

HENRY FIELDING

AMELIA –
VOLUME 1

Генри Филдинг
Amelia – Volume 1

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Amelia – Volume 1

INTRODUCTION

Fielding's third great novel has been the subject of much more discordant judgments than either of its forerunners. If we take the period since its appearance as covering four generations, we find the greatest authority in the earliest, Johnson, speaking of it with something more nearly approaching to enthusiasm than he allowed himself in reference to any other work of an author, to whom he was on the whole so unjust. The greatest man of letters of the next generation, Scott (whose attitude to Fielding was rather undecided, and seems to speak a mixture of intellectual admiration and moral dislike, or at least failure in sympathy), pronounces it "on the whole unpleasing," and regards it chiefly as a sequel to *Tom Jones*, showing what is to be expected of a libertine and thoughtless husband. But he too is enthusiastic over the heroine. Thackeray (whom in this special connection at any rate it is scarcely too much to call the greatest man of the third generation) overflows with predilection for it, but chiefly, as it would seem, because of his affection for Amelia herself, in which he practically agrees with Scott and Johnson. It would be invidious, and is noways needful, to single out any critic of our own time to place beside these great men. But it cannot be denied that the book, now as always, has incurred a considerable amount of hinted fault and hesitated dislike. Even Mr. Dobson notes some things in it as "unsatisfactory," Mr. Gosse, with evident consciousness of temerity, ventures to ask whether it is not "a little dull." The very absence of episodes (on the ground that Miss Matthews's story is too closely connected with the main action to be fairly called an episode) and of introductory dissertations has been brought against it, as the presence of these things was brought against its forerunners.

I have sometimes wondered whether *Amelia* pays the penalty of an audacity which, *a priori*, its most unfavourable critics would indignantly deny to be a fault. It begins instead of ending with the marriage-bells; and though critic after critic of novels has exhausted his indignation and his satire over the folly of insisting on these as a finale, I doubt whether the demand is not too deeply rooted in the English, nay, in the human mind, to be safely neglected. The essence of all romance is a quest; the quest most perennially and universally interesting to man is the quest of a wife or a mistress; and the chapters dealing with what comes later have an inevitable flavour of tameness, and of the day after the feast. It is not common now-a-days to meet anybody who thinks Tommy Moore a great poet; one has to encounter either a suspicion of Philistinism or a suspicion of paradox if one tries to vindicate for him even his due place in the poetical hierarchy. Yet I suspect that no poet ever put into words a more universal criticism of life than he did when he wrote "I saw from the beach," with its moral of —

"Give me back, give me back, the wild freshness of morning – Her smiles and her tears are worth evening's best light."

If we discard this fallacy boldly, and ask ourselves whether *Amelia* is or is not as good as *Joseph Andrews* or *Tom Jones*, we shall I think be inclined to answer rather in the affirmative than in the negative. It is perhaps a little more easy to find fault with its characters than with theirs; or rather, though no one of these characters has the defects of Blifil or of Allworthy, it is easy to say that no one of them has the charm of the best personages of the earlier books. The idolaters of *Amelia* would of course exclaim at this sentence as it regards that amiable lady; and I am myself by no means disposed to rank amiability low in the scale of things excellent in woman. But though she is by no means what her namesake and spiritual grand-daughter, Miss Sedley, must, I fear, be pronounced to be, an amiable fool, there is really too much of the milk of human kindness, unrefreshed and unrelieved of its mawkishness by the rum or whisky of human frailty, in her. One could have better pardoned her

forgiveness of her husband if she had in the first place been a little more conscious of what there was to forgive; and in the second, a little more romantic in her attachment to him. As it is, he was *son homme*; he was handsome; he had broad shoulders; he had a sweet temper; he was the father of her children, and that was enough. At least we are allowed to see in Mr. Booth no qualities other than these, and in her no imagination even of any other qualities. To put what I mean out of reach of cavil, compare Imogen and Amelia, and the difference will be felt.

But Fielding was a prose writer, writing in London in the eighteenth century, while Shakespeare was a poet writing in all time and all space, so that the comparison is luminous in more ways than one. I do not think that in the special scheme which the novelist set himself here he can be accused of any failure. The life is as vivid as ever; the minor sketches may be even called a little more vivid. Dr Harrison is not perfect. I do not mean that he has ethical faults, for that is a merit, not a defect; but he is not quite perfect in art. His alternate persecution and patronage of Booth, though useful to the story, repeat the earlier fault of Allworthy, and are something of a blot. But he is individually much more natural than Allworthy, and indeed is something like what Dr Johnson would have been if he had been rather better bred, less crotchety, and blessed with more health. Miss Matthews in her earlier scenes has touches of greatness which a thousand French novelists lavishing "candour" and reckless of exaggeration have not equalled; and I believe that Fielding kept her at a distance during the later scenes of the story, because he could not trust himself not to make her more interesting than Amelia. Of the peers, more wicked and less wicked, there is indeed not much good to be said. The peer of the eighteenth-century writers (even when, as in Fielding's case, there was no reason why they should "mention him with *Kor*," as Policeman X. has it) is almost always a faint type of goodness or wickedness dressed out with stars and ribbons and coaches- and-six. Only Swift, by combination of experience and genius, has given us live lords in Lord Sparkish and Lord Smart. But Mrs. Ellison and Mrs. Atkinson are very women, and the serjeant, though the touch of "sensibility" is on him, is excellent; and Dr Harrison's country friend and his prig of a son are capital; and Bondum, and "the author," and Robinson, and all the minor characters, are as good as they can be.

It is, however, usual to detect a lack of vivacity in the book, an evidence of declining health and years. It may be so; it is at least certain that Fielding, during the composition of *Amelia*, had much less time to bestow upon elaborating his work than he had previously had, and that his health was breaking. But are we perfectly sure that if the chronological order had been different we should have pronounced the same verdict? Had *Amelia* come between *Joseph* and *Tom*, how many of us might have committed ourselves to some such sentence as this: "In *Amelia* we see the youthful exuberances of *Joseph Andrews* corrected by a higher art; the adjustment of plot and character arranged with a fuller craftsmanship; the genius which was to find its fullest exemplification in *Tom Jones* already displaying maturity"? And do we not too often forget that a very short time – in fact, barely three years – passed between the appearance of *Tom Jones* and the appearance of *Amelia*? that although we do not know how long the earlier work had been in preparation, it is extremely improbable that a man of Fielding's temperament, of his wants, of his known habits and history, would have kept it when once finished long in his desk? and that consequently between some scenes of *Tom Jones* and some scenes of *Amelia* it is not improbable that there was no more than a few months' interval? I do not urge these things in mitigation of any unfavourable judgment against the later novel. I only ask – How much of that unfavourable judgment ought in justice to be set down to the fallacies connected with an imperfect appreciation of facts?

To me it is not so much a question of deciding whether I like *Amelia* less, and if so, how much less, than the others, as a question what part of the general conception of this great writer it supplies? I do not think that we could fully understand Fielding without it; I do not think that we could derive the full quantity of pleasure from him without it. The exuberant romantic faculty of *Joseph Andrews* and its pleasant satire; the mighty craftsmanship and the vast science of life of *Tom Jones*; the ineffable irony and logical grasp of *Jonathan Wild*, might have left us with a slight sense of hardness, a vague

desire for unction, if it had not been for this completion of the picture. We should not have known (for in the other books, with the possible exception of Mrs. Fitzpatrick, the characters are a little too determinately goats and sheep) how Fielding could draw *nuances*, how he could project a mixed personage on the screen, if we had not had Miss Matthews and Mrs. Atkinson – the last especially a figure full of the finest strokes, and, as a rule, insufficiently done justice to by critics.

And I have purposely left to the last a group of personages about whom indeed there has been little question, but who are among the triumphs of Fielding's art – the two Colonels and their connecting-link, the wife of the one and the sister of the other. Colonel Bath has necessarily united all suffrages. He is of course a very little stagey; he reminds us that his author had had a long theatrical apprenticeship: he is something too much *d'une piece*. But as a study of the brave man who is almost more braggart than brave, of the generous man who will sacrifice not only generosity but bare justice to "a hogo of honour," he is admirable, and up to his time almost unique. Ordinary writers and ordinary readers have never been quite content to admit that bravery and braggadocio can go together, that the man of honour may be a selfish pedant. People have been unwilling to tell and to hear the whole truth even about Wolfe and Nelson, who were both favourable specimens of the type; but Fielding the infallible saw that type in its quiddity, and knew it, and registered it for ever.

Less amusing but more delicately faithful and true are Colonel James and his wife. They are both very good sort of people in a way, who live in a lax and frivolous age, who have plenty of money, no particular principle, no strong affection for each other, and little individual character. They might have been – Mrs. James to some extent is – quite estimable and harmless; but even as it is, they are not to be wholly ill spoken of. Being what they are, Fielding has taken them, and, with a relentlessness which Swift could hardly have exceeded, and a good-nature which Swift rarely or never attained, has held them up to us as dissected preparations of half-innocent meanness, scoundrelism, and vanity, such as are hardly anywhere else to be found. I have used the word "preparations," and it in part indicates Fielding's virtue, a virtue shown, I think, in this book as much as anywhere. But it does not fully indicate it; for the preparation, wet or dry, is a dead thing, and a museum is but a mortuary. Fielding's men and women, once more let it be said, are all alive. The palace of his work is the hall, not of Eblis, but of a quite beneficent enchanter, who puts burning hearts into his subjects, not to torture them, but only that they may light up for us their whole organisation and being. They are not in the least the worse for it, and we are infinitely the better.

DEDICATION

To RALPH ALLEN, ESQ.

