

СЭМНЮЭЛ РИЧАРДСОН

CLARISSA HARLOWE; OR
THE HISTORY OF A
YOUNG LADY — VOLUME
5

Сэмюэл Ричардсон

**Clarissa Harlowe; or the history
of a young lady — Volume 5**

«Public Domain»

Ричардсон С.

Clarissa Harlowe; or the history of a young lady — Volume 5 /
С. Ричардсон — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| LETTER I | 5 |
| LETTER II | 8 |
| LETTER III | 11 |
| LETTER IV | 13 |
| LETTER V | 15 |
| LETTER VI | 22 |
| LETTER VII | 25 |
| LETTER VIII | 29 |
| LETTER IX | 33 |
| LETTER X | 36 |
| LETTER XI | 38 |
| LETTER XII | 41 |
| LETTER XIII | 45 |
| Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. | 48 |

Samuel Richardson

Clarissa Harlowe; or the history of a young lady — Volume 5

LETTER I

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. FRIDAY EVENING

Just returned from an airing with my charmer, complied with after great importunity. She was attended by the two nymphs. They both topt their parts; kept their eyes within bounds; made moral reflections now-and- then. O Jack! what devils are women, when all tests are got over, and we have completely ruined them!

The coach carried us to Hampstead, to Highgate, to Muswell-hill; back to Hampstead to the Upper-Flask: there, in compliment to the nymphs, my beloved consented to alight, and take a little repast. Then home early by Kentish-town.

Delightfully easy she, and so respectful and obliging I, all the way, and as we walked out upon the heath, to view the variegated prospects which that agreeable elevation affords, that she promised to take now-and-then a little excursion with me. I think, Miss Howe, I think, said I to myself, every now-and-then as we walked, that thy wicked devices are superceded.

But let me give thee a few particulars of our conversation in the circumrotation we took, while in the coach—She had received a letter from Miss Howe yesterday, I presumed?

She made no answer. How happy should I think myself to be admitted into their correspondence? I would joyfully make an exchange of communications.

So, though I hoped not to succeed by her consent, [and little did she think I had so happily in part succeeded without it,] I thought it not amiss to urge for it, for several reasons: among others, that I might account to her for my constant employment at my pen; in order to take off her jealousy, that she was the subject of thy correspondence and mine: and that I might justify my secrecy and uncommunicativeness by her own.

I proceeded therefore—That I loved familiar-letter-writing, as I had more than once told her, above all the species of writing: it was writing from the heart, (without the fetters prescribed by method or study,) as the very word cor-respondence implied. Not the heart only; the soul was in it. Nothing of body, when friend writes to friend; the mind impelling sovereignly the vassal-fingers. It was, in short, friendship recorded; friendship given under hand and seal; demonstrating that the parties were under no apprehension of changing from time or accident, when they so liberally gave testimonies, which would always be ready, on failure or infidelity, to be turned against them.—For my own part, it was the principal diversion I had in her absence; but for this innocent amusement, the distance she so frequently kept me at would have been intolerable.

Sally knew my drift; and said, She had had the honour to see two or three of my letters, and of Mr. Belford's; and she thought them the most entertaining that she had ever read.

My friend Belford, I said, had a happy talent in the letter-writing way; and upon all subjects.

I expected my beloved would have been inquisitive after our subject: but (lying perdue, as I saw) not a word said she. So I touched upon this article myself.

Our topics were various and diffuse: sometimes upon literary articles [she was very attentive upon this]; sometimes upon the public entertainments; sometimes amusing each other with the fruits of the different correspondencies we held with persons abroad, with whom we had contracted

friendships; sometimes upon the foibles and perfections of our particular friends; sometimes upon our own present and future hopes; sometimes aiming at humour and raillery upon each other.—It might indeed appear to savour of vanity, to suppose my letters would entertain a lady of her delicacy and judgment: but yet I could not but say, that perhaps she would be far from thinking so hardly of me as sometimes she had seemed to do, if she were to see the letters which generally passed between Mr. Belford and me [I hope, Jack, thou hast more manners, than to give me the lie, though but in thy heart].

She then spoke: after declining my compliment in such a manner, as only a person can do, who deserved it, she said, For her part, she had always thought me a man of sense [a man of sense, Jack! What a niggardly praise!],—and should therefore hope, that, when I wrote, it exceeded even my speech: for that it was impossible, be the letters written in as easy and familiar a style as they would, but that they must have that advantage from sitting down to write them which prompt speech could not always have. She should think it very strange therefore, if my letters were barren of sentiment; and as strange, if I gave myself liberties upon premeditation, which could have no excuse at all, but from a thoughtlessness, which itself wanted excuse.—But if Mr. Belford's letters and mine were upon subjects so general, and some of them equally (she presumed) instructive and entertaining, she could not but say, that she should be glad to see any of them; and particularly those which Miss Martin had seen and praised.

This was put close.

I looked at her, to see if I could discover any tincture of jealousy in this hint; that Miss Martin had seen what I had not shown to her. But she did not look it: so I only said, I should be very proud to show her not only those, but all that passed between Mr. Belford and me; but I must remind her, that she knew the condition.

No, indeed! with a sweet lip pouted out, as saucy as pretty; implying a lovely scorn, that yet can only be lovely in youth so blooming, and beauty so divinely distinguished.

How I long to see such a motion again! Her mouth only can give it.

But I am mad with love—yet eternal will be the distance, at the rate I go on: now fire, now ice, my soul is continually upon the hiss, as I may say. In vain, however, is the trial to quench—what, after all, is unquenchable.

Pr'ythee, Belford, forgive my nonsense, and my Vulcan-like metaphors—Did I not tell thee, not that I am sick of love, but that I am mad with it? Why brought I such an angel into such a house? into such company?—And why do I not stop my ears to the sirens, who, knowing my aversion to wedlock, are perpetually touching that string?

I was not willing to be answered so easily: I was sure, that what passed between two such young ladies (friends so dear) might be seen by every body: I had more reason than any body to wish to see the letters that passed between her and Miss Howe; because I was sure they must be full of admirable instruction, and one of the dear correspondents had deigned to wish my entire reformation.

She looked at me as if she would look me through: I thought I felt eye- beam, after eye-beam, penetrate my shivering reins.—But she was silent. Nor needed her eyes the assistance of speech.

Nevertheless, a little recovering myself, I hoped that nothing unhappy had befallen either Miss Howe or her mother. The letter of yesterday sent by a particular hand: she opening it with great emotion—seeming to have expected it sooner—were the reasons for my apprehensions.

We were then at Muswell-hill: a pretty country within the eye, to Polly, was the remark, instead of replying to me.

But I was not so to be answered—I should expect some charming subjects and characters from two such pens: I hoped every thing went on well between Mr. Hickman and Miss Howe. Her mother's heart, I said, was set upon that match: Mr. Hickman was not without his merits: he was what the ladies called a SOBER man: but I must needs say, that I thought Miss Howe deserved a husband of a very different cast!

This, I supposed, would have engaged her into a subject from which I could have wiredrawn something:—for Hickman is one of her favourites— why, I can't divine, except for the sake of opposition of character to that of thy honest friend.

But she cut me short by a look of disapprobation, and another cool remark upon a distant view; and, How far off, Miss Horton, do you think that clump of trees may be? pointing out of the coach. —So I had done.

Here endeth all I have to write concerning our conversation on this our agreeable airing.

We have both been writing ever since we came home. I am to be favoured with her company for an hour, before she retires to rest.

All that obsequious love can suggest, in order to engage her tenderest sentiments for me against tomorrow's sickness, will I aim at when we meet. But at parting will complain of a disorder in my stomach.

We have met. All was love and unexceptionable respect on my part. Ease and complaisance on her's. She was concerned for my disorder. So sudden!—Just as we parted! But it was nothing. I should be quite well by the morning.

Faith, Jack, I think I am sick already. Is it possible for such a giddy fellow as me to persuade myself to be ill! I am a better mimic at this rate than I wish to be. But every nerve and fibre of me is always ready to contribute its aid, whether by health or by ailment, to carry a resolved-on roguery into execution.

Dorcas has transcribed for me the whole letter of Miss Howe, dated Sunday, May 14,¹ of which before I had only extracts. She found no other letter added to that parcel: but this, and that which I copied myself in character last Sunday whilst she was at church, relating to the smuggling scheme,² are enough for me.

Dorcas tells me, that her lady has been removing her papers from the mahogany chest into a wainscot box, which held her linen, and which she put into her dark closet. We have no key of that at present. No doubt but all her letters, previous to those I have come at, are in that box. Dorcas is uneasy upon it: yet hopes that her lady does not suspect her; for she is sure that she laid in every thing as she found it.

¹ See Vol. IV. Letter XXIX.

² Ibid. Letter XLII.

LETTER II

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. COCOA-TREE, SATURDAY, MAY 27

This ipecacuanha is a most disagreeable medicine. That these cursed physical folks can find out nothing to do us good, but what would poison the devil! In the other world, were they only to take physic, it would be punishable enough of itself for a mis-spent life. A doctor at one elbow, and an apothecary at the other, and the poor soul labouring under their prescribed operations, he need no worse tormentors.

But now this was to take down my countenance. It has done it: for, with violent reachings, having taken enough to make me sick, and not enough water to carry it off, I presently looked as if I had kept my bed a fortnight. Ill jesting, as I thought in the midst of the exercise, with edge tools, and worse with physical ones.

Two hours it held me. I had forbid Dorcas to let her lady know any thing of the matter; out of tenderness to her; being willing, when she knew my prohibition, to let her see that I expected her to be concerned for me.—

Well, but Dorcas was nevertheless a woman, and she can whisper to her lady the secret she is enjoined to keep!

Come hither, toad, [sick as the devil at the instant]; let me see what a mixture of grief and surprize may be beat up together in thy puden-face.

That won't do. That dropt jaw, and mouth distended into the long oval, is more upon the horrible than the grievous.

Nor that pinking and winking with thy odious eyes, as my charmer once called them.

A little better that; yet not quite right: but keep your mouth closer. You have a muscle or two which you have no command of, between your cheek-bone and your lips, that should carry one corner of your mouth up towards your crow's-foot, and that down to meet it.

There! Begone! Be in a plaguy hurry running up stair and down, to fetch from the dining-room what you carry up on purpose to fetch, till motion extraordinary put you out of breath, and give you the sigh natural.

What's the matter, Dorcas?

Nothing, Madam.

My beloved wonders she has not seen me this morning, no doubt; but is too shy to say she wonders. Repeated What's the matter, however, as Dorcas runs up and down stairs by her door, bring on, O Madam! my master! my poor master!

What! How! When!—and all the monosyllables of surprize.

[Within parentheses let me tell thee, that I have often thought, that the little words in the republic of letters, like the little folks in a nation, are the most significant. The trisyllables, and the rumbler of syllables more than three, are but the good-for-little magnates.]

I must not tell you, Madam—My master ordered me not to tell you—but he is in a worse way than he thinks for!—But he would not have you frightened.

High concern took possession of every sweet feature. She pitied me!—by my soul, she pitied me!

Where is he?

Too much in a hurry for good manners, [another parenthesis, Jack! Good manners are so little natural, that we ought to be composed to observe them: politeness will not live in a storm]. I cannot

stay to answer questions, cries the wench—though desirous to answer [a third parenthesis—Like the people crying proclamations, running away from the customers they want to sell to]. This hurry puts the lady in a hurry to ask, [a fourth, by way of establishing the third!] as the other does the people in a hurry to buy. And I have in my eye now a whole street raised, and running after a proclamation or express-crier, as if the first was a thief, the other his pursuers.

At last, O Lord! let Mrs. Lovelace know!—There is danger, to be sure! whispered from one nymph to another; but at the door, and so loud, that my listening fair-one might hear.

Out she darts—As how! as how, Dorcas!

O Madam—A vomiting of blood! A vessel broke, to be sure!

Down she hastens; finds every one as busy over my blood in the entry, as if it were that of the Neapolitan saint.

In steps my charmer, with a face of sweet concern.

How do you, Mr. Lovelace?

O my best love!—Very well!—Very well!—Nothing at all! nothing of consequence!—I shall be well in an instant!—Straining again! for I was indeed plaguy sick, though no more blood came.

In short, Belford, I have gained my end. I see the dear soul loves me. I see she forgives me all that's past. I see I have credit for a new score.

Miss Howe, I defy thee, my dear—Mrs. Townsend!—Who the devil are you?— Troop away with your contrabands. No smuggling! nor smuggler, but myself! Nor will the choicest of my fair-one's favours be long prohibited goods to me!

Every one is now sure that she loves me. Tears were in her eyes more than once for me. She suffered me to take her hand, and kiss it as often as I pleased. On Mrs. Sinclair's mentioning, that I too much confined myself, she pressed me to take an airing; but obligingly desired me to be careful of myself. Wished I would advise with a physician. God made physicians, she said.

I did not think that, Jack. God indeed made us all. But I fancy she meant physic instead of physicians; and then the phrase might mean what the vulgar phrase means;—God sends meat, the Devil cooks.

I was well already, on taking the styptic from her dear hands.

On her requiring me to take the air, I asked, If I might have the honour of her company in a coach; and this, that I might observe if she had an intention of going out in my absence.

If she thought a chair were not a more proper vehicle for my case, she would with all her heart! There's a precious!

I kissed her hand again! She was all goodness!—Would to Heaven I better deserved it, I said!—But all were golden days before us!—Her presence and generous concern had done every thing. I was well! Nothing ailed me. But since my beloved will have it so, I'll take a little airing!— Let a chair be called!—O my charmer! were I to have owned this indisposition to my late harasses, and to the uneasiness I have had for disobliging you; all is infinitely compensated by your goodness.—All the art of healing is in your smiles!—Your late displeasure was the only malady!

