

VICISSITUDES
IN
GENTEEL LIFE.

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GENTEEL LIFE

In FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

An Endeavour to please the Many, is not only a vain, but a foolish Attempt, as the Success would be inglorious; while the Approbation of the Few—the penetrating and judicious Few—who can see, and will admire, the Beauties that are meant, though imperfectly expressed, rewards the Labors of a Writer, and will perpetuate the Verdure of his shaded Laurels.

SPECTATOR

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VICISSITUDES

IN

GENTEEL LIFE.

LETTER, I.

MISS STANLEY, TO LADY STANLEY.

Woodstock, March 5th.

I Have now, my dear madam, been introduced to the respectable friends at the Lawn, and likewise to Lady Blurton and “the Honourable Miss Barbara Tupps.”

Yesterday, about twelve o'clock, a note arrived from Mrs. Stanhope to Mrs. Lawson, telling her that her niece and herself were just returned from Stanton; that Maria being impatient to see Charlotte's friend, they had determined to take the first opportunity of being introduced to her, and offered themselves to dinner, if Mrs. Lawson's family was not otherwise engaged. Accordingly, about half after one o'clock, setting out as soon as the servant returned, they arrived.

As the appearance of genteel people of this sect, is, I believe, rather new to you, I will endeavour to be a little particular in my description of theirs, the simplicity of it strongly striking my observation.

Their chaise was one of the neatest I ever saw in my life. Its colour was a light brown, elegantly ornamented, though in a plain way, with silver beadings, &c. lined with white sattin, and drawn by a pair of beautiful grey horses. The servants livery, if it can be called one, was of the colour of the chaise; buttons, the same, and, likewise, lined with white.

When the ladies appeared, I was surprised at the graceful ease of their manner, notwithstanding all that had been said to me about it; for I could not divest myself of the idea of some stiffness and formality; so unjustly has that opinion been generally imprinted upon the minds of those who differ in persuasion from these truly agreeable people; as Mrs. Lawson, who has had a pretty large acquaintance amongst them, tells me she has commonly found them to be. Charlotte confesses she had once a strong prejudice against them, from supposing she must never laugh, nor hardly speak, when in their company, which she says was entirely removed in their first visit to the Lawn. Mrs. Eleanor Lawson was always partial to them, but Miss Rachel dislikes them, she declares, “beyond all the people she knows upon earth,” because they will neither bow nor courtesy, and because they impertinently call her Rachel; a name, it seems, which she dislikes above all others; probably, on account of its being her own; and often quarrels with her mother and aunt, for their having imposed it upon her, without giving her any other to relieve it, as she says they might

have done, without any affront to her lady-godmother. She is, to be sure, a most disagreeable tempered young woman, and ruins, as far as she is able, the harmony of this otherwise happy family.

When Mrs. Stanhope entered the room, I was struck with the agreeableness of her figure. She appears to be about fifty years of age; and has, I dare say, been very handsome when younger. Her complexion is very clear, and her hair dark. In her person she is rather tall, and inclined to be fat. She addressed me with a manner composed of true dignity and politeness; congratulating my friends at Woodstock on, what she termed, their acquisition.

I then turned to Miss Maria Lewis, than whom, I think, a more interesting figure never caught my eye. Her complexion is lovely fair indeed. Her features small, and her face so regularly pitted by the small pox, that I am sure it must have added to its beauty. Her eyes are dark; her lips a bright red. For the colour of her hair and eye-brows I can hardly find a comparison. It is not light; nor dark: yet rather dark than otherwise, and extremely glossy. It straggles about her neck; down the sides of her face, and upon her forehead, in a natural wave, forming itself, behind, into ringlets; evidently without having been curled. She is not quite so tall as Miss Lawson; rather more slender, and strikingly genteel. Her hands and arms particularly beautiful.

The elegance of her figure, prevented my noticing her dress, till a considerable time after her entrance; but I recollect she had on a light brown sattin gown; white sattin petticoat, with three welts. The sleeves of her gown came just below her elbow, and were bound with a strip of muslin: a piece of narrow black ribband was tied round her neck. Her linen was all of the finest buck-muslin; the apron laid in deep welts up to the top. There was not any thing about her which looked like trimming. Her bonnet and cloak were white sattin; the former almost round, and of the prettiest and most becoming shape imaginable: When she took it off, the simplicity of her head-dress pleased me more than all the rest. I cannot do justice to it by description. She has not yet, as I before intimated, turned her hair up from her forehead. I believe she endeavours to divest it of its curl in the fore part, but without success; its natural bend still persisting to give addition to its beauty. She wore a cap exactly calculated for the delicacy of her features. It was small and round. Her age, as I have said, is seventeen; but she appears still younger.

When Charlotte led her up to me, and put her hand into mine, introducing us to each other with a compliment to both, she animatedly said—"I am happy in being presented to the dearest friend of Charlotte Lawson, with whom I presume to hope *her* kind partiality will give me some distinction."

I was so struck with the agreeable frankness of her manner, that I doubt I made but an awkward reply: however, I meant a sincere compliment, and she received it as such: thanking me for my prepossession, and asking permission to observe, that what she had already seen of me answered so exactly the idea she had formed, from description, that she was convinced she had likewise imbibed a just opinion of my character. I made my answer by my looks; and then, our matronly friends being seated, we took our places at the fire side; Miss Rachel not being yet ready to make her appearance. A more agreeable conversation than that which succeeded, I scarce ever remember to have borne a part in; the novel simplicity of the language of *the friends*, surprised and delighted me nearly as much as the delicacy and justness of their sentiments.

We sat chatting till near three o'clock, when a servant came with a letter to Miss Rachel, from Miss Barbara Tupps, apologizing for the short notice, and requesting her to get ready to return with Lady Blurton, who would follow the messenger; and indeed no sooner was the letter read, than, at a little distance, the chariot was in view. I had been told of the extreme gaudiness of this lady's appearance, but my utmost ideas of finery were short of the glare of her superb equipage; the showiness of which was, perhaps, more strikingly observable from the resemblance of the simple one that, about an hour before, entered the court-yard: indeed, no two things of the same kind could form a stronger contrast. In a few minutes the hall door was thrown open, and in rushed the ladies, both of them rather large in their make, and rendered much more so by the extreme bustle of their clothes, dressed—the one in an orange-tawney tabby; the other in deep red-rose sattin, with a profusion of feathers; flowers, and ribbands. Can you wonder at the surprise which filled the gentle Maria at this blazing appearance, or at the strong propensity to laughter which seized your saucy Emma! almost every body was inclined to smile. Mrs. Stanhope was, I believe, the only one who appeared unmoved. Yet even she, I fancied, looked with concern; as if she pitied them, and had said to herself—“*Poor things!*”—with an inward sigh of compassion for their folly. Even Miss Rachel, who professes to have a violent attachment to “*the Honourable Miss Barbara Tupps,*” was rather ashamed of their glaring finery. The friendship, as it is called, between Miss Barbara and Miss Rachel, arose from their having been together at school, one quarter of a year. Had they both continued there, it is probable this friendship would soon have given way to as great an animosity; their tempers being, as it seems it is generally known, by their friends on both sides, alike proud and unhappy. Mrs. Lawson and Mrs. Eleanor made considerable objections to Miss Rachel's accompanying these ladies to London: but upon her coming of age, which she did last November, she gave them to understand she should no longer think herself liable to any controul. Her conduct gives great vexation to her real friends. Mrs. Lawson, very tenderly and wisely, after due remonstrances, gives sometimes an apparent consent to what she can neither approve nor prevent, to avoid coming to extremities, and to save Miss Rachel from the open defiance which she seems to hold herself ready to commence: Hence, her permission to attend Lady Blurton.

When these honourable visitors entered the room, they were first introduced to Mrs. Stanhope; upon whom they seemed to look with inexpressible contempt; then to me, and then to Miss Lewis; over whom the eyes of Miss Barbara seemed to wander in a moment. They then sat down upon a sofa in silence; till at length Lady Blurton deigning to look at me—“I think, Miss,” said she, “Mrs. Lawson pronounced the name of Stanley, when she presented you.”

I bowed an affirmative.

Lady Blurton. O! aye—of the Stanley's in Derbyshire. Your father, I believe, Miss, has not yet succeeded in his endeavours to get a *real* title.

Emma. I do not know, madam, what you call a real title.

Lady Blurton. “*Madam,*” child! I am *Lady Blurton*. Well, but I believe, *madam* is the fashion; though, I protest, a very indecent one, as it sweeps away all due distinction: but young people must, to be sure, conform to the fashion, be it what it will.

Mrs. Lawson. Does your ladyship think that is always necessary? May there not be

exceptions to the rule?

Lady Blurton. None, madam; none: none in life. If young people would cut any figures in the *circles*, they must be in the fashion; though, as the Earl of Banbury says, it should demand their walking with their heads downwards—He! he! he! he!

Mrs. E. Lawson. Then neither good sense nor morality are to stand out against this idol, fashion!

Lady Blurton. Good sense and morality, Mrs. Eleanor Lawson! you quite amaze me! How can a woman in your sphere talk in such a style! To be a fashionable person is sufficient. It includes every thing.

Mrs. E. Lawson. But are there not people in the world, Lady Blurton, who would look down with a little conscious superiority upon those who act upon this system? people too, whose opinion is truly worth regarding? And will there not come a time, think you, when these empty sentiments will prove not only very useless, but very painful to their adopter?

Lady Blurton was pursued to her last resource by Mrs. Eleanor Lawson's interrogations, which, she afterwards owned, she could not help bringing forward on account of Miss Rachel, who was so soon to be entrusted to her ladyship's protection.

The subject was now dropped, and Lady Blurton, not forgetting my reply, turned to me in front, and said—"Sure, Miss Stanley, you cannot have been brought up in so much ignorance, as not to know that a real title is such as confers *nobility*; all below that great boundary being merely nominatives. Your father, I fancy, is still nothing more than a baronet."

Emma. Nothing more, madam; nor does he *aspire* to be any thing more.

Lady Blurton. O fye! O fye! Do not convey such an idea of your father's want of spirit. I dare say you four young ladies [looking at the two Miss Lawsons; Miss Lewis, and myself] would all wish to be married to real titles.

Charlotte. And does your Ladyship exclude Miss Barbara from a supposition of joining in the wish?

Lady Blurton. O Miss Lawson! Under the tutorage of such a mama, you must know better than to think it necessary to ask such a question. Miss Barbara Tupps was *born* honorable. It is not, therefore, essential for her to stand upon such a point; because were she to marry a *plebeian*, she would still retain her primeval distinction.

Lady Blurton judged politically in thinking it necessary to make this declaration; wisely concluding, no doubt, that it was very unlikely, "*the honorable Miss Barbara Tupps*" should ever be lifted into a sphere more exalted.

"True," said Miss Rachel Lawson, to Lady Blurton's last speech, "I think your ladyship

observes with great justness.”

No chance, to be sure, could ever have jumbled together a more unconsonant party than these ladies and the friends from the Lawn. I seemed to tremble for the events of the afternoon.

Just as Miss Rachel had replied to Lady Blurton, we were summoned to dinner, the greatest part of which passed pleasantly enough; but towards the latter end, an incident of the comic kind, made some of us put on tragic faces.

After an elegant table of fish, fowls, &c. &c. we had a genteel little desert of creams; jellies, and preserves. Near Miss Lewis stood some lemon slummery, which I could not help observing was particularly pleasant; Lady Blurton joined me in opinion; and Miss Tupps (her plate at that time being empty) fixing her eyes upon it, the gentle Maria, ever willing to oblige, took the spoon in her hand, and said with a pleasant air—“Barbara, wilt thou give me leave to help thee to a little of this nice jelly?”

This was the first direct address she had had occasion to make to either of these great ladies, and the consternation which appeared in the countenance of both, upon the occasion, is indescribable. They looked at each other with all imaginable surprise, and Lady Blurton, laying down the spoon she was lifting to her mouth, repeated the word BARBARA? in a tone (casting her eyes round the table) that asked the company whether she had heard aright.

“*Barbara* indeed!”—re-echoed the honorable Miss—while the modest, but unintimidated, Maria collectedly said, looking at both—“Friends, I meant you no disrespect. Were I in company with the daughter of a prince, the opinion in which I have been educated, would lead me to address her with the same seeming familiarity.”

“I do not know, Miss,” said the haughty girl, with a deep flush of resentment in her cheeks, “what your education has been, but the proofs you have, just now, exhibited, are not very strong in favour of its gentility.”

Mrs. Lawson, greatly hurt upon the occasion, and concerned for her innocent young friend, told this “honorable Miss Barbara Tupps,” that she would answer for it, Miss Lewis was very far from intending the least incivility; on the contrary, she evidently wished to oblige her, by helping her to some of the slummery which her friends had been so kind as to recommend.

Dinner was by this time finished; for no slummery would Miss Barbara taste; the table cleared; fruit and wine set on, and the servants going out, when the dowager lady took upon her to criticise Mrs. Lawson's address to her darling.

Lady Blurton. You say, madam, that Miss—I protest I forget her name—meant a civility, when she offered to serve Miss Barbara Tupps with some of that slummery, which, to be sure, was very nice. By the same rule, madam, you would affirm that the mistress of a London gin-shop coming to the door, and, with an offensive breath, asking you to walk in and drink, was a civil personage.

At this I saw Mrs. Stanhope, who had, hitherto, appeared unmoved, was offended; and, I believe, thought it was incumbent upon her to take some notice of this palpable affront to her niece; which she did by saying—“Permit me, neighbour Blurton, to observe that the dialect thou hast chosen to convey thy ideas in, is so new to Maria Lewis, that I apprehend she will not understand the allusion.”

The edge of this reproof was too fine for her ladyship's feelings to be hurt by, because she was insensible to its keenness; but she seemed to suppose it was a tart reply—not by Mrs. Stanhope's manner; for that was perfectly composed; but, probably, because she was conscious her speech merited one: therefore, drawing up her head, she said—“I cannot tell, madam, what you mean, madam; nor do I know that I ever was any neighbour of yours.”

Mrs. Stanhope. And yet I hope I should be a neighbour to thee, were I called upon by occasion, without removing into thy vicinity. I have been accustomed to think of, and to use, the word neighbour in an extensive sense.

Lady Blurton. Are you going to teach me the sense of words, madam? Or do you suppose I do not know what a neighbour is?

Mrs. Stanhope. It appeared as if thou wert a stranger to the sense in which I used the word; as else, thou wouldst not, I think, have been offended.

Mrs. Eleanor Lawson observing the attitude of consequence which Lady Blurton was preparing to speak in, and apprehending the argument might increase in unpleasantness, prevented her reply, by saying—“I do not pretend to understand the true etymology of the word neighbour; but we have the highest authority for using it for any one who would do another an office of kindness; though, as the example alluded to, says, they should be so far from living near each other, that they should even be of different nations: and this, doubtless, is the sense—the benevolent sense—in which it is constantly used by that sect of people, of which Mrs. Stanhope is a member; and, permit me to say, an ornament.”

Mrs. Eleanor Lawson, as she afterwards said, hoped this would finish the subject; but Lady Blurton, who always thinks, what she calls, her opinion, ought universally to be subscribed to, was not to be so answered. Without giving time for any body to introduce any other topic of conversation, as every one was endeavouring to do, she proceeded with—“Upon my word, Mrs. Eleanor Lawson, you are all too wise; too learned, and too good for me. I protest I know not what to say to you. Pray what authority, and what example can you give, to bring that old-fashioned and vulgar word of *neighbour* into use?”

Mrs. E. Lawson. Your Ladyship certainly remembers the story of the good Samaritan.

Lady Blurton. Yes; I remember reading something about it when I went to school; though I protest I have almost forgot it. But the higher circles, madam, are not ruled by any of these things now; for if they were, all due distinctions would be laid aside, and we should be all friends and neighbours in a lump. He! he! he!

Miss Barbara, [continuing the he, he, he.] What, I wonder, would Colonel Morington think of such antique doctrines! Cannot your Ladyship imagine you see that charming man, whom your ladyship always allowed to be a poignant wit, listening in the attitude of surprise, to such novel sentiments?

To the question of her daughter, Lady Blurton made the following reply—“Novel sentiments indeed! my dear Miss Barbara. Why we shall, by and by, have all the old stories in the Bible laid before us, as fit examples for us to follow. Pray madam”—turning herself in front to Mrs. Stanhope, in a disputing attitude—“is there in that old book any account of personages of real nobility?”

At that instant the door of the dining-room was thrown open, and Doctor Griffith, the venerable Rector of Woodstock, made his appearance. We all of us arose at his entrance, for which we received a reprimand, as he desires always to be permitted to come and go without any ceremony. After he had seated himself, which he did between Mrs. Stanhope and myself, Mrs. Eleanor Lawson, desirous, as she owned after they were gone, to give, if possible, some check to the haughtiness of this really ridiculous woman, said, “Doctor, you are come in the right time to give an answer to a question of Lady Blurton’s; her ladyship wanting to know if there were in the ages in which the Bible was written, any people of real nobility.”

Doctor G. [addressing Lady Blurton.] Certainly, madam, a great number.

Lady Blurton. Well, I protest, I am heartily glad of that. Now, madam, [to Mrs. Stanhope] you will see your error. Doctor Griffith, you are a very learned gentleman. Well, and who were they? I protest I did not know this before. I declare I shall like that book better than ever I did in my life.

Doctor Griffith. Some of the most renowned in the earliest ages of the world were Abraham; Jacob; Moses, and David.

Lady Blurton. And pray how were they distinguished? And what titles did their ladies bear?

Doctor Griffith. The first, madam, was called THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL: Jacob was generally termed THE PATRIARCH: Moses, THE MEEKEST OF ALL MEN; and David—THE MAN AFTER GOD’S OWN HEART. As to their ladies, as you term them, I believe they thought themselves happy in being the wives of such GOOD MEN, without any desire of being considered as *great* women.

Lady Blurton. Well, but Doctor, I believe you are in jest all this time, and I protest—

Doctor Griffith. Indeed, madam, I am not in jest; this is to me a serious subject; and rather a melancholy one. To bring our ideas down to our own times—were the female part of the creation to think *goodness* of heart the best recommendation our sex could obtain, no one undeserving of that distinction would dare to offer himself to any woman of character. Were he inclined to make himself happy in marriage, he would first endeavour to retrieve his lost reputation. And were the male part of the world to give that due preference to the meek; the modest; the good-humoured, and domestic, though lively fair ones, which they so justly merit, we should not see our modern belles so studious to display such tinsel ornaments of person, and empty qualities of mind, as they now consider to be a

first distinction. But, madam, [addressing Mrs. Stanhope] I did not know you were returned to Woodstock, or I certainly should have treated myself by a call upon you and my little dove here— [by which appellation he always distinguishes Miss Lewis.]

This, as the good doctor intended it should, gave a turn to the conversation. The rest of the afternoon was passed in lively chit-chat; and Lady Blurton seemed to regard Mrs. Stanhope as increased in consequence from the respect with which she was treated by Doctor Griffith, who being the son of a gentleman possessed of what she acknowledges to be a real title, had much of her observance. As the doctor has always been distinguished for his fine understanding; great goodness, and likewise true politeness, we were all somewhat surprised at his so unceremoniously replying to Lady Blurton; and, after they were gone, we remarked it to him; upon which he told us he so thoroughly knew the character of the woman, that he was convinced she needed some reproof, the moment he heard what subject we were upon, and was determined to endeavour to silence her.

About seven o'clock the ladies left us, taking with them, to her great delight, Miss Rachel Lawson, whom, I must confess, I was not sorry to see depart; except on account of the concern her going with such introducers into gay life, gave her mother, aunt, and sister: *but she would not be prevented.*

The remainder of the evening was convivial and agreeable, beyond my powers of description.

Mrs. Stanhope and Doctor Griffith are upon a very intimate footing, and greatly respect each other; a proof of the goodness of both their hearts.

Other subjects press for admittance, but I will not at this time enter upon any new ones.

By to-morrow's post I mean to write to Maria; who, let me repeat, is often in my remembrance. Her letter particularly obliged me.

I cannot suppress a wish to know if Sir Charles Conway keeps his intention of not making any long stay in London.

With an affectionate heart, I am,

My dear madam,
Your's, by every tie of
duty and gratitude,
EMMA STANLEY.

LETTER, II.

SIR CHARLES CONWAY, TO GEORGE
STANLEY, ESQ.

Portland Place, March 5th.

I Have received yours, dated Monday, and thank you for the smile with which some lines in it inspired my features. The sensation seemed new to me; and when it ceased, I wondered how it could have been effected.

To the first part of your letter, I say nothing; except that I hope you are not to be *caught by a pink gown and white petticoat*.

I arrived in town this morning at ten. As I told you, I intended to have been here last night, but was induced to stop at Barnet by our fellow-student, Herbert Evelyn. There never was a better hearted fellow in existence than Herbert. He has taken orders, and has, for some time, been enquiring for a curacy; for, would you believe it! his father has married that young baggage, who was his housekeeper at Reading, and since that time, poor Herbert has scarce known what to do with himself. I think he is grown extremely handsome, and his understanding seems even brighter than it used to be; yet it was always considered as of first rate: but he has too much real merit, and is too diffident to advance himself. I have, therefore, taken him entirely under my care. He is to accompany me in my present ramble, and, at my return, to live at Hawthorn Grove till our good old rector shall be translated to a richer inheritance, and then he shall be instituted to that living: but to prevent his having any temptation to wish for the arrival of the poor old man's last hour, I will settle an annuity upon him till that period, not greatly short of the good rector's income.

Herbert received my proposal with a peculiar grace. His eyes glistened: he pressed my hand; bowed, and left me. When we again met, he revived the subject, and ended it with expressing a hope that Mr. Eachard would, at our return, accept his constant assistance in the church.

I know you will be pleased at my having picked up such a companion; whom, by what is *called mere accident*, I met with half a mile on the other side of Barnet. We were driving pretty smartly along a smooth piece of road, when the rein of one of the fore horses got loose from its buckle, and James dismounted to fasten it; at which instant I observed a very genteel young man, exceedingly well mounted, who met and passed the chaise. I was struck, when I saw him, with an idea that I had some knowledge of him, but the difference, much to his advantage, which his canonical dress made in his appearance, prevented my recollecting who he was. Just as James had replaced the buckle, and was going to remount, Mr. Evelyn returned, and advancing to the chaise window—"Sir Charles Conway's carriage, by the arms," said he; "and sure I see my old friend!" At that instant I recognized his features; gave him my hand, and, upon finding his business could as well be pursued in the morning, insisted upon his giving his horse to Joseph, and taking a seat in the chaise. Till we reached Barnet, we had only common chat; but alighting there, and ordering some coffee, the conversation became very interesting. Old Evelyn, as I told you, has married his housekeeper; Peggy Southern her name; who proves such a virago, and so entirely governs her old

cully, that his father's house is no longer a residence for poor Herbert.

His mother's dying request that he might be educated for a clergyman, seems to have been a prophetic one. At the time she made it, it was hardly thought consistent with rectitude; as nobody considered him in any other light than as the undoubted heir to fourteen hundred a year; two only of which were settled upon the late Mrs. Evelyn; therefore the father has unlimited power over the other twelve; which, it is ten to one but he disposes of to the children of this young hussey, if she has any; though, perhaps, they will not be indebted to him for their existence.

Herbert has lately occupied lodgings in London; and, when we met, was going to a village near North-Mims, where he has a friend who promised to recommend him to a vacant curacy in that neighbourhood. He enquired very cordially after you, and sends his compliments.

Upon my word I have several times been surprised, since the short time of our meeting, at the extraordinary qualities which appear to be in the mind of this young man. You, George, will, I know, be particularly pleased with him, as he at once united the scholar; the good man, and the gentleman. The difference between what he is now, and what he was when we called upon him at Reading, two years back, is incredible.

The enclosed allegory respecting fate and free-will, which I scribbled last night before I went to bed, will give you my opinion upon what will, probably, be called the *chance* of my meeting with Mr. Evelyn. It is so entirely in your own way, that I will not apologize for presenting you with such a serious performance.

I have not yet fixed the day for leaving London, but mean not to stay in it long. My mode of travelling will now be altered, and, as you advised, shall go down with my chaise and four; but shall take only one saddle horse, as Mr. Evelyn's must go likewise.

And now to another part of your letter—your Quixotic scheme.—The advice you give is, I think, exactly calculated for you to follow. It would be acting up to the very essence of your character. Leave Maria Birtles to your footman—though I must own, by what you say of her, and her conduct, she is rather too superior: but I do not credit one half of your account—and pursue the noble Lady Caroline. I will furnish you with a letter of introduction to her; and Stanley will supply the place of Pemberton, as well as Conway. Pursue and bring her back. This will be an achievement worthy of you; and though, for various reasons, I decline the *Knightship*, as *Sancho*, I am at your command. Seriously though, I am under much concern for the fate of that justly celebrated young lady. Had I not known her, I should have pitied her from report; but whoever has once seen her, must be doubly interested for her. Who knows what she may not, at this time endure! In a foreign country, and, probably, if she misses the Maynards, without one friend near her! How severely must she feel her present destiny! Her misfortunes have frequently had a place in my contemplation since I have known the particulars of her history: the *more* frequently, because of my thorough acquaintance with that old hypocrite, Lord Crumpford; than whom I do not think there is a viler fellow breathing.

Such a wife as *Lady Caroline Pemberton*, George, I should joy to see you in possession of. She is *the very woman* to suit you. Want of fortune in *her*, ought not *once to be named*. If you hear

any more of her, transmit to me the account.

* * * * *

Just as I was going to close my letter, Colonel Greville was announced. He met Joseph in Piccadilly; stopped him, and enquired for me. I could almost wish he had not known I was in town, for I do not want company. His enquiries about friends at Alverston were so very particular, that he unavoidably caught some knowledge of the present situation of circumstances; at which, as indeed he well might, he seemed astonished. We had not much conversation; he being engaged to a masquerade-party. I think he talked of going soon to Alverston.

Hang him! he seems to have oppressed my spirits. His questions, though obliging in intention, were, at this time, particularly irksome.

Farewell.

CHARLES CONWAY.

LETTER, III.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Alverston, Friday night, March 6th.

YOUR letter, my dear Charles, dated yesterday, was put into my hands just as I was sitting down to scribble to you. The contents greatly please me; at least, the major part of them. Your meeting with Herbert Evelyn, is just such an incident as I could have wished for. I have always loved that fellow for his generosity to the Hadderleys. Very few people would have acted as he did, in that business. Give my hearty service to him, and bid him not postpone his ideas of having a living in Derbyshire till your reverend friend leaves his terrestrial heritage, for Fowler is returned from Bath worse than when he left Alverston, and his dissolution is expected soon to happen. Poor young man! I but little thought, when he was inducted to this benefice, he would vacate it so soon; as who, at that time, was more strong and hearty than Fowler! While he lives, I shall say no more upon this subject; save that my father has given it to me to supply the loss we are so soon likely to experience.

Believe me, I perfectly coincide, and in my rational moments always did, with the allegorical realities which you enclosed. I firmly believe all you meant to infer upon the subject, yet cannot, *for the blood of me*, as my godfather says, bring my practice to my principles. My soul seems to be like tinder; the least spark sets it on fire; and, in half a minute, I am blown into a blaze. At this very juncture, I seem all combustible, and I did a violence to myself in suppressing a rhapsody respecting the events of last night, till I had paid my compliments to the receipt of your letter; which, however, I re-affirm has so much, on many accounts, pleased me, that it confined for some minutes, after perusal, my thoughts entirely to its subjects: a proof, and a strong one, as you will by and by acknowledge, of its importance in my estimation.

Lady Caroline Pemberton indeed! No; no, Charles, no Lady Carolines for me, I do assure you! Greatly as I admire and reverence her fame, I would not marry her were she sole heiress to the whole Danvers estate; and, indeed, that would have but little weight in determining my election. Tell me not, therefore, of Lady Caroline Pemberton. Tell me not, at this time, even of Maria Birtles: but tell me, Conway, tell me of my invisible enslaver—of the dear, charming, beautiful creature, who, for aught I know, may be as ugly as Hecate, as I am an entire stranger to her identity; yet I rave—I burn—I die to throw myself at her feet.

“Is the fellow mad!?” you will exclaimingly question.

Mad indeed, Charles! very, very mad: and mad I am likely to continue, without hope of relief. But I will try to tell you the rise of my distemper, with all the leading particulars.

I finished my last letter with the arrival of Bob Saunders, and the impossibility of any thing happening at the ball to afford me even amusement.

What incompetent judges we are one hour of what we shall be the next! How often are the most important events at hand—decisive of our happiness or its contrary—when we think ourselves

in a perfect, and, as perhaps we call it, a stupid serenity!

Could you ever have supposed—but no; it was impossible. So listen, and be convinced.

