

СЭМНЮЭЛ РИЧАРДСОН

CLARISSA HARLOWE; OR
THE HISTORY OF A
YOUNG LADY — VOLUME

9

Сэмюэл Ричардсон

**Clarissa Harlowe; or the history
of a young lady — Volume 9**

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Содержание

LETTER I	5
LETTER II	7
LETTER III	8
LETTER IV	9
LETTER V	10
LETTER VI	11
LETTER VII	13
LETTER VIII	16
LETTER IX	17
LETTER X	19
LETTER XI	20
LETTER XII	21
LETTER XIII	24
LETTER XIV	26
LETTER XV	27
LETTER XVI	28
LETTER XVII	30
LETTER XVIII	31
LETTER XIX	33
LETTER XX	34
LETTER XXI	37
LETTER XXII	38
LETTER XXIII	40
LETTER XXIV	42
LETTER XXV	43
LETTER XXVI	50
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	52

Samuel Richardson

Clarissa Harlowe; or the history of a young lady — Volume 9

LETTER I

MR. BELFORD [IN CONTINUATION.]

SOHO, SIX O'CLOCK, SEPT. 7

The lady is still alive. The Colonel having just sent his servant to let me know that she inquired after me about an hour ago, I am dressing to attend her. Joel begs of me to dispatch him back, though but with one line to gratify your present impatience. He expects, he says, to find you at Knightsbridge, let him make what haste he can back; and, if he has not a line or two to pacify you, he is afraid you will pistol him; for he apprehends that you are hardly yourself. I therefore dispatch this, and will have another ready, as soon as I can, with particulars.—But you must have a little patience; for how can I withdraw myself every half hour to write, if I am admitted to the lady's presence, or if I am with the Colonel?

SMITH'S, EIGHT IN THE MORNING.

The lady is in a slumber. Mrs. Lovick, who sat up with her, says she had a better night than was expected; for although she slept little, she seemed easy; and the easier for the pious frame she was in; all her waking moments being taken up in devotion, or in an ejaculatory silence; her hands and eyes often lifted up, and her lips moving with a fervour worthy of these her last hours.

TEN O'CLOCK.

The Colonel being earnest to see his cousin as soon as she awoke, we were both admitted. We observed in her, as soon as we entered, strong symptoms of her approaching dissolution, notwithstanding what the women had flattered us with from her last night's tranquillity.—The Colonel and I, each loth to say what we thought, looked upon one another with melancholy countenances.

The Colonel told her he should send a servant to her uncle Antony's for some papers he had left there; and asked if she had any commands that way.

She thought not, she said, speaking more inwardly than she did the day before. She had indeed a letter ready to be sent to her good Norton; and there was a request intimated in it. But it was time enough, if the request were signified to those whom it concerned when all was over. —However, it might be sent them by the servant who was going that way. And she caused it to be given to the Colonel for that purpose.

Her breath being very short, she desired another pillow. Having two before, this made her in a manner sit up in her bed; and she spoke then with more distinctness; and, seeing us greatly concerned, forgot her own sufferings to comfort us; and a charming lecture she gave us, though a brief one, upon the happiness of a timely preparation, and upon the hazards of a late repentance, when the mind, as she observed, was so much weakened, as well as the body, as to render a poor soul hardly able to contend with its natural infirmities.

I beseech ye, my good friends, proceeded she, mourn not for one who mourns not, nor has cause to mourn, for herself. On the contrary, rejoice with me, that all my worldly troubles are so near to their end. Believe me, Sirs, that I would not, if I might, choose to live, although the pleasantest part of my life were to come over again: and yet eighteen years of it, out of nineteen, have been very pleasant. To be so much exposed to temptation, and to be so liable to fail in the trial, who would not rejoice that all her dangers are over?—All I wished was pardon and blessing from my dear parents. Easy as

my departure seems promised to be, it would have been still easier, had I that pleasure. BUT GOD ALMIGHTY WOULD NOT LET ME DEPEND FOR COMFORT UPON ANY BUT HIMSELF.

She then repeated her request, in the most earnest manner, to her cousin, that he would not heighten her fault, by seeking to avenge her death; to me, that I would endeavour to make up all breaches, and use the power I had with my friend, to prevent all future mischiefs from him, as well as that which this trust might give me to prevent any to him.

She made some excuses to her cousin, for not having been able to alter her will, to join him in the executorship with me; and to me, for the trouble she had given, and yet should give me.

She had fatigued herself so much, (growing sensibly weaker) that she sunk her head upon her pillows, ready to faint; and we withdrew to the window, looking upon one another; but could not tell what to say; and yet both seemed inclinable to speak: but the motion passed over in silence. Our eyes only spoke; and that in a manner neither's were used to—mine, at least, not till I knew this admirable creature.

The Colonel withdrew to dismiss his messenger, and send away the letter to Mrs. Norton. I took the opportunity to retire likewise; and to write thus far. And Joel returning to take it, I now close here.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK.

LETTER II

MR. BELFORD [IN CONTINUATION.]

The Colonel tells me that he had written to Mr. John Harlowe, by his servant, 'That they might spare themselves the trouble of debating about a reconciliation; for that his dear cousin would probably be no more before they could resolve.'

He asked me after his cousin's means of subsisting; and whether she had accepted of any favour from me; he was sure, he said, she would not from you.

I acquainted him with the truth of her parting with some of her apparel.

This wrung his heart; and bitterly did he exclaim as well against you as against her implacable relations.

He wished he had not come to England at all, or had come sooner; and hoped I would apprise him of the whole mournful story, at a proper season. He added, that he had thoughts, when he came over, of fixing here for the remainder of his days; but now, as it was impossible his cousin could recover, he would go abroad again, and re-settle himself at Florence or Leghorn.

The lady has been giving orders, with great presence of mind, about her body! directing her nurse and the maid of the house to put her in the coffin as soon as she is cold. Mr. Belford, she said, would know the rest by her will.

She has just now given from her bosom, where she always wore it, a miniature picture, set in gold, of Miss Howe. She gave it to Mrs. Lovick, desiring her to fold it up in white paper, and direct it, To Charles Hickman, Esq. and to give it to me, when she was departed, for that gentleman.

She looked upon the picture, before she gave it her—Sweet and ever-amiable friend!—Companion!—Sister!—Lover! said she—and kissed it four several times, once at each tender appellation.

Your other servant is come.—Well may you be impatient!—Well may you! —But do you think I can leave off, in the middle of a conversation, to run and set down what offers, and send it away piece-meal as I write? —If I could, must I not lose one half, while I put down the other?

This event is nearly as interesting to me as it is to you. If you are more grieved than I, there can be but one reason for it; and that's at your heart!—I had rather lose all the friends I have in the world, (yourself in the number,) than this divine lady; and shall be unhappy whenever I think of her sufferings, and of her merit; though I have nothing to reproach myself by reason of the former.

I say not this, just now, so much to reflect upon you as to express my own grief; though your conscience I suppose, will make you think otherwise.

Your poor fellow, who says that he begs for his life, in desiring to be dispatched back with a letter, tears this from me—else, perhaps, (for I am just sent for down,) a quarter of an hour would make you—not easy indeed—but certain—and that, in a state like your's, to a mind like your's, is a relief.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, FOUR O'CLOCK.

LETTER III
MR. BELFORD, TO RICHARD MOWBRAY,
ESQ. THURSDAY AFTERNOON

DEAR MOWBRAY,

I am glad to hear you are in town. Throw yourself the moment this comes to your hand, (if possible with Tourville,) in the way of the man who least of all men deserves the love of the worthy heart; but most that of thine and Tourville; else the news I shall most probably send him within an hour or two, will make annihilation the greatest blessing he has to wish for.

You will find him between Piccadilly and Kensington, most probably on horseback, riding backwards and forwards in a crazy way; or put up, perhaps, at some inn or tavern in the way—a waiter possibly, if so, watching for his servant's return to him from me.

His man Will. is just come to me. He will carry this to you in his way back, and be your director. Hie away in a coach, or any how. Your being with him may save either his or a servant's life. See the blessed effects of triumphant libertinism! Sooner or later it comes home to us, and all concludes in gall and bitterness!

Adieu. J. BELFORD.

LETTER IV

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ

Curse upon the Colonel, and curse upon the writer of the last letter I received, and upon all the world! Thou to pretend to be as much interested in my Clarissa's fate as myself!—'Tis well for one of us that this was not said to me, instead of written.—Living or dying, she is mine—and only mine. Have I not earned her dearly?—Is not d——n——n likely to be the purchase to me, though a happy eternity will be her's?

An eternal separation!—O God! O God!—How can I bear that thought!—But yet there is life!—Yet, therefore, hope—enlarge my hope, and thou shalt be my good genius, and I will forgive thee every thing.

For this last time—but it must not, shall not be the last—Let me hear, the moment thou receivest this—what I am to be—for, at present, I am

The most miserable of Men.

ROSE, AT KNIGHTSBRIDGE, FIVE O'CLOCK.

My fellow tells me that thou art sending Mowbray and Tourville to me:—I want them not—my soul's sick of them, and of all the world—but most of myself. Yet, as they send me word they will come to me immediately, I will wait for them, and for thy next. O Belford, let it not be—But hasten it, be what it may!

LETTER V
MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.
SEVEN O'CLOCK, THURSDAY EVENING, SEPT. 7

I have only to say at present—Thou wilt do well to take a tour to Paris; or wherever else thy destiny shall lead thee!——

JOHN BELFORD.

LETTER VI
MR. MOWBRAY, TO JOHN BELFORD,
ESQ. UXBRIDGE, SEPT. 7, BETWEEN
ELEVEN AND TWELVE AT NIGHT

DEAR JACK,

I send by poor Lovelace's desire, for particulars of the fatal breviate thou sentest him this night. He cannot bear to set pen to paper; yet wants to know every minute passage of Miss Harlowe's departure. Yet why he should, I cannot see: for if she is gone, she is gone; and who can help it?

I never heard of such a woman in my life. What great matters has she suffered, that grief should kill her thus?

I wish the poor fellow had never known her. From first to last, what trouble she has cost him! The charming fellow had been half lost to us ever since he pursued her. And what is there in one woman more than another, for matter of that?

It was well we were with him when your note came. Your showed your true friendship in your foresight. Why, Jack, the poor fellow was quite beside himself—mad as any man ever was in Bedlam.

Will. brought him the letter just after we had joined him at the Bohemia Head; where he had left word at the Rose at Knightsbridge he should be; for he had been sauntering up and down, backwards and forwards, expecting us, and his fellow. Will., as soon as he delivered it, got out of his way; and, when he opened it, never was such a piece of scenery. He trembled like a devil at receiving it: fumbled at the seal, his fingers in a palsy, like Tom. Doleman's; his hand shake, shake, shake, that he tore the letter in two, before he could come at the contents: and, when he had read them, off went his hat to one corner of the room, his wig to the other—D—n—n seize the world! and a whole volley of such-like execrations; running up and down the room, and throwing up the sash, and pulling it down, and smiting his forehead with his double fist, with such force as would have felled an ox, and stamping and tearing, that the landlord ran in, and faster out again. And this was the distraction scene for some time.

In vain was all Jemmy or I could say to him. I offered once to take hold of his hands, because he was going to do himself a mischief, as I believed, looking about for his pistols, which he had laid upon the table, but which Will., unseen, had taken out with him, [a faithful, honest dog, that Will.! I shall for ever love the fellow for it,] and he hit me a d—d dowse of the chops, as made my nose bleed. 'Twas well 'twas he, for I hardly knew how to take it.

Jemmy raved at him, and told him, how wicked it was in him, to be so brutish to abuse a friend, and run mad for a woman. And then he said he was sorry for it; and then Will. ventured in with water and a towel; and the dog rejoiced, as I could see by his look, that I had it rather than he.

And so, by degrees, we brought him a little to his reason, and he promised to behave more like a man. And so I forgave him: and we rode on in the dark to here at Doleman's. And we all tried to shame him out of his mad, ungovernable foolishness: for we told him, as how she was but a woman, and an obstinate perverse woman too; and how could he help it?

And you know, Jack, (as we told him, moreover,) that it was a shame to manhood, for a man, who had served twenty and twenty women as bad or worse, let him have served Miss Harlowe never so bad, should give himself such obstropulous airs, because she would die: and we advised him never to attempt a woman proud of her character and virtue, as they call it, any more: for why? The conquest did not pay trouble; and what was there in one woman more than another? Hay, you know, Jack!—And thus we comforted him, and advised him.

But yet his d—d addled pate runs upon this lady as much now she's dead as it did when she was living. For, I suppose, Jack, it is no joke: she is certainly and bonâ fide dead: I'n't she? If not, thou deservest to be doubly d—d for thy fooling, I tell thee that. So he will have me write for particulars of her departure.

He won't bear the word dead on any account. A squeamish puppy! How love unmans and softens! And such a noble fellow as this too! Rot him for an idiot, and an oaf! I have no patience with the foolish duncical dog —upon my soul, I have not!

So send the account, and let him howl over it, as I suppose he will.

But he must and shall go abroad: and in a month or two Jemmy, and you, and I, will join him, and he'll soon get the better of this chicken-hearted folly, never fear; and will then be ashamed of himself: and then we'll not spare him; though now, poor fellow, it were pity to lay him on so thick as he deserves. And do thou, till then, spare all reflections upon him; for, it seems, thou hast worked him unmercifully.

