

СЭМЮЭЛ РИЧАРДСОН

CLARISSA HARLOWE; OR
THE HISTORY OF A
YOUNG LADY — VOLUME
2

Сэмюэл Ричардсон
Clarissa Harlowe; or the history
of a young lady — Volume 2

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Samuel Richardson Clarissa Harlowe; or the history of a young lady — Volume 2

THE HISTORY OF CLARISSA HARLOWE

LETTER I MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE

My heart fluttered with the hope and the fear of seeing my mother, and with the shame and grief of having given her so much uneasiness. But it needed not: she was not permitted to come. But my aunt was so good as to return, yet not without my sister; and, taking my hand, made me sit down by her.

She came, she must own, officiously, she said, this once more, though against the opinion of my father: but knowing and dreading the consequence of my opposition, she could not but

come.

She then set forth to my friends' expectation from me; Mr. Solmes's riches (three times as rich he came out to be, as any body had thought him); the settlements proposed; Mr. Lovelace's bad character; their aversions to him; all in a very strong light, not in a stronger than my mother had before placed them in. My mother, surely, could not have given the particulars of what had passed between herself and me: if she had, my aunt would not have repeated many of the same sentiments, as you will find she did, that had been still more strongly urged, without effect by her venerable sister.

She said it would break the heart of my father to have it imagined that he had not a power over his own child; and that, as he thought, for my own good: a child too, whom they had always doated upon!—Dearest, dearest Miss, concluded she, clasping her fingers, with the most condescending earnestness, let me beg of you, for my sake, for your own sake, for a hundred sakes, to get over this averseness, to give up your prejudices, and make every one happy and easy once more.—I would kneel to you, my dearest Niece—nay, I will kneel to you—!

And down she dropt, and I with her, kneeling to her, and beseeching her not to kneel; clasping my arms about her, and bathing her worthy bosom with my tears.

O rise! rise! my beloved Aunt, said I: you cut me to the heart with this condescending goodness.

Say then, my dearest Niece, say then, that you will oblige all

your friends!—If you love us, I beseech you do—

How can I perform what I can sooner choose to die than to perform—!

Say then, my dear, that you will consider of it. Say you will but reason with yourself. Give us but hopes. Don't let me entreat, and thus entreat, in vain—[for still she kneeled, and I by her].

What a hard case is mine!—Could I but doubt, I know I could conquer.—That which is an inducement to my friends, is none at all to me—How often, my dearest Aunt, must I repeat the same thing?—Let me but be single—Cannot I live single? Let me be sent, as I have proposed, to Scotland, to Florence, any where: let me be sent a slave to the Indies, any where—any of these I will consent to. But I cannot, cannot think of giving my vows to man I cannot endure!

Well then, rising, (Bella silently, with uplifted hands, reproaching my supposed perverseness,) I see nothing can prevail with you to oblige us.

What can I do, my dearest Aunt Hervey? What can I do? Were I capable of giving a hope I meant not to enlarge, then could I say, I would consider of your kind advice. But I would rather be thought perverse than insincere. Is there, however, no medium? Can nothing be thought of? Will nothing do, but to have a man who is the more disgustful to me, because he is unjust in the very articles he offers?

Whom now, Clary, said my sister, do you reflect upon? Consider that.

Make not invidious applications of what I say, Bella. It may not be looked upon in the same light by every one. The giver and the acceptor are principally answerable in an unjust donation. While I think of it in this light, I should be inexcusable to be the latter. But why do I enter upon a supposition of this nature?—My heart, as I have often, often said, recoils, at the thought of the man, in every light.—Whose father, but mine, agrees upon articles where there is no prospect of a liking? Where the direct contrary is avowed, all along avowed, without the least variation, or shadow of a change of sentiment?—But it is not my father's doing originally. O my cruel, cruel brother, to cause a measure to be forced upon me, which he would not behave tolerably under, were the like to be offered to him!

The girl is got into her altitudes, Aunt Hervey, said my sister. You see, Madam, she spares nobody. Be pleased to let her know what she has to trust to. Nothing is to be done with her. Pray, Madam, pronounce her doom.

My aunt retired to the window, weeping, with my sister in her hand: I cannot, indeed I cannot, Miss Harlowe, said she, softly, (but yet I heard every word she said): there is great hardship in her case. She is a noble child after all. What pity things are gone so far!—But Mr. Solmes ought to be told to desist.

O Madam, said my sister, in a kind of loud whisper, are you caught too by the little siren?—My mother did well not to come up!—I question whether my father himself, after his first indignation, would not be turned round by her. Nobody but my

brother can do any thing with her, I am sure.

Don't think of your brother's coming up, said my aunt, still in a low voice—He is too furious. I see no obstinacy, no perverseness, in her manner! If your brother comes, I will not be answerable for the consequences: for I thought twice or thrice she would have gone into fits.

O Madam, she has a strong heart!—And you see there is no prevailing with her, though you were upon your knees to her.

My sister left my aunt musing at the window, with her back towards us, and took that opportunity to insult me still more barbarously; for, stepping to my closet, she took up the patterns which my mother had sent me up, and bringing them to me, she spread them upon the chair by me; and offering one, and then another, upon her sleeve and shoulder, thus she ran on, with great seeming tranquility, but whisperingly, that my aunt might not hear her. This, Clary, is a pretty pattern enough: but this is quite charming! I would advise you to make your appearance in it. And this, were I you, should be my wedding night-gown—And this my second dressed suit! Won't you give orders, love, to have your grandmother's jewels new set?—Or will you thing to shew away in the new ones Mr. Solmes intends to present to you? He talks of laying out two or three thousand pounds in presents, child! Dear heart!—How gorgeously will you be array'd! What! silent still?—But, Clary, won't you have a velvet suit? It would cut a great figure in a country church, you know: and the weather may bear it for a month yet to come. Crimson velvet, suppose! Such

a fine complexion as yours, how it would be set off by it! What an agreeable blush would it give you!—Heigh-ho! (mocking me, for I sighed to be thus fooled with,) and do you sigh, love?—Well then, as it will be a solemn wedding, what think you of black velvet, child?—Silent still, Clary?—Black velvet, so fair as you are, with those charming eyes, gleaming through a wintry cloud, like an April sun!—Does not Lovelace tell you they are charming eyes?—How lovely will you appear to every one!—What! silent still, love?—But about your laces, Clary?—

She would have gone on still further, had not my aunt advance towards me, wiping her eyes—What! whispering ladies! You seem so easy and so pleased, Miss Harlowe, with your private conference, that I hope I shall carry down good news.

I am only giving her my opinion of her patterns, here.—Unasked indeed; but she seems, by her silence, to approve of my judgment.

O Bella! said I, that Mr. Lovelace had not taken you at your word!—You had before now been exercising your judgment on your own account: and I had been happy as well as you! Was it my fault, I pray you, that it was not so?—

O how she raved!

To be so ready to give, Bella, and so loth to take, is not very fair in you.

The poor Bella descended to call names.

Why, Sister, said I, you are as angry, as if there were more in the hint than possibly might be designed. My wish is sincere, for

both our sakes!—for the whole family's sake!—And what (good now) is there in it?—Do not, do not, dear Bella, give me cause to suspect, that I have found a reason for your behaviour to me, and which till now was wholly unaccountable from sister to sister—

Fie, fie, Clary! said my aunt.

My sister was more and more outrageous.

O how much fitter, said I, to be a jest, than a jester!—But now, Bella, turn the glass to you, and see how poorly sits the robe upon your own shoulders, which you have been so unmercifully fixing upon mine!

Fie, fie, Miss Clary! repeated my aunt.

And fie, fie, likewise, good Madam, to Miss Harlowe, you would say, were you to have heard her barbarous insults!

Let us go, Madam, said my sister, with great violence; let us leave the creature to swell till she bursts with her own poison.—The last time I will ever come near her, in the mind I am in!

It is so easy a thing, returned I, were I to be mean enough to follow an example that is so censurable in the setter of it, to vanquish such a teasing spirit as your's with its own blunt weapons, that I am amazed you will provoke me!—Yet, Bella, since you will go, (for she had hurried to the door,) forgive me. I forgive you. And you have a double reason to do so, both from eldership and from the offence so studiously given to one in affliction. But may you be happy, though I never shall! May you never have half the trials I have had! Be this your comfort, that you cannot have a sister to treat you as you have treated me!—

And so God bless you!

O thou art a—And down she flung without saying what.

Permit me, Madam, said I to my aunt, sinking down, and clasping her knees with my arms, to detain you one moment—not to say any thing about my poor sister—she is her own punisher—only to thank you for all your condescending goodness to me. I only beg of you not to impute to obstinacy the immovableness I have shown to so tender a friend; and to forgive me every thing I have said or done amiss in your presence, for it has not proceeded from inward rancour to the poor Bella. But I will be bold to say, that neither she, nor my brother, nor even my father himself, knows what a heart they have set a bleeding.

I saw, to my comfort, what effect my sister's absence wrought for me.—Rise, my noble-minded Niece!—Charming creature! [those were her kind words] kneel not to me!—Keep to yourself what I now say to you.—I admire you more than I can express—and if you can forbear claiming your estate, and can resolve to avoid Lovelace, you will continue to be the greatest miracle I ever knew at your years—but I must hasten down after your sister.—These are my last words to you: 'Conform to your father's will, if you possibly can. How meritorious will it be in you if you do so! Pray to God to enable you to conform. You don't know what may be done.'

Only, my dear Aunt, one word, one word more (for she was going)—Speak all you can for my dear Mrs. Norton. She is but low in the world: should ill health overtake her, she may not know

how to live without my mamma's favour. I shall have no means to help her; for I will want necessaries before I will assert my right: and I do assure you, she has said so many things to me in behalf of my submitting to my father's will, that her arguments have not a little contributed to make me resolve to avoid the extremities, which nevertheless I pray to God they do not at last force me upon. And yet they deprive me of her advice, and think unjustly of one of the most excellent of women.

I am glad to hear you say this: and take this, and this, and this, my charming Niece! (for so she called me almost at every word, kissing me earnestly, and clasping her arms about my neck:) and God protect you, and direct you! But you must submit: indeed you must. Some one day in a month from this is all the choice that is left you.

And this, I suppose, was the doom my sister called for; and yet no worse than what had been pronounced upon me before.

She repeated these last sentences louder than the former. 'And remember, Miss,' added she, 'it is your duty to comply.'—And down she went, leaving me with my heart full, and my eyes running over.

The very repetition of this fills me with almost equal concern to that which I felt at the time.

I must lay down my pen. Mistiness, which give to the deluged eye the appearance of all the colours in the rainbow, will not permit me to write on.

WEDNESDAY, FIVE O'CLOCK

I will now add a few lines—My aunt, as she went down from me, was met at the foot of the stairs by my sister, who seemed to think she had staid a good while after her; and hearing her last words prescribing to me implicit duty, praised her for it, and exclaimed against my obstinacy. Did you ever hear of such perverseness, Madam? said she: Could you have thought that your Clarissa and every body's Clarissa, was such a girl?—And who, as you said, is to submit, her father or she?

My aunt said something in answer to her, compassionating me, as I thought, by her accent: but I heard not the words.

Such a strange perseverance in a measure so unreasonable!—But my brother and sister are continually misrepresenting all I say and do; and I am deprived of the opportunity of defending myself!—My sister says,¹ that had they thought me such a championess, they you not have engaged with me: and now, not knowing how to reconcile my supposed obstinacy with my general character and natural temper, they seem to hope to tire me out, and resolve to vary their measures accordingly. My brother, you see,² is determined to carry this point, or to abandon Harlowe-place, and never to see it more. So they are to lose a son, or to conquer a daughter—the perversest and most ungrateful

¹ See Letter XLII. of Vol. I.

² Ibid.

that ever parents had!—This is the light he places things in: and has undertaken, it seems, to subdue me, if his advice should be followed. It will be farther tried; of that I am convinced; and what will be their next measure, who can divine?

I shall dispatch, with this, my answer to your's of Sunday last, begun on Monday;³ but which is not yet quite finished. It is too long to copy: I have not time for it. In it I have been very free with you, my dear, in more places than one. I cannot say that I am pleased with all I have written—yet will not now alter it. My mind is not at ease enough for the subject. Don't be angry with me. Yet, if you can excuse one or two passages, it will be because they were written by

Your CLARISSA HARLOWE.

³ See Letter XL, *ibid.*

LETTER II
MISS HOWE, TO MISS
CLARISSA HARLOWE
WEDNESDAY NIGHT, MARCH 22

ANGRY!—What should I be angry for? I am mightily pleased with your freedom, as you call it. I only wonder at your patience with me; that's all. I am sorry I gave you the trouble of so long a letter upon the occasion,⁴ notwithstanding the pleasure I received in reading it.

I believe you did not intend reserves to me: for two reasons I believe you did not: First, because you say you did not: Next, because you have not as yet been able to convince yourself how it is to be with you; and persecuted as you are, how so to separate the effects that spring from the two causes [persecution and love] as to give to each its particular due. But this I believe I hinted to you once before; and so will say no more upon this subject at present.

