

СЭМНЮЭЛ РИЧАРДСОН

CLARISSA HARLOWE; OR
THE HISTORY OF A
YOUNG LADY — VOLUME
1

Сэмюэл Ричардсон

**Clarissa Harlowe; or the history
of a young lady — Volume 1**

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Samuel Richardson

Clarissa Harlowe; or the history of a young lady — Volume 1

PREFACE

The following History is given in a series of letters, written Principally in a double yet separate correspondence;

Between two young ladies of virtue and honor, bearing an inviolable friendship for each other, and writing not merely for amusement, but upon the most interesting subjects; in which every private family, more or less, may find itself concerned; and,

Between two gentlemen of free lives; one of them glorying in his talents for stratagem and invention, and communicating to the other, in confidence, all the secret purposes of an intriguing head and resolute heart.

But here it will be proper to observe, for the sake of such as may apprehend hurt to the morals of youth, from the more freely-written letters, that the gentlemen, though professed libertines as to the female sex, and making it one of their wicked maxims, to keep no faith with any of the individuals of it, who are thrown into their power, are not, however, either infidels or scoffers; nor yet such as think themselves freed from the observance of those other moral duties which bind man to man.

On the contrary, it will be found, in the progress of the work, that they very often make such reflections upon each other, and each upon himself and his own actions, as reasonable beings must make, who disbelieve not a future state of rewards and punishments, and who one day propose to reform—one of them actually reforming, and by that means giving an opportunity to censure the freedoms which fall from the gayer pen and lighter heart of the other.

And yet that other, although in unbosoming himself to a select friend, he discovers wickedness enough to entitle him to general detestation, preserves a decency, as well in his images as in his language, which is not always to be found in the works of some of the most celebrated modern writers, whose subjects and characters have less warranted the liberties they have taken.

In the letters of the two young ladies, it is presumed, will be found not only the highest exercise of a reasonable and practicable friendship, between minds endowed with the noblest principles of virtue and religion, but occasionally interspersed, such delicacy of sentiments, particularly with regard to the other sex; such instances of impartiality, each freely, as a fundamental principle of their friendship, blaming, praising, and setting right the other, as are strongly to be recommended to the observation of the younger part (more specially) of female readers.

The principle of these two young ladies is proposed as an exemplar to her sex. Nor is it any objection to her being so, that she is not in all respects a perfect character. It was not only natural, but it was necessary, that she should have some faults, were it only to show the reader how laudably she could mistrust and blame herself, and carry to her own heart, divested of self-partiality, the censure which arose from her own convictions, and that even to the acquittal of those, because revered characters, whom no one else would acquit, and to whose much greater faults her errors were owing, and not to a weak or reproachable heart. As far as it is consistent with human frailty, and as far as she could be perfect, considering the people she had to deal with, and those with whom she was inseparably connected, she is perfect. To have been impeccable, must have left nothing for the Divine Grace and a purified state to do, and carried our idea of her from woman to angel. As such is she often esteemed by the man whose heart was so corrupt that he could hardly believe human nature capable of the purity, which, on every trial or temptation, shone out in her's [sic].

Besides the four principal person, several others are introduced, whose letters are characteristic: and it is presumed that there will be found in some of them, but more especially in those of the chief character among the men, and the second character among the women, such strokes of gayety, fancy, and humour, as will entertain and divert, and at the same time both warn and instruct.

All the letters are written while the hearts of the writers must be supposed to be wholly engaged in their subjects (the events at the time generally dubious): so that they abound not only in critical situations, but with what may be called instantaneous descriptions and reflections (proper to be brought home to the breast of the youthful reader;) as also with affecting conversations; many of them written in the dialogue or dramatic way.

'Much more lively and affecting,' says one of the principal character, 'must be the style of those who write in the height of a present distress; the mind tortured by the pangs of uncertainty (the events then hidden in the womb of fate;) than the dry, narrative, unanimated style of a person relating difficulties and danger surmounted, can be; the relater perfectly at ease; and if himself unmoved by his own story, not likely greatly to affect the reader.'

What will be found to be more particularly aimed at in the following work is—to warn the inconsiderate and thoughtless of the one sex, against the base arts and designs of specious contrivers of the other—to caution parents against the undue exercise of their natural authority over their children in the great article of marriage—to warn children against preferring a man of pleasure to a man of probity upon that dangerous but too-commonly-received notion, that a reformed rake makes the best husband—but above all, to investigate the highest and most important doctrines not only of morality, but of Christianity, by showing them thrown into action in the conduct of the worthy characters; while the unworthy, who set those doctrines at defiance, are condignly, and, as may be said, consequentially punished.

From what has been said, considerate readers will not enter upon the perusal of the piece before them as if it were designed only to divert and amuse. It will probably be thought tedious to all such as dip into it, expecting a light novel, or transitory romance; and look upon story in it (interesting as that is generally allowed to be) as its sole end, rather than as a vehicle to the instruction.

Different persons, as might be expected, have been of different opinions, in relation to the conduct of the Heroine in particular situations; and several worthy persons have objected to the general catastrophe, and other parts of the history. Whatever is thought material of these shall be taken notice of by way of Postscript, at the conclusion of the History; for this work being addressed to the public as a history of life and manners, those parts of it which are proposed to carry with them the force of an example, ought to be as unobjectionable as is consistent with the design of the whole, and with human nature.

NAMES OF THE PRINCIPAL PERSONS

- MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, a young lady of great beauty and merit.
ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ. her admirer.
JAMES HARLOWE, ESQ. father of Clarissa.
MRS. HARLOWE, his lady.
JAMES HARLOWE, their only son.
ARABELLA, their elder daughter.
JOHN HARLOWE, ESQ. elder brother of James Harlowe, sen.
ANTONY HARLOWE, third brother.
ROGER SOLMES, ESQ. an admirer of Clarissa, favoured by her friends.
MRS. HERVEY, half-sister of Mrs. Harlowe.
MISS DOLLY HERVEY, her daughter.
MRS. JUDITH NORTON, a woman of great piety and discretion, who had a principal share in the education of Clarissa.
COL. WM. MORDEN, a near relation of the Harlowes.
MISS HOWE, the most intimate friend, companion, and correspondent of Clarissa.
MRS. HOWE, her mother.
CHARLES HICKMAN, ESQ. an admirer of Miss Howe.
LORD M., uncle to Mr. Lovelace.
LADY SARAH SADLEIR, LADY BETTY LAWRANCE, half-sisters of Lord M.
MISS CHARLOTTE MONTAGUE, MISS PATTY MONTAGUE, nieces of the same nobleman.
DR. LEWEN, a worthy divine.
MR. ELIAS BRAND, a pedantic young clergyman.
DR. H. a humane physician.
MR. GODDARD, an honest and skilful apothecary.
JOHN BELFORD, ESQ. Mr. Lovelace's principal intimate and confidant.
RICHARD MOWBRAY, THOMAS DOLEMAN, JAMES TOURVILLE, THOMAS BELTON, ESQRS. libertine friends of Mr. Lovelace.
MRS. MOORE, a widow, keeping a lodging-house at Hampstead.
MISS RAWLINS, a notable young gentlewoman there.
MRS. BEVIS, a lively young widow of the same place.
MRS. SINCLAIR, the pretended name of a private brothel-keeper in London.
CAPTAIN TOMLINSON, the assumed name of a vile pander to the debaucheries of Mr. Lovelace.
SALLY MARTIN, POLLY HORTON, assistants of, and partners with, the infamous Sinclair.
DORCAS WYKES, an artful servant at the vile house.

LETTERS OF VOLUME I

LETTER I. Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.—Desires from her the particulars of the rencounter between Mr. Lovelace and her brother; and of the usage she receives upon it: also the whole of her story from the time Lovelace was introduced as a suitor to her sister Arabella. Admires her great qualities, and glories in the friendship between them.

LETTER II. III. IV. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Gives the requested particulars. Together with the grounds of her brother's and sister's ill-will to her; and of the animosity between her brother and Lovelace.—Her mother connives at the private correspondence between her and Lovelace, for the sake of preventing greater evils. Character of Lovelace, from an enemy.—Copy of the preamble to her grandfather's will.

LETTER V. From the same.—Her father, mother, brother, briefly characterized. Her brother's consequence in the family. Wishes Miss Howe had encouraged her brother's address. Endeavors to find excuses for her father's ill temper, and for her mother's passiveness.

LETTER VI. From the same.—Mr. Symmes, Mr. Mullins, Mr. Wyerley, in return, proposed to her, in malice to Lovelace; and, on their being rejected, Mr. Solmes. Leave given her to visit Miss Howe for a few days. Her brother's insolent behaviour upon it.

LETTER VII. From the same.—The harsh reception she meets with on her return from Miss Howe. Solmes's first visit.

LETTER VIII. From the same.—All her family determined in Solmes's favour. Her aversion to him. She rejects him, and is forbid going to church, visiting, receiving visits, or writing to any body out of the house.

LETTER IX. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Her expedient to carry on a private correspondence with Miss Howe. Regrets the necessity she is laid under to take such a clandestine step.

LETTER X. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—Inveighs against the Harlowe family for proposing such a man as Solmes. Characterizes them. Is jealous of Antony Harlowe's visits to her mother. Rallies her friend on her supposed regard to Lovelace.

LETTER XI. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Is nettled and alarmed at her raillery. Her reasons for not giving way to a passion for Lovelace.

LETTER XII. Miss Howe in reply.—Continues her raillery. Gives Lovelace's character from Mrs. Fortescue.

LETTER XIII. XIV. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—The views of her family in favouring the address of Solmes. Her brother's and sister's triumph upon the difficulties into which they have plunged her.

LETTER XV. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—She accounts for Arabella's malice. Blames her for having given up the power over the estate left her by her grandfather.

LETTER XVI. XVII. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Offends her father by her behaviour to Solmes in his presence. Tender conversation between her mother and her.—Offers to give up all thoughts of Lovelace, if she may be freed from Solmes's address. Substance of one of Lovelace's letters, of her answer, and of his reply. Makes a proposal. Her mother goes down with it.

LETTER XVIII. From the same.—The proposal rejected. Her mother affects severity to her. Another interesting conversation between them.

LETTER XIX. From the same.—Her dutiful motives for putting her estate into her father's power. Why she thinks she ought not to have Solmes. Afflicted on her mother's account.

LETTER XX. XXI. From the same.—Another conference with her mother, who leaves her in anger.—She goes down to beg her favour. Solmes comes in. She offers to withdraw; but is forbid. What follows upon it.

LETTER XXII. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Substance of a letter from Lovelace. She desires leave to go to church. Is referred to her brother, and insultingly refused by him. Her letter to him. His answer.

LETTER XXIII. XXIV. XXV. From the same.—Her faithful Hannah disgracefully dismissed. Betty Barnes, her sister's maid, set over her. A letter from her brother forbidding her to appear in the presence of any of her relations without leave. Her answer. Writes to her mother. Her mother's answer. Writes to her father. His answer.

LETTER XXVI. From the same.—Is desirous to know the opinion Lord M.'s family have of her. Substance of a letter from Lovelace, resenting the indignities he receives from her relations. She freely acquaints him that he has nothing to expect from her contrary to her duty. Insists that his next letter shall be his last.

LETTER XXVII. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—Advises her to resume her estate. Her satirical description of Solmes. Rallies her on her curiosity to know what opinion Lord M. and his family have of her. Ascribes to the difference in each of their tempers their mutual love. Gives particulars of a conversation between her mother and her on Clarissa's case. Reflects on the Harlowe family, and particularly on Mrs. Harlowe, for her passiveness.

LETTER XXVIII. Clarissa. In answer.—Chides her for the liberties she takes with her relations. Particularly defends her mother. Chides her also for her lively airs to her own mother. Desires her to treat her freely; but wishes not that she should impute love to her; and why.

LETTER XXIX. From the same.—Her expostulatory letter to her brother and sister. Their answers.

LETTER XXX. From the same.—Exceedingly angry with Lovelace, on his coming to their church. Reflections on pride, &c.

LETTER XXXI. Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.—Pride, revenge, love, ambition, or a desire of conquest, his avowedly predominant passions. His early vow to ruin as many of the fair sex as he can get into his power. His pretences for it. Breathes revenge against the Harlowe family. Glories in his contrivances. Is passionately in love with Clarissa. His high notions of her beauty and merit. Yet is incensed against her for preferring her own relations to him. Clears her, however, of intentional pride, scorn, haughtiness, or want of sensibility. What a triumph over the sex, and over her whole family, if he can carry off a lady so watchful and so prudent! Is resolved, if he cannot have the sister, to carry off the brother. Libertine as he is, can have no thoughts of any other woman but Clarissa. Warns Belford, Mowbray, Tourville, and Belton, to hold themselves in readiness to obey his summons, on the likelihood there is of room for what he calls glorious mischief.

LETTER XXXII. XXXIII. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Copies of her letters to her two uncles; and of their characteristic answer.—Her expostulatory letter to Solmes. His answer.—An insolent letter from her brother, on her writing to Solmes.

LETTER XXXIV. Lovelace to Belford.—He directs him to come down to him. For what end. Description of the poor inn he puts up at in disguise; and of the innocent daughter there, whom he calls his Rosebud. He resolves to spare her. Pride and policy his motives, and not principle. Ingenuous reflections on his own vicious disposition. He had been a rogue, he says, had he been a plough-boy. Resolves on an act of generosity for his Rosebud, by way of atonement, as he calls it, for some of his bad actions; and for other reasons which appear in the sequel.