I was willing to give thee some account of the hand we have had with the tearing fellow, who had certainly been a lost man, had we not been with him; or he would have killed somebody or other. I have no doubt of it. And now he is but very middling; sits grinning like a man in straw; curses and swears, and is confounded gloomy; and creeps into holes and corners, like an old hedge-hog hunted for his grease.

And so, adieu, Jack. Tourville, and all of us, wish for thee; for no one has the influence upon him that thou hast.

R. MOWBRAY.

As I promised him that I would write for the particulars abovesaid, I write this after all are gone to bed; and the fellow is set out with it by day-break.

LETTER VII

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ. THURSDAY NIGHT

I may as well try to write; since, were I to go to bed, I shall not sleep. I never had such a weight of grief upon my mind in my life, as upon the demise of this admirable woman; whose soul is now rejoicing in the regions of light.

You may be glad to know the particulars of her happy exit. I will try to proceed; for all is hush and still; the family retired; but not one of them, and least of all her poor cousin, I dare say, to rest.

At four o'clock, as I mentioned in my last, I was sent for down; and, as thou usedst to like my descriptions, I will give thee the woeful scene that presented itself to me, as I approached the bed.

The Colonel was the first that took my attention, kneeling on the side of the bed, the lady's right hand in both his, which his face covered, bathing it with his tears; although she had been comforting him, as the women since told me, in elevated strains, but broken accents.

On the other side of the bed sat the good widow; her face overwhelmed with tears, leaning her head against the bed's head in a most disconsolate manner; and turning her face to me, as soon as she saw me, O Mr. Belford, cried she, with folded hands—the dear lady—A heavy sob permitted her not to say more.

Mrs. Smith, with clasped fingers, and uplifted eyes, as if imploring help from the only Power which could give it, was kneeling down at the bed's feet, tears in large drops trickling down her cheeks.

Her nurse was kneeling between the widow and Mrs. Smith, her arms extended. In one hand she held an ineffectual cordial, which she had just been offering to her dying mistress; her face was swoln with weeping (though used to such scenes as this); and she turned her eyes towards me, as if she called upon me by them to join in the helpless sorrow; a fresh stream bursting from them as I approached the bed.

The maid of the house with her face upon her folded arms, as she stood leaning against the wainscot, more audibly exprest her grief than any of the others.

The lady had been silent a few minutes, and speechless, as they thought, moving her lips without uttering a word; one hand, as I said, in her cousin's. But when Mrs. Lovick, on my approach, pronounced my name, O Mr. Belford, said she, with a faint inward voice, but very distinct nevertheless—Now!—Now! [in broken periods she spoke]—I bless God for his mercies to his poor creature—all will soon be over—a few—a very few moments—will end this strife—and I shall be happy!

Comfort here, Sir—turning her head to the Colonel—comfort my cousin—see! the blame—able kindness—he would not wish me to be happy—so soon!

Here she stopt for two or three minutes, earnestly looking upon him. Then resuming, My dearest Cousin, said she, be comforted—what is dying but the common lot?—The mortal frame may seem to labour—but that is all!—It is not so hard to die as I believed it to be!—The preparation is the difficulty—I bless God, I have had time for that—the rest is worse to beholders, than to me!—I am all blessed hope—hope itself. She looked what she said, a sweet smile beaming over her countenance.

After a short silence, Once more, my dear Cousin, said she, but still in broken accents, commend me most dutifully to my father and mother—There she stopt. And then proceeding—To my sister, to my brother, to my uncles—and tell them, I bless them with my parting breath—for all their goodness to me—even for their displeasure, I bless them—most happy has been to me my punishment here! Happy indeed!

She was silent for a few moments, lifting up her eyes, and the hand her cousin held not between his. Then, O Death! said she, where is thy sting! [the words I remember to have heard in the burial-

service read over my uncle and poor Belton.] And after a pause—It is good for me that I was afflicted! Words of scripture, I suppose.

Then turning towards us, who were lost in speechless sorrow—O dear, dear gentlemen, said she, you know not what foretastes—what assurances—And there she again stopped, and looked up, as if in a thankful rapture, sweetly smiling.

Then turning her head towards me—Do you, Sir, tell your friend that I forgive him!—And I pray to God to forgive him!—Again pausing, and lifting up her eyes as if praying that He would. Let him know how happily I die:—And that such as my own, I wish to be his last hour.

She was again silent for a few moments: and then resuming—My sight fails me!—Your voices only—[for we both applauded her christian, her divine frame, though in accents as broken as her own]; and the voice of grief is alike in all. Is not this Mr. Morden's hand? pressing one of his with that he had just let go. Which is Mr. Belford's? holding out the other. I gave her mine. God Almighty bless you both, said she, and make you both—in your last hour—for you must come to this—happy as I am.

She paused again, her breath growing shorter; and, after a few minutes —And now, my dearest Cousin, give me your hand—nearer—still nearer —drawing it towards her; and she pressed it with her dying lips—God protect you, dear, dear Sir—and once more, receive my best and most grateful thanks—and tell my dear Miss Howe—and vouchsafe to see, and to tell my worthy Norton—she will be one day, I fear not, though now lowly in her fortunes, a saint in Heaven—tell them both, that I remember them with thankful blessings in my last moments!—And pray God to give them happiness here for many, many years, for the sake of their friends and lovers; and an heavenly crown hereafter; and such assurances of it, as I have, through the all-satisfying merits of my blessed Redeemer.

Her sweet voice and broken periods methinks still fill my ears, and never will be out of my memory.

After a short silence, in a more broken and faint accent—And you, Mr. Belford, pressing my hand, may God preserve you, and make you sensible of all your errors—you see, in me, how all ends—may you be—And down sunk her head upon her pillow, she fainting away, and drawing from us her hands.

We thought she was then gone; and each gave way to a violent burst of grief.

But soon showing signs of returning life, our attention was again engaged; and I besought her, when a little recovered, to complete in my favour her half-pronounced blessing. She waved her hand to us both, and bowed her head six several times, as we have since recollected, as if distinguishing every person present; not forgetting the nurse and the maid-servant; the latter having approached the bed, weeping, as if crowding in for the divine lady's blessing; and she spoke faltering and inwardly—Bless—bless—bless—you all—and—now—and now—[holding up her almost lifeless hands for the last time] come—O come—blessed Lord —JESUS!

And with these words, the last but half-pronounced, expired:—such a smile, such a charming serenity overspreading her sweet face at the instant, as seemed to manifest her eternal happiness already begun.

O Lovelace!—But I can write no more!

I resume my pen to add a few lines.

While warm, though pulseless, we pressed each her hand with our lips; and then retired into the next room.

We looked at each other, with intent to speak: but, as if one motion governed, as one cause affected both, we turned away silent.

The Colonel sighed as if his heart would burst: at last, his face and hands uplifted, his back towards me, Good Heaven! said he to himself, support me!—And is it thus, O flower of nature!—

Then pausing—And must we no more—never more!—My blessed, blessed Cousin! uttering some other words, which his sighs made inarticulate.—And then, as if recollecting himself—Forgive me, Sir!—Excuse me, Mr. Belford! And sliding by me, Anon I hope to see you, Sir—And down stairs he went, and out of the house, leaving me a statue.

When I recovered, I was ready to repine at what I then called an unequal dispensation; forgetting her happy preparation, and still happier departure; and that she had but drawn a common lot; triumphing in it, and leaving behind her every one less assured of happiness, though equally certain that the lot would one day be their own.

She departed exactly at forty minutes after six o'clock, as by her watch on the table.

And thus died Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, in the blossom of her youth and beauty: and who, her tender years considered, had not left behind her her superior in extensive knowledge and watchful prudence; nor hardly her equal for unblemished virtue, exemplary piety, sweetness of manners, discreet generosity, and true christian charity: and these all set off by the most graceful modesty and humility; yet on all proper occasions, manifesting a noble presence of mind, and true magnanimity: so that she may be said to have been not only an ornament to her sex, but to human nature.

A better pen than mine may do her fuller justice. Thine, I mean, O Lovelace! For well dost thou know how much she excelled in the graces of both mind and person, natural and acquired, all that is woman. And thou also can best account for the causes of her immature death, through those calamities which in so short a space of time, from the highest pitch of felicity, (every one in a manner adoring her,) brought her to an exit so happy for herself, but, that it was so early, so much to be deplored by all who had the honour of her acquaintance.

This task, then, I leave to thee: but now I can write no more, only that I am a sympathizer in every part of thy distress, except (and yet it is cruel to say it) in that which arises from thy guilt.

ONE O'CLOCK, FRIDAY MORNING.

LETTER VIII
MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT
LOVELACE, ESQ. NINE, FRIDAY MORN

I have no opportunity to write at length, having necessary orders to give on the melancholy occasion. Joel, who got to me by six in the morning, and whom I dispatched instantly back with the letter I had ready from last night, gives me but an indifferent account of the state of your mind. I wonder not at it; but time (and nothing else can) will make it easier to you: if (that is to say) you have compounded with your conscience; else it may be heavier every day than other.

Tourville tells us what a way you are in. I hope you will not think of coming hither. The lady in her will desires you may not see her. Four copies are making of it. It is a long one; for she gives her reasons for all she wills. I will write to you more particularly as soon as possibly I can.

Three letters are just brought by a servant in livery, directed To Miss Clarissa Harlowe. I will send copies of them to you. The contents are enough to make one mad. How would this poor lady have rejoiced to receive them!—And yet, if she had, she would not have been enabled to say, as she nobly did,¹ That God would not let her depend for comfort upon any but Himself.—And indeed for some days past she had seemed to have got above all worldly considerations.—Her fervent love, even for her Miss Howe, as she acknowledged, having given way to supreamer fervours.²

¹ See Letter I. of this volume.

² See Vol. VIII. Letter LXII.

LETTER IX
MRS. NORTON, TO MISS CLARISSA
HARLOWE WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 6

At length, my best beloved Miss Clary, every thing is in the wished train: for all your relations are unanimous in your favour. Even your brother and your sister are with the foremost to be reconciled to you.

I knew it must end thus! By patience, and persevering sweetness, what a triumph have you gained!

This happy change is owing to letters received from your physician, from your cousin Morden, and from Mr. Brand.

Colonel Morden will be with you, no doubt, before this can reach you, with his pocket-book filled with money-bills, that nothing may be wanting to make you easy.

And now, all our hopes, all our prayers, are, that this good news may restore you to spirits and health; and that (so long withheld) it may not come too late.

I know how much your dutiful heart will be raised with the joyful tidings I write you, and still shall more particularly tell you of, when I have the happiness to see you: which will be by next Sunday, at farthest; perhaps on Friday afternoon, by the time you can receive this.

For this day, being sent for by the general voice, I was received by every one with great goodness and condescension, and entreated (for that was the word they were pleased to use, when I needed no entreaty, I am sure,) to hasten up to you, and to assure you of all their affectionate regards to you: and your father bid me say all the kind things that were in my heart to say, in order to comfort and raise you up, and they would hold themselves bound to make them good.

How agreeable is this commission to your Norton! My heart will overflow with kind speeches, never fear! I am already meditating what I shall say, to cheer and raise you up, in the names of every one dear and near to you. And sorry I am that I cannot this moment set out, as I might, instead of writing, would they favour my eager impatience with their chariot; but as it was not offered, it would be a presumption to have asked for it: and to-morrow a hired chaise and pair will be ready; but at what hour I know not.

How I long once more to fold my dear, precious young lady to my fond, my more than fond, my maternal bosom!

Your sister will write to you, and send her letter, with this, by a particular hand.

I must not let them see what I write, because of my wish about the chariot.

Your uncle Harlowe will also write, and (I doubt not) in the kindest terms: for they are all extremely alarmed and troubled at the dangerous way your doctor represents you to be in; as well as delighted with the character he gives you. Would to Heaven the good gentleman had written sooner! And yet he writes, that you know not he has now written. But it is all our confidence, and our consolation, that he would not have written at all, had he thought it too late.

They will prescribe no conditions to you, my dear young lady; but will leave all to your own duty and discretion. Only your brother and sister declare they will never yield to call Mr. Lovelace brother; nor will your father, I believe, be easily brought to think of him for a son.

I am to bring you down with me as soon as your health and inclination will permit. You will be received with open arms. Every one longs to see you. All the servants please themselves that they shall be permitted to kiss your hands. The pert Betty's note is already changed; and she now runs over in your just praises. What friends does prosperity make! What enemies adversity! It always was, and always will be so, in every state of life, from the throne to the cottage.—But let all be forgotten now

on this jubilee change: and may you, my dearest Miss, be capable of rejoicing in this good news; as I know you will rejoice, if capable of any thing.

God preserve you to our happy meeting! And I will, if I may say so, weary Heaven with my incessant prayers to preserve and restore you afterwards!

I need not say how much I am, my dear young lady, Your ever-affectionate and devoted,
JUDITH NORTON.

An unhappy delay, as to the chaise, will make it Saturday morning before I can fold you to my fond heart.

LETTER X
MISS ARAB. HARLOWE, TO MISS CL.
HARLOWE WEDN. MORN. SEPT. 6

DEAR SISTER,

We have just heard that you are exceedingly ill. We all loved you as never young creature was loved: you are sensible of that, sister Clary. And you have been very naughty—but we could not be angry always.

