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Lackington, James, 1746-1815.

Memoirs of the forty-five first years of the  
James Lackington, the present bookseller in  
Chiswell-street, Moorfields, London.











M E M O I R S

O F

The FORTY-FIVE FIRST YEARS

O F

The L I F E

O F

JAMES LACKINGTON.

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[ Price Five Shillings and Sixpence, in boards. ]







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*J. Dackington*

*Who a few Years since began business with five pounds  
now sells One hundred thousand Volumes Yearly.*

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# M E M O I R S

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The FORTY-FIVE FIRST YEARS

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## The L I F E

O F

### JAMES LACKINGTON,

The present Bookfeller in Chiswell-street, Moorfields, London.

Written by Himself.

IN FORTY-SEVEN LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

With a TRIPLE DEDICATION.

1. To the PUBLIC.
  2. To RESPECTABLE
  3. To SORDID
- } BOOKSELLERS.

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A N E W E D I T I O N .

Corrected, and much enlarged; interspersed with many *original humorous Stories*, and *drroll Anecdotes*, not in former Editions; to which is also added, an INDEX.

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“ Fair praise is sterling gold—all should desire it—

“ Flatt’ry, base coin—a cheat upon the nation;

“ And yet, our vanity doth much admire it,

“ And really gives it all its circulation.” PETER PINDAR.

“ As all Fanatics preach, so all men write,

“ Out of the strength of Gifts, and inward Light,

“ In spite of art; as Horses thorough pac’d

“ Were never taught, and therefore go more fast.” BUTLER.

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Printed for the AUTHOR, No. 46 and 47, Chiswell-Street;  
and sold by all other Bookfellers.

M D C C X C I V .

[Price 5s. 6d. in Boards.]



# A TRIPLE DEDICATION.

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## I. TO THE PUBLIC.

“ In things indiff’rent Reason bids us chuse,  
“ Whether the whim’s a monkey or a muse.”

CHURCHILL. ]

WORTHY PATRONS.

WERE I to address you in the accustomed declamatory strain which has long been adopted as the *universal language* of dedications, viz. FLATTERY, I should not only merit your contempt, for thus endeavouring to impose upon your understandings, but also render myself ridiculously conspicuous, by a feeble attempt to perform that, for which, as well by nature as long established habit, I am totally disqualified.

On the other hand, I should esteem myself equally meriting your censure, as being guilty of a flagrant species of ingratitude, were I to omit availing myself of so favourable an opportunity

portunity as now presents itself of expressing the respect and veneration I entertain for you, resulting from the very extensive and ample encouragement with which you have crowned my indefatigable exertions to obtain your patronage, by largely contributing to the diffusion of science and rational entertainment, on such moderate terms as were heretofore unknown.

Permit me to indulge the pleasing hope, that when I assert my mind is deeply impressed with the most grateful sense of the obligation, I shall be honoured with credit. If this opinion be well founded, to enlarge on the subject were superfluous—if otherwise, the strongest arguments, the most splendid and forcible language could convey, would not ensure conviction; I therefore desist, fully persuaded that the most satisfactory demonstration I can possibly exhibit of the sincerity of this declaration, will be, an inviolable adherence to that uniform line of conduct which has already secured your approbation to a degree eminent as unprecedented

dedented, and which is indeed daily rendered more evident, by a progressive increase in the number and extent of your commands; trusting, that so long as you find my practice invariably correspondent to those professions so frequently exhibited to your notice (from which to deviate would render me unworthy your protection) you will, in defiance of all malignant opposition, firmly persevere in the liberal support of him whose primary ambition it is, and during life shall be, to distinguish himself as,

WORTHY PATRONS,

Your much obliged,

Ever grateful,

And devoted humble servant,

Chiswell-Street,  
October 1791.

JAMES LACKINGTON.

2. To that part of the numerous body of BOOKSELLERS of Great Britain and Ireland, whose conduct JUSTLY claims the additional title of RESPECTABLE ;

Whose candour and liberality he has in numerous instances experienced, and feels a sensible pleasure in thus publicly acknowledging.

And lastly (though not least in *Fame*)

3. To those fordid and malevolent BOOKSELLERS, whether they resplendent dwell in stately mansions, or in wretched huts of dark and groveling obscurity ;

—“ I'll give every one a smart lash in my way.”—

To whose assiduous and unwearied labours to injure his reputation with their brethren and the public, he is in a considerable degree indebted for the confidence reposed in him, and the success he has been honoured with, productive of his present prosperity,

THESE MEMOIRS

are, with all due discrimination of the respective merits of each,

Inscribed by

THE AUTHOR.



# P R E F A C E.

---

“ To print or not to print ?—this is the question :

“ Whether 'tis better in a trunk to bury

“ The quirks and crochets of outrageous fancy,

“ Or send a well-wrote copy to the prefs,

“ And, by disclosing, end them?————

---

“ For who would bear th' impatient thirst of fame,

“ The pride of conscious merit, and 'bove all,

“ The tedious importunity of friends——

---

“ To groan and sweat under a load of wit?

---

“ 'Tis Critics that makes cowards of us all.

JAGO.

CUSTOM, it has been repeatedly observed by many of my worthy (and some perhaps *unworthy*) predecessors in authorship, has rendered a preface almost indispensibly necessary ; while others again have as frequently remarked, that “ *custom is the law of fools.*” Those considerations induced me to hesitate whether I should usher my performance into the world with a preface, and thus hazard

hazard being classed with the adherents to that law, or by omitting it, escape the opprobrium, for “ *who shall decide when doctors disagree?* ” Now though I would not take upon me to decide in every point in which doctors disagree, yet after giving the present subject that mature consideration which so important a concern required, I thought myself fully competent to decide, if not to general satisfaction, at least so as fully to satisfy one particular person, for whom I profess to have a very great regard, though perhaps few are to be found who would be equally condescending to him ; who that person is I do not wish publicly to declare, as (being a very modest man) it might offend him, I shall only say, the more you read the memoirs contained in the following pages, the better you will become acquainted with him. I ground my decision on these arguments ; I concluded, as most of my brethren of the quill do of their labours, that my performance possessed so much intrinsic merit, as would occasion it to be universally admired by all good judges, as a prodigious effort

effort of human genius, and that this approbation must naturally excite the envy of some authors, who had not met with that high applause they deemed themselves entitled to, and incline them to search for imperfections in my work, and though I was persuaded of the impossibility of their finding any, yet being thus foiled, they might catch at the want of a preface, and construe *that* into an omission, so that in order to disarm them, I resolved to have one, especially as those who deem prefaces unnecessary may, if they choose, decline reading it, whilst those on the other side of the question, if there was none, might be disappointed, and have cause for complaint; but to be serious (if I can).

Almost every author on producing the effusions of his pen (and his brain if he has any) thinks it prudent to introduce himself by a kind of *Prologue*, as it may be called, stating his reasons with due precision for intruding himself on his readers (whether true or otherwise, is not always material to enquire)

enquire) bespeaking their candour towards his weakneſſes and imperfections (which by the bye, few authors are ſo ſenſible of as their readers) and not unfrequently endeavouring to ſooth the thoſe GOLIATHS in literature, ycleped *critics*, (with whom not many little Davids are found hardy enough to contend) hoping thus to coax them into good humour; or, perhaps, if his vanity preponderates, he throws the gauntlet of defiance, with a view of terrifying them either to hold their peace, or to do juſtice to thoſe mighty abilities *he* is confident he poſſeſſes in a degree eminently ſuperior to moſt of his brethren.

Among “ true Parnaffian bullies,” De Scudery ſtands one of the foremoſt, he concludes his preface to the works of his friend Theophile, with theſe remarkable words, “ I do not hesitate to declare, that amongſt all the dead and all the living, there is no perſon who has any thing to ſhew, that approaches the force of this vigorous genius; but if amongſt the latter, any one were ſo  
extravagant

extravagant as to confider that I detract from his imaginary glory, to fhew him that I fear as little as I esteem him, this is to inform him that my name is DE SCUDERY." We have another remarkable instance in Claude Terllon, a poetical foldier; " who begins his poems, by informing the critics, that if any one attempts to cenfure him, he will only condefcend to anfwer him fword in hand."

For my own part, I difclaim thefe modes: convinced, that in the firft cafe, every reader, whatever the author may plead, will, to judge for himfelf; and with regard to professed critics, were I fo difpofed, neither my natural or acquired abilities enable me to *bully* thofe who muft be very ill qualified for their task, if they were thus to be intimidated from declaring their real fentiments; and, on the other hand, to affect a degree of humility, and by flattery to aim at warping their minds, is, in my opinion, paying them a very bad compliment.

- “ Critics forgive the first essay  
“ Of one whose thoughts are plain,  
“ Whose heart is full, who never means  
“ To steal your time again.

Never should I have ventured to appear in this habit before the public, had not the following motives urged me thereto:

Many of my acquaintances have frequently expressed a desire of obtaining from myself such particulars as they could rely on, of my passage through life.

I have even been repeatedly threatened by some particular friends, that if I declined drawing up a narrative, they were determined to do it for me, one of the first mentioned gentlemen prevailed on me (as the most likely mode to bring it to a period) to devote now and then a spare hour in minuting down some of the most material occurrences of my life, and to send them to him in an epistolary form, intending to digest the whole into a regular narrative for publication; that gentleman, however, on perusal,

rufal, was of opinion, that it would be additionally acceptable to the curious part of the public, if exhibited to them in the plain and fimple manner in which thefe letters were written, as thus tending to difplay fuch traits and features of a fomewhat original character, and give a more perfect idea of “ I, great I, the little hero of each tale,” than any other mode that could have been adopted; efppecially, as many *intelligent* perfons were confident I could not write at all, while others *kindly* attributed to me what I never wrote.

————— “ Then think,  
 “ That he who thus is forc’d to fpeak,  
 “ Unlefs commanded, would have dy’d in filence.”

If among the multitude of memoirs under which the prefs has groaned, and with which it ftill continues to be tortured, the following fheets fhould afford fome degree of entertainment, as a relaxation from more grave and folid ftudies, to an inquisitive and candid reader (thofe of an oppofite defcription are not to be pleas’d with the ableft performance)

performance) and he should deem it not the worst, nor the most expensive among the numerous tribe, I shall esteem myself amply rewarded; had I, however, been disposed to be more attentive to entertainment, and less to veracity, I might, to many, have rendered it much more agreeable, though less satisfactory to myself, as I believe the observation long since made to be just, that few books are so ill written, but that something may be gleaned from their perusal.

Should the insignificance of *my* life induce any person better qualified to present the world with *his*, big with interesting events, my disposing of several large editions of that performance will afford me more *solid* satisfaction as a *bookseller*, than any success or emolument which can possibly arise from this, my first and most probably last, essay as an author.

If unfortunately any of my kind readers should find the book so horrid dull and stupid, that they cannot get through it,

or



or if they do, and wish not to travel the same road again, I here declare my perfect readiness to supply them with abundance of books, much more witty, much more —whatever they please, they never shall want books while L. is able to assist them; and whether they prefer one of his writing, or that of any other author, he protests he will not be in the smallest degree offended: let every author make the same declaration if he can.

Should my memoirs be attended with no other benefit to society, they will at least tend to shew what may be effected by a persevering habit of industry, and an upright conscientious demeanour in trade towards the public, and probably inspire some one, of perhaps superior abilities, with a laudable ambition, to emerge from obscurity, by a proper application of those talents with which providence has favoured him, to his own credit and emolument, as well as the benefit of the community. To such an one I ever have, and ever shall wish every pos-

fible fucefs, as it has uniformly been my opinion, that whatever is thus acquired, is more honourable to the parties than the poffeffion of wealth obtained without any intrinsic merit or exertion, and which is too frequently confumed with rapidity in the purfuit of vice and diffipation.

One word to my old friends the bookfellers under number three of my dedication. This publication it is to be expected will tend to excite fome degree of mirth in them. Confcious that I have often been the caufe (however unintentional on my part) of exciting lefs pleafing fenfations in them, I will readily allow them full fcope; however, according to the well known adage, "Let them laugh who win," I hope they will indulge me in the fame propenfity of laughing, if not *at* them, at leaft *with* them.

As a proof of my friendly difpofition, I fhall here add a piece of advice, which I do not hesitate to pronounce will, if attended to, entitle them to promotion in my *firft*  
clafs

clafs of bookfellers, and eventually prove more beneficial than a constant perfeverance in the mode of conduct they have hitherto purfued ; and thofe who have children will, I hope, fee the propriety of inculcating the fame doctrine to them for their future benefit : and as I flatter myfelf my advice will prove equally productive of benefit to great numbers of the community at large as to bookfellers. It is this :

If they obferve any perfon by induftry and application endeavouring to obtain an honeft livelihood in that line for which his talents or difpofition have qualified him, never to attempt, by dark inuendoes, fly hints, and falfe afperfions, to injure him, as, if he happens to be a man of becoming fpirit, fuch conduct will only tend to increafe his exertions, and render him ftill more cautious to obtain a good character ; in fo doing their weapons will recoil on themfelves, and they will have the mortification to fee him flourish, whilft they become objects of contempt

in the eyes of the public, and will of course be avoided by them.

But I forgot myself, from debating whether a preface was really necessary or not. If I proceed thus, I shall produce one as long as my book, as indeed some of my serious in authorship have done before me, though not altogether consistent with propriety.

I will therefore conclude with a wish that my readers may enjoy the feast with the same good humour with which I have prepared it; they will meet with some *solid* though not much *coarse* food, and the major part, I hope light and easy of digestion; those with keen appetites will partake of each dish, while others more delicate may select such dishes as are more light, and better adapted to their palates; they are all genuine British fare; but lest they should be at a loss to know what the entertainment consists of, I beg leave to inform them that it contains forty-seven dishes of various sizes, which (if they calculate

calculate the expence of their *admission tickets*) they will find does not amount to two-pence per dish; and what I hope they will consider as *immensely* valuable (in compliance with the precedent set by Mr. Farley, a gentleman eminent in the culinary science,) a striking likeness of their *Cook* into the bargain.

I have also prepared a bill of fare at the end of the volume. Ladies and gentlemen, pray be seated; you are heartily welcome, and much good may it do you.



# P R E F A C E

TO THE

SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT EDITIONS.

---

“ 'Tis nothing new, I'm sure you know,  
“ For those who write, their works to show ;  
“ And if they're prais'd, and render'd vain,  
“ 'Tis ten to one they write again :  
“ And then they read it o'er with care,  
“ Correcting here, and adding there.” Mrs. SAVAGE.

**T**HE first edition of my Memoirs was no sooner published, than my old envious friends, mentioned in the third class of my dedication, found out that it was “ d—n'd stuff! d—n'd low!” the production of a *cobler*, and only fit to amuse that honourable fraternity, or to line their garrets and stalls; and many gentlemen, who are my customers, have informed me, that when they asked for them at several shops, they received for an answer, that they had already too much waste paper, and would not increase it by keeping Lackington's Memoirs: and some kindly added, “ You need not be in

haste to purchase, as in the course of the Christmas holidays, Mr. Birch in Cornhill will wrap up all his mince-pies with them, and distribute them through the town for the public good. Thus

- “ With all the eunuch’s melancholy spite,  
 “ They growl at you, because they cannot write ;  
 “ A gloomy silence, envy’s pang imparts,  
 “ Or some cold hint betrays their canker’d hearts.”

But the rapid sale of this Life soon caused them to alter their stories ; and I was very much surprised to hear that several of those gentlemen, who had scarce done exclaiming, “ Vile trash ! beneath all criticism ! ” &c. began to praise the composition ; and on looking into the English Review, I found that the editors had filled seven pages in reviewing those Memoirs, and had bestowed much praise on the author. I was then ready to conclude, that their generous and manly impartiality had, in a miraculous manner, effected the conversion of others. But I was soon convinced, that meanness can never be exchanged for generosity ; and that

that



that those that had been “unclean were unclean still;” or, as Churchill says,

- “ That envy, which was woven in the frame  
 “ At first, will to the last remain the same.  
 “ Reason may drown, may die, but envy’s rage,  
 “ Improves with time, and gathers strength from age.”

It seems that several of those liberal-minded men, being prodigiously mortified at the encreasing sale of my *Life*, applied to different authors in order to get one of them to father my book : but those authors, either from principle, or from knowing that my manuscript was kept in my shop for the inspection of the public, or for some other motive, refused to adopt the poor bantling : and not only so, but laughed at, and exposed the mean contrivance, to the very great disappointment of those *kind and honest-hearted friends of mine*.

- “ ’Tis hard to say, what mysteries of fate,  
 “ What turns of fortune, on poor writers wait ;  
 “ The party slave will wound him as he can,  
 “ And damp the merit, if he hates the man.” W. HARTÉ.

That I might not be justly charged with ingratitude, I take this opportunity of thank-  
 ing

ing my friends, customers, and the public, for their candid reception of my volume; the sale of which, and the encomiums I have received on the subject, both by letter and otherwise, have far exceeded my most sanguine and self-flattering expectations; I very sensibly feel the obligation! Their generosity has overwhelmed me! I am overpaid, and remain their debtor!

“ A truce with jesting; what I here impart

“ Is the warm overflowings of a grateful heart;

“ Come good, come bad, while life or mem'ry last,

“ My mind shall treasure up your favours past.”

But, lest I should be over vain, I must at the same time declare, that I have received scurrilous abusive letters from several of Mr. Wesley's people, merely because I have exposed their ridiculous principles and absurd practices; but more particularly, for having pulled off the hypocritical veil from some of those sanctified deceivers which are among them.

The numerous letters of approbation which I have received from rational intelligent

ligent gentlemen, convinces me that I have not wronged the cause of manly and rational christianity, nor was it ever my intention so to do.

“ But your philosophers will say,

“ Best things grow worse when they decay.

“ If Phœbus’ ray too fiercely burn,

“ The richest wines to sourest turn.                    E. LLOYD.

I here also present my compliments and sincere thanks to my impartial friends, under the second class of my dedication, for the friendly disposition they have shewn, in freely distributing my Memoirs among their customers, and they may be assured, that I will not let slip any opportunity of making them proper returns for all their favours.

I cannot conclude this Preface without saying something about this edition.

When I put the first edition to the press, I really intended to print but a small number; so that when I was prevailed on, by some of my friends, to print a very large impression,

pression, I had not the least idea of ever being able to sell the whole ; and of course had not any intention of printing other editions. But the rapid sale of the work, and the many letters which I am continually receiving from gentlemen, in various parts of Great Britain and Ireland, who are pleased to honour me with their approbation and thanks, encouraged me to read the whole over with more attention, to correct such typographical errors as had escaped my observation, and to improve the language in numberless places, and yet many errors still remain.

In executing this plan, I perceived that I had omitted to introduce many things which would have been an improvement to the work ; and while inserting them, others occurred to my memory, so that most parts of the work is now very much enlarged. But although these additions have increased the expences of printing and paper, to near double, yet I have added but sixpence to the price. Had profit been my motive, I  
could

could have divided the work into two volumes, and I may add that each volume would have been larger than even some *six shilling* ones lately published.

To such as ask why these additions had not been printed separately, to the end that such as purchased the first edition, might have had them without purchasing the whole work over again? I answer, had it been practical, I would have done that; but those additions being so many, and so various, rendered that method ridiculous, as every one who will take the trouble to compare the various editions, must readily acknowledge; nor can the purchasers of even the first edition, complain with respect to the price, it being equal in size to most new publications which are sold at Six Shillings. And although some may think that the prefixed head is of no value, I can assure them, that I am of a very different opinion, *at least of the original*; and I have the pleasure to add, that a very great number of my customers have been highly pleased to have so striking

striking a likeness of their old bookseller. Nor am I the first bookseller who has published his head; Mr. Nicolson (commonly called Maps,) bookseller at Cambridge, two years since, had his head finely engraven; it is a good likeness, and is sold at 10s. 6d. Francis Kirkman, partner with Richard Hend (last century) prefixed his portrait to a book, entitled “The Wits, or Sport upon Sport,” This Francis Kirkman also published *Memoirs of his own Life*, and probably led the way to John Dunton. See Granger’s *Biographical History of England*, vol. iv.

I could make many other apologies—

- “ — — — “ But why should I distrust,  
 “ My judges are as merciful as just :  
 “ I know them well, have oft their friendship try’d,  
 “ And their protection is my boast—my pride.

CUNNINGHAM.

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V E R S E S

Occasioned by reading

The LIFE of Mr. JAMES LACKINGTON.

Addressed to the ingenious AUTHOR.

By his UNKNOWN FRIEND.

---

**S**INCE your Pen, Friend Unknown, such improvement  
conveys,  
'Tis but justice to you that this Tribute repays ;  
For when in the Bosom mild Gratitude burns,  
'Tis a pleasing relief, which the Feeling returns :  
For as dear as the Light to the thoughts of the Blind,  
Is the Pen, or the Voice, that enlightens the Mind ;  
And the more, as from Nature and Genius untaught  
Your various adventures and humour are brought,  
Which display all the farce of the Methodist Plan,  
The shame of Religion, of Reason, and Man ;  
While no Libertine Motives their Secrets dispense,  
But Propriety joins hand-in-hand with good Sense,

Oh !

Oh! with thee, could the Crowd view each sanctified scene,  
 Where the Hypocrite oft wears Simplicity's mien ;  
 Where youth, second-childhood, and weakness of Sex,  
 Are objects they ever prefer to perplex ;  
 Like thee, they'd contemn, or indignantly leave,  
 Whom Folly, and Knav'ry, combine to deceive ;  
 And whose Newgate Conversions blasphemously paint  
 The wretch most *deprav'd*, the most *excellent* Saint.

Go on ; and discover each latent design,  
 And your rivals expose, who 'gainst Learning combine :  
 O'er such craft shall fair conduct, like thine, still prevail,  
 And an envy'd success lay them low in the Scale.  
 But as Time is too short all your steps to retrace,  
 Let your LIFE speak the rest, and succeed in their place :  
 How Books mend the manners ; and now so abound,  
 Where Rudeness and Ignorance lately were found.  
 But plain Truth, for itself, it must still be confess'd,  
 Is the faithfullest advocate—therefore the best :  
 So I rise from the Feast with a satisfied mind,  
 That the same every Taste, and each Temper, may find.  
 Still to drop all comparison, Mental's the fare,  
 That needs only good taste to invite us to share ;  
 Entertainment and Knowledge, the objects in view ;  
 Then receive, as the Donor, the Praise that is due.

C. H—S.

BURY ST. EDMUND'S.



THE  
L I F E  
OF  
J. L A C K I N G T O N,  
BOOKSELLER.

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LETTER I.

- “ Others with wishful eyes on Glory look,  
“ When they have got their picture toward a book,  
“ Or pompous title, like a gaudy Sign  
“ Meant to betray dull fots to wretched wine.  
“ If at his title L—— had dropt his quill,  
“ L—— might have past for a great genius still :  
“ But L——, alas! (excuse him if you can)  
“ Is now a Scribbler, who was once a man.”

YOUNG'S Love of Fame.

DEAR FRIEND,

YOU have often requested me to devote what few leisure moments I could spare, in minuting down some of the principal occurrences of my life, with a view, sooner or later, of exhibiting the ac-

B

count

count to the public eye ; who, as you were pleased to say, could not but be somewhat curious to learn some well-authenticated particulars of a man, well known to have risen from an obscure origin to a degree of notice, and to a participation of the favor of the Public, in a particular line of business, I may without vanity say, hitherto unprecedented. This will appear more conspicuous if you consider, that I was not only poor, but laboured under every other disadvantage ; being a stranger in London, and without friends, &c.

Ever willing to pay a becoming deference to the judgment of a person of your acknowledged merits, and whom I have the felicity of numbering among my firmest friends, yet being less anxious to appear as an adventurer among the numerous tribe of authors, than to continue a considerable vender of the produce of their labours, I have continually delayed complying with your kind wishes.— By the bye, does the publication of a Catalogue of Books entitle the compiler to the  
name

name of *Author*? If it does, many Book-fellers have long had a claim to that distinction, by the annual publication of their Catalogues, and myself, as *author* of a very voluminous one every six months. The reason for my asking this question is, I last year observed, that a certain bookseller published his first Catalogue with this introduction: — “As this is the first Catalogue ever the AUTHOR made, and is done in great haste, he hopes inaccuracies will be treated with lenity.”

But to return from this digression. I should probably have still delayed compiling my narrative, if the editors of a certain periodical publication, who monthly labor to be witty, had not deemed me of sufficient consequence to introduce into their work, what they are pleased to call a *Portrait* of me! and though it was by them intended as a caricatura, yet I am persuaded it will appear to those who best know me, as a daubing more characteristic of the heavy brush of a manufacturer of signs, than the delicate

pencil of a true portrait-painter; and on that account I should most certainly have considered it as unworthy notice, had they not daubed me with false features. This at once determined my wavering resolution, and I am now fully resolved to minute down such particulars of my passage through life, as, though not adorned with an elegance of style, will, I assure you, possess what to you, I flatter myself, will be a greater recommendation, viz. a strict adherence to truth.

“ To pomp or pathos I make no pretence,  
 “ But range in the broad path of common sense,  
 “ Nor ever burrow in the dark sublime.”

And though no doubt you will meet with some occurrences in which you may find cause for censure, yet I hope others will present themselves, which your candour will induce you to commend.

“ Disdain not then these trifles to attend,  
 “ Nor fear to blame, nor study to commend.”

LORD HERVEY.

Should you be able to afford the whole a patient perusal, and think the account  
 meriting

meriting the public eye, I shall chearfully submit to your decision, convinced that you will not,

“ With mean complacence e'er betray your trust,

“ Nor be so civil as to prove unjust.”

John Dunton, a brother *Bibliopole*, long since exhibited a whole volume of dulness, which he called his “ Life and errors.” The latter term I believe might be a very proper appendage to the title page of the innumerable lives which have been, and which will be published: For what man will dare to say of himself, his life has not been loaded with errors? That mine has been such, I readily acknowledge; and should this narrative be published, many perhaps may deem that act another (possibly the greatest) error. To those I shall only observe, that “ to err is human, to forgive divine.”

As an additional stimulus, I can assure you as an absolute fact, that several gentlemen have at different periods (one very lately)

intimated to me their intentions of engaging in the task, if I any longer declined it.

Of my first-mentioned *kind Biographers* I shall take my leave, with a couplet, many years since written by an eminent poet, and not inapplicable to the present case.

“ Let B— charge low Grub-Street on my quill,  
“ And write whate’er he please, except MY WILL.

And of you, for the present, after informing you, my next shall contain a faithful account of particulars relative to the early part of my life, with assuring you that I am,

Dear Friend,

Your ever obliged,

LETTER

## L E T T E R II.

“ Why should my birth keep down my mounting Spirit ?  
 “ Are not all creatures subject unto time ;  
 “ To time, who doth abuse the world,  
 “ And fills it full of hotch-podge bastardy ?  
 “ There’s legions now of beggars on the Earth,  
 “ That their original did spring from Kings ;  
 “ And many monarchs now, whose fathers were  
 “ The riff-raff of their age ; for time and fortune  
 “ Wears out a noble train to beggary ;  
 “ And from the dunghill millions do advance  
 “ To state ; and mark, in this admiring world  
 “ This is the course, which in the name of fate  
 “ Is seen as often as it whirls about ;  
 “ The river Thames that by our door doth run,  
 “ His first beginning is but small and shallow,  
 “ Yet keeping on his course grows to a sea.”

SHAKESPEAR’S *Cromwell*.

DEAR FRIEND,

**I**N my last I hinted that I should confine myself to a plain narrative of facts, unembellished with the meretricious aid of lofty figures, or representations of things which never had existence, but in the brain of the author. I shall therefore not trouble you with a history of predictions which foretold the future greatness of your

humble servant, nor with a minute account of the aspects of the planets at the very auspicious and important crisis when first I inhaled the air of this bustling orb.

“ Whatever star did at my birth prevail,  
 “ Whether my fate was weigh’d in Libra’s scale;  
 “ Or Scorpio reign’d, whose gloomy pow’r  
 “ Rules dreadful o’er the natal hour ;  
 “ Or Capricorn with angry rays,  
 “ Those tyrants of the western skies.”

HORACE.

For, extraordinary as it may appear, it has never yet occurred to me, that any of the adepts in the astrological science have made a calculation of my nativity ; 'tis probable this high honor is by the planets destined to adorn the sublime lucubrations of the very ingenious Mr. SIBLEY, in the next edition of his stup—endous work ! And here, for the honor of the craft let me remark, that this most sublime genius has, with myself, to boast (and who would not boast of their genealogy in having a prince for their ancestor ?) in being a Son of the renowned PRINCE CRISPIN.

A vo-



A volume has been written with the title of “The Honor of the Taylors ; or, the History of Sir JOHN HAWKWOOD.” But were any learned writer to undertake—— The honor of the Shoemakers, or the History of ——, how insignificant a figure would the poor Taylors make, when compared with the honorable craft !

“ Coblers from Crispin boast their Public Spirit,

“ And all are upright downright men of merit.”

Should I live to see as many editions of my Memoirs published, as there have been of the Pilgrim’s Progress, I may be induced to present the world with a Folio on that important subject.

But to begin——

Were I inclined to pride myself in genealogical descent, I might here boast that the family were originally settled at White Lackington, in Somersetshire, which obtained its name from one of my famous ancestors, and give you a long detail of their grandeur, &c. but  
having

having as little leisure as inclination to boast of what if true would add nothing to *my* merits, I shall for the present only say, that I was born at Wellington in Somersetshire, on the 31st of August, (old style) 1746. My father, George Lackington, was a Journeyman Shoemaker, who had incurred the displeasure of my grandfather for marrying my mother, whose maiden name was Joan Trott. She was the daughter of a poor weaver in Wellington; a good honest man, whose end was remarkable, though not very fortunate; in the road between Taunton and Wellington, he was found drowned in a ditch, where the water scarcely covered his face: He was, 'tis conjectured,

“ ——— Drunk when he died.”

This happened some years before the marriage of my Father and Mother.

My grandfather, George Lackington, had been a Gentleman Farmer at Langford, a village two miles from Wellington, and acquired a pretty considerable property. But  
my

my father's mother dying when my father was but about thirteen years of age, my grandfather, who had two daughters, bound my father apprentice to a Mr. Hordly, a master shoemaker in Wellington, with an intention of setting him up in that business at the expiration of his time. But my father worked a year or two as a journeyman, and then displeased his father by marrying a woman without a shilling, of a mean family, and who supported herself by spinning of wool into yarn, so that my mother was delivered of your friend and humble servant, her first-born, and hope of the family, in my grandmother Trott's poor cottage; and that good old woman carried me privately to church, unknown to my father, who was (nominally) a Quaker, that being the religion of his ancestors.

About the year 1750, my father having three or four children, and my mother proving an excellent wife, my grandfather's relentment had nearly subsided, so that he supplied him with money to open a shop for  
*himself.*

*himself*. But that which was intended to be of very great service to him and his family, eventually proved extremely unfortunate to himself and them ; for, as soon as he found he was more at ease in his circumstances, he contracted a fatal habit of drinking, and of course his business was neglected ; so that after several fruitless attempts of my grandfather to keep him in trade, he was, partly by a very large family, but more by his habitual drunkenness, reduced to his old state of a journeyman shoemaker : Yet so infatuated was he with the love of liquor, that the endearing ties of husband and father could not restrain him : by which baneful habit himself and family were involved in the extremest poverty.

“ To mortal men great loads allotted be ;

“ But of all packs, no pack like poverty.”

HERRICK.

So that neither myself, my Brothers, or Sisters, are indebted to a Father (scarcely for any thing that can endear his memory, or cause us to reflect on him with pleasure.

“ Children,

“ Children, the blind effects of love and chance  
 “ Bear from their birth the impress of a Slave.

DRYDEN.

My father and mother might have said with  
 Middleton,

“ How adverse runs the destiny of some creatures !  
 “ Some only can get riches and no children,  
 “ We only can get children and no riches ;  
 “ Then 'tis the prudent part to check our will,  
 “ And, till our state rife, make our blood stand still.”

But to our mother we are indebted for every thing. “ She was a woman take her for all in all, I shall not look upon her like again.” Never did I know or hear of a woman who worked and lived so hard as she did to support Eleven children: and were I to relate the particulars, it would not gain credit. I shall only observe, that for many years together, she worked generally nineteen or twenty hours out of every twenty-four; even when very near her time, sometimes at one hour she was seen walking backwards and forwards by her Spinning-wheel, and her midwife sent for the next. Whenever she was asked

to drink a half pint of ale, at any shop where she had been laying out a trifling sum, she always asked leave to take it home to her husband, who was always so mean and selfish as to drink it.

Out of love to her family she totally abstained from every kind of Liquor, water excepted, her food was chiefly broth, (little better than water and oatmeal) turnips, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, &c. her children fared something better, but not much, as you may well suppose. When I reflect on the astonishing hardships and sufferings of so worthy a woman, and her helpless infants, I find myself ready to curse the husband and father that could thus involve them in such a deplorable scene of misery and distress. It is dreadful to add, that his habitual drunkenness shortened his days nearly one half, and that about twenty years since he died, unregretted by his own children; nay more, while nature shed tears over his grave, reason was thankful:

“ A parting tear to nature must be paid,

“ Nature in spite of us, will be obey'd.”

Thankful

Thankful that the cause of their poverty and misery was taken out of the way.

- “ The pious tear the fons and daughters shed ;  
 “ Thus they, whom long he wrong'd, bewail'd him dead :  
 “ With rev'ence they perform his obsequies,  
 “ And bear their sorrows as befits the wife.

COOKE.

Read this, ye inhuman parents, and shudder !  
 Was a law made to banish all such fathers,  
 would it not be a just, nay even a mild law ?  
 I have my doubts whether children should  
 not be taught to despise and detest an unna-  
 tural brutal parent, as much as they are to  
 love and revere a good one.

Here, sir, permit me to drop so gloomy a  
 subject, and relate an uncommon circum-  
 stance that happened about this time.

Mr. James Knowland, who for many years  
 kept the sign of the Eight Bells in Welling-  
 ton, had a son that appeared weakly and  
 infirm ; when he was about nine years old,  
 he was taken very ill, and (to all appearance)  
 died ; he had laid in the coffin five days,  
 when

when in bringing him down stairs in order to bury him, they thought that something moved in the coffin, and on opening it, they found him alive, and his eyes open. About two years after this, the boy was again taken ill, and in a day or two after, was to all appearance dead; but his father resolved not to have him interred, until he became offensive; he laid in this state six days, and again came to life.

I am, Sir,

Yours.

LETTER



## L E T T E R III.

“ So have I wander’d ere those days were past,  
 “ That childhood calls her own. Ah, happy days,  
 “ That recollection loves, unstain’d with vice,  
 “ Why are ye gone so soon ?——

Village Curate.

DEAR FRIEND,

**A**S I was the eldest, and my father for the first few years a careful hard working man, I fared something better than my brothers and sisters. I was put for two or three years to a day-school, kept by an old woman; and well remember how proud I used to be to see several ancient dames lift up their hands and eyes with astonishment, while I repeated by memory several chapters out of the New Testament, concluding me from this specimen to be a prodigy of Science. But my career of learning was soon at an end, when my mother became so poor that she could not afford the mighty sum of two-pence per week for my schooling. Besides, I was obliged to supply

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the

the place of a nurse to several of my brothers and sisters. The consequence of which was, that what little I had learned was presently forgot ; instead of learning to read, &c. it very early became my chief delight to excel in all kinds of boyish mischiefs ; and I soon arrived to be the captain and leader of all the boys in the neighbourhood.

“ The sprightliest of the sprightly throng,

“ The foremost of the train.”

Mifs BOWDLER.

So that if any old woman's lanthorn was kicked out of her hand, or drawn up a sign-post, or if any thing was fastened to her tail, or if her door was nailed up, I was sure to be accused as the author, whether I really were so or not.

But one of my tricks had nearly proved fatal to me. I had observed that *yawning* was infectious ; and with a determination to have some sport, I collected several boys together one market-day evening, and instructed them to go amongst the butchers ;  
whither

whither I accompanied them. We placed ourselves at proper distances, and at a signal given, all began to yawn as wide as we could; which immediately had the desired effect, the whole butcher-row was set a yawning; on which I and my companions burst out into a hearty laugh, and took to our heels. The trick pleased us so well, that two or three weeks after, we attempted to renew it. But one of the butchers, who was half drunk, perceiving our intention, snatched up his cleaver and threw it at me, which knocked off my hat without doing me any harm.

I was about ten years of age, when a man began to cry *apple-pies* about the streets, I took great notice of his methods of selling his pies, and thought I could do it much better than him. I communicated to a neighbouring baker my thoughts on the subject in such a manner as gave him a very good opinion of my abilities for a pie-merchant, and he prevailed on my father to let me live with him. My manner of crying pies, and my activity

in felling them, soon made me the favourite of all such as purchased halfpenny apple-pies, and halfpenny plum-puddings, so that in a few weeks the old pie-merchant shut up his shop. You see, friend, that I soon began to “make a noise in the world.” I lived with this baker about twelve or fifteen months, in which time I sold such large quantities of pies, puddings, cakes, &c. that he often declared to his friends in my hearing, that I had been the means of extricating him from the embarrassing circumstances in which he was known to be involved prior to my entering his service.

During the time I continued with this Baker, many complaints were repeatedly made against me for the childish follies I had been guilty of, such as throwing snow-balls, frightening people by flinging serpents and crackers into their houses, &c. I also happened one day to overturn my master's son, a child about four years old, whom I had been driving in a wheel-barrow. Dreading the consequences, I immediately flew from  
from

from my master's house, and (it being evening) went to a glazier's, and procured a parcel of broken glafs; I also provided myself with a pocketful of peas; and thus equipped, made fine diversion for myself and my unlucky companions, by going to a number of houses, one after another, discharging a handful of peas at the windows, and throwing down another handful of glafs in the street at the same instant, which made such a noise as very much frightened many people, who had no doubt of their windows being broken into a thousand pieces. This adventure, together with throwing the child out of the wheel-barrow, produced such a clamour against me amongst the old women, that I would not return to my master, and not knowing what else to do, I went home to my father, who, you may easily conceive could not afford to keep me idle, so I was soon set down by his side to learn his own trade; and I continued with him several years, working when he worked, and while he was keeping *Saint Monday*, I was with

boys of my own age, fighting, cudgel-playing, wrestling, &c. &c.

The following story has been variously stated ; my father assured me that the origin of it was as follows :

He and some other young fellows being one Easter Sunday morning at the clerk's house at Langford, near Wellington, drinking the clerk's ale, they overheard the old man reading the verses of the psalms that he was to read that morning at church ; and in order to have some fun with the old clerk, one of the company set off early to church, and on the word tree they stuck on, the word horse, so that when the old man came to that place, he read as follows, " And they shall flourish like a young bay horse." Horse ! it should not be horse ; but, by the Lord, it is horse !

The above old man was called Red Cock for many years before his death, for having one Sunday slept in church, and dreaming  
that

that he was at a cock-fighting, he bawled, out, “ A shilling upon the red cock.” And behold the family are called Red Cock unto this day.

The preceding reminds me of an odd circumstance that happened but a few years since at W———. As the good doctor was one Sunday morning going through the street towards the cathedral, he heard a woman cry “ Mackerel, all alive, alive O !” And on his arrival at the church, he began the service as follows, “ When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive, alive O !” These last words the doctor proclaimed aloud, in the true tone of the fish-woman, to the great surprise of the congregation ; but the good doctor was so studious and absent, that he knew not what he had done.

Yours, &c.

## L E T T E R IV.

“ Who gather round, and wonder at the tale  
 “ Of horrid apparition, tall and ghastly,  
 “ That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand,  
 “ O'er some new-open'd grave : and (strange to tell!)  
 “ Evanishes at crowing of the cock.”

BLAIR'S Grave.

DEAR FRIEND,

I Must not forget an odd adventure that happened when I was about twelve years of age, as it tends to shew in part my dauntless disposition, which discovered itself on many occasions in the very early part of my life.

I had one day walked with my father to Holywell lake, a village two miles from Wellington, where meeting with some good ale, he could not find in his heart to part from it until late at night. When we were returning home by the way of Rockwell-Green, (commonly called *Rogue Green*, from a gang of robbers and house-breakers who formerly lived there) having just passed the  
 bridge,



bridge, we were met by several men and women, who appeared to be very much frightened, being in great agitation. They informed us that they were returning back to Rogue-Green, in order to sleep there that night, having been prevented from going home to Wellington by a dreadful Apparition, which they had all seen in the hollow way, about a quarter of a mile distant; adding, that a person having been murdered there formerly, the ghost had walked ever since; that they had never before paid much attention to the well-known report; but now they were obliged to credit it, having had ocular demonstration.

“ Aided by Fancy, terror lifts his head,  
“ And leaves the dreary mansions of the dead;  
“ In shapes more various mocks at human care,  
“ Than e'er the fabled Proteus us'd to wear;  
“ Now, in the lonely way each trav'ler's dread,  
“ He stalks a giant-shape without a head.  
“ Now in the haunted house, his dread domain,  
“ The curtain draws, and shakes the clinking chain;  
“ Hence fabled ghosts arise, and spectres dire,  
“ Theme of each ev'ning tale by winter's fire.”

PRALL'S Superstition.

My

My father had drank too large a quantity of ale to be much afraid of any thing, and I (who could not let slip such an opportunity of shewing my courage) seconded matters for the poor terrified people to return with us ; and as I offered to lead the van, they were prevailed on to make the attempt once more ; but said, that it was rather presumptuous, and hoped that no dreadful consequence would ensue, as all the company, they trusted, were honest-hearted, and intended no harm to any person : they moreover added, that “ God certainly was above the devil.” I then advanced, and kept before the company about fifty yards,

“ Whistling aloud to bear my courage up.”

But when we had walked about a quarter of a mile, I saw at some distance before us in the hedge, the dreadful apparition that had so terrified our company. Here it is ! (said I). “ Lord have mercy upon us !” replied some of the company, making a full stop ; and would have gone back, but shame prevented them. I still kept my distance before,

fore, and called out to them to follow me, assuring them that I was determined to see what it was. They then fell one behind another, and advanced in single files. As I proceeded I too was seized with a timid apprehension, but durst not own it; still keeping on before, although I perceived my hair to heave my hat from my head, and my teeth to chatter in my mouth. In fact, I was greatly agitated at what I saw; the object much resembled the human figure as to shape, but the size was prodigious. However, I had promised to see what it was, and for that purpose I obstinately ventured on about thirty yards from the place where I first had sight of it. I then perceived that it was only a very short tree, whose limbs had been newly cut off, the doing of which had made it much resemble a giant. I then called to the company, and informed them, with a hearty laugh, that they had been frightened at the stump of a tree.

This

This story caused excellent diversion for a long time afterwards in Wellington, and I was mentioned as an hero.

The pleasure and satisfaction I received from the discovery, and the honour I acquired for the courage I possessed in making it, has, I believe, had much influence on me ever since; as I cannot recollect that in any one instance I have ever observed the least fear of apparitions, spirits, &c. since.

“ What education did at first receive,

“ Our ripen'd age confirms us to believe.”

POMFRET.

Not that I have always steadily disbelieved what has been related of such appearances, a few accounts of which seem so well authenticated, as at least to make me doubt whether there might not exist in the scale of beings some of a more aerial substance than mankind, who may possess both the inclination and the power of assuming our shape, and may perhaps take as much delight in teasing the human species, as too many of our species do

do in teasing and even tormenting those of the brute creation.

“ Some aſtral forms I muſt invoke by pray’r ;  
 “ Fram’d all of pureſt atoms of the air :  
 “ In airy chariots they together ride,  
 “ And ſip the dew, as thro’ the clouds they glide ;  
 “ Vain ſpirits, You, that ſhunning heav’n’s high noon,  
 “ Swarm here beneath the concave of the moon,  
 “ Hence to the taſk aſſign’d you here below !  
 “ Upon the ocean make loud tempeſts blow ;  
 “ Into the wombs of hollow clouds repair,  
 “ And caſh out thunder from the bladder’d air ;  
 “ From pointed ſun-beams take the miſts they drew :  
 “ And ſcatter them again in pearly dew ;  
 “ And of the bigger drops they drain below,  
 “ Some mould in hail, and others ſift in ſnow.”

DRYDEN.

While I am on this ſubject, I cannot reſiſt the temptation of relating a truly ridiculous affair that happened about this time at Taunton.

In the workhouſe belonging to the pariſh of St. James, there lived a young woman who was an idiot. This poor creature had a great averſion to ſleeping in a bed, and at bed-time would often run away to a field in the

the

the neighbourhood called the Priory, where she slept in the cowsheds.

In order to break her of this bad custom, two men agreed to try if they could not frighten her out of it. And one night, when they knew that she was there, they took a white sheet with them, and coming to the place, one of the men concealed himself to see the event, while the other wrapped himself up in the sheet, and walked backwards and forwards close before the cowshed in which she was laid. It was some time before Molly paid any attention to the apparition; but at last up she got. "Aha! (said she) a white devil!" and by her manner of expressing herself she thought it was very strange to see a *white* devil. And soon after she exclaimed, "A black devil too! a black devil too!" With that the man who had the sheet on, looked over his shoulder, and saw (or imagined he saw) a person all over black behind him; the sight of which made him take to his heels. Molly then clapped her hands as fast as she could, crying

crying out at the same time, " Run, black devil, and catch white devil ! Run, black devil, and catch white devil ! " and was highly diverted. But this proved a serious adventure to the white devil, as he expired within a few minutes after he had reached his own house ; and from that time poor Molly was left alone to sleep in peace.

About ten years after the above affair, at Wivelscombe, nine miles from Taunton, a gentleman farmer's house was alarmed every night between twelve and one o'clock. The chamber doors were thrown open, the bed-clothes pulled off the beds, and the kitchen furniture thrown with violence about the kitchen, to the great terror of the family, insomuch that the servants gave their master and mistress warning to leave their places, and some of them actually quitted their service. This dreadful affair had lasted about six weeks, when a young gentleman who was there on a visit, being in bed one night, at the usual hour he heard his chamber door thrown open, and a very odd noise  
about

about his room. He was at first frightened, but the noise continuing a long time, he became calm, and laid still, revolving in his mind what he had best do. When on a sudden he heard the spirit creep under his bed, which was immediately lifted up, &c. This convinced him that there was some substance in the spirit; on which he leaped out of bed, secured the door, and with his oaken staff belaboured the ghost under the bed as hard as he could, until he heard a female voice imploring mercy. On that he opened his chamber door, and called aloud for a light. The family all got up as fast as possible, and came to his room. He then informed them that he had got the spirit under the bed; on hearing which, most of them were terribly frightened, and would have run off faster than they came, but he assured them, they had nothing to fear: then out he dragged the half-murdered spirit from its scene of action. But how great was their surprize and shame, when they discovered that this tormenting devil was no other than one of their servant girls  
about



about sixteen years of age, who had been confined to her bed several months by illness.

This ghost was no sooner laid, than two others alarmed the neighbourhood; one of which for a long time shook a house every night, and terribly distressed the family; at length they all resolved one night to go over the whole house in a body, and see what it was that so agitated the building. They examined every room, but in vain, as no cause could be discovered. So they very seriously as well as unanimously concluded, that it must be *the devil*.

But about a fortnight after this, one of the family being out late in the garden, saw a great boy get in at the window of an old house next door (part of which was in ruins), and soon after the house began to shake as usual, on which the family went out of their own habitation, and entered the old house where the boy was seen to get in; yet for a long time they could not discover any person, and were just turning to come out

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again,

again, when one of the company observed the boy suspended above their heads, striding over the end of a large beam that ran across both houses.

It was then apparent, that the violent agitation of the adjoining house was occasioned by nothing more than his leaping up and down on the unsupported end of this beam.

Another apparition had for a long time stolen many geese, turkeys, &c. and altho' it had been seen by many, yet nobody would venture to go near it, until at length one person a little wiser than the rest of his neighbours, seeing the famous apparition all over white stealing his fowls, was determined to be fully satisfied what kind of spirit it could be that had so great a predilection for poultry. He accordingly went round the yard, and as the apparition was coming over the wall, he knocked it down. This terrible ghost then proved to be a neighbouring woman, who had put on her shroud, in order to deter any persons that should by chance

chance see her, from coming near her. Thus, though she had for a long time successfully practised this ingenious way of procuring poultry, the old fox was caught at last.

This is so prolific a subject, that I could fill many pages with relations of dreadful spectres, which for a while have reigned with tyrannic sway over weak minds, and at length when calm Reason was suffered to assume its power, have been discovered to be no more objects of terror than those I have here noticed. But doubtless many such instances must have occurred to you.

“ Chief o’er the sex he rules with tyrant sway,  
 “ When vapours seiz’d them, or vain fears betray ;  
 “ With groans of distant friends affrights the ear,  
 “ Or, sits a phantom in the vacant chair ;  
 “ Fancy, like Macbeth, has murder’d sleep.”

PRALL.

It has indeed often astonished me, that in this enlightened age, there should yet remain numbers, not in the country only, but

even in the metropolis, who suffer themselves to be made miserable by vain fears of preternatural occurrences, which generally owe their origin to the knavery of some ill-disposed person, who has a sinister purpose to answer thereby, or to the foolish desire of alarming the minds of weak people: a practice sometimes (though intended as *fun*) productive of very serious consequences. Now and then, indeed, these terrors are owing to accidental and ridiculous causes. As an instance, I shall give you the account of a terrible alarm which some years since took place in an Hospital of this city, as related to me by a gentleman, who at the time resided in the house, for the purpose of completing his medical education, and on whose veracity I can confidently rely.

For several nights successively a noise had been heard in the lower part of the building, like the continual tapping against a window, which led the night nurses *wisely* to conclude it must certainly be occasioned by the Spirit of one of the bodies deposited in the dead-house

house endeavouring to escape; as the sound seemed to proceed from that particular quarter. The dread of these *sagacious ladies* at last became such, as totally to prevent their going from ward to ward to do their duty, and determined my friend to attempt to lay this perturbed spirit; which however he apprehended would more speedily, as well as effectually, be performed by the assistance of a good cudgel, than by exorcisms; he therefore, instead of consulting the Chaplain, gave orders the next night as soon as the usual *dreadful sound* was heard, to give him notice. This you may suppose they did not neglect doing, though at the same time they were shocked at his temerity, and apprehensive for the consequences. Impressed with an idea of the alarm being occasioned by some servant or patient in the house, he immediately sallied forth, with a candle in one hand, and a good tough twig in the other, accompanied by two of the men servants of the Hospital, accoutred in the same manner, resolved that if detected, the party should meet with an ample reward. The dead-

house was passed; the noise continued; though it evidently proceeded from a window at some distance in the area. When the cavalcade came near the scene of action, the window suddenly and violently broke, without any thing being seen. This my friend confessed, for a moment occasioned his making a halt; but as nothing visible had escaped through the area, it occurred to him something might have made an entrance that way; accordingly he proceeded to the internal part of the building, and on opening the door, the apparition immediately not only appeared, but disappeared, and that so instantaneously as not to afford time to apply the remedy intended. And what think you, was this dreadful spirit? That you may exercise your ingenuity at guessing; I will here conclude with,

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## LETTER V.

“ ——— Were thy education ne'er so mean,  
 “ Having thy limbs, a thousand fair courses  
 “ Offer themselves to thy election.”

BEN JONSON'S *Every Man in his Humour*.

“ Laugh if you are wife.”

MARTIAL.

DEAR FRIEND,

A CAT.—An odd beginning of a Letter, by the bye—but here highly *important* and proper, as tending to relieve you from the anxious thoughts which (no doubt) must have filled your mind on the subject of the concluding part of my former letter. I must give you a laughable instance or two more, which lately happened. Mr. Higley, the bookfeller famous for felling odd volumes, or broken sets of books, lived next door to a public-house in Ruffell-court, Drury-lane; this public-house was separated from his habitation only by a flight wainscot partition, through which Mr. Higley caused

an hole to be cut, and a slider put over it, so that when he wanted any beer, he always drew back the slider, and had it handed to him through this convenient aperture.

The night after Mr. Higley's death, which happened a few months since, the man who was left to take care of the corps, about twelve o'clock hearing the landlord and his family going up stairs to their beds, on a sudden drew back the slider and halloo'd through the hole, "Bring me a pint of beer." This order the landlord and his family heard, and were terribly alarmed, as they really thought it had proceeded from the ghost of their neighbour Higley; the poor maid let fall the warming-pan, which came tumbling down the stairs; the landlady being within the reach of her husband's legs, caught fast hold of them, which in his fright he mistook for poor Higley. But the man bursting into a hearty laugh, restored the spirits of our host and his family.

About



About the year 1781, six or seven mechanics having been drinking near the whole of the day at a public house in the Borough, they at night were at a loss how to procure more liquor, their money being all gone, when two of the company observed, that an old wiredrawer in the room was dead drunk, they proposed to put him into a sack, and to carry him to Longbottom, the resurrection-man. This motion met with the approbation of the whole, and the two that proposed it took him away to Longbottom's house, as a dead subject, and requested a guinea, saying that they would call for the remainder in the morning. Their request was complied with, and the old wiredrawer was left in the sack in a room amongst dead bodies. About midnight the old man awaked, and made a terrible noise, which much alarmed Mr. Longbottom and his wife, as they really supposed that one of their dead subjects was come to life again, durst not approach the room, but remained for a long time under a dreadful apprehension of what might be the consequences. The old fellow after a long struggle

struggle got out of the sack, and after tumbling about awhile over the dead bodies, he at last found his way down stairs, and off he set, leaving Mr. Longbottom and his wife in the utmost consternation. The old wiredrawer related this story to my brother Philip Lackington.

Having now, I dare say, had enough of *Ghostesses*, I will proceed with my narration.

During the time that I lived with the Baker, my name became so celebrated for selling a large number of pies, puddings, &c. that for several years following, application was made to my father, for him to permit me to sell Almanacks a few market days before and after Christmas. In this employ I took great delight, the country people being highly pleased with me, and purchasing a great number of my Almanacks, which excited envy in the itinerant venders of Moore, Wing, Poor Robin, &c. to such a degree, that my father often expressed his anxiety lest they should some way or other do me a mischief. But I had not the least concern,  
for

for possessing a light pair of heels, I always kept at a proper distance.