While Mrs. Sinclair, and Dorcas, and Polly, and even poor silly Mabell [for Sally went out, as my angel came in] with uplifted hands and eyes, stood thanking Heaven that I was better, in audible whispers: See the power of love, cried one!—What a charming husband, another!—Happy couple, all!

O how the dear creature's cheek mantled!—How her eyes sparkled!—How sweetly acceptable is praise to conscious merit, while it but reproaches when applied to the undeserving!—What a new, what a gay creation it makes all at once in a diffident or dispirited heart!

And now, Belford, was it not worth while to be sick? And yet I must tell thee, that too many pleasanter expedients offer themselves, to make trial any more of this confounded ipecacuanha.

LETTER III

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE SATURDAY, MAY 27

Mr. Lovelace, my dear, has been very ill. Suddenly taken. With a vomiting of blood in great quantities. Some vessel broken. He complained of a disorder in his stomach over night. I was the affected with it, as I am afraid it was occasioned by the violent contentions between us.—But was I in fault?

How lately did I think I hated him!—But hatred and anger, I see, are but temporary passions with me. One cannot, my dear, hate people in danger of death, or who are in distress or affliction. My heart, I find, is not proof against kindness, and acknowledgements of errors committed.

He took great care to have his illness concealed from me as long as he could. So tender in the violence of his disorder!—So desirous to make the best of it!—I wish he had not been ill in my sight. I was too much affected—every body alarming me with his danger. The poor man, from such high health, so suddenly taken!—and so unprepared!—

He is gone out in a chair. I advised him to do so. I fear that my advice was wrong; since quiet in such a disorder must needs be best. We are apt to be so ready, in cases of emergency, to give our advice, without judgment, or waiting for it!—I proposed a physician indeed; but he would not hear of one. I have great honour for the faculty; and the greater, as I have always observed that those who treat the professors of the art of healing contemptuously, too generally treat higher institutions in the same manner.

I am really very uneasy. For I have, I doubt, exposed myself to him, and to the women below. They indeed will excuse me, as they think us married. But if he be not generous, I shall have cause to regret this surprise; which (as I had reason to think myself unaccountably treated by him) has taught me more than I knew of myself.

'Tis true, I have owned more than once, that I could have liked Mr. Lovelace above all men. I remember the debates you and I used to have on this subject, when I was your happy guest. You used to say, and once you wrote,³ that men of his cast are the men that our sex do not naturally dislike: While I held, that such were not (however that might be) the men we ought to like. But what with my relations precipitating of me, on one hand, and what with his unhappy character, and embarrassing ways, on the other, I had no more leisure than inclination to examine my own heart in this particular. And this reminds me of a transcribe, though it was written in raillery. 'May it not be,' say you,⁴ 'that you have had such persons to deal with, as have not allowed you to attend to the throbs; or if you had them a little now-and-then, whether, having had two accounts to place them to, you have not by mistake put them to the wrong one?' A passage, which, although it came into my mind when Mr. Lovelace was least exceptionable, yet that I have denied any efficacy to, when he has teased and vexed me, and given me cause of suspicion. For, after all, my dear, Mr. Lovelace is not wise in all his ways. And should we not endeavour, as much as is possible, (where we are not attached by natural ties,) to like and dislike as reason bids us, and according to the merit or demerit of the object? If love, as it is called, is allowed to be an excuse for our most unreasonable follies, and to lay level all the fences that a careful education has surrounded us by, what is meant by the doctrine of subduing our passions?—But, O my dearest friend, am I not guilty of a punishable fault, were I to love this man of errors? And has not my own heart deceived me, when I thought it did not? And what must be that love, that has not

³ See Vol. IV. Letter XXXIV.

⁴ See Vol. I. Letter XII.

some degree of purity for its object? I am afraid of recollecting some passages in my cousin Morden's letter.⁵ —And yet why fly I from subjects that, duly considered, might tend to correct and purify my heart? I have carried, I doubt, my notions on this head too high, not for practice, but for my practice. Yet think me not guilty of prudery neither; for had I found out as much of myself before; or, rather, had he given me heart's ease enough before to find it out, you should have had my confession sooner.

Nevertheless, let me tell you (what I hope I may justly tell you,) that if again he give me cause to resume distance and reserve, I hope my reason will gather strength enough from his imperfections to enable me to keep my passions under.—What can we do more than govern ourselves by the temporary lights lent us?

You will not wonder that I am grave on this detection—Detection, must I call it? What can I call it?—

Dissatisfied with myself, I am afraid to look back upon what I have written: yet know not how to have done writing. I never was in such an odd frame of mind.—I know not how to describe it.—Was you ever so?— Afraid of the censure of her you love—yet not conscious that you deserve it?

Of this, however, I am convinced, that I should indeed deserve censure, if I kept any secret of my heart from you.

But I will not add another word, after I have assured you, that I will look still more narrowly into myself: and that I am

Your equally sincere and affectionate CL. HARLOWE.

⁵ See Vol. IV. Letter XIX, & seq.

LETTER IV

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. SAT. EVENING

I had a charming airing. No return of my malady. My heart was perfectly easy, how could my stomach be otherwise?

But when I came home, I found that my sweet soul had been alarmed by a new incident—The inquiry after us both, in a very suspicious manner, and that by description of our persons, and not by names, by a servant in a blue livery turn'd up and trimm'd with yellow.

Dorcas was called to him, as the upper servant; and she refusing to answer any of the fellow's questions, unless he told his business, and from whom he came, the fellow (as short as she) said, that if she would not answer him, perhaps she might answer somebody else; and went away out of humour.

Dorcas hurried up to her Lady, and alarmed her, not only with the fact, but with her own conjectures; adding, that he was an ill-looking fellow, and she was sure could come for no good.

The livery and the features of the servant were particularly inquired after, and as particularly described—Lord bless her! no end of her alarms, she thought! And then did her apprehensions anticipate every evil that could happen.

She wished Mr. Lovelace would come in.

Mr. Lovelace came in soon after; all lively, grateful, full of hopes, of duty, of love, to thank his charmer, and to congratulate with her upon the cure she had performed. And then she told the story, with all its circumstances; and Dorcas, to point her lady's fears, told us, that the servant was a sun-burnt fellow, and looked as if he had been at sea.

He was then, no doubt, Captain Singleton's servant, and the next news she should hear, was, that the house was surrounded by a whole ship's crew; the vessel lying no farther off, as she understood, than Rotherhithe.

Impossible, I said. Such an attempt would not be ushered in by such a manner of inquiry. And why may it not rather be a servant of your cousin Morden, with notice of his arrival, and of his design to attend you?

This surmise delighted her. Her apprehensions went off, and she was at leisure to congratulate me upon my sudden recovery; which she did in the most obliging manner.

But we had not sat long together, when Dorcas again came fluttering up to tell us, that the footman, the very footman, was again at the door, and inquired, whether Mr. Lovelace and his lady, by name, had not lodgings in this house? He asked, he told Dorcas, for no harm. But his disavowing of harm, was a demonstration with my apprehensive fair-one, that harm was intended. And as the fellow had not been answered by Dorcas, I proposed to go down to the street-parlour, and hear what he had to say.

I see your causeless terror, my dearest life, said I, and your impatience —Will you be pleased to walk down—and, without being observed, (for he shall come no farther than the parlour-door,) you may hear all that passes?

She consented. We went down. Dorcas bid the man come forward. Well, friend, what is your business with Mr. and Mrs. Lovelace?

Bowing, scraping, I am sure you are the gentleman, Sir. Why, Sir, my business is only to know if your honour be here, and to be spoken with; or if you shall be here for any time?

Whom came you from?

From a gentleman who ordered me to say, if I was made to tell, but not else, it was from a friend of Mr. John Harlowe, Mrs. Lovelace's eldest uncle.

The dear creature was ready to sink upon this. It was but of late that she had provided herself with salts. She pulled them out.

Do you know anything of Colonel Morden, friend? said I.

No; I never heard of his name.

Of Captain Singleton?

No, Sir. But the gentleman, my master, is a Captain too.

What is his name?

I don't know if I should tell.

There can be no harm in telling the gentleman's name, if you come upon a good account.

That I do; for my master told me so; and there is not an honest gentleman on the face of God's yearth.—His name is Captain Tomlinson, Sir.

I don't know such a one.

I believe not, Sir. He was pleased to say, he don't know your honor, Sir; but I heard him say as how he should not be an unwelcome visiter to you for all that.

Do you know such a man as Captain Tomlinson, my dearest life, [aside,] your uncle's friend?

No; but my uncle may have acquaintance, no doubt, that I don't know.— But I hope [trembling] this is not a trick.

Well, friend, if your master has anything to say to Mr. Lovelace, you may tell him, that Mr. Lovelace is here; and will see him whenever he pleases.

The dear creature looked as if afraid that my engagement was too prompt for my own safety; and away went the fellow—I wondering, that she might not wonder, that this Captain Tomlinson, whoever he were, came not himself, or sent not a letter the second time, when he had reason to suppose that I might be here.

Mean time, for fear that this should be a contrivance of James Harlowe, who, I said, love plotting, though he had not a head turned for it, I gave some precautionary directions to the servants, and the women, whom, for the greater parade, I assembled before us, and my beloved was resolved not to stir abroad till she saw the issue of this odd affair.

And here must I close, though in so great a puzzle.

Only let me add, that poor Belton wants thee; for I dare not stir for my life.

Mowbray and Tourville skulk about like vagabonds, without heads, without hands, without souls; having neither you nor me to conduct them. They tell me, they shall rust beyond the power of oil or action to brighten them up, or give them motion.

How goes it with thy uncle?

LETTER V

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. SUNDAY, MAY 28

This story of Captain Tomlinson employed us not only for the time we were together last night, but all the while we sat at breakfast this morning. She would still have it that it was the prelude to some mischief from Singleton. I insisted (according to my former hint) that it might much more probably be a method taken by Colonel Morden to alarm her, previous to a personal visit. Travelled gentlemen affected to surprise in this manner. And why, dearest creature, said I, must every thing that happens, which we cannot immediately account for, be what we least wish?

She had had so many disagreeable things befall her of late, that her fears were too often stronger than her hopes.

And this, Madam, makes me apprehensive, that you will get into so low-spirited a way, that you will not be able to enjoy the happiness that seems to await us.

Her duty and her gratitude, she gravely said, to the Dispenser of all good, would secure her, she hoped, against unthankfulness. And a thankful spirit was the same as a joyful one.

So, Belford, for all her future joys she depends entirely upon the invisible Good. She is certainly right; since those who fix least upon second causes are the least likely to be disappointed—And is not this gravity for her gravity?

She had hardly done speaking, when Dorcas came running up in a hurry—she set even my heart into a palpitation—thump, thump, thump, like a precipitated pendulum in a clock-case—flutter, flutter, flutter, my charmer's, as by her sweet bosom rising to her chin I saw.

This lower class of people, my beloved herself observed, were for ever aiming at the stupid wonderful, and for making even common incidents matter of surprise.

Why the devil, said I to the wench, this alarming hurry?—And with your spread fingers, and your O Madams, and O Sirs!—and be cursed to you! Would there have been a second of time difference, had you come up slowly?

Captain Tomlinson, Sir!

Captain Devilson, what care I?—Do you see how you have disordered your lady?

Good Mr. Lovelace, said my charmer, trembling [see, Jack, when she has an end to serve, I am good Mr. Lovelace,] if—if my brother,—if Captain Singleton should appear—pray now—I beseech you—let me beg of you—to govern your temper—My brother is my brother—Captain Singleton is but an agent.

My dearest life, folding my arms about her, [when she asks favours, thought I, the devil's in it, if she will not allow such an innocent freedom as this, from good Mr. Lovelace too,] you shall be witness of all passes between us.—Dorcas, desire the gentleman to walk up.

Let me retire to my chamber first!—Let me not be known to be in the house!

Charming dear!—Thou seest, Belford, she is afraid of leaving me!—O the little witchcrafts! Were it not for surprises now-and-then, how would an honest man know where to have them?

She withdrew to listen.—And though this incident has not turned out to answer all I wished from it, yet is it not necessary, if I would acquaint thee with my whole circulation, to be very particular in what passed between Captain Tomlinson and me.

Enter Captain Tomlinson, in a riding-dress, whip in hand.

Your servant, Sir,—Mr. Lovelace, I presume?

My name is Lovelace, Sir.

Excuse the day, Sir.—Be pleased to excuse my garb. I am obliged to go out of town directly, that I may return at night.

The day is a good day. Your garb needs no apology.

When I sent my servant, I did not know that I should find time to do myself this honour. All that I thought I could do to oblige my friend this journey, was only to assure myself of your abode; and whether there was a probability of being admitted to the speech of either you, or your lady.

Sir, you best know your own motives. What your time will permit you to do, you also best know. And here I am, attending your pleasure.

My charmer owned afterwards her concern on my being so short. Whatever I shall mingle of her emotions, thou wilt easily guess I had afterwards.

Sir, I hope no offence. I intend none.

None—None at all, Sir.

Sir, I have no interest in the affair I come about. I may appear officious; and if I thought I should, I would decline any concern in it, after I have just hinted what it is.

And pray, Sir, what is it?

May I ask you, Sir, without offence, whether you wish to be reconciled, and to co-operate upon honourable terms, with one gentleman of the name of Harlowe; preparative, as it may be hoped, to a general reconciliation?

O how my heart fluttered! cried my charmer.

I can't tell, Sir—[and then it fluttered still more, no doubt:] The whole family have used me extremely ill. They have taken greater liberties with my character than are justifiable; and with my family too; which I can less forgive.

