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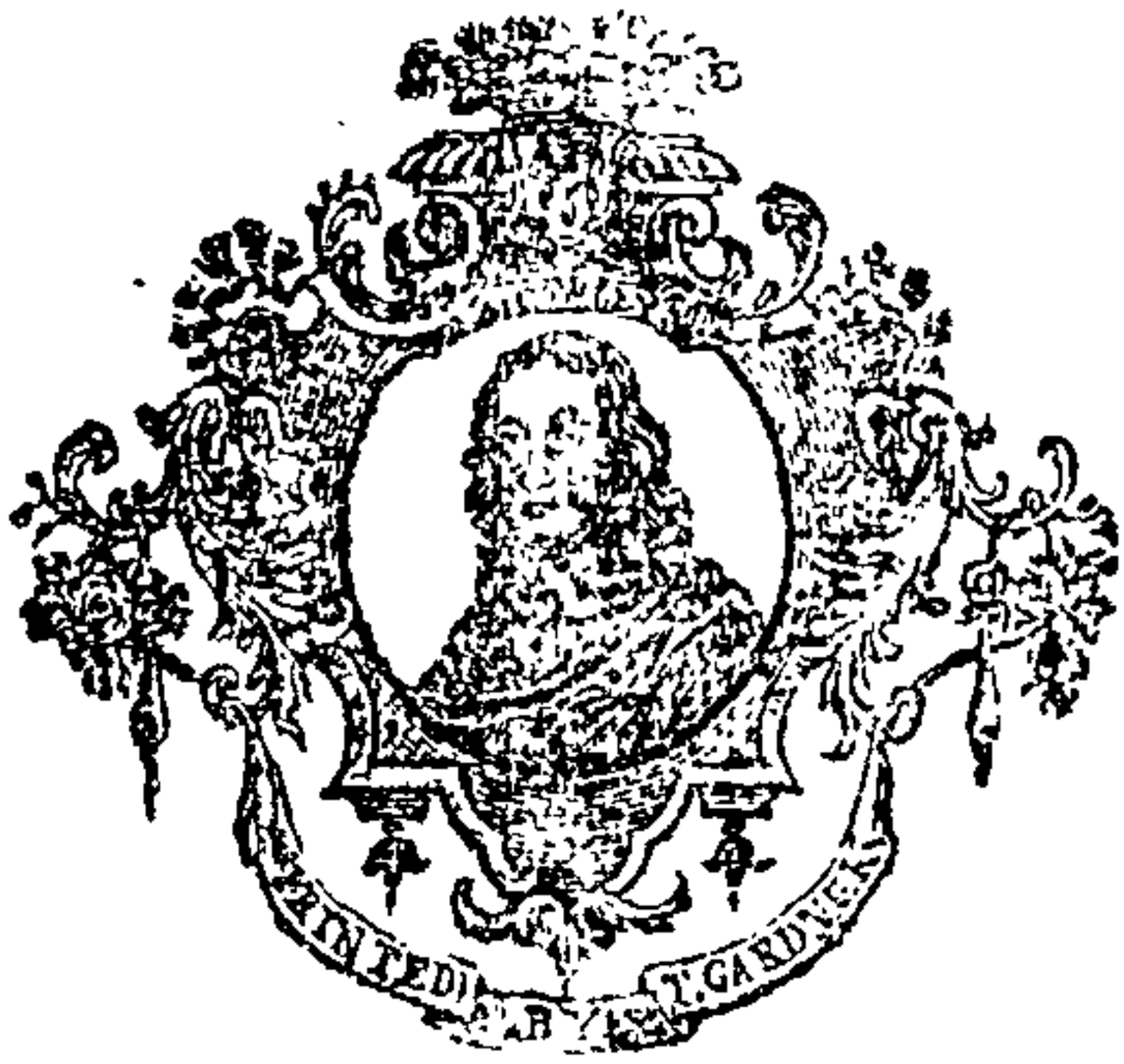
EPISTLES
FOR THE
LADIES,
In TWO VOLUMES.

EPISTLES
FOR THE
LADIES.

To Beauty's fierce tyrannic Sway,
All Mankind their Homage pay;
But soon, alas! its Power decays,
A strong, but short-liv'd, Blaze;
While Wit and Virtue will maintain,
An uncontested, lasting Reign.

PRIOR.

VOL. II.



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EPISTLES

FOR THE

LADIES.

BOOK VII.

EPISTLE LXXVIII.

From Hillaria *to* Clio, *on the Inconsistency of wishing to live a long Time, yet trembling at the Thoughts of growing old.*

My Dear Clio,

I HAVE been thinking that *Human Understanding* is no less liable to be unhinged than the Mechanism of the *Human Frame.* The least Jar of a Surprize puts it out of Tune, and one cannot presently get it into Order again. — We have certainly *Passions* of the *Mind*, as well as *Diseases* of the *Body*, which we are not aware of, till some sudden Accident calls

them forth, and the *one* are no leſs capable of ſuſpending the *Faculties* of *Reaſon* for a Time, than the *other* are of obſtructing that *animal Fluid*, to the proper Circulation of which, we owe our *Health* and *Vigour*.

I was led into this Reflection by catching myſelf in a Folly, which I had not before ever thought I had been guilty of, but which I ſhall not be much aſhamed of confeſſing, ſince on contemplating on ſome Paſſages my Obſervation ſupplies me with, I find is a Folly inherent, in a more or leſs Degree, to the whole Species of human Kind, though few are ingenuous enough to acknowledge it.

I was ſitting Yeſterday in my Parlour Window, looking careleſsly on the People as they paſſed; when all at once a Fellow abruptly preſented himſelf before me, and cried in a hoarſe Voice, *Spectacles*, Madam, *fine Spectacles*, and at the ſame Time thruſt a Pair of theſe Noſe-Saddles within the Saſh: You cannot imagine, dear *Clio*, how I was ſhocked, I gave the Man ſome ſhort Anſwer or another, and immediately drew down the Window. — *Good God*, ſaid I to myſelf, *do I look old enough to be ſuppoſed to want Spectacles?* Never conſidering that it was the Fellow's Trade to offer them to every Body, and that in Effect many People, younger than myſelf, were obliged to make uſe of them. — I ran however to my Glaſs, and fancied I perceived what they call the Crow's Feet appearing at the Corners of my Eyes.

Eyes. — I looked and looked again, and the more I did so, the more I thought these cruel Marks of Time were visible; and now recollecting that my last Birth Day brought me into my one and thirtieth Year, and that a very few more of them would rank me among the Num- of the Aged, I fell into such a Fit of the Vapours as I had never before known in my whole Life. Is not this unaccountable? — Where now was my Understanding? — Where my Reason? The little Share I have is sufficient to make me know that if one lives a great while in this World one must grow old, and few of us there are who desire to die young; why was it not then enough to make me easy under the common Fate of Nature?

I DO assure you I had grown two or three Hours older, before I could bring myself to be at all reconciled with the Thoughts that every Moment brought me nearer to that so much dreaded Stage of Life; but thank Heaven I got the better of it at last, and laughed at the foolish Part my Imagination had been acting.

THAT we all, however, have a natural Aversion for Grey Hairs and Wrinkles, cannot be denied; and that to overcome the Uneasiness their Approach inflicts, requires the utmost Exertion of our Reason; yet is not this an Inconsistency, a kind of Absurdity in the Composition of our Minds? — We ridicule a thousand lesser Follies of Mankind, yet pass over that which

more than all of them put together, deſerves to be ſo, that of being aſhamed and afraid of attaining what all the World as well as ourſelves would wiſh to arrive at. — But we would live for ever if we could, and yet be always young; we would have a Gap in Time from fifteen to ſixty; and even then not be content perhaps to be thought on as in the Decline.

Were old Age terrible to us merely as it is the Forerunner of Death, or as it is generally attended with Infirmities, which ſometimes renders Life a Burden, I ſhould not be ſo much ſurprized; but alas we every Day ſee Death and Diſeaſes ſeize upon thoſe far removed from it; no Time of Life is a Security againſt either. — Nor is it altogether the Apprehenſion of being deprived of what Share of Beauty Nature may have beſtowed upon us, that renders it ſo alarming, ſince that alſo may be loſt in Youth by the Small-pox, and a thouſand other Accidents. — No, it is only the *Name*, not the *Effects*, we ſo much dread; and I believe moſt People would rather chuſe *Deformity* with *Youth*, than *Comelineſs* with *old Age*.

This, and ſome other Propenſities of the Mind, in my Opinion, is ſufficient to convince any thinking Perſon of the Impotence of *human Underſtanding*, and oblige us all to own with the Poet, that

Reaſon

Reaſon in Man is but the twinkling Lamp
Of wand'ring Life, that wakes and winks by Turns;
Fooling the Follower betwixt Shade and Shining.

You will imagine by my being ſo ſerious, that I have not yet quite got over the Fright the Man put me into, and indeed I am not ſure whether I have or not; but be that as it will, I have Reſolution enough to wiſh from the very Bottom of my Heart, that you and I may grow old in Friendſhip, and that whatever Effect Time may have upon our *Perſons*, our *Minds* may remain as now united; which will be a Conſolation for all the Mortifications in the Power of the old Gentleman with the Hour-Glaſs, to

My Dear *Clio*,

Yours, with the moſt perfect Amity,

HILLARIA.

EPISTLE LXXIX.

In Answer to the foregoing.

From Clio *to* Hillaria, *giving her the Reasons for that Aversion Human Nature has to growing old, and pointing out the only Means of rendering it agreeable to ourselves, and beneficial to others.*

My dear Hillaria,

YOU must forgive me when I tell you I laughed very heartily at the lively Description you give of the Fright you were in on seeing the terrible Man with the Spectacles: You might have apprehended it would have had a contrary Effect, however, on me, if you had considered I am four Years older than yourself; for I am ready to join with you in Opinion, that there is nothing more shocking, especially to our Sex, than to be thought in Years; though we cannot help knowing it, yet we would fain unknow it, and seldom look upon those as our Friends who remind us of it: — Yet do I not look upon this Aversion to old Age to be so great a Weakness as you seem to think it is. — It is not because we have lived a long Time, and consequently by the Course of Nature must be near our Dissolution; neither is it because the

Loss

Loſs of Beauty ſeems to us ſo great an Evil; neither is it altogether through the Fears of thoſe Infirmities generally, though not always, felt in Age, that makes the Approach of that Æra ſo dreadful to our Apprehenſion; but there is another Misfortune which you have not mentioned, that for the moſt Part attends it; which is, being treated with Contempt by every one who is a few Years younger than ourſelves: — This is the true Motive which makes People afraid of growing old, and of being aſhamed when they are ſo. — Every one, even the Aged themſelves, have a Prejudice in Favour of Youth. — Youth attracts the Love, the Reſpect, the Services of all the World; while Age may live alone unpitied, unregarded. — Impute the Folly, therefore, my dear *Hillaria*, not ſo much to thoſe who dread being old, as to thoſe whoſe Behaviour gives them Cauſe to do ſo. — As you juſtly obſerve, a long Life is a Bleſſing every one is deſirous of attaining, we all do every Thing in our Power, in order to preſerve it; here therefore lies the Abſurdity, to deſpiſe that in others, which we take ſo much Pains to be one Day ourſelves. — Yet thus it is, and thus I doubt not but it will ever be, while the World continues. — The only Way therefore to ward off the Slights old Age is liable to receive, is to lay up in Youth a Stock of Knowledge wherewith to entertain ourſelves when no Body elſe will think it worth their while to entertain us: — If we make good Uſe of our vigorous Years, we ſhall have leſs Reaſon to regret being left

alone, than they will have who ſhun our Society; beſides, there are Ways to make Age agreeable to others as well as to our ſelves; not by endeavouring to conceal it by an Affectation of Youth, or by aſſuming the Privilege of reproving with Auſterity, but by preſerving a Medium between the Grave and Gay in our Behaviour, and by rebuking the Faults we ſee in others rather by Example than Precept.— When I ſee a gaudy Butterfly Coquet of threeſcore, hopping from Viſit to Viſit, and plumeing herſelf on the Elegancy of her Taſte in Dreſs, and ſcruing herſelf into a thouſand antick Poſtures in order to ſhew the Limberneſs of her Joints, I do not pity the Ridicule ſhe is treated with:— Nor when I hear an antiquated Prude take upon her to give Leſſons to thoſe of better Underſtanding than herſelf, inveigh againſt all Diverſions how innocent ſoever, and cenſure even a chearful Diſpoſition as an unpardonable Crime, I do not wonder in the leaſt, to find all Society with her avoided.

The worſt that can be ſaid of Age is, that it magnifies the Errors, and renders the Virtues leſs conſpicuous: It is our Buſineſs therefore to *correct* the *one*, and *improve* the *other*, before we arrive at that Stage of Life in which nothing will be excuſed, and every Thing is expected on the Account of our Experience and Opportunity of cultivating the Talents we have received from Nature.— Be aſſured, that how old ſoever we grow, and how much ſoever impaired in our

our *outward Form*, we ſhall meet with no Rebuffs at leaſt from thoſe whoſe Treatment is worth our Notice, if we have taken due Care to beautify our *Minds*, and endeavour to verify the Character Mr. *Waller* gives of Age;

The Soul with nobler Reſolutions deckt,
The Body ſtooping does herſelf erect.
Clouds of Affections from our younger Eyes,
Conceal that Happineſs which Age deſcries;
The Soul's dark Cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
Lets in new Light through Chinks which Time has made.
Stronger by Weakneſs, wiſer we become,
As we draw near to our eternal Home.

But we have a greater Authority than Mr. *Waller*, which tells us, that the ſure Way to make Age honourable, is to have it overtake us in Righteouſneſs. Let us therefore, my dear *Hillaria*, endeavour to profit by the Miſtakes of others, and inſtead of counting how our Years run on, examine how our Knowledge increaſes; what Progreſs we have made in rooting out our darling Follies, and planting the beneficial Seeds of Piety and Morality in our Hearts.—To ſucceed in this Attempt, I am confident will afford us an innate Satisfaction, infinitely ſuperior to all we could receive from our Toilette, or the Flatteries of the World while in the Bloom of Youth.—Adieu my dear *Hillaria*, believe me,

With an unfeigned Sincerity,
Yours, *&c.*

Clio.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXXX.

From Euphrosine *to* Semanthe, *giving her an Account how she had passed the Evening of the preceeding Day.*

I Remember that once playing at *Questions and Commands*, a witty Lady in Company, whose Turn it was to question, demanded of her Subject what *Wit* was like? To which he replied, like your Ladyship's Bottle of *Sal Volatile*, poignant at first opening, but on being too much handed about, loses all its Flavour, and becomes quite insipid. — I then thought the Comparison just, and I have since had many Occasions of bringing it fresh into my Mind; but never found it more strongly verified than last Night.

You must know I went to visit *Aspatia*, whom I had not seen for some Time, and found her, as she always is, encircled with a Number of the gay World: —They were all in what they call top Spirits, more Speakers than Hearers, and as many fine Things as would have furnished two or three Conversations, were thrown away by being spoke all at once; — every one being so full of what they had to say themselves, that seldom any Attention was given to the Words of another: — This Torrent of Wit continued,

I believe, for the Space of an Hour, to flow with the utmoſt Rapidity, when all on a ſudden it ſunk into a Calm, and we were all as dumb and ſolemn as Mourners at a Funeral. — One Lady ſat counting the Sticks of her Fan; another amuſed herſelf with jingling the Drops of the Pendants in her Ear; a third was examining her little Finger Nail; a fourth held her Snuff-Box in one Hand, and whirl'd it round and round with the other: — Nor were the Gentlemen more alert; — One employed himſelf with ſtroking the *Dreſden* of his Ruffles; another had his Eyes fixed upon the Fire; a third ſat patting his Knee; — in fine, had the Court of Dulneſs to have been repreſented in a Picture, the Painter might have taken it to the Life from us in our different Attitudes.

ARISTO was the firſt of the whole Company who awaked from this Lethargy of Mind, and looking round, What, ſaid he, are you all retired into yourſelves? Come, Ladies, I will propound a Queſtion to you, and will expect every one of you to anſwer in Turn. — What, ſetting aſide *Faith*, the *Grace* of *God*, and all Things appertaining to *Religion*, do you think the moſt deſirable Thing in Life? And firſt addreſſing himſelf to *Aſpaſia*, I deſire your Opinion, Madam.

I KNOW not, anſwered ſhe modeſtly, why you ſhould expect me to ſpeak firſt, when there are ſo many in Company much more capable of

of anſwering; but ſince you enjoin it, ſhall not heſitate to tell you, that according to my Judgment there is nothing ſo deſirable as *Grandeur*.

Your Reaſon, Madam! rejoin'd *Ariſto*. Becauſe, ſaid ſhe, it attracts the Homage of the inferior World, conceals our Vices, and renders our Virtues more conſpicuous.

He then turned to her that ſat next, who ſubſcribed to the ſame Opinion *Aſpaſia* had given; that high Birth and Titles were the firſt Things to be wiſhed for on Earth; but on his ſpeaking to the third, I cannot, ſaid ſhe, think with theſe Ladies: *Beauty* ſeems to me to have infinitely the Preference over every other Bleſſing we can be poſſeſſed of, becauſe it attracts the Love and Admiration of all who ſee it.

Now would Heaven grant my Prayers, cried *Lamara* haſtily, it would be to indue me with a Superiority of *Wit*, becauſe Wit enables us to defend ourſelves if attacked, and to offend others whenever we have a Mind without their daring to retort.

Well, above all Things, give me *Riches*, ſaid *Luteſia*; Riches can purchaſe all Things, they ſupply all the Defects of Birth, of Beauty, of Wit, and command more Followers, than all of them put together; in fine, whoever has them, has every Joy this World can give.—

It

It is all, and all in all, as Mr. *Dryden* has made *Jupiter* say,

——— *When I made*
This Gold, I made a greater God than Jove,
And gave my own Omnipotence away.

Yet said the discreet *Sophia*, neither Riches, nor Grandeur, nor Beauty, nor Wit, can afford any real Satisfaction, without *Health.*—*Health* is the Salt of Life as *Cowley* says, and gives a Relish to the whole:—An uninterrupted *Health* should therefore be my Choice; and I have the Authority of one whose Skill has often recovered it, when well nigh lost, for my Opinion in this Point, who addresses her in these Terms:

Health, blooming Goddess, most auspicious Power,
Whose Blessings Mortals next to Life implore:
Mankind, as you vouchsafe to smile, or frown,
Find Ease in Chains, or Anguish in a Crown.

It was now my Turn to speak, and having well weighed the Arguments urged by these Ladies in Defence of their different Sentiments, should certainly have conformed to her's who spoke last, if the Example of *Beaticia* had not that Moment came into my Mind.—*Beaticia*, who but a few Years past was what Mrs. *Behn* describes in a favourite Character in one of her Plays,

Noble

Noble by Birth, but nobler by Endowments :
Fair as Imagination paints young Angels :
Chearful as Birds that welcome in the Morn :
Lovesome and gay as was the first Corinna,
That charm'd our best of Poets :
Witty as Fancy makes the revelling Gods,
And equally as bounteous in her Blessings.

But is now, alas, by perverse Accidents, stript of almost all her Fortune, deprived by Death of her nearest Friends, and abandoned by the greatest Part of those who survive, all her Limbs enfeebled by a long Fit of Sickness, incapable of enjoying any one Pleasure in Life, yet retains the same Vigour of Mind as ever, the same Sweetness, Chearfulness, and Composure, complains not of her Fate, and not only *seems*, but really *is* contented with her Lot, severe as others think it. I had seen this Miracle of suffering Virtue but the Day before, and it was to her I was indebted for remembring that *Content*, by far exceeded all the Blessings I had heard enumerated; I therefore had the Boldness to dissent from all who had given their Opinions before me, and quoted for my Authority the Story of *Beaticia*, which was not unknown to some of the Company, and ended what I had to say with these Lines from a late eminent Poet.

Content *alone can all our Ills redress*;
Content, *that other Name for* Happiness!

'Tis

'Tis equal if our Fortunes ſhould augment,
And ſtretch themſelves to the ſame vaſt Extent,
With our Deſires, or thoſe Deſires abate,
Shrink and contract themſelves to fit our State.
We to ourſelves may all our Wiſhes grant,
And nothing coveting, can nothing want.

I HAD the Satisfaction to perceive what I had alledged was unanſwerable by thoſe Ladies who had maintained different Opinions, and that the Men in general approved my Poſition: — It was however left to *Ariſto*, who had propounded the Queſtion, to decide which of us had beſt reſolved it; which he did in theſe Terms: You, Madam, ſaid he to *Amaſia*, and the Lady who ſits next you, are greatly miſtaken in the Preference you both give to Grandeur, as we have many living Inſtances that Titles do not always excite Reſpect, but, on the contrary, by the Means by which they have been acquired, debaſe rather than do Honour to the Wearers. Beſides, when we conſider the prodigious Changes that happen, and that we have not only read of, but ſeen with our Eyes, the nobleſt born ſunk and degraded even to Scorn, who that ſtands high can aſſure himſelf he ſhall not have a ſudden Fall, as Sir *Charles Sedley* juſtly expreſſes it.

Greatneſs ne'er envied when well underſtood,
Thou art no real but a ſeeming Good:
Sick at the Heart thou in the Face look'ſt well.
Who fooliſhly for thee his Peace doth ſell,

In

In his exalted State can only gain
To be more wretched than the Vulgar can.

Then, Madam, continued he, to the third, it muſt be confeſſed that Beauty is a moſt deſirable Thing, but then where is the Beauty that has a Charm for every Heart? — Tho' it's Power is univerſal, no ſingle She had ever yet, or ever can have, that Power lodged in herſelf. — What is raviſhing in the Eyes of ſome Men, is quite diſagreeable to thoſe of others, as Mr. *Cowley* tells you,

The Cauſe of Love can never be aſſign'd,
'Tis in no Face, but in the Lover's Mind.

As your Wiſh, therefore, Madam, is an Impoſſibility in Nature, I muſt give it againſt you entirely, and come to the Lady who places *Wit*, in the firſt Claſs of Human Bleſſings; and ſays ſhe does ſo, becauſe it ſupplies the Means of defending ones ſelf, and of offending others. — Now in my Opinion what you have alledged in Favour of this Quality, is an Argument againſt it, becauſe it cannot be commendable to be quick in returning Affronts, much leſs to give them unprovoked, eſpecially to thoſe who are not in a Condition to make an adequate Return. — *Wit*, thus applied, may be compared to Lightning, blaſting whatever it lights upon: — It is a Quality, except accompanied with a great Fund of Good-nature, the moſt pernicious of all others to Society.

Lamira,

LAMARA looked a little confounded at hearing the Choice ſhe had made ſo ſeverely cenſured; and *Ariſto* imagining perhaps he had exceeded the Bounds of Politeneſs in what he had ſaid, endeavoured to ſoften it by proceeding in theſe Terms: — I will not, cried he, ſuppoſe your Ladyſhip had any other View in what you urged, than to make Trial whether Complaiſance or Sincerity would have the greateſt Share in my Deciſion; but, however, as I am here ſet up for Judge, I think myſelf bound to act with Impartiality, and am therefore obliged to pronounce Sentence againſt *Wit*, not only becauſe an ill Uſe may be made of it, but becauſe however harmleſs it may be, it is a very trifling Perfection when left to itſelf, and is not directed by good Senſe. — It may give a ſudden Spring to Converſation, and enliven, for a Moment, but like all other Spirits immediately evaporates and leaves a certain Langour behind, as we all have juſt now had a Proof.

None of us could forbear laughing as he ſpoke this, at the Remembrance of the Reſverie we had been in, before he found out this Way of making us once more Thinking Beings; we offered no Interruption, however, but ſuffered him to proceed in his Judgment, which he did in this Manner.

As for you, Madam, ſaid he to *Luteſia*, with an Air that expreſſed the Deference he is known to pay that Lady, I dare believe that, before I ſpeak,

you are ſure of my declaring in Prejudice of the Choice you ſeem to make of *Riches* before any other Qualification; I ſay ſeem, for I flatter myſelf your Heart has no Connection with your Words in this Point; I ſhall take the Liberty, notwithſtanding, to put you upon your Guard, againſt an Infatuation of that Sort, by reminding you of Mr. *Cowley*'s Advice.

Take heed, take heed, thou lovely Maid,
Nor be by glitt'ring Ills betray'd;
Thyſelf for Money! Oh let no Man know
The Price of Beauty fall'n ſo low;
What Dangers ought'ſt thou not to dread,
When Love *that's blind, is by blind* Fortune *led.*

When *Sophia* ſpoke, purſued he, turning to that Lady, I thought the Preference ſhe gave to *Health* too juſt for any Thing that could come after it to overthrow. *Juvenal*'s Admonition to contract our Wiſhes, is certainly worthy the Regard of every one.

Forgive the Gods the reſt; and be confin'd,
To Health *of Body, and* Content *of Mind.*

Health excels all other Bleſſings, and can be compenſated for the Want of by nothing but Content: — No true Pleaſure is to be found without both; but thus much I muſt ſay, that as Health does not always bring Content with it, though it ought to do ſo, and Content has the Power

Power of ſupplying the Want of Health, the Balance is on the Side of Content, and I muſt therefore decree in Favour of *Euphroſine*, to whoſe Choice there is no Poſſibility of an Exception.

EVERY one agreed to the Deciſion of *Ariſto*, yet he made a very handſome Apology to the Ladies whom he had been obliged to contradict, ſaying, that he propoſed the Queſtion merely for Merriment, and to quicken a Converſation which began to grow ſpiritleſs; and therefore he hoped not to be reproached hereafter, for any Thing he had advanced; proteſting at the ſame Time, that he had done the extremeſt Violence to his Inclination, in oppoſing the Sentiments of Ladies, who, though they had given their Opinions ſomewhat too haſtily on the Subject he propoſed, he was ſenſible knew much better than himſelf how to have reſolved it. — He concluded with allowing, that Grandeur, Beauty, Wit, and Riches, were all of them Things to be deſired, and that a ſmall Portion of them, with Health and Content, would make the Perfection of Mortal Happineſs.

THIS reconciled all, and the Company continued in perfect Good-humour during the whole Time we ſtayed together, which was till near twelve. — We returned not indeed to that Confuſion of Wit, which *Ariſto* had ſo well rallied; every one ſpoke in their Turn, and ſpoke only what they had conſidered;—the Converſation

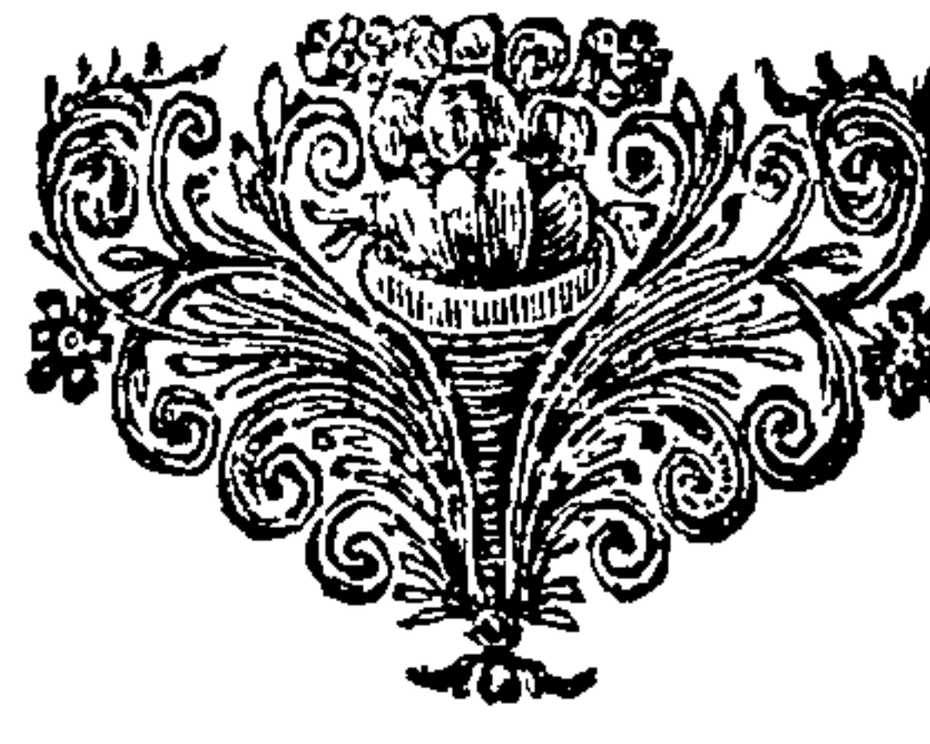
was lively, but ſerious and improving: I wiſh my Paper would admit of ſending you the Particulars. — What I have ſaid, however, may perhaps ſerve to amuſe you, at a Time when you cannot ſtir abroad, and have little to entertain you with at home.

And now, my dear *Semanthe*, wiſhing you a perpetual Round of Health and Content, I take my Leave, and am,

With the ſincereſt Friendſhip,

Your's, *&c.*

Euphrosine.



EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXXXI.

From Alicia *to* Louisa, *giving her the true Reasons of her refusing to live with a Husband, who after having by his Ill-usage obliged her to separate herself from him, was now become extremely penitent, and desired a Reconciliation.*

AT length, my dear *Louisa*, I have prevailed upon myself to reveal to you the Secret you have so long in vain requested of me; — a Secret, which not Death should have extorted, I now yield as a Sacrifice to the Gratitude and Friendship I owe to you. — But before I enter on the surprizing Story, let me remind you of the Circumstances of my former Life: — You know I was married extremely young to * * * *: The Match was made by Friends, and neither of our Hearts consulted in the Affair: — Our Humours, Manners, and Principles were so directly opposite, that no great Harmony could be expected between us: — However, I should have endeavoured to behave as became a Wife, had he been even a civil Husband, but you have been Witness of his gross Way of treating me, which every Day growing more provoking, and I less able to support it, I resolved to part. — I then had the Pity of all that knew me, indeed I deserved it, for I was innocent and unhappy. Those Friends who had been the Promoters of

this moſt diſagreeable Union, now propoſed a Separation, to which he readily enough agreed, and conſented to allow me a Maintenance ſuitable to the large Fortune I had brought him.

But this did not make me entirely eaſy.— I thought a Woman who lived apart from her Huſband in the ſame Town made an odd Figure, and that I could not better loſe the Memory of my diſagreeable Circumſtances, than in the Amuſements of Travel into foreign Parts. — My Intention was not to return till I had made the Tour of *Europe*, and accordingly ſet out with only *Letitia* my Woman, and one Footman. I went firſt to *France*, and having ſeen every Thing there worth the Attention of a Stranger, paſſed on to *Italy*. — I found enough in *Rome* to ſatiate Curioſity ; yet I proceeded to *Naples*, and ſeveral other of thoſe fine Cities which compoſe that delicious Country.— At length, in my Return, I came to *Florence*. — *Florence*, the Spot where I was deſtined to loſe my Heart, my Peace of Mind, my —, what ſhall I ſay ; — how ſhall I tell it you, — and yet I muſt, it was the Scene of my Undoing, — the Place where I was deprived of every Thing that ought to be dear to Womankind.

This is enough, my dear *Louiſa*, to ſhew you that I have rendered myſelf unworthy of that Affection my penitent Huſband now profeſſes for me, and for what Reaſon I ſo obſtinately refuſe the Offers he makes of living with me again;

again; but it may not be enough for the Satisfaction of your Curiosity: — You must also be made acquainted with the Particulars of my Fall, by what Means I was ensnared, and the Name and Quality of my Seducer. — You shall then be informed of all my Memory can supply, — and O, it is a too faithful Monitor to make me lose even the minutest Circumstance.

Know then, as the Beginning of my Misfortune, the very Night I arrived at *Florence*, poor *Letitia* fell sick; had she been well, my Fate might have been averted, and I had not been left alone, exposed to a Temptation which sure I must have been more than Woman to have resisted. — On my first coming to any Place, before it was enough known who I was to make my Acquaintance, she used to be my Companion in the little Rambles I took to see the Town, but I apprehended no other Misfortunes in being now obliged to go alone, but the want of somebody to speak to, as my Footman always followed at a Distance, to protect me from any Insult, of which indeed there is little Danger in these Parts of the World, the very meanest of the People being courteous and obliging, especially to any one who appears to be a Stranger. — One Afternoon the Sun shining with less Fierceness than usual, I went out sooner than was my Custom, and as I every Day took a fresh Tour in order to give my Curiosity the greater Satisfaction, I now happened into a pleasant Walk between two Rows of Trees, whose

intermingling Boughs formed a Kind of Arch over my Head. — I found there were ſeveral Seats placed on each Side, and thought I could not paſs an Hour more agreeably than in this Receſs, not a Creature but myſelf at that Time being in it; and having ordered my Servant to go back and wait my Return at the Avenue, I ſat down, and looking round me diſcovered another little Walk which turned out of this, and was even more cloſe; on which I roſe up and went into it, where I had not advanced many Paces, before I perceived ſomething that ſtruck my Eyes prodigiouſly. — Two large Statues of white Marble, the one of *Apollo*, and the other of *Pallas*, ſupported a Kind of Tent, or Pavilion, which as I drew more near I found was compoſed of Green and Gold Wire in a Lattice-Work, and overſpread with Roſes, Jeſſamine, Honeyſuckles, and other fragrant Flowers planted on the Sides, and as they grew, entwined themſelves about the Wires; I ſaw the Door was half open, and longing to know what was contained in the Inſide of a Place whoſe Outſide was adorned with ſo much Elegance, ventured to puſh it far enough back juſt to peep in. — I ſaw no body; I liſtened and heard no Voice, ſo went boldly in. It is impoſſible to deſcribe the Beauties, which Way ſoever I turned my Eyes, that preſented themſelves to me: — The moſt magnificent Gardens on the one Side were viſible through the Squares of the Lattice, and on the other, the River *Arno*, gliding through a Valley ornamented with all the Sweets of Nature. — The

Furniture

Furniture of this delicious Bower, consisted only of a Settee of green Sattin, richly embroidered with Silver, but no larger than one Person might sit upon commodiously, and a Marble Table near it with some Books: — At the upper End there was an Alcove, but the inner Part so extremely shaded, that I could not, at that Distance, discover what it contained. — Not in the least doubting but I was alone, I stepped forwards, but had not quite reached the Entrance, before I heard a certain rustling, which convinced me I was not so much in private, as I had imagined; and ashamed of the Intrusion I had been guilty of, was hurrying out with such Precipitation, that my Feet slipped upon the polish'd Pavement, and I had fallen down, if catching hold of one of the Elbows of the Settee had not prevented me: — At the same Instant, the most enchanting Voice I had ever heard, asked me if I were not hurt, on which I thought myself oblig'd to turn and make some Apology for the Rudeness I had been guilty of. — As you know I speak pretty good *Italian*, I should not have been at a loss for Words, had not my Surprize at the Object before me, for some Moments deprived me of the Power of Utterance. — I thought I had seen all that was great and lovely, and could not have imagined it in the Power of any mortal Charms to have disconcerted me in the Manner I now was. — O! *Louisa*, how shall I attempt to make you sensible of the Graces which so much attracted my Admiration, without, at the same Time, giving you Cause to suspect I

magnify

magnify them, in order to alleviate the Guilt that Admiration has involved me in ;— yet be assured he is much more than Words can speak; and though you should figure to yourself a Form such as Painters would wish to have before them when copying the Graces of young *Apollo*, or the God of *Love*, it would fall short, infinitely short, of what he is.

Whether he saw into the real Cause of my Confusion, or imagined I had received some Prejudice by the Accident that had just happened, I cannot pretend to say, but am more inclined to think the latter, since he seems to be less acquainted with his own Perfections than any one who beholds them; but he again, with some Concern in his Looks, repeated the Question, If I were hurt: — No, *said I*, by this Time having recovered myself enough to speak, no otherwise than in my Shame for having thus abruptly broke in upon a Place I might easily have perceived was intended for Privacy. — To this he replied with the most respectful Air, that I ought not to repent the Honour I had done him, which though he supposed was more owing to Chance than Design, he should be guilty of nothing that might render him unworthy of it. — I then told him, that it was indeed Curiosity that had brought me thither, and that I should be far from repenting having indulged it, since he was so good to pardon my having done so. — I added also, some Encomiums on the delectable Situation of this little Edifice, which I said, with a great deal of

of Truth, exceeded every Thing I had ever ſeen. He ſeemed charmed with my Approbation of it, and told me he had it erected after a Model of his own Fancy, on purpoſe to retire into, and read in thoſe Hours of the Day when the Warmth of the Climate obliged moſt People to take their Repoſe. — After ſome few Civilities on both Sides, I was preparing to take my Leave, but he detained me, and with the moſt obliging Smile, told me I ſhould but ill prove the Sincerity of the Praiſes I had beſtowed on his little Cabinet, if I quitted it, before I had examined half what it contained: — With theſe Words, he took my Hand, and led me to the Settee, — I thought it would have denoted a ſtrange Want of good Breeding to have reſiſted, but was all this Time in a Confuſion not to be expreſſed. — The Moment I was ſeated he rung a Bell, on the Sound of which a Gentleman immediately appeared; my charming Hoſt met him at the Door, and in a low Voice gave him ſome Orders which I did not hear, but ſoon after diſcovered of what Nature they were by his returning with a Gold Waiter, on which was placed a Bottle and Glaſſes, with Saucers of wet and dry Sweet-Meats, and fine Fruits, which having ſet down on the Table, a Sign was made to him to retire. In that Interval however we had fallen into Diſcourſe; he aſked me of what Country I was, which having informed him, as alſo my Name, and the Rank I held in the World: He told me in Return that he was called *Altamani*; was the only Son of the Prince of that Name, and that

the

the Gardens I ſaw before me belonged to his Father's Palace, which ſtood at the Extremity, as was too far removed for the Eye to reach, at the Diſtance we were. I doubted not before but he was a Perſon of very great Diſtinction, but the Knowledge now how great, overwhelmed me with Shame that I had been prevailed upon to keep my Seat as there was no other for him; but ſay all I could, he would not ſuffer me to riſe, and the Gentleman's Entrance with the Things I mentioned put an End to, at leaſt interrupted, the Diſpute. — He was the Waiter himſelf, and ſerved me with the Wine and Sweetmeats ſtill ſitting, till at laſt I teſtified ſo much Uneaſineſs at the Rudeneſs he compelled me to be guilty of, that—Well, Madam, *ſaid he, ſmiling*, ſince you needs will have me placed, and this Cabinet is ſo ill ſupplied with Seats, if you will permit me, we will try if this Settee will not hold us both. On which I drew as cloſe as I could to one of the Elbows, over which I threw my Hoop in order to make Room; as he is very ſlender and fine proportioned, though tall above the common Stature, he made a Shift to ſqueeze between me and the other Elbow, but to keep himſelf up was obliged to lay one of his Arms over the Back, and conſequently over my Neck. — He ſaid a thouſand fine Things on the Happineſs he enjoyed in being ſo near me, which I know not how I anſwered, for the Tumult I felt within my ſelf is not to be accounted for. After having entertained me with ſome Praiſes on my Beauty, my Shape and Air, he took an Occaſion to tell me,

me, he had heard it was the Cuſtom in my Country to ſalute the Ladies, and that he had been ſtrangely cruel to himſelf in neglecting ſo long a Time to take a Privilege, I could not as an *Engliſh* Woman refuſe. I had no Time to tell him it was a Cuſtom many of our Sex could wiſh aboliſhed; his Lips had ſeized on mine, before I could utter one Syllable, where he made himſelf full amends for the Delay he had complained of. The Poſture which the Narrowneſs of the Seat had obliged us to be in might indeed be called a half Embrace, and I might plead my Inability of reſiſting, as an Excuſe for not having done ſo as I ought; but I will not deceive you, my Confeſſion ſhall be full and without Reſerve. I did ſtruggle it is true, but not with that Reſolution and Spirit as became a virtuous Woman, a Pleaſure fatal to Honour overflowed my Heart, and though I ſtill had a juſt Senſe of the one, yielded but too much to the other. — As ſoon, however, as I had the Power of doing it, I told him the Cuſtom of *England* did not admit of ſuch repeated Preſſures, and in ſpeaking this attempted to riſe. — I affected all the Severity I could in my Voice, but I fear my Looks gave the Lye to my Words, and too plainly made him ſee, that if I was vexed at being detained, I ſhould be more ſo to be let go. — He held one of my Hands, faſt graſped in his, and while he ſpoke the ſofteſt Words that Tongue e're uttered, or Heart e're conceived, had all the Time his Eyes intently fixed upon my Face; they are too penetrating, alas, not to have diſcovered

covered the Secret of my Soul, whatever Care I took to conceal it, and doubtless foreseeing the Triumph would be all his own, at length suffered me to quit my Seat, to shew me, as he said, the inner Partition of his Cabinet: — Accordingly he drew me toward the Alcove, — I made no Efforts to avoid entring into it, though I own I tremble for the Consequence. — I feared him, and had too much Reason to fear myself. I found it so shadowed with the Boughs of some Trees which grew on the Outside, that there was but just Light enough to distinguish Objects. — There were some Bustos I perceived of great and eminent Men placed on Pedestals, and a Settee of white and gold Brocade, twice as large as that we had been sitting on. — On this having placed me half reluctant, half complying, or rather, to my Shame I speak it, more of the latter than the former, my too charming Companion renewed, or more properly redoubled his amorous Sollicitations, till, O how shall I own it! his Angel Form, — his Dignity, — his soft persuasive Accents, — his tender pressures, — the Sweetness, the delightful Gloom, the thousand Enchantments that surrounded me, lulled my unguarded Soul into a Forgetfulness of all I ought to have remembred, and yielded myself up to Love and *Altamani.*

O THOSE dear Guilty Moments! — but they are fled, — for ever fled; and in their Room a sad Eternity of conscious Shame succeeds. — Short, alas! were my Transports; I found my Punish-

ment

ment almoſt in the Inſtant of my Crime. Before we parted he told me that intending to make the Tour of *Europe*, the next Morning was prefixed for his ſetting out. — Heavens! How like a Bolt of Ice did theſe Words run through my Heart, — I fainted, but ſoon recoverd, and in a Flood of Tears vented ſome Part of the Anguiſh that oppreſſed me. — If he did not really love me, the Sweetneſs of his Diſpoſition made him compaſſionate the Condition he ſaw me in; he omitted nothing that the utmoſt Tenderneſs of Heart could ſuggeſt, or Eloquence expreſs for my Conſolation: He aſſured me that the firſt Rout he ſhould take would be to *France*, from whence, he ſhould paſs to *England*, where he had an Intention to ſtay ſome Time, and there, ſaid he, embracing me with unſpeakable Ardor, I ſhall again have an Opportunity of meeting my adorable *Alicia*, and renewing all thoſe Raptures cruel Neceſſity now interrupts. It was a Neceſſity indeed, for which I ſaw no Remedy, therefore endeavoured to ſubmit to it in the beſt Manner I was able. — The Cloſe of Day drawing on, we parted, — O *Louiſa*, to meet no more, though had I thought ſo then, I certainly had died upon the Spot, or taken ſome extravagant Reſolution of following him in Diſguiſe; but as *Oroonoko* ſays,

Degrees make all Things eaſy.

Happy is it, therefore, that we know not all our Fate at once! — Diſappointments on Diſappointments

pointments have, at length, given Reason room to operate: Now, all has past appears to me as a Dream; yet, O! it is a Dream which I can never banish from my Mind.

I will not trouble you with any Detail of what my Thoughts were on my coming to my Lodgings, nor how I passed the Night; you may suppose my Mind was in Confusion enough: — I wondered at myself for what I had done, was ashamed, but yet not repented of it; — nay, on the contrary, took Pleasure in recalling to Remembrance every Circumstance of my Undoing. — Had I not been obliged to stay some Time in *Florence*, not only for my Woman's Recovery, but for some Remittances which were not yet arrived, I had directly left that Place, and overtook my charming Prince in *France*; but as that was a Thing impracticable, I consoled myself with the Assurance of meeting him in *England*. — I now avoided making any Acquaintance, but past the greatest Part of my Time in that Walk which led to the Bower, and, full of the Idea of the Owner, was always repeating the Rhapsody *Statira* makes, when fired with the Remembrance of *Alexander*'s Love, and which I fancied much more applicable to my *Altamani*.

Not the Spring's Mouth, nor Breath of Jessamin,
Nor Roses opening Buds, nor Violets Bloom,
Are half so sweet as Altamani's *Breast*;
From every Pore of him a Perfume falls:

He

He kiſſes ſofter than a Southern Wind,
Curls like a Vine, and touches like a God!
Thus he will talk—good Gods, how he will talk!
Ev'n when the Joy he ſigh'd for was poſſeſt,
He ſpoke the kindeſt Words, and look'd ſuch Things;
Vow'd with ſuch Paſſion, ſwore with ſo much Grace,
That 'twas a Kind of Heaven to be deluded by him.

I OUGHT not to wound your chaſter Ears with any Repetition of theſe criminal Ideas; but ſpite of all my Efforts, the Love, the Languiſhment, ſtill hangs about my Heart, and I only breathe ſoft Deſires. — Wretched Situation, to know all the Guilt of the Paſſion without any of its Joys!

As ſoon as my Affairs permitted, I left *Florence*, and made the beſt Speed to *France*, not without ſome Hope, that the Gaiety of that Place might detain him long enough for me to arrive before his Departure. The Motions of a Perſon of his Dignity and Character are eaſily known: — I was preſently informed, that, after ſtaying but fifteen Days at *Paris*, he took Poſt-Chaiſes for *Calais*, in order to croſs over to *England*. — Heavens! how did my Heart exult in the vain Imagination, that the Deſire of ſeeing me again had ſome Share in the Haſte he made! And how great was my Mortification, when I

heard at *Calais*, that happening to meet ſome young Noblemen whom he had known in *Italy*, he had been prevailed on to embark with them on board a Man of War, in order to viſit ſome Parts of *Spain*.

Judge, with what an akeing Heart I now came Home, though I diſſembled it ſo well, that none of thoſe who came to compliment me on my Return perceived my Diſcontent. The Conſtraint I put upon myſelf in doing ſo, however, I believe very much contributed to bring on that long Fit of Sickneſs, in which you were ſo good to afford me frequent Viſits. — You know my Phyſicians, as the laſt Remedy in their Power to preſcribe, ſent me down to * * * *, which being my native Air, in a ſhort Time recovered me, but I was in no Haſte, on the Return of my Health, to return to *London*. How much weakened ſoever I had been by my Indiſpoſition, my Love for *Altamani* was as ſtrong as ever, and as I had no Hopes of ſeeing him as yet, had no Reliſh for any of the Diverſions of the Town, and it was not till after an Abſence of five Months that I came back, where I was ſoon informed by thoſe who little ſuſpected the Intereſt I had in the Intelligence, that the charming Prince had been here, and after a Stay of about three Weeks, had departed, a few Days before my Arrival. — This gave the finiſhing Stroke to all the Expectations I till now indulged; — not the leaſt Shadow of a Probability remained, of ever ſeeing more the

the dear Object of my Wishes, and I now first began seriously to attempt overcoming a Passion, no less fruitless than it is criminal.—In vain, alas, I strive, — the short liv'd Happiness I enjoyed, still dwells upon my Mind, and all my Efforts are ineffectual to chase away the too dear Remembrance.

I WILL add nothing in my Vindication, — you cannot condemn me more than I do myself, — pity at least my Suffering, dear *Louisa*, though you cannot pardon the Transgressions of

Your ill-fated Friend,
ALICIA.

EPISTLE LXXXI.

From Evadne *in the Country, to her Friend in* London, *giving her a very diverting Account of the Behaviour of a Gentleman and Lady who were passionately in Love without ever having seen each other.*

Dear Melissa,

THE Concern you express for my being so long coop'd up in a little Country Town, is very obliging, because I dare promise myself the kind Things you say on that Occasion are the Dictates of a Heart warm in my Interest.—

I ſhould, indeed, have a very ſad Time of it here, if it were not for an Adventure, which has given ſome Life to the Converſation of our Gentry, and in which I believe you will find ſomething extraordinary enough to divert you, even amidſt that Circle of Pleaſure with which you are perpetually ſurrounded.

On my firſt Arrival at ****, I came acquainted with a young Lady called *Clelia*; as I found her infinitely more agreeable than any other of thoſe who came to compliment me, and indeed much more than I could have expected to meet with at ſuch a Diſtance from the Place, which I always looked upon as the only Seat of Politeneſs, I was quite charmed with her Behaviour, and ſhe appeared no leſs pleaſed with mine: We ſoon grew extremely intimate, yet not enough for her to entruſt me with the Secret of her Heart, and it was from others that I firſt learned, ſhe had been for a long Time deeply in Love with a Gentleman of a neighbouring County, whom ſhe had never ſeen, and that he, with as little Knowledge of her, was at leaſt equally captivated.—I will tell you by what Means.

CLELIA has a very pretty Genius to Poetry, which, to amuſe herſelf and Friends, ſhe exerciſes on every Occaſion.—A little Copy of Verſes ſhe had wrote on the innocent Satiſfaction of a rural Life, happened to be ſhewn to him, and he having a great Taſte that Way, and

wrote

wrote ſeveral good Things himſelf, was ſo much charmed with the Product of this Lady's Brain, that he would needs employ his Muſe in writing a Compliment on what ſhe had wrote: This was preſented to her by a Friend of his who was acquainted with her.— The Manner of this Addreſs ſeemed ſo elegant to her, that ſhe imagined herſelf under a kind of Obligation to return it, and, as I ſaid before, being extremely fond of ſhewing her Intereſt in *Parnaſſus*, ſent him her Thanks in Heroics for the Approbation he had teſtified of her Poetry:— This ſecond Proof of her Wit and Politeneſs, drew another Epiſtle from him; that, an Anſwer from her; that, from him again; and ſo on from one to the other, till at laſt, what was meant only as Gallantry, became converted into a ſerious Admiration; and as others *look* themſelves into Love, they *wrote* themſelves into the moſt violent Paſſion that I have heard of ſince the Days of *Oroondates* and *Statira*: — He fancies her all Angel; ſhe conſiders him no leſs than a Demy-God:— The extravagant Ideas they have of each other's Perfections, render them diffident of their own, and as ordinary Lovers are impatient for an Interview, theſe are no leſs fearful of meeting.— There was the other Day a great Horſe-Race on the *Downs*; — few Perſons of any Note for forty Miles round were abſent; but *Clelia*, who tho' before her Correſpondence with *Cleomenes*, for ſo he is called, would not for half her Fortune been deprived of that Pleaſure, now could not be prevailed on to go for fear of being ſeen by

Cleomenes; and *Cleomenes*, tho' his own Horſe was one that ran, avoided the Sport left he ſhould not be able to conceal himſelf from *Clelia*.

In fine, this *Platonic* Paſſion, with which they were mutually inſpired, became the whole Talk of the Country, and as there was no Diſparity between them, either as to Birth or Fortune, many of the Friends on both Sides laboured to bring them into Sentiments more like thoſe of People of this World; but all that could be ſaid in order to perſuade them to ſee each other was ineffectual. — The Anſwer that both gave was, that they were conſcious of not deſerving that Eſteem which a diſtant Correſpondence had excited, and were loth to forfeit it by a nearer Acquaintance.

As *Clelia* now knows I am in the Secret, I take the Liberty of rallying her with all the Severity I am capable of, on this Caprice. — She takes it, however, in good Part, and ſhews me all the Letters ſhe every Day receives, with the Anſwers ſhe ſends back. — Nothing certainly ever was more paſſionate on his Side, more tender on her's: I tell her I would have her change her Name of *Clelia* into that of *Sappho*, and that *Cleomenes* ought to aſſume that of *Phaon*.

I cannot help ſaying that this is one of the prettieſt, as well as moſt innocent Amours I ever heard of: — Here is all the Love, all the Gallantry,

Gallantry, all the Amuſement and Eclat of the Paſſion without any of the Pains of it; — both Parties are ſatisfied and ſecure of their Conqueſt; each is contented with the Poſſeſſion of the other's Heart, and ſeems to aim at no farther Gratification: — So little are they of *Cowley*'s Opinion.

When Souls mix 'tis a Happineſs,
But not compleat, till Bodies too combine,
And cloſely as our Minds together join:
But half of Heaven the Souls in Glory taſte,
Till by Love in Heaven at laſt,
The Bodies too are plac'd.

WHETHER the Coldneſs is real, or only affected through an Exceſs of Timidity, I will not, however, be poſitive, but a Plot is laid to try their Conſtitutions more effectually, and bring them together in ſpite of themſelves. — It will be executed in a few Days, and as I ſhall be preſent at the Scene, will not fail to give you a particular Account of the Succeſs, till when I am,

My dear *Meliſſa*,

Your's, &c.

EVADNE.

EPISTLE LXXXII.

From Evadne *to* Meliſſa, *with the Sequel of the Story of* Clelia *and* Cleomenes.

Dear *Meliſſa*,

I DO not wonder at your Impatience to know the Reſult of an Amour ſo romantic as that of *Clelia* and *Cleomenes*; we who are the Denizens of dear St. *James*'s have but little Idea of thoſe viſionary Tranſports :— The Lovers who addreſs us are for more ſubſtantial Joys than thoſe of Theory, and ſome of us too have been Fools enough to be of their Opinion. — What a Figure would theſe Country Lovers make in the *Mall!* They would certainly be pointed at as Creatures of another Species; but I can now tell you that there is ſome Likelihood they will grow modern in Time, if they are not already ſo in their Hearts. — They have ſeen and been ſome Time in Company with each other, and I do not find that this Interview has been of any Prejudice to what we call *Love*, though it may be the Overthrow of their *Platonic* Syſtem of it.

The Stratagem I told you of for that Purpoſe, was contrived in this Manner:— A Relation of *Clelia*'s has lately built a fine new Houſe, about five Miles from this Town; ſome of the Apart-

ments

ments being furnished, though not yet sufficiently compleated for them to inhabit, the Gentleman and his Wife desired *Clelia*, myself, and some other Friends, to go one Day and drink Tea there, in order, as was pretended, to have our Opinion of the Building: — This Request being readily complied with, we all went on Horseback: — The same Day a Gentleman who was in the Secret, and a great Intimate of *Cleomenes*, made him a Visit, and in a careless Fashion, and without any Sort of Design, asked him to take a Ride that Afternoon, which he having agreed to, the other led him to the Place where we were: — *Here is a handsome house built here*, said he, *I am acquainted with the Owner, let us go in, and see it: — With all my Heart*, replied *Cleomenes*: On which they knocked at the Gate, and *Clelia*'s Kinsman seeing them from the Window, ran down, and would needs make them come up and drink Tea. — The Friend of *Cleomenes*, to prevent that shy Lover from suspecting there was any Thing of Design in what he had done, made some Excuses for the Interruption, saying, he came only to look at the House as he was passing that Way, and should not have made so abrupt a Visit, had he known there was any Company there.

