*Letter 13th Laura in Continuation*

They had been gone nearly a couple of

Hours, before either Macdonald or Graham had

entertained any suspicion of the affair. And they

might not even then have suspected it, but for the

following little Accident. Sophia happening one

day to open a private drawer in Macdonald’s

Library with one of her own keys, discovered that

it was the Place where he kept his Papers of

consequence and amongst them some bank notes

of considerable amount. This discovery she

imparted to me; and having agreed together that it

would be a proper treatment of so vile a Wretch

as Macdonald to deprive him of money, preps the

dishonestly gained, it was determined that next

time we should either of us happen to go that way,

we would take one or more of the Bank notes56

from the drawer. This well-meant Plan we had

often successfully put in Execution; but alas! on

the very day of Janetta’s Escape, as Sophia was

majestically removing the 5th Banknote from the

Drawer to her own purse, she was suddenly most

impertinently interrupted in her employment by

the entrance of Macdonald himself, in a most

abrupt and precipitate Manner. Sophia (who

though naturally all winning sweetness could when

occasions demanded it call forth the Dignity of

her sex) instantly put on a most forbidding look,

and darting an angry frown on the undaunted

culprit, demanded in a haughty tone of voice

“Wherefore her retirement was thus insolently

broken in on?” The unblushing Macdonald,

without even endeavouring to exculpate himself

from the crime he was charged with, meanly

endeavoured to reproach Sophia with ignobly57

defrauding him of his money…. The dignity of

Sophia was wounded; “Wretch (exclaimed she,

hastily replacing the Bank-note in the Drawer)

how darest thou to accuse me of an Act, of which

the bare idea makes me blush?” The base

wretched was still unconvinced and continued to

upbraid the justly offended Sophia in such

opprobrious Language, that at length he so greatly

provoked the gentle sweetness of her Nature, as

to induce her to revenge herself on him by

informing him of Janetta’s Elopement, and of the

active Part we had both taken in the affair. At this

period of their Quarrel, I entered the library and

was as you may imagine equally offended as

Sophia at the ill-grounded accusations of the

malevolent and contemptible Macdonald. “Base

Miscreant! (Cried I) how canst thou thus

undauntedly endeavour to sully the spotless58

reputation of such bright Excellence? Why dost

thou do not suspect MY innocence as soon?” “Be

satisfied Madam (replied he) I DO suspect it, and

therefore must desire that you will both leave this

House in less than half an hour.”

“We shall go willingly; (answered Sophia)

our hearts have long detested thee and noting but

our friendship for thy daughter could have

induced us to remain so long beneath thy roof.”

“Your friendship for my daughter has

indeed been most powerfully exerted by throwing

her into the arms of an unprincipled Fortune-

hunter.

” (Replied he)

“Yes, (exclaimed I) amidst every

misfortune, it will afford us some consolation to

reflect that by this one act of Friendship to59

Jannetta, we have amply discharged every

obligation that we have received from her father.”

“It must indeed be a most grateful

reflection, to your exalted minds.” (Said he.)

As soon as we had packed up our

wardrobe and valuables, we left Macdonald Hall,

and after having walked about a mile and a half we

sate down by the side of a clear limpid stream to

refresh our exhausted limbs. The place was suited

to meditation. A grove of full-grown Elms

sheltered us from the East. A Bed of full-grown

Nettles from the West. Before us ran the

murmuring brook and behind us ran the turn-pike

road. We were in a mood for contemplation and

in a Disposition to enjoy so beautiful a spot. A

mutual silence which had for some time reigned

broke by my exclaiming “What a lovely scene!60

Alas why are not Edward and Augustus here to

enjoy its Beauties with us?”

“Ah! My beloved Laura (Cried Sophia) for

pity’s sake forbear recalling to my remembrance

the unhappy situation of my imprisoned Husband.

Alas, what would I not give to learn the fate of my

Augustus! To know if he is still in Newgate. Or if

he is yet hung. But never shall I be able to so far

to conquer my tender sensibility as to enquire

after him. Oh! Don’t I beseech you ever let me

again hear you repeat his beloved name. It affects

me too deeply. I can’t bear to hear him mentioned

it wounds my feelings.

”

“Excuse me my Sophia for having thus

unwillingly offended you” (Replied I) and then

changing the conversation, desisted her to admire

the noble Grandeur of the Elms which sheltered61

us from the Eastern Zephyr. “Alas! my Laura

(returned she) avoid so melancholy a subject, I

intreat you. Don’t again wound my Sensibility by

observations on those elms. They remind me of

Augustus. He was like them, tall, majestic he

possessed that noble grandeur which you admire

in them.”

I was silent, fearful lest I might any more

unwillingly distress her by fixing on any other

subject of conversation which might again remind

her of Augustus.