O, my friend, little did I imagine at that time, that I should ever excite the same poor mean spirit in many of the booksellers of London and other places! but,

“ *Envy* at last crawls forth, from hell’s dire throng,  
 “ Of all the direful’st! her black locks hung long,  
 “ Attir’d with curling serpents; her pale skin  
 “ Was almost dropp’d from her sharp bones within,  
 “ And at her breast stuck vipers, which did prey  
 “ Upon her panting heart both night and day,  
 “ Sucking black blood from thence: which to repair,  
 “ Both day and night they left fresh poisons there.  
 “ Her garments were deep-stain’d with human gore,  
 “ And torn by her own hands, in which she bore  
 “ A knotted whip and bowl, which to the brim,  
 “ Did green gall, and the juice of wormwood swim;  
 “ With which when she was drunk, she furious grew,  
 “ And lash’d herself: thus from th’ accursed crew,  
 “ *Envy*, the wort of fiends, herself presents,  
 “ *Envy*, good only when she herself torment.”

COWLEY.

“ ——— The true condition of *Envy* is,  
 “ *Dolor aliena felicitatis*; to have  
 “ Our eyes continually fix’d upon another  
 “ Man’s prosperity, that is, his chief happiness,  
 “ And to grieve at that.”

I was

I was fourteen years and a half old when I went with my father to work at Taunton, seven miles from Wellington. We had been there about a fortnight, when my father informed our master, George Bowden, that he would return to Wellington again. Mr. Bowden was then pleased to inform my father that he had taken a liking to me, and proposed taking me apprentice; I seconded Mr. Bowden's motion (having a better prospect in continuing with Mr. Bowden than in returning to Wellington with my father), as he offered to take me without any premium, and to find me in every thing. My father accepted his offer, and I was immediately bound apprentice for seven years to Mr. George and Mrs. Mary Bowden, as honest and worthy a couple as ever carried on a trade.

“ Religious, punctual, frugal, and so forth;

“ Their word would pass for more than they were worth.”

POPE.

They carefully attended to their shop six days in the week, and on the seventh went with their family twice to an anabaptist meeting;

meeting; where little attention was paid to speculative doctrines; but where sound morality was constantly inculcated.

“ For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,

“ His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.”

But in this, as in many other places of worship, it was performed in a dull spiritless manner; so that the excellent morality taught there was not so much attended to as it would have been had it been enforced, or re-enforced by the captivating powers of oratory.

I well remember, that although I constantly attended this place, it was a year or two before I took the least notice of the sermon, which was read; nor had I any idea that I had the least concern in what the minister was (as 'tis called) preaching about. For,

“ Who a cold, dull, lifeless drawling keeps,

“ One half his audience laughs, whilst t'other sleeps.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Sermons, like plays, some please us at the ear,

“ But never will a serious reading bear;

“ Some

- “ Some in the clofet edify enough,  
“ That from the pulpit seem'd but forry stuff.  
“ 'Tis thus there are who by ill reading spoil  
“ Young's pointed sense, or Atterbury's style!  
“ While others, by the force of eloquence,  
“ Make that seem fine, which scarce is common sense.  
“ But some will preach without the least pretence  
“ To virtue, learning, art, or eloquence.  
“ Why not? you cry : they plainly see, no doubt—  
“ A priest may grow *right reverend* without.”

Art of Preaching.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R VI.

“ Youth is the flock whence grafted superstition  
 “ Shoots with unbounded vigour.”

MILLER'S Mahomet.

“ — All must lament that he's under such banners,  
 “ As evil community spoils our good manners.”

SIMKIN.

DEAR FRIEND,

AT the time that I was bound apprentice, my master had two sons, the eldest about seventeen years old, the youngest fourteen. The eldest had just been baptized, and introduced as a member of the arianistical dipping community where my master and his family attended. The boy was a very sober industrious youth, and gave his father and mother much pleasure. The youngest was also a good lad. Thus every thing continued well for some time after I had been added to the family. Both of the boys had very good natural parts, and had learned

learned to read, write, keep accounts, &c. But they had been at schools where no variety of books had been introduced, so that all they had read was the Bible. My master's whole library consisted of a school-size Bible, Watts's Psalms and Hymns, Foot's Tract on Baptism, Culpepper's Herbal, the History of the Gentle Craft, an old imperfect volume of Receipts in Physic, Surgery, &c. and the Ready Reckoner. The ideas of the family were as circumscribed as their library. My master called attention to business and working hard, "*minding the main chance.*" On Sundays all went to meeting; my master on that day said a short grace before dinner, and the boys read a few chapters in the Bible, took a walk for an hour or two, then read a chapter or two more.

“ What right, what true, what fit we justly call,  
“ And this was all our care—for this is all.”

They then supped, and went early to bed, perfectly satisfied with having done their  
duty;



duty ; and each having a quiet conscience, soon fell into the arms of “ Nature’s soft nurse ! sweet sleep.

“ And thus whatever be our station,  
 “ Our hearts in spite of us declare ;  
 “ We feel peculiar consolation,  
 “ And taste of happiness a share.”

HORACE Imitated.

I cannot here omit mentioning a very singular custom of my master’s : Every morning, at all seasons of the year, and in all weathers, he rose about three o’clock, took a walk by the river-side round French-ware-fields, stopt at an alehouse that was early open to drink half a pint of ale, came back before six o’clock, then called up his people to work, and went to bed again about seven.

Thus was the good man’s family jogging easily and quietly on, no one doubting but he should go to heaven when he died, and every one hoping it would be a good while first.

“ A man should be religious, not superstitious.”

E

But

But, alas! the dreadful crisis was at hand that put an end to the happiness and peace of this little family. I had been an apprentice about twelve or fifteen months, when my master's eldest son George happened to go and hear a sermon by one of Mr. Wesley's preachers, who had left the plough-tail to preach the *pure* and *unadulterated* Gospel of Christ. By this sermon the fallow ground of poor George's heart was ploughed up, he was now persuaded that the innocent and good life he had led would only sink him deeper into hell: in short, he found out that he had never been converted, and of course was in a state of damnation, without benefit of Clergy. But he did not long continue in this damnable state, but soon became one of

“ ————— The sanctified band,

“ Who all holy mysteries well understand.”

SIMKIN.

He persuaded himself that he had passed through the *New Birth*, and was quite sure that his name was registered in the Book of Life, and (to the great grief of his parents) he was in reality become *a new creature*.

“ 'Twas

“ ’Twas methodistic grace that made him tofs and tumble,  
 “ Which in his entrails did like julap rumble.”

OVID’S Epist. Burlesqued.

George had no sooner made things sure for himself, than he began to extend his concern to his father, mother, brother, and me; and very kindly gave us to understand, that he was sure we were in a very deplorable state, “ without hope, and without God in the world,” being under the curse of the Law.

“ For all enthusiasts when the fit is strong,

“ Indulge a volubility of tongue.”

FENTON.

In the long winter nights, as we sat at work together, he proved (in his way) that every man had original sin enough to damn a thousand souls; and a deal was said on that subject. A passage was quoted from the wise determination of the doctors of the Sorbonne, where they say that children inclosed in their mother’s womb, are liable to damnation, if they die there unbaptized. Quotations were also made from some *deep*

author who had asserted, that there were  
 “ infants in hell but a span long ;” and that  
 “ hell was paved with infant skulls,” &c.

“ Thus feigning to adore, make thee,  
 “ A tyrant God of cruelty !  
 “ As if thy right-hand did contain  
 “ Only an universe of pain,  
 “ Hell and damnation in thy left,  
 “ Of ev’ry gracious gift bereft,  
 “ Hence reigning floods of grief and woes,  
 “ On those that never were thy foes,  
 “ Ordaining torments.”

As to **Morality**, George assured us it was of no avail ; that as for good works, they were only splendid sins ; and that in the best good work that any creature could perform, there was sin enough to sink the doer to the nethermost hell ; that it was *faith* alone that did every thing, without a grain of morality ; but that no man could have one particle of this mysterious faith, before he was justified ; and *justification* was a sudden operation on the soul, by which the most execrable wretch that ever lived might instantaneously be assured

fured of all his fins being pardoned ; that his body from that very moment became the living temple of the Holy Ghost ; that he had fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ; and, that Spirit was to be their constant and infallible guide :

“ Whate’er men speak by this new light,  
“ Still they were fure to be i’ the right.  
“ This dark-lanthorn of the Spirit,  
“ Which none see by but those that bear it ;  
“ A light that falls down from on high,  
“ For spiritual trades to cozen by ;  
“ An ignis fatuus, that bewitches  
“ And leads men into pools and ditches,  
“ This light inspires and plays upon  
“ The noise of Saint, like bagpipe drone,  
“ And speaks through hollow empty soul,  
“ As through a trunk, or whispering hole,  
“ Such language as no mortal ear  
“ But spiritu’l eaves-droppers can hear.”

My master very seldom heard any of these conversations, but my good mistress would sit down for hours together, with her Bible in her lap, from which she would read such scriptures as proved the necessity of living a good life, performing good works, &c. she also did her best to confute the tenets of

Original sin, Imputed righteousness, doctrine of the Trinity, &c. &c. Unfortunately the good woman had no great talents for controversy; however, George had a very tenacious memory, and employed all his thoughts on these subjects, so that John his younger brother, and I also (two competent judges no doubt) thought that he had the best of the arguments on these edifying subjects. Nothing, says Montaigne, is so firmly believed as that which we least know, for which reason Plato said, "that it was more easy to satisfy his hearers, with discourses about the nature of the Gods than of men." About five months after George's conversion, John went to hear those only true Ambassadors from Heaven,

- " Who stroll and teach from town to town
- " The good old Cause: which some believe
- " To be the devil that tempted Eve
- " With knowledge, and do still invite
- " The world to mischief with new light."

BUTLER.

These devil-dodgers happened to be so very *powerful* (that is very *noisy*) that they soon sent

sent John home, crying out, he should be damn'd! he should be damn'd for ever!

But John soon got out of the damnable state, and assured us that all his sins were forgiven, merely by believing that he had passed from death into life, and had union and communion with God. He now became as merry as before he had been sorrowful, and sung in Mr. Wesley's strain,

“ Not a doubt shall arise  
 “ To darken the skies,  
 “ Nor hide for a moment my God from my Eyes.”

John sung to me, and said to me a deal in this wonderful strain, of which I did not comprehend one syllable.

“ ——— His words were loose  
 “ As heaps of sand, and scatter'd wide from sense,  
 “ So high he mounted in his airy throne,  
 “ That when the wind had got into his head,  
 “ It turn'd his brains to frenzy.”

But these extraordinary accounts and discourses, together with the controversies between the mother and the sons, made me think they

knew many matters of which I was totally ignorant. This created in me a desire for knowledge, that I might know who was right and who was wrong. But to my great mortification, I could not read. I knew most of the letters, and a few easy words, and I set about learning with all my might. My mistress would sometimes instruct me; and having three-halfpence per week allowed me by my mother, this money I gave to John (my master's youngest son) and for every three-halfpence he taught me to spell one hour; this was done in the dark, as we were not allowed a candle after we were sent up stairs to bed.

I soon made a little progress in reading; in the mean time I also went to the Methodist meeting. There, as "enthusiasm is the child of melancholy," I caught the infection. The first that I heard was one Thomas Bryant, known in Taunton by the name of the *damnation preacher* (he had just left off cobbling *soles* of another kind.) His sermon frightened me most terribly. I soon after  
went



went to hear an old Scotchman, and he assured his congregation, that they would be damn'd, and double damn'd, and treble damn'd, and damn'd for ever, if they died without what he called *faith*.

“ Conjurers like, on fire and brimstone dwell,

“ And draw each moving argument from hell.”

SOAME JENYNS.

This marvellous doctrine and noisy rant and enthusiasm soon worked on my passions, and made me believe myself to be really in the damnable condition that they represented; and in this miserable state I continued for about a month, being all that time unable to work myself up to the proper key.

At last, by singing and repeating enthusiastic amorous hymns, and ignorantly applying particular texts of scripture, I got my imagination to the proper pitch, and thus was I born again in an instant, became a very great favourite of heaven,

“ And with my new invented patent eyes,

“ Saw Heav'n and all the angels in the skies.”

PETER PINDER.

I had

I had angels to attend all my steps, and was as familiar with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as any old woman in Mr. Wesley's connection; which, by the bye, is saying a great deal.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R VII.

- “ No sleep, no peace, no rest  
 “ Their wand’ring and afflicted minds possess’d ;  
 “ Upon their souls and eyes  
 “ Hell and eternal horrors lies,  
 “ Unusual shapes and images,  
 “ Dark pictures and resemblances  
 “ Of things to come, and of the worlds below,  
 “ O’er their distemper’d fancies go :  
 “ Sometimes they curse, sometimes they pray unto  
 “ The gods above, the gods beneath ;  
 “ No sleep, but waking now was sister unto death.”

BP. SPURGEON.

DEAR FRIEND,

**I**T is perhaps worth remark-  
 ing, that what the methodists call conviction  
 of sin, being awakened, &c. is often a most  
 dreadful state, and has the very same effect  
 on such as have lived a very innocent life as  
 it has upon the most notorious offenders ; this  
 conviction (as they call it) is brought about  
 by the preachers heaping all the curses in the  
 Bible on the heads of the most virtuous as  
 well as most vicious ; for, say they, he who  
 keepeth

keepeth the whole law and offendeth but in one point, is as much in a state of damnation, as he that hath broken every one of the commandments, or committed robbery, murder, &c. so that they pour out every awful denunciation found in the Bible, and many not found there, against all who have not the methodistical faith: this they call shaking the people over the mouth of hell, and they in reality believe.

“ That cruel God, who form’d us in his wrath,  
 “ To plague, oppress, and torture us to death,  
 “ Who takes delight to see us in despair,  
 “ And is more happy, the more curs’d we are.  
 “ In vain all nature smiles, but man alone,  
 “ He’s form’d more perfect and was made to groan.”

Young Officer’s Trifles.

Thus are many who before possessed “ consciences void of offence towards God and mankind” tricked out of their peace of mind, by the ignorant application of texts of scripture. Their fears being once so dreadfully alarmed, they often become insupportable to themselves and all around them;  
 many

many in this state have put a period to their existence, others run mad, &c:

“ Oh! would mankind but make great truths their guide,  
 “ And force the helm from prejudice and pride ;  
 “ Were once these maxims fix’d, that God’s our friend,  
 “ Virtue our good, and happiness our end ;  
 “ How soon must reason o’er the world prevail,  
 “ And error, fraud, and superstition fail !  
 “ None would hereafter then with groundless fear,  
 “ Describe th’ Almighty cruel and severe.”

Soame Jenyns’s Epistle to Hon. P. York.

If the above terror of conscience was only to take place in knaves and rascals, there would be no reason for blaming the methodists on that head ; “ the wretch deserves the hell he feels.” A terrible instance of this kind happened near London-bridge about two years since : a person in a lucrative branch of business had put unbounded confidence in his head shopman, and well rewarded him for his supposed faithfulness. One morning, this man not coming down stairs so soon as usual, the servant maid went up to call him, and found him hanging up to the bed-post ; she had the presence of mind to cut him down, but he being nearly dead,

dead, it was some days before he perfectly recovered.

On his master coming to town, he was informed of what had happened to his favourite shopman; he heard the relation with the utmost astonishment, and took great pains to discover the cause of so fatal a resolution, but to no purpose. However, he endeavoured to reconcile this unhappy man to life, was very tender towards him, and gave him more encouragement than ever; but the more the master did to encourage and make him happy, the more the poor wretch appeared to be dejected; in this unhappy state of mind he lived about six months, when one morning, not appearing at his usual time, the servant maid went to see if he was well, and found him very weak in bed; a day or two after, his master came to town, and being told of his situation, went up to see him, and finding him in bed, and apparently very ill, proposed sending for a physician, but the poor devil refused to take any thing, and rejected every assistance, saying his time was  
nearly

nearly come. Soon after this the servant informed her master that he would not have the bed made, and that she had just observed some blood on one corner of the sheet. The master then went up stairs again, and by lifting up the bed-clothes found that he had stabbed himself in several places, and that in this state he had lain three or four days.

“ When innocence and peace are gone,

“ How sad, how teazable to live!”    SECUNDUS.

On the surgeon's appearance, he refused to have the wounds inspected, and the surgeon being of opinion that it was too late to render him any kind of service, they let him lie still. The master soon after this pressed him much to know the mysterious cause of so much misery, and so unnatural an end. The dying wretch exclaimed, “ a wounded conscience, who can bear.” The master then endeavoured to comfort him, and assured him that his conscience ought not to wound him. “ I know you (continued he) to be a good man, and the best of servants.” Hold! hold! exclaimed the wretch, your words are daggers

gers to my soul ! I am a villain, I have robbed you of hundreds, and have long suffered the tortures of the damned for being thus a concealed villain ; every act of kindness shewn to me by you has been long like vultures tearing my vitals. Go, sir, leave me, the sight of you causes me to suffer excruciating tortures ; he then shrunk under the bed-clothes, and the same night expired in a state of mind unhappy beyond all description.

“ Hope gone ! the guilty never rest !

“ Dismay is always near ;

“ There is a midnight in the breast,

“ No morn can ever cheer.”      Night Scenes.

Terrible as the above relation is, I assure you that I have not heightened it : when an ungrateful villain is punished by his own reflections, we acknowledge it to be but just. In Morton’s History of Apparitions are several shocking stories of persons, who by their abandoned practices, have brought on themselves all the horrors of a guilty conscience.

“ O treacherous conscience ; while she seems to sleep

“ On rose and myrtle, lull’d with fyren song :

“ While she seems nodding o’er her charge to drop

“ On headlong appetite the slacken’d rein,

“ And



- “ And gives up to licence unrecalld,  
 “ Unmarked; see from behind her secret stand,  
 “ The sly informer minutes every fault,  
 “ And her dread diary with horror fills.  
 “ A watchful foe! the formidable spy,  
 “ Lift’ning, o’erhears the whispers of our camp:  
 “ Our dawning purposes of heart explores,  
 “ And steals our embryos of iniquity.  
 “ As all rapacious usurers conceal,  
 “ Their doomsday-book from all consuming heirs,  
 “ Thus with indulgence most severe she treats,  
 “ Writes down our whole history, which death shall read,  
 “ In ev’ry pale delinquent’s private ear.”

Night Thoughts.

But the case is otherwise amongst the methodists, they work on the fears of the most virtuous; youth and innocence fall victims daily before their threats of hell and damnation, and the poor feeble-minded, instead of being comforted and encouraged, are often by them sunk into an irrecoverable state of gloomy despondence and horrible despair.

It is true that many of their hearers are not only methodistically convinced, or alarmed, but are also *hocus pocusly converted*, for as some of their preachers employ all their

art and rhetoric, to alarm and terrify, so others of them use their utmost skill, to give them assurance of their sins being pardoned; which remind us of the law-suit, where one party sued for a forged debt, and the other produced a forged receipt. But with thousands that is not the case, even with those who join their society, where so much of divine love, assurance, and extasies are talked of, where enthusiastic, rapturous, intoxicating hymns are sung, and besides the unhappy mortals in their own community, thousands there are who have lost their peace of mind by occasionally hearing their sermons.

And even those among them who have arrived to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, and who at times talk of their foretaste of heaven, and of their full assurance of sins forgiven, and of talking to the Deity as familiarly as they will to one another; (all which, and much more, I have heard a thousand times) yet even those very pretended favorites of heaven are (if we believe themselves) miserable for the greatest  
part

part of their time, having doubts, fears, horrors of mind, &c. continually haunting them wherever they are. “The superstitious man, says Cicero, is miserable in every scene, in every incident of life: even sleep itself, which banishes all other cares of unhappy mortals, affords to him matter of new terror, while he examines his dreams, and finds in those visions of the night, prognostication of future calamities.” Between twenty and thirty years since, some thousands of them in London took it into their heads that the world would be at an end on such a night, and for some days previous to this fatal night, nothing was attended to but fasting and praying, and when it came, they made a watch-night of it, and spent it in prayer, &c. expecting every moment to be the last; and it is remarkable, that thousands who were not methodists gave credit to this ridiculous prophecy, and were terribly alarmed; but the next morning they were ashamed to look at one another, and many durst not appear in their shops for sometime afterwards. But others of them said that God

had heard the prayers of the righteous, and so spared the world a little longer. Some years after that Mr. Wesley alarmed his people all over England, with the tail of a comet; great numbers were dreadfully apprehensive lest this comet should scorch the earth to a cinder; but the saints by prayer made the comet keep a proper distance.

Charnock, of the last century, in his discourse on Providence, has proved (in his way) that the universe was created and is kept agoing for the sake of the elect, and that as soon as their number is complete, the whole will be destroyed. This is genuine calvinism.

The fanatics in every age have found their account in making their followers believe the end of the world was at hand. In some of the wills and deeds, by which estates have been given to monasteries, &c. in France, they have expressed their belief of the world's being nearly at an end, as a reason for making such liberal donations to the church.

But

But it is happy for us that in England such wills would be set aside. A case of this nature occurred while Lord Northington was at the head of the law department. Reilly the preacher, had wheedled, or frightened, an old woman (Mrs. Norton) out of a deed of gift of fifty pounds per year, but after the old woman's panic and fear of damnation was over, she had recourse to Chancery, and his Lordship annulled the deed of gift. His Lordship's remarks on such kinds of imposition are very curious, and worth your reading. See *Collectanea Juridica*, vol. i. p. 458.

In fact, the very best of the methodists are like children, elated or depressed by mere trifles; and many who joined them while young and ignorant, quit their society as they attain to years of discretion, or as their judgment is better informed.

Love or anger, ambition or avarice (says a great man) have their root in the temper and affections, which the soundest reason is

scarce able fully to correct; but superstition, being founded on false opinion, must immediately vanish, when true philosophy has inspired juster sentiments of superior powers.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R VIII.

- " Religion's lustre is by native innocence  
 " Divinely fair, pure, and simple from all arts;  
 " You daub and dress her like a common mistress,  
 " The harlot of your fancies; and by adding  
 " False beauties, which she wants not, make the world  
 " Suspect her angel face is foul within."

ROWE'S Tamerlane.

- " Be careful to destroy the book of James.  
 " Substantial virtues that vile papist claims;  
 " Forgetting Paul, he spurns at faith alone,  
 " And bids our faintship by our lives be known:  
 " All Cato's virtue was not worth a pin,  
 " And Pacion's exit but a shining sin.

DEAR FRIEND,

**T**HE enthusiastic notions which I had imbibed, and the desire I had to be talking about religious mysteries, &c. answered one valuable purpose; as it caused me to embrace every opportunity to learn to read, so that I could soon read the easy parts of the Bible, Mr. Wesley's Hymns, &c. and every leisure minute was so employed.

In the winter I was obliged to attend my work from six in the morning until ten at night. In the summer half year, I only worked as long as we could see without candle; but notwithstanding the close attention I was obliged to pay to my trade, yet for a long time I read ten chapters in the Bible every day: I also read and learned many hymns, and as soon as I could procure some of Mr. Wesley's Tracts, Sermons, &c. I read them also; many of them I perused in *Cloacina's* Temple. (the place where my Lord Chesterfield advised his son to read the classics, but I did not apply them after reading to the farther use that his Lordship hints at.)

I had such good eyes, that I often read by the light of the Moon, as my master would never permit me to take a candle into my room, and that prohibition I looked upon as a kind of persecution, but I always comforted myself with the thoughts of my being a dear child of God; and as such, that it was impossible for me to escape persecution from  
the



the children of the devil, which epithets I very *piously* applied to my good master and mistress. And so ignorantly and imprudently zealous (being a real methodist) was I for the good of their precious souls, as sometimes to give them broad hints of it, and of the dangerous state they were in. Their pious good old minister, the Reverend Mr. Harrison, I called “*a blind leader of the blind* ;” and I more than once assured my mistress, that both he and his whole flock were in a state of damnation, being without the assurance of their sins being pardoned, they must be “*strangers to the hope of Israel, and without God in the world.*” My good mistress wisely thought that a good stick was the best way of arguing with such an ignorant infatuated boy as I was, and had often recourse to it ; but I took care to give her a deal of trouble ; for whenever I was ordered in my turn to read in the Bible, I always selected such chapters as I thought militated against Arians, Socinians, &c. and such verses as I deemed favourable to the doctrine of Original Sin, Justification by Faith, imputed

imputed Righteousness, the doctrine of the Trinity, &c. On such parts I always placed a particular emphasis, which puzzled and teased the old lady a good deal.

Among other places I thought (having so been taught by the methodists) that the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel very much favoured the doctrines of original sin, imputed righteousness, &c. that chapter I often selected and read to her, and she as often read the eighteenth chapter of the same prophecy, for the sake of the parable of the Father's eating *four grapes*.

Whenever I read in St. Paul's Epistles on justification by faith alone, my good mistress would read in the Epistle of St. James, such passages as say that a man is not justified by faith alone, but by faith and works, which often embarrassed me not a little. However, I comforted myself with the conceit of having more texts of Scripture on my side of the question than she had on her side. As to St. James, I was almost ready to conclude, that  
he

he was not quite orthodox, and so at last I did not much mind what he said.

- “ — False opinions rooted in the mind,  
“ Hoodwink the soul and keep our reason blind.  
“ In controverted points can reason sway,  
“ When passion or conceit hurries us away ?”

Hitherto I had not frequented the methodist meetings by the consent or knowledge of my master and mistress; nor had my zeal been so great as to make me openly violate their commands. But as my zeal increased much faster than my knowledge, I soon disregarded their orders, and without hesitation ran away to hear a methodistical sermon as often as I could find opportunity. One Sunday morning at eight o'clock my mistress seeing her sons set off, and knowing that they were gone to a methodist meeting, determined to prevent me from doing the same by locking the door, which she accordingly did; on which in a superstitious mood, I opened the Bible for direction what to do (ignorant methodists often practise the same superstitious

superstitious method) and the first words I read were these, “ He has given his angels charge concerning thee, lest at any time thou shouldest dash thy foot against a stone.” This was enough for me; so without a moment’s hesitation, I ran up two pair of stairs to my own room, and out of the window I leaped, to the great terror of my poor mistress. I got up immediately, and ran about two or three hundred yards, towards the meeting-house; but alas! I could run no farther; my feet and ankles were most intolerably bruised, so that I was obliged to be carried back and put to bed; and it was more than a month before I recovered the use of my limbs. I was ignorant enough to think that the Lord had not used me very well, and resolved not to put so much trust in him for the future.

This my rash adventure made a great noise in the town, and was talked of many miles round. Some few admired my amazing strength of faith, but the major part pitied

pitied me, as a poor ignorant, deluded and infatuated boy.

“ The neighbours star’d and sigh’d yet blefs’d the lad,  
“ Some deem’d him wond’rous wife, some believ’d him mad.

DR. BEATTIE,

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours,

LETTER

## L E T T E R IX.

- “ One makes the rugged paths so smooth and even,  
 “ None but an ill-bred man can miss of heaven.  
 “ Another quits his stockings, breeches, shirt,  
 “ Because he fancies virtue dwells in dirt :  
 “ While all concur to take away the stress,  
 “ From weightier points, and lay it on the less.”

STILLINGFLEET ON Conversation.

- “ ’Gad I’ve a thriving traffic in my eye.  
 “ Near the mad mansions of Moorfields I’ll bawl ;  
 “ Friends, fathers, mothers, sisters, sons and all,  
 “ Shut up your shops, and listen to my call.

FOOTE.

DEAR FRIEND,

IN the fourth year of my apprenticeship, my master died ; now although he was a good husband, a good father, and a good master, &c. yet as he had not the methodistical faith, and could not pronounce the *Shibboleth* of that sect, I *piously* feared that he was gone to hell.

My mistress thought that his death was hastened by his uneasy reflections on the  
 bad

bad behaviour of his sons, after they commenced methodists, as before they were *converted* each was dutiful and attended to his trade, but after they became *saints* they attended so much to their spiritual concerns that they acted as though they supposed they were to be fed and cloathed by miracles, like Mr. Huntingdon, who informs us in his book called "The Bank of Faith," that the Lord sent him a pair of breeches, that a dog brought him mutton to eat, fish died at night in a pond on purpose to be eaten by him in the morning; money, and in short every thing he could desire, he obtained by prayer. Mr. Wesley used to cure a violent pain in his head the same way, as he relates in his Journals. Thus as Foote says,

"With labour, toil, all second means dispense,

"And live a rent-charge upon providence."

To give you a better idea of methodistical ignorance and neglect of ordinary means of living, &c. I will relate one instance more. Mary Hubbard (an old woman of Mr. Wesley's society) would  
often

often wash her linen, hang it out to dry, and go away to work in the fields, or to Taunton market, four miles from her house; and when blamed, she would answer “that the Lord watched over her, and all that she had, and that he would prevent any person from stealing her two old smocks, or if he permitted them to be stolen, he would send her two new in their stead.” And I seriously assure you, sir, that there are many thousand Mary Hubbards amongst the methodists.

As I had been bound to my mistress as well as my master, I was of course an apprentice still. But after my master’s death I obtained more liberty of conscience (as I called it) so that I not only went to hear the methodist sermons, but was also admitted into their society; and I believe they never had a more devout enthusiastical member; for several years I regularly attended every sermon and all their private meetings.

“ I, like a hackney-coachman, knew  
 “ Short way to heav’n by a clew,  
 “ Cou’d cut across, and save the road,  
 “ That guided to the blest’d abode.”

As



As you are probably unacquainted with the nature of these *private meetings*, a short account of them may perhaps afford you some amusement.

Mr. Wesley instituted amongst his people, besides the public preachings, several kinds of private meetings; and as the *prayer-meeting* is the least private of any of them, I will first take notice of that.

To the prayer-meetings, which were in general held in private houses, they often invited people who were not of their society. An hymn was first sung, then they all knelt, and the first person who felt a motion, made an extemporary prayer; when he had done another began, and so on, for about two hours.

- “ There every soul a face of sorrow wears,
- “ And not one sign of happiness appears;
- “ But looks of terror and dejected eyes,
- “ Despairing murmurs, and heart-rending sighs!
- “ No eye doth wander, and no lip doth smile,
- “ But holy horrors chill us all the while.

YOUNG OFFICER.

It so happened sometimes, that one of the brethren began to pray without having *the gift* of prayer (as they call it), and then he often stuck fast, like some of the young orators at Coach-maker's Hall, &c. Prayer-meetings were held in such high esteem amongst them that they asserted, more were "*born again,*" and more "*made free* from all the remains of sin," or in other words of their own, "*made perfect* as God is perfect," in these kinds of meeting, than at public preaching, &c. Thus, as Pomfret says,

“ The spirits heated will strange things produce.”

But it is impossible for you, my friend, to form any just idea of these assemblies, except you had been present at them: one wheedles and coaxes the Divine Being, in his addresses; another is amorous and luscious; and a third so rude and commanding, he will even tell the Deity that he must be *a liar* if he does not grant all they ask. In this manner will they work up one another's imaginations until they may actually be said to be in a state of intoxication, and whilst in this intoxicated state,

state, it often happens that some of them recollect a text of scripture, such as, “thy sins are forgiven thee,” or “go and sin no more,” &c. and then they declare themselves to be born again, or to be sanctified, &c.

They have another kind of private meeting after the public preaching on Sunday evenings, in which the preacher meets all the members of the society, who stay behind after the general congregation is dismissed. To this society the preacher gave such advice as he deemed better suited to a godly few than to a promiscuous multitude of “*outward-court* worshippers.”

Their *Love-feast* is also a private meeting of as many members of the community as please to attend; and they generally come from all parts, within several miles of the place where love-feasts are held.

When all are met they alternately sing and pray; and such amongst them as think that their *experience* (as they call it) is remarkable,

able, stand up in their place and relate all the transactions between God, the devil, and their souls.

- “ Discursing evils, which begin,  
 “ In every soul, that tastes of sin!  
 “ As head of chosen, doth foreknow,  
 “ How far the devil means to go.”

Pious Incendiary.

At such seasons as this I have heard many of them declare they had just received the pardon of all their sins while Brother such-a-one was in prayer; another would then get up and assert that he was just at that instant made perfectly free from sin.

At these times the Spirit is supposed to be very powerfully at work amongst them; and such an *unison* of sighing and *groaning* succeeds, that you would think they had all lost their senses. In this frantic state, many apply to themselves such texts of scripture as happen to come into their heads.

In the Love-feast they have *buns* to eat, which are mutually broken between each  
 brother

brother and sister, and they have also *water* to drink, which they hand from one to another. These meetings begin about seven o'clock, and last until nine or ten.

In London, Bristol, and other large places, they have some *private* meetings, unknown to the community at large. These meetings consist of all married men at one time, young and unmarried men at another time: the married women by themselves, and the single women by themselves; and to each of these classes Mr. Wesley went, and gave such advice or exhortations as he thought suitable to their situation in life, seldom failing to speak much in praise of celibacy, to the *Maids* and *Bachelors* under his pastoral care. I will in my next give you an account of their watch-nights, class-meetings, bands, and other particulars.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

## L E T T E R X.

“ ————— Here Gamaliel sage  
 “ Trains up his babes of grace, instructed well  
 “ In all the ——— discipline of prayer ;  
 “ To point the holy leer : by just degrees  
 “ To close the twinkling eye ; expand the palms,  
 “ To expose the whites, and with the sightless balls  
 “ To glare upon the crowd : to rise, to sink  
 “ The docile voice ; now murm’ring soft and slow,  
 “ With inward accent calm, and then again,  
 “ In foaming floods of rapt’rous eloquence  
 “ Let loose the storm, and thunder, thro’ the nose  
 “ The threatened vengeance,”

SOMERVILLE.

DEAR FRIEND,

**T**HE *Watch-night* begins about seven o’clock. They sing hymns, pray, preach, sing, and pray again ; then exhort, sing and pray alternately, until twelve o’clock. The hymns which they sing on those nights, are wrote for such occasions, and abound with gloomy ideas, which are increased by the time of night ; and it must be remarked, that the major part of those  
 who

who attend these nocturnal meetings, having fasted the whole of the day (according to Mr. Wesley's orders) are in a very proper state of mind to entertain the most extravagant whims or enthusiastic notions that can possibly enter the heads of any visionaries. So that such nights are often very prolific, as numbers are said to be born again, and become the temples of the Holy Ghost on watch-nights, which makes those nights esteemed by them.

Mr. Wesley, in every place where his people were numerous, had divided them into *classes*, consisting of twelve or fourteen brothers or sisters. Sometimes men and women met together in the same *class* (as they called it) and other classes consisted of all men or all women. Each of these classes had one in it who was called the leader. In such classes where men and women meet together, the leader was always a brother : and so of course when the class consisted of men alone. But in the women's classes a sister was always the leader.

When they met together, the leader first gave out a hymn, which they all sang; after the hymn they all knelt, and their leader made an extemporaneous prayer; after which they were seated, and when the leader had informed them of the state of his own mind, he enquired of all present, one after another, how they found the state of their souls. Some he found were full of faith and *assurance*, others had dreadful doubts and fears; some had horrid temptations,

“ It doth affect my inward man,  
 “ To think of Satan’s wicked plan;  
 “ Ah! me, how doth that fiend conspire,  
 “ To drag each sinner to lasting fire.”

Fanaticism Displayed.

Others complained of a lukewarm state, &c. In these meetings, some of the members spoke of themselves, as though they were as pure as angels are in heaven, but with the generality of them, it was far otherwise, and nothing was more common among them than to hear the major part exclaiming against themselves, and declaring that they were the most vile abandoned wretches on this side hell, that they wondered why the earth did not  
 open



open and swallow them up alive. But they generally added, that “the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin,” and that “where sin abounded there would grace much more abound.” Indeed it was easy to remark that the reason why they painted themselves in such odious colours, was only to boast of an astonishing quantity of grace that God had bestowed on them, in thus pardoning all their abominations, and numbering them with the household of faith, who ought to have been shut up in the nethermost hell. The greater the sinner (say they) the greater the saint. To each of these the leader gave a word of comfort, or of correction in the best manner he was able. They then sang and prayed again. This lasted about one hour. And every one in Mr. Wesley’s connexion did, or was expected to meet, each in his own class once in a week. In these classes each made a weekly contribution towards the general support of the preachers, &c. Such as were very poor contributed a penny per week, others two-pence, and some who could afford it sixpence. This money was  
entered

entered in a book kept for that purpose, and one in every class called the steward, had the care of the cash.

I now come to speak of the *Bands*, which consisted only of *justified* persons; that is, such as had received the *assurance* of their sins being pardoned. In the classes, both the *awakened* (as they call them) and the justified, and even those that were made *perfect*, met all together, as did the married and the single, and often men and women. But none were admitted into any *band* but such as were at least in a justified state, and the married of each sex met by themselves, and the single by themselves. About ten was the number generally put in one band; all these must belong to and meet in some class, once a week, when not hindered by sickness, &c. and they were also to meet weekly in their band. When met, they first sung, then made a short prayer; that done, the *band-leader* informed them of the state of his mind during the last week, &c. He then made inquiry into the state of all present, and each related

related what had passed since they last met ; as what visitations they had received from God, what temptations from the devil, the flesh, &c. And it is a maxim amongst them that exposing to one another what the devil has particularly tempted them to commit, will make the old fellow more careful how he tempts, when he knows that all his secrets will be told the next meeting. This they call shaming the devil. In the classes they only confessed in general terms, that they have been tempted by the world, the flesh and the devil. But in the bands they confessed the particular sins which they had been tempted to commit, or had actually committed.

The last time I met in band was in London, where an old man (near seventy years of age) informed us that he had for several weeks together laboured under a very grievous temptation of the devil, who all this time had been constantly tempting him to commit adultery ; he further informed us, that having let too much of his house to lodgers,

lodgers, they were obliged to put the maid's bed in the room where he and his wife slept; and that one morning he had seen the maid lying asleep, nearly or quite uncovered, and he again assured us, that ever since that time the devil had been every day tempting him to do that which was nought with the maid. I could not help thinking the old gentleman was right in charging it on *the devil*, as there was little reason to think it was any temptation of *the flesh*. Permit me to add, that this *old buck* had a wife about half his own age. I have been informed, that some young men of the brotherhood have at times disguised themselves in women's clothes, and have so got into the women's bands; it may be very curious to hear the confessions of the holy sisters. By this time I suppose you have had enough of *band-meetings*.

Mr. Wesley instituted another kind of private meeting for the highest order of his people, called the *select bands*; to which none were admitted but such as were sanctified, or made *perfect* in love, and freed from all the remains

remains of sin. But as I never professed *perfection*, I was not permitted to enter into this holy of holies. But I have known a great number of these perfect saints, of both sexes; and I also lived in the same house a whole year with one of these intire holy sisters. A few days before I came to live in Chiswell-Street, one of these perfect sisters was detected in stealing coals out of the shed of one of the sanctified brothers, but she, like the old fellow above mentioned, said it was the devil that tempted her to do it.

Four times every year new *tickets* are distributed to all Mr. Wesley's people throughout the three kingdoms. Their ticket is a very small slip of paper, with a text of scripture on it, which is exchanged every quarter for some other text. Such as are only in a *class*, have a different text from such as are in a *band*, so that no one can be admitted into a general meeting of the bands, appointed by any of the preachers when he intends to give them an exhortation, nor into any particular band, by a common society ticket. On the  
common

common tickets are such texts as these: "Now is the accepted time."—"Awake thou that sleepest," and such like. But those for the *bands* are in a higher strain; as, "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."—"Go on unto perfection."—"Ye are children of the light."—"Your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost;" and other texts of a similar tendency. For these tickets, each poor person paid one shilling, such as were rich paid more; indeed the money seemed to be the principal end of issuing tickets, at least in country places, the members in the community being so well known to each other, that they scarce ever shewed their tickets in order to gain admittance. I forgot to inform you that prayer-meetings, class-meetings, band-meetings, &c. were in general held in private houses, belonging to some of the brethren.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## LETTER XI.

“ Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;  
 “ Was every thing by starts and nothing long.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Then all for women, panting, rhiming, drinking,  
 “ Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.”

DEAR FRIEND,

YOU now see what sort of a society I was got into. In country places particularly, they consist of farmers, husbandmen, shoemakers, woolcombers, weavers, their wives, &c. I have heard Mr. Wesley remark that more women are converted than men; and I believe that by far the greatest part of his people are females; and not a few of them sour, disappointed old maids, with some others of a less prudish disposition.

“ Who grown unfit for carnal bliss,  
 “ Long to taste how Spirits hiss.”

Lavater in his essay on physiognomy says,  
 “ Women sink into the most incurable melancholy,

lancholy, as they also rise to the most enraptured heights." In another place he says, "By the irritability of their nerves, their incapability for deep inquiry and firm decision, they may easily from their extreme sensibility, become the most irreclaimable, the most rapturous enthusiasts."

There is, says Mr. Hume, only one subject on which I am apt to distrust the judgment of females : and that is, concerning books of gallantry and devotion, which they commonly affect as high-flown as possible ; and most of them seem more delighted with the warmth, than with the justness of the passion. I mention gallantry and devotion as the same subject ; because, in reality, they become the same when treated in this manner ; and we may observe, that they both depend on the very same complexion, as the fair sex have a great share of the tender and amorous disposition, it perverts their judgment on this occasion, and makes them be easily affected, even in what has no propriety in the expressions, nor nature in the sentiment.



ment. Mr. Addison's elegant discourses of religion have no relish with them, in comparison to books of mystic devotion: and Otway's fine tragedies are rejected for the rant of Mr. Dryden.

There are thousands in this society who will never read any thing besides the Bible, and books published by Mr. Wesley. For several years I read very little else, nor would I go (at least very seldom) to any other place of worship; so that instead of hearing the sensible and learned ministers of Taunton, I would often go four, five, or six miles, to some country village, to hear an inspired husbandman, shoemaker, blacksmith, or woolcomber; and frequently in frost and snow have I rose a little after midnight (not knowing what time of night it was) and have wandered about the town until five o'clock, when the preaching began; where I have often heard a sermon preached to not more than ten or a dozen people. But such of us as did attend at this early hour, used afterwards to congratulate each other on the

great privilege we enjoyed, then off we went to our work, shivering with cold.

I was first converted to methodism when I was about sixteen years of age, from that time until I was twenty-one I was a sincere enthusiast, and every spare hour I enjoyed I dedicated to the study of the Bible, reading methodistical books, learning hymns, hearing sermons, meeting in societies, &c. My memory was very tenacious, so that every thing I read I made my own. I could have repeated several volumes of hymns; when I heard a sermon, I could have preached it again, and nearly in the same words; my Bible had hundreds of leaves folded down, and thousands of marks against such texts as I thought favoured the doctrines (or whims) which I had imbibed. So that I stood forth as the champion of methodism wherever I came.

But alas! my godly strict life at length suffered interruption. I will give you a farther account of the methodists when I come to the time when I finally left their society.

The

The election for two members of Parliament was strongly contested at Taunton, just as I attained my twenty-first year; and being now of age, the six or seven months, which I had to serve of my apprenticeship were purchased of my mistress of some friends of two of the contending candidates; so that I was at once set free in the midst of a scene of riot and dissipation.

“ Present Example gets within our guard,

“ And acts with double force, by few repell’d.”

YOUNG.

“ Nor shame, nor honour could prevail;

“ To keep me thus from turning tail.”

As I had a vote, and was also possessed of a few ideas above those of my rank and situation, my company was courted by some who were in a much higher sphere; and (probably what they partly intended) in such company I soon forgot my godly or methodistical connections, and run into the opposite extreme: so that for several months most of my spare hours were devoted to the

“ Young-ey’d God of Wine! Parent of joys!  
 “ Frolic and full of thee, while the cold fons  
 “ Of temperance, the fools of thought and care,  
 “ Lay stretch’d in sober slumbers.”

MALLET’S Eurydice.

Here I had nearly funk for ever into meanness, obscurity and vice; for when the election was over, I had no longer open houses to eat and drink in at free cost. And having refused bribes, I was nearly out of cash.

I began the world with an unsuspecting heart, was tricked out of about three pounds (every shilling I was possessed of) and part of my cloaths, by some country sharpers. Having one coat and two waistcoats left, I lent my best waistcoat to an acquaintance, who left the town and forgot to return it.

However, I did not sink quite so low as the commonalty of journeymen shoemakers, but in general worked very hard, and spent my money in better company.

“ To

- “ To know good preferring specious ill,  
 “ Reason becomes a cully to the will,  
 “ Thus men, perversly fond to roam astray,  
 “ Hood-winks the guide assigned to shew the way ;  
 “ And in Life’s voyage, like the pilot fares,  
 “ Who breaks the compass, and contemns the stars.”

FENTON.

Notwithstanding, at times I was very uneasy, and although I had not been at any methodistical meeting during the time that I had lived this dissipated life, yet my mind was not freed intirely from the superstitious fears I had there imbibed ; so that whenever any person asked me, what would become of me (that had lived such an holy life) if I should die in the state of *backsliding* from “the good old way ?” I always acknowledged that I should be eternally damn’d, were that to be the case. But I must confess that I was not much afraid of dying in such a state, as I was too much prepossessed with the methodistical notions of *free-grace*, that would not let me be finally lost, presuming that I must wait as it were for a *second call* to repentance, justification, &c. which I had been taught to be-

lieve might take place instantaneously, and put the devil to flight in a hurry, and so matters would be all right again. And I have known many who having these ideas, have continued to live very profligate Lives to the end of the chapter.

I often privately took the Bible to bed with me, and in the long summer mornings read for hours together in bed, but this did not in the least influence my conduct. As you know great events often arise from little causes, I am now going to relate a circumstance, trivial in itself, though productive of a more considerable change in my situation, than any I had yet experienced.

I was twenty-one years of age the 11th of September 1767, the election was over the latter end of March 1768. It was in this year that my new master's wife insisted on my purchasing milk of a milk-maid who was a customer at the shop; which command I refused to comply with, as I had a smart little milk maid of my own. But as my  
mistress

mistress wore the breeches, my master was obliged, by his wife's order, to inform me that I must comply with her mandate, or get another master. I left him without hesitation; and the same afternoon went to Wellington, took leave of my father and mother, and informed them of my intention to go to Bristol. After two or three days, I returned back to Taunton, where I stayed a day or two more. In which time I became enamoured with, or infatuated by, the beautiful *Nancy Trott*: and although I saw the impropriety of the measure, yet I could not resist the fair tempter, who prevailed with me to permit her to accompany me in my journey.

- “ Reason was given to curb our headstrong will,  
 “ And yet but shews a weak physician's skill;  
 “ Gives nothing while the raging fit does last,  
 “ But stays to cure it when the worst is past.  
 “ Reason's a staff for age, when Nature's gone;  
 “ But Youth is strong enough to walk alone.”

DRYDEN'S *Con. of Gran.*

We rested a week in Bridgewater, where I worked hard and got money to convey us to

H 4

Exbridge,

Exbridge, seventeen miles on this side Bristol ; and there I saw my conduct in such a point of view as made me to resolve to leave her.

- “ In well-feign'd accidents, now they hail my ear,  
 “ My life, my love, my charmer, or my dear.  
 “ As if these sounds, these joyless sounds could prove  
 “ The smallest particle of genuine love.  
 “ O ! purchas'd love, retail'd through half the town,  
 “ Where each may share on paying half-a-crown ;  
 “ Where every air of tenderness is art,  
 “ And not one word the language of the heart ;  
 “ Where all is mockery of Cupid's reign,  
 “ End in remorse, in wretchedness and pain.

Art of living in London.

My finances amounted to three shillings and one penny, out of which I gave her half-a-crown, and with the remaining sevenpence, without informing her of my purpose, I set off for Bristol ; where I arrived in a few hours, and got work the same evening.

A few days after, I went to the inn where the Taunton carrier put up, to enquire after *Miss Trott*, as I wanted to know if she had returned safe to Taunton. I was informed that she was in Bristol nearly as soon as I was.



was. Knowing but little of the world, and still less of women of her description, I was quite unhappy on her account, for fear that being in a strange place she might be in want and distress; which thought induced me to offer to several of my countrymen five shillings to the first who should bring me an account where I might find her; but I did not see her until several weeks after that.

“ Some foe to his upright intent,  
 “ Finds out his weaker part,  
 “ Virtue engages his assent,  
 “ But pleasure wins the heart.  
 “ 'Tis here the folly of the wife,  
 “ Through all his arts we view,  
 “ And while his tongue the charge denies,  
 “ His conscience owns it true.”

COWPER.

The Taunton carrier gave me a letter from my good Mistress Bowden (who by marrying again had changed her name to Dingle). The contents of this letter very much surprised me. It informed me that a day or two before I fell out with my last mistress (which was the trifling cause of my leaving Taunton) *Betty Tucker*, a common lafs, had sworn

sworn a child to me; that the parish officers had been to my master's shop within an hour after I had left it to go to Wellington, and that they had been at Wellington just as I had left that place, and afterwards hearing that I was in Bridgewater they had pursued me thither. But the morning on which they arrived, I had set off for Exbridge; and believing that I had intentionally fled before them, they had given over this chase for the present.

Reflecting on this affair, although my conduct was very far from entitling me to entertain such a supposition, yet I was then weak enough to imagine, that being a particular favourite of heaven a kind of miracle had been wrought to save me from a prison, or from marrying a woman I could not bear the idea of living with a single week; and as I had not any knowledge of her being with child (not having seen her for three months before) I had not taken any measure to avoid the consequence, but put myself in the way of the officers: for, as I have just told you,  
after

after I had taken leave of my father and mother, I went back to Taunton, and walked about publicly one whole day, and part of another.

This girl was delivered about two months afterwards of a still-born child, so that I was never troubled for expences. Methinks you are ready to say with Pomfret,

“ 'Tis easy to descend into the snare,  
 “ By the pernicious conduct of the Fair:  
 “ But safely to return from their abode,  
 “ Requires the wit, the prudence of a God.”

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XII.

- “ Terror in dreams the anxious mother moves,  
 “ Or bids fond virgin’s mourn their absent loves.  
 “ Sylvia in vain her wearied eyes would close,  
 “ Hark! the sad death-watch clicks—adieu repose;  
 “ The distant owl, or yelling mastiff near,  
 “ Terror still vibrates on the list’ning ear,  
 “ And bids the affrighted Sylvia vigils keep,  
 “ For Fancy like Macbeth has murder’d sleep.

Mr. PRALL.

DEAR FRIEND,

THE subject of my last recalls to my mind a ridiculous affair, which excited much mirth in that part of the country.

During the Election at Taunton, a gentleman one day came in a post-chaise to the White-hart Inn, kept by Mr. Baldwin, and after having refreshed himself, strolled into the yard, and seeing the hostler, asked him if he could inform him where they took in the *news*? The hostler understanding him in a literal

a literal sense, directed him to a bookseller's shop on the opposite side of the way; this shop was kept by Miss A—d—n, a beautiful young lady of irreproachable character, and one whose fine understanding and polished taste did honour to the profession; which profession she only adopted for an amusement, as she possessed an independent fortune.

Our gentleman on entering the shop, enquired of the shopmaid for her mistress, but the maid being used to serve in the shop, and knowing that her mistress had some ladies with her, informed the gentleman that she could help him to any thing that he wanted. But on his saying he had some private business with her mistress, he was shewed into a back parlour, and the mistress being informed a gentleman wanted to speak to her, she went directly to him. The moment she entered the room, he clasped her in his arms, called her a divine creature, &c. This so alarmed Miss A—d—n, that she screamed aloud; on hearing of which, the ladies, preceded

ceded by the housemaid and shopmaid, repaired to the parlour, where they found Miss A—d—n almost in fits. The gentleman thinking that it was only a trick to raise her price, took but little notice, on which one of the maids ran out and called in several of the neighbours, who on coming into the parlour, saw with astonishment our Sir Harry Wildair taking improper liberties with Miss A—d—n, and desired him to desist. But he desired them not to attempt to put tricks on travellers, and ordered them to leave the room. Instead of obeying his injunctions they in a resolute tone ordered our spark to go instantly about his business. However he still kept his ground, until the mayor of the town, who happened to live just by, was called in. Mr. Mayor demanded to know why he took such freedom with the lady? Our gentleman, seeing that the affair began to look very serious, now became calm, and informed the company that having an inclination for a frolic, he had enquired for a bad house, and had been directed there; adding that if there had been any mistake, he was  
very

very sorry for it, and would beg the lady's pardon. On hearing this the company was more surprized than before, and demanded of the gentleman, who had informed him that that house was a bawdy-house? He, without hesitation, replied, the hostler at the White Hart. Upon this the hostler was sent for, and on his being asked, if he had directed that gentleman, to Miss A—d—n's as to a bawdy-house? The poor fellow, with marks of terror and surprize, answered, No. The Gentleman never asked me for a bawdy-house, he only asked me for a house where they took in the news. So that the hostler's understanding him in a literal sense, caused all the confusion. The affair however had got so much air, that our spark was glad to leave the town immediately.

A very strange unaccountable circumstance happened in this Inn, about the same time; one of those occurrences that puzzle the philosopher, and strengthen superstition in weak minds. Three or four gentlemen of the neighbourhood were drinking wine in  
one

one of the rooms, when the landlord of the Inn (as it appeared to them) walked into the room, and coming up to the table, around which they were seated, they addressed him with Mr. Baldwin how do you do? sit down and take a glass of wine with us; but instead of doing as requested, the supposed Inn-keeper walked out of the room, without making any reply; which not only surprized, but offended the company, who rung the bell violently, and on the waiter's appearance, they ordered him to send in his master. The waiter informed them that his master was not at home. The gentlemen replied that he was at home a few minutes since, and therefore they insisted on seeing him; but the man assured them they were mistaken, as his master was in Bristol, and had been there several days. They then ordered the waiter to send in Mrs. Baldwin, who immediately appearing, the gentlemen asked her where Mr. Baldwin was, and she informed them as the waiter had already done, that he was in Bristol, and had been there several days, on which the gentlemen

grew



grew very angry, and swore that Mr. Baldwin had just before come into the room, and on their requesting him to partake of their wine, had insulted them by going out of the room, without deigning to give them an answer. Mrs. Baldwin then drew out of her pocket a letter she had that morning received from Mr. Baldwin, by which it was apparent, that he really was in Bristol. The story was then told round the neighbourhood, and all the old women concluded that Mr. Baldwin must certainly be dead, and that he died at the very instant that the gentlemen saw him come into the room; but Mr. Baldwin returning two days after, rendered it necessary for them to vary their story; they then asserted that it was a token, or some warning of his death, and had no doubt but it would very soon happen. It was generally thought that Mr. Baldwin was weak enough to pay such attention to the story and the inference, as to hurt his health, as he really died within a year after, and the old women were not a little pleased at the event,

as it tended to justify the truth of their prediction.

