СЭМЮЭЛ РИЧАРДСОН

CLARISSA HARLOWE; OR THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG LADY — VOLUME 3

Сэмюэл Ричардсон

Clarissa Harlowe; or the history of a young lady — Volume 3

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Samuel Richardson Clarissa Harlowe; or the history of a young lady — Volume 3

LETTERS OF VOLUME III

LETTER I. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—Is astonished, confounded, aghast. Repeats her advice to marry Lovelace.

LETTER II. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Gives a particular account of her meeting Lovelace; of her vehement contention with him; and, at last, of her being terrified out of her predetermined resolution, and tricked away. Her grief and compunction of heart upon it. Lays all to the fault of corresponding with him at first against paternal prohibition. Is incensed against him for his artful dealings with her, and for his selfish love.

LETTER III. Mr. Lovelace to Joseph Leman.—A letter which lays open the whole of his contrivance to get off Clarissa.

LETTER IV. Joseph Leman. In answer.

LETTER V. Lovelace to Belford.—In ecstasy on the success of his contrivances. Well as he loves Clarissa, he would show

her no mercy, if he thought she preferred any man living to him. Will religiously observe the INJUNCTIONS she laid upon him previous to their meeting.

LETTER VI. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—A recriminating conversation between her and Lovelace. He reminds her of her injunctions; and, instead of beseeching her to dispense with them, promises a sacred regard to them. It is not, therefore, in her power, she tells Miss Howe, to take her advice as to speedy marriage. [A note on the place, justifying her conduct.] Is attended by Mrs. Greme, Lord M.'s housekeeper at The Lawn, who waits on her to her sister Sorlings, with whom she consents to lodge. His looks offend her. Has written to her sister for her clothes.

LETTER VII. Lovelace to Belford.—Gives briefly the particulars of his success. Describes her person and dress on her first meeting him. Extravagant exultation. Makes Belford question him on the honour of his designs by her: and answers doubtfully.

LETTER VIII. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—Her sentiments on her narrative. Her mother, at the instigation of Antony Harlowe, forbids their correspondence. Mr. Hickman's zeal to serve them in it. What her family now pretend, if she had not left them. How they took her supposed projected flight. Offers her money and clothes. Would have her seem to place some little confidence in Lovelace. Her brother and sister will not permit her father and uncles to cool.

LETTER IX. X. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Advises her to obey her mother, who prohibits their correspondence. Declines to accept her offers of money: and why. Mr. Lovelace not a polite man. She will be as ready to place a confidence in him, as he will be to deserve it. Yet tricked away by him as she was, cannot immediately treat him with great complaisance. Blames her for her liveliness to her mother. Encloses the copy of her letter to her sister.

LETTER XI. Lovelace to Belford.—Prides himself in his arts in the conversations between them. Is alarmed at the superiority of her talents. Considers opposition and resistance as a challenge to do his worst. His artful proceedings with Joseph Leman.

LETTER XII. From the same.—Men need only be known to be rakes, he says, to recommend themselves to the favour of the sex. Wishes Miss Howe were not so well acquainted with Clarissa: and why.

LETTER XIII. From the same.—Intends to set old Antony at Mrs. Howe, to prevent the correspondence between the two young ladies. Girl, not gold, his predominant passion. Rallies Belford on his person and appearance. Takes humourous notice of the two daughters of the widow Sorlings.

LETTER XIV. From the same.—Farther triumphs over the Harlowes. Similitude of the spider and fly. Is for having separate churches as well as separate boarding-schools for the sexes. The women ought to love him, he says: and why. Prides himself that they do.

LETTER XV. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Particulars of an angry conference with Lovelace. Seeing her sincerely displeased, he begs the ceremony may immediately pass. He construes her bashful silence into anger, and vows a sacred regard to her injunctions.

LETTER XVI. XVII. XVIII. Lovelace to Belford.—The pleasure of a difficult chace. Triumphs in the distress and perplexity he gave her by his artful and parading offer of marriage. His reasons for and against doing her justice. Resolves to try her to the utmost. The honour of the whole sex concerned in the issue of her trial. Matrimony, he sees, is in his power, now she is.

LETTER XIX. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—Will not obey her mother in her prohibition of their correspondence: and why. Is charmed with her spirit.

LETTER XX. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Knows not what she can do with Lovelace. He may thank himself for the trouble he has had on her account. Did she ever, she asks, make him any promises? Did she ever receive him as a lover?

LETTER XXI. XXII. From the same.—She calls upon Lovelace to give her a faithful account of the noise and voices she heard at the garden-door, which frightened her away with him. His confession, and daring hints in relation to Solmes, and her brother, and Betty Barnes. She is terrified.

LETTER XXIII. Lovelace to Belford.—Rejoices in the stupidity of the Harlowes. Exults in his capacity for mischief.

The condescensions to which he intends to bring the lady. Libertine observations to the disadvantage of women; which may serve as cautions to the sex.

LETTER XXIV. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—A conversation with Mr. Lovelace wholly agreeable. His promises of reformation. She remembers, to his advantage, his generosity to his Rosebud and his tenants. Writes to her aunt Hervey.

LETTER XXV. XXVI. Lovelace to Belford.—His acknowledged vanity. Accounts for his plausible behaviour, and specious promises and proposals. Apprehensive of the correspondence between Miss Howe and Clarissa. Loves to plague him with out-of-the-way words and phrases.

LETTER XXVII. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—How to judge of Lovelace's suspicious proposals and promises. Hickman devoted to their service. Yet she treats him with ridicule.

LETTER XXVIII. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Lovelace complains, she hears, to Mrs. Greme, of her adhering to her injunctions. What means he by it, she asks, yet forego such opportunities as he had? She is punished for her vanity in hoping to be an example. Blames Miss Howe for her behaviour to Hickman.

LETTER XXIX. From the same.—Warm dialogues with Lovelace. She is displeased with him for his affectedly-bashful hints of matrimony. Mutual recriminations. He looks upon her as his, she says, by a strange sort of obligation, for having run away with her against her will. Yet but touches on the edges of

matrimony neither. She is sick of herself.

LETTER XXX. From the same.—Mr. Lovelace a perfect Proteus. He now applauds her for that treatment of him which before he had resented; and communicates to her two letters, one from Lady Betty Lawrance, the other from Miss Montague. She wonders he did not produce those letters before, as he must know they would be highly acceptable to her.

LETTER XXXI. XXXII. XXXIII. XXXIV. From the same.—The contents of the letters from Lady Betty and Miss Montague put Clarissa in good humour with Mr. Lovelace. He hints at marriage; but pretends to be afraid of pursuing the hint. She is earnest with him to leave her: and why. He applauds her reasonings. Her serious questions, and his ludicrous answer.—He makes different proposals.—He offers to bring Mrs. Norton to her. She is ready to blame herself for her doubts of him: but gives reasons for her caution.—He writes by her consent to his friend Doleman, to procure lodgings for her in town.

LETTER XXXV. Lovelace to Belford.—Glories in his contrivances. Gives an advantageous description of Clarissa's behaviour. Exults on her mentioning London. None but impudent girls, he says, should run away with a man. His farther views, plots, and designs.

LETTER XXXVI. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—Humourously touches on her reproofs in relation to Hickman. Observations on smooth love. Lord M.'s family greatly admire her. Approves of her spirited treatment of Lovelace, and of her going to London.

Hints at the narrowness of her own mother. Advises her to keep fair with Lovelace.

LETTER XXXVII. XXXVIII. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Wonders not that her brother has weight to make her father irreconcilable.—Copy of Mr. Doleman's answer about London lodgings. Her caution in her choice of them. Lovelace has given her five guineas for Hannah. Other instances of his considerateness. Not displeased with her present prospects.

LETTER XXXIX. Lovelace to Belford.—Explains what is meant by Doleman's answer about the lodgings. Makes Belford object to his scheme, that he may answer the objections. Exults. Swells. Despises every body. Importance of the minutiae. More of his arts, views, and contrivances.

LETTER XL. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—Acquaints her with a scheme formed by her brother and captain Singleton, to carry her off. Hickman's silent charities. She despises all his sex, as well as him. Ill terms on which her own father and mother lived. Extols Clarissa for her domestic good qualities. Particulars of a great contest with her mother, on their correspondence. Has been slapt by her. Observations on managing wives.

LETTER XLI. XLII. XLIII. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—A strong remonstrance on her behaviour to her mother; in which she lays down the duty of children. Accuses her of want of generosity to Hickman. Farther excuses herself on declining to accept of her money offers. Proposes a condition on which Mrs. Howe may see all they write.

LETTER XLIV. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—Her mother rejects the proposed condition. Miss Howe takes thankfully her reprehensions: but will continue the correspondence. Some excuses for herself. Humourous story of game-chickens.

LETTER XLV. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Lovelace communicates her brother's and Singleton's project; but treats it with seeming contempt. She asks his advice what to do upon it. This brings on an offer of marriage from him. How it went off.

LETTER XLVI. Lovelace to Belford.—He confesses his artful intentions in the offer of marriage: yet had like, he says, to have been caught in his own snares.

LETTER XLVII. Joseph Leman to Mr. Lovelace.—With intelligence of a design formed against him by the Harlowes. Joseph's vile hypocrisy and selfishness.

LETTER XLVIII. Lovelace. In answer.—Story of Miss Betterton. Boast of his treatment of his mistresses. The artful use he makes of Joseph's intelligence.

LETTER XLIX. Clarissa to her aunt Hervey.—Complains of her silence. Hints at her not having designed to go away with Lovelace. She will open her whole heart to her, if she encourage her to do so, by the hopes of a reconciliation.

LETTER L. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—Observations on Lovelace's meanness, pride, and revenge. Politeness not to be expected from him. She raves at him for the artful manner in which he urges Clarissa to marry him. Advises her how to act in her present situation.

LETTER LI. Belford to Lovelace.—Becomes a warm advocate for the lady. Gives many instructive reasons to enforce his arguments in her favour.

LETTER LII. Mrs. Hervey to Clarissa.—A severe and cruel letter in answer to her's, Letter XLIX. It was not designed, she says, absolutely to force her to marry to her dislike.

LETTER LIII. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Her deep regret on this intelligence, for having met Lovelace. The finer sensibilities make not happy. Her fate too visibly in her power. He is unpolite, cruel, insolent, unwise, a trifler in his own happiness. Her reasons why she less likes him than ever. Her soul his soul's superior. Her fortitude. Her prayer.

LETTER LIV. LV. From the same.—Now indeed is her heart broken, she says. A solemn curse laid upon her by her father. Her sister's barbarous letters on the occasion.

LETTER LVI. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—A letter full of generous consolation and advice. Her friendly vow. Sends her fifty guineas in the leaves of a Norris's miscellanies.

LETTER LVII. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—A faithful friend the medicine of life. She is just setting out for London. Lovelace has offered marriage to her in so unreserved a manner, that she wishes she had never written with diffidence of him. Is sorry it was not in her power to comply with his earnest solicitations. Returns her Norris: and why.

LETTER LVIII. LIX. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—Sorry she has returned her Norris. Wishes she had accepted of Lovelace's

unreserved offer of marriage. Believes herself to have a sneaking kindness for Hickman: and why. She blames Mrs. Harlowe: and why.

In answer to Letter VIII. Clarissa states the difference in the characters of Mr. Lovelace and Mr. Hickman; and tells her, that her motives for suspending marriage were not merely ceremonious ones. Regrets Mrs. Howe's forbidding the correspondence between them. Her dutiful apology for her own mother. Lesson to children.

LETTER LX. Lovelace to Belford.—Thinks he shall be inevitably manacled at last. The lady's extreme illness. Her filial piety gives her dreadful faith in a father's curses. She lets not Miss Howe know how very ill she was. His vows of marriage bring her back to life. Absolutely in earnest in those vows. [The only time he was so.] He can now talk of love and marriage without check. Descants upon Belford's letter, No. LI.

LETTER LXI. From the same.—Is setting out for London. A struggle with his heart. Owns it to be a villain of a heart. A fit of strong, but transitory remorse. If he do marry, he doubts he shall have a vapourish wife. Thinks it would be better for both not to marry. His libertine reasons. Lessons to the sex.

LETTER LXII. From the same.—They arrive at Mrs. Sinclair's. Sally Martin and Polly Horton set upon him. He wavers in his good purposes. Dorcas Wykes proposed, and reluctantly accepted for a servant, till Hannah can come. Dorcas's character. He has two great points to carry. What they are.

THE HISTORY OF CLARISSA HARLOWE

LETTER I

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TUESDAY, NINE O'CLOCK

I write, because you enjoin me to do so. Love you still!—How can I help it, if I would? You may believe how I stand aghast, your letter communicating the first news—Good God of Heaven and Earth!—But what shall I say?—I am all impatient for particulars.

Lord have mercy upon me!—But can it be?

My mother will indeed be astonished!—How can I tell it her! —It was but last night (upon some jealousies put into her head by your foolish uncle) that I assured her, and this upon the strength of your own assurances, that neither man nor devil would be able to induce you to take a step that was in the least derogatory to the most punctilious honour.

But, once more, can it be? What woman at this rate!—But, God preserve you!

Let nothing escape you in your letters. Direct them for me,

however, to Mrs. Knolly's, till further notice.

Observe, my dear, that I don't blame you by all this—Your relations only are in fault!—Yet how you came to change your mind is the surprising thing.

How to break it to my mother, I know not. Yet if she hear it first from any other, and find I knew it before, she will believe it to be my connivance!—Yet, as I hope to live, I know not how to break it to her.

But this is teasing you.—I am sure, without intention.