Robin says, you had but just deposited your last parcel when he took it: for he was there but half an hour before, and found nothing. He had seen my impatience, and loitered about, being willing to bring me something from you, if possible.

⁴ See Vol. I, Letter XXXVII, for the occasion; and Letters XXXVIII. and XL. of the same volume, for the freedom Clarissa apologizes for.

My cousin Jenny Fynnett is here, and desires to be my bedfellow to-night. So I shall not have an opportunity to sit down with that seriousness and attention which the subjects of yours require. For she is all prate, you know, and loves to set me a prating; yet comes upon a very grave occasion—to procure my mother to go with her to her grandmother Larking, who has long been bed-ridden; and at last has taken it into her head that she is mortal, and therefore will make her will; a work she was till now extremely averse to; but it must be upon condition that my mother, who is her distant relation, will go to her, and advise her as to the particulars of it: for she has a high opinion, as every one else has, of my mother's judgment in all matters relating to wills, settlements, and such-like notable affairs.

Mrs. Larking lives about seventeen miles off; and as my mother cannot endure to lie out of her own house, she proposes to set out early in the morning, that she might be able to get back again at night. So, to-morrow I shall be at your devotion from day-light to day-light; nor will I be at home to any body.

I have hinted before, that I could almost wish my mother and Mr. Hickman would make a match of it: and I here repeat my wishes. What signifies a difference of fifteen or twenty years; especially when the lady has spirits that will make her young a long time, and the lover is a mighty sober man?—I think, verily, I could like him better for a papa, than for a nearer relation: and they are strange admirers of one another.

But allow me a perhaps still better (and, as to years, more

suitable and happier) disposal; for the man at least.—What think you, my dear, of compromising with your friends, by rejecting both men, and encouraging my parader?—If your liking one of the two go no farther than conditional, I believe it will do. A rich thought, if it obtain your approbation! In this light, I should have a prodigious respect for Mr. Hickman; more by half than I can have in the other. The vein is opened—Shall I let it flow? How difficult to withstand constitutional foibles!

Hickman is certainly a man more in your taste than any of those who have hitherto been brought to address you. He is mighty sober, mighty grave, and all that. Then you have told me, that he is your favourite. But that is because he is my mother's perhaps. The man would certainly rejoice at the transfer; or he must be a greater fool than I take him to be.

O but your fierce lover would knock him o' the head—I forgot that!—What makes me incapable of seriousness when I write about Hickman?—Yet the man so good a sort of man in the main!—But who is perfect? This is one of my foibles: and it is something for you to chide me for.

You believe me to be very happy in my prospect in relation to him: because you are so very unhappy in the foolish usage you meet with, you are apt (as I suspect) to think that tolerable which otherwise would be far from being so. I dare say, you would not, with all your grave airs, like him for yourself; except, being addressed by Solmes and him, you were obliged to have one of them.—I have given you a test. Let me see what you will say to it.

For my own part, I confess to you, that I have great exceptions to Hickman. He and wedlock never yet once entered into my head at one time. Shall I give you my free thoughts of him?—Of his best and his worst; and that as if I were writing to one who knows him not?—I think I will. Yet it is impossible I should do it gravely. The subject won't bear to be so treated in my opinion. We are not come so far as that yet, if ever we shall: and to do it in another strain, ill becomes my present real concern for you.

Here I was interrupted on the honest man's account. He has been here these two hours—courting the mother for the daughter, I suppose—yet she wants no courting neither: 'Tis well one of us does; else the man would have nothing but halcyon; and be remiss, and saucy of course.

He was going. His horses at the door. My mother sent for me down, pretending to want to say something to me.

Something she said when I came that signified nothing—Evidently, for no reason called me, but to give me an opportunity to see what a fine bow her man could make; and that she might wish me a good night. She knows I am not over ready to oblige him with my company, if I happen to be otherwise engaged. I could not help an air a little upon the fretful, when I found she had nothing of moment to say to me, and when I saw her intention.

She smiled off the visible fretfulness, that the man might go away in good humour with himself.

He bowed to the ground, and would have taken my hand, his whip in the other. I did not like to be so companioned: I withdrew

my hand, but touched his elbow with a motion, as if from his low bow I had supposed him falling, and would have helped him up—A sad slip, it might have been! said I.

A mad girl! smiled it off my mother.

He was quite put out; took his horse-bridle, stumped back, back, back, bowing, till he run against his servant. I laughed. He mounted his horse. I mounted up stairs, after a little lecture; and my head is so filled with him, that I must resume my intention, in hopes to divert you for a few moments.

Take it then—his best, and his worst, as I said before.

Hickman is a sort of fiddling, busy, yet, to borrow a word from you, unbusy man: has a great deal to do, and seems to me to dispatch nothing. Irresolute and changeable in every thing, but in teasing me with his nonsense; which yet, it is evident, he must continue upon my mother's interest more than upon his own hopes; for none have I given him.

Then I have a quarrel against his face, though in his person, for a well-thriven man, tolerably genteel—Not to his features so much neither; for what, as you have often observed, are features in a man?—But Hickman, with strong lines, and big cheek and chin bones, has not the manliness in his aspect, which Lovelace has with the most regular and agreeable features.

Then what a set and formal mortal he is in some things!—I have not been able yet to laugh him out of his long bid and beads. Indeed, that is, because my mother thinks they become him; and I would not be so free with him, as to own I should choose to

have him leave it off. If he did, so particular is the man, he would certainly, if left to himself, fall into a King-William's cravat, or some such antique chin-cushion, as by the pictures of that prince one sees was then the fashion.

As to his dress in general, he cannot indeed be called a sloven, but sometimes he is too gaudy, at other times too plain, to be uniformly elegant. And for his manners, he makes such a bustle with them, and about them, as would induce one to suspect that they are more strangers than familiars to him. You, I know, lay this to his fearfulness of disoblighing or offending. Indeed your over-doers generally give the offence they endeavour to avoid.

The man however is honest: is of family: has a clear and good estate; and may one day be a baronet, an't please you. He is humane and benevolent, tolerably generous, as people say; and as I might say too, if I would accept of his bribes; which he offers in hopes of having them all back again, and the bribed into the bargain. A method taken by all corrupters, from old Satan, to the lowest of his servants. Yet, to speak in the language of a person I am bound to honour, he is deemed a prudent man; that is to say a good manager.

Then I cannot but confess, that now I like not anybody better, whatever I did once.

He is no fox-hunter: he keeps a pack indeed; but prefers not his hounds to his fellow-creatures. No bad sign for a wife, I own. He loves his horse; but dislikes racing in a gaming way, as well as all sorts of gaming. Then he is sober; modest; they

say, virtuous; in short, has qualities that mothers would be fond of in a husband for their daughters; and for which perhaps their daughters would be the happier could they judge as well for themselves, as experience possibly may teach them to judge for their future daughters.

Nevertheless, to own the truth, I cannot say I love the man: nor, I believe, ever shall.

Strange! that these sober fellows cannot have a decent sprightliness, a modest assurance with them! Something debonnaire; which need not be separated from that awe and reverence, when they address a woman, which should shew the ardour of their passion, rather than the sheepishness of their nature; for who knows not that love delights in taming the lion-hearted? That those of the sex, who are most conscious of their own defect in point of courage, naturally require, and therefore as naturally prefer, the man who has most of it, as the most able to give them the requisite protection? That the greater their own cowardice, as it would be called in a man, the greater is their delight in subjects of heroism? As may be observed in their reading; which turns upon difficulties encountered, battles fought, and enemies overcome, four or five hundred by the prowess of one single hero, the more improbable the better: in short, that their man should be a hero to every one living but themselves; and to them know no bound to his humility. A woman has some glory in subduing a heart no man living can appall; and hence too often the bravo, assuming the hero, and

making himself pass for one, succeeds as only a hero should.

But as for honest Hickman, the good man is so generally meek, as I imagine, that I know not whether I have any preference paid me in his obsequiousness. And then, when I rate him, he seems to be so naturally fitted for rebuke, and so much expects it, that I know not how to disappoint him, whether he just then deserve it, or not. I am sure, he has puzzled me many a time when I have seen him look penitent for faults he has not committed, whether to pity or laugh at him.

You and I have often retrospected the faces and minds of grown people; that is to say, have formed images for their present appearances, outside and in, (as far as the manners of the persons would justify us in the latter) what sort of figures they made when boys and girls. And I'll tell you the lights in which HICKMAN, SOLMES, and LOVELACE, our three heroes, have appeared to me, supposing them boys at school.

Solmes I have imagined to be a little sordid, pilfering rogue, who would purloin from every body, and beg every body's bread and butter from him; while, as I have heard a reptile brag, he would in a winter-morning spit upon his thumbs, and spread his own with it, that he might keep it all to himself.

Hickman, a great overgrown, lank-haired, chubby boy, who would be hunched and punched by every body; and go home with his finger in his eye, and tell his mother.

While Lovelace I have supposed a curl-pated villain, full of fire, fancy, and mischief; an orchard-robber, a wall-climber, a

horse-rider without saddle or bridle, neck or nothing: a sturdy rogue, in short, who would kick and cuff, and do no right, and take no wrong of any body; would get his head broke, then a plaster for it, or let it heal of itself; while he went on to do more mischief, and if not to get, to deserve, broken bones. And the same dispositions have grown up with them, and distinguish them as me, with no very material alteration.

Only that all men are monkeys more or less, or else that you and I should have such baboons as these to choose out of, is a mortifying thing, my dear.

I am sensible that I am a little out of season in treating thus ludicrously the subject I am upon, while you are so unhappy; and if my manner does not divert you, as my flightiness used to do, I am inexcusable both to you, and to my own heart: which, I do assure you, notwithstanding my seeming levity, is wholly in your case.

As this letter is extremely whimsical, I will not send it until I can accompany it with something more solid and better suited to your unhappy circumstances; that is to say, to the present subject of our correspondence. To-morrow, as I told you, will be wholly my own, and of consequence yours. Adieu, therefore, till then.

LETTER III
MISS HOWE, TO MISS
CLARISSA HARLOWE
TUESDAY MORN. 7 O'CLOCK

My mother and cousin are already gone off in our chariot and four, attended by their doughty 'squire on horseback, and he by two of his own servants, and one of my mother's. They both love parade when they go abroad, at least in compliment to one another; which shews, that each thinks the other does. Robin is your servant and mine, and nobody's else—and the day is all my own.

I must begin with blaming you, my dear, for your resolution not to litigate for your right, if occasion were to be given you. Justice is due to ourselves, as well as to every body else. Still more must I blame you for declaring to your aunt and sister, that you will not: since (as they will tell it to your father and brother) the declaration must needs give advantage to spirits who have so little of that generosity for which you are so much distinguished.

There never was a spirit in the world that would insult where it dared, but it would creep and cringe where it dared not. Let me remind you of a sentence of your own, the occasion for which I have forgotten: 'That little spirits will always accommodate themselves to the temper of those they would work upon: will

fawn upon a sturdy-tempered person: will insult the meek:—And another given to Miss Biddulph, upon an occasion you cannot forget:—'If we assume a dignity in what we say and do, and take care not to disgrace by arrogance our own assumption, every body will treat us with respect and deference.'

I remember that you once made an observation, which you said, you was obliged to Mrs. Norton for, and she to her father, upon an excellent preacher, who was but an indifferent liver: 'That to excel in theory, and to excel in practice, generally required different talents; which did not always meet in the same person.' Do you, my dear (to whom theory and practice are the same thing in almost every laudable quality), apply the observation to yourself, in this particular case, where resolution is required; and where the performance of the will of the defunct is the question—no more to be dispensed with by you, in whose favour it was made, than by any body else who have only themselves in view by breaking through it.

I know how much you despise riches in the main: but yet it behoves you to remember, that in one instance you yourself have judged them valuable—'In that they put it into our power to lay obligations; while the want of that power puts a person under a necessity of receiving favours—receiving them perhaps from grudging and narrow spirits, who know not how to confer them with that grace, which gives the principal merit to a beneficent action.'—Reflect upon this, my dear, and see how it agrees with the declaration you have made to your aunt and sister, that you

would not resume your estate, were you to be turned out of doors, and reduced to indigence and want. Their very fears that you will resume, point out to you the necessity of resuming upon the treatment you meet with.

I own, that (at first reading) I was much affected with your mother's letter sent with the patterns. A strange measure however from a mother; for she did not intend to insult you; and I cannot but lament that so sensible and so fine a woman should stoop to so much art as that letter is written with: and which also appears in some of the conversations you have given me an account of. See you not in her passiveness, what boisterous spirits can obtain from gentler, merely by teasing and ill-nature?

I know the pride they have always taken in calling you a Harlowe—Clarissa Harlowe, so formal and so set, at every word, when they are grave or proudly solemn.—Your mother has learnt it of them—and as in marriage, so in will, has been taught to bury her own superior name and family in theirs. I have often thought that the same spirit governed them, in this piece of affectation, and others of the like nature (as Harlowe-Place, and so-forth, though not the elder brother's or paternal seat), as governed the tyrant Tudor,⁵ who marrying Elizabeth, the heiress of the house of York, made himself a title to a throne, which he would not otherwise have had (being but a base descendant of the Lancaster line); and proved a gloomy and vile husband to her; for no other cause, than because she had laid him under obligations which his

⁵ Henry VII.

pride would not permit him to own.—Nor would the unprincely wretch marry her till he was in possession of the crown, that he might not be supposed to owe it to her claim.