A more ridiculous affair happened about ten years since, at the Two Bells, opposite Whitechapel Church. The landlord was sitting one night with some jovial company, one of whom happening to say that he prayed to God, that such a thing should not come to pass, the landlord replied in a good humoured manner, your prayers will neither do good or harm; upon which the other said a deal to persuade the host that his prayers would do great things; but the more he said in praise of his prayers, the more the landlord laughed at, and ridiculed him. The man at last insisted that he could pray the landlord to death in two months time, and offered to bet him a crown bowl of punch to the truth of it, which the landlord accepting, the wager was laid, and almost every night after this, the man came to the house, and constantly laughed at the landlord, and assured him that he would lose his wager; and however strange it may appear, our host did die

die within the time, and his widow paid the wager. I think there cannot remain a doubt but that the ridiculous talk of the fellow actually affected the landlord's mind, and hastened his death; and the following instances tend also to shew how easily the lives of some are shortened.

Joseph Scales, Esq. about five years since, in turning short one day in one of the streets of London, met a man whom he had not seen for some time, and innocently addressed him with, Ha! what are you alive yet! which had such an effect on the poor man that he died a few hours after.

Being at Bristol about four years since, I enquired after a worthy leatherfeller whom I had formerly known, and was informed that he was lately dead, and that his death was supposed to have been hastened by a famous fortuneteller, who having cast his nativity, declared that he would die within six months, which affected his mind so as to accomplish the prediction. The story of the

late Dr. Pitcairn, of Edinburgh, and the collier, is well known. This strong healthy collier was, on his way to Edinburgh, made to believe by the doctor's students, although in perfect health, that he was really very ill, and went home to bed and died.

I have set down the above instances, in order to shew how easy it is to trifle away the lives of our fellow creatures, and surely such who wantonly do it, must afterwards have very gloomy reflections.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## LETTER XIII.

- “ I had a Friend that lov'd me:  
 “ I was his soul : he liv'd not but in me.  
 “ We were so close link'd in each other's breast,  
 “ The rivets were not found that join'd us first.”

DRYDEN'S All for Love.

DEAR FRIEND,

IN my last I mentioned my arrival at Bristol, where I took a lodging in a street, called (I think,) Queen-Street, in Castle-Street, at the house of a Mr. *James*; a much more decent residence, than commonly falls to the lot of journeymen shoemakers.

In this house I found a Mr. John Jones, a genteel youngman, just turned of twenty-one years of age: He was also a son of *Crispin*, and made women's stuff shoes: which he sold by the dozen to warehouses. This Mr. Jones and I were soon very intimate; we kept ourselves neatly dressed, and in general worked hard, spending our money chiefly in the company of women. As,

- " All men have follies, which they blindly trace,  
 " Thro' the dark turnings of a dubious maze.  
 " But happy those, who by a prudent care,  
 " Retreat betimes from the fallacious snare."

POMFRET.

We followed this course about four months. During this time Mr. Jones once persuaded me to go with him to the Playhouse, where we saw Shakespear's fine comedy of "As you like it." This was a feast indeed to me, who had never before seen nor even read any theatrical production. 'Tis impossible for me to describe my sensations on the occasion. Between the play and the entertainment (which was the Mayor of Garrat) Mr. Edward Shuter performed a short piece called "The drunken man." This was the only time that I ever saw that extraordinary genius, but he made such an impression on my mind, that it is impossible I ever should forget him. I believe it is not generally known, as few would ever have suspected, that this child of Momus was also a child of grace.

Since the publication of the first edition of these memoirs, I have read "The memoirs of  
 of

of Mr. Tate Wilkinſon,” patentee of the Theatres Royal of York and Hull, and was much ſurprized to learn that the famous Ned Shuter was a *gracious ſoul*. I wi give you a paſſage or two out of Mr. Wilkinſon’s memoirs, vol. iii. page 27, &c. “ My imitation of Mr. Whitefield was beyond compare. Mr. Foote was ſtruck by ſtepping in by chance, and once hearing Whitefield; the mixture of whoſe abſurdity, whim, conſequence and extravagance, pleaſed his fancy, and entertained him highly, as Whitefield was that day dealing out damnation, fire and brimſtone, as cheerfully as if they were ſo many bleſſings. What pity it is that our fears only, and not our reaſon, will bring conviction; but reaſon handed by unaffected pure piety and religion would be a day of woe to methodiſm.

“ Mr. Foote was only a ſpy at Whitefield’s academy, while I (ſays Mr. Wilkinſon) had been a zealot for ſome ſeaſons before my encounter at Covent-Garden with Mr. Foote, my attendance had been conſtant with my

friend Shuter, and as he actually was one of the new-born, and paid large sums to Whitefield, I was always permitted to stay with him, for he was really bewildered in his brains, more by his wishing to acquire imaginary grace, than by all his drinking, and whenever he was warm with the bottle, and with only a friend or two, like Maw-worm, he could not mind his shop, because he thought it a sin, and wished to go a-preaching; for Shuter like Maw-worm believed he had a call. I have gone with Shuter at six in the morning of a Sunday at Tottenham-Court-Road, then before ten to Mr. Wesley's in Long-Acre; at eleven again at Tottenham-Court-Road Tabernacle, dined near Bedlam (a very proper place for us both) with a party of the holy ones, went at three to Mr. Wesley's theatre; then from that to Whitefield's till eight, and then shut up, to commune with the family compact, page 29. I having had so much practice (while a zealot) I really obtained and exhibited a much stronger likeness of Whitefield than Mr. Foote did. The week before my Covent-Garden



Garden exhibition, I met Shuter at the Tabernacle; a great coolness had continued for some time, as we had not spoke, or even looked at each other since the breach between us in 1758, but as we were met together in a place of charity and forgiveness to all who subscribed to the preacher, we became very sociable, and before Whitefield's lecture was done we were perfectly reconciled: *we adjourned to the Rose, and by three the next morning were sworn friends*, and continued so until his death. Ned Shuter was a lively, spirited, shrewd companion; a superior in natural whim and humour surely never inhabited a human breast, for what he said and did was all his own, as it was with difficulty he could read the parts he had to play, and could not write at all; he had attained to sign an order, but no more. Nature could not here bestow her gifts to greater advantage, than on poor Ned, as what she gave he made shine, not only conspicuously but brilliantly, and to the delight of all who knew him on or off the stage; he might truly be dubbed the child of nature. He was no man's enemy but his  
own,

own; peace, rest, and happiness, I hope he now possesses; for, the poor, the friendless and the stranger he often comforted, and when sometimes reduced by his follies, he never could see a real object in misery and resist giving at least half he was worth to his distressed fellow creature." Page 5, vol. iii, "But, O ye saints of your own creating! I will preach to you: Mark! *judge not of plays and players, lest you be judged*; those who are the most censorious on the infirmities of others, are usually most notoriously guilty of far greater failings themselves, and *sanctified methodistical slander* is of all the most severe, bitter and cruel."

Page 6. "In the comedy of the Hypocrite, the Colonel says he supposes they go to the play for the benefit of the brethren. Cantwell answers, "the charity covereth the sin;" which was actually the case, for in 1757, as *Shuter was bountiful to the Tabernacle, Mr. Whitefield not only permitted, but advised his hearers to attend Shuter's benefit*; but for that night only." Alas, poor Shuter!

It

It is singular enough that about this time, although I could not write, yet I composed several songs, one of which was sold for a guinea; some were given to the Bristol printers, who printed them, and the ballad-fingers sung them about the streets; on which occasions I was as proud as though I had composed an opera.

“ Obscurely born—No generous friend he found,  
“ To lend his trembling steps o’er classic ground,  
“ No Patron fill’d his heart with flatt’ring hope,  
“ No tutor’d lesson gave his genius scope.  
“ `And yet he soar’d beyond the spells that bind  
“ The slow perception of the vulgar mind.”

Mrs. ROBINSON.

My friend Mr. Jones was my secretary, who before I came to live with him had not the least relish for books, and I had only read a few enthusiastic authors, together with Pomfret’s poems; this last I could almost repeat by memory; however I made the most of my little stock of literature, and strongly recommended the purchasing of books to Mr. Jones. But so ignorant were we on the subject, that neither of us knew what books were

were fit for our perusal, nor what to enquire for, as we had scarce ever heard or seen even any *title pages*, except a few of the religious sort, which at that time we had no relish for. So that we were at a loss how to increase our small stock of science. And here I cannot help thinking that had Fortune thrown proper books in our way, we should have imbibed a just taste for literature, and soon made some tolerable progress, but such was our obscurity, that it was next to impossible for us ever to emerge from it.

“ The mind untaught in vain,  
 “ Her powers, tho’ blooming vigour nourish,  
 “ Hopes in perfect pride to flourish ;  
 “ Culture must her might maintain.”

MR. PINKERTON.

As we could not tell what to ask for, we were ashamed to go into the booksellers shops ; and I assure you, my friend, that there are thousands now in England in the very same situation : many, very many have come to my shop, who have discovered an enquiring mind, but were totally at a loss what

what to ask for, and who had no friend to direct them.

“ ————— Reason grows apace, and calls  
 “ For the kind hand of an assiduous care.  
 “ Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,  
 “ To teach the young idea how to shoot,  
 “ To pour the fresh instruction o’er the mind,  
 “ To breathe th’ enlivening spirit, and to fix  
 “ The gen’rous purpose in the glowing breast.”

THOMSON.

One day as my friend Jones and I were strolling about the fair that is annually held in and near St. James’s church-yard, we saw a stall of books, and in looking over the title pages, I met with Hobbes’s Translation of Homer’s Iliad and Odyffey. I had somehow or other heard that Homer was a great poet, but unfortunately I had never heard of Pope’s translation of him, so we very eagerly purchased that by Hobbes. At this stall I also purchased Walker’s poetical paraphrase of Epictetus’s morals; and home we went, perfectly well pleased with our bargains.

We that evening began with Hobbe’s Homer; but found it very difficult for us  
 to

to read, owing to the obscurity of the translation, which together with the indifferent language, and want of poetical merit in the translator, somewhat disappointed us: however, we had from time to time many a hard puzzling hour with him.

But as to Walker's *Epicætetus*, although that had not much poetical merit, yet it was very easy to be read, and as easily understood. The principles of the *Stoics* charmed me so much, that I made the book my companion wherever I went, and read it over and over in raptures, thinking that my mind was secured against all the smiles or frowns of fortune.

- “ When foes revil'd, or friends betray'd,  
 “ Our hearts have wrung, perhaps with sorrow;  
 “ But a firm effort always made  
 “ Complete resources for to-morrow.
- “ Then why repine at vice elate,  
 “ For injur'd worth our courage drown;  
 “ Let us who cannot alter fate,  
 “ Mind no men's business but our own:

J. ROBERTSON'S *Martial*.

I now

I now grew weary of dissipating my time; and began to think of employing my spare hours in something more satisfactory. For want of something else to do, I went one evening to hear Mr. John Wesley preach in Broadmead, and being completely tired of the way of life that I had lived (more or less) ever since I had been out of my apprenticeship, and happening to have no other pursuit or hobby-horse, there was a kind of vacuity in my mind; in this state I was very susceptible of any impressions, so that when I came to hear Mr. Wesley, my old fanatical notions returned full upon me, and I was once more carried away by the tide of enthusiasm. So that the following lines by Mr. S. Rogers might be applied to me with great propriety:

“ His humour once o’er, with a grave contrite face  
“ To the mead he repairs, that rich fountain of grace,  
“ Where in spiritual fervour he turn’d up his eyes,  
“ True mechanical faint! and in unison sighs;  
“ With every true godly exterior indu’d,  
“ As if from his cradle this line he’d pursu’d.”

My friend Mr. Jones soon saw with grief and indignation the wonderful alteration in  
me ;

me; who, from a gay, volatile, dissipated young fellow, was at once metamorphosed into a dull, moping, praying, psalm-singing fanatic, continually reprehending all about me for their harmless mirth and gaiety.

“ For Saints themselves will often be,  
“ Of gifts that cost them nothing, free.”

HUDIBRAS.

Nothing is more common than to see mankind run from one extreme to another: which was my case once more.

“ Whate’er the leading passion be,  
“ That works the soul’s anxiety,  
“ In each extreme th’ effect is bad,  
“ Sense grows diseas’d and reason mad.”

E. LLOYD.

About this time we left our habitation in Queen-street, and took lodgings of Mr. Jones’s mother, on St. Philip’s Plain, where lived a brother of Mr. Jones, who was about seventeen years of age. Soon after we had removed to this place, the brother, whose name was Richard Jones, was permitted to work in the same room with my friend and me.



me. They had also a sister about twenty years of age, who frequently joined our company.

Our room over-looked the Church-yard, which contributed to increase my gloomy ideas; and I had so much of the spiritual quixotism in me, that I soon began to think that it was not enough for me to save my own soul, but I ought in conscience to attempt the conversion of my companions, who (I really believed) were in the high road to hell, and every moment liable to eternal damnation. Of this charitable disposition are almost all the methodists; who, as Hudibras says,

“Compound for sins they are inclined to,  
“By damning those they have no mind to.”

The frequency of newly-opened graves, which we saw from our windows, furnished me with opportunities for descanting on the uncertainty of life and all sublunary enjoyments; I assured them that nothing deserved attention but what related to our everlast-

K ing

ing state, and that they might, on their repentance, receive in one moment the pardon of all their sins, have a foretaste of the joys of heaven, and know that their names were enrolled in the book of life. I farther protested that they had no time to lose; that they all stood on the very verge of hell, and the breaking-brink of eternal torments; with a great deal more of such edifying stuff.

The youngest brother soon became a convert; and Miss Betsy was *born again* soon after.

“ Lo! in the twinkling of an eye,

“ Their souls was frank'd for.            Kingdom come.

But I had a tight job to convert my friend John; he held out, and often cursed me heartily, and sung prophane songs all day long.

But about four or five weeks after my re-conversion, John was also converted, and became a favourite of heaven, so that we considered ourselves as a holy community.

“ Who

- “ Who knew the feat of Paradise,  
 “ Could tell in what degree it lies;  
 “ Could deepest mysteries unriddle,  
 “ As easily as thread a needle.”

HUDIBRAS.

A laughable affair happened during my residence here. A captain of a ship one day brought a parrot as a present to a family, the mistress of which being a methodist, happened to have one of the preachers call in just as the dinner was putting on the table, so that the captain and the preacher were both asked to stay. As soon as the table was covered, the preacher began a long grace, in the midst of which *Poll*, who had been put in a corner of a room, cried out, “ *D——n your eyes, tip us none of your jaw.*” This, with the immoderate laughter of the captain, entirely disconcerted the pious chaplain; at last he began his grace again, but he had not got to the end before *Poll* again interrupted him with, “ *You d——n canting son of a b——b.*” By the above it appeared that the captain had tutored *Poll* on purpose to have some fun in this canting family; how-

ever, the good lady of the house made it a point of conscience to have Polly converted, but found it utterly impossible to effect that great change in the methodistical way, that is, *instantaneously*, as after she had scolded her six months for speaking bad words, and had actually taught her a part of the Lord's prayer, yet Poll would not entirely leave off her sea language, so that it often happened while the good lady was teaching her to pray, Poll would out with, "*D——n your eyes, tumble up, you lubbers;*" and even after she had preached to her several years, she would not venture to say that Poll was in a state of grace; but be that as it will, Poll obtained the name of Methodist, being called by the neighbours, the Methodist Parrot.

I must inform you also that the poor preacher abovementioned was but just come out of Wales, and understood English but very imperfectly, and in the course of his sermon one day he had forgot the English for the word lamb, and after hammering a good while

while about it, he out with “Goddymighty’s little Mutton, that took away the fins of the world,” which caused a good deal of diversion among the ungodly.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

## L E T T E R XIV.

“ ——— He was a shrewd philosopher,  
 “ And had read every text and gloss over ;  
 “ Whate’er the crabbed’st author hath,  
 “ He understood b’implicit faith ;  
 “ Whatever Sceptic could enquire for,  
 “ For every why he had a wherefore ;  
 “ Knew more than forty of them do,  
 “ As far as words and terms could go,  
 “ All which he understood by rote,  
 “ And as occasion serv’d would quote ;  
 “ No matter whether right or wrong,  
 “ They might be either said or sung.”

HUDIBRAS.

DEAR FRIEND,

**M**R. John Jones and myself were now greater friends than ever, so that one would on no account stir out of the house without the other.

Mr. Jones had the advantage of me in temporals, he could get more money than I could ; but as to grace, and spiritual gifts, I had much the advantage of all our community ;

nity; so that I was their spiritual director, and if they thought that any of their acquaintance held any opinions that were not quite sound and orthodox, such were introduced to me, in order that I might convince them of their errors. In fact, I was looked upon as an apostle, so that whatever I asserted was received as pure gospel; nor was any thing undertaken without my advice.

We all worked very hard, particularly Mr. John Jones and me, in order to get money to purchase books; and for some months every shilling we could spare was laid out at old book-shops, stalls, &c. infomuch that in a short time we had what *we* called a very good library. This choice collection consisted of Polhil on precious Faith; Polhil on the Decrees; Shepherd's sound Believer; Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress; Bunyan's Good News for the vilest of Sinners; his Heavenly Footman; his Grace abounding to the chief of Sinners; his Life and Death of Mr. Badman; his Holy War in the town of *Mansoul*; Hervey's Meditations; Hervey's Dialogues;

Roger's Seven Helps to Heaven; Hall's Jacob's Ladder; Divine Breathings of a devout Soul; Adams on the second epistle of Peter; Adams's Sermons on the *black* Devil, the *white* Devil, &c. &c. Colling's Divine Cordial for the Soul; Pearse's Soul's Espousal to Christ; Erskine's Gospel Sonnets; the Death of Abel: The Faith of God's elect; Manton on the epistle of St. James; Pamble's Works; Baxter's Shove for a *heavy-arsed* Christian; his Call to the Unconverted; Mary Magdalen's Funeral Tears; Mrs. Moore's Evidences for Heaven; Mead's Almost a Christian; The Sure Guide to Heaven; Brooks on Assurance; God's Revenge against Murder; Brooks's Heaven upon Earth; The Pathway to Heaven; Wilcox's Guide to eternal Glory; Derham's Unsearchable Riches of Christ; his Exposition of Revelations; Alleine's Sure Guide to Heaven; The Sincere Convert; Watson's Heaven taken by Storm; Heaven's Vengeance; Wall's None but Christ; Aristotle's Masterpiece; Coles on God's Sovereignty; Charnock on Providence; Young's Short and sure Guide to Salvation; Wesley's Sermons;



Sermons, Journals, Tracts, &c. and others of the same description.

We had indeed a few of a better sort, as Gay's Fables; Pomfret's Poems; Milton's Paradise Lost; besides Hobbe's Homer, and Walker's Epictetus, mentioned in my last letter,

But what we wanted in judgment in choosing our library, we made up in application; so anxious were we to read a great deal, that we allowed ourselves but about three hours sleep in twenty-four, and for some months together we never were all in bed at the same time. (Sunday nights excepted.) But lest we should oversleep the time allowed, one of us sat up to work until the time appointed for the others to rise, and when all were up, my friend John and your humble servant took it by turns to read aloud to the rest, while they were at their work.

“ Such there are, deny'd by stars unkind,

“ The seasons to exert the noble mind,

“ Should watch occasions, and attend the hours,

“ And catch the moments, to indulge their pow'rs.

COOKE.

But

But this mad scheme of ours had nearly been attended with very serious consequences. One night, it being my turn to watch, I removed to the fire-side, to read some particular passage, and the candlestick which we worked by not being convenient to move about, and there being no other at that time in the room, I set up the candle against the handle of a pewter pot, and was so extremely heavy (owing to much watchfulness) that I fell fast asleep, and had like never to have awaked again; for the candle burned down to the handle of the pot, melted it off, and then fell on the chair on which it stood; so that Mr. Jones found me in the morning, fast asleep, and part of the chair consumed; which alarmed us all very much, and made us more cautious.

But still we continued our plan of living, so that we made a rapid progress in what we called spiritual and divine knowledge; and were soon masters of the various arguments made use of by most polemical divines, &c.

And

And the better to guard my pupils from what I called *false doctrines*, I used often to engage them in various controversies, in which I sometimes took one side of the question, sometimes the other, in order to make them well versed in controversy, and acquainted with the strength of their adversaries. So that I was, by turns, a Calvinist, an Arminian, an Arian, a Socinian, a Deist, and even an Atheist. And after they had said all they could to confute me, I would point out where they had failed, and added such arguments as I was master of, and in general we were all satisfied. But when we happened to have any doubts, we had recourse to the Bible and commentators of our own side of the question, and I assure you my dear friend, this was a very fine hobby-horse, which, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up all the other hobby-horses.

“ Light minds are pleased with trifles.” OVID.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## LETTER XV.

“ Laugh where you must ; be candid where you can.”

POPE.

“ Know then, that always when you come,

“ You’ll find me fitting on my bum :

“ Or lying on a couch, surrounded

“ With tables, pens, and books, confounded ;

“ Wrapt up in lofty speculation,

“ As if on the safety of the nation.”

HUME.

DEAR FRIEND,

IN the course of my reading, I learnt that there had been various sects of philosophers amongst the Greeks, Romans, &c. and I well remembered the names of the most eminent of them. At an old book-shop I purchased Plato on the Immortality of the Soul, Plutarch’s Morals, Seneca’s Morals, Epicurus’s Morals, the Morals of Confucius the Chinese Philosopher, and a few others. I now can scarce help thinking that I received more real benefit from reading and studying them and Epictetus, than from all other books that

that I had read before, or have ever read since that time.

“ I read the labours of the pen,

“ And thought them more than common men.”

I was but about twenty-two years of age, when I first began to read those fine moral productions; and I assure you, my friend, that they made a very deep and lasting impression on my mind. By reading them, I was taught to bear the unavoidable evils attending humanity, and to supply all my wants by contracting or restraining my desires.

“ To mend my virtues, and exalt my thought,

“ What the bright sons of Greece and Rome have wrote,

“ O'er day and night I turn; in them we find

“ A rich repast for the luxurious mind.”      COOKE.

It is now twenty-three years since I first perused them; during which time I do not recollect that I have ever felt one *anxious* painful wish to get money, estates, or any way to better my condition:

“ Indeed, my friend, were I to find

“ That wealth could e'er my real wishes gain;

“ Had

- “ Had e'er disturb'd my thoughtful mind,  
 “ Or cost one serious moment's pain ;  
 “ I should have said, that all the rules,  
 “ I learn'd of moralists and schools,  
 “ Were very ufeless, very vain.”

And yet I have never since that time let slip any fair opportunity of doing it. Be contented, says Isocrates, with what you have, and seek at the same to make the best improvement of it you can. So that all I mean is, that I have not been over *solicitous* to obtain any thing that I did not possess ; but could at all times say, with St. Paul, that I have learned to be contented in all situations, although at times they have been very gloomy indeed. Dryden says,

- “ We to ourselves may all our wishes grant,  
 “ For, nothing coveting, we nothing want.”

DRYDEN'S Indian Emperor.

And in another place he says,

- “ They cannot want who wish not to have more :  
 “ Who ever said an anchorit was poor ?”

DRYDEN'S Secret Love.

The pleasures of eating and drinking I entirely despised, and for some time carried this disposition

disposition to an extreme ; and even to the present time I feel a very great indifference about these matters : when in company I frequently dine off one dish, when there are twenty on the table. The account of Epicurus living in his garden, at the expence of about a halfpenny per day, and that when he added a little cheefe to his bread on particular occasions, he considered it as a luxury, filled me with raptures.

- “ He talk’d of virtue, and of human blifs,  
 “ What else so fit for man to settle well?  
 “ And still his long researches met in this,  
 “ This *truth* of *truths* which nothing can repel.  
 “ From virtue’s fount the purest joys outwell  
 “ Sweet rills of thought that chear the conscous soul,  
 “ While vice pours forth the troubled streams of hell,  
 “ Which, howe’er disguis’d, at last will dole ;  
 “ Will through the tortur’d breast their fiery torrent roll.”

TOMSON.

From that moment I began to live on bread and tea, and for a considerable time did not partake of any other viands, but in those I indulged myself three or four times a day. My reasons for living in this abstemious manner were in order to save money to purchase books,

books, to wean myself from the gross pleasures of eating and drinking, &c. and to purge my mind, and to make it more susceptible of intellectual pleasures; and here I cannot help remarking, that the term *Epicure*, when applied to one who makes the pleasures of the table his chief good, casts an unjust reflection on *Epicurus*, and conveys a wrong idea of that contemplative and very abstemious philosopher: for although he asserted that pleasure was the chief or supreme good, yet he also as strongly asserted, that it was the tranquility of the mind, and intellectual pleasure, that he so extolled and recommended. “ This pleasure (says he) that is the very centre of our happiness, consists in nothing else than having our mind free from disturbance, and our body free from pain; drunkenness, excessive eating, niceness in our liquors, and all that seasons good cheer, have nothing in them that can make life happy; there is nothing but frugality and tranquility of mind that establish this happy state; it is this calm that facilitates our distinguishing betwixt those things that  
ought



ought to be our choice, and those we ought to shun; and it is by the means thereof, that we discard those notions that discompose this first mover of our life.”

- “ When Epicurus to the world had taught,  
 “ That pleasure was the chiefest good,  
 “ (And was perhaps in the right, if rightly understood)  
 “ His life he to his doctrines brought,  
 “ And in a garden’s shade, that sovereign pleasure sought;  
 “ Whoever a true Epicure would be,  
 “ May there find cheap and virtuous luxury.”

COWLEY’S Garden.

St. Evremont in his vindication of Epicurus says, “ Ignorant men know not his worth. Wise men have given large and honourable testimonies of his exalted virtue and sublime precepts. They have fully proved his pleasures to be as severe as the stoick’s virtue; that to be debauched like Epicurus, a man must be as sober as Zeno.—His temperance was so great that his ordinary diet was nothing but bread and water. The stoicks and all other philosophers agree with *Epicurus* in this; that the true felicity of life is to be free from perturbations, to understand our duty

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towards

towards God and Man, and to enjoy the present without any anxious dependance upon the future ; not to amuse ourselves either with hopes or fears ; to curb and restrain our unruly appetites, to rest satisfied with what we have, which is abundantly sufficient, for he that is content wants nothing."

- “ Some place the bliss in action, some in ease ;  
 “ Those call it pleasure, and contentment these ;  
 “ Some sunk to beasts, find pleasure end in pain ;  
 “ Some swell'd to Gods, confess e'en virtue vain.”

POPE.

I continued the above self-denying life until I left Bristol, which was on Whitfunday in 1769. I had for some time before been pointing out to my friend John Jones some of the pleasures and advantages of travelling, so that I easily prevailed on him to accompany me towards the West of England ; and in the evening we arrived at Bridgewater, where Mr. Jones got work. He was employed by Mr. Cash, with whom he continued near twelve months, and in the end married Mr. Cash's daughter, a very pretty and very amiable little woman, with some fortune. When my friend

was

was offered work by Mr. Cash, I prevailed on him to accept of it, assuring him that I had no doubt of my being able to get work at Taunton: but in that I was disappointed, nor could I get a constant feat of work until I came to Exeter, and of that place I was soon tired; but being informed that a Mr. John Taylor of Kingbridge (forty miles below Exeter) wanted such a hand, I went down, and was gladly received by Mr. Taylor, whose name inspires me with gratitude, as he never treated me as a journeyman, but made me his companion. Nor was any part of my time ever spent in a more agreeable pleasing manner than that which I passed in this retired place, or I believe more profitable to a master. I was the first man he ever had that was able to make stuff and silk shoes, and it being also known that I came from Bristol, this had great weight with the country ladies, and procured my master customers, who generally sent for me to take measure of their feet, and I was looked upon by all to be the best workman in the town, altho' I had not been brought up to stuff-work, nor had ever

entirely made one stuff or filk shoe before. Nor should I have presumed to proclaim myself a stuff-man, had there been any such workmen in the place ; but as there were none, I boldly ventured, and succeeded very well ; nor did any one in the town ever know that it was my first attempt in that branch.

During the time that I lived here, I as usual was obliged to employ one or other of my acquaintance to write my letters for me ; this procured me much praise among the young men as a good inditer of letters. (I need not inform you that they were not good judges.) My master said to me one day, he was surprized that I did not learn to write my own letters ; and added, that he was sure that I could learn to do it in a very short time. The thought pleased me much, and without any delay I set about it, by taking up any pieces of paper that had writing on them, and imitating the letters as well as I could. I employed my leisure hours in this way for near two months, after which time I wrote my own letters, in a bad hand, you  
may

may be sure ; but it was plain and easy to read, which was all I cared for : nor to the present moment can I write much better, as I never would have any person to teach me, nor was I ever possessed of patience enough to employ time sufficient to learn to write well ; and yet as soon as I was able to scribble, I wrote verses on some trifle or other every day for years together.

Out of some thousands I at present recollect the following, which I placed by the side of the figure of a clergyman in his robes, with his hands and eyes lifted up ; this image stood over the fire-place in my room.

Here's a shoemaker's chaplain has negative merit,  
 As his vice he ne'er flatters or ruffles his spirit ;  
 No wages receiving, his conscience is clear ;  
 Not prone to deceiving, he's nothing to fear.  
 'Tis true he is silent—but that's nothing new ;  
 And if you'd repent, his attitude view ;  
 With uplifted hands all vice to reprove,  
 How solemn he stands, his eyes fix'd above !

As a kind of contrast I will insert an epigram that I wrote but a few days since on an ignorant methodist preacher.

A stupid fellow told me t'other day,  
 That by the spirit he could preach and pray;  
 Let none then say that miracles have ceas'd,  
 As God still opes the mouth of beast;  
 And asses now can speak as plain  
 As e'er they could in Balaam's reign.

But I always wrote as fast as I could, without endeavouring to write well, and that this is my present practice I need not inform you.

I came to this place in but a weak state of body; however, the healthy situation of the town, together with bathing in the salt water, soon restored me to perfect health. I passed thirteen months here in a very happy manner; but the wages for work being very low, and as I had spent much time in writing hymns to every song-tune that I knew, besides a number of love-verses, letters, &c. I was very poor; and to complete all, I began to keep a deal of company, in which I gave a loose to my natural gaiety of disposition, much more than was consistent with the grave, sedate ideas which I had formed of a religious character; all which made me resolve to leave Kingsbridge, which I did in 1770. I tra-

I travelled as far as Exeter the first day, where I worked about a fortnight, and saved sufficient to carry me to Bridgewater, where I worked two or three weeks more. Before I arrived there Mr. John Jones had gone back to reside at Bristol, but as soon as he heard of my being in Bridgewater, he and his brother Richard sent me an invitation to come to Bristol again and live with them. Finding that I did not immediately comply, they both came to Bridgewater, and declared their intentions of not returning to Bristol without me; so that after a day or two I yielded to their solicitations, and again lived very comfortably with them, their mother and sister.

I think it was about this period, that I went several times to the Tabernacle, and heard Mr. George Whitefield; and of all the preachers that ever I attended, never did I meet with one that had such a perfect command over the passions of his audience. In every sermon that I heard him preach, he would sometimes make them ready to burst

with laughter, and the next moment drown them in tears; indeed it was scarce possible for the most guarded to escape the effect.

“ He had something ’twas thought still more horrid to say,  
 “ When his tongue lost its powers and he fainted away;  
 “ Some say ’twas his conscience that gave him a stroke,  
 “ But those who best knew him treat that as a joke;  
 “ ’Tis a trick which stage orators use in their need,  
 “ The passions to raise and the judgment mislead.” SIMKIN.

In one of my excursions I passed many agreeable hours with the late Mr. La Bute, at Cambridge, who was well known, he having taught French in that university upwards of forty years. He informed me that near forty years since, Mr. Whitefield having advertised himself to preach at Gog-Magog-Hill, many thousand people collected together from many miles round. While he was preaching, he was elevated on the highest ground, and his audience stood all round on the declivity; during his sermon, a young countrywoman, who had come some miles to hear him, and waited several hours, being very faint, owing to the violent heat of the sun, the breaths of the multitude, as well as  
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the want of refreshment; and it is very likely much agitated in her mind by the extraordinary doctrines of the preacher, she fell backwards, just under the orator, and there lay kicking up her heels. On seeing the poor girl lie in a kind of convulsion, some of the company moved to assist her, and the women began to draw down her apron and petticoats over her feet; but Mr. Whitefield cry'd out, "*Let her alone! Let her alone! A glorious fight! A glorious fight!*" No doubt the holy man meant that it was a glorious fight to see a sinner fall before the power of the word; but the young college bucks and wits construed his meaning differently, and put the audience into such immoderate fits of laughing, that even Mr. Whitefield's utmost efforts were not able to restore their gravity, but he was obliged to dismiss his congregation abruptly.

For a long time after this happened, the Cantabs as they reeled homewards in the night-time, disturbed the sober inhabitants, by loudly exclaiming, "A glorious fight! A glorious fight! As Dr. Squintum says."

I am, dear Friend, yours.

## LETTER XVI.

- " Love the most generous passion of the mind,  
 " The softest refuge innocence can find;  
 " The soft director of unguided youth,  
 " Fraught with kind wishes, and secured by truth;  
 " The cordial drop heav'n in our cup has thrown,  
 " To make the nauseous draught of life go down;  
 " On which one only blessing God might raise,  
 " In lands of atheists subsidies of praise;  
 " For none did e'er so dull and stupid prove,  
 " But felt a God, and blest'd his pow'r, in love."

Nonpareil.

DEAR FRIEND,

**I** Must now request you to go back with me a few years, as I have not yet made you acquainted with my principal amours. I was about seventeen years of age when an adventure discovered, that although I was so very spiritual, as I before informed you, I was notwithstanding susceptible of another kind of impression.

" Oh,

- “ Oh, let me still enjoy the cheerful day,  
 “ Till many years unheeded o’er me roll ;  
 “ Pleas’d in my age I trifle life away,  
 “ And tell how much I lov’d ere I grew old.”

HAMMOND’S Love Elegies.

Being at farmer Gamlin’s at Charlton, four miles from Taunton, to hear a methodist sermon, I fell desperately in love with the farmer’s handsome dairy-maid.

- “ Her home spun dress in simple neatness lies,  
 “ And for no glaring equipage she sighs.  
 “ She gratefully receives what heav’n has sent,  
 “ And, rich in poverty, enjoys content.  
 “ Her reputation which is all her boast,  
 “ In a malicious visit ne’er was lost.  
 “ No midnight masquerade her beauty wears,  
 “ And health, not paint, the fading bloom repairs.  
 “ If Love’s soft passions in her bosom reign,  
 “ An equal passion warms her happy swain.”

GAY.

At that time I abounded in *spiritual gifts*, which induced this honest rustic maid to be very kind to me, and to walk several fields with me in my road back to Taunton, talking all the way of her spiritual distress and godly concerns; while I poured heavenly comfort into her soul, and talked so long of

*divine*

*divine* Love, until I found that my affection for her was not altogether of that *spiritual* nature. And yet,

“ We lov’d without transgressing Virtue’s bounds :  
 “ We fixt the limits of our tenderest thoughts,  
 “ Came to the verge of honour, and there stopp’d;  
 “ We warm’d us by the fire, but were not scorch’d.  
 “ If this be sin, Angels might live with more;  
 “ And mingle rays of minds less pure than ours.” i

DRYDEN’S Love Triumphant.

After this you may be sure that I did not let slip any opportunity of hearing sermons at farmer Gamlin’s; and I generally prevailed with Nancy Smith, my charming spiritual dairy-maid, to accompany me part of the way home, and at every gate I accompanied my spiritual advice with a kiss.

——“ Oh then the longest summer’s day  
 “ Seem’d too, too much in haste; fill the full heart  
 “ Had not imparted half: ’twas happiness  
 “ Too exquisite to last. Of joys departed  
 “ Never to return, how painful the remembrance!”

BLAIR’S Grave.

But alas! these comfortable Sunday walks were soon at an end; as my charming Nancy Smith, for some reason or other (I have for-  
 got

got what) left her place, and went to live as dairy-maid with a farmer in the marsh country, between Bridgewater and Bristol, seventeen miles from Taunton; so that I did not see her for near two years afterwards; during which time I gave spiritual advice to another holy sister, whose name was Hannah Allen.

“ Sure philosophy, reason, and coldness must prove

“ Defences unequal to shield us from Love.”

C. J. Fox.

I prevailed on this lovely maid to attend the methodist preaching at five o'clock on Monday mornings, and we often met at three or four; so that we had an hour or two to spend in walking and conversation on spiritual affairs. Had you seen and heard us on the cold frosty mornings, it would have put you in mind of Milton's *Devils*, whom he represents as at times starving with cold:

“ Others apart, sat on a hill, retir'd,

“ In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high

“ Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;

“ Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute;

“ And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.”

Paradise Lost.

But

But I assure you, my friend, that we were sometimes like the Galatians of old; we began in the *spirit*, and ended in the *flesh*.

“ Now on the mofs-bank, beneath the shade,  
 “ For hours of love, or meditation, made;  
 “ To the soft passion I my heart resign,  
 “ To make the long obdurate maiden mine.” COOKE.

With this dear girl I spent all my leisure time, for two or three years; so that we enjoyed together hundreds of happy, and I can truly add, *innocent* hours.

“ O days of bliss!  
 “ To equal this  
 “ Olympus strives in vain;  
 “ O happy pair,  
 “ O happy fair!  
 “ O happy, happy swain!” JOANNES SECUNDUS.

But still I never could entirely forget my charming innocent *Dairy-maid*. In fact, I had love enough for both, to have taken either for better or worse; but my being an apprentice, prevented me from marrying at that time.

Absence, says Rochefoucault, lessens moderate passions, but increases great ones; like  
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the wind which blows out tapers, but kindles fire.

It is true, I had the greatest love for Nancy Smith ; but Hannah Allen had the advantage of Nancy, as I could see Hannah almost every day, and Nancy only once or twice in about three years. However, I at last fell out with Hannah (on what occasion I cannot recollect) and I sent Nancy a letter, which made up matters with her ; for, like Sterne, I was “ always in love with one goddess or other ;” and Xenophon in his banquet, informs us, that the divine Socrates said, that he never remembered that he was ever without being in love, nor would he part from the company without saying something on “ the attributes of that great power ; he resembles but a child, says he, who by his power is master of all things, and is grafted into the very essence and constitution of the soul of man.”

Soon after Nancy Smith came to live for a little time at her father's house at Petherton  
near

near Bridgewater, seven miles from Taunton. This happened during the election at Taunton, when I was changed from a strict methodist to a rake; and although the wedding ring was purchased, and we were to have been married in a few days, yet the marriage was put off on account of my dissipated character.

With wine, I strove to sooth my love-sick soul,  
 But vengeful Cupid dash'd with tears the bowl:  
 All mad with rage, to kinder nymphs I flow.

GRAINGER'S TIBULLUS.

I soon after set off for Bristol, as I before informed you: nor did I see her after that, until my return from Kingsbridge, when I saw her several times prior to my setting off for Bristol with my friend Jones, and his brother Richard.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER



## L E T T E R XVII.

“ The man who by his labour gets  
 “ His bread in independent state,  
 “ Who never begs, and feldom eats,  
 “ Himself can fix, or change his fate.” PRIOR.

“ If you will use the little that you have,  
 “ More has not heav'n to give, or you to crave:  
 “ Cease to complain. He never can be poor  
 “ Who has sufficient, and who wants no more.  
 “ If but from cold, and pining hunger free,  
 “ The richest monarch can but equal thee.”

HORACE Imitated.

DEAR FRIEND,

I Had not long resided a second time with my good Bristol friends, before I renewed my correspondence with my old sweetheart Nancy Smith. I informed her that my attachment to Books, together with travelling from place to place, and also my total disregard for money, had prevented me from saving any; and that while I remained in a single unsettled state, I was never likely to accumulate it. I also pressed her

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very much to come to Bristol to be married, which she soon complied with : and married we were, at St. Peter's Church, towards the end of the year 1770 ; near seven years after my first making love to her.

" When join'd in hand and heart, to church we went,  
 " Mutual in vows, and pris'ners by consent.  
 " My Nancy's heart beat high, with mix'd alarms,  
 " But trembling beauty glow'd with double charms.  
 " In her soft breast a modest struggle rose,  
 " How she should seem to like the lot she chose :  
 " A smile she thought would dress her looks too gay ;  
 " A frown might seem too sad, and blast the day.  
 " But while nor this, nor that, her will could bow,  
 " She walk'd, and look'd, and charm'd, and knew not how.  
 " Our hands at length th' unchanging Fiat bound,  
 " And our glad Souls sprung out to meet the found.  
 " Joys meeting joys unite, and stronger shine :  
 " For passion purified is half divine :  
 " Now NANCY thou art mine, I cry'd—and she  
 " Sigh'd soft—now JEMMY thou art LORD of me!"

A. HILL.

We kept our wedding at the house of my friends the Messrs. Jones's, and at bed-time retired to ready-furnished lodgings, which we had before provided, at half-a-crown per week. Our finances were but just sufficient to pay the expences of the day, for the next morning,

morning, in searching our pockets (which we did not do in a careless manner) we discovered that we had but one halfpenny to begin the world with. But—

- “ The hearth was clean, the fire clear,  
 “ The kettle on for tea ;  
 “ Palemon, in his elbow chair,  
 “ As blefs’d as man could be.  
 “ Clarinda, who his heart possess’d,  
 “ And was his new-made bride,  
 “ With head reclin’d upon his breast,  
 “ Set toying by his side:  
 “ Palemon with a heart elate,  
 “ Pray’d to Almighty Jové,  
 “ That it might ever be his fate,  
 “ Just so to live and love.”

It is true, we had laid in eatables sufficient for a day or two, in which time we knew we could by our work procure more, which we very cheerfully set about, singing together the following lines of Dr. Cotton :

- “ Our portion is not large indeed,  
 “ But then how little do we need ?  
 “ For Nature’s calls are few ;  
 “ In this the art of living lies,  
 “ To want no more than may suffice,  
 “ And make that little do.”

The above, and the following ode by Mr. Fitzgerald, did we scores of times repeat, even with raptures !

- “ No glory I covet, no riches I want,  
 “ Ambition is nothing to me :  
 “ The one thing I beg of kind heaven to grant,  
 “ Is, a mind independent and free.  
  
 “ By passion unruffled, untainted by pride,  
 “ By Reason my life let me square ;  
 “ The wants of my nature are cheaply supplied<sup>d</sup>  
 “ And the rest are but folly and care.  
  
 “ Those blessings which providence kindly has lent,  
 “ I’ll justly and gratefully prize ;  
 “ While sweet meditation and cheerful content,  
 “ Shall make me both healthy and wise.  
  
 “ In the pleasures the great man’s possessions display,  
 “ Unenvy’d I’ll challenge my part ;  
 “ For every fair object my eyes can survey,  
 “ Contributes to gladden my heart.  
  
 “ How vainly thro’ infinite trouble and strife,  
 “ The many their labours employ ;  
 “ When all that is truly delightful in life,  
 “ Is what all, if they will, may enjoy.”

After having worked on stuff-work in the country, I could not bear the idea of returning to the leather branch ; so that I attempted  
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and obtained a feat of Stuff in Bristol. But better work being required there than in Kingsbridge, &c. I was obliged to take so much care to please my master, that at first I could not get more than nine shillings a week, and my wife could get but very little, as she was learning to bind stuff-shoes, and had never been much used to her needle; so that what with the expence of ready-furnished lodging, fire, candles, &c. we had but little left for purchasing provisions.

To increase our straits, my old friend being somewhat displeas'd at our leaving him and his relations, took an early opportunity to tell me that I was indebted to him near forty shillings, of two years standing. It is more dishonourable (says Rochefoucault) to distrust our friends, than to be deceived by them. I was not convinced of the justice of the claim, but to avoid dispute, I paid him in about two months.

“ But if friends prove unfaithful, and fortune's a whore,

“ Still may I be virtuous, although I am poor.”

A. BOURNE.

During nearly the whole of which time it

was extremely severe weather, and yet we made four shillings and sixpence per week pay for the whole of what we consumed in eating and drinking. Strong beer we had none, nor any other liquor (the pure element excepted), and instead of tea, or rather coffee, we toasted a piece of bread; at other times we fried some wheat, which when boiled in water made a tolerable substitute for coffee; and as to animal food, we made use of but little, and that little we boiled and made broth of.

“ The recollection of past toils is sweet.” EURIPID.

During the whole of this time we never once wished for any thing that we had not got, but were quite contented, and with a good grace, in reality made a virtue of necessity. We

“ Trembled not with vain desires,

“ Few the things which life requires.” FRANCIS'S HOR.

And the subject of our prayer was,

“ This day be bread and peace our lot,

“ All else beneath the sun,

“ Thou know’st if best bestow’d or not,

“ And let thy will be done.”

I am, dear Friend, yours.

## L E T T E R XVIII.

“ To temper thus the stronger fires,  
 “ Of youth he strove, for well he knew,  
 “ Boundless as thought tho’ man’s desires,  
 “ The real wants of Life are few.” CARTWRIGHT.

“ In adverse hours an equal mind maintain.”

FRANCIS’S HORACE.

DEAR FRIEND,

**I**N a few days after we had paid the last five shillings of the debt claimed by my friend Mr. Jones, we were both together taken so ill as to be confined to our bed, but the good woman of the house, our landlady, came to our room and did a few trifles for us. She seemed very much alarmed at our situation, or rather for her own, I suppose, as thinking we might in some measure become burthen some to her. We had in cash two shillings and nine-pence, half a crown of which we had carefully locked up in a box, to be saved as a resource on any extraordinary emergence. This money sup-

ported us two or three days, in which time I recovered without the help of medicine: but my wife continued ill near six months, and was confined to her bed the greatest part of the time; which illness may very easily be accounted for.

Before she came to Bristol, she had ever been used to a very active life, and had always lived in the country, so that in coming to dwell in a populous city, she had exchanged much exercise and good air for a sedentary life and very bad air; and this I presume was the cause of all her illness from time to time, which at length, as unfortunately as effectually, undermined her constitution. During her first six months illness, I lived many days solely on water-gruel. “What nature requires, (says Montaigne,) is so small a matter, that by its littleness it escapes the gripes of fortune;” for as I could not afford to pay a nurse, much of my time was taken up in attendance on her, and most of my money expended in procuring medicines, together with such trifles as she  
could



could eat and drink. But what added extremely to my calamity was the being within the hearing of her groans, which were caused by the excruciating pains in her head, which for months together defied the power of medicine.

It is impossible for words to describe the keenness of my sensations during this long term; yet as to *myself*, my poverty and being obliged to live upon water-gruel gave me not the least uneasiness.

“ In ruffling seasons I was calm,

“ And smil'd when fortune frown'd.”      YOUNG.

But the necessity of being continually in the sight and hearing of a beloved object, a young, charming, handsome, innocent wife,

“ Who sick in bed lay gasping for her breath;

“ Her eyes, like dying lamps, sunk in their sockets,

“ Now glar'd and now drew back their feeble light;

“ Faintly her speech fell from her fault'ring tongue

“ In interrupted accents, as she strove

“ With strong agonies that shook her limbs

“ And writh'd her tortur'd features into forms

“ Hideous to sight.”      BELLER'S Injur'd Innocence.

How

How I supported this long dreary scene,  
I know not; the bare recollection of which  
is exceedingly painful, even at this distance  
of time.

- “ Lo, from amidst afflictions night  
“ Hope burst all radiant on the sight;  
“ Her words the troubled bosom sooth,  
“ Why thus dismay’d?  
“ Hope ne’er is wanting to their aid,  
“ Who tread the path of truth,  
“ ’Tis I, who smooth the rugged way,  
“ I, who close the eyes of sorrow,  
“ And with glad visions of to-morrow,  
“ Repair the weary soul’s decay.”

BEATTIE’S Ode to Hope.

At last, when every thing that seemed to  
promise relief had been tried in vain, some old  
woman recommended *Cephalic* snuff. I own  
I had not much faith in it; however, I pro-  
cured it, and in a short time after she was  
much relieved from the intolerable pain in  
her head, but yet continued in a very bad  
state of health; her constitution having suf-  
fered such a dreadful shock, I thought that  
no means could be used so likely to restore it,  
as a removal to her native air. Accordingly  
I left

I left my feat of work at Bristol, and returned with her to Taunton, which is about seven miles from Petherton, her native place. But in Taunton I could not procure so much work as I could do; so that as soon as I thought she could bear the air of Bristol, we returned thither, where she soon relapsed, and we again went back to Taunton. This removing to Taunton was repeated about five times in little more than two years and a half.

- “ Of chance or change, O let not man complain,  
 “ Elfe shall he never cease to wail!  
 “ For, from the imperial dome, to where the swain  
 “ Rears the lone cottage in the silent dale,  
 “ All feel th’ assault of fortune’s fickle gale.”

MINSTREL.

But at last, finding that she had long fits of illness at Taunton also, as well as at Bristol, with a view of having a better price for my work I resolved to visit London; and as I had not money sufficient to bear the expences of both to town, I left her all the money I could spare, and took a place on the outside of the stage coach, and the second day arrived at the metropolis, in August

1773,

1773, with two shillings and sixpence in my pocket; and recollecting the address of an old townsman, who was also a spiritual brother,

“ Whose hair in greasy locks hung down,  
 “ As strait as candles from his crown,  
 “ To shade the borders of his face,  
 “ Whose outward signs of inward grace  
 “ Were only visible in spiteful  
 “ Grimaces, very stern and frightful.”

BUTLER'S *Posth. Works.*

This holy brother was also a journeyman shoe-maker, who had arrived at the summit of his expectations, being able to keep a house over his head (as he chose to express himself), that is, by letting nearly the whole of it out in lodgings, he was enabled to pay the rent. This house was in White-cross-street, which I found out the morning after my arrival, where I procured a lodging, and Mr. Heath, in Fore-street, supplied me with plenty of work.

I laugh'd then and whistl'd, and sung too most sweet,  
 Saying, just to a hair I've made both ends to meet.

Derry-down.

I am, dear Friend, yours.

LETTER

## LETTER XIX.

“ I’ll travel no more—I’ll try a London audience—

“ Who knows but I may get an engagement,”

Wild Oats.

“ When superstition (bane of manly virtues!)

“ Strikes root within the soul; it over-runs

“ And kills the power of Reason.”

PHILIPS Duke of Gloucester.

DEAR FRIEND,

AT this time I was as visionary and superstitious as ever I had been at any preceding period, for although I had read some sensible books, and had thereby acquired a few rational ideas, yet having had a methodistical wife for near three years, and my keeping methodistical company, together with the gloomy notions which in spite of reason and philosophy I had imbibed during the frequent, long, and indeed almost constant illness of my wife, the consequence was, that those few rational or liberal ideas which I had before treasured up, were at my coming to London in a dormant state, or borne

borne down by the torrent of enthusiastic whims, and fanatical chimeras.

“ ——— Oh ! what a reasonless machine

“ Can superstition make the reas’ner man !”

MILLET’S Mahomet.

So that as soon as I procured a lodging and work, my next enquiry was for Mr. Wesley’s *Gospel-shops*: and on producing my *class* and *band* tickets from Taunton, I was put into a class, and a week or two after admitted into a band.

But it was several weeks before I could firmly resolve to continue in London; as I really was struck with horror for the fate of it; more particularly on Sundays, as I found so few went to church, and so many were walking and riding about for pleasure, and the lower class getting drunk, quarrelling, fighting, working, buying, selling, &c. I had seen so much of the same kind in Bristol, that I often wondered how God permitted it to stand; but London I found infinitely worse, and seriously trembled for fear the measure of iniquity was quite full, and that

every

every hour would be its last. However, I at length concluded, that if London was a second *Sodom*, I was a second *Lot*; and these comfortable ideas reconciled me to the thought of living in it.

“ I said it was a wretched place,  
 “ Unfit for any child of grace;  
 “ ’Tis ripe for judgment: Satan’s seat,  
 “ The sink of sin, and hell complete;  
 “ In ev’ry street of trulls a troop,  
 “ And ev’ry cook-maid wears a hoop.” SOMERVILLE.

And some of Mr. Wesley’s people gave me great comfort by assuring me, that “ the Lord had much people in this city:” which I soon discovered to be true, as I got acquainted with many of those righteous chosen saints, who modestly arrogate to themselves that they are the peculiar favourites of heaven, and consequently that any place they reside in must be safe.

In a month I saved money sufficient to bring up my wife, and she had a pretty tolerable state of health; of my master I obtained some stuff-shoes for her to bind, and nearly as  
 much

much as she could do. Having now plenty of work and higher wages, we were tolerably easy in our circumstances, more so than we ever had been, so that we soon procured a few cloaths. My wife had all her life before done very well with a superfine broad cloth cloak, but now I prevailed on her to have one of silk.

Until this winter I had never found out that I wanted a *great coat*, but now I made that important discovery.

“ A winter garment now demands your care,  
 “ To guard the body from the inclement air ;  
 “ Soft be the inward vest, the outward strong,  
 “ And large to wrap you warm, down reaching long.”  
 COOKE'S Hesiod.

My landlord shewed me one made of a coarse kind of Bath-coating, which he purchased new at a shop in Rosemary-lane, for ten shillings and sixpence ; so that the next half-guinea I had to spare, away I went to Rosemary-lane (and to my great surprize), was hauled into a shop by a fellow who was walking up and down before the door of a fop-seller, where I was soon fitted



fitted with a great coat of the same sort as that of my landlord. I asked the price; but how great was my astonishment, when the honest shopman told me, that he was so taken with my clean, honest, industrious looks, that he would let *me* have it cheaper than he would his own brother, so in one word he would oblige *me* with it for five and twenty shillings, which was the very money that it cost him. On hearing this, I crossed the shop in a trice, in order to set off home again, but the door had a fastening to it beyond my comprehension; nor would the good man let me out before I had made him an offer. I told him, I had so little money about me that I could not offer any thing, and again desired that he would let me out. But he persisted, and at last I told him that my landlord had informed me that he had purchased such another coat for ten shillings and sixpence; on which he began to give himself airs, and assured me, that however some people came by their goods, that for his part, he always paid for *his*. I heartily wished myself out of the shop, but in vain; as he seemed deter-

mined not to part with me until I had made some offer. I then told him that I had but ten shillings and sixpence, and of course could not offer him any more than I had got. I now expected more abuse from him, but instead of that the patient good man told me, that as he perhaps might get something by me another time, I should have the coat for my half guinea, although it was worth more than double the money.