Mr. Slayton not chusing to accompany us to the lodge, as he meant to pursue his journey to town early in the morning, my father was under the necessity of remaining likewise at Alverston. It was, therefore, agreed that our coach should convey my mother, Mr. Saunders and myself, and wait till morning (as it was not probable we should leave the ball till after midnight) for Bob and me; and that *his* chaise, my father's being at Derby to be new lined, should be sent for my mother between eleven and twelve, as she would not consent either to stay longer, or to permit our deserting the company so early. To the ball, then, about seven o'clock last evening, we were conveyed, where we met, I think, the most elegant company I ever saw selected. Beauties swarmed in every corner of the room; amongst whom, the most distinguishable were Miss Asheton; Miss Williams; Miss Prettyman; Lady Jane Stafford; the young Dowager Lady Brewster; Miss Sparkes, and Miss Louisa Levett. The smartest beaux—Lord Ramsey; Lord Ashburne; Sir George Nassau; Sir Cotton Delwyn; Sir John Byron; Captain Forbes; Mr. Smythes; Mr. Gladwyn, and Mr. Derelincourt; not forgetting myself and Bob Saunders. Bob danced with a Miss Allenton, and I with Lady Brewster. But the bride—I forgot the bride—was one of the prettiest women there; and her dress, by far the most elegant.

The first minuet was danced by Lady Jane Stafford with the bridegroom. The second, by the young dowager with Lord Ashburne. But I cannot go through all the ceremony. Suffice it that the bride begged off, and that I walked the Z with Miss Lucy Browne. After minuets, we proceeded to country dances; after country dances to supper; which was announced about half past ten. I told you I danced with Lady Brewster. The evening, as I prognosticated, had, hitherto, no particular charms for me; though my partner was handsome; lively, and good-humoured: but Maria Birtles held her place in my idea. About twelve o'clock, the dons and matrons began to retire; my mother was amongst the early ones; upon which occasion I was very near offending our ceremonious Squire Saunders, by preparing to attend her. He brushed past me; took my mother's hand, and asked me if I recollected in whose carriage she was going. I begged his pardon; bowed, and resigned to his care my mother; who, by the bye, was near losing one of her diamond earrings, in the anti-room. She was not sensible of its dropping, but a servant accidentally set his foot upon it, while she was putting on her cloak. Of this incident, Saunders made a long story to the ladies upon his return; observing to them how careful they ought to be upon such occasions; and ending his harangue with an account of the nobleness, as he termed it, of Lady Stanley's bounty to the fortunate finder. What a strange fellow this is grown! His particularities increase upon him most intolerably.

We returned to the ball-room, and continued dancing till after one, when a sudden confusion ensued, occasioned by the fainting of Lady Sardon, who fell lifeless upon the floor, no one being near enough to save her; but when she was down, she was surrounded in an instant: the dancing ceased; the music stopped, and all was bustle and hurry. Lord Ramsey and myself took her up, and carried her into the anti-room, where we placed her upon a sofa. The ladies thronged round her; each endeavouring to be of service. One drew from her pocket some eau-de-luce; another some hartshorn; a third a smelling-bottle, and so on all round, till at length she revived, and in a short time was entirely recovered.

The spirit of dancing seemed to be now evaporated, and two or three of the young ones began a gentle game of romps, which soon became general, and a universal hoity-toity filled the place. I seized upon the youngest of the Miss Bouvres, and was going to place her by my side as I sat upon the sofa, which stood behind the opening of the door; but she struggled from me, and ran to the other side of the room; at which, setting one foot back to spring after her, I trod upon some thing that lay just under the sofa, and was partly hid by the fringe at the bottom of the cover; when, upon stooping down, I saw and picked up a very neat vellum case, with a small gold stamped border, the contents of which I was strongly tempted to inspect; but honor forbid; therefore I took with me into the ball-room a small stool which was used to accommodate the ladies in stepping from the door to their carriages, mounted it, and proclaimed aloud my good fortune, offering to restore my prize to its fair owner (as, by its delicacy, it evidently belonged to a lady) for the reward of a kiss from the hand which received it, upon proof of just claim. I then made many little flourishes upon the nature of the oath I required to be taken upon the occasion, offering my right cheek (as a book might not be at hand) for sealing the affirmation; and soon drew round me a great number of auditors; but the perverse charmer, whose property it was, refused to make her claim; which, at the time surprised me, as there was no doubt of her being present; it having, probably, been dropped by some of the fair ones who bustled round Lady Sardon, and my O Yez! pronounced three times with a very audible voice, had charmed round my stage, every lady, and I believe every gentleman of the party. But the reason for this disingenuity soon appeared very obvious; for having continued my enquiry for some time, without effect, I stepped into an adjoining room to inspect the contents, that I might gain intelligence of the owner, and then saw the cause of its not being claimed. And now, Conway, figure to yourself the surprise; the astonishment; the something, for which I cannot find a name, that seized me when I drew from the little case a miniature portrait of myself. I started—I gazed—for the likeness was so wonderfully strong, that it struck me in a moment—I disbelieved the evidence of my senses; rubbed my eyes, and asked myself if I was awake. It was fortunate that I did not examine the contents of my prize in the ball-room, as every one who had seen me, must have wondered at my antic behaviour. I went to the glass—held the image by its side—looked at that—at myself, and was convinced it was my exact resemblance: no representation could possibly be more true: it was done in crayons, and executed by a most masterly hand indeed. This incident seemed to me to be the effect of enchantment; but the magical spell had not yet arrived at its greatest height, nor produced its greatest effect; for recollecting my absence from the company might possibly be noticed and wondered at, I was about to replace the little figure in the recess I had drawn it from, and return to the occupied rooms, when I again suspected my eyes of being under illusion upon their wandering over the following lines which appeared to be written with the greatest accuracy, and in the most particularly elegant characters I ever saw, on the back of the paper, which was double.

“The portrait which my pencils trace,
“Will give you Stanley's form and face:
“But not his form and face conjoined,
“My heart could steal, without his mind.
“*There* gentleness and spirit meet—
“*There* wit and sense each other greet;
“And form one, in my eyes, compleat.”

Charles, not the strongest—the most active—the most powerful imagination ever given to man, can come up to the idea of the effect these lines, added to the circumstance of the portrait, had

upon my heart. From my not being able to fix upon any one individual, the dear performer was represented to my imagination as the most beautiful of all beautiful creatures. Of her mental perfections, I had the most absolute proof; and that her affection was decidedly mine, even modesty herself must allow. My *vanity*, Charles, was not awakened, high as were the encomiums of the poetry; but my tenderness—my *gratitude*—all the sensibility of my soul—was absorbed by this real—yet ideal charmer. For some time I stood lost in contemplation; fixing first upon one—then upon another of the angels (as I now thought they all were) which graced the wedding feast; every one being, in my opinion, more handsome than she was before this incident; but my idea could not rest upon any; so effectually had the real one guarded both her manner and her countenance, when the case was offered to public claim. I now determined to return to the rooms with the most watchful eye; judging it would be almost impossible the lovely creature could escape my observation, in the strict scrutiny I meant to set on foot. Upon going into the ball-room I found it vacated; dancing having been given over by universal consent, and the company retired to the drawing-room, having ordered their carriages to be got in readiness.

I now separately addressed every individual female present; endeavouring, by all the methods I could think of, to draw the confession I so ardently wished to obtain; but to no purpose. Some smiled—others blushed; but they were not the smiles nor the blushes of consciousness. Yet I was convinced the *charming she* must then be present, as no one had left the ball but elderly matrons, in whom not one idea could center upon the occasion.

I examined the possibility of the magic performance having been dropped by a mother or aunt of some absent enchantress; but my suppositions wearied me, without bringing to my view the least probable conjecture, and I was obliged to seem to forget the incident, though it united with my every idea. I wished to have set on foot some little puzzling play of the species of fortune-telling, making it necessary for every lady to give a sentence in writing, which at once would have rendered the veil transparent; the characters of the poetry being, as I have told you, so remarkably beautiful, that it was not likely any others would resemble them. My sister's writing is the most similar of any I ever saw; but it does not equal it. This method, therefore, I would certainly have taken, had it been an hour sooner; but it was then too late to permit my practising it with any degree of propriety; the company being all about to depart.

I would have given worlds to have detected the sweet assassinating thief who has thus wounded and robbed me under these impervious shades, and I think should have been tempted to have insisted upon the immediate sacrifice of her name as a recompense.

By my faith, Charles! I never before was under such perplexity. What can I do! How can I think of any other creature! The execution of the portrait, and the poetry, give proof of her genius and accomplishments: the sentiments of the verses evince her delicacy; her tenderness; her goodness: *and* the choice she has made FOR AN OBJECT OF HER SENSIBILITY—gives her, *in my estimation—every power to charm*. Maria Birtles—so late the image of my idolatry—seems nearly vanished from my remembrance; perhaps, because I have not seen her since my return.

Charles—knowing my temper *as you know it*—if you do not compassionate me, you are worse than a barbarian.

By my soul! I believe I shall go distracted. I cannot write: I cannot think: I cannot do any thing. I am ashamed of myself—ashamed of finding my heart, which I absolutely believed to be even more fixed than I would own to you, capable of being so changed—so divided—so I know not what to call it.

Yet can it be wondered at! A circumstance so singular—so extraordinary! I am, beyond measure, perplexed.

And you, I now recollect, will rejoice at this incident. You will think it a fortunate circumstance, if it frees me, in any degree, from what you dare to consider as an inglorious captivity.

Be not too sanguine. I own I feel, at present, rather awkward; but the effervescence occasioned by this ignis-fatuus must cease in time, if it continues to elude my exploration; and then the blaze, after its temporary suppression—

But, Charles! Charles! this is only to plague you; for I have not one distinct idea of what is probable, or of what my wishes lead to. My soul is all confusion.

I repeat that I cannot write: I cannot think: I cannot do any thing.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, IV.
MISS RACHEL LAWSON TO MISS LAWSON.

London, March 6th.

ABOUT two hours back we safely alighted in charming Hanover-Square with health and spirits unimpaired: for if they *were* a little wasted by the fatigues of the journey, they were instantly recruited by the very first view we caught of dear London.

Poor Charlotte! how I pity your situation! yet not so much as if your exile from all that is delightful was not voluntary. Strange that a young woman of your vivacity and accomplishments should have such an antiquated taste as to give Oxfordshire the preference to Middlesex!

Astonishing sister! absolutely astonishing!

I do not mean to offend any one in the circle which I have been taught to revere—else I should be tempted to repeat the hackneyed quotation of

“—Croaking rooks,
“Dull aunts and godly books.”

While Miss Stanley is with you, indeed, Woodstock may be supportable; provided—pray, Charlotte, do not be offended, but provided you could keep clear of—THE FRIENDS AT THE LAWN.

Miss Barbara Tupps has talked of nothing since she left Woodstock but Doctor *Griffith's* "Little Dove," who, she observes, and I think not very unjustly, can never be of any earthly use but to soil a real fine lady.

But poor Charlotte! I must not make you quite sick of your sylvan scene, neither; therefore I am almost afraid that the contrast will strike you too forcibly when I tell you that we are going this evening to Drury-Lane Theatre; as Lady Blurton says that will be the best method to proclaim her return to town—To-morrow to Mrs. Linsted's, her ladyships cousin; on Sunday to Lady Beever's card-rout, which Lady Blurton never fails to attend when in London; on Monday to a concert; on Tuesday to Covent-Garden; on Wednesday—but I forgot myself—I quere whether my mention of the Sunday's engagement has not so astonished you as to render you incapable of proceeding. But, child! I am not at this time within the precincts of the *friends at the Lawn*; nor yet in hearing of old Doctor Griffith's lectures. I must now conform to the fashion of the times, or I had better have staid at Woodstock.

When I have experienced the enchantments of the town, I think I will venture to give you a slight sketch of them, as you are so rooted to your native soil—alias dirt! Excuse me, Charlotte—that I need not, I believe, be *very* apprehensive of destroying you by envy.

Remember me, my good matronly sister, with due reverence, duty, love and compliments to my mother, aunt, and Miss Stanley; believing that this vortex has not yet so totally absorbed me as to prevent my still continuing

Your's, affectionately,
R. LAWSON.

LETTER, V.

MRS. LAWSON, TO MISS RACHEL LAWSON.

Woodstock, March 7th, Saturday morning.

YOUR letter to your sister, my dear Rachel, reached Woodstock just as we were sitting down to breakfast, after which Charlotte was retiring to answer it, but being disposed to write to you myself, I told her the employment should devolve upon me.

We are all glad, my dear girl, to hear of your safe arrival in London. Your aunt; your sister, and Miss Stanley, request to be remembered to you with tender cordiality, wishing your excursion may prove beneficial as well as agreeable.

Present the compliments of our circle to Lady Blurton and Miss Barbara Tupps.

And now, my dear, allow a mother, ever solicitous for the best happiness of her children, to express her apprehensions on your present situation; which, I must confess, is not exactly what I could wish it to be.

Lady Blurton is a woman of gaiety: for a woman of her years—of *great* gaiety. Miss Barbara Tupps is pretty much like her mother in almost every respect. My Rachel has, three times doubled, the understanding of either, and is greatly more qualified to lead both, than to be led by them; for which reason, I hope she will not give herself up to their guidance.

Were you, my dear child, a few years younger, I should think it my duty to write to Lady Blurton, requesting her attention to the principles in which you have been educated; and intreating her rather to leave you to amuse yourself, which you are exceedingly well qualified to do, than to introduce you to company unconsonant to such as you have been accustomed to, and likewise, I hope, to your disposition. But you are now of an age, and, as I before said, of ability to advise the person who is, at present, in the world's eye, your leader.

Lady Blurton, you say, constantly attends Lady Beever's Sunday's card-routs. I know Lady Beever well. I knew her when she was Hannah Smith, and a seemingly modest young woman. Her father was an industrious, honest man, and happy in the notice his daughter attracted from our family; which was not withdrawn till the atrociousness of her conduct made it highly improper to be continued. When she was about eighteen, she went to live with Mrs. Beever, who died within a year after her going thither; but not before she found reason to lament her husband's ever having known Hannah Smith.

Soon after Mrs. Beever's death, Mr. Beever was knighted, and, in a few weeks, ushered Hannah Smith into the great world as his lady. The poor man lived long enough to recollect he had had *one* good wife; but his reason failed, and while he, for three years, was confined in a private mad-house, Lady Beever—or, as many people still think and call her—Hannah Smith—had her routs; her drums, and her gallants.

Such is the woman to whom my Rachel is to be introduced by Lady Blurton! whom, by the way, I wonder that her ladyship notices; because, to use her own expression, she is not of quality. Such is the woman who, upon the death of the man whose name she bears, removed to what is called "*the other end of the town*," and has her Sunday card-meetings; to which people of reputation condescend to resort, because, as the phrase is, "she lives in style!"

Exert, my dear child, the reason with which GOD ALMIGHTY has so liberally blessed you, and instead of submitting to follow Lady Blurton and her daughter in their mistakes, give yourself the consequence, so justly your due, of endeavouring to teach them rectitude from error.

In a state where individuals, in general, are happy in the good order and government extended to every corner of the kingdom, it is wrong to infringe upon its laws (though, perhaps, there may be some which, in themselves, are of but small consequence) because it may prove an introduction to general disorder; for when the observation of customs, established by authority, shall cease, who can tell what bounds shall be set to the infringement? therefore, every law of the nation which is not *contrary* to the law of GOD, ought to be attentively observed, though in itself, as I have said, immaterial. Allowing, for a few moments, that the observation of the Sabbath is merely by human appointment, and that it might be as well if all respect to it were abolished—still, upon the foregoing considerations, it ought to be esteemed as the law of the kingdom requires, though it

answers not the purposes for which people, in general, hold it in reverence. There are six successive days in which we have perfect freedom to pursue the fashionable diversions of the age; and if we will not be restrained by higher considerations, it is only *varying* our amusements *to make the Sunday supportable!!!*

The *first* part of *any* day is seldom spent in either card-playing; dancing, or theatrical entertainments. It is only a few hours in the evening that are employed in the prohibited diversions; and it is very hard if modern ingenuity cannot invent some method to kill this short period, less offensive to society, than an open defiance of law and decency. If the fine ladies of the present age, will not punish themselves so much as to be *exemplary*, let them be *negatively* virtuous, and not set a pattern to their children and servants, which, if generally followed, would, without dispute, bring inevitable destruction upon the nation: and what exclusive right have *they* to mis-spend the Sabbath-day? Where is the privilege to stop? At what ranks of people?

I have done with supposing the institution to be merely a harmless one. It is positively useful; and even necessary for the good order of society—for the well-doing of mankind: and it is, likewise, by Divine Command.

That it was a fundamental part of the *old law* will not be disputed. And was it ever repealed? No: it was enforced by the Great Teacher of the Gospel Faith.

“Keep the Commandments”—was an edict of His who enjoined nothing superfluous. The other nine, are, by every one, allowed to be reasonable, and why should this be singled out for exemption?

I am not contending for such an observance of the Sabbath as some people think necessary: that is to say, that we ought to look upon it as a day of austerity, throughout which, we must continue to mortify ourselves and all about us. By no means: let it be devoted to the *happiness* of society; but not in an inverted sense—not to the partial [and that false] happiness of a few; nor in dissipation by any individual.

It has been foolishly said, that by fixing one day in seven for the more particular exercise of religion, it is taken, by some people, as a licence for laying aside all serious thoughts till the return of that period. Let such superficial observers be asked whether it is probable that those people, who take this licence, would ever have any serious thoughts at all, if they were not, now and then, called upon to recollect.

Why (some are ready enough to *ask*) is SUNDAY more than any other day? Without entering into disquisitions about “times and seasons”—it may be answered by saying, that as all ages have agreed in thinking one day in seven a proper portion of time to set apart for rest from worldly business; and as all the Christian world *has* used the Sunday for a Sabbath, why should *not* Sunday be the Sabbath day? Without saying what reason there is for it, let it be asked if there is any against it, to authorise a change.

In support of a Sabbath it has been said—“We may surely afford the ALMIGHTY GOD one day in seven for his service.”

This, I must confess, is not an argument I am fond of using. Had it been advanced that the Almighty of his bounty has given *us* one day in seven, I should readily have subscribed to it. For is it not designed to be a day of rest from care and labour—from fatigue and all anxiety? A day of general jubilee, not only to man, but to even the working beasts of the field? Did GOD for his own sake command the Sabbath? No: for ours: for the poor and the rich: for the low and the high: for the servant as well as for his master. How, then, is the question, ought it to be observed? Doubtless in such a manner as shall most exclude every kind of labour. And what method so proper on *that* account, as well as others, as a due attendance upon public worship? In these solemn assemblies, all ranks of people are, or ought to be, upon an equal footing. Distinction then ceases; no one being more acceptable, to the Great Maker of all, than another, because of his being more rich; nobler in ancestry, or higher in power. And does not the aptitude of almost all mankind to forget the primeval and future equality of the human race, make it necessary to awaken, at stated periods, the consideration that there is no real—no durable distinction between the present Great and Small, save what is acquired by different degrees of purity of soul?

It has always been my opinion that we ought so to manage our worldly affairs as to give all possible rest on the Sabbath day to ourselves; our servants, and our cattle; which cannot be the case where assemblies are opened for public amusement; there being then no cessation from the drudgery of our domestics; the labour of our horses; or from *the fatigues of pleasure*—a slavery more injurious to the mind and the body than those who inlist in it will believe till too late.

Again—I do not, as I before said, wish it to be understood that I think it necessary to observe that formal severity which inverts (though by a contrary method) the design of this lenient donation, as I will call it—in almost as great a degree as its opposite extreme; [making it, however, more equal to all orders of people] and which our Redeemer censured in the professors of the Jewish institution, by the parables of the strayed beasts and withered hand; recorded by three, if not by all the Evangelists.

“*The Sabbath was made for Man.*” The institution is here confirmed by, at least, implication; its intended benefit to man ascertained; with a power given to his reason to employ it in moral and benevolent—as well as religious exercises: but his abuse—his total inversion of it—is not any where authorised, or even tolerated.

It therefore stands distinguished by divine—by civil—and by moral law; and must be approved by justice and reason.

You will therefore, my dear Rachel, very highly oblige me, by declining to mix with Sunday card-players; particularly with those of Lady Beever’s party. With peculiar earnestness I request what I will not command, because I hope to prevail by entreaty; and am very sorry this will not reach you in time to prevent your first introduction.

If you want *an excuse*—make a merit of your obedience, and plead the *promise* I request you to give me in an early letter: though I would rather you would give your own judgement against the practice. But this as you please—so you do but absent yourself.

Perhaps though you mean to assemble with the party, you have pre-determined—and indeed I hope so—not to be an *actual* partaker of the amusement.

Ah! my dear child! this will be playing with sharp-edged tools upon a precipice. For, in the first place, as every one is *but* one, and Rachel Lawson a young woman of reputation and *some* distinction, your presence will be a sanction to the more inconsiderate; as it will be obvious that though you abstain from being a performer, you are only prevented by your obedience to a mother, or by the not-yet-conquered prejudice of education; but that the practice is far from being offensive to your principles. Yet even this, my dear, is not the worst. How can you say how long you shall maintain your resolution of being only a looker-on? Pressed on all hands, as you undoubtedly will be (for it is the nature of degeneracy to endeavor to emit its contagious virus; the principles which have been sown in this island still remaining with such strength as to make their violators wish for the unavailing countenance of numbers) laughed at, perhaps, for your unfashionable objections by those who envy your uncorrupted integrity, and are maliciously bent upon its destruction—what in such a situation will not my girl descend to, if her principles, insensibly weakened by a frequent and familiar observation of their violation are not deliberately firm against the practice.

And now, my love, if what I *have* said prevails not; all I *can* say will be ineffectual; except my dear child will comply in simple pity to my feelings, and in consideration of the poignant affliction her refusal will give to her fondly anxious, and tenderly affectionate mother,

ELIZABETH LAWSON.

P.S.

The clock now strikes eleven. I subscribed to the above about half an hour back, after which I found the subject of my letter so pressing upon my mind, that I could find no quiet till I ordered Richard to get ready to set off for London directly, that my request may reach you before your consent to the first introduction at Lady Beever's Sunday's-meeting, renders your refusal on the second occasion more difficult and disagreeable to you.

In doing this, my dear girl, I consult your ease and benefit; being desirous to relieve your duty as much as possible from all hard conditions.

Richard has orders to continue in London till six o'clock Monday morning. By his return my dear Rachel will tell me she is well and happy—that she considers and accepts my anxiety, and the step I am taking, as the strongest proof of my tenderest affection—and that, *as* a relief to herself, she *promises* to decline all such Sundays' engagements as are incompatible with the long established, and universally approved custom of the nation—with morality—and with the tenets of the Christian dispensation.

And now, my dear-loved girl, will I pray to the Supreme that He may direct and strengthen you, till your happiness is fixed beyond reverse.

LETTER, VI.

MISS RACHEL LAWSON, TO MRS. LAWSON.

Hanover Square, Sunday evening, March 8th.

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR letter by Richard, I received, and read, with much surprise; and I cannot but say that I was sensibly hurt at the contents.

Permit me to observe, that if the occasion of your express were to be known, it would give room for a conjecture of my having been strangely educated, that at twenty-one years of age I do not know how to chuse my company. However, to show that I am not so disobedient as may sometimes have been thought, I will give the promise you so very particularly require (though the punctual observance of it will make me appear very singular) of not joining in Sunday card-parties, except when they are held at Lady Blurton's, and then I am sure you will allow it would be an impossibility to avoid them without rendering myself more ridiculous than you, I hope, would wish me to be; therefore, my dear madam, I must, in my turn, be a little peremptory in almost insisting upon it that you do not lay upon me this injunction; with which, if you do, I really cannot comply; and I should be unwilling, as I hope you have some reason to believe, to act in direct opposition to your commands.

As to Lady Blurton and Miss Barbara Tupps—I do not want the information of their both being fools, because I never yet considered them in any other light: no great fear, therefore, that I should make either of them my pattern; nor do I think it worth my pains to set them one. As they are, they answer my purpose; which is, by their means, to see and enjoy the gaieties of life in a somewhat greater degree than it was possible to do in Oxfordshire; the pleasures of which are not, I must confess, much adapted to confine my affections within their circle. The very air I breathe in this place, exhilarates my spirits, and I feel in good humour from morning till night; else, let me observe, I should have been more sensibly affected by the severe sentiments of your letter, which are not calculated to draw my preference from London to Woodstock.

I may, perhaps, have written rather saucily; at least what I have said may meet with a stern construction; but my meaning is to prevent your troubling yourself, in future, on these occasions; as, though I have now submitted to the very unreasonable requisition, I will not promise any future concessions.

Excuse me, madam: excuse my explicitness. *I* now mean to *spare* you. Let it, however, be understood that I am sensible of the *motive* which induced you to take what was really an extraordinary step; and doubtless my thanks for it may be expected. I therefore *will* thank you; but as I feel a little acrimony arising in my mind, at the absurd difficulties this strange prohibition will lay me under, I believe I had best conclude my letter.

Lady Blurton says when she excuses me to Lady Beever, whom last night I promised to attend, she shall be obliged to make a little free with the obsolete prejudices of the Woodstock

Bowerians; to which I gave my hearty concurrence.

With my love at large, to your domesticated—I was very near saying rusticated—party,
I am, my dear madam,
your affectionate,
and, I hope, dutiful daughter,
R. LAWSON.

LETTER, VII.

LADY CAROLINE PEMBERTON, TO MRS.
MAYNARD.

March 9th, 1789.

I Was this morning, my dearest Harriet, made inexpressibly happy by a letter from our good foster-sister, Mrs. Thompson, informing me that you and my dear Augustus are expected in St. James's Square next Thursday.

Thank GOD for the intelligence. I hope I shall now soon be relieved from some of my perplexities, as I rest much upon Mr. Maynard's influence with my father. To describe the various distresses I have undergone since we parted at Canterbury, would take up too much time at present, as I wish to hasten this, that it may be ready for your reception the moment you alight, knowing the anxiety you must both be in, respecting my safety. But before I give you my little narrative, which is not crowded with the most agreeable incidents, let me make you smile by telling you that I am, at this time, retained as a waiting-maid upon Miss Stanley, of Alverston-Park in Derbyshire; and that the name I at present bear, is that of Maria Birtles.

After assuring you that I am in perfect health—easy in situation—and in as good spirits as you can well suppose, I will proceed to give you a few of the particulars respecting my affairs, with which you are unacquainted.

The last letter that I am certain of your receiving from me, was the one which told of my father's harsh determination about that vile Lord Crumpford—one of the most avaricious—most detestable old wretches, that ever could be thought of for the torment, and almost inevitable destruction of any young creature.

In my next letter, which I dare say never reached Ostend, till you had left it, I informed—or, rather, meant to inform you — of my father's continued inflexibility, and that if he could not be softened, I should be obliged to fly from his authority; in which case, I would hasten directly to you. Another letter, and another after that, both very long ones, mentioned particularly what happened till the night I was compelled to leave Berkley Square; the chief circumstances of which were, that I had got every thing in readiness for a speedy flight, should I be driven to any emergency; that our good nurse Pooley, and her daughter Thompson, had taken to their house the clothes I should want to carry, for both myself and Jenny; packed them into proper trunks, and agreed with a hackney-

coachman to wait for me every evening, at the corner of the Square, and that I had taken of Mr. Galliard, the day before he left London, five hundred pounds of the legacy left me by Mrs. Selwyn.

I then gave the particulars of the conversation I overheard between my father; Lord Crumpford; a villainous lawyer, and a parson still worse than the lawyer; from which I understood that the writings were all ready, and could be effectually executed without my signing them; that a special licence had been actually procured, and a determination made for the ceremony to be performed on the coming Thursday [and this was Tuesday] without any more deliberation, by the wretch of a parson, then present, who had once been a horse-jockey, but, by the interest of Lord Crumpford, who presented him to the living of Branton, had been ordained, to the disgrace of the clerical dignity. After what they thought proper to term the marriage, it was intended I should be carried to the new-fitted-up house in Woodstock, called the Cottage, accompanied by my father and Lord Crumpford; with his daughter, as bride-maid.

Harriet—Augustus—could I resolve to stay and be the victim of such—But hush, rash girl! Thy father was of the number thou art ready so severely to censure. He was: and it grieves me to recollect it. I have always loved him with the affection of an affectionate daughter. I loved him *then*. I love him *still*, with *unabated* love; and the idea of saving him from future regret, strengthened my resolution to leave him: for regret he must have had when he found how irretrievably wretched he had rendered a daughter, whom, till of late, he had always treated with an indulgence expressive of genuine affection.

What *could* be his motive! What *could* be his inducement to doom me to such destruction! If he thought of securing my happiness by ensuring to me the continuance of rank and fortune, how widely did he mistake the happiness I covet! Dear, calm, domestic felicity! how was it possible you could mix with such a union! *Union*—did I say? No: dissonance through life.

But I will proceed with my narrative. Yet first let me observe that it is wonderful my father did not prevent both my going out and receiving visitors. But I believe he had not the least idea that I would take the step I have taken: for though I often expostulated with him on the impropriety of what he called the match; and the impossibility of my ever reconciling it to either my heart or my conscience, I always endeavoured to speak in the language of respect and tenderness; and this, I suppose, led him to think I might be conquered.

Ungenerous—But—again—I am speaking of *my father*; of my father who placed such a confidence in me as to suppose I would not run from what he thought my duty; and indeed my heart would severely reproach me, had I pursued such a measure upon any less emergency.