In fine, they came up, and the Stranger was introduced by his Name, which we could perceive made *Clelia* give a sudden Start, but appeared much more confounded, when the Friend of *Cleomenes*, who it was agreed should do all the

the Mischief, as he could be the least suspected of Design, took an Occasion of addressing himself also to her by her Name. — The Consternation of *Cleomenes* at hearing it, was, I think, superior to that which *Clelia* had been in; — but certainly never did two People of Sense look so silly as they did: — *Cleomenes*, on knowing he was in Company with his fair Correspondent, was under a Necessity of saying something like what he had so often wrote, and *Clelia* was no less obliged to thank him for the many polite Addresses she had received from him. — But, dear *Melissa*, I can give you no better Idea of the Behaviour of them both, than by saying it was somewhat like that celebrated, though more heightened Scene in the Play of *Grief A-la-mode*, between Lord *Hardy* and Lady *Charlotte*; — as sometimes the Expressions they made use of were huddled and scarce intelligible, at others drawled out, and a long Pause between every Sentence.

Never had I experienced so much Command over myself as at this Juncture to restrain from laughing, and I believe none of the Company but found the same Difficutly. — We all kept our Countenances pretty well, however, and I believe neither of the Lovers had any Suspicion of the Trick had been put upon them.

We, who were in the Plot, have had a good deal of Diversion about it, though I must own it might have proved of an unlucky Consequence either to one or the other of them, if a Liking

Liking of the *Persons*, had not been mutually answerable to that of the *Mind* in both; but, thank *God*, no such ill Accident has happened: *Cleomenes* thinks *Clelia* all that is exquisite in Womankind, and *Clelia* allows *Cleomenes* to be the most agreeable Man she ever saw.—I catched her the other Day as I came upon her unawares, breathing out this Raphsody, which I know not if she had made herself, or had read in any of the Poets:

Less fair are Orchards in their Summer Pride,
Adorn'd with Trees on some clear River's Side.
Less fair are Vallies, their green Mantles spread,
Or Mountains with tall Cedars on their Head.

CLEOMENES, since this Interview, and being informed of the obliging Things she says of him, has gained Courage enough to intreat her Permission to visit her, and she, finding an additional Warmth in the Expressions of the Letters she now receives from him, has consented to admit him.—It is not to be doubted but that this Passion so violent, and so long a Time pent up on both Sides, will shortly break into a mutual Confession,—and then there is no more to do, but away to the Altar of *Hymen*:—Till that Incident arrives,

none

none of us dare tell either of them how they have been trepann'd into Happinefs, but the Detail will ferve well enough to heighten the Mirth of a Wedding Entertainment. — Adieu,

My dear *Melifſa*,

Yours, *&c.*

EVADNE.

EPISTLE LXXXIII.

From Mira *to* Irene, *on having received a Letter from her, acquainting her that ſhe had been affronted by* Belinda, *and teſtifying her Reſolution of being revenged on her; the Deſign of this Epiſtle is therefore to perſuade her from entertaining any Deſign of that kind, by ſhewing the Amiableneſs of a forgiving Temper.*

My dear Irene,

THOUGH I am ſeldom long in Debt for Obligations my Friends confer on me by their Letters, yet I make the more Haſte to anſwer yours, becauſe I would not wiſh you to continue one Moment, if poſſible, in the Humour you ſeem poſſeſſed of at preſent, and am apt to flatter myſelf from the partial Regard you have always

always treated me with, that what I ſhall urge to you on this Head, will have little Weight.

I AM extremely concerned to find *Belinda* has behaved to you in the Manner you inform me, but am inclined to believe it proceeded rather from the too much Gaiety, I may ſay the Levity of her Temper, than from any premeditated Deſign to make you uneaſy; and if ſo, merits more of your Pity than Reſentment, as it will in Time bring on her the Contempt, inſtead of the Admiration, ſhe is ſo ambitious of attracting from the World.—You need not doubt but ſhe will have her Mortifications, without your contributing towards them:—You know ſhe is already avoided by thoſe of her Acquaintance, whom it is moſt for her Reputation to converſe with, and if you follow their Example the Puniſhment will be enough:—To return Pique for Pique, has ſomething in it beneath that Greatneſs of Mind, I have obſerved in you on other Occaſions, and ſhould you now be hurried into it by the Dictates of an unruly Paſſion, I am certain you would be aſhamed of it on Reflection:—Had you not been prevented from ſhewing your Reſentment by Company coming in juſt as the Affront was given, you tell me that by this Time, you ſhould have thought no more of it, but as Things have happened, you think it a Piece of Juſtice owing to yourſelf, to repay Injury with Injury.—Indeed, my Dear, this is a very fallacious Way of Reaſoning:—According to my Way of judging,

Revenge

Revenge in the *injured* Perſon takes off great Part of the Blame from the Perſon who has *given the Injury*; whereas, on the contrary, *Forgiveneſs* fixes it indeliably, and ſhews a Nobleneſs of Nature in the Soul, capable of putting in Practice ſo heavenly a Quality.— The *Italians* have a *Proverb* very much in Vogue among them,

Pardonare e da Angelo
Scardaſi e da Beſtia.

To forgive is like an Angel,
To forget is like a Beaſt.

The Human Nature, as a late noble Author obſerves, is half *celeſtial* half *terreſtrial*:— Its Share of the *Heavenly* is ſhewn in Acts of Benevolence and Mercy; its *Earthly* in thoſe of Cruelty, Oppreſſion, Avarice, and other groſs Propenſities:— It is the Buſineſs of *Reaſon* to cheriſh and improve the *one*, and to correct the *other* as much as in us lies; now if we retaliate the Offences committed againſt us, it is a downright Contradiction to that noble Principle, and debaſes ourſelves inſtead of exalting:— It is indeed but a petty Miſchief with which you threaten *Belinda*, but perhaps that petty Miſchief is all in your Power to do her, and you would act yet greater Things, did Chance, or her own Indiſcretion, preſent you with the Means:— Be wary therefore, I beſeech you, how you indulge a Diſpoſition not only ungenerous and unchriſtian, but

but in itſelf mean in *Men*, but moſt unbecoming in our Sex, the Beauty of whoſe Characteriſtic is Gentleneſs and Sweetneſs.

I DO not adviſe you however to adhere only to one Part of the Proverb above quoted: — I would not urge you to *forget*, though I would have you *forgive*. — There are not many Things which to me appear more ridiculous than when People affront and quarrel with each other, and after both Parties have wreaked all their Malice, become reconciled and as good Friends as ever, perhaps even more ſo than before, to ſhew how much they can *forgive* and *forget*, yet on the firſt Occaſion break off again, and renew their Animoſity. — This I have ſeen happen various Times, but never without incurring the ſecret Cenſure from all the ſenſible Part of thoſe who are Witneſſes of the Folly.

I SHOULD be extremely ſorry to find my dear *Irene* guilty of a Levity which would ſo much tarniſh the Luſtre of her other amiable Qualities. — It would give me a Pain to hear you had put it in *Belinda*'s Power to uſe you ill a ſecond Time by converſing with her, equal to that I ſhould feel on your perſiſting in your preſent Reſolution of Revenge; both which to avoid, I am confident will afford you the greateſt Peace of Mind, as well as increaſe that Love and Eſteem you have acquired from all who know you truly; among whom

whom there can be none more anxious for your Happineſs and Reputation, than,

My dear *Irene*,

Yours, ſincerely,

MIRA.

EPISTLE LXXXIV.

From Aſtrea *to a Lady on the many unhappy Diverſities of Opinion in religious Matters, occaſioned by the Controverſies between Divines.*

Madam,

I WENT Yeſterday to viſiſt *Lucia*, who you know has kept her Chamber ſome Time; I found her in a very ill State of Health, ſo ill indeed, that her Phyſicians deſpair of her Recovery; but the Pains her Diſtemper occaſioned were nothing in Compariſon to thoſe of her Mind. I ſhall die, *ſaid ſhe*, my dear *Aſtrea*, I ſhall die, but if any one ſhould aſk me in what Perſuaſion as to Matters of Religion I ſhall die, it is impoſſible for me to give any determined Anſwer. I am divided between the different Sects, and though I am a Chriſtian, know not of what Church.—I then found ſhe had been reading Books of Controverſy, firſt between thoſe of the Churches of *Rome* and *Greece*; then the

Arguments brought against both by the Church of *England*, then between that and the *Dissenters*, and at last between the infinite Numbers of Sects, which not only dissent from, but oppose each other with the utmost Vehemence. I said all in my Power to persuade her to continue in the Faith in which she had been educated, and of the Purity of which there was no Room to doubt; but what would my weak Arguments avail against those of so many learned Men she had read, who all seemed right, till compared with their Antagonists!

This, and many other Instances I have known of the like Nature, makes me think it would be happy for some People if they could not read, since what they indulge in themselves as a laudable Curiosity of being instructed in the Truth, often serves only to distract, instead of informing the Mind. — And, indeed, how should it be otherwise? When we find Men of equal Learning and Abilities so opposite to each other in the Interpretation of the sacred Text, so industrious in spreading and propagating their different Opinions, and so warm in maintaining them, that they are ready to seal it with their Blood, how impossible is it for those of less Capacities to judge which is in the right, or indeed whether either are so?

It is to these unhappy Divisions in those who take upon them to expound the Gospel, that I am afraid that Infidelity, which we now see

creeping on all Degrees of People, is very much owing.—Faith, when it once becomes ſtagger'd, is in great Danger of being entirely overthrown; and I am ſorry to obſerve the Enemies of Chriſtianity triumph in ſeeing that Work done for them, by the Churchmen themſelves, which all their own Arguments would never have been able to accompliſh: If the Houſe which is divided againſt itſelf cannot ſtand, we may juſtly be under the ſame Apprehenſions on the ſcore of Religion; but if not altogether ſo, it will at leaſt ceaſe to ſhine with that Luſtre it would do, if its Profeſſors were more united.

But as the pure and unmixed Doctrines delivered to us by our Bleſſed Saviour and his Apoſtles, have been for a long Succeſſion of Years, and I fear will ſtill be ſo wreſted to ſerve the particular Purpoſes of Ambition, Oſtentation, or an Affectation of Peculiarity by ſome miſguided Zealots, the only Way to avoid being led aſtray, is to read none of their Writings, but ſtick wholly to the Scriptures themſelves; the plain Text will be ſufficient for the Conduct of our Lives both in civil and religious Matters, without endangering the turning of our Heads, with thoſe Parts which appear too abſtruſe for our own Judgment to unfold, and we can ſo little depend on that of others for Satisfaction.

I remember ſome Time ago, to have met with a little Book, which though it carries the Air of a Romance, and is wrote in that Style, contains

contains a very uſeful Allegory on the Occaſion I am ſpeaking of.—The Author, after deſcribing the moſt beautiful Iſland that ever was, ſituated in ſome Part or other of that Immenſity of Waters which lie beyond the Moon, tells us, that it had been governed for an infinite Number of Ages, by Kings of an uninterrupted Line, but that Male-Iſſue at laſt failing, it became ſubject to a Princeſs called *Eovaai*, the only Daughter of the laſt Monarch, whoſe Name indeed has ſlipt my Memory; it is however of little Importance to the Story; it is enough to ſay he was a very good King, and had enjoyed a long and happy Reign.— When he found his Diſſolution near, he called his Daughter to him, and after giving her ſome neceſſary Precepts for governing, he took a Jewel from his Breaſt and fixed it upon hers, charging her to preſerve it with more Care than Life, never to truſt it in any other Hands, and above all never to ſuffer her Curioſity to explore what was contained in it. While, ſaid he, you preſerve this precious Gift delivered by the Gods themſelves, you, and the People you are born to rule, will be perfectly happy; but if once you part from it, or let it be pryed into by any inquiſitive Eyes, you, and all under you will be accurſed; Woes beyond a Name will fall upon you, and every kind of Plague be the Portion of this devoted Iſland. The Princeſs promiſed an entire Obſervance of his Commands, and of this in particular.

For ſome Years after his Death ſhe was punctual in obeying his Commands, but one unhappy Day being alone in a fine Grotto which overlooked the Sea, ſhe began to wonder within herſelf what extraordinary Virtue could be lodg'd in ſo ſmall a Compaſs as that Jewel, ſhe having many others of greater Magnitude and Luſtre, concerning which her Father had not given her the leaſt Charge, and was tempted to think the Value he had ſet upon it, was owing merely to the Capriciouſneſs of old Age; ſhe thought at leaſt there could be no Harm in examining it, as ſhe would not preſume to break it open, or any Way demoliſh it, ſo took it off her Breaſt and turned it on every Side to try if ſhe could diſcover any Thing particular in it; but ſaw nothing more than what ſhe might diſcern at a much greater Diſtance, that it was a pretty large Stone, environed with ſeveral others of a leſs Size: — Well, *cried ſhe, to herſelf peeviſhly*, what can this mighty Myſtery be? — My Father told me, it was a Preſent from the Gods; ſurely the Gods do not deal in Riddles with Mankind; but if they do, I ſhould think it rather a Merit than a Crime to endeavour to explain their Meaning: In ſpeaking theſe Words, the Stone in the middle dropt out, and left the Foſſet empty, this a little ſurprizing her ſhe ſtooped to take it up, but a little Bird which had been hopping about the Grotto, ſnatched it in his Beak, and immediately ſoared with it out of Sight: In vain ſhe ſcreamed, — in vain ſhe purſued the winged Robber with her Eyes in Hopes of

of ſeeing it let fall where ſhe might find it, ſhe ſoon loſt Sight both of him and the Prize he had deprived her of: — She then repented what ſhe had done, though only for having diſobeyed the laſt Commands of her Father; but ſoon ſhe found Conſequences more direful than could have ever entered her Imagination. — The pure unclouded Sky grew on a ſudden black and horrid, ſcarce any Light remained but what was given by blazing Sheets of elemental Fire, which ſhot with amazing Rapidity through the Gloom, accompanied with Claps of Thunder ſo loud and violent, they ſeemed to ſhake the Baſis of the Earth, and bring on a ſecond Chaos.

I HAD forgot to tell you, that in this Iſland, no ſuch Thing had ever been known before, not even the Winds had leave to blow upon it too roughly, and only gentle *Zephirs* wafted from Field to Field, the various Odours of an eternal Spring; — how terrible then muſt ſuch a Phœnomena be to the unhappy *Eovaai* and her People! But this was only the Beginning of Miſfortunes, — all that the old King had prognoſticated ſoon after enſued. — Plagues followed Plagues, War, Famine, deſolating Peſtilence, every deſtroying Angel poured out his Phial of Wrath upon them: — Inteſtine Jars bred Sedition among the People, which at length broke into open Rebellion; the Queen was driven from her Palace, all was in Confuſion, and this once bleſt, this envied Spot of Earth, reduced to the utmoſt Miſery and Contempt.

The various Incidents of *Eovaai*'s Calamities, take up the whole Book, but I have told you in few Words the Allegory, which I believe you will find no Difficulty in explaining.

People that enquire too deeply into the Myſteries of Religion, will always finds themſelves bewildered;—the Speculation is above the Reach of human Reaſon even in the ſtrongeſt Heads, and when attempted by the more Weak, is ſure to bring on the moſt fearful Diſtraction of Ideas. Humbly to believe what we are taught in Youth, is the ſureſt Means of enjoying Peace of Mind in Age, and will be our beſt Conſolation in the Hour of Death.

If we look into the World, either through the Retroſpect of Hiſtory, or as preſent Obſervation ſhews it to us, we ſhall find, that Difference in Religion, or the Difference of Pretences to it, have been the ſole Cauſe or Excuſe for the Miſchiefs committed in it, as the humorous Poet *Hudibraſs* juſtly ſays,

Zeal's a dreadful Termagant,
That teaches Saints to tear and rant;
Turns meek and ſneaking ſecret Ones
To raw Heads fierce and bloody Bones:
And not content with endleſs Quarrels
Againſt the wicked and their Morals,
The Gibelines *for want of* Guelphs,
Divert their Rage upon themſelves.

The

The first Broachers of any new Opinion, find so much their Account in it, that it is not to be wondered at, in an Age where the fairest Professions of Zeal for the true Deity are frequently made the Cover of a secret Idolatry of *Mammon*, we should find so many of deep Heads and shallow Pockets, endeavour to make their own Advantage of the Credulous and more Ignorant.

Curiosity is, no doubt, one of the most darling Propensities of human Nature, and indeed ought in some Cases to be encouraged, as it is only another Word for a Desire of Knowledge. — Without it, all Improvement in the Arts and Sciences would cease; — Nature, which every Day teems with fresh Wonders for the speculative Mind, in vain would spread her unexhausted Stores; — the Beauty and the Use of her various Productions lost, and we should be guilty of an ungrateful Neglect to the Almighty Dispenser of those Blessings. — Here is sufficient to exercise the inquisitive Faculty; — here the Search is equally commendable, as pleasing; Why then should we not be content with that, and not attempt to pry into the Things that are forbidden, and in which our utmost Scrutiny serves only to plunge us into the more Uncertainty!

Yet I have heard many People boast of this enquiring Disposition as to Matters of Religion.

Shall I believe this or that, *say they*, because such a one, or such a one, has maintained it for a Truth! — No, I will examine all, make myself acquainted with every different Opinion, and then chuse, and abide by that which I find right. This would be extremely just, I grant, could any one be certain he were able, among this Diversity, to chuse the right. Reason will inform him, he will tell you; alas, how weak is Reason in this Point? how little to be depended on, how apt to be misled, and how often are those who imagine themselves most free from the Partiality of Prejudice, entirely governed by it, to the binding even of that Reason they are so vain of? Mr. *Dryden* in his *Religio Laici*, has some very fine Lines on the Imbecility of Human Reason.

Dim as the borrow'd Beams of Moon and Stars
To lonely, weary, wand'ring Travellers,
Is Reason to the Soul; and as on high,
Those rolling Fires discover but the Sky,
Not light us here, so Reason's glimm'ring Ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful Way,
But guide us upward to a better Day.
And as those nightly Tapers disappear,
When Day's bright Lord ascends our Hemisphere;
So pale grows Reason at Religion's Sight,
So dies, and so dissolves in supernat'ral Light.

Curiosity, as I before observed, is a Praiseworthy Emotion of the Mind, when directed to proper Objects, but when misapplied, is the most

moſt dangerous of any; we know not to what Lengths it may excite us, even in Things of infinitely leſs Conſequence than that of Religion; but there above all others we ought to be careful not to indulge it, if we have any Regard to our Peace of Mind.

I BELIEVE it ſuperfluous to make any Apology for ſo long a Letter, becauſe you have often deſired I would give you my Sentiments freely on this Occaſion, and poor *Lucia*'s Condition reminding me of the Promiſe I then gave of complying with your Commands, I took the firſt Opportunity of fulfilling it. — I am ſenſible I have left many Arguments unurged which the Subject might furniſh, but I was apprehenſive of becoming too tedious, and beſides know your own good Senſe will eaſily ſupply whatever I have been deficient in. — I am with due Reſpect,

Madam,

Your moſt humble,

And moſt obedient Servant,

ASTREA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXXXV.

From Sophronia *to a Gentleman, who having received some Disappointments in Life, could not forbear testifying an unbecoming Impatience at Fortune, and the Baseness of Mankind.*

Sir,

THOUGH you have no Friend more truly concerned for those repeated Disappointments you have met with than myself, yet I must own I am much more concerned to find with how little Temper you sustain them; and as I had not the Opportunity last Night of communicating my Sentiments to you upon it, think it the Duty of Friendship to lay hold on the first that offered, to use my poor Endeavours, at least, to call you back to your former self, by reminding you how unworthy it is of that Philosophy you make Profession of, to suffer an unavailing Passion to triumph over Reason. — If you have not a sufficient Stock of Resignation to the Divine Will, to look upon all Afflictions with the same Eye you would do on Blessings, consider them at least as unavoidable; and that Impatience and Repining may, and indeed always does render them worse, never better. — For all Events either there *is*, or *is not*, a Remedy; if the former, Prudence demands we should attempt it; if the latter, the same Prudence should teach us to think as little as possible of it. — Cross Accidents are common to all Men, more or less,

and

and in well ſupporting them conſiſts the Dignity of a Rational Being. — An Infant will be froward and peeviſh when any thing happens to thwart its little Fancy, but Maturity ſhould inform us that we muſt not expect to be humoured in every Thing. — I am aſhamed to hear People cry out, that this or that is not to be borne, when we all know that what Heaven decrees, without whoſe Will nothing comes to paſs, muſt be borne; and all our murmuring at our Fate ſerves only to render it more grievous, as a Slave in ſtruggling with his Chains, feels them with double Weight.

Will Example influence, let any one who labours under any Diſappointment, turn their Eyes upon *Learchus* : —*Learchus* in his extreme Youth, baſely defrauded out of an ample Patrimony, and when riper Years put him in a Condition to attempt the Recovery of his Rights, deceived and betrayed by thoſe he moſt confided in for Redreſs : — The darling Object of his moſt early Wiſhes, the beautiful *Cleora*, torn from his Hopes and given to another : — Every Expectation fruſtrated, — every Aim impeded. The Butt, at which ill Fortune ſeems to have darted her whole Quiver of envenomed Arrows, yet with how equal, how ſerene a Mind, does he ſupport them all? How does his Fortitude riſe ſuperior to every Ill, above uttering either Reproaches, or Complaints?

Let me conjure you, Sir, to imitate a Virtue

you

you have ſo often praiſed, and which is ſo juſtly revered by all good Men. — Religion, Philoſophy, and even Self-love unite to bid us exert all the nobler, and more diſcreet Emotions of the Soul, to guard againſt the equally prophane, and mean Alarms of Paſſion and Diſcontent.

I know you have not had the beſt Succeſs in your moſt laudable Attempts; I know you have much wherewith to accuſe the Injuſtice of Mankind: But conſider we live not in an Age where either Virtue, or Good-Senſe has any Plea for Favour or Protection. — Were you to purſue contrary Methods than thoſe you have made Choice of, you would doubtleſs have more Succeſs; but that I hope, nay, dare anſwer for, you will never do. — It ought, therefore, to conſole you, that if you are ill dealt with by the World, you merit not to be ſo, by becoming the Engine of him who is your principal Oppreſſor, to oppreſs others, who if they have not Senſe enough to ſee it at preſent, will one Day feel it in the ſevereſt Manner. — The Generality of Mankind only know you have been unhappy in your Purſuits, but are entirely ignorant that you are ſo, merely becauſe you have too much Honeſty to conceive, much leſs to join in any Scheme for aggrandizing a Few to the Prejudice of the Whole. — Pity, therefore, rather than be angry at the Folly of the miſguided Multitude, who go with the Current, which Way ſoever it caries them; be ſatisfyed with living an inactive Life,

Life, ſince thoſe you wiſh to ſerve, chuſe not to be ſerved by you, and take Part with your, and their own Enemies, in barring you from all the Means of rendering your Virtues, or your Abilities conſpicuous.

But you ſeem not to lay the Streſs of your Diſquiet ſo much on your having loſt a Seat in Parliament, or that of your Cauſe in *Weſtminſter-Hall*, though deprived of ſo conſiderable a Part of your Eſtate by it, or on the Diſappointment of that Poſt of Honour you have ſo long ſollicited, and been made to expect, as on the Time you have waſted in theſe Purſuits, and the Triumphs your ill Succeſs affords to your Enemies. — Alas! Sir, the two latter are but the Conſequences of the former; and a Moment's cool Reflection will tell you, that you ought rather to make the beſt Uſe you can of future Time, than regret the paſt; and that if your Enemies rejoice in thoſe Misfortunes which were unavoidable, they will have yet more to do ſo, when they find you bring others on yourſelf by giving Way to a fruitleſs Diſcontent.

Pardon the Freedom of theſe Remonſtances, as they flow from a Heart full with good Wiſhes for your Welfare. — I am,

Sir,

Yours, *&c.*

Sophronia.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXXXVI.

From Miranda *at* Windſor, *to* Panthea *at* Paris, *expreſſing her Uneaſineſs at not having heard from her, and earneſtly entreating her to write.*

My dear Panthea,

I HAVE juſt now found out that human Nature is extremely partial and ſelfiſh, if not greatly corrected by Reaſon. — I have ſadly lamented not having heard from you in three ſucceſſive Poſts, and to my Shame muſt own that at firſt I wiſhed rather to attribute your Silence to any Thing than want of Friendſhip; but when I reflected more deliberately I retracted the narrow and intereſted Ambition, and bluſhed to think of how little Conſequence my Peace of Mind was in Competition with a thouſand Accidents, which might happen to yourſelf, and oblige you to forget a Perſon, no otherwiſe worthy the Favours you have honoured me with, than by the ſincere and grateful Senſe I have of them.

One Line aſſuring me you are in Health, and that nothing has fallen out of Ill to you, will

will now make me perfectly easy: — You see how humble I am grown, — a Month ago I should have complained to have seen your Name subscribed at the Bottom of a *folio* Sheet, now even the quarter Part of a *Duodecimo* would content me, — see what it is to be starved. — I rioted in the Plenitude of your Wit and Good-Nature, but being so long deprived of any Part will make me thankful for the smallest Crumbs which fall from that Abundance, you pour forth on others.

I flatter myself, however, you will not take me at my Word, and that when you do write, your Letter will be copious enough to make Atonement for all past Omissions, which as I have calculated cannot be less than three whole Sheets of the largest imperial Paper *Paris* can supply you with.

I HAVE no News to acquaint you with, but that we are like to have so ill a Neighbour, that I shall be obliged to leave *Windsor*.

I AM wearing into my own selfish Views again; — but though I know it highly unreasonable to desire you should devote so much of your Time in a Place where you might employ it in much more agreeable Amusements, yet I know you well enough to know nothing is so pleasing to yourself as to please others, and in that Confidence depend on my Request being

being granted, ſince I am certain you alſo know that the continual Aſſurances of your Friendſhip makes the greateſt Happineſs of,

My dear *Panthea*,

Yours, *&c.*

MIRANDA.

The End of the SEVENTH BOOK.

EPISTLES

FOR THE

LADIE.

BOOK VIII.

EPISTLE LXXXVII.

From Miranda *to* Panthea, *wrote the ſame Day with the foregoing, on Account of having after her ſending it to the Poſt, received two Letters from her, which had lain at the Office in* Calais *by Reaſon of the Mail being detained.*

My Dear Panthea,

YOU will receive from me both an *Accuſation* and *Recantation* at the ſame Time; the *former*, I but *thought*, I had Reaſon; to make the *latter*, I am *ſure* I have. — I did not, alas! conſider the Ocean was between us, nor that the Quarrels of Princes interfered with our Friendſhip, and might poſſibly prevent

my receiving the Assurances of it so soon as I expected. — I had just sent mine to the Post when yours was brought me, and by their Dates perceived the Error I was in. — I could not bear you should see the rash Judgment I had passed, without, at the same Time, seeing I was convinced, and ashamed of it: — But I shall leave my Transgression to be excused by the Motive, if, as the Poet says,

The Faults of Love, by Love are justify'd;

So will those of Friendship also be, where it is mutual, and shall therefore rest satisfied till your next takes away all room for Doubt.

I THANK you for the agreeable Account you give me: The Story is very entertaining, but you have the happy Talent of rendering every Thing so you treat upon. — I have no Time to expatiate on the Beauties of it, nor indeed to consider them as I ought: I fear being too late for the Post, and can only tell you that I am, with the most unfeigned Regard,

My Dear *Panthea*,

Yours, *&c.*

MIRANDA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXXXVIII.

From Sophronia *to* Marcia, *who being disappointed of seeing her so soon as she expected, had desired she would send her Daughter.*

Dear Marcia,

IT is a sad Thing to have out-lived ones Credit. — My last gave you all the Assurances that Words could form, of my being with you as soon as the ugly Business I have at present on my Hands should be dispatched; — yet that was not sufficient, — you require me to send my Daughter, and tell me you shall then be certain of my coming to fetch her Home; which is only a genteel Manner of letting me know my Word is not to be relyed on without Security. Indeed, I think, I ought to remember I am descended from the Ancient *Britons*, and resent, in the Manner my Ancestors would have done, the not being believed without an Hostage. — But Times are changed, and the Fashions of the Mind alter as well as those of the Dress. — I find I have not Courage to refuse you any Thing. — Whatever you enjoin must be granted: — The Pledge you demand sets out to Morrow in the Stage Coach — She will have the Honour to deliver you this Mark of my Submission, also the Purchase of Tea you desired I

would make for you, and the Snuff-Box you left behind you in *London*.

As for any freſh Intelligence I have none, except one Thing I am ſure you will be ſorry to hear. — Mr. ****, has reſigned his Office, and this Event at preſent engroſſes the Converſation of the Town; various Cenſures are paſſed on it, ſome applaud, and others blame his Reſolution; thoſe who do the latter, tho' they cannot help ſaying with *Acaſto* in the Play,

——— *in corrupted Times,*
The Poſt of Honour is a private Station;

Yet they alledge, that a Perſon ſo eminent for his Wiſdom, Integrity, and every other Virtue and great Qualification, ſhould not have withdrawn himſelf from Public Affairs, when there was ſo much Occaſion for his Preſence to be a Check on the licentious Deſigns of bold and venal Men in Office.

Others again will tell you, that he has acted a truly wiſe and noble Part; that it would have been inconſiſtent with his Character to have continued any longer a Member of that Body with whom he could not join, and whoſe Councils being governed by Majority, it would be vain for him to oppoſe; and where poſſibly ſome Things hereafter might be done, in which, tho' innocent, he muſt bear Part of the Blame when canvaſſed by Poſterity.

All

All, however, agree, all I mean who have no Share in the Corruption of the Times, that Things muſt be very deſperate indeed, when ſuch a Man chuſes to quit the Scene of Action, he has always lived in, and bury thoſe great Talents in Obſcurity, which he finds of no Weight to ſtem the Tide of over-bearing Vice.

For my own Part, I cannot help thinking that this Action muſt open the Eyes of all who are not wilfully blind to the real Situation of our Public Affairs, and enable them to examine into the Conduct of the Managers with more Care than they have done for ſome Years paſt, as well as ſhew them how dangerous it is, to take Things upon the Credit of an artful Harrangue, or a well penned Pamphlet.

But no more on this Subject till we meet, which I flatter myſelf will be ſomething ſooner than I propoſed when I wrote laſt to you. — My Lawyer has juſt now aſſured me, my Buſineſs will be decided the firſt Week in Term, and if ſo, farewel for a Time to this noiſy, buſy, buſtling, very fooliſh Town. — I ſhall leave the Fire-works to thoſe who like the Glare, and fly to my dear *Marcia*, in whoſe Society, amidſt the blooming Sweets the approaching Seaſon promiſes, I doubt not to enjoy more

ſolid Happineſs, than all the gaudy expenſive Rejoicings for the *Peace* can afford thoſe who are moſt eager to partake of them. — Till when believe me,

With the moſt perfect Amity,

My Dear *Marcia*,

Yours, *&c.*

SOPHRONIA.

EPISTLE LXXXIX.

From Mira *to her Neice, on the Manner in which ſhe ought to confer Favours.*

My Dear Neice,

I WAS tranſported with Joy at the Account *Matilda* gave me of your generous Benefaction to the worthy and unfortunate Mrs. * * *, but my Satisfaction had yet been more compleat, had I received it from any other Mouth than that of one who had it from yourſelf. — The Bounties we beſtow do Honour to ourſelves, and therefore ſhould never be reported by ourſelves. — Nay it behoves us to ſilence, as much as is in our Power, the Gratitude of the Receiver, for which Reaſon I ſhould chuſe to convey my Donations by an unknown Hand, eſpecially, if the

the Object of my Compaſſion had been born and bred in a Situation ſuperior to Obligations of that Nature. — It requires the utmoſt Caution and Delicacy of Behaviour, when we appear in ſuch a Caſe, to avoid giving greater Pain than Pleaſure to the Perſon we would ſerve. — An ungracious Manner of conferring a Favour deſtroys great Part of the Merit of it, and mingles a certain Gall, which poiſons all the Comforts it is intended to beſtow. The Shock which an unhappy Perſon feels in being obliged to accept Relief offered, as it too frequently is, one would think more the Effect of Cruelty than Compaſſion in thoſe who inflict it; and, without being cenſorious, one may ſay, has its Source rather from Oſtentation than true Charity. This is, my Dear, a Meanneſs of Spirit which I am ſo far from ſuſpecting in you, that I know you utterly incapable of it: I am certain you endeavoured to diſſipate the Confuſion ſhe muſt neceſſarily be involved in, by Expreſſions altogether obliging and polite; and that your very Looks, as well as Words, were ſo turned, as to convince her that you were doing yourſelf the greateſt Pleaſure: — All this I make not the leaſt doubt of, yet am a little concerned for your own Sake, that you mentioned any thing of the Affair to *Matilda*.—She told it me; — ſhe may tell it to others alſo, — they may repeat it till it comes round to Mrs. * * * herſelf, and then how greatly will the Value of the Obligation you have conferred, be diminiſhed. — This, indeed, may not happen, and I hope it will not; but

in Things of this Kind, where the Peace of Mind of a Person whom we wish well is liable to be affected, we should leave nothing to Chance: We are sure of the Secret while in our own Bosoms, but cannot be so when confided in that of another, and I therefore take the Liberty which Friendship, Blood, and the Experience of more Years entitles me to, of reminding you, that true Generosity requires we should be so far from taking any Notice of the Favours we confer either to the Receivers or any other Person, that we ought to lose the Memory of it ourselves. There is nothing more common, than to hear People inveigh against the Ingratitude of those they have some Way or other obliged; but if we examine into the Motives which induced them to do the good Offices they so much boast of, perhaps we should not find they had so much Reason to complain. — There are many Instances in which the *Donor* deserves little Thanks from the *Receiver*, but I shall take Notice of only two,— The one where we expect an implicit and eternal Submission in Requital for the Favours bestowed, and look on the Person we have obliged as Slaves purchased with our Money; — The other where what is done, is done merely with the View of magnifying ourselves in the Eyes of the World. I never hear Accusations of this Nature, without being put in Mind of that genteel, but severe Reprimand *Henry* IV. of *France* gave to one of his Generals who had spoke too largely of the Services he had rendered him, which was this,

Vous

Vous ſauvez mes Etat, J'aime a le publier :
Mais quand je m'en ſouviens, vous devez l'oblier.

I find, my Dear, whoever has any other Proſpect in the beſtowing a Favour, than that of ſerving the Perſon on whom it is beſtowed, does no Favour at all, that demands much Gratitude from the Receiver. — The Act ought to be pure and ſimple, unmixed with any Conſiderations of Self-Gratification, farther than that of the Pleaſure which flows in a generous Soul on having the Power of being ſerviceable to our Fellow-Creatures.

THAT you may always be bleſt with that Power and Inclination, is the Wiſh and Hope of, my dear Neice,

Your truly affectionate Aunt,

And ſincere Friend,

MIRA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XC.

From Belliza *to* Araminta, *ſeverely reproving her for encouraging the Addreſſes of a Gentleman whom ſhe loved, but who was every Way an improper Match for her, and muſt infallibly be ruined if he perſiſted in his preſent Intreaties.*

My once much-valued Araminta,

I AM extremely ſorry my long Abſence from Town has kept me in the dark in an Affair which, had I known in the Beginning, I might have flattered myſelf the Advice I am now about to give, might have had more Weight. — Yes, *Araminta*, it is with an equal Share of Surprize and Grief, I hear of the tender Intercourſe carried on between you and *Miramont*; that he ſhould declare a Paſſion for you, and that you ſhould encourage that Paſſion, are Things ſo little expected from either of you, that without being convinced by the moſt undeniable Proofs, would never have gained Credit with me. — Good Heaven! Is it by yielding to the ſoft Impulſe of an inconſiderate Love, that he hopes to retrieve the Misfortunes of his Family? And is this the Effects of that generous Pity I have heard you teſtify for the Injuries he ſuſtains, to put it out of his Power ever to revenge them? O *Araminta*, *Araminta*, I am ſhocked, I am confounded

founded at ſuch a falling-off from Reaſon in two Perſons, of whoſe Capacities I had the higheſt Idea ; — yet, if not too late, let me conjure you by all the Teſtimonies you have received of my unfeigned Regard, to conſider what you are about, — withdraw in Time from the Precipice before you, nor plunge yourſelf and him you pretend to love, into an Abyſs of Ruin, from which, when once ſunk, neither of you muſt hope to riſe again.

But you, it ſeems, pretend, that though both fired with an equal Degree of Paſſion, he neither preſſes nor would you conſent the Ceremony of Marriage ſhould be compleated till his Affairs were ſettled, and he is in Poſſeſſion of his Eſtate. How romantic, how ridiculous is this! Can either he or you imagine thoſe Wretches who took the Advantage of ſome ſmall Incumbrances he was left involved in, to ſtrip him in his Infancy of that vaſt Patrimony, which is his Due ſtill, will refund their unjuſt Acquiſition, and in meer Compaſſion to your mutual Love, give back his Rights ? Do they not rather rejoice, that by this fatal Flame he is deprived of the only Means of doing himelf Juſtice, that of marrying into a Family whoſe Wealth and Intereſt might enable Him to call them to account for what they have done?

I wonder not at your loving the accompliſh'd *Miramont*, he doubtleſs is ſuch as might juſtify the moſt warm Affection; nor do I think it ſtrange he ſhould

ſhould find enough in you to excite the extremeſt Tenderneſs in his youthful Heart; but Reaſon, and a due Co ſideration of that indiſſoluble Bar Fortune has thrown between you, ought to have checked in both the ſoft Emotion. — *Victoria* languiſhes to throw her immenſe Fortune at his Feet, her Father would gladly hurt all his Influence and Power to obtain Reſtitution for the injured Youth, if he were once become his Son: The fair, the virtuous, the high-born *Amelia*, ſighs to find the Overtures made to him, by her Brother, on her ſcore, have had ſo little Effect:— Either of theſe Ladies, you are ſenſible, might render him in a Condition to cope with his bitter Adverſaries, and can you take the Advantage, partial Fancy gives you over them in her Eſteem? Say, you love, can you wiſh him to forego all the glorious Proſpects ſuch Alliances afford him? — Does the Vanity of triumphing over your fair and opulent Rivals prevail above the generous Senſe you ought to have of his Injuries and Miſfortunes; nay, of the unhappy Tenderneſs he has for you?

Can any one look on it as a Proof of true Affection, that you chuſe rather to ſee him linger out a Life uſeleſs to his Country, and inglorious to himſelf, in a vain Adoration of your Charms, than to have him ſhine in the Honours to which he is born with any other Woman? — A truly noble Perſon conſults the Intereſt of the beloved Object; and were yours ſuch, you would endeavour to render yourſelf leſs amiable than you are,

are, instead of heightening, as I am told you do, by Art, the Graces you have received from Nature: — You would fly his Presence, not court his Visits; you would do every Thing in your Power to damp so pernicious a Flame, not add Fewel to it, by repeated Declarations of seducing Love.

I AM very sensible how ill you will relish my speaking in so free a Manner, but I am no less excited to do so by my Friendship for you, than by that Respect which is owing to the great Merits of *Miramont*; and the Impatience every honest Heart must feel at the cruel Usage he has sustained: — You might, to my Knowledge, marry with a Person of your own Condition, and make a Figure in the World suitable to your Birth and Fortune; whereas, by encouraging the Address of a Person, so much your Superior by Birth, yet not in a Condition to support the Dignity of Blood; one, who without being so, aims not at your Possession, and while he continues to prosecute so unavailing an Intercourse, must remain as he is, renders both yourself and him the Sport of Fortune, and a Theme for Ridicule to all who know it.

THE romantic Delusion with which you both are at present so powerfully possessed, doubtless tells you, it is heroic to suffer every Thing for each other's Sake, and condemn yourselves to an eternal Celebacy, rather than attempt to break the Chains which Love has cast about your Hearts;

Hearts; but *Araminta*, a few Years hence, when decaying Vigour on the one Side, and faded Beauty on the other, make it too late to retrieve the Time you have loſt, will certainly convince both of the unhappy Infatuation, and each will equally reproach the Cauſe of their Undoing. — *Miramont*, indeed, will have the moſt Reaſon to do ſo, when he reflects, that by an ill-judged Paſſion he has loſt the Eſteem of all his Friends, all Hopes of Aſſiſtance, or even Compaſſion from the World, and render himſelf the laſt of a moſt noble Family, muſt die unbleſt with Heirs, and leave his Enemies in an undiſturbed Poſſeſſion of an Eſtate, to which they have no Right.

Indeed, I am ſo angry at your Behaviour, that I give myſelf no Pain how much you may be diſconcerted at theſe Remonſtrances; the more ſtinging they are, the more they are likely to produce the Effect I wiſh: — I ſhould rejoice that any Thing I ſay, ſhould carry Conviction with it, and if any Thing could be of Force to bring you back to that good Senſe you once were Miſtreſs of, and that I may, without forfeiting my own, continue to ſubſcribe myſelf,

Your Friend,

Belliza.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XCI.

From Hillaria *to* Clio, *on the Doctrine of* Pythagoras, *and the Fondness some People shew to Animals, while those of their own Species are neglected.*

I AM always persecuting my Dear *Clio*, for the Solution of some impertinent Doubt or other hatched in my own prolific Noddle: — I heartily wish you had more Vanity than you have; for then I should be sure you would pardon the Trouble for the Sake of the Compliment to your Understanding; but as that is not the Case, I must depend entirely on your meer good Nature: — You must know, I have been puzzling my Brain all last Night, about the Tenets of *Pythagoras*, and cannot help thinking that, as much as his Philosophy seems to be exploded, there are a great many of all Degrees of People who really believe them: To what other Reason can be assigned the immoderate Fondness we frequently see shewn to several Kinds of Animals, than to a Belief in those who treat them with it, that when once the Being they now wear shall be shaken off, they shall immediately be transmigrated into some one or other of those Creatures? — Would the inconstant *Belinda* be so constant in her Friendship to her little Lapdog *Veni*,

Veni, if ſhe did not think whenever ſhe ceaſes to flaunt it in the Mall upon two Legs, ſhe ſhall, like him, run by the Hoop of ſome new Belle upon four? — Would *Comus* ſee without Concern, thouſands of the Species he now is of, periſh miſerably, yet take ſo much Care his favourite Bear ſhould want for Nothing, if he had not a Notion of being one Day a Bear himſelf? — Would *Clara* keep Servants and a Table for the Entertainment of diſtreſt Cats, yet turn the Needy of her own Kind from her Door, unpitied, unrelieved, if ſhe did not believe her Sojourn would hereafter be among the Mewing Race? — Would *Atamadoule* carreſs her Monkey with ſo much Tenderneſs, and imitate all the little Tricks ſhe ſees him play, but becauſe ſhe would be perfect in the Part ſhe expects Fate will oblige her to act in good Earneſt, ſome few Years hence?

In fine, I ſee People take a Fancy to one kind or other of the Brute Creation, and are at greater Pains to humour them than they can bring themſelves to be at, for any Thing that is Human, even the Meaneſt obliged to them in Blood: Does not this look, *Clio*, as if they were degenerating by Degrees into Diſpoſitions ſuitable to the Rank they ſhall one Day hold?

CHRISTIAN Philoſophy, you know, gives us Hope, that it is in our Power to become Angels hereafter, or, at leaſt, ſuch glorified Creatures, as to be fit Society for thoſe celeſtial

ſtial Beings, why then do we not endeavour to be as like them as we can, while on Earth, in order to prepare ourſelves for a Change ſo flattering to Ambition? — Nothing methinks is more ſtrange, than that ſo few ſhould make any Attempt towards attaining the neceſſary Qualifications for making a good Figure in the Regions of immortal Bliſs, and yet all pretend they hope to be admitted there.—Can a Perſon, whoſe Pleaſure is in the Company of a Dog, a Monkey, a Parrot, a Cat, a Horſe, or any other Species of the Brute Creation, be imagined to have Taſte for the Converſation of Cherubs, Seraphs, and the reſt of the Angelic Throng, which are all Purity, and much more refined above the moſt delicate of the Human Race, than we are above the loweſt Reptile that crawls beneath our Feet? — To me, therefore, it is plain that *Pythagoras* has but too many Diſciples among thoſe who call themſelves *Chriſtians*, and would be thought to live according to the Doctrine, and depend on the Promiſes given by the great Maſter of the Faith they affect to maintain.

Does not this look as if they ſubſcribed to what the witty Earl of *Rocheſter* wrote, when, being in a ſullen Humour with the World, he declares,

Were I (who to my Coſt already am
One of thoſe ſtrange prodigious Creatures Man)
A Spirit free to chuſe, for my own Share
What Caſe of Fleſh and Blood I'd pleaſe to wear,
I'd be a Dog, a Monkey, or a Bear;

Or any Thing, but that vain Animal,
Who is so proud of being rational.

How are Sentiments of this kind consistent with that Ambition, which they say is inherent to all Human Nature? — As not to think in such a Manner, rather a more abject and deplorable Meanness? — Yet, I do assure you, I have heard some People very seriously defend it.

Set me right in this Matter, if you can, I beseech you; at least favour me so far, as to give me your Opinion, what Degree of Spirit those People must have, who can content themselves with the Belief of existing hereafter, in the Shape and Station of Creatures so infinitely inferior to that which they enjoy at present. — For my Part, I should be, beyond all Expression, wretched in the Apprehension of losing the little *Reason* I am Mistress of, and degenerating into meer *Instinct*: — I know of no Idea so shocking, and would wish it never should come cross my Thoughts. — I hope, while in this World, I never shall be deprived of the Power of testifying by Actions befitting the Human Species, that I am,

My dear *Clio*,

Yours sincerely,

Hillaria.

P. S.

P. S. Do not imagine, that in what I have ſaid concerning the Fondneſs ſome People have for the Brute Creation, I mean, to affront *Tib*, your little favourite Squirrel: — I would have a proper Care taken of all harmleſs Animals whenever they fall under our Protection, and am very well convinced you are far from putting the little Forreſter in any Degree of Competition, even with the meaneſt Servant that feeds or cleans him.

EPISTLE XCII.

In Anſwer to the foregoing.

From Clio *to* Hillaria, *giving her Opinion of the true Cauſe of the Folly ſhe complains of.*

My Dear *Hillaria.*

I AM not at all ſurprized to find you think it ſo great a Difficulty to reconcile with Reaſon, that immoderate Fondneſs ſome People have for Animals; but I muſt tell you, I think you do this Folly of the Age too much Honour, to aſcribe it to Principle, or Opinion of any Sort: — It certainly does not proceed from a wrong Way of thinking, but from not thinking at all; and as much as I contemn the Precepts of *Pythagoras*, in the Point you mention, I contemn, yet more, thoſe who regulate themſelves by no Precept

whatever. — The true Source of all the Follies, and indeed of all the Miseries too, of the present Age, arises from a Want of Thought: — There is an unhappy Void in the Minds of a great many People: — All they do, whether good or ill, is without Design, or Premeditation, and meerly as Chance directs: — When you see *Belinda* hug her Lapdog, it is not because she loves him, but because she has nothing else at that Time to do, and is too volatile to be a Moment unactive: — It is the same Thing with *Comus*, he will one Day cherish his Bear, the next make the poor Monster be beat unmercifully, just as he takes it into his Head, and without being either pleased or angry: — Examine the greatest Part of the Companies you go into, you will find that almost every Thing they say and do is instantaneous, and actuated by a sudden Emotion for which themselves can give no Manner of Account, have never thought upon before, and perhaps never reflect upon afterwards. In fine, my Dear, most People especially those who are called the *Beau Monde*, seem to me to be guided only by something yet less sagacious, and more mean than that very *Instinct* you so much dread to be reduced to.

As to the Transmigration of Human Souls into the Brute Creation, I think you need be under no Manner of Pain, nor can I believe there are any, who in their Hearts, entertain the least Opinion of that Doctrine, though I am sensible some, who

who take a Delight in appearing particular, affect to defend it.

I was not long ſince in Company, where this Subject happening to be mentioned, a grave old Gentleman took upon him to maintain, that nothing could be more conſiſtent with Reaſon: — *There is*, ſaid he, *a perpetual Renovation in every Thing that breathes, not only as Nature takes Delight in Variety, but as it is agreeable alſo to Divine Juſtice, to tranſmute the Human Mind into ſuch Forms as it moſt reſembled, while in its priſtine Form.* Among other Things, he told us, that the Phœnix of *Arabia* contained the Soul of *Adam*, in order to puniſh his too great Complaiſance for *Eve*, by condemning him to live in an eternal Celibacy. — I could perceive the Inclination every one that heard him had to make ſome Reply or other to this Poſition, but he delivered it with ſo authoritative an Air, that no one durſt open their Lips in Contradiction.

Let you and I, my Dear *Hillaria*, not perplex ourſelves with theſe Fancies: — Let us have the laudable Ambition of aſcending to a Species infinitely above what we at preſent are, inſtead of imagining we ſhall deſcend into any of thoſe ſo much beneath us: — Suppoſing even the Syſtem were true, that the old Gentleman I juſt mentioned would have us believe, and that we ſhould indeed be rendered hereafter what we moſt reſemble while here, it is ſurely our Buſineſs to attain to as near a Similitude, as our frail

Natures will permit, of the moſt refined and glorified Works of the Creator. — If we ſtrictly adhere to the Principles of *Chriſtianity*, and depend on the Aſſurances given us in Holy Writ, the Rotation we ſhall know when leaving this Life, will be much more for the better, than our *Pythagoreans* pretend will be for the worſe.—Let the cruel and blood-thirſty Man tremble at his future Exiſtence in a Wolf, the baſe Betrayer into a Mole, the Libidinous into a Goat or Swine, the Envious into a Cat, and all who delight in Deeds of Darkneſs, into Bats or Shriek Owls, but let the Lovers of Mercy and Benevolence, the Pure and Incorrupt of Heart, expect to be cloathed with the Rays of celeſtial Beauty, and never-fading Charms. — I am,

My dear *Hillaria*,

Yours unfeignedly,

Clio.

P. S. *Tib* is much obliged to you for the Apology you make in his Favour, and if he could ſpeak, would doubtleſs thank you for it: — I am however bound to make you my Acknowledgments for not believing the Pleaſure I ſometimes take in him, will bring me in any Danger of being one Day tranſmigrated into a Squirrel.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XCIII.

From Apamia *to* Euphrosine *in the Country, on the pretended Conjurer that was expected to shew Wonders at the Theatre in the* Hay-market.

Dear *Euphrosine*,

THERE are some Sorts of Misfortunes which it is not in our Power to pity, how much soever they may be regretted by the Person who labours under them. — My last gave you an Account of a ridiculous, and indeed impious Entertainment, proposed to be exhibited at the Little Theatre in the *Hay-market*, where a Fellow pretended not only to convey his whole real Body (without Equivocation) into a Quart Bottle, in the View of the Audience, but also to raise, from their eternal Homes, the Spirits of deceased Persons, and oblige them to hold Discourse with as many as were desirous of such Conversation; but I little imagined when I wrote concerning this impudent Proposition, that any one could be *weak* enough to believe such Things were practicable, or *wicked* enough to wish to be Spectators of them if they were so; but, to my great Surprize and Concern, I was informed, by one who happened to pass that Way, that the Throng of Chairs and Coaches about the Doors, were greater than ever had been seen before at that

obſcure Houſe. No Conjurer, however, appeared, and this numerous and polite Audience, after waiting a long Time, thought beſt to retire, which they might have done in good Order, had not a certain very *Great* Perſon, who had come to Town for no other Purpoſe, as it proved, than to be diſarmed, been ſo much incenſed at the Diſappointment, that he reſolved Revenge on the poor Scenes, and without any Conſideration of the Fright he might give the Ladies, ordered the Doors to be opened to the Mob, who broke in like a Torrent, driving all before them, plucking up Benches, Boxes, and Orcheſtra, in their Way to the Stage, which, with their heroic Leader at their Head, they ſoon demoliſhed: In this Confuſion, it is eaſy to conceive what the Apparel of the Women muſt ſuffer: — Some came home without their Tippets, Aprons, Capuchins, Headdreſſes, and Fans, and few, I am informed, were ſo lucky as to preſerve their Watches: Small Matter, I think, of Commiſeration, ſince they knew the Value of Time ſo little as to laviſh it in the Manner they intended! — *Laſſalia* is dying with the Vapours, for being deprived of the Pleaſure ſhe expected of knowing in what Manner they diverted themſelves in the inviſible World: — *Belinda* keeps her Bed, and has been twice blooded for the Bruiſes ſhe received in buſtling through the Crowd: — A certain Nobleman remarkable for nothing ſo much as holding up his Chin, is in danger of loſing Part of it by a Fall from the Box into the Pit: — The crazy Bones of another are ſo diſlocated, that it is to be feared his

his Surgeons will loſe Credit in endeavouring to put them in Order :—Numberleſs were the Diſaſters of that ill-ſtarred Night, and moſt pitiful are the Complaints one every where hears on the Occaſion ; but indeed I have not a ſufficient Stock of Good-nature to afford them either public Condolence, or private Compaſſion; on the contrary, I am as much troubled, as a Perſon of my gay Temper can be, to find ſuch an Exuberance of Folly and Prophaneneſs, for I can give no better Epithets to ſo unwarrantable a Curioſity among People whoſe Rank and Education one would think ſhould inſpire them with better Notions.

But you are doubtleſs impatient to know how all this came about, and by whom the Town were ſo egregiouſly impoſed upon; and I wiſh it were in my Power to inform you with any Certainty. Whoever the Perſon is, who hired the Playhouſe for this End, advertiſed his pretended Performance in all the Papers, and was at all the ſubſequent Expences of ſuch an Undertaking, he has taken Care to ſcreen himſelf ſo effectually behind the Curtain, as not to be diſcovered : — This we may be ſure of, that it was done with the ſole View of expoſing the Stupidity of the preſent Age, which rather than want ſome new Matter of Amuſement, would run even to the Devil in ſearch of it.