Sir, Sir, I have done. I beg pardon for this intrusion.

My beloved was then ready to sink, and thought very hardly of me.

But, pray, Sir, to the immediate purpose of your present commission; since a commission it seems to be?

It is a commission, Sir; and such a one, as I thought would be agreeable to all parties, or I should not have given myself concern about it.

Perhaps it may, Sir, when known. But let me ask you one previous question—Do you know Colonel Morden, Sir?

No, Sir. If you mean personally, I do not. But I have heard my good friend Mr. John Harlowe talk of him with great respect; and such a co-trustee with him in a certain trust.

Lovel. I thought it probable, Sir, that the Colonel might be arrived; that you might be a gentleman of his acquaintance; and that something of an agreeable surprise might be intended.

Capt. Had Colonel Morden been in England, Mr. John Harlowe would have known it; and then I should not have been a stranger to it.

Lovel. Well but, Sir, have you then any commission to me from Mr. John Harlowe?

Capt. Sir, I will tell you, as briefly as I can, the whole of what I have to say; but you'll excuse me also in a previous question, for what curiosity is not my motive; but it is necessary to be answered before I can proceed; as you will judge when you hear it.

Lovel. What, pray, Sir, is your question?

Capt. Briefly, whether you are actually, and bonâ fide, married to Miss Clarissa Harlowe?

I started, and, in a haughty tone, is this, Sir, a question that must be answered before you can proceed in the business you have undertaken?

I mean no offence, Mr. Lovelace. Mr. Harlowe sought to me to undertake this office. I have daughters and nieces of my own. I thought it a good office, or I, who have many considerable affairs upon my hands, had not accepted of it. I know the world; and will take the liberty to say, that if the young lady—

Captain Tomlinson, I think you are called?

My name is Tomlinson.

Why then, Tomlinson, no liberty, as you call it, will be taken well, that is not extremely delicate, when that lady is mentioned.

When you had heard me out, Mr. Lovelace, and had found I had so behaved, as to make the caution necessary, it would have been just to have given it.—Allow me to say, I know what is due to the character of a woman of virtue, as well as any man alive.

Why, Sir! Why, Captain Tomlinson, you seem warm. If you intend any thing by this, [O how I trembled! said the lady, when she took notice of this part of our conversation afterwards,] I will only say, that this is a privileged place. It is at present my home, and an asylum for any gentleman who thinks it worth his while to inquire after me, be the manner or end of his inquiry what it will.

I know not, Sir, that I have given occasion for this. I make no scruple to attend you elsewhere, if I am troublesome here. I was told, I had a warm young gentleman to deal with: but as I knew my intention, and that my commission was an amicable one, I was the less concerned about that. I am twice your age, Mr. Lovelace, I dare say: but I do assure you, that if either my message or my manner gives you offence, I can suspend the one or the other for a day, or for ever, as you like. And so, Sir, any time before eight tomorrow morning, you will let me know your further commands.—And was going to tell me where he might be found.

Captain Tomlinson, said I, you answer well. I love a man of spirit. Have you not been in the army?

I have, Sir; but have turned my sword into a ploughshare, as the scripture has it,—[there was a clever fellow, Jack!—he was a good man with somebody, I warrant! O what a fine coat and cloke for an hypocrite will a text of scripture, properly applied, make at any time in the eyes of the pious!—how easily are the good folks taken in!]
—and all my delight, added he, for some years past, has been in cultivating my paternal estate. I love a brave man, Mr. Lovelace, as well as ever I did in my life. But let me tell you, Sir, that when you come to my time of life, you will be of opinion, that there is not so much true bravery in youthful choler, as you may now think there is.

A clever fellow again, Belford!—Ear and heart, both at once, he took in my charmer!—'Tis well, she says, there are some men who have wisdom in their anger.

Well, Captain, that is reproof for reproof. So we are upon a footing. And now give me the pleasure of hearing the import of your commission.

Sir, you must first allow me to repeat my question: Are you really, and bonâ fide, married to Miss Clarissa Harlowe? or are you not yet married?

Bluntly put, Captain. But if I answer that I am, what then?

Why then, Sir, I shall say, that you are a man of honour.

That I hope I am, whether you say it or not, Captain Tomlinson.

Sir, I will be very frank in all I have to say on this subject—Mr. John Harlowe has lately found out, that you and his niece are both in the same lodgings; that you have been long so; and that the lady was at the play with you yesterday was se'nnight; and he hopes that you are actually married. He has indeed heard that you are; but as he knows your enterprising temper, and that you have declared, that you disdain a relation to their family, he is willing by me to have your marriage confirmed from your own mouth, before he take the steps he is inclined to take in his niece's favour. You will allow me to say, Mr. Lovelace, that he will not be satisfied with an answer that admits of the least doubt.

Let me tell you, Captain Tomlinson, that it is a high degree of vileness for any man to suppose—

Sir—Mr. Lovelace—don't put yourself into a passion. The lady's relations are jealous of the honour of their family. They have prejudices to overcome as well as you—advantage may have been taken—and the lady, at the time, not to blame.

This lady, Sir, could give no such advantages: and if she had, what must the man be, Captain Tomlinson, who could have taken them?—Do you know the lady, Sir?

I never had the honour to see her but once; and that was at a church; and should not know her again.

Not know her again, Sir!—I thought there was not a man living who had once seen her, and would not know her among a thousand.

I remember, Sir, that I thought I never saw a finer woman in my life. But, Mr. Lovelace, I believe, you will allow, that it is better that her relations should have wronged you, than you the lady, I hope, Sir, you will permit me to repeat my question.

Enter Dorcas, in a hurry.

A gentleman, this minute, Sir, desires to speak with your honour—[My lady, Sir!—Aside.]

Could the dear creature put Dorcas upon telling this fib, yet want to save me one?

Desire the gentleman to walk into one of the parlours. I will wait upon him presently.

[Exit Dorcas.]

The dear creature, I doubted not, wanted to instruct me how to answer the Captain's home put. I knew how I intended to answer it—plumb, thou may'st be sure—but Dorcas's message staggered me. And yet I was upon one of my master-strokes—which was, to take advantage of the captain's inquiries, and to make her own her marriage before him, as she had done to the people below; and if she had been brought to that, to induce her, for her uncle's satisfaction, to write him a letter of gratitude; which of course must have been signed Clarissa Lovelace. I was loth, therefore, thou may'st believe, to attend her sudden commands: and yet, afraid of pushing matters beyond recovery with her, I thought proper to lead him from the question, to account for himself and for Mr. Harlowe's coming to the knowledge of where we are; and for other particulars which I knew would engage her attention; and which might possibly convince her of the necessity there was for her to acquiesce in the affirmative I was disposed to give. And this for her own sake; For what, as I asked her afterwards, is it to me, whether I am ever reconciled to her family?—A family, Jack, which I must for ever despise.

You think, Captain, that I have answered doubtfully to the question you put. You may think so. And you must know, that I have a good deal of pride; and, only that you are a gentleman, and seem in this affair to be governed by generous motives, or I should ill brook being interrogated as to my honour to a lady so dear to me.—But before I answer more directly to the point, pray satisfy me in a question or two that I shall put to you.

With all my heart, Sir. Ask me what questions you please, I will answer them with sincerity and candour.

You say, Mr. Harlowe has found out that we were at a play together: and that we were both in the same lodgings—How, pray, came he at his knowledge?—for, let me tell you, that I have, for certain considerations, (not respecting myself, I will assure you,) condescended that our abode should be kept secret. And this has been so strictly observed, that even Miss Howe, though she and my beloved correspond, knows not directly where to send to us.

Why, Sir, the person who saw you at the play, was a tenant of Mr. John Harlowe. He watched all your motions. When the play was done, he followed your coach to your lodgings. And early the next day, Sunday, he took horse, and acquainted his landlord with what he had observed.

Lovel. How oddly things come about!—But does any other of the Harlowes know where we are?

Capt. It is an absolute secret to every other person of the family; and so it is intended to be kept: as also that Mr. John Harlowe is willing to enter into treaty with you, by me, if his niece be actually married; for perhaps he is aware, that he shall have difficulty enough with some people to bring about the desirable reconciliation, although he could give them this assurance.

I doubt it not, Captain—to James Harlowe is all the family folly owing. Fine fools! [heroically stalking about] to be governed by one to whom malice and not genius, gives the busy liveliness that distinguishes him from a natural!—But how long, pray, Sir, has Mr. John Harlowe been in this pacific disposition?

I will tell you, Mr. Lovelace, and the occasion; and be very explicit upon it, and upon all that concerns you to know of me, and of the commission I have undertaken to execute; and this the rather, as when you have heard me out, you will be satisfied, that I am not an officious man in this my present address to you.

I am all attention, Captain Tomlinson.

And so I doubt not was my beloved.

Capt. 'You must know, Sir, that I have not been many months in Mr. John Harlowe's neighbourhood. I removed from Northamptonshire, partly for the sake of better managing one of two executorship, which I could not avoid engaging in, (the affairs of which frequently call me to town, and are part of my present business;) and partly for the sake of occupying a neglected farm, which has lately fallen into my hands. But though an acquaintance of no longer standing, and that commencing on the bowling- green, [uncle John is a great bowler, Belford,] (upon my decision of a point to every one's satisfaction, which was appealed to me by all the gentlemen, and which might have been attended with bad consequences,) no two brothers have a more cordial esteem for each other. You know, Mr. Lovelace, that there is a consent, as I may call it, in some minds, which will unite them stronger together in a few hours, than years can do with others, whom yet we see not with disgust.'

Lovel. Very true, Captain.

Capt. 'It was on the foot of this avowed friendship on both sides, that on Monday the 15th, as I very well remember, Mr. Harlowe invited himself home with me. And when there, he acquainted me with the whole of the unhappy affair that had made them all so uneasy. Till then I knew it only by report; for, intimate as we were, I forbore to speak of what was so near his heart, till he began first. And then he told me, that he had had an application made to him, two or three days before, by a gentleman whom he named,⁶ to induce him not only to be reconciled himself to his niece, but to forward for her a general reconciliation.

'A like application, he told me, had been made to his sister Harlowe, by a good woman, whom every body respected; who had intimated, that his niece, if encouraged, would again put herself into the protection of her friends, and leave you: but if not, that she must unavoidably be your's.'

I hope, Mr. Lovelace, I make no mischief.—You look concerned—you sigh, Sir.

Proceed, Captain Tomlinson. Pray proceed.—And I sighed still more profoundly.

Capt. 'They all thought it extremely particular, that a lady should decline marriage with a man she had so lately gone away with.'

Pray, Captain—pray, Mr. Tomlinson—no more of this subject. My beloved is an angel. In every thing unblamable. Whatever faults there have been, have been theirs and mine. What you would further say, is, that the unforgiving family rejected her application. They did. She and I had a misunderstanding. The falling out of lovers—you know, Captain. —We have been happier ever since.

Capt. 'Well, Sir; but Mr. John Harlowe could not but better consider the matter afterwards. And he desired my advice how to act in it. He told me that no father ever loved a daughter as he loved this niece of his; whom, indeed, he used to call his daughter-niece. He said, she had really been unkindly treated by her brother and sister: and as your alliance, Sir, was far from being a discredit to their family, he would do his endeavour to reconcile all parties, if he could be sure that ye were actually man and wife.'

Lovel. And what, pray, Captain, was your advice?

Capt. 'I gave it as my opinion, that if his niece were unworthily treated, and in distress, (as he apprehended from the application to him,) he would soon hear of her again: but that it was likely, that this application was made without expecting it would succeed; and as a salvo only, to herself, for marrying without their consent. And the rather thought I so, as he had told me, that it came from a

⁶ See Vol. IV. Letters XXIII and XXIX.

young lady her friend, and not in a direct way from herself; which young lady was no favourite of the family; and therefore would hardly have been employed, had success been expected.'

Lovel. Very well, Captain Tomlinson—pray proceed.

Capt. 'Here the matter rested till last Sunday evening, when Mr. John Harlowe came to me with the man who had seen you and your lady (as I presume she is) at the play; and who had assured him, that you both lodged in the same house.—And then the application having been so lately made, which implied that you were not then married, he was so uneasy for his niece's honour, that I advised him to dispatch to town some one in whom he could confide, to make proper inquiries.'

Lovel. Very well, Captain—And was such a person employed on such an errand by her uncle?

Capt. 'A trusty and discreet person was accordingly sent; and last Tuesday, I think it was, (for he returned to us on the Wednesday,) he made the inquiries among the neighbours first.' [The very inquiry, Jack, that gave us all so much uneasiness.⁷] 'But finding that none of them could give any satisfactory account, the lady's woman was come at, who declared, that you were actually married. But the inquirist keeping himself on the reserve as to his employers, the girl refused to tell the day, or to give him other particulars.'

Lovel. You give a very clear account of every thing, Captain Tomlinson. Pray proceed.

Capt. 'The gentleman returned; and, on his report, Mr. Harlowe, having still doubts, and being willing to proceed on some grounds in so important a point, besought me (as my affairs called me frequently to town) to undertake this matter. "You, Mr. Tomlinson, he was pleased to say, have children of your own: you know the world: you know what I drive at: you will proceed, I am sure, with understanding and spirit: and whatever you are satisfied with shall satisfy me."'

Enter Dorcas again in a hurry.

Sir, the gentleman is impatient.

I will attend him presently.

The Captain then accounted for his not calling in person, when he had reason to think us here.

He said he had business of consequence a few miles out of town, whither he thought he must have gone yesterday, and having been obliged to put off his little journey till this day, and understanding that we were within, not knowing whether he should have such another opportunity, he was willing to try his good fortune before he set out; and this made him come booted and spurred, as I saw him.