Let me now repeat my former advice—If you are not married by this time, be sure delay not the ceremony. Since things are as they are, I wish it were thought that you were privately married before you went away. If these men plead AUTHORITY to our pain, when we are theirs—Why should we not, in such a case as this, make some good out of the hated word, for our reputation, when we are induced to violate a more natural one?

Your brother and sister [that vexes me almost as much as any thing!] have now their ends. Now, I suppose, will go forward alterations of wills, and such-like spiteful doings.

Miss Lloyd and Miss Biddulph this moment send up their names. They are out of breath, Kitty says, to speak to me—easy to guess their errand;—I must see my mother, before I see them. I have no way but to shew her your letter to clear myself. I shall not be able to say a word, till she has run herself out of her first

breath.—Forgive me, my dear—surprise makes me write thus. If your messenger did not wait, and were not those young ladies below, I could write it over again, for fear of afflicting you.

I send what you write for. If there be any thing else you want that is in my power, command without reserve

Your ever affectionate ANNA HOWE.

LETTER II

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE. TUESDAY NIGHT

I think myself obliged to thank you, my dear Miss Howe, for your condescension, in taking notice of a creature who has occasioned you so much scandal.

I am grieved on this account, as much, I verily think, as for the evil itself.

Tell me—but yet I am afraid to know—what your mother said.

I long, and yet I dread, to be told, what the young ladies my companions, now never more perhaps to be so, say of me.

They cannot, however, say worse of me than I will of myself. Self accusation shall flow in every line of my narrative where I think I am justly censurable. If any thing can arise from the account I am going to give you, for extenuation of my fault (for that is all a person can hope for, who cannot excuse herself) I know I may expect it from your friendship, though not from the charity of any other: since by this time I doubt not every mouth is opened against me; and all that know Clarissa Harlowe condemn the fugitive daughter.

After I had deposited my letter to you, written down to the last hour, as I may say, I returned to the ivy summer-house;

first taking back my letter from the loose bricks: and there I endeavoured, as coolly as my situation would permit, to recollect and lay together several incidents that had passed between my aunt and me; and, comparing them with some of the contents of my cousin Dolly's letter, I began to hope, that I needed not to be so very apprehensive as I have been of next Wednesday. And thus I argued with myself.

'Wednesday cannot possibly be the day they intend, although to intimidate me they may wish me to think it is: for the settlements are unsigned: nor have they been offered me to sign. I can choose whether I will or will not put my hand to them; hard as it will be to refuse if my father and mother propose, if I made compulsion necessary, to go to my uncle's themselves in order to be out of the way of my appeals? Whereas they intend to be present on Wednesday. And, however affecting to me the thought of meeting them and all my friends in full assembly is, perhaps it is the very thing I ought to wish for: since my brother and sister had such an opinion of my interest in them, that they got me excluded from their presence, as a measure which they thought previously necessary to carry on their designs.

'Nor have I reason to doubt, but that (as I had before argued with myself) I shall be able to bring over some of my relations to my party; and, being brought face to face with my brother, that I shall expose his malevolence, and of consequence weaken his power.

'Then supposing the very worst, challenging the minister as I

shall challenge him, he will not presume to proceed: nor surely will Mr. Solmes dare to accept my refusing and struggling hand. And finally, if nothing else will do, nor procure me delay, I can plead scruples of conscience, and even pretend prior obligation; for, my dear, I have give Mr. Lovelace room to hope (as you will see in one of my letters in your hands) that I will be no other man's while he is single, and gives me not wilful and premeditated cause of offence against him; and this in order to rein-in his resentment on the declared animosity of my brother and uncles to him. And as I shall appeal, or refer my scruples on this head, to the good Dr. Lewen, it is impossible but that my mother and aunt (if nobody else) must be affected with this plea.'

Revolving cursorily these things, I congratulated myself, that I had resolved against going away with Mr. Lovelace.

I told you, my dear, that I would not spare myself: and I enumerate these particulars as so many arguments to condemn the actions I have been so unhappily betrayed into. An argument that concludes against me with the greater force, as I must acknowledge, that I was apprehensive, that what my cousin Dolly mentions as from Betty, and from my sister who told her, that she should tell me, in order to make me desperate, and perhaps to push me upon some such step as I have been driven to take, as the most effectual means to ruin me with my father and uncles.

God forgive me, if I judge too harshly of their views!—But if I do not, it follows, that they laid a wicked snare for me; and that I have been caught in it.—And now they triumph, if they can

triumph, in the ruin of a sister, who never wished or intended to hurt them!

As the above kind of reasoning had lessened my apprehensions as to the Wednesday, it added to those I had of meeting Mr. Lovelace—now, as it seemed, not only the nearest, but the heaviest evil; principally indeed because nearest; for little did I dream (foolish creature that I was, and every way beset!) of the event proving what it has proved. I expected a contention with him, 'tis true, as he had not my letter: but I thought it would be very strange, as I mentioned in one of my former,* if I, who had so steadily held out against characters so venerable, against authorities so sacred, as I may say, when I thought them unreasonably exerted, should not find myself more equal to such a trial as this; especially as I had so much reason to be displeased with him for not having taken away my letter.

On what a point of time may one's worldly happiness depend! Had I but two hours more to consider of the matter, and to attend to and improve upon these new lights, as I may call them—but even then, perhaps, I might have given him a meeting.—Fool that I was! what had I to do to give him hope that I would personally acquaint him with the reason for my change of mind, if I did change it?

O my dear! an obliging temper is a very dangerous temper! —By endeavouring to gratify others, it is evermore disobliging itself!

When the bell rang to call the servants to dinner, Betty came

to me and asked, if I had any commands before she went to hers; repeating her hint, that she should be employed; adding, that she believed it was expected that I should not come up till she came down, or till I saw my aunt or Miss Hervey.

I asked her some questions about the cascade, which had been out of order, and lately mended; and expressed a curiosity to see how it played, in order to induce her [how cunning to cheat myself, as it proved!] to go thither, if she found me not where she left me; it being a part of the garden most distant from the ivy summer-house.

She could hardly have got into the house when I heard the first signal—O how my heart fluttered!—but no time was to be lost. I stept to the garden-door; and seeing a clear coast, unbolted the already-unlocked door—and there was he, all impatience, waiting for me.

A panic next to fainting seized me when I saw him. My heart seemed convulsed; and I trembled so, that I should hardly have kept my feet, had he not supported me.

Fear nothing, dearest creature, said he—let us hasten away—the chariot is at hand—and, by this sweet condescension, you have obliged me beyond expression or return.

Recovering my spirits a little, as he kept drawing me after him, O Mr. Lovelace, said I, I cannot go with you—indeed I cannot—I wrote you word so—let go my hand, and you shall see my letter. It is lain there from yesterday morning, till within this half-hour. I bid you watch to the last for a letter from me, lest I should

be obliged to revoke the appointment; and, had you followed the direction, you would have found it.

I have been watched, my dearest life, said he, half out of breath—I have been watched in every step I took: and my trusty servant has been watched too, ever since Saturday; and dared not to come near your wall. And here we shall be discovered in a moment.—Speed away, my charmer—this is the moment of your deliverance—if you neglect this opportunity, you can never have such another.

What is it you mean, Sir?—Let go my hand: for I tell you [struggling vehemently] that I will sooner die than go with you.

Good God! said he, with a look of wildness and surprise, what is it I hear?—But [still drawing me after him, as he retreated farther from the door] it is no time to argue—by all that's good you must go—surely you cannot doubt my honour, nor give me cause to question your own.

As you value me, Mr. Lovelace, urge me no farther. I come fixed and resolved. Let me give you the letter I have written. My further reasons shall follow; and they will convince you that I ought not to go.

Nothing, Madam, can convince me—by all that's sacred, I will not leave you. To leave you now, would be to lose you for ever—

Am I to be thus compelled? interrupted I, with equal indignation and vehemence.—Let go my hands—I am resolved not to go with you—and I will convince you that I ought not.

All my friends expect you, Madam—all your own are

determined against you—Wednesday next is the day, the important, perhaps the fatal day! Would you stay to be Solmes's wife?—Can this be your determination at last?

No, never, never will I be that man's—But I will not go with you! [draw me not thus—How dare you, Sir? I would not have seen you, but to tell you so]. I had not met you, but for fear you would have been guilty of some rashness—and, once more, I will not go—What mean you?—striving with all my force to get from him.

What can have possessed my angel, said he [quitting my hands, and with a gentler voice] that after so much ill-usage from your relations; vows so solemn on my part; an affection so ardent; you stab me with a refusal to stand by your own appointment?

We have no time to talk, Mr. Lovelace. I will give you my reasons at a better opportunity. I cannot go with you now—and once more urge me no farther—surely, I am not to be compelled by every body!

I see how it is, said he, with a dejected but passionate air—What a severe fate is mine!—At length your spirit is subdued!—Your brother and sister have prevailed; and I must give up all my hopes to a wretch so truly despicable—

Once more I tell you, interrupted I, I never will be his—all may end on Wednesday differently from what you expect—

And it may not!—And then, good heavens!

It is to be their last effort, as I have reason to believe—

And I have reason to believe so too—since if you stay, you

will inevitably be Solmes's wife.

Not so, interrupted I—I have obliged them in one point. They will be in good-humour with me. I shall gain time at least. I am sure I shall. I have several ways to gain time.

And what, Madam, will gaining time do? It is plain you have not a hope beyond that—it is plain you have not, by putting all upon that precarious issue. O my dearest, dearest life, let me beseech you not to run a risque of this consequence. I can convince you that it will be more than a risque if you go back, that you will on Wednesday next be Solmes's wife.—Prevent, therefore, now that it is in your power to prevent, the fatal mischief that will follow such a dreadful certainty.

While I have any room for hope, it concerns your honour, Mr. Lovelace, as well as mine, (if you have the value for me you pretend, and wish me to believe you,) that my conduct in this great point should justify my prudence.

Your prudence, Madam! When has that been questionable? Yet what stead has either your prudence or your duty stood you in, with people so strangely determined?

And then he pathetically enumerated the different instances of the harsh treatment I had met with; imputing all to the malice and caprice of a brother, who set every body against him: and insisting, that I had no other way to bring about a reconciliation with my father and uncles, than by putting myself out of the power of my brother's inveterate malice.

Your brother's whole reliance, proceeded he, has been upon

your easiness to bear his insults. Your whole family will seek to you, when you have freed yourself from this disgraceful oppression. When they know you are with those who can and will right you, they will give up to you your own estate. Why then, putting his arms around me, and again drawing me with a gentle force after him, do you hesitate a moment?—Now is the time—Fly with me, then, I beseech you, my dearest creature! Trust your persecuted adorer. Have we not suffered in the same cause? If any imputations are cast upon you, give me the honour (as I shall be found to deserve it) to call you mine; and, when you are so, shall I not be able to protect both your person and character?

Urge me no more, Mr. Lovelace, I conjure you. You yourself have given me a hint, which I will speak plainer to, than prudence, perhaps, on any other occasion, would allow. I am convinced, that Wednesday next (if I had time I would give you my reasons) is not intended to be the day we had both so much dreaded: and if after that day shall be over, I find my friends determined in Mr. Solmes's favour, I will then contrive some way to meet you with Miss Howe, who is not your enemy: and when the solemnity has passed, I shall think that step a duty, which till then will be criminal to take: since now my father's authority is unimpeached by any greater.

Dearest Madam—

Nay, Mr. Lovelace, if you now dispute—if, after this more favourable declaration, than I had the thought of making, you are not satisfied, I shall know what to think both of your gratitude

and generosity.

The case, Madam, admits not of this alternative. I am all gratitude upon it. I cannot express how much I should be delighted with the charming hope you have given me, were you not next Wednesday, if you stay, to be another man's. Think, dearest creature! what an heightening of my anguish the distant hope you bid me look up to is, taken in this light!

Depend, depend upon it, I will die sooner than be Mr. Solmes's. If you would have me rely upon your honour, why should you doubt of mine?

I doubt not your honour, Madam; your power is all I doubt. You never, never can have such another opportunity.—Dearest creature, permit me—and he was again drawing me after him.

Whither, Sir, do you draw me?—Leave me this moment—Do you seek to keep me till my return shall grow dangerous or impracticable? This moment let me go, if you would have me think tolerably of you.

My happiness, Madam, both here and hereafter, and the safety of all your implacable family, depend upon this moment.

To Providence, Mr. Lovelace, and to the law, will I leave the safety of my friends. You shall not threaten me into a rashness that my heart condemns!—Shall I, to promote your happiness, as you call it, depend upon future peace of mind?

You trifle with me, my dear life, just as our better prospects begin to open. The way is clear; just now it is clear; but you may be prevented in a moment. What is it you doubt?—May I perish

eternally, if your will shall not be a law to me in every thing! All my relations expect you.—Next Wednesday!—Dearest creature! think of next Wednesday!—And to what is it I urge you, but to take a step that sooner than any other will reconcile you to all whom you have most reason to value in your family?

Let my judge for myself, Sir. Do not you, who blame my friends for endeavouring to compel me, yourself seek to compel. I won't bear it. Your earnestness gives me greater apprehensions, and greater reluctance. Let me go back, then—let me, before it is too late, go back, that it may not be worse for both—What mean you by this forcible treatment? Is it thus that I am to judge of the entire submission to my will which you have so often vowed?—Unhand me this moment, or I will cry out for help.

I will obey you, my dearest creature!—And quitted my hand with a look full of tender despondency, that, knowing the violence of his temper, half-concerned me for him. Yet I was hastening from him, when, with a solemn air, looking upon his sword, but catching, as it were, his hand from it, he folded both his arms, as if a sudden thought had recovered him from an intended rashness.

Stay, one moment—but one moment stay, O best beloved of my soul!—Your retreat is secure, if you will go: the key lies at the door.—But, O Madam, next Wednesday, and you are Mr. Solmes's!—Fly me not so eagerly—hear me but a few words.