“Why do you not speak my Laura? (Said she

after a short pause) I can’t support this silence you

must not leave me to my own reflections; they

ever recur to Augustus.

”62

“What a beautiful sky! (Said I) How

charmingly is the azure varied by those delicate

streaks of white!”

“Oh! My Laura (replied she hastily

withdrawing her Eyes from a momentary glance at

the sky) don’t thus distress me by calling me

Attention to an object which so cruelly reminds

me of my Augustus’s blue satin waistcoat striped

in white! In pity to unhappy friend avoid a subject

so distressing.” What could I do? The feelings of

Sophia were at that time so exquisite, and the

tenderness she felt for Augustus so poignant that I

hadn’t power to start any other topic, justly fearing

that it might in some unforeseen manner again

awaken all her sensibility by directing her thoughts

to her Husband. Yet to be silent would be cruel;

she had inteated me to talk.63

From this Dilemma I was most fortunately

relieved by an accident truly apropos; it was the

lucky overturning of a Gentleman’s Phaeton, on

the road which ran murmuring behind us. It was

a most fortunate accident as it diverted the

attention of Sophia from the melancholy

reflections which she had been before indulging.

We instantly quitted our seats and ran to the

rescue of those who but a few moments before

had been in so elevated a situation as a fashionably

high Phaeton, but who were now laid low and

sprawling in the Dust.

“What an ample subject for

reflection on the uncertain Enjoyments of this

world, wouldn’t that Phaeton and the Life of

Cardinal Wolsey afford a thinking Mind!” Said I to

Sophia as we were hastening to the field of

Action.64

She hadn’t time to answer me, for every

thought was now engaged by the horrid spectacle

before us. Two Gentlemen most elegantly attired

but weltering in their blood was what first struck

our Eyes we approached they were Edward and

Augustus. Yes, dearest Marianne they were our

Husbands. Sophia shrieked and fainted on the

ground I screamed and instantly ran mad. We

remained thus mutually deprived of our senses,

some minutes, and on regaining them were

deprived of them again. For an did we continue in

this unfortunate situation Sophia fainting every

moment and I running mad as often. At length a

groan from the hapless Edward (who alone

retained any share of life) restored us to ourselves.

Had we indeed before imagined Hours and a

quarter that either of them lived, we should have

been more sparing of our Grief but as we had65

supposed when we first beheld them that they

were no more, we knew that nothing could remain

to be done but what we were about. No sooner

did we therefore hear my Edward’s groan than

postponing our lamentations for the present, we

hastily ran to the Dear youth and kneeling on each

side of him implored him not to die.

“Laura (Said

He is fixing his now languid Eyes on me) I fear I

have been overturned.”

I was overjoyed to find him yet sensible.

“Oh! Tell me Edward (Said I) tell me I

beseech you before you die, what has befallen you

since that unhappy Day in which Augustus was

arrested.

”

“I will (Said he) and instantly fetching a

deep sigh, Expired. Sophia immediately sank again

into a swoon. My grief was more audible. My66

Voice faltered, My Eyes assumed a vacant star, my

face become as pale as Death, and my senses were

considerably impaired.”

“Talk not to me of Phaetons (Said I,

raving in a frantic, incoherent manner) Give me a

violin. I’ll play to him and sooth him in his

melancholy Hours Beware ye gentle Nymphs of

Cupid’s Thunderbolts, a void the piercing shafts

of Jupiter Look at the grove of Firs I see a leg of

Mutton They told me Edward wasn’t Dead; but

they deceived me they took him for a cucumber”

Thus I continued wildly exclaiming on my

Edward’s Death. For two Hours did I rave thus

madly and shouldn’t then have left off, as I was

not in the least fatigued, hadn’t Sophia who was

just recovered from her swoon, intreated me to

consider that Night was now approaching and that

the Damps began to fall.

“And wither shall we go67

(Said I) to shelter us from either?” “To that white

Cottage.” (Replied she pointing to a neat Building

which rose up amidst the grove of Elms and

which I hadn’t before observed) I agreed and we

instantly walked to it we knocked at the door it

was opened by an old woman; on being requested

to afford us a Night’s Lodging, She informed us

that her house was but small, that she had only

two Bedrooms, but hat However we should be

welcome to one of them. We were satisfied and

followed the good woman into the House where

we were greatly cheered by the sight of a

comfortable fire. She was a window and had only

one Daughter, who was then just seventeen One

of the best of ages; but alas! she was very plain,

and her name was Bridget…. Nothing therefore

could be expected from her she could not be

supposed to possess either exalted Ideas,68

Delicate Feelings or refined Sensibilities. She was

nothing more than a mere good-tempered, civil,

and obliging young woman; as such we could

scarcely dislike here, she was only an Object of

Contempt.

Adeiu Laura.