EPISTLES
FOR THE
LADIES.

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

PRIOR.

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EPISTLES

FOR THE

LADIES.

BOOK I.

EPISTLE I.

LUCIDAMIA *to* MELANTHE,

On her proposing the Means of carrying on a secret Correspondence with a Lover she was sent by her Parents into the Country to avoid. With the Story of Clydamon *and* Flavia.

THUS banished from all the gay Delights of Life, and the more solid Pleasures of Friendship and Society, I need not tell you how agreeably I was surprized at receiving a Letter from my dear *Melanthe.* — The Methods you have taken, not only to discover the Place of my Retreat, but also to elude the Vigilance of my watchful Guardians, is a Proof that your Wit and Ingenuity are equal to your Good-nature and Compassion, and have the

highest Claim to my Admiration as well as Gratitude. — How shall I ever sufficiently repay your Tenderness! — My Distress is lessened by the Share you take in it, and every Woe sits lighter on me, by your seeming to feel them so heavy; — yet, generous *Melanthe!* — I have something farther than all this to thank you for: I have an Obligation to you, which perhaps you think not of, nor even imagine I should take as one; yet it is such as I tremble to reflect what I must have endured, had you acted in a contrary manner. — If, instead of proposing to me the Means of continuing a Correspondence with *Seraphino*, you had put your Stratagem in execution, and accompanied your Letter with one from that unhappy Youth, how miserable must I have been! — My Heart sinks in me, and a chill Horror runs through all my Veins at the bare Idea: — No, *Melanthe*, I am unhappy enough already, without the dreadful Addition of a Consciousness of deserving to be so. — When I encouraged the Addresses of *Seraphino*, the Condescention was authorized by my Parents; and if the Graces of his Person, and a nearer Acquaintance with his many Virtues, made me yield up my whole Heart to the enchanting Influence, I had nothing wherewith to reproach myself; but now, in this sad Alternative, when those who, under Heaven, have the sole Right of disposing me, command me to see him no more, how can I,—how dare I, indulge an Inclination, which, however innocent in itself, would be rendered criminal by Disobedience. — From the

the Power which ſeparates us there is no Appeal. — *Seraphino*, as well as I, ought to be ſenſible of this Truth, and I hope will not ſuffer his Paſſion to get ſo far the better of his Reaſon, as to make him wiſh a Union, which could not but be attended with the extremeſt Wretchedneſs to both of us. — What though the Quarrel between our Fathers, aroſe from a meer Trifle to the judging World, we ſee to what fatal Lengths it has tranſported them, that there is ſo little Probability of their ever being reconciled, that every Hour ſeems to give Increaſe to their Animoſity; and it is not our Province to look to the *Cauſe*, but the *Effects*. — It is enough for us to know their Will; — let others examine into the Motives of that Will; we are not to *enquire*, but to *obey*. — Hard is it, I confeſs, to bring one's ſelf to think with Indifference of a Perſon one has been long accuſtomed to regard with the moſt perfect Tenderneſs. — I know not whether the Separation of the Soul and Body, in the Agonies of Death, can inflict Pains more terrible, yet am I well convinced I owe no leſs a Sacrifice to my Duty. — I do not pretend that I am *Heroine* enough to perform it as I ought, but I aſſure you I am *Chriſtian* enough to uſe my utmoſt Efforts for that End. — Let *Seraphino* animate and ſtrengthen me by his Example; it is the only Favour I ask of him, or will ever receive from him. — I beg you will communicate my Sentiments to him on this Head, and that he may be certain they are my own, you may let him ſee the Teſtimony under

my Hand, if you judge proper, or ſhall find it neceſſary.—If our mutual Misfortune has ſo deep an Effect on him, as you ſeem to think it has, it is an Action truly worthy the Generoſity of your Nature, to alleviate his Sorrows; but, alas! this is not to be done by cheriſhing any vain Hopes he may conceive concerning me, or encouraging him to perſiſt in Deſires which muſt be fruitleſs, becauſe unwarrantable.—Rather ſet before his Eyes the Madneſs of proſecuting a Suit, which, were he to ſucceed in, would entail certain Ruin on himſelf, as well as the Perſon he pretends to love.—Illuſtrate your Arguments with ſome of thoſe ſad Examples that daily Obſervation preſents us with, of the Miſeries of marrying without the Conſent of Friends.—I will furniſh you with one, which my former Intimacy with the unfortunate young Lady, gave me a great deal of Pain on being told of.

The Story of Clydamon *and* Flavia.

'*Clydamon* and *Flavia* were in a manner bred 'up together; the near Neighbourhood of 'their Parents, and a certain Parity of Senti-'ments, occaſioning the greateſt Intimacy be-'tween the Families: From their moſt early 'Years, each diſcovered a more than ordinary 'Tenderneſs for the other, inſomuch that they 'were called Husband and Wife long before 'there was the leaſt Thought of their ever be-'ing ſo. What was ſpoke in Merriment, how-'ever, became ſerious, as the young Couple

'grew

'grew nearer to Maturity.—The Father of *Flavia* thought he could not dispose of his Daughter better than to *Clydamon*; and the other was very well pleased to give his Son a Wife educated in the manner *Flavia* had been.—But while this Matter was on the Carpet, the Mother of that young Beauty unfortunately died, and that Accident put off for a Time any further Discourse upon that Head.—It would doubtless have been resumed as soon as the Mourning was over, if an unforeseen Misfortune to the Lovers Hopes had not happened.—The Father of *Flavia* had not buried his amorous Inclinations in the Grave of his deceased Wife, he fell in Love with a Widow Lady, and was married to her in less than three Months after the Funeral. The first Use she made of the too great Ascendant she had gained over her Husband, was to break off the intended Match between *Flavia* and *Clydamon*, in favour of a Son she had by a former Husband, who was unhappily captivated by the Charms of that young Lady.

'THE Father of *Clydamon* was so incensed at the Slight put on his Alliance, that he testified his Sense of it in Terms the other could not very well bear; and these two old Gentlemen, from being inseparable Friends, became the most implacable Enemies.—The Lovers were forbid ever to speak to each other any more; but Love, and the Inadvertency of Youth, got the better of their Duty, and they chose

‘ rather to hazard all the Miſeries they might
‘ ſhare together, than endure thoſe which Sepa-
‘ ration inflicted: — *Flavia* packed up what va-
‘ luable Trinkets ſhe was Miſtreſs of, and quit-
‘ ted her Father's Houſe at Midnight: *Clyda-*
‘ *mon* had provided a Chaiſe and Six, which,
‘ with a proper Eſcorte, carried them both to
‘ *London*, where, on their Arrival, they were
‘ married. — I received a Viſit from her, and
‘ gay as ſhe then ſeemed, I trembled for the
‘ Conſequence of the raſh Step ſhe had taken,
‘ though I muſt confeſs I did not apprehend
‘ it of that terrible Nature it proved.

‘ After ſubſiſting ſome little Time on the
‘ Sale of their Jewels, they were driven to the
‘ extremeſt Neceſſities. — It was in vain they
‘ endeavoured, by the moſt ſubmiſſive Letters,
‘ to move the Hearts of their obdurate Parents.
‘ In vain that *Clydamon* uſed his utmoſt Efforts
‘ for procuring ſome Poſt, or Employment, by
‘ which he might ſupport himſelf and his ſtill-
‘ beloved *Flavia*; every Attempt he made
‘ was unſucceſsful, and the Diſtreſs of this un-
‘ happy Pair was ſuch, as no human Patience
‘ could ſuſtain. — I heard they had not even
‘ Food for ſeveral Days, when *Clydamon*, grown
‘ deſperate, reſolved on Meaſures to force that
‘ Relief, which the cruel World refuſed to his
‘ Complaints. — By ſome means or other, he
‘ borrowed a Piſtol, and turned Robber on the
‘ Highway. — He got ſeveral little Bootys,

‘ which

'which ſufficed to keep them from periſhing, 'but not a Sum to enable him to leave off this 'dreadful Vocation.—At length he was taken, 'tried, and condemned to be hanged: — 'The ſhocking News ſoon reached his Fa- 'ther's Ears, and what paternal Affection could 'not induce him to grant, the Fears of diſgra- 'cing his Family, now wrung from him: — He 'came immediately to Town, and by the Dint 'of a large Sum of Money, properly applied, 'obtained a Pardon for his Son, on Condition 'he ſhould tranſport himſelf to ſome one or 'other of our Colonies abroad, the Choice of 'which was left to his own Option.

'THIS unfortunate young Gentleman, ear- 'neſtly begged Permiſſion to throw himſelf at 'his Father's Feet before his Departure, but 'could neither obtain a Grant of that Requeſt, 'nor of any thing, wherewith he might have 'been enabled to get his Bread in the Place to 'which he was going, and he embarked with 'the unhappy *Flavia*, who on no Terms would 'be perſwaded to ſtay behind him, in a Con- 'dition ſuch as gave him little room to rejoice 'his forfeited Life had been redeemed.

'PROVIDENCE, however, ordered it ſo, that 'they ſtood in need of no farther human Aſſiſ- 'tance; — the Ship they ſailed in ſprung a 'Leak, and the greateſt Part of thoſe on board 'were loſt, among the Number of whom were

'this faithful Pair, whom no Afflictions could 'change from that inviolable Love they had 'vowed to each other, and whose good Qua- 'lities, if not obscured by Disobedience, had cer- 'tainly merited a better Fate.'

See, my dear *Melanthe!* the sad Effects of marrying without the Consent of Parents. — By it we forfeit all Claim to their Protection, and the World's Esteem, — become the Prey of Calamity and Scorn, and in that hopeless, helpless Situation, are too apt, as in the Case of *Clydamon*, to grow dead to every Sense, but that of our Wretchedness, and run headlong into Crimes to which our Nature is most averse. — But should we pursue only such Courses for our Relief, as are most laudable, we cannot expect Length of Days, or that the few we are permitted to enjoy should be crowned with any true Prosperity. — O defend me, Heaven, from ever being the Victim of Disobedience! — The last Words my Father said to me, as he was putting me into the Coach, ring still in my Ears, and I hope will always dwell upon my Mind: — *If you would avoid my everlasting Curse*, cried he, *make no Attempts to disappoint my Will, nor think of* Seraphino *more.* — Alas, I could only answer with my Tears, but my Heart vowed Obedience to the severe Injunction. — If you truly love me, help to fortify this pious Resolution in me. — Write to me as often as Opportunity permits; but mention not *Seraphino*, till you can assure me

he

he has led me the Way to Resignation. — Farewell, and believe that in all Circumstances of Life I am

Dear Madam,

Yours sincerely,

LUCIDAMIA.

EPISTLE II.

From the same to her Mother, on hearing she was sent for to London, *in order to be compelled to marry a Man she had the utmost Aversion for.*

Most dear, and honoured Madam,

AS on a thousand Occasions I have experienced your Indulgence, I impute rather to your Compliance with my Father's Request than your own Inclination, that I have been denied the Happiness of an Answer to any of those many many Letters I have sent since my Confinement in this solitary Recess; and am therefore emboldened once more to pour out the Fulness of my Soul before you; — to beseech you to have Compassion on my forlorn Condition; — nay, even to conjure you by the tender Name of Mother, and all the Ties of Nature and Affection, to vouchsafe me your Assistance in this distracting Exigence, — this terrible Dilemma, that, whichsoever way I turn, affords nothing but the Prospect of eternal Ruin. — My Aunt has just now shewn me a Letter she received from my Father, wherein he desires her to prepare for our Return

to

to *London*; but, O Heaven! to what End!— to be the wretched Bride, the Victim of a Man I can have no Idea of as a Husband!—a Man, who, were my Heart entirely free from all Attachment to another, I never could be brought to love!—How can I assume a Tenderness it is not in my Power to feel!—To be sincere in all my Words and Actions, was the first Precept of my early Youth; — I have ever since held it sacred, and I cannot, and am certain you would not wish me to forego it.—But I am now told that Reason ought to guide Inclination, that the softer Passions should give way to the Considerations of Interest and the World's Esteem, and that these plead strongly in favour of *Andrugio*:— Alas, how different are my Thoughts!—What are his Titles to me!—What all the Honours his late Success has gained!—Meer Shadows to attract the distant Eye, but afford no Temptation upon a near Approach.—Can his Wealth purchase for me the least Moment's Peace of Mind?—Or outward Grandeur compensate for inward Discontent?—O no,—where *Hearts* are not linked by a secret Sympathy, an invisible, undiscernable Attraction that binds them to each other, Heaven never intended a Union of *Hands*, nor will vouchsafe a Blessing.—Thus, Madam, I have heard you say, you argued with yourself, when you refused a Coronet for my Father:— Your Parents indeed did not oppose your Inclination, but left you free to make your Choice between *Love* and *Greatness*;—that, alas! is not my unhappy Case;—yet do I not complain,

complain, much less presume to expect you should sacrifice your Resentment, to comply with the Tenderness of my Heart.—As I am torn from what I had once your Leave to think would make my greatest Happiness, I only intreat I may not be forced to what I know will be the extremest Wretchedness that can be inflicted on me.—*Celia* has given me some Hints which I believe she had from my Aunt, that it is more out of Hatred to *Seraphino*, than Goodwill to *Andrugio*, that my Father has taken this cruel Resolution, and meerly to prevent my disposing of myself against his Consent, intends to dispose of me so contrary to my own.—Ah Madam! if it be so, I beseech you to assure him, as you safely may, that there is nothing (not even this dreadful Marriage) which more shocks my Imagination, than being guilty of so rash, so unpardonable a Violation of my Duty.—I agree to renounce *Seraphino* for ever, —utterly to abjure him, — to see him no more, and, as little as possible, to think of him.—I will put it out of my Power to listen to any Dictates my fond Heart might suggest in his Favour, by the most sacred Obligations that Words can form, or Incredulity exact from me; but if all this should be thought too weak to attone for my Failing in that implicit Obedience is expected from me, reverse at least my Sentence;—punish me by any other kind of Means provoked Authority can invent;—condemn me to pass the whole Remainder of my Days in lonely Solitude; — shut me from all Society, or banish me where only

Lions

Lions and Tygers dwell. — Fate cannot reach me in any Shape ſo horrid as the Embraces of *Andrugio.*

Pardon, I beſeech you, Madam, the Wildneſs of theſe Expreſſions, which nothing but the moſt poignant Anguiſh of the laſt Deſpair could have forced from me; and be aſſured, that tho' I have ſaid much more than you may think I ought to have done, I have ſaid little in compariſon of what is felt by,

Madam,

Your unhappy, but, as far as I am able,

Obedient Daughter,

Lucidamia.