We are indeed more afflicted with the news of your being so very ill than I can express; for I see not but, after this separation, (as we understand that your misfortune has been greater than your fault, and that, however unhappy, you have demeaned yourself like the good young creature you used to be,) we shall love you better, if possible, than ever.

Take comfort, therefore, sister Clary, and don't be too much cast down —whatever your mortifications may be from such noble prospects over-clouded, and from the reflections you will have from within, on your faulty step, and from the sullying of such a charming character by it, you will receive none from any of us; and, as an earnest of your papa's and mamma's favour and reconciliation, they assure you by me of their blessing and hourly prayers.

If it will be any comfort to you, and my mother finds this letter is received as we expect, (which we shall know by the good effect it will have upon your health,) she will herself go to town to you. Mean-time, the good woman you so dearly love will be hastened up to you; and she writes by this opportunity, to acquaint you of it, and of all our returning love.

I hope you will rejoice at this good news. Pray let us hear that you do. Your next grateful letter on this occasion, especially if it gives us the pleasure of hearing you are better upon this news, will be received with the same (if not greater) delight, than we used to have in all your prettily-penn'd epistles. Adieu, my dear Clary! I am,

Your loving sister, and true friend, ARABELLA HARLOWE.

LETTER XI
TO HIS DEAR NIECE, MISS CLARISSA
HARLOWE WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 6

We were greatly grieved, my beloved Miss Clary, at your fault; but we are still more, if possible, to hear you are so very ill; and we are sorry things have been carried so far. We know your talents, my dear, and how movingly you could write, whenever you pleased; so that nobody could ever deny you any thing; and, believing you depended on your pen, and little thinking you were so ill, and that you lived so regular a life, and are so truly penitent, are must troubled every one of us, your brother and all, for being so severe. Forgive my part in it, my dearest Clary. I am your second papa, you know. And you used to love me.

I hope you'll soon be able to come down, and, after a while, when your indulgent parents can spare you, that you will come to me for a whole month, and rejoice my heart, as you used to do. But if, through illness, you cannot so soon come down as we wish, I will go up to you; for I long to see you. I never more longed to see you in my life; and you was always the darling of my heart, you know.

My brother Antony desires his hearty commendations to you, and joins with me in the tenderest assurance, that all shall be well, and, if possible, better than ever; for we now have been so long without you, that we know the miss of you, and even hunger and thirst, as I may say, to see you, and to take you once more to our hearts; whence indeed you was never banished so far as our concern for the unhappy step made us think and you believe you were. Your sister and brother both talk of seeing you in town; so does my dear sister, your indulgent mother.

God restore your health, if it be his will; else, I know not what will become of
Your truly loving uncle, and second papa, JOHN HARLOWE.

LETTER XII
MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE,
ESQ. FRIDAY NIGHT, SEPT. 8, PAST TEN

I will now take up the account of our proceedings from my letter of last night, which contained the dying words of this incomparable lady.

As soon as we had seen the last scene closed (so blessedly for herself!) we left the body to the care of the good women, who, according to the orders she had given them that very night, removed her into that last house which she had displayed so much fortitude in providing.

In the morning, between seven and eight o'clock, according to appointment, the Colonel came to me here. He was very much indisposed. We went together, accompanied by Mrs. Lovick and Mrs. Smith, into the deceased's chamber. We could not help taking a view of the lovely corpse, and admiring the charming serenity of her noble aspect. The women declared they never saw death so lovely before; and that she looked as if in an easy slumber, the colour having not quite left her cheeks and lips.

I unlocked the drawer, in which (as I mentioned in a former³) she had deposited her papers. I told you in mine of Monday last, that she had the night before sealed up, with three black seals, a parcel inscribed, As soon as I am certainly dead, this to be broke open by Mr. Belford. I accused myself for not having done it over-night. But really I was then incapable of any thing.

I broke it open accordingly, and found in it no less than eleven letters, each sealed with her own seal, and black wax, one of which was directed to me.

I will enclose a copy of it.

TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. SUNDAY EVENING, SEPT. 3.

SIR,

I take this last and solemn occasion to repeat to you my thanks for all your kindness to me at a time when I most needed countenance and protection.

A few considerations I beg leave, as now at your perusal of this, from the dead, to press upon you, with all the warmth of a sincere friendship.

By the time you will see this, you will have had an instance, I humbly trust, of the comfortable importance of a pacified conscience, in the last hours of one, who, to the last hour, will wish your eternal welfare.

The great Duke of Luxemburgh, as I have heard, on his death-bed, declared, that he would then much rather have had it to reflect upon, that he had administered a cup of cold water to a worthy poor creature in distress, than that he had won so many battles as he had triumphed for. And, as one well observes, All the sentiments of worldly grandeur vanish at that unavoidable moment which decides the destiny of men.

If then, Sir, at the tremendous hour it be thus with the conquerors of armies, and the subduers of nations, let me in a very few words (many are not needed,) ask, What, at that period, must be the reflection of those, (if capable of reflection,) who have lived a life of sense and offence; whose study and whose pride most ingloriously have been to seduce the innocent, and to ruin the weak, the unguarded, and the friendless; made still more friendless by their base seductions?—O Mr. Belford, weigh, ponder, and reflect upon it, now that, in health, and in vigour of mind and body, the reflections will most avail you—what an ungrateful, what an unmanly, what a meaner than reptile pride is this!

In the next place, Sir, let me beg of you, for my sake, who AM, or, as now you will best read it, have been, driven to the necessity of applying to you to be the executor of my will, that you will bear,

³ See Vol. VIII. Letter LVII.

according to that generosity which I think to be in you, with all my friends, and particularly with my brother, (who is really a worthy young man, but perhaps a little too headstrong in his first resentments and conceptions of things,) if any thing, by reason of this trust, should fall out disagreeably; and that you will study to make peace, and to reconcile all parties; and more especially, that you, who seem to have a great influence upon your still-more headstrong friend, will interpose, if occasion be, to prevent farther mischief—for surely, Sir, that violent spirit may sit down satisfied with the evils he has already wrought; and, particularly, with the wrongs, the heinous and ignoble wrongs, he has in me done to my family, wounded in the tenderest part of its honour.

For your compliance with this request I have already your repeated promise. I claim the observance of it, therefore, as a debt from you: and though I hope I need not doubt it, yet was I willing, on this solemn, this last occasion, thus earnestly to re-inforce it.

I have another request to make to you; it is only, that you will be pleased, by a particular messenger, to forward the enclosed letters as directed.

And now, Sir, having the presumption to think that an useful member is lost to society by means of the unhappy step which has brought my life so soon to its period, let me hope that I may be an humble instrument, in the hands of Providence, to reform a man of your abilities; and then I shall think that loss will be more abundantly repaired to the world, while it will be, by God's goodness, my gain; and I shall have this farther hope, that once more I shall have an opportunity in a blessed eternity to thank you, as I now repeatedly do, for the good you have done to, and the trouble you will have taken for, Sir,

Your obliged servant, CLARISSA HARLOWE.

The other letters are directed to her father, to her mother, one to her two uncles, to her brother, to her sister, to her aunt Hervey, to her cousin Morden, to Miss Howe, to Mrs. Norton, and lastly one to you, in performance of her promise, that a letter should be sent you when she arrived at her father's house!—I will withhold this last till I can be assured that you will be fitter to receive it than Tourville tells me you are at present.

Copies of all these are sealed up, and entitled, Copies of my ten posthumous letters, for J. Belford, Esq.; and put in among the bundle of papers left to my direction, which I have not yet had leisure to open.

No wonder, while able, that she was always writing, since thus only of late could she employ that time, which heretofore, from the long days she made, caused so many beautiful works to spring from her fingers. It is my opinion, that there never was a woman so young, who wrote so much, and with such celerity. Her thoughts keeping pace, as I have seen, with her pen, she hardly ever stopped or hesitated; and very seldom blotted out, or altered. It was a natural talent she was mistress of, among many other extraordinary ones. I gave the Colonel his letter, and ordered Harry instantly to get ready to carry the others. Mean time (retiring into the next apartment) we opened the will. We were both so much affected in perusing it, that at one time the Colonel, breaking off, gave it to me to read on; at another I gave it back to him to proceed with; neither of us being able to read it through without such tokens of sensibility as affected the voice of each.

Mrs. Lovick, Mrs. Smith, and her nurse, were still more touched, when we read those articles in which they are respectively remembered: but I will avoid mentioning the particulars, (except in what relates to the thread of my narration,) as in proper time I shall send you a copy of it.

The Colonel told me, he was ready to account with me for the money and bills brought up from Harlowe-place; which would enable me, as he said, directly to execute the legacy parts of the will; and he would needs at the instant force into my hands a paper relating to that subject. I put it into

my pocket-book, without looking into it; telling him, that as I hoped he would do all in his power to promote a literal performance of the will, I must beg his advice and assistance in the execution of it.

Her request to be buried with her ancestors, made a letter of the following import necessary, which I prevailed upon the Colonel to write; being unwilling myself (so early at least,) to appear officious in the eye of a family which probably wishes not any communication with me.

TO JAMES HARLOWE, JUN. ESQ. SIR,

The letter which the bearer of this brings with him, will, I presume, make it unnecessary to acquaint you and my cousins with the death of the most excellent of women. But I am requested by her executor, who will soon send you a copy of her last will, to acquaint her father (which I choose to do by your means,) that in it she earnestly desires to be laid in the family-vault, at the feet of her grandfather.

If her father will not admit of it, she has directed her body to be buried in the church-yard of the parish where she died.

I need not tell you, that a speedy answer to this is necessary.

Her beatification commenced yesterday afternoon, exactly at forty minutes after six.

I can write no more, than that I am

Your's, &c. WM. MORDEN.

FRIDAY MORN. SEPT. 8.

By the time this was written, and by the Colonel's leave transcribed, Harry was booted and spurred, his horse at the door; and I delivered him the letters to the family, with those to Mrs. Norton and Miss Howe, (eight in all,) together with the above of the Colonel to Mr. James Harlowe; and gave him orders to use the utmost dispatch with them.

The Colonel and I have bespoke mourning for our selves and servants.

LETTER XIII

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ. SAT. TEN O'CLOCK

Poor Mrs. Norton is come. She was set down at the door; and would have gone up stairs directly. But Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Lovick being together and in tears, and the former hinting too suddenly to the truly-venerable woman the fatal news, she sunk down at her feet in fits; so that they were forced to breath a vein to bring her to herself, and to a capacity of exclamation; and then she ran on to Mrs. Lovick and me, who entered just as she recovered, in praise of the lady, in lamentations for her, and invectives against you; but yet so circumscribed were her invectives, that I could observe in them the woman well educated, and in her lamentations the passion christianized, as I may say.

She was impatient to see the corpse. The women went up with her. But they owned that they were too much affected themselves on this occasion to describe her extremely-affecting behaviour.

With trembling impatience she pushed aside the coffin-lid. She bathed the face with her tears, and kissed her cheeks and forehead, as if she were living. It was she indeed! she said; her sweet young lady! her very self! Nor had death, which changed all things, a power to alter her lovely features! She admired the serenity of her aspect. She no doubt was happy, she said, as she had written to her she should be; but how many miserable creatures had she left behind her!—The good woman lamenting that she herself had lived to be one of them.

It was with difficulty they prevailed upon her to quit the corpse; and when they went into the next apartment, I joined them, and acquainted her with the kind legacy her beloved young lady had left her; but this rather augmented than diminished her concern. She ought, she said, to have attended her in person. What was the world to her, wringing her hands, now the child of her bosom, and of her heart, was no more? Her principal consolation, however, was, that she should not long survive her. She hoped, she said, that she did not sin, in wishing she might not.

It was easy to observe, by the similitude of sentiments shown in this and other particulars, that the divine lady owed to this excellent woman many of her good notions.

I thought it would divert the poor gentlewoman, and not altogether unsuitably, if I were to put her upon furnishing mourning for herself; as it would rouse her, by a seasonable and necessary employment, from that dismal lethargy of grief, which generally succeeds to the violent anguish with which a gentle nature is accustomed to be torn upon the first communication of the unexpected loss of a dear friend. I gave her therefore the thirty guineas bequeathed to her and to her son for mourning; the only mourning which the testatrix has mentioned; and desired her to lose no time in preparing her own, as I doubted not, that she would accompany the corpse, if it were permitted to be carried down.

The Colonel proposes to attend the hearse, if his kindred give him not fresh cause of displeasure; and will take with him a copy of the will. And being intent to give the family some favourable impressions of me, he desired me to permit him to take with him the copy of the posthumous letter to me; which I readily granted. He is so kind as to promise me a minute account of all that should pass on the melancholy occasion. And we have begun a friendship and settled a correspondence, which but one incident can possibly happen to interrupt to the end of our lives. And that I hope will not happen.

But what must be the grief, the remorse, that will seize upon the hearts of this hitherto-inexorable family, on the receiving of the posthumous letters, and that of the Colonel apprizing them of what has happened? I have given requisite orders to an undertaker, on the supposition that the body will be permitted to be carried down; and the women intend to fill the coffin with aromatic herbs.

The Colonel has obliged me to take the bills and draughts which he brought up with him, for the considerable sums which accrued since the grandfather's death from the lady's estate.