LETTER XXXV. From the same.—His artful contrivances and dealings with Joseph Leman. His revenge and his love uppermost by turns. If the latter succeeds not, he vows that the Harlowes shall feel the former, although for it he become an exile from his country forever. He will throw himself into Clarissa's presence in the woodhouse. If he thought he had no prospect of her favour, he would attempt to carry her off: that, he says, would be a rape worthy of a Jupiter. The arts he is resolved to practise when he sees her, in order to engage her future reliance upon his honour.

LETTER XXXVI. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Lovelace, in disguise, surprises her in the woodhouse. Her terrors on first seeing him. He greatly engages her confidence (as he had designed) by his respectful behaviour.

LETTER XXXVII. Miss Howe to Clarissa.—After rallying her on her not readily owning the passion which she supposes she has for Lovelace, she desires to know how far she thinks him eligible for his best qualities, how far rejectable for his worst.

LETTER XXXVIII. XXXIX. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—She disclaims tyranny to a man who respects her. Her unhappy situation to be considered, in which the imputed love is held by her parents to be an undutiful, and therefore a criminal passion, and where the supposed object of it is a man of faulty morals. Is interrupted by a visit from Mrs. Norton, who is sent up to her to influence her in Solmes's favour. An affecting conversation between them. What passes upon it, and after it.

LETTER XL. From the same.—Resumes the requested subject. What sort of man she could have preferred to Mr. Lovelace. Arguments she has used to herself in his favour, and in his disfavour. Frankly owns that were he now a moral man, she would prefer him to all the men she ever saw. Yet is persuaded, that she could freely give up the one man to get rid of the other, as she had offered to her friends. Her delicacy affected by Miss Howe's raillery; and why. Gives her opinion of the force which figure or person may be allowed to have upon her sex.

LETTER XLI. From the same.—A letter from her mother (with patterns of rich silks) in which she entreats her to comply with all their wishes. What ought to be the principal view of a good wife in adorning her person. Her distress. Begs leave to wait upon her mother alone. Her father's angry letter, ordering her to prepare for her wedding-day. Solmes requests to see her. She refuses. All in tumults below upon it. Her brother and her sister desire that she may be left to their management.

LETTER XLII. From the same.—A very warm dialogue between her sister and her. Her sister's envy, unnatural behaviour, and violence. Clarissa sends down proposals in writing to her friends, and a letter to her brother. His insolent answer; in which he tells her, that her proposal will be considered in full assembly next morning; but that, if they shall be complied with, he will retire to Scotland, and never more return to Harlowe-place.

LETTER XLIII. Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Hardly doubts but her proposals will be accepted. Paints to herself, as her relations arrive one by one, what their deliberations, and the result of them will be, when they are all assembled. Her proposals rejected. Her sister's cruel insults on the occasion produce another warm dialogue between them. Her sister leaves her in a fury. She is greatly disturbed at the contents of a letter from Lovelace.

LETTER XLIV. From the same.—Her aunt Hervey, accompanied by her sister, makes her a visit. Farther insults from her sister. Her aunt's fruitless pleas in Solmes's favour.

THE HISTORY OF CLARISSA HARLOWE

LETTER I

MISS ANNA HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE JAN 10

I am extremely concerned, my dearest friend, for the disturbances that have happened in your family. I know how it must hurt you to become the subject of the public talk: and yet, upon an occasion so generally known, it is impossible but that whatever relates to a young lady, whose distinguished merits have made her the public care, should engage every body's attention. I long to have the particulars from yourself; and of the usage I am told you receive upon an accident you could not help; and in which, as far as I can learn, the sufferer was the aggressor.

Mr. Diggs, the surgeon, whom I sent for at the first hearing of the rencounter, to inquire, for your sake, how your brother was, told me, that there was no danger from the wound, if there were none from the fever; which it seems has been increased by the perturbation of his spirits.

Mr. Wyerley drank tea with us yesterday; and though he is far from being partial to Mr. Lovelace, as it may well be supposed, yet both he and Mr. Symmes blame your family for the treatment they gave him when he went in person to inquire after your brother's health, and to express his concern for what had happened.

They say, that Mr. Lovelace could not avoid drawing his sword: and that either your brother's unskilfulness or passion left him from the very first pass entirely in his power.

This, I am told, was what Mr. Lovelace said upon it; retreating as he spoke: 'Have a care, Mr. Harlowe—your violence puts you out of your defence. You give me too much advantage. For your sister's sake, I will pass by every thing:—if—'

But this the more provoked his rashness, to lay himself open to the advantage of his adversary—who, after a slight wound given him in the arm, took away his sword.

There are people who love not your brother, because of his natural imperiousness and fierce and uncontrollable temper: these say, that the young gentleman's passion was abated on seeing his blood gush plentifully down his arm; and that he received the generous offices of his adversary (who helped him off with his coat and waistcoat, and bound up his arm, till the surgeon could come,) with such patience, as was far from making a visit afterwards from that adversary, to inquire after his health, appear either insulting or improper.

Be this as it may, every body pities you. So steady, so uniform in your conduct: so desirous, as you always said, of sliding through life to the end of it unnoted; and, as I may add, not wishing to be observed even for your silent benevolence; sufficiently happy in the noble consciousness which attends it: Rather useful than glaring, your deserved motto; though now, to your regret, pushed into blaze, as I may say: and yet blamed at home for the faults of others—how must such a virtue suffer on every hand!—yet it must be allowed, that your present trial is but proportioned to your prudence.

As all your friends without doors are apprehensive that some other unhappy event may result from so violent a contention, in which it seems the families on both sides are now engaged, I must desire you to enable me, on the authority of your own information, to do you occasional justice.

My mother, and all of us, like the rest of the world, talk of nobody but you on this occasion, and of the consequences which may follow from the resentments of a man of Mr. Lovelace's spirit; who, as he gives out, has been treated with high indignity by your uncles. My mother will have it, that you cannot now, with any decency, either see him, or correspond with him. She is a good

deal prepossessed by your uncle Antony; who occasionally calls upon us, as you know; and, on this rencounter, has represented to her the crime which it would be in a sister to encourage a man who is to wade into her favour (this was his expression) through the blood of her brother.

Write to me therefore, my dear, the whole of your story from the time that Mr. Lovelace was first introduced into your family; and particularly an account of all that passed between him and your sister; about which there are different reports; some people scrupling not to insinuate that the younger sister has stolen a lover from the elder: and pray write in so full a manner as may satisfy those who know not so much of your affairs as I do. If anything unhappy should fall out from the violence of such spirits as you have to deal with, your account of all things previous to it will be your best justification.

You see what you draw upon yourself by excelling all your sex. Every individual of it who knows you, or has heard of you, seems to think you answerable to her for your conduct in points so very delicate and concerning.

Every eye, in short, is upon you with the expectation of an example. I wish to heaven you were at liberty to pursue your own methods: all would then, I dare say, be easy, and honourably ended. But I dread your directors and directresses; for your mother, admirably well qualified as she is to lead, must submit to be led. Your sister and brother will certainly put you out of your course.

But this is a point you will not permit me to expatiate upon: pardon me therefore, and I have done.—Yet, why should I say, pardon me? when your concerns are my concerns? when your honour is my honour? when I love you, as never woman loved another? and when you have allowed of that concern and of that love; and have for years, which in persons so young may be called many, ranked in the first class of your friends,

Your ever grateful and affectionate, ANNA HOWE.

Will you oblige me with a copy of the preamble to the clauses in your grandfather's will in your favour; and allow me to send it to my aunt Harman?—She is very desirous to see it. Yet your character has so charmed her, that, though a stranger to you personally, she assents to the preference given you in that will, before she knows the testator's reasons for giving you that preference.

LETTER II

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE HARLOWE-PLACE, JAN. 13

How you oppress me, my dearest friend, with your politeness! I cannot doubt your sincerity; but you should take care, that you give me not reason from your kind partiality to call in question your judgment. You do not distinguish that I take many admirable hints from you, and have the art to pass them upon you for my own: for in all you do, in all you say, nay, in your very looks (so animated!) you give lessons to one who loves you and observes you as I love you and observe you, without knowing that you do—So pray, my dear, be more sparing of your praise for the future, lest after this confession we should suspect that you secretly intend to praise yourself, while you would be thought only to commend another.

Our family has indeed been strangely discomposed.—Discomposed!—It has been in tumults, ever since the unhappy transaction; and I have borne all the blame; yet should have had too much concern from myself, had I been more justly spared by every one else.

For, whether it be owing to a faulty impatience, having been too indulgently treated to be inured to blame, or to the regret I have to hear those censured on my account, whom it is my duty to vindicate; I have sometimes wished, that it had pleased God to have taken me in my last fever, when I had every body's love and good opinion; but oftener that I had never been distinguished by my grandfather as I was: since that distinction has estranged from me my brother's and sister's affections; at least, has raised a jealousy with regard to the apprehended favour of my two uncles, that now-and-then overshadows their love.

My brother being happily recovered of his fever, and his wound in a hopeful way, although he has not yet ventured abroad, I will be as particular as you desire in the little history you demand of me. But heaven forbid that any thing should ever happen which may require it to be produced for the purpose you mention!

I will begin, as you command, with Mr. Lovelace's address to my sister; and be as brief as possible. I will recite facts only; and leave you to judge of the truth of the report raised, that the younger sister has robbed the elder.

It was in pursuance of a conference between Lord M. and my uncle Antony, that Mr. Lovelace [my father and mother not forbidding] paid his respect to my sister Arabella. My brother was then in Scotland, busying himself in viewing the condition of the considerable estate which was left him there by his generous godmother, together with one as considerable in Yorkshire. I was also absent at my Dairy-house, as it is called,¹ busied in the accounts relating to the estate which my grandfather had the goodness to devise to me; and which once a year was left to my inspection, although I have given the whole into my father's power.

My sister made me a visit there the day after Mr. Lovelace had been introduced; and seemed highly pleased with the gentleman. His birth, his fortune in possession, a clear 2000L. a year, as Lord M. had assured my uncle; presumptive heir to that nobleman's large estate: his great expectations from Lady Sarah Sadleir and Lady Betty Lawrence; who with his uncle interested themselves very warmly (he being the last of his line) to see him married.

¹ Her grandfather, in order to invite her to him as often as her other friends would spare her, indulged her in erecting and fitting up a dairy-house in her own taste. When finished, it was so much admired for its elegant simplicity and convenience, that the whole seat (before, of old time, from its situation, called The Grove) was generally known by the name of The Dairy-house. Her grandfather in particular was fond of having it so called.

'So handsome a man!—O her beloved Clary!' (for then she was ready to love me dearly, from the overflowings of her good humour on his account!) 'He was but too handsome a man for her!—Were she but as amiable as somebody, there would be a probability of holding his affections!—For he was wild, she heard; very wild, very gay; loved intrigue—but he was young; a man of sense: would see his error, could she but have patience with his faults, if his faults were not cured by marriage!'

Thus she ran on; and then wanted me 'to see the charming man,' as she called him.—Again concerned, 'that she was not handsome enough for him;' with, 'a sad thing, that the man should have the advantage of the woman in that particular!'—But then, stepping to the glass, she complimented herself, 'That she was very well: that there were many women deemed passable who were inferior to herself: that she was always thought comely; and comeliness, let her tell me, having not so much to lose as beauty had, would hold, when that would evaporate or fly off:—nay, for that matter,' [and again she turned to the glass] 'her features were not irregular; her eyes not at all amiss.' And I remember they were more than usually brilliant at that time.—'Nothing, in short, to be found fault with, though nothing very engaging she doubted—was there, Clary.'

Excuse me, my dear, I never was thus particular before; no, not to you. Nor would I now have written thus freely of a sister, but that she makes a merit to my brother of disowning that she ever liked him; as I shall mention hereafter: and then you will always have me give you minute descriptions, nor suffer me to pass by the air and manner in which things are spoken that are to be taken notice of; rightly observing, that air and manner often express more than the accompanying words.

I congratulated her upon her prospects. She received my compliments with a great deal of self-complacency.

She liked the gentleman still more at his next visit; and yet he made no particular address to her, although an opportunity was given him for it. This was wondered at, as my uncle has introduced him into our family declaredly as a visitor to my sister. But as we are ever ready to make excuses when in good humour with ourselves for the perhaps not unwilful slights of those whose approbation we wish to engage; so my sister found out a reason much to Mr. Lovelace's advantage for his not improving the opportunity that was given him.—It was bashfulness, truly, in him. [Bashfulness in Mr. Lovelace, my dear!]
—Indeed, gay and lively as he is, he has not the look of an impudent man. But, I fancy, it is many, many years ago since he was bashful.

Thus, however, could my sister make it out—'Upon her word, she believed Mr. Lovelace deserved not the bad character he had as to women.—He was really, to her thinking, a modest man. He would have spoken out, she believed; but once or twice as he seemed to intend to do so, he was under so agreeable a confusion! Such a profound respect he seemed to shew her! A perfect reverence, she thought: she loved dearly that a man in courtship should shew a reverence to his mistress'—So indeed we all do, I believe: and with reason; since, if I may judge from what I have seen in many families, there is little enough of it shewn afterwards.—And she told my aunt Hervey, that she would be a little less upon the reserve next time he came: 'She was not one of those flirts, not she, who would give pain to a person that deserved to be well-treated; and the more pain for the greatness of his value for her.'—I wish she had not somebody whom I love in her eye.

