

**HENRY
FIELDING**

AMELIA –
VOLUME 2

Henry Fielding
Amelia – Volume 2

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=25203183

Amelia – Volume 2:

Содержание

BOOK V	4
Chapter i.	4
Chapter ii	14
Chapter iii.	20
Chapter iv.	26
Chapter v.	34
Chapter vi.	40
Chapter VII.	48
Chapter VIII.	56
Chapter ix.	63
BOOK VI	69
Chapter i.	69
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	71

Henry Fielding

Amelia – Volume 2

BOOK V

Chapter i.

*In which the reader will meet
with an old acquaintance*

Booth's affairs were put on a better aspect than they had ever worn before, and he was willing to make use of the opportunity of one day in seven to taste the fresh air.

At nine in the morning he went to pay a visit to his old friend Colonel James, resolving, if possible, to have a full explanation of that behaviour which appeared to him so mysterious: but the colonel was as inaccessible as the best defended fortress; and it was as impossible for Booth to pass beyond his entry as the Spaniards found it to take Gibraltar. He received the usual answers; first, that the colonel was not stirring, and an hour after that he was gone out. All that he got by asking further questions was only to receive still ruder answers, by which, if he had been very sagacious, he might have been satisfied how little worth his

while it was to desire to go in; for the porter at a great man's door is a kind of thermometer, by which you may discover the warmth or coldness of his master's friendship. Nay, in the highest stations of all, as the great man himself hath his different kinds of salutation, from an hearty embrace with a kiss, and my dear lord or dear Sir Charles, down to, well Mr. — , what would you have me do? so the porter to some bows with respect, to others with a smile, to some he bows more, to others less low, to others not at all. Some he just lets in, and others he just shuts out. And in all this they so well correspond, that one would be inclined to think that the great man and his porter had compared their lists together, and, like two actors concerned to act different parts in the same scene, had rehearsed their parts privately together before they ventured to perform in public.

Though Booth did not, perhaps, see the whole matter in this just light, for that in reality it is, yet he was discerning enough to conclude, from the behaviour of the servant, especially when he considered that of the master likewise, that he had entirely lost the friendship of James; and this conviction gave him a concern that not only the flattering prospect of his lordship's favour was not able to compensate, but which even obliterated, and made him for a while forget the situation in which he had left his Amelia: and he wandered about almost two hours, scarce knowing where he went, till at last he dropt into a coffee-house near St James's, where he sat himself down.

He had scarce drank his dish of coffee before he heard a young

officer of the guards cry to another, "Od, d – n me, Jack, here he comes – here's old honour and dignity, faith." Upon which he saw a chair open, and out issued a most erect and stately figure indeed, with a vast periwig on his head, and a vast hat under his arm. This august personage, having entered the room, walked directly up to the upper end, where having paid his respects to all present of any note, to each according to seniority, he at last cast his eyes on Booth, and very civilly, though somewhat coldly, asked him how he did.

Booth, who had long recognized the features of his old acquaintance Major Bath, returned the compliment with a very low bow; but did not venture to make the first advance to familiarity, as he was truly possessed of that quality which the Greeks considered in the highest light of honour, and which we term modesty; though indeed, neither ours nor the Latin language hath any word adequate to the idea of the original.

The colonel, after having discharged himself of two or three articles of news, and made his comments upon them, when the next chair to him became vacant, called upon Booth to fill it. He then asked him several questions relating to his affairs; and, when he heard he was out of the army, advised him earnestly to use all means to get in again, saying that he was a pretty lad, and they must not lose him.

Booth told him in a whisper that he had a great deal to say to him on that subject if they were in a more private place; upon this the colonel proposed a walk in the Park, which the other readily

accepted.

During their walk Booth opened his heart, and, among other matters, acquainted Colonel Bath that he feared he had lost the friendship of Colonel James; "though I am not," said he, "conscious of having done the least thing to deserve it."

Bath answered, "You are certainly mistaken, Mr. Booth. I have indeed scarce seen my brother since my coming to town; for I have been here but two days; however, I am convinced he is a man of too nice honour to do anything inconsistent with the true dignity of a gentleman." Booth answered, "He was far from accusing him of anything dishonourable." – "D – n me," said Bath, "if there is a man alive can or dare accuse him: if you have the least reason to take anything ill, why don't you go to him? you are a gentleman, and his rank doth not protect him from giving you satisfaction." "The affair is not of any such kind," says Booth; "I have great obligations to the colonel, and have more reason to lament than complain; and, if I could but see him, I am convinced I should have no cause for either; but I cannot get within his house; it was but an hour ago a servant of his turned me rudely from the door." "Did a servant of my brother use you rudely?" said the colonel, with the utmost gravity. "I do not know, sir, in what light you see such things; but, to me, the affront of a servant is the affront of the master; and if he doth not immediately punish it, by all the dignity of a man, I would see the master's nose between my fingers." Booth offered to explain, but to no purpose; the colonel was got into his stilts; and it was

impossible to take him down, nay, it was as much as Booth could possibly do to part with him without an actual quarrel; nor would he, perhaps, have been able to have accomplished it, had not the colonel by accident turned at last to take Booth's side of the question; and before they separated he swore many oaths that James should give him proper satisfaction.

Such was the end of this present interview, so little to the content of Booth, that he was heartily concerned he had ever mentioned a syllable of the matter to his honourable friend.

[This chapter occurs in the original edition of *Amelia*, between 1 and 2. It is omitted later, and would have been omitted here but for an accident. As it had been printed it may as well appear: for though it has no great value it may interest some readers as an additional illustration of Fielding's dislike to doctors. – ED.]

Containing a brace of doctors and much physical matter.

He now returned with all his uneasiness to Amelia, whom he found in a condition very little adapted to relieve or comfort him. That poor woman was now indeed under very great apprehensions for her child, whose fever now began to rage very violently: and what was worse, an apothecary had been with her, and frightened her almost out of her wits. He had indeed represented the case of the child to be very desperate, and had prevailed on the mother to call in the assistance of a doctor.

Booth had been a very little time in the room before this doctor arrived, with the apothecary close at his heels, and both approached the bed, where the former felt the pulse of

the sick, and performed several other physical ceremonies.

He then began to enquire of the apothecary what he had already done for the patient; all which, as soon as informed, he greatly approved. The doctor then sat down, called for a pen and ink, filled a whole side of a sheet of paper with physic, then took a guinea, and took his leave; the apothecary waiting upon him downstairs, as he had attended him up.

All that night both Amelia and Booth sat up with their child, who rather grew worse than better. In the morning Mrs. Ellison found the infant in a raging fever, burning hot, and very light-headed, and the mother under the highest dejection; for the distemper had not given the least ground to all the efforts of the apothecary and doctor, but seemed to defy their utmost power, with all that tremendous apparatus of phials and gallypots, which were arranged in battle-array all over the room.

Mrs. Ellison, seeing the distress, and indeed distracted, condition of Amelia's mind, attempted to comfort her by giving her hopes of the child's recovery. "Upon my word, madam," says she, "I saw a child of much the same age with miss, who, in my opinion, was much worse, restored to health in a few days by a physician of my acquaintance. Nay, I have known him cure several others of very bad fevers; and, if miss was under his care, I dare swear she would do very well." "Good heavens! madam," answered Amelia, "why should you not mention him to me? For my part I have no acquaintance with any London physicians, nor do I know whom the apothecary hath brought me." "Nay,

madam," cries Mrs. Ellison, "it is a tender thing, you know, to recommend a physician; and as for my doctor, there are abundance of people who give him an ill name. Indeed, it is true, he hath cured me twice of fevers, and so he hath several others to my knowledge; nay, I never heard of any more than one of his patients that died; and yet, as the doctors and apothecaries all give him an ill character, one is fearful, you know, dear madam." Booth enquired the doctor's name, which he no sooner heard than he begged his wife to send for him immediately, declaring he had heard the highest character imaginable of him at the Tavern from an officer of very good understanding. Amelia presently complied, and a messenger was despatched accordingly.

But before the second doctor could be brought, the first returned with the apothecary attending him as before. He again surveyed and handled the sick; and when Amelia begged him to tell her if there was any hopes, he shook his head, and said, "To be sure, madam, miss is in a very dangerous condition, and there is no time to lose. If the blisters which I shall now order her, should not relieve her, I fear we can do no more." – "Would not you please, sir," says the apothecary, "to have the powders and the draught repeated?" "How often were they ordered?" cries the doctor. "Only *tertia* quaq. hora," says the apothecary. "Let them be taken every hour by all means," cries the doctor; "and – let me see, pray get me a pen and ink." – "If you think the child in such imminent danger," said Booth, "would you give us leave to call in another physician to your assistance – indeed my wife" – "Oh, by all means," said the doctor, "it

is what I very much wish. Let me see, Mr. Arsenic, whom shall we call?" "What do you think of Dr Dosewell?" said the apothecary. – "Nobody better," cries the physician. – "I should have no objection to the gentleman," answered Booth, "but another hath been recommended to my wife." He then mentioned the physician for whom they had just before sent. "Who, sir?" cries the doctor, dropping his pen; and when Booth repeated the name of Thompson, "Excuse me, sir," cries the doctor hastily, "I shall not meet him." – "Why so, sir?" answered Booth. "I will not meet him," replied the doctor. "Shall I meet a man who pretends to know more than the whole College, and would overturn the whole method of practice, which is so well established, and from which no one person hath pretended to deviate?" "Indeed, sir," cries the apothecary, "you do not know what you are about, asking your pardon; why, he kills everybody he comes near." "That is not true," said Mrs. Ellison. "I have been his patient twice, and I am alive yet." "You have had good luck, then, madam," answered the apothecary, "for he kills everybody he comes near." "Nay, I know above a dozen others of my own acquaintance," replied Mrs. Ellison, "who have all been cured by him." "That may be, madam," cries Arsenic; "but he kills everybody for all that – why, madam, did you never hear of Mr. – ? I can't think of the gentleman's name, though he was a man of great fashion; but everybody knows whom I mean." "Everybody, indeed, must know whom you mean," answered Mrs. Ellison; "for I never heard but of one, and that many years ago."