He dropped a hint in commendation of the people of the house; but it was in such a way, as to give no room to suspect that he thought it necessary to inquire after the character of persons, who make so genteel an appearance, as he observed they do.

And here let me remark, that my beloved might collect another circumstance in favour of the people below, had she doubted their characters, from the silence of her uncle's inquirist on Tuesday among the neighbours.

Capt. 'And now, Sir, that I believe I have satisfied you in every thing relating to my commission, I hope you will permit me to repeat my question—which is—'

Enter Dorcas again, out of breath.

Sir, the gentleman will step up to you. [My lady is impatient. She wonders at your honour's delay. Aside.]

Excuse me, Captain, for one moment.

I have staid my full time, Mr. Lovelace. What may result from my question and your answer, whatever it shall be, may take us up time.— And you are engaged. Will you permit me to attend you in the morning, before I set out on my return?

You will then breakfast with me, Captain?

⁷ See Vol. IV. Letter L.

It must be early if I do. I must reach my own house to-morrow night, or I shall make the best of wives unhappy. And I have two or three places to call at in my way.

It shall be by seven o'clock, if you please, Captain. We are early folks. And this I will tell you, that if ever I am reconciled to a family so implacable as I have always found the Harlowes to be, it must be by the mediation of so cool and so moderate a gentleman as yourself.

And so, with the highest civilities on both sides, we parted. But for the private satisfaction of so good a man, I left him out of doubt that we were man and wife, though I did not directly aver it.

LETTER VI

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. SUNDAY NIGHT

This Captain Tomlinson is one of the happiest as well as one of the best men in the world. What would I give to stand as high in my beloved's opinion as he does! but yet I am as good a man as he, were I to tell my own story, and have equal credit given to it. But the devil should have had him before I had seen him on the account he came upon, had I thought I should not have answered my principal end in it. I hinted to thee in my last what that was.

But to the particulars of the conference between my fair-one and me, on her hasty messages; which I was loth to come to, because she has had an half triumph over me in it.

After I had attended the Captain down to the very passage, I returned to the dining-room, and put on a joyful air, on my beloved's entrance into it—O my dearest creature, said I, let me congratulate you on a prospect so agreeable to your wishes! And I snatched her hand, and smothered it with kisses.

I was going on; when interrupting me, You see, Mr. Lovelace, said she, how you have embarrassed yourself by your obliquities! You see, that you have not been able to return a direct answer to a plain and honest question, though upon it depends all the happiness, on the prospect of which you congratulate me!

You know, my best love, what my prudent, and I will say, my kind motives were, for giving out that we were married. You see that I have taken no advantage of it; and that no inconvenience has followed it. You see that your uncle wants only to be assured from ourselves that it is so—

Not another word on this subject, Mr. Lovelace. I will not only risk, but I will forfeit, the reconciliation so near my heart, rather than I will go on to countenance a story so untrue!

My dearest soul—Would you have me appear—

I would have you appear, Sir, as you are! I am resolved that I will appear to my uncle's friend, and to my uncle, as I am.

For one week, my dearest life! cannot you for one week—only till the settlements—

Not for one hour, with my own consent. You don't know, Sir, how much I have been afflicted, that I have appeared to the people below what I am not. But my uncle, Sir, shall never have it to upbraid me, nor will I to upbraid myself, that I have wilfully passed upon him in false lights.

What, my dear, would you have me say to the Captain to-morrow morning? I have given him room to think—

Then put him right, Mr. Lovelace. Tell the truth. Tell him what you please of the favour of your relations to me: tell him what you will about the settlements: and if, when drawn, you will submit them to his perusal and approbation, it will show him how much you are in earnest.

My dearest life!—Do you think that he would disapprove of the terms I have offered?

No.

Then may I be accursed, if I willingly submit to be trampled under foot by my enemies!

And may I, Mr. Lovelace, never be happy in this life, if I submit to the passing upon my uncle Harlowe a wilful and premeditated falshood for truth! I have too long laboured under the affliction which the rejection of all my friends has given me, to purchase my reconciliation with them now at so dear a price as this of my veracity.

The women below, my dear—

What are the women below to me?—I want not to establish myself with them. Need they know all that passes between my relations and you and me?

Neither are they any thing to me, Madam. Only, that when, for the sake of preventing the fatal mischiefs which might have attended your brother's projects, I have made them think us married, I would not appear to them in a light which you yourself think so shocking. By my soul, Madam, I had rather die, than contradict myself so flagrantly, after I have related to them so many circumstances of our marriage.

Well, Sir, the women may believe what they please. That I have given countenance to what you told them is my error. The many circumstances which you own one untruth has drawn you in to relate, is a justification of my refusal in the present case.

Don't you see, Madam, that your uncle wishes to find that we are married? May not the ceremony be privately over, before his mediation can take place?

Urge this point no further, Mr. Lovelace. If you will not tell the truth, I will to-morrow morning (if I see Captain Tomlinson) tell it myself. Indeed I will.

Will you, Madam, consent that things pass as before with the people below? This mediation of Tomlinson may come to nothing. Your brother's schemes may be pursued; the rather, that now he will know (perhaps from your uncle) that you are not under a legal protection.—You will, at least, consent that things pass here as before?—

To permit this, is to go on in an error, Mr. Lovelace. But as the occasion for so doing (if there can be in your opinion an occasion that will warrant an untruth) will, as I presume, soon be over, I shall the less dispute that point with you. But a new error I will not be guilty of, if I can avoid it.

Can I, do you think, Madam, have any dishonourable view in the step I supposed you would not scruple to take towards a reconciliation with your own family? Not for my own sake, you know, did I wish you to take it; for what is it to me, if I am never reconciled to your family? I want no favours from them.

I hope, Mr. Lovelace, there is no occasion, in our present not disagreeable situation, to answer such a question. And let me say, that I shall think my prospects still more agreeable, if, to-morrow morning you will not only own the very truth, but give my uncle's friend such an account of the steps you have taken, and are taking, as may keep up my uncle's favourable intentions towards me. This you may do under what restrictions of secrecy you please. Captain Tomlinson is a prudent man; a promoter of family-peace, you find; and, I dare say, may be made a friend.

I saw there was no help. I saw that the inflexible Harlowe spirit was all up in her.—A little witch!—A little—Forgive me, Love, for calling her names! And so I said, with an air, We have had too many misunderstandings, Madam, for me to wish for new ones: I will obey you without reserve. Had I not thought I should have obliged you by the other method, (especially as the ceremony might have been over before any thing could have operated from your uncle's intentions, and of consequence no untruth persisted in,) I would not have proposed it. But think not, my beloved creature, that you shall enjoy, without condition, this triumph over my judgment.

And then, clasping my arms about her, I gave her averted cheek (her charming lip designed) a fervent kiss.—And your forgiveness of this sweet freedom [bowing] is that condition.

She was not mortally offended. And now must I make out the rest as well as I can. But this I will tell thee, that although her triumph has not diminished my love for her, yet it has stimulated me more than ever to revenge, as thou wilt be apt to call it. But victory, or conquest, is the more proper word.

There is a pleasure, 'tis true, in subduing one of these watchful beauties. But by my soul, Belford, men of our cast take twenty times the pains to be rogues than it would cost them to be honest; and dearly, with the sweat of our brows, and to the puzzlement of our brains, (to say nothing of the hazards we run,) do we earn our purchase; and ought not therefore to be grudged our success when we meet with it—especially as, when we have obtained our end, satiety soon follows; and leaves us little or nothing to show for it. But this, indeed, may be said of all worldly delights.—And is not that a grave reflection from me?

I was willing to write up to the time. Although I have not carried my principal point, I shall make something turn out in my favour from Captain Tomlinson's errand. But let me give thee this caution; that thou do not pretend to judge of my devices by parts; but have patience till thou seest the whole. But once more I swear, that I will not be out-Norris'd by a pair of novices. And yet I am very apprehensive, at times, of the consequences of Miss Howe's smuggling scheme.

My conscience, I should think, ought not to reproach me for a contrivance, which is justified by the contrivances of two such girls as these: one of whom (the more excellent of the two) I have always, with her own approbation, as I imagine, proposed for my imitation.

But here, Jack, is the thing that concludes me, and cases my heart with adamant: I find, by Miss Howe's letters, that it is owing to her, that I have made no greater progress with my blooming fair-one. She loves me. The ipecacuanha contrivance convinces me that she loves me. Where there is love there must be confidence, or a desire of having reason to confide. Generosity, founded on my supposed generosity, has taken hold of her heart. Shall I not now see (since I must forever be unhappy, if I marry her, and leave any trial unessayed) what I can make of her love, and her newly-raised confidence?—Will it not be to my glory to succeed? And to her's and to the honour of her sex, if I cannot?—Where then will be the hurt to either, to make the trial? And cannot I, as I have often said, reward her when I will by marriage?

'Tis late, or rather early; for the day begins to dawn upon me. I am plaguy heavy. Perhaps I need not to have told thee that. But will only indulge a doze in my chair for an hour; then shake myself, wash and refresh. At my time of life, with such a constitution as I am blessed with, that's all that's wanted.

Good night to me!—It cannot be broad day till I am awake.—Aw-w-w-whaugh—pox of this yawning!

Is not thy uncle dead yet?

What's come to mine, that he writes not to my last?—Hunting after more wisdom of nations, I suppose!—Yaw-yaw-yawning again!—Pen, begone!

LETTER VII

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. MONDAY, MAY 29

Now have I established myself for ever in my charmer's heart.

The Captain came at seven, as promised, and ready equipped for his journey. My beloved chose not to give us her company till our first conversation was over—ashamed, I suppose, to be present at that part of it which was to restore her to her virgin state by my confession, after her wifeness had been reported to her uncle. But she took her cue, nevertheless, and listened to all that passed.

The modestest women, Jack, must think, and think deeply sometimes. I wonder whether they ever blush at those things by themselves, at which they have so charming a knack of blushing in company. If not; and if blushing be a sign of grace or modesty; have not the sex as great a command over their blushes as they are said to have over their tears? This reflection would lead me a great way into female minds, were I disposed to pursue it.

I told the Captain, that I would prevent his question; and accordingly (after I had enjoined the strictest secrecy, that no advantage might be given to James Harlowe, and which he had answered for as well on Mr. Harlowe's part as his own) I acknowledged nakedly and fairly the whole truth—to wit, 'That we were not yet married. I gave him hints of the causes of procrastination. Some of them owing to unhappy misunderstandings: but chiefly to the Lady's desire of previous reconciliation with her friends; and to a delicacy that had no example.'

Less nice ladies than this, Jack, love to have delays, wilful and studied delays, imputed to them in these cases—yet are indelicate in their affected delicacy: For do they not thereby tacitly confess, that they expect to be the greatest estainers in wedlock; and that there is self-denial in the pride they take in delaying?

I told him the reason of our passing to the people below as married—yet as under a vow of restriction, as to consummation, which had kept us both to the height, one of forbearing, the other of vigilant punctilio; even to the denial of those innocent freedoms, which betrothed lovers never scruple to allow and to take.

I then communicated to him a copy of my proposal of settlement; the substance of her written answer; the contents of my letter of invitation to Lord M. to be her nuptial-father; and of my Lord's generous reply. But said, that having apprehensions of delay from his infirmities, and my beloved choosing by all means (and that from principles of unrequited duty) a private solemnization, I had written to excuse his Lordship's presence; and expected an answer every hour.

'The settlements, I told him, were actually drawing by Counsellor Williams, of whose eminence he must have heard—'

He had.

'And of the truth of this he might satisfy himself before he went out of town.'

'When these were drawn, approved, and engrossed, nothing, I said, but signing, and the nomination of my happy day, would be wanting. I had a pride, I declared, in doing the highest justice to so beloved a creature, of my own voluntary motion, and without the intervention of a family from whom I had received the greatest insults. And this being our present situation, I was contented that Mr. John Harlowe should suspend his reconciliatory purposes till our marriage were actually solemnized.'

The Captain was highly delighted with all I said: Yet owned, that as his dear friend Mr. Harlowe had expressed himself greatly pleased to hear that we were actually married, he could have wished it had been so. But, nevertheless, he doubted not that all would be well.

He saw my reasons, he said, and approved of them, for making the gentlewomen below [whom again he understood to be good sort of people] believe that the ceremony had passed; which so well accounted for what the lady's maid had told Mr. Harlowe's friend. Mr. James Harlowe, he said, had certainly ends to answer in keeping open the breach; and as certainly had formed a design to get his sister out of my hands. Wherefore it as much imported his worthy friend to keep this treaty as secret, as it did me; at least till he had formed his party, and taken his measures. Ill will and passion were dreadful misrepresenters. It was amazing to him, that animosity could be carried so high against a man capable of views so pacific and so honourable, and who had shown such a command of his temper, in this whole transaction, as I had done. Generosity, indeed, in every case, where love of stratagem and intrigue (I would excuse him) were not concerned, was a part of my character.

He was proceeding, when, breakfast being ready, in came the empress of my heart, irradiating all around her, as with a glory—a benignity and graciousness in her aspect, that, though natural to it, had been long banished from it.

Next to prostration lowly bowed the Captain. O how the sweet creature smiled her approbation of him! Reverence from one begets reverence from another. Men are more of monkeys in imitation than they think themselves.—Involuntarily, in a manner, I bent my knee—My dearest life—and made a very fine speech on presenting the Captain to her. No title myself, to her lip or cheek, 'tis well he attempted not either. He was indeed ready to worship her;—could only touch her charming hand.

I have told the Captain, my dear creature—and then I briefly repeated (as if I had supposed she had not heard it) all I had told him.

He was astonished, that any body could be displeased one moment with such an angel. He undertook her cause as the highest degree of merit to himself.