When near the garden-door, I stopped; and was the more satisfied, as I saw the key there, by which I could let myself in

again at pleasure. But, being uneasy lest I should be missed, I told him, I could stay no longer. I had already staid too long. I would write to him all my reasons. And depend upon it, Mr. Lovelace, said I [just upon the point of stooping for the key, in order to return] I will die, rather than have that man. You know what I have promised, if I find myself in danger.

One word, Madam, however; one word more [approaching me, his arms still folded, as if, I thought, he would not be tempted to mischief]. Remember only, that I come at your appointment, to redeem you, at the hazard of my life, from your gaolers and persecutors, with a resolution, God is my witness, or may he for ever blast me! [that was his shocking imprecation] to be a father, uncle, brother, and, as I humbly hoped, in your own good time, a husband to you, all in one. But since I find you are so ready to cry out for help against me, which must bring down upon me the vengeance of all your family, I am contented to run all risques. I will not ask you to retreat with me; I will attend you into the garden, and into the house, if I am not intercepted.

Nay, be not surprised, Madam. The help you would have called for, I will attend you to; for I will face them all: but not as a revenger, if they provoke me not too much. You shall see what I can further bear for your sake—and let us both see, if expostulation, and the behaviour of a gentleman to them, will not procure me the treatment due to a gentleman from them.

Had he offered to draw his sword upon himself, I was prepared to have despised him for supposing me such a poor

novice, as to be intimidated by an artifice so common. But this resolution, uttered with so serious an air, of accompanying me in to my friends, made me gasp with terror.

What mean you, Mr. Lovelace? said I: I beseech you leave me —leave me, Sir, I beseech you.

Excuse me, Madam! I beg you to excuse me. I have long enough skulked like a thief about these lonely walls—long, too long, have I borne the insults of your brother, and other of your relations. Absence but heightens malice. I am desperate. I have but this one chance for it; for is not the day after to-morrow Wednesday? I have encouraged virulence by my tameness.—Yet tame I will still be. You shall see, Madam, what I will bear for your sake. My sword shall be put sheathed into your hands [and he offered it to me in the scabbard].—My heart, if you please, clapping one hand upon his breast, shall afford a sheath for your brother's sword. Life is nothing, if I lose you—be pleased, Madam, to shew me the way into the garden [moving toward the door]. I will attend you, though to my fate!—But too happy, be it what it will, if I receive it in your presence. Lead on, dear creature! [putting his sword into his belt]—You shall see what I can bear for you. And he stooped and took up the key; and offered it to the lock; but dropped it again, without opening the door, upon my earnest expostulations.

What can you mean, Mr. Lovelace?—said I—Would you thus expose yourself? Would you thus expose me?—Is this your generosity? Is every body to take advantage thus of the weakness

of my temper?

And I wept. I could not help it.

He threw himself upon his knees at my feet—Who can bear, said he, [with an ardour that could not be feigned, his own eyes glistening,] who can bear to behold such sweet emotion?—O charmer of my heart, [and, respectfully still kneeling, he took my hand with both his, pressing it to his lips,] command me with you, command me from you; in every way I am implicit to obedience—but I appeal to all you know of your relations' cruelty to you, their determined malice against me, and as determined favour to the man you tell me you hate, (and, O Madam, if you did not hate him, I should hardly think there would be a merit in your approbation, place it where you would)—I appeal to every thing you know, to all you have suffered, whether you have not reason to be apprehensive of that Wednesday, which is my terror!—whether you can possibly have another opportunity—the chariot ready: my friends with impatience expecting the result of your own appointment: a man whose will shall be entirely your will, imploring you, thus, on his knees, imploring you—to be your own mistress; that is all: nor will I ask for your favour, but as upon full proof I shall appear to deserve it. Fortune, alliance, unobjectionable!—O my beloved creature! pressing my hand once more to his lips, let not such an opportunity slip. You never, never will have such another.

I bid him rise. He arose; and I told him, that were I not thus unaccountably hurried by his impatience, I doubted not

to convince him, that both he and I had looked upon next Wednesday with greater apprehension than was necessary. I was proceeding to give him my reasons; but he broke in upon me—

Had I, Madam, but the shadow of a probability to hope what you hope, I would be all obedience and resignation. But the license is actually got: the parson is provided: the pedant Brand is the man. O my dearest creature, do these preparations mean only a trial?

You know not, Sir, were the worst to be intended, and weak as you think me, what a spirit I have: you know not what I can do, and how I can resist when I think myself meanly or unreasonably dealt with: nor do you know what I have already suffered, what I have already borne, knowing to whose unbrotherly instigations all is to be ascribed—

I may expect all things, Madam, interrupted he, from the nobleness of your mind. But your spirits may fail you. What may not be apprehended from the invincible temper of a father so positive, to a daughter so dutiful?—Fainting will not save you: they will not, perhaps, be sorry for such an effect of their barbarity. What will signify expostulations against a ceremony performed? Must not all, the dreadful all follow, that is torture to my heart but to think of? Nobody to appeal to, of what avail will your resistance be against the consequences of a rite witnessed to by the imposers of it, and those your nearest relations?

I was sure, I said, of procuring a delay at least. Many ways I had to procure a delay. Nothing could be so fatal to us both, as for

me now to be found with him. My apprehensions on this score, I told him, grew too strong for my heart. I should think very hardly of him, if he sought to detain me longer. But his acquiescence should engage my gratitude.

And then stooping to take up the key to let myself into the garden, he started, and looked as if he had heard somebody near the door, on the inside; clapping his hand on his sword.

This frighted me so, that I thought I should have sunk down at his feet. But he instantly re-assured me: He thought, he said, he had heard a rustling against the door: but had it been so, the noise would have been stronger. It was only the effect of his apprehension for me.

And then taking up the key, he presented it to me.—If you will go, Madam—Yet, I cannot, cannot leave you!—I must enter the garden with you—forgive me, but I must enter the garden with you.

And will you, will you thus ungenerously, Mr. Lovelace, take advantage of my fears? of my wishes to prevent mischief? I, vain fool, to be concerned for every one; nobody for me!

Dearest creature! interrupted he, holding my hand, as I tremblingly offered to put the key to the lock—let me, if you will go, open the door. But once more, consider, could you possibly obtain that delay which seems to be your only dependence, whether you may not be closer confined? I know they have already had that in consideration. Will you not, in this case, be prevented from corresponding either with Miss Howe, or with

me?—Who then shall assist you in your escape, if escape you would?—From your chamber-window only permitted to view the garden you must not enter into, how will you wish for the opportunity you now have, if your hatred to Solmes continue!—But alas! that cannot continue. If you go back, it must be from the impulses of a yielding (which you'll call, a dutiful) heart, tired and teased out of your own will.

I have no patience, Sir, to be thus constrained. Must I never be at liberty to follow my own judgment? Be the consequence what it may, I will not be thus constrained.

And then, freeing my hand, I again offered the key to the door.

Down the ready kneeler dropt between me and that: And can you, can you, Madam, once more on my knees let me ask you, look with an indifferent eye upon the evils that may follow? Provoked as I have been, and triumphed over as I shall be, if your brother succeeds, my own heart shudders, at times, at the thoughts of what must happen: And can yours be unconcerned? Let me beseech you, dearest creature, to consider all these things; and lose not this only opportunity. My intelligence—

Never, Mr. Lovelace, interrupted I, give so much credit to the words of a traitor. Your base intelligencer is but a servant. He may pretend to know more than he has grounds for, in order to earn the wages of corruption. You know not what contrivances I can find out.

I was once more offering the key to the lock, when, starting from his knees, with a voice of affrightment, loudly whispering,

and as if out of breath, they are at the door, my beloved creature! and taking the key from me, he fluttered with it, as if he would double lock it. And instantly a voice from within cried out, bursting against the door, as if to break it open, the person repeating his violent pushes, Are you there?—come up this moment!—this moment!—here they are—here they are both together!—your pistol this moment!—your gun!—Then another push, and another. He at the same moment drew his sword, and clapping it naked under his arm, took both my trembling hands in his; and drawing me swiftly after him, Fly, fly, my charmer; this moment is all you have for it, said he.—Your brother!—your uncles!—or this Solmes!—they will instantly burst the door—fly, my dearest life, if you would not be more cruelly used than ever—if you would not see two or three murders committed at your feet, fly, fly, I beseech you.

O Lord:—help, help, cried the fool, all in amaze and confusion, frighted beyond the power of controuling.

Now behind me, now before me, now on this side, now on that, turned I my affrighted face, in the same moment; expecting a furious brother here, armed servants there, an enraged sister screaming, and a father armed with terror in his countenance more dreadful than even the drawn sword which I saw, or those I apprehended. I ran as fast as he; yet knew not that I ran; my fears adding wings to my feet, at the same time that they took all power of thinking from me—my fears, which probably would not have suffered me to know what course to take, had I not had him to

urge and draw me after him: especially as I beheld a man, who must have come out of the door, keeping us in his eye, running now towards us; then back to the garden; beckoning and calling to others, whom I supposed he saw, although the turning of the wall hindered me from seeing them; and whom I imagined to be my brother, my father, and their servants.

Thus terrified, I was got out of sight of the door in a very few minutes: and then, although quite breathless between running and apprehension, he put my arm under his, his drawn sword in the other hand, and hurried me on still faster: my voice, however, contradicting my action; crying, no, no, no, all the while; straining my neck to look back, as long as the walls of the garden and park were within sight, and till he brought me to the chariot: where, attending, were two armed servants of his own, and two of Lord M.'s on horseback.

Here I must suspend my relation for a while: for now I am come to this sad period of it, my indiscretion stares me in the face; and my shame and my grief give me a compunction that is more poignant methinks than if I had a dagger in my heart. To have it to reflect, that I should so inconsiderately give in to an interview, which, had I known either myself or him, or in the least considered the circumstances of the case, I might have supposed would put me into the power of his resolution, and out of that of my own reason.

For, might I not have believed, that he, who thought he had cause to apprehend that he was on the point of losing a

person who had cost him so much pains and trouble, would not hinder her, if possible, from returning? That he, who knew I had promised to give him up for ever, if insisted as a condition of reconciliation, would not endeavour to put it out of my power to do so? In short, that he, who had artfully forborne to send for my letter, (for he could not be watched, my dear,) lest he should find in it a countermand to my appointment, (as I myself could apprehend, although I profited by the apprehension,) would want a device to keep me with him till the danger of having our meeting discovered might throw me absolutely into his power, to avoid my own worse usage, and the mischiefs which might have ensued (perhaps in my very sight) had my friends and he met?

But if it shall come out, that the person within the garden was his corrupted implement, employed to frighten me away with him, do you think, my dear, that I shall not have reason to hate him and myself still more? I hope his heart cannot be so deep and so vile a one: I hope it cannot! But how came it to pass, that one man could get out at the garden-door, and no more? how, that that man kept aloof, as it were, and pursued us not; nor ran back to alarm the house? my fright, and my distance, would not let me be certain; but really this man, as I now recollect, had the air of that vile Joseph Leman.

O why, why, my dear friends!—But wherefore blame I them, when I had argued myself into a hope, not improbable, that even the dreadful trial I was to undergo so soon might turn out better than if I had been directly carried away from the presence of my

once indulgent parents, who might possibly intend that trial to be the last I should have had?

Would to Heaven, that I had stood it, however! then if I had afterwards done, what now I have been prevailed upon, or perhaps foolishly frightened to do, I should not have been stung so much by inward reproach as now I am: and this would have been a great evil avoided.

You know, my dear, that your Clarissa's mind was ever above justifying her own failings by those of others. God forgive those of my friends who have acted cruelly by me! But their faults are their own, and not excuses for mine. And mine began early: for I ought not to have corresponded with him.

O the vile encroacher! how my indignation, at times, rises at him! thus to lead a young creature (too much indeed relying upon her own strength) from evil to evil!—This last evil, although the remote, yet sure consequence of my first—my prohibited correspondence! by a father early prohibited.

How much more properly had I acted, with regard to that correspondence, had I, once for all, when he was forbidden to visit me, and I to receive his visits, pleaded the authority by which I ought to have been bound, and denied to write to him!—But I thought I could proceed, or stop, as I pleased. I supposed it concerned me, more than any other, to be the arbitress of the quarrels of unruly spirits.—And now I find my presumption punished—punished, as other sins frequently are, by itself!

As to this last rashness; now, that it is too late, I plainly see

how I ought to have conducted myself. As he knew I had but one way of transmitting to him the knowledge of what befel me; as he knew that my fate was upon a crisis with my friends; and that I had in my letter to him reserved the liberty of revocation; I should not have been solicitous whether he had got my letter or not: when he had come, and found I did not answer to his signal, he would presently have resorted to the loose bricks, and there been satisfied, by the date of my letter, that it was his own fault that he had it not before. But, governed by the same pragmatical motives which induced me to correspond with him at first, I was again afraid, truly, with my foolish and busy prescience; and the disappointment would have thrown him into the way of receiving fresh insults from the same persons; which might have made him guilty of some violence to them. And so to save him an apprehended rashness, I rushed into a real one myself. And what vexes me more is, that it is plain to me now, by all his behaviour, that he had as great a confidence in my weakness, as I had in my own strength. And so, in a point entirely relative to my honour, he has triumphed; for he has not been mistaken in me, while I have in myself!

Tell me, my dear Miss Howe, tell me truly, if your unbiassed heart does not despise me?—It must! for your mind and mine were ever one; and I despise myself!—And well I may: For could the giddiest and most inconsiderate girl in England have done worse than I shall appear to have done in the eye of the world? Since my crime will be known without the provocations, and

without the artifices of the betrayer too; while it will be a high aggravation, that better things were expected from me than from many others.