SIR, – The following book is sincerely designed to promote the cause of virtue, and to expose some of the most glaring evils, as well public as private, which at present infest the country; though there is scarce, as I remember, a single stroke of satire aimed at any one person throughout the whole.

The best man is the properest patron of such an attempt. This, I believe, will be readily granted; nor will the public voice, I think, be more divided to whom they shall give that appellation. Should a letter, indeed, be thus inscribed, DETUR OPTIMO, there are few persons who would think it wanted any other direction.

I will not trouble you with a preface concerning the work, nor endeavour to obviate any criticisms which can be made on it. The good-natured reader, if his heart should be here affected, will be inclined to pardon many faults for the pleasure he will receive from a tender sensation: and for readers of a different stamp, the more faults they can discover, the more, I am convinced, they will be pleased.

Nor will I assume the fulsome stile of common dedicators. I have not their usual design in this epistle, nor will I borrow their language. Long, very long may it be before a most dreadful circumstance shall make it possible for any pen to draw a just and true character of yourself without incurring a suspicion of flattery in the bosoms of the malignant. This task, therefore, I shall defer till that day (if I should be so unfortunate as ever to see it) when every good man shall pay a tear for the satisfaction of his curiosity; a day which, at present, I believe, there is but one good man in the world who can think of it with unconcern.

Accept then, sir, this small token of that love, that gratitude, and that respect, with which I shall always esteem it my GREATEST HONOUR to be,

Sir,

Your most obliged, and most obedient humble servant,

HENRY FIELDING.

Bow Street, Dec. 2, 1751.

BOOK I

Chapter i. *Containing the exordium, &c*

The various accidents which befel a very worthy couple after their uniting in the state of matrimony will be the subject of the following history. The distresses which they waded through were some of them so exquisite, and the incidents which produced these so extraordinary, that they seemed to require not only the utmost malice, but the utmost invention, which superstition hath ever attributed to Fortune: though whether any such being interfered in the case, or, indeed, whether there be any such being in the universe, is a matter which I by no means presume to determine in the affirmative. To speak a bold truth, I am, after much mature deliberation, inclined to suspect that the public voice hath, in all ages, done much injustice to Fortune, and hath convicted her of many facts in which she had not the least concern. I question much whether we may not, by natural means, account for the success of knaves, the calamities of fools, with all the miseries in which men of sense sometimes involve themselves, by quitting the directions of Prudence, and following the blind guidance of a predominant passion; in short, for all the ordinary phenomena which are imputed to Fortune; whom, perhaps, men accuse with no less absurdity in life, than a bad player complains of ill luck at the game of chess.

But if men are sometimes guilty of laying improper blame on this imaginary being, they are altogether as apt to make her amends by ascribing to her honours which she as little deserves. To retrieve the ill consequences of a foolish conduct, and by struggling manfully with distress to subdue it, is one of the noblest efforts of wisdom and virtue. Whoever, therefore, calls such a man fortunate, is guilty of no less impropriety in speech than he would be who should call the statuary or the poet fortunate who carved a Venus or who writ an Iliad.

Life may as properly be called an art as any other; and the great incidents in it are no more to be considered as mere accidents than the several members of a fine statue or a noble poem. The critics in all these are not content with seeing anything to be great without knowing why and how it came to be so. By examining carefully the several gradations which conduce to bring every model to perfection, we learn truly to know that science in which the model is formed: as histories of this kind, therefore, may properly be called models of *human life*, so, by observing minutely the several incidents which tend to the catastrophe or completion of the whole, and the minute causes whence those incidents are produced, we shall best be instructed in this most useful of all arts, which I call the *art of life*.

Chapter ii

The history sets out. Observations on the excellency of the English constitution and curious examinations before a justice of peace

On the first of April, in the year – , the watchmen of a certain parish (I know not particularly which) within the liberty of Westminster brought several persons whom they had apprehended the preceding night before Jonathan Thrasher, Esq., one of the justices of the peace for that liberty.

But here, reader, before we proceed to the trials of these offenders, we shall, after our usual manner, premise some things which it may be necessary for thee to know.

It hath been observed, I think, by many, as well as the celebrated writer of three letters, that no human institution is capable of consummate perfection. An observation which, perhaps, that writer at least gathered from discovering some defects in the polity even of this well-regulated nation. And, indeed, if there should be any such defect in a constitution which my Lord Coke long ago told us "the wisdom of all the wise men in the world, if they had all met together at one time, could not have equalled," which some of our wisest men who were met together long before said was too good to be altered in any particular, and which, nevertheless, hath been mending ever since, by a very great number of the said wise men: if, I say, this constitution should be imperfect, we may be allowed, I think, to doubt whether any such faultless model can be found among the institutions of men.

It will probably be objected, that the small imperfections which I am about to produce do not lie in the laws themselves, but in the ill execution of them; but, with submission, this appears to me to be no less an absurdity than to say of any machine that it is excellently made, though incapable of performing its functions. Good laws should execute themselves in a well-regulated state; at least, if the same legislature which provides the laws doth not provide for the execution of them, they act as Graham would do, if he should form all the parts of a clock in the most exquisite manner, yet put them so together that the clock could not go. In this case, surely, we might say that there was a small defect in the constitution of the clock.

To say the truth, Graham would soon see the fault, and would easily remedy it. The fault, indeed, could be no other than that the parts were improperly disposed.

Perhaps, reader, I have another illustration which will set my intention in still a clearer light before you. Figure to yourself then a family, the master of which should dispose of the several economical offices in the following manner; viz. should put his butler in the coach-box, his steward behind his coach, his coachman in the butlery, and his footman in the stewardship, and in the same ridiculous manner should misemploy the talents of every other servant; it is easy to see what a figure such a family must make in the world.

As ridiculous as this may seem, I have often considered some of the lower officers in our civil government to be disposed in this very manner. To begin, I think, as low as I well can, with the watchmen in our metropolis, who, being to guard our streets by night from thieves and robbers, an office which at least requires strength of body, are chosen out of those poor old decrepit people who are, from their want of bodily strength, rendered incapable of getting a livelihood by work. These men, armed only with a pole, which some of them are scarce able to lift, are to secure the persons and houses of his majesty's subjects from the attacks of gangs of young, bold, stout, desperate, and well-armed villains.

Quae non viribus istis
Munera conveniunt.

If the poor old fellows should run away from such enemies, no one I think can wonder, unless it be that they were able to make their escape.

The higher we proceed among our public officers and magistrates, the less defects of this kind will, perhaps, be observable. Mr. Thrasher, however, the justice before whom the prisoners above mentioned were now brought, had some few imperfections in his magistratical capacity. I own, I have been sometimes inclined to think that this office of a justice of peace requires some knowledge of the law: for this simple reason; because, in every case which comes before him, he is to judge and act according to law. Again, as these laws are contained in a great variety of books, the statutes which relate to the office of a justice of peace making of themselves at least two large volumes in folio; and that part of his jurisdiction which is founded on the common law being dispersed in above a hundred volumes, I cannot conceive how this knowledge should be acquired without reading; and yet certain it is, Mr. Thrasher never read one syllable of the matter.

This, perhaps, was a defect; but this was not all: for where mere ignorance is to decide a point between two litigants, it will always be an even chance whether it decides right or wrong: but sorry am I to say, right was often in a much worse situation than this, and wrong hath often had five hundred to one on his side before that magistrate; who, if he was ignorant of the law of England, was yet well versed in the laws of nature. He perfectly well understood that fundamental principle so strongly laid down in the institutes of the learned Rochefoucault, by which the duty of self-love is so strongly enforced, and every man is taught to consider himself as the centre of gravity, and to attract all things thither. To speak the truth plainly, the justice was never indifferent in a cause but when he could get nothing on either side.

Such was the justice to whose tremendous bar Mr. Gotobed the constable, on the day above mentioned, brought several delinquents, who, as we have said, had been apprehended by the watch for diverse outrages.

The first who came upon his trial was as bloody a spectre as ever the imagination of a murderer or a tragic poet conceived. This poor wretch was charged with a battery by a much stouter man than himself; indeed the accused person bore about him some evidence that he had been in an affray, his cloaths being very bloody, but certain open sluices on his own head sufficiently shewed whence all the scarlet stream had issued: whereas the accuser had not the least mark or appearance of any wound. The justice asked the defendant, What he meant by breaking the king's peace? – To which he answered – "Upon my shoul I do love the king very well, and I have not been after breaking anything of his that I do know; but upon my shoul this man hath brake my head, and my head did brake his stick; that is all, gra." He then offered to produce several witnesses against this improbable accusation; but the justice presently interrupted him, saying, "Sirrah, your tongue betrays your guilt. You are an Irishman, and that is always sufficient evidence with me."

The second criminal was a poor woman, who was taken up by the watch as a street-walker. It was alleged against her that she was found walking the streets after twelve o'clock, and the watchman declared he believed her to be a common strumpet. She pleaded in her defence (as was really the truth) that she was a servant, and was sent by her mistress, who was a little shopkeeper and upon the point of delivery, to fetch a midwife; which she offered to prove by several of the neighbours, if she was allowed to send for them. The justice asked her why she had not done it before? to which she answered, she had no money, and could get no messenger. The justice then called her several scurrilous names, and, declaring she was guilty within the statute of street-walking, ordered her to Bridewell for a month.