About the end of November I received an account of the death of my grandfather.

“ The good old gentleman expir’d,  
“ And decently to heav’n retir’d.”

I was also informed that he had left a will in favour of my grandmother-in-law’s relations, who became possessed of all his effects, except a small freehold estate, which he left to my youngest brother, because he happened to be called George (which was the name of my grandfather) and ten pounds a piece to each of his other grand-children.

So totally unacquainted was I with the modes of transacting business, that I could  
not

not point out any method of having my ten pounds sent up to London, at least, no mode that the executor of the will would approve of; it being such a *prodigious* sum, that the greatest caution was used on both sides, so that it cost me about half the money in going down for it, and in returning to town again. This was in extremely hard frosty weather (I think some time in December), and being on the outside of a stage-coach, I was so very cold; that when I came to the inn where the passengers dined, I went directly to the fire, which struck the cold inward, so that I had but a very narrow escape from instant death. This happened in going down. In returning back to town, I had other misfortunes to encounter. The cold weather still continuing, I thought the basket warmer than the roof, and about six miles from Salisbury, I went back into it. But on getting out of it, in the inn yard at Salisbury, I heard some money jingle; and on searching my pockets, I discovered that I had lost about sixteen shillings, two or three of which I found in the basket, the rest had fallen through on the

N 2

road;

road ; and no doubt the whole of what I had left of my ten pounds would have gone the same way, had I not (for fear of highwaymen) sewed it up in my cloaths. I recollected that Seneca had said, “ A wise and good man is proof against all accidents of fate ; and that a brave man is a match for fortune ; and knowing myself to be both *wise, good* and *brave*, I bore the loss of my silver with the temper of a stoick, and like Epictetus reasoned, that I could not have lost it, if I had not first had it ; and that as I had lost it, why it was all the same as though it had never been in my possession.

But a more dreadful misfortune befel me the next morning ; the extreme severe weather still continuing, in order to keep me from dying with cold, I drank some punch and gin, which (not being used to drink any thing strong) made me so drunk, that the coachman put me inside the carriage for fear I should fall off the roof. I there met with some of the jovial sort, who had also drunk to keep out the cold, so that I found them  
in

in high glee; being asked to sing them a song, I immediately complied, and forgetting that I was one of the holy brethren, I sung song for song with the merriest of them; only several times between the acts, I turned up the whites of my eyes, and uttered a few ejaculations, as "Lord forgive me!" "O Christ! What am I doing?" and a few more of the same pious sort.

"The veriest hermit in the nation,

"May yield, God knows, to strong temptation." SWIFT.

However, after eating a good dinner, and refraining from liquor, I became nearly sober, and by the time I arrived in town, quite so; though in a terrible agitation of mind, by reflecting on what I had done, and was so ashamed of the affair, that I concealed it from my wife, that I might not grieve her righteous soul with the knowledge of so dreadful a fall: so that she with great pleasure ripped open the places in my clothes, which contained my treasure, and with an heart full of gratitude, piously thanked providence for affording us such a supply, and hoped that

the Lord would enable us to make a good use of it.

“ Whate’er can good or ill befall,

“ Faithful partner she of all.”      WESLEY’S Meliffa.

Here perhaps I may with great propriety quote the following lines of Gray :

“ Let not ambition mock their useful toil,

“ Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;

“ Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,

“ The short and simple annals of the poor.”

I am

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XX.

" Thus dwelt poor ——, of few good poffeft,  
 " A bed, board, tankard, and fix cups at beft;  
 " Item, Wesley's Head, old books, and rotten cheft,  
 " His bed was fcant, for his fhort wife too fhort;  
 " His cups were earthen, all of fmaller fort."

OWEN'S Juvenal.

" Fixt in an elbow chair at eafe,  
 " I choofe companions as I pleafe." SWIFT.

" Hail, precious pages! that amufe and teach,  
 " Exalt the genius, and improve the breaft.  
 " A feaft for ages.—O thou banquet nice!  
 " Where the foul riots with fecure excefs.  
 " What heart felt blifs! What pleafure wing'd hours."

Dr. S. DAVIS.

DEAR FRIEND,

**W**ITH the remainder of the money we purchafed houfhold goods, but as we then had not fufficient to furnifh a room, we worked hard, and lived ftill harder, fo that in a fhort time we had a room furnifhed with our own goods; and I believe that it is not poffible for you to imagine with what pleafure and fatisfaction we looked round the

room and furveyed our property: I believe that Alexander the Great never reflected on his immense acquisitions with half the heart-felt enjoyment which we experienced on this capital attainment.

“ How happy is the man whose early lot,  
 “ Hath made him master of a furnish'd cot.”

After our room was furnished, as we still enjoyed a better state of health than we did at Bristol and Taunton, and had also more work and higher wages, we often added something or other to our stock of wearing apparel.

“ Industrious habits in each bosom reigns,  
 “ And industry begets a love of gain.  
 “ Hence all the good from opulence that spring.”

GOLDSMITH.

Nor did I forget the old-book shops: but frequently added an old book to my small collection; and I really have often purchased books with the money that should have been expended in purchasing something to eat; a striking instance of which follows:

At



At the time we were purchasing household goods, we kept ourselves very short of money, and on Christmas-eve we had but half-a-crown left to buy a Christmas dinner. My wife desired that I would go to market, and purchase this festival dinner, and off I set for that purpose; but in the way I saw an old-book shop, and I could not resist the temptation of going in; intending only to expend sixpence or ninepence out of my half-crown. But I stumbled upon Young's Night Thoughts—forgot my dinner—down went my half-crown—and I hastened home, vastly delighted with the acquisition. When my wife asked me where was our Christmas dinner? I told her it was in my pocket.—“In your pocket (said she), that is a strange place. How could you think of stuffing a joint of meat into your pocket?” I assured her that it would take no harm. But as I was in no haste to take it out, she began to be more particular, and enquired what I had got, &c. On which I began to harangue on the superiority of intellectual pleasures over sensual gratifications, and observed that the brute creation

creation enjoyed the latter in a much higher degree than man. And that a man, that was not possessed of intellectual enjoyments, was but a two-legged brute.

I was proceeding in this strain : “ And so, (said she) instead of buying a dinner, I suppose you have, as you have done before, been buying books with the money ?”

“ Pray what is the value of Newton or Locke ?

“ Do they lessen the price of potatoes or corn ?

“ When poverty comes, can they soften the shock,

“ Or teach us how hunger is patiently borne ?

“ You spend half your life-time in poring on books ;

“ What a mountain of wit must be cramm'd in that skull !

“ And yet, if a man were to judge by your looks,

“ Perhaps he would think you confoundedly dull.”

I confessed I had bought Young's *Night Thoughts* : “ And I think (said I) that I have acted wisely ; for had I bought *a dinner*, we should have eaten it to-morrow, and the pleasure would have been soon over ; but should we live fifty years longer, we shall have the *Night Thoughts* to feast upon.” This was too powerful an argument to admit of  
any

any farther debate ; in ſhort, my wife was convinced. Down I ſat, and began to read with as much enthuſiaſm as the good doctor poſſeſſed when he wrote it ; and ſo much did it excite my attention as well as approbation, that I retained the greateſt part of it in my memory. A couplet of Perſius, as Engliſhed, might have been applied to me :

“ — For this you gain your meagre looks,  
“ And ſacrifice your dinner to your books.”

Sometime in June 1774, as we ſat at work in our room, Mr. Boyd, one of Mr. Weſley's people, called and informed me that a little ſhop and parlour were to be let in Featherſtone-ſtreet ; adding, that if I was to take it, I might there get ſome work as a maſter. I without hesitation told him that I liked the idea, and hinted that I would ſell books alſo. Mr. Boyd then asked me how I came to think of ſelling books ? I informed him that until that moment it had never once entered into my thoughts ; but that when he propoſed my taking the ſhop, it inſtantly occurred into my mind, that  
for

for several months past I had observed a great increase in a certain old-book shop; and that I was persuaded I knew as much of old books as the person who kept it. I farther observed, that I loved books, and that if I could but be a bookseller, I should then have plenty of books to read, which was the greatest motive I could conceive to induce me to make the attempt. My friend on this assured me, that he would get the shop for me, and with a laugh added, "When you are Lord Mayor, you shall use all your interest to get me made an Alderman." Which I engaged not to forget to perform.

" In all my wand'rings round this world of care,  
 " In all my griefs, and God has giv'n my share;  
 " I still had hopes to see some better days."

My *private library* at this time consisted of Fletcher's Checks to Antinomianism, &c. 5 volumes; Watts's Improvement of the Mind; Young's Night Thoughts; Wake's Translation of the Apostolical Epistles; Fleetwood's Life of Christ; the first twenty numbers of Hinton's Dictionary of the Arts  
 and

and Sciences; some of Wesley's Journals, and some of the pious lives published by him; and about a dozen other volumes of the latter sort, besides odd magazines, &c. And to set me up in style, Mr. Boyd recommended me to the friends of an holy brother lately gone to heaven, and of whom I purchased a bagful of old books, chiefly divinity, for a guinea.

With this stock, and some odd scraps of leather, which together with all my books were worth about five pounds, I opened shop on Midsummer-day, 1774, in Featherstone-street, in the parish of St. Luke; and I was as well pleased in surveying my little shop with my name over it, as was Nebuchadnezzar, when he said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" and my good wife often perceiving the pleasure that I took in my shop, piously cautioned me against setting my mind on the riches of this world, and assured me that it was all but vanity. "You are very right, my dear (I sometimes replied), and to keep our minds as spiritual as we can, we will always attend our class and band meetings,  
hear

hear as many sermons, &c. at the Foundery on week days as possible, and on sabbath days we will mind nothing but the good of our souls: our small beer shall be fetched in on Saturday nights, nor will we dress even a potatoe on the sabbath. We will still attend the preaching at five o'clock in the morning; at eight go to the prayer meeting; at ten to the public worship at the Foundery; hear Mr. Perry at Cripplegate, at two; be at the preaching at the Foundery at five; meet with the general society at six; meet in the united bands at seven, and again be at the prayer meeting at eight; and then come home, and read and pray by ourselves."

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## LETTER XXI.

- “ ——— Strange vicissitudes of human fate!  
 “ Still alt’ring, never in a steady state ;  
 “ Good after ill, and after pain delight ;  
 “ Alternate, like the scenes of day and night,  
 “ Since every one who lives is born to die,  
 “ And none can boast intire felicity :  
 “ With equal mind what happens let us bear,  
 “ Nor joy, nor grieve too much for things beyond our care,  
 “ Like pilgrims, to the appointed place we tend :  
 “ The world’s an Inn, and death’s the journey’s end.

DRYDEN’S Palemon and Arcite.

DEAR FRIEND,

**N**otwithstanding the obscurity of the street, and the mean appearance of my shop, yet I soon found customers for what few books I had, and I as soon laid out the money in other old trash which was daily brought for sale.

At that time Mr. Wesley’s people had a sum of money which was kept on purpose to lend out, for three months, without interest, to such of their society whose characters were  
good,

good, and who wanted a temporary relief. To increase my little stock, I borrowed five pounds out of this fund, which was of great service to me.

In our new situation we lived in a very frugal manner, often dining on potatoes, and quenching our thirst with water, being absolutely determined, if possible, to make some provision for such dismal times as sickness, shortness of work, &c. which we had been so frequently involved in before, and could scarce help expecting to be our fate again. My wife foreboded it much more than I did, being of a more melancholy turn of mind.

“ ————— Women ever love

“ To brood o'er sorrows, and indulge their woe.

FRANCKLIN'S Sophocles.

I lived in this street six months, and in that time increased my stock from five pounds, to twenty-five pounds.

“ London——the public there are candid and generous, and before my merit can have time to create me enemies, I'll save money, and a fig for the Sultan and Sophy.” ROVER.

This



This immense stock I deemed too valuable to be buried in Featherstone-Street ; and a shop and parlour being to let in Chiswell-Street, No. 46, I took them. This was at that time, and for fourteen years afterwards, a very dull and obscure situation : as few ever passed through it, besides Spitalfield weavers on *hanging days*, and methodists on *preaching nights* ; but still it was much better adapted for business than Featherstone-Street.

A short time after I came into Chiswell-Street to live, an odd circumstance occurred which caused a great deal of talk ; Mrs. Chapman, who many years kept a ivery stable in Coleman-Street, had a cat big with kitten ; this cat was one day seen to fly at a fowl, that was roasting by the fire, which she repeated several times, so that she was at last put out of the room ; when this fowl was dressed and eat, they gave poor puss the bones, but this was not enough, for when she lay in, they found that she had marked her kitten, as instead of two feet before, she had two wings, with some short feathers on

O

them,

them, the singularity of this kitten drew great numbers to visit her, which occasioned so much trouble to Mrs. Chapman, that she signed the death warrant, and poor puss was drowned, and afterwards buried in the dung heap.

I thought this story would read as well in my life, as in the Philosophical Transactions, which prevented me from troubling those learned authors with it.

A few weeks after I came into this Street, I bade a final adieu to the *gentle craft*, and converted my little stock of leather, &c. into old books; and a great sale I had, considering my stock; which was not only extremely small, but contained very little variety, as it principally consisted of divinity; for as I had not much knowledge, so I seldom ventured out of my depth. Indeed, there was one class of books, which for the first year or two that I called myself a bookseller, I would not sell, for such was my ignorance, bigotry, superstition (or what you please) that I conscientiously

scientifically destroyed such books as fell into my hands which were written by free-thinkers; for really supposing them to be dictated by his sable highness, I would neither read them myself, nor sell them to others.

You will perhaps be surpris'd when I inform you, that there are in London (and I suppose in other populous places) persons who purchase every article which they have occasion for (and also many articles which they have no occasion for, nor ever will) at stalls, beggarly shops, pawnbrokers, &c. under the idea of purchasing *cheaper* than they could at respectable shops, and of men of property. A considerable number of these kind of customers I had in the beginning, who forsook my shop as soon as I began to appear more respectable, by introducing better order, possessing more valuable books, and having acquired a better judgment, &c. Notwithstanding which, I declare to you, upon my honour, that these very bargain-hunters have given me double the price that

I now charge for thousands and tens of thousands of volumes. For as a tradesman increases in respectability and opulence, his opportunities of purchasing increase proportionably, and that the more he buys and sells, the more he becomes a judge of the real value of his goods. It was for want of this experience and judgement, stock, &c. that for several years I was in the habit of charging more than double the price I now do for many thousand articles. But professed bargain-hunters often purchase old *locks* at the stalls in Moorfields, when half the wards are rusted off or taken out, and give more for them than they would have paid for new ones to any reputable ironmonger. And what numerous instances of this infatuation do we meet with daily at sales by auction, not of books only, but of many other articles? Of which I could here adduce a variety of glaring instances: but (not to tire you) a few of recent date shall suffice.—At the sale of Mr. Rigby's books at Mr. Christie's, Martyn's Dictionary of Natural History sold for *fifteen guineas*, which then stood

in

in my catalogue at *four pounds fifteen shillings*; Pilkington's Dictionary of Painters, at *seven guineas*, usually sold at three; Francis's Horace, *two pounds eleven shillings*, and many others in the same manner. At Sir George Colebrook's sale, the octavo edition of the Tatler sold for *two guineas and a half*. At a sale a few weeks since, Rapin's History, in folio, the two first volumes only (instead of five) sold for upwards of *five pounds*! I charge for the same from *ten shillings and sixpence to one pound ten shillings*. I sell great numbers of books to pawnbrokers, who sell them out of their windows at much higher prices, the purchasers believing that they are buying bargains, and that such articles have been pawned; and it is not only books which pawnbrokers purchase, but various other matters, and they always purchase the worst kind of every article they sell. I will even add, that many shops which are *called* pawnbrokers, never take in any pawns, yet can live by selling things which are supposed to be kept over time.

I went on prosperously until some time in September, 1775, when I was suddenly taken ill of a dreadful fever; and eight or ten days after, my wife was seized with the same disorder.

“ Human hopes, now mounting high,  
 “ On the swelling surge of joy ;  
 “ Now with unexpected woe,  
 “ Sinking to the depths below.”      WEST’S Pinder.

At that time I only kept a boy to help in my shop, so that I fear, while I lay ill, my wife had too much care and anxiety on her mind. I have been told that, before she was confined to her bed, she walked about in a delirious state; in which she did not long continue, but contrary to all expectation died, in a fit of enthusiastic rant, on the ninth of November, surrounded with several methodical preachers.

“ Invidious death ! how dost thou rend in sunder  
 “ Whom love has knit and sympathy made one ?  
 “ A tie so stubborn.”——      BLAIR’S GRAVE.

She was in reality one of the best of women; and although for about four years she was ill the greatest part of the time, which involved

involved me in the very depth of poverty and distress, yet I never once repented having married her.

“ ——— still busy meddling memory,  
 “ In barbarous succession, musters up  
 “ The past endearments of our softer hours,  
 “ Tenacious of his theme.”      BLAIR’S GRAVE.

’Tis true she was enthusiastical to an extreme, and of course very superstitious and visionary, but as I was very far gone myself, I did not think that a fault in her.

“ Go, take thy seat, the heav’nly choirs among,  
 “ But leave thy virtues to the world below.” Orlando Furioso.

Indeed she much exceeded me, and most others that ever fell under my observation, as she in reality *totally* neglected and disregarded *every kind of pleasure whatever*, but those of a spiritual (or visionary) nature. Methinks I here see you smile: but I assure you she made *no* exception; but was a complete devotee, and what is more remarkable, without pride or ill-nature.

“ Intentions so pure, and such meekness of spirit,  
 “ Must of course, and of right, Heaven’s kingdom inherit.”

SIMKIN.

I am, dear Friend, yours.

## L E T T E R XXII.

“ I’ve strange news to give you! but when you receive it,  
 “ ’Tis impossible, Sir, that you should believe it!  
 “ But as I’ve been told this agreeable story,  
 “ I’ll digress for a moment to lay it before ye.”

DEAR SIR,

A Friend of mine, of whose veracity I entertain the highest opinion, has favoured me with an account of a lady, who has to the full as much, indeed more of the spirit, but without the good-nature of Nancy Lackington. The fact is as follows :

“ ’Tis true ’tis pity : and pity ’tis its true.”

Mr. R—t, a genteel tradesman with whom I am acquainted, having lost his second wife early in 1790, courted and married one of the holy sisters a few months afterwards. They had lived together about six months, when Mr. R—t, one Sunday, being a sober religious man, took down Doddridge’s Lectures, and began to read them to his wife and family. But this holy sister found fault with her husband

band



band for reading fuch learned rational difcourfes, which favoured too much of human reafon and vain philofophy, and wifhed he would read fomewhat more fpiritual and edifying. He attempted to convince her that Dr. Doddridge was not only a good rational divine, but to the full as fpiritual as any divine ought to be; and that to be more fpiritual he muft be lefs rational, and of courfe become fanatical and vifionary. But thefe obfervations of the husband fo difpleafed his fpiritual wife, that fhe retired to bed, and left her husband to read Doddridge's Lectures as long as he chofe to his children by a former wife.

The next morning, while Mr. R—t was out on bufinets, this holy fifter, without faying one fyllable to any perfon, packed up all her clothes, crammed them into a hackney-coach, and away fhe went. Mr. R—t, poor foul! on coming home, difcovered his immense lofs, and in an almoft frantic ftate, fpent the firft fortnight in fruitlefs attempts to difcover her retreat.

“ Three weeks after her elopement, I was  
“ (says Mr. R—t) going down Cheapſide  
“ one day, and ſaw a lady ſomething like  
“ my wife, but as ſhe was ſomewhat diſ-  
“ guiſed, and I could not ſee her face, I  
“ was not ſure. At laſt I ventured to look  
“ under her bonnet, and found, that, ſure  
“ enough, it was ſhe. I then walked three  
“ times backwards and forwards in Cheap-  
“ ſide, endeavouring to perſuade her to re-  
“ turn with me, or to diſcover where ſhe  
“ lived; but ſhe obſtinately refuſed to re-  
“ turn, or to let me ſee her retreat; and  
“ here (ſays Mr. R—t) I begged that ſhe  
“ would grant me a kiſs; but ſhe would not  
“ willingly. However, after ſome buſtle in  
“ the ſtreet, I took a farewel kiſs. Poor  
“ dear ſoul! (ſigh’d he) ſhe is rather *too*  
“ *ſpiritual*; for notwithstanding I laid by  
“ her ſide near ſix months, ſhe never would  
“ be prevailed upon to do any thing carnal;  
“ and although I did all in my power to get  
“ the better of her ſpiritual ſcruples, yet ſhe  
“ was always ſo in love with Chriſt her hea-  
“ venly ſpouſe, that when ſhe eloped from  
“ me,

“ me, she was, I assure you, as good a virgin as when I married her.”

I must give you a story or two of the same nature with the preceding.

A gentleman of London happening to be on a visit at Bristol about three years since, fell in love with a handsome young lady who was one of the holy sisterhood; after a few weeks acquaintance he made her an offer of his person and fortune, and the young lady, after proper inquiry had been made into the gentleman's family, fortune, &c. consented to make our lover happy. They were soon after married, and the same day set off in a post-chaise towards London, in order to sleep the first night at an inn, and so save the lady the blushes occasioned by the jokes common on such occasions; this happy couple had been in bed about an hour when the cry of murder alarmed the house; this alarm proceeding from the room that was occupied by the bride and bridegroom, drew the company that way; the inn-keeper knocked at the door,

door, and demanded admittance ; our Benedict appeared at the door, and informed the host that his lady had been taken suddenly ill in a kind of fit he believed, but that she was better ; and after the innkeeper's wife had been sent into the room to see the young lady, and had found her well, all retired to bed.

They had, however, not lain more than two hours, when the cry of murder, fire, &c. again alarmed the house, and drew many out of their beds once more.

Our young gentleman then dressed himself, and opening the door, informed the company that he had that morning been married to the young lady in bed, and that being married, he had insisted on being admitted to the privilege of an husband, but that the young lady had talked much about the good of her poor soul, her spiritual husband, &c. and that instead of granting what he conceived to be the right of every husband, she had thought proper to disturb all in the house. He added, that having been thus made very  
ridiculous,

ridiculous, he would take effectual care to prevent a repetition of the same absurd conduct.

He then ordered a post-chaise, and set off for London, leaving our young faint in bed to enjoy her spiritual contemplations in their full extent; nor has he ever since paid her any attention.

Some time since, being in a large town in the West, she was pointed out to me by a friend, as she was walking in the street.

I am also informed, from undoubted authority, that in the same town there are a couple who have been married upwards of three years, and as yet the husband is not certain as to the sex of his wife; and on every attempt of the husband for that purpose, the servants are alarmed with the screams of the pious lady, who would not permit such carnal communication for the world.

The preceding stories put me in mind of what Ovid says was practised by young  
maids

maids on the festival of the celebrated nymph *Anna Perenna*, thus translated by I know not who :

- “ With promises the amorous god she led,  
 “ And with fond hopes his eager passion fed ;  
 “ At length 'tis done, the goddess yields, she cry'd ;  
 “ My pray'rs have gain'd the victory o'er pride.  
 “ With joy the god prepares the golden bed ;  
 “ Thither, her face conceal'd, is Anna led ;  
 “ Just on the brink of bliss, she stands confess'd ;—  
 “ The disappointed lover is her jest,  
 “ While rage and shame alternate swell his breast. }

I know that there are now in Mr. Wesley's society, in London, some women who, ever since they were converted, have refused to sleep with their husbands, and that some of those will not pay the least attention to any temporal concern whatever, being, as they term it, wholly wrapped up in divine contemplation, having their souls absorbed in divine love, so as not to be interrupted by the trifling concerns of a husband, family, &c.

Mrs. G—— left her husband and children, one of whom was sucking at her breast, and came from Ireland to London ; and when she was upbraided with her unnatural behaviour, she

she replied, "It was the will of the Lord, she had left all for Christ's sake, and followed the guidings of his spirit. To set under the preaching of Mr. Wesley, was of more importance to her than husband and children." For a long time she lived on what she had brought away from her husband; after that was gone, she lived an half-starved life, by taking in plain-work. What became of her at last, I could never learn.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## LETTER XXIII.

- “ Women that leave no stone unturn’d,  
 “ In which the cause might be concern’d.” HUDIBRAS.
- “ The *man without sin*, the *methodist* Rabbi,  
 “ Has perfectly cur’d the chlorosis of Tabby :  
 “ And if right I can judge from her shape and face,  
 “ She soon may produce an infant of grace.  
 “ Now they say that all people in her situation  
 “ Are very fine subjects for regeneration.”

New Bath Guide.

DEAR FRIEND,

BECAUSE some of the holy sisters are in their amours altogether spiritual, you are by no means to understand that they are all totally divested of the carnal propensity.

Some of these good creatures are so far from thinking that their husbands are too carnal in their affections, that they really think that they are not enough so ; and instances are not wanting, in which, owing to their having husbands too spiritual, they have  
 been



been willing to receive assistance from the husbands of other women.

It is but about a year since a certain celebrated preacher used to administer carnal consolation to the wife of his clerk. This holy communication was repeated so often, and so open, that at last it came to the clerk's ears, who watching an opportunity, one day surprised the pious pair at their *devotion*, and so *belaboured* the preacher with his walking-staff, that the public were for near a month deprived of the benefits resulting from his remarkable gift of eloquence.

“ The pious methodist may chance to fail,  
“ Like Æsop's fox, entangl'd by the tail.”

As I am got into the story-telling way, I cannot resist the temptation of telling another; for, as Mat. Bramble says,

“ ——— Here my subject is not barren;  
“ But in rare anecdotic matter rich.”

A certain holy sister who lately kept a house in a country village, within ten miles of London, and *took in* (as they called it)

Mr. Wesley's preachers, by taking *in* is only meant, that when they came in their turn to preach in the village, she used to supply each with victuals and a bed (*no doubt* but they slept *alone*). This lady was so very remarkable for her *spiritual experience* and divine gifts, that she attracted many to her house, besides such as came in the regular course of their duty, and among the former a preacher from London, from whom I learnt the affair. This preacher happening to want a wife, and being very spiritually-minded, actually married her in December 1790, merely for her great gifts and grace, as her fortune was not above the fiftieth part as much as his own; and as to person, she is scarce one degree above ugliness itself; although her husband is well-proportioned, and upon the whole a handsome man. They had not been married a week, when this simple preacher discovered that his gifted gracious saint was an incarnate devil, who had married him only to rob, plunder, and ——— him.

- “ Whate’er it be, to wisest men and best  
 “ Seeming at first all heav’nly under virgin veil,  
 “ Soft, modest, meek, demure,  
 “ Once join’d, the contrary she proves, a thorn  
 “ Intestine, far within defensive arms  
 “ A cleaving mischief; in his way to virtue  
 “ Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms  
 “ Draws him away enslav’d  
 “ With dotage, and his sense deprav’d,  
 “ To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends.”

MILTON’S Samson’s Agonistes.

And in a few months, between her and her gallants, they bullied him out of a settlement to the amount of four times the sum she brought him, and the poor pious preacher thinks that he has cheaply got rid of her.

- “ Ah, foolish woman! may she one day see  
 “ How deep she’s plung’d herself in infamy,  
 “ And with true penitence wash out the stain;—  
 “ But—mischief on’t—why should I pray in vain;  
 “ For she’s but harden’d at the name of grace,  
 “ No blush was ever seen t’adorn her face.” GOULD.

The reason why I interest myself in his behalf is, because I am confident that he really is an honest well-meaning man at the bottom; but withal one that does not possess the greatest share of understanding, and who

being formerly but a mean mechanic, never had any education; but although he is a great enthusiast, yet he is one of the good-natured inoffensive sort, who will do no harm to any person, but on the contrary, all the good in his power. I am only sorry, as he lately was an honest useful tradesman, that he should have so much spiritual quixotism in him, as at thirty years of age to shut up his shop and turn preacher, without being able to read his primer; which I can assure you is the case.

“ What though his wits could ne'er dispense,  
 “ One page of grammar, or of sense;  
 “ What though his learning be so slight,  
 “ He scarcely knows to spell or write;  
 “ What though his skull be cudgel-proof,  
 “ He's orthodox, and that's enough.” TOM BRAINLESS.

But as these heavenly teachers only speak as the Spirit giveth utterance, of course all human learning is entirely superfluous.

“ ——— “ As he does not chuse to cull,  
 “ His faith by any scripture rule;  
 “ But by the vapours that torment  
 “ His brains, from hypochondria sent,

“ Which

- “ Which into dreams and visions turn,  
“ And make his zeal so fiercely burn,  
“ That reason loses the ascendant,  
“ And all within grows independant.  
“ He proves all such as do accord  
“ With him the chosen of the Lord ;  
“ But that all others are accurst,  
“ 'Tis plain in Canticles the first.”

BUTLER'S Posth. Works.

The following very extraordinary fact took place about the time that I first came to live in Chiswell-Street: Mr. R— a surgeon, who lived many years near Moorfields, happening to have a methodistical lady (some relation to him) that boarded in the house, and served as a companion to Mrs. R—; the Surgeon some how or other got to bed to this holy woman, and after some time Mrs. R— became acquainted with their illicit amours; she took not the least notice of the affair, but kept in good humour with both until she had an opportunity of being revenged of her rival. One afternoon, her husband being from home, she took care to send the servants out of the way, and then went up stairs to this boarder's bed room, and

found her taking her afternoon nap on the bed, upon which she secured her hands, by tying them, one to each of the posts at the head of the bed, in doing which the lady awaked and began to laugh, as thinking it was some bit of humour; Mrs. R— laughed also, and proceeded to tie her legs, one to each of the posts at the foot of the bed, which the other permitted, still thinking it was some harmless whim; but alas! she was soon convinced to the contrary, for as soon as Mrs. R— had made her secure, she (horrid to relate) took a pen-knife, and cut off one half of the externals of the offending part. Now said she, in savage triumph, let Mr. R— take half, or a whole one, which he likes the best. She then sent for her husband, and told him that Mrs. ——— wanted his immediate assistance, which he found to be too true, as she was nearly dead with the loss of blood; however, he with much care and attention at last healed the wound. She then was desired by Mrs. R— to get herself another place to board at, lest she should lose the other half—the poor lady took her advice,  
and

and after this dreadful misfortune gave herself up entirely to devotion, and was soon after admitted into the select bands, among the entirely holy sisters, who are made perfect in grace.

A few years since the methodist-preachers got footing in Wellington (the famous birth-place of your humble servant) and established a society, soon after which one of their preachers (at Collompton, a neighbouring town) happened to like a young servant girl, who was one of the holy sisters, (she having gone through the new birth) better than his wife, because she was an unenlightened, unconverted woman. And this servant girl proving with child, the news soon reached Wellington; and a very wealthy gentleman, who entertained the preachers there, followed the preacher of Collompton's example, and got his own pious maid with child.

- “ Blessed she tho’ once rejected,  
 “ Like a little wandering sheep;  
 “ Poor maid, one morning was elected  
 “ By a vision in her sleep.”

After this some of the society in Wellington began to have all things in common, and several more of the holy sisters proved prolific; which so alarmed the parish, that some of the heads of it insisted that the preachers should not be permitted to preach there any longer. "For, if (said they) the methodist-society continues, we shall have the parish full of bastards."

A similar affair happened at a country town, ten or twelve miles from Oxford, about two years since, where a very handsome powerful preacher made converts of a great number of women, both married and single, who were wonderfully affected, and great numbers flocked to his standard.

" He had a roguish twinkle in his eye,  
 " And shone all glittering with ungodly dew,  
 " If a tight damsel chanc'd to be tripping by  
 " Which when observ'd, he thrunk into his mew,  
 " And frait would recollect his piety anew."

Cattle of Indolence.

But he had not laboured there more than a year, before the churchwardens were made acquainted



acquainted with his powerful operations on five young female fairs, who all swore bastards to this holy, spiritual labourer in the vineyard; upon which the gentlemen of the town exerted themselves, and prevented the farther propagation of methodism; as

- “ The ladies by sympathy seem'd to discover
- “ The advantage of having a spiritual lover.
- “ They were sadly afraid that wives, widows, and misses,
- “ Would confine to the—all their favours and kisses.”

There was in Salisbury, some few years ago, a congregation of methodists in connection with the late Mr. Wesley; and amongst the poorer members, a young man, who with honourable professions, paid his addresses to a young woman. They generally met in the dusk of the evening, after their daily labour was ended. One evening in particular he pressed her to marry him; it was mutually agreed on, and the day fixt, for the celebration of their nuptials; and by way of binding the bargain (as odd as it may seem) he presented the young woman with half a guinea. A few evenings after, being in  
company

company with her as usual, he began to offer rudeness to her; alledging in excuse, that as they were to be married in a few days, the congress would be perfectly innocent. But the girl resented the usage highly; and soon after, complained to the other methodists in that city, of the insult she had received from him. The young man was accordingly challenged with it; but he stiffly denied the whole; alledging that he had not been in her company for some time past; that he had made no matrimonial contract with her; and consequently did not give her the half guinea as asserted; and the men who usually worked with him in the same shop, averred positively that he was present with them on the evening in question, at his usual employment. Upon this, the methodists *wisely* concluded, that it must have been the devil who had carried on this affair with the young woman, that when he gave her the half guinea, she had sold herself to him, and that on the day fixt for the marriage, he would come and fetch her away; or at least that some great evil would befall her: and as Mr.

Wesley

Wesley was to be at Newbury soon, they prudently determined upon sending a deputation of certain of their members to him, for his advice in so critical an affair; which was accordingly done.—After having stated the case to him; instead of opening their eyes, as so learned a man ought to have done; he treated the whole as truth; and directed them to fast and pray on that day when they expected Satan to make his appearance; and after the deputies had left Newbury, he said to the good people of the house where he then was; *I thought a little fasting and prayer would not do them any harm.*

The author of a letter to Dr. Coke and Mr. More, published since the first edition of my Memoirs, informs us, that a gentleman of Chesham had a daughter about seventeen years of age, which he put into the hands of a methodist parson, to have her converted, and was exceedingly kind and liberal to him; and we are informed that this rascal converted her first, and debauched her afterwards.

So you see, my dear friend, by the above examples (were it necessary, I could give you many more) that not all the converted and sanctified females are become so absorbed in the spiritual delights of the mystical union, as to have lost all relish for carnal connections; as we find that many among them are blessed with a mind so capacious, as to be able to participate in the pleasures of both worlds.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XXIV.

“ Domestic happiness, thou only bliss  
 “ Of paradise that has surviv'd the fall!  
 “ Thou art the nurse of virtue in thine arms,  
 “ She smiles appearing as in truth she is,  
 “ Heav'n born and destin'd for the skies again.    *COWPER.*

“ Woman, man's chiefest good, by heav'n design'd  
 “ To glad the heart, and humanize the mind;  
 “ To sooth each angry care, abate the strife,  
 “ And lull the passions as we walk through life.”

*Art of living in London.*

DEAR FRIEND,

**A**FTER a long digression, I  
 must now return to my own affairs.

I continued in the above-mentioned dreadful fever many weeks, and my life was despaired of by all that came near me. During which time, my wife, whom I affectionately loved, died and was buried, without my once having a sight of her. What added much to my misfortunes, several nurses that  
were

were hired to take care of me and my wife, proved so abandoned and depraved as to have lost all sense of moral obligation, and every tender feeling for one who to all appearance was just on the point of death: several of these monsters in female shape robbed my drawers of linen, &c. and kept themselves drunk with gin, while I lay unable to move in my bed, and was ready to perish, partly owing to want of cleanliness and proper care. Thus situated, I must inevitably have fallen a victim, had it not been for my sister Dorothy, wife of Mr. Northam of Lambeth, and my sister Elizabeth, wife of Mr. Bell in Soho.

“ ————— — dreadful are the ills

“ Which cruel fortune brings on human kind.”

FRANCKLIN'S Sophocles.

These kind sisters, as soon as they were informed of the deplorable state in which I lay, notwithstanding some misunderstanding which subsisted between us, and prevented me from sending for them, hastened to me, and each sat up with me alternately, so that  
I had

I had one or the other with me every night ; and contrary to all expectation, I recovered. But this recovery was in a very slow manner.

As soon as I was able to enquire into the state of my affairs, I found that Mr. Wheeler, sack and rope-maker in Old-street, and Messrs. Bottomley and Shaw, carpenters and sash-makers in Bunhill-row, had saved me from ruin, by locking up my shop, which contained my little *all*. Had not this been done, the nurses would no doubt have contrived means to have emptied my shop, as effectually as they had done my drawers.

The above gentlemen not only took care of my shop, but also advanced money to pay such expences as occurred ; and as my wife was dead, they assisted in making my will in favour of my mother.

These worthy gentlemen belong to Mr. Wesley's society (and notwithstanding they have imbibed many enthusiastic whims) yet  
would

would they be an honour to any society, and are a credit to human nature. I hope that I never shall recollect their kindness without being filled with the warmest sentiments of gratitude towards them.

I never had any opportunity of returning Mr. Wheeler's kindness. But Messrs. Bottomley and Shaw have had many hundred pounds of me for work, and are still my carpenters, and ever shall be as long as I shall live near them, and have a house to repair.

“ He that hath Nature in him must be grateful :  
 “ 'Tis the Creator's primary great Law,  
 “ That links the chain of being to each other,  
 “ Joining the greater to the lesser nature,  
 “ Tying the weak and strong, the poor and powerful,  
 “ Subduing men to brutes, and even brutes to men.”

There is a fine passage in Ajax, a tragedy by Sophocles, as translated by Dr. Francklin, and as it is a wife speaking to her husband, is the more remarkable.

Tecmeffa says to Ajax

————— Thou art my all,

“ My only safeguard : do not, do not leave me !

“ Nought so becomes a man as gratitude,

“ For



“ For good received, and noble deeds are still  
 “ Are the offspring of benevolence, whilst he  
 “ With whom remembrance dies of blessings past,  
 “ Is vile and worthless.”

On my recovery I also learnt that Miss Dorcas Turton (the young woman that kept the house, and of whom I then rented the shop, parlour, kitchen and garret) having out of kindness to my wife, occasionally assisted her during her illness, had caught the same dreadful disorder, she was then very dangerously ill, and people shunned the house as much as if the plague had been it. So that when I opened my shop again, I was stared at as though I had actually returned from the other world; and it was a considerable time before many of my former customers could credit that I really was in existence, it having been repeatedly reported that I was also dead.

Montaigne says “ That sorrow is a passion which the world has endeavoured to honour, by cloathing it with the godly titles of wisdom, virtue, &c. which is a foolish and vile  
 Q disguise ;

disguise ; the Italians call it by its proper name, *ill nature*, for in truth (says she) it is always a mean base passion ; and for that reason the stoicks forbid their wise men to be any way affected with it.”

Whether Montaigne is right or not, I will not determine ; but I got rid of my sorrow as fast as I could, thinking that I could not give a better proof of my having loved my late wife, than by getting another as soon as I could.

“ Man may be happy if he will,”

“ I’ve said so often, and I think so still :

“ Doctrine to make the millions stare !

“ Know then, each mortal is an actual Jove ;

“ Can brew what weather he shall most approve,

“ Or wind, or calm, or foul, or fair.

“ But here’s the mischief—man’s an ass I say ;

“ Too fond of thunder, light’ning, storm and rain ;

“ He hides the charming, chearing ray,

“ That spreads a smile, o’er hill and plain !

“ Dark he must court the scull, and spade, and shroud,

“ The mistress of his soul must be a cloud !”

PETER PINDAR.

Miss Dorcas Turton was a charming young woman, and you must now be made farther

farther acquainted with her. She is the daughter of Mr. Samuel Turton of Staffordshire; her mother by marriage, still retained her maiden name, which was Miss Jemima Turton of Oxfordshire, grand daughter of the honourable Sir John Turton, Knight, one of the Judges of the Court of King's Bench. Mr. Samuel Turton had a large fortune of his own, and about twenty thousand pounds with his wife Miss Jemima, but by law suits, and an unhappy turn for gaming, he dissipated nearly the whole of it, and was obliged to have recourse to trade to help to support his family.

“ 'Tis lost at dice, what ancient honour won,

“ Hard, when the father plays away the son.”

He opened a shop as a sadler's ironmonger; but as he was but little acquainted with trade, and as his old propensity to gaming never quitted him, it is no wonder that he did not succeed in his business; and to crown all his other follies, he was bound for a false friend in a large sum; this completed his ruin.

His wife died in Jan. 1773, and his final ruin ensued a few months after; so that from that time to his death he was partly supported by his daughter Miss Dorcas Turton, who cheerfully submitted to keep a school, and worked very hard at plain work, by which means she kept her father from want.

“ The worst of ills to poverty ally’d,

“ Is the proud scoff, it hurts man’s honest pride.”

OWEN’S Juvenal.

The old gentleman died a few months after I came into the shop. Being partly acquainted with this young lady’s goodness to her father, I concluded that so amiable a daughter was very likely to make a good wife; I also knew that she was immoderately fond of books, and would frequently read until morning; this turn of mind in her was the greatest of all recommendations to me, who having acquired a few ideas, was at that time restless to increase them: so that I was in raptures with the bare thoughts of having a woman to read with, and also to read to me.

“ Of all the pleasures, noble and refin’d,  
 “ Which form the taste and cultivate the mind,  
 “ In ev’ry realm where science darts its beams,  
 “ From Thale’s ice to Afric’s golden streams,  
 “ From climes where Phœbus pours his orient ray,  
 “ To the fair regions of declining day,  
 “ The “ Feast of Reason” which from READING springs,  
 “ To reas’ning man the highest solace brings.  
 “ ’Tis BOOKS a lasting pleasure can supply,  
 “ Charm while we live, and teach us how to die.”

LACKINGTON’S Shop Bill.

I embraced the first opportunity after her recovery to make her acquainted with my mind, and as we were no strangers to each others characters and circumstances, there was no need of a long formal courtship; so I prevailed on her not to defer our union longer than the 30th of January, 1776, when for the second time I entered into the holy state of matrimony.

——— “ Wedded Love is found on esteem,  
 “ Which the fair merits of the mind engage:  
 “ For those are charms that never can decay,  
 “ But Time, which gives new whiteness to the swan,  
 “ Improves their lustre.”

FENTON.

I am, dear Friend, yours.

## L E T T E R   X X V .

- “ Reason re-baptiz’d me when adult:  
 “ Weigh’d true from false, in her impartial scale.  
 “ Truth, radiant goddess! fallies on my soul!  
 “ And puts delusion’s dusky train to flight.”      YOUNG.
- “ All the mystic lights were quench’d.”      LEE.
- “ To thee philosophy! to thee the light,  
 “ The guide of mortals through their mental night,  
 “ By whom the world in all its views is shewn,  
 “ Our guide through nature’s works, and in our own,  
 “ Who place in order being’s wond’rous chain,  
 “ Save where those puzzling, stubborn links remain,  
 “ By art divine involv’d, which man can ne’er explain.”      }
- CRABE.

DEAR FRIEND,

**I** Am now in February 1776,  
 arrived at an important period of my life.  
 Being lately recovered from a very painful,  
 dangerous, and hopeless illness, I found my-  
 self once more in a confirmed state of health,  
 furrounded by my little stock in trade, which  
 was but just saved from thieves, and which  
 to me was an immense treasure.

- “ Pass some fleeting moments by,  
 “ All at once the tempest fly;  
 “ Instant shifts the clouded scene;  
 “ Heav’n renews its smiles serene.”      WEST’S Pindar.

Add to the above, my having won a second time in a game where the odds were so much against me; or to use another simile, my having drawn another prize in the lottery of wedlock, and thus like John Bunce, repaired the loss of one very valuable woman by the acquisition of another still more valuable.

- “ O woman! let the libertine decry,  
 “ Rail at the virtuous love he never felt,  
 “ Nor wish’d to feel.—Among the sex there are  
 “ Numbers as greatly good as they are fair;  
 “ Where rival virtues strive which brightens most,  
 “ Beauty the smallest excellence they boast;  
 “ Where all unite substantial bliss to prove,  
 “ And give mankind in them a taste of joys above.”

HAYWARD.

Dr. Watts, in his poem entitled Few Happy Matches, supposes that souls come forth in pairs, male and female, and that the reason why there are so many unhappy matches, is occasioned by many souls losing their part-

ners in the way to this lower world. That the happy matches takes place when souls arrive safe and meeting again instinctively, impel the bodies, they animate towards each other, so as to produce an Hymeneal union. So that according to the good doctor's hypothesis, it must be very dangerous indeed for a person to be married more than once; but perhaps such cases as mine, might be exceptions to the general rule, and three souls might come out together; but how very fortunate was I to meet with both my partners.

Reflecting on the above united circumstances, I found in my heart an unusual sensation, such as until then I had been a stranger to, and something within me adopted the sentiments of Anacreon, when he said

“ Hence, forrows hence, nor rudely dare  
“ Disturb my transient span;  
“ Be mine to live (adieu to care)  
“ As cheerful as I can.”

My mind began to expand, intellectual light and pleasure broke in and dispelled the  
gloom



gloom of fanatical melancholy; the founness of my natural temper, which had been much increased by superstition, (called by Swift, "the spleen of the soul,") in part gave way, and was succeeded by cheerfulness, and some degree of good-nature.

" As when a wretch from thick polluted air,  
" And dungeon-horrors by kind fate discharg'd,  
" Climbs some fair eminence, where æther pure,  
" Surrounds him, and Elysian prospects rise,  
" His heart exults, his spirits cast their load;  
" As if new-born he triumphs in the change."      YOUNG.

It was in one of these cheerful moods that I one day took up the Life of John Bunce; and it is impossible for my friend to imagine with what eagerness and pleasure I read through the whole four volumes of this whimsical, sensible, pleasing work; it was written by Thomas Amory, Esq. (who was living in the year 1788, at the great age of 97) and I know not of any work more proper to be put into the hands of a poor ignorant bigotted superstitious methodist; but the misfortune is, that scarce one of them will read any thing but what suits with their

own narrow notions, so that they shut themselves up in darkness, and exclude every ray of intellectual light; which puts me in mind of the enthusiasts on the banks of the Ganges, who will not look at any thing beyond the tip of their noses. By the time I had gone through the last volume,

“ My soul had took its freedom up.”      GREEN.

John Buncler's merry life puts me in mind of Peter Pindar's sensible, whimsical lines.

“ Who told man that he must be curs'd on earth ?  
 “ The GOD of NATURE? no such thing !  
 “ Heav'n whisper'd him, the moment of his birth,  
 “ Don't cry, my lad, but dance and sing ;  
 “ Don't be too wise, and be an ape,  
 “ In colours let the soul be drefs'd, not crape.  
 “ Roses shall smooth LIFE's journey, and adorn ;  
 “ Yet mind me if, through want of grace,  
 “ Thou mean't to fling the blessing in my face,  
 “ Thou hast full leave to tread upon a thorn.”

Yet some there are, of men I think the worst,  
 Poor imps! unhappy if they can't be curs'd  
 For ever brooding over mis'ry's eggs,  
 As though life's pleasure were a deadly sin;  
 Mousing for ever for a gin  
 To catch their happiness by the legs.

I also received great benefits from reading Coventry's Philemon to Hydaspes; it consists of dialogues on false religion, extravagant devotion, &c. in which are many very curious remarks on visionaries of various ages and sects. This work is complete in five parts octavo. There has also been a decent Scotch edition, published in twelves, both editions are now rather scarce.

I now began to enjoy many innocent pleasures and recreations in life, without the fear of being eternally damn'd for a laugh, a joke, or for spending a sociable evening with a few friends, going to the play-house, &c. &c.

————— “ The hours so spent shall live,  
 “ Not unapplauded in the book of heav'n,  
 “ For dear and precious as the moments are,  
 “ Permitted man, they are not all for deeds  
 “ Of active virtue, give we none to vice,  
 “ And heav'n will not reparation ask,  
 “ For many a summer's day and winter's eve,  
 “ So spent as best amuses us,  
 “ We trifle all, and he that best deserves,  
 “ Is but a trifler.—'tis a trifling world.” Village Curate.

In short, I saw that true religion was no  
 way

way incompatible with, or an enemy to rational pleasures of any kind. As life (says one) is the gift of heaven, it is religion to enjoy it.

“ Fools by excess make varied pleasure pall,

“ The wise man’s moderate, and enjoys them all.”

VOLTAIRE by Franklin.

I now also began to read with great pleasure the rational and moderate divines of all denominations: and a year or two after I began with metaphysics, in the intricate, though pleasing, labyrinths of which I have occasionally since wandered, nor am I ever likely to find my way out.

“ Like a guide in a mist have I rambled about,

“ And now come at last where at first I set out;

“ And unless for new lights we have reason to hope,

“ In darkness it must be my fortune to grope.”

I am not in the least uneasy on that head, as I have no doubt of being in my last moments able to adopt the language of one of the greatest men that ever existed.

“ Great God, whose being by thy works is known,

“ Hear my last words from thy eternal throne:

“ If I mistook, ’twas while thy law I fought,

“ I may have err’d, but thou wert in each thought;

“ Fearless

“ Fearless I look beyond the opening grave,  
 “ And cannot think the God who being gave,  
 “ The God whose favours made my bliss o’erflow,  
 “ Has doom’d me, after death, to endless woe.”

In the mean time I can sincerely adopt the following lines of Mr. Pope :

“ If I am right, thy grace impart,  
 “ Still in the right to stay ;  
 “ If I am wrong, O teach my heart,  
 “ To find the better way.”

Having begun to think rationally, and reason freely on religious matters, you may be sure I did not long remain in Mr. Wesley’s society. No,

“ A ray of welcome light disclosed my path !  
 “ Joyful I left the shadowy realms of death,  
 “ And hail’d the op’ning glories of the sky.

BOYD’S Dante’s Inferno.

What is remarkable, I well remember that some years before, Mr. Wesley told his society in Broadmead, Bristol, in my hearing, that he could never keep a bookfeller six months in his flock (all fanatics are enemies to reason.) He was then pointing out the danger that attended close reasoning in matters of religion and spiritual concerns, in  
 reading

reading controversies, &c. At that time I had not the least idea of my ever becoming a bookfeller; but I no sooner began to give scope to my reasoning faculties, than the above remarkable assertion occurred to my mind.

But that which rather hastened my departure from methodism was this:—The methodist preachers were continually reprobating the practice of masters and mistresses keeping servants at home on Sundays, to dress dinners, which prevented them from hearing the word of God (by the word of God they mean their own jargon of nonsense); assuring them if the souls of such servants were damned, they might in a great measure lay their damnation at the doors of such masters and mistresses, who rather than eat a cold dinner, would be guilty of breaking the sabbath, and risking the souls of their servants. But how great was my surprize on discovering that these very men who were continually preaching up fasting, abstinence, &c. to their congregations, and who  
wanted

wanted others to dine off cold dinners, or eat bread and cheefe, &c. would themselves not even *sup*, without roasted fowls, &c.

This I found to be fact, as I several times had occasion, after attending the preaching, to go into the kitchen behind the *old Foundery* (which at that time was Mr. Wesley's preaching house); there I saw women who had been kept from hearing the sermon, &c. they being employed in roasting fowls, and otherwise providing good suppers for the preachers.

“ A cart-load, lo, their stomachs steal ;

“ Yet swear they cannot make a meal !”

“ So,” said I, “ you lay burthens on other men's shoulders, but will not so much as touch them yourselves with one of your fingers.”

A ridiculous instance of the same nature happened also some years since at Taunton. One of Mr. Wesley's preachers, whose name was Cotterrell, assured his congregation from time to time, that every baker that baked meat on Sundays would be damned, and

every

every person that partook of such meat would also be damned; on which a poor baker shut up his oven on Sundays; the consequence was, that he lost his customers, as such bakers as baked their victuals on Sunday, had their custom on other days, so that the poor baker's family was nearly reduced to the workhouse; when one Sunday passing before the door where he knew the preacher was to dine, he was very much surpris'd to see a baked leg of pork carried into the house, and after a few minutes reflection, he rush'd in, and found the pious preacher eating part of the baked leg of pork, on which he bid farewell to the methodists, and again took care for his family.

It perhaps is worth remarking, that many poor hair-dressers in Mr. Wesley's society are reduced to extreme poverty; they cannot get employment, as they will not dress hair on Sundays; and I find that a poor milk-woman, who until the beginning of the year 1792, maintained her family in a decent manner, was lately frightened out of her  
understanding



understanding by a methodist preacher; her crime was, the selling milk on Sundays. The poor wretch is now confined in Bedlam, and her five children are in a workhouse. But driving people mad they treat as a trifling affair. A few weeks since, a methodist preacher in Grub-street, in one of his discourses, made use of the following language to his auditory.—“ You spread a report I am informed, that my doctrine has such effect upon some, that they run mad; but I should much rather send five thousand to Bedlam, than that one soul should be sent to hell.”

I at this time know a bookseller, who being a methodist, is so conscientious as to have his hair dressed on the evening of every Saturday, and to prevent its being discomposed in the night, he on those nights always sleeps in his elbow chair. Indeed some tell the story different, and say, that his hair is dressed on Saturday morning, and by sleeping in his chair he saves the expence of dressing on Sundays; others say, that the

first is the fact, and that he hinted at it in his shop-bills, in order that the public may know where to find a tradesman that had a very tender conscience.

I was one day called aside, and a hand-bill was given me; and thinking it to be a quack doctor's bill for a certain disease, I expressed my surprise at its being given to me in such a particular manner; but on reading it, I found it contained a particular account of the wonderful conversion of a John Biggs, when he was twenty-one years of age. Mr. Biggs says, that ever since that time he has had *communion with God his Father every hour*. He publishes this bill (he says) for the glory of God; but that the public might have an opportunity of dealing with this wonderful faint and perfectly holy man, he put his address in capitals, JOHN BIGGS, No. 98, Strand. I keep this bill as a curiosity.

The following note was some years since given to the clerk, for the clergyman at St. Michael's church, Bristol:—"I, Mary Lockhart,

Lockhart, return Almighty God my most hearty thanks for the benefits received in my soul, through the burning and shining lights, Mr. Cennick and Mr. Hall. I have not only received remission for my sins past, present, and to come, but am now entered into the rest (or made perfect) of the children of God. Mary Lockhart.”