EPISTLE III.

From a Lady of Quality, to her Friend in the Country.

Dear Silvia.

While I am envying you the true Felicities of a calm Retreat, you are repining at being deprived for a few Months of the noiſy Enjoyments of this tumultuous Town. — You long to know what paſſes among the gay, the trifling World, wiſh to be told of the Foibles you pity, and in ſpite of all your Good-nature, are ſtarved for want of a little Scandal. — Indeed, my dear, I am the moſt unfit Perſon alive to treat you with this kind of Food; however, I will do my beſt to entertain you, but aſſure you at the

ſame

ſame time, that it ſhall be only at the Expence of my own Follies, not at that of other People.

You know though I loſt my Husband before what they call the *Honey-Moon* of Marriage was expired, and became a Widow at ſixteen, I always declared againſt entering into a ſecond Engagement. I need not tell you my Sincerity in this Point, ſince you have been Witneſs of many Inſtances to convince you of it. — For upwards of four Years I perſiſted in my Reſolution; but, you do not ſee my Bluſhes, while I confeſs that towards the middle of the fifth, other Ideas came into my Head. — About that Time I happened to meet *Dorimenes* at Lady *Lucia*'s Aſſembly; he was juſt then returned from his Travels; the World allows, he is perfectly accompliſhed: — he ſeemed to diſtinguiſh me in a particular manner, directed every thing he ſaid to me, and watched my Eyes for an Approbation: — All the Company took Notice of his Behaviour; they ſpoke of it wherever they came, and from this firſt Interview gave him to me for a Lover.

AFTER this, I could go to no public Place without ſeeing him; whether I went to Church, to Court, to the Park, the Ridotto, the Opera, or Play, I was ſure of finding him. — At laſt he took the Liberty of viſiting me, declared an Infinity of Paſſion for me, and left nothing unſaid or unſworn to convince me of the reality of it. It was not Vanity, but a ſecret Liking, that made

made me but too willing to give Credit to his Flatteries: — Yes, *Silvia*, I will own to you that I was weak enough to be pleased with the Person and Address of *Dorimenes*, and also to let him see I was so. — He proposed Marriage, and I had half consented, when a sudden Thought came into my Head, to make Trial how far his Affection would extend. — I told him I had but one Objection to becoming his in the Way he mentioned; which was, that being determined, as I imagined, never to marry again, I had made a Deed of Gift to a Relation, of all I was worth in the World, in case I ever did so, and that the same Moment that made me a *Wife*, made me also a *Beggar*; so that, *said I, with a very serious Air*, it is out of my Power to change my Condition, unless to a Man who has a sufficient Stock of *Fortune* and *Love* to support a Wife of Quality, without the least Contribution on her Part: — The *one* of these, *continued I*, I know you are Master of, but dare not flatter myself you have enough of the *other*, to hazard the Inconveniences of such a Union.

Perfect as he is in the Art of Dissimulation, he could not keep the Shock this Tale gave him from being visible in his Countenance: — You would have been diverted to have seen the aukward Professions he afterwards made; but I felt a certain Tremor at my Heart, that convinced me more than I had been before how much he had got Possession of it. — His Words, indeed, were passionate as ever, but the Accents in which they

they were ſpoke, were faint and languid; he vowed his whole Deſires were centered in my charming Perſon, but his Eyes gave the Lie to every Oath, and while he ſwore he wiſhed no greater Heaven than my Preſence, diſcovered a Reſtleſsneſs to leave me. — I was now no leſs deſirous to be rid of him, and impatient to break off an Entertainment I could no longer find any Pleaſure in. — Some Company luckily came, and relieved us both; and, would you believe it, *Silvia*, we ſince have never met. — He ſent me a Letter the next Day, pretending ſudden Buſineſs into the Country; but I know he is ſtill in Town, though he carefully avoids all Places which threaten him with my Appearance.

I SEE, in my Mind's Eye, as *Hamlet* ſays, the Impatience Friendſhip and Curioſity excite in you for the Sequel of this Adventure, that is, in relation to my Part of it, for I have already informed you of all I can on that of *Dorimenes*. — I was moſt terribly mortified for the firſt four or five Days, and half repented the Stratagem which had loſt me ſo agreeable a Lover, and by putting his Generoſity to too high a Teſt, removed the ſweet Deluſion from my Eyes, which, had it continued, would have afforded me the ſame Satisfaction the reality could have done; but Pride at length came to my Aſſiſtance, and enabled me to think only with Contempt of a Man, who while he pretended the moſt ſublime Paſſion that ever was, had only ſordid Intereſt in view,

view, made his Addresses to my Fortune, not my Person, and could think with *Hudibras*,

What's the Worth of any Thing,
But so much Money as 'twill bring?

On the Recovery of my Liberty, I was sadly alarmed at what might be said in regard to this Affair.—All my Acquaintance had seen the Devoirs paid to me by *Dorimenes*; they now saw those Devoirs were entirely ceased, and I trembled at the Thoughts that my Picture might be drawn in a Willow Garland at all the Tea-Tables in Town, and perhaps exhibited on *Foote*'s Theatre of Mimickry, among his Catalogue of *Miserables.*—I did not find that an Affectation of Gaiety would of itself be sufficient to defend me from the Mischief I so much dreaded; and as I had heard it was a Maxim with Politicians to seem most open in those Things they most endeavoured to conceal, I resolved to put it in practice, and related to every one I came in Company with, the whole Subject of my last Conversation with *Dorimenes*, boasting at the same time of my own happy Artifice, which had rid me of his impertinent Sollicitations.—I had the good Fortune to be believed.—my Character of Insensibility is retrieved; and the Raillery falls wholly on *Dorimenes.*

To you alone, dear *Silvia*, my Weakness is confessed, and I give you Leave to laugh at me as immoderately as you please, provided you put

put it in the Power of nobody elſe to do ſo, and look on the Confidence I repoſe in you as the higheſt Proof of Friendſhip can be given by

Yours affectionately,

SERENA.

EPISTLE IV.

From Marilla *to* Amelia, *giving an Account of her unhappy Paſſion for* Mirtyllo; *her being the Occaſion of his Death; the Diſtraction this dreadful Accident had involved her in, and the Reſolution ſhe had taken upon it.*

My dear AMELIA.

I CANNOT quit the World for ever, without taking a laſt Leave of you, and alſo making you Partaker of a Secret, which had I revealed in Time, perhaps I had not been thus miſerable. — If not fated to Perdition, your kind Advice might have reſtrained my Frenzy. — What have I ſaid! — Wretch that I am! — How dare I, even in Thought, prophanely tax eternal Providence, or lay the Blame of my Impurities on Heaven! — No, in my Intervals of Reaſon I am convinced, and ready with the Poet to acknowledge, that

'Tis our own Wiſdom moulds our State,
Our Faults, or Virtues, make our Fate.

O, How ſhall I begin! — With what Words

ſhall I confeſs my Folly, my Injuſtice, my Perfidiouſneſs, and Ingratitude!—How relate the yet more ſhocking Conſequence! Yet it is a Task which Friendſhip demands from me, and which I have enjoined myſelf, as the firſt Act of that long Penance I have vowed:—Mean, mean Atonement for Guilt like mine!—Take then the dreadful Tale.

You are too well acquainted with the Affairs of our Family, not to know that I was contracted in my Infancy by my Parents to *Antonio*; that I was bred up in the Notion of being one Day his Wife; that no other Man had ever any Acceſs to me on the ſcore of Love; and that both being arrived at a proper Age, the ſacred Ceremony only waited for his Return from *Wiltſhire*, where he went to take Poſſeſſion of an Eſtate lately left him by his Uncle;—but, O *Amelia!* you yet are ignorant what happened during that fatal Abſence.—I was invited by a diſtant Relation of my Mother's to paſs ſome Days with her Daughters, at a Houſe they had hired for the Summer Seaſon a few Miles out of Town;—the Requeſt was complied with:—In an ill Hour I went, and there commenced my unfortunate Acquaintance with *Myrtillo*, who happened to lodge at the next Houſe.—The Gardens of the two Apartments joined, and each had a Back-door, which opened into a curious Walk of mingled Pines and Elms.—As I was a much earlier Riſer than any of the Family I was with, I ſeldom miſſed amuſing myſelf every fair Morn-

ing

ing in this refreſhing Solitude. — *Myrtillo* obſerved me from his Window, and came thither alſo. — At firſt I imagined he was only induced by the ſame Motives with myſelf, but after a very few Interviews, he convinced me that it was more the Pleaſure he took in entertaining me, than thoſe the Place afforded, that had made him quit his Chamber.

IN fine, he declared himſelf my Lover, in Terms which, the Event has ſadly demonſtrated, were no leſs ſincere than they were paſſionate and tender. — O Heaven! how tranſporting were thoſe bliſsful Moments! — In ſpite of the Horrors I now feel, a guilty Satisfaction riſes in my Heart at the Remembrance, and aggravates my Crime. — I had never heard any thing like this from *Antonio:* — From the Time he knew what was meant by the Name of Wife, he had always looked upon me as already ſuch; and all thoſe Extacies of Paſſion, thoſe Impatiencies, thoſe Hopes and Fears, thoſe ſoft Anxieties, which Uncertainty creates, and are ſo pleaſing in the Beginning of Love, were unknown to Perſons who thought themſelves ſecure of each other. — I now found myſelf addreſſed in a Manner altogether new to me, and by the moſt charming of his Sex; the Novelty aided the Graces of his Form and Wit, and hurried me as it were into a Forgetfulneſs of all beſide. — The Obligations I was under, — the Promiſe made by thoſe who had the ſole Right to diſpoſe of me, and which my own Mouth had a thouſand

Times confirmed, were ſcarce ever thought on by me, and when they were, made no Impreſſion.

This deſtructive Intercourſe had continued for about fourteen Days, when my Mother commanded me home, in order to prepare for my Marriage, *Antonio* being on his Return. — One would imagine this Mandate, and the Occaſion of it, ſhould have rouſed my ſleeping Reaſon, and made me ſee the Madneſs of indulging an Inclination ſo impoſſible to be gratified; yet I was ſtill inſenſible, and inſtead of telling *Myrtillo* the Circumſtance I was in, and breaking off all Converſation with him, appointed a Place where we might privately meet after I came to *London*. — As his Deſires were perfectly conſiſtent with Honour and Virtue, he propoſed entreating Permiſſion of my Father to viſit me at home, aſſuring me that his Family and Fortune were ſuch, as he flattered himſelf, would not be diſapproved: But this I poſitively forbid, though without letting him into any Part of the Reaſons I had for doing ſo; my Refuſal, I perceived, gave him a great deal of Pain, as not being able to comprehend the Meaning; but he was obliged to ſubmit, and remain in a Suſpence, which could not but be extremely uneaſy, conſidering the Purity and Ardor of his Affection for me.