A genteel young man and woman were then set forward, and a very grave- looking person swore he caught them in a situation which we cannot as particularly describe here as he did before the magistrate; who, having received a wink from his clerk, declared with much warmth that the fact was incredible and impossible. He presently discharged the accused parties, and was going, without any evidence, to commit the accuser for perjury; but this the clerk dissuaded him from, saying he doubted

whether a justice of peace had any such power. The justice at first differed in opinion, and said, "He had seen a man stand in the pillory about perjury; nay, he had known a man in gaol for it too; and how came he there if he was not committed thither?" "Why, that is true, sir," answered the clerk; "and yet I have been told by a very great lawyer that a man cannot be committed for perjury before he is indicted; and the reason is, I believe, because it is not against the peace before the indictment makes it so." "Why, that may be," cries the justice, "and indeed perjury is but scandalous words, and I know a man cannot have no warrant for those, unless you put for rioting¹ them into the warrant."

The witness was now about to be discharged, when the lady whom he had accused declared she would swear the peace against him, for that he had called her a whore several times. "Oho! you will swear the peace, madam, will you?" cries the justice: "Give her the peace, presently; and pray, Mr. Constable, secure the prisoner, now we have him, while a warrant is made to take him up." All which was immediately performed, and the poor witness, for want of securities, was sent to prison.

A young fellow, whose name was Booth, was now charged with beating the watchman in the execution of his office and breaking his lanthorn. This was deposed by two witnesses; and the shattered remains of a broken lanthorn, which had been long preserved for the sake of its testimony, were produced to corroborate the evidence. The justice, perceiving the criminal to be but shabbily drest, was going to commit him without asking any further questions. At length, however, at the earnest request of the accused, the worthy magistrate submitted to hear his defence. The young man then alledged, as was in reality the case, "That as he was walking home to his lodging he saw two men in the street cruelly beating a third, upon which he had stopt and endeavoured to assist the person who was so unequally attacked; that the watch came up during the affray, and took them all four into custody; that they were immediately carried to the round-house, where the two original assailants, who appeared to be men of fortune, found means to make up the matter, and were discharged by the constable, a favour which he himself, having no money in his pocket, was unable to obtain. He utterly denied having assaulted any of the watchmen, and solemnly declared that he was offered his liberty at the price of half a crown."

Though the bare word of an offender can never be taken against the oath of his accuser, yet the matter of this defence was so pertinent, and delivered with such an air of truth and sincerity, that, had the magistrate been endued with much sagacity, or had he been very moderately gifted with another quality very necessary to all who are to administer justice, he would have employed some labour in cross-examining the watchmen; at least he would have given the defendant the time he desired to send for the other persons who were present at the affray; neither of which he did. In short, the magistrate had too great an honour for truth to suspect that she ever appeared in sordid apparel; nor did he ever sully his sublime notions of that virtue by uniting them with the mean ideas of poverty and distress.

There remained now only one prisoner, and that was the poor man himself in whose defence the last-mentioned culprit was engaged. His trial took but a very short time. A cause of battery and broken lanthorn was instituted against him, and proved in the same manner; nor would the justice hear one word in defence; but, though his patience was exhausted, his breath was not; for against this last wretch he poured forth a great many volleys of menaces and abuse.

The delinquents were then all dispatched to prison under a guard of watchmen, and the justice and the constable adjourned to a neighbouring alehouse to take their morning repast.

¹ *Opus est interprete.* By the laws of England abusive words are not punishable by the magistrate; some commissioners of the peace, therefore, when one scold hath applied to them for a warrant against another, from a too eager desire of doing justice, have construed a little harmless scolding into a riot, which is in law an outrageous breach of the peace committed by several persons, by three at the least, nor can a less number be convicted of it. Under this word rioting, or riotting (for I have seen it spelt both ways), many thousands of old women have been arrested and put to expense, sometimes in prison, for a little intemperate use of their tongues. This practice began to decrease in the year 1749.

Chapter iii. *Containing the inside of a prison*

Mr. Booth (for we shall not trouble you with the rest) was no sooner arrived in the prison than a number of persons gathered round him, all demanding garnish; to which Mr. Booth not making a ready answer, as indeed he did not understand the word, some were going to lay hold of him, when a person of apparent dignity came up and insisted that no one should affront the gentleman. This person then, who was no less than the master or keeper of the prison, turning towards Mr. Booth, acquainted him that it was the custom of the place for every prisoner upon his first arrival there to give something to the former prisoners to make them drink. This, he said, was what they call garnish, and concluded with advising his new customer to draw his purse upon the present occasion. Mr. Booth answered that he would very readily comply with this laudable custom, was it in his power; but that in reality he had not a shilling in his pocket, and, what was worse, he had not a shilling in the world. – "Oho! if that be the case," cries the keeper, "it is another matter, and I have nothing to say." Upon which he immediately departed, and left poor Booth to the mercy of his companions, who without loss of time applied themselves to uncasing, as they termed it, and with such dexterity, that his coat was not only stript off, but out of sight in a minute.

Mr. Booth was too weak to resist and too wise to complain of this usage. As soon, therefore, as he was at liberty, and declared free of the place, he summoned his philosophy, of which he had no inconsiderable share, to his assistance, and resolved to make himself as easy as possible under his present circumstances.

Could his own thoughts indeed have suffered him a moment to forget where he was, the dispositions of the other prisoners might have induced him to believe that he had been in a happier place: for much the greater part of his fellow-sufferers, instead of wailing and repining at their condition, were laughing, singing, and diverting themselves with various kinds of sports and gambols.

The first person v/ho accosted him was called Blear-eyed Moll, a woman of no very comely appearance. Her eye (for she had but one), whence she derived her nickname, was such as that nickname bespoke; besides which, it had two remarkable qualities; for first, as if Nature had been careful to provide for her own defect, it constantly looked towards her blind side; and secondly, the ball consisted almost entirely of white, or rather yellow, with a little grey spot in the corner, so small that it was scarce discernible. Nose she had none; for Venus, envious perhaps at her former charms, had carried off the gristly part; and some earthly damsel, perhaps, from the same envy, had levelled the bone with the rest of her face: indeed it was far beneath the bones of her cheeks, which rose proportionally higher than is usual. About half a dozen ebony teeth fortified that large and long canal which nature had cut from ear to ear, at the bottom of which was a chin preposterously short, nature having turned up the bottom, instead of suffering it to grow to its due length.

Her body was well adapted to her face; she measured full as much round the middle as from head to foot; for, besides the extreme breadth of her back, her vast breasts had long since forsaken their native home, and had settled themselves a little below the girdle.

I wish certain actresses on the stage, when they are to perform characters of no amiable cast, would study to dress themselves with the propriety with which Blear-eyed Moll was now arrayed. For the sake of our squeamish reader, we shall not descend to particulars; let it suffice to say, nothing more ragged or more dirty was ever emptied out of the round-house at St Giles's.

We have taken the more pains to describe this person, for two remarkable reasons; the one is, that this unlovely creature was taken in the fact with a very pretty young fellow; the other, which is more productive of moral lesson, is, that however wretched her fortune may appear to the reader, she was one of the merriest persons in the whole prison.

Blar-eyed Moll then came up to Mr. Booth with a smile, or rather grin, on her countenance, and asked him for a dram of gin; and when Booth assured her that he had not a penny of money, she replied – "D – n your eyes, I thought by your look you had been a clever fellow, and upon the snaffling lay² at least; but, d – n your body and eyes, I find you are some sneaking budge³ rascal." She then launched forth a volley of dreadful oaths, interlarded with some language not proper to be repeated here, and was going to lay hold on poor Booth, when a tall prisoner, who had been very earnestly eying Booth for some time, came up, and, taking her by the shoulder, flung her off at some distance, cursing her for a b – h, and bidding her let the gentleman alone.

This person was not himself of the most inviting aspect. He was long- visaged, and pale, with a red beard of above a fortnight's growth. He was attired in a brownish-black coat, which would have shewed more holes than it did, had not the linen, which appeared through it, been entirely of the same colour with the cloth.

This gentleman, whose name was Robinson, addressed himself very civilly to Mr. Booth, and told him he was sorry to see one of his appearance in that place: "For as to your being without your coat, sir," says he, "I can easily account for that; and, indeed, dress is the least part which distinguishes a gentleman." At which words he cast a significant look on his own coat, as if he desired they should be applied to himself. He then proceeded in the following manner:

"I perceive, sir, you are but just arrived in this dismal place, which is, indeed, rendered more detestable by the wretches who inhabit it than by any other circumstance; but even these a wise man will soon bring himself to bear with indifference; for what is, is; and what must be, must be. The knowledge of this, which, simple as it appears, is in truth the heighth of all philosophy, renders a wise man superior to every evil which can befall him. I hope, sir, no very dreadful accident is the cause of your coming hither; but, whatever it was, you may be assured it could not be otherwise; for all things happen by an inevitable fatality; and a man can no more resist the impulse of fate than a wheelbarrow can the force of its driver."

Besides the obligation which Mr. Robinson had conferred on Mr. Booth in delivering him from the insults of Blar-eyed Moll, there was something in the manner of Robinson which, notwithstanding the meanness of his dress, seemed to distinguish him from the crowd of wretches who swarmed in those regions; and, above all, the sentiments which he had just declared very nearly coincided with those of Mr. Booth: this gentleman was what they call a freethinker; that is to say, a deist, or, perhaps, an atheist; for, though he did not absolutely deny the existence of a God, yet he entirely denied his providence. A doctrine which, if it is not downright atheism, hath a direct tendency towards it; and, as Dr Clarke observes, may soon be driven into it. And as to Mr. Booth, though he was in his heart an extreme well-wisher to religion (for he was an honest man), yet his notions of it were very slight and uncertain. To say truth, he was in the wavering condition so finely described by Claudian:

labefacta cadelat
Religio, causaeque – viam non sponte sequebar
Alterius; vacua quae currere semina motu
Affirmat; magnumque novas fer inane figures
Fortuna, non arte, regi; quae numina sensu
Ambiguo, vel nulla futat, vel nescia nostri.

