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T H E
W O M A N
O F
H O N O R.

In THREE VOLUMES.

V O L U M E I.

Letters bring things more home, and represent them more to the life, than either Annals or Lives.

BACON, *Lord VERULAM.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for T. LOWNDES, at N^o 77,
in Fleet-street;

And W. NICOLL, at N^o 51, in
St. Paul's Church-yard.

MDCCLXVIII.

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vii



MEMOIRS

OF A

WOMAN of HONOR.



LETTER I.

From Mr. MELLEFONT, to Mrs.
BUCKLEY.

Lancashire.

HIS letter, dear aunt, will be de-
T livered to you by that sister of
my wife's, of whom you have
been so good to promise that you will
VOL. I. B take

take care and do her any good offices that may depend on you. But as in my last I only summarily mentioned the circumstance of her going to London, it is now very fit to acquaint you more at large of the necessary particulars relating to her past and present circumstances: In favor of preserving the chain of which, you will readily excuse my mentioning certain facts already abundantly known to you.

Her father, the learned Dr. Maynwaring, dying about eleven years after his marriage with the daughter of a country gentleman, left her a widow with two children, Esther, and Clara. The first, being the eldest by many years, on her coming into this part of the country, with Mrs. Alderton, a distant relation by the father's side, with whom she lived as a
companion,

companion, I had the good fortune to see her, and soon, with the approbation of her friends, and especially of Mrs. Alderton, was made, by obtaining her hand, the happiest of men. Views of fortune in this match I could have none; since I well knew that her father had died in rather streight circumstances, tho' not long after I received the small legacy which you know, on the death of Mrs. Alderton, as a mark of her friendship to my wife, and of her approbation of her choice.

Mrs. Maynwaring, her mother, who was, in every point of female worth, an excellent woman, had not failed to give her children the best education in her power. In her impatience to see her daughter after her marriage with me, as it was not possible for me to be spared

from my residence, she was so good as to take a long journey across the country, purely to pay us a visit; in which there was not wanting to the heartiest welcome, any circumstance but that of her not bringing Clara with her, of whom she was unwilling to risque the fatigue, being but just recovered from the inoculation which she had undergone with the utmost success.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Maynwaring, not long after her return, was suddenly carried off by bursting a vein, as she was on some occasion straining beyond her strength to move a chest of drawers in her apartment, not having waited for a servant to assist her. On this melancholy news, which I was obliged to conceal from my wife, then on the point of delivery, to whom it would, in all probability, have been fatal,
and

and whom I could invent no plausible pretext for leaving, I immediately, however, sent off a person to take care of poor Clara, who was left in a very undesirable condition, and who, even in her tender age, not being full seven years old, was so little insensible to her loss, that it had nearly killed her. She was actually so ill upon it, that she could not immediately bear the removal I had directed of her to our house. She remained then under the care of an old nurse in the family, who, though very willing, was very ill qualified for that, or any office, being so worn with years and infirmities, that she died soon after Clara's leaving her.

Before this distress of Clara's situation was well over, by the orders I had sent, and just after I had found means, by due

degrees, to break this misfortune to my wife, we had received a consolatory letter from Mr. Glassmore, a merchant of some eminence in London, and brother to Mrs. Maynwaring, in which there was an offer, conceived in the most tender and affectionate terms, of taking care of Clara, if we would send her up to him. Sensible of the advantages to her from our acceptance of this offer, it was not, however, without some struggle of prudence with inclination, that Esther, who passionately loved her sister, consented to the preference, on this occasion, of her uncle over herself.

The point being settled, and my wife being as yet too weak to bear any travelling fatigue, I contrived so as to go myself to Norfolk, where I found Clara somewhat recovered, and in a way that
I judged

I judged the journey, and change of objects, would rather be of service than not to her health. It is true she much wanted to go with me to her sister, at least, before she went to London, and I was myself strongly inclined to give her that satisfaction; but as I found Mr. Glassmore had sent a person down to take care of bringing her to town as soon as possible, I was afraid of his not taking well any retardment.

This gentleman was a widower, left without any issue, which, doubtless, had some influence in his determination to take care of Clara, and even to leave her his fortune, if she should be found to deserve it.

I had never seen her, as I had not been before then in that part of the country.

She was, I repeat it, about her seventh year, but for her age rather tall. I had been by my wife prepared for seeing an uncommonly pretty child, not however without due allowance being made for deductions for sisterly partiality. But for this injustice I had now at sight of her to make honorable amends, for in my life I had never seen, never imagined any thing comparable to her for sweetness and beauty of features, delicacy of shape and air, and a bloom of complexion, in which the momentary prevalence of the fairest white over the roseate hue of her cheeks, from the remaining impressions of languor and affliction for the death of her mother, gave an inexpressible tenderness to her looks, and increased the natural sympathy for the grief they expressed.

Not,

Not, however, to tire you unnecessarily with particulars, which such an earliness of age would not suffer to be very interesting, and which would unmercifully lengthen a letter, that from the introductory design of it must be a long one, I shall only observe to you, that she arrived very safely in London, where she was received by Mr. Glassmore with the utmost tenderness and affection. The loveliness of her figure would, at least, not lessen such a disposition.

That no cultivation might be wanting to her natural perfections, he placed her immediately under the care of Mrs. Mercier, the widow of a bookseller, who, by extraction, was a French refugee. At his death, with the little fortune he had left her, she had set up a boarding-school for young ladies at Chelsea, and, by her personal management,

had brought it into great and just reputation. Her method of education was admirable, for without neglecting any one accomplishment that peculiarly contributes to grace the female sex, she had a special regard to cultivating and improving the heart. It was by making virtue amiable, and by placing in its true point of view, of superior dignity and pleasure in a consciousness of innocence, that she inspired her scholars with almost an enthusiasm of love for their duty. Shame, that great engine of education, she employed with great sparingness and attention not to stale its effect, or wear out the springs of it by too frequent an use. Manual correction was entirely out of the question; she looked on it not only as carrying an air of slavery with it, but even as contrary to the end proposed; from its hardening that tender age in its faults, by endearing them

them to it for what it suffers for them, and by only adding to it a new guilt, the spirit of concealment; which finds a kind of joy in deceiving parents and teachers. Besides that, if you use children to blows or to hard words, they are apt to contract an abject fear, and by dint of being debased by others are insensibly accustomed to debase themselves. The best masters are not surely those who prefer bringing their scholars forward by slavish corrections, to the finding out a good method of instruction. But that costs too much trouble. The quickest way with them, and which does not require much skill, is that of rating and striking. For that there needs nothing more but hastiness and ill-nature. Whereas to bring them up by reason, there must be a care, an attention to their tempers and capacities, a delicacy, in short, of which few teachers are capable. Mrs. Mercier's plan

was to make her pupils fear nothing so much as being in disgrace with themselves, on having done any thing to incur a just reproach from her, which she never made to them, without, at the same time, rendering them sensible that it was a pain to herself, which it was mean and cruel in them to give her. Thus governing more by love than by fear, she was always sure of the whole school on her side, in the case of any animadversion for a fault; the offending party on incurring her displeasure, lay under a kind of civil excommunication, from her companions and play-fellows, who shunned her, not without expressions of a pity more mortifying than reproach, till, on her show of penitence, or atonement by a better conduct, she was restored to the favor of the Governess, who had succeeded in making herself considered less as the austere mistress, than as
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the tender common mother of them all. Always averse to the common arbitrary practice of enslaving children to the authority of prejudices, she was especially careful to put them into the train of an early exercise of their reasoning faculty, without the conviction of which she cautioned them against receiving implicitly any opinion; accustoming them to inquire into the causes of their judgments of things, and leading them to the truth by the way of examination: Thus accustoming them to think for themselves, and not to let their reason lie idle, or carry it about them, as so many in a more advanced age, like a lame arm in a sling, as if it would hurt them to use it.

Among many other improvements of their understanding, she had by early instilling into them, a contempt for finery,
done

done the real service to their beauty of defending it against the injuries it is sure to receive from being over-dressed. Every thing, especially with children, depends on the light in which it is presented to them; the simplicity of that age being susceptible of any impressions, and from the instinctive rectitude of nature, mostly so of good ones; they are as much and more to be inflamed by real great objects than by little ones. Among the punishments, by shame, which she had contrived for vanity or pride, was that of ordering the party under that charge to be dressed in her best cloaths, with all the trinkets that the fondness of parents or relations might have bestowed on her, and obliged to walk or sit, for a certain space of time, alone, as being much too good for the company of her school-fellows, who, to humor the joke, kept ironically their distance; or, if her

her offence was very flagrant indeed, they compelled her to sit on a stool, and danced round her, as milk maids before a May garland. But to turn this act of derision to the general improvement, independently of the example, Mrs. Mercier entreated her pupils, upon their own judgment, to which she fairly appealed, to satisfy themselves that dress, carried beyond an elegant neatness, could be of no sort of advantage in the eyes of persons of true taste; and as to superficial judges or to understandings no better than those of fops in one sex or triflers in the other, the preferable point would be not to please them. Without countenancing or allowing any malignant criticism or reflexion on the person of the party under this sentence of finery, she made them every one, and even the delinquent thus exposed, sensible of the folly and especially of the falsity

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sity of a reliance on the foreign ornaments of dress, those treacherous auxiliaries, which, if a woman is pretty, divide the attention to her personal charms, and, in the eye of taste, are no more an improvement of them, than gilding to a fine statue. But if she is homely, the damage is still greater: fine cloaths and jewels not only draw on those who are under that disinherittance from nature more attention, by making their misfortune more conspicuous, but robs them of the compassion due to them for that injury, by the indignation which finery so murdered must excite. It is only for ideots not to abstract the person from the trappings. With men of taste beauty will be beauty in a stuff gown and colored handkerchief, and ugliness ugliness though caparisoned all over like the Mogul's elephant, with rubies and diamonds. In short, the idea
of

of a gorgeous dress remained on the minds of the young ladies, as much associated with that of shame and contempt, as the fear of a staight waistcoat with a dread of pain in the wounded imagination of those liable to it for insanity. And as the rage of overdressing is a kind of madness, a fine gown was represented to them as the staight waistcoat of it.

There was another particularity in Mrs. Mercier's school which was of great service to the pupils. The back part of her house communicated with a very spacious inclosure, which was partly a garden, partly a wilderness, with a large room on one side, to serve for a shelter in bad weather; it was here that the amiable troop were regularly conducted to their diversion for two hours before dinner, and encouraged to use as much motion and exercise as their vivacity

vivacity or inclination should suggest to them. They were especially, and without any the least air of compulsion, imperceptibly guided to make their choice of those kind of amusements that required the greatest activity. Rehearsals of the lessons of their dancing-masters, digging appropriate spots in the garden, the country sports of swinging, and even of flinging coits, bowling, riding, no diversion, in short, was judged too violent that was consistent with the modesty of the sex. There were even prizes instituted for excellence in feats of dexterity: all which were controuled and managed with so much delicacy, that while they excluded every idea of too masculine an air, they manifestly preserved the shape from the coarseness of a corpulence contracted by idleness and inaction, they gave a glow of freshness to the complexion, and
laid

laid the solid foundations of a healthy constitution. Nor was this end a little promoted by Mrs. Mercier's taking care to keep their palate to that simplicity of diet, a relish for which is originally the precious gift of nature, too often destroyed by being insensibly betrayed into an habitual taste for made-dishes, and for all those poisons of modern cookery, to which beauty, health, and life are so often the sacrifice. Knowing human nature too well to give an inclination to them by prohibitions, and being sensible that at the tables of their relations they would be sure to meet with those pernicious dainties under the recommendation of rarity and expensiveness, she imagined it best to guard against their seduction by anticipation. Her own table, then, was never without one or two of those articles, which were left to the discretion of her pupils; but they

they appeared constantly under such marks of reprobation and disgust, that none of them were tempted to touch them; some would, when purposely desired to make trial of them, sputter at them, like the savages when they first taste salt; so that when they saw the like at the tables of their friends, they were prepared and proof against any temptation from them. Add to all this precautionary management, that there was a note of shame, upon any appearance of a lickerishness, of which their understandings had been convinced of the danger even to their beauty.

It was in this school that Clara received her education; and by the readiness of her proficiency in every branch of it, was the darling and pride of the governess's heart, to whom it did so much honor; while the natural sweetness of her
temper

temper was great enough to subdue the envy of her school-fellows, and at length to make them forgive her superiority even in points the least apt to be forgiven.

Do not imagine that any partiality of a relation could bias me to exaggerate her merit, I but repeat Mrs. Mercier's testimony of her, and in her own words.

I shall only here state one incident that will serve to characterize at once Clara's sentiments, and the discretion of her governess,

Among the ornaments with which her uncle Mr. Glassmore's fondness had enabled her to distinguish her apartment, there was a superb Chinese temple of mother-of-pearl, of an uncommonly curious and costly workmanship, the present of a Chi-

na-supercargo. This was not only very much valued by Clara, on account of its beauty, but as she had designed it for one of the marks of her gratitude to Mrs. Mercier, upon that worthy woman's birthday, of which the scholars having obtained the specification by discovering the register of it on a family bible, had constantly since made a law among themselves to celebrate it, out of pure affection to her, and forced her not only to consent to this compliment, but to accept any presents they thought would be the most agreeable, and of which any refusal from her would have been a real mortification to them. This day was then near at hand, when Clara, upon some occasion happening to enter her apartment, found in it one of the half-boarders, all in tears, and in the utmost consternation for having rather carelessly, in moving a chair, thrown

thrown

thrown down the stand on which the Chinese temple had been placed, and which now lay on the floor in a thousand glittering fragments. As heartily chagrined as Clara was, especially at the disappointment of her design, which however she had never mentioned to any one, the unaffected concern and grief in which she saw the poor girl, who was the cause of this accident, turned all her thoughts to comfort her, and to relieve her from the distress of her fears, not only from her resentment, but of Mrs. Mercier's. After then taking some pain to excuse the girl's carelessness even to her own self, she removed her apprehension of the governess's anger, by taking the accident upon herself. This for some little time passed current. Mrs. Mercier condoled with her on her loss, and the girl who had really broken the temple would have escaped so much

much as suspicion, but for her own impatience of the secret in the fulness of her gratitude. She could not help, under the seal of secrecy, communicating to one of the young ladies, the obligation she thought herself under to Clara for her procedure on this occasion. This young lady, rather edified by it than from any ill intention, thought it a pity that Clara, who was universally beloved, should lose the merit of such an act of good nature, and, in that spirit, divulged it through the school. By this means it came to Mrs. Mercier's ears. There were not two opinions about it, except only that the governess saw cause in it to give a lesson to all her pupils. On the first occasion, then, of their being all assembled, she singled out Clara, and after preparing her to receive, without reluctance, her remonstrance, by a preliminary approbation of the good natured motive

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tive on which she had acted, she observed to her, that it was to that motive her error against truth was obliged for a pardon, which was enough to satisfy her that it was an error, since if it were not one, what occasion could there be for forgiveness; that truth was too great a sacrifice to make to almost any good; that in this single falsity she had not only been herself guilty, but the cause of guilt in another, and that the mischief had gone farther, by its being the occasion of a young lady's betraying the secret confided in her, though most probably with a good intention; that, in short, nobody could tell where the moral evil proceeding from a falsity would stop; whereas truth was, at

least, eternally, by its nature, defended from any fear of shame or reproach.

Clara, whose docility could only be equalled by her candor, and whose detestation of falsity had, on this occasion, only been momentarily blinded by an invincible emotion of compassion, touched to the heart at this representation from Mrs. Mercier, of the propriety of which she was intimately convinced, took hold of the hand which her governess extended to her, as a sign of perfect cordiality, and moistening it with tears of gratitude, thanked her for her instruction, the sincerity of her regard for which, she said, should be proved by an inviolable observance of it in future.

Mr.

Mr. Glassmore, on being informed of this loss of Clara's, and of her behaviour on it, was so charmed, that he immediately repaired the damage by the present of a magnificent set of dressing boxes, of the old Japan, for her toilet, accompanied with a large silver coffee-pot, which served Clara to acquit herself of the engagement she had secretly contracted with herself, to make Mrs. Mercier a present on the anniversary commemoration I have already mentioned.

I shall pass over the rest of her proceedings, at that school, except just one circumstance, of which, before the conclusion of this letter, you will see the necessity.