You have chidden me, and again will, I doubt not, for the liberties I take with some of your relations. But my dear, need I tell you, that pride in ourselves must, and for ever will, provoke contempt, and bring down upon us abasement from others?—Have we not, in the case of a celebrated bard, observed, that those who aim at more than their due, will be refused the honours they may justly claim?—I am very much loth to offend you; yet I cannot help speaking of your relations, as well as of others, as I think they deserve. Praise or dispraise, is the reward or punishment which the world confers or inflicts on merit or demerit; and, for my part, I neither can nor will confound them in the application. I despise them all, but your mother: indeed I do: and as for her—but I will spare the good lady for your sake—and one argument, indeed, I think may be pleaded in her favour, in the present contention—she who has for so many years, and with such absolute resignation, borne what she has borne to the sacrifice of her own will, may think it an easier task than another person can imagine it, for her daughter to give up hers. But to think to whose instigation all this is originally owing—God forgive me; but with such usage I should have been with Lovelace before now! Yet remember, my dear, that the step which would not be wondered at from such a hasty-tempered creatures as me, would be inexcusable in such a considerate person as you.

After your mother has been thus drawn in against her judgment, I am the less surprised, that your aunt Hervey should go along with her; since the two sisters never separate. I have inquired into the nature of the obligation which Mr. Hervey's indifferent conduct in his affairs has laid him under—it is only, it seems, that your brother has paid off for him a mortgage upon one part of his estate, which the mortgagee was about to foreclose; and taken it upon himself. A small favour (as he has ample security in his hands) from kindred to kindred: but such a one, it is plain, as has laid the whole family of the Herveys under obligation to the ungenerous lender, who has treated him, and his aunt too (as Miss Dolly Hervey has privately complained), with the less ceremony ever since.

Must I, my dear, call such a creature your brother?—I believe I must—Because he is your father's son. There is no harm, I hope, in saying that.

I am concerned, that you ever wrote at all to him. It was taking too much notice of him: it was adding to his self-significance; and a call upon him to treat you with insolence. A call which you might have been assured he would not fail to answer.

But such a pretty master as this, to run riot against such a man as Lovelace; who had taught him to put his sword into his scabbard, when he had pulled it out by accident!—These indoor insolents, who, turning themselves into bugbears, frighten women, children, and servants, are generally cravens among men. Were he to come fairly across me, and say to my face some

of the free things which I am told he has said of me behind my back, or that (as by your account) he has said of our sex, I would take upon myself to ask him two or three questions; although he were to send me a challenge likewise.

I repeat, you know that I will speak my mind, and write it too. He is not my brother. Can you say, he is yours?—So, for your life, if you are just, you can't be angry with me: For would you side with a false brother against a true friend? A brother may not be a friend: but a friend will always be a brother—mind that, as your uncle Tony says!

I cannot descend so low, as to take very particular notice of the epistles of these poor souls, whom you call uncles. Yet I love to divert myself with such grotesque characters too. But I know them and love you; and so cannot make the jest of them which their absurdities call for.

You chide me, my dear,⁶ for my freedoms with relations still nearer and dearer to you, than either uncles or brother or sister. You had better have permitted me (uncorrected) to have taken my own way. Do not use those freedoms naturally arise from the subject before us? And from whom arises that subject, I pray you? Can you for one quarter of an hour put yourself in my place, or in the place of those who are still more indifferent to the case than I can be?—If you can—But although I have you not often at advantage, I will not push you.

Permit me, however, to subjoin, that well may your father love

⁶ See Vol. I. Letter XXVIII.

your mother, as you say he does. A wife who has no will but his! But were there not, think you, some struggles between them at first, gout out of the question?—Your mother, when a maiden, had, as I have heard (and it is very likely) a good share of those lively spirits which she liked in your father. She has none of them now. How came they to be dissipated?—Ah! my dear!—she has been too long resident in Trophonius's cave, I doubt.⁷

Let me add one reflection upon this subject, and so entitle myself to your correction for all at once.—It is upon the conduct of those wives (for you and I know more than one such) who can suffer themselves to be out-blustered and out-gloomed of their own wills, instead of being fooled out of them by acts of tenderness and complaisance.—I wish, that it does not demonstrate too evidently, that, with some of the sex, insolent controul is a more efficacious subduer than kindness or concession. Upon my life, my dear, I have often thought, that many of us are mere babies in matrimony: perverse fools when too much indulged and humoured; creeping slaves, when treated harshly. But shall it be said, that fear makes us more gentle obligers than love?—Forbid it, Honour! Forbid it, Gratitude! Forbid it, Justice! that any woman of sense should give occasion to have this said of her!

Did I think you would have any manner of doubt, from the style or contents of this letter, whose saucy pen it is that has run on at this rate, I would write my name at length; since it comes

⁷ Spectator, Vol. VIII. No. 599.

too much from my heart to disavow it: but at present the initials shall serve; and I will go on again directly.

A.H.

LETTER IV
MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA
HARLOWE THURSDAY
MORN. 10 O'CLOCK (MAR. 23)

I will postpone, or perhaps pass by, several observations which I had to make on other parts of your letters; to acquaint you, that Mr. Hickman, when in London, found an opportunity to inquire after Mr. Lovelace's town life and conversation.

At the Cocoa-tree, in Pall-mall, he fell in with two of his intimates, the one named Belton, the other Mowbray; both very free of speech, and probably as free in their lives: but the waiters paid them great respect, and on Mr. Hickman's inquiry after their characters, called them men of fortune and honour.

They began to talk of Mr. Lovelace of their own accord; and upon some gentlemen in the room asking, when they expected him in town, answered, that very day. Mr. Hickman (as they both went on praising Lovelace) said, he had indeed heard, that Mr. Lovelace was a very fine gentleman—and was proceeding, when one of them, interrupting him, said,—Only, Sir, the finest gentleman in the world; that's all.

And so he led them on to expatiate more particularly on his qualities; which they were very fond of doing: but said not one single word in behalf of his morals—Mind that also, in your

uncle's style.

Mr. Hickman said, that Mr. Lovelace was very happy, as he understood, in the esteem of the ladies; and smiling, to make them believe he did not think amiss of it, that he pushed his good fortune as far as it would go.

Well put, Mr. Hickman! thought I; equally grave and sage—thou seemest not to be a stranger to their dialect, as I suppose this is. But I said nothing; for I have often tried to find out this might sober man of my mother's: but hitherto have only to say, that he is either very moral, or very cunning.

No doubt of it, replied one of them; and out came an oath, with a Who would not?—That he did as every young fellow would do.

Very true! said my mother's puritan—but I hear he is in treaty with a fine lady—

So he was, Mr. Belton said—The devil fetch her! [vile brute!] for she engrossed all his time—but that the lady's family ought to be—something—[Mr. Hickman desired to be excused repeating what—though he had repeated what was worse] and might dearly repent their usage of a man of his family and merit.

Perhaps they may think him too wild, cries Hickman: and theirs is, I hear, a very sober family—

SOBER! said one of them: A good honest word, Dick!—Where the devil has it lain all this time?—D—— me if I have heard of it in this sense ever since I was at college! and then, said he, we bandied it about among twenty of us as an obsolete.

These, my dear, are Mr. Lovelace's companions: you'll be

pleased to take notice of that!

Mr. Hickman said, this put him out of countenance.

I stared at him, and with such a meaning in my eyes, as he knew how to take; and so was out of countenance again.

Don't you remember, my dear, who it was that told a young gentleman designed for the gown, who owned that he was apt to be too easily put out of countenance when he came into free company, 'That it was a bad sign; that it looked as if his morals were not proof; but that his good disposition seemed rather the effect of accident and education, than of such a choice as was founded upon principle?' And don't you know the lesson the very same young lady gave him, 'To endeavour to stem and discountenance vice, and to glory in being an advocate in all companies for virtue;' particularly observing, 'That it was natural for a man to shun or to give up what he was ashamed of?' Which she should be sorry to think his case on this occasion: adding, 'That vice was a coward, and would hide its head, when opposed by such a virtue as had presence of mind, and a full persuasion of its own rectitude to support it.' The lady, you may remember, modestly put her doctrine into the mouth of a worthy preacher, Dr. Lewen, as she used to do, when she has a mind not to be thought what she is at so early an age; and that it may give more weight to any thing she hit upon, that might appear tolerable, was her modest manner of speech.

Mr. Hickman, upon the whole, professed to me, upon his second recovery, that he had no reason to think well of Mr.

Lovelace's morals, from what he heard of him in town; yet his two intimates talked of his being more regular than he used to be. That he had made a very good resolution, that of old Tom Wharton, was the expression, That he would never give a challenge, nor refuse one; which they praised in him highly: that, in short, he was a very brave fellow, and the most agreeable companion in the world: and would one day make a great figure in his country; since there was nothing he was not capable of—

I am afraid that his last assertion is too true. And this, my dear, is all that Mr. Hickman could pick up about him: And is it not enough to determine such a mind as yours, if not already determined?

Yet it must be said too, that if there be a woman in the world that can reclaim him, it is you. And, by your account of his behaviour in the interview between you, I own I have some hope of him. At least, this I will say, that all the arguments he then used with you, seemed to be just and right. And if you are to be his—But no more of that: he cannot, after all, deserve you.

LETTER V
MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA
HARLOWE THURSDAY
AFTERNOON, MARCH 23

An unexpected visitor has turned the course of my thoughts, and changed the subject I had intended to pursue. The only one for whom I would have dispensed with my resolution not to see any body all the dedicated day: a visiter, whom, according to Mr. Hickman's report from the expectations of his libertine friends, I supposed to be in town.—Now, my dear, have I saved myself the trouble of telling you, that it was you too-agreeable rake. Our sex is said to love to trade in surprises: yet have I, by my promptitude, surprised myself out of mine. I had intended, you must know, to run twice the length, before I had suffered you to know so much as to guess who, and whether man or woman, my visiter was: but since you have the discovery at so cheap a rate, you are welcome to it.

The end of his coming was, to engage my interest with my charming friend; and he was sure that I knew all your mind, to acquaint him what he had to trust to.

He mentioned what had passed in the interview between you: but could not be satisfied with the result of it, and with the little satisfaction he had obtained from you: the malice of your family

to him increasing, and their cruelty to you not abating. His heart, he told me, was in tumults, for fear you should be prevailed upon in favour of a man despised by every body.

He gave me fresh instance of indignities cast upon himself by your uncles and brother; and declared, that if you suffered yourself to be forced into the arms of the man for whose sake he was loaded with undeserved abuses, you should be one of the youngest, as you would be one of the loveliest widows in England. And that he would moreover call your brother to account for the liberties he takes with his character to every one he meets with.

He proposed several schemes, for you to choose some one of them, in order to enable you to avoid the persecutions you labour under: One I will mention—That you will resume your estate; and if you find difficulties that can be no otherwise surmounted, that you will, either avowedly or privately, as he had proposed to you, accept of Lady Betty Lawrance's or Lord M.'s assistance to instate you in it. He declared, that if you did, he would leave absolutely to your own pleasure afterwards, and to the advice which your cousin Morden on his arrival should give you, whether to encourage his address, or not, as you should be convinced of the sincerity of the reformation which his enemies make him so much want.

I had now a good opportunity to sound him, as you wished Mr. Hickman would Lord M. as to the continued or diminished favour of the ladies, and of his Lordship, towards you, upon their being acquainted with the animosity of your relations to them,

as well as to their kinsman. I laid hold of the opportunity, and he satisfied me, by reading some passages of a letter he had about him, from Lord M. That an alliance with you, and that on the foot of your own single merit, would be the most desirable event to them that could happen: and so far to the purpose of your wished inquiry does his Lordship go in this letter, that he assures him, that whatever you suffer in fortune from the violence of your relations on his account, he and Lady Sarah and Lady Betty will join to make it up to him. And yet that the reputation of a family so splendid, would, no doubt, in a case of such importance to the honour of both, make them prefer a general consent.

I told him, as you yourself I knew had done, that you were extremely averse to Mr. Solmes; and that, might you be left to your own choice, it would be the single life. As to himself, I plainly said, That you had great and just objections to him on the score of his careless morals: that it was surprising, that men who gave themselves the liberties he was said to take, should presume to think, that whenever they took it into their heads to marry, the most virtuous and worthy of the sex were to fall to their lot. That as to the resumption, it had been very strongly urged by myself, and would be still further urged; though you had been hitherto averse to that measure: that your chief reliance and hopes were upon your cousin Morden; and that to suspend or gain time till he arrived, was, as I believed, your principal aim.

I told him, That with regard to the mischief he threatened, neither the act nor the menace could serve any end but theirs who

persecuted you; as it would give them a pretence for carrying into effect their compulsory projects; and that with the approbation of all the world; since he must not think the public would give its voice in favour of a violent young man, of no extraordinary character as to morals, who should seek to rob a family of eminence of a child so valuable; and who threatened, if he could not obtain her in preference to a man chosen by themselves, that he would avenge himself upon them all by acts of violence.