Never, I must need say, did an angel so much look the angel. All placid, serene, smiling, self-assured: a more lovely flush than usual heightening her natural graces, and adding charms, even to radiance, to her charming complexion.

After we had seated ourselves, the agreeable subject was renewed, as we took our chocolate. How happy should she be in her uncle's restored favour!

The Captain engaged for it—No more delays, he hoped, on her part! Let the happy day be but once over, all would then be right. But was it improper to ask for copies of my proposals, and of her answer, in order to show them to his dear friend, her uncle?

As Mr. Lovelace pleased.—O that the dear creature would always say so!

It must be in strict confidence then, I said. But would it not be better to show her uncle the draught of the settlements, when drawn?

And will you be so good as to allow of this, Mr. Lovelace?

There, Belford! We were once the quarrelsome, but now we are the polite, lovers.

Indeed, my dear creature, I will, if you desire it, and if Captain Tomlinson will engage that Mr. Harlowe shall keep them absolutely a secret; that I may not be subjected to the cavil and controul of any others of a family that have used me so very ill.

Now, indeed, Sir, you are very obliging.

Dost think, Jack, that my face did not now also shine?

I held out my hand, (first consecrating it with a kiss,) for her's. She condescended to give it me. I pressed it to my lips: You know not Captain Tomlinson, (with an air,) all storms overblown, what a happy man—

Charming couple! [his hands lifted up,] how will my good friend rejoice! O that he were present! You know not, Madam, how dear you still are to your uncle Harlowe!

I am still unhappy ever to have disobliged him!

Not too much of that, however, fairest, thought I!

The Captain repeated his resolution of service, and that in so acceptable a manner, that the dear creature wished that neither he, nor any of his, might ever want a friend of equal benevolence.

Nor any of this, she said; for the Captain brought it in, that he had five children living, by one of the best wives and mothers, whose excellent management made him as happy as if his eight hundred pounds a year (which was all he had to boast of) were two thousand.

Without economy, the oracular lady said, no estate was large enough. With it, the least was not too small.

Lie still, teasing villain! lie still.—I was only speaking to my conscience, Jack.

And let me ask you, Mr. Lovelace, said the Captain; yet not so much from doubt, as that I may proceed upon sure grounds—You are willing to co-operate with my dear friend in a general reconciliation?

Let me tell you, Mr. Tomlinson, that if it can be distinguished, that my readiness to make up with a family, of whose generosity I have not had reason to think highly, is entirely owing to the value I have for this angel of a woman, I will not only co-operate with Mr. John Harlowe, as you ask; but I will meet with Mr. James Harlowe senior, and his lady, all the way. And furthermore, to make the son James and his sister Arabella quite easy, I will absolutely disclaim any further interest, whether living or dying, in any of the three brothers' estates; contenting myself with what my beloved's grandfather had bequeathed to her: for I have reason to be abundantly satisfied with my own circumstances and prospects—enough rewarded, were she not to bring a shilling in dowry, in a woman who has a merit superior to all the goods of fortune.—True as the Gospel, Belford!—Why had not this scene a real foundation?

The dear creature, by her eyes, expressed her gratitude, before her lips could utter it. O Mr. Lovelace, said she—you have infinitely—And there she stopt.

The Captain run over in my praise. He was really affected.

O that I had not such a mixture of revenge and pride in my love, thought I!—But, (my old plea,) cannot I make her amends at any time? And is not her virtue now in the height of its probation?—Would she lay aside, like the friends of my uncontending Rosebud, all thoughts of defiance—Would she throw herself upon my mercy, and try me but one fortnight in the life of honour—What then?—I cannot say, What then—

Do not despise me, Jack, for my inconsistency—in no two letters perhaps agreeing with myself—Who expects consistency in men of our character?—But I am mad with love—fired by revenge—puzzled with my own devices—my invention is my curse—my pride my punishment—drawn five or six ways at once, can she possibly be so unhappy as I?—O why, why, was this woman so divinely excellent!—Yet how know I that she is? What have been her trials? Have I had the courage to make a single one upon her person, though a thousand upon her temper?—Enow, I hope, to make her afraid of ever more disobliging me more!—

I must banish reflection, or I am a lost man. For these two hours past have I hated myself for my own contrivances. And this not only from what I have related to thee; but for what I have further to relate. But I have now once more steeled my heart. My vengeance is uppermost; for I have been reperusing some of Miss Howe's virulence. The contempt they have both held me in I cannot bear.

The happiest breakfast-time, my beloved owned, that she had ever known since she had left her father's house. [She might have let this alone.] The Captain renewed all his protestations of service. He would write me word how his dear friend received the account he should give him of the happy situation of our affairs, and what he thought of the settlements, as soon as I should send him the draughts so kindly promised. And we parted with great professions of mutual esteem; my beloved putting up vows for the success of his generous mediation.

When I returned from attending the Captain down stairs, which I did to the outward door, my beloved met me as I entered the dining-room; complacency reigning in every lovely feature.

'You see me already,' said she, 'another creature. You know not, Mr. Lovelace, how near my heart this hoped-for reconciliation is. I am now willing to banish every disagreeable remembrance. You know not, Sir, how much you have obliged me. And O Mr. Lovelace, how happy I shall be, when my heart is lightened from the all-sinking weight of a father's curse! When my dear mamma—You don't know, Sir, half the excellencies of my dear mamma! and what a kind heart she has, when it is left to follow its own impulses—When this blessed mamma shall once more fold me to her indulgent bosom! When I shall again have uncles and aunts, and a brother and sister, all striving who shall show most kindness and favour to the poor outcast, then no more an outcast—And you, Mr. Lovelace, to behold all this, with welcome—What though a little cold at first? when they come to know you better, and to see you oftener, no fresh causes of disgust occurring, and you, as I hope, having entered upon a new course, all will be warmer and warmer love on both sides, till every one will perhaps wonder, how they came to set themselves against you.'

Then drying her tears with her handkerchief, after a few moments pausing, on a sudden, as if recollecting that she had been led by her joy to an expression of it which she had not intended I should see, she retired to her chamber with precipitation; leaving me almost as unable to stand it as herself.

In short, I was—I want words to say how I was—my nose had been made to tingle before; my eyes have before been made to glisten by this soul-moving beauty; but so very much affected, I never was—for, trying to check my sensibility, it was too strong for me, and I even sobbed— Yes, by my soul, I audibly sobbed, and was forced to turn from her before she had well finished her affecting speech.

I want, methinks, now I have owned the odd sensation, to describe it to thee—the thing was so strange to me—something choking, as it were, in my throat—I know not how—yet, I must needs say, though I am out of countenance upon the recollection, that there was something very pretty in it; and I wish I could know it again, that I might have a more perfect idea of it, and be better able to describe it to thee.

But this effect of her joy on such an occasion gives me a high notion of what that virtue must be [What other name can I call it?] which in a mind so capable of delicate transport, should be able to make so charming a creature, in her very bloom, all frost and snow to every advance of love from the man she hates not. This must be all from education too—Must it not, Belford? Can education have stronger force in a woman's heart than nature?—Sure it cannot. But if it can, how entirely right are parents to cultivate their daughters' minds, and to inspire them with notions of reserve and distance to our sex: and indeed to make them think highly of their own! for pride is an excellent substitute, let me tell thee, where virtue shines not out, as the sun, in its own unborrowed lustre.

LETTER VIII

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ

And now it is time to confess (and yet I know that thy conjectures are beforehand with my exposition) that this Captain Tomlinson, who is so great a favourite with my charmer, and who takes so much delight in healing breaches, and reconciling differences, is neither a greater man nor a less than honest Patrick M'Donald, attended by a discarded footman of his own finding out.

Thou knowest what a various-lived rascal he is; and to what better hopes born and educated. But that ingenious knack of forgery, for which he was expelled the Dublin-University, and a detection since in evidenceship, have been his ruin. For these have thrown him from one country to another; and at last, into the way of life, which would make him a fit husband for Miss Howe's Townsend with her contrabands. He is, thou knowest, admirably qualified for any enterprize that requires adroitness and solemnity. And can there, after all, be a higher piece of justice, than to keep one smuggler in readiness to play against another?

'Well, but, Lovelace, (methinks thou questionest,) how camest thou to venture upon such a contrivance as this, when, as thou hast told me, the Lady used to be a month at a time at this uncle's; and must therefore, in all probability, know, that there was not a Captain Tomlinson in all the neighbourhood, at least no one of the name so intimate with him as this man pretends to be?'

This objection, Jack, is so natural a one, that I could not help observing to my charmer, that she must surely have heard her uncle speak of this gentleman. No, she said, she never had. Besides she had not been at her uncle Harlowe's for near ten months [this I had heard from her before]: and there were several gentlemen who used the same green, whom she knew not.

We are all very ready, thou knowest, to believe what she likes.

And what was the reason, thinkest thou, that she had not been of so long a time at this uncle's?—Why, this old sinner, who imagines himself entitled to call me to account for my freedoms with the sex, has lately fallen into familiarities, as it is suspected, with his housekeeper; who assumes airs upon it.—A cursed deluding sex!—In youth, middle age, or dotage, they take us all in.

Dost thou not see, however, that this housekeeper knows nothing, nor is to know any thing, of the treaty of reconciliation designed to be set on foot; and therefore the uncle always comes to the Captain, the Captain goes not to the uncle? And this I surmised to the lady. And then it was a natural suggestion, that the Captain was the rather applied to, as he is a stranger to the rest of the family—Need I tell thee the meaning of all this?

But this intrigue of the antient is a piece of private history, the truth of which my beloved cares not to own, and indeed affects to disbelieve: as she does also some puisny gallantries of her foolish brother; which, by way of recrimination, I have hinted at, without naming my informant in their family.

'Well but, methinks, thou questionest again, Is it not probable that Miss Howe will make inquiry after such a man as Tomlinson?—And when she cannot—'

I know what thou wouldst say—but I have no doubt, that Wilson will be so good, if I desire it, as to give into my own hands any letter that may be brought by Collins to his house, for a week to come. And now I hope thou art satisfied.

I will conclude with a short story.

'Two neighbouring sovereigns were at war together, about some pitiful chuck-farthing thing or other; no matter what; for the least trifles will set princes and children at loggerheads. Their armies had been drawn up in battalia some days, and the news of a decisive action was expected every hour to

arrive at each court. At last, issue was joined; a bloody battle was fought; and a fellow who had been a spectator of it, arriving, with the news of a complete victory, at the capital of one of the princes some time before the appointed couriers, the bells were set a ringing, bonfires and illuminations were made, and the people went to bed intoxicated with joy and good liquor. But the next day all was reversed: The victorious enemy, pursuing his advantage, was expected every hour at the gates of the almost defenceless capital. The first reporter was hereupon sought for, and found; and being questioned, pleaded a great deal of merit, in that he had, in so dismal a situation, taken such a space of time from the distress of his fellow-citizens, and given it to festivity, as were the hours between the false good news and the real bad.'

Do thou, Belford, make the application. This I know, that I have given greater joy to my beloved, than she had thought would so soon fall to her share. And as the human life is properly said to be chequerwork, no doubt but a person of her prudence will make the best of it, and set off so much good against so much bad, in order to strike as just a balance as possible.

[The Lady, in three several letters, acquaints her friend with the most material passages and conversations contained in those of Mr. Lovelace's preceding. These are her words, on relating what the commission of the pretended Tomlinson was, after the apprehensions that his distant inquiry had given her:]

At last, my dear, all these doubts and fears were cleared up, and banished; and, in their place, a delightful prospect was opened to me. For it comes happily out, (but at present it must be an absolute secret, for reasons which I shall mention in the sequel,) that the gentleman was sent by my uncle Harlowe [I thought he could not be angry with me for ever]: all owing to the conversation that passed between your good Mr. Hickman and him. For although Mr. Hickman's application was too harshly rejected at the time, my uncle could not but think better of it afterwards, and of the arguments that worthy gentleman used in my favour.

Who, upon a passionate repulse, would despair of having a reasonable request granted?—Who would not, by gentleness and condescension, endeavour to leave favourable impressions upon an angry mind; which, when it comes coolly to reflect, may induce it to work itself into a condescending temper? To request a favour, as I have often said, is one thing; to challenge it as our due, is another. And what right has a petitioner to be angry at a repulse, if he has not a right to demand what he sues for as a debt?

[She describes Captain Tomlinson, on his breakfast-visit, to be, a grave, good sort of man. And in another place, a genteel man of great gravity, and a good aspect; she believes upwards of fifty years of age. 'I liked him, says she, as soon as I saw him.'

As her projects are now, she says, more favourable than heretofore, she wishes, that her hopes of Mr. Lovelace's so-often-promised reformation were better grounded than she is afraid they can be.]

We have both been extremely puzzled, my dear, says she, to reconcile some parts of Mr. Lovelace's character with other parts of it: his good with his bad; such of the former, in particular, as his generosity to his tenants; his bounty to the innkeeper's daughter; his readiness to put me upon doing kind things by my good Norton, and others.

A strange mixture in his mind, as I have told him! for he is certainly (as I have reason to say, looking back upon his past behaviour to me in twenty instances) a hard-hearted man.—Indeed, my dear, I have thought more than once, that he had rather see me in tears than give me reason to be pleased with him.

My cousin Morden says, that free livers are remorseless.⁸ And so they must be in the very nature of things.

⁸ See Vol. IV. Letter XIX. See also Mr. Lovelace's own confession of the delight he takes in a woman's tears, in different parts of his letters.

Mr. Lovelace is a proud man. We have both long ago observed that he is. And I am truly afraid, that his very generosity is more owing to his pride and his vanity, than that philanthropy (shall I call it?) which distinguishes a beneficent mind.