Before the dispute was ended, the doctor himself entered

the room. As he was a very well-bred and very good-natured man, he addressed himself with much civility to his brother physician, who was not quite so courteous on his side. However, he suffered the new comer to be conducted to the sick-bed, and at Booth's earnest request to deliver his opinion.

The dispute which ensued between the two physicians would, perhaps, be unintelligible to any but those of the faculty, and not very entertaining to them. The character which the officer and Mrs. Ellison had given of the second doctor had greatly prepossessed Booth in his favour, and indeed his reasoning seemed to be the juster. Booth therefore declared that he would abide by his advice, upon which the former operator, with his zany, the apothecary, quitted the field, and left the other in full possession of the sick.

The first thing the new doctor did was (to use his own phrase) to blow up the physical magazine. All the powders and potions instantly disappeared at his command; for he said there was a much readier and nearer way to convey such stuff to the vault, than by first sending it through the human body. He then ordered the child to be blooded, gave it a clyster and some cooling physic, and, in short (that I may not dwell too long on so unpleasing a part of history), within three days cured the little patient of her distemper, to the great satisfaction of Mrs. Ellison, and to the vast joy of Amelia.

Some readers will, perhaps, think this whole chapter might have been omitted; but though it contains no great

matter of amusement, it may at least serve to inform posterity concerning the present state of physic.]

Chapter ii

In which Booth pays a visit to the noble lord

When that day of the week returned in which Mr. Booth chose to walk abroad, he went to wait on the noble peer, according to his kind invitation.

Booth now found a very different reception with this great man's porter from what he had met with at his friend the colonel's. He no sooner told his name than the porter with a bow told him his lordship was at home: the door immediately flew wide open, and he was conducted to an ante-chamber, where a servant told him he would acquaint his lordship with his arrival. Nor did he wait many minutes before the same servant returned and ushered him to his lordship's apartment.

He found my lord alone, and was received by him in the most courteous manner imaginable. After the first ceremonials were over, his lordship began in the following words: "Mr. Booth, I do assure you, you are very much obliged to my cousin Ellison. She hath given you such a character, that I shall have a pleasure in doing anything in my power to serve you. – But it will be very difficult, I am afraid, to get you a rank at home. In the West Indies, perhaps, or in some regiment abroad, it may be more easy; and, when I consider your reputation as a soldier, I make no doubt of your readiness to go to any place where the service of your country shall call you." Booth answered, "That he was

highly obliged to his lordship, and assured him he would with great chearfulness attend his duty in any part of the world. The only thing grievous in the exchange of countries," said he, "in my opinion, is to leave those I love behind me, and I am sure I shall never have a second trial equal to my first. It was very hard, my lord, to leave a young wife big with her first child, and so affected with my absence, that I had the utmost reason to despair of ever seeing her more. After such a demonstration of my resolution to sacrifice every other consideration to my duty, I hope your lordship will honour me with some confidence that I shall make no objection to serve in any country." – "My dear Mr. Booth," answered the lord, "you speak like a soldier, and I greatly honour your sentiments. Indeed, I own the justice of your inference from the example you have given; for to quit a wife, as you say, in the very infancy of marriage, is, I acknowledge, some trial of resolution." Booth answered with a low bow; and then, after some immaterial conversation, his lordship promised to speak immediately to the minister, and appointed Mr. Booth to come to him again on the Wednesday morning, that he might be acquainted with his patron's success. The poor man now blushed and looked silly, till, after some time, he summoned up all his courage to his assistance, and relying on the other's friendship, he opened the whole affair of his circumstances, and confessed that he did not dare stir from his lodgings above one day in seven. His lordship expressed great concern at this account, and very kindly promised to take some opportunity of calling on him

at his cousin Ellison's, when he hoped, he said, to bring him comfortable tidings.

Booth soon afterwards took his leave with the most profuse acknowledgments for so much goodness, and hastened home to acquaint his Amelia with what had so greatly overjoyed him. She highly congratulated him on his having found so generous and powerful a friend, towards whom both their bosoms burnt with the warmest sentiments of gratitude. She was not, however, contented till she had made Booth renew his promise, in the most solemn manner, of taking her with him. After which they sat down with their little children to a scrag of mutton and broth, with the highest satisfaction, and very heartily drank his lordship's health in a pot of porter.

In the afternoon this happy couple, if the reader will allow me to call poor people happy, drank tea with Mrs. Ellison, where his lordship's praises, being again repeated by both the husband and wife, were very loudly echoed by Mrs. Ellison. While they were here, the young lady whom we have mentioned at the end of the last book to have made a fourth at whist, and with whom Amelia seemed so much pleased, came in; she was just returned to town from a short visit in the country, and her present visit was unexpected. It was, however, very agreeable to Amelia, who liked her still better upon a second interview, and was resolved to solicit her further acquaintance.

Mrs. Bennet still maintained some little reserve, but was much more familiar and communicative than before. She appeared,

moreover, to be as little ceremonious as Mrs. Ellison had reported her, and very readily accepted Amelia's apology for not paying her the first visit, and agreed to drink tea with her the very next afternoon.

Whilst the above-mentioned company were sitting in Mrs. Ellison's parlour, serjeant Atkinson passed by the window and knocked at the door. Mrs. Ellison no sooner saw him than she said, "Pray, Mr. Booth, who is that genteel young serjeant? he was here every day last week to enquire after you." This was indeed a fact; the serjeant was apprehensive of the design of Murphy; but, as the poor fellow had received all his answers from the maid of Mrs. Ellison, Booth had never heard a word of the matter. He was, however, greatly pleased with what he was now told, and burst forth into great praises of the serjeant, which were seconded by Amelia, who added that he was her foster-brother, and, she believed, one of the honestest fellows in the world.

"And I'll swear," cries Mrs. Ellison, "he is one of the prettiest. Do, Mr. Booth, desire him to walk in. A serjeant of the guards is a gentleman; and I had rather give such a man as you describe a dish of tea than any Beau Fribble of them all."

Booth wanted no great solicitation to shew any kind of regard to Atkinson; and, accordingly, the serjeant was ushered in, though not without some reluctance on his side. There is, perhaps, nothing more uneasy than those sensations which the French call the *mauvaise honte*, nor any more difficult to conquer; and poor Atkinson would, I am persuaded, have

mounted a breach with less concern than he shewed in walking across a room before three ladies, two of whom were his avowed well-wishers.

Though I do not entirely agree with the late learned Mr. Essex, the celebrated dancing-master's opinion, that dancing is the rudiment of polite education, as he would, I apprehend, exclude every other art and science, yet it is certain that persons whose feet have never been under the hands of the professors of that art are apt to discover this want in their education in every motion, nay, even when they stand or sit still. They seem, indeed, to be overburthened with limbs which they know not how to use, as if, when Nature hath finished her work, the dancing-master still is necessary to put it in motion.

Atkinson was, at present, an example of this observation which doth so much honour to a profession for which I have a very high regard. He was handsome, and exquisitely well made; and yet, as he had never learnt to dance, he made so awkward an appearance in Mrs. Ellison's parlour, that the good lady herself, who had invited him in, could at first scarce refrain from laughter at his behaviour. He had not, however, been long in the room before admiration of his person got the better of such risible ideas. So great is the advantage of beauty in men as well as women, and so sure is this quality in either sex of procuring some regard from the beholder.

The exceeding courteous behaviour of Mrs. Ellison, joined to that of Amelia and Booth, at length dissipated the uneasiness

of Atkinson; and he gained sufficient confidence to tell the company some entertaining stories of accidents that had happened in the army within his knowledge, which, though they greatly pleased all present, are not, however, of consequence enough to have a place in this history.

Mrs. Ellison was so very importunate with her company to stay supper that they all consented. As for the serjeant, he seemed to be none of the least welcome guests. She was, indeed, so pleased with what she had heard of him, and what she saw of him, that, when a little warmed with wine, for she was no flincher at the bottle, she began to indulge some freedoms in her discourse towards him that a little offended Amelia's delicacy, nay, they did not seem to be highly relished by the other lady; though I am far from insinuating that these exceeded the bounds of decorum, or were, indeed, greater liberties than ladies of the middle age, and especially widows, do frequently allow to themselves.

Chapter iii.

