

HÉLOÏSE , PETER ABELARD

**LETTERS OF
ABELARD AND
HELOISE**

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their lives, amours, and misfortunes:*

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Peter Abelard

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PREFACE

It is very surprising that the *Letters of Abelard and Heloise* have not sooner appeared in English, since it is generally allowed, by all who have seen them in other languages, that they are written with the greatest passion of any in this kind which are extant. And it is certain that the *Letters from a Nun to a Cavalier*, which have so long been known and admired among us, are in all respects inferior to them. Whatever those were, these are known to be genuine Pieces occasioned by an amour which had very extraordinary consequences, and made a great noise at the time when it happened, being between two of the most distinguished Persons of that age.

These *Letters*, therefore, being truly written by the Persons themselves, whose names they bear, and who were both

remarkable for their genius and learning, as well as by a most extravagant passion for each other, are every where full of sentiments of the heart, (which are not to be imitated in a feigned story,) and touches of Nature, much more moving than any which could flow from the Pen of a Writer of Novels, or enter into the imagination of any who had not felt the like emotions and distresses.

They were originally written in Latin, and are extant in a Collection of the Works of *Abelard*, printed at Paris in the year 1616. With what elegance and beauty of stile they were written in that language, will sufficiently appear to the learned Reader, even by those few citations which are set at the bottom of the page in some places of the following history. But the Book here mentioned consisting chiefly of school-divinity, and the learning of those times, and therefore being rarely to be met with but in public libraries, and in the hands of some learned men, the Letters of *Abelard* and *Heloise* are much more known by a Translation, or rather Paraphrase of them, in French, first published at the Hague in 1693, and which afterwards received several other more complete Editions. This Translation is much applauded, but who was the Author of it is not certainly known. Monsieur Bayle says he had been informed it was done by a woman; and, perhaps, he thought no one besides could have entered so thoroughly into the passion and tenderness of such writings, for which that sex seems to have a more natural disposition than the other. This may be judged of by the Letters

themselves, among which those of *Heloise* are the most moving, and the Master seems in this particular to have been excelled by the Scholar.

In some of the later Editions in French, there has been prefixed to the Letters an Historical Account of *Abelard* and *Heloise*; this is chiefly extracted from the Preface of the Editor of *Abelard's Works* in Latin, and from the *Critical Dictionary* of Monsieur Bayle¹, who has put together, under several articles, all the particulars he was able to collect concerning these two famous Persons; and though the first Letter of *Abelard to Philintus*, in which he relates his own story, may seem to have rendered this account in part unnecessary; yet the Reader will not be displeas'd to see the thread of the relation entire, and continued to the death of the Persons whose misfortunes had made their lives so very remarkable.

It is indeed impossible to be unmoved at the surprising and multiplied afflictions and persecutions which befel a man of *Abelard's* fine genius, when we see them so feelingly described by his own hand. Many of these were owing to the malice of such as were his enemies on the account of his superior learning and merit; yet the great calamities of his life took their rise from his unhappy indulgence of a criminal passion, and giving himself a loose to unwarrantable pleasures. After this he was perpetually involved in sorrow and distress, and in vain sought for ease and quiet in a monastic life. The *Letters* between him and

¹ *Vide Artic.* Abelard, Heloise, Foulques, and Paraclete

his beloved *Heloise* were not written till long after their marriage and separation, and when each of them was dedicated to a life of religion. Accordingly we find in them surprising mixtures of devotion and tenderness, and remaining frailty, and a lively picture of human nature in its contrarieties of passion and reason, its infirmities, and its sufferings.

The History of Abelard and Heloise

Peter Abelard was born in the village of Palais in Britany. He lived in the twelfth century, in the reigns of *Louis the Gross*, and *Louis the Young*. His Father's name was *Beranger*, a gentleman of a considerable and wealthy family. He took care to give his children a liberal and pious education, especially his eldest son *Peter*, on whom he endeavoured to bestow all possible improvements, because there appeared in him an extraordinary vivacity of wit joined with sweetness of temper, and all imaginable presages of a great man.

When he had made some advancement in learning, he grew so fond of his books, that, lest affairs of the world might interrupt his proficiency in them, he quitted his birthright to his younger brothers, and applied himself entirely to the studies of Philosophy and Divinity.

Of all the sciences to which he applied himself, that which pleased him most, and in which he made the greatest progress, was Logick. He had a very subtile wit, and was incessantly whetting it by disputes, out of a restless ambition to be master of his weapons. So that in a short time he gained the reputation of the greatest philosopher of his age; and has always been esteemed the founder of what we call the *Learning of the Schoolmen*.

He finished his studies at Paris, where learning was then in a flourishing condition. In this city he found that famous professor

of philosophy William des Champeaux, and soon became his favourite scholar; but this did not last long. The professor was so hard put to it to answer the subtle objections of his new scholar, that he grew uneasy with him. The school soon run into parties. The senior scholars, transported with envy against *Abelard*, seconded their master's resentment. All this served only to increase the young man's presumption, who now thought himself sufficiently qualified to set up a school of his own. For this purpose he chose an advantageous place, which was the town of Melun, ten leagues from Paris, where the French court resided at that time. Champeaux did all that he could to hinder the erecting of this school; but some of the great courtiers being his enemies, the opposition he made to it only promoted the design of his rival.

The reputation of this new professor made a marvellous progress, and eclipsed that of Champeaux. These successes swelled *Abelard* so much that he removed his school to Corbeil, in order to engage his enemy the more closer in more frequent disputations. But his excessive application to study brought upon him a long and dangerous sickness, which constrained him to return to his own native air.

After he had spent two years in his own country he made a second adventure to Paris, where he found that his old antagonist Champeaux had resigned his chair to another, and was retired into a convent of Canons Regular, among whom he continued his lectures. *Abelard* attacked him with such fury, that he quickly

forced him to renounce his tenets. Whereupon the poor monk became so despicable, and his antagonist in such great esteem, that nobody went to the lectures of Champeaux, and the very man who succeeded him in his professorship, listed under *Abelard*, and became his scholar.

He was scarce fixed in his chair before he found himself exposed more than ever to the strokes of the most cruel envy. Endeavours were used to do him ill offices by all those who were any ways disaffected to him. Another professor was put into his place, who had thought it his duty to submit to *Abelard*, in short so many enemies were raised against him that he was forced to retreat from Paris to Melun, and there revived his logick lectures. But this held not long; for hearing that Champeaux with all his infantry was retired into a country village, he came and posted himself on mount St. Genevieve, where he erected a new school, like a kind of battery against him whom Champeaux had left to teach at Paris.