I added, That he was very much mistaken, if he thought to intimidate you by such menaces: for that, though your disposition was all sweetness, yet I knew not a steadier temper in the world than yours; nor one more inflexible, (as your friends had found, and would still further find, if they continued to give occasion for its exertion,) whenever you thought yourself in the right; and that you were ungenerously dealt with in matters of too much moment to be indifferent about. Miss Clarissa Harlowe, Mr. Lovelace, let me tell you, said I, timid as her foresight and prudence may make her in some cases, where she apprehends dangers to those she loves, is above fear, in points where her honour, and the true dignity of her sex, are concerned.—In short, Sir, you must not think to frighten Miss Clarissa Harlowe into such a mean or unworthy conduct as only a weak or unsteady mind can be guilty of.

He was so very far from intending to intimidate you, he said, that he besought me not to mention one word to you of what had passed between us: that what he had hinted at, which carried

the air of menace, was owing to the fervour of his spirits, raised by his apprehensions of losing all hope of you for ever; and on a supposition, that you were to be actually forced into the arms of a man you hated: that were this to be the case, he must own, that he should pay very little regard to the world, or its censures: especially as the menaces of some of your family now, and their triumph over him afterwards, would both provoke and warrant all the vengeance he could take.

He added, that all the countries in the world were alike to him, but on your account: so that, whatever he should think fit to do, were you lost to him, he should have noting to apprehend from the laws of this.

I did not like the determined air he spoke this with: he is certainly capable of great rashness.

He palliated a little this fierceness (which by the way I warmly censured) by saying, That while you remain single, he will bear all the indignities that shall be cast upon him by your family. But would you throw yourself, if you were still farther driven, into any other protection, if not Lord M.'s, or that of the ladies of his family, into my mother's,⁸ suppose; or would you go to London to private lodgings, where he would never visit you, unless he had

⁸ Perhaps it will be unnecessary to remind the reader, that although Mr. Lovelace proposes (as above) to Miss Howe, that her fair friend should have recourse to the protection of Mrs. Howe, if farther driven; yet he had artfully taken care, by means of his agent in the Harlowe family, not only to inflame the family against her, but to deprive her of Mrs. Howe's, and of every other protection, being from the first resolved to reduce her to an absolute dependence upon himself. See Vol. I. Letter XXXI.

your leave (and from whence you might make your own terms with your relations); he would be entirely satisfied; and would, as he had said before, wait the effect of your cousin's arrival, and your free determination as to his own fate. Adding, that he knew the family so well, and how much fixed they were upon their measures, as well as the absolute dependence they had upon your temper and principles, that he could not but apprehend the worst, while you remained in their power, and under the influence of their persuasions and menaces.

We had a great deal of other discourse: but as the reciting of the rest would be but a repetition of many of the things that passed between you and him in the interview between you in the wood-house, I refer myself to your memory on that occasion.⁹

And now, my dear, upon the whole, I think it behoves you to make yourself independent: all then will fall right. This man is a violent man. I should wish, methinks, that you should not have either him or Solmes. You will find, if you get out of your brother's and sister's way, what you can or cannot do, with regard to either.

If your relations persist in their foolish scheme, I think I will take his hint, and, at a proper opportunity, sound my mother. Mean time, let me have your clear opinion of the resumption, which I join with Lovelace in advising. You can but see how your demand will work. To demand, is not to litigate. But be your resolution what it will, do not by any means repeat to

⁹ See Vol. I. Letter XXXVI.

them, that you will not assert your right. If they go on to give you provocation, you may have sufficient reason to change your mind: and let them expect that you will change it. They have not the generosity to treat you the better for disclaiming the power they know you have. That, I think, need not now be told you. I am, my dearest friend, and ever will be,

Your most affectionate and faithful ANNA HOWE.

LETTER VI
MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE,
TO MISS HOWE WEDN.
NIGHT, MARCH 22

On the report made by my aunt and sister of my obstinacy, my assembled relations have taken an unanimous resolution (as Betty tells me it is) against me. This resolution you will find signified to me in the inclosed letter from my brother, just now brought me. Be pleased to return it, when perused. I may have occasion for it, in the altercations between my relations and me.

MISS CLARY,

I am commanded to let you know, that my father and uncles having heard your aunt Hervey's account of all that has passed between her and you: having heard from your sister what sort of treatment she has had from you: having recollected all that has passed between your mother and you: having weighed all your pleas and proposals: having taken into consideration their engagements with Mr. Solmes; that gentleman's patience, and great affection for you; and the little opportunity you have given yourself to be acquainted either with his merit, or his proposals:

having considered two points more; to wit, the wounded authority of a father; and Mr. Solmes's continued entreaties (little as you have deserved regard from him) that you may be freed from a confinement to which he is desirous to attribute your perverseness to him [averseness I should have said, but let it go], he being unable to account otherwise for so strong a one, supposing you told truth to your mother, when you asserted that your heart was free; and which Mr. Solmes is willing to believe, though nobody else does—For all these reasons, it is resolved, that you shall go to your uncle Antony's: and you must accordingly prepare yourself to do so. You will have but short notice of the day, for obvious reasons.

I will honestly tell you the motive for your going: it is a double one; first, That they may be sure, that you shall not correspond with any body they do not like (for they find from Mrs. Howe, that, by some means or other, you do correspond with her daughter; and, through her, perhaps with somebody else): and next, That you may receive the visits of Mr. Solmes; which you have thought fit to refuse to do here; by which means you have deprived yourself of the opportunity of knowing whom and what you have hitherto refused.

If after one fortnight's conversation with Mr. Solmes, and after you have heard what your friends shall further urge in his behalf, unhardened by clandestine correspondencies, you shall convince them, that Virgil's *amor omnibus idem* (for the application of which I refer you to the *Georgic* as translated

by Dryden) is verified in you, as well as in the rest of the animal creation; and that you cannot, or will not forego your prepossession in favour of the moral, the virtuous, the pious Lovelace, [I would please you if I could!] it will then be considered, whether to humour you, or to renounce you for ever.

It is hoped, that as you must go, you will go cheerfully. Your uncle Antony will make ever thing at his house agreeable to you. But indeed he won't promise, that he will not, at proper times, draw up the bridge.

Your visitors, besides Mr. Solmes, will be myself, if you permit me that honour, Miss Clary; your sister; and, as you behave to Mr. Solmes, your aunt Hervey, and your uncle Harlowe; and yet the two latter will hardly come neither, if they think it will be to hear your whining vocatives.—Betty Barnes will be your attendant: and I must needs tell you, Miss, that we none of us think the worse of the faithful maid for your dislike of her: although Betty, who would be glad to oblige you, laments it as a misfortune.

Your answer is required, whether you cheerfully consent to go? And your indulgent mother bids me remind you from her, that a fortnight's visit from Mr. Solmes, are all that is meant at present.

*I am, as you shall be pleased to deserve, Yours, &c. JAMES
HARLOWE, JUN.*

So here is the master-stroke of my brother's policy! Called upon to consent to go to my uncle Antony's avowedly to receive

Mr. Solmes's visits!—A chapel! A moated-house!—Deprived of the opportunity of corresponding with you!—or of any possibility of escape, should violence be used to compel me to be that odious man's!¹⁰

Late as it was when I received this insolent letter, I wrote an answer to it directly, that it might be ready for the writer's time of rising. I inclose the rough draught of it. You will see by it how much his vile hint from the Georgic; and his rude one of my whining vocatives, have set me up. Besides, as the command to get ready to go to my uncle's is in the name of my father and uncles, it is but to shew a piece of the art they accuse me of, to resent the vile hint I have so much reason to resent in order to palliate my refusal of preparing to go to my uncle's; which refusal would otherwise be interpreted an act of rebellion by my brother and sister: for it seems plain to me, that they will work but half their ends, if they do not deprive me of my father's and uncles' favour, even although it were possible for me to comply with their own terms.

You might have told me, Brother, in three lines, what the determination of my friends was; only, that then you would not have had room to display your pedantry by so detestable an allusion or reference to the Georgic. Give me leave to tell you, Sir, that if humanity were a branch of your studies at the

¹⁰ These violent measures, and the obstinate perseverance of the whole family in them, will be the less wondered at, when it is considered, that all the time they were but as so many puppets danced upon Mr. Lovelace's wires, as he boasts, Vol. I. Letter XXXI.

university, it has not found a genius in you for mastering it. Nor is either my sex or myself, though a sister, I see entitled to the least decency from a brother, who has studied, as it seems, rather to cultivate the malevolence of his natural temper, than any tendency which one might have hoped his parentage, if not his education, might have given him to a tolerable politeness.

I doubt not, that you will take amiss my freedom: but as you have deserved it from me, I shall be less and less concerned on that score, as I see you are more and more intent to shew your wit at the expense of justice and compassion.

The time is indeed come that I can no longer bear those contempts and reflections which a brother, least of all men, is entitled to give. And let me beg of you one favour, Sir:—It is this, That you will not give yourself any concern about a husband for me, till I shall have the forwardness to propose a wife to you. Pardon me, Sir; but I cannot help thinking, that could I have the art to get my father of my side, I should have as much right to prescribe for you, as you have for me.

As to the communication you make me, I must take upon me to say, That although I will receive, as becomes me, any of my father's commands; yet, as this signification is made by a brother, who has shewn of late so much of an unbrotherly animosity to me, (for no reason in the world that I know if, but that he believes he has, in me, one sister too much for his interest,) I think myself entitled to conclude, that such a letter as you have sent me, is all your own: and of course to declare, that, while I so think it,

I will not willingly, nor even without violence, go to any place, avowedly to receive Mr. Solmes's visits.

I think myself so much entitled to resent your infamous hint, and this as well for the sake of my sex, as for my own, that I ought to declare, as I do, that I will not receive any more of your letters, unless commanded to do so by an authority I never will dispute; except in a case where I think my future as well as present happiness concerned: and were such a case to happen, I am sure my father's harshness will be less owing to himself than to you; and to the specious absurdities of your ambitious and selfish schemes.—Very true, Sir!

One word more, provoked as I am, I will add: That had I been thought as really obstinate and perverse as of late I am said to be, I should not have been so disgracefully treated as I have been—Lay your hand upon your heart, Brother, and say, By whose instigations?—And examine what I have done to deserve to be made thus unhappy, and to be obliged to style myself

Your injured sister, CL. HARLOWE.

When, my dear, you have read my answer to my brother's letter, tell me what you think of me?—It shall go!

LETTER VII
MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE,
TO MISS HOWE THURSDAY
MORNING, MARCH 23

My letter has set them all in tumults: for, it seems, none of them went home last night; and they all were desired to be present to give their advice, if I should refuse compliance with a command thought so reasonable as it seems this is.

Betty tells me, that at first my father, in a rage, was for coming up to me himself, and for turning me out of his doors directly. Nor was he restrained, till it was hinted to him, that that was no doubt my wish, and would answer all my perverse views. But the result was, that my brother (having really, as my mother and aunt insisted, taken wrong measures with me) should write again in a more moderate manner: for nobody else was permitted or cared to write to such a ready scribbler. And, I having declared, that I would not receive any more of his letters, without command from a superior authority, my mother was to give it hers: and accordingly has done so in the following lines, written on the superscription of his letter to me: which letter also follows; together with my reply.

CLARY HARLOWE,

Receive and read this, with the temper that becomes your sex, your character, your education, and your duty: and return an answer to it, directed to your brother.

CHARLOTTE HARLOWE. TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE THURSDAY MORNING

Once more I write, although imperiously prohibited by a younger sister. Your mother will have me do so, that you may be destitute of all defence, if you persist in your perversity. Shall I be a pedant, Miss, for this word? She is willing to indulge in you the least appearance of that delicacy for which she once, as well as every body else, admired you—before you knew Lovelace; I cannot, however, help saying that: and she, and your aunt Hervey, will have it—[they would fain favour you, if they could] that I may have provoked from you the answer they nevertheless own to be so exceedingly unbecoming. I am now learning, you see, to take up the softer language, where you have laid it down. This then is the case:

They entreat, they pray, they beg, they supplicate (will either of these do, Miss Clary?) that you will make no scruple to go to your uncle Antony's: and fairly I am to tell you, for the very

purpose mentioned in my last—or, 'tis presumable, they need not entreat, beg, pray, supplicate. Thus much is promised to Mr. Solmes, who is your advocate, and very uneasy that you should be under constraint, supposing that your dislike to him arises from that. And, if he finds that you are not to be moved in his favour, when you are absolutely freed from what you call a controul, he will forbear thinking of you, whatever it costs him. He loves you too well: and in this, I really think, his understanding, which you have reflected upon, is to be questioned.

Only for one fortnight [sic], therefore, permit his visits. Your education (you tell me of mine, you know) ought to make you incapable of rudeness to any body. He will not, I hope, be the first man, myself excepted, whom you ever treated rudely, purely because he is esteemed by us all. I am, what you have a mind to make me, friend, brother, or servant—I wish I could be still more polite, to so polite, to so delicate, a sister.

JA. HARLOWE.