This

This Story has been in all the public News-Papers, and will doubtlefs afford Matter of Raillery for all the Courts in *Europe*, and ferve to heighten the Idea they have long had of our Manners and Morality : — But I forget I am writing to one whofe Zeal for the Honour of her Country muft render this frefh Subject of Ridicule very unpleafing : — I heartily wifh I could prefent you with fome Inftance of public Virtue or Wifdom to counterbalance it, but that is not in my Power at prefent, and I have no one Thing to tell you, which I can flatter myfelf will not be difagreeable, except that I am, and ever fhall be,

With the utmoft Sincerity,

Dear Creature,

Yours, *&c.*

Apamia.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XCIV.

From Honoria *to* Belliza, *on having received a Congratulatory Letter from her, on Account of a large Addition to her Fortune by the Death of a Gentleman who had courted her.*

Dear Madam,

I Have received too many Proofs of the Friendship with which you favour me, to be at all surprized to find you among the Number of those who congratulate me on so large an Addition to my Fortune, as has lately devolved on me through the Generosity and Death of the too faithful *Constantius* : — Imaginary Blessing ! — Gilded Wretchedness ! — Little, alas ! does the World know, how dear I pay for this Accession: — There is somewhat of uncommon Perversness in my Fate : — All that would make the Felicity of others, serves only to render me unhappy : — You know, Madam, that from my very early Years, I had all the Tenderness my Soul is capable of feeling for *Philetes*.— You know also how well the charming Youth deserves that Affection ; but neither of us being blest with a Sufficiency of the Goods of Fortune, I refused to make him Partner of a State I thought unequal to his Merits. — *Constantius*, who had a vast Estate, loved me, as the Event has proved, but

but too well: — But my Heart being long before disposed of, I could not think of giving my Person elsewhere: — I need not tell you how much I was embarrassed with the Persecutions of my Friends, who were continually ringing in my Ears, that as there was no Possibility of living with *Philetes* in a Fashion answerable to either of our Births, that I ought in Justice to myself to accept of the Offer of his Rival, whose Possession would infinitely more than make up for the Deficiencies of mine: — Often have you seen me in Tears on this Account, and been Witness of the more terrible Alarms I have sustained through the Jealousies of *Philetes*, who though never encouraged to hope I would be his, could not support the Apprehensions that I might one Day be another's, and give me Instances of a Despair, which sometimes gave me Reason to tremble for the Consequences: — *Constantius* heard not of this unfortunate and mutual Passion till very lately: — He told me of it, but as of a Thing to which he gave no Credit, till my own Confession convinced him of the Truth: — I had indeed no Motive which could induce me to deceive him, as I imagined not the Effect my Sincerity in this Point soon after produced, nor had I any Thing to fear from his Reproaches, having from the first Moment he declared his Intentions, said every Thing in my Power, except revealing the Secret he now had wrested from me, to assure him that my Heart was far from agreeing to them. — He bore the Confirmation, however, with more Fortitude and Patience than I expected from a Lo-

ver,

ver, who had always expressed his Passion in the warmest, and, as I used to think, romantic Terms. — He offered not the least Interruption the whole Time I was speaking, nor when I had left off, made any Reply for several Minutes, but seemed in a profound Reverie ; — at last, coming out of it, — *Well, Madam*, said he, *I have nothing wherewith to accuse either you, or my more happy Rival ; and should be unworthy of the Honour I pretend to of adoring you, if my continuing my unavailing Addresses, gave any Disturbance to your Peace. — I take therefore my everlasting Leave, and sincerely wish that whatever Impediment at present debars you from the Gratification of your Wishes, it may be soon removed.* — He waited not to hear what Return I would make to these Words, but concluding them with a low Bow, went hastily out of the Room, leaving me in a good deal of Consternation at his Behaviour. I had never any great Share of Vanity in my Composition, and could not imagine it had its Source from the Motive I afterwards found it had, an Excess of Love and Respect ; but rather suspected it proceeded from the Want of both, and that having in his Mind repented of the Offers he had made me, was well enough pleased with this Opportunity of breaking off. — O had it been thus, what a World of Anxiety and endless Grief had I escaped ! — But not to keep you in Suspence, a Fever, with which he was immediately seized, gave a fatal Testimony of the Violence he had done himself in this dissembled Calmness

and

and Resignation. — He languished under this Distemper but four Days, on the last of which his Valet brought me a Letter from him, with a Copy of his Testament so much in my Favour.— I cannot express to you, Madam, the strange Emotions with which I was agitated at this unexpected, unexampled, undeserved Generosity: — I hated myself for not being able to love a Man of such exalted Worth: — Nay, I almost hated *Philetes*, as the Cause of my Ingratitude: — I more than once resolved to go to the House of this Martyr to the most pure and disinterested Passion that ever was, to conjure him to live if possible, and to live for me, — to promise all he could desire or ask, and to abjure the so much doated on *Philetes* for ever. — But as often as I was about to put this Thought in Execution, still my fond foolish Heart with-held me, and deprived me of the Power of moving: — I found, alas! I had not Strength enough of Mind to imitate *Constantius*, — Gratitude and Reason yielded to a partial Tenderness, and in Spite of both, his Rival triumphed! — While I was debating within myself, a Messenger brought me Intelligence that he expired soon after he had finished his Letter, having forced himself to write it in the Agonies of Death: — The Certainty that all I could do to save him would now come too late, plunged me into a Grief which I know not if it could have been exceeded, had I seen *Philetes* breathe his last.—But there is no making you sensible how very justifiable this Affection was, without letting you see the Value of the Person whose Loss occasioned it: I have therefore sent you a Copy

py of what he wrote, which, much more than the Legacy so much talked of, will shew you what he was. — I doubt not but when you have read it, you will own I have Cause for everlasting Sorrow and Remorse, and that I ought to do no less than devote the whole Remainder of my Days to the Memory of one to whom I have so fatally been dear.—I do not pretend that I can ever love *Philetes* less than I have done, but I can, — I will, whatever I endure, sacrifice that Love to the Manes of his unhappy Rival,—forego all the softer Wishes of my Soul, and live a Widowed-Virgin for his Sake.—This, dear Madam, is the Resolution I have taken, and not all the Pangs I feel at the Sight of the Distraction and Despair it gives *Philetes*, are able to make me recede from it: — Pity the Situation of your unhappy Friend, and confess that there is something peculiar and mysteriously cruel in my Destiny. — To be beloved by two such Men as *Philetes* and *Constantius*, comes not to every Woman's Share: It is a Glory many of my Sex will envy me, and yet, how miserable has it made me! — I could not reward the Passion of *Constantius*, because I loved *Philetes*; nor can I gratify the Wishes of *Philetes*, without Injustice to the Memory of *Constantius*: — The *Living* and *Dead* divide my Soul between them; Love, Esteem, Gratitude and Compassion join to rend my Heart with a Vicissitude of Anguish; yet is it equally impossible for me, according to

my

my Way of Thinking, to eaſe the Diſquiets of him who lives, as it is to reſtore Life to him who ſleeps within his Tomb. Both are irrecoverably loſt to me, and I to Peace: — But I detain you too long from the Encloſed: — The Peruſal of that will abundantly juſtify the Grief I feel, and the Determination I have made, and be at the ſame Time an Excuſe for theſe incoherent Lines from,

Dear Madam,

Your ſincerely Affectionate

Humble Servant,

Honoria.

EPISTLE XCV.

Enclosed in the foregoing.

From Constantius *to* Honoria, *with the Copy of his last Will, and assuring her that he dies without Regret, as he shall leave her happy.*

Most Dear, and (even in Death) sole Object of my worldly Cares.

HAD the Passion you have inspired me with been tainted by any selfish Views, I could not have heard you avow your Affection for another, without the Resentment against the happy He; perhaps too have had the Arrogance to have accused you of Partiality, and Ingratitude: — This, I say, how unjust soever, is the Way of ordinary Lovers, but my wishes had an Aim more refined and more suitable to their Object: — All my Felicity was placed in the Hope of making yours, and when I found that glorious Ambition frustrated, I from that Moment resolved to leave the vain Pursuit to him who alone had the Power of accomplishing it.—Ardently as I languished for the Possession of your lovely Person, I should have thought the Blessing too dearly purchased, if at the Expence of your Peace of Mind.

But, Madam, I ſoon found that to quit you, and keep Life, were Things incompatible : — The Inſtant I came from your Apartment I was ſeized with Agonies which convinced me it was Time for me to ſettle my Affairs in this World, ſo as I deſired they ſhould be found at my Deceaſe, and make ſuch Preparation for another as my Diſorders would permit : —As your Happineſs was ſtill the reigning Purport of my Soul, I immediately ordered my Teſtament to be drawn up, by which you will find I have conſtituted you my ſole Executrix, and bequeathed you all my *perſonal* Eſtate, as well as made you Heireſs of all that Part of my *real* One, which is not entailed upon the Family : — The Original I have put into the Hands of Mr. * * * *, my Lawyer, who I believe is an honeſt Man; I encloſe you however an exact Copy, to prevent all Poſſibility of an Impoſition.—I felt ſo much Eaſe after having done this, that I began to think I ſhould recover : — Yet had it been ſo, you ſhould not by my Life have been deprived of what my Death deſigned you : —I reſolved rather to retire to ſome diſtant Corner of the World, and reſerving to myſelf only a ſmall Penſion to ſupply the Neceſſities of Nature, paſs the Days allotted me in Prayer and Meditation ; but Heaven has decreed it otherwiſe, perhaps to ſave your generous Soul the Pain of thinking you were indebted for any Obligation to one you could not love, I ſoon perceived my Fever had but afforded a ſhort Intermiſſion to return with greater Violence upon me : — It now has got the Better of my

vital

vital Spirits, and I find I am going, I hope to that Land where all is Love and ever-during Bliſs; yet be aſſured, amidſt the Extaſies of immortal Pleaſure, *Honoria* will be remembered, and it will add even to the Joys of Heaven, to think I have contributed to her Happineſs on Earth. — O, may it be ſincere and permanent, may the fortunate *Philetes*, my Rival now no more, for a long Series of revolving Time, ſhare all thoſe Tranſports my fond Heart once aimed at, till both grown old in Bliſs, you ſoar together to the Realms of Glory: — Till then, O *Honoria!* a long Farewel.

CONSTANTIUS.

P. S. I cannot cloſe this without deſiring that the only Tribute you will pay to the Memory of my Love, may be the ſpeedy Conſummation of your Nuptials with the happy *Philetes*, who I am aſſured, by all that know him, has Merits to juſtify your Choice: — Once more Adieu.

EPISTLE XCVI.

From Belliza *to* Honoria, *expressing her Surprize at the Resolution she had taken, and persuading her that it was occasioned through an over Delicacy which was rather a Fault than a Virtue to indulge.*

Dear Madam,

COULD I ever have thought *Philetes* would have wanted an Advocate to *Honoria!* — Could I have believed that when propitious Fate had removed the only Impediment to your mutual Wishes, another should start up, raised meerly by your own creative Fancy! — I am charmed with your generous Way of thinking; I applaud the tender Compassion with which you mourn the Death of *Constantius*, and the grateful Regard you pay his Memory: — The Sentiments you express on this Occasion, are truly noble and sublime, but as the Extreme of *Virtue* borders upon a *Vice*, let them not transport you so far, as to sacrifice your eternal Peace, and that of him you love to a *Chimera*.—This is over acting the Heroine, and does not *compliment*, but *affront* the Intention of the faithful *Constantius*, who made you his Heiress to the End you might *fulfil* your Wishes, not debar yourself for ever from them.

In-

Indeed, my dear *Honoria*, I cannot expreſs the Aſtoniſhment ſo wild a Reſolution as this you have taken has involved me in: — I cannot diſcern even the leaſt Shadow of Reaſon you have for it: — You are not certain of being any Way acceſſory to the Death of that unhappy Gentleman: — He laid no violent Hands upon himſelf, nor died of waſting Grief, but of a Fever, and ſuppoſing the Agitations of his Mind might bring it on, it doubtleſs was the Fate appointed for him, and would have happened, if he had never ſeen, nor ever loved you; nay, were it even ſure that the Deſpair at finding it impoſſible to gain your Affection, was the ſole Cauſe of his untimely End, you have nothing wherewith to accuſe yourſelf in this Point, you never encouraged his addreſſes, never was guilty of flattering him with a fallacious Hope, and would you then, becauſe you have been innocently fatal to one Lover, wilfully deſtroy another? — Muſt *Philetes* die, becauſe *Conſtantius* could not live! — If departed Spirits know any Thing of what is done in the World they have left behind, that of *Conſtantius* cannot but be diſpleaſed to ſee his Hopes of making your Felicity a ſecond Time defeated, and that neither alive nor dead he had Power of pleaſing you; and thus by ſtrainingGratitude to aPitch too high, you would become (what you ſeem ſo much to fear) really ungrateful; and inſtead of doing Honour to his Generoſity, render it in Effect the Source of Miſery.

But I flatter myſelf, from the Opinion I have of your good Underſtanding, that this Enthuſiaſtic Flight of an imaginary Duty, only proceeded from the firſt Emotions of the over Delicacy of your Humour. — I am impatient, however, for an Opportunity of offering ſome Arguments, too long to be inſerted in the Compaſs of a Letter, in order to convince you, that to carry your Senſe of the Obligation conferred you beyond Nature, is more romantic than juſt, and on that Account ſhall haſten my Return to *London*, ſome Days ſooner than I propoſed, being ever,

With the moſt perfect Amity,

Dear Madam,

Yours, *&c.*

Belliza.

P. S. I have wrote to *Philetes*, to bid him give no Regard to the preſent Capriciouſneſs of your Behaviour, for ſo I took the Liberty to term it: If he follows my Advice, he will let you have but little Reſpite; lay the Blame on your humble Servant, who is beſt able to bear it.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XCVII.

Mira *to a Lady who had very much entreated her to go with her to a Masquerade, giving her the Reasons for her Refusal, and her Opinion freely of that Diversion.*

Dear Madam,

FEW Things are capable of giving me greater Displeasure, than that of finding myself under a Necessity of refusing any Thing to my Dear *Fidelia*; but when I assure you, that to comply with what you now request of me, would not only be doing the utmost Violence to my Inclination, but is also inconsistent with my Character, and the Rules I have set down for my Conduct in Life, I dare say, you would not wish me to endure so severe a Mortification: — It is certain, I never declared any Dislike of the reigning Diversions of the Town, nor indeed have I any in Reality to all of them: On the contrary, there are some which receive, as well as deserve, all the Encouragement in my Power to bestow; but there are others, which, tho' I do not publickly depreciate, I should be sorry to countenance, and among these latter, I must be so free to tell you Masquerades stand in the first Rank of my Aversion and Contempt.

You know, my Dear, in what Manner I am, as it were, compelled to live: — There are many Things I give into for the Sake of not being thought particular, which my Judgment entirely disapproves: — One of the Things to which my Humour, as well as Reason, is most averse, is Gaming; yet, one Day in a Week I have Tables set out for that Purpose, in two Rooms, and seldom fail of Mortification, of what others look upon as a Credit, a *Route*, a *Drum-Major*, and sometimes am honoured with a *Hurricane*: — I go to Court, pay Compliments, measure my Steps, and walk back out of the Presence as others do, yet think it a kind of modish Slavery, from which I would gladly be free, if it were possible for me, in the Station I am, to be so: — But as, thank Heaven, I have no such Obligation to frequent the *Masquerade*, I pity those who have no better Idea of the Value of Time, than to lavish it in that ridiculous Entertainment. — Curiosity and Perswasion once carried me thither; — but, good God! what a heap of Absurdities which Way soever I turned, grated upon my Ears! — How ashamed was I to see myself in a Place, where tho' there are a great deal of what they call good Company, all Common-Sense seemed wholly banished, and Ribaldry and Idiotism were the established Rules!

To be free with you, my dear *Fidelia*, I look upon *Masquerades*, as they are managed here, to be not only foolish, but immoral: — They afford a Sanction to all the Indecencies of Speech at least, and a Man who has some Regard to his Cha-

Character of Modesty, will venture to say that in a Masque, which the most avowed Libertine would blush to do barefaced.

I GIVE you my Sentiments on this Head, with the less Reserve, as I am confident they are partly your own, and that you are so far from being in Reality fond of this Diversion, that you have often made Presents to others of the Tickets forced upon yourself; I wish I could prevail upon you to be yet less so, and that instead of going but once in a Season, you would resolve never to go at all: — If you will take the Word of an old *Poet* for it, whatever is not worthy our Approbation, is of our Contempt.

All Human Efforts have a certain Claim,
In more or less Degree, to Praise or Censure:
'Tween good *and* bad *no Medium here is found;*
Whatever's half the One, *is all the* other.

BROOM.

I MUST own I am for no Entertainments which my Understanding will not permit me to repeat, and though we both have seen the late Mr. *Thomson*'s new Play of *Coriolanus*, if instead of my going with you to the *Hay-market*, you will favour me with your Company to *Covent-Garden*, I dare answer you will find your Account in it, and not only pass your Evening more

more agreeable, but feel a much greater Satisfaction within yourself the next day: — I would not, however, if you are under any extraordinary Engagement to the contrary, desire you to break through it: — I would have none of my Friends be guilty of any Thing that might be looked upon as Affectation, but if you can find any handsome Pretence for changing your Intentions, shall be extremely glad, as I know it will be much for your Advantage, as well as to enjoy your agreeable Society at the same Time, will be to her, who is

With the greatest Sincerity,

My Dear *Fidelia*,

Yours, *&c.*

Mira.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XCVIII.

The Answer.

From Fidelia *to* Mira.

Dear Madam,

IT is utterly impossible for me to express how high a Sense I have of the Obligation your last has conferred upon me: — As to be able to follow the amiable Example you give our Sex, has been always my Ambition, so your friendly Advice is the greatest Favour you could possibly bestow: — To shew it is not thrown away upon me, be assured that no Engagements to others, no Inclinations of my own will ever be of Force enough to induce me to any Thing the excellent *Mira* disapproves, when once I am so happy as to know her Sentiments upon it: — The Honour you do me in believing I have no Relish for that Scene of Folly, called a *Masquerade*, is very flattering to my Vanity, and the more so as I am conscious of deserving it in some Measure; for indeed, Madam, it was more in Compliance with those I converse with, than any Self-gratification which ever induced me to make one among that mingled Rout.—As nothing can be more weak than to be guided by the Judgment of others, meerly because it is their Judgment, I shall for the future have the Courage to chuse for

for myſelf, whenever I am not ſo happy as to have the Advantage of your Councel and Example.

As breaking off one Engagement for the Sake of entering into another, I am afraid would be looked upon as an Affront to the Company, as well as the Entertainment, I muſt defer the Pleaſure of waiting on you to the Play till ſome other Night: — We have the Misfortune to live in an Age, when every Thing that does not tally with the general Vogue, is looked upon as ridiculous; and one is under a Neceſſity, as you juſtly obſerve, of keeping certain Meaſures, if one would avoid being the Subject of it.—I ſhall, therefore, pretend Buſineſs, ſee no Company, keep cloſe in my Chamber, and amuſe myſelf with ſome new Books, which luckily enough for me are juſt ſent in: — They muſt afford very little Satisfaction indeed, if not more than will compenſate for what I ſhould have found in the *Haymarket.* — I have the Honour to be,

With a profound Reſpect,

Dear Madam,

Your moſt obliged,

And moſt obedient Servant,

FIDELIA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XCIX.

From Belliza *to* Millamant, *endeavouring to make her ſenſible of the Folly and Danger of encouraging a Multiplicity of Admirers; and perſwading her to fix her Choice on him ſhe found moſt deſerving among the Number of thoſe who addreſſed her, before ſhe incurred the Character of a Levity which might leſſen her in the Eſteem of a worthy Man.*

Dear Millamant,

I AM ſorry to ſay I find a Pain in any Thing that gives you Pleaſure, yet will not the ſincere Friendſhip I have for you, permit me to be ſilent, while I ſee you hurried by a youthful Vanity into a Conduct which muſt in Time be fatal to your Peace of Mind and Reputation: — Conſider, my Dear, the Incongruity of your Behaviour: — You affect to laugh at the Woes of Love, to be above all Suſceptibility of that Paſſion, yet take all imaginable Pains to inſpire it in others: — Nothing delights you more than a new Conqueſt, and how many ſoever you make, cannot ſupport the Loſs of one with any tolerable Degree of Patience: — How many Arts do you put in Practice to ſecure the Heart you deſpiſe! What Trouble do you give yourſelf to prolong the Devoirs you are determined never to reward!

For

For Heaven's Sake, ask yourself what you propose by all this, and what will be the Consequence? — When your Lovers swear they die for you, you either do, or do not give Credit to their Oaths; if the former, your Manner of acting is the Height of Ill-nature and Cruelty, if the latter, you should methinks instead of being proud, rather be ashamed to reflect you gave any Encouragement for so gross an Attempt, to impose on your Understanding: — It is ungrateful and unjust to sport with the Pains of a worthy Man; — it is mean to flatter the vain Views of an insincere and empty Coxcomb.—But it is not either for the one, or the other, but for yourself I am chiefly concerned: — Remember the Fate of *Melinda*, as described by good old *Drayton*.

Melinda *spread her splendid Train,*
And swept the Youths along the Plain.
By Turns she smil'd, by turns she frown'd on every Slave,
Hope and Despair alternate gave;
But ah! how humbled was her Pride,
They found her Aim was only to give Pain,
So broke at once the servile Chain
And all her Arts defy'd.
Or on the Walks, or on the Green,
No more she seems the Woodland *Queen!*
No more her Breast the Glow of Triumph warms,
While in their Bloom, neglected are her Charms.
Her Votaries once, indignant now,
Pass scornful by, and scarce vouchsafe a Bow;

Re-

Requital just! the Nymphs and Swains proclaim,
And to the slighted Fair impute the Blame.

BELIEVE me, Dear *Millamant*, the Conduct you at present pursue, will in a short Time deprive you of all that Admiration and Esteem, you are so desirous of preserving.—A Man of Sense can ill brook a Competitor in Love, who is treated with the same Regard as himself, much less to be put on a Level with a Coxcomb.—The Encouragement you give to all will lose you all, and if so, you will be as unpitied as the Poet's Heroine.

I CANNOT suppose that, in your serious Hours, you have made any Resolution against Marriage: — Permit me therefore to remind you, that it is high Time for you to fix your Choice, if you find any one among the Number of those who make their Addresses worthy of it : — If not, for Heaven's Sake, discard them all, and wait till some Offer is made, to which you will have no Objection ; you know not but you may have some secret Lover endued with every Qualification, to render you as happy as a Wife can be, who may be deterred from making you an Offering of his Heart, while he sees you encompased with a Herd among whom he does not chuse to rank himself.

BUT, however that may be, reflect I beseech you, how much your Reputation suffers amidst these

theſe Pretenders to your Heart: —You will perhaps think it ſufficient, that you are guilty of no Inclination for any of them, in Breach of Innocence and Virtue: — That you allow no Liberties in Prejudice to your Character, or that ſhould embolden any Man to hope you might be brought to pardon the greateſt he could take: — For indeed tho' far be it from me to imagine you can forget yourſelf in this Point, yet, my Dear, I would have you remember, that we ought to behave ſo as to avoid all Suſpicion in the moſt cenſorious: — But put the Caſe that none ſhould preſume to call your Conduct ſo far in Queſtion: — Suppoſing the World in general ſhould allow you as innocent as I, who I think know you perfectly, ſincerely do, yet Vanity and Levity are of themſelves ſufficient Blemiſhes in Reputation, and ſuch as I before obſerved, will infallibly loſe you the Eſteem of all Men of true Underſtanding: — Forfeit not then thoſe Expectations of ſolid Happineſs, which your Birth, Beauty, Fortune, and a Thouſand amiable Qualities, give you a juſt Pretence to, for the poor, empty, tranſient Pleaſure of ſhewing your Power over the Hearts that either are, or feign themſelves devoted to you. — Ceaſe to take Pains to captivate: — Reſerve all your Cares to ſecure the Affection of him you ſhall find worthy of yours, and till you are convinced there is ſuch a one in the World, forbear wiſhing to be loved by any other.

I

I shall make no Apology for the Liberty I take in giving you this Advice, in the Confidence you will believe it, what it really is, the Effects of a Friendſhip always warm and ſincere in your Intereſt, and which I hope no Miſunderſtanding will ever break off between you and her, who is,

My Dear *Millamant*,

Yours, *&c.*

Belliza.

EPISTLE C.

From Marcella *to* Polydore, *attempting to prove, that more ſolid Happineſs was to be found in Friendſhip than in Love: And deſiring he will let her know how far his Opinion coincides with her's in that Point.*

Sir,

I Happened the other Day into ſome Company where the Subject of Converſation was on the different Bleſſings ariſing from Love and Friendſhip: The greateſt Part of the Company gave the Preference to the former, but notwithſtanding the celebrated *Ardella* was one of that Number, I could not be complaiſant enough to acquieſce, tho'

to a Judgment which has the Character of being so superior to the greatest Part of my Sex. — I took upon me to maintain, that the Ideas which arise from Friendship, being more pure and spiritual than those of Love, could not but afford more true and refined Pleasures to a delicate Mind, than those of a Passion which having always some Mixture of Self-gratification in it, was liable to a Thousand tormenting Doubts and Anxieties, as we always see among those devoted to it: — The one, I said, was a celestial Flame, the other a meer earthy Vapour, gross and wavering;—that the one was immortal as our Souls, and would continue with us in Paradise to all Eternity; the other decaying, and perishable with our Frames, and very seldom, if ever, of so long a Duration: — The one, cried I, with some Vehemence, finding myself opposed, lifts us to the *angelic* Nature, the other is left to itself, and unaccompanied with Friendship's nobler Blaze, would debase us to the *bestial*.

The Energy with which I could not forbear expressing my Sentiments on this Occasion, set the whole Company into a Fit of Laughter, and turned the Discourse which before was very serious into Pleasantry: —Every one, even those who had not been on my Side of the Question, rallied me in their Turn: — One called me a Platonic, another a Cynic, a third a Stoic, and all agreed, that I was an utter Enemy to the tender Passion: — It was in vain that I endeavoured to clear myself in this Point: — The Charac-

ter

ter is entailed upon me, for ought I know, as long as my Pretence to ſhew a Senſibility of Love in myſelf, or to inſpire it in others.

THIS is a Reflection, however, that gives me little Pain : — To ſecure the Friendſhip of thoſe I eſteem is the chief of my Ambition; and as you, Sir, ſtand one of the foremoſt in that Rank, hope you will not take Part with the Advocates for Love againſt me.

IN my Opinion, we never ſhew the Dignity of our Being ſo much as when we are found capable of reliſhing the Joys of Friendſhip:—Joys which ſtand in no need of the Senſes for Support, and are truly ſeraphic : — The Soul here diſdains to ſtoop to the low Gratifications of Fleſh and Blood, and, like its divine Original, finds its Pleaſure in itſelf ;— its ſole Aim being to make the Happineſs of others : No jealous Pangs, no anxious Cares diſturb the Tranquility of its Ideas; and, if ill treated, as too often is the Caſe, may transfer itſelf to a more worthy Object, without incurring the Cenſure of Inconſtancy, as in Affairs of Love : — No little Arts are neceſſary to ſecure an adequate Affection : — As we have no Regard to the outward Frame, and are charmed only with thoſe Beauties we find in the Mind of our Friend, there needs no more than to embelliſh that Part in ourſelves to preſerve bliſsful Union entire.

How then can any one pretend that ſuch a celeſtial Intercourſe is not infinitely to be preferred to all the groſs Delights of a Paſſion, which, however diſguiſed, is ſenſual, and depending on Fancy is liable to be eraſed by a thouſand Accidents ſo ſubject to Change, that it rarely happens, but firſt or laſt, one of the Parties becomes baſe, and the other miſerable.

But I forget to whom I am writing; thoſe ſacred Bands which have ſo long and ſo inviolably linked you to the worthy *Acaſto*, ought to have convinced me, there needs no Arguments to engage you to give your Opinion in Favour of Friendſhip; but as one cannot be too much aſſured of what one earneſtly deſires, I entreat you will oblige me with a ſpeedy Anſwer, and, by your Approbation, confirm me in Sentiments at preſent ſo pleaſing to me. I am,

With the moſt perfect Regard,

Sir,

Your moſt humble,

And moſt obedient Servant,

Marcella.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CI.

In Answer to the foregoing.

From Polydore *to* Marcella, *testifing his Approbation of her Notions of Friendship; but endeavouring at the same Time to perswade her, that between Persons of different Sexes, the Union is more perfect when heightened by Love.*

Madam,

YOU did not deceive yourself, O most adorable *Marcella!* when you imagined I should give my Voice on the Side of Friendship, and in applauding those refined and exalted Notions you have of it.—But while I admire those seraphic Ideas with which you seem possest, would not wish you to throw the Woman off entirely, in order to be all Angel before your Time. — Friendship indeed, when pure and disinterested, comprehends all earthly, as well as celestial Blessings, but then, charming *Marcella*, I would have you remember, that such a Friendship has no Reserve, it gives all in its Power, and thinks nothing its own, when wanted by the darling Object: — How little possible is it then to enter into an Engagement of that Nature, with a Person of a different Sex, without being led into those Inconveniencies with which you so warmly accuse

Love to bring upon its Votaries : — I have, it is certain, the moſt ſincere and perfect Amity for *Acaſto*, that one Man can poſſibly have for another : — My Heart, my Purſe are open to him, he ſhares all my Secrets, partakes in all my Pains and Pleaſures, the one are ſoftened, and the other heightened by his being a Sharer in them : —Whatever befals either of us, is equally felt by the other : — Yet, O *Marcella!* were I linked with you in the ſame Union, would not my Regards be different ? — Would not *Friendſhip* then loſe its Name, and aſſume that of *Love*: *Acaſto* gives me all he can, and ſhould I not expect the ſame from *Marcella ?* — Yes, and muſt receive it too, or you would be a Friend but in Profeſſion, and turn Apoſtate to the Laws yourſelf preſcribe : — Think not, therefore, there is a Poſſibility of living with a Man in ſuch Friendſhip as you ſeem to paint, and at the ſame Time be an Enemy to Love : — Would ſuch a Friendſhip permit you to ſee him languiſh in vain for any Thing in your Power to grant ? — Could you perſiſt in being his Friend, yet deny him a Gratification you found ſo eſſential to his Peace, perhaps his Life ? — No, no, divine *Marcella*, whoever is the happy Man to have you for a Friend, muſt and will alſo ſubject you to the Laws of Love.

In fine, Madam, there is ſo ſtrict a Connexion between Love and Friendſhip, that they can never be ſeperated : — Friendſhip between Perſons of the ſame Sex, is no more than a mutual Sympathy

pathy of Souls, and Love between two of different Sexes, is Friendſhip heightened by a greater Degree of Tenderneſs: — A great and generous Mind is alone capable of truly feeling either of theſe Paſſions: Both are equally above the narrow Ideas of a confined and mean Capacity, and whoever has Sentiments elevated enough for the one, will likewiſe be ſuſceptible of the other.

No longer therefore, moſt beautiful *Marcella!* declare yourſelf the Enemy of a Paſſion, ſo near a-kin to that which you eſpouſe with ſo much Warmth: — I grant with you, that thoſe wandering Fires, thoſe wild Excurſions of a wanton Inclination, which wear the Name of Love, and are generally miſtaken for it, are no leſs groſs and earthly than you repreſent them, and utterly unworthy of a Mind ſo delicate as yours; but the Love I ſpeak of, is of a far different Nature, it is ſpiritual and rarified as Friendſhip, the Soul is chiefly concerned in it, and though the Body comes in for a Share of the Happineſs it beſtows, claims but the ſecond Place; the Enjoyment of the *Perſon* is aimed at only to obtain the more perfect Enjoyment of the *Soul:* — The one without the other would be uncompleat, the Union of both is not only the moſt exquiſite, but the moſt permanent Felicity we can know on Earth.

That I may ſee you inſpired with, and equally

inſpiring ſuch a Love, is the beſt Wiſh can be made, by him, who is

With the moſt ſincere Attachment,

Madam,

Your devoted,

And obedient Servant,

Polydore.

EPISTLE CII.

From Leonora *in the Country, to her Siſter in* London, *giving her an Account of a very tragical Accident that had juſt happened at the Lady's Houſe whom ſhe was at preſent with.*

My Dear Siſter,

A Dreadful Occaſion prevented my writing to you laſt Poſt, and I am ſtill ſo full of Surprize, Terror and Concern, that my Hand is ſcarce able to guide my Pen. — I acquainted you in a former Letter, that *Fernando* taking the Advantage of this Receſs from the Duties of his new Poſt, came down on a Viſit to his Mother: — You know how in political Matters he has turned Apoſtate to the Principles his whole Family have thought it their Glory to profeſs, but perhaps

haps are ignorant he has equally renounced thoſe of Religion, acted in Conformity to the Modes of the Times, and become an avowed Deiſt as they call it, though I wiſh it may not deſerve a Name yet worſe.—The News of the firſt Change in him had given her Ladyſhip much Anxiety, but ſhe knew not of the latter till his Arrival, when not the Reſpect he owed her as a Mother, could keep him from turning into Ridicule thoſe ſacred Miſteries on which alone we depend for Salvation :—This entirely deſtroyed all the Pleaſure of ſeeing him after ſo long an Abſence :—All ſhe could urge was ineffectual to prevail on him to accompany us to Church, and when private Prayers were going to be read in the Family, he always took up his Hat, walked out, and ſaid, he would return when the Farce was over :—Yet did not the new Principles to which he owed his Promotion, nor the new Tenets he had embraced, ſeem to afford him any innate Satisfaction ; on the contrary, all his Behaviour rather denoted a Dejection of Spirits :— A conſtant Gloom hung upon his Brow, and when he affected to be moſt gay in his Converſation, there was a certain Heavineſs in his Eyes, which ſhewed his Heart had nothing chearful in it.— On his firſt coming, he talked of ſtaying a Month, or ſix Weeks, but had not been here eight Days, before he ſeemed uneaſy to be gone, and told us, he thought the Country leſs pleaſant than when he ſaw it laſt ; found fault with many Alterations in the Gardens, which every one elſe looked upon as Improvements ; —then quarrelled

relled at the Situation of his Chamber, though it was the beſt in the Houſe, on which my Lady deſired him to take his Choice of any other; but all would not do, he liked none, and ſaid he would go back to *London*: — In this Manner, however, he continued with us a Fortnight, and for the laſt two Days had mentioned nothing of his Departure: — Yet at the Expiration of that Time it was he left us: —O, my Dear Siſter! He left us indeed: — But in what Manner! — I ſhudder to repeat it.——

In the Dead of Night, thoſe of the Family who were not drowned in Sleep were alarmed by the Report of a Piſtol: — They called the reſt, imagining Thieves were breaking in, and arming themſelves as well as they could, ran to the Windows to ſee what they could diſcover; finding all quiet there, my Lady, who by this Time was got up, would have them ſearch the Houſe: — I durſt not remain alone, ſo went with them thro' all the Rooms, till coming to *Fernando*'s Chamber, and wondering that all this Buſtle had not waked him, they knocked ſoftly, then more loud, and finding he did not anſwer, burſt open the Door; where, O God! they found him lying on the Floor with the Piſtol yet clenched in his Hand: — It appeared he had not been in Bed, for on Enquiry his Servant told us he had ordered him to leave a Candle, for he ſhould ſit up to read: — The Candle was ſtill burning on the Table, on which was alſo a Standiſh with a Paper, ſuppoſed to be wrote by him juſt before his Perpetration of this horrid Deed, it contained theſe Words:

" How

" How contemptible, even at the beſt, is Man!
" How fluctuating is the human Heart!—How
" vague, how wandering its Deſires! — How
" little are we able to judge what it is we truly
" aim at, or how long we ſhall proſecute that
" Aim we do at preſent! — Who can be cer-
" tain he ſhall not To-morrow loath, what he
" To-day adores! — This ſhews there is no ſuch
" Thing as a real Good on Earth: — If there
" were, in the Multitude of our Purſuits we
" ſhould ſomewhere find it, and what was once
" proved ſuch, would always be ſo: — Love,
" Fame, Ambition, Wealth, when once attain-
" ed, are empty Dreams, meer Shadows, which
" we wonder at ourſelves for having waſted ſo
" much Time in Chace of: — We all know
" this, yet ſtill go on in the ſame beaten Road:
" — Roaming from one Acquiſition to ano-
" ther; — never eaſy, yet ever hoping to be
" ſo; — always expecting Happineſs, and always
" diſappointed: — Succeſs only ſerves to ſhew
" the Worthleſſneſs of the Thing we have been
" toyling for: — The World is nothing elſe
" but a great Hoſpital of Fools, a *Bedlam*,
" where he that moſt excels in ſome new Frenzy,
" attracts the greateſt Number of Followers,
" and is the moſt conſiderable Perſon: — Why
" then ſhould we deſire to live? — Why wiſh
" to propagate ſo wretched a Species?—Were we
" capable of being influenced by the leaſt Spark
" of Common-Senſe, we ſhould rather join in
" one Reſolution to plunge at once into Eternity,
" and either be nothing, or more happy.

" *When*

" *When I consider Life 'tis all a Cheat,*
" *Yet fool'd with Hope, Men favour the Deceit;*
" *Trust on, and think To-morrow will repay,*
" *To-morrow's falser than the former Day;*
" *Lies more, and while it says we shall be blest*
" *With some new Joy, cuts off what we possest:*
" *Strange Couz'nage! None would live past*
" *Years again,*
" *Yet all hope Pleasure in what yet remain;*
" *And from the Dregs of Life think to receive,*
" *What the first sprightly Running cou'd not*
" *give.*
" *I'm tired with waiting for this chemic Gold,*
" *Which fools us Young, and beggars us when Old.*

" *DRYDEN* thought justly when he wrote
" these Lines; yet lived a long while after: —
" He wanted Resolution,—I pity all who do.—

I put this Paper in my Pocket, intending to shew it to my Lady as soon as she should be in a Condition to read it; but, alass! I know not whether ever she will be so: — Her Agonies are undiscribable,—she mourns the Loss of her Son, but is much more terrified for his immortal Part: I am little able to console, yet cannot think of leaving her till the Arrival of her two Neices, whom she has sent for from *Worcester*: — The whole Family are in the utmost Distraction, and never did poor Creature, who promised herself so much Satisfaction as I did in this Country, meet with so severe a Disappointment:—Poor *Fernando*, he

he now is convinced of those sacred Truths he impiously presumed to call in Question :—O grant, Heaven, that Mercy may interpose between him and offended Justice : — My Tears flow too fast, I can write no more.—Adieu,

My dear Sister,

Yours affectionately,

LEONORA.

EPISTLE CIII.

From Saphira, Miranda, Serena, *and* Clio, *to a young Gentleman of* Oxford, *celebrated for his Wit and Learning, desiring him to write to each of them.*

Sir,

AS they sent formerly to *Delphos* to enquire of *Apollo*, Who was the wisest Man in *Greece*, so we, on consulting *Leonidas*, who you know is the Oracle of *London*, have received Answer, that * * * * was the Man of the most Wit in *Oxford* : We then desired to know of what Benefit his Wit could be to us at the Distance of fifty Miles, to which he replied, *by writing Letters*. We, therefore, all four, join to entreat you will immediately fulfill the Divination, by send-

ſending to each of us an Eſſay on a different Subject, till when we ſubſcribe ourſelves

Your very impatient,

But moſt humble Servants,

SAPHIRA,

MIRANDA,

SERENA,

CLIO.

EPISTLE CIV.

The Anſwer.

From * * * * *to* Saphira, Miranda, Serena, *and* Clio, *excuſing himſelf from writing to any of them in particular, by the Difficulty of addreſſing them in a proper Manner.*

Ladies,

HOW high an Opinion ſoever I had of the Oracle you mention, I ſhould, for the future, give no Credit to his Predictions, if I could believe he has decreed me an Honour which does no Way belong to me; but I rather think, that like the Prieſteſſes of old, you have pronounced for

for him what he never meant to utter; but be that as it may, it is certainly a malicious Contrivance to involve me in Perplexities from which you might easily foresee, I should not well know how to extricate myself.

It must be confessed the young *Trojan* was very much put to it, when obliged to decide between three Goddesses, but my Case is much more hard who have four to deal with: — Besides, the celestial Appearance on Mount *Ida*, had each her different Attribute; he had only to consider whether Power, Wisdom, or Beauty most deserved the Prize; now my Divinities have in each of them all these Perfections blended, and that so equally, that it is impossible to give the Preference to any one: — How then shall I address to you? — If I begin with the most lovely *Saphira*, will not *Miranda*, *Serena*, and *Clio*, have Reason to be offended? — If to the most discreet *Miranda*, how will the rest of you take it? — If to the most enchanting *Serena*, or the most excellent *Clio*, it will be still the same: — Whatever Epithet I give the one, is robbing the others of their Due. And though you should even have so little of your Sex in you, as to compromise this Matter between yourselves, and resolve to take every Thing in good Part, how should I be able to forgive myself for the Injustice I had been guilty of?

Thus you see, Ladies, that by commanding me to write to each of you in particular, you have laid

laid a Stumbling-Block at the very Threſhold of my Obedience, which it is impoſſible for me to get over: — If it would not be too much Vanity in me to imagine this pretty Stratagem was contrived on purpoſe to catch the Secret of my Heart, I muſt take particular Care that the little Rogue ſhall not diſcover himſelf in my Eyes, when next I have the Happineſs of ſeeing you, being determined to keep my Partiality, if I have any, concealed from every one but her, in whoſe Favour it is.

But all this is meer Conjecture on both Sides, I am no more aſſured that you had any View of the Nature I have mentioned, in the Injunction you laid on me, than you can be, that there are any Grounds for an Inquiſition; or that I am, or ever am like to be, other than of all, and each of you, what I ſubſcribe myſelf,

Ladies,

An obſequious Admirer,

And moſt devoted Servant,

* * * *

End of the Eighth Book.

EPISTLES

FOR THE

LADIES.

BOOK IX.

EPISTLE CV.

From Clio *in the Country, to* Hillaria *in* London, *acquainting her with the Disagreeableness of her Situation, and the Reasons she had for preparing to return to Town, much sooner than she intended on quitting it, with the Character of her Landlady.*

My Dear Hillaria,

YOU will be surprized that I already think of leaving a Retirement, I proposed myself so much Satisfaction in, and had resolved to continue in the whole Remainder of the Season; but you will soon cease to be so, when I

acquaint you how greatly I am disappointed in almost every End I proposed to myself in coming hither. — You know there were two Motives which induced me to take up my Residence for some Time in this Village: — The one to avoid the Smoke of *London*, and breathe an Air which I had before experienced was agreeable to my Condition; and the other to get rid of the impertinent Babble of some Persons, whose Acquaintance I could by no other Way so well break off with: — The first of these would afford me great Refreshment, could I enjoy it in the full Extent I flattered myself with doing at my Arrival; but as to the latter, I have only exchanged Voices, and have in the Sound of one, all I flew from in those of a mixed Assembly.

You saw the Person I have the Misfortune to be lodged with: — You were with me when she came in order to agree for the Apartment: — You may remember she was in Weeds, that she told us the first Year of her Widowhood wanted some Months of being expired, and that she was the unhappy Relict of a Gentleman who having left her in indifferent Circumstances, she lived in a very retired Way, saw no Company, and kept but one Servant.—I often smile within myself at the kind Concern you exprest after she was gone, left being in the House with so disconsolate a Person, whose Sighs and Groans could nōt but sometimes reach my Ears, should have an Effect on my Temper to the Prejudice of my Health: In-

Indeed I was a little apprehenſive myſelf, that being naturally of a commiſerating Diſpoſition, and apt to ſuffer in the Woes of others, thoſe of this ſorrowful Widow might touch me more deeply than I wiſhed ; — but, my Dear *Hillaria*, let both you and I henceforward give up all pretence to Penetration : — Never more let us venture to form a Judgment at firſt Sight : — Never were two People ſo groſsly deceived as we have been ; — for, would you believe it, this formal Piece of Mortality, who ſeemed to have done with all Deſires of Fleſh and Blood, who looked more like a moving Sepulchre, than a living Woman has under that Maſk of melancholly Sanctity, all the warm Inclinations of an *Italian Bona-Roba*, the Vanity of the moſt celebrated Toaſt, formed to the capricious Apiſhneſs of a Girl juſt come into her Teens, and eager to prove herſelf a Woman, by being known to have a Lover.—In fine, this antiquated Memento of Death andFuturity, is a perfect Miſs Notable in her Diſpoſition, and without the Excuſe of Youth or Beauty, like her imagines her Life and Uglineſs capable of rendering her the Idol of the Men, and the Envy of the Women.

I HAD been here but one Night, when coming into my Chamber, after having made me the uſual Compliments of hoping I had enjoyed a good Repoſe, and that I liked my Bed, ſhe ſat down, and without any Ceremony began to tell me, that the greateſt Misfortune of Widowhood

was being plagued with a Crowd of Lovers : — That for her Part, ſhe was perfectly embarraſſed with the Multiplicity of Addreſſers, which every Day increaſed upon her Hands, — *I do not know what they ſee in me*, ſaid ſhe affectedly, *I am not very young, nor I do not think myſelf handſome, but go where I will, I am peſtered with the Importunities of one Fellow or other.*—I told her, I ſuppoſed they imagined ſhe was very rich. *No, Madam*, replied ſhe, *it is well known my Huſband left the greateſt Part of his Subſtance in truſt for me, and I have only a poor Ballance not ſufficient to maintain me as I would live.*

She run on for a good while, repeating the fine Things were ſaid to her, but let me only into one Part of her Character; I found her ſilly, vain, and conceited to an Exceſs, but did not ſuſpect her guilty of any amorous Inclinations: I thought that Folly extinguiſhed in her by Age, and that the High-day of the Blood had long ſince been over with her; — but alaſs, as the Song ſays,

Aged Phillis,
Wanton ſtill is,

The poor Creature is in Love, diſtractedly in Love, with a Man young enough to be her Son, whom ſhe came accidentally acquainted with in a Boat, and whoſe Name, Family, and Circumſtances ſhe knows no more of, than he is pleaſed to tell her.—According to her Report, he pretends

tends an Infinity of Paſſion for her, but waves coming to the Article of Marriage, till he has taken the Truſt of her Children's Fortune from the Hands it is at preſent lodged, and transferred it into his: — The Caſe between them, as I take it, ſtands thus: — She wants him to be the *Husband*, he wants only to be the *Guardian*: — She has a violent Inclination to his *Perſon*, he to her *Effects*, which as they certainly are very trifling, ſhews him to be either a very great Villain, or in very wretched Circumſtances.

But what is all this to me? you will ſay.— Why truly it would be nothing at all, if the Woman had not taken it into her Head to make me her Confidante, and were not continually teazing me with the Repetition of her Extravagancies:— One Hour ſhe is ſo fearful of diſobliging him, that ſhe reſolves to give up all, and truſt to his Honour for marrying her afterwards: — The next a Gleam of Reaſon ſhews her, that to go before a Lawyer with him, on the Score he preſſes for, is not the Way to make him go with her before a Parſon; and according as her Mind changes, ſhe is ſure to come into my Apartment with the Detail of what happens to be her Sentiments at that Time: — It is in vain my Maid tells her, I am buſy, am laid down to ſleep, no Excuſe can keep her out: — She cries ſhe muſt ſpeak one Word to me, ſays ſhe will not ſtay a Moment, yet never leaves me till the Whole of all has paſt between her and this

young Favourite, is related over and over, and always with ſome freſh Addition.

With this Stuff are my Ears perpetually grated, I have no way of ſhunning the inceſſant Din, but by keeping in my Chamber, and locking the Door againſt her: — Whenever I go into the Garden, ſhe watches my coming down, purſues and perſecutes me the whole Time I ſtay, and it is by a Miracle almoſt I am ſometimes happy enough to get back into my Apartment without her.

You may think it ſtrange that her Lover ſhould leave ſo much Time upon her Hands to be a Plague to other People, but you muſt know, that for ſome Reaſons he thinks proper to conceal, he never comes a Wooing till after Day is ſhut in, and as for any other Company, I doubt not but the ſame I have to complain of, has made all her Acquaintance ſhun her, with the ſame Care I would do, were there a Poſſibility for it.

Judge then, my Dear *Hillaria*, of the Diſagreeableneſs of my preſent Situation, and pardon my troubling you with this long Letter on ſo trifling a Subject: — I deſign for *London* next Week, but in the mean Time ſhould be glad you would ſend me ſomething to fill my Head with more pleaſing Ideas, than thoſe which at pre-

preſent confound the little Underſtanding Heaven has been ſo good to endue it with. If while I remain here any Thing can reſtore me to my former Self, it will be a Letter from you, which I ſhall impatiently expect, and am,

My Dear *Hillaria*,

Sincerely yours,

Clio.

EPISTLE CVI.

From Theophila *to* Violante, *on having received a Letter from her, with an Account that* Martaſinda *had renounced all the faulty Pleaſures of Life, and was turned* Methodiſt.

Dear *Violante*,

I Received your ſurprizing Narrative, and know not whether I am more rejoiced at the Converſion of the late diſſolute *Martaſinda*, or grieved for thoſe who are weak and wicked enough to ridicule her for it: — True Devotion is ſeated in the Heart, that is the Temple of the Deity, and in what Place ſoever, or under what outward Form ſoever we pay our Duty to the Moſt High, it is certainly better than not to do it at all. — If *Martaſinda* is ſincerely touched

with a just Sense of the Enormities of her past Life, and has taken the Road of Penitence, we ought to hope it will conduct her to that Goal which is the End of Religion, though the Path by which she pursues it, may not be just such as we could wish.

I Lament with you the unhappy Divisions among Christians, and believe it is chiefly to that we owe the Growth of *Deism*, or rather *Atheism*, in these Kingdoms particularly; but yet, I cannot be of their Opinion, who maintain that there is but one Way of Worship acceptable to Heaven, and that all others, though springing from the warmest Zeal and purest Love, is rather an Affront, than a Sacrifice: — It is well, if to judge thus uncharitably, is not in Effect a much greater Error than the Mistake itself, however gross it may appear to the too tenacious Censurers.—I think there is something extremely reasonable in what Mr. *Rowe* says on this Occasion.

Look round, how Providence bestows alike
Sun-shine and Rain to bless the fruitful Year,
On different Nations, all of different Faiths.
And, though by several Names and Titles worshiped,
Heav'n takes the various Tribute of their Praise;
Since all agree to own, at least to mean,
One best, one greatest, only Lord of all.

But

But we have a greater Authority than Mr. *Rowe*, which forbids us to be ſevere on any Religion or Sect. — St. *Paul* tells us, that it is not following *Barrabas*, or *Cephas*, or himſelf, but he who knows the Will of the Lord, and does it, who is acceptable to Heaven: — Let us not therefore repine, that *Martaſinda* is converted by the *Methodiſts*, but be glad ſhe is ſo by any Means.—Adieu,

My Dear *Violante*,

I am always,

With the moſt perfect Amity,

Yours, *&c.*

Theophila.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CVII.

From Astrea *to* Euphrosine, *giving her some Discription of her Brother's fine Seat and Gardens, with the Manner in which she passes her Time there.*

My Dear Euphrosine,

YOU kindly desire to know in what Manner I divert myself in a Family, the Master of which is always abroad, and passes the greatest Part of his Time in Exercises too robust for my Constitution, and too noisy for my Inclination, and where you cannot conceive I can have any Opportunity of opening my Mouth, unless I would descend to the Conversation of the Steward, Housekeeper, or Gardener, who I think may be looked upon as the chief Domestics. — I might tell you that, thank Heaven, I have not been so great a Spendthrift of the Years I have lived in the World, as not to have laid up a sufficient Stock of Observations in my Mind, wherewith to entertain myself in a Solitude far less agreeable than this; but I will not so far impose upon your Understanding, because I am sensible you know Reflection and Contemplation, however sublime, if not sometimes relaxed by Amusements of a less serious Nature, are apt to fix a certain Heaviness on the Spirits, which by Degrees may grow

grow into a Melancholly, and render the beſt of Cauſes productive of the worſt Effects; but I aſſure you, ſince my Arrival here, my Philoſophy has been put to no ſuch Trial: — The Ladies, not only of this, but of the neighbouring Counties, under pretence of paying their Compliments to me, are glad of the Opportunity of partaking the Pleaſures this dilectable Receſs is capable of affording: — My Brother has indeed diſcovered an uncommon Genius in rural Elegance: — His Gardens are laid out with the utmoſt Propriety, and ornamented with a great Number of Exotic Curioſities — A winding Hedge of Myrtle, interſperſed with Jeſſamin and Honeyſuckles, divides the Whole into five Partitions, and I muſt tell you, that with how much Indolence ſoever my Brother behaves in public Affairs, his Mind ſeems not quite void of that noble Spirit, which invigorated our Anceſtors.—In the Midſt of each of theſe fine Plots, is placed the Statue of ſome Britiſh Hero, or diſtinguiſhed Patriot, and on the Top of an embowered Arch, high in the Center ſtands the Goddeſs Liberty, with all the Charms in the Power of Sculpture to beſtow: — You will eaſily conceive, my Dear *Euphroſine*, how greatly I was pleaſed with the Sight of Hieroglyphics, which diſcovered to me what I ſo long had wiſhed to find in the Soul of a Perſon ſo dear to me, both by Blood and Friendſhip: — I could not forbear, as we were walking together one Day, expreſſing my Satisfaction to him on this Head, and told him that I was not without Hope, that the Heart, which paid ſo great a Reverence

verence to the Virtues of Antiquity, would in Time be influenced to imitate them in Practice.— To which he replied with a Smile, *That may be, my dear Sister, but you must give me leave to wait for a Time, in which the Virtues meant shall become less obnoxious.* — I said no more, knowing how unwilling he is to explain himself on this Head;— but to return to my Discription.

The Walks gradually growing more narrow are terminated by a Mount, on which an Ascent of Marble Steps carries to the Eminence, whence you have a Prospect over a great Part of the Country: — A Cascade of Water falling from each Side, form little Rivulets, across each of these is a Bridge, where a *Tryton* stands inviting you to pass over to the other Side, and take your Ease in Grottos, composed of Shellwork, with Banks of Moss commodiously placed, either to sit or lye retired upon.—The Foot of the Mount between the Rivulets; is a large Camomile oblong Square, which brings you into a Wilderness extremely thick and shady, and Grottos, by which Ways you may also go quite back into the Gardens without repassing the Mount: — Indeed, my Dear, nothing can be more pleasant than this Place; every Thing conspires to charm, and lull the Mind into a sweet Forgetfulness of all its Cares: — The Warbling of the Birds above your Head, the agreeable Murmur of the Waters beneath your Feet, the various Odours which Issue from the surrounding Plants, and perfume the ambient Air; — the variegated Beauties, which salute

ſalute your Eyes which Way ſoever you turn, may defend me from the Cenſure of Partiality to my Brother's Taſte, when I ſay that nothing can be better contrived to regale all the Senſes at once, even to a Profuſion of Delight, than this enchanting Receſs.