I will conclude this letter in the words of Col. Lambert, in the comedy of the Hypocrite.—“I cannot see with temper, sir, so many religious mountebanks impose on the unwary multitude; wretches, who make a trade of religion, and shew no uncommon concern for the next world, only to raise their fortunes with greater security in this. I always respect piety and virtue, but there are pretenders to religion, as well as to courage; and as the truly brave are not such as make much noise about their valour, so, I apprehend, the truly good seldom or never deal in much grimace. I can never pay the same regard to the mask that I do to the face.”

I am, dear Friend, yours,

## LETTER XXVI.

“ Good morrow to thee : How dost do ?  
 “ I only just call'd in, to shew  
 “ My love, upon this blessed day,  
 “ As I by chance came by this way.

BUTLER'S *Posth.* Works.

“ Let not your weak unknowing hand  
 “ Presume God's bolts to throw,  
 “ And deal damnation round the land,  
 “ On each you judge his foe.”

DEAR FRIEND,

I Had no sooner left Mr. Wesley's society, and begun to talk a little more like a rational being, but I found that I had incurred the hatred of some, the pity of others, the envy of many, and the displeasure of *all* Mr. Wesley's—*old women* !

“ No feared conscience is so fell,  
 “ As that which has been burnt with zeal,  
 “ For christian charity's as well,  
 “ A great impediment to zeal,  
 “ As zeal a pestilent disease,  
 “ To charity and peace.”

BUTLER'S *Remains.*

So that for a long time I was constantly  
 teased

teased with their impertinent nonsense. I believe that never was a poor devil so plagued.

“ Superstition is dreadful in her wrath,

“ Her dire Anathemas against you dart.” HENRIADE.

Some as they passed by my door in their way to the Foundery would only make a stop and lift up their hands, turn up the whites of their eyes, shake their heads, groan and pass on. Many would call in and take me aside, and after making rueful faces, address me with, “ Oh, Brother Lackington! I am very sorry to find that you who began in the Spirit are now like to end in the flesh. Pray brother, do remember Lot’s wife.” Another would interrupt me in my business, to tell me, that “ He that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is unfit for the kingdom.” Another had just called as he was passing by, to caution me against the bewitching snares of prosperity. Others again called to know if I was as happy then as I was when I constantly fought the Lord with my brethren,

in prayer meeting, in class, in band, &c. When I assured them that I was more happy, they in a very solemn manner assured me, that I was under a very great delusion of the devil; and when I by chance happened to laugh at their enthusiastic rant, some have run out of my shop, declaring that they were afraid to stay under the same roof with me, lest the house should fall on their heads. Sometimes I have been accosted in such an alarming manner as though the house was on fire, with "Oh! brother! brother! you are fast asleep! and the flames of hell are taking hold of you;" which reminds me of the following lines.

" ——— Were hell demolish'd now,  
 " Another must be had for you;  
 " That providence were falsely nam'd,  
 " If such a monster is not damn'd.

ROBERTSON'S Miscellanies.

A certain preacher assured me, in the presence of several gentlemen, that the devil would soon toss me about in the flames of hell with a pitchfork. This same eloquent mild preacher used occasionally to strip to his shirt to *dodge* the devil.

Mr. E.

Mr. E. a gentleman of my acquaintance, going through some alley, one Sunday, hearing a very uncommon noise, was led by curiosity to the house from whence it proceeded, and there he saw elevated above, an assembly of old women, &c. this taylor, stript in his shirt, with his wig off, and the collar of his shirt unbuttoned, sweating, foaming at the mouth, and bellowing like a baited bull. In the above manner it seems he would often amuse himself and his congregation for near two hours,

“ Cursing from his sweating tub,

“ The cavaliers of Belzebub.”

BUTLER'S Poeth. Works.

Some of the *Tabernacle* faints assured me, that I never had one grain of saving grace, and that when I thought myself a child of God, I was only deluded by the devil, who being now quite sure of me, did not think it worth his while to deceive me any longer. Others advised me to take care of sinning against light and knowledge, and piously hoped that it was not quite too late; that I had not (they hoped) committed the *unpardon-*

*able* sin against the Holy Ghost. Others again, who happened to be in a better humour, often told me that they should see me brought back to the true sheepfold, as they really hoped I had once been in a state of grace, and if so, that I always was in grace, in spite of all I could do: the Lord would never quit his hold of me; that I might fall *foully*, but that it was impossible for me to fall *finally*, as in the end I should be brought back on the shoulders of the everlasting gospel; for when God came to number his jewels, not one would be missing.

One of these righteous men, after passing some encomiums on me for my moral character, assured me that I had by no means fallen so low as many of God's dear children had fallen; but fall as low as they possibly can, said he, they are still God's children, for altho' they may "be black with sin, they are fair within." He then read to me the following passage out of a pamphlet written against Mr. Fletcher by Mr. R. Hill, "David  
" stood as completely justified in the ever-  
" lasting



“ lasting righteousness of Christ, at the time  
 “ when he caused Uriah to be murdered,  
 “ and was committing adultery with his wife,  
 “ as he was in any part of his life. For all  
 “ the sins of the elect, be they more or be  
 “ they less, be they past, present, or to come,  
 “ were for ever done away. So that every  
 “ one of those *elect* stand spotless in the sight  
 “ of God.” Is not this a very comfortable  
 kind of doctrine? The pernicious conse-  
 quences of such tenets, impressed on the minds  
 of the ignorant followers of these quacks in  
 religion, must be obvious to every person  
 capable of reflection. They have nothing to  
 do but enlist themselves in the band of  
 the elect, and no matter then how criminal  
 their life !

Thus, my dear friend, I was for a long  
 time coaxed by some, threatened with all the  
 tortures of the damned by others, and con-  
 stantly teased some how or other by all the  
 methodists who came near me.

“ Surrounded by foes, as I sat in my chair,

“ Who attacked like dogs that are baiting a bear.”

I at last determined to laugh at all their ridiculous perversions of the scripture, and their spiritual cant. As Peter Pindar says,

“ My honest anger boil'd to view  
 “ The snuffing, long-fac'd, canting crew.”

For as Dr. Dalton justly remarks,

“ A conscience void of blame her front erects,  
 “ Her God she fears, all other fear rejects.”

The consequence (as might be expected) was, they piously and charitably consigned me over to be tormented by the devil, and every where declared that I was turned a downright atheist. But the aspersions of such fanatics gave me no concern, for

“ ——— If there's a power above us,  
 “ (And that there is, all nature cries aloud  
 “ Thro' all her works) he must delight in Virtue;  
 “ And that which he delights in must be happy.”

ADDISON'S Cato.

And no matter “ when or where.” After relating such ridiculous stuff as the above, I think that I cannot conclude this better than with Swift's humorous and satirical account of the day of judgement; so humorous that

I would

I would not have quoted it had it not been written by a divine of the Church of England.

" With a whirl of thought opprefs'd,  
 " I sunk from reverie to rest,  
 " An horrid vision seiz'd my head,  
 " I saw the graves give up their dead :  
 " Jove arm'd with terrors bursts the skies!  
 " And thunder roars, and light'ning flies!  
 " Amaz'd, confus'd, its fate unknown,  
 " The world stands trembling at his throne!  
 " While each pale sinner hung his head,  
 " Jove nodding, shook the heavens and said,  
 " Offending race of human kind,  
 " By nature, reason, learning blind ;  
 " You who thro' frailty stept aside,  
 " And you who never fell thro' pride,  
 " You who in different sects were sham'd,  
 " And come to see each other damn'd !  
 " (So some folks told you, but they knew  
 " No more of Jove's designs than you)  
 " The world's mad business now is o'er,  
 " And I repent these pranks no more.  
 " — I to such blockheads set my wit !  
 " I damn such fools! go, go, you're bit."

I am, dear Friend, yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XXVII.

- “ ——— Say, what founds my ear invade,  
 “ From Delphi’s venerable shade ?  
 “ The temple rocks, the laurel waves !  
 “ The god ! the god ! the sybil cries.  
 “ Her figure swells ; she foams, she raves !  
 “ Her figure swells to more than mortal size.  
 “ Streams of rapture roll along,  
 “ Silver notes ascend the skies :  
 “ Wake, Echo, wake, and catch the song,  
 “ Oh, catch it ere it dies.  
 “ The sybil speaks, the dream is o’er,  
 “ The holy harpings charm no more.  
 “ In vain she checks the god’s controul,  
 “ His madding spirit fills the frame,  
 “ And moulds the features of her soul,  
 “ Breathing a prophetic flame.  
 “ The cavern frowns ! its hundred mouths unclose !  
 “ And, in the thunder’s voice the fate of empire flows !”

Superstition, a Poem.

DEAR FRIEND,

**T**HERE is a very extraordinary passage in Rousseau’s Thoughts on Fanaticism. It is printed in his Thoughts, published by Debrett, Vol. i. page 11.

“ Bayle

“ Bayle (says he) has acutely proved that  
 “ Fanaticism is more pernicious than Atheism.  
 “ This is incontestable. What he has been  
 “ very careful, however, not to mention,  
 “ and, what is not less true is, that Fana-  
 “ ticism, although sanguinary and cruel, is  
 “ still an exalted passion, which elevates the  
 “ heart of man, raises him above the fear of  
 “ death, multiplies his resources exceedingly,  
 “ and which only wants to be better di-  
 “ rected, to be productive of the most sub-  
 “ lime virtues. (He adds) The argumen-  
 “ tative spirit of controversy and philosophy,  
 “ on the contrary, attaches us to life, ener-  
 “ vates and debases the soul, concentrates  
 “ all passions in the baseness of self-interest,  
 “ and thus gradually saps the real foundation  
 “ of all society.”

I have somewhere read of a man, who  
 having been cured of madness, he, instead  
 of thanking his friends and the physician,  
 was displeas'd with them, for having de-  
 prived him of the happiness he possess'd in a  
 state of insanity. And methinks Rousseau  
 seems

seems to be much of the same mind. But how was it possible that he should so glaringly contradict himself in so few lines? Plutarch was the first that asserted, that superstition was worse than Atheism. Lord Bacon in his Essays says the same; and Bayle has incontestably proved it, as Rousseau acknowledges. We know from a great authority that “Fanaticism is to superstition what a delirium is to a fever, and fury to anger. He who has extasies and visions, who takes dreams for realities, and his imagination for prophecies, is an enthusiast; and he who sticks not at supporting his folly by murder, is a fanatic;” and yet Rousseau when he acknowledges that fanaticism is sanguinary and cruel, calls it “an exalted passion, which elevates the heart of man, and raises him above the fear of death, multiplies his resources exceedingly.” Of all the absurdities wrote by great men, this seems to me the greatest. If we except that which he asserts in the following lines, “Philosophy attaches to life, enervates and debases the soul, concentrates all the passions in the business of self-

self-interest, and thus gradually, says he, saps the real foundation of all society?" That the very reverse of what Rousseau here asserts is the truth, must be obvious to every thinking being: no one cannot help thinking he must have wrote these lines in a fit of insanity, in a fanatical conventicle. "The superstitious (says Plutarch) are in continual fear of the divine powers, whom they suppose to be cruel, and hurtful beings, and he that fears the divine powers fears every thing. The land, the sea, air, sky, darkness, light, silence and dreams. Even slaves forget their cruel masters, and prisoners their fetters; but superstition fills the soul even in sleep, with prodigious forms and ghostly spectres."

"But still some frightful tales, some furious threats,

"By——— form'd those grave and holy cheats,

"Invent new fears, whose horrid looks should fright,

"And damp thy thoughts. CREECH'S Lucretius.

A much greater man than Rousseau says, "The only remedy for the infectious disease of Fanaticism, is a *philosophical* temper, which spreading through society, at length softens manners, and obviates the excesses of the distemper;

temper; for whenever it gets ground, the best way is to fly from it and stay till the air is purified. The laws and religion are no preservative against this mental pestilence; religion so far from being a salutary aliment in these cases, in infected brains becomes poison."

"The laws likewise have proved very ineffectual against this spiritual rage; it is indeed like reading an order of council to a lunatic. The creatures are firmly persuaded, that the spirit by which they are actuated is above all laws, and that their enthusiasm is the only law they are to regard."

"What can be answered to a person who tells you, that he had rather obey God than men; and who, in consequence of that choice, is certain to gain heaven by cutting your throat?"

Was it possible to keep the enthusiast at all times free from fanaticism, I believe the mischief to society would not be so great, as  
in



in that case, enthusiasm would be a more harmless madness; but it seems impossible to keep the two characters separate, which is the reason that the terms are often used by writers indiscriminately.

Enthusiasts and fanatics are in general conscious of their own inability to reason, hence they all exclaim against it, and "immediate revelation being a much easier way to establish their opinions," they have recourse to it in all difficulties, and nothing is more common among the methodists, than to hear them assert that they become acquainted with the truth of all the mysteries of christianity, by their being revealed to them by "the Spirit of the Lord." Mr. Locke says, (speaking of enthusiasts) "They understand that God has promised to enlighten the mind, by a ray darted into the mind immediately from the fountain of light; and who then has so good a title to expect it, as those who are his peculiar people."

"Their minds being thus prepared, whatever groundless opinion comes to settle itself

S strongly

strongly upon their fancies, is an illumination from God. And whatever odd action, they find in themselves a strong inclination to do, that impulse is concluded to be a call from heaven, and must be obeyed; it is a commission from above, and they cannot err in executing it.

“ This I take to be properly enthusiasm, which, though founded neither on reason nor divine revelation, but rising from the conceits of a warmed or over weening brain, works yet where it once gets footing, more powerfully on the persuasions and actions of men, than either of those two, or both together; men being most forwardly obedient to the impulses they receive from themselves, and the whole man is sure to act more vigorously where the whole is carried by a natural motion. For strong conceit, like a new principle, carries alleasily with it, when got above common sense; and freed from all restraint, of reason, and check of reflection, it is heightened into a divine authority, in concurrence with our own temper and inclination.”

“ ————— I feel him now  
 “ Like a strong spirit, charm'd into a tree,  
 “ That leaps and moves the wood without a wind :  
 “ The roused god, as all the while he lay  
 “ Entomb'd alive, starts, and dilates himself ;  
 “ He struggles, and he tears my aged trunk  
 “ With holy fury ; my old arteries burst ;  
 “ My shrivell'd skin, like parchment, crackles at the holy  
     fire.” DRYDEN'S ŒDIPUS.

These impulses and revelations have been made the pretext not only for thousands of absurdities and ridiculous whims, but also for every kind of wickedness. It is but a few years since that there were in Poland a sect of these fanatics, who all at once was seized with an impulse to kill their own children, which they did most devoutly, in order to secure the salvation of those children. Lucretius says,

“ Such impious use was of religion made,  
 “ Such dev'lish acts religion could persuade.”

What, my dear friend, can preserve mankind from this pestilence so effectually as philosophy, which Rousseau attempts to degrade. “ Painful and corporal punishment

(says Beccaria) should never be applied to fanaticism, for being founded on pride, it glories in persecution. Infamy and ridicule only should be employed against fanatics ; in the first, their pride will be overbalanced by the pride of the people ; and we judge of the power of the second, if we consider that even truth is obliged to summon all her force, attacked with error armed with ridicule. Thus by opposing one passion to another, and opinion to opinion, a wise legislator puts an end to the admiration of the populace occasioned by a false principle, the original absurdity of which is veiled by some well deduced consequences.”

It is for the above reasons that I have held up to public ridicule that sect of fanatics, among whom I lost so much of my time in the early part of my life ; and for the same reasons I hope you will read with patience a few more of my letters, in which I intend to make you laugh with me a little more at the absurdities of the methodists.

I am, dear Friend, yours.

## L E T T E R XXVIII.

“ In London streets is often seen  
 “ A hum-drum faint with holy mein,  
 “ His locks most primitively wear  
 “ An ancient Abrahamick air,  
 “ And like bad copies of a face,  
 “ The good original disgrace.”

BUTLER'S Poeth. Works.

“ Some there are who seek for private holes,  
 “ Securely in the dark to damn their souls,  
 “ Wear vizards of hypocrisy to steal,  
 “ And sink away in masquerade, to hell.”

DEAR FRIEND,

**I**T being generally known that I had for many years been a strict methodist, since I have freed myself from their shackles, I have been often asked if I did not believe or rather know, that the methodists were a vile sect of hypocrites altogether? My reply has been uniformly in the negative. I am certain that they are not in general so. The major part of them indeed are very ignorant (as is the case with enthusiasts of every religion); but I believe that a

great number of the methodists are sincere, honest, friendly people ; in justice to those of that description it may not be amiss to observe, that many artful, sly, designing persons, having noticed their character, connections, &c. and knowing that a religious person is in general supposed to be honest and conscientious, have been induced to join their societies, and by assuming an appearance of extraordinary sanctity, have the better been enabled to cheat and defraud such as were not guarded against their hypocritical wiles. Rochefoucault says, that “ truth does not so much good in the world, as its appearances do mischief.”

“ Making religion a disguise,  
 “ Or cloak to all their villanies.”

BUTLER'S Poeth. Works.

I have also reason to believe that there are not a few, who think that they can as it were afford to cheat and defraud, on the score of having right notions of religion in their heads, hearing what they deem orthodox teachers, going to prayer-meetings, &c.

There

There are again others who think, that grace is so free and so easy to be had, or in other words, that as they can have pardon for all kinds of sins, and that at any time whenever they please, they under this idea make very little conscience of running up large scores, to which practice I fear such doctrines as I noticed in my last, from the pen of Mr. Hill, have not a little contributed.

“ The wrath of gods, tho’ dreadful is but slow,  
 “ With tardy footsteps comes th’ avenging blow,  
 “ If all the bad are punish’d, ’twill be long  
 “ Ere my turn comes to suffer in the throng.  
 “ I may find mercy from the power divine.  
 “ They oft o’erlook such moderate guilt as mine,  
 “ Crimes, quite the same, oft meet a different end.”

OWEN’S Juvenal.

I have often thought that great hurt has been done to society by the methodist preachers, both in town and country, attending condemned malefactors, as by their fanatical conversation, visionary hymns, bold and impious applications of the scriptures, &c: many dreadful offenders against law and justice, have had their passions and imaginations

so worked upon, that they have been sent to the other world in such raptures, as would better become martyrs innocently suffering in a glorious cause, than criminals of the first magnitude.

A great number of narratives of these sudden conversions and triumphant exits have been compiled, many of them published, and circulated with the greatest avidity, to the private emolument of the editors, and doubtless to the great edification of all sinners, long habituated to a course of villainous depredations on the lives and properties of the honest part of the community; and many such accounts as have not appeared in print, have been assiduously proclaimed in all the methodist chapels and barns, throughout the three kingdoms; by which the good and pious of every denomination have been scandalized, and notorious offenders encouraged to persevere, trusting sooner or later, to be honoured with a similar degree of notice, and thus by a kind of hocus pocus, be suddenly transformed into saints.

The



The following remarks made by the compilers of the Monthly Review for 1788, page 286, are so applicable to the present subject, that I hope my introducing the passage will not be deem'd improper. After mentioning a couplet in one of the methodistical hymns, where it is said

“ *Believe* and all your sin's forgiven.”

“ Only *believe* and yours is heaven.”

they proceed thus :

“ Such doctrine no doubt must be comfortable to poor wretches so circumstanced as those were to whom this pious preacher had the goodness to address his discourse ; but some (and those not men of shallow reflection) have questioned whether it is altogether right, thus to free the most flagitious outcasts of society from the terrors of an *after-reckoning* ; since it is too well known, that most of them make little account of their punishment in *this* world. Instead of the “ fearful *looking for of* (future) *judgment* ;” they are enraptured with the prospect of a joyful flight “ to the expanded arms of a loving Saviour—

Saviour—longing to embrace his long lost children.” Surely this is not the way (humanly speaking) to check the alarming progress of moral depravity; to which, one would think *no* kind of *encouragement* ought to be given.”

I must observe farther, that the unguarded manner in which the methodist preachers make tenders of pardon and salvation, has induced many to join their fraternity, whose consciences wanted very large plaisters indeed! many of those had need to be put under a course of mortification and penance, but they generally adopt another method; a few quack nostrums, which they call faith and assurance, dries up the wound, and they then make themselves as hateful by affecting to have squeamish consciences, as they really have been obnoxious, for having consciences of very wide latitude indeed. And notwithstanding the affected change, they often are as bad, or worse than ever. Butler says

“ — That which owns the fairest pretext,

“ Is often found the indirect'st.

“ Hence

- “ Hence ’tis, that hypocrites still paint  
 “ Much fairer than the real faint ;  
 “ And knaves appear more just and true  
 “ Than honest men, who make less shew.”

As a friend, permit me to advise you never to purchase any thing at a shop where the master of it crams any of his pious nonsense into his shopbill, &c. as you may be assured you will nine times out of ten find them, in the end, arrant hypocrites, and as such, make no scruple of cheating in the way of trade, if possible.

This puts me in mind of one of these pious brethren in Petticoat-lane, who wrote in his shop-window, “ Rumps and Burs sold here, and Baked Sheep’s heads will be continued every night, *if the Lord permit.*” The Lord had no objection: so Rumps, Burs, and Baked *Sheep’s heads* were sold there a long time. And I remember to have seen on a board, near Bedminster-down, “ Tripe and cow-heels sold here as usual, except on the Lord’s-day, which *the Lord help me to keep holy.*” And on my enquiring about the person who exhibited this remarkable

able shew-board, at the inn just by, I was informed that the pious Tripe-seller generally got drunk on Sundays, after he returned from the barn-preaching; which accounts for his not felling tripe on that day, having full employment (though possibly not so inoffensive) elsewhere.

I also saw in a village near Plymouth in Devonshire, “ Roger Tuttel, *by God’s grace and mercy*, kills rats, moles, and all sorts of vermin and venomous creatures.” But I need not have gone so far for pious cant, as, no doubt you must remember that a few years since, a certain pious common-council man of the metropolis, advertised in the public papers for a porter that could carry *three hundred* weight, take care of horses, and *serve the Lord*. Of the same worthy personage I have heard it asserted, that so very conscientious is he, that he once staved a barrel of beer in his cellar, because he detected it *working* on the sabbath-day, which brought to my recollection four lines in drunken Barnaby’s Journey :

- " To Banbury came I; O prophane one!  
 " Where I saw a puritane one,  
 " Hanging of his cat on Monday,  
 " For killing of a mouse on Sunday."

Mr. L——e, a gentleman of my acquaintance informs me, that a methodist neighbour of his, in St. Martin's-lane, who keeps a parcel of fowls, every Saturday night makes a point of conscience of tying together the legs of every cock he has, in order to prevent them from breaking the sabbath, by gallanting the hens on Sundays; as Col. Lambert says Doctor Cantwell used to do by the turkey cocks.

I have a few more observations to make on this remarkable sect, but fearing I have already tired you, shall reserve them for my next.

- " Seeming devotion doth but gild the knave,  
 " That's neither faithful, honest, just, or brave,  
 " But where religion does with virtue join,  
 " It makes a hero like an angel shine."      WALLER.

I am  
 Dear Friend,  
 Yours.

LETTER

## LETTER XXIX.

“ Under this stone rests Hudibras,  
 “ A Knight as errant as e'er was:  
 “ The controversy only lies,  
 “ Whether he was more fool than wife;  
 “ Full oft he suffer'd bangs and drubs,  
 “ And full as oft took pains in tubs:  
 “ And for the good old Cause stood buff,  
 “ 'Gainst many a bitter kick and cuff,  
 “ Of which the most that can be said,  
 “ He pray'd and preach'd, and preach'd and pray'd.”

BUTLER'S Poeth. Works.

DEAR FRIEND,

**I**T is very remarkable that while I was writing the last five lines of my former letter to you, on Wednesday the 2d of March 1791, I received the news of the death of Mr. John Wesley, who I am informed died that morning at his own house, in the City-road, Moorfields, in the Eighty-eighth year of his age. He had no illness, but the wheels of the machine being worn out, it stopt of course. As I am on the sub-  
ject

ject of methodism, I hope you will not deem it impertinent, if I devote a few lines to this great parent of a numerous sect, whom I well knew, and feel a pleasure in speaking of with some respect.

Several days preceding his interment, being laid in his coffin, in his gown and band, he was exposed to the view of all his friends who came, and the public; and I suppose that forty or fifty thousand persons had a sight of him. But the concourse of people was so great, that many were glad to get out of the crowd without seeing him at all; and although a number of constables were present, yet the pick-pockets contrived to ease many of their purses, watches, &c.

To prevent as much as possible the dreadful effects of a mob, he was interred on Wednesday March the 9th, between five and six o'clock in the morning, in the burial ground behind his own chapel in the City-road. After which Dr. Whitehead (the physician) preached his funeral sermon; but

but notwithstanding the early hour, many thousands attended more than the chapel would hold, although it is very large.

As soon as it was known that Mr. Wesley was deceased, a number of needy brethren deemed it a fair opportunity of profiting by it, and each immediately set his ingenuity to work, to compose what he chose to call a *life* of him; and for some weeks since the funeral the chapel-yard and its vicinity has exhibited a truly ludicrous scene, on every night of preaching, owing to the different writers and venders of these hasty performances exerting themselves to secure a good sale; one bawling out that *his* is the *right* life; a second with a pious shake of the head, declares *his* the real life; a third protests *he* has got the *only genuine* account; and a fourth calls them all vile cheats and impostors, &c. so that between all these competitors, the saints are so divided and perplexed in their opinions, that some decline purchasing either; others willing “to try all, and keep that which is good,” buy of each of these respectable venders



venders of the life and last account of that celebrated character; while the uninterested passenger is apt to form a conclusion that the house of prayer is again become a den of thieves. Thus we see those holy candidates for heaven are so influenced by self-interest that it

“ Turns meek and secret sneaking ones

“ To Raw-heads fierce and bloody bones.” HUDIBRAS.

I cannot help thinking that Mr. John Wesley, the father of the methodists, was one of the most respectable enthusiasts that ever lived; as it is generally thought that he believed all that he taught others, and lived the same pious exemplary life, that he would have his followers practise. The sale of his numerous writings produced nett profits to the amount of near TWO THOUSAND POUNDS per annum; and the weekly collection of the classes in London and Westminster amounted to a very large sum; besides this, great sums were collected, at the sacraments and love-feasts, for quarterly tickets, private and public subscriptions, &c. &c.

In a pamphlet which was published in the beginning of this year 1792, by an old member of their society, it is asserted that for the last ten years, the sums collected in Great Britain and Ireland, have amounted to no less than FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS per annum, which reminds me of Peter Pindar's humorous lines.

- “ I've often read those pious whims,  
 “ Methodist's sweet damnation hymns,  
 “ That chant of heav'nly riches,  
 “ What have they done? those heav'nly strains,  
 “ Devoutly squeez'd from canting brains,  
 “ But fill'd their earthly breeches.”

Besides the above, many private collections are made in all his societies throughout the three kingdoms, so that Mr. Wesley might have amassed an immense fortune, had riches been his object. But instead of accumulating wealth, he expended all his own private property: and I have been often informed, from good authority, that he never denied relief to a poor person that asked him. To needy tradesmen I have known him to give ten or twenty pounds at once. In going a  
 few

few yards from his study to the pulpit, he generally gave away an handful of half-crowns to poor old people of his society. He was indeed charitable to an extreme, as he often gave to unworthy objects, nor would he keep money sufficient to hold out on his journies. One of his friends informs me that he left but £4. 10s. behind him: and I have heard him declare that he would not die worth twenty pounds, except his books for sale, which he has left to the "general methodist fund, for carrying on the work of God, by itinerant preachers," charged only with a rent of eighty-five pounds a year, which he has left to the wife and children of his brother Charles.

His learning and great abilities are well known. But I cannot help noticing that in one of his publications (stepping out of his line) he betrayed extreme weakness and credulity, though no doubt his intentions were good. What I allude to is his *Primitive Physic*, a work certainly of a dangerous ten-

dency, as the majority of remedies therein prescribed are most assuredly inefficacious, and many of them very dangerous, if administered. The consequence of the first is, that while poor ignorant people are trying these remedies (besides the very great probability of their mistaking the case) the diseases perhaps become so inveterate as to resist the power of more efficacious remedies properly applied, and with regard to those of a highly dangerous nature, how rash to trust them in the hands of such uninformed people as this book was almost solely intended for, especially when sanctioned by the name of an author whose influence impressed the minds of the unfortunate patients with the most powerful conviction. Many fatal effects, I fear, have been produced by a blind adherence to this compilation; which carries with it more the appearance of being the production of an ignorant opinionated old woman, than of the man of science and education. One melancholy instance is fresh in my memory; a much esteemed friend having fallen an immediate sacrifice to an im-

prudent

prudent application of one of these remedies.

Permit me just to give you one specimen of the Author's wonderful abilities, by quoting a receipt, which if not an *infallible remedy*, must at least be acknowledged to be a singular one.

“ To cure a windy Cholic.”

“ Suck a healthy woman daily ; this (says Mr. Wesley) was tried by my father.”

Should you, my dear friend, be desirous of perusing a variety of remedies, equally *judicious* as well as *efficacious* with those of Mr. Wesley, you will meet with ample satisfaction by turning to “ *Dom Pernety's Voyage to the Falkland Islands,*” page 153 to 162. quarto edition.

Some of the receipts there inserted are so truly *curious*, I can scarce refrain from treating you with a specimen or two, but some of them being *very* indelicate, I must take care in selecting, for, like Simpkin,

“ I pity the ladies so modest and nice.”

Take the two following, one being no doubt an effectual remedy for a grievous complaint of that useful quadruped the horse ; the other at least equally certain for the cure of one of the most dangerous disorders human nature is subject to.

“ To Cure a Foundered Horse.”

“ Let him take one or two spoonfuls of *common salt* in half a pint of water !”

“ For a malignant Fever.”

“ A live tench applied to the feet for *twelve hours*, then buried *quietly*, or thrown down *the house of office*, and the patient will soon recover.”

It was a circumstance peculiarly happy for the practitioners of physic, though no doubt a terrible misfortune to the public, that the difference in religious principles of these two reverend gentlemen proved an effectual bar to the union of their medical abilities, which appear so exactly correspondent ;

dent; had such an event taken place, that horrid monster *disease* might by this time have been banished from the earth, and the sons of *Æsculapius* would be doomed to feed on their own compositions or starve! The Rev. Dr. Fordyce, in a late publication, has also given the world a remedy for the cramp, as *delicate* as efficacious.

But here, I think I see you smile at my censuring Mr. Wesley for *stepping out of his line*, when at the very moment I am committing the same error by obtruding my judgment upon the science of physic.—I shall only reply, Many thought I did the same when I commenced bookfeller: and a friend once taught me the adage, (be not offended, 'tis the only scrap of Latin I shall give you) “*Ne Sutor ultra crepidam.*” But the event has proved it otherwise, and I flatter myself every candid and judicious person capable of judging will think with me on the above subject. And I also must inform you, that in one disorder I have been successful even in physic. The fact is this: Mrs.

Lackington having several times been cured of the dropfy in the cheft, by broom tea; I prefcribed it to others, nor has it once failed. The laft inftance was in 1792, a young lady, an only daughter, being nearly loft to her family, ſhe having had the dropfy two years, by my defire took broom tea, a little at a time, once or twice a day, weak or ſtrong as ſhe could bear. She continued this for ſeveral months, by which ſhe perfectly recovered her health, and I hope ſhe will ſoon have a good husband, and get another kind of dropfy. But to reſume my narrative.

What a pity that ſuch a character as Mr. Wesley was, upon the whole, ſhould have been a dupe and a rank enthufiaft! A believer in dreams, viſions, immediate revelations, miraculous cures, witchcraft, and many other ridiculous abſurdities, as appears from many paſſages of his Journals, to the great diſgrace of his abilities and learning; which puts one in mind of Cæſar, who in his commentaries turns bridge builder, and a maker of engines; of  
Periander,



Periander, who although he was an excellent physician, quitted physic to write bad verses; Sir Isaac Newton's Exposition of the Revelations, Milton's Paradise Regained, Dr. Johnson's unmanly and childish Devotions, &c. &c. and (to compare small things with greater) J. L's turning author.

- “ This Verro's fault, by frequent praises fir'd,  
 “ He severall parts at try'd, in each admir'd;  
 “ That Verro was not ev'ry way complete,  
 “ 'Twas long unknown, and might have been so yet.  
 “ But—mad, th' unhappy man pursu'd,  
 “ That only thing heav'n meant he never should;  
 “ And thus his proper road to fame neglected,  
 “ He's ridicul'd for that he but effected.” DALACOURT

However, I think we may safely affirm that Mr. Wesley was a good sincere and honest one, who denied himself many things; and really thought that he disregarded the praise and blame of the world, when he was more courted, respected, and followed than any man living, and he ruled over a hundred and twenty thousand people with an absolute sway, and the love of power seems to have been the main spring of all his actions. I

am inclined to believe that his death will be attended with consequences somewhat similar to those which followed the death of Alexander the Great. His spiritual generals will be putting in their pretensions, and soon divide their master's conquests. His death happened at a time rather critical to the methodists, as the *Swedenborgians*, or *New Jerusalemists*, are gaining ground very fast. Many of the methodists, both preachers and hearers, are already gone over to their party, many more will now, undoubtedly, follow; and the death of that great female champion of methodism, the Countess of Huntingdon, which has since happened, will in all probability occasion another considerable defection from *that* branch of methodists, and an additional reinforcement to the Swedenborgians; a proof of the fondness of mankind for novelty, and the marvellous, even in religious matters.

Great discoveries and improvements have of late years been made in various branches of the arts and sciences; but valuable and  
important

important as these discoveries are, how trifling do they appear, when compared with the astonishing and wonderful discoveries which have been made by the Swedenborgians, who are, it seems, *beyond a doubt*, “*the only true church of God* ;” by them the “*true science of the language of correspondence*” is discovered, so that mankind are no longer left in the dark ; the divine arcana is now laid open, and mysteries are no longer mysteries. “*God in me speaks to God in you* ;” so that I can talk to you of feasting on chariots and horses, and be perfectly understood. And although they read any chapter in the Bible, without exception, publicly in the congregations, yet the most prudish lady, or the most delicate virgin, do not blush for being quite spiritual, and being acquainted with the “*true language of correspondence*.” They never notice indelicate expressions, being wholly occupied in applying the spiritual corresponding words. These, my friend, are glorious discoveries indeed. And what a pity it is that so many thousand pious learned men should have wasted so much  
time

time in endeavouring to explain the mysterious parts of the Prophets and the Revelations to no purpose, but to make work for bookfellers. It was very providential for them that the Swedenborgians did not appear in the more early ages of the church ; but a very great loss to mankind in general ; the more so, as it seems the great man, after whom the sect are named, composed the whole of his numerous works under the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost, and are more valuable than the Bible. I must just take notice of another wonderful community.

In the beginning of the year 1786, a strange sect of religious fanatics sprung up near Dumfrize in Scotland ; the first of whom seems to have been a Lady Buchan, as from her they were called Buchanites. They were but few in number, and all lived in one house together, both men and women, and had all things in common. In 1791 an Englishman of some property joined their society, and gave all that he had to the  
common

common flock. The next day Lady Buchan proclaimed a fast, which was to be strictly kept for six weeks ; this was no ways pleasing to the Englishman, so that after he had fasted two days, he applied to the sheriff, in order to recover his property from out of the flock of the holy community ; but the sheriff informed him, that as it was a free gift, it was not in his power to recover it.

Lady Buchan at times called herself the Holy Spirit, and in that character applied to many people in order to make them converts to this new sect.

The chief article of their faith was, that they should never taste of death, but should be translated, and when any one of them happened to die, the rest said that it was for want of faith ; and when Lady Buchan died, they insisted on keeping her unburied, declaring that she could not be dead : under this assurance she was kept a long time ; the magistrates however at last had her buried by force, to prevent any bad consequence that  
might

might arise from the horrid stench, which began to make the neighbourhood insupportable.

A little before she expired, she called her followers near her, and informed them, that she had a secret to communicate to them, which was, that she was the Virgin Mary, the real mother of Jesus; the same woman mentioned in the Revelations as being clothed with the sun, &c. who was driven into the wilderness; that she had been wandering in the world ever since our Saviour's days; that though she here appeared to die, they need not be discouraged, for she would only sleep a little, and in a short time visit them again, and conduct them to the New Jerusalem. I had this curious account from some gentlemen in Scotland, except that part where she calls herself the Virgin, which I added from the Bee for July, 1791.

A short time after Mr. Wesley's chapel was finished in the City Road, an old gentleman was buried in the burial ground behind

hind it, who on his death-bed informed his wife, that he should soon come to life again; on which account the door of the vault was not fastened, and the old lady paid him a visit every day, to see if he was come to life, and in this practice did she continue two years, when the poor old lady paid him her last visit, and was laid by his side.

I will make some further remarks on the methodists in my next.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R   X X X .

- “ More haughty than the rest, the——  
 “ Appear with belly gaunt, and famish'd face :  
 “ Never was so deform'd a babe of grace.”    DRYDEN.  
  
 “ —— Olios made of conflagration,  
 “ Of gulphs, of brimstone, and damnation,  
 “ Eternal torments, furnace, worm,  
 “ Hell-fire, a whirlwind, and a storm ;  
 “ With Mammon, Satan, and perdition,  
 “ And *Belzebub* to help the dish on ;  
 “ *Belial*, and *Lucifer*, and all  
 “ The nicknames which *Old Nick* we call.”    E. LLOYD,

DEAR FRIEND,

ALTHOUGH Mr. Wesley was possessed of a very great share both of natural and acquired abilities, yet I suppose it scarcely necessary to inform you, that this is by no means the case with his preachers in general ; for although there are amongst them some truly sensible, intelligent men, yet the major part are very ignorant and extremely illiterate : many of these excellent spiritual guides cannot read a chapter in  
the



the bible, though containing the deep mysteries which they have the rashness and presumption to pretend to explain. Many others cannot write their own names.

- “ A motly crew, from various callings sprung,  
 “ Some of you have been gipsies, others failors;  
 “ Some drays have whistling driven, or carts of dung,  
 “ And others mighty barbers been and taylors.

MAT. BRAMBLE.

But so great is the ignorance of Mr. Wesley's people in general, that they often neglect the more rational and sensible of their preachers, and are better pleased with such as are even destitute of common sense; really believing that the incoherent nonsense which they from time to time pour forth, is dictated by the Holy Spirit. As these noisy declaimers never scruple to call themselves the “servants of the most high God,” Ambassadors from heaven, &c. Peter Pindar, speaking of one of that stamp, seems to think that if he was sent from God, heaven had made a bad choice; take his own words.

- “ Whene'er I hear that stupid parson H—,  
 “ God's house with ev'ry nonsense fill,  
 “ And when with blasphemy each sentence cramm'd;

- “ And when I hear the impossor cry,  
 “ I’ve news, you raggamuffins, from the sky ;  
   “ I’m come to tell ye, that you’ll all be damn’d :  
 “ I’m come from God, ye strumpets—come from God—  
   “ I’m God almighty’s fervant—hear my voice.  
 “ Which if it were so, would be vastly odd,  
   “ Since Heav’n would show bad judgment in the choice.”

It is always observable, that the more ignorant people are, the more confidence they possess. This confidence, or *impudence*, passes with the vulgar, as a mark of their being in the right ; and the more the ignorance of the preachers is discovered, the more are they brought down to their own standard. Again, the more ignorant preachers having very contracted ideas of real religion and manly virtue, of course supply the want of it with a ridiculous fuss about trifles, which passes with the ignorant for a more sanctified deportment, and hence arises much of the mischief which has been so justly charged on the methodists. For by making the path to heaven so very narrow, and beset with ten thousand bugbears, many despairing to be ever able to walk in it, have thrown off all religion

religion and morality, and sunk into the abyss of vice and wickedness. Others have their tempers so soured as to become lost to all the tender connexions of husband, wife, father, child, &c. really believing that they are *literally* to hate father, mother, &c. for Christ's sake. Thus is sweet domestic peace and happiness for ever blasted.

“ Enlivening hope, and fond desire,  
 “ Resign the heart to spleen and care ;  
 “ Scarce frighted love maintains her fire,  
 “ And rapture saddens to despair.” DR. JOHNSON.

Many have in a fit of despondency put a period to their existence, it having become a burthen too intolerable to be borne. Some have been so infatuated with the idea of fasting to mortify the flesh, that their strict perseverance in it has been productive of the most serious consequences : Two instances of which lately occurred in one family, in the City Road—The mistress was deprived of her senses, and the maid *literally* fasted herself to death ; and Bedlam and private mad-houses now contain many very melancholy instances of the dreadful effects of religious despon-

despondency ; not to mention the hundreds that have died from time to time in such places, and the numerous suicides which have been traced to the same source.

I knew one man who for many years believed himself to be the Holy Ghost, and endeavoured to make his acquaintance believe the same : in other respects he appeared to be in his right senses.

Mr. Bentley says in his letter to the members of the house of commons, dated May 12th, 1791, that although he had a fortune of one thousand pounds, and naturally liked good living, yet that he lived on horse and ass flesh, barley bread, stinking butter, &c. and when he found that his eating such things gave offence to his neighbours, he left off eating ass flesh, and only lived on vegetables, as the common sort of food by their dearth hurt his *conscience*.

A few years since I saw in a field not seven miles from China-hall, Mr. Taylor, a ship-carpenter,

carpenter, of Deptford, tossing up his bible in the air. This he often repeated, and raved at a strange rate. Amongst other things, (pointing to a building at some distance) “*That* (said he) is the *devil’s* house, and it shall not stand three days longer!” On the third day after this I saw with surprize an account in one of the public papers of that very building having been set on fire, and burnt to the ground; and thus the poor itinerant disciples of Thespis lost the whole of their wardrobe and scenery.

This religious maniac soon after preached very often in Smithfield and Moorfields; but he did not wholly depend on the operations of the Holy Spirit, as at last he seldom began to preach until he was nearly drunk, or filled with another kind of spirit, and then he was “a very powerful preacher indeed.”

- “ Great were his looks, his eyes with hallow stare
- “ Deep, deep within the burning sockets roll’d,
- “ Like Gorgon’s crest, or stern Alecto’s hair,
- “ His tempest-beaten locks erect and bold,
- “ With horrid shade his temples seem’d to fold,
- “ His beard, the rest conceal’d, a black disguise.

ORLANDO FURIOSO.

But the good man happening several times to exert himself rather too much, had nearly tumbled headlong out of his portable pulpit; these accidents the mob *uncharitably* ascribed to the liquor that he had drank, and with mud, stones, dead cats, &c. drove him off every time he came, until at last our preacher took his leave of them with saying, “that he perceived it was in vain to attempt their conversion, as he saw that God had given them over to the hardness of their hearts.”

I must inform you that this devout zealous preacher lived many years before this, and some years after, with a very holy sister, and begot sons and daughters, without being brought into bondage, by submitting to the carnal ordinance of marriage. I have been lately informed, that his enthusiasm and superstition, at last, entirely deprived him of the small remains of reason, and that he died in a private mad-house.

But

But although this holy man deserted them, yet other spiritual knights-errant were not wanting, so that a little time before the heaps of stones which lay for years in Moorfields were removed, for the purpose of building on the spot, I have seen five or six in a day preaching their initiation sermons from those elevated situations, until they could collect a sufficient sum of money to purchase pulpits. Some of these excellent preachers received the whole of their divine education and took up their degrees in Moorfields, and in due time, after having given ample and satisfactory proofs of being properly qualified, have been admitted to professorships in the noble College situated on the south side of those fields, generally known by the name of *Bedlam*. You must know, Sir, that many of the lazy part of the community set up stalls in Moorfields to buy and sell apples, old iron, &c. several of these having heard such edifying discourses frequently repeated as they sat at their stalls, and observing the success which those kind of preachers met with, boldly resolved to make trial of their

spiritual gifts on the heaps of stones, and have now totally abandoned their stalls, and are gone forth as ambassadors of heaven.

“ — Thus poor Crispin crazy for the praise,  
 “ Of pulpit eloquence, to preach essays,  
 “ His 'prentice clerk ; his cobbling stool his stage ;  
 “ Flies to the fields with tabernacle rage !  
 “ With Rowland's skill erects his orbs of fight,  
 “ Or turns them ravish'd ! on the inward light !  
 “ New faith, all saving faith, proclaims aloud !  
 “ Now deals damnation to the trembling crowd,  
 “ Ask'd why for preaching he deserts his stall,  
 “ (Bred at Moorfields, or Tot'nham) hear him bawl,  
 “ Because as how I feels I has a call.”

BUSEBY'S Age of Genius.

One of these who cannot read, lately informed me, that he had quitted all temporal concerns for the good of poor ignorant sinners.

John Turpin, a waiter of an Inn at Dartmouth, some time late in 1791, made free with some of his master's plate, and was whipped at the tail of a cart round the town, after which he went to Totness, about 12 miles from Dartmouth, and commenced methodist preacher ; and a few months after  
 he



he had the assurance to return to Dartmouth to proclaim his conversion, and to preach what he was pleased to call the gospel, and in that capacity he soon collected together as great a number of people round his pulpit as before he had done round his cart, and among others he made a convert of the clerk of the parish, who entertained him in his house at free cost. Some time this spring (1792) as he was one Sunday morning going towards the church with the clerk, he pretended to be seized on a sudden with griping pains, and told the clerk that he must go back, on which the old fool of a clerk gave him the key of his house, and also a key of a closet where he kept some brandy, and advised him to go and take a glass. On the old man's return from church, he missed a watch, and on farther search he missed another watch, and upwards of twenty guineas in gold. And as the preacher was not to be found, he hired horses, and with a constable set off in pursuit of this heavenly minded rascal, and about fifteen miles from Dartmouth they

they took him, with the whole of the property on him.

At Exeter Assizes in March he was tried, found guilty and condemned to be hung; but was reprieved, and is since sent to Botany-Bay, where perhaps he may have address enough to get himself made chaplain to Barrington. As on his trial he told the judge, that if he would send him to Botany-Bay, he would do much towards the glory of God, in sending one among the abandoned transports, who could call them to repentance, and bring them to Christ the friend of the chief of sinners.

But before I take my leave of the subject, I will in few words inform you how the preachers were governed and supported. Mr. Wesley every year ordered the major part of his travelling preachers in Great Britain and Ireland, which were upwards of two hundred in number, to meet together, one year at London, the next at Bristol, and the following at Manchester; this meeting  
he

he called a conference. At those conferences, the business of the whole society was transacted, new preachers admitted, and some turned off, or silenced; complaints heard, differences adjusted, &c. Mr. Wesley having divided Great Britain into circuits, at those conferences, he appointed the preachers to every circuit for the following year; and as he well knew the general want of abilities among his preachers, he limited their time of preaching in one circuit to a year, and so in some measure, made up the want of abilities by variety, most of those circuits had three or four preachers every year, and in many country places, they had but one sermon a week from the travelling preachers, so that each preacher preached about twelve sermons in the year (sometimes it may be twenty) at each place. In every circuit one of the preachers was called the assistant; to him the various contributions were paid, and of him might be had any of Mr. Wesley's publications. He also admitted new members, or turned out any who were judged unworthy of bearing the high appellation of a methodist.

Each

Each itinerant preacher had a horse found him, which, with himself, is maintained by some brother or sister wherever they go, as the preachers do not put up at any inn, and yet they have as regular stages to call at as the coaches have, they having made converts at convenient distances in most parts of Great Britain and Ireland.

Each travelling preacher was then allowed twelve pounds a year, to find himself cloaths, pay turnpikes, &c. besides what they could get privately out of the old women's pockets. But besides those circuit-preachers, there "were in the year 1790, in Europe and America, thirteen or fourteen hundred," of local holdersforth, who do not preach out of their own neighbourhood, and those in general are the most ignorant of all.

Many of the circuit-preachers only travel until they can marry a rich widow, or some ignorant young convert with money, which has often been the cause of great unhappiness in many respectable families. The following

following poetical description of the methodist preachers, is so much to my purpose, that I must insert it :

“ Every *mechanic* will commence

“ *Orator*, without *mood* or *tense*;

“ *Pudding* is *pudding* still they know,

“ Whether it has a plum or no.

“ So, tho’ the preacher have no skill,

“ A *sermon* is a *sermon* still.

“ The Bricklay’r throws his trowel by,

“ And now *builds mansions in the sky*;

“ The *Cobler*, touch’d with *holy pride*,

“ Flings his *old shoes* and *left* aside,

“ And now devoutly sets about

“ Cobbling of *soles* that *ne’er wear out*;

“ The *Baker* now a *preacher* grown,

“ Finds *man lives not by bread alone*,

“ And now his customers he feeds

“ With *pray’rs*, with *sermons*, *graces*, and *creeds*;

“ The *Tinman*, mov’d by warmth within,

“ *Hammers the gospel* just like *tin*;

“ *Weavers inspir’d*, their *shuttles* leave,

“ *Sermons* and *flimsy hymns* to weave;

“ *Barbers* uncreep’d will leave the chin,

“ To trim, and shave the *man within*;

“ The *Waterman* forgets his *wherry*,

“ And opens a *celestial ferry*;

“ The *Brewer*, bit by frenzy’s grub,

“ The *massing* for the *preaching tub*

“ *Refigns, those waters* to explore,

“ Which if you drink, you thirst no more;

“ The

“ The *Gard’ner*, weary of his trade,  
 “ Tir’d of the mattock and the spade,  
 “ Chang’d to *Apollo* in a trice,  
 “ *Waters the plants* of *paradise* ;  
 “ The *Fisberman* no longer fet  
 “ For *fish* the meshes of their net,  
 “ But catch, like *Peter*, *men of sin*,  
 “ For *catching* is to *take them in*.”

I now take a final leave of methodism, with assuring you, that in giving a general idea of the tenets and practices of a numerous sect who have excited much public attention, I have invariably had in view to “ speak of them as they are, nothing to extenuate, nor set down aught in malice.” Should you wish to see the errors of the methodists particularly exposed, you may read Bishop Lavington’s “ *Enthusiasm of the methodists and papists compared.*” It is esteemed a very good work, it will amuse as well as instruct you. In my next, I intended to have resumed the account of my own affairs ; but an extraordinary publication will tempt me to add one letter more on the methodists.

I am, dear Friend, yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R   X X X I .

" Religion, fairest maid on earth,  
 " As meek as good, who drew her breath  
 " From the blest union when in heaven,  
 " Pleasure was bride to virtue given ;  
 " Religion ever pleas'd to pray,  
 " Possess'd the precious gift one day ;  
 " Hypocryfy, of Cunning born,  
 " Crept in and stole it ere the morn."

CHURCHILL.

DEAR FRIEND,

**A**LTHOUGH I was many years in connexion with Mr. Wesley's people, it seems, according to a pamphlet published a few months after the two first editions of my Memoirs, that I was but superficially acquainted with Mr. Wesley and his preachers. The pamphlet is entitled, " A Letter to the Rev. T. Coke, LL. D. and Mr. H. Moore." To which is added, " An Appeal and Remonstrance to the People called Methodists, by an old Member of the Society." This old member informs us, that he has been acquainted

quainted with the methodists twenty-eight years, and if their preachers are but half as bad as he has drawn them, they are a detestable set of fly deceiving villains. The letter was occasioned by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore's proposals for publishing Mr. Wesley's Life, in opposition to that advertised (under the sanction of the executors) to be written by Dr. Whitehead.

And we are informed that after Mr. Wesley's manuscripts and private papers had been given up to Dr. Whitehead, and the Doctor appointed to write his Life, and this Life announced to the public by the executors as the only authentic work, on a misunderstanding taking place between Dr. Whitehead and the preachers, because the Doctor would not submit his work to be inspected, altered, &c. and also because the Doctor would not consent to give to the preachers at the conference, nearly the whole of the profits derived from his labours, they then sent a circular letter  
signed



signed by nine of their head preachers, to all their societies, and advise them *to return the subscriptions that they had taken for Doctor Whitehead's Life of Mr. Wesley, and to procure all the subscriptions in their power for another Life of Mr. Wesley, to be written by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore.*

The following quotations I think will please you, page 8, &c. “ That Mr. Wesley was a great man is an undeniable truth; *that* is comparatively:—Great amongst little people. ”

“ Nothing can exhibit his character as an ambitious man, more than the following anecdote, which I can give from the most authentic authority. When a boy he was in the Charter-House School; the Rev. *A. Tooke*, the author of the *Pantheon*, was then master, and observing that his pupil, who was remarkably forward in his studies, yet he constantly associated with the inferior classes, and it was his custom to be surrounded by a number of the little boys, haranguing them. Mr. Tooke once accidentally broke in upon him when in the middle of an oration, and interrupted him, by desiring him to follow him to the parlour. Mr. Wesley, offended by being thus

X

abruptly

abruptly deprived of an opportunity of displaying his superior abilities, obeyed his master very reluctantly. When they had got into the parlour Mr. Tooke said to him: "John, I wonder that you who are so much above the lower forms should constantly associate with them, for you should now consider yourself as a man, and affect the company of the bigger boys, who are your equals." Our hero, who could hardly stifle his resentment whilst his master spoke, boldly replied:—" *Better to rule in hell, than serve in heaven.*"

"Mr. Tooke dismissed his pupil with this remarkable observation to the assistant master.—That boy though designed for the Church will never get a living in it: for his ambitious soul will never acknowledge a superior, or be confined to a parish.

"That he was superior to the prejudices he inculcated to his followers, and with what contempt he sometimes treated the lay-preachers, the following will shew.—Being at supper one Sunday night, (a short time before his death) with several of the preachers, one of them observed that whenever Mr. Wesley travelled, he was always invited to the houses of the neighbouring nobility and gentry; but when the preachers travelled, no notice was taken of them, which he could not account for. Mr. Wesley replied, "It was the way

way of the world to court the great, but I say, love me love my dog! enjoying his triumph with a hearty laugh at their expence.”

After this old member's letter comes his Appeal and Remonstrance to the Methodists, which, as coming from an old methodist, contains some very extraordinary assertions and facts, and letters more extraordinary. I shall give you some extracts from it in page 28. “Faith is the ground-work of (methodist) evidence—it precludes the necessity of every virtue—it is to be feared it has sent more of its votaries to Bedlam than to heaven—is to wise men a stumbling block, an unintelligible jargon of mystical nonsense, which common sense and common honesty reject.”