Money he values not, but as a mean to support his pride and his independence. And it is easy, as I have often thought, for a person to part with a secondary appetite, when, by so doing, he can promote or gratify a first.

I am afraid, my dear, that there must have been some fault in his education. His natural bias was not, perhaps (as his power was likely to be large) to do good and beneficent actions; but not, I doubt, from proper motives.

If he had, his generosity would not have stopt at pride, but would have struck into humanity; and then would he not have contented himself with doing praiseworthy things by fits and starts, or, as if relying on the doctrine of merits, he hoped by a good action to atone for a bad one;⁹ but he would have been uniformly noble, and done the good for its own sake.

To show the consistence of his actions, as they now appear, with his views and principles, as he lays them down in his first letters, it may be not amiss to refer the reader to his letters, Vol. I. No. XXXIV. XXXV.

See also Vol. I. Letter XXX.—and Letter XL. for Clarissa's early opinion of Mr. Lovelace.—Whence the coldness and indifference to him, which he so repeatedly accuses her of, will be accounted for, more to her glory, than to his honour.

O my dear! what a lot have I drawn! pride, this poor man's virtue; and revenge, his other predominating quality!—This one consolation, however, remains:—He is not an infidel, and unbeliever: had he been an infidel, there would have been no room at all for hope of him; (but priding himself, as he does, in his fertile invention) he would have been utterly abandoned, irreclaimable, and a savage.

[When she comes to relate those occasions, which Mr. Lovelace in his narrative acknowledges himself to be affected by, she thus expresses herself:]

He endeavoured, as once before, to conceal his emotion. But why, my dear, should these men (for Mr. Lovelace is not singular in this) think themselves above giving these beautiful proofs of a feeling heart? Were it in my power again to choose, or to refuse, I would reject the man with contempt, who sought to suppress, or offered to deny, the power of being visibly affected upon proper occasions, as either a savage-hearted creature, or as one who was so ignorant of the principal glory of the human nature, as to place his pride in a barbarous insensibility.

These lines translated from Juvenal by Mr. Tate, I have been often pleased with:

Compassion proper to mankind appears:
Which Nature witness'd, when she lent us tears.
Of tender sentiments we only give
These proofs: To weep is our prerogative:
To show by pitying looks, and melting eyes,
How with a suff'ring friend we sympathise.
Who can all sense of other ills escape,
Is but a brute at best, in human shape.

⁹ That the Lady judges rightly of him in this place, see Vol. I. Letter XXXIV. where, giving the motive for his generosity to his Rosebud, he says—'As I make it my rule, whenever I have committed a very capital enormity, to do some good by way of atonement; and as I believe I am a pretty deal indebted on that score; I intend to join an hundred pounds to Johnny's aunt's hundred pounds, to make one innocent couple happy.'— Besides which motive, he had a further view in answer in that instance of his generosity; as may be seen in Vol. II. Letters XXVI. XXVII. XXVIII. See also the note, Vol. II. pp. 170, 171.

It cannot but yield me some pleasure, hardly as I have sometimes thought of the people of the house, that such a good man as Captain Tomlinson had spoken well of them, upon inquiry.

And here I stop a minute, my dear, to receive, in fancy, your kind congratulation.

My next, I hope, will confirm my present, and open still more agreeable prospects. Mean time be assured, that there cannot possibly any good fortune befall me, which I shall look upon with equal delight to that I have in your friendship.

My thankful compliments to your good Mr. Hickman, to whose kind invention I am so much obliged on this occasion, conclude me, my dearest Miss Howe,

Your ever affectionate and grateful CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER IX

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. TUESDAY, MAY 30

I have a letter from Lord M. Such a one as I would wish for, if I intended matrimony. But as matters are circumstanced, I cannot think of showing it to my beloved.

My Lord regrets, 'that he is not to be the Lady's nuptial father. He seems apprehensive that I have still, specious as my reasons are, some mischief in my head.'

He graciously consents, 'that I may marry when I please; and offers one or both of my cousins to assist my bride, and to support her spirits on the occasion; since, as he understands, she is so much afraid to venture with me.

'Pritchard, he tells me, has his final orders to draw up deeds for assigning over to me, in perpetuity, 1000£. per annum: which he will execute the same hour that the lady in person owns her marriage.'

He consents, 'that the jointure be made from my own estate.'

He wishes, 'that the Lady would have accepted of his draught; and commends me for tendering it to her. But reproaches me for my pride in not keeping it myself. What the right side gives up, the left, he says, may be the better for.'

The girls, the left-sided girls, he means.

With all my heart. If I can have my Clarissa, the devil take every thing else.

A good deal of other stuff writes the stupid peer; scribbling in several places half a dozen lines, apparently for no other reason but to bring in as many musty words in an old saw.

If thou sawest, 'How I can manage, since my beloved will wonder that I have not an answer from my Lord to such a letter as I wrote to him; and if I own I have one, will expect that I should shew it to her, as I did my letter?—This I answer—'That I can be informed by Pritchard, that my Lord has the gout in his right-hand; and has ordered him to attend me in form, for my particular orders about the transfer:' And I can see Pritchard, thou knowest, at the King's Arms, or wherever I please, at an hour's warning; though he be at M. Hall, I in town; and he, by word of mouth, can acquaint me with every thing in my Lord's letter that is necessary for my charmer to know.

Whenever it suits me, I can resolve the old peer to his right hand, and then can make him write a much more sensible letter than this that he has now sent me.

Thou knowest, that an adroitness in the art of manual imitation, was one of my earliest attainments. It has been said, on this occasion, that had I been a bad man in meum and tuum matters, I should not have been fit to live. As to the girls, we hold it no sin to cheat them. And are we not told, that in being well deceived consists the whole of human happiness?

WEDNESDAY, MAY 31.

All still happier and happier. A very high honour done me: a chariot, instead of a coach, permitted, purposely to indulge me in the subject of subjects.

Our discourse in this sweet airing turned upon our future manner of life. The day is bashfully promised me. Soon was the answer to my repeated urgency. Our equipage, our servants, our liveries, were parts of the delightful subject. A desire that the wretch who had given me intelligence out of the family (honest Joseph Leman) might not be one of our menials; and her resolution to have her faithful Hannah, whether recovered or not; were signified; and both as readily assented to.

Her wishes, from my attentive behaviour, when with her at St. Paul's,¹⁰ that I would often accompany her to the Divine Service, were greatly intimated, and as readily engaged for. I assured her, that I ever had respected the clergy in a body; and some individuals of them (her Dr. Lewen for one) highly: and that were not going to church an act of religion, I thought it [as I told thee once] a most agreeable sight to see rich and poor, all of a company, as I might say, assembled once a week in one place, and each in his or her best attire, to worship the God that made them. Nor could it be a hardship upon a man liberally educated, to make one on so solemn an occasion, and to hear the harangue of a man of letters, (though far from being the principal part of the service, as it is too generally looked upon to be,) whose studies having taken a different turn from his own, he must always have something new to say.

She shook her head, and repeated the word new: but looked as if willing to be satisfied for the present with this answer. To be sure, Jack, she means to do great despite to his Satanic majesty in her hopes of reforming me. No wonder, therefore, if he exerts himself to prevent her, and to be revenged. But how came this in!—I am ever of party against myself.—One day, I fancy, I shall hate myself on recollecting what I am about at this instant. But I must stay till then. We must all of us do something to repent of.

The reconciliation-prospect was enlarged upon. If her uncle Harlowe will but pave the way to it, and if it can be brought about, she shall be happy.—Happy, with a sigh, as it is now possible she can be!

She won't forbear, Jack!

I told her, that I had heard from Pritchard, just before we set out on our airing, and expected him in town to-morrow from Lord M. to take my directions. I spoke with gratitude of my Lord's kindness to me; and with pleasure of Lady Sarah's, Lady Betty's, and my two cousins Montague's veneration for her: as also of his Lordship's concern that his gout hindered him from writing a reply with his own hand to my last.

She pitied my Lord. She pitied poor Mrs. Fretchville too; for she had the goodness to inquire after her. The dear creature pitied every body that seemed to want pity. Happy in her own prospects, she had leisure to look abroad, and wishes every body equally happy.

It is likely to go very hard with Mrs. Fretchville. Her face, which she had valued herself upon, will be utterly ruined. 'This good, however, as I could not but observe, she may reap from so great an evil—as the greater malady generally swallows up the less, she may have a grief on this occasion, that may diminish the other grief, and make it tolerable.'

I had a gentle reprimand for this light turn on so heavy an evil—'For what was the loss of beauty to the loss of a good husband?'—Excellent creature!

Her hopes (and her pleasure upon those hopes) that Miss Howe's mother would be reconciled to her, were also mentioned. Good Mrs. Howe was her word, for a woman so covetous, and so remorseless in her covetousness, that no one else will call her good. But this dear creature has such an extension in her love, as to be capable of valuing the most insignificant animal related to those whom she respects. Love me, and love my dog, I have heard Lord M. say.—Who knows, but that I may in time, in compliment to myself, bring her to think well of thee, Jack?

But what am I about? Am I not all this time arraigning my own heart?—I know I am, by the remorse I feel in it, while my pen bears testimony to her excellence. But yet I must add (for no selfish consideration shall hinder me from doing justice to this admirable creature) that in this conversation she demonstrated so much prudent knowledge in every thing that relates to that part of the domestic management which falls under the care of a mistress of a family, that I believe she has no equal of her years in the world.

¹⁰ See Vol. IV. Letter V.

But, indeed, I know not the subject on which she does not talk with admirable distinction; insomuch that could I but get over my prejudices against matrimony, and resolve to walk in the dull beaten path of my ancestors, I should be the happiest of men—and if I cannot, I may be ten times more to be pitied than she.

My heart, my heart, Belford, is not to be trusted—I break off, to re-peruse some of Miss Howe's virulence.

Cursed letters, these of Miss Howe, Jack!—Do thou turn back to those of mine, where I take notice of them—I proceed—

Upon the whole, my charmer was all gentleness, all ease, all serenity, throughout this sweet excursion. Nor had she reason to be otherwise: for it being the first time that I had the honour of her company alone, I was resolved to encourage her, by my respectfulness, to repeat the favour.

On our return, I found the counsellor's clerk waiting for me, with a draught of the marriage-settlements.

They are drawn, with only the necessary variations, from those made for my mother. The original of which (now returned by the counsellor) as well as the new draughts, I have put into my beloved's hands.

These settlements of my mother made the lawyer's work easy; nor can she have a better precedent; the great Lord S. having settled them, at the request of my mother's relations; all the difference, my charmer's are 100l. per annum more than my mother's.

I offered to read to her the old deed, while she looked over the draught; for she had refused her presence at the examination with the clerk: but this she also declined.

I suppose she did not care to hear of so many children, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh sons, and as many daughters, to be begotten upon the body of the said Clarissa Harlowe.

Charming matrimonial recitatives!—though it is always said lawfully begotten too—as if a man could beget children unlawfully upon the body of his own wife.—But thinkest thou not that these arch rogues the lawyers hereby intimate, that a man may have children by his wife before marriage?—This must be what they mean. Why will these sly fellows put an honest man in minds of such rogueries?—but hence, as in numberless other instances, we see, that law and gospel are two very different things.

Dorcas, in our absence, tried to get at the wainscot-box in the dark closet. But it cannot be done without violence. And to run a risk of consequence now, for mere curiosity-sake, would be inexcusable.

Mrs. Sinclair and the nymphs are all of opinion, that I am now so much a favourite, and have such a visible share in her confidence, and even in her affections, that I may do what I will, and plead for excuse violence of passion; which, they will have it, makes violence of action pardonable with their sex; as well as allowed extenuation with the unconcerned of both sexes; and they all offer their helping hands. Why not? they say: Has she not passed for my wife before them all?—And is she not in a fine way of being reconciled to her friends?—And was not the want of that reconciliation the pretence for postponing the consummation?

They again urge me, since it is so difficult to make night my friend, to an attempt in the day. They remind me, that the situation of their house is such, that no noises can be heard out of it; and ridicule me for making it necessary for a lady to be undressed. It was not always so with me, poor old man! Sally told me; saucily flinging her handkerchief in my face.

LETTER X

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. FRIDAY, JUNE 2

Notwithstanding my studied-for politeness and complaisance for some days past; and though I have wanted courage to throw the mask quite aside; yet I have made the dear creature more than once look about her, by the warm, though decent expression of my passion. I have brought her to own, that I am more than indifferent with her: but as to LOVE, which I pressed her to acknowledge, what need of acknowledgments of that sort, when a woman consents to marrying?—And once repulsing me with displeasure, the proof of true love I was vowing for her, was RESPECT, not FREEDOM. And offering to defend myself, she told me, that all the conception she had been able to form of a faulty passion, was, that it must demonstrate itself as mine sought to do.

I endeavoured to justify my passion, by laying over-delicacy at her door. Over-delicacy, she said, was not my fault, if it were her's. She must plainly tell me, that I appeared to her incapable of distinguishing what were the requisites of a pure mind. Perhaps, had the libertine presumption to imagine, that there was no difference in heart, nor any but what proceeded from difference of education and custom, between the pure and impure—and yet custom alone, as she observed, if I did so think, would make a second nature, as well in good as in bad habits.

I have just now been called to account for some innocent liberties which I thought myself entitled to take before the women; as they suppose us to be married, and now within view of consummation.

I took the lecture very hardly; and with impatience wished for the happy day and hour when I might call her all my own, and meet with no check from a niceness that had no example.

She looked at me with a bashful kind of contempt. I thought it contempt, and required the reason for it; not being conscious of offence, as I told her.