In his third visit, Bella governed herself by this kind and considerate principle: so that, according to her own account of the matter, the man might have spoken out.—But he was still bashful: he was not able to overcome this unseasonable reverence. So this visit went off as the former.

But now she began to be dissatisfied with him. She compared his general character with this his particular behaviour to her; and having never been courted before, owned herself puzzled how to deal with so odd a lover. 'What did the man mean, she wondered? Had not her uncle brought him declaredly as a suitor to her?—It could not be bashfulness (now she thought of it) since he might have opened his mind to her uncle, if he wanted courage to speak directly to her.—Not that she cared much for the man neither: but it was right, surely, that a woman should be put out of doubt early as to a man's intentions in such a case as this, from his own mouth.—But, truly, she had begun to think, that

he was more solicitous to cultivate her mamma's good opinion, than hers!—Every body, she owned, admired her mother's conversation; but he was mistaken if he thought respect to her mother only would do with her. And then, for his own sake, surely he should put it into her power to be complaisant to him, if he gave her reason to approve of him. This distant behaviour, she must take upon herself to say, was the more extraordinary, as he continued his visits, and declared himself extremely desirous to cultivate a friendship with the whole family; and as he could have no doubt about her sense, if she might take upon her to join her own with the general opinion; he having taken great notice of, and admired many of her good things as they fell from her lips. Reserves were painful, she must needs say, to open and free spirits, like hers: and yet she must tell my aunt,' (to whom all this was directed) 'that she should never forget what she owed to her sex, and to herself, were Mr. Lovelace as unexceptionable in his morals as in his figure, and were he to urge his suit ever so warmly.'

I was not of her council. I was still absent. And it was agreed upon between my aunt Hervey and her, that she was to be quite solemn and shy in his next visit, if there were not a peculiarity in his address to her.

But my sister it seems had not considered the matter well. This was not the way, as it proved, to be taken for matters of mere omission, with a man of Mr. Lovelace's penetration. Nor with any man; since if love has not taken root deep enough to cause it to shoot out into declaration, if an opportunity be fairly given for it, there is little room to expect, that the blighting winds of anger or resentment will bring it forward. Then my poor sister is not naturally good-humoured. This is too well-known a truth for me to endeavor to conceal it, especially from you. She must therefore, I doubt, have appeared to great disadvantages when she aimed to be worse tempered than ordinary.

How they managed it in their next conversation I know not. One would be tempted to think by the issue, that Mr. Lovelace was ungenerous enough to seek the occasion given,² and to improve it. Yet he thought fit to put the question too:—But, she says, it was not till, by some means or other (she knew not how) he had wrought her up to such a pitch of displeasure with him, that it was impossible for her to recover herself at the instant. Nevertheless he re-urged his question, as expecting a definitive answer, without waiting for the return of her temper, or endeavouring to mollify her; so that she was under a necessity of persisting in her denial: yet gave him reason to think she did not dislike his address, only the manner of it; his court being rather made to her mother than to herself, as if he was sure of her consent at any time.

A good encouraging denial, I must own: as was the rest of her plea; to wit, 'A disinclination to change her state. Exceedingly happy as she was: she never could be happier!' And such-like consenting negatives, as I may call them, and yet not intend a reflection upon my sister: for what can any young creature in the like circumstances say, when she is not sure but a too-ready consent may subject her to the slights of a sex that generally values a blessing either more or less as it is obtained with difficulty or ease? Miss Biddulph's answer to a copy of verse from a gentleman, reproaching our sex as acting in disguise, is not a bad one, although you may perhaps think it too acknowledging for the female character.

Ungen'rous Sex!—To scorn us if we're kind;
And yet upbraid us if we seem severe!
Do you, t' encourage us to tell our mind,
Yourselves put off disguise, and be sincere.
You talk of coquetry!—Your own false hearts
Compel our sex to act dissembling parts.

Here I am obliged to lay down my pen. I will soon resume it.

² See Mr. Lovelace's Letter, No. XXXI, in which he briefly accounts for his conduct in this affair.

LETTER III

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE JAN. 13, 14

And thus, as Mr. Lovelace thought fit to take it, had he his answer from my sister. It was with very great regret, as he pretended, [I doubt the man is an hypocrite, my dear] that he acquiesced in it. 'So much determinedness; such a noble firmness in my sister, that there was no hope of prevailing upon her to alter sentiments she had adopted on full consideration.' He sighed, as Bella told us, when he took his leave of her: 'Profoundly sighed; grasped her hand, and kissed it with such an ardour—Withdrew with such an air of solemn respect—She could almost find it in her heart, although he had vexed her, to pity him.' A good intentional preparative to love, this pity; since, at the time, she little thought that he would not renew his offer.

He waited on my mother after he had taken leave of Bella, and reported his ill success in so respectful a manner, as well with regard to my sister, as to the whole family, and with so much concern that he was not accepted as a relation to it, that it left upon them all (my brother being then, as I have said, in Scotland) impressions in his favour, and a belief that this matter would certainly be brought on again. But Mr. Lovelace going up directly to town, where he staid a whole fortnight, and meeting there with my uncle Antony, to whom he regretted his niece's cruel resolution not to change her state; it was seen that there was a total end of the affair.

My sister was not wanting to herself on this occasion. She made a virtue of necessity; and the man was quite another man with her. 'A vain creature! Too well knowing his advantages: yet those not what she had conceived them to be!—Cool and warm by fits and starts; an ague-like lover. A steady man, a man of virtue, a man of morals, was worth a thousand of such gay flutterers. Her sister Clary might think it worth her while perhaps to try to engage such a man: she had patience: she was mistress of persuasion: and indeed, to do the girl justice, had something of a person: But as for her, she would not have a man of whose heart she could not be sure for one moment; no, not for the world: and most sincerely glad was she that she had rejected him.'

But when Mr. Lovelace returned into the country, he thought fit to visit my father and mother; hoping, as he told them, that, however unhappy he had been in the rejection of the wished-for alliance, he might be allowed to keep up an acquaintance and friendship with a family which he should always respect. And then unhappily, as I may say, was I at home and present.

It was immediately observed, that his attention was fixed on me. My sister, as soon as he was gone, in a spirit of bravery, seemed desirous to promote his address, should it be tendered.

My aunt Hervey was there; and was pleased to say, we should make the finest couple in England—if my sister had no objection.—No, indeed! with a haughty toss, was my sister's reply—it would be strange if she had, after the denial she had given him upon full deliberation.

My mother declared, that her only dislike of his alliance with either daughter, was on account of his reputed faulty morals.

My uncle Harlowe, that his daughter Clary, as he delighted to call me from childhood, would reform him if any woman in the world could.

My uncle Antony gave his approbation in high terms: but referred, as my aunt had done, to my sister.

She repeated her contempt of him; and declared, that, were there not another man in England, she would not have him. She was ready, on the contrary, she could assure them, to resign her pretensions under hand and seal, if Miss Clary were taken with his tinsel, and if every one else approved of his address to the girl.

My father indeed, after a long silence, being urged by my uncle Antony to speak his mind, said, that he had a letter from his son, on his hearing of Mr. Lovelace's visits to his daughter Arabella; which he had not shewn to any body but my mother; that treaty being at an end when he received it: that in this letter he expressed great dislike to an alliance with Mr. Lovelace on the score of his immoralities: that he knew, indeed, there was an old grudge between them; but that, being desirous to prevent all occasions of disunion and animosity in his family, he would suspend the declaration of his own mind till his son arrived, and till he had heard his further objections: that he was the more inclined to make his son this compliment, as Mr. Lovelace's general character gave but too much ground for his son's dislike of him; adding, that he had heard (so, he supposed, had every one,) that he was a very extravagant man; that he had contracted debts in his travels: and indeed, he was pleased to say, he had the air of a spendthrift.

These particulars I had partly from my aunt Hervey, and partly from my sister; for I was called out as soon as the subject was entered upon. When I returned, my uncle Antony asked me, how I should like Mr. Lovelace? Every body saw, he was pleased to say, that I had made a conquest.

I immediately answered, that I did not like him at all: he seemed to have too good an opinion both on his person and parts, to have any regard to his wife, let him marry whom he would.

My sister particularly was pleased with this answer, and confirmed it to be just; with a compliment to my judgment.—For it was hers.

But the very next day Lord M. came to Harlowe-Place [I was then absent]; and in his nephew's name made a proposal in form; declaring, that it was the ambition of all his family to be related to ours: and he hoped his kinsman would not have such an answer on the part of the younger sister, as he had on that of the elder.

In short, Mr. Lovelace's visits were admitted as those of a man who had not deserved disrespect from our family; but as to his address to me, with a reservation, as above, on my father's part, that he would determine nothing without his son. My discretion as to the rest was confided in: for still I had the same objections as to the man: nor would I, when we were better acquainted, hear any thing but general talk from him; giving him no opportunity of conversing with me in private.

He bore this with a resignation little expected from his natural temper, which is generally reported to be quick and hasty; unused it seems from childhood to check or controul. A case too common in considerable families where there is an only son: and his mother never had any other child. But, as I have heretofore told you, I could perceive, notwithstanding this resignation, that he had so good an opinion of himself, as not to doubt, that his person and accomplishments would insensibly engage me: And could that be once done, he told my aunt Hervey, he should hope, from so steady a temper, that his hold in my affections would be durable: While my sister accounted for his patience in another manner, which would perhaps have had more force if it had come from a person less prejudiced: 'That the man was not fond of marrying at all: that he might perhaps have half a score mistresses: and that delay might be as convenient for his roving, as for my well-acted indifference.' That was her kind expression.

Whatever was his motive for a patience so generally believed to be out of his usual character, and where the object of his address was supposed to be of fortune considerable enough to engage his warmest attention, he certainly escaped many mortifications by it: for while my father suspended his approbation till my brother's arrival, Mr. Lovelace received from every one those civilities which were due to his birth: and although we heard from time to time reports to his disadvantage with regard to morals, yet could we not question him upon them without giving him greater advantages in his own opinion than the situation he was in with us would justify to prudence; since it was much more likely that his address would not be allowed of, than that it would.

And thus was he admitted to converse with our family almost upon his own terms; for while my friends saw nothing in his behaviour but what was extremely respectful, and observed in him no violent importunity, they seemed to have taken a great liking to his conversation: While I considered

him only as a common guest when he came; and thought myself no more concerned in his visits, not at his entrance and departure, than any other of the family.

But this indifference on my side was the means of procuring him one very great advantage; since upon it was grounded that correspondence by letters which succeeded;—and which, had it been to be begun when the family animosity broke out, would never have been entered into on my part. The occasion was this:

My uncle Hervey has a young gentleman intrusted to his care, whom he has thoughts of sending abroad a year or two hence, to make the Grand Tour, as it is called; and finding Mr. Lovelace could give a good account of every thing necessary for a young traveller to observe upon such an occasion, he desired him to write down a description of the courts and countries he had visited, and what was most worthy of curiosity in them.

He consented, on condition that I would direct his subjects, as he called it: and as every one had heard his manner of writing commended; and thought his narratives might be agreeable amusements in winter evenings; and that he could have no opportunity particularly to address me directly in them, since they were to be read in full assembly before they were given to the young gentleman, I made the less scruple to write, and to make observations, and put questions for our further information—Still the less perhaps as I love writing; and those who do, are fond, you know, of occasions to use the pen: And then, having ever one's consent, and my uncle Hervey's desire that I would write, I thought that if I had been the only scrupulous person, it would have shewn a particularity that a vain man might construe to his advantage; and which my sister would not fail to animadvert upon.

You have seen some of these letters; and have been pleased with this account of persons, places, and things; and we have both agreed, that he was no common observer upon what he had seen.

My sister allowed that the man had a tolerable knack of writing and describing: And my father, who had been abroad in his youth, said, that his remarks were curious, and shewed him to be a person of reading, judgment and taste.

Thus was a kind of correspondence begun between him and me, with general approbation; while every one wondered at, and was pleased with, his patient veneration of me; for so they called it. However, it was not doubted but he would soon be more importunate, since his visits were more frequent, and he acknowledged to my aunt Hervey a passion for me, accompanied with an awe that he had never known before; to which he attributed what he called his but seeming acquiescence with my father's pleasure, and the distance I kept him at. And yet, my dear, this may be his usual manner of behaviour to our sex; for had not my sister at first all his reverence?

Mean time, my father, expecting his importunity, kept in readiness the reports he had heard in his disfavour, to charge them upon him then, as so many objections to address. And it was highly agreeable to me that he did so: it would have been strange if it were not; since the person who could reject Mr. Wyerley's address for the sake of his free opinions, must have been inexcusable, had she not rejected another's for his freer practices.

But I should own, that in the letters he sent me upon the general subject, he more than once inclosed a particular one, declaring his passionate regards for me, and complaining with fervour enough, of my reserves. But of these I took not the least notice: for, as I had not written to him at all, but upon a subject so general, I thought it was but right to let what he wrote upon one so particular pass off as if I had never seen it; and the rather, as I was not then at liberty (from the approbation his letters met with) to break off the correspondence, unless I had assigned the true reason for doing so. Besides, with all his respectful assiduities, it was easy to observe, (if it had not been his general character) that his temper is naturally haughty and violent; and I had seen too much of that untractable spirit in my brother to like it in one who hoped to be still more nearly related to me.

