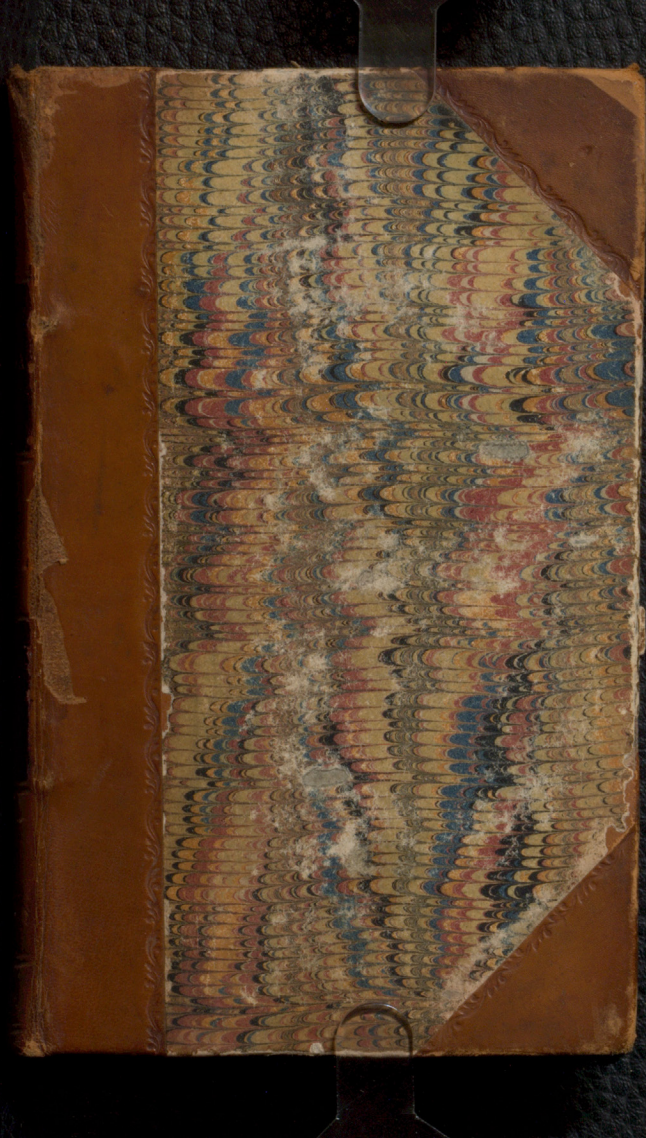








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EVELINA

OR

THE HISTORY OF

A YOUNG LADY'S INTRODUCTION
TO THE WORLD

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE ACTIONS

A NEW EDITION, IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

LONDON

1814

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VOL. II

London

Printed by Hansard, jun. Peterborough-court, Fleet-street
FOR W. LOWNDES, 38, BEDFORD STREET
AND LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME AND BROWN,
39, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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EVELINA

LETTER I.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

[Holborn, June 18th.]

MADAME Duval rose very late this morning, and, at one o'clock, we had just breakfasted, when Miss Branghton, her brother, Mr. Smith, and Monsieur Du Bois, called to enquire after our healths.

This civility in young Branghton, I much suspect, was merely the result of his father's commands; but his sister and Mr. Smith, I soon found, had motives of their own. Scarce had they spoken to Madame Duval, when, advancing eagerly to me, "Pray, Ma'am," said Mr. Smith, "who was that gentleman?"

"Pray, Cousin," cried Miss Branghton, "was not he the same gentleman you ran away with that night at the opera?"

"Goodness! that he was," said young Branghton; "and, I declare, as soon as ever I saw him, I thought I knew his face."

"I'm sure I'll defy you to forget him," answered his sister, "if once you had seen him: he is the finest gentleman I ever saw in my life; don't you think so, Mr. Smith?"

"Why, you won't give the Lady time to speak,"

said Mr. Smith.—“Pray, Ma'am, what is the gentleman's name?”

“Willoughby, Sir.”

“Willoughby! I think I have heard the name. Pray, Ma'am, is he married?”

“Lord, no, that he is not,” cried Miss Branghton; “he looks too smart by a great deal for a married man. Pray, Cousin, how did you get acquainted with him?”

“Pray Miss,” said young Branghton, in the same breath, “what's his business?”

“Indeed I don't know,” answered I.

“Something very genteel, I dare say,” added Miss Branghton, “because he dresses so fine.”

“It ought to be something that brings in a good income,” said Mr. Smith; “for I'm sure he did not get that suit of clothes he had on under thirty or forty pounds; for I know the price of clothes pretty well.—Pray, Ma'am, can you tell me what he has a-year?”

“Don't talk no more about him,” cried Madame Duval, “for I don't like to hear his name: I believe he's one of the worst persons in the world; for though I never did him no manner of harm, nor so much as hurt a hair of his head, I know he was an accomplice with that fellow, Captain Mirvan, to take away my life.”

Every body, but myself, now crowding around her for an explanation, a violent rapping at the street-door was unheard; and, without any previous notice, in the midst of her narration, Sir Clement Willoughby entered the room. They all started; and, with looks of guilty confusion, as if they feared his resentment for having listened to Madame Duval, they scrambled for chairs, and in a moment were all formally seated.

Sir Clement, after a general bow, singling out Madame Duval, said with his usual easiness, “I

have done myself the honour of waiting on you, Madam, to enquire if you have any commands to Howard Grove, whither I am going to-morrow morning."

Then, seeing the storm that gathered in her eyes, before he allowed her time to answer, he addressed himself to me;—"And if you, Ma'am, have any with which you will honour me, I shall be happy to execute them."

"None at all, Sir."

"None!—not to Miss Mirvan!—no message! no letter!"

"I wrote to Miss Mirvan yesterday by the post."

"My application should have been earlier, had I sooner known your address."

"*Ma foi*," cried Madame Duval, recovering from her surprise, "I believe never nobody saw the like of this!"

"Of what, madam!" cried the undaunted Sir Clement, turning quick towards her; "I hope no one has offended you!"

"You don't hope no such a thing!" cried she, half choaked with passion, and rising from her chair. This motion was followed by the rest; and in a moment, every body stood up.

Still Sir Clement was not abashed; affecting to make a bow of *acknowledgment* to the company in general, he said, "Pray—I beg—Ladies,—Gentlemen,—pray don't let me disturb you, pray keep your seats."

"Pray, Sir," said Miss Branghton, moving a chair toward him, "won't you sit down yourself?"

"You are extremely good, Ma'am:—rather than make any disturbance—"

And so saying, this strange man seated himself, as did in an instant every body else, even Madame Duval herself, who, overpowered by his boldness, seemed too full for utterance.

He then, and with as much composure as if he had been an expected guest, began to discourse on the weather,—its uncertainty,—the heat of the public places in summer,—the emptiness of the town,—and other such common topics.

Nobody, however, answered him, Mr. Smith seemed afraid, young Branghton ashamed, M. Du Bois amazed, Madame Duval enraged, and myself determined not to interfere. All that he could obtain, was the notice of Miss Branghton, whose nods, smiles, and attention, had some appearance of entering into conversation with him.

At length, growing tired, I suppose, of engaging every body's eyes, and nobody's tongue, addressing himself to Madame Duval, and to me, he said, "I regard myself as peculiarly unfortunate, Ladies, in having fixed upon a time for my visit to Howard Grove, when you are absent from it."

"So I suppose, Sir, so I suppose," cried Madame Duval, hastily rising, and the next moment as hastily seating herself;—"you'll be a wanting of somebody to make your game of, and so you may think to get me there again;—but, I promise you, Sir, you won't find it so easy a matter to make me a fool: and besides that," raising her voice, "I've found you out, I assure you; so if ever you go to play your tricks upon me again, I'll make no more ado, but go directly to a justice of peace; so, Sir, if you can't think of nothing but making people ride about the country at all hours of the night, just for your diversion, why, you'll find I know some justices as well as Justice Tyrrell."

Sir Clement was evidently embarrassed at this attack; yet he affected a look of surprise, and protested he did not understand her meaning.

"Well," cried she, "if I don't wonder where people can get such impudence! if you'll say that, you'll say any thing: however if you swear till

you're black in the face, I sha'n't believe you ; for nobody sha'n't persuade me out of my senses, that I'm resolved."

"Doubtless not, Madam," answered he with some hesitation ; "and I hope you do not suspect I ever had such an intention ; my respect for you—"

"O, Sir, you're vastly polite all of a sudden ! but I know what it's all for ! its only for what you can get !—You could treat me like nobody at Howard Grove ; but now you see I've a house of my own, you've a mind to wheedle yourself into it ; but I sees your design, so you needn't trouble yourself to take no more trouble about that, for you shall never get nothing at my house,—not so much as a dish of tea :—so now, Sir, you see I can play you trick for trick."

There was something so extremely gross in this speech, that it even disconcerted Sir Clement, who was too much confounded to make any answer.

It was curious to observe the effect which his embarrassment, added to the freedom with which Madame Duval addressed him, had upon the rest of the company. Every one, who before seemed at a loss how, or if at all, to occupy a chair, now filled it with the most easy composure : and Mr. Smith, whose countenance had exhibited the most striking picture of mortified envy, now began to recover his usual expression of satisfied conceit. Young Branghton, too, who had been apparently awed by the presence of so fine a gentleman, was again himself, rude and familiar ; while his mouth was wide distended into a broad grin, at hearing his aunt give the beau such a trimming.

Madame Duval, encouraged by this success, looked around her with an air of triumph, and continued her harangue. "And so, Sir, I suppose you thought to have had it all your own way, and to have comed here as often as you pleased, and to

have got me to Howard Grove again, on purpose to have served me as you did before ; but you shall see I'm as cunning as you ; so you may go and find somebody else to use in that manner, and to put your mask on, and to make a fool of ; for as to me, if you go to tell me your stories about the Tower again, for a month together, I'll never believe 'em no more : and I'll promise you, Sir, if you think I like such jokes, you'll find I'm no such person."

"I assure you, Ma'am,—upon my honour,—I really don't comprehend—I fancy there is some misunderstanding—"

"What, I suppose you'll tell me next you don't know nothing of the matter?"

"Not a word, upon my honour."

O, Sir Clement, thought I, is it thus you prize your honour!

"*Pardi*," cried Madame Duval, "this is the most provokingest part of all! why, you might as well tell me I don't know my own name."

"Here is certainly some mistake ; for I assure you, Ma'am—"

"Don't assure me nothing," cried Madame Duval, raising her voice ; "I know what I'm saying, and so do you too ; for did not you tell me all that about the Tower, and about M. Du Bois?—why, M. Du Bois wasn't never there, nor nigh it, and so it was all your own invention."

"May there not be two persons of the same name? the mistake was but natural—"

"Don't tell me of no mistake, for it was all on purpose : besides, did not you come, all in a mask, to the chariot-door, and help to get me put in that ditch?—I'll promise you, I've had the greatest mind in the world to take the law of you ever since ; and if ever you do as much again, so I will, I assure you!"

Here Miss Branghton tittered, Mr. Smith smiled contemptuously, and young Branghton thrust his handkerchief into his mouth to stop his laughter.

The situation of Sir Clement, who saw all that passed, became now very awkward even to himself, and he stammered very much in saying, "Surely, Madam—surely you—you cannot do me the—the injustice to think—that I had any share in the—the—the misfortune which—"

"*Ma foi*, Sir," cried Madame Duval, with increasing passion, "you'd best not stand talking to me at that rate: I know it *was* you; and if you stay there a provoking me in such a manner, I'll send for a constable this minute."

Young Branghton, at these words, in spite of all his efforts, burst into a loud laugh; nor could either his sister or Mr. Smith, though with more moderation, forbear joining in his mirth.

Sir Clement darted his eyes towards them with looks of the most angry contempt; and then told Madame Duval, that he would not now detain her to make his vindication, but would wait on her some time when she was alone.

"*O Pardi*, Sir," cried she, "I don't desire none of your company; and if you wasn't the most boldest person in the world, you would not dare look me in the face."

The ha, ha, ha's! and he, he, he's! grew more and more uncontrollable, as if the restraint, from which they had burst, had added to their violence. Sir Clement could no longer endure being the object who excited them; and, having no answer ready for Madame Duval, he hastily stalked towards Mr. Smith and young Branghton, and sternly demanded what they laughed at?

Struck by the air of importance which he assumed, and alarmed at the angry tone of his voice, their merriment ceased as instantaneously as if it had

been directed by clock-work ; and they stared foolishly, now at him, now at each other, without making any answer but a simple "*Nothing, Sir.*"

"*O pour le coup,*" cried Madame Duval, "this is too much ! Pray Sir, what business have you to come here a ordering people that comes to see me ? I suppose next nobody must laugh but yourself !"

"With me, Madam," said Sir Clement, bowing, "a *lady* may do any thing, and consequently there is no liberty in which I shall not be happy to indulge *you* :—but it has never been my custom to give the same licence to *gentlemen.*"

Then, advancing to me, who had sat very quietly on a window during this scene, he said, "Miss Anville, I may at least acquaint our friends at Howard Grove that I had the honour of leaving you in good health." And then, lowering his voice, he added, "For Heaven's sake, my dearest creature, who are these people ? and how came you so strangely situated ?"

"I beg my respects to all the family, Sir," answered I, aloud ; "and I hope you will find them well."

He looked at me reproachfully, but kissed my hand ; and then, bowing to Madame Duval and Miss Branghton, passed hastily by the men, and made his exit.

I fancy he will not be very eager to repeat his visits ; for I should imagine he has rarely, if ever, been before in a situation so awkward and disagreeable.

Madame Duval has been all spirits and exultation ever since he went, and only wishes Captain Mirvan would call, that she might *do the same by him*. Mr. Smith, upon hearing that he was a baronet, and seeing him drive off in a very beautiful chariot, declared that he would not have laughed upon any account, had he known his rank ; and regretted

extremely having missed such an opportunity of making so *genteel* an acquaintance. Young Branghton vowed, that if he had known as much, as he would have *asked for his custom*; and his sister has sung his praises ever since, protesting she thought *all along* he was a man of *quality* by his look.

LETTER II.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[June 21.]

THE last three evenings have passed tolerably quiet, for the Vauxhall adventures had given Madame Duval a surfeit of public places: home, however, soon growing tiresome, she determined to-night, she said, to relieve her *ennui* by some amusement; and it was therefore settled, that we should call upon the Branghtons at their house, and thence proceed to Marybone Gardens.

But, before we reached Snow-Hill, we were caught in a shower of rain: we hurried into the shop, where the first object I saw was Mr. Macartney, with a book in his hand, seated in the same corner where I saw him last; but his looks were still more wretched than before, his face yet thinner, and his eyes sunk almost hollow in his head. He lifted them up as we entered, and I even thought that they emitted a gleam of joy: involuntarily I made to him my first courtesy; he rose and bowed with a precipitation that manifested surprise and confusion.

In a few minutes we were joined by all the family, except Mr. Smith, who fortunately was engaged.

Had all the future prosperity of our lives depended upon the good or bad weather of this evening, it could not have been treated as a subject of

greater importance. "Sure never any thing was so unlucky!"—"Lord, how provoking!"—"It might rain for ever if it would hold up now."—These, and such expressions, with many anxious observations upon the kennels, filled up all the conversation till the shower was over.

And then a very warm debate arose, whether we should pursue our plan, or defer it to some finer evening. The Miss Branghtons were for the former; their father was sure it would rain again; Madame Duval, though she detested returning home, yet dreaded the dampness of the gardens.

Mr. Du Bois then proposed going to the top of the house, to examine whether the clouds looked threatening or peaceable: Miss Branghton, starting at this proposal, said they might go to Mr. Macartney's room, if they would, but not to her's.

This was enough for the brother; who, with a loud laugh, declared he would have some *fun*; and immediately led the way, calling to us all to follow. His sisters both ran after, but no one else moved.

In a few minutes young Branghton, coming half way down stairs, called out, "Lord, why don't you all come? why, here's Poll's things all about the room!"

Mr. Branghton then went; and Madame Duval, who cannot bear to be excluded from whatever is going forward, was handed up stairs by M. Du Bois.

I hesitated a few moments whether or not to join them; but, soon perceiving that Mr. Macartney had dropped his book, and that I engrossed his whole attention, I prepared, from mere embarrassment, to follow them.

As I went, I heard him move from his chair, and walk slowly after me. Believing that he wished to speak to me, and earnestly desiring myself to know if, by your means, I could possibly be of any service to him, I first slackened my pace, and then

turned back. But, though I thus met him half-way, he seemed to want courage or resolution to address me; for, when he saw me returning, with a look extremely disordered, he retreated hastily from me.

Not knowing what I ought to do, I went to the street-door, where I stood some time, hoping he would be able to recover himself; but, on the contrary, his agitation increased every moment; he walked up and down the room in a quick but unsteady pace, seeming equally distressed and irresolute; and, at length, with a deep sigh, he flung himself into a chair.

I was so much affected by the appearance of such extreme anguish, that I could remain no longer in the room: I therefore glided by him and went up stairs; but, ere I had gone five steps, he precipitately followed me, and, in a broken voice, called out "Madam!—for Heaven's sake—"

He stopped: but I instantly descended, restraining, as well as I was able, the fulness of my own concern. I waited some time, in painful expectation, for his speaking: all that I had heard of his poverty occurring to me, I was upon the point of presenting him my purse; but the fear of mistaking or offending him deterred me. Finding, however, that he continued silent, I ventured to say, "Did you—Sir, wish to speak to me?"

"I did," cried he with quickness, "but now—I cannot!—"

"Perhaps, Sir, another time;—perhaps if you recollect yourself—"

"Another time!" repeated he mournfully; "alas! I look not forward but to misery and despair!"

"O, Sir," cried I, extremely shocked, "you must not talk thus!—If you forsake *yourself*, how can you expect—"

I stopped. "Tell me, tell me," cried he, with

eagerness, "who you are?—whence you come?—and by what strange means you seem to be arbitress and ruler of the destiny of such a wretch as I am!"

"Would to Heaven," cried I, "I could serve you?"

"You can!"

"And how? Pray tell me how?"

"To tell you—is death to me! yet I *will* tell you. —I have a *right* to your assistance,—you have deprived me of the only resource to which I could apply,—and therefore—"

"Pray, pray speak," cried I, putting my hand into my pocket; "they will be down stairs in a moment!"

"I will, Madam.—Can you—will you—I think you will!—may I then—" he stopped and paused; "say, will you"—then, suddenly turning from me, "Great Heaven, I cannot speak!" and he went back to the shop.

I now put my purse in my hand, and following him, said, "If, indeed, Sir, I can assist you, why should you deny me so great a satisfaction? Will you permit me to—"

I dared not go on; but with a countenance very much softened, he approached me, and said "Your voice, Madam, is the voice of compassion!—such a voice as these ears have long been strangers to!"

Just then young Braghton called out vehemently to me to come up stairs. I seized the opportunity of hastening away: and therefore saying, "Heaven, Sir, protect and comfort you!" I let fall my purse upon the ground, not daring to present it to him, and ran up stairs with the utmost swiftness.

Too well do I know you, my ever-honoured Sir, to fear your displeasure for this action: I must, however, assure you, I shall need no fresh supply during my stay in town, as I am at little expence, and hope soon to return to Howard Grove.

Soon, did I say! when not a fortnight is yet expired of the long and tedious month I must linger out here!

I had many witticisms to endure from the Brangltons, upon account of my staying so long with the *Scotch mope*, as they call him; but I attended to them very little, for my whole heart was filled with pity and concern. I was very glad to find the Marybone scheme was deferred, another shower of rain having put a stop to the dissension upon this subject; the rest of the evening was employed in most violent quarrelling between Miss Polly and her brother, on account of the discovery made by the latter of the state of her apartment.

We came home early; and I have stolen from Madame Duval and M. Du Bois, who is here for ever, to write to my best friend.

I am most sincerely rejoiced, that this opportunity has offered for my contributing what little relief was in my power to this unhappy man; and I hope it will be sufficient to enable him to pay his debts to this pitiless family.

LETTER III.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

[*Berry Hill.*]

DISPLEASURE? my Evelina!—you have but done your duty; you have but shown that humanity without which I should blush to own my child. It is mine, however, to see that your generosity be not repressed by your suffering from indulging it; I remit to you, therefore, not merely a token of my approbation, but an acknowledgment of my desire to participate in your charity.

O my child, were my fortune equal to my confidence in thy benevolence, with what transport should I, through thy means, devote it to the relief of indigent virtue! yet let us not repine at the limitation of our power; for while our bounty is proportioned to our ability, the difference of the greater or less donation can weigh but little in the scale of justice.

In reading your account of the misguided man, whose misery has so largely excited your compassion, I am led to apprehend, that this unhappy situation is less the effect of misfortune than of misconduct. If he is reduced to that state of poverty represented by the Branghtons, he should endeavour, by activity and industry, to retrieve his affairs, and not pass his time in idle reading in the very shop of his creditor.

The pistol scene made me shudder; the courage with which you pursued this desperate man, at once delighted and terrified me. Be ever thus, my dearest Evelina, dauntless in the cause of distress! let no weak fears, no timid doubts, deter you from the exertion of your duty, according to the fullest sense of it that Nature has implanted in your mind. Though gentleness and modesty are the peculiar attributes of your sex, yet fortitude and firmness, when occasion demands them, are virtues as noble and as becoming in women as in men: the right line of conduct is the same for both sexes, though the manner in which it is pursued may somewhat vary, and be accommodated to the strength or weakness of the different travellers.

There is, however, something so mysterious in all you have seen or heard of this wretched man, that I am unwilling to stamp a bad impression of his character upon so slight and partial a knowledge of it. Where any thing is doubtful, the ties of society, and the laws of humanity, claim a favourable in-

terpretation: but remember, my dear child, that those of discretion have an equal claim to your regard.

As to Sir Clement Willoughby, I know not how to express my indignation at his conduct. Insolence so insufferable, and the implication of suspicions so shocking, irritate me to a degree of wrath, which I hardly thought my almost worn-out passions were capable of again experiencing. You must converse with him no more: he imagines, from the pliability of your temper, that he may offend you with impunity; but his behaviour justifies, nay, calls for your avowed resentment; do not, therefore, hesitate in forbidding him your sight.

The Branghtons, Mr. Smith, and young Brown, however ill-bred and disagreeable, are objects too contemptible for serious displeasure: yet I grieve much that my Evelina should be exposed to their rudeness and impertinence.

The very day that this tedious month expires, I shall send Mrs. Clinton to town, who will accompany you to Howard Grove. Your stay there will, I hope, be short; for I feel daily an increasing impatience to fold my beloved child to my bosom!

ARTHUR VILLARS,

LETTER IV.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

[Holborn, June 27.]

I HAVE just received, my dearest Sir, your kind present, and still kinder letter. Surely never had orphan so little to regret as your grateful Evelina! Though motherless, though worse than fatherless, bereft from infancy of the two first and greatest blessings of life, never has she had cause to deplore

their loss ; never has she felt the omission of a parent's tenderness, care or indulgence ; never, but from sorrow for *them*, had reason to grieve at the separation ! Most thankfully do I receive the token of your approbation, and most studiously will I endeavour so to dispose of it, as may merit your generous confidence in my conduct.

Your doubts concerning Mr. Macartney give me some uneasiness. Indeed, Sir, he has not the appearance of a man, whose sorrows are the effect of guilt. But I hope, before I leave town, to be better acquainted with his situation, and enabled, with more certainty of his worth, to recommend him to your favour.

I am very willing to relinquish all acquaintance with Sir Clement Willoughby, as far as it may depend upon myself so to do ; but, indeed I know not how I should be able to absolutely *forbid him my sight*.

Miss Mirvan, in her last letter, informs me that he is now at Howard Grove, where he continues in high favour with the Captain, and is the life and spirit of the house. My time, since I wrote last, has passed very quietly, Madame Duval having been kept at home by a bad cold, and the Branghtons by bad weather. The young man, indeed, has called two or three times ; and his behaviour, though equally absurd, is more unaccountable than ever : he speaks very little, takes hardly any notice of Madame Duval, and never looks at me without a broad grin. Sometimes he approaches me, as if with intention to communicate intelligence of importance ; and then, suddenly stopping short, laughs rudely in my face.

O how happy shall I be, when the worthy Mrs. Clinton arrives !

June 29th.

Yesterday morning, Mr. Smith called to acquaint

us that the Hampstead assembly was to be held that evening; and then he presented Madame Duval with one ticket, and brought another to me. I thanked him for his intended civility, but told him I was surprised he had so soon forgotten my having already declined going to the ball.

"Lord, Ma'am," cried he, "how should I suppose you was in earnest? come, come, don't be cross; here's your Grandmama ready to take care of you, so you can have no fair objection, for she'll see that I don't run away with you. Besides, Ma'am, I got the tickets on purpose."

"If you were determined, Sir," said I, "in making me this offer, to allow me no choice of refusal or acceptance, I must think myself less obliged to your intention than I was willing to do."

"Dear Ma'am," cried he, "you're so smart, there is no speaking to you;—indeed you are monstrous smart, Ma'am! but come, your Grandmama shall ask you, and then I know you'll not be so cruel."

Madame Duval was very ready to interfere; she desired me to make no further opposition, said she should go herself, and insisted upon my accompanying her. It was in vain that I remonstrated; I only incurred her anger: and Mr. Smith having given both the tickets to Madame Duval with an air of triumph, said he should call early in the evening, and took leave.

I was much chagrined at being thus compelled to owe even the shadow of an obligation to so forward a young man; but I determined that nothing should prevail upon me to dance with him, however my refusal might give offence.

In the afternoon, when he returned, it was evident that he purposed to both charm and astonish me by his appearance: he was dressed in a very showy

manner, but without any taste; and the inelegant smartness of his air and deportment, his visible struggle against education to put on the fine gentleman, added to his frequent conscious glances at a dress to which he was but little accustomed, very effectually destroyed his aim of *figuring*, and rendered all his efforts useless.

During tea entered Miss Branghton and her brother. I was sorry to observe the consternation of the former, when she perceived Mr. Smith. I had intended applying to her for advice upon this occasion, but had been always deterred by her disagreeable abruptness. Having cast her eyes several times from Mr. Smith to me, with manifest displeasure, she seated herself sullenly in the window, scarce answering Madame Duval's inquiries, and when I spoke to her, turning absolutely away from me.

Mr. Smith, delighted at this mark of his importance, sat indolently quiet on his chair, endeavouring by his looks rather to display, than to conceal, his inward satisfaction.

"Good gracious!" cried young Branghton, "why, you're all as fine as five-pence! Why, where are you going?"

"To the Hampstead ball," answered Mr. Smith.

"To a ball!" cried he, "Why, what, is Aunt going to a ball? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, to be sure," cried Madame Duval; "I don't know nothing need hinder me."

"And pray, Aunt, will you dance too?"

"Perhaps I may; but I suppose, Sir, that's none of your business, whether I do or not."

"Lord! well, I should like to go! I should like to see Aunt dance of all things! But the joke is, I don't believe she'll get ever a partner."

"You're the most rudest boy ever I see," cried Madame Duval angrily: "but I promise you, I'll

tell your father what you say, for I've no notion of such vulgarness."

"Why, Lord, Aunt, what are you so angry for? there's no speaking a word but you fly into a passion: you're as bad as Biddy or Poll for that, for you're always a scolding."

"I desire, Tom," cried Miss Branghton, "you'd speak for yourself, and not make so free with my name."

"There, now, she's up! there's nothing but quarrelling with the women; it's my belief they like it better than victuals and drink."

"Fie, Tom," cried Mr. Smith, "you never remember your manners before the ladies: I'm sure you never heard *me* speak so rude to *them*."

"Why, Lord, *you* are a beau; but that's nothing to me. So if you've a mind, you may be so polite as to dance with Aunt yourself." Then, with a loud laugh, he declared it would be *good fun* to see them.

"Let it be never so good, or never so bad," cried Madame Duval, "you won't see nothing of it I promise you: so pray don't let me hear no more of such vulgar pieces of fun; for, I assure you, I don't like it. And as to my dancing with Mr. Smith, you may see wonderfuller things than that any day in the week."

"Why, as to that, Ma'am," said Mr. Smith, looking much surprised, "I always thought you intended to play at cards, and so I thought to dance with the young lady."

I gladly seized this opportunity to make my declaration, that I should not dance at all.

"Not dance at all!" repeated Miss Branghton; "yes, that's a likely matter truly, when people go to balls."

"I wish she mayn't," said the brother; "'cause

then Mr. Smith will have nobody but Aunt for a partner. Lord, how mad he'll be!"

"O, as to that," said Mr. Smith, "I don't at all fear of prevailing with the young lady, if once I get her to the room."

"Indeed, Sir," cried I, much offended by his conceit, "you are mistaken; and therefore I beg leave to undeceive you, as you may be assured my resolution will not alter."

"Then, pray, Miss, if it is not impertinent," cried Miss Branghton sneeringly, "what do you go for?"

"Merely and solely," answered I, "to comply with the request of Madame Duval."

"Miss," cried young Branghton, "Bid only wishes it was she, for she has cast a sheep's eye at Mr. Smith this long while."

"Tom," cried the sister, rising, "I've the greatest mind in the world to box your ears! How dare you say such a thing of me!"

"No, hang it, Tom, no, that's wrong," said Mr. Smith, simpering; "it is, indeed, to tell the lady's secrets.—But never mind him, Miss Biddy, for I won't believe him."

"Why, I know Bid would give her ears to go," returned the brother; "but only Mr. Smith likes Miss best,—so does every body else."

While the sister gave him a very angry answer, Mr. Smith said to me in a low voice, "Why now, Ma'am, how can you be so cruel as to be so much handsomer than your cousins? Nobody can look at them when you are by."

"Miss," cried young Branghton, "whatever he says to you don't mind him, for he means no good; I'll give you my word for it, he'll never marry you; for he has told me again and again, he'll never marry as long as he lives; besides, if he'd any mind to be married, there's Bid would have had him long ago, and thanked him too."

"Come, come, Tom, don't tell secrets; you'll make the ladies afraid of me: but I assure you," lowering his voice, "if I *did* marry, it should be your cousin."

Should be!—did you ever, my dear Sir, hear such unauthorised freedom? I looked at him with a contempt I did not wish to repress, and walked to the other end of the room.

Very soon after Mr. Smith sent for a hackney-coach. When I would have taken leave of Miss Branghton, she turned angrily from me, without making any answer. She supposes, perhaps, that I have rather sought, than endeavoured to avoid, the notice and civilities of this conceited young man.

The ball was at the *long room* at Hampstead.

This room seems very well named, for I believe it would be difficult to find any other epithet which might with propriety distinguish it, as it is without ornament, elegance, or any sort of singularity, and merely to be marked by it's length.

I was saved from the importunities of Mr. Smith the beginning of the evening, by Madame Duval's declaring her intention to dance the two first dances with him herself. Mr. Smith's chagrin was very evident; but as she paid no regard to it, he was necessitated to lead her out.

I was, however, by no means pleased, when she said she was determined to dance a minuet. Indeed, I was quite astonished, not having had the least idea she would have consented to, much less proposed, such an exhibition of her person. She had some trouble to make her intentions known, as Mr. Smith was rather averse to speaking to the master of the ceremonies.

During this minuet, how much did I rejoice in being surrounded only with strangers! She danced in a style so uncommon; her age, her showy dress, and an unusual quantity of *rouge*, drew upon her

the eyes, and I fear the derision, of the whole company. Who she danced with, I know not; but Mr. Smith was so ill-bred as to laugh at her very openly, and to speak of her with as much ridicule as was in his power. But I would neither look at, nor listen to him, nor would I suffer him to proceed with any speech which he began, expressive of his vexation at being forced to dance with her. I told him, very gravely, that complaints upon such a subject might, with less impropriety, be made to every person in the room than to me.

When she returned to us, she distressed me very much, by asking what I thought of her minuet. I spoke as civilly as I could; but the coldness of my compliment evidently disappointed her. She then called upon Mr. Smith to secure a good place among the country dancers; and away they went, though not before he had taken the liberty to say to me in a low voice, "I protest to you, Ma'am, I shall be quite out of countenance, if any of my acquaintance should see me dancing with the old lady!"

For a few moments I very much rejoiced at being relieved from this troublesome man; but scarce had I time to congratulate myself, before I was accosted by another, who *begged the favour of hopping a dance* with me.

I told him that I should not dance at all; but he thought proper to importune me, very freely, not to be so cruel; and I was obliged to assume no little haughtiness before I could satisfy him I was serious.

After this, I was addressed much in the same manner, by several other young men; of whom the appearance and language were equally inelegant and low-bred: so that I soon found my situation was both disagreeable and improper; since, as I was quite alone, I fear I must seem rather to invite than to forbid the offers and notice I received; and

yet so great was my apprehension of this interpretation, that I am sure, my dear Sir, you would have laughed had you seen how proudly grave I appeared.

I knew not whether to be glad or sorry, when Madame Duval and Mr. Smith returned. The latter instantly renewed his tiresome entreaties, and Madame Duval said she would go to the card-table; and as soon as she was accommodated, she desired us to join the dancers.

I will not trouble you with the arguments which followed. Mr. Smith teased me till I was weary of resistance; and I should at last have been obliged to submit, had I not fortunately recollected the affair of Mr. Lovel, and told my persecutor, that it was impossible I should dance with him, even if I wished it, as I had refused several persons in his absence.

He was not contented with being extremely chagrined; but took the liberty, openly and warmly, to expostulate with me upon not having said I was engaged.

The total disregard with which, involuntarily, I heard him, made him soon change the subject. In truth, I had no power to attend to him; for all my thoughts were occupied in re-tracing the transactions of the two former balls at which I had been present. The party—the conversation—the company—O how great the contrast!

In a short time, however, he contrived to draw my attention to himself, by his extreme impertinence; for he chose to express what he called his *admiration* of me, in terms so open and familiar, that he forced me to express *my* displeasure with equal plainness.

But how was I surprised, when I found he had the temerity—what else can I call it?—to impute my resentment to doubts of his honour: for he said, “My dear Ma’am, you must be a little patient; I

assure you I have no bad designs, I have not upon my word; but, really, there is no resolving upon such a thing as matrimony all at once; what with the loss of one's liberty, and what with the ridicule of all one's acquaintance,—I assure you, Ma'am, you are the first lady who ever made me even demur upon this subject; for, after all, my dear Ma'am, marriage is the devil."

"Your opinion, Sir," answered I, "of either the married or the single life, can be of no manner of consequence to me; and therefore I would by no means trouble you to discuss their different merits."

"Why, really, Ma'am, as to your being a little out of sorts, I must own I can't wonder at it; for, to be sure, marriage is all in all with the ladies; but with us gentlemen it's quite another thing! Now only put yourself in my place;—suppose you had such a large acquaintance of gentlemen as I have,—and that you had always been used to appear a little—a little smart among them,—why now, how should you like to let yourself down all at once into a married man?"

I could not tell what to answer; so much conceit, and so much ignorance, both astonished and silenced me.

"I assure you, Ma'am," added he, "there is not only Miss Biddy,—though I should have scorned to mention her, if her brother had not blab'd, for I'm quite particular in keeping ladies secrets,—but there are a great many other ladies that have been proposed to me;—but I never thought twice of any of them, that is, not in a *serious* way:—so you may very well be proud," offering to take my hand; "for I assure you, there is nobody so likely to catch me at last as yourself."

"Sir," cried I, drawing myself back as haughtily as I could, "you are totally mistaken, if you imagine you have given me any pride I felt not before,

by this conversation ; on the contrary, you must allow me to tell you, I find it too humiliating to bear with it any longer."

I then placed myself behind the chair of Madame Duval : who, when she heard of the partners I had refused, pitied my ignorance of the world, but no longer insisted upon my dancing.

Indeed, the extreme vanity of this man makes me exert a spirit which I did not, till now, know that I possessed : but I cannot endure that he should think me at his disposal.

The rest of the evening passed very quietly, as Mr. Smith did not again attempt speaking to me ; except, indeed, after we had left the room, and while Madame Duval was seating herself in the coach, he said, in a voice of *pique*, " Next time I take the trouble to get any tickets for a young lady, I'll make a bargain before-hand, that she shan't turn me over to her grandmother."

We came home very safe ; and thus ended this so long projected and most disagreeable affair.

LETTER V.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

I HAVE just received a most affecting letter from Mr. Macartney. I will inclose it, my dear Sir, for your perusal. More than ever have I cause to rejoice that I was able to assist him.

Mr. Macartney to Miss Anville.

Madam,

IMPRESSED with the deepest, the most heartfelt sense of the exalted humanity with which you have rescued from destruction an unhappy stranger, allow me, with the humblest gratitude, to offer you

my fervent acknowledgments, and to implore your pardon for the terror I have caused you.

You bid me, Madam, live: I have now, indeed, a motive for life, since I should not willingly quit the world, while I withhold from the needy and distressed any share of that charity which a disposition so noble would otherwise bestow upon them.

The benevolence with which you have interested yourself in my affairs, induces me to suppose you would wish to be acquainted with the cause of that desperation from which you snatched me; and the particulars of that misery of which you have so wonderfully been a witness. Yet as this explanation will require that I should divulge secrets of a nature the most delicate, I must intreat you to regard them as sacred, even though I forbear to mention the names of the parties concerned.

I was brought up in Scotland, though my mother, who had the sole care of me, was an English-woman, and had not one relation in that country. She devoted to me her whole time. The retirement in which we lived, and the distance from our natural friends, she often told me, were the effect of an unconquerable melancholy with which she was seized upon the sudden loss of my father, some time before I was born.

At Aberdeen, where I finished my education, I formed a friendship with a young man of fortune, which I considered as the chief happiness of my life:—but, when he quitted his studies, I considered it as my chief misfortune; for he immediately prepared, by direction of his friends, to make the tour of Europe. As I was designed for the church, and had no prospect even of maintenance but from my own industry, I scarce dared permit even a wish of accompanying him. It is true, he would joyfully have borne my expences: but my affection was as free from meanness as his own; and I made a deter-

mination the most solemn, never to lessen its dignity by submitting to pecuniary obligations.

We corresponded with great regularity, and the most unbounded confidence, for the space of two years, when he arrived at Lyons in his way home.

He wrote me thence the most pressing invitation to meet him at Paris, where he intended to remain some time. My desire to comply with his request, and shorten our absence, was so earnest, that my mother, too indulgent to control me, lent me what assistance was in her power, and, in an ill-fated moment, I set out for that capital.

My meeting with this dear friend was the happiest event of my life: he introduced me to all his acquaintance; and so quickly did time seem to pass at that delightful period, that the six weeks I had allotted for my stay were gone, ere I was sensible I had missed so many days. But I must now own, that the company of my friend was not the sole subject of my felicity: I became acquainted with a young lady, daughter of an Englishman of distinction, with whom I formed an attachment, which I have a thousand times vowed, a thousand times sincerely thought, would be lasting as my life. She had but just quitted a convent in which she had been placed when a child, and though English by birth, she could scarcely speak her native language. Her person and disposition were equally engaging; but chiefly I adored her for the greatness of the expectations, which, for my sake, she was willing to resign.

When the time for my residence in Paris expired, I was almost distracted at the idea of quitting her; yet I had not the courage to make our attachment known to her father, who might reasonably form for her such views as would make him reject, with a contempt which I could not bear to think of, such an offer as mine. Yet I had free access to the

house, where she seemed to be left almost wholly to the guidance of an old servant, who was my fast friend.

But to be brief, the sudden and unexpected return of her father one fatal afternoon, proved the beginning of the misery which has ever since devoured me. I doubt not but he had listened to our conversation; for he darted into the room with the rage of a madman. Heavens! what a scene followed!—what abusive language did the shame of a clandestine affair, and the consciousness of acting ill, induce me to brook! At length, however, his fury exceeded my patience, he called me a beggarly, cowardly Scotchman. Fired at the words, I drew my sword; he, with equal alertness, drew his; for he was not an old man, but, on the contrary, strong and able as myself. In vain his daughter pleaded;—in vain did I, repentant of my anger, retreat—his reproaches continued: myself, my country, were loaded with infamy, till, no longer constraining my rage,—we fought,—and he fell!

At that moment I could almost have destroyed myself! The young lady fainted with terror; the old servant, drawn to us by the noise of the scuffle, entreated me to escape, and promised to bring intelligence of what should pass to my apartment. The disturbance which I heard raised in the house obliged me to comply; and, in a state of mind inconceivably wretched, I tore myself away.

My friend, whom I found at home, soon discovered the whole affair. It was near midnight before the woman came. She told me that her master was living, and her young mistress restored to her senses. The absolute necessity for my leaving Paris, while any danger remained, was forcibly urged by my friend: the servant promised to acquaint him of whatever passed, and he to transmit to me her information. Thus circumstanced, with

the assistance of this dear friend, I effected my departure from Paris, and, not long after, I returned to Scotland. I would fain have stopped by the way, that I might have been nearer the scene of all my concerns; but the low state of my finances denied me that satisfaction.

The miserable situation of my mind was soon discovered by my mother; nor would she rest till I communicated the cause. She heard my whole story with an agitation which astonished me:—the name of the parties concerned seemed to strike her with horror:—but when I said, *We fought, and he fell*;—"My son," cried she, "you have then murdered your father!" and she sunk breathless at my feet. Comments, Madam, upon such a scene as this, would to you be superfluous, and to me agonizing: I cannot, for both our sakes, be too concise. When she recovered, she confessed all the particulars of a tale which she had hoped never to have revealed.—Alas! the loss she had sustained of my father was not by death!—bound to her by no ties but those of honour, he had voluntarily deserted her!—Her settling in Scotland was not the effect of choice,—she was banished thither by a family but too justly incensed.—Pardon, Madam, that I cannot be more explicit!

My senses, in the greatness of my misery, actually forsook me, and, for more than a week, I was wholly delirious. My unfortunate mother was yet more to be pitied; for she pined with unmitigated sorrow, eternally reproaching herself for the danger to which her too strict silence had exposed me. When I recovered my reason, my impatience to hear from Paris almost deprived me of it again; and though the length of time I waited for letters might justly be attributed to contrary winds, I could not bear the delay, and was twenty times upon the point of returning thither at all hazards. At length, how-

ever, several letters arrived at once, and from the most insupportable of my afflictions I was then relieved; for they acquainted me that the horrors of parricide were not in reserve for me. They informed me also, that as soon as the wound was healed, a journey would be made to England, where my unhappy sister was to be received by an aunt, with whom she was to live.

This intelligence somewhat quieted the violence of my sorrows. I instantly formed a plan of meeting them in London, and, by revealing the whole dreadful story, convincing this irritated parent that he had nothing more to apprehend from his daughter's unfortunate choice. My mother consented, and gave me a letter to prove the truth of my assertions. As I could but ill afford to make this journey, I travelled in the cheapest way that was possible. I took an obscure lodging,—I need not, Madam, tell you where,—and boarded with the people of the house.

Here I languished, week after week, vainly hoping for the arrival of my *family*; but my impetuosity had blinded me to the imprudence of which I was guilty in quitting Scotland so hastily. My wounded father, after his recovery, relapsed; and when I had waited in the most comfortless situation for six weeks, my friend wrote me word, that the journey was yet deferred for some time longer.

My finances were then nearly exhausted; and I was obliged, though most unwillingly, to beg further assistance from my mother, that I might return to Scotland. Oh, Madam!—my answer was not from herself;—it was written by a lady who had long been her companion, and acquainted me that she had been taken suddenly ill of a fever,—and was no more!

The compassionate nature of which you have given such noble proofs, assures me I need not, if I

could, paint to you the anguish of a mind overwhelmed with such accumulated sorrows.

Inclosed was a letter to a near relation, which she had, during her illness, with much difficulty, written; and in which, with the strongest maternal tenderness, she described my deplorable situation, and intreated his interest to procure me some preferment. Yet so sunk was I by misfortune, that a fortnight elapsed before I had the courage or spirit to attempt delivering this letter. I was then compelled to it by want. To make my appearance with some decency, I was necessitated myself to the melancholy task of changing my coloured clothes for a suit of mourning;—and then I proceeded to seek my relation.

I was informed he was not in town.

In this desperate situation, the pride of my heart, which hitherto had not bowed to adversity, gave way; and I determined to intreat the assistance of my friend, whose offered services I had a thousand times rejected. Yet, Madam, so hard is it to root from the mind its favourite principles or prejudices, call them which you please, that I lingered another week ere I had the resolution to send away a letter, which I regarded as the death of my independence.

At length, reduced to my last shilling, dunned insolently by the people of the house, and almost famished, I sealed this fatal letter; and with a heavy heart, determined to take it to the post-office. But Mr. Branghton and his son suffered me not to pass through their shop with impunity; they insulted me grossly, and threatened me with imprisonment, if I did not immediately satisfy their demands. Stung to the soul, I bid them have but a day's patience, and flung from them in a state of mind too terrible for description.

My letter, which I now found would be received too late to save me from disgrace, I tore into a

thousand pieces; and scarce could I refrain from putting an instantaneous, and unlicensed, period to my existence.

In this disorder of my senses, I formed the horrible plan of turning foot-pad; for which purpose I returned to my lodging, and collected whatever of my apparel I could part with; which I immediately sold, and with the produce purchased a brace of pistols, powder and shot. I hope, however, you will believe me, when I most solemnly assure you, my sole intention was to *frighten* the passengers I should assault with these dangerous weapons; which I had not loaded, but from a resolution,—a dreadful one, I own,—to save *myself* from an ignominious death if seized. And, indeed, I thought, that if I could but procure money sufficient to pay Mr. Branghton, and make a journey to Scotland, I should soon be able, by the public papers, to discover whom I had injured, and to make private retribution.

But, Madam, new to every species of villainy, my perturbation was so great, that I could with difficulty support myself; yet the Branghtons observed it not as I passed through the shop.