Thus did we live, ſeeing each other every Day, and giving and receiving all the Teſtimonies

monies of Love that Virtue would permit me to grant, or the Respect he had for me permit him to ask. — At last the Eve of the Day appointed for my Marriage with *Antonio* arrived; — then, and not till then, were my Eyes open to behold the ridiculous Part I had been acting: — I now found I was not only the most unfortunate, but also deserved to be the most despised of Women. I had deceived *Myrtillo*, wronged *Antonio*, and could expect no less than to be exposed by the one, and ill-treated by the other, when once the nuptial Rites should put me under his Subjection. — I trembled to think what a few Hours must make me; for to break off with *Antonio*, seemed a thing so much impossible, that I never so much as thought of it. — I had appointed to meet *Myrtillo* that Evening, at our usual Rendezvous, the Hour was come, and I had my Capuchin on to go; but when I considered the Necessity there now was for me to reveal to him the Truth of my unhappy Situation, Shame, and the Apprehensions of his just Reproaches, would not suffer me to do it by Word of Mouth; I therefore wrote a few Lines, which, confused and incoherent as they were, served plainly enough to unravel the whole Mystery of my past Behaviour. — When I had sent this away, I was a little more at Ease, and I confess so stupid, as not to give myself the least Concern in what Manner I should form my future Conduct in relation to this Affair, or make any Resolution either to avoid *Myrtillo* after I had given my Hand to *Antonio*, or continue a Correspondence with him.

Indeed I much fear that had I asked myſelf the Queſtion at that Time, I ſhould have been weak and wicked enough to have fixed upon the latter; but the Honour, and I may ſay the too pure Affection of *Myrtillo*, ſaved my Virtue any Trial of that Nature.

I never reflect on the ſtrange Indifference which for ſome Hours poſſeſſed me, without the utmoſt Amazement; but ſoon, alas! this Calm was ſucceeded by a Tempeſt, which ceaſed not, till it drove me to the laſt Deſpair, — a Deſpair which muſt be endleſs, as the Cauſe is irretrievable. — O *Amelia!* that it were poſſible for you to conceive it, — that ſome kind Spirit would whiſper it in your Ears, and ſave my Pen the Shock.

In this Inactivity of Mind I went to Bed, and ſlept the former Part of the Night as uſual; but towards Morning, fell into a Slumber, which preſented me with the moſt diſtracting Images. —I thought *Myrtillo* came to my Bedſide, with ghaſtly Looks, and clad in the diſmal Livery of Death, frowning he looked, and in a Voice, which ſtill methinks I hear, cried, *See, to what your Perfidiouſneſs has reduced* Myrtillo! Then ſhot away, more ſwift than the Lightnings which encompaſſed him.

Screaming I waked; yet ſtill I thought I ſaw the dreadful Viſion. — My affrighted Heart beat with convulſive Throbs, and the cold dead

Dew

Dew hung yet upon my Brow, when a Servant, (who had been but too officious in forwarding my ſecret Interviews with *Myrtillo*,) came into my Chamber, and delivered me a Letter, which ſhe ſaid he had wrote the Night before, and ordered his Servant to bring early in the Morning. I need not tell you with what Confuſion I opened this Epiſtle, though I was far from imagining the fatal Purport. — I here incloſe you a Copy of it, — the very firſt Lines of which will ſhew you the ſad Accompliſhment of my Dream, and the Occaſion I have for unutterable, ever-during Horrors!

THINK for your wretched Friend, what all the Words in the World would find impoſſible to deſcribe. — I ſhriek'd, — I tore my Hair, — I raved, till Nature, quite exhauſted, refuſed to aid my Exclamations, and I fell into a Swoon. — My Mother was called, — my Father ſoon followed, — all the Family were rouſed, and the Letter lying by me on the Pillow, at once diſcovered my Crime, and the Cauſe of my Diſtreſs. — My Father had Preſence enough of Mind to ſend to *Myrtillo*'s Lodgings, flattering himſelf, perhaps, that what he had wrote, might be only the Deception of a Lover, in hope of breaking off my Marriage with *Antonio*; but the Meſſenger returned with Intelligence, that the unhappy Gentleman had indeed been found dead in his Bed that Morning.

I WILL not trouble you with a Repetition of what was ſaid to me on that ſcore; the Condi-

tion I was in, abated great part of those Reproaches my Conduct had so justly merited; and both my Parents at length joined in endeavouring to console me, and also to perswade me, that as the Mischief was past a Remedy, it would be Prudence to conceal what Part I had in it, and fulfil my Engagements with *Antonio*, who possibly might never hear of any thing had passed between me and his unhappy Rival — O God! how did this Proposal add to the Agonies I felt; — judge, *Amelia*, for I know you have a Soul delicate and tender, could I now think of giving myself up to another, and murder a second time the faithful, the betrayed *Myrtillo*; — forbid it Heaven! — forbid it all that is humane. — At such an Act, what could I less expect, than to have seen his injured Shade rise from his Tomb, upbraid my base Ingratitude, and snatch me from the Altar. — No, I was struck with too deep a Sense of the Injustice I had been guilty of, to regard aught but the Means of expiating my Crime, and from the Instant I was capable of thinking of any thing, resolved to fly all Converse with the World, and think how I might put it out of even my own Power, ever to be tempted by its illusive Pleasures, and seek out

Some solitary Cloister's safe Retreat,
And there with holy Virgins live immur'd;
Coarse my Attire, and short my Hours of Rest,
Broke by the melancholly Midnight Bell:
Where Fasting, Tears, and Penitence, and Prayer,
May do Myrtillo *Justice every Hour.*

The

THE Words are borrowed, but ſo exactly conformable to my own Sentiments, that I could not forbear making uſe of them. — Look not on all this as the Effects of a momentary Paſſion, — a Deſpair which will ſoon wear off, and give place to other Ideas. — No, it is the Reſult of ſerious deliberated Thought. — Alas, I had once too little, but have now enough to make me know, that as I have deprived the World of one of its chief Ornaments, the leaſt I can do is, to devote the whole Remainder of my worthleſs Days to Lamentations for his Fate.

I HAVE at laſt prevailed on my Parents to conſent to my Departure. — *Antonio*, who by ſome Accident is acquainted with the fatal Story, no longer urges the Performance of their Promiſe; and to-morrow I take an everlaſting Leave of all that once was dear to me. — Adieu, my ever-valued Friend. — Think ſometimes with Compaſſion on the Sufferings of

The Loſt

MARRILLA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE V.

Enclosed in the Former.

From Myrtillo *to* Marrilla, *after he had swallowed Poison.*

MADAM,

DESPAIR of Life has made me have recourse to Death; your Letter gave a mortal Stab, but tho' *sure*, the Effects might have been *slow*, and in the lingering Torments of the Wound who knows but I might have been driven to some Deed unpardonable, either by Heaven or you;—to prevent which, I have this Moment swallowed a Dose, which in a few Hours will free you from all Apprehensions of any Reproaches from me, and the happy *Antonio* from the Pain of thinking there was a Man in the World who once had Reason to flatter himself with your Affection.

But O permit me once to tell you, it was doubly cruel in you to render me *unjust* as well as *miserable.*—Could I have imagined the Blessing I wished to obtain was the Right of another, not all your Stock of Charms, nor my Excess of Passion, should have compelled me to pursue the guilty Aim.—It is true, I adored you at first Sight, but while my Love was in its Infancy, Time and Absence might have assisted Reason

in

in ſubduing it.—O, wherefore did you ſtrengthen the fond Flame by fallacious Hopes! — Why nouriſh it by fatal Kindneſs, till it became too powerful for Controll! — Alas! you knew little of the Heart you had made ſo much devoted to you, if you foreſaw not the Conſequence of ſuch a Deception.

BUT I have done. — Reſentment ill becomes my preſent State, and I forgive, nay bleſs the Hand that ſends me to my Grave: — when I am duſt, may you live long and happy. — My long laſt Sleep already ſteals upon me, — my Eyelids ſink beneath the Weight, — my Pulſe beats languid, and every earthly Object leſſens, and loſes of its former Value. — Forgive me, Heaven, that thus uncalled I venture to appear before thy great Tribunal; — for, O, I come. — Farewell, vain World, and too-much loved *Marrilla*, farewell for ever,

The Dying

MYRTILLO.

EPISTLE VI.

From Belliza *to* Mira, *acquainting her with the Occaſion of her Quarrel with* Belinda.

MADAM,

IT is only Obedience to your Commands could have made me intrude on Moments which I know are always employed on the moſt ſublime and beneficial Subjects, with any thing ſo trifling

as

as the little Pique *Belinda* has taken it into her Head to have againſt me, much leſs to enter into a Detail of the Follies (to give her Conduct no worſe a Name) of a Perſon for whom I once profeſſed a Friendſhip, and whoſe Weakneſs I ſtill heartily commiſerate; but as ſhe has led the way by firſt mentioning the Affair, and you deſire an Explanation, I ſtand excuſed from any Imputation of *Malice* on the one ſide, or *Impertinence* on the other. — I wonder indeed, ſince *Libertines* of our Sex, as well as of the other, for the moſt part take a Pride in boaſting themſelves ſuch, ſhe did not acquaint you with the Particulars herſelf, and ſpare my Pen the unpleaſing Task. — That ſhe has not done ſo, however, gives me room to hope ſhe is not quite abandoned, and that true Piety is ſtill capable of ſtriking her with ſo much Awe, that ſhe dreads the Frowns of *Mira*, even at the Diſtance of an hundred Miles.

You know, Madam, ſhe was always fond of the Pleaſures of the Town, not ſo much for the ſake of themſelves, as becauſe ſhe ſaw them purſued with ſo much Eagerneſs by others. — A Bigot to the Mode, whatever it was, ſhe never took the Pains to conſider whether it reflected Honour or Diſhonour on the Followers; — ſo paſſionate an Admirer of the Court, that the Cuſtoms ſhe ſaw practiſed there, have ever been the conſtant Rule for all her Actions. — I have often watched the Opportunity of finding her in a ſerious Moment, to remind her that the higheſt Titles

Titles were not always accompanied by the beſt Senſe, and repreſented to her in the ſtrongeſt Terms I am Miſtreſs of, the Ridiculouſneſs of apeing the Errors of thoſe we are not at Liberty to cenſure. — She ſeemed to take all I ſaid in good part, but it ſeems thought me ſo little in earneſt, that ſhe ſent a Card inviting me to make one at an Aſſembly ſhe has lately eſtabliſhed for Gaming every Sunday in the Afternoon.

I AM far from being ſo good as I ſhould be; the Gaieties of Life have, perhaps, too many Charms for me, yet I can never hear of this open Defiance of Heaven, this flying in the Face of all Religion and Decency, without being extremely ſhocked, by whomſoever it is practiſed. — Were there no written Law, there is certainly one imprinted in the Heart of every rational Creature, which tells us, if we will liſten to its Dictates, that we are dependant on a Superior Being, who formed, protects, gives us all the good things we enjoy, and has the higheſt Claim to our Adoration; how then can we be ſo ungrateful as to think one Day in ſeven too much to devote entirely to him? — I could not forbear expreſſing my Sentiments to *Belinda* on this head the firſt time I ſaw her, which happened to be the ſame Day I had received her Meſſage. — *Florimel* was preſent, and, as it ſeems ſhe had been juſt as I came in endeavouring to prevail on that Lady to be one of her Party, what I ſaid was leſs to be forgiven. — She affected however to turn it into Ridicule; hooted at my *primitive*

Air

Air, as ſhe was pleaſed to call it, and told me I was turned *Methodiſt*.

Really, Madam, *anſwered I*, I know nothing of the Principles of thoſe People, but if the Appellation given to them, implies no more than a Regularity of Behaviour and Manners, I ſee no Reaſon why it ſhould be a Term of Reproach, and on the contrary ſhould be proud of being a *Methodiſt*.

O, then, *cried ſhe*, your Ambition may be eaſily gratified; — you have no more to do than to put on a Stuff Gown, — tye your Hair up tight in the Nape of your Neck, — travel two or three times a Week to *Moorfields*, and chaunt out ſpiritual Hymns, inſtead of Opera Airs.

I let her have her Laugh out without Interruption, and then told her ſeriouſly, that I wiſhed the Conduct of ſome People might not bring them in time to a Lodging at a certain Dwelling in *Moorfields*, which, when once in, they would not eaſily get out of.

This downright affronted her, and unable to conceal her Spite,—Nay, Madam, *ſaid ſhe, looking contemptouſly upon me*, it is my Turn to be grave now, and I am authorized by your own Example to tell you, that I know nobody more fit to be an Inhabitant of the Place you mention, than one who gives her Advice unasked, and pretends to reprimand a Perſon, who perhaps underſtands much

much better than herſelf what becomes her Rank, and Character in the World.