After what I have ſaid of it, you will not think it ſtrange that I have not too much Time on my Hands for Contemplation; even now a Flow of Company are juſt pouring in at the Gate, — I muſt haſten to receive them, and conclude with aſſuring you that I am,

With the moſt perfect Amity,

My Dear *Euphroſine*,

Yours, *&c.*

Astrea.

P. S. I need not tell you I long impatiently to hear from you: — Once more Adieu.

EPISTLE CVIII.

From Aſtrea *to* Euphroſine, *giving her an Account of a very ſurprizing Adventure ſhe had met with as ſhe had been taking the Air with her Brother in the Park, and the Concern it had involved her in.*

My Dear Euphroſine,

YOU know I have been accuſtomed to be pretty punctual in diſcharging the Obligations my Friends confer upon me, as ſoon as it is in my Power, and may perhaps think it ſtrange that I have let two Poſts go from hence without paying the Debt your laſt laid on me, but I aſſure you at the Time I received it, and ſome Days after, my Spirits were in ſo great an Agitation, that I was utterly unable to make Uſe of my Pen.—The Occaſion I dare ſay you will be anxious to know, and I therefore take the firſt Opportunity of relating it.

I know not whether in the Deſcription I gave you of my Brother's fine Retreat, I made any mention of his Park, which I then had not ſeen, though heard much in the Praiſe of: — The Delight he takes in it, has made him often preſs me to go and ſee it; accordingly we ſet out juſt at Day-break, which you know, at this Seaſon of the

the Year, is about four o'Clock: —We went in a Chaiſe and Six, and had two Servants on Horſe-back:—As our Journey was but ſeven Miles, we propoſed driving once round the Park, and returning by the Time at which I uſually breakfaſted: — As we drew near, one of the Servants galloped before to give Notice to the Park-keeper in order that the great Gate might be opened for the Chaiſe; but he had not paſt us more than the Length of his Horſe, when we ſaw him ſtop ſhort, and the Coachman driving on, *Here has been Miſchief done to Night*, cried he; on which my Brother plucked the String, and looking out, ſaw the Graſs was ſprinkled with Blood: — *Yonder lies a Woman murdered*, ſaid the Man, *I do not ſee her move*. My Brother at theſe Words jumped out of the Chaiſe, and ran to the Place his Servant pointed too: — I was too much frighted to ſtay behind, and immediately followed, where I beheld the moſt ſhocking Spectacle my Eyes had ever met: — It was a young Creature who ſeemed of Condition by the Richneſs of her Riding Habit, which was green Satin, fringed with Gold; — ſhe had no Covering on her Head, and her Hair, which hung down on her Cheek, was full of Blood, which ſeemed to iſſue from a Wound ſomewhere about her Breaſt: — On a more cloſe Examination, we perceived ſome Signs of Life in her, and one of the Men raiſing her a little, ſhe opened her Eyes half Way, and preſently after cried, in a faint Voice, but diſtinct enough to be intelligible, *If you have any Huma-*

nity

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nity

nity in you, convey me to some Place where I may die with Decency: — My Brother, who has a great deal of Compassion in his Nature, was distracted at the Impossibility there seemed of giving her any Assistance, there being no Town, nor even House near; but I had more Presence of Mind than he on this Occasion, and sent one of the Men to the Park-keeper's little Hut, who being informed of the Accident, came running out with his Wife, and a Bottle of Brandy.—I made them fetch Water in a large Bucket, and having stript my Patient to her Shift and under Petticoat, threw it upon her: — This I did to stop the Blood, which by the Swiftness of its flowing, I easily foresaw would be fatal, if her Wounds were not so: — I found a large Cut in her Neck, another in her left Arm, both which my Brother said, seemed to be made with a Hanger, and just below her Breast very near the Pit of her Stomach, a Swelling of a round Form, about the Bigness of a *Portugueze* Three Pound twelve Shilling Piece, and very black: It was plain that this Contusion had been made by a violent Blow, but with what Kind of Instrument, or Weapon, was passed Conjecture.

The Water had the Effect I hoped for, the Bleeding ceased, after which I washed the Wounds with some of the Brandy the Woman had brought, and bound them up to keep the Air from getting into them, with such Things as the Park-keeper's Wife could furnish me with: — The Smart which the Brandy occasioned, I suppose it was, which

which brought the poor Lady to herſelf; ſhe opened her Eyes again, and would have ſpoke, but had not Strength.

As there was a Poſſibility ſhe might live, if proper Care were taken, we conſulted in what Manner we ſhould diſpoſe of her: —My Brother thought it impoſſible ſhe could be attended as befitting her Condition, or the Rank ſhe ſeemed to be of, with the Park-keeper, ſo reſolved to take her to his Houſe; but how to convey her thither ſafely without a Litter was the Difficulty: But this, by the Help of a little Contrivance, we got over.—We put all the Garments I had ſtript her of into one Side of the Chaiſe, and covered them with a Blanket I made the Park-keeper bring, raiſed a Seat equal in my Knees as I ſat, then wrapt her up warm, and laid her croſs, ſo as her Head reſted on my Lap, and her Feet on the Side of the Chaiſe: — My Brother got on one of his Men's Horſes, and in this Poſition, the Coachman driving very ſlow, we brought her Home, where ſhe was immediately put into Bed: — During this little Journey, ſhe had ſeveral Times attempted to ſpeak, but had not the Power, and as I aſſiſted in putting the Pillows under her Head, that ſhe might lie as eaſy as poſſible, ſhe catched hold of that Hand which was neareſt to her, and preſſed it with all the Force her Weakneſs would permit, looking on me at the ſame Time with Eyes, which, though deprived of all their Radiance, had yet an inexpreſſive Loveliness in them, and ſeemed to ſpeak all the

Sentiments of a Soul over-flowing with Gratitude for the good Offices ſhe received from me.

A Surgeon, whom my Brother had loſt no Time in ſending for from the next Town, being arrived, he ſearched her Wounds, and to our great Satisfaction aſſured us, that none of them were mortal: — That her greateſt Danger was the Loſs of Blood, which he ſaid had been ſo great, that had it continued but a few Minutes longer, her Life muſt inevitably have iſſued with it.—He added, that the Contuſion on her Breaſt would take the longeſt Time to cure, and ſeemed no leſs at a Loſs, than I had been, to gueſs by what Means it had been occaſioned.

After having given the neceſſary Directions as to what Regimen was to be obſerved in her Diet, he deſired, that above all Things, Care ſhould be taken to keep her as quiet as poſſible, and that even when ſhe recovered her Speech, as he doubted not but ſhe would after a little Sleep, no Queſtions ſhould be aſked her concerning the Abuſe ſhe had received, nor any Thing ſaid in her hearing which had any Relation to it; becauſe the leaſt Agitation of Spirits in her preſent State, might make her Wounds bleed afreſh, and be of the moſt dangerous Conſequence.—Theſe Orders being given, he took his Leave, promiſing to make a ſecond Viſit in the Evening.

While

While I was employed above Stairs with the Surgeon and his Patient, my Brother was no less hurried below: — The great Hall was full of People: A Gentleman from *London*, whom some Business had brought into the Country, and was at a Tenant's of my Brother's, had the Night before been robbed by his Servant of all his Money, his Watch, several Bank Bills, and, in fine, every Thing else of Value he had with him: — My Brother granted his Authority, as *Custos Rotulorum* of the County, to pursue and search for the Villain in all the Houses liable to Suspicion, and would have accompanied the Gentleman himself, knowing him to be a Person of Family and Fortune, had he not been too much disconcerted with the Accident above related: — He made him an Invitation to his House, however, on his Return from the Pursuit, and insisted on his making it his Home while his Affairs detained him in the Country. The Stranger accepted the Invitation, not having been very commodiously lodged, as it was but a poor ill-furnished Inn, though the only one thereabouts.

As nothing hindered my Brother from going in Pursuit of this Villain, but the kind Consideration that I should be too deeply affected with the Condition of my fair Patient, if left alone to meditate upon it, he stayed at home with me the whole Day; — as it happened no Company came, which I was extremely glad of, not being in a State of Mind proper to entertain them: — I ordered my own Woman to sit by the Bed-side

of the wounded Lady, and apply ſuch Things as were preſcribed; notwithſtanding which, I went almoſt every Hour into her Chamber, and to my great Satisfaction found ſhe had taken ſeveral Slumbers, which, though ſhort, very much refreſhed her: — She had recovered her Speech, and on Sight of me, cried out, *My charming Preſerver and Benefactreſs! With what Words ſhall I thank your Goodneſs?* — I replied, that I thought it, as I really did, the greateſt Piece of good Fortune I had ever met with in my Life, to have the Opportunity of being ſerviceable to her; and that if ſhe imagined any Gratitude was due to me, ſhe muſt ſhew it in a ſtrict Obſervance of the Rules preſcribed for her, which above all Things was to forbear ſpeaking, and to keep her Mind as free as poſſible from all perplexing Thoughts. — *When you have a little more Strength*, added I, *I ſhall be glad to hear by what unhappy Accident you were reduced to the Condition you are in; but till then, would be very ſorry to indulge a Curioſity which might coſt you ſo dear: — I flatter myſelf with enjoying, in the Friendſhip of ſo agreeable a Perſon, a greater Recompence than the little I have done, or ever can do, is able to deſerve.* With theſe Words I left the Chamber, to prevent any Anſwer ſhe might have made.

The Maids, who had the Charge of cleaning her Garments from the Blood with which they had been in a manner dyed, told me there was nothing in her Pocket except a Handkerchief, but in the In-

Inſide of her Stays juſt within the Lining, which they were obliged to rip for waſhing, they found a ſmall Picture which had been ſowed in, as might be ſuppoſed for the better concealing it: — This they brought to me, — it was the Reſemblance of a handſome young Man, with a Cryſtal over it, ſet in Gold, and a Cypher of ſmall Diamonds on the Back: — The Glaſs was broke, the Stones looſe in their Sockets, and ready to fall out, and both the Frame and Picture very much bent, as ſomething had been puſhed forcibly againſt it: — This made me imagine that a Blow given her juſt in this Place, had occaſioned the Contuſion in her Breaſt, the Hurt being exactly of the ſame Bigneſs with the Picture: — I laid the Jewel carefully by, not doubting but it was very precious to her, but reſolved to make no mention of any ſuch thing to her, till ſhe had recovered a greater Share of Strength.

The Surgeon came in the Evening according to his Promiſe, but did not think fit to take off the Bandages till next Morning: — He found her entirely free from a Fever, and gave us great Hopes that her Cure would be ſpeedy: — After he was gone, and my fair Patient left to her Repoſe, my Brother and Self went to Supper, but we had ſcarce ſeated ourſelves, when Word was brought, that the Inn-keeper, who had attended the Gentleman in purſuing his wicked Servant, was returned and begged to be admitted: — My Brother ordered he ſhould be brought in, and aſked if they had taken the Fellow, on which

he gave the following Account: — That the Party he was with, for they divided themſelves into ſeveral ſmall Bodies, in order to prevent the Fellow from eſcaping by any croſs Road, having continued their Purſuit ſome twelve or thirteen Miles, one of the formoſt ſpied a Horſe ſaddled and compleatly accoutred, grazing without a Rider: —The Gentleman preſently cried out, it was his own Horſe, and the ſame his Man had rode away with: — *We then*, ſaid the Inn-keeper, *concluded our Search was near at an End, as indeed it was, for we found him lying in a Ditch covered with Blood, and in an expiring Condition: His Skull was fractured, one of his Thighs broke, and, I think, both his Arms diſlocated. — We did not, however, know at firſt how much he was hurt, and his Maſter was beginning to rate the Ingratitude and Villiany he had been guilty of towards him, when the Wretch cried out: — O Mercy, Heaven, you do not know Sir the worſt of my Crimes! — What I have ſtolen may be reſtored, but* Altezeera! — *What of* Altezeera, *interrupted the Gentleman in ſuch an Agitation as I cannot tell how to preſcribe? Dead! Dead!* anſwered the Wretch, *murdered! barbarouſly murdered by my curſt Hand: — O Mercy! — Mercy, Heaven!* and with theſe Words expired.

THE Gentleman, continued he, *ſeemed quite frantic on hearing this* Confeſſion; we had much ado to prevent him from running his Sword through the Body of him, who was now paſt Senſe of feeling it, and afterwards from exerciſing

that

that Act of Desperation on himself: — I thought we should never have got him back to my House, and now he is there, I know not what to do with *him*; *for he will certainly be mad*; — *but who this* Altezzera *is, or where the Murder was committed, we cannot find out.*

I HAD not as yet had an Opportunity of telling my Brother any Thing concerning the Picture that had been found in the Stays of the wounded Lady; but it now came into my Head, that she was the same who the Villain had so inhumanly abused, and whose supposed Death had thrown the Gentleman into such Agonies: — As this would be easily proved by producing the Picture, I ran immediately and fetched it, desiring both my Brother and the Inn-keeper to tell me, if it bore any Resemblance with the Face of the afflicted Stranger: — They both assured me, that it did, and in their Opinion, could be drawn for no other: — On my relating where it had been found, my Brother joined with me in believing the wounded Lady, under our Care, was no other than the *Altezzera*, who seemed so dear to the Stranger; and that this second Adventure would unravel the Mystery of the first. — He therefore resolved to go directly to him, and put an End to his Distress, by letting him know the good Fortune we had of preserving a young Lady that Morning, who might, if Providence had not sent us so opportunely to her Relief, have been inevitably lost for ever, as her cruel Abuser doubtless imagined she was.

I BEGGED, however, that he would not be too ſudden in revealing the Affair, leſt the Ruſh of Joy, on ſuch an Exceſs of Grief, might have a fatal Effect, either on his Reaſon or his Life: My Brother told me he was aware of it, and would behave with all Precaution.

As the Inn was ſcarce two Miles off, my Brother accompained his Tenant on Foot, and in about an Hour and a half returned with *Philander*, for that was the Name of the Gentleman, whom he had in a Manner forced along with him: — Though Horror, Confuſion, and the moſt poignant Anguiſh ſat on every Feature, I was immediately convinced he was the Original of the Portrait I had in my Pocket: — My Brother, in preſenting him to me, ſaid, *Siſter, this Gentleman imagines he has loſt a Miſtreſs dearer to him than his Life, by the Villany of his own Servant: — What ſay you, are we to judge wholly by Appearances?*

THIS Gentleman, anſwered I, *I hope is too wiſe to do ſo: — Heaven, for a Tryal of our Fortitude, often threatens us with Misfortunes it never intends to inflict: — I flatter myſelf what he ſo much laments, is of the Nature I have mentioned. — Would to God, Madam*, ſaid he with a Sigh, which ſeemed to rend his Heart-ſtrings, *I had the leaſt room for Doubt; but the Villian with his dying Breath confeſſed the horrid Crime. Perhaps*, reſumed I, *he might ſuppoſe his brutal Rage had taken Effect: — He might wound her, but not*

mor-

mortally: — Come Sir, continued I, perceiving he was ready to ſink with inward Grief, which before me he endeavoured to reſtrain, *I beſeech you take Comfort: — I have a ſtrong Prepoſſeſſion that the Lady ſtill lives to reward ſuch conſtant Affection as yours appears to be. I am of the ſame Mind with my Siſter*, cried my Brother, *and dare almoſt promiſe you a Sight of the fair injured* Altezeera, *in a very ſhort Time. O, were there a Poſſibility of hoping for that Bleſſing, I would forgive all elſe in the Power of Fate: — But ſhe is too ſurely dead: — Irrecoverably loſt! — What Miracle can reſtore her to me, dear, murdered* Altezeera! — *— The loveliest, beſt of Women, is fallen a Sacrifice to, I know not what, inhuman Motive.*

I WOULD fain have aſked him if he could gueſs by what Means ſhe fell into the Power of ſuch a Monſter; but eaſily judging he could not reſolve me in this Point, without entering into a Narrative his preſent Condition would but ill admit of, I deferred the Satisfaction of my Curioſity, till he ſhould be more at Eaſe to afford it me.

I SHOULD write you a Book inſtead of a Letter, if I were to repeat the many Arguments made uſe of, both by myſelf and Brother, to bring him into an Imagination of the Poſſibility of his Miſtreſs having eſcaped the cruel Stroke intended for her. — All we urged, however, was ineffectual, till I ventured to ſpeak ſomewhat more plain; — *Many a Perſon*, ſaid I, *has been*

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extreamly, nay dangerously wounded, and even laid out for dead, yet have recovered: — Who knows but in the very Crisis between Life and Death, some heavenly-directed Hand might administer Relief, and save the Soul just fleeting into Eternity: — Perhaps, Altezeera, *thus preserved, is this Moment thinking of* Philander, *and longing to communicate to him the Means of her Preservation.*

I spoke this with such an Air, as made him think there was something more in them, than merely to sooth his Griefs by a flattering Supposition, and looking earnestly in my Face, *Ah, Madam,* said he, *if any Accident has discovered to you any Thing relating to my* Altezeera, *I beseech, I conjure you to reveal it to me.*

I am not certain, answered I, *that a Lady who was found desperately wounded this Morning in a Field adjoining to my Brother's Park, be the same you mean; but if she proves so, I dare venture to assure you of her Life at present: — Where is that Lady?* cried he, impatiently, — *the least Glimpse of her Face, the least Accent of her dear, yet well-known Voice, will soon convince me of my Happiness or Misery.*

Should the fair Person I mean, replied I, *be in Reality your* Altezeera, *a Visit from you in the Condition to which she is reduced, might utterly destroy all the Efforts have been made to save her, and be no less fatal than the Wounds she has received*

ceived must have been, without the immediate Interposition of Divine Providence. — But, there are other Ways to ease your Suspense, which I will point out, continued I, *provided you give me your solemn Promise not to attempt seeing her, till she is better able to sustain so agreeable a Surprize.*

Having giving me his Word to submit to my Directions in every Thing relating to this Affair, I asked him if he had never made a present to *Altezeera* of his Picture? To which he answering in the Affirmative, I shewed him the Picture had been taken out of the wounded Lady's Stays.

Judge, my dear *Euphrosine*, of the Transport this Conviction gave him, I shall only tell you, it was such as sufficiently proved how necessary the Caution I had observed in making the Discovery, was to prevent it from taking too violent an Effect on his Understanding.

By degrees I proceeded to let him into the whole of this Adventure, but he had no sooner known that it was to us she owed her Preservation, than the Expressions of his Gratitude exceeded all Bounds: — He threw himself at my Feet, kissing my Hands with the same Ardour he would have done those of his Mistress: — Embraced my Brother, called him his Guardian Angel, and it was a considerable Time before

we

we could put any Stop to the immoderate Raptures of his Joy.

I thought I had now a Right to be let into the History of a Passion in these Days so very extraordinary, and no sooner signified my Curiosity in this Point, than he very obligingly gratified it, relating all that passed between him and *Altezeera* during the whole Progress of their Loves to the very Evening of that unhappy Accident, which was near parting them for ever.

To repeat it in his own Words, even if my Memory would permit, which is impossible, would be too tedious, since three Parts in four of the Narrative he made us was expatiating on the Virtue, Beauty, Sweetness of his Mistress, and his own Admiration of those amiable Qualities, and even that which was most material, often interrupted with Exclamations on the Severity of his Fate, which had thrown so many Bars between him and the Accomplishment of his Desires. — I shall therefore give the plain Account as I selected it from the less material, though I cannot but say very affecting Particulars.

Altezeera, it seems, is the Daughter of a Gentleman whom some fortuitous Events have raised to a Pitch of Opulence; yet not being content with enjoying his Wealth in a private Life, he neglects nothing that he thinks will tend to the aggrandizing himself and Family, and as the most likely Way of succeeding in this Point, takes

takes all Opportunities of teſtifying his Attachment to the preſent Poſſeſſors of the Throne of *Great Britain*, even to a Degree of an impertinent Officiouſneſs: It has however ſucceeded ſo well as to make him taken Notice of at Court, and procure a Commiſſion in the Army for his ſecond Son, and one in the Navy for his third; as for the Eldeſt he is of a different Way of Thinking, and will by no Means accept of an Employment under the Government, though he had the Offer of one, both lucrative and honourable: This would greatly incenſe the old Gentleman, perhaps even enough to occaſion his being diſinherited, were the true Motive of his Refuſal known, but he finds Ways of evading it, and by joining his Father in railing againſt the Principles of *Jacobitiſm*, makes him far from ſuſpicious, that it is by them he is influenced to refuſe whatever would oblige him to take the Oaths. — *Ormuſia*, for that was his Name, has maintained a long Friendſhip with *Philander*, but knowing him violent in that Cauſe to which his Father is ſo averſe, never brought him home, for fear any Diſpute concerning Party-Affairs ſhould happen between them: — They were however ſeldom a Day aſunder, and *Ormuſia* being ſeized with a Fit of the Gout, which confined him for a long Time to his Chamber, could not live without the Company of his dear *Philander*:—*Altezeera*, who had the moſt tender Regard for this Brother, on Account of his being poſſeſt of Qualities infinitely more amiable than either of her others, was almoſt continually with him: — She either

either read ſome agreeable Book, or ſung to him, which greatly alleviated the Pain of his Diſtemper : — Here *Philander* frequently ſaw her, and here it was he firſt imbibed a Paſſion he had never been ſenſible of before. — The Perſon and Accompliſhments of this amiable Companion of a Brother ſo dear to her, had all the Effect the Poſſeſſor of them could wiſh on the young Heart of *Altezeera* : — *Ormuſia* obſerved in the Eyes of both the Deſires with which they were inſpired, and as he thought, they were in every Circumſtance adapted to make each other happy, reſolved to encourage this mutual Flame.

It was he who emboldened *Philander*, to hope *Altezeera* would not be inflexible to his Offers, and contrived ſuch Opportunities for him to addreſs her, as ſhe could not well have avoided, even had ſhe had an Inclination to do ſo; but her Brother's Behaviour giving a Sanction to her Wiſhes, her Lover found her more condeſcending than he could have hoped for without that Pretence. — In fine, this tender Intercourſe ended in a mutual Aſſurance of everlaſting Affection, and a ſolemn Promiſe never to be but each other's. — *Ormuſia* growing better, quitted his Chamber, but *Philander* being now acquainted with the whole Family, made his Viſits almoſt as frequently as before : — The old Gentleman being much abroad, and his two younger Sons at their reſpective Poſts, the Lovers had many Opportunities of repeating to each other the Sincerity of that Paſſion, with which both were equally in-

inflamed, and *Philander* had now Thoughts, as he knew no Objection could be made, either as to his Family, or Estate, of declaring to the Father of *Altezeera* his Pretensions: — *Ormusia* approved of his Design, and he went one Day with a full Resolution to discourse the old Gentleman upon that Head. — No Conversation had yet happened when *Philander* was present concerning Party-Affairs, so his Principles on that Score were a Secret; but unluckily for him, a Person who was well acquainted with them, and had seen him often with *Ormusia*, had that very Morning informed the old Gentleman of all, and asked him, how he came to permit his Son to converse with a known *Jacobite*, such as *Philander*. Nothing could exceed the Rage with which this Piece of Intelligence inspired the Father, and when *Philander* entered, and was beginning to usher in the Request he was about to make, with some fine Speech proper for the Occasion, — *Sir*, cried the old Gentleman, *I hear strang Things of you, and if you do not clear yourself of an Accusation laid to your Charge, must desire you to refrain coming to my House any more, or keeping Company with my Son:* — *Bless me*, continued he, *I might have been undone, utterly ruined in my Fortune and Character, if I had not been warned in Time.*

Philander was so much confounded at this unexpected Treatment, that he could only ask him what he meant by it. — *Why, Sir*, replied the other, *I am told, by very good Authority, that you*

are

are a Malcontent, — a Jacobite,— *an Oppugner of the illustrious Family of* Hanover, *or in other Words, a Rebel.*

Had any Man but yourself called me so, answered *Philander,* somewhat warmly, *I should have known what sort of Reply it would become me to make: — But the Respect I have for you, is a Bond I cannot break through: — Yet, Sir, permit me to say, no Word or Action of mine ever gave Cause for branding me with the odious Appellation of Rebel.*

No, cried the old Gentleman, pouring out a Glass of Wine, *let me see you down on your Knees, and drink Confusion to the* Pretender, *and all his Brood. — Sir,* said *Philander,* greatly shocked, *it is not in my Nature to wish Confusion to any one, and I hope you are too good a Christian to desire it of me in earnest.* — Christian, *or no* Christian, cried the old Gentleman in a hurry, *he that will not drink Confusion to the* Pretender, *his Sons, and all his Adherents, I say, is worse than an Infidel: — But I find what you are, — all is true I heard of you: — Therefore, Sir, I desire you will forbear my House, and if I hear my Son continues to keep you Company, he had better do somewhat else.*

I have inserted this Part of the Dialogue, my dear *Euphrosine,* merely to divert you, and to shew you how unjust and ridiculous an over-acted Loyalty may render a Person: — *Philander*

der, however, who had his own Reason for bringing his Antagonist into better Humour, appeared extremely cool, and though he could not perswade himself to deny his Attachment to the *Stuart* Family, he endeavoured to make the old Gentleman believe that, though he had had the most tender Commiseration for the Sufferings of those unfortunate Exiles, and the greatest Admiration of their Virtues, yet he was far from wishing to attempt any Thing in Prejudice of the House of *Hanover*.

But this was so far from pacifying the Father of *Altezeera*, that he grew more outragious, and a second Time forbidding him his House, the Lover was obliged to return without accomplishing any Part of the Business he had come upon.

Ormusia after this durst not appear in Public with *Philander*, but the same Friendship as ever subsisted between them, and he not only saw him frequently in private, but also contrived Interviews between him and *Altezeera*, who did not like her Lover the less for his steady Adherence to his Principles, she being of the same herself.—But to return.

This Lady having eighteen thousand Pounds left her by her Grandmother, to be paid on the Day of her Marriage, or when she should come of Age, was under no Necessity, in Point of Interest,

to consult her Father in the Choice of a Husband:—Duty, however, had hitherto restrained her from giving her Hand without his Permission, but as the Prejudice he had taken to *Philander*, was as unlikely to be removed as it was unreasonable, she thought she might be dispenced with from rendering herself and Lover unhappy meerly to submit to so cruel a Caprice.

Her Brother fortified her Resolution in this Point, appointed a Day for the Celebration of their Marriage, though it was thought proper by the Lovers, as well as himself, that he should be present at it: — All Things were conducted with that Secrecy, that the old Gentleman had not the least Suspicion any Affair of Love was carrying on between his Daughter, and the Man he so much hated, till the very Evening before that Morning, when she was to steal out, and give herself away for ever.

The fatal Discovery was made by her unhappily dropping a Letter where her Father found it:—By the Description of his Behaviour, it could only be compared to what we meet with in *Bedlam*:—He treated *Altezeera* with the most bitter Reproaches, and had he not been with-held by his own Servants, who feared he would kill her, had certainly committed some Outrage on her Person; he locked her into the Chamber, and kept the Key, however, himself.

Happy

Happy for *Ormusia*, and the Lovers also, that his Name was not mentioned in this luckless Letter, so that though his Father upbraided him for having introduced such a Villain (for so he termed *Philander*) into his Family, yet he had no Suspision of his having any Hand in the intended Marriage; and the young Gentleman had the Address to prevent him from believing any Thing against him in this Point, though some there were that laboured to inculcate in him a different Opinion.

Neither *Philander* in the Absence of his Adorable, nor *Altezeera* in her Confinement, was without some Glimpse of Hope from the Integrity of this dear Friend :—He indeed practised every Method for the Enlargement of his Sister : — When his Father was abroad, he tried every Key in the House, but could find none would open the Door of her Prison, and to force it was impossible, without the Noise alarming the Servants : — There she was compelled to remain, till her Father having taken his Resolutions concerning her, went into her one Morning, and bidding her follow him, put her into a Coach and Six, in which one Man and two Women attended to receive her. — She had no Time for Complaints, or Expostulations : — The Door of the House was immediately shut, and the Coach drove away with all possible Rapidity : — She was thus carried, without knowing whither, to this County, and placed in a small House, at present occupied by a Person, who

I find is a Dependant on her Father, where the Person who received her, had strict Orders to confine her, to let no Person whatever have Access to her, and to refuse her even the Priviledge of Pen and Paper.

The Father, tho' he entertained no Doubts of *Ormusia* on this Score, would not reveal to him how he had disposed of his Sister; but the young Gentleman, by the Manner in which she was carried off, had some Conjecture of the Truth; which on the Return of those who accompanied her, he had Artifice enough to sift from the Mouth of one of them.—*Philander*, who protests he would have searched the whole World for his beloved *Altezeera*, no sooner had an Account of where she was, than he immediately took Horse, attended but by a Valet de Chambre, whom he had lately hired, but whom he found a Fellow of an uncommon Share of Cunning, and therefore a Person proper to be employed in the Affair he had in Hand; as he did not doubt but the fair Object of his Wishes, would be kept as inaccessible, as while under the Key of her obdurate Father.

As our Lover had no Acquaintance in these Parts, he took up his Lodging at the Inn I before mentioned; which, tho' a wretched One, was the most commodious for his Purpose, as being the nearest to the House where *Altezeera* was confined.

The

The Valet had the Addreſs to make the Diſcovery his Maſter expected from him, and the tranſported *Philander* no ſooner was informed of the Place, which contained the Idol of his Soul, than he went in Sight, and walked backwards and forwards at a Diſtance, in Confidence of not being known there by any Body, but herſelf, whom he hoped to ſee at ſome or other of the Windows.

His Hope in this Particular did not deceive him, he perceived her leaning her Head on her Hand in a diſconſolate Poſture.—Finding ſhe did not obſerve him, he made a Noiſe with ſome little Stones which he picked up:—This made her caſt her Eyes to the Place where he ſtood. —She ſtarted, and appeared equally ſurprized, and pleaſed. Not daring to ſpeak, for fear of being heard by any of the Family, ſhe made a Motion to him to write; and put down a Sling from the Window, to ſhew by what Means ſhe might receive a Letter from him.—They continued ſome Minutes, exchanging the moſt tender and ſignificant Glances, but, all at once, ſhe retired haſtily, and at the ſame Time waved her Hand, in Token for him to retire.

As he doubted not, but ſome Perſon coming into the Chamber, had occaſioned this Interruption, he obeyed the Signal, and returned to his Inn, where he paſt the reſt of the Day in writing to her; in the Evening, he was himſelf

the Bearer of his Billet.—He waited not long before ſhe appeared, and letting down the Sling to which he fixed it, ſhe made a Sign that he ſhould convey Paper, Pens, and Ink, to her by the ſame Means, which he afterwards did: They continued this Converſation ſeveral Days. —The Purport of moſt of the Letters that paſſed between them, was contriving Means for her Eſcape, which at laſt was agreed to be made, by a Ladder of Ropes, the Window not being very high; this Ladder was to be conveyed to her as the Letters had been; but before that could be procured, ſhe gave him Notice, that a little Girl belonging to the Family, had ſaid ſhe had ſeen a fine Gentleman waiting in the Field behind the Houſe, and therefore deſired he would ſend his Servant with his next Letter: He had ſeen the Child himſelf playing about, and as by coming frequently, he might be ſeen by ſome other, he thought proper to obſerve the Caution *Altezeera* had given him, and his Valet, from that Time, carried what he wrote, and brought him her Anſwers.

Every Thing being prepared for her being carried off, the Night was appointed in which ſhe was to deſcend, and *Philander*, now imagined himſelf on the Point of obtaining all he had ſo long and ſo ardently languiſhed for:—The laſt Night of his intending to ſtay in that Inn, and which he expected would be the laſt in which he ſhould be under any Suſpence, he went to Bed, full of the moſt pleaſing Ideas.—

Waking

Waking in the Morning, and hearing the Family were ſtirring, he wondered his Valet did not come into his Chamber, as was his Cuſtom, to attend his riſing:—He lay ſtill ſome Time, thinking it to be more early, than he at firſt took it to be, but undrawing his Curtains, and finding the Sun was very high, knew the Day muſt be far advanced, on which he ſtarted out of his Bed, and ran to the Table, where he uſed to lay his Watch, in order to be more aſſured; he could neither find that nor the Picture of *Altezeera*, which he had always worn about his Neck, but the Ribband being a little torn he had plucked it off, in order to have a new one put to it.—He was a little ſurprized, but ſuppoſing his Valet had laid them in ſome other Place, began to ſtamp with his Feet, and call haſtily for him:—Some of the People coming up, he aſked for his Man, and was anſwered that he was not yet returned.—*Returned, from whence?* cried *Philander* haſtily; they replied, they knew nothing, but from where they ſuppoſed he had ſent him.—In ſhort, after ſome few more Queſtions little to the Purpoſe, but ſuch was the Confuſion he was in it was natural for him to aſk, he was informed, that after he was in Bed, the Valet had come to the Stable, ordered the beſt Horſe to be ſaddled, and when he mounted told the Groom that he was going on an extraordinary Affair for his Maſter, and ſhould not return till late the next Day.—*Philander* then began to

examine his little Baggage, and found himſelf ſtript of every Thing the Villain could carry off, without being ſuſpected by the People of the Houſe.

THIS, ſaid he, concluding his Narrative, *is all I am able to acquaint you with, in Relation to the Deſigns of that dead Monſter; it is* Altezeera *herſelf, who alone can inform us, by what magic Arts he got her into his Power, and what it was that prompted him to commit on ſuch Beauty, Youth, and Innocence, an Outrage which the moſt ſavage* African *would never have been guilty of.*

We paſt the reſt of the Evening in admiring the Goodneſs of Divine Providence, which frequently, when we think ourſelves moſt loſt to Hope, by Means the moſt unexpected, ſends Relief and ſnatches from Deſpair.

In the Morning, the Surgeon found his Patient in as fair a Way of Recovery, as could be wiſhed, but yet not fit to hold any long Converſation; the Impatience of *Philander* to ſee her, is ſtill, therefore, obliged to be reſtrained; my Brother, to alleviate his Diſcontent, has taken him out this Day a fiſhing; and I ſeize on this Interval to acquaint you with an Adventure, which has ſomewhat in it remarkable enough to engage your At-

Attention, and excuſe the Length of this Epiſtle, from,

My Dear *Euphroſine*,

Yours, *&c.*

ASTREA.

P. S. The Moment I am let into the Miſtery of *Altezeera*'s Misfortune, I ſhall not fail to acquaint you with it.—Adieu.

EPISTLE CIX.

From Brilliante *to* Sophronia, *acquainting her, that ſhe is at preſent extremely divided between Love and Honour, and entreating her Advice how to proceed, ſo as neither to do a Violence to her Inclination, nor Injuſtice to a Perſon whoſe Sollicitations had prevailed on her to give him Hope of marrying her.*

Dear Madam,

IT is only in your Prudence and experienced Friendſhip, I have my Hope of Relief, in an Exigence the moſt cruel, that certainly ever happened to any Woman in the World.—I am, ſince laſt you ſaw me, involved in a Sea of Perplexities; whichever Way I ſteer, threatening

Con-

Confusion to my Peace of Mind, and Reputation.—Assist me with your Counsel, I beseech you, but I know the Intreaty will be needless, when you are acquainted with the Cause, which reduces me to want it. Take it then, as briefly as the Circumstances will admit.

You are not ignorant, how, for two whole Years, I have been persecuted with the importunate Addresses of *Leander*; I say persecuted; because, tho' I found nothing in his Person, Character, or Conversation to excite any Aversion, or indeed to give me any just Cause to refuse him, yet he was far from having the Power of inspiring my Heart with those tender Emotions which are called Love, and which methought somewhat told me were necessary to be felt for those to whom we intend to give up ourselves for Life.—In fine, the Consideration of what I owed his Merits, and that generous and tender Affection, which he has given me a thousand Proofs of, would not suffer me wholly to reject him, nor could I think of yielding to his Suit, without the most inexpressible Reluctance. —We were on these Terms together for the Time I mentioned, till last Week, wearied out by my Friends on the one Side, who, as I am turned of two and twenty, reminded me I ought to settle in the World, and pressed me to make an End of this Affair, and the passionate Sollicitations of *Leander* on the other, I made him a Kind of a half Promise in his Favour, at which he appeared in such an excessive Transport,

vow-

vowing the whole Buſineſs of his Life ſhould be to ſhew how ſenſible he was of the Bleſſing I had given him Room to hope, that I felt no Regret for the Condeſcenſion I had made.

But, O! dear Madam, this Day was the laſt of my Tranquillity, the Evening of the next I went with a Lady to the Opera; a Gentleman ſat near us, who, being alone, entered into ſome Diſcourſe with us, and ſaid many gallant Things, which, tho' I perceived were directed chiefly to me, I ſhould have taken little notice of from any other Man, but there was Something, that to me ſeemed ſo enchanting in the Manner in which he uttered them, the Looks that accompanied them, and the Mouth that ſpoke them, that I could not keep myſelf from taking more Pleaſure in hearing him, than in all the fine Notes of the Muſick.—Towards the End of the Entertainment, *Leander*, and a Brother of the Lady's, hearing where we were, came to ſee us ſafe into our Chairs, on which I fancied this too charming Stranger looked a little diſconcerted, but drew back to give thoſe Gentlemen, who he found were of our Acquaintance, Room to join us.—Till now, I never hated *Leander*, tho' I had not loved, but at this Inſtant I wiſhed him dead, or any Thing, rather than in the Way of occaſioning this Interruption.—We all ſupped together that Night, but I was ſuch ill Company, that the tender *Leander* ſeemed in the utmoſt Anxiety for my Health, aſked me a thouſand Times if I had not taken cold, or if the Kettle-Drums had

not

not made my Head ach, prescribed twenty different Remedies, and so much embarrassed me with this officious Love, that every Moment seemed an Age till I got Home and rid of him.

But then, alas! I was far from being at Ease; the Idea of my unknown Conqueror ran in my Mind, and would not suffer me to take the least Repose.—I know you will condemn me, for thus indulging my Thoughts of a Person so utterly a Stranger to me, one I had never seen but once, and might probably never see again; one who might be already married or engaged; or if not already so, might have seen nothing in me capable of attracting his generous Regards: I do assure you, Madam, all these Arguments I urged to myself, and added to them the Ingratitude I was guilty of to the Love and Constancy of *Leander*; but all was too weak to stem the Torrent of soft Desires, with which my Heart was overwhelmed at this one fatal Interview.—As the Poet says,

A Change so swift, what Heart did ever feel!
It rush'd upon me like a mighty Stream,
And bore me in a Moment far from Shore!

You will expect, perhaps, I should give you some Description of the Charms, that wrought this wonderful Effect; but I am too sensible, the least I could say, would be suspected of a partial Exaggeration, therefore shall refer to the Character given of him by others, which, as I had

had ſoon the Opportunity of hearing, I cannot proceed much farther in my Story without repeating.

Neither the Morning, nor the various Objects which Day preſented gave any Relaxation to my Diſquiets.—I traverſed every Room in my Apartment, ſat down in one, looked out of the Window of another, took up a Book, but had not Power to read.—I went to Breakfaſt, but reliſhed nothing, I pour'd my Tea into the Sugar-Diſh inſtead of my Cup, and in fine was in ſuch an Abſence of Mind, that I knew not what I did, and was incapable of any one rational Word or Action.—My Woman reminding me it was my Hour of dreſſing, I adjourned to my Toilet, but nothing ſhe brought me to put on could pleaſe me.—I threw one Set of Ribbands on the Floor, another at her Head, tore a third to Pieces :—Made her alter the Curls of my Hair twenty Times over :—Sent her to my Drawers for one Thing, which, when ſhe brought, I threw aſide, and called for another.—While I was venting my Spleen in this Manner on my poor Maid, who had never ſeen me in ſuch a Humour in her whole Time of living with me, one of my Footmen knocked ſoftly at the Door of the Dreſſing-Room, and on her opening it, delivered a Letter, which he ſaid was juſt brought, and required an Anſwer.—As I did not know the Hand, I opened it with ſome Surprize ; but, good Heaven ! how greatly was that Surprize increaſed, when I found from whom it came, and what

were

were the Contents, which I tranſcribed for your Peruſal, not chuſing to part with the Original, for Reaſons, to which Love alone can plead my Excuſe.

To the moſt amiable BRILLIANTE.

Madam,

" Heaven, who is the ſole Diſpoſer of all " human Events, can alone determine, whether " I ought to date the Æra of my Happineſs, or " Miſery from laſt Evening.—It is needleſs to " tell you the Perſon who ſat next to you at the " Opera, and took the Liberty of ſpeaking to " you as often as Opportunity permitted, became " from that Inſtant wholly devoted to you ; thoſe " Eyes which made ſo ſudden a Conqueſt of my " Heart could not want Penetration to diſcover " they had upon me.—Yes, Madam, I own my " ſelf your Captive, but could not ſubmit to be " ſo, without knowing the Name of my Con- " queror.—I followed you to the Place where " you went, and perceiving the Chair that car- " ried you waited, concluded that was not your " Abode, and ſtayed at a Houſe in the Neigh- " bourhood, till I ſaw you come out, and at- " tended you at a Diſtance, till you entered the " Houſe which I perceive is your Habitation :— " This Morning I was ſo fortunate to learn your " Name, and that you are not married, but am " ignorant whether pre-engaged or not ; if the " latter, I flatter myſelf, neither my Family, " Fortune, nor Character, are ſuch as would

" make

" make me despair the honourable Prospects I
" have to make would be totally rejected.—
" Be so good, therefore, I beseech you, as to in-
" dulge me with the Knowledge, that if the
" Blessing I am ambitious of be already disposed,
" I may, for the future, avoid all Interviews, so
" dangerous to my Peace; or, if your Heart is
" free to receive the soft Impression of a faithful
" Love, I may endeavour, by all the Services
" in my Power, to be that happy Man.—
" This Consideration, Madam, will prove your
" Generosity equal to your Beauty, and I hope
" will not be thought too presuming in me to
" intreat, since, if to gain you be among the
" Things that are impossible, Prudence requires
" my utmost Efforts to check the hopeless Pas-
" sion. And, if happily for me it is otherwise,
" I cannot too soon begin to testify, with how
" much Ardor and Sincerity I am

" The charming *Brilliante*'s

" Adorer,

" ORONTES.

WHAT Agitations this Billet threw me into, I leave it to yourself to judge; for you, Madam, have doubtless known the Force of Love, for that happy Man, to whose Memory you have been so faithful, as never to admit a second Choice, tho' left a Widow in all the Pride of Life, and blooming Beauty.—I will not, nor indeed can I pretend

pretend to give you any exact Detail of the various, perplexed, transporting Ideas, which, by turns, crowded into my Imagination, at a Declaration so unexpected, so unhoped for, so unthought of; I neither knew what I ought to judge of this Affair, nor in what Manner I should behave.—The Reserve of my Temper made me loth to write to a Man I had so little Knowledge of, especially on such a Score, but there appeared so much Justice and Reason in his Request, that after a good Deal of Debate within myself, I at last resolved to comply with it; but how I should answer was the greatest Difficulty.—To tell him I was under a previous Engagement, and entirely reject the Offer he made me of his Heart, was doing too great a Violence to my own; and to encourage his Pretensions, after the Hopes I had given to *Leander*, seemed dishonourable to both; but I will not take up your Time with repeating the different Arguments, that my Generosity and Inclination, urged on each Side the Question, I will only tell your the latter prevailed, yet not so far as to render me wholly guilty of a Breach of the other. An Expedient between both presented itself to me, as you will see by the Answer I gave, which I here enclose you a Copy of.

To Orontes.

"*Sir*,

"A Declaration of Love, from a Person so "entirely a Stranger to me, seems so very extraordinary,

"traordinary, that you cannot be ſurprized I "have ſo long detained your Meſſenger, on the "Uncertainty in what Manner I ſhould receive "it.—Were I in reality Miſtreſs of more Per-"fections than I can pretend to be endued with, "it would be a ridiculous and unpardonable "Vanity in me to imagine they would have "Force to make, in ſo tranſient a View as you "had of me, an Impreſſion of the Nature "you make Profeſſion of; and I ſhould think "your Letter dictated by meer Caprice, or Cu-"rioſity, of trying in what Faſhion a Woman "would behave on ſuch an Occaſion: If I did, "Fancy can create Merits where there are none; "and is more frequently than *Reaſon* the Di-"rector of Inclination.—If this ſhould happen "to be the Caſe, Gratitude and Good Manners "demand a civil Return.—I therefore flatter "myſelf, my Character will not ſuffer by this "Complaiſance, ſince it extends no farther, "than to inform you I neither am, or ever in-"tend to be under any Engagements, but ſuch "as ſhall be approved by Sir *John Worthy*, who "is the neareſt Relation I have, and whoſe Ad-"vice ſhall always direct

"BRILLIANTE.

I THOUGHT myſelf extremely politic in referring him to Sir *John*, as it would be the ſureſt Touchſtone of the Sincerity of his Profeſſions, and alſo give me Time to collect my wandering Thoughts, ſo as to be able to judge

what it would beſt become me to do, in order to gratify my Inclinations in Favour of *Orontes*, yet not give his leſs fortunate Rival room to complain of his Infidelity.—The more I conſidered, however, I was only the more diſtracted; tho' what I had ſaid to *Leander* did not amount to a Promiſe, yet would I have given the World there had been a Poſſibility of recalling it; I eaſily perceived he depended upon it, made himſelf ſure of me, and ſeemed the moſt contented Man alive, when he had the moſt Reaſon to be the contrary. —All that Day, and the ſucceeding Night, I laboured under inexpreſſible Agitations:—The next Morning Sir *John* ſent a Servant to deſire I would come to his Houſe, the Gout preventing him from ſtirring out, and added that he had Buſineſs with me of the greateſt Importance.

I was not without ſome Suſpicion, that it was on the Score of *Orontes*.—My Heart fluttered at the Thought, and I hurried to obey the Summons, with a Precipitation, which, after declaring the fooliſh Situation of my Mind, you will not wonder at.

He received me with a Smile, and wiſhed me Joy; I aſked of what? *Of having charmed the Heart of the moſt accompliſhed Gentleman in Town*, ſaid he, *and of an Eſtate ſo much ſuperior to what your Fortune could expect*—I could not reſtrain my Bluſhes, but affected to be ignorant of his Meaning, till he told me *Orontes* had been with him; and having ſignified, that he found I had

reſolved

resolved to be directed by his Choice, had entreated his Interest.—*I am infinitely obliged to you, my fair Cousin*, said Sir John, *for paying me this Deference, as I am no otherwise entitled to it than by my sincere good Wishes for your Happiness; but since you have done me this Honour, I have ventured to give* Orontes *my Promise of all the Assistance in my Power, and that as I cannot go out, I would engage you to sup with me this Evening in order to introduce him to you in Form as a Lover, who, in my Judgment, merits your best Encouragements.*

He then told me, he had been intimately acquainted with the Father of *Orontes*, knew the Estate which devolved to the young Gentleman at his Decease, and that there was not the least Objection to be made to him, provided his Person was such as I could like; *and*, added he, *I look upon you to be too good a Judge of what is agreeable, to be blind to the many Perfections he has received from Nature as well as Education, and think that if you had formed in your Imagination a Man, such as would render you the most blest and envyed of your Sex, you could not have excelled what is really to be found in the accomplished* Orontes.—I need not say how delighted I was to hear this Character of him from the Mouth of Sir *John*, but I dissembled it as well as I was able, and feigned some Reluctance at consenting to the Interview he proposed.—I was at last, however, prevailed to yield to what I more passionately desired than any Thing this

World could give, and I took my Leave, promiſing to return about ſix in the Evening.

At the appointed Hour I went, having, as you may believe, neglected nothing that I thought might confirm the favourable Idea *Orontes* had entertained of me: I found him there before me, Sir *John* preſented him, and he accoſted me with the uſual Forms on ſuch Occaſions, but I had enough to do to receive his Salutation as that of a Perſon who was more indebted to the Recommendation of my Kinſman, than to my own Inclination. Lady *Worthy* had prepared a very elegant Entertainment, after which, being juſt a Set for *Whiſt*, we went to Cards, *Orontes* was my Partner, which gave him an Opportunity of ſaying many Things to me, equally gallant as tender.

It growing late, he waited on me Home in his Chariot, made me the moſt paſſionate Declaration of his Love, had my Permiſſion to viſit me the next Day, and to renew his Profeſſions; he gave all the Tokens imaginable of thinking himſelf happy in the Progreſs he had made, and I was no leſs ſo in my own Mind, to find that this ſecond Sight of me had not leſſened the Paſſion the firſt had inſpired him with.

But, Madam, when I was left alone, and had Leiſure to meditate on the Circumſtances of this Adventure, I could not forbear trembling at the Conſequences. — The Violence of

Leander's

Leander's long and conſtant Flame, ſeemed to threaten all that was terrible, when he ſhould come to know he had been ſupplanted in that Affection he had flattered himſelf with by a Lover of a Day old.—I found there was but too much Reaſon to fear, he would not tamely ſuffer this new Rival to bear away the Prize he had long, by all Manner of Services, ſought to obtain.—The moſt fatal Images now preſented themſelves to me.—The Reproaches I ſhould receive from him, perhaps from the other alſo, on Account of that Pre-engagement *Leander* might pretend ;—the Cenſure the Town would paſs upon me for my imagined Levity;—all came at once into my Head, and rendered my Night more tormenting, than the Day had been tranſporting.

My Inquietudes had certainly but too juſt a Foundation.—They ſtill remain upon me, nor can even the Preſence of *Orontes*, who I have ſeen twice, ſince we met at Sir *John*'s, entirely diſſipate them.

LEANDER, as yet, knows nothing of his Miſhap, Fortune has been ſo much my Friend, as to take him out of Town for ſome Days, and given me Time to reflect on the Capriciouſneſs of my Fate.—But alas! What does it avail? —I always regarded *Leander* as a Man of Honour; thought myſelf obliged to him for the Sincerity of his Attachment, but never either loved him, or pretended to do ſo; yet, as I have

been inadvertent enough to ſay ſome Things, which he has conſtrued into a growing Affection in me, to be convinced of the contrary muſt be the moſt cruel Diſappointment.—I am grieved to think the Pains I muſt inflict, yet to relieve them muſt feel more poignant Ones myſelf.—What, Madam, ſhall I do? I eſteem *Leander*, and I love *Orontes*. Both purſue the ſame Aim with me, and will be equally miſerable in miſſing it.—Tell me, dear Madam, is there a Way in Nature for me to extricate myſelf from this Perplexity? I would marry according to my Inclinations, yet would not loſe the Good-will of *Leander*, nor have my Character blemiſhed by the Accuſations of his Deſpair. — O! that he loved me leſs, or I had never known what it was to love another:—Had I never ſeen *Orontes*, I might have given my Hand to *Leander*,—have lived with him a dull, inſipid, but innocent Life; if Happineſs had not been my Portion, yet ſhould I have been free from Wretchedneſs; but, what a ſuperlative Degree of Wretchedneſs, to ſuffer *One* to poſſeſs my *Perſon*, while *another* triumphs over my *Heart*.—Can I yield to the Endearments of *Leander*, yet languiſh with the utmoſt Height of Paſſion for *Orontes*!—I ſhudder at the Thought:—'Tis Death, or worſe than Death.—Yet can I, to gratify this Paſſion, ſacrifice Gratitude, Generoſity, and Honour, run the Riſk of involving him I love, and him I ought to love, in Perplexities, which may be laſting as their lives.—I ſpeak not of the Ills which may happen to myſelf, the

leaſt

least of which is Loss of Reputation, and a Consciousness of having acted wrong.

Once more I beg you will favour me with your Advice, and believe me that I truly am, in spite of my Distractions,

With the greatest Respect,

Dear Madam,

Your most Humble,

And Obedient Servant,

Brilliante.

EPISTLE CX.

From Sophronia *to* Brilliante, *in Answer to the Foregoing.*

Dear Madam,

I KNOW of nothing, which for a considerable Time has given me more Pain, than the Account your last brought me.—I am extremely grieved to find in you a Proof of those unhappy

Consequences, which I always thought threatened any Promises made to a Lover, previous to those before the Altar.—When we come there, it is Time enough to declare our Sentiment; all Assurances we give of our Affection before-hand, tho' made with never so much Sincerity, are frequently broke, and when kept, I have observed, are seldom fortunate.

If it is dangerous, then, to engage ourselves to a Man we truly love and prize above the rest of his Sex, how much more is it to do to One who is indifferent to us; we cannot, having a Heart unprepossessed, be certain, but that in a Moment an Object may be presented to us, which may at once destroy our former Insensibility, and teach us, indeed, what it is to love. —This has been your Case, and you have fatally experienced a Mischief, which, I doubt not, but you were far from apprehending.—But Remonstrances of this Nature are now too late. —You do not want to be made sensible of your Inadvertency, but Advice, how to remedy the Inconveniences which may probably attend it.— You are so good to request this of me, and I will give it you with the utmost Sincerity, according to the best of my Judgment.

I cannot perswade you, my dear *Brilliante*, to give yourself to a Man you do not love, even tho' you did not love another; much less

as

as you are poſſeſſed with ſo extreme a Paſſion, and for One whoſe Merit, by all Account, for I have heard much of him, ſeems to juſtify all the Tenderneſs you have for him.—I cannot too much applaud the Delicacy of your Sentiments, and that nice Senſe of Honour which makes you tremble at violating what you ſay, and I will not diſbelieve, was no more than a half Promiſe.—I heartily pity *Leander*, who it is certain loves you to an infinite Degree, and is a very worthy Man; but it would be an ill Return to his Love and Conſtancy, to give him a Wife, who would think herſelf miſerable in being ſo: —A Wife, to whom, the more he endeavoured to endear himſelf, the more he would be diſagreeable:—A Wife, who, in his Arms, languiſhed for another, and who, in every Action, ſhewed ſhe was his more by Compulſion than Inclination.—Indeed, however unhappy *Leander* may think himſelf in being rejected by you, he would find himſelf much more ſo in being accepted, in the preſent Situation of your Heart, which according to your Deſcription of it, and the Merits of your Conqueror, ſeems not very likely to change.