I had a little specimen of this temper of his upon the very occasion I have mentioned: For after he had sent me a third particular letter with the general one, he asked me the next time he came to Harlowe-Place, if I had not received such a one from him?—I told him I should never answer one

so sent; and that I had waited for such an occasion as he had now given me, to tell him so: I desired him therefore not to write again on the subject; assuring him, that if he did, I would return both, and never write another line to him.

You can't imagine how saucily the man looked; as if, in short, he was disappointed that he had not made a more sensible impression upon me: nor, when he recollected himself (as he did immediately), what a visible struggle it cost him to change his haughty airs for more placid ones. But I took no notice of either; for I thought it best to convince him, by the coolness and indifference with which I repulsed his forward hopes (at the same time intending to avoid the affectation of pride or vanity) that he was not considerable enough in my eyes to make me take over-ready offence at what he said, or at his haughty looks: in other words, that I had not value enough for him to treat him with peculiarity either by smiles or frowns. Indeed he had cunning enough to give me, undesignedly, a piece of instruction which taught me this caution; for he had said in conversation once, 'That if a man could not make a woman in courtship own herself pleased with him, it was as much and oftentimes more to his purpose to make her angry with him.'

I must break off here, but will continue the subject the very first opportunity. Mean time, I am
Your most affectionate friend and servant, CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER IV

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE JAN. 15

Such, my dear, was the situation Mr. Lovelace and I were in when my brother arrived from Scotland.

The moment Mr. Lovelace's visits were mentioned to him, he, without either hesitation or apology, expressed his disapprobation of them. He found great flaws in his character; and took the liberty to say in so many words, that he wondered how it came into the heads of his uncles to encourage such a man for either of his sisters: At the same time returning his thanks to my father for declining his consent till he arrived, in such a manner, I thought, as a superior would do, when he commended an inferior for having well performed his duty in his absence.

He justified his avowed inveteracy by common fame, and by what he had known of him at college; declaring, that he had ever hated him; ever should hate him; and would never own him for a brother, or me for a sister, if I married him.

That early antipathy I have heard accounted for in this manner:

Mr. Lovelace was always noted for his vivacity and courage; and no less, it seems, for the swift and surprising progress he made in all parts of literature: for diligence in his studies in the hours of study, he had hardly his equal. This it seems was his general character at the university; and it gained him many friends among the more learned; while those who did not love him, feared him, by reason of the offence his vivacity made him too ready to give, and of the courage he shewed in supporting the offence when given; which procured him as many followers as he pleased among the mischievous sort.—No very amiable character, you'll say, upon the whole.

But my brother's temper was not more happy. His native haughtiness could not bear a superiority so visible; and whom we fear more than love, we are not far from hating: and having less command of his passions than the other, he was evermore the subject of his perhaps indecent ridicule: so that every body, either from love or fear, siding with his antagonist, he had a most uneasy time of it while both continued in the same college.—It was the less wonder therefore that a young man who is not noted for the gentleness of his temper, should resume an antipathy early begun, and so deeply rooted.

He found my sister, who waited but for the occasion, ready to join him in his resentments against the man he hated. She utterly disclaimed all manner of regard for him: 'Never liked him at all:—His estate was certainly much incumbered: it was impossible it should be otherwise; so entirely devoted as he was to his pleasures. He kept no house; had no equipage: Nobody pretended that he wanted pride: the reason therefore was easy to be guessed at.' And then did she boast of, and my brother praised her for, refusing him: and both joined on all occasions to depreciate him, and not seldom made the occasions; their displeasure against him causing every subject to run into this, if it began not with it.

I was not solicitous to vindicate him when I was not joined in their reflection. I told them I did not value him enough to make a difference in the family on his account: and as he was supposed to have given much cause for their ill opinion of him, I thought he ought to take the consequence of his own faults.

Now and then indeed, when I observed that their vehemence carried them beyond all bounds of probability in their charges against him, I thought it but justice to put in a word for him. But this only subjected me to reproach, as having a prepossession in his favour which I would not own.—So that, when I could not change the subject, I used to retire either to my music, or to my closet.

Their behaviour to him, when they could not help seeing him, was very cold and disobliging; but as yet not directly affrontive. For they were in hopes of prevailing upon my father to forbid his visits. But as there was nothing in his behaviour, that might warrant such a treatment of a man of his birth and fortune, they succeeded not: And then they were very earnest with me to forbid them. I asked, what authority I had to take such a step in my father's house; and when my behaviour to him was so distant, that he seemed to be as much the guest of any other person of the family, themselves excepted, as mine?—In revenge, they told me, that it was cunning management between us; and that we both understood one another better than we pretended to do. And at last they gave such a loose to their passions, all of a sudden* as I may say, that instead of withdrawing, as they used to do when he came, they threw themselves in his way purposely to affront him.

* The reason of this their more openly shown animosity is given in Letter XIII.

Mr. Lovelace, you may believe, very ill brooked this: but nevertheless contented himself to complain of it to me: in high terms, however, telling me, that but for my sake my brother's treatment of him was not to be borne.

I was sorry for the merit this gave him in his own opinion with me: and the more, as some of the affronts he received were too flagrant to be excused: But I told him, that I was determined not to fall out with my brother, if I could help it, whatever faults he had: and since they could not see one another with temper, should be glad that he would not throw himself in my brother's way; and I was sure my brother would not seek him.

He was very much nettled at this answer: But said, he must bear his affronts if I would have it so. He had been accused himself of violence in his temper; but he hoped to shew on this occasion that he had a command of his passions which few young men, so highly provoked, would be able to shew; and doubted not but it would be attributed to a proper motive by a person of my generosity and penetration.

My brother had just before, with the approbation of my uncles, employed a person related to a discharged bailiff or steward of Lord M. who had had the management of some part of Mr. Lovelace's affairs (from which he was also dismissed by him) to inquire into his debts, after his companions, into his amours, and the like.

My aunt Hervey, in confidence, gave me the following particulars of what the man had said of him.

'That he was a generous landlord: that he spared nothing for solid and lasting improvements upon his estate; and that he looked into his own affairs, and understood them: that he had been very expensive when abroad; and contracted a large debt (for he made no secret of his affairs); yet chose to limit himself to an annual sum, and to decline equipage, in order to avoid being obliged to his uncle and aunts; from whom he might have what money he pleased; but that he was very jealous of their controul; had often quarrels with them; and treated them so freely, that they were all afraid of him. However, that his estate was never mortgaged, as my brother had heard it was; his credit was always high; and the man believed, he was by this time near upon, if not quite, clear of the world.

'He was a sad gentleman, he said, as to women:—If his tenants had pretty daughters, they chose to keep them out of his sight. He believed he kept no particular mistress; for he had heard newly, that was the man's word, was every thing with him. But for his uncle's and aunt's teazings, the man fancied he would not think of marriage: he was never known to be disguised with liquor; but was a great plotter, and a great writer: That he lived a wild life in town, by what he had heard: had six or seven companions as bad as himself; whom now and then he brought down with him; and the country was always glad when they went up again. He would have it, that although passionate, he was good-humoured; loved as well to take a jest as to give one; and would rally himself upon occasion the freest of any man he ever knew.'

This was his character from an enemy; for, as my aunt observed, every thing the man said commendably of him came grudgingly, with a must needs say—to do him justice, &c. while the contrary was delivered with a free good-will. And this character, as a worse was expected, though this was bad enough, not answering the end of inquiring after it, my brother and sister were more apprehensive than before, that his address would be encouraged, since the worst part of it was known, or supposed, when he was first introduced to my sister.

But, with regard to myself, I must observe in his disfavour, that, notwithstanding the merit he wanted to make with me for his patience upon my brother's ill-treatment of him, I owed him no compliments for trying to conciliate with him. Not that I believe it would have signified any thing if he had made ever such court either to him or to my sister: yet one might have expected from a man of his politeness, and from his pretensions, you know, that he would have been willing to try. Instead of which, he shewed such a contempt both of my brother and my sister, especially my brother, as was construed into a defiance of them. And for me to have hinted at an alteration in his behaviour to my brother, was an advantage I knew he would have been proud of; and which therefore I had no mind to give him. But I doubted not that having so very little encouragement from any body, his pride would soon take fire, and he would of himself discontinue his visits, or go to town; where, till he came acquainted with our family, he used chiefly to reside: And in this latter case he had no reason to expect, that I would receive, much less answer, his Letters: the occasions which had led me to receive any of his, being by this time over.

But my brother's antipathy would not permit him to wait for such an event; and after several excesses, which Mr. Lovelace still returned with contempt, and a haughtiness too much like that of the aggressor, my brother took upon himself to fill up the door-way once when he came, as if to oppose his entrance: And upon his asking for me, demanded, what his business was with his sister?

The other, with a challenging air, as my brother says, told him, he would answer a gentleman any question; but he wished that Mr. James Harlowe, who had of late given himself high airs, would remember that he was not now at college.

Just then the good Dr. Lewen, who frequently honours me with a visit of conversation, as he is pleased to call it, and had parted with me in my own parlour, came to the door: and hearing the words, interposed; both having their hands upon their swords: and telling Mr. Lovelace where I was, he burst by my brother, to come to me; leaving him chafing, he said, like a hunted boar at bay.

This alarmed us all. My father was pleased to hint to Mr. Lovelace, that he wished he would discontinue his visits for the peace-sake of the family: And I, by his command, spoke a great deal plainer.

But Mr. Lovelace is a man not easily brought to give up his purpose, especially in a point wherein he pretends his heart is so much engaged: and no absolute prohibition having been given, things went on for a little while as before: for I saw plainly, that to have denied myself to his visits (which however I declined receiving as often as I could) was to bring forward some desperate issue between the two; since the offence so readily given on one side was brooked by the other only out of consideration to me.

And thus did my brother's rashness lay me under an obligation where I would least have owed it.

The intermediate proposals of Mr. Symmes and Mr. Mullins, both (in turn) encouraged by my brother, induced him to be more patient for a while, as nobody thought me over-forward in Mr. Lovelace's favour; for he hoped that he should engage my father and uncles to approve of the one or the other in opposition to the man he hated. But when he found that I had interest enough to disengage myself from the addresses of those gentlemen, as I had (before he went to Scotland, and before Mr. Lovelace visited here) of Mr. Wyerley's, he then kept no measures: and first set himself to upbraid me for supposed prepossession, which he treated as if it were criminal; and then to insult Mr. Lovelace in person, at Mr. Edward Symmes's, the brother of the other Symmes, two miles off; and no good Dr. Lewen being there to interpose, the unhappy rencounter followed. My brother was disarmed, as

you have heard; and on being brought home, and giving us ground to suppose he was much worse hurt than he really was, and a fever ensuing, every one flamed out; and all was laid at my door.

Mr. Lovelace for three days together sent twice each day to inquire after my brother's health; and although he received rude and even shocking returns, he thought fit on the fourth day to make in person the same inquiries; and received still greater incivilities from my two uncles, who happened to be both there. My father also was held by force from going to him with his sword in his hand, although he had the gout upon him.

I fainted away with terror, seeing every one so violent, and hearing Mr. Lovelace swear that he would not depart till he had made my uncles ask his pardon for the indignities he had received at their hands; a door being held fast locked between him and them. My mother all the time was praying and struggling to with-hold my father in the great parlour. Meanwhile my sister, who had treated Mr. Lovelace with virulence, came in to me, and insulted me as fast as I recovered. But when Mr. Lovelace was told how ill I was, he departed; nevertheless vowing revenge.

He was ever a favourite with our domestics. His bounty to them, and having always something facetious to say to each, had made them all of his party: and on this occasion they privately blamed every body else, and reported his calm and gentlemanly behaviour (till the provocations given him ran very high) in such favourable terms, that those reports, and my apprehensions of the consequence of this treatment, induced me to read a letter he sent me that night; and, it being written in the most respectful terms (offering to submit the whole to my decision, and to govern himself entirely by my will) to answer it some days after.

To this unhappy necessity was owing our renewed correspondence, as I may call it; yet I did not write till I had informed myself from Mr. Symmes's brother, that he was really insulted into the act of drawing his sword by my brother's repeatedly threatening (upon his excusing himself out of regard to me) to brand me if he did not; and, by all the inquiry I could make, that he was again the sufferer from my uncles in a more violent manner than I have related.

The same circumstances were related to my father and other relations by Mr. Symmes; but they had gone too far in making themselves parties to the quarrel either to retract or forgive; and I was forbidden to correspond with him, or to be seen a moment in his company.

One thing however I can say, but that in confidence, because my mother commanded me not to mention it:—That, expressing her apprehension of the consequences of the indignities offered to Mr. Lovelace, she told me, she would leave it to my prudence to do all I could to prevent the impending mischief on one side.

I am obliged to break off. But I believe I have written enough to answer very fully all that you have required of me. It is not for a child to seek to clear her own character, or to justify her actions, at the expense of the most revered ones: yet, as I know that the account of all those further proceedings by which I may be affected, will be interesting to so dear a friend (who will communicate to others no more than what is fitting) I will continue to write, as I have opportunity, as minutely as we are used to write to each other. Indeed I have no delight, as I have often told you, equal to that which I take in conversing with you by letter, when I cannot in person.