Among other the social virtues which Mrs. Mercier had studiously inculcated to her pupils, as the great sources of happiness, she had not omitted that of friendship. She had observed to them, that men, with very little pretention to the thing, had contented themselves with the name, which in general, they prostituted, by giving it to a commerce of interest ; or to an association in follies or vices ; but that as to the women, the other sex, who laid claim to it as purely a manly virtue, honored them with a supposition of their being absolutely incapable of it, and excluded them from it as formally as Mahomet is *said* to do from his Paradise. Female friendship was, according to them, a chimera, a non-entity,

entity, the men grudging them even the name, which is all that they themselves retain of it. It was not then as a point only of honor, but of happiness, that she recommended the cultivation of that virtue; she convinced their understanding of how great utility a well-chosen friend might be, on many occasions, and that there was not a single good argument to be offered why such connexions were not as desirable, as worthy among women, as among men; nay, that the weaker the female sex was, the more expedient it was to multiply its props, and that friendship was surely not one of the least; that, after all, a jest was not a reason: and that if delicacy was one of the chief ingredients of that virtue, the women were incon-

testably, in that point, as much qualified as the men.

Reasons less powerful than these would have sufficed to persuade a heart so disposed to every sentiment of worth, as Clara's naturally was. Besides then, the perfect harmony in which she lived with all her companions, she had met above half way the advances made to her by one of the young ladies of the school, a daughter of Earl Lovell, her name Lady Harriet, and about one year older than herself. A certain sympathy of temper, and conformity of taste, in their favorite objects of improvement, in short, in every thing, had first begun their intimacy, which habit afterwards strengthened and lastingly

ingly cemented. Without any such affectation of the name of friends, as might be disagreeable to the rest of that amiable society, who were all competitors for Clara's preference, they contented themselves with the pleasure they found in the reality of the sentiment, of which they omitted no opportunity of convincing one another.

In this tenor of life, in the bosom of improvement, and in all the satisfaction of innocent amusements, Clara had attained to her fourteenth year, when her uncle, impatient of having such a treasure nearer him, took her home, to the great grief of Mrs. Mercier and of the whole school, but especially of Lady Harriet, who not enduring to stay there

after her, prevailed likewise on her mother to take her away.

Mr. Glassmore, who had long been sensible of his niece's superior merit of person and accomplishments, not content with a profusion on her of every thing he imagined would please her, set her at the head of his house, of which he considered her, and not without reason, as the greatest ornament. In short, he idolised her to such a degree, as was very capable of spoiling one less fortified by nature and education.

And here it would be ingratitude for me to omit, that she had constantly given us the most tender marks of her
remem-

remembrance of us, not only in frequent letters to her sister, which breathed nothing but the spirit of goodness and affection, but by sending us, on every occasion, presents of such value, that we were obliged very seriously to remonstrate to her against the excess. Nor did she stop at this, but as her influence over her uncle grew to such a point, that he followed all the impressions she was pleased to suggest to him, he gave us proof, in many essentials, of his natural regard for Esther, being greatly increased by her quality of sister to Clara. In short, it is but fair to confess, that much of the present ease of our circumstances we owe to her good offices with Mr. Glassmore.

But alas! that so good an intention, as that of this fond uncle, should be, by his straining it beyond the bounds of discretion, pernicious to himself. It was but just, but natural, for him to think, that the greater was his niece's merit, personal and acquired, the less she would need a fortune, to which that merit was so rich a supplement. But as nothing, in this world, is easier or more common, than to ruinously confound a true good with a false one, Mr. Glassmore, who had never been covetous of money for himself, began to consider it as the supreme good, in the passion of his heart, for the adding to those advantages of Nature and Art, of which Clara was already so eminently possessed,

possessed, that of a fortune equal to them. In this spirit, he, who had been before noted for rather a slow, cautious, circumspect dealer, suddenly went over to the other extreme, and launched out into trade, in a manner that surprised every one that knew him. Then it was that, for the first time, he was seen to prefer the chance of sudden great gains, to the repetition of slow, moderate, and more secure ones. Some successes, at first, so elated and encouraged him to proceed, that, big with the hopes they inspired, he used to talk of nothing less than giving Clara fourscore or a hundred thousand pounds to her fortune; and, in all probability, very sincerely meant as he said. Unluckily, in the very year that he

had taken her home, no less than four capital adventures, in which he had risked by much the greatest part of his substance, failed, so that in aiming to raise her a fortune, he sunk his own. His constitution, originally never a very good one, had been for some time sensibly declining, the consciousness of which had, perhaps, contributed to that precipitancy with which he proceeded in his endeavours to accumulate the fortune he was projecting for Clara. This blow then going to his heart, in its disappointment of his darling scheme, was, no doubt, of fatal consequence to his health, and the more so, for that he could not prevail on himself to procure the relief of unbosoming himself to the sole object of his
confi-

confidence, of his affection, of his care. He could not, indeed, quite conceal his melancholy from Clara, though he endeavoured it as much as possible, which only made his grief prey the more fiercely on him inwards, but the cause of it she could not even guess, having never heard him mention a word of his losses, a reserve which very likely proceeded from his fear of giving her any uneasiness. Not to dwell then disagreeably to you on this subject of affliction, and without particularising the history of his illness, I hasten to the fatal conclusion of it. A few minutes before his death, of the approaches of which he was sensible, he intimated a desire to speak to Clara alone, who was so weak with
her

her constant attendance, and watching him, as well as with her fears and grief for his condition, that she was scarce more alive than himself. The attendants being all withdrawn, she had just spirits and sense enough to observe, that he was in that sort of confusion for uttering what he had to say, which attends a repugnance to give vent to a smothered secret. He began twice or thrice to articulate a few scarce intelligible words, that seemed expressions of a tender concern and compassion, when he was stopped short by the force of his disease: it is probable the inward conflict he was enduring hastened his agony, for thenceforwards he remained speechless till the last instant of his breath, which was
about

about a quarter of an hour afterwards. Clara frightened, and skreaming for help, was carried out of the room.

We were presently apprised of this catastrophe, and immediately set out for town, where our presence was on many accounts indispenfably necessary. You being at that time in Cornwall with your late husband, we could not have the benefit of your counfels.

Nothing could be more moving than the deep distress in which we found Clara; pale, extenuated, and sinking under her grief. I sincerely believe that our arrival saved her life, or at least retrieved her from the gates of death, which seemed already opening
for

for her. But the sight of her sister, from whom she had been so long absent, and whom she had always expressed a passionate desire to see, somewhat revived her, and gave her the first gleam of consolation, since the death of Mr. Glassmore. She had from that time remained in such a state of stupefaction and unconcern for any thing, that she had never once thought of any point of interest, or of what she had to expect from the state of his affairs; and the compassion with which she had inspired all who saw her, had kept them from mentioning it to her.

When his will was opened, it appeared to be of a very recent date, and conformable to his latter circumstances.

He

He had left my wife two hundred pounds, with some other bequeathments to servants, and Clara residuary legatee. But by a very fair calculation, from the very clear accounts he had kept to the last, it was presently discovered, that, all due deductions made, the whole of what was left would not exceed from between fifteen hundred to two thousand pounds. This, with Milbury-farm in Somersetshire, which in his life-time he had irrevocably secured to her, and may bring in something above a hundred a year, constitute the whole of her fortune, instead of that princely one with which his fond assurances had often flattered her. Out of his constant liberal supplies she had made some little reserve of money and jewels, which
might

might have been much greater, but for her own disposition and generosity.

However, such was her unaffected disinterestedness, that on any mention to her of condolance, relative to her disappointment of fortune, she could hardly conceive what they meant by it; she was so thoroughly satisfied with the comparatively small matter that was left, and esteemed it a competency for any wants she could figure to herself, in her actual moderation of desires, and proposed simplicity of life. But the memory of her uncle was only the dearer to her for the cause of that diminution of her intended fortune, which never gave her a moment's uneasiness.

As

As soon as she had paid her last sad duties to his remains, her earnest intreaty to us was to take her down for a while into the country with us, there, in the bosom of our family, to restore her wounded spirits. There was nothing she could have proposed more agreeable to our own wishes.

I ought not to omit mentioning here, that no sooner had Clara been taken home by her uncle, whose declarations of his intentions to make her so great a fortune had been currently received and believed, that even in that tender age of her's there had presented themselves a number of suitors, some of them in very opulent circumstances,
but

but whom Mr. Glassmore had not encouraged, in his idea of procuring one of the first matches in the kingdom for her. After his death, when it was discovered that her fortune was nothing equal to what had been given out, there was not one of those who had proposed their pretensions that deserted her. As ever since her uncle's demise she had shut herself up, and remained inaccessible to any visitors, it was to my wife that all of them made their applications, and intreated her good offices. But as that was not the time to touch such a string, there could be no answer returned to their proposals, but a civilly elusive one, referring them to herself, when her affliction should be moderated enough for an application of
that

that kind to be more consistent with decency. Some of her suitors acquiesced in the reasonableness of this delay; others, in letters (which were constantly with great politeness returned to them,) in the genteelst manner they could imagine, covertly insinuated the merit of their perseverance, even after the discovery of the disparity of her fortune to theirs. At that time, Clara was too much engrossed by her affliction to take notice of any thing of that kind, but when she became restored to a little more tranquillity of mind, she said, on their being mentioned to her, that she could see but very little difference, in point of delicacy, between such as should drop their suit, on finding the inferiority of her fortune, and those who

made a merit to her of their persistence, notwithstanding the superiority of theirs, the very mention of which betrayed their taking into the account a circumstance according to her ideas of things, of a nature very foreign to a passion of which she knew nothing, nor desired to know, except that she believed it stood very little upon respects of fortune, and was only the better for that contempt, however the world might be in general of another opinion.

Upon the whole, there appeared in Clara so great an indifference, or rather aversion for this subject, that we never ventured to renew the offence of it to her.

All dispositions being made for returning to our parsonage-house, Clara left a letter for Lady Harriet, who was then at the family seat, with her mother, at Moultray ; and, after taking a most tender leave of Mrs. Mercier, who, in her visits, had been of great service in joining her consolatory efforts to ours, we set out for my parsonage-house, where we arrived without any accident or inconvenience by the way.

Here it was that the gloom of Clara's melancholy first gave signs of dissipating, with the removal and change of objects, while her natural cheerfulness began to regain its ascendant,
and

and shew itself in gleams of smiles, which were drawn from her by the little careffes and playfulness of our children. But surely nothing could be more engaging, nor more edifying, than her behaviour. The country ladies round us, who had been prepared for all the insolence and affectation of a fine lady's airs, were agreeably surpris'd to find in their stead so sweet a simplicity of manners, and an unassumingness, which was the result of the most perfect modesty in every sense of that word. Nothing was more easy to see, than that she had a great deal of true wit, and, at the same time, that she did not herself suspect it, by her neither affecting to show or to conceal it.

But

But even we, who had many reasons to anticipate every thing that was amiable, from what we had precedently experienced of her conduct, or had reason to infer from the spirit of her letters, could not help being struck with the ease and grace with which she entered into our domestic occupations, and slid into all the female functions of rural œconomy.

These exercises, together with the country air, soon had their usual effect; she presently recovered the florid bloom of her complexion, and stood restored in beauty. It is without any the least exaggeration, I can assure you, that few of our neighbouring Gentlemen have seen her with impunity,

nity, or are proof against her numerous attractions; many of them have already declared themselves; and even Mr. Collins, our squire, who, in his life, was never heard to praise any thing but dogs and horses, does her the honor of preferring her to them. But without any airs of insolent beauty, of prudery, or coquetry, Clara has hitherto eluded all their addresses, by the art of keeping them at a distance, without offence. Her shunning them appears to proceed less from her dislike of them, than from her natural love of retirement.

She was extremely pleased with a very large closet adjoining to her chamber, which I have added to the
par-

parsonage house since you saw it. Without any the least romantic turn of head, the melancholic mood in which she arrived here was pleasingly soothed by the situation of it, sweetly shaded by the trees of a neighbouring grove, where the silence of its solitude is only broken by the warbling of birds, and by a rill of the clearest water, forming a natural cascade with almost a musical murmur. Here, on a harpsichord of my wife's, she spent some of her time, in the cultivation of her accomplishment in music, which she would disdain to possess in any degree inferior to that of a mistress of the art. Here, accompanying that instrument with a very fine soprano voice, and with those graces which are so great

an addition to vocal execution, she would, on the least intimation of its affording us pleasure, and without any of the grimace to none so common as to the worst players, without their thinking themselves so, give us one of the highest entertainments of which the human refinement of nature by art is susceptible. You know my passion for music, and have often blamed me for the excess of it; you will then think that this renders me partial; but lady Proffer, who is universally allowed to be a great and real judge, loudly confirms my opinion of the superiority of Clara's both voice and performance. In neither did I ever hear any of the Italian singers excel her, no, not even in the graces of song, which
the

the more natural they seem, are but the more difficult to learn.

She has given us too an excellent miniature picture of her own painting, of Flora, our second child, in an attitude of sleeping, which is another proof of her determination never to remain contented with mediocrity in any improvement she attempts. In that spirit, she made herself perfect mistress of the Italian, which she at first began only for its use in her study of music.

You will then easily guess how happy the stay with us, of so accomplished, so amiable a sister, was likely to make us, while, from the return of her gaiety, and the satisfac-

faction she expressed at her condition with us, we were in hopes that happiness would have been more lasting. An incident, none of us expected, has, at least, interrupted it.

Clara had often mentioned Lady Harriet to us, always with the utmost tenderness, and latterly with some little regret and surprize at not having heard from her. It was not full two days from her making this remark, that an express came down from that young Lady, and brought Clara a letter, of which, as it relates to the occasion of this to you, I inclose you the copy.

L E T-

L E T T E R

From Lady HARRIET LOVELL to Miss
CLARA MAYNWARING.

London, August.

“ *My ever dear friend,*

“ YOU cannot conceive how
“ vexed I have been at my receiv-
“ ing so late your letter, through
“ the negligence of our porter, who
“ kept it till I came last night to town.
“ I should certainly have had him turned
“ away, but that I am clear his fault
“ proceeded rather from stupidity than
“ ill-intention; and as his innocent wife
“ and children would be involved in his
“ punishment, I am persuaded that I
“ should not make my court to you by

“ an act of severity, whatever the justice
“ of it might be. It is, then, to the
“ implied intercession of your goodness
“ that he owes his not losing his place.

“ So far in just excuse for the delay of
“ my answer.

“ I do not mean to pester you with a
“ condolence of mere ceremony, and
“ less yet with common-place consola-
“ tion; but I sincerely sympathise with
“ you; I know your sensibility, and,
“ will not, therefore, dwell upon a sub-
“ ject so fit to refresh the smart of its
“ wounds.

“ I say nothing to you either of the
“ new-discovered inferiority of your for-
“ tune

“tune to the expectation which had
“been raised of it: why should I, know-
“ing your way of thinking as I do,
“offer you any arguments to extenuate
“your loss of an advantage which you
“would certainly despise if you had it?
“You are but too rich in endowments,
“infinitely superior to those of fortune:
“a head less good than yours would be
“turned with the high-ground on which
“you stand, so much above the greatest
“part of our sex, in the points of ex-
“cellence we most covet.

“How dare you, then, talk to me
“of the disparity of our conditions?
“In what have I deserved this of you?
“I do you more justice. If it is the
“part of inferiority to ask favors; see

“ a confession of it in the suit I have to
“ make to you in this letter ; and let
“ me tell you, that it would be great
“ injustice in you to deny it me, since
“ you are the cause of my necessity for
“ it ; you, who have made almost the
“ whole world indifferent to me by com-
“ parison of it to you. [In that word
“ *almost* there lies a mystery, which when
“ I see you shall cease to be one.] Yes,
“ Clara, you alone have made me sen-
“ sible of the essential distinction be-
“ tween a recourse to acquaintance from
“ an impatience of solitude, and the joys
“ of friendship founded on virtue and
“ mutual improvement. Is it not to
“ your example, to my emulation of
“ your dignity of sentiments and man-
“ ners, that I am more indebted for the
“ little

“ little I am worth, than to all Mrs.
“ Mercier’s lessons? All the company
“ I see only reminds me of you, and
“ nothing supplies the place of you.
“ Society at best appears to me a
“ dreary desert, in which here and there,
“ at great distances, in characters like
“ yours, one meets with a few spots
“ of verdure, that are of some relief to
“ the tired traveller. But now you are
“ more necessary to me than ever; for
“ since I had the happiness of seeing
“ you last, an occurrence, of the greatest
“ importance to the rest of my life,
“ has taken place, about which I need
“ such a friend as you, in whose bosom
“ I may deposite my fears, my anxie-
“ ties, my alarms.