You charge me to marry the first opportunity—Ah! my dear! another of the blessed effects of my folly—That's as much in my power now as—as I am myself!—And can I besides give a sanction immediately to his deluding arts?—Can I avoid being angry with him for tricking me thus, as I may say, (and as I have called it to him,) out of myself?—For compelling me to take a step so contrary to all my resolutions and assurances given to you; a step so dreadfully inconvenient to myself; so disgraceful and so grievous (as it must be) to my dear mother, were I to be less regardful of any other of my family or friends?—You don't know, nor can you imagine, my dear, how I am mortified!—How much I am sunk in my own opinion! I, that was proposed for an example, truly, to others!—O that I were again in my father's house, stealing down with a letter to you; my heart beating with expectation of finding one from you!

This is the Wednesday morning I dreaded so much, that I once thought of it as the day of my doom: but of the Monday, it is plain, I ought to have been most apprehensive. Had I staid, and had the worst I dreaded happened, my friends would then have been answerable for the consequences, if any bad ones had followed:—but now, I have only this consolation left me (a very poor one, you'll say!) that I have cleared them of blame, and

taken it all upon myself!

You will not wonder to see this narrative so dismally scrawled. It is owing to different pens and ink, all bad, and written in snatches of time; my hand trembling too with fatigue and grief.

I will not add to the length of it, by the particulars of his behaviour to me, and of our conversation at St. Alban's, and since; because those will come in course in the continuation of my story; which, no doubt, you will expect from me.

Only thus much will I say, that he is extremely respectful (even obsequiously so) at present, though I am so much dissatisfied with him and myself that he has hitherto had no great cause to praise my complaisance to him. Indeed, I can hardly, at times, bear the seducer in my sight.

The lodgings I am in are inconvenient. I shall not stay in them: so it signifies nothing to tell you how to direct to me hither. And where my next may be, as yet I know not.

He knows that I am writing to you; and has offered to send my letter, when finished, by a servant of his. But I thought I could not be too cautious, as I am now situated, in having a letter of this importance conveyed to you. Who knows what such a man may do? So very wicked a contriver! The contrivance, if a contrivance, to get me away, so insolently mean!—But I hope it is not a contrivance neither!—Yet, be that as it will, I must say, that the best of him, and of my prospects with him, are bad; and yet, having enrolled myself among the too-late repenters, who shall pity me?

Nevertheless, I will dare to hope for a continued interest in your affections [I shall be miserable indeed if I may not!] and to be remembered in your daily prayers. For neither time nor accident shall ever make me cease to be

Your faithful and affectionate CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER III

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOSEPH LEMAN SAT. APRIL 8

HONEST JOSEPH,

At length your beloved young lady has consented to free herself from the cruel treatment she has so long borne. She is to meet me without the garden-door at about four o'clock on Monday afternoon. I told you she had promised to do so. She has confirmed her promise. Thank Heaven she has confirmed her promise!

I shall have a chariot-and-six ready in the by-road fronting the private path to Harlowe-paddock; and several of my friends and servants not far off, armed to protect her, if there be occasion: but every one charged to avoid mischief. That, you know, has always been my principal care.

All my fear is, that, when she comes to the point, the over-niceness of her principles will make her waver, and want to go back: although her honour is my honour, you know, and mine is her's. If she should, and should I be unable to prevail upon her, all your past services will avail nothing, and she will be lost to me for ever: the prey then of that cursed Solmes, whose vile stinginess will never permit him to do good to any of the servants

of the family.

I have no doubt of your fidelity, honest Joseph; nor of your zeal to serve an injured gentleman, and an oppressed young lady. You see by the confidence I repose in you, that I have not; more particularly, on this very important occasion, in which your assistance may crown the work: for, if she waver, a little innocent contrivance will be necessary.

Be very mindful, therefore, of the following directions; take them into your heart. This will probably be your last trouble, until my beloved and I are joined in holy wedlock: and then we will be sure to take care of you. You know what I have promised. No man ever reproached me for breach of word.

These, then, honest Joseph, are they:

Contrive to be in the garden, in disguise, if possible, and unseen by your young lady. If you find the garden-door unbolted, you will know that she and I are together, although you should not see her go out at it. It will be locked, but my key shall be on the ground just without the door, that you may open it with your's, as it may be needful.

If you hear our voices parleying, keep at the door till I cry Hem, hem, twice: but be watchful for this signal; for I must not hem very loud, lest she should take it for a signal. Perhaps, in struggling to prevail upon the dear creature, I may have an opportunity to strike the door hard with my elbow, or heel, to confirm you—then you are to make a violent burst against the door, as if you would break it open, drawing backward and

forward the bolt in a hurry: then, with another push, but with more noise than strength, lest the lock give way, cry out (as if you saw some of the family) Come up, come up, instantly!—Here they are! Here they are!—Hasten!—This instant! hasten! And mention swords, pistols, guns, with as terrible a voice as you can cry out with. Then shall I prevail upon her, no doubt, if loth before, to fly. If I cannot, I will enter the garden with her, and the house too, be the consequence what it will. But, so affrighted, these is no question but she will fly.

When you think us at a sufficient distance [and I shall raise my voice urging her swifter flight, that you may guess at that] then open the door with your key: but you must be sure to open it very cautiously, lest we should not be far enough off. I would not have her know you have a hand in this matter, out of my great regard to you.

When you have opened the door, take your key out of the lock, and put it in your pocket: then, stooping for mine, put it in the lock on the inside, that it may appear as if the door was opened by herself, with a key, which they will suppose to be of my procuring (it being new) and left open by us.

They should conclude she is gone off by her own consent, that they may not pursue us: that they may see no hopes of tempting her back again. In either case, mischief might happen, you know.

But you must take notice, that you are only to open the door with your key, in case none of the family come up to interrupt us, and before we are quite gone: for, if they do, you'll find by

what follows, that you must not open the door at all. Let them, on breaking it open, or by getting over the wall, find my key on the ground, if they will.

If they do not come to interrupt us, and if you, by help of your key, come out, follow us at a distance; and, with uplifted hands, and wild impatient gestures, (running backward and forward, for fear you should come up too near us, and as if you saw somebody coming to your assistance,) cry out for help, help, and to hasten. Then shall we be soon at the chariot.

Tell the family that you saw me enter a chariot with her: a dozen, or more, men on horseback, attending us; all armed; some with blunderbusses, as you believe; and that we took quite the contrary way to that we should take.

You see, honest Joseph, how careful I am, as well as you, to avoid mischief.

Observe to keep at such a distance that she may not discover who you are. Take long strides, to alter your gait; and hold up your head, honest Joseph; and she'll not know it to be you. Men's airs and gaits are as various and peculiar as their faces. Pluck a stake out of one of the hedges: and tug at it, though it may come easy: this, if she turn back, will look terrible, and account for your not following us faster. Then, returning with it, shouldered, to brag to the family what you would have done, could you have overtaken us, rather than your young lady should be carried off by such a ——— And you may call me names, and curse me. And these airs will make you look valiant, and in earnest. You

see, honest Joseph, I am always contriving to give you reputation. No man suffers by serving me.

But, if our parley should last longer than I wish; and if any of her friends miss her before I cry, Hem, hem, twice; then, in order to save yourself, (which is a very great point with me, I assure you,) make the same noise as above: but as I directed before, open not the door with your key. On the contrary, wish for a key with all your heart; but for fear any of them should by accident have a key about them, keep in readiness half a dozen little gravel-stones, no bigger than peas, and thrust two or three slily into the key-hole; which will hinder their key from turning round. It is good, you know, Joseph, to provide against every accident in such an important case, as this. And let this be your cry, instead of the other, if any of my enemies come in your sight, as you seem to be trying to burst the door open, Sir! Sir! or Madam! Madam! O Lord, hasten! O Lord, hasten! Mr. Lovelace! Mr. Lovelace!—And very loud—and that shall quicken me more than it shall those you call to.—If it be Betty, and only Betty, I shall think worse of your art of making love[1] than of your fidelity, if you can't find a way to amuse her, and put her upon a false scent.

You must tell them that your young lady seemed to run as fast off with me as I with her. This will also confirm to them that all pursuit is in vain. An end will hereby be put to Solmes's hopes: and her friends, after a while, will be more studious to be

[1] See Vol.II. Letter XXIX.

reconciled to her than to get her back. So you will be a happy instrument of great good to all round. And this will one day be acknowledged by both families. You will then be every one's favourite; and every good servant, for the future, will be proud to be likened to honest Joseph Leman.

If she should guess at you, or find you out, I have it already in my head to write a letter for you to copy,[2] which, occasionally produced, will set you right with her.

This one time be diligent, be careful: this will be the crown of all: and once more, depend, for a recompense, upon the honour of

Your assured friend, R. LOVELACE.

You need not be so much afraid of going too far with Betty. If you should make a match with her, she is a very likely creature, though a vixen, as you say. I have an admirable receipt to cure a termagant wife.—Never fear, Joseph, but thou shalt be master of thine house. If she be very troublesome, I can teach thee how to break her heart in a twelvemonth; and honestly too;—or the precept would not be mine.

I enclose a new earnest of my future favour.

[2] See Vol.III. Letter XXI.

LETTER IV

TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQUIER, HIS HONNER SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 9

HONNERED SIR,

I must confesse I am infinitely obliged to your Honner's bounty. But this last command!—It seems so intricket! Lord be merciful to me, how have I been led from littel stepps to grate stepps!—And if I should be found out!—But your Honner says you will take me into your Honner's sarvise, and protect me, if as I should at any time be found out; and raise my wages besides; or set me upp in a good inne; which is my ambishion. And you will be honnerable and kind to my dearest young lady, God love her.—But who can be unkind to she?

I wil do my best I am able, since your Honner will be apt to lose her, as your Honner says, if I do not; and a man so stingie will be apt to gain her. But mayhap my deareste young lady will not make all this trubble needful. If she has promissed, she will stand to it, I dare to say.

I love your Honner for contriveing to save mischiff so well. I thought till I know'd your Honner, that you was verry mischevous, and plese your Honner: but find it to be clene contrary. Your Honner, it is plane, means mighty well by every

body, as far as I see. As I am sure I do myself; for I am, althoff a very plane man, and all that, a very honnest one, I thank my God. And have good principels, and have kept my young lady's pressepts always in mind: for she goes no where, but saves a soul or two, more or less.

So, commending myself to your Honner's further favour, not forgetting the inne, when your Honner shall so please, and good one offers; for plases are no inherritanses now-a-days. And, I hope, your Honner will not think me a dishonest man for sarving your Honner agenst my duty, as it may look; but only as my conshence clears me.

Be pleased, howsomever, if it like your Honner, not to call me honest Joseph, so often. For, althoff I think myself verry honnest, and all that, yet I am touched a littel, for fear I should not do the quite right thing: and too besides, your Honner has such a fesseshious way with you, as that I hardly know whether you are in jest or earnest, when your Honner calls me honnest so often.

I am a very plane man, and seldom have writ to such honourable gentlemen; so you will be good enuff to pass by every thing, as I have often said, and need not now say over again.

As to Mrs. Betty; I tho'te, indeed, she looked above me. But she comes on vere well, natheless. I could like her better, iff she was better to my young lady. But she has too much wit for so plane a man. Natheless, if she was to angre me, althoff it is a shame to bete a woman, yet I colde make shift to throe my hat at her, or so, your Honner.

But that same reseit, iff your Honner so please, to cure a shrewish wife. It would more encurrege to wed, iff so be one know'd it before-hand, as one may say. So likewise, if one knoed one could honnestly, as your Honner says, and as of the handy-work of God, in one twelvemonth—

But, I shall grow impertinent to such a grate man.—And hereafter may do for that, as she turnes out: for one mought be loth to part with her, mayhap, so verry soon too; espessially if she was to make the notable landlady your Honner put into my head.

Butt wonce moer, begging your Honner's parden, and promissing all dilligence and exsackness, I reste,

Your Honner's dewtiful sarvant to command, JOSEPH LEMAN.

LETTER V

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. ST. ALBAN'S, MONDAY NIGHT

I snatch a few moments while my beloved is retired, [as I hope, to rest,] to perform my promise. No pursuit—nor have I apprehensions of any; though I must make my charmer dread that there will be one.

And now, let me tell thee, that never was joy so complete as mine!—But let me inquire, is not the angel flown away?

O no! She is in the next apartment!—Securely mine!—Mine for ever!

O ecstasy!—My heart will burst my breast,

To leap into her bosom!

I knew that the whole stupid family were in a combination to do my business for me. I told thee that they were all working for me, like so many ground moles; and still more blind than the moles are said to be, unknowing that they did so. I myself, the director of their principal motions; which falling in with the malice of their little hearts, they took to be all their own.

But did I say my joy was perfect?—O no!—It receives some abatement from my disgusted bride. For how can I endure to

think that I owe more to her relations' precautions than to her favour for me?—Or even, as far as I know, to her preference of me to another man?

But let me not indulge this thought. Were I to do so, it might cost my charmer dear. Let me rejoice, that she has passed the rubicon: that she cannot return: that, as I have ordered it, the flight will appear to the implacables to be altogether with her own consent: and that if I doubt her love, I can put her to trials as mortifying to her niceness, as glorious to my pride.—For, let me tell thee, dearly as I love her, if I thought there was but the shadow of a doubt in her mind whether she preferred me to any man living, I would shew her no mercy.

TUESDAY, DAY-DAWN.

But, on the wings of love, I fly to my charmer, who perhaps by this time is rising to encourage the tardy dawn. I have not slept a wink of the hour and half I lay down to invite sleep. It seems to me, that I am not so much body, as to require such a vulgar renovation.