I THEN told her that I was ſorry to find ſhe had ſo little Diſcernment as to miſtake the Effect of my good Will for an Affront; but ſince I perceived ſhe was among the Number of the Incorrigibles, I ſhould hereafter deſiſt from any Remonſtrances. — I ſhall take care to put it out of your Power to break your Word, *cried ſhe*, for I will never ſpeak to you again; *then turning to* Florimel, my dear you will pardon me, *added ſhe*, but I cannot ſtay where ſhe is. So whisked out of the Room like a Whirlwind.

THIS, Madam, is the Subſtance of the laſt Converſation we are likely ever to have together; for I am informed ſhe makes terrible Complaints of my Behaviour towards her; — rails againſt me wherever ſhe comes, and in fine, carries her Reſentment as far as it is poſſible between Perſons of the ſame Sex we are; and were we of the other, I do not doubt but our Quarrel muſt have been decided before now by Weapons more fatal than the Tongue. — Tho' for my own part, how little pacific ſoever I might have proved if I had been a *Man*, as Nature has made me a *Woman*, I too much commiſerate her Failings, to be very angry at this ill Return of the good Office I intended to her, but muſt own I am not at all ſorry that the Accident has broke off any Intimacy with one, whoſe Conduct I am afraid will, in a ſhort

ſhort time, rob her of all the valuable Part of her Acquaintance.

What Cenſures may be paſt upon me for interfering in a Matter, in which it may be judged I had no immediate Concern, will give me little Pain, as I flatter myſelf the Motive I had to it, will render me excuſable in the Opinion of the excellent *Mira*, who, tho' Miſtreſs of an uncommon Sweetneſs and Benignity of Nature, can never be complaiſant enough to behold with Indifference any Affront offered to Religion or Morality.

So much of my Paper is taken up with this unhappy angry Woman, that I have ſcarce room to congratulate your ſafe Arrival at that delicious Retreat, which I could almoſt wiſh had fewer Charms, ſince I fear it will detain you longer than is for the Advantage of your Friends in *London*:—May you, however, in ſpite of Self-Intereſt, enjoy all the Pleaſures it is capable of affording, without the leaſt Interruption from ill Health, or ill Accidents, till Compaſſion for the Want we have of you, not Wearineſs of the Place, reſtores you to us. — I am, with the utmoſt Sincerity and Reſpect,

Madam,

Your very affectionate Friend,

and devoted humble Servant,

Belliza.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE VII.

From Althea *to* Mira, *excuſing herſelf for not having wrote to her in ſome time, by giving her an Account of the Adventure that had prevented her.*

My dear Friend,

I AM afraid my having ſo long delayed acknowledging the favour of your laſt, has made you by this time look on me as unworthy of calling you ſo; but I am very ſenſible you are not of the Number of thoſe who judge altogether by Appearances, and flatter myſelf with regaining your good Opinion, when I ſhall acquaint you with the Cauſe of this ſeeming Negligence.

You may remember I wrote you, ſome time ago, that the Reputation of being very rich, and known to be free from the Incumbrance of Children, had laid me under the Perſecution of no leſs than three Lovers at once; — two of them I diſpatched pretty eaſily, but could no more get rid of the other, than of my Shadow at Noontide. — He had told me he had a large Eſtate in Poſſeſſion, but as I had no Inclination to be jointured out of it, never gave myſelf any Trouble to enquire into the Truth of what he ſaid. — Finding Self-Intereſt was not my darling Paſſion, he began to attack me on what is called the weak Side, and endeavoured to charm me by Dint of

meer Love; — to enjoy a Moment's Peace out of my Presence, was among the Things that are impossible in Nature: — I was no less than an Angel, a Goddess; a civil Look, or what he interpreted as such, raised him to the highest Heaven, and a Frown endangered his plunging himself into another Place. — Never was such an *Oroondates*, in all but his Patience; — in that indeed he was extremely wanting; for the Hero in the Romance thought a Kiss of his Mistress's Hand a sufficient Recompence for seven Years Service; this, doubtless, imagined he should carry my whole Person in seven Weeks.

In fine, he would take no Denial, — be rebuffed by nothing I could say; — it was in vain I forbid him my House; — he did not only follow me to all public Places, but found Means to get himself introduced to most of my Acquaintance; so that without I could have resolved to seclude myself from all Diversion, all Conversation, I I could not totally avoid him. — This Perseverance, this Assiduity, might, for aught I know, in time have perswaded me he really had found something in me worthy of a sincere Attachment, if a lucky Accident had not prevented the Deception he so well carried on from taking Effect; and I might have thought as *Hudibras* says:

His Passion true, and would survive
New Worlds and Natures to outlive;
And like to Heralds Moons remain
All crescent, without Change or Wane.

But

BUT if I had any Vanity rising in me on this score, you will see how it was mortified. — Lady *Fanny* had made a Party for Country-Dancing at her House; I was desired to make one. — *Clerimont* (for so my pretended Enamorato was called) was also either invited, or intruded himself, I know not which; but I was no sooner in the Room than he came in: — After having made his Compliments to her Ladyship, and some others in the Company, whom he knew, he approached, and saluting me with an Air very different from that with which he had accosted the others, entreated I would be his Partner; but as I was aware of his Intention from the Moment I saw him enter, I had already engaged myself to a Gentleman who I was very certain had no Design upon me. — He seemed much chagrined, but that was not a Place for him to teize me with any Complaints, or impertinent Accusations of Cruelty.

MANY Dances had not been led up before the Heat of the Exercise, joined to that of the Season, had the Effects might be expected. — *Clerimont*, in plucking out his Handkerchief, dropt a Letter, which fell just at my Feet: — Though every thing relating to him was a Matter of perfect Indifference to me, Curiosity put it into my Head to take it up, which I did, without, I believe, any of the Company observing; — but how I was surprized, you may easily imagine, when I shall tell you, examining it after I came home, I found it a Letter from a Wo-

man who ſubſcribed herſelf his Wife; and indeed the artleſs and tender Expreſſions it contained, left me no room to doubt her being ſo. — So flagrant a Piece of Villany, in a Man of the Family and Fortune he pretended to be, extremely ſhocked me, and I could no way fathom either the Motives of his addreſſing me, or the End he propoſed to himſelf, had I been ſo weak as to liſten to his Suit: — I reſolved, however, to penetrate into this Myſtery, if there were a Poſſibility, and accordingly ſent for him the next Morning.

Such a Meſſage, after the Treatment I had always given him, would certainly have greatly aſtoniſhed him, but I thought there appeared more of Guilt and Shame, than either Pleaſure or Surprize in his Countenance when he approached me.—He was beginning, notwithſtanding, to aſſume ſome Shew of the latter, but did it in ſo aukward a Manner, that I then preſently imagined he had miſſed the Letter, and had ſome Apprehenſions of the Truth.—I was really in ſome Pain for him, and to put an End to his Diſſimulation, let him know, in a few Words, the Diſcovery I had made, without mingling the leaſt Reproach with what I ſaid. — This it was which perhaps gave him the Confidence to think of continuing to impoſe upon me, and he replied with all the Aſſurance of Innocence, " Alas! " Madam, this Letter belongs to a Friend of " mine, whoſe Marriage, for ſome Reaſons " being a Secret, I conſented all the Letters " from

" from his Wife ſhould be directed to me."— This Turn, he had the Vanity to imagine, as he afterwards confeſſed, would have paſſed upon me; but unluckily there was one Paſſage in the Letter, which ſhewed to a Demonſtration, that he was the individual Man to whom it was *meant* as well as *directed.*— He had for ſeveral Days paſt had the Forefinger of his Right-Hand tied up, on account of a *Whitloe*; — this very *Whitloe* was mentioned by his Wife; you will ſee on what Account, by the Copy of her Letter, which I here encloſe. — On my confronting him with this Proof as it ſtood in the Text, he grew all Confuſion; and after I had expatiated, in what I thought a proper Manner, on the Baſeneſs of his Proceeding, he fell at my Feet, confeſſed all I had ſaid was juſt, but conjured me not to expoſe him, as what he had done had been enforced by the moſt melancholy Neceſſity.

I THEN told him, that there was a Poſſibility for him to prevail on me to grant his Requeſt; but it could only be done by his ſincerely laying open the whole Affair, and convincing me there were indeed ſome other Inducements, beſides a natural Propenſity to Wickedneſs, that had led him into a Deſign ſo infamous in itſelf, and ſo highly criminal in the Eyes of God and Man.— On which, with an unfeigned Readineſs, he confeſſed he had endeavoured to deceive me in almoſt every thing he had pretended;—that he was indeed of the Family he ſaid, but was a younger Brother of a younger Branch of it;—

that the ſmall Fortune bequeathed him by his Father was far from being ſufficient to ſupport himſelf in the Faſhion he had been bred, much leſs a Wife; yet in ſpite of all theſe Conſiderations, he had married a young Creature, the Daughter of a Country-Clergyman, whom he loved to the greateſt Exceſs; — that ſhe already had brought him one Child, and was now pregnant with another, and that it was meerly the Apprehenſions of what ſhe might be reduced to, (the greateſt Part of his little Fortune being exhauſted) which alone had put him upon this deſperate Method of Relief, having in vain tried all others.

I Asked him if ſhe were privy to his Purpoſe, and he anſwering in the Negative, I deſired to know, in caſe he had ſucceeded, by what Magic Art he could expect to conceal the Crime he had been guilty of from either of us? — As to that, *ſaid he*, it might have been eaſy enough; — my Wife knows nothing of the Town, has never been in it, and I would taken care to have kept her always out of it; — whenever I left her, my Pretence was to have been an Employment I had procured here; and when I went from you, a Jaunt into the Country for my Health; — the greateſt Difficulty, *continued he*, would have been to have found Balm to heal thoſe Stings of my own Conſcience, which I am ſenſible muſt have been ſevere and ſharp, by what I feel in this Detection of my intended Guilt, even without the Perpetration.

HE accompanied every Article of this Confeſſion with ſuch bitter Sighs, and gave ſo many Tokens of a ſincere Penitence, that I was touched with a great deal of Compaſſion. — I aſſured him that I was much better pleaſed with him for deſigning rather to make me his Convenience, than abandon, for my ſake, one who had the only juſt Title to his Heart; — that I not only forgave the Ill he intended againſt me, but would alſo prevent his falling into any future Temptations from his Neceſſities, provided he approved the Means I offered. — He ſeemed quite raviſhed at the bare Imagination, and ſaid he would gladly do any thing he was capable of. — I then told him, there was a genteel Employment vacant in my Brother's Office, which I did not doubt being able to procure for him; adding, that as he had told me his Misfortunes, and I knew Money would be required, I would advance the Sum, and take his Bond for quarterly Payments, out of the Profits of his Poſt.

IT would be needleſs to trouble you with any Repetitions of the Acknowledgments he made me; you will eaſily ſuppoſe them to be ſuitable to the Occaſion. — I ordered him to come to me in the Afternoon, being reſolved to go inſtantly about the Performance of my Promiſe.— Accordingly I dined that Day with my Brother, and obtained a Grant of the Poſt for the Perſon I recommended. — I made *Clerimont* write that ſame Night for his Wife to come to Town, and in two Days I had the Pleaſure of ſeeing her; —

ſhe is very beautiful, but there is a native Sweetneſs and Simplicity in all her Air and Behaviour, which renders her more lovely, than the fineſt Features in the World could do without it.—Her Mind ſeems conformable to her Perſon, and my Judgment is very much deceived, if ſhe is not worthy of a Man incapable of the Treachery her Husband was about to practiſe;— but of that ſhe is entirely ignorant, and perfectly contented with her Lot, bends her whole Thoughts on pleaſing him:— He, doubtleſs, loves her no leſs than he aſſured me he did; and I hope, as they are now in a Condition to live eaſy in the World, they will always be ſo to each other.— For my part, it gives me an inexpreſſible Satisfaction, to think it has been in my Power, to make a virtuous young Woman happy, and of recovering a Man of ſome Merit, back to Honour, when he was attempting to be a Villain.

Thus, my dear *Mira*, while I have ſeemed to labour for the Good of others, I have been procuring a real one for myſelf; and ſure if thoſe whom Heaven has ſo laviſhly endued with the Means of being ſerviceable in their Generations, could be ſenſible of that refined Pleaſure which reſults from conferring Benefits, there would be no ſuch thing as Miſery in the World;— all Diſcontent,— all Envy,— all Murmurings at the unequal Diſtribution of Fortune, would ceaſe; Compaſſion on the one ſide, and a grateful Senſation on the other, would eſtabliſh a perpetual Harmony between the *great* and the *inferior*

World. — To me it is therefore ſtrange, that ſo many of the *former* are indolent in what would certainly be of infinitely the moſt Advantage to themſelves; as the admirable *Cowley* juſtly expreſſes it:

Riches alone are of uncertain Date,
And on ſhort Life long cannot wait;
The Virtuous make of them the beſt,
And put them out to Fame for Intereſt:
With a frail Good they wiſely buy
The ſolid Purchaſe of Eternity.