Champeaux understanding that his substitute was thus besieged in his school, brought the Regular Canons attack again to their monastery. But this, instead of relieving his friend, caused all his scholars to desert him. At which the poor philosopher was so mortified, that he followed the example of his patron Champeaux, and turned monk too.

The dispute now lay wholly between *Abelard* and Champeaux, who renewed it with great warmth on both sides; but the senior had not the best on't. While it was depending, *Abelard* was

obliged to visit his father and mother, who, according to the fashion of those times, had resolved to forsake the world, and retire into convents, in order to devote themselves more seriously to the care of their salvation.

Having assisted at the admission of his parents into their respective monasteries and received their blessing, he returned to Paris, where during his absence, his rival had been promoted to the bishoprick of Chalons. And now being in a condition to quit his school without any suspicions of flying from his enemy, he resolved to apply himself wholly to Divinity.

To this end he removed to Laon, where one *Anselm* read divinity-lectures with good reputation. But *Abelard* was so little satisfied with the old man's abilities, who as he says, had a very mean genius, and a great fluency of words without sense, that he took a resolution for the future to hear no other master than the Holy Scriptures. A good resolution! if a man takes the Spirit of God for his guide, and be more concerned to distinguish truth from falsehood, than to confirm himself in those principles into which his, own fancy or complexion, or the prejudices of his birth and education, have insensibly led him.

Abelard, together with the Holy Scriptures, read the ancient fathers and doctors of the church, in which he spent whole days and nights, and profited so well, that instead of returning to *Anselm's* lectures, he took up the same employment, and began to explain the Prophet *Ezekiel* to some of his fellow-pupils. He performed this part so agreeably; and in so easy a method that

he soon got a crowd of auditors.

The jealous *Anselm* could not bear this; he quickly found means to get the lecturer silenced. Upon this *Abelard* removed to Paris once more, where he proceeded with his public exposition on Ezekiel, and soon acquired the same reputation for his divinity he had before gained for his philosophy. His eloquence and learning procured him an incredible number of scholars from all parts; so that if he had minded saving of money, he might have grown rich with ease in a short time. And happy had it been for him, if, among all the enemies his learning exposed him to, he had guarded his heart against the charms of love. But, alas! the greatest doctors are not always the wisest men, as appears from examples in every age; but from none more remarkable than that of this learned man, whose story I am now going to tell you.

Abelard, besides his uncommon merit as a scholar, had all the accomplishments of a gentleman. He had a greatness of soul which nothing could shock; his passions were delicate, his judgment solid, and his taste exquisite. He was of a graceful person, and carried himself with the air of a man of quality. His conversation was sweet, complaisant, easy, and gentleman-like. It seemed as tho' Nature had designed him for a more elevated employment than that of teaching the sciences. He looked upon riches and grandeur with contempt, and had no higher ambition than to make his name famous among learned men, and to be reputed the greatest doctor of his age: but he had human frailty, and all his philosophy could not guard him from the attacks of

love. For some time indeed, he had defended himself against this passion pretty well, when the temptation was but slight; but upon a more intimate familiarity with such agreeable objects, he found his reason fail him: yet in respect to his wisdom, he thought of compounding the matter and resolved at first, that love and philosophy should dwell together in the same breast. He intended only to let out his heart to the former, and that but for a little while; never considering that love is a great ruiner of projects; and that when it has once got a share in a heart, it is easy to possess itself of the whole.

He was now in the seven or eight and twentieth year of his age, when he thought himself completely happy in all respects, excepting that he wanted a mistress. He considered therefore of making a choice, but such a one as might be most suitable to his notions, and the design he had of passing agreeably those hours he did not employ in his study. He had several ladies in his eye, to whom as he says in one of his *Letters*, he could easily have recommended himself. For you must understand, that besides his qualifications mentioned before, he had a vein of poetry, and made abundance of little easy songs, which he would sing with all the advantage of a gallant air and pleasant voice. But tho' he was cut out for a lover, he was not over-hasty in determining his choice. He was not of a humour to be pleased with the wanton or forward; he scorned easy pleasures, and sought to encounter with difficulties and impediments, that he might conquer with the greater glory. In short, he had not yet seen the woman he was

to love.

Not far from the place where *Abelard* read his lectures lived one *Doctor Fulbert*, a canon of the church of Notre-Dame. This canon had a niece named *Heloise* in his house whom he educated with great care and affection. Some writers say*, that she was the good man's natural daughter; but that, to prevent a public scandal, he gave out that she was his niece by his sister, who upon her death-bed had charged him with her education. But though it was well known in those times, as well as since, that the niece of an ecclesiastick is sometimes more nearly related to him, yet of this damsel's birth and parentage we have nothing very certain. There is reason to think, from one of her *Letters to Abelard*, that she came of a mean family; for she owns that great honour was done to her side by this alliance, and that he married much below himself. So that what Francis d'Amboise says, that she was of the name and family of Montmorency has no manner of foundation. It is very probable she was really and truly Fulbert's niece, as he affirmed her to be. Whatever she was for birth, she was a very engaging woman; and if she was not a perfect beauty, she appeared such at least in *Abelard's* eyes. Her person was well proportioned, her features regular, her eyes sparkling, her lips vermilion and well formed, her complexion animated, her air fine, and her aspect sweet and agreeable. She had a surprising quickness of wit, an incredible memory, and a considerable share of learning, joined with humility; and all these accomplishments were attended with something so graceful and

moving, that it was impossible for those who kept her company not to be in love with her.

* Papyr. Maffo. Annal. 1. 3. *Joannes Canonicus Pariflus, Heloysiam naturalem filiam habehat prastanti ingenio formaque.*

As soon as *Abelard* had seen her, and conversed with her, the charms of her wit and beauty made such an impression upon his heart, that he presently conceived a most violent passion for her, and resolved to make it his whole endeavour to win her affections. And now, he that formerly quitted his patrimony to pursue his studies, laid aside all other engagements to attend his new passion.

In vain did Philosophy and Reason importune him to return; he was deaf to their call, and thought of nothing but how to enjoy the sight and company of his dear *Heloise*. And he soon met with the luckiest opportunity in the world. Fulbert who had the greatest affection imaginable for his niece, finding her to have a good share of natural wit, and a particular genius for learning, thought himself obliged to improve the talents which Nature had so liberally bestowed on her. He had already put her to learn several languages, which she quickly came to understand so well, that her fame began to spread itself abroad, and the wit and learning of *Heloise* was every where discoursed of. And though her uncle for his own share was no great scholar, he was very felicitous that his niece should have all possible improvements. He was willing, therefore, she should have masters to instruct her in what she had a mind to learn: but he loved his money, and this

kept him from providing for her education so well as she desired.