You must still write to me, if you condescend to reply. Your mother will not be permitted to be disturbed with your nothing-meaning vocatives!—Vocatives, once more, Madam Clary, repeats the pedant your brother!

TO JAMES HARLOWE, JUNIOR, ESQ

Permit me, my ever-dear and honoured Papa and Mamma,

in this manner to surprise you into an audience, (presuming this will be read to you,) since I am denied the honour of writing to you directly. Let me beg of you to believe, that nothing but the most unconquerable dislike could make me stand against your pleasure. What are riches, what are settlements, to happiness? Let me not thus cruelly be given up to a man my very soul is averse to. Permit me to repeat, that I cannot honestly be his. Had I a slighter notion of the matrimonial duty than I have, perhaps I might. But when I am to bear all the misery, and that for life; when my heart is less concerned in this matter, than my soul; my temporary, perhaps, than my future good; why should I be denied the liberty of refusing? That liberty is all I ask.

It were easy for me to give way to hear Mr. Solmes talk for the mentioned fortnight, although it is impossible for me, say what he would, to get over my dislike to him. But the moated-house, the chapel there, and the little mercy my brother and sister, who are to be there, have hitherto shewn me, are what I am extremely apprehensive of. And why does my brother say, my restraint is to be taken off, (and that too at Mr. Solmes's desire,) when I am to be a still closer prisoner than before; the bridge threatened to be drawn up; and no dear papa and mamma near me, to appeal to, in the last resort?

Transfer not, I beseech you, to a brother and sister your own authority over your child—to a brother and sister, who treat me with unkindness and reproach; and, as I have too much reason to apprehend, misrepresent my words and behaviour; or, greatly

favoured as I used to be, it is impossible I should be sunk so low in your opinions, as I unhappily am!

Let but this my hard, my disgraceful confinement be put an end to. Permit me, my dear Mamma, to pursue my needleworks in your presence, as one of your maidens; and you shall be witness, that it is not either wilfulness or prepossession that governs me. Let me not, however, be put out of your own house. Let Mr. Solmes come and go, as my papa pleases: let me but stay or retire when he comes, as I can; and leave the rest to Providence.

Forgive me, Brother, that thus, with an appearance of art, I address myself to my father and mother, to whom I am forbidden to approach, or to write. Hard it is to be reduced to such a contrivance! Forgive likewise the plain dealing I have used in the above, with the nobleness of a gentleman, and the gentleness due from a brother to a sister. Although of late you have given me but little room to hope either for your favour or compassion; yet, having not deserved to forfeit either, I presume to claim both: for I am confident it is at present much in your power, although but my brother (my honoured parents both, I bless God, in being), to give peace to the greatly disturbed mind of

Your unhappy sister, CL. HARLOWE.

Betty tells me, my brother has taken my letter all in pieces; and has undertaken to write such an answer to it, as shall confirm the wavering. So, it is plain, that I should have moved somebody by it, but for this hard-hearted brother—God forgive him!

LETTER VIII
MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE,
TO MISS HOWE THURSDAY
NIGHT, MARCH 23

I send you the boasted confutation-letter, just now put into my hands. My brother and sister, my uncle Antony and Mr. Solmes, are, I understand, exulting over the copy of it below, as an unanswerable performance.

TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

Once again, my inflexible Sister, I write to you. It is to let you know, that the pretty piece of art you found out to make me the vehicle of your whining pathetics to your father and mother, has not had the expected effect.

I do assure you, that your behaviour has not been misrepresented—nor need it. Your mother, who is solicitous to take all opportunities of putting the most favourable constructions upon all you do, has been forced, as you well know, to give you up, upon full trial. No need then of the expedient of pursuing your needleworks in her sight. She cannot bear your whining pranks: and it is for her sake, that you are not permitted

to come into her presence—nor will be, but upon her own terms.

You had like to have made a simpleton of your aunt Hervey yesterday: she came down from you, pleading in your favour. But when she was asked, What concession she had brought you to? she looked about her, and knew not what to answer. So your mother, when surprised into the beginning of your cunning address to her and to your father, under my name, (for I had begun to read it, little suspecting such an ingenious subterfuge,) and would then make me read it through, wrung her hands, Oh! her dear child, her dear child, must not be so compelled!—But when she was asked, Whether she would be willing to have for her son-in-law the man who bids defiance to her whole family; and who had like to have murdered her son? And what concession she had gained from her dear child to merit this tenderness? And that for one who had apparently deceived her in assuring her that her heart was free?—Then could she look about her, as her sister had done before: then was she again brought to herself, and to a resolution to assert her authority [not to transfer it, witty presumer!] over the rebel, who of late has so ungratefully struggled to throw it off.

You seem, child, to have a high notion of the matrimonial duty; and I'll warrant, like the rest of your sex, (one or two, whom I have the honour to know, excepted,) that you will go to church to promise what you will never think of afterwards. But, sweet child! as your worthy Mamma Norton calls you, think a little less of the matrimonial, (at least, till you come into that state,) and a

little more of the filial duty.

How can you say, you are to bear all the misery, when you give so large a share of it to your parents, to your uncles, to your aunt, to myself, and to your sister; who all, for eighteen years of your life, loved you so well?

If of late I have not given you room to hope for my favour or compassion, it is because of late you have not deserved either. I know what you mean, little reflecting fool, by saying, it is much in my power, although but your brother, (a very slight degree of relationship with you,) to give you that peace which you can give yourself whenever you please.

The liberty of refusing, pretty Miss, is denied you, because we are all sensible, that the liberty of choosing, to every one's dislike, must follow. The vile wretch you have set your heart upon speaks this plainly to every body, though you won't. He says you are his, and shall be his, and he will be the death of any man who robs him of his PROPERTY. So, Miss, we have a mind to try this point with him. My father, supposing he has the right of a father in his child, is absolutely determined not to be bullied out of that right. And what must that child be, who prefers the rake to a father?

This is the light in which this whole debate ought to be taken. Blush, then, Delicacy, that cannot bear the poet's amor omnibus idem!—Blush, then, Purity! Be ashamed, Virgin Modesty! And, if capable of conviction, surrender your whole will to the will of the honoured pair, to whom you owe your being: and beg of all

your friends to forgive and forget the part you have of late acted.

I have written a longer letter than ever I designed to write to you, after the insolent treatment and prohibition you have given me: and, now I am commissioned to tell you, that your friends are as weary of confining you, as you are of being confined. And therefore you must prepare yourself to go in a very few days, as you have been told before, to your uncle Antony's; who, notwithstanding you apprehensions, will draw up his bridge when he pleases; will see what company he pleases in his own house; nor will he demolish his chapel to cure you of your foolish late-commenced antipathy to a place of divine worship.—The more foolish, as, if we intended to use force, we could have the ceremony pass in your chamber, as well as any where else.

Prejudice against Mr. Solmes has evidently blinded you, and there is a charitable necessity to open your eyes: since no one but you thinks the gentleman so contemptible in his person; nor, for a plain country gentleman, who has too much solid sense to appear like a coxcomb, justly blamable in his manners.—And as to his temper, it is necessary you should speak upon fuller knowledge, than at present it is plain you can have of him.

Upon the whole, it will not be amiss, that you prepare for your speedy removal, as well for the sake of your own conveniency, as to shew your readiness, in one point, at least, to oblige your friends; one of whom you may, if you please to deserve it, reckon, though but a brother,

JAMES HARLOWE.

P.S. If you are disposed to see Mr. Solmes, and to make some excuses to him for past conduct, in order to be able to meet him somewhere else with the less concern to yourself for your freedoms with him, he shall attend you where you please.

If you have a mind to read the settlements, before they are read to you for your signing, they shall be sent you up—Who knows, but they will help you to some fresh objections?—Your heart is free, you know—It must—For, did you not tell your mother it was? And will the pious Clarissa fib to her mamma?

I desire no reply. The case requires none. Yet I will ask you, Have you, Miss, no more proposals to make?

I was so vexed when I came to the end of this letter, (the postscript to which, perhaps, might be written after the others had seen the letter,) that I took up my pen, with an intent to write to my uncle Harlowe about resuming my own estate, in pursuance of your advice. But my heart failed me, when I recollected, that I had not one friend to stand by or support me in my claim; and it would but the more incense them, without answering any good end. Oh! that my cousin were but come!

Is it not a sad thing, beloved as I thought myself so lately by every one, that now I have not one person in the world to plead for me, to stand by me, or who would afford me refuge, were I to be under the necessity of asking for it!—I who had the vanity to think I had as many friends as I saw faces, and flattered myself too, that it was not altogether unmerited, because I saw not my Maker's image, either in man, woman, or child, high or low, rich

or poor, whom, comparatively, I loved not as myself.—Would to heaven, my dear, that you were married! Perhaps, then, you could have induced Mr. Hickman to afford me protection, till these storms were over-blown. But then this might have involved him in difficulties and dangers; and that I would not have done for the world.

I don't know what to do, not I!—God forgive me, but I am very impatient! I wish—But I don't know what to wish, without a sin!—Yet I wish it would please God to take me to his mercy!—I can meet with none here—What a world is this!—What is there in it desirable? The good we hope for, so strangely mixed, that one knows not what to wish for! And one half of mankind tormenting the other, and being tormented themselves in tormenting!—For here is this my particular case, my relations cannot be happy, though they make me unhappy!—Except my brother and sister, indeed—and they seem to take delight in and enjoy the mischief they make.

But it is time to lay down my pen, since my ink runs nothing but gall.

LETTER IX
MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE,
TO MISS HOWE FRIDAY
MORNING, SIX O'CLOCK

Mrs. Betty tells me, there is now nothing talked of but of my going to my uncle Antony's. She has been ordered, she says, to get ready to attend me thither: and, upon my expressing my averseness to go, had the confidence to say, That having heard me often praise the romanticness of the place, she was astonished (her hands and eyes lifted up) that I should set myself against going to a house so much in my taste.

I asked if this was her own insolence, or her young mistress's observation?

She half-astonished me by her answer: That it was hard she could not say a good thing, without being robbed of the merit of it.

As the wench looked as if she really thought she had said a good thing, without knowing the boldness of it, I let it pass. But, to say the truth, this creature has surprised me on many occasions with her smartness: for, since she has been employed in this controuling office, I have discovered a great deal of wit in her assurance, which I never suspected before. This shews, that insolence is her talent: and that Fortune, in placing her as

a servant to my sister, had not done so kindly by her as Nature; for that she would make a better figure as her companion. And indeed I can't help thinking sometimes, that I myself was better fitted by Nature to be the servant of both, than the mistress of the one, or the servant of the other. And within these few months past, Fortune has acted by me, as if she were of the same mind.

FRIDAY, TEN O'CLOCK

Going down to my poultry-yard, just now, I heard my brother and sister and that Solmes laughing and triumphing together. The high yew-hedge between us, which divides the yard from the garden, hindered them from seeing me.

My brother, as I found, has been reading part, or the whole perhaps, of the copy of his last letter—Mighty prudent, and consistent, you'll say, with their views to make me the wife of a man from whom they conceal not what, were I to be such, it would be kind in them to endeavour to conceal, out of regard to my future peace!—But I have no doubt, that they hate me heartily.

Indeed, you was up with her there, brother, said my sister. You need not have bid her not to write to you. I'll engage, with all her wit, she'll never pretend to answer it.

Why, indeed, said my brother, with an air of college-sufficiency, with which he abounds, (for he thinks nobody writes like himself,) I believe I have given her a choke-pear. What say

you, Mr. Solmes?

Why, Sir, said he, I think it is unanswerable. But will it not exasperate he more against me?

Never fear, Mr. Solmes, said my brother, but we'll carry our point, if she do not tire you out first. We have gone too far in this method to recede. Her cousin Morden will soon be here: so all must be over before that time, or she'll be made independent of us all.

There, Miss Howe, is the reason given for their jehu-driving.

Mr. Solmes declared, that he was determined to persevere while my brother gave him any hopes, and while my father stood firm.

My sister told my brother, that he hit me charmingly on the reason why I ought to converse with Mr. Solmes: but that he should not be so smart upon the sex, for the faults of this perverse girl.

Some lively, and, I suppose, witty answer, my brother returned; for he and Mr. Solmes laughed outrageously upon it, and Bella, laughing too, called him a naughty man: but I heard no more of what they said; they walked on into the garden.

If you think, my dear, that what I have related did not again fire me, you will find yourself mistaken when you read at this place the enclosed copy of my letter to my brother; struck off while the iron was red hot.

No more call me meek and gentle, I beseech you.

TO MR. JAMES HARLOWE
FRIDAY MORNING. SIR,

If, notwithstanding your prohibition, I should be silent, on occasion of your last, you would, perhaps, conclude, that I was consenting to go to my uncle Antony's upon the condition you mention. My father must do as he pleases with his child. He may turn me out of his doors, if he thinks fit, or give you leave to do it; but (loth as I am to say it) I should think it very hard to be carried by force to any body's house, when I have one of my own to go to.

Far be it from me, notwithstanding yours and my sister's provocations, to think of my taking my estate into my own hands, without my father's leave: But why, if I must not stay any longer here, may I not be permitted to go thither? I will engage to see nobody they would not have me see, if this favour be permitted. Favour I call it, and am ready to receive and acknowledge it as such, although my grandfather's will has made it a matter of right.