“ If, then, your regard for me is not
“ a vain profession, of which, however,
“ far be it from me to suspect you;
“ if, in our tender years, our singling
“ one another out, in distinction from
“ the rest of the world, was not rather a
“ childish playing at friendship, than
“ laying a solid foundation for the per-
“ severance of so noble, so delicious, so
“ virtuous a sentiment; come and
“ bless me with your company for as
“ long as you can afford your absence
“ from your sister, or she will spare
“ you. She will lay me under an
“ immortal obligation, if she gives her
“ consent. Inclosed with this you will
“ receive my mother’s invitation, which
“ is as civil a one as she would write to
“ any

“ any one under a Princess. You
“ know her idea, which, with all due
“ respect to her, is, I assure you, not
“ mine, of rank, and how apt she is
“ to proportion her stile: but, with
“ regard to you, her fondness for me
“ makes you an exception.

“ I should tell you, too, that I ima-
“ gine a country-recess is of too solitary
“ a nature to answer the purpose of
“ compleating the dissipation of your
“ melancholy, and that a little of the
“ whirl of amusements in a town life, may
“ serve to make a not unnecessary di-
“ version to your grief: but that I wish
“ your yielding to my pressing instances
“ for your accepting my invitation may
“ be

62 *From Mr. MELLEFONT,*

“ be purely owing to your own good-
“ nefs, to your own friendship for me.

“ Come, then, my sweet girl, come as
“ foon as you poffibly can; come and
“ enliven me with your prefence: there
“ is but one fun, there is but one
“ Clara, and I fhall hail your ap-
“ pearance with more joy, than the long
“ benighted Greenlander does the re-
“ turn of the folar orb to gild his ho-
“ rizon, after a fix months abfence.

“ Once more, in this request remem-
“ ber, that I am recommending to you
“ one of the points I have the moft at
“ my heart: confult yours, and deny
“ me if you dare or can.

“ Yours, &c.

“ HARRIET LOVELL.”

The foregoing letter Clara directly put into our hands, and as the express waited for the answer, we could not well avoid coming to an immediate determination.

It was with the most tender regard, with the gentlest submissiveness to an authority we certainly had not over her, any farther than her own choice gave it us, that she left us to pronounce whether she should or not accept this invitation. At the same time she did not dissemble to us her own inclination to comply with it, though unfeignedly ready to sacrifice her desires to ours. She was sensible, she said, of the danger to one of her years and inexperience,

in

in going into so gay and mixed a sphere of life, as that in which her companionship to Lady Harriet would introduce her; and that none were more likely to fail in that career, than such as presume the most on their own forces; but that on one great principle she durst venture to rely, which was, that she would always herself mean the best, though without any presumption on her own infallibility; that, on the contrary, she depended on nothing so much as on the precautions she proposed to take against herself, judging, that her greatest safeguard against her being deceived by others, would be, to take particular care not to be deceived by herself; concluding with a repetition of sending an excuse to Lady Harriet, if

we

we should disapprove of her giving her that mark of her friendship she fairly owned she wished to do.

Upon this representation, though we had many objections to oppose to her going, independent of our own ardent desire to have her longer with us, we not only cordially returned her the compliment of leaving the point entirely to her own decision, but I took upon me, dear aunt, to offer her, in you, a sincere friend and useful council, sure, at once, of your not protesting this draught upon a goodness, which, I am persuaded, is inexhaustible, and of its being hardly possible to find for you a more worthy opportunity for the exertion of it. Had not I been very clear, then,
that

that both you and Clara would do honor to my recommendation, I would not have taken the liberty to trouble you with it. Richmond being at so easy a distance from the town, will occasionally afford her a ready recourse to you; and surely you would have been edified at the transports of gratitude with which she received our concurrence to her wishes, and this address of her to you, of whom she has, with reason, the highest opinion, from the justice I have done to your character of untainted honor, and of perfect knowledge of the world, and all this yet more exalted by your great good-nature.

Agreeably,

Agreeably, then, to this determination the express was sent off with a most respectful answer from Clara to Lady Lovell, and a most tender one to Lady Harriet, in which she excused herself for her succinctness, on her unwillingness to detain the messenger.

Just at this time, luckily for Clara's design, Lady Proffer was on the point of returning to London, from a visit to her sister; and, on hearing of this intention, offered Clara a place in her post-chaise, which she said she would not afford her gratis, that she would not; for she would be paid with a song. You know her oddity, which is very far from disagreeable, since there is always good-nature at the bottom of
it :

it: All we are in pain for, is, lest the carriage should break down with her weight of corpulence, to the enormous preponderance of which, on one side, Clara, with her slimness of make, must be so deficient a ballance. However, as one may say, the horses are to, and go the journey she will, not without leaving many an aching heart behind her, ours included.

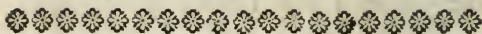
You will now naturally say, that I have been writing you not a letter, but a history; nay, worse than a history, a long panegyric; but this is impossible to avoid, while writing of Clara: Nor am I at all afraid of doing her an ill office by over-raising your expectation about her. I judged it necessary, because re-
spectful

spectful to you, to give you some idea of the person I was taking the liberty to put, in some measure, under your protection.

Yours, &c.

EDWARD MELLEFONT,

L E T-



L E T T E R II.

CLARA MAYNWARING, *to Mrs.*
ESTHER MELLEFONT.

DEAR SISTER,

London.

AS you would doubtless take it ill that such as are so admirably well united, I should attempt to separate, by my writing apart to Mr. Mellefont, this, then, and every future letter, is ever to be understood jointly and in common to you both. So that is adjusted. I arrived very safe, and not in the least fatigued, at Lady Proffer's, who,

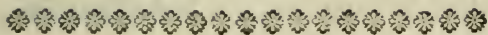
who, with a friendly violence, means to detain me two days at her house in the city, having sent her coach immediately to Mrs. Buckley, with your letter and a note of apology from me, for my not delivering it with my own hands. But Lady Proffer tells me, Mrs. Buckley knows her too well to take any thing amiss from her, for she will have her way. In my hurry to see Lady Harriet, I could ill brook this retardment; but I do not know what it is to resist the pressure of a good-natured civility which one may feel comes from the heart; I would at any time rather suffer an inconveniency than give a pain.

A croud of visitants coming in, to whom Mrs. Proffer, in continuance of
that

kind tyranny of her's, insists, I should imagine absurdly enough, on my doing the honors of her house, giving for reason that I am absolutely the mistress of it, I find I can, at present, have no time to bestow on this letter the extension I could wish, for the effusions of my heart to you. No matter; I know your goodness, and that you will give me, implicitly, credit for what I am thus hindered from saying; and sure I am, all that I do not say, could not contain all that I feel of affection, gratitude, and respect for you. Embrace your little ones for me, and believe me ever,

Your obliged and
tenderly loving sister and servant,

CLARA MAYNWARING.



L E T T E R III.

Mrs. BUCKLEY to the Reverend Mr.
MELLEFONT.

Dear Nephew, *Richmond.*

I Write myself; I think myself extremely obliged to you for procuring me the knowledge of your excellent sister; by what I can already discern of her, I had rather be her acquaintance than only her relation, but hold it a greater happiness still to be both.

On receipt of your letter, with Clara's note and Lady Proffer's invitation to

town, I immediately set off, and own to you, that all that you had said to me in your sister's favor, I found, at sight of her, inferior to the reality. A more striking figure I never beheld, nor certainly a more graceful one. With all the charms of innocence and sweetness, you see her heart breathing in her every gesture, every motion, every word. Her reception captivated me.

You may be sure I thanked Lady Proffer for the kind care she had taken of her in the journey, and for all her more than civilities. The grossness of that woman's fat good-humor has to me ten thousand times the merit of the delicacy of some of the quality's meager politeness.

I could

I could not get away till the evening, when Clara sent a card to Lady Harriet, to acquaint her of her arrival, and of her being at Richmond with me, where I brought her to the apartment which I have dedicated entirely to her use, and shall keep so, that it may occasionally afford her a convenient recess; and I may add, a pleasant one; as nothing can be imagined more agreeable than its situation, commanding, from the top of Richmond-hill, such a prospect as I fancy may vie with any that Greece or Italy can produce, the vales of Tempe and Arno not excluded. As there would be a kind of egotism in dwelling to you on all the satisfaction Clara expressed at taking possession of the premises, I shall lightly pass over

that circumstance, pleasing as it was to me; but still surely less so than that of finding, by the ease and freedom of her behaviour to me, that she had penetrated the dispositions of my heart towards her, and repaid me with all the overture of hers, in the spirit of congenial confidence and unreserve.

The next morning, we had not done breakfast, before Lady Harriet arrived in a coach and six, to fetch away Clara. Their interview afforded a scene of great tenderness, and mutual regard, while Lady Harriet overwhelmed her with thanks for her obliging compliance with her invitation. Not having so much as staid to take her breakfast in town, she sat down to it with us,

As

As soon as it was over, considering me as Clara's aunt, she begged it as the greatest favor, and with so good a grace that I could not well have refused her, that I would go to town with them, not only to see Clara installed in the apartment she had prepared for her, but to do her the honor of a commencement of acquaintance. In this particular, Clara's pressing joining her instances determined me, and accordingly we proceeded to town together.

But before I mention to you our reception, the concern you will naturally have to know the more essential particulars of the Lovell-family will give propriety to my prefixing sum-

marily some account of what may, perhaps, have escaped Clara's knowledge.

I had no acquaintance with the family ; but Mrs. Villaret, a worthy neighbour of mine, and a very sensible woman, is very intimate in it, and might have been more so, if her ill state of health had not greatly broke off the intercourse. She had often mentioned Lady Lovell to me, but never laid any stress on her knowledge of her, till I lately drew what information I wanted from her.

Earl Lovell dying about six years ago, left Lady Lovell with two children, a son, now Earl Lovell,
who

who is about five and twenty, and Lady Harriet, who is many years younger.

The father was not, that I could learn, ever eminent in any thing, but was contented with being one of those immemorables, or cyphers of high life, who, having no opinion of their own, go constantly with their party, right or wrong; whose names you see, indeed, in the list of the Peerage, but which are the disdain of history, and the neglect of their own times; being hardly ever known out of an obscure narrow circle of menial servants, dependents, or of the party in which they are listed, made tools of, and despised: upon the whole, personages

rather negatively good than positively bad, and irreproachable enough for any thing but insignificance, or nothingness of character.

The mother, Lady Lovell, is principally remarkable for two passions, which she carries to the greatest extremity, a pride of quality, an arrogance of state, which dishonors her understanding, c-therwise not a bad one; and a boundless fondness for her children, whom she idolises to that degree, as to have brought herself at length to believe that they are of a superior clay to the rest of mortals; mere earthen ware these, while her issue are the porcelain.

As to the son, Earl Lovell, whom by the by I have occasionally seen,
he

he is rather handsome, not ill-natured, unless in his wit, but withall the most consummate coxcomb that ever existed, and, to the shame of our sex, only the more dangerous to it for the being so. He is now actually in Ireland, settling some interests in his estate there, but is hourly expected.

Lady Harriet, as to her complexion, is to the full as fair as Clara; her features not quite so regular, though, in their assemblage, extremely graceful and engaging: she has that sort of beauty that for its not making the violentest impression at the first glance, surely revenges itself at the second, by producing a self-reproach for the injustice done it, and, upon examina-

E 5

tion,

tion, grows forcibly upon you. There is an exquisite sensibility in her looks, which, joined to her great vivacity, tempts one to conclude that there is for her no mediocrity of happiness, or of distress. She seems born for nothing but great pleasures, or great pains. As to her heart, there is but one report about it, that it is an excellent one: nor surely is it a little prejudice in her favor, that all her mother's indulgences and blind fondness have not been able to spoil her. But the secret alluded to in Harriet's letter, is the secret of the comedy, for nothing can be more public than her engagement with the Marquess of Soberton, a young nobleman of great expectation, and who
has

has a very good character, even though a nobleman. Notwithstanding this is a match entirely the result of family-interest and connexions, in which little or no courtship has passed, Lady Harriet adores him. His father being ill at the Spaw, he is gone over to him, and, on his return, the marriage is to take effect. In the mean while, if I am not much mistaken, the company of Clara is, as Lady Harriet herself says, a recourse to which she flies from the usual anxieties of a tender love, seeking the relief of confidence in the bosom of friendship.

Such is the actual situation, as near as is necessary to be known, of the Lovell-family, from which I leave you to draw

what inferences you please, and come now to our arrival at Lady Lovell's.

Prepared as I was by the knowledge of her character, it was with much ado I smothered a smile at the stateliness this Lady Dowager threw into her reception of us. There was something so quaint, so formal, and so bridling in her manner, that I really could not help pitying an otherwise good woman enough, for being so excessive ridiculous. But Clara a Parson's daughter, and I the widow of a country-Attorney, did not appear characters in life, with which a Countess was obliged to keep much measures; accordingly she treated us with a fine air of supercilious civility, every now and then checking herself,

self, as if she had been afraid of letting down her dignity by too great a condescension, and as if she aimed at giving us to understand, that we owed the supreme honor she was doing us, to her over-fondness in humoring her daughter's fancies; much in the same stile, as that of letting her have a doll, or any plaything she might cry for, in her infancy. And yet, amidst all the blindness of this absurd assumingness, I could not help thinking that our behaviour rather disconcerted her. On my side there was a coldly polite reserve, with which I received all she said, that could not but partake of my inward contempt. But as to Clara, independently of the striking impression of so uncommon a beauty as her's, she had
withal

withal so truly noble an air, a countenance so sweetly awful, that I could observe it was not, at length, without its effect on her. Lady Harriet, to her great joy, as she told me afterwards, remarked it too. Upon the whole, however, we had no great cause to complain.

Our audience of introduction to the august Lady Lovell being over, Lady Harriet carried us first to her own apartment, which was extremely neat, and afterwards to that allotted for Clara, which she had some reason to object against, for being too magnificent for that simplicity of friendship with which she wished to be treated.

After

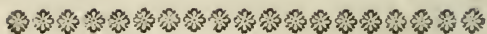
After dining together, in family, when Lady Lovell most graciously vouchsafed to descend a little more from her sublime rank, I left Clara with her friend, and returned to my own house at Richmond, where I instantly sat down to write you this, and to assure you of my being ever,

Dear nephew,

Your affectionate aunt,

LUCY BUCKLEY.

L E T.



L E T T E R IV.

CLARA MAYNWARING, *to Mrs.*
MELLEFONT.

Dear Sister, *London, Sept.*

AFTER seeing Mrs. Buckley's letter to you, I have very little material to add, except that I have all the reason in the world to be satisfied with Lady Harriet's noble and constant procedure towards me. Even Lady Lovell gives me all the marks I could reasonably desire, or expect, of her being pleased with her daughter's choice of a companion. There is, however, in me
one

one great unfitness for Lady Harriet's confidence; she is perpetually talking to me of her passion for Lord Soberton, and is amazed to find I do not enter into it with the spirit she wishes. But this does not proceed from any objection I have to her taste, for I never saw the Marquess, and have, from unprejudiced persons, heard an excellent character of him; but, from my total unacquaintance with the subject of love, consulting me upon it, is like talking to a blind man of colors. I have not any the least idea of that passion, nor desire to have it. It is not that I despise it, that I brave it, or give myself airs of defiance to it, but I heartily wish to preserve my freedom, because I find it sufficient to my happiness. The actual good
which

which I now enjoy, in a state of liberty, may be, for aught I know, incomparably less than that which there is a chance of finding in a state of love; but I should imagine a certainty of content rather preferable to a contingency of happiness: And, in the mean while, I have the same aversion for any discourse of it being addressed to me, as upon any other subject of which I am totally ignorant, and wish to remain so. Lady Harriet, in her pitying me, reminds me of what I have read, in travels, of the inhabitants of the Alps, who look down with great contempt upon such as have not their throats beautified with a wen. No matter; our disputes upon this point answer her purpose of diverting herself, as much, and perhaps more, than
the

the monotony of my agreeing with her : They serve to advance the clock, which she tediously counts till the return of the Marquess. There is, however, one point in which I am forced to be insincere with her, and that is, in suppressing a remark of Mrs. Buckley's on his Lordship's letters ; a remark which, I assure you, would have escaped my inexperience, or rather ignorance of the matter. She says, that in point of stile, wit, politeness, they are admirably well written, but that there is not the shadow of sentiment, nor a spark of love in them. I heartily hope she refines too much ; for, after all, why should not he love one of the most amiable women in the world, and by whom he is so ardently beloved, that I really believe the bare
suspi-

suspicion of its being unreturned would go near to kill her. There is nothing surely I wish less, than for her example to afford me a triumph in that cause of liberty which I am defending against her. But, not to take up sorrow at interest, let us wait events where nothing in our power can prevent them.