Here I stop:—what followed is better known to yourself. But no time can ever efface from my memory that moment, when in the very action of preparing for my own destruction, or the lawless seizure of the property of others, you rushed into the room and arrested my arm!—It was indeed an awful moment!—the hand of Providence seemed to intervene between me and eternity: I beheld you as an angel!—I thought you dropt from the clouds!—The earth, indeed, had never presented to my view a form so celestial!—What wonder, then, that a spectacle so astonishing should, to a man disordered as I was, appear too beautiful to be human?

And now, Madam, that I have performed this painful task, the more grateful one remains of rewarding, as far as is in my power, your generous goodness, by assuring you it shall not be thrown away. You have awakened me to a sense of the false pride by which I have been actuated;—a pride which, while it scorned assistance from a friend, scrupled not to compel it from a stranger, though at the hazard of reducing that stranger to a situation as destitute as my own. Yet, oh! how violent was the struggle which tore my conflicting soul ere I could persuade myself to profit by the benevolence which you were so evidently disposed to exert in my favour!

By means of a ring, the gift of my much-regretted mother, I have for the present satisfied Mr. Branghton; and, by means of your compassion, I hope to support myself either till I hear from my friend, to whom at length I have written, or till the relation of my mother returns to town.

To talk to you, Madam, of paying my debt, would be vain; I never can! the service you have done me exceeds all power of return: you have restored me to my senses; you have taught me to curb those passions which bereft me of them; and, since I cannot avoid calamity, to bear it as a man! An interposition so wonderfully circumstanced can never be recollected without benefit. Yet allow me to say, the pecuniary part of my obligation must be settled by my first ability.

I am, Madam, with the most profound respect, and heart-felt gratitude,

Your obedient,
and devoted humble servant,

J. MACARTNEY.

LETTER VI.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Holborn, July 1.—5 o'clock in the morning.]

O, SIR, what an adventure have I to write!—all night it has occupied my thoughts, and I am now risen thus early to write it to you.

Yesterday it was settled that we should spend the evening in Marybone Gardens, where M. Torre, a celebrated foreigner, was to exhibit some fireworks. The party consisted of Madame Duval, all the Branghtons, M. Du Bois, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Brown.

We were almost the first persons who entered the Gardens, Mr. Branghton having declared he would have *all he could get for his money*, which, at best, was only fooled away at such silly and idle places.

We walked in parties, and very much detached from one another. Mr. Brown and Miss Polly led the way by themselves; Miss Branghton and Mr. Smith followed; and the latter seemed determined to be revenged for my behaviour at the ball, by transferring all his former attention for me to Miss Branghton, who received it with an air of exultation; and very frequently they each of them, though from different motives, looked back, to discover whether I observed their good intelligence. Madame Duval walked with M. Du Bois, and Mr. Branghton by himself; but his son would willingly have attached himself wholly to me; saying frequently, "Come, Miss, let's you and I have a little fun together: you see they have all left us, so now let's leave them." But I begged to be excused, and went to the other side of Madame Duval.

This garden, as it is called, is neither striking for magnificence nor for beauty; and we were all so dull and languid, that I was extremely glad

when we were summoned to the orchestra, upon the opening of a concert; in the course of which I had the pleasure of hearing a concerto on the violin by Mr. Barthelemon, who to me seems a player of exquisite fancy, feeling, and variety.

When notice was given us that the fire-works were preparing, we hurried along to secure good places for the sight; but very soon we were so encircled and incommoded by the crowd, that Mr. Smith proposed the *ladies* should make interest for a form to stand upon: this was soon effected: and the men then left us to accommodate themselves better; saying they would return the moment the exhibition was over.

The fire-work was really beautiful; and told, with wonderful ingenuity, the story of Orpheus and Eurydice: but, at the moment of the fatal look which separated them for ever, there was such an explosion of fire, and so horrible a noise, that we all, as of one accord, jumpt hastily from the form, and ran away some paces, fearing that we were in danger of mischief, from the innumerable sparks of fire which glittered in the air.

For a moment or two I neither knew nor considered whither I had run; but my recollection was soon awakened by a stranger's addressing me with, "Come along with me, my dear, and I'll take care of you."

I started; and then to my great terror, perceived that I had out-run all my companions, and saw not one human being I knew! With all the speed in my power, and forgetful of my first fright, I hastened back to the place I had left;—but found the form occupied by a new set of people.

In vain, from side to side, I looked for some face I knew; I found myself in the midst of a crowd, yet without party, friend, or acquaintance. I walked in disordered haste from place to place, without

knowing which way to turn, or whither I went. Every other moment I was spoken to by some bold and unfeeling man; to whom my distress, which I think must be very apparent, only furnished a pretence for impertinent witticisms, or free gallantry.

At last a young officer, marching fiercely up to me, said, "You are a sweet pretty creature, and I enlist you in my service;" and then, with great violence, he seized my hand. I screamed aloud with fear; and forcibly snatching it away, I ran hastily up to two ladies, and cried, "for Heaven's sake, dear ladies, afford me some protection!"

They heard me with a loud laugh, but very readily said, "Ay, let her walk between us;" and each of them took hold of an arm.

Then in a drawling, ironical tone of voice, they asked *what had frightened my little Ladyship?* I told them my adventure very simply, and intreated they would have the goodness to assist me in finding my friends.

O yes, to be sure, they said, I should not want for friends, whilst I was with them. Mine, I said, would be very grateful for any civilities with which they might favour me. But imagine, my dear Sir, how I must be confounded, when I observed, that every other word I spoke produced a loud laugh! However, I will not dwell upon a conversation, which soon, to my inexpressible horror, convinced me I had sought protection from insult, of those who were themselves most likely to offer it! You, my dearest Sir, I well know will both feel for, and pity my terror, which I have no words to describe.

Had I been at liberty, I should have instantly run away from them when I made the shocking discovery; but, as they held me fast, that was utterly impossible: and such was my dread of their resentment or abuse that I did not dare make any open attempt to escape.

They asked me a thousand questions, accompanied by as many halloos, of who I was, what I was, and whence I came? My answers were very incoherent;—but what, good Heaven, were my emotions, when, a few moments afterwards, I perceived advancing our way—Lord Orville!

Never shall I forget what I felt at that instant: had I, indeed, been sunk to the guilty state which such companions might lead him to suspect, I could scarce have had feelings more cruelly depressing.

However, to my infinite joy, he passed us without distinguishing me; though I saw that in a careless manner, his eyes surveyed the party.

As soon as he was gone, one of these unhappy women said, “Do you know that young fellow?”

Not thinking it possible she should mean Lord Orville by such a term, I readily answered, “No, Madam.”

“Why then,” answered she, “you have a monstrous good stare for a little country Miss.”

I now found I had mistaken her, but was glad to avoid an explanation.

A few minutes after, what was my delight to hear the voice of Mr. Brown, who called out, “Lord, i’n’t that Miss what’s her name?”

“Thank God,” cried I, suddenly springing from them both, “thank God, I have found my party.”

Mr. Brown was, however, alone; and, without knowing what I did, I took hold of his arm.

“Lord, Miss,” cried he, “we’ve had such a hunt you can’t think! some of them thought you was gone home: but I says, says I, I don’t think, says I, that she’s like to go home all alone, says I.”

“So that gentleman belongs to you, Miss, does he?” said one of the women.

“Yes, Madam,” answered I, “and I now thank

you for your civility ; but as I am safe, will not give you any further trouble."

I courtied slightly, and would have walked away ; but most unfortunately, Madame Duval and the two Miss Branghtons just then joined us.

They all began to make a thousand inquiries ; to which I briefly answered, that I had been obliged to these two ladies for walking with me, and would tell them more another time : for though I felt great *comparative* courage, I was yet too much intimidated by their presence, to dare be explicit.

Nevertheless, I ventured once more to wish them good night, and proposed seeking Mr. Branghton. These unhappy women listened to all that was said with a kind of callous curiosity, and seemed determined not to take any hint. But my vexation was terribly augmented when, after having whispered something to each other, they very cavalierly declared, that they intended joining our party ! and then, one of them very boldly took hold of my arm, while the other, going round, seized that of Mr. Brown ; and thus, almost forcibly, we were moved on between them, and followed by Madame Duval and the Miss Branghtons.

It would be very difficult to say which was greatest, my fright, or Mr. Brown's consternation ; who ventured not to make the least resistance, though his uneasiness made him tremble almost as much as myself. I would instantly have withdrawn my arm ; but it was held so tight I could not move it ; and poor Mr. Brown was circumstanced in the same manner on the other side ; for I heard him say, " Lord, Ma'am, there's no need to squeeze one's arm so ! "

And this was our situation,—for we had not taken three steps, when,—O Sir,—we again met Lord Orville !—but not again did he pass quietly by us :—unhappily I caught his eye ;—both mine immedi-

ately were bent to the ground ; but he approached me, and we all stopped.

I then looked up. He bowed. Good God, with what expressive eyes did he regard me ! Never were surprise and concern so strongly marked :—yes, my dear Sir, he looked *greatly* concerned ; and that, the remembrance of that, is the only consolation I feel for an evening the most painful of my life.

What he first said I know not ; for indeed, I seemed to have neither ears nor understanding ; but I recollect that I only courtied in silence. He paused for an instant, as if—I believe so,—as if unwilling to pass on ; and then, finding the whole party detained, he again bowed, and took leave.

Indeed, my dear Sir, I thought I should have fainted ; so great was my emotion from shame, vexation, and a thousand other feelings, for which I have no expressions. I absolutely tore myself from the woman's arm ; and then, disengaging myself from that of Mr. Brown, I went to Madame Duval, and besought that she would not suffer me to be again parted from her.

I fancy—that Lord Orville saw what passed ; for scarcely was I at liberty, ere he returned. Methought, my dear Sir, the pleasure, the surprise of that moment, recompensed me for all the chagrin I had before felt : for do you not think, that his return manifests, from a character so quiet, so reserved as Lord Orville's, something like solicitude in my concerns ? such at least was the interpretation I involuntarily made upon again seeing him.

With a politeness to which I have been sometime very little used, he apologised for returning ; and then inquired after the health of Mrs. Mirvan, and the rest of the Howard Grove family. The flattering conjecture which I have just acknowledged, had so wonderfully restored my spirits, that I believe I

never answered him so readily, and with so little constraint. Very short, however, was the duration of this conversation; for we were soon most disagreeably interrupted.

The Miss Branghtons, though they saw almost immediately the characters of the women to whom I had so unfortunately applied, were, nevertheless, so weak and foolish, as merely to *titter* at their behaviour. As to Madame Duval, she was for some time so strangely imposed upon that she thought they were two real fine ladies. Indeed, it is wonderful to see how easily and how frequently she is deceived. Our disturbance, however, arose from young Brown, who was now between the two women, by whom his arms were absolutely pinioned to his sides: for a few minutes his complaints had been only murmured; but he now called out aloud, "Goodness, Ladies, you hurt me like any thing! why, I can't walk at all, if you keep pinching my arms so?"

This speech raised a loud laugh in the women, and redoubled the tittering of the Miss Branghtons. For my own part, I was most cruelly confused: while the countenance of Lord Orville manifested a sort of indignant astonishment; and, from that moment, he spoke to me no more till he took leave.

Madame Duval, who now began to suspect her company, proposed our taking the first box we saw empty, bespeaking a supper, and waiting till Mr. Branghton should find us.

Miss Polly mentioned one she had remarked, to which we all turned. Madame Duval instantly seated herself; and the two bold women, forcing the frightened Mr. Brown to go between them, followed her example.

Lord Orville, with an air of gravity that wounded my very soul, then wished me good night. I said not a word; but my face, if it had any connection

with my heart, must have looked melancholy indeed: and so I have some reason to believe it did; for he added, with much more softness, though no less dignity, "Will Miss Anville allow me to ask her address, and to pay my respects to her before I leave town?"

O how I changed colour at this unexpected request!—yet what was the mortification I suffered in answering, "My Lord, I am—in Holborn!"

He then bowed and left us.

What, what can he think of this adventure! how strangely, how cruelly have all appearances turned against me! Had I been blessed with any presence of mind, I should instantly have explained to him the accident which occasioned my being in such terrible company:—but I have none!

As to the rest of the evening, I cannot relate the particulars of what passed; for, to you, I only write of what I think; and I can think of nothing but this unfortunate, this disgraceful meeting. These two wretched women continued to torment us all, but especially poor Mr. Brown, who seemed to afford them uncommon diversion, till we were discovered by Mr. Branghton, who very soon found means to release us from their persecutions, by frightening them away. We stayed but a short time after they left us, which was all employed in explanations.

Whatever may be the construction which Lord Orville may put upon this affair, to me it cannot fail of being unfavourable; to be seen—gracious Heaven! to be seen in company with two women of such character!—How vainly, how proudly have I wished to avoid meeting him when only with the Branghtons and Madame Duval;—but now, how joyful should I be had he seen me to no greater disadvantage!—Holborn, too! what a direction! he who had always—but I will not torment you,

my dearest Sir, with any more of my mortifying conjectures and apprehensions: perhaps he may call,—and then I shall have an opportunity of explaining to him all the most shocking part of the adventure. And yet, as I did not tell him at whose house I lived, he may not be able to discover me; I merely said, *in Holtorn*; and he, who I suppose saw my embarrassment, forbore to ask any other direction.

Well, I must take my chance!

Yet let me, in justice to Lord Orville, and in justice to the high opinion I have always entertained of his honour and delicacy,—let me observe the difference of his behaviour, when nearly in the same situation, to that of Sir Clement Willoughby. He had, at least, equal cause to depreciate me in his opinion, and to mortify and sink me in my own; but far different was his conduct:—perplexed, indeed, he looked, and much surprised:—but it was benevolently, not with insolence. I am even inclined to think, that he could not see a young creature whom he had so lately known in a higher sphere, appear so suddenly, so strangely, so disgracefully altered in her situation, without some pity and concern. But whatever might be his doubts and suspicions, far from suffering them to influence his behaviour, he spoke, he looked with the same politeness and attention with which he had always honoured me when countenanced by Mrs. Mirvan.

Once again, let me drop this subject.

In every mortification, every disturbance, how grateful to my heart, how sweet to my recollection, is the certainty of your never failing tenderness, sympathy, and protection! Oh, Sir, could I upon this subject, could I write as I feel,—how animated would be the language of your devoted

EVELINA.

LETTER VII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Holborn, July 1.

LISTLESS, uneasy, and without either spirit or courage to employ myself from the time I had finished my last letter, I indolently seated myself at the window, where, while I waited Madame Duval's summons to breakfast, I perceived, among the carriages which passed by, a coronet-coach, and, in a few minutes, from the window of it, Lord Orville! I instantly retreated, but not, I believe, unseen; for the coach immediately drove up to our door.

Indeed, my dear Sir, I must own I was greatly agitated; the idea of receiving Lord Orville by myself,—the knowledge that his visit was entirely to me,—the wish of explaining the unfortunate adventure of yesterday,—and the mortification of my present circumstances,—all these thoughts, occurring to me nearly at the same time, occasioned me more anxiety, confusion, and perplexity, than I can possibly express.

I believe he meant to send up his name; but the maid, unused to such a ceremony, forgot it by the way, and only told me, that a great Lord was below, and desired to see me; and, the next moment, he appeared himself.

If formerly, when in the circle of high life, and accustomed to its manners, I so much admired and distinguished the grace, the elegance of Lord Orville, think, Sir, how they must strike me now,—now, when far removed from that splendid circle, I live with those to whom even civility is unknown, and decorum a stranger!

I am sure I received him very awkwardly: depressed by a situation so disagreeable—could I do otherwise? When his first inquiries were made, “I

think myself very fortunate," he said, "in meeting with Miss Anville at home, and still more so in finding her disengaged."

I only courtied. He then talked of Mrs. Mirvan, asked how long I had been in town, and other such general questions; which happily gave me time to recover from my embarrassment. After which he said, "If Miss Anville will allow me the honour of sitting by her a few minutes" (for we were both standing) "I will venture to tell her the motive which, next to enquiring after her health, has prompted me to wait on her thus early."

We were then both seated; and after a short pause, he said, "How to apologise for so great a liberty as I am upon the point of taking, I know not;—shall I, therefore, rely wholly upon your goodness, and not apologise at all?"

I only bowed.

"I should be extremely sorry to appear impertinent,—yet hardly know how to avoid it."

"Impertinent! O, my Lord," cried I, eagerly, "that, I am sure, is impossible!"

"You are very good," answered he, "and encourage me to be ingenuous—"

Again he stopped: but my expectation was too great for speech. At last, without looking at me, in a low voice, and hesitating manner, he said, "Were those ladies with whom I saw you last night ever in your company before?"

"No, my Lord," cried I, rising and colouring violently, "nor will they ever be again."

He rose too; and, with an air of the most condescending concern, said, "Pardon, Madam, the abruptness of a question which I knew not how to introduce as I ought, and for which I have no excuse to offer but my respect for Mrs. Mirvan, joined to the sincerest wishes for your happiness: yet I fear I have gone too far!"

"I am very sensible of the honour of your lordship's attention," said I; "but——"

"Permit me to assure you," cried he, finding I hesitated, "that officiousness is not my characteristic; and that I would by no means have risked your displeasure, had I not been fully satisfied you were too generous to be offended without a real cause of offence."

"Offended!" cried I, "no, my Lord, I am only grieved,—grieved, indeed! to find myself in a situation so unfortunate as to be obliged to make explanations, which cannot but mortify and shock me."

"It is I alone," cried he, with some eagerness, "who am shocked, as it is I who deserve to be mortified. I seek no explanation, for I have no doubt; but in mistaking me, Miss Anville injures herself: allow me therefore, frankly and openly, to tell you the intention of my visit."

I bowed, and we both returned to our seats.

"I will own myself to have been greatly surprised," continued he, "when I met you yesterday evening, in company with two persons who I was sensible merited not the honour of your notice: nor was it easy for me to conjecture the cause of your being so situated; yet, believe me, my incertitude did not for a moment do you injury. I was satisfied that their characters must be unknown to you; and I thought, with concern, of the shock you would sustain when you discovered their unworthiness. I should not, however, upon so short an acquaintance, have usurped the privilege of intimacy, in giving my unasked sentiments upon so delicate a subject, had I not known that credulity is the sister of innocence, and therefore feared you might be deceived. A something which I could not resist, urged me to the freedom I have taken to caution you; but I shall not easily forgive myself if I have been so unfortunate as to give you pain."

The pride which his first question had excited, now subsided into delight and gratitude ; and I instantly related to him as well as I could, the accident which had occasioned my joining the unhappy women with whom he had met me. He listened with an attention so flattering, seemed so much interested during the recital, and, when I had done, thanked me in terms so polite, for what he was pleased to call my condescension, that I was almost ashamed either to look at or hear him.

Soon after the maid came to tell me, that Madame Duval desired to have breakfast made in her own room.

" I fear," cried Lord Orville, instantly rising, " that I have intruded upon your time ;—yet who, so situated, could do otherwise ?" Then, taking my hand, " Will Miss Anville allow me thus to seal my peace ?" he pressed it to his lips, and took leave.

Generous, noble Lord Orville ! how disinterested his conduct ! how delicate his whole behaviour ! willing to advise, yet afraid to wound me !—Can I ever in future, regret the adventure I met with at Marybone, since it has been productive of a visit so flattering ? Had my mortifications been still more humiliating, my terrors still more alarming, such a mark of esteem—may I not call it so ?—from Lord Orville, would have made me ample amends.

And indeed, my dear Sir, I require some consolation in my present very disagreeable situation ; for, since he went, two incidents have happened, that, had not my spirits been particularly elated, would greatly have disconcerted me.

During breakfast, Madame Duval, very abruptly, asked, if I should like to be married ? and added, that Mr. Branghton had been proposing a match for me with his son. Surprised, and, I must own, provoked, I assured her that in thinking of me, Mr. Branghton would very vainly lose his time.

"Why," cried she, "I have had grander views for you myself, if once I could get you to Paris, and make you be owned; but if I can't do that, and you can do no better, why, as you are both my relations, I think to leave my fortune between you; and then, if you marry, you never need want for nothing."

I begged her not to pursue the subject, as, I assured her, Mr. Branghton was totally disagreeable to me; but she continued her admonitions and reflections, with her usual disregard of whatever I could answer. She charged me, very peremptorily, neither wholly to discourage, nor yet to accept Mr. Branghton's offer, till she saw what could be done for me: the young man, she added, had often intended to speak to me himself, but, not well knowing how to introduce the subject, he had desired her to pave the way for him.

I scrupled not, warmly and freely, to declare my aversion to this proposal; but it was to no effect; she concluded, just as she had begun, by saying, that I should not *have him, if I could do better.*

Nothing, however, shall persuade me to listen to any other person concerning this odious affair.

My second cause of uneasiness arises, very unexpectedly, from M. Du Bois; who, to my infinite surprise, upon Madame Duval's quitting the room after dinner, put into my hand a note, and immediately left the house.

This note contains an open declaration of an attachment to me; which, he says, he should never have presumed to have acknowledged, had he not been informed that Madame Duval destined my hand to young Branghton,—a match which he cannot endure to think of. He beseeches me earnestly to pardon his temerity; professes the most inviolable respect; and commits his fate to time, patience, and pity.

This conduct in M. Du Bois gives me real concern, as I was disposed to think very well of him. It will not, however, be difficult to discourage him; and therefore, I shall not acquaint Madame Duval of his letter, as I have reason to believe it would greatly displease her.

LETTER VIII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[July 3.]

O, SIR, how much uneasiness must I suffer to counterbalance one short morning of happiness?

Yesterday the Branghtons proposed a party to Kensington Gardens; and, as usual, Madame Duval insisted upon my attendance.

We went in a hackney-coach to Piccadilly, and then had a walk through Hyde Park; which in any other company would have been delightful. I was much pleased with Kensington Gardens, and think them infinitely preferable to those of Vauxhall.

Young Branghton was extremely troublesome; he insisted upon walking by my side, and talked with me almost by compulsion; however, my reserve and coldness prevented his entering upon the hateful subject which Madame Duval had prepared me to apprehend. Once, indeed, when I was accidentally a few yards before the rest, he said, "I suppose, Miss, aunt has told you about—you know what?—ha'n't she, Miss!"—But I turned from him without making any answer. Neither Mr. Smith nor Mr. Brown were of the party; and poor M. Du Bois, when he found that I avoided him, looked so melancholy, that I was really sorry for him.

While we were strolling round the garden, I perceived, walking with a party of ladies at some dis-

tance, Lord Orville! I instantly retreated behind Miss Branghton, and I kept out of sight till we had passed him; for I dreaded being seen by him again in a public walk with a party of which I was ashamed.

Happily I succeeded in my design, and saw no more of him; for a sudden and violent shower of rain made us all hasten out of the gardens. We ran till we came to a small green-shop, where we begged shelter. Here we found ourselves in company with two footmen, whom the rain had driven into the shop. Their livery I thought I had before seen; and, upon looking from the window, I perceived the same upon a coachman belonging to a carriage, which I immediately recollected to be Lord Orville's.

Fearing to be known, I whispered Miss Branghton not to speak my name. Had I considered but a moment, I should have been sensible of the inutility of such a caution, since not one of the party call me by any other appellation than that of *Cousin* or of *Miss*; but I am perpetually involved in some distress or dilemma from my own heedlessness.

This request excited very strongly her curiosity; and she attacked me with such eagerness and bluntness of inquiry, that I could not avoid telling her the reason of my making it, and, consequently, that I was known to Lord Orville: an acknowledgment which proved the most unfortunate in the world; for she would not rest till she had drawn from me the circumstances attending my first making the acquaintance. Then, calling to her sister, she said, "Lord, Polly, only think! Miss has danced with a Lord!"

"Well," cried Polly, "that's a thing I should never have thought of! And pray, Miss, what did he say to you?"

This question was much sooner asked than answered ; and they both became so very inquisitive and earnest, that they soon drew the attention of Madame Duval and the rest of the party ; to whom, in a very short time, they repeated all they had gathered from me.

" Goodness, then," cried young Branghton, " if I was Miss, if I would not make free with his Lordship's coach to take me to town."

" Why, ay," said the father, " there would be some sense in that ; that would be making some use of a Lord's acquaintance, for it would save us coach-hire."

" Lord, Miss," cried Polly, " I wish you would ; for I should like of all things to ride in a coronet-coach."

" I promise you," said Madame Duval, " I'm glad you've thought of it, for I don't see no objection ;—so let's have the coachman called."

" Not for the world," cried I, very much alarmed : " indeed it is utterly impossible."

" Why so?" demanded Mr. Branghton : " pray, where's the good of your knowing a Lord, if you're never the better for him?"

" *Ma foi*, child," said Madame Duval, " you don't know no more of the world than if you was a baby. Pray, Sir, (to one of the footmen) tell that coachman to draw up, for I wants to speak to him."

The man stared, but did not move. " Pray, pray, Madam," said I, " pray, Mr. Branghton, have the goodness to give up this plan ; I know but very little of his Lordship, and cannot, upon any account, take so great a liberty."

" Don't say nothing about it," said Madame Duval, " for I shall have it my own way : so, if *you* won't call the coachman, Sir, I'll promise you I'll call him myself."

The footman, very impertinently, laughed and

turned upon his heel. Madame Duval, extremely irritated, ran out in the rain, and beckoned the coachman, who instantly obeyed her summons. Shocked beyond all expression, I flew after her, and entreated her with the utmost earnestness, to let us return in a hackney coach:—but, oh!—she is impenetrable to persuasion! She told the man she wanted him to carry her directly to town, and that she would answer for him to Lord Orville. The man, with a sneer, thanked her, but said he should answer for himself; and was driving off; when another footman came up to him, with information that his Lord was gone into Kensington Palace, and would not want him for an hour or two.

“Why, then, friend,” said Mr. Branghton (for we were followed by all the party) “where will be the great harm of your taking us to town?”

“Besides,” said the son, “I’ll promise you a pot of beer for my own share.”

These speeches had no other answer from the coachman than a loud laugh, which was echoed by the insolent footmen. I rejoiced at their resistance; though I was certain that, if their Lord had witnessed their impertinence, they would have been instantly dismissed his service.

“Pardi,” cried Madame Duval, “if I don’t think all the footmen are the most impudentest fellows in the kingdom! But I’ll promise you I’ll have your master told of your airs; so you’ll get no good by ’em.”

“Why, pray,” said the coachman, rather alarmed, “did my Lord give you leave to use the coach?”

“It’s no matter for that,” answered she; “I’m sure if he’s a gentleman, he’d let us have it sooner than we should be wet to the skin; but I’ll promise you he shall know how saucy you’ve been, for this young lady knows him very well.”

"Ay, that she does," said Miss Polly; "and she's danced with him too."

Oh, how I repented my foolish mismanagement! The men bit their lips, and looked at one another in some confusion. This was perceived by our party; who, taking advantage of it, protested they would write Lord Orville word of their ill behaviour without delay. This quite startled them; and one of the footmen offered to run to the palace, and ask his Lord's permission for our having the carriage.

This proposal really made me tremble, and the Branghtons all hung back upon it; but Madame Duval is never to be dissuaded from a scheme she has once formed. "Do so," cried she; "and give this child's compliments to your master; and tell him, as we ha'n't no coach here, we should be glad to go just as far as Holborn in his."

"No, no;" cried I; "don't go,—I know nothing of his Lordship,—I send no message,—I have nothing to say to him!"

The men, very much perplexed, could with difficulty restrain themselves from resuming their impertinent mirth. Madame Duval scolded me very angrily, and then desired them to go directly. "Pray, then," said the coachman, "what name is to be given to my Lord!"

"Anville," answered Madame Duval; "tell him Miss Anville wants the coach; the young lady he danced with once."

I was really in an agony; but the winds could not have been more deaf to me, than those to whom I pleaded! and therefore the footman, urged by the repeated threats of Madame Duval, and perhaps recollecting the name himself, actually went to the palace with this strange message!

He returned in a few minutes; and, bowing to me with the greatest respect, said, "My Lord desires

his compliments; and his carriage will be always at Miss Anville's service."

I was so much affected by this politeness, and chagrined at the whole affair, that I could scarce refrain from tears. Madame Duval, and the Miss Branghtons eagerly jumped into the coach, and desired me to follow. I would rather have submitted to the severest punishment; but all resistance was vain.

During the whole ride I said not a word: however, the rest of the party were so talkative, that my silence was very immaterial. We stopped at our lodgings; but, when Madame Duval and I alighted, the Branghtons asked if they could not be carried on to Snow-Hill? The servants, now all civility, made no objection. Remonstrances from me would, I too well knew, be fruitless; and therefore, with a heavy heart, I retired to my room, and left them to their own direction.

Seldom have I passed a night in greater uneasiness.—So lately to have cleared myself in the good opinion of Lord Orville,—so soon to forfeit it!—to give him reason to suppose I presumed to boast of his acquaintance!—to publish his having danced with me!—to take with him a liberty I should have blushed to have taken with the most intimate of my friends!—to treat, with such impertinent freedom, one who has honoured me with such distinguished respect!—Indeed, Sir, I could have met with no accident that would so cruelly have tormented me!

If such were, then, my feelings, imagine,—for I cannot describe, what I suffered during the scene I am now going to write.

This morning, while I was alone in the dining-room, young Branghton called. He entered with a most important air; and, strutting up to me, said, "Miss, Lord Orville sends his compliments to you."

"Lord Orville!" repeated I, much amazed.

"Yes, Miss, Lord Orville; for I know his Lordship now, as well as you.—And a very civil gentleman he is, for all he's a Lord."

"For Heaven's sake," cried I, "explain yourself."

"Why, you must know, Miss, after we left you, we met with a little misfortune; but I don't mind it now, for it's all turned out for the best: but, just as we were a-going up Snow-Hill, plump we comes against a cart, with such a jog it almost pulled the coach-wheel off. However, that i'n't the worst; for, as I went to open the door in a hurry, a-thinking the coach would be broke down, as ill-luck would have it, I never minded that the glass was up, and so I poked my head fairly through it.—Only see, Miss, how I've cut my forehead!"

A much worse accident to himself would not, I believe, at that moment have given me any concern for him: however, he proceeded with his account, for I was too much confounded to interrupt him.

"Goodness, Miss, we were in such a stew, us, and the servants, and all, as you can't think; for, besides the glass being broke, the coachman said how the coach wouldn't be safe to go back to Kensington. So we didn't know what to do; however, the footmen said they'd go and tell his Lordship what had happened. So then father grew quite uneasy like, for fear of his Lordship's taking offence, and prejudicing us in our business; so he said I should go this morning and ask his pardon, cause of having broke the glass. So then I asked the footman the direction, and they told me he lived in Berkeley-square; so this morning I went,—and I soon found out the house."

"You did!" cried I, quite out of breath with apprehension.

"Yes, Miss, and a very fine house it is.—Did you ever see it?"

"No."

"No!—why, then, Miss, I know more of his Lordship than you do, for all you knew him first. So, when I came to the door, I was in a peck of troubles, a-thinking what I should say to him; however, the servants had no mind I should see him; for they told me he was busy, but I might leave my message. So I was just a-coming away, when I bethought myself to say I came from you."

"From me!"

"Yes, Miss, for you know, why should I have such a long walk as that for nothing? So I says to the porter, says I, tell his Lordship, says I, one wants to speak to him as comes from one Miss Anville, says I."

"Good God," cried I, "and by what authority did you take such a liberty?"

"Goodness, Miss, don't be in such a hurry, for you'll be as glad as me, when you hear how well it all turned out. So then they made way for me, and said his Lordship would see me directly: and there I was led through such a heap of servants, and so many rooms, that my heart quite misgave me; for I thought, thinks I, he'll be so proud he'll hardly let me speak; but he's no more proud than I am, and he was as civil as if I'd been a lord myself. So then I said, I hoped he wouldn't take it amiss about the glass, for it was quite an accident; but he bid me not mention it, for it did not signify. And then he said he hoped you got safe home, and wasn't frightened; and so I said yes, and I gave your duty to him."

"My duty to him!" exclaimed I,—“and who gave you leave?—who desired you?”

"O, I did it of my own head, just to make him think I came from you. But I should have told you before, how the footman said he was going out of town to-morrow evening, and that his sister was

soon to be married, and that he was a-ordering a heap of things for that ; so it come into my head, as he was so affable, that I'd ask him for his custom. So I says, says I, my Lord, says I, if your Lordship i'n't engaged particularly, my father is a silver-smith, and he'll be very proud to serve you, says I ; and Miss Anville, as danced with you, is his cousin, and she's my cousin too, and she'd be very much obligated to you, I'm sure."

" You'll drive me wild," cried I, starting from my seat, " you have done me an irreparable injury ; —but I will hear no more !" —and then I ran into my own room.

I was half frantic, I really raved ; the good opinion of Lord Orville seemed now irretrievably lost ; a faint hope, which, in the morning, I had vainly encouraged, that I might see him again and explain the transaction, wholly vanished, now I found he was so soon to leave town : and I could not but conclude, that, for the rest of my life, he would regard me as an object of utter contempt.

The very idea was a dagger to my heart ! — I could not support it, and — but I blush to proceed — I fear your disapprobation ; yet I should not be conscious of having merited it, but that the repugnance I feel to relate to you what I have done, makes me suspect I must have erred. Will you forgive me, if I own that I *first* wrote an account of this transaction to Miss Mirvan ? — and that I even thought of *concealing* it from you ? — Short-lived, however, was the ungrateful idea, and sooner will I risk the justice of your displeasure, than unworthily betray your generous confidence.

You are now probably prepared for what follows — which is a letter — a hasty letter, that, in the height of my agitation, I wrote to Lord Orville.

" My Lord,

" I am so infinitely ashamed of the application

made yesterday for your Lordship's carriage in my name, and so greatly shocked at hearing how much it was injured, that I cannot forbear writing a few lines to clear myself from the imputation of an impertinence which I blush to be suspected of, and to acquaint you, that the request for your carriage was made against my consent, and the visit with which you were importuned this morning, without my knowledge.

"I am inexpressibly concerned at having been the instrument, however innocently, of so much trouble to your Lordship; but I beg you to believe, that the reading these lines is the only part of it which I have given voluntarily. I am, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's most humble servant,

"EVELINA ANVILLE."

I applied to the maid of the house to get this note conveyed to Berkeley-square; but scarce had I parted with it, before I regretted having written at all; and I was flying down stairs to recover it, when the voice of Sir Clement Willoughby stopped me. As Madame Duval had ordered we should be denied to him, I was obliged to return up stairs; and after he was gone, my application was too late, as the maid had given it to a porter.

My time did not pass very serenely while he was gone; however, he brought me no answer, but that Lord Orville was not at home. Whether or not he will take the trouble to send any,—or whether he will condescend to call,—or whether the affair will rest as it is, I know not;—but, in being ignorant, am most cruelly anxious.

LETTER IX.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[July 4.]

You may now, my dear Sir, send Mrs. Clinton

for your Evelina with as much speed as she can conveniently make the journey, for no further opposition will be made to her leaving this town: happy had it perhaps been for her had she never entered it!

This morning Madame Duval desired me to go to Snow-Hill, with an invitation to the Branghtons and Mr. Smith to spend the evening with her; and she desired M. Du Bois, who breakfasted with us, to accompany me. I was very unwilling to obey her, as I neither wished to walk with M. Du Bois, nor yet to meet young Branghton. And, indeed, another, a yet more powerful reason added to my reluctance;—for I thought it possible that Lord Orville might send some answer, or perhaps might call, during my absence; however, I did not dare dispute her commands.

Poor M. Du Bois spoke not a word during our walk, which was, I believe, equally unpleasant to us both. We found all the family assembled in the shop. Mr. Smith, the moment he perceived me, addressed himself to Miss Branghton, whom he entertained with all the gallantry in his power. I rejoice to find that my conduct at the Hampstead ball has had so good an effect. But young Branghton was extremely troublesome; he repeatedly laughed in my face, and looked so impertinently significant, that I was obliged to give up my reserve to M. Du Bois, and enter into conversation with him merely to avoid such boldness.

"Miss," said Mr. Branghton, "I'm sorry to hear from my son that you wasn't pleased with what we did about that Lord Orville: but I should like to know what it was you found fault with, for we did all for the best."

"Goodness!" cried the son, "why, if you'd seen Miss, you'd have been surprised—she went out of the room quite in a huff, like—"

"It is too late, now," said I, "to reason upon this

subject; but, for the future, I must take the liberty to request, that my name may never be made use of without my knowledge. May I tell Madame Duval that you will do her the favour to accept her invitation?"

"As to me, Ma'am," said Mr. Smith, "I am much obliged to the old lady, but I have no mind to be taken in by her again; you'll excuse me, Ma'am."

All the rest promised to come, and I then took leave; but, as I left the shop, I heard Mr. Branghton say, "Take courage, Tom, she's only coy." And, before I had walked ten yards, the youth followed.

I was so much offended that I would not look at him, but began to converse with M. Du Bois, who was now more lively than I had ever before seen him; for, most unfortunately, he misinterpreted the reason of my attention to him.

The first intelligence I received when I came home, was, that two gentlemen had called, and left cards. I eagerly enquired for them, and read the names of Lord Orville and Sir Clement Willoughby. I by no means regretted that I missed seeing the latter, but perhaps I may all my life regret that I missed the former; for probably he has now left town,—and I may see him no more!

"My goodness," cried young Branghton, rudely looking over me, "only think of that Lord's coming all this way! It's my belief he'd got some order ready for father, and so he'd a mind to call and ask you if I'd told him the truth."

"Pray, Betty," cried I, "how long has he been gone?"

"Not two minutes, Ma'am."

"Why then, I'll lay you any wager," said young Branghton, "he saw you and I a walking up Holborn Hill."

"God forbid!" cried I, impatiently; and, too much chagrined to bear with any more of his remarks, I ran up stairs; but I heard him say to M. Du Bois, "Miss is so *uppish* this morning, that I think I had better not speak to her again."

I wish M. Du Bois had taken the same resolution; but he chose to follow me into the dining-room, which he found empty.

"*Vous ne l'aimez donc pas, ce garçon, Mademoiselle!*" cried he.

"Me!" cried I, "no, I detest him!" for I was quite sick at heart.

"*Ah, tu me rends la vie!*" cried he; and, flinging himself at my feet, he had just caught my hand as the door was opened by Madame Duval.

Hastily, and with marks of guilty confusion in his face, he arose; but the rage of that lady quite amazed me! Advancing to the retreating M. Du Bois, she began, in French, an attack, which her extreme wrath and wonderful volubility almost rendered unintelligible; yet I understood but too much, since her reproaches convinced me she had herself proposed being the object of his affection.

He defended himself in a weak and evasive manner; and, upon her commanding him from her sight, very readily withdrew: and then, with yet greater violence, she upbraided me with having *seduced* his heart, called me an ungrateful, designing girl, and protested she would neither take me to Paris, nor any more interest herself in my affairs, unless I would instantly agree to marry young Branghton.

Frightened as I had been at her vehemence, this proposal restored all my courage; and I frankly told her, that in this point I never could obey her. More irritated than ever, she ordered me to quit the room.

Such is the present situation of affairs. I shall

excuse myself from seeing the Branghtons this afternoon: indeed, I never wish to see them again. I am sorry, however innocently, that I have displeased Madame Duval; yet I shall be very glad to quit this town, for I believe it does not now contain one person I ever wish to again meet. Had I but seen Lord Orville, I should regret nothing: I could then have more fully explained what I so hastily wrote; yet it will always be a pleasure to me to recollect that he called, since I flatter myself it was in consequence of his being satisfied with my letter.

Adieu, my dear Sir; the time now approaches when I hope once more to receive your blessing, and to owe all my joy, all my happiness, to your kindness.

LETTER X.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

[Berry Hill, July 7.]

WELCOME, thrice welcome, my darling Evelina, to the arms of the truest, the fondest of your friends! Mrs. Clinton, who shall hasten to you with these lines, will conduct you directly hither; for I can consent no longer to be parted from the child of my bosom!—the comfort of my age!—the sweet solace of all my infirmities! Your worthy friends at Howard Grove must pardon me that I rob them of the visit you proposed to make them before your return to Berry Hill, for I find my fortitude unequal to a longer separation.

I have much to say to you, many comments to make upon your late letters, some parts of which give me no little uneasiness; but I will reserve my remarks for our future conversations. Hasten, then,

to the spot of thy nativity, the abode of thy youth, where never yet care or sorrow had power to annoy thee.—O that they might ever be banished this peaceful dwelling!

Adieu, my dearest Evelina! I pray but that thy satisfaction at our approaching meeting may bear any comparison with mine!

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER XI.

EVELINA TO MISS MIRVAN.

[*Berry-Hill, July 14.*]

My sweet Maria will be much surprised, and I am willing to flatter myself, concerned, when, instead of her friend, she receives this letter;—this cold, this inanimate letter, which will but ill express the feelings of the heart which indites it.

When I wrote to you last Friday, I was in hourly expectation of seeing Mrs. Clinton, with whom I intended to have set out for Howard Grove. Mrs. Clinton came; but my plan was necessarily altered, for she brought me a letter,—the sweetest that ever was penned, from the best and kindest friend that ever orphan was blessed with, requiring my immediate attendance at Berry Hill.

I obeyed,—and pardon me if I own I obeyed without reluctance: after so long a separation, should I not else have been the most ungrateful of mortals?—And yet,—oh, Maria! though I *wished* to leave London, the gratification of my wish afforded me no happiness! and though I felt an impatience inexpressible to return hither, no words, no language, can explain the heaviness of heart with which I made the journey. I believe you would hardly have known me;—indeed, I hardly

know myself. Perhaps, had I first seen *you*, in your kind and sympathising bosom I might have ventured to have reposed every secret of my soul ; —and then—but let me pursue my journal.

Mrs. Clinton delivered Madame Duval a letter from Mr. Villars, which requested her leave for my return ; and, indeed, it was very readily accorded : yet, when she found, by my willingness to quit town, that M. Du Bois was really indifferent to me, she somewhat softened in my favour ; and declared, that, but for punishing his folly in thinking of such a child, she would not have consented to my being again buried in the country.

All the Branghtons called to take leave of me ; but I will not write a word more about them : indeed I cannot, with any patience, think of that family, to whose forwardness and impertinence is owing all the uneasiness I at this moment suffer !

So great was the depression of my spirits upon the road, that it was with difficulty I could persuade the worthy Mrs. Clinton I was not ill ; but, alas ! the situation of my mind was such as would have rendered any mere bodily pain, by comparison, even enviable !

And yet, when we arrived at Berry Hill,—when the chaise stopped at this place,—how did my heart throb with joy !—and when, through the window, I beheld the dearest, the most venerable of men, with uplifted hands, returning, as I doubt not, thanks for my safe arrival,—Good God ! I thought it would have burst my bosom !—I opened the chaise-door myself ; I flew,—for my feet did not seem to touch the ground,—into the parlour : he had risen to meet me ; but the moment I appeared he sunk into his chair, uttering, with a deep sigh, though his face beamed with delight, “ My God, I thank thee ! ”

I sprung forward ; and, with a pleasure that bordered upon agony, I embraced his knees, I kissed

his hands, I wept over them, but could not speak : while he, now raising his eyes in thankfulness towards heaven, now bowing down his reverend head, and folding me in his arms, could scarce articulate the blessings with which his kind and benevolent heart overflowed.

O, Miss Mirvan, to be so beloved by the best of men,—should I not be happy?—Should I have one wish save that of meriting his goodness?—Yet think me not ungrateful ; indeed I am not, although the internal sadness of my mind unfits me, at present, for enjoying as I ought the bounties of Providence.

I cannot journalize, cannot arrange my ideas into order.

How little has situation to do with happiness! I had flattered myself, that, when restored to Berry Hill, I should be restored to tranquillity : far otherwise have I found it, for never yet had tranquillity and Evelina so little intercourse.

I blush for what I have written. Can you, Maria, forgive my gravity? but I restrain it so much, and so painfully, in the presence of Mr. Villars, that I know not how to deny myself the consolation of indulging it to you.

Adieu, my dear Miss Mirvan.

Yet one thing I must add : do not let the seriousness of this letter deceive you ; do not impute to a wrong cause the melancholy I confess, by supposing that the heart of your friend mourns a too great susceptibility : no, indeed ! believe me it never was, never can be, more assuredly her own than at this moment. So witness in all truth,

Your affectionate

EVELINA.

You will make my excuses to the honoured Lady Howard, and to your dear mother.

LETTER XII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Berry Hill, July 21.]

You accuse me of mystery, and charge me with reserve: I cannot doubt but I must have merited the accusation; yet, to clear myself,—you know not how painful will be the task. But I cannot resist your kind intreaties;—indeed I do not wish to resist them: for your friendship and affection will soothe my chagrin. Had it arisen from any other cause, not a moment would I have deferred the communication you ask;—but as it is, I would, were it possible, not only conceal it from all the world, but endeavour to disbelieve it myself. Yet since I *must* tell you, why trifle with your impatience?

I know not how to come to the point; twenty times have I attempted it in vain;—but I will *force* myself to proceed.

Oh, Miss Mirvan, could you ever have believed, that one who seemed formed as a pattern for his fellow-creatures, as a model of perfection,—one whose elegance surpassed all description,—whose sweetness of manners disgraced all comparison;—oh, Miss Mirvan, could you ever have believed that *Lord Orville*, would have treated me with indignity?

Never, never again will I trust to appearances;—never confide in my own weak judgment;—never believe that person to be good who seems to be amiable! What cruel maxims are we taught by a knowledge of the world!—But while my own reflections absorb me, I forget you are still in suspense. I had just finished the last letter which I wrote to you from London, when the maid of the house brought me a note. It was given to her, she said,

by a footman, who told her he would call the next day for an answer.