You ask me, in a very unbrotherly manner, in the postscript to your letter, if I have not some new proposals to make? I HAVE (since you put the question) three or four; new ones all, I think; though I will be bold to say, that, submitting the case to any one person whom you have not set against me, my old ones ought not to have been rejected. I think this; why then should I not write it?—Nor have you any more reason to storm at your sister for

telling it you, (since you seem in your letter to make it your boast how you turned my mother and my aunt Hervey against me,) than I have to be angry with my brother, for treating me as no brother ought to treat a sister.

These, then, are my new proposals.

That, as above, I may not be hindered from going to reside (under such conditions as shall be prescribed to me, which I will most religiously observe) at my grandfather's late house. I will not again in this place call it mine. I have reason to think it a great misfortune that ever it was so—indeed I have.

If this be not permitted, I desire leave to go for a month, or for what time shall be thought fit, to Miss Howe's. I dare say my mother will consent to it, if I have my father's permission to go.

If this, neither, be allowed, and I am to be turned out of my father's house, I beg I may be suffered to go to my aunt Hervey's, where I will inviolably observe her commands, and those of my father and mother.

But if this, neither, is to be granted, it is my humble request, that I may be sent to my uncle Harlowe's, instead of my uncle Antony's. I mean not by this any disrespect to my uncle Antony: but his moat, with his bridge threatened to be drawn up, and perhaps the chapel there, terrify me beyond expression, notwithstanding your witty ridicule upon me for that apprehension.

If this likewise be refused, and if I must be carried to the moated-house, which used to be a delightful one to me, let it

be promised me, that I shall not be compelled to receive Mr. Solmes's visits there; and then I will as cheerfully go, as ever I did.

So here, Sir, are your new proposals. And if none of them answer your end, as each of them tends to the exclusion of that ungenerous persister's visits, be pleased to know, that there is no misfortune I will not submit to, rather than yield to give my hand to the man to whom I can allow no share in my heart.

If I write in a style different from my usual, and different from what I wished to have occasion to write, an impartial person, who knew what I have accidentally, within this hour past, heard from your mouth, and my sister's, and a third person's, (particularly the reason you give for driving on at this violent rate, to wit, my cousin Morden's soon-expected arrival,) would think I have but too much reason for it. Then be pleased to remember, Sir, that when my whining vocatives have subjected me to so much scorn and ridicule, it is time, were it but to imitate examples so excellent as you and my sister set me, that I should endeavour to assert my character, in order to be thought less an alien, and nearer of kin to you both, than either of you have of late seemed to suppose me.

Give me leave, in order to empty my female quiver at once, to add, that I know no other reason which you can have for forbidding me to reply to you, after you have written what you pleased to me, than that you are conscious you cannot answer to reason and to justice the treatment you have given me.

If it be otherwise, I, an unlearned, an unlogical girl, younger by near a third than yourself, will venture (so assured am I of the justice of my cause) to put my fate upon an issue with you: with you, Sir, who have had the advantage of an academical education; whose mind must have been strengthened by observation, and learned conversation, and who, pardon my going so low, have been accustomed to give choke-pears to those you vouchsafe to write against.

Any impartial person, your late tutor, for instance, or the pious and worthy Dr. Lewen, may be judge between us: and if either give it against me, I will promise to resign to my destiny: provided, if it be given against you, that my father will be pleased only to allow of my negative to the person so violently sought to be imposed upon me.

I flatter myself, Brother, that you will the readier come into this proposal, as you seem to have a high opinion of your talents for argumentation; and not a low one of the cogency of the arguments contained in your last letter. And if I can possibly have no advantage in a contention with you, if the justice of my cause affords me not any (as you have no opinion it will,) it behoves you, methinks, to shew to an impartial moderator that I am wrong, and you not so.

If this be accepted, there is a necessity for its being carried on by the pen; the facts being stated, and agreed upon by both; and the decision to be given, according to the force of the arguments each shall produce in support of their side of the question: for

give me leave to say, I know too well the manliness of your temper, to offer at a personal debate with you.

If it be not accepted, I shall conclude, that you cannot defend your conduct towards me; and shall only beg of you, that, for the future, you will treat me with the respect due to a sister from a brother who would be thought as polite as learned.

And now, Sir, if I have seemed to shew some spirit, not foreign to the relation I have the honour to be to you, and to my sister; and which may be deemed not altogether of a piece with that part of my character which once, it seems, gained me every one's love; be pleased to consider to whom, and to what it is owing; and that this part of that character was not dispensed with, till it subjected me to that scorn, and to those insults, which a brother, who has been so tenacious of an independence voluntarily given up by me, and who has appeared so exalted upon it, ought not to have shewn to any body, much less to a weak and defenceless sister; who is, notwithstanding, an affectionate and respectful one, and would be glad to shew herself to be so upon all future occasions; as she has in every action of her past life, although of late she has met with such unkind returns.

CL. HARLOWE

See, my dear, the force, and volubility, as I may say, of passion; for the letter I send you is my first draught, struck off without a blot or erasure.

FRIDAY, THREE O'CLOCK

As soon as I had transcribed it, I sent it down to my brother by Mrs. Betty.

The wench came up soon after, all aghast, with a Laud, Miss! What have you done?—What have you written? For you have set them all in a joyful uproar!

My sister is but this moment gone from me. She came up all in a flame; which obliged me abruptly to lay down my pen: she ran to me—

O Spirit! said she; tapping my neck a little too hard. And is it come to this at last—!

Do you beat me, Bella?

Do you call this beating you? only tapping you shoulder thus, said she; tapping again more gently—This is what we expected it would come to—You want to be independent—My father has lived too long for you—!

I was going to speak with vehemence; but she put her handkerchief before my mouth, very rudely—You have done enough with your pen, mean listener, as you are!—But know that neither your independent scheme, nor any of your visiting ones, will be granted you. Take your course, perverse one! Call in your rake to help you to an independence upon your parents, and a dependence upon him!—Do so!—Prepare this moment—resolve what you will take with you—to-morrow you go—

depend upon it to-morrow you go!—No longer shall you stay here, watching and creeping about to hearken to what people say—'Tis determined, child!—You go to-morrow—my brother would have come up to tell you so; but I persuaded him to the contrary—for I know not what had become of you, if he had—Such a letter! such an insolent, such a conceited challenger!—O thou vain creature! But prepare yourself, I say—to-morrow you go—my brother will accept of your bold challenge; but it must be personal; and at my uncle Antony's—or perhaps at Mr. Solmes's—

Thus she ran on, almost foaming with passion; till, quite out of patience, I said, No more of your violence, Bella—Had I known in what way you designed to come up, you should not have found my chamber-door open—talk to your servant in this manner. Unlike you, as I bless God I am, I am nevertheless your sister—and let me tell you, that I won't go to-morrow, nor next day, nor next day to that—except I am dragged away by violence.

What! not if your father or mother command it—Girl? said she, intending another word, by her pause and manner before it came out.

Let it come to that, Bella; then I shall know what to say. But it shall be from their own mouths, if I do—not from yours, nor you Betty's—And say another word to me, in this manner, and be the consequence what it may, I will force myself into their presence; and demand what I have done to be used thus!

Come along, Child! Come along, Meekness—taking my

hand, and leading me towards the door—Demand it of them now—you'll find both your despised parents together!—What! does your heart fail you?—for I resisted, being thus insolently offered to be led, and pulled my hand from her.

I want not to be led, said I; and since I can plead your invitation, I will go: and was posting to the stairs accordingly in my passion—but she got between me and the door, and shut it—

Let me first, Bold one, said she, apprize them of your visit—for your own sake let me—for my brother is with them. But yet opening it again, seeing me shrink back—Go, if you will!—Why don't you go?—Why don't you go, Miss?—following me to my closet, whither I retired, with my heart full, and pulled the sash-door after me; and could no longer hold in my tears.

Nor would I answer one word to her repeated aggravations, nor to her demands upon me to open my door (for the key was on the inside); nor so much as turn my head towards her, as she looked through the glass at me. And at last, which vexed her to the heart, I drew the silk curtain, that she should not see me, and down she went muttering all the way.

Is not this usage enough to provoke a rashness never before thought of?

As it is but too probable that I may be hurried away to my uncle's without being able to give you previous notice of it; I beg that as soon as you shall hear of such a violence, you would send to the usual place, to take back such of your letters as may not have reached my hands, or to fetch any of mine that may be there.

*May you, my dear, be always happy, prays you CLARISSA
HARLOWE.*

I have received your four letters. But am in such a ferment,
that I cannot at present write to them.

LETTER X
MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE,
TO MISS HOWE FRIDAY
NIGHT, MARCH 24

I have a most provoking letter from my sister. I might have supposed she would resent the contempt she brought upon herself in my chamber. Her conduct surely can only be accounted for by the rage instigate by a supposed rivalry.

TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE

I am to tell you, that your mother has begged you off for the morrow: but that you have effectually done your business with her, as well as with every body else.

In your proposals and letter to your brother, you have shewn yourself so silly, and so wise; so young, and so old; so gentle, and so obstinate; so meek, and so violent; that never was there so mixed a character.

We all know of whom you have borrowed this new spirit. And yet the seeds of it must be in your heart, or it could not all at once shew itself so rampant. It would be doing Mr. Solmes a spite to wish him such a shy, un-shy girl; another of your contradictory

qualities—I leave you to make out what I mean by it.

Here, Miss, your mother will not let you remain: she cannot have any peace of mind while such a rebel of a child is so near her. Your aunt Hervey will not take a charge which all the family put together cannot manage. Your uncle Harlowe will not see you at his house, till you are married. So, thanks to your own stubbornness, you have nobody that will receive you but your uncle Antony. Thither you must go in a very few days; and, when there, your brother will settle with you, in my presence, all that relates to your modest challenge; for it is accepted, I assure you. Dr. Lewen will possibly be there, since you make choice of him. Another gentleman likewise, were it but to convince you, that he is another sort of man than you have taken him to be. Your two uncles will possibly be there too, to see that the poor, weak, and defenceless sister has fair play. So, you see, Miss, what company your smart challenge will draw together.

Prepare for the day. You'll soon be called upon. Adieu, Mamma Norton's sweet child!

ARAB. HARLOWE.

I transcribed this letter, and sent it to my mother, with these lines:

A very few words, my ever-honoured Mamma!

If my sister wrote the enclosed by my father's direction, or yours, I must submit to the usage she gave me in it, with this only observation, That it is short of the personal treatment I have received from her. If it be of her own head—why then, Madam

—But I knew that when I was banished from your presence—
Yet, till I know if she has or has not authority for this usage, I
will only write further, that I am

Your very unhappy child, CL. HARLOWE.

This answer I received in an open slip of paper; but it was wet
in one place. I kissed the place; for I am sure it was blistered, as
I may say, by a mother's tear!—She must (I hope she must) have
written it reluctantly.

To apply for protection, where authority is defied, is bold.
Your sister, who would not in your circumstances have been
guilty of your perverseness, may allowably be angry at you for it.
However, we have told her to moderate her zeal for our insulted
authority. See, if you can deserve another behaviour, than that
you complain of: which cannot, however be so grievous to you,
as the cause of it is to

Your more unhappy Mother.

How often must I forbid you any address to me!

Give me, my dearest Miss Howe, your opinion, what I can,
what I ought to do. Not what you would do (pushed as I am
pushed) in resentment or passion—since, so instigated, you tell
me, that you should have been with somebody before now—
and steps taken in passion hardly ever fail of giving cause for
repentance: but acquaint me with what you think cool judgment,
and after-reflection, whatever were to be the event, will justify.

I doubt not your sympathizing love: but yet you cannot
possibly feel indignity and persecution so very sensibly as the

immediate sufferer feels them—are fitter therefore to advise me, than I am myself.

I will here rest my cause. Have I, or have I not, suffered or borne enough? And if they will still persevere; if that strange persister against an antipathy so strongly avowed, will still persist, say, What can I do?—What course pursue?—Shall I fly to London, and endeavour to hide myself from Lovelace, as well as from all my own relations, till my cousin Morden arrives? Or shall I embark for Leghorn in my way to my cousin? Yet, my sex, my youth, considered, how full of danger is this last measure!—And may not my cousin be set out for England, while I am getting thither?—What can I do?—Tell me, tell me, my dearest Miss Howe, [for I dare not trust myself,] tell me, what I can do.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK AT NIGHT

I have been forced to try to compose my angry passions at my harpsichord; having first shut close my doors and windows, that I might not be heard below. As I was closing the shutters of the windows, the distant whooting of the bird of Minerva, as from the often-visited woodhouse, gave the subject in that charming Ode to Wisdom, which does honour to our sex, as it was written by one of it. I made an essay, a week ago, to set the three last stanzas of it, as not unsuitable to my unhappy situation; and after I had re-perused the Ode, those were my lesson; and, I am sure, in the solemn address they contain to the All-Wise and

All-powerful Deity, my heart went with my fingers.

