

LETTERS

ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

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LETTERS
ON
SEVERAL SUBJECTS,
FROM A
PRECEPTRESS
TO HER
PUPILS WHO HAVE LEFT SCHOOL,
ADDRESSED CHIEFLY TO
REAL CHARACTER,

AND

*Designed for the Use of Young Ladies from Sixteen
to Twenty Years of Age.*

Providence has given no one ability to do much, that something might be left for every one to do. The business of life is carried on by a general co-operation, in which the part of any single person can be no more distinguished than the effect of a particular drop when the meadows are floated by a summer shower; yet every drop increases the inundation, and every hand adds to the happiness or misery of mankind.

Hawkefworth's Adventurer.

L O N D O N :

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M D C C X C V I I .

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* In this letter *trifles* are considered as having the power of augmenting or diminishing our happiness; and therefore, in our communication with society, demand attention.

P R E F A C E.

THOUGH (according to the beautiful observation quoted in the title-page) “ something is left for every one “ to do,” I cannot flatter myself with a hope, that it is in *my* power to add *much* to the happiness of those who may do me the favour of perusing the following Letters.

Many

Many distinguished writers (before whom I am but as a glow-worm compared with an evening star) have already communicated their invaluable productions to enlighten the world; and there is no duty, religious, moral, nor relative, to be acquired or improved, but may be met with, if sought for, in various judicious authors. As, however, the youthful mind is always desirous of something new (though nothing new there is), and as I am conscious there are many beside myself, who have a peculiar pleasure in reading instructions written by a *friend* (though of inferior abilities), I present myself *in that character*, and not as an
author,

author, to the several young ladies addressed in this work.

Having long been engaged in the arduous task of assisting parental endeavours in the cultivation of the youthful mind, I have had an opportunity of observing various virtues and various errors. If by the method I have taken I should excite a love of the former, and a rejection of the latter, my intention is fully answered; or if I have a wish beyond, it is that of possessing a share in the *affections* of my female readers, and more particularly of those who have been personally under my tuition. They must suffer me to *hint* at their faults,

A

though

though they may assure themselves I will not expose the names of the culpable, for that is not the way to reclaim. And with this assurance I withdraw from my Preface, to begin a correspondence which I anxiously hope will end in the advantage of my readers.

LET.

LETTERS,

&c. &c.



LETTER I.

To Miss A. ROBERTSON.

ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.



MY DEAR AND DUTIFUL PUPIL,

AS the time approaches in which I must resign you to paternal care, I feel a particular desire of giving you some memento of my affection ; and, instead of presenting you with ornaments to decorate your *person*, I shall turn my thoughts chiefly to the improvement
B of

of your *münd*, and avail myself at intervals of the circumscribed favours of leisure in penning down instructions for your future conduct ; flattering myself that you will value my admonitions, first, for the sake of virtue itself, and next, for the sake of the admonisher. I already find myself engaged in an undertaking which sensibly affects my feelings ; may they ever be as replete with friendship for you as they are at this moment ! and that I am sure they ever will be, if you continue as heretofore to deserve them. Every preceptress who is properly interested in the welfare of the family committed to her charge, must feel desirous that *every* scholar, after leaving school, should bear in remembrance former instructions, and must be happy in hearing of their merited prosperity ; but there are seldom such cogent reasons for *extended* advice as the present occasion calls for. The generality of young ladies, on leaving school, return to the bosom of their families, and have mothers to complete them in what the preceptress may have left undone ; but you, my dear, have very peculiar claims to

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my *future* as well as *present* care. Your entrance here was attended with very affecting circumstances. It was the request of your late excellent mother at an awful crisis: that request, proposed at such a time, proved her confidence in my sister and self, who have mutually studied in our conduct towards you to act in conformity with her wishes, and have had the distinguished pleasure of observing, by the general tenor of your conduct, that our endeavours have been successful. I feel some emotions of concern, that London is to be the place of your future residence, as I know it cannot add to (though I hope it will never wear off) that innocent and artless simplicity which is your present most pleasing characteristic. As it was implanted by *nature*, it cannot be entirely rooted out; but as we know that nature will admit of great improvements, so also we know that her beauties, whether of the mind or person, suffer great diminution by the almost imperceptible encroachments of art.—

“Brighter than polished silver, more valuable
 “than Peruvian ore, more precious than the

“ pearl in the sea, the diamond in the bowels
 “ of the earth, or all the shining treasures of
 “ the mines of Potosi, is *reputation* to a wo-
 “ man.” And not less bright is guileless un-
 affected *innocence*. When we hear any person
 launching out into the praise of an *artless*
 young woman, our tenderest feelings are all
 afloat in her favour, and we listen to the re-
 later with smiles of approbation ; but when,
 on the contrary, an *artful* young person is the
 subject of discourse, the countenance of the
 hearer involuntarily changes into a frown, and
 scarcely can we wait till the conclusion of the
 narrative before we express our sentiments of
 disgust.

Every kind of *affectation*, as it is a departure
 from *nature*, is evidently a species of *art*. I
 would not admit an affected woman to my
confidence—I should doubt her *sincerity*---I could
 not bestow on her a portion of my *affection*,
 knowing she could not tender me any in return ;
 for the affected love only themselves : I could
 not fawningly shew her *respect* ; for respect is
 due

due only to what is respectable, and that is not *affectation*.

You have read in a favourite little book of mine, called “ The Whole Duty of Woman,” a section on this subject ; but, as it can never be too powerfully impressed on your mind, I shall here transcribe a few valuable sentences.

“ Who is she that cometh *tripping* with nice
 “ *mincing steps*, whose tongue *lispeth* sweetness,
 “ and whose form is *not her own*?

“ Her name is AFFECTATION: she hath
 “ put off herself, and decked her with the
 “ borrowed plumes of others, by whom she is
 “ despised.

“ She affecteth melody of voice, and har-
 “ mony of speech, with wisdom, importance,
 “ and dignity of deportment.

“ She hath forgotten how to tread ; she
 “ neither danceth nor walketh along.

“ She distorteth her features to excite at-
“ tention ; she laugheth at nothing to shew
“ the beauty of her teeth.

“ She washeth her cheeks with perfumes
“ till the native bloom departeth away ; then
“ painteth with the artificial rose.

“ She is pleased to hear herself speak ; she
“ listeneth not to the voice of another.

“ She taketh upon her to instruct those who
“ are wiser than herself, and to teach what
“ she understandeth not.

“ Beware, O daughter of Britain, lest thou
“ art misled by AFFECTATION ; for thou
“ wilt be neglected by others, till by reflection
“ thou discoverest the cause, and art led to
“ despise thyself.”

Note—“ She affecteth melody of voice and
“ harmony of speech,” &c. but, instead of har-
mony, a judicious hearer will find it discord.

Among

Among the various species of affectation, that of *imitating* pompous or pedantic speakers is not the least ridiculous. The word Tuesday is called *Cherweday**. Sometimes the flowers are refreshed by the morning *jew*, and at other times we hear of gentlemen fighting a *jewel*. Sometimes words are mutilated, and at others lengthened; mischievous is called mischiev~~ious~~---portentous, portent~~ious~~; and thus encumbered with a vowel that does not belong to them are most words ending unfortunately in *ous*. But, while you reject the above-noticed pronunciation, there is no reason why you should fall into the opposite extreme (as I too often do myself), and say *Toosday*, *do*, &c. for there is a pleasing medium not difficult of attainment, which gives an inexpressible charm and *real harmony* to language. For instance, to find out the proper pronunciation of the word Tuesday, you have only to sound the letter *t*; then pronounce the three

* Where this has been a fault of the *teacher*, it is excusable in the *pupil*.

* following letters as you would the verb *use*, to which add *day*, and you will have an agreeable soft sound quite different from the harsh *Chewfday*, or the plain *Toofday*. With respect to *dew*, sound only the letters *d* and *u*, as if you were spelling without putting together the syllable *du*. I once heard a lady make a satirical remark on an acquaintance who pronounced education edication, calling it herself *edjucation*, but the latter is equally faulty. The vowel *u* should certainly be sounded perceptibly, but not as if having a *j* before it. If ever you wish to sound the letter *u*, place *y* before it, and you have it soft and elegant, as *ed yucation*; *u* has a full sound of its own; I only allow you to borrow the *y* to prove it.

Be careful never to call pasture *paster*, lest you be supposed to mean *pastor*, an instructor; but remember again the letter *y*, as *past-yure*, and not *pastchure*. Never confuse *legislator*, a lawgiver, with *legislature*, the law itself; *impostor*, a deceiver, with *imposture*, the deceit; nor *ingenious*, of good capacity, with
inge-

ingenuous, amiable. Time will not permit me to enlarge on the subject; but, if you will pay attention to graceful speakers, you may continue to improve long after you have escaped from scholastic instruction. Much as a variety of domestic engagements require my attendance, I steal a few minutes more just to say, that no impropriety of speech whatever, gives me such uncomfortable sensations as that of aspirating the letter *h* when it should be silent, and suffering it to be mute when it should be aspirated, as *ands* for *hands*, *ope* for *hope*, *hedges* for *edges*, &c. In pity to affected young ladies who *adopt* such false pronunciation, I always do them the favour to believe they have never learnt to *spell*.

But, lest this last observation should lead you to think I am uncharitably inclined to *criticism* (which I have always thought only another word for *envy*), I beg to assure you I should think myself undeserving the esteem of my friends, and by no means qualified “to pour
“instruction o’er the youthful mind,” were I
to

to suffer my pen to mark the pitiable errors of the *uninformed*.---“ The marble in the quarry,” as Addison has beautifully observed, “ has each inherent cloud, spot, and vein, running through the body of it, as well as that which the skill of the polisher has drawn out to view ;” and the capacious mind, which is too often called *ignorant*, frequently possesses more solid understanding than the pedant who ridicules it for want of *learning*. But *affectation*, being a conceited usurpation of a something to which it has no rightful pretensions, is like the jackdaw in borrowed plumes, and deserves to be ridiculed and driven out of society.

So frequent are the interruptions I meet with to my present employment, and so long the intervals between quitting and resuming my pen, that I sometimes fear I shall not be able to conclude my preceptive letter before your approaching departure ; and yet, my dear Miss Anne, I have still much to say. You are now of an age that requires cautionary advice on subjects which, hitherto, you have
been

been less acquainted with than any young lady I have ever had under my care, or who has come within the circle of my acquaintance; and the highest encomium I can pay to your innocence is to say, that, when many young ladies I could name, who are three or four years under your age, have been trying each coquettish art to *gain* or to *deceive* admirers, you, at the age of nineteen, have been laudably engaged at your leisure hours in directing the amusements, assisting at the feasts, or adjusting, perhaps for a dance, the dresses of your *little* schoolfellows. How faulty are parents, and how many have I met with of that description, who think it a disgrace for a child of twelve years old to be playing with a doll, and who immediately after that age think it necessary to change the *dress* of the child to something more womanly. Deluded parents! who perceive not that with the womanly *dress*, womanly *manners* will also be adopted; and how often is it seen, that, at fourteen, the mere child will obtrude herself into the company of grown ladies, listening to, and joining in their conversation, even

even should it turn upon the subject of matrimony, or lovers; for too many ladies, I am sorry to say, indulge themselves upon those topics when children are present. As “there is a time for every purpose,” there should be a time to *converse*, and a time to *refrain* from *conversing*. Pity it is that ladies do not store their minds with a few valuable subjects, that they may *seasonably* vary, without being *at all times* under the necessity of discussing one, which would often be as well managed by the meanest plebeian.

My spirits have been considerably lowered since I this evening sat down to write; I am indeed too much interested in my undertaking to perform it unfeelingly. With respect to the subject I am now introducing, namely, the attachments of the heart, I am, perhaps, a fit and an unfit person to give you advice. It is, however, a subject which may prove of so much consequence to your welfare and peace of mind, that I cannot entirely draw a veil over it.

I have

I have every reason to believe your heart has not yet entertained a sentiment beyond that of friendship for any one; it is, therefore, unbiaſſed, and the more capable of receiving the principles I wiſh to inculcate.

It is a common obſervation, that few people marry the firſt object of their affections; I think, in general, ſuch diſappointments are fortunate; for firſt attachments are often formed at ſo early, and inconfiderate an age, that they can ſcarcely be deemed any thing more than romantic infatuation, which is often proved by the cold indifference that too often follows precipitate, thoughtleſs, and ill-timed marriages. The inſtances of which among my own circle of friends, and I may add *relatives*, are many. I again feel myſelf greatly at a loſs in adviſing you; therefore, in the words of Southern, read my ſentiments.

“ Oh! let the ſteps of youth be cautious

“ How they advance into a dangerous world;

“ Our *duty* only can conduct us ſafe;

“ Ours

“ Our *passions* are *seducers* ; but of all ;
 “ The strongest LOVE ; he first approaches us
 “ In childish play, wantoning in our walks ;
 “ If *heedlessly* we wander *after* him,
 “ As he will pick out all the dancing way,
 “ We’re lost, and hardly to return again :
 “ We should take warning : he is painted *blind* ;
 “ To shew us, if we fondly *follow* him,
 “ The precipices we may fall into.
 “ Therefore let VIRTUE take him by the hand ;
 “ Directed so, he leads to certain joy.”

The poet having kindly assisted me, I shall proceed to make a few comments on the foregoing lines.

Our *duty only* can conduct us safe.