Yesterday Lady Harriet's brother, Lord Lovell, of whom I had often hear her speak with much affection, arrived in town, from Ireland. Mrs. Buckley was with us at tea in Lady Harriet's apartment, when he came in, and staid a good while with us. He is, I hope, worthy of so good a sister.

Mrs.

to Mrs. MELLEFONT. 93

Mrs. Buckley says she will write to you by this post, which encourages me to abridge this trouble to you.

Yours, &c.

CLARA MAYNWARING.

L E T.



L E T T E R V.

Mrs. BUCKLEY, to Mr. MELLEFONT.

Dear nephew,

Richmond.

EITHER my judgment plays me false, or the scenes to which your recommendation of Clara has introduced me, threaten to grow every instant more interesting. The regard Lady Harriet has for Clara, has led her into the most unreserved confidence in me. She takes to me the more for that disposition to sympathise with her, which she does not find in your sister, who,

who, not having seen the enemy, as I have done, can give her no account of his marches, and manner of procedure. I shall with great pleasure give up all the honor of sagacity of conjecture, if her Lord should prove as much in love as she believes him, and is undoubtedly herself. I make not the least doubt of his marrying her; that, it seems, is fixed; but to me every thing on his side has more the air of one of your common interest matches, in which Love, either on one side or the other, but ofteneft on both, takes his revenge for the not having been consulted, by refusing his sanction to the ceremony. These forebodings of mine, you may be sure, I keep from Lady Harriet. Why should I,
on

on doubts perhaps false and injurious, plant daggers in one of the worthiest hearts that ever animated a human breast? Let that then stand over.

Yesterday I was by chance witness to a not uncurious scene. We were drinking tea at Lady Harriet's, when one of the servants came in and told us Lord Lovell was coming; his mother happening to be out of the way on a visit at Kensington. We expected to see him in a travelling undress, being but a few hours arrived in town from Holyhead. But no; he was full-dressed for an assembly that evening at Lady Evergreen's, by an invitation that had met him twenty miles out of London. His sister sprung round his
neck

neck to welcome him, and presented him to Clara and me. I dare swear he took me, by my appearance, for some odd body, whom his sister had picked up he could not conceive where, and put the full equivalent of that opinion into the looks with which he accompanied his compliment to me. No wonder. I heartily forgive him; for, between you and me, in my figure and dress, I had not amiss the air of an old mantua-maker suing for custom, or of a candidate for the place of house-keeper to a city-alderman, on the recommendation of a new receipt for dressing turtle.

But when he cast his eyes on Clara, who did not, I assure you, cast her's

on him, but waited, with the utmost modesty and the sereneſt unconcern, to receive his compliment, the cavalier manner in which he had finiſhed his addreſs to me, and was beginning it to her, gave place to the hesitation of aſtoniſhment, and to the reſpectfullneſs of admiration. Preſently he recovers himſelf, and, as if he had meant to make himſelf amends for the awe with which ſhe had inſpired him, he threw himſelf into one of the arm-chairs with which the room was ſet, and, ſpreading himſelf out with the moſt eaſy familiarity, began to play off ſuch a battery of airs and graces, as, I dare ſwear, he expected would do great execution on the object, againſt which he directed them. Had you then ſeen Clara, you
could

could not but have been edified with her behaviour. Instinctively guarded by her natural good sense against all the false brilliants of coxcombry, she baulked all his barbarous attempts at shining, with a most provoking and a most unaffected inattention and neglect. Yet nothing could be more intelligibly at once expressed, than her profound respect for the brother of Lady Harriet, and her perfect carelessness about the very fine gentleman who was fluttering before her. At his first coming, he had spoken of his great hurry to go to Lady Evergreen; and yet he staid above three hours with us, without he himself, I believe, observing this inconsistency. Lady Harriet, however, seemed to enjoy it exultingly; though, in my opinion,

there was one circumstance greatly against her brother: she had often spoken of him to me, but always with infinitely more of affection than of esteem. So much is certain, that Clara, during the whole time of his visit, took so little notice of him, that I question much whether she could have told the color of his cloaths, which were, to do him justice, very magnificent, and not absolutely without taste. When it so fell in her way to speak, that silence would have appeared ill-breeding, or affectation, she acquitted herself of her part of the conversation with the utmost delicacy, and with so much liberty of spirit, that he had not any the least reason to flatter himself with his having added her to the list of his captives at first sight. I should

should be loth to risk the wager of his not being himself her's, without himself knowing it. At least there was something so modest, so disconcerted, so crest-fallen in his air, at leaving us, that might authorise such a presumption.

No sooner was he out of the room, than Lady Harriet, with great good-nature, and, I believe, great sincerity, complimented Clara on a conquest the infallibility of which she had anticipated: to this Clara returned no answer but a vague elusive one, full indeed of respect, but withall so steeped in the cold of indifference, as if the object had been of no more account than catching a fly.

In short, Clara appears to me so much more likely to be the scourge than the prey of a coxcomb, that I would, for a very small premium, insure her from the whole tribe of them.

Lady Lovel receives a great deal of company, and some of them persons of real worth. Lady Harriet, entirely taken up with the thoughts of her future Lord, sees, not only without envy, but even with pleasure, as a justification of her choice, the distinguished court paid to Clara, whom nothing but complaisance for her could induce to accompany her to their drawing-room, being naturally averse to mixed company. A multitude of lovers have
offered

offered themselves upon the most honorable terms, but Clara, who makes no violent declaration against a married life, and who, whenever the topic is brought up in a way that she cannot avoid saying something, always speaks respectfully of love, though as of a foreign power, of which she never wishes to be the subject; appears so utterly averse to any engagement, and throws so repulsive a coldness into her air, as nips in the bud any attempt at a proposal of that nature to her. Yet I do not think her insensible. On the contrary, whenever she does love, I believe it will be with such a fervor of passion, that the consciousness of her being liable to that excess, and her apprehensions of her dangers from it,

make her keep so severe a guard over her heart.

It is with great difficulty we can get her to public places, where she never appears without drawing a croud after her. But this inconvenience she is too modest to give for a reason; nor do I believe it, even at bottom, the only one. She pleads a want of relish for them, especially for their being staled to her by repetition; the best, she says, will hardly bear above once seeing, as there are few books that will bear above once reading. The seeing the company is no amusement to her, and the being seen by it no temptation to a vanity which she has not. Plays she likes for the sake of
their

their sense, and operas for the sake of their sound, being very fond of music, both in quality of judge and performer. As to cards, the reason she gives for not having learned to play any game, is, that she had no taste for them; by which she did not in the least mean to impeach the taste of others, but that having never wanted for something, in her idea, better to do or to say, she had never, for a recourse against such a heaviness of time hanging on the hands, as she had never experienced, been driven to a diversion, which, abstracted from the taint of avarice in it, seemed to her only a refuge from idle dulness into busy insipidity. She leaves, then, cards very contentedly to those who like them, without blaming,

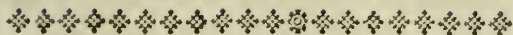
and certainly without envying them. And in these opinions she is so far from giving herself a wise sententious air, that they come from her in the stile of an apology for her singularity, and with greatly the more effect, for her so clearly possessing the rare merit of a total exemption from affectation, that tormentor of nature, that poisoner of beauty, that murderer of the graces. Having formed both her taste and her heart upon the best models, she has nothing to do but to abandon her words and gestures to the freedom of their course. Thence every thing she says or does breathes the sweets of native simplicity, and strikes with all the pathos of sentimental energy. In short, the more I study Clara, the more
I am

I am convinced of her being herself a fortune, and superior to a title, though I am very clear of two points; first, that Lady Lovell would sooner see her son married to a witch of quality, than to an angel in her rank in life; and next, that Earl Lovell is not capable of judging, or, at least, of being captivated by her virtues. She may, and I do not doubt but she already has, raised his desires, but I much question his being susceptible of love, a defect which will eternally defend Clara against any danger from him. I have entered into these particulars to satisfy you of the motives of my security about her; for had I any the least apprehensions about her, I would immediately prevail on her to

remove from Lady Lovell's; but without such a reason, it would be cruel to give Lady Harriet so great a pain, especially as the proximity of the Marquess of Soberton's arrival will naturally bring on a separation, without any violence to either.

I am yours, &c.

L E T.



L E T T E R VI.

Lord LOVELL to HENRY GOLDING,
Esq; at Chester.

London.

Dear HAL,

I Have not been above two or three days in town. But before I come to the point, which I have, at present, most at heart, let me dispatch two fools whom you laid in my way.

First, then, pray acquaint that mirror of knighthood, Sir Marmaduke Wormly, of my having, according to
promise,

promise, tried the market, as to his chance of succeeding in his offer to the ministry, of so great a bargain as himself; and that the result of my inquiry is, that whether he is inclined to put himself up at public auction, or to sell himself by private contract, he may find a purchaser to treat with him. But this cannot be so well done without a little previous personal attendance at the ministerial levee, or Statute-hall kept for hiring servants of all work; when you may tell him for his comfort, that nothing more will be required of him, than his having no character, and being qualified for no service.

By going a little out of the road, I managed so as to call at your cousin

Prim-

Primrose's, who, I hope in the Lord, is only your relation. I had alighted at an inn in his neighbourhood, and sent to know if he would receive my visit; upon which, after making me wait some little time, he came himself, dressed at all points in form like Garter King at Arms, on a day of ceremony, and received me with such convulsions of civility, that I could hardly keep from laughing out in his pretious face, that little yellow shrivelled face of his, that looked like a dried mushroom. To his house then he insisted I should go, of which, in our way to it, he gave me as magnificent a description, as if it had been the palace of a Fairy Queen, with ten thousand bed chambers, six thousand saloons, three hundred and sixty-

sixty-five court yards, besides garrets, cellars, closets, and cupboards. I could not imagine where this stupendous fabric could have modestly withdrawn from view, for it never entered into my head, that he was speaking of a huddle of spit-over hovels, clapped together to form what he termed the seat of his illustrious progenitors, which stood, or rather was falling just before us. When I found my error, I bit my lips, to keep from laughing out, as I entered this mansion of the Primroses. He carried me to his best room, where, in honor to his taste, hung half-a-dozen villainous paintings, beneath the display of signs in Harp-alley, and which he currently shewed me for so many Raphael's, Correggio's, and Dominichino's.

In

In short, I never saw a higher original except his old maiden sister, who keeps his house. I do not know whether she had any tender designs upon me, but surely a more ridiculous caricature of ugliness and affectation was never exhibited than this Caliban in petticoats. It was about breakfast time when I arrived, and after being made to wait a great while for one perishing of hunger, madam made her appearance in all her powers of dress: but what with that winter-piece, her head, hoary with age, and frosted with powder, her waincoat-face, and a white tabby gown with green sleeves and breast-knots, she reminded me of an old fashioned hall stuck with Christmas. But the infantine airs she gave herself, with
a voice

a voice as hoarse as a boat-swain's, coming from an enormous mouth, stuck with teeth, set at distances, like milestones, almost took away my stomach. After breakfast, he carried me to see his damned cabbage-garden, with his superb menagery, in which, by way of exotic curiosities, there was a mangy Irish wolf-dog, a stinking pole-cat, a sick-monkey, a lame mule, a dumb parrot, a Friezland hen dying of the pip, and two Muscovy-ducks mud-sucking in a dirty puddle, which he dignified with the name of a canal. You may easily guess how these absurdities delighted me: I verily think I should have staid to enjoy them longer, if I had not been in such a hurry to get to town. I came away, however,

however, without doing your business ; which, after all his assurances to you of getting it easily done, I soon found is no more in his power, than the crown of Poland is in mine.

I had another little affair of my own to settle at St. Alban's, where I staid about four days, and received an invitation from that eternal hag, Lady Evergreen, to her assembly, with a shrewd hint of Mrs. Marigold being to be there, the once so much admired Miss Bazin ; who, in her lust for money, sacrificed the charms of an angel to age, diseases, and impotency. She is now looking out, it seems, for a supplement to her dearee's deficiencies ; but I am not her man. To me she stinks of her husband.

As

As who the devil would not have his stomach turned, at the thought of making a meal of what lies cold and malded on such a fellow's trencher? Yet I was determined to go, by the hopes of seeing that little flirt Jenny Perks there, to whom I had done the honor of having some thoughts of her, before I was suddenly called to Ireland, and so was forced to leave the reduction of the place unfinished, though, I may venture to say, there were broad signs of a capitulation, which, I believe, will now come to nothing; for the reason you shall hear.

On coming to town, I immediately went to my own house, to dress for the assembly. I knew my mother was not
at

at home, but I proposed a visit to my singular sister, who, you know, is so far gone in the sentimental way : And whom do you think I found with her ? An old good looking sort of a decent Joan Douce, and a girl in mourning, of about fifteen. Ay ! that girl ! Hal ! that girl is, at this moment, the lady of my ascendant ; in short, I was planet-struck. But, as inflammable as I bespeak your pronouncing me, let me, at the same time, remind you of a justice due to me, that I am at least too nice of taste to be caught by a vulgar form. But this angelic creature it was impossible to see without a transport of admiration. A complexion dazzlingly fair, enlivened by the roseate color of her cheeks. Then her eyes ! — but I will not go on,
I should

I should lose myself in a description that must faint under the reality ; yet, let me add, that all the exquisite beauty of her features and shape, were nothing to the air of delicacy and of dignity which animated the whole. I gazed on her with such intense rapture, as must have put her to pain, had she minded me, but I never could once catch her eyes on me, though I did and said all I could to attract her notice. As she kept, for some time, an unbroken silence, I was in good hopes she was dumb, or an idiot, that she might have fewer arms against me. But my precious sister, with mischief, I believe, in her heart, was determined not to leave me that resource, by directing discourse to her, which could not but produce answers, and by turning those
answers

answers into matter of farther question, she succeeded so far to draw her out of covert, as made me very clear that she had a great share of wit and understanding; nor a more melodious voice did I ever hear, than that which graced her utterance, and sent every word to the heart. In the mean while, in honor to truth, I must say, that I did not, on this occasion, make the most brilliant figure: By all I could gather from her behaviour to me, she remained rather more heart-whole than myself. I could observe in her nothing towards me but the most easy unconcern, and the most chilling indifference. Patience! My day of revenge will come. Have her I will, cost what it will. For, after all, what do you think this prodigy should

should be? A poor parson's daughter, with a fortune, I suppose, of twenty pounds, from the feast, at St. Paul's, for the children of the clergy. My sister dear picked her up, I am told, at a boarding-school, and, I should imagine rather unadvisedly, keeps her for a companion: But this will be very commodious for me. Yes, yes, I fancy a small matter of courtship and a brace of thousands will do the business.

However, one sacrifice I immediately made, for on my leaving them, my proposed going to Lady Evergreen's assembly was as much out of the question with me, as the throwing myself into the river. I came home directly, and spent the remainder of the evening, and
a good

a good part of the night, in reflexions on the new conquest I was meditating, and in digesting my plan of operations against this fair enemy of my quiet. As to the issue, I do not greatly despair of it. Remember that I attack in a coronet, at the head of a good rent-roll, to say nothing of my having the authority of more than one lady, to write myself a pretty fellow. Yet, hang it, I do not know how it is, but I cannot jest with so good a grace as I wish, on this matter: I feel I am more in earnest than ever I was in my life; and, 'sdeath! why not? I never saw so fine a creature before. By all the powers of Love and Fortune, she shall be mine.

Mean while, Hal, I am terribly at a loss for you. I have fifty acquaintances that are equivalent to the town-trumpets, for joining with me to publish the success of an intrigue, but not one I can trust to for assisting me in the conducting it, in its infancy. In such matters, you are my whole privy-council: and now you are unluckily out of the way, upon a wild-goose-chase after a damned lawsuit, which I am afraid will never come to good, for your lawyer here, that was, and whom you have left for one, who flatters your inclination without regard to your interest, insists on it that you have not the shadow of right on your side. You may not perhaps, indeed, despair the more of your cause for that.