I could have shown to Mrs. Norton the copies of the two letters which she missed by coming up. But her grief wants not the heightenings which the reading of them would have given her.

I have been dipping into the copies of the posthumous letters to the family, which Harry has carried down. Well may I call this lady divine. They are all calculated to give comfort rather than reproach, though their cruelty to her merited nothing but reproach. But were I in any of their places, how much rather had I, that she had quitted scores with me by the most severe recrimination, than that she should thus nobly triumph over me by a generosity that has no example? I will enclose some of them, which I desire you to return as soon as you can.

LETTER XIV

TO THE EVER-HONOURED JAS. HARLOWE, SEN. ESQ

MOST DEAR SIR,

With exulting confidence now does your emboldened daughter come into your awful presence by these lines, who dared not, but upon this occasion, to look up to you with hopes of favour and forgiveness; since, when this comes to your hands, it will be out of her power ever to offend you more.

And now let me bless you, my honoured Papa, and bless you, as I write, upon my knees, for all the benefits I have received from your indulgence: for your fond love to me in the days of my prattling innocence: for the virtuous education you gave me: and for, the crown of all, the happy end, which, through divine grace, by means of that virtuous education, I hope, by the time you will receive this, I shall have made. And let me beg of you, dear, venerable Sir, to blot out from your remembrance, if possible, the last unhappy eight months; and then I shall hope to be remembered with advantage for the pleasure you had the goodness to take in your Clarissa.

Still on her knees, let your poor penitent implore your forgiveness of all her faults and follies; more especially of that fatal error which threw her out of your protection.

When you know, Sir, that I have never been faulty in my will; that ever since my calamity became irretrievable, I have been in a state of preparation; that I have the strongest assurance that the Almighty has accepted my unfeigned repentance; and that by this time you will (as I humbly presume to hope,) have been the means of adding one to the number of the blessed; you will have reason for joy rather than sorrow. Since, had I escaped the snares by which I was entangled, I might have wanted those exercises which I look upon now as so many mercies dispensed to wean me betimes from a world that presented itself to me with prospects too alluring; and in that case (too easily satisfied with the worldly felicity) I might not have attained to that blessedness, in which now, on your reading of this, I humbly presume, (through the divine goodness,) I am rejoicing.

That the Almighty, in his own good time, will bring you, Sir, and my ever-honoured mother, after a series of earthly felicities, of which my unhappy fault be the only interruption, (and very grievous I know that must have been,) to rejoice in the same blessed state, is the repeated prayer of, Sir,

Your now happy daughter, CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XV TO THE EVER-HONOURED MRS. HARLOWE

HONOURED MADAM,

The last time I had the boldness to write to you, it was with all the consciousness of a self-convicted criminal, supplicating her offended judge for mercy and pardon. I now, by these lines, approach you with more assurance; but nevertheless with the highest degree of reverence, gratitude, and duty. The reason of my assurance, my letter to my papa will give; and as I humbly on my knees implored his pardon, so now, in the same dutiful manner, do I supplicate your's, for the grief and trouble I have given you.

Every vein of my heart has bled for an unhappy rashness; which, (although involuntary as to the act,) from the moment it was committed, carried with it its own punishment; and was accompanied with a true and sincere penitence.

God, who has been a witness of my distresses, knows that, great as they have been, the greatest of all was the distress that I knew I must have given to you, Madam, and to my father, by a step that had so very ugly an appearance in your eyes and his; and indeed in the eyes of all my family; a step so unworthy of your daughter, and of the education you had given her.

But HE, I presume to hope, has forgiven me; and, at the instant this will reach your hands, I humbly trust, I shall be rejoicing in the blessed fruits of his forgiveness. And be this your comfort, my ever-honoured Mamma, that the principal end of your pious care for me is attained, though not in the way so much hoped for.

May the grief which my fatal error has given to you both, be the only grief that shall ever annoy you in this world!—May you, Madam, long live to sweeten the cares, and heighten the comforts, of my papa!—May my sister's continued, and, if possible, augmented duty, happily make up to you the loss you have sustained in me! And whenever my brother and she change their single state, may it be with such satisfaction to you both as may make you forget my offence; and remember me only in those days in which you took pleasure in me! And, at last, may a happy meeting with your forgiven penitent, in the eternal mansions, augment the bliss of her, who, purified by sufferings already, when this salutes your hands, presumes she shall be

The happy and for ever happy CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XVI TO JAMES HARLOWE, JUN. ESQ

SIR,

There was but one time, but one occasion, after the rash step I was precipitated upon, that I would hope to be excused looking up to you in the character of a brother and friend. And NOW is that time, and THIS the occasion. NOW, at reading this, will you pity your late unhappy sister! NOW will you forgive her faults, both supposed and real! And NOW will you afford to her memory that kind concern which you refused to her before!

I write, my Brother, in the first place, to beg your pardon for the offence my unhappy step gave to you, and to the rest of a family so dear to me.

Virgin purity should not so behave as to be suspected, yet, when you come to know all my story, you will find farther room for pity, if not more than pity, for your late unhappy sister!

O that passion had not been deaf! That misconception would have given way to inquiry! That your rigorous heart, if it could not itself be softened (moderating the power you had obtained over every one) had permitted other hearts more indulgently to expand!

But I write not to give pain. I had rather you should think me faulty still, than take to yourself the consequence that will follow from acquitting me.

Abandoning therefore a subject which I had not intended to touch upon, (for I hope, at the writing of this, I am above the spirit of recrimination,) let me tell you, Sir, that my next motive for writing to you in this last and most solemn manner is, to beg of you to forego any active resentments (which may endanger a life so precious to all your friends) against the man to whose elaborate baseness I owe my worldly ruin.

For, ought an innocent man to run an equal risque with a guilty one?— A more than equal risque, as the guilty one has been long inured to acts of violence, and is skilled in the arts of offence?

You would not arrogate to yourself God's province, who has said, Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it. If you would, I tremble for the consequence: For will it not be suitable to the divine justice to punish the presumptuous innocent (as you would be in this case) in the very error, and that by the hand of the self-defending guilty—reserving him for a future day of vengeance for his accumulated crimes?

Leave then the poor wretch to the divine justice. Let your sister's fault die with her. At least, let it not be revived in blood. Life is a short stage where longest. A little time hence, the now-green head will be grey, if it lives this little time: and if Heaven will afford him time for repentance, why should not you?

Then think, my Brother, what will be the consequence to your dear parents, if the guilty wretch, who has occasioned to them the loss of a daughter, should likewise deprive them of their best hope, and only son, more worth in the family account than several daughters?

Would you add, my Brother, to those distresses which you hold your sister so inexcusable for having (although from involuntary and undersigned causes) given?

Seek not then, I beseech you, to extend the evil consequences of your sister's error. His conscience, when it shall please God to touch it, will be sharper than your sword.

I have still another motive for writing to you in this solemn manner: it is, to entreat you to watch over your passions. The principal fault I knew you to be guilty of is, the violence of your temper when you think yourself in the right; which you would oftener be, but for that very violence.

You have several times brought your life into danger by it.

Is not the man guilty of a high degree of injustice, who is more apt to give contradiction, than able to bear it? How often, with you, has impetuosity brought on abasement? A consequence too natural.

Let me then caution you, dear Sir, against a warmth of temper, an impetuosity when moved, and you so ready to be moved, that may hurry you into unforeseen difficulties; and which it is in some measure a sin not to endeavour to restrain. God enable you to do it for the sake of your own peace and safety, as well present as future! and for the sake of your family and friends, who all see your fault, but are tender of speaking to you of it!

As for me, my Brother, my punishment has been seasonable. God gave me grace to make a right use of my sufferings. I early repented. I never loved the man half so much as I hated his actions, when I saw what he was capable of. I gave up my whole heart to a better hope. God blessed my penitence and my reliance upon him. And now I presume to say, I AM HAPPY.

May Heave preserve you in safety, health, and honour, and long continue your life for a comfort and stay to your honoured parents! And may you, in that change of your single state, meet with a wife as agreeable to every one else as to yourself, and be happy in a hopeful race, and not have one Clarissa among them, to embitter your comforts when she should give you most comfort! But may my example be of use to warn the dear creatures whom once I hoped to live to see and to cherish, of the evils with which the deceitful world abounds! are the prayers of

Your affectionate sister, CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XVII TO MISS HARLOWE

Now may you, my dear Arabella, unrestrained by the severity of your virtue, let fall a pitying tear on the past faults and sufferings of your late unhappy sister; since, now, she can never offend you more. The Divine mercy, which first inspired her with repentance (an early repentance it was; since it preceded her sufferings) for an error which she offers not to extenuate, although perhaps it were capable of some extenuation, has now, as the instant that you are reading this, as I humbly hope, blessed her with the fruits of it.

Thus already, even while she writes, in imagination purified and exalted, she the more fearlessly writes to her sister; and now is assured of pardon for all those little occasions of displeasure which her forwarder youth might give you; and for the disgrace which her fall has fastened upon you, and upon her family.

May you, my Sister, continue to bless those dear and honoured relations, whose indulgence so well deserves your utmost gratitude, with those cheerful instances of duty and obedience which have hitherto been so acceptable to them, and praise-worthy in you! And may you, when a suitable proposal shall offer, fill up more worthily that chasm, which the loss they have sustained in me has made in the family!

Thus, my Arabella! my only sister! and for many happy years, my friend! most fervently prays that sister, whose affection for you, no acts, no unkindness, no misconstruction of her conduct, could cancel! And who NOW, made perfect (as she hopes) through sufferings, styles herself,

The happy CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XVIII TO JOHN AND ANTONY HARLOWE, ESQRS

HONOURED SIRS,

When these lines reach your hands, your late unhappy niece will have known the end of all her troubles; and, as she humbly hopes, will be rejoicing in the mercies of a gracious God, who has declared, that he will forgive the truly penitent of heart.

I write, therefore, my dear uncles, and to you both in one letter (since your fraternal love has made you both but as one person) to give you comfort, and not distress; for, however sharp my afflictions have been, they have been but of short duration; and I am betimes (happily as I hope) arrived at the end of a painful journey.

At the same time I write to thank you both for all your kind indulgence to me, and to beg your forgiveness of my last, my only great fault to you and to my family.

The ways of Providence are unsearchable. Various are the means made use of by it, to bring poor sinners to a sense of their duty. Some are drawn by love, others are driven by terrors, to their divine refuge. I had for eighteen years out of nineteen, rejoiced in the favour and affection of every one. No trouble came near to my heart, I seemed to be one of those designed to be drawn by the silken cords of love.—But, perhaps, I was too apt to value myself upon the love and favour of every one: the merit of the good I delighted to do, and of the inclinations which were given me, and which I could not help having, I was, perhaps, too ready to attribute to myself; and now, being led to account for the cause of my temporary calamities, find I had a secret pride to be punished for, which I had not fathomed: and it was necessary, perhaps, that some sore and terrible misfortunes should befall me, in order to mortify that my pride, and that my vanity.

Temptations were accordingly sent. I shrunk in the day of trial. My discretion, which had been so cried up, was found wanting when it came to be weighed in an equal balance. I was betrayed, fell, and became the by-word of my companions, and a disgrace to my family, which had prided itself in me perhaps too much. But as my fault was not that of a culpable will, when my pride was sufficiently mortified, I was not suffered (although surrounded by dangers, and entangled in snares) to be totally lost: but, purified by sufferings, I was fitted for the change I have NOW, at the time you will receive this, so newly, and, as I humbly hope, so happily experienced.

Rejoice with me, then, dear Sirs, that I have weathered so great a storm. Nor let it be matter of concern, that I am cut off in the bloom of youth. 'There is no inquisition in the grave,' says the wise man, 'whether we lived ten or a hundred years; and the day of death is better than the day of our birth.'

Once more, dear Sirs, accept my grateful thanks for all your goodness to me, from my early childhood to the day, the unhappy day, of my error! Forgive that error!—And God give us a happy meeting in a blessed eternity; prays

Your most dutiful and obliged kinswoman, CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Mr. Belford gives the Lady's posthumous letters to Mrs. Hervey, Miss Howe, and Mrs. Norton, at length likewise: but, although every letter varies in style as well as matter from the others; yet, as they are written on the same subject, and are pretty long, it is thought proper to abstract them.

That to her aunt Hervey is written in the same pious and generous strain with those preceding, seeking to give comfort rather than distress. 'The Almighty, I hope,' says she, 'has received and blessed my penitence, and I am happy. Could I have been more than so at the end of what is called a happy life of twenty, or thirty, or forty years to come? And what are twenty, or thirty, or forty years to look back upon? In half of any of these periods, what friends might not I have mourned for? what temptations from worldly prosperity might I not have encountered with? And in such a case, immersed

in earthly pleasures, how little likelihood, that, in my last stage, I should have been blessed with such a preparation and resignation as I have now been blessed with?'

She proceeds as follows: 'Thus much, Madam, of comfort to you and to myself from this dispensation. As to my dear parents, I hope they will console themselves that they have still many blessings left, which ought to balance the troubles my error has given them: that, unhappy as I have been to be the interrupter of their felicities, they never, till this my fault, know any heavy evil: that afflictions patiently borne may be turned into blessings: that uninterrupted happiness is not to be expected in this life: that, after all, they have not, as I humbly presume to hope, the probability of the everlasting perdition of their child to deplore: and that, in short, when my story comes to be fully known, they will have the comfort to find that my sufferings redound more to my honour than to my disgrace.