To avow thoſe Sentiments among ſome of my Acquaintance, would infallibly draw on me the Cenſure of a Lunatic, or Enthuſiaſt; but I know to whom I am writing, and that it is as needleſs to make any Apology for what I have ſaid on this ſcore, as it would be to entreat you to keep the encloſed Letter, and the Narration which depends upon it, an inviolable Secret, or to aſſure you that I never can be other, than

Your faithful humble Servant,

ALTHEA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE VIII.

Enclosed in the foregoing.

From Amanda *in the Country, to her Husband in Town, reproaching him with the Fright his last Letter had put her into, and acquainting him with the Method she took for consoling herself in his Absence.*

My dear Clerimont,

WHere shall I find Words to express the Agitation I was in, on opening the last Letter you sent. — Knowing, as you do, how much a Coward I am in every thing where you are concerned, you could not but suppose I should be terribly alarmed at seeing, under your Signet, a Hand-writing so different from yours. — How could you then be so regardless of my tender Heart, or the Condition I am in, as not to order your *Amanuensis* to tell me at once the Cause, instead of beginning with those ambiguous Words, *I am obliged to employ another Hand to write to you.* — Good God! what dreadful Interpretations did I put upon them; — all that was shocking to Imagination came at once into my Head: wounded, — sick, — dying perhaps, cried I, and had not Courage to proceed, but invoked my better Angel to explain what it was so easy for me to have told myself. — At last I ventured, tho' trembling with Suspense and Terror, to cast my

my Eyes a ſecond Time upon the Paper, and (Thanks to Heaven) immediately found that all theſe horrible Apprehenſions had been occaſioned only by a *Whitloe* on your Fore-finger.

I DOUBT not but you will laugh at this new Proof, added to the thouſand others I have given you of my Simplicity, but that you may not have too contemptible an Opinion of me, I muſt now acquaint you, that though I have nothing of the *Hero* in me, I am grown a Piece of a Philoſopher ſince you left me; and as the *Chymiſts* pretend to extract Gold out of the baſeſt Metal, I have learned the Art of bringing *Pleaſure* out of *Pain*, and converting the worſt of *Ills* into a *Good*. — As thus, my Dear, (for I cannot find in my Heart to keep you in a Moment's Suſpence) I never give myſelf Leave to think how unfortunate I am in your Abſence, but how happy I ſhall be in your Return. — I recollect every little Event has happened ſince your going, and range them in order in my Memory, to entertain you with, when you come home, and pleaſe myſelf with the Expectation of hearing from you many and more agreeable Narratives of thoſe Occurrences, which the great World you are at preſent engaged in, cannot fail of preſenting you with in abundance.

THIS, deareſt *Clerimont*, is the Manner in which I anticipate, in *Idea*, the Bleſſing Heaven will, I hope, permit me ſoon to enjoy in *Reality*: And this is the only Method I could take to enable

enable me to obey that ſtrict Injunction you laid upon me, of not afflicting myſelf at our enforced Separation.—I do aſſure you, it has had ſo good an Effect upon me, that I have loſt nothing of my Complexion, nor that Vivacity you uſed to ſay you thought ſo well became me; and if you do not ſtay (which God forbid) till my Shape is too much extended, I fancy you will find me much the ſame you left me; but whatever my *Form* may appear, there needs no Aſſeverations to convince you my *Heart* is incapable of changing.—I am reſolved to flatter myſelf with being no leſs ſecure of yours, and that all the Beauties you may happen to be acquainted with, will have no Charms for you, in prejudice of that Affection, which Law has made my Due, and which makes all the Happineſs, and is the ſole Ambition of,

My dear Soul,

Your Ever-faithful Wife,

Amanda.

P. S. I ſaw our little Boy yeſterday, he is pure well, and has cut two Teeth.—Heaven proſper your Undertakings, and ſend you ſoon to us again.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE IX.

Erminia *to Lady* Betty * * *, *giving her an Account of the brutiſh Treatment ſhe had received from* Comus; *and the providential Eſcape ſhe had from his intended Violence, at the Houſe of a Perſon of Quality.*

IT was not without good Reaſon you warned me againſt entring into any Intimacy with the Counteſs of * * * *; but dear Lady *Betty*, that was not enough; — the Hints you gave me were too modeſt to enable me to form any right Judgment of that wicked Woman, —(ſo I ſhall always call her, while ſhe continues to diſgrace that Dignity to which her Marriage has raiſed her.) — You ſhould have taken the Privilege of your Rank, and the Friendſhip with which you honour me, and inſiſted on my never converſing with her; — never viſiting her on any Conſideration; — you might have aſſured yourſelf, that the Reſpect and Love I owe to you, would have prevented me from being enſnared by the dangerous Civilities ſhe treated me with. — But why do I go about to excuſe my own Inadvertency, by laying the Blame on your want of Freedom in this Point. — I had ſeen too much of her Behaviour with *Comus*, when the moſt public, nay, the moſt ſacred Places could not reſtrain her from anſwering his lewd Raillery loud enough to be heard by the whole Company, in a manner not only ſcandalous

lous to her Sex, but even ſhocking to thoſe of the other, who had not thrown off all Decency, however they might in private have approved of it. — Heavens! what ribald Diſcourſe! — what Prophaneſs! — what Vollies of Oaths and Imprecations has ſhe not liſtened to, with a viſible Satisfaction, from the Mouth of that illuſtrious Perſon! — Yet, I confeſs all this was too little to make me totally avoid her. — She ſent for me this Afternoon, — I went, — found her alone, and I thought more ſerious than uſual; — we had not been long together, before *Comus* came in. — I roſe, and would have taken Leave, but ſhe forced me to ſit down again in her peremptory Way; — ſaid that ſhe expected her Lord home, and we would then go to *Whiſt*; — but in the mean time, *cried ſhe*, as we are a Party for *Ombre*, we need not be idle. — I was opening my Mouth to tell her Ladyſhip, I could not poſſibly ſtay the Evening, but had not Opportunity to utter one Syllable, ſhe went haſtily out of the Room, even as ſhe was ſpeaking, as I imagined to order Cards; for I was far from any Apprehenſions of the monſtrous Deſign had been formed againſt me. — She had no ſooner left us, than *Comus* ſtarted from his Chair, and bolted the Door. — I was ſtrangely ſurprized, as you will eaſily believe, and asked him what he meant. — The Reply he made was ſuch, as I could neither repeat, nor you endure to hear. — Yet filthy, odious as his Expreſſions were, the Actions which immediately followed were more deteſtable. — I almoſt loath myſelf for the Indignities

dignities I was compelled to ſuffer. — In fine, he endeavoured to drag me to the Settee, which you know ſtands at the upper End of the Drawing-Room; it was in vain I ſtruggled, in vain I attempted to prevail on him to reflect on the Cruelty, the Baſeneſs of the Crime he was about to perpetrate, eſpecially in a Man of his Birth.— As much in vain I called out for Aſſiſtance with my whole Force; Heaven only heard, or would regard my Cries, and ſure ſome ſupernatural Power it was, that in this dreadful Moment, gave me Strength beyond what could be expected from my Sex. — I perfectly fought with him, I tore, I ſcratched his Face, yet alas, all this could not have long defended me, and doubtleſs I muſt at laſt have been the wretched Victim of his abominable Deſires, if his Foot had not happened to hitch ſome how or other in the Carpet, which, by our Wreſtling, was pretty much diſordered, and I at that Inſtant, giving him a ſudden Puſh, threw his heavy Carcaſe on the Floor. — I ſnatched the bleſſed Opportunity, unfaſtened the Door, and flew down Stairs; — he purſued me, but the Terror I was in, gave Wings to my Feet. — I reached the outer Gate, where, thinking myſelf ſafe, I ſtopt to take Breath, and remember, that as I was going out, in ſpite of my Confuſion, I turned to the Porter, and ſaid, — *I never knew till now your Lady kept a Brothel.* — I own, dear Lady *Betty*, my Hurry of Spirits made me quite forget my Appointment with you, but had it been in my Head, I could not have thought of appearing before

before your Servants in the Condition I then was. I was ashamed to be seen, even by my own, and doubt not my very Chairmen guessed at the Adventure had befallen me. — The Marks of Violence were but two visible in all my Form and Dress. — Never was poor Creature so ruffled, — so torn; — it is now three Hours since I came home, yet have not half recovered my Fatigue. — I hope, however, to be able to wait on you in the Morning, but could not go to Bed without letting you know by what Accident I was hindered from doing myself that Pleasure to Night. — I am,

Dear Lady *Betty*,

Your most obliged, and humble Servant,

ERMINIA.

EPISTLE X.

From Euphrosine *to a Gentleman, who being a perfect Stranger to her, had for a long Time pestered her with Love-Letters, and in his last had desired an Answer, and given his Direction where it should be sent.*

SIR,

I Thank you for having at last given me an Opportunity of doing what I should have done long ago, had you favoured me with your Direction. — I now return you all the Letters you

you have taken the Pains to write to me, and after the firſt, ſhould not even have damaged the Seals, had not the Superſcriptions been always in different Hands, ſo that it was impoſſible to know they came from the ſame Perſon, without opening them.

I MIGHT very well be diſpenſed with for not ſending any Anſwer to one who is entirely a Stranger to me, and to whom I could not poſſibly give the leaſt Encouragement; but think it proper to comply with your Requeſt, in order to put a Stop to all future Trouble on both Sides.

THE little Share of Reaſon I am Miſtreſs of, aſſures me, there can be but two Motives for your addreſſing me in this romantic Manner. — Either the Hope of repairing, by my Fortune, ſome Defects yours may labour under, or the Whim of diverting yourſelf at the Expence of that Vanity you might expect to excite in me; but, Sir, you will preſently diſcover how unlikely it is I ſhould become the Dupe of the one or the other of theſe Views.

I HAVE Parents who deſerve, and have a Right to demand my perfect Confidence, and from whom it is my *Inclination*, as well as it is undoubtedly my *Duty*, to conceal nothing; — by them, not only all my *Actions*, but my very *Will*, ſhall always be regulated; and to that End I have entreated the Favour of whichever of them is in the Way, to peruſe, before I ſee it, every Let-

ter that ſhall hereafter be directed to me.—This I am certain is the moſt effectual Method a Maid like me can take to ſecure herſelf from the numberleſs Artifices of baſe and deſigning Men.—Thoſe who have *Love* for their *Incitement*, and *Honour* for their *Aim*, will never be offended at it.—I am, as far as Prudence permits, and Good-Manners requires,

Sir,

Your humble Servant,

Euphrosine.

EPISTLE XI.

Sophronia *to* Meliſſa, *a Maid of Honour, on hearing ſhe had bought a fine* Pantine.

My dear Couſin,

I HAD not refuſed myſelf the Pleaſure of waiting on you yeſterday, as I propoſed, if happening to call at *Wildey*'s for ſome things I wanted, I was told that he had juſt ſold you a very fine *Pantine*; and I was apprehenſive that to have come in the firſt Hurry of your Satisfaction in this new Play-thing, I ſhould have had little of your Converſation on any other Subject, and to have offered any Interruption to the Entertainment, might perhaps have been a Mortification you would not eaſily have forgiven.—It is poſſible my Epiſtle may be equally unpleaſing, ſince I cannot forbear writing what the ſincere

cere Friendſhip I have for you would certainly have obliged me to ſpeak. — There is indeed this Difference between Remonſtrances by Letter, and thoſe made by Word of Mouth, that the *One* we can throw aſide without reading, when we find the Purport likely to be diſagreeable, and the other we are compelled to liſten to thro' Decency and Good-Manners. — I have a ſure Way, however, to know whether you treat this in the Faſhion I have mentioned, and that is by asking you a few Queſtions in it, which I ſhall expect you to anſwer the firſt time we meet.