My

My next will, I hope, bring you advice of my having made some promising advances. Since I cannot have the benefit of your aid in person, I find at least some relief in this epistolary confidence, on a subject which is at present the sole business of my life. Can I live without having her in my arms whom I have eternally in my head?

Yours, &c.

LOVELL.



L E T T E R VII.

Lord LOVELL to HENRY GOLDING,
Esq;

London.

YOUR last, dear Hal, treats my present enterprize with such an air of compliment on the facility of it, as I would willingly take for a good omen, if unhappily my own experience, and, by this time, a better knowledge of the enemy, had not reduced the sanguineness of my hopes, to terms of greater moderation. Yet were you even here at
hand

hand to make your observations, I could forgive your being deceived by all the appearances of things in my favor, while I have an unpropitious presentiment that the bottom is clearly and desperately against me.

It is now near a month since I have had as free an admittance to Clara as her stay with my sister may be supposed to admit: and, to my eternal shame, I do not find myself one jot more advanced than at the first instant that my passion commenced. And yet, half this time, you well know, has heretofore sufficed for me to bring down a countess, two baronets ladies, and the daughter of a country 'squire. It would be

pleasant enough if I should lose all the honors of my generalship before a place, which one would imagine, at the first view, very slightly fortified: no dragons of relations, no jealous guardians of a great fortune, to take alarm at the approaches of an invader. Lady Harriet, who would not, so much I know of her, for worlds, contribute to the promotion of any designs, which would not be strictly agreeable to her principles of prudery, and who, I believe, rather entertains, with regard to Clara, the most absurd and chimerical of all hopes, that of my having designs of a more serious nature on her; a thought for which Lady Lovell would not very readily forgive her, if she but suspected it; Lady Harriet, I say, provokes

vokes me horridly with that perfect security and insolent unconcern, with which she abandons her friend, as she calls her, to the worst of my designs. But, what is yet more unpropitious for me, Clara's conduct towards me justifies but too much this confidence. She does not seem to do me the honor of fearing me. She neither shuns me, nor throws herself in my way; and without ever seeking occasions to speak to me, when she does, it is always with such an air of unconstraint, such an intrepid affability, as disconcerts me a thousand times more than shyness, or reserve. In short, she leaves to the most frozen, and the most constant indifference, the care to tell me on what terms I stand with her. It is true, she

shows me abundance of respect, if that would satisfy me; but the vexation of it is, that this respect is much of the nature of that which she pays to Lady Lovell; that leads to no other consequence, than if I was her grandmother. You may guess how encouraging this is for me to enter on a declaration of love. I have tried often with her the old trick of taking circuits in conversation, to make it land at length on that subject, with a view to some overture of my passion. But of this she has constantly disappointed me, without any affectation of eluding my design, only by such a silence as it might be supposed she would keep on a question of geometry or algebra being started before her. She is at no pains to shift the discourse, for she

she takes no part in it ; and lets it fall to the ground, without so much as a motion to take it up.

I happened one day, just as my sister was gone out of the room, and she was following her, to desire her, with a beseeching look, to stay, as if I had something very extraordinary to communicate to her, which, by the way, was the case ; for I had really armed myself with resolution to break the ice, so far as a declaration may be called breaking it. On this intimation, she turned short upon me, with a look of emphatic severity ; and, making a low curtesy, asked me if I had any commands for her ; and without waiting for my answer, which she left sticking in

my throat, went out abruptly after Harriet. Nothing in the world could be so contrary to her usual politeness, and therefore I have some reason to think she had penetrated my design, and, preventively of it, did herself this violence.

Among my dispositions to attack, it will be easy for you to think that I did not omit the old and so often successful one, of presents; but as I had reason to think she would not accept any that were crudely offered to herself, I contrived, without affectation, an opportunity of presenting Lady Harriet with some very rich jewels; of which, at the same time, I made it rather a point of breeding, than of gallantry,

lantry, to intreat of Clara her acceptance of duplicates of them, which I had prepared for that purpose. But even that scheme would not take; she refused them with the most polite and the most cold thankfulness; and with no other excuse, than that wanting nothing, she would receive nothing. Lady Harriet only shook her head, and said, "Poor brother!" and very currently took her share of the intended presents, but sent them back to me the next morning, with an ironical sneer, that she could not in conscience keep them, as my design in my generosity had so lamentably miscarried. I made, however, so seriously a point of her receiving them again, that, though with great reluctance, and for fear of an ab-

solute quarrel with me, she consented; but, in revenge, she mischievously thanked Clara for them, as it was to her, she said, she owed them.

Such an incident would, with most women, have at least done me no disservice, but Clara breaks all my rules of judgment of the sex. I could, since that time, feel, in her behaviour to me, rather an increase of a coldness, which was, in all conscience, great enough before.

You know the impetuosity of my temper, and that to me, who am accustomed to summary proceedings, and to surrenders at the first summons, even a delay must appear a denial of justice

to me. My impatience then is put to a terrible trial, by so new and unaccountable a situation, that in all this time I have not been able to get so far as the initial step of a declaration. At this rate, a man should have a patriarchal length of life, to undertake an amour. By the time it would take me to reduce the place, I should be too old to enjoy my victory.

I suppose I might come to my point instantly, if I could but prevail on myself to make honorable proposals, but that I am not yet so far gone as to think of doing, even if Lady Lovell would give her consent, to which, I am very certain, no earthly consideration could bring her.

As

As much as she doats on me, and as ready as she would be to sacrifice any point of interest to me, she is so stark quality-mad, that my marrying any woman not of a titled family would go near to kill her. In this, her presumable opposition to my playing the fool, and marrying, forsooth, for love, turns upon a very different objection from mine. I am not the bubble of any such nonsense. Between you and me, and not to let it go any farther, I would at any time prefer the four quarters of pure flesh and blood, of the humblest cottager, if she was but handsome, to the sixteen quarters of descent of a Princess that was not so. Even interest or fortune do not move me much. But
the

the truth is, that with the utmost passion for the sex, I have an invincible aversion against matrimony; not from any great dread of an abridgment of liberty; for, I promise you, I should make the yoke fit as easy on me as an old slipper. And, indeed, to do justice to our times, the nuptial ceremony often separates more than it unites many a woeful pair, by driving them more than ever into society, as a refuge from one another.

To me the great plague of a wedded life is, that it sets such a damned sheep-mark upon a man, as is very unfavorable to my darling passion for variety. Every woman almost

almost to whom you make your addresses, from the fine lady to the pert chambermaid, sends you, with a smart rebuff, back to your wife, or flaps you in the face with the wrong you are doing to your sweet lady, your good lady, so that in pity to her, they pique themselves on being cruel to you. Not that there are not to be found such as will make no objection to you on that account, but then they must be either downright mean mercenary creatures, or some frightful stale women of quality, with whom one would not wish to avail oneself of their noble superiority to a vulgar prejudice.

The married men too, themselves, have, in general, among the women,
a sort

a sort of foolish insipid air, as if conscious of having forfeited that title to the universal joy, which is currently allowed to such honest fellows as we that have grace enough to preserve our liberty. Even the women of honor receive us more cordially, and look with a better eye on us, the pandours and huffars of gallantry, than on the regulars of wedlock, to whom they suppose themselves more indifferent than to us, who are known to be prowling about for plunder. For tho' a woman may be determined enough against making a slip, she may nevertheless prefer those, as affording her the greater matter of merit, with whom she would be the freest to make the slip.

In

In short, dear Hal, I cannot surmount my antipathy for the connubial state; but could I even be so abandoned by my better genius, as, in a rutting-fit to rush upon matrimony, like Lord Pepperall, reeking from the stews, I do not know one in the world with whom I could sooner commit such a folly than with Clara.

Yet how to get her on my own terms, “aye, that is the question?” Her uniform simplicity of principle confounds all the turnings and windings of art; and the worst of it is, I see no glimpse of hope of her departure from that resolute evenness, that calm steddiness, which one may
plainly

plainly see in her, has even more foundation in character than in education.

With your noble way of thinking you will probably wonder that I have not recourse to some stratagem, or even violence, to get her person into my possession, and so take the shortest way with my fair diffenter. But those schemes of rapes, or running away with women, are, in the first place, what I have always detested and despised: besides, they rarely or ever answer the end, and, in this country especially, are next to impracticable. But as to Clara, for many reasons that I could give you, the probability of succeeding in such an attempt would hardly be less than that of a Sallee rover's cruizing

cruizing above bridge, and making prize of a Thames-wherry carrying a company to Vauxhall.

I could, however, as soon think of parting with life, as of giving over my pursuit: it is not even in my power, she so engrosses my whole soul. She is the center of all my wishes. In short, I propose to leave nothing unattempted that can give me a chance of succeeding with her (take me right) in my own way.

There is a certain Mrs. Buckley who appears to me a devilish shrewd, sensible woman, and not in very affluent circumstances. She is a kind of aunt or relation, by marriage, to Clara, and possesses,

esses, as I have reason to think, her confidence, without reserve. Now it is not impossible but she may be the weak side of this apparently inexpugnable place; at least, it is worth trying: When, if I do not carry my point with her, I have one grand battery in reserve, that I think can hardly fail; but that is a thought I hoard up like old gold, not to be brought out but as my last stake. In the mean while, I almost envy the happiness of those humdrums who are proof against the charms of variety: If they have fewer pleasures, they have also fewer pains. You see how I am served by my taste for it: After having dragged me from change to change, it has brought me, at length, to my present distracted state; between
a vio-

a violent passion for enjoyment, and a resolution not to obtain it on the only terms I am afraid it is to be obtained, and which, to increase my perplexity, I see others ready to offer, whose pretensions to title and fortune are very little inferior to mine. Hitherto I have only this comfort, that to my rivals she keeps unalteredly the same tenor of coolness, reserve, and discouragement, as to me. But then I tremble to think of the advantage their honorable designs, forsooth! give them over me, especially with a girl of so moderate a fortune.

That pale, bloodless fribble, Lord Phillimore, with a very good estate, has not only to herself made proposals
of

of marriage, with a jointure at her own discretion, but has got Lady Lovell to interest herself in his behalf, who was surpris'd enough at the offer, but stood petrified with astonishment at Clara's modest but firm rejection of it. Nor is this the only one, whom that matchless girl has treated so, without giving them any cause of offence in the manner of her refusal, and especially without herself appearing the vainer.

Mean while all these distinctions shown to Clara, begin to give Lady Lovell some uneasiness for me, by lessening to her ideas that impossibility she had always presumed of my demeaning myself, as she would certainly call it, in having any serious thoughts of one so
much

much below me, as a poor parson's daughter. This, however, is a folly which I forgive in my good lady-mother, in favor of the double use I may possibly make of it, towards accomplishing my ends on Clara, and myself at the same time escaping the horrors of the nuptial chains. Good luck to the fish who runs away with the bait without being itself caught by the hook!

Adieu! dear Hal, wish me death or speedy victory.

Yours, &c.

L O V E L L.

L E T-



L E T T E R VIII.

Mrs. BUCKLEY to Mr. MELLEFONT.

Dear Nephew,

Richmond.

YOUR letters* gave me great pleasure in the satisfaction they express at Clara's conduct, and at the constant eye I have to every thing that concerns her. I saw the last letter she wrote you, as indeed she has no reserves for me, and could not help remarking, that she

* Some letters, the receipt of which is mentioned in the course of these Memoirs, and which are immaterial to the story, are omitted.

defrauded you of a great deal of the pleasure to find her so worthy of your good opinion, by that indifference with which she slips over, without insistence on points that most of our sex would treat as the greatest matter of boast, the number and quality of the lovers who have presented themselves, and whose suit she has eluded, without giving herself the air of eluding them.

She has not, I find, so much as mentioned to you Lord Lovell among her admirers, and that for a reason which I fancy would rather gall his lordship, if he knew it; but, on this occasion, his vanity remains, like a blinded husband, unhurt by offences of which he is ignorant.

For

For those of her suitors, who have accompanied their declarations of love with such honorable proposals as took away from her all right of complaining, she has, I am persuaded, all that regard, and even gratitude, that they could desire, consistent with her firm resolution not to give her hand without her heart, which I am pretty sure is hitherto totally free. But as to Lord Lovell, I could almost swear she never threw away a thought upon him. In quality of brother to Lady Harriet, for whom she has a boundless regard, he commands and obtains her utmost respect: But for any thing farther, I am very perfectly clear, there is not that man

on earth that is more indifferent to her.

Nor can I say I much condemn her. He is one of Fortune's spoilt children, his education having been like that of too many of our nobility, principally committed to a tutor, who, not having in himself a spark of elevation of sentiment, could hardly communicate it to his pupil.

His travels, which, in the old rote, were merely matter of fashion, had been little better than a silly, unmeaning scamper over Europe, in the course of which he had exposed some of the follies of his own country, and brought back with him many of those of foreign ones.

Super-

Superficial observations on things themselves beneath attention, the fopperies of courts, the childish play at soldiers, in military raree-shews, or theatrical camps, with a list of the names of the most celebrated singers and fiddlers of Italy, and a vile jargon of the technical terms of painting ill-understood, and consequently for ever mis-applied, composed the whole stock of improvement, which, at his return, made him appear to his lady-mother such a prodigy as princesses might kneel to, and kneel in vain.

To finish him, he fell into the rank with the rest of his fellow-lordlings, and went soufe into all the miseries which they have the impudence, or the

tastelessness, to call high-life; the noble sphere of which consists in selling themselves and their country, like negroes, to some minister as worthless as themselves; in cheating, or being cheated, at the gaming-table, or on the turf; in being lived on by their flatterers, poisoned by their cooks, and cullied by drabs whom their footmen might disdain. Not that, at bottom, Lord Lovell had not, with some wit, more hopeful dispositions, but he was weak enough to be subdued by the instinct of imitation, so as to be drawn into the whirl of the current follies, and became good for nothing by the force of example. Nothing, however, more common than that flimsy pliancy, that imbecillity of character, which renders

so

so many the victims of a false shame. They dare not break herd, afraid of the ridicule of idiots for not resembling them, a resemblance which one would imagine no great temptation. Is not this much such an absurdity, as it would be for a man in health, thrown by chance into a lazaretto of lepers, to dread their derision for not catching the infection, and for not having the honor to be covered like them with livid spots and loathsome ulcers?

Thence it is, in a great measure, that in conformity to the epidemical rottenness of the times, Lord Lovell, without the spirit to raise himself above them, without regard for the welfare of his country, which might

go to the devil for what he cares, without any passion for true honor, without so much as an idea of that heroic ardor which characterizes great men, is silly enough to forgive himself the wretched use he makes of such great advantages, as birth, title, and fortune, and withall humble enough to sit down, like so many others, ignobly in contented worthlessness, and under the just reproach of having necessarily recourse to trifles from a want of relish or capacity for great affairs. Alas! take from them their follies, their frivolous amusements, what would you leave them? how would you fill up the terrible gap you would have made? Nature is said to abhor a vacuum: if their minds are over-run with the vilest

vilest weeds, is it not because their minds are not a soil for great sentiments to grow or take root in? It is not that all, or even many of them, are ignorant of their duty, but they have a want of manly enough firmness in their character to pursue it: they know, perhaps, the value of all the virtues, without its being in their power to practice them; as a man may know well enough the value of a thousand guineas, who cannot command a shilling.

Lord Lovell, it is true, sometimes pays to vanity the tribute of attempting to gain importance, by rising up to speak in the house; but how he must acquit himself you will

easily conclude, from the following reflexion, obvious to common sense, and applicable to numbers of his rank.

Let the frivolous object of pursuit, or fancy, of the generality of our lords or men of fortune, be what it will, horse-racing let me specify, for example, you will find, that after making it the business of their little lives, to pass for great men in it, when they come to take it for their topic of conversation, all consummately familiar as one would imagine it to them, they speak upon it in bad language, and with worse judgment, even pitifully enough to be laughed at by their teachers, the horse-jockeys, riding-grooms, helpers, and boot-catchers.

catchers. Now if these great-men make so miserable a figure on those frivolous and favorite points, which they have studied for years, and which are hardly above the lowest capacity, what can be expected from them on those great objects, the affairs of the of the nation, foreign and domestic, which they never studied at all, and which, if they did, would more than probably be above their comprehension?