Abelard, who knew *Heloise's* inclinations, and the temper of her uncle, thought this an opportunity favourable to his design. He was already well acquainted with Fulbert, as being his brother canon in the same church; and he observed how fond the other was of his friendship, and what an honour he esteemed it to be intimate with a person of his reputation. He therefore told him one day in familiarity, that he was at a loss for some house to board in; and if you could find room for me, said he, in yours, I leave to you name the terms.

The good man immediately considering that by this means he should provide an able master for his niece who, instead of taking money of him, offered to provide him well for his board, embraced his proposal with the joy imaginable, gave him a thousand caresses, and desired he would consider him for the future as one ambitious of the strictest friendship with him.

What an unspeakable joy was this to the amorous *Abelard*! to consider that he was going to live with her, who was the only object of his desires! that he should have the opportunity of seeing and conversing with her every day, and of acquainting her with his passion! However, he concealed his joy at present lest he should make his intention suspected. We told you before how liberal Nature had been to our lover in making his person every way so agreeable; so that he flattered himself that it was almost impossible² that any woman should reject his addresses. Perhaps

² *Tanti quippe tunc nominis eram & juventutis & forma gratia praeminebam, ut*

he was mistaken: the sex has variety of humour. However, consider him as a philosopher who had therto lived in a strict chastity³, he certainly reasoned well in the business of love; when he concluded that *Heloise* would be an easier conquest to him than others because her learning gave him an opportunity of establishing a correspondence by letters, in which he might discover his passion with greater freedom than he dared presume to use in conversation.

Some time after the Canon had taken *Abelard* into his own house, as they were discoursing one day about things somewhat above Fulbert's capacity, the latter turned the discourse insensibly to the good qualities of his niece; he informed *Abelard* of the excellency of her wit, and how strong a propensity she had to improve in learning; and withal made it his earnest request, that he would take the pains to instruct her. *Abelard* pretended to be surprised at a proposal of this nature. He told him that learning was not the proper business of women; that such inclinations in them had more of humour or curiosity than a solid desire of knowledge; and could hardly pass, among either the learned or ignorant, without drawing upon them the imputation of conceit and affectation. Fulbert answered, that this was very true of women of common capacities; but he hoped, when he had discoursed with his niece, and found what progress

quamcunque foeminartn nostre dignarer amore nullam verer repulsam. 1 Epist. Abel. p. 10. Abel.

³ *Froena libidini coepi laxare, qui antea viveram continantissime.* Ibid.

she had made already, and what a capacity she had for learning, he would be of another opinion. *Abelard* assured him, he was ready to do all he could for her improvement, and if she was not like other women, who hate to learn any thing beyond their needle, he would spare no pains to make *Heloise* answer the hopes which her uncle had conceived of her.

The canon was transported with the civility of the young doctor; he returned him thanks, and protested he could not do him a more acceptable service than to assist his niece in her endeavours to learn; he therefore entreated him once more to set apart some of his time, which he did not employ in public, for this purpose: and, (as if he had known his designed intrigue, and was willing to promote it) he committed her entirely to his care, and begged of him to treat her with the authority of a master; not only to chide her, but even to correct her whenever she was guilty of any neglect or disobedience to his commands.

Fulbert, in this, showed a simplicity without example but the affection which he had for his niece was so blind, and *Abelard* had so well established his reputation for wisdom, that the uncle never scrupled in the least to trust them together, and thought he had all the security in the world for their virtue. *Abelard* you may be sure, made use of the freedom which was given him. He saw his beautiful creature every hour, he set her lessons every day, and was extremely pleased to see what proficiency she made. *Heloise*, for her part, was so taken with her master, that she liked nothing so well as what she learned from him; and the master

was charmed with that quickness of apprehension with which his scholar learned the most difficult lessons. But he did not intend to stop here. He knew so well how to insinuate into the affections of this young person, he gave her such plain intimations of what was in his heart and spoke so agreeably of the passion which he had conceived for her, that he had the satisfaction of seeing himself well understood. It is no difficult matter to make a girl of eighteen in love; and *Abelard* having so much wit and agreeable humour, must needs make a greater progress in her affections than she did in the lessons which he taught her; so that in a short time she fell so much in love with him, that she could deny him nothing.

Fulbert had a country-house at Corbeil, to which the lovers often resorted, under pretence of applying themselves more closely to their studies: there they conversed freely and gave themselves up entirely to the pleasure of a mutual passion. They took advantage of that privacy which study and contemplation require without subjecting themselves to the censure of those who observed it.

In this retirement *Abelard* owns that more time was employ'd in soft caresses than in lectures of philosophy. Sometimes he pretended to use the severity of a master; the better to deceive such as might be spies upon them, he exclaimed against *Heloise*, and reproached her for her negligence. But how different were his menaces from those which are inspired by anger!

Never did two lovers give a greater loose to their delights

than did these two for five or six months; they lived in all the endearments which could enter into the hearts of young beginners. This is *Abelard's* own account of the matter. He compares himself to such as have been long kept in a starving condition, and at last are brought to a feast. A grave and studious man exceeds a debauchee in his enjoyments of a woman whom he loves and of whom he is passionately beloved.

Abelard being thus enchanted with the caresses of his mistress, neglected all his serious and important affairs. His performances in public were wretched. His scholars perceived it, and soon guessed the reason. His head was turned to nothing but amorous verses. His school was his aversion, and he spent as little time in it as he could. As for his lectures they were commonly the old ones served up again: the night was wholly lost from his studies; and his leisure was employed in writing songs, which were dispersed and sung in diverse provinces of France many years after. In short our lovers, who were in their own opinion the happiest pair in the world, kept so little guard, that their amours were every where talked of, and all the world saw plainly that the sciences were not always the subject of their conversation. Only honest Fulbert, under whose nose all this was done, was the last man that heard any thing of it; he wanted eyes to see that which was visible to all the world; and if any body went about to tell him of it, he was prepossessed with so good an opinion of his niece and her master, that he would believe nothing against them.

But at last so many discoveries were daily made to him, that

he could not help believing something; he therefore resolved to separate them, and by that means prevent the ill consequences of their too great familiarity. However, he thought it best to convict them himself, before he proceeded further; and therefore watched them so closely, that he had one day an opportunity of receiving ocular satisfaction that the reports he had heard were true. In short he surprised them together. And though he was naturally choleric, yet he appeared so moderate on this occasion as to leave them under dismal apprehensions of something worse to come after. The result was, that they must be parted.