As I would no more condemn, than I would applaud any thing, without believing at leaſt that ſome Sort of Reaſon juſtified my ſo doing, and imagined the Uſe of theſe painted Pieces of Paſteboard might have in it ſomewhat more than I had Penetration to diſcover, as I could go to no polite Aſſembly, without ſeeing them in the Hands of young and old of both Sexes. I took the Liberty of deſiring Lady M**, who I perceived was paſſionately fond of them, to ſet my Judgment right in this Point, on which ſhe told me, that playing with her *Pantine* was a very pretty Amuſement when ſhe had nothing to think on. — I was extremely ſorry that a Woman, turned of threeſcore, ſhould in all that Time have found nothing worthy of Remembrance or Reflection, and equally concerned when putting the ſame Queſtion to her Grand-daughter, ſhe cried, *O, Madam, a* Pantine, *is the moſt neceſſary Utenſil in the whole World: — When one has a*

Mind to ſay or do any thing one is aſhamed to ſpeak, one need but play off the Pantine *in a particular Manner, and one ſhall be underſtood preſently.* — Had I the ſame Relation to her I have to you, I ſhould have been free enough to have told her, a Woman of true Senſe and Honour could have nothing in her *Heart* ſhe would bluſh at entruſting to her *Tongue.*

I FLATTER myſelf, dear *Meliſſa*, with receiving neither of theſe Replies from you, but am not quite ſo certain you will not tell me, as moſt others have done, that you do it becauſe it is the *Faſhion*, and that you would not be particular in the Circle. — I muſt therefore warn you beforehand, that I ſhall not take this as a ſufficient Excuſe; and the rather, as the ſame might be alledged for following ſome other Modes, no leſs ridiculous than the *Pantine*, which of late Years have been eſtabliſhed among us, and which are every Day invented, as if there were a Plot to root Common Senſe out of the Nation, and to ſet up Caprice and Folly in the Throne of Reaſon.

You will wonder, perhaps, that I expreſs myſelf with ſo much Warmth, on what I dare ſay you look upon as a meer Trifle. — I grant it is no more in itſelf, yet it is ſuch as debaſes the Underſtanding. — You may remember, Couſin, that when we were Girls, we were impatient to be Women, flattering ourſelves that an Increaſe of Years would bring with them an Increaſe of Knowledge.

Knowledge. — Shall we then, when arrived at this wiſhed-for Maturity, return again to Childhood, and laviſh away our Time in Amuſments fit only for Hanging-Sleeves and a Bib-Apron! nay, even inferior to thoſe which at that Time took up our Attention! For the Management of our jointed Babies ſerved to give us an Idea how to behave when we ſhould come to have living ones; and our Wax Viands, in what Manner it was proper to furniſh a Table with real ones, when Miſtreſs of a Family. — The *Pantine*, therefore, and the *Rattle*, I think, ought to be put on the ſame Footing; either of them may contribute to ſtill the Cries of the froward Infant, before the Soul is in any meaſure enlivened with Reaſon, or capable of knowing with what it is delighted; but both are of equal Inſignificance, when once the Nurſe reſigns her Charge, and ſhould be thrown aſide at the ſame Time.

I AM ſenſible, however, I am too ſerious on the Occaſion, and have ſaid much more than was neceſſary to diſſwade you from being over-fond of a Thing which, it is highly probable, you are weary of already; at leaſt I am ſure you are ſo, if, ſince it has been in your Poſſeſſion, you have given yourſelf one Moment's Thought. — I know you too well, not to know you ſtand in need of no other Monitor than your own good Senſe, whenever you pleaſe to permit it to exert itſelf; but the inceſſant Hurry attending a Court-Life, frequently engroſſes the Mind too much to leave any Room for Reflection, and this was

the ſole Motive, and is the beſt Excuſe for the Liberty taken by

Your affectionate Kinſwoman,

And moſt humble Servant,

SOPHRONIA.

EPISTLE XII.

From Aſtrea *to her Brother, returning Mr.* Thompſon's Caſtle of Indolence, *which he had lent her, and deſired her Opinion of.*

Dear Brother,

THE Compliment you pay my Underſtanding, in deſiring my Opinion of the encloſed Poem, is ſuch, as Modeſty would not permit me to look on as ſincere, from any other than yourſelf; — but I know the partial Affection with which you honour me, and make not the leaſt doubt if you really think me qualified for the Task you enjoin. — I ſhall therefore make no Scruple of communicating my Thoughts to you, as they naturally occurred on reading it.

You have often told me, you perceived I was not to be caught with Words, and that, as well as I loved Muſic, I was but little delighted, when the Notes did not convey ſome intelligible Meaning. — So far I muſt do myſelf the Juſtice to acknowledge your Obſervation right; — a pompous Stile, — the Cadence of a well-turned Verſe,

Verſe, may give a momentary Pleaſure to the Ear, but it is the Sentiment alone that reaches the Heart; and I run no Riſque of forfeiting my Judgment, when I ſay, that in both theſe Mr. *Thompſon* excels in all the Pieces with which he has obliged the World; but I am greatly miſtaken, if this laſt does not bear away the Prize for the nobleſt and moſt laudable Aim of a *Poet.* — Here he endeavours to rouſe a ſleeping Nation; — to ſhame the preſent Age out of that Forgetfulneſs, which has very near loſt them the glorious Patrimony bequeathed them by their Anceſtors; and charm them from the Embraces of Vice, by ſhewing Virtue in the beautiful Robes ſhe was wont to be adorned with; — reminds them, that by *Arts* and *Induſtry* this Iſland roſe to ſuch an envyed Height, and points the fatal Cauſe by which it ſinks, even beneath Pity, from the neighbouring Kingdoms. — Great is the Attempt, and worthy of the Art, too long debaſed by flattering Eulogies!

BUT here, my dear Brother, give me Leave to obſerve, that it is not to thoſe loſt in Luxury and Impiety, the Poet ſo much ſpeaks, as to thoſe who mean well, wiſh well, and do well *themſelves*, but take not the leaſt Pains to make *others* do ſo; — who content themſelves with being innocent Spectators, as they imagine, of the Miſchiefs they cannot avoid ſeeing, and think it is enough to lament the impending Fate of their Country, without ſtretching out a Hand for its Relief. — But, Sir, according to my way of

judging, whoever offers not every thing in his Power to *ſave* in ſome meaſure, takes part with the *Deſtroyer*, and may be ſaid to give a tacit Conſent to the Ills he is too indolent to oppoſe. — You will tell me, that Corruption, Oppreſſion, Luxury, and every kind of Vice, have enlifted under their Banners the greateſt Part of Mankind, and that it would be vain, romantic, and what not, to combat againſt ſuch unequal Numbers. — You may perhaps add alſo, that ſome recent Inſtances have rendered the Name of *Patriot* ridiculous, even to the loweſt Rank of People, and that even thoſe of the better Sort are apt to ſuſpect it as a Term to cover ſome ſelf-intereſted View; — that all Teſtimonies of Love of Country, and Public Spirit, ſerve only to make the Perſon who gives them, obnoxious to Society, hateful to many, and laughed at by all.

I AM very ſorry that I am obliged to own this is but too true, yet I dare ſay you would not wiſh to be thought an *Atheiſt*, to avoid the Witticiſms of the Libertine for profeſſing the Belief of a God, nor that *Poſterity* ſhould brand you with the Name of a *Traitor* to your Country, meerly to eſcape the Cenſure of a *Malecontent* by your *Cotemporaries*.—No, I am very certain you have never had ſo much Complaiſance for the *Mode*, as to call in queſtion any part of the Myſteries of *Religion*; nor for any *Miniſter* or *Miniſters*, to give your Aſſent to any thing in prejudice of the *Commonwealth*; yet I muſt once

once more remind you, that ſome Bills have paſſed, which you could wiſh had not been ſo, when you were abſent. — It is poſſible your ſingle Vote would not have prevented it, and there is the ſame Poſſibility that it might. — I am not very well verſed in Parliamentary Affairs, but have heard from the moſt knowing, that Inſtances have been, where the Majority has not exceeded Number one. — Should any ſuch thing happen in your Time, and in a Matter of the utmoſt Conſequence to the Nation, with what Remorſe muſt you reflect on ſo fatal an Inactivity !—Beſides, it is not through the Want of your Voice alone the common Cauſe might ſuffer, great is the Prevalence of Example, and I am pretty confident yours would influence many to be of the ſame Side the Queſtion. — I wiſh, therefore, you could be perſwaded not to make ſuch frequent Pretences for retiring to your Country-Seat. — Your Gardener will take Care of your Flower-Pots, — your Steward of your Rents: Permit, then, the harmleſs Bucks to range unmoleſted in your Park, — the feathered and the finny Race to eſcape the Gin and Angle ; — a nobler and more intereſting Cauſe demands all your Attention, — the Cauſe of Liberty, — the Liberty of Poſterity ! — You cannot be certain that the *Enemies* of our happy *Conſtitution* watch not the Opportunity of your Abſence to do that, which the utmoſt future Zeal, and Aſſiduity of its *Friends*, would never be able to get repealed.

You may, perhaps, laugh at this as a vain Prophecy,

Prophecy, but I have for it the Authority of a good old Poet, whose Works I have heard you frequently quote on other Occasions.

One luckless Hour may teem with Ills, which all
The Cares of future Time can ne'er recall.
Trust nought to Chance; — those whom base Ends inflame,
Watch every Crisis to compleat their Aim.

But I have done, at least for the present; and if you think I have taken too much Freedom in these Remonstrances, you ought to blame yourself, for desiring I would write my Sentiments on a Poem, the Design of which could not but lead me into such Reflections on the growing Calamities of my Country, and the Source of them, as rendered me altogether unable to forbear telling you how ardently I wish to see a Person, so near and dear to me, be one of the first to break the Chains of Indolence, and do Honour to Mr. *Thompson*'s generous Advice; to which I refer you, and entreat you to consider it with Attention, as hoping it will have all the Effect it ought, and would afford so infinite a Satisfaction to,

My dearest Brother,

Your sincerely affectionate Sister,

And obliged humble Servant,

Astrea.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XIII.

From Mira, *to a Lady who had expressed the utmost Surprize at her staying in the Country after Winter was pretty far advanced; with a Detail of the Manner in which she passes her Time there, and the many solid Pleasures which Retirement is capable of affording to a thinking Mind.*

Madam,

IT is now, indeed, the Time when the Town Diversions summon the gay Part of the World to quit their rural Seats, and shine in the Circle of the *Beau Monde*, — Plays, Balls, Masquerades, and Operas, are already begun. — The Country is almost as desolate of Inhabitants as the Trees in my Forest are of Leaves. — All my Acquaintance in these Parts have left me, for what they call Delights more agreeable to the Season; yet I am still here, — and what seems most strange to you, am here by my own Choice; and think it not the least of those many Obligations I owe to the Love and Complaisance of my dear Lord, that he consents to be, a little longer than is expected from him, absent from the Grand Council of the Nation, rather than take me from the Felicities this Recess affords. — But you wonder I am not eaten up with the Spleen, or dying with the Vapours, and cannot conceive how I am able to support so long a Deprivation of those Pleasures,

ſures which, tho' I am far from being an Enemy to, cannot help thinking you greatly over-rate; and charming as you paint them, and really agreeable as I confeſs ſome of them are, you muſt pardon me, when I ſay, they cannot, in my Opinion, come in any Competition with thoſe of Retirement. — Here I am free and diſincumbered with the inſincere Civilities, — the vain Ceremonials, — the fantaſtic Pomp, which the troubleſome Rank I hold in Life obliges me to partake. — What Company, — what Amuſements can I want, when the wide Creation is ſpread out before me; — when the Court of Heaven, with all its Glories, opens to my View, and an uninterrupted Tranquility aſſiſts Contemplation to lift me above this dull Earth, to travel in Idea thro' the Ætherial Regions, and anticipate the Privilege of Immortality! — Whether the Sun appears in all his Radiance, or the pale Moon ſhines in her borrowed Light; — whether I hail the Dawn, or pay my Compliments to the Evening *Heſperus*; — whether my impatient Eye wanders among the unnumbered Stars, or loſes itſelf amidſt that Galaxy of Splendor which forms the Milky Way, my Soul ſeems all diſſolved and looſened from its Clay; — I feel myſelf, methinks, already a Gueſt in the celeſtial Abodes, and joining Chorus with the bleſt Inhabitants, in Praiſe and Adoration of the Eternal Source of Love, of Light, and Joy.

But theſe are Raptures which I cannot at all Times indulge, nor indeed ought I to be ſo entirely

tirely abſorbed in them, as to forget, that during the Time appointed for my Stay on Earth, I have Duties to diſcharge which cannot be diſpenced with. — As I am a *Wife*, I am bound to make it my Study to pleaſe him to whom, by Love, Law, and the moſt tender Obligations, I am united; and as I am a *Mother*, to omit nothing in my Power to form the Minds of thoſe, to whom I have given Birth, in ſuch a Manner as to render them incapable of doing any thing hereafter unworthy the Dignity of a reaſonable Being. — Above all things, I take Care to inculcate into their moſt early Years, the Knowledge that they are born for Eternity; and while I amuſe them with the Study of Natural Philoſophy, I turn their Reflections on the Supreme Author of all the various and amazing Productions they behold with ſo much Pleaſure. — I endeavour, as much as poſſible, to make them leſs in love with *Art* than *Nature*, and to contemn all the Handyworks of *Man*, in Compariſon with thoſe of *Him who made Man*. — To look on the Glare of Finery and Equipage, as the meaneſt of all Trifles, and to conſider even Beauty (though the Gift of God) as a Good, which can no way counterbalance for any Defect in the *Mind*. — As the Precepts I lay down are delivered with a Familiarity, which has nothing of the Air of Leſſon, I have the Satisfaction to perceive they liſten to them with more Delight, than to any thing they can hear in the Nurſery, and affords me great room to hope, makes an Impreſſion on their Hearts, which will not eaſily be eraced.