I wish you to understand *religion* and *morality* as comprised in the word *duty* ; for morality separated from religion is but a *part* of our duty, and is as a dwelling-place without a foundation.

I will not be so rigid as to assert that the human heart is capable of devising a shield to
 repel

repel the shafts of love ; they fly invisibly ; but as soon as the wound is felt, *duty* should be consulted as a skilful physician, whose *advice*, if applied for in time, and attentively followed, seldom fails of effecting a *cure*, or, at least, of preventing fatal consequences.

That duty, which above all others is most likely to be a guard against romantic and ill-timed marriages, 'is *obedience* to *parental* authority, which you know I have always *particularly* endeavoured to inculcate when on the subject of duties in *general* ; and have been pleased in observing you so attentive, that I have no reason to fear you will ever transgress by marrying contrary to your worthy father's approbation ; but, as life is always uncertain, it may be your misfortune to lose that best of friends before you receive a matrimonial offer. You will then, perhaps, think you have no one to consult but yourself. Do not think me too scrupulous when I say, I would then advise the consent of the *gentleman's* parents ; for if you think a woman culpable for bringing
distress

distress on her friends, would you not view that fault in a man in the same light? Never, then, put it in the power of a husband to say, “It was my blind partiality for an imprudent woman that has alienated the affections of my once indulgent father.” It is too often seen that gentlemen, after the age of twenty-one, begin to throw off all paternal controul: against such I would have you guard: but if your sentiments are congenial with mine, you can never *respect*, and much less *love*, a man who endeavours to set his father or his father’s advice in an inferior point of view: for even if a good son is so unfortunate as to have a *vicious* father, it is his duty to *conceal* his faults; or, if they are so flagrant as not to admit of concealment, *he* should be the last to *expose* them.

The inclination to throw off parental restraint is sometimes predominant in our sex, where it appears still more offensive to nature and propriety; for as, from our birth, we are but *secondary* objects in the creation, subordi-
nation

nation is the natural sphere in which we were intended to move. This subordinate state does not degrade us, neither does it subject us, as some have asserted, to the tyranny of man; on the contrary, it entitles us to his protection. It is the designation of Providence, and therefore right. The degradation is when we attempt to step out of that state. Which, in your opinion, is the most dignified character? The haughty *Vashti*, who refused to come into the presence of her *husband*, which (independent of his being a king) was her duty, or the humble *Esther*, who (though a queen) “obeyed the commandment of Mordecai her
“*uncle* as when she was brought up with him?” True *humility*, be assured, is dignity itself, and can never degrade the female character; but *boasted humility* is the highest *pride*, the opposite of what it assumes.

Having endeavoured to enforce the duty of submission to parents, I now enter upon another, which in our intercourse with the world may be called into action every hour, “Do

“ as you would be done by.” When a lady is addressed by a worthy gentleman, and feels that she has no affection for him, humanity should direct her to take the earliest opportunity of removing his expectations; and not, for the sake of gratifying her vanity, sport with the feelings of a person, who, perhaps, has done her too much honour by making her his choice.

Coquetry, or the art of *stealing** the affections of the unsuspecting, is a vice unnaturally fashionable; nor can there be a greater violation of the eighth commandment. It is, indeed, far worse than any other kind of *theft*, because it cannot be committed without injuring the health and peace of mind of the person *defrauded*, and seldom is there a possibility of making restitution. Dr. Gregory has said,

* In several charming Scots songs the words *winning*, and *stealing*, a heart are used as synonymous. I think there should be a distinction—the *winner*, who obtains by artless and honourable means, has always a claim to the prize; not so the *stealer*.

that

that “*male* coquetry is much more inexcusable
 “ than *female*, as well as more pernicious.”
 I do not perceive it ; I see it on both sides in
 so reprehensible a light, that I should accuse
 a *judge of injustice* who could admit an excuse
 for either party. There is but one motive
 that ever instigates this *immoral* practice, which
 is, VANITY ; and, as “ vanity is the vice of
 “ *little minds*,” be assured no man nor woman
 of *dignified* principles ever did or can debase
 themselves by descending to the mean arts of
 coquetry.

But, however honourably you may yourself
 determine to act, it is possible you may be
 drawn into the net of the ensnarer ; but, should
 you fortunately escape without material injury,
 let not the reflection of your danger awaken
 your mind to misanthropical feelings. Do not
 ascribe to the *whole* sex a fault which is com-
 mon only to the *inferior* part of it ; for, while
 within your own bosom you are conscious of
integrity and *principle*, it would be selfishness to

suppose they exist not in others, or that they are peculiar to sex or age.

Be *cautious*, but not *suspicious*. Friendship may be rare, but it has not entirely deserted the world ; therefore “ let not distrust stir up
“ ingratitude : the favour of the day deserves
“ the thanks thereof, till the injury of the
“ morrow cancels the obligation.”

To have many lovers is no *honour* to a woman, neither is it any *disgrace* ; the disgrace lies in the *encouragement* of many : and with this observation I quit the subject.

Having directed you to consider religion and morality as comprised in the word *duty*, I shall just say a few words on the former ; but they will be very few. “ Religion and
“ the scripture,” said a worthy elderly friend of mine, “ should be our rule of life, not too
“ much the subject of our conversation or
“ letters.” We are at liberty to *explore* the

scriptures; we have the clergy to *expound* them. My part, as your preceptress, is to enjoin you to steadfastness in the faith you have been brought up in. I am so great an admirer of Dr. Gregory's Advice to his Daughters, that I shall here avail myself of his words.

“ I wish you to go no farther than the scrip-
 “ tures for your religious opinions; embrace
 “ those you find clearly revealed; never per-
 “ plex yourself about such as you do not un-
 “ derstand, but treat them with becoming re-
 “ verence.—The important and interesting
 “ articles of faith are sufficiently plain; fix
 “ your attention on these, and do not meddle
 “ with controversy.---Never indulge yourself
 “ in ridicule on religious subjects; nor give
 “ countenance to it in others, by seeming di-
 “ verted with what they say.---Cultivate an
 “ enlarged charity for all mankind, however
 “ their religion may differ from your's; yet
 “ never suffer any person to insult you by any
 “ foolish or rude remarks on your religious

“ opinions ; but shew the same resentment *
 “ you would naturally do on being offered any
 “ other personal insult.”

In an elegant little book, entitled “ Original Fables,” “ The Travelling Bear,” is so aptly suited to the present subject, that I shall here transcribe it for your perusal and instruction.

“ A bear, who was bred in the savage de-
 “ serts of Siberia, had an inclination to see
 “ the world : he travelled from forest to forest,
 “ and from one kingdom to another, making
 “ many profound observations in his way.
 “ Among the rest of his excursions he came

* Do not on every slight occasion give way to *re-
 sentment*, of which there are two kinds, viz. *generous*
 and *malicious* ; the latter, when indulged, soon be-
 comes *revenge*, which (as religion forbids) is a passion
 that disgraces human nature. “ *Revenge*,” said an
 amiable author, “ always costs us dear ; it is better
 “ to *forgive* and save the charges.”

“ by

“ by accident into a farmer’s yard, where he
 “ saw a number of poultry standing to drink
 “ by the side of a pool. Observing that at every
 “ sip they turned up their heads towards the
 “ sky, he could not forbear inquiring the
 “ reason of so peculiar a ceremony. They
 “ supposing, as a traveller, he wished for in-
 “ struction, politely informed him, that it was
 “ by way of returning thanks to heaven for
 “ the benefit of allaying their thirst ; and
 “ was, indeed, an ancient and religious cus-
 “ tom, which they could not with a safe con-
 “ science, or without impiety, omit. Here
 “ the bear burst into a fit of laughter, at once
 “ mimicking their gestures, and ridiculing
 “ their superstition (as he called it) in the
 “ most contemptuous manner. On which
 “ one of the fowls, with dignified courage
 “ and solemnity, addressed him in the following
 “ words :

“ As you are a *stranger*, Sir, we excuse the
 “ indecency of your behaviour ; yet give me
 “ leave to tell you, that *none* but a *bear* will

“ ever ridicule religious ceremonies, however
 “ absurd they may appear, in the presence of
 “ those who hold them sacred.”

To join a fable with a religious subject would, in most instances, be an inconsistency ; but the above conveys so cogent a reproof against licentiousness, that, as an elucidation of the foregoing words, “ cultivate an
 “ enlarged charity,” &c. I think it may without impropriety be admitted.

Throughout this address to you, my dear Miss Anne, I wish you to observe, that my attention has been paid chiefly to *mental accomplishments* *, which are intrinsically of far more value than ornamental *attainments* * ; not that I wish to decry the latter ; on the contrary, I have ever held in high estimation every art and science that can assist in exalting

* These two words are not strictly synonymous—a man or woman may be *accomplished* in the virtues of the mind without the addition of *attainments*.

the

the human character. All I advise is, that embellishments should be considered as secondary branches of education, which should always give place to *religious* and *moral duties*; the two latter, indeed, should be the groundwork of polite acquirements, for “let it be
 “remembered, that none can be disciples of
 “the *graces* but in the school of *virtue*; and
 “that those who wish to be lovely must learn
 “early to be *good*.”

I have now, my dear, after innumerable interruptions, arrived at the conclusion of my precepts, which, I doubt not, will be received with complacency, and followed conscientiously; and, if in future any advice or instruction in my power can render you the smallest service, bear in remembrance that I am your friend.

C. PALMER.

LET.

LETTER II.

*To Miss S***.*

ON THE SUBJECT OF COMPLIMENTARY CARDS.



I AM far from being displeased with the favour of your card just received, as I am sure you intended to oblige me by it; and I thank you most kindly for such a memento of your regard, notwithstanding the improprieties with which it abounds. I am convinced you have good sense enough to receive with complacency the comments which (without begging your pardon) I use the friendly freedom of making. To have our faults *exposed* is, I know, very humiliating; but I beg you will not consider this as an *exposure*: I mean only to *point out* some flagrant errors, with a view to your improve-

prove-

provement, and to prevent the ridicule which might otherwise be levelled against you by the scholar or the pedant, whose conscious superiority in learning, too frequently prompts him to treat with malignity the errors of the *inattentive* (for *ignorance*, while writing to *you*, would be too harsh a word). Good-nature without learning is, in my opinion, far more lovely than learning without good-nature ; but I see no reason why they should oppose each other so often as they do. A lady who has reached the summit of female attainments, yet wanting the more desirable qualifications of the heart, as charity, gentleness, economy, and generosity, may still be called *ignorant* ; for she is ignorant of, or inattentive to, her *duty*, which is the worst kind of ignorance and inattention. Such a lady, several years since, was acquainted with me, and the manner in which she once received a card from another, for whom (when present) she expressed the most friendly sentiments, has given me a tolerable idea of what may be the derision to
which

which your's may be liable, should they have the misfortune to fall into such hands.

The card just alluded to was received in the midst of company, and, when read, a satirical laugh followed, which caused a relation to inquire what had excited such mirth; "Oh!" replied the lady, "the card contains nothing "by which either you or I can edify;" and it was then handed round to divert the company. I was very young, yet old enough silently to remark, that the lady had discovered her superior knowledge at the expence of good sense and charity, which should always teach us either to pass over the failings of our companions, or privately point them out, with a good design, to those who commit them.

Having finished my preparatory discourse, I proceed to transcribe your card, in order to correct it.

"Jane

“ Jane S * * * sends her respectful compli-
 “ ments to Miss P * * *, begs she will oblige
 “ her by accepting the trifles sent in the basket.
 “ I sincerely hope, my dear Madam, my sister
 “ is obedient to your instruction, and continues
 “ to deserve your good opinion,” &c.

It is unnecessary to transcribe the remainder,
 the above lines being sufficient for my purpose;
 they should have been written thus:

“ *Miss* S * * * sends her respectful compli-
 “ ments to Miss P * * *, begs she will oblige
 “ her by accepting the trifles sent in the basket.
 “ Sincerely hopes her sister is obedient to Miss
 P * * *’s instructions, and continues to deserve
 “ her good opinion.”

In the beginning of your card you use your
 Christian name by way of shewing your hu-
 mility; considered in that light the error does
 you honour, though it certainly ought to be
 avoided. I do not know the origin of notes,
 or complimentary cards; but it is evident,
 that

that messages contained therein should be couched in terms such as would be proper for a servant to deliver verbally. You will therefore perceive the impropriety of using your Christian name ; for, humble as you are, you would think it a great liberty in your servant to come to my house with a message from you, and say, *Jane S * * * 's compliments, &c.* You will also now perceive the impropriety of saying, “ *I hope my sister is obedient* “ to *your* instructions ;” which, if delivered verbally by the servant, would imply that servant’s sister, and the expression would be immediately addressed to the person who might open the door. You now, I hope, understand that the words *my, mine, thy, thine, you, your, your’s, I, we, us, &c.* should never be used in a complimentary card. However, do not be deterred from writing by what I have remarked, and let me hope soon to receive another note from you ; only take care not to end with *your humble servant, &c.* if you think proper to begin with *Miss S * * * 's compliments ;* but if you are, indeed, so fastidious that your

Christian

Christian name *must* be used, always confine yourself to *letters*, wherein it may be *signed* with propriety.

Observe the hints I have given you, and your improvement will afford real pleasure to

Your sincere Friend.

LET.

LETTER III.

To ELIZA.

ON DRÉSS.



“ Loveliness
“ Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
“ But is, when unadorn’d, adorn’d the most.”