Who can express the torment our lovers felt upon this separation! However, it served only to unite their hearts more firmly; they were but the more eager to see one another. Difficulties increased their desires, and put them upon any attempts without regarding what might be the consequence. *Abelard* finding it impossible to live without his dear *Heloise*, endeavoured to settle a correspondence with her by her maid Agaton, who was a handsome brown girl, well shaped, and likely enough to have pleased a man who was not otherwise engaged. But what a surprise was it to our Doctor, to find this girl refuse his money, and in recompence of the services she was to do him with his mistress, demanded no less a reward than his heart, and making him at once a plain declaration of love! *Abelard* who could love none but *Heloise*, turned from her abruptly, without answering a word. But a rejected woman is a dangerous creature. Agaton knew well how to revenge the affront put upon her,

and failed not to acquaint Fulbert with *Abelard's* offers to her, without saying a word how she had been disobliged. Fulbert thought it was time to look about him. He thanked the maid for her care, and entered into measures with her, how to keep *Abelard* from visiting his niece.

The Doctor was now more perplexed than ever: he had no ways left but to apply himself to *Heloise's* singing-master; and the gold which the maid refused prevailed with him. By this means *Abelard* conveyed a letter to *Heloise*, in which he told her, that he intended to come and see her at night, and that the way he had contrived was over the garden-wall by a ladder of cords. This project succeeded, and brought them together. After the first transports of this short interview, *Heloise*, who had found some more than ordinary symptoms within her, acquainted her lover with it. She had informed him of it before by a letter; and now having this opportunity to consult about it; they agreed that she should go to a sister of his in Britany, at whose house she might be privately brought to bed. But before they parted, he endeavored to comfort her, and make her easy in this distress, by giving her assurances of marriage. When *Heloise* heard this proposal she peremptorily rejected it, and gave such reasons⁴ for her refusal, as left *Abelard* in the greatest astonishment.

Indeed a refusal of this nature is so extraordinary a thing, that perhaps another instance of it is not to be found in history. I persuade myself, therefore, that I shall not offend my reader,

⁴ See *Abelard's* letter to *Philintus*, and *Heloise's* first *Letter to Abelard*.

if I make some few remarks upon it. It often happens, that the passion of love stifles or over-rules the rebukes of conscience; but it is unusual for it to extinguish the sensibility of honour. I don't speak of persons of mean birth and no education; but for others, all young women, I suppose, who engage in love-intrigues, flatter themselves with one of these views; either they hope they shall not prove with child, or they shall conceal it from the world, or they shall get themselves married. As for such as resolve to destroy the fruit of their amours, there are but few so void of all natural affections as to be capable of this greatest degree of barbarity. However, this shows plainly, that if Love tyrannizes sometimes, it is such a tyrant as leaves honour in possession of its rights. But *Heloise* had a passion so strong, that she was not at all concerned for her honour or reputation. She was overjoyed to find herself with child, and yet she did her utmost not to be married. Never fore was so odd an example as these two things made when put together. The first was very extraordinary; and how many young women in the world would rather be married to a disagreeable husband than live in a state of reproach? They know the remedy is bad enough, and will cost them dear; but what signifies that, so long as the name of husband hides the flaws made in their honour? But as for *Heloise*, she was not so nice in this point. An excess of passion, never heard of before, made her chuse to be *Abelard's* mistress rather than his wife. We shall see, in the course of this history, how firm she was in this resolution, with what arguments she supported it, and how

earnestly she persuaded her gallant to be of the same mind.

Abelard, who was willing to lose no time, least his dear *Heloise* should fall into her uncle's hands, disguised her in the habit of a nun, and sent her away with the greatest dispatch, hoping that after she was brought to bed, he should have more leisure to persuade her to marriage, by which they might screen themselves from the reproach which must otherwise come upon them, as soon as the business should be publicly known.

As soon as *Heloise* was set forward on her journey, *Abelard* resolved to make Fulbert a visit in order to appease him, if possible, and prevent the ill effects of his just indignation.

The news that *Heloise* was privately withdrawn soon made a great noise in the neighbourhood; and reaching Fulbert's ears, filled him with grief and melancholy. Besides, that he had a very tender affection for his niece, and could not live without her, he had the utmost resentment of the affront which *Abelard* had put upon him, by abusing the freedom he had allowed him. This fired him with such implacable fury, as in the end fell heavy upon our poor lovers, and had very dreadful consequences.

When Fulbert saw *Abelard*, and heard from him the reason why *Heloise* was withdrawn, never was man in such a passion. He abandoned himself to the utmost distractions of rage, despair, and thirst of revenge. All the affronts, reproaches, and menaces that could be thought of, were heaped upon *Abelard*; who was, poor man, very passive, and ready to make the Canon all the satisfaction he was able. He gave him leave to say what he

pleased; and when he saw that he tired himself with exclaiming, he took up the discourse, and ingenuously confess'd his crime. Then he had recourse to all the prayers, submissions, and promises, he could invent; and begged of him to consider the force of Love, and what foils this tyrant has given to the greatest men: that the occasion of the present misfortunes was the most violent passion that ever was; that this passion continued still; and that he was ready to give both him and his niece all the satisfaction which this sort of injury required. Will you marry her then? said Fulbert, interrupting him. Yes, replied *Abelard*, if you please, and she will consent. If I please! said the Canon, pausing a little; if she will consent! And do you question either? Upon this he was going to offer him his reasons, after his hasty way, why they should be married: But *Abelard* entreated him to suppress his passion a while, and hear what he had to offer: which was, that their marriage might for some time be kept secret. No, says the Canon, the dishonor you have done my niece is public, and the reparation you make her shall be so too, But *Abelard* told him, that since they were to be one family, he hoped he would consider his interest as his own. At last after a great many intreaties, Fulbert seem'd content it should be as *Abelard* desired; that he should marry *Heloise* after she was brought to bed, and that in the mean time the business should be kept secret.