Relating principally to the affairs of serjeant Atkinson

The next day, when all the same company, Atkinson only excepted, assembled in Amelia's apartment, Mrs. Ellison presently began to discourse of him, and that in terms not only of approbation but even of affection. She called him her clever serjeant, and her dear serjeant, repeated often that he was the prettiest fellow in the army, and said it was a thousand pities he had not a commission; for that, if he had, she was sure he would become a general.

"I am of your opinion, madam," answered Booth; "and he hath got one hundred pounds of his own already, if he could find a wife now to help him to two or three hundred more, I think he might easily get a commission in a marching regiment; for I am convinced there is no colonel in the army would refuse him."

"Refuse him, indeed!" said Mrs. Ellison; "no; he would be a very pretty colonel that did. And, upon my honour, I believe there are very few ladies who would refuse him, if he had but a proper opportunity of soliciting them. The colonel and the lady both would be better off than with one of those pretty masters that I see walking about, and dragging their long swords after them, when they should rather drag their leading-strings."

"Well said," cries Booth, "and spoken like a woman of spirit. – Indeed, I believe they would be both better served."

"True, captain," answered Mrs. Ellison; "I would rather leave the two first syllables out of the word gentleman than the last."

"Nay, I assure you," replied Booth, "there is not a quieter creature in the world. Though the fellow hath the bravery of a lion, he hath the meekness of a lamb. I can tell you stories enow of that kind, and so can my dear Amelia, when he was a boy."

"O! if the match sticks there," cries Amelia, "I positively will not spoil his fortune by my silence. I can answer for him from his infancy, that he was one of the best-natured lads in the world. I will tell you a story or two of him, the truth of which I can testify from my own knowledge. When he was but six years old he was at play with me at my mother's house, and a great pointer-dog bit him through the leg. The poor lad, in the midst of the anguish of his wound, declared he was overjoyed it had not happened to miss (for the same dog had just before snapt at me, and my petticoats had been my defence). – Another instance of his goodness, which greatly recommended him to my father, and which I have loved him for ever since, was this: my father was a great lover of birds, and strictly forbad the spoiling of their nests. Poor Joe was one day caught upon a tree, and, being concluded guilty, was severely lashed for it; but it was afterwards discovered that another boy, a friend of Joe's, had robbed the nest of its young ones, and poor Joe had climbed the tree in order to restore them, notwithstanding which, he submitted to the punishment

rather than he would impeach his companion. But, if these stories appear childish and trifling, the duty and kindness he hath shewn to his mother must recommend him to every one. Ever since he hath been fifteen years old he hath more than half supported her: and when my brother died, I remember particularly, Joe, at his desire, for he was much his favourite, had one of his suits given him; but, instead of his becoming finer on that occasion, another young fellow came to church in my brother's cloaths, and my old nurse appeared the same Sunday in a new gown, which her son had purchased for her with the sale of his legacy."

"Well, I protest, he is a very worthy creature," said Mrs. Bennet.

"He is a charming fellow," cries Mrs. Ellison – "but then the name of serjeant, Captain Booth; there, as the play says, my pride brings me off again."

And whatsoever the sages charge on pride,
The angels' fall, and twenty other good faults beside;
On earth I'm sure – I'm sure – something – calling
Pride saves man, and our sex too, from falling. —

Here a footman's rap at the door shook the room. Upon which Mrs. Ellison, running to the window, cried out, "Let me die if it is not my lord! what shall I do? I must be at home to him; but suppose he should enquire for you, captain, what shall I say? or will you go down with me?"

The company were in some confusion at this instant, and

before they had agreed on anything, Booth's little girl came running into the room, and said, "There was a prodigious great gentleman coming up- stairs." She was immediately followed by his lordship, who, as he knew Booth must be at home, made very little or no enquiry at the door.

Amelia was taken somewhat at a surprize, but she was too polite to shew much confusion; for, though she knew nothing of the town, she had had a genteel education, and kept the best company the country afforded. The ceremonies therefore past as usual, and they all sat down.

His lordship soon addressed himself to Booth, saying, "As I have what I think good news for you, sir, I could not delay giving myself the pleasure of communicating it to you. I have mentioned your affair where I promised you, and I have no doubt of my success. One may easily perceive, you know, from the manner of people's behaving upon such occasions; and, indeed, when I related your case, I found there was much inclination to serve you. Great men, Mr. Booth, must do things in their own time; but I think you may depend on having something done very soon."

Booth made many acknowledgments for his lordship's goodness, and now a second time paid all the thanks which would have been due, even had the favour been obtained. This art of promising is the economy of a great man's pride, a sort of good husbandry in conferring favours, by which they receive tenfold in acknowledgments for every obligation, I mean among those who really intend the service; for there are others who cheat poor men

of their thanks, without ever designing to deserve them at all.

This matter being sufficiently discussed, the conversation took a gayer turn; and my lord began to entertain the ladies with some of that elegant discourse which, though most delightful to hear, it is impossible should ever be read.

His lordship was so highly pleased with Amelia, that he could not help being somewhat particular to her; but this particularity distinguished itself only in a higher degree of respect, and was so very polite, and so very distant, that she herself was pleased, and at his departure, which was not till he had far exceeded the length of a common visit, declared he was the finest gentleman she had ever seen; with which sentiment her husband and Mrs. Ellison both entirely concurred.

Mrs. Bennet, on the contrary, exprest some little dislike to my lord's complaisance, which she called excessive. "For my own part," said she, "I have not the least relish for those very fine gentlemen; what the world generally calls politeness, I term insincerity; and I am more charmed with the stories which Mrs. Booth told us of the honest serjeant than with all that the finest gentlemen in the world ever said in their lives!"

"O! to be sure," cries Mrs. Ellison; "*All for Love, or the World well Lost*, is a motto very proper for some folks to wear in their coat of arms; but the generality of the world will, I believe, agree with that lady's opinion of my cousin, rather than with Mrs. Bennet."

Mrs. Bennet, seeing Mrs. Ellison took offence at what she

said, thought proper to make some apology, which was very readily accepted, and so ended the visit.

We cannot however put an end to the chapter without observing that such is the ambitious temper of beauty, that it may always apply to itself that celebrated passage in Lucan,

*Nec quenquam jam ferre potest Caesarve priorem, Pompeiusve
parem.*

Indeed, I believe, it may be laid down as a general rule, that no woman who hath any great pretensions to admiration is ever well pleased in a company where she perceives herself to fill only the second place. This observation, however, I humbly submit to the judgment of the ladies, and hope it will be considered as retracted by me if they shall dissent from my opinion.

Chapter iv.

Containing matters that require no preface

When Booth and his wife were left alone together they both extremely exulted in their good fortune in having found so good a friend as his lordship; nor were they wanting in very warm expressions of gratitude towards Mrs. Ellison. After which they began to lay down schemes of living when Booth should have his commission of captain; and, after the exactest computation, concluded that, with economy, they should be able to save at least fifty pounds a-year out of their income in order to pay their debts.

These matters being well settled, Amelia asked Booth what he thought of Mrs. Bennet? "I think, my dear," answered Booth, "that she hath been formerly a very pretty woman." "I am mistaken," replied she, "if she be not a very good creature. I don't know I ever took such a liking to any one on so short an acquaintance. I fancy she hath been a very spritely woman, for, if you observe, she discovers by starts a great vivacity in her countenance." "I made the same observation," cries Booth: "sure some strange misfortune hath befallen her." "A misfortune, indeed!" answered Amelia; "sure, child, you forget what Mrs. Ellison told us, that she had lost a beloved husband. A misfortune which I have often wondered at any woman's surviving." At which words she cast a tender look at Booth, and presently afterwards, throwing herself upon his neck, cried, "O, Heavens!

what a happy creature am I! when I consider the dangers you have gone through, how I exult in my bliss!" The good-natured reader will suppose that Booth was not deficient in returning such tenderness, after which the conversation became too fond to be here related.

The next morning Mrs. Ellison addressed herself to Booth as follows: "I shall make no apology, sir, for what I am going to say, as it proceeds from my friendship to yourself and your dear lady. I am convinced then, sir, there is a something more than accident in your going abroad only one day in the week. Now, sir, if, as I am afraid, matters are not altogether as well as I wish them, I beg, since I do not believe you are provided with a lawyer, that you will suffer me to recommend one to you. The person I shall mention is, I assure you, of much ability in his profession, and I have known him do great services to gentlemen under a cloud. Do not be ashamed of your circumstances, my dear friend: they are a much greater scandal to those who have left so much merit unprovided for."

Booth gave Mrs. Ellison abundance of thanks for her kindness, and explicitly confessed to her that her conjectures were right, and, without hesitation, accepted the offer of her friend's assistance.

Mrs. Ellison then acquainted him with her apprehensions on his account. She said she had both yesterday and this morning seen two or three very ugly suspicious fellows pass several times by her window. "Upon all accounts," said she, "my dear sir, I

advise you to keep yourself close confined till the lawyer hath been with you. I am sure he will get you your liberty, at least of walking about within the verge. There's something to be done with the board of green-cloth; I don't know what; but this I know, that several gentlemen have lived here a long time very comfortably, and have defied all the vengeance of their creditors. However, in the mean time, you must be a close prisoner with your lady; and I believe there is no man in England but would exchange his liberty for the same gaol."