How then ſhall you behave, you ſay, how get off from the Encouragement you have given *Leander*, without incurring the Cenſure of Levity from him and all his Friends?—I muſt own it

it a very difficult Point, nor do I think, proceed which Way ſoever the Circumſtances between you permit, you can totally avoid ſome Accuſations of that Nature: I know how ſtinging they will be to a Woman who thinks as you do, but yet they will be light in Compariſon with thoſe ſevere Remora's, which the Conſcioufneſs of having rendered the Man ſo dear to you, yourſelf, and even *Leander* alſo unhappy, by the fulfilling of an inconſiderate Promiſe, which his Importunities alone extorted from you.

However, as the longer *Leander* continues in the Hope you have ſo unfortunately given him, the more will his Affection increaſe, and conſequently the Diſappointment, whenever it happens, be the greater, I would have you receive him with the greateſt Coolneſs, and tho' I think it would neither be good Manners, nor Gratitude, to preſerve that ill Humour towards him, you tell me you did, on your having firſt ſeen *Orontes*, yet I would have you behave ſo, as by Degrees to let him ſee how impoſſible it is for you ever to love or marry him.—If poſſible, conceal from him the Addreſſes of his Rival, and as that would be difficult in this Town, where all Eyes are on the watch for ſuch Diſcoveries, I think it highly proper you ſhould retire to the Houſe of ſome Friend in the Country, ſtrictly forbidding him to

to follow you.—When you are there, let Sir *John*, who I find is perfectly in the Intereſt of *Orontes*, make Uſe of all his Rhetoric to convince *Leander*, that the Match he has ſo long ſollicited, could not bring Happineſs to either Party; and according as he behaves on that Occaſion, either venture, or not, to inſinuate, as tho' you might marry to greater Advantage.

As thoſe of our Kindred are for the moſt Part guided by Intereſt, Sir *John*'s appearing in the Matter will take away great Part of the Blame from you; and the World, and even *Leander* himſelf, will be apt to imagine, you rather yielded to the Perſwaſion of ſo near a Relation, than to any Change in your own Inclinations.

This, I think, will be a much more eligible Waof proceeding, than precipitately to reverſe theDoom he at preſent flatters himſelf with.—To find himſelf at once rejected, and for the Sake of a Rival, might produce ſome deſperate Effects, perhaps, even fatal, either to the Loved, or Unbeloved, it is not impoſſible to both.—Whereas, Time, the Arguments of Friends, and your Reſerve, may at laſt bring this impatient Lover to a more moderate Way of thinking, to judge with Temper on what you now told him, and de-

destroy all Temper, and make him know by Experience, the Truth of *Oronooko*'s Maxim,

Degrees make all Things easy:

Thus have I given you my faithful Sentiments, as to the Dilemma you are in, and leave you to improve on the Scheme I have laid down for relieving yourself from it; if your own Ingenuity, actuated by a Passion fertile in Expedients, supply you with a better, I shall be sincerely glad, none being more truly desirous of your Happiness than,

Dear Madam,

Your most Affectionate Friend,

And Humble Servant,

Sophronia.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXI.

From Cleora *to* Ardelia, *on the Wickedness of Scandal, and the inhuman Pleasure some People take in exposing real Faults, and broaching fictitious Ones, to the Ruin of the fairest Reputation.*

Dear Ardelia,

I LEAVE it to the Divines to decide, what Sin it is which Heaven itself has not the Power of pardoning; but certainly there is none which on Earth deserves so little Forgiveness, as that of Scandal and Defamation.—Even Murder seems to me less cruel, less atrocious.—The Person sullied only meets before the Time, that Fate to which all Nature is condemned; but the Slaughter of Reputation is a Stab to the very Soul;—and Life is but a Prolongation of a Sense of Pain.—And yet this glaring Iniquity,—this savage Sporting with Ruin, passes for Wit in those who practise it, and is an agreeable Entertainment to the Hearers.—Methinks, it should rather shock, than delight any One who pretends to the least good Nature, to hear the real Errors of

of their Fellow-Creatures, ſet forth and magnified with all the aggravating Circumſtances that witty Malice can invent. But where no Cauſe is given for Cenſure, where the moſt perfect Innocence is no Defence, and even that Openneſs of Behaviour, and unaffected Chearfulneſs, which are its trueſt Indications, are conſtrued into the Marks of a vicious Inclination, the Crime of thoſe who do ſo, ought to be as deteſtable to Man, as moſt ſurely it is to Heaven.

I doubt not but you will readily imagine, I have the Story we heard laſt Night in View.—Indeed, my Dear, I cannot eaſily forget the unbecoming Flouts, the ſcurril Jeſts, which the greateſt Part of the Company paſſed upon two abſent Ladies, who, as it proved, had no Friends to take their Parts. As neither you nor I were acquainted with the Perſons and Characters of the young Perſons ſcandalized, we were obliged to content ourſelves with ſaying we were ſorry if there were any real Grounds for what we found gave the Aſſembly ſo much Diverſion.—You know how little Weight the Diſpleaſure we teſtified had to put a Stop to the Career of Raillery, almoſt every Mouth was full of:—But I muſt now inform you, that this Morning I ſaw a Gentleman, who is well acquainted with the Ladies in Queſtion, and on whoſe Veracity I dare

dare depend.—He aſſured me, upon his Honour, that they were ſo far from giving any Room to authoriſe the injurious Treatment I related to him, that nothing could be more modeſt and inoffenſive than their Deportments; and that it was his firm Belief, their Thoughts and Inclinations were entirely conformable to what they appeared.—He told me, however, that he had heard ſomewhat of the Nature I had repeated, which he ſuppoſed had been invented by ſome wicked Perſon: *But*, ſaid he, *as I am confident, there is not the leaſt Truth in it, I am amazed it did not immediately ſubſide, and die with the other Lies of the Day.* — I replied, that I had always obſerved the *left Hand* Trumpet of Fame was more ſonorous than the *Right*; that the fatal Blaſt, once ſounded, reached through every Quarter, and with repeated Echoes, ſilences the ſofteſt Notes of Gentleneſs and Humanity.—As one of the beſt of our *Engliſh* Poets juſtly expreſſes it:

On Eagles Wings immortal Scandals fly,
While virtuous Actions are but born, and die.

As I know you will be equally glad with myſelf, to have a juſt Pretence for vindicating the Reputation of the two young Creatures, ſo barbarouſly traduced, I could not forbear immediately acquainting you with the Opinion my

my Friend has of them.—If he ſhould happen to be deceived, by his Inclination to believe the beſt of every One, and we found guilty of defending a bad Cauſe, it will at leaſt be an Error, which all the humane and good-natured Part of the World will eaſily forgive. I am,

My Dear *Ardelia*,

Sincerely Yours,

Cleora.

End of the Ninth Book.

EPISTLES

FOR THE

LADIES.

BOOK X.

EPISTLE CXII.

From Perocles, *to a Lady, who had ask'd his Opinion concerning Apparitions; giving her a very remarkable Account of one he had himself seen.*

Madam,

YOU were so good, last Night, to ask my Opinion concerning Apparitions; to which, you may remember, I made but an evasive Answer, not choosing to speak my Sentiments, or rather my perfect Conviction on that Head,

before Persons who, I knew, would turn into Ridicule the most solemn Assurances I could give them. — I determined, however, to take the first Opportunity of resolving the Question you put to me; which I shall do in such a Manner, that, if your Dependance on my Veracity be in any Degree proportionable to what you have flattered me with, will leave you under no Doubts hereafter, concerning that Matter.

Nothing is so injurious to the Credit of *real* Facts, as the Formation of *fictitious* ones, which have any Resemblance of them. It is, certainly, the many absurd Stories, which have been reported of Ghosts, that has so much destroyed our Faith in all of that Nature. — If our Forefathers believed too much, we believe too little. — People generally run from one Extreme to another. — To avoid the Superstition of former Times, this wiser Age flies to Infidelity, in Things yet more essential to the Happiness of Futurity, than this I am about to treat upon.

But I will not take up your Time with a Repetition of any of those Arguments, which have been urged both for, and against the Question: I know you are perfectly well versed in what the Sacred Writings say concerning it; nor are you altogether unacquainted with those many well attested Narratives, which the History of all Ages presents us with; I shall only relate an Incident that happened to myself, and to which I owe my Conviction; and when I have told you all

all the Circumſtances of it, leave it to your own Judgment to decide whether, or not, I could be impoſed upon by the Force of Imagination.

JUNIUS and myſelf were Fellow Students at *Oxford*; we had the greateſt Intimacy together of any two in the Univerſity; a Parity of Sentiments and Humour, indeed, linked us in a more perfect and ſolid Friendſhip than is ordinarily found between Perſons of the Age we were.—As we had both of us a pretty ſerious Turn of Mind, we entered frequently into Diſcourſes concerning the Inviſible World, the State of Departed Souls, and how far it was reaſonable to ſuppoſe they had any Knowledge of the Tranſactions of thoſe they had left behind.—I am aſhamed to ſay, neither of us had ſuch juſt Notions of Futurity as we ought to have had:—We ran too much into the Mode of Free-thinking, and were not far from doubting, if the Soul had any Exiſtence at all after the Body became ſenſeleſs.—In one of the Converſations we had on this Topic, it was agreed between us, that which ever of us died firſt, he ſhould return, if poſſible, and give the other certain Information of the Truth. It happened, that a few Months after, *Junius* was taken ill of a Fever, which carried him off in a few Days:—During his Sickneſs, tho' I was, almoſt the whole Time I could ſpare from the Duties of the College, never from his Bed-ſide, I mentioned nothing of this Promiſe, nor, indeed, did it come into my Head, till ſome time after his Deceaſe; but

one Night, happening to ſit up ſomewhat more late than uſual, and being alone in my Chamber, revolving on ſome Paſſages I had been reading, relating to Futurity, the Converſation I had with *Junius* returned freſh into my Mind, and not having ſeen any thing of him, as he had made me to expect, but too much ſtrengthened me in the Disbelief I was ever inclined to have of the Exiſtence of the Soul after its Separation from the Body. In this Diſpoſition I went to Bed, where I had not lain three Minutes, and was far from being inclined to Sleep, before I ſaw the Curtains drawn gently open, and the Figure of *Junius* ſtanding between them, looking directly upon me. — I felt no Terror, yet when I attempted to ſpeak I found myſelf unable; but the gentle Spirit waited not for my Salutation, but with a Voice ſoft and benign, as was his Countenance, — Perocles, ſaid he, *Divine Permiſſion warrants me to make good my Promiſe; — I come to aſſure your wavering Faith in Immortality, and convince you that there is another World, vaſtly different from that you inhabit; — I knew it before my Diſſolution, but not till the Inſtant of it, when my Eyes cloſed, to all ſenſual Objects; my guardian Angel, who had defended me from falling into the groſs Vices of the Age, clad in ineffable Splendor, and the moſt dazzling Beauty, ſtood all confeſt before me, and ſpreading his radiant Wings between me and a Gulph of nameleſs Horrors, into which I thought myſelf juſt falling, bore me more quick than Thought, or the Lightning's ſudden Flaſh, into the Regions*

of

of eternal Bliſs; where, proſtrate at the Throne of Mercy, unutterable Brightneſs! Glory inconceivable! the Fiat of my Redemption was pronounced, while Miriads of Angels tuned their golden Harps to Songs of joyous Praiſe. — Farewell;—Believe, O Perocles! *and you will be bleſt as I am.*

THIS ſaid, he vaniſhed in a Stream of Light, too dazzling for human Sight to bear; — the ſtrong Refulgence ſtruck me for a Moment blind, but Harmony Divine beat on my raviſh'd Ear Sounds which no Inſtrument compoſed by human Art could ever convey: — My Soul was filled with celeſtial Ardors, glowed with ſacred Fires, and doubtleſs had a Taſte of thoſe Immortal Exſtacies, which are the Portion of the Bleſt above. — The Raptures in which I had been abſorbed, beginning by Degrees to diſſipate, and the Power of Recollection returned, I conſidered temperately on what had paſt,—I was well aſſured it was not the Illuſion of a Dream,—I had not ſlumbered ſince I went to Bed,—my waking Eyes had beheld the Form of *Junius*, tho' much more beautiful than I had ever ſeen him when alive,—my Ears had heard him utter Truths I had ſo often preſumed to call in Queſtion, — I had no longer any Pretence to countenance Infidelity, and was, a ſecond Time, diſſolved in grateful Adoration to the Supreme Being, for having vouchſafed to convince me by ſo extraordinary a Method.

I leave it to yourſelf, Madam, to judge of this Matter, as you ſhall find moſt reaſonable. —The Belief, that departed Souls are ſometimes permitted to appear, is no Part of our Creed, tho' that of a Future Exiſtence is ſo; and is no otherwiſe neceſſary to be inculcated, than as it is an undeniable Demonſtration of the other. —I am confident your Faith in that, which is the only Material, ſtands in need of no Props to ſuſtain it; I ſhall therefore trouble you no farther, than to aſſure you I am,

With the greateſt Reſpect,

Madam,

Your moſt Humble,

And moſt Devoted Servant,

Perocles.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXIII.

From Panthea *at* Paris, *to* Miranda *at* London, *in Answer to one she had received from that Lady, expressing her Surprize that she stayed so long in* France.

My Dear Miranda,

MARS has now sheath'd his bloody Sword, — *Bellona* has withdrawn her thundring Engines, — the Peace at length is happily concluded, — the Ports are opened, and the smiling Waves court me to return to the Embraces of my expecting Friends. — What Excuse then, say you, can I make for loitering here? — Indeed, but little. — Yet it is not that I prefer the Gardens of *Luxembourg* to *Windsor* Forest, or the *Theulieries* to St. *James*'s Park; — or that the Banks of the *Seine* have more Charms for me than our own august *Thames*; — or, that I am at all less an *Englishwoman* for having been two Years in *France*. — No, I assure you, my dear *Miranda!* for more than half that Time I have long'd to be at home, with an Impatience, which it would be the utmost Vanity in me to imagine any of my Friends felt for seeing me there: — Yet I know not how it is, but the People of this Kingdom have something in their manner, that forces one, as it were, against one's Reason, nay,

against one's Inclination too, to do just as they would have one.

My Things were all packed up, — Post-chaises were ordered, — and every thing was ready for my going to *Calais*, when Madame, the Countess *De Valervois* came in, and laid an Embargo on me and my little Equipage. — This Lady is of *Roan*, in *Normandy*; she had just received a Letter, that her Sister was going to be married to a Nobleman of that Province: The Wedding was to be celebrated with great Magnificence, and her Presence at it was not to be dispensed with. — She said so many obliging Things to me, in order to prevail on me to accompany her, that I had not the Power of refusing her Request; which, indeed, I was the more readily induced to grant, as I knew I could take Shipping at *Dieppe*, whenever I pleased, for *England*; so on engaging her Promise not to insist on my returning with her to *Paris*, I at last consented, and To-morrow we set out.

I shall now, however, get loose from all the Enchantments of this gay Metropolis, and do not apprehend I shall meet any, where I am going, capable of detaining me long, tho' Monsieur *De Marivaux*, who is to be of our Company, tells me, he will conjure up a Spirit, that, in spite of all my Efforts, shall keep me in the Circle of *Normandy* much longer than I intend. — What he means, I know not, but think myself pretty certain, that his Wit, celebrated as it

is,

is, will be little effectual for this purpose: — It will not be impolitic, notwithstanding, to take all the Precautions I can, to preserve me from any Spell he may design to prepare for me; — as I have found by Experience, that the Strength of my own Resolution is not at all times, and in all Circumstances, to be entirely depended upon, your friendly Assistance must be my kind Auxiliary in this Point. — I do not flatter you, when I assure you, that your Commands for my speedy return to *England*, will have more Weight than all that can be done to perswade me to continue, even a very little longer Time, absent from it.

My next will be dated from *Roan*; where, if I find any thing worth communicating, I shall not fail to give you an exact Account of it. — And now, my dear *Miranda*, I have nothing more to add, but what, I hope, you are already convinced of, that wherever I am, I am always,

With the most perfect Amity,

Yours, *&c.*

PANTHEA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXIV.

From Panthea *at* Roan, *to* Miranda *at* London; *with the Account of a very extraordinary Adventure, which had happened just before her Arrival there.*

I Have now the Pleasure to acquaint my dear *Miranda*, that after a most agreeable Journey, I am safely arrived at *Roan.*— We were met, within three Leagues of the City, by the young Lady, her intended Bridegroom, and several of the principal Inhabitants, who conducted us to a spacious Hotel, where we found all things prepared, in the most elegant manner for our Reception ; — the Wedding, however, will not be solemnized this Fortnight, so that you must not expect to hear I am going to embark for a whole Month, at least. — In the mean time, I shall present you with the History of an Adventure, so very extraordinary, that I should be ashamed to recite it for the sake of its Incredibility, could I not bring, were there Occasion, not only the whole City of *Roan*, but half *Normandy*, for Vouchers of the Truth hereof ; — nay, I know not but, by this time, it may have reached *Paris*, scarce any thing, that ever happened, having made a greater Noise.

'Madamoiselle St. *Clercy*, the only 'Daughter of a wealthy Merchant of that Name, 'was, in the 17th Year of her Age, seized with 'a violent Disorder in her Head and Stomach, 'which, at length, threw her into Convulsion 'Fits, in one of which she expired, at least she 'seemed to have done so, in the Opinion of all 'about her, no Symptoms of any Remains of Life 'being perceivable through her whole Frame.

'It is the Custom all over *France*, to make 'the Day of Interment the next, or the next but 'one, at fartheſt, after that of the Decease; for 'which Reason, I heartily pray, whenever I 'make my Exit, it may be in a Country where 'People are not so hasty to get rid of their 'Friends.—Poor Madamoiselle St. *Clercy* was 'dressed in her Funeral Habiliments, carried into 'a Room hung with Black, and laid on a Couch 'covered with the same: The Equipage of 'Death was all set forth: Her Parents, and the 'rest of her Friends withdrawn: None but two 'Priests, who were appointed to attend the 'Corps, and pass the Night in Prayer for the 'Peace of her departed Soul. Their Oraisons 'were not half told over, before some Symp-'toms of Life appearing in their Fair Charge, the 'Family were immediately roused, who finding 'Breath was, indeed, returned, put her into a 'warm Bed; which, with the Help of Cordials, 'and other reviving Spirits, prescribed by the 'Physicians,

'Physicians, in a few Hours, restored her both 'to her Speech and Senses.

'For a few Days she seemed to enjoy a most 'perfect Health; her Convulsions had quite left 'her, her Eyes resumed their former Lustre, and 'her Complexion all its Freshness: But soon the 'Roses faded in her Cheeks, and a livid Pale-'ness overspread her Face; — she grew ex-'tremely lean, yet her Waist so much enlarged 'itself, that she was judged in danger of a 'Dropsy: Remedies proper for that Distemper 'were given to her, but without any effect.

'Her Disorder, as it proved, sprang from a 'very different Cause, than all had been hitherto 'ascribed to it. — In fine, she was great with 'Child, and the Physicians having discovered it, 'found themselves under a Necessity of acquaint-'ing her Parents with it.

'It is not to be doubted, but that so alarm-'ing an Information must involve them in the 'utmost Confusion: They flew to the Apartment 'of their Daughter, and upbraided her with the 'Deception she had put upon them, in Terms 'severe enough, yet, suitable to the Occasion. 'The first Shock of this Accusation threw her 'into a Swoon: On her Recovery, she fell at their 'Feet, and protested her Innocence with the 'most bitter Imprecations, accompanied with 'Tears of mingled Shame and Grief. — They 'looked on each other, and knew not what to 'think; and both were equally tempted to sus-

'pect

‘ pect the Skill of the Physicians, rather than
‘ the Veracity of a young Creature, whom they
‘ had bred up in the strictest Rules of Truth and
‘ Virtue, and whom they had never found to
‘ deviate from either. — They sent, however, to
‘ consult other Gentlemen of the Faculty, and
‘ also several skilful Women, who all joined to
‘ confirm what the former had alledged, to the
‘ Distraction of the young Lady, and the Per-
‘ plexity of all her Kindred.

‘ At last the dreadful Hour of Conviction
‘ came on: — She fell into those Agonies,
‘ which all Women are condemned to suffer in
‘ becoming Mothers; — yet still she persisted in
‘ denying she had ever transgressed the Laws of
‘ Chastity: Believing herself in the Pangs of
‘ Death, she begg'd her spiritual Director might
‘ be sent for. — He came. — After confessing
‘ to him those trifling Offences, which Human
‘ Nature can never be said to be totally free from,
‘ she desired Absolution; but he refused, tell-
‘ ing her, he was well assured she had not been
‘ sincere in her Confession, and then exhorted
‘ her not to deceive the World, or Heaven: —
‘ He remonstrated to her, that the Crime of
‘ which she was accused, was venial, in Compa-
‘ rison with that of denying it in those solemn
‘ Moments. On this she wept bitterly, but still
‘ avowed her Innocence.

‘ This Manner of Behaviour appeared so
‘ monstrous in her, that every one cryed out,
‘ she

'ſhe merited no Pity, or Aſſiſtance.—Her Mo-
'ther, however, ſuffered a Midwife to come to
'her Relief, and ſhe was ſoon after, amidſt
'Horrors inconceivable, delivered of a Son.

'The Meaſures which had been taken to
'prevail on her to relate the Truth, and her
'ſteady Perſeverance in atteſting her Ignorance
'of what was laid to her Charge, even after a
'living Proof of it was brought into the World,
'afforded much Matter for Speculation: The
'Story ſpread from one to another, till it be-
'came the general Diſcourſe.

'The Eccleſiaſtics were moſt of all con-
'cerned, and knew not how to judge of it:
'The whole Conduct of Madamoiſelle St.
'*Clercy* had, till this unhappy Accident, been
'unblameable, and they could not account for
'her becoming, all at once, ſo hardened in
'Guilt.—Some among them had the Super-
'ſtition to imagine ſhe had been, unknown to
'herſelf, made pregnant by an *Incubus*; and
'therefore urged that both ſhe, and the Infant
'ſhould be committed to the Flames. The
'Affair was laid before the Biſhop, and a grand
'Conſultation was held among the Reverend
'Fathers, in what Faſhion ſhe ſhould be pro-
'ceeded with:—His Lordſhip was willing to
'Queſtion her himſelf, before he would deter-
'mine on any thing; and for this purpoſe ſhe
'was cited to appear, as ſoon as ſhe ſhould be
'in a Condition, at his Palace, where ſeveral of
'the

'the ſuperior Clergy were alſo required to be 'preſent.

'The Day appointed being arrived, ſhe went 'led by her weeping Parents, who ſtood in little 'leſs need of Support. — The Anſwers ſhe gave 'to the Biſhop's Interrogatories, were the ſame 'with thoſe to her Confeſſor, and all who had ex-'amined her on the ſame Score, had already re-'ceived. — On which he was going to pro-'nounce a Sentence, which it is thought would 'not have been the moſt mild, when a young 'Gentleman, who had the Appearance of an 'Officer, ruſh'd haſtily into the Room, crying 'out, nothing could be decreed, with Juſtice, 'againſt that Lady, till what he had to urge in 'her Defence was heard. The Permiſion he 'deſired being granted, he approached the 'Throne, where the Biſhop was ſitting, and after 'making his proper Submiſſions, ſurpriſed the 'whole Aſſembly with a Speech; which, as I 'had it from one who took it down in Short-'hand, I have tranſlated as near the Original as 'I could.

The Declaration and Confeſſion of Monſieur La Uraimont, *formerly a Novice of the Order of St.* Francis, *now a Cadet in the Army.*

"PARDON me, my Lord, and you moſt "Reverend Fathers, that thus uncalled, "I preſume to appear before your ſacred Tri-

"bunal,

" bunal; but Truth, Juſtice, and all thoſe Laws,
" by which an honeſt Soul is bound, oblige me
" to vindicate the ſpotleſs Innocence of Mada-
" moiſelle St. *Clercy*, and to confeſs the Guilt,
" you are about to condemn, is all my own:
" Should my Life be judged the ſole Expiation of
" the Crime, I voluntarily offer, even that, a
" Sacrifice to the offended Laws, and the Fame
" of this much injur'd Lady: — But I will not
" detain your Lordſhip's Attention, by any un-
" neceſſary Prelude. — Being intended for the
" Church, I was a Novice of the Order of St.
" *Francis*, at the Time of Madamoiſelle St. *Clercy*'s
" ſuppos'd Death, and was made choice of to
" aſſiſt Father *Belcourt* in his Devotions, on that
" Occaſion: — The Cloſeneſs of the Room, the
" Heat of the Weather, or ſome other Cauſe,
" affected the good Father ſo much, he was
" obliged to go out for a little Air. I had
" heard much talk of this Lady's Beauty, but
" had never ſeen her; and having this Oppor-
" tunity, had the Curioſity to lift up the Lawn,
" with which her Face was covered; ſhe ſeemed
" indeed extremely lovely: — I could not think
" her Dead: — I fancied I ſaw Breath iſſue from
" her Lips: — I put my Hand upon her Boſom,
" and felt ſome Warmth in it: — A diabolical
" Propenſity that Inſtant ſeized me: — My
" Reaſon was extinct: — Religion, Honour,
" Decency no longer had any Place in me. —
" 'Twould be to add to my Crime to repeat the
" Manner of it. — What I have already ſaid,
" and the Conſequences, with which your
" Lordſhip

" Lordſhip is acquainted, prove it but too plain.
" — I ſhall only ſay, that in that Struggle be-
" tween Life and Death, ſhe was entirely ig-
" norant of the Violation I had the Impiety to
" perpetrate. — Father *Belcourt* ſoon after re-
" turned, and we alarmed the Family. — As
" to myſelf, the Death of an elder Brother giv-
" ing a ſudden Turn to my Affairs, I quitted
" the Altar, to which, indeed, I had no real
" Call, and went into the Army. — I returned,
" but laſt Night, to this City, when upon hear-
" ing the whole Circumſtances of this unhappy
" Affair, I heſitated not a Moment to reveal
" the Truth; as I ſhould have looked upon
" it a greater Crime to have ſuffered it to
" remain a Myſtery, than that of committing
" the Act it ſelf.

' After this Declaration, he reſigned him-
' ſelf to the Judgment of the Biſhop; but the
' Affair was of too much Importance to admit
' of an immediate Deciſion. The whole As-
' ſembly was filled with the utmoſt Aſtoniſh-
' ment at what they heard, and for the
' preſent could only order him into Confine-
' ment, and acquit Mademoiſelle St. *Clercy* of
' all Blame.

' These ſpiritual Judges had many Conſul-
' tations, before any thing could be determined
' on ſo extraordinary a Caſe. — Monſ. *Vraimont*
' had many Friends, particularly an Uncle, who
' is Prior of the Benedictines; theſe alledged

'in his Favour, that the Crime he had been 'guilty of, came not under the Denomination 'of Sacrilege, the Lady not being actually 'dead at the Time of committing it, and this 'Argument, joined to the Generosity of his 'Behaviour, pleaded so strongly in his Behalf, 'that it was thought proper to drop all further 'Prosecution.

'The Clergy thus appeased, nothing re-'mained for Mons. *Vraimont* but to make what 'Satisfaction was in his Power, to the injured 'Family of St. *Clercy*; which he did, by pub-'lickly espousing the young Lady, and settling 'on her a very large Dower.

They were married but last Week, and it would be too tedious to repeat half the Witticisms, which this Adventure has been productive of: Besides, so much of my Paper is already taken, that I have only room to subscribe myself, as ever,

My Dear *Miranda*,

Yours, *&c.*

Panthea.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXV.

From Astrea *to* Euphrosine, *with the Continuance of the History of* Philander *and* Altezeera, *as begun in a former Book.*

My Dear Euphrosine,

I Concluded my last with an almost assured Hope, that the Adventure related in it, would end to the Satisfaction of the Parties concerned; but an unlucky Turn has happened to cast a Gloom on the late fair Prospect, and involved us all in a second Confusion.

Sure every Passion, but fond Love,
Unto its own Redress does move;
But that alone the Wretch inclines
To what prevents his own Designs.

Indeed, I am more angry with *Philander*, than I have Words to express: — Certainly, if ever Lover had Cause to be contented with his Fate, he had; — to find his Mistress whom he thought dead, alive, in the same House with him, and in the Care of Persons who took a Pleasure in promoting her Recovery almost equal to their own; — and that the very Accident

which threatened him with her irrecoverable Loſs, had given her Liberty, and put it in her Power to be for ever united to him: — Theſe, I ſay, one would think, were Reflections to have made any reaſonable Man happy; — but I ſee plainly, not only by his Behaviour, but that of ſome others, whom we both know, the Truth of the Poet's Words,

—— That to be wiſe and love,
Is hardly granted to the Gods above.

Though he had heard the Surgeon every Day repeat his Injunctions, that his Patient ſhould be kept extremely quiet; — that no unneceſſary Queſtions ſhould be put to her, and all Occaſions of obliging her to ſpeak, moſt carefully avoided; adding, that on her Silence and Compoſure of Mind, the Certainty of her Cure depended; and though I had given him the moſt ſolemn Aſſurances, that the Moment ſhe ſhould be in a Condition to hold any Converſation, ſhe ſhould be informed of his being there; yet, notwithſtanding all this, it was with the utmoſt Difficulty I reſtrained him from ſhewing himſelf to her; and though I am pretty certain, from the whole Tenor of his Deportment, that he loves with as much Sincerity, as any Man can do; I am at the ſame Time convinced, that it was more the Fears of offending me, than any Apprehenſions of the Conſequences which might attend his Viſit,

Visit, that deterred him from going into her Chamber.

For four Days, however, I kept him within the Bounds so necessary to be observed; but on the fifth, when I was engaged with some Ladies who were come to visit me, his Impatience so far prevailed on my Brother, as to gain his Consent for gratifying him so far as to see *Attezeera* when she was asleep, on Condition, that he should content himself with a bare Sight of her Face, without by any Word or Action attempting to disturb her Repose.

His Request was accompanied with such moving Expressions, that my Brother could not resist the Force of them: — He went with him to the Chamber of *Attezeera*, and being told by the Person whom I had ordered to attend her, that she was just fallen into a Slumber, they drew near the Bed, and *Philander* opening the Curtain gently, had a full View of the Face he so much longed to see: — Fatal Curiosity! how dear has it been like to cost him? His ungovernable Passion broke through all the Bounds of Reason, Discretion, and even Care of the beloved Object, and perhaps, without even knowing what he did, he cried out in a Transport, — *'Tis she! — By Heaven, 'tis she herself!* and at the same Moment seized one of her Hands which lay over the Bedcloaths, and put it to his Mouth with an Eagerness as going to devour it: — This Pressure, join'd

to the loud Exclamation he had made, would have awoke the ſlumbering Fair had ſhe been in a more deep Sleep than the preſent Anguiſh of her Condition could be expected to permit: — She ſtarted, opened her Eyes, ſcreamed, and fell immediately into a Fit, out of which ſhe but recovered to relapſe into a worſe: *Philander*, now ſenſible of the ill Effects of what he had done, railed like a Man wholly deprived of Reaſon: — My Brother, tho' extremely diſconcerted, forced him with much ado out of the Chamber: — She grew ſo bad, that all the Servants in the Houſe were called to her Aſſiſtance; I heard the Noiſe, and excuſing myſelf to my Friends, flew to the Chamber of *Altezeera*, whom I found, as I then thought, in the Agonies of Death; — the Surgeon was ſent for, and a Phyſician, to join his Endeavours alſo for her Relief; — indeed I deſpaired that it would be in the Power of either to afford her any: — I was in too great a Concern to enquire preſently, if any Accident had happened to occaſion ſo ſad a Change in her; but her own Words, when the Intermiſſion of her Fits gave her Leave to ſpeak, let me into great Part of the Truth: — *The inhuman Wretch*, cryed ſhe, *has murdered his Maſter!* — *O* Philander! Philander! *but I follow thee*; then fainted away, and on her Recovery, *Where is the dear Shade?* reſumed ſhe, *why ſo ſoon vaniſhed?* — *He was here but now*, — *there, there he ſtood.* — Thus did ſhe rave between the Intervals

tervals, and I asking hastily if any one had been in the Room, was informed by my Woman of what I have related to you. — I cannot tell whether my Grief for the Effects of this Accident, or Rage at the Occasion of it, was most predominant in me; but this was not a Time or Place to express my Sentiments, and casting about in my Mind what was best to be done, I thought that as she had seen her Lover, and imagined it was his Apparition, to convince her it was his real Self would be less prejudicial than the Error she was in: — I therefore told her, that *Philander* was living, and had no other Wounds than those of his Mind for the dangerous Condition to which the Villany of his wicked Servant had reduced her; — *Philander*, cried she, *living! — and do you know him, Madam, and our unhappy Story? — He is*, answered I, *a Guest at present in this House.* And then perceiving she was in a Condition to attend to what I said, related to her all I knew of this Adventure; the Remainder, I told her, must be her Part to unfold, when Heaven should be pleased to give her Strength to do it. — *But*, cried she hastily, *may I not see* Philander? *Did he appear before me only to give me Terror? — and shall I not now have the Consolation of beholding him such as my Tenderness for him makes Life a Blessing?* — I then ordered he should be called, and it seems his Distraction for his late Behaviour was so great, that it required no less than such a pleasing Mandate to restore him to his Senses; — he came,

and throwing himself on his Knees at her Bed-Side, conjured her to forgive the Fright which the Impatience of his Love had occasioned. There needed little Rhetoric to obtain what he requested, and the Scene between them was extremely moving; but the Exertion of her Spirits on this sudden Flow of Joy, after the Hurry they had been in with a contrary Emotion, threw her again into Fits so violent, that happy was it for us all, that the Doctor and Surgeon came in to our Relief; — the latter of these finding so sad a Change in his Patient, after having left her in the Morning so much better, shook his Head, and told us, he feared his Orders had not been complied with; to which I answered, that indeed they had not, and the present Condition of the Lady was owing to an Accident which had thrown her Mind into some Confusion; but intreated they would do their utmost for retrieving this Misfortune: — *Philander*, who had looked very silly all the Time I was speaking, now cried out, *Restore her, save her, and make your own Demands, though it be my whole Estate:* It is not to be doubted, but that they assured him, nothing in the Power of their Skill should be wanting: — On examining her Pulse, they found it much disorder'd, and the Surgeon, when he took off her Dressings, said the Wounds were much inflamed; — they both, however, gave us Hopes that if she kept twelve Hours from a Fever, she might get over this Shock; — strict Orders were

again

again repeated, that every Thing about her ſhould be as ſtill as poſſible, which *Philander* is too ſenſible of his Error to deſire to infringe.

The Time ſpecified by the Phyſicians paſſed over without any Symptom of a Fever being diſcovered in her; but ſhe was, and ſtill continues ſo exceſſive weak, that when ſhe attempts to ſpeak, her Voice is ſcarce intellegible :— I fear it will be ſome Time before ſhe recovers Strength enough to relate that which we yet are ignorant of, concerning this Adventure :— Her Life, however, is now judged to be out of Danger ;— *Philander* is never from her Chamber, but when Decency obliges him to retire :— His tender Aſſiduities, certainly contribute greatly to reſtore her to that Compoſure of Mind, without which all exterior Remedies would be applied to little Effect;— ſo that, angry as I was, at the Diſregard he paid to my Intreaties, or the Orders of the Surgeon, I am now of Opinion, that the Prejudice done her by his Diſobedience, is well atoned for by the innate Satisfaction I can perceive ſhe now enjoys, and have therefore heartily forgiven him that Act of Raſhneſs, as well as my Brother for permitting it.

This is all I am able to inform you of at preſent, but hope a few Days will give me more Light into an Affair, which yet ſeems big with Myſtery.

Till

Till then, adieu! — I need not tell you with how much Sincerity I am,

My Dear *Euphrosine.*

Yours, *&c.*

Astrea.

EPISTLE CXVI.

From Urania *to* Mira, *returning Dr.* Burnet's Sacred Theory of the Earth, *which that Lady had lent to her, and expressing the Satisfaction the Perusal of those Volumes had afforder her, especially that Part which related to the* Millennium, *or Christ's Thousand Years Reign on Earth.*

Dear Madam,

FAVOURS conferred by you, afford a double Benefit, as they are always well adapted: First, you search into the Wants of those you love, and then generously bestow Relief; — had you sent me a Book of Novels or new Poems, they might have entertained my gayer Moments for the present; — or were it some Part of modern History you had recommended to my Perusal, it would have made me somewhat wiser than before,

fore, but fallen infinitely ſhort of the Advantage I now enjoy. — Theſe excellent Volumes have let me into the very inmoſt Receſſes of Nature, enlarged my Ideas, and enabled me to behold, as the Author himſelf expreſſes it,

— *In comprehenſive Thought,*
The vaſt Extent 'twixt God *and* Nought.

I AM raviſhed with the Beauties of the Creation, as it came from the Hands of the *Almighty*; and am ſtruck with the moſt reverential Awe, when I conſider the dreadful Change it ſince has undergone by his juſt Judgements on a ſinful World: — I am now no longer at a Loſs to account for what they call the Wonders of the *Peak*; — nor for the Inequality of the Land, in ſome Parts ſo ſtupendouſly mountainous, in others ſo low and marſhy; — nor for thoſe diſmal Caverns, which in many Places ſeem to lead down even to the Center of the Earth; — nor how theſe numberleſs little Iſlands, torn as it were from the Continent, came to be ſcattered up and down the Sea: — Theſe admirable Books have ſhewn me, that all this was done by the Force of thoſe Waters, which being let looſe by their great Ruler, overwhelmed, broke in, and diſlocated the once beauteous Frame of Nature.

BUT even this Satisfaction, great as it is, comes infinitely ſhort of what the charming Deſcription

ſcription given of the *Millennium* affords: — O moſt incomparable *Mira!* might I preſume to hope I ſhould be one of the happy Number admitted into that Scene of Bliſs, I ſhould in Theory be already there; anticipate my Paradiſe, and while environed with a thouſand Impertinences, which eternally ſpring up amidſt this Vale of Miſery and Folly, feel in my Breaſt the untainted Joys of Heaven; — To live a thouſand Years diveſted of all anxious Cares, all Griefs, ſecured from Diſappointments, as from vain Purſuits, and idle Wiſhes; — to be certain that neither Pain nor Sickneſs can annoy us more; — to know we have paſſed the Gulph of Death; — eſcap'd all the Horrors of the Grave; are out of the Reach of thoſe evil and malicious Spirits, who watch to ſeize the flying Soul, and are ſafely landed on that Shore, where all is Love and Harmony; — where the Author of our Redemption reigns in Perſon, over a World, which is all one great Palace, and all who enter there are of his Court.

How enchanting is the Idea! — How glorious the Proſpect! — How flattering to Hope! But, who in theſe later Ages, alas! dare venture to indulge it? — the Prophets, — the Patriarchs, — the Apoſtles, — the Martyrs, who have ſuffered for the Cauſe of Righteouſneſs, perhaps, will fill thoſe happy Seats, and leave no Room for Virtues of an inferior Rank.

Tell

Tell me, dear Madam, do you think it possible for a Person moderately good, and who wishes to be much more so, to be enlisted in this Divine Company? Will the Purity of the Intention, or the Piety of the Heart alone, without some distinguished Act of Zeal, be sufficient to entitle any one to a Place in the first Resurrection?

You see, Madam, that though the admirable Author of these Books does not attempt to enforce the Belief of his System, as a Matter of Faith, yet I am of the Number of those, who are perfectly convinced of it: — But do not imagine I am so, merely because so great a Man seems to be of that Opinion himself; I do assure you I have examined those Texts of Holy Writ, which he has quoted for that Purpose, and find them so conformable to his Way of expounding, especially those in the Revelations of St. *John*, that I cannot think it is in the Power of human Learning to put any other Construction upon them.

Yet, plain as it appears me, I find some People treat it as visionary, and only the Effects of a too warm, and fertile Fancy; but Sceptics there will always be in Things of yet greater Consequence to our Salvation; — as such I look on these, and shall not waver in my Belief of the

Doctor's

Doctor's Position, till I hear better Proofs against it, than any he has brought in Defence of it.

Favour me, I beseech you, Madam, with your Sentiments on this Occasion, the first Moment you have to bestow on her, who is,

With the greatest Respect,

Dear Madam,

Your most Humble,

And Obedient Servant,

Urania.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXVII.

The Answer.

From Mira *to* Urania, *praising her comprehensive fine Genius, and encouraging her to hope every Thing she wished for on so laudable a Score.*

My Dear Urania,

I AM delighted beyond Measure to find you are so highly sensible of the Value of the Work I sent you: — It shews you have a Soul capable of receiving the most delicate Impressions of Philosophy, as well as I always knew you had of Religion: — Contemplation on the Divine Being, and the Wonders of his Providence, is the most seraphic Employment of the Mind, and brings us the nearest to the angelic Nature: — Few Things that have ever been wrote are better calculated to serve this sublime End; and I do not flatter you when I say, that few Readers have a Genius more adapted for Improvement, and will do more Honour to the Author's Labour.

I DO not wonder, however, that you are more charmed with that Part of his Book, which relates to his *Millennium*, than with any of the pre-

preceding ones, becauſe People are naturally more inclined to give Attention to that which is to come, than that which is paſt, though never ſo curious and intereſting: — When next I have the Pleaſure of ſeeing you, ſhall enter into ſome Diſcourſe with you, and give you what Obſervations I have made on his Account of the Paradiſaical World, and the ſtrange Revolution occaſioned by the Deluge, but at preſent will not interrupt thoſe rapturous Meditations the *Millennium* I perceive has filled you with.

And to ſhew you how much I approve the Credit you give to this enchanting Syſtem, dare venture to aſſure you, that when Death has unlocked the adamantine Gates, and brought Futurity to View, you have no Reaſon to deſpond of being one of thoſe who ſhall partake of the Felicities our Author deſcribes in the *Millennium:* Fear not, my dear *Urania*, that becauſe you have not been endowed with the Gift of Prophecy, nor have ſuſtained the fiery Trial of Martrydom, you have no Pretenſions to be admitted a Denizon in that happy Place; — much leſs need you be under any Apprehenſions for the Want of Room: – Our bleſſed Saviour has doubtleſs already marked out his choſen Train, and will meaſure out his New Jeruſalem proportionable to the Number of its Inhabitants; — we have only to prepare ourſelves properly for a Reception there, and take Care we do not, like the foolish

foolish Virgins, have our Lamps to trim, when we are called upon to enter.

The ardent Zeal you express for being one of that select Band, will certainly keep you always ready; nor will you, when Death, the Harbinger of the Joys you wish for, knocks at your Door, and bids you haste away, be at any Loss to put on those Ornaments, which are necessary for your suitable Appearance. I am so confident of your Diligence in this Point, that all Remonstrances may be spared, and I shall, therefore, add nothing farther on the Subject.

When you have well digested these Volumes, I have another for your Perusal, which, to a Person of your speculative Turn of Mind, cannot but be extremely agreeable. It is wrote by the same Author, and entitled, *The State of Departed Souls*: — You will there see the true Meaning of the Word *Hades*, or what we call Hell, with many other curious Explanations concerning Eternity. — These are Things too abstruse for every Capacity, but I know yours, that you have read *Origen*, and are in no Danger of falling into those Errors, which mislead the Vulgar.

I long to see you, that I may talk freely on these Matters; and flatter myself, that my tell-

ing you so will hasten your Return to *London*: Farewel, my dear *Urania*; may we long enjoy the Society of each other on Earth, and meet hereafter, in Doctor *Burnet*'s *Millennium*; till when, I am,

With the greatest Sincerity,

Madam,

Your most Humble,

And most Devoted Servant,

MIRA.

EPISTLE CXVIII.

From Mira *to* Semanthe, *on that Lady having seemed to accuse herself of Weakness, for having been terrified with the late Shock of an Earthquake.*

Dear Semanthe.

TO contend with Heaven, to brave the Bolts of Offended Justice, and bid Defiance to Divine Wrath, is a false Piece of Heroism: — Had I heard you had unmoved bore so terrible a Shock, I should have bewailed your Insensibility,

lity, not applauded your Courage:—For my own Part, I am far from being ashamed to confess, that I no sooner felt the tremendous Totter of every Thing about me, than I fell prostrate on that Earth, which I knew not but would immediately open and swallow me alive: I cried for Protection to the Almighty Being of Beings who alone could give it me: — That great Supreme! in whose Hands are all the Corners of the Universe, who, when he pleases, can crush the Worlds he has made, and all within them, into their Original *Chaos*.

You have sometimes been pleased to ask my Advice, and have flattered me with acquiescing to my Opinion in every Thing; — do it then in this, my dear *Semanthe*, and cease to make any Attempts to repel that reverential Awe, which true Piety inspires, for every Thing that seems sent by Heaven to warn us of our Transgressions. What though the Poet says,

The truly Innocent stand safe amidst
The Crack of Nature, and the Crush of Worlds;

Who is it that can boast so perfect a Virtue as never to have done any Thing which might demand Divine Vengeance? — The very thinking so would be a Crime, which would require all Heaven's Mercy to forgive. — I hope there are none guilty of so impious a Presumption.

But there are others, who though they assign a far less guilty Pretence for their Insensibility of Fear, in this, and other such like dreadful Events, I cannot but look upon highly to be blamed: — I mean those, who ascribing every Thing that happens, to natural Causes, will not allow there are any Indications of the Wrath of an offended Deity, except that which every Man feels in his own Bosom, in a Consciousness of having done a bad Action.

Among other Causes which I have heard assigned for the late Earthquake, by those who call themselves the Rationalists, one is, that the Planet *Jupiter*, in his Passage through the *Zodiac*, came so near the Earth, that the Percussion of his Atmosphere occasioned the Shock which so much alarmed us. — Whether there be any Thing in this Position, I am not Astronomer enough to take upon me to decide; but I should think, had it been so, the Trembling would have been more general than it seems by the Accounts we have of it.

But be that as it may, can any one, but an Atheist, deny, that *Jupiter*, and every other Star, all that is in the Heavens above, and in the Earth beneath, are under Direction of an over-ruling Providence? Is not all Nature actuated by the God of Nature? — Who then but must tremble

at

at the Irregularity in thoſe Things which were created in the moſt perfect Order.

Yes, *Semanthe*, Heaven, like a tender Parent, menaces before it gives the Blow: — It is in us alone to avert impending Vengeance, by a timely Penitence and Submiſſion. — I am ſorry to hear ſo many People, for ſome of whom I have a great Regard, and a good Will for all, were at the Play and Maſquerade on a Night ſucceeding that Day of Terror: — Thoſe who had a true Senſe of it would certainly have employed their Time in a very different Manner.

I am,

With the moſt perfect Amity,

Yours, *&c.*

Mira.

EPISTLE CXIX.

From Sophronia, *to a Gentleman, who was going to marry his Daughter to a Man of the most dissolute Behaviour, debauched Principle, and Ill-nature, only because he had promised her to him, before he was well acquainted with his Character.*

IT was with an Astonishment equal to the Concern I feel in every Thing relating to your Family, that I heard, in spite of all the Vices *Lisario* is known to be guilty of, you are determined to give your Daughter to him: — He has your Promise it is certain, but then you made that Promise when he maintained a Character to justify your Choice: — You knew not then, nor did the World imagine, he would return from his Travels the abandoned Wretch he is: — Must then the young, the fair, the innocent *Violetta*, fall the Victim of a too nice Point of Honour in him who has the Disposal of her! — Must she be condemned to lasting Misery, by the very Person, who is bound by all the Laws of Heaven and Nature, to do every Thing in his Power to protect her from it! — Must she be the Prey of Vice and Folly, only because it should not he said,

you

you broke your Word! — Is this to be a Father? Is it not rather the Effect of Tyranny, than paternal Affection? Pardon, Sir, the Freedom which our long Friendſhip emboldens me to take, and believe I *ſpeak* no more than what all *think*, who know what you are about to do, and which if you carry into Completion, cannot but draw on you that very Cenſure you ſeem ſo fearful of incurring.

To be ſtrictly tenacious of one's Word, is certainly a moſt Praiſe-worthy Quality, yet the *Caſuiſts* will tell you, the Extreme of any *Virtue* borders on a *Vice:* — Many Inſtances might be produced to prove, there may be Promiſes, which it is leſs a Fault to break than to keep; and ſure, if any are to be diſpenſed with, yours made to *Liſario* is ſo.

Of two Evils, they ſay, we ought to chuſe the leaſt; and if you ſhould think it a greater, to chuſe to retract a Promiſe made to one, who is no longer the ſame Man he was at the Time of your making it, than to ſacrifice a moſt deſerving Child to certain Wretchedneſs, I am afraid it will be eſteemed rather a ſullen Obſtinacy than real Honour in you.

The more the charming Maid reſigns herſelf to your *Will*, the more careful you ſhould be to *will* nothing that did not afford a Probability of turning to her Advantage: Enjoin her not,

therefore, I conjure you, Sir, to an Action, which muſt not only be the entire Deſtruction of her Peace, but may alſo drive her to a Deſpair fatal to her Morals, and make her curſe the Obedience by which ſhe is undone.

I MIGHT enumerate the many Miſchiefs which attend a Union between Perſons ſo oppoſite in their Principles and Humours as *Violetta*, and *Liſario*, but your own good Senſe and Obſervation render it needleſs:—I only beg you will ſeriouſly reflect upon the Conſequences which may enſue, before you tie that irrevocable Knot, which Death, or ſomewhat worſe than Death, only can diſſolve. —I am,

With an unfeigned Regard,

Sir,

Your moſt humble

And obedient Servant

SOPHRONIA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXX.

From Aſtrea *to* Euphroſine, *with the Sequel of the Story of* Philander *and* Altezeera.

My dear Euphroſine,

I NOW write to you with double Satisfaction, having it in my Power, at laſt, to preſent you with the Sequel of an Adventure, which I know your Good-nature too well, not to know you muſt be very much intereſted in, though not yet perſonally acquainted with any of thoſe concerned in it.

I HAD but juſt finiſhed my laſt Letter to you, and two or three other Diſpatches I was obliged to ſend to *London*, when *Philander* came into my Chamber, and with a Tranſport of Joy told me, that his dear *Altezeera* was ſo much better, that ſhe believed herſelf able to give an Account of the Accident that had befallen her, but would not do it till I was preſent: This ſo overjoyed me, that I did not ſtay to congratulate him on the Occaſion, but ran haſtily into the Room where ſhe was; he followed with an equal Degree of Speed, and we were no ſooner ſeated by her Bedſide, than ſhe began with a Voice more audible

dible than I could have imagined, to addreſs herſelf to us in the following Terms:

'It has been no ſmall Addition to the Pains 'I have felt, that you, Madam, and my dear '*Philander*, ſhould ſo long be kept in Ignorance 'concerning the Manner by which I was reduced 'to the Condition I was found in, and relieved 'by the generous Pity of your Self, and your 'noble Brother.

'The Beginning of my Hiſtory I know *Phi-* '*lander* has already made you acquainted with; 'it only remains for me to tell you, that the 'Night before that appointed for my Eſcape, 'juſt as I was going into Bed, I heard the ac- 'cuſtomed Signal under my Window: — I was 'very much ſurprized, but looking out, found 'it was indeed *Philander*'s Servant; on which I 'haſtily let down the String, ſuppoſing he had 'brought a Letter: — *Madam*, ſaid he, *my* '*Maſter had no Time to write, an Accident has* '*happened that requires your immediate Removal*; '— *no Time is to be loſt*; — *make Haſte therefore* '*to deſcend*; — *he has prepared a Chariot, in* '*which he waits for you at a convenient Diſtance.* 'I had no Suſpicion of the Truth of what he 'ſaid, but ran back to fetch the Ladder of 'Ropes he had before conveyed to me: — While 'I was fixing it, *Have you got your Jewels, Ma-* '*dam*, cried he; *I have none here*, anſwered I: —

'*That*

'*That is unlucky*, replied he, *but no Matter*. By 'this Time I was got down; — he was on 'Horſeback, — he took me up before him, and 'we rode, I believe, near a Mile, without ſpeak-'ing a Word, till coming to the great Road, I 'aſked him where *Philander* was, — a *little far-'ther off*, anſwered he, and with theſe Words 'clapped Spurs to his Horſe, which galloped 'with us at ſuch a furious Rate, that I had no 'Breath to ſpeak.

'I thought we were now far enough from 'the Place where I had been confined, and be-'gan to wonder I did not ſee *Philander* : — Our 'Pace being a little ſlackened, I aſked where 'he was, and added, I hoped he had not miſ-'taken the Road where the Chariot was to meet 'us: — *No, no*, replied this Monſter, *you are 'more near your Lover than you imagine*.

'I WAS that Inſtant, continued ſhe, ſeized with 'a Terror, which I could not then account for, 'nor am able to deſcribe: — I threw my Eyes 'round in Search of what I ſo much wiſhed 'to ſee, but though I could diſcern to a great 'Diſtance, the Moon ſhining very bright, no-'thing preſented itſelf to me but a dreary Waſte, 'over which we paſſed, and came to the En-'trance of a Wood: — Here it was the Vil-'lain ſtopped, and ſtill holding me in his 'Arms, diſmounted : — He made me ſit down

'on

'on a Kind of Bank, while he tied his Horse by 'the Bridle to a Tree; *Now*, said he, *you will 'immediately be in Possession of the most faithful 'and passionate of all Lovers.* — O where is he? 'cried I, endeavouring to penetrate into the 'Thickness of the Wood; *Why comes he not to 'ease my trembling Heart?* — *Here, here he is,* 'replied that most execrable of all Traitors, and 'at the same Time throwing himself down by 'me, *behold in me your faithful Adorer*; — Phi-'lander *loves you not,* — *he has resigned his Title 'to you, and you are mine by his Gift, and I hope 'will be so by your own free Will, when you shall 'be convinced how much I adore you.*

'The Astonishment and Terror I was in at 'the Beginning of this infamous Declaration, 'left me not the Power of interrupting it, till he 'attempting to close it with a Kiss: — Rage got 'the better of the more timid Passions, and giv-'ing him a Blow with all my Force upon the Face, '*Most impudent of all Villains*, cried I, *what Devil 'has prompted thee to this Behaviour? Your 'Beauty*, answered he, *and the Commands of him 'that was once my Master:* — *Thou liest*, said I, 'half choaked with Indignation, and endea-'vouring to rise, but alas! all the Strength I 'could muster up, was feeble, when opposed to 'his: — He had me fast within his Grasp, and 'compelled me to sit still and hear the odious 'Arguments he had prepared to work me to his

'Will:

'Will: — He told me, that ſenſible of the many 'Inconveniences that attend Marriage without 'the Conſent of Friends, and beſides having the 'Offer of a more ſuitable Match, that *Philander* 'had reſolved to quit me; — on which he ſaid 'he had acquainted you with the Secret Paſſion 'he had for me; — that you adviſed him to 'purſue it; and directed him in the Means he 'he now had taken as the moſt likely for accom-'pliſhing his Purpoſe.