This note,—but let it speak for itself.

“ To Miss Anville.”

“ With transport, most charming of thy sex, did I read the letter with which you yesterday morning favoured me. I am sorry the affair of the carriage should have given you any concern, but I am highly flattered by the anxiety you express so kindly. Believe me, my lovely girl, I am truly sensible of the honour of your good opinion, and feel myself deeply penetrated with love and gratitude. The correspondence you have so sweetly commenced, I shall be proud of continuing; and I hope the strong sense I have of the favour you do me will prevent your withdrawing it. Assure yourself, that I desire nothing more ardently than to pour forth my thanks at your feet, and to offer those vows which are so justly the tribute of your charms and accomplishments. In your next, I intreat you to acquaint me how long you shall remain in town. The servant, whom I shall commission to call for an answer, has orders to ride post with it to me. My impatience for his arrival will be very great, though inferior to that with which I burn to tell you, in person, how much I am, my sweet girl, your grateful admirer, :

“ ORVILLE.”

What a letter! how has my proud heart swelled every line I have copied! What I wrote to him you know; tell me, then, my dear friend, do you think it merited such an answer!—and that I have deservedly incurred the liberty he has taken? I meant nothing but a simple apology, which I thought as much due to my own character as to his; yet, by the construction he seems to have put upon it, should you not have imagined it contained the avowal of sentiments which might indeed have provoked his contempt?

The moment the letter was delivered to me, I retired to my own room to read it; and so eager was my first perusal, that,—I am ashamed to own,—it gave me no sensation but of delight. Unsuspicious of any impropriety from Lord Orville, I perceived not immediately the impertinence it implied,—I only marked the expressions of his own regard; and I was so much surprised, that I was unable for some time to compose myself, or read it again:—I could only walk up and down the room, repeating to myself, “Good God, is it possible?—am I then loved by Lord Orville?”

But this dream was soon over, and I awoke to far different feelings. Upon a second reading I thought every word changed,—it did not seem the same letter,—I could not find one sentence that I could look at without blushing: my astonishment was extreme, and it was succeeded by the utmost indignation.

If, as I am very ready to acknowledge, I erred in writing to Lord Orville, was it for *him* to punish the error? If he was offended, could he not have been silent? If he thought my letter ill-judged, should he not have pitied my ignorance? have considered my youth, and allowed for my inexperience?

Oh, Maria! how have I been deceived in this man! Words have no power to tell the high opinion I had of him; to that was owing the unfortunate solicitude which prompted my writing; a solicitude I must for ever repent!

Yet perhaps I have rather reason to rejoice than to grieve, since this affair has shewn me his real disposition, and removed that partiality which, covering his every imperfection, left only his virtues and good qualities exposed to view. Had the deception continued much longer, had my mind received any additional prejudice in his favour, who knows whether my mistaken ideas might have led me? Indeed I fear I was in greater danger than I apprehended,

or can now think of without trembling;—for, oh, if this weak heart of mine had been penetrated with too deep an impression of his merit,—my peace and happiness had been lost for ever.

I would fain encourage more cheerful thoughts, fain drive from my mind the melancholy that has taken possession of it; but I cannot succeed: for added to the humiliating feelings which so powerfully oppress me, I have yet another cause of concern;—alas, my dear Maria, I have broken the tranquillity of the best of men!

I have never had the courage to shew him this cruel letter; I could not bear so greatly to depreciate in his opinion, one whom I had, with infinite anxiety, raised in it myself. Indeed, my first determination was to confine my chagrin totally to my own bosom; but your friendly inquiries have drawn it from me: and now I wish I had made no concealment from the beginning, since I know not how to account for a gravity, which not all my endeavours can entirely hide or repress.

My greatest apprehension is, lest he should imagine that my residence in London has given me a distaste to the country. Every body I see takes notice of my being altered, and looking pale and ill. I should be very indifferent to all such observations, did I not perceive that they draw upon me the eyes of Mr. Villars, which glisten with affectionate concern.

This morning, in speaking of my London expedition, he mentioned Lord Orville. I felt so much disturbed, that I would instantly have changed the subject; but he would not allow me, and, very unexpectedly, he began his panegyric, extolling in strong terms, his manly and honourable behaviour in regard to the Marybone adventure. My cheeks glowed with indignation every word he spoke;—so lately as I had myself fancied him the noblest of his sex,

Now that I was so well convinced of my mistake, I could not bear to hear his undeserved praises uttered by one so really good, so unsuspecting, so pure of heart!

What he thought of my silence and uneasiness I fear to know; but I hope he will mention the subject no more. I will not, however, with ungrateful indolence, give way to a sadness which I find infectious to him who merits the most cheerful exertion of my spirits. I am thankful that he has forborne to probe my wound; and I will endeavour to heal it by the consciousness that I have not deserved the indignity I have received. Yet I cannot but lament to find myself in a world so deceitful, where we must suspect what we see, distrust what we hear, and doubt even what we feel!

LETTER XIII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Berry Hill, July 29.]

I MUST own myself somewhat distressed how to answer your raillery: yet believe me, my dear Maria, your suggestions are those of *fancy*, not of *truth*. I am unconscious of the weakness you suspect; yet, to dispel your doubts, I will animate myself more than ever to conquer my chagrin, and to recover my spirits.

You wonder, you say, since my *heart* takes no part in this affair, why it should make me so unhappy? And can you, acquainted as you are with the high opinion I entertained of Lord Orville, can you wonder that so great a disappointment in his character should affect me? Indeed, had so strange a letter been sent to me from *any* body, it could not have failed shocking me; how much more sensibly,

then, must I feel such an affront, when received from the man in the world I had imagined least capable of giving it?

You are glad I made no reply; assure yourself, my dear friend, had this letter been the most respectful that could be written, the clandestine air given to it, by his proposal of sending his servant for my answer, instead of having it directed to his house, would effectually have prevented my writing. Indeed, I have an aversion the most sincere to all mysteries, all private actions; however foolishly and blameably, in regard to this letter, I have deviated from the open path which, from my earliest infancy, I was taught to tread.

He talks of my having *commenced a correspondence* with him: and could Lord Orville indeed believe I had such a design? believe me so forward, so bold, so strangely ridiculous? I know not if his man called or not; but I rejoice that I quitted London before he came, and without leaving any message for him. What, indeed, could I have said? it would have been a condescension very unmerited to have taken any, the least notice of such a letter.

Never shall I cease to wonder how he could write it. Oh, Maria! what, what could induce him so causelessly to wound and affront one who would sooner have died than wilfully offended *him*?—How mortifying a freedom of style! how cruel an implication conveyed by his *thanks* and expressions of gratitude! Is it not astonishing, that any man can *appear* so modest, who is so vain?

Every hour I regret the secrecy I have observed with my beloved Mr. Villars; I know not what bewitched me, but I felt at first a repugnance to publishing this affair that I could not surmount;—and now, I am ashamed of confessing that I have any thing to confess! Yet I deserve to be punished for the false delicacy which occasioned my silence;

since, if Lord Orville himself was contented to forfeit his character, was it for me, almost at the expence of my own, to support it?

Yet I believe I should be very easy, now the first shock is over, and now that I see the whole affair with the resentment it merits, did not all my good friends in this neighbourhood, who think me extremely altered, tease me about my gravity, and torment Mr. Villars with observations upon my dejection and falling away. The subject is no sooner started, than a deep gloom overspreads his venerable countenance, and he looks at me with a tenderness so melancholy, that I know not how to endure the consciousness of exciting it.

Mrs. Selwyn, a lady of large fortune, who lives about three miles from Berry Hill, and who has always honoured me with very distinguishing marks of regard, is going in a short time to Bristol, and has proposed to Mr. Villars to take me with her for the recovery of my health. He seemed very much distressed whether to consent or refuse; but I, without any hesitation, warmly opposed the scheme, protesting my health could no where be better than in this pure air. He had the goodness to thank me for this readiness to stay with him: but he is all goodness! Oh, that it were in my power to be indeed what, in the kindness of his heart, he has called me, the comfort of his age, and solace of his infirmities!

Never do I wish to be again separated from him. If here I am grave, elsewhere I should be unhappy. In his presence, with a very little exertion, all the cheerfulness of my disposition seems ready to return; the benevolence of his countenance reanimates, the harmony of his temper composes, the purity of his character edifies me! I owe to him every thing! and, far from finding my debt of gratitude a weight, the first pride, the first pleasure of

my life, is the recollection of the obligations conferred upon me by a goodness so unequalled.

Once, indeed, I thought there existed another,—who, when *time had wintered o'er his locks*, would have shone forth among his fellow-creatures with the same brightness of worth which dignifies my honoured Mr. Villars; a brightness, how superior in value to that which results from mere quickness of parts, wit, or imagination! a brightness, which, not contented with merely diffusing smiles, and gaining admiration from the sallies of the spirits, reflects a real and a glorious lustre upon all mankind! Oh, how great was my error! how ill did I judge! how cruelly have I been deceived!

I will not go to Bristol, though Mrs. Selwyn is very urgent with me;—but I desire not to see any more of the world! the few months I have already passed in it, have sufficed to give me a disgust even to its name.

I hope too, I shall see Lord Orville no more; accustomed, from my first knowledge of him, to regard him as a *being superior to his race*, his presence, perhaps, might banish my resentment, and I might forget his ill conduct; for oh, Maria!—I should not know how to see *Lord Orville*—and to think of displeasure!

As a sister I loved him;—I could have entrusted him with every thought of my heart, had he deigned to wish my confidence: so steady did I think his honour, so *feminine* his delicacy, and so amiable his nature! I have a thousand times imagined that the whole study of his life, and whole purport of his reflections, tended solely to the good and happiness of others: but I will talk,—write,—think of him no more!

Adieu, my dear friend!

LETTER XIV.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Berry Hill, August 10.]

You complain of my silence, my dear Miss Mirvan;—but what have I to write? Narrative does not offer, nor does a lively imagination supply the deficiency. I have, however, at present, sufficient matter for a letter, in relating a conversation I had yesterday with Mr. Villars.

Our breakfast had been the most cheerful we have had since my return hither; and when it was over, he did not, as usual, retire to his study, but continued to converse with me while I worked. We might, probably, have passed all the morning thus sociably, but for the entrance of a farmer, who came to solicit advice concerning some domestic affairs. They withdrew together into the study.

The moment I was alone my spirits failed me; the exertion with which I had supported them had fatigued my mind; I flung away my work, and, leaning my arms on the table, gave way to a train of disagreeable reflections, which, bursting from the restraint that had smothered them, filled me with unusual sadness.

This was my situation, when, looking towards the door, which was open, I perceived Mr. Villars, who was earnestly regarding me. "Is Farmer Smith gone, Sir?" cried I, hastily rising, and snatching up my work.

"Don't let me disturb you," said he, gravely; "I will go again to my study."

"Will you, Sir?—I was in hopes you were coming to sit here."

"In hopes!—and why, Evelina, should you hope it?"

This question was so unexpected, that I knew not how to answer it; but, as I saw he was moving away, I followed, and begged him to return. "No, my dear, no," said he, with a forced smile, "I only interrupt your meditations."

Again I knew not what to say: and while I hesitated, he retired. My heart was with him, but I had not the courage to follow. The idea of an explanation brought on in so serious a manner, frightened me. I recollected the inference *you* had drawn from my uneasiness, and I feared that he might make a similar interpretation.

Solitary and thoughtful, I passed the rest of the morning in my own room. At dinner I again attempted to be cheerful; but Mr. Villars himself was grave, and I had not sufficient spirits to support a conversation merely by my own efforts. As soon as dinner was over, he took a book, and I walked to the window. I believe I remained near an hour in this situation. All my thoughts were directed to considering how I might dispel the doubts which I apprehended Mr. Villars had formed, without acknowledging a circumstance which I had suffered so much pain merely to conceal. But while I was thus planning for the future, I forgot the present; and so intent was I upon the subject which occupied me, that the strange appearance of my unusual inactivity and extreme thoughtfulness never occurred to me. But when, at last, I recollected myself, and turned round, I saw that Mr. Villars, who had parted with his book, was wholly engrossed in attending to me. I started from my reverie, and, hardly knowing what I said, asked if he had been reading?

He paused a moment, and then replied, "Yes, my child;—a book that both afflicts and perplexes me."

He means *me*, thought I; and therefore I made no answer.

"What if we read it together?" continued he, "will you assist me to clear its obscurity?"

I knew not what to say; but I sighed involuntarily from the bottom of my heart. He rose, and approaching me, said with emotion, "My child, I can no longer be a silent witness of thy sorrow,—is not *thy* sorrow *my* sorrow?—and ought I to be a stranger to the cause, when I so deeply sympathise in the effect?"

"Cause, Sir!" cried I, greatly alarmed, "what cause?—I don't know,—I can't tell—I—"

"Fear not," said he, kindly, "to unbosom thyself to me, my dearest Evelina; open to me thy whole heart,—It can have no feelings for which I will not make allowance. Tell me, therefore, what it is that thus afflicts us both; and who knows but I may suggest some means of relief?"

"You are too, too good," cried I, greatly embarrassed; "but indeed I know not what you mean."

"I see," said he, "it is painful to you to speak: suppose, then, I endeavour to save you by guessing?"

"Impossible! impossible!" cried I, eagerly; "no one living could ever guess, ever suppose—" I stopped abruptly; for I then recollected I was acknowledging something was to be guessed: however, he noticed not my mistake.

"At least let me try," answered he, mildly; "perhaps I may be a better diviner than you imagine: if I guess every thing that is probable, surely I must approach near the real reason. Be honest, then, my love, and speak without reserve;—does not the country, after so much gaiety, so much variety, does it not appear insipid and tiresome?"

"No, indeed! I love it more than ever, and more than ever do I wish I had never, never quitted it?"

"Oh, my child! that I had not permitted the journey! My judgment always opposed it, but my resolution was not proof against persuasion."

"I blush, indeed," cried I, "to recollect my earnestness;—but I have been my own punisher?"

"It is too late now," answered he, "to reflect upon this subject; let us endeavour to avoid repentance for the time to come, and we shall not have erred without reaping some instruction." Then, seating himself, and making me sit by him, he continued, "I must now guess again: perhaps you regret the loss of those friends you knew in town;—perhaps you miss their society, and fear you may see them no more?—perhaps Lord Orville——"

I could not keep my seat; but rising hastily, said, "Dear Sir, ask me nothing more!—for I have nothing to own,—nothing to say;—my gravity has been merely accidental, and I can give no reason for it at all.—Shall I fetch you another book?—or will you have this again?"

For some minutes he was totally silent, and I pretended to employ myself in looking for a book. At last, with a deep sigh, "I see," said he, "I see but too plainly, that though Evelina is returned,—I have lost my child!"

"No, Sir, no," cried I, inexpressibly shocked, "she is more your's than ever! Without you, the world would be a desert to her, and life a burthen:—forgive her, then; and,—if you can,—condescend to be, once more, the confidant of all her thoughts."

"How highly I value, how greatly I wish for her confidence," returned he, "she cannot but know;—yet to extort, to tear it from her,—my justice, my affection both revolt at the idea. I am sorry that I was so earnest with you;—leave me, my dear, leave me and compose yourself;—we will meet again at tea."

"Do you then refuse to hear me?"

"No, but I abhor to compel you. I have long seen that your mind has been ill at ease, and mine

has largely partaken of your concern : I forbore to question you ; for I hoped that time, and absence from whatever excited your uneasiness, might best operate in silence : but, alas ! your affliction seems only to augment,—your health declines,—your look alters !—Oh, Evelina, my aged heart bleeds to see the change !—bleeds to behold the darling it had cherished, the prop it had reared for its support when bowed down by years and infirmities, sinking itself under the pressure of internal grief !—struggling to hide what it should seek to participate !—But go, my dear, go to your own room ; we both want composure, and we will talk of this matter some other time.”

“ Oh, Sir,” cried I, penetrated to the soul, “ bid me not leave you !—think me not so lost to feeling, to gratitude——”

“ Not a word of that,” interrupted he : “ it pains me you should think upon that subject ; pains me you should ever remember that you have not a natural, an hereditary right to every thing within my power. I meant not to affect you thus,—I hoped to have soothed you !—but my anxiety betrayed me to an urgency that has distressed you. Comfort yourself, my love ; and doubt not but that time will stand your friend, and all will end well.”

I burst into tears : with difficulty had I so long restrained them ; for my heart, while it glowed with tenderness and gratitude, was oppressed with a sense of its own unworthiness. “ You are all, all goodness !” cried I, in a voice scarce audible ; “ little as I deserve,—unable as I am to repay, such kindness,—yet my whole soul feels,—thanks you for it !”

“ My dearest child,” cried he, “ I cannot bear to see thy tears ;—for *my* sake dry them ; such a sight is too much for me : think of that, Evelina, and take comfort, I charge thee !”

"Say then," cried I, kneeling at his feet, "say then that you forgive me! that you pardon my reserve,—that you will again suffer me to tell you my most secret thoughts, and rely upon my promise never more to forfeit your confidence!—my father!—my protector!—my ever-honoured,—ever-loved—my best and only friend!—say you forgive your Evelina, and she will study better to deserve your goodness!"

He raised, he embraced me; he called me his sole joy, his only earthly hope, and the child of his bosom! He folded me to his heart; and, while I wept from the fulness of mine, with words of sweetest kindness and consolation he soothed and tranquillised me.

Dear to my remembrance will ever be that moment when, banishing the reserve I had so foolishly planned, and so painfully supported, I was restored to the confidence of the best of men!

When at length we were again quietly and composedly seated by each other, and Mr. Villars waited for the explanation I had begged him to hear, I found myself extremely embarrassed how to introduce the subject which must lead to it. He saw my distress; and with a kind of benevolent pleasantry, asked me if I would let him *guess* any more? I assented in silence.

"Shall I, then, go back to where I left off?"

"If—if you please;—I believe so,—" said I, stammering.

"Well, then, my love, I think I was speaking of the regret it was natural you should feel upon quitting those from whom you had received civility and kindness, with so little certainty of ever seeing them again, or being able to return their good offices? These are circumstances that afford but melancholy reflections to young minds; and the affectionate disposition of my Evelina, open to all social feelings,

must be hurt more than usual by such considerations.—You are silent, my dear? Shall I name those whom I think most worthy the regret I speak of? We shall then see if our opinions coincide.”

Still I said nothing, and he continued.

“In your London journal, nobody appears in a more amiable, a more respectable light than Lord Orville; and perhaps——”

“I knew what you would say,” cried I, hastily, “and I have long feared where your suspicions would fall; but indeed, Sir, you are mistaken: I hate Lord Orville,—he is the last man in the world in whose favour I should be prejudiced.”

I stopped; for Mr. Villars looked at me with such infinite surprise, that my own warmth made me blush.

“You *hate* Lord Orville!” repeated he.

I could make no answer; but took from my pocket-book the letter, and giving it to him, “See, Sir,” said I, “how differently the same man can *talk* and *write*!”

He read it three times before he spoke; and then said, “I am so much astonished, that I know not what I read. When had you this letter?”

I told him. Again he read it, and, after considering its contents some time, said, “I can form but one conjecture concerning this most extraordinary performance: he must certainly have been intoxicated when he wrote it.”

“Lord Orville intoxicated!” repeated I: “once I thought him a stranger to all intemperance;—but it is very possible, for I can believe any thing now.”

“That a man who had behaved with so strict a regard to delicacy,” continued Mr. Villars, “and who, as far as occasion had allowed, manifested sentiments the most honourable, should thus insolently, thus wantonly, insult a modest young woman,

in his perfect senses, I cannot think possible. But, my dear, you should have inclosed this letter in an empty cover, and have returned it to him again: such a resentment would at once have become *your* character, and have given him an opportunity, in some measure, of clearing his own. He could not well have read this letter the next morning without being sensible of the impropriety of having written it."

Oh, Maria! why had not I this thought? I might then have received some apology; the mortification would then have been *his* not *mine*. It is true, he could not have reinstated himself so highly in my opinion as I had once ignorantly placed him, since the conviction of such intemperance would have levelled him with the rest of his imperfect race; yet my humbled pride might have been consoled by his acknowledgments.

But why should I allow myself to be humbled by a man who can suffer his reason to be thus abjectly debased, when I am exalted by one who knows no vice, and scarcely a failing,—but by hearsay? To think of his kindness, and reflect upon his praises, might animate and comfort me even in the midst of affliction. "Your indignation," said he, "is the result of virtue; you fancied Lord Orville was without fault—he had the appearance of infinite worthiness, and you supposed his character accorded with his appearance: guileless yourself, how could you prepare against the duplicity of another? Your disappointment has but been proportioned to your expectations, and you have chiefly owed its severity to the innocence which hid its approach."

I will bid these words dwell ever in my memory, and they shall cheer, comfort, and enliven me! This conversation, though extremely affecting to me at the time it passed, has relieved my mind from much anxiety. Concealment, my dear Maria, is the foe

of tranquillity : however I may err in future, I will never be disingenuous in acknowledging my errors. To you and to Mr. Villars I vow an unremitting confidence.

And yet, though I am more at ease, I am far from well : I have been some time writing this letter ; but I hope I shall send you soon a more cheerful one.

Adieu, my sweet friend. I intreat you not to acquaint even your dear mother with this affair ; Lord Orville is a favourite with her, and why should I publish that he deserves not that honour ?

LETTER XV.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Bristol Hotwells, August 28.]

You will be again surprised, my dear Maria, at seeing whence I date my letter : but I have been very ill, and Mr. Villars was so much alarmed, that he not only insisted upon my accompanying Mrs. Selwyn hither, but earnestly desired she would hasten her intended journey.

We travelled very slowly, and I did not find myself so much fatigued as I expected. We are situated upon a most delightful spot ; the prospect is beautiful, the air pure, and the weather very favourable to invalids. I am already better, and I doubt not but I shall soon be well ; as well, in regard to mere health, as I wish to be.

I cannot express the reluctance with which I parted from my revered Mr. Villars : it was not like that parting which, last April, preceded my journey to Howard Grove, when, all expectation and hope, though I wept, I rejoiced ; and though I sincerely grieved to leave him, I yet wished to be

gone : the sorrow I now felt was unmingled with any livelier sensation ; expectation was vanished, and hope I had none ! All that I held most dear upon earth I quitted ; and that upon an errand, to the success of which I was totally indifferent, the re-establishment of my health. Had it been to have seen my sweet Maria, or her dear mother, I should not have repined.

Mrs. Selwyn is very kind and attentive to me. She is extremely clever : her understanding, indeed, may be called *masculine* : but, unfortunately, her manners deserve the same epithet ; for, in studying to acquire the knowledge of the other sex, she has lost all the softness of her own. In regard to myself, however, as I have neither courage nor inclination to argue with her, I have never been personally hurt at her want of gentleness ; a virtue which, nevertheless, seems so essential a part of the female character, that I find myself more awkward, and less at ease, with a woman who wants it, than I do with a man. She is not a favourite with Mr. Villars, who has often been disgusted at her unmerciful propensity to satire : but his anxiety that I should try the effect of the Bristol waters, overcame his dislike of committing me to her care. Mrs. Clinton is also here ; so that I shall be as well attended as his utmost partiality could desire.

I will continue to write to you, my dear Miss Mirvan, with as much constancy as if I had no other correspondent ; though, during my absence from Berry Hill, my letters may, perhaps, be shortened on account of the minuteness of the journal which I must write to my beloved Mr. Villars : but you, who know his expectations, and how many ties bind me to fulfil them, will, I am sure, rather excuse any omission to yourself, than any negligence to him.

LETTER XVI.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

[*Bristol Hotwells, Sept. 12.*]

THE first fortnight that I passed here was so quiet, so serene, that it gave me reason to expect a settled calm during my stay; but if I may now judge of the time to come, by the present state of my mind, the calm will be succeeded by a storm, of which I dread the violence!

This morning, in my way to the pump-room with Mrs. Selwyn, we were both very much incommoded by three gentlemen, who were sauntering by the side of the Avon, laughing and talking very loud, and lounging so disagreeably, that we knew not how to pass them. They all three fixed their eyes very boldly upon me, alternately looking under my hat, and whispering one another. Mrs. Selwyn assumed an air of uncommon sternness, and said, "You will please, gentlemen, either to proceed yourselves, or to suffer us."

"Oh! Ma'am," cried one of them, "we will suffer *you* with the greatest pleasure in life."

"You will suffer us *both*," answered she, "or I am much mistaken: you had better, therefore, make way quietly; for I should be sorry to give my servant the trouble of teaching you better manners."

Her commanding air struck them, yet they all chose to laugh; and one of them wished the fellow would begin his lesson, that he might have the pleasure of rolling him into the Avon; while another, advancing to me with a freedom which made me start, said, "By my soul I did not know you!—but I am sure I cannot be mistaken;—had not I the honour of seeing you once at the Pantheon?"

I then recollected the nobleman, who, at that place, had so much embarrassed me. I courtesied

without speaking. They all bowed, and making, though in a very easy manner, an apology to Mrs. Selwyn, they suffered us to pass on, but chose to accompany us.

"And where," continued this Lord, "can you so long have hid yourself? do you know I have been in search of you this age? I could neither find you out, nor hear of you; not a creature could inform me what was become of you. I cannot imagine where you could be immured. I was at two or three public places every night, in hopes of meeting you. Pray, did you leave town?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"So early in the season!—what could possibly induce you to go before the birth-day?"

"I had nothing, my Lord, to do with the birth-day."

"By my soul, all the women who *had*, may rejoice you were away. Have you been here any time?"

"Not above a fortnight, my Lord."

"A fortnight!—how unlucky that I did not meet you sooner! but I have had a run of ill luck ever since I came. How long shall you stay?"

"Indeed, my Lord, I don't know."

"Six weeks I hope; for I shall wish the place at the devil when you go."

"Do you, then, flatter yourself, my Lord," said Mrs. Selwyn, who had hitherto listened in silent contempt, "that you shall see such a beautiful spot as this, when you visit the dominions of the devil?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Faith, my Lord," said one of his companions, who still walked with us, though the other had taken leave, "the Lady is rather hard upon you."

"Not at all," answered Mrs. Selwyn; "for as I cannot doubt but his Lordship's rank and interest will secure him a place there, it would be reflecting

on his understanding, to suppose he should not wish to enlarge and beautify his dwelling."

Much as I was disgusted with this Lord, I must own Mrs. Selwyn's severity rather surprised me: but you, who have so often observed it, will not wonder she took so fair an opportunity of indulging her humour.

"As to *places*," returned he, totally unmoved, "I am so indifferent to them, that the devil take me if I care which way I go! *objects*, indeed, I am not so easy about; and, therefore, I expect, that those angels with whose beauty I am so much enraptured in this world, will have the goodness to afford me some little consolation in the other."

"What, my Lord!" cried Mrs. Selwyn, "would you wish to degrade the habitation of your friend, by admitting into it the insipid company of the upper regions?"

"What do you do with yourself this evening?" said his Lordship, turning to me.

"I shall be at home, my Lord."

"O, à-propos,—where are you?"

"Young ladies, my Lord," said Mrs. Selwyn, "are *no where*."

"Prithee," whispered his Lordship, "is that queer woman your mother?"

Good Heavens, Sir, what words for such a question!

"No, my Lord."

"Your maiden aunt, then?"

"No."

"Whoever she is, I wish she would mind her own affairs: I don't know what the devil a woman lives for after thirty: she is only in other folks way. Shall you be at the assembly?"

"I believe not, my Lord."

"No!—why then, how in the world can you contrive to pass your time?"

"In a manner which your Lordship will think very extraordinary," cried Mrs. Selwyn, "for the young lady reads."

"Ha, ha, ha! Egad, my Lord," cried the facecious companion, "you are got into bad hands."

"You had better, Ma'am," answered he, "attack Jack Coverley here, for you will make nothing of me."

"Of *you*, my Lord," cried she, "Heaven forbid I should ever entertain so idle an expectation! I only talk, like a silly woman, for the sake of talking; but I have by no means so low an opinion of your Lordship as to suppose you vulnerable to censure."

"Do, pray, Ma'am," cried he, "turn to Jack Coverley; he's the very man for you;—he'd be a wit himself if he was not too modest."

"Prithee, my Lord, be quiet," returned the other; "if the lady is contented to bestow all her favours upon *you*, why should you make such a point of my going snacks?"

"Don't be apprehensive, gentlemen," said Mrs. Selwyn, drily, "I am not romantic;—I have not the least design of doing good to either of you."

"Have not you been ill since I saw you?" said his Lordship, again addressing himself to me.

"Yes, my Lord."

"I thought so; you are paler than you was, and I suppose that's the reason I did not recollect you sooner."

"Has not your Lordship too much gallantry," cried Mrs. Selwyn, "to discover a young lady's illness by her looks?"

"The devil a word can I speak for that woman," said he, in a low voice; "do, prithee, Jack, take her in hand."

"Excuse me, my Lord," answered Mr. Coverley.

"When shall I see you again?" continued his

Lordship; "do you go to the pump-room every morning?"

"No, my Lord."

"Do you ride out?"

"No, my Lord."

Just then we arrived at the pump-room, and an end was put to our conversation, if it is not an abuse of words to give such a term to a string of rude questions and free compliments.

He had not opportunity to say much more to me, as Mrs. Selwyn joined a large party, and I walked home between two ladies. He had, however, the curiosity to see us to the door.

Mrs. Selwyn was very eager to know how I had made acquaintance with this nobleman, whose manners so evidently announced the character of a confirmed libertine. I could give her very little satisfaction, as I was ignorant even of his name: but, in the afternoon, Mr. Ridgeway, the apothecary, gave us very ample information.

As his person was easily described, for he is remarkably tall, Mr. Ridgeway told us he was Lord Merton, a nobleman who is but lately come to his title, though he has already dissipated more than half his fortune; a professed admirer of beauty, but a man of most licentious character: that among men, his companions consisted chiefly of gamblers and jockies; and among women he was rarely admitted.

"Well, Miss Anville," said Mrs. Selwyn, "I am glad I was not more civil to him. You may depend upon *me* for keeping him at a distance."

"O, Madam," said Mr. Ridgeway, "he may now be admitted any where, for he is going to *reform*."

"Has he, under that notion, persuaded any fool to marry him?"

"Not yet, Madam, but a marriage is expected to take place shortly: it has been some time in agita-

tion ; but the friends of the Lady have obliged her to wait till she is of age : however, her brother, who has chiefly opposed the match, now that she is near being at her own disposal, is tolerably quiet. She is very pretty, and will have a large fortune. We expect her at the Wells every day."

"What is her name?" said Mrs. Selwyn.

"Larpent," answered he: "Lady Louisa Larpent, sister of Lord Orville."

"Lord Orville!" repeated I, all amazement.

"Yes, Ma'am ; his Lordship is coming with her. I have had certain information. They are to be at the Honourable Mrs. Beaumont's. She is a relation of my Lord's, and has a very fine house upon Clifton Hill."

His Lordship is coming with her!—Good God, what an emotion did those words give me! How strange, my dear Sir, that just at this time, he should visit Bristol! It will be impossible for me to avoid seeing him, as Mrs. Selwyn is very well acquainted with Mrs. Beaumont. Indeed, I have had an escape in not being under the same roof with him, for Mrs. Beaumont invited us to her house immediately upon our arrival ; but the inconvenience of being so distant from the pump-room made Mrs. Selwyn decline her civility.

Oh that the first meeting was over!—or that I could quit Bristol without seeing him!—inexpressibly do I dread an interview! Should the same impertinent freedom be expressed by his looks, which dictated his cruel letter, I shall not know how to endure either him or myself. Had I but returned it, I should be easier, because my sentiments of it would then be known to him ; but now, he can only gather them from my behaviour ; and I tremble lest he should mistake my indignation for confusion!—lest he should misconstrue my reserve into embarrassment!—for how, my dearest Sir, how shall I be able

totally to divest myself of the respect with which I have been used to think of him?—the pleasure with which I have been used to see him?

Surely he, as well as I, must recollect the letter at the moment of our meeting; and he will probably mean to gather my thoughts of it from my looks;—oh that they could but convey to him my real detestation of impertinence and vanity! then would he see how much he had mistaken my disposition when he imagined them my due.

There was a time when the very idea that such a man as Lord Merton should ever be connected with Lord Orville, would have both surprised and shocked me; and even yet I am pleased to hear of his repugnance to the marriage.

But how strange, that a man of so abandoned a character should be the choice of a sister of Lord Orville; and how strange, that, almost at the moment of the union, he should be so importunate in gallantry to another woman! What a world is this we live in! how corrupt! how degenerate! well might I be contented to see no more of it! If I find that the *eyes* of Lord Orville agree with his *pen*,—I shall then think, that of all mankind, the only virtuous individual resides at Berry Hill.

LETTER XVII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[*Bristol Hotwells, Sept. 16.*]

OH, Sir, Lord Orville is still himself! still what, from the moment I beheld, I believed him to be—all that is amiable in man! and your happy Evelina, restored at once to spirits and tranquillity, is no longer sunk in her own opinion, nor discontented with

the world ;—no longer, with dejected eyes, sees the prospect of passing her future days in sadness, doubt, and suspicion ! with revived courage she now looks forward, and expects to meet with goodness, even among mankind :—though still she feels, as strongly as ever, the folly of hoping, in any *second* instance, to meet with *perfection*.

Your conjecture was certainly right ; Lord Orville, when he wrote that letter, could not be in his senses. Oh that intemperance should have power to degrade so low, a man so noble !

This morning I accompanied Mrs. Selwyn to Clifton Hill, where, beautifully situated, is the house of Mrs. Beaumont. Most uncomfortable were my feelings during our walk, which was very slow ; for the agitation of my mind made me more than usually sensible how weak I still continue. As we entered the house, I summoned all my resolution to my aid, determined rather to die than give Lord Orville reason to attribute my weakness to a wrong cause. I was happily relieved from my perturbation, when I saw Mrs. Beaumont was alone. We sat with her for, I believe, an hour without interruption ; and then we saw a phaeton drive up to the gate, and a lady and gentleman alight from it.

They entered the parlour with the ease of people who were at home. The gentleman, I soon saw, was Lord Merton : he came shuffling into the room with his boots on, and his whip in his hand ; and having made something like a bow to Mrs. Beaumont, he turned towards me. His surprise was very evident ; but he took no manner of notice of me. He waited, I believe, to discover, first, what chance had brought me to that house, where he did not look much rejoiced at meeting me. He seated himself very quietly at the window, without speaking to any body.

Mean time the lady, who seemed very young,

hobbling rather than walking into the room, made a passing courtesy to Mrs. Beaumont, saying, "How are you, Ma'am?" and then, without noticing any body else, with an air of languor she flung herself upon a sofa, protesting, in a most affected voice, and speaking so softly she could hardly be heard, that she was fatigued to death. "Really, Ma'am, the roads are so monstrous dusty,—you can't imagine how troublesome the dust is to one's eyes!—and the sun, too, is monstrous disagreeable!—I dare say I shall be so tanned I shan't be fit to be seen this age. Indeed, my Lord, I won't go out with you any more, for you don't care where you take one."

"Upon my honour," said Lord Merton, "I took you the pleasantest ride in England; the fault was in the sun, not me."

"Your Lordship is in the right," said Mrs. Selwyn, "to transfer the fault to the *sun*, because it has so many excellencies to counterbalance partial inconveniences, that a *little* blame will not injure *that* in our estimation."

Lord Merton looked by no means delighted at this attack; which I believe she would not so readily have made, but to revenge his neglect of us.

"Did you meet your brother, Lady Louisa?" said Mrs. Beaumont.

"No, Ma'am. Is he rode out this morning?"

I then found, what I had before suspected, that this Lady was Lord Orville's sister: how strange, that such near relations should be so different to each other! There is, indeed, some resemblance in their features; but, in their manners, not the least.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Beaumont, "and I believe he wished to see you."

"My Lord drove so monstrous fast," said Lady Louisa, "that perhaps we passed him. He frightened me out of my senses; I declare my head is quite

giddy. Do you know, Ma'am, we have done nothing but quarrel all the morning?—You can't think how I've scolded; have not I, my Lord?" and she smiled expressively at Lord Merton.

"You have been, as you always are," said he, twisting his whip with his fingers, "all sweetness."

"O fie, my Lord," cried she, "I know you don't think so; I know you think me very ill-natured;—don't you, my Lord?"

"No, upon my honour;—how can your Ladyship ask such a question? Pray how goes time? my watch stands."

"It is almost three," answered Mrs. Beaumont.

"Lord, Ma'am, you frighten me!" cried Lady Louisa; and then, turning to Lord Merton, "why now, you wicked creature you, did you not tell me it was but one?"

Mrs. Selwyn then rose to take leave; but Mrs. Beaumont asked if she would look at the shrubbery. "I should like it much," answered she, "but that I fear to fatigue Miss Anville."

Lady Louisa, then raising her head from her hand, on which it had leant, turned round to look at me; and having fully satisfied her curiosity, without any regard to the confusion it gave me, turned about, and, again leaning on her hand, took no further notice of me.

I declared myself very able to walk, and begged that I might accompany them. "What say *you*, Lady Louisa," cried Mrs. Beaumont, "to a stroll in the garden?"

"Me, Ma'am!—I declare I can't stir a step; the heat is so excessive, it would kill me. I'm half dead with it already; besides I shall have no time to dress. Will any body be here to day, Ma'am?"

"I believe not, unless Lord Merton will favour us with his company."

"With great pleasure, Madam."

"Well, I declare you don't deserve to be asked," cried Lady Louisa, "you wicked creature you!—I must tell you one thing Ma'am,—you can't think how abominable he was! do you know we met Mr. Lovel in his new phaeton, and my Lord was so cruel as to drive against it?—we really flew. I declare I could not breathe. Upon my word, my Lord, I'll never trust myself with you again,—I won't indeed."

We then went into the garden, leaving them to discuss the point at their leisure.

Do you remember a *pretty but affected young lady* I mentioned to have seen, in Lord Orville's party, at the Pantheon? How little did I then imagine her to be his sister! yet Lady Louisa Larpent is the very person. I can now account for the piqued manner of her speaking to Lord Merton that evening, and I can now account for the air of displeasure with which Lord Orville marked the undue attention of his future brother-in-law to me.

We had not walked long, ere, at a distance, I perceived Lord Orville, who seemed just dismounted from his horse, enter the garden. All my perturbation returned at the sight of him!—yet I endeavoured to repress every feeling but resentment. As he approached us, he bowed to the whole party; but I turned away my head to avoid taking any share in his civility. Addressing himself immediately to Mrs. Beaumont, he was beginning to enquire after his sister: but, upon seeing my face, he suddenly exclaimed, "Miss Anville!"—and then he advanced, and made his compliments to me,—not with an air of vanity or impertinence, nor yet with a look of consciousness or shame;—but with a countenance open, manly, and charming!—with a smile that indicated pleasure, and eyes that sparkled with delight!—on *my* side was all that consciousness; for by him,

I really believe, the letter was, at that moment, entirely forgotten.

With what politeness did he address me ! with what sweetness did he look at me ! the very tone of his voice seemed flattering ! he congratulated himself upon his good fortune in meeting with me ;— hoped I should spend some time in Bristol, and enquired, even with anxiety enquired, if my health was the cause of my journey ; in which case his satisfaction would be converted into apprehension.

Yet, struck as I was with his manner, and charmed to find him such as he was wont to be, imagine not, my dear Sir, that I forgot the resentment I owe him, or the cause he has given me of displeasure ; no, my behaviour was such, as I hope, had you seen, you would not have disapproved : I was grave and distant ; I scarce looked at him when he spoke, or answered him when he was silent.

As he must certainly observe this alteration in my conduct, I think it could not fail making him both recollect and repent the provocation he had so causelessly given me ; for surely he was not so wholly lost to reason, as to be now ignorant he had ever offended me.

The moment that, without absolute rudeness, I was able, I turned entirely from him, and asked Mrs. Selwyn if we should not be late home ? How Lord Orville looked I know not, for I avoided meeting his eyes ; but he did not speak another word as we proceeded to the garden gate. Indeed, I believe, my abruptness surprised him, for he did not seem to expect I had so much spirit. And, to own the truth, convinced as I was of the propriety, nay, necessity, of showing my displeasure, I yet almost hated myself for receiving his politeness so ungraciously.

When we were taking leave, my eyes accidentally meeting his, I could not but observe that his gravity

equalled my own ; for it had entirely taken place of the smiles and good humour with which he had met me.

“ I am afraid this young lady,” said Mrs. Beaumont, “ is too weak for another long walk till she is again rested.”

“ If the Ladies will trust to my driving,” said Lord Orville, “ and are not afraid of a phaeton, mine shall be ready in a moment.”

“ You are very good, my Lord,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “ but my will is yet unsigned, and I don’t chuse to venture in a phaeton with a young man while that is the case.”

“ O,” cried Mrs. Beaumont, “ you need not be afraid of my Lord Orville, for he is remarkably careful.”

“ Well, Miss Anville,” answered she, “ what say you ?”

“ Indeed,” cried I, “ I had much rather walk—” But then, looking at Lord Orville, I perceived in his face a surprise so serious at my abrupt refusal, that I could not forbear adding, “ for I should be sorry to occasion so much trouble.”

Lord Orville, brightening at these words, came forward and pressed his offer in a manner not to be denied ;—so the phaeton was ordered ! And indeed, my dear Sir,—I know not how it was ;—but, from that moment, my coldness and reserve insensibly wore away ! You must not be angry,—it was my intention, nay, my endeavour, to support them with firmness : but when I formed the plan, I thought only of the letter,—not of Lord Orville !—and how is it possible for resentment to subsist without provocation ? yet, believe me, my dearest Sir, had he sustained the part he began to act when he wrote the ever-to-be-regretted letter, your Evelina would not have forfeited her title to your esteem, by contentedly submitting to be treated with indignity.

We continued in the garden till the phaeton was ready. When we parted from Mrs. Beaumont, she repeated her invitation to Mrs. Selwyn to accept an apartment in her house; but the reason I have already mentioned made it be again declined.

Lord Orville drove very slow, and so cautiously, that, notwithstanding the height of the phaeton, fear would have been ridiculous. I supported no part in the conversation; but Mrs. Selwyn extremely well supplied the place of two. Lord Orville himself did not speak much; but the excellent sense and refined good-breeding which accompany every word he utters, give value and weight to whatever he says.

"I suppose, my Lord," said Mrs. Selwyn, when we stopped at our lodgings, "you would have been extremely confused had we met any gentlemen who have the honour of knowing you."

"If I had," answered he, gallantly, "it would have been from mere compassion at their envy."

"No, my Lord," answered she, "it would have been from mere shame, that in an age so daring, you alone should be such a coward as to forbear to frighten women."

"O," cried he, laughing, "when a man is in a fright for himself, the ladies cannot but be in security; for you have not had half the apprehension for the safety of your persons, that I have for that of my heart." He then alighted, handed us out, took leave, and again mounting the phaeton, was out of sight in a minute.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Selwyn, when he was gone, "there must have been some mistake in the birth of that young man; he was, undoubtedly, designed for the last age: for he is really polite!"

And now, my dear Sir, do not you think, according to the present situation of affairs, I may give up my resentment, without imprudence or impro-

priety? I hope you will not blame me. Indeed, had you, like me, seen his respectful behaviour, you would have been convinced of the impracticability of supporting any further indignation.

LETTER XVIII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[*Bristol Hotwells, Sept. 19th.*]

YESTERDAY morning Mrs. Selwyn received a card from Mrs. Beaumont, to ask her to dine with her to-day: and another, to the same purpose, came to me. The invitation was accepted, and we are but just arrived from Clifton-Hill.

We found Mrs. Beaumont alone in the parlour. I will write you the character of that lady, in the words of our satirical friend Mrs. Selwyn. "She is an absolute *Court Calendar* bigot; for, chancing herself to be born of a noble and ancient family, she thinks proper to be of opinion that *birth* and *virtue* are one and the same thing. She has some good qualities; but they rather originate from pride than principle, as she piques herself upon being too high-born to be capable of an unworthy action, and thinks it incumbent upon her to support the dignity of her ancestry. Fortunately for the world in general, she has taken it into her head, that condescension is the most distinguishing virtue of high life; so that the same pride of family which renders others imperious, is with her the motive of affability. But her civility is too formal to be comfortable, and too mechanical to be flattering. That she does *me* the honour of so much notice, is merely owing to an accident, which, I am sure, is very painful to her remembrance; for it so hap-

“pened that I once did her some service, in regard
 “to an apartment at Southampton; and I have since
 “been informed, that, at the time she accepted my
 “assistance, she thought I was a woman of quality;
 “and I make no doubt but she was miserable when
 “she discovered me to be a mere country gentlewo-
 “man: however, her nice notions of decorum have
 “made her load me with favours ever since. But
 “I am not much flattered by her civilities, as I am
 “convinced I owe them neither to attachment nor
 “gratitude; but solely to a desire of cancelling an
 “obligation, which she cannot brook being under,
 “to one whose name is no where to be found in
 “the Court Calendar.”

You well know, my dear Sir, the delight this lady takes in giving way to her satirical humour.

Mrs. Beaumont received us very graciously, though she somewhat distressed me by the questions she asked concerning my family;—such as, Whether I was related to the Anvilles in the North?—Whether some of my name did not live in Lincolnshire? and many other enquiries, which much embarrassed me.

The conversation next turned upon the intended marriage in her family. She treated the subject with reserve; but it was evident she disapproved Lady Louisa's choice. She spoke in terms of the highest esteem of Lord Orville, calling him, in Marimontel's words, “*Un jeune homme comme il y en a peu.*”

I did not think this conversation very agreeably interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Lovel. Indeed I am heartily sorry he is now at the Hot-Wells. He made his compliments with the most obsequious respect to Mrs. Beaumont, but took no sort of notice of any other person.