SUCH was the opinion of a writer, whose sentiments can never be too deeply impressed on your mind; it will be an honour to acknowledge your acquaintance with such an author, for he has left

“ Not one immoral, one corrupted thought,
“ Which, e’en when *dying*, he could wish to blot.”

Love-

Loveliness and attraction are, in this instance, almost synonymous words; but *allurement* seems to be the present prevailing motto of the enchantress FASHION, from which *Loveliness*, “too delicate to bear the public eye,” has retired to her sweet and tranquil sequestration, and is “by bashful MODESTY concealed.” If you have never seen her, the descriptive *Thomson* will acquaint you that

“ Her form is fresher than the morning rose
 “ When the dew wets its leaves.”

And that “ the modest virtues *mingle* in her
 “ eyes.”

He will tell you also that,

“ Thoughtless of beauty, she is beauty’s self,”
 though “ veil’d in a *simple robe*.”

Does not this engaging description incline you to an imitation of LOVELINESS, rather
 D than

than to an imitation of fashion's votaries, who, having no charms to be compared with the morning rose,

By night "shine forth, solicitous to bless,
" In all the *glaring impotence of dress.*"

Do not, however, think me so austere as to wish you *never* to comply with the taste of the day; I would wish you always, *moderately*, to follow the prevailing mode, when consistent with that delicacy which ought to be inseparable from the female character; but can you think it *consistent*, or believe that a lady asserts the truth when she says, that she wears a veil over her bonnet, because it gives the wearer an air of *modesty*, yet in other respects appears in garments which are an offence to modesty, and a disgrace to the wearer? you surely agree with me, that, in such instances, *fashion* throws the veil over the face, or why has not the *whole dress* an air of modesty?

It is generally supposed, that the principal motive of every young lady, while she is dressing, is that of appearing agreeable to the opposite sex ; the motive, in itself, is by no means improper, nor unnatural ; but I fear she much oftener disgusts than excites admiration, notwithstanding the flattering approbation frequently poured into her ear. I will not, however, say it *never* succeeds when ridiculous ; for it sometimes attracts the eye of the ignorant fop, or the rude sycophant, but the *sensible man—never !*

Be assured, that a man of sense can never be pleased with a lady's dress, except DECENCY has been her handmaid, and even then he will consider it as a trifling recommendation ; for, with him, the ornaments of the *mind* have the most powerful sway ; nor will he forego them for all the allurements of beauty and dress in conjunction ; I will just transcribe a line or two written by a gentleman who, for a few moments only, was captivated by external appearances.

“ When Lesbica first I saw so heavenly fair,
 “ *Dress’d* like a queen, and with majestic air,
 “ Methought my soul, that did so high aspire,
 “ Had caught a ray of pure celestial fire ;
 “ But when the beauteous *dress’d-up* idiot spoke,
 “ Forth from her coral lips such folly broke,
 “ The trickling nonsense quickly heal’d the wound,
 “ And what her beauty caught her tongue un-
 “ bound.”

As I wish to confine this letter chiefly to the subject of dress, I will not enter into the superior merit of mental improvements, farther than just to observe, that when the mind is properly cultivated, the dress will be regulated accordingly.

You do not properly distinguish when you call every thing that is fashionable *elegant*.—Real elegance can never with justice be ridiculed ; for “ *elegance of dress* adds grace to
 “ beauty itself, as delicacy in behaviour is the
 “ ornament of the most beautiful mind ;” but there are many fashionable dresses which I take the liberty of calling *vulgar*, though you,
 I fear,

I fear, will have difficulty in joining my opinion.

Do not by what I have written imagine I wish you to be inattentive to your person ; on the contrary, I recommend personal *neatness* as a duty we owe to ourselves ; and,

“ As nature every morn bestows

“ The crystal dew to cleanse the rose,”

so also I recommend personal *cleanliness* as a duty we owe to health.

To be neat and clean, therefore, you see, I consider as indispensably requisite in your external appearance, to which you may add as much *real elegance* as your station in life will admit of, without incurring any farther reproof

From your friendly Admonisher.

LETTER IV.

To AMELIA.

ON THE CHOICE OF BOOKS.



I AM particularly obliged, my dear, by the affectionate compliment you pay me in requesting my direction in your choice of books. You kindly promise to be guided implicitly by my opinion, as to selection or rejection ; but, my good girl, do not think me unkind when I decline pointing out such as you should avoid ; for though I have never had cause to impute DISOBEDIENCE to my artless correspondent, yet, as I have frequently seen verified this sensible remark of Mr. Gay,

“ Re-

“ Restrain your child, you’ll soon believe

“ The text which says, “ We sprang from Eve.”

I long ago laid it down as a principle, never to lead the way to error by naming what ought to be avoided ; for one of the great *weaknesses* of human nature is that *fancied strength* which impels the rash to search after prohibited knowledge. The unguarded reader of an improper book is led on imperceptibly from page to page, like the bewildered traveller, who, though prompted by prudence to return, keeps onward step by step, till the stagnant pool, o’ergrown with sedges, or the unexpected precipice, deceives his foot, and he falls a victim to his temerity. Some, indeed, there are, so falsely courageous, as purposely to seek out danger for the vain glory of combating. Such characters are no less absurd than Don Quixotte fighting with the windmills.

I sincerely believe your heart to be so properly inclined to every feminine virtue, and so animated with a desire of attaining *useful*

knowledge, that I think you have no need of a better guide to teach you how to “choose the good and refuse the evil.” But if a pleasing diffidence of your own judgment still remains, I refer you to Dr. Gregory’s Legacy, and Mrs. Chapone’s Letters, for farther instruction. I cannot write like them; and when you reflect that the one addressed his beloved daughters, and the other an amiable niece, you will read their works as if written by your own father and aunt, who, negligent of fame as authors, have a view only to your improvement.

Though I decline the direction of your choice, I shall make some occasional observations on the subject of reading. I know it is possible for the same book to have a very different influence on different minds, as the following little narrative will prove.—Maria and Julia were educated by the same preceptress, and taught to tread in the same paths of moral and religious duty, from which the dutiful Maria seldom strayed; but Julia grieved her

2

monitors

monitors by her frequent deviations. They read the same books, and heard from their teacher the same comments. At length, unknown to their friends, they met with an exceptionable volume; they read it together, unsuspicious of its consequences: it was one of those mixtures of elegance and trash which we hardly know how to ascribe to the same author; but Maria, like “the bee, extracted the “honey from the weeds;” while Julia, who might be compared to “the spider, imbibed “only the poison.”

As the readers of Julia’s class are much more numerous than those of Maria’s, young ladies cannot be too careful in their selection of books; and if by chance they meet with one at which delicacy recoils, it is their duty to shut it with as much contempt as they would turn from a person who had insulted them with improper language.

Novels are almost universally disapproved, and with reason; yet they are almost universally
fally

fully read: but the usual objection, that the hero or heroine of a novel is generally drawn too perfect, is, in my opinion, a very trifling one, compared with many others that might be adduced. While the reader is endeavouring to *approach near perfection*, she cannot be said to be *departing from it*; therefore I see not the injury. Far greater mischief lies in those passages that shelter the disobedience of children, who, forgetful that

“Duty demands the parent’s voice

“Should sanctify the daughter’s choice,”

unfeelingly elope from their parents, and complete the misery of themselves and families, by concealed, and consequently *disgraceful*, marriages. Novels that inculcate romantic ideas, and that have a tendency to make the reader discontented with her real situation in life, are particularly hurtful. They mislead her judgment, pervert her principles, and spoil her temper; indeed the temper has not a greater enemy than discontent.

Some beautiful stanzas, which I transcribed some years ago (from what author I do not recollect), are so applicable to my present subject, that I shall here insert them, not only for your perusal, but for your instruction.

I.

“ Welcome the *real* state of things,
 “ *Ideal* world, adieu!
 “ Where clouds, pil’d up by *Fancy’s* hand,
 “ Hang louring o’er each view.

II.

“ Here the gay sunshine of *content*
 “ Shall gild each humble scene;
 “ And life steal on with gentle pace
 “ Beneath a sky serene.

III.

“ *Hesperian* trees amidst my grove
 “ I ask not to behold;
 “ Since e’en from Ovid’s song I know
 “ That *dragons* guard the *gold*.

IV.

IV.

“ Nor would I have the phoenix build
“ In my poor *elms* his nest;
“ For where shall odorous gums be found
“ To treat the beauteous guest?

V.

“ Henceforth no pleasure I desire
“ In any *wild extreme*;
“ Such as should lull the captiv’d mind
“ In a bewitching dream.

VI.

“ *Friendship* I ask, without caprice,
“ Where faults are overseen,
“ Errors on both sides, mixt with truth,
“ And kind good-will between.

VII.

“ *Health*, that may best its value prove
“ By *slight* returns of *pain*;
“ *Amusements* to *enliven* life,
“ *Crosses* to prove it *vain*.

VIII.

VIII.

“ Thus would I pass my hours away,
 “ Extracting *good* from *all*,
 “ Till time should from my sliding feet
 “ Push this uncertain ball.”

Having thus given you my opinion on visionary romantic writings, I shall next consider your observation, that “ books are very “ improving.”

Properly selected, and properly limited, they certainly are ; and very far am I from wishing to check a rational pleasure ; therefore be not alarmed when I assert, that when young ladies are *too* fond of reading, it becomes a species of *idleness*. Many an indolent woman has wasted half her days in reading, which would have been employed in a much more exemplary manner in the domestic management of her family. As there is a *time* for *every* purpose, we should remember there is a time to *read*, and a time to *work* ; and should by no means suffer our love of *amusement*,
 though

though it may be dignified by the term *improvement*, to infringe upon more useful employments.

I once knew a lady who would retire to her chamber, when she met with a favourite book, and read from morning till evening, except during the time of meals; and at supper would relate her ill-remembered story so ungrammatically, that, to use an expression of Mrs. Chapone, “it gave me an irritation of nerves “to hear her.” Many instances might be brought forward to prove, that to *read* is not always to derive *improvement*.

Henrietta Woodford, by the death of her parents, was left, at the age of sixteen, to conduct and provide for three brothers and two sisters. She had received an education proper for her rustic station, and could read very tolerably; but, though she was moderately fond of books, she knew so well that it was her duty to work for the maintenance of her orphan brothers and sisters, that she seldom indulged.

dulged herself in *lettered* amusements ; and when she did, it was for an hour early in a morning before the business of the day began. At seven, after religious duties were performed, she would begin to wash and comb her little family ; at eight she prepared their breakfast ; before nine she would send them neatly dressed to school. Her next employment was to set her house in order, cleanse her person, and sit down to needle-work, which she took in for the support of herself and the children ; the whole of their patrimony amounting only to forty pounds a year. To prepare their homely meal was her next task ; and the afternoon was spent alike industriously. When her little dependants returned at night, she would, if time would allow her, hear them the lessons they had read at school, or sing to them innocent and cheerful songs ; and when they were gone to bed, she would keep her next sister up to assist her in mending the clothes which her brothers frequently tore in searching for birds' nests, or playing at marbles ; but never did Henrietta send them in rags to school. So

amiable

amiable a character could not long remain in obscurity, for virtue is diffusive as the beams of the sun ; she had therefore many, and *some sincere*, admirers, who, though superior in pecuniary circumstances to Henrietta, would have thought it an *honour* to have obtained her hand ; but neither *attraction* * nor *allurement* could draw her from her steady purpose. She had promised her mother, in an awful hour, that her utmost protection should be extended to the children, and her heart was embosomed among them.

But, alas ! this excellent young woman lived but a short time the example and ornament of the village : she fell, at the age of eighteen, a patient victim to an epidemical fever, piously exhorting her sister Arabella to supply her loss. The heedless Arabella promised much ;

* “ *Attraction* means something *natural*—*allurement* something *artificial*.

“ *Attractions* are amiable in themselves, *allurements* odious.” See “ Observations on the *Difference* of Words *esteemed* synonymous.”

too

too much, indeed, for mortal to perform; but all her words and actions were tinged with extravagance and romantic enthusiasm. She became immoderately fond of books (which had been but sparingly allowed by the prudent Henrietta), and her nightly readings too often broke in upon the morning hours, which, by depriving her of natural rest, rendered her unfit for the early exertions of the day. The poor little children used to rise at their accustomed hour; and, sometimes playing, and sometimes crying, wait the time of Arabella's rising, which was generally too late to prepare them properly for school; from which they were so frequently detained by the indolence of their sister, that, by degrees, they became unwilling to go at all. Their clean and shining locks, which Henrietta had so often affectionately twirled round her industrious fingers, became soiled and coarse for want of attention. Their elbows came through their coats, and their whole attire was unseemly. In such a state was this now deplorable family,

E

when

when a set of itinerant players came into the village.

The unhappy children were obliged to live on coarse fare, that Arabella might go often to the play, where her romantic affections were soon placed on the ignorant *Romeo* of the company. I know not by what means he discovered her sentiments; but, before the players left the village, they were married; and *Romeo* insisting that his *Juliet* should partake of the sorrows of theatrical perambulations, she was obliged to obey; therefore, packing up the whole of her small wardrobe, she bade a long adieu to her sister and brothers, who were left to the care of the parish.

I chose to select this story from humble life; had I gone many degrees higher, the same inference might have been drawn.