'THINK not, my generous Benefactreſs, 'nor you, my dear *Philander*, (ſhe went on) that 'I believed one Syllable of what this Wretch 'had uttered, but the different Paſſions of Fear 'and Anger warring in my Breaſt, prevented 'me for ſome Time from ſaying any Thing in 'Contradiction to his Falſhoods: — He added, 'that though reduced to be a Servant, through 'the ill Management of his Parents, he was de-'ſcended of a good Family, had a little Know-'ledge of Commerce, and as I had a Fortune 'independant of my Father, he would carry me 'to *Holland*, and lay it out in ſuch Merchandize, 'as he ſhould find would turn to the beſt 'Account; ſo that, ſaid he, throwing his hateful 'Arms about my Neck, *I doubt not but by my In-'duſtry, you may be one Day no leſs rich, and in-'finitely more happy, than you could have been, in 'being the Wife of* Philander.

'HAD

'Had I been Miſtreſs of the leaſt Preſence 'of Mind, I ſhould certainly have flattered the 'Villain's Hopes, have ſeemed to give Credit to 'his Allegations, made a Shew of Conſent to his 'Deſires, and ſuffered him to conduct me on the 'Journey he mentioned, till we had arrived at 'ſome Place where I might ſafely have diſcovered 'my Diſdain, proclaimed his Treachery, and ap-'plied for the Protection of Juſtice: — Believing 'himſelf ſecure of me, he then would, perhaps, 'have treated me with Reſpect, and I had 'eſcaped the Inſults he ſoon after had the Inſo-'lence, and the Cruelty to offer: — But in that 'dreadful Juncture, my Senſes were all confuſed, 'and loſt: — I had no Reflection, — no Con-'trivance,—no Thought, but to find proper 'Words wherewith to expreſs my Abhorrence 'of his Perſon, and Attempt. — This ſo irri-'tated him, that he plainly told me, if I would 'not be his in the honourable Way he had pro-'poſed, I ſhould be ſo by one which ſhould 'make me hereafter repent my Pride and Folly; 'that he had not proceeded ſo far without a Re-'ſolution to ſtop at nothing; and that he was 'not of a Humour to be checked by the vain 'Threats of a weak ſilly Woman.

'These Words were followed by Actions, 'which left me no Room to doubt the horrid 'Intention of his Soul; my Modeſty, alas! ſuf-

'fered

'fered but too many Indignities, and it was 'Heaven alone that ſure enabled me to repel the 'laſt of Violations ;—all my Stock of Strength, 'however, was near exhauſted, and I was very 'near being rendered the moſt wretched of my 'Sex, when I was relieved by the moſt unex-'pected, and, indeed, unhoped-for Means.

'Just as I was on the Brink of Ruin, the 'ſudden trampling of Horſes at ſome Diſtance 'made the Villain ſtart, and pauſe in the Exe-'cution of his Purpoſe:—This Interruption 'alſo gave me Time and Breath to ſend forth a 'loud Shout, in Hopes of drawing thoſe Perſons, 'whoever they were, to my Reſcue:—He ſtill 'kept liſtening, but ſtopped my Mouth with his 'Hand ſo cloſe, that I could make little or no 'Sound ;—I uſed my utmoſt Efforts, however, 'for that Purpoſe, which he perceiving, and at 'the ſame time, imagining the Perſons he heard 'were coming that Way, perhaps alſo that they 'were in Purſuit of himſelf, to prevent being 'taken, and in Revenge for his Diſappointment, 'he drew his Hanger, and gave me two Wounds, 'holding the other Hand ſtill over my Mouth; 'after which he ſet his Foot upon my Breaſt, 'doubtleſs to diſpatch me with the more Speed, 'then mounted his Horſe, and rode away with 'an incredible Swiftneſs.

'My intended Raviſher being gone, as I 'might

'might well be assured, by his last Usage of me, 'with no Thoughts of returning, I made no 'Efforts to call the Strangers, whom I still heard, 'to my Assistance, not doubting by the Pains I 'felt, but I had received my Death's Wound, and 'also not being sure but I might fall into as bad 'Hands as his I had just escaped.—I therefore 'lay quite still till they were past, which they did 'without taking any Notice of me; — they were 'three in Number, and seemed earnest in Dis-'course; but on what Subject, or what Business 'bent, my Agonies prevented me from dis-'covering: — You may suppose, indeed, I had 'little Curiosity that Way.

'I WILL not trouble you with any Description 'of the Agonies with which my Mind accom-'panied those of my Body; — you may judge in 'the dying Condition I then thought myself, 'they must be as terrible as Human Nature could 'sustain, but I cannot forbear saying, that the Ap-'prehensions I had, that the wicked Wretch had 'murdered his Master, was not the least tor-'menting.

'MY Wounds bled very fast, and can impute 'my not fainting quite away, only to the ex-'cessive Pain I felt from the Hurt in my Breast, 'the Monster having set his Foot just in the 'Place where a little Picture of *Philander*'s was 'concealed within my Stays.

DAY

'DAY at laſt broke; the Weather was ex-
'tremely ſultry, which, joined to the great Loſs
'of Blood I had ſuſtained, got the better of my
'Anguiſh, and I fell into a kind of Swoon:
'How long I lay in that Condition, I know not,
'but the firſt Objects that preſented themſelves
'to my returning Senſes, were you, good Madam,
'and your noble Brother, or rather I ſhould call
'you the Guardian Angels of my Life, my Ho-
'nour, my Peace, my Happineſs, my all that
'is dear.'

HERE *Altezeera* ended the Narrative we had ſo long and ſo impatiently wiſhed to hear, which I would not detain your Attention from, by any Repetition of the many Interruptions, which the violent Emotions *Philander* was in at ſome Parts of it, forced him to give, during the Recital.

ALTEZEERA herſelf was ſo much fatigued with holding ſo long a Diſcourſe, and alſo with the various Agitations which the Remembrance of what had paſſed raiſed in her, that even *Philander* himſelf, loth as he was to leave her Preſence, judged it neceſſary we ſhould retire, in order that ſhe might take ſome Repoſe.

WE went down Stairs into the Parlour, where we found my Brother juſt come in: — He ſeemed

more penſive than ordinary, but before we had Time to aſk him the Cauſe of it, he ſurprized us with a Piece of Intelligence we little expected.

He told us, that having been at * * * Town, which you know is but ſix Miles off this Houſe, he had been informed, that an old Gentleman, accompanied by three others, and attended by ſeveral Servants, were all lodged at an Inn, and were coming the next Morning to him, to apply for an Authority to ſearch the County for a young Lady, who had for ſome Time been miſſing, and they imagined was concealed in ſome Houſe or other in theſe Parts.

BY the Deſcription, ſaid my Brother, *this can be no other than the Father of* Altezeera; *and if ſo, it would be mean and baſe in me to grant Authority for the troubling other People's Houſes with a fruitleſs Search of a Perſon, whom I all the Time kept ſecreted in my own: — Beſides*, added he, *I could not anſwer to myſelf the impoſing on a Gentleman of his Character and Figure in the World.*

PHILANDER turned pale at hearing my Brother ſpeak in this Manner, fearing he intended to give up *Altezeera* to her Father, and they ſhould again be ſeparated: — Indeed I was a little ſurprized myſelf, conſidering the Sweetneſs of his Temper, and the Friendſhip which ſhe had

had conceived for *Philander* in this ſhort Time of their Acquaintance.

But he ſoon eaſed the Suſpence we both were in, by continuing his Diſcourſe in this Manner: *I ſee no Way*, ſaid he, *either honourable for myſelf, or that can ſecure the Poſſeſſion of* Altezeera *to* Philander, *but by an immediate Marriage;— to which if they both agree, I will have the Pleaſure of giving her Hand to him, whom I am convinced deſerves it, and my own Chaplain ſhall perform the ſacred Ceremony.— A Husband's Power abrogates that of a Father, and he will not attempt any Thing to diſannul what the Church has confirmed.*

Never did I behold any Tranſport come up to that, which *Philander* expreſſed on this Occaſion;— he threw himſelf upon my Brother's Neck,— called him his Patron,— his Preſerver, and gave him all the tender Epithets, that Gratitude could invent:— The firſt Raptures of his Satisfaction being over, he began to expreſs ſome Fears, that *Altezeera* would not, in her preſent weak Condition, be prevailed upon to agree to this Propoſal; but this I undertook to bring about, on which we all retired to our reſpective Chambers, having reſolved that very early in the Morning the Nuptials ſhould be ſolemnized: Before I went to Bed, I ordered the Woman,

who attended *Altezeera*, to call me on her first waking, let the Hour be what it would.

Accordingly, about four o' Clock in the Morning, the Woman came to my Bedside, and told me, that the Lady, after a very refreshing Sleep, was now awake, and had called for something to drink; on which I rose, got on my Clothes with all the Speed I could, and went into her Chamber: — She seemed very much amazed at seeing me at such an Hour, but I soon told her what my Errand was, and found no Difficulty to persuade her to take the Step my Brother had proposed.

This done, I sent to rouse my Brother, *Philander*, the Chaplain, and the House-keeper and Butler, thinking it necessary they should be Witnesses to the Marriage.

PHILANDER, I suppose, had not slept since I last saw him, for I had no sooner sent the Summons than he entered the Room; — my Brother and the rest came in a short Time, and the Chaplain being told what he was to do, performed, between *Philander* and *Altezeera*, those mystic Rites, which make two People inseparably One.

This, however, with the Thoughts of her Father's near Approach, and the Upbraidings she

ſhe expected from the firſt Fury of his Reſentment, made *Altezeera* ſomewhat diſordered, and it was as much as all of us could do to inſpire her with Courage to face the Storm.

It was not more than ſeven, when my Brother was told ſome Gentlemen below deſired to ſpeak with him on an extraordinary Affair: This Intelligence almoſt threw *Altezeera* into her cold Fit again, but I left *Philander* to comfort her, and went down into a little Room adjacent to that my Brother always received Company in on theſe Occaſions, and where I could diſtinctly hear all that paſſed ;— I ſoon found it was indeed the Father, the Brother, and two other Relations of *Altezeera*'s, who were there: — They were beginning to addreſs him in the uſual Form for what they wanted, but he preſently told them, that they might ſpare themſelves the Trouble of any farther Search, for the Lady they were in queſt of, was at that Time a Gueſt with her Huſband in his Houſe :— The Father flew into the extremeſt Rage at the Word Huſband ;—*What, is ſhe married?* cried he, knocking his Cane againſt the Floor with Vehemence ; *the audacious Huſſey! 'tis to* Philander, *then, I ſuppoſe!* — my Brother anſwered in the Affirmative, and was beginning to ſay ſome handſome Things in Behalf of that Gentleman, and the Choice ſhe had made of him ; but the unreaſonably incenſed Father would liſten to nothing

on that Score, nor be prevailed upon even to ſee *Altezeera*, or *Philander*; — he ſwore ſhe never ſhould have a Shilling from him, and that inſtead of a Bleſſing, he would load her with his eternal Curſes. — No Arguments my Brother could make uſe of, had the power to bring him to more Moderation: — He even forgot good Manners, and run out of the Houſe without paying thoſe Reſpects which my Brother's Quality demanded: — The other Kindred, who came with him, were more polite; — the Brother of *Altezeera*, ſo often mentioned in my former Letters on this Subject, ſtayed a little behind the others, and in as brief Terms as he could, begged Pardon for his Father's abrupt Behaviour; — thanked him for the Favours he found had been conferred by him on his Siſter and *Philander*, — entreated he would commend him to them, and let them know, he would neglect nothing that might mitigate their Father's Indignation.

Poor *Altezeera* was very much affected on hearing this Detail, though we concealed from her the worſt Part of what her cruel Father had ſaid: — She received, however, ſome Conſolation in a few Hours; — the generous *Ormuſio* took an Opportunity of ſending a Letter to her from the Inn, before they ſet out on their Return for *London*; he repeated in it what he had ſaid to my Brother, and added, that he was very confident

fident his Interceſſion, with that of other Friends, would ſoon bring about a Reconciliation.

I HAVE nothing now farther to acquaint you with, my dear *Euphroſine*, than that as ſoon as *Altezeera* has perfectly recovered her Health, we ſhall all come to *London* together, and you will then ſee a Pair of Lovers, who have ſuffered enough for each other, to bring Conſtancy into Faſhion again: — Farewell, — I have wrote you a Book inſtead of a Letter, and have no Time to add any Thing concerning myſelf, but that I am,

Dear Creature,

Sincerely yours,

ASTREA.

EPISTLE CXXI.

From Mira *to* Urania, *on the ſecond terrible Shock of an Earthquake, felt on the* 8th *of* March.

AGAIN, my dear *Urania*, has all-gracious Heaven vouchſafed to warn a ſinful World of what it ought to expect: — Again has the Almighty Being, like a tender Parent, ſhook the Rod before the Blow is given, which, when it once deſcends, Repentance is no more; as I remember to have ſomewhere read,

The Years of our Probation paſt,
All future Prayers and Penitence are vain.
By the irrevocable Fiat doom'd
To never-ending Bliſs or Woe,
Both Hopes and Fears in Certainty are loſt.

We can die but once, indeed, and if well prepared, ought not to be too anxious in what Manner we make our Exit hence: — But the Pleaſures and Temptations of this World are too alluring, alas! for the Generality of People, wholly to reſiſt: — How many, perhaps, full of the Memory of the enchanting Entertaintments of the preceeding Evening, forgot to recommend

mend themſelves to the Divine Protection, before they yielded to that Image of Death, Sleep? How many were kept from paying their Duty to the Deity, by the Thoughts in what Manner they ſhould paſs the next Day, what Viſits they had to pay, and what new Diverſion ſhould attend their Preſence? — How many were guilty of this Omiſſion, through the anxious Cares which Penury excites? — Much are theſe laſt to be pitied, though not excuſed; but, O *Urania*, what ſhall we ſay, what can we think, of thoſe, who, even in the Inſtant of that dreadful Shock, were by it interrupted in planning wicked Schemes of Oppreſſion, who were that Moment plotting Deſigns pernicious to Society.

The ſly Projector, who deſigns to build
His Fortune on his Neighbour's, or, perchance,
His Country's Ruin, — 'tis alike to him
If Individual, or whole Nations ſink,
Wakes with the Dawn, nor taſtes a Morning's Slumber.

Others, leſs hurtful to Mankind, but unjuſt and cruel to themſelves, lay drowned in Luſt and Wine, and fatigued with the laſt Night's Debauch, were rock'd in ſo profound a Sleep, as not to be awaked by the tremendous Shock. — A Shock, which, had not Infinite Mercy interpoſed, might have diſſolved the whole Fabric of this Air-ſuſpended Globe, and buried all within

within it, in the Ruins. — But what ſhall I ſay to the bold impious Man, who would rob the Almighty of one of his Attributes, nor till he feels his Vengeance, will be convinced he takes any Cognizance of what is done below; ſuch I tremble for indeed!

But this Accident, as I before obſerved, in its moſt dreadful Effects, could but have anticipated our Fate, and done no more than what Nature, ſome Time or other, would have done without it, — or than a thouſand other Caſualties, of a leſs fearful Kind, might poſſibly have brought about: — Yet ought we always to remember, that ſlow or ſudden Death is equal only in regard to the mortal Part of us, and not affect too much Heroiſm in this Point. — When national Tranſgreſſions have called down national Chaſtiſements, forced long-neglected *Mercy*, from her Seat, and all is left to *Juſtice*, at that Tribunal who dare expect to be acquitted!

Prayers and Humiliations can alone avert the menac'd Stroke, and thoſe I hope will not be omitted. — I am, with a Confuſion of Mind, too great for Words to deſcribe,

My dear *Urania*,

Yours, *&c.*

Mira.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXXII.

From Stella *in* London, *to her Sister in* Paris, *returning her Thanks for the Present she had received from her, and acquainting her with the Use she had made of it.*

My dear Sister,

THIS brings you my most grateful Acknowledgments for the fine Head, Ruffles, and Tippet, you were so kind to send me by the Hands of ****. — Never had I seen any Thing so curious, and beautiful, as the Work; and that which added to my Admiration of it was, that he assured me it was wrought by the Hands of a Recluse, of the Order of St. *Augustine*, and sold for the Relief of the Poor. All who saw have been charmed with it, and you may be sure, I shewed it to as many as came near me. — I could not help trying the Head, the Ruffles, and Tippet, the very next Day after they were in my Possession, to see how they became me; and thought they very much contributed to heighten the few Graces Nature had bestowed upon me. — By what I have said, I doubt not, but you will think I could not rest in this new Equipage at all the public Places in Town. — Were I the same gay, vain Thing, I

was

was when you left *London*, this Conjecture would have been just; but, my dear Sister, I am now, thank Heaven, another Creature, and you must not take it ill of me when I tell you, I wore them but for a Moment, and have put it out of my Power to make any Use of them a second Time. – I asked the Value of them, of those who are judged the best Connoisseurs in *French Point*, and they assured me, that they could not cost less than an hundred Livres, where they were bought; but were here worth double that Sum.

On considering seriously of this Matter, I found it inconsistent with the Duties owing from me to my Fellow Creatures, to feed a senseless Pride in myself, with what would afford Ease to the Hardships so many of them laboured under. — *This curious Lace*, said I to myself, *a Pin, or twenty Accidents, may tear. — It may be mildewed, or spoiled in washing; or, if none of these happen, the very Fineness of the Thread will render it of short Duration. — Linnen of a far less Price, will as well answer the End of Apparel, keep me more warm, look as decent, though less attract the Admiration, and perhaps the Envy, of the Beholders.*

In fine, I disposed of it for a Hundred and Twenty Pounds, to Lady *Fanny:* — Both of us thought ourselves happy by having made this Bargain. — She went to Court, and plumed herself

herſelf in being the fineſt Lady there : — I to the Priſons, where I had the Satisfaction of releaſing ſix Captives for ſmall Debts, who might elſe have periſhed there. — This took not up more than half the Sum, ſo the remaining Part I diſtributed among People whoſe Wants were known to me.

The Prayers and Bleſſings of thoſe I have relieved, are greater, and more laſting Ornaments, than any that Art or Fancy can ſupply me with; and I doubly thank you, my dear Siſter, for affording me the Means of doing what my niggard Fortune would otherwiſe have denied me.

Thus you ſee, the Effects of the pious Nun's Handiwork have extended themſelves much farther than ſhe could have expected, by relieving the Poor in *London*, as well as thoſe in *Paris*, at which, I dare anſwer, ſhe would not be offended, did the Knowledge of it reach her ; nor will you, I flatter myſelf, judge with leſs Candour of the Uſe I have made of your very obliging Preſent. — To convince me, however, that you will do ſo, I beg you will ſend me a Lock of your Hair, as alſo one of that moſt worthy Perſon, who, you inform me, is now my Brother ; but I deſire to have it as it comes off your Heads, — not ſet, nor ornamented. I know a poor, but ingenious Jeweller, whom it is a Kind of Charity to employ. — I ſhall make it into a Locket for my Breaſt, where I ſhall always

always wear it, to ſhew how dear you are, and ever will be, to

Your affectionate Siſter,

STELLA.

EPISTLE CXXIII.

From Euſebia *to* Sophronia, *giving her the Account of the Death of* Clotilda.

My dear Friend,

I Come now from being a Witneſs of the moſt ſolemn, and intereſting Scene, that Nature can preſent. — I mean that of Death: — The Death of the once gay, and ſprightly *Clotilda*: — A Woman, who could not be called vicious, nor yet wholly virtuous. — The Extremes of good and ill were ſo mingled in her Conſtitution, that the one was for the moſt Part hindered from exerting itſelf, and the other moderated by its oppoſite; — ſo that it might be ſaid, that in the general her Life was an inſipid Blank. — Reaſon ſeemed beſtowed on her for no other Purpoſe, than to enable her to talk, and write well; it never had any Sway over her Actions: — They were influenced by meer Propenſity, and according as the praiſe-worthy, or blameable Paſſions were predominant, was her Conduct and Behaviour: — Pleaſed or angry, — me-

melancholly or chearful, without a Cauſe: — Her Civilities, — her Diſdain, — her Love, — her Hate,—were all the Effect of Caprice, and never of long Continuance; ſo that her Friendſhip was little to be valued, or her Enmity feared. — Unhappy Woman! whatever *Good* ſhe did loſt all its Merit, becauſe not directed by Judgment; and the *Ill* was cenſured with the more Severity, even on that very Score, which ought rather to have excuſed it: — So quick-ſighted are the Generality of People to the Faults of others! — As the Poet truly ſays,

All ſee my Spots, but few my Brightneſs take.

CLOTILDA, it is certain, might have been a ſhining Ornament to her Sex, had ſhe made a proper Uſe of thoſe Talents ſhe received from Nature; had ſhe more early examined into herſelf, and remembered, that where much was given, much would be expected, ſhe would, doubtleſs, have avoided all thoſe Miſtakes, which ſome have ſo ſeverely cenſured: — Had ſhe cheriſhed thoſe divine Emanations, which by Starts inſpired her Mind, ſhe might have never once wandered from thoſe Paths which lead to Virtue, Fame, and everlaſting Happineſs. — But, alas! the Power of Reflection came to her too late, to retrieve her Reputation in this World, tho', I hope, not for her Remiſſion in the next.

In her laſt Sickneſs, ſhe deſired I would be with her as often as I could, — I was ſo, and tho'

tho' I was ſorry to find her Diſtemper increaſed every Day, ſo as to have her Life deſpaired of, yet I rejoiced to find her nobler Part, her Soul, in a more healthy Diſpoſition than it had ever been. — She joined with me in Prayers, and the moſt grateful Praiſes, to the Divine Being, for giving her this Warning of her approaching Fate; — confeſſed to me, with Tears of mingled Shame and Grief, many Errors, which, 'till then, I was ignorant ſhe had been guilty of; but ever and anon cried out, *I hate,—I deſpiſe myſelf for my paſt Follies: Yet, O my dear* Euſebia! *How can I be certain, that were I to recover from this Sickneſs, I ſhould not act them over again? — I know not my own Heart, nor how far my preſent Reſolution might be depended upon: — I think myſelf a ſincere Penitent; — but what! — O what, if I am deceived, will then become of me?*

Perceiving ſhe was ready to fall into Deſpair, I comforted her the beſt I was able, and had the Satisfaction to find her, at length, perfectly compoſed, and truſting to Divine Mercy. — She expired in my Arms, and her laſt Breath iſſued with a kind of Angelic Smile. — Farewel, dear *Sophronia*, my Tears will permit me to add no more, than that I am, ſincerely,

Yours, *&c.*

Euſebia.

End of the Tenth Book.

EPISTLES

FOR THE

LADIES.

BOOK XI.

EPISTLE CXXIV.

From Mira *to* Aurelia, *concerning the Manner in which ſhe educates her Daughter, and blaming her for laying ſomewhat of a too great Re-ſtraint upon her.*

My dear Aurelia,

FLATTER myſelf you are too well convinced of the Sincerity of my Friendſhip, to imagine what I am about to ſay is dictated by any Ill-nature, or a Deſire of finding ſomewhat to condemn in the Conduct of thoſe for whom I profeſs a Regard; I ſhall therefore make no Apology for telling you, that tho' in moſt Things you come as near

Perfection as Woman can do, yet in *one* you are guilty of an Error, which may open a Door to let in that very Misfortune you are moſt careful to avoid — I know you to be kind and indulgent to thoſe over whom you have Command; — faithful to thoſe you call your Friends; — a tender, affectionate Wife, and make it your Study to be the beſt of Mothers. — But, alaſs! it is in this laſt Article you fail: — You ſtart, perhaps, at an Accuſation which may ſeem to you ſo unjuſt. — You will reply, that you have nothing to do with the Education of your Son, and that you have early inſtructed your Daughter in the Principles of Virtue and Religion; — that you have given her all the Accompliſhments becoming her Sex and Rank, and have omitted nothing in your Power for forming her Mind, ſo as to know how to behave well through every Stage of Life: — All this I grant; — and, moreover, that you keep a moſt vigilant Eye over all her Words and Behaviour, ſo as to prevent her from having any Knowledge of, or Acquaintance with, the modiſh Fopperies of the preſent Age; and above all, that nothing which has the leaſt Tendency to Flattery ſhall ever reach her Ears; and here it is, I think you are in the wrong; not that I would encourage any thing that might raiſe the Seeds of Vanity, that Bane to Virtue, in a Female Heart; and were you certain of having it always in your Power to defend that of *Corinna* from it, ſhe would be bleſt indeed, and the

Caution

Caution you uſe in this Point, could never be too much extolled. — But, my dear *Aurelia*, conſider with yourſelf, how almoſt impoſſible this is ; — that, in ſpite of all your Care, ſome Accident may happen to lay her open to the Snares which are always ſpread for Innocence: Some gay and ſelf-ſufficient Coxcomb may find an Opportunity of addreſſing her with all the Rhetoric of pretended Paſſion ; and ſuch Diſcourſes being new to her, how can ſhe be prepared to anſwer as ſhe ought ! — Believe me, when a young Girl, who has never been treated otherwiſe than as ſhe really is made by Nature, finds herſelf all at once erected into a Goddeſs, ſhe is too apt, if not to imagine herſelf ſuch, to think her Worſhipper does ſo : Whereas thoſe more accuſtomed to be entertained with ſuch Fooleries, treat them with the Contempt they merit, and think no more of them when paſt. — For this Reaſon, I cannot approve of a Boarding-School Education for Girls of Condition ; — a Convent is much better, provided they avoid the Superſtitions of the Place ; becauſe they are uſed to Gallantry at the Grate, from young Gentlemen who take Pleaſure in entertaining the Nuns, and are no Strangers to the World when they come into it. — In a word, too much Reſtraint is as dangerous as too much Liberty.—Let, therefore, the young *Corinna* ſee ſomething of the Humours of the Town : — I am confident, the more ſhe is acquainted with what you ſo carefully hide from her, the more her good Senſe, and the

excellent Rudiments you have given her, will teach her to despise it. — I have much to add on this Subject, but Company prevents me, and I must defer what I have farther to say till another Opportunity; and, in the mean time, am,

Dear *Aurelia*,

Yours, *&c.*

Mira.

EPISTLE CXXV.

From Euphrosine *to* Mira, *with some Verses that Lady had desired her to procure a Copy of.*

Dear Madam,

As every Request you vouchsafe to make, ought to have all the Force of a Command, especially with me, I have never ceased teazing *Ardella* to permit me to transcribe those Verses you have expressed a Desire of seeing, and have at last obtained her Leave, tho' they are closed with what she thinks so high a Compliment to herself, that I could perceive her Modesty suffered a good deal in granting what I asked.—You have here enclosed a faithful Copy, and I rejoice in this,

this, as I ſhall do in every Opportunity of teſtifying, that nothing can afford me ſo much Pride and Pleaſure, as the means of retaliating, tho' it be only in Trifles, ſome of the great and unnumbered Obligations your partial Friendſhip has conferred upon me. — I have the Honour to be,

With the moſt ſincere Gratitude, and profound Reſpect,

Madam,

Your Ladyſhip's

Moſt Devoted,

And moſt faithful Servant,

EUPHROSINE.

A POEM, *incloſed in the foregoing.*

THE

VISION.

Inſcribed to the incomparable *Ardella.*

STretch'd on the graſſy Margin of a Brook,
Whoſe murm'ring Fellowſhip my Mind partook,
Actively idle, I repining lay,
Gaz'd on the Flood, and ſigh'd the Stream away.

Who knows, I cry'd, what Course thou haſt to paſs,
Sweet Stream! that now creep'ſt ſoftly thro' this Graſs!
How may'ſt thou flow anon? — Perhaps, ſlid hence,
Thy deep'ning Channel fills ſome moated Fence,
Hems in ſome Farms, where homely Ruſticks meet,
And their ſweet Bread, Prize of hard Labour, eat.
Thence to ſome Lord's delightful Garden led,
Thou may'ſt thy vegetative Influence ſpread,
Where, as thro' fragrant Beds, thy Purlings ſlide,
The grateful Flow'rs ſhall kiſs 'em as they glide.
Here, charm'd and ling'ring, thou may'ſt wiſh to ſtay,
And hoarſely murm'ring roll, diſpleaſed, away.

Next, may thy Silver Current's Brightneſs die,
And muddily ſome ſtagnate Fen ſupply,
Where ſhadowy Reeds in thy ſlow Streams ſhall ſhake,
And Floods fly trembling from the Gloom they make.
Frighted and glad to 'ſcape this horrid Place,
Thou may'ſt wind ſhort, and new direct thy Race
Through verdant Meads, o'erjoy'd may'ſt dancing go,
And Cattle ſip thy Whirlpools as they flow.

Grave

Grave *Thames* may next receive thy mix'd Embrace,
And fam'd *Augusta* see thy sully'd Face:
From her wash'd Foot thy scatter'd Flood may stray,
And in the swallowing Ocean roll away:
There, wasted Stream, in Wind-driv'n Billows tost,
Thy oft-chang'd Being shall be wholly lost.
Even so, I cried, sweet Stream! does human Life,
'Midst endless Changes, and in endless Strife,
Glide with Impatience thro' unknown Events,
Till Nature asks Repose, and Death consents.

Why then is such a Life so much desir'd?
By what Pursuits is vain Ambition fir'd?
Friendship is lost on Earth, *Love* goes astray,
And Men, like Beasts, each on the other prey.
Even the soft Sex their downy Bosoms hide
With inward Artifice, or outward Pride.
Nothing is now worth wishing for on Earth,
And Death is grown a much less Woe than Birth.

While thus I mus'd, back roll'd th' astonish'd Brook,
The Trees bow'd down, the Earth beneath me shook!
All Heaven descended to the glowing Ground,
And radiant Terror dazzling shone around!

Blind with the ſtrong Refulgence, fix'd I lay,
Buried in Brightneſs, and o'erwhelmed in Day!
When, lo! a Sound broke out, — 'Impatient
'Youth
'Liſten, and mark the Voice of ſacred *Truth!*
'I come, continu'd ſhe, to bring thee Peace;
'To bid thy Diffidence in Friendſhip ceaſe.
'Again to reconcile thee to Mankind,
'New wing thy Tranſports, and unclog thy
'Mind.
'There lives a Charmer, whom divinely fir'd,
'Even her whole Sex's Virtues have inſpir'd;
'Where all that's manly, joins with all that's
'ſweet,
'And in whoſe Breaſt engroſs'd Perfections meet:
'Her Mind no conſcious Pride of Merit ſtains,
'In her wide Soul unſully'd Vigour reigns,
'Blind to her Worth, ſhe feels not her own
'Flame,
'Enriches Merit, yet deſpiſes Fame!

'Haste then, and meet her, as ſhe this Way
'ſtrays,
'And thy own Wonder ſhall out-ſpeak my
'Praiſe.'

The Goddeſs vaniſh'd to her native Skies,
And th' uncover'd Shade unbarr'd my Eyes.
I look'd, and lo! within the honour'd Wood,
Lovely *Ardella* hid in Bay-Leaves ſtood.
Ardella! but her Wonders to reveal,
Were to deſcribe what I can only feel,

Now

Now reconcil'd to the ſhunn'd World I'll live,
Ardella, Joys worth living for, can give.

EPISTLE CXXVI.

From Euphroſine *to* Clariſmonda, *on hearing ſhe intended to take a Voyage to* Spain.

Dearest Clariſmonda,

IT was with an Infinity of Surprize and Grief, that I heard from my Brother, that on Receipt of a Letter from the Conſul, your Uncle, you had reſolved on going to *Spain*. — This Viſit, if you make it, I am certain will not be a ſhort one; — if we are ſo unhappy as to loſe you, it will be for a long Time; perhaps, for ever. — You may marry there, or if not ſo, it is not to be doubted but that all Manner of Allurements will be prepared to engage your Stay. I know you have many Reaſons not to be in Love with *England*; — that you have met with ſome Treatment unworthy of you, or of the Character of thoſe from whom you received it; — but yet, my Dear, I muſt tell you, that it is not quite juſt, that thoſe who love you, and are your ſincere Friends, ſhould ſuffer for the Faults of thoſe whom Envy, or Ignorance of your Merit, have made your Enemies.

A Poet of my Acquaintance, and who is not altogether a Stranger to you, happening to be with me when my Brother brought in the unwelcome Tidings, called immediately for Pen and Paper, and wrote, Extempore, the following Lines, which I cannot forbear communicating to you, tho' I had not his Permiſſion.

On the excellent Clariſmonda's *intending a Voyage to* Spain.

To Spain! *forbid it Heaven! O wiſh no more*
To bleſs profuſely that abounding Shore!
To Souls, like thine, it can no Pleaſure yield,
To waſte Manure on the too fertile Field;
Since Spain, *high-treaſured, graſps the* Golden Weſt,
O let Thy Indies *be by us poſſeſt.*

But I fear all he can write, or I can ſay, will be ineffectual to prevail, if you are indeed ſo much reſolved, as my Brother ſeems to think. — There is no Way but one that I know of to deprive the *Dons* triumphing in our Loſs, and that is, by ſetting *Aſtrea* to argue you out of ſo cruel a Deſign. — She will tell you, that no Conſideration whatever ought to make one prefer the Good of any Country to one's own, and tho' how unjuſtly ſoever we may have been treated by it, we are to bear every thing with Patience, as a Child from

from a Parent; and, that the filial Duty owing from us, to the Land which gave us Birth, can never be dispensed with: — But I will not go about to anticipate what she can say so much better. — I am no Politician you know, and seldom meddle with the Affairs of State; but I am, for all that, so much an *English* Woman, as not to endure the Thoughts of *Clarismonda*, or *Gibraltar*, going out of our Hands.

You see, as indolent as I seem, and really am, to most of the Transitions of this World, I can be warm on some Occasions. — There is a certain Public-spiritedness in my Composition, which I was not sensible of myself, till the Knowledge of your Intentions awakened it in me, and I could not delay one Moment writing to you some Part of my Sentiments, tho' I expect to see you Tomorrow. — I hope nothing I have said will hinder you from coming, tho' I will not promise I shall be able to entertain you with any other Discourse. — I am, in the mean time, and always,

My very dear *Clarismonda*,

Your most Faithful,

And Obedient Servant,

EUPHROSINE.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXXVII.

From Gloriana *in the Country, to* Lothario *in Town, on hearing he intended to take a Journey, on Purpose to visit her.*

My Lord,

I AM extremely obliged for the Favour, I am told, you design me; but should be guilty of a great Abuse of your Good-nature, if I permitted you to take the Pains of so long a Journey, without acquainting you before-hand of the Reception you will meet with at the End of it.

In the first Place, I must let your Lordship know, that my Sister being just married, I have resigned my House this Summer Season to the Use of her and her Husband; and having taken it into my Head to study Philosophy, am retired into a little Cell, for I can call it no better, which just holds myself, and my Books, and belongs to a Tenant of mine hard by, where all my Servants, except a Girl who lies at my Bed's Foot, are lodged. — I believe you never heard of a Female Hermit, nor even imagined there was such a Thing; yet, if you are not deterred from coming by what I have said, and what I have

have ſtill to ſay, you will find the Truth of it in me. —I have already given you to underſtand, that you are to expect no better Apartment than ſuch as my Tenant can accommodate you with, who, tho' he is a wealthy Farmer, is quite a plain Man, and infected with none of the modiſh Fopperies which waſte great Part of the Subſtance of thoſe who live nearer to that Source of deſtructive Pride and Vanity, *London:* You will be placed in a great wild Room, without any other covering to the Walls, than here and there an old Family Picture; and be content to lie in a Bed, the Canopy of which is a brown Cloth, plentifully pinked by the Moths, and ſupported by the Trunks of four large Oaks, carved in the Shape of the Giants in *Guildhall*. — As for your Eating, you will find a Table about three Yards long, ſpread every Day with Beef, Mutton, and ſometimes Lamb, Veal, Poultry of ſeveral Sorts, with great Gammons of Bacon, and Bag-Puddings in plenty; — but, for Heaven's ſake, do not let your Appetite wander towards Ragouts, Fricaſſees, Crawfiſh Soop, Pitty-Patees, Trouſles, Morelles, and thoſe *autre quelque choſe*, in the ſerving up of which your Cook ſo much excells. — The very Names of theſe Things would fright my honeſt Farmer into Exclamations: — *French*, nor indeed any Sort of Wine, you muſt not think of while you are here, but good *October* Beer is never wanting: — Thus much for your Dinner. — As to Supper you will ſeldom be regaled with any thing beſides the

the Remains of Noon, except a Sallad with Vinegar and brown Sugar; for Oil is a prohibited Commodity in this House. — Then for your Breakfast, which to have been regular I should have begun with, but was afraid to tell you, a large Bowl, or it may be, in respect to to your Quality, a white Porringer, with a Mess of Milk-pottage, or Parley-broth with Plumbs in it, will be presented to you, possibly with Encomiums, such as —*This is good wholesome Food, and opens the Stomach in a Morning.*

Can then the nice, the elegant *Lothario*, take up with such coarse Entertainment? — Can a Wit so refined and delicate as yours descend to the Conversation of an homely Rustic? — Can you exchange the dear Delights of *Ranelagh* and *Vauxhall*, for plain *Arable* and *Pasture?* For, I assure you, no Grounds are here wasted in Pleasure-Gardens, Wildernesses, or Groves. — Can you resolve to retire to your Chamber as soon as the Sun leaves our Hemisphere, as you either must do or sit alone; and be waked at Four in the Morning, with the Lowing of some Fourscore Cows, that come to be milked in the Yard; — the Guggling of Turky Cocks, the Quackling of Ducks in an adjacent Pond, and the Cawing of Rooks, lodged in a Row of hospitable old Trees, just before your Window? — If, I say, you can bring yourself to be pleased, for a few Weeks, with this Manner of Life,

Life, I dare aſſure you of a hearty Welcome.— If I may judge of your Anſwer by your uſual Politeneſs, you will tell me you can ſubmit to all this, and much more for *Gloriana*'s Sake. — In Caſe, therefore, of ſuch a Compliment, and ſuppoſing it ſincere, I muſt further acquaint your Lordſhip, that I ſhall not bear you Company in any Part of the Entertainment I have deſcrib'd; — that I never ſet my Foot in the Farm-houſe, but have ſuch of their Proviſion as I make choice of, brought from thence by the Girl who attends me, and is placed before me on a little three-legg'd Stool, which juſt holds one Plate, and a Knife and Fork. — You may, indeed, viſit me as often as you think proper, in my Hut; but it muſt be on this Condition, that you never mention one Word of Love, Gallantry, or Politics: — That all our Diſcourſe ſhall turn on Points of Philoſophy. — In a Word, you muſt forget all Buſineſs, — forego all Pleaſures, — throw off all Deſires, all Inclinations relating to this World, and imagine yourſelf already an Inhabitant of ſome other of the celeſtial Orbs; you ſhall conſult my Globe, and chuſe which of them you like beſt, provided it be not that I have fixed upon for my own Reſidence; becauſe if we fancied ourſelves both in one Place, it would afford no room for Deſcription, or Argument, on the Beauties and Conveniencies of the ſeveral Climates.

And

And now, my Lord, having enumerated all thoſe Particulars concerning your Reception here, and ſtipulated on what Terms you may be a welcome Gueſt, I ſhall have nothing wherewith to reproach myſelf, whether you perſiſt, or not, in your Intention of coming to,

Yours, &c.

Gloriana.

P. S. I thank your Lordſhip for the fine *Euclid* you were ſo good to ſend me by *Thomas*: — The Tooling, the Guilding of the Cover is very curious, and the Regiſter, as well as Toſſels, ſhew the Elegance of your Fancy: It ſhines, among my other Volumes, with a diſtinguiſhed Luſtre, like *Lothario* himſelf, in the Circle at St. *James*'s; yet, I aſſure you, I ſhould have been equally fond of it in a plain Ruſſet Binding. — See what a Change the Study of Philoſophy has made in me. Adieu!

EPISTLE CXXVIII.

In Answer to the foregoing.

From Lothario *to* Gloriana.

Madam,

I Received yours, and doubt not but you imagine, you have said enough to keep a Man of my Humour at as great a Distance as possible from the Air of ****; but you will find I am able to give you greater Proofs of my Resolution, than you did me the Honour to expect from me. In spite of all the terrible Ideas you have taken Pains to inspire in me, concerning the Way in which I must live among those People who seem to be of the true *Gothic* Race, I am upon the Wing to take my Flight toward you. — There is one of the Conditions on which I am to be allowed visiting you, which at first, indeed, pretty much alarmed me: —It seemed very hard, that one World might not be sufficient to contain us both; but, on second Thoughts, I grew more easy on this Score; for, as I am pretty certain, you have not chose *Venus* for your Dwelling, and I am at Liberty to fix on any of those you have rejected, I shall certainly make that pretty Twinckler my Home, and do not despair

but to convince you there are so many Charms to be found in it, as will prevail on you to quit your own Orb, and take Refuge in mine. — Imagination gives a Spur to my Impatience, and I shall give my Horses, which now are at the Door, little Respite till they bring me to ****. The Moment I seal this, I mount: — I fly to gain the happy Opportunity of declaring once more, in Person, how much I am,

The excellent *Gloriana*'s,

Most Devoted

Lothario.

EPISTLE CXXIX.

From Amadea *to* Melissa, *desiring she would excuse her for not complying with her repeated Invitations of coming to visit her at Court.*

Dear Melissa,

I AM extremely sorry at finding myself obliged to refuse you any thing, more especially in a Request, which, if it were not for some Reasons, would be both an Honour, and Pleasure to me to comply with; — but I know not how it is, whether

whether there is ſomewhat in that Air you at preſent breathe, that has the Power of changing the very Natures of all who live in it, to the Reverſe of what they were before; or, that you think yourſelf under an abſolute Neceſſity of conforming to the Rules of Behaviour practiſed by thoſe you are among; but, certain it is, you are not the ſame *Meliſſa* there, as when I had the Happineſs of being firſt acquainted with you, or as you ſtill appear when I am ſo fortunate as to find you at *Mira*'s, *Euſebia*'s, *Sophronia*'s, or ſome others of our common Friends.

Believe me, my dear *Meliſſa*, I ſhould always rejoice in every Opportunity of waiting on you, could I flatter myſelf with finding you alone, or with any other Company than ſuch as my ſerious Turn of Mind will, by no means, permit me to be eaſy in. Indeed I cannot bear to ſee Perſons, eminent for their Birth and Stations, not only forget what is becoming their Rank, but alſo degenerate from the Dignity of the Human Nature, to put on that of an Animal, I forbear to mention; and of ſuch there are, alas! but too great a Number of both Sexes.

In the only Viſit I made you ſince your Promotion, as you are pleaſed to call it, Heavens! how my Ears were deafened with the inceſſant Clamour of vociferous Tongues? There were no Hearers, for all were Speakers; and the Converſation, if it can be called ſuch, ſeemed neither

to be dictated by the Heart, nor Brain :— No Design indicated, no Argument attempted, but Words, — mere Words alone, which Chance threw out. — The only intelligible Thing I heard was from a Fop, all covered over with Bugles and Embroidery, who cry'd, *What shall we do to kill Time to-night?*

O *MELISSA!* that Phrase of *killing Time*, common as it is, to me sounds dreadful: — It amazes me to find, that any reasonable Being can want to waste, and destroy, the supremest Blessing allowed us by indulgent Heaven: — A Blessing, which when once deprived of, we can enjoy no other.

I cannot think you can so far forget the excellent Education you have had under the best of Parents and Instructors, and, at the same time, forfeit that fine Understanding you have received from Nature, and for which you are so justly celebrated, as to be really pleased with the Modes and Manners of those you are obliged to converse with. — No; you only affect to be easy with what it is not in your Power to reform; you will not, therefore, wonder, that I who, thank Heaven, am entirely free from all Necessity of putting myself under any Constraint, and dare make Use of the Reason which God has given me, should avoid mingling with

with Perſons, who ſeem to be aſhamed of having the leaſt Share of it.

SOPHRONIA writes me Word, in her laſt Letter, that ſhe expects you will paſs ſome Days with her at her Country Seat: — If ſo, I ſhall do myſelf the Favour of joining you there, and even of accompanying you in your Journey, if you will let me know the Day. I beg you will ſteal one Moment, tho' it be from Sleep, to aſſure me I have not offended beyond a Pardon, and that you have ſtill ſome Remains of Kindneſs for her, who is,

With the ſincereſt Regard,

Dear *Meliſſa*,

Your moſt Humble,

And moſt Obedient Servant,

AMADEA.

EPISTLE CXXX.

From Belliza *in Town, to* Hermione *in the Country, with the Account of an Intrigue of a very particular Nature, which ſhe was accidentally made acquainted with.*

Dear Hermione,

I KNOW very well, that to you, who live in the Country, an Account of every little Accident that happens in *London* is an agreeable Amuſement; I am therefore glad Fortune has put it in my Power to give you an Entertainment of this Kind, by the Detail of an Adventure, which has in it ſomewhat more than ordinarily particular.

Some Repairs, that were wanting in my Houſe, obliged me to go out of it, in order to avoid the Noiſe and Dirt of the Workmen: I took a Lodging in the ſame Street, which I was recommended to by a Friend, and where I am as well accommodated as I can deſire, or could expect.

The third Day after I came here, happening to walk into the Garden for a little Air, I ſaw, at ſome Diſtance from me, a young Lady in a

loofe

loose Dishabille, endeavouring to climb up a little Wall at the Extremity of the Terrass: — The rustling of my Silks, as I passed, made her turn her Head; on Sight of me she quitted her Design, and ran with all the Speed imaginable into the House. I was a little surprized, and the more so, as I had been told there were no Lodgers in the House, except myself, and Servants; and that the whole Family, before my coming, consisted only of a Gentleman, who is an Ecclesiastick, his Neice, and one Maid-servant. Having no Company that Evening, I asked the Neice to drink Tea with me: As we were discoursing on ordinary Affairs, I told her what I had seen, and asked, more thro' Chance, than any great Curiosity, who that young Lady was? — I had scarce finished my Demand, when the Person, to whom I made it, set down her Dish of Tea, begg'd my Pardon, and flew out of the Room with the utmost Precipitation. — She was not above a Minute absent, and on her Return, after saying many handsome Things, in Excuse for her abrupt Behaviour, gave me the following little History as the Motive of it.

'That young Lady, said she, whom you saw 'in the Garden, is the Daughter of a particular 'Friend of my Uncle's: — She has been bred 'in the most strict Principles of Virtue and Re-'ligion, and was, with the Consent of her Pa-

'rents, addreſs'd to for Marriage, by a Perſon 'who could not but be looked upon as a ſuitable 'Match for her. — As her young Heart had hi-'therto been unaffected either with the Joys, 'or Pains, of Love, ſo likewiſe ſhe had no 'Averſion to her Lover: She received him 'as the Man ordained by Heaven, and thoſe 'who, under Heaven, had the Diſpoſal of her, 'to be her Husband; — her Carriage towards 'him was perfectly modeſt, yet ſo obliging, 'that he had all the Reaſon in the World to flat-'ter himſelf with having made ſome Impreſſion 'on her Heart. After a Courtſhip of about 'four Months, in all which time ſhe gave him 'room to hope he every Day gained Ground in 'her Affection, the Wedding Morning was fixed. 'Never was there a Promiſe of a more happy 'Pair, and doubtleſs would have been ſo, if an 'unforeſeen and moſt unlucky Accident had 'not intervened, to blaſt their mutual Good, 'and damp the Torch of *Hymen*, 'ere it was fully 'lighted.

'This young Creature, whom I ſhall call '*Magdalena*, happened to be acquainted with a 'Lady, who has the moſt tender Intercourſe 'with a certain Baronet, well known to the po-'lite World. — The Eve before the Day ap-'pointed for her Marriage, ſhe caſually met 'him at the Apartment of his Miſtreſs: — They 'had never ſeen each other before, and fatal was 'the Interview to the Peace of both. — Love,

'to

'to whose Effects, 'till now, she had been a 'Stranger, rushed all at once on her unguarded 'Soul, and seized on all its Faculties.— His 'roving Heart, susceptible of every new At-'traction, could not behold her sprightly Charms 'without wishing to become the Possessor of 'them :— What he once desires he never fails 'attempting to accomplish :—He said many soft 'Things to her, even in the Presence of her who 'had been, for several Years, the reigning Ob-'ject of his Passion. — Night coming on, and 'she being obliged to take Leave, he would 'needs conduct her Home in his Chariot, which 'had been, all this time, waiting at the Door.

'HAVING found, before their coming out, 'that she was to be married the next Morning, 'he thought no Time was to be lost in the Pro-'secution of his Design, and taking her by the 'Hand, which he strenuously pressed between 'both his, *What*, said he, *is all this Heaven of 'Beauty to be disposed of Tomorrow?* — *Have I 'seen you only to be rendered the most miserable 'of Mankind?* — She was surprized, but far 'from being offended at hearing him speak in 'this Manner, and not knowing well what An-'swer to make, kept entirely silent, till he asked 'her the Name and Quality of the happy Per-'son who was to be her Husband ; on which 'she immediately replied, that the Man whom 'her Parents had decreed for her, was called '*Clodius*, and that he was an eminent Trades-

'man.

'man. — *How!* cried the Baronet, disdainfully, '*must Charms, which would enrich the Bed of the* '*first Monarch upon Earth, be prophaned by the* '*Touch of a little servile Mechanic? — Forbid it* '*all that's Noble! — It cannot sure be the Effect* '*of your own Choice! — A Form, like yours, must* '*have a Soul more delicate! — Say, most adorable* 'Magdalena, *can you love a Man, whom, by his* '*Occupation, if no otherwise, is so unworthy of* '*you?* — To which she answered, with a Sigh, 'that she had never asked herself the Question, 'but must obey her Parents: By this time they 'were got almost to her Father's Door, which 'he perceiving, and not willing to part with 'her, till he had known more of her Sentiments 'on this Head, ordered his Coachman to drive 'slowly round a great Square, adjacent to the 'Street where she lived.

'She either wanted Artifice, or had not the 'Power of concealing from him the Pleasure she 'took in the tender Pressures he frequently gave, 'not only to her Hands, but unresisting Lips; '— He found the Conquest he had gained, and 'nothing is more strange, than that he did not 'compleat his Victory, by seizing on the last 'Triumph she could yield. — He contented him-'self, however, with obtaining her Promise of 'meeting him the very first Moment she could 'get out after her Marriage, which, she told 'him, it was utterly impossible for her either to 'defer, or wholly to break off: — After mutu-

'ally

'ally interchanging Kiſſes and Embraces, they 'parted. — He exulting in the Aſſurance of 'being ſhortly in the Poſſeſſion of Charms, 'which his preſent Inclinations repreſented to 'him as ſuperior to thoſe of any other Woman 'he knew; — ſhe full of perplexed Imagina-'tions, yet indulging Tranſports no Way con-'formable to the Duty ſhe was about to vow 'before the Altar.

'In ſpite of the Excuſes ſhe makes, conti-'nued my obliging Informer, the World, in 'my Opinion, would have judged leſs ſeverely of 'her Conduct, if ſhe had gone directly away with 'the Baronet, and never married *Clodius*, rather 'than have prophaned that ſacred Ceremony, 'and made an innocent Man, who truly loved 'her, the Dupe of her infamous Intentions. — I 'have already told you, that this unhappy Per-'ſon had always been indifferent to her; but 'Time, and the exceſſive Tenderneſs with which 'he regards her, might have inſpired ſome Share 'of it in her; but the ſtrong Paſſion ſhe had 'entertained in Favour of another, rendered him 'now deteſtable in her Eyes. — She went with 'him to the Holy Temple, — gave him her 'Hand, — was made his Bride, but, — would 'you believe it, Madam, — reſolved never to 'be his Wife.

Per-

Perceiving I looked in a ſtrange Conſternation at theſe Words, as not being able to comprehend the Meaning of them, ſhe ſmiled, and told me, that what ſhe had ſaid might very well ſurprize me; — that ſhe expected no leſs, but would ſoon explain the Ænigma, if I would give her Leave to go on with ſo tedious a Narrative. — I aſſured her I was impatient for the Cataſtrophe of an Adventure, which ſeemed to be of a pretty extraordinary Kind; — on which ſhe reſumed her Diſcourſe in theſe, or the like, Terms.

'Strange is it, purſued ſhe, that ſo young 'a Creature, not yet Nineteen, could have the 'Courage and the Addreſs to impoſe upon a 'Man, whom ſhe had made her Husband, in 'the Manner ſhe now did; — but Love had 'taught her Subtilty, and having determined to 'preſerve herſelf entire for her dear Baronet, 'had recourſe to a Stratagem, which I ſhould 'never have given Credit to, if the Account ſhe 'has ſince given of it, had not been confirmed 'by the repeated Aſſeverations of *Clodius* him-'ſelf.

'It was in the Beginning of *Advent*, that 'theſe ill-ſtarr'd Nuptials were celebrated, if I 'may properly ſay celebrated, where Conſum-'mation is wanting. — You ſtart again, Madam, 'yet ſo it is. — Feigning an Exceſs of Devo-'tion,

'tion, ſhe entreated he would not inſiſt on the 'Rights of Marriage, till thoſe Holy Weeks 'were paſt. — As he knew ſhe had ſpent ſome 'Years of her Life in a Convent, he imagined 'ſhe had imbibed ſome of thoſe Superſtitions, 'generally imputed to Receſſes of that Sort; 'but as Reſpect is always the Companion of a 'pure and ſincere Affection, he complyed with 'her Requeſt, how much averſe ſoever his Incli-'nations were to it.

'WHILE *Advent* laſted, ſhe every Day went 'abroad, under Pretence of viſiting the 'Churches; but, in reality, to meet her Baronet, 'whom, the very next Day after her Marriage, 'ſhe had advertiſed by a Billet where, and at 'what Hour, he ſhould find her.

'WHAT Liberties he took, or what Conde-'ſcenſions ſhe made him, Heaven, and them-'ſelves, only know; but, without being very 'cenſorious, one may gueſs ſhe did not paſs her 'Days with him, as ſhe had done her Nights 'with *Clodius*.