THUS,

Thus, Madam, have I given you a faithful Account of the Avocations I am employed in during my Retirement from the great World, which, I believe, you will allow are ſuch as leave no Time to hang heavy on my Hands, and when I aſſure you, as I can do with the greateſt Sincerity, that theſe Avocations make the ſupremeſt Pleaſure of my Life, you will alſo ceaſe to wonder, that I am in no haſte to return to a Place, where it is utterly impoſſible for me to purſue them with the ſame Freedom I do here. — I muſt notwithſtanding ſubmit to Fate, which I am juſt now informed, has doomed next Tueſday for my Departure from this Scene of true Content. — I bear it however with the leſs Regret, as I ſhall have the Honour of congratulating Sir *Thomas* on the Reward of his long faithful Paſſion for the virtuous and beautiful *Clarinda:* I beg, in the mean time, you will make my Compliments acceptable to both, and aſſure them, that they ſhare, with their Siſter, in the ſincere Friendſhip and Eſteem of,

Madam,

Your moſt humble Servant,

Mira.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XIV.

Sophronia *to* Ophelia, *on hearing ſhe had loſt her Beauty by the Small-Pox.*

My Dear Ophelia,

I Received yours, and rejoice too much in your Recovery, to be able to condole with you on any Alteration your late Illneſs has made in you; and indeed how great ſoever it may be, am far from thinking it deſerves to be mentioned with that Concern you ſeem to do: — You have fought Death, and foiled him at one of his ſharpeſt Weapons; and if you have received ſome Scars, ought to look upon them rather as the Trophies of Victory, than Blemiſhes. — What if your Complexion has loſt ſome Part of its dazzling Whiteneſs, and your Features are not altogether ſo delicate, the leſs Charms your Glaſs preſents you with, the more you will find in your Cloſet; and, deprived of the Pleaſure of contemplating the Graces of your outward Form, you will have the greater Leiſure to improve and embelliſh thoſe which are not ſo eaſily impaired.

LET us pretend what we will, it is the Ambition of attracting Admirers, that renders Beauty of ſo much Value to all the young and gay; but if we would conſider ſeriouſly, we ſhould find that it is Virtue, Good Senſe, Sweetneſs of Diſpoſition, and Complaiſance, of which the Girdle of *Cytheria* is really compoſed. — The fineſt Face in the World, without them, will not long

maintain its Empire over the Heart of a Man of Underſtanding, as the Poet truly ſays,

Beauty ſoon grows familiar to the Eye,
Virtue alone has Charms that never die.

Do not think, however, that I am glad to find you are more on a Level, than before this Accident, with the greateſt Part of our Sex; I confeſs the Beauties of the *Perſon* greatly contribute to ſet off and render thoſe of the *Mind* conſpicuous, and for that Reaſon ſhould be extremely ſorry for any Defect in the *one*, if I were not certain you had enough of the *other*, to engroſs the whole Attention of as many as know you; and that they may every Day increaſe in Luſtre, is the ſincere Wiſh of,

My Dear *Ophelia*,

Your's,

Sophronia.

End of the First Book.

EPISTLES

FOR THE

LADIES.

BOOK II.

EPISTLE XV.

From Semanthe *to* Mira, *complaining of the Hardneſs of her Fate, in being courted by two Gentlemen, equally worthy of her Affection, yet incapable of giving herſelf to either, through the Capricioufneſs of her Parents; her Father abſolutely forbidding her to think of the one, and her Mother no leſs implacable againſt the other.*

Dear Madam,

I Received the Favour of yours, with that Satisfaction which I am certain all who are capable of judging their own Happineſs muſt feel on the like Occaſion. I have nothing to be vain upon, but the Friend-

ſhip of the admirable *Mira*, and in ſpite of the many Defects I every Day diſcover in myſelf, cannot help thinking there is ſomewhat worthy in me, or I ſhould not have met ſo many Proofs of it. — It is common enough to miſtake meer *Compaſſion* for the Effects of *Liking*, but as you yet are ignorant how much I am an Object for the *one*, I may very well flatter myſelf with being honoured with the *other*; — nay, I have yet a ſtronger Reaſon to feed this Pride in me, that of your loving me, while you imagine me more unworthy than I really am of your Regard. — You accuſe me, my dear *Mira*, of Levity, Coquetry, and what not, in encouraging the Addreſſes of *Polydore* and *Lyſander* at the ſame Time. — Alas! how little do you know my Soul, or the Motives of this ſeeming Inſtability of Humour; but I can no longer fear the Apprehenſion of ſuffering in your Opinion; I will let you into a Secret, which I bluſh not to reveal on my own Account, but on that of thoſe for whom Duty obliges me always to preſerve the higheſt Veneration. — I thank Heaven, I have not a Heart capable of being agitated with any of thoſe violent Emotions I have obſerved in ſome of my Acquaintance, yet it is not inſenſible to Merit. — That of *Polydore* and *Lyſander* appear ſo equal to me, that I believe I might be very happy with either; but an unfortunate Diſagreement between my Parents will permit me to be ſo with neither. — My Father, who has made *Polydore* his Choice, commands me to receive him as the Man who

muſt be one Day my Husband. — My Mother, who is no leſs in the Intereſt of *Lyſander*, charges me on her Bleſſing, to conſider *him* in the ſame Light, and both menace my Diſobedience with their eternal Curſe. — What can I do in ſo ſevere an Exigence? — I neither dare indulge an Affection, nor maintain an abſolute Indifference for either the one or the other of theſe Gentlemen. — By the Manner in which I am compelled to behave, each thinks he has Reaſon to flatter himſelf with having made ſome Impreſſion on me. — The ſole Excuſe I have for not complying with the Deſires of *Lyſander* is, that he muſt not hope for any farther Marks of Favour from me, till he has obtained the Conſent of my Father. — To *Polydore* I ſay the ſame Thing in relation to my Mother. — Thus do I throw ſome Part of the Weight of this moſt vexatious Affair on thoſe who, it muſt be confeſſed, deſerve moſt to be loaded with it, ſince it is only an unhappy, and (if I may be allowed to call it ſo) a faulty Diſunion between themſelves, not any prudential Reaſons (the Characters, Fortunes, and Families of both my Lovers being equally unexceptionable) that renders each ſo averſe to what the other approves. — My Father, however, by this Means is continually perſecuted by the Sollicitations of *Lyſander*, my Mother by thoſe of *Polydore*, and both alike are puzzled for Pretences to refuſe what they are reſolved never to grant. But, Madam, judge how much my Peace of Mind ſuffers all this Time by the Caprice of my Parents; and I fear will always do ſo, for I ſee

little room to expect they ever will agree in this, or any other Point. — That Tenderness I might hope they had for me, as their only Child, I have experienced is of no Force, when opposed against the Pleasure they take in contradicting each other. — I have put my Modesty to the utmost Stress to make the Trial. — When my Father insists on my giving myself to *Polydore*, I affect to feel the most passionate Inclination for *Lysander*, and when my Mother urges the Suit of *Lysander*; I pretend the extremest Affection for *Polydore*; but my supposed Attachment is so far from having any Effect on either of them, that they only reproach my Folly, as they call it, in the bittereſt Terms, and tell me I must learn to square my Wishes by the Rule of their *Will*. — Heaven knows how gladly I would do so, were once that *Will* of *two* become *one*.

I doubt not, dearest Madam, but after this, you will own I much more deserve your Pity than Reproof. — I am now arrived at an Age, in which, if I ever settle in the World, it is Time to do it. — A few Years hence I must not think of making my Fortune by Marriage, but of making the Fortune of the Man I marry, a Thing very inconsistent with my Humour; so that upon the whole, as Matters are managed in our Family, it seems as if I were condemned to lead Apes. — This is an Apprehension, however, that gives me no Pain; but tho' I am not in Love either with *Polydore*, or *Lysander*, I am truly concerned they should waste their Time in

so

ſo vain a Purſuit, and am ſo free from that Vanity, which they falſely ſay is inherent to all our Sex, of taking Pleaſure in a Crowd of Admirers, that having only *two*, I wiſh from my Heart to be rid of them, ſince it never will be in my Power, without the Death of one or other of my Parents, which I am far from wiſhing, to return the generous and ſincere Affection I am convinced they both have for me, with any thing but Diſſimulation, ſince I am equally forbid to *diſmiſs*, as I am to *engage*, myſelf with either of them. — It is certain, my Father would not permit the Viſits of *Lyſander*, if my Mother did not, in ſpite of his Diſpleaſure, encourage him to come, nor would ſhe ſuffer *Polydore* to approach me, if my Father did not exert the Authority of a Husband in his Favour.—Whenever they happen to meet, though I take all imaginable Care to behave alike to both, yet am not without Fears, that the Jealouſy each has of the other, ſhould at laſt tranſport them to ſome Action, which would involve us all in Confuſion. — If you can adviſe me to any Method, by which I may extricate myſelf out of this Labyrinth of Perplexities, or think a Change of Conduct would better my Condition, I know you will have the Goodneſs to communicate it, with the ſame Sincerity I entreat it. — The Deſire I have of being directed by a Judgment, which will ever be infallible with me, will greatly add to the Impatience I always feel for hearing from you. — I do aſſure you, I am more uneaſy than I have Words to expreſs, but yet I hope not ſo much as to make

me forget any Part of the Obligations I owe to you, or that Respect which is so much your Due on every Account, from all the World, but more particularly from,

Dear Madam,

Your most faithful, and devoted Servant,

SEMANTHE.

EPISTLE XVI.

Sabina *to* Mira, *revealing to her the Secret of her Amour with* Lycidas; *the Discovery made of it by her Father; his sending for his Son, in order to revenge the Injury done to their Family; the Duel fought between the Lover and the Brother, in which the latter was killed upon the Spot; concluding with the just Remorse and Despair she is in, at having been the Cause of so dreadful a Tragedy.*

MADAM,

COULD my fatal Story have been kept a Secret, I certainly never should have revealed it, even to you; but rather chose to have stole myself away in Silence from all who had ever known me, and wasted the wretched Remnant of my Days in some such Place, as Mr. *Rowe* has made his *Fair Penitent* describe.

An

An unfrequented Vale, o'ergrown with Trees,
Moſſy and old, within whoſe loneſome Shade
Ravens and Birds ill-omen'd only dwell:
No Sound to break the Silence, but a Brook,
That bubbling winds among the Weeds; no Mark
Of any human Shape that had been there,
Unleſs a Skeleton of ſome poor Wretch,
Who had long ſince, like me by Love undone,
Sought that ſad Place out, to deſpair and die in.

BUT O, incomparable *Mira*, my Crime is publiſhed by the dire Effects; — it is too flagrant to be hid; — Earth, as well as the all-ſeeing Eye of Heaven, is Witneſs of my Shame. — The great Diſtance you are at, alone prevents you from being already acquainted with it; your Return cannot fail of preſenting you with every aggravating Circumſtance; but though I am ſure of your knowing all from the Mouth of Fame, as my ill Conduct admits of no Excuſe, I know not, if you were even here, whether I ſhould dare to meet that virtuous Indignation, which, however mild your Words might be, would not be reſtrained from ſparkling in your Eyes at hearing a Declaration, ſuch as the good Opinion you had of me, would render ſtrangely ſurprizing.—But my Paper cannot bluſh, and will tranſmit what perhaps, I ſhould have wanted Courage to ſpeak. I doubt not, but by this ſad Prelude, you gueſs part of what I am about to write; eſpecially as you have often ſeen *Lycidas* with me, and told me you wiſhed I might not one Day find him dangerous to my Peace. — O, too prophetick

Words, how dearly havé I experienced the Truth of them! — You might have added *Virtue* too. — *Virtue* and *Peace* go hand-in-hand, and both are irrecoverably loſt to me. — There needs no more to make my Shame apparent; — but if there does, if partial Friendſhip ſeeks to find a Meaning in my Words, to render me leſs guilty, think! O think, what it is a Man, void of all Regard to aught, but the Gratification of his wild Deſires, will ask, when Paſſion prompts, and Opportunity invites, and what a Maid, believing, — fond, — with fancied Merit charmed, in an unguarded Hour, may be prevailed upon to grant, then tell yourſelf that cruel Seducer is *Lycidas*, — that yielding ruined Creature the unfortunate *Sabina*.