This way of thinking, or rather of doubting, he had contracted from the same reasons which Claudian assigns, and which had induced Brutus in his latter days to doubt the existence of that virtue

² A cant term for robbery on the highway

³ Another cant term for pilfering

which he had all his life cultivated. In short, poor Booth imagined that a larger share of misfortunes had fallen to his lot than he had merited; and this led him, who (though a good classical scholar) was not deeply learned in religious matters, into a disadvantageous opinion of Providence. A dangerous way of reasoning, in which our conclusions are not only too hasty, from an imperfect view of things, but we are likewise liable to much error from partiality to ourselves; viewing our virtues and vices as through a perspective, in which we turn the glass always to our own advantage, so as to diminish the one, and as greatly to magnify the other.

From the above reasons, it can be no wonder that Mr. Booth did not decline the acquaintance of this person, in a place which could not promise to afford him any better. He answered him, therefore, with great courtesy, as indeed he was of a very good and gentle disposition, and, after expressing a civil surprize at meeting him there, declared himself to be of the same opinion with regard to the necessity of human actions; adding, however, that he did not believe men were under any blind impulse or direction of fate, but that every man acted merely from the force of that passion which was uppermost in his mind, and could do no otherwise.

A discourse now ensued between the two gentlemen on the necessity arising from the impulse of fate, and the necessity arising from the impulse of passion, which, as it will make a pretty pamphlet of itself, we shall reserve for some future opportunity. When this was ended they set forward to survey the gaol and the prisoners, with the several cases of whom Mr. Robinson, who had been some time under confinement, undertook to make Mr. Booth acquainted.

Chapter iv. *Disclosing further secrets of the prison-house*

The first persons whom they passed by were three men in fetters, who were enjoying themselves very merrily over a bottle of wine and a pipe of tobacco. These, Mr. Robinson informed his friend, were three street-robbers, and were all certain of being hanged the ensuing sessions. So inconsiderable an object, said he, is misery to light minds, when it is at any distance.

A little farther they beheld a man prostrate on the ground, whose heavy groans and frantic actions plainly indicated the highest disorder of mind. This person was, it seems, committed for a small felony; and his wife, who then lay-in, upon hearing the news, had thrown herself from a window two pair of stairs high, by which means he had, in all probability, lost both her and his child.

A very pretty girl then advanced towards them, whose beauty Mr. Booth could not help admiring the moment he saw her; declaring, at the same time, he thought she had great innocence in her countenance. Robinson said she was committed thither as an idle and disorderly person, and a common street-walker. As she past by Mr. Booth, she damned his eyes, and discharged a volley of words, every one of which was too indecent to be repeated.

They now beheld a little creature sitting by herself in a corner, and crying bitterly. This girl, Mr. Robinson said, was committed because her father-in-law, who was in the grenadier guards, had sworn that he was afraid of his life, or of some bodily harm which she would do him, and she could get no sureties for keeping the peace; for which reason justice Thrasher had committed her to prison.

A great noise now arose, occasioned by the prisoners all flocking to see a fellow whipt for petty larceny, to which he was condemned by the court of quarter-sessions; but this soon ended in the disappointment of the spectators; for the fellow, after being stript, having advanced another sixpence, was discharged untouched.

This was immediately followed by another bustle; Blear-eyed Moll, and several of her companions, having got possession of a man who was committed for certain odious unmanlike practices, not fit to be named, were giving him various kinds of discipline, and would probably have put an end to him, had he not been rescued out of their hands by authority.

When this bustle was a little allayed, Mr. Booth took notice of a young woman in rags sitting on the ground, and supporting the head of an old man in her lap, who appeared to be giving up the ghost. These, Mr. Robinson informed him, were father and daughter; that the latter was committed for stealing a loaf, in order to support the former, and the former for receiving it, knowing it to be stolen.

A well-drest man then walked surlily by them, whom Mr. Robinson reported to have been committed on an indictment found against him for a most horrid perjury; but, says he, we expect him to be bailed today. "Good Heaven!" cries Booth, "can such villains find bail, and is no person charitable enough to bail that poor father and daughter?" "Oh! sir," answered Robinson, "the offence of the daughter, being felony, is held not to beailable in law; whereas perjury is a misdemeanor only; and therefore persons who are even indicted for it are, nevertheless, capable of being bailed. Nay, of all perjuries, that of which this man is indicted is the worst; for it was with an intention of taking away the life of an innocent person by form of law. As to perjuries in civil matters, they are not so very criminal." "They are not," said Booth; "and yet even these are a most flagitious offence, and worthy the highest punishment." "Surely they ought to be distinguished," answered Robinson, "from the others: for what is taking away a little property from a man, compared to taking away his life and his reputation, and ruining his family into the bargain? – I hope there can be no comparison in the crimes, and I think there ought to be none in the punishment. However, at present, the punishment

of all perjury is only pillory and transportation for seven years; and, as it is a traversable andailable offence, methods are found to escape any punishment at all."⁴

Booth exprest great astonishment at this, when his attention was suddenly diverted by the most miserable object that he had yet seen. This was a wretch almost naked, and who bore in his countenance, joined to an appearance of honesty, the marks of poverty, hunger, and disease. He had, moreover, a wooden leg, and two or three scars on his forehead. "The case of this poor man is, indeed, unhappy enough," said Robinson. "He hath served his country, lost his limb, and received several wounds at the siege of Gibraltar. When he was discharged from the hospital abroad he came over to get into that of Chelsea, but could not immediately, as none of his officers were then in England. In the mean time, he was one day apprehended and committed hither on suspicion of stealing three herrings from a fishmonger. He was tried several months ago for this offence, and acquitted; indeed, his innocence manifestly appeared at the trial; but he was brought back again for his fees, and here he hath lain ever since."

Booth exprest great horror at this account, and declared, if he had only so much money in his pocket, he would pay his fees for him; but added that he was not possessed of a single farthing in the world.

Robinson hesitated a moment, and then said, with a smile, "I am going to make you, sir, a very odd proposal after your last declaration; but what say you to a game at cards? it will serve to pass a tedious hour, and may divert your thoughts from more unpleasant speculations."

I do not imagine Booth would have agreed to this; for, though some love of gaming had been formerly amongst his faults, yet he was not so egregiously addicted to that vice as to be tempted by the shabby plight of Robinson, who had, if I may so express myself, no charms for a gamester. If he had, however, any such inclinations, he had no opportunity to follow them, for, before he could make any answer to Robinson's proposal, a strapping wench came up to Booth, and, taking hold of his arm, asked him to walk aside with her; saying, "What a pox, are you such a fresh cull that you do not know this fellow? why, he is a gambler, and committed for cheating at play. There is not such a pickpocket in the whole quad."⁵

A scene of altercation now ensued between Robinson and the lady, which ended in a bout at fisticuffs, in which the lady was greatly superior to the philosopher.

While the two combatants were engaged, a grave-looking man, rather better drest than the majority of the company, came up to Mr. Booth, and, taking him aside, said, "I am sorry, sir, to see a gentleman, as you appear to be, in such intimacy with that rascal, who makes no scruple of disowning all revealed religion. As for crimes, they are human errors, and signify but little; nay, perhaps the worse a man is by nature, the more room there is for grace. The spirit is active, and loves best to inhabit those minds where it may meet with the most work. Whatever your crime be, therefore I would not have you despair, but rather rejoice at it; for perhaps it may be the means of your being called." He ran on for a considerable time with this cant, without waiting for an answer, and ended in declaring himself a methodist.

Just as the methodist had finished his discourse, a beautiful young woman was ushered into the gaol. She was genteel and well drest, and did not in the least resemble those females whom Mr. Booth had hitherto seen. The constable had no sooner delivered her at the gate than she asked with a commanding voice for the keeper; and, when he arrived, she said to him, "Well, sir, whither am I to be conducted? I hope I am not to take up my lodging with these creatures." The keeper answered, with a kind of surly respect, "Madam, we have rooms for those who can afford to pay for them." At these words she pulled a handsome purse from her pocket, in which many guineas chinked, saying,

⁴ By removing the indictment by *certiorari* into the King's Bench, the trial is so long postponed, and the costs are so highly increased, that prosecutors are often tired out, and some incapacitated from pursuing. *Verbum sapienti.*]

⁵ A cant word for a prison.

with an air of indignation, "That she was not come thither on account of poverty." The keeper no sooner viewed the purse than his features became all softened in an instant; and, with all the courtesy of which he was master, he desired the lady to walk with him, assuring her that she should have the best apartment in his house.

Mr. Booth was now left alone; for the methodist had forsaken him, having, as the phrase of the sect is, searched him to the bottom. In fact, he had thoroughly examined every one of Mr. Booth's pockets; from which he had conveyed away a penknife and an iron snuff-box, these being all the moveables which were to be found.

Booth was standing near the gate of the prison when the young lady above mentioned was introduced into the yard. He viewed her features very attentively, and was persuaded that he knew her. She was indeed so remarkably handsome, that it was hardly possible for any who had ever seen her to forget her. He enquired of one of the underkeepers if the name of the prisoner lately arrived was not Matthews; to which he was answered that her name was not Matthews but Vincent, and that she was committed for murder.

The latter part of this information made Mr. Booth suspect his memory more than the former; for it was very possible that she might have changed her name; but he hardly thought she could so far have changed her nature as to be guilty of a crime so very incongruous with her former gentle manners: for Miss Matthews had both the birth and education of a gentlewoman. He concluded, therefore, that he was certainly mistaken, and rested satisfied without any further enquiry.

Chapter v.