She then departed in order to send for the attorney, and presently afterwards the serjeant arrived with news of the like kind. He said he had scraped an acquaintance with Murphy. "I hope your honour will pardon me," cries Atkinson, "but I pretended to have a small demand upon your honour myself, and offered to employ him in the business. Upon which he told me that, if I would go with him to the Marshal's court, and make affidavit of my debt, he should be able very shortly to get it me; for I shall have the captain in hold," cries he, "within a day or two." "I wish," said the serjeant, "I could do your honour any service. Shall I walk about all day before the door? or shall I be porter, and watch it in the inside till your honour can find some means of securing yourself? I hope you will not be offended at me, but I beg you would take care of falling into Murphy's hands; for he hath the character of the greatest villain upon earth. I am afraid you will think me too bold, sir; but I have a little money; if it can be of any service, do, pray your honour, command it. It

can never do me so much good any other way. Consider, sir, I owe all I have to yourself and my dear mistress."

Booth stood a moment, as if he had been thunderstruck, and then, the tears bursting from his eyes, he said, "Upon my soul, Atkinson, you overcome me. I scarce ever heard of so – much goodness, nor do I know how to express my sentiments of it. But, be assured, as for your money, I will not accept it; and let it satisfy you, that in my present circumstances it would do me no essential service; but this be assured of likewise, that whilst I live I shall never forget the kindness of the offer. However, as I apprehend I may be in some danger of fellows getting into the house, for a day or two, as I have no guard but a poor little girl, I will not refuse the goodness you offer to shew in my protection. And I make no doubt but Mrs. Ellison will let you sit in her parlour for that purpose."

Atkinson, with the utmost readiness, undertook the office of porter; and Mrs. Ellison as readily allotted him a place in her back-parlour, where he continued three days together, from eight in the morning till twelve at night; during which time, he had sometimes the company of Mrs. Ellison, and sometimes of Booth, Amelia, and Mrs. Bennet too; for this last had taken as great a fancy to Amelia as Amelia had to her, and, therefore, as Mr. Booth's affairs were now no secret in the neighbourhood, made her frequent visits during the confinement of her husband, and consequently her own.

Nothing, as I remember, happened in this interval of time,

more worthy notice than the following card which Amelia received from her old acquaintance Mrs. James: – "Mrs. James sends her compliments to Mrs. Booth, and desires to know how she does; for, as she hath not had the favour of seeing her at her own house, or of meeting her in any public place, in so long time, fears it may be owing to ill health."

Amelia had long given over all thoughts of her friend, and doubted not but that she was as entirely given over by her; she was very much surprized at this message, and under some doubt whether it was not meant as an insult, especially from the mention of public places, which she thought so inconsistent with her present circumstances, of which she supposed Mrs. James was well apprized. However, at the entreaty of her husband, who languished for nothing more than to be again reconciled to his friend James, Amelia undertook to pay the lady a visit, and to examine into the mystery of this conduct, which appeared to her so unaccountable.

Mrs. James received her with a degree of civility that amazed Amelia no less than her coldness had done before. She resolved to come to an eclaircissement, and, having sat out some company that came in, when they were alone together Amelia, after some silence and many offers to speak, at last said, "My dear Jenny (if you will now suffer me to call you by so familiar a name), have you entirely forgot a certain young lady who had the pleasure of being your intimate acquaintance at Montpelier?" "Whom do you mean, dear madam?" cries Mrs. James with great concern.

"I mean myself," answered Amelia. "You surprize me, madam," replied Mrs. James: "how can you ask me that question?" "Nay, my dear, I do not intend to offend you," cries Amelia, "but I am really desirous to solve to myself the reason of that coldness which you shewed me when you did me the favour of a visit. Can you think, my dear, I was not disappointed, when I expected to meet an intimate friend, to receive a cold formal visitant? I desire you to examine your own heart and answer me honestly if you do not think I had some little reason to be dissatisfied with your behaviour?" "Indeed, Mrs. Booth," answered the other lady, "you surprize me very much; if there was anything displeasing to you in my behaviour I am extremely concerned at it. I did not know I had been defective in any of the rules of civility, but if I was, madam, I ask your pardon." "Is civility, then, my dear," replied Amelia, "a synonymous term with friendship? Could I have expected, when I parted the last time with Miss Jenny Bath, to have met her the next time in the shape of a fine lady, complaining of the hardship of climbing up two pair of stairs to visit me, and then approaching me with the distant air of a new or a slight acquaintance? Do you think, my dear Mrs. James, if the tables had been turned, if my fortune had been as high in the world as yours, and you in my distress and abject condition, that I would not have climbed as high as the monument to visit you?" "Sure, madam," cried Mrs. James, "I mistake you, or you have greatly mistaken me. Can you complain of my not visiting you, who have owed me a visit almost these three weeks? Nay, did I

not even then send you a card, which sure was doing more than all the friendship and good-breeding in the world required; but, indeed, as I had met you in no public place, I really thought you was ill."

"How can you mention public places to me," said Amelia, "when you can hardly be a stranger to my present situation? Did you not know, madam, that I was ruined?" "No, indeed, madam, did I not," replied Mrs. James; "I am sure I should have been highly concerned if! had." "Why, sure, my dear," cries Amelia, "you could not imagine that we were in affluent circumstances, when you found us in such a place, and in such a condition." "Nay, my dear," answered Mrs. James, "since you are pleased to mention it first yourself, I own I was a little surprized to see you in no better lodgings; but I concluded you had your own reasons for liking them; and, for my own part, I have laid it down as a positive rule never to enquire into the private affairs of any one, especially of my friends. I am not of the humour of some ladies, who confine the circle of their acquaintance to one part of the town, and would not be known to visit in the city for the world. For my part, I never dropt an acquaintance with any one while it was reputable to keep it up; and I can solemnly declare I have not a friend in the world for whom I have a greater esteem than I have for Mrs. Booth."

At this instant the arrival of a new visitant put an end to the discourse; and Amelia soon after took her leave without the least anger, but with some little unavoidable contempt for

a lady, in whose opinion, as we have hinted before, outward form and ceremony constituted the whole essence of friendship; who valued all her acquaintance alike, as each individual served equally to fill up a place in her visiting roll; and who, in reality, had not the least concern for the good qualities or well-being of any of them.

Chapter v.

Containing much heroic matter

At the end of three days Mrs. Ellison's friend had so far purchased Mr. Booth's liberty that he could walk again abroad within the verge without any danger of having a warrant backed against him by the board before he had notice. As for the ill-looking persons that had given the alarm, it was now discovered that another unhappy gentleman, and not Booth, was the object of their pursuit.

Mr. Booth, now being delivered from his fears, went, as he had formerly done, to take his morning walk in the Park. Here he met Colonel Bath in company with some other officers, and very civilly paid his respects to him. But, instead of returning the salute, the colonel looked him full in the face with a very stern countenance; and, if he could be said to take any notice of him, it was in such a manner as to inform him he would take no notice of him.

Booth was not more hurt than surprized at this behaviour, and resolved to know the reason of it. He therefore watched an opportunity till the colonel was alone, and then walked boldly up to him, and desired to know if he had given him any offence? The colonel answered hastily, "Sir, I am above being offended with you, nor do I think it consistent with my dignity to make you any answer." Booth replied, "I don't know, sir, that I have

done anything to deserve this treatment." "Look'ee, sir," cries the colonel, "if I had not formerly had some respect for you, I should not think you worth my resentment. However, as you are a gentleman born, and an officer, and as I have had an esteem for you, I will give you some marks of it by putting it in your power to do yourself justice. I will tell you therefore, sir, that you have acted like a scoundrel." "If we were not in the Park," answered Booth warmly, "I would thank you very properly for that compliment." "O, sir," cries the colonel, "we can be soon in a convenient place." Upon which Booth answered, he would attend him wherever he pleased. The colonel then bid him come along, and strutted forward directly up Constitution-hill to Hyde-park, Booth following him at first, and afterwards walking before him, till they came to that place which may be properly called the field of blood, being that part, a little to the left of the ring, which heroes have chosen for the scene of their exit out of this world.

Booth reached the ring some time before the colonel; for he mended not his pace any more than a Spaniard. To say truth, I believe it was not in his power: for he had so long accustomed himself to one and the same strut, that as a horse, used always to trotting, can scarce be forced into a gallop, so could no passion force the colonel to alter his pace.

At length, however, both parties arrived at the lists, where the colonel very deliberately took off his wig and coat, and laid them on the grass, and then, drawing his sword, advanced to Booth, who had likewise his drawn weapon in his hand, but had made

no other preparation for the combat.

The combatants now engaged with great fury, and, after two or three passes, Booth run the colonel through the body and threw him on the ground, at the same time possessing himself of the colonel's sword.

As soon as the colonel was become master of his speech, he called out to Booth in a very kind voice, and said, "You have done my business, and satisfied me that you are a man of honour, and that my brother James must have been mistaken; for I am convinced that no man who will draw his sword in so gallant a manner is capable of being a rascal. D – n me, give me a buss, my dear boy; I ask your pardon for that infamous appellation I dishonoured your dignity with; but d – n me if it was not purely out of love, and to give you an opportunity of doing yourself justice, which I own you have done like a man of honour. What may be the consequence I know not, but I hope, at least, I shall live to reconcile you with my brother."