Abelard, having given his scholars a vacation, returned into Britany to visit his designed spouse, and to acquaint her with what had passed. She was not at all concerned at her uncle's

displeasure; but that which troubled her was, the resolution which she saw her lover had taken to marry her, She endeavoured to dissuade him from it with all the arguments she could think of. She begun with representing to him the wrong he did himself in thinking of marriage: that as she never loved him but for his own sake, she preferred his glory, reputation, and interest, before her own. I know my uncle, said she, will never be pacified with any thing we can do, and what honour shall I get by being your wife, when at the same time I certainly ruin your reputation? What curse may I not justly fear, should I rob the world of so eminent a person as you are? What an injury shall I do the Church? how much shall I disoblige the learned? and what a shame and disparagement will it be to you, whom Nature has fitted for the public good, to devote yourself entirely to a wife? Remember what St. *Paul* says, *Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife*. If neither this great man, nor the fathers of the church, can make you change your resolution, consider at least what your philosophers say of it. Socrates has proved, by many arguments, that a wife man ought not to marry. Tully put away his wife Terentia; and when Hircius offered him his sister in marriage he told him, he desired to be excused, because he could never bring himself to divide his thoughts between his books and his wife. In short, said she, how can the study of divinity and philosophy comport with the cries of children, the songs of nurses, and all the hurry of a family? What an odd fight will it be to see maids and scholars, desks and cradles, books and distaffs, pens and spindles,

one among another? Those who are rich are never disturbed with the care and charges of housekeeping; but with you scholars it is far otherwise⁵.

He that will get an estate must mind the affairs of the world, and consequently is taken off from the study of divinity and philosophy. Observe the conduct of the wife Pagans in this point, who preferred a single life before marriage, and be ashamed that you cannot come up to them. Be more careful to maintain the character and dignity of a philosopher. Don't you know, that there is no action of life which draws after it so sure and long a repentance, and to so little purpose? You fancy to yourself the enjoyments you shall have in being bound to me by a bond which nothing but death can break: but know there is no such thing as sweet chains; and there is a thousand times more glory, honour, and pleasure, in keeping firm to an union which love alone has established, which is supported by mutual esteem and merit, and which owes its continuance to nothing but the satisfaction of seeing each other free. Shall the laws and customs which the gross and carnal world has invented hold us together more surely than the bonds of mutual affection? Take my word for it, you'll see me too often when you see me ev'ry day: you'll have no value for my love nor favours when they are due to you, and cost you no care. Perhaps you don't think of all this at present; but you'll think of nothing else when it will be too late. I don't take notice what

⁵ *Heloïssa dehortabat me nuptiis. Nuptia non conveniunt cum philosophia, &c. Oper. Abel. p 14.*

the world will say, to see a man in your circumstances get him a wife, and so throw away your reputation, your fortune and your quiet. In short, continued she, the quality of mistress is a hundred times more pleasing to me than that of a wife. Custom indeed, has given a dignity to this latter name, and we are imposed upon by it; but Heaven is my witness, I had rather be *Abelard's* mistress than lawful wife to the Emperor of the whole world. I am very sure I shall always prefer your advantage and satisfaction before my own honour, and all the reputation, wealth, and enjoyments, which the most splendid marriage could bring me. Thus *Heloise* argued, and added a great many more reasons, which I forbear to relate, lest I should tire my reader. It is enough for him to know, that they are chiefly grounded upon her preference of love to marriage, and liberty to necessity.

We might therefore suppose that *Heloise* was afraid lest marriage should prove the tomb of love. The Count de Buffi, who passes for the translator of some of her Letters, makes this to be her meaning, though cloathed in delicate language. But if we examine those which she writ to *Abelard* after their separation, and the expressions she uses to put him in mind, that he was indebted for the passion she had for him to nothing but love itself, we must allow that she had more refined notions, and that never woman was so disinterested. She loved *Abelard* 'tis true; but she declared it was not his sex that she most valued in him.

Some authors ⁶ are of opinion, that it was not an excess of love

⁶ *D'ctionnaire de Moreri*

which made *Abelard* press *Heloise* to marriage, but only to quiet his conscience: but how can any one tell his reasons for marriage better than he himself? Others say⁷ that if *Heloise* did really oppose *Abelard's* design of marrying her so earnestly, it was not because she thought better of concubinage than a married life, but because her affection and respect for her lover leading her to seek his honour and advantage in all things, she was afraid that by marrying him she should stand between him and a bishoprick, which his wit and learning well deserved. But there is no such thing in her Letters, nor in the long account which *Abelard* has left us of the arguments which his mistress used to dissuade him from marriage. These are the faults of many authors, who put such words in the mouths of persons as are most conformable to their own ideas. It is often more advantageous, that a woman should leave her lover free for church dignities, than render him incapable of them by marriage: but is it just therefore to suppose that *Heloise* had any such motives? There is indeed a known story of a man that was possessed of a prebend, and quitted it for a wife. The day after the wedding, he said to his bride, My dear, consider how passionately I loved you, since I lost my preferment to marry you. You have done a very foolish thing, said she; you might have kept that, and have had me notwithstanding.

But to return to our lovers. A modern author, who well understood human nature, has affirmed, "That women by the favours they grant to men, grow she fonder of them; but, on the

⁷ *Fran. d'Amboise.*

contrary, the men grow more indifferent⁸." This is not always true, *Abelard* was not the less enamoured with *Heloise* after she had given him the utmost proofs of her love; and their familiarity was so far from having abated his flame, that it seems all the eloquence of *Heloise* could not persuade *Abelard* that he wronged himself in thinking to marry her. He admired the wit, the passion, and the ingenuity of his mistress, but in these things he did not come short of her. He knew so well how to represent to her the necessity of marriage, the discourse which he had about it with Fulbert, his rage if they declined it, and how dangerous it might be to both of them, that at last she consented to do whatever he pleased: but still with an inconceivable reluctance, which showed that she yielded for no other reason but the fear of disobliging him.

Abelard was willing to be near his mistress till she was brought to bed, which in a short time she was of a boy. As soon as *Heloise* was fit to go abroad, *Abelard* carried her to Paris, where they were married in the most private manner that could be, having no other company but Fulbert, and two or three particular friends. However, the wedding quickly came to be known. The news of it was already whispered about; people soon began to talk of it more openly, till at last they mentioned it to the married pair.