Think not that I wish entirely to check your love of reading; I only advise you to
take

take *discretion* for your guide, and you will not then be misled. Modern female readers are too apt to forget their grammars and dictionaries, without which they may read for years, and yet make but little progress in learning. *A great reader* being asked why she did not accept the invitation of a friend, replied, “ I should have *went*, but only I was *a* reading such a pretty book, that I could not attend to *no* invitation *whatsoever*.” When I advise the dictionary as your literary companion, I wish you to use it as the lamp of knowledge, but let it not light you to pedantry. Attend, I entreat you, to the following quotation :

“ Art thou lettered, let not the difficulty of thy speech puzzle the ignorant ; lest, instead of admiring thy knowledge, they condemn thee for pride and affectation.

“ Yet let thy words be choice, as the matter of thy speech ; nor pervert the elegance
 E 2 “ of

“ of thy phrase to suit the gross apprehension
 “ of the weak and injudicious.

“ *Perspicuity* will never force thee to be in-
 “ delicate, nor to forget thou shouldst support
 “ the elegance of a woman *.”

Though I have, in the course of this letter, evinced that my sentiments are in unison with those who think novels are, in general, pernicious; yet I am certain there are a variety of publications equally dangerous, though much less suspected; indeed it is wrong to suffer the mind to dwell intensely on one kind of reading, be it what it may; and even religion, too closely pursued by an injudicious reader, may be productive of fatal consequences: perhaps I have done wrong to assert this opinion: few young people require a check on religious subjects; for, much to their disgrace, it is the only subject on which they seem *desirous* of

* Whole Duty of Woman.

remain-

remaining ignorant; but as there are *some* who pursue it with the most laudable motives, it may not be amiss to conduct the thoughts of such persons into their proper channel. An enthusiastic devotee is a superstitious character, and superstition is an enemy to religion. A youthful understanding may not have discriminating powers sufficient to discern the difference; I therefore refer you to Dr. Johnson's *Rambler*, Vol. I. where you will find them finely contrasted in a most beautiful allegory. The *Rambler* is a work which I may recommend without injuring you; it is replete with important instruction. The story of Seged, Lord of Ethiopia, who set apart ten days for happiness, justly exemplifies the fallacy of all human appointments, and should teach us "never to extend our hopes beyond the bounds of probability."

Adieu, my dear young friend! In your choice of *books*, as well as of *companions*, "consider and beware; for she who would avoid

“ sorrow must be wary in her steps ; and she
“ who would shun misfortune, must be care-
“ ful to take *wisdom* for her companion *.”

With every wish for your advancement in
useful knowledge,

I remain, &c.

* Riley's Choice Emblems.

LET-

LETTER V.

To Mrs. * * *.

ON CLANDESTINE MARRIAGES.



YOUR letter reached my hands at the moment of my return from visiting your afflicted mother, whose extreme grief, caused by your misconduct, has so powerfully engaged my feelings, that if I have any compassion to bestow on your sufferings, it is not sufficient to prompt a compliance with your request. Indeed I am much surprised that you should fix on me as your pleader, when you have so long known my disapprobation of *clandestine* marriages. You have never, I flatter myself, before this letter, had reason to think me se-

vere ; and even now I would willingly search for palliatives ; for, whatever the offence,

“ I always pity where I can ;”

and might have been subdued by your entreaties, had I not seen your tender mother ; but, after such an interview, my pen can only mark the dictates of displeasure.

“ Your husband,” you tell me, “ is the best man in the world.” He is then much reformed ; he certainly was not the best man in the world when he taught you to stray from your *duty* ; to quit the *once happy* family you dwelt with, and prevailed with you to consent to a contract which has brought your amiable mother into a declining state. Such artifice is beneath the dignity even of a man whose merit is many degrees *below* the *best* ; therefore your superlative encomium has not enhanced my respect for his character ; on the contrary, I believe you will find, that your father’s house (if he forgives you) will at last be the sad refuge of a *deserted* wife.

In

In order more effectually to engage my compassion, and induce me to intercede with your parents, you entreat me “not to turn a reluctant ear to an unfortunate young woman, whose greatest error is that of having followed the dictates of *nature*.” I cannot be drawn over to your side by such kind of pleading, because my opinion of nature’s dictates differ so widely from what you have advanced in excuse, that your conduct appears to me a *revolt* against nature rather than obedience to her dictates; and as circumstances urge me to deal plainly with you, I leave out the word *nature*, and substitute that of *inclination*, which you have precipitately followed. *Nature* was not once consulted, or she would have told you to incline to the tender admonitions of your affectionate mother; nature never prompted a child to be undutiful; but, on the contrary, “marks for her own” all those who sacrifice their wayward inclinations to the exalted duties of filial obedience and love.

You

You are not unacquainted with the interesting story of RUTH the Moabitess, nor can you read it without perceiving that the brightest part of her character was her love of Naomi, who was only her *mother-in-law*; it is, I think, impossible to read without wishing to emulate her tenderness when she exclaims, “Entreat
 “me not *to leave thee*, nor to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest
 “I will go; and where thou lodgest I will
 “lodge; thy people shall be my people, and
 “thy God my God.” And in Thomson’s charming transcript of RUTH (the dutiful Lavinia) the same virtues shine forth in all their lustre. Lavinia, it is true, was not insensible to the attractions of Palemon, but love was subordinate to duty; she only *blush’d consent*; and, as an exalted mind is above the meanness of clandestine proceedings,

“The news *immediate* to her *mother* brought.”

I am persuaded, that a mind dignified as Lavinia’s was by every feminine virtue must
 have

have felt far less gratification in the possession of riches and honours, even though conferred upon her by her elegant and amiable lover Palemon, than in the happy reflection, that her uniformly dutiful conduct was the comfort and support of her aged parent. We read, that when the mother of Lavinia heard of the approaching happiness of her child,

“ Joy seiz’d her wither’d veins; and one bright

“ gleam

“ Of *setting* life shone on her *evening* hours.”

I will not paint the contrast by a full description of the state in which I this morning found your afflicted mother: if you have not entirely lost the sensibility I once thought you possessed, you will *feel* the unhappy difference.

I must now take notice of a passage in your letter, wherein you make use of another (but equally ineffectual) argument, by way of excusing the rash step you have taken. You tell me, “ you are *firmly* convinced, that there is
“ a ruling

“ a ruling fatality which directs *all marriages* ;
 “ and that, as it is impossible to fly from fate,
 “ it will be *cruelty* in your parents, who once
 “ were so fond of you, if they continue to with-
 “ hold their forgiveness.”

As I always decline, as much as possible, religious and political controversy, I shall not *oppose* your assertion ; but upon the foundation of your own opinion, of which *you* are *firmly convinced*, endeavour to reconcile *fate* and *duty*.

You will certainly allow, that the only ruler of fate is the Supreme Being, and that he has given us a commandment which says, “ Honour thy father and thy mother ;” which, in other words, is, love them ; obey them ; follow their *reasonable* advice ; and endeavour, by thy conduct, to make them happy. Is it consistent with the wisdom or justice of the Almighty, that he should *command* us to do that which he has *decreed* impossible ? If your marriage with Mr. M*** was ordained by an *unavoidable decree*, the interference of your parents could not

not have prevented it, why then was it clandestine? Knowing (according to your own creed) that so it *must* be, should you not, for the sake of your reputation, if nothing more, have endeavoured to have had your union sanctioned by parental approbation; assuring yourself, that in order to bring about such a decree, and make it consistent with the commandment also, Heaven would have inclined your parents (had you consulted them) to consent to your marriage? So that you find I should still disapprove of your disobedience, even were I to allow the fatality you insist on. But let me advise you, in future, not to impute every wrong action to fatal necessity; nor say, that you could not see the precipice till your foot slipped; for Providence

“ Has given us in this *dark estate*
 “ To *see* the *good* from *ill*,
 “ And, binding *nature* fast in *fate*,
 “ Left *free* the *human will*.”

I shall

I shall quit the last subject with this slight observation ; that your opinion of matrimonial fatality is of a very recent date. I am persuaded, that, before you married, you never gave yourself a moment's thought, whether matrimony was directed by *fate* or *chance* ; and have now only adopted a notion of the former, because it answers your purpose of palliation, of which your letter chiefly consists ; for indeed the sum total is this : “ Your husband is “ the best man in the world—you have only “ followed the dictates of nature—and your “ marriage was predetermined by fate.” These you thought unanswerable excuses ; but they have no weight with me, and I hope you will suppress them in future, at least in the presence of the younger branches of your father's family, lest such sophistry, working upon the youthful inclinations of their hearts, should prompt them to act as you have done, and so “ bring down the grey hairs of your parents with sorrow to the grave ;” while you, with stoic insensibility, exclaim—Not by my
mis-

misconduct have these misfortunes happened, but by the *unavoidable decrees of fate*.

I cannot close this letter without noticing that part of your's wherein you say, "it will be *cruel* in your parents, who once were so fond of you, if they continue to withhold their forgiveness." Why do you say, "who *once* were so fond;" unfortunately for them, it is the affection they *still* have for you which makes their grief so sharp: what kind of fondness do you look for? Do you expect them to *caress* you for your *disobedience*? As to their forgiveness, I am persuaded they will extend it to you; religion and *nature* will incline them to it; but their forgiveness should be a subject of humiliation to you, inasmuch as it will exalt their characters; and thus far I promise from myself, that though I decline the task you have required, of becoming your *pleader*, humanity will prevent me from exaggerating your fault.

Novels are almost universally condemned as the principal incitements to romantic love and clandestine marriages; but what is to be said in the present instance? Novels have always, by you, been held in contempt; though there are many which would have taught you better conduct; for you have acted like the heroine of a very inferior novel indeed; few of those books *recommend*, though they *relate*, clandestine proceedings; however, they should be read but seldom, and then with extreme caution; an antidote is not always at hand against the poison imbibed by their too frequent use.

There is another incentive to thoughtless romantic marriages, as powerful as the study of novels; I mean the indulgence of epistolary correspondences between young ladies of the same age, who no sooner leave school, or private tuition, than they think themselves entitled to receive admirers. Their thoughts, conversation, and letters, are engrossed by one subject, which is en-

cou-

couraged on either side till it forms, as it were, a novel between them, the catastrophe of which is always *romantic*, and sometimes fatal. I am sorry to say, that you are an instance of this truth; had you chosen (as Mrs. Chapone advises) a lady of twenty-six, instead of sixteen, for your confidant, her more mature judgment would have pointed out to you the errors you were precipitating yourself into. Restraint might not have been pleasant at the time, but you would have thanked her in future for her reasonable advice.

I will suppose, for a moment, a young lady relating to her romantic confidant the misfortune of her ill-timed marriage; which, to give it the air of a novel, she begins with an interjection, as thus: “*Oh!* my dear Maria! pity the unhappy state of your friend, who is suffering under the severity of paternal displeasure; yet what, alas! is my crime, that my parents refuse to see me—to acknowledge me as their daughter—I, who never, till now, gave them cause to complain, and have only disobeyed
F
them

them in marrying the amiable object of my affections, whose poverty is his only fault. But I will throw myself at the feet of my dear and once indulgent mother ; she will not, she cannot refuse to pardon her penitent child, but will enfold me in her maternal embrace, and become my advocate with my inveterate, but nevertheless much-loved, father ; and all will yet be well.”

Such are the rhapsodies of which youthful female correspondences are generally composed. While single, their letters are full of the attentions of admirers, and the cruelty of opposing parents ; when married, the romance is still carried on, and the style of the novel kept up, till penury draws back the veil, and discovers the instability of such romantic friendships ; which, as they originate in a selfish indulgence of disclosing intrigue, are at an end the moment misfortune on either side begins ; and the married heroine is left alone to deplore a miserable situation, which her own misconduct,

duct, with the aid of a young, inexperienced, romantic friend, so precipitately led her into.

I have written a very long letter (or rather treatise), and, I fear, to very little purpose; for it is too probable you will not feel the truth of my sentiments, till, at some future period, your own daughter, perhaps, regardless of your grief, may act as you have done; and then you will know, by sorrowful experience,

“How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is

“To have a thankless child.”

I am well aware that my letter will be termed *severe*; but I am addressing a person who seldom stands *self-accused* in any erroneous instance, and thinks she has a *right* to be pardoned whenever she chooses to deviate from duty.

The mother of your romantic correspondent has shewn me a letter you wrote her a short time since, wherein are these words: “If

“ my enraged father could be brought to a
 “ sense of his unjust severity, and would settle
 “ a trifling annuity on my beloved husband,
 “ it would enable him to go into business;
 “ which, for my sake, I am sure he would
 “ attend to with indefatigable assiduity, and
 “ then there would be nothing wanting to
 “ make our happiness complete.” Deluded
 Marian! how can you talk of complete hap-
 piness when you have made your friends mi-
 serable? And how can you expect your worthy
 and justly displeased father will settle an annuity
 on a man, who has already squandered away,
 in the meanest pursuits, all that his late father
 bestowed upon him for the best purposes.
 Poverty is no disgrace to a man, when un-
 foreseen misfortunes have caused it; but when
 idleness and extravagance are the cause, it
 renders him an object of contempt.