Booth shewed great concern, and even horror in his countenance. "Why, my dear colonel," said he, "would you force me to this? for Heaven's sake tell me what I have ever done to offend you."

"Me!" cried the colonel. "Indeed, my dear child, you never did anything to offend me. – Nay, I have acted the part of a friend to you in the whole affair. I maintained your cause with my brother as long as decency would permit; I could not flatly contradict him, though, indeed, I scarce believed him. But what could I do?"

If I had not fought with you, I must have been obliged to have fought with him; however, I hope what is done will be sufficient, and that matters may be discomodated without your being put to the necessity of fighting any more on this occasion."

"Never regard me," cried Booth eagerly; "for Heaven's sake, think of your own preservation. Let me put you into a chair, and get you a surgeon."

"Thou art a noble lad," cries the colonel, who was now got on his legs, "and I am glad the business is so well over; for, though your sword went quite through, it slanted so that I apprehend there is little danger of life: however, I think there is enough done to put an honourable end to the affair, especially as you was so hasty to disarm me. I bleed a little, but I can walk to the house by the water; and, if you will send me a chair thither, I shall be obliged to you."

As the colonel refused any assistance (indeed he was very able to walk without it, though with somewhat less dignity than usual), Booth set forward to Grosvenor-gate, in order to procure the chair, and soon after returned with one to his friend; whom having conveyed into it, he attended himself on foot into Bond-street, where then lived a very eminent surgeon.

The surgeon having probed the wound, turned towards Booth, who was apparently the guilty person, and said, with a smile, "Upon my word, sir, you have performed the business with great dexterity."

"Sir," cries the colonel to the surgeon, "I would not have you

imagine I am afraid to die. I think I know more what belongs to the dignity of a man; and, I believe, I have shewn it at the head of a line of battle. Do not impute my concern to that fear, when I ask you whether there is or is not any danger?"

"Really, colonel," answered the surgeon, who well knew the complexion of the gentleman then under his hands, "it would appear like presumption to say that a man who hath been just run through the body is in no manner of danger. But this I think I may assure you, that I yet perceive no very bad symptoms, and, unless something worse should appear, or a fever be the consequence, I hope you may live to be again, with all your dignity, at the head of a line of battle."

"I am glad to hear that is your opinion," quoth the colonel, "for I am not desirous of dying, though I am not afraid of it. But, if anything worse than you apprehend should happen, I desire you will be a witness of my declaration that this young gentleman is entirely innocent. I forced him to do what he did. My dear Booth, I am pleased matters are as they are. You are the first man that ever gained an advantage over me; but it was very lucky for you that you disarmed me, and I doubt not but you have the equanimity to think so. If the business, therefore, hath ended without doing anything to the purpose, it was Fortune's pleasure, and neither of our faults."

Booth heartily embraced the colonel, and assured him of the great satisfaction he had received from the surgeon's opinion; and soon after the two combatants took their leave of each other. The

colonel, after he was drest, went in a chair to his lodgings, and Booth walked on foot to his; where he luckily arrived without meeting any of Mr. Murphy's gang; a danger which never once occurred to his imagination till he was out of it.

The affair he had been about had indeed so entirely occupied his mind, that it had obliterated every other idea; among the rest, it caused him so absolutely to forget the time of the day, that, though he had exceeded the time of dining above two hours, he had not the least suspicion of being at home later than usual.

Chapter vi.

In which the reader will find matter worthy his consideration

Amelia, having waited above an hour for her husband, concluded, as he was the most punctual man alive, that he had met with some engagement abroad, and sat down to her meal with her children; which, as it was always uncomfortable in the absence of her husband, was very short; so that, before his return, all the apparatus of dining was entirely removed.

Booth sat some time with his wife, expecting every minute when the little maid would make her appearance; at last, curiosity, I believe, rather than appetite, made him ask how long it was to dinner? "To dinner, my dear!" answered Amelia; "sure you have dined, I hope?" Booth replied in the negative; upon which his wife started from her chair, and bestirred herself as nimbly to provide him a repast as the most industrious hostess in the kingdom doth when some unexpected guest of extraordinary quality arrives at her house.

The reader hath not, I think, from any passages hitherto recorded in this history, had much reason to accuse Amelia of a blameable curiosity; he will not, I hope, conclude that she gave an instance of any such fault when, upon Booth's having so long overstayed his time, and so greatly mistaken the hour of the day,

and upon some other circumstances of his behaviour (for he was too honest to be good at concealing any of his thoughts), she said to him after he had done eating, "My dear, I am sure something more than ordinary hath happened to-day, and I beg you will tell me what is."

Booth answered that nothing of any consequence had happened; that he had been detained by a friend, whom he met accidentally, longer than he expected. In short, he made many shuffling and evasive answers, not boldly lying out, which, perhaps, would have succeeded, but poorly and vainly endeavouring to reconcile falsehood with truth; an attempt which seldom fails to betray the most practised deceiver.

How impossible was it therefore for poor Booth to succeed in an art for which nature had so entirely disqualified him. His countenance, indeed, confessed faster than his tongue denied, and the whole of his behaviour gave Amelia an alarm, and made her suspect something very bad had happened; and, as her thoughts turned presently on the badness of their circumstances, she feared some mischief from his creditors had befallen him; for she was too ignorant of such matters to know that, if he had fallen into the hands of the Philistines (which is the name given by the faithful to bailiffs), he would hardly have been able so soon to recover his liberty. Booth at last perceived her to be so uneasy, that, as he saw no hopes of contriving any fiction to satisfy her, he thought himself obliged to tell her the truth, or at least part of the truth, and confessed that he had had a little

skirmish with Colonel Bath, in which, he said, the colonel had received a slight wound, not at all dangerous; "and this," says he, "is all the whole matter." "If it be so," cries Amelia, "I thank Heaven no worse hath happened; but why, my dear, will you ever converse with that madman, who can embrace a friend one moment, and fight with him the next?" "Nay, my dear," answered Booth, "you yourself must confess, though he be a little too much on the *qui vive*, he is a man of great honour and good-nature." "Tell me not," replied she, "of such good-nature and honour as would sacrifice a friend and a whole family to a ridiculous whim. Oh, Heavens!" cried she, falling upon her knees, "from what misery have I escaped, from what have these poor babes escaped, through your gracious providence this day!" Then turning to her husband, she cried, "But are you sure the monster's wound is no more dangerous than you say? a monster surely I may call him, who can quarrel with a man that could not, that I am convinced would not, offend him."

Upon this question, Booth repeated the assurances which the surgeon had given them, perhaps with a little enlargement, which pretty well satisfied Amelia; and instead of blaming her husband for what he had done, she tenderly embraced him, and again returned thanks to Heaven for his safety.

In the evening Booth insisted on paying a short visit to the colonel, highly against the inclination of Amelia, who, by many arguments and entreaties, endeavoured to dissuade her husband from continuing an acquaintance in which, she said, she should

always foresee much danger for the future. However, she was at last prevailed upon to acquiesce; and Booth went to the colonel, whose lodgings happened to be in the verge as well as his own.

He found the colonel in his night-gown, and his great chair, engaged with another officer at a game of chess. He rose immediately, and, having heartily embraced Booth, presented him to his friend, saying, he had the honour to introduce to him as brave and as *fortitudinous* a man as any in the king's dominions. He then took Booth with him into the next room, and desired him not to mention a word of what had happened in the morning; saying, "I am very well satisfied that no more hath happened; however, as it ended in nothing, I could wish it might remain a secret." Booth told him he was heartily glad to find him so well, and promised never to mention it more to any one.

The game at chess being but just begun, and neither of the parties having gained any considerable advantage, they neither of them insisted on continuing it; and now the colonel's antagonist took his leave and left the colonel and Booth together.

As soon as they were alone, the latter earnestly entreated the former to acquaint him with the real cause of his anger; "for may I perish," cries Booth, "if I can even guess what I have ever done to offend either you, or your brother. Colonel James."

"Look'ee, child," cries the colonel; "I tell you I am for my own part satisfied; for I am convinced that a man who will fight can never be a rascal; and, therefore, why should you enquire any more of me at present? when I see my brother James, I hope

to reconcile all matters, and perhaps no more swords need be drawn on this occasion." But Booth still persisting in his desire, the colonel, after some hesitation, with a tremendous oath, cried out, "I do not think myself at liberty to refuse you after the indignity I offered you; so, since you demand it of me, I will inform you. My brother told me you had used him dishonourably, and had divellicated his character behind his back. He gave me his word, too, that he was well assured of what he said. What could I have done? though I own to you I did not believe him, and your behaviour since hath convinced me I was in the right; I must either have given him the lye, and fought with him, or else I was obliged to behave as I did, and fight with you. And now, my lad, I leave it to you to do as you please; but, if you are laid under any necessity to do yourself further justice, it is your own fault."

"Alas! colonel," answered Booth, "besides the obligations I have to the colonel, I have really so much love for him, that I think of nothing less than resentment. All I wish is to have this affair brought to an eclaircissement, and to satisfy him that he is in an error; for, though his assertions are cruelly injurious, and I have never deserved them, yet I am convinced he would not say what he did not himself think. Some rascal, envious of his friendship for me, hath belyed me to him; and the only resentment I desire is, to convince him of his mistake."