Fulbert who was less concerned to keep his word than to cover the reproach of his family, took care to spread it abroad. But *Heloise*, who loved *Abelard* a thousand times better than

⁸ *M. de la Bruyere.*

she did herself, and always valued her dear Doctor's honour above her own, denied it with the most solemn protestations, and did all she could to make the world believe her. She constantly affirmed, that the reports of it were mere slanders; that *Abelard* never proposed any such thing; and if he had, she would never have consented to it. In short, she denied it so constantly, and with such earnestness, that she was generally believed. Many people thought, and boldly affirmed, that the Doctor's enemies had spread this story on purpose to lessen his character. This report came to Fulbert's ears, who, knowing that *Heloise* was the sole author of it, fell into so outrageous a passion at her, that after a thousand reproaches and menaces, he proceeded to use her barbarously. But *Abelard*, who loved her never the worse for being his wife, could not see this many days with patience. He resolved therefore to order matters so as to deliver her from this state of persecution. To this purpose they consulted together what course was to be taken; and agreed, that for setting them both free, her from the power and ill-humour of her uncle, and him from the persecuting reports which went about of him, *Heloise* should retire into a convent, where she should take the habit of a nun, all but the veil, that so she might easily come out again, when they should have a more favourable opportunity. This design was proposed, approved, and executed, almost at the same time. By this means they effectually put a stop to all reports about a marriage. But the Canon was too dangerous a person to be admitted to this consultation; he would never

have agreed to their proposal; nor could he hear of it without the utmost rage. 'Twas then that he conceived a new desire of revenge, which he pursued till he had executed it in the most cruel manner imaginable. This retreat of *Heloise* gave him the more sensible affliction, because she was so far from covering her own reputation, that she completed his shame. He considered it as *Abelard's* contrivance, and a fresh instance of his perfidious dealing towards him. And this reflection put him upon studying how to be revenged on them both at one stroke; which, aiming at the root of the mischief, should forever disable them from offending again.

While this plot was in agitation, the lovers, who were not apt to trouble their heads about what might happen, spent their time in the most agreeable manner that could be. *Abelard* could not live long without a sight of his dear wife. He made her frequent visits in the convent of Argenteuil, to which she was retired. The nuns of this abbey enjoyed a very free kind of life: the grates and parlours were open enough. As for *Heloise*, she had such excellent qualifications as made the good sisters very fond of her, and extremely pleased that they had such an amiable companion. And as they were not ignorant what reports there were abroad, that she was married to the famous *Abelard*, (though she denied it to the last,) the most discerning among them, observing the frequent visits of the Doctor, easily imagined that she had reasons for keeping herself private, and so they took her case into consideration, and expressed a wonderful

compassion for her misfortunes.

Some of them, whom *Heloise* loved above the rest, and in whom she put great confidence, were not a little aiding and assisting in the private interviews which she had with *Abelard*, and in giving him opportunities to enter the convent. The amorous Doctor made the best use of every thing. The habit which *Heloise* wore the place where he was to see her, the time and seasons proper for his visit, the stratagems which must be used to facilitate his entrance, and carry him undiscovered to *Heloise's* chamber, the difficulties they met with, the reasons they had for not letting it be known who they were, and the fear they were in of being taken together; all this gave their amours an air of novelty, and added to their lawful embraces all the taste of stolen delights.

These excesses had then their charms, but in the end had fatal consequences. The furious Canon persisting in his design of being revenged on *Abelard*, notwithstanding his marriage with his niece, found means to corrupt a domestic of the unfortunate Doctor, who gave admittance into his master's chamber to some assassins hired by Fulbert, who seized him in his sleep, and cruelly deprived him of his manhood, but not his life. The servant and his accomplices fled for it. The wretched *Abelard* raised such terrible outcries, that the people in the house and the neighbours being alarmed, hastened to him, and gave such speedy assistance, that he was soon out of a condition of fearing death.

The news of this accident made great noise, and its singularity

raised the curiosity of abundance of persons, who came the next day as in procession, to see, to lament and comfort him. His scholars loudly bewailed his misfortune, and the women distinguished themselves upon this occasion by extraordinary marks of tenderness. And 'tis probable among the great number of ladies who pitied *Abelard*, there were some with whom he had been very intimate: for his philosophy did not make him scrupulous enough to esteem every small infidelity a crime, when it did not lessen his constant love of *Heloise*.

This action of Fulbert was too tragical to pass unpunished: the traiterous servant and one of the assassins were seized and condemned to lose their eyes, and to suffer what they had done to *Abelard*. But Fulbert denying he had any share in the action saved himself from the punishment with the loss only of his benefices. This sentence did not satisfy *Abelard*; he made his complaint to no purpose to the bishop and canons; and if he had made a remonstrance at Rome, where he once had a design of carrying the matter, 'tis probable he would have had no better success. It requires too much money to gain a cause there. One *Foulques*, prior of Deuil, and intimate friend of *Abelard*, wrote thus to him upon the occasion of his misfortune: "If you appeal to the Pope without bringing an immense sum of money, it will be useless: nothing can satisfy the infinite avarice and luxury of the Romans. I question if you have enough for such an undertaking; and if you attempt it, nothing will perhaps remain but the vexation of having flung away so much money. They who go to Rome without large

sums to squander away, will return just as they went, the expence of their journey only excepted⁹." But since I am upon Foulques's letters which is too extraordinary to be passed over in silence, I shall give the reader some reflections which may make him amends for the trouble of a new digression.

This friend of *Abelard* lays before him many advantages which might be drawn from his misfortune. He tells him his extraordinary talents, subtilty, eloquence and learning had drawn from all parts an incredible number of auditors, and so filled him with excessive vanity: he hints gently at another thing, which contributed not a little towards making him proud, namely, that the women continually followed him, and gloried in drawing him into their snares. This misfortune, therefore, would cure him of his pride, and free him from those snares of women which had reduced him even to indigence, tho' his profession got him a large revenue; and now he would never impoverish himself by his gallantries.

Heloise herself, in some passages of her *Letters*, says, that there was neither maid nor wife¹⁰, who in *Abelard's* absence did not form designs for him, and in his presence was not inflamed with love: the queens themselves, and ladies of the first quality, envied the pleasures she enjoyed with him. But we are not to take these words of *Heloise* in a strict sense; because as she loved *Abelard* to

⁹ *This Letter is extant in Latin in Abelard's Works.*

¹⁰ *Qua conjugata, que virgo non concupiscebat absentem, & non exardescibat in presentem? Qua regina, vel prapotens foemina gaudiis meis non invidebat, vel thalamis?*

madness, so she imagined every one else did. Besides, that report, to be sure, hath added to the truth. It is not at all probable that a man of *Abelard's* sense, and who according to all appearance passionately loved his wife, should not be able to contain himself within some bounds, but should squander away all his money upon mistresses, even to his not reserving what was sufficient to provide for his necessities. Foulques owns, that he speaks only upon hearsay, and in that, no doubt, envy, and jealousy had their part.