In a few minutes Lady Louisa Larpent made her appearance. The same manners prevailed; for, courtesying, with, “I hope you are well, Ma'am,”

to Mrs. Beaumont, she passed straight forward to her seat on the sofa; where, leaning her head on her hand, she cast her languishing eyes round the room, with a vacant stare, as if determined, though she looked, not to see who was in it.

Mr. Lovel, presently approaching her, with reverence the most profound, hoped her ladyship was not indisposed.

"Mr. Lovel!" cried she, raising her head, "I declare I did not see you: have you been here long?"

"By my *watch*, Madam," said he, "only five minutes—but by your Ladyship's absence as many hours."

"O! now I think of it," cried she, "I am very angry with you;—so go along, do; for I sha'n't speak to you all day."

"Heaven forbid your La'ship's displeasure should last so long! in such cruel circumstances, a day would seem an age. But in what have I been so unfortunate as to offend?"

"O, you half killed me the other morning, with terror! I have not yet recovered from my fright. How could you be so cruel as to drive your phaeton against my Lord Merton's?"

"'Pon honour, Ma'am, your La'ship does me wrong;—it was all owing to the horses,—there was no curbing them. I protest I suffered more than your Ladyship, from the terror of alarming you."

Just then entered Lord Merton; stalking up to Mrs. Beaumont, to whom alone he bowed, he hoped he had not made her wait; and then, advancing to Lady Louisa, said, in a careless manner, "How is your Ladyship this morning?"

"Not well at all," answered she; "I have been dying with the head-ach ever since I got up."

"Indeed!" cried he, with a countenance wholly

unmoved, "I am very unhappy to hear it. But should not your Ladyship have some advice?"

"I am quite sick of advice," answered she, "Mr. Ridgeway has but just left me,—but he has done me no good. Nobody here knows what is the matter with me, yet they all see how indifferent I am."

"Your Ladyship's constitution," said Mr. Lovel, "is infinitely delicate."

"Indeed it is," cried she, in a low voice, "I am *nerve* all over!"

"I am glad, however," said Lord Merton, "that you did not take the air this morning, for Coverley has been driving against me as if he was mad: he has got two of the finest spirited horses I ever saw."

"Pray, my Lord," cried she, "why did not you bring Mr. Coverley with you? he's a droll creature; I like him monstrously."

"Why, he promised to be here as soon as me. I suppose he'll come before dinner's over."

In the midst of this trifling conversation Lord Orville made his appearance. O how different was his address! how superior did he look and move, to all about him! Having paid his respects to Mrs. Beaumont, and then to Mrs. Selwyn, he came up to me, and said, "I hope Miss Anville has not suffered from the fatigue of Monday morning?" Then, turning to Lady Louisa, who seemed rather surprised at his speaking to me, he added, "Give me leave, sister, to introduce Miss Anville to you."

Lady Louisa, half-rising, said, very coldly, that she should be glad of the honour of knowing me; and then, abruptly turning to Lord Merton and Mr. Lovel, continued, in a half-whisper, her conversation.

For my part, I had risen and courtesied, and now, feeling very foolish, I seated myself again; first I blushed at the unexpected politeness of Lord Orville, and immediately afterwards at the contemptuous

failure of it in his sister. How can that young lady see her brother so universally admired for his manners and deportment, and yet be so unamiably opposite to him in her's ! But while *his* mind, enlarged and noble, rises superior to the little prejudices of rank ; *her's*, feeble and unsteady, sinks beneath their influence.

Lord Orville, I am sure, was hurt and displeased : he bit his lips, and turning from her, addressed himself wholly to me, till we were summoned to dinner. Do you think I was not grateful for his attention ? yes, indeed, and every angry idea I had entertained, was totally obliterated.

As we were seating ourselves at the table, Mr. Coverley came into the room : he made a thousand apologies in a breath for being so late, but said he had been retarded by a little accident, for that he had overturned his phaeton, and broke it all to pieces. Lady Louisa screamed at this intelligence, and, looking at Lord Merton, declared she would never go into a phaeton again.

"O," cried he, "never mind Jack Coverley ; for he does not know how to drive."

"My Lord," cried Mr. Coverley, "I'll drive against *you* for a thousand pounds."

"Done!" returned the other ; "name your day, and we'll each choose a judge."

"The sooner the better," cried Mr. Coverley ; "to-morrow, if the carriage can be repaired."

"These enterprises," said Mrs. Selwyn, "are very proper for men of rank, since 'tis a million to one but both parties will be incapacitated for any better employment."

"For Heaven's sake," cried Lady Louisa, changing colour, "don't talk so shockingly ! Pray, my Lord, pray, Mr. Coverley, don't alarm me in this manner."

"Compose yourself, Lady Louisa," said Mrs. Beaumont, "the gentlemen will think better of the scheme; they are neither of them in earnest."

"The very mention of such a scheme," said Lady Louisa, taking out her salts, "makes me tremble all over! Indeed, my Lord, you have frightened me to death! I sha'n't eat a morsel of dinner."

"Permit me," said Lord Orville, "to propose some other subject for the present, and we will discuss this matter another time."

"Pray, brother, excuse me; my Lord must give me his word to drop the project,—for I declare it has made me sick as death."

"To compromise the matter," said Lord Orville, "suppose, if both parties are unwilling to give up the bet, that, to make the ladies easy, we change its object to something less dangerous?"

This proposal was so strongly seconded by all the party, that both Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley were obliged to comply with it; and it was then agreed that the affair should be finally settled in the afternoon.

"I shall now be entirely out of conceit with phaetons again," said Mrs. Selwyn, "though Lord Orville had almost reconciled me to them."

"My Lord Orville!" cried the witty Mr. Coverley, "why, my Lord Orville is as careful,—egad as careful as an old woman! Why, I'd drive a one-horse cart against my Lord's phaeton for a hundred guineas!"

This sally occasioned much laughter; for Mr. Coverley, I find, is regarded as a man of infinite humour.

"Perhaps, Sir," said Mrs. Selwyn, "you have not discovered the *reason* my Lord Orville is so careful!"

"Why, no, Ma'am; I must own I never heard any particular reason for it."

"Why, then, Sir, I'll tell it you; and I believe you will confess it to be *very* particular; his Lordship's friends are not yet tired of him."

Lord Orville laughed and bowed. Mr. Coverley, a little confused, turned to Lord Merton, and said, "No foul play, my Lord! I remember your Lordship recommended me to the notice of this lady the other morning, and, egad, I believe you have been doing me the same office to-day."

"Give you joy, Jack!" cried Lord Merton, with a loud laugh.

After this the conversation turned wholly upon eating, a subject which was discussed with the utmost delight; and, had I not known they were men of rank and fashion, I should have imagined that Lord Merton, Mr. Lovel, and Mr. Coverley, had all been professed cooks; for they displayed so much knowledge of sauces and made-dishes, and of the various methods of dressing the same things, that I am persuaded they must have given much time, and much study, to make themselves such adepts in this art. It would be very difficult to determine, whether they were most to be distinguished as *gluttons* or *epicures*; for they were, at once, dainty and voracious, understood the right and the wrong of every dish, and alike emptied the one and the other. I should have been quite sick of their remarks, had I not been entertained by seeing that Lord Orville, who, I am sure, was equally disgusted, not only read my sentiments, but, by his countenance, communicated to me his own.

When dinner was over, Mrs. Beaumont recommended the gentlemen to the care of Lord Orville, and then attended the ladies to the drawing-room.

The conversation, till tea-time, was extremely insipid; Mrs. Selwyn reserved herself for the gentle-

men, Mrs. Beaumont was grave, and Lady Louisa languid.

But at tea, every body revived; we were joined by the gentlemen, and gaiety took place of dullness.

Since I, as Mr. Lovel says, am *nobody**, I seated myself quietly at a window, and not very near to any body: Lord Merton, Mr. Coverley, and Mr. Lovel, severally passed me without notice, and surrounded the chair of Lady Louisa Larpent. I must own, I was rather piqued at the behaviour of Mr. Lovel, as he had formerly known me. It is true, I most sincerely despise his foppery; yet I should be grieved to meet with *contempt* from any body. But I was by no means sorry to find, that Lord Merton was determined not to know me before Lady Louisa, as his neglect relieved me from much embarrassment. As to Mr. Coverley, his attention or disregard were equally indifferent to me. Yet, altogether, I feel extremely uncomfortable in finding myself considered in a light very inferior to the rest of the company.

But when Lord Orville appeared, the scene changed: he came up stairs last; and, seeing me sit alone, not only spoke to me directly, but drew a chair next mine, and honoured me with his entire attention.

He enquired very particularly after my health, and hoped I had already found benefit from the Bristol air. "How little did I imagine," added he, "when I had last the pleasure of seeing you in town, that ill health would in so short a time have brought you hither! I am ashamed of myself for the satisfaction I feel at seeing you,—yet, how can I help it?"

* Vol. 1. p. 32.

He then enquired after the Mirvan family, and spoke of Mrs. Mirvan in terms of most just praise. "She is gentle and amiable," said he, "a true feminine character."

"Yes, indeed," answered I: "and her sweet daughter, to say every thing of her at once, is just the daughter such a mother deserves."

"I am glad of it," said he, "for both their sakes, as such near relations must always reflect credit or disgrace on each other."

After this he began to speak of the beauties of Clifton; but, in a few moments, he was interrupted by a call from the company, to discuss the affair of the wager. Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley, though they had been discoursing upon the subject some time, could not fix upon the thing that satisfied them both.

When they asked the assistance of Lord Orville, he proposed that every body present should vote something; and that the two gentlemen should draw lots which, from the several votes, should decide the bet.

"We must then begin with the ladies," said Lord Orville; and applied to Mrs. Selwyn.

"With all my heart," answered she, with her usual readiness; "and, since the gentlemen are not allowed to risk their *necks*, suppose we decide the bet by their *heads*?"

"By our heads?" cried Mr. Coverley; "Egad, I don't understand you."

"I will then explain myself more fully. As I doubt not but you are both excellent classics, suppose, for the good of your own memories, and the entertainment and surprise of the company, the thousand pounds should fall to the share of him who can repeat by heart the longest ode of Horace?"

Nobody could help laughing, the two gentlemen applied to excepted; who seemed, each of them,

rather at a loss in what manner to receive this unexpected proposal. At length Mr. Coverley, bowing low, said, "Will your Lordship please to begin?"

"Devil take me if I do!" answered he, turning on his heel, and stalking to the window.

"Come, gentlemen," said Mrs. Selwyn, "why do you hesitate? I am sure you cannot be afraid of a weak woman? Besides, if you should chance to be out, Mr. Lovel, I dare say, will have the goodness to assist you."

The laugh now turned against Mr. Lovel, whose change of countenance manifested no great pleasure at the transition.

"Me, Madam!" said he, colouring; "no, really I must beg to be excused."

"Why so, Sir?"

"Why so, Ma'am!—Why, really—as to that,—'pon honour, Ma'am, you are rather—a little severe;—for how is it possible for a man who is in the House, to study the classics? I assure you, Ma'am," (with an affected shrug) "I find quite business enough for *my* poor head in studying politics."

"But, did you study politics at school, and at the university?"

"At the university!" repeated he, with an embarrassed look; "why, as to that, Ma'am,—no, I can't say I did; but then, what with riding,—and—and—and so forth,—really one has not much time, even at the university, for mere reading."

"But, to be sure, Sir, you *have* read the classics!"

"O dear, yes, Ma'am!—very often,—but not very—not very lately."

"Which of the odes do you recommend to these gentlemen to begin with?"

"Which of the odes!—Really, Ma'am, as to that, I have no very particular choice;—for, to own the truth, that Horace was never a very great favourite with me."

"In truth I believe you!" said Mrs. Selwyn, very drily.

Lord Merton, again advancing into the circle, with a nod and a laugh, said, "Give you joy, Lovel!"

Lord Orville next applied to Mrs. Beaumont for her vote.

"It would very agreeably remind me of past times," said she, "when *bowing* was in fashion, if the bet was to depend upon the best made bow."

"Egad, my Lord," cried Mr. Coverley, "there I should beat you hollow, for your Lordship never bows at all."

"And pray, Sir, do *you*?" said Mrs. Selwyn.

"Do I, Ma'am?" cried he; "why, only see!"

"I protest," cried she, "I should have taken *that* for a *shrug*, if you had not told me 'twas a bow."

"My lord," cried Mr. Coverley, "let's practise;" and then, most ridiculously, they pranced about the room, making bows.

"We must now," said Lord Orville, turning to me, "call upon Miss Anville."

"O no, my Lord," cried I; "indeed I have nothing to propose." He would not, however, be refused; but urged me so much to say *something*, that at last, not to make him wait any longer, I ventured to propose an extempore couplet upon some given subject.

Mr. Coverley instantly made me a bow, or, according to Mrs. Selwyn, a *shrug*, crying, "Thank you, Ma'am; egad, that's my *forte*!—why, my Lord, the Fates seem against you."

Lady Louisa was then applied to; and every body seemed eager to hear her opinion. "I don't know what to say, I declare," cried she, affectedly; "can't you pass me?"

"By no means," said Lord Merton.

"Is it possible your Ladyship can make so cruel a request?" said Mr. Lovel.

"Egad," cried Mr. Coverley, "if your Ladyship does not help us in this dilemma, we shall be forced to return to our phaetons."

"Oh!" cried Lady Louisa, screaming; "you frightful creature, you, how can you be so abominable?"

I believe this trifling lasted near half an hour; when at length, every body being tired, it was given up, and she said she would consider against another time.

Lord Orville now called upon Mr. Lovel; who, after about ten minutes deliberation, proposed, with a most important face, to determine the wager by who should draw the longest straw!

I had much difficulty to forbear laughing at this unmeaning scheme; but saw, to my great surprise, not the least change of countenance in any other person; and, since we came home, Mrs. Selwyn has informed me, that to *draw straws* is a fashion of betting by no means uncommon. Good God! my dear Sir, does it not seem as if money were of no value or service, since those who possess, squander it away in a manner so infinitely absurd?

It now only remained for Lord Orville to speak; and the attention of the company shewed the expectations he had raised; yet, I believe, they by no means prevented his proposal from being heard with amazement; for it was no other than that the money should be his due, who, according to the opinion of the judges, should bring the worthiest object with whom to share it!

They all stared, without speaking. Indeed, I believe every one, for a moment at least, experienced something like shame, from having either proposed or countenanced an extravagance so useless and frivolous. For my part, I was so much struck and affected by a rebuke so noble to these spendthrifts, that I felt my eyes filled with tears.

The short silence and momentary reflection into which the company was surprised, Mr. Coverley was the first to dispel, by saying, "Egad, my Lord, your Lordship has a most remarkable odd way of taking things."

"Faith," said the incorrigible Lord Merton, "if this scheme takes, I shall fix upon my Swiss to share with me; for I don't know a worthier fellow breathing."

After a few more of these attempts at wit, the two gentlemen agreed that they would settle the affair the next morning.

The conversation then took a different turn; but I did not give it sufficient attention to write any account of it. Not long after, Lord Orville resuming his seat near mine, said, "why is Miss Anville so thoughtful?"

"I am sorry, my Lord," said I, "to consider myself among those who have so justly incurred your censure."

"My censure!—you amaze me!"

"Indeed, my Lord, you have made me quite ashamed of myself for having given my vote so foolishly, when an opportunity offered, if, like your Lordship, I had had the sense to use it, of showing some humanity."

"You treat this too seriously," said he, smiling; "and I hardly know if you do not now mean a rebuke to me."

"To you, my Lord!"

"Nay, who are most deserving of it; those who adapt their conversation to the company, or those who affect to be superior to it?"

"O, my Lord, who else would do you so little justice?"

"I flatter myself," answered he, "that, in fact, your opinion and mine, in this point, are the same, though you condescended to comply with the hu-

mour of the company. It is for me therefore, to apologize for so unseasonable a gravity, which, but for the particular interest that I now take in the affairs of Lord Merton, I should not have been so officious to display."

Such a compliment as this could not fail to reconcile me to myself; and with revived spirits, I entered into a conversation, which he supported with me till Mrs. Selwyn's carriage was announced; and we returned home.

During our ride, Mrs. Selwyn very much surprised me, by asking, if I thought my health would now permit me to give up my morning walks to the pump-room, for the purpose of spending a week at Clifton? "for this poor Mrs. Beaumont," added she, "is so eager to have a discharge in full of her debt to me, that out of mere compassion, I am induced to listen to her. Besides, she has always a house full of people; and, though they are chiefly fools and coxcombs, yet there is some pleasure in cutting them up."

I begged I might not, by any means, prevent her following her inclination, as my health was now very well established. And so, my dear Sir, to-morrow we are to be actually the guests of Mrs. Beaumont.

I am not much delighted at this scheme; for, greatly as I am flattered by the attention of Lord Orville, it is not very comfortable to be neglected by every body else. Besides, as I am sure I owe the particularity of his civility to a generous feeling for my situation, I cannot expect him to support it so long as a week.

How often do I wish, since I am absent from you, that I was under the protection of Mrs. Mirvan! It is true, Mrs. Selwyn is very obliging, and, in every respect, treats me as an equal; but she is contented with behaving well herself, and does not, with a

distinguishing politeness, raise and support me with others. Yet I mean not to blame her, for I know she is sincerely my friend; but the fact is, she is herself so much occupied in conversation, when in company, that she has neither leisure nor thought to attend to the silent.

Well, I must take my chance! But I knew not, till now, how requisite are birth and fortune to the attainment of respect and civility.

LETTER XIX.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Clifton, Sept. 20.]

HERE I am, my dear Sir, under the same roof, and inmate of the same house, as Lord Orville! Indeed, if this were not the case, my situation would be very disagreeable, as you will easily believe, when I tell you the light in which I am generally considered.

"My dear," said Mrs. Selwyn, "did you ever before meet with that egregious fop, Lovel?"

"I very readily satisfied her as to my acquaintance with him.

"O, then," said she, "I am the less surprised at his ill-nature, since he has already injured you."

I begged her to explain herself; and then she told me, that while Lord Orville was speaking to me, Lady Louisa said to Mr. Lovel, "Do you know who that is?"

"Why, Ma'am, no, 'pon honour," answered he, "I can't absolutely say I do; I only know she is a kind of a toad-eater. She made her first appearance in that capacity last spring, when she attended Miss Mirvan, a young lady of Kent."

How cruel is it, my dear Sir, to be thus exposed to the impertinent suggestions of a man who is determined to do me ill offices! Lady Louisa may well despise a *toad-eater*; but, thank Heaven, her brother has not heard, or does not credit, the mortifying appellation. Mrs. Selwyn said, she would advise me to *pay my court* to this Mr. Lovel; "for," said she, "though he is malicious, he is fashionable, and may do you some harm in the great world." But I should disdain myself as much as I do him, were I capable of such duplicity as to flatter a man whom I scorn and despise.

We were received by Mrs. Beaumont with great civility, and by Lord Orville with something more. As to Lady Louisa, she scarcely perceived that we were in the room.

There has been company here all day, part of which I have spent most happily; for after tea, when the ladies played at cards, Lord Orville, who does not, and I, who cannot play, were consequently at our own disposal; and then his Lordship entered into a conversation with me, which lasted till supper-time.

Almost insensibly, I find the constraint, the reserve, I have been wont to feel in his presence, wear away; the politeness, the sweetness, with which he speaks to me, restore all my natural cheerfulness, and make me almost as easy as he is himself; and the more so, as, if I may judge by his looks, I am rather raised than sunk of late in his opinion.

I asked him how the bet was, at last, to be decided? He told me that, to his great satisfaction, the parties had been prevailed upon to lower the sum from one thousand to one hundred pounds; and that they had agreed it should be determined by a race between two old women, one of which was to be chosen by each side, and both were to be proved more than eighty years of age, though, in other respects, strong and healthy as possible.

When I expressed my surprise at this extraordinary method of spending so much money, "I am charmed," said he, "at the novelty of meeting with one so unhackneyed in the world, as not to be yet influenced by custom to forget the use of reason: for certain it is, that the prevalence of fashion makes the greatest absurdities pass uncensured, and the mind naturally accommodates itself even to the most ridiculous improprieties, if they occur frequently."

"I should have hoped," said I, "that the humane proposal made yesterday by your Lordship, would have had more effect."

"O," cried he, laughing, "I was so far from expecting any success, that I shall think myself very fortunate if I escape the wit of Mr. Coverley in a lampoon! yet I spoke openly, because I do not wish to conceal that I am no friend to gaming."

After this, he took up the New Bath Guide, and read it with me till supper-time. In our way down stairs, Lady Louisa said, "I thought, brother, you were engaged this evening?"

"Yes, sister," answered he, "and I *have* been engaged." And he bowed to me with an air of gallantry that rather confused me.

Sept. 23.

Almost insensibly have three days glided on since I wrote last, and so serenely, that, but for your absence, I could not have formed a wish. My residence here is much happier than I had dared expect. The attention with which Lord Orville honours me, is as uniform as it is flattering, and seems to result from a benevolence of heart that proves him as much a stranger to caprice as to pride; for, as his particular civilities arose from a generous resentment at seeing me neglected, so will they, I trust, continue, as long as I shall, in any degree, deserve them. I

am now not merely easy, but even gay in his presence: such is the effect of true politeness, that it banishes all restraint and embarrassment. When we walk out, he condescends to be my companion, and keeps by my side all the way we go. When we read, he marks the passages most worthy to be noticed, draws out my sentiments, and favours me with his own. At table, where he always sits next to me, he obliges me by a thousand nameless attentions; while the distinguishing good-breeding with which he treats me, prevents my repining at the visibly-felt superiority of the rest of the company. A thousand occasional meetings could not have brought us to that degree of social freedom, which four days spent under the same roof have, insensibly, been productive of: and, as my only friend in this house, Mrs. Selwyn, is too much engrossed in perpetual conversation to attend much to me, Lord Orville seems to regard me as a helpless stranger, and, as such, to think me intitled to his good offices and protection. Indeed, my dear Sir, I have reason to hope, that the depreciating opinion he formerly entertained of me is succeeded by one infinitely more partial.—It may be that I flatter myself; but yet his looks, his attentions, his desire of drawing me into conversation, and his solicitude to oblige me, all conspire to make me hope I do not. In short, my dearest Sir, these last four happy days would repay me for months of sorrow and pain!

LETTER XX.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Clifton, Sept. 24.]

THIS morning I came down stairs very early; and supposing that the family would not assemble for

some time, I strolled out, purposing to take a long walk, in the manner I was wont to do at Berry Hill, before breakfast: but I had scarce shut the garden-gate, before I was met by a gentleman, who immediately bowing to me, I recollected to be the unhappy Mr. Macartney. Very much surprised, I courtesied, and stopped till he came up to me. He was still in mourning, but looked better than when I saw him last, though he had the same air of melancholy which so much struck me at first sight of him.

Addressing me with the utmost respect, "I am happy, Madam," said he, "to have met with you so soon. I came to Bristol but yesterday, and have had no small difficulty in tracing you to Clifton."

"Did you know, then, of my being here?"

"I did, Madam; the sole motive of my journey was to see you. I have been to Berry Hill, and there I had my intelligence, and, at the same time, the unwelcome information of your ill health."

"Good God! Sir,—and can you possibly have taken so much trouble?"

"Trouble! O, Madam, could there be any, to return you, the moment I had the power, my personal acknowledgments for your goodness?"

I then enquired after Madame Duval and the Snow-Hill family. He told me they were all well, and that Madame Duval proposed soon returning to Paris. When I congratulated him on looking better, "It is *yourself*, Madam," said he, "you should congratulate; for to your humanity alone it may now be owing that I exist at all." He then told me, that his affairs were now in a less desperate situation; and that he hoped, by the assistance of time and reason, to accommodate his mind to a more cheerful submission to his fate. "The interest you so generously took in my affliction," added he, "assures me you will not be displeased to hear of my better fortune; I was therefore eager to acquaint you with

it." He then told me that his friend, the moment he had received his letter, quitted Paris, and flew to give him his personal assistance and consolation. With a heavy heart, he acknowledged, he accepted it; "but yet," he added, "*I have* accepted it; and therefore, as bound equally by duty and honour, my first step was to hasten to the benefactress of my distress, and to return" (presenting me something in a paper) "the only part of my obligations that *can* be returned; for the rest, I have nothing but my gratitude to offer, and must always be contented to consider myself her debtor."

I congratulated him most sincerely upon his dawning prosperity, but begged he would not deprive me of the pleasure of being his friend; and declined receiving the money, till his affairs were more settled.

While this point was in agitation, I heard Lord Orville's voice inquiring of the gardener if he had seen me? I immediately opened the garden gate; and his Lordship, advancing to me with quickness, said, "Good God, Miss Anville, have you been out alone? Breakfast has been ready some time, and I have been round the garden in search of you."

"Your Lordship has been very good," said I; "but I hope you have not waited."

"Not waited!" repeated he, smiling: "Do you think we could sit down quietly to breakfast, with the idea that you had run away from us? But come," (offering to hand me) "if we do not return, they will suppose *I* am run away too; and they very naturally may, as they know the attraction of the magnet that draws me."

"I will come, my Lord," said I, rather embarrassed, "in two minutes." Then, turning to Mr. Macartney, with yet more embarrassment, I wished him good morning.

He advanced towards the garden, with the paper still in his hand.

"No, no," cried I, "some other time."

"May I then, Madam, have the honour of seeing you again?"

I did not dare take the liberty of inviting any body to the house of Mrs. Beaumont, nor yet had I the presence of mind to make an excuse; and, therefore, not knowing how to refuse him, I said, "Perhaps you may be this way again to-morrow morning,—and I believe I shall walk out before breakfast."

He bowed, and went away; while I, turning again to Lord Orville, saw his countenance so much altered, that I was frightened at what I had so hastily said. He did not again offer me his hand; but walked, silent and slow, by my side. Good Heaven! thought I, what may he not suppose from this adventure? May he not, by my desire of meeting Mr. Macartney to-morrow, imagine it was by design I walked out to meet him to-day? Tormented by this apprehension, I determined to avail myself of the freedom which his behaviour, since I came hither, has encouraged; and, since he would not ask any questions, begin an explanation myself. I therefore slackened my pace to gain time; and then said, "Was not your Lordship surprised to see me speaking with a stranger?"

"A stranger?" repeated he; "is it possible that gentleman can be a stranger to you?"

"No, my Lord," said I, stammering, "not to me—but only it might look—he might seem—"

"No, believe me," said he, with a forced smile, "I could never suppose Miss Anville would make an appointment with a stranger."

"An appointment, my Lord?" repeated I, colouring violently.

"Pardon me, Madam," answered he, "but I thought I had heard one."

I was so much confounded that I could not speak: yet, finding he walked quietly on, I could not endure he should make his own interpretation of my silence: and therefore, as soon as I recovered from my surprise, I said, "Indeed, my Lord, you are much mistaken, Mr. Macartney had particular business with me—and I could not—I knew not how to refuse seeing him;—but indeed, my Lord—I had not,—he had not—" I stammered so terribly that I could not go on.

"I am very sorry," said he, gravely, "that I have been so unfortunate as to distress you; but I should not have followed you had I not imagined you were merely walked out for the air."

"And so I was!" cried I, eagerly, "indeed, my Lord, I was! My meeting with Mr. Macartney was quite accidental; and, if your Lordship thinks there is any impropriety in my seeing him to-morrow, I am ready to give up that intention."

"If I think!" said he, in a tone of surprise; "surely Miss Anville cannot leave the arbitration of a point so delicate to one who is ignorant of all the circumstances which attend it?"

"If," said I, "it was worth your Lordship's time to hear them,—you should *not* be ignorant of the circumstances which attend it."

"The sweetness of Miss Anville's disposition," said he, in a softened voice, "I have long admired; and the offer of a communication, which does me so much honour, is too grateful to me not to be eagerly caught at."

Just then Mrs. Selwyn opened the parlour window, and our conversation ended. I was rallied upon my passion for solitary walking; but no questions were asked me.

When breakfast was over, I hoped to have had some opportunity of speaking with Lord Orville; but Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley came in, and insisted upon his opinion of the spot they had fixed upon for the old women's race. The ladies declared they would be of the party; and accordingly we all went.

The race is to be run in Mrs. Beaumont's garden; the two gentlemen are as anxious, as if their joint lives depended upon it. They have at length fixed upon objects; but have found great difficulty in persuading them to practise running, in order to try their strength. This grand affair is to be decided next Thursday.

When we returned to the house, the entrance of more company still prevented my having any conversation with Lord Orville. I was very much chagrined, as I knew he was engaged at the Hotwells in the afternoon. Seeing, therefore, no probability of speaking to him before the time of my meeting Mr. Macartney arrived, I determined that, rather than risk his ill opinion, I would leave Mr. Macartney to his own suggestions.

Yet, when I reflected upon his peculiar situation, his poverty, his sadness, and, more than all the rest, the idea I knew he entertained of what he calls his obligations to me, I could not resolve upon a breach of promise, which might be attributed to causes, of all others, the most offensive to one whom misfortune has made extremely suspicious of slights and contempt.

After the most uneasy consideration, I at length determined upon writing an excuse, which would, at once, save me from either meeting or affronting him. I therefore begged Mrs. Selwyn's leave to send her man to the Hotwells, which she instantly granted; and then I wrote the following note:

"To Mr. Macartney.

"SIR,

"As it will not be in my power to walk out to-morrow morning, I would by no means give you the trouble of coming to Clifton. I hope, however, to have the pleasure of seeing you before you quit Bristol. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"EVELINA ANVILLE."

I desired the servant to inquire at the pump-room where Mr. Macartney lived, and returned to the parlour.

As soon as the company dispersed, the ladies retired to dress. I then, unexpectedly, found myself alone with Lord Orville; who, the moment I rose to follow Mrs. Selwyn, advanced to me, and said, "Will Miss Anville pardon my impatience, if I remind her of the promise she was so good as to make me this morning?"

I stopped, and would have returned to my seat; but before I had time, the servants came to lay the cloth. He retreated, and went towards the window; and, while I was considering in what manner to begin, I could not help asking myself what *right* I had to communicate the affairs of Mr. Macartney: and I doubted whether, to clear myself from one act of imprudence, I had not committed another.

Distressed by this reflection, I thought it best to quit the room, and give myself some time for consideration before I spoke; and therefore, only saying I must hasten to dress, I ran up stairs, rather abruptly I own; and so, I fear, Lord Orville must think. Yet what could I do? unused to the situations in which I find myself, and embarrassed by the slightest difficulties, I seldom, till too late, discover how I ought to act.

Just as we were all assembled to dinner, Mrs. Selwyn's man, coming into the parlour, presented

to me a letter, and said, "I can't find out Mr. Macartney, Madam; but the post office people will let you know if they hear of him."

I was extremely ashamed of this public message; and, meeting the eyes of Lord Orville, which were earnestly fixed on me, my confusion redoubled, and I knew not which way to look. All dinner-time he was as silent as myself; and the moment it was in my power I left the table, and went to my own room. Mrs. Selwyn presently followed me; and her questions obliged me to own almost all the particulars of my acquaintance with Mr. Macartney, in order to excuse my writing to him. She said it was a most romantic affair, and spoke her sentiments with great severity; declaring that she had no doubt but he was an adventurer and an impostor.

And now, my dear Sir, I am totally at a loss what I ought to do; the more I reflect, the more sensible I am of the utter impropriety, nay, treachery, of revealing the story, and publishing the misfortunes and poverty of Mr. Macartney; who has an undoubted right to my secrecy and discretion, and whose letter charges me to regard his communication as sacred.—And yet, the appearance of mystery,—perhaps something worse, which this affair must have to Lord Orville,—his seriousness,—and the promise I have made him, are inducements scarce to be resisted for trusting him with the openness he has reason to expect from me.

I am equally distressed, too, whether or not I should see Mr. Macartney to-morrow morning.

Oh, Sir, could I now be enlightened by your counsel, from what anxiety and perplexity should I be relieved!

But no,—I ought not to betray Mr. Macartney, and I will not forfeit a confidence which would never have been reposed in me, but from a reliance

upon my honour, which I should blush to find myself unworthy of. Desirous as I am of the good opinion of Lord Orville, I will endeavour to act as if I was guided by your advice; and making it my sole aim to *deserve* it, leave to time and to fate my success or disappointment.

Since I have formed this resolution, my mind is more at ease; But I will not finish my letter till the affair is decided.

Sept. 25.

I rose very early this morning; and, after a thousand different plans, not being able to resolve upon giving poor Mr. Macartney leave to suppose I neglected him, I thought it incumbent upon me to keep my word; since he had not received my letter; I therefore determined to make my own apologies, not to stay with him two minutes, and to excuse myself from meeting him any more.

Yet, uncertain whether I was wrong or right, it was with fear and trembling that I opened the garden-gate;—judge, then, of my feelings, when the first object I saw was Lord Orville!—he, too, looked extremely disconcerted, and said, in a hesitating manner, “Pardon me, Madam,—I did not intend,—I did not imagine you would have been here so soon—or—or I would not have come.”—And then, with a hasty bow, he passed me, and proceeded to the garden.

I was scarce able to stand, so greatly did I feel myself shocked; but, upon my saying, almost involuntarily, “Oh, my Lord!”—he turned back, and, after a short pause, said, “Did you speak to me, Madam?”

I could not immediately answer; I seemed *choaked*, and was even forced to support myself by the garden-gate.

Lord Orville, soon recovering his dignity, said, “I know not how to apologise for being, just now,

at this place ;—and I cannot immediately—if ever—clear myself from the imputation of impertinent curiosity, to which I fear you will attribute it : however, at present, I will only intreat your pardon, without detaining you any longer.” Again he bowed, and left me.

For some moments I remained fixed to the same spot, and in the same position, immoveably as if I had been transformed to a stone. My first impulse was to call him back, and instantly tell him the whole affair ; but I checked this desire, though I would have given the world to have indulged it ; something like pride aided what I thought due to Mr. Macartney, and I determined not only to keep his secret, but to delay any sort of explanation till Lord Orville should condescend to request it.

Slowly he walked ; and, before he entered the house, he looked back, but hastily withdrew his eyes, upon finding I observed him.

Indeed, my dear Sir, you cannot easily imagine a situation more uncomfortable than mine was at that time ; to be suspected by Lord Orville of any clandestine actions wounded my soul ; I was too much discomposed to wait for Mr. Macartney, nor, in truth, could I endure to have the design of my staying so well known. Yet I was so extremely agitated, that I could hardly move ; and I have reason to believe Lord Orville, from the parlour-window, saw me tottering along ; for, before I had taken five steps, he came out, and, hastening to meet me, said, “ I fear you are not well ; pray, allow me” (offering his arm) “ to assist you.”

“ No, my Lord,” said I, with all the resolution I could assume ; yet I was affected by an attention, at that time so little expected, and forced to turn away my head to conceal my emotion.

“ You must,” said he, with earnestness, “ indeed you must,—I am sure you are not well ;—refuse me

not the honour of assisting you ;" and, almost forcibly, he took my hand, and, drawing it under his arm, obliged me to lean upon him. That I submitted was partly the effect of surprise at an earnestness so uncommon in Lord Orville, and, partly, that I did not just then dare trust my voice to make any objection.

When we came to the house, he led me into the parlour, and to a chair, and begged to know if I would not have a glass of water.

" No, my Lord, I thank you," said I, " I am perfectly recovered ;" and, rising, I walked to the window, where, for some time, I pretended to be occupied in looking at the garden.

Determined as I was to act honourably by Mr. Macartney, I yet most anxiously wished to be restored to the good opinion of Lord Orville ; but his silence, and the thoughtfulness of his air, discouraged me from speaking.

My situation soon grew disagreeable and embarrassing, and I resolved to return to my chamber till breakfast was ready. To remain longer I feared might seem *asking* for his enquiries ; and I was sure it would ill become me to be more eager to speak, than he was to hear.

Just as I reached the door, turning to me hastily, he said, " Are you going, Miss Anville ?"

" I am, my Lord," answered I ; yet I stopped.

" Perhaps to return to—but I beg your pardon !" He spoke with a degree of agitation that made me readily comprehend he meant to *the garden* ; and I instantly said, " To my own room, my Lord." And again I would have gone ; but convinced by my answer that I understood him, I believe he was sorry for the insinuation : he approached me with a very serious air, though at the same time he forced a smile, and said, " I know not what evil genius pursues me this morning, but I seem destined to do

or to say something I ought not: I am so much ashamed of myself, that I can scarce solicit your forgiveness."

"My forgiveness! my Lord?" cried I, abashed, rather than elated by his condescension; "surely you cannot—you are not serious?"

"Indeed never more so! yet, if I may be my own interpreter, Miss Anville's countenance pronounces my pardon."

"I know not, my Lord, how any one can *pardon*, who has never been offended."

"You are very good; yet I could expect no less from a sweetness of disposition which baffles all comparison: will you not think I am an encroacher, and that I take advantage of your goodness, should I once more remind you of the promise you vouchsafed me yesterday?"

"No, indeed; on the contrary I shall be very happy to acquit myself in your Lordship's opinion."

"Acquittal you need not," said he, leading me again to the window; "yet I own my curiosity is strongly excited."

When I was seated, I found myself much at a loss what to say; yet, after a short silence, assuming all the courage in my power, "Will you not, my Lord," said I, "think me trifling and capricious, should I own I have repented the promise I made, and should I entreat your Lordship not to insist upon my strict performance of it?"—I spoke so hastily, that I did not, at the time, consider the impropriety of what I said.

As he was entirely silent, and profoundly attentive, I continued to speak without interruption.

"If your Lordship, by any other means, knew the circumstances attending my acquaintance with Mr. Macartney, I am most sure you would yourself disapprove my relating them. He is a gentleman,

and has been very unfortunate ;—but I am not—I think,—at liberty to say more : yet I am sure, if he knew your Lordship wished to hear any particulars of his affairs, he would readily consent to my acknowledging them ;—shall I, my Lord, ask his permission ?”

“ *His affairs !*” repeated Lord Orville ; “ by no means, I have not the least curiosity about them.”

“ I beg your Lordship’s pardon,—but indeed I had understood the contrary.”

“ Is it possible, Madam, you could suppose the affairs of an utter stranger can excite my curiosity ?”

The gravity and coldness with which he asked this question, very much abashed me. But Lord Orville is the most delicate of men ! and, presently recollecting himself, he added, “ I mean not to speak with indifference of any friend of your’s,—far from it ; any such will always command my good wishes : yet I own I am rather disappointed ; and though I doubt not the justice of your reason, to which I implicitly submit, you must not wonder, that, when upon the point of being honoured with your confidence, I should feel the greatest regret at finding it withdrawn.”

Do you think, my dear Sir, I did not, at that moment, require all my resolution to guard me from frankly telling him whatever he wished to hear ? yet I rejoice that I did not ; for, added to the actual wrong I should have done, Lord Orville himself, when he had heard, would, I am sure, have blamed me. Fortunately, this thought occurred to me ; and I said, “ Your Lordship shall yourself be my judge ; the promise I made, though voluntary, was rash and inconsiderate ; yet had it concerned myself, I would not have hesitated in fulfilling it ; but the gentleman, whose affairs I should be obliged to relate——”

“ Pardon me,” cried he, “ for interrupting you ;

yet allow me to assure you, I have not the slightest desire to be acquainted with his affairs, further than what belongs to the motives which induced you yesterday morning——” He stopped; but there was no occasion to say more.

“That, my Lord,” cried I, “I will tell you honestly. Mr. Macartney had some particular business with me, and I could not take the liberty to ask him hither.”

“And why not?—Mrs. Beaumont, I am sure——”

“I could not, my Lord, think of intruding upon Mrs. Beaumont’s complaisance; and so, with the same hasty folly I promised your Lordship, I much *more* rashly promised to meet him.”

“And did you?”

“No, my Lord,” said I, colouring, “I returned before he came.”

Again, for some time, we were both silent; yet, unwilling to leave him to reflections which could not but be to my disadvantage, I summoned sufficient courage to say, “There is no young creature, my Lord, who so greatly wants, or so earnestly wishes for, the advice and assistance of her friends, as I do: I am new to the world, and unused to acting for myself;—my intentions are never wilfully blameable, yet I err perpetually! I have hitherto been blessed with the most affectionate of friends, and, indeed, the ablest of men, to guide and instruct me upon every occasion:—but he is too distant, now, to be applied to at the moment I want his aid:—and *here*,—there is not a human being whose counsel I can ask.”

“Would to Heaven,” cried he, with a countenance from which all coldness and gravity were banished, and succeeded by the mildest benevolence, “that I were worthy,—and capable,—of supplying the place of such a friend to Miss Anville!”

“You do me but too much honour,” said I, “yet

I hope your Lordship's candour,—perhaps I ought to say indulgence,—will make some allowance on account of my inexperience, for behaviour so inconsiderate :—May I, my Lord, hope that you will ?”

“ May I,” cried he, “ hope that you will pardon the ill-grace with which I have submitted to my disappointment? and that you will permit me (kissing my hand) thus to seal my peace ?”

“ Our peace, my Lord !” said I, with revived spirits.

“ This, then,” said he, again pressing it to his lips, “ for *our* peace : and now,—are we not friends ?”

Just then the door opened, and I had only time to withdraw my hand, before the ladies came in to breakfast.

I have been, all day, the happiest of human beings !—to be thus reconciled to Lord Orville, and yet to adhere to my resolution,—what could I wish for more ?—he too has been very cheerful, and more attentive, more obliging to me than ever. Yet Heaven forbid I should again be in a similar situation, for I cannot express how much uneasiness I have suffered from the fear of incurring his ill opinion.

But what will poor Mr. Macartney think of me ? happy as I am, I much regret the necessity I have been under of disappointing him.

Adieu, my dearest Sir.

LETTER XXI.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

[*Berry Hill, Sept. 28.*

DEAD to the world, and equally insensible to its pleasures or its pains, I long since bid adieu to all joy, and defiance to all sorrow, but what should

spring from my Evelina,—sole source, to me, of all earthly felicity. How strange, then, is it, that the letter in which she tells me she is the *happiest of human beings*, should give me most mortal inquietude!

Alas, my child! that innocence, the first, best gift of Heaven, should, of all others, be the blindest to its own danger,—the most exposed to treachery,—and the least able to defend itself, in a world where it is little known, less valued, and perpetually deceived!

Would to Heaven you were here!—then by degrees, and with gentleness, I might enter upon a subject too delicate for distant discussion. Yet is it too interesting, and the situation too critical, to allow of delay.—Oh, my Evelina, your situation is critical indeed!—your peace of mind is at stake, and every chance for your future happiness may depend upon the conduct of the present moment.

Hitherto I have forbore to speak with you upon the most important of all concerns, the state of your heart:—alas, I need no information! I have been silent, indeed, but I have not been blind.

Long, and with the deepest regret, have I perceived the ascendancy which Lord Orville has gained upon your mind.—You will start at the mention of his name,—you will tremble every word you read;—I grieve to give pain to my gentle Evelina, but I dare not any longer spare her.

Your first meeting with Lord Orville was decisive. Lively, fearless, free from all other impressions, such a man as you describe him could not fail of exciting your admiration; and the more dangerously, because he seemed as unconscious of his power as you of your weakness; and therefore you had no alarm, either from *his* vanity or *your* own prudence.

Young, animated, entirely off your guard, and thoughtless of consequences, *Imagination* took the

reins ; and *Reason*, slow-paced, though sure-footed, was unequal to a race with so eccentric and flighty a companion. How rapid was then my Evelina's progress through those regions of fancy and passion whither her new guide conducted her !—She saw Lord Orville at a ball,—and he was *the most amiable of men* !—She met him again at another,—and he *had every virtue under Heaven* !

I mean not to depreciate the merit of Lord Orville, who, one mysterious instance alone excepted, seems to have deserved the idea you formed of his character ; but it was not time, it was not the knowledge of his worth, obtained your regard ; your new comrade had not patience to wait any trial ; her glowing pencil, dipt in the vivid colours of her creative ideas, painted to you, at the moment of your first acquaintance, all the excellencies, all the good and rare qualities, which a great length of time and intimacy could alone have really discovered.

You flattered yourself, that your partiality was the effect of esteem, founded upon a general love of merit, and a principle of justice ; and your heart, which fell the sacrifice of your error, was totally gone ere you suspected it was in danger.

A thousand times have I been upon the point of showing you the perils of your situation ; but the same inexperience which occasioned your mistake, I hoped, with the assistance of time and absence, would effect a cure : I was, indeed, most unwilling to destroy your illusion, while I dared hope it might itself contribute to the restoration of your tranquillity ; since your ignorance of the danger, and force of your attachment, might possibly prevent that despondency with which young people, in similar circumstances, are apt to persuade themselves, that what is only difficult, is absolutely impossible.

But, now, since you have again met, and have become more intimate than ever, all my hope from silence and seeming ignorance is at an end.

Awake then, my dear, my deluded child, awake to the sense of your danger, and exert yourself to avoid the evils with which it threatens you :—evils which, to a mind like your's, are most to be dreaded ; secret repining, and concealed, yet consuming regret ! Make a noble effort for the recovery of your peace, which now, with sorrow I see it, depends wholly upon the presence of Lord Orville. This effort may indeed be painful ; but trust to my experience, when I assure you it is requisite.

You must quit him !—his sight is baneful to your repose, his society is death to your future tranquillity ! Believe me, my beloved child, my heart aches for your suffering, while it dictates its necessity.