Mean time, I cannot help saying, that I am exceedingly concerned to find, that I am become so much the public talk as you tell me I am. Your kind, your precautionary regard for my fame, and the opportunity you have given me to tell my own story previous to any new accident (which heaven avert!) is so like the warm friend I have ever found in my dear Miss Howe, that, with redoubled obligation, you bind me to be

Your ever grateful and affectionate, CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Copy of the requested Preamble to the clauses in her Grandfather's Will: inclosed in the preceding Letter.

As the particular estate I have mentioned and described above, is principally of my own raising: as my three sons have been uncommonly prosperous; and are very rich: the eldest by means of the

unexpected benefits he reaps from his new found mines; the second, by what has, as unexpectedly, fallen in to him on the deaths of several relations of his present wife, the worthy daughter by both sides of very honourable families; over and above the very large portion which he received with her in marriage: my son Antony by his East-India traffic, and successful voyages: as furthermore my grandson James will be sufficiently provided for by his grandmother Lovell's kindness to him; who, having no near relations, hath assured me, that she hath, as well by deed of gift as by will, left him both her Scottish and English estates: for never was there a family more prosperous in all its branches, blessed be God therefore: and as my said son James will very probably make it up to my grand-daughter Arabella; to whom I intend no disrespect; nor have reason; for she is a very hopeful and dutiful child: and as my sons, John and Antony, seem not inclined to a married life; so that my son James is the only one who has children, or is likely to have any. For all these reasons; and because my dearest and beloved grand-daughter Clarissa hath been from her infancy a matchless young creature in her duty to me, and admired by all who knew her, as a very extraordinary child; I must therefore take the pleasure of considering her as my own peculiar child; and this without intending offence; and I hope it will not be taken as any, since my son James can bestow his favours accordingly, and in greater proportion, upon his son James, and upon his daughter Arabella.—

These, I say, are the reasons which move me to dispose of the above-described estate in the precious child's favour; who is the delight of my old age: and, I verily think, has contributed, by her amiable duty and kind and tender regards, to prolong my life.

Wherefore it is my express will and commandment, and I enjoin my said three sons, John, James, and Antony, and my grandson James, and my grand-daughter Arabella, as they value my blessing, and will regard my memory, and would wish their own last wills and desires to be fulfilled by their survivors, that they will not impugn or contest the following bequests and devises in favour of my said grand-daughter Clarissa, although they should not be strictly conformable to law or to the forms thereof; nor suffer them to be controverted or disputed on any pretence whatsoever.

And in this confidence, &c. &c. &c.

LETTER V

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE JAN. 20

I have been hindered from prosecuting my intention. Neither nights nor mornings have been my own. My mother has been very ill; and would have no other nurse but me. I have not stirred from her bedside (for she kept her bed); and two nights I had the honour of sharing it with her.

Her disorder was a very violet colic. The contentions of these fierce, these masculine spirits, and the apprehension of mischiefs that may arise from the increasing animosity which all here have against Mr. Lovelace, and his too well known resenting and intrepid character, she cannot bear. Then the foundations laid, as she dreads, for jealousy and heart-burnings in her own family, late so happy and so united, afflict exceedingly a gentle and sensible mind, which has from the beginning, on all occasions, sacrificed its own inward satisfaction to outward peace. My brother and sister, who used very often to jar, are now so entirely one, and are so much together, (caballing was the word that dropt from my mother's lips, as if at unawares,) that she is very fearful of the consequences that may follow;—to my prejudice, perhaps, is her kind concern; since she sees that they behave to me every hour with more and more shyness and reserve: yet, would she but exert that authority which the superiority of her fine talents gives her, all these family feuds might perhaps be extinguished in their but yet beginnings; especially as she may be assured that all fitting concessions shall be made by me, not only as my brother and sister are my elders, but for the sake of so excellent and so indulgent a mother.

For, if I may say to you, my dear, what I would not to any other person living, it is my opinion, that had she been of a temper that would have borne less, she would have had ten times less to bear, than she has had. No commendation, you'll say, of the generosity of those spirits which can turn to its own disquiet so much condescending goodness.

Upon my word I am sometimes tempted to think that we may make the world allow for and respect us as we please, if we can but be sturdy in our wills, and set out accordingly. It is but being the less beloved for it, that's all: and if we have power to oblige those we have to do with, it will not appear to us that we are. Our flatterers will tell us any thing sooner than our faults, or what they know we do not like to hear.

Were there not truth in this observation, is it possible that my brother and sister could make their very failings, their vehemences, of such importance to all the family? 'How will my son, how will my nephew, take this or that measure? What will he say to it? Let us consult him about it;' are references always previous to every resolution taken by his superiors, whose will ought to be his. Well may he expect to be treated with this deference by every other person, when my father himself, generally so absolute, constantly pays it to him; and the more since his godmother's bounty has given independence to a spirit that was before under too little restraint.—But whither may these reflections lead me!—I know you do not love any of us but my mother and me; and, being above all disguises, make me sensible that you do not oftener than I wish.—Ought I then to add force to your dislikes of those whom I wish you to like?—of my father especially; for he, alas! has some excuse for his impatience of contradiction. He is not naturally an ill-tempered man; and in his person and air, and in his conversation too, when not under the torture of a gouty paroxysm, every body distinguishes the gentleman born and educated.

Our sex perhaps must expect to bear a little—uncourtliness shall I call it?—from the husband whom as the lover they let know the preference their hearts gave him to all other men.—Say what they will of generosity being a manly virtue; but upon my word, my dear, I have ever yet observed, that it is not to be met with in that sex one time in ten that it is to be found in ours.—But my father was soured by the cruel distemper I have named; which seized him all at once in the very prime of

life, in so violent a manner as to take from the most active of minds, as his was, all power of activity, and that in all appearance for life.—It imprisoned, as I may say, his lively spirits in himself, and turned the edge of them against his own peace; his extraordinary prosperity adding to his impatience. Those, I believe, who want the fewest earthly blessings, most regret that they want any.

But my brother! What excuse can be made for his haughty and morose temper? He is really, my dear, I am sorry to have occasion to say it, an ill-temper'd young man; and treats my mother sometimes—Indeed he is not dutiful.—But, possessing every thing, he has the vice of age, mingled with the ambition of youth, and enjoys nothing—but his own haughtiness and ill-temper, I was going to say.—Yet again am I adding force to your dislikes of some of us.—Once, my dear, it was perhaps in your power to have moulded him as you pleased.—Could you have been my sister!—Then had I friend in a sister.—But no wonder that he does not love you now; who could nip in the bud, and that with a disdain, let me say, too much of kin to his haughtiness, a passion that would not have wanted a fervour worthy of the object; and which possibly would have made him worthy.

But no more of this. I will prosecute my former intention in my next; which I will sit down to as soon as breakfast is over; dispatching this by the messenger whom you have so kindly sent to inquire after us on my silence. Mean time, I am,

Your most affectionate and obliged friend and servant, CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER VI

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE HARLOWE-PLACE, JAN. 20

I will now resume my narrative of proceedings here.—My brother being in a good way, although you may be sure that his resentments are rather heightened than abated by the galling disgrace he has received, my friends (my father and uncles, however, if not my brother and sister) begin to think that I have been treated unkindly. My mother been so good as to tell me this since I sent away my last.

Nevertheless I believe they all think that I receive letters from Mr. Lovelace. But Lord M. being inclined rather to support than to blame his nephew, they seem to be so much afraid of Mr. Lovelace, that they do not put it to me whether I do or not; conniving on the contrary, as it should seem, at the only method left to allay the vehemence of a spirit which they have so much provoked: For he still insists upon satisfaction from my uncles; and this possibly (for he wants not art) as the best way to be introduced again with some advantage into our family. And indeed my aunt Hervey has put it to my mother, whether it were not best to prevail upon my brother to take a turn to his Yorkshire estate (which he was intending to do before) and to stay there till all is blown over.

But this is very far from being his intention: For he has already began to hint again, that he shall never be easy or satisfied till I am married; and, finding neither Mr. Symmes nor Mr. Mullins will be accepted, has proposed Mr. Wyerley once more, on the score of his great passion for me. This I have again rejected; and but yesterday he mentioned one who has applied to him by letter, making high offers. This is Mr. Solmes; Rich Solmes you know they call him. But this application has not met with the attention of one single soul.

If none of his schemes of getting me married take effect, he has thoughts, I am told, of proposing to me to go to Scotland, that as the compliment is, I may put his house there in such order as our own is in. But this my mother intends to oppose for her own sake; because having relieved her, as she is pleased to say, of the household cares (for which my sister, you know, has no turn) they must again devolve upon her if I go. And if she did not oppose it, I should; for, believe me, I have no mind to be his housekeeper; and I am sure, were I to go with him, I should be treated rather as a servant than a sister:—perhaps, not the better because I am his sister. And if Mr. Lovelace should follow me, things might be worse than they are now.

But I have besought my mother, who is apprehensive of Mr. Lovelace's visits, and for fear of whom my uncles never stir out without arms and armed servants (my brother also being near well enough to go abroad), to procure me permission to be your guest for a fortnight, or so.—Will your mother, think you, my dear, give me leave?

I dare not ask to go to my dairy-house, as my good grandfather would call it: for I am now afraid of being thought to have a wish to enjoy that independence to which his will has entitled me: and as matter are situated, such a wish would be imputed to my regard to the man to whom they have now so great an antipathy. And indeed could I be as easy and happy here as I used to be, I would defy that man and all his sex; and never repent that I have given the power of my fortune into my father's hands.

Just now, my mother has rejoiced me with the news that my requested permission is granted. Every one thinks it best that I should go to you, except my brother. But he was told, that he must not expect to rule in every thing. I am to be sent for into the great parlour, where are my two uncles and my aunt Hervey, and to be acquainted with this concession in form.

You know, my dear, that there is a good deal of solemnity among us. But never was there a family more united in its different branches than ours. Our uncles consider us as their own children, and declare that it is for our sakes that they live single. So that they are advised with upon every article relating to us, or that may affect us. It is therefore the less wonder, at a time when they understand that Mr. Lovelace is determined to pay us an amicable visit, as he calls it, (but which I am sure cannot end amicably,) that they should both be consulted upon the permission I had desired to attend you.

I will acquaint you with what passed at the general leave given me to be your guest. And yet I know that you will not love my brother the better for my communication. But I am angry with him myself, and cannot help it. And besides, it is proper to let you know the terms I go upon, and their motives for permitting me to go.

Clary, said my mother, as soon as I entered the great parlour, your request to go to Miss Howe's for a few days has been taken into consideration, and granted—

Much against my liking, I assure you, said my brother, rudely interrupting her.

Son James! said my father, and knit his brows.

He was not daunted. His arm was in a sling. He often has the mean art to look upon that, when any thing is hinted that may be supposed to lead toward the least favour to or reconciliation with Mr. Lovelace.—Let the girl then [I am often the girl with him] be prohibited seeing that vile libertine.

Nobody spoke.

Do you hear, sister Clary? taking their silence for approbation of what he had dictated; you are not to receive visits from Lord M.'s nephew.

Every one still remained silent.

Do you so understand the license you have, Miss? interrogated he.

I would be glad, Sir, said I, to understand that you are my brother;—and that you would understand that you are only my brother.

O the fond, fond heart! with a sneer of insult, lifting up his hands.

Sir, said I, to my father, to your justice I appeal: If I have deserved reflection, let me be not spared. But if I am to be answerable for the rashness—

No more!—No more of either side, said my father. You are not to receive the visits of that Lovelace, though.—Nor are you, son James, to reflect upon your sister. She is a worthy child.

Sir, I have done, replied he:—and yet I have her honour at heart, as much as the honour of the rest of the family.

And hence, Sir, retorted I, your unbrotherly reflections upon me?

Well, but you observe, Miss, said he, that it is not I, but your father, that tells you, that you are not to receive the visits of that Lovelace.

Cousin Harlowe, said my aunt Hervey, allow me to say, that my cousin Clary's prudence may be confided in.

I am convinced it may, joined my mother.

But, aunt, but, madam (put in my sister) there is no hurt, I presume, in letting my sister know the condition she goes to Miss Howe upon; since, if he gets a nack of visiting her there—

You may be sure, interrupted my uncle Harlowe, he will endeavour to see her there.

So would such an impudent man here, said my uncle Antony: and 'tis better done there than here.

Better no where, said my father.—I command you (turning to me) on pain of displeasure, that you see him not at all.

I will not, Sir, in any way of encouragement, I do assure you: not at all, if I can properly avoid it.

You know with what indifference, said my mother, she has hitherto seen him.—Her prudence may be trusted to, as my sister Hervey says.

With what apparent indifference, drawled my brother.

Son James! said my father sternly.

I have done, Sir, said he. But again, in a provoking manner, he reminded me of the prohibition. Thus ended the conference.

Will you engage, my dear, that the hated man shall not come near your house?—But what an inconsistency is this, when they consent to my going, thinking his visits here no otherwise to be avoided!—But if he does come, I charge you never to leave us alone together.

As I have no reason to doubt a welcome from your good mother, I will put every thing in order here, and be with you in two or three days.