'These considerations will, I hope, make their temporary loss of but one child out of three (unhappily circumstances too as she was) matter of greater consolation than affliction. And the rather, as we may hope for a happy meeting once more, never to be separated either by time or offences.'

She concludes this letter with an address to her cousin Dolly Hervey, whom she calls her amiable cousin; and thankfully remembers for the part she took in her afflictions.—'O my dear Cousin, let your worthy heart be guarded against those delusions which have been fatal to my worldly happiness!—That pity, which you bestowed upon me, demonstrates a gentleness of nature, which may possibly subject you to misfortunes, if your eye be permitted to mislead your judgment.—But a strict observance of your filial duty, my dearest Cousin, and the precepts of so prudent a mother as you have the happiness to have (enforced by so sad an example in your own family as I have set) will, I make no doubt, with the Divine assistance, be your guard and security.'

The posthumous letter to Miss Howe is extremely tender and affectionate. She pathetically calls upon her 'to rejoice that all her Clarissa's troubles are now at an end; that the state of temptation and trial, of doubt and uncertainty, is now over with her; and that she has happily escaped the snares that were laid for her soul; the rather to rejoice, as that her misfortunes were of such a nature, that it was impossible she could be tolerably happy in this life.'

She 'thankfully acknowledges the favours she had received from Mrs. Howe and Mr. Hickman; and expresses her concern for the trouble she has occasioned to the former, as well as to her; and prays that all the earthly blessings they used to wish to each other, may singly devolve upon her.'

She beseeches her, 'that she will not suspend the day which shall supply to herself the friend she will have lost in her, and give to herself a still nearer and dearer relation.'

She tells her, 'That her choice (a choice made with the approbation of all her friends) has fallen upon a sincere, an honest, a virtuous, and, what is more than all, a pious man; a man who, although he admires her person, is still more in love with the graces of her mind. And as those graces are improvable with every added year of life, which will impair the transitory ones of person, what a firm basis, infers she, has Mr. Hickman chosen to build his love upon!'

She prays, 'That God will bless them together; and that the remembrance of her, and of what she has suffered, may not interrupt their mutual happiness; she desires them to think of nothing but what she now is; and that a time will come when they shall meet again, never to be divided.

'To the Divine protection, mean time, she commits her; and charges her, by the love that has always subsisted between them, that she will not mourn too heavily for her; and again calls upon her, after a gentle tear, which she will allow her to let fall in memory of their uninterrupted friendship, to rejoice that she is so early released; and that she is purified by her sufferings, and is made, as she assuredly trusts, by God's goodness, eternally happy.'

The posthumous letters to Mr. LOVELACE and Mr. MORDEN will be inserted hereafter: as will also the substance of that written to Mrs. Norton.

LETTER XIX
MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE,
ESQ. SAT. AFTERNOON, SEPT. 9

I understand, that thou breathest nothing but revenge against me, for treating thee with so much freedom; and against the cursed woman and her infernal crew. I am not at all concerned for thy menaces against myself. It is my design to make thee feel. It gives me pleasure to find my intention answered. And I congratulate thee, that thou hast not lost that sense.

As to the cursed crew, well do they deserve the fire here, that thou threatenest them with, and the fire hereafter, that seems to await them. But I have this moment received news which will, in all likelihood, save thee the guilt of punishing the old wretch for her share of wickedness as thy agent. But if that happens to her which is likely to happen, wilt thou not tremble for what may befall the principal?

Not to keep thee longer in suspense; last night, it seems, the infamous woman got so heartily intoxicated with her beloved liquor, arrack punch, at the expense of Colonel Salter, that, mistaking her way, she fell down a pair of stairs, and broke her leg: and now, after a dreadful night, she lies foaming, raving, roaring, in a burning fever, that wants not any other fire to scorch her into a feeling more exquisite and durable than any thy vengeance could give her.

The wretch has requested me to come to her; and lest I should refuse a common messenger, sent her vile associate, Sally Martin; who not finding me at Soho, came hither; another part of her business being to procure the divine lady's pardon for the old creature's wickedness to her.

This devil incarnate, Sally, declares that she never was so shocked in her life, as when I told her the lady was dead.

She took out her salts to keep from fainting; and when a little recovered she accused herself for her part of the injuries the lady had sustained; as she said Polly Horton would do for her's; and shedding tears, declared, that the world never produced such another woman. She called her the ornament and glory of her sex; acknowledged, that her ruin was owing more to their instigations, than even (savage as thou art) to thy own vileness; since thou wert inclined to have done her justice more than once, had they not kept up thy profligate spirit to its height.

This wretch would fain have been admitted to a sight of the corpse; but I refused the request with execrations.

She could forgive herself, she said, for every thing but her insults upon the admirable lady at Rowland's, since all the rest was but in pursuit of a livelihood, to which she had been reduced, as she boasted, from better expectations, and which hundred follow as well as she. I did not ask her, by whom reduced?

At going away, she told me, that the old monster's bruises are of more dangerous consequence than the fracture; that a mortification is apprehended, and that the vile wretch has so much compunction of heart, on recollecting her treatment of Miss Harlowe, and is so much set upon procuring her forgiveness, that she is sure the news she is to carry her will hasten her end.

All these things I leave upon thy reflection.

LETTER XX

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ. SAT. NIGHT

Your servant gives me a dreadful account of your raving unmanageableness. I wonder not at it. But as nothing violent is lasting, I dare say that your habitual gaiety of heart will quickly get the better of your phrensy; and the rather do I judge so, as your fits are of the raving kind, (suitable to your natural impetuosity,) and not of that melancholy species which seizes slower souls.

For this reason I will proceed in writing to you, that my narrative may not be broken by your discomposure; and that the contents of it may find you, and help you to reflection, when you shall be restored.

Harry is returned from carrying the posthumous letters to the family, and to Miss Howe; and that of the Colonel, which acquaints James Harlowe with his sister's death, and with her desire to be interred near her grandfather.

Harry was not admitted into the presence of any of the family. They were all assembled together, it seems, at Harlowe-place, on occasion of the Colonel's letter, which informed them of the lady's dangerous way;⁴ and were comforting themselves, as Harry was told, with hopes that Mr. Morden had made the worst of her state, in order to quicken their resolutions.

It is easy to judge what must be their grief and surprise on receiving the fatal news which the letters Harry sent in to them communicated.

He staid there long enough to find the whole house in confusion; the servants running different ways; lamenting and wringing their hands as they ran; the female servants particularly; as if somebody (poor Mrs. Harlowe, no doubt; and perhaps Mrs. Hervey too) were in fits.

Every one was in such disorder, that he could get no commands, nor obtain any notice of himself. The servants seemed more inclined to execrate than welcome him—O master!—O young man! cried three or four together, what dismal tidings have you brought?—They helped him, at the very first word, to his horse; which, with great civility, they had put up on his arrival; and he went to an inn, and pursued on foot his way to Mrs. Norton's; and finding her come to town, left the letter he carried don for her with her son, (a fine youth,) who, when he heard the fatal news, burst out into a flood of tears—first lamenting the lady's death, and then crying out, What—what would become of his poor mother!—How would she support herself, when she should find, on her arrival in town, that the dear lady, who was so deservedly the darling of her heart, was no more!

He proceeded to Miss Howe's with the letter for her. That lady, he was told, had just given orders for a young man, a tenant's son, to post to London, and bring her news of her dear friend's condition, and whether she should herself be encouraged, by an account of her being still alive, to make her a visit; every thing being ordered to be in readiness for her going up on his return with the news she wished and prayed for with the utmost impatience. And Harry was just in time to prevent the man's setting out.

He had the precaution to desire to speak with Miss Howe's woman or maid, and communicated to her the fatal tidings, that she might break them to her young lady. The maid herself was so affected, that her old lady (who, Harry said, seemed to be every where at once) came to see what ailed her! and was herself so struck with the communication, that she was forced to sit down in a chair.—O the sweet creature! said she, and is it come to this?—O my poor Nancy!—How shall I be able to break the matter to my Nancy?

⁴ See the beginning of Letter II.

Mr. Hickman was in the house. He hastened in to comfort the old lady— but he could not restrain his own tears. He feared, he said, when he was last in town, that this sad event would soon happen; but little thought it would be so very soon!—But she is happy, I am sure, said the good gentleman.

Mrs. Howe, when a little recovered, went up, in order to break the news to her daughter. She took the letter, and her salts in her hand. And they had occasion for the latter. For the housekeeper soon came hurrying down into the kitchen, her face overspread with tears—her young mistress had fainted away, she said—nor did she wonder at it—never did there live a lady more deserving of general admiration and lamentation, than Miss Clarissa Harlowe! and never was there a stronger friendship dissolved by death than between her young lady and her.

She hurried, with a lighted wax candle, and with feathers, to burn under the nose of her young mistress; which showed that she continued in fits.

Mr. Hickman, afterwards, with his usual humanity, directed that Harry should be taken care of all night; it being then the close of day. He asked him after my health. He expressed himself excessively afflicted, as well for the death of the most excellent of women, as for the just grief of the lady whom he so passionately loves. But he called the departed lady an Angel of Light. We dreaded, said he, (tell your master,) to read the letter sent—but we needed not—'tis a blessed letter! written by a blessed hand!—But the consolation she aims to give, will for the present heighten the sense we all shall have of the loss of so excellent a creature! Tell Mr. Belford, that I thank God I am not the man who had the unmerited honour to call himself her brother.

I know how terribly this great catastrophe (as I may call it, since so many persons are interested in it) affects thee. I should have been glad to have had particulars of the distress which the first communication of it must have given to the Harlowes. Yet who but must pity the unhappy mother?

The answer which James Harlowe returned to Colonel Morden's letter of notification of his sister's death, and to her request as to her interment, will give a faint idea of what their concern must be. Here follows a copy of it:

TO WILLIAM MORDEN, ESQ. SATURDAY, SEPT. 9.

DEAR COUSIN,

I cannot find words to express what we all suffer on the most mournful news that ever was communicated to us.

My sister Arabella (but, alas! I have now no other sister) was preparing to follow Mrs. Norton up, and I had resolved to escort her, and to have looked in upon the dear creature.

God be merciful to us all! To what purpose did the doctor write, if she was so near her end?—Why, as every body says, did he not send sooner?— Or, Why at all?

The most admirable young creature that ever swerved! Not one friend to be with her!—Alas! Sir, I fear my mother will never get over this shock. —She has been in hourly fits ever since she received the fatal news. My poor father has the gout thrown into his stomach; and Heaven knows— O Cousin!—O Sir!—I meant nothing but the honour of the family; yet have I all the weight thrown upon me—[O this cursed Lovelace!—may I perish if he escape the deserved vengeance!]⁵

We had begun to please ourselves that we should soon see her here—Good Heaven! that her next entrance into this house, after she abandoned us so precipitately, should be in a coffin.

We can have nothing to do with her executor, (another strange step of the dear creature's!) —He cannot expect we will—nor, if he be a gentleman, will he think of acting. Do you, therefore, be pleased, Sir, to order an undertaker to convey the body down to us. My mother says she shall be for ever unhappy, if she may not in death see the dear creature whom she could not see in life. Be so kind, therefore, as to direct the lid to be only half-screwed down—that (if my poor mother

⁵ The words thus enclosed (' ') were omitted in the transcript to Mr. Lovelace.

cannot be prevailed upon to dispense with so shocking a spectacle) she may be obliged—she was the darling of her heart!

If we know her well in relation to the funeral, it shall be punctually complied with; as shall every thing in it that is fit or reasonable to be performed; and this without the intervention of strangers.

Will you not, dear Sir, favour us with your presence at this melancholy time? Pray do—and pity and excuse, with the generosity which is natural to the brave and the wise, what passed at our last meeting. Every one's respects attend you. And I am, Sir,

Your inexpressibly afflicted cousin and servant, JA. HARLOWE, JUN.

Every thing that's fit or reasonable to be performed! [repeated I to the Colonel from the above letter on his reading it to me;] that is every thing which she has directed, that can be performed. I hope, Colonel, that I shall have no contention with them. I wish no more for their acquaintance than they do for mine. But you, Sir, must be the mediator between them and me; for I shall insist upon a literal performance in every article.

The Colonel was so kind as to declare that he would support me in my resolution.

LETTER XXI
MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.
SUNDAY MORN. EIGHT O'CLOCK, SEPT. 10

I staid at Smith's till I saw the last of all that is mortal of the divine lady.

As she has directed rings by her will to several persons, with her hair to be set in crystal, the afflicted Mrs. Norton cut off, before the coffin was closed four charming ringlets; one of which the Colonel took for a locket, which, he says, he will cause to be made, and wear next his heart in memory of his beloved cousin.

Between four and five in the morning, the corpse was put into the hearse; the coffin before being filled, as intended, with flowers and aromatic herbs, and proper care taken to prevent the corpse suffering (to the eye) from the jolting of the hearse.

Poor Mrs. Norton is extremely ill. I gave particular directions to Mrs. Smith's maid (whom I have ordered to attend the good woman in a mourning chariot) to take care of her. The Colonel, who rides with his servants within view of the hearse, says that he will see my orders in relation to her enforced.