As soon as I had heard the before-mentioned conversation, I hastened to Jenny, and ordered her to get ready for our leaving the house at seven o'clock, my father having, at that time, an engagement in the city, as I was determined not to venture staying any longer. It was then about four, and not having any thing to do, I set down and wrote a letter to you of all the particulars which had occurred since the dispatch of my preceding packet, that in case any thing should happen to frustrate my concerted plan, you might have the whole before you. This letter I did not intend to send to you, except I found myself disappointed; because by the time you could receive it, I hoped to be with you. However, after it was finished, I, in the hurry I then began to be in, as it was drawing

near the time of my going, sealed, directed and gave it to a servant to take, with other letters, to the post-office; not considering how much you would be distressed on account of my safety, if, by any chance, it should reach your hands before you saw me; as I finished with telling you I was then upon the point of leaving my father's house, and meant to go directly to Dover; from whence it was my intention to take a passage in the first ship that would sail, after my arrival, for any part of the coast of France, and that after landing, I should proceed directly to Ostend.

I told you I should take no attendant but Jenny, and that I had not one apprehension respecting the danger of the expedition; having not been rash in my determination upon the extraordinary measure I was pursuing; for hour after hour, in day after day, did I—to speak in a language you perfectly understand—enter in the most retired examination; offering my ardent prayers for direction; and found no path opened for either my own safety, or my father's, but the one which flight led into.

In one of my letters—for I mention particulars as they occur, without any respect to method—I gave my reasons for not chusing to seek protection of any friend in England; the chief of which, next to the preference I naturally gave to you and Augustus, was the difficulty of my being concealed in the kingdom; as it was most likely my father would make strict search amongst those with whom I was most intimate; in which case, there must either be a great deal of evasion practiced, or I must openly brave his authority: all which, I hoped, would be avoided by my taking refuge with you, till Mr. Maynard had reconciled my father to my refusal of his very unreasonable command.

What, Harriet, would I not give to be reinstated in my father's favor! How happy did I use to think myself in the approving smiles he, till lately, always bestowed upon my conduct in almost every particular.

What, again let me exclaim, *could* induce him to contemplate, with complacency, such a sacrifice!!!

But I will avoid, as much as possible, all animadversions upon what has happened. Yet my wonder is sometimes so predominant, that I cannot suppress my exclamations.

But for the above consideration of improbable concealment in England, I think I should have sought a refuge, till your return, if my father had not before that time relented, with Sir John Warburton, as I could not but believe that Fanny would experience much happiness in her father's being able to afford me protection.

After I had finished, and inconsiderately dispatched my letter to you, I stood upon the watch, with a throbbing heart, for my father's going out, and, in a few minutes, saw his coach driven from the door, when (summoning Jenny to attend me) I hastened down stairs, and she followed me; but just as she reached the second landing, her foot slipped, and she fell to the bottom.

To describe the consternation I was in, is impossible. I stood some moments in a perfect stupor, till the noise of her fall bringing into the saloon two or three servants, I recollected myself, and assisting to raise her, said, after she was a little revived, I do not think it will be proper for you to go to-night, Jenny; therefore will send for Mrs. Thompson to attend me here. This thought happily

came in my head, with the idea of the good woman's anxiety when she found we went not; as about two hours before, I sent her a note to tell her my determination was fixed for that evening. This I hoped would obviate any suspicion that might arise upon sight of the parcel which Jenny let fall; therefore dispatched Peter to Mrs. Thompson, with orders for her to go to me directly and carry my gold dimitty gown, that she might try it on.

That she had one to make for me was actually true; yet, O! my dear father! why did you drive into such crooked ways a young creature whose ambition it ever was to tread the one, strait, unveiled path of rectitude!

When Jenny could speak, which was not till after she had shed a shower of tears, I found she was more hurt than, upon first lifting her up, I had supposed her to be. I therefore ordered her to be carried back into my dressing-room, for she could neither walk nor stand, and immediately sent for Mr. Bell, who, upon inspecting her hurts, found she had dislocated her ankle, and very much bruised her leg and foot.

I was extremely concerned, as you will believe, not only on my own account, but on the poor girl's; who cried as if her heart would break; the chief cause of which, I well knew, was her anxiety for me, as I had long been convinced of the sincerity of her affection.

I asked Mr. Bell how long he thought it would be before she would be able to walk. He said he doubted a fortnight or three weeks, as the dislocation seemed to be a very bad one. Therefore after requesting him to give her all possible attendance; ordering her to be put to bed, and telling her I would soon see her again, I retired to my closet to ruminate upon this accident, and to consider the measure I must next pursue.

At first I was almost superstitious enough to view the casualty as a forbidding omen to my undertaking, but when I was more composed, I found myself still persuaded that it was the only plan I could pursue; and my judgement was so far from being in opposition, that it commended and confirmed the impulse.

Thus re-assured, I went into Jenny's room, where I found Mrs. Thompson, whom I requested to come next evening in the coach which she had ordered to be at the corner of the Square. My trunks, she told me, were all in readiness, her husband having carefully corded and directed them, as I desired, for Mrs. Wilson, passenger; that being the character I meant to assume through my voyage. I then requested her to secure me a place in the Dover mail-coach; which I thought was preferable to going by myself, in post-chaises, through the night; but if no place was vacant, to have a post-chaise and four in readiness.

Poor Jenny and Mrs. Thompson were distressed, beyond measure, at the idea of my venturing by myself; but no argument could prevail with me to alter my purpose. Mrs. Thompson, good creature, earnestly requested to be permitted to attend me, to which she was sure her husband and mother would cheerfully consent, rather than that I should go alone; but this, as you may suppose, I would not, on any account, permit; though I shall not soon lose the remembrance of the offer.

After giving orders about Jenny, I very early retired to bed, and, in good truth, to rest; for, strange as it may seem, I never remember to have slept more comfortably. You would smile if I were to tell you that my very dreams were refreshing; but it is absolutely true.

The next morning at breakfast, my father was so very kind in his behaviour, that he greatly distressed me. I would have given the universe that his command had been such as I *could*—such as I *ought* to have obeyed. But, my dear cousins, *was* it possible a compliance to his dreadful edict could have the least place in my contemplation! He was called out, and, for a few moments, left me to myself, when I again looked into my heart to see if duty demanded the sacrifice; but a strong negative immediately stopped the investigation. My father returned, and I once more endeavoured, by the most gentle means, to soften his determination; intreating his compassion in the most persuasive language; accent, and manner I was capable of using; but he started into a fury, and, by the immediate change, convinced me his prior tenderness was, in some degree, assumed; probably, to soften me to his measures. My father left the room with a menacing brow; telling me he should dine with Lord Crumpford; and bidding me avoid his presence till a sense of my duty produced obedience.

I was now more strongly determined; as I found no dependance could be placed upon the hope of my father's relenting in the moment of my danger and distress, as I had sometimes fondly imagined.

To pass over immaterial circumstances—the evening arrived; the coach was ready; Mrs. Thompson attended, and I was driven to her house about half after six; from whence, in another coach, she went with me to the Dover-mail; in which, a place having been secured, I took my seat, and the next morning found myself in the desired port. I was excessively fatigued, but having intelligence that a vessel, called the Ceres, was just going under sail for Calais, I entered immediately, and as soon as I was on board, wrote to my father; the copy of which letter I inclose for Mr. Maynard's perusal, that he may know how to proceed in the negotiation I am impatient to have him commence.

And now, as I am not *absolutely* mistress of my time, and as, therefore, something may occur to prevent my finishing the whole of my narrative in time for your receiving it upon your immediate arrival, I will conclude, and send this my first scribble by the next post.

Harriet—my dear Harriet! I long to see you. Write to me the first possible moment. You will remember and direct to Maria Birtles, Alverston Park, Derbyshire.

Tell Augustus, his prognostication that I kept not my heart a twelvemonth after you left England, was not verified.

“And have you, Caroline, *really* preserved it your own till this period?”

Do not be too inquisitive. That question varies from the point.

“Ah, Caroline!”

And ah, Harriet! It cannot now be helped. Heigh-ho! But I hope the case is not desperate.

Give my love to Mr. Maynard, and trust me that I continue his and yours with unabated fervency, notwithstanding the depredations which may possibly have been made upon my affection.
CAROLINE PEMBERTON.

LETTER, VIII.

LADY CAROLINE PEMBERTON, TO MRS.
MAYNARD.
(In Continuation.)

March 10th.

I Last night, my dearest Harriet, dispatched to you the first part of my secret history; therefore, as that letter and this will probably be both put into your hands at the same time, it is an even chance which of the two you first unfold. If this should obtain the preference, lay it aside, and let the other have its due precedency, or you will not know what you are reading about.

I left myself on board a little inconvenient vessel named the Ceres; the captain, as he was called, of which was good-natured and civil; though not without a tincture of the roughness of a British sailor. His name was Warder. There were two more female passengers, and several gentlemen; one amongst the latter, who was made the means of my now existing.

The captain intended to sail in about an hour after I went on board, but the wind continued contrary all the day. At ten at night he put off a little, and went about a league, but was then obliged to drop anchor, [you see I have learned the technical terms] and continue stationary all that night and the next day, there being a perfect calm. I found myself rather sick, but hoped, as I was no worse, I should weather the voyage, as the phrase is, tolerably well, without considering that as the vessel was perfectly still, there was no cause for my being otherwise than well, except the perturbation of my spirits. However, as I did not labour under a sense of having acted wrong on the occasion which fixed me in that situation, I was tolerably composed: and, indeed, I should be highly ungrateful were I to forbear saying that I was sensible of very great support through the whole of this—in itself—afflicting event.

About eight o'clock on the Saturday evening the wind arose, very strong from the South-East. This set the vessel into a violent motion; it being, you know, contrary to our course; which brought upon me so extreme a fit of sickness that I thought every moment must be my last; it being attended with an excruciating pain in my stomach. A most terrible storm indeed now came on: all hands were called upon deck, and I was left upon the cabin floor.

What language shall I use to describe the horrors of that period! None that I am versed in can give the least adequate idea of the scene which ensued. Some of the particulars I was sensible of at the time; of the rest I was afterwards informed.

In the little cooking place upon deck called, I think, the caboose, were two sailors; the one

lame; the other (an apprentice just entered) extremely sick: these two poor creatures, caboose, and all the boats, were swept over-board, in one dark moment, by the violent rush of an immense wave that almost overwhelmed the vessel, which all this time lay nearly flat on one side.

I was entirely drenched in water, for by the inexcusable negligence of the carpenter, the dead-lights were not to be found; the sea, therefore, poured in at the cabin-windows in torrents, while the cups and glasses were tumbling about my head. Thus I lay, hour after hour, in total darkness; cries and shrieks echoing from every corner. At length the morning broke, when the storm, if possible, increased; and this continued till twelve o'clock on the Sunday night, when the repeated cry of "*all lost!*" made me hope the end of my distresses was at hand. The main and foremasts were broken and gone over-board; almost all the rigging was lost, and it was thought the vessel had sprung a leak; which, however, proved to be a mistake.

But what am I thinking of, thus to terrify you by this description!

Suffice it, that another morning appeared, when it was found we were within view of land; but no one on board could tell upon what coast we were; for during the storm, which, I ought before to have said began now to cease, the wind had shifted to every point in the compass, and we were driven to and fro. However, it was soon discovered we were within sight of Seaford in Sussex, but the wind was still blowing pretty brisk from the North, which made it be apprehended we should not be able to reach the shore.

About seven o'clock, my kind friend, before-mentioned, whose name I cannot now recollect, but which I have in a memorandum-book that I left in London, came down to see what was become of us females, when he found me in the condition I have described. He instantly called the steward, who, though the frightfullest black man I ever beheld, was one of the most humane and tender creatures existing. They raised me up between them, for I was utterly incapable of the least motion, and carried me to a bench, upon which they seated me, and pressed, as much as they could, the water from my clothes. My kind friend then left me, for a few moments, to the care of the steward, who, I had just sense enough to know, supported me in his arms, while he went to see if either of the ladies could give me any assistance. They had been so fortunate as to get upon their beds, and had suffered no personal inconvenience, save that of being violently rocked from side to side. They were then perfectly well, and were got together, "making themselves," as they said, "*fit to be seen;*" till when, they told him, they could not do me any service. My friend was so offended with what he termed their inhumanity, that he left them in disgust, and returned to me, when asking the good steward for a blanket, he divested me, with the greatest decency, of my upper garments; wrapped me in it, and conveyed me to bed; after which, he made me drink a rich and strong cordial, and that threw me almost immediately into a very sound sleep, which continued till one o'clock, when I was awakened by a shout of gladness, occasioned, as I was soon informed, by the arrival of two boats from the Seaford coast, from whence the signals of our distress had been observed by some gentlemen who were walking along the shore; for we lay near a mile sideways of the town, or we must sooner have been perceived.

My friendly attendant now came to my bed-side to see if I was able to be dressed, when he observed, with evident pleasure, the happy effects of his kindness; for I could raise myself without assistance, and at last made shift to put on some fresh clothes, which, very fortunately, had been

preserved from the water; but the box which contained them was the only part of my luggage I could find. Several trunks and large parcels had been thrown over-board to lighten the vessel: probably mine were amongst the number, for I never afterwards could gain any intelligence of any thing belonging to me. In one of the trunks which I lost, I had packed the five hundred pounds I received from Mr. Galliard, which I had requested him to let me have in cash; as I thought I might meet with some trouble in exchanging bills. However this loss did not give me one moment's concern. *We were saved*—and I had clothes to go ashore in; a few guineas in my purse, and about seventy pounds in bank notes, in my pocket-book.

Gratitude now took entire possession of my soul. The sense of the great deliverance almost overwhelmed me; and it never, I hope, will be erased from my remembrance.

As soon as we were ready, we were put into one of the boats, and rowed to Seaford. It was about three o'clock when we reached the shore, which was lined with spectators. I immediately asked if a carriage could be had, and was soon accommodated with one that conveyed us (for I offered seats to the two ladies and my kind friend) to the head inn, where, ordering a fire in a chamber, and sending for a physician, I soon went to bed; neither of the insensible women offering me the least assistance, though I was then greatly indisposed.

The doctor, upon hearing the cause of my illness, ordered me some strengthening medicines, and desired me to take as much nourishing diet as possible; telling me I had more occasion for that than for physic. I was much pleased with this good gentleman, and asked him to recommend me to a nurse who could continue with me, during my stay at Seaford. He told me he would, and, within half an hour after he left me, a very matronly woman was brought to attend me.

I now seemed very comfortable, and soon after my nurse's arrival, sent to beg the favor of seeing my kind fellow-passenger, whom I requested to dispose of some money from me to the good steward and amongst the sailors.

After this, I took my medicines and went to sleep, and next morning found myself so much recovered, that I arose and wrote to you an account of my late disasters and present safety, and of my being necessitated to lay aside all ideas of another voyage; having neither clothes nor money sufficient for that purpose. I then wrote to Chesnut Manor; giving Miss Warburton a succinct account of my distresses, and entreated *her* father's protection, till my own could be brought to dispense with the hard conditions he had annexed to my duty.

For an answer to this letter, I waited four days at Seaford (having procured inconvenient lodgings in the house of a cousin of my nurse's) with extreme impatience, and on the fifth, received the reply which I mean to inclose. You will read it at this place, and then will not wonder at the effect the great unkindness of it had upon my spirits, so much, before, oppressed! The only favor which she granted me was, as you will see, a promise of the required secrecy.

It is not in the compass of words to describe the surprise and grief I experienced upon this occasion.

But I will draw a veil over the period; as it would only give distress both to you and myself

to describe the many painful days I afterwards spent at Seaford. Yet I confess them to have been the most profitable I ever lived through. It was there I was first taught to know, truly, the little dependance that can, with safety, be placed on the strongest human hope. It was there I was first led to rely *entirely* on the great FATHER of the Human Race. It was there I was convinced He was indeed my Guide, and that I must not look for help from any mortal creature. *At first*, I seemed to be forsaken both by GOD and man; but the brightness which afterwards broke in upon my mind, was like the sun gilding the sky in a fine summer's evening, after a dismal tempest; every dark cloud being chased away, and a sweet calm taking place of the horrors of the storm.

To the Almighty GOD alone did I then look for strength and assistance; and in HIM found all I wanted. My mind was refreshed in a manner I cannot describe.

From Seaford I proceeded to London; and ordered my stages so as to reach Mrs. Thompson's (to whom I had previously written) about six o'clock, where I was received by her and nurse with tears of joy, and by her good husband with every token of respectful affection. Their best bed-chamber, which is really a decent room, was got in perfect order for my reception; of that I took possession; and in that little abode experienced real tranquillity. However, I dared not to think of continuing there, as I must either totally have confined myself, or have hazarded being discovered. The first would have been detrimental to my health; the other, to my happiness. I therefore determined to disguise myself in humble garments, and take lodgings in some country place.

But as I have still a considerable deal to say, I will here conclude this letter, and begin afresh after Lady Stanley is retired to rest. Farewell.

C.P.

LETTER, IX.
LADY CAROLINE PEMBERTON, TO MRS.
MAYNARD.
(In Continuation.)

LADY Stanley is not well. She retired early. I am therefore sole mistress of the present hour, by the side of a good fire, in a pleasant apartment, destined to my use during my continuance in this really magnificent mansion.

“And are you then known to be the daughter of the Earl of Danvers? I thought your highest distinction had been *Mrs. Maria Birtles!*”

Have patience, my good cousins. All in due time. I have a variety of circumstances to acquaint you with before I lay aside my pen.

“Ah! Caroline—that love affair!”

We are not, Harriet, coming to that yet. I must first take a view—an unpleasant one — of what passed at Berkeley-Square after I left it.

By Mrs. Thompson’s means I was informed that poor Jenny was still exceedingly lame; having, through carelessness, caught a violent cold, which settled into her ankle; but that, however, she was, it was hoped, in a way to do well.

She told Mrs. Thompson (who sometimes went to speak to her when my father was from home; he not giving permission for her to enter the house, as she and nurse were suspected of facilitating my escape) that his Lordship was in a most tremendous passion when it was first intimated that I was not to be found.

Mrs. Dickerson, our new housekeeper, is a favourite with my father’s valet-de-chambre, and as Mr. Dupre is an almost continual attendant upon his master, very few things happen in the family with which he is not in some measure acquainted. Through Mrs. Dickerson, therefore, Jenny gained a considerable deal of intelligence.

It seems my father did not return home on the Wednesday night till several hours after I had left the house. Taking it therefore, I suppose, for granted, that I was in bed, he made no enquiry for me. The next morning he arose very early, and about eight o’clock, Lord Crumpford; a clergyman, and another gentleman—probably the lawyer—were driven to the door, and ushered into the library; where they continued some time in conversation with my father, who at nine o’clock ordered me to be called. It was then that the storm began. I tremble at the recollection. The idea of my dear father’s displeasure pains me beyond expressing.

Dupre was the messenger. After an absence of a few minutes he returned with—“Lady Caroline, my Lord, is not at home.”

“Not at home?” interrogated my father, “then order her to be sent for immediately. Whither is she gone?”

Dupre went out to make enquiries; his second return gave information that I had not been at home since the evening before.

My father began to look wild; Lord Crumpford groaned, it seems, sat down; repeated the word *dammed*—and slapped his hand upon his forehead; the parson and the other man staring with surprize.

Jenny was ordered to attend.

Jenny was ill in bed.

It was a lie, my father swore. “Ill; dying; dead, bring her hither this instant.”

It was confirmed that Jenny could not be moved.

You have often rallied me upon the apparent affection of all our domestics, which now was of the greatest service to me; for had they given all the circumstances within their knowledge, my father might, possibly, have collected sufficient light to have pursued me before I had been secured from his authority.

Mrs. Dickerson was summoned; but Mrs. Dickerson could give no other information than had been given before.

“Lady Caroline went out between six and seven last evening; and we have sat up all night, every minute expecting her coming home”—was the sum of her evidence.

“Perhaps”—intimated the supposed lawyer—“she went to a play: Possibly some misfortune.”—

This set my father upon a different kind of enquiry. Who saw me go out? Who attended me? In what was I dressed?—were questions I wonder he did not ask sooner; but it is evident that my having escaped the intended persecution, was the first idea he entertained upon hearing that I was gone from home.

The porter was summoned—“At what time did Caroline go out last night?”

“Between six and seven, my Lord!”

“Who attended her?”

“She went without an attendant, my Lord,” said Jones; after his ceremonious manner.

“Without an attendant!—In what was she dressed?”

“She was *all in black*, my Lord.”

“*In black!* What does the fellow mean!”

“*Indeed*, an’t please your Lordship, she was in black; and I wondered what was the matter.”

Jones was right. I chose a mourning dress as convenient for the occasion.

“Did she not order a carriage?” proceeded my father.

“No, my Lord; she left the house on foot.”

“Which way did she turn?”

“She turned to the right, my Lord; and I thought went in at Lady Stebbing’s.”

Lady Stebbing was sent to. She had not seen me. Messengers were then dispatched to every place where it was the least probable information could be given, and to those who were the evening before at public entertainments; but no intelligence could be procured.

The return of every messenger with a negative, drove my dear father into repeated fits of fury. But I wish to close this day’s scene. Yet one ensued which was, if possible, still worse; the receipt of my letter, sent, as I told you, by the return of the mail, confirming my father’s suppositions of my escape. At first, it seems, he determined to pursue me to France; but soon laid aside the intention, leaving me, he said, to my destiny. Since that time he has not been much in London; therefore I cannot learn any thing of his present sentiments.

Poor Jenny is quite distressed about me; and would, doubtless, be made happy by the information of my return; but I think it would not be right to let her know any thing of what has happened. The belief of my having left the kingdom is so firmly established, that no one, now, will think of searching for me in England; whereas if the least syllable of the truth were to transpire, such an enquiry might be set on foot as I should find it hard to elude. Sir John and Miss Warburton; nurse Pooley; Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, are the only people intrusted with the knowledge of my return. Therefore, as I think I am at present tolerably safe, it surely would be wrong to run any unnecessary hazard.

Jenny told Mrs. Thompson several letters directed for me had arrived at Berkley-Square: amongst the rest, one from you, which my father opened, (as I suppose he did all the rest) and found you were upon the point of leaving Ostend. — This, it seems, alarmed him for my safety, and he again declared a resolution to pursue me; which resolution, like the former—Jenny knew not why—soon subsided.

You will now return with me to Mrs. Thompson’s, where I have told you I did not think it eligible to continue, therefore determined upon country lodgings; but before I put my plan in execution, Mrs. Thompson was sent for by Mrs. Douglas, of Grosvenor-Square, to take orders about a gown she was making for her, who (the time Mrs. Thompson was there) received a letter from

Miss Stanley, with an enquiry after a young woman that once lived with her as a servant; Miss Stanley wishing to have her supply the place of one she was going to part with. This letter Mrs. Douglas read to a young lady—her niece I believe—who sat in the room at work, and from what passed, Mrs. Thompson found the young woman enquired for, was married. A conversation now opened between the two ladies upon the Stanley family; who Mrs. Thompson observed, seemed, by the character given them by Mrs. Douglas, to be all angels. Miss Stanley, the old lady said, was, she believed, one of the best and most amiable young women upon earth; and, indeed, I have, since that time, found Mrs. Douglas' opinion of her to be a just one.

When Mrs. Thompson, at her return, recited the particulars of this conversation, I was instantly struck with a thought—a whimsical one you will say—of offering myself to attend Miss Stanley in the capacity of lady's-maid; and the more I considered of it, the more eligible the idea appeared.

That you may not think my late adventures had infected me with the spirit of romance—attend a little to my situation at that juncture.

The intention of continuing with Mrs. Thompson had given way, as I told you, to considerations of health and privacy. Good as my constitution is, you know I was always made ill when debarred of air and exercise; neither of which, as I before said, could I enjoy without hazarding a discovery. Country lodgings, therefore, I had determined upon, and meant to enquire about that very day in which Mrs. Thompson attended Mrs. Douglas. My finances were slender—the time of your return uncertain—the resource I looked for from the Warburtons, shut up—In short, I thought an asylum in so respectable a family would, upon future investigation, best secure my reputation in the eye of the world, and likewise prevent my being under any embarrassment for want of money. The *business* of an attendant to such a young lady as Miss Stanley was represented to be, would, I conjectured, be only an agreeable amusement to one who always loved employment, and whose prospects were not so lively as to make rumination entertaining; and I fancied myself tolerably well qualified to execute such an office to the satisfaction of my patroness. Mrs. Thompson burst into tears when I mentioned my design. Nurse was, likewise, very uneasy; but I laughed away their scruples, and, at length, silenced their objections.

Ordering, therefore, a coach to be called, I dispatched Mrs. Thompson to Grosvenor-Square, desiring her to tell Mrs. Douglas she had, at that time, under her care a young woman—Maria Birtles her name—who would think herself very happy in the protection of the Alverston family. That she had been genteelly brought up under the care of an excellent aunt; after whose death she found herself in distressed circumstances; having some years before lost her mother; and her father—formerly an officer in the guards—more inattentive to her happiness than it were to be wished.

Except the fictitious name—not one syllable was here that deviated from the strictest truth. Mrs. Thompson added her own encomiums upon my character and abilities, and finished with saying the terms of my retention would be left entirely to Miss Stanley.

With this description, Mrs. Douglas, whose benevolence led her to wish to be of universal service, was so well satisfied, that she desired to see me as soon as possible. It was then settled that I

should wait upon her the morning following, when dressing myself in some of my late-bought humble garments—the top of my finery being a pale pink silk gown and white petticoat—I took a coach, and, with Mrs. Thompson, was driven to Grosvenor-Square, where I was introduced to Mrs. Douglas as she sat at breakfast.

To finish my account of this business as soon as possible—the good lady was so super-abundantly satisfied with me and my character—given by Mrs. Thompson—that she immediately wrote the strongest recommendation of me to Miss Stanley; shewing Mrs. Thompson what she had written; the consequence of which was, my being, the next week, whirled down, in the Derby mail, to Alverston Park.

Had I leisure, I would give you a description of this beautiful situation; which, certainly, is one of the most enchanting spots in the universe: but this must be deferred till some future opportunity.

My reception at Alverston was pleasing beyond expression. Never, in the days of my prosperity, was I introduced into a family so perfectly amiable. Sir Edward Stanley is a phenomenon. I never before saw the steadiness and respectability of years so happily blended with the cheerfulness of youth. He has been, and indeed still is, extremely handsome. In his temper there is a generous warmth, which makes his conversation pleasing past idea. His principles are unsullied. Charity and generosity have made his heart one of their mansions; while true courage, mercy and tenderness, are so inseparably united with his nature, that he must cease to exist when they are extinguished from his breast. This charming veteran, who never stirs abroad without receiving marks of almost adoration, has the most lively penetrating blue eye you can imagine; is an adept in every science, and, likewise, such an ingenious mechanic, that he sees, in an instant, how every machine which he hears talked of, must be constructed. I often sit and listen to him with the greatest admiration.

Lady Stanley is a wife exactly calculated for such a husband. Her person is truly elegant, and her face still descriptive of beauty. Her understanding is exalted; her judgment particularly excellent. Her disposition is sweetness itself, *enlivened*, as I may say, by a little aptitude to passion; which, however, she so corrects that one can but just perceive she has it in her temper. It seldom has any other effect upon those about her than to make them smile; which, indeed, she encourages, by smiling herself the moment she is sensible of having spoken with quickness. Her *delicacy* is the most *genuine* I ever observed, and compassion beams from every feature of her face.

On the day which compleated her twenty-fourth year, was this amiable woman (then Miss Henrietta Wilbraham) married to Sir Edward Stanley; since which time this accomplished pair have lived in the highest harmony, but not without experiencing considerable affliction in the death, or premature birth, of several children during the first years of their marriage. Miss Stanley, now about twenty-one, is the youngest of six that were born alive.

The chief of these particulars I gathered from Mrs. Moore, a worthy gentlewoman of scarce any fortune, who attends—or rather *did* attend, for she is now very ill—upon Lady Stanley.

I would hasten to give you some description of the darling daughter of this respectable

house, but from a consciousness that I cannot do the subject justice. When I was first received by her at Mrs. Biddle's, a mantua-maker in Derby, I seemed as if I had met with a long-lost beloved sister. Never before did I see a woman so fascinating. Her eyes; her air; her manner; her conversation, full of fire, duly tempered by the softest and most winning affability. As to her person—she is one of the most beautiful women I ever beheld. Her understanding is equal to any thing in nature. Her temper above praise: no wonder she is almost idolized by all ranks of people.

When she first saw me, she looked with apparent surprize; and though she was perfectly familiar, treated me with such distinction, that I began to forget the character I had assumed, and to listen for the sound of Lady Caroline.

She took me with her in her chaise from Derby to Alverston. During the little journey we had a great deal of conversation upon various subjects. After I had been giving my sentiments on a late new comedy, with rather more freedom, I fancy, than became my situation—"It is well, Maria," said she, "you brought me a letter from Mrs. Douglas, or I should have suspected you had been some person of distinction in disguise"—adding, with a lively air—"Why your sentiments, child, would do honor to a peeress."

At this I blushed very deeply; not, as *she* must naturally conclude, at the height of the compliment; but, as *you* will readily conjecture, from consciousness.

"Do not blush, Maria," said the charming girl; "I will not pain your modesty; therefore I suppress my opinion."

When we reached Alverston she presented me to Lady Stanley; telling her, at the same time, in Italian, that she had found a wonder. At this—fool that I was—my face and neck were all in a glow. She then looked at me with a smiling penetration—"Italian too, my good girl!" said she. "French—I could allow you. But come, we shall understand you better by and by."

My father, madam, I replied, is an adept in Italian. I did not always live with him, but I saw him, sometimes, at my aunt's, and he would, now and then, give himself a little trouble in instructing me.