This is not the first time, Mr. Lovelace, said she, that I have had cause to be displeased with you, when you, perhaps, have not thought yourself exceptionable.—But, Sir, let me tell you, that the married state, in my eye, is a state of purity, and [I think she told me] not of licentiousness; so, at least, I understood her.

Marriage-purity, Jack!—Very comical, 'faith—yet, sweet dears, half the female world ready to run away with a rake, because he is a rake; and for no other reason; nay, every other reason against their choice of such a one.

But have not you and I, Belford, seen young wives, who would be thought modest! and, when maids, were fantastically shy; permit freedoms in public from their uxorious husbands, which have shown, that both of them have forgotten what belongs either to prudence or decency? while every modest eye has sunk under the shameless effrontery, and every modest face been covered with blushes for those who could not blush.

I once, upon such an occasion, proposed to a circle of a dozen, thus scandalized, to withdraw; since they must needs see that as well the lady, as the gentleman, wanted to be in private. This motion had its effect upon the amorous pair; and I was applauded for the check given to their licentiousness.

But, upon another occasion of this sort, I acted a little more in character. For I ventured to make an attempt upon a bride, which I should not have had the courage to make, had not the unblushing passiveness with which she received her fond husband's public toyings (looking round her

with triumph rather than with shame, upon every lady present) incited my curiosity to know if the same complacency might not be shown to a private friend. 'Tis true, I was in honour obliged to keep the secret. But I never saw the turtles bill afterwards, but I thought of number two to the same female; and in my heart thanked the fond husband for the lesson he had taught his wife.

From what I have said, thou wilt see, that I approve of my beloved's exception to public loves. That, I hope, is all the charming icicle means by marriage-purity, but to return.

From the whole of what I have mentioned to have passed between my beloved and me, thou wilt gather, that I have not been a mere dangler, a Hickman, in the passed days, though not absolutely active, and a Lovelace.

The dear creature now considers herself as my wife-elect. The unsaddened heart, no longer prudish, will not now, I hope, give the sable turn to every address of the man she dislikes not. And yet she must keep up so much reserve, as will justify past inflexibilities. 'Many and many a pretty soul would yield, were she not afraid that the man she favoured would think the worse of her for it.' That is also a part of the rake's creed. But should she resent ever so strongly, she cannot now break with me; since, if she does, there will be an end of the family reconciliation; and that in a way highly discreditable to herself.

SATURDAY, JUNE 3.

Just returned from Doctors Commons. I have been endeavouring to get a license. Very true, Jack. I have the mortification to find a difficulty, as the lady is of rank and fortune, and as there is no consent of father or next friend, in obtaining this all-fettering instrument.

I made report of this difficulty. 'It is very right,' she says, 'that such difficulties should be made.'—But not to a man of my known fortune, surely, Jack, though the woman were the daughter of a duke.

I asked, if she approved of the settlements? She said, she had compared them with my mother's, and had no objection to them. She had written to Miss Howe upon the subject, she owned; and to inform her of our present situation.¹¹

Just now, in high good humour, my beloved returned me the draughts of the settlements: a copy of which I have sent to Captain Tomlinson. She complimented me, 'that she never had any doubt of my honour in cases of this nature.'

In matters between man and man nobody ever had, thou knowest.

I had need, thou wilt say, to have some good qualities.

Great faults and great virtues are often found in the same person. In nothing very bad, but as to women: and did not one of them begin with me.¹²

We have held, that women have no souls. I am a very Turk in this point, and willing to believe they have not. And if so, to whom shall I be accountable for what I do to them? Nay, if souls they have, as there is no sex in ethereals, nor need of any, what plea can a lady hold of injuries done her in her lady-state, when there is an end of her lady-ship?

¹¹ As this letter of the Lady to Miss Howe contains no new matter, but what may be collected from one of those of Mr. Lovelace, it is omitted.

¹² See Vol. I. Letter XXXI.

LETTER XI

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. MONDAY, JUNE 5

I am now almost in despair of succeeding with this charming frost-piece by love or gentleness.—A copy of the draughts, as I told thee, has been sent to Captain Tomlinson; and that by a special messenger. Engrossments are proceeding with. I have been again at the Commons.—Should in all probability have procured a license by Mallory's means, had not Mallory's friend, the proctor, been suddenly sent for to Chestnut, to make an old lady's will. Pritchard has told me by word of mouth, though my charmer saw him not, all that was necessary for her to know in the letter my Lord wrote, which I could not show her: and taken my directions about the estates to be made over to me on my nuptials.—Yet, with all these favourable appearances, no conceding moment to be found, no improvable tenderness to be raised.

But never, I believe, was there so true, so delicate a modesty in the human mind as in that of this lady. And this has been my security all along; and, in spite of Miss Howe's advice to her, will be so still; since, if her delicacy be a fault, she can no more overcome it than I can my aversion to matrimony. Habit, habit, Jack, seest thou not? may subject us both to weaknesses. And should she not have charity for me, as I have for her?

Twice indeed with rapture, which once she called rude, did I salute her; and each time resenting the freedom, did she retire; though, to do her justice, she favoured me again with her presence at my first entreaty, and took no notice of the cause of her withdrawing.

Is it policy to show so open a resentment for innocent liberties, which, in her situation, she must so soon forgive?

Yet the woman who resents not initiatory freedoms must be lost. For love is an encroacher. Love never goes backward. Love is always aspiring. Always must aspire. Nothing but the highest act of love can satisfy an indulged love. And what advantages has a lover, who values not breaking the peace, over his mistress who is solicitous to keep it!

I have now at this instant wrought myself up, for the dozenth time, to a half-resolution. A thousand agreeable things I have to say to her. She is in the dining-room. Just gone up. She always expects me when there.

High displeasure!—followed by an abrupt departure.

I sat down by her. I took both her hands in mine. I would have it so. All gentle my voice. Her father mentioned with respect. Her mother with reverence. Even her brother amicably spoken of. I never thought I could have wished so ardently, as I told her I did wish, for a reconciliation with her family.

A sweet and grateful flush then overspread her fair face; a gentle sigh now-and-then heaved her handkerchief.

I perfectly longed to hear from Captain Tomlinson. It was impossible for the uncle to find fault with the draught of the settlements. I would not, however, be understood, by sending them down, that I intended to put it in her uncle's power to delay my happy day. When, when was it to be?

I would hasten again to the Commons; and would not return without the license.

The Lawn I proposed to retire to, as soon as the happy ceremony was over. This day and that day I proposed.

It was time enough to name the day, when the settlements were completed, and the license obtained. Happy should she be, could the kind Captain Tomlinson obtain her uncle's presence privately.

A good hint!—It may perhaps be improved upon—either for a delay or a pacifier.

No new delays for Heaven's sake, I besought her; and reproached her gently for the past. Name but the day—(an early day, I hoped it would be, in the following week)—that I might hail its approach, and number the tardy hours.

My cheek reclined on her shoulder—kissing her hands by turns. Rather bashfully than angrily reluctant, her hands sought to be withdrawn; her shoulder avoiding my reclined cheek—apparently loth, and more loth to quarrel with me; her downcast eye confessing more than her lips can utter. Now surely, thought I, is my time to try if she can forgive a still bolder freedom than I had ever yet taken.

I then gave her struggling hands liberty. I put one arm round her waist: I imprinted a kiss on her sweet lip, with a *Be quiet only*, and an averted face, as if she feared another.

Encouraged by so gentle a repulse, the tenderest things I said; and then, with my other hand, drew aside the handkerchief that concealed the beauty of beauties, and pressed with my burning lips the most charming breast that ever my ravished eyes beheld.

A very contrary passion to that which gave her bosom so delightful a swell, immediately took place. She struggled out of my encircling arms with indignation. I detained her reluctant hand. Let me go, said she. I see there is no keeping terms with you. Base encroacher! Is this the design of your flattering speeches? Far as matters have gone, I will for ever renounce you. You have an odious heart. Let me go, I tell you.

I was forced to obey, and she flung from me, repeating *base*, and adding *flattering*, *encroacher*.

In vain have I urged by Dorcas for the promised favour of dining with her. She would not dine at all. She could not.

But why makes she every inch of her person thus sacred?—So near the time too, that she must suppose, that all will be my own by deed of purchase and settlement?

She has read, no doubt, of the art of the eastern monarchs, who sequester themselves from the eyes of their subjects, in order to excite their adoration, when, upon some solemn occasions, they think fit to appear in public.

But let me ask thee, Belford, whether (on these solemn occasions) the preceding cavalcade; here a greater officer, and there a great minister, with their satellites, and glaring equipages; do not prepare the eyes of the wondering beholders, by degrees, to bear the blaze of canopy'd majesty (what though but an ugly old man perhaps himself? yet) glittering in the collected riches of his vast empire?

And should not my beloved, for her own sake, descend, by degrees, from goddess-hood into humanity? If it be pride that restrains her, ought not that pride to be punished? If, as in the eastern emperors, it be art as well as pride, art is what she of all women need not use. If shame, what a shame to be ashamed to communicate to her adorer's sight the most admirable of her personal graces?

Let me perish, Belford, if I would not forego the brightest diadem in the world, for the pleasure of seeing a twin Lovelace at each charming breast, drawing from it his first sustenance; the pious task, for physical reasons,¹³ continued for one month and no more!

I now, methinks, behold this most charming of women in this sweet office: her conscious eye now dropt on one, now on the other, with a sigh of maternal tenderness, and then raised up to my

¹³ In Pamela, Vol. III. Letter XXXII. these reasons are given, and are worthy of every parent's consideration, as is the whole Letter, which contains the debate between Mr. B. and his Pamela, on the important subject of mothers being nurses to their own children.

delighted eye, full of wishes, for the sake of the pretty varlets, and for her own sake, that I would deign to legitimate; that I would condescend to put on the nuptial fetters.

LETTER XII

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. MONDAY AFTERNOON

A letter received from the worthy Captain Tomlinson has introduced me into the presence of my charmer sooner than perhaps I should otherwise have been admitted.

Sullen her brow, at her first entrance into the dining-room. But I took no notice of what had passed, and her anger of itself subsided.

'The Captain, after letting me know that he chose not to write till he had promised the draught of the settlements, acquaint me, that his friend Mr. John Harlowe, in their first conference (which was held as soon as he got down) was extremely surprised, and even grieved (as he feared he would be) to hear that we were not married. The world, he said, who knew my character, would be very censorious, were it owned, that we had lived so long together unmarried in the same lodgings; although our marriage were now to be ever so publicly celebrated.

'His nephew James, he was sure, would make a great handle of it against any motion that might be made towards a reconciliation; and with the greater success, as there was not a family in the kingdom more jealous of their honour than theirs.'

This is true of the Harlowes, Jack: they have been called The proud Harlowes: and I have ever found, that all young honour is supercilious and touchy.

But seest thou not how right I was in my endeavour to persuade my fair- one to allow her uncle's friend to think us married; especially as he came prepared to believe it; and as her uncle hoped it was so?—But nothing on earth is so perverse as a woman, when she is set upon carrying a point, and has a meek man, or one who loves his peace, to deal with.

My beloved was vexed. She pulled out her handkerchief: but was more inclined to blame me than herself.

Had you kept your word, Mr. Lovelace, and left me when we came to town—And there she stopt; for she knew, that it was her own fault that we were not married before we left the country; and how could I leave her afterwards, while her brother was plotting to carry her off by violence?

Nor has this brother yet given over his machinations.

For, as the Captain proceeds, 'Mr. John Harlowe owned to him (but in confidence) that his nephew is at this time busied in endeavouring to find out where we are; being assured (as I am not to be heard of at any of my relations, or at my usual lodgings) that we are together. And that we are not married is plain, as he will have it, from Mr. Hickman's application so lately made to her uncle; and which was seconded by Mrs. Norton to her mother. And her brother cannot bear that I should enjoy such a triumph unmolested.'

A profound sigh, and the handkerchief again lifted to the eye. But did not the sweet soul deserve this turn upon her, for feloniously resolving to rob me of herself, had the application made by Hickman succeeded?

I read on to the following effect:

'Why (asked Mr. Harlowe) was it said to his other inquiring friend, that we were married; and that by his niece's woman, who ought to know? who could give convincing reasons, no doubt'—

Here again she wept; took a turn across the room; then returned—Read on, says she—

Will you, my dearest life, read it yourself?

I will take the letter with me, by-and-by—I cannot see to read it just now, wiping her eyes—read on—let me hear it all—that I may know your sentiments upon this letter, as well as give my own.

'The Captain then told uncle John the reasons that induced me to give out that we were married; and the conditions on which my beloved was brought to countenance it; which had kept us at the most punctilious distance.

'But still Mr. Harlowe objected my character. And went away dissatisfied. And the Captain was also so much concerned, that he cared not to write what the result of his first conference was.

'But in the next, which was held on receipt of the draughts, at the Captain's house, (as the former was, for the greater secrecy,) when the old gentleman had read them, and had the Captain's opinion, he was much better pleased. And yet he declared, that it would not be easy to persuade any other person of his family to believe so favourably of the matter, as he was now willing to believe, were they to know that we had lived so long together unmarried.

'And then the Captain says, his dear friend made a proposal:—It was this—That we should marry out of hand, but as privately as possible, as indeed he found we intended, (for he could have no objection to the draughts)—but yet, he expected to have present one trusty friend of his own, for his better satisfaction'—

Here I stopt, with a design to be angry—but she desiring me to read on, I obeyed.

'—But that it should pass to every one living, except to that trusty person, to himself, and to the Captain, that we were married from the time that we had lived together in one house; and that this time should be made to agree with that of Mr. Hickman's application to him from Miss Howe.'

This, my dearest life, said I, is a very considerate proposal. We have nothing to do but to caution the people below properly on this head. I did not think your uncle Harlowe capable of hitting upon such a charming expedient as this. But you see how much his heart is in the reconciliation.