Foulques tells him besides, that the amputation of a part of his body, of which he made such ill use, would suppress at the same time a great many troublesome passions, and procure him liberty of reflecting on himself, instead of being hurried to and fro by his passions: his meditations would be no more interrupted by the emotions of the flesh, and therefore he would be more successful in discovering the secrets of Nature. He reckons it as a great advantage to him, that he would no more be the terror of husbands, and might now lodge any where without being suspected. And forgets not to acquaint him, that he might converse with the finest women without any fear of those temptations which sometimes overpower even age itself upon the sight of such objects. And, lastly, he would have the happiness of being exempt from the illusions of sleep; which exemption, according to him is a peculiar blessing.

It was with reason that Foulques reckons all these as advantages very extraordinary in the life of an ecclesiastick. It

is easy to observe, that, to a person who devotes himself to continence, nothing can be more happy than to be insensible to beauty and love, for they who cannot maintain their chastity but by continual combats are very unhappy. The life of such persons is uneasy, their state always doubtful. They but too much feel the trouble of their warfare; and if they come off victorious in an engagement, it is often with a great many wounds. Even such of them as in a retired life are at the greatest distance from temptations, by continually struggling with their inclinations, setting barriers against the irruptions of the flesh, are in a miserable condition. Their entrenchments are often forced, and their conscience filled with sorrow and anxiety. What progress might one make in the ways of virtue, who is not obliged to fight an enemy for every foot of ground? Had *Abelard's* misfortune made him indeed such as Foulques supposed, we should see him in his *Letters* express his motives of comfort with a better grace. But though he now was in a condition not able to satisfy a passion by which he had suffered so much, yet was he not insensible at the sight of those objects which once gave him so much pleasure. This discourse therefore of Foulques, far from comforting *Abelard* in his affliction, seems capable of producing the contrary effect; and it is astonishing if *Abelard* did not take it so, and think he rather insulted him, and consequently resent it.

As to dreams, St. Austin informs us of the advantage Foulques tells his friend he had gained. St. Austin implores the grace of God to deliver him from this sort of weakness, and says, he gave

consent to those things in his sleep which he should abominate awake, and laments exceedingly so great a regaining weakness.

But let us go on with this charitable friend's letter; it hath too near a relation to this to leave any part of it untouched. Matrimonial functions (continues Foulques) and the cares of a family, will not now hinder your application to please God. And what a happiness is it, not to be in a capacity of sinning? And then he brings the examples of Origen, and other martyrs, who rejoice now in heaven for their being upon earth in the condition *Abelard* laments; as if the impossibility of committing a sin could secure any one from desiring to do it. But one of the greatest motives of comfort, and one upon which he insists the most is, because his misfortune is irreparable. This is indeed true in fact, but the consequence of his reasoning is not so certain; *Afflict not yourself* (says he) *because your misfortune is of such a nature as is never to be repaired.*

It must be owned, that the general topics of consolation have two faces, and may therefore be considered very differently, even so as to seem arguments for sorrow. As for instance, one might argue very justly, that a mother should not yield too much to grief upon the loss of a son, because her tears are unavailable; and tho' she should kill herself with sorrow, she can never, by these means, bring her son to life. Yet this very thing, that all she can do is useless, is the main occasion of her grief; she could bear it patiently, could she any ways retrieve her loss. When Solon lamented the death of his son, and some friend, by way of

comfort, told him his tears were insignificant. *That*, said he, *is the very reason why I weep.*

But Foulques argues much better afterwards; he says, *Abelard* did not suffer this in the commission of an ill act, but sleeping peaceably in his bed; that is he was not caught in any open fact, such has cost others the like loss. This is indeed a much better topic than the former, though it must be allowed that *Abelard* had drawn this misfortune on himself by a crime as bad as adultery; yet the fault was over, and he had made all the reparation in his power, and when they maimed him he thought no harm to any body.

Abelard's friend makes use likewise of other consolatory reasons in his Letter, and represents to him, after a very moving manner, the part which the Bishop and Canons, and all the Ecclesiasticks of Paris, took in his disgrace, and the mourning there was among the inhabitants and especially the women, upon this occasion. But, in this article of consolation, how comes it to pass that he makes no mention of *Heloise*? This ought not to appear strange: she was the most injured, and therefore questionless, her sorrows were sufficiently known to him; and it would be no news to tell the husband that his wife was in the utmost affliction for him. For as we observed before, though she was in a convent, she had not renounced her husband, and those frequent visits he made her were not spent in reading homilies. But let us make an end of our reflections on Foulques's curious Letter, Foulques, after advising *Abelard* not to think

of carrying the matter before the Pope, by assuring him that it required too great expence to obtain any satisfaction at that court, concludes all with this last motive of consolation, that the imagined happiness he had lost was always accompanied with abundance of vexation; but if he persevered in his spirit of resignation, he would, without doubt, at the last day obtain that justice he had now failed of. 'Tis great pity we have not *Abelard's* answer to this delicate Letter, the matter then would look like one of Job's Dialogues with his friends. *Abelard* would generally have enough to reply, and Foulques would often be but a sorry comforter. However, it is certain this Letter was of some weight with *Abelard*; for we find afterwards he never thought of making a voyage to Rome. Resolved to hear his calamity patiently, he left to God the avenging of the cruel and shameful abuse he had suffered.

But let us return to *Heloise*. 'Tis probable her friends of the convent of Argenteuil concealed so heavy a misfortune from her for some time; but at last she heard the fatal news. Though the rage and fury of her uncle threatened her long since with some punishment, yet could she never suspect any thing of this nature. It will be saying too little to tell the reader she felt all the shame and sorrow that is possible. She only can express those violent emotions of her soul upon so severe an occasion.

In all probability this misfortune of *Abelard* would have been a thorough cure of her passion, if we might argue from like cases: but there is no rule so general as not to admit of some

exceptions; and *Heloise's* love upon this severe trial proved like Queen Stratonice's, who was not less passionate for her favourite Combabus, when she discovered his impotence, than she had been before.

Shame and sorrow had not less seized *Abelard* than *Heloise*, nor dared he ever appear in the world; so that he resolved, immediately upon his cure, to banish himself from the sight of men, and hide himself in the darkness of a monastick life avoiding all conversation with any kind of persons excepting his dear *Heloise*, by whose company he endeavoured to comfort himself. But she at last resolved to follow his example, and continue forever in the convent of Argenteuil where she was. *Abelard* himself confesses, that shame rather than devotion had made him take the habit of a monk; and that it was jealousy more than love which engaged him to persuade *Heloise* to be professed before he had made his vow. The Letters which follow this history will inform us after what manner and with what resolution they separated. *Heloise* in the twenty-second year of her age generously quitted the world, and renounced all those pleasures she might reasonably have promised herself, to sacrifice herself entirely to the fidelity and obedience she owed her husband, and to procure him that ease of mind which he said he could no otherwise hope for.