Containing certain adventures which befel Mr. Booth in the prison

The remainder of the day Mr. Booth spent in melancholy contemplation on his present condition. He was destitute of the common necessities of life, and consequently unable to subsist where he was; nor was there a single person in town to whom he could, with any reasonable hope, apply for his delivery. Grief for some time banished the thoughts of food from his mind; but in the morning nature began to grow uneasy for want of her usual nourishment: for he had not eat a morsel during the last forty hours. A penny loaf, which is, it seems, the ordinary allowance to the prisoners in Bridewell, was now delivered him; and while he was eating this a man brought him a little packet sealed up, informing him that it came by a messenger, who said it required no answer.

Mr. Booth now opened his packet, and, after unfolding several pieces of blank paper successively, at last discovered a guinea, wrapt with great care in the inmost paper. He was vastly surprized at this sight, as he had few if any friends from whom he could expect such a favour, slight as it was; and not one of his friends, as he was apprized, knew of his confinement. As there was no direction to the packet, nor a word of writing contained in it, he began to suspect that it was delivered to the wrong person; and being one of the most untainted honesty, he found out the man who gave it him, and again examined him concerning the person who brought it, and the message delivered with it. The man assured Booth that he had made no mistake; saying, "If your name is Booth, sir, I am positive you are the gentleman to whom the parcel I gave you belongs."

The most scrupulous honesty would, perhaps, in such a situation, have been well enough satisfied in finding no owner for the guinea; especially when proclamation had been made in the prison that Mr. Booth had received a packet without any direction, to which, if any person had any claim, and would discover the contents, he was ready to deliver it to such claimant. No such claimant being found (I mean none who knew the contents; for many swore that they expected just such a packet, and believed it to be their property), Mr. Booth very calmly resolved to apply the money to his own use.

The first thing after redemption of the coat, which Mr. Booth, hungry as he was, thought of, was to supply himself with snuff, which he had long, to his great sorrow, been without. On this occasion he presently missed that iron box which the methodist had so dexterously conveyed out of his pocket, as we mentioned in the last chapter.

He no sooner missed this box than he immediately suspected that the gambler was the person who had stolen it; nay, so well was he assured of this man's guilt, that it may, perhaps, be improper to say he barely suspected it. Though Mr. Booth was, as we have hinted, a man of a very sweet disposition, yet was he rather overwarm. Having, therefore, no doubt concerning the person of the thief, he eagerly sought him out, and very bluntly charged him with the fact.

The gambler, whom I think we should now call the philosopher, received this charge without the least visible emotion either of mind or muscle. After a short pause of a few moments, he answered, with great solemnity, as follows: "Young man, I am entirely unconcerned at your groundless suspicion. He that censures a stranger, as I am to you, without any cause, makes a worse compliment to himself than to the stranger. You know yourself, friend; you know not me. It is true, indeed, you heard me accused of being a cheat and a gamester; but who is my accuser? Look at my apparel, friend; do thieves and gamesters wear such cloaths as these? play is my folly, not my vice; it is my impulse, and I have been a martyr to it. Would a gamester have asked another to play when he could have lost eighteen-pence and won nothing? However, if you are not satisfied, you may search my pockets; the outside of all but one will serve your turn, and in that one there is the eighteen-pence I told you of." He then turned up his cloaths; and his pockets entirely resembled the pitchers of the Belides.

Booth was a little staggered at this defence. He said the real value of the iron box was too inconsiderable to mention; but that he had a capricious value for it, for the sake of the person who gave it him; "for, though it is not," said he, "worth sixpence, I would willingly give a crown to any one who would bring it me again."

Robinson answered, "If that be the case, you have nothing more to do but to signify your intention in the prison, and I am well convinced you will not be long without regaining the possession of your snuff-box."

This advice was immediately followed, and with success, the methodist presently producing the box, which, he said, he had found, and should have returned it before, had he known the person to whom it belonged; adding, with uplifted eyes, that the spirit would not suffer him knowingly to detain the goods of another, however inconsiderable the value was. "Why so, friend?" said Robinson. "Have I not heard you often say, the wickeder any man was the better, provided he was what you call a believer?" "You mistake me," cries Cooper (for that was the name of the methodist): "no man can be wicked after he is possessed by the spirit. There is a wide difference between the days of sin and the days of grace. I have been a sinner myself." "I believe thee," cries Robinson, with a sneer. "I care not," answered the other, "what an atheist believes. I suppose you would insinuate that I stole the snuff-box; but I value not your malice; the Lord knows my innocence." He then walked off with the reward; and Booth, turning to Robinson, very earnestly asked pardon for his groundless suspicion; which the other, without any hesitation, accorded him, saying, "You never accused me, sir; you suspected some gambler, with whose character I have no concern. I should be angry with a friend or acquaintance who should give a hasty credit to any allegation against me; but I have no reason to be offended with you for believing what the woman, and the rascal who is just gone, and who is committed here for a pickpocket, which you did not perhaps know, told you to my disadvantage. And if you thought me to be a gambler you had just reason to suspect any ill of me; for I myself am confined here by the perjury of one of those villains, who, having cheated me of my money at play, and hearing that I intended to apply to a magistrate against him, himself began the attack, and obtained a warrant against me of Justice Thrasher, who, without hearing one speech in my defence, committed me to this place."

Booth testified great compassion at this account; and, he having invited Robinson to dinner, they spent that day together. In the afternoon Booth indulged his friend with a game at cards; at first for halfpence and afterwards for shillings, when fortune so favoured Robinson that he did not leave the other a single shilling in his pocket.

A surprizing run of luck in a gamester is often mistaken for somewhat else by persons who are not over-zealous believers in the divinity of fortune. I have known a stranger at Bath, who hath happened fortunately (I might almost say unfortunately) to have four by honours in his hand almost every time he dealt for a whole evening, shunned universally by the whole company the next day. And certain it is, that Mr. Booth, though of a temper very little inclined to suspicion, began to waver in his opinion whether the character given by Mr. Robinson of himself, or that which the others gave of him, was the truer.

In the morning hunger paid him a second visit, and found him again in the same situation as before. After some deliberation, therefore, he resolved to ask Robinson to lend him a shilling or two of that money which was lately his own. And this experiments he thought, would confirm him either in a good or evil opinion of that gentleman.

To this demand Robinson answered, with great alacrity, that he should very gladly have complied, had not fortune played one of her jade tricks with him: "for since my winning of you," said he, "I have been stript not only of your money but my own." He was going to harangue farther; but Booth, with great indignation, turned from him.

This poor gentleman had very little time to reflect on his own misery, or the rascality, as it appeared to him, of the other, when the same person who had the day before delivered him the

guinea from the unknown hand, again accosted him, and told him a lady in the house (so he expressed himself) desired the favour of his company.

Mr. Booth immediately obeyed the message, and was conducted into a room in the prison, where he was presently convinced that Mrs. Vincent was no other than his old acquaintance Miss Matthews.

Chapter vi
***Containing the extraordinary behaviour of Miss Matthews
on her meeting with Booth, and some endeavours
to prove, by reason and authority, that it is possible
for a woman to appear to be what she really is not***

Eight or nine years had past since any interview between Mr. Booth and Miss Matthews; and their meeting now in so extraordinary a place affected both of them with an equal surprize.

After some immaterial ceremonies, the lady acquainted Mr. Booth that, having heard there was a person in the prison who knew her by the name of Matthews, she had great curiosity to inquire who he was, whereupon he had been shewn to her from the window of the house; that she immediately recollected him, and, being informed of his distressful situation, for which she expressed great concern, she had sent him that guinea which he had received the day before; and then proceeded to excuse herself for not having desired to see him at that time, when she was under the greatest disorder and hurry of spirits.

Booth made many handsome acknowledgments of her favour; and added that he very little wondered at the disorder of her spirits, concluding that he was heartily concerned at seeing her there; "but I hope, madam," said he —

Here he hesitated; upon which, bursting into an agony of tears, she cried out, "O captain! captain! many extraordinary things have passed since last I saw you. O gracious heaven! did I ever expect that this would be the next place of our meeting?"

She then flung herself into her chair, where she gave a loose to her passion, whilst he, in the most affectionate and tender manner, endeavoured to soothe and comfort her; but passion itself did probably more for its own relief than all his friendly consolations. Having vented this in a large flood of tears, she became pretty well composed; but Booth unhappily mentioning her father, she again relapsed into an agony, and cried out, "Why? why will you repeat the name of that dear man? I have disgraced him, Mr. Booth, I am unworthy the name of his daughter." — Here passion again stopped her words, and discharged itself in tears.

After this second vent of sorrow or shame, or, if the reader pleases, of rage, she once more recovered from her agonies. To say the truth, these are, I believe, as critical discharges of nature as any of those which are so called by the physicians, and do more effectually relieve the mind than any remedies with which the whole materia medica of philosophy can supply it.

When Mrs. Vincent had recovered her faculties, she perceived Booth standing silent, with a mixture of concern and astonishment in his countenance; then addressing herself to him with an air of most bewitching softness, of which she was a perfect mistress, she said, "I do not wonder at your amazement, Captain Booth, nor indeed at the concern which you so plainly discover for me; for I well know the goodness of your nature: but, O, Mr. Booth! believe me, when you know what hath happened since our last meeting, your concern will be raised, however your astonishment may cease. O, sir! you are a stranger to the cause of my sorrows."

"I hope I am, madam," answered he; "for I cannot believe what I have heard in the prison — surely murder" — at which words she started from her chair, repeating, "Murder! oh! it is music in my ears! — You have heard then the cause of my commitment, my glory, my delight, my reparation! Yes, my old friend, this is the hand, this is the arm that drove the penknife to his heart. Unkind fortune, that not one drop of his blood reached my hand. — Indeed, sir, I would never have washed it from it. — But, though I have not the happiness to see it on my hand, I have the glorious satisfaction of remembering I saw it run in rivers on the floor; I saw it forsake his cheeks, I saw him fall a martyr

to my revenge. And is the killing a villain to be called murder? perhaps the law calls it so. – Let it call it what it will, or punish me as it pleases. – Punish me! – no, no – that is not in the power of man – not of that monster man, Mr. Booth. I am undone, am revenged, and have now no more business for life; let them take it from me when they will."