Page 30, &c. “It has been computed that the contributions raised among the members of the different societies in Great Britain and Ireland for these last ten years, has amounted to no less than **FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS** per annum. It has been further proved that about one eighth part of this sum is appropriated

to the purposes for which it was raised, and the remainder is disposed of at the discretion of the conference, the preachers, and the stewards. This calculation does not include the enormous sums known to be raised privately by the influence of the preachers in their respective circuits, under the various pretensions of distress, &c.

“ However, I do not pretend to vouch for the accuracy of this calculation, yet I think it by no means exaggerated. What has come within my own knowledge I can assert with confidence, and I challenge any one to refute it.

“ Of *Kingwood School*, I can speak with certainty: for this foundation, many thousands have been raised which never were, and I believe never were intended to be applied, to that charity. During eight years that I was at Kingwood, it not only supported itself, but produced a considerable annual surplus.

“ One of the masters of King’s School, being deficient in his accounts, he was judged an improper person to enjoy any place of trust, and was accordingly dismissed, and appointed to a circuit as a *travelling preacher*—but any will do for that, who has but *impudence* and *hypocrisy*—no matter whether he possesses a grain of *honesty*. Now if this was the case with respect to Kingwood,

wood, may we not conclude that the same iniquitous principle pervaded the administration of the finances in all the different departments?

Page 33, &c. “ O how long, ye *sheep*, will ye be the prey of *wolves*, who fleece and devour you at pleasure! and, ye *fools*, be the dupes of *knavery* and *hypocrisy* ?

“ Open your eyes, and behold the *villain* and *hypocrite* unmasked, in instances of the most flagitious crimes, and deeds of the blackest dye! perpetrated by wretches, whom you tamely suffer to devour your substance, and whom you cheerfully contribute to support in idleness and luxury, which brings into contempt the gospel, and whose example has done more harm to religion, than that of the most abandoned and profligate open sinner: admitting at the same time that there may be, and I hope there are, some honest and sincere men amongst them.

“ To begin then with the late Rev. J. Wesley. As the founder and head, he must be considered as the *primum mobile*, or first mover of this mighty machine of *hypocrisy*, *fraud*, and *villainy*! Yet were his motives originally laudable in their intention, virtuous in their object, but unhappy in their consequences. This I will endeavour to make appear, by an impartial review of his life, character, and conduct. I flatter myself that I am in some measure qualified, being totally dis-

vested of prejudice, and having no interest either in representing him as a *saint* or a *devil*.

“ From what I have observed during near twenty-eight years that I have known him, I have uniformly found him ambitious, imperious, and positive even to obstinacy. His learning and knowledge various and general, but superficial; his judgment too hasty and decisive to be always just—his penetration acute: yet was he constantly the dupe to his credulity and his unaccountable and universal good opinion of mankind. Humane, generous, and just. In his private opinions liberal to a degree inconsistent with strict Christianity; in his public declarations rigid almost to intolerance. From this observation of the inconsistency of his private opinions and public declarations, I have often been inclined to doubt his sincerity, even in the profession of the Christian faith. In his temper impetuous, and impatient of contradiction; but in his heart, a stranger to malice or resentment; incapable of particular attachment to any individual; he knew no ties of blood or claims of kindred; never violently or durably affected by grief, sorrow, or any of the passions to which humanity is subject; susceptible of the grossest flattery, and the most fulsome panegyric was constantly accepted and rewarded. In his views and expectations, sanguine and unbounded, but though often disappointed,

never

never dejected; of his benevolence and charity much has been said; but it is to be observed, benevolence is but a passive virtue, and his charity was no more than bribery; he knew no other use of money but to give it away, and he found out that an hundred pounds would go farther in half crowns than in pounds; so that his charity was little more than parade, as he hardly ever essentially relieved an object of distress: in fact his charity was no more than putting his money to interest, as the example excited his followers to the practice of the same virtue, and doubled their subscriptions and contributions. In his constitution warm, and consequently amorous; in his manner of living luxurious and strictly epicurean, and fond of dishes highly relished, and fond of drinking the richest wines, in which he indulged often, but never to excess. He was indebted more to his commanding, positive, and authoritative manner, than to any intrinsically superior abilities.

“ Having thus given the outlines of his character, I shall only observe, that he appears to have been more a philosopher than a christian: and shall then proceed to some anecdotes and circumstances which will corroborate my assertions, and justify my conclusion.

“ As the *work of God*, as it is called, was the sphere of action in which he was more particularly

and conspicuously engaged, and as I have ventured to question the sincerity of his professions, it is proper that I should state my reasons for so doing. First then of conversion: in the *methodical* sense of the word, for in the true sense, I apprehend to be neither more or less, than forsaking vice and practising virtue; but, however, the methodical sense imports quite a different thing, and it is in that sense we shall view it. I have made it an invariable observation, that Mr. Wesley, although he was often in the company of sensible men, who were capable of forming an opinion, and presumed to judge for themselves by the light of nature, the evidence of the senses, and the aid of reason and philosophy; but of such, he never attempted the conversion. In his own family and amongst his relations, he never attempted, or if he did attempt, he never succeeded: except now and then with a female, in whom he found a heart susceptible of any impression he pleased to give. It is remarkable, that even the children of Mr. C. W. were never converted—because they, and most of his relations, possessed sense enough to discover hypocrisy, and honesty enough to reject the advantage they might have derived from assuming it. But what is still more extraordinary, is, that out of so many hundred, who have been educated at *Kingwood*, in the most rigid discipline of methodism, hardly any have embraced their tenets, or become  
members



members of the society. The reason is pretty obvious, they were taught too much to imbibe the ridiculous prejudices the founder wished to be instilled into their minds : philosophy and methodism are utterly incompatible. When the human mind is formed by the study of philosophy, it expands itself to the contemplation of things. †

“ It is true indeed, the *work* was sometimes attended with power among the children at *Kingfwood*. *Conversions* were frequent ; but never durable. I myself was converted some ten or a dozen times ; but unluckily, my *class leader* was detected in having stolen a pair of silver buckles. This was a dreadful stroke to the *work*, and a glorious triumph to the *wicked one*. The whole fabric of *faith, grace*, and all its concomitant vices, as *hypocrisy, &c. &c.* experienced a total overthrow ! The serious boys, as they are called by way of eminence, fell into the utmost contempt, and ever after, the *leader* of a *class* was stiled *Captain of the Gang* : a *convert* and a *thief*, were synonymous terms.

“ A general conversion among the boys, was once effected, by the late excellent Mr. *Fletcher* : one poor boy only excepted, who unfortunately resisted the influence of the Holy Spirit ; for which he was severely flogged, which did not fail of the desired effect, and impressed proper notions  
of

of religion on his mind. Unhappily these operations of the Spirit, though violent, were but of short duration.

“ As the conversion of men and women is a more serious concern than that of children, I will describe one, to which I was an eye witness among the poor Colliers at *Kingfwood*. One of those presumptuous and impious fanatical wretches, who assume the character of ministers of God, and take upon them in his most holy name, to denounce his curses and vengeance against those who are far less guilty than themselves: a fellow of this description, of the name of *Sauderfon*, preaching to a congregation of ignorant, but harmless people; this fellow took upon himself, in the name of God, to condemn them all to eternal damnation, painting their deplorable state in the most dreadful colours: some of his hearers were soon evidently affected by this discourse, which he took care to improve, and taking the advantage of the kindling spark, addressed himself more particularly to them, whom he soon “ made roar for the disquietude of their souls.” The whole congregation were quickly affected in the like manner, one and all exclaimed, “ What shall I do to be saved? Oh! I’m damned! I’m damned! I’m damned to all eternity! What shall I do? Oh! Oh! Oh!” Our performer observing to what a state he

he had reduced his audience, redoubled his threats of divine wrath and vengeance, and with a voice terrible as thunder, demanded, "Is there any backsliders in the presence of God?" A dead and solemn pause ensued—till he exclaimed, "Here is an old grey-headed sinner:" at the same time striking with his hand violently on the bald pate of an honest old man who sat under the desk; the poor man gave a deep groan; whether from conviction, or from the pain of the blow, I know not, for it was far from being gentle. The farce was not yet concluded: when they were strongly *convulsed* with these *convictions*, he fell down upon his knees, and with the greatest fervency, accompanied with abundance of tears, he intreated the Lord in mighty prayer, to have compassion on the poor desponding sinners whom he had brought to a proper sense of their danger: the prayer continued about ten minutes, accompanied by the sighs and groans of the converted and alarmed sinners, in concert making a most divine harmony: when suddenly starting up, he pretended to have received a gracious answer to his prayer, and with a joyful and smiling countenance, pointing towards the window, exclaimed: Behold the Lamb! Where! Where! Where! was the cry of every contrite and returning sinner. (and they were all of that description) There! (continued the preacher, extending his arms towards the window where he pretended first to have

have espied the Lamb.) In Heaven! In *Colo!* making intercession for your sins! And I have his authority to proclaim unto you—"your sins are forgiven—depart in peace."—O, my dearest brethren, how sweet is the sound of those extatic words. "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world!" But could you but feel the peculiar energy, the divine force, the rapturous and cheering import of the *original*, your mouths would be filled with praise, and your hearts with divine joy, holy exultation, and unspeakable gratitude.—Only mark the sound of the words, even that will convey an expressible pleasure to your souls, "*Hecca Hangus Dei! Ki dollit pekkaltus Monday!*" The school-boys (who were seated in a pew detached from the congregation on account of their prophane and contemptuous behaviour during service) immediately burst into a loud laugh, on one of the congregation saying, "O the blessed man! We shall see him again on MONDAY."

In some pages following we have an account of the methodist preacher's first converting his benefactor's daughter, and then debauching her; also of a preacher at Beverly, in Yorkshire, that collected fifteen pounds for a poor man in great distress, and  
gave

gave him only fifteen shillings, reserving to himself fourteen pounds five shillings for the trouble of collecting it, with which, and twenty pounds more he was entrusted with, he decamped the next day, to the astonishment of the simple on whom he had imposed.

I wish the author as he proposes may soon give us a more particular account of the methodists, preachers, and people, and also of some of Mr. Wesley's private opinions, &c.

This pamphlet concludes with very curious letters written by Mr. J. Wesley, and he informs us, in a note, that the publisher has his address, in order to direct any person to the author, where they may see the original letters. I here give you the whole of these extraordinary letters.

Page 50, &c.

“ DEAR SIR,

FOR your obliging letter which I received this morning, I return you thanks.

“ Our opinions for the most part perfectly coincide respecting the stability of the connexion,  
after

after my head is laid in the dust. This, however, is a subject, about which I am not so anxious as you seem to imagine; on the contrary, it is a matter of the utmost indifference to me; as I have long foreseen that a division must necessarily ensue, from causes so various, unavoidable and certain, that I have long since given over all thoughts and hopes of settling it on a permanent foundation. You do not seem to be aware of the most effective cause that will bring about a division. You apprehend the most serious consequences from a struggle between the preachers for power and pre-eminence, and there being none among them of sufficient authority or abilities to support the dignity, or command the respect and exact the implicit obedience, which is so necessary to uphold our constitution on its present principles. This is one thing that will operate very powerfully against unity in the connexion, and is, perhaps, what I might possibly have prevented, had not a still greater difficulty arisen in my mind: I have often wished for some person of abilities to succeed me as the head of the church I have with such indefatigable pains, and astonishing success established; but convinced that none but very superior abilities would be equal to the undertaking, was I to adopt a successor of this description, I fear he might gain so much influence among the people, as to usurp a share, if not the whole of that absolute and uncontrollable  
power,

power, which I have hitherto, and am determined I will maintain so long as I live : never will I bear a rival near my throne.—You, no doubt, see the policy of continually changing the preachers from one circuit to another at short periods : for should any of them become popular with their different congregations, and insinuate themselves into the favour of their hearers, they might possibly obtain such influence, as to establish themselves independently of me, and the general connexion. Besides, the novelty of the continual change excites curiosity, and is the more necessary, as few of our preachers have abilities to render themselves in any degree tolerable, any longer than they are new.

The principal cause which will inevitably effect a diminution and division in the connexion after my death, will be the failure of subscriptions and contributions towards the support of the cause, for money is as much the sinews of religious, as of military power. If it is with the greatest difficulty that even I can keep them together, for want of this very necessary article, I think no one else can. Another cause, which, with others, will effect the division, is the disputes and contentions that will arise between the preachers and the parties that will espouse the several causes, by which means much truth will be brought to light, which will reflect so much to their disadvantage, that the  
eyes

eyes of the people will be opened to see their motives and principles, nor will they any longer contribute to their support, when they find all their pretensions to sanctity and love are founded on motives of interest and ambition. The consequence of which will be, a few of the most popular will establish themselves in the respective places where they have gained sufficient influence over the minds of the people; the rest must revert to their original humble callings. But this no way concerns me: I have obtained the object of my views, by establishing a name that will not soon perish from the face of the earth; I have founded a sect which will boast my name, long after my discipline and doctrines are forgotten.

“ My character and reputation for sanctity is now beyond the reach of calumny; nor will any thing that may hereafter come to light, or be said concerning me, to my prejudice, however true, gain credit.

“ My unfoil'd name, th' austereness of my life,  
Will vouch against it.  
And so the accusation overweigh  
That it will stifle in its own report,  
And smell of calumny.”

“ Another cause that will operate more powerfully and effectually than any of the preceding, is the rays of philosophy which begins now to pervade all ranks, rapidly dispelling the mists of  
ignorance,



ignorance, which has been long in a great degree the mother of devotion, of slavish prejudice, and the enthusiastic bigotry of religious opinions : the decline of the papal power is owing to the same irresistible cause, nor can it be supposed that methodism can stand its ground, when brought to the test of truth, reason, and philosophy.

I am, &c.

I. W.”

City Road, Thursday Morn.

Our Author informs us that the following was written to a very amiable and accomplished lady, some years ago. The lady was about three and twenty years of age.

“ MADAM,

“ IT is with the utmost diffidence I presume to address superior excellence : emboldened by a violent, yet virtuous passion, kindled by the irresistible rays, and encouraged by the sweetly attractive force, of transcendent beauty, the elegant simplicity of your manners, the fascinating melody of your voice, and above all, the inexpressible fire of an eye, that the extravagance of the Muses has given to the goddesses of love : but which Nature has bestowed on you alone.

“ They sparkle with the right *Promethean* fire!”

Y

“ Believe

“ Believe me, my dear Madam, this is not the language of romance ; but the genuine exuberant effusions of an enraptured soul. The impression of your charms was no less instantaneous than irresistible : when first I saw you, so forcibly was I struck with admiration and love of your divine perfections, that my soul was filled with sensations so wild and extravagant, yet delightful and pure ! —But I will not indulge in declaring what are my real sentiments, lest I should incur a suspicion of flattery. Your mind, superior to fulsome panegyric, unsusceptible of the incense of affected adulation, would, with just indignation, spurn at those impertinent compliments, which are commonly offered with a view to impose upon the vanity and credulity of the weaker part of your sex : I will not attempt it ; but confine myself to the dictates of sincerity and truth, nor shall a compliment escape my pen, that is not the sentiment of a devoted heart.

“ As beauty has no positive criterion, and fancy alone directs the judgment and influences the choice, we find different people see it in various lights, forms, and colours ; I may therefore, without a suspicion of flattery, declare, that in my eye you are the most agreeable object, and most perfect work of created nature : nor does your mind seem to partake less of the divinity than your person.

“ I view

“ I view thee over with a lover’s eye ;  
 “ No fault haft thou, or I no fault can spy.”

“ The reason I did not before declare myself, was the profound and respectful diftance I thought it became me to obferve, from a confcious fenfe of my own comparative unworthinefs to approach, much lefs to hope for favour from, the quint-eflence of all female perfection.—Forgive me, my dear Eliza, and compaffionate a heart too deeply impreffed with your divine image, ever to be erafed by time, nor can any power, but the cold hand of death, ever obliterate from my mind the fond imagination and fweet remembrance of Eliza’s charms ! Nor can even death itfelf divide the union that fubfifts between kindred fouls.

“ Yefterday, my dear Eliza, the charms of your converfation detained me too late to meet the *penitents*, as I had promifed to do ; but

“ With thee converfing, I forget  
 “ All times, all feafons, and their change.”

“ I hope, however, the difappointment of my company did not deprive them of a bleffing.

“ This being my birth-day, reflexions on the revolution of years and the fhortnefs of life, naturally intrude on my mind. I am now *eighty-one* years of age, and I thank God I enjoy the fame vigor of conftitution I poffeffed at *twenty-one* !

None of the infirmities that usually accompany years, either corporal or mental; and I think it not impossible that I may fulfil my hundred years, the residue of which shall be devoted to love and Eliza.

I. W.”

I sent a person to the author of the above pamphlet, to desire him to give me a sight of the original of the preceding letters; but he returned for answer, that he had sent them back to the persons to whom they were written; so that I cannot be certain as to their authenticity.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXII.

“ Passion, 'tis true, may hurry us along ;

“ Sometimes the just may deviate into wrong.”

VOLTAIRE by Francklin.

DEAR FRIEND,

MY new wife's attachment to books was a very fortunate circumstance for us both, not only as it was a perpetual source of rational amusement, but also as it tended to promote my trade: her extreme love for books made her delight to be in the shop, so that she soon became perfectly acquainted with every part of it, and (as my stock increased) with other rooms where I kept books, and could readily get any article that was asked for. Accordingly, when I was out on business my shop was well attended. This constant attention, and good usage, procured me many customers, and I soon perceived that I could sell double and treble the quantity of books if I had a larger stock. But how to enlarge it, I knew not, except by

flow degrees, as my profits should enable me ; for as I was almost a stranger in London, I had but few acquaintances, and these few were not of the opulent sort. I also saw that the town abounded with cheats, swindlers, &c. who obtained money and other property, under false pretences, of which the credulous were defrauded, which often prevented me from endeavouring to borrow, lest I should be suspected of having the same bad designs.

I was several times so hard put to it, for cash to purchase parcels of books which were offered to me, that I more than once pawned my watch, and a suit of cloaths, and twice I pawned some books for money to purchase others.

Soon after I commenced bookseller, I became acquainted with what Pope calls "the noblest work of God," an HONEST man. This was Mr. JOHN DENIS, an oilman in Cannon-street (father of the present Mr. John Denis, bookseller.) This gentleman had often visited me during my long  
illness,

illness, and having seen me tranquil and serene when on the very point of death, he formed a favourable conclusion that I too must be an honest man, as I had so quiet a conscience at such an awful period. Having retained these ideas of me after my recovery, and being perfectly well acquainted with my circumstances, he one day offered to become a partner in my business, and to advance money in proportion to my stock. This confidential offer I soon accepted; early in 1778 he became partner; and we very soon laid out his money in second-hand books, which increased the stock at once to double.

I soon after this proposed printing a sale catalogue, to which, after making a few objections, Mr. Denis consented. This catalogue of twelve thousand volumes (such as they were) was published in 1779. My partner's name was not in the title-page, the address was only "J. LACKINGTON and Co. No. 46, Chiswell-street." This our first publication produced very opposite effects on those who perused it; in some it excited

much mirth, in others an equal proportion of anger. The major part of it was written by me, but Mr. Denis wrote many pages of it; and as his own private library consisted of scarce old myffical and alchymical books, printed above a century ago, many of them were in bad condition; this led him to insert *neat* in the catalogue to many articles, which were only neat when compared with such as were in very bad condition; so that when we produced such books as were called *neat* in our catalogue, we often got ourselves laughed at, and sometimes our *neat* articles were heartily *damned*. We had also a deal of trouble on another score; Mr. Denis inserted a number of articles without the authors names, and assured me that the books were well known, and to mention the authors was often uselefs. The fact was, Mr. Denis knew who wrote those articles; but was soon convinced that many others did not, as we were often obliged to produce them merely to let our customers see who were the authors; we however took twenty pounds the first week the books were on sale,



sale, which we thought a large sum. The increase of our stock augmented our customers in proportion; so that Mr. Denis, finding that his money turned to a better account in bookfelling than in the funds, very soon lent the stock near two hundred pounds, which I still turned to a good account. We went on very friendly and prosperously for a little more than two years; when one night Mr. Denis hinted that he thought I was making purchases too fast, on which I grew warm, and reminded him of an article in our partnership agreement, by which I was to be sole purchaser, and was at liberty to make what purchases I should judge proper. I also reminded him of the profits which my purchases produced, and he reminded me of his having more money in the trade than I had. We were indeed both very warm; and on my saying, that if he was displeas'd with any part of my conduct, he was at liberty to quit the partnership; he in great warmth replied that he would. The above pass'd at Mr. Denis's house in Hoxton-square; I then bade him  
good

good night. When Mr. Denis called at the shop the next day, he asked me if I continued in the same mind I was in the preceding night? I assured him that I did. He then demanded of me whether I insisted on his keeping his word to quit the partnership? I replied, I did not *insist* on it, as I had taken him a partner for three years, nearly one third part of which time was unexpired; but, I added, that, as I had always found him strictly a man of his word, I supposed he would prove himself so in the present instance, and not assert one thing at night and another in the morning. On which he observed, that as he was not provided with a shop, he must take some time to look for one. I told him that he might take as long a time as he thought necessary. This was in March 1780. He appointed the twentieth of May following. On that day we accordingly dissolved the partnership; and, as he had more money in the trade than myself, he took my notes for what I was deficient, which was a great favour done to me. We parted in great friendship, which continued

to

to the day of his death; he generally called every morning to see us, and learn our concerns, and we constantly informed him of all that had passed the preceding day; as how much cash we had taken, what were the profits, what purchases we had made, what bills we had to pay, &c. and he sometimes lent me money to help to pay them.

At his death he left behind him in his private library the best collection of scarce valuable mystical, and alchymical books, that ever was collected by one person. In his lifetime he prized these kind of books above every thing; in collecting them he never cared what price he paid for them. This led him to think, after he became a bookfeller, that other book-collectors should pay their money as freely as he had done his, which was often a subject of debate between him and me, as I was for selling every thing cheap, in order to secure those customers already obtained, as well as increase their numbers.

In Selden's Table Talk is the following odd passage: "The giving a bookfeller his price for his books has this advantage; he that will do so, shall have the refusal of whatsoever comes to his hand, and so by that means get many things which otherwise he never should have seen." He adds, "So it is in giving a bawd her own price." But I hope he did not mean to compare the bookfellers to old bawds. Different professions are oddly jumbled together in the following lines:

" No surgeon will extract a tooth,  
 " No strumpet exercise her trade,  
 " No parson preach eternal truth,  
 " Where not a sixpence can be made."

Mr. Denis was, at the time of his death, about fifty years of age. He informed me that in his childhood and youth he was weakly to an extreme, so that no one who knew him ever thought he could live to be twenty years of age; however, he enjoyed an uninterrupted state of health for nearly the last forty years of his life; this he ascribed to his strictly adhering to the rules

laid down by *Cornaro* and *Tryon* in their books on Health, Long Life and Happiness. His unexpected death was in consequence of a fever caught by sitting in a cold damp room.

O'er the sad reliques of each friend sincere,  
The happiest mortal, sure, may spare a tear,

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours,

LETTER

## LETTER XXXIII.

“ There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
 “ Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune,  
 “ Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
 “ Is bound in shallows and in miseries ;  
 “ On such a foul sea are we now afloat,  
 “ And we must take the current when it serves,  
 “ Or lose our ventures.” SHAKESPEARE’S Julius Cæsar.

DEAR FRIEND,

**I**T was some time in the year  
 seventeen hundred and eighty, when I re-  
 solved from that period to give no person  
 whatever any credit. I was induced to make  
 this resolution from various motives : I had  
 observed, that where credit was given, most  
 bills were not paid within six months, many  
 not within a twelvemonth, and some not  
 within two years. Indeed, many tradesmen  
 have accounts of seven years standing ; and  
 some bills are never paid. The losses sus-  
 tained by the interest of money in long cre-  
 dits, and by those bills that were not paid at  
 all ; the inconveniences attending not having  
 the

the ready-money to lay out in trade to the best advantage, together with the great loss of time in keeping accounts, and collecting debts, convinced me, that if I could but establish a ready-money business *without any exceptions*, I should be enabled to sell every article very cheap.

“ Let all the learn’d say all they can,  
 “ ’Tis ready money makes the man.”

When I communicated my ideas on this subject to some of my acquaintances, I was much laughed at and ridiculed; and it was thought, that I might as well attempt to rebuild the tower of Babel, as to establish a large business without giving credit. But notwithstanding this discouragement, and even *You*, my dear friend, expressing your doubts of the practicability of my scheme, I determined to make the experiment; and began by plainly marking in every book facing the title the lowest price that I would take for it; which being much lower than the common market prices, I not only retained my former customers, but soon increased their numbers. But, my dear Sir, you can scarce imagine  
 what

what difficulties I encountered for several years together. I even sometimes thought of relinquishing this my favourite scheme altogether, as by it I was obliged to deny credit to my very acquaintance; I was also under a necessity of refusing it to the most respectable characters, as *no exception* was, or now is made, not even in favour of nobility; my porters being strictly enjoined, by one general order, to bring back all books not previously paid for, except they receive the amount on delivery. Again, many in the country found it difficult to remit small sums that were under bankers notes, (which difficulty is now done away, as all post masters receive small sums of money, and give drafts for the same on the post office in London) and others to whom I was a stranger, did not like to send the money first, as not knowing how I should treat them, and suspecting by the price of the articles, there must certainly be some deception. Many unacquainted with my plan of business, were much offended, until the advantages accruing to them from it were duly explained, when they very readily



readily acceded to it. As to the anger of such, who though they were acquainted with it, were still determined to deal on credit only, I considered that as of little consequence, from an opinion that some of them would have been as much enraged when their bills were sent in, had credit been given them.

I had also difficulties of another nature to encounter; when first I began to sell very cheap, many came to my shop prepossessed against my goods, and of course often saw faults where none existed; so that the best editions were merely from prejudice deemed very bad editions, and the best bindings said to be inferior workmanship, for no other reason, but because I sold them so cheap; and I often received letters from the country, to know if such and such articles were REALLY as I stated them in my catalogues, and *if they REALLY were the best editions, if REALLY in calf; and REALLY elegantly bound; with many other reallys.* Oh my friend! I *really* was afraid for some years

that I should be *really* mad with vexation. But these letters of *reallys* have for years happily ceased, and the public are now *really* and thoroughly convinced that I will not assert in my catalogues what is not *really* true. But imagine, if you can, what I must have felt, on hearing the very best of goods depreciated, on no other account whatever, but because they were not charged at a higher price.

It is also worth observing, that there were not wanting among the booksellers, some who were mean enough to assert that all my books were bound in sheep, and many other unmanly artifices were practised, all of which so far from injuring me, as basely intended, turned to my account; for when gentlemen were brought to my shop by their friends, to purchase some trifling article, or were led into it by curiosity, they were often very much surpris'd to see many thousands of volumes in elegant and superb bindings. The natural conclusion was, that if I had not held forth to the public better terms than

than others, I should not have been so much envied and misrepresented.

“ ———To malice sure I'm much oblig'd,  
 “ On every side by calumny besieg'd;  
 “ Yet envy I could almost call the friend.”

So that whether I am righteous or not, all these afflictions have worked together for my good. But I assure you, that my temporal salvation was not effected without “*conditions.*” As every envious transaction was to me an additional spur to exertion, I am therefore not a little indebted to Messrs. ENVY, DETRACTION, and Co. for my present prosperity; though I assure you, this is the only debt I am determined not to pay. Green says,

“ Happy the man who innocent,  
 “ Grieves not at ills he can't prevent:  
 “ And when he can't prevent foul play,  
 “ Enjoys the follies of the fray.” SPLEEN.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

## L E T T E R XXXIV.

“ Constant at shop and Change, his gains were sure:  
 “ His givings rare ; save half-pence to the poor.”

DEAR FRIEND,

I N the first three years after I refused to give credit to any person, my business increased much, and as the whole of my profit (after paying all expences) was laid out in books, my stock was continually enlarged, so that my Catalogues in the year seventeen hundred and eighty-four, were very much augmented in size. The first contained Twelve thousand, and the second Thirty thousand volumes : this increase was not merely in numbers, but also in value, as a very great part of these volumes were *better*, that is, books of an higher price. But notwithstanding the great increase of my business, I still met with many difficulties on account of my selling books cheap ; one of these I confess I did not foresee : as the more convinced the public were of my act-  
 ing

ing strictly conformable to the plan I had adopted, the more this objection gained ground, and even to the present day is not *entirely* done away. This difficulty was, in making private purchases of libraries and parcels of books, many of my customers for several years had no objection to *buying* of me because I sold cheap, but were not equally inclined to *sell* me such books as they had no use for, or libraries that were left them at the death of relations, &c. They reasoned (very plausibly, it must be confessed) thus: “Lackington sells very cheap; he therefore will not give much for what is offered him for sale. I will go to those who sell very dear; as the more they sell their books for, the more they can afford to give for them.”

This mode of reasoning, however specious it seems at first, will on due reflection appear nugatory and erroneous, for the following reasons :

I believe no one ever knew or heard of a covetous man that would sell his goods *cheap* :

But every one has heard of such characters selling *very dear*; and when a covetous person makes a purchase, is it likely that he should offer a generous price? Is he not when buying influenced by the same avaricious disposition as when selling? And on the other hand, I cannot help thinking (I am aware of the inference) that one who has been constantly selling cheap for a series of years must possess some degree of generosity; that this disposition has prevailed in me when I have been called to purchase, and when libraries or parcels of books have been sent to me, thousands in the three kingdoms can witness. And however paradoxical it may appear, I will add, that I can afford to give more for books now, than I could if I sold them much dearer. For, were I to sell them dear, I should be ten times longer in selling them; and the expences for warehouse-room, insurance from fire, together with the interest of the money lying long in a dead stock, would prevent my giving a large price when books were offered for sale.

But

But it did not appear in this point of view to the public in the more early stages of my business, until being often sent for after other booksellers had made offers for libraries, and finding that I would give more than they had offered, it was communicated from one to another until it became publicly known; and the following method which I adopted some years since has put the matter beyond the shadow of a doubt.

When I am called upon to purchase any library or parcel of books, either myself or my assistants carefully examine them, and if desired to fix a price, I mention at a word the utmost that I will give for them, which I always take care shall be as much as any bookseller can afford to give: but if the seller entertains any doubts respecting the price offered, and chooses to try other booksellers, he pays me five per cent. for valuing the books; and as he knows what I have valued them at, he tries among the trade, and when he finds that he cannot get any greater sum offered, on returning to me, he not

only receives the price I at first offered, but also a return of the five per cent. which was paid me for the valuation.

But to such as fix a price on their own books I make no charge (if in, or very near town) either taking them at the price at which they are offered to me, or if that appear too much, immediately declining the purchase.

This equitable mode I have the pleasure to find has given the public the utmost satisfaction.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER



## L E T T E R   X X X V .

“ Behold, Sir Balaam, now a man of spirit,  
 “ Ascribes his gettings to his parts and merit.”    P O P E .

“ Weak truth cannot your reputation save,  
 “ The knaves will all agree to call you knave :  
 “ Wrong’d shall he live, insulted, o’er oppress’d,  
 “ Who dares be less a villain than the rest.”

Satyr against Man.

DEAR FRIEND,

W H E N I was first initiated into the various manoeuvres practised by bookfellers, I found it customary among them, (which practice still continues) that when any books had not gone off so rapidly as expected, or so fast as to pay for keeping them in store, they would put what remained of such articles into private sales, where only bookfellers are admitted, and of them only such as were invited by having a catalogue sent them. At one of these sales I have frequently seen seventy or eighty thousand volumes sold after dinner, including  
 books

books of every description, good, bad, and indifferent ; by this means they were distributed through the trade.

When first invited to these trade sales, I was very much surprised to learn, that it was common for such as purchased remainders, to *destroy* one half or three fourths of such books, and to charge the full publication price, or nearly that, for such as they kept on hand ; and there was a kind of standing order amongst the trade, that in case any one was known to sell articles under the publication price, such a person was to be excluded from trade sales ; so blind were copy-right-holders to their own interest.

For a short time I cautiously complied with this custom ; but I soon began to reflect that many of these books so destroyed, possessed much merit, and only wanted to be better known ; and that if others were not worth six shillings, they were worth three, or two, and so in proportion for higher or lower priced books.

From

From that time I resolved not to destroy any books that were worth saving, but to sell them off at half, or a quarter of the publication prices. By selling them in this cheap manner, I have disposed of many hundred thousand volumes, many thousands of which have been intrinsically worth their original prices. This part of my conduct, however, though evidently highly beneficial to the community, and even to bookfellers, created me many enemies among the trade; some of the meaner part of whom, instead of employing their time and abilities in attending to the increase of their own business, aimed at reducing mine; and by a variety of pitiful insinuations and dark inuendoes, strained every nerve to injure the reputation I had already acquired with the public, determined, (as they *wisely* concluded) thus to effect my ruin; which indeed they daily prognosticated, with a demon-like spirit, must inevitably very speedily follow. This conduct, however, was far from intimidating me, as the effect proved directly opposite to what they wished for and expected,

expected, and I found the respect and confidence of the public continually increasing, which added very considerably to the number of my customers: It being an unquestionable fact, that before I adopted this plan, great numbers of persons were very desirous of possessing some particular books, for which however (from various motives) they were not inclined to pay the original price; as some availed themselves of the opportunity of borrowing from a friend, or from a circulating library, or having once read them, though they held the works in esteem, might deem them too dear to purchase; or they might have a copy by them, which from their own and family's frequent use (or lending to friends) might not be in so good a condition as they could wish, though rather than purchase them again at the full price, they would keep those they had; or again, they might be desirous to purchase them to make presents of; or they might have a commission from a correspondent in the country, or abroad, and wish to gain a  
small

small profit on the articles for their trouble, not to mention the great numbers that would have been given to the poor.

Thousands of others have been effectually prevented from purchasing, (though anxious so to do) whose circumstances in life would not permit them to pay the full price, and thus were totally excluded from the advantage of improving their understandings, and enjoying a rational entertainment. And you may be assured, that it affords me the most pleasing satisfaction, independent of the emoluments which have accrued to me from this plan, when I reflect what prodigious numbers in inferior or *reduced* situations of life, have been essentially benefitted in consequence of being thus enabled to indulge their natural propensity for the acquisition of knowledge, on easy terms: nay, I could almost be vain enough to assert, that I have thereby been highly instrumental in diffusing that general desire for READING, now so prevalent among the inferior orders of society;

ciety ; which most certainly, though it may not prove equally instructive to all, keeps them from employing their time and money, if not to *bad*, at least to *less rational* purposes.

How happy should I have deemed myself in the earlier stage of my life, if I could have met with the opportunity which every one capable of reading may now enjoy, of obtaining books at so easy a rate : Had that been the case, the Catalogue of my *juvenile library*, with which I presented you in a former letter, would have made a more respectable appearance, and I might possibly have been enabled when I purchased Young's Night Thoughts for a *Christmas dinner*, to have at the same time bought a joint of meat, and thus enjoyed both a mental and corporeal feast, as well as pleased my wife. (which I need not inform you the ladies say every good husband ought to do.) But after all, quere, Whether if I had enjoyed such an advantage, should I ever have thought of commencing bookfeller ? If not, should I  
have

have been the *great man* I now feel myself, and hope *you* acknowledge me to be? In my next I will make a few observations on purchasing manuscripts, bookfellers liberality, authors turning publishers, &c. in the mean time,

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XXXVI.

“ High in the world of letters and of wit,  
 “ Enthron’d like Jove behold opinion fit !  
 “ As symbols of her sway, on either hand  
 “ Th’ unfailing urns of praise and censure stand ;  
 “ Their mingled streams her motley servants shed  
 “ On each bold author’s self devoted head.” HAYLEY.

DEAR FRIEND,

**I** Promised in my last to give you a few remarks on purchasing manuscripts ; and as I seldom make such purchases, and but rarely publish any new books, I think you may fairly credit me for impartiality. Nothing is more common than to hear authors complaining against publishers, for want of liberality in purchasing their manuscripts. But I cannot help thinking that most of these complaints are groundless ; and that were all things considered, publishers (at least many of them) would be allowed to possess more liberality than any other set of tradesmen, I mean so far as relates to the purchasing manuscripts and copy-right.

Not



Not to trouble you with a long enumeration of instances in confirmation of this assertion, I shall barely mention the following :

It is owing to the encouragement of book-fellers that the public is possessed of that valuable work Johnson's Dictionary: and the same liberality to the doctor in respect to that publication, his edition of Shakespeare, and the English Poets, will always reflect honour on the parties. So sensible was the doctor of this, that he asserted bookfellers were the best Mæcenas's.

Pope, the late Sir John Hawkins, Dr. Cullen, Hume, Dr. Hill, Dr. Robertson, the present Mr. Gibbon, &c. &c. are all striking instances of the truth of my observation.

As I feel a pleasure in mentioning acts of liberality wherever they occur, suffer me to quote the following passage from Sir John Hawkins's Life of Dr. Johnson :

A a " The

“The booksellers with whom Mr. Chambers had contracted for his dictionary, finding that the work succeeded beyond their expectations, made him a voluntary present of, I think, 500*l.* Other instances of the like generosity have been known of a profession of men, who, in the debates on the question of literary property, have been described as scandalous monopolizers, fattening at the expence of other men’s ingenuity, and growing opulent by oppression.” He also says, that Doctor Hill earned in one year 1500*l.* by his pen.

The late Mr. Elliot, bookfeller, of Edinburgh, gave Mr. Smellie a thousand pounds for his *Philosophy of Natural History*, when only the heads of the chapters was wrote. Hume received only 200*l.* for one part of the *History of Britain*, but for the remainder of that work he had 5000*l.* Dr. Robertson was paid for his *History of Scotland* but 600*l.*, but for his *Charles V.* he received 4500*l.* Dr. Blair obtained the highest price for *Sermons* that ever was given; they were purchased

chafed by Mr. Cadell in the Strand, and Mr. Creech of Edinburgh, and after the first two volumes of these Sermons were published, Dr. Blair was farther rewarded from another quarter with a pension of 200l. a year; Sherlock's Sermons had a very great sale, as had Dr. White's and many others, but none ever sold so well as Dr. Blair's, and the sale of them is still as great as ever.

It is confidently asserted, that the late Dr. Hawkesworth received six thousand pounds for his compilation of Voyages, if so (and I have never heard it contradicted) I leave it to any considerate person to judge, whether in paying so enormous a price, the publishers did not run a great risk, when it is considered how great the expences of bringing forward such a work must have been. I have also been informed, that David Mallet, Esq. was offered two thousand pounds for Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophical Works, which he refused.

A very few years since, Mr. R— was paid sixteen hundred pounds to do a work, which

he died without performing, and the money being spent, it was not recoverable. Before Dr. Rees engaged to revise and improve Chambers's Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, very large sums for that purpose had from time to time been obtained from the proprietors, by persons who never fulfilled their engagements.

It ought also to be considered, that frequently the money which is paid for the copy, is but trifling, compared with the expence of printing, paper, advertising, &c. and hundreds of instances may be adduced of publishers having sustained very great losses, and many have been made bankrupts, through their liberality in purchasing manuscripts and publishing them; and on the other hand, it must be acknowledged that some publishers have made great fortunes by their copy rights, but their number is comparatively small.

I have been told of booksellers who frequently offer as low as half a guinea per volume for novels in manuscript; it is a shocking

shocking price to be sure, but it should be remembered that as there are some of the trade who are mean enough to wish to obtain valuable copy-rights for nothing; so, on the other hand, many novels have been offered to bookfellers; indeed, many have actually been published, that were not worth the expence of paper and printing, so that the copy-right was dear at any price; and it should be remarked, that authors in general are apt to form too great expectations from their productions, many instances of which I could give you, but I will only produce one.

A gentleman a few years since shewed a manuscript to a publisher, which he refused to purchase, but offered to be the publisher if the gentleman would print it, &c. at his own expence, which he readily agreed to do; the publisher then desired to know how many copies should be printed, on which the gentleman began to compute how many families there were in Great Britain, and assured the publisher that every family would at *least* purchase one copy, but the publisher

not being of the same opinion, our author then said that he would print sixty thousand copies *only*, but added, he was afraid that another edition could not be got ready as soon as it would be wanted. However, after a long debate, the publisher prevailed on him to print only *twelve hundred and fifty*, instead of *sixty thousand*, but promised in case another edition should be wanted in haste, to make the printers work night and day, in order not to disappoint the public. This work was soon afterwards published and advertised at a great rate, and for a long time, but to the infinite mortification of our author, not one hundred copies were sold, not even enough indeed to pay for the advertisements. In the preceding instance, I am persuaded the publisher did his best to promote the sale of the work ; but in general where authors keep their own copy-right they do not succeed, and many books have been consigned to oblivion, through the inattention and mismanagement of publishers, as most of them are envious of the success of such works as do not turn to their own account ;

count ; very many juſt complaints are made on this head, ſo that I am fully of opinion that for authors to ſucceed well they ſhould ſell their copy-rights, or be previously well acquainted with the characters of their publiſhers.

Many works may be mentioned that never fold well, whilſt the author retained the copy-right, which fold rapidly after the copy-right was fold to the trade ; and no wonder, for if the publiſher wiſhes to purchaſe the copy-right, he ſometimes will take care to prevent the ſale of it, in order to make the author out of conceit with the book, and be willing to part with the copy-right for a mere trifle ; but this is only true of ſome publiſhers ; I am ſorry that any ſuch ſhould be found, but I am ſure as to the fact.

As I have before obſerved, there are ſome authors who become their own publiſhers, but that mode will ſeldom or never answer, as fifty to one might be fold by being expoſed to view, and recommended in book-

bookellers shops, where ladies and gentlemen are continually calling to purchase some books, and to turn over others, and often by dipping into publications are led to purchase such as they had no intention to buy. But authors should be reminded that there are many who would not go to private houses to look over books when they are not certain to purchase, and where, if they do purchase, they are to take them home in their pockets, or be at the trouble of sending for them, which is not the case when they purchase at a bookseller's shop. And all authors should be sure to give the full allowance to the trade, or their works can never have a great sale, as no bookseller can reasonably be expected to promote the sale of a work in which he is abridged of his usual profits, and the more liberality authors exercise towards the trade, the greater will be their profits in the end. For it is inconceivable what mischief booksellers *can* and often *will* do to authors, as thousands of books are yearly written for to London, that are never sent; and in these cases many plausible reasons



sons are assigned by them for such omissions, As, "The book is too dear, or it is out of print; the author is scarce ever at home; he gives too much trouble; he does not keep his work bound, or sewed; he is gone from his former lodging, and no one knows where to find him; the work is not worth your purchasing; such a one has wrote much better on the subject," &c. &c. and in such cases, what redress can an author have for so essential an injury?

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXVII.

- “ Books, of all earthly things my chief delight ;  
 “ My exercise by day, and dreams by night ;  
 “ Dispassion'd masters, friends without deceit,  
 “ Who flatter not ; companions ever sweet ;  
 “ With whom I'm always cheerful, from whom rise,  
 “ Improv'd and better, if not good and wife ;  
 “ Grave, faithful counsellors, who all excite,  
 “ Instruct and strengthen to behave aright ;  
 “ Admonish us, when fortune makes her Court,  
 “ And when she's absent, solace and support.  
 “ Happy the man to whom ye are well known,  
 “ 'Tis his own fault if ever he's alone.” ANONYMOUS.

DEAR FRIEND,

**A**LTHOUGH the result of the plan which I adopted for reducing the price of books, as mentioned in my last, was a vast increase of purchasers, yet at the same time I found a prodigious accumulation of my expences ; which will not appear strange, when I inform you, that I made proportionably large purchases, such as two hundred copies of one book, three hundred of another, five hundred of a third, a thousand

fand of a fourth, two thousand of a fifth, nay, sometimes I have purchased six thousand copies of one book, and at one time I actually had no less than TEN THOUSAND COPIES of Watts's Psalms, and the same number of his Hymns, in my possession. In addition to these, I purchased very large numbers of many thousand different articles, at trade sales of all sorts, as bankrupt sales, sales of such as had retired from business, others caused by the death of booksellers, sales to reduce large stocks, annual sales, &c. that you may form some idea, I must inform you that at one of the above sales, I have purchased books to the amount of five thousand pounds in one afternoon. Not to mention those purchased of authors, and town and country booksellers, by private contract, &c. to a very considerable amount. My expences were also exceedingly increased by the necessity I was under of keeping each article in a variety of different kinds of bindings, to suit the various tastes of my customers; besides paying my bills for the above, I was always obliged to find ready money to pay

for

for libraries and parcels of second-hand books, which after a while poured in upon me from town and country. So that I often look back with astonishment at my courage (or temerity, if you please) in purchasing, and my wonderful success in taking money sufficient to pay the extensive demands that were perpetually made upon me, as there is not another instance of success so rapid and constant under such circumstances. Some indeed there have been, who for two or three years, purchased away very fast, but could not persevere, as they were unable to sell with equal rapidity: for no one that has not a quick sale can possibly succeed with large numbers. For supposing that a bookseller expends a thousand pounds in the purchase of four articles (I have often done that in only one article) and these are bought at a quarter the usual price, the interest of the money is fifty pounds a year; besides which, some allowance must be made for warehouse-room, insurance from fire, &c. so that granting he might sell a few of each article every year at four times the price he first paid for them,

them, yet if he does not sell enough to pay the interest and other expences of those that remain, he is, after all, on the losing side; which has been the case with the major part of such as have purchased a large number of one book, and I have known many instances of booksellers purchasing articles at a quarter the price, and selling them at the full price, and yet have not had two per cent. for their money.

For several years together I thought I should be obliged to desist from purchasing a large number of any one article; for although by not giving any credit I was enabled to sell very cheap, yet the heavy stock of books in sheets often disheartened me, so that I more than once resolved to leave off purchasing all such articles where the number was very large. But, somehow or other, a torrent of business suddenly poured in upon me on all sides, so that I very soon forgot my resolution of not making large purchases, and now find my account in firmly adhering to that method; and being universally known for  
making

making large purchases, most of the trade in town and country, and also authors of every description, are continually furnishing me with opportunities. In this branch of trade it is next to impossible for me ever to have any formidable rivals, as it requires an uncommon exertion, as well as very uncommon success, and that for many years together, to rise to any great degree of eminence in that particular line. This success must be attained too, without the aid of *novelty*, which I found to be of very great service to me: And should any person begin on my plan and succeed extremely well, he could never supersede me, as I am still enlarging my business every year, and the more it is extended the cheaper I can afford to sell; so that though I may be pursued, I cannot be overtaken, except I should (as some others have done) be so infatuated and blinded by prosperity, as to think that the public would continue their favours, even though the plan of business were reversed. But as the first king of Bohemia kept his country shoes by him, to remind him from whence he was taken,

taken, I have put a motto on the doors of my carriage, constantly to remind me to what I am indebted for my prosperity, viz.

“ SMALL PROFITS DO GREAT THINGS.”

And I assure you, Sir, that reflecting on the means by which I have been enabled to support a carriage, adds not a little to the pleasure of riding in it. I believe I may, without being deemed censorious, assert, that there are some who ride in their carriages, who cannot reflect on the means by which they were acquired with an equal degree of satisfaction.

- “ If splendor charm not, yet avoid the scorn
- “ That treads on lowly stations, think of some
- “ Assiduous booby mounting o'er your head,
- “ And thence with faucy grandeur looking down ;
- “ Think of (reflection's stab!) the pitying friend,
- “ With shoulder shrugg'd, and sorry. Think that time
- “ Has golden minutes, if discreetly seiz'd.
- “ Riches and fame are industry's reward.
- “ The nimble runner courses fortune down,
- “ And then he banquets, for she feeds the bold.”

Dr. Sneyd Davies to F. Cornwallis.

I am, dear Friend, yours.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXVIII.

“ Those who would learning’s glorious kingdom find,  
 “ The dear-bought treasure of the trading mind,  
 “ From many dangers must themselves acquit,  
 “ And more than Scylla and Charybdis meet.  
 “ Oh! what an ocean must be voyaged o’er,  
 “ To gain a prospect of the shining store!  
 “ Resisting rocks oppose th’ enquiring soul,  
 “ And adverse waves retard it as they roll.  
 “ The little knowledge now which man obtains,  
 “ From outward objects and from sense he gains;  
 “ He like a wretched slave must plod and sweat,  
 “ By day must toil, by night that toil repeat;  
 “ And yet, at last, what little fruit he gains,  
 “ A beggar’s harvest glean’d with mighty pains!”

POMFRET.

DEAR FRIEND,

**I**T has been asked, times innumerable, how I acquired any tolerable degree of knowledge, so as to enable me to form any ideas of the merits or demerits of books; or how I became sufficiently acquainted with the prices that books were commonly sold for, so as to be able to buy and sell; particularly books in the learned and foreign languages. Many have thought that



that from the beginning I always kept shopmen to furnish me with instructions necessary to carry on my business; but you and all my old friends and acquaintances well know that not to have been the case; as for the first thirteen years after I became a bookfeller, I never had one shopman who knew any thing of the worth of books, or how to write a single page of catalogue properly, much less to compile the whole. I always wrote them myself, so long as my health would permit: indeed I continued the practice for years after my health was much impaired by too constant an application to that and reading; and when I was at last obliged to give up writing them, I for several catalogues stood by and dictated to others; even to the present time I take some little part in their compilation; and as I ever did, I still continue to fix the price to every book that is sold in my shop, except such articles as are both bought and sold again while I am out of town. I have now many assistants in my shop, who buy, sell, and in short transact the major part of my business.

As to the little knowledge of literature I possess, it was acquired by dint of application. In the beginning I attached myself very closely to the study of divinity and moral philosophy, so that I became tolerably acquainted with all the points controverted between divines; after having read the great champions for christianity, I next read the works of Toulmin, Lord Herbert, Tindal, Chubb, Morgan, Collins, Hammond, Woolston, Annet, Mandeville, Shaftesbury, D'Argens, Bolingbroke, Williams, Helvetius, Voltaire, and many other free-thinkers. I have also read most of our English poets, and the best translations of the Greek and Latin Classics, and also of the Italian and French poets; nor did I omit to read History, Voyages, Travels, Natural History, Biography, &c.

- “ Survey the globe, each ruder realm explore,
- “ From reason's faintest ray to Newton soar;
- “ What different spheres to human bliss assign'd!
- “ What slow gradations in the scale of mind.
- “ Yet mark in each these mystic wonders wrought,
- “ Oh mark the sleepless energies of thought.”

Pleasures of Memory.

At

At one time I had a strong inclination to learn French, but as soon as I was enabled to make out and abridge titlepages, so as to insert them right in my catalogues, I left off for what appeared to me more pleasing as well as more necessary pursuits; reflecting that as I began so late in life, and had probably but a very short period to live, (and I paid some regard to what Helvetius has asserted, viz. that “No man acquires any new ideas after he is forty-five years of age.”) I had no time to bestow on the attainment of languages.

“ ’Tis weak in any man to lavish pains,  
 “ And rife and confound his brains.”

I therefore contented myself with reading all the translations of the classics, and inserted the originals in my Catalogues as well as I could; and when sometimes I happened to put the *Genitive* or *Dative* case instead of the *Nominative* or *Accusative*, my customers kindly considered this as a venial fault, which they readily pardoned, and bought the books notwithstanding.

As I have indefatigably used my best endeavours to acquire knowledge, I never thought I had the smallest reason to be ashamed on account of my deficiency, especially as I never made pretensions to erudition, or affected to possess what I knew I was deficient in. “A bookfeller (says Mr. Paterfon in his *Joineriana*) is in general, a bad judge of every thing—but his stupidity shines most conspicuously in that particular branch of knowledge by which he is to get his bread.” Dr. Young’s couplet, you will therefore think equally applicable to many others as well as myself:

“ Unlearned men of books assume the care,  
 “ As eunuchs are the guardians of the fair.” Love of Fame.

I had like to have forgot to inform you, that I have also read most of our best plays, and am so fond of the Theatre, that in the winter season I have often been at Drury-Lane or Covent-Garden four or five evenings in a week.

“ ——— There cultivate my mind  
 “ With the soft thrillings of the tragic muse,  
 “ Divine Melpomene, sweet pity’s nurse,  
 “ Queen of the stately step, and flowing pall.

“ Nor

“ Nor let Monimia mourn with streaming eyes,  
 “ Her joys incestuous, and polluted love :  
 “ Now let soft Juliet in the gaping tomb  
 “ Print the last kifs on her true Romeo’s lips,  
 “ His lips yet reeking from the deadly draught.  
 “ Or Jaffier kneel for one forgiving look.  
 “ Nor feldom let the Moor on Desdemona  
 “ Pour the misguided threats of jealous rage.  
 “ By soft degrees the manly torrent steals  
 “ From my fwoln eyes, and at a brother’s wo  
 “ My big heart melts in sympathifing tears.  
 “ What are the splendors of the gaudy court,  
 “ Its tinsel trappings, and its pageant pomps?  
 “ To me far happier feems the banifh’d Lord,  
 “ Amid Siberia’s unrejoicing wilds.”      WARTON.

Another great fource of amufement as well as knowledge, I have met with in reading almoft all the beft novels ; by the *beft*, I mean thofe written by Cervantes, Fielding, Smollet, Richardson, Mifs Burney, Voltaire, Marmontel, Sterne, Le Sage, Goldfmith, Mackenzie, Dr. Moor, Green, C. Smith, Gunning, Lee, Reeves, Lennox, Radcliff, and fome others. And I have often thought, with Fielding, that fome of thofe publications have given us a more genuine hiftory of Man, in what are called Romances, than is fometimes to be found under the more re-

spectable titles of History, Biography, &c. I have indeed dipped into every thing as Dr. Armstrong advises.

- “ Toy with your books, and as the various fits
- “ Of humour seize you, from philosophy
- “ To fable shift, from serious Antonine
- “ To Rabelais ravings, and from prose to song,
- “ While reading pleases, but no longer read,
- “ And read aloud refounding Homer's strains,
- “ And wield the thunder of Demosthenes.
- “ The chest so exercised, improves its thoughts,
- “ And quick vibrations thro' the bowels drive
- “ The restless blood, which in unactive days
- “ Would loiter else, through unelastic tubes,
- “ Deem it not trifling, while I recommend
- “ What posture suits; to stand and sit by turns,
- “ As nature prompts, is best, but o'er your leaves
- “ To lean for ever cramps the vital parts,
- “ And robs the fine machinery of its play.”

Art of Preserving Health.