Time making *Abelard's* misfortune familiar to him, he now entertained thoughts of ambition, and of supporting the reputation he had gained of the most learned man of the age.

He began with explaining the *Acts of the Apostles* to the monks of the monastery of St. *Dennis* to which he had retired; but the disorders of the abbey, and debauchees of the Abbot, which equally with his dignity, were superior to those of the simple monks, quickly drove him hence. He had made himself uneasy to them by censuring their irregularity. They were glad to part with him, and he to leave them.

As soon as he had obtained leave of the Abbot, he retired to Thinbaud in Champaign, where he set up a school, persuading himself that his reputation would bring him a great number of scholars. And indeed they flocked to him, not only from the most distant provinces of France, but also from Rome, Spain, England, and Germany, in such number, that the towns could not provide accommodation, nor the country provisions, enough for them¹¹. But *Abelard* did not foresee, that this success and reputation would at the same time occasion him new troubles. He had made himself two considerable enemies at Laon, Alberic of Rheims, and Lotulf of Lombardy, who, as soon as they perceived how prejudicial his reputation was to their schools, sought all occasions to ruin him; and thought they had a lucky handle to do so from a book of his, intituled, *The Mystery of the Trinity*. This they pretended was heretical, and through the Archbishop's means they procured a council at Soissons in the year 1121; and without suffering *Abelard* to make any defence, ordered his book

¹¹ *Ad quas scholas tanta scholarium multitudo confluit ut nec locus hospitii, nec terra sufficeret alimentis.* Abel. Oper. p. 19

to be burnt by his own hands, and himself to be confined to the convent of St. Medard. This sentence gave him such grief, that he says himself, the unhappy fate of his writing touched him more sensibly than the misfortune he had suffered through Fulbert's means. Nor was it only his fatherly concern for his own productions, but the indelible mark of heresy which by this means was fixed on him, which so exceedingly troubled him.

That the curious reader may have a complete knowledge of this matter, I shall here give an account of that pretended heresy which was imputed to *Abelard*. The occasion of his writing this book was, that his scholars demanded ¹² philosophical arguments on that subject; often urging that it was impossible to believe what was not understood; that it was to abuse the world, to preach a doctrine equally unintelligible to the speaker and auditor; and that it was for the blind to lead the blind. These young men were certainly inclined to Sabellinism. *Abelard's* enemies however did not accuse him of falling into this, but another heresy as bad, Tritheism; though indeed he was equally free from both: he explained the unity of the Godhead by comparisons drawn from human things but according to a passage of St. Bernard¹³, one of his greatest enemies, he seemed to hold, that no one ought to believe what he could not give a reason for. However *Abelard's* treatise upon this subject pleased every one except those of his

¹² *Humanas & philosophicas rationes requirebant. & plus quae inteligi, quam quae dici possent, efflagitabant.* Abel Op.

¹³ *Benardi Epist.* 190.

own profession, who, stung with envy that he should find out explanations which they could not have thought of, raised such a cry of heresy upon him, that he and some of his scholars had like to have been stoned by the mob¹⁴. By their powerful cabals they prevailed with Conan bishop of Preneste, the Pope's legate, who was president of the council, to condemn his book, pretending that he asserted three Gods, which they might easily suggest, when he was suffered to make no defence. 'Tis certain he was very orthodox in the doctrine of the Trinity; and all this process against him was only occasioned by the malice of his enemies. His logical comparison (and logic was his masterpiece) proved rather the three Divine Persons One, than multiplied the Divine Nature into Three. His comparison is, that as the three proportions¹⁵ in a syllogism are but one truth, so the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are but one Essence; and it is certain the inconveniences which may be drawn from this parallel are not more than what may be drawn from the comparison of the three dimensions of solids, so much insisted on by the famous orthodox mathematician Dr. Wallis of England. But great numbers of pious and learned divines, who have not been over-subtile in politics, have been persecuted and condemned as well as *Abelard* by the ignorance and malice of their brethren.

¹⁴ *Ita me in clero & populo diffamaverunt, ut pene me populos paucosque qui advenerant ex discipulis nostris prima die nostri adventus lapidarent; dicentes me tres Deos praedicare & scripsisse, sicut ipsis persuasum fuerat.* Abel Oper. p. 20.

¹⁵ *Sicut eadem oratio est, propositio, assumptio & conclusio, ita eadem Essentia est Pater, Filius, and Spiritus Sanctis.* Ibid.

A little after his condemnation, *Abelard* was ordered to return to St. Dennis. The liberty he had taken to censure the vicious lives of the monks had raised him a great many enemies. Amongst these was St. Bernard, not upon the same motives as those monks, but because *Abelard's* great wit, joined with so loose and sensual a life, gave him jealousy, who thought it impossible the heart should be defiled without the head being likewise tainted.

Scarce had he returned to St. Dennis, when one day he dropped some words, intimating he did not believe that the St. Dennis their patron was the Areopagite mentioned in the Scripture, there being no probability that he ever was in France. This was immediately carried to the Abbot, who was full of joy, that he had now a handle to heighten the accusations of heresy against him with some crime against the state; a method frequently used by this sort of gentlemen to make sure their revenge. In those times, too, the contradicting the notions of the monks was enough to prove a man an atheist, heretic, rebel, or any thing; learning signified nothing. If any one of a clearer head and larger capacity had the misfortune to be suspected of novelty, there was no way to avoid the general persecution of the monks but voluntarily banishing himself. The Abbot immediately assembled all the house, and declared he would deliver up to the secular power a person who had dared to reflect upon the honour of the kingdom and of the crown. *Abelard* very rightly judging that such threatenings were not to be despised, fled by night to Champaign, to a cloister of the monks of Troies,

and there patiently waited till the storm should be over. After the death of this Abbot, which, very luckily for him happened soon after his flight, he obtained leave to live where he pleased, though it was not without using some cunning. He knew the monks of so rich a house had fallen into great excesses, and were very obnoxious to the court, who would not fail to make their profit of it: he therefore procured it should be represented to his council as very disadvantageous to his Majesty's interest, that a person who was continually censuring the lives of his brethren should continue any longer with them. This was immediately understood, and orders given to some great men at court to demand of the Abbot and monks why they kept a person in their house whose conduct was so disagreeable to them; and, far from being an ornament to the society, was a continual vexation, by publishing their faults? This being very opportunely moved to the new Abbot, he gave *Abelard*

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