But why, as in the chariot, as in the inn, at alighting, all heart-bursting grief, my dearest creature? SO persecuted as thou wert persecuted!—So much in danger of the most abhorred compulsion!—Yet grief so unsuspectedly sincere for an escape so critical!—Take care, take care, O beloved of my soul! for jealous is the heart in which love has erected a temple to thee.

Yet, it must be allowed, that such a sudden transition must

affect her; must ice her over. When a little more used to her new situation; when her hurries are at an end; when she sees how religiously I shall observe all her INJUNCTIONS; she will undoubtedly have the gratitude to distinguish between the confinement she has escaped from, and the liberty she has reason to rejoice in.

She comes! She comes! And the sun is just rising to attend her! Adieu! Be half as happy as I am (for all diffidencies, like night-fogs before the sun, disperse at her approach) and, next myself, thou wilt be the happiest man in the world.

LETTER VI

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12

I will pursue my melancholy story.

Being thus hurried to the chariot, it would have been to no purpose to have refused entering into it, had he not in my fright lifted me in, as he did: and it instantly drove away a full gallop, and stopped not till it brought us to St. Alban's; which was just as the day shut in.

I thought I should have fainted several times by the way. With uplifted hands and eyes, God protect me! said I often to myself: Can it be I, that am here! My eyes running over, and my heart ready to burst with sighs as involuntarily as my flight.

How different, how inexpressibly different, the gay wretch; visibly triumphing (as I could not but construe his almost rapturous joy) in the success of his arts! But overflowing with complimental flourishes, yet respectfully distant his address, all the way we flew; for that, rather than galloping, was the motion of the horses; which took, as I believe, a round-about way, to prevent being traced.

I have reason to think, there were other horsemen at his devotion; three or four different persons, above the rank of the

servants, galloping by us now-and-then, on each side of the chariot: but he took no notice of them; and I had too much grief, mingled with indignation, notwithstanding all his blandishments, to ask any questions about them, or any thing else.

Think, my dear, what were my thoughts on alighting from the chariot; having no attendant of my own sex; no clothes but what I had on, and those little suited to such a journey as I had already taken, and was still to take: neither hood nor hat, nor any thing but a handkerchief round my head and shoulders: fatigued to death: my mind still more fatigued than my body: and in such a foam the horses, that every one in the inn we put up at guessed [they could not do otherwise] that I was a young giddy creature, who had run away from her friends. This it was easy to see, by their whispering and gaping: more of the people of the house also coming in by turns, than were necessary for the attendance.

The mistress of the house, whom he sent in to me, showed me another apartment; and, seeing me ready to faint, brought me hartshorn and water; and then, upon my desiring to be left alone for half an hour, retired: for I found my heart ready to burst, on revolving every thing in my thoughts: and the moment she was gone, fastening the door, I threw myself into an old great chair, and gave way to a violent flood of tears, which a little relieved me.

Mr. Lovelace, sooner than I wished, sent up the gentlewoman, who pressed me, in his name, to admit my brother, or to come down to him: for he had told her I was his sister; and that he had

brought me, against my will, and without warning, from a friend's house, where I had been all the winter, in order to prevent my marrying against the consent of my friends; to whom he was now conducting me; and that, having given me no time for a travelling-dress, I was greatly offended at him.

So, my dear, your frank, your open-hearted friend, was forced to countenance this tale; which indeed suited me the better, because I was unable for some time to talk, speak, or look up; and so my dejection, and grief, and silence, might very well pass before the gentlewoman and her niece who attended me, as a fit of sullenness.

The room I was in being a bed-chamber, I chose to go down, at his repeated message, attended by the mistress of the house, to that in which he was. He approached me with great respect, yet not exceeding a brotherly politeness, where a brother is polite; and, calling me his dearest sister, asked after the state of my mind; and hoped I would forgive him; for never brother half so well loved a sister, as he me.

A wretch! how naturally did he fall into the character, although I was so much out of mine!

Unthinking creatures have some comfort in the shortness of their views; in their unapprehensiveness; and that they penetrate not beyond the present moment: in short that they are unthinking! —But, for a person of my thoughtful disposition, who has been accustomed to look forward, as well to the possible, as to the probable, what comfort can I have in my reflections?

But let me give you the particulars of our conversation a little before and after our supper-time, joining both in one.

When we were alone, he besought me (I cannot say but with all the tokens of a passionate and respectful tenderness) to be better reconciled to myself and to him: he repeated all the vows of honour and inviolable affection that he ever made me: he promised to be wholly governed by me in every future step. He asked me to give him leave to propose, whether I chose to set out next day to either of his aunts?

I was silent. I knew not what to say, nor what to do.

Whether I chose to have private lodgings procured for me in either of those ladies' neighbourhood, as were once my thoughts?

I was still silent.

Whether I chose to go to either of Lord M.'s seats; that of Berks, or that in the county we were in?

In lodgings, I said, any where, where he was not to be.

He had promised this, he owned; and he would religiously keep to his word, as soon as he found all danger of pursuit over; and that I was settled to my mind. But, if the place were indifferent to me, London was the safest, and the most private: and his relations should all visit me there, the moment I thought fit to admit them. His cousin Charlotte, particularly, should attend me, as my companion, if I would accept of her, as soon as she was able to go abroad. Mean time, would I go to Lady Betty Lawrance's (Lady Sarah was a melancholy woman)? I should be the most welcome guest she ever received.

I told him, I wished not to go (immediately, however, and in the frame I was in, and not likely to be out of) to any of his relations: that my reputation was concerned, to have him absent from me: that, if I were in some private lodging, the meaner the less to be suspected, (as it would be known, that I went away by his means; and he would be supposed to have provided me handsome accommodations,) it would be most suitable both to my mind and to my situation: that this might be best, I should think, in the country for me; in town for him. And no matter how soon he was known to be there.

If he might deliver his opinion, he said, it was, that since I declined going to any of his relations, London was the only place in the world to be private in. Every new comer in a country town or village excited a curiosity: A person of my figure [and many compliments he made me] would excite more. Even messages and letters, where none used to be brought, would occasion inquiry. He had not provided a lodging any where, supposing I would choose to go either to London, where accommodations of that sort might be fixed upon in an hour's time, or to Lady Betty's; or to Lord M.'s Herfordshire seat, where was the housekeeper, an excellent woman, Mrs. Greme, such another as my Norton.

To be sure, I said, if I were pursued, it would be in their first passion; and some one of his relations' houses would be the place they would expect to find me at—I knew not what to do.

My pleasure should determine him, he said, be it what it would. Only that I were safe, was all he was solicitous about. He

had lodgings in town; but he did not offer to propose them. He knew, I would have more objections to go to them, than I could to go to Lord M.'s, or to Lady Betty's.

No doubt of it, I replied, with such an indignation in my manner, as made him run over with professions, that he was far from proposing them, or wishing for my acceptance of them. And again he repeated, that my honour and safety were all he was solicitous about; assuring me, that my will should be a law to him in every particular.

I was too peevish, and too much afflicted, and indeed too much incensed against him, to take well any thing he said.

I thought myself, I said, extremely unhappy. I knew not what to determine upon: my reputation now, no doubt, utterly ruined: destitute of clothes: unfit to be seen by any body: my very indigence, as I might call it, proclaiming my folly to every one who saw me; who would suppose that I had been taken at advantage, or had given an undue one; and had no power over either my will or my actions: that I could not but think I had been dealt artfully with: that he had seemed to have taken, what he might suppose, the just measure of my weakness, founded on my youth and inexperience: that I could not forgive myself for meeting him: that my heart bled for the distresses of my father and mother, on this occasion: that I would give the world, and all my hopes in it, to have been still in my father's house, whatever had been my usage: that, let him protest and vow what he would, I saw something low and selfish in his love, that he could study

to put a young creature upon making such a sacrifice of her duty and conscience: when a person, actuated by a generous love, must seek to oblige the object of it, in every thing essential to her honour, and to her peace of mind.

He was very attentive to all I said, never offering to interrupt me once. His answer to every article, almost methodically, shewed his memory.

'What I had said, he told me, made him very grave; and he would answer accordingly.

'He was grieved at his heart, to find that he had so little share in my favour or confidence.

'As to my reputation, (he must be very sincere with me,) that could not suffer half so much by the step I so regretted to have taken, as by the confinement, and equally foolish and unjust treatment, I had met with from my relations: that every mouth was full of blame of them, of my brother and sister particularly; and of wonder at my patience: that he must repeat what he had written to me he believed more than once, That my friends themselves expected that I should take a proper opportunity to free myself from their persecutions; why else did they confine me? That my exalted character, as he called it, would still bear me out, with those who knew me; who knew my brother's and sister's motives; and who knew the wretch they were for compelling me to have.

'With regard to clothes; who, as matters were circumstanced, could expect that I should be able to bring away any others than

those I had on at the time? For present use or wear, all the ladies of his family would take a pride to supply me: for future, the product of the best looms, not only in England, but throughout the world, were at my command.

'If I wanted money, as no doubt I must, he should be proud to supply me: Would to heaven, he might presume to hope, there were but one interest between us!'

And then he would fain have had me to accept of a bank note of a hundred pounds; which, unawares to me, he put into my hand: but which, you may be sure, I refused with warmth.

'He was inexpressibly grieved and surprised, he said, to hear me say he had acted artfully by me. He came provided, according to my confirmed appointment,' [a wretch to upbraid me thus!] 'to redeem me from my persecutors; and little expected a change of sentiment, and that he should have so much difficulty to prevail upon me, as he had met with: that perhaps I might think his offer to go into the garden with me, and to face my assembled relations, was a piece of art only: but that if I did, I wronged him: since to this hour, seeing my excessive uneasiness, he wished, with all his soul he had been permitted to accompany me in. It was always his maxim to brave a threatened danger. Threateners, where they have an opportunity to put in force their threats, were seldom to be feared. But had he been assured of a private stab, or of as many death's wounds as there were persons in my family, (made desperate as he should have been by my return,) he would have attended me into the house.'

So, my dear, what I have to do, is to hold myself inexcusable for meeting such a determined and audacious spirit; that's all! I have hardly any question now, but that he would have contrived some wicked stratagem or other to have got me away, had I met him at a midnight hour, as once or twice I had thoughts to do; and that would have been more terrible still.

He concluded this part of his talk, with saying, 'That he doubted not but that, had he attended me in, he should have come off in every one's opinion well, that he should have had general leave to renew his visits.'

He went on—'He must be so bold as to tell me, that he should have paid a visit of this kind, (but indeed accompanied by several of his trusty friends,) had I not met him; and that very afternoon too; for he could not tamely let the dreadful Wednesday come, without making some effort to change their determinations.'

What, my dear, was to be done with such a man!

'That therefore for my sake, as well as for his own, he had reason to wish that a disease so desperate had been attempted to be overcome by as desperate a remedy. We all know, said he, that great ends are sometimes brought about by the very means by which they are endeavoured to be frustrated.'

My present situation, I am sure, thought I, affords a sad evidence of this truth!

I was silent all this time. My blame was indeed turned inward. Sometimes, too, I was half-frighted at his audaciousness: at others, had the less inclination to interrupt him, being excessively

fatigued, and my spirits sunk to nothing, with a view even of the best prospects with such a man.

This gave his opportunity to proceed: and that he did; assuming a still more serious air.

'As to what further remained for him to say, in answer to what I had said, he hoped I would pardon him; but, upon his soul, he was concerned, infinitely concerned, he repeated, (his colour and his voice rising,) that it was necessary for him to observe, how much I chose rather to have run the risque of being Solmes's wife, than to have it in my power to reward a man who, I must forgive him, had been as much insulted on my account, as I had been on his—who had watched my commands, and (pardon me, Madam) ever changeable motion of your pen, all hours, in all weathers, and with a cheerfulness and ardour, that nothing but the most faithful and obsequious passion could inspire.'

I now, my dear, began to revive into a little more warmth of attention.—

'And all, Madam, for what?'—How I stared! for he stopt then a moment or two—'Only,' went he on, 'to prevail upon you to free yourself from ungenerous and base oppressions'—

Sir, Sir, indignantly said I—

'Hear me but out, dearest Madam!—My heart is full—I must speak what I have to say—To be told (for your words are yet in my ears, and at my heart!) that you would give the world, and all your hopes in it, to have been still in your cruel and gloomy father's house'—

Not a word, Sir, against my father!—I will not bear that—

'Whatever had been your usage:—and you have a credulity, Madam, against all probability, if you believe you should have avoided being Solmes's wife: That I have put you upon sacrificing your duty and conscience—yet, dearest creature! see you not the contradiction that your warmth of temper has surprised you into, when the reluctance you shewed to the last to leave your persecutors, has cleared your conscience from the least reproach of this sort?'—

O Sir! Sir! are you so critical then? Are you so light in your anger as to dwell upon words?—

Indeed, my dear, I have since thought that his anger was not owing to that sudden impetus, which cannot be easily bridled; but rather was a sort of manageable anger let loose to intimidate me.

'Forgive me, Madam—I have just done—Have I not, in your opinion, hazarded my life to redeem you from oppression? Yet is not my reward, after all, precarious?—For, Madam, have you not conditioned with me (and, hard as the condition is, most sacredly will I observe it) that all my hope must be remote? That you are determined to have it in your power to favour or reject me totally, as you please?'

See, my dear! in every respect my condition changed for the worse! Is it in my power to take your advice, if I should think it ever so right to take it?[3]

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[3] Clarissa had been censured as behaving to Mr. Lovelace, in their first conversation at St. Alban's, and afterwards, with too much reserve, and even with haughtiness.

'And have you not furthermore declared,' proceeded he 'that you will engage to renounce me for ever, if your friends insist upon that cruel renunciation, as the terms of being reconciled to you?