At these words the colonel grinned horribly a ghastly smile, or rather sneer, and answered, "Young gentleman, you may do as you please; but, by the eternal dignity of man, if any man

breathing had taken a liberty with my character – Here, here – Mr. Booth (shewing his fingers), here d – n me, should be his nostrils; he should breathe through my hands, and breathe his last, d – n me."

Booth answered, "I think, colonel, I may appeal to your testimony that I dare do myself justice; since he who dare draw his sword against you can hardly be supposed to fear any other person; but I repeat to you again that I love Colonel James so well, and am so greatly obliged to him, that it would be almost indifferent to me whether I directed my sword against his breast or my own."

The colonel's muscles were considerably softened by Booth's last speech; but he again contracted them into a vast degree of fierceness before he cried out – "Boy, thou hast reason enough to be vain; for thou art the first person that ever could proudly say he gained an advantage over me in combat. I believe, indeed, thou art not afraid of any man breathing, and, as I know thou hast some obligations to my brother, I do not discommend thee; for nothing more becomes the dignity of a man than gratitude. Besides, as I am satisfied my brother can produce the author of the slander – I say, I am satisfied of that – d – n me, if any man alive dares assert the contrary; for that would be to make my brother himself a liar – I will make him produce his author; and then, my dear boy, your doing yourself proper justice there will bring you finely out of the whole affair. As soon as my surgeon gives me leave to go abroad, which, I hope, will be in a few days,

I will bring my brother James to a tavern where you shall meet us; and I will engage my honour, my whole dignity to you, to make you friends."

The assurance of the colonel gave Booth great pleasure; for few persons ever loved a friend better than he did James; and as for doing military justice on the author of that scandalous report which had incensed his friend against him, not Bath himself was ever more ready, on such an occasion, than Booth to execute it. He soon after took his leave, and returned home in high spirits to his Amelia, whom he found in Mrs. Ellison's apartment, engaged in a party at ombre with that lady and her right honourable cousin.

His lordship had, it seems, had a second interview with the great man, and, having obtained further hopes (for I think there was not yet an absolute promise) of success in Mr. Booth's affairs, his usual good-nature brought him immediately to acquaint Mr. Booth with it. As he did not therefore find him at home, and as he met with the two ladies together, he resolved to stay till his friend's return, which he was assured would not be long, especially as he was so lucky, he said, to have no particular engagement that whole evening.

We remarked before that his lordship, at the first interview with Amelia, had distinguished her by a more particular address from the other ladies; but that now appeared to be rather owing to his perfect good-breeding, as she was then to be considered as the mistress of the house, than from any other preference. His present behaviour made this still more manifest; for, as he was

now in Mrs. Ellison's apartment, though she was his relation and an old acquaintance, he applied his conversation rather more to her than to Amelia. His eyes, indeed, were now and then guilty of the contrary distinction, but this was only by stealth; for they constantly withdrew the moment they were discovered. In short, he treated Amelia with the greatest distance, and at the same time with the most profound and awful respect; his conversation was so general, so lively, and so obliging, that Amelia, when she added to his agreeableness the obligations she had to him for his friendship to Booth, was certainly as much pleased with his lordship as any virtuous woman can possibly be with any man, besides her own husband.

Chapter VII.

Containing various matters

We have already mentioned the good-humour in which Booth returned home; and the reader will easily believe it was not a little increased by the good-humour in which he found his company. My lord received him with the utmost marks of friendship and affection, and told him that his affairs went on as well almost as he himself could desire, and that he doubted not very soon to wish him joy of a company.

When Booth had made a proper return to all his lordship's unparalleled goodness, he whispered Amelia that the colonel was entirely out of danger, and almost as well as himself. This made her satisfaction complete, threw her into such spirits, and gave such a lustre to her eyes, that her face, as Horace says, was too dazzling to be looked at; it was certainly too handsome to be looked at without the highest admiration.

His lordship departed about ten o'clock, and left the company in raptures with him, especially the two ladies, of whom it is difficult to say which exceeded the other in his commendations. Mrs. Ellison swore she believed he was the best of all humankind; and Amelia, without making any exception, declared he was the finest gentleman and most agreeable man she had ever seen in her life; adding, it was great pity he should remain single. "That's true, indeed," cries Mrs. Ellison, "and I have often lamented it;

nay, I am astonished at it, considering the great liking he always shews for our sex, and he may certainly have the choice of all. The real reason, I believe, is, his fondness for his sister's children. I declare, madam, if you was to see his behaviour to them, you would think they were his own. Indeed he is vastly fond of all manner of children." "Good creature!" cries Amelia; "if ever he doth me the honour of another visit I am resolved I will shew him my little things. I think, Mrs. Ellison, as you say my lord loves children, I may say, without vanity, he will not see many such." "No, indeed, will he not," answered Mrs. Ellison: "and now I think on't, madam, I wonder at my own stupidity in never making the offer before; but since you put it into my head, if you will give me leave, I'll take master and miss to wait on my lord's nephew and niece. They are very pretty behaved children; and little master and miss will be, I dare swear, very happy in their acquaintance; besides, if my lord himself should see them, I know what will happen; for he is the most generous of all human beings."

Amelia very readily accepted the favour which Mrs. Ellison offered her; but Booth exprest some reluctance. "Upon my word, my dear," said he, with a smile, "this behaviour of ours puts me in mind of the common conduct of beggars; who, whenever they receive a favour, are sure to send other objects to the same fountain of charity. Don't we, my dear, repay our obligations to my lord in the same manner, by sending our children a begging to him?"

"O beastly!" cries Mrs. Ellison; "how could such a thought enter your brains? I protest, madam, I begin to grow ashamed of this husband of yours. How can you have so vulgar a way of thinking? Begging, indeed! the poor little dear things a begging! If my lord was capable of such a thought, though he was my own brother instead of my cousin, I should scorn him too much ever to enter his doors." "O dear madam!" answered Amelia, "you take Mr. Booth too seriously, when he was only in jest; and the children shall wait upon you whenever you please."

Though Booth had been a little more in earnest than Amelia had represented him, and was not, perhaps, quite so much in the wrong as he was considered by Mrs. Ellison, yet, seeing there were two to one against him, he wisely thought proper to recede, and let his simile go off with that air of a jest which his wife had given it.

Mrs. Ellison, however, could not let it pass without paying some compliments to Amelia's understanding, nor without some obscure reflexions upon Booth, with whom she was more offended than the matter required. She was indeed a woman of most profuse generosity, and could not bear a thought which she deemed vulgar or sneaking. She afterwards launched forth the most profuse encomiums of his lordship's liberality, and concluded the evening with some instances which he had given of that virtue which, if not the noblest, is, perhaps, one of the most useful to society with which great and rich men can be endowed.

The next morning early, serjeant Atkinson came to wait on

lieutenant Booth, and desired to speak with his honour in private. Upon which the lieutenant and serjeant took a walk together in the Park. Booth expected every minute when the serjeant would open his mouth; under which expectation he continued till he came to the end of the mall, and so he might have continued till he came to the end of the world; for, though several words stood at the end of the serjeant's lips, there they were likely to remain for ever. He was, indeed, in the condition of a miser, whom a charitable impulse hath impelled to draw a few pence to the edge of his pocket, where they are altogether as secure as if they were in the bottom; for, as the one hath not the heart to part with a farthing, so neither had the other the heart to speak a word.

Booth at length, wondering that the serjeant did not speak, asked him, What his business was? when the latter with a stammering voice began the following apology: "I hope, sir, your honour will not be angry, nor take anything amiss of me. I do assure you, it was not of my seeking, nay, I dare not proceed in the matter without first asking your leave. Indeed, if I had taken any liberties from the goodness you have been pleased to shew me, I should look upon myself as one of the most worthless and despicable of wretches; but nothing is farther from my thoughts. I know the distance which is between us; and, because your honour hath been so kind and good as to treat me with more familiarity than any other officer ever did, if I had been base enough to take any freedoms, or to encroach upon your honour's goodness, I should deserve to be whipt through the regiment. I

hope, therefore, sir, you will not suspect me of any such attempt."

"What can all this mean, Atkinson?" cries Booth; "what mighty matter would you introduce with all this previous apology?"

"I am almost ashamed and afraid to mention it," answered the serjeant; "and yet I am sure your honour will believe what I have said, and not think anything owing to my own presumption; and, at the same time, I have no reason to think you would do anything to spoil my fortune in an honest way, when it is dropt into my lap without my own seeking. For may I perish if it is not all the lady's own goodness, and I hope in Heaven, with your honour's leave, I shall live to make her amends for it." In a word, that we may not detain the reader's curiosity quite so long as he did Booth's, he acquainted that gentleman that he had had an offer of marriage from a lady of his acquaintance, to whose company he had introduced him, and desired his permission to accept of it.

Booth must have been very dull indeed if, after what the serjeant had said, and after what he had heard Mrs. Ellison say, he had wanted any information concerning the lady. He answered him briskly and chearfully, that he had his free consent to marry any woman whatever; "and the greater and richer she is," added he, "the more I shall be pleased with the match. I don't enquire who the lady is," said he, smiling, "but I hope she will make as good a wife as, I am convinced, her husband will deserve."