In order to obtain some ideas in Astronomy, Geography, Electricity, Pneumatics, &c. I attended a few lectures given by the late eminent Mr. Ferguson, the present very ingenious Mr. Walker, and others; and for some time several gentlemen spent two or three evenings in a week at my house, for the purpose of improvement in science.

science. At these meetings we made the best use of our time with globes, telescopes, microscopes, electrical machines, air pumps, air guns, *a good bottle of wine*, and *other philosophical instruments*—

The mention of which revives in my memory the loss I sustained by the premature death of a worthy philosophical friend, whom you have met, when you occasionally did us the honor of making one of the evening party, and benefiting us by your instructions. I could say much in his praise, but shall forbear, as another friend, who was also one of this (I may truly say) *rational assembly*, has composed what I think a just character of him, free from that fulsome panegyric which too often degrades those it is meant to celebrate, and conveys to all who knew the parties, the idea of having been designed as a burlesque instead of an encomium; however, as you may not have seen it (though in print) and it will engross but a very little of your time to peruse, I shall here beg leave to insert it.

“ With what surprife pofterity fhall fee

“ A panegyric penn’d without a fee!”

“ On Sunday, May 24, 1789, died at his  
 “ houfe in Worſhip-ftreet, Moorfields, aged  
 “ 50, Mr. Ralph Tinley; one who had not  
 “ dignity of birth or elevated rank in life to  
 “ boaſt of, but who poſſeſſed what is far fu-  
 “ perior to either, a ſolid underſtanding,  
 “ amiable manners, a due ſenſe of religion,  
 “ and an induſtrious diſpoſition. Inſtead of  
 “ riches, Providence bleſſed him with a good  
 “ ſhare of health, and a mind contented with  
 “ an humble ſituation. Thoſe hours which  
 “ he could ſpare from a proper attention to  
 “ the duties of a huſband and a father, and  
 “ manual labour as a ſhoemaker, were inceſ-  
 “ ſantly employed in the improvement of  
 “ his mind in various branches of ſcience;  
 “ in many of which he attained a profici-  
 “ ency, totally diveſted of that affectation of  
 “ ſuperiority which little minds aſſume.  
 “ Theſe qualities rendered him reſpected by  
 “ all who knew him, as an intelligent man,  
 “ and a moſt agreeable companion. Among  
 “ other acquisitions, ENTOMOLOGY was his  
 “ peculiar



“ peculiar delight. Thus far the prospect is  
“ pleasing. It is a painful task to add, that  
“ this amiable person fell a victim to an un-  
“ happy error in taking a medicine. The  
“ evening previous to his decease he spent in  
“ a philosophical society, of which he had  
“ many years been a member, and where  
“ his attendance had been constant; but  
“ finding himself indisposed, he in the  
“ morning early had recourse to a phial of  
“ antimonial wine, which had long been in  
“ his possession, and of which only a small  
“ part remained. This, most unfortunately!  
“ he swallowed; and it having by long ma-  
“ ceration, acquired an extraordinary degree  
“ of strength, and being rendered turbid by  
“ mixing with the metallic particles, it pro-  
“ duced the effect of a violent poison, occa-  
“ sioning almost instantaneous death. May  
“ his fate prove a warning to others, to be  
“ careful how they venture to confide in  
“ their own judgment in so intricate a science  
“ as medicine!—His valuable cabinet of in-  
“ sects, both foreign and domestic, supposed  
“ to be one of the completest (of a private  
“ collection)

“ collection) in the kingdom, all scientific-  
 “ cally arranged with peculiar neatness, and  
 “ in the finest preservation, will (if it falls  
 “ into proper hands,) remain a monument of  
 “ his knowledge and application.”—But to  
 proceed.

My thirst was, and still is so great for literature, that I could almost subscribe to the opinions of Herillus the philosopher, who placed in learning the sovereign good, and maintained that it was alone sufficient to make us wise and happy; others have said that “ Learning is the mother of all virtue, and that vice is produced from ignorance.” although that is not strictly true, yet I cannot help regretting the disadvantages I labor under by having been deprived of the benefits of an early education, as it is a loss that can scarcely be repaired, in any situation. How much more difficult then was it for me to attain any degree of proficiency, when involved in the concerns of a large business?

“ Without a genius learning soars in vain,  
 “ And without learning, genius sinks again;  
 “ Their force united, crowns the sprightly reign.”

}

ELPHINSTON'S Horace.

The

The instructions that I received from men and books were often like the seeds sown among thorns, the cares of the world choaked them :

“ My head was full of household cares,

“ And necessary dull affairs.”      Lord Lyttleton.

So that although I understand a little of many branches of literature, yet my knowledge is, after all, I freely confess, but superficial ; which indeed I need not have told you. As Montaigne said two hundred years ago, I may say now, “ I have a smatch  
“ of every thing, and nothing thoroughly  
“ *a-la-mode de Francoise*. As to my natural  
“ parts, I often find them to bow under the  
“ burden ; my fancy and judgment do but  
“ grope in the dark, staggering, tripping,  
“ and stumbling ; and when I have gone as  
“ far as I can, I am by no means satisfied ;  
“ I see more land still before me, but so  
“ wrapped up in clouds, that my dim sight  
“ cannot distinguish what it is.” However, superficial as it is, it affords me an endless source of pleasure.

“ And

“ And books are still my highest joy,

“ These earliest please, and latest cloy.” SOAME JENYNS.

It has also been of very great use to me in business, as it enabled me to put a value on thousands of articles, before I knew what such books were commonly sold at : 'tis true I was sometimes mistaken, and have sold a very great number of different articles much lower than I ought, even on my own plan of selling very cheap, yet that never gave me the smallest concern ; but if I discovered that I had (as sometimes was the case) sold any articles too dear, it gave me much uneasiness ; for whether I had any other motives I will leave to such as are acquainted with me to determine, but I reasoned thus ; if I sell a book too dear, I perhaps lose that customer and his friends for ever, but if I sell articles considerably under their real value, the purchaser will come again and recommend my shop to his acquaintances, so that from the principles of self-interest I would sell cheap ; I always was inclined to reason in this manner, and nine years since a very trifling circumstance operated much  
upon

upon my mind, and fully convinced me my judgment was right on that head. Mrs. Lackington had bought a piece of linen to make me some shirts; when the linen-draper's man brought it into my shop, three ladies were present, and on seeing the cloth opened, asked Mrs. L. what it cost per yard; on being told the price, they all said it was very cheap, and each lady went and purchased the same quantity, to make shirts for their husbands, those pieces were again displayed to their acquaintances, so that the linen-draper got a deal of custom from that very circumstance; and I resolved to do likewise. However trifling this anecdote may appear, you will pardon me for introducing it, when you reflect that it was productive of very beneficial consequences, and that many greater effects have arisen from as trivial causes. We are even told that Sir Isaac Newton would probably never have studied the system of gravitation had he not been under an apple tree, when some of the fruit loosened from the branches and fell to  
the

the earth; it was the question of a simple gardener concerning a pump, that led Galileo to study and discover the weight of the air. To the tones of a welch harp, are we indebted for the bard of Gray; and Gibbon formed the design of that truly great work, his *History of the Decline of the Roman Empire*, while viewing the ruins of the Capitol.

- “ Lull'd in the countless chambers of the brain,
- “ Our thoughts are link'd by many a hidden chain;
- “ Awake but one, and lo, what myriads rise!
- “ Each stamps its image as the other flies.”

Pleasures of Memory.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XXXIX.

- “ ———Honest Englishmen, who never were abroad,  
 “ Like England only, and its taste applaud.  
 “ Strife still subsists, which yields the better gout;  
 “ Books or the world, the many or the few.  
 “ True taste to me is by this touchstone known,  
 “ That’s always best that’s nearest to my own.”

Man of Taste.

- “ In my Delia all endowments meet;  
 “ All that is just, agreeable, or sweet,  
 “ All that can praise and admiration move;  
 “ All that the wisest and the bravest love,  
 “ Her thoughts are manly, and sense refin’d. POMFRET.

DEAR FRIEND,

**I**T has been long since remarked, that a person may be well acquainted with books, or in other words, may be a very learned man, and yet remain almost totally ignorant of men and manners, as Mallet remarks of a famous divine:

- “ While Bentley, long to wrangling schools confin’d,  
 “ And but by books acquainted with mankind,  
 “ Dares, in the fulness of the pedant’s pride,  
 “ ———— Tho’ no judge decide.”

Verbal Criticism.

Hence

Hence many fine chimerical systems of law, government, &c. have been spun out of the prolific brains of the learned, which have only served to amuse others as learned and as unacquainted with mankind as the authors, and have frequently produced a number of remarks, replies, observations, severe (not to say scurrilous) criticisms, and new systems and hypotheses; these again gave birth to fresh remarks, rejoinders, &c. *ad—(infinitum)*. These learned men, after tiring themselves and the public, have generally left them just as wise on the subject as when they began, nay often

“ From the same hand how various is the page;

“ What civil war their brother pamphlets rage?

“ Tracts battle tracts, self-contradictions glare.” YOUNG.

The reading and studying of History, Voyages, Travels, &c. will no doubt contribute much to that kind of knowledge, but will not alone be sufficient; in order to become a proficient in that useful branch of knowledge. “MAN KNOW THYSELF!” was a precept of the ancient philosophers. But I can scarce think it possible for any man to be



be well acquainted with himself, without his possessing a tolerable degree of knowledge of the rest of mankind. In the former part of my life I saw a deal of what is called *low life*, and became acquainted with the customs, manners, dispositions, prejudices, &c. of the labouring part of the community, in various cities, towns, and villages; for years past, I have spent some of my leisure hours among that class of people who are called opulent or genteel tradesmen; nor have I been totally excluded from higher circles. The middle station of life (says Hume) is the most favourable to the acquiring of wisdom and ability, as well as of virtue, and a man so fortunate has a better chance of attaining a knowledge both of men and things, than those of a more elevated station. He enters with more familiarity into human life; every thing appears in its natural colours before him; he has more leisure to form observations, and has besides the motive of ambition to push him on in his attainments, being certain that he can never rise to any

C c

distinction,

distinction, or eminence to the world, without his own industry.

But among all the schools where the knowledge of mankind is to be acquired, I know of none equal to that of a *bookfeller's shop*. A bookfeller who has any taste in literature, may in some measure be said to feed his mind as cooks and butchers wives get fat by the smell of meat. If the master is of an inquisitive and communicative turn, and is in a considerable line of business, his shop will then be a place of resort for men, women, and children, of various nations, and of more various capacities, dispositions, &c.

Who there but wishes to prolong his stay,  
 And on those cases cast a ling'ring look ;  
 For who to thoughtless ignorance a prey  
 Neglects to hold short dalliance with a book.  
 Reports attract the lawyer's parting eyes,  
 Novels Lord Fopling and Sir Plume require,  
 For songs and plays the voice of beauty cries,  
 And sense and nature Grandison desire.

To adduce a few instances by way of illustration :—Here you may find an old *barrow*  
 inquiring

inquiring for “The Countess of Huntingdon’s Hymn-book;” an old worn-out *rake*, for “Harris’s List of Covent-garden Ladies;” simple *Simon*, for “The Art of writing Love-letters;” and Dolly for a Dream-book; the lady of true taste and delicacy wants Louisa Mathews; and my lady’s *maid*, “Ovid’s Art of Love;” a *doubting* Christian, calls for “The Crumbs of Comfort;” and a practical *Antinomian*, for “Eton’s Honeycomb of Free Justification;” the pious *Church-woman*, for “The Week’s Preparation;” and the *Atheist*, for “Hammond’s Letter to Dr. Priestley; Toulmin’s Eternity of the World, and Hume’s Dialogues on Natural Religion;” the *Mathematician*, for “Sanderfon’s Fluxions;” and the *Beau*, for “The Toilet of Flora;” the *Courtier*, for “Machiavel’s Prince,” or “Burke on the Revolution in France;” and a *Republican*, for “Paine’s Rights of Man;” the tap-room *Politician*, wants “The History of Wat Tyler,” or of “The Fisherman of Naples;” and an old Chelsea *Pensioner*, calls for “The History of the Wars of glorious Queen Anne;” the

*Critic* calls for “ Bayle’s Historical Dictionary—Blair’s Lectures—Johnson’s Lives of the Poets, and the last month’s reviews ;” and my *Barber* wants “ The Sessions Paper,” or “ The Trial of John the Painter :” the *Free-thinker* asks for “ Hume’s Effays,” and the young *Student*, for “ Leland’s View of Deistical Writers ;” the *Fortune-teller* wants “ Sibley’s Translation of Placidus de Titus,” or “ Sanderfon’s Secrets of Palmiftry ;” and the *Sceptic* wants “ Cornelius Agrippa’s Vanity of the Arts and Sciences ;” an *old hardened sinner*, wants “ Bunyan’s Good News for the vilest of Men ;” and a *moral Christian* wants “ The Whole Duty of Man ;” the *Roman Catholic* wants “ The Lives of the Saints ;” the *Protestant* wants “ Fox’s Book of Martyrs ;” one asks for “ An Account of Animal Magnetifm ;” another for “ The Victorious Philofopher’s Stone discovered ;” one wants “ The Death of Abel ;” another defires to have “ The Spanish Rogue ;” one wants an “ Ecclefiaftical History ;” another, “ The Tyburn Chronicle ;” one wants “ Johnson’s Lives of the Highwaymen ;” another

wants

wants “ Gibbons’s Lives of pious Women ;” Miss *W——b* calls for “ Euclid in Greek ;” and a young *divine* for “ Juliet Grenville, a novel ;” and the *philosopher* dips into every thing.

But it would be an endless task to set down the various and opposite articles that are constantly called for in my shop. To talk to these different pursuers after happiness, or amusement, has given me much pleasure, and afforded me some knowledge of mankind, and also of books: and to hear the debates that frequently occur between the different purchasers is a fine amusement; so that I have sometimes compared my shop to a stage. And I assure you that a variety of characters, strongly marked, constantly made their appearance.

“ Ye who push’d on by noble ardour aim  
 “ In social life to gain immortal fame,  
 “ Observe the various passions of mankind,  
 “ Gen’ral, peculiar, single and combin’d,  
 “ How youth from manhood differ in its views,  
 “ And how old age still other paths pursues ;  
 “ How zeal in Priscus nothing more than heats,  
 “ In Codex burns, and ruins all it meets ;

- “ How freedom now a lovely face shall wear,  
 “ Now shock us in the likenefs of a bear,  
 “ How jealousy in ſome reſembles hate,  
 “ In others ſeems but love grown delicate ;  
 “ How modeſty is often pride refin’d,  
 “ And virtue but the canker of the mind ;  
 “ How love of riches, grandeur, life and fame,  
 “ Wear different ſhapes, and yet are ſtill the ſame.”

Essay on Converſation.

Would my health permit my conſtant attendance, I ſhould prefer it, to every thing in life (reading excepted) and you may recollect that for ſome years I fought no other amuſement whatever. It was at a bookſeller’s ſhop at Athens, that Zeno, after his great loſs by ſhipwreck, found conſolation in reading Xenophon : there he ſoon forgot his loſs, where (ſays he to the bookſeller) do theſe fort of men live ; the philoſopher Crates was at the door, whom Zeno followed, and from that hour became his diſciple.

Having been long habituated to make remarks on whatever I ſaw or heard, is another reaſon why I have ſucceeded ſo well in  
my

my business. I have for the last seven years successively told my acquaintances before the year began, how much money I should take in the course of it, without once failing of taking the sum mentioned. I formed my judgment by observing what kind of stock in trade I had in hand, and by considering how that stock was adapted to the different tastes and pursuits of the times; in doing this I was obliged to be pretty well informed of the state of politics in Europe, as I have always found that *bookselling* is much affected by the political state of affairs. For as mankind are in search of amusement, they often embrace the first that offers; so that if there is any thing in the news-papers of consequence, that draws many to the coffee-house, where they chat away the evenings, instead of visiting the shops of booksellers (*as they ought to do, no doubt*) or *reading* at home. The best time for *bookselling*, is when there is no kind of news stirring; then many of those who for months would have done nothing but talk of war or peace, revolutions, and counter-revolutions, &c. &c. for want

of other amusement, will have recourse to books; so that I have often experienced that the report of a war, or the trial of a great man, or indeed any subject that attracts the public attention, has been some hundreds of pounds out of my pocket in a few weeks.

Before I conclude this letter, I cannot help observing, that the sale of books in general has increased prodigiously within the last twenty years. According to the best estimation I have been able to make, I suppose that more than four times the number of books are sold now than were sold twenty years since. The poorer sort of farmers, and even the poor country people in general, who before that period spent their winter evenings in relating stories of witches, ghosts, hobgoblins, &c. now shorten the winter nights by hearing their sons and daughters read tales, romances, &c. and on entering their houses, you may see Tom Jones, Roderick Random, and other entertaining books, stuck up on their bacon racks, &c. If *John* goes to town with a load of hay, he is charged to be sure not



not to forget to bring home “*Peregrine Pickle’s Adventures* ;” and when *Dolly* is sent to market to sell her eggs, she is commissioned to purchase “*The History of Pamela Andrews*.” In short, all ranks and degrees now READ. But the most rapid increase of the sale of books has been since the termination of the late war.

A number of book-clubs are also formed in every part of England, where each member subscribes a certain sum quarterly to purchase books ; in some of these clubs the books after they have been read by all the subscribers, are sold among them to the highest bidders, and the money produced by such sale, is expended in fresh purchases, by which prudent and judicious mode, each member has it in his power to become possessed of the work of any particular author he may judge deserving a superior degree of attention ; and the members at large enjoy the advantage of a continual succession of different publications, instead of being restricted to a repeated perusal of the same authors ; which must have been the

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the case with many, if so rational a plan had not been adopted.

I have been informed, that when circulating libraries were first opened, the booksellers were much alarmed, and their rapid increase added to their fears, and led them to think that the sale of books would be much diminished by such libraries. But experience has proved that the sale of books, so far from being diminished by them, has been greatly promoted, as from those repositories, many thousand families have been cheaply supplied with books, by which the taste for reading has become much more general, and thousands of books are purchased every year, by such as have first borrowed them at those libraries, and after reading, approving of them, become purchasers.

Circulating libraries have also greatly contributed towards the amusement and cultivation of the other sex; by far the greatest part of ladies have now a taste for books.

“ —— Learning, once the man's exclusive pride,  
“ Seems verging fast towards the female side.”

It is true, that I do not, with Miss Mary Wolstonecraft, “ earnestly wish to see the distinction of sex confounded in society,” not even with her exception, “ unless where love animates the behaviour.” And yet I differ widely from those gentlemen, who would prevent the ladies from acquiring a taste for books; and as yet I have never seen any solid reason advanced, why ladies should not polish their understandings, and render themselves fit companions for men of sense. And I have often thought that one great reason, why some gentlemen spend all their leisure hours abroad, is for want of rational companions at home; for if a gentleman happens to marry a fine lady, as justly painted by Miss Wolstonecraft, or the square elbow family drudge, as drawn to the life by the same hand, I must confess that I see no great inducement that he has to desire the company of his wife, as she scarce can be called a rational companion, or one fit to be entrusted with the education of her children; and even

Roussau

Rouffeau is obliged to acknowledge that it “ is a melancholy thing for a father of a family, who is fond of home, to be obliged to be always wrapped up in himself, and to have nobody about him to whom he can impart his sentiments.” Lord Lyttleton advises well in the two following lines :

“ Do you, my fair, endeavour to poffefs

“ An elegance of mind, as well as drefs.”

I cannot help thinking, that the reason why fome of the eastern nations treat the ladies with fuch contempt, and look upon them in fuch a degrading point of view, is owing to their marrying them when mere children both as to age and understanding ; which laft being intirely neglected, they feldom are capable of rational converfation, and of courfe are neglected and defpifed. But this is not the cafe with Englifh ladies ; they now in general read, not only novels, although many of that clafs are excellent productions, and tend to polifh both the heart and head ; but they alfo read the beft books in the Englifh language, and many  
read

read the best works in various languages; and there are some thousands of ladies, which come to my shop, that know as well what books to choofe, and are as well acquainted with works of taste and genius, as any gentlemen in the kingdom, notwithstanding the sneer against novel readers, &c.

- “ The rights of women, says a female pen,  
 “ Are to do every thing as well as men.  
 “ And since the sex at length has been inclin’d  
 “ To cultivate that useful part the mind;  
 “ Since they have learnt to read, to write, to spell;  
 “ Since some of them have writ, and use it well;  
 “ Let us not force them back with brow severe,  
 “ Within the pale of ignorance and fear,  
 “ Confin’d entirely to domestic arts,  
 “ Producing only children, pies and tarts.” NARES.

I am sorry that Dr. Gregory had some reason for giving the following advice to his daughters; “ If you happen, says he, to have any learning, keep it a profound secret, especially from the men, who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts.” My God, what sort of men must these be; and what degrading ideas must they have of women.—

Butler,

Butler, when he wrote this couplet, seems to have been one of that sort.

“ The souls of women are so small,  
 “ That some believe th’ none at all.” REMAINS:

A gentleman of my acquaintance, lately rode fifty miles, for the pleasure of seeing and conversing with a learned woman, but very little known; her name is Elizabeth Ogilvie Beuger; when very young, she wrote a poem, entitled the Female. She understands Latin, Greek, Italian, Spanish and other languages, is well versed in various branches of arts and sciences. She is a tide-waiter’s daughter, in or near Portsmouth; it seems she learned to read and write, by picking up bits of paper in the street, with which she would retire to her garret.

“ Why boast, O arrogant, imperious man,  
 “ Perfections so exclusive! are thy powers  
 “ Nearer approaching to the deity? Canst thou solve  
 “ Questions which high infinity propounds,  
 “ Soar nobler flights, or dare immortal deeds,  
 “ Unknown to woman, if she greatly dare  
 “ To use the pow’rs assign’d her? Active strength,  
 “ The boast of animals, is clearly thine:  
 “ By this uphold, thou think’st the lesson rare

“ That

" That female virtue teach, poor the height  
 " Which female wit obtains. The theme unfolds  
 " It's ample maze, for Montague befriends  
 " The puzzled thought, and blazing in the eye  
 " Of bolden'd opposition strait presents  
 " The soul's best energies, her keenest powers,  
 " Clear, vigorous, and enlightened." Mrs. YEARSLEY.

The *Sunday-Schools* are spreading very fast in most parts of England, which will accelerate the diffusion of knowledge among the lower classes of the community, and in a very few years exceedingly increase the sale of books.—Here permit me earnestly to call on every honest bookseller (I trust my call will not be in vain) as well as on every friend to the extension of knowledge, to unite (as *you* I am confident will) in a hearty AMEN.

Let such as doubt whether the enlightening of the understandings of the lower orders of society, makes them happier, or be of any utility to a state, read the following lines (particularly the last twelve) by Dr. Goldsmith, taken from his Traveller.

“ These

“ These are the charms to barren states assign’d,  
 “ Their wants are few, their wishes all confin’d;  
 “ Yet let them only share the praises due,  
 “ If few their wants, their pleasures are but few;  
 “ Since every want that stimulates the breast,  
 “ Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest.  
 “ Hence from such lands each pleasing science flies,  
 “ That first excites desire, and then supplies.  
 “ Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,  
 “ To fill the languid pause with finer joy;  
 “ Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,  
 “ Catch every nerve, and vibrates thro’ the frame;  
 “ Their level life is but a mould’ring fire,  
 “ Nor quench’d by want, nor fann’d by strong desire;  
 “ Unfit for raptures, or if raptures cheer,  
 “ On some high-festival of once a year,  
 “ In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire,  
 “ ’Till buried in debauch, the bliss expire.

“ But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow,  
 “ Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low:  
 “ For, as refinement stops, from fire to son,  
 “ Unalter’d, unimprov’d their manners run;  
 “ And love’s and friendship’s finely pointed dart  
 “ Fall blunted from each indurated heart;  
 “ Some sterner virtues o’er the mountain’s breast,  
 “ May sit like falcons low’ring on the nest,  
 “ But all the gentler morals, such as play  
 “ Thro’ life’s more cultivated walks, and charm our way;  
 “ These far dispers’d, on tim’rous pinions fly,  
 “ To sport and flutter in the kinder sky.”



It is worth remarking that the introducing histories, romances, stories, poems, &c. into schools, has been a very great means of diffusing a general taste for reading among all ranks of people, while in schools, the children only read the Bible (which was the case in many schools a few years ago) children then did not make so early a progress in reading as they have since, they have been pleased and entertained as well as instructed; and this relish for books, in many will last as long as life.

I am also informed that literature is making a still more rapid progress in Germany, and that there are at this time, seven thousand living authors in that country, and that every body reads.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

## L E T T E R XL.

“ Happy the man that has each fortune try'd,  
 “ To whom she much has given, much deny'd,  
 “ With abstinence all delicacies he fees,  
 “ And can regale himself with toast and cheefe.”

Art of Cookery.

“ One solid dish his week day meals affords,  
 “ And added Pudding consecrates the Lord's.”

“ Your business ne'er defer from day to day,  
 “ Sorrow and poverty attends delay ;  
 “ But lo! the careful man shall always find  
 “ Increase of wealth according to his mind.”

COOKE'S Hesiod.

DEAR FRIEND,

**T**HE Public at large, and bookfellers in particular, have beheld my increasing stock with the utmost astonishment, they being entirely at a loss to conceive by what means I have been enabled to make good all my payments ; and for several years, in the beginning of my business, some of the trade repeatedly asserted, that it was totally impossible that I could continue to pay for the large numbers of books that I continually

continually purchased; and ten years since, being induced to take a journey into my own country, with a view to the restoration of my health, which had been materially injured by intense application to catalogue-making, too much reading, &c. during the six weeks that I retired into the west, Mrs. Lackington was perpetually interrogated respecting the time that I was expected to return. This was done in such a manner as evidently shewed that many thought I never intended to return at all. But how great was their surprize, when as a prelude to my return, I sent home several waggon loads of books which I had purchased in the country.

As I never had any part of the *miser* in my composition, I always proportioned my expences according to my profits; that is, I have for many years expended two thirds of the profits of my trade; which proportion of expenditure I never exceeded.

“ Things to the owners minds, their merit square,

“ Good if well used; if ill, they evils are.”

If you will please to refer to Dr. Johnson's "Idler" for "the progress of Ned Drugget," you will see much of the progress of your humble servant depicted. Like Ned, in the beginning I opened and shut my own shop, and welcomed a friend by a shake of the hand. About a year after, I beckoned across the way for *a pot of good porter*. A few years after that, I sometimes invited my friends to dinner, and provided them a roasted *fillet of veal*; in a progressive course the *ham* was introduced, and a *pudding* was the next addition made to the feast. For some time a glass of *brandy and water* was a luxury; a glass of Mr. Beaufoy's *raisin wine* succeeded; and as soon as *two thirds* of my profits enabled me to afford good *red port*, it immediately appeared: nor was *sherry* long behind.

" Wine whets the wit, improves its native force,  
 " And gives a pleasing flavour to discourse,  
 " By making all our spirits debonair,  
 " Throws off the fears, the sediments of care."

" As April when ploughing the furrows,  
 " Drives winter away to the pole;  
 " Old port, by dispelling life's sorrows,  
 " Relaxes the frost of the soul."

It was some years before I discovered that a lodging in the country was very healthy. Gay's lines were then repeated,

“ Long in the noisy town I've been immur'd,  
“ Respir'd in smoke, and all its cares endur'd.”

The year after my country *lodging* by regular gradation was transformed into a country *house*; and in another year, the inconveniences attending a *stage coach* were remedied by a *chariot*.

“ My precious rib has ventured to declare,  
“ 'Tis vulgar on one's legs to take the air.”

Comforts of Marriage.

For four years, *Upper Holloway* was to me an *elysium*; then *Surry* appeared unquestionably the most beautiful county in England, and *Upper Merton* the most rural village in *Surry*. So now *Merton* is selected as the seat of occasional philosophical retirement.

“ Here on a single plank thrown safe ashore,  
“ I hear the tumult of the distant throng,  
“ As that of seas remote or dying storms.  
“ Here like a shepherd gazing from his hut,  
“ Touching his reed, or leaning on his staff,  
“ Eager ambition's fiery chace I see;  
“ I see the circling hunt of noisy men,  
“ Burst law's inclosure, leap the mounds of right,  
“ Pursuing and pursu'd, each other's prey.”

YOUNG.

But

But I assure you, my dear friend, that in every step of my progress, envy and malevolence has pursued me close.

When by the advice of that eminent physician, Dr. Lettsom, I purchased a horse, and saved my life by the exercise it afforded me, the old adage, “*Set a beggar on horse-back and he'll ride to the Devil,*” was deemed fully verified; but when Mrs. Lackington mounted another, “they were very sorry to see people so young in business run on at so great a rate!” The occasional relaxation which we enjoyed in the country was censured as an abominable piece of pride; but when the *carriage* and *servants* in *livery* appeared, “they would not be the first to hurt a foolish tradesman’s character; but if (as was but too probable) the *docket* was not already struck, the *gazette* would soon settle that point.”

“Base Envy withers at another’s joy,

“And hates that excellence it cannot reach.” THOMPSON.

“It is no less a proof (says Dr. Johnson) of eminence to have many enemies, than many friends.”

But I have been lately informed that these *good natured* and *compassionate* people have for some time found it necessary to alter their story.

- “ No more shall want thy weary hand constrain,
- “ Henceforth good days and plenty shall betide ;
- “ The gods will for the good old age provide ;
- “ A glorious change attends thy low estate ;
- “ Sudden and mighty riches round thee wait ;
- “ Be wise, and use the lucky hour of fate. ROWE’S *Lucan*.

It seems that at last they have discovered the secret springs from whence I drew my wealth ; however, they do not quite agree in their accounts, for although some can tell you the very *number* of my fortunate lottery ticket, others are as positive that I found bank-notes in an old book, to the amount of many thousand pounds, and if they please, can even tell you the title of the very fortunate old book that contained this treasure. But you shall receive it from me, which you will deem authority to the full as unexceptionable, I assure you then upon my honour, that I found the whole of what I am possessed of, in—SMALL PROFITS, *bound* by INDUSTRY, and *clasped* by OECONOMY.

- “ Gilt toils for gain at honour’s vast expence,  
 “ Heaven throws the trifle into innocence,  
 “ And fixes happiness in hell’s despite,  
 “ The necessary consequence of right.”

Earl Nugent to Lord Cornbury.

Read this, ye covetous wretches, in all trades, who when you get a good customer are for making the most of him ! But if you have neither honour nor honesty, you should at least possess a little *common sense*. Reflect on the many customers that your over-charges have already driven from your shops ! do you think that you can find customers enough so deficient in penetration as not to discover your characters ? no such thing. Your exorbitant charges are a general subject of conversation and dislike : you cannot with confidence look your own customers in the face, as you are conscious of your meanness and imposition, and your sordid disposition is evidently the reason, that some gentlemen are led to look with contempt and disdain on tradesmen. But when men in trade are men of honour, they will in general be treated as such ; and were it otherwise,

“ One



- “ One self-approving hour whole years outweighs,  
 “ Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas :  
 “ And more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels,  
 “ Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.”

POPE.

“ Self esteem is one of the first ingredients of man's happiness,” and I pity from my soul many poor wretches which I observe bartering away their constitutions, and what few liberal sentiments they may possess; rising early and sitting up late, exerting all the powers of the body and mind, to get what they call a competency, no matter by what means this is effected.

- “ Silver to gold, we own, should yield the prize ;  
 “ And gold to virtue ; louder folly cries.  
 “ Ye sons of care, let money first be fought ;  
 “ Virtue is only worth a second thought.  
 “ My friends get money ; get a large estate,  
 “ By honest means ; but get at any rate.  
 “ This maxim echoes still from street to street,  
 “ While young and old the pleasing strains repeat.

FRANCIS'S HORACE.

Thousands actually destroy themselves in accomplishing their grand design : others, live to obtain the long-wished for country retreat. But, alas ! the promised happiness

is

is as far from them as ever, often farther. The busy bustling scene of business being over, a vacuity in the mind takes place, spleen and vapours succeed, which encrease bodily infirmities, death stares them in the face. The mean dirty ways by which much of their wealth has been obtained make retrospect reflections intolerable. Philosophy stands aloof, nor ever deigns to visit the sordid soul. Gardens and pleasure grounds become dreary deserts; the miserable possessors linger out a wretched existence, or put a period to it with a halter or pistol.

“ Sated, loathing, hopeless here of bliss,

“ Some plunge to seek it into death’s abyss.” Lord Nugent.

“ Were this not common would it not be strange?

“ That ’tis so common, this is stranger still.”

I cannot omit to quote the following fine lines from Mr. Soame Jenyns, as they naturally occur to my recollection.

“ Useless in business, yet unfit for ease,

“ Nor skill’d to mend mankind, nor form’d to please.

“ The mind not taught to think, no useful store

“ To fix reflection, dreads the vacant hour;

“ Turn’d in itself, its numerous faults are seen,

“ And all the mighty void that lies within.

“ ’Tis conscious virtue crowns the blest retreat.”

SOAME JENYNS.

“ Solitude (says Cowley) can be well fitted and set aright, but upon very few persons. They have knowledge enough of the world to see the follies of it ; and virtue enough to despise all vanity.”

The profits of my business the present year 1791, will amount to FOUR THOUSAND POUNDS \*. What it will increase to I know not ; but if my health will permit me to carry it on a few years longer, there is very great probability, considering the rapid increase which each succeeding year has produced, that the profits will be double what they now are ; for I here pledge my reputation as a tradesman, never to deviate from my old plan of giving as much for libraries as it is possible for a tradesman to give, and selling them and *new* publications also, for the same SMALL PROFITS that have been attended with such astonishing success for some years past. And I hope that my assistants will also persevere in that attentive obliging mode of

\* Since this was wrote, my business is enlarged, in 1792, my profits were about 5000l.

conduct which has so long distinguished No. 46 and 47, Chiswell-street, Moorfields; conscious, that should I ever be weak enough to adopt an opposite line of conduct, or permit those who act under my direction so to do, I should no longer meet with the very extraordinary encouragement and support which I have hitherto experienced; neither should I have the smallest claim to a continuance of it under such circumstances.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XLI.

“ But by your revenue measure your expence,  
 “ And to your funds and acres join your sense.”

YOUNG'S Love of Fame.

“ Learn what thou ow'st thy country and thy friend,  
 “ What's requisite to spare, and what to spend.”

DRYDEN'S Persius,

DEAR FRIEND,

THE open manner of stating my profits will no doubt appear strange to many who are not acquainted with my singular conduct in that and other respects. But you, Sir, know that I have for fourteen years past kept a strict account of my profits. Every book in my possession, before it is offered to sale is marked with a private mark, what it cost me, and with a public mark of what it is to be sold for; and every article, whether the price is six-pence or sixty pounds, is entered in a day-book as it is sold, with the price it cost and the money it sold for: and each night the profits of the day are cast up by one of my shopmen, as every one of them

them understand my private marks. Every Saturday night the profits of the week are added together and mentioned before all my shopmen, &c. the week's profits, and also the expences of the week are then entered one opposite the other, in a book kept for the purpose; the whole sum taken in the week is also set down, and the sum that has been paid for books bought. These accounts are kept publicly in my shop, and ever have been so, as I never saw any reason for concealing them, nor was ever jealous of any of my men's profiting by my example and taking away any of my business, as I always found that such of them as did set up for themselves came to my shop, and purchased to the amount of ten times more than they hindered me from selling. By keeping an account of my profits, and also of my expences, I have always known how to regulate the latter by the former. "To live above our station, shews a proud heart; and to live under it, discovers a narrow soul." Horace says,

“ A part

- “ A part I will enjoy as well as keep,  
 “ My heir may sigh and think it want of grace;  
 “ But sure no statute in his favour says,  
 “ How free or frugal I shall pass my days.  
 “ I get and sometimes spend, and at others spare,  
 “ Divided between carelessness and care.”

And I have done that, without the trifling way of setting down a halfpenny-worth of matches, or a penny for a turnpike. I have one person in the shop whose constant employment it is to receive all the cash, and discharge all bills that are brought for payment, and if Mrs. Lackington wants money for house-keeping, &c. or if I want money for *hobby-horses*, &c. we take five or ten guineas, pocket it, and set down the sum taken out of trade as expended; when that is gone we repeat our application, but never take the trouble of setting down the *items*. But such of my servants as are entrusted to lay out money are always obliged to give in their accounts, to shew how each sum has been expended.

“ Bless'd who with order their affairs dispose,

“ But rude confusion is the source of woes.”

COOKE'S HESIOD.

It

It may not be improper here to take a little notice of some very late insinuations of my old envious *friends*. It has been suggested that I am now grown *immensely rich*, and that having already more property than I can reasonably expect to live to expend, and no young family to provide for, I for these reasons ought to decline my business, and no longer engross trade to myself that ought to be divided into a number of channels, and thus support many families. In answer to which I will observe, that some of these objectors were in trade before me, and when I first embarked in the profession of a bookseller, despised me for my mean beginning. When afterwards I adopted my plan of selling cheap, and for ready-money only, they made themselves very merry at my expence, for expecting to succeed by so *ridiculous* a project, (as they in their consummate wisdom were pleased to term it) and predestined my ruin, so that no doubt I ought to comply with any thing they desire, however unreasonable it may appear to me.



To deny that I have a competence, would be unpardonable ingratitude to the public, to go no higher :

“ 'Tis one thing madly to despise my store :  
 “ Another not to heed to treasure more ;  
 “ Glad like a boy to snatch the first good day,  
 “ And pleas'd if fordid want be far away.  
 “ What is't to me (a passenger God wot)  
 “ Whether the vessel be first rate or no.  
 “ The ship itself may make a better figure,  
 “ But I that sail, neither less nor bigger ;  
 “ I neither strut with ev'ry fav'ring breath,  
 “ Nor strive with all the tempest in my teeth ;  
 “ In power, wit, figure, virtue, fortune, plac'd,  
 “ Behind the foremost, and before the last.  
 “ Divided between carelessness and care,  
 “ Sometimes I spend, at other times I spare.”

FORTESSQUE.

But to insinuate that I am getting money for no good purpose, is false and invidious\*.

\* When I wrote my life in 1791, I had no partner. In the summer of 1793, I sold Mr. Robert Allen one fourth share of the profits of my trade. This young gentleman was brought up in my shop, and of course is well acquainted with my method of doing business ; and having been a witness to the profitable effects resulting from small profits, is as much in love with that mode of transacting business as I am, and as the trade is continually increasing, I suppose I shall be obliged to take another quarter partner very soon, as I cannot bear to see even trifles neglected.

The great apostle St. Paul, who was an humble follower of CHRIST, thought he might be permitted to boast of himself a little.

“ If a man (says Selden) does not take notice of that excellency and perfection that is in himself, how can he be thankful to God who is the author of it. Nay, if a man hath too mean an opinion of himself, it will render him unserviceable both to God and man. He adds, pride may be allowed to this or that degree, else a man cannot keep up to his dignity.” Montaigne says, “ that to speak more of one’s self than is really true, is not only presumption but folly ; and for a man to speak less of himself than he really is, is folly, not modesty ; and to take that for current pay, which is under a man’s value, is cowardice and pusillanimity.” Aristotle says, “ no virtue assists itself with falshood, and that truth is never subject matter of error.” “ False modesty (says Bruyere) is the most cunning sort of vanity ; by this a man never appears what he is.” After which, I suppose  
it

it will not be thought very presumptuous in me, if I should state a few facts, merely to justify my conduct in carrying on my trade beyond the time that certain persons would prescribe to me.

It is now about five years since I began to entertain serious thoughts of going out of business, on account of the bad state of health which both Mrs. Lackington and myself have laboured under; and having no desire to be rich, we adopted Swift's prayer.

“ Preserve almighty providence!

“ Just what you gave me, competence,

“ Remov'd from all th' ambitious scene,

“ Nor puff'd by pride, nor sunk by spleen.”

But it was then suggested by several of my friends, that as I had about fifty poor relations, a great number of whom are children, others are old and nearly helpless, and that many had justly formed some expectations from me: therefore to give up such a trade as I was in possession of, before I was absolutely obliged to do it, would be a kind of *injustice* to those whom by the ties of blood I

was in some measure bound to relieve and protect.

“ Twice five and twenty cousins have implor’d,  
 “ That help, his purse, they cry, can well afford.”

Comforts of Marriage.

These and other considerations induced me to wave the thoughts of precipitating myself out of so extensive and lucrative a business; and in the mean time I apply a part of the profits of it to maintain my good old mother, who is alive at Wellington in Somersetshire, her native place. I have two aged men and one woman, whom I support: and I have also four children to maintain and educate, three of these children have lost their father, and also their mother (who was my sister) the other child has both her parents living, but they are poor; many others of my relations are in the same circumstances, and stand in need of my assistance, so that ———

“ If e'er I've mourn'd my humble, lowly state,  
 “ If e'er I've bow'd my knee at fortune's shrine,  
 “ If e'er a wish escap'd me to be great,  
 “ The fervent prayer, humanity, was thine.

“ Perish

- “ Perish the man who hears the piteous tale  
 “ Unmov’d, to whom the heart-felt glow’s unknown ;  
 “ On whom the widow’s plaints could ne’er prevail,  
 “ Nor made the injur’d wretches cause his own.  
 “ How little knows he the extatic joy,  
 “ The thrilling blifs of cheering wan despair !  
 “ How little knows the pleasing warm employ,  
 “ That calls the grateful tribute of a tear.  
 “ The splendid dome, the vaulted rock to rear,  
 “ The glare of pride and pomp, be, grandeur, thine !  
 “ To wipe from misery’s eye the wailing tear,  
 “ And soothe the oppressed orphans woe, be mine.”

It has also been frequently said, that by selling my books very cheap, I have materially injured other bookfellers both in town and country. But I still deny the charge : and here I will first observe, that I have as just a reason to complain of them for giving credit, as they can have for my selling cheap and giving *no* credit ; as it is well known that there are many thousands of people every where to be found who will decline purchasing at a shop where credit is denied, when they can find shopkeepers enough who will readily give it ; and as I frequently lose customers who having always been accustomed to have credit, they will not take the

trouble to pay for every article as sent home ; these of course deal at those shops who follow the old mode of business ; so that in such cases, I might say to the proprietors of these shops, ‘ You ought not to give any person ‘ credit : because by so doing you are taking ‘ customers from me.’ As to my *hurting the trade* by selling *cheap*, they are, upon the whole, mistaken ; for although no doubt some instances will occur, in which they may observe that the preference is given to *my* shop, and the books purchased of me on account of their being cheap ; but they never consider how many books they dispose of on the very same account. As, however, this may appear rather paradoxical, I will explain my meaning farther :

I now sell more than one hundred thousand volumes annually ; many who purchase part of these, do so solely on account of their cheapness ; many thousands of these books would have been destroyed, as I have before remarked, but for my selling them on those very moderate terms ; now when thousands  
of

of these articles are sold, they become known by being handed about in various circles of acquaintances, many of whom wishing to be possessed of the same books without enquiring the price of their friends, step into the first bookfeller's shop, and give their orders for articles which they never would have heard of, had not I, by selling them cheap, been the original cause of their being dispersed abroad; so that by means of the plan pursued in my shop, whole editions of books are sold off, and new editions printed of the works of authors, who but for that circumstance would have been scarce noticed at all.

But (say they) you not only sell such books cheap, as are but little known, but you even sell a great deal under price the very first rate articles however well they may be known, or however highly they may be thought of by the literary world. I acknowledge the charge, and again repeat that as I do not give any credit, I really ought to do so, and I may add, that in some measure I am obliged to do it; for who

would come out of their way to Chifwellstreet to pay me the same price in ready money, as they might purchase for at the first shop they came to, and have credit also.

And although first rate authors are very well known, yet I well know that by selling them cheaper than others, many are purchased of me that never would have been purchased at the full price, and every book that is sold tends to spread the fame of the author, and rapidly extends the sale, and as I before remarked, sends more customers to other shops as well as to my own.

I must also inform you, that besides five or six private catalogues of books in sheets, for bookfellers only, I publish two catalogues for the public every year, and of each of those public catalogues, I print above three thousand copies, most of those copies are lent about from one to another, so that supposing only four persons see each copy, twenty four thousand persons look over my catalogues



logues annually ; no other mode of advertising bears the least proportion to it.

I could say much more on this subject, but will not unnecessarily take up your time, as I trust what is here advanced will convey full conviction to your mind, and as I believe it is universally known and allowed, that no man ever promoted the sale of books in an equal degree, with your old friend, and as in reading I have experienced many thousand happy hours, and which still engrosses the largest portion of my time, and gives me more real pleasure and solid satisfaction than all other things in the world ; you cannot conceive what agreeable sensations I enjoy, on reflecting on my having contributed so much towards the pleasures of others, in diffusing through the world, such an immense number of books, by which many have been enlightened and taught to think, and from meer animals have become rational beings. With a book the poor man in his intervals from labour forgets his hard lot, or learns to bear it with pleasure, whilst in intellectual pleasures

pleasures he can vie with kings. Books afford comfort to the afflicted, and consolation to the prisoner; books are our most constant and most faithful companions and friends, of which we never are cloyed.

“ What heartfelt blifs! what pleasure-winged hours,  
 “ Transported are we to Rome’s letter’d sons;  
 “ We by their favour Tyber’s banks enjoy,  
 “ The temples trace, and share their noble games ;  
 “ Enter the crowded theatre at will ;  
 “ March to the forum, hear the consul plead,  
 “ Are present in the thundering Capitol,  
 “ When Tully speaks ; at softer hours attend  
 “ Harmonious Virgil to his Mantuan farm,  
 “ Or Baia’s shore : how often drink his strains,  
 “ Rural, or epic sweet ! how often rove  
 “ With Horace, bard and moralist benign,  
 “ With happy Horace rove, in fragrant paths  
 “ Of myrtle bowers, by Tifoli’s cascade.  
 “ Hail, precious pages ! that amuse and teach,  
 “ Exalt the genius, and improve the breast ;  
 “ But chiefly thou, supreme philosophy,  
 “ Shed thy best influence ; with thy train appear  
 “ Of graces mild,—————

“ Tutor of human life! auspicious guide  
 “ Whose faithful clue unravels ev’ry maze,  
 “ Whose skill can disengage the tangled thorn,  
 “ And smoothe the rock to down! whose magic powers  
 “ Controul each storm, and bid the roar be still.

DR. S. DAVIES.

I am, dear Friend, yours.

## L E T T E R XLII.

“ —This is a traveller, Sir ; knows men and manners ;  
 “ and has plough’d up sea so far, ’till both the poles have  
 “ knock’d ; has seen the sun take coach, and can distin-  
 “ guish the colour of his horses, and their kinds, and had  
 “ a Flanders mare leap’d there.”

BEAUMONT and FLETCHER’S Scornful Lady.

DEAR FRIEND,

AMONGST the variety of occurrences with which I have endeavoured to entertain you, perhaps not all equally interesting (and the most material of them, I am duly sensible, not entitling me to the claim of being esteemed a writer possessed of the very first abilities this age or nation has produced,) I recollect my not yet having given you an account of my principal TRAVELS. Possibly you might very readily pardon that omission, as from what has already appeared it must be evident, the engagements which from time to time have fully engrossed my attention, have not furnished me with

with an opportunity of making the tour of Europe, or tracing the source of the river Nile, much less circumnavigating the globe. And even supposing I had been possessed both of the time and inclination for such extensive undertakings, the disadvantages which I labour under for want of having received a proper education, would have disqualified me from making such remarks and observations as naturally present themselves to those who have been fortunate enough to possess that advantage, and of course are qualified to present the world with a variety of subjects equally curious and instructive: though it is not without reluctance I think it necessary here to observe, that some of these gentlemen, not content with giving a true account of what actually occurred to them, and supposing that plain matter of fact would not be sufficiently interesting to excite that superior degree of attention and admiration which they were ambitious as authors to acquire, they have thought proper to intermix so much of the *marvellous* into their narrations, as has been the occasion of many persons reading

reading them with such diffidence, as to doubt the truth of many relations, which though really strictly consistent with veracity, yet being novel and uncommon, they were unwilling to credit, lest they should incur the censure of being possessed of a superior degree of weakness and credulity. This I am also confident has induced many a modest author to omit passages, which though really true, he was cautious of publishing, from a fear of being subjected to the same severe animadversions, or what is still worse, being suspected of wilfully imposing on his readers. Recent instances of which, were it necessary, I could adduce; but I shall proceed with cautioning you from being alarmed lest I should fall into either of these errors; nothing *very marvellous* will occur in what I mean to present you with; though I shall not be intimidated from relating *real facts*, from the apprehension of not being credited. As an additional recommendation, (no doubt) the history of my travels will be interspersed with such remarks on *men* and *manners* as have presented themselves to me during

during my peregrination; and this I previously warn you, will be done in my “accustomed defultory manner,” from which, as Mr. *Pennant* says in his *History of London*, “I am too old to depart,” that is, as Dr. *Johnson* might possibly have explained it, “Sir, you are then too old to MEND.” But you, my dear friend, are not so fastidious a critic: although you may find the whole very *dull*, it shall not be very *long*; so that if it does not act as a cordial to enliven your spirits, it may (if read in the evening) prove a powerful *narcotic*, and afford you some pleasing dreams, when

“Tir’d nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep,  
“His ready visit pays.”

I shall therefore not trouble you with a detail of bad roads, the impositions of innkeepers, what food I partook of, how many bottles of wine were drank, the height of steeples, &c. a sufficiency of this, I trust, has already appeared in different writers. Thus much by way of preparation for my journies. I now set out.

In

In *September*, Seventeen hundred and eighty-seven, I set off for Edinburgh ; and in all the principal towns through which I passed, was led from a motive of curiosity, as well as with a view towards obtaining some valuable purchases, to examine the bookfellers shops for scarce and valuable books ; but although I went by the way of York, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, &c. and returned through Glasgow, Carlisle, Leeds, Lancaster, Preston, Manchester, and other considerable places, I was much surpris'd, as well as disapointed, at meeting with very few of the works of the most esteemed authors ; and those few consisted in general of ordinary editions, besides an assemblage of common trifling books, bound in sheep, and that too in a very bad manner. It is true, at York and Leeds there were a few (and but very few) good books ; but in all the other towns between London and Edinburgh nothing but trash was to be found : in the latter city indeed, a few capital articles are kept, but in no other part of Scotland.

In Seventeen hundred and ninety, I repeated my journey, and was much mortified to be under a necessity of confirming my former observations. This remarkable deficiency in the article of books, is however not peculiar to the northern parts of England; as I have repeatedly travelled into the western parts, and found abundant cause for dissatisfaction on the same account, so that I may venture without fear of contradiction to assert, that London, as in all other articles of commerce, is likewise the grand emporium of Great Britain for books, engrossing nearly the whole of what is valuable in that very extensive, beneficial, and I may add lucrative branch of trade. As to Ireland, I shall only observe, that if the booksellers in that part of the empire do not shine in the possession of valuable books, they must certainly be allowed to possess superior industry in reprinting the works of every English author of merit, as soon as published, and *very liberally* endeavouring to disseminate them, in a surreptitious manner through every part of our island, though the attempts

now



now generally proves abortive, to the great loss and injury of the ingenious projectors.

At Newcastle, I passed a day or two in the year 1787, where I was much delighted with viewing a singular phenomenon in natural history, namely, the celebrated *crows nest* affixed above the weather-cock, on the upper extremity of the exchange, in the market-place. In the year 1783, as I was well informed, the crows first built this curious nest, and succeeded in hatching and rearing their young. In the following year they attempted to rebuild it: but a contest ensuing among some of the sable fraternity, after a fierce engagement they were obliged to relinquish it, and the nest was demolished by the victorious party before it was finished. This bad success, however, did not deter the original builders and possessors from returning in the year 1785, when they took quiet possession of their freehold, rebuilt the premises, and reared another family. This they repeated the three following years with equal success, and when I was there in the year

1790, much of the nest remained, but the crows had forsaken it. The above occurrence, though to many it may appear incredible, is an undoubted fact. That *crows* should come into the center of a populous town to build their nests, is of itself remarkable, but much more so, that they should prefer a weathercock to any other situation, where the whole family, and their habitation turned round with every puff of wind, though they were perfectly secured from falling, by the spike of iron which rose above the vane, around which the whole made their revolutions; and as on one side the nest was higher than on the other, that part being always to windward, by this ingenious contrivance of the feathered architects, the inside of the nest was continually kept in a proper degree of warmth. I never recollect these various circumstances, without being lost in admiration at the extraordinary sagacity of these birds. While I am on birds, I will relate another odd circumstance that happened not far from Moorfields: In the summer of 1781, in a burial-ground near Peerless-Pool, there

there was one corner where human bones were piled up, and in one of the skulls a blackbird made her nest, and hatched five young ones, three or four of which being cocks, were kept by the neighbours, and turn out fine fingers.

In Newcastle however, I met with a greater curiosity, as well as a more amiable subject of it than a crows nest to excite my astonishment.

In my first journey, Mr. *Fisher* the book-feller introduced me to his daughter, a charming young lady, who being unfortunately born deaf, was consequently dumb, till a gentleman a few years since taught her to understand what was said to her by the motion of the lips. I had the pleasure of conversing with her several times, and found that she had much of the Scotch accent, which as Mr. Fisher informed me, she acquired of the gentlemen who taught her not only to understand the conversation of others but to *speak*, he being a native of that country, he remarked also, that she never had

spoken the Newcastle dialect. This young lady, I was also informed, dances exceedingly well, keeping exact time with the music, whether it is played slow or quick. When it is considered what an intense application must have been used, both on the part of the teacher and his fair pupil, to produce such a happy effect, it surely reflects great credit on each of the parties.

In the year 1790, when I again visited Newcastle with Mrs. Lackington, this young lady became the first object of inquiry, and we were both introduced to her.

I have lately been informed of a lady now in London, who although she is deaf, takes great *delight in music*, and when asked how she is affected by it, she answers that she feels it at her *breast* and at *the bottom of her feet*.

Being on the subject of *Curiosities*, and having just related the pleasure I experienced on account of a lady acquiring the use of speech, permit me now to present you with  
another

another *rarity* indeed!—somewhat connected with the former, no doubt, but intended as an effectual remedy (temporary, at least) for an opposite complaint of the same organs, viz. too great a *volubility of speech*, with which (as it is said) many females are so infected, as sometimes to lead them to exceed the bounds of due moderation and female decorum, and even display itself in the utterance of such harsh (though frequently inarticulate) terms as tend too much to disgrace the unhappy patient, and violently affect the auditory nerves of all persons within a considerable distance.—To quit metaphor.