'But nevertheless, Madam, all the merit of having saved you from an odious compulsion, shall be mine. I glory in it, though I were to lose you for ever. As I see I am but too likely to do, from your present displeasure; and especially, if your friends insist upon the terms you are ready to comply with.

'That you are your own mistress, through my means, is, I repeat, my boast. As such, I humbly implore your favour, and that only upon the conditions I have yielded to hope for it. As I do now, thus humbly, [the proud wretch falling on one knee,] your forgiveness, for so long detaining your ear, and for all the plain dealing that my undesigning heart would not be denied to utter by my lips.'

O Sir, pray rise! Let the obliged kneel, if one of us must kneel! But, nevertheless, proceed not in this strain, I beseech you. You

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Surely those, who have thought her to blame on this account, have not paid a due attention to the story. How early, as above, and in what immediately follows, does he remind her of the terms of distance which she had prescribed to him, before she was in his power, in hopes to leave the door open for a reconciliation with her friends, which her heart was set upon? And how artfully does he (unrequired) promise to observe the conditions in which she in her present circumstances and situation (in pursuance of Miss Howe's advice) would gladly have dispensed with?—To say nothing of the resentment she was under a necessity to shew, at the manner of his getting her away, in order to justify to him the sincerity of her refusal to go off with him. See, in her subsequent Letter to Miss Howe, No. IX., her own sense upon the subject.

have had a great deal of trouble about me: but had you let me know in time, that you expected to be rewarded for it at the price of my duty, I should have spared you much of it.

Far be it from me, Sir, to depreciate merit so extraordinary. But let me say, that had it not been for the forbidden correspondence I was teased by you into; and which I had not continued (every letter, for many letters, intended to be the last) but because I thought you a sufferer from my friends; I had not been either confined or ill treated: nor would my brother's low-meant violence have had a foundation to work upon.

I am far from thinking my case would have been so very desperate as you imagine had I staid. My father loved me in his heart: he would not see me before; and I wanted only to see him, and to be heard; and a delay of his sentence was the least thing I expected from the trial I was to stand.

You are boasting of your merits, Sir: let merit be your boast; nothing else can attract me. If personal considerations had principal weight with me, either in Solmes's disfavour, or in your favour, I shall despise myself: if you value yourself upon them, in preference to the person of the poor Solmes, I shall despise you!

You may glory in your fancied merits in getting me away: but the cause of your glory, I tell you plainly, is my shame.

Make to yourself a title to my regard, which I can better approve of; or else you will not have so much merit with me, as you have with yourself.

But here, Sir, like the first pair, (I, at least, driven out of my

paradise,) are we recriminating. No more shall you need to tell me of your sufferings, and your merits! your all hours, and all weathers! For I will bear them in memory as long as I live; and if it be impossible for me to reward them, be ever ready to own the obligation. All that I desire of you now is, to leave it to myself to seek for some private abode: to take the chariot with you to London, or elsewhere: and, if I have any further occasion for your assistance and protection, I will signify it to you, and be still further obliged to you.

You are warm, my dearest life!—But indeed there is no occasion for it. Had I any views unworthy of my faithful love for you, I should not have been so honest in my declarations.

Then he began again to vow the sincerity of his intentions—

But I took him up short: I am willing to believe you, Sir. It would be insupportable but to suppose there were a necessity for such solemn declarations. [At this he seemed to collect himself, as I may say, into a little more circumspection.] If I thought there were, I would not sit with you here, in a public inn, I assure you, although cheated hither, as far as I know, by methods (you must excuse me, Sir) which, but to suspect, will hardly let me have patience either with you or with myself—but no more of this, just now: Let me, I beseech you, good Sir, bowing [I was very angry!] let me only know whether you intend to leave me; or whether I have only escaped from one confinement to another?

Cheated hither, as far as I know, Madam! Let you know (and with that air, too, charming, though grievous to my heart!) if you

have only escaped from one confinement to another—amazing! perfectly amazing! And can there be a necessity for me to answer this? You are absolutely your own mistress—it was very strange, if you were not. The moment you are in a place of safety, I will leave you. To one condition only, give me leave to beg your consent: it is this, that you will be pleased, now you are so entirely in your own power, to renew a promise voluntarily made before; voluntarily, or I would not now presume to request it; for although I would not be thought capable of growing upon concession, yet I cannot bear to think of losing the ground your goodness had given me room to hope I had gained; 'That, make up how you please with your relations, you will never marry any other man, while I am living and single, unless I should be so wicked as to give new cause for high displeasure.'

I hesitate not to confirm this promise, Sir, upon your own condition. In what manner do you expect to confirm it?

Only, Madam, by your word.

Then I never will.

He had the assurance (I was now in his power) to salute me as a sealing of my promise, as he called it. His motion was so sudden, that I was not aware of it. It would have looked affected to be very angry; yet I could not be pleased, considering this as a leading freedom, from a spirit so audacious and encroaching: and he might see, that I was not.

He passed all that by with an air peculiar to himself—Enough, enough, dearest Madam! And now let me beg of you but to

conquer this dreadful uneasiness, which gives me to apprehend too much for my jealous love to bear; and it shall be my whole endeavour to deserve your favour, and to make you the happiest woman in the world; as I shall be the happiest of men.

I broke from him to write to you my preceding letter; but refused to send it by his servant, as I told you. The mistress of the house helped me to a messenger, who was to carry what you should give him to Lord M.'s seat in Hertfordshire, directed for Mrs. Greme, the housekeeper there. And early in the morning, for fear of pursuit, we were to set out that way: and there he proposed to change the chariot and six for a chaise and pair of his own, which he had at that seat, as it would be a less-noticed conveyance.

I looked over my little stock of money; and found it to be no more than seven guineas and some silver: the rest of my stock was but fifty guineas, and that five more than I thought it was, when my sister challenged me as to the sum I had by me:[4] and those I left in my escritoire, little intending to go away with him.

Indeed my case abounds with a shocking number of indelicate circumstances. Among the rest, I was forced to account to him, who knew I could have no clothes but what I had on, how I came to have linen with me (for he could not but know I sent for it); lest he should imagine I had an early design to go away with him, and made that part of the preparation.

He most heartily wished, he said, for my mind's sake, that your

[4] See Vol. I. Letter XLIII.

mother would have afforded me her protection; and delivered himself upon this subject with equal freedom and concern.

There are, my dear Miss Howe, a multitude of punctilios and decorums, which a young creature must dispense with, who, in a situation like mine, makes a man the intimate attendant of her person. I could now, I think, give twenty reasons stronger than any I have heretofore mentioned, why women of the least delicacy should never think of incurring the danger and the disgrace of taking the step I have been drawn in to take, but with horror and aversion; and why they should look upon the man who should tempt them to it, as the vilest and most selfish of seducers.

Before five o'clock (Tuesday morning) the maidservant came up to tell me that my brother was ready, and that breakfast also waited for me in the parlour. I went down with a heart as heavy as my eyes, and received great acknowledgements and compliments from him on being so soon dressed, and ready (as he interpreted it) to continue on our journey.

He had the thought which I had not (for what had I to do with thinking, who had it not when I stood most in need of it?) to purchase for me a velvet hood, and a short cloke, trimmed with silver, without saying any thing to me. He must reward himself, the artful encroacher said, before the landlady and her maids and niece, for his forethought; and would salute his pretty sullen sister!—He took his reward; and, as he said before, a tear with it. While he assured me, still before them [a vile wretch!] that

I had nothing to fear from meeting with parents who so dearly loved me.—

How could I be complaisant, my dear, to such a man as this?

When we had got in the chariot, and it began to move, he asked me, whether I had any objection to go to Lord M.'s Hertfordshire seat? His Lordship, he said, was at his Berkshire one.

I told him, I chose not to go, as yet, to any of his relations; for that would indicate a plain defiance to my own. My choice was, to go to a private lodging, and for him to be at a distance from me: at least, till I heard how things were taken by my friends: for that, although I had but little hopes of a reconciliation as it was; yet if they knew I was in his protection, or in that of any of his friends, (which would be looked upon as the same thing,) there would not be room for any hopes at all.

I should govern him as I pleased, he solemnly assured me, in every thing. But he still thought London was the best place for me; and if I were once safe there, and in a lodging to my liking, he would go to M. Hall. But, as I approved not of London, he would urge it no further.

He proposed, and I consented, to put up at an inn in the neighbourhood of The Lawn (as he called Lord M.'s seat in this county) since I chose not to go thither. And here I got two hours to myself; which I told him I should pass in writing another letter to you, (meaning my narrative, which, though greatly fatigued, I had begun at St. Alban's,) and in one to my sister, to apprise the family (whether they were solicitous about it or not) that I was

well; and to beg that my clothes, some particular books, and the fifty guineas I had left in my escritoire, might be sent me.

He asked, if I had considered whither to have them directed?

Indeed, not I, I told him: I was a stranger to—

So was he, he interrupted me; but it struck him by chance—

Wicked story-teller!

But, added he, I will tell you, Madam, how it shall be managed—If you don't choose to go to London, it is, nevertheless, best that your relations should think you there; for then they will absolutely despair of finding you. If you write, be pleased to direct, to be left for you, at Mr. Osgood's, near Soho-square. Mr. Osgood is a man of reputation: and this will effectually amuse them.

Amuse them, my dear!—Amuse whom?—My father!—my uncles!—But it must be so!——All his expedients ready, you see!

I had no objection to this: and I have written accordingly. But what answer I shall have, or whether any, that is what gives me no small anxiety.

This, however, is one consolation, that if I have an answer, and although my brother should be the writer, it cannot be more severe than the treatment I have of late received from him and my sister.

Mr. Lovelace staid out about an hour and half; and then came in; impatiently sending up to me no less than four times, to desire admittance. But I sent him word as often, that I was busy; and at

last, that I should be so, till dinner was ready. He then hastened that, as I heard him now-and-then, with a hearty curse upon the cook and waiters.

This is another of his perfections. I ventured afterwards to check him for his free words, as we sat at dinner.

Having heard him swear at his servant, when below, whom, nevertheless, he owns to be a good one; it is a sad life, said I, these innkeepers live, Mr. Lovelace.

No; pretty well, I believe—but why, Madam, think you, that fellows, who eat and drink at other men's cost, or they are sorry innkeepers, should be entitled to pity?

Because of the soldiers they are obliged to quarter; who are generally, I believe, wretched profligates. Bless me! said I, how I heard one of them swear and curse, just now, at a modest, meek man, as I judge by his low voice, and gentle answers!—Well do they make it a proverb—Like a trooper!

He bit his lip; arose; turned upon his heel; stept to the glass; and looking confidently abashed, if I may say so, Ay, Madam, said he, these troopers are sad swearing fellows. I think their officers should chastise them for it.

I am sure they deserve chastisement, replied I: for swearing is a most unmanly vice, and cursing as poor and low a one; since they proclaim the profligate's want of power, and his wickedness at the same time; for, could such a one punish as he speaks, he would be a fiend!

Charmingly observed, by my soul, Madam!—The next

trooper I hear swear and curse, I'll tell him what an unmanly, and what a poor wretch he is.

Mrs. Greme came to pay her duty to me, as Mr. Lovelace called it; and was very urgent with me to go to her lord's house; letting me know what handsome things she had heard of her lord, and his two nieces, and all the family, say of me; and what wishes for several months past they had put up for the honour she now hoped would soon be done them all.

This gave me some satisfaction, as it confirmed from the mouth of a very good sort of woman all that Mr. Lovelace had told me.

Upon inquiry about a private lodging, she recommended me to a sister-in-law of hers, eight miles from thence—where I now am. And what pleased me the better, was, that Mr. Lovelace (of whom I could see she was infinitely observant) obliged her, of his own motion, to accompany me in the chaise; himself riding on horseback, with his two servants, and one of Lord M.'s. And here we arrived about four o'clock.

But, as I told you in my former, the lodgings are inconvenient. Mr. Lovelace indeed found great fault with them: and told Mrs. Greme (who had said, that they were not worthy of us) that they came not up even to her own account of them. As the house was a mile from a town, it was not proper for him, he said, to be so far distant from me, lest any thing should happen: and yet the apartments were not separate and distinct enough for me to like them, he was sure.

This must be agreeable enough for him, you will believe.

Mrs. Greme and I had a good deal of talk in the chaise about him: she was very easy and free in her answers to all I asked; and has, I find, a very serious turn.

I led her on to say to the following effect; some part of it not unlike what Lord M.'s dismissed bailiff had said before; by which I find that all the servants have a like opinion of him.

'That Mr. Lovelace was a generous man: that it was hard to say, whether the servants of her lord's family loved or feared him most: that her lord had a very great affection for him: that his two noble aunts were not less fond of him: that his cousins Montague were as good natured young ladies as ever lived: that Lord M. and Lady Sarah, and Lady Betty had proposed several ladies to him, before he made his addresses to me: and even since; despairing to move me and my friends in his favour.—But that he had no thoughts of marrying at all, she had heard him say, if it were not to me: that as well her lord as the two ladies his sisters were a good deal concerned at the ill-usage he received from my family: but admired my character, and wished to have him married to me (although I were not to have a shilling) in preference to any other person, from the opinion they had of the influence I should have over him. That, to be sure, Mr. Lovelace was a wild gentleman: but wildness was a distemper which would cure itself. That her lord delighted in his company, whenever he could get it: but that they often fell out; and his lordship was always forced to submit —indeed, was half afraid of him, she believed; for Mr. Lovelace

would do as he pleased. She mingled a thousand pities often, that he acted not up to the talents lent him—yet would have it, that he had fine qualities to found a reformation upon: and, when the happy day came, would make amends for all: and of this all his friends were so assured, that they wished for nothing so earnestly, as for his marriage.'