In another part of your letter to your *ac-*
quaintance (for I shall not style her *friend*), you
 tell her, you build your hope of success with
 me on the favourable opinion I gave of Miss

E***’s

E***'s run-away match, as you ludicrously call it. I certainly did, in many instances, defend her conduct; but I cannot draw the least comparison between her marriage and your's; her worthy but unfortunate lover had been received by her father as his daughter's future husband: he was caressed as a son by her mother, and his manly virtues *won* the heart of the amiable Miss E***; and as a train of admirers does no honour to a woman, she encouraged *none* but him. At length, by a variety of unforeseen misfortunes, his circumstances were so impaired, that he soon became an object of *no value* in the eyes of her avaricious father, who no longer permitted him to visit his daughter, to whom he proposed another admirer of ample fortune. Virtuous affection, founded on principles of honour, and once sanctioned by paternal approbation, can never be rooted from the heart while the object who excites it lives unmarried; and had Miss E*** obeyed the command of her father in marrying the second person proposed,

it would have been sacrificing the greater duty to the lesser. The strictest duty to parents does not enjoin children to obey when vice prompts the parent to command: if a father commands his son to steal, God has said, “Thou *shalt not* ;” which then is he to obey? —Thus have I endeavoured to shew, that Miss E*** is not to be placed on a parallel with yourself, though she married unknown to her father; he had once (you will remember) consented to her union, and had no just cause to retract.

One observation more, and I will conclude this long epistle. Miss E*** married the first and only object of her affections; however, that alone would not have engaged me on her side; but it is an additional excuse for her when compared with you, who eloped with a *secondary* admirer; be assured, if a lady can conquer a first attachment, provided it be sincere, she will find much less difficulty in overcoming the second, particularly when the
paternal

paternal home is furnished with so many blessings as your's was ; for cheerfulness, peace, and *contentment*, in every breast but your's, were the family characteristics. Had you been under the dominion of tyrannical parents, your fault would have been *pardonable* (though not *praise-worthy*) ; but you were protected by the most tender friends, whose chief delight has ever been that of promoting the *rational* happiness of their children. You could entertain no fears of being *constrained* to give your hand where your heart could not be an accompaniment ; and therefore gratitude for such indulgence should have prompted you to have relinquished your infatuated choice ; which, being (as I before observed) only *secondary*, time, prudence, and absence, would have enabled you to have conquered.

I shall now release you from the mortification of reading comments, which I am sorry you ever gave me cause to write ; and as romantic young ladies think that friendship con-

sists in excusing each other's failings, and condoling on matrimonial troubles brought on by themselves, you will hardly believe me sincere, when, after such a letter of opposition, I subscribe myself

Your *Friend*.

LET.

LETTER V.

AND LAST.



DEAR LADIES,*

PERHAPS you have never yet heard the observation, that “*trifles* make the sum “ of human things.” Let it now come under your serious consideration ; and when you reflect that *trifles* have given you pleasure, and that *trifles* have been productive of pain, I hope the reflection will so far influence your conduct as to deter you from trifling with the sensibility of others. We need not be *told*, that one of the great duties of society is reciprocity of kind offices, since our own feel-

* This letter was originally addressed to two young ladies ; with some trivial alterations I now address it to my pupils in general.

ings,

ings, if we make a charitable use of them, are sufficient to direct us. When a gentleman and lady invite a party, they should, for the time, consider that party as their own family ; every one of which has an equal claim to their attention : yet how frequently is it seen, that *one* at a table engrosses the peculiar assiduities of the entertainer, while *another* equally, or perhaps more, deserving, is almost forgotten, seldom addressed, and but coolly assisted. That person who (having invited company) treats one guest as a *superior*, and another little better than a *menial*, wants both *understanding* and *humanity*.

Time will only allow me to make short comments on the different instances wherein mutual attentions should be shewn to each other in our intercourse with society. You may extend them by observation and reflection. Having expressed my disapprobation of *partial* hospitality, and *pointed inhospitality to* visitors, I shall say a few words on a fault of equal magnitude too often committed *by* them. It
is

is not uncommon, after an entertainment, for *envy* to disperse her remarks among her too credulous *listeners*, who, in *retailing*, are always careful that her noxious communications shall not suffer the least diminution. “ We waited long after the appointed time for dinner at Mr. E***’s,” she will say, “ which was very illy dressed at last ; and I do assure you, there was a turkey, which had been kept so long, *stript of its feathers I suppose*, that really it was quite offensive. Mrs. E*** blushed excessively, as well she might, when I gave my plate with its nauseous contents to the servant, after just tasting a little of the sauce. To be sure she made many apologies, which were quite ridiculous, since she must have known it was not fit to eat. Except the turkey, there was a profusion of *good* things on the table ; indeed I may say an *extravagant* superfluity, considering the impoverished circumstances of Mr. and Mrs. E***, who had much better be saving a little for their young family than imitating their superiors by making such entertainments.”

Such, with the most unprovoked additions, are the harsh misrepresentations of *envy*; how different from those of *charity* on the same occasion! “ I dined,” saith she, “ with Mr. and Mrs. E*** last week; a large party was invited, and all were equal sharers of the benevolent hospitality of the entertainers, who were entitled to the gratitude of all who were present for the pains they took to make every one happy. Poor Mrs. E***! how distressed I was for her at dinner: she had been in London several days, and, during her absence, a turkey had been sent her, which the cook (thinking it would be an additional treat) prepared for dinner, without the knowledge of her mistress, who arrived from town but an hour before the party met, and was much delighted to find her servant had been so thoughtful; but unfortunately it was not so good as my friend had hoped: however, it was soon demolished, and I saw but one lady who put it aside. I imagine she was not fond of turkey, and no doubt was much hurt when she observed that the removal of her plate severely affected the sensibility of

Mrs.

Mrs. E * * *, whose colour rose and retired so rapidly, that I feared she would have fainted. Mr. and Mrs. E * * * are not in such good circumstances as formerly, and their entertainments are much less frequent ; but having received a munificent present from an affluent relation, their good hearts were doubly cheered by sharing it with their friends." Learn from these observations, which you will have reason to subscribe to through life, that while envy is traducing the person who lavishes comforts on her, " charity *thinketh* no evil."

Charity and *politeness* are so cemented in the bonds of amity, that they cannot easily be separated, yet they are often in need of a friend to introduce them, since an ostentatious *giver* of *gifts* frequently usurps the place of the *former*, and cringing *ceremony* the latter ; however, as *Minerva* * has lately been consulted by our sex on the *exterior* of the head, there is reason to hope for a reform in the *interior*,

* Alluding to the *Minerva* bonnet.

which,

which, as far as *outside appearances* can discover, has been long under the dominion of *folly* *.

If

* The *folly* by which our sex has so long been governed, particularly in drefs, is manifestly proved by a late publication, entitled “ An Address to the Ladies, by a young Man.” I sincerely hope his spirited and very requisite advice will have the intended effect. No lady could with propriety have written as he has done; or, if she could, the reproof would have had no weight. It would have been imputed to *envy*, to *gravity*, or to *prudery*. Or even if written by a *gentleman* advanced in years, the giddy votaries of fashion might have said, “ of what consequence are these reproofs to us? We dress to attract the *young*, and, if they approve, we care not.” But when ladies find that the *young*, for whom they dress, are disgusted with their defiance of decency, there is some hope of reformation; for, believe me, the sentiments of this writer are the sentiments of *all sensible men*. It has been said, that his first edition was too severe. I did not see the first; but I will venture to say, there is no severity in the second. It is spirited, as it ought to be; for mild reproof and distant hints have long been tried in vain.

When

If we apply to the *goddess* of *wisdom*, she will instruct us how to distinguish the *true* from the *false* ; she will tell us, that

“ *Charity* ! decent, modest, easy, kind,
 “ Softens the high, and rears the abject mind ;
 “ Knows with just reins and gentle hand to guide
 “ Betwixt vile shame and arbitrary pride.
 “ Not soon *provok’d*, she easily *forgives* ;
 “ And much she suffers, as she much believes.
 “ Soft peace she brings wherever she arrives ;
 “ She builds our quiet as she forms our lives ;
 “ Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,
 “ And opens in each breast a little heaven.”

She will also tell us, that “ true *politeness*
 “ is an evenness of soul that excludes, at the
 “ same time, insensibility and too much ear-
 “ nestness. It supposes a quick discernment
 “ of the different characters, tempers, mis-
 “ ries, or perfections of man ; and, by a sweet

When I prepared for the compositor a preceding letter on the subject of dress, I had not seen the above-mentioned work ; I am much pleased to see the topic enlarged upon by so able a writer.

“ con-

“ condescension, adapts itself to each man’s
 “ case ; never to *flatter*, but always to *calm*
 “ the passions. It is a kind of forgetting one’s
 “ self, in order to be agreeable to others ; yet
 “ in so delicate a manner, as scarcely to let
 “ them perceive you are so employed. It
 “ knows how to contradict with respect, and
 “ to praise without fawning or adulation ;
 “ and is equally remote from an *insipid com-*
 “ *plaisance* and a *low familiarity*.”

Having now given you, in the words of two
 competent authors, a definition of *charity* and
politeness, I hope you will in future do honour
 to them only in their *real* characters ; for, on
 the evening of Mr. E***’s ball, you were
 paying *undue* respect to two impostors, who,
 having picked up one or two of the characte-
 ristics of the amiable personages they *mis-re-*
 presented, decorated themselves therewith, and
 thus came masked to the ball. Your kind
 opinion of them was by no means reprehens-
 ible ; it was praiseworthy, because you be-
 lieved them to be in reality the characters they
 attempted

attempted to personate; but, had you before known how to distinguish, you would have observed their failure in a variety of instances. Had the lady who gave half a crown to a poor man as she stepped from her carriage been *Charity*, she would not have kicked the little dog, which, to escape the pursuit of some hard-hearted boys, crouched at her feet for protection; and had her companion, who entered the ball-room with *studied phrases* and innumerable *curtsies*, shaking one by the hand, and complimenting another, been *Politeness*, she would not scornfully have turned from a young lady of *inferior birth*, who with extreme gentleness inquired concerning the health of her family. True *charity* and true *politeness* are never inconsistent; for which reason, those who artfully assume their characters are easily detected by an attentive observer.

Dr. Gregory, in his Advice to his Daughters, says, “ Do not confine your charity to
“ giving money. You may have many op-

“portunities of shewing a compassionate spirit
 “where your money is not wanted.”

If the lady before mentioned had been charitably inclined, she would have petitioned her father not to pursue his intention of pulling down a pleasant cottage belonging to Widow S***, in order to enlarge his grounds; instead of which, she unfeelingly said, “I hope,
 “Sir, you will soon put that project in execution; for I long to see a beautiful canal
 “meandering in the valley where that shabby
 “cottage now stands; and, indeed, Mrs. S***
 “and her children have been so troublesome
 “of late, that I shall not be easy ’till they are
 “turned out. They had the confidence
 “yesterday to interrupt me in my walk, and
 “petition me to intercede in their behalf;
 “Mrs. S*** telling me, that she believed the
 “removal would be the death of her; adding,
 “that during the life of her husband it was the
 “humble abode of happiness; and that since
 “his death, her only consolation, next to the
 “tendernefs of her children, was in the soli-
 “tary

“ tary employment of nurturing the shrubbery
 “ which he had planted, and in contemplating
 “ the progress of his former industry.—And
 “ then she began to *cry*, which obliged me to
 “ tell her, I thought the indulgence of such
 “ feelings was very improper in a person of
 “ her mean station ; and that she ought, in
 “ her early days, to have been taught sub-
 “ mission to her superiors : however, out of
 “ compassion, I offered her half a guinea,
 “ which she haughtily refused ; telling me,
 “ that money could not purchase another ha-
 “ bitation like the lov’d cottage she must leave,
 “ and therefore she would not accept my
 “ bounty.”

This unfeeling discourse, at which I be-
 lieve, ladies, you were not present, was in-
 terrupted by a gentleman from the ball-room,
 who came to request her hand for the next
 dance. The insensibility of this *oppressor*, and
 the forlorn state of the *oppressed*, brought on a
 train of reflections in my mind, that neither

the enchanting sound of sweet music, nor the hilarity of the company, could check.

These are they, thought I, “ who devour
 “ widows houses :” and these are such as Dr.
 Goldsmith has in vain reprov'd in his exquisi-
 tely beautiful poem, *The Deserted Village*.
 I say *in vain*, because those who have read his
 works have not profited by the following
 pointed lines :

“ Where then, ah! where, shall poverty reside
 “ To 'scape the pressure of *contiguous pri'e*?
 “ If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd,
 “ He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
 “ Those fenceless fields the *sons of wealth* divide,
 “ And e'en the *bare-worn common* is deny'd *.”

And

* I hope the insertion of the above lines, and consequent observations, will not give scope to the malevolence of those who indulge themselves, invectively, against every gentleman who, perhaps, without the least thought of oppression, wishes to add an acre or two to his grounds. Whenever I hear a person exclaiming—“ What! are the poor to be deprived of
 “ every comfort to support the luxury of the rich?” &c.

I al-

And again, when deploring the banishment of a family, he says,

“ Good Heav’n ! what sorrows gloom’d that parting
“ day

“ That call’d them from their *native walks* away ;

“ When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,

“ *Hung round their towers*, and fondly look’d their
“ last.”

To

I always suspect that some private pique against the Encloser instigates his seeming compassion ; for, alas ! the middling class of society, at times, oppress the poor as much as the rich do ; and few have so much feeling as to stand forth the champions of the oppressed, except they feel some resentment themselves against the oppressor ; and seldom, very seldom, has the boaster any legal title to the virtues of which he boasts. I do not say, that a *disinterested* friend is *never* to be found : I should, indeed, be most ungrateful if I did ; having (jointly with a dear relation) experienced, in the early part of my life, that most invaluable blessing at a time when it was most needed, and never will its consequences be erased from my memory.