This was the return I met with—You have always, as a mark of your politeness, let me know how meanly you think of every one in my family.

Yet thou wilt think, Belford, that I could forgive her for the reproach.

'The Captain does not know, says he, how this proposal will be relished by us. But for his part, he thinks it an expedient that will obviate many difficulties, and may possibly put an end to Mr. James Harlowe's further designs: and on this account he has, by the uncle's advice, already declared to two several persons, by whose means it may come to that young gentleman's, that he [Captain Tomlinson] has very great reason to believe that we were married soon after Mr. Hickman's application was rejected.

'And this, Mr. Lovelace, (says the Captain,) will enable you to pay a compliment to the family, that will not be unsuitable to the generosity of some of the declarations you were pleased to make to the lady before me, (and which Mr. John Harlowe may make some advantage of in favour of a reconciliation,) in that you were entitled to make the demand.' An excellent contriver, surely, she must think this worthy Mr. Tomlinson to be!

But the Captain adds, 'that if either the lady or I disapprove of his report of our marriage, he will retract it. Nevertheless, he must tell me, that Mr. John Harlowe is very much set upon this way of proceeding; as the only one, in his opinion, capable of being improved into a general reconciliation. But if we do acquiesce in it, he beseeches my fair-one not to suspend my day, that he may be authorized in what he says, as to the truth of the main fact. [How conscientious this good man!] Nor must it be expected, he says, that her uncle will take one step towards the wished-for reconciliation, till the solemnity is actually over.'

He adds, 'that he shall be very soon in town on other affairs; and then proposes to attend us, and give us a more particular account of all that has passed, or shall further pass, between Mr. Harlowe and him.'

Well, my dearest life, what say you to your uncle's expedient? Shall I write to the Captain, and acquaint him, that we have no objection to it?

She was silent for a few minutes. At last, with a sigh, See, Mr. Lovelace, said she, what you have brought me to, by treading after you in such crooked paths!—See what disgrace I have incurred!—Indeed you have not acted like a wise man.

My beloved creature, do you not remember, how earnestly I besought the honour of your hand before we came to town?—Had I been then favoured—

Well, well, Sir; there has been much amiss somewhere; that's all I will say at present. And since what's past cannot be recalled, my uncle must be obeyed, I think.

Charmingly dutiful!—I had nothing then to do, that I might not be behind-hand with the worthy Captain and her uncle, but to press for the day. This I fervently did. But (as I might have expected) she repeated her former answer; to wit, That when the settlements were completed; when the license was actually obtained; it would be time enough to name the day: and, O Mr. Lovelace, said she, turning from me with a grace inimitably tender, her handkerchief at her eyes, what a happiness, if my dear uncle could be prevailed upon to be personally a father, on this occasion, to the poor fatherless girl!

What's the matter with me!—Whence this dew-drop!—A tear!—As I hope to be saved, it is a tear, Jack!—Very ready methinks!—Only on reciting!—But her lovely image was before me, in the very attitude she spoke the words—and indeed at the time she spoke them, these lines of Shakespeare came into my head:

Thy heart is big. Get thee apart and weep!
Passion, I see, is catching:—For my eye,
Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine,
Begin to water—

I withdrew, and wrote to the Captain to the following effect—'I desired that he would be so good as to acquaint his dear friend that we entirely acquiesced with what he had proposed; and had already properly cautioned the gentlewomen of the house, and their servants, as well as our own: and to tell him, That if he would in person give me the blessing of his dear niece's hand, it would crown the wishes of both. In this case, I consented, that his own day, as I presumed it would be a short one, should be ours: that by this means the secret would be with fewer persons: that I myself, as well as he, thought the ceremony could not be too privately performed; and this not only for the sake of the wise end he had proposed to answer by it, but because I would not have Lord M. think himself slighted; since that nobleman, as I had told him [the Captain] had once intended to be our nuptial-father; and actually made the offer; but that we had declined to accept of it, and that for no other reason than to avoid a public wedding; which his beloved niece would not come into, while she was in disgrace with her friends. But that if he chose not to do us this honour, I wished that Captain Tomlinson might be the trusty person whom he would have be present on the happy occasion.'

I showed this letter to my fair-one. She was not displeased with it. So, Jack, we cannot now move too fast, as to settlements and license: the day is her uncle's day, or Captain Tomlinson's, perhaps, as shall best suit the occasion. Miss Howe's smuggling scheme is now surely provided against in all events.

But I will not by anticipation make thee a judge of all the benefits that may flow from this my elaborate contrivance. Why will these girls put me upon my master-strokes?

And now for a little mine which I am getting ready to spring. The first that I have sprung, and at the rate I go on (now a resolution, and now a remorse) perhaps the last that I shall attempt to spring.

A little mine, I call it. But it may be attended with great effects. I shall not, however, absolutely depend upon the success of it, having much more effectual ones in reserve. And yet great engines are often moved by small springs. A little spark falling by accident into a powder-magazine, hath done more execution in a siege, than an hundred cannon.

Come the worst, the hymeneal torch, and a white sheet, must be my amende honorable, as the French have it.

LETTER XIII

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ. TUESDAY, JUNE 6

Unsuccessful as hitherto my application to you has been, I cannot for the heart of me forbear writing once more in behalf of this admirable woman: and yet am unable to account for the zeal which impels me to take her part with an earnestness so sincere.

But all her merit thou acknowledgest; all thy own vileness thou confessest, and even gloriest in it: What hope then of moving so hardened a man?—Yet, as it is not too late, and thou art nevertheless upon the crisis, I am resolved to try what another letter will do. It is but my writing in vain, if it do no good; and if thou wilt let me prevail, I know thou wilt hereafter think me richly entitled to thy thanks.

To argue with thee would be folly. The case cannot require it. I will only entreat thee, therefore, that thou wilt not let such an excellence lose the reward of her vigilant virtue.

I believe there never were libertines so vile, but purposed, at some future period of their lives, to set about reforming: and let me beg of thee, that thou wilt, in this great article, make thy future repentance as easy, as some time hence thou wilt wish thou hadst made it.

If thou proceedest, I have no doubt that this affair will end tragically, one way or another. It must. Such a woman must interest both gods and men in her cause. But what I most apprehend is, that with her own hand, in resentment of the perpetrated outrage, she (like another Lucretia) will assert the purity of her heart: or, if her piety preserve her from this violence, that wasting grief will soon put a period to her days. And, in either case, will not the remembrance of thy ever-during guilt, and transitory triumph, be a torment of torments to thee?

'Tis a seriously sad thing, after all, that so fine a creature should have fallen into such vile and remorseless hands: for, from thy cradle, as I have heard thee own, thou ever delightedst to sport with and torment the animal, whether bird or beast, that thou lovedst, and hadst a power over.

How different is the case of this fine woman from that of any other whom thou hast seduced!—I need not mention to thee, nor insist upon the striking difference: justice, gratitude, thy interest, thy vows, all engaging thee; and thou certainly loving her, as far as thou art capable of love, above all her sex. She not to be drawn aside by art, or to be made to suffer from credulity, nor for want of wit and discernment, (that will be another cutting reflection to so fine a mind as her's:) the contention between you only unequal, as it is between naked innocence and armed guilt. In every thing else, as thou ownest, her talents greatly superior to thine!—What a fate will her's be, if thou art not at last overcome by thy reiterated remorse!

At first, indeed, when I was admitted into her presence,¹⁴ (and till I observed her meaning air, and heard her speak,) I supposed that she had no very uncommon judgment to boast of: for I made, as I thought, but just allowances for her blossoming youth, and for that loveliness of person, and for that ease and elegance in her dress, which I imagined must have taken up half her time and study to cultivate; and yet I had been prepared by thee to entertain a very high opinion of her sense and her reading. Her choice of this gay fellow, upon such hazardous terms, (thought I,) is a confirmation that her wit wants that maturity which only years and experience can give it. Her knowledge (argued I to myself) must be all theory; and the complaisance ever consorting with an age so green and so gay, will make so inexperienced a lady at least forbear to show herself disgusted at freedoms of discourse in which those present of her own sex, and some of ours, (so learned, so well read, and so travelled,) allow themselves.

¹⁴ See Vol. IV. Letter VII.

In this presumption I ran on; and having the advantage, as I conceited, of all the company but you, and being desirous to appear in her eyes a mighty clever fellow, I thought I showed away, when I said any foolish things that had more sound than sense in them; and when I made silly jests, which attracted the smiles of thy Sinclair, and the specious Partington: and that Miss Harlowe did not smile too, I thought was owing to her youth or affectation, or to a mixture of both, perhaps to a greater command of her features.—Little dreamt I, that I was incurring her contempt all the time.

But when, as I said, I heard her speak, which she did not till she had fathomed us all; when I heard her sentiments on two or three subjects, and took notice of the searching eye, darting into the very inmost cells of our frothy brains; by my faith, it made me look about me; and I began to recollect, and be ashamed of all I had said before; in short, was resolved to sit silent, till every one had talked round, to keep my folly in countenance. And then I raised the subjects that she could join in, and which she did join in, so much to the confusion and surprise of every one of us!—For even thou, Lovelace, so noted for smart wit, repartee, and a vein of raillery, that delighteth all who come near thee, satest in palpable darkness, and lookedst about thee, as well as we.

One instance only of this shall I remind thee of.

We talked of wit, and of it, and aimed at it, bandying it like a ball from one to another, and resting it chiefly with thee, who wert always proud enough and vain enough of the attribute; and then more especially as thou hadst assembled us, as far as I know, principally to show the lady thy superiority over us; and us thy triumph over her. And then Tourville (who is always satisfied with wit at second-hand; wit upon memory: other men's wit) repeated some verses, as applicable to the subject; which two of us applauded, though full of double entendre. Thou, seeing the lady's serious air on one of those repetitions, appliedst thyself to her, desiring her notions of wit: a quality, thou saidst, which every one prized, whether flowing from himself, or found in another.

Then it was that she took all our attention. It was a quality much talked of, she said, but, she believed, very little understood. At least, if she might be so free as to give her judgment of it from what had passed in the present conversation, she must say, that wit with men was one thing; with women another.

This startled us all:—How the women looked!—How they pursed their mouths; a broad smile the moment before upon each, from the verses they had heard repeated, so well understood, as we saw, by their looks! While I besought her to let us know, for our instruction, what wit with women: for such I was sure it ought to be with men.

Cowley, she said, had defined it prettily by negatives. Thou desiredst her to repeat his definition.

She did; and with so much graceful ease, and beauty, and propriety of accent, as would have made bad poetry delightful.

A thousand diff'rent shapes it bears;
Comely in thousand shapes appears.
'Tis not a tale, 'tis not a jest,
Admir'd with laughter at a feast,
Nor florid talk, which must this title gain:
The proofs of wit for ever must remain.
Much less can that have any place
At which a virgin hides her face.
Such dross the fire must purge away:—'Tis just
The author blush there, where the reader must.

Here she stopt, looking round upon her upon us all with conscious superiority, as I thought. Lord, how we stared! Thou attemptedst to give us thy definition of wit, that thou mightest have something to say, and not seem to be surprised into silent modesty.

But as if she cared not to trust thee with the subject, referring to the same author as for his more positive decision, she thus, with the same harmony of voice and accent, emphatically decided upon it.

Wit, like a luxurious vine,
Unless to virtue's prop it join,
Firm and erect, tow'rd heaven bound,
Tho' it with beauteous leaves and pleasant fruit be crown'd,
It lies deform'd, and rotting on the ground.

If thou recollectest this part of the conversation, and how like fools we looked at one another; how much it put us out of conceit with ourselves, and made us fear her, when we found our conversation thus excluded from the very character which our vanity had made us think unquestionably ours; and if thou profitest properly by the recollection; thou wilt be of my mind, that there is not so much wit in wickedness as we had flattered ourselves there was.

And after all, I have been of opinion ever since that conversation, that the wit of all the rakes and libertines down to little Johnny Hartop the punster, consists mostly in saying bold and shocking things, with such courage as shall make the modest blush, the impudent laugh, and the ignorant stare.

And why dost thou think I mention these things, so mal-a-propos, as it may seem!—Only, let me tell thee, as an instance (among many that might be given from the same evening's conversation) of this fine woman's superiority in those talents which ennoble nature, and dignify her sex—evidenced not only to each of us, as we offended, but to the flippant Partington, and the grosser, but egregiously hypocritical Sinclair, in the correcting eye, the discouraging blush, in which was mixed as much displeasure as modesty, and sometimes, as the occasion called for it, (for we were some of us hardened above the sense of feeling delicate reproof,) by the sovereign contempt, mingled with a disdainful kind of pity, that showed at once her own conscious worth, and our despicable worthlessness.

O Lovelace! what then was the triumph, even in my eye, and what is it still upon reflection, of true jest, laughing impertinence, and an obscenity so shameful, even to the guilty, that they cannot hint at it but under a double meaning!

Then, as thou hast somewhere observed,¹⁵ all her correctives avowed by her eye. Not poorly, like the generality of her sex, affecting ignorance of meanings too obvious to be concealed; but so resenting, as to show each impudent laughter the offence given to, and taken by a purity, that had mistaken its way, when it fell into such company.

Such is the woman, such is the angel, whom thou hast betrayed into thy power, and wouldst deceive and ruin.—Sweet creature! did she but know how she is surrounded, (as I then thought, as well as now think,) and what is intended, how much sooner would death be her choice, than so dreadful a situation!—'And how effectually would her story, were it generally known, warn all the sex against throwing themselves into the power of ours, let our vows, oaths, and protestations, be what they will!'

¹⁵ See Vol. IV. Letter XLVIII.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

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

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