This, indifferent as it is, is better than my brother says of him.

The people of the house here are very honest-looking industrious folks: Mrs. Sorlings is the gentlewoman's name. The farm seems well stocked, and thriving. She is a widow; has two sons, men grown, who vie with each other which shall take most pains in promoting the common good; and they are both of them, I already see, more respectful to two modest young women their sisters, than my brother was to his sister.

I believe I must stay here longer than at first I thought I should.

I ought to have mentioned, that, before I set out for this place, I received your kind letter.[5] Every thing is kind from so dear a friend.

I own, that after I had told you of my absolute determination not to go away with him, you might well be surprised, at your first hearing that I was actually gone. The Lord bless me, my dear, I myself, at times, can hardly believe it is I, that have been led to take so strange a step.

I have not the better opinion of Mr. Lovelace for his extravagant volubility. He is too full of professions. He says too

[5] See Vol. II. Letter XLVII.

many fine things of me, and to me. True respect, true value, I think, lies not in words: words cannot express it: the silent awe, the humble, the doubting eye, and even the hesitating voice, better shew it by much, than, as our beloved Shakespeare says,

> ——The rattling tongue
> Of saucy and audacious eloquence.

The man indeed at times is all upon the ecstatic; one of his phrases. But, to my shame and confusion, I must say, that I know too well to what to attribute his transports. In one word, it is to his triumph, my dear. And, to impute it to that perhaps equally exposes my vanity, and condemns my folly.

We have been alarmed with notions of a pursuit, founded upon a letter from his intelligencer.

How do different circumstances either sanctify or condemn the same action!—What care ought we to take not to confound the distinctions of right and wrong, when self comes in the question!—I condemned in Mr. Lovelace the corrupting of a servant of my father's; and now I am glad to give a kind of indirect approbation of that fault, by inquiring of him what he hears, by that or any other way, of the manner in which my relations took my flight. A preconcerted, forward, and artful flight, it must undoubtedly appear to them. How grievous is that to think of! yet how, as long as I am situated, can I put them right?

Most heavily, he says, they take it; but shew not so much grief as rage. And he can hardly have patience to hear of the virulence and menaces of my brother against himself. Then a merit is made to me of his forbearance.

What a satisfaction am I robbed of, my dearest friend, when I reflect upon my inconsiderateness! O that I had it still in my power to say I suffered wrong, rather than did wrong! That others were more wanting in their kindness to me than I duty (where duty is owing) to them.

Fie upon me! for meeting the seducer!—Let all end as happily as it now may, I have laid up for myself remorse for my whole life.

What still more concerns me is, that every time I see this man, I am still at a greater loss than before what to make of him. I watch every turn of his countenance: and I think I see very deep lines in it. He looks with more meaning, I verily think, than he used to look; yet not more serious; not less gay—I don't know how he looks—but with more confidence a great deal than formerly; and yet he never wanted that.

But here is the thing; I behold him with fear now, as conscious of the power my indiscretion has given him over me. And well may he look more elate, when he sees me deprived of all the self-supposed significance, which adorns and exalts a person who has been accustomed to respect; and who now, by a conscious inferiority, allows herself to be overcome, and in a state of obligation, as I may say, to a man who from a humble suitor to her

for her favour, assumes the consequence and airs of a protector.

I shall send this, as my former, by a poor man, who travels every day with pedlary matters. He will leave it at Mrs. Knolly's, as you direct.

If you hear any thing of my father and mother, and of their health, and how my friends were affected by my unhappy step, pray be so good as to write me a few lines by the messenger, if his waiting for them can be known to you.

I am afraid to ask you, Whether, upon reading that part of my narrative already in your hands, you think any sort of extenuation lies for

Your unhappy CLARISSA HARLOWE?

LETTER VII

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. TUESDAY, WEDN. APRIL 11, 12

You claim my promise, that I will be as particular as possible, in all that passes between me and my goddess. Indeed, I never had a more illustrious subject to exercise my pen. And, moreover, I have leisure; for by her good will, my access would be as difficult to her, as that of the humblest slave to an Eastern monarch. Nothing, then, but inclination to write can be wanting; and since our friendship, and your obliging attendance upon me at the White Hart, will not excuse that, I will endeavour to keep my word.

I parted with thee and thy brethren, with a full resolution, thou knowest, to rejoin ye, if she once again disappointed me, in order to go together (attended by our servants, for shew sake) to the gloomy father; and demand audience of the tyrant upon the freedoms taken with my character. In short, to have tried by fair resolutions, and treat his charming daughter with less inhumanity, and me with more civility.

I told thee my reasons for not going in search of a letter of countermand. I was right; for if I had, I should have found such a one; and had I received it, she would not have met me. Did she

think, that after I had been more than once disappointed, I would not keep her to her promise; that I would not hold her to it, when I had got her in so deeply?

The moment I heard the door unbolt, I was sure of her. That motion made my heart bound to my throat. But when that was followed with the presence of my charmer, flashing upon me all at once in a flood of brightness, sweetly dressed, though all unprepared for a journey, I trod air, and hardly thought myself a mortal.

Thou shalt judge of her dress, as at the moment I first beheld her she appeared to me, and as, upon a nearer observation, she really was. I am a critic, thou knowest, in women's dresses. Many a one have I taught to dress, and helped to undress. But there is such a native elegance in this lady, that she surpasses all that I could imagine surpassing. But then her person adorns what she wears, more than dress can adorn her; and that's her excellence.

Expect therefore a faint sketch of her admirable person with her dress.

Her wax-like flesh (for after all, flesh and blood I think she is) by its delicacy and firmness, answers for the soundness of her health. Thou hast often heard me launch out in praise of her complexion. I never in my life beheld a skins so illustriously fair. The lily and the driven snow it is nonsense to talk of: her lawn and her laces one might indeed compare to those; but what a whited wall would a woman appear to be, who had a complexion which would justify such unnatural comparisons? But this lady is

all glowing, all charming flesh and blood; yet so clear, that every meandring vein is to be seen in all the lovely parts of her which custom permits to be visible.

Thou has heard me also describe the wavy ringlets of her shining hair, needing neither art nor powder; of itself an ornament, defying all other ornaments; wantoning in and about a neck that is beautiful beyond description.

Her head-dress was a Brussels-lace mob, peculiarly adapted to the charming air and turn of her features. A sky-blue ribband illustrated that. But although the weather was somewhat sharp, she had not on either hat or hood; for, besides that she loves to use herself hardily (by which means and by a temperance truly exemplary, she is allowed to have given high health and vigour to an originally tender constitution) she seems to have intended to shew me, that she was determined not to stand to her appointment. O Jack! that such a sweet girl should be a rogue!

Her morning gown was a pale primrose-coloured paduasoy: the cuffs and robins curiously embroidered by the fingers of this ever-charming Arachne, in a running pattern of violets and their leaves, the light in the flowers silver, gold in the leaves. A pair of diamond snaps in her ears. A white handkerchief wrought by the same inimitable fingers concealed—O Belford! what still more inimitable beauties did it not conceal!—And I saw, all the way we rode, the bounding heart (by its throbbing motions I saw it!) dancing beneath her charming umbrage.

Her ruffles were the same as her mob. Her apron a flowered

lawn. Her coat white sattin, quilted: blue sattin her shoes, braided with the same colour, without lace; for what need has the prettiest foot in the world of ornament? neat buckles in them: and on her charming arms a pair of black velvet glove-like muffs of her own invention; for she makes and gives fashions as she pleases. —Her hands velvet of themselves, thus uncovered the freer to be grasped by those of her adorer.

I have told thee what were my transports, when the undrawn bolt presented to me my long-expected goddess. Her emotions were more sweetly feminine, after the first moments; for then the fire of her starry eyes began to sink into a less dazzling languor. She trembled: nor knew she how to support the agitations of a heart she had never found so ungovernable. She was even fainting, when I clasped her in my supporting arms. What a precious moment that! How near, how sweetly near, the throbbing partners!

By her dress, I saw, as I observed before, how unprepared she was for a journey; and not doubting her intention once more to disappoint me, I would have drawn her after me. Then began a contention the most vehement that ever I had with woman. It would pain thy friendly heart to be told the infinite trouble I had with her. I begged, I prayed; on my knees, yet in vain, I begged and prayed her to answer her own appointment: and had I not happily provided for such a struggle, knowing whom I had to deal with, I had certainly failed in my design; and as certainly would have accompanied her in, without thee and thy brethren: and who

knows what might have been the consequence?

But my honest agent answering my signal, though not quite so soon as I expected, in the manner thou knowest I had prescribed, They are coming! They are coming!—Fly, fly, my beloved creature, cried I, drawing my sword with a flourish, as if I would have slain half an hundred of the supposed intruders; and, seizing her trembling hands, I drew her after me so swiftly, that my feet, winged by love, could hardly keep pace with her feet, agitated by fear.—And so I became her emperor.

I'll tell thee all, when I see thee: and thou shalt then judge of my difficulties, and of her perverseness. And thou wilt rejoice with me at my conquest over such a watchful and open-eyed charmer.

But seest thou not now (as I think I do) the wind outstripping fair one flying from her love to her love? Is there not such a game? —Nay, flying from her friends she was resolved not to abandon, to the man she was determined not to go off with?—The sex! the sex, all over!—Charming contradiction!—Hah, hah, hah, hah! —I must here—I must here, lay down my pen, to hold my sides; for I must have my laugh out now the fit is upon me.

I believe—I believe—Hah, hah, hah! I believe, Jack, my dogs conclude me mad: for here has one of them popt in, as if to see what ailed me, or whom I had with me. Hah, hah, hah! An impudent dog! O Jack, knewest thou my conceit, and were but thy laugh joined to mine, I believe it would hold me for an hour

longer.

But, O my best beloved fair one, repine not thou at the arts by which thou suspectest thy fruitless vigilence has been over watched. Take care, that thou provokest not new ones, that may be still more worthy of thee. If once thy emperor decrees thy fall, thou shalt greatly fall. Thou shalt have cause, if that come to pass, which may come to pass (for why wouldst thou put off marriage to so long a day, as till thou hadst reason to be convinced of my reformation, dearest?) thou shalt have cause, never fear, to sit down more dissatisfied with the stars, than with thyself. And come the worst to the worst, glorious terms will I give thee. Thy garrison, with general Prudence at the head, and governor Watchfulness bringing up the rear, shall be allowed to march out with all the honours due to so brave a resistance. And all thy sex, and all mine, that hear of my stratagems, and of thy conduct, shall acknowledge the fortress as nobly won as defended.

'Thou wilt not dare, methinks I hear thee say, to attempt to reduce such a goddess as this, to a standard unworthy of her excellencies. It is impossible, Lovelace, that thou shouldst intent to break through oaths and protestations so solemn.'

That I did not intend it, is certain. That I do intend it, I cannot (my heart, my reverence for her, will not let me) say. But knowest thou not my aversion to the state of shackles?—And is she not IN MY POWER?

'And wilt thou, Lovelace, abuse that power which—'

Which what, Belford? Which I obtained not by her own

consent, but against it.

'But which thou never hadst obtained, had she not esteemed thee above all men.'

And which I had never taken so much pains to obtain, had I not loved her above all women. So far upon a par, Jack! and if thou pleadest honour, ought not honour to be mutual? If mutual, does it not imply mutual trust, mutual confidence? And what have I had of that from her to boast of?—Thou knowest the whole progress of our warfare: for a warfare it has truly been; and far, very far, from an amorous warfare too. Doubts, mistrusts, upbraidings, on her part; humiliations the most abject, on mine. Obliged to assume such airs of reformation, that every varlet of ye has been afraid I should reclaim in good earnest. And hast thou not thyself frequently observed to me, how awkwardly I returned to my usual gayety, after I had been within a mile of her father's garden-wall, although I had not seen her?

Does she not deserve to pay for all this?—To make an honest fellow look like an hypocrite, what a vile thing is that!

Then thou knowest what a false little rogue she has been. How little conscience she has made of disappointing me. Hast thou not been a witness of my ravings on this score? Have I not, in the height of them, vowed revenge upon the faithless charmer? And if I must be forsworn, whether I answer her expectations, or follow my own inclinations; and if the option be in my own power, can I hesitate a moment which to choose?

Then, I fancy by her circumspection, and her continual

grief, that she expects some mischief from me. I don't care to disappoint any body I have a value for.

But O the noble, the exalted creature! Who can avoid hesitating when he thinks of an offence against her? Who can but pity—

Yet, on the other hand, so loth at last to venture, though threatened to be forced into the nuptial fetters with a man, whom to look upon as a rival, is to disgrace myself!—So sullen, now she has ventured!—What title has she to pity; and to a pity which her pride would make her disclaim?

But I resolve not any way. I will see how her will works; and how my will leads me on. I will give the combatants fair play, and yet, every time I attend her, I find that she is less in my power; I more in hers.

Yet, a foolish little rogue! to forbid me to think of marriage till I am a reformed man! Till the implacables of her family change their natures, and become placable!

It is true, when she was for making those conditions, she did not think, that without any, she should be cheated out of herself; for so the dear soul, as I may tell thee in its place, phrases it.

How it swells my pride, to have been able to outwit such a vigilant charmer! I am taller by half a yard in my imagination than I was. I look down upon every body now. Last night I was still more extravagant. I took off my hat, as I walked, to see if the lace were not scorched, supposing it had brushed down a star; and, before I put it on again, in mere wantonness and heart's ease,

I was for buffeting the moon.

In short, my whole soul is joy. When I go to bed I laugh myself asleep; and I awake either laughing or singing—yet nothing nearly in view, neither—For why?—I am not yet reformed enough!