In the mean while, even their herding instinct is owing to their being necessary to one another. Uneasy in company where they could not help feeling disagreeably their inferiority, they seek for the mean despicable ease

and relief to their vanity, in associating with such as they cannot suspect of giving them that pain. They live together, as women visit, without a spark of friendship ; they meet without esteem, and part without regret. Pleasure they worship as their idol, without one just idea of what it is, and ruinously sacrificing to it health, fortune, and fair fame, fall themselves the victims of an unknown God. Taste, you will say, is arbitrary, and that the pleasure of the plough boy, who wished to be a king, that he might ride upon a gate all day long, was as essentially pleasure to him, as carrying a point against the country might be to a monarch, silly enough to have a separate interest from it. True. But then the boy has not the
absurd

absurd impudence of demanding respect for his choice. I have no objection to a man's rolling himself in a kennel; but I should wish he would not recommend it to me for a delicious bath. Then the mischief these men of power and fashion do by diffusing their false taste, and making it the common nonsense of a nation, is really no laughing matter, nor indeed a very triumphable success even for themselves. In extirpating all the virtues which make society happy, such as friendship, moral-love, generosity, and love of country, to make way for all the mean destructive vices, selfishness, debauchery, avarice, corruption, these leaders of the multitude appear to me to act just as wisely as the possessor of
a garden,

a garden, stored with salutary delicious fruit, would do, who should pull up all the trees that bore it, and fill his ground in their stead with a shrubbery of dangerous plants and noxious weeds, poppies, bang, hemlock, night-shade, and the poisons of Marmol.

The times then had, no doubt, their share in forming Lord Lovell's character. Among other choice instances of the humor and pleasantry in vogue, that of bantering is in high favor with Lord Lovell, who thinks it great wit to make a common practice of it. It is something in the low stile of your old college-wit of bamboozling, which being at length exploded at the University, is come to make its fortune
in

in town. The great joke is for one of these wits to deceive, and laugh at you for your not thinking him a knave or a liar. Somewhat in this way, Lord Lovell will take hold of the hand of any man, especially of talents or of worth, who has been unfortunate enough to address himself to him for a favor, and tell him, with a tone of the greatest fervor and sincerity, that “he wonders such eminent parts
“ can be slighted—that the state suf-
“ fers by not seeking out for such men,
“ and employing them—that for his
“ part, he is sorry for nothing so much
“ as its not being in his power to do
“ the justice he wished to such trans-
“ cendent merit.” — The poor man, who is the butt of this barbarous at-
tempt

tempt at wit and humor, greedily devours this mockery, and does not see that my lord is enjoying his mistake, and exposing him to by-standers, by winking with one eye, and tonguing out his cheek. Among others, he served your friend Dr. Morell so, who observed it, and told me, he was horribly tempted to spit in his face.

He gives himself another air, which I own pleases me extremely, and that is, the declaration of an outrageous aversion against matrimony. For this I would even greatly honor him, if it proceeded from a principle of justice to himself, and of kindness to our sex, in an unwillingness to make any woman of merit so miserable, as a match with
him

him could hardly fail of doing. But, no! the reason, according to him, of his detestation of the nuptial tie, is, that the name of a wife would be a dreadful stumbling-block to him in his career of gallantry: and yet, if all his conquests are as untriumphable ones as those I have heard of, I should think he gives matrimony its full revenge for his railing against it. These I mean are the stale battered Countesses of Flauntantribus, of whom half the town had been sick these ten years; two baronets ladies, the one parted from her husband for being caught a-bed with his footman; the other, far from handsome, and a born idiot; and a country-squire's daughter, who had some time before come up to town

to

to lie in of a bastard she had by a strolling player, with whom she fell in love on seeing him massacre the part of Tamerlane in a barn.

Peace be to his Lordship, with all his equipage of conquests at his heels; but, without fee or reward, I could let him into the secret of the true reason, at bottom, of his indisposition to matrimony; a reason which, probably, he neither knows nor suspects; and that is, his moral incapacity for love. That passion, without being a ridiculous Platonism, which never existed but in the fancy-ridden head of some philosopher, who having more imagination than judgment, left Nature out of the question, in her favorite object of attention:

tion : that passion, I say, for ever, tacitly or expressly, includes a proposal of its duration and constancy to the object of it, and thus combines desire with the sentiment that sanctifies it. And this is so far from being an over-strained or metaphysical notion, that it stands instinctively the common sense of mankind, where undepraved by false refinements, or superior to the being driven, like mere brutes, by the sensual goad. To go no farther than our own country ; you see not only in the rural sphere of life, where innocence of manners most flourishes, but even amidst all the dissoluteness of towns, the honest mechanic, the industrious tradesman, the generality, in short, of the people, hold it for a principle, to
found

found their prospect of domestic happiness on this very combination of a passion for the enjoyment of the woman they like, with a wish of its settled permanency in a legal union. And this simplicity of view, which is, in fact, an instinct of Nature, may, in all ranks of mankind, from the King to the Shepherd, with perhaps different degrees of warmth and of delicacy, justly be called LOVE: A name, of which it is a prostitution to give it to matches of mere convenience of families, of sordid interest, or of a brutal appetite that looks no farther than a momentary gratification. In this, dear nephew, you are very sensible that I am launching out into no visionary ideas; you are, happily, yourself an instance
of

of their being practically true. You, who furnish, in your own procedure, an edifying example of the permanent bliss to be found in moral love, a love approved by God and Man. But, to be qualified for such happiness, it is indispensably requisite to have a heart; now that is what Nature has refused to too many human creatures. And surely a man without a heart, is absolutely, and in the worst sense, as disqualified for the greatest and most exquisite pleasures of love, as the guardians of a seraglio. Is not, to a true taste, impotency of spirit less eligible than impotency of body? Or does enjoyment, without love, deserve the name of enjoyment? In this light, which I defy any one justly to call a false one, how
much

much would so many of our miserable men of wit and pleasure, about town, have to discount of their boasts of having had a number of women as worthless as themselves? In this light, I do not at all wonder at Lord Lovell's disinclination to a state, for which he wants the most essential qualification, that of the heart: an incurable defect, for which I should think it as great cruelty to blame, or rather not to pity him, as it would be to laugh at or refuse compassion to a man born blind, for his want of sight. Beauty may give Lord Lovell desires, because he has eyes; but never love, because he has no heart: he may possibly know the gross pleasures of sensation; but never the voluptuous raptures of sentiment:

by

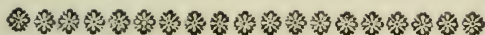
by nature disinherited of the most exalted bliss that it is in her power to confer, he stands for ever condemned to a volubility of desire, like Sisyphus, from the bottom of a hill to roll a stone, that never reaching or remaining on the summit, but perpetually recoiling upon him, subjects him to an eternal fatigue in vain. He is bound never to rise beyond the animal gratification of an appetite, as distinct from the noble passion of love as vice is from virtue: an appetite that has no consistence: while inconstancy, produced by disgust, and by the weakness of a soul incapable of attaching itself to a worthy object, makes him the bubble of a sickly fancy roving from mistress to mistress, always courting pleasure,
and

and never catching it, or at best a phantom in its stead.

Carried away by the subject, I was going on, when a casual cast of my eye, on the tremendous length of the preceding scrawl, admonished me to conclude for the present; with reserve to give you, by the next post, the remainder of what I have to say, where you will abundantly see the reason of this preamble relative to Lord Lovell. In the meanwhile, I am ever yours, &c.

LUCY BUCKLEY.

L E T.



L E T T E R IX.

Mrs. BUCKLEY to Mr. MELLEFONT:

Dear Nephew,

Richmond.

RESUMING the subject of my last, I proceed in the account I have to give you of Lord Lovell, by way of necessary introduction.

As if every thing had conspired to give his head a cast more wrong than perhaps nature meant it should have, his evil genius betrayed him into the ac-

quaintance of one Golding, whom he picked up on the turf at Newmarket, and whom he took afterwards for his companion and confident ; one who is infinitely worse than a scoundrel erected into a gentleman, being a gentleman sunk into a scoundrel. Nor will you think the term too harsh, after the fact I have to relate to you, which characterises strongly this honorable friend and associate of the right honorable Lord Lovell.

A little before I went to Cornwall, I had employed as a milliner one Mrs. Maberley, a decent, sober, industrious woman. She had often sent home to me the little articles of her business by one of her journey-women, a girl of
about

about seventeen, but one of the prettiest creatures you can imagine, breathing the sweets of innocence and youth, and withall so well-behaved, so sensible, that I could not help taking particular notice of her. Some years afterwards, when I returned to town, I let Mrs. Maberley have my custom again, and took occasion to inquire what was become of her pretty journey-woman. Her answer was, that she was a good-for-nothing hussy, who had been drawn aside by a vile fellow, one Golding, who had debauched and left her. This, I have since found, was the identical Golding, in such high favor with Lord Lovell. At that time I thought no more of the girl, and was only sorry that one, who had appeared to me to

deserve a better fate, had not escaped a shipwreck only too common to afford much surprize. A few days afterwards, in a retired part of Hyde-park, who should I meet with there but this young woman, dressed with great neatness and simplicity, with her child by that fellow, to whom she was procuring the benefit of a walk and the air? At seeing me so unexpectedly, she would have modestly declined any notice from me, and, for that purpose, turned her head aside, and was passing on. I made up to her with all the encouragment I could throw into my looks and address, and with really more of tender concern, than of an impertinent curiosity, drew her story from her, which, on farther enquiry, I found to be exactly true,

true, except that, in her diffidence and modesty, she had done herself less than justice in certain particulars.

Golding had, it seems, taken the advantage of her youth and inexperience to seduce her to his ends, by all the usual artifices employed on those occasions. By this means she soon lost her bread and service at Mrs. Mabblerley's, and being with child by him, underwent such a series of base, cruel treatment, as ended, at last, in a total desertion of her and of her infant, whom he abandoned to all the miseries of indigence, and to worse yet, to all the temptations, with her youth and figure, to rescue herself from the oppressions of actual want, by the horrors of prostitution.

titution. These temptations she had the virtue to withstand; and after a train of sufferings, and severe trials of her constancy to her plan of a conduct that shewed how little she had deserved her first fall, especially with such a monster, she arrived, by industry at her needle, and by frugality of living, at a situation just easy enough for the maintenance of herself and daughter, to whom she behaved with excessive tenderness, as if she thought it incumbent on her to make her amends for the neglect of the unnatural father. Straight as her circumstances were, she denied herself almost necessaries of life to give her child the best education she could. But what greatly charmed me in her was, the gentleness, the freedom
from

from all acrimony, with which she mentioned the wretch to whom she owed her ruin, and for whom she had suffered so many hardships, imbittered too by the reflexion, that it was through his baseness that she suffered them. All her resentment was levelled against herself, whom she allows to have been justly punished for her fault, though she might think it hard, that her chastisement should come from him, with such atrocious circumstances. I have reason to believe she sincerely detests any thought of renewing with him, and happily now she owes to her good sense, and to the merit of a long tried conduct, a condition that sets her above any excuse of bad circumstances, to wish the resumption of any connexion

with a wretch for whom her love must have been long obliterated by the justest contempt.

This, however, is the pretious wight on whom Lord Lovell has so judiciously pitched for his confidential hanger-on, and of whose meanness in playing that part, it is not a little aggravation that he is not driven to it by want. He has some fortune, though perhaps insufficient to his extravagances, to which his lordship's rewards for his service to him in his vices and follies, may be no unwelcome supply. I never saw him, but your acquaintance Mr. Sutton, who, by the bye, carries on his business with great success and reputation of probity, had a law-suit under his management,

certain

certain incidents in the course of which gave him a thorough insight into his character. You may, perhaps, imagine, that Golding must have at least some talent, some accomplishment, some favorable distinction, to recommend him to his lordship's countenance and intimacy. Nothing can be less the case. From a concern for a person so nearly related to Lady Harriet, whom I sovereignly love and esteem, I suffered myself to be told the character of one who has such an influence over her brother. With a soul of an ether, coarse enough to have been made out of the damps of a coal-mine, his whole flow of wit, humor, and pleasantry, springs out of the kennels and sinks of Covent-garden, in a course through

brothels, taverns, and night-houses, of which it has gathered all the loathsome filth and offensiveness. Vulgar and illiterate to the last degree, there would be no conceiving how he could have gained the confidence of Lord Lovell, who is, himself, not absolutely without wit, but for his eternal applause and assent to every thing he says or does; for the wretch is so determinate a flatterer, that he would reprove the arrantest miser for being too extravagant, and the most abandoned spendthrift for being too strict an economist; add to this, a constant readiness without reserve, to perform any dirty offices on which his patron may put him. In return for which, his lordship most heartily despises him, and is governed
by

by him, without so much as suspecting that it is he himself who is that low fellow's led-captain, and not that low fellow his.

Nor are you to think this strange. Nothing is at present so common. It is even the general rule, for men of fortune and rank, to give their confidence to such as they neither love nor esteem, nay ofteneft, to such as they contemn, who generally return them the compliment, and, *in petto*, repay them in kind. In proof of this littleness in our pretious Great, take a list of them, I mean of those in the highest class of life, for title, opulence, and power, and, on the fairest examination, you will find that by much the

I 6

greatest

greatest part of them, are respectively governed by some little obscure wretch, who creeps about them, fawns upon, and flatters them in all their littleneffes, follies, and vices: most commonly too he is the most palpably worthless of the whole herd of dependents, who are but the less jealous of him for his being so, nothing alarming the whole camp of them more, than the rare case of their master's shewing any favor or distinction to a man with whose merit their want of it must stand in the light of a disadvantageous comparison. There is nothing they dread so much, as the danger to them of their patron's favor getting into a channel different from that to which they owe that countenance to them, which is so much to
his

his dishonor and to his prejudice. For you need scarce look any further, for the cause of that ignoble, trifling, unessential figure, the generality of our great people make, than their meanness of taste and spirit in not disdaining to be the centers each of a little dirty sphere of servile dependents, and nauseous flatterers, who must be so far from making great a man intrinsically little, that they must make a real great man appear little, if it could be supposed that such a character could make such a choice.

I have known too some half-wits as fond of having a led-dunce as some ordinary women constantly take some
fright

fright abroad with them, as a foil for the benefit of the comparison.

I have dwelt the longer on this reflexion, rather digressive, I confess, first because this epidemical weakness of the men, who have the lead in this country, must naturally influence the conduct of public affairs, and then because I really wish to extenuate Lord Lovell's folly, by shewing it to be partly the fault of his times, from the contagion of example. A candor in me, to which you will think him less intitled from my justice than from my contempt; when I shall have acquainted you with an incident, which alone might defend this long preamble about him from a charge of impertinence.

The

The other day, about noon, who should come to my door in a post-chaise, and alone, but Lord Lovell? This was an honor I had no room to expect, from the respectful and cold distance I had always kept him at, notwithstanding plain enough advances occasionally made me on his side towards nearer acquaintance: advances, of which I had no reason to be extremely vain, considering their motive.

You may remember that I had very early observed his Lordship's being smitten with Clara, about which I was under no sort of apprehension. I knew him susceptible only of that kind of passion against which she was more strongly

strongly guarded by principle, than even by the fear of a danger which was not a whit the greater to her, for her thorough contempt of it. Lord Lovell, finding in her conduct towards him something so repulsive and discouraging as to give very little overture for any hope of succeeding easily in any designs of the nature of those he was entertaining thoughts of upon her, did me, I suppose, the honor of casting his eyes on me, as a relation that might be of some convenience to him, in the pursuit of his ends, from the influence he judged I had on her, by the great respect and confidence with which that amiable girl has constantly treated me. Of my situation in life, my figure was not at all calculated to give him a very
brilliant

brilliant idea. My being always in one gown, and that a stuff one, with every other article of dress uniformly in that stile, would at most, to a man of fashion, that is to say, to a man governed by appearances, suffer me to pass for a decayed gentlewoman on the charitable list.

Lady Harriet, so far from undeceiving him, used to enjoy his mistake. He had precluded himself from any participation of her's to him, even of the commonest occurrences of life, by constantly looking down upon her from the stupendous height of his own excellence, and superciliously treating her as an odd, insignificant girl, though she has ten times his sense, without one of his defects.

fects. She had often, with a smothered smile, heard him tell me to my face, with a fine emphatic tone, as if he was overwhelming me with honor, that he really took me for a mighty decent good sort of a woman.