How fortunate that this was true. How else could I, with any consistency, have accounted for my information?

I must suppress the sequel of my tale till I see you; when you, I know, will take pleasure in hearing by what gradations I rose to my present distinction in this family, where I am now upon the footing of a companion, and that *not* an humble one, to Lady Stanley, during the absence of her daughter, who has been some time at Woodstock with Miss Lawson; the young lady with whose amiable manners we were so much pleased when she was introduced to us at Tunbridge.

When I first came to Alverston, it was expected the lovely Emma would soon be married to our old Weymouth friend, Sir Charles Conway. I had heard this before I came into Derbyshire; but it never occurred to my recollection till I arrived at my journey's end, and I had not ventured the chance of his recognizing me. However, as it was some time since he saw me, I hoped my dress and

situation would be my security, should I ever meet with him, which I thought it probable I might never do, as my station would authorize retirement; for at my first coming I did not think of being treated as I now am. Nor did I wish it. For some time I earnestly contended to act in the capacity I had entered upon; but all in this family seem so assured I was not born to servitude, that I am obliged to accept the distinctions they are determined to pay me; of which, and of Miss Stanley's agreeable offer of a cordial friendship, I will tell you more when we meet. All I will add is, that I was obliged to be a little peremptory in declining to eat at their table: my motive was an apprehension of there meeting with company to whom I might not be unknown. Lady Stanley sometimes permits me, her own woman being, as I before observed, at this time very ill, to assist her in dressing, &c. and in instructing in the business of a lady's-maid, a pretty, docile, little girl, who, if she proves tractable, will, I believe, be taken in that capacity by either Lady or Miss Stanley; as poor Mrs. Moore is not likely to get well again, and I am positively rejected, though I have earnestly requested, and that for a variety of reasons, a continuance *in* my servitude. The last time I mentioned it to Lady Stanley, she silenced me at once; telling me she should reproach herself while she lived, were she to permit a person of my appearance and qualifications [high compliments, cousin] to live with her as a servant. She gave me at the same time, as from Sir Edward, a thirty pound note; which I was obliged to accept, but shall lay by to return some time hence; desiring me to equip myself with such apparel as Emma, at her return, would wish to *see a friend of her's* appear in.

What true generosity of soul runs through this family, Harriet!

It has, as I told you, been some time expected that Miss Stanley would, ere long, be Lady Conway.

What the matter is, I cannot yet exactly say; but the dear Emma told me it was all over, and owned to me her distress upon the occasion; adding—she wished to tell me all, but dare not. She dare not, she said, even tell her mother. She was promise-bound, and *must* be secret, though the task was *very heavy*. It was on this account that she suddenly left Alverston; and, I find, all the family are greatly dissatisfied with what has happened. For my part, I cannot help ardently wishing a reconciliation may take place between this, at present, separated couple; for I think they seem exactly calculated for each other. We all, you know, agreed Sir Charles Conway was one of the most amiable men we had ever seen; and that he was the life of our Weymouth party.

How long Miss Stanley will stay at Woodstock, I know not. She greatly obliged me last week by a most agreeable letter, which I answered immediately. If she does not return soon, it is probable she will never again see Maria Birtles; but I hope she, some time hence, will think *her friend* Caroline Pemberton an equivalent for the loss of her waiting-maid.

I am impatient to be with you, but will wait Mr. Maynard's advice how to proceed, before I leave Derbyshire.

Having now brought you down to the present period, I think I will conclude this my last packet in the narrative way; or have you, Augustus, any questions to ask, before I finish?

“Why, yes, Caroline, I want to know if Sir Edward and Lady Stanley have no other child living than the amiable daughter you have been talking about.”

And pray, sir, why do you ask *that* particular question? Suppose they *have* a son—What then? Does it follow that I—Ah, my cousins! I doubt, I doubt—shall I own it? Come; yes, I will. I will confess that if my father, instead of Lord Crumpford, had proposed Mr. Stanley, I should not—have ran away from him. That is all. What a wonderful reputation should I have had, in such a case, for implicit obedience to parental authority! an absolute pattern of submission to all the girls of the age. *Because my father had commanded*—I, probably, should have been brought to accept of one of the most—what shall I say about him, Harriet, to express what he is, that will not, to my sarcastical kinsman, sound like the partiality of a simple girl in love? One of the most—*what?* I cannot find a fit phrase; therefore summon to your idea a very fine figure of a man, endowed with an uncommon understanding; of a most excellent disposition, though rather too impetuous; a sparkling wit, with finished erudition; then call him George Stanley, and you will have the person; the mind, and the name of the man who has—it would be a folly to deny it—stolen the heart of my father's daughter; and that, I greatly fear, beyond retrieve. How all this came about, and what reason I have to suppose my swain is caught in the same net, must be the subject of some future conversation.

A few evnings back, I found myself in a very whimsical situation, through which I scarce knew how to conduct myself.

An old Mr. Slayton, of Oakley-Hill, a few miles from Mansfield, a relation to the Wilbraham family, was one of Mr. Stanley's godfathers; and, I believe, means to present him with a very handsome sum of money—if I understand aright, a hundred thousand pounds—provided he marries with his approbation. This gentleman came last week to Alverston, in his way to London, and was introduced into Lady Stanley's dressing-room, while she and I sat there at work. It was after tea. Sir Edward was not at home. Mr. Stanley came up with him. For some time the conversation ran on trifling subjects, but at length, according, as it seems, to his custom, Mr. Slayton began upon matrimony, and who should, in my presence, be talked of to Mr. Stanley as a wife, but myself! Do not mistake—not me, as Maria Birtles, but as Caroline Pemberton. Never before was I so overwhelmed with confusion. I absolutely thought I should have fainted; the throbbing of my heart being so great, that it made me quite sick. Fortunately the old squire's broad shoulders, behind which I screened myself, prevented my embarrassment from being observed; otherwise, some strange construction must have been drawn from my emotion.

I must forcibly tear my pen from the paper, or I shall scribble over half a ream. Never did I know where to stop when writing to you, and the last subject *is not quite exhausted*.

Seriously, my dear cousins, as you have now the whole of my situation before you, I request you to advise me, and to manage for me, as your judgment directs; depending upon my approbation of your sentence. Let me hear from you immediately: yet I shall tremble when I see your letter, on account of the expected information of my dear father's displeasure. I think you must not tell me if he is *very* angry; and yet you *must*; for except I am assured I know all, I shall be distressed by my own suppositions.

Farewell. I will not add another line.
CAROLINE PEMBERTON.

LETTER, X.

COL. GREVILLE, TO GEORGE STANLEY, ESQ.

Pall-Mall, March 10th, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

ABOUT five days since, I had the pleasure of seeing, in Portland-Place, our friend Sir Charles Conway; but my satisfaction on the occasion received considerable abatement, from the apparent lowness of his spirits. His dress told me he did not mourn the death of any body, or, by the solemnity of his manner, I should have concluded the existence of some beloved friend had been just terminated. He is no longer the lively—the gay companion we mutually have held in admiration. My concern for his happiness led to enquiries that produced answers which unfolded the cause; when my wonder changed its subject. I was no more surprised at his dejection of spirits. *Such* a deprivation happening to me, would, I honestly confess, have extinguished not only all my hope of happiness, but my whole portion of reason: for as the felicity he formerly enjoyed, was, in my opinion, the highest any man could experience upon earth, the loss of it must, consequently, be the greatest degree of torment. My wonder, therefore, when I learned the occasion of his melancholy, was, that he was not still more deeply afflicted. Such a woman as Emma Stanley!—Heavens and earth! who would not exchange every other species of bliss for that one of calling her his!

Another part of my amazement was what could occasion the rupture between a pair seemingly so affectionately attached to each other. That the primary cause of blame rested with Sir Charles, I not one moment hesitated to pronounce: for that Miss Stanley would not—*could* not have capriciously dissolved such an engagement, is an immovable article of my creed.

The sum total is—the affair is concluded; never, most likely, to be revived.

And now how shall I summon sufficient courage to enter upon the only purport of my letter! My hand trembles while it obeys the dictates of my heart.

Were the greatest monarch upon the habitable globe to pretend to merit the hand of Miss Stanley, he ought to be punished for his presumption, as it is impossible for any human being to deserve a jewel so inestimable. How then dare I breathe a wish to call her mine! Yet that I would contemptuously spurn at diadems, if put in competition with her yielding hand, is a truth which has long, long been fatal to my felicity. I have endeavoured to consider her as so absolutely united to Sir Charles Conway, that it would have been criminal to have even wished a dissolution of the engagement; but no ideal representation could silence the whispers of my heart, which always told me she was absolutely necessary to my ever knowing happiness; nor could I prevent my envy from resting upon a man blessed with Miss Stanley's favor.

Convinced of the true nobleness of mind which inspires every individual of the Alverston family—shall I mention the present disparity of my fortune to that which your sister is already in possession of? Shall I imagine myself to stand so low in your opinion, as to suppose it necessary to

disclaim every view of a mercenary tendency? No; I will not. Neither will I, to lessen, in appearance, my presumption, dwell upon the nobility of my ancestry and present connexions; nor upon the expectation of reversionary riches!

The whole of this great business I commit, my dear friend, to your management. Favor me with your interest, and oblige me with three lines by to-morrow's post, to tell me I have not presumed too much upon the experienced generosity of your soul; which, great as I have often been convinced it is, my timidity, on the present occasion, tells me may be offended by this enormous intrusion.

Some times I am apprehensive of being too early in the disclosure of my sentiments; but my fear that delay should give an opportunity for some more resolute, and perhaps less-truly adoring presumer to succeed, impels me to urge to you my wishes; leaving the time and manner of further proceedings to your friendly direction.

On the greatly interesting subject, I will not now say any more; and after it, what can to me appear of consequence? Nothing—but the pleasure I take in seeing my name witnessing an avowal of the respect and affection with which I have the honor to be,

My dear sir,

your obliged

and devoted

ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, XI.

MR. STANLEY, TO COLONEL GREVILLE.

Alverston, March 11th, Wednesday evening.

DEAR SIR,

YOUR letter has this instant reached me. As you desire, I answer it directly, though it cannot go by this day's post; that having been gone through some time back.

I write—not only at your request, but that I may shut the subject from my thoughts as soon as possible.

You mistake, Colonel—greatly mistake the point in question. My sister—whom on this occasion I could almost renounce—is the only culpable person concerned. Sir Charles Conway's conduct is absolutely unimpeachable. It ever was, and will remain so. Justice, and my affection for my friend, which is at war with that for my sister, obliges me to give this testimony.

The caprice of woman—heard you never of this inherent quality in the sex?—is the only known cause of Emma Stanley's rendering wretched the very man on earth most calculated to make her happy. To your success I shall not oppose any thing; but you, and every one who may think me a proper person to apply to on such an occasion, must excuse my declining taking any concern in her

future choice.

Whomever she thinks proper for her husband, I shall, doubtless, consider as my brother; though if she elects with no more judgment than she has discarded, I shall blush at my relation.

Colonel do not mistake me. If she chuses you, you will not have any reason to complain of my want of cordial wishes for your mutual happiness. Had not my sister's unaccountable *excentricity* so highly offended me, as to make me determine never more to give my voice in such an election, I would have espoused your cause with all due fervency. As it is, I repeat you must excuse me; still, however believing me to be

Your affectionate friend,
GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XII.

COLONEL GREVILLE, TO SIR EDWARD
STANLEY.

Pall-Mall, March 13th.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE many instances of friendship I have received from all your family, give me hope you will indulgently listen to the request I am now presuming to make to you. It is of a very aspiring nature, and flattered as I always have been by your too high sense of an action which was nothing more than an office of common humanity, I am almost apprehensive you will think me too presuming when I tell you that my hope is to take from you, and that with the joint consent of your house, the rescued and inestimable jewel of your family.

The moment of my being assured Miss Stanley was at liberty from her late engagement, my wishes, before too unrestrainable, beat high to call her mine. For some days I hesitated; unable to summon sufficient resolution to dare the attempt: but equally unable to silence the importunities of a heart ever devoted to that most charming of women, I wrote, on Tuesday last, to Mr. Stanley, who obligingly gave me an immediate answer; but on account of his intimacy with Sir Charles Conway, declined taking any active part in the affair. To you, therefore, and to Lady Stanley, I make my appeal, and presume to hope for your concurrence with my wishes.

To delineate the circumscribed limits of my present fortune, would, on several accounts, be an affront to you. The first reason of my forbearance arises from a knowledge of the true nobleness of soul which so particularly distinguishes all of your name; my next—because you are as perfectly acquainted with the state of my finances as I am myself; you, likewise, well know the reasonableness of my expectations of reversionary riches and other distinctions. The promises I have received—not only from the minister, but from the king himself—give me a hope of being able to place Miss Stanley in a sphere not unworthy her distinguished merits. Of the sincerity and ardency of the affection I have long entertained for her, I could write volumes; but of this, I trust you will not entertain one doubt, as it must be a matter of easy belief, that a man, honored as I have been by her

avowed sentiments of regard (to which, from the effusions of a mind too sensible of what she termed an obligation, she gave the appellation of gratitude) should conceive a tender prepossession *for such a woman*; though the idea of her predilection for another, kept down, in some measure, the rising wish of being *the happy first* in her affection.

With you, my dear Sir Edward, and with Lady Stanley, I now implicitly rest the affair which must constitute or destroy all the felicity this world can afford me; subscribing myself in the language of truth,

Your greatly obliged,
respectful, and
obedient servant,
ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, XIII.

COLONEL GREVILLE, TO THE HONOURABLE
MRS. DIGBY.

Pall-Mall, March 13th.

YOUR letter, my dear cuz, without a date, informing me of your safe arrival at the intended scene of action, reached me, a few days back, at Lord Farnham's; and that dated Yarmouth, March the eleventh, I received yesterday. To the first I did not reply, because you sent me no address;—what, I wonder, were you thinking of when you wrote that letter!—To be sure it might be supposed that a cover directed to so celebrated a character as that of *the Honorable Mrs. Digby*, would have found its way to your hands, all over the king's dominions; yet what I was then in the humour to have written, was not to be hazarded to the *possibility* of a miscarriage.

Do you not know from experience, Bella, that the old observation of every thing's being made more dear by the difficulty of obtaining it, is most unquestionably true? Myself I acknowledge to be a melancholy proof of its verity, on the subject of our late—or, if you please, of *your* late, dexterous manoeuvring. While Miss Stanley was *in danger* of being Lady Conway, I would have given all the globes in the vast extent of ether, for the chance Sir Charles then had of possessing her—*AND—her fortune*. A mighty convenient thing that last, an't please your ladyship, to a man who has dipped at both ends, (though I believe that is a circumstance not much known) a scanty patrimony: yet no sooner had you, with mighty art, loosened the silken fetters which tied this envied pair, than I found my relish for matrimony, which, let me confess, was never particularly strong, much abated; however my passionate tenderness for “the glittering bait,” continues in full transport. To facilitate, therefore, its gratification, I wrote, a few days back, to George Stanley, who gave me an immediate answer; but neither very polite, nor in the style I expected; for I had ventured to suppose he would have told me that next to his discarded friend, I was the man he wished to call brother: and considering the professions of gratitude which I had so repeatedly heard from all the family, for my heroic preservation of the phoenix from the flames, I do not think this supposition was a very unreasonable one. However it was not realized. The zealous friend of the outed member refused to have any thing to do in a new election. This disappointment stimulated, I believe, my

wishes. I again found myself very much in love; therefore immediately wrote a letter to the father; giving him, as I had done the young one, a gentle hint of the conflagration at Mr. Symond's; intertwining an address to the mother, and throwing myself upon their clemency. If the old don gives me an answer as laconic as that I have received from the heir-apparent, I am determined to besiege the girl herself, without delay; and if *she* refuses me—no more begging and praying: I will, at once, strike a grand stroke; seize my prey, like the monarch of the woods, and secure her from all others of my species.

But this plot is still in petto. I will not yet trust you with even the outlines; but keep, till the word of command shall be given, the why; the how; the when, and the where, in impervious darkness.

Having done with myself—let me talk about you.

Sir Charles is not yet, you say, arrived at Yarmouth; I did not expect to hear he was; as by his conversation, when I saw him in Portland-Place, I found he meant to take a view of the towns and villages upon the coast of Essex and Suffolk. When he left London I know not; for the day after I saw him I went to Windsor, and I was not, at my return, industrious to seek another meeting with him.

My letter, which met you at Mrs. Betterson's, made but slight mention of the Mr. Evelyn who is to accompany your knight in his tour. I have since dined with him at Barclay's, of Reading, in which town his father lives; and I now pronounce him to be one of the most accomplished young Levites I ever saw. I think if you manage right, he may be of use in your designs; as his friendship for Sir Charles will naturally lead him to wish his forgetfulness of *the ungrateful* Emma. This hint I give you, that you may make the most of it.

I cannot but say that I pride myself in your approbation of my managing conversation with Sir Charles Conway. The commendations of MRS. DIGBY—though she is my cousin—so confirm my sentiments, that I am quite elated at the recollection; therefore, in the height of my exaltation I subscribe myself her most respectful

and most obedient servant,
ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, XIV.

SIR EDWARD STANLEY, TO COLONEL
GREVILLE.

Alverston, March 14th.

YOUR letter, my dear sir, reached my hands about an hour since. I directly carried it to Lady Stanley, to consult upon the contents, and we immediately agreed in thinking there is but one answer which can be given to it with propriety.

Sir Charles Conway, as you well know, had not merely our consent to address our daughter, but our warmest wishes for his success. On every account he was the man to whose protection we were desirous to consign her; and it was our expectation, and the expectation of all our friends, that the affair would soon have been happily concluded. It has, however, been proved we were too sanguine; and the disappointment considerably affected us; being an added instance of the instability of human hope; for we were almost presumptuous enough to think nothing could frustrate the felicity we proposed to ourselves in this seemingly eligible union. And now, unwilling as we are to charge Emma with capriciousness, justice to Sir Charles Conway compels us to exonerate him from every degree of blame respecting the termination of this greatly approved engagement. Indeed we blame not any body; for as our dear girl was evidently much distressed; [we mean to be honest with you, Colonel] as we have great reason to believe she had a real predilection for Sir Charles, and as we never had occasion to suspect the goodness of either her head or her heart, we rest the matter on a belief that the whole is the effect of some cause which it is not yet given us to develop. Our answer to your letter, therefore, is, that we are firmly determined not to interfere in any new proposal which shall be made to our daughter; trusting she will not make a choice to our disapprobation. For this resolve, we have several reasons: one of the number is, a consideration for Sir Charles Conway; as we cannot but think his affection for Emma leads him to consider himself as a great sufferer from her very unexpected change of sentiments; though he has too much true goodness to distress us with his complaints. But it is an ill compliment to so finished a character as his is, to suppose a necessity for expatiating upon his merits.

You have now before you, my dear Colonel, our sentiments as plain as simple language can convey them. We wish to be frank and sincere to all the world; particularly to one to whom we shall ever think ourselves under obligation for the preservation of the darling child in question.

Point out some way wherein I can be of use to you; give me some opportunity of serving you. It will afford peculiar happiness to both Lady Stanley and myself to be able to shew a sense of our obligation by something more than language; but till an acceptable method can be found for that purpose, I must content myself with requesting you, my dear sir, to consider me as your ever grateful and affectionate friend,

EDWARD STANLEY.

LETTER, XV.

LADY STANLEY, TO MISS STANLEY.

Alverston, March 14th.

Notwithstanding I this morning dispatched to my dear Emma a large sheet of paper full written, I must again take up my pen to address her. But I will now be as concise as possible.

Inclosed, for your perusal, is a letter from Colonel Greville, with your father's answer to it.

Read them both with attention; consult *your inward mind*, and then form your own conclusion.

I shall be glad to hear from you, when your sentiments are fixed; but do not write hastily.

May GOD Almighty direct my dear child in all her researches for true and lasting happiness.

I forbear to say more than that I am
her anxiously affectionate mother,
HENRIETTA STANLEY.

LETTER, XVI.

COLONEL GREVILLE, TO MISS STANLEY.

Pall-Mall, March 15th.

HAVING been attached to Miss Stanley for a series of years, by ties of a most tender friendship, hardly restraining my wishes for a connexion of a *still more tender* kind, by the belief of her heart's being the property of another, it is not to be wondered at that the moment which informed me she was at liberty to elect, to the first seat in her favor, that fortunate individual to whose petition she would compassionately listen, should give birth to—or, rather, mature—my most ardent aspirations towards that long envied—that most blest of all sublunary distinctions.

I have been accustomed to consider a general at the head of his army as one of the most glorious objects in the creation. But, believe me, madam, he would, when compared with the man of your choice, sink, in my eye, beneath the meanest of those whom he commands.

These are my real sentiments, and with them I offer myself a suppliant—an admiring—an adoring suppliant—for your favor. Riches and titles will soon be laid at your feet. Candidates of the first distinction will crowd to enter the lifts, as soon as it is known you have a preference to bestow. But of these opponents I am not afraid. Riches and titles, with you, madam, have no very powerful charms; else would I dwell upon my considerable expectancies. But you know my reversionary rights; and you know, likewise, I am partly promised a revival of the title of my mother's father.

Excuse me that I mention these matters. I repeat my conviction of their being considered as immaterial to you when put in competition with sincerity and affection; with which qualities I can boast myself to be nobly enriched. In these articles my wealth has been accumulating with rapidity ever since my first acquaintance with the treasures of your mind. Think of then, and pity me for, the torments I have endured in the constant empty wish for a *return*. Not but that I acknowledge my heart has been often elated by instances of your highly valued *friendship*. But what did *that* do for me!—increase the ardency of my wishes for the first share of your *affection*, to almost distraction.

I cannot paint the bitter heart-aches I have endured under the mask of a smile, when I have visited Alverston. Many times have I intended going thither, and then altered my intention; being unable to endure the idea of witnessing the happiness I so greatly envied.

But I will not at this time enlarge upon this head.

I have written to Sir Edward and Mr. Stanley on the interesting subject, and have been favored with letters from both, not prohibitory. Yet they decline interfering; rightly judging they may safely trust to your own discretion; which no one ever saw cause to question.

And now, madam, I will conclude; earnestly requesting a speedy release from that torment of suspense I must necessarily endure till you deign to favor me with a reply: such a one as will, I must presume to hope, open to me a prospect of future happiness.

I am, my dear madam,
your most fervently affectionate,
and truly devoted adorer,
ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, XVII.

COLONEL GREVILLE, TO LORD FITZ-MURRAY.

Pall-Mall, March 15th.

I Rather think I shall, at last, be obliged to adopt your scheme of conquest; which, however, goes most plaguily against my pride; not, you will believe, against my principle; for now all these pains have been taken to separate the cooing turtles, the fair one *shall* be brought to surrender by means of strength or stratagem.

Confound the stupid family for their stoical indifference about such a business. *They ought* to have interfered—to have *enforced my proposal*; instead of that, the young one, for I wrote first to him, laconically begged to be excused from having any hand in the affair, because of his friendship, forsooth! to his dear Sir Charles Conway! A curse upon such friendship! Is he not *my* friend too? and has he not reason to imagine I am so foolish as to be his, without any regard to interest? Besides are they not all under obligation to me? They have, it is true, made, what they may think, considerable returns; but can any favor pay the great debt of saving the young lady from such terrible destruction? Positively, no; they will ever remain my debtors.

My second letter was to Sir Teddy himself. His reply was rather more prolix than the youngster's, but it amounted to the same sum total. He, truly! would not direct the matter, because his daughter was so well calculated to judge and chuse for herself. Dame Stanley, according to the tenor of his letter, was of the same opinion. I wonder the late dismissal so contrary to their approbation, did not lower the parental partiality of these sentiments; as, according to all *they* can judge by, the girl must have acted very capriciously. Something the old fellow talked about a hidden cause, not yet developed. I did not quite understand what might be the full extent of his meaning, but faith! he made me tremble by his intimation. I must finish this business as soon as possible, lest any malicious demon should whisper a secret which may throw me at a distance. I this day received the father's answer; have just now written to the girl herself; and beginning to find a wonderful increase of my passion, from the idea of its being likely I may meet with more difficulty in my pursuit than I had before permitted myself to apprehend, have, I do assure you, flourished off in style; for I am not *yet enough in love* to prevent my senses from having free exercise.

It most certainly is an observation founded upon incontrovertible facts, that a man who is fool enough to be *in good earnest*, as they say, in these matters, is never so likely to succeed as the honest fellow who has prudence and policy in view; and therefore reason and discretion at command.

I, working by this rule, have, as I told you, composed a gallant billet-doux for my lass; which I fancy to be the most lucky hit, my hand ever guided. Had I been quite sincere in all I said, my scribble would have wanted many of its little ornaments; for, as I have observed, a man who is really in love with a woman, without any regard to her appendages, can seldom, or never, either write or speak with pointed elegance.

Let us now suppose this celebrated fair should, out of pure constancy to her first flame, reject my humble petition. What, after that, must be my next step? Why this: to seize her, as you six months back proposed, and convey her to your Welch castle. Where I will treat her with so much love, that, surfeited with the richness of the banquet, she shall be glad to resign—nay to *offer* the name of Stanley, as a ransom for her liberty from that sweet thralldom; joyfully—even thankfully—consenting to exchange it for the one from which death only can release her.

I will inclose the particulars of the plan, that your useful Pandarus, and his still more useful spouse may have it for perusal.

Your scheme I have considerably improved upon; and have, as you will see, included Miss Lawson; that you, likewise, may have some little amusement.

And now, my Lord, if I can but execute the double plan of perfecting my own scheme and frustrating that of Mrs. Digby, I shall *indeed* be a man; which is one reason for my being in haste to pursue my project; though I take care to let my precious kinswoman, who has one of the most artful, plotting, guileful hearts that ever inhabited a female breast, suppose I am backward and dilatory. But the moment I am secure, I will blow her up, and spoil her match. She never, if I can prevent it, shall have another husband. No young fry to cut me out of the estate, do I want her to produce. I have recommended Herbert Evelyn to her acquaintance, who will, I think, soon see and frustrate her designs; as I employed Vandeput to give him a hint of her character.

She pretends ignorance—for I believe it *is* pretence—of the real purport of her father's will; which, doubtless, is a very complex piece of business; but thus far the meaning is perfectly clear. If she dies without a child, what he left her goes to her sister; and if she likewise leaves this world without children (as most likely she will; it being improbable she should ever marry) it was to revert to James Bentley, who died soon after old Howard; *and then*, after his death, to rest in me; merely, I believe, because he did not care what became of it any farther. Had *any* distinction been made between the sisters, it ought to have been in favor of Matilda; but the artful Arabella was his darling; and, by her little serpent-like tricks, took effectual care to keep herself so, and likewise, it is said, to continue his resentment against Matilda; who, according to the voice of fame, for I never saw much of her, though we are so nearly related, is a most amiable character.

With Arabella's disposition I am thoroughly acquainted, by means of our so often living together, in puerile days, at our old aunt Montgomery's, and I know her to be fraudulent.

As I told you—she believes, or affects to believe—that if she has no child, she has a power of disposal; and that only in case of her dying intestate, the estate goes as the will directs. But if I survive her, I shall let her executor know better things, with respect to all that was her father's property.

Let me hear from you soon, and tell me if you have still any intention of carrying Fanny into Wales; or if she is now so well reconciled to her fate that you dare trust her at Bernford during your stay in London. Her brother, I find, has not the least idea of her being with you. Williamson is the person he suspects.

Till we meet, my Lord, farewell. *That you may escape the due reward of your actions*, is, I think, a very friendly wish; for which, I expect you will acknowledge you owe me obligation.

ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, XVIII.

MISS STANLEY, TO COLONEL GREVILLE.

Woodstock, Tuesday, March 17th, 1789.

SIR,

YOUR letter, dated the fifteenth, which I just now received, has distressed me beyond measure.

Why will you lay me under the disagreeable necessity of refusing any request of yours so earnestly made? for refuse it I must, or be accessory to the destruction of both my own happiness and yours. Believe me, my good friend, I speak from certain knowledge, or I would not speak so decisively. I have an infallible intelligencer to instruct me on this head, whose dictates, on such an occasion, it would be certain wretchedness to disobey. I owe you obligation of the highest worldly nature; and should experience inexpressible gladness to be able to add materially to your welfare; to promote which, I would make considerable sacrifices; but in the case in question, most sure am I that a compliance with your expressed wishes, would not only deprive *me* of felicity, but prevent *your ever again* having the least prospect of it while we both should remain in existence; it being utterly impossible you could be happy with a woman whose heart must constantly continue sullenly insensible to your affection; and it is this conviction, sir, that confirms my determination (which is indeed fixed unalterably) of never being more to you than

your much obliged,
and truly grateful friend,
EMMA STANLEY.

LETTER, XIX.

SIR CHARLES CONWAY, TO GEORGE STANLEY, ESQ.

March 17th, 1789.