"Your honour hath been always too good to me," cries Atkinson; "but this I promise you, I will do all in my power to

merit the kindness she is pleased to shew me. I will be bold to say she will marry an honest man, though he is but a poor one; and she shall never want anything which I can give her or do for her, while my name is Joseph Atkinson."

"And so her name is a secret, Joe, is it?" cries Booth.

"Why, sir," answered the serjeant, "I hope your honour will not insist upon knowing that, as I think it would be dishonourable in me to mention it."

"Not at all," replied Booth; "I am the farthest in the world from any such desire. I know thee better than to imagine thou wouldst disclose the name of a fair lady." Booth then shook Atkinson heartily by the hand, and assured him earnestly of the joy he had in his good fortune; for which the good serjeant failed not of making all proper acknowledgments. After which they parted, and Booth returned home.

As Mrs. Ellison opened the door, Booth hastily rushed by; for he had the utmost difficulty to prevent laughing in her face. He ran directly up-stairs, and, throwing himself into a chair, discharged such a fit of laughter as greatly surprized, and at first almost frightened, his wife.

Amelia, it will be supposed, presently enquired into the cause of this phenomenon, with which Booth, as soon as he was able (for that was not within a few minutes), acquainted her. The news did not affect her in the same manner it had affected her husband. On the contrary, she cried, "I protest I cannot guess what makes you see it in so ridiculous a light. I really think Mrs. Ellison hath

chosen very well. I am convinced Joe will make her one of the best of husbands; and, in my opinion, that is the greatest blessing a woman can be possessed of."

However, when Mrs. Ellison came into her room a little while afterwards to fetch the children, Amelia became of a more risible disposition, especially when the former, turning to Booth, who was then present, said, "So, captain, my jantee-serjeant was very early here this morning. I scolded my maid heartily for letting him wait so long in the entry like a lacquais, when she might have shewn him into my inner apartment." At which words Booth burst out into a very loud laugh; and Amelia herself could no more prevent laughing than she could blushing.

"Heyday!" cries Mrs. Ellison; "what have I said to cause all this mirth?" and at the same time blushed, and looked very silly, as is always the case with persons who suspect themselves to be the objects of laughter, without absolutely taking what it is which makes them ridiculous.

Booth still continued laughing; but Amelia, composing her muscles, said, "I ask your pardon, dear Mrs. Ellison; but Mr. Booth hath been in a strange giggling humour all this morning; and I really think it is infectious."

"I ask your pardon, too, madam," cries Booth, "but one is sometimes unaccountably foolish."

"Nay, but seriously," said she, "what is the matter? – something I said about the serjeant, I believe; but you may laugh as much as you please; I am not ashamed of owning I think him

one of the prettiest fellows I ever saw in my life; and, I own, I scolded my maid at suffering him to wait in my entry; and where is the mighty ridiculous matter, pray?"

"None at all," answered Booth; "and I hope the next time he will be ushered into your inner apartment."

"Why should he not, sir?" replied she, "for, wherever he is ushered, I am convinced he will behave himself as a gentleman should."

Here Amelia put an end to the discourse, or it might have proceeded to very great lengths; for Booth was of a waggish inclination, and Mrs. Ellison was not a lady of the nicest delicacy.

Chapter VIII.

The heroic behaviour of Colonel Bath

Booth went this morning to pay a second visit to the colonel, where he found Colonel James. Both the colonel and the lieutenant appeared a little shocked at their first meeting, but matters were soon cleared up; for the former presently advanced to the latter, shook him heartily by the hand, and said, "Mr. Booth, I am ashamed to see you; for I have injured you, and I heartily ask your pardon. I am now perfectly convinced that what I hinted to my brother, and which I find had like to have produced such fatal consequences, was entirely groundless. If you will be contented with my asking your pardon, and spare me the disagreeable remembrance of what led me into my error, I shall esteem it as the highest obligation."

Booth answered, "As to what regards yourself, my dear colonel, I am abundantly satisfied; but, as I am convinced some rascal hath been my enemy with you in the cruellest manner, I hope you will not deny me the opportunity of kicking him through the world."

"By all the dignity of man," cries Colonel Bath, "the boy speaks with spirit, and his request is reasonable."

Colonel James hesitated a moment, and then whispered Booth that he would give him all the satisfaction imaginable concerning the whole affair when they were alone together; upon which,

Booth addressing himself to Colonel Bath, the discourse turned on other matters during the remainder of the visit, which was but short, and then both went away together, leaving Colonel Bath as well as it was possible to expect, more to the satisfaction of Booth than of Colonel James, who would not have been displeased if his wound had been more dangerous; for he was grown somewhat weary of a disposition that he rather called captious than heroic, and which, as he every day more and more hated his wife, he apprehended might some time or other give him some trouble; for Bath was the most affectionate of brothers, and had often sworn, in the presence of James, that he would eat any man alive who should use his sister ill.

Colonel Bath was well satisfied that his brother and the lieutenant were gone out with a design of tilting, from which he offered not a syllable to dissuade them, as he was convinced it was right, and that Booth could not in honour take, nor the colonel give, any less satisfaction. When they had been gone therefore about half an hour, he rang his bell to enquire if there was any news of his brother; a question which he repeated every ten minutes for the space of two hours, when, having heard nothing of him, he began to conclude that both were killed on the spot.

While he was in this state of anxiety his sister came to see him; for, notwithstanding his desire of keeping it a secret, the duel had blazed all over the town. After receiving some kind congratulations on his safety, and some unkind hints concerning

the warmth of his temper, the colonel asked her when she had seen her husband? she answered not that morning. He then communicated to her his suspicion, told her he was convinced his brother had drawn his sword that day, and that, as neither of them had heard anything from him, he began to apprehend the worst that could happen.

Neither Miss Bellamy nor Mrs. Gibber were ever in a greater consternation on the stage than now appeared in the countenance of Mrs. James. "Good Heavens! brother," cries she; "what do you tell me? you have frightened me to death. Let your man get me a glass of water immediately, if you have not a mind to see me die before your face. When, where, how was this quarrel? why did you not prevent it if you knew of it? is it not enough to be every day tormenting me with hazarding your own life, but must you bring the life of one who you know must be, and ought to be, so much the dearest of all to me, into danger? take your sword, brother, take your sword, and plunge it into my bosom; it would be kinder of you than to fill it with such dreads and terrors." Here she swallowed the glass of water, and then threw herself back in her chair, as if she had intended to faint away.

Perhaps, if she had so, the colonel would have lent her no assistance, for she had hurt him more than by ten thousand stabs. He sat erect in his chair, with his eyebrows knit, his forehead wrinkled, his eyes flashing fire, his teeth grating against each other, and breathing horror all round him. In this posture he sat for some time silent, casting disdainful looks at his sister. At

last his voice found its way through a passion which had almost choaked him, and he cried out, "Sister, what have I done to deserve the opinion you express of me? which of my actions hath made you conclude that I am a rascal and a coward? look at that poor sword, which never woman yet saw but in its sheath; what hath that done to merit your desire that it should be contaminated with the blood of a woman?"

"Alas! brother," cried she, "I know not what you say; you are desirous, I believe, to terrify me out of the little senses I have left. What can I have said, in the agonies of grief into which you threw me, to deserve this passion?"

"What have you said?" answered the colonel: "you have said that which, if a man had spoken, nay, d – n me, if he had but hinted that he durst even think, I would have made him eat my sword; by all the dignity of man, I would have crumbled his soul into powder. But I consider that the words were spoken by a woman, and I am calm again. Consider, my dear, that you are my sister, and behave yourself with more spirit. I have only mentioned to you my surmise. It may not have happened as I suspect; but, let what will have happened, you will have the comfort that your husband hath behaved himself with becoming dignity, and lies in the bed of honour."

"Talk not to me of such comfort," replied the lady; "it is a loss I cannot survive. But why do I sit here lamenting myself? I will go this instant and know the worst of my fate, if my trembling limbs will carry me to my coach. Good morrow, dear brother; whatever

becomes of me, I am glad to find you out of danger." The colonel paid her his proper compliments, and she then left the room, but returned instantly back, saying, "Brother, I must beg the favour of you to let your footman step to my mantua-maker; I am sure it is a miracle, in my present distracted condition, how it came into my head." The footman was presently summoned, and Mrs. James delivered him his message, which was to countermand the orders which she had given that very morning to make her up a new suit of brocade. "Heaven knows," says she, "now when I can wear brocade, or whether ever I shall wear it." And now, having repeated her message with great exactness, lest there should be any mistake, she again lamented her wretched situation, and then departed, leaving the colonel in full expectation of hearing speedy news of the fatal issue of the battle.

But, though the reader should entertain the same curiosity, we must be excused from satisfying it till we have first accounted for an incident which we have related in this very chapter, and which, we think, deserves some solution. The critic, I am convinced, already is apprized that I mean the friendly behaviour of James to Booth, which, from what we had before recorded, seemed so little to be expected.

It must be remembered that the anger which the former of these gentlemen had conceived against the latter arose entirely from the false account given by Miss Matthews of Booth, whom that lady had accused to Colonel James of having as basely as wickedly traduced his character.