Our poor gentleman turned pale with horror at this speech, and the ejaculation of "Good heavens! what do I hear?" burst spontaneously from his lips; nor can we wonder at this, though he was the bravest of men; for her voice, her looks, her gestures, were properly adapted to the sentiments she expressed. Such indeed was her image, that neither could Shakspear describe, nor Hogarth paint, nor Clive act, a fury in higher perfection.

"What do you hear?" reiterated she. "You hear the resentment of the most injured of women. You have heard, you say, of the murder; but do you know the cause, Mr. Booth? Have you since your return to England visited that country where we formerly knew one another? tell me, do you know my wretched story? tell me that, my friend."

Booth hesitated for an answer; indeed, he had heard some imperfect stories, not much to her advantage. She waited not till he had formed a speech; but cried, "Whatever you may have heard, you cannot be acquainted with all the strange accidents which have occasioned your seeing me in a place which at our last parting was so unlikely that I should ever have been found in; nor can you know the cause of all that I have uttered, and which, I am convinced, you never expected to have heard from my mouth. If these circumstances raise your curiosity, I will satisfy it."

He answered, that curiosity was too mean a word to express his ardent desire of knowing her story. Upon which, with very little previous ceremony, she began to relate what is written in the following chapter.

But before we put an end to this it may be necessary to whisper a word or two to the critics, who have, perhaps, begun to express no less astonishment than Mr. Booth, that a lady in whom we had remarked a most extraordinary power of displaying softness should, the very next moment after the words were out of her mouth, express sentiments becoming the lips of a Dalila, Jezebel, Medea, Semiramis, Parysatis, Tanaquil, Livilla, Messalina, Agrippina, Brunichilde, Elfrida, Lady Macbeth, Joan of Naples, Christina of Sweden, Katharine Hays, Sarah Malcolm, Con Philips,⁶ or any other heroine of the tender sex, which history, sacred or profane, ancient or modern, false or true, hath recorded.

We desire such critics to remember that it is the same English climate, in which, on the lovely 10th of June, under a serene sky, the amorous Jacobite, kissing the odoriferous zephyr's breath, gathers a nosegay of white roses to deck the whiter breast of Celia; and in which, on the 11th of June, the very next day, the boisterous Boreas, roused by the hollow thunder, rushes horrible through the air, and, driving the wet tempest before him, levels the hope of the husbandman with the earth, dreadful remembrance of the consequences of the Revolution.

Again, let it be remembered that this is the selfsame Celia, all tender, soft, and delicate, who with a voice, the sweetness of which the Syrens might envy, warbles the harmonious song in praise of the young adventurer; and again, the next day, or, perhaps the next hour, with fiery eyes, wrinkled brows, and foaming lips, roars forth treason and nonsense in a political argument with some fair one of a different principle.

Or, if the critic be a Whig, and consequently dislikes such kind of similes, as being too favourable to Jacobitism, let him be contented with the following story:

I happened in my youth to sit behind two ladies in a side-box at a play, where, in the balcony on the opposite side, was placed the inimitable B – y C – s, in company with a young fellow of no very formal, or indeed sober, appearance. One of the ladies, I remember, said to the other – "Did you ever see anything look so modest and so innocent as that girl over the way? what pity it is such a

⁶ Though last not least.

creature should be in the way of ruin, as I am afraid she is, by her being alone with that young fellow!" Now this lady was no bad physiognomist, for it was impossible to conceive a greater appearance of modesty, innocence, and simplicity, than what nature had displayed in the countenance of that girl; and yet, all appearances notwithstanding, I myself (remember, critic, it was in my youth) had a few mornings before seen that very identical picture of all those engaging qualities in bed with a rake at a bagnio, smoaking tobacco, drinking punch, talking obscenity, and swearing and cursing with all the impudence and impiety of the lowest and most abandoned trull of a soldier.

Chapter vii. *In which Miss Matthews begins her history*

Miss Matthews, having barred the door on the inside as securely as it was before barred on the outside, proceeded as follows:

"You may imagine I am going to begin my history at the time when you left the country; but I cannot help reminding you of something which happened before. You will soon recollect the incident; but I believe you little know the consequence either at that time or since. Alas! I could keep a secret then! now I have no secrets; the world knows all; and it is not worth my while to conceal anything. Well! – You will not wonder, I believe. – I protest I can hardly tell it you, even now. – But I am convinced you have too good an opinion of yourself to be surprized at any conquest you may have made. – Few men want that good opinion – and perhaps very few had ever more reason for it. Indeed, Will, you was a charming fellow in those days; nay, you are not much altered for the worse now, at least in the opinion of some women; for your complexion and features are grown much more masculine than they were." Here Booth made her a low bow, most probably with a compliment; and after a little hesitation she again proceeded. – "Do you remember a contest which happened at an assembly, betwixt myself and Miss Johnson, about standing uppermost? you was then my partner; and young Williams danced with the other lady. The particulars are not now worth mentioning, though I suppose you have long since forgot them. Let it suffice that you supported my claim, and Williams very sneakingly gave up that of his partner, who was, with much difficulty, afterwards prevailed to dance with him. You said – I am sure I repeat the words exactly – that you would not for the world affront any lady there; but that you thought you might, without any such danger declare, that there was no assembly in which that lady, meaning your humble servant, was not worthy of the uppermost place; 'nor will I,' said you, 'suffer, the first duke in England, when she is at the uppermost end of the room, and hath called her dance, to lead his partner above her.'

"What made this the more pleasing to me was, that I secretly hated Miss Johnson. Will you have the reason? why, then, I will tell you honestly, she was my rival. That word perhaps astonishes you, as you never, I believe, heard of any one who made his addresses to me; and indeed my heart was, till that night, entirely indifferent to all mankind: I mean, then, that she was my rival for praise, for beauty, for dress, for fortune, and consequently for admiration. My triumph on this conquest is not to be expressed any more than my delight in the person to whom I chiefly owed it. The former, I fancy, was visible to the whole company; and I desired it should be so; but the latter was so well concealed, that no one, I am confident, took any notice of it. And yet you appeared to me that night to be an angel. You looked, you danced, you spoke-everything charmed me."

"Good Heavens!" cries Booth, "is it possible you should do me so much unmerited honour, and I should be dunce enough not to perceive the least symptom?"

"I assure you," answered she, "I did all I could to prevent you; and yet I almost hated you for not seeing through what I strove to hide. Why, Mr. Booth, was you not more quick-sighted? – I will answer for you – your affections were more happily disposed of to a much better woman than myself, whom you married soon afterwards. I should ask you for her, Mr. Booth; I should have asked you for her before; but I am unworthy of asking for her, or of calling her my acquaintance."

Booth stopt her short, as she was running into another fit of passion, and begged her to omit all former matters, and acquaint him with that part of her history to which he was an entire stranger.

She then renewed her discourse as follows: "You know, Mr. Booth, I soon afterwards left that town, upon the death of my grandmother, and returned home to my father's house; where I had not been long arrived before some troops of dragoons came to quarter in our neighbourhood. Among the officers there was a cornet whose detested name was Hebbers, a name I could scarce repeat, had I not at the same time the pleasure to reflect that he is now no more. My father, you know, who is a hearty

well-wisher to the present government, used always to invite the officers to his house; so did he these. Nor was it long before this cornet in so particular a manner recommended himself to the poor old gentleman (I cannot think of him without tears), that our house became his principal habitation, and he was rarely at his quarters, unless when his superior officers obliged him to be there. I shall say nothing of his person, nor could that be any recommendation to a man; it was such, however, as no woman could have made an objection to. Nature had certainly wrapt up her odious work in a most beautiful covering. To say the truth, he was the handsomest man, except one only, that I ever saw – I assure you, I have seen a handsomer – but – well. – He had, besides, all the qualifications of a gentleman; was genteel and extremely polite; spoke French well, and danced to a miracle; but what chiefly recommended him to my father was his skill in music, of which you know that dear man was the most violent lover. I wish he was not too susceptible of flattery on that head; for I have heard Hebbers often greatly commend my father's performance, and have observed that the good man was wonderfully pleased with such commendations. To say the truth, it is the only way I can account for the extraordinary friendship which my father conceived for this person; such a friendship, that he at last became a part of our family.

"This very circumstance, which, as I am convinced, strongly recommended him to my father, had the very contrary effect with me: I had never any delight in music, and it was not without much difficulty I was prevailed on to learn to play on the harpsichord, in which I had made a very slender progress. As this man, therefore, was frequently the occasion of my being importuned to play against my will, I began to entertain some dislike for him on that account; and as to his person, I assure you, I long continued to look on it with great indifference.

"How strange will the art of this man appear to you presently, who had sufficient address to convert that very circumstance which had at first occasioned my dislike into the first seeds of affection for him!

"You have often, I believe, heard my sister Betty play on the harpsichord; she was, indeed, reputed the best performer in the whole country.

"I was the farthest in the world from regarding this perfection of hers with envy. In reality, perhaps, I despised all perfection of this kind: at least, as I had neither skill nor ambition to excel this way, I looked upon it as a matter of mere indifference.

"Hebbers first put this emulation in my head. He took great pains to persuade me that I had much greater abilities of the musical kind than my sister, and that I might with the greatest ease, if I pleased, excel her; offering me, at the same time, his assistance if I would resolve to undertake it.