YESTERDAY morning I wrote to you from Harwich. I now date from Framlingham, a pretty little market town in Suffolk, famous for its church and castle; the latter, as you know, celebrated for the refuge it afforded *bloody Queen Mary*, as she is called. It is one of the most agreeable pieces of

decayed antiquity I have seen lately. Within-side is a very long room of rather modern date; built for the reception of the parish-poor, who are here maintained in great order and decency. The prospect from the top of the walls of the castle is very pleasant; affording a view of an estate of several hundreds per annum left to the poor of this place by Sir Robert Hitcham. His desire to have only a plain stone laid over him was prettily evaded by his executors, who ordered the repository to be distinguished by a large black marble slab, supported at the corners by four angels; each kneeling upon one knee. Though there are in this chancel several superb monuments to some of the Norfolk family, this of Sir Robert's, from its simple elegance, claims the pre-eminence. The church is, I think, take it without and within, one of the handsomest structures I ever saw in a country town. As soon as I entered, I remembered to have seen it before; it was when I was brought by Lord Bristol upon a visit to a relation of his who lived in a village within four miles of this place: but I was either never shown, or had forgotten, the castle. My passion for music, I believe, imprinted the church upon my idea, as I now perfectly recollect hearing its organ touched by a gentleman whose very amiable and respectable character did honor, as our party afterwards observed, to advanced life. I still remember that I was, at the time, particularly struck with the similitude of his person and manners to those of your father.

These recurrences led me to enquire for him of the mistress of the inn, whose singular reply was—"O dear, sir! he has a long time been in Heaven!"—adding that he certainly was one of the best men that ever breathed. This led me to wish to extend my enquiries, and just as I had began to ask her the particulars of this exemplary character, an elderly gentleman of a respectable appearance, was walking through the gate-way, in which we were standing. He immediately caught our subject; stopped, and looked attentive. Seeing he wished to speak, I transferred to him the conversation, and received a compleat description of a truly good man. After talking some time with this gentleman, he said—"I was last night, sir, with a large company, in the room over our heads, when the virtues of my old friend made a subject of conversation. They were discussed some time, and the closing opinion was this—*that no one could recollect a single fault in his disposition.*"—Saying this, my intelligencer made a bow, and walked off, to conceal, as I conjectured, his emotion.

Just such an emulating character as the above, will Sir Edward Stanley leave behind him.

From Framlingham I mean to go to Orford, to look at the castle in that place; from thence to Aldborough, and along the coast, by Southwold and Lowestoff to Yarmouth.

Mr. Evelyn is now writing an answer to the letter he received from you yesterday. From poor Fowler's sudden alteration for the worse, you will probably be his first patron. The idea of presenting him to you—not as an old acquaintance but as a friend, affords me considerable pleasure: but this is such a leading sentiment, that if I write any longer I shall glide into the prohibited subject; therefore I will bid you farewell.

CHARLES CONWAY.

After this reaches you, direct to me at Aldborough, Suffolk; to be left at the post-office. I mean to wait here till I receive your answer to my first from Harwich.

LETTER, XX.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Alverston, March 17th.

TEN thousand things crowd to the point of my pen. To which to give the preference I know not. My mind is in a tumult. Tell me not of moderation—of placidity—of philosophy, and such trumpery stuff; but give me the wings of a swallow, and the eye of an eagle, that I may fly, and penetrate at once, into the secret recesses of that shaded labyrinth, a woman's heart.

But here I am proseing away with my pen, when I am in the greatest haste to let you into the light of interesting matters of fact. Take them, then, as soon as a swift quill and the mail can convey them.

I have found her, Charles. At least I know who she is, and am going to pursue the tender; trembling; sickening; flying, charmer. Conway! I am transported. Who but that elegant creature Lady Lucinda Harrington, (whom three years back, from the slight view we had of her, we agreed had all the symptoms of growing beauty in her face) should be the dear, submitting angel that dropped my resemblance at the foot of the sofa in the anti-room at Hazel-wood Lodge! Sweet, lovely Lady Lucinda! How I already adore her! What shall I do when I see her, and hear her condescendingly acknowledge, in delicate, hesitating accents, that her pencil had delineated my features; her blushes, and her timid eye, confessing her partiality! If I do not pity her—if I do not return her affection, I shall deservedly be reckoned a barbarian.

An earl's daughter—a rich heiress—a beautiful creature, [as I chuse to believe, for I own I have not a very distinct idea of her features] and, as the lost, and happily found performance evinces—a woman of genius, sense and sentiment, absolutely and beyond a doubt, as you shall hear by and by, prepossessed in my favor! In short—to put the matter into plain English—is in love with me.

And now, Sir Charles Conway, what is it you have to say upon this occasion? Do you not think I am a gentleman of high renown? Do you not envy me? Do you not—But I must hasten to the particulars of this glorious event.

About eleven o'clock this morning, Mrs. Raymond; Mrs. Willet; Mrs. Butler, and Miss Parker, were driven into the court-yard. I was walking in the garden; and hastening to hand them out of their carriage, conducted them into the library where my mother was sitting. After a little chit-chat, Miss Parker began with—"Well, Mr. Stanley, and how is poor Lady Lucinda Harrington?"

With a look of surprise, I asked the meaning of her question; when Mrs. Willett, joining in the conversation, pertly said, "Nay, nay, Mr. Stanley, no affectation! We are all in the secret."

What secret, madam? asked I, with increased amazement.

Mrs. Willet. What secret! *Why no secret at all:* for every body knows that Lady Lucinda Harrington is in love with Mr. Stanley.

Stanley. Upon my word, madam, you do me high honor; but I must confess it is very unmerited.

Mrs. Butler. Mr. Stanley this is indeed affectation. Not but that you are right, too, to keep the young lady's secret.

Stanley. My dear Mrs. Butler I must request to be believed, when I tell you that Lady Lucinda Harrington and myself may almost be called perfect strangers to each other, as we never met but once, and that was three years since, at an inn in Huntington; where we stopped, at the same time, to change horses.

Mrs. Raymond. Be that as it may, give me leave to assert, it is an undoubted fact, that she is deeply in love with you.

Miss Parker. To be sure it is. For why, else, did she turn pale when she heard your name mentioned? Why faint when she was told you were expected in the evening, at Mr. Mortimer's, on Miss Heylin's wedding-day? Why so impatiently request Lady Glynn to convey her home before your arrival there? Are not these incontestible proofs of her being in love with you?

Stanley. Upon my credit, Miss Parker, these particularities, if appearing upon my account, bear at least an equal similitude to instances of dislike. But I never before heard that either Lady Lucinda Harrington or Lady Glynn had been, on the day you mention, at Mr. Mortimer's.

Lady Stanley. Nor I; which is somewhat strange; as these incidents, at such times, are generally subjects of conversation.

Mrs. Butler. O dear madam! it was delicacy which prevented its being mentioned to either Mr. Stanley or your ladyship. You were supposed to be parties concerned; for which reason delicacy, likewise, prevented the mention of either of the ladies names.

Faith! thought I, there is something strangely plausible in that idea! and *in spite of my burthensome quantity of native modesty*, the circumstance of the picture immediately popped into my head. Pray, ladies, said I—for I was determined to gather all the light I could—pray what is the serious meaning of all this jesting? It is impossible you can be in earnest about the cause of the young lady's illness; therefore I take the whole to be some curiously invented fable.

“Upon my reputation, sir,” said the pert Miss Parker, “the fable, as you are pleased to call it, is a real truth, as Mrs. Willett; Mrs. Raymond and myself can witness.”

Mrs. Butler. And I, likewise, can answer for its reality, though I saw not the scene; as Lady Glynn, her own aunt, told the story to Mrs. Brahim; who told it to Miss Patty Macpherson; who told it to *me*: so you see, Mr. Stanley, though I had not the honor of an invitation to Miss Heylin's wedding, as I had some reason, I think, to expect, I am pretty well authorized to confirm what these ladies have advanced; and can answer for it, however strongly you may chuse to deny it, that Lady Lucinda Harrington has certainly been a great sufferer upon your account.

Lady Stanley, [preventing my reply.] Well, but my dear ladies, be so obliging as to give us the particulars of this seeming mystery; which has, I confess, rather excited my curiosity.

Miss Parker. Why then, madam, I will take it upon me to be the speakeress, as I was amongst the foremost in attending the distressed fair. After dinner, when we ladies retired to the drawing-room, and were walking backward and forward, and talking and laughing, and so forth, Mrs. Mortimer lamented the absence of Miss Stanley, and likewise, expressed her concern that your Ladyship was not able to oblige us with your company at dinner, but that she hoped to see you and Mr. Stanley early in the evening.

“Is Mr. Stanley coming hither?” asked, or rather, as I have since recollected, exclaimed Lady Lucinda.

“He is expected, madam,” replied Miss Prettiman.—“And I hope will come,” joined in Mrs. Willet.

Mrs. Willet. You say right, Miss Parker; and I thought Lady Lucinda looked very languishing when she asked if Mr. Stanley’s name was not George.

Miss Parker. Indeed she did: and when Miss Sparkes told her that it was, she repeated the name in the most tender accent. “George!”—said she, and sighed as she spoke—“George is surely the prettiest name in the world! *My dear George!* is a sweet beginning to a letter of love. Do not you think so, Miss Parker?” said her ladyship, addressing herself to me.

Yes, Lady Lucinda, I replied; the name has a very good sound.

“A good sound!” echoed she. “Oh Heavens! It is divine!” Just then, as you, madam, [to Mrs. Raymond] may remember, for you stood near us, Lady Glynn’s servant returned with an answer to the card which Mrs. Mortimer had prevailed upon her ladyship to send to Sir Philip, pressing his going in the evening; and this, for a few moments, engaged the attention of us that stood near, but presently turning to reply to Lady Lucinda, I observed she looked pale; when, upon my noticing it to her, she exclaimed in a tone somewhat theatrical—“Any thing sudden, madam; any thing unexpected—I did not know who was coming,” [expecting you, Mr. Stanley.] “But I doubt I shall faint. Indeed, Miss Parker, I shall faint. Carry me, carry me away; or Lady Stanley will increase my distress, by entering in the midst of the bustle.”

At her repeated importunity, we conveyed her down stairs, and led her into the anti-room; that being the most airy; where placing her upon the sofa, she went into an hysteric fit. Her aunt, who is extremely fond of her, was very much alarmed, though it seems she has, of late, been subject to this disorder. Almost every one present produced a smelling-bottle, but Lady Glynn requested Miss Sparkes to put her hand into Lady Lucinda’s pocket for some drops, which she always carries about with her; they having been found to be of singular efficacy; and indeed they presently recovered her; but no sooner was she sensible, than she asked, with quickness, who took the bottle out of her pocket, as if she was afraid of something being found—a love-letter, Mrs. Brewster said—[doubtless the picture, Charles]—which she would not have to be seen.

Upon being satisfied Miss Sparkes had taken the bottle only, she was easy, and turning to Lady Glynn—"My dear, dear madam!" said she, "let us go. Call Chapone, Lady Stanley will be here presently. I cannot, cannot stay. I can not support the bustle of any new introductions. Chapone. Come Chapone, and carry me—carry me away!"

I have given you two or three of Miss Parker's speeches in one, that you might have the account entire, without the interruptions which were made by the consent the others gave to the exactness of her detail.

The talkative lady finished with the following observations.

"It must be owned the young lady seems a little tinctured with affectation and romance; her air and her accent being quite theatrically tender; but all was attributed to her delicate reluctance to be seen by you, Mr. Stanley, in such disorder; for she again mentioned Lady Stanley's expected arrival; and as she walked to the carriage, supported by myself and Chapone, she started upon seeing a coach (which proved to be Mr. Proby's) at a distance; and, I am confident, pronounced the name of George, with a sigh, in a half whisper."

This, Charles, was the sum total of Miss Parker's evidence. And from the circumstances collected together, not forgetting that of her sitting upon the anti-room sofa, and her alarm at her pocket's having been rummaged, there cannot remain a shadow of a doubt that she—the identical Lady Lucinda Harrington; daughter to the late Earl of Blanford; and heiress to an hundred and fifty thousand pounds—SHE dropped my depicted form which *she*, out of partiality *to my sweet person*, and as the dear creature says—to my mind, however she came by any knowledge of it, had portrayed upon the lost piece of vellum.

The remainder of the information which I gained from these chattering gypsies was, that after Lady Lucinda returned to Sir Philip Glynn's, (who is one of her guardians, and with whom, at his house in Cavendish Square, she has resided ever since the death of her father, till the Friday before the ball; when Sir Philip was summoned into Derbyshire) two physicians were sent for, who gave it as their positive advice that she must immediately be carried to Bristol. To Bristol, therefore, she went: at Bristol she now is; and to Bristol am I hastening in pursuit of the lovely girl, whom I am determined to bring back Lady Lucinda Stanley, for I find I cannot hold out against the allurements which unite in this one charmer.

Maria Birtles!!! Oh Charles! I wish I had *never seen her*. But gratitude prevails; and honor shall be triumphant. May you, my humble maid—ever lovely—too lovely—Maria! may you meet with a kindred mind in an equal situation! Yet that is nearly impossible! as few in her rank—But I must fly from the thought, as I do the sight, of her. One idea that she gives, in secret, a sigh to my name, would undo me. Were *she* under the same circumstances—or were Lady Lucinda to be found a Maria!—what an increase of rapture would rise in my mind! But let me be moderate. Let me be content, and even thankful. Maria Birtles—Heavenly creature!—so endowed, would, as I before have said, convey too large a portion of happiness, without some great counterbalancing check, to one individual. Possessed of her, his lot would be too distinguished; for it always was my opinion that happiness is more regularly dispensed than, from a cursory view of mankind, we are apt to

suppose. I never believed there is that inequality in the distribution of felicity to the human race, which those in the two extremities of station are particularly disposed to imagine. Such as are destitute of outward, have, without one doubt, inward blessings to which the others are strangers. This is a steadfast article of my creed, which *self-love* prevents from lessening my charity, as I likewise believe if I refuse to afford that relief, to those who any way want it, which it is put into my power to bestow, *I myself*, and not *they*, fare the worse for the omission. For as the happiness of a fellow-creature can never be left to my caprice, his necessities are assuredly supplied by other means, till his measure of relief is full, and I (as I have said) am, upon the occasion, the eventual and deserving sufferer.

Let me consider. If I am not mistaken, this is the substance of the doctrine contained in a part of your allegory. It is. I have imbibed it, and was now going to palm it upon you as my own: but I scorn the plagiarism, and own the obligation.

The felicity which the lovely Maria would give to the man of her choice, led me into this digression. Let me, before I finish, indulge myself in saying that were I to consider only my own satisfaction, my "*sister's waiting-maid*"—I still hate you for the expression—should be Mrs. Stanley; my pride, in that case, would be too weak to combat, with success, my affection. But when I consider my father; my mother—two of the best parents upon earth—with some others who deserve *a little* of my consideration; when I think of the situation to which, it seems, an amiable young creature is reduced on my account, and recollect the delicate reluctance, as Miss Parker aptly expressed it to be, which she found in her gentle bosom to my being acquainted with her unsought partiality to me—In short, when I suffer myself coolly to investigate every circumstance and its consequence, I yield to the force of conviction, and determine to sacrifice to *prudence*; to *propriety*; to *gratitude*; to *duty*, the ardent affection of my heart for the amiable—the more than amiable, Maria Birtles. Yet how hard the task! I dare not trust myself to look at her. The sound of a female foot alarms me, and I fly from the apprehended temptation of her appearance. After what has passed, what must she think of me! But I dare not reflect. Do I, in this, act like myself! No; and you will be glad of the change. The tenderness of my heart for Lady Lucinda's delicate distress, and my gratitude for her partial sentiments, have drawn me to a conduct I had determined never to pursue. Nothing but these dispositions and circumstances *could* have prevented my resolution to make Maria my own. I have said I never will marry till I can find a woman whom I can *admire*; *esteem*, and *love*: and to that, indeed, I *still* adhere, because I doubt not but the titled fair will engage my admiration; my esteem, and my affection. Yet my meaning was, that I would marry no woman but the one who could engross *my whole heart*. And does Lady Lucinda do that? No; nor ever will till the remembrance of Maria Birtles is extinguished. But what am I saying! Distraction will return if I proceed. My resolution is already tottering. I will finish, and prepare for my journey to Bristol, while I have one remnant of heroism left.

Remember me to Evelyn. Fowler is much as when I wrote three days back.

The date of your last letter was from Harwich. If this next post does not bring me another, I shall be disappointed.

Mr. Kelby is returned from London. He has brought Whitman to terms, and says our law matters are in a good train; but Hayward continues obstinate.

As soon as I reach Bristol, you shall hear from me again. Farewell.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XXI.

MRS. MAYNARD, TO LADY CAROLINE
PEMBERTON.

Cavendish Square, March 17th.

THE hasty note which I dispatched to my dearest Caroline on Saturday evening, to inform her of our safe arrival in London, and of the receipt of her packets, expressed but imperfectly the joy we experienced in hearing of her safety, and in finding ourselves once more in the same country with a friend ever so dearly beloved. Soon, very soon, we shall, I hope, be in the same house; never more to be separated for any long period. There is no describing my sensations when I think of meeting you. My dear Augustus talks of nothing else. But I must hasten to the business in which you are so greatly concerned, without expressing either my happiness; my amazement, or indignation.

About an hour after we arrived in Cavendish Square, just as I had dispatched my little scribble to you, Lord Danvers was announced, and immediately ushered up stairs. Expecting us on the Thursday, he had sent several times to enquire if we were at home, or had been heard from. After mutual congratulations, his lordship immediately, with apparent impatience, mentioned your *elopement*, as he termed it; wanting, as it seemed, to prejudice Mr. Maynard in favor of his plan; but he soon found Mr. Maynard was not to be so prejudiced; for after a very short conversation he, with his usual sincerity, told his uncle, that he must excuse him for speaking his sentiments with freedom, as he thought his cousin had acted, in every particular which had come to his knowledge, as a wise and good woman, and even as a *kind* and *dutiful* daughter *ought* to have acted, or indeed *could* have acted, without forfeiting her title to both characters: insisting upon it that you must have saved your father from a great deal of after-regret.

This astonished his lordship; at least he thought proper to *appear* to be astonished; and put on that air of dignity for which he has been so noted. However, Augustus, not in the least intimidated, soon brought him about, and almost to tears, upon shewing him the letters we had received from you on the subject while we were at Ostend, and leaving him to form his own suppositions upon our missing your others by our, rather suddenly, leaving the Continent, without telling him we had heard of you since our arrival.

Your father now intreated Mr. Maynard to use every possible endeavour to discover the place of your retreat; confessing he had been wretched ever since you left him, though he had, in some measure, comforted himself by concluding you were under our protection. Mr. Maynard promised to use his utmost diligence in the affair, and asked his uncle what terms of accommodation he would authorise him to propose. "Terms!" repeated the earl, with all the symptoms of a rising passion—"None, but her accepting the hand and immense fortune of Lord Crumpford; which are terms not only of lenity but reward."

This produced a conversation so much to the honor of your cousin, that, on the account of a still nearer relation, I will suppress the particulars. Arm yourself, my dearest girl, with a little

patience before you ruminate with too much earnestness on the idea of your being to be made a piece of merchandise. But it will not avail to mince the matter; and as you have acted so exemplary, you ought to be comforted by every confirmation of having done right, even in the opinion of those cunningly-wise people who judge by events. You are entitled to every consolation; every supporting and strengthening information. And as your dutiful tenderness to your father may give to your recollection a sting, whose barb may be withdrawn by the unfolding of truth, I *will* tell you that you were actually to be sold by Lord Danvers to Lord Crumpford for an enormous sum of money; *how much*, Mr. Maynard, (whom this discovery worked up into a fury) cannot yet ascertain. By mere accident he gained the first hint, which he pursued, and will still pursue, if possible, to full knowledge.

I have no patience with your father. Chide me not, Caroline, for reason, in this case, justifies my passion, and *I will not even endeavour* to be moderate.

That *vile* Lord Crumpford! What could be *his* inducement to part with so much of the “gold he worships” for a jewel of whose value he can form no estimate! *Lord Danvers*’ motive, and a horrid one it is, was more easily developed. He has lately lost much more than he can pay, at the gaming table, and this savage wretch, who thought to have drawn *you* into his den, was not only to have paid the debt of honor, as (by a total inversion of words) it is generally called, but likewise to have given a release of the jointured estate in Derbyshire, and then, with an unaccountable appearance of such generosity as his sordid soul cannot have the least real sense of, the horrid creature was to have taken you without a fortune. What the monster’s inducement could be, must ever remain unfathomable, unless we conclude he meant to sell you again; rightly judging from the voice of report—for no eyes has this barbarian for female beauty, unless for Queen Anne’s head upon his darling metal—that he should draw high bidders for his SINE QUA NON, who he must consciously believe would be glad to change her bargain.

And now, my dear, to the other part of your story — your Alverston adventures; for I pass over, till we meet, all *intermediums*.

Mr. Maynard desires you will not give yourself the trouble to collect any proofs of Mr. Stanley's return of *tendresse*, as he holds it as an incontestible truth, that there is not a man in existence, *of whom you can think favorably*, who would not lay himself at your feet, be his fortune or station next to royalty. He does indeed love you, Caroline, with the fondest fraternal affection: even equal to that which, from earliest years, has united you and your Harriet. Shall I be jealous of Miss Stanley? No; I hope to have cause to love her next to yourself. I could expatiate till I tired even your patience, on the merits of the worthies you have depicted. *Such* a family have I wished you to find and honor by your addition to it. Mr. Maynard knew Mr. Stanley at Eaton, and says he then promised to be much such a character as you have given him. Do you know I enjoy the idea of your one day rewarding this family for their generous treatment of you? I am in love with every soul of them; and, were it proper, should skim down to Alverston, to have the pleasure of discovering to them your name and family; which could not fail of giving them all, peculiar satisfaction. Mr. Stanley is, doubtless, disengaged, or you would have known it; therefore I see no probable impediment to your union: for when Lord Danvers comes to his senses, he will be happy in such an alliance, if he has any affection for you: and as for them, they will, without dispute, rejoice—for have they not discernment—at so lovely an addition to their family, without bestowing one thought

upon the article of fortune.

I could scribble a week without intermission; wanting to prate about all your haps and mishaps, but I must forbear.

Mrs. Thompson was with me last night, and showed extreme gladness to see me; chiefly I dare say on your account. Her husband and poor nurse have been, it seems, half frantic about you. She told me she had acquainted you with Jenny's recovery.

But, Caroline, I must finish. You will receive this, if it goes duly, to-morrow evening. Write to me again before you allow yourself to sleep, that I may have the scribble as soon as possible.

Farewell. I need not ask you to believe that I am yours, most faithfully,

HARRIET MAYNARD.

LETTER, XXII.

LADY CAROLINE PEMBERTON, TO MRS.
MAYNARD.

Alverston Park, March 18th.

I HAVE received and read my dear Harriet's letter; and, as she commands, prohibit sleep till I have replied to some of its contents.

The part respecting my father, was less distressing than I had reason to expect it would be; as I doubted not that I should be informed of the whole truth without reserve; and as I had dreaded his being quite furious. I will pass over the subject as lightly as possible, because I cannot expatiate on my father's conduct. But, Harriet—Augustus—let me intreat, let me *insist* upon it, that my father be immediately assured my ready—my *officious* consent waits to sign any deed, however binding, which shall give liberty to the whole of the jointured estate. Indeed this must—this shall be done; and that without delay. I *will not* live under the apprehension of my father's owing obligations which I can discharge; therefore if Mr. Maynard will not act as my agent in this affair, I am determined to write to him myself, let what will be the consequence. You both know my inflexibility in a matter of this kind; therefore, my dear cousins, offer not one remonstrance on my determination which, permit me to affirm, is unalterable. Let me but do my duty, and depend upon the Almighty GOD for a provision. What though I have not one in proportion to the situation in which I was born!!! The grandeur of the mind is, surely, superior to that of the person! And if the one or the other must suffer an eclipse, as, in the matter in question, must inevitably be the case, which is it the greatest glory to keep undiminished? But glory, my dear cousins, is not the object of my pursuit; except it be that which no eclipse can ever affect. Excuse this seeming affectation of being above the world—above myself and all my wishes. To you I write the honest dictates of my heart at the time they rise; and I am now particularly conscious of the force of this truth—that all the united riches and honors of the universe can never make an adequate compensation for the least diminution of *those riches and honors* which the world in general, and I myself, at other times, am too apt too lightly to estimate. My mind is raised, Harriet, I seem to look down on all that is sublunary. For a few minutes I will lay aside my pen.

* * * * *

I am returned to my scribbling not yet divested of my seeming exaltation, but I will try to write a little “like one of this world.”

You, my cousins, whose affection for me will lead you to think more of the before-mentioned release, than, were the case your own, you would allow me to think of the matter, will immediately revert in idea to the obstacle my being totally unfortunated may raise to my being received into this family as a relation. At present—though I own that all my wishes which the great futurity can spare, are centered too much, as the case stands, in one vortex—at *present* I seem above them all, and find such immense consolation from a consideration of the occasion; or from some still Greater Source, that the probability of my want of fortune being an insurmountable objection to views of this nature, hardly gives me one sensible pang. How, when I descend to my usual level, the

idea will affect me, I know not, I will not pretend to answer for myself in future. It certainly cannot be supposed that, noble as their minds are, it will to Sir Edward and Lady Stanley be alike indifferent whether their son marries a rich heiress or a beggar: in the nature of things it cannot be, even were they left to themselves unstimulated; which they are not; for the Mr. Slayton I mentioned, who really seems to be a good man, though a little whimsical and somewhat attached to money, is, I can now say from more full information, to give Mr. Stanley a fortune of an hundred thousand pounds, provided he marries with his approbation; which he is not likely to do, except he marries to riches. This Mr. Slayton [I partly told you the circumstance in one of my first letters] was present when Lady Stanley mentioned me, *as my father's daughter*, with some approbation, and as one who would make a proper wife for his godson. The old gentleman replied that he had heard something of my character, but failed not to observe upon the smallness of my fortune. Mr. Stanley, indeed, immediately reprobated this observation with some warmth; and, I believe, spoke his real sentiments; probably, however, with the *more* warmth to fix with *Maria Birtles* an opinion of his disinterestedness. On several occasions he has made downright love to me; never, I must do him the justice to observe, presuming *very* much upon my situation. Instances of his conduct, when chance has afforded him an opportunity to speak his sentiments on this point, I cannot now give; and, indeed, my inclination to give them is a little subsided; as of late he has seemed to shun me; and if, by accident, we have met, has appeared under perplexity and confusion. I should have imagined Sir Edward or Lady Stanley had observed and spoken their disapprobation of his complaisance to me, were there any alteration in their conduct; but as that is not the case—or if there be any alteration it is from kind to still kinder—the change must be occasioned by a fluctuation in his own mind. Perhaps he is naturally capricious. With all my heart; and I wish his caprice and his other faults to appear together: for as neither his merit nor his evident partiality would, singly, have been sufficient to attach me, so the failure of both—or indeed of one—must effectually give my heart its liberty.

When I fancy that he acts against his sentiments, in agreement with what he think Sir Edward's and Lady Stanley's wishes, were circumstances (as far as he is acquainted with them) to be known, the task of regaining my freedom is not so easy; as it raises my opinion of him still higher, without giving me room to suppose the affection he has professed for me is abated. I must confess I too easily, though I did not wish him to know it, believed his declarations of respect and tenderness; for, my dear cousins, I have very foolishly parted with a large share of my heart; simply believing an easy path to happiness lay through this vista. In time to come I may, perhaps, smart pretty severely for this credulous folly.

To-morrow Mr. Stanley goes for Bristol. Upon what occasion, or when to return, I know not. I believe the call was sudden and unexpected. Sometimes I fancy a Lady is concerned; and that that causes his change of conduct to me; which is, I must acknowledge, the most unpleasant idea I ever in my life entertained. I wish Miss Stanley was at home; for though her ladyship is extremely communicative, one cannot talk so *inquiringly* to a woman of her years, as to one of one's own age. And yet I must recall this; for, except upon the subject in question, I can speak to her with the greatest freedom. Twice this morning I thought she was going to mention this journey, but was both times interrupted. I wish she had: I wish she had only given me an opportunity—But what a way am I got into. How insensibly have I written myself into anxiety! A few minutes back I thought myself above the world, and now—I am ashamed of myself, Harriet; ashamed of my want of stability. *So soon* to descend! How weak is human nature! Perhaps I am weaker than others. And yet—But I repeat that I am ashamed of myself. Harriet, did you ever suppose I should be found to be so poor a

creature? Yet did you know this Mr. Stanley, I think you would soon find him to be so exactly adapted to what you know my sentiments are, that you would, in some measure, excuse my folly; though I cannot excuse it myself. Sometime back, I took a hasty sketch of his figure, and was fanciful enough to scribble under it six or seven lines of rhyme, with an intent to send it to you, but by a piece of unpardonable carelessness, I have lost it: and this incident has vexed me considerably; as who knows what conjectures its being found may occasion! I cannot imagine when or where I could lose it. I took it two or three weeks back, and gave it its finishing stroke one evening when Lady Stanley, attended by the original of my little representative, went to a ball given on account of the wedding of a Miss Heylin. Sir Edward was detained at home by Mr. Slayton. About twelve o'clock the chaise of Mr. Saunders, who went to the ball in the Alverstton coach, was sent for Lady Stanley, and it being rather a pleasant night, I officiously offered my attendance, that her ladyship might, in her return, have company; which very much, I saw, pleased Sir Edward; who, so delicate was his consideration for me, would not intimate the least wish to that purpose; and Mrs. Moore was too ill to be permitted to venture. *I hope* my motive was to prevent Lady Stanley's return from being disagreeable to her; though, at the same time, I fear a wish to obtrude myself on Mr. Stanley's idea, composed a part of it. You see, Harriet, I am very honest in my confessions. It was natural for me to conclude that a son so dutiful and so polite, would attend his mother to her carriage; but I was mistaken in my conjectures. Mr. Saunders, the gentleman I mentioned above, handed her down stairs; which I was surprised at, and not much pleased with. However, I afterwards recollected that as her ladyship was going in his chaise, this young man, who appears to be very ceremonious, might think it his office to see her seated in it.