Let the above subject, however, be properly considered, and it will surely be acknowledged, that a

To quit, even with an advantageous prospect, a dwelling to which we have been long accustomed, and to which domestic happiness, or domestic misfortunes, have chained either our affections or memory, is always painful ; but to be *exiled* by the pride of others from the “ seats of our youth,” is next to heart-breaking.

He who “ indignant spurns the cottage from “ the green,” endeavours to excuse his severity by saying, “ it is but a *hovel* ; the family will live much more comfortably in “ another place.” That may be the plea of

village may sometimes be a gainer by the enlargement of a gentleman's grounds ; since the number of workmen employed in such alterations must certainly afford more assistance to poor families, than the scanty pittance drawn from the privilege of keeping a few geese or sheep on “ the bare-worn common.” Let not the encloser, therefore, be condemned, except (as in the instance of the widow before mentioned) severity and oppression be exercised ; then, indeed, however high his station, he is an object deserving contempt.

the

the usurper, but is seldom the opinion of the banished family. The love of home is not to be deracinated; and Goldsmith, in his description of the mountaineers of Swisserland, makes the following observation :

“ Dear is that *shed* to which his soul conforms,
 “ And dear that *hill* which *lifts* him to the *storms*.

* * * * *

“ While the rude *torrent* and the *whirl-wind's* roar
 “ But bind him to his *native* mountains more.”

In a charming poem, entitled “ Local Attachments,” this adherence to home, whether in humble or exalted life, is naturally and affectingly exemplified in a variety of interesting instances; among which the Winchester school-boy is not the least.

It would, however, be injustice to people of fortune, many of whom have hearts expanding with benevolence, not to bring some examples of humanity, where power could have been exerted in depriving the peasantry of comfort.

I once had the honour of calling *friend* a gentleman *, whose mind was so replete with philanthropy, that it might be truly said of him,

“ He gathered blifs to see his neighbours blest.”

* “ Michael Collinson, Esq. who, like his father,
 “ Peter Collinson, Esq. long an eminent member of
 “ the Royal Society, was distinguished for his know-
 “ ledge in natural history, and for the attention he
 “ paid to botanical subjects in particular. From his
 “ generally well-informed mind, and polished man-
 “ ners, his company was much esteemed by persons
 “ of the first eminence; and to his more intimate
 “ friends he was endeared by his remarkably engaging
 “ attention to them, as well as by his benevolence
 “ and liberality. His enjoyment of the latter part of
 “ his life was much interrupted, and toward the close
 “ of it almost subverted, by a series of painful disor-
 “ ders, which he sustained with exemplary patience,
 “ resignation, and fortitude !”

The above just traits of his character appeared in the Chronicle shortly after his decease; inserted, I imagine, by the desire of an affectionate relation.

Once

Once, when conversing with him on the beauty of his grounds, I noticed, in particular, the grove of elms before his house. “It
 “is very pleasant,” he replied; and added, “I
 “could enclose it, but I never will; for I
 “derive higher gratification from seeing my
 “neighbours enjoy it, than I should do if it
 “were added to my garden.” But the generosity of this estimable character was still more extensive: the timid hare found in his garden a refuge from its pursuers; and even the sparrows were suffered to steal the seeds with impunity. “There is enough for them and
 “me,” I have heard him say; and indeed there was found produce enough for many families in the village to partake of; for munificence could not exceed his.

In the dispensations of his bounty he discovered an elegant and exalted understanding; for, though “to soften the calamities of man-
 “kind, and inspire gladness into an oppressed
 “heart, is the noblest privilege of an enlarged
 “fortune, yet there are few who know how
 “to

“ to exercise that privilege in all its generous
“ refinements: I have seen charity (says the
“ author I am now quoting), if *charity* it
“ might be called, *insult* with an air of *pity*,
“ and *wound* at the same time that it *healed*;
“ but I have also seen the highest munificence
“ dispensed with the most refined tendernefs,
“ and bounty conferred with as much address
“ as the most artful could employ in soliciting
“ a favour*.”

Had the worthy friend, whose name I have just recorded, been now living, I should have suppressed encomium, lest it might have been considered as flattery; but, as he is no more!—it is only a just tribute of gratitude due to his memory.

Having imperceptibly deviated from my first intention, I cannot return to the subject which induced me to address you, till I have engaged your attention awhile to another character, of

* Fitzosborne's Letters.

whose

whose benevolent distribution of pleasure to others I have been myself a witness and partaker.

In the year 1782, the tender indulgence of a very estimable lady afforded me an opportunity of passing some pleasant weeks at Bath, Bristol, and Stour Head: at the latter, my generous entertainer fixed her abode for a fortnight; and every day we enjoyed the luxury of rambling uncontrouled about the spacious and beautiful grounds belonging to Mr. Hoare, the banker. With an amiable young companion, of whom I shall speak hereafter, I have passed in the Turkish Pavillion the early morning hours; have been sheltered in the cool Grotto on the river Stour from the sultry heat of noon; and have bidden adieu to “parting day” in the Temple of the Sun at eve.

To describe the beauties of that delightful seat is entirely out of my power; I saw and felt them all; but description must be left to abler pens than mine: indeed it is not requisite
to

to my present purpose, which is to instil into the minds of young ladies such a respect for characters distinguished for *diffusive benevolence*, as may induce them to *imitate* while they *revere*.

I hope the amiable and much-valued lady I have alluded to will pardon me for the liberty I have taken in thus inserting, without permission, a line or two of her poem on the beauties of Stour Head.

After a just and elegant description of that enchanting spot, together with some interesting traits of the owner's character, the following lines, applicable to my present subject, occur :

“ Yet these sweet shades to him would be impair'd,
 “ *Benevolence* so truly rules his mind,
 “ Unless with *all* their rural charms he shar'd,
 “ For, like his soul, his *walks* are unconfin'd.”

The extent of the above mentioned grounds is *seven* miles; that part more particularly
 called

called Pleasure Grounds is about *three* ; and throughout the whole there was not a *fastened* gate.

What is remarkable, there was not a vestige of plebeian depredation, nor so much as a cropt flower to be seen: no doubt the peasantry felt the value of their privileges, and acted so as to deserve their continuance.

Whatever I have advanced in the course of this letter on the pride and oppression of high life, I think those vices of equal, if not greater, magnitude in the lower ranks of society: a proud man or woman who have been *educated*, may one day be convinced of their failings by books, by advice, or by adversity; but the low, *uneducated* proud, whose *ignorance* is always accompanied by *obstinacy*, are like untamed brutes, and over them *reason* has no power. If low by birth, low in manners, and low in station, the school of adversity is no school for them; and if the wheel of fortune turns in their favour, they become what

is vulgarly, but very justly, called *purse-proud*; and from the purse-proud *low*, what is it that sensibility, humility, meekness, and misfortune, do not suffer?

It is now requisite that I should go back to the evening of the ball, as I have another observation to make on the character you thought so polite.

What I am going to remark, you may probably think very *trifling*; but recollect the beginning of my letter, and you will find it accord with my first intention.

The humble young lady from whom Miss H*** scornfully turned at her entrance, had chosen for her dance “The Flowers of Edinburgh,” which she went through with peculiar ease and grace; the party followed, and at length Miss H*** came down the lines, making intentional mistakes in her way, and then laughing affectedly at the *impossibility* of attending to such a tedious figure. Just as she
was

was passing the amiable girl she meant to insult, she said, “ I wonder who chose this dance? “ It is absolutely so unfashionably long, that “ really one had need have the constitution of “ a dairy-maid to go down it.” And when she had concluded, she desired the next couple not to choose a dance with the figure *bay*, for that it was too vulgar to be introduced in a genteel company. A friend, the next day, compassionating the persecuted young lady for such undeserved ill treatment, she sensibly replied, “ It did not affect me ; I have met with so “ many real troubles, that I should be ashamed “ to be even discomposed at the poor efforts of “ envy and vanity so contemptible.”

Young ladies, when they accept an invitation, should remember, that there are mutual duties in society, that require them to *oblige* as well as to be *obliged* ; and therefore if, at a ball, they like, for the sake of *fashion*, to choose a *short* dance, they should, for the sake of *politeness*, condescend to the taste of others, who, to shew that *they are not slaves to fashion*, or,

3

for

for the *sake* of a *tune*, may with as much propriety choose a *long* one ; and I would advise them never to contend about the gentility or vulgarity of a figure ; for whether we dance *triangularly*, *circularly*, or choose to form in our movements the almost banished figure 8, if we perform our motions with ease and good-humour, we shall approach much nearer to gentility than the fashionable disputer who is depriving a company of innocent enjoyment, merely to maintain a ridiculous opinion, that to form a *double* ring is not so genteel as a *single* one. How much happier are parties where all, reciprocally, strive

“ To please—are pleas’d—who *give* to *gain* esteem,
 “ Till seeming blest, they grow to what they seem.”

Thus, dear Ladies, have I endeavoured to point out the necessity of attending to *trifles*, as well as to circumstances which are, *comparatively*, of more importance, in our communications with society ; and, lest you should again be induced, by false appearances, to

pay

pay that respect to ostentation which is only due to virtue, I advise you, in future, to make observations (but not censoriously) on the *consistency* of characters; and by that criterion you may safely form your judgment, and select your friends.

I will not say adieu, till I have given you the promised anecdote of the young lady *, my companion at Stour Head; for, though it is foreign from the general tenor of this letter, yet, as it affords me an opportunity of recording a proof of duty to a parent (a virtue I have always endeavoured to inculcate) I shall make no apology for the insertion.

This amiable child was not quite fourteen, when, with great regret, I parted with her at Bristol, on her entrance at Miss More's school. She had a mind well informed, a disposition truly engaging, and a capacity equal to the

* Miss O'Keefe.

attainment of whatever she undertook. Music, which she had an invincible desire of learning, was (I know not for what reason) denied. A naval officer, who had a high respect for her family, heard her lament the painful prohibition : he said to her, “ You *shall* learn, my
 “ dear. Perhaps your mamma thinks the
 “ expence unnecessary, therefore I will defray it,
 “ and you shall learn without the knowledge
 “ of your mother.”

“ O! no, Sir,” she replied ; “ I am very
 “ much obliged to you, very much obliged
 “ indeed ; but I cannot think of learning with-
 “ out my mama’s consent, it would be so un-
 “ dutiful.” He endeavoured to convince her by the most persuasive arguments, that there would be no impropriety in her compliance ; but, though he eloquently pleaded, and though her own desire of such an accomplishment was in unison with his persuasions, yet did this charming girl, at so early an age, combat all his arguments ; and concluded with a most
 polite

polite and steady rejection, saying, “ I shall
 “ always remember your goodness, Sir, but
 “ my mama has *forbidden*, and I wish to *obey*
 “ her.”

When she was absent, the gentleman said to me, “ What a fine understanding has that
 “ excellent girl! I think I value her more
 “ for her rejection of my proposal than I
 “ should have done had she accepted it.”

Let those young ladies, who are plotting elopements to destroy the peace of their parents, learn their duty from a child of fourteen; and they may rest assured, that the most certain way of securing the permanent respect of those who would persuade them to err, is by a steady and polite determination to follow the guidance of parental experience.

I have now, dear Ladies, accomplished my arduous undertaking; and earnestly entreating you to view in their proper light the various
 H 2 subjects

subjects of my pen, which, notwithstanding some plain rebukes, has been employed for the benefit of those I value, I subscribe myself, with sincerity,

Your faithful and affectionate Friend,

CH. PALMER.

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.



AS I wish to make this small work as useful as the short intervals of leisure will allow, I shall now add a remark or two on some of the most obvious errors which occur in almost every sentence of the inattentive speaker.

The young lady who told me she went to Mrs. *Siddon's* benefit, need not fear ridicule if she should in future add another *s* to the name. The laugh against untaught people, who say *postes*, *beastes*, &c. has made many a diffident person afraid of using the genitive case, thinking that *Siddons's*, &c. affords the same ground for

censure; but there is no impropriety in the latter, since a name that ends with *s* must always have another *s* added to it to form the genitive case, otherwise the name is abridged; for instance, to say Mrs. *Siddon's* benefit, is making the name *Siddon*.

“ The supposition that *s* denotes *his* has
 “ been sufficiently exploded; for it is added to
 “ the proper names of *women*, as *Mary's* cap,
 “ *Betsey's* ring, &c.*”

Having heard the present tense of the verb *to shew* used for the past tense and passive participle, I shall here fix each in their right places.

<i>Present Tense.</i>	<i>Past or Imperfect Tense.</i>	<i>Passive Participle.</i>
Shew,	Shewed	Shewn
or		
Show	Showed	Shown

* See Ash's and Trinder's Grammars.

Ex.

Ex. I will *shew* my work to you. She *shewed* her book to me. The curiosities were *shewn* by the gentleman who collected them.

The past tense of the verb *to draw* is as frequently out of place.

<i>Present Tense.</i>	<i>Past Tense.</i>	<i>Passive Part.</i>
Draw	Drew	Drawn

Ex. I will *draw* a bird ; I *drew* one yesterday ; but it was not *drawn* well.

Came, the past or imperfect tense of the verb *is come*, is much in fashion with illiterate people. It sounds, in the ear of the untaught, rather *genteeler* than *come* ; but let not those *, who ought to know better, use it out of place.