Yet would I could ſtop here! — that my Undoing were all I had to unfold; but there is a dreadful Conſequence, which makes my Offence unpitiable here; — unpardonable, I fear, hereafter. — Abandoned to all Senſe of Honour, Reputation, and even common Prudence, I took ſo little Care to hide my Infamy, that it ſoon reached my Father's Ears; — a Letter, he intercepted, confirmed what he had heard. — No Words can paint the Extremity of his Grief and Rage. — Scarce could he refrain from making me the Victim of his Fury. — O, would to Heaven it had been all let looſe upon me; juſt had been the Doom, and I had bleſt the Blow. — But my poor Life was inſufficient to atone for the Diſhonour brought upon his Family. — He locked me

me into my Chamber, then ſent the ſame Inſtant for my Brother, who happened to be at Sir *John* * * * *, — he made too obedient Haſte to obey the fatal Summons, and alſo to reſolve on taking that Revenge on my Betrayer, which my Father's Age and Infirmities would not permit him to attempt himſelf.

BUT let me haſte to end the horrid Tale, or the Diſtraction I am in will rob me of the Power, and I ſhall leave you in Suſpence. — My Brother ſent that ſame Night a Challenge to *Lycidas*, which being accepted, the next Morning they met and fought: — Heaven, for my greater Puniſhment, thought fit to give the Victory to him who leaſt deſerved it, and my unhappy Brother was brought home breathleſs; — dead, paſt all Recovery. — The Houſe ecchoed with Shrieks and Cries; — a confuſed Noiſe filled every Room. — Impatient to be ſatisfied, and trembling, though I was yet ignorant of the Occaſion, I forced the Lock of my Door, and flew down Stairs into the Parlour, where the firſt Object that preſented itſelf, was the now cold Corpſe of my dear Brother, and near him my Father, upheld by his Servants, in Agonies which ſeemed mortal. — As ſoon as he beheld me, *O Serpent*, cried he, *behold thy Works! — the Fruits of thy curſed Polly!* — Theſe Words, and the Volley of Execrations I heard thundered out againſt *Lycidas*, left me no room to doubt the Truth. — Sure in that Moment I felt ſome Portion of what the Damned endure. — I flew to my Father's Sword,

Sword, which lay upon a Table, and had plunged it into my Breaſt, had I not been prevented by ſome of the Neighbours, whom this ſad Accident had brought into the Houſe. — I was afterwards forced back into my Chamber, where I have ever ſince remained, in a Condition little different from Madneſs. — A Nurſe, who attended me in my infant Days, keeps continually by me, to prevent the Violence my Deſpair had threatened, and comfort me all ſhe is able. — Needleſs, alas! and vain her tender Cares; — there wants no Sword or Poiſon to deſtroy me. Terrors unutterable, inconceivable, prey on my Vitals:—Life flies alarmed from Pulſe to Pulſe, and ſoon will be driven out from every Seat. — Yes, Madam, I feel I am going to that unknown Land, *from whoſe Bourne*, as *Shakeſpear* expreſſes it, *no Traveller returns*. — O, were the Proſpect clear before me, how gladly would I wing my Way, and leave this Load of Infamy behind. — Aid me, my Guardian Angel! — Aid me, all ye celeſtial Spirits, who delight in Acts of Mercy and Benevolence! Support my feeble Courage! Whiſper in my Ear, that when my Soul ſhakes off this guilty Clay, the Gates of *Paradiſe* will not be barred againſt me! — that my Repentance comes not too late, and will atone — but here again I am ſhocked! — my Heart ſhudders! — the Blood forſakes its natural Courſe, and ſhoots convulſive Pangs thro' my whole Frame! — Repentance, did I ſay! — How can I hope my Repentance is ſincere, when I cannot yet bring myſelf to hate the Author of

my

my Ruin; when my ſinful Mind ſtill preſents the Murderer of my Brother, with all thoſe Charms which aſſiſted him in the Murder of my Innocence! — O, how can I expect Succour from thoſe Beings, who are themſelves all Purity, while I retain any Part of thoſe impure Imaginations which joined with *Lycidas* to undo me! Pity me! — Pray for me! — It is all can now be done for

Your deſpairing, dying Friend,

SABINA.

P. S. Juſt as I had finiſhed the above, I heard that *Lycidas* has eſcaped the Purſuit made after him, and that my Father's Diſcompoſure of Mind has thrown him into ſo violent a Fever, that there is no Hope of his Recovery! — What! — O, what muſt become of me! — Adieu, perhaps, for ever!

EPISTLE XVII.

From Athalia, *to a Gentleman, who had argued that no Man could be an ill Husband, who had an endearing Wife.*

YOU laſt Night carried all before you; but I would not have you imagine your Arguments unanſwerable, becauſe nobody attempted to confute them. — Thank rather the Good-Nature of the Company, and aſcribe nothing to the

Juſtice

Juſtice of the Cauſe you took upon you to defend. — All your Wit and Eloquence would have been ineffectual, to perſwade People into a Belief of what every Day's Experience contradicts: — But *Emilia* was preſent, and as you are upon the Point of being married to her, it would have been too cruel in us to have urged any thing, which might have deterred her, after ſhe becomes a Wife, from behaving in that endearing Manner, to which I will not doubt but you may be one of thoſe Husbands, who will make an adequate Return.

But, Sir, all your Sex are not of that grateful Diſpoſition, as I could ſhew by a Multiplicity of Proofs, even among my own Acquaintance; — one, however, I fancy will be ſufficient, and give you too plain a Conviction, for you to renew any Diſcourſe on this Head, unleſs in private to your Miſtreſs.

I was this Morning at my Brother's; — you know how much the Public Affairs he is engaged in, take him up. — While I was waiting in his Dreſſing-Room, till he had diſpatched ſome People he had Buſineſs with, a Letter lying half open on his Toilet, tempted my Curioſity to peep into it; — I found it ſo admirably well adapted to the Deſign I had of taking the firſt Opportunity of ſhewing you the Error you are in at preſent, that I haſtily tranſcribed it, with a Reſolution of ſending it to you, as I now do, flattering myſelf, that when you have read it, you will

will agree with me in acknowledging, that if the Endearments of ſuch a Woman as *Cleomelia*, joined to the immenſe Obligations her Husband has to her, render her rather diſtaſteful than the contrary, there are not many of our Sex, who have Reaſon to expect theirs will be agreeable.

I SINCERELY wiſh, nevertheleſs, that thoſe you may meet with from *Emilia*, may really receive all you ſeem to think they merit from a Husband. — I give you my ſolemn Promiſe never to mention one Word to her of the encloſed, and am,

SIR,

Your moſt humble Servant,

ATHALIA.

EPISTLE XVIII.

Encloſed in the foregoing.

*From the Earl of * *, to the Hon. Mr. * * *.*

Dear Jack,

ALL my Friends have had ſo little of my Company ſince I have been *wived*, that none of you have any Reaſon to regret my leaving *London*. — My Father-in-law, I thank him, takes me with him to make a Country Viſit, a Favour for which I am much more indebted to him, than for the Fortune he bribed me with to marry his Daughter.—I ſhall now have a little Reſpite from the fulſome Sounds of *My Dear*, and

and *My Dear Lord*, at the Beginning of every Sentence, and ſometimes too accompanied with a Kiſs, or perhaps a Squeeze by the Hand, yet more tireſome and impertinent to a Man of Taſte. — But if the old Fellow, who thinks this mighty pretty, would but once take a Trip into the other World, I ſhould make her behave more like a Woman of this, or leave her to a ſeparate Maintenance. — The Moment of my Return, ſhall bring you Word where I am; and in ſpite of my matrimonial Yoke, will ſteal one Night, to enjoy your Company, and *Tom* * * * *'s, over a Bottle of *Champaigne*, with two or three Girls of Wit and Spirit. — Till when, I am,

Dear *Jack*,

Yours, *&c.*

EPISTLE XIX.

From Euſebia *to the Biſhop of* * *, *on the Power of Divine Muſic. With ſome Hints of a Propoſal for the better encouraging it in theſe Kingdoms.*

My Lord,

IT is a vulgar Aphoriſm, that thoſe who are untouched with Muſic, have no Souls. — What I ſuppoſe is meant by it is, that ſuch People are incapable of reliſhing the Joys of Immortality (among the Infinity of which, ſeraphic Sounds are always reckoned as a Part) and I ſhould be very apt to ſubſcribe to this Opinion, were

were I not confident, that whatever Obſtructions there may be in our Senſation in this Point, they will be all removed with our other Imperfections, when we arrive at the Manſions of Eternity. — It is nevertheleſs, methinks, the Buſineſs of us all, while we remain on Earth, to endeavour, as much as in us lies, to fit ourſelves for the Society we hope to enjoy hereafter; and that this can be done by no Method more likely to ſucceed, than by Divine Muſic, is obvious, by the Power harmonious Notes have on the Mind, to whatever Purpoſe they are applied.—We are told, my Lord, the Lyre of *Timotheus* had that perſwaſive Force, as to inſpire in the Breaſts of all who heard it, any Paſſion he pleaſed, or to convert, in an Inſtant, the extremeſt Emotion, Nature or Circumſtances had imprinted there into its contrary. — How much greater then muſt be its Energy, when tuned in Praiſes to that Supreme Being of Beings, whom the moſt hardened Sinner in his Heart acknowledges and reveres! — So efficacious is it, and ſo ſublime the Ideas, which elevate the Soul to rapturous Contemplation of that Eternal Fountain of all Harmony, that I know not whether the Royal Prophet merited that glorious Appellation of *the Man after God's own Heart* leſs by his ſacred Hymns, than by his other Acts of Devotion, and was not equally great in driving the evil Spirit out of *Saul*, as in conquering *Goliah*, and the Hoſt of the *Philiſtines*.

I WAS led into theſe Reflections by being laſt Night at Mr. *Handel*'s fine Oratorio of *Joſhua*, where,

where, though the Words were not quite so elegant, nor so well as I could have wished adapted to the Music, I was transported into the most divine Extasy. — I closed my Eyes, and imagined myself amidst the angelic Choir in the bright Regions of everlasting Day, chanting the Praises of my great Creator, and his ineffable *Messiah*. — I seemed, methought, to have nothing of this gross Earth about me, but was all Soul! — all Spirit!

I cannot help thinking, but that Entertainments of this Nature frequently exhibited, would have an Effect over the most obdurate Minds, and go a great Way in reforming an Age, which seems to be degenerating equally into an Irreverence for the Deity, and a Brutality of Behaviour to each other; but as this Depravity of Taste, of Principles, and Manners, has spread itself from *London* even to the remotest Parts of this Island, I should be glad there were *Oratorios* established in every City and great Town throughout the Kingdom; but even then, to be of general Service, they ought to be given *gratis*, and all Degrees of People allowed to partake of them, otherwise it is but an inconsiderable Number, in comparison with the whole, whose Fortunes would admit of their being improved this Way.

It would, therefore, be an Act truly worthy of the *British* Nobility, Clergy, and Gentry, to enter into a Subscription, for the bringing up to Music, such of our Youth, of both Sexes, who

are

are qualified either for the vocal or inſtrumental Part, and ſettling a Fund for maintaining them decently, and ſo as not to be obliged to follow any other Vocation, nor perform in any other Kind of Entertainment. — Theſe ſhould all be under the Inſpection of the Miniſter of the Place to which they belong, who, as far as he is able, ſhould take Care they were guilty of nothing in private Life, that ſhould diſgrace, or bring an Odium on their public Character, which, by their officiating in ſacred Worſhip, ought always to be held in Eſtimation.

IF any one ſhould object, that the Calamities of the Times will not at preſent admit of any additional Expence, I think the Anſwer is eaſy.— There are modiſh Expences, which all reaſonable People allow would be much more for the Glory of the Nation to retrench. — Many of our *public Diverſions* are no other than *public Nuſances*, and tend to the Overthrow of all Religion, Morality, and even Common Senſe; and were they to be aboliſhed in Favour of thoſe Seminaries of Divine Muſic, I have been ſpeaking of, I am pretty certain it would appear, on calculating the Expence of both, that *Virtue* might be purchaſed at a much cheaper Rate than *Vice*.

BUT however impracticable this Scheme may be, I dare flatter myſelf, your Lordſhip will believe it is well meant; and know you are too ſincere a Lover, as well as too great an Example of Piety and Humanity, to be offended at any

thing proceeding from ſuch Motives. — I ſhall therefore make no Apology for the Liberty I have taken, and only aſſure you, I have the Honour to be,

With the moſt perfect Attachment,
Your Lordſhip's
Moſt dutiful, and moſt obedient Servant,
EUSEBIA.

EPISTLE XX.

From Cariclea *to* Arabella, *giving her an Account how ſhe relieved the Country People from the Terrors they