'*ADVENT* at laſt was over, to the great Joy 'of the impatient Bridegroom; but how cruel 'was his Diſappointment, when inſtead of re-'turning the Careſſes he was about to give her 'on this Occaſion, ſhe burſt into Tears! — con-'feſſed to him, that what ſhe had told him con-'cerning *Advent*, was the leaſt Part of the Mo-

'tive,

'tive, which had obliged her to refuſe to him 'the Obedience of a Wife; and, that ſhe had in 'reality made a ſolemn Vow to the bleſſed Mo-'ther of our Saviour, to remain a Virgin for the 'Space of ſeven Weeks after her Marriage, 'whenever it ſhould happen.

'*CLODIUS*, you may be ſure, was not well 'pleaſed, yet had too much Religion to compel 'her to the Breach of an Oath, and lay every 'Night by her Side as chaſte, though leſs con-'tented, than the Veſtals, whom, ſhe pretended, 'had inſpired her with a Reſolution to devote 'the firſt Weeks of her Marriage to Piety and 'religious Acts alone.

'Six of the ſeven Weeks ſhe feigned to keep 'ſo ſacred, were now elapſed, in all which time 'the honeſt Heart of *Clodius* had not the leaſt 'Suſpicion of the Deception ſhe had put upon 'him: Whether her prolifick Brain had any 'Thing in Store, yet farther to beguile him, is 'uncertain, the Time was come when the Frauds 'ſhe had already practiſed were to be laid open, 'and a Stop put to any future Attempts by her 'of that Nature.

'*FULVIA*, for by that Name the Miſtreſs 'of the Baronet is diſtinguiſhed, had Reaſon to 'gueſs, by ſome late Marks of Coldneſs ſhe had 'obſerved in him, that he was in Chace of a 'new Object; and having taken this into her

'Head,

' Head, ſoon diſcovered both who her Rival was, ' and the Place where they met; for, as the Poet ' ſays,

What can eſcape a jealous Woman's Knowledge?

' Doubly enraged at the Inconſtancy of her ' Lover, and the Baſeneſs of a Woman whom ' ſhe had made her Confidante, ſhe flew directly ' to the Husband and the Mother of *Magdalena*, ' related all ſhe knew, and to aggravate their ' Reſentment againſt her Rival, told them a true ' and moſt pity-moving Story, how the Baronet, ' in a far Country, had found the Means, in her ' extreme Youth, to ſeduce, and bring her from ' her Friends; ſhewed them a fine Boy ſhe had ' by him, and added, that her whole Depen- ' dance, and that of her Child, was on his Ho- ' nour, which ſhe knew not how far the Inſinua- ' tions of *Magdalena* might prevail on him to ' forfeit.

' Happily for *Magdalena*, her Father was ' out of Town, when this Intelligence was ' brought: He is a Man ſtrictly tenacious of the ' Honour of his Family, and I know not how ' far the firſt Emotions of his Rage might have ' tranſported him, on the Diſcovery of a Thing ' of this Nature; but the Mother was of a more ' mild, and conſiderative Diſpoſition; and the ' Husband, who one would have expected to ' have immediately taken Fire, behaved with a

' Cold-

'Coldneſs ſcarce to be credited.—The Truth 'is, the Love he had for his tranſgreſſing Wife 'made him flatter himſelf, that the whole Story 'was no more than a meer Suſpicion, raiſed by 'Jealouſy in the Mind of *Fulvia*. It was, 'however, agreed upon by them, that no No-'tice ſhould be taken to *Magdalena* of what 'they had heard; but that a Spy ſhould be ſent 'after her wherever ſhe went, in order that the 'Truth might be brought to Light.

'The Perſon, who was employed on this Er-'rand, ſoon brought Word, that he ſaw her 'take a Chair at the End of the Street, which 'he followed till it carried her into a Coffee-'houſe of no very good Fame.

'*CLODIUS* went directly where his Emiſſary 'had informed him ſhe had entered, and aſked 'for her by her Name; but the People of the 'Houſe denied they knew any ſuch Perſon, and 'he having no Warrant, or proper Officers with 'him to ſearch the Houſe, was obliged to return 'as he had come.

'*MAGDALENA* and the Baronet were im-'mediately told who had been there, on which 'they judged it neceſſary to ſeparate, leſt he 'ſhould come back with an Authority, and find 'them together.

'*MAG-*

'*MAGDALENA* having Reason to believe 'some Accident had betrayed her, cast about in 'her Mind how she should wave off the Cer- 'tainty of what, she flattered herself, was no 'more than a Suspicion. — The Baronet had, 'that Morning, given her a Purse of Guineas, 'and a fine Seal, which, she considered, if found 'upon her, might be a Kind of Proof against 'her. — In the Hurry of Spirits, which this 'Turn in her Affairs had occasioned, she could 'think of nobody but me to entrust it with; 'but finding neither myself, nor Uncle, at 'Home, she left it with the Maid, desiring she 'would keep it safe, and secret, till she saw her 'again.

'My Uncle happened that very Morning to 'call upon her Mother, who, as she concealed 'nothing from him, related to him, in a Flood 'of Tears, the ill Conduct of her Daughter, 'having been just informed in this latter Part of 'it, by the almost distracted *Clodius*.

'*MAGDALENA*, in the mean time, depend- 'ing on the Good-nature of her Husband, had 'the Courage to go Home, and denied every 'Thing he taxed her of, with an unparalell'd 'Assurance, even tho' he confronted her with 'the very Man, who had seen her go out of the 'Chair into that House her Husband mentioned.

'On my Uncle's talking to me ſomewhat of 'this Affair before our Servant, ſhe preſently 'told us of the Purſe and Seal *Magdalena* had 'depoſited in her Hands; which ſerving as a 'Confirmation of their Guilt, my Uncle bid the 'Maid deliver up to him, thinking it proper the 'Huſband ſhould be conſulted on this Paſſage. '— Some Buſineſs of Importance, however, 'preventing him from ſending to *Clodius* the 'ſame Day, I muſt return to that unhappy 'Man, and tell you in what Manner his eaſy 'Faith was yet once more impoſed upon by the 'deceitful *Magdalena*.

'All the Artifices, known by the moſt wiley 'of her Sex, were now put in Practice by her, 'in order to ſtagger his Belief, as to what was 'told him, concerning her going to the Coffee-'Houſe: — Tears, Sighs, and feigned Ten-'derneſs, were all employed; — ſhe even fell 'at his Feet, conjured him to think her inno-'cent, and had the Prophaneneſs to appeal to 'Heaven, that ſhe was ſo.

'Never was poor Man divided in his Senti-'ments like *Clodius*: — The Perſon he ſent to 'follow her was one he could depend upon: He 'ſtill perſiſted in his Accuſation: — She, on the 'other Hand, was as obſtinate in her Defence. 'It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that a 'Husband who loved, as *Clodius* did, ſhould

'rather

'rather be inclined to believe what he wiſhed, 'than what he feared: — His Reaſon, notwith-'ſtanding, was not wholly laid aſleep by her 'Enchantments; he would not leave her the 'whole Day, nor ſuffer her to go abroad: — 'They dined, — they drank Tea, — they ſup-'ped, — they went to Bed together, — neither 'of them had much Sleep: The different Agi-'tations of their Minds kept both equally awake. '— *You ſeem troubled, my Dear,* ſaid ſhe, *but 'the Time will ſhortly come, when you will have 'a convincing Proof, that I never have been 'another's; and my whole future Conduct ſhall 'be one continued Teſtimony, that I never can be 'but yours alone.* — Theſe Words, accompanied 'with a tender Preſſure of his Hand, ſo tran-'ſported him, that he was ready to curſe him-'ſelf for having ſuſpected her Virtue. — They 'paſſed their Hours in mutual Proteſtations of 'Affection, till the Morning was pretty far ad-'vanced, then pretending herſelf a little diſor-'dered, ſhe aroſe, and ſaid ſhe muſt go into the 'Garden for Air; but would come to Bed 'again: — She threw on only a looſe Night-'gown and Petticoat, as he thought; but ſhe 'had the Addreſs to get from behind the Cur-'tain her Hoop, Capuchin, and Bonnet, which 'ſhe put on in the next Room, and went directly 'out of the Houſe: — He waited ſome time for 'her Return; but, finding ſhe came not, rang 'the Bell, and having asked a Maid Servant,

'who instantly came up, where her Mistress was, 'the Girl answered, that she saw her go out at 'the Street Door, about three or four Minutes 'before.

'*CLODIUS* seemed now indeed entirely be-'reft of his Senses; he jumped out of Bed, ran 'with his Clothes half on into the Street, en-'quiring of every one he met, if they had seen 'his Wife.—None being able to inform him, 'he went to her Mother, and alarmed that good 'Woman with this second Matter of Complaint. '—Where *Magdalena* was, during this Time, 'she has not yet thought fit to confess; but she 'sent a Chairman to our Maid, desiring she 'would return by him the Purse and Seal she 'had left in her Hands the Day before:—My 'Uncle and I were then at Breakfast. She asked 'us what Answer she should send to *Magdalena*; 'on which my Uncle bid her say, she would de-'liver nothing till she came herself.—The Fel-'low was no sooner gone than we sent for *Clo-'dius*, who happily was found as he was coming 'from her Mother's: We told him of the Con-'dence his Wife reposed in our Maid, and gave 'him the Things she had entrusted with her.

'While we were discoursing on this Affair, '*Magdalena* herself knocked at the Door: We 'saw her from the Window, and ordered the 'Maid to take her down into the Kitchen, under 'Pretence of restoring her the Things with more

'Pri-

'Privacy. — As ſoon as the Door was ſhut, we 'all ran down. — It would be too tedious to re-'peat the juſt Reproaches made by the deſpairing '*Clodius:* I ſhall only ſay, that finding herſelf 'detected paſt all Poſſibility of Excuſe, ſhe 'threw off Diſſimulation, avowed the Hatred 'ſhe had for him, and declared no Arguments, 'or Force, ſhould ever make her live with him 'as a Wife. *Death*, cried ſhe, *is not more de-'teſtable than the Thoughts of your Embraces.*

'All that could be urged being in vain, '*Clodius* entreated my Uncle would confine her 'in our Houſe, till he could reſolve in what 'Manner to diſpoſe of her.

'The Room he made Choice of for her 'Priſon, is a back Chamber up Two Pair of 'Stairs, the Key of which I have ever ſince 'kept myſelf. By what Means ſhe got the Lock 'open, I have not yet found out; but had not 'your Ladyſhip's unexpected Preſence ſo luckily 'prevented it, ſhe had, doubtleſs, by this time, 'eſcaped our Vigilance.'

Here the Gentlewoman concluded her Story, which, I hope, will ſeem no more tedious to you, than it did to me. 'Tis highly probable the Adventure will not end here, and that my

next may bring you ſomething farther concerning it. I am, in the mean time,

My dear *Hermione*,

Yours, *&c.*

BELLIZA.

EPISTLE CXXXI.

From Alinda *to* Celia, *on falſe Delicacy in Matters of Love. Occaſioned by that Lady's having cenſured her for confeſſing an Affection for a Man, to whom ſhe was to be married in a few Days.*

NOTHING ever ſurprized me ſo much, as to hear that my Conduct, which, thank Heaven, has always eſcaped the Tongue of Malice, ſhould, at laſt, be cenſured with ſuch Cruelty in all Companies, by a Friend; who, in Caſe of any Attack that Way, I ſhould have expected would have defended it: — But, it ſeems, I am now unworthy the Regard of *Celia*, — that I have forfeited all Pretenſions to her Love, or Eſteem. — And why? becauſe I have not been aſhamed to confeſs an Affection for a Man of Senſe and Honour; and to whom, with my Parents

Parents Approbation, I am, in a few Days, to be united by the moſt ſacred and indiſoluble Bonds! — No; — but you ſay, I ought to ſeem averſe, — pretend I was forced into Marriage by my Father's poſitive Command, or, at leaſt, that it was meerly in Compaſſion to the Sufferings of my Lover, and to ſave his Life, that I had let myſelf be prevailed on to give him my Hand; that to own an Inclination for him had any Share in my Conſent, is monſtrous! — abominable! — a Piece of Impudence, which you are amazed I could be guilty of. — Indeed, *Celia*, theſe are very hard Words, yet they do not make me bluſh, either with Shame or Anger; I rather contemn them as the Dictates of a *falſe Delicacy*, I will not ſay of a *falſe Modeſty*: Tho' ſome, perhaps, who hear you talk in this Manner, may have the Ill-nature to aſcribe it to that Motive.

For my Part, I always thought, nor can be eaſily brought to change my Opinion in this Point, that the moſt tender Love and Friendſhip ought to precede the Marriage Rites; — that both Parties ſhould be, as much as poſſible, acquainted with each other's Hearts; and all Suſpicion of Indifference on either Side entirely removed. — What Idea can a Man have of future Happineſs, with a Woman who, while he is preparing to lead her to the Altar, affects an Inſenſibility either of his Love, or Merits? And how aukwardly will that ſoft Compliance, which

is the Duty of a Wife, ſit on her, who, till ſhe became ſo, has accuſtomed herſelf to treat him, who is now her Husband, only with Coldneſs and Diſdain?

In the Beginning of Courtſhip, I confeſs, a Woman can ſcarcely be too much reſerved. — Whatever Inclination ſhe finds riſing in her Heart ſhould be carefully reſtrained from breaking out in any Word or Action, which might convert his Hope of gaining her into an Aſſurance of doing ſo. — Many Men are falſe and wavering. — 'Tis Perſeverance tries Sincerity; but where a long Series of unqueſtionable Proofs have convinced her of his Worth, and ſhe is determined to give herſelf to him, it is both ungenerous and impolitic to conceal from him the Motives on which ſhe yields.

I knew a Lady once, who was courted by a Gentleman every Way deſerving of her, and who loved her with a moſt perfect Tenderneſs: —She had, at leaſt, an equal Degree for him; but concealed it under Airs ſo coquette and ſkittiſh, that deſpairing of ever bringing her to a ſettled Reſolution, he quitted her, and ſought a Cure for his hopeleſs Paſſion in Abſence. — She raved at his Inconſtancy; but every one elſe approved his Conduct: And to her other Mortifications ſhe had that added of being wholly unpitied.

Let

Let this Example, *Celia*, be a Warning to you. — I think no Loſs more great than that of a deſerving Lover, and ſhall never riſque my future Happineſs, for the Sake of a ſhort-liv'd Triumph over a Heart, I think, devoted to me. — Farewell. — You will one Time or other, I hope, be convinced of your Error in this Point, and acknowledge the Injuſtice you have been guilty of, to

Yours, *&c.*

Alinda.

EPISTLE CXXXII.

From Theophila *to a Lady, whoſe only Son, a Youth of great Hopes, lay at the Point of Death; exhorting her to Patience and Reſignation to the Divine Will, under this and every other Affliction.*

Madam,

It is not that I wonder at, or condemn, your juſt Senſe of the Loſs you are too likely to ſuſtain; but becauſe a Calamity, ſuch as yours, requires every Help that can

can be applied, that I take the Liberty of offering my Advice. — I know no Woman has more Fortitude than yourself; but, alas! human Courage of itself is not sufficient: — You must fly to the eternal Source of all Consolation, 'tis in him alone you can find Relief. — Your Son yet lives, and while he continues to do so, lay him on the Altar chearfully, with *Abraham*, resign him to that Fate which seems decreed for him, and who knows but Heaven may avert the impending Blow, and bid him live, to recompence his Mother's Piety. — Keep ever in your Mind this memorable Saying of Mr. *Pope*; that,

In spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,
One Truth is clear, Whatever is, *is* Right.

So that whether your Son lives, or dies, the Supream and All-wise Director of his Fate does it for the best, both for him and you. — Let not then the flattering Expectations, which his near approaching Maturity afforded you, dwell upon your Mind: — Think not how happy you should have been, to have seen him rise to all those Honours, and that Applause, which Virtue and Benevolence will extort, even in the most vicious and corrupt Age: — Rather reflect, that if he is thus early called, it is to receive Blessings more substantial than any this vain World can give; and that

Heav'n

Heav'n saw him ripe, perhaps, tho' not full blown,
Therefore thought fit to seize him, as its own.

BE assured, dear Madam, that, in all Misfortunes, Religion is our only Refuge: — If we truly love God, he will either remove the Causes of our Complaint, or enable us to sustain them, in such a Manner, as shall more endear us to him; and I know not whether there is any one Virtue more acceptable in the Eyes of Heaven, than the well-bearing of Afflictions.

LET not then, I beseech you, an immoderate Grief overwhelm all those Considerations, which are the Duty not only of every Christian, but also of every rational Being of what Persuasion, in Matters of Faith, soever they may be. — And it is a Truth, which cannot be denied, that there have been some *Heathens* who, in the Point I am speaking of, have left us Examples worthy of Imitation.

I CANNOT forbear, however, observing, that while I am recommending Resignation, there is a Sort of it, which has only the Shew of Virtue, but, in reality, is far from being such. — I mean that of relinquishing merely because we know it is in vain to contend with Providence. This enforced, — this sullen Resignation, has in it a great Mixture, both of Self-love and Ostentation,

tation, and cannot be any Way acceptable to the Deity. — Thoſe who practiſe it, I am apt to imagine, reaſon with themſelves in this Manner: *To grieve for what I cannot remedy, would only hurt my Conſtitution; and, if I appear unaffected, the World will applaud my Fortitude.*

To bring ourſelves to that Frame of Mind, which can alone diſpoſe us to ſuch a Reſignation, as I would wiſh to ſee in every one, we muſt be convinced of the infinite Love God has for Mankind; — the innumerable Inſtances which every Hour preſents us with, of his Care over us; and always keep in Memory, that we are indebted to him for Bleſſings ſuperior far to any he deprives us of: — Immortality! the Means of Grace! and the Hope of everlaſting Glory! — Theſe Reflections will certainly render his Chaſtiſements welcome to us, as they are never inflicted, but either to reform our Errors, or improve our Virtues. Theſe are Remonſtrances which, I hope, you have no Occaſion for, even in this, the ſevereſt Trial you can undergo; yet will ſerve to ſhew with how ſincere a Regard I have the Honour to be,

Madam,

Your moſt humble Servant,

Theophila.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXXXIII.

From Orythia *to* Celemena; *acquainting her, that ſhe was much leſs happy than the World imagined, and deſiring her Advice how to behave, ſo as to be more eaſy.*

Dear Celemena,

HOW imperfect is all human Happineſs! how deceitful our Expectations of Bliſs without Alloy! — The moſt exquiſite Sweets of Life are mingled with a Bitter, which leaves a Gall upon the Mind; yet ought we not to repine at Providence, or pretend Heaven deals its Bleſſings with a niggard Hand. — No; — 'tis our own Humours, — our own empoiſoned Natures, that will not ſuffer us to reliſh, as we ought, the Felicities we enjoy.

You will be ſurprized at this from me, and indeed may very well be ſo, as every one, that knows me, looks on me as the moſt fortunate Woman in the World. — A few Weeks paſt I thought myſelf ſo. — It was but the Second of laſt Month, which gave me to my dear *Bellgarde*: — You accompanied us to the Altar, and were Witneſs of that perfect Contentment which ſat on both our Faces. — O, had it continued,

we

we had been bleſt indeed! For the firſt four or five Days, after our Marriage, you know we ſaw no Company, except yourſelf, and two or three near Relations; but afterwards all our Acquaintance had Invitations, and ſince then we were ſcarce ever alone, but in thoſe Hours ordained by Nature for Repoſe. — The Satisfaction of my Heart diffuſed itſelf through my whole Behaviour, and added to that Sprightlineſs and Vivacity, which was always natural to me. *Bellgarde* alſo appeared extremely chearful in Company; but I could not forbear taking Notice, that when we were alone, all his Endeavours could not conceal a certain Gloomineſs of Soul which gave me ſome Alarms. —Perceiving it every Day encreaſed, I aſked him ſome tender Queſtions, which the ſincere Affection I have for him ſuggeſted, concerning this Change in his Temper: He would fain have avoided giving any direct Anſwer, and have ſilenced my Enquiries by an Air of Pleaſantry, which I could eaſily ſee he but forced himſelf to put on. — — On this I grew very ſerious, and told him, I was convinced that ſomething troubled him, and that whatever it were the Union between us gave me a Right to be made Partaker of it: He made no immediate Reply to theſe Words; but fixed his Eyes upon me with a Look, which ſpoke the Agitations he that Moment ſuſtained; — at laſt, *Ah*, Orythia, Orythia! cry'd he, *ſeek not to know from me, a Secret, which you may ſo eaſily inform yourſelf. — The World believes me bleſt,*

bleſt, infinitely bleſt! — You alone can tell why I am not ſo. — How true, O Dryden! *are thy Words?*

Few know what Cares a Husband's Peace deſtroys,
His real Griefs, and his diſſembled Joys.

Believe me, my dear *Celemena*, I was ſo aſtoniſhed at hearing him, that I had not the Power of ſpeaking one Word; but ſtood as ſilent, and confuſed, as tho' conſcious of ſome Crime, to merit ſuch a Treatment. — A few Moments, however, ſerving to recover me, *What*, ſaid I, with ſome Reſentment, *do you then already repent of having become a Husband: If you are unhappy, how doubly ſo am I.*

I could not conclude theſe Words without letting fall ſome Tears, which the Exceſs of thoſe various Emotions, that then fill'd my Breaſt, forced from my Eyes; — which he perceiving, *What have I ſaid*, cried he, *what have I done? — Wretch that I am!* and flying to me, catched me in his Arms, and preſſed me to his Boſom, with ſuch Tranſports of unfeigned Affection, as are not to be deſcrib'd. — *Oh, I have been to blame*, went he on, *I ought to be content with the Happineſs I am in Poſſeſſion of; ſince it is much more than I can pretend to deſerve. — You deſerve all Things*, ſaid I; *but I beſeech you, by all the Love you have profeſs'd, and which I flatter my-*

myſelf you have for me, to tell me what you mean.

He ſeemed very loth to give any direct Anſwer to what I ſaid; but I urged him ſo home, to tell me in what Point I had given him any Cauſe of Diſquiet, that he was at length prevailed upon, and making me ſit down by him on a Settee with one of his Arms round my Waiſt, and the other about my Neck, he began to eaſe, or rather to add to, my Surprize, in theſe Terms:

FAR be it from me, ſaid he, *my moſt loved, and moſt adored* Orythia, *to accuſe you of any Thing. — No; — you are all that the moſt raptured Fancy could invent, of Fair and Good. — I have only to repine at Nature, who has dealt her Bounties to me with a too ſcanty Hand. — Fain would I be deſerving an Excellence like yours: Fain have the flowing Wit of* Dorilaus; *— the fine Perſon of* Alexis; *— the Wiſdom and Sagacity of* Learchus; *and, in a Word, all thoſe Perfections you are ſo quick-ſighted to diſcern in others.*

As I remembered to have expreſs'd my Senſe of thoſe Gentlemen's ſeveral Merits, in the very Words he made Uſe of, I was no longer at a Loſs to account for the Motive of his Uneaſineſs; but unwilling to mention it, I replied, that if I had not found all thoſe good Qualities centered in him, I ſhould not with ſo much Plea-

ſure

ſure have become his Wife. He made a moſt tender Reply to what I ſaid, yet I could perceive he took it rather as the Effects of my Complaiſance, than the real Dictates of my Heart.

I HAVE a natural Averſion to all Kinds of Diſſimulation, and could not long refrain from expreſſing my Fears, that there was a Propenſity to Jealouſy in him, which, if encouraged, would, one time or other, render us both unhappy.

HE would, by no means, confeſs himſelf guilty of this Foible, but made this nice Diſtinction, That what was commonly implyed by Jealouſy, was a baſe Suſpicion of the Want of Honour; — that my Virtue was his Security, as to my Perſon; — that he knew me capable of reſiſting all Manner of Temptations; but that he wiſhed to appear ſuch in my Eyes, as ſhould lay me under no Neceſſity of exerting that Virtue in his Favour. I then aſſured him, Heaven was my Witneſs, with the greateſt Sincerity, that I married him becauſe I thought him the moſt worthy of his Sex; and, that ſince I had been his Wife, I had, and ever ſhould make it my Study to pleaſe him, much more thro' Inclination than Duty. I added ſo many Endearments to this Aſſertion, that he was perfectly raviſhed with the Condeſcention I had ſhewed, as he was pleaſed to call it.

It would look too much like Vanity in me, to repeat the many tender Things he ſaid to me on the Occaſion. I ſhall only tell you, that they were ſuch as flattered me with the Hope he would thenceforward be entirely at eaſe; — but, alaſs! how ſadly has my fond Wiſh deceived me! — The Civilities, with which I treat even thoſe of his own Blood, I can perceive are painful to him. — What is it I muſt do? — I cannot avoid ſeeing a great deal of Company if I would; beſides, my own Friends, the Poſt he holds, his numerous Acquaintance, and the Delight he takes in making frequent Entertainments for them, lays me open to the Hearing of Abundance of fine Things. — Am I to bluſh, affect a Reſerve, and ſeem to take in earneſt, what I know are only Words of courſe, the Tribute paid to my Sex and Rank, by all the Gay and *Polite*? — A conſtant Round of Wit is perpetually played off at our Houſe. — Am I to ſtifle the little Talents I have received from Nature and Education, and ſit a ſilent ſtupid Auditor? — 'Tis poſſible that my Humour, *Tous jour enjouée*, as the *French* phraſe it, may ſometimes ſparkle out beyond what is altogether requiſite; — yet were I to reſtrain it, I ſhould become a mere Mope; — by an aukward Prudery damp all the Spirit of the Converſation, expoſe myſelf to the Ridicule of the World, and, perhaps too, loſe the greateſt Part of my Merit with him,

him, in whose Eyes I would chiefly wish to appear always agreeable.

Judge then, my dear *Celemena*, how perplexing my Situation is! — Other Women often lament the Want of Ardour in the Affections of their Husbands; I am unhappy only in the Excess of it; — yet so precious to me is the Source of my Inquietudes, that I could not support finding the Cause removed, how much soever I tremble for the Effects. — Advise me, dear Creature; invent some Way, if there be such a Thing in Nature, for me to preserve the one in all its present flaming Fervency, and prevent the other from rising to too great a Height: — Teach me, if you can, how to keep alive the Passion of this beloved Husband, and, at the same time, kill all Suspicion in him of the Tenderness with which my Soul regards him; for, Oh! I shudder at this Maxim of the Poet:

Distrust in Lovers is too warm a Sun,
But, ah! 'tis Night in Love when that is gone.

Pity my Condition, and believe me that I am,

With the utmost Sincerity,

Yours, *&c.*

Orythia.

EPISTLE CXXXIV.

From Jacinta *to* Letitia, *giving her an Account of the Motives which had induced her to marry* Leander, *and the Cause on which they are now separated.*

Dear Letitia,

ALL the World was surprized at my Marriage; they will now be more so at my Separation from a Husband, whom I married meerly for Love, and, till I put my large Fortune into his Hands, had scarce sufficient to maintain him like a Gentleman. I will now tell you the Source from which both these Events proceed: — It was Vanity; the extremest Vanity and Folly, on my Side, that united us. — It is the utmost Ingratitude and Perfidiousness, on his, that parts us. The Particulars of the Story, equally shameful to both, are as follow:

I HAD the greatest Intimacy, that could be, with a young Woman called *Jemima*; she was the Daughter of a Gentleman of one of the best Families in *England*; but thro' the Misconduct of her Mother was left, at his Death, with a very small

ſmall Fortune, too inconſiderable to give her any Proſpect of marrying according to her Birth. — She was, indeed, very pretty, well accompliſh'd, had a good deal of Wit, and ſomewhat extremely ſweet in her Diſpoſition.

A WEALTHY Citizen, who had nothing diſagreeable in his Perſon and Behaviour, and not thirty Years of Age, made his Addreſſes to her. — All her Friends perſuaded her to accept the Offer, as, her Circumſtances conſidered, ſhe could not hope for a better Match; but ſhe continuing averſe, I took the Privilege of our Friendſhip to talk ſerioufly to her, and even went ſo far as to tell her, I would never ſee her more, if ſhe perſiſted in rejecting, what ſhe ought rather to accept with the greateſt Satisfaction. My Remonſtrances drew Tears from her Eyes, and ſhe, at laſt, confeſs'd to me, that it was not in her Power to comply with my Advice; — that her Heart and Promiſe had long been given to *Leander*, and that ſhe would prefer any kind of Miſery to that of being falſe to him.

I HAD heard of *Leander*, — had ſeen him, but without taking any Notice of him; but after owning her Affection for him, ſhe repreſented him to me in ſuch amiable Colours, as raiſed in me a kind of Curioſity to be acquainted with him; but this Curioſity was greatly increaſed on her ſhewing me a Packet of Letters ſhe had received from him, during his Courtſhip. —

Never had I read any thing ſo moving, ſo paſſionately tender, and ſo elegant withal: — It ſeemed as if the Gods of Love and Wit joined to guide his Pen, and dictated each inchanting Sentence. None of thoſe numberleſs Declarations of Love, which had been made to myſelf, had half that Fervour, or that Eloquence: — All were languid, dull, and ſpiritleſs, when compared with thoſe of *Leander*. — *What*, cried I to myſelf, *is it that all my Lovers have wanted Wit, or, that I want Charms to inſpire Raptures ſuch as theſe?* In fine, I now began to envy a Maid, whoſe Condition before I had ſo much pitied. — I could not bear to ſee her plume herſelf, in being ſo ardently beloved, and ſhould now have been as pleaſed at any Accident that might mortify, as I ſhould once have been for any good Fortune to happen to her.

I was one Morning full of theſe wicked Diſpoſitions towards her, when ſhe came jumping to my Bedſide, and told me, that a certain Nobleman, to whom *Leander* was well known, had given him the Aſſurance of a conſiderable Employment in the Revenue, which was at his Diſpoſal, and that then there would be no Impediment to their Marriage, as it had been delayed on the Account that he was not in a Condition to maintain a Family. I cannot expreſs the Vexation this gave me; but I diſſembled it, and having told her, I was glad to hear any good Fortune that befel her, pretended Indiſpoſition

to

to excuſe her not ſpeaking much, on which ſhe took her Leave.

Never ſure was any Vanity like mine: — I could not be in Love with *Leander*; — had ſeen him only *en paſſant*; — never ſpoke to him; — yet did I languiſh with the utmoſt Impatience for the Means of uſing all the little Arts I was Miſtreſs of, to render *Jemima*, whom I now hated, leſs lovely in his Eyes.

Chance, in a few Days, ſeconded my Endeavours; I found out, that the Husband of a Woman who made my Hoop-petticoats, was *Leander*'s Taylor, and that he frequently called at their Houſe: This Woman I ſent for, made her my Confidante, and, at the ſame Time alſo, let her know it would be her Intereſt to ſerve me. We conſulted together, and ſhe was to take all Opportunities of detracting from *Jemima*'s Merit, without ſeeming to do ſo; and, as in Friendſhip to him, wiſh him to caſt his Eyes upon ſome Lady of Fortune. This being done to pave the Way, ſhe was to get him to drink Tea with her ſome Afternoon; I was to come in, as if by Chance, and then manage as I ſhould ſee proper.

All this being conducted as we had contrived, you may be ſure I dreſſed myſelf to the beſt Advantage, and repaired to the Rendezvous.— The polite Manner in which I was accoſted by

Leander, joined to the Prepoſſeſſion I had in his Favour, extremely charmed me. — My ſubtle Confidante, purpoſely, was ſo long preparing the Tea, that the Day was ſhut in before we had done. I then roſe to take my Leave, on which ſhe offered to ſend for a Chair, but, I ſaid, I choſe to walk, as it was but a ſmall Way to my Houſe, and the Weather fine: — *Leander*, on this, could do no leſs than beg Permiſſion to attend me Home, which it is not to be doubted he eaſily obtained.

Having given himſelf this Trouble, it ſeemed no Breach of Modeſty in me, to deſire him to walk in; I ſhewed him into the Dining-room, and found means to enter into a Converſation with him, which he could not have broke off without Ill-manners: — I preſſed him to ſtay Supper, on purpoſe to have an Opportunity of ſhewing my gilt Plate. — On parting, I told him, I ſhould be glad if he would call and bring me the News of the Town, whenever he paſſed that Way: He made a Reply full of Gallantry, as indeed was his whole Deportment, all the Time he had ſtayed with me.

I cannot ſay, that tho' I took all this on his Account, I had any Thoughts of marrying him, I was only ambitious of adding to my Train of Lovers, one ſo accompliſhed as *Leander*, and forcing *Jemima*, who thought herſelf ſecure of his

his Heart, to forego her Triumph, and acknowledge the Power of my ſuperior Charms.

O Vanity! Vanity! that fatal Source of all the Errors our Sex are guilty of, and Cauſe of all our Woes, how dearly have I paid for having obeyed thy Dictates!

In order to compleat the Conqueſt my Folly ſo much aimed at, I made the Woman tell him, I was very much charmed with his Perſon and Behaviour, and hint to him, that ſhe was well aſſured, that if he made his Addreſſes to me on the Score of Marriage, the Offer would not be rejected.

I had, however, the Mortification to find, that neither my own Invitations, nor all this Woman ſaid to him, engaged one Viſit from him for ſeveral Days; but, when I almoſt began to give over Expectation, I received a Letter from him, containing a moſt paſſionate Declaration of Love, and withal aſſuring me, that having been charmed with me at the firſt Interview, he durſt not truſt himſelf with a ſecond, fearing to offend me by a Behaviour, which he knew not if it would be in his Power to reſtrain within thoſe Bounds I might expect, from a Perſon whoſe Acquaintance with me had ſo ſhort a Date.

This

This Letter was brought me by the Hoop-petticoat-maker. — I would not write, but ſent an Anſwer by her full of Encouragement, and which, I doubt not, but ſhe highly exaggerated the Kindneſs of, having now nothing more at Heart than to bring about this Match. —Alas! I little thought how I was made the Dupe of two of the moſt mercenary Wretches in the World!

In fine, he came, — he addreſſed, — I liſtened. — What, at firſt, was only Vanity, now became Inclination. — A Marriage was huddled up between us, without the leaſt Conſideration on my Side, or conſulting any one of my Friends.

During the ſhort Time of *Leander*'s Courtſhip, I had found a Pretence to quarrel with *Jemima*, in order to keep her from knowing any thing of what I have reaſon to believe ſhe was as well acquainted with as myſelf; for, would you think it, dear *Letitia*, that Nobleman, on whom *Leander* had depended, had fallen into Diſgrace, and was turned out of Office himſelf; ſo that it was Deſpair which gave me this unworthy Husband: — He behaved, however, towards me with Complaiſance enough, and I had not began to repent the Step I had taken, when a young Woman of my Acquaintance, by the ſtrangeſt Accident in the World, dif-

discovered the whole Scene of Villainy, and immediately revealed it to me.

This Person goes almost every Day to see a Sister of her's, lately come to Town, and lodges in a House, divided into several Tenements. — She had often seen *Leander* pass in and out of the House. — At first she thought nothing of it, but finding he came often, had the Curiosity to ask her Sister, who that Gentleman came to visit; on which the other answered, that his Wife lodged there; *but*, said she, *I find their Marriage is a Secret, for tho' he comes here almost every Day, he seldom sleeps here. — I perceive, by the Supper preparing in the Kitchen, that he is to stay to-night, and this is but the second he has done so, for these three Weeks that I have been in Town.* My Friend then asked his Name, and the other told him, they called him Captain *La Val.*

Thinking she ought not to conceal from me the Injury I sustained, she came that Instant, and related what she had seen and heard. I was astonished, and could scarce credit the Report; but recollecting, that *Leander* had once lain abroad, in the time she mentioned, and that he intended to do so that Night, under Pretence of visiting a Relation at *Windsor*, I was but too well convinced of the Reality of my Misfortune.

My

My Friend had never ſeen the Woman who paſſed for his Wife, ſo could give me no Deſcription of her Perſon, whereby I might gueſs if it was *Jemima*, or ſome other, for whoſe Sake I was thus baſely dealt with. — I ſcarce could think it ſhe, her Carriage having always been perfectly modeſt; but then the exceſſive Love I knew they had for each other, made me ſometimes imagine, that Nature had triumphed over Virtue, even to this guilty Height: — For the firſt Hour I did nothing but curſe *Leander*, — the Folly of my own paſt Conduct, and upbraided Deſtiny for having rendered me ſo weak, and him ſo wicked. The firſt Tranſports of my Rage being over, I conſulted with my Intelligencer how to proceed: — We went together to a Magiſtrate, procured a Warrant, and proper Officers to ſerve it: — This done, we went all together to the Houſe, where we doubted not but to find the criminal Pair by this time in Bed: — We enquired for the Siſter of the Perſon who was with me: — I left the Officers in her Apartment, on being told, that the pretended Captain *La Val*, and his Lady, were not yet in Bed, and accompanied by the Woman that came with me, flew to the Room where we were informed they lodged: — The Door was half open: — We ruſhed directly in, and found *Leander* and *Jemima*, for it was ſhe indeed, all undreſt, and ready to go into Bed, which a Maid-ſervant was that Inſtant warming for them.

I SHOULD ſpin out this Narration to a too tedious Length, ſhould I go about to deſcribe the Confuſion they both were in. — *Jemima* fell into a Swoon ; *Leander* ſtood like one transfixed with Thunder, neither capable of aſſiſting her, nor pacifying me. — I was juſt going to call in the Officers, when ſomewhat within me reſtrained my Voice, and bade me be leſs rigid. The cruel Injuſtice I had done *Jemima*, in depriving her of all Hopes of lawfully poſſeſſing a Man ſo dear to her, and the Arts I had practiſed on *Leander*, to ſeduce him from the Faith he had pledged to her, now appeared to me in their true Colours, and made me look upon myſelf as the greateſt Criminal of the three. — Struck with Remorſe and Shame, Deſire of Vengeance ceaſed, — I quitted the Room with as much Precipitation as I had entered it. — I told the Officers I had been miſtaken, — diſmiſſed them with a Preſent for their Trouble, and returned Home, full of the moſt diſtracted and ſelf-condemning Thoughts.

LEANDER came Home ſoon after me, but I would not ſuffer him to come into my Chamber, and he lay in another Room. I ſpent the whole Remainder of the Night in conſidering what would beſt become me to do; and having fixed my Reſolution, ſent for him in the Morning : — He approached me with Looks full of Shame and Dejection, and was preparing to make

make ſome Speech in excuſe of the Fault he had been guilty of; but I told him, that I would enter into no Diſcuſſion on that Affair; — that as it was impoſſible for us to live with any tolerable Degree of Happineſs together, it was much the beſt Way to part: — That a thouſand Pound, which I had given him to lay out on a Mortgage, ſhould be his own; but, that the reſt of my Fortune ſhould be ſecured to myſelf, in ſuch a Manner as he ſhould never be able to get any Part of it into his Poſſeſſion, and that, if he would agree to theſe Terms, I would order my Lawyer to draw up Articles accordingly.

He would fain have affected a Reluctance at the Separation I propoſed, but I could eaſily perceive his Heart accepted it with Gladneſs.

This Affair, however, being ſettled between us, I inſiſted on his quitting my Houſe that ſame Day, which he accordingly did. — In about a Week's time, the Writings were drawn up, and properly executed for a final Separation; and I now hear, that having ſold a ſmall Annuity he had, and raiſed what Money he could other Ways, he is preparing to go to *Bulloign*, where he intends to merchandize, and fix his Reſidence with his beloved *Jemima*. I can forgive them both enough to wiſh them happy, but I much doubt if they will be ſo; for tho' I can excuſe *Jemima*, who may think herſelf more lawfully his Wife than I could be, having been his by Con-

Contract, before I ever saw his Face; yet the double Perfidy of *Leander*, both to her and me, is such, I think, as cannot but draw down on him the severest Vengeance of offended Heaven.

BUT I leave them to their Fate; — my own I acknowledge to be most just: — The Folly and Vanity of my Heart, in seducing a Man, whom I then could not love, because I did not then know him, meerly to enjoy the cruel Satisfaction of triumphing over, and rendering miserable, a Woman, whom I called my Friend, and who had entrusted me with her dearest Secrets, makes me hateful, even to myself, and forces me to confess, in the extremest Bitterness of Heart, that all my Mortifications, great as they are, are yet unequal to the Crime which brought them on me.

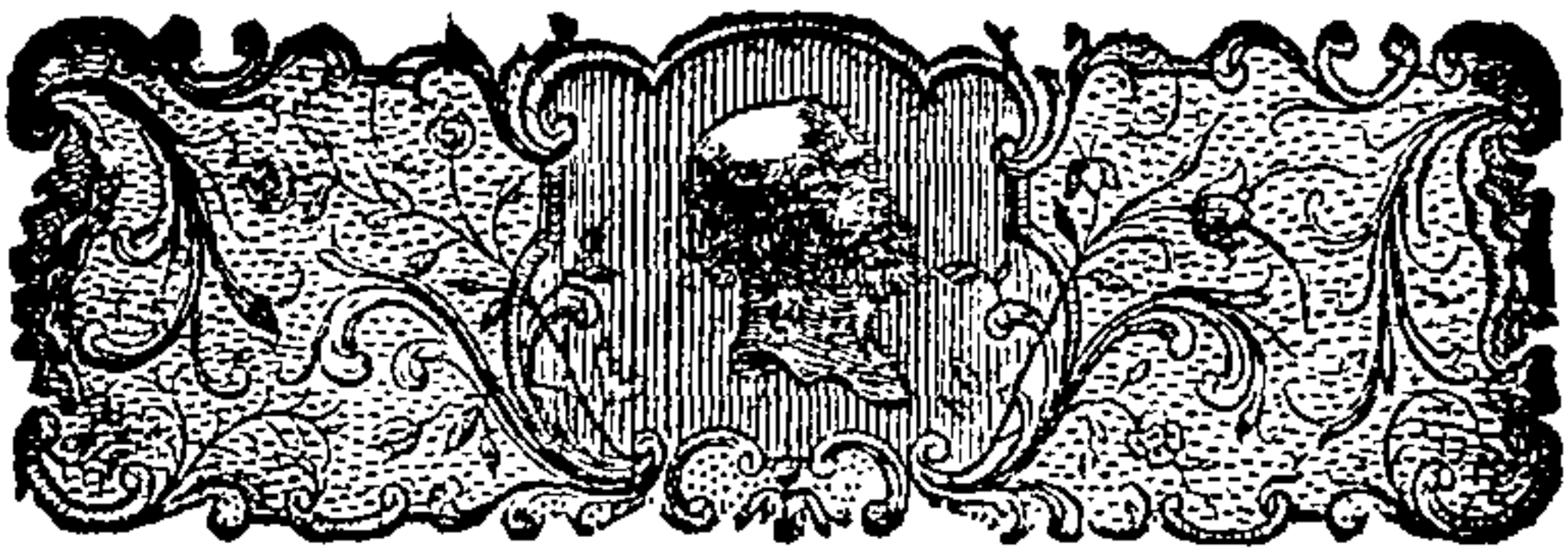
O *LETITIA*, beware of Vanity! — Let not the Pride of Youth, or Beauty, or Wit, or Wealth tempt you, to imagine you have a Right to invade the Property of another. Let not the Ambition of seeing yourself followed by a Croud of Lovers, mislead you from all the Paths of Honour and Discretion; nor endeavour to attract the Men by any studied Arts, much less, by any sinister Means, lessen the Merits of those of your own Sex, who may happen, whether deservedly, or not, to be prized

prized above you: Let my Example be your Warning, and teach you to avoid the Errors and Misfortunes of

Your ſincere Friend,

JACINTA.

End of the ELEVENTH BOOK.



EPISTLES
FOR THE
LADIES.

BOOK XII.

EPISTLE CXXXV.

From Melliora *to Lady* Betty, *with an Account of the Motives which had induced her to leave her Father's House.*

Dear Lady Betty,

WHILE all my Acquaintance are pretending to assign Reasons for my quitting a Father, who has always so tenderly loved me, according to their own Suggestions alone, I shall take the Pains to justify my Conduct in this Point; and yet, perhaps, you are the least of any at a Loss, to guess at the true Reasons of it. Your Intimacy with my dear

Mother, giving you a perfect Idea in what Manner I was bred, and the few Visits you have made at our House since her Death, and my Father's second Marriage with this Court Belle, is sufficient to convince you of the wide Difference between the Company I was favoured with before that fatal Hour, and those I have since been obliged to converse with. I say obliged, for there was no avoiding my new Mother's Guests: — Retire to my Chamber, — shut myself in my Closet, even there I was pursued, — an Alarm beat at my Door, — and I must either come out, or hear the Creator of the World affronted by the impious Ridicule they throw out on the long Prayers they pretended to think I was making to him.

I WILL not wound your Ears with a Repetition of any of those prophane Absurdities mine were perpetually shocked with, from that Hoydenly Rout, which croud the Circle of her Ladyship's Drawing-room. I will only give a Description of this Society in two Lines, which a Friend of mine wrote extempore:

Honour's Dishonour, and Title's Disgrace,
Dignify'd Dregs of Britain's *fallen Race.*

Indeed, Lady *Betty*, some of these new-created Nobility seem, to me, to be of a different Species from those whose Patents bear a more ancient Date; nor is it much to be wondered at, when we

we consider the Motives on which many of them are raised to the exalted Station they at present enjoy, and which, in my Opinion, seems to have turned their Heads; — they would not else, certainly, behave as if they thought Virtue, Decency, and even Reason, Things beneath their Regard.

But there is no Occasion for me to enlarge upon this Subject to a Lady, who, by the Care she takes to avoid such Conversation, shews how much she disapproves of it; — and, flatter myself, that what I have already said will be sufficient to absolve me, in your Opinion, from all Blame for what I have done.

My Father, it is certain, at first, was much averse to my Departure; because he thought it would look like the Effects of that sometimes unjust Pique, the Children of former Marriages are apt to take against a Parent, who is only such in Name; but, thank Heaven, I have at last obtained his Permission, and now board, with my Maid, and one Footman, at the House of a Clergyman, who, tho' not dignified according to his Merit, does Honour to his Profession, by the most pious and exemplary Life: He was never married, but has a Sister who lives with him, and manages the Family. She is a very conversable Woman: — I pass many agreeable Hours with her. — Indeed I think myself so

happy, in being once more got among reasonable Creatures, that I do not cast a Look back on the Grandeur I have left behind.

I AM as well contented with two plain Dishes, as with ten, crowded with the most expensive Exotics; and breathe the Air as freely, and find it full as sweet in a glood clean Hack, as in a Spring-Chariot and Six. — Nothing is wanting to compleat my Satisfaction, but your Return to Town, the News of which I impatiently expect. I am,

Dear Lady *Betty*,

Your most Humble,

And most Obedient Servant,

MELLIORA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXXXVI.

From Dorimant *to* Ardella, *returning her a Silver Medal ſhe happened to drop at his Houſe, in a Viſit ſhe made to his Lady.*

Madam,

WHEN Deities of Old, as Poets tell,
Vouchſaf'd a Viſit to ſome Mortal's Cell,
To prove their Preſence, and renown their Hoſt,
They left ſome Token for the Wretch to boaſt.

Ardella, thus of late my welcome Gueſt,
For ſix ſhort Hours the happy Chamber bleſt,
At laſt departing, I but looking round,
The Place ſhe ſat in pav'd with Silver found.

My Simile does not hold good, however; for tho' you are as much a Goddeſs as *Juno*, *Minerva*, *Venus*, *Diana*, or any of that celeſtial Hierarchy, which grace the Walls of the *Pantheon*, yet you are not equally bountiful, at leaſt to me. I am confident you did not intend this precious Medal as a Preſent to me, — it would,

therefore, be a kind of Sacrilege to keep it.— Be pleaſed then to receive it back, and eſteem the painful Proof I now give you of my Honour, as ſome Sort of Merit in me. I do aſſure you, I never parted with any thing out of my Poſſeſſion with half the Reluctance I do this;— not only for the Sake of that truly illuſtrious young Hero, whoſe Reſemblance it bears, but, alſo, for that of the amiable Perſon who, I dare ſay, has often been contemplated with Regards which would have made *Alexander* himſelf, were he living, more proud than all his Conqueſts.

My Wife joins with me in returning Thanks for the Favour of your laſt obliging Viſit, which we both hope will ſhortly be followed by another, as you know her Condition at preſent deprives her of the Honour of waiting on you. I muſt not, however, ſuffer her to run away with any Part of the Acknowledgments the Reſtoration I now make you has a Claim to.— She is too ſincere not to confeſs, when ſhe ſees you, that it is all my own Act and Deed; and that, if ſhe had been ſo fortunate to have ſeen it firſt, it would have been ſome Time before you would have called yourſelf, again, the Miſtreſs of it; but whatever Liberties you Ladies may take with each other, I had not the Courage to preſume ſo far. All the Recompence I intreat for this Piece of Self-denial is, Permiſſion to unite my

my Voice, with that of all the discerning Part of Mankind, in telling you that I am,

With the most profound Respect,

Madam,

Your most devoted Servant,

And Admirer,

DORIMANT.

EPISTLE CXXXVII.

From Belliza *to* Hermione, *with the Sequel of the Story of* Magdalena *and* Claudius, *as begun in Book* XI. *Page* 288.

My dear Hermione,

I SHOULD not have let so many Posts escape, without writing to you, had I not been delayed by the Expectations of being able to acquaint you with the Catastrophe of that Adventure my last gave you so large a Part of, and indeed what I have now to relate is not of a very interesting Nature; such as it is, however, you shall be told in as brief a Manner as I can.

CLODIUS having been informed of the Attempt his Wife had made to eſcape, gave Orders ſhe ſhould be more ſtrickly watched, which ſhe accordingly was. In the mean Time, he conſulted with her Friends how to diſpoſe of her, ſo as to prevent her bringing any farther Diſgrace on her Family, or Deſtruction on herſelf. Some People were for having her confined in a Madhouſe; — others adviſed him to make her a Priſoner in a Garret in his own Houſe, where the Windows ſhould be grated, and the Door kept always bolted, ſo as ſhe ſhould neither ſee, nor be ſeen by any Body, except a Servant, who ſhould convey to her every Day juſt Food enough to keep her alive; but to neither of theſe would the tender Heart of *Clodius* conſent, and he himſelf hit upon an Expedient, which was approved by all that heard it. It was this: He propoſed ſhe ſhould continue to board where ſhe was, under the ſame Reſtriction ſhe had been, till he could prepare for ſending her to a Convent. Poor Man! he flattered himſelf that Time, and the pious Council that would there be given her, would reclaim, and make a thorough Convert of her; and that, when ſenſible of her paſt Errors, they might one Day live happy together.

MAGDALENA was ſoon informed of her Huſband's Intentions, and, on this Occaſion, exerted all her Artifice; — ſhe pretended to think of the Reſolution he had taken concerning her,

her, with all the Gratitude it really deſerved ;— ſhe ſaid, that ſhe was aſhamed of her paſt Miſconduct, and deſired nothing more than to be hid, for ſome time, from the World ; adding, that tho' ſhe could not as yet bring herſelf to love her Husband, ſhe would endeavour to do it, and merit a Pardon from him.

She ſo well acted her Part, that the good People of the Houſe were deceived into a Belief of her Sincerity, and kept a leſs watchful Eye over her than they ought. The Baronet, who, as we have ſince been informed, had his Spies continually about the Street, found Means either to ſpeak or give a Letter to her, thro' a Window, where ſhe was frequently permitted to look out. A Woman came one Day, as on a Meſſage from her Huſband, and *Magdalena* following her to the Door, under the Pretence of ſaying ſomething to her, which ſhe had forgot while in the Room, they both flew out of the Houſe together, with ſuch Precipitation, that tho' they were purſued with all imaginable Speed, they got clear off. Some Chairmen, who have a Stand in the Street ſay, that a Hackney-Coach, with one Gentleman in it, ſtood ready to receive them, a little beyond the Corner.

This laſt Deception has ſo much turned the Heart of *Clodius*, that he ſeems to take no great Pains for diſcovering the Place of her Retreat ; and the little Search he has made has certainly been

been more for Form's Sake, than out of a real Desire of finding her.

This is all I am able to acquaint you with, concerning this young Hypocrite; and, indeed, it cannot be supposed her future Fate will be worth enquiring into.

I have sent you the Books mentioned in your last, and am,

With the sincerest good Wishes,

My dear *Hermione*,

Yours, *&c.*

Belliza.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXXXVIII.

From Eusebia *to* Mira, *on that Lady's having seemed to hint it, as her Opinion, that the* present *Age (bad as it is), does not exceed the* former *ones, either in Folly or Impiety.*

Madam,

AS every Word that falls from the incomparable *Mira* is a kind of Text to all who hear her, what you said, in the last Conversation we had together, concerning the Enormities of the past and present Age, has ever since dwelt upon my Mind. You were pleased to say, that in all Times the World had abounded in Vice and Folly, and brought some Examples of both from ancient Records, which, you seemed to think, could not be outdone by any we saw at present.

I AM, indeed, Madam, very ready to allow, that History has transmitted to us Accounts of some Crimes, which it is not in the Power of all Hell's Invention to exceed; — that both Vice and Folly have, in former Times, been practised to the utmost Excess; but then, you must also allow, that Instances of this kind were rare; — that

— that the Propenſity was not epidemical ; — that a Depravity of Morals and Manners had not ſpread itſelf thro' the whole Body of the People; — that Wickedneſs was not the Mode, nor any one aſhamed of Virtue, and good Senſe, as, I am ſorry to ſay, is now the Caſe, ſome few, a very few, in Compariſon with the whole, excepted.

Did any Age produce the wild Extremes this has done ? — I could mention numberleſs Inſtances; but there needs no more than what is juſt now in the Mouth of every one, and is of ſo flagrant a Kind, as I doubt not but will record us to all Poſterity, as a Generation both weak and impious; but what, perhaps, is yet a more mortifying Reflection, render us, while living, the juſt Ridicule of all the Nations round us, and make them ſay of us, with the Poet,

Religion's bright Authority they dare,
And yet are Slaves to ſuperſtitious Fear.