Could I flatter myself that Lord Orville would, indeed, be sensible of your worth, and act with a nobleness of mind which should prove it congenial to his own, then would I leave my Evelina to the unmolested enjoyment of the cheerful society, and increasing regard, of a man she so greatly admires : but this is not an age in which we may trust to appearances ; and imprudence is much sooner regretted than repaired. Your health, you tell me, is much mended :—Can you then consent to leave Bristol ?—not abruptly, that I do not desire, but in a few days from the time you receive this ? I will write to Mrs. Selwyn, and tell her how much I wish your return ; and Mrs. Clinton can take sufficient care of you.

I have meditated upon every possible expedient that might tend to your happiness, ere I fixed upon exacting from you a compliance which I am convinced will be most painful to you ; but I can satisfy myself in none. This will at least be safe ; and as to success,—we must leave it to time.

I am very glad to hear of Mr. Macartney's welfare.

Adieu, my dearest child! Heaven preserve and strengthen you! A. V.

LETTER XXII.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

[Clifton, Sept. 28.]

SWEETLY, most sweetly, have two days more passed since I wrote: but I have been too much engaged to be exact in my journal.

To-day has been less tranquil. It was destined for the decision of the important bet, and has been productive of general confusion throughout the house. It was settled that the race should be run at five o'clock in the afternoon. Lord Merton breakfasted here, and staid till noon. He wanted to engage the ladies to *bet on his side*, in the true spirit of gaming, without seeing the racers. But he could only prevail on Lady Louisa, as Mrs. Selwyn said she never laid a wager against her own wishes, and Mrs. Beaumont would *not take sides*. As for *me*, I was not applied to. It *is* impossible for negligence to be more pointed than that of Lord Merton to me, in the presence of Lady Louisa.

But, just before dinner, I happened to be alone in the drawing-room, when his lordship suddenly returned; and, coming in with his usual familiarity, he was beginning, "You see, Lady Louisa,—" but stopping short, "Pray, where's every body gone?"

"Indeed I don't know, my Lord."

He then shut the door; and, with a great alteration in his face and manner, advanced eagerly towards me, and said, "How glad I am, my sweet

girl, to meet you, at last, alone! By my soul I began to think there was a plot against me, for I've never been able to have you a minute to myself." And very freely he seized my hand.

I was so much surprised at this address, after having been so long totally neglected, that I could make no other answer, than staring at him with unfeigned astonishment.

"Why now," continued he, "if you was not the cruellest little angel in the world, you would have helped me to some expedient: for you see how I am watched here; Lady Louisa's eyes are never off me. She gives me a charming foretaste of the pleasures of a wife! however, it won't last long."

Disgusted to the greatest degree, I attempted to draw away my hand; but I believe I should not have succeeded, if Mrs. Beaumont had not made her appearance. He turned from me with the greatest assurance, and said, "How are you, Ma'am?—how is Lady Louisa?—you see I can't live a moment out of the house."

Could you, my dearest Sir, have believed it possible for such effrontery to be in man?

Before dinner came Mr. Coverley, and, before five o'clock, Mr. Lovel and some other company. The place marked out for the race, was a gravel-walk in Mrs. Beaumont's garden, and the length of the ground twenty yards. When we were summoned to the *course*, the two poor old women made their appearance. Though they seemed very healthy for their time of life, they yet looked so weak, so infirm, so feeble, that I could feel no sensation but that of pity at the sight. However, this was not the general sense of the company; for they no sooner came forward, than they were greeted with a laugh from every beholder, Lord Orville excepted, who looked very grave during the whole

transaction. Doubtless he must be greatly discontented at the dissipated conduct and extravagance of a man, with whom he is soon to be so nearly connected.

For some time, the scene was truly ridiculous: the agitation of the parties concerned, and the bets that were laid upon the old women, were absurd beyond measure. *Who are you for?* and *whose side are you of?* was echoed from mouth to mouth by the whole company. Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley were both so excessively gay and noisy, that I soon found they had been too free in drinking to their success. They handed, with loud shouts, the old women to the race-ground, and encouraged them by liberal promises to exert themselves.

When the signal was given for them to set off, the poor creatures, feeble and frightened, ran against each other: and, neither of them able to support the shock, they both fell on the ground.

Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley flew to their assistance. Seats were brought for them; and they each drank a glass of wine. They complained of being much bruised; for, heavy and helpless, they had not been able to save themselves, but fell with their whole weight upon the gravel. However, as they seemed equal sufferers, both parties were too eager to have the affair deferred.

Again therefore they set off, and hobbled along, nearly even with each other, for some time; yet frequently, to the inexpressible diversion of the company, they stumbled and tottered; and the confused hallooing of "*Now, Coverley!*" "*Now, Merton!*" run from side to side during the whole affair.

Not long after, a foot of one of the poor women slipt, and with great force she came again to the ground. Involuntarily, I sprung forward to assist her; but Lord Merton, to whom she did not be-

long, stopped me, calling out, "No foul play! no foul play!"

Mr. Coverley then, repeating the same words, went himself to help her, and insisted that the other should stop. A debate ensued; but the poor creature was too much hurt to move, and declared her utter inability to make another attempt. Mr. Coverley was quite brutal: he swore at her with unmanly rage, and seemed scarce able to refrain even from striking her.

Lord Merton then, in great rapture, said it was a *hollow thing*; but Mr. Coverley contended, that the fall was accidental, and time should be allowed for the woman to recover. However, all the company being against him, he was pronounced the loser.

We then went to the drawing-room, to tea. After which, the evening being remarkably warm, we all walked in the garden. Lord Merton was quite riotous, and Lady Louisa in high spirits; but Mr. Coverley endeavoured, in vain, to conceal his chagrin.

As Lord Orville was thoughtful, and walked by himself, I expected that, as usual, I should pass unnoticed, and be left to my own meditations: but this was not the case; for Lord Merton, entirely off his guard, giddy equally from wine and success, was very troublesome to me; and, regardless of the presence of Lady Louisa, which hitherto has restrained him even from common civility, he attached himself to me, during the walk, with a freedom of gallantry that put me extremely out of countenance. He paid me the most high-flown compliments; and frequently and forcibly seized my hand, though I repeatedly, and with undissembled anger, drew it back. Lord Orville, I saw, watched us with earnestness; and Lady Louisa's smiles were converted into looks of disdain.

I could not bear to be thus situated; and complaining I was tired, I quickened my pace, with intention to return to the house; but Lord Merton, hastily following, caught my hand, and saying the *day was his own*, vowed he would not let me go.

"You *must*, my Lord," cried I, extremely flurried.

"You are the most charming girl in the world," said he, "and never looked better than at this moment."

"My Lord," cried Mrs. Selwyn, advancing to us, "you don't consider, that the better Miss Anville looks, the more striking is the contrast with your Lordship; therefore, for your own sake, I would advise you not to hold her."

"Egad, my Lord," cried Mr. Coverley, "I don't see what right you have to the best *old*, and the best *young* woman too, in the same day."

"*Best young woman!*" repeated Mr. Lovel; "'pon honour, Jack, you have made a most unfortunate speech; however, if Lady Louisa can pardon you,—and her ladyship is all goodness,—I am sure nobody else can; for you have committed an outrageous solecism in good manners."

"And pray, Sir," said Mrs. Selwyn, "under what denomination may your own speech pass?"

Mr. Lovel, turning another way, affected not to hear her: and Mr. Coverley, bowing to Lady Louisa, said, "Her Ladyship is well acquainted with my devotion;—but, egad, I don't know how it is,—I had always an unlucky turn at an epigram, and never could resist a smart play upon words in my life."

"Pray, my Lord," cried I, "let go my hand! pray, Mrs. Selwyn, speak for me."

"My Lord," said Mrs. Selwyn, "in detaining Miss Anville any longer you only lose time; for we are already as well convinced of your valour and your strength, as if you were to hold her an age."

"My Lord," said Mrs. Beaumont, "I must beg leave to interfere: I know not if Lady Louisa can pardon you; but as this young Lady is at my house, I do not choose to have her made uneasy."

"I pardon him!" cried Lady Louisa; "I declare I am monstrous glad to get rid of him."

"Egad, my Lord," cried Mr. Coverley, "while you are grasping at a shadow, you'll lose a substance; you'd best make your peace while you can."

"Pray, Mr. Coverley, be quiet," said Lady Louisa, peevishly; "for I declare I won't speak to him. Brother," taking hold of Lord Orville's arm, "will you walk in with me?"

"Would to Heaven," cried I, frightened to see how much Lord Merton was in liquor, "that I too had a brother!—and then I should not be exposed to such treatment."

Lord Orville, instantly quitting Lady Louisa, said, "Will Miss Anville allow *me* the honour of taking that title?" and then, without waiting for any answer, he disengaged me from Lord Merton; and, handing me to Lady Louisa, "Let me," added he, "take equal care of *both* my sisters;" and then, desiring her to take hold of one arm, and begging me to make use of the other, we reached the house in a moment. Lord Merton, disordered as he was, attempted not to stop us.

As soon as we entered the house, I withdrew my arm, and courtied my thanks, for my heart was too full for speech. Lady Louisa, evidently hurt at her brother's condescension, and piqued extremely by Lord Merton's behaviour, silently drew away her's; and biting her lips, with a look of infinite vexation, walked sullenly up the hall.

Lord Orville asked her if she would not go into the parlour?

"No," answered she, haughtily, "I leave you and

your new sister together :” and then she walked up stairs.

I was quite confounded at the pride and rudeness of this speech. Lord Orville himself seemed thunderstruck : I turned from him, and went into the parlour : he followed me, saying, “ Must I now apologize to Miss Anville for the liberty of my interference ?—or ought I to apologize, that I did not, as I wished, interfere sooner ?”

“ O, my Lord,” cried I, with an emotion I could not repress, “ it is from you alone I meet with any respect ;—all others treat me with impertinence, or contempt !”

I am sorry I had not more command of myself, as he had reason just then to suppose I particularly meant his sister ; which, I am sure, must very much hurt him.

“ Good Heaven,” cried he, “ that so much sweetness and merit can fail to excite the love and admiration so justly their due ! I cannot,—I dare not express to you half the indignation I feel at this moment !”

“ I am sorry, my Lord,” said I, more calmly, “ to have raised it ; but yet,—in a situation that calls for protection, to meet only with mortifications, —indeed, I am but ill formed to bear them !”

“ My dear Miss Anville,” cried he, warmly, “ allow me to be your friend ; think of me as if I were indeed your brother ; and let me intreat you to accept my best services, if there is any thing in which I can be so happy as to shew my regard,—my respect for you !”

Before I had time to speak, the rest of the party entered the parlour ; and, as I did not wish to see any thing more of Lord Merton, at least before he had slept, I determined to leave it. Lord Orville, seeing my design, said, as I passed him, “ Will you go ?” “ Had not I best, my Lord ?” said I. “ I

am afraid," said he, smiling, "since I must now speak as your *brother*, I am afraid you *had*;—you see you may trust me, since I can advise against my own interest."

I then left the room, and have been writing ever since. And, methinks, I can never lament the rudeness of Lord Merton, as it has more than ever confirmed to me the esteem of Lord Orville.

LETTER XXIII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Sept. 30.]

OH, Sir, what a strange incident have I to recite ! what a field of conjecture to open !

Yesterday evening we all went to an assembly. Lord Orville presented tickets to the whole family ; and did me the honour, to the no small surprise of all here, I believe, to dance with me. But every day abounds in fresh instances of his condescending politeness ; and he now takes every opportunity of calling me his *friend* and his *sister*.

Lord Merton offered a ticket to Lady Louisa ; but she was so much incensed against him, that she refused it with the utmost disdain : neither could he prevail upon her to dance with him ; she sat still the whole evening, and deigned not to look at or speak to him. To me her behaviour is almost the same : for she is cold, distant, and haughty, and her eyes express the greatest contempt. But for Lord Orville, how miserable would my residence here make me !

We were joined in the ball-room by Mr. Coverley, Mr. Lovel, and Lord Merton, who looked as if he was doing penance, and sat all the evening next to Lady Louisa, vainly endeavouring to appease her anger.

Lord Orville began the minuets ; he danced with a young lady who seemed to engage the general attention, as she had not been seen here before. She is pretty, and looks mild and good-humoured.

" Pray, Mr. Lovel," said Lady Louisa, " who is that ?"

" Miss Belmont," answered he, " the young heiress : she came to the Wells yesterday."

Struck with the name, I involuntarily repeated it ; but nobody heard me.

" What is her family ?" said Mrs. Beaumont.

" Have you not heard of her, Ma'am ?" cried he ; " she is only daughter and heiress of Sir John Belmont."

Good Heaven, how did I start ! the name struck my ear like a thunderbolt. Mrs. Selwyn, who immediately looked at me, said, " Be calm, my dear, and we will learn the truth of all this."

Till then I had never imagined her to be acquainted with my story ; but she has since told me, that she knew my unhappy mother, and was well informed of the whole affair.

She asked Mr. Lovel a multitude of questions ; and I gathered from his answers, that this young lady was just come from abroad with Sir John Belmont, who was now in London ; that she was under the care of his sister, Mrs. Paterson ; and that she would inherit a considerable estate.

I cannot express the strange feelings with which I was agitated during this recital. What, my dearest Sir, can it possibly mean ? Did you ever hear of any after-marriage ?—or, must I suppose, that, while the lawful child is rejected, another is adopted ?—I know not what to think ! I am bewildered with a contrariety of ideas !

When we came home, Mrs. Selwyn passed more than an hour in my room conversing upon this subject. She says, that I ought instantly to go to town,

find out my father, and have the affair cleared up. She assures me I have too strong a resemblance to my dear, though unknown, mother, to allow of the least hesitation in my being owned, when once I am seen. For my part, I have no wish but to act by your direction.

I cannot give any account of the evening; so disturbed, so occupied am I by this subject, that I can think of no other. I have entreated Mrs. Selwyn to observe the strictest secrecy, and she has promised that she will. Indeed, she has too much sense to be idly communicative.

Lord Orville took notice of my being absent and silent; but I ventured not to intrust him with the cause. Fortunately, he was not of the party at the time Mr. Lovel made the discovery.

Mrs. Selwyn says, that if you approve my going to town, she will herself accompany me. I had a thousand times rather ask the protection of Mrs. Mirvan, but, after this offer, that will not be possible.

Adieu, my dearest Sir. I am sure you will write immediately, and I shall be all impatience till your letter arrives.

LETTER XXIV.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Oct. 1.

GOOD God, my dear Sir, what a wonderful tale have I again to relate! even yet, I am not recovered from my extreme surprise.

Yesterday morning, as soon as I had finished my hasty letter, I was summoned to attend a walking party to the Hot-wells. It consisted only of Mrs. Selwyn and Lord Orville. The latter walked by

my side all the way ; and his conversation dissipated my uneasiness, and insensibly restored my serenity.

At the pump-room I saw Mr. Macartney ; I courted him twice ere he would speak to me. When he did, I began to apologize for having disappointed him ; but I did not find it very easy to excuse myself, as Lord Orville's eyes, with an expression of anxiety that distressed me, turned from him to me, and me to him, every word I spoke. Convinced, however, that I had really trifled with Mr. Macartney, I scrupled not to beg his pardon. He was then not merely appeased, but even grateful.

He requested me to see him to-morrow : but I had not the folly to be again guilty of an indiscretion which had already caused me so much uneasiness ; and therefore I told him frankly, that it was not in my power at present to see him but by accident ; and, to prevent his being offended, I hinted to him the reason I could not receive him as I wished to do.

When I had satisfied both him and myself upon this subject, I turned to Lord Orville, and saw, with concern, the gravity of his countenance. I would have spoken to him, but knew not how : I believe, however, he read my thoughts ; for, in a little time, with a sort of serious smile, he said, " Does not Mr. Macartney complain of his disappointment ? "

" Not much, my Lord. "

" And how have you appeased him ? " Finding I hesitated what to answer, " Am I not your brother ? " continued he, " and must I not enquire into your affairs ? "

" Certainly, my Lord, " said I, laughing, " I only wish it were better worth your Lordship's while. "

" Let me, then, make immediate use of my privilege. When shall you see Mr. Macartney again ? "

" Indeed, my Lord, I can't tell. "

"But,—do you know that I shall not suffer *my* sister to make a private appointment?"

"Pray, my Lord," cried I earnestly, "use that word no more! Indeed, you shock me extremely."

"That would I not do for the world," cried he, "yet you know not how warmly, how deeply I am interested, not only in all your concerns, but in all your actions."

This speech—the most particular one Lord Orville had ever made to me, ended our conversation at that time; for I was too much struck by it to make any answer.

Soon after, Mr. Macartney, in a low voice, intreated me not to deny him the gratification of returning the money. While he was speaking, the young lady I saw yesterday at the assembly, with the large party, entered the pump-room. Mr. Macartney turned as pale as death, his voice faltered, and he seemed not to know what he said. I was myself almost equally disturbed, by the crowd of confused ideas that occurred to me. Good Heaven! thought I, why should he be thus agitated?—is it possible this can be the young lady he loved?—

In a few minutes we quitted the pump-room; and, though I twice wished Mr. Macartney good morning, he was so absent he did not hear me.

We did not immediately return to Clifton, as Mrs. Selwyn had business at a pamphlet shop. While she was looking at some new poems, Lord Orville again asked me when I should see Mr. Macartney?

"Indeed, my Lord," cried I, "I know not, but I would give the universe for a few moments conversation with him!" I spoke this with a simple sincerity, and was not aware of the force of my own words.

"The universe!" repeated he, "Good God, Miss Anville, do you say this to *me*?"

"I would say it," returned I, "to any body, my Lord."

"I beg your pardon," said he, in a voice that shewed him ill pleased, "I am answered!"

"My Lord," cried I, "you must not judge hardly of me. I spoke inadvertently; but if you knew the painful suspense I suffer at this moment, you would not be surprised at what I have said."

"And would a meeting with Mr. Macartney relieve you from this suspense?"

"Yes, my Lord, two words might be sufficient."

"Would to Heaven," cried he, after a short pause, "that I were worthy to know their import!"

"Worthy, my Lord!—O, if that were all, your Lordship could ask nothing I should not be ready to answer! If I were but at liberty to speak, I should be *proud* of your Lordship's enquiries: but, indeed, I am not—I have not any right to communicate the affairs of Mr. Macartney;—your Lordship cannot suppose I have."

"I will own to you," answered he, "I know not *what* to suppose; yet there seems a frankness even in your mystery—and such an air of openness in your countenance, that I am willing to hope,—"
He stopped a moment, and then added, "This meeting, you say, is essential to your repose?"

"I did not say *that*, my Lord; but yet I have the most important reasons for wishing to speak to him."

He paused a few minutes; and then said, with warmth, "Yes, you *shall* speak to him!—I will myself assist you!—Miss Anville, I am sure, cannot form a wish against propriety: I will ask no questions, I will rely upon her own purity, and, uninformed, blindfold as I am, I will serve her with all my power!" And then he went into the shop, leaving me so strangely affected by his generous behaviour, that I almost wished to follow him with my thanks.

When Mrs. Selwyn had transacted her affairs, we returned home.

The moment dinner was over, Lord Orville went out, and did not come back till just as we were summoned to supper. This is the longest time he has spent from the house since I have been at Clifton; and you cannot imagine, my dear Sir, how much I missed him. I scarce knew before how infinitely I am indebted to him alone for the happiness I have enjoyed since I have been at Mrs. Beaumont's.

As I generally go down stairs last, he came to me, the moment the ladies had passed by, and said, "Shall you be at home to-morrow-morning?"

"I believe so, my Lord."

"And will you then receive a visitor for me?"

"For you, my Lord!"

"Yes:—I have made acquaintance with Mr. Macartney, and he has promised to call upon me to-morrow about three o'clock."

And then, taking my hand, he led me down stairs.

O Sir!—was there ever such another man as Lord Orville?—Yes, *one* other now resides at Berry-Hill!

This morning there has been a great deal of company here; but at the time appointed by Lord Orville, doubtless with that consideration, the parlour is almost always empty, as every body is dressing.

Mrs. Beaumont, however, was not gone up stairs when Mr. Macartney sent in his name.

Lord Orville immediately said, "Beg the favour of him to walk in. You see, Madam, that I consider myself as at home."

"I hope so," answered Mrs. Beaumont, "or I should be very uneasy."

Mr. Macartney then entered. I believe we both felt very conscious to whom the visit was paid: but Lord Orville received him as his own guest; and not merely entertained him as such while Mrs. Beau-

mont remained in the room, but for some time after she had left it : a delicacy that saved me from the embarrassment I should have felt, had he immediately quitted us.

In a few minutes, however, he gave Mr. Macartney a book,—for I, too, by way of pretence for continuing in the room, pretended to be reading,—and begged he would be so good as to look it over, while he answered a note, which he would dispatch in a few minutes, and return to him.

When he was gone, we both parted with our books ; and Mr. Macartney, again producing the paper with the money, besought me to accept it.

“ Pray,” said I, still declining it, “ did you know the young lady who came into the pump-room yesterday morning ? ”

“ Know her ! ” repeated he, changing colour, “ Oh, but too well ! ”

“ Indeed ! ”

“ Why, Madam, do you ask ? ”

“ I must beseech you to satisfy me further upon this subject ; pray tell me who she is.”

“ Inviolably as I meant to keep my secret, I can refuse you, Madam, nothing ;—that lady—is the daughter of Sir John Belmont !—of my father ! ”

“ Gracious Heaven ! ” cried I, involuntarily laying my hand on his arm, “ you are then—” *my brother*, I would have said, but my voice failed me, and I burst into tears.

“ Oh, Madam,” cried he, “ what does this mean ?—what can thus distress you ? ”

I could not answer, but held out my hand to him. He seemed greatly surprised, and talked in high terms of my condescension.

“ Spare yourself,” cried I, wiping my eyes, “ spare yourself this mistake,—you have a *right* to all I can do for you ; the similarity of our circumstances—”

We were then interrupted by the entrance of Mrs.

Selwyn; and Mr. Macartney, finding no probability of our being left alone, was obliged to take leave, though, I believe, very reluctantly, while in such suspense.

Mrs. Selwyn, then, by dint of interrogatories, drew from me the state of this affair. She is so penetrating, that there is no possibility of evading to give her satisfaction.

Is not this a strange event? Good Heaven! how little did I think that the visits I so unwillingly paid at Mr. Branghton's would have introduced me to so near a relation! I will never again regret the time I spent in town this summer: a circumstance so fortunate will always make me think of it with pleasure.

* * * * *

I have just received your letter,—and it has almost broken my heart!—Oh, Sir! the illusion is over, indeed! How vainly have I flattered, how miserably deceived myself! Long since, doubtful of the situation of my heart, I dreaded a scrutiny;—but now, now that I have so long escaped, I began, indeed, to think my safety insured, to hope that my fears were causeless, and to believe that my good opinion and esteem of Lord Orville might be owned without suspicion, and felt without danger;—miserably deceived, indeed! *His sight is baneful to my repose;—his society is death to my future tranquillity!* Oh, Lord Orville! could I have believed that a friendship so grateful to my heart, so soothing to my distresses, a friendship, which, in every respect, did me so much honour, would only serve to embitter all my future moments! —What a strange, what an unhappy circumstance, that my gratitude, though so justly excited, should be so fatal to my peace!

Yes, Sir, I *will* quit him;—would to Heaven I could at this moment! without seeing him again,—without trusting to my now conscious emotion!—

Oh, Lord Orville, how little do you know the evils I owe to you! how little suppose that, when most dignified by your attention, I was most to be pitied, —and when most exalted by your notice, you were most my enemy!

You, Sir, relied upon my ignorance; —I, alas, upon your experience; and, whenever I doubted the weakness of my heart, the idea that *you* did not suspect it, reassured me, —restored my courage, and confirmed my error! —Yet am I most sensible of the kindness of your silence.

Oh, Sir! why have I ever quitted you? why been exposed to dangers to which I am so unequal?

But I will leave this place, leave Lord Orville, —leave him, perhaps, for ever! —no matter; your counsel, your goodness, may teach me how to recover the peace and the serenity of which my unguarded folly has beguiled me. To you alone do I trust, in you alone confide, for every future hope I may form.

The more I consider the parting with Lord Orville, the less fortitude do I feel to bear the separation; —the friendship he has shown me, —his politeness —his sweetness of manners, —his concern in my affairs, —his solicitude to oblige me, —all, all to be given up! —

No, I cannot tell him I am going, —I dare not trust myself to take leave of him, —I will run away without seeing him: —implicitly will I follow your advice, avoid his sight, and shun his society!

To-morrow morning I will set off for Berry-Hill. Mrs. Selwyn and Mrs. Beaumont shall alone know my intention. And to-day —I will spend in my own room. The readiness of my obedience is the only atonement I can offer for the weakness which calls for its exertion.

Can you, will you, most honoured, most dear Sir! sole prop by which the poor Evelina is supported, —

can you, without reproach, without displeasure, receive the child you have so carefully reared,—from whose education better fruit might have been expected, and who, blushing for her unworthiness, fears to meet the eye by which she has been cherished?—Oh, yes, I am sure you will! Your Evelina's errors are those of the judgment; and you, I well know, pardon all but those of the heart!

LETTER XXV.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Clifton, October 1.

I HAVE only time, my dearest Sir, for three words, to overtake my last letter, and prevent your expecting me immediately; for, when I communicated my intention to Mrs. Selwyn, she would not hear of it, and declared it would be highly ridiculous for me to go before I received an answer to my intelligence concerning the journey from Paris. She has, therefore insisted upon my waiting till your next letter arrives. I hope you will not be displeased at my compliance, though it is rather against my own judgment: but Mrs. Selwyn quite overpowered me with the force of her arguments. I will, however, see very little of Lord Orville; I will never come down stairs before breakfast; give up all my walks in the garden; seat myself next to Mrs. Selwyn; and not merely avoid his conversation, but shun his presence. I will exert all the prudence and all the resolution in my power, to prevent this short delay from giving you any further uneasiness.

Adieu, my dearest Sir. I shall not now leave Clifton till I have your directions,

LETTER XXVI.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[October 2.]

YESTERDAY, from the time I received your kind, though heart-piercing letter, I kept my room,—for I was equally unable and unwilling to see Lord Orville ; but this morning, finding I seemed destined to pass a few days longer here, I endeavoured to calm my spirits, and to appear as usual ; though I determined to avoid him to the utmost of my power. Indeed, as I entered the parlour, when called to breakfast, my thoughts were so much occupied with your letter, that I felt as much confusion at his sight, as if he had himself been informed of its contents.

Mrs. Beaumont made me a slight compliment upon my recovery, for I had pleaded illness to excuse keeping my room : Lady Louisa spoke not a word ; but Lord Orville, little imagining himself the cause of my indisposition, enquired concerning my health with the most distinguishing politeness. I hardly made any answer ; and, for the first time since I have been here, contrived to sit at some distance from him.

I could not help observing that my reserve surprised him ; yet he persisted in his civilities, and seemed to wish to remove it. But I paid him very little attention ; and the moment breakfast was over, instead of taking a book, or walking in the garden, I retired to my own room.

Soon after, Mrs. Selwyn came to tell me, that Lord Orville had been proposing I should take an airing, and persuading her to let him drive us both in his phaeton. She delivered the message with an archness that made me blush ; and added, that an airing, in *my Lord Orville's carriage*, could not fail to revive my spirits. There is no possibility of escap-

ing her discernment; she has frequently rallied me upon his lordship's attention,—and, alas!—upon the pleasure with which I have received it! However, I absolutely refused the offer.

“Well,” said she, laughing, “I cannot just now indulge you with any solicitation; for, to tell you the truth, I have business to transact at the Wells, and am glad to be excused myself. I would ask you to walk with *me*;—but since *Lord Orville* is refused, I have not the presumption to hope for success.”

“Indeed,” cried I, “you are mistaken; I will attend you with pleasure.”

“O rare coquetry!” cried she, “surely it must be inherent in our sex, or it could not have been imbibed at *Berry Hill*.”

I had not spirits to answer her, and therefore put on my hat and cloak in silence.

“I presume,” continued she, drily, “his lordship may walk with us?”

“If so, Madam,” said I, “you will have a companion, and I will stay at home.”

“My dear child,” cried she, “did you bring the certificate of your birth with you?”

“Dear Madam, no!”

“Why then, we shall never be known again at *Berry Hill*.”

I felt too conscious to enjoy her pleasantry: but I believe she was determined to torment me, for she asked if she should inform Lord Orville that I desired him not to be of the party?

“By no means, Madam; but, indeed, I had rather not walk myself.”

“My dear,” cried she, “I really do not know you this morning,—you have certainly been taking a lesson of Lady Louisa.”

She then went down stairs; but presently returning, told me she had acquainted Lord Orville that

I did not choose to go out in the phaeton, but preferred a walk, *tête-à-tête* with her, by way of *variety*.

I said nothing, but was really vexed. She bid me go down stairs, and said she would follow immediately.

Lord Orville met me in the hall. "I fear," said he, "Miss Anville is not yet quite well?" and he would have taken my hand, but I turned from him, and courtesying slightly, went into the parlour.

Mrs. Beaumont and Lady Louisa were at work: Lord Merton was talking with the latter; for he has now made his peace, and is again received into favour.

I seated myself, as usual, by the window. Lord Orville, in a few minutes, came to me, and said, "Why is Miss Anville so grave?"

"Not grave, my Lord," said I, "only stupid:" and I took up a book.

"You will go," said he, after a short pause, "to the assembly to-night."

"No, my Lord, certainly not."

"Neither then will I; for I should be sorry to sully the remembrance I have of the happiness I enjoyed at the last."

Mrs. Selwyn then coming in, general enquiries were made to all but me, of who would go to the assembly? Lord Orville instantly declared he had letters to write at home; but every one else settled to go.

I then hastened Mrs. Selwyn away, though not before she had said to Lord Orville, "Pray, has your Lordship obtained Miss Anville's leave to favour us with your company?"

"I have not, Madam," answered he, "had the vanity to ask it."

During our walk, Mrs. Selwyn tormented me unmercifully. She told me, that since I declined any

addition to our party, I must, doubtless, be conscious of my own powers of entertainment; and begged me, therefore, to exert them freely. I repented a thousand times having consented to walk alone with her: for though I made the most painful efforts to appear in spirits, her raillery quite overpowered me.

We went first to the pump-room. It was full of company; and the moment we entered, I heard a murmuring of, "*That's she!*" and, to my great confusion, I saw every eye turned towards me. I pulled my hat over my face, and, by the assistance of Mrs. Selwyn, endeavoured to screen myself from observation: nevertheless, I found I was so much the object of general attention, that I intreated her to hasten away. But unfortunately she had entered into conversation, very earnestly, with a gentleman of her acquaintance, and would not listen to me; but said, that if I was tired of waiting, I might walk on to the milliner's with the Miss Watkins, two young ladies I had seen at Mrs. Beaumont's, who were going thither.

I accepted the offer very readily, and away we went. But we had not gone three yards, before we were followed by a party of young men, who took every possible opportunity of looking at us, and, as they walked behind, talked aloud, in a manner at once unintelligible and absurd. "Yes," cried one, "'tis certainly she!—mark but her *blushing cheek!*"

"And then her *eye*—her *downcast eye!*"—cried another.

"True, oh most true," said a third, "*every beauty is her own!*"

"But then," said the first, "her *mind*,—now the difficulty is, to find out the truth of *that*, for she will not say a word."

"She is *timid*," answered another; "mark but her *timid* air."

During this conversation, we walked on silent and quick: as we knew not to whom it was particularly addressed, we were all equally ashamed, and equally desirous to avoid such unaccountable observations.

Soon after we were caught in a shower of rain. We hurried on; and these gentlemen, following us, offered their services in the most pressing manner, begging us to make use of their arms; and, while I almost ran, in order to avoid their impertinence, I was suddenly met by Sir Clement Wilmoughby!

We both started: "Good God!" he exclaimed, "Miss Anville!" and then, regarding my tormentors with an air of displeasure, he earnestly enquired, if any thing had alarmed me?

"No, no;" cried I, for I found no difficulty now to disengage myself from these youths, who, probably, concluding from the commanding air of Sir Clement, that he had a right to protect me, quietly gave way to him, and entirely quitted us.

With his usual impetuosity, he then began a thousand enquiries, accompanied with as many compliments; and he told me, that he arrived at Bristol but this morning, which he had entirely devoted to endeavours to discover where I lodged.

"Did you know, then," said I, "that I was at Bristol?"

"Would to Heaven," cried he, "that I *could* remain in ignorance of your proceedings with the same contentment you do of mine! then should I not for ever journey upon the wings of Hope, to meet my own despair! *You* cannot even judge of the cruelty of my fate; for the ease and serenity of your mind incapacitates you from feeling for the agitation of mine!"

The ease and serenity of *my* mind ! alas, how little do I merit those words !

“ But,” added he, “ had *accident* brought me hither, had I not known of your journey, the voice of fame would have proclaimed it to me instantly upon my arrival.”

“ The voice of fame !” repeated I.

“ Yes, for yours was the first name I heard at the pump-room. But had I *not* heard your name, such a description could have painted no one else.”

“ Indeed,” said I, “ I do not understand you.” But, just then arriving at the milliner’s, our conversation ended ; for Miss Watkins called me to look at caps and ribbons.

Sir Clement, however, has the art of being always at home ; he was very soon engaged, as busily as ourselves, in looking at lace ruffles ; yet he took an opportunity of saying to me, in a low voice, “ How charmed I am to see you look so well ! I was told you were ill ;—but I never saw you in better health,—never more infinitely lovely !”

I turned away to examine the ribbons, and soon after Mrs. Selwyn made her appearance. I found that she was acquainted with Sir Clement, and her manner of speaking to him convinced me that he was a favourite with her.

When their mutual compliments were over, she turned to me, and said, “ Pray, Miss Anville, how long can you live without nourishment ?”

“ Indeed, Ma’am,” said I, laughing, “ I have never tried.”

“ Because so long, and no longer,” answered she, “ you may remain at Bristol.”

“ Why, what is the matter, Ma’am ?”

“ The matter !—why, all the ladies are at open war with you,—the whole pump-room is in confusion ; and you, innocent as you pretend to look, are the cause. However, if you take my advice, you

will be very careful how you eat and drink during your stay."

I begged her to explain herself: and she then told me, that a copy of verses had been dropped in the pump-room, and read there aloud: "The beauties of the Wells," said she, "are all mentioned, but *you* are the Venus to whom the prize is given."

"Is it then possible," cried Sir Clement, "that you have not seen these verses?"

"I hardly know," answered I, "whether *any* body has."

"I assure you," said Mrs. Selwyn, "if you give *me* the invention of them, you do me an honour I by no means deserve."

"I wrote down in my tablets," said Sir Clement, "the stanzas which concern Miss Anville this morning at the pump-room; and I will do myself the honour of copying them for her this evening."

"But why the part that concerns *Miss Anville*?" said Mrs. Selwyn; "Did you ever see her before this morning?"

"O yes," answered he, "I have had that happiness frequently at Captain Mirvan's. Too, too frequently!" added he, in a low voice, as Mrs. Selwyn turned to the milliner: and as soon as she was occupied in examining some trimmings, he came to me, and, almost whether I would or not, entered into conversation with me.

"I have a thousand things," cried he, "to say to you. Pray where are you?"

"With Mrs. Selwyn, Sir."

"Indeed!—then, for once, chance is my friend. And how long have you been here?"

"About three weeks."

"Good Heaven! what an anxious search have I had, to discover your abode, since you so suddenly left town! The termagant Madame Duval re-

fused me all intelligence. Oh, Miss Anville, did you know what I have endured! the sleepless, restless state of suspense I have been tortured with, you could not, all cruel as you are, you could not have received me with such frigid indifference?"

"Received you, Sir!"

"Why, is not my visit to *you*? Do you think I should have made this journey, but for the happiness of again seeing you?"

"Indeed it is possible I might,—since so many others do."

"Cruel, cruel girl! you *know* that I adore you! you *know* you are the mistress of my soul, and arbitress of my fate!"

Mrs. Selwyn then advancing to us, he assumed a more disengaged air, and asked, if he should not have the pleasure of seeing her in the evening at the assembly?

"Oh, yes," cried she, "we shall certainly be there; so you may bring the verses with you, if Miss Anville can wait for them so long."

"I hope then," returned he, "that you will do me the honour to dance with me?"

I thanked him, but said I should not be at the assembly.

"Not be at the assembly!" cried Mrs. Selwyn, "Why, have *you* too letters to write?"

She looked at me with a significant archness that made me colour; and I hastily answered, "No, indeed, Ma'am!"

"You have not!" cried she, yet more drily; "then pray, my dear, do you stay at home to *help*,—or to *hinder* others?"

"To do neither, Ma'am," answered I, in much confusion; "so, if you please, I will *not* stay at home."

"You allow me, then," said Sir Clement, "to hope for the honour of your hand?"

I only bowed,—for the dread of Mrs. Selwyn's raillery made me not dare refuse him.

Soon after this we walked home: Sir Clement accompanied us; and the conversation that passed between Mrs. Selwyn and him was supported in so lively a manner, that I should have been much entertained, had my mind been more at ease: but, alas! I could think of nothing but the capricious, the unmeaning appearance which the alteration in my conduct must make in the eyes of Lord Orville! And much as I wish to avoid him, greatly as I desire to save myself from having my weakness known to him,—yet I cannot endure to incur his ill opinion,—and, unacquainted as he is with the reasons by which I am actuated, how can he fail contemning a change to him so unaccountable?

As we entered the garden, he was the first object we saw. He advanced to meet us; and I could not help observing, that at sight of each other both he and Sir Clement changed colour.

We went into the parlour, where we found the same party we had left. Mrs. Selwyn presented Sir Clement to Mrs. Beaumont; Lady Louisa and Lord Merton he seemed well acquainted with already.

The conversation was upon the general subjects, of the weather, the company at the Wells, and the news of the day. But Sir Clement, drawing his chair next to mine, took every opportunity of addressing himself to me in particular.

I could not but remark the striking difference of *his* attention, and that of Lord Orville: the latter has such gentleness of manners, such delicacy of conduct, and an air so respectful, that, when he flatters most, he never distresses; and when he most confers honour, appears to receive it! The former

obtrudes his attention, and forces mine; it is so pointed, that it always confuses me, and so public, that it attracts general notice. Indeed I have sometimes thought that he would rather *wish*, than dislike to have his partiality for me known, as he takes great care to prevent my being spoken to by any but himself.

When at length he went away, Lord Orville took his seat, and said, with a half smile, "Shall I call Sir Clement,—or will *you* call me an usurper for taking this place?—You make me no answer?—Must I then suppose that Sir Clement—"

"It is little worth your Lordship's while," said I, "to suppose any thing upon so insignificant an occasion."

"Pardon me," cried he;—"to *me* nothing is insignificant in which you are concerned."

To this I made no answer; neither did he say any thing more, till the ladies retired to dress: and then, when I would have followed them, he stopped me, saying, "One moment, I entreat you!"

I turned back, and he went on, "I greatly fear that I have been so unfortunate as to offend you; yet so repugnant to my very soul is the idea, that I know not how to suppose it possible I can unwittingly have done the thing in the world that, designedly, I would wish to avoid."

"No, indeed, my Lord, you have not," said I.

"You sigh!" cried he, taking my hand, "would to Heaven I were the sharer of your uneasiness, whencesoever it springs! with what earnestness would I not struggle to alleviate it!—Tell me, my dear Miss Anville,—my new-adopted sister, my sweet and most amiable friend!—tell me, I beseech you, if I can afford you any assistance?"

"None, none, my Lord!" cried I, withdrawing my hand, and moving towards the door.

“Is it then impossible I can serve you?—Perhaps you wish to see Mr. Macartney again?”

“No, my Lord.” And I held the door open.

“I am not, I own, sorry for that. Yet, oh! Miss Anville, there *is* a question,—there is a conjecture,—I know not how to mention, because I dread the result!—But I see you are in haste;—perhaps in the evening I may have the honour of a longer conversation.—Yet one thing will you have the goodness to allow me to ask?—Did you, this morning, when you went to the Wells,—did you *know* who you should meet there?”

“Who, my Lord?”

“I beg your pardon a thousand times for a curiosity so unlicensed;—but I will say no more at present.”

He bowed, expecting me to go;—and then, with quick steps, but a heavy heart, I came to my own room. His question, I am sure, meant Sir Clement Willoughby; and had I not imposed upon myself the severe task of avoiding, flying Lord Orville with all my power, I would instantly have satisfied him of my ignorance of Sir Clement’s journey. And yet more did I long to say something of the assembly, since I found he depended upon my spending the evening at home.

I did not go down stairs again till the family was assembled to dinner. My dress, I saw, struck Lord Orville with astonishment; and I was myself so much ashamed of appearing whimsical and unsteady, that I could not look up.

“I understood,” said Mrs. Beaumont, “that Miss Anville did not go out this evening.”

“Her intention in the morning,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “was to stay at home; but there is a fascinating power in an *assembly*, which, upon second thoughts, is not to be resisted.”

"The assembly!" cried Lord Orville; "are you then going to the assembly?"

I made no answer; and we all took our places at table.

It was not without difficulty that I contrived to give up my usual seat; but I was determined to adhere to the promise in my yesterday's letter, though I saw that Lord Orville seemed quite confounded at my visible endeavours to avoid him.

After dinner, we all went into the drawing-room together, as there were no gentlemen to detain his lordship; and then, before I could place myself out of his way, he said, "You are then really going to the assembly?—May I ask if you shall dance?"

"I believe not,—my Lord."

"If I did not fear," continued he, "that you would be tired of the same partner at two following assemblies, I would give up my letter-writing till to-morrow evening, and solicit the honour of your hand."

"If I *do* dance," said I, in great confusion, "I believe I am engaged."

"Engaged!" cried he, with earnestness, "May I ask to whom?"

"To—Sir Clement Willoughby, my Lord."

He said nothing, but looked very little pleased, and did not address himself to me any more all the afternoon. Oh, Sir!—thus situated, how comfortless were the feelings of your Evelina!

Early in the evening, with his accustomed assiduity, Sir Clement came to conduct us to the assembly. He soon contrived to seat himself next me, and, in a low voice, paid me so many compliments, that I knew not which way to look.

Lord Orville hardly spoke a word, and his countenance was grave and thoughtful; yet, whenever I raised my eyes, his, I perceived, were directed to-

wards me, though instantly, upon meeting mine, he looked another way.

In a short time, Sir Clement, taking from his pocket a folded paper, said, almost in a whisper, "Here, loveliest of women, you will see a faint, an unsuccessful attempt to paint the object of all my adoration ! yet, weak as are the lines for the purpose, I envy beyond expression the happy mortal who has dared make the effort."

"I will look at them," said I, "some other time." For, conscious that I was observed by Lord Orville, I could not bear he should see me take a written paper, so privately offered, from Sir Clement. But Sir Clement is an impracticable man, and I never yet succeeded in any attempt to frustrate whatever he has planned.

"No," said he, still in a whisper, "you must take them now, while Lady Louisa is away ;" for she and Mrs. Selwyn were gone up stairs to finish their dress, "she must by no means see them."

"Indeed," said I, "I have no intention to shew them."

"But the only way," answered he, "to avoid suspicion, is to take them in her absence. I would have read them aloud myself, but that they are not proper to be seen by any body in this house, yourself and Mrs. Selwyn excepted."

Then again he presented me the paper, which I now was obliged to take, as I found declining it was vain. But I was sorry that this action should be seen, and the whispering remarked, though the purport of the conversation was left to conjecture.

As I held it in my hand, Sir Clement teased me to look at it immediately ; and told me, the reason he could not produce the lines publicly was, that among the ladies who were mentioned, and supposed to be rejected, was Lady Louisa Larpen. I am much concerned at this circumstance, as I cannot

doubt but that it will render me more disagreeable to her than ever, if she should hear of it.

I will now copy the verses, which Sir Clement would not let me rest till I had read.

SEE last advance, with bashful grace,
Downcast eye, and blushing cheek,
Timid air, and beauteous face,
ANVILLE,—whom the Graces seek.

Though ev'ry beauty is her own,
And though her mind each virtue fills,
ANVILLE,—to her power unknown,
Artless strikes,—unconscious kills.

I am sure, my dear Sir, you will not wonder that a panegyric such as this should, in reading, give me the greatest confusion ; and, unfortunately, before I had finished it, the ladies returned.

“What have you there, my dear?” said Mrs. Selwyn.

“Nothing, Ma'am,” said I, hastily folding, and putting it in my pocket.

“And has *nothing*,” cried she, “the power of *rouge*?”

I made no answer ; a deep sigh, which escaped Lord Orville at that moment, reached my ears, and gave me sensations—which I dare not mention !

Lord Merton then handed Lady Louisa and Mrs. Beaumont to the latter's carriage. Mrs. Selwyn led the way to Sir Clement's, who handed me in after her.

During the ride I did not once speak ; but when I came to the assembly room, Sir Clement took care that I should not preserve my silence. He asked me immediately to dance ; I begged him to excuse me, and seek some other partner. But on the contrary, he told me, he was very glad I would sit still, as he had a million of things to say to me.

He then began to tell me, how much he had suffered from absence ; how greatly he was alarmed

when he heard I had left town; and how cruelly difficult he had found it to trace me; which, at last, he could only do by sacrificing another week to Captain Mirvan.

"And Howard Grove," continued he, "which, at my first visit, appeared the most delightful spot upon earth, now appeared to me the most dismal: the face of the country seemed altered: the walks, which I had thought most pleasant, were now most stupid: Lady Howard, who had appeared a cheerful and respectable old lady, now seemed in the common John Trot style of other aged dames: Mrs. Mirvan, whom I had esteemed as an amiable piece of still-life, now became so insipid, that I could hardly keep awake in her company: the daughter too, whom I had regarded as a good-humoured, pretty sort of a girl, now seemed too insignificant for notice: and as to the Captain, I had always thought him a booby,—but now he appeared a savage!"