"When he had sufficiently inflamed my ambition, in which, perhaps, he found too little difficulty, the continual praises of my sister, which before I had disregarded, became more and more nauseous in my ears; and the rather, as, music being the favourite passion of my father, I became apprehensive (not without frequent hints from Hebbers of that nature) that she might gain too great a preference in his favour.

"To my harpsichord then I applied myself night and day, with such industry and attention, that I soon began to perform in a tolerable manner. I do not absolutely say I excelled my sister, for many were of a different opinion; but, indeed, there might be some partiality in all that.

"Hebbers, at least, declared himself on my side, and nobody could doubt his judgment. He asserted openly that I played in the better manner of the two; and one day, when I was playing to him alone, he affected to burst into a rapture of admiration, and, squeezing me gently by the hand, said, There, madam, I now declare you excel your sister as much in music as, added he in a whispering sigh, you do her, and all the world, in every other charm.

"No woman can bear any superiority in whatever thing she desires to excel in. I now began to hate all the admirers of my sister, to be uneasy at every commendation bestowed on her skill in music, and consequently to love Hebbers for the preference which he gave to mine.

"It was now that I began to survey the handsome person of Hebbers with pleasure. And here, Mr. Booth, I will betray to you the grand secret of our sex. – Many women, I believe, do, with great innocence, and even with great indifference, converse with men of the finest persons; but this I am confident may be affirmed with truth, that, when once a woman comes to ask this question of herself, Is the man whom I like for some other reason, handsome? her fate and his too, very strongly depend on her answering in the affirmative.

"Hebbers no sooner perceived that he had made an impression on my heart, of which I am satisfied I gave him too undeniable tokens, than he affected on a sudden to shun me in the most apparent manner. He wore the most melancholy air in my presence, and, by his dejected looks and sighs, firmly persuaded me that there was some secret sorrow labouring in his bosom; nor will it be difficult for you to imagine to what cause I imputed it.

"Whilst I was wishing for his declaration of a passion in which I thought I could not be mistaken, and at the same time trembling whenever we met with the apprehension of this very declaration, the widow Carey came from London to make us a visit, intending to stay the whole summer at our house.

"Those who know Mrs. Carey will scarce think I do her an injury in saying she is far from being handsome; and yet she is as finished a coquette as if she had the highest beauty to support that character. But perhaps you have seen her; and if you have I am convinced you will readily subscribe to my opinion."

Booth answered he had not; and then she proceeded as in the following chapter.

Chapter viii

The history of Miss Matthews continued

"This young lady had not been three days with us before Hebbers grew so particular with her, that it was generally observed; and my poor father, who, I believe, loved the cornet as if he had been his son, began to jest on the occasion, as one who would not be displeased at throwing a good jointure into the arms of his friend.

"You will easily guess, sir, the disposition of my mind on this occasion; but I was not permitted to suffer long under it; for one day, when Hebbers was alone with me, he took an opportunity of expressing his abhorrence at the thoughts of marrying for interest, contrary to his inclinations. I was warm on the subject, and, I believe, went so far as to say that none but fools and villains did so. He replied, with a sigh, Yes, madam, but what would you think of a man whose heart is all the while bleeding for another woman, to whom he would willingly sacrifice the world; but, because he must sacrifice her interest as well as his own, never durst even give her a hint of that passion which was preying on his very vitals? 'Do you believe, Miss Fanny, there is such a wretch on earth?' I answered, with an assumed coldness, I did not believe there was. He then took me gently by the hand, and, with a look so tender that I cannot describe it, vowed he was himself that wretch. Then starting, as if conscious of an error committed, he cried with a faltering voice, 'What am I saying? Pardon me, Miss Fanny; since I beg only your pity, I never will ask for more. – ' At these words, hearing my father coming up, I betrayed myself entirely, if, indeed, I had not done it before. I hastily withdrew my hand, crying, Hush! for heaven's sake, my father is just coming in; my blushes, my look, and my accent, telling him, I suppose, all which he wished to know.

"A few days now brought matters to an eclairsissement between us; the being undeceived in what had given me so much uneasiness gave me a pleasure too sweet to be resisted. To triumph over the widow, for whom I had in a very short time contracted a most inveterate hatred, was a pride not to be described. Hebbers appeared to me to be the cause of all this happiness. I doubted not but that he had the most disinterested passion for me, and thought him every way worthy of its return. I did return it, and accepted him as my lover.

"He declared the greatest apprehensions of my father's suspicion, though I am convinced these were causeless had his designs been honourable. To blind these, I consented that he should carry on sham addresses to the widow, who was now a constant jest between us; and he pretended from time to time to acquaint me faithfully with everything that past at his interviews with her; nor was this faithless woman wanting in her part of the deceit. She carried herself to me all the while with a shew of affection, and pretended to have the utmost friendship for me But such are the friendships of women!"

At this remark, Booth, though enough affected at some parts of the story, had great difficulty to refrain from laughter; but, by good luck, he escaped being perceived; and the lady went on without interruption.

"I am come now to a part of my narrative in which it is impossible to be particular without being tedious; for, as to the commerce between lovers, it is, I believe, much the same in all cases; and there is, perhaps, scarce a single phrase that hath not been repeated ten millions of times.

"One thing, however, as I strongly remarked it then, so I will repeat it to you now. In all our conversations, in moments when he fell into the warmest raptures, and exprest the greatest uneasiness at the delay of his joys, he seldom mentioned the word marriage; and never once solicited a day for that purpose. Indeed, women cannot be cautioned too much against such lovers; for though I have heard, and perhaps truly, of some of our sex, of a virtue so exalted, that it is proof against every temptation; yet the generality, I am afraid, are too much in the power of a man to whom they have owned an

affection. What is called being upon a good footing is, perhaps, being upon a very dangerous one; and a woman who hath given her consent to marry can hardly be said to be safe till she is married.

"And now, sir, I hasten to the period of my ruin. We had a wedding in our family; my musical sister was married to a young fellow as musical as herself. Such a match, you may be sure, amongst other festivities, must have a ball. Oh! Mr. Booth, shall modesty forbid me to remark to you what past on that occasion? But why do I mention modesty, who have no pretensions to it? Everything was said and practised on that occasion, as if the purpose had been to inflame the mind of every woman present. That effect, I freely own to you, it had with me. Music, dancing, wine, and the most luscious conversation, in which my poor dear father innocently joined, raised ideas in me of which I shall for ever repent; and I wished (why should I deny it?) that it had been my wedding instead of my sister's.

"The villain Hebbers danced with me that night, and he lost no opportunity of improving the occasion. In short, the dreadful evening came. My father, though it was a very unusual thing with him, grew intoxicated with liquor; most of the men were in the same condition; nay, I myself drank more than I was accustomed to, enough to inflame, though not to disorder. I lost my former bed-fellow, my sister, and – you may, I think, guess the rest – the villain found means to steal to my chamber, and I was undone.

"Two months I passed in this detested commerce, buying, even then, my guilty, half-tasted pleasures at too dear a rate, with continual horror and apprehension; but what have I paid since – what do I pay now, Mr. Booth? O may my fate be a warning to every woman to keep her innocence, to resist every temptation, since she is certain to repent of the foolish bargain. May it be a warning to her to deal with mankind with care and caution; to shun the least approaches of dishonour, and never to confide too much in the honesty of a man, nor in her own strength, where she has so much at stake; let her remember she walks on a precipice, and the bottomless pit is to receive her if she slips; nay, if she makes but one false step.

"I ask your pardon, Mr. Booth; I might have spared these exhortations, since no woman hears me; but you will not wonder at seeing me affected on this occasion."

Booth declared he was much more surprised at her being able so well to preserve her temper in recounting her story.

"O sir," answered she, "I am at length reconciled to my fate; and I can now die with pleasure, since I die revenged. I am not one of those mean wretches who can sit down and lament their misfortunes. If I ever shed tears, they are the tears of indignation. – But I will proceed.

"It was my fate now to solicit marriage; and I failed not to do it in the most earnest manner. He answered me at first with procrastinations, declaring, from time to time, he would mention it to my father; and still excusing himself for not doing it. At last he thought on an expedient to obtain a longer reprieve. This was by pretending that he should, in a very few weeks, be preferred to the command of a troop; and then, he said, he could with some confidence propose the match.

"In this delay I was persuaded to acquiesce, and was indeed pretty easy, for I had not yet the least mistrust of his honour; but what words can paint my sensations, when one morning he came into my room, with all the marks of dejection in his countenance, and, throwing an open letter on the table, said, 'There is news, madam, in that letter which I am unable to tell you; nor can it give you more concern than it hath given me.'

"This letter was from his captain, to acquaint him that the rout, as they call it, was arrived, and that they were to march within two days. And this, I am since convinced, was what he expected, instead of the preferment which had been made the pretence of delaying our marriage.

"The shock which I felt at reading this was inexpressible, occasioned indeed principally by the departure of a villain whom I loved. However, I soon acquired sufficient presence of mind to remember the main point; and I now insisted peremptorily on his making me immediately his wife, whatever might be the consequence.

"He seemed thunderstruck at this proposal, being, I suppose, destitute of any excuse: but I was too impatient to wait for an answer, and cried out with much eagerness, Sure you cannot hesitate a moment upon this matter – 'Hesitate! madam!' replied he – 'what you ask is impossible. Is this a time for me to mention a thing of this kind to your father?' – My eyes were now opened all at once – I fell into a rage little short of madness. Tell not me, I cried, of impossibilities, nor times, nor of my father – my honour, my reputation, my all are at stake. – I will have no excuse, no delay – make me your wife this instant, or I will proclaim you over the face of the whole earth for the greatest of villains. He answered, with a kind of sneer, 'What will you proclaim, madam? – whose honour will you injure?' My tongue faltered when I offered to reply, and I fell into a violent agony, which ended in a fit; nor do I remember anything more that past till I found myself in the arms of my poor affrighted father.