* *These* and *those* should not be used indiscriminately ; *these* relates to what is near, *those* to what is distant. *Ex.* You are welcome to *these* scissors (which I have in my hand), or to *those* which I left in my room ; *these* do not cut well, but *those* are very sharp.

“ I should have *came*” is wrong ; *come* is the passive participle. *Ex.* When did you *come* ? I *came* yesterday. I should have *come* the day before, but was prevented *.

* “ Lily’s Grammar lays down a good rule with respect to passive participles, that they all end in *d, t, or n*, as *fed, taught, slain*. This analogy is liable to as few exceptions as any ; and, considering how little analogy of any kind we have in the English language, it seems wrong to annihilate the few traces that may be found. It would be well, therefore, if all persons who endeavour to be accurate, would be careful to avoid a corruption at present so prevalent of saying ‘ it was *wrote*,’ for ‘ it was *written* ;’ ‘ he was *drove*,’ for ‘ he was *driven* ;’ ‘ I have *fell*,’ for ‘ I have *fallen* ;’ I have *went*,’ for ‘ I have *gone* ;’ in all which instances a verb is absurdly used to supply the passive participle, without any necessity from the *want* of such a participle.”

See *Hermes, or a Philosophical Inquiry concerning Universal Grammar*, by James Harris, Esq. See also *Trinder’s Essay* and *Devis’s Accidence*.

Come, gone, done, borne, spone, made, clung, &c. are exceptions to the above rule.

The

The conjunctions *either*, *neither*, *or*, and *nor*, are often used improperly ; *nor* should always follow *neither*, and *or*, *either*.

Ex. *Neither* thought, word, *nor* deed.

Either this *or* that.

Nor I *either*, is improper.

In the first letter I have given a hint or two relative to pronunciation, I shall therefore here only observe, that the following contractions are extremely inelegant: *certn*, *Latn*, *fortn*, *satn*, &c. for *certain*, *Latin*, *fortune*, *satin*, &c. An attention to elegant speakers is the readiest way of acquiring a graceful pronunciation.

If young ladies would attend, as they ought, to the pleasing study of their own language, the remarks I have made would be rendered superfluous ; and indeed there are so many cheap and useful books extant for their instruction, that it is a disgrace to a lady of tolerable capacity to be unacquainted with them.

Ash's

Ash's Introduction to Lowth's English
Grammar,

Dr. Trinder's Essay on English Grammar,

Ellen Devis's English Accidence,

And a late edition of Entick's Spelling
Dictionary,

are all worth the attention of adults ; but it is generally thought too childish for grown ladies to attend to books used by children at school ; therefore those who are above listening to advice, must continue to read *novels*, and remain in ignorance.

To desert our own language for the sake of another is like preferring a stranger to a friend ; and yet I am far from discouraging any acquirement : I only wish to observe, that our *friends* have the first title to our attention *.

When

* “ The importance of an English education is now
“ pretty well understood ; and it is generally acknow-
“ ledged, that not only for ladies, but for young
“ gentlemen designed merely for trade, an intimate
“ acquaintance with the proprieties and beauties of the
“ English

When a young lady tells me she is making great progress in the *French* language, and the next minute says, “this French book was *gave* “to me by the gentleman who is teaching “me,” I cannot compliment her so highly as to suppose her *French* is better than her *English*; for if she perceive not a difference in *give, gave, given*, I naturally conclude that she cannot distinguish the various significations of the following *French* words, *donnez, donner, donnerai, donné, and donne*; therefore my dear pupils,

“Let all the *foreign tongues* alone,
“Till you can read and write *your own*.”

“English tongue would be a very desirable and necessary attainment, far preferable to a *smattering* of “the learned languages.” ASH.

“Some persons make a great bustle, and tell you, “that it is impossible to spell or write good *English* “without being well acquainted with *Latin*; but we “are now quite convinced of the contrary, having a “perfect grammar of our own.” FENNING.

Since the foregoing letters were sent to the press, many passages have recurred to my recollection which I should gladly have enlarged upon for the instruction of my young readers ; therefore, though they may be a little out of place, I hope they will be no less useful if continued in the Postscript.

Among the many virtues which ennoble the human heart, *integrity* has a claim to peculiar respect. If we are once assured that it is in our friend's possession, we may safely disburden our hearts when oppressed with grief, and extend our pleasures by imparting them. There is something more than *pleasure*, there is *happiness* in disclosing affairs of consequence to an *interested* and *disinterested* friend who has understanding and prudence ; but as these brilliant virtues are not to be met with every day, young ladies should be careful how they place an implicit confidence in either sex, particularly those of their own age, whose experience is generally upon an equality with their own ; consequently advice from such,

3

how-

however well meant, is very seldom advantageous.

Dr. Gregory says, “ In the choice of your
 “ friends, have your principal regard to good-
 “ nefs of heart and *fidelity* ; if they also pos-
 “ fefs taste and genius, that will still make
 “ them more useful as companions. If you
 “ have the good fortune to meet with any
 “ who (on the above principles) deserve the
 “ name of *friends*, unbecom yourself to them
 “ with the most unsuspecting confidence. An
 “ open temper, if restrained but by tolerable
 “ prudence, will make you, on the whole, much
 “ happier than a reserved, suspicious one. But
 “ however open you may be on your own
 “ affairs, never disclose the secrets of one
 “ friend to another ; these are secret deposits
 “ which do not belong to you ; nor have you
 “ any right to make use of them.”

Our sex are particularly accused of infidelity
 respecting the confidence reposed in us---I
 think unjustly. For my own part, the affection
 of

of an amiable sister has rendered a confidant unnecessary ; yet I have so high an opinion of some ladies of my acquaintance, that I should not fear trusting them with the most important circumstances ; nor with letters of consequence *unsealed* ; indeed, if an *unsealed* letter be not as safe in the hands of a friend as a *sealed* one, that friend does not possess true honour. *Locks* and *seals* are used as securities against *dishonesty* and *curiosity* ; were honour and integrity universal there would be no occasion for either. Be not fond of disclosing your own affairs for the sake of hearing those of others, lest your curiosity *lead* you to dishonesty ; therefore “ seek not to know what
 “ is improper for thee, thirst not after prohibited knowledge, for in the acquaintance
 “ of many things lieth not wisdom, but in the
 “ knowledge of that which is meet. Let the
 “ threshold of thy neighbour’s door secure her
 “ family ; let not her window tempt thine eye
 “ to see, nor the open casement thine ear
 “ to hear the secrets of her house ; for the
 “ prying eye is a foe to itself, and the listening
 “ ear

“ ear will hear itself slandered. Art thou in-
 “ quisitive after deeds of defamation and re-
 “ proof, inquire of thyself, and thou shalt find
 “ employment within *.”

I shall conclude this instruction with a quotation from a letter of an elegant correspondent, whose sentiments are always worth recording. “ I never spread subtle nets to
 “ catch secrets, as spiders do flies ; but if they
 “ are committed to my guardianship, I con-
 “ sider them as wards in trust which demand
 “ my kindest attention and steadiest pro-
 “ tection.”

Attend to these hints, and be *faithful*.

Never indulge yourselves in *personal*, *professional*, nor *national* prejudices ; they are the failings of narrow minds. Personal beauty and personal deformity are of themselves equally incapable of dispensing comfort ; and when,

* Whole Duty of Woman.

in

in the hour of distress, we languish for the blessing of a friend, the form or complexion will be found of no consequence. Benevolence has the power of giving charms to the plainest features, while the loveliest are rendered forbidding by haughtiness and oppression. Personal attractions have, in my opinion, just the same effect as a fine picture, and are capable of exciting a little *admiration* in common with the beauties of nature, but can never create *esteem* nor respect; and those who choose a partner from external appearances *only*, discover a defective understanding.

“ Beauty soon grows familiar to the lover,
 “ Fades in his eye, and palls upon his sense.”

Reflections thrown upon *professional* gentlemen, as *physicians, lawyers, clergymen, &c.* discover a mind tainted with the love of detraction, a fault particularly ascribed to our sex. Physical gentlemen are accused of *inhumanity*; those of the law, of *dishonesty*; and the respectable clergy are, in general, termed
hypocrites,

hypocrites. Instances of such vices may certainly be found in each denomination; but that is no reason why the characters of the innocent should suffer with the guilty, nor is it an excuse for those who indulge in slander.

Knox has very justly observed, that if a physician were to feel as an interested friend does for the sufferings of his patients, he would be unfit to administer the means of relief; but that medical gentlemen are capable of sympathy when they go “to the house of mourning,” I have myself been a witness.

A few years ago a scene of extreme affliction, occasioned by a fatal disorder, happened in the family of a friend of mine. I will not enter into a detail of the melancholy circumstances, lest it should revive in the minds of the amiable surviving relatives too keen a remembrance of past sufferings; I shall, therefore, only observe, that a worthy apothecary, who attended the family, one day called on me, and,

as we were talking of the distressed relations of his patients, he thus humanely expressed his feelings, which were also visible in his countenance : “ It is, indeed, such a scene of sorrow, that I had rather give five guineas than go to the house.”

Medical gentlemen, however, escape much better than those of the *law*, against whom every little *witling* thinks he has a right “ to shoot out his arrows,” “ even bitter words.” If the intricacies of the law afford greater opportunity for dishonesty, so much the higher praise is due to those who “ hold fast their integrity.” Having myself undergone many vicissitudes, the law has had some share amongst them ; and from different gentlemen in that profession I have experienced very *noble* and very *mean* treatment ; so I have from those who knew nothing of law : I therefore ascribed the virtue and the vice to the persons who exercised them ; the *profession* was (in my opinion) neither exalted by the one, nor abased by

by the other ; for I perfectly agree with one of our English poets, that

“ The *out-ward act* is prompted from *within*,

“ And from *the sinner's mind* proceeds *the sin*.”

The witticisms thrown on the clergy are, I think, still more reprehensible, being a defiance of religion ; and the person who can wantonly degrade the clerical character is himself, or herself, less respectable than the character degraded. Those who indulge themselves in buffoonery on sacred subjects, at any time, are by no means estimable, but particularly when in the presence of a clergyman : their ill-timed and false wit is then a *personal insult*, as well as an insult on religion. I have seen clergymen bear with it, till I have been surprised at their patience ; but imagine they very properly thought the *jesters* too *mean* for resentment.

National prejudices are the next on my list, on which, however, I shall say but little, since

it is generally allowed, that there is a national character; but that is no reason why we should suppose, that Providence has placed on one part of the earth men of a superior order to those on another part. “*Human nature*,” says an elegant writer, whose name I have forgotten, “*is every where the same* :” and may charity ever inculcate the idea, that

“ Virtue’s confin’d to no one spot,
 “ But blooms the growth of every clime.”

Even uncivilised nations prove the truth of the above lines; and the contemplation of the many virtues of untaught nature ought to make the more cultivated blush at their own frequent deviations from rectitude, and want of philanthropy.

I never derived more pleasure from any narrative or history I ever read, than from Keate’s elegant Account of the Pelew Islands, on which Captain Wilson was shipwrecked. The manners of the islanders were, indeed, distinguished
 by

by such artless simplicity, and their minds so ennobled by benevolence, that the reader is forcibly led to feel the relationship which one part of the world bears to another, and to join with Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Piozzi, that

“ All men throughout the peopled earth
 “ From one sublime beginning spring;
 “ All from *one source* derive their birth,
 “ The same their *parent* and their King.”

As many of my subscribers are among those who have read, with pleasure equal to mine, the above-mentioned interesting narrative, I flatter myself they will be pleased with the insertion of the following beautiful lines by Mrs. West. That lady has adhered so closely to the circumstances narrated, that those whose sensibility has subsided since Mr. Keate's affecting pen called it forth, will find it perceptibly revived by the sorrow-moving poetess, from whom I hope my pupils will reap instruction.

P E L E W.



*This Poem was occasioned by reading Mr. Keate's
animated Description of the Pelew Islands.*

A LONG the star-impeopled sky
Full thirty moons had run,
Since Abba Thule *, with manly grief,
Dismiss'd his vent'rous son †.

* The East India Company's ship the Antelope being wrecked on Oroolong, one of the Pelew islands, Abba Thule the king, and his subjects, gave the crew a most hospitable reception, and assisted them with every thing the country afforded.

† The king, at the departure of the English, entrusted his second son, Lee Boo, to the care of Capt. Wilson, that he might, to use his own words, "be
"made an *Englishman*."

Go,

“Go, youth!” the prudent monarch said,

“This wondrous England view:

Go, to that distant world disclose

The virtues of Pelew.

“To useful arts thy hands apply,

To useful lore attend;

So shall the travels of thy youth

Thy riper age befriend.

“For not to please thy roving eye

Thou seek’st the land unknown,

But that its wisdom, arts, and arms,

May dignify thy own.

“Nor let the grandeur of the scene

With fear thy soul appall;

’Tis but a mockery, a show;

True worth transcends it all.

“Ye friendly strangers! to whose care

My darling I confide;

Oh! think henceforth a father’s love

Must be by you supply’d.

“ Good speed to all ! when on this line *
No record I discern,
I’ll climb the heights of Oroolong,
And wait my son’s return.”

Here ceas’d the just benignant prince ;
The flowing sails expand,
And Britain’s gen’rous tars with grief
Forfake the friendly land.