"Indeed, Sir Clement," cried I, angrily, "I will not hear you speak thus of my best friends."

"I beg your pardon," said he, "but the contrast of my two visits was too striking not to be mentioned."

He then asked what I thought of the verses?

"Either," said I, "they are written ironically, or by some madman."

Such a profusion of compliments ensued, that I was obliged to propose dancing, in my own defence. When we stood up, "I intended," said he, "to have discovered the author by his looks; but I find you so much the general loadstone of attention that my suspicions change their object every moment. Surely you must yourself have some knowledge who he is?"

I told him no. Yet, my dear Sir, I must own to you, I have no doubt but that Mr. Macartney must be the author; no one else would speak of me so

partially; and, indeed, his poetical turn puts it, with me, beyond dispute.

He asked me a thousand questions concerning Lord Orville; how long he had been at Bristol?—what time I had spent at Clifton?—whether he rode out every morning?—whether I ever trusted myself in a phaeton? and a multitude of other enquiries, all tending to discover if I was honoured with much of his lordship's attention, and all made with his usual freedom and impetuosity.

Fortunately, as I much wished to retire early, Lady Louisa makes a point of being the first who quit the rooms, and therefore we got home in very tolerable time.

Lord Orville's reception of us was grave and cold; far from distinguishing me, as usual, by particular civilities, Lady Louisa herself could not have seen me enter the room with more frigid unconcern, nor have more scrupulously avoided honouring me with any notice. But chiefly I was struck to see, that he suffered Sir Clement, who stayed supper, to sit between us, without any effort to prevent him, though till then, he had seemed to be even tenacious of a seat next mine.

This little circumstance affected me more than I can express: yet I endeavoured to *rejoice* at it, since neglect and indifference from him may be my best friends.—But, alas!—so suddenly, so abruptly to forfeit his attention!—to lose his friendship!—Oh, Sir, these thoughts pierced my soul!—scarce could I keep my seat; for not all my efforts could restrain the tears from trickling down my cheeks: however, as Lord Orville saw them not, for Sir Clement's head was constantly between us, I tried to collect my spirits, and succeeded so far as to keep my place with decency, till Sir Clement took leave; and then, not daring to trust my eyes to meet those of Lord Orville, I retired.

I have been writing ever since; for, certain that I could not sleep, I would not go to bed. Tell me, my dearest Sir, if you possibly can, tell me that you approve my change of conduct,—tell me that my altered behaviour to Lord Orville is right,—that my flying his society, and avoiding his civilities are actions which *you* would have dictated.—Tell me this, and the sacrifices I have made will comfort me in the midst of my regret,—for never, never can I cease to regret that I have lost the friendship of Lord Orville!—Oh, Sir, I have slighted,—have rejected,—have thrown it away!—No matter, it was an honour I merited not to preserve; and now I see,—that my mind was unequal to sustaining it without danger.

Yet so strong is the desire you have implanted in me to act with uprightness and propriety, that, however the weakness of my heart may distress and afflict me, it will never, I humbly trust, render me wilfully culpable. The wish of doing well governs every other, as far as concerns my conduct,—for am I not *your* child?—the creature of your own forming!—Yet, Oh, Sir, friend, parent of my heart!—my feelings are all at war with my duties! and while I most struggle to acquire self-approbation, my peace, my happiness, my hopes,—are lost!

'Tis you alone can compose a mind so cruelly agitated; you, I well know, can feel pity for the weakness to which you are a stranger; and, though you blame the affliction, soothe and comfort the afflicted.

LETTER XXVII.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

[Berry-Hill, Oct. 3.

YOUR last communication, my dearest child, is indeed astonishing; that an acknowledged daughter

and heiress of Sir John Belmont should be at Bristol, and still my Evelina bear the name of Anville, is to me inexplicable: yet the mystery of the letter to Lady Howard prepared me to expect something extraordinary upon Sir John Belmont's return to England.

Whoever this young lady may be, it is certain she now takes a place to which you have a right indisputable. An *after-marriage* I never heard of; yet, supposing such a one to have happened, Miss Evelyn was certainly the first wife, and therefore her daughter must, at least, be entitled to the name of Belmont.

Either there are circumstances in this affair at present utterly incomprehensible, or else some strange and most atrocious fraud has been practised; which of these two is the case, it now behoves us to enquire.

My reluctance to this step gives way to my conviction of its propriety, since the reputation of your dear and much injured mother must now either be fully cleared from blemish, or receive its final and indelible wound.

The public appearance of a daughter of Sir John Belmont will revive the remembrance of Miss Evelyn's story in all who have heard it,—who the *mother* was, will be universally demanded,—and if any other Lady Belmont should be named, the birth of my Evelina will receive a stigma, against which, honour, truth, and innocence may appeal in vain!—a stigma, which will eternally blast the fair fame of her virtuous mother, and cast upon her blameless self the odium of a title, which not all her purity can rescue from established shame and dishonour?

No, my dear child, no; I will not quietly suffer the ashes of your mother to be treated with ignominy! her spotless character shall be justified to the world—her marriage shall be acknowledged,

and her child shall bear the name to which she is lawfully entitled.

It is true, that Mrs. Mirvan would conduct this affair with more delicacy than Mrs. Selwyn ; yet, perhaps, to save time, is of all considerations, the most important, since the longer this mystery is suffered to continue, the more difficult may be rendered its explanation. The sooner, therefore, you can set out for town, the less formidable will be your task.

Let not your timidity, my dear love, depress your spirits : I shall, indeed, tremble for you at a meeting so singular and so affecting, yet there can be no doubt of the success of your application : I enclose a letter from your unhappy mother, written, and reserved purposely for this occasion : Mrs. Clinton too, who attended her in her last illness, must accompany you to town.—But, without any other certificate of your birth, that which you carry in your countenance, as it could not be effected by artifice, so it cannot admit of a doubt.

And now, my Evelina, committed at length to the care of your real parent, receive the fervent prayers, wishes, and blessings, of him who so fondly adopted you !

May'st thou, Oh child of my bosom ! may'st thou, in this change of situation, experience no change of disposition ! but receive with humility, and support with meekness the elevation to which thou art rising ! May thy manners, language, and deportment, all evince that modest equanimity, and cheerful gratitude, which not merely deserve, but dignify prosperity ! May'st thou, to the last moments of an unblemished life, retain thy genuine simplicity, thy singleness of heart, thy guileless sincerity ! And may'st thou, stranger to ostentation, and superior to insolence, with true greatness of soul shine forth conspicuous only in beneficence !

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER XXVIII.

[Inclosed in the preceding Letter.]

LADY BELMONT TO SIR JOHN BELMONT.

IN the firm hope that the moment of anguish which approaches will prove the period of my sufferings, once more I address myself to Sir John Belmont, in behalf of the child, who, if it survives its mother, will hereafter be the bearer of this letter.

Yet, in what terms,—Oh, most cruel of men!—can the lost Caroline address you, and not address you in vain? Oh, deaf to the voice of compassion—deaf to the sting of truth—deaf to every tie of honour—say, in what terms may the lost Caroline address you, and not address you in vain!

Shall I call you by the loved, the respected title of husband?—No, you disclaim it!—the father of my infant?—No, you doom it to infamy!—the lover who rescued me from a forced marriage?—No, you have yourself betrayed me!—the friend from whom I hoped succour and protection?—No, you have consigned me to misery and destruction!

Oh, hardened against every plea of justice, remorse, or pity! how, and in what manner, may I hope to move thee? Is there one method I have left untried? remains there one resource unessayed? No! I have exhausted all the bitterness of reproach, and drained every sluice of compassion!

Hopeless, and almost desperate, twenty times have I flung away my pen;—but the feelings of a mother, a mother agonizing for the fate of her child, again animating my courage, as often I have resumed it.

Perhaps when I am no more, when the measure of my woes is completed, and the still, silent, unreproaching dust has received my sad remains,—then,

perhaps, when accusation is no longer to be feared, nor detection to be dreaded, the voice of equity, and the cry of nature, may be heard.

Listen, Oh Belmont, to their dictates! reprobate not your child, though you have reprobated its mother. The evils that are past, perhaps, when too late, you may wish to recal; the young creature you have persecuted, perhaps, when too late, you may regret that you have destroyed;—you may think with horror of the deceptions you have practised, and the pangs of remorse may follow me to the tomb:—Oh, Belmont, all my resentment softens into pity at the thought! what will become of thee, good Heaven, when, with the eye of penitence, thou reviewest thy past conduct!

Hear, then, the solemn, the last address, with which the unhappy Caroline will importune thee.

If, when the time of thy contrition arrives,—for arrive it must!—when the sense of thy treachery shall rob thee of almost every other, if then thy tortured heart shall sigh to expiate thy guilt,—mark the conditions upon which I leave thee my forgiveness.

Thou knowest I am thy wife!—clear, then, to the world the reputation thou hast sullied, and receive, as thy lawful successor, the child who will present thee this, my dying request.

The worthiest, the most benevolent, the best of men, to whose consoling kindness I owe the little tranquillity I have been able to preserve, has plighted me his faith, that, upon no other conditions, he will part with his helpless charge.

Should'st thou, in the features of this deserted innocent, trace the resemblance of the wretched Caroline,—should its face bear the marks of its birth, and revive in thy memory the image of its mother, wilt thou not, Belmont, wilt thou not therefore renounce it?—Oh, babe of my fondest affection! for

whom already I experience all the tenderness of maternal pity ! look not like thy unfortunate mother,—lest the parent, whom the hand of death may spare, shall be snatched from thee by the more cruel means of unnatural antipathy !

I can write no more. The small share of serenity I have painfully acquired, will not bear the shock of the dreadful ideas that crowd upon me.

Adieu,—for ever !—

Yet, Oh !—shall I not, in this last farewell, which thou wilt not read till every stormy passion is extinct, and the kind grave has embosomed all my sorrows,—shall I not offer to the man, once so dear to me, a ray of consolation to those afflictions he has in reserve ? Suffer me, then, to tell thee, that my pity far exceeds my indignation,—that I will pray for thee in my last moments, and that the recollection of the love I once bore thee, shall swallow up every other !

Once more, adieu !

CAROLINE BELMONT.

LETTER XXIX.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

[Clifton, Oct. 3.]

THIS morning I saw from my window, that Lord Orville was walking in the garden ; but I would not go down stairs till breakfast was ready : and then, he paid me his compliments almost as coldly as Lady Louisa paid her's.

I took my usual place, and Mrs. Beaumont, Lady Louisa, and Mrs. Selwyn, entered into their usual conversation.—Not so your Evelina ; disregarded, silent, and melancholy, she sat like a cypher, whom, to nobody belonging, by nobody was noticed.

Ill brooking such a situation, and unable to support the neglect of Lord Orville, the moment breakfast was over I left the room, and was going up stairs ; when, very unpleasantly, I was stopped by Sir Clement Willoughby, who, flying into the hall, prevented my proceeding.

He enquired very particularly after my health, and entreated me to return into the parlour. Unwillingly I consented, but thought any thing preferable to continuing alone with him ; and he would neither leave me, nor suffer me to pass on. Yet, in returning, I felt not a little ashamed at appearing thus to take the visit of Sir Clement to myself. And, indeed, he endeavoured, by his manner of addressing me, to give it that air.

He stayed, I believe, an hour ; nor would he, perhaps, even then have gone, had not Mrs. Beaumont broken up the party, by proposing an airing in her coach. Lady Louisa consented to accompany her ; but Mrs. Selwyn, when applied to, said, " If my Lord, or Sir Clement will join us, I shall be happy to make one ;—but really a trio of females will be nervous to the last degree."

Sir Clement readily agreed to attend them ; indeed, he makes it his evident study to court the favour of Mrs. Beaumont. Lord Orville excused himself from going out ; and I retired to my own room. What he did with himself I know not, for I would not go down stairs till dinner was ready : his coldness, though my own change of behaviour has occasioned it, so cruelly depresses my spirits, that I know not how to support myself in his presence.

At dinner, I found Sir Clement again of the party. Indeed, he manages every thing his own way ; for Mrs. Beaumont, though by no means easy to please, seems quite at his disposal.

The dinner, the afternoon, and the evening, were

to me the most irksome imaginable: I was tormented by the assiduity of Sir Clement, who not only *took*, but *made* opportunities of speaking to me, —and I was hurt,—Oh, how inexpressibly hurt!—that Lord Orville not only forbore, as hitherto, *seeking*, he even *neglected* all occasions of talking with me!

I begin to think, my dear Sir, that the sudden alteration in my behaviour was ill-judged and improper; for, as I had received no offence, as the cause of the change was upon *my* account, not *his*, I should not have assumed, so abruptly, a reserve for which I dared assign no reason,—nor have shunned his presence so obviously, without considering the strange appearance of such a conduct.

Alas, my dearest Sir, that my reflections should always be too late to serve me! dearly, indeed, do I purchase experience! and much, I fear, I shall suffer yet more severely, from the heedless indiscretion of my temper, ere I attain that prudence and consideration, which, by foreseeing distant consequences, may rule and direct in present exigencies.

[Oct. 4th.

Yesterday morning every body rode out, except Mrs. Selwyn and myself; and we two sat for some time together in her room; but, as soon as I could, I quitted her, to saunter in the garden; for she diverts herself so unmercifully with rallying me, either upon my gravity,—or concerning Lord Orville,—that I dread having any conversation with her.

Here, I believe I spent an hour by myself; when, hearing the garden gate open, I went into an arbour, at the end of a long walk, where, ruminating, very unpleasantly, upon my future prospects, I remained quietly seated but a few minutes, before I

was interrupted by the appearance of Sir Clement Willoughby.

I started; and would have left the arbour, but he prevented me. Indeed, I am almost certain he had heard in the house where I was, as it is not, otherwise, probable he would have strolled down the garden alone.

"Stop, stop," cried he, "loveliest and most beloved of women, stop and hear me!"

Then, making me keep my place, he sat down by me, and would have taken my hand; but I drew it back, and said I could not stay.

"Can you, then," cried he, "refuse me the smallest gratification, though, but yesterday, I almost suffered martyrdom for the pleasure of seeing you?"

"Martyrdom! Sir Clement."

"Yes, *beauteous insensible!* *martyrdom*: for did I not compel myself to be immured in a carriage, the tedious length of a whole morning, with the three most fatiguing women in England?"

"Upon my word, the ladies are extremely obliged to you."

"Oh," returned he, "they have, every one of them, so copious a share of their own personal esteem, that they have no right to repine at the failure of it in the world; and, indeed, they will themselves be the last to discover it."

"How little," cried I, "are those ladies aware of such severity from *you*!"

"They are guarded," answered he, "so happily and so securely by their own conceit, that they are not aware of it from any body. Oh, Miss Anville, to be torn away from *you*, in order to be shut up with *them*,—is there a human being, except your cruel self, could forbear to pity me?"

"I believe, Sir Clement, however hardly you may choose to judge of them, your situation, by the

world in general, would rather have been envied than pitied."

"The world in general," answered he, "has the same opinion of them that I have myself: Mrs. Beaumont is every where laughed at, Lady Louisa ridiculed, and Mrs. Selwyn hated."

"Good God, Sir Clement, what cruel strength of words do you use!"

"It is you, my angel, are to blame, since your perfections have rendered their faults so glaring. I protest to you, during our whole ride, I thought the carriage drawn by snails. The absurd pride of Mrs. Beaumont, and the respect she exacts, are at once insufferable and stupifying; had I never before been in her company, I should have concluded that this had been her first airing from the herald's office,—and wished her nothing worse, than that it might also be the last. I assure you, that but for gaining the freedom of her house, I would fly her as I would plague, pestilence, and famine. Mrs. Selwyn, indeed, afforded some relief from this formality, but the unbounded license of her tongue—"

"O, Sir Clement, do you object to that?"

"Yes, my sweet reproacher, in a woman I do; in a woman I think it intolerable. She has wit, I acknowledge, and more understanding than half her sex put together; but she keeps alive a perpetual expectation of satire, that spreads a general uneasiness among all who are in her presence; and she talks so much, that even the best things she says weary the attention. As to the little Louisa, 'tis such a pretty piece of languor, that 'tis almost cruel to speak rationally about her,—else I should say, she is a mere compound of affectation, impertinence, and airs."

"I am quite amazed," said I, "that, with such

opinions, you can behave to them all with so much attention and civility."

"Civility! my angel,—why, I could worship, could adore them, only to procure myself a moment of your conversation! Have you not seen me pay my court to the gross Captain Mirvan, and the virago Madame Duval? Were it possible that a creature so horrid could be formed, as to partake of the worst qualities of all these characters,—a creature, who should have the haughtiness of Mrs. Beaumont, the brutality of Captain Mirvan, the self-conceit of Mrs. Selwyn, the affectation of Lady Louisa, and the vulgarity of Madame Duval,—even to such a monster as that I would pay homage, and pour forth adulation, only to obtain one word, one look from my adored Miss Anville!"

"Sir Clement," said I, "you are greatly mistaken if you suppose this duplicity of character recommends you to my good opinion. But I must take this opportunity of begging you never more to talk to me in this strain."

"Oh, Miss Anville, your reproofs, your coldness, pierce me to the soul! look upon me with less rigour, and make me what you please;—you shall govern and direct all my actions,—you shall new-form, new-model me:—I will not have even a wish but of your suggestion; only deign to look upon me with pity—if not with favour!"

"Suffer me, Sir," said I, very gravely, "to make use of this occasion to put a final conclusion to such expressions. I entreat you never again to address me in a language so flighty and so unwelcome. You have already given me great uneasiness; and I must frankly assure you, that if you do not desire to banish me from wherever you are, you will adopt a very different stile and conduct in future."

I then rose, and was going, but he flung himself

at my feet to prevent me, exclaiming, in a most passionate manner, " Good God ! Miss Anville, what do you say ?—is it, can it be possible, that, so unmoved, that, with such petrifying indifference, you can tear from me even the remotest hope !"

" I know not, Sir," said I, endeavouring to disengage myself from him, " what hope you mean, but I am sure that I never intended to give you any."

" You distract me," cried he, " I cannot endure such scorn ;—I beseech you to have some moderation in your cruelty, lest you make me desperate :—say, then, that you pity me,—O fairest inexorable ! loveliest tyrant !—say, tell me, at least, that you pity me !"

Just then, who should come in sight, as if intending to pass by the arbour, but Lord Orville ! Good Heaven, how did I start ! and he, the moment he saw me, turned pale, and was hastily retiring ;—but I called out " Lord Orville !—Sir Clement, release me,—let go my hand !"

Sir Clement, in some confusion, suddenly rose, but still grasped my hand. Lord Orville, who had turned back, was again walking away ; but, still struggling to disengage myself, I called out, " Pray, pray, my Lord, don't go !—Sir Clement, I *insist* upon your releasing me !"

Lord Orville then, hastily approaching us, said, with great spirit, " Sir Clement, you cannot wish to detain Miss Anville by force !"

" Neither, my Lord," cried Sir Clement, proudly, " do I request the honour of your Lordship's interference."

However, he let go my hand, and I immediately ran into the house.

I was now frightened to death, lest Sir Clement's mortified pride should provoke him to affront Lord Orville : I therefore ran hastily to Mrs. Selwyn, and entreated her, in a manner hardly to be understood,

to walk towards the arbour. She asked no questions, for she is quick as lightning in taking a hint, but instantly hastened into the garden.

Imagine, my dear Sir, how wretched I must be till I saw her return! scarce could I restrain myself from running back: however, I checked my impatience, and waited, though in agonies, till she came.

And now, my dear Sir, I have a conversation to write, the most interesting to me that I ever heard. The comments and questions with which Mrs. Selwyn interrupted her account I shall not mention; for they are such as you may very easily suppose.

Lord Orville and Sir Clement were both seated very quietly in the arbour: and Mrs. Selwyn, standing still, as soon as she was within a few yards of them, heard Sir Clement say, "Your question, my Lord, alarms me, and I can by no means answer it, unless you will allow me to propose another."

"Undoubtedly, Sir."

"You ask me, my Lord, what are my intentions?—I should be very happy to be satisfied as to your Lordship's."

"I have never, Sir, professed *any*."

Here they were both, for a few moments, silent: and then Sir Clement said, "To what, my Lord, must I then impute your desire of knowing mine?"

"To an unaffected interest in Miss Anville's welfare."

"Such an interest," said Sir Clement, drily, "is indeed very generous; but, except in a father,—a brother,—or a lover—"

"Sir Clement," interrupted his Lordship, "I know your inference; and I acknowledge I have not the right of enquiry which any of those three titles bestow; and yet I confess the warmest wishes to serve her, and to see her happy. Will you, then, excuse me, if I take the liberty to repeat my question?"

"Yes, if your Lordship will excuse my repeating, that I think it a rather extraordinary one."

"It may be so," said Lord Orville; "but this young lady seems to be peculiarly situated; she is very young, very inexperienced, yet appears to be left totally to her own direction. She does not, I believe, see the dangers to which she is exposed, and I will own to you, I feel a strong desire to point them out."

"I don't rightly understand your Lordship,—but I think you cannot mean to prejudice her against me?"

"Her sentiments of *you*, Sir, are as much unknown to me, as your intentions towards *her*. Perhaps, were I acquainted with either, my officiousness might be at an end: but I presume not to ask upon what terms—"

Here he stopped; and Sir Clement said, "You know, my Lord, I am not given to despair; I am by no means such a puppy as to tell you I am upon *sure ground*; however, perseverance—"

"You are, then, determined to persevere?"

"I am, my Lord."

"Pardon me, then, Sir Clement, if I speak to you with freedom. This young lady, though she seems alone, and, in some measure, unprotected, is not entirely without friends; she has been extremely well educated, and accustomed to good company; she has a natural love of virtue, and a mind that might adorn *any* station, however exalted: is such a young lady, Sir Clement, a proper object to trifle with?—for your principles, excuse me, Sir, are well known."

"As to that, my Lord, let Miss Anville look to herself; she has an excellent understanding, and needs no counsellor."

"Her understanding is indeed excellent; but she

is too young for suspicion, and has an artlessness of disposition I never saw equalled."

"My Lord," cried Sir Clement, warmly, "your praises make me doubt your disinterestedness, and there exists not the man, who I would so unwillingly have for a rival as yourself. But you must give me leave to say, you have greatly deceived me in regard to this affair."

"How so, Sir?" cried Lord Orville, with equal warmth.

"You were pleased, my Lord," answered Sir Clement, "upon our first conversation concerning this young lady, to speak of her in terms by no means suited to your present encomiums; you said she was a *poor, weak, ignorant girl*, and I had great reason to believe you had a most contemptuous opinion of her."

"It is very true," said Lord Orville, "that I did not, at our first acquaintance, do justice to the merits of Miss Anville; but I knew not then how new she was to the world; at present, however, I am convinced, that whatever might appear strange in her behaviour, was simply the effect of inexperience, timidity, and a retired education; for I find her informed, sensible, and intelligent. She is not, indeed, like most modern young ladies, to be known in half an hour: her modest worth, and fearful excellence, require both time and encouragement to shew themselves. She does not, beautiful as she is, seize the soul by surprise, but, with more dangerous fascination, she steals it almost imperceptibly."

"Enough, my Lord," cried Sir Clement, "your solicitude for her welfare is now sufficiently explained."

"My friendship and esteem," returned Lord Orville, "I do not wish to disguise; but assure yourself, Sir Clement, I should not have troubled you

upon this subject, had Miss Anville and I ever conversed but as friends. However, since you do not choose to avow your intentions, we must drop the subject."

"My intentions," cried he, "I will frankly own, are hardly known to myself. I think Miss Anville the loveliest of her sex; and, were I a *marrying man*, she, of all the women I have seen, I would fix upon for a wife: but I believe that not even the philosophy of your Lordship would recommend me to a connection of that sort, with a girl of obscure birth, whose only dowry is her beauty, and who is evidently in a state of dependency."

"Sir Clement," cried Lord Orville, with some heat, "we will discuss this point no further; we are both free agents, and must act for ourselves."

Here Mrs. Selwyn, fearing a surprise, and finding my apprehensions of danger were groundless, retired hastily into another walk, and soon after came to give me this account.

Good Heaven, what a man is this Sir Clement! so designing, though so easy; so deliberately artful, though so flighty! Greatly however, is he mistaken, all confident as he seems; for the girl, obscure, poor, dependant as she is, far from wishing the honour of his alliance, would not only *now*, but *always* have rejected it.

As to Lord Orville,—but I will not trust my pen to mention him,—tell me, my dear Sir, what *you* think of him?—tell me if he is not the noblest of men?—and if you can either wonder at, or blame my admiration?

The idea of being seen immediately by either party, after so singular a conversation, was both awkward and distressing to me; but I was obliged to appear at dinner. Sir Clement, I saw, was absent and uneasy; he watched me, he watched Lord Or-

ville, and was evidently disturbed in his mind. Whenever he spoke to me, I turned from him with undisguised disdain, for I am too much irritated against him, to bear with his ill-meant assiduities any longer.

But, not once,—not a moment, did I dare meet the eyes of Lord Orville! All consciousness myself, I dreaded his penetration, and directed mine every way—but towards his. The rest of the day I never quitted Mrs. Selwyn.

Adieu, my dear Sir: to-morrow I expect your directions, whether I am to return to Berry-Hill, or once more to visit London.

LETTER XXX.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Oct. 6th.

AND now, my dearest Sir, if the perturbation of my spirits will allow me, I will finish my last letter from Clifton-Hill.

This morning, though I did not go down stairs early, Lord Orville was the only person in the parlour when I entered it. I felt no small confusion at seeing him alone, after having so long and successfully avoided such a meeting. As soon as the usual compliments were over, I would have left the room, but he stopped me by saying, “If I disturb you, Miss Anville, I am gone.”

“My Lord,” said I, rather embarrassed, “I did not mean to stay.”

“I flattered myself,” cried he, “I should have had a moment’s conversation with you.”

I then turned back; and he seemed himself in some perplexity: but, after a short pause, “You are very good,” said he, “to indulge my request; I

have, indeed, for some time past, most ardently desired an opportunity of speaking to you."

Again he paused; but I said nothing, so he went on.

"You allowed me, Madam, a few days since, you allowed me to lay claim to your friendship,—to interest myself in your affairs,—to call you by the affectionate title of sister;—and the honour you did me, no man could have been more sensible of; I am ignorant, therefore, how I have been so unfortunate as to forfeit it:—but, at present, all is changed! you fly me,—your averted eye shuns to meet mine, and you sedulously avoid my conversation."

I was extremely disconcerted at this grave, and but too just accusation, and I am sure I must look very simple;—but I made no answer.

"You will not, I hope," continued he, "condemn me unheard; if there is any thing I have done,—or any thing I have neglected, tell me, I beseech you, *what*, and it shall be the whole study of my thoughts how to deserve your pardon."

"Oh, my Lord," cried I, penetrated at once with shame and gratitude, "your too, too great politeness oppresses me!—you have done nothing,—I have never dreamt of offence;—if there is any pardon to be asked, it is rather for *me*, than for *you* to ask it."

"You are all sweetness and condescension!" cried he, "and I flatter myself you will again allow me to claim those titles which I find myself so unable to forego. Yet, occupied as I am, with an idea that gives me the greatest uneasiness, I hope you will not think me impertinent, if I still solicit, still entreat, nay implore you to tell me, to what cause your late sudden, and to me most painful, reserve was owing?"

"Indeed, my Lord," said I, stammering, "I don't,—I can't,—indeed, my Lord,—"

"I am sorry to distress you," said he, "and ashamed to be so urgent,—yet I know not how to be satisfied while in ignorance,—and the *time* when the change happened, makes me apprehend,—may I, Miss Anville, tell you *what* it makes me apprehend?"

"Certainly, my Lord."

"Tell me, then,—and pardon a question most essentially important to me ;—Had, or had not, Sir Clement Willoughby any share in causing your inquietude?"

"No, my Lord," answered I, with firmness, "none in the world."

"A thousand, thousand thanks!" cried he: "you have relieved me from a weight of conjecture which I supported very painfully. But one thing more; is it, in any measure, to Sir Clement that I may attribute the alteration in your behaviour to myself, which I could not but observe, began the very day after his arrival at the Hot-wells?"

"To Sir Clement, my Lord," said I, "attribute nothing. He is the last man in the world who would have any influence over my conduct."

"And will you, then, restore to me that share of confidence and favour with which you honoured me before he came?"

Just then, to my great relief,—for I knew not what to say,—Mrs Beaumont opened the door, and in a few minutes we went to breakfast.

Lord Orville was all gaiety; never did I see him more lively or more agreeable. Very soon after, Sir Clement Willoughby called, to pay his respects, he said, to Mrs. Beaumont. I then came to my own room, where, indulging my reflections, which, now soothed, and now alarmed me, I remained very quietly, till I received your most kind letter.

Oh Sir, how sweet are the prayers you offer for your Evelina! how grateful to her are the blessings you pour upon her head!—You *commit me to my real parent*,—Ah, Guardian, Friend, Protector of my youth,—by whom my helpless infancy was cherished, my mind formed, my very life preserved,—*you are the Parent my heart acknowledges*, and to you do I vow eternal duty, gratitude, and affection!

I look forward to the approaching interview with more fear than hope; but, important as is this subject, I am just now wholly engrossed with another, which I must hasten to communicate.

I immediately acquainted Mrs. Selwyn with the purport of your letter. She was charmed to find your opinion agreed with her own, and settled that we should go to town to-morrow morning: and a chaise is actually ordered to be here by one o'clock.

She then desired me to pack up my clothes; and said she must go herself to *make speeches* and *tell lies* to Mrs. Beaumont.

When I went down stairs to dinner, Lord Orville, who was still in excellent spirits, reproached me for secluding myself so much from the company. He sat next me,—*he would sit next me*,—at table; and he might, I am sure, repeat what he once said of me before, *that he almost exhausted himself in fruitless endeavours to entertain me*;—for, indeed, I was not to be entertained: I was totally spiritless and dejected; the idea of the approaching meeting,—and Oh, Sir, the idea of the approaching parting,—gave a heaviness to my heart that I could neither conquer nor repress. I even regretted the half explanation that had passed, and wished Lord Orville had supported his own reserve, and suffered me to support mine.

However, when, during dinner, Mrs. Beaumont

spoke of our journey, my gravity was no longer singular; a cloud instantly overspread the countenance of Lord Orville, and he became nearly as thoughtful and as silent as myself.

We all went together to the drawing-room. After a short and unentertaining conversation, Mrs. Selwyn said she must prepare for her journey, and begged me to see for some books she had left in the parlour.

And here, while I was looking for them, I was followed by Lord Orville. He shut the door after he came in, and, approaching me with a look of anxiety, said, "Is this true, Miss Anville, are you going?"

"I believe so, my Lord," said I, still looking for the books.

"So suddenly, so unexpectedly must I lose you?"

"No great loss, my Lord," cried I, endeavouring to speak cheerfully.

"Is it possible," said he gravely, "Miss Anville can doubt my sincerity?"

"I can't imagine," cried I, "what Mrs. Selwyn has done with these books."

"Would to Heaven," continued he, "I might flatter myself you would allow me to prove it!"

"I must run up stairs," cried I, greatly confused, "and ask what she has done with them."

"You are going, then," cried he, taking my hand, "and you give me not the smallest hope of your return!—will you not, then, my too lovely friend!—will you not, at least, teach me, with fortitude like your own, to support your absence?"

"My Lord," cried I, endeavouring to disengage my hand, "pray let me go!"

"I will," cried he, to my inexpressible confusion, dropping on one knee, "if you wish to leave me!"

"Oh, my Lord," exclaimed I, "rise, I beseech

you, rise!—such a posture to me!—surely your Lordship is not so cruel as to mock me!”

“Mock you!” repeated he earnestly, “no, I revere you! I esteem and I admire you above all human beings! you are the friend to whom my soul is attached as to its better half! you are the most amiable, the most perfect of women! and you are dearer to me than language has the power of telling.”

I attempt not to describe my sensations at that moment; I scarce breathed; I doubted if I existed,—the blood forsook my cheeks, and my feet refused to sustain me: Lord Orville, hastily rising, supported me to a chair, upon which I sunk, almost lifeless.

For a few minutes, we neither of us spoke; and then, seeing me recover, Lord Orville, though in terms hardly articulate, entreated my pardon for his abruptness. The moment my strength returned, I attempted to rise, but he would not permit me.

I cannot write the scene that followed, though every word is engraven on my heart; but his protestations, his expressions, were too flattering for repetition: nor would he, in spite of my repeated efforts to leave him, suffer me to escape:—in short, my dear Sir, I was not proof against his solicitations—and he drew from me the most sacred secret of my heart!

I know not how long we were together; but Lord Orville was upon his knees, when the door was opened by Mrs. Selwyn!—To tell you, Sir, the shame with which I was overwhelmed, would be impossible;—I snatched my hand from Lord Orville,—he, too, started and rose, and Mrs. Selwyn, for some instants, stood facing us both in silence.

At last, “My Lord,” said she, sarcastically, “have you been so good as to help Miss Anville to look for my books?”

"Yes, Madam," answered he, attempting to rally, "and I hope we shall soon be able to find them."

"Your Lordship is extremely kind," said she, drily, "but I can by no means consent to take up any more of your time." Then looking on the window-seat, she presently found the books, and added, "Come, here are just three, and so, like the servants in the Drummer, this important affair may give employment to us all." She then presented one of them to Lord Orville, another to me, and taking a third herself, with a most provoking look, she left the room.

I would instantly have followed her; but Lord Orville, who could not help laughing, begged me to stay a minute, as he had many important matters to discuss.

"No, indeed, my Lord, I cannot,—perhaps I have already stayed too long."

"Does Miss Anville so soon repent her goodness?"

"I scarce know what I do, my Lord,—I am quite bewildered!"

"One hour's conversation," cried he, "will, I hope, compose your spirits, and confirm my happiness. When, then, may I hope to see you alone?—shall you walk in the garden to-morrow before breakfast?"

"No, no, my Lord; you must not, a second time, reproach me with making an *appointment*."

"Do you then," said he, laughing, "reserve that honour only for Mr. Macartney?"

"Mr. Macartney," said I, "is poor, and thinks himself obliged to me; otherwise—"

"Poverty," cried he, "I will not plead; but, if being *obliged* to you has any weight, who shall dispute my title to an appointment?"

"My Lord, I can stay no longer,—Mrs. Selwyn will lose all patience."

"Deprive her not of the pleasure of her *conjectures*,—but tell me, are you under Mrs. Selwyn's care?"

"Only for the present, my Lord."

"Not a few are the questions I have to ask Miss Anville: among them, the most important is, whether she depends wholly on herself, or whether there is any other person for whose interest I must solicit?"

"I hardly know, my Lord, I hardly know myself to whom I most belong."

"Suffer, suffer me, then," cried he, with warmth, "to hasten the time when that shall no longer admit a doubt!—when your grateful Orville may call you all his own!"

At length, but with difficulty, I broke from him. I went, however, to my own room, for I was too much agitated to follow Mrs. Selwyn. Good God, my dear Sir, what a scene! surely the meeting for which I shall prepare to-morrow cannot so greatly affect me! To be loved by Lord Orville,—to be the honoured choice of his noble heart,—my happiness seemed too infinite to be borne, and I wept, even bitterly I wept, from the excess of joy which overpowered me.

In this state of almost painful felicity I continued till I was summoned to tea. When I re-entered the drawing-room, I rejoiced much to find it full of company, as the confusion with which I met Lord Orville was rendered the less observable.

Immediately after tea, most of the company played at cards,—and then—till supper-time, Lord Orville devoted himself wholly to me.

He saw that my eyes were red, and would not let me rest till he had made me confess the cause; and when, though most reluctantly, I had acknowledged my weakness, I could with difficulty refrain from weeping again at the gratitude he expressed.

He earnestly desired to know if my journey could not be postponed; and when I said no, entreated permission to attend me to town.

"Oh, my Lord," cried I, "what a request!"

"The sooner," answered he, "I make my devotion to you in public, the sooner I may expect, from your delicacy, you will convince the world you encourage no mere *danglers*."

"You teach me, then, my Lord, the inference I might expect, if I complied."

"And can you wonder I should seek to hasten the happy time, when no scruples, no discretion will demand our separation? and when the most punctilious delicacy will rather promote, than oppose, my happiness in attending you?"

To this I was silent, and he re-urged his request.

"My Lord," said I, "you ask what I have no power to grant. This journey will deprive me of all right to act for myself."

"What does Miss Anville mean?"

"I cannot now explain myself; indeed, if I could, the task would be both painful and tedious."

"O, Miss Anville," cried he, "when may I hope to date the period of this mystery? when flatter myself that my promised friend will indeed honour me with her confidence?"

"My Lord," said I, "I mean not to affect any mystery,—but my affairs are so circumstanced, that a long and most unhappy story can alone explain them. However, if a short suspense will give your Lordship any uneasiness,—"

"My beloved Miss Anville," cried he, eagerly, "pardon my impatience!—You shall tell me nothing you would wish to conceal,—I will wait your own time for information, and trust to your goodness for its speed."

"There is *nothing*, my Lord, I wish to conceal,—to *postpone* an explanation is all I desire."

He then requested, that, since I would not allow him to accompany me to town, I would permit him to write to me, and promise to answer his letters.

A sudden recollection of the two letters which had already passed between us occurring to me, I hastily answered, "No, indeed, my Lord!"

"I am extremely sorry," said he, gravely, "that you think me too presumptuous. I must own I had flattered myself, that, to soften the inquietude of an absence, which seems attended by so many inexplicable circumstances, would not have been to incur your displeasure."

This seriousness hurt me; and I could not forbear saying, "Can you indeed desire, my Lord, that I should, a second time, expose myself, by an unguarded readiness, to write to you?"

"A second time! unguarded readiness!" repeated he; "you amaze me!"

"Has your Lordship then quite forgot the foolish letter I was so imprudent as to send you when in town?"

"I have not the least idea," cried he, "of what you mean."

"Why then, my Lord," said I, "we had better let the subject drop."

"Impossible!" cried he, "I cannot rest without an explanation!"

And then, he obliged me to speak very openly of both the letters; but, my dear Sir, imagine my surprise, when he assured me, in the most solemn manner, that, far from having ever written me a single line, he had never received, seen, or heard of my letter!

This subject, which caused mutual astonishment and perplexity to us both, entirely engrossed us for the rest of the evening; and he made me promise to shew him the letter I had received in his name to-

morrow morning, that he might endeavour to discover the author.

After supper, the conversation became general.

And now, my dearest Sir, may I not call for your congratulations upon the events of this day? a day never to be recollected by me but with the most grateful joy! I know how much you are inclined to think well of Lord Orville; I cannot, therefore, apprehend that my frankness to him will displease you. Perhaps the time is not very distant, when your Evelina's choice may receive the sanction of her best friend's judgment and approbation, —which seems now all she has to wish!

In regard to the change in my situation which must first take place, surely I cannot be blamed for what has passed! the partiality of Lord Orville must not only reflect honour upon me, but upon all to whom I do, or may belong.

Adieu, most dear Sir. I will write again when I arrive at London.

LETTER XXXI.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Clifton, Oct. 7th.]

You will see, my dear Sir, that I was mistaken in supposing I should write no more from this place, where my residence now seems more uncertain than ever.

This morning, during breakfast, Lord Orville took an opportunity to beg me, in a low voice, to allow him a moment's conversation before I left Clifton; "May I hope," added he, "that you will stroll into the garden after breakfast?"

I made no answer, but I believe my looks gave no

denial ; for, indeed, I much wished to be satisfied concerning the letter. The moment, therefore, that I could quit the parlour, I ran up stairs for my calash ; but, before I reached my room, Mrs. Selwyn called after me, " If you are going to walk, Miss Anville, be so good as to bid Jenny bring down my hat, and I'll accompany you."

Very much disconcerted, I turned into the drawing room, without making any answer, and there I hoped to wait unseen, till she had otherwise disposed of herself. But, in a few minutes, the door opened, and Sir Clement Willoughby entered.

Starting at the sight of him, in rising hastily, I let drop the letter which I had brought for Lord Orville's inspection, and, before I could recover it, Sir Clement, springing forward, had it in his hand. He was just presenting it to me, and, at the same time, enquiring after my health, when the signature caught his eye, and he read aloud " Orville."

I endeavoured, eagerly, to snatch it from him, but he would not permit me ; and, holding it fast, in a passionate manner exclaimed, " Good God, Miss Anville; is it possible you can value such a letter as this?"

The question surprised and confounded me, and I was too much ashamed to answer him ; but, finding he made an attempt to secure it, I prevented him, and vehemently demanded him to return it.

" Tell me first," said he, holding it above my reach, " tell me if you have since received any more letters from the same person?"

" No, indeed," cried I, " never !"

" And will you also, sweetest of women, promise that you never *will* receive any more ? Say that, and you will make me the happiest of men."

" Sir Clement," cried I, greatly confused, " pray give me the letter."

" And will you not first satisfy my doubts?—will

you not relieve me from the torture of the most distracting suspense?—tell me but that the detested Orville has written to you no more!”

“Sir Clement,” cried I, angrily, “you have no right to make any conditions,—so pray give me the letter directly.”

“Why such solicitude about this hateful letter? can it possibly deserve your eagerness? tell me, with truth, with sincerity tell me, does it really merit the least anxiety?”

“No matter, Sir,” cried I, in great perplexity, “the letter is mine, and therefore—”

“I must conclude, then,” said he, “that the letter deserves your utmost contempt,—but that the name of Orville is sufficient to make you prize it.”

“Sir Clement,” cried I, colouring, “you are quite—you are very much—the letter is not—”

“O, Miss Anville,” cried he, “you blush!—you stammer!—Great Heaven! it is then all as I feared!”

“I know not,” cried I, half-frightened, “what you mean; but I beseech you to give me the letter, and to compose yourself.”

“The letter,” cried he, gnashing his teeth, “you shall never see more! You ought to have burnt it the moment you had read it!” And in an instant he tore it into a thousand pieces.

Alarmed at a fury so indecently outrageous, I would have run out of the room; but he caught hold of my gown, and cried, “Not yet, not yet must you go! I am but half mad yet, and you must stay to finish your work. Tell me, therefore, does Orville know your fatal partiality?—Say *yes*,” added he, trembling with passion, “and I will *kill* you for ever!”

“For Heaven’s sake, Sir Clement,” cried I, “release me!—if you do not, you will force me to call for help.”

"Call, then," cried he, "inexorable and most unfeeling girl; call, if you please, and bid all the world witness your triumph;—but could ten worlds obey your call, I would not part from you till you had answered me. Tell me, then, does Orville know you love him?"

At any other time, an enquiry so gross would have given me inexpressible confusion; but now, the wildness of his manner terrified me, and I only said, "Whatever you wish to know, Sir Clement, I will tell you another time; but, for the present, I intreat you to let me go!"

"Enough," cried he, "I understand you!—the art of Orville has prevailed;—cold, inanimate, phlegmatic as he is, you have rendered him the most envied of men!—One thing more, and I have done:—Will he marry you?"

What a question! my cheeks glowed with indignation, and I felt too proud to make any answer.

"I see, I see how it is," cried he, after a short pause, "and I find I am undone for ever!" Then, letting loose my gown, he put his hand to his forehead, and walked up and down the room in a hasty and agitated manner.

Though now at liberty to go, I had not the courage to leave him: for his evident distress excited all my compassion. And this was our situation, when Lady Louisa, Mr. Coverley, and Mrs. Beaumont entered the room.

"Sir Clement Willoughby," said the latter, "I beg pardon for making you wait so long, but—"

She had not time for another word; Sir Clement, too much disordered to know or care what he did, snatched up his hat, and, brushing hastily past her, flew down stairs, and out of the house.

And with him went my sincerest pity, though I earnestly hope I shall see him no more. But what, my dear Sir, am I to conclude from his strange

speeches concerning the letter? Does it not seem as if he was himself the author of it? How else should he be so well acquainted with the contempt it merits? Neither do I know another human being who could serve any interest by such a deception. I remember, too, that just as I had given my own letter to the maid, Sir Clement came into the shop: probably he prevailed upon her, by some bribery, to give it to him; and afterwards, by the same means, to deliver to me an answer of his own writing. Indeed I can in no other manner account for this affair. Oh, Sir Clement, were you not yourself unhappy, I know not how I could pardon an artifice that has caused me so much uneasiness!

His abrupt departure occasioned a kind of general consternation.

"Very extraordinary behaviour this!" cried Mrs. Beaumont.

"Egad," said Mr. Coverley, "the Baronet has a mind to tip us a touch of the heroics this morning!"

"I declare," cried Lady Louisa, "I never saw any thing so monstrous in my life! it's quite abominable;—I fancy the man's mad;—I'm sure he has given me a shocking fright!"

Soon after, Mrs. Selwyn came up stairs with Lord Merton. The former, advancing hastily to me, said, "Miss Anville, have you an almanack?"

"Me!—no, Madam."

"Who has one, then?"

"Egad," cried Mr. Coverley, "I never bought one in my life; it would make me quite melancholy to have such a time-keeper in my pocket. I would as soon walk all day before an hour-glass."

"You are in the right," said Mrs. Selwyn, "not to watch time, lest you should be betrayed, unawares, into reflecting how you employ it."

"Egad, Ma'am," cried he, "if Time thought no more of me than I do of Time, I believe I

should bid defiance, for one while, to old age and wrinkles; for deuce take me if ever I think about it at all."

"Pray, Mr. Coverley," said Mrs. Selwyn, "why do you think it necessary to tell me this so often?"

"Often!" repeated he; "Egad, Madam, I don't know why I said it now;—but I'm sure I can't recollect that ever I owned as much before."

"Owned it before!" cried she, "why, my dear Sir, you own it all day long; for every word, every look, every action proclaims it."