I enclose the Ode, and my effort with it. The subject is solemn; my circumstances are affecting; and I flatter myself, that I have not been quite unhappy in the performance. If it obtain your approbation, I shall be out of doubt, and should be still more assured, could I hear it tried by your voice and finger.

ODE TO WISDOM BY A LADY

I

The solitary bird of night
Thro' thick shades now wings his flight,
And quits his time-shook tow'r;
Where, shelter'd from the blaze of day,
In philosophic gloom he lay,
Beneath his ivy bow'r.

II

With joy I hear the solemn sound,
Which midnight echoes waft around,

And sighing gales repeat.
Fav'rite of Pallas! I attend,
And, faithful to thy summons, bend
At Wisdom's awful seat.

III

She loves the cool, the silent eve,
Where no false shows of life deceive,
Beneath the lunar ray.
Here folly drops each vain disguise;
Nor sport her gaily colour'd dyes,
As in the beam of day.

IV

O Pallas! queen of ev'ry art,
That glads the sense, and mends the heart,
Blest source of purer joys!
In ev'ry form of beauty bright,
That captivates the mental sight
With pleasure and surprise;

V

To thy unspotted shrine I bow:
Attend thy modest suppliant's vow,
 That breathes no wild desires;
But, taught by thy unerring rules,
To shun the fruitless wish of fools,
 To nobler views aspires.

VI

Not Fortune's gem, Ambition's plume,
Nor Cytherea's fading bloom,
 Be objects of my prayer:
Let av'rice, vanity, and pride,
Those envy'd glitt'ring toys divide,
 The dull rewards of care.

VII

To me thy better gifts impart,

Each moral beauty of the heart,
By studious thought refin'd;
For wealth, the smile of glad content;
For pow'r, its amplest, best extent,
An empire o'er my mind.

VIII

When Fortune drops her gay parade.
When Pleasure's transient roses fade,
And wither in the tomb,
Unchang'd is thy immortal prize;
Thy ever-verdant laurels rise
In undecaying bloom.

IX

By thee protected, I defy
The coxcomb's sneer, the stupid lie
Of ignorance and spite:
Alike condemn the leaden fool,
And all the pointed ridicule
Of undiscerning wit.

X

From envy, hurry, noise, and strife,
The dull impertinence of life,
In thy retreat I rest:
Pursue thee to the peaceful groves,
Where Plato's sacred spirit roves,
In all thy beauties drest.

XI

He bad Ilyssus' tuneful stream
Convey thy philosophic theme
Of perfect, fair, and good:
Attentive Athens caught the sound,
And all her list'ning sons around
In awful silence stood.

XII

Reclaim'd her wild licentious youth,

Confess'd the potent voice of Truth,
And felt its just controul.
The Passions ceas'd their loud alarms,
And Virtue's soft persuasive charms
O'er all their senses stole.

XIII

Thy breath inspires the Poet's song
The Patriot's free, unbiass'd tongue,
The Hero's gen'rous strife;
Thine are retirement's silent joys,
And all the sweet engaging ties
Of still, domestic life.

XIV

No more to fabled names confin'd;
To Thee supreme, all perfect mind,
My thought direct their flight.
Wisdom's thy gift, and all her force
From thee deriv'd, Eternal source
Of Intellectual Light!

XV

O send her sure, her steady ray,
To regulate my doubtful way,
 Thro' life's perplexing road:
The mists of error to controul,
And thro' its gloom direct my soul
 To happiness and good.

XVI

Beneath her clear discerning eye
The visionary shadows fly
 Of Folly's painted show.
She sees thro' ev'ry fair disguise,
That all but Virtue's solid joys,
 Is vanity and woe.

[Facsimile of the music to "The Ode to Wisdom" (verse 14).]

LETTER XI

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE FRIDAY MIDNIGHT

I have now a calmer moment. Envy, ambition, high and selfish resentment, and all the violent passions, are now, most probably, asleep all around me; and shall now my own angry ones give way to the silent hour, and subside likewise?—They have given way to it; and I have made use of the gentler space to re-peruse your last letters. I will touch upon some passages in them. And that I may the less endanger the but-just recovered calm, I will begin with what you write about Mr. Hickman.

Give me leave to say, That I am sorry you cannot yet persuade yourself to think better, that is to say, more justly, of that gentleman, than your whimsical picture of him shews you so; or, at least, than the humourousness of your natural vein would make one think you do.

I do not imagine, that you yourself will say, he sat for the picture you have drawn. And yet, upon the whole, it is not greatly to his disadvantage. Were I at ease in my mind, I would venture to draw a much more amiable and just likeness.

If Mr. Hickman has not that assurance which some men have, he has that humility and gentleness which many want: and which, with the infinite value he has for you, will make him one of the

fittest husbands in the world for a person of your vivacity and spirit.

Although you say I would not like him myself, I do assure you, if Mr. Solmes were such a man as Mr. Hickman, in person, mind, and behaviour, my friends and I had never disagreed about him, if they would not have permitted me to live single; Mr. Lovelace (having such a character as he has) would have stood no chance with me. This I can the more boldly aver, because I plainly perceive, that of the two passions, love and fear, this man will be able to inspire one with a much greater proportion of the latter, than I imagine is compatible with the former, to make a happy marriage.

I am glad you own, that you like no one better than Mr. Hickman. In a little while, I make no doubt, you will be able, if you challenge your heart upon it, to acknowledge, that you like not any man so well: especially, when you come to consider, that the very faults you find in Mr. Hickman, admirably fit him to make you happy: that is to say, if it be necessary to your happiness, that you should have your own will in every thing.

But let me add one thing: and that is this:—You have such a sprightly turn, that, with your admirable talents, you would make any man in the world, who loved you, look like a fool, except he were such a one as Lovelace.

Forgive me, my dear, for my frankness: and forgive me, also, for so soon returning to subject so immediately relative to myself, as those I now must touch upon.

You again insist (strengthened by Mr. Lovelace's opinion) upon my assuming my own estate [I cannot call it resuming, having never been in possession of it]: and I have given you room to expect, that I will consider this subject more closely than I have done before. I must however own, that the reasons which I had to offer against taking your advice were so obvious, that I thought you would have seen them yourself, and been determined by them, against your own hastier counsel.—But since this has not been so, and that both you and Mr. Lovelace call upon me to assume my own estate, I will enter briefly into the subject.

In the first place, let me ask you, my dear, supposing I were inclined to follow your advice, Whom have I to support me in my demand? My uncle Harlowe is one of my trustees—he is against me. My cousin Morden is the other—he is in Italy, and very probably may be set against me too. My brother has declared, that they are resolved to carry their points before he arrives: so that, as they drive on, all will probably be decided before I can have an answer from him, were I to write: and, confined as I am, were the answer to come in time, and they did not like it, they would keep it from me.

In the next place, parents have great advantages in every eye over the child, if she dispute their pleasure in the disposing of her: and so they ought; since out of twenty instances, perhaps two could not be produced, when they were not in the right, the child in the wrong.

You would not, I am sure, have me accept of Mr. Lovelace's

offered assistance in such a claim. If I would embrace any other person's, who else would care to appear for a child against parents, ever, till of late, so affectionate?==But were such a protector to be found, what a length of time would it take up in a course of litigation! The will and the deeds have flaws in them, they say. My brother sometimes talks of going to reside at The Grove: I suppose, with a design to make ejectments necessary, were I to offer at assuming; or, were I to marry Mr. Lovelace, in order to give him all the opposition and difficulty the law would help him to give.

These cases I have put to myself, for argument-sake: but they are all out of the question, although any body were to be found who would espouse my cause: for I do assure you, I would sooner beg my bread, than litigate for my right with my father: since I am convinced, that whether the parent do his duty by the child or not, the child cannot be excused from doing hers to him. And to go to law with my father, what a sound has that! You will see, that I have mentioned my wish (as an alternative, and as a favour) to be permitted, if I must be put out of his house, to go thither: but not one step further can I go. And you see how this is resented.

Upon the whole, then, what have I to hope for, but a change in my father's resolution?—And is there any probability of that; such an ascendancy as my brother and sister have obtained over every body; and such an interest to pursue the enmity they have now openly avowed against me?

As to Mr. Lovelace's approbation of your assumption-scheme,

I wonder not at. He very probably penetrates the difficulties I should have to bring it to effect, without his assistance. Were I to find myself as free as I would wish myself to be, perhaps Mr. Lovelace would stand a worse chance with me than his vanity may permit him to imagine; notwithstanding the pleasure you take in rallying me on his account. How know you, but all that appears to be specious and reasonable in his offers; such as, standing his chance for my favour, after I became independent, as I may call it [by which I mean no more, than to have the liberty of refusing for my husband a man whom it hurts me but to think of in that light]; and such as his not visiting me but by my leave; and till Mr. Morden come; and till I am satisfied of his reformation;—How know you, I say, that he gives not himself these airs purely to stand better in your graces as well as mine, by offering of his own accord conditions which he must needs think would be insisted on, were the case to happen?

Then am I utterly displeased with him. To threaten as he threatens; yet to pretend, that it is not to intimidate me; and to beg of you not to tell me, when he must know you would, and no doubt intended that you should, is so meanly artful!—The man must think he has a frightened fool to deal with.—I, to join hands with such a man of violence! my own brother the man whom he threatens!—And what has Mr. Solmes done to him?—Is he to be blamed, if he thinks a person would make a wife worth having, to endeavour to obtain her?—Oh that my friends would but leave me to my own way in this one point! For have I given the man

encouragement sufficient to ground these threats upon? Were Mr. Solmes a man to whom I could but be indifferent, it might be found, that to have spirit, would very little answer the views of that spirit. It is my fortune to be treated as a fool by my brother: but Mr. Lovelace shall find—Yet I will let him know my mind, and then it will come with a better grace to your knowledge.

Mean time, give me leave to tell you, that it goes against me, in my cooler moments, unnatural as my brother is to me, to have you, my dear, who are my other self, write such very severe reflections upon him, in relation to the advantage Lovelace had over him. He is not indeed your brother: but remember, that you write to his sister.—Upon my word, my dear Miss Howe, you dip your pen in gall whenever you are offended: and I am almost ready to question, whether I read some of your expressions against others of my relations as well as him, (although in my favour,) whether you are so thoroughly warranted to call other people to account for their warmth. Should we not be particularly careful to keep clear of the faults we censure?—And yet I am so angry both at my brother and sister, that I should not have taken this liberty with my dear friend, notwithstanding I know you never loved them, had you not made so light of so shocking a transaction where a brother's life was at stake: when his credit in the eye of the mischievous sex has received a still deeper wound than he personally sustained; and when a revival of the same wicked resentments (which may end more fatally) is threatened.

His credit, I say, in the eye of the mischievous sex: Who is

not warranted to call it so; when it is re (as the two libertines his companions gloried) to resolve never to give a challenge; and among whom duelling is so fashionable a part of brutal bravery, that the man of temper, who is, mostly, I believe, the truly brave man, is often at a loss so to behave as to avoid incurring either a mortal guilt, or a general contempt?

To enlarge a little upon this subject, May we not infer, that those who would be guilty of throwing these contempts upon a man of temper, who would rather pass by a verbal injury, than to imbrue his hands in blood, know not the measure of true magnanimity? nor how much nobler it is to forgive, and even how much more manly to despise, than to resent, an injury? Were I a man, methinks, I should have too much scorn for a person, who could wilfully do me a mean wrong, to put a value upon his life, equal to what I put upon my own. What an absurdity, because a man had done me a small injury, that I should put it in his power (at least, to an equal risque) to do me, and those who love me, an irreparable one!—Were it not a wilful injury, nor avowed to be so, there could not be room for resentment.

How willingly would I run away from myself, and what most concerns myself, if I could! This digression brings me back again to the occasion of it—and that to the impatience I was in, when I ended my last letter, for my situation is not altered. I renew, therefore, my former earnestness, as the new day approaches, and will bring with it perhaps new trials, that you will (as undivestedly as possible of favour or resentment) tell me what you would have

me do:—for, if I am obliged to go to my uncle Antony's, all, I doubt, will be over with me. Yet how to avoid it—that's the difficulty!

I shall deposit this the first thing. When you have it, lose no time, I pray you, to advise (lest it be too late)

Your ever obliged CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XII

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE SATURDAY, MARCH 25

What can I advise you to do, my noble creature? Your merit is your crime. You can no more change your nature, than your persecutors can theirs. Your distress is owing to the vast disparity between you and them. What would you have of them? Do they not act in character?—And to whom? To an alien. You are not one of them. They have two dependencies in their hope to move you to compliance.—Upon their impenetrableness one [I'd give it a more proper name, if I dared]; the other, on the regard you have always had for your character, [Have they not heretofore owned as much?] and upon your apprehensions from that of Lovelace, which would discredit you, should you take any step by his means to extricate yourself. Then they know, that resentment and unpersuadableness are not natural to you; and that the anger they have wrought you up to, will subside, as all extraordinaries soon do; and that once married, you will make the best of it.

But surely your father's son and eldest daughter have a view (by communicating to so narrow a soul all they know of your just aversion to him) to entail unhappiness for life upon you, were you to have the man who is already more nearly related to them, than ever he can be to you, although the shocking compulsion

should take place.