After what I have ſaid, I believe it is almoſt needleſs to tell you, I mean that unaccountable Pannic which all *London* was in, on the Prophecy of a poor Lunatic. You ſaw with what Precipitation Numbers hurried out of Town, and thoſe who were prevented from going, either by Shame, or the Neceſſity of Buſineſs, till the very Night, on which the dreadful Calamity was predicted, then left their Houſes, and choſe rather to hazard all the ill Accidents of the Night-Air, than truſt

truſt the Providence of God at home in their own Cloſets; as if the Vengeance of the Almighty, if deſtined to fall on them, could not reach them in their Flight: Yet this Behaviour, ridiculous as it appears now, even to thoſe guilty of it, I can forgive, as it certainly proceeded from a juſtifiable Terror of the deſerved Wrath of an offended Deity. The direful Apprehenſions they were under, from the Conſciouſneſs of their Crimes, would not ſuffer them to conſider from what Mouth the Judgment was denounced, or, that the only Means of averting it was Prayer and Penitence; but what ſhall we ſay of that glaring Impiety, that audacious Boldneſs, with which this late Tremor is ſucceeded. — The ſo-much-dreaded Night was no ſooner over, than People made a Jeſt, not only of their paſt Fears, but of the Power of Heaven. — The Name of an *Earthquake*, of late ſo terrible, is now become a Subject of Pleaſantry. — The very ſilly, but inoffenſive Terms of a *Route*, a *Drum*, and a *Drum-major*, are now exchanged for that of an *Earthquake*: — Footmen run up and down with Cards of Invitation to their Lady's *Earthquakes*: — A new Mode of Dreſs, for the Head, is ſold in the Shops, under the Name of *Earthquake* Caps. — What can all this be deemed, but an impious deriding of that tremendous Judgment we have lately twice felt the Menaces of? Produce, Madam, if you can, one Inſtance parallel to this. If People formerly were guilty of Crimes, they acted them in Corners; they did

did not openly affront Heaven, and avow a Contempt of Divine Wrath. O! may we not provoke too far long-ſuffering Mercy; in which Prayer, I know, you will readily join with,

Madam,

Your moſt Obedient Servant,

EUSEBIA.

EPISTLE CXXXIX.

From Aſtrea *to* Mira, *with a Poem which that Lady had expreſſed a great Deſire to read.*

Madam,

ARDELLA, tho' ſhe fears your Judgment, depends ſo much on your good Nature, as to permit me to ſend you the Verſes you have heard ſo often mentioned.

I BELIEVE, that on Peruſal, you will be ſurprized ſhe never would ſuffer it to be preſented to the Perſon for whom ſhe intended it, and believe, with me, that the Lady of that excellent Patriot loſt a great deal of Pleaſure by her Exceſs of Modeſty; — but I forbear to take up your

your Time, with any Remarks of my own, and am,

With the greateſt Friendſhip and Reſpect,

Madam,

Your moſt obedient Servant,

ASTREA.

On the Birth of the firſt-born Son of Sir WATKIN WILLIAMS WYNNE, *Bart.*

An Irregular ODE.

I.

SNatch'd from Eternity's tremendous Brink, *
My Fate ſuſpended, and Death's icy Hand
A while withdrawn: E're my Reprieve expires,
And I for ever in Oblivion ſink,
Let me the Debt, which Truth, and Love,
And mighty Gratitude demand,
Well as I may, diſcharge. The long enfeebled Muſe
My active Fancy re-inſpires,
Again her Force I prove,
And my warm Wiſh the darling Theme purſues.

* The Authoreſs was juſt recovered from a long and dangerous Fit of Sickneſs, when ſhe wrote theſe Verſes.

II.

II.

The reigning Prince let *Colley* ſing,
And tune to royal Praiſe the venal String;
For Court, or Country, let the Stateſman toil,
His ſleepleſs Hours employ
How to be ſafe, or to be great;
Let Prieſts, and Lawyers, cleareſt Truths deſtroy,
Unneceſſary Doubts create,
By fruitleſs vain Debate;
And puzzling Queriſts the vaſt World embroil,
In mad Diſputes, 'twixt Town and Stage,
Who chuſes may engage;
The Task I readily remit;
Let ſofter Topicks be my Part;
Let Beauty, innate Worth, and Wit,
Employ my Pen, as they attract my Heart.
Do Thou, O *Wynne!* but ſmile upon my Lays;
Let me thy licens'd Laureat be,
I'll ſeek no other Praiſe,
No other Dignity.

III.

Cease, ceaſe, my Muſe, then to complain,
Begin, at once, the joyous Strain!
Caſt all thy darkſome Thoughts away,
And ſing the bleſt, the happieſt Day,
That we in Times long Æra find,
The Day to which we owe
The beſt of Gifts, the beſt that Woman-kind
Could diſpence, or Heaven beſtow.

IV.

IV.

What cannot Fancy reach! — in my Mind's
Eye,
I ſee the ſuff'ring Charmer patient lie
Amidſt that Rack of Nature, and of Senſe,
Entail'd upon us all for *Eve*'s Offence:
Around her Couch I ſee the Matrons wait,
Fear, mix'd with Hope, decypher'd in each Face;
While trembling Virgins, as befits their State,
A greater Diſtance keep,
And, Pangs yet unexperienc'd, weep,
Equally anxious for th' impending Fate,
'Twixt Life and Death, ſo ſmall a Space.
All in devouteſt Orizons unite;
Attending Angels catch the pious Prayers,
And ſwift convey them to th' Almighty's Ears:
Sudden, the beauteous Babe ſprings forth to Light,
Diſperſes every Care,
Joy of all Eyes, and glads the Parent-Fair.
The Father all in Miniature confeſt,
Each ſocial Virtue, every noble Aim,
That warms his gen'rous Breaſt,
The little Patriot-Infant's Charms proclaim.
The raviſh'd Gazers, late abſorb'd in Fear,
A different Extreme diſcloſe;
With wild Delight each Eye-ball glows,
And every Face does Tranſport wear,
Some preſs to kiſs his Lilly Hands,
And ſome his Feet:
Others, more uſeful, bring the Swadling-Bands,
Or for the welcome Gueſt prepare the Meat;

But who, in proper Attitude, can paint
The new-made Mother? — Her own yearning Smiles,
When clasping to her Breast the lovely Boy,
Alone can speak
Th' unutterable Love! th' unutterable Joy!
All Colours are too faint!
All Language is too weak!
What she must feel Conception's Self beguiles!

V.

Hail Heav'n-loved Day, if Poets Prophets are,
The Time will be when thou shalt claim
'Place 'mong the first i'th' Kalendar of Fame,
Wrote by un-erring Hand,
Nought shall thy rising Glories mar,
But, to Time's End, fair and unblotted stand.
More dear to *Britons* than when sacred Rites
(As ancient History recites)
On each revolving Seventh, at *Freya*'s * Shrine,
By *Druids* celebrated, wak'd the Morn,
Nor ended till the setting Sun
Had his diurnal Motion run;
For Blessings nearer to Divine
Be now remark'd: A second Patriot born,
And *Albion*'s Hopes restor'd. Auspicious Day!
Thro' the wide Circle of the Year,

* A Goddess worshipped by the ancient *Britons*, to whom they devoted one Day in every Week, and called it after her, *Freya*, or *Friday*, on which Day the young Hero of this Poem was born.

On

On Thee, let Joy her Brighteſt Viſage wear,
And no dull Cares her Charms allay,
Henceforth devoted be
To Gratitude, and Jollity.
Let Morning Prayers thy Bounties own,
And flowing Bowls thy Evenings crown,
While the unfading Myrtle, and the Bays,
Adorn each Brow, and ſpeak thy Praiſe.

EPISTLE CXL.

From Emilia *to* Sophronia, *with an Account of the Marriage of* Brilliante, *and the unhappy Fate of her forſaken Lover.*

Madam,

THE Concern, my Couſin *Brilliante* tells me, you have always been ſo good to expreſs for every Thing relating to her, aſſures me you will excuſe the Trouble of a Letter from one, who has the Honour to be known to you only by Name; ſince I preſume to take this Liberty for no other Reaſon, than to acquaint you with what has happened to her, ſince her Arrival in theſe Parts; and which is, indeed, too ſhocking for her to be able to repeat herſelf.

You know, Madam, that being determined to marry the Man ſhe loved, ſhe quitted *London*, and came down with him to my Houſe, hoping to have the Ceremony of their Nuptials over, before the unhappy Perſon, ſhe abandoned, could hear any Thing of it.

She was certainly induced to act in this Manner, thro' a tender Compaſſion for the Sufferings of a Man, who had ſo long loved her, and had once thought himſelf ſo near the Accompliſhment of his Wiſhes. She imagined, that to be told ſhe had diſpoſed of herſelf to another, after the Thing was over, and paſt recall, eſpecially compleated at ſo great a Diſtance, would be leſs grievous to him, than if celebrated in the ſame Town with him, and where he would be continually hearing ſome particular or other, on a Subject ſo diſagreeable to him. She has often ſaid to me, that ſhe hoped he had Reſolution, and Reſentment enough, to cure both his Love and Deſpair, when certain how ineffectual either of theſe Paſſions would be, and that before ſhe returned to *London*, he would be able to eraſe from his Mind, all thoſe Ideas which had been ſo deſtructive to his Peace.

But alas! how terribly was ſhe deceived by theſe flattering Expectations: — The jealous Lover, who, by her late Behaviour to him, had ſome Suſpicion of his Misfortune, and had

Spies

Spies upon her, who obſerved all her Motions, was ſoon informed to what Place ſhe had retired, — who it was that accompanied her in the Journey, and on what Deſign they went. He immediately followed, attended only by one Servant, reſolving, by ſome Means or other, to break off the Match; but arrived not till the next Day after the Conſummation: — He put up at a neighbouring Inn, and wrote a little Billet to *Brilliante*, which, according to his Order, his Man delivered into her own Hands: — I have ſeen it, — it contains theſe Lines:

To the inconſtant and unjuſt Brilliante.

" *Madam*,

" I KNOW too much not to be impatient to
" know the whole of my Misfortune. —
" The laſt, and only Favour, I ſhall ever in-
" treat, is an Opportunity of ſpeaking three
" Words to you in private, which, I hope,
" you will not refuſe to

The much-injured,

LEONTIUS.

JUDGE, Madam, of the Conſternation ſhe muſt be in, on receiving this, and knowing how near the Author of it was. — She anſwered it,

however, in these Terms, as she has since told me:

"*Sir*,

"THO' the Power over all my Actions is "now, by Love and Law, another's Right, "yet I think too much is owing to the long Af- "fection you have borne me, to refuse answering "your Letter; but must desire to be excused "from any private Conversation, as it is not "consistent with my Honour, nor can be of "any Service to your Peace. I am sorry you "have taken this Journey on my Account;— "but, as you are here, shall make no Scruple of "receiving a public Visit from you, on the "Foot of Friendship; but if you cannot "bring yourself to this, entreat you will return, "and hope you have more Generosity, than to "do any thing which may disturb the Tran- "quility of

"BRILLIANTE.

'TIS plain, that 'till this Moment he was not certain of her being actually married, and had flattered himself with being arrived early enough to attempt some Opposition; for, on reading this Confirmation under her own Hand, and finding all was over, he was no longer Master of himself.—A sudden Fit of Madness that In-

Instant seized him,—*Then there remains no more*, cried he, with a Sigh, which, his Servant told me, seemed to cleave his Heart; after which, pausing a little, *Yes*, said he, *there is still one Thing to be done.* — With these Words, snatching up a Pistol, which lay on a Table near him, he flew out of the Inn, and came directly to my House, thundered at the Gate, and demanded to speak with the Bride and Bridegroom. — The Fury that appeared in his Countenance, and the Tone of his Voice, as well as the Pistol in his Hand, so frighted the Servant that opened the Gate, that he was about to shut it again; but the inraged Lover pushed in by Force, and rushed into a Parlour where, by Accident, *Brilliante* and myself were sitting. —She started from her Chair at Sight of him, and had not Power to speak. — *Then you are married, Madam*, cried he, raving, *and I am come too late to offer the Sacrifice, I intended, at the Altar.* — *Brilliante* was about to say something, but could not, and she fell into a Swoon almost at the Feet of him who had occasioned it: — For my Part I was so terrify'd, that I was neither capable of offering her any Assistance, nor of saying any thing to him. — On seeing her fall, — *Dead*, — *Dead, by Heavens*, cried he, with a Look full of Horror, *conscious Guilt has been her Executioner, and Despair's mine.* — In speaking this he clapped the Pistol to his Head, and discharged it with so exact an Aim, that his Brains flew out that In-

ſtant, and daſhed the Bridegroom in the Face, as he entered the Room.

Never was there ſo dreadful a Scene for a Man, who had been but one Day a Husband. — All Words would be too weak to deſcribe it, and your own Conception muſt better preſent you with the Repreſentation.

The horrid Deed was perpetrated but Yeſterday: — We are all in Confuſion, and Heaven only knows the Conſequences. — *Brilliante* is extremely ill, her Huſband appears greatly diſſatisfied, and, I much fear, that the Death of the unhappy Gentleman is not the laſt Miſchief attending this Marriage.

As ſoon as *Brilliante* is in a Condition I doubt not but ſhe will write to you herſelf; which if ſhe is not ſoon, you may expect a more full Information than can as yet be given, by her who is,

With a profound Reſpect,

Madam,

Your moſt Humble,

And moſt Obedient Servant,

Emilia.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXLI.

From Belliza *to* Hermione, *with ſome further Particulars concerning* Clodius, Magdalena, *and the Baronet*; *and the Character of* Fulvia.

My dear Hermione,

I Thought I ſhould have had nothing further to ſay on the Story, which was the Subject of the two laſt Letters you received from me: — Nor indeed is there any thing aſtoniſhing in what I have to relate, when we conſider how much the preſent Age is influenced by Self-intereſt, and how little Honour and Fidelity there is to be found, even among thoſe who make the greateſt Shew of both, when a Proſpect of Advantage tempts them to act a contrary Part. The People of this Houſe, who ſeemed in ſuch Confuſion and Concern at *Magdalena*'s Eſcape, are now, by Circumſtances which amount almoſt to a Proof, more than ſuſpected to have been inſtrumental in it, or, at leaſt, to have connived at her Departure. — Inſtead of aſſiſting, as certainly they ought to have done, the injured Husband, in the Meaſures he was about to purſue for the retaking the perfidious Fugitive, they amuſed him with fictitious Stories, and baffled his

his Search by falſe Directions, which, they pretended, had been given them by Perſons who had caſually ſeen her; and this it was that made him weary of the fruitleſs Toil, and reſolve to give himſelf, and Friends, no further Trouble on that Account.

Nor is this the only Indication of their double Dealing with poor *Clodius:* — When he was adviſed, by his Friends, to take the Method commonly uſed in ſuch Caſes, that of advertiſing his eloped Wife in the public Papers, in order to prevent her from bringing on him Debts, which would have been a much worſe Misfortune than the Loſs of her, they keep him from doing it, by perſwading him, that ſhe will ſoon return repentant, and become aſhamed of her paſt Follies, and make a better Wife, than, perhaps, ſhe would have been if ſhe never had tranſgreſſed.

The Man is certainly of a moſt forgiving Nature; he ſtill loves the perfidious *Magdalena*, and is eaſily prevailed on to give Credit to what he ſo much wiſhes; and tho' I cannot ſay much in Favour of his Underſtanding in this Point, I can by no means join with thoſe, who cry, that whatever he ſhall hereafter ſuffer, by his Remiſſneſs, is undeſerving of Compaſſion.

I CANNOT take Leave of you, my dear *Hermione*, without ſaying ſomething of *Fulvia*, whom, ſince my laſt, I have had the Pleaſure of ſeeing, and have heard ſome Particulars of her Story from a Perſon well acquainted with it. — She is not a Native of this Kingdom, but was born and educated in a Region pretty remote from this; — the Baronet being on his Travels, happened to ſee and fall in Love with her: — The Agreeableneſs of his Perſon, his Wit, his Addreſs, and, above all, the Vows he made of everlaſting Conſtancy, ſtruck too deep an Impreſſion on her youthful Heart, ſhe being then ſcarce Fifteen Years of Age: — She quitted her Parents, Friends, and Country for his Sake: — She accompanied him in all his Voyages, and Journeys, which being ended, came with him to *England*, where ſhe lived with him for the Space of ten or eleven Years, in all Things as a Wife, except the Name, behaving, during that whole Time, and ſince her unhappy Separation from him, with the utmoſt Sweetneſs, Modeſty, and Œconomy. — In fine, I know no Woman more amiable, either as to the Qualities of the Mind, or the Beauties of the Perſon, and I never look on her without thinking it a great Pity ſhe was not placed in a Sphere, where her Perfections might have ſhone to more Advantage.

AH!

Ah! how inconſtant is the Heart of Man! — How prone to Change! — What but the Deſire of Novelty could make *Magdalena*, even for a Moment, rival the lovely and deſerving *Fulvia*, in the Eſteem of her dear Baronet.

If ever the little winged God ſhould inſpire your Breaſt with tender Sentiments, may they be in Favour of ſome one who differs from the Generality of his Sex, in this particular, which is the ſincere Wiſh of,

My dear *Hermione*,

Yours, *&c.*

Belliza.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXLII.

From Eusebia *to* Ardella, *in Praise of some Verses she had seen, of her composing, and perswading her to exert her Talent in Poetry, on the Story of* Mary Magdalen, *as mentioned by St.* Luke, *and the other Evangelists.*

My dear Ardella,

I Thank you for the undesigned Pleasure I received, on reading some Verses *Mira* shewed me the other Day, and told me, were of your composing. — It has always been my Opinion, that in Poetry, as in Devotion, there is no Medium: It must either *be inspired*, or *not inspired*. If the first, it cannot but be *good*; if the latter, it must be *bad*, and consequently unaffecting. I find so much Spirit, Energy, and all the Marks of true *Genius*, in what you have wrote, that I shall ever, hereafter, call you by no other Name than the *Muse*, and to prove that I do not flatter you, take the Liberty to recommend a Theme to you, which I should be sorry to see ill handled; and which, to *conceive* justly, requires the most perfect Purity of Heart, with the most exalted Ideas of Gratitude, and Love; and to *express* the utmost Delicacy of Sentiments,

ments, and Eloquence of Style. — After ſaying this, I doubt not but you will imagine I mean ſomewhat in the religious Strain: — Indeed I do; for I think nothing elſe worthy of ſuch a Pen as yours, or that can afford ſo laſting a Satisfaction to a reaſonable Mind.

As Tapers languiſh at th' Approach of Day,
And by Degrees melt ſlow their Shine away,
Awhile they glimmer with contracted Fires,
Trembling, unable to relax their Spires;
But when the Sun's broad Eye is opened wide,
And Beams thick flaſhing dart on every Side,
No more their emulative Force they try,
But, ſtruck with Radiance, ſink at once, and die;
So the dim Joys of ſenſual Delight
Vaniſh and die at pure Religion's Sight.

But not to keep you in ſuſpence, the Incident I would have you write upon, is that ſo often mentioned in the Goſpel, to the Honour of our Sex, that of *Mary Magdalen*'s coming to the Sepulchre of our bleſſed Saviour, the third Day after offering himſelf up a Sacrifice for the Sins of the World.

The Love and Zeal of this pious Penitent cannot be too ſtrongly painted. — Many there doubtleſs are, who have ſinned like her, and like her too have been enabled, by the Spirit of Grace, to abandon their former Errors; but few

I fear, like her, are ſo truly ſenſible of the Tranſcendency of Divine Goodneſs, and acknowledge it with that fervent Gratitude.

You may deſcribe her riſing before the Morning, laden with precious Ointments, and the more precious Offering of a contrite Heart: — Her Terrors, and Grief, on miſſing the Lord of Life: — Her Amazement at Sight of the Angels, and the Declaration they made to her: — Her Holy Raptures on being accoſted by her Heavenly Maſter; and the Haſte ſhe made to acquaint his Diſciples with the glorious Tidings of his Reſurrection.

You may alſo give a ſhort Sketch of the Hiſtory of this lovely Saint, before her Converſion; — ſhew how ſhe ſhone the Pride of *Herod*'s Court, — the Idol of a vain luxurious Age: — How every Joy, that vicious Wit and Fancy can invent, filled her each Senſe: — How every Step ſhe took was to ſome new Delight: — Then ſhew the dire Effects of pleaſing ſoft inticing Charms: — How Sloth, and Luſt, and every deadly Sin, ſteal on the unguarded Heart, and turn it all to Foulneſs. — Paint her, I ſay, thus loſt to Virtue, and abandoned by her guardian Angel: — The Fiends exulting in their Prey: — Hell, ſure ſhe was all its own, triumphed in the glorious Prize. — Then! — O the bleſſed Tranſition! — Diſplay the Wonders of her ſwift Redemption! — How at the Doctrine of the heavenly

heavenly *Jesus*, the Beams of Divine Grace darted on her benighted Soul, and drove away those evil Spirits which had so long reigned over it.

O boundless Love! — O Mercy infinite! — Strait she tore off the gaudy Ornaments of Pride and Vanity, — forsook the glittering Scene of guilty Pleasures, — exchanged the lofty Palace for an humble Cell: — Angels beheld with Rapture her Conversion, and tuned their golden Harps to join the Music of her grateful Prayers.

Set forth, my dear *Ardella*, in as lively Terms as possible, the Joys of sweet Repentance; — but I leave the Conduct of the Poem to yourself! — The Hints I have given are only to awake your Genius, and doubt not but to see them abundantly improved, till when, and always, believe me to be sincerely,

Yours, &c.

Eusebia.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXLIII.

From Portia *to the E. of* ****, *on his having attempted to ſeduce her Virtue, after he had conferred ſome Favours on her, under the Pretence of an honourable and diſintereſted Friendſhip.*

My Lord,

FEW Things could have happened to give me greater Pain, than the Declaration contained in the laſt Letter I had the Honour to receive from you. — While I thought myſelf ſecure of one ſincere Friend, to whom I might have Recourſe, in the many Vexations it is my Fate to be involved in, I never thought I was wholly miſerable. — How cruel is it in you, then, to deprive me of that only Conſolation! — Good Heaven! Could I ever have imagined you would have taken Advantage of thoſe Neceſſities you ſeemed to commiſerate with ſo much Tenderneſs! — No; — nothing but your ſelf could have convinced me you were capable of ſo ungenerous an Action, or, that a Deſign of ſuch a baſe Kind could have been couched under ſuch fair and honeſt Pretences. — How incongruous are the Arguments of Men of the fineſt

Underſtanding, when uſed in Favour of Vice! You exclaim againſt the injurious Treatment of my Huſband towards me, yet would perſwade me to juſtify his Conduct by my own, and give him an Excuſe for his Ingratitude and Ill-nature. — You ſay the Figure to which his Extravagancies have reduced me, is unworthy of my Birth and Merit; yet you would bring me to make one, not only unworthy of them, but of my Reaſon alſo. — What could my worſt Enemy wiſh more, than to ſee me add Shame and Guilt to the Misfortunes I already labour under? — Yet to draw me to this laſt Degree of Wretchedneſs, you would have me believe, is the Effect of Love. — Ah! how is the pureſt and nobleſt of all Paſſions prophaned, when ſuch groſs and ſenſual Deſires are aſcribed to it! — Defend, ye guardian Angels, all thoſe of my Sex, who wiſh to continue virtuous, from giving Credit to ſuch vain Deluſions! — May they, like me, diſcover the black polluted Fiend, tho' clad in all the Radiance of the true Divinity. — What are your Offers but ſo many Baits to lure me to Perdition? — What would my Acceptance of them make me but a gawdy Slave, ridiculouſly miſcalled a Miſtreſs? — No, my Lord, be aſſured, that no Diſtreſs, no Exigence Fortune can lay upon me, ſhall ever reduce me to become the deſpicable Thing you would have me. — The Vows I made before the Holy Altar are indelibly imprinted on my Heart, as well as regiſter'd in Heaven; nor can any thing on the Part of him,

him, to whom I am thus bound, erase them thence. — Religion, Reputation, Duty, all Laws, both human and divine, oblige me to beg, to starve, to wander round the World a Vagrant with him, rather than shine in all the Pomp of guilty Grandeur with any other Man. — If, instead of that mighty Passion you affect to profess for me, you feel the least real Good-Will towards me, by that I beseech you, nay take the Liberty to conjure you, to avoid seeing me for the future. — Leave me to my Miseries, nor seek to add to them, by reminding me how greatly I deceived myself, when I imagined you found any thing worthy of a sincere Friendship, or Regard, in the unhappy

PORTIA.

P. S. I send your Lordship back the last Purse of Guineas, which some Necessities, you observed in the Family, made you leave Yesterday on my Table, and which, I thank God, are no Ways embezzled. — My first and most ardent Prayers henceforward shall be, that Heaven will vouchsafe some Means, by which I may return those others also, which my mistaken, and too flattering Opinion of your Friendship, induced me to accept. — This may appear to you, perhaps, as a Piece of ill-judged Pride; but I shall give myself little Pain on that Head, as I am conscious of the

Motive whence it proceeds. — The Proofs of Pity I can receive with a becoming Gratitude, but ſhall always reject with Scorn and Indigdignation, whatever is the Bait of real Vice.

EPISTLE CXLIV.

From Camilla *at* Berlin, *to* Aſtrea *in* London; *with an Account of what ſhe had obſerved in that Court, and a remarkable Incident, which happened in her Preſence, and ſhewed the great Goodneſs of his* Pruſſian *Majeſty towards his Subjects.*

Dear Madam,

IT is now near three Weeks ſince my Arrival; but I forbore writing, till enabled to give an Account of ſomething more worthy your Attention than any thing relating to myſelf.

Monsieur and Madame *De* ****, who were here before me, received me with a great deal of Civility, and introduced me to all thoſe, whom they had made Acquaintance with. — They carried me to ſee the fine Buildings on the River *Spree*, the Arſenals, and the great Canal, which extends itſelf, from the abovementioned River, whence

whence it is cut, quite to the *Elbe:* We alſo ſaw the Palace, and the Court being then at *Potzdam*, we had the Opportunity of taking a View of the Royal Apartments with more Liberty, than otherwiſe we could have done. I cannot ſay much in Praiſe of the Architecture, tho' it is magnificent enough, and extremely convenient: — The Furniture is very rich, and all the State Rooms are ornamented with moſt curious Pieces of Painting. — His Pruſſian Majeſty, it ſeems, is highly delighted with that Science, and gives the greateſt Encouragement to the Profeſſors of it, as, indeed, he does to all who excel in any Art whatſoever. — In the King's Cloſet are the Pictures of many illuſtrious Perſonages, drawn at full Length; but one, above all the reſt, attracted my Eyes, not only becauſe it appeared to me to have ſomething peculiarly lovely and majeſtic in it, but alſo becauſe it has a great Reſemblance of a Portrait, in Miniature, which you wear at your Watch, and, I know, ſet the higheſt Value upon. I aſked the Man, who ſhewed us the Apartments, and belongs to them, for whom that amiable Piece was deſigned? — *It is, Madam*, ſaid he, affecting to miſtake which it was I meant, *the Prince Succeſſor of* Sweden, *the illuſtrious Conſort of our Princeſs Royal.* — I then told him, that to ſatisfy my Curioſity, he muſt acquaint me, who it was that was placed between the Prince he named, and the Princeſs *Amelia* of *Pruſſia.* — I could perceive the Fellow ſmile at this Demand; but was either unable to inform

me, or had ſome private Reaſons for not doing ſo. — I was not, however, long kept in Suſpence, Monſieur *De* **** took me aſide, and told me, he had often ſeen the Original at *Paris*, and that it was, indeed, drawn for the Perſon that I had imagined.

I cannot but ſay, that the Sight of this Picture, and the Manner in which it was diſpoſed, put ſome Conjectures into my Head, which Time alone can reveal the Truth of, ſo will not trouble you with the Repetition of them, at leaſt in Writing; — how I may be tempted to talk of it at my return, I will not anſwer.

The whole Royal Family, in a few Days after, coming back to *Berlin*, I had the Honour of ſeeing the two Queens, and Princeſs *Amelia*, in the Gardens of the Palace. — As I doubt not but ſome Deſcription of theſe Princeſſes will be agreeable to you, I ſhall give you as exact a one as is in my Power: — The Queen-Dowager has ſomewhat very graceful in her Look and Mien; — her preſent Majeſty, without being a Beauty, has more Charms than many who are reputed ſuch; and the Princeſs *Amelia* has, to a perfect Regularity of Features, and Delicacy of Complection, a certain Sweetneſs added, which Phiſiognomiſts will tell you, is the infallible Indication of a tender, generous Mind.

I DID not ſee the King till after ſeveral Days, tho' I went to the Drawing-room, the Opera-houſe, and other public Places, in the Hope of gratifying my Curioſity, with all it now had to demand. — Some ſaid, his Majeſty was ſlightly indiſpoſed with a Cold; but others, who, I believe, were better acquainted with the Humour of this Prince, told me, the Occaſion of his ſhutting himſelf up was on the Account of ſome Affairs of very great Importance, the Diſpatch of which he did not think proper to entruſt to his Secretaries, or any other of his Miniſters, he always writing all Letters of Moment with his own Hand.

HENCE it is, Madam, that the Councils of this Monarch remain ſo impenetrable a Myſtery, and that his Deſigns are ſo ſeldom diſappointed; nor is the Secrecy he obſerves, of leſs Advantage to the Succeſs of his Affairs abroad, than it is to preſerve a due Order and Tranquility at home. — The great Officers of State being all kept equally in the dark, as to their Royal Maſter's Pleaſure, no one has Reaſon to be jealous of the other, for being more entruſted than himſelf, as, in other Courts, is frequently the Caſe: — Neither is there any Prime Miniſter, who, preſuming on the Confidence repoſed in him, inſolently lords it over his Fellow Peers, acts his own Dictates in his Sovereign's Name,

arrogates to himſelf the Merit of all the *Good*, and throws the Blame of all the *Ill* upon the Throne.

You will ſay, perhaps, that for a King to conſult only with himſelf, is ruling with an abſolute Authority, and altogether inconſiſtent with the Liberties of the People. — I grant it is ſo, and that ſuch an unlimited Power lodged in the Hands of a bad Prince, would be terrible indeed; — and yet I know not if a Nation does not ſuffer more when ſuch a Power is delegated by Law to a Plurality; becauſe there might then be many Tyrants inſtead of one. The King of *Pruſſia*, 'tis true, is arbitrary; but the Uſe he makes of being ſo, you will preſently ſee in the following Inſtance.

Last Sunday Morning M. *De* *** came to my Lodgings, and told me, he had juſt ſeen the King returning from taking the Air in his Coach, and that it was highly probable, he would dine that Day in Public; — on which I agreed to go with that Gentleman, his Lady, and ſome other Company, to the Palace about Noon.

On our entering the great Chamber of State, we found that Monſieur *De* *** had not been deceived in his Conjecture. A vaſt many People, led by the ſame Deſire as ourſelves, were already there, none being denied Admittance, who made

made a tolerable Appearance.—We had not waited long before the King, the two Queens, the Princes his Brothers, and Princeſs *Amelia*, came into the Room, and placed themſelves at Table. I will not pretend to tell you the Number of the Diſhes that was ſerved up, nor the Variety of Meats they were compoſed of, I ſhall only ſay, that all was ſumptuous, elegant, and befitting the Dignity of ſo great a Prince, with whom, indeed, my Attention was too much taken up, as it was the firſt Time of ſeeing him, to regard any thing elſe.—I perceived he eat little, but talked a good deal, and was extremely pleaſant, not only with the Royal Family, who ſat at Table, but alſo with the Nobles who waited behind the Chair, frequently turning to them on the one Side, and the other.—This a little ſurprized me, as I had heard he was of ſo reſerved a Temper; but I have been ſince informed, he is only ſo in Matters of State, and in all other Things communicative and facetious.

As to the Perſon of his Majeſty, it is extremely graceful, tho' not tall;—his Eyes are the moſt ſparkling, and withal the moſt penetrating I ever beheld, and in them, as well as in all his Features, and that Air, which accompanies his every Word and Geſture, there is a certain Dignity, a peculiar Greatneſs, which, without being told ſo, would make one know him,

him, not only that he was a King, but likewise that he was worthy to be so.

This illustrious Company was just rising from Table, when a Woman neat, but meanly dressed, press'd thro' the Crowd and all trembling and confused, threw herself at the King's Feet, and presented him a Petition, which I expected he would have put into the Hands of some one or other of the Noblemen, to have read to him at a more leisure Hour, as is the Custom with most other Princes, by which Means, unless the Person to whom it is given, who is generally the first Lord in Waiting, is previously acquainted with the Affair, and made a Friend of, the thing is utterly forgot, and the Supplicant never the better for addressing; — but the Heart of this Monarch is of a different Mould: — He will not commit the Redress of any one of his Subject's Grievances to the Care of another, but, like the Eye of Heaven, will, himself, see into the Truth of all Things. — He took the Paper, opened it, and examined the Contents heedfully; but, as soon as he had finish'd, darted a furious Look at the poor Woman, which made my Heart ake for her. —*Wherefore*, said he, *was I not told of this before? — Did not you know you had a King? — or did you imagine me a King in Name alone, unwilling, or incapable of affording you Protection.* To which the poor Creature, with a faultering Voice, replied, that she feared being too presuming, and had no Friend to intercede

tercede for her to his Majesty. *You need no Friend but me*, said the King, with more Mildness, *provided you have Justice on your Side, which To-morrow shall be examined into, and if what you say be real, full Reparation made you.* With these Words he turned away, ordering one of the Lords to bid her attend next Day at the Palace, which he accordingly did, and the poor Woman went out of the Room curtesying to every one as she passed, as much transported with Joy, as she had lately been stupified with a contrary Passion.

ALL this had been lost upon us, as I am a perfect Stranger to the *German* Language, if Monsieur *De* ****, who understands it very well, had not the Goodness to interpret it to me. As we all were ignorant of the Contents of the Petition, he likewise went the next Day to Court, on purpose to inform himself, both of the Cause and Event of the poor Woman's Complaint.

UPON his Return, he obliged us with the following Detail: It seems the Husband of this poor Woman had rented some Lands by way of Farm, of a Nobleman belonging to Court, for a certain Term of Years; but on his Demise, the young Heir refusing to stand to his Father's Agreement, turned him and his Family out of Doors, without any justifiable Reason, but merely because he had been offered by another a larger Rent than the former paid. The Law, indeed, would

would have relieved him, but he had not Money to contend with ſo powerful an Adverſary; and this Misfortune drawing on others, he was at length caſt into Priſon, and his Family reduced to a moſt deplorable Condition.

Under theſe oppreſſive and calamitous Circumſtances, he was adviſed to throw his unfortunate Caſe at the Throne of Royal Juſtice, which was done in the Manner I have already related.

His Majeſty was no ſooner convinced of the Reality of the Fact, than he ordered the young Nobleman to releaſe the Man out of Priſon, by paying all the Debts for which he was confined, to reinſtate him in his Farm, and likewiſe to give him a Sum of Money, as a Reparation for the Injuries he had cauſed him to ſuſtain.

Every one highly applauded this equitable Deciſion, tho' no leſs could be expected from a Prince, whoſe Ears are ever open to the Complaints of even the meaneſt Subjects in his Dominions, who never hears but to redreſs, and takes Pleaſure in humbling the Pride of the Oppreſſor.

In fine, Madam, by the Accounts every one gives of him, he may juſtly be called the common Father of his People. — All his Endeavours are to make them great, good, and happy, He

He is ſtrictly impartial in his Rewards and Puniſhments; — he cheriſhes Virtue wherefoever it is found, and ſeverely chaſtiſes Vice, in thoſe whom milder Means will not reclaim.

THIS is only a ſlight Sketch of this excellent Prince's Character, yet has it taken up ſo much of my Paper, that I have but juſt Room to tell you, that my next ſhall preſent you with ſomethink, I know, you will be pleaſed to hear, concerning the charming Princeſs *Amelia*; and that I am,

With the greateſt Reſpect,

Madam,

Your moſt obedient Servant,

CAMILLA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXLV.

From Stella *to* Melanthe, *on being told that Lady had ridiculed her retired Way of Life, imputing it to Poverty, and the Loſs of a Lover.*

Madam,

I HAVE ſo long ſince found out how little the Friendſhips of this World are to be depended upon, that I am ſeldom ſurpriſed at hearing any of my Actions cenſured by thoſe, who by their Profeſſions I ſhould rather have expected would have defended them. I muſt ſay, however, that I flattered myſelf you would not have been among the Number I have mentioned, much leſs could have believed, you would have exerted your great Talent of Ridicule, on a Subject which, if true, ought to excite Compaſſion in a generous Mind.

You pretend, it ſeems, to have diſcovered Motives for my living in a retired Way, which, thank Heaven, I am far from knowing myſelf; — but ſuppoſing it were true, that by the ſudden Death of an unjuſt Guardian, I were, indeed, deprived of the beſt Part of my Fortune, and

and alſo, on that Occaſion, I had loſt a Lover, who was very dear to me, and to whom I expected to have been married, were either of theſe Misfortunes fit Matters for Mirth ?

But how eaſy is it for Ill-nature to convert every thing to its own Purpoſe ! — How different my Reaſons for Retirement are, from thoſe you aſcribe for it, the World will ſee, in a very little Time, and thoſe, who at preſent are witty at my Expence, be obliged to take Shame to themſelves.

In the mean time, I take the Liberty, on Account of our former Friendſhip, to adviſe you to be leſs extravagant in your Pleaſantries upon me, as they will hereafter turn more to your Confuſion, than at preſent they involve me in. — Thus much I will aſſure you, that tho' I have ſuſtained ſome Loſs by the Death of my Guardian, it is not conſiderable enough to hinder me from appearing in the Manner I have been accuſtomed ; and as to the Match being broke off with Mr. *L.* I ſhall always do that Gentleman the Juſtice to ſay, he has neither acted a diſhonourable nor ungenerous Part, nor am I the diſconſolate and deſpairing Creature, you have taken ſo much Pains to repreſent me. — On his Return from *Boloign*, you will be convinced of this Truth ; till when, you would do well to ſuſpend your Judgment, leſt it ſhould be found as little to be relied upon, as your Sincerity

cerity to a Perſon who never gave you any Cauſe of Offence, and, perhaps, of all your Acquaintance, was the fartheſt from ſuſpecting it was in your Nature, to treat any one in the Manner you have done the juſtly reſentful

STELLA.

P. S. I deſire no Anſwer to this. — I am too well aſſured, by the moſt undeniable Proofs, how ſmall a Share I have in your good Wiſhes, or Eſteem, to give Credit to any Profeſſions of Kindneſs, ſhould you think it worth your while to make them, and therefore to prevent all Occaſion of future Correſpondence between us, I ſend you back the Book I borrowed of you. — Adieu for ever.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXLVI.

From Aranthe *in the Country, to* Olivia *in Town, in Answer to a Letter she had received from that Lady, testifying her Disrelish of all the Pleasures of* London, *and inviting her to come down, and partake with her the more innocent Amusements she enjoyed at the Seat of Lady* B***.

My dear Olivia,

I Received yours with that Satisfaction I always do every thing that comes from you; but, I assure you, what afforded me the most was, that Part wherein you acquaint me with your perfect Recovery from that Indisposition you laboured under when I left *London*, and of which, indeed, I was extremely impatient to hear. As for any other Intelligence, than such as relates to the Welfare of my Friends, it attracts little of my Attention. — What is it to me, who loves who? What Wife has eloped? Or what Virgin beguiled her Parents Vigilance? Who made the finest Shew on the Birth-Day? What long expecting Courtier has at last obtained a Place? Or who has made, or lost, his Fortune at Play? The Place and Company I now am in, has given

me more refined Ideas: — I now despise and pity the vain Pursuits, the fantastic Pleasures, and empty, fleeting Joys of the giddy Town, and can sit down in a shady Bower, at the End of a long-living Gallery of aged Trees, and say with *Cowley*,

All this World's Noise appears to me
But as a dull, ill-acted Comedy.

O! my dear *Olivia*, could you but truly taste the innocent Delights, the tranquil uninterrupted Joys a Country Life affords, you would not lose one Moment of Life in that Scene of endless Hurry and Confusion, but fly to this enchanting Recess, where Life is Life indeed; — where Nature pours forth all her Hoard of Sweets, regaling every Sense; — where Heaven's own Hand, which Way so ever you turn, spreads out the beauteous Prospect, and the Art of Man aims only to preserve the Divine Original entire, not to disguise it by imaginary Embellishments.

I had your Promise, when we parted, that you would soon follow me down. — I told Lady *B* * * * of it, and she impatiently expects you. — When walking together thro' the fragrant Shades, or lie reclined upon a mossy Bank, in a cool Grot, close by the Side of a clear Stream, which gently flows and murmers o'er the Pebbles in its Passage, we wish *Olivia* here, and cry, 'Tis only she is wanting.

Haste

Haste then, my dear *Olivia*, to compleat our Happineſs, and begin your own. — Believe a Perſon, whom you have been pleaſed to allow a tolerable Judge in moſt Things, that Nature never formed a Scene more delectable than what you will here be preſented with. — I never look round me, without theſe Lines of Mr. *Waller*'s coming into my Mind,

Sure Heav'n has left this Spot of Earth uncurſt,
To ſhew how all Things were created firſt.

But I flatter myſelf I need throw no Temptations in your Way, and that as ſoon as Convenience permits, your own Inclination, of itſelf, will be ſufficient to bring you to,

My dear *Olivia*,

Yours, *&c.*

Aranthe.

EPISTLE CXLVII.

From Mira *to* Euphrosine, *on false Breeding, or an Affectation of Complaisance and Politeness.*

My dear Euphrosine,

THERE are a Sort of People in the World, pretty frequently met with, who, by an aukward Imitation of Manners, to which they have not been accustomed, not only render themselves extremely ridiculous, but also are equally troublesome to others: — I mean your Pretenders to Good-Breeding: — The Affectation without the Reality, produces a Thousand Impertinencies, to which I know not if a downright Abruptness of Behaviour is not preferable.

THERE is a reigning Mistake in most Parents concerning this Point. — It is not those Accomplishments, which Persons of Condition usually give their Children, that, in my Judgment, constitutes the Whole of Good-Breeding, tho' I own they very much contribute towards it. — One may sing, dance, play well on various Sorts of Instruments, have a perfect Understanding in Music, and speak the *French* and *Italian* Languages with the greatest Fluency; yet, after all,

all, be very far from what I call well-bred. — True Politeneſs is not a Science to be learned in Schools. — Nature muſt beſtow a Genius: — That Genius muſt be improved by reading Works of Delicacy and Spirit, and heightened by a Freedom of Converſation with Perſons of Taſte. — It is an Enemy to all kind of Conſtraint, does every Thing with Eaſe, and, tho' it is ſure never to offend, it alſo never is at the Expence of Flattery to oblige. — What the witty Earl of *Rocheſter* ſaid of Poetry, I think may be properly applied to Good-Breeding. — His Words are theſe:

In Poetry, that ſooneſt wins the Heart,
Where moſt of Nature's ſeen, and leaſt of Art.

Form and Ceremony, Things which many People ſtudy, and take ſo much Pains to be well verſed in all the Punctilioes of, ſpoil the beſt Education, and make the Perſon who practiſes them diſagreeable and tireſome.

Sir *Thomas* ****, who, you know, I greatly eſteem on account of his Honeſty and Good-nature, brought his new-married Bride to viſit me the other Day. — I had been told ſhe was a fine-bred Woman, and received her in a Manner ſuitable to that Character; but, dear *Euphroſine*, how much did I find myſelf at a Loſs, either to look or ſpeak before her. — She ſo peſter'd me with Compliments and Aſſurances of

the great Sense of the high Honour I had done her, in permitting her to wait upon me, that I had scarce a Word to answer in return. — I offered her a Pinch of Snuff, in order to gain a Moment's Truce; but she happening to have her Right-hand Glove off, took the Box from me with her Left, and laid it in the Window, 'till she had drawn on her other Glove, saying, she would not be so rude to touch my Snuff with naked Fingers. — I called for Tea sooner than I would have done, in the Hope of shortening her Visit; but, unluckily, put Sugar into her Cup, without asking whether she liked it, or not. — She sipp'd and sipp'd, and all the Time praised the Tea, as the most excellent she had ever tasted. — Sir *Thomas* not having observed that I had put Sugar into the Cup, cried, *You are certainly, my dear, the best Judge of the Flavour, drinking it, as you do, without Sugar.* — On which I remembered I had been guilty of an Indecorum, in not consulting her Palate on that Account, and asked her Pardon. — She appeared in a most terrible Confusion, and told Sir *Thomas*, she was surprized he should mention any thing of it. — *Truly*, said the Knight, with his usual Simplicity, *I was quite ignorant of the Matter; but since it is so, I think I have more Reason to be surprised to see you punish yourself by drinking what, I know, you have an Aversion to, rather than speak a Word to prevent it.* To which she repiled, Oh! fie, Sir *Thomas*, how can you talk so! Where do you think I

was

was bred? — Then turning to me, made a long Apology for the Abruptness of her Husband. — I took his Part, but durst not say too much, for fear of continuing the Dispute. At last they took their Leave; — I waited on them to the Head of the Stair-Case; but the good Lady so often turned back to prevent me, and dropt me so many Curtesies, that returning them made my Knees ach for an Hour after.

As I have the most perfect Regard for every Branch of your Family, I would wish you to warn your young Sister, who, I hear, is just come from the Boarding-School, not to mistake this overstrained Complaisance for true Politeness. She may possibly have acquired a certain Stiffness of Behaviour under the Tuition of her formal Governess, which, if not in Time converted into a more easy Habit, might render her other Accomplishments of less Merit in the Eyes of the Discerning. I am,

With the sincerest Amity,

My dear *Euphrosine*,

Yours, *&c.*

MIRA.

EPISTLE CXLVIII.

From Hillaria *to* Clio, *complaining of the Inconveniencies which frequently attend being made the Confidante of a Secret.*

My dear Clio,

THERE is an Evil under the Sun, (as the wise *Agar* says,) which People do not at first apprehend to be one, yet, for the most Part, find it so; I mean that of being trusted with what ought to be kept a Secret. Do not mistake me now, and imagine I have so little the Gift of Taciturnity, that I cannot hold my Tongue when I am desired, or that I am troubled with the Itch of wanting to reveal hidden Things. — No; — I assure you, that, tho' I have no Secrets of my own, I can keep those of other People with as much Ease as if I never had known, or had forgot them; which latter is, indeed, sometimes the Case with me.

It is, I believe, about three Weeks ago, that *Belinda* came to me, in a great Hurry, — seemed in some Confusion, and told me, that *Arsames*, her own Sister's Husband, had just been making a most passionate Declaration of Love to her; but

but begged I would not mention the least Hint of it to any Person in the World: *For*, said she, *if the Thing should take Air, my Sister, who loves him furiously, would be the most miserable Creature in Life.* I replied, she might depend on my Fidelity; on which she seemed satisfied, and took her Leave, I suppose, to give the same Intelligence to others as she had done to me; for the very next Day I heard it spoke of in three or four Companies, and soon after found it was become an universal Secret.

ARSAMES himself was told of it, and whether guilty or not, highly resented the Report she had spread of him: — She took it into her Head to lay the whole Blame upon me, either by accusing me of betraying what she had discovered to me in Confidence, or, by pretending it was a Story invented by myself: Which of these it was I have not yet been able to find out; but the whole Family look as gloomy upon me, as if, by the last Will and Testament of some deceased Relation, I had deprived them of an Estate each was in Expectation of.

Sure, of all the Follies under the Sun, there is none greater than that of running from House to House, under Pretence of disburthening one's Mind of something that lies heavy upon it: For my own Part, I never could find there was any Necessity for telling any one Person what I wished

wiſhed to keep concealed from others. In my Opinion, a Secret, in this Point, may be compared to Glaſs, one Flaw endangers its flying into a Thouſand Pieces; but if it ever ſhould ſo happen, that, on an extraordinary Accident, my Head were overcharged with ſomething too ponderous for my Carriage, I ſhould certainly think one Friend, of a common Share of Underſtanding and Capacity, ſufficient to aſſiſt me in ſupporting it, and not call out for Help from every one I knew.

But to leave theſe Sieves, (for ſo, I think, all ſuch as *Belinda* may be juſtly called,) to the Contempt they bring upon themſelves, I am only ſorry for thoſe who, unhappily, are made their Confidantes. 'Tis a ſad thing, methinks, to have a Story forced upon one, as it were, and then be made to ſuffer for the Knowledge of it; yet, I perceive, this is the Caſe with many People, as well as myſelf, and there is ſcarce any avoiding it, if one converſe much with the World. I am reſolved, therefore, at leaſt I think I am ſo, to uſe my utmoſt Endeavours to fly, for the future, that Variety of mixed Company I once ſo much delighted in, and ſee none but a few ſelect Friends; from whom I ſhall be ſure of receiving no Mortification of the Nature *Belinda* has occaſioned me.

I

I KNOW you will tell me, these Reflections are too grave to be lasting; — that whatever I may intend in the Humour I am just now in, will be baffled the first new Temptation to the contrary; and that I could not hear a Party of Pleasure were forming, without agreeing to make one in it, even tho' *Belinda* herself were of the Number.

I OWN, indeed, my Disposition has somewhat too much of the Volatile in it; but the more I am able to restrain it, the more I shall shew the Strength of that good Sense, which can alone justify the Friendship with which you favour

Yours, sincerely,

HILLARIA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE CXLIX.

From Panthea *in* France, *to* Miranda *in* London, *excusing herself for not having kept her Promise, and giving her an Account of the Motives which had induced her to stay so much longer there than she intended.*

WHAT will you think of me, my dear *Miranda*, when, after the repeated Assurances I have given you of quitting *France*, you find I am still here, and, instead of myself, you only receive a Letter from me? — Nay, what, indeed, can I say in my own Defence, against the too just Accusation you will, doubtless, lay upon me? Why, truly nothing, but that I am a weak Woman, and that there are some sort of Temptations, which I am altogether unable to resist. The pressing Entreaties of Madame de *M**** are of that Number, and to these I may add those of Monsieur the Marquis de St *Andre*, and his agreeable Lady: They have a fine Country Seat, six Leagues distant from *Rouen*. They had been there on the same Errand as we, — that of being present at the Nuptials of the Sister of Madame *de M****. This Ceremony, with the subsequent Feastings and Rejoicings, being over,

over, they prepared to return home. They engaged Madame de *M**** to accompany them, and to use all their Interest to prevail on me to be one of the Party.

BELIEVE me, I held out as long as any Woman in the same Circumstances could have done, but at last was forced to yield to such gallant and repeated Importunities. As to Monsieur *Marivaux*, he said not one Word to tempt me, either by representing the Pleasures of the Place to which we were going, or by endeavouring to perswade me how much my Presence would add to them. — He doubted not but I remembered, he had threatened me before our setting out from *Paris*, with finding Ways and Means to engage my Continuance in *France*, for a longer Time than I intended, and guessing I should be aware of him, and prepared to answer any Arguments he could urge on that Score, affected an Indifference, which, as I did not immediately reflect on the Occasion, a little surprized me, from a Person of his Wit and Politeness; — but, on our Arrival, he soon let me see into the Motive of his Taciturnity, and made good the Saying of another very witty Man of my Acquaintance, which was this:

Wit is as difficult to be kept in, as a burning Coal in the Mouth.

THE

The Moment we were set down to a fine Collation, which Madame the Marchioness had before sent Orders should be prepared for our Reception, the wicked *Marivaux* began to tieze me, on the little Force of that Resolution I had so much boasted of.—*This is not* Dieppe, *Madam*, said he, *and I am afraid, tho' there are many Rivers, none of them are navigable, so that you will find a great Difficulty in getting to* England *by the twelfth of this Month, as you proposed to do.* In fine, my dear *Miranda*, he rallied so unmercifully, that you yourself, as angry as you would have been at the Cause I had given him, must have pitied me. As I had little to say for myself, Monsieur the Marquis, Madame the Marchioness, Madame de *M****, and another Lady who was with us, thought themselves obliged to take my Part; — which they did with so much Spirit, that he, at last, promised to pursue the Theme no farther, provided I would forgive what was past — This you may be sure I was very glad to do, as I was very unable to cope with him, even tho' there had been less Justice on his Side the Question.

I should not have taken up so much of my Paper with this Gentleman, but that I thought even the most minutest Circumstance relating to a Person, whose Works I have seen you so much transported with, could not but be agreeable to you.

Ah!

Ah! my Dear, the *French* have an Infinity of Wit, 'tis true; but then they have alſo an Infinity of Encouragement to enliven their Ideas. I look upon it, that it is not ſo much to the Clearneſs of the Air they breathe, nor the Purity of the Wines they drink, they are indebted for that harmonious Flow of Style, ſo remarkable both in their Converſation and Writings, as to the Favours they receive from thoſe of a ſuperior Rank, and the Reſpect which a Man or Woman of Genius is always treated with by them. Here it is not neceſſary, as in *England*, to have a great Eſtate, or Title, to be introduced to the Acquaintance of the firſt Nobility in the Kingdom: Wit, Ingenuity, and Learning, are ſufficient Recommendations for the Perſon poſſeſt of them. Well, therefore, may Merit flouriſh in a Country where it is held in ſuch high Veneration, not rewarded with empty Praiſes only, but alſo with ſuch other Benefits, as are moſt ſuitable to the Wants of the Receiver.

I have often been ſorry to obſerve the Negligence with which our Quality treat thoſe Authors, whoſe Writings they have found moſt capable of entertaining them. — A narrow Fortune naturally occaſions a Dejection of Spirits. — A Perſon muſt have a great Soul indeed, who, oppreſs'd by the Indigencies of Life, employs his Time, and lays out the Labour of his Brain, merely to give Pleaſure to an inconſiderate and and ungrateful Age, which enquires not into his Affairs,

Affairs, nor would afford Redreſs in any Exigence, if made known, and never ſo deſerving Commiſeration. — Sometimes, I confeſs, it happens, that a Tomb-ſtone, or Monument, is erected to the Memory of a deceaſed Genius, at a very great Expence; but, I fear, this Act of public Spirit, is rather the Effect of Oſtentation, than true Generoſity, and puts me in Mind of an old well known Diſtich:

Seven Cities now contend for Homer *dead,*
Thro' which the living Homer *begg'd his Bread.*

But I will dwell no longer on ſo diſagreeable a Subject: — Things will be as they are, in ſpite of all that can be ſaid, nor will the Generality be influenced by the Example of a Few; beſides, they tell me, the Poſt is juſt going out, and allows me no more time than juſt to aſſure you, that Madame *de M**** ſets out for *Paris* ten Days hence. — I ſhall accompany her as far as her Siſter's, where, purſuant to my firſt Reſolution, I ſhall take my Leave, and depart for *Dieppe*. I dare not ſay how much I wiſh to be with you, leſt you ſhould think my long Abode in *France* has made me imbibe ſome Part of that Inſincerity this Nation is ſo famous for; but whatever I may ſeem to you at preſent, you ſhall always find a true *Engliſh* Heart in the Boſom of,

My dear *Miranda*,

Yours, *&c.*

Panthea.

FINIS.