Be it as it may—I saw nothing of Mr. Stanley, though I was in a kind of saloon, which I believe they call the anti-room near ten minutes. For after Lady Stanley had put on her cloak and was just stepping to the door, a servant set his foot upon something which, upon examination, was found to be one of her diamond ear-rings; she having dropped without missing it. This occasioned some little bustle, and her ladyship requested me to take care of the jewel, which I did; putting it into a little ivory box, without being sensible of drawing any thing with it, when I took it out of my pocket; but upon searching the next day for a small vellum case, into which I had deposited the portrait, I was alarmed at not being able to find it, though I examined every recess with the greatest attention. What became of it I know not. I might drop it in the anti-room. It might fall from my pocket as I was getting into the chaise, or I might lose it in a walk I took the next morning; for I missed it not till the afternoon. The loss of this trifle lest it should lead its finder to form improper suppositions, or to make an improper use of it, gave me for some time much perplexity. However as near a fortnight has elapsed without my having heard any mention of its being found, I am willing to conclude I dropped it into the canal, as I was walking on its bank that same morning; for I recollect taking my handkerchief out of my pocket to tye round my neck; the wind blowing rather sharp across the water.

I fancy the likeness was pretty striking. At least, I found myself wonderfully well satisfied with my performance, and were not matters in a train so seemingly unfavorable I would endeavour to repair my loss.

I must now finish. A little quiet will I hope re-produce the happy tranquility which prevailed when I wrote the first part of this letter; and which I am sorry to find can be so easily interrupted.

Farewell my dear friends. I know I need not request you to write soon to
your
CAROLINE PEMBERTON.

LETTER, XXIII.
MRS. MAYNARD, TO LADY CAROLINE
PEMBERTON.

Cavendish Square, March 20th.

YOUR letter, my ever dearest Caroline, has half broken my heart. I cannot bear to think of the meditated sacrifice of your estate. Small as it is, it would keep such a moderate mind as yours, in independence. Yet I very much fear it must be given up. And for what? Who deserves such an instance of nobleness? you will be offended with me; and yet I must go on. Lord Danvers—no longer your father, or our uncle—is a strange man. Indeed, Caroline, he is a strange man. Yet angry with him as I am, I must do him the justice to say I think he has a tender affection for you. Though it takes a very odd kind of drapery. To judge by *appearances*, he hates you with vehemence. The horrid Crumpford too!—I can scarce endure his name. Lord Danvers, to palliate the vile engagement he has entered into with such a wretch, insists much upon the proof he gives of his great regard for you, by offering to take you upon such terms; and this, he says, was his inducement to comply with his proposals; as it was a security for his treating you well, would you have accepted him without a show of dislike: and he pretends not to doubt but that with such an ascendancy over him, you might have moulded him to your wishes.

How could a man with your father's understanding talk such nonsense!

But I will pass over a deal of such-like conversation, and turn to your proposal. Indeed you must not entirely ruin yourself to free Lord Danvers from the effects of his imprudence. Yet you are *so* peremptory. And certainly while Mr. Maynard and I have existence—but I do not want that a mind so over and above sensible of what you call obligation, should be brought to fancy yourself in a state of dependance; *even upon us*. You think too deeply of such matters; though were you the *disposer*, you would justly call them trifles.

Really, Caroline, you vex me sadly. But here comes Mr. Maynard.

* * * * *

I am now somewhat better pleased, though by no means fully satisfied.

Mr. Maynard has again been in Berkley Square, where he has had a great deal of conversation with his uncle about you. Some part of it was commendable; some censurable; but the repetition is unnecessary.

When Lord Danvers was convinced that you *never would* consent to be Lady Crumpford, and his passion upon the conviction was somewhat subsided, he asked Mr. Maynard what course he

could possibly think of his pursuing. Much altercation passed on this head, till at length, against his judgement, and in downright obedience to your commands, (though not till various other means had been proposed and rejected) Mr. Maynard hinted a supposition that it was possible your affectionate duty might induce you to liberate the jointured estate. By the avidity with which his ungenerous lordship received this intimation, one must think he had been in waiting for the proposal; which idea so provoked Mr. Maynard, that he, as from his own judgement, raised several objections to the execution of the plan; all which Lord Danvers immediately over-ruled, and the result was, that Augustus engaged to endeavour to procure your consent.

To *endeavour* to procure it, mind you; for as he could not, without owning he had heard from you, answer for your compliance, you are still free to retract your too liberal intention; and I heartily wish you would: *even on your father's account* I wish it; because by experiencing the difficulties resulting from his imprudence, it may guard him against such folly in future, whereas if he be immediately relieved, without being taught to feel—You understand me, and I wish you would take my advice. But if you *are* unpersuadable—if you are still *determined* to take upon yourself the bondage which straitens your father—the matter is thus to be managed. The estate in question, for the sake of form, and for a reason still better than that, is to be assigned over to Mr. Maynard. That is to say, he is to buy it firm and fast, with this proviso—that whenever Lord Danvers wishes to re-purchase it, *for the purpose of again settling it upon you*, he is to have it at the same price: Thus the estate is not to cease being yours for more than one day. It will not, let me say in my turn, be to any purpose to oppose this design; therefore you may spare yourself the trouble of setting about it. We can be peremptory as well as you. And in this case you will find us so. Submit you must. There is no remedy. So you may as well do it with a good grace. I hope, for his credit's sake, that this is what Lord Danvers *expected* his nephew would do; and you must admit this supposition, or you leave your father without one excuse for accepting your noble resignation. I must give it that title, unwilling as I am that it should be practised. However, his lordship is not to have the consolation of knowing the estate is still your own, for a great variety of very good reasons. I know you will have a string of seemingly powerful arguments against this intended procedure, or I should not have said more than ten words, and those merely to give you the necessary information upon the matter; but I want to silence you at once, as I re-tell you it will not be to any purpose to oppose; therefore, in addition to my *commands*, let me furnish your *scrupulosity* with this palliating consideration—that Lord Danvers has promised Mr. Maynard to lay by yearly a handsome stipulated sum, out of the income of his estate, till he redeems this small one in question; which surely, from such a large revenue, he may do, even without cramping the magnificence of his spirit, as you, my dear, are to live with us, while you remain single. Besides this, your father has started another plan (and that I think a very feasible one) to repair this fracture. He had, as you know, a liberty by the will of his grandfather, to mortgage the principal estate for a large, but limited sum, in cases of emergency, which liberty the testator, in a long preamble, advised might be sparingly used; but to this advice your father has not very strictly adhered, having taken up to the last allotted shilling. From this source, therefore, no farther relief can be expected; but your great uncle Richard, the Nabob, who entailed upon the male heir all that part of the estate which goes by the name of the Eastern Farms, did not specifically annex his donation to the title; for which reason, it seems, any two heirs of full age may sue a fine and cut off the entail; and upon this resource your father rests himself; probably, I think, conjecturing that the son which his nephew left, who must inevitably inherit all the entailed estates, as well as the title, will gladly consent to sue this fine when he comes to age, and divide the money with Lord Danvers, as he must already be greatly in want of cash, and will, by that time, find

his wants still greater. I never knew the particulars of his situation till yesterday, when Sir William Jennyns was telling Mr. Maynard that your late cousin Thomas William Pemberton appeared, before his death, to be sincerely grieved about his past conduct; that it was believed he had a real affection for the woman, dissolute as her life had been, whom he had married; she, it seems, having always behaved well to him; that, therefore, depending upon his uncle to make some provision for his son, he scraped together the remnant of his fortune, and purchased for his wife an annuity of one hundred and fifty pounds, upon which, as soon as her husband died, Mrs. Pemberton went down into the northern part of Yorkshire to live in splendor: and Sir William says she really does manage to make a tolerable appearance with this stipend; for going this time twelvemonth into Scotland, he passed through the village where she lives, and being accompanied by a gentleman who had some acquaintance with the clergyman of that place, he went with him to call upon him, when they found him surrounded by six or eight boys, to whom he taught the rudiments of grammar; the eldest of which, being considerably bigger than the rest, attracted his notice, when Mr. Broomley (the clergyman) told him that the youth he noticed was the heir to the title and great estate of the Earl of Danvers. This, as may be supposed, led to other enquiries, and Sir William was informed that Mrs. Pemberton lived in a genteel house in the village; that her income was supposed to be but slender; that she was desirous to give her son as good an education as she could afford; that therefore Mr. Broomley had consented to his remaining with him till his age exceeded that of the boys he wished to have under his tutorage, but that he was very soon going to Edinburgh for farther improvement. Sir William said he never saw a much finer boy in his life;—that he was full of fire and sprightliness, and quite sensible of his future dignity. I think I wish to have this youth taken from the tutelage of his mother; and have a scheme rumbling in my head, which, if practicable, may be of great utility to all of the house of Pemberton.

I am not going to marry you to your cousin Thomas William, Caroline; though were he ten or twelve years older, and your heart free, it would be the very plan I should adopt. As it is, I had rather see you Lady Caroline Stanley than any other lady whatever; because I know when once such a heart as yours has suffered itself to yield—You know my meaning, child, and I have not time for unnecessary explanations.

Let me hear from you immediately, and tell me something which, contrary to your last, will give me more pleasure than admiration. Farewell.

H.M.

Since I concluded my letter, Lord Danvers has been here. He has just left us. I cannot but say that he appears extremely anxious to hear of your safety, and likewise very impatient to see you; which Mr. Maynard says proceeds *chiefly* from affection. It seems he is much distressed about informing Lord Crumpford of the plan in agitation; which leads to a supposition that he is already under some pecuniary engagement to that savage. He will not suffer his nephew to acquaint him with it; lest, as must be concluded, he should discover the depth of the agreement between them. In other words—should come at the knowledge of the sum total for which Lord Danvers sold his daughter!

Horrid creatures both! I am glad I know there is *one* good man in the world. You, Caroline, will, I hope, ere long, present to me another.

LETTER, XXIV.

LADY CAROLINE PEMBERTON, TO MRS.
MAYNARD.

Alverston Park, March 20th.

HARRIET, as soon as you have perused this scribble, send immediately for Mrs. Thompson, and desire her to copy such a letter of your dictating as will demand my instant return, in such a manner as I can show to Lady Stanley, whom I would not, for the world, offend by an abrupt departure, without show of reason. Let the given cause be the return of a friend from abroad—my father's desire to see me—any thing that can be said with truth. Here I cannot—must not stay.

I know I alarm you by this abrupt way of writing, and wish I could be more guarded, but I cannot, though I have been endeavouring for some composure.

Harriet! I have long thought myself very foolishly entangled, and I have candidly confessed it to you; but thus very much engaged—thus weakly yielding—Indeed, Harriet, I am very unhappy.

But you shall hear the cause.

This Bristol journey!—I thought, from the first, there was something in it very particular; it was so sudden. And then the great alteration in his behaviour too! I told you I suspected a lady was the occasion: and so it proves. And who do you suppose the lady is? But it is impossible you can guess. For who could believe that such a man as Mr. Stanley would ever think of marrying a woman who has no one single circumstance to recommend her but riches? as you, Harriet, will join with me in saying is the case, when I tell you that the object of his pursuit is not other than that affectedly romantic girl, Lady Lucinda Harrington. Are you not surprised at his want of distinction! Such a coquette! So very silly! vain! pert! without even the flimsey recommendation of beauty! For what little pretensions she once had to think herself pretty, are now destroyed by her obstinacy respecting inoculation; to which she never would submit, because her nurse, a simple woman who disliked the practice, endeavoured to prepossess her against it, by telling her it would bring a humour into her face; which immediately made her resolve never to be inoculated; the consequence of which was, that about two months after, she caught the small-pox; and had it so violently as to endanger her life. Her face is considerably marked by it, and it has occasioned a very displeasing turn in her right eye.

Such is the lady to whom Mr. Stanley, for the sake of a fortune he wants not, is going to unite himself for life! Astonishing! absolutely astonishing!

Is this his disinterestedness! Is this his noble contempt of every thing sordid! I have no patience to think of him. Was this conduct in compliance with the expressed wishes of Sir Edward and Lady Stanley, (which I cannot find reason to suppose) the matter would wear a different appearance; yet even in *that* case, it would not be commendable: for can it, on *any* account, be right to make a sacrifice of conscience? No: not even to parental command: else—how culpable must I be deemed! Shall we suppose Mr. Stanley to be really attached to Lady Lucinda Harrington?

Impossible! No two beings in nature can be more opposite to each other than they are. If he be, what can I think of his treatment of me? For I must own my vanity led me to believe I saw in him all the marks of genuine affection. If I was mistaken, how dared he to affront me by a pretended respect! But to him I was only his sister's waiting-maid. In what a labyrinth am I involved! I have considered and re-considered and re-considered, till I am sick of conjecture. However, I cannot believe Mr. Stanley to be possessed with a real affection for such a woman as he is now pursuing. Besides, if my consternation did not bewilder my comprehension, the first of his meeting with her was at the ball I mentioned in my last; since which, a change in his conduct has, as I have told you, been flagrant.

Indeed I feel myself very much above him; and doubt not but my foolish partiality will, in a short time, be as much lessened as my opinion.

But I must tell you how I came by my intelligence—Intelligence which I was greatly desirous of gaining, and now, when I have it, almost wish I had never received.

After breakfast this morning, Lady Stanley asked me *if I would be so obliging*—was her polite expression—as to make an alteration in a cap which she thought too large for her. My reply soon produced my employment, and she sat down by me to thread my needles and assist me with pins. After a little conversation about London and its fashions, she asked me (probably from hearing me occasionally mention two or three young women of distinction) if I had ever heard of Lady Lucinda Harrington. I answered in the affirmative. She then asked me if she was reckoned sensible; to which question, really believing she knew to the contrary, I only smiled; whereupon her ladyship said, with some appearance of surprise, “You smile, Maria. Have I asked a smiling question?”

This, seeing Lady Stanley look rather serious, somewhat disconcerted me, and willing to prevent any ill effects from my almost involuntary risibility, I replied that Lady Lucinda was very young, and sometimes very lively, which might occasion severity to call in question her understanding.

“Maria,” said her ladyship, with peculiar earnestness, “I repeat my question, and entreat you to be candid. Is Lady Lucinda Harrington reckoned sensible?”

Any request of yours, madam, so earnestly made, must, I answered, be complied with. Lady Lucinda has *not* a reputation for wisdom.

“Give me what you know of her character, Maria,” said Lady Stanley, with a countenance which she seemed to endeavour to compose.

Upon my word, I know but little of the lady, madam, said I; and am consequently very ill qualified to speak on the subject.

“Is she handsome?” asked her ladyship.

No, madam, was all my reply.

“She is very diffident and timid, I believe,” said Lady Stanley, “for which, perhaps, she is

indebted to having been brought up in retirement; as those innocent and amiable appearances generally vanish too soon after a young woman is permitted to see company.”

A look of real astonishment was all the answer I made to this sentiment, for some moments, till at length I repeated—very unpolitely, as I now recollect—*Lady Lucinda Harrington diffident and timid!*

“Your tone expresses your thinking otherwise, Maria,” observed my venerable benefactress: “and once more I *entreat* you to tell me freely *what you know* of her character.”

I was now obliged to give my full opinion; and never was any body more disconcerted than Lady Stanley was when she heard it. “If this,” said she with a sigh, “is the case, George will be greatly disappointed; but I hope he will not be too hasty.”

Astonishment now changed sides. All my faculties were lost in wonder; till comprehending, in one moment, the whole force of her meaning, and connecting it with the expedition to Bristol, where I know Sir Philip Glynn has a house, I was so confused—so overpowered—that I burst into tears.

Lady Stanley, as well she might be, was extremely surprised at my emotion, till her own benevolent heart gave rise to a construction which made me blush at the undeserved honor it conferred upon mine. The dear mistaken woman supposed I was generously pained at having spoken so freely about a person who, if the premeditated union took place, it would be a grief to her to have occasion to think of with disrespect; and, as was obvious, upon this conclusion she endeavoured to console me, by telling me I had said no more than what she had, perhaps a little unjustifiably, pressed from me; and that however it had disappointed her expectations, she would endeavour to prevent being so biassed by it as to occasion her being prejudiced against the young lady, should it ever happen that there was any alliance between the two families.

“I talk to you, my dear Maria,” added she, “very freely. I talk to you as to *a friend*; and happy do I think myself to have, in the absence of my daughter, *such* a friend to talk to.”

She then opened her sentiments relative to Miss Stanley and Sir Charles Conway, and very *piously*, as well as pathetically, argued upon the allay of happiness which those in the most envied situations are—in *mercy*—was her observation—taught to experience. And most charmingly she expatiated upon the topic; though feeling very deeply, as she confessed, the keenness of the disappointment which was likely to be allotted to her dear Sir Edward and herself, in the frustration of their wish for a union between Emma and Sir Charles Conway, and in the future daughter-in-law, which they had presumed to hope the judgement of their son would select to present them with. “But his judgement” she said, “is not, perhaps, to have, in this case, its free exercise.”

Harriet, what could this speech of Lady Stanley’s import?

“His judgement in this case, not to have its free exercise!”

It surely is very strange! Who, or what, in an affair of such consequence, ought to bias—or,

indeed, *can* bias his judgement?

Perhaps his godfather is grown arbitrary, and insists upon his compliance.

Yet how unpardonable would it be in this noble and independent family to submit to such usurped authority, for the paltry recompense of a sum of money which, however great, would, it may truly be said, be to them useless!—bartering real happiness for that which is merely imaginary!

But I weary myself with conjectures, and will conjecture no longer.

Send for me immediately. Get me snug lodgings in one of the villages near London. I think the Essex side will be preferable to Hampstead; Highgate, or the more frequented places; in which I should be apprehensive of being discovered before Mr. Maynard's final settlement with my father gives me the liberty I am so impatient to receive, of soliciting, upon my knees, his pardon.

This is Friday. On Sunday I hope the post will bring my summons, that on Monday—not, I fear, without much reluctance—I may leave Alverston; probably *for ever!* The exquisite pang my heart feels at that thought, is greater than I dare attempt to describe.

Excellent Lady Stanley! Admirable Sir Edward! Dear, lovely Emma! And—oh, Harriet!—too, too agreeable brother of the last! what joy had I permitted myself to take in the prospect of an *equal* acquaintance — in a friendship —But, tormenting ideas, begone. I will not, if I can help it, harbour such enemies to my tranquility.

Harriet!—Augustus!—dear, ever dear friends of my heart! from you I hope soon to receive the soothing I seem so much to covet.

Where is that happy placidity of which I so lately boasted! It is gone; and I cannot regain it, though I exert my utmost power. It is right that I should be convinced I am weak and helpless—nothing, of myself: unable to correct, in the least degree, the working; the wandering; the sinking of my spirits! But *I will pray* to be better; and will hope to find strength in a sense of my weakness.

For a short time—adieu.

CAROLINE PEMBERTON.

LETTER, XXV.

SIR PHILIP GLYNN, TO LIONEL BARNARD, ESQ.

Stratford, March 20th, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

IT is with a considerable degree of pleasure I set down to inform you that I hope our anxiety about our young ward will now soon be over, as I have this day had proposals made me from a gentleman, which will, I am pretty well assured, meet with your approbation. The gentleman's name is Stanley.

He is the only son of a baronet of whom you probably have heard, whose family-seat (Alverston Park) is within a few miles of my newly purchased estate in Derbyshire. I am a stranger to the person of Sir Edward, but by his character I know him well, and indeed I must needs say few people are better spoken of in the country, than he and all his family. The estate, quite unincumbered, is very large, and his godfather, old Slayton of Oakley-Hill, whom I know very well, is to give him a hundred thousand pounds; part now, the rest at his death, provided he marries with his consent, which I should suppose there is no great doubt of his doing, if he marries Lady Lucinda Harrington. By mere accident I met with Mr. Stanley at Coventry, just as your nephew and his clerk had left me. It seems he heard my name mentioned, and directly introduced himself, requesting, at the same time, in a most polite manner, the honor, as he called it, of being permitted to dine with me, if I was not engaged; to which I readily consented, as I knew him to be a very agreeable companion, having spent some hours with him at the last Warwick assize. In the course of conversation, he introduced the name of our ward, and spoke so warmly in praise of her character, that I, partly in jest, partly in earnest, asked him if he was in love with the lady. He said he had seen her, but that he was not so happy as to be of her acquaintance; adding a wish to be introduced to her, which I told him he soon should be, if he would give himself the trouble of taking a ride to Bristol, and offered him, if he were in earnest, my interest. My young spark caught at this in a moment, and said that Bristol was the destined end of his journey. In short, I drew him on by little and little, till we came to a right understanding with each other, and at length, so far enticed him, (for I thought it would be a clever thing) that he made me such proposals as I could not make any objection to; therefore promised him your influence; my own, and Lady Glynn's.

Thus then this matter is settled as far as it can be at present; at which I am extremely glad; for notwithstanding her aunt's very partial fondness, I do not, as I have often said, think our young lady very marketable, though she has such a lumping fortune: and then, as I told you in my last, I am every day more and more convinced she has some private amour upon her hands, only she manages so cunningly that I cannot discover the secret; but her languishing airs; her conversation, and her manner upon divers occasions (as well as her constant refusal of several gentlemen whom I have named to try her) confirm it to me; though Lady Glynn will not be convinced. I do not pretend to so much penetration as to say I should have suspected it, if Mr. Langley had not given me the hint, but after he mentioned it (and I think he knew something more than he would say) I thought I saw it plainly, and have for some time been determined to get at some of her letters *myself*, as her aunt refuses her assistance. I have lectured Mrs. Sally upon it two or three times, but she firmly denies any knowledge of the matter; yet I still suspect that by means of my man Chapone, who courts this girl of Lady Lucinda's, the intrigue, if there be one, is managed; and the other day I questioned him, likewise, upon the subject; but he disowns being acquainted with any such an affair as strongly as Sally does; so I know not what to conclude. It would be a confounded slur upon us all to have an heiress of such consequence intrusted to our care and elude our sagacity. I therefore tell you every particular I can gather, that your suspicions, by being awakened, may lead to some probable conjecture. One particular I can answer for, which is, that the business is carried on by letter only; for I positively affirm no suspicious person whatsoever has visited her since she has been under our protection; and I farther protest that she never is suffered to go out without being attended by some trusty person; so that you see I am every way careful of our young heiress: nevertheless, I shall be very glad, as I know you will be likewise, when she is under another—and, in her case—better protection; and for that reason I must own I took some pains to allure the Alverston Squire to the noose, which he very readily fell into. I told him I had, before now, heard my ward mention his

name, but that I must not betray a young lady's secrets. This took him mightily, and he was very curious in enquiring what opinion she entertained of him; but I told him he must learn that from herself, repeating that it was not right to betray a young lady's secrets. For two reasons I hinted that she was very coy and shy to the men. First, because he is a high-spirited spark, and would like her the better for it; next, to prepare him for rather a cold reception; as it is ten to one that she will treat him with disdain. However, I shall give her to understand, that except she behaves to him with complaisance, we shall be convinced she entertains improper partialities; it being impossible she could, were her heart as free as it ought to be, refuse such an eligible offer; and that, therefore (as I shall take upon me to answer for you) we shall all think ourselves justified in securing her from improper acquaintances, by sending her back to the convent till she shall be of age. This I know will so terrify her, that, in all likelihood, she will receive him at first with civility, by which means, as he is a very handsome and fine young fellow, he may, in a short time, so gain upon her fickle temper, as to make her bend to our wishes. She will, perhaps, object to his not being high enough in rank; but it is telling no great secret if I say that none of rank will have her, except they want her fortune; and, indeed, I cannot but wonder at young Stanley's inducement, as both he and his family must be above the temptation of riches, I should suppose. He talked something about her beauty; which, as he said he had seen her, rather surprised me. Her understanding too, he mentioned. I wish he does not find himself disappointed when he is more acquainted with her. However, as I had that thought in my head, I drew him on, as I have said, to plain proposals, so that he will not find it an easy matter to go back with honor. Perhaps, said I to myself, her being an earl's daughter is the charm; and if that is the case, it is all well enough. After dinner we determined to post on to this place; where, as Mr. Stanley was obliged to retire to write some letters as soon as we arrived, I took the opportunity of penning the above particulars to you, knowing they would give you pleasure.

Let me hear from you immediately after you have asked council about the settlements, for I well know we must take the capricious lady as soon as we can catch her in the humour.

I am, dear sir,
your friend,
and humble servant,
PHILIP GLYNN.

LETTER, XXVI.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Stratford, March 20th, 1789.

WELL, my dear Charles! I am thus far arrived on my Quixotte expedition, and upon considering coolly of the matter, seem half afraid *you* will think it was, *indeed*, began under the guidance of the spirit of chivalry; a symptom that I myself am verging to that opinion; and, to confess the truth, it does seem to favour a little of romance.

Is it a peculiar unhappy quality in me, or do I share the failing in common with the rest of my species, that I am apt to set a mighty value upon things seemingly hard to be attained, and abate in my relish for them, when they are given to my hand? I believe the question is thus to be answered.

Mortals of my temper are very liable to this mental illness; whereas those with better hearts and wiser heads enjoy what they possess without taking pains to make themselves miserable, by heightening, in idea, the good of those things they are without.

I left Alverston yesterday, and reached Mr. Bellard's before dark. With him I staid all night; breakfasted with him this morning, and about noon arrived at Coventry, where, as I alighted, I heard the name of Sir Philip Glynn, and found myself somewhat fluttered upon the supposition that the ladies were with him; but it proved otherwise. He had been at the inn two days, transacting business with some gentlemen from London, who had just left him: presuming, therefore, upon the slight acquaintance I made with him last autumn at Warwick, I introduced myself to his notice, and proposed, if he was not otherwise engaged, our dining together; which proposal he accepted with readiness. I am not in the humour for description, or I could make you smile at the baronet's *peculiar*s, which were, to me, rather novel. The good man is not over wise; but he has a mighty open, and, seemingly, honest heart.

What the plague ails me, Charles! I am either very much tired, or not well; for it cannot *be* that my spirits are depressed, because I seem to have a probable view of gaining the very point which I set out to compass.

But I must tell you a few plain matters of fact, and leave you to make your own comments.

Sir Philip and I, both of us being desirous to pursue our journey, agreed upon an early dinner; during which, in the course of conversation, I led to a topic that naturally introduced the name of Lady Lucinda Harrington. It would be labour to me, at this time, to give you minute particulars: suffice it that Sir Philip's sedulity to continue his ward the subject of our discourse, together with several good round intimations—one of which, accompanied with a significant look, was—"I can tell you, Mr. Stanley, I have heard my niece mention your name *before now*,"—so convinced me of the reality of her partial opinion of me, that (softened still more by the presenting idea of the scene at Mr. Mortimer's) I was so much worked upon by rising compassion; so opened by my own too sanguine temper, and so led, or rather pressed, by Sir Philip's encouragement, that I, at length, fairly—I hope not foolishly—made him the proposals which my father (for I acquainted both him and my mother with my whole design) enabled me to offer, if I found circumstances to answer my wishes. The baronet accepted them (and indeed they were unobjectionable) with an avidity which confirmed my idea of his knowledge of the lady's partiality. He likewise promised me, in addition to his own, the influence, *were it necessary*—with a significant emphasis he spoke—of Lady Glynn and Mr. Bernard, his brother-guardian; not doubting but we should *wind up the business* to the satisfaction of all parties; though I must expect a little difficulty with his ward, at first, as she was naturally shy to the gentlemen.

Upon the whole, there was somewhat particular in Sir Philip's ready acquiescence with what I so hastily proposed: however, it is easily accountable for, if Lady Lucinda's obliging prepossession in my favor be allowed. Yet I feel myself dissatisfied, and want to remove the fault, if any fault there be in the case, from myself. But why, you will ask, am I otherwise than pleased, when I have so nearly attained what, this morning, seemed to be the summit of my wishes? That, Charles, *is the question*, and if it is not owing to a naturally craving and unsatisfiable disposition, I know no solution for the mystery but—the name of *Maria Birtles*.

Now you will begin to rave and call me by all the vile epithets your recollection can furnish you with.

Rave on, and welcome. I care not. Neither your applause nor your censure can set me *to rights* within. Of the two, I think I had rather, in the present situation of circumstances, have your blame than your praise, for then I should be put upon seeking for—and should, perhaps, find—a defence for my conduct and sentiments.

But I *hate* sentiments: I hate myself; I hate all the world; Maria Birtles more than all the rest; for has she not greatly interrupted my peace? she has; and the only pleasure I can find, is in the revengeful idea that I, likewise, have injured hers. Yet oh! that thought only wounds mine more deeply. The sweets arising from a revenge so glorious, turn and sink into my heart, and give death to my happiness.

I will write no more. I will think no more. Yet what can I do? If I go to bed I cannot sleep.

Sir Philip now sends up to ask if I am ready for supper. I cannot eat: but I must attend him.

After dining together at Coventry, we agreed to post off for Stratford: both, seemingly eager to pursue the journey. He, probably, was really so; and I wanted to be going *somewhere*; hardly caring whither.