"O, Mr. Booth, what was then my situation! I tremble even now from the reflection. – I must stop a moment. I can go no farther." Booth attempted all in his power to soothe her; and she soon recovered her powers, and proceeded in her story.

Chapter ix

In which Miss Matthews concludes her relation

Before I had recovered my senses I had sufficiently betrayed myself to the best of men, who, instead of upbraiding me, or exerting any anger, endeavoured to comfort me all he could with assurances that all should yet be well. This goodness of his affected me with inexpressible sensations; I prostrated myself before him, embraced and kissed his knees, and almost dissolved in tears, and a degree of tenderness hardly to be conceived – But I am running into too minute descriptions.

"Hebbers, seeing me in a fit, had left me, and sent one of the servants to take care of me. He then ran away like a thief from the house, without taking his leave of my father, or once thanking him for all his civilities. He did not stop at his quarters, but made directly to London, apprehensive, I believe, either of my father or brother's resentment; for I am convinced he is a coward. Indeed his fear of my brother was utterly groundless; for I believe he would rather have thanked any man who had destroyed me; and I am sure I am not in the least behindhand with him in good wishes.

"All his inveteracy to me had, however, no effect on my father, at least at that time; for, though the good man took sufficient occasions to reprimand me for my past offence, he could not be brought to abandon me. A treaty of marriage was now set on foot, in which my father himself offered me to Hebbers, with a fortune superior to that which had been given with my sister; nor could all my brother's remonstrances against it, as an act of the highest injustice, avail.

"Hebbers entered into the treaty, though not with much warmth. He had even the assurance to make additional demands on my father, which being complied with, everything was concluded, and the villain once more received into the house. He soon found means to obtain my forgiveness of his former behaviour; indeed, he convinced me, so foolishly blind is female love, that he had never been to blame.

"When everything was ready for our nuptials, and the day of the ceremony was to be appointed, in the midst of my happiness I received a letter from an unknown hand, acquainting me (guess, Mr. Booth, how I was shocked at receiving it) that Mr. Hebbers was already married to a woman in a distant part of the kingdom.

"I will not tire you with all that past at our next interview. I communicated the letter to Hebbers, who, after some little hesitation, owned the fact, and not only owned it, but had the address to improve it to his own advantage, to make it the means of satisfying me concerning all his former delays; which, to say the truth, I was not so much displeased at imputing to any degree of villany, as I should have been to impute it to the want of a sufficient warmth of affection, and though the disappointment of all my hopes, at the very instant of their expected fruition, threw me into the most violent disorders; yet, when I came a little to myself, he had no great difficulty to persuade me that in every instance, with regard to me, Hebbers had acted from no other motive than from the most ardent and ungovernable love. And there is, I believe, no crime which a woman will not forgive, when she can derive it from that fountain. In short, I forgave him all, and am willing to persuade myself I am not weaker than the rest of my sex. Indeed, Mr. Booth, he hath a bewitching tongue, and is master of an address that no woman could resist. I do assure you the charms of his person are his least perfection, at least in my eye."

Here Booth smiled, but happily without her perceiving it.

"A fresh difficulty (continued she) now arose. This was to excuse the delay of the ceremony to my father, who every day very earnestly urged it. This made me so very uneasy, that I at last listened to a proposal, which, if any one in the days of my innocence, or even a few days before, had assured me I could have submitted to have thought of, I should have treated the supposition with the highest contempt and indignation; nay, I scarce reflect on it now with more horror than astonishment. In

short, I agreed to run away with him – to leave my father, my reputation, everything which was or ought to have been dear to me, and to live with this villain as a mistress, since I could not be his wife.

"Was not this an obligation of the highest and tenderest kind, and had I not reason to expect every return in the man's power on whom I had conferred it? "I will make short of the remainder of my story, for what is there of a woman worth relating, after what I have told you?"

"Above a year I lived with this man in an obscure court in London, during which time I had a child by him, whom Heaven, I thank it, hath been pleased to take to itself.

"During many months he behaved to me with all the apparent tenderness and even fondness imaginable; but, alas! how poor was my enjoyment of this compared to what it would have been in another situation? When he was present, life was barely tolerable: but, when he was absent, nothing could equal the misery I endured. I past my hours almost entirely alone; for no company but what I despised, would consort with me. Abroad I scarce ever went, lest I should meet any of my former acquaintance; for their sight would have plunged a thousand daggers in my soul. My only diversion was going very seldom to a play, where I hid myself in the gallery, with a daughter of the woman of the house. A girl, indeed, of good sense and many good qualities; but how much beneath me was it to be the companion of a creature so low! O heavens! when I have seen my equals glittering in a side-box, how have the thoughts of my lost honour torn my soul!"

"Pardon me, dear madam," cries Booth, "for interrupting you; but I am under the utmost anxiety to know what became of your poor father, for whom I have so great a respect, and who, I am convinced, must so bitterly feel your loss."

"O Mr. Booth," answered she, "he was scarce ever out of my thoughts. His dear image still obtruded itself in my mind, and I believe would have broken my heart, had I not taken a very preposterous way to ease myself. I am, indeed, almost ashamed to tell you; but necessity put it in my head. – You will think the matter too trifling to have been remembered, and so it surely was; nor should I have remembered it on any other occasion. You must know then, sir, that my brother was always my inveterate enemy and altogether as fond of my sister. – He once prevailed with my father to let him take my sister with him in the chariot, and by that means I was disappointed of going to a ball which I had set my heart on. The disappointment, I assure you, was great at the time; but I had long since forgotten it. I must have been a very bad woman if I had not, for it was the only thing in which I can remember that my father ever disobliged me. However, I now revived this in my mind, which I artificially worked up into so high an injury, that I assure you it afforded me no little comfort. When any tender idea intruded into my bosom, I immediately raised this phantom of an injury in my imagination, and it considerably lessened the fury of that sorrow which I should have otherwise felt for the loss of so good a father, who died within a few months of my departure from him.

"And now, sir, to draw to a conclusion. One night, as I was in the gallery at Drury-lane playhouse, I saw below me in a side-box (she was once below me in every place), that widow whom I mentioned to you before. I had scarce cast my eyes on this woman before I was so shocked with the sight that it almost deprived me of my senses; for the villain Hebberts came presently in and seated himself behind her.

"He had been almost a month from me, and I believed him to be at his quarters in Yorkshire. Guess what were my sensations when I beheld him sitting by that base woman, and talking to her with the utmost familiarity. I could not long endure this sight, and having acquainted my companion that I was taken suddenly ill, I forced her to go home with me at the end of the second act.

"After a restless and sleepless night, when I rose the next morning I had the comfort to receive a visit from the woman of the house, who, after a very short introduction, asked me when I had heard from the captain, and when I expected to see him? I had not strength or spirits to make her any answer, and she proceeded thus: – 'Indeed I did not think the captain would have used me so. My husband was an officer of the army as well as himself; and if a body is a little low in the world, I am sure that is no reason for folks to trample on a body. I defy the world to say as I ever was guilty of

an ill thing.' For heaven's sake, madam, says I, what do you mean? 'Mean?' cries she; 'I am sure, if I had not thought you had been Captain Hebbers' lady, his lawful lady too, you should never have set footing in my house. I would have Captain Hebbers know, that though I am reduced to let lodgings, I never have entertained any but persons of character.' – In this manner, sir, she ran on, saying many shocking things not worth repeating, till my anger at last got the better of my patience as well as my sorrow, and I pushed her out of the room.

"She had not been long gone before her daughter came to me, and, after many expressions of tenderness and pity, acquainted me that her mother had just found out, by means of the captain's servant, that the captain was married to another lady; 'which, if you did not know before, madam,' said she, 'I am sorry to be the messenger of such ill news.'

"Think, Mr. Booth, what I must have endured to see myself humbled before such a creature as this, the daughter of a woman who lets lodgings! However, having recollected myself a little, I thought it would be in vain to deny anything; so, knowing this to be one of the best-natured and most sensible girls in the world, I resolved to tell her my whole story, and for the future to make her my confidante. I answered her, therefore, with a good deal of assurance, that she need not regret telling me this piece of ill news, for I had known it before I came to her house.

"Pardon me, madam,' replied the girl, 'you cannot possibly have known it so long, for he hath not been married above a week; last night was the first time of his appearing in public with his wife at the play. Indeed, I knew very well the cause of your uneasiness there; but would not mention –'

"His wife at the play? answered I eagerly. What wife? whom do you mean?

"I mean the widow Carey, madam,' replied she, 'to whom the captain was married a few days since. His servant was here last night to pay for your lodging, and he told it my mother.'

"I know not what answer I made, or whether I made any. I presently fell dead on the floor, and it was with great difficulty I was brought back to life by the poor girl, for neither the mother nor the maid of the house would lend me any assistance, both seeming to regard me rather as a monster than a woman.

"Scarce had I recovered the use of my senses when I received a letter from the villain, declaring he had not assurance to see my face, and very kindly advising me to endeavour to reconcile myself to my family, concluding with an offer, in case I did not succeed, to allow me twenty pounds a-year to support me in some remote part of the kingdom.

"I need not mention my indignation at these proposals. In the highest agony of rage, I went in a chair to the detested house, where I easily got access to the wretch I had devoted to destruction, whom I no sooner found within my reach than I plunged a drawn penknife, which I had prepared in my pocket for the purpose, into his accursed heart. For this fact I was immediately seized and soon after committed hither; and for this fact I am ready to die, and shall with pleasure receive the sentence of the law.

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