I told thee at the time, if thou rememberest, how capable this restriction was of being turned upon the over-scrupulous dear creature, could I once get her out of her father's house; and were I disposed to punish her for her family's faults, and for the infinite trouble she herself had given me. Little thinks she, that I have kept an account of both: and that, when my heart is soft, and all her own, I can but turn to my memoranda, and harden myself at once.

O my charmer, look to it! Abate of thy haughty airs! Value not thyself upon thy sincerity, if thou art indifferent to me! I will not bear it now. Art thou not in my POWER!—Nor, if thou lovest me, think, that the female affectation of denying thy love, will avail thee now, with a heart so proud and so jealous as mine?—Remember, moreover, that all thy family sins are upon thy head —!

But ah! Jack, when I see my angel, when I am admitted to the presence of this radiant beauty, what will become of all this vapouring?

But, be my end what it may, I am obliged, by thy penetration, fair one, to proceed by the sap. Fair and softly. A wife at any time! Marriage will be always in my power.

When put to the university, the same course of initial studies will qualify the yonker for the one line or the other. The genius ought to point out the future lawyer, divine, or physician!—So the same cautious conduct, with such a vigilance, will do either for the wife, or for the no-wife. When I reform, I'll marry. 'Tis time enough for the one, the lady must say—for the other, say I!

But how I ramble!—This is to be in such a situation, that I know not what to resolve upon.

I'll tell thee my inclinings, as I proceed. The pro's and the con's I'll tell thee: but being got too far from the track I set out in, I will close here. I may, however, write every day something, and send it as opportunity offers.

Regardless, nevertheless, I shall be in all I write, of connection, accuracy, or of any thing but of my own imperial will and pleasure.

LETTER VIII

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE WEDNESDAY NIGHT, APRIL 12

I have your narrative, my dear. You are the same noble creature you ever were. Above disguise, above art, above attempting to extenuate a failing.

The only family in the world, yours, surely, that could have driven such a daughter upon such extremities.

But you must not be so very much too good for them, and for the case.

You lay the blame so properly and so unsparingly upon your meeting him, that nothing can be added to that subject by your worst enemies, were they to see what you have written.

I am not surprised, now I have read your narrative, that so bold and so contriving a man—I am forced to break off——

You stood it out much better and longer—Here again comes my bustling, jealous mother!

Don't be angry at yourself. Did you not do for the best at the time? As to your first fault, the answering his letters; it was always incumbent upon you to assume the guardianship of such a family,

when the bravo of it had run riot, as he did, and brought himself into danger.

Except your mother, who has no will of her own, have any of them common sense?

Forgive me, my dear—Here is that stupid uncle Antony of yours. A pragmatical, conceited positive.—He came yesterday, in a fearful pucker, and puffed, and blowed, and stumped about our hall and parlour, while his message was carried up.

My mother was dressing. These widows are as starched as the old bachelors. She would not see him in a dishabille for the world —What can she mean by it?

His errand was to set her against you, and to shew her their determined rage on your going away. The issue proved too evidently that this was the principal end of his visit.

The odd creature desired to speak with her alone. I am not used to such exceptions whenever any visits are made to my mother.

When she was primed out, down she came to him. They locked themselves in. The two positive heads were put together —close together I suppose; for I listened, but could hear nothing distinctly, though they both seemed full of their subject.

I had a good mind, once or twice, to have made them open the door. Could I have been sure of keeping but tolerably my temper, I would have demanded admittance. But I was afraid, if I had obtained it, that I should have forgot it was my mother's house, and been for turning him out of it. To come to rave against and

abuse my dearest, dearest, faultless friend! and the ravings to be encouraged, and perhaps joined in, in order to justify themselves; the one for contributing to drive that dear friend out of her father's house; the other for refusing her a temporary asylum, till the reconciliation could have been effected, which her dutiful heart was set upon; and which it would have become the love which my mother had ever pretended for you, to have mediated for—Could I have had patience!

The issue, as I said, shewed what the errand was—Its fusty appearance, after the old fusty fellow was marched off, [you must excuse me, my dear,] was in a kind of gloomy, Harlowe-like reservedness in my mother; which upon a few resenting flirts of mine, was followed by a rigorous prohibition of correspondence.

This put us, you may suppose, upon terms not the most agreeable, I desired to know, if I were prohibited dreaming of you?—For, my dear, you have all my sleeping as well as waking hours.

I can easily allow for your correspondence with your wretch at first (and yet your notions were excellent) by the effect this prohibition has upon me; since, if possible, it has made me love you better than before; and I am more desirous than ever of corresponding with you.

But I have nevertheless a much more laudable motive—I should think myself the unworthiest of creatures, could I be brought to slight a dear friend, and such a meritorious one, in her distress. I would die first—And so I told my mother. And I have

desired her not to watch me in my retired hours; nor to insist upon my lying with her constantly, which she now does more earnestly than ever. 'Twere better, I told her, that the Harlowe-Betty were borrowed to be set over me.

Mr. Hickman, who so greatly honours you, has, unknown to me, interposed so warmly in your favour with my mother, that it makes for him no small merit with me.

I cannot, at present, write to every particular, unless I would be in set defiance. Tease, tease, tease, for ever! The same thing, though answered fifty times over, in every hour to be repeated —Lord bless me! what a life must my poor father—But let me remember to whom I am writing.

If this ever-active, ever-mischievous monkey of a man, this Lovelace, contrived as you suspect—But here comes my mother again—Ay, stay a little longer, my Mamma, if you please—I can but be suspected! I can but be chidden for making you wait; and chidden I am sure to be, whether I do or not, in the way you, my good Mamma, are Antony'd into.

Bless me! how impatient she is! How she thunders at the door! This moment, Madam! How came I to double-lock myself if! What have I done with the key! Duce take the key! Dear Madam! You flutter one so!

You may believe, my dear, that I took care of my papers before I opened the door. We have had a charming dialogue— She flung from me in a passion—

So—What's now to be done? Sent for down in a very peremptory manner, I assure you. What an incoherent letter will you have, when I get it to you! But now I know where to send it, Mr. Hickman shall find me a messenger. Yet, if he be detected, poor soul, he will be Harlowed-off, as well as his meek mistress.

THURSDAY, APRIL 13.

I have this moment your continuation-letter. And am favoured, at present, with the absence of my Argus-eyes mother. —

Dear creature! I can account for all your difficulties. A young lady of your delicacy!—And with such a man!—I must be brief ——

The man's a fool, my dear, with all his pride, and with all his complaisance, and affected regards to your injunctions. Yet his ready inventions——

Sometimes I think you should go to Lady Betty's. I know not what to advise you to do.—I should, if you were not so intent upon reconciling yourself to your relations. Yet they are implacable. You can have no hopes of them. Your uncle's errand to my mother may convince you of that; and if you have an answer to your letter to your sister, that will confirm you, I dare say.

You need not to have been afraid of asking me, Whether upon reading your narrative, I thought any extenuation could lie for what you have done! I have, as above, before I had your

question, told you my mind as to that. And I repeat, I think, your provocations and inducements considered, that ever young creature was who took such a step.

But you took it not—You were driven on one side, and, possibly, tricked on the other.—If any woman on earth shall be circumstanced as you were, and shall hold out so long as you did, against her persecutors on one hand, and her seducer on the other, I will forgive her for all the rest of her conduct, be it what it will.

All your acquaintance, you may suppose, talk of nobody but you. Some indeed bring your admirable character for a plea against you: but nobody does, or can, acquit your father and uncles.

Every body seems apprized of your brother's and sister's motives. Your flight is, no doubt, the very thing they aimed to drive you to, by the various attacks they made upon you; unhoping (as they must do all the time) the success of their schemes in Solmes's behalf. They knew, that if once you were restored to favour, the suspended love of your father and uncles, like a river breaking down a temporary obstruction, would return with double force; and that then you would expose, and triumph over all their arts.—And now, I hear they enjoy their successful malice.

Your father is all rage and violence. He ought, I am sure, to turn his rage inward. All your family accuse you of acting with deep art; and are put upon supposing that you are actually every

hour exulting over them, with your man, in the success of it.

They all pretend now, that your trial of Wednesday was to be the last.

Advantage would indeed, my mother owns, have been taken of your yielding, if you had yielded. But had you not been prevailed upon, they would have given up their scheme, and taken your promise for renouncing Lovelace—Believe them who will!

They own, however, that a minister was to be present—Mr. Solmes was to be at hand—And your father was previously to try his authority over you, in order to make you sign the settlements—All of it a romantic contrivance of your wild-headed foolish brother, I make no doubt. Is it likely that he and Bell would have given way to your restoration to favour, supposing it in their power to hinder it, on any other terms than those their hearts had been so long set upon?

How they took your flight, when they found it out, may be better supposed than described.

Your aunt Hervey, it seems, was the first that went down to the ivy summer-house, in order to acquaint you that their search was over. Betty followed her; and they not finding you there, went on towards the cascade, according to a hint of yours.

Returning by the garden-door, they met a servant [they don't say, it was Joseph Leman; but it is very likely that it was he] running, as he said, from pursuing Mr. Lovelace (a great hedge-stake in his hand, and out of breath) to alarm the family.

If it were this fellow, and if he were employed in the double

agency of cheating them, and cheating you, what shall we think of the wretch you are with? Run away from him, my dear, if so —no matter to whom—or marry him, if you cannot.

Your aunt and all your family were accordingly alarmed by this fellow—evidently when too late for pursuit. They got together, and when a posse, ran to the place of interview; and some of them as far as to the tracks of the chariot wheels, without stopping. And having heard the man's tale upon the spot, a general lamentation, a mutual upbraiding, and rage, and grief, were echoed from the different persons, according to their different tempers and conceptions. And they returned like fools as they went.

Your brother, at first, ordered horses and armed men to be got ready for a pursuit. Solmes and your uncle Tony were to be of the party. But your mother and your aunt Hervey dissuaded them from it, for fear of adding evil to evil; not doubting but Lovelace had taken measures to support himself in what he had done; and especially when the servant declared, that he saw you run with him as fast as you could set foot to the ground; and that there were several armed men on horseback at a small distance off.

My mother's absence was owing to her suspicion, that the Knolly's were to assist in our correspondence. She made them a visit upon it. She does every thing at once. And they have promised, that no more letters shall be left there, without her knowledge.

But Mr. Hickman has engaged one Filmer, a husbandman in the lane we call Finch-lane, near us, to receive them. Thither you will be pleased to direct yours, under cover, to Mr. John Soberton; and Mr. Hickman himself will call for them there; and there shall leave mine. It goes against me too, to make him so useful to me. He looks already so proud upon it! I shall have him [Who knows?] give himself airs—He had best consider, that the favour he has been long aiming at, may put him into a very dangerous, a very ticklish situation. He that can oblige, may disoblige—Happy for some people not to have it in their power to offend!

I will have patience, if I can, for a while, to see if these bustlings in my mother will subside—but upon my word, I will not long bear this usage.

Sometimes I am ready to think, that my mother carries it thus on purpose to tire me out, and to make me the sooner marry. If I find it to be so, and that Hickman, in order to make a merit with me, is in the low plot, I will never bear him in my sight.

Plotting wretch, as I doubt your man is, I wish to heaven that you were married, that you might brave them all, and not be forced to hide yourself, and be hurried from one inconvenient place to another. I charge you, omit not to lay hold on any handsome opportunity that may offer for that purpose.

Here again comes my mother—

We look mighty glum upon each other, I can tell you. She had

not best Harlowe me at this rate—I won't bear it.

I have a vast deal to write. I know not what to write first. Yet my mind is full, and ready to run over.

I am got into a private corner of the garden, to be out of her way.—Lord help these mothers!—Do they think they can prevent a daughter's writing, or doing any thing she has a mind to do, by suspicion, watchfulness, and scolding?—They had better place a confidence in one by half—A generous mind scorns to abuse a generous confidence.

You have a nice, a very nice part to act with this wretch—who yet has, I think, but one plain path before him. I pity you—but you must make the best of the lot you have been forced to draw. Yet I see your difficulties.—But, if he do not offer to abuse your confidence, I would have you seem at least to place some in him.

If you think not of marrying soon, I approve of your resolution to fix somewhere out of his reach. And if he know not where to find you, so much the better. Yet I verily believe, they would force you back, could they but come at you, if they were not afraid of him.

I think, by all means, you should demand of both your trustees to be put in possession of your own estate. Mean time I have sixty guineas at your service. I beg you will command them. Before they are gone, I'll take care you shall be further supplied. I don't think you'll have a shilling or a shilling's worth of your own from your relations, unless you extort it from them.

As they believe you went away by your own consent, they are,

it seems, equally surprised and glad that you have left your jewels and money behind you, and have contrived for clothes so ill. Very little likelihood this shews of their answering your requests.

Indeed every one who knows not what I now know, must be at a loss to account for your flight, as they will call it. And how, my dear, can one report it with any tolerable advantage to you?—To say, you did not intend it when you met him, who will believe it?—To say, that a person of your known steadiness and punctilio was over-persuaded when you gave him the meeting, how will that sound?—To say, you were tricked out of yourself, and people were given credit to it, how disreputable!—And while unmarried, and yet with him, the man a man of such a character, what would it not lead a censuring world to think?

I want to see how you put it in your letter for your clothes.

As you may depend upon all the little spiteful things they can offer, instead of sending what you write for, pray accept the sum that I tender. What will seven guineas do?—And I will find a way to send you also any of my clothes and linen for present supply. I beg, my dear Clarissa, that you will not put your Anna Howe upon a footing with Lovelace, in refusing to accept of my offer. If you do not oblige me, I shall be apt to think you rather incline to be obliged to him, than to favour me. And if I find this, I shall not know how to reconcile it with your delicacy in other respects.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.