Mean time, I am Your most affectionate and obliged, CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER VII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE [AFTER HER RETURN FROM HER.] HARLOWE-PLACE, FEB. 20

I beg your excuse for not writing sooner. Alas! my dear, I have sad prospects before me! My brother and sister have succeeded in all their views. They have found out another lover for me; an hideous one!—Yet he is encouraged by every body. No wonder that I was ordered home so suddenly. At an hour's warning!—No other notice, you know, than what was brought with the chariot that was to carry me back.—It was for fear, as I have been informed [an unworthy fear!] that I should have entered into any concert with Mr. Lovelace had I known their motive for commanding me home; apprehending, 'tis evident, that I should dislike the man they had to propose to me.

And well might they apprehend so:—For who do you think he is?—No other than that Solmes—Could you have believed it?—And they are all determined too; my mother with the rest!—Dear, dear excellence! how could she be thus brought over, when I am assured, that on his first being proposed she was pleased to say, That had Mr. Solmes the Indies in possession, and would endow me with them, she should not think him deserving of her Clarissa!

The reception I met with at my return, so different from what I used to meet with on every little absence [and now I had been from them three weeks], convinced me that I was to suffer for the happiness I had had in your company and conversation for that most agreeable period. I will give you an account of it.

My brother met me at the door, and gave me his hand when I stepped out of the chariot. He bowed very low: pray, Miss, favour me.—I thought it in good humour; but found it afterwards mock respect: and so he led me in great form, I prattling all the way, inquiring of every body's health, (although I was so soon to see them, and there was hardly time for answers,) into the great parlour; where were my father, mother, my two uncles, and sister.

I was struck all of a heap as soon as I entered, to see a solemnity which I had been so little used to on the like occasions in the countenance of every dear relation. They all kept their seats. I ran to my father, and kneeled: then to my mother: and met from both a cold salute: From my father a blessing but half pronounced: My mother indeed called me child; but embraced me not with her usual indulgent ardour.

After I had paid my duty to my uncles, and my compliments to my sister, which she received with solemn and stiff form, I was bid to sit down. But my heart was full: and I said it became me to stand, if I could stand, upon a reception so awful and unusual. I was forced to turn my face from them, and pull out my handkerchief.

My unbrotherly accuser hereupon stood forth, and charged me with having received no less than five or six visits at Miss Howe's from the man they had all so much reason to hate [that was the expression]; notwithstanding the commands I had had to the contrary. And he bid me deny it if I could.

I had never been used, I said, to deny the truth, nor would I now. I owned I had in the three weeks passed seen the person I presumed he meant oftener than five or six times [Pray hear me, brother, said I; for he was going to flame out], but he always asked for Mrs. or Miss Howe, when he came.

I proceeded, that I had reason to believe, that both Mrs. Howe and Miss, as matters stood, would much rather have excused his visits; but they had more than once apologized, that having not the same reason my papa had to forbid him their house, his rank and fortune entitled him to civility.

You see, my dear, I made not the pleas I might have made.

My brother seemed ready to give a loose to his passion: My father put on the countenance which always portends a gathering storm: My uncles mutteringly whispered: And my sister aggravatingly held up her hands. While I begged to be heard out:—And my mother said, let the child, that was her kind word, be heard.

I hoped, I said, there was no harm done: that it became not me to prescribe to Mrs. or Miss Howe who should be their visitors: that Mrs. Howe was always diverted with the raillery that passed between Miss and him: that I had no reason to challenge her guest for my visitor, as I should seem to have done had I refused to go into their company when he was with them: that I had never seen him out of the presence of one or both of those ladies; and had signified to him once, on his urging a few moments' private conversation with me, that, unless a reconciliation were effected between my family and his, he must not expect that I would countenance his visits, much less give him an opportunity of that sort.

I told him further, that Miss Howe so well understood my mind, that she never left me a moment while Mr. Lovelace was there: that when he came, if I was not below in the parlour, I would not suffer myself to be called to him: although I thought it would be an affectation which would give him an advantage rather than the contrary, if I had left company when he came in; or refused to enter into it when I found he would stay any time.

My brother heard me out with such a kind of impatience as shewed he was resolved to be dissatisfied with me, say what I would. The rest, as the event has proved, behaved as if they would have been satisfied, had they not further points to carry by intimidating me. All this made it evident, as I mentioned above, that they themselves expected not my voluntary compliance; and was a tacit confession of the disagreeableness of the person they had to propose.

I was no sooner silent than my brother swore, although in my father's presence, (swore, unchecked either by eye or countenance,) That for his part, he would never be reconciled to that libertine: and that he would renounce me for a sister, if I encouraged the addresses of a man so obnoxious to them all.

A man who had like to have been my brother's murderer, my sister said, with a face even bursting with restraint of passion.

The poor Bella has, you know, a plump high-fed face, if I may be allowed the expression. You, I know, will forgive me for this liberty of speech sooner than I can forgive myself: Yet how can one be such a reptile as not to turn when trampled upon!

My father, with vehemence both of action and voice [my father has, you know, a terrible voice when he is angry] told me that I had met with too much indulgence in being allowed to refuse this gentleman, and the other gentleman; and it was now his turn to be obeyed!

Very true, my mother said:—and hoped his will would not now be disputed by a child so favoured.

To shew they were all of a sentiment, my uncle Harlowe said, he hoped his beloved niece only wanted to know her father's will, to obey it.

And my uncle Antony, in his rougher manner, added, that surely I would not give them reason to apprehend, that I thought my grandfather's favour to me had made me independent of them all.—If I did, he would tell me, the will could be set aside, and should.

I was astonished, you must needs think.—Whose addresses now, thought I, is this treatment preparative to?—Mr. Wyerley's again?—or whose? And then, as high comparisons, where self is concerned, sooner than low, come into young people's heads; be it for whom it will, this is wooing as the English did for the heiress of Scotland in the time of Edward the Sixth. But that it could be for Solmes, how should it enter into my head?

I did not know, I said, that I had given occasion for this harshness. I hoped I should always have a just sense of every one's favour to me, superadded to the duty I owed as a daughter and a niece:

but that I was so much surprised at a reception so unusual and unexpected, that I hoped my papa and mamma would give me leave to retire, in order to recollect myself.

No one gainsaying, I made my silent compliments, and withdrew;—leaving my brother and sister, as I thought, pleased; and as if they wanted to congratulate each other on having occasioned so severe a beginning to be made with me.

I went up to my chamber, and there with my faithful Hannah deplored the determined face which the new proposal it was plain they had to make me wore.

I had not recovered myself when I was sent for down to tea. I begged my maid to be excused attending; but on the repeated command, went down with as much cheerfulness as I could assume; and had a new fault to clear myself of: for my brother, so pregnant a thing is determined ill-will, by intimations equally rude and intelligible, charged my desire of being excused coming down, to sullens, because a certain person had been spoken against, upon whom, as he supposed, my fancy ran.

I could easily answer you, Sir, said I, as such a reflection deserves: but I forbear. If I do not find a brother in you, you shall have a sister in me.

Pretty meekness! Bella whisperingly said; looking at my brother, and lifting up her lip in contempt.

He, with an imperious air, bid me deserve his love, and I should be sure to have it.

As we sat, my mother, in her admirable manner, expatiated upon brotherly and sisterly love; indulgently blamed my brother and sister for having taken up displeasure too lightly against me; and politically, if I may say so, answered for my obedience to my father's will.—The it would be all well, my father was pleased to say: Then they should dote upon me, was my brother's expression: Love me as well as ever, was my sister's: And my uncles, That I then should be the pride of their hearts.—But, alas! what a forfeiture of all these must I make!

This was the reception I had on my return from you.

Mr. Solmes came in before we had done tea. My uncle Antony presented him to me, as a gentleman he had a particular friendship for. My uncle Harlowe in terms equally favourable for him. My father said, Mr. Solmes is my friend, Clarissa Harlowe. My mother looked at him, and looked at me, now-and-then, as he sat near me, I thought with concern.—I at her, with eyes appealing for pity. At him, when I could glance at him, with disgust little short of affrightment. While my brother and sister Mr. Solmes'd him, and Sirr'd—yet such a wretch!—But I will at present only add, My humble thanks and duty to your honoured mother (to whom I will particularly write, to express the grateful sense I have of her goodness to me); and that I am

Your ever obliged, CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER VIII

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE FEB. 24

They drive on here at a furious rate. The man lives here, I think. He courts them, and is more and more a favourite. Such terms, such settlements! That's the cry.

O my dear, that I had not reason to deplore the family fault, immensely rich as they all are! But this I may the more unreservedly say to you, as we have often joined in the same concern: I, for a father and uncles; you, for a mother; in every other respect, faultless.

Hitherto, I seem to be delivered over to my brother, who pretends as great a love to me as ever.

You may believe I have been very sincere with him. But he affects to rally me, and not to believe it possible, that one so dutiful and discreet as his sister Clary can resolve to disoblige all her friends.

Indeed, I tremble at the prospect before me; for it is evident that they are strangely determined.

My father and mother industriously avoid giving me opportunity of speaking to them alone. They ask not for my approbation, intended, as it should seem, to suppose me into their will. And with them I shall hope to prevail, or with nobody. They have not the interest in compelling me, as my brother and sister have: I say less therefore to them, reserving my whole force for an audience of my father, if he will permit me a patient ear. How difficult is it, my dear, to give a negative where both duty and inclination join to make one wish to oblige!

I have already stood the shock of three of this man's particular visits, besides my share in his more general ones; and find it is impossible I should ever endure him. He has but a very ordinary share of understanding; is very illiterate; knows nothing but the value of estates, and how to improve them, and what belongs to land-jobbing and husbandry. Yet I am as one stupid, I think. They have begun so cruelly with me, that I have not spirit enough to assert my own negative.

They had endeavoured it seems to influence my good Mrs. Norton before I came home—so intent are they to carry their point! And her opinion not being to their liking, she has been told that she would do well to decline visiting here for the present: yet she is the person of all the world, next to my mother, the most likely to prevail upon me, were the measures they are engaged in reasonable measures, or such as she could think so.

My aunt likewise having said that she did not think her niece could ever be brought to like Mr. Solmes, has been obliged to learn another lesson.

I am to have a visit from her to-morrow. And, since I have refused so much as to hear from my brother and sister what the noble settlements are to be, she is to acquaint me with the particulars; and to receive from me my determination: for my father, I am told, will not have patience but to suppose that I shall stand in opposition to his will.

Mean time it has been signified to me, that it will be acceptable if I do not think of going to church next Sunday.

The same signification was made for me last Sunday; and I obeyed. They are apprehensive that Mr. Lovelace will be there with design to come home with me.

Help me, dear Miss Howe, to a little of your charming spirit: I never more wanted it.

The man, this Solmes, you may suppose, has no reason to boast of his progress with me. He has not the sense to say any thing to the purpose. His courtship indeed is to them; and my brother pretends to court me as his proxy, truly!—I utterly, to my brother, reject his address; but thinking a person, so well received and recommended by all my family, entitled to good manners, all I say against him is affectedly attributed to coyness: and he, not being sensible of his own imperfections, believes that my avoiding him when I can, and the reserves I express, are owing to nothing else: for, as I said, all his courtship is to them; and I have no opportunity of saying no, to one who asks me

not the question. And so, with an air of mannish superiority, he seems rather to pity the bashful girl, than to apprehend that he shall not succeed.

FEBRUARY 25.

I have had the expected conference with my aunt.

I have been obliged to hear the man's proposals from her; and have been told also what their motives are for espousing his interest with so much warmth. I am even loth to mention how equally unjust it is for him to make such offers, or for those I am bound to reverence to accept of them. I hate him more than before. One great estate is already obtained at the expense of the relations to it, though distant relations; my brother's, I mean, by his godmother: and this has given the hope, however chimerical that hope, of procuring others; and that my own at least may revert to the family. And yet, in my opinion, the world is but one great family. Originally it was so. What then is this narrow selfishness that reigns in us, but relationship remembered against relationship forgot?

But here, upon my absolute refusal of him upon any terms, have I had a signification made me that wounds me to the heart. How can I tell it you? Yet I must. It is, my dear, that I must not for a month to come, or till license obtained, correspond with any body out of the house.

My brother, upon my aunt's report, (made, however, as I am informed, in the gentlest manner, and even giving remote hopes, which she had no commission from me to give,) brought me, in authoritative terms, the prohibition.

Not to Miss Howe? said I.

No, not to Miss Howe, Madam, tauntingly: for have you not acknowledged, that Lovelace is a favourite there?

See, my dear Miss Howe—!

And do you think, Brother, this is the way—

Do you look to that.—But your letters will be stopt, I can tell you.—And away he flung.

My sister came to me soon after—Sister Clary, you are going on in a fine way, I understand. But as there are people who are supposed to harden you against your duty, I am to tell you, that it will be taken well if you avoid visits or visitings for a week or two till further order.

Can this be from those who have authority—

Ask them; ask them, child, with a twirl of her finger.—I have delivered my message. Your father will be obeyed. He is willing to hope you to be all obedience, and would prevent all incitements to refractoriness.

I know my duty, said I; and hope I shall not find impossible condition annexed to it.

A pert young creature, vain and conceited, she called me. I was the only judge, in my own wise opinion, of what was right and fit. She, for her part, had long seen into my specious ways: and now I should shew every body what I was at bottom.