When the hearse moved off, and was out of sight, I locked up the lady's chamber, into which all that had belonged to her was removed.

I expect to hear from the Colonel as soon as he is got down, by a servant of his own.

LETTER XXII
MR. MOWBRAY, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.
UXBRIDGE, SUNDAY MORN. NINE O'CLOCK

DEAR JACK,

I send you enclosed a letter from Mr. Lovelace; which, though written in the cursed Algebra, I know to be such a one as will show what a queer way he is in; for he read it to us with the air of a tragedian. You will see by it what the mad fellow had intended to do, if we had not all of us interposed. He was actually setting out with a surgeon of this place, to have the lady opened and embalmed.—Rot me if it be not my full persuasion that, if he had, her heart would have been found to be either iron or marble.

We have got Lord M. to him. His Lordship is also much afflicted at the lady's death. His sisters and nieces, he says, will be ready to break their hearts. What a rout's here about a woman! For after all she was no more.

We have taken a pailful of black bull's blood from him; and this has lowered him a little. But he threatens Col. Morden, he threatens you for your cursed reflections, [cursed reflections indeed, Jack!] and curses all the world and himself still.

Last night his mourning (which is full as deep as for a wife) was brought home, and his fellows' mourning too. And, though eight o'clock, he would put it on, and make them attend him in theirs.

Every body blames him on this lady's account. But I see not for why. She was a vixen in her virtue. What a pretty fellow she has ruined—Hey, Jack!—and her relations are ten times more to blame than he. I will prove this to the teeth of them all. If they could use her ill, why should they expect him to use her well?—You, or I, or Tourville, in his shoes, would have done as he has done. Are not all the girls forewarned? —'Has he done by her as that caitiff Miles did to the farmer's daughter, whom he tricked up to town, (a pretty girl also, just such another as Bob.'s Rosebud,) under a notion of waiting on a lady?—Drilled her on, pretending the lady was abroad. Drank her light-hearted—then carried her to a play—then it was too late, you know, to see the pretended lady —then to a bagnio—ruined her, as they call it, and all this the same day. Kept her on (an ugly dog, too!) a fortnight or three weeks, then left her to the mercy of the people of the bagnio, (never paying for any thing,) who stript her of all her clothes, and because she would not take on, threw her into prison; where she died in want and despair!—A true story, thou knowest, Jack.—This fellow deserved to be d—d—d. But has our Bob. been such a villain as this?—And would he not have married this flinty-hearted lady?—So he is justified very evidently.

Why, then, should such cursed qualms take him?—Who would have thought he had been such poor blood? Now [rot the puppy!] to see him sit silent in a corner, when he has tired himself with his mock majesty, and with his argumentation, (Who so fond of arguing as he?) and teaching his shadow to make mouths against the wainscot—The devil fetch me if I have patience with him!

But he has had no rest for these ten days—that's the thing!—You must write to him; and pr'ythee coax him, Jack, and send him what he writes for, and give him all his way—there will be no bearing him else. And get the lady buried as fast as you can; and don't let him know where.

This letter should have gone yesterday. We told him it did. But were in hopes he would have inquired after it again. But he raves as he has not any answer.

What he vouchsafed to read of other of your letters has given my Lord such a curiosity as makes him desire you to continue your accounts. Pray do; but not in your hellish Arabic; and we will let the poor fellow only into what we think fitting for his present way.

I live a cursed dull poking life here. What with I so lately saw of poor Belton, and what I now see of this charming fellow, I shall be as crazy as he soon, or as dull as thou, Jack; so must seek for better

company in town than either of you. I have been forced to read sometimes to divert me; and you know I hate reading. It presently sets me into a fit of drowsiness; and then I yawn and stretch like a devil.

Yet in Dryden's Palemon and Arcite have I just now met with a passage, that has in it much of our Bob.'s case. These are some of the lines.

Mr. Mowbray then recites some lines from that poem, describing a distracted man, and runs the parallel; and then, priding himself in his performance, says:

Let me tell you, that had I begun to write as early as you and Lovelace, I might have cut as good a figure as either of you. Why not? But boy or man I ever hated a book. 'Tis folly to lie. I loved action, my boy. I hated droning; and have led in former days more boys from their book, than ever my master made to profit by it. Kicking and cuffing, and orchard-robbing, were my early glory.

But I am tired of writing. I never wrote such a long letter in my life. My wrist and my fingers and thumb ache d——n——y. The pen is an hundred weight at least. And my eyes are ready to drop out of my head upon the paper.—The cramp but this minute in my fingers. Rot the goose and the goose-quill! I will write no more long letters for a twelve-month to come. Yet one word; we think the mad fellow coming to. Adieu.

LETTER XXIII
MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD,
ESQ. UXBRIDGE, SAT. SEPT. 9

JACK,

I think it absolutely right that my ever-dear and beloved lady should be opened and embalmed. It must be done out of hand this very afternoon. Your acquaintance, Tomkins, and old Anderson of this place, I will bring with me, shall be the surgeons. I have talked to the latter about it.

I will see every thing done with that decorum which the case, and the sacred person of my beloved require.

Every thing that can be done to preserve the charmer from decay shall also be done. And when she will descend to her original dust, or cannot be kept longer, I will then have her laid in my family-vault, between my own father and mother. Myself, as I am in my soul, so in person, chief mourner. But her heart, to which I have such unquestionable pretensions, in which once I had so large a share, and which I will prize above my own, I will have. I will keep it in spirits. It shall never be out of my sight. And all the charges of sepulture too shall be mine.

Surely nobody will dispute my right to her. Whose was she living?—Whose is she dead but mine?—Her cursed parents, whose barbarity to her, no doubt, was the true cause of her death, have long since renounced her. She left them for me. She chose me therefore; and I was her husband. What though I treated her like a villain? Do I not pay for it now? Would she not have been mine had I not? Nobody will dispute but she would. And has she not forgiven me?—I am then in statu quo prius with her, am I not? as if I had never offended?—Whose then can she be but mine?

I will free you from your executorship, and all your cares.

Take notice, Belford, that I do hereby actually discharge you, and every body, from all cares and troubles relating to her. And as to her last testament, I will execute it myself.

There were no articles between us, no settlements; and she is mine, as you see I have proved to a demonstration; nor could she dispose of herself but as I pleased.—D——n——n seize me then if I make not good my right against all opposers!

Her bowels, if her friends are very solicitous about them, and very humble and sorrowful, (and none have they of their own,) shall be sent down to them—to be laid with her ancestors—unless she has ordered otherwise. For, except that, she shall not be committed to the unworthy earth so long as she can be kept out of it, her will shall be performed in every thing.

I send in the mean time for a lock of her hair.

I charge you stir not in any part of her will but by my express direction. I will order every thing myself. For am I not her husband? and, being forgiven by her, am I not the chosen of her heart? What else signifies her forgiveness?

The two insufferable wretches you have sent me plague me to death, and would treat me like a babe in strings.—D——n the fellows, what end can they mean by it? Yet that crippled monkey Doleman joins with them. And, as I hear them whisper, they have sent for Lord M.—to controul me, I suppose.

What I write to you for is,

1. To forbid you intermeddling with any thing relating to her. To forbid Morden intermeddling also. If I remember right, he has threatened me, and cursed me, and used me ill—and let him be gone from her, if he would avoid my resentment.

2. To send me a lock of her hair instantly by the bearer.

3. To engage Tomkins to have every thing ready for the opening and embalming. I shall bring Anderson with me.

4. To get her will and every thing ready for my perusal and consideration.

I will have possession of her dear heart this very night; and let Tomkins provide a proper receptacle and spirits, till I can get a golden one made for it.

I will take her papers. And, as no one can do her memory justice equal to myself, and I will not spare myself, who can better show the world what she was, and what a villain he that could use her ill? And the world shall also see what implacable and unworthy parents she had.

All shall be set forth in words at length. No mincing of the matter. Names undisguised as well as facts. For, as I shall make the worst figure in it myself, and have a right to treat myself as nobody else shall, who shall controul me? who dare call me to account?

Let me know, if the d——d mother be yet the subject of the devil's own vengeance—if the old wretch be dead or alive? Some exemplary mischief I must yet do. My revenge shall sweep away that devil, and all my opposers of the cruel Harlowe family, from the face of the earth. Whole hecatombs ought to be offered up to the manes of my Clarissa Lovelace.

Although her will may in some respects cross mine, yet I expect to be observed. I will be the interpreter of her's.

Next to mine, her's shall be observed: for she is my wife, and shall be to all eternity.—I will never have another.

Adieu, Jack, I am preparing to be with you. I charge you, as you value my life or your own, do not oppose me in any thing relating to my Clarissa Lovelace.

My temper is entirely altered. I know not what it is to laugh, or smile, or be pleasant. I am grown choleric and impatient, and will not be controuled.

I write this in characters as I used to do, that nobody but you should know what I write. For never was any man plagued with impertinents as I am.

R. LOVELACE. IN A SEPARATE PAPER ENCLOSED IN THE ABOVE.

Let me tell thee, in characters still, that I am in a dreadful way just now. My brain is all boiling like a cauldron over a fiery furnace. What a devil is the matter with me, I wonder! I never was so strange in my life.

In truth, Jack, I have been a most execrable villain. And when I consider all my actions to the angel of a woman, and in her the piety, the charity, the wit, the beauty, I have helped to destroy, and the good to the world I have thereby been a mean of frustrating, I can pronounce d——n——n upon myself. How then can I expect mercy any where else?

I believe I shall have no patience with you when I see you. Your d——d stings and reflections have almost turned my brain.

But here Lord M. they tell me, is come!—D——n him, and those who sent for him!

I know not what I have written. But her dear heart and a lock of her hair I will have, let who will be the gainsayers! For is she not mine? Whose else can she be? She has no father nor mother, no sister, no brother, no relations but me. And my beloved is mine, and I am her's— and that's enough.—But Oh!—

She's out. The damp of death has quench'd her quite!
Those spicy doors, her lips, are shut, close lock'd,
Which never gale of life shall open more!

And is it so?—Is it indeed so?—Good God!—Good God!—But they will not let me write on. I must go down to this officious Peer—Who the devil sent for him?

LETTER XXIV
MR. BELFORD, TO RICHARD MOWBRAY, ESQ.
SUNDAY, SEPT. 10. FOUR IN THE AFTERNOON

I have your's, with our unhappy friend's enclosed. I am glad my Lord is with him. As I presume that his phrensy will be but of short continuance, I most earnestly wish, that on his recovery he could be prevailed upon to go abroad. Mr. Morden, who is inconsolable, has seen by the will, (as indeed he suspected before he read it,) that the case was more than a common seduction; and has dropt hints already, that he looks on himself, on that account, as freed from his promises made to the dying lady, which were, that he would not seek to avenge her death.

You must make the recovery of his health the motive for urging him on this head; for, if you hint at his own safety, he will not stir, but rather seek the Colonel.

As to the lock of hair, you may easily pacify him, (as you once saw the angel,) with hair near the colour, if he be intent upon it.

At my Lord's desire I will write on, and in my common hand; that you may judge what is, and what is not, fit to be read to Mr. Lovelace at present. But as I shall not forbear reflections as I go along, in hopes to reach his heart on his recovery, I think it best to direct myself to him still, and that as if he were not disordered.

As I shall not have leisure to take copies, and yet am willing to have the whole subject before me, for my own future contemplation, I must insist upon a return of my letters some time hence. Mr. Lovelace knows that this is one of my conditions; and has hitherto complied with it.

Thy letter, Mowbray, is an inimitable performance. Thou art a strange impenetrable creature. But let me most earnestly conjure thee, and the idle flutterer, Tourville, from what you have seen of poor Belton's exit; from our friend Lovelace's phrensy, and the occasion of it; and from the terrible condition in which the wretched Sinclair lies; to set about an immediate change of life and manners. For my own part, I am determind, be your resolutions what they may, to take the advice I give.

As witness, J. BELFORD.

LETTER XXV

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ

O Lovelace! I have a scene to paint in relation to the wretched Sinclair, that, if I do it justice, will make thee seriously ponder and reflect, or nothing can. I will lead thee to it in order; and that in my usual hand, that thy compeers may be able to read it as well as thyself.

When I had written the preceding letter, not knowing what to do with myself, recollecting, and in vain wishing for that delightful and improving conversation, which I had now for ever lost; I thought I had as good begin the task, which I had for some time past resolved to begin; that is to say, to go to church; and see if I could not reap some benefit from what I should hear there. Accordingly I determined to go to hear the celebrated preacher at St. James's church. But, as if the devil (for so I was then ready to conclude) thought himself concerned to prevent my intention, a visit was made me, just as I was dressed, which took me off from my purpose.

From whom should this visit be, but from Sally Martin, accompanied by Mrs. Carter, the sister of the infamous Sinclair! the same, I suppose I need not tell you, who keeps the bagnio near Bloomsbury.

These told me that the surgeon, apothecary, and physician, had all given the wretched woman over; but that she said, she should not die, nor be at rest, till she saw me; and they besought me to accompany them in the coach they came in, if I had one spark of charity, of christian charity, as they called it, left.

I was very loth to be diverted from my purpose by a request so unwelcome, and from people so abhorred; but at last went, and we got thither by ten; where a scene so shocking presented itself to me, that the death of poor desponding Belton is not, I think, to be compared with it.