Now, of all the ministers of vengeance, there are none with whom the devil deals so treacherously as with those whom he employs in executing the mischievous purposes of an angry mistress; for no sooner is revenge executed on an offending lover that it is sure to be repented; and all the anger which before raged against the beloved object, returns with double fury on the head of his assassin.

Miss Matthews, therefore, no, sooner heard that Booth was killed (for so was the report at first, and by a colonel of the army) than she immediately concluded it to be James. She was extremely shocked with the news, and her heart instantly began to relent. All the reasons on which she had founded her love recurred, in the strongest and liveliest colours, to her mind, and all the causes of her hatred sunk down and disappeared; or, if the least remembrance of anything which had disobliged her remained, her heart became his zealous advocate, and soon satisfied her that her own fates were more to be blamed than he, and that, without being a villain, he could have acted no otherwise than he had done.

In this temper of mind she looked on herself as the murderer of an innocent man, and, what to her was much worse, of the man she had loved, and still did love, with all the violence imaginable. She looked on James as the tool with which she had done this murder; and, as it is usual for people who have rashly or inadvertently made any animate or inanimate thing the instrument of mischief to hate the innocent means by which the

mischief was effected (for this is a subtle method which the mind invents to excuse ourselves, the last objects on whom we would willingly wreak our vengeance), so Miss Matthews now hated and cursed James as the efficient cause of that act which she herself had contrived and laboured to carry into execution.

She sat down therefore in a furious agitation, little short of madness, and wrote the following letter:

"I Hope this will find you in the hands of justice, for the murder of one of the best friends that ever man was blest with. In one sense, indeed, he may seem to have deserved his fate, by chusing a fool for a friend; for who but a fool would have believed what the anger and rage of an injured woman suggested; a story so improbable, that I could scarce be thought in earnest when I mentioned it?

"Know, then, cruel wretch, that poor Booth loved you of all men breathing, and was, I believe, in your commendation guilty of as much falsehood as I was in what I told you concerning him.

"If this knowledge makes you miserable, it is no more than you have made the unhappy

F. MATTHEWS."

Chapter ix.

Being the last chapter of the fifth book

We shall now return to Colonel James and Mr. Booth, who walked together from Colonel Bath's lodging with much more peaceable intention than that gentleman had conjectured, who dreamt of nothing but swords and guns and implements of wars.

The Birdcage-walk in the Park was the scene appointed by James for unburthening his mind. – Thither they came, and there James acquainted Booth with all that which the reader knows already, and gave him the letter which we have inserted at the end of the last chapter.

Booth exprest great astonishment at this relation, not without venting some detestation of the wickedness of Miss Matthews; upon which James took him up, saying, he ought not to speak with such abhorrence of faults which love for him had occasioned.

"Can you mention love, my dear colonel," cried Booth, "and such a woman in the same breath?"

"Yes, faith! can I," says James; "for the devil take me if I know a more lovely woman in the world." Here he began to describe her whole person; but, as we cannot insert all the description, so we shall omit it all; and concluded with saying, "Curse me if I don't think her the finest creature in the universe. I would give half my estate, Booth, she loved me as well as she doth you.

Though, on second consideration, I believe I should repent that bargain; for then, very possibly, I should not care a farthing for her."

"You will pardon me, dear colonel," answered Booth; "but to me there appears somewhat very singular in your way of thinking. Beauty is indeed the object of liking, great qualities of admiration, good ones of esteem; but the devil take me if I think anything but love to be the object of love."

"Is there not something too selfish," replied James, "in that opinion? but, without considering it in that light, is it not of all things the most insipid? all oil! all sugar! zounds! it is enough to cloy the sharp-set appetite of a parson. Acids surely are the most likely to quicken."

"I do not love reasoning in allegories," cries Booth; "but with regard to love, I declare I never found anything cloying in it. I have lived almost alone with my wife near three years together, was never tired with her company, nor ever wished for any other; and I am sure I never tasted any of the acid you mention to quicken my appetite."

"This is all very extraordinary and romantic to me," answered the colonel. "If I was to be shut up three years with the same woman, which Heaven forbid! nothing, I think, could keep me alive but a temper as violent as that of Miss Matthews. As to love, it would make me sick to death in the twentieth part of that time. If I was so condemned, let me see, what would I wish the woman to be? I think no one virtue would be sufficient. With the

spirit of a tigress I would have her be a prude, a scold, a scholar, a critic, a wit, a politician, and a Jacobite; and then, perhaps, eternal opposition would keep up our spirits; and, wishing one another daily at the devil, we should make a shift to drag on a damnable state of life, without much spleen or vapours."

"And so you do not intend," cries Booth, "to break with this woman?"

"Not more than I have already, if I can help it," answered the colonel.

"And you will be reconciled to her?" said Booth.

"Yes, faith! will I, if I can," answered the colonel; "I hope you have no objection."

"None, my dear friend," said Booth, "unless on your account."

"I do believe you," said the colonel: "and yet, let me tell you, you are a very extraordinary man, not to desire me to quit her on your own account. Upon my soul, I begin to pity the woman, who hath placed her affection, perhaps, on the only man in England of your age who would not return it. But for my part, I promise you, I like her beyond all other women; and, whilst that is the case, my boy, if her mind was as full of iniquity as Pandora's box was of diseases, I'd hug her close in my arms, and only take as much care as possible to keep the lid down for fear of mischief. But come, dear Booth," said he, "let us consider your affairs; for I am ashamed of having neglected them so long; and the only anger I have against this wench is, that she was the occasion of it."

Booth then acquainted the colonel with the promises he had

received from the noble lord, upon which James shook him by the hand, and heartily wished him joy, crying, "I do assure you, if you have his interest, you will need no other; I did not know you was acquainted with him."

To which Mr. Booth answered, "That he was but a new acquaintance, and that he was recommended to him by a lady."

"A lady!" cries the colonel; "well, I don't ask her name. You are a happy man, Booth, amongst the women; and, I assure you, you could have no stronger recommendation. The peer loves the ladies, I believe, as well as ever Mark Antony did; and it is not his fault if he hath not spent as much upon them. If he once fixes his eye upon a woman, he will stick at nothing to get her."

"Ay, indeed!" cries Booth. "Is that his character?"

"Ay, faith," answered the colonel, "and the character of most men besides him. Few of them, I mean, will stick at anything beside their money. Jusque a la Bourse is sometimes the boundary of love as well as friendship. And, indeed, I never knew any other man part with his money so very freely on these occasions. You see, dear Booth, the confidence I have in your honour."

"I hope, indeed, you have," cries Booth, "but I don't see what instance you now give me of that confidence."

"Have not I shewn you," answered James, "where you may carry your goods to market? I can assure you, my friend, that is a secret I would not impart to every man in your situation, and all circumstances considered."

"I am very sorry, sir," cries Booth very gravely, and turning as pale as death, "you should entertain a thought of this kind; a thought which hath almost frozen up my blood. I am unwilling to believe there are such villains in the world; but there is none of them whom I should detest half so much as myself, if my own mind had ever suggested to me a hint of that kind. I have tasted of some distresses of life, and I know not to what greater I may be driven, but my honour, I thank Heaven, is in my own power, and I can boldly say to Fortune she shall not rob me of it."

"Have I not exprest that confidence, my dear Booth?" answered the colonel. "And what you say now well justifies my opinion; for I do agree with you that, considering all things, it would be the highest instance of dishonour."

"Dishonour, indeed!" returned Booth. "What! to prostitute my wife! Can

I think there is such a wretch breathing?"

"I don't know that," said the colonel, "but I am sure it was very far from my intention to insinuate the least hint of any such matter to you. Nor can I imagine how you yourself could conceive such a thought. The goods I meant were no other than the charming person of Miss Matthews, for whom I am convinced my lord would bid a swinging price against me."

Booth's countenance greatly cleared up at this declaration, and he answered with a smile, that he hoped he need not give the colonel any assurances on that head. However, though he was satisfied with regard to the colonel's suspicions, yet

some chimeras now arose in his brain which gave him no very agreeable sensations. What these were, the sagacious reader may probably suspect; but, if he should not, we may perhaps have occasion to open them in the sequel. Here we will put an end to this dialogue, and to the fifth book of this history.

BOOK VI

Chapter i.

Panegyrics on beauty, with other grave matters

The colonel and Booth walked together to the latter's lodging, for as it was not that day in the week in which all parts of the town are indifferent, Booth could not wait on the colonel.

When they arrived in Spring-garden, Booth, to his great surprize, found no one at home but the maid. In truth, Amelia had accompanied Mrs. Ellison and her children to his lordship's; for, as her little girl showed a great unwillingness to go without her, the fond mother was easily persuaded to make one of the company.

Booth had scarce ushered the colonel up to his apartment when a servant from Mrs. James knocked hastily at the door. The lady, not meeting with her husband at her return home, began to despair of him, and performed everything which was decent on the occasion. An apothecary was presently called with hartshorn and sal volatile, a doctor was sent for, and messengers were despatched every way; amongst the rest, one was sent to enquire at the lodgings of his supposed antagonist.

The servant hearing that his master was alive and well above-stairs, ran up eagerly to acquaint him with the dreadful situation in which he left his miserable lady at home, and likewise with the occasion of all her distress, saying, that his lady had been at her brother's, and had there heard that his honour was killed in a duel by Captain Booth.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.