Dear Bella! said I, hands and eyes lifted up—why all this?—Dear, dear Bella, why—

None of your dear, dear Bella's to me.—I tell you, I see through your witchcrafts [that was her strange word]. And away she flung; adding, as she went, and so will every body else very quickly, I dare say.

Bless me, said I to myself, what a sister have I!—How have I deserved this?

Then I again regretted my grandfather's too distinguishing goodness to me.

FEB. 25, IN THE EVENING.

What my brother and sister have said against me I cannot tell:—but I am in heavy disgrace with my father.

I was sent for down to tea. I went with a very cheerful aspect: but had occasion soon to change it.

Such a solemnity in every body's countenance!—My mother's eyes were fixed upon the tea-cups; and when she looked up, it was heavily, as if her eye-lids had weights upon them; and then

not to me. My father sat half-aside in his elbow-chair, that his head might be turned from me: his hands clasped, and waving, as it were, up and down; his fingers, poor dear gentleman! in motion, as if angry to the very ends of them. My sister was swelling. My brother looked at me with scorn, having measured me, as I may say, with his eyes as I entered, from head to foot. My aunt was there, and looked upon me as if with kindness restrained, bending coldly to my compliment to her as she sat; and then cast an eye first on my brother, then on my sister, as if to give the reason [so I am willing to construe it] of her unusual stiffness.—Bless me, my dear! that they should choose to intimidate rather than invite a mind, till now, not thought either unpersuadable or ungenerous!

I took my seat. Shall I make tea, Madam, to my mother?—I always used, you know, my dear, to make tea.

No! a very short sentence, in one very short word, was the expressive answer. And she was pleased to take the canister in her own hand.

My brother bid the footman, who attended, leave the room—I, he said, will pour out the water.

My heart was up in my mouth. I did not know what to do with myself. What is to follow? thought I.

Just after the second dish, out stepped my mother—A word with you, sister Hervey! taking her in her hand. Presently my sister dropt away. Then my brother. So I was left alone with my father.

He looked so very sternly, that my heart failed me as twice or thrice I would have addressed myself to him: nothing but solemn silence on all hands having passed before.

At last, I asked, if it were his pleasure that I should pour him out another dish?

He answered me with the same angry monosyllable, which I had received from my mother before; and then arose, and walked about the room. I arose too, with intent to throw myself at his feet; but was too much overawed by his sternness, even to make such an expression of my duty to him as my heart overflowed with.

At last, as he supported himself, because of his gout, on the back of a chair, I took a little more courage; and approaching him, besought him to acquaint me in what I had offended him?

He turned from me, and in a strong voice, Clarissa Harlowe, said he, know that I will be obeyed.

God forbid, Sir, that you should not!—I have never yet opposed your will—

Nor I your whimsies, Clarissa Harlowe, interrupted he.—Don't let me run the fate of all who shew indulgence to your sex; to be the more contradicted for mine to you.

My father, you know, my dear, has not (any more than my brother) a kind opinion of our sex; although there is not a more condescending wife in the world than my mother.

I was going to make protestations of duty—No protestations, girl! No words! I will not be prated to! I will be obeyed! I have no child, I will have no child, but an obedient one.

Sir, you never had reason, I hope—

Tell me not what I never had, but what I have, and what I shall have.

Good Sir, be pleased to hear me—My brother and sister, I fear—

Your brother and sister shall not be spoken against, girl!—They have a just concern for the honour of my family.

And I hope, Sir—

Hope nothing.—Tell me not of hopes, but of facts. I ask nothing of you but what is in your power to comply with, and what it is your duty to comply with.

Then, Sir, I will comply with it—But yet I hope from your goodness—

No expostulations! No but's, girl! No qualifyings! I will be obeyed, I tell you; and cheerfully too!—or you are no child of mine!

I wept.

Let me beseech you, my dear and ever-honoured Papa, (and I dropt down on my knees,) that I may have only yours and my mamma's will, and not my brother's, to obey.

I was going on; but he was pleased to withdraw, leaving me on the floor; saying, That he would not hear me thus by subtilty and cunning aiming to distinguish away my duty: repeating, that he would be obeyed.

My heart is too full;—so full, that it may endanger my duty, were I to try to unburden it to you on this occasion: so I will lay down my pen.—But can—Yet positively, I will lay down my pen—!

LETTER IX

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE FEB. 26, IN THE MORNING

My aunt, who staid here last night, made me a visit this morning as soon as it was light. She tells me, that I was left alone with my father yesterday on purpose that he might talk with me on my expected obedience; but that he owned he was put beside his purpose by reflecting on something my brother had told him in my disfavour, and by his impatience but to suppose, that such a gentle spirit as mine had hitherto seemed to be, should presume to dispute his will in a point where the advantage of the whole family was to be so greatly promoted by my compliance.

I find, by a few words which dropt unawares from my aunt, that they have all an absolute dependence upon what they suppose to be meekness in my temper. But in this they may be mistaken; for I verily think, upon a strict examination of myself, that I have almost as much in me of my father's as of my mother's family.

My uncle Harlowe it seems is against driving me upon extremities: But my brother has engaged, that the regard I have for my reputation, and my principles, will bring me round to my duty; that's the expression. Perhaps I shall have reason to wish I had not known this.

My aunt advises me to submit for the present to the interdicts they have laid me under; and indeed to encourage Mr. Solmes's address. I have absolutely refused the latter, let what will (as I have told her) be the consequence. The visiting prohibition I will conform to. But as to that of not corresponding with you, nothing but the menace that our letters shall be intercepted, can engage my observation of it.

She believes that this order is from my father, and that my mother has not been consulted upon it. She says, that it is given, as she has reason think, purely in consideration to me, lest I should mortally offend him; and this from the incitements of other people (meaning you and Miss Lloyd, I make no doubt) rather than by my own will. For still, as she tells me, he speaks kind and praiseful things of me.

Here is clemency! Here is indulgence!—And so it is, to prevent a headstrong child, as a good prince would wish to deter disaffected subjects, from running into rebellion, and so forfeiting every thing! But this is allowing to the young-man's wisdom of my brother; a plotter without a head, and a brother without a heart!

How happy might I have been with any other brother in the world but James Harlowe; and with any other sister but his sister! Wonder not, my dear, that I, who used to chide you for these sort of liberties with my relations, now am more undutiful than you ever was unkind. I cannot bear the thought of being deprived of the principal pleasure of my life; for such is your conversation by person and by letter. And who, besides, can bear to be made the dupe of such low cunning, operating with such high and arrogant passions?

But can you, my dear Miss Howe, condescend to carry on a private correspondence with me?—If you can, there is one way I have thought of, by which it may be done.

You must remember the Green Lane, as we call it, that runs by the side of the wood-house and poultry-yard where I keep my bantams, pheasants, and pea-hens, which generally engage my notice twice a day; the more my favourites because they were my grandfather's, and recommended to my care by him; and therefore brought hither from my Dairy-house since his death.

The lane is lower than the floor of the wood-house; and, in the side of the wood-house, the boards are rotted away down to the floor for half an ell together in several places. Hannah can step into the lane, and make a mark with chalk where a letter or parcel may be pushed in, under some sticks; which may be so managed as to be an unsuspected cover for the written deposits from either.

I have been just now to look at the place, and find it will answer. So your faithful Robert may, without coming near the house, and as only passing through the Green Lane which leads to two or three farm-houses [out of livery if you please] very easily take from thence my letters and deposit yours.

This place is the more convenient, because it is seldom resorted to but by myself or Hannah, on the above-mentioned account; for it is the general store-house for firing; the wood for constant use being nearer the house.

One corner of this being separated off for the roosting-place of my little poultry, either she or I shall never want a pretence to go thither.

Try, my dear, the success of a letter this way; and give me your opinion and advice what to do in this disgraceful situation, as I cannot but call it; and what you think of my prospects; and what you would do in my case.

But before-hand I will tell you, that your advice must not run in favour of this Solmes: and yet it is very likely they will endeavour to engage your mother, in order to induce you, who have such an influence over me, to favour him.

Yet, on second thoughts, if you incline to that side of the question, I would have you write your whole mind. Determined as I think I am, and cannot help it, I would at least give a patient hearing to what may be said on the other side. For my regards are not so much engaged [upon my word they are not; I know not myself if they be] to another person as some of my friends suppose; and as you, giving way to your lively vein, upon his last visits, affected to suppose. What preferable favour I may have for him to any other person, is owing more to the usage he has received, and for my sake borne, than to any personal consideration.

I write a few lines of grateful acknowledgement to your good mother for her favours to me in the late happy period. I fear I shall never know such another. I hope she will forgive me, that I did not write sooner.

The bearer, if suspected and examined, is to produce that as the only one he carries.

How do needless watchfulness and undue restraint produce artifice and contrivance! I should abhor these clandestine correspondences, were they not forced upon me. They have so mean, so low an appearance to myself, that I think I ought not to expect that you should take part in them.

But why (as I have also expostulated with my aunt) must I be pushed into a state, which I have no wish to enter into, although I reverence it?—Why should not my brother, so many years older, and so earnest to see me engaged, be first engaged?—And why should not my sister be first provided for?

But here I conclude these unavailing expostulations, with the assurance, that I am, and ever will be,

Your affectionate, CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER X

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE FEB. 27

What odd heads some people have!—Miss Clarissa Harlowe to be sacrificed in marriage to Mr. Roger Solmes!—Astonishing!

I must not, you say, give my advice in favour of this man!—You now convince me, my dear, that you are nearer of kin than I thought you, to the family that could think of so preposterous a match, or you would never have had the least notion of my advising in his favour.

Ask for his picture. You know I have a good hand at drawing an ugly likeness. But I'll see a little further first: for who knows what may happen, since matters are in such a train; and since you have not the courage to oppose so overwhelming a torrent?

You ask me to help you to a little of my spirit. Are you in earnest? But it will not now, I doubt, do you service.—It will not sit naturally upon you. You are your mother's girl, think what you will; and have violent spirits to contend with. Alas! my dear, you should have borrowed some of mine a little sooner;—that is to say, before you had given the management of your estate into the hands of those who think they have a prior claim to it. What though a father's!—Has not the father two elder children?—And do they not both bear more of his stamp and image than you do?—Pray, my dear, call me not to account for this free question; lest your application of my meaning, on examination, prove to be as severe as that.

Now I have launched out a little, indulge me one word more in the same strain—I will be decent, I promise you. I think you might have known, that Avarice and Envy are two passions that are not to be satisfied, the one by giving, the other by the envied person's continuing to deserve and excel.—Fuel, fuel both, all the world over, to flames insatiate and devouring.

But since you ask for my opinion, you must tell me all you know or surmise of their inducements. And if you will not forbid me to make extracts from your letters for the entertainment of my aunt and cousin in the little island, who long to hear more of your affairs, it will be very obliging.

But you are so tender of some people who have no tenderness for any body but themselves, that I must conjure you to speak out. Remember, that a friendship like ours admits of no reserves. You may trust my impartiality. It would be an affront to your own judgment, if you did not: For do you not ask my advice? And have you not taught me that friendship should never give a bias against justice?—Justify them, therefore, if you can. Let us see if there be any sense, whether sufficient reason or not in their choice. At present I cannot (and yet I know a good deal of your family) have any conception how all of them, your mother and your aunt Hervey in particular, can join with the rest against judgments given. As to some of the others, I cannot wonder at any thing they do, or attempt to do, where self is concerned.

You ask, Why may not your brother be first engaged in wedlock? I'll tell you why: His temper and his arrogance are too well known to induce women he would aspire to, to receive his addresses, notwithstanding his great independent acquisitions, and still greater prospects. Let me tell you, my dear, those acquisitions have given him more pride than reputation. To me he is the most intolerable creature that I ever conversed with. The treatment you blame, he merited from one whom he addressed with the air of a person who presumes that he is about to confer a favour, rather than to receive one. I ever loved to mortify proud and insolent spirits. What, think you, makes me bear Hickman near me, but that the man is humble, and knows and keeps his distance?

As to your question, Why your elder sister may not be first provided for? I answer, Because she must have no man, but one who has a great and clear estate; that's one thing. Another is, Because

she has a younger sister. Pray, my dear, be so good as to tell me, What man of a great and clear estate would think of that eldest sister, while the younger were single?

You are all too rich to be happy, child. For must not each of you, by the constitutions of your family, marry to be still richer? People who know in what their main excellence consists, are not to be blamed (are they) for cultivating and improving what they think most valuable?—Is true happiness any part of your family view?—So far from it, that none of your family but yourself could be happy were they not rich. So let them fret on, grumble and grudge, and accumulate; and wondering what ails them that they have not happiness when they have riches, think the cause is want of more; and so go on heaping up, till Death, as greedy an accumulator as themselves, gathers them into his garner.

Well then once more I say, do you, my dear, tell me what you know of their avowed and general motives; and I will tell you more than you will tell me of their failings! Your aunt Hervey, you say,³ has told you: Why must I ask you to let me know them, when you condescend to ask my advice on the occasion?

That they prohibit your corresponding with me, is a wisdom I neither wonder at, nor blame them for: since it is an evidence to me, that they know their own folly: And if they do, is it strange that they should be afraid to trust one another's judgment upon it?

I am glad you have found out a way to correspond with me. I approve it much. I shall more, if this first trial of it prove successful. But should it not, and should it fall into their hands, it would not concern me but for your sake.

We have heard before you wrote, that all was not right between your relations and you at your coming home: that Mr. Solmes visited you, and that with a prospect of success. But I concluded the mistake lay in the person; and that his address was to Miss Arabella. And indeed had she been as good-natured as your plump ones generally are, I should have thought her too good for him by half. This must certainly be the thing, thought I; and my beloved friend is sent for to advise and assist in her nuptial preparations. Who knows, said I to my mother, but that when the man has thrown aside his yellow full-buckled peruke, and his broad-brimmed beaver (both of which I suppose were Sir Oliver's best of long standing) he may cut a tolerable figure dangling to church with Miss Bell!—The woman, as she observes, should excel the man in features: and where can she match so well for a foil?

I indulged this surmise against rumour, because I could not believe that the absurdest people in England could be so very absurd as to think of this man for you.

We heard, moreover, that you received no visiters. I could assign no reason for this, except that the preparations for your sister were to be private, and the ceremony sudden, for fear this man should, as another man did, change his mind. Miss Lloyd and Miss Biddulph were with me to inquire what I knew of this; and of your not being in church, either morning or afternoon, the Sunday after your return from us; to the disappointment of a little hundred of your admirers, to use their words. It was easy for me to guess the reason to be what you confirm—their apprehensions that Lovelace would be there, and attempt to wait on you home.

My mother takes very kindly your compliments in your letter to her. Her words upon reading it were, 'Miss Clarissa Harlowe is an admirable young lady: wherever she goes, she confers a favour: whomever she leaves, she fills with regret.'—And then a little comparative reflection—'O my Nancy, that you had a little of her sweet obligingness!'

No matter. The praise was yours. You are me; and I enjoyed it. The more enjoyed it, because—Shall I tell you the truth?—Because I think myself as well as I am—were it but for this reason, that had I twenty brother James's, and twenty sister Bell's, not one of them, nor all of them joined together, would dare to treat me as yours presume to treat you. The person who will bear much shall

³ See Letter VIII.

have much to bear all the world through; it is your own sentiment,⁴ grounded upon the strongest instance that can be given in your own family; though you have so little improved by it.

The result is this, that I am fitter for this world than you; you for the next than me:—that is the difference.—But long, long, for my sake, and for hundreds of sakes, may it be before you quit us for company more congenial to you and more worthy of you!

I communicated to my mother the account you give of your strange reception; also what a horrid wretch they have found out for you; and the compulsory treatment they give you. It only set her on magnifying her lenity to me, on my tyrannical behaviour, as she will call it [mothers must have their way, you know, my dear] to the man whom she so warmly recommends, against whom it seems there can be no just exception; and expatiating upon the complaisance I owe her for her indulgence. So I believe I must communicate to her nothing farther—especially as I know she would condemn the correspondence between us, and that between you and Lovelace, as clandestine and undutiful proceedings, and divulge our secret besides; for duty implicit is her cry. And moreover she lends a pretty open ear to the preachments of that starch old bachelor your uncle Antony; and for an example to her daughter would be more careful how she takes your part, be the cause ever so just.

Yet is this not the right policy neither. For people who allow nothing will be granted nothing: in other words, those who aim at carrying too many points will not be able to carry any.

But can you divine, my dear, what the old preachment-making, plump-hearted soul, your uncle Antony, means by his frequent amblings hither?—There is such smirking and smiling between my mother and him! Such mutual praises of economy; and 'that is my way!'—and 'this I do!'—and 'I am glad it has your approbation, Sir!'—and 'you look into every thing, Madam!'—'Nothing would be done, if I did not!'—

Such exclamations against servants! Such exaltings of self! And dear heart, and good lack!—and 'las a-day!—And now-and-then their conversation sinking into a whispering accent, if I come across them!—I'll tell you, my dear, I don't above half like it.

Only that these old bachelors usually take as many years to resolve upon matrimony as they can reasonably expect to live, or I should be ready to fire upon his visits; and to recommend Mr. Hickman to my mother's acceptance, as a much more eligible man: for what he wants in years, he makes up in gravity; and if you will not chide me, I will say, that there is a primness in both (especially when the man has presumed too much with me upon my mother's favour for him, and is under discipline on that account) as make them seem near of kin: and then in contemplation of my sauciness, and what they both fear from it, they sigh away! and seem so mightily to compassionate each other, that if pity be but one remove from love, I am in no danger, while they are both in a great deal, and don't know it.

Now, my dear, I know you will be upon me with your grave airs: so in for the lamb, as the saying is, in for the sheep; and do you yourself look about you; for I'll have a pull with you by way of being aforehand. Hannibal, we read, always advised to attack the Romans upon their own territories.

You are pleased to say, and upon your word too! that your regards (a mighty quaint word for affections) are not so much engaged, as some of your friends suppose, to another person. What need you give one to imagine, my dear, that the last month or two has been a period extremely favourable to that other person, whom it has made an obliger of the niece for his patience with the uncles.

But, to pass that by—so much engaged!—How much, my dear?—Shall I infer? Some of your friends suppose a great deal. You seem to own a little.

Don't be angry. It is all fair: because you have not acknowledged to me that little. People I have heard you say, who affect secrets, always excite curiosity.

But you proceed with a kind of drawback upon your averment, as if recollection had given you a doubt—you know not yourself, if they be [so much engaged]. Was it necessary to say this to me?—and to say it upon your word too?—But you know best.—Yet you don't neither, I believe. For a

⁴ Letter V.

beginning love is acted by a subtle spirit; and oftentimes discovers itself to a by-stander, when the person possessed (why should I not call it possessed?) knows not it has such a demon.

But further you say, what preferable favour you may have for him to any other person, is owing more to the usage he has received, and for your sake borne, than to any personal consideration.

This is generously said. It is in character. But, O my friend, depend upon it, you are in danger. Depend upon it, whether you know it or not, you are a little in for't. Your native generosity and greatness of mind endanger you: all your friends, by fighting against him with impolitic violence, fight for him. And Lovelace, my life for yours, notwithstanding all his veneration and assiduities, has seen further than that veneration and those assiduities (so well calculated to your meridian) will let him own he has seen—has seen, in short, that his work is doing for him more effectually than he could do it for himself. And have you not before now said, that nothing is so penetrating as the eye of a lover who has vanity? And who says Lovelace wants vanity?

In short, my dear, it is my opinion, and that from the easiness of his heart and behaviour, that he has seen more than I have seen; more than you think could be seen—more than I believe you yourself know, or else you would let me know it.

Already, in order to restrain him from resenting the indignities he has received, and which are daily offered him, he has prevailed upon you to correspond with him privately. I know he has nothing to boast of from what you have written: but is not his inducing you to receive his letters, and to answer them, a great point gained? By your insisting that he should keep the correspondence private, it appears there is one secret which you do not wish the world should know: and he is master of that secret. He is indeed himself, as I may say, that secret! What an intimacy does this beget for the lover! How is it distancing the parent!

Yet who, as things are situated, can blame you?—Your condescension has no doubt hitherto prevented great mischiefs. It must be continued, for the same reasons, while the cause remains. You are drawn in by a perverse fate against inclination: but custom, with such laudable purposes, will reconcile the inconveniency, and make an inclination.—And I would advise you (as you would wish to manage on an occasion so critical with that prudence which governs all your actions) not to be afraid of entering upon a close examination into the true springs and grounds of this your generosity to that happy man.

It is my humble opinion, I tell you frankly, that on inquiry it will come out to be LOVE—don't start, my dear!—Has not your man himself had natural philosophy enough to observe already to your aunt Hervey, that love takes the deepest root in the steadiest minds? The deuce take his sly penetration, I was going to say; for this was six or seven weeks ago.

I have been tinctured, you know. Nor on the coolest reflection, could I account how and when the jaundice began: but had been over head and ears, as the saying is, but for some of that advice from you, which I now return you. Yet my man was not half so—so what, my dear—to be sure Lovelace is a charming fellow. And were he only—but I will not make you glow, as you read—upon my word I will not.—Yet, my dear, don't you find at your heart somewhat unusual make it go throb, throb, throb, as you read just here?—If you do, don't be ashamed to own it—it is your generosity, my love, that's all.—But as the Roman augur said, Caesar, beware of the Ides of March!

Adieu, my dearest friend.—Forgive, and very speedily, by the new found expedient, tell me that you forgive,

Your ever-affectionate, ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XI

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

You both nettled and alarmed me, my dearest Miss Howe, by the concluding part of your last. At first reading it, I did not think it necessary, said I to myself, to guard against a critic, when I was writing to so dear a friend. But then recollecting myself, is there not more in it, said I, than the result of a vein so naturally lively? Surely I must have been guilty of an inadvertence. Let me enter into the close examination of myself which my beloved friend advises.

I do so; and cannot own any of the glow, any of the throbs you mention.—Upon my word I will repeat, I cannot. And yet the passages in my letter, upon which you are so humourously severe, lay me fairly open to your agreeable raillery. I own they do. And I cannot tell what turn my mind had taken to dictate so oddly to my pen.

But, pray now—is it saying so much, when one, who has no very particular regard to any man, says, there are some who are preferable to others? And is it blamable to say, they are the preferable, who are not well used by one's relations; yet dispense with that usage out of regard to one's self which they would otherwise resent? Mr. Lovelace, for instance, I may be allowed to say, is a man to be preferred to Mr. Solmes; and that I do prefer him to that man: but, surely, this may be said without its being a necessary consequence that I must be in love with him.

Indeed I would not be in love with him, as it is called, for the world: First, because I have no opinion of his morals; and think it a fault in which our whole family (my brother excepted) has had a share, that he was permitted to visit us with a hope, which, however, being distant, did not, as I have observed heretofore,⁵ entitle any of us to call him to account for such of his immoralities as came to our ears. Next, because I think him to be a vain man, capable of triumphing (secretly at least) over a person whose heart he thinks he has engaged. And, thirdly, because the assiduities and veneration which you impute to him, seem to carry an haughtiness in them, as if he thought his address had a merit in it, that would be more than an equivalent to a woman's love. In short, his very politeness, notwithstanding the advantages he must have had from his birth and education, appear to be constrained; and, with the most remarkable easy and genteel person, something, at times, seems to be behind in his manner that is too studiously kept in. Then, good-humoured as he is thought to be in the main to other people's servants, and this even to familiarity (although, as you have observed, a familiarity that has dignity in it not unbecoming to a man of quality) he is apt sometimes to break out into a passion with his own: An oath or a curse follows, and such looks from those servants as plainly shew terror, and that they should have fared worse had they not been in my hearing: with a confirmation in the master's looks of a surmise too well justified.

Indeed, my dear, THIS man is not THE man. I have great objections to him. My heart throbs not after him. I glow not, but with indignation against myself for having given room for such an imputation. But you must not, my dearest friend, construe common gratitude into love. I cannot bear that you should. But if ever I should have the misfortune to think it love, I promise you upon my word, which is the same as upon my honour, that I will acquaint you with it.

You bid me to tell you very speedily, and by the new-found expedient, that I am not displeased with you for your agreeable raillery: I dispatch this therefore immediately, postponing to my next the account of the inducements which my friends have to promote with so much earnestness the address of Mr. Solmes.

⁵ Letter III.

Be satisfied, my dear, mean time, that I am not displeas'd with you: indeed I am not. On the contrary, I give you my hearty thanks for your friendly premonitions; and I charge you (as I have often done) that if you observe any thing in me so very faulty as would require from you to others in my behalf the palliation of friendly and partial love, you acquaint me with it: for methinks I would so conduct myself as not to give reason even for an adversary to censure me; and how shall so weak and so young a creature avoid the censure of such, if my friend will not hold a looking-glass before me to let me see my imperfections?

Judge me, then, my dear, as any indifferent person (knowing what you know of me) would do. I may be at first be a little pained; may glow a little perhaps to be found less worthy of your friendship than I wish to be; but assure yourself, that your kind correction will give me reflection that shall amend me. If it do not, you will have a fault to accuse me of, that will be utterly inexcusable: a fault, let me add, that should you not accuse me of it (if in your opinion I am guilty) you will not be so much, so warmly, my friend as I am yours; since I have never spared you on the like occasions.

Here I break off to begin another letter to you, with the assurance, mean time, that I am, and ever will be,

Your equally affectionate and grateful, CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XII

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE THURSDAY MORNING, MARCH 2

Indeed you would not be in love with him for the world!—Your servant, my dear. Nor would I have you. For, I think, with all the advantages of person, fortune, and family, he is not by any means worthy of you. And this opinion I give as well from the reasons you mention (which I cannot but confirm) as from what I have heard of him but a few hours ago from Mrs. Fortescue, a favourite of Lady Betty Lawrance, who knows him well—but let me congratulate you, however, on your being the first of our sex that ever I heard of, who has been able to turn that lion, Love, at her own pleasure, into a lap-dog.

Well but, if you have not the throbs and the glows, you have not: and are not in love; good reason why—because you would not be in love; and there's no more to be said.—Only, my dear, I shall keep a good look-out upon you; and so I hope you will be upon yourself; for it is no manner of argument that because you would not be in love, you therefore are not.—But before I part entirely with this subject, a word in your ear, my charming friend—'tis only by way of caution, and in pursuance of the general observation, that a stander-by is often a better judge of the game than those that play.—May it not be, that you have had, and have, such cross creatures and such odd heads 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?

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