As to that wretch's perseverance, those only, who know not the man, will wonder at it. He has not the least delicacy. His principal view in marriage is not to the mind. How shall those beauties be valued, which cannot be comprehended? Were you to be his, and shew a visible want of tenderness to him, it is my opinion, he would not be much concerned at it. I have heard you well observe, from your Mrs. Norton, That a person who has any over-ruling passion, will compound by giving up twenty secondary or under-satisfactions, though more laudable ones, in order to have that gratified.

I'll give you the substance of a conversation [no fear you can be made to like him worse than you do already] that passed between Sir Harry Downeton and this Solmes, but three days ago, as Sir Harry told it but yesterday to my mother and me. It will confirm to you that what your sister's insolent Betty reported he should say, of governing by fear, was not of her own head.

Sir Harry told her, he wondered he should wish to obtain you so much against your inclination as every body knew it would be, if he did.

He matter'd not that, he said: coy maids made the fondest wives: [A sorry fellow!] It would not at all grieve him to see a pretty woman make wry faces, if she gave him cause to vex her. And your estate, by the convenience of its situation, would richly pay him for all he could bear with your shyness.

He should be sure, he said, after a while, of your

complaisance, if not of your love: and in that should be happier than nine parts in ten of his married acquaintance.

What a wretch is this!

For the rest, your known virtue would be as great a security to him, as he could wish for.

She will look upon you, said Sir Harry, if she be forced to marry you, as Elizabeth of France did upon Philip II. of Spain, when he received her on his frontiers as her husband, who was to have been but her father-in-law: that is, with fear and terror, rather than with complaisance and love: and you will perhaps be as surly to her, as that old monarch was to his young bride.

Fear and terror, the wretch, the horrid wretch! said, looked pretty in a bride as well as in a wife: and, laughing, [yes, my dear, the hideous fellow laughed immoderately, as Sir Harry told us, when he said it,] it should be his care to perpetuate the occasion for that fear, if he could not think he had the love. And, truly, he was of opinion, that if LOVE and FEAR must be separated in matrimony, the man who made himself feared, fared best.

If my eyes would carry with them the execution which the eyes of the basilisk are said to do, I would make it my first business to see this creature.

My mother, however, says, it would be a prodigious merit in you, if you could get over your aversion to him. Where, asks she [as you have been asked before], is the praise-worthiness of obedience, if it be only paid in instance where we give up nothing?

What a fatality, that you have no better an option—either a Scylla or a Charybdis.

Were it not you, I should know how (barbarously as you are used) to advise you in a moment. But such a noble character to suffer from a (supposed) rashness and indiscretion of such a nature, would, as I have heretofore observed, be a wound to the sex.

While I was in hope, that the asserting of your own independence would have helped you, I was pleased that you had one resource, as I thought. But now, that you have so well proved, that such a step would not avail you, I am entirely at a loss what to say.

I will lay down my pen, and think.

I have considered, and considered again; but, I protest, I know no more what to say now, than before. Only this: That I am young, like yourself; and have a much weaker judgment, and stronger passions, than you have.

I have heretofore said, that you have offered as much as you ought, in offering to live single. If you were never to marry, the estate they are so loth should go out of their name, would, in time, I suppose, revert to your brother: and he or his would have it, perhaps, much more certainly this way, than by the precarious reversions which Solmes makes them hope for. Have you put this into their odd heads, my dear?—The tyrant word **AUTHORITY**, as they use it, can be the only objection against this offer.

One thing you must consider, that, if you leave your parents,

your duty and love will not suffer you to justify yourself by an appeal against them; and so you'll have the world against you. And should Lovelace continue his wild life, and behave ungratefully to you, will not his baseness seem to justify their cruel treatment of you, as well as their dislike of him?

May heaven direct you for the best!—I can only say, that for my own part, I would do any thing, go any where, rather than be compelled to marry the man I hate; and (were he such a man as Solmes) must always hate. Nor could I have borne what you have borne, if from father and uncles, not from brother and sister.

My mother will have it, that after they have tried their utmost efforts to bring you into their measures, and find them ineffectual, they will recede. But I cannot say I am of her mind. She does not own, she has any authority for this, but her own conjecture. I should otherwise have hoped, that your uncle Antony and she had been in on one secret, and that favourable to you. Woe be to one of them at least [to you uncle to be sure I mean] if they should be in any other!

You must, if possible, avoid being carried to that uncle's. The man, the parson, your brother and sister present!—They'll certainly there marry you to the wretch. Nor will your newly-raised spirit support you in your resistance on such an occasion. Your meekness will return; and you will have nothing for it but tears [tears despised by them all] and ineffectual appeals and lamentations: and these tears when the ceremony is profaned, you must suddenly dry up; and endeavour to dispose of yourself

to such a humble frame of mind, as may induce your new-made lord to forgive all your past declarations of aversion.

In short, my dear, you must then blandish him over with a confession, that all your past behaviour was maidenly reserve only: and it will be your part to convince him of the truth of his imprudent sarcasm, that the coyest maids make the fondest wives. Thus will you enter the state with a high sense of obligation to his forgiving goodness: and if you will not be kept to it by that fear, by which he proposes to govern, I am much mistaken.

Yet, after all, I must leave the point undetermined, and only to be determined, as you find they recede from their avowed purpose, or resolve to remove you to your uncle Antony's. But I must repeat my wishes, that something may fall out, that neither of these men may call you his!—And may you live single, my dearest friend, till some man shall offer, that may be as worthy of you, as man can be!

But yet, methinks, I would not, that you, who are so admirably qualified to adorn the married state, should be always single. You know I am incapable of flattery; and that I always speak and write the sincerest dictates of my heart. Nor can you, from what you must know of your own merit (taken only in a comparative light with others) doubt my sincerity. For why should a person who delight to find out and admire every thing that is praiseworthy in another, be supposed ignorant of like perfections in herself, when she could not so much admire them in another, if she had them not herself? And why may not I give her those

praises, which she would give to any other, who had but half of her excellencies?—Especially when she is incapable of pride and vain-glory; and neither despises others for the want of her fine qualities, nor overvalues herself upon them?—Over-values, did I say!—How can that be?

Forgive me, my beloved friend. My admiration of you (increased, as it is, by every letter you write) will not always be held down in silence; although, in order to avoid offending you, I generally endeavour to keep it from flowing to my pen, when I write to you, or to my lips, whenever I have the happiness to be in your company.

I will add nothing (though I could add a hundred things on account of your latest communications) but that I am

Your ever affectionate and faithful ANNA HOWE.

I hope I have pleased you with my dispatch. I wish I had been able to please you with my requested advice.

You have given new beauties to the charming Ode which you have transmitted to me. What pity that the wretches you have to deal with, put you out of your admirable course; in the pursuit of which, like the sun, you was wont to cheer and illuminate all you shone upon!

LETTER XIII
MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE,
TO MISS HOWE SUNDAY
MORNING, MARCH 26

How soothing a thing is praise from those we love!—Whether conscious or not of deserving it, it cannot but give us great delight, to see ourselves stand high in the opinion of those whose favour we are ambitious to cultivate. An ingenuous mind will make this farther use of it, that if he be sensible that it does not already deserve the charming attributes, it will hasten (before its friend finds herself mistaken) to obtain the graces it is complimented for: and this it will do, as well in honour to itself, as to preserve its friend's opinion, and justify her judgment. May this be always my aim!—And then you will not only give the praise, but the merit; and I shall be more worthy of that friendship, which is the only pleasure I have to boast of.

Most heartily I thank you for the kind dispatch of your last favour. How much am I indebted to you! and even to your honest servant!—Under what obligations does my unhappy situation lay me!

But let me answer the kind contents of it, as well as I may.

As to getting over my disgusts to Mr. Solmes, it is impossible to be done; while he wants generosity, frankness of heart,

benevolence, manners and every qualification that distinguishes the worthy man. O my dear! what a degree of patience, what a greatness of soul, is required in the wife, not to despise a husband who is more ignorant, more illiterate, more low-minded than herself!—The wretch, vested with prerogatives, who will claim rule in virtue of them (and not to permit whose claim, will be as disgraceful to the prescribing wife as to the governed husband); How shall such a husband as this be borne, were he, for reasons of convenience and interest, even to be our CHOICE? But, to be compelled to have such a one, and that compulsion to arise from motives as unworthy of the prescribers as of the prescribed, who can think of getting over an aversion so justly founded? How much easier to bear the temporary persecutions I labour under, because temporary, than to resolve to be such a man's for life? Were I to comply, must I not leave my relations, and go to him? A month will decide the one, perhaps: But what a duration of woe will the other be!—Every day, it is likely, rising to witness to some new breach of an altar-vowed duty!

Then, my dear, the man seems already to be meditating vengeance against me for an aversion I cannot help: for yesterday my saucy gaoleress assured me, that all my oppositions would not signify that pinch of snuff, holding out her genteel finger and thumb: that I must have Mr. Solmes: that therefore I had not best carry my jest too far; for that Mr. Solmes was a man of spirit, and had told HER, that as I should surely be his, I acted very unpolitely; since, if he had not more mercy [that was her word, I

know not if it were his] than I had, I might have cause to repent the usage I gave him to the last day of my life. But enough of this man; who, by what you repeat from Sir Harry Downeton, has all the insolence of his sex, without any one quality to make that insolence tolerable.

I have receive two letters from Mr. Lovelace, since his visit to you; which make three that I have not answered. I doubt not his being very uneasy; but in his last he complains in high terms of my silence; not in the still small voice, or rather style of an humble lover, but in a style like that which would probably be used by a slighted protector. And his pride is again touched, that like a thief, or eves-dropper, he is forced to dodge about in hopes of a letter, and returns five miles (and then to an inconvenient lodging) without any.

His letters and the copy of mine to him, shall soon attend you. Till when, I will give you the substance of what I wrote him yesterday.

I take him severely to task for his freedom in threatening me, through you, with a visit to Mr. Solmes, or to my brother. I say, 'That, surely, I must be thought to be a creature fit to bear any thing; that violence and menaces from some of my own family are not enough for me to bear, in order to make me avoid him; but that I must have them from him too, if I oblige those to whom it is both my inclination and duty to oblige in every thing that is reasonable, and in my power.

'Very extraordinary, I tell him, that a violent spirit shall

threaten to do a rash and unjustifiable thing, which concerns me but a little, and himself a great deal, if I do not something as rash, my character and sex considered, to divert him from it.

'I even hint, that, however it would affect me, were any mischief to happen on my own account, yet there are persons, as far as I know, who in my case would not think there would be reason for much regret, were such a committed rashness as he threatens Mr. Solmes with, to rid her of two persons whom, had she never known, she had never been unhappy.'

This is plain-dealing, my dear: and I suppose he will put it into still plainer English for me.

I take his pride to task, on his disdaining to watch for my letters; and for his eves-dropping language: and say, 'That, surely, he has the less reason to think so hardly of his situation; since his faulty morals are the cause of all; and since faulty morals deservedly level all distinction, and bring down rank and birth to the canaille, and to the necessity which he so much regrets, of appearing (if I must descent to his language) as an eves-dropper and a thief. And then I forbid him ever to expect another letter from me that is to subject him to such disgraceful hardships.

'As to the solemn vows and protestations he is so ready, upon all occasions, to make, they have the less weight with me, I tell him, as they give a kind of demonstration, that he himself, from his own character, thinks there is reason to make them. Deeds are to me the only evidence of intentions. And I am more and more convinced of the necessity of breaking off a correspondence with

a person, whose addresses I see it is impossible either to expect my friends to encourage, or him to appear to wish that they should think him worthy of encouragement.

'What therefore I repeatedly desire is, That since his birth, alliances, and expectations, are such as will at any time, if his immoral character be not an objection, procure him at least equal advantages in a woman whose taste and inclinations moreover might be better adapted to his own; I insist upon it, as well as advise it, that he give up all thoughts of me: and the rather, as he has all along (by his threatening and unpolite behaviour to my friends, and whenever he speaks of them) given me reason to conclude, that there is more malice in them, than regard to me, in his perseverance.'

This is the substance of the letter I have written to him.

The man, to be sure, must have the penetration to observe, that my correspondence with him hitherto is owing more to the severity I meet with, than to a very high value for him. And so I would have him think. What a worse than moloch deity is that, which expects an offering of reason, duty, and discretion, to be made to its shrine!

Your mother is of opinion, you say, that at last my friends will relent. Heaven grant that they may!—But my brother and sister have such an influence over every body, and are so determined; so pique themselves upon subduing me, and carrying their point; that I despair that they will. And yet, if they do not, I frankly own, I would not scruple to throw myself upon any not disreputable

protection, by which I might avoid my present persecutions, on one hand, and not give Mr. Lovelace advantage over me, on the other—that is to say, were there manifestly no other way left me: for, if there were, I should think the leaving my father's house, without his consent, one of the most inexcusable actions I could be guilty of, were the protection to be ever so unexceptionable; and this notwithstanding the independent fortune willed me by my grandfather. And indeed I have often reflected with a degree of indignation and disdain, upon the thoughts of what a low, selfish creature that child must be, who is to be reined in only by the hopes of what a parent can or will do for her.

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