I know not if he understood the full severity of her satire, but he only turned off with a laugh; and she then applied to Mr. Lovel, and asked if he had an almanack?

Mr. Lovel, who always looks alarmed when she addresses him, with some hesitation answered, "I assure you, Ma'am, I have no manner of antipathy to an almanack,—none in the least,—I assure you;—I dare say I have four or five."

"Four or five!—pray, may I ask what use you make of so many?"

"Use!—really, Ma'am, as to that,—I don't make any particular use of them; but one must have them, to tell one the day of the month:—I'm sure else I should never keep it in my head."

"And does your time pass so smoothly unmarked, that, without an almanack, you could not distinguish one day from another?"

"Really, Ma'am," cried he, colouring, "I don't see any thing so very particular in having a few almanacks; other people have them, I believe, as well as me."

"Don't be offended," cried she, "I have but made a little digression. All I want to know is, the state of the moon;—for if it is at the *full*, I shall be saved a world of conjectures, and know at once to what cause to attribute the inconsisten-

cies I have witnessed this morning. In the first place, I heard Lord Orville excuse himself from going out, because he had business of importance to transact at home ;—yet have I seen him sauntering alone in the garden this half hour. Miss Anville, on the other hand, I invited to walk out with me ; and, after seeking her every where round the house, I find her quietly seated in the drawing-room. And but a few minutes since, Sir Clement Willoughby, with even more than his usual politeness, told me he was come to spend the morning here ;—when, just now, I met him flying down stairs, as if pursued by the Furies ; and, far from repeating his compliments, or making any excuse, he did not even answer a question I asked him, but rushed past me, with the rapidity of a thief from a bailiff !”

“ I protest,” said Mrs. Beaumont, “ I can’t think what he meant ; such rudeness, from a man of any family, is quite incomprehensible.”

“ My Lord,” cried Lady Louisa to Lord Merton, “ Do you know he did the same by me ?—I was just going to ask him what was the matter ; but he ran past me so quick, that I declare he quite dazzled my eyes. You can’t think, my Lord, how he frightened me ; I dare say I look as pale,—don’t I look very pale, my Lord ?”

“ Your Ladyship,” said Mr. Lovel, “ so well becomes the lilies, that the roses might blush to see themselves so excelled.”

“ Pray, Mr. Lovel,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “ if the roses should blush, how would you find it out ?”

“ Egad,” cried Mr. Coverley, “ I suppose they must blush, as the saying is, like a blue dog,—for they are *red* already.”

“ Prithee, Jack,” said Lord Merton, “ don’t you pretend to talk about blushes, that never knew what they were in your life.”

"My Lord," said Mrs. Selwyn, "if experience alone can justify mentioning them, what an admirable treatise upon the subject may we not expect from your Lordship!"

"O, pray, Ma'am," answered he, "stick to Jack Ceverley,—he's your only man; for my part, I confess I have a mortal aversion to arguments."

"O fie, my Lord," cried Mrs. Selwyn, "a senator of the nation! a member of the noblest parliament in the world!—and yet neglect the art of oratory!"

"Why, faith, my Lord," said Mr. Lovel, "I think, in general, your House is not much addicted to study; we of the Lower House have indubitably most application; and, if I did not speak before a superior power, (bowing to Lord Merton) I should presume to add, we have likewise the most able speakers."

"Mr. Lovel," said Mrs. Selwyn, "you deserve immortality for that discovery! But for this observation, and the confession of Lord Merton, I protest I should have supposed that a peer of the realm, and an able logician, were synonymous terms."

Lord Merton, turning upon his heel, asked Lady Louisa if she should *take the air* before dinner?

"Really," answered she, "I don't know;—I'm afraid it's monstrous hot; besides, (putting her hand to her forehead) I an't half well; it's quite horrid to have such weak nerves!—the least thing in the world discomposes me: I declare, that man's oddness has given me such a shock,—I don't know when I shall recover from it. But I'm a sad weak creature;—don't you think I am, my Lord?"

"O, by no means," answered he, "your Ladyship is merely delicate,—and devil take me if ever I had the least passion for an Amazon."

"I have the honour to be quite of your Lordship's opinion," said Mr. Lovel, looking maliciously at

Mrs. Selwyn ; “ for I have an insuperable aversion to strength, either of body or mind, in a female.”

“ Faith, and so have I,” said Mr. Coverley ; “ for egad, I’d as soon see a woman chop wood, as hear her chop logic.”

“ So would every man in his senses,” said Lord Merton ; “ for a woman wants nothing to recommend her but beauty and good-nature ; in every thing else she is either impertinent or unnatural. For my part, deuce take me if ever I wish to hear a word of sense from a woman as long as I live !”

“ It has always been agreed,” said Mrs. Selwyn, looking round her with the utmost contempt, “ that no man ought to be connected with a woman whose understanding is superior to his own. Now I very much fear, that to accommodate all this good company, according to such a rule, would be utterly impracticable, unless we should choose subjects from Swift’s Hospital of Idiots.”

How many enemies, my dear Sir, does this unbounded severity excite ! Lord Merton, however, only whistled ; Mr. Coverley sang ; and Mr. Lovel, after biting his lips some time, said, “ ’Pon honour, that lady—if she was *not* a lady,—I should be half tempted to observe,—that there is something,—in such severity,—that is rather, I must say,—rather oddish.”

Just then a servant brought Lady Louisa a note upon a *waiter*, which is a ceremony always used to her Ladyship ; and I took the opportunity of this interruption to the conversation to steal out of the room.

I went immediately to the parlour, which I found quite empty ; for I did not dare walk in the garden after what Mrs. Selwyn had said.

In a few minutes a servant announced Mr. Maccartney ; saying, as he entered the room, that he would acquaint Lord Orville he was there.

Mr. Macartney rejoiced much at finding me alone. He told me he had taken the liberty to enquire for Lord Orville, by way of pretext for coming to the house."

I then very eagerly enquired if he had seen his father.

"I have, Madam," said he, "and the generous compassion you have shown made me hasten to acquaint you, that, upon reading my unhappy mother's letter, he did not hesitate to acknowledge me."

"Good God," cried I, with no little emotion, "how similar are our circumstances! And did he receive you kindly?"

"I could not, Madam, expect that he would; the cruel transaction which obliged me to fly Paris, was too recent in his memory."

"And,—have you seen the young lady?"

"No, Madam," said he, mournfully, "I was forbid her sight."

"Forbid her sight!—and why?"

"Partly, perhaps, from prudence,—and partly from the remains of a resentment which will not easily subside. I only requested leave to acquaint her with my relationship, and be allowed to call her sister;—but it was denied me!" "*You have no sister,*" said Sir John, "*you must forget her existence* Hard and vain command!"

"You have—you have a sister!" cried I, from an impulse of pity, which I could not repress; "a sister who is most warmly interested in your welfare, and who only wants opportunity to manifest her friendship and regard."

"Gracious Heaven!" cried he, "what does Miss Anville mean?"

"Anville," said I, "is not my real name; Sir John Belmont is my father,—he is your's,—and I am your sister!—You see, therefore, the claim we mutually have to each other's regard; we are not

merely bound by the ties of friendship, but by those of blood. I feel for you, already, all the affection of a sister; I felt it indeed, before I knew I was one. —Why, my dear brother, do you not speak?—do you hesitate to acknowledge me?"

"I am so lost in astonishment," cried he, "that I know not if I hear right!"—

"I have, then, found a brother," cried I, holding out my hand, "and he will not own me!"

"Own you!—Oh, Madam," cried he, accepting my offered hand, "is it indeed possible *you* can own *me*?—a poor wretched adventurer! who so lately had no support but from your generosity?—whom your benevolence snatched from utter destruction?—Can *you*,—Oh, Madam, can you indeed, and without a blush, condescend to own such an outcast for a brother?"

"Oh, forbear, forbear," cried I, "is this language proper for a sister? are we not reciprocally bound to each other?—Will you not suffer me to expect from *you* all the good offices in your power?—But tell me, where is our father at present?"

"At the Hot Wells, Madam! he arrived there yesterday morning."

I would have proceeded with further questions, but the entrance of Lord Orville prevented me. The moment he saw us, he started, and would have retreated; but, drawing my hand from Mr. Macartney's, I begged him to come in.

For a few moments we were all silent, and, I believe, all in equal confusion. Mr. Macartney, however, recollecting himself, said, "I hope your Lordship will forgive the liberty I have taken in making use of your name."

Lord Orville, rather coldly, bowed, but said nothing.

Again we were all silent, and then Mr. Macartney took leave.

"I fancy," said Lord Orville, when he was gone, "I have shortened Mr. Macartney's visit?"

"No, my Lord, not at all.

"I had presumed," said he, with some hesitation, "I should have seen Miss Anville in the garden ;—but I knew not she was so much better engaged."

Before I could answer, a servant came to tell me the chaise was ready, and that Mrs. Selwyn was enquiring for me.

"I will wait on her immediately," cried I, and away I was running ; but Lord Orville, stopping me, said, with great emotion, "Is it thus, Miss Anville, you leave me?"

"My Lord," cried I, "how can I help it?—perhaps, soon, some better opportunity may offer—"

"Good Heaven!" cried he, "do you, indeed, take me for a Stoic! What better opportunity may I hope for?—is not the chaise come?—are you not going? have you even deigned to tell me whither?"

"My journey, my Lord, will now be deferred. Mr. Macartney has brought me intelligence which renders it at present unnecessary."

"Mr. Macartney," said he, gravely, "seems to have great influence ;—yet he is a very young counsellor."

"Is it possible, my Lord, Mr. Macartney can give you the least uneasiness?"

"My dearest Miss Anville," said he, taking my hand, "I see, and I adore the purity of your mind, superior as it is to all little arts, and all apprehensions of suspicion ; and I should do myself, as well as you, injustice, if I were capable of harbouring the smallest doubts of that goodness which makes you mine for ever : nevertheless, pardon me, if I own myself surprised,—nay, alarmed, at these frequent meetings with so young a man as Mr. Macartney."

"My Lord," cried I, eager to clear myself, "Mr. Macartney is my brother!"

"Your brother! you amaze me!—What strange mystery, then, makes his relationship a secret?"

Just then, Mrs. Selwyn opened the door. "O, you are here!" cried she: "Pray, is my Lord so kind as to assist you in *preparing* for your journey, or in *retarding* it?"

"I should be most happy," said Lord Orville, smiling, "if it were in my power to do the *latter*."

I then acquainted her with Mr. Macartney's communication.

She immediately ordered the chaise away; and then took me into her own room, to consider what should be done.

A few minutes sufficed to determine her; and she wrote the following note.

"To Sir John Belmont, Bart.

"Mrs. SELWYN presents her compliments to Sir John Belmont; and, if he is at leisure, will be glad to wait on him this morning, upon business of importance."

She then ordered her man to enquire at the pump-room for a direction; and went herself to Mrs. Beaumont to apologize for deferring her journey.

An answer was presently returned, that he would be glad to see her.

She would have had me immediately accompany her to the Hot Wells; but I entreated her to spare me the distress of so abrupt an introduction, and to pave the way for my reception. She consented rather reluctantly, and, attended only by her servant, walked to the Wells.

She was not absent two hours; yet so miserably did time seem to linger, that I thought a thousand accidents had happened, and feared she would never return. I passed the whole time in my own room,

for I was too much agitated even to converse with Lord Orville.

The instant that, from my window, I saw her returning, I flew down stairs, and met her in the garden.

We both walked to the arbour.

Her looks, in which disappointment and anger were expressed, presently announced to me the failure of her embassy. Finding that she did not speak, I asked her, in a faltering voice, whether or not I had a father?

* You have *not*, my dear!" said she abruptly.

"Very well, Madam," said I, with tolerable calmness, "let the chaise then be ordered again;—I will go to Berry Hill;—and there, I trust, I shall still find one!"

It was some time ere she could give, or I could hear, the account of her visit; and then she related it in a hasty manner; yet I believe I can recollect every word.

"I found Sir John alone. He received me with the utmost politeness. I did not keep him a moment in suspense as to the purport of my visit. But I had no sooner made it known, than, with a supercilious smile, he said, "And have you, Madam, been prevailed upon to revive that ridiculous old story?" Ridiculous, I told him, was a term which he would find no one else do him the favour to make use of, in speaking of the horrible actions belonging to the *old story* he made so light of; "actions," continued I, "which would dye still deeper the black annals of Nero or Caligula." He attempted in vain to rally; for I pursued him with all the severity in my power, and ceased not painting the enormity of his crime till I stung him to the quick, and, in a voice of passion and impatience, he said, "No more, Madam,—this is not a subject upon which I need a monitor."

"Make then," cried I, "the only reparation in your power.—Your daughter is now at Clifton; send for her hither; and, in the face of the world, proclaim the legitimacy of her birth, and clear the reputation of your injured wife." "Madam," said he, "you are much mistaken, if you suppose I waited for the honour of this visit before I did what little justice now depends upon me to the memory of that unfortunate woman: her daughter has been my care from her infancy; I have taken her into my house; she bears my name; and she will be my sole heir-ess." For some time this assertion appeared so absurd, that I only laughed at it: but, at last, he assured me, I had myself been imposed upon; for that the very woman who attended Lady Belmont in her last illness, conveyed the child to him while he was in London, before she was a year old. "Unwilling," he added, "at that time to confirm the rumour of my being married, I sent the woman with the child to France: as soon as she was old enough, I put her into a convent, where she has been properly educated, and now I have taken her home. I have acknowledged her for my lawful child, and paid, at length, to the memory of her unhappy mother, a tribute of fame, which has made me wish to hide myself hereafter from all the world." This whole story sounded so improbable, that I did not scruple to tell him I discredited every word. He then rung his bell; and, enquiring if his hair-dresser was come, said he was sorry to leave me; but that, if I would favour him with my company to-morrow, he would do himself the honour of introducing Miss Belmont to me, instead of troubling me to introduce her to him. I rose in great indignation; and assuring him I would make his conduct as public as it was infamous—I left the house."

Good Heaven, how strange the recital! how incomprehensible an affair! The Miss Belmont then

who is actually at Bristol, passes for the daughter of my unhappy mother! passes, in short, for your Evelina! Who she can be, or what this tale can mean, I have not any idea.

Mrs. Selwyn soon after left me to my own reflections. Indeed they were not very pleasant. Quietly as I had borne her relation, the moment I was alone I felt most bitterly both the disgrace and the sorrow of a rejection so cruelly inexplicable.

I know not how long I might have continued in this situation, had I not been awakened from my melancholy reverie by the voice of Lord Orville. "May I come in," cried he, "or shall I interrupt you?"

I was silent, and he seated himself next me.

"I fear," he continued, "Miss Anville will think I persecute her: yet so much as have I to say, and so much as I wish to hear, with so few opportunities for either, she cannot wonder—and I hope she will not be offended—that I seize with such avidity every moment in my power to converse with her. You are grave," added he, taking my hand: "I hope you do not regret the delay of your journey?—I hope the pleasure it gives to *me*, will not be a subject of pain to *you*?—You are silent!—Something, I am sure, has afflicted you:—would to Heaven I were able to console you!—Would to Heaven I were worthy to participate in your sorrows!"

My heart was too full to bear this kindness, and I could only answer by my tears. "Good Heaven," cried he, "how you alarm me!—My love, my sweet Miss Anville, deny me no longer to be the sharer of your griefs!—tell me, at least, that you have not withdrawn your esteem!—that you do not repent the goodness you have shown me!—that you still think me the same grateful Orville, whose heart you have deigned to accept!"

"Oh, my Lord," cried I, "your generosity over-

powers me!" And I wept like an infant. For now, that all my hopes of being acknowledged seemed finally crushed, I felt the nobleness of his disinterested regard so forcibly, that I could scarce breathe under the weight of gratitude which oppressed me.

He seemed greatly shocked; and, in terms the most flattering, the most respectfully tender, he at once soothed my distress, and urged me to tell him its cause.

"My Lord," said I, when I was able to speak, "you little know what an outcast you have honoured with your choice!—a child of bounty,—an orphan from infancy,—dependent, even for subsistence dependent, upon the kindness of compassion!—Rejected by my natural friends,—disowned for ever by my nearest relation,—Oh, my Lord, so circumstanced, can I deserve the distinction with which you honour me? No, no, I feel the inequality too painfully;—you must leave me, my Lord; you must suffer me to return to obscurity; and there, in the bosom of my first, best, my only friend,—I will pour forth all the grief of my heart!—while you, my Lord, must seek elsewhere—"

I could not proceed; my whole soul recoiled against the charge I would have given, and my voice refused to utter it.

"Never," cried he, warmly, "my heart is your's, and I swear to you an attachment eternal!—You prepare me, indeed, for a tale of horror, and I am almost breathless with expectation;—but so firm is my conviction, that, whatever are your misfortunes, to have merited them is not of the number, that I feel myself more strongly, more invincibly devoted to you than ever!—Tell me but where I may find this noble friend, whose virtues you have already taught me to reverence,—and I will fly to obtain his consent and intercession, that henceforward our fates may be indissolubly united;—and then shall it be

the sole study of my life to endeavour to soften your past,—and guard you from future misfortunes!”

I had just raised my eyes to answer this most generous of men, when the first object they met was Mrs. Selwyn.

“So, my dear,” cried she, “what, still courting the rural shades! I thought ere now you would have been satiated with this retired seat, and I have been seeking you all over the house. But I find the only way to meet with *you*,—is to enquire for *Lord Orville*. However, don’t let me disturb your meditations; you are possibly planning some pastoral dialogue.”

And, with this provoking speech, she walked on.

In the greatest confusion I was quitting the arbour, when Lord Orville said, “Permit me to follow Mrs. Selwyn;—it is time to put an end to all impertinent conjectures; will you allow me to speak to her openly?”

I assented in silence, and he left me.

I then went to my own room, where I continued till I was summoned to dinner; after which, Mrs. Selwyn invited me to her’s.

The moment she had shut the door, “Your Ladyship,” said she, “will, I hope, be seated.”

“Ma’am!” cried I, staring.

“O the sweet innocent! So you don’t know what I mean?—but, my dear, my sole view is to accustom you a little to your dignity elect, lest, when you are addressed by your title, you should look another way, from an apprehension of listening to a discourse not meant for you to hear.”

Having, in this manner, diverted herself with my confusion, till her raillery was almost exhausted, she congratulated me very seriously upon the partiality of Lord Orville, and painted to me, in the strongest terms, his disinterested desire of being

married to me immediately. She had told him, she said, my whole story, and yet he was willing, nay eager, that our union should take place of any further application to my family. "Now, my dear," continued she, "I advise you by all means to marry him directly; nothing can be more precarious than our success with Sir John; and the young men of this age are not to be trusted with too much time for deliberation, where their interests are concerned."

"Good God, Madam," cried I, "do you think I would hurry Lord Orville?"

"Well, do as you will," said she, "luckily you have an excellent subject for Quixotism;—otherwise this delay might prove your ruin; but Lord Orville is almost as romantic as if he had been born and bred at Berry-Hill."

She then proposed, as no better expedient seemed likely to be suggested, that I should accompany her at once in her visit to the Hot-Wells to-morrow morning.

The very idea made me tremble; yet she represented so strongly the necessity of pursuing this unhappy affair with spirit, or giving it totally up, that, wanting her force of argument, I was almost obliged to yield to her proposal.

In the evening we all walked in the garden: and Lord Orville, who never quitted my side, told me he had been listening to a tale, which, though it had removed the perplexities that had so long tormented him, had penetrated him with sorrow and compassion. I acquainted him with Mrs. Selwyn's plan for to-morrow, and confessed the extreme terror it gave me. He then, in a manner almost unanswerable, besought me to leave to him the conduct of the affair, by consenting to be his before an interview took place.

I could not but acknowledge my sense of his gene-

rosity ; but I told him I was wholly dependent upon you ; and that I was certain your opinion would be the same as mine ; which was, that it would be highly improper I should dispose of myself for ever, so very near the time which must finally decide by whose authority I ought to be guided. The subject of this dreaded meeting, with the thousand conjectures and apprehensions to which it gives birth, employed all our conversation then, as it has all my thoughts since.

Heaven only knows how I shall support myself, when the long expected—the wished—yet terrible moment arrives, that will prostrate me at the feet of the nearest, the most revered of all relations, whom my heart yearns to know, and longs to love !

LETTER XXXII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Oct. 9.]

I COULD not write yesterday, so violent was the agitation of my mind ;—but I will not, now, lose a moment till I have hastened to my best friend an account of the transactions of a day I can never recollect without emotion.

Mrs. Selwyn determined upon sending no message, “ Lest,” said she, “ Sir John, fatigued with the very idea of my reproaches, should endeavour to avoid a meeting. All we have to do is to take him by surprise. He cannot but see who you are, whether he will do you justice or not.”

We went early, and in Mrs. Beaumont's chariot ; into which Lord Orville, uttering words of the kindest encouragement, handed us both.

My uneasiness, during the ride, was excessive ; but, when we stopped at the door, I was almost senseless with terror ! the meeting, at last, was not

so dreadful as that moment ! I believe I was carried into the house ; But I scarce recollect what was done with me : however, I know we remained some time in the parlour before Mrs. Selwyn could send any message up stairs.

When I was somewhat recovered, I entreated her to let me return home, assuring her I felt myself quite unequal to supporting the interview.

“ No,” said she ; “ you must stay now : your fears will but gain strength by delay ; and we must not have such a shock as this repeated.” Then, turning to the servant, she sent up her name.

An answer was brought, that he was going out in great haste, but would attend her immediately. I turned so sick, that Mrs. Selwyn was apprehensive I should have fainted ; and, opening a door which led to an inner apartment, she begged me to wait there till I was somewhat composed, and till she had prepared for my reception.

Glad of every moment’s reprieve, I willingly agreed to the proposal ; and Mrs. Selwyn had but just time to shut me in, before her presence was necessary.

The voice of a *father*—Oh, dear and revered name!—which then, for the first time, struck my ears, affected me in a manner I cannot describe, though it was only employed in giving orders to a servant as he came down stairs.

Then, entering the parlour, I heard him say, “ I am sorry, Madam, I made you wait ; but I have an engagement which now calls me away : however, if you have any commands for me, I shall be glad of the honour of your company some other time.”

“ I am come, Sir,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “ to introduce your daughter to you.”

“ I am infinitely obliged to you,” answered he ; “ but I have just had the satisfaction of breakfasting with her. Ma’am, your most obedient.”

"You refuse, then, to see her?"

"I am much indebted to you, Madam, for this desire of increasing my family; but you must excuse me if I decline taking advantage of it. I have already a daughter, to whom I owe every thing; and it is not three days since that I had the pleasure of discovering a son: how many more sons and daughters may be brought to me, I am yet to learn; but I am already perfectly satisfied with the size of my family."

"Had you a thousand children, Sir John," said Mrs. Selwyn, warmly, "this only one, of which Lady Belmont was the mother, ought to be most distinguished; and, far from avoiding her sight, you should thank your stars, in humble gratitude, that there yet remains in your power the smallest opportunity of doing the injured wife you have destroyed, the poor justice of acknowledging her child!"

"I am very unwilling, Madam," answered he, "to enter into any discussion of this point; but you are determined to compel me to speak. There lives not at this time the human being, who should talk to me of the regret due to the memory of that ill-fated woman: no one can feel it so severely as myself, but let me, nevertheless, assure you, I have already done all that remained in my power to prove the respect she merited from me: her child I have educated, and owned for my lawful heiress: if, Madam, you can suggest to me any other means by which I may more fully do her justice, and more clearly manifest her innocence, name them to me; and, though they should wound my character still deeper, I will perform them readily."

"All this sounds vastly well," returned Mrs. Selwyn; "but I must own it is rather too enigmatical for my faculties of comprehension. You can, however, have no objection to seeing this young lady?"

"None in the world."

"Come forth, then, my dear," cried she, opening the door; "come forth and see your father!" Then, taking my trembling hand, she led me forward. I would have withdrawn it and retreated; but, as he advanced instantly towards me, I found myself already before him.

What a moment for your Evelina—an involuntary scream escaped me, and, covering my face with my hands, I sunk on the floor.

He had, however, seen me first; for, in a voice scarce articulate, he exclaimed, "My God! does Caroline Evelyn still live!"

Mrs. Selwyn said something, but I could not listen to her; and in a few minutes he added, "Lift up thy head—if my sight has not blasted thee!—lift up thy head, thou image of my long lost Caroline!"

Affected beyond measure, I half arose, and embraced his knees, while yet on my own.

"Yes, yes," cried he, looking earnestly in my face, "I see, I see thou art her child! she lives—she breathes,—she is present to my view! Oh, God, that she indeed lived!—Go, child, go," added he, wildly starting, and pushing me from him; "take her away, Madam,—I cannot bear to look at her!" And then, breaking hastily from me, he rushed out of the room.

Speechless, motionless myself, I attempted not to stop him; but Mrs. Selwyn, hastening after him, caught hold of his arm: "Leave me, Madam," cried he, with quickness, "and take care of the poor child:—bid her not think me unkind; tell her, I would at this moment plunge a dagger in my heart to serve her: but she has set my brain on fire; and I can see her no more!" Then, with a violence almost frantic, he ran up stairs.

Oh, Sir, had I not indeed cause to dread this interview?—an interview so unspeakably painful and

afflicting to us both! Mrs. Selwyn would have immediately returned to Clifton; but I entreated her to wait some time, in the hope that my unhappy father, when his first emotion was over, would again bear me in his sight. However, he soon after sent his servant to enquire how I did; and to tell Mrs. Selwyn he was much indisposed, but would hope for the honour of seeing her to-morrow, at any time she would please to appoint.

She fixed upon ten o'clock in the morning; and then, with a heavy heart, I got into the chariot. Those afflicting words, *I can see her no more!* were never a moment absent from my mind.

Yet the sight of Lord Orville, who handed us from the carriage, gave some relief to the sadness of my thoughts. I could not, however, enter upon the painful subject; but, begging Mrs. Selwyn to satisfy him, I went to my own room.

As soon as I communicated to the good Mrs. Clinton the present situation of my affairs, an idea occurred to her, which seemed to clear up all the mystery of my having been so long disowned.

The woman, she says, who attended my ever-to-be-regretted mother in her last illness, and who nursed me the first four months of my life, soon after being discharged from your house, left Berry-Hill entirely, with her baby, who was but six weeks older than myself. Mrs. Clinton remembers, that her quitting the place appeared, at the time, very extraordinary to the neighbours; but, as she was never heard of afterwards, she was by degrees quite forgotten.

The moment this was mentioned, it struck Mrs. Selwyn, as well as Mrs. Clinton herself, that my father had been imposed upon; and that the nurse, who said she had brought his child to him, had, in fact, carried her own.

The name by which I was known, the secrecy

observed in regard to my family, and the retirement in which I lived, all conspired to render this scheme, however daring and fraudulent, by no means impracticable; and, in short, the idea was no sooner started, than conviction seemed to follow it.

Mrs. Selwyn determined immediately to discover the truth or mistake of this conjecture; therefore, the moment she had dined, she walked to the Hot-Wells, attended by Mrs. Clinton.

I waited in my room till her return; and then heard the following account of her visit:

She found my poor father in great agitation. She immediately informed him of the occasion of her so speedy return, and of her suspicions of the woman who had pretended to convey to him his child. Interrupting her with quickness, he said he had just sent her from his presence; that the certainty I carried in my countenance of my real birth, made him, the moment he had recovered from a surprise which had almost deprived him of reason, suspect, himself, the imposition she mentioned. He had therefore sent for the woman, and questioned her with the utmost austerity; she turned pale, and was extremely embarrassed; but still she persisted in affirming, that she had really brought him the daughter of Lady Belmont. His perplexity, he said, almost distracted him: he had *always* observed, that his daughter bore no resemblance to either of her parents; but, as he had never doubted the veracity of the nurse, this circumstance did not give birth to any suspicion.

At Mrs. Selwyn's desire, the woman was again called, and interrogated with equal art and severity; her confusion was evident, and her answers often contradictory; yet she still declared she was no impostor. "We will see that in a minute," said Mrs. Selwyn; and then desired Mrs. Clinton might

be called up stairs. The poor wretch, changing colour, would have escaped out of the room; but, being prevented, dropt on her knees, and implored forgiveness. A confession of the whole affair was then extorted from her.

Doubtless, my dear Sir, you must remember *Dame Green*, who was my first nurse. The deceit she has practised was suggested, she says, by a conversation she overheard; in which my unhappy mother besought you, that, if her child survived her, you would take the sole care of its education; and, in particular, if it should be a female, you would by no means part with her in early life. You not only consented, she says, but assured her you would even retire abroad with me yourself, if my father should importunately demand me. Her own child, she said, was then in her arms; and she could not forbear wishing it were possible to give *her* the fortune which seemed so little valued for me. This wish once raised was not easily suppressed; on the contrary, what at first appeared a mere idle desire, in a short time seemed a feasible scheme. Her husband was dead, and she had little regard for any body but her child; and, in short, having saved money for the journey, she contrived to enquire a direction to my father; and, telling her neighbours she was going to settle in Devonshire, she set out on her expedition.

When Mrs. Selwyn asked her how she dared perpetrate such a fraud, she protested she had no ill designs; but that, as *Miss* would be never the worse for it, she thought it pity *nobody* should be the better.

Her success we are already acquainted with. Indeed, every thing seemed to contribute towards it; my father had no correspondent at Berry Hill; the child was instantly sent to France: where, be-

ing brought up in as much retirement as myself, nothing but accident could discover the fraud.

And here let me indulge myself in observing, and rejoicing to observe, that the total neglect I thought I met with was not the effect of insensibility or unkindness, but of imposition and error; and that, at the very time we concluded I was unnaturally rejected, my deluded father meant to show me most favour and protection.

He acknowledges that Lady Howard's letter flung him into some perplexity: he immediately communicated it to Dame Green, who confessed it was the greatest shock she had ever received in her life; yet she had the heart and boldness to assert, that Lady Howard must herself have been deceived: and as she had, from the beginning of her enterprize, declared she had stolen away the child without your knowledge, he concluded that some deceit was *then* intended him; and this thought occasioned his abrupt answer.

Dame Green owned, that, from the moment the journey to England was settled, she gave herself up for lost. All her hope was to have had her daughter married before it took place; for which reason she had so much promoted Mr. Macartney's addresses: for though such a match was inadequate to the pretensions of *Miss Belmont*, she well knew it was far superior to those *her daughter* could form after the discovery of her birth.

My first enquiry was, if this innocent daughter was yet acquainted with the affair? No, Mrs. Selwyn said; nor was any plan settled how to divulge it to her. Poor unfortunate girl! how hard is her fate! She is entitled to my kindest offices, and I shall always consider her as my sister.

I then asked whether my father would again allow me to see him?

"Why, no, my dear, not yet," answered she;

"he declares the sight of you is too much for him : however, we are to settle every thing concerning you to-morrow ; for this woman took up all our time to-day."

This morning, therefore, she is again gone to the Hot Wells. I am waiting in all impatience for her return ; but, as I know you will be anxious for the account this letter contains, I will not delay sending it.

LETTER XXXIII.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Oct. 9.

How agitated, my dear Sir, is the present life of your Evelina ! every day seems important, and one event only a prelude to another.

Mrs. Selwyn, upon her return this morning from the Hot-Well, entering my room very abruptly, said, "Oh, my dear, I have terrible news for you !"

"For me, Ma'am !—Good God ! what now ?"

"Arm yourself," cried she, "with all your Berry Hill philosophy :—con over every lesson of fortitude or resignation you ever learnt in your life ;—for know,—you are next week to be married to Lord Orville !"

Doubt, astonishment, and a kind of perturbation I cannot describe, made this abrupt communication alarm me extremely ; and, almost breathless, I could only exclaim, "Good God, Madam, what do you tell me !"

"You may well be frightened, my dear," said she, ironically ; "for really there is something mighty terrific in becoming, at once, the wife of the man you adore,—and a Countess !"

I intreated her to spare her raillery, and tell me her real meaning. She could not prevail with herself to grant the *first* request, though she readily complied with the second.

My poor father, she said, was still in the utmost uneasiness: he entered upon his affairs with great openness, and told her, he was equally disturbed how to dispose either of the daughter he had discovered, or the daughter he was now to give up; the former he dreaded to trust himself with again beholding, and the latter he knew not how to shock with the intelligence of her disgrace. Mrs. Selwyn then acquainted him with my situation in regard to Lord Orville: this delighted him extremely; and, when he heard of his Lordship's eagerness, he said, he was himself of opinion, the sooner the union took place the better; and, in return, he informed her of the affair of Mr. Macartney. "And, after a very long conversation," continued Mrs. Selwyn, "we agreed, that the most eligible scheme for all parties would be, to have both the real and the fictitious daughter married without delay. Therefore, if either of you have any inclination to pull caps for the title of Miss Belmont, you must do it with all speed, as next week will take from both of you all pretensions to it."

"Next week!—dear Madam, what a strange plan!—without my being consulted,—without applying to Mr. Villars,—without even the concurrence of Lord Orville!"

"As to consulting *you*, my dear, it was out of all question; because, you know, young ladies' hearts and hands are always to be given with reluctance!—as to Mr. Villars, it is sufficient we know him for your friend:—and as for Lord Orville, he is a party concerned."

"A party concerned!—you amaze me?"

"Why, yes; for, as I found our consultation likely to redound to his advantage, I persuaded Sir John to send for him."

"Send for him!—Good God!"

"Yes; and Sir John agreed. I told the servant, that if he could not hear of his Lordship in the house, he might be pretty certain of encountering him in the arbour.—Why do you colour, my dear?—Well, he was with us in a moment: I introduced him to Sir John; and we proceeded to business."

"I am very, very sorry for it!—Lord Orville must himself think this conduct strangely precipitate."

"No, my dear, you are mistaken; Lord Orville has too much good sense. Every thing was then discussed in a rational manner. You are to be married privately, though not secretly, and then go to one of his Lordship's country seats: and poor little Miss Green and your brother, who have no house of their own, must go to one of Sir John's."

"But why, my dear Madam, why all this haste? why may we not be allowed a little longer time?"

"I could give you a thousand reasons," answered she, "but that I am tolerably certain *two* or *three* will be more than you can controvert, even with all the logic of genuine coquetry. In the first place, you doubtless wish to quit the house of Mrs. Beaumont: to whose, then, can you with such propriety remove as to Lord Orville's?"

"Surely, Madam," cried I, "I am not more destitute now than when I thought myself an orphan?"

"Your father, my dear," answered she, "is willing to save the little impostor as much of the mortification of her disgrace as is in his power; now, if you immediately take her place, according to your right, as Miss Belmont, why, not all that either of you can do for her, will prevent her being eter-

nally stigmatized as the bantling of Dame Green, wash-woman and wet-nurse of Berry Hill, Dorsetshire. Now, such a genealogy will not be very flattering, even to Mr. Macartney, who, all dismal as he is, you will find by no means wanting in pride and self-consequence."

"For the universe," interrupted I, "I would not be accessory to the degradation you mention; but surely, Madam, I may return to Berry Hill?"

"By no means," said she: "for though compassion may make us wish to save the poor girl the confusion of an immediate and public fall, yet justice demands you should appear henceforward in no other light than that of Sir John Belmont's daughter. Besides, between friends, I, who know the world, can see that half this prodigious delicacy for the little usurper, is the mere result of self-interest; for, while *her* affairs are hushed up, Sir John's, you know, are kept from being brought further to light. Now the double marriage we have projected obviates all rational objections. Sir John will give you immediately 30,000*l.*; all settlements, and so forth, will be made for you in the name of Evelina Belmont:—Mr. Macartney will at the same time take poor Polly Green; and yet, at first, it will only be generally known that a daughter of Sir John Belmont's is married."

In this manner, though she did not convince me, yet the quickness of her arguments silenced and perplexed me. I enquired, however, if I might not be permitted to again see my father, or whether I must regard myself as banished his presence forever?

"My dear," said she, "he does not know you; he concludes that you have been brought up to detest him; and therefore he is rather prepared to dread than to love you."

This answer made me very unhappy: I wished,

most impatiently, to remove his prejudice; and endeavour, by dutiful assiduity, to engage his kindness; yet knew not how to propose seeing him, while conscious he wished to avoid me.

This evening, as soon as the company was engaged with cards, Lord Orville exerted his utmost eloquence to reconcile me to this hasty plan; but how was I startled when he told me that next *Tuesday* was the day appointed by my father to be the most important of my life!

"Next Tuesday!" repeated I, quite out of breath, "Oh, my Lord!"

"My sweet Evelina," said he, "the day which will make me the happiest of mortals, would probably appear awful to you were it to be deferred a twelvemonth. Mrs. Selwyn has, doubtless, acquainted you with the many motives which, independent of my eagerness, require it to be speedy; suffer, therefore, its acceleration, and generously complete my felicity, by endeavouring to suffer it without repugnance."

"Indeed, my Lord, I would not wilfully raise objections, nor do I desire to appear insensible of the honour of your good opinion;—but there is something in this plan—so very hasty—so unreasonably precipitate:—besides, I shall have no time to hear from Berry-Hill;—and believe me, my Lord, I should be for ever miserable, were I, in an affair so important, to act without the sanction of Mr. Villars's advice."

He offered to wait on you himself: but I told him I had rather write to you. And then he proposed, that, instead of my immediately accompanying him to Lincolnshire, we should first pass a month at my native *Berry-Hill*.

This was, indeed, a grateful proposal to me, and I listened to it with undisguised pleasure. And, in short, I was obliged to consent to a compromise, in

merely deferring the day till Thursday ! He readily undertook to engage my father's concurrence in this little delay ; and I besought him, at the same time, to make use of his influence to obtain me a second interview, and to represent the deep concern I felt in being thus banished his sight.

He would then have spoken of *settlements* ; but I assured him I was almost ignorant even of the word.

And now, my dearest Sir, what is your opinion of these hasty proceedings ? Believe me, I half regret the simple facility with which I have suffered myself to be hurried into compliance ; and, should you start but the smallest objection, I will yet insist upon being allowed more time.

I must now write a concise account of the state of my affairs to Howard Grove, and to Madame Duval.

Adieu, dearest and most honoured Sir ! every thing at present depends upon your single decision ; to which, though I yield in trembling, I yield implicitly.

LETTER XXXIV.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Oct. 11.]

YESTERDAY morning, as soon as breakfast was over, Lord Orville went to the Hot-Wells, to wait upon my father with my double petition.

Mrs. Beaumont, then, in general terms, proposed a walk in the garden. Mrs. Selwyn said she had letters to write ; but Lady Louisa rose to accompany her.

I had had some reason to imagine, from the notice with which her Ladyship had honoured me during breakfast, that her brother had acquainted her with

my present situation : and her behaviour now confirmed my conjectures : for, when I would have gone up stairs, instead of suffering me, as usual, to pass disregarded, she called after me with an affected surprise, " Miss Anville, don't you walk with us ?"

There seemed something so little-minded in this sudden change of conduct, that, from an involuntary motion of contempt, I thanked her with a coldness like her own, and declined her offer. Yet, observing that she blushed extremely at my refusal, and recollecting she was sister to Lord Orville, my indignation subsided ; and, upon Mrs. Beaumont's repeating the invitation, I accepted it.

Our walk proved extremely dull : Mrs. Beaumont, who never says much, was more silent than usual ; Lady Louisa strove, in vain, to lay aside the restraint and distance she has hitherto preserved ; and as to me, I was too conscious of the circumstances to which I owed their attention, to feel either pride or pleasure from receiving it.

Lord Orville was not long absent : he joined us in the garden with a look of gaiety and good humour that revived us all. " You are just the party," said he, " I wished to see together. Will you, Madam, (taking my hand) allow me the honour of introducing you, by your real name, to two of my nearest relations ? Mrs. Beaumont, give me leave to present to you the daughter of Sir John Belmont ; a young lady, who, I am sure, must long since have engaged your esteem and admiration, though you were a stranger to her birth."

" My Lord," said Mrs. Beaumont, graciously saluting me, " the young lady's rank in life, your Lordship's recommendation, or her own merit, would any one of them have been sufficient to have entitled her to my regard ; and I hope she has always met with that respect in my house which is so much her due ; though, had I been sooner made acquainted

with her family, I should doubtless have better known how to have secured it."

"Miss Belmont," said Lord Orville, "can receive no lustre from family, whatever she may give to it. Louisa, you will, I am sure, be happy to make yourself an interest in the friendship of Miss Belmont, whom I hope shortly (kissing my hand, and joining it with her Ladyship's) to have the happiness of presenting to you by yet another name, and by the most endearing of all titles."

I believe it would be difficult to say whose cheeks were, at that moment, of the deepest dye, Lady Louisa's or my own; for the conscious pride with which she has hitherto slighted me, gave to her an embarrassment which equalled the confusion that an introduction so unexpected gave to me. She saluted me, however; and, with a faint smile, said, "I shall esteem myself very happy to profit by the honour of Miss Belmont's acquaintance."

I only courtesied, and we walked on; but it was evident, from the little surprise they expressed, that they had been already informed of the state of the affair.

We were soon after joined by more company: and Lord Orville then, in a low voice, took an opportunity to tell me the success of his visit. In the first place, Thursday was agreed to; and, in the second, my father, he said, was much concerned to hear of my uneasiness; sent me his blessing; and complied with my request of seeing him, with the same readiness he should agree to any other I could make. Lord Orville, therefore, settled that I should wait upon him in the evening, and, at his particular request, unaccompanied by Mrs. Selwyn.

This kind message, and the prospect of so soon seeing him, gave me sensations of mixed pleasure and pain, which wholly occupied my mind till the time of my going to the Hot-Wells.

Mrs. Beaumont lent me her chariot, and Lord Orville absolutely insisted upon attending me. "If you go alone," said he, "Mrs. Selwyn will certainly be offended; but if you allow me to conduct you, though she may give the freer scope to her raillery, she cannot possibly be affronted: and we had much better suffer her laughter, than provoke her satire."

Indeed, I must own, I had no reason to regret being so accompanied; for his conversation supported my spirits from drooping, and made the ride seem so short, that we actually stopped at my father's door, before I knew we had proceeded ten yards.

He handed me from the carriage, and conducted me to the parlour, at the door of which I was met by Mr. Macartney. "Ah, my dear brother," cried I, "how happy am I to see you here!"

He bowed, and thanked me. Lord Orville, then, holding out his hand, said, "Mr. Macartney, I hope we shall be better acquainted; I promise myself much pleasure from cultivating your friendship."

"Your Lordship does me but too much honour," answered Mr. Macartney.

"But where," cried I, "is my sister? for so I must already call, and always consider her:—I am afraid she avoids me;—you must endeavour, my dear brother, to prepossess her in my favour, and reconcile her to owning me."

"Oh, Madam," cried he, "you are all goodness and benevolence! but at present I hope you will excuse her, for I fear she has hardly fortitude sufficient to see you: in a short time, perhaps—"

"In a *very* short time, then," said Lord Orville, "I hope you will yourself introduce her, and that we shall have the pleasure of wishing you both joy: allow me, my Evelina, to say *we*, and permit me, in your name, as well as my own, to entreat that the first guests we shall have the happiness of receiving may be Mr. and Mrs. Macartney."

A servant then came to beg I would walk up stairs. I besought Lord Orville to accompany me ; but he feared the displeasure of Sir John, who had desired to see me alone. He led me, however, to the foot of the stairs, and made the kindest efforts to give me courage : but indeed he did not succeed ; for the interview appeared to me in all its terrors, and left me no feeling but apprehension.

The moment I reached the landing place, the drawing-room door was opened : and my father, with a voice of kindness, called out, " My child, is it you ? "

" Yes, Sir," cried I, springing forward, and kneeling at his feet, " it is your child, if you will own her ! "

He knelt by my side, and, folding me in his arms, " Own thee," repeated he, " yes, my poor girl, and Heaven knows with what bitter contrition ! " Then, raising both himself and me, he brought me into the drawing-room, shut the door, and took me to the window ; where, looking at me with great earnestness, " Poor unhappy Caroline ! " cried he ; and, to my inexpressible concern, he burst into tears. Need I tell you, my dear Sir, how mine flowed at the sight ?

I would again have embraced his knees ; but, hurrying from me, he flung himself upon a sofa, and, leaning his face on his arms, seemed for some time absorbed in bitterness of grief.

I ventured not to interrupt a sorrow I so much respected ; but waited in silence, and at a distance, till he recovered from its violence. But then it seemed in a moment to give way to a kind of frantic fury ; for starting suddenly, with a sternness which at once surprised and frightened me, " Child," cried he, " hast thou yet sufficiently humbled thy father ? — if thou hast, be contented with this proof of my weakness, and no longer force thyself into my presence ! "

Thunderstruck by a command so unexpected, I stood still and speechless, and doubted whether my own ears did not deceive me.

"Oh go, go!" cried he, passionately; "in pity—in compassion,—if thou valuest my senses, leave me,—and for ever!"

"I will, I will," cried I, greatly terrified; and I moved hastily towards the door: yet stopping when I reached it, and, almost involuntarily, dropping on my knees, "Vouchsafe," cried I, "Oh, Sir, vouchsafe but once to bless your daughter, and her sight shall never more offend you!"

"Alas," cried he, in a softened voice, "I am not worthy to bless thee!—I am not worthy to call thee daughter!—I am not worthy that the fair light of Heaven should visit my eyes!—Oh God! that I could but call back the time ere thou wast born,—or else bury its remembrance in eternal oblivion!"

"Would to Heaven," cried I, "that the sight of me were less terrible to you! that, instead of irritating, I could soothe your sorrows!—Oh, Sir, how thankfully would I then prove my duty, even at the hazard of my life!"