After supper, I must write, as I promised my mother, to Emma. But why do I plague you with the mention of *her* name!

Woman! woman! detested!—beloved!—baneful!—blissful creature! at once our torment and delight—*with* thee, no happiness; *without* thee, no felicity—the only foundation yet certain destruction of gladsomeness and content!

O! Charles! Charles! pity me; write to me, and soothe me.

Direct to me at the post-office, Bristol.

GEORGE STANLEY.

I received yours from Framlingham half an hour after I sealed my last. This, as you order, I shall send to Aldborough; but my next I will address to you at the post-office Yarmouth, as by your account you will be arrived at that sea-port by the time my letter will reach it.

LETTER, XXVII.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Saturday night, Bristol March 21st.

IN the human mind are strange vicissitudes; and in mine, perhaps, as sudden changes from one extreme to another as in that of any mortal breathing. I am now a happy—a very happy fellow, and wonder what ailed me when I wrote my last. My spirits must have been depressed by some demon of envy.

After I had finished; directed and sealed my letter to you, I went down to the baronet who, likewise, had been writing, and found him very impatient for his supper, which was presently brought in. My appetite was, at first, very sickly, but sir Philip's heartiness revived mine, and I made a pretty comfortable meal; after which, we each of us sipped a bottle of excellent port, and retired with a mutual desire of pursuing our route so early as six in the morning; wishing to reach Bristol in good time this evening. Before I went to bed I wrote my letter to my sister, giving her an account of my plan, &c. and then paid a larger tribute to Somnus than I expected, who very bountifully rewarded me, by ordering Morpheus to enliven my fancy with the most pleasing images; but I have no leisure, now, to relate visions. Sir Philip called at my chamber-door this morning before six. I obeyed his summons, and we were upon the road a few minutes after. At Gloucester we took an early dinner, and reached this city by five o'clock. Upon Sir Philip's recommendation I was immediately accommodated with comfortable apartments in a genteel lodging-house near the Exchange, from whence I now write, but I would have you continue to direct to me at the post-office.

After I was dressed I went to Captain Jones', and it happening to be the anniversary of his wedding, I there met with Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright; Mr. Mrs. and Miss Wharton; James Pyeford and Sir John Cottingham; with a crowd of beaux and belles to whom I was a stranger; but being introduced by Jones, was soon acquainted with half a hundred.

Lady Lucinda Harrington was a topic of conversation; the men affirming she had a hundred and fifty thousand charms—alias guineas—and was, consequently, the object of general admiration. But it seems she has confessed her heart is not her own; and this, she says, she declares, that she may not be pestered by the gentlemen. An extraordinary proceeding surely; and such as but few ladies would adopt. However, it must be allowed it is a very generous method, as it shows she does not wish to make unavailing conquests.

But is it not rather strange, Conway, that this young beauty—as I have taken it into my head to suppose she is, though I have not I think heard much said upon that particular—should be so determinedly prepossessed in favor of a person of whom she has such a slight knowledge? Well, but so it is. There, certainly, is no accounting for female partialities. She, probably, has *heard* something of me that she *does* like; and, perhaps, not *seen* any thing, in our short interview, that she does *not*, [I do not speak from vanity, Charles, for I am not in a vain humour] and having a heart to dispose of, which, we may conclude, she did not think any one who solicited it worthy to possess, it is not, all these suppositions allowed, so very strange, is it? that she should bestow it upon me: for surely there cannot, after all, be any doubt about the matter! I shall look like a pretty puppy indeed, if there *be* a mistake in this particular. But avaunt mistrust and diffidence! it must be so. Her fainting upon hearing I was expected at the wedding—her delineating, as she certainly did, my features—Sir Philip's intimations, and eagerness to hear and accept our proposals—her declaration that her heart is not her own, yet visited by no evidently preferred addresser—in short, there are so many presumptive proofs, and these pretty strong ones, of her having conceived *a penchant for my*

identity, that even modesty herself, with a blushing cheek, must acknowledge it would be inexcusable infidelity to withhold belief: mine I therefore yield with transport; and accept, with gratitude, the flattering predilection, which I mean to return with all possible fervency.

To-morrow morning—or rather *this* morning—I am to breakfast at Sir Philip Glynn's, and to be introduced to the ladies; though in no other light, I suppose at present, than as a new acquaintance of the good gentleman's. I should not chuse to be too early presented as a lover, because it might prevent Lady Lucinda from behaving with that freedom which would give a true display of her character: not but that it is, I must own, as matters have been managed, rather too late for a scrutiny; as the election seems to be *uninvalidable*.

And now, that I may not look so stupid in the morning as to discredit my future charmer's prepossession, I will try to get some sleep.

The party at Captain Jones' broke up at twelve, on account of its being Saturday night; else, I believe, they would there have hailed the rising sun, for they seemed to be very convivial.

Adieu, Charles. I think I shall dream of Lady Lucinda.

GEORGE STANLEY.

I make no particular mention of Mr. Evelyn, as I take it for granted you have taught him to know enough of me, to convince him that I shall remember him always.

LETTER, XXVIII.

MISS STANLEY, TO LADY STANLEY.

Woodstock, March 22nd.

AS you, my dear madam, know that Sunday is not my general letter-writing day, my date will lead you to expect I have a more than ordinary call upon me to exercise my pen: and indeed I have; for I feel myself distressed beyond expressing. But how blameable am I thus to alarm my dear mother! Let me hasten to say that the occasion of my present vexation is the substance of a letter, which is just put into my hands, from my brother. It is dated from Stratford, and informs me he is so far on his journey to Bristol, in chace, as he calls it, of *Lady Lucinda Harrington*. Never could astonishment exceed that which seized me on reading this intelligence. Who in their senses would single out Lady Lucinda Harrington for a daughter to Sir Edward and Lady Stanley! Why, madam, she is one of the most—But what am I going to say! Is she, *indeed*, to be my sister! If she is, I shall do well to suppress my opinion of her. *My* opinion did I say? It is, it seems, the opinion of every individual who knows her, that she is weak, vain, proud, capricious and coquettish. Young as she is, it is, without hesitation, reported that she has been engaged in more than one intrigue. Report, indeed, is often fallacious; but, my dear madam, I cannot, I cannot consent she should be my brother's wife; as such a woman as would make him happy, never could have the character which this, whether justly or not, as to several particulars, has universally obtained. What *can* George mean! What *can* be his inducement! Riches he wants not; nor *would* he, I hope, think of marrying to acquire an addition to his fortune. Had the lady of whom he is in pursuit, even the poor recommendation of *beauty* to engage him, it would abate my *wonder*, though not my concern; but, by all accounts, she is very far, indeed, from being handsome.

Mrs. Clifford, who was last week at Mrs. Lawson's, was speaking of her and her family in general, who, it seems, are all reckoned *odd kind of people*. I did not understand this expression, nor did I ask for an explanation, as I had then very little idea of its ever being to me of any importance. I remember she answered a question of Mr. Robert Shemmon's respecting the *person* of Lady Lucinda, by observing, that when she had a cloak on she did not appear ungenteel, but that without one, her being awry was very discernable; and that her face, since she had had the small-pox, wore but an unpleasing appearance.

Tell me, my dear madam, tell me what has induced my brother to think of this lady. I am all impatience for some information. Sometimes I am inclined to write to him; yet know not what to say. I would welcome such a fit of illness as would justify my sending for him by an express.

The letter I received from you last Thursday, demands a thousand acknowledgements. I intended to have replied to it to-morrow, but my present subject totally engrosses all my ideas. Surely on Tuesday morning, the time you dated, you knew not of my brother's intended expedition to Bristol. I *conclude* you did not, or you would have mentioned so material a circumstance. How sudden then—But I bewilder myself to no purpose with conjectures.

Pray do ease my anxiety by an early reply.

To-morrow is to be spent at Mrs. Stanhope's: but I doubt I shall be very uncomfortable; even when surrounded by such amiable and dear friends.

I am greatly obliged by, and as well pleased with, the contents of the two letters sent me by your Maria. Give my love to her, and tell her that she is, however, a saucy gipsy, to insinuate that I shall be jealous of your partiality for her, and that, when my spirits are more free than they are at this period, I mean to write her a chiding reply. But to you let me say that I am happy in your having such a companion.

I wrote to Alverston about an hour before your last reached Woodstock. You have, I doubt not, received the scribble, and will be so kind as to give me your opinion upon the subject.

I am very happy in my dear father's approbation of my reply to Colonel Greville, from whom I have again heard in a short note, intimating an intention of being soon in Oxfordshire. I hope he does not think of coming on my account, as I shall be really distressed to contend with him, having *no other* answer to give than what the mail conveyed.

Sir Charles Conway's stay in London was lengthened to my expectation. Sir Charles, madam, has, in London, several acquaintance.

Pray do not be so distressed about my health. Indeed I am better than I have been; and my good doctor affirms that the fine weather will entirely drive away my malady.

All at Woodstock send the most affectionate remembrance. They bid me tell you I am very good and manageable. Mrs. Eleanor Lawson, in particular, charges me to say that she will answer for my being your's, and my dear father's,

ever dutiful daughter,
EMMA STANLEY.

LETTER, XXIX.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Bristol, March 22d.

NOW, Charles, bedizened in the best array I brought to Bristol, and perfectly satisfied with my appearance, am I waiting for the important hour. The clock this instant strikes eight. At nine I am to be received at Sir Philip Glynn's. I cannot but say that I feel a little flutteration, as the girls call it, at the approach of this momentous interview. I hope Lady Lucinda will come up to the expectations I have formed of her. To be sure *beauty* is not essential in a wife; yet I cannot help wishing I may find my ideas of her, in that respect, realized. However, if the contrary be the case, I will endeavour to make the abatement with cheerfulness; consoling myself by contemplating the superiority of the beauties of her mind.

I forgot to tell you that I wrote, from Stratford, to my father; communicating my unexpected

success from my accidentally meeting with Sir Philip, and requesting him, for the sake of form, to give that gentleman, by letter, a ratification of the proposals he so generously enabled me to offer. This, perhaps, was unnecessary; however it is of no other consequence than to bind me more strongly to fulfil my own warm wishes.

My spirits are quite in alt; and I am quite a happy fellow.

* * * * *

A note from Sir Philip is now arrived, desiring my attendance as soon as convenient. What now, I wonder, is the matter! Sure she does not pretend to stand out! I shall not be pleased with her if she uses too much affectation upon the occasion. A little, I can allow her; as I should be disgusted with an *apparent willingness*; but no uncandidly expressed reluctance!

And now, Conway, for the day, adieu. I do not expect much leisure for scribbling till drowsy mortals have submitted to the chains of slumber, as I suppose I shall be permitted to attend Sir Philip and the ladies to church.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XXX.

SIR PHILIP GLYNN, TO LIONEL BARNARD, ESQ.

Bristol, March 22d.

DEAR SIR,

I Take the opportunity which my early rising gives me, of telling you that I hope I have used such means with our young lady as to induce her to comply with our wishes; and I will tell you what I said to her.

As soon as ever I alighted, I told Lady Glynn the whole affair, who, even more readily than I imagined, came into the plan; and then I went up to Lady Lucinda, whom I found in a very sullen mood. Upon my informing her that I had received very eligible proposals from a young gentleman who had the united countenance of all those who had any right to controul her, she assumed a haughty air, and, as usual, declared against receiving the addresses of any body. I then grew peremptory, and told her it was our determination (making her believe you were acquainted with the business) she should either comply or return immediately to France, and remain in her old convent till she was full twenty-one years of age; as we had received information that she, by some means, held improper correspondencies, and we did not chuse to be outwitted. At this she coloured like scarlet, and desired to know with whom we thought proper to suspect her being indiscreetly acquainted. I told her that was the mystery, and that it led us to apprehend she might be too cunning for us, if we did not take care, in steps of more consequence. I then told her the name of her intended lover, and left her with a desire to see her when she was disposed to be obedient. After this I went into my study, and in about half an hour sent up Chapone with a note, desiring to know her determination, as, upon her refusal, I should immediately write to you to procure her a passage to

France as soon as possible, and likewise to seek out a proper person to attend her. It was, as I expected, a considerable time before she would deign to give me an answer; but, at length, sent to request I would go up to her, and when I went, she received me with tolerable good humour, and after some expostulation told me she would comply, if I would let her be allowed a handsome sum for pin-money. I assured her she might rest herself contented about that matter, as Mr. Stanley had exceeded our very wishes. I then explained his proposals, with which she seemed perfectly satisfied; and upon my giving her two fifty-pound notes, to keep her in this good humour, she thanked me, and owned she had sometimes been very stubborn, but said she had always a due sense of our care and kindness, and was often ashamed of herself.

So far so good, brother-guardian; and I have now sent for Mr. Stanley to come to me before the ladies appear in the breakfast-room, that I may tell him how matters stand. I have led him to expect a cool reception, and as she has promised to behave with complaisance, I will give an intimation that I found it very difficult to persuade her to comply when I first proposed the matter, but that when I mentioned his name, she seemed mollified, and, soon after, gave her consent. This is, to be sure, rather stretching the point; but we will pass over that, as it will give our young gentleman a little courage if he supposes she has heard any thing of his character (and I shall enlarge upon that hint) to prepossess her in his favor.

I every minute expect his coming, so will conclude with congratulating you upon the probability of your wishes, respecting our ward, being soon fulfilled, and am,

dear sir,

your friend,

and humble servant,

PHILIP GLYNN.

Last night I received two hundred and seventy pounds for Mr. Whalley, which I put to account.

LETTER, XXXI.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Bristol, Sunday night, past eleven.

I Am too sleepy, Charles, to write even the events of this day. It has been observed that when the mind has been overcharged, it feels a lassitude upon its retiring into itself. Of this lassitude, however, I never was before so sensible. Perhaps I never before had my mind so *greatly* overcharged. What the cause is, I know not; but though I have a great deal to say, I feel an averseness to scribbling. However I will do so much violence upon my inclination as to tell you that I have spent the day at Sir Philip's, where I met with a most gracious reception from him and from the ladies. I intended to have been home early, on purpose to have given you a minute account of what has passed; but could not, without absolute rudeness, disengage myself from the baronet's importuning invitation.

Let me just observe, that my expectations relative to Lady Lucinda's beauty were not quite answered. She is not handsome, Charles. She is not in the least handsome. I think rather the contrary. Not, as I before observed, that beauty is essential to conjugal happiness, and it was a fault in me to raise my ideas so high; for, upon recollection, (and it now strikes me forcibly) I never heard her person much celebrated. I believe I mentioned this last night: but it then only simply occurred without my thinking of it with attention. I cannot but say that I admire female beauty; especially since I have been so feelingly convinced that every amiable—every great and good quality, may inhabit a beautiful form.

However, as you will think this is bringing Maria Birtles too forward in the picture, I will suppress my sentiments on this particular, and at the same time betake myself to rest. Whether I shall sleep or not, or if I do, of whom I shall dream, I cannot pre-determine; nor can I tell whether I shall have leisure to write to you to-morrow.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XXXII.

LADY LUCINDA HARRINGTON, TO MISS
BELINDA HORTON.

Bristol, March 23d.

I Arise, my dear Belinda, before one beam from Sol's refulgency has gilded with its glorious brightness our horizon, to tell you that I now hope for permission to see you in Bath in a very few days, and that I shall doubtless be attended by *my dear George*, who being, yesterday, dressed with the greatest nicety, (doubtless to secure his conquest) looked handsomer—positively handsomer than ever. When we were at church, how greatly did he outshine, in my eye, all others who ever sought my favor! And am I not convinced—But I must suppress my raptures. Volumes of panegyric would leave half his charms unblazoned.

In my last night's hasty note, I told you upon what prodigious good terms Guardy and I now are; but I forgot to mention the material circumstance of his graciously presenting me with two fifty-pound bank notes, and after Stanley left us, told me, in a fond fit, that I might now be permitted to pay you the visit I had so earnestly petitioned for.

I therefore write in haste, to prohibit your going from home till I see you, and to desire you to ask your aunt to send for me in a hurry about next Wednesday, *on account of your being very much indisposed*. I cannot at this time give my reasons for this procedure; but when I see you, you shall know every thing.

I will only add that I am exceedingly happy. Scenes of Arcadia seem to dance before my eyes; my loved Corydon appearing in every view irresistible. You cannot think how pleased I am with your approbation of my flame, nor what an ease it gave me when I confessed it to you. Dearly as I have loved you, I think I should have found an abatement of my friendship, had you reprobated my affection, my voluntary affection, for the dear lad of my wishes.

Ah, Belinda! before this week be ended! Heavens! what may not happen before this week be ended!!! With joy; with apprehension; with fear; with delight, I tremble. What an extatic pleasure will it be to me to reward with my hand and fortune the dear man who has so long possessed my heart.

Adieu, Belinda. Belinda, adieu. Remember you are not only to accompany me to the awful altar of Hymen, but to live with me ever after, and be a partner of, as well as a witness to, the happiness of
your too tender

LUCINDA.

LETTER, XXXIII.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Monday morning, Seven o'clock.

I Can neither write nor let it alone. What to do with myself till dinner I know not. I am to dine at Sir Philip's.

* * * * *

Charles, what ails me! I am restless, impatient, and low-spirited. Am I ill? Is the disorder in my mind or my body? You are a casuist, and must both tell me what my malady is, and how a cure will be best effected. Every thing that I have wished, goes on with celerity; and the end of my labours seems to be nearly accomplished; for Lady Lucinda has received and even accepted me as her husband elect: Lady Glynn has expressed her happiness at the union in prospect; and, as to *Sir Philip*, he drives on at the rate of fifteen miles in an hour. This very day I am invited, or rather impressed, to meet, at his house, an attorney, who is to make a rough draft of the settlements, which are to be sent up to London for immediate engrossing, if Mr. Barnard, the other guardian, approves them; and, so generous has my father been, it is almost impossible he can do otherwise.

I modestly intimated to Sir Philip, that in a day or two he might expect a ratification of the proposals in a letter from Sir Edward to himself; but he carelessly replied that that was not of the least consequence, as the well-known character of both my father and myself was sufficient security for him to place entire reliance upon; adding, with a very high compliment, that he knew *who* he accepted as a husband for his niece when he accepted me; or he should not so unceremoniously have *chimed in* with my offer. He then said that as all parties appeared so well satisfied, he did not know why the wedding should not be solemnized as soon as the settlements could be executed.

What a cursed hand have I made of this job! Into what a labyrinth am I drawn by my own stupid folly! And now—which way to turn—how, by any means to extricate myself from this dilemma, I know not.

“But why,” you will exclaim, “do you wish to be extricated from those fetters you were so willing—so eager to put on.”

O Charles! Charles!—there is no denying it any longer—I am—I am a most miserable dog—made so, from a very happy fellow, by my own contrivance.

What demon could persuade me to form and follow so ridiculous a plan—for I now see it clearly in that light—as to set out upon a full gallop—puppy as I was—in pursuit of a woman to whose person, and even character, I was almost a stranger! I did not, it is true, intend to proceed to these lengths before I had made some acquaintance with her; and had I not met with Sir Philip at Coventry—had I not so precipitately introduced myself to him—and had he not been so confoundedly ready to forward this plaguey business, I had still been my own man; for the first

visit—almost the first sight of the lady—would have, at least, cooled my endeavours to effect a second.

Indeed, Conway, I am a miserable being. To go forward, is destruction; to go back, so cursedly am I hampered, is almost impossible. Tell me, my friend! my better genius! what I must do to rid myself of this wretched piece of business.

I think I will now give you particulars. Last night, and when I began this letter, I was unwilling to enter upon the subject, being ashamed of myself, and wanting to brave it out; but now I yield; conscience urges me to confess my folly, and to deplore its effects.

Yesterday morning, soon after eight, a note from Sir Philip, as I told you, demanded my instant attendance. I immediately went in the height of impatience to know the cause of the hasty summons; fearing something destructive to my then stupid wishes. The baronet received me with bows and smiles; and I thought myself happy when he told me that the evening before, he announced to his ward the arrival of a new lover, at which she was excessively displeased, and absolutely refused to receive him, till he mentioned my name; when, it seems, she blushed; courtesied, and owned her approbation! A great deal more to this purpose, Sir Philip told me; all which enforced the conviction of her really unaccountable prepossession; so that *that* part of my inducement retains its full force; indeed is strengthened, by the increased confirmation of her, perhaps, increased partiality.

At nine o'clock we were told that breakfast and the ladies waited for us, and were ushered into an elegantly furnished dressing-room, where Lady Glynn and Lady Lucinda were sitting upon a sofa. The first arose to receive us as soon as we entered, and immediately approaching me with an offered hand, welcomed me to her house; adding, that *my errand there*, and the character she had heard of me, not only from Sir Philip, but from all the world, rendered ceremony unnecessary and impertinent.

To this dainty speech I made as polite a reply as my surprise would suffer my ideas to furnish me with, but being led by the elder to the younger lady, I was absolutely astonished at hearing the aunt address the niece in the following words, and at that niece's reply.

“Lucinda, my ever beloved child, arise and receive, at the warm recommendation of your most careful friends, this gentleman, whom I now, with real pleasure, introduce to you: receive him, my dear, as your lover, and look upon him as your future husband.”

I was at this absolutely struck dumb with amazement; as I neither expected nor wished for any thing of the kind; but endeavouring to recover myself to relieve the young lady, whom, I must necessarily suppose, would nearly sink with confusion, I was going to make a reply, which *she herself* interrupted, by saying—“*Your* recommendations, my dear madam, and those of Sir Philip and Mr. Barnard, have ever had additional weight with me since I was consigned to your care by my dear indulgent parents deceased; I, therefore, neither hesitate nor blush to receive Mr. Stanley as you desire; and I go farther—I even thank you” [with a courtesy she spoke the words] “for rendering my obedience so easy; so pleasant; so agreeable.”

Now, Charles, if you can find a word hitherto unknown in any language to express the height of amazement, let it sound in your ears to convey the sense of what I in vain seek to communicate. My head was turned to all the thirty-two points of the mariners compass in the course of a few moments. I absolutely stared with my mouth open, and verily believe that in the first moment of astonishment, uttered, in a tone of the strongest surprise, the word MADAM!?!—as if I doubted the evidence of my sense of hearing; but collecting myself as soon as possible, I took her partly held-out hand, and made, I believe, a very incoherent speech; for, upon my soul, I can scarce remember one syllable of what I said. However, she smiled and looked pleased; taking, I suppose, the appearance of my confusion for symptoms of love.

And now, Charles, I could wish to convey to your idea the exact figure of the woman I was standing before (as she appeared totally different to the little girl we saw at Huntington) but that I never like to make natural deformities the sport of my pen; and I could not describe the person of Lady Lucinda Harrington without an appearance of ridicule. However, you will readily believe I am now too deeply serious to attempt a style of gaiety, even if the occasion would justify it, I will, therefore, say that the outward form of this young lady is extremely unprepossessing, and her countenance still more unlovely. When we met her, which was, I think about three years back, I recollect we agreed in admiring her complexion; which, though pale, was very pleasing. This beauty is already fled. The small-pox has made such ravages in her face as I never before beheld: but I will not be minute. Her being distinguishably bent in her shape, escaped our notice, as we saw her not without a cloak. The colour of her hair was, likewise, unobserved; it being then loaded, as I perfectly remember, with brown powder, and I mistook it for an auburn; whereas it is, in reality, the most disagreeable red I ever saw. This particular *may* be mentioned with severity, because she has taken it into her head that it is very beautiful; for which reason she wears it extremely long without powder; and not content with what nature has given her, which is a very sufficient quantity, has added a monstrous load of artificial ringlets which cover her shoulders. That she feels no mortification from the twist in her back, she took pains to signify, by hinting that she thought *there was* such a thing as *elegant deformity*—*if she might so express herself*—and that a certain bend in the shape gave a dignity to the person.

Charles! guess what I felt at hearing such a ridiculous assertion from the lips of a woman who seems inevitably fated to be my wife!

Lady Lucinda does not appear to be much grown since we saw her; is, consequently, a woman of under size; but her hands and arms denote she was framed by nature upon a larger scale. With these, likewise, she appears to be more than contented; for, from their being of a pale sallowish colour, she fancies they are beautifully white; therefore is industrious to display them, ornamented with rings and pearl bracelets.

I will wait till I return from my this-day's visit before I speak *more* decisively upon her mind. At present, I cannot see any thing to contradict her being silly; proud, and ill-natured. How the plague could such a woman as this ever adopt the whim of being in love with me! for that, as I told you remains incontrovertible. Besides the circumstance of the portrait, [and that it was dropped from her pocket, her replies to my *distant* intimations on that head confirmed; strange as her being capable of such a performance seems] her whole behaviour appeared studiously calculated to convince me of her affection.

What, Conway! shall I—can I—ought I to do? To judge from circumstances—her happiness is absolutely dependant upon me. I am already bound to her by the laws of honor; both Sir Philip and Lady Glynn introducing and dwelling upon such topics as *inevitably* drew me to confirm to Lady Lucinda, in their presence, the design upon which I came to Bristol.

Charles, what *could* I do! How, *possibly*, avoid professing my intention!

May my most inveterate enemy never know so bitter an hour as the one which succeeded that profession!

I cannot describe all the ensuing circumstances of the day: the retrospection is too painful. At eleven we went to church. This was some relief; but when we returned, Lady Glynn, with horrid indelicacy, proposed to Sir Philip a little walk before dinner; saying she would leave Lucinda to entertain Mr. Stanley; adding, with a disgusting smile, that she dared to say I should not find their absence insupportable.

Heavens and earth! what a load of distress entered, at that moment, into my heart! I verily think I was hardly in my senses for an hour after. But for the relief of a harpsichord, I know not how I should have gone through this interval with decency. Lady Lucinda sat down, at my entreaty, to the instrument. I believe she played tolerably well; yet I hardly know, for I was very absent; but the unrequested shrieks of her voice almost stunned my ears. This, to a being who could live upon harmony, was almost beyond enduring. However my whole soul was so out of tune, that the music of the spheres would, at that time, have sounded as discord.

At length Sir Philip and his lady returned: we dined; we drank tea; we supped, and I came home. And now, as I told you, am I going to meet this cursed attorney.

Oh Conway! Conway! whatever have been your plagues, you have not—you never had—that bitterest of all bitter reflections to encounter with, of having brought them upon yourself by your own foolish plans and practices.

Had I *never known* MARIA BIRTLES, Lady Lucinda Harrington would have been my disgust and my torment: so lay no fault on that dear—neglected—angelic maid, for fascinating my eyes and judgement.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XXXIV.

SIR PHILIP GLYNN, TO LIONEL BARNARD, ESQ.

March 23d.

DEAR FRIEND,

I Have this instant your letter by Tom Hawkins, and send by his return, a rough draft of the settlements between Lady Lucinda Harrington and George Stanley Esq. If you approve them (and I

think you cannot do otherwise) lay them before our old friend in the Temple, and let them be finished ready for signing, and sent down the first possible moment. I am glad my letter from Stratford so well pleased you. We drive on here very fast. Lady Lucinda is as fond as a young Turtle. I never before saw her in such good humour; and *my* lady is talking of bespeaking bridal clothes. I think it would be as well for you to come down with the settlements, and we then will have the wedding directly; for you know it is not the custom for such a great heiress to have a long wooing-time. It would, as Lady Glynn says, be ridiculous to defer the affair; all parties being of one mind, and the house in readiness for their reception; for Lady Lucinda chuses to go to Harrington-Hall after the ceremony, rather than to London.

I am, my dear friend,

in great haste,

yours, &c. &c.

P.G.

LETTER, XXXV.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Monday night

NOW Charles my ruin is nearly compleat. This cursed baronet has netted me over head and ears, while I lie like a stupid fool and lament my miserable situation without endeavouring—indeed without knowing how to endeavour—to extricate myself.

Lady Lucinda is a fool, as well as ugly and illnature'd. I am *sure* she is illnature'd though she aims at appearing extremely agreeable. Indeed Sir Philip, by a bad stroke of policy, observed he never before saw her so pleasant for so great a length of time; meaning, probably, to have me suppose myself the cause, without considering what an opening it gave for a supposition that she is not so naturally.

I sicken at the recollection of the transactions of the day, and cannot recapitulate them: will therefore try to sink the remembrance of the effects of my folly in oblivion.

Tuesday morning, eleven o'clock.

Heavens and earth! what shall I do now! How shall I keep in my senses! Blockhead! Idiot! Puppy! as I am—how shall I prevent instant distraction; A curse upon my folly!—my stupid; senseless; conceited folly! Yet *somebody* must have dropped this bewildering—this *ruinating vellum-case and portrait*. For, Charles! *Lady Lucinda Harrington never had it in her possession!* I *now know* this as a truth—I thought I did before—from the most incontestible proofs. Her hand-writing—strange that I did not sooner *contrive* to see that: but I did not seek for confirmation of the matter, because I thought it needed none—Her hand-writing, accidentally displayed—vile pot-hook scrawls! as the characters are—was what first awakened the idea of a possibility of my being mistaken. I then immediately investigated the circumstances; every one of which stared me in the face with a negative. So far from Lady Lucinda's being a painter and a poet—she has not the least idea of either of the arts. With regard to a *portrait*—she declares she never saw one in her life that conveyed to her senses the least resemblance of the person for whom it was intended: and as to rhymes!—But what signifies talking about the matter? It is too assuredly true that she is not the woman for whom I began this wild-goose chase.