At the town-hall I was shewn a piece of antiquity called a *brank*. It consists of a combination of iron fillets, and is fastened to the head by a lock fixed to the back part of it; a thin plate of iron goes into the mouth, sufficiently strong however, to confine the tongue, and thus prevent the wearer from making any use of that restless member. The use of this piece of machinery is to punish notorious *scolds*. I am pleased to find

that it is now considered merely as a matter of curiosity, the females of that town happily having not the smallest occasion for the application of so harsh an instrument: whether it is that all females, apprehensive of being included in *that* description, have travelled southward, to avoid the danger of so degrading an exhibition, or whatever other reason is assigned, I forgot to enquire. It however affords me pleasure to reflect, that the ladies of Newcastle are left at liberty to adopt a head-dress of their own choosing, confident that they possess a more refined taste than to fix upon one by no means calculated to display their lovely countenances to advantage, as I am persuaded the *brank* would cast such a gloom on the fairest of them, as would tend much to diminish the influence of their charms, and give pain to every beholder. It may be prudent, notwithstanding, still to preserve it *in terrorem*, as who knows what future times may produce? As I esteem it a very ingenious contrivance, and as there may be parts of the country still to be found, where the application of such a machine may  
be

be useful in some christian families (I will not say in *all*, having sufficient grounds for asserting the contrary) I here present you with an accurate sketch of it,



together with the manner of its application : that if any ingenious artist should be applied to, he may not be at a loss how it is to be made. I would, however, advise such a one to be cautious in offering them to public sale, and by no means to advertise them (especially if a married man, or having any views towards matrimony).

I am, dear Friend,

Yours,

## L E T T E R    X L I I I .

“ O, land of cakes! how oft my eyes

“ Desire to see thy mountains rise;

“ How Fancy loves thy steep to climb,

“ So wild, so solemn, so sublime.”

“ All the stage-coaches that travel so fast,

“ Must get now and then an unfortunate cast.”

DEAR FRIEND,

I N my first journey to Scotland I sometimes travelled post, but often entered the different stage-coaches, &c. for a stage or two, when I happened to see any setting out so as to suit my time and inclination: but at last I had pretty nearly paid dear for it, as the driver of the diligence from Darlington to Durham happened to be much inebriated, and before his quitting Darlington had almost overset us; not observing the man was drunk, we attributed the fault to the horses, we were however very speedily undeceived in that respect by many concurrent circumstances, so that we were one minute nearly in the ditch

on



on the right hand, and the next but just escaping that on the left; at other times we experienced *striking proofs* of the inability of our conductor against the number of one-horse *coal carts*, not to mention their frequently running foul of us for being on the wrong side of the road; (for drivers of coaches and carts can be to the full as savage towards each other in the country, as in London): however, notwithstanding all these “hair breadth escapes,” we retained our seats, till we arrived within three quarters of a mile of Durham, when at length the specific gravity of the driver’s head preponderating over all the other parts of his frame united, precipitated him with violence from the elevated station he had, till then (though with difficulty) possessed to his parent earth. There were three unfortunate passengers in the carriage, left to the discretion of the horses, viz. a gentleman, an innkeeper’s wife, and your humble servant: the lady in strict compliance with the practice of her sex in similar situations, on seeing the rapid descent of our charioteer, immediately honoured us with a  
loud

loud and shrill shriek; the *quadrupeds*, not accustomed to this pretty female note so much as the sonorous voice of a coachman, mistook for a signal to mend their pace, and they, habituated to pay all due obedience to the commands of their superiors of the biped creation, when understood by them, and finding no check, instantly proceeded to a full gallop; and we, however reluctantly, followed them down a gentle descent, not at a *gentle* rate, but with prodigious velocity. As I was quite calm and collected, I coolly reconnoitred the road before us, and observing that it was perfectly clear, as for half a mile not a coal-cart was to be seen, although we had lately passed several score, I began to reason with my companions, and they speedily became calm enough to assist in holding a council what was best to be done in our critical situation. Our debates were quickly ended, as we were unanimous in opinion that if we once entered the city of Durham, the carriage must inevitably be torn to pieces, owing to the variety of turnings and obstructions we should have to encounter, we therefore

fore entered into an immediate resolution, *nem. con.* that to open the doors, and exhibit our agility by leaping out, was, of “two evils, choosing the least:” this we instantly did, in as careful a manner as possible; we first alighted on our feet, and next complimented the ground with our noses, without receiving much injury. Our female companion indeed, by being rather too precipitate, alighted in a manner which on any other occasion would not have appeared strictly decent, of which she, poor lady! was so sensible, that she immediately “hoped *as how* we were both *married* gentlemen;” which was quickly replied to by both in the affirmative; and thus we saved our fair one the trouble of exerting herself in another scream, and ourselves the punishment of hearing it.

Being no longer parties concerned in the danger, it afforded us some entertainment to observe the progress of our vehicle now considerably lightened by our escape from it, and becoming every moment still lighter by the  
exclusion

exclusion of small trunks, boxes, parcels, great coats, &c. they, in imitation of our example making leaps, some from the inside of the carriage, and others from the boot; whether occasioned by the *repulsion* of the carriage and its appendages, or the *attraction* of the earth, I am not sufficiently versed in philosophy to decide. Posterity when they peruse my labours, no doubt will determine this *weighty* point, and transmit it to the remotest period of time, properly dignified by *F. R. S.* in *Phil. Transf.*

The horses finding themselves less incumbered, and urged on by the noise of the doors continually flapping, increased their speed: happily however the carriage was stopped before it entered the city, and no damage was sustained either by the horses or the carriage. Before we left the inn, our careful *son of the whip* arrived, not in the least injured, but rather benefited by his disaster, being suddenly transformed into a state of perfect sobriety; after him followed two countrymen laden with the several articles which  
had

had been so violently ejected. As I reflected that this unguarded man might not always be equally successful, either to himself or his passengers, as in the present instance, I obtained a promise from the innkeeper never to permit him to drive any carriage in future, in the management of which he had any concern. But I have since learned that the innkeeper did not keep his word, as he soon permitted him to drive the same diligence, and a few months after, being drunk as usual, he fell from the box, and was killed on the spot.

It is astonishing what a number of fatal accidents continually happen from carelessness and the want of sobriety in this thoughtless race of beings. I was informed that only two days previous to my arrival at Durham, a coachman quitting his box to step into an adjacent house, in his absence the horses began to move gently, and a lady in the carriage giving a loud scream, the noise occasioned the horses to set off full gallop, in consequence of which a lady of Durham,  
happening

happening unfortunately at that instant to be crossing the way, was thrown down, and the wheels passing over her, she died on the spot. —One of the many melancholy effects resulting from the ridiculous practice of screaming. But I crave pardon of the ladies; when I begin passing censure on them, it is high time to close my epistle (which if not very long will perhaps be deemed sufficiently impertinent) with,

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XLIV.

- “ O that the too censorious world would learn  
 “ This wholesome rule, and with each other bear !  
 “ But man, as if a foe to his own species,  
 “ Takes pleasure to report his neighbour’s faults,  
 “ Judging with rigour ev’ry small offence,  
 “ And prides *himself* in scandal.”

HAYWOOD’S D. of Brunswick.

- “ A nation fam’d for song, and beauty’s charms ;  
 “ Zealous, yet modest, innocent, though free :  
 “ Patient of toil ; sincere amidst alarms ;  
 “ Inflexible in faith : invincible in arms.”

BEATTIE’S Minstrel.

DEAR FRIEND,

**I**T is reported of a very eminent author, that he never blotted a line of what he had once written : on which it has been remarked, that it was a pity he had not blotted a thousand. Now though my extreme modesty will not permit me to put myself on a level with that great man as an author, whatever the impartial world may think of our comparative merits, I must confess I do not like to blot what I have once

once

once written, fearful lest when I begin, (another proof of my modesty,) I should deface the major part of my manuscripts, and thus deprive the public of the great advantages which may result from them. What I allude to, is an unfortunate slip of the pen in my last ; however, as “ confession of a fault makes some amends,” and I immediately checked myself, craved pardon, abruptly closed my letter, and threw the offending pen from me with some degree of anger, I hope those lovely fair ones, who might think I meant to affront them, will with their accustomed benignity forgive, and indulge me with a smile on my future labours ; and as a convincing proof how sensible I am of their kind condescension, I here engage never more to express my dislike of their *screaming*, except they should omit purchasing books of me, which I am sure every candid fair (and what fair one is not candid ?) will think sufficiently provoking.

But in order to remind them that every great man does not always conduct himself  
with



with equal politeness towards the Ladies, I beg permission to introduce a very great man to them: no less a personage than Doctor JOHNSON. Of whom indeed so much hath already been sung and said, that the subject may be supposed to be nearly exhausted; which is, however, so far from being the case, that notwithstanding two quarto volumes of his life by Mr. Boswell are just published, we are taught to expect another life by a different hand. Indeed until some other great man makes his exit (myself out of the question) we are likely to be entertained with fresh anecdotes of him; but when that period once arrives, then farewell *Johnson!*

The Doctor, whose extreme fondness for that agreeable beverage *tea*, is well known, was once in company with a number of ladies, assembled to partake with him of the same refreshment. The lady of the house happened to be one of those particularly attentive to punctilio, and had exhibited her finest set of china for the entertainment of

her guests; the Doctor, who drank large quantities, and with considerable expedition, could not always wait with becoming patience ceremoniously to ask for and receive in due form the addition of a lump of sugar when necessary; he therefore without permission put his finger and thumb into the sugar-dish, tumbling the contents over, till he met with a piece of the proper size; the lady kept her eye fixed on him the whole time, and deeming his conduct a great breach of decorum, resolved to make him sensible of it, by immediately ordering the servant to change the sugar-dish. The Doctor, tho' apparently attentive only to his tea, noticed it, and as soon as he had emptied the cup, put it together with the saucer under the fire-place, with due care, however, not to break them. This was too severe a trial for the poor lady, who, apprehensive for the fate of her dear china, after a decent scream, with warmth demanded the reason of his treating her in so rude a manner. "Why, my dear madam, (replied he) I was alarmed with the idea that whatever I touched

“ touched was thereby contaminated, and  
 “ impressed with anxious desire to contri-  
 “ bute towards your felicity, I removed the  
 “ object so defiled from your presence with  
 “ all possible expedition.” This reply, tho’  
 it extorted a smile from all the company  
 present, did not satisfy the lady to whom it  
 was addressed, who notwithstanding she ex-  
 erted herself to appear in good humour, was  
 too much offended to forget the affront.—  
 This anecdote has been related to me with  
 some *addenda* which heighten the story,  
 though more to the disadvantage of the  
 Doctor; but I believe as here related, it  
 may be depended on as the real fact.

During my continuance in Scotland,  
 which was about three weeks the first time,  
 and about a month the last, I often reflected  
 with pain on the illiberal, not to say brutal  
 treatment the inhabitants received from the  
 Doctor. At Edinburgh I heard various anec-  
 dotes related of him, which were perfectly  
 novel to me, and in all probability will be  
 so to you. I shall therefore give you a  
 specimen:

Being one day at a gentleman's house in Edinburgh, several ladies and gentlemen came in to pay their respects to him; and among others the then Lord Provost went up to the Doctor, bowing repeatedly, and expressing the highest respect for him, to all which the Doctor paid not the least attention. Exceedingly hurt at so flagrant a mark of disrespect, he turned round, and put a shilling into the hand of the gentleman of the house: On being asked what the shilling was intended for, he replied, "Have not I seen your *bear*?"

As the Doctor was one day drinking tea at another gentleman's house, the lady asked him if he did not choose another cup: It seems she had forgot her having before asked him the same question; and on her repeating it he replied, "Woman, have I not already told you that I had done?" On which the lady answered him in his own gruff manner. During his continuance in her house she always talked to him without ceremony, and it was remarked that she had more influence

influence with him than any other person in Scotland.

I was much pleased with the politeness of the gentleman who related me this story of the Doctor, as he appeared anxious to excuse him for his want of due decorum, and thus to palliate a most obvious blemish in the character of one of the most eminent of my countrymen. I could wish the compilers of the biographical department of that truly great and useful work, the "*Encyclopaedia Britannica*" would observe the same politeness and impartiality. And I hope that this hint will also induce them in some subsequent edition, when I am gone to

"That Bourne from whence no traveller returns."

to do justice to my *great and astonishing merits*, by way of compensation for having fallen short in speaking of other *great men*; and should I happen to be *out of print* by the time the editors of the *Biographia Britannica* arrive at letter *L.* which seems extremely probable, according to the very deliberate pro-

gress of that work, I hope they will not flightly pass *me* over. If they should, let them take the consequence: as I here give them fair and timely notice, and they have not to plead as an excuse, the want of materials.

I will give you one anecdote more of the great Doctor, because it relates to a Scotchman very eminent in the literary world. I had it from Mr. Samuel, who was one of the party.

Dr. Johnson being one afternoon at the house of Mr. Samuel's uncle (whose name I have forgot) who lived in one of the streets that leads from the Strand to the Thames, a number of gentlemen being present, they agreed to cross the water and make a little excursion on the other side; in stepping into the boat one of the company said, Mr. Hume, give me your hand. As soon as they were seated, our Doctor asked Mr. Samuel if that was Hume the Deist. Mr. Samuel replied, that it was the great Mr. Hume, the deep

deep metaphysician and famous historian. Had I known that (said the Doctor) I would not have put a foot in the boat with him. In the evening they had all agreed to sup together at a house near St. Clement's Church in the Strand, and Doctor Johnson coming in after the rest of the company had sometime been met, he walked up to Mr. Hume, and taking him by the hand, said, Mr. Hume, I am very glad to see you, and seemed well pleased to find him there, and it appeared to Mr. Samuel that the Doctor had thus chose to atone for his hasty expression before related.

As I do not recollect any thing being recorded respecting the Doctor's *pugilistri* abilities (excepting his knocking down Osborn the bookfeiler, be considered as such) I shall beg leave to relate another anecdote which I received from the gentleman who favoured me with the preceding one.

Dr. Johnson being at the water side when some ladies had just quitted a boat and were

endeavouring to fettle the fare with the waterman; this son of the Thames, like too many of his brethren, insisted on much more than his due, accompanying his demand in the usual stile of eloquence, with abusive language, the Doctor kindly interfering, furnished the ladies with the opportunity of retreating, and transferred the whole abuse to himself, who finding that argument had made no impression on the waterman, tried what he could effect by the strength of his arm, and gave the refractory fellow a hearty drubbing, which had the desired effect.

One word more concerning our great Lexicographer. It must be allowed by every candid and impartial person, that the extreme contempt and prejudice he entertained towards our friends of *North* Britain reflected a very strong shade on his character, which his warmest admirers cannot justify.

Were I, as a South Briton, called upon to give my fair and unprejudiced opinion respecting



speaking national character of the natives of Scotland and those of England, and I flatter myself I have had ample opportunities of observing the peculiar traits of both countries, I would say, that if we in England excel them in some virtues, they no less shine in others, and if the North-Britons possess some peculiar frailties and prejudices, we of the South are not intirely free from ours; so that were the virtues and vices of a certain number of each country placed in an hydrostatical balance (it must however be a pretty large one,) I believe it very difficult to prognosticate which of the two would preponderate. It is true, I have met with one very great villain in Scotland, in Mr. S. which only tends to prove there are probably *scoundrels* to be found every where, and that without taking the trouble which Diogenes did, in search of an *honest man*; and I am much afraid, were I to enquire of some North Britons, they could without any great difficulty point out to me some of my own countrymen as bad.

I detest

I detest all national prejudices, as I think it betrays great weakness in the parties who are influenced by them. Every nation of the habitable globe, nay each particular province of those countries has certainly some peculiar traits belonging to it which distinguishes it from its neighbours. But if we are disposed to view one another with the severity of criticism, how easy, nay how frequent it is to discover superior virtues (as we think) as well as abilities in that particular spot which gave birth to ourselves, and equally divested of that strict impartiality which alone can enable us to judge properly, discover proportionable blemishes in the natives of other countries.

“ But travellers who want the *will*  
 “ To mark the shapes of good and ill,  
 “ With vacant stare thro’ Europe range,  
 “ And deem all bad, because ’tis strange,  
 “ Thro’ varying modes of life, we trace  
 “ The finer traite, the latent grace,  
 “ Quite free from spleen’s incumb’ring load,  
 “ At little evils on the road;  
 “ So while the path of life I tread,  
 “ A path to me with briars spread;

“ Let

- “ Let me its tangled mazes spy,  
“ Like you, with gay, good humour eye,  
“ And be my spirit light as air,  
“ Call life a jest, and laugh at care.”

In saying thus much, I do not mean to infer, that we ought not to be inspired with a laudable ambition to excel, not those of other countries only, but even those with whom we are more intimately connected: but that should be done without drawing invidious comparisons of the merits or demerits of others. In short, let it be the earnest endeavour of each country, and every individual of that country in particular, united under our amiable monarch, to strive which shall have a superior claim to the title of being GOOD MEN, useful members of society, friends to the whole human race, and peaceable subjects of a government, which though not absolutely in a state of *perfection*—(and can that man be really deemed *wise* who expects to meet with perfection in any human establishment?) is still happily superior to every other in the known world.

But

But to return to Edinburgh. The old town, so called, has not much to boast of; but the new town is by far the most compleat and elegant I ever saw. In various towns of England and Scotland, I have indeed seen some good streets, and many good houses, but in this the whole is uniformly fine; not one house, much less a whole street that can be termed indifferent in the whole town.

And here let me do justice to North-British hospitality, and their very polite attention to such Englishmen who happen to travel to the "land of cakes." I can truly say, that the polite and friendly behaviour of the inhabitants towards Mrs. Lackington and myself, claims our warmest gratitude and sincerest thanks. This the more civilized part of my countrymen will readily believe; and as to those of another description (happily but a comparatively small number, I trust) are welcome to treat my assertion with that contempt usually attendant on prejudice, which is the result of ignorance.

The

The subject I now mean to enter into being a delicate one, permit me here to close my letter ; thus affording you a short respite, and myself a little time for consideration on the propriety of submitting my ideas (as you seem determined all those I send you shall be) to public notice.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XLV.

“ Set *woman* in his eye, and in his walk,  
 “ Among daughters of men the fairest found,  
 “ Many are in each region passing fair  
 “ As the noon sky, more like to goddesses  
 “ Than mortal creatures; graceful and discreet,  
 “ Expert in amorous arts, enchanting tongues:  
 “ Persuasive, virgin majesty, with mild  
 “ And sweet allay’d, yet terrible to approach;  
 “ Skill’d to retire, and in retiring draw  
 “ Hearts after them, tangl’d in amorous nets;  
 “ Such objects have the power to soften and tame  
 “ Severest temper, smooth the rugged’st brow,  
 “ Enerve and with voluptuous hope dissolve;  
 “ Draw out with credulous desire,  
 “ At will, the manliest resoluteest breast.”

DEAR FRIEND,

**I**N my last I expressed some diffidence respecting the propriety of committing to paper my thoughts on a particular subject; I have since weighed it with due caution, and the consideration of my having during the long course of my epistolary correspondence always declared my sentiments freely on every subject, soon determined me

not

not to degrade myself by shrinking back, now it is so near drawing to a conclusion.

The subject then is—that bright lovely part of the creation, WOMAN!—the source of all our joys, the assuagers of all our griefs; deprived of whose powerful and attractive charms, man would be a wretch indeed. But alas! the utmost efforts of my abilities are far inadequate to do justice to their merits; happily that pleasing theme has engaged the attention of the ablest and worthiest of men, from the remotest period down to the present time; and I trust ever will, nay must, so long as a spark of virtue remains in the human breast.

“ Weak tho’ her frame, not hers to yield  
 “ To steel, to fire, to dart, or shield;  
 “ Vain are th’ embattled warrior’s arms—  
 “ No proof ’gainst beauty’s heav’nly charms;  
 “ Beauty! whose smiles, with soft controul,  
 “ At once—can pierce him to the soul.”

FAWKES’S ANACREON.

And when I reflect, that

“ They are not only FAIR, but JUST as fair.”

I have nought to fear,

I there-

I therefore proceed with cheerfulness to say, that in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Sterling, &c. there are more really fine women to be found than in any place I ever visited. I do not mean to say that we have not as many handsome women in England; but the idea I wish to convey is, that we have not so many in proportion: that is, Go to any public place where a number of ladies are assembled, in either of the above towns, and then go to any place in England where an equal number are met, and you will notice a greater number of fine women among the former, than among the latter. It must be obvious that in making this declaration, I allude to the genteeler part; for among the lower classes of women in Scotland, by being more exposed to the inclemency of the weather, the majority are very homely, and the want of the advantages of apparel, (which those in a higher sphere can avail themselves of, and know how to apply) together with their fluttish and negligent appearance, does not tend in the least to heighten their charms.

Having



Having both read and heard much related of the manner of washing their linen, which I must confess I could not credit without having ocular demonstration, during my continuance at Glasgow, curiosity led me to the mead by the river side. For the poor women here instead of the water coming to them, as in London, are obliged to travel loaded with their linen to the water; where you may daily see great numbers washing, in *their* way; which if seen by some of our London prudes, would incline them to form very unjust and uncharitable ideas of the modesty of these Scottish lasses. Many of them give a trifle to be accommodated with the use of a large wash-house near the water, where about a hundred may be furnished with every convenience for their purpose. But by far the greatest part make fires, and heat the water in the open air, and as they finish their linen, they spread it on the grass to dry; which is the universal mode of drying throughout Scotland. Here the

“ Maidens bleach their summer smocks.”

H h

I had

I had walked to and fro several times, and began to conclude that the custom of getting into the tubs and treading on the linen, either never had been practised, or was come into difufe ; but I had not waited more than half an hour, when many of them jumped into the tubs, without shoes or stockings, with their shift and petticoats drawn up far above the knees, and stamped away with great compofure in their countenances, and with all their ftrength, no Scotchman taking the leaft notice, or even looking towards them, conftant habit having rendered the fcene perfectly familiar.

On converfing with fome gentlemen of Glasgow on this curious fubject, they affured me that thefe fingular laundreffes (as they appeared to me) were ftremely modeft women, who only did what others of unblemifhed reputation had been accuftomed to for a long feries of years ; and added, that at any other time a purfe of gold would not tempt them to draw the curtain fo high. By way of contrast, let me obferve that many of our  
London

London servant-*maids*, though not always so nice in other respects, would not be seen thus habited *in public* on any terms, lest their precious characters should be called in question. A striking instance of the powerful influence of habit! Pomfret says,

“ Custom’s the world’s great idol we adore,  
 “ And knowing that we seek to know no more.”

Most of the female servants in Edinburgh, Glasgow, &c. do all their work, and run about the town the fore part of the day without stays, shoes or stockings; and on Sundays I saw the country-women going towards Kirk, in the same manner (stays excepted;) however, they do not go into kirk, till they have dressed their legs and feet; for that purpose they seat themselves on the grass, somewhere near, put on their shoes and stockings, and garter up very deliberately,

“ Nor heed the passenger who looks that way.”

Most of these poor young country-women go without any caps or hats; they have in general fine heads of hair, many plait it,

others let it hang loose down their backs ; and I assure you, my friend, they look very agreeable.

I returned each time through Buxton, where staying, a week or two, I visited Castleton, and spent several hours in exploring that stupendous cavern, called The Devil's A— in the Peake. I also surveyed Poole's Hole, near Buxton, and purchased a great variety of petrifications. In our way home I saw the great marble manufactory at Aston, in the water, spent some days at Matlock, the most romantic village that I ever saw, but the sight of it cost me dear ; as we were conveyed there in an old crazy post-chaise, in which I caught a violent cold, the lining being very damp.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours,

LETTER

## L E T T E R XLVI.

“ Good seen expected, evil unforeseen,  
 “ Appear by turns as fortune shifts the scene :  
 “ Some rais’d aloft come tumbling down amain,  
 “ Then fall so hard, they bound and rise again.”

DRYDEN’S *Virgil*

“ New turns and changes every day  
 “ Are of inconstant chance the constant arts ;  
 “ Soon fortune gives, soon takes away,  
 “ She comes, embraces, nauseates you, and parts.  
 “ But if she stays or if she goes,  
 “ The wise man little joy or little sorrow knows ;  
 “ For over all there hangs a doubtful fate,  
 “ And few there be that’re always fortunate.  
 “ One gains by what another is bereft :  
 “ The frugal destinies have only left  
 “ A common bank of happiness below,  
 “ Maintain’d, like nature, by an ebb and flow.”

How’s *Indian Emp.*

DEAR FRIEND,

I Did not intend to trouble  
 you or the public with an account of any  
 more of my *wonderful travels*, but being now  
 at Lyme, for want of other amusements this  
 rainy morning, I thought that a short ac-

count of this journey might afford you some entertainment.

My state of health being but indifferent, and Mrs. Lackington's still worse, I was induced to try what effect a journey would produce ;

“ When med'cine fails, amusement should be sought,  
 “ Though but to sooth the miseries of thought.”

It being immaterial what part I travelled to ; and as I had not for a long time seen my native place, and perhaps might not be furnished with another opportunity, we resolved to visit it.

“ And many a year elaps'd, return to view  
 “ Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,  
 “ Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,  
 “ Swells at my breast—————  
 “ I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,  
 “ Amidst the swains to shew my book-learn'd skill.  
 “ Yes, let the rich deride, with proud disdain  
 “ The simple blessings of the lowly train,  
 “ To me more dear, congenial to my heart,  
 “ One native charm, than all the gloss of art ;  
 “ Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,  
 “ The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway :  
 “ Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,  
 “ Unenvy'd, unmolested, unconfin'd.”

GOLDSMITH.

Accordingly in July laſt, 1791, we ſet out from Merton, which I now make my chief reſidence, taking Bath, Briſtol, &c. in our way to my native place Wellington.

In Briſtol, Exbridge, Bridgewater, Taunton, Wellington, and other places, I amused myſelf in calling on ſome of my maſters, with whom I had about twenty years before worked as a journeyman ſhoemaker. I addreſſed each with, “ *Pray Sir, have you got any occaſion?* ” which is the term made uſe of by journeymen in that uſeful occupation, when ſeeking employment. Moſt of thoſe honeſt men had quite forgot my perſon, as many of them had not ſeen me ſince I worked for them: ſo that it is not eaſy for you to conceive with what ſurprize and aſtoniſhment they gazed on me. For you muſt know that I had the vanity (I call it humour) to do this in my chariot, attended by my ſervants; and on telling them who I was, all appeared to be very happy to ſee me.

“ Things, at every step, to claim a tear,  
 “ Some little friendship form’d and cherish’d here.”

And I assure you, my friend, it afforded me much real pleasure to see so many of my old acquaintances alive and well, and tolerable happy. The following lines often occurred to my mind :

“ Far from the madding crowds ignoble strife,  
 “ Their sober wishes never learn’d to stray :  
 “ Along the cool sequester’d vale of life  
 “ They keep the noiseless tenor of their way.”

At Taunton and Wellington it seemed to be the unanimous determination of all the poorer sort, that I should by no means be deficient in *old acquaintance*.

“ Faithful mem’ry wakes each past delight,  
 “ Each youthful transport bursting on the sight,  
 “ Equal in years when frolic sports display,  
 “ And Phœbus gladdens with a brighter ray.”

GREEN’S Apollonius Rhodius.

Some poor souls declared that they had known me for *fifty* years (that is, years before I was born ;) others had danced me in their arms a thousand times ; nay, better still, some knew my grandmother ; but, best of all,



one old man claimed acquaintance with me, for having seen me many times on the top of a six-and-twenty round ladder, balanced on the chin of a merry andrew! The old man was however egregiously mistaken, as I never was so precariously exalted, my ambition, as you well know, taking a very different turn. But that was of no consequence: all the old fellow wanted was *a shilling*—and I gave it him. No matter (as Sterne says) from what motive. I never examine into these things. This I observed, that none of them were common beggars, but poor useful labouring people, (giving to common strollers is but encouraging idleness and every other vice) and as *Small matters made many happy*, I was supremely so, to be the means of contributing to their comfort. And indeed who would hesitate at being the means of diffusing happiness on such easy terms, and with so little trouble?

“ His faithful kin, though forty times remov'd,  
 “ Will let him hear how tenderly he's lov'd;  
 “ Silence when he harangues will ne'er be broke,  
 “ But ev'ry tongue repeat his poorest joke.”

The bells rang merrily all the day of my arrival. I was also honoured with the attention of many of the most respectable people in and near Wellington and other parts : Some of whom were pleased to inform me, that the reason of their paying a particular attention to me was their having heard, and now having themselves an opportunity of observing, that I did not so far forget myself, as many proud upstarts had done ; that the notice I took of my poor relations and old acquaintance merited the respect and approbation of every real gentleman.

“ By dear experience every day we find,  
 “ That riches commonly degrade the mind,  
 “ That he, who train’d through wants instructive school,  
 “ Had prov’d a man of sense, becomes a fool,  
 “ As dirt on all beneath himself looks down,  
 “ Nor feels for any sorrow but his own.”

ROBERTSON’S Miscellanies.

They were also pleased to express a wish, that as soon as I could dispose of my business, I would come down and spend the remainder of my days among them. Those ideas were pleasing to me, and perhaps may be realized ; I wish it may be soon.

“ There

“ There could I trifle carelessly away,  
“ The milder evening of life’s clouded day,  
“ From business, and the world’s intrusion free,  
“ With books, with love, with friendship and with thee,  
“ No farther want, no wish yet unpossess’d,  
“ Could e’er disturb my unambitious breast.”

This reception was the more pleasing, as I have sometimes observed a contrary conduct practis’d by some, who have been pleas’d to stile themselves gentlemen, and on that score think that they have a right to treat men of business (however respectable they may be) as by much their inferiors ; and it too often happens that one of those petty gentry who possesses but a hundred or two per annum, will behave in a haughty manner to a man in business who spends as many thousands ; but such should be told, that a real gentleman in any company will never either by word or action, attempt to make the meanest person feel his inferiority, but on the contrary.

They should be inform’d also how highly impolitic and unjust it is to attempt to fix a stigma on trade and commerce, the very  
things

things that have caused England to rise so high in the political scale of Europe.

“ ————— Mighty commerce hail !  
 “ By thee the sons of Attic’s sterile land,  
 “ A scanty number, laws imposed on Greece,  
 “ Nor aw’d they Greece alone ; vast Asia’s king,  
 “ Tho’ girt by rich arm’d myriads at their frown,  
 “ Felt his heart wisher on his farthest throne,  
 “ Perennial source of population thou !  
 “ While scanty peasants plough the flow’ry plains,  
 “ What swarms of useful citizens spring up,  
 “ Hatch’d by thy fostering wing.”

Grainger’s Sugar-cane.

’Tis true that even in England you may see great numbers of very opulent tradesmen who have not had an idea but what they have acquired behind the counter ; but you may also find many thousands of the same class of life who are possessed of very liberal ideas, and who would not commit an action that would disgrace a title.

“ In England (says Thicknesse) one may trust the honour of a respectable tradesman ; in France and Flanders I never experienced a single instance of it.” (He adds) “ and an English merchant, who has resided many  
 years

years at Marfeilles, affured me that there was not a merchant in that great city, who would not only over-reach him if he could, but would boast alfo all over the town of having fo done." And I think that we may eafily account for this very great difference, in the national characters of merchants and tradefmen. On the continent, merchants and tradefmen are looked upon, in a degrading point of view, merely for being of that clafs, nor would the moft honourable or refpectable behaviour ever raife them in the ideas or eftimation of the nobles or gentry, who are taught to treat them with neglect, and even contempt. Thus being deprived of that great motive to noble or liberal actions, the love of honour, rank, the notice of the great, &c. &c. their minds become depressed and degraded; whilst in England the merchants and refpectable tradefmen, being held in higher eftimation, and often admitted to the company, converfation, and honours of higher claffes, the fordid mind by degrees imbibes more liberal fentiments, and the rough manners receive a degree of polifh.

For

For my part, I will endeavour to adhere to the advice given by Perſius as it is tranſlated :

“ Study thyſelf what rank, or what degree

“ The wife Creator has ordain'd for thee :

“ And all the offices of that ſtate

“ Perform; and with thy prudence guide thy fate.”

William Jones, Eſq. of Foxdowne, near Wellington, informed me of a remarkable *prognofication* in my favour; he told me that when I was a boy, about twelve years of age, Mr. Paul, then a very conſiderable wholeſale linen-draper, in Friday-ſtreet, London, (I believe ſtill living) paſſing by my father's houſe one day, ſtopped at the door and aſked various queſtions about ſome guinea-pigs which I had in a box. My answers it ſeems pleaſed and ſurprized him, and turning towards Mr. Jones, ſaid, “ *Depend upon it, ſir, that boy will one day riſe far above the ſituation that his preſent mean circumſtances ſeem to promiſe.*” So who knows what a great man I may yet be?—perhaps

“ A double pica in the book of fame.”

Give

Give me leave to introduce another prediction, though not altogether so pleasing as that just related. An Italian gentleman, and if we may judge by appearance, a person of rank, was some years since looking at some books of *palmistry* in my shop, and at the same time endeavoured to convince me of the reality of that science. In the midst of his discourse, he suddenly seized my right-hand, and looking for some time with great attention on the various lines, he informed me that I had twice been in danger of losing my life, once by water, and once by a wound in my head; he was certainly right, but I believe by chance, as I have many other times been in very great danger. He added, that I had much of the goddess *Venus* in me, but much more of *Mars*; and assured me that I should go to the wars, and arrive at great honour. He likewise informed me, that I should die by *fire-arms pointed over a wall*.—How far the former part of this gentleman's prediction may be relied on, I will not pretend to decide, but the last part of it was lately very near coming to such a decision

decision as would have proved the fallibility of that part of his prognostication, though even in that case he might have pleaded his being pretty near the matter of fact, only substituting *gunpowder* instead of *fire-arms*, and I should not have had it in my power to contend the point with him. I will endeavour to render this intelligible: On Tuesday the fifth of July, 1791, I very nearly escaped being blown up with the powder-mills belonging to Mr. Bridges, at Ewell, near Merton in Surry. A quarter of an hour before that event took place, I was riding out within one mile of the mills, and having enquired of Mr. Rose, at Coombe-Farm, for the way that leads round by the mills, I actually rode part of the way, with an intent of visiting them. But somehow or other, I scarce knew why, I turned my horse about, and a few minutes after I had done so, I saw the fatal catastrophe; which happening by day, resembled a large cloud of smoke, of a very light colour, and the report reached my ears immediately after. I instantly concluded, it could be nothing less than the  
powder-mills



powder-mills blown up; and on my return to my house at Merton, I soon learned that it was the identical powder-mill that in all probability I should have been in, or close by, at the time of the explosion. By this accident it seems four men were killed, some of whom had large families. The bodies were so much mangled by the explosion, that they could not be distinguished from each other, and the head of one of them was thrown to a great distance.

But to proceed with my journey. I esteem myself peculiarly happy, on one account in particular, that I undertook it; and have only to regret it did not take place sooner, as it tended to undeceive me in a matter in which I had long been in an error. The case was this: I had for seven years past supposed that the parents of my first wife were dead; and on enquiring after them of Mr. Cash at Bridgewater, he confirmed the report. However, as we passed through North Petherton, being but a mile from the place where they formerly lived, I could not help

stopping to find out the time when they died, and what other particulars I could learn relative to them; but, to my very great surprize, I was informed that they were both living at Newton, two miles distant. On this information I gave the coachman orders to drive us there, but still could scarcely credit that they really were alive.—But, O my dear Friend, it is utterly impossible for me to describe the sensations of Mrs. Lackington and myself, on entering

————— “ The cobweb'd cottage,  
 “ With ragged wall of mould'ring mud,”

which contained them !

“ Then Poverty, grim spectre, rose,  
 “ And horror o'er the prospect threw.” AMWELL.

There we found—two

“ Poor human ruins, tottering o'er the grave!”

The dim light on our entrance seemed a little to flash in the socket, and every moment threatened to disappear for ever ! while their  
 “ pale wither'd hands were stretched out  
 towards

towards me, trembling at once with eagerness and age." Never before did I feel the full force of Shakspeare's description,

" ————— Last scene of all

" That ends this strange eventful history,

" Is second childishness, and mere oblivion :

" Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing."

From such a state of poverty and wretchedness, good God, deliver every worthy character.

The old man is ninety years of age, and the good old woman eighty. The old man's intellects are much impaired; he for a moment knew me, and then his recollection forsook him. His behaviour brought to my mind, the passage in the *Odyssley*, where the good old man meets his long lost son.

" He faints, he sinks, with mighty joys oppress,

" But as returning life regains its seat,

" And his breath lengthens, and his pulses beat ;

" Yes, I believe, he cries, almighty Jove!

" Heav'n rules as yet, and gods there are above."

The old woman retained her senses and knowledge during the whole of the time we were with them.

“ They breath’d their prayer, long may such goodness live!

“ ’Twas all they gave, ’twas all they had to give.”

On inquiry I found, that what little property they had possessed had been all expended for some years.

“ How many once in Fortune’s lap high fed,

“ Solicit the cold hand of Charity!

“ To shock us more—solicit it in vain!” Dr. YOUNG.

Amidst this dreary scene, it was some alleviation to learn that their pious son had given them weekly as much as he could afford from his own little family, and I have added enough to render them as comfortable as their great age can possibly admit of. But for your sake and my own, I will drop this gloomy subject; which to me proved one of the most affecting scenes that ever I experienced in the whole course of my life; and I believe that had I not afforded them relief, the dreary scene would have followed my haunted imagination to my grave. It is a  
fine

fine speech that Metastasio puts into the mouth of Titus.

- “ What would’st thou leave me, friend, if thou deny’st me,  
 “ The glorious privilege of doing good ?  
 “ Shall I my only joy forego ;  
 “ No more my kind protection shew,  
 “ To those by fortune’s frown pursu’d ;  
 “ No more exalt each virtuous friend,  
 “ No more a bounteous hand extend,  
 “ T’ enrich the worthy and the good ?” HOOLE.

During our continuance at Wellington, I one morning rode over to Black Down, on purpose to inspect an immense heap of stones on the top of the hill, straight before the town, which I remembered to have seen when a boy. The distance from Wellington is about two miles. These stones cover about an acre of ground, and rise to a great height. The country people informed me with great gravity, that “ the Devil brought them there in one night in his *leathern apron*.” But the name of it, as well as the form, proves what it was. It is called Symmon’s *Borough* or *Barrow*; which, you know, signifies a burial-place. I should not have

taken any notice of it here, had I ever seen any Barrow of *stones* besides this, and five other smaller Barrows, about half a mile from the large one. The country people informed me that the *devil* brought the five heaps there in his *glove*. I also observed the remains of a large camp near the spot. Camden has taken notice of a large camp at Roach Castle, three or four miles from hence; it is strange that neither he nor Gough should take any notice of so singular a Barrow as this certainly is.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Yours.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XLVII.

“ Ye who amid this feverish world would wear  
 “ A body free of pain, of cares the mind,  
 “ Fly the rank city ; shun its turbid air :  
 “ Breathe not the chaos of eternal smoke  
 “ And volatile corruption from the dead,  
 “ The dying, sickening, and the living world  
 “ Exhal’d, to fully heaven’s transparent dome  
 “ With dim mortality. It is not air  
 “ That from a thousand lungs reeks back to thine,  
 “ Sated with exhalations, rank and fell,  
 “ The spoil of dunghills, and the putrid thaw  
 “ Of Nature ; when from shape and texture she  
 “ Relapsed into fighting Elements.  
 “ It is not air, but floats a nauseous mass  
 “ Of all obscene, corrupt, offensive things,  
 “ Much moisture hurts : here a fordid bath,  
 “ With daily rancour fraught, relaxes more  
 “ The solids than simple moisture can.”

ARMSTRONG’S Art of Health.

*Lyme, Sep. 4, 1791.*

DEAR FRIEND,

**B**EING now at one of those  
 places usually called *watering places*, that is,  
 a place where invalids resort in great num-  
 bers for the real or pretended purpose of  
 drinking the waters for which each particu-

lar situations is in repute, and bathing in them with a view to the restoration of their health ; I shall trouble you with a few observations which have occurred to me on the subject. I cannot entertain a doubt but that many by this practice have been highly benefited ; but at the same time I must observe that such relief is only to be reasonably expected where the parties possess a sufficient share of prudence to conform to those rules which are laid down to them by those who are best acquainted with the nature of the several complaints, the strength or weakness of their constitutions, and the different virtues those several waters possess, so as properly to adapt them to each particular case, by drinking the waters at proper stated periods, as well as in proper doses : besides conforming to such a regimen as shall co-operate with them in producing the desired effect. But where invalids neglect all, or indeed any of those rules, is it not rather an absurdity to expect relief ?—I will endeavour to explain myself :

Those waters either possess powerful virtues, or they do not. If they do, is it not  
obvious



obvious that some judgment and caution is necessary in the use of them? which must either produce good or bad effects, according to the prudence with which they are applied. If on the other hand, they are of so insignificant a nature, that they may be used at any time, and in any proportion, without injury; and that too in disorders and constitutions very much varying from each other, then surely the inference must be, that no dependence is to be placed on them, and consequently it matters not if they are never used at all. For what purpose then do such numbers put themselves to the inconvenience, expence, and trouble of travelling (frequently from distant parts of the kingdom) and that too when many of them are in so debilitated a state, that their very removal is attended with extreme danger, and sometimes proves fatal? But that those waters are not inactive, I am well convinced, having seen the bad effects arising from the imprudent use of them, in many instances, as well as the happy consequences attending their being used with due caution.

I was

I was first led into these reflections by having been highly diverted, when I visited Buxton several summers, with the preposterous and absurd conduct of some of the company who resorted thither for the purpose of restoring their health. I remember six or seven gentlemen informing me, that they were violently afflicted with the gout and rheumatism, and had undertaken this journey in hopes of receiving benefit by the waters. These gentlemen often rode or walked about the cold dreary hills, in very damp wet mornings, and afterwards drank claret from three o'clock in the afternoon to three the next morning: But I did not continue there long enough to be a witness of the happy effects which must inevitably be produced by a perseverance in such a judicious regimen.

I also visited Freestone, near Boston in Lincolnshire: to which place a number of tradesmen and farmers resorted with their wives, in hopes of receiving benefit from the use of the salt water, in a variety of complaints; which they had been advised to do

by

by the faculty, for a month, with particular directions to bathe every other day, and on the intermediate days to drink half a pint of the water in the course of that day. But these wise people on duly considering the matter, were fully convinced that this would detain them from their families and business longer than was altogether convenient; and also (which they supposed their medical friends never thought of) that they could bathe the full number of times, and drink the prescribed quantity of the water in a week or a fortnight at farthest, and thus not only expedite the cure, but likewise enable them to return to their families and business so much earlier, as well as save the necessary expences attending their continuing for such a length of time at the watering place. These united considerations appeared to them so consistent with prudence and oeconomy, that they resolved to put them into immediate practice. I remonstrated with several of these good people on the impropriety of their conduct; but whether they concluded I was a party interested in detaining them on  
the

the spot, or whether they deemed my judgment inferior to their own, I know not; but I observed that some of them bathed several times in a day, and drank salt water by the quart, the consequence of which was, that they left the place, when the time expired which *they* had prescribed to themselves, much worse than they came. Some indeed were so very weak, that I am persuaded they could with difficulty reach their homes alive. And in these cases the want of success, instead of being attributed to the *folly* of the patients, is generally transferred to the *waters*, and to the want of judgment in those who advised the use of them.

I assure you, my dear friend, this is pretty much the case at Lyme. My rooms commanding a view of the sea, I have this and several other days noticed many decent looking men going down the beach three or four times in as many hours, and drinking a pint of water each time. I have made the same observation at *Margate, Brighton, Hastings, Eastbourne, Seaton, Charmouth*, and other  
places,

places, so that the observation of Crabshaw's nurse, in "the Adventures of Sir Lancelot Greaves," has frequently occurred to me: "Blessed be G— (said she) my patient is in a fair way! his apozem has had a blessed effect! five and twenty stools since three o'clock in the morning!"

Relating these particulars to a medical friend, he informed me that such specimens of ignorance and obstinacy were by no means confined to the watering places; as he had in the course of his practice met with repeated instances, where patients with a view of hastening the cure, and *getting out of the doctor's hands* (whom the vulgar *charitably* suppose wish to retain them there as long as possible) have swallowed a half pint mixture intended for several doses at once, and a whole box of pills in the same manner. The consequences of which have been, that from the violence of the operations they have remained *in his hands* a considerable time, some so long as life (thus foolishly trifled with) lasted.

But

But here are many of another class ; some of whom, though not *all*, came on purpose to bathe, but during the whole of their continuance here, never found time to bathe once. Some hasten to the billiard-room as soon as they are out of their beds in the morning, and there they continue until bedtime again. A few of these are indeed much benefited, being cured of *consumptions in their purses*, while others become proportionably as much emaciated. And a great number, both of ladies and gentlemen, devote the whole of their time to dressing, eating, and playing at whist. Charming *exercise* it must be ! as they frequently sit still in their chairs, for eight or ten hours together.

“ Where knights, and beaux, and lords, and sharpers run,  
 “ Some to undo, but more to be undone.  
 “ Of all the plagues that from the birth of time,  
 “ Have rang’d by turns this sublunary clime,  
 “ And in their various forms the nations curs’d,  
 “ The boundless love of play is sure the worst.”

WHIST, a Poem.

Here are others again, who, like the gentlemen at Buxton, sit drinking (*often red port after salt-water*) until three or four in  
 the

the morning ; making a delightful noise, to *compose* those in the same house who are real *invalids*, and who desirous of obtaining rest, retire early, though frequently to very little purpose.

I have also observed, that all the above places are as healthy for horses, as they are for their masters. For as the innkeepers depend almost entirely on the season, they take great care, and do all they can to make these places comfortable. So that if gentlemen have fat, lazy, prancing horses, and want to reduce them in size and temper, they may be sure to have it done in some of the inns and stables at the various watering places ; where such hay is procured as must infallibly answer the purpose even though they be allowed a double portion of corn.

There is yet another very great advantage (which I had like to have forgot) resulting from attending the watering places. Such gentlemen who happen to have servants too honest, too industrious, too attentive, too cleanly,

cleanly, too humble, too sober, &c. by taking them to any of these places, where they have so much leisure time, and where these party-coloured gentry meet together so often, and in such numbers, no one can go away unimproved, except he is a very dull fellow indeed.—This is not merely my own observation: for several gentlemen of my acquaintance assured me that they had always found their servants improved prodigiously after each of these excursions.

We purpose setting out for Weymouth in a day or two: but as I intend that this shall be my last epistle, I will not conclude it until I arrive at Merton.

“ If into distant parts I vainly roam,  
 “ And novelty from varied objects try,  
 “ My busy thoughts seek their wonted home,  
 “ And sicken at the vain variety.”

*Merton*, Sept. 11th. We arrived here safe last night, being my birth-day. At Weymouth we had the honour of walking several evenings on the Esplanade, with their majesties and the four princesses. His majesty  
 seems



seems in perfect health and spirits, and diffuses life and spirits to all around him. Long, very long may he continue to enjoy the same degree of health and happiness! But I could not help pitying Mr. Hughes, the manager of the Theatre there; as the company in general seem to pay but very little attention to plays, while they can partake of the pleasure of walking and breathing the sea air with so many of the royal family. But his majesty, whose humanity is by no means the least of his many virtues, will no doubt consider Mr. Hughes, who is industrious to an extreme, as he is scarce a moment idle. For besides managing his company, performing himself six, sometimes eight characters in a week, he paints all his own scenes, and attends to many other subjects; and although he has had a large expensive family (nine children,) the theatre there, and that also at Exeter is his own. Weymouth theatre he rebuilt about four years since; every thing is very neat; his scenes are fine, and his company a very good one. I saw them perform four pieces with a deal

of pleasure; notwithstanding I had often seen the same in London, I remarked here as I had long before done at Bath, that the parts were more equally supported than they often are at Drury-lane and Covent-garden; for although at those places we have many first-rate actors and actresses, yet sometimes parts are given to such wretched performers as would not grace a barn, which I never saw done at Bath or Weymouth.

In our road home, within half a mile of Dorchester, we stopt and spent half an hour in looking round the famous Roman Amphitheatre. It is close to the road, on the right hand side, and covers about an acre of ground. It is judged that ten thousand people might without interruption have beheld such exercises as were exhibited in this school of the ancients; it is called Mambury, and is supposed to be the compleatest antiquity of the kind in England.

I also amused myself, as I travelled through Dorsetshire and Wiltshire, in surveying

veying many of the numerous camps, fortifications, and barrows: which lasting monuments of antiquity are to be seen in abundance in these counties, a great number of them remaining in a perfect state.

Nor could I any longer omit the opportunity of seeing that stupendous piece of antiquity on Salisbury Plain, the famous *Stonehenge*, two miles from Amesbury. We spent near two hours there in astonishment; and had not night came on, we should not have been able to have parted from it so soon. We found a very good inn at Amesbury, which proves very convenient to such whom curiosity may detain on this wonderful spot until it is late. It is remarkable, that although so many able antiquaries have devoted their time and attention to the investigation of Stonehenge, it remains still a matter undecided when and for what purpose this amazing pile was formed; nor is there less cause of admiration, how stones of such magnitude were brought hither! I shall not

perfume, either to decide on this curious point, or offer any conjectures of my own.

I have now, sir, not only given you the most material circumstances of my life, but have also super-added a short sketch of some of my travels. And should the fine air of Merton preserve the stock of health and spirits which I have acquired in this last excursion, I intend during the summer to spend a few hours in the middle of three or four days in every week in Chiswell-street, devoting the mornings and the remainder of the evenings to my rural retreat,

“ Where cheerfulness, triumphant fair,  
 “ Dispels the painful cloud of care,  
 “ O, sweet of language, mild of mien,  
 “ O, Virtue’s friend, and pleasure’s queen!  
 “ By thee our board with flow’rs is crown’d,  
 “ By thee with songs our walks resound;  
 “ By thee the sprightly mornings shine,  
 “ And ev’ning hours in peace decline.”

As my house at Merton is not far from the church-yard, I was a few evenings since walking in this receptacle of mortality, and recollecting the scene between Sir Lucius O’Trigger and Acres, said to myself, “ Here  
 “ is

“ is good saug lying, in this place.” So I sat down on one of the graves, and wrote the following lines, which I hope when I am gone to heaven (I am not in haste) my friends will have engraved on my tomb-stone.

*LACKINGTON'S EPITAPH.*

Good passenger, one moment stay,  
 And contemplate this heap of clay ;  
 'Tis LACKINGTON that claims a pause,  
 Who strove with Death, but lost his cause ;  
 A stranger genius ne'er need be,  
 Than many a merry year was he.  
 Some faults he had ; some virtues too ;  
 (The Devil himself should have his due :)  
 And as Dame Fortune's wheel turn'd round,  
 Whether at top or bottom found,  
 He never once forgot his station,  
 Nor e'er disown'd a poor relation ;  
 In poverty he found content,  
 Riches ne'er made him insolent.  
 When poor, he'd rather read than eat ;  
 When rich, books form'd his highest treat.  
 His first great wish, to act, with care,  
 The several parts assign'd him here ;  
 And, as his heart to truth inclin'd,  
 He study'd hard the truth to find.  
 Much pride he had, 'twas love of fame,  
 And slighted gold, to get a name ;  
 But fame herself prov'd greatest gain,  
 For riches follow'd in her train.  
 Much had he read, and much had thought,  
 And yet, you see, he's come to nought ;  
 Or out of print, as he would say,  
 To be revis'd some future day ;  
 Free from errata, with addition,  
 A new, and a complete edition.

During the winter I purpose spending most of my time in town ; where I hope again to enjoy the company of you, sir, and some others of our old philosophical friends, and when tired of philosophizing, we will again sing our old verses.

- “ What tho’ the many wholly bend,  
 “ To things beneath our state,  
 “ Some poorly to be rich contend,  
 “ And others meanly great.
- “ There liv’d a few in ev’ry space,  
 “ Since first our kind began,  
 “ Who still maintain’d, with better grace,  
 “ The dignity of man,

In the mean time, I am,  
 Dear friend, yours.

*P. S.* I should deem myself deficient in point of justice to the ingenious artist who painted the portrait from whence the engraving affixed as a frontispiece to this volume is taken, if I did not embrace this opportunity of acknowledging the approbation it has been honoured with by all who have seen it, as a striking likeness.

The following circumstance, though to many it may appear in a ludicrous point of view,

view, yet as it is a fact which does not depend solely on my assertion, I shall not hesitate to mention it.

Before the portrait was finished, Mrs. Lackington, accompanied by another lady, called on the painter to view it. Being introduced into a room filled with portraits, her little dog (the faithful Argus) being with her, immediately ran to that particular portrait, paying it the same attention as he is always accustomed to do the original; which made it necessary to remove him from it, lest he should damage it; though this was not accomplished without expressions of dissatisfaction on the part of poor Argus.

“ He knew his lord, he knew and strove to meet,

“ And all he could, his tail, his ears, his eyes,

“ Salute his master, and confess his joys.

POPE'S *Odyſſey*.

Those who are conversant in history will not doubt the fact; several similar instances being recorded of the sagacity and nice discrimination of these animals.

## A P R A Y E R.

" O may my work for ever live!  
 " (Dear friend, this selfish zeal forgive :)  
 " May no vile miscreant fauce cook  
 " Prefume to tear my learned book,  
 " To finge his fowl for nicer gueft,  
 " Or pin it on the turkey's breast.  
 " Keep it from pastry bak'd or buying,  
 " From broiling steak, and fritters frying ;  
 " From lighting pipes or wrapping snuff,  
 " Or caſing up a feather muff ;  
 " From all the ſeveral ways the grocer  
 " (Who to the learned world's a foe, Sir,)  
 " Has found in twiſting, folding, packing,  
 " His brain and ours at once a racking :  
 " And may it never curl the head  
 " Of either living block, or dead.  
 " Thus when all dangers they have paſt,  
 " My leaves like leaves of braſs ſhall laſt.  
 " No blaſt ſhall from a critic's breath,  
 " By vile infection cauſe their death,  
 " 'Till they in flames at laſt expire,  
 " And help to ſet the world on fire."

AMEN.

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