The old wretch had once put her leg out by her rage and violence, and had been crying, scolding, cursing, ever since the preceding evening, that the surgeon had told her it was impossible to save her; and that a mortification had begun to show itself; insomuch that, purely in compassion to their own ears, they had been forced to send for another surgeon, purposely to tell her, though against his judgment, and (being a friend of the other) to seem to convince him, that he mistook the case; and that if she would be patient, she might recover. But, nevertheless, her apprehensions of death, and her antipathy to the thoughts of dying, were so strong, that their imposture had not the intended effect, and she was raving, crying, cursing, and even howling, more like a wolf than a human creature, when I came; so that as I went up stairs, I said, Surely this noise, this howling, cannot be from the unhappy woman! Sally said it was; and assured me, that it was noting to the noise she had made all night; and stepping into her room before me, dear Madam Sinclair, said she, forbear this noise! It is more like that of a bull than a woman!— Here comes Mr. Belford; and you'll fright him away if you bellow at this rate.

There were no less than eight of her cursed daughters surrounding her bed when I entered; one of her partners, Polly Horton, at their head; and now Sally, her other partner, and Madam Carter, as they called her, (for they are all Madams with one another,) made the number ten; all in shocking dishabille, and without stays, except Sally, Carter, and Polly; who, not daring to leave her, had not been in bed all night.

The other seven seemed to have been but just up, risen perhaps from their customers in the fore-house, and their nocturnal orgies, with faces, three or four of them, that had run, the paint lying in streaky seams not half blowzed off, discovering coarse wrinkled skins: the hair of some of them of divers colours, obliged to the black-lead comb where black was affected; the artificial jet, however, yielding apace to the natural brindle: that of others plastered with oil and powder; the oil predominating: but every one's hanging about her ears and neck in broken curls, or ragged ends;

and each at my entrance taken with one motion, stroking their matted locks with both hands under their coifs, mobs, or pinnars, every one of which was awry. They were all slip-shoed; stockingless some; only under-petticoated all; their gowns, made to cover straddling hoops, hanging trollopy, and tangling about their heels; but hastily wrapt round them, as soon as I came up stairs. And half of them (unpadded, shoulder-bent, pallid-lips, limber-jointed wretches) appearing, from a blooming nineteen or twenty perhaps over-night, haggard well-worn strumpets of thirty-eight or forty.

I am the more particular in describing to thee the appearance these creatures made in my eyes when I came into the room, because I believe thou never sawest any of them, much less a group of them, thus unprepared for being seen.⁶ I, for my part, never did before; nor had I now, but upon this occasion, being thus favoured. If thou hadst, I believe thou wouldst hate a profligate woman, as one of Swift's yahoos, or Virgil's obscene harpies, squirting their ordure upon the Trojan trenches; since the persons of such in their retirements are as filthy as their minds.— Hate them as much as I do; and as much as I admire, and next to adore, a truly virtuous and elegant woman: for to me it is evident, that as a neat and clean woman must be an angel of a creature, so a sluttish one is the impurest animal in nature. But these were the veterans, the chosen band; for now-and-then flitted in to the number of half a dozen or more, by turns, subordinate sinners, under-graduates, younger than some of the chosen phalanx, but not less obscene in their appearance, though indeed not so much beholden to the plastering focus; yet unpropt by stays, squalid, loose in attire, sluggish-haired, uner-petticoated only as the former, eyes half-opened, winking and pinking, mispatched, yawning, stretching, as if from the unworn-off effects of the midnight revel; all armed in succession with supplies of cordials (of which every one present was either taster or partaker) under the direction of the busier Dorcas, who frequently popt in, to see her slops duly given and taken.

But when I approached the old wretch, what a spectacle presented itself to my eyes!

Her misfortune has not at all sunk, but rather, as I thought, increased her flesh; rage and violence perhaps swelling her muscular features. Behold her, then, spreading the whole troubled bed with her huge quaggy carcass: her mill-post arms held up; her broad hands clenched with violence; her big eyes, goggling and flaming ready as we may suppose those of a salamander; her matted griesly hair, made irreverend by her wickedness (her clouted head-dress being half off, spread about her fat ears and brawny neck;) her livid lips parched, and working violently; her broad chin in convulsive motion; her wide mouth, by reason of the contraction of her forehead (which seemed to be half-lost in its own frightful furrows) splitting her face, as it were, into two parts; and her huge tongue hideously rolling in it; heaving, puffing as if four breath; her bellows-shaped and various-coloured breasts ascending by turns to her chin, and descending out of sight, with the violence of her gaspings.

This was the spectacle, as recollection has enabled me to describe it, that this wretch made to my eye, by her suffragans and daughters, who surveyed her with scouling frightened attention, which one might easily see had more in it of horror and self-concern (and self-condemnation too) than of love or pity; as who should say, See! what we ourselves must one day be!

As soon as she saw me, her naturally-big voice, more hoarsened by her ravings, broke upon me: O Mr. Belford! O Sir! see what I am come to!— See what I am brought to!—To have such a cursed crew about me, and not one of them to take care of me! But to let me tumble down stairs so distant from the room I went from! so distant from the room I meant to go to!—Cursed, cursed be every careless devil!—May this or worse be their fate every one of them!

And then she cursed and swore most vehemently, and the more, as two or three of them were excusing themselves on the score of their being at that time as unable to help themselves as she. As soon as she had cleared the passage of her throat by the oaths and curses which her wild impatience made her utter, she began in a more hollow and whining strain to bemoan herself. And here, said she

⁶ Whoever has seen Dean Swift's Lady's Dressing room, will think this description of Mr. Belford's not only more natural, but more decent painting, as well as better justified by the design, and by the use that may be made of it.

—Heaven grant me patience! [clenching and unclenching her hands] am I to die thus miserably!—of a broken leg in my old age!—snatched away by means of my own intemperance! Self-do! Self-undone!—No time for my affairs! No time to repent!—And in a few hours (Oh!—Oh!—with another long howling O—h!—U—gh—o! a kind of screaming key terminating it) who knows, who can tell where I shall be?—Oh! that indeed I never, never, had had a being!

What could one say to such a wretch as this, whose whole life had been spent in the most diffusive wickedness, and who no doubt has numbers of souls to answer for? Yet I told her, she must be patient: that her violence made her worse: and that, if she would compose herself, she might get into a frame more proper for her present circumstances.

Who, I? interrupted she: I get into a better frame! I, who can neither cry, nor pray! Yet already feel the torments of the d——d! What mercy can I expect? What hope is left for me?—Then, that sweet creature! that incomparable Miss Harlowe! she, it seems, is dead and gone! O that cursed man! Had it not been for him! I had never had this, the most crying of all my sins, to answer for!

And then she set up another howl.

And is she dead?—Indeed dead? proceeded she, when her howl was over—O what an angel have I been the means of destroying! For though it was that it was mine, and your's, and your's, and your's, devils as we all were [turning to Sally, to Polly, and to one or two more] that he did not do her justice! And that, that is my curse, and will one day be yours! And then again she howled.

I still advised patience. I said, that if her time were to be so short as she apprehended, the more ought she to endeavour to compose herself: and then she would at least die with more ease to herself—and satisfaction to her friends, I was going to say—But the word die put her into a violent raving, and thus she broke in upon me. Die, did you say, Sir?—Die!—I will not, I cannot die!—I know not how to die!—Die, Sir! —And must I then die?—Leave this world?—I cannot bear it!—And who brought you hither, Sir?—[her eyes striking fire at me] Who brought you hither to tell me I must die, Sir?—I cannot, I will not leave this world. Let others die, who wish for another! who expect a better!—I have had my plagues in this; but would compound for all future hopes, so as I may be nothing after this!

And then she howled and bellowed by turns.

By my faith, Lovelace, I trembled in every joint; and looking upon her who spoke this, and roared thus, and upon the company round me, I more than once thought myself to be in one of the infernal mansions.

Yet will I proceed, and try, for thy good, if I can shock thee but half as much with my descriptions, as I was shocked with what I saw and heard.

Sally!—Polly!—Sister Carter! said she, did you not tell me I might recover? Did not the surgeon tell me I might?

And so you may, cried Sally; Monsieur Garon says you may, if you'll be patient. But, as I have often told you this blessed morning, you are reader to take despair from your own fears, than comfort from all the hope we can give you.

Yet, cried the wretch, interrupting, does not Mr. Belford (and to him you have told the truth, though you won't to me; does not he) tell me that I shall die?—I cannot bear it! I cannot bear the thoughts of dying!

And then, but that half a dozen at once endeavoured to keep down her violent hands, would she have beaten herself; as it seems she had often attempted to do from the time the surgeon popt out the word mortification to her.

Well, but to what purpose, said I (turning aside to her sister, and to Sally and Polly), are these hopes given her, if the gentlemen of the faculty give her over? You should let her know the worst, and then she must submit; for there is no running away from death. If she had any matters to settle, put her upon settling them; and do not, by telling her she will live, when there is no room to expect it, take from her the opportunity of doing needful things. Do the surgeons actually give her over?

They do, whispered they. Her gross habit, they say, gives no hopes. We have sent for both surgeons, whom we expect every minute.

Both the surgeons (who are French; for Mrs. Sinclair has heard Tourville launch out in the praise of French surgeons) came in while we were thus talking. I retired to the farther end of the room, and threw up a window for a little air, being half-poisoned by the effluvia arising from so many contaminated carcasses; which gave me no imperfect idea of the stench of gaols, which, corrupting the ambient air, gives what is called the prison distemper.

I came back to the bed-side when the surgeons had inspected the fracture; and asked them, If there were any expectation of her life?

One of them whispered me, there was none: that she had a strong fever upon her, which alone, in such a habit, would probably do the business; and that the mortification had visibly gained upon her since they were there six hours ago.

Will amputation save her? Her affairs and her mind want settling. A few days added to her life may be of service to her in both respects.

They told me the fracture was high in her leg; that the knee was greatly bruised; that the mortification, in all probability, had spread half-way of the femur: and then, getting me between them, (three or four of the women joining us, and listening with their mouths open, and all the signs of ignorant wonder in their faces, as there appeared of self-sufficiency in those of the artists,) did they by turns fill my ears with an anatomical description of the leg and thigh; running over with terms of art, of the tarsus, the metatarsus, the tibia, the fibula, the patella, the os tali, the os tibæ, the tibialis posticus and tibialis anticus, up to the os femoris, to the acetabulum of the os ischion, the great trochanter, glutæus, triceps, lividus, and little rotators; in short, of all the muscles, cartilages, and bones, that constitute the leg and thigh from the great toe to the hip; as if they would show me, that all their science had penetrated their heads no farther than their mouths; while Sally lifted up her hands with a *Laud bless me!* Are all surgeons so learned!—But at last both the gentlemen declared, that if she and her friends would consent to amputation, they would whip off her leg in a moment.

Mrs. Carter asked, To what purpose, if the operation would not save her?

Very true, they said; but it might be a satisfaction to the patient's friends, that all was done that could be done.

And so the poor wretch was to be lanced and quartered, as I may say, for an experiment only! And, without any hope of benefit from the operation, was to pay the surgeons for tormenting her!

I cannot but say I have a mean opinion of both these gentlemen, who, though they make a figure, it seems, in their way of living, and boast not only French extraction, but a Paris education, never will make any in their practice.

How unlike my honest English friend Tomkins, a plain serious, intelligent man, whose art lies deeper than in words; who always avoids parade and jargon; and endeavours to make every one as much a judge of what he is about as himself!

All the time that the surgeons ran on with their anatomical process, the wretched woman most frightfully roared and bellowed; which the gentlemen (who showed themselves to be of the class of those who are not affected with the evils they do not feel,) took no other notice of, than by raising their voices to be heard, as she raised her's—being evidently more solicitous to increase their acquaintance, and to propagate the notion of their skill, than to attend to the clamours of the poor wretch whom they were called in to relieve; though by this very means, like the dog and the shadow in the fable, they lost both aims with me; for I never was deceived in one rule, which I made early; to wit, that the stillest water is the deepest, while the bubbling stream only betrays shallowness; and that stones and pebbles lie there so near the surface, to point out the best place to ford a river dry shod.

As nobody cared to tell the unhappy wretch what every one apprehended must follow, and what the surgeons convinced me soon would, I undertook to be the denouncer of her doom. Accordingly, the operators being withdrawn, I sat down by the bed-side, and said, Come, Mrs. Sinclair, let me

advise you to forbear these ravings at the carelessness of those, who, I find, at the time, could take no care of themselves; and since the accident has happened, and cannot be remedied, to resolve to make the best of the matter: for all this violence but enrages the malady, and you will probably fall into a delirium, if you give way to it, which will deprive you of that reason which you ought to make the best of for the time it may be lent you.

She turned her head towards me, and hearing me speak with a determined voice, and seeing me assume as determined an air, became more calm and attentive.

I went on, telling her, that I was glad, from the hints she had given, to find her concerned for her past misspent life, and particularly for the part she had had in the ruin of the most excellent woman on earth: that if she would compose herself, and patiently submit to the consequences of an evil she had brought upon herself, it might possibly be happy for her yet. Meantime, continued I, tell me, with temper and calmness, why was you so desirous to see me?