Heaven help his head! It was not for one of his turn to discover in that "good sort of a woman," one who at one time, and before she was led to a just estimate of things by a husband, fortunately for her, a man of sense, had lived not lower than on a line with persons of the first distinction of the kingdom; to which I can safely add, that it was the very dullest part of my life; nothing being more certain, than that among those of his rank I observed the
least

least room for improvement, the falsest and most futile prejudices, the greatest vacuity of taste; a system, in short, only fit to set the head wrong, and to contract the heart. The only acquisition I have to boast of among them, was that of a most meritorious contempt for them, on a thorough knowledge of them. Judge then, dear nephew, whether I made a sacrifice that cost me much reluctance, when entering, on the conviction of my own experience, into Mr. Buckley's ideas, I escaped from those scenes of tasteless enjoyment and ridiculous vanity, into the snug of life, where, in the bosom of ease, tranquillity, and improvement, under the direction of one of the best of husbands,

I passed

I passed the most delicious moments of my existence.

But I ask pardon while I dwell on this preliminary, I leave his most serene Lordship too long at my door : Let me introduce him into my parlour, where I was sitting mobbed up, with a flannel pinned under my chin, for a violent tooth-ach, which did not, I suppose, extremely add to the awfulness of my figure, which was, at best, that of an old Fortune-teller. Neither could the appearance of my house, very small, though neat, and chosen by me purely for its situation, combined with the furniture of the room in which I received him, the whole of which could not, at a fair appraisement, amount to much above fifty shillings,

help

help to give him other ideas than those he had brought with him, of that mediocrity of my circumstances which he was come most nobly prepared to insult, and to turn to the account of his villainous purposes.

After the usual salutations, and some silly enough humming and hawing, he began :

“ Why, you have got here a good
“ pretty kind of a habitation — Let
“ me see; the rent cannot, I should
“ think, be very high. Indeed, the
“ situation is something. Upon my
“ word, Mrs. Buckley, a woman of
“ your merit ought to have greater
“ matters

“ matters done for her. I have always
 “ thought you a very valuable person.”

To this, and much of the like, no answer from me, except, now-and-then, “ I thank your Lordship—You are
 “ very good—To be sure the times are
 “ rather hard”—And all this with such a profound air of, yes and please you, to every thing he said, as helped to draw him finely out to the point at which I wanted him, an explanation of the motive of this visit. This was strictly poetical justice; a banter of him in his own way.

Not to waste paper and time, I shall only give you a summary view of his business with me.

He

He had long entertained very serious thoughts of my niece, (as he called her, from his having heard her give me the appellation of aunt,) and had nothing but honorable intentions towards her. (In which I have pregnant reason to think he lied.) That his mother's oddity of temper could not be unknown to me, the measures he was obliged to keep with which were the only cause that he did not make his declaration more public—That being but too sure that he could never obtain her consent to a match, in her way of thinking, so disproportionate, he could not well venture to disoblige her, as she had still a great deal in her power. (This is true.) That, in the mean while, he
was

was dying of ardor and impatience for obtaining the possession of Clara, whom he would in all respects consider and treat as his lawful wife; and as an earnest of his honorable intentions, would immediately settle six hundred a year upon her for life: that he was afraid it would not be easy, indeed, for him to bring her to acquiesce in such an arrangement, which he proposed should last no longer than till the benefit of time and events should put it into his power to prove the legitimacy of his passion: that, for my part, he should not, as an acknowledgment for any good offices I might do him on this occasion, scruple a thousand pounds, which were ready at my service as barely a retaining fee.

Observe,

Observe, that I abstract to you the substance of his proposal, but spare you the preambles and circuit of words which he employed to gild the pill to me.

The truth is, that, at first, I did not conceive his drift. I imagined he was aiming at somewhat in the nature of a clandestine marriage, which, however undoubtedly unacceptable, would not, at least, have been so gross an affront. It was then, without design, on my part, and purely in a spirit of explanation, that, by dint of doubts and leading questions, into which I took special care to throw no discouragement that might have shut him up to me, I came at length, to an af-

certainment of his meaning, which was, that all his honorable proposals were reducible to the terms of Clara's being his mistress, upon honor, and I his procureess, for hire.

You cannot conceive how much the impudence and absurdity of this overture diverted me. My sense of it was absolutely nearer to pity than to resentment. But I took care not to die in his lordship's debt.

Composing then my countenance to the highest expression I could throw into it, of mock-gratitude and ironical submission, I made his lordship a curtesy down to the ground, and told him, that I considered myself as under
an

an immortal obligation to him for his charitable intentions, in singling me out for his service on so delicate a commission—That I should immediately enter upon it by acquainting Lady Harriet, and especially Clara and her friends, with the generosity of his flame, and the purity of his designs: that I made no doubt of Clara's jumping at the offer, and of her impatience to qualify herself for touching the first quarter of her honorable pension; but that as he was so pretty a man, I should think her unconscionable if she did not take that into the account, and afford him a cheaper bargain: that for my part, I would so far set her a good example, that I would give up the brokerage he was pleased to offer me; nay, that

if his lordship wanted a couple of thousand pounds, if he would send his steward to treat with me, I was ready to lend it him at three and a half per cent.

You are sensible, dear nephew, there was no gasconade in this proffer. I have a much larger sum by me, which I hardly know where to place out. My passion for that simplicity which I consider as the standard of taste, and the true sublime of life, brings with it a saving, for which I should have the greatest contempt, was the œconomy I observe to spring from any thing so sordid as avarice. As it is, I do not spend a third of my income, which enables me to make reserves that may serve others,

others, without occasioning me any self-denial, or self-reproach for meanness of spirit.

However, before I had well done speaking, and I had surely coolness enough not to lose any of the degrees of impression that what I said was successively making on him, I could distinctly observe the progressive growth of his confusion, rage, and shame to their utmost pitch. Confounded at the turn against him his application to me had taken, enraged at the cool contemptuousness of the irony with which I was treating him, and ashamed of the wretched figure he was making in the eyes of one he had begun with addressing himself to, as to an object of charity, he sunk under the

superiority which his ridiculous mistake of me had given me over him.

The point with him now was to recover so terrible a stumble with the best grace he could. For some minutes he continued stunned, and incapable of uttering a syllable. At length, getting a little the better of his oppression, he told me, with a faltering voice, and a tone of humiliation, that he saw he had taken a very foolish step; that he sincerely asked my pardon, and entreated me to consider that his punishment was in my hands, and that as he lay entirely at my mercy, he hoped my generosity, and his unfeigned sorrow for his offence, would induce me to spare him; that as to Lady Harriet, my threat of acquaint-
ing

ing her of his folly, affected him incomparably less, than Clara's receiving any ill impressions of him; that he was but too sensible that much of his fate depended on my not doing him with her all the diskindness he had deserved, especially from me: but as to herself, he was resolved to repair the injury in a manner that should convince me, that the bottom of his intentions was purer than what that step he had just taken gave them leave to appear; a step into which he had been betraid rather by the blindness and impetuosity of his passion, which had hid the irregularity of it from him, than by a dishonorable design.

K †

This

This was the sum of his apology, of all which I had to believe as much or as little as I pleased. I knew too well the nature and tendency of the insinuation of his intention to repair the affront to Clara, to give him any the least credit for it.

I replied to him then in an extreme polite strain, but as vague, and death-cold an one, as the hollowest, smoothest courtier could have employed, to elude an explicit declaration. I suffered him to go away, under a perfect uncertainty of what my procedure would be upon this curious piece of conduct of his.

As soon as he was gone, the first idea that naturally presented itself, was
to

to write immediately to Clara a succinct account of what had passed; the weather being too bad for me to go in person, under the pain I was in. About this there was no difficulty: but I much wished to spare Lady Harriet the cruel uneasiness I was sure that her brother's procedure would give her. I was afraid too, that Clara herself might, in the first emotions of her wounded delicacy, think it incumbent on her to remove directly from Lady Harriet's, to whom the abruptness of the step, combined with the cause of it, could not fail of giving a great deal of pain. As I was then perfectly clear that there was no danger to Clara, with her way of thinking, from her continuing a little while longer with Lady Harriet, and that her coming

away might imply to him such a fear of his designs, as she was much above having; I had, to her staying at Lady Lovell's, till the Marquess of Sober-ton's imminent arrival, but one objection, which was the possibility of Lord Lovell's imagining that such her continuance after so great an indignity, which he would naturally judge I could not well answer suppressing to her, was a kind of laying wait for his effectuating that reparation which he had insinuated to me, by a declaration in form of more honorable intentions. However, this objection I soon solved to myself, by a reflexion on the groundlessness of such a presumption in Lord Lovell from what I knew of my own ideas, and had the strongest reason to believe of Clara's.

I con;

I considered, that it would be great injustice to give the worthy, the amiable Lady Harriet unnecessarily great pain, for fear of any vain and false notion of her brother's. There is not, perhaps, a more pernicious, nor a more common error, than the doing or not doing a thing, out of regard to the opinion of fools, which by the by is doing them rather too much honor.

In these ideas, I sat down to give Clara the necessary and very candid information of Lord Lovell's procedure, and withall my opinion for her not coming away immediately, and my reasons for that opinion, which, however, it was absolutely at her option to follow or not, as I was ever ready to

receive her with open arms. This letter I sent by a special messenger, my own maid, so as not to be delivered in Lady Harriet's presence, to prevent any reserve which the novelty of it between them would render very awkward, and against which I easily guarded my servant by equipping her with a collateral pretext.

In the afternoon I received by the return of the messenger Clara's answer, of which I enclose you the copy.

Yours, &c.

LUCY BUCKLEY.

LET-

L E T T E R.

CLARA MAYNWARING, to Mrs.
BUCKLEY.

“ London.

“ *My ever respectable Aunt,*

“ A F T E R expressing to you my
“ pain for the indignity you have met
“ with on my account, a pain much
“ lessened to me by my reflexion on
“ your superiority to it, suffer me to
“ give to a very sincere friendship the
“ first place in my expressions of grati-
“ tude to you, for your tender concern
“ for Lady Harriet on this occasion.
“ Nothing can be more just than your
“ apprehensions for her: nothing more
“ merited than your unwillingness to
“ give

“ give her unnecessarily cause of pain.”

“ In honor to truth, I must confess, that

“ I should most probably on the first

“ sense of the insult done to you, (for

“ as to myself, my Lord Lovell can-

“ not offend me,) I should have en-

“ deavoured to make Lady Harriet

“ sensible of the propriety of my leav-

“ ing her, without any thing in my

“ heart towards her, but sentiments of

“ the utmost affection and esteem. I

“ am, I hope, incapable of such an

“ injustice as that of imputing to her,

“ as any demerit, those follies or indiscre-

“ tions of a brother, which she would

“ be the first to detest and deplore.

“ Be it then as you have better judged.

“ Lord Soberton will certainly soon be

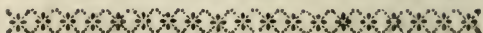
“ here, by his father's orders, who is

“ in

“ in a fair way of recovery. The
“ celebration of his nuptials with Lady
“ Harriet will naturally bring on a se-
“ paration without any violence. The
“ rest of the time, till my return to my
“ brother Mellefont’s, in the country,
“ as I originally proposed before the
“ summer comes on, I shall, with your
“ leave, spend with you, to my great
“ improvement, I am very sure. In
“ the mean while, I shall conceal from
“ Lady Harriet an incident that would
“ give her so great an uneasiness: it
“ is the only kind of perfidy of which
“ my friendship for her is capable.

“ Yours, &c.

“ CLARA MAYNWARING.”



L E T T E R X.

Mr. MELLEFONT to Mrs. BUCKLEY.

Lancashire, Nov.

My ever honored Aunt,

YOU cannot conceive what pleasure your letters have given my wife and me, éxcept just in that part where we felt for the indignity of your treatment ; which, however, you are so right to treat with the scorn and derision it deserves. As we unfeignedly join in our full satisfaction at Clara's having the happiness of your counsels at hand, and the good sense to respect them :

them : we are not in any the least pain about the issue of Lord Lovell's designs, whatever they may be : with such a pilot as you, there is no fear of a shipwreck.

But if I sincerely pity Lord Lovell for his not being above the worthlessness of his times, I hope I may have leave to pity my country much more, for the danger of ruin to which it stands exposed, in having it's fate depend on no better heads and hearts, than those of the generality of the people of power in all parties. Nor do I see any likelihood of an amendment, unless a few men of good sense, and real well-meaning, with the requisites of rank and fortune to give their operations

rations due weight, should rise to the rescue of the nation from the prevalence of all the futility and corruption under which it is evidently sinking. But if it is too much, or too chimerical to suppose, that there are a few still remaining capable of such an effort of virtue, I hope no one will say that such a country does not deserve its perdition, and that the chimera would be not to bespeak it.

And here suffer me to offer you a few remarks on our titled nobility, which, as I principally derive them from the information of Mr. Buckley, who, I am sensible, thought no subject of this kind above your comprehension,

hension, will be rather reminding than presuming to instruct you.

The great authority, then, of our nobles was unquestionably owing to their official duty, considered in two lights, that of Judges, Guardians of the Law, and Counsellors to the Throne; and that of Defenders of their country against enemies foreign and domestic.

In their judiciary capacity they constitute the upper house, where they sit merely in the civil character of Judges, under the titles of Lords or Barons, both which have no relation to any thing but the Law: the word Lord importing a Magistrate, and Baron a Judge; Barony a district of civil government,

vernment, in former times feudally liable to furnish its contingent to the national service. In their military province they have other titles, which are an ingraftment on those of Lord or Baron; such as Duke, Marquess, Earl, &c. which are designations of martial rank, those distinguished by them being originally bound to personal service, receiving for their pay certain allotments of lands, which they possessed by feudal tenure.

You have here their office in one plain, succinct view. They were the first in the land for law and arms. Are they, in reality, the first in either now? Or is it not a moot-point, whether they are better lawyers in the house, or better
soldiers

soldiers in the field? Personal service in war they have long, in general, renounced, and left to younger brothers, and to any military adventurers, for a livelihood; content, for themselves, to carry arms no where but on their seals, plate, or coach-doors, less as ensigns of honor, than matter of a tasteless parade. But then, you will say, they have stuck the closer to their civil character of Judges, of Comptrollers of Ministers, and Counsellors of the State. May be so.

As to their being Judges; it is their essential prerogative to be such; and they, no doubt, qualify themselves duly for the discharge of that great and respectable office.

In their political character of Directors of Ministers, I am afraid that, in former times, Ministers may have too often

found them readier to pay a court to them, than to correct them.

As Advisers of Kings, it is, perhaps, to be wished, that, instead of concurring with them, to plunge the nation unnecessarily into debt, they had less respected those passions and weakneses of theirs, which were the causes of that debt, of which so great a part has been incurred in a direct opposition to the national interest; so that the worst was not the act itself of increasing the debt.

And here there occurs a not uncurious remark, which I do not care whether any one has made before me or not, so it is but a true and a just one.

In the earliest ages of Britain and of Gaul, long before Julius Cesar actually destroyed the liberty of one, and laid the foundation of destroying the liberty,
of

of the other, as he too fatally did that of his own country, the power of the Law was predominant over that of the Sword, which was nothing more than executively its minister. But the guardianship of the laws made in the popular assemblies, was trusted to the Peace-officers; a designation I prefer to the word Clergy, (which, in those times, long prior to Christianity, bore quite another construction than it now does; that I may not appear partial to my own order.) However, by various revolutions, the Sword at length prevailed. The power was wrested out of the hands of the Law, and put into those of the military, who to trial by Courts and Juries substituted that of judiciary Duels, on the absurd barbarism of which it is superfluous to insist. In the ancient system, the Man of Learning and

the Judge were united; in the subsequent one, the Soldier and the Judge. But how far our Nobles maintain either the judiciary or the military character, let those who know them best determine.

To me our Lords in general appear somewhat like the French *Abbés*, who, having renounced the graver functions annexed to their primordial institution, constitute a kind of body, of which the greatest privilege seems to be that of doing nothing, and of circulating, in society, their sad inutility. By this means those *Abbés* have lost much of their dignity, nothing being more conformable to the principles of equity, than that whoever withdraws from the performance of those duties, for which they are allowed a consideration, lucrative,

tive,

tive, or honorary, or both, should incontestably forfeit such consideration. Where then any class of men falls under that description, if they are not dead in law, are not they manifestly so in equity? Who is not sensible, that a body from which the spirit is departed, does not present an idea of great sweetness?

Nothing is more demonstrable, than that originally most of the lands of the nobility were as purely military benefices as bishopricks were ecclesiastical ones, both subject to a discharge of their respective duties, and neither of them hereditary.