Remember’d kindness fill’d each eye
With sympathetic tears,
Depress’d with woe each feeling heart,
And check’d the parting cheers †.

* Abba Thule inquired of Capt. Wilson, how long it might probably be before his son returned ; and being informed about thirty moons, he made a correspondent number of knots upon a piece of line, and carefully laid it by.

† The English were so affected at the kindness of these islanders, that they could scarcely articulate three cheers at parting.

And

And now to grace his son's return,
 When free from regal cares,
 The tender father with delight
 The polish'd bone * prepares.

No more on the recording line
 A token he discerns;
 He climbs the heights of Oroolong,
 No more his son returns.

Nor yet with tidings of his fate,
 Where parts the coral reef †,
 He sees the well-known English sail,
 Or well-known English chief.

To-morrow's fun perhaps may bring
 The dear expected youth;
 He will not yield to mean complaint,
 Nor doubt the English truth.

* The Pelew chiefs wear a bone bracelet as a mark of dignity.

† The western side of the islands are inclosed by a reef of coral, upon which the Antelope was wrecked; there is an opening in one part, with a sufficient depth of water to enable a small vessel to pass safely.

To-

To-morrow's fun, O King! ascends,
It sets unblest by thee ;
“ And wherefore did I trust my child
To yon unpitying sea ?

“ Cold with my darling lie entomb'd
Each valiant English friend ;
Or would not those I sav'd from death
To my distress attend ?

“ The angry spirit hath prevail'd *,
Its curse my hopes betray'd,
Yet in the happy isles above
My motives shall be weigh'd.

“ In those blue fields, those sunny clouds,
For virtue soon confess'd,
Lee Boo enjoys perpetual peace,
There too shall I be blest'd.”

So spake the sire, yet sigh'd to find
His anxious wishes vain ;
Nor ere must Europe's envied arts
Adorn his simple reign.

* They have a notion of a bad spirit, and future happiness to the good.

And now he marks the funeral plant *,
 And lays it on the ground ;
 Then bending o'er it chaunts a dirge,
 And piles the turf around.

Prince of humanity ! thy fears †
 Are just—thy son is dead ;
 But England's dust, not ocean's wave,
 Conceals the stranger's head.

He came ; with confidence and joy
 Her welcome pleas'd she gave—
 With sweet simplicity he charm'd,
 Then sunk into the grave.

Then wither'd all his father's hopes,
 And all his country's fame ;
 Then fled a soul which, e'en in death,
 Confess'd a patriot's flame.

* Their funeral rites, as described by Mr. Keate,
 correspond with the above account.

† This amiable youth, whose gentleness and penetration endeared him to all who saw him, died of the small-pox soon after his arrival in England.

His

His pow'rless but impassion'd wish
 His lov'd Pelew rejoin'd,
 To tell that England was good place *,
 And English very kind.

Far from his country, kindred, fire,
 His tomb affection rears †,
 Graves with his name the votive stone,
 And bathes it with her tears.

There, as she paints uncultur'd worth,
 And unaffected grace,
 She shames the boast of letter'd pride,
 And Europe's polish'd race.

Mild, uncorrupt, though unadorn'd,
 The natives of Pelew
 Present the portrait of an heart
 To artless goodness true.

* His dying words.

† The Honourable East India Company expressed their gratitude to his father by placing an handsome inscription over his grave.

In sophistry's deep maze unlearn'd,
In studious lore untaught,
They only know the useful law
Of acting as they ought;

In happy ignorance of all
The ills of polish'd life,
That wealth, which arms the midnight foe,
And lures the faithless wife.

Firm, not ferocious, brave, sincere,
Industrious, and content,
In scenes of inoffensive toil
Their blameless lives are spent.

And will not Heaven for them uncloset
Her golden gates of light?
Will not the God, to them unknown,
The life he loves requite!

Will not the Saviour, whom they ne'er
Were call'd on to confess,
The charity himself enjoins
With promis'd glory bless?

Faith's

Faith's precious ray, by nature's light
But partially supply'd,
Will their just Maker claim of them
The talent he deny'd?

Hence be the narrow mind, that views
The savage with disdain;
Hence be the arrogance, that dares
To limit Mercy's reign.

For ever open are thy doors,
Thou city of our God!
By every kindred, people, tongue;
Shall thy large courts be trod.

Then controversial pride shall meet
The brother he disown'd,
And see the children of the south
With Abraham's sons entron'd.

There shall philanthropy transcend
Their systematic plan,
And only truth and goodness give
Pre-eminence to man.

I hope

I hope the insertion of the foregoing lines will excite, in such of my readers as have not read the Narrative to which they allude, a wish to peruse it, and their reward will be, if they pay attention, “profit mingled with pleasure.” I shall cite but one passage, and that only because it is most likely to be passed over by hasty readers without the attention it deserves. *Nature* had been the tutor of the deservedly-lamented prince (Lee Boo), and had so highly cultivated his understanding, that he possessed the powers of discrimination in a far greater degree than most of our *civilised* people of fashion. I was particularly pleased with his remark, when at China, on the *superfluous* decorations and ceremonies of the table at which he dined, in company with the principal officers, &c. &c. invited by the Captain.

“My father,” said the amiable youth, “though *King* of Pelew, has his dinner on a “*cocoa shell*, and wipes his fingers on a *plantain leaf*.” This passage ought to be considered

considered as an instructive reproof by those who pay more attention to *form* than *propriety*. There surely can be no propriety in attending to *absurd* forms, among which may be ranked a fashionable mode of eating, introduced, I suppose, by those

“ Who far in distant regions roam
 “ To bring *politer manners* home.”

GAY.

This fashionable way of eating, or rather of using the knife and fork, is to cut the meat, &c. in small pieces, then to put the knife aside, and eat with the fork only, or with a piece of bread and a fork *. I one day asked a very amiable young lady (who thought it genteel to follow this *outlandish* custom) why she submitted so to every frivolous whim of the day? She replied, “ because it is now

* I am not such an enemy to fashion as to disobey her orders when convinced of their reasonableness or utility; but have not yet found a person to *descend* the above.

“reckoned so ill bred to put a knife in one’s mouth.” I could not help laughing excessively (which is also *very unfashionable*) at the idea, that to receive our food by the conveyance of a picked-pointed piece of steel should be a greater mark of good breeding than that of using an instrument of a different shape. I hope none of those *extremely* delicate people are remarkably fond of green peas; because, if they cannot afford dessert spoons to eat them with, they must suffer no small degree of punishment in obeying the *tyrant fashion* by eating them with a fork. It strikes me, that there is as much vulgarity in using the *bowl* of a *spoon* as the broad end of a *knife*; therefore, those who reject the latter, would, I think, do well to introduce the fashion of stirring tea, eating peas, &c. with the *handle* of the *spoon* instead of the *bowl*. I shall be accused by some, and I foresee by *whom*, of diminishing the power of *politeness*; but I beg to inform my accusers, that I state these circumstances in *defence* of *Politeness*, who is in danger of being deprived of her rights by the

usurper Ceremony. *Politeness* may be known by her uniform endeavours *to please*—*Ceremony* by equal endeavours to appear *conspicuous*. To eat with *decency* and *thankfulness* is the duty of every rational being; but to eat by fashion's “*varying rules*” is beneath the attention of rationality.

When adversity takes places of prosperity (and who is free from the vicissitudes of fortune?) it is then that all fastidious ceremonies appear in their true light, *folly in the extreme*. When I reflect that I have a worthy brother, who was among the distressed sufferers from storm, devastation, and *almost famine*, in the West Indies, in the year 1780, I see, in the strongest colours, the *insignificancy* of such foibles.

Nothing can be a greater proof that all such ceremonies originate in *false delicacy*, than the readiness with which the adherents will depart from them when what they call a *frolic*, or a rustic entertainment, induces them to lay aside their false consequence. A cold dinner

On a slice of bread upon Epping Forest, or elsewhere, has been thought very agreeable (notwithstanding the fingers were soiled a little in holding it) even by those who, when seated at the table of *form*, would almost have loathed the meal before them, had they seen one of the guests, with plebeian vulgarity, eat mashed potatoes with the point of a knife.

At a concert in Hanover-square, last winter, it chanced that I stood in the tea-room by the side of a *duke*. The night was most severely cold, which made a warm cup of tea a truly desirable refreshment; and I observed his Grace receive his cup with as much satisfaction (although it had been washed in a bowl in which, of course, were the drainings of those previously used by persons of inferior rank) as he could have done had a different cup been each time presented, or washed in a separate basin. Perhaps this condescension in the duke was not singular; for it is with justice allowed, that persons in high life seldom give themselves so many airs as the *imi-*

tators of high life ; and the young lady who, between five and six o'clock one fine summer evening, emphatically said to me, " Good *morn-*
" ing to you," merely to let me know she *dined* at a *genteel* hour, has more of my *pity* for her *weakness* than of my *respect* for her *consequence* ; for though, in her opinion, the *grand* affair of dining at six o'clock had inverted the divisions of time, it did not prevent me from recollecting, that the *evening* had been divided from the *morning* by the interval of *noon*.

In many situations in life late hours are unavoidable, and therefore by no means subjects of censure ; but to imagine that late hours can give *importance*, is ignorance indeed ! If we value ourselves even upon *meritorious* actions, we greatly diminish their worth ; but if we value ourselves upon our *errors*, we abundantly increase their magnitude. No person living, however superior his abilities, however high his station, or however amiable his disposition or person, derives his advantages

tages from *himself*; for “every good and perfect gift is from above.” Let no one, therefore, proudly *boast*, even though “he be
“anointed with the oil of gladness above his
“fellows.”

False delicacy, to which I now revert, can always conquer itself whenever it has a motive sufficiently powerful; so also can *passion*, *peevishness*, and *obstinacy*. The three latter seldom break forth when in company, and the former is generally shaken off when alone. But, while I warn you against the affectation of delicacy, I wish you equally to guard against the admission of *coarseness*, whether in speech or manners*.

Some

* Pliant dispositions, amiably bending to advice, are frequently led to do *wrong* by their zealous endeavours to do *right*; which has induced me to point out contrarieties, that they may avoid the danger of *extremes*, whether religious or moral. The following just observations deserve attention: “Extend *generosity*, it is *profuseness*; confine *economy*, it is *avarice*;

Some persons, merely to avoid the ridicule thrown on that fantastical character called a *fine lady*, give way to the opposite extreme, and bid defiance even to *Politeness herself*; because they cannot distinguish her, lovely as she is, from the usurper before mentioned: such will boast of *eating, drinking, speaking, and acting*, just as they please; have no notion of your *polite* sort of people, who have no *sincerity* belonging to them; are very fond of telling “a piece of their mind,” however distressing that *piece* may be to the hearer; and this merely because they value themselves on being *honest* and *downright*. This conduct is no less a species of affectation than that which I have already endeavoured to degrade, and generally originates in a morose and selfish temper.

In reading the account of the Pelew Islands, you will naturally be led to feel, that all ranks

“unbridle *courage*, it is *rashness*; indulge *sensibility*, it is *weakness* †.”

† See an Address to the Ladies.

of.

of human beings, of whatever complexion or feature, have a right to your compassion and assistance when in distress. Our religion, you know, includes “all *Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics,*” as objects of our pity. Reflections on this subject may probably incline you to give a thought to the miserable condition of fellow-creatures condemned to slavery. The youthful mind has a strong tendency to compassion; but even compassion may be carried to an enthusiastic excess, which often injures the cause for which it pleads. Before you join the voice of those who enumerate the sufferings of slaves abroad, examine whether the servants in your own house are exempt from tyranny.

A slave in the Indies is happier, if under the command of a mild master, than the scullion girl in the kitchen of an English nobleman, whose dignity not permitting him to descend to the inspection of the inferior offices belonging to his household, he is ignorant of the sufferings of his lower menials; and,

while he is debating in the senate-house on the misery of slavery, his own home, could it undergo a minute investigation, would furnish sufficient employment for his philanthropic feelings. But it is not in the houses of the *great* alone that such grievances exist. Apprentices, half-boarders at schools, parish children put out to nurse, unfortunate little chimney-sweepers, &c. &c. frequently claim the attention of the humane as much as the African slaves; and, being at home, might more easily be redressed.

I shall not enlarge on this subject, lest my readers should suppose I am inclined to *politics*; which, of all subjects, I dislike the most; and sincerely hope I shall never have the mortification of seeing a female politician among those who have been, or may hereafter be, my pupils. There is something so masculine in the character, that I think a lady seated at the head of her table ignorantly * talking on

* I say *ignorantly*, because ladies seldom converse *sensibly* on the subject; and when they do, it does them no honour.

politics, appears as much out of her proper sphere as she would do on the box of a stage-coach, with the reins of ungovernable horses in her hand. The government of a family is the only government necessary for a woman to be acquainted with; and if she conducts that properly, she will have done all in her power towards the improvement of the state; for, if the *private* tuition of children be religiously and morally directed, “the rising generation” may reasonably be expected to fill *public* stations with honour to themselves and advantage to their country.

CON-

CONCLUSION.



THOUGH I well know the foregoing Letters, &c. will be read with disapprobation by many persons, who will suppose certain passages are levelled against themselves, I cannot on that account wish I had suppressed them. I do not feel the sinallest resentment against any one whom I have addressed, nor against any one to whom the reproofs may be applied; therefore, if conviction of wrong be at the heart, that heart (and not the writer of these pages) is the chastiser.

F I N I S.



Just Published;

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF

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