She seemed to be in great confusion of thought, and turned her head this way and that; and at last, after much hesitation, said, Alas for me! I hardly know what I wanted with you. When I awoke from my intemperate trance, and found what a cursed way I was in, my conscience smote me, and I was for catching like a drowning wretch, at every straw. I wanted to see every body and any body but those I did see; every body who I thought could give me comfort. Yet could I expect none from you neither; for you had declared yourself my enemy, although I had never done you harm; for what, Jackey, in her old tone, whining through her nose, was Miss Harlowe to you?—But she is happy!—But oh! what will become of me?—Yet tell me, (for the surgeons have told you the truth, no doubt,) tell me, shall I do well again? May I recover? If I may, I will begin a new course of life: as I hope to be saved, I will. I'll renounce you all—every one of you, [looking round her,] and scrape all I can together, and live a life of penitence; and when I die, leave it all to charitable uses—I will, by my soul—every do it to charity—but this once, lifting up her rolling eyes, and folded hands, (with a wry-mouthed earnestness, in which every muscle and feature of her face bore its part,) this one time—good God of Heaven and earth, but this once! this once! repeating those words five or six times, spare thy poor creature, and every hour of my life shall be passed in penitence and atonement: upon my soul it shall!

Less vehement! a little less vehement! said I—it is not for me, who have led so free a life, as you but too well know, to talk to you in a reproaching strain, and to set before you the iniquity you have lived in, and the many souls you have helped to destroy. But as you are in so penitent a way, if I might advise, you should send for a good clergyman, the purity of whose life and manners may make all these things come from him with a better grace than they can from me.

How, Sir! What, Sir! interrupting me: send for a parson!—Then you indeed think I shall die! Then you think there is no room for hope!—A parson, Sir!—Who sends for a parson, while there is any hope left?—The sight of a parson would be death immediate to me!—I cannot, cannot die!—Never tell me of it!—What! die!—What! cut off in the midst of my sins!

And then she began again to rave.

I cannot bear, said I, rising from my seat with a stern air, to see a reasonable creature behave so outrageously!—Will this vehemence, think you, mend the matter? Will it avail you any thing? Will it not rather shorten the life you are so desirous to have lengthened, and deprive you of the only opportunity you can ever have to settle your affairs for both worlds?—Death is but the common lot: and if it be your's soon, looking at her, it will be also your's, and your's, and your's, speaking with a raised voice, and turning to every trembling devil round her, [for they all shook at my forcible application,] and mine too. And you have reason to be thankful, turning again to her, that you did not perish in that act of intemperance which brought you to this: for it might have been your neck, as well as your leg; and then you had not had the opportunity you now have for repentance—and, the Lord have mercy upon you! into what a state might you have awoke!

Then did the poor wretch set up an inarticulate frightful howl, such a one as I never before heard of her; and seeing every one half-frighted, and me motioning to withdraw, O pity me, pity me, Mr. Belford, cried she, her words interrupted by groans—I find you think I shall die!—And what may I be, and where, in a very few hours—who can tell?

I told her it was vain to flatter her: it was my opinion she would not recover.

I was going to re-advise her to calm her spirits, and endeavour to resign herself, and to make the beset of the opportunity yet left her; but this declaration set her into a most outrageous raving. She would have torn her hair, and beaten her breast, had not some of the wretches held her hands by force, while others kept her as steady as they could, lest she should again put out her new-set leg; so that, seeing her thus incapable of advice, and in a perfect phrensy, I told Sally Martin, that there was no bearing the room; and that their best way was to send for a minister to pray by her, and to reason with her, as soon as she should be capable of it. And so I left them; and never was so sensible of the benefit of fresh air, as I was the moment I entered the street.

Nor is it to be wondered at, when it is considered that, to the various ill smells that will always be found in a close sick bed-room, (for generally, when the physician comes, the air is shut out,) this of Mrs. Sinclair was the more particularly offensive, as, to the scent of plasters, salves, and ointments, were added the stench of spirituous liquors, burnt and unburnt, of all denominations; for one or other of the creatures, under pretence of colics, gripes, or qualms, were continually calling for supplies of these, all the time I was there. And yet this is thought to be a genteel house of the sort; and all the prostitutes in it are prostitutes of price, and their visitors people of note.

O, Lovelace! what lives do most of us rakes and libertines lead! what company do we keep! And, for such company, what society renounce, or endeavour to make like these!

What woman, nice in her person, and of purity in her mind and manners, did she know what miry wallowers the generality of men of our class are in themselves, and constantly trough and sty with, but would detest the thoughts of associating with such filthy sensualists, whose favourite taste carries them to mingle with the dregs of stews, brothels, and common sewers?

Yet, to such a choice are many worthy women betrayed, by that false and inconsiderate notion, raised and propagated, no doubt, by the author of all delusion, that a reformed rake makes the best husband. We rakes, indeed, are bold enough to suppose, that women in general are as much rakes in their hearts, as the libertines some of them suffer themselves to be take with are in their practice. A supposition, therefore, which it behoves persons of true honour of that sex to discountenance, by rejecting the address of every man, whose character will not stand the test of that virtue which is the glory of a woman: and indeed, I may say, of a man too: why should it not?

How, indeed, can it be, if this point be duly weighed, that a man who thinks alike of all the sex, and knows it to be in the power of a wife to do him the greatest dishonour man can receive, and doubts not her will to do it, if opportunity offer, and importunity be not wanting: that such a one, from principle, should be a good husband to any woman? And, indeed, little do innocents think, what a total revolution of manners, what a change of fixed habits, nay, what a conquest of a bad nature, and what a portion of Divine GRACE, is required, to make a man a good husband, a worthy father, and true friend, from principle; especially when it is considered, that it is not in a man's own power to reform when he will. This, (to say nothing of my own experience,) thou, Lovelace, hast found in the progress of thy attempts upon the divine Miss Harlowe. For whose remorse could be deeper, or more frequent, yet more transient than thine!

Now, Lovelace, let me know if the word grace can be read from my pen without a sneer from thee and thy associates? I own that once it sounded oddly in my ears. But I shall never forget what a grave man once said on this very word—that with him it was a rake's sibboleth.⁷ He had always hopes

⁷ See Judges xii. 6.

of one who could bear the mention of it without ridiculing it; and ever gave him up for an abandoned man, who made a jest of it, or of him who used it.

Don't be disgusted, that I mingle such grave reflections as these with my narratives. It becomes me, in my present way of thinking, to do so, when I see, in Miss Harlowe, how all human excellence, and in poor Belton, how all inhuman libertinism, and am near seeing in this abandoned woman, how all diabolical profligacy, end. And glad should I be for your own sake, for your splendid family's sake, and for the sake of all your intimates and acquaintance, that you were labouring under the same impressions, that so we who have been companions in (and promoters of one another's) wickedness, might join in a general atonement to the utmost of our power.

I came home reflecting upon all these things, more edifying to me than any sermon I could have heard preached: and I shall conclude this long letter with observing, that although I left the wretched howler in a high phrensy-fit, which was excessively shocking to the by-standers; yet her phrensy must be the happiest part of her dreadful condition: for when she is herself, as it is called, what must be her reflections upon her past profligate life, throughout which it has been her constant delight and business, devil-like, to make others as wicked as herself! What must her terrors be (a hell already begun in her mind!) on looking forward to the dreadful state she is now upon the verge of!—But I drop my trembling pen.

To have done with so shocking a subject at once, we shall take notice, that Mr. Belford, in a future letter, writes, that the miserable woman, to the surprise of the operators themselves, (through hourly increasing tortures of body and mind,) held out so long as till Thursday, Sept. 21; and then died in such agonies as terrified into a transitory penitence all the wretches about her.

LETTER XXVI
COLONEL MORDEN, TO JOHN
BELFORD, ESQ. SUNDAY NIGHT, SEPT. 10

DEAR SIR,

According to my promise, I send you an account of matters here. Poor Mrs. Norton was so very ill upon the road, that, slowly as the hearse moved, and the chariot followed, I was afraid we should not have got her to St. Albans. We put up there as I had intended. I was in hopes that she would have been better for the stop: but I was forced to leave her behind me. I ordered the maid-servant you were so considerately kind as to send down with her, to be very careful of her; and left the chariot to attend her. She deserves all the regard that can be paid her; not only upon my cousin's account, but on her own—she is an excellent woman.

When we were within five miles of Harlowe-place, I put on a hand-gallop. I ordered the hearse to proceed more slowly still, the cross-road we were in being rough; and having more time before us than I wanted; for I wished not the hearse to be in till near dusk. I got to Harlowe-place about four o'clock. You may believe I found a mournful house. You desire me to be very minute.

At my entrance into the court, they were all in motion. Every servant whom I saw had swelled eyes, and looked with so much concern, that at first I apprehended some new disaster had happened in the family. Mr. John and Mr. Antony Harlowe and Mrs. Hervey were there. They all helped on one another's grief, as they had before done each other's hardness of heart.

My cousin James met me at the entrance of the hall. His countenance expressed a fixed concern; and he desired me to excuse his behaviour the last time I was there.

My cousin Arabella came to me full of tears and grief.

O Cousin! said she, hanging upon my arm, I dare not ask you any questions!—About the approach of the hearse, I suppose she meant.

I myself was full of grief; and, without going farther or speaking, sat down in the hall in the first chair.

The brother sat on one hand of me, the sister on the other. Both were silent. The latter in tears.

Mr. Antony Harlowe came to me soon after. His face was overspread with all the appearance of woe. He requested me to walk into the parlour; where, as he said, were all his fellow-mourners.

I attended him in. My cousins James and Arabella followed me.

A perfect concert of grief, as I may say, broke out the moment I entered the parlour.

My cousin Harlowe, the dear creature's father, as soon as he saw me, said, O Cousin, Cousin, of all our family, you are the only one who have nothing to reproach yourself with!—You are a happy man!

The poor mother, bowing her head to me in speechless grief, sat with her handkerchief held to her eyes with one hand. The other hand was held by her sister Hervey, between both her's; Mrs. Hervey weeping upon it.

Near the window sat Mr. John Harlowe, his face and his body turned from the sorrowing company; his eyes red and swelled.

My cousin Antony, at his re-entering the parlour, went towards Mrs. Harlowe—Don't—dear Sister, said he!—Then towards my cousin Harlowe—Don't—dear Brother!—Don't thus give way—And, without being able to say another word, went to a corner of the parlour, and, wanting himself the comfort he would fain have given, sunk into a chair, and audibly sobbed.

Miss Arabella followed her uncle Antony, as he walked in before me, and seemed as if she would have spoken to the pierced mother some words of comfort. But she was unable to utter them,

and got behind her mother's chair; and, inclining her face over it, on the unhappy lady's shoulder, seemed to claim the consolation that indulgent parent used, but then was unable, to afford her.

Young Mr. Harlowe, with all his vehemence of spirit, was now subdued. His self-reproaching conscience, no doubt, was the cause of it.

And what, Sir, must their thoughts be, which, at that moment, in a manner, deprived them of all motion, and turned their speech into sighs and groans!—How to be pitied, how greatly to be pitied! all of them! But how much to be cursed that abhorred Lovelace, who, as it seems, by arts uncommon, and a villany without example, has been the sole author of a woe so complicated and extensive!—God judge me, as—But I stop—the man (the man can I say?) is your friend!—He already suffers, you tell me, in his intellect.—Restore him, Heaven, to that—If I find the matter come out, as I apprehend it will—indeed her own hint of his usage of her, as in her will, is enough—nor think, my beloved cousin, thou darling of my heart! that thy gentle spirit, breathing charity and forgiveness to the vilest of men, shall avail him!—But once more I stop—forgive me, Sir!—Who could behold such a scene, who could recollect it in order to describe it, (as minutely as you wished me to relate how this unhappy family were affected on this sad occasion,) every one of the mourners nearly related to himself, and not to be exasperated against the author of all?

As I was the only person (grieved as I was myself) from whom any of them, at that instant, could derive comfort; Let us not, said I, my dear Cousin, approaching the inconsolable mother, give way to a grief, which, however just, can now avail us nothing. We hurt ourselves, and cannot recall the dear creature for whom we mourn. Nor would you wish it, if you know with what assurance of eternal happiness she left the world—She is happy, Madam!—depend upon it, she is happy! And comfort yourselves with that assurance!

O Cousin, Cousin! cried the unhappy mother, withdrawing her hand from that of her sister Hervey, and pressing mine with it, you know not what a child I have lost!—Then in a low voice, and how lost!—That it is that makes the loss insupportable.

They all joined in a kind of melancholy chorus, and each accused him and herself, and some of them one another. But the eyes of all, in turn, were cast upon my cousin James, as the person who had kept up the general resentment against so sweet a creature. While he was hardly able to bear his own remorse: nor Miss Harlowe her's; she breaking out into words, How tauntingly did I write to her! How barbarously did I insult her! Yet how patiently did she take it!—Who would have thought that she had been so near her end!—O Brother, Brother! but for you!—But for you!—Double not upon me, said he, my own woes! I have every thing before me that has passed! I thought only to reclaim a dear creature that had erred! I intended not to break her tender heart! But it was the villanous Lovelace who did that—not any of us!—Yet, Cousin, did she not attribute all to me?—I fear she did!—Tell me only, did she name me, did she speak of me, in her last hours? I hope she, who could forgive the greatest villain on earth, and plead that he may be safe from our vengeance, I hope she could forgive me.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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