At length, indeed, the French set us the example, which it was natural enough for the Barons, (who in their double quality of Judges and Generals had both the Law and the Power in their own hands,) to follow, of changing the nature of the military benefices and titles, and of making them like allodial estates, transmissible by inheritance. But even then it was not understood, that such a right of descent should absolve them from the discharge of those duties, for which the revenues of their estates were considered by the whole nation as standing salaries. A Duke, even on this new footing, was a born Leader of an army; an Earl or Count a General, a Vice-count a Lieutenant-General, and so
on;

on; but every one of these titles implied a duty of actual military service to the public. Nor indeed could any dispensation from it take place, with more propriety, with more justice, than if our lords the Bishops were very gravely to bring in a bill into the house, for leave to entail their titles and temporalities in their families, without any incumbence on them to discharge the episcopal duties.

So that, in strict fact, our Nobles hold their advantages of fortune and honor less by the spirit of the law, than by its prescriptive connivence at such a sine-cure tenure, as is very different from the original institution, and even from the first alteration of that

institution. Nor could the nation, in its grant of land for actual service, or even for reward of past service, ever be imagined to include, in the idea of reward, a birth-right to the descendants, from those so paid or rewarded, of lying an useless insignificant load on it; or intend, as matter of claim for them, the privilege of worthlessness, and the mockery of empty titles of a military service, which they never perform, and which they leave to others under the modern denominations of General, Lieutenant-general, Brigadier, &c. who have just as clear a right to expect that their pay, subject to no discharge of duty, shall be made hereditary in their families, as the merely titular officers of the nobility ever had
to

to procure, as they actually did procure their feudal tenures to be; the service for which they have so prudently commuted for only paying their share of the general taxation.

Of this our Nobility could not be too much reminded, even for their own sakes, as it might tend to excite in them a spirit of gratitude to a country, by whose curtesy they are allowed the *uti possidetis* of so many gratuitous advantages. It might kindle a desire in them to merit, by some degree of utility to the public, that respect which they cannot otherwise claim with the best grace imaginable, especially while it is hardly possible for others to pay less of it to them than they do to themselves: it

might rouse in them a noble disdain of any honor but what is intrinsically honor in itself, in a just distinction of it from that contemptible spurious honor, which has no better foundation than a prescriptive error of opinion and vulgar prejudice.

As it is, how very few of them are there, that do not acquiesce in the most ignoble obscurity ! poor immemorable insignificants, content with never being named among those who defend their country with their arms, or prosper it with their counsels ! Does their august body, in fact, form, now-a-days, many very great Generals to command armies, many Speakers of real eloquence in the house, or many Statesmen of abilities to
take

take charge of the national power, or care of the public interest? Is not there rather a deplorable scarcity of all these? You cannot but see, especially as to the offices of government, the distress to which this country is reduced for supplying proper personages to fill them. Many have been called Ministers, but how few of them were chosen! some having born that name, who were no more of the standard of capacity requisite for the conduct of affairs, than the obsidional coins of copper are of a metal answerable to the value stamped upon them, by authority, both, for want of better, owing their temporary currency to the urgency of necessity.

Nor is it a wonder that places should be so contemptibly *not* filled, while rank avarice, without a spark of honor

or of patriotism, is the principal motive of courting, or of accepting employments: Avarice, that execrable passion, allied to every meanness, and which gives a rage for power to none more than to those who are the least capable of doing justice to it.

But if some of our Great would but calculate the worth of what they lose of real good and solid satisfaction, by suffering themselves to be blinded by a fordid selfishness, which not only undignifies them, but endangers their much superior interest in the public welfare, they would spurn the idea of any complaisance to a Court, at the expence of their duty; nobly just to which, they would, in fact, do much greater

greater service to their country, to their King, and even to themselves.

As things are, the corruption of the men of power is arrived at such an incredible pitch of profligacy, that there are some of them, who make it a point of their importance to be paid not only for the good they do not hinder, but for the mischief they do not do to their country. Figure to yourself the meanness of such as can hug themselves not only on what they save by not doing a good action, but on what they get by a bad one.

These reflexions, however, are extorted from me by my sincere regard for that part of our constitution, against which it can surely be no offence, to

wish it more essential, more estimable; their political life and dignity capitally depending on their degree of consideration with the public, which always measures its esteem of men and things by their utility to it.

You may also see by this, dear aunt, that I am not likely to be dazzled by any offers, however honorable, that may come from the Earl Lovell, merely in his quality of Lord, for which, singly considered, I neither esteem nor despise him. It is not in his title, it is not in opulence, but in his character that Clara is to find her happiness: and I am much mistaken, if she is ever, Atalanta-like, lured out
of

of her career of honor and prudence, by the glitter, though it were of the whole globe in gold.

What I should apprehend for her most, and of which yet, I am afraid not only to wound her delicacy with the mention, but in the very mention, to incline her the more to what I apprehend, is, her giving to respects of family-interest a weight in her determination that might unfavorably affect her future condition. Knowing how much easier it is to keep egotism out of one's words, than out of one's thoughts and actions, it is not to a fine verbose form of protestation that I trust your doing justice to the clearness of my spirit, but to that instinctive worthiness of your

own heart, which cannot fail of doing justice to the reality of my sentiments. It is then, on this unaffected principle, that I entreat of you to make Clara sensible that she could not, on this occasion, offer to me, or to her sister, a greater indignity, than that of not following the directions of her own heart, in so sacred a point of personal importance to her, as the disposal of herself for life.

Hoping and believing every thing for the best, I am ever, dear Aunt,

Yours, &c.

EDWARD MELLEFONT;



L E T T E R XI.

Lord LOVELL to HENRY GOLDING;
Esq;

London.

ALL is lost, dear Hal, or so very near it, that I have but one chance left, and if that should fail me, why then, heigh for the lover's leap, for I will be cursed if ever I take the matrimonial one. That is a state of punishment to which, I hope, I am not predestinated.

You

You must know, there is no strata-
gem, no art, that I could think of,
but what I have been trying, to establish
my point with this strange, perverse,
what shall I call her, Angel, for that
word is at the end of my pen, and
places itself on the paper, almost with-
out my leave.

I had often seen a woman caught by
the discontinuance of a lover's chace,
which as soon as she perceived, she
wheeled about insensibly, in a doubling
maze, and chopped into his mouth.
Upon this plan, I had, for some days,
left off that constancy of visits with
which I had besieged her at my sister's;
or if I went there, I not only took
no notice of Clara, beyond that kind
of

of common civility, which is half an insult, when it has been for some time preceded by more particular distinctions, but I occasionally singled out Lady Arabella Castres, a very pretty young lady, who is often with them, and began to pay her such a court, as I flattered myself would be observed by Clara, and pique, at least, her vanity, or alarm that fear, so natural to women, the fear of losing a conquest. But I might just as well have spared myself the pains of playing a part that cost me so much repugnance, for Clara never once gave the least sign of paying any more attention to my airs of desertion, or change, than she had done to my tenderest assiduities. In short, I found myself not a whit the forwarder for this
often

often successful stale stratagem of love-militant. I soon then came back to my colors, without her taking any more notice of my return to her, than she had done of my leaving her. But what yet hurt me worst of all, was that intrepid ease, gaiety, and frankness, with which she never failed of using me, in common with every one else, except when I ventured to be particular to her, when, without any symptom of emotion, she behaved to me with such a frozen reserve, so chilling an indifference, that her anger would have been a thousand times more preferable, and less discouraging. This is the more galling, Hal, for that you well know I am not used to such treatment.

“ Give

“ Give her over,” you will say. Ay, that I would if I could; but a hatchet struck into my head could not give me greater pain than but the thought of it. I am even obliged to persevere, in my own defence; for while she remains unpossessed, she so thoroughly engrosses my whole faculties of desire, that she not only hinders me from being happy with herself, but with the whole sex besides. Her incomparable image rises to me in bar of every application to another woman. My constancy is not so much a merit as a necessity. In short, I could with pleasure sacrifice half my estate to the getting her upon my own terms. Nay, I would gladly say to her, Spare my liberty,

berty, and take my fortune. Nay, in some moments, the devil of desire tempts me so violently, torments me so fiercely, that I could almost marry her in a passion, if it were but to get rid of my damned love.

I had, however, a glimmering of hope left, and that was to come at her through a kind of aunt, one Mrs. Buckley, whom I mentioned to you in my last, and who, I had reason to think, knew the world, and understood practice. To her, then, I made my application, with such offers as would have engaged many a lord that I could name to sell himself, and throw his country, like paper and packthread, into the bargain. But I happened to be devilishly
out

out in my conjectures about her; I met with such a let-down, Hal, such a let-down! I am not yet above half recovered of the cursed cut I then received over my crest. In short, that string is intirely snapped; and against touching the matrimonial one, even though with no other intention than to make it subservient to my purpose of avoiding matrimony, I have an aversion that equals the horror of water in one bitten by a mad dog. And yet, I find I must have recourse to that detested expedient, and strike my reserve-blow.

I had fortunately thrown into my apology to Mrs. Buckley, the hint of my design to repair the injury she was pleased to think done to Clara's honor,
in

in my application to her for her good offices. Now this hint lays a plausible enough foundation for my intended plan of procedure.

I propose, then, to make a false-confidence to Lady Lovell, of my having entertained serious thoughts of honorable addresses to Clara. There is not the least reason to fear her taking me at my word. It is, perhaps, the only point I could pitch on, which I would not be sure of carrying with her fondness. But in this I am as far from expecting to find her tractable, as, indeed, I am from wishing it. No. The old Lady, at the bare mention of it, will take fire finely; and the least she will do will be to lay me under

under the whole weight of her disgrace. So much the better. The more noise she will make, and I dare swear she will not make a little, the more service she will do me. In asking what I foreknow will not be granted, I shall, to borrow an expression of Lord Haversham's, have "asked a denial," and that is the very thing I want. In the mean while, the devil will be in it if this motion of mine will not at least look well. Such a proof of my sincerity must reconcile me to Mrs. Buckley, and to Clara give me such a merit of suffering for her sake, as may not improbably place me on a better footing with her than I have hitherto been. The ground will be the less hard for my approaches. Not

to

to mention, that, by this step, I shall get Lady Harriet greatly in my interest, who would not, for the world, promote it in any other way, and will zealously do it in this, from the joy it would give her at once to make her friend's fortune, to contribute to what she sincerely believes would render me happy, and draw closer the ties of friendship between her and Clara, of whom she is excessively fond; nor, every thing considered, faith, do I wonder at it.

Of such a situation, then, it will be hard, indeed, if I do not make my advantage, without the danger of being drawn into an engagement, which all this art is meant to elude.

But

But to put things at the worst, and to suppose an impossibility, was Lady Lovell to deprive me of the plea of her refusal of consent, my game would be indeed more difficult, but far from desperate. I should, by the time it would take to bring her to that point, have, in all human probability, so far familiarised and ingratiated myself with Clara, as to stand fair for the benefit of that chapter of accidents, which so often favors the bold and artful lover. You understand me, Hal.

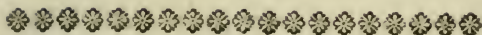
And now dare, after this, to think yourself so necessary to my schemes of gallantry, that I could not take a step out of your leading-strings. However,
I really

I really wish you was with me, though,
from your last, I have not much room
to expect it.

Yours,

L O V E L L.

L E T.



L E T T E R XII.

HENRY GOLDING, *Esq;* to Lord
LOVELL.

My Lord,

Chester.

UPON my honor, your Lordship is a noble engineer. What a train have you laid to blow up the fort of that little spitfire? Is it for me to presume to be “necessary to your “schemes of gallantry?” No, no, you beat me hollow. Till I knew your lordship, I thought I was somebody at that sport, but I find now I am nobody. If I mean to get on, I must go to school

to your Lordship; you are a perfect Matchawell at intreagues. All I have to say, is, and you must give me leave to be free with you, your Lordship knows I am apt to be too sincear; I must tell you, I think you give yourself a damned deal of trouble, when you might have readier meals than running hares. May I be the capital figure of the first collar-day at Tyburn, if I think any of the pusses worth the pains of hunting them tender. Zounds! give me the thing at hand, a good willing tit, even though she stood at livery in one of the stalls at Covent-garden, before any of your shy ones, with all their damned vartue at their tails. I know your Lordship will immediately twit me in the teeth with the risk I run of being had before Dr.

Rock,

Rock, for misdemeanours of that kind,
All that is true, my Lord, but a little
discretion is a fine thing. Merry and
wife, say I. With good care, and pick-
ing of one's bits, there may be found
flesh as sweet and as little fly-blown in a
baud's larder, as in the safe of a nun-
nery. Indeed, it requires some person
that knows the market well to be the ca-
terer, and grant clean bills of health;
otherwise there is no insurance against
consequences. Take things as they run
in common, there is no venturing on
muscles, mushrooms, and women of
the town; the danger fells the plea-
sure.

You are, I find, for keeping, but that
is a devilish expensive lay. If your

mistress should not even play you jades tricks, and keep true to you, as it is not to be supposed she could do otherwise to such a fine gentleman as your Lordship, why then there's brats and christenings, till at last you come as much into family-order as if you was lawfully tethered; unless your Lordship would do as I do, who always leave the cow and the calf to shift for their own fodder.

But as to bidding matrimony defiance, there we agree to a charm; with this difference, that your Lordship, being much wiser than I, has taken upon trust the torments of that hell of a state; whereas nothing would serve me but I must be puppy enough to make personally

sonally the experiment, and it turned out as I deserved; for by Jove I was finely sped. I married for a fortune, which did not, however, turn out near what I had imagined, a woman rather stricken in years, who caught me, by looking as if she would die. But, what do you think? My pretious had the impudence to be jealous of me, and gave herself the airs of expecting I should be constant to her stale charms. Constant, too! with a vengeance! But I was even with her: I presently broke the beldam of wearing yellow stockings, and cured her suspicions for ever, by certainty; for I brought home too strapping drabs, kept them for some time under her nose, by way of exercise for her patient-Grizzleship, and then turned

her a-drift upon board-wages. However, the dear creature is dead, at last, though, by the way, her heart was so tough, it took a damned deal of breaking. I found it a great deal easier to get rid of her fortune than of her!— But if ever I am caught again in that noose, may my wife turn the tables upon me, and send me to the wrong side of the turf.

I love women well enough, when I want them, but who the deuce would chuse to live in a cook's shop, where the meat is for ever under his nose, whether he has any stomach to it or not? Wives, too, are such unconscionable creatures, they are for ever either picking a quarrel with you for the sake of the
sweets

sweets of reconciliation, or extorting more fondness from you than you can well afford, when the poor devil of a husband is like a debtor in a spunging-house, squeezed for expence, without his being either in cash or in cue for it. In short, my Lord, matrimony is the the devil, and all the joys of it as much against the grain as statute-labor, or as dull as playing at cards for nothing. Talk of happy marriages! one may as well talk of soft thunder, slow lightning, a jolly famine, a sweet plague, lively funerals, plump skeletons, and pretty death's heads.

From my soul, then, I worship your better genius, for inspiring you with such a scorn of the trap.

As

As for that vixen to whom you are now, it seems, doing the honor of a chace, hang me, if I do not believe your Lordship is taking the advantage of my absence to hum me. It is a very likely story, indeed, that any girl of her degree in life, with flesh and blood about her, could hold out four-and-twenty hours against such proffers as yours, with so handsome a young nobleman tacked to them. Who does not know, my Lord, that you are the crack of the field, with gold to silver odds in your favor. But I see what it is, you are so generous a sportsman, that you mean to give her law; you have not yet put forth half your strength; whenever it comes to that,

my

my life to an old shoe, that she will lay subdued and breathless before you.

In the mean while, it is but too true that I am detained here fore against my will, but I hope it will not be so long as your Lordship seems to think; and, to say the truth, in the method of sap that you are conducting your siege, I do not apprehend that I could be of much use to you, as you are so much a better engineer than myself. Storming is more in my way. Say but the word, and I will, at all events, come post to town, and provide four barrels of gunpowder to blow up the beldam at Richmond, and half-a-dozen mirmidons, that in the face of day shall carry off your
Princess

Princess in triumph, and plump her into
your arms.

Your Lordship is, I hope, persuaded,
that no Cormantine Négroe could be
more absolutely devoted to your com-
mands, than,

My Lord,

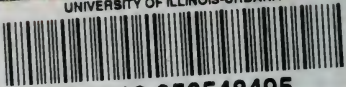
Your Lordship's most humble

and most obedient servant,

HENRY GOLDING.

End of the FIRST VOLUME.

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