"Are you so kind?" cried he, gently; "come hither, child;—rise, Evelina:—Alas, it is for *me* to kneel,—not you;—and I *would* kneel,—I would crawl upon the earth,—I would kiss the dust,—could I, by such submission, obtain the forgiveness of the representative of the most injured of women!"

"Oh, Sir," exclaimed I, "that you could but read my heart!—that you could but see the filial tenderness and concern with which it overflows!—you would not then talk thus,—you would not then banish me your presence, and exclude me from your affection!"

"Good God," cried he, "is it then possible that you do not hate me?—Can the child of the wronged

Caroline look at,—and not execrate me? Wast thou not born to abhor, and bred to curse me? Did not thy mother bequeath thee her blessing on condition that thou should'st detest and avoid me?"

"Oh no, no, no!" cried I; "think not so unkindly of her, nor so hardly of me." I then took from my pocket-book her last letter; and, pressing it to my lips, with a trembling hand, and still upon my knees, I held it out to him.

Hastily snatching it from me, "Great Heaven!" cried he, "'tisher writing—Whence comes this?—who gave it you?—why had I it not sooner?"

I made no answer; his vehemence intimidated me, and I ventured not to move from the suppliant posture in which I had put myself.

He went from me to the window, where his eyes were, for some time rivetted upon the direction of the letter, though his hand shook so violently he could hardly hold it. Then, bringing it to me, "Open it,"—cried he,—"for I cannot!"

I had myself hardly strength to obey him; but when I had, he took it back, and walked hastily up and down the room, as if dreading to read it. At length, turning to me, "Do you know," cried he, "its contents?"

"No, Sir," answered I, "it has never been unsealed."

He then again went to the window, and began reading. Having hastily run it over, he cast up his eyes with a look of desperation; the letter fell from his hand, and he exclaimed, "Yes! thou art sainted!—thou art blessed!—and I am cursed for ever!" He continued some time fixed in this melancholy position; after which, casting himself with violence upon the ground, "Oh wretch," cried he, "unworthy life and light, in what dungeon canst thou hide thy head?"

I could restrain myself no longer; I rose and

went to him; I did not dare speak; but, with pity and concern unutterable, I wept and hung over him.

Soon after, starting up, he again seized the letter, exclaiming, "Acknowledge thee, Caroline!—yes, with my heart's best blood would I acknowledge thee!—Oh that thou could'st witness the agony of my soul! Ten thousand daggers could not have wounded me like this letter!"

Then, after again reading it, "Evelina," he cried, "she charges me to receive thee;—wilt thou, in obedience to her will, own for thy father the destroyer of thy mother?"

What a dreadful question!—I shuddered, but could not speak.

"To clear her fame, and receive her child," continued he, looking stedfastly at the letter, "are the conditions upon which she leaves me her forgiveness: her fame I have already cleared;—and Oh, how willingly would I take her child to my bosom, fold her to my heart,—call upon her to mitigate my anguish, and pour the balm of comfort on my wounds, were I not conscious I deserve not to receive it, and that all my affliction is the result of my own guilt!"

It was in vain I attempted to speak; horror and grief took from me all power of utterance.

He then read aloud from the letter, "*Look not like thy unfortunate mother!*" "Sweet soul, with what bitterness of spirit hast thou written!—Come hither Evelina: Gracious Heaven! (looking earnestly at me) never was likeness more striking!—the eyes—the face—the form—Oh, my child, my child!" Imagine, Sir,—for I can never describe my feelings, when I saw him sink upon his knees before me! "Oh, dear resemblance of thy murdered mother!—Oh, all that remains of the most injured of women! behold thy father at thy feet!—bending thus lowly to implore you would not hate him.—Oh, then,

thou representative of my departed wife, speak to me in her name, and say that the remorse which tears my soul tortures me not in vain !”

“ Oh, rise, rise, my beloved father,” cried I, attempting to assist him ; “ I cannot bear to see you thus ; reverse not the law of nature ; rise yourself, and bless your kneeling daughter !”

“ May Heaven bless thee, my child !—” cried he, “ for I dare not.” He then rose ; and, embracing me most affectionately, added, “ I see, I see that thou art all kindness, softness, and tenderness ; I need not have feared thee, thou art all the fondest father could wish, and I will try to frame my mind to less painful sensations at thy sight. Perhaps the time may come, when I may know the comfort of such a daughter ;—at present I am only fit to be alone : dreadful as are my reflections, they ought merely to torment myself.—Adieu, my child ;—be not angry,—I cannot stay with thee ;—Oh, Evelina ! thy countenance is a dagger to my heart !—just so thy mother looked,—just so—”

Tears and sighs seemed to choak him ;—and, waving his hand, he would have left me ;—but, clinging to him, “ Oh, Sir,” cried I, “ will you so soon abandon me ?—am I again an orphan !—Oh, my dear, my long-lost father, leave me not, I beseech you ! take pity on your child, and rob her not of the parent she so fondly hoped would cherish her !”

“ You know not what you ask,” cried he ; “ the emotions which now rend my soul are more than my reason can endure : suffer me then to leave you ;—impute it not to unkindness, but think of me as well as thou canst. Lord Orville has behaved nobly ;—I believe he will make thee happy.” Then, again embracing me, “ God bless thee, my dear child,” cried he, “ God bless thee, my Evelina !—endeavour to love,—at least not to hate me,—and to make me

an interest in thy filial bosom, by thinking of me as thy father."

I could not speak; I kissed his hands on my knees; and then, with yet more emotion, he again blessed me, and hurried out of the room,—leaving me almost drowned in tears.

Oh, Sir, all goodness as you are, how much will you feel for your Evelina, during a scene of such agitation! I pray Heaven to accept the tribute of his remorse, and restore him to tranquillity!

When I was sufficiently composed to return to the parlour, I found Lord Orville waiting for me with the utmost anxiety:—and then a new scene of emotion, though of a far different nature, awaited me; for I learned by Mr. Macartney, that this noblest of men had insisted the so-long supposed Miss Belmont should be considered, *indeed*, as my sister, and as the co-heiress of my father; though not in *law*, in *justice*, he says, she ought ever to be treated as the daughter of Sir John Belmont.

Oh, Lord Orville!—it shall be the sole study of my happy life, to express, better than by words, the sense I have of your exalted benevolence and greatness of mind!

LETTER XXXV.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Clifton, Oct. 12.]

THIS morning early I received the following letter from Sir Clement Willoughby:

To Miss Anville.

I HAVE this moment received intelligence that preparations are actually making for your marriage with Lord Orville.

Imagine not that I write with the imbecile idea of rendering those preparations abortive. No, I am not so mad. My sole view is to explain the motive of my conduct in a particular instance, and to obviate the accusation of treachery which may be laid to my charge.

My unguarded behaviour, when I last saw you, has, probably, already acquainted you, that the letter I then saw you reading was written by myself. For your further satisfaction, let me have the honour of informing you, that the letter you had designed for Lord Orville, had fallen into my hands.

However I may have been urged on by a passion the most violent that ever warmed the heart of man, I can by no means calmly submit to be stigmatised for an action seemingly so dishonourable; and it is for this reason that I trouble you with this justification.

Lord Orville,—the happy Orville, whom you are so ready to bless,—had made me believe he loved you not;—nay, that he held you in contempt.

Such were my thoughts of his sentiments of you, when I got possession of the letter you meant to send him. I pretend not to vindicate either the means I used to obtain it, or the action of breaking the seal; but I was impelled, by an impetuous curiosity, to discover the terms upon which you wrote to him.

The letter, however, was wholly unintelligible to me, and the perusal of it only added to my perplexity.

A tame suspense I was not born to endure, and I determined to clear my doubts at all hazards and events.

I answered it, therefore, in Orville's name.

The views which I am now going to acknowledge, must, infallibly, incur your displeasure;—yet I scorn all palliation.

Briefly, then, I concealed your letter to prevent a discovery of your capacity ; and I wrote you an answer, which I hoped would prevent your wishing for any other.

I am well aware of every thing which can be said upon this subject. Lord Orville will, possibly, think himself ill-used ; but I am extremely indifferent as to his opinion ; nor do I now write by way of offering any apology to him, but merely to make known to yourself the reasons by which I have been governed.

I intend to set off next week for the Continent. Should his Lordship have any commands for me in the mean time, I shall be glad to receive them. I say not this by way of defiance,—I should blush to be suspected of so doing through an indirect channel ; but simply that, if you show him this letter, he may know I dare defend, as well as excuse, my conduct.

CLEMENT WILLOUGHBY.

What a strange letter ! how proud and how piqued does its writer appear ! To what alternate *meanness* and *rashness* do the passions lead, when reason and self-denial do not oppose them ! Sir Clement is conscious he has acted dishonourably ; yet the same unbridled vehemence, which urged him to gratify a blameable curiosity, will sooner prompt him to risk his life, than confess his misconduct. The rudeness of his manner of writing to me, springs from the same cause : the proof which he has received of my indifference to him, has stung him to the soul, and he has neither the delicacy nor forbearance to disguise his displeasure.

I determined not to show this letter to Lord Orville, and thought it most prudent to let Sir Clement know I should not. I therefore wrote the following note :

To Sir Clement Willoughby.

SIR,

The letter you have been pleased to address to me, is so little calculated to afford Lord Orville any satisfaction, that you may depend upon my carefully keeping it from his sight. I will bear you no resentment for what is past; but I most earnestly intreat, nay implore, that you will not write again, while in your present frame of mind, by *any* channel, direct or indirect.

I hope you will have much pleasure in your promised expedition; and I beg leave to assure you of my good wishes.

Not knowing by what name to sign, I was obliged to send it without any.

The *preparations* which Sir Clement mentions, go on just as if your consent were arrived: it is in vain that I expostulate; Lord Orville says, should any objections be raised, all shall be given up; but that, as his hopes forbid him to expect any, he must proceed as if already assured of your concurrence.

We have had, this afternoon, a most interesting conversation, in which we have traced our sentiments of each other from our first acquaintance. I have made him confess how ill he thought of me upon my foolish giddiness at Mrs. Stanley's ball; but he flatters me with assurances, that every succeeding time he saw me, I appeared to something less and less disadvantage.

When I expressed my amazement that he could honour with his choice a girl who seemed so infinitely, in *every* respect, beneath his alliance, he frankly owned, that he had fully intended making more minute inquiries into my family and connections; and particularly concerning *those people* he saw me with at Marybone, before he acknowledged his prepossession in my favour: but the suddenness

of my intended journey, and the uncertainty of seeing me again, put him quite off his guard; and, "divesting him of prudence, left him nothing but love." These were his words; and yet, he has repeatedly assured me, that his partiality has known no bounds from the time of my residing at Clifton.

* * * * *

Mr. Macartney has just been with me, on an embassy from my father. He has sent me his kindest love and assurances of favour; and desired to know if I am happy in the prospect of changing my situation, and if there is any thing I can name which he can do for me. And, at the same time, Mr. Macartney delivered to me a draught on my father's banker for a thousand pounds, which he insisted that I should receive entirely for my own use, and expend in equipping myself properly for the new rank of life to which I seem destined.

I am sure I need not say how much I was penetrated by this goodness; I wrote my thanks, and acknowledged, frankly, that if I could see *him* restored to tranquillity, my heart would be without a wish.

LETTER XXXVI.

EVELINA IN CONTINUATION.

[Clifton, Oct. 13.]

THE time approaches now when I hope we shall meet;—yet I cannot sleep;—great joy is as restless as sorrow,—and therefore I will continue my journal.

As I had never had an opportunity of seeing Bath, a party was formed last night for showing me that celebrated city; and this morning, after breakfast, we set out in three phaetons. Lady Louisa and

Mrs. Beaumont with Lord Merton ; Mr. Coverley with Mr. Lovel ; and Mrs. Selwyn, and myself, with Lord Orville.

We had hardly proceeded half a mile, when a gentleman from a post-chaise, which came galloping after us, called out to the servants, "Holla, my lads!—pray, is one Miss Anville in any of them *thing-em-bobs*?"

I immediately recollected the voice of Captain Mirvan ; and Lord Orville stopped the phaeton. He was out of the chaise, and with us in a moment. "So, Miss Anville," cried he, "how do you do? so I hear you're Miss Belmont now;—pray, how does old Madame French do?"

"Madame Duval," said I, "is, I believe, very well."

"I hope she is in *good case*," said he, winking significantly, "and won't flinch at seeing service: she has laid by long enough to refit and be made tight. And pray how does poor Monseer Doleful do? is he as lank-jawed as ever?"

"They are neither of them," said I, "in Bristol."

"No!" cried he, with a look of disappointment; "but surely the old dowager intends coming to the wedding! 'twill be a most excellent opportunity to show off her best Lyons silk. Besides, I purpose to dance a new-fashioned jig with her. Don't you know when she'll come?"

"I have no reason to expect her at all."

"No!—'Fore George, this here's the worst news I'd wish to hear!—why I've thought of nothing all the way, but what trick I should serve her."

"You have been very obliging!" said I, laughing.

"O, I promise you," cried he, "our Moll would never have wheedled me into this jaunt, if I'd known she was not here; for, to let you into the secret, I fully intended to have treated the old buck with another frolic."

"Did Miss Mirvan, then, persuade you to this journey?"

"Yes, and we've been travelling all night."

"*We!*" cried I: "Is Miss Mirvan, then, with you?"

"What, Molly?—yes, she's in that there chaise."

"Good God, Sir, why did you not tell me sooner?" cried I; and immediately, with Lord Orville's assistance, I jumped out of the phaeton, and ran to the dear girl. Lord Orville opened the chaise door; and I am sure I need not tell you what unfeigned joy accompanied our meeting.

We both begged we might not be parted during the ride; and Lord Orville was so good as to invite Captain Mirvan into his phaeton.

I think I was hardly ever more rejoiced than at this so seasonable visit from my dear Maria; who had no sooner heard the situation of my affairs, than with the assistance of Lady Howard, and her kind mother, she besought her father with such earnestness to consent to the journey, that he had not been able to withstand their united intreaties; though she owned, that, had he not expected to have met with Madame Duval, she believes he would not so readily have yielded. They arrived at Mrs. Beaumont's but a few minutes after we were out of sight, and overtook us without much difficulty.

I say nothing of our conversation, because you may so well suppose both the subjects we chose, and our manner of discussing them.

We all stopped at a great hotel, where we were obliged to enquire for a room, as Lady Louisa, *fatigued to death*, desired to *take something* before we began our rambles.

As soon as the party was assembled, the Captain, abruptly saluting me, said, "So, Miss Belmont, I

wish you joy ; so, I hear you've quarrelled with your new name already ?”

“ Me !—no, indeed, Sir.”

“ Then please for to tell me the reason you're in such a hurry to change it ?”

“ Miss Belmont !” cried Mr. Lovel, looking around him with the utmost astonishment : “ I beg pardon ;—but, if it is not impertinent,—I must beg leave to say I always understood that Lady's name was Anville.”

“ 'Fore George,” cried the Captain, “ it runs in my head, I've seen you somewhere before ! and now I think on't, pray a'n't you the person I saw at the play one night, and who didn't know, all the time, whether it was a tragedy or a comedy, or a concert of fiddlers ?”

“ I believe, Sir,” said Mr. Lovel, stammering, “ I had once,—I think—the pleasure of seeing you last spring.”

“ Aye, and if I live an hundred springs,” answered he, “ I shall never forget it ; by jingo, it has served me for a most excellent good joke ever since. Well, howsomever, I'm glad to see you still in the land of the living,” shaking him roughly by the hand, “ Pray, if a body may be so bold, how much a night may you give at present to keep the undertakers aloof ?”

“ Me, Sir !” said Mr. Lovel, very much discomposed ; “ I protest I never thought myself in such imminent danger as to—really, Sir, I don't understand you.”

“ O, you don't ! why then I'll make free for to explain myself. Gentlemen and Ladies, I'll tell you what ; do you know this here gentleman, simple as he sits there, pays five shillings a-night to let his friends know he's alive !”

“ And very cheap, too,” said Mrs. Selwyn, “ if we consider the value of the intelligence.”

Lady Louisa being now refreshed, we proceeded upon our expedition.

The charming city of Bath answered all my expectations. The Crescent, the prospect from it, and the elegant symmetry of the Circus, delighted me. The Parades, I own, rather disappointed me; one of them is scarce preferable to some of the best paved streets in London; and the other, though it affords a beautiful prospect, a charming view of Prior Park and of the Avon, yet wanted something in *itself* of more striking elegance than a mere broad pavement, to satisfy the ideas I had formed of it.

At the pump-room, I was amazed at the public exhibition of the ladies in the bath: it is true, their heads are covered with bonnets; but the very idea of being seen, in such a situation, by whoever pleases to look, is indelicate.

"Fore George," said the Captain, looking into the bath, "this would be a most excellent place for old Madame French to dance a fandango in! By Jingo, I wouldn't wish for better sport than to swing her round this here pond!"

"She would be very much obliged to you," said Lord Orville, "for so extraordinary a mark of your favour."

"Why, to let you know," answered the Captain, "she hit my fancy mightily; I never took so much to an old tabby before."

"Really now," cried Mr. Lovel, looking also into the bath, "I must confess it is, to me, very incomprehensible why the ladies choose that frightful unbecoming dress to bathe in! I have often pondered very seriously upon the subject, but could never hit upon the reason."

"Well, I declare," said Lady Louisa, "I should like of all things to set something new a-going; I always hated bathing, because one can get no pretty

dress for it? now do, there's a good creature, try to help me to something."

"Who, me!—O, dear Ma'am," said he, simpering, "I can't pretend to assist a person of your Ladyship's taste; besides, I have not the least head for fashions.—I really don't think I ever invented above three in my life! but I never had the least turn for dress,—never any notion of fancy or elegance."

"O fie, Mr. Lovel! how can you talk so?—don't we all know that you lead the *ton* in the *beau monde*? I declare, I think you dress better than any body."

"O dear Ma'am, you confuse me to the last degree! I dress well!—I protest I don't think I'm ever fit to be seen!—I'm often shocked to death to think what a figure I go. If your Ladyship will believe me, I was full half an hour this morning thinking what I should put on!"

"Odds my life," cried the Captain, "I wish I'd been near you! I warrant I'd have quickened your motions a little; Half an hour thinking what you'd put on; and who the deuce do you think cares the snuff of a candle whether you've any thing on or not?"

"O pray, Captain," cried Mrs. Selwyn, "don't be angry with the gentleman for *thinking*, whatever be the cause, for I assure you he makes no common practice of offending in that way."

"Really, Ma'am, you're prodigiously kind," said Mr. Lovel, angrily.

"Pray now," said the Captain, "did you ever get a ducking in that there place yourself?"

"A ducking, Sir!" repeated Mr. Lovel: "I protest I think that's rather an odd term!—but if you mean a *bathing*, it is an honour I have had many times."

"And pray, if a body may be so bold, what do

you do with that frizle-frize top of your own? Why I'll lay you what you will, there is fat and grease enough on your crown to buoy you up, if you were to go in head downwards."

"And I don't know," cried Mrs. Selwyn, "but that might be the easiest way: for I'm sure it would be the lightest."

"For the matter of that there," said the Captain, "you must make him a soldier, before you can tell which is lightest, head or heels. Howsomever, I'd lay ten pounds to a shilling, I could whisk him so dextrously over into the pool, that he should light plump upon his foretop and turn round like a totum."

"Done!" cried Lord Merton; "I take your odds."

"Will you?" returned he; "why, then, 'fore George, I'd do it as soon as say Jack Robinson."

"He, he!" faintly laughed Mr. Lovel, as he moved abruptly from the window; "'pon honour, this is pleasant enough; but I don't see what right any body has to lay wagers about one without one's consent."

"There, Lovel, you are out," cried Mr. Coverley, "any man may lay what wager about you he will; your consent is nothing to the purpose: he may lay that your nose is a sky-blue, if he pleases."

"Ay," said Mrs. Selwyn, "or that your mind is more adorned than your person;—or any absurdity whatsoever."

"I protest," said Mr. Lovel, "I think it's a very disagreeable privilege, and I must beg that nobody may take such a liberty with me."

"Like enough you may," cried the Captain; "but what's that to the purpose? Suppose I've a mind to lay that you've never a tooth in your head—pray, how will you hinder me?"

"You'll allow me, at least, Sir, to take the liberty of asking how you'll *prove* it?"

"How?—why, by knocking them all down your throat."

"Knocking them all down my throat, Sir!" repeated Mr. Lovel, with a look of horror; "I protest I never heard any thing so shocking in my life! And I must beg leave to observe, that no wager, in my opinion, could justify such a barbarous action."

Here Lord Orville interfered, and hurried us to our carriages.

We returned in the same order we came. Mrs. Beaumont invited all the party to dinner, and has been so obliging as to beg Miss Mirvan may continue at her house during her stay. The Captain will lodge at the Wells.

The first half-hour after our return was devoted to hearing Mr. Lovel's apologies for dining in his riding-dress.

Mrs. Beaumont then, addressing herself to Miss Mirvan and me, inquired how we liked Bath?

"I hope," said Mr. Lovel, "the ladies do not call this *seeing* Bath."

"No!—what should ail 'em?" cried the Captain, "do you suppose they put their eyes in their pockets?"

"No, Sir; but I fancy you will find no person—that is—no person of any condition—call going about a few places in a morning *seeing* Bath."

"Mayhap, then," said the literal Captain, "you think we should see it better by going about at midnight?"

"No, Sir, no," said Mr. Lovel, with a supercilious smile, "I perceive you don't understand me;—we should never call it *seeing* Bath, without going at the right season."

"Why, what a plague, then," demanded he, "can you only see at one season of the year?"

Mr. Lovel again smiled; but seemed superior to making any answer.

"The Bath amusements," said Lord Orville, "have a sameness in them, which, after a short time, renders them rather insipid; but the greatest objection that can be made to the place, is the encouragement it gives to gamesters."

"Why, I hope, my Lord, you would not think of abolishing *gaming*," cried Lord Merton, "'tis the very zest of life! Devil take me if I could live without it."

"I am sorry for it," said Lord Orville, gravely, and looking at Lady Louisa.

"Your Lordship is no judge of this subject," continued the other; "but if once we could get you to a gaming-table, you'd never be happy away from it!"

"I hope, my Lord," cried Lady Louisa, "that nobody *here* ever occasions your quitting it."

"Your Ladyship," said Lord Merton, recollecting himself, "has power to make me quit any thing."

"Except *herself*," said Mr. Coverley, "Egad, my Lord, I think I've helpt you out there."

"You men of wit, Jack," answered his Lordship, "are always ready;—for my part, I don't pretend to any talents that way."

"Really, my Lord?" asked the sarcastic Mrs. Selwyn; "well, that is wonderful, considering success would be so much in your power."

"Pray, Ma'am," said Mr. Lovel to Lady Louisa, "has your Ladyship heard the news?"

"News!—what news?"

"Why, the report circulating at the Wells concerning a certain person."

"O Lord, no: pray tell me what it is?"

"O no, Ma'am, I beg your La'ship will excuse

me; 'tis a profound secret, and I would not have mentioned it, if I had not thought you knew it."

"Lord, now, how can you be so monstrous? I declare, now, you're a provoking creature! But come, I know you'll tell me;—won't you, now?"

"Your La'ship knows I am but too happy to obey you; but, 'pon honour, I can't speak a word, if you won't all promise me the most inviolable secrecy."

"I wish you'd wait for that from me," said the Captain, "and I'll give you my word you'd be dumb for one while. Secrecy, quoth-a!—Fore George, I wonder you an't ashamed to mention such a word, when you talk of telling it to a woman. Though, for the matter of that, I'd as lieve blab it to the whole sex at once, as to go for to tell it to such a thing as you."

"Such a thing as me, Sir!" said Mr. Lovel, letting fall his knife and fork, and looking very important; "I really have not the honour to understand your expression."

"It's all one for that," said the Captain; "you may have it explained whenever you like it."

"'Pon honour, Sir," returned Mr. Lovel, "I must take the liberty to tell you, that I should be extremely offended, but that I suppose it to be some sea-phrase; and therefore I'll let it pass without further notice."

Lord Orville, then, to change the discourse, asked Miss Mirvan if she should spend the ensuing winter in London?

"No, to be sure," said the Captain, "what should she for? she saw all that was to be seen before."

"Is London, then," said Mr. Lovel, smiling at Lady Louisa, "only to be regarded as a *sight*?"

"Why, pray, Mr. Wiseacre, how are you pleased for to regard it yourself?—Answer me to that."

"O Sir, *my* opinion, I fancy, you would hardly

and intelligible. I don't understand *sea-phrases* enough to define it to your comprehension. Does not your La'ship think the task would be rather difficult?"

"O Lard, yes," cried Lady Louisa; "I declare I'd as soon teach my parrot to talk Welsh."

"Ha! ha! ha! admirable!—'Pon honour, your La'ship's quite in luck to-day; but that, indeed, your La'ship is every day. Though, to be sure, it is but candid to acknowledge, that the gentlemen of the ocean have a set of ideas, as well as a dialect, so opposite to *our's*, that it is by no means surprising *they* should regard London as a mere *show*, that may be seen by being *looked at*. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha!" echoed Lady Louisa: "Well, I declare you are the drollest creature!"

"He! he! 'Pon honour, I can't help laughing at the conceit of *seeing London* in a few weeks!"

"And what a plague should hinder you?" cried the Captain; "do you want to spend a day in every street?"

Here again Lady Louisa and Mr. Lovel interchanged smiles.

"Why, I warrant you, if I had the showing it, I'd haul you from St. James's to Wapping the very first morning."

The smiles were now, with added contempt, repeated; which the Captain observing, looked very fiercely at Mr. Lovel, and said, "Hark'ee, my spark, none of your grinning!—'tis a lingo I don't understand; and, if you give me any more of it, I shall go near to lend you a box o' the ear."

"I protest, Sir," said Mr. Lovel, turning extremely pale, "I think it's taking a very particular liberty with a person, to talk to one in such a style as this!"

"It's like you may," returned the Captain: "but give a good gulp, and I'll warrant you'll swallow it." Then, calling for a glass of ale, with a very provoking and significant nod, he drank to his easy digestion.

Mr. Lovel made no answer, but looked extremely sullen; and, soon after, we left the gentlemen to themselves.

I had then two letters delivered to me; one from Lady Howard and Mrs. Mirvan, which contained the kindest congratulations; and the other from Madame Duval;—but not a word from you,—to my no small surprise and concern.

Madame Duval seems greatly rejoiced at my late intelligence: a violent cold, she says, prevents her coming to Bristol. The Branghtons, she tells me, are all well; Miss Polly is soon to be married to Mr. Brown; but Mr. Smith has changed his lodgings, “which,” she adds, “has made the house extremely dull. However, that’s not the worst news; *pardi*, I wish it was! but I’ve been used like nobody,—for Monsieur Du Bois has had the baseness to go back to France without me.” In conclusion, she assures me, as you prognosticated she would, that I shall be sole heiress of all she is worth, when Lady Orville.

At tea-time, we were joined by all the gentlemen but Captain Mirvan, who went to the hotel where he was to sleep, and made his daughter accompany him, to separate her *trumpery*, as he called it, from his clothes.

As soon as they were gone, Mr. Lovel, who still appeared extremely sulky, said, “I protest, I never saw such a vulgar, abusive fellow in my life, as that Captain; ’pon honour, I believe he came here for no purpose in the world but to pick a quarrel; however, for my part, I vow I won’t humour him.”

“I declare,” cried Lady Louisa, “he put me in a monstrous fright;—I never heard any body talk so shocking in my life!”

“I think,” said Mrs. Selwyn, with great solemnity, “he threatened to box your ears, Mr. Lovel;—did not he?”

"Really, Ma'am," said Mr. Lovel, colouring, "if one was to mind every thing those low kind of people say, one should never be at rest for one impertinence or other; so I think the best way is to be above taking any notice of them."

"What," said Mrs. Selwyn, with the same gravity, "and so receive the blow in silence!"

During this discourse, I heard the Captain's chaise stop at the door, and ran down stairs to meet Maria. She was alone, and told me that her father, who, she was sure, had some scheme in agitation against Mr. Lovel, had sent her on before him. We continued in the parlour till his return, and were joined by Lord Orville, who begged me not to insist on a patience so unnatural, as submitting to be excluded our society. And let me, my dear Sir, with a grateful heart let me own, I never before passed half an hour in such perfect felicity.

I believe we were all sorry when the Captain returned; yet his inward satisfaction, from however different a cause, did not seem inferior to what our's had been. He chuckled Maria under the chin, rubbed his hands, and was scarce able to contain the fulness of his glee. We all attended him to the drawing room; where, having composed his countenance, without any previous attention to Mrs. Beaumont, he marched up to Mr. Lovel, and abruptly said, "Pray, have you e'er a brother in these here parts?"

"Me, Sir?"—no, thank Heaven, I'm free from all encumbrances of that sort."

"Well," cried the Captain, "I met a person just now so like you, I could have sworn he had been your twin-brother."

"It would have been a most singular pleasure to me," said Mr. Lovel, "if I also could have seen him; for, really, I have not the least notion what sort of a

person I am, and I have a prodigious curiosity to know."

Just then the Captain's servant, opening the door, said, "A little gentleman below desires to see one Mr. Lovel."

"Beg him to walk up stairs," said Mrs. Beaumont. "But, pray what is the reason William is out of the way?"

The man shut the door without any answer.

"I can't imagine who it is," said Mr. Lovel: "I recollect no little gentleman of my acquaintance now at Bristol,—except indeed the Marquis of Charlton;—but I don't much fancy it can be him. Let me see, who else is there so very little?"

A confused noise among the servants now drew all eyes towards the door: the impatient Captain hastened to open it; and then, clapping his hands, called out, "'Fore George, 'tis the same person I took for your relation!"

And then, to the utter astonishment of every body but himself, he hauled into the room a monkey, full-dressed, and extravagantly *à la mode*!

The dismay of the company was almost general. Poor Mr. Lovel seemed thunderstruck with indignation and surprise: Lady Louisa began a scream, which for some time was incessant; Miss Mirvan and I jumped involuntarily upon the seats of our chairs; Mrs. Beaumont herself followed our example; Lord Orville placed himself before me as a guard; and Mrs. Selwyn, Lord Merton, and Mr. Coverley, burst into a loud, immoderate, ungovernable fit of laughter, in which they were joined by the Captain, till, unable to support himself, he rolled on the floor.

The first voice which made its way through this general noise was that of Lady Louisa, which her fright and screaming rendered extremely shrill.

"Take it away!" cried she, "take the monster away;—I shall faint, I shall faint if you don't?"

Mr. Lovel, irritated beyond endurance, angrily demanded of the Captain what he meant?

"Mean?" cried the Captain, as soon as he was able to speak; "why only to show you in your proper colours." Then rising, and pointing to the monkey, "Why now, ladies and gentlemen, I'll be judged by you all!—Did you ever see any thing more like?—Odds my life, if it wasn't for this here tail, you wouldn't know one from t'other."

"Sir," cried Mr. Lovel, stamping, "I shall take a time to make you feel my wrath."

"Come now," continued the regardless Captain, "just for the fun's sake, doff your coat and waist-coat, and swop with Monsieur *Grinagain* here; and I'll warrant you'll not know yourself which is which."

"Not know myself from a monkey!—I assure you, Sir, I'm not to be used in this manner, and I won't bear it—curse me if I will!"

"Why, hey-day!" cried the Captain, "what, is master in a passion?—well, don't be angry:—come, he shan't hurt you;—here, shake a paw with him;—why, he'll do you no harm, man!—come, kiss and be friends!"

"Who, I?" cried Mr. Lovel, almost mad with vexation; "as I'm a living creature, I would not touch him for a thousand worlds!"

"Send him a challenge," cried Mr. Coverley, "and I'll be your second."

"Ay, do," said the Captain; and I'll be second to my friend, Monsieur Clapperclaw here. Come, to it at once!—tooth and nail!"

"God forbid!" cried Mr. Lovel, retreating, "I would sooner trust my person with a mad bull!"

"I don't like the looks of him myself," said Lord Merton, "for he grins most horribly."

"Oh, I'm frightened out of my senses!" cried Lady Louisa, "take him away, or I shall die!"

"Captain," said Lord Orville, "the ladies are alarmed; and I must beg you would send the monkey away."

"Why, where can be the mighty harm of one monkey more than another?" answered the Captain: "howsoever, if its agreeable to the ladies, suppose we turn them out together?"

"What do you mean by that, Sir?" cried Mr. Lovel, lifting up his cane.

"What do *you* mean?" cried the Captain, fiercely, "be so good as to down with your cane."

Poor Mr. Lovel, too much intimidated to stand his ground, yet too much enraged to submit, turned hastily round, and, forgetful of consequences, vented his passion by giving a furious blow to the monkey.

The creature darting forwards, sprung instantly upon him; and, clinging round his neck, fastened his teeth to one of his ears.

I was really sorry for the poor man; who, though an egregious fop, had committed no offence that merited such chastisement.

It was impossible now to distinguish whose screams were loudest, those of Mr. Lovel, or of the terrified Lady Louisa, who, I believe, thought her own turn was approaching: but the unrelenting Captain roared with joy.

Not so Lord Orville: ever humane, generous, and benevolent, he quitted his charge, who he saw was wholly out of danger, and seizing the monkey by the collar, made him loosen the ear; and then, with a sudden swing, flung him out of the room, and shut the door.

Poor Mr. Lovel, almost fainting with terror, sunk upon the floor, crying out, "Oh, I shall die, I shall die!—Oh, I'm bit to death!"

"Captain Mirvan," said Mrs. Beaumont, with no little indignation, "I must own I don't perceive the wit of this action; and I am sorry to have such cruelty practised in my house."

"Why Lord, Ma'am," said the Captain, when his rapture abated sufficiently for speech, "how could I tell they'd fall out so?—By jingo, I brought him to be a messmate for t'other."

"Egad," said Mr. Coverley, "I would not have been served so for a thousand pounds."

"Why, then, there's the odds of it," said the Captain; "for you see he is served so for nothing. But come," turning to Mr. Lovel, "be of good heart, all may end well yet, and you and *Monseer* Longtail be as good friends as ever."

"I'm surprised, Mrs. Beaumont," cried Mr. Lovel, starting up, "that you can suffer a person under your roof to be treated so inhumanly."

"What argufies so many words?" said the unfeeling Captain; "it is but a slit of the ear; it only looks as if you had been in the pillory."

"Very true," added Mrs. Selwyn; "and who knows but it may acquire you the credit of being an anti-ministerial writer?"

"I protest," cried Mr. Lovel, looking ruefully at his dress, "my new riding-suit's all over blood!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried the Captain, "see what comes of studying for an hour what you shall put on!"

Mr. Lovel then walked to the glass; and, looking at the place, exclaimed, "Oh Heaven, what a monstrous wound! my ear will never be fit to be seen again!"

"Why then," said the Captain, "you must hide it;—'tis but wearing a wig."

"A wig!" repeated the affrighted Mr. Lovel; "I wear a wig?—no, not if you would give me a thousand pounds an hour!"

"I declare," said Lady Louisa, "I never heard such a shocking proposal in my life!"

Lord Orville then, seeing no prospect that the altercation would cease, proposed to the Captain to walk. He assented; and having given Mr. Lovel a nod of exultation, accompanied his Lordship down stairs.

"'Pon honour," said Mr. Lovel, the moment the door was shut, "that fellow is the greatest brute in nature! he ought not to be admitted into a civilized society."

"Lovel," said Mr. Coverley, affecting to whisper, "you must certainly pink him: you must not put up with such an affront."

"Sir," said Mr. Lovel, "with any common person I should not deliberate an instant; but really with a fellow who has done nothing but fight all his life, 'pon honour, Sir, I can't think of it!"

"Lovel," said Lord Merton, in the same voice, "you *must* call him to account."

"Every man," said he, pettishly, "is the best judge of his own affairs; and I don't ask the honour of any person's advice."

"Egad, Lovel," said Mr. Coverley, "you're in for it!—you can't possibly be off!"

"Sir," cried he, very impatiently, "upon any proper occasion, I should be as ready to show my courage as any body;—but as to fighting for such a trifle as this—I protest I should blush to think of it!"

"A trifle!" cried Mrs. Selwyn, "good Heaven! and have you made this astonishing riot about a trifle?"

"Ma'am," answered the poor wretch, in great confusion, "I did not know at first but that my cheek might have been bit;—but as 'tis no worse, why, it does not a great deal signify. Mrs. Beaumont, I have the honour to wish you a good even-

ing ; I'm sure my carriage must be waiting." And then, very abruptly, he left the room.

What a commotion has this mischief-loving Captain raised ! Were I to remain here long, even the society of my dear Maria could scarce compensate for the disturbances which he excites.

When he returned, and heard of the quiet exit of Mr. Lovel, his triumph was intolerable. " I think, I think," cried he, " I have peppered him well ! I'll warrant he won't give an hour to-morrow morning to settling what he shall put on ; why, his coat," turning to me, " would be a most excellent match for old Madame Furbelow's best Lyons silk ! 'Fore George, I'd desire no better sport than to have that there old cat here to go her snacks !"

All the company then, Lord Orville, Miss Mirvan, and myself excepted, played at cards ; and we—oh, how much better did we pass our time !

While we were engaged in a most delightful conversation, a servant brought me a letter, which he told me had by some accident been mislaid. Judge of my feelings when I saw, my dearest Sir, your revered hand-writing ! My emotions soon betrayed to Lord Orville whom the letter was from ; the importance of the contents he well knew ; and, assuring me I should not be seen by the card-players, he besought me to open it without delay.

Open it, indeed, I did—but read it I could not ; —the willing, yet awful consent you have granted —the tenderness of your expressions—the certainty that no obstacle remained to my eternal union with the loved owner of my heart, gave me sensations too various, and, though joyful, too little placid for observation. Finding myself unable to proceed, and blinded by the tears of gratitude and delight, which started into my eyes, I gave over the attempt of reading till I retired to my own room ; and, having no voice to answer the inquiries of Lord Orville,

I put the letter into his hands, and left it to speak both for me and itself.

Lord Orville was himself affected by your kindness: he kissed the letter as he returned it; and, pressing my hand affectionately to his heart, "You are now," said he, in a low voice, "all my own! Oh, my Evelina, how will my soul find room for its happiness?—it seems already bursting!" I could make no reply, indeed I hardly spoke another word the rest of the evening: so little talkative is the fulness of contentment.

O, my dearest Sir, the thankfulness of my heart I must pour forth at our meeting, when, at your feet, my happiness receives its confirmation from your blessing; and when my noble-minded, my beloved Lord Orville, presents to you the highly-honoured, and thrice-happy Evelina.

A few lines I will endeavour to write on Thursday, which shall be sent off express, to give you, should nothing intervene, yet more certain assurance of our meeting.

Now then, therefore, for the first, and probably the last time I shall ever own the name, permit me to sign myself,

Most dear Sir, your gratefully affectionate,

EVELINA BELMONT.

Lady Louisa, at her own particular desire, will be present at the ceremony, as well as Miss Miryan and Mrs. Selwyn: Mr. Macartney will, the same morning, be united to my foster-sister; and my father himself will give us both away.

LETTER XXXVII.

MR. VILLARS TO EVELINA.

EVERY wish of my soul is now fulfilled—for the felicity of my Evelina is equal to her worthiness!

Yes, my child, thy happiness is engraved in golden characters upon the tablets of my heart; and their impression is indelible: for, should the rude and deep-searching hand of Misfortune attempt to pluck them from their repository, the fleeting fabric of life would give way; and in tearing from my vitals the nourishment by which they are supported, she would but grasp at a shadow insensible to her touch.

Give thee my consent?—Oh thou joy, comfort, and pride of my life, how cold is that word to express the fervency of my approbation! yes, I do indeed giveth thee my consent; and so thankfully, that, with the humblest gratitude to Providence, I would seal it with the remnant of my days.

Hasten then, my love, to bless me with thy presence, and to receive the blessings with which my fond heart overflows!—And oh, my Evelina, hear and assist in one only humble, but ardent prayer, which yet animates my devotions: That the height of bliss to which thou art rising may not render thee giddy, but that the purity of thy mind may form the brightest splendour of thy prosperity!—and that the weak and aged frame of thy almost idolizing parent, nearly worn out by time, past afflictions, and infirmities, may yet be able to sustain a meeting with all its better part holds dear; and then, that all the wounds which the former severity of fortune inflicted, may be healed and purified by the ultimate consolation of pouring forth my dying words in blessings on my child!—closing these joy-streaming eyes in her presence, and breathing my last faint sighs in her loved arms!

Grieve not, oh child of my care! grieve not at the inevitable moment! but may thy own end be equally propitious! Oh, may'st thou, when full of days, and full of honour, sink down as gently to rest!—be loved as kindly, watched as tenderly, as

thy happy father! And may'st thou, when thy glass is run, be sweetly, but not bitterly, mourned by some remaining darling of thy affections—some yet surviving Evelina!

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER XXXVIII.

EVELINA TO THE REV. MR. VILLARS.

ALL is over, my dearest Sir; and the fate of your Evelina is decided! This morning, with fearful joy and trembling gratitude, she united herself for ever with the object of her dearest, her eternal affection.

I have time for no more; the chaise now waits which is to conduct me to dear Berry-Hill, and to the arms of the best of men.

EVELINA.

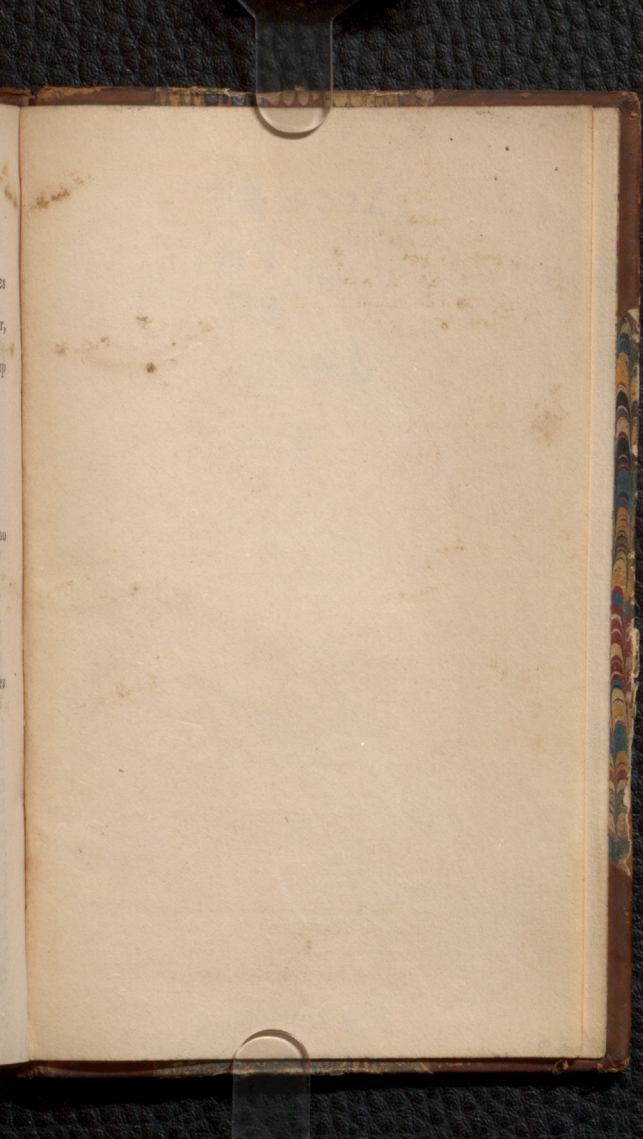


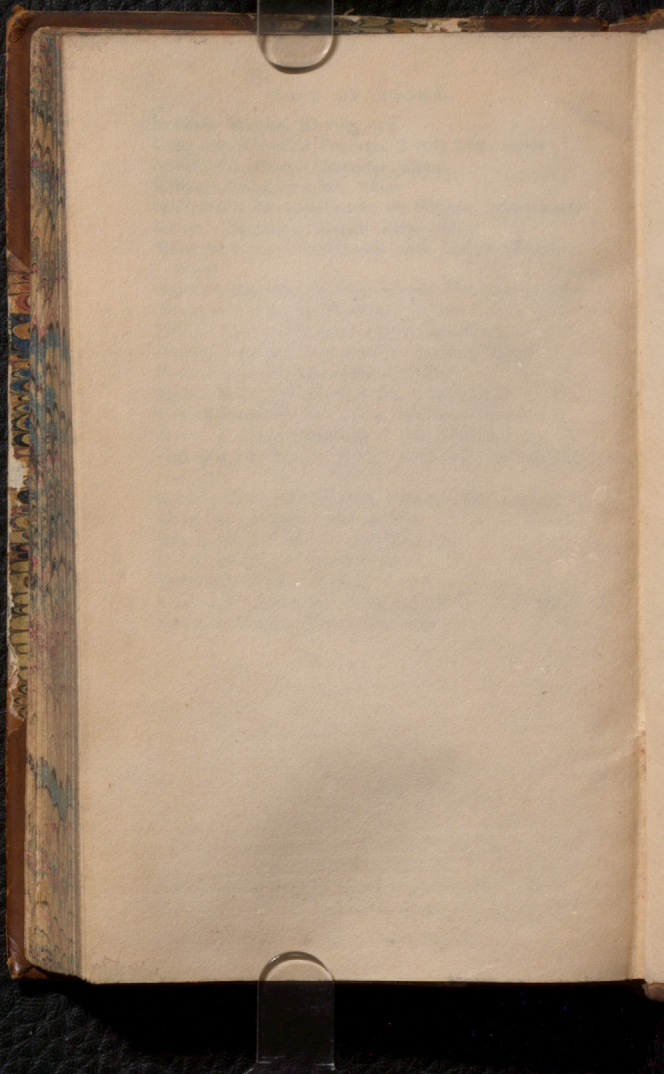
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