And here—settlements have been roughly drawn out by a villainous petty-fogger, and sent to London for Mr. Barnard's inspection; and if he approves them, for engrossing!—a letter from my dear indulgent father to Sir Philip, to whom I foolishly—in conformity with all my late conduct—gave him a direction from Stratford, to ratify the proposals he authorised me to make; to thank him for the honor he conferred upon us by his ready acceptance of me, and to tell him that he left the final settlement of every thing to his discretion and mine.

To *my* discretion! To *mine*! Yes, a pretty instance I have given of discretion, truly!

What the plague is to be done! Charles, why do you not write to me? What the deuce ails *you* that I do not hear from you? I am sure I might, ere this, have received an answer to the letter which I sent from Stratford, had you, as I desired you to do, written immediately.

Excuse me, Conway, I am out of humour with myself; with you, and with every existing being.

Do not expect me to write any more at present. What can I have to say that will make the employment a pleasant one?

I will not write again till I hear from you.

G.S.

LETTER, XXXVI.

SIR C. CONWAY, TO GEORGE STANLEY, ESQ.

Yarmouth, March 24th.

I Have two letters of yours unanswered now before me; one dated Alverston, March the seventeenth, the other, Stratford, twentieth; both of which have given me considerable uneasiness. I would have written yesterday, but was then, as now, at a loss for expression.

Before this time—before any letter of mine, in reply to either of your two last, can reach you—advice will probably be useless, or I would send an express with a hint for you not to be too precipitate in executing your design. On Tuesday you wrote from Alverston. On Thursday I received the letter. In that, you said you were going to Bristol, and that I should hear from you upon your arrival in that city; but never said how, nor when, you meant to begin your journey; consequently there was no probability of getting a letter to such a flying fellow soon enough to answer my wishes. However, when I received your account from Stratford, I most earnestly wished I had attempted it. Till that reached me, I satisfied myself, in some measure, with the belief that a first interview with the lady in question would cool the ardor of your pursuit, and that you would soon relinquish your design; but when I read your letter above-mentioned, I was more distressed than I have been since I left Derbyshire.

Could I, by any means practicable, get you out of the intanglement into which I suspect you plunged last Friday, I would not spare any pains to effect your release. But I know not what plan to pursue. Indeed I have harassed my thoughts so much about you, that I have given myself a violent head-ache, which has lasted twelve hours.

Sir Philip Glynn I am well acquainted with *per renommee*. Colonel Bridgwood, who, as I told you, supped with me at Harwich, gave me twenty ridiculous stories of *him*; his *lady*, and his *ward*; but as the conversation was, at the time, uninteresting, it escaped my pen. Most heartily do I wish I could have presaged its ever being of consequence to you.

This oddity of a baronet—this Sir Philip—is extremely sedulous to dispose of his charge to any eligible mate; apprehending, as it seems, that she may, else, dispose of *herself* without any regard to discretion. So far his anxiety, *if he has reason for it*, is laudable; but methinks I should not wish George Stanley to marry any woman whose guardian deems it necessary *to provide for her in time*. Bridgwood says he offered her to his cousin Morrison, and, after that, to Lord Wickham; adding, with a laugh, that *he* hoped to come in for a turn some day or other; and that, if he did, the gilded bait would be too alluring for him to resist; though he doubted he should find a barb on the hook.

What, consistently with my ardent wish for your happiness, can I say more upon this subject! If what *I have* said, reaches you in season, it will be sufficient; if not, it is more than enough.

You will be sure to write immediately upon receiving this: though I hope there are now some letters upon the road.

I never remembered myself to have been more actuated by impatience than at this interval. It is with the utmost difficulty that my pen is restrained by discretion. I therefore tear myself from the subject.

Last Tuesday I wrote to you from Framlingham in Suffolk; on Wednesday evening, from Yoxford, a village in the same county; for, altering my plan, I proceeded directly from Framlingham to Yarmouth, without touching upon any of the intermediate towns upon the coast; but I sent Joseph to the post-master of Aldborough, with a request that he would forward any letters directed to me, which might fall into his hands, to the post-office in Yarmouth; by which means I yesterday received yours from Stratford.

And now, as I cannot say any more about your affairs, I will touch upon my own.

I am very pleasantly situated as to lodgings, in this agreeable sea-port. Mr. Evelyn gratifies me greatly, by telling me that he never before found himself so happy. But, George, I cannot boast much in that particular! Your sister's image attends me every moment, both in solitude and in company; and I do not feel the least abatement in either the affection or esteem I ever entertained for her. You may *call* this a weakness; but when you consider the woman your sister is, you cannot *think* it one. For has she not every good, great, and amiable quality, by which a female head or heart can be ornamented or rendered valuable? She has; and that in the most distinguishable degree. And amongst *beauties*—who but Emma Stanley has the universally-allowed—the almost ungrudged (so bewitchingly soft is her manner) pre-eminence! For a gentle liveliness of disposition—for sweetness of temper—most assuredly she stands unexcelled, if not unequalled.

Oh George! George! what poignant pain I feel upon a retrospection of former scenes! Yet tormenting as this retrospection is, I cannot help almost perpetually dwelling upon what once afforded me such pure—such animating happiness; happiness that bid me look forward—that lifted my ideas to scenes of endless bliss; and for which I had presumed to hope it would be a gradual preparation.

But if I can help it I will not murmur, though whilst I have existence I can never cease to

regret the deprivation.

Herbert Evelyn, to whom I have communicated particulars, is a CHRISTIAN: not a stern religious Priest. He instructs, at the same time that he soothes me; and by encouraging me, in some measure, to indulge my grief, relieves me from its importunity.

We arrived at this place on Thursday, where almost the first object that I saw, was Mrs. Digby. I cannot imagine how it came into that woman's head to chuse such a situation as Yarmouth at such a season of the year. A month or two hence, it is much more likely to be agreeable. But, perhaps, she is as ready to wonder at the motive which brings *me* hither. Can she have a reason of the same nature? Probably, not: but, perhaps, one as stimulating.

I am *displeased* with her being here, and want to criticise the unknown occasion.

Indeed Stanley, I am fearful of growing splenetic. The Providence which sent Herbert Evelyn to my benefit, was more kind to *me*, than, at first, I was sensible of. I blindly and, perhaps, vainly, thought the blessing was confined to him; feeling probably, more self-complacency at what I *did*, than gratitude for that which I received.

You must allow me, George, now and then, to moralize a little deeply. Adverse events will produce their advantage if, instead of the poisonous, we are careful to extract the salubrious particles. May I at least *endeavour* to grow wiser and better from this bankruptcy of human happiness.

Mrs. Digby is almost a torment to me. Soon after our arrival on the Thursday evening [we reached Yarmouth by dinner] she sent to request seeing me. The message seemed pressing: I could not but go; but I was extremely displeased, upon entering her rooms, to find them filled with company. This very alert gentlewoman, though she has been here but so short a time, has managed to get acquainted with almost all the genteel people in the place. To be sure her figure, which, it must be allowed, is what is called handsome, though it pleases not me—the liveliness of her wit—her apparent good humour—and, above all, the style in which she appears, which is truly elegant—must make an acquaintance with her, flattering to people in general. She that evening had given a public invitation to all the fashionable Yarmouth world; and this was the reason she said—an obliging one I suppose she meant it—why she sent express for me; as she thought it a favourable opportunity for my being, at once, introduced to every body.

I told her I was under much obligation to her for her motive, but that it was rather my wish, and indeed my plan, to be pretty much retired, during my stay in this part of the country.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, “such a plan as that must be universally reprobated.” It would be a crime, she added, for such a man as myself—was her intended compliment—to hide from society, when I must naturally benefit every one with whom I conversed. All which she spoke with the most careless air imaginable; hastening to introduce me to the company; for this debate passed in a little hall in which she met me at my entrance. I then told her I had a friend with me, whom I could not leave by himself, and that I must request—

At which she interrupted me—"A friend with you! better and better. Who is he?" Then, without waiting for an answer—"let him come. We will have him amongst us; his being your friend is his sufficient recommendation."

There was no resisting her importunity without absolute rudeness. I was therefore, at length, obliged to comply with her request of sending for Mr. Evelyn, and was then ushered into a very handsome apartment, crowded with ladies and gentlemen; many of whom were engaged at cards: but I do not intend to carry you through the whole of the evening, which, to me, was very fatiguing. However, by means of a Mr. Sherrett, I secured the comfortable lodgings I now occupy, of which he had been, some time, in possession, and was going to quit next morning. My only objection to them is their vicinity to those of Mrs. Digby, who is continually forming what she calls parties of pleasure: and (which not a little vexes me) we are, I find, supposed to be lovers.

You cannot think how this woman plagues me. Evelyn, being in better spirits, is quite entertained with her. He humourously insists upon it that she is in love with one of us, and says he flatters himself that *he* is the favoured object, as he hopes she has too much discernment to throw away her heart upon one who would be so insensible to the favor. And yet I query if Herbert would be a whit more grateful; as though every one must, upon a first observation, be struck with admiration of Mrs. Digby's face; form; air, and manner, which certainly are somewhat fascinating, she is not, I am sure, such a woman as a man of his turn would select for a wife. Yet, when it is considered how much such an affair would advance him in the world, I do not know what to think of the matter.

You will, perhaps, imagine I am canvassing about a piece of business that is never likely to have any foundation in reality. But, between you and me, George, this fair widow thinks Mr. Evelyn a very handsome young man; and she has found out he has an excellent understanding, and that he is extremely polite and accomplished. This was her observation to me four days back; and I do not think she has seen or heard any thing since that time to alter her opinion. Evelyn, as I said, smiles about her extraordinary civilities to us both; but, I dare answer for it, has not sufficient vanity to raise one idea of her thinking of him with, even approbation: and yet I really believe she is extremely pleased with his company.

On the Thursday, as I have said, we arrived, and spent the evening at Mrs. Digby's rooms. On Friday morning, by appointment, we attended her in a walk round the town; and she insisted upon it that we should drink tea with her in the afternoon. On Saturday morning she sent to request our obliging a friend of hers—a Mrs. Chilcot, who was of her party on the Thursday—with our company in the evening; and hoped we would excuse her having answered for our attendance; which she did upon the presumption of our not yet having formed engagements of our own. I sent an excuse of not being quite well; upon which Mr. Evelyn received a note from her, expressing her concern for my indisposition, and begging to know if he thought it was of a serious nature. If it was, she could recommend me to a woman who would give me the best of attendance as a nurse; and to a physician who was a very eminent practitioner; adding, that if I was very ill, she should think it much *greater* to obey the dictates of duty and inclination in visiting me in my confinement, than to submit to the censure of hearers and lookers-on. After this, she says if I am *not* so ill as my message led her to apprehend, she should think herself obliged to Mr. Evelyn if *he* would countenance the hasty promise she had given, by favoring Mrs. Chilcot with two or three hours of his presence.

“Is the deuce in this woman!”—said Herbert, upon reading the note; “What can we do with her? Faith, Sir Charles! it is a florid conquest. Get your heart free, and try to secure hers.”

I insisted upon it that her battery was levelled at him; as an increase of her vivacity was visible whenever he approached her; whereas, to me, I had, sometimes, thought her a little reserved.

“All cunning! all design!”—he exclaimed—adding—“If she be not one of the most artful amongst women, I will give up all knowledge of the female sex.”

Thus we bandied some time upon this vivacious young dowager; neither of us allowing—because neither was willing to believe—*himself* the object of her peculiar favor: but I fancy Evelyn was a little conscious of the weakness of his side of the argument.

The aggregate of the answer to the note with which we had been honored, was, that I was only slightly indisposed, and that Mr. Evelyn would attend her appointment.

Between five and six, therefore, he called upon her, and went with her to Mrs. Chilcot’s, where they continued till near ten, and, at parting, she proposed our going with her to church the next morning, if my indisposition would permit my being abroad.

I cannot say but that the frequency of these proposals was already extremely irksome to me, as it threatened an entire demolition of the plan upon which I had determined.

Mrs. Digby’s first motive was, doubtless, to introduce us, as we were perfect strangers in the place, to the Yarmouth gentry. Had she known my wish to have continued unnoticed, she would have abated of what I was so ungrateful as to term officiousness; and which, I thought, if encouraged, would probably increase till it was insupportable. This consideration, absolutely led me to form ideas of removing from Yarmouth; till the suggestion arose of Mrs. Digby’s having, in reality, a beginning partiality for my friend, which might, for aught I knew, terminate to their mutual interest. For as she has fortune enough for both, he has the judgement and discretion, in great abundance, for which she seems to have some occasion. I therefore determined upon treating her with continued civility, and likewise upon suppressing, a little, my sentiments upon the subject; for as Herbert has a pretty deal of delicacy, he might be hurt, should the matter turn out seriously, at the recollection of its ever having been made a topic of jesting. I, as I before said, have the reputation of being the lover; which opinion, probably, arises from the supposed similarity of circumstances; for people who carry their servants about with them, are sure to have their title; family; fortune, and even private character, laid open to every frivolous enquirer.

I have ordered Robert to attend particularly upon Mr. Evelyn, and, indeed, to consider himself as his servant, during our travels: and, this morning, as I was leaning out of a window over the entrance-door, I heard a postillion of Mrs. Digby’s asking him whether it was *his* master, meaning Mr. Evelyn, or Sir Charles Conway, that was to have his lady. To which Robert, without any hesitation, replied—“O Sir Charles to be sure! we stopped at her house as we came along; and it was then, Joseph says, all agreed upon.”

A couple of prating rascals! I could very freely have given them a hearty drubbing.

From the above considerations respecting my friend Herbert, I agreed to attend the lady to church on the Sunday morning; though had I then known so much as I now do, of the ideas which, even at that early period, were scattered about, I should, upon her account, for it is not of much consequence to me, have thought it right to have declined going. When we walked up the aisle, I saw, in their looks, the thoughts of the gentlemen and ladies whose seats we passed.—I saw they considered me as the husband elect of this gay widow.

Yesterday we heard from Joseph, who has, I believe, formed some attachment to one of her women, that Mrs. Digby was extremely indisposed. Upon this, common civility made it necessary for us to send an enquiry; the answer to which, confirmed the information; and this morning at breakfast, Herbert said he thought it would not be amiss were he *to call* and ask how she did. I was of his opinion, and he went when I sat down to write this letter; and now I every moment expect his return; therefore will not finish till I see him.

* * * * *

Mr. Evelyn is at home. When he went to Mrs. Digby's he met her physician just coming down stairs. Of him he made particular enquiry, and was told she was exceedingly ill, and that the disorder seemed to be upon her spirits. When he was coming away, her woman met him, and said, "Are you going, sir? My lady would, I think, be glad"—She stopped. Herbert stood still a few moments, expecting her reply; but she said no more; he therefore left my compliments with his own, and went to take a walk.

There was something very particular, Herbert observed, in the woman's manner when she spoke to him; *so* particular, that, added to the doctor's opinion, it awakened an idea of her understanding's being deranged. Poor woman! if that is the case, I do indeed pity her greatly.

Mr. Evelyn desires to be remembered to you in very cordial terms. He desires me to tell you that he is quite impatient to see you, as he was always very ambitious of being distinguished by your notice; but, as he has often told me, he used to think you considered him as too spiritless to merit your attention.

And now George farewell. You will believe that I shall continue in anxiety till I receive your next accounts.

CHARLES CONWAY.

LETTER, XXXVII.

MRS. DIGBY, TO COLONEL GREVILLE.

Tuesday morning, Yarmouth, March 24th.

I Am now performing the part of a sick woman; and I perform it to admiration. The fit came upon me on Sunday evening; on Monday, I grew worse, and now am extremely ill.

I think I am entering into the last act of the comedy, and have not one doubt but that the piece will close with a wedding;—with two, if you play your cards as well as I have done mine.

My Benson is a dexterous manager. I am more obliged to her than I intended to be; however I am pretty well assured of her fidelity, *because* I make it her *interest* to be faithful. I am not very fond of waiting-maid confidants; but in the present case a little *prudent* communication has been absolutely necessary. This Mrs. Useful has very ingeniously circulated the report of my being addressed by Sir Charles Conway. She hinted it round even before he arrived; so, upon his appearance, it was immediately and universally adopted.

The Mr. Evelyn whom you prepared me to expect, attends my gallant knight. The moment I saw him, I entered into his whole character. My plan was immediately formed and pursued; and it must be successful. Mr. Evelyn is the very thing I wished him to be. There is some merit in managing such a man as this. I have only one fear about him, which is—that he should have a desire to be *more* than my friend. Anglois—that his admiration of me—I *intend* he should *admire* me—should lead him into love before the grand affair be over. *Afterwards*, he must do as he pleases and take the consequence.

If Sir Charles sees his friend's partiality, nothing could induce him to commence rival. These your honorable gentlemen are moved by such fine wires, that the least touch stops their progress, and puts them into a contra direction; for which reason I mean to drop some hints to my clerical friend that my heart is enthralled by the invincible Conway; this will, for a time at least, put a stop to any sneaking kindness he may be beginning to entertain for me, and out of pure heroism, lead him to promote his companion's happier destiny. I am you see perfectly acquainted with the fine-spun delicacy of these sentimental moralizers.

But I intend to be a little deranged. A *very* little; just enough to countenance a few extravagant flights. Benson may hint to my physician that she is apprehensive my case is love: and as it would be hard of belief that such a blooming young relict could love in vain—and as I should not chuse to hazard such a derogating idea—she must fill the great vacancy under the doctor's great wig (in answer to the surprise which will naturally seize him upon the communication) with a suggestion of my extreme delicacy's being so averse to a second marriage, that she believes I had rather *die* than give the gentleman *the least reason to suppose I have the least affection for him*. This will take. The good man proud of the discovery *made by his Esculapian knowledge*, will whisper the secret about, and about, till it reaches the ears of our itinerants: or Benson may add that it would be charity to give the gentleman (who, in great confidence, she may tell the doctor, is Sir Charles

Conway) a hint of the matter, as he himself is dying for love of her lady.

As to the opinion of the public on all this—I value it not a rush: besides, the idea *my amiable delicacy's* being unable to endure a second attachment, will bring me off with the *very* prudent dames, and the gay ones will laugh at me for what they will call my double folly, while I, in triumph, shall look down upon the whole universe.

And now Colonel Archibald Greville, what think you of your cousin Arabella!—*Digby*, no longer. I shall soon order my women to have my linen marked with the letters A.C.

* * * * *

Since I wrote the above, my doctor has been here. He has already caught, from Benson, a hint of my *pitiable disease*, and I dare say will set about making *the wonderful discovery* when he comes for his next fee.

* * * * *

Fortune seems to assist my designs most marvellously.—Mr. Evelyn—poor Evelyn—called just now to enquire about my health. To my wishes, at the bottom of the stairs, he met the doctor, who, it seems, proportioned the length of his visage to the deplorableness of the case, and from him Mr. Evelyn took his answer. Benson, likewise, after running up to me with the intelligence (for he arrived while she was talking, upon the stairs, to the doctor) hastened down again to conduct him out, and spoke *a little darkly* about her lady's illness.

But I must, for a short time, lay aside my pen; having to arrange a few particulars with which you are not yet acquainted; and let me tell you that your ever knowing them depends upon my success.

Tuesday evening.

Having resumed my pen, I will likewise resume my subject; it being impossible for me to write upon any other.

In my letter of Friday last, I told you of our preceding evening's entertainment, and that I presaged it would be right to be very familiar with the parson, but a *little* reserved to my dear baronet. I do not exactly mean *reserved*, but a little shy—bashful—awkward—*conscious*. To look down; to try to blush, and rather to avoid him, than otherwise, whenever he approached me. You men are so dull in comprehending the nice *artlings* by which the wisest and gravest amongst you are entrapped, that I almost despair of making myself understood.

If a woman is completely skilled in the science of manoeuvring, all she does will pass for nature, when a truly honest girl—as she is called—especially if she has a good understanding, will be said to be artful and cunning. I speak to this point decisively, because it is so strongly exemplified in the character of Amelia Blandford, whose heart is as transparent as crystal, and whose natural philanthropy leads her to wish to oblige universally; yet because she is extremely happy in a vivacity of temper, and blest with distinguished quickness of intellect, is, by the surface-skimmers of her

acquaintance, termed an artful gypsy. I hate to see people's characters so mis-read. Let Miss Blandford have the *native* reputation she merits, but does not possess, and give me that, which I more glory in, of being *skilful*.

Under five and twenty, colonel, and yet—thanks to a dear monastic education—a perfect Urganda, in the mystery of fascination.

But what a wanderer this pen of mine is! Confined at home *by my increasing indisposition*, the time seems to hang heavy, or I believe I should not have written at this crisis. I now begin to be tired of my employ, therefore cannot tell you any thing more of the last three days, save that every thing has gone on exactly to my wishes. My next step shall be to find out when my doctor (from whose house Benson is this moment returned, having now, as she tells me, fully tutored him to my wishes) shall have conveyed his intelligence to Mr. Evelyn; for that is the hint she gave him to pursue; and then to send to the young Preacher with a request to see him for a few minutes. What I shall say to him, I cannot justly ascertain, but the purport of my conversation must be my *esteem*—my high regard—my *preference* of Sir Charles Conway over all the men I know, which will doubtless set some bounds to the too favorable sentiments I cannot but think likely to arise in the heart of this very agreeable man, from the friendly familiarity wherewith, to compass my point, I must necessarily treat him: Yet I am continually apprehensive lest Sir Charles' observation of any consequential predilection should cast an eternal blight on the growth of that affection which I hope soon to see springing up in his soul for your then happy kins-woman.

Mr. Evelyn once secured as an ally—as who can doubt but he will be by this method of procedure?—my way, my work, will be easy;—*so* easy, that I am half apprehensive I shall be almost inclined to flight the ready conquest. However, if circumstances make it necessary—if he is *not quite* so tame as I expect he will be—I then, to give it the finishing stroke, will, without more ado, write him a letter, fairly acknowledging my prepossession; confessing my late indisposition was entirely owing to the great struggle between delicacy; propriety, and an affection that had been long and deeply fixed;—fixed at a time when duty demanded its extirpation: then represent what a series of affliction it occasioned me;—how resolutely I suppressed its appearances in trying situations; and will gently intimate with what propriety I conducted myself under this unrevealed distress, which was greatly increased by occasional incidents, that I cannot then mention.

I shall probably add many little things which do not just now occur, and then finish the *rational* part of my letter with saying, that after this confession, made necessary by the insinuations which have, I am well informed, been conveyed to his ear—which, you will remember, I intend to be authorised to say before I write—I cannot think of seeing him again; therefore, if he has no very particular reason to lengthen the time of his stay in Yarmouth, I should consider it as the greatest obligation I could receive, if, under a pretence of sudden and pressing business, he would hasten the visit which he talked of making to Norwich and the more Northern part of the Eastern shore, before an endeavour to restore my health should make it necessary for me to go abroad. This I shall observe, may seem rather an extraordinary request; yet as not only my tranquility, but my reputation is concerned (as after the former apparent intimacy, our avoiding each other cannot but infuse ideas detrimental to my character) I have hope, *from the rectitude of his judgment*, my courage, in defence of the delicacy of my fame, now trusted solely to his discretion and honor, will, from such a mind as his, meet with not only excuse, but approbation.

I shall then intimate that it is not my *partial bias* in his favor which leads me, with this ingenuity, to be so perfectly unreserved to him in an affair of such importance, but *my opinion of him, as a man and a gentleman*, which convinces my judgment that it is the most proper method to pursue; as it will put a stop to every unfavourable conjecture and distressing embarrassment, without having recourse to falsehood; it ever being my opinion [prepare yourself, Archibald, for a little surprise at the assertion] that honesty of heart, take its good and bad consequences, is the wisest; best, and every way, most eligible companion we can carry through life: in other words—in the words of an old adage—that “Honesty is the best policy.”

What think you of this, my lad! Will not this method be a sure one to win the heart of such a man as Sir Charles Conway? It will: it must. There remains no doubt of it. He will rejoice at finding such a woman ready to accept—as he must think, notwithstanding my delicate pretensions of delicacy which my simple doctor is to whisper in his ear—to soothe—to console him for the “ungrateful Emma.”

After this my valiant cousin, my reported derangement will make a few absurd slights very natural; as it must be supposed such a recapitulation of affecting circumstances will disorder a mind so susceptible. I shall, therefore, a little inconsistently, request that I may once more see him before he leaves Yarmouth; and, perhaps, I may ask this with some degree of wildness; then desire him *not* to oblige me, as his presence must necessarily add to the difficulty of my task; because, as I shall delicately hint, such a visit, after the candid confession I have made, cannot but lead to a conjecture respecting the tendency of his sentiments, which will—which must—endanger a resolution that, for the honor of my sex I greatly wish to be enabled to adhere to; after which I shall express something like distraction at the idea of his going without taking leave of me, and then again revert to the conclusion I must inevitably form, upon seeing him at my rooms; adding that I shall with difficulty prevent myself from flying to receive with transport a man whose sentiments I shall then judge are congenial with my own.

All this, extravagant as it may seem, the nature of my illness (which, you see, it is requisite should be of this kind) will exonerate. I do not, you may believe, intend to be *so much out*, as to raise any apprehension of some future return of my malady; therefore shall only be sufficiently disturbed to evince the greatness of my delicacy and the truth of my affection; and to justify a few extraordinary, but necessary movements.

I believe I once before observed to you, that a man of Sir Charles Conway’s turn would be so far from thinking negligently of a woman for showing an affection for him, that without such a proof he would not, I am well convinced, marry the greatest princess in the universe. Remember—he is neither a fool nor a coxcomb. From which conviction arises my plan of besieging him with an avowal of regard; being assured it will prove my strongest battery.

And now to sum up—He cannot, with common humanity, after having read my letter, think of leaving Yarmouth without seeing me. Yet his coming *will be—must be—SHALL be*—a tacit confession, followed, I hope, by an *oracular* one—of his consonant regard for me. As such, I shall appear to receive it; and shall so conduct myself as will make it impossible for him to recede from my evident conception of his visit; even though, when he enters, his intention should be quite

diverse. In short—I shall not stumble at *any* measures to effect the purpose upon which I am so strongly resolved; which resolve, my motive justifies; being determined to make the kindest; tenderest, and the best wife breathing; to reward—to make him the happiest of mankind;—for can you—dare you—doubt, in that respect, my power?

If all this *should* fail—if there remains a possibility of a defeat—my dernier resort—yet I am unwilling to mention it; and still more unwilling to enter upon it. However, if all other means fail, it *shall be* practiced. But I will follow your example. You boast of a scheme in petto. So do I. You shall not know it till emergency calls for its execution. Suffice it, *that it will be infallible*; and that it can only be justified *by necessity*; for, Greville! I WILL BE LADY CONWAY.

How comes it about that to you—to a man-creature—I write with such total unreserve on an affair of such immense importance! I will tell you why. First, because you are so necessarily involved in the consequence of my success or defeat, that, for your own sake, you cannot betray me. Secondly, because I must write about it to some body, and know no woman, nor any other man, whom I dare trust with the particulars. Thirdly, because I have been so used to confide in you—we having, I believe, two roguish hearts, true cousins—in all my little manoeuvrings from infancy, that I have got *a habit*—I would not have you too proud of my confidence—of communication whenever I take up my pen to scribble to you. I am desirous to explain my motives for two reasons:—first, to confine, as I said, *your* vanity; and next, to prevent your thinking it the effect of *mine* that I write so minutely. Not that I deny being somewhat proud of my management; which, I hope you will gratify me by allowing is of superfine texture.

Could I despotically confine my sister from disclosing the important secret, I should have the greatest pleasure in the world in putting her upon the fidgets by a minute display of all my late manoeuvrings. Poor Matilda's "*rectitude and integrity*"—words upon which she is continually ringing dull changes—would be tortured beyond revival. Never were there two children of the same mother so totally different as she and I are, in every respect. She is all innate honor; and I—and am proud of it—all conscious roguery: such roguery as the dull souls who cannot aspire to it, pretend to censure and despise. Apropos. Do you know Mrs. Egerton, of Lanston, is dead? Matilda, with all her delicacy, will take the widower, depend upon it! just before the poor woman died [she was not ill above a week] she expressed a wish to see Miss Howard, but recollecting, it seems, that a compliance with her request, would, as she appeared convinced her death was at hand, draw her friend into an after-situation rather embarrassing, she contented herself with writing her a letter, in which she made it her earnest request that she would, *indeed*, be a mother to her children; and that, as soon as a due respect to *her own* character would permit. Thus, as the moralizing gentry will say, things seem to be in a train to give Matilda a reward for the exemplary conduct she has pursued throughout life. I received the account of Mrs. Egerton's death from aunt Montgomery; who has been to visit my sister at Harborough.

The old gentlewoman writes a long prosing letter upon the occasion, and says Miss Howard was very much afflicted at the intelligence.

Believe this who will. I know better things. *Affected* she might be; but her feeling affliction at such an event, under such circumstances, is beyond the reach of my credence.

Let me hear from you immediately. How undiligent men are when compared with women! Had I been in your situation, Emma Stanley should, ere now, have taken the name of Greville. Your last letter tells me you are all alive in hope, though she has given her negative. Hasten, hasten, I beseech you, the execution of your boasted plan. It will help to facilitate mine: for *that* reason, therefore, as well as for the affection of cousin-ship, I wish you speedy success.

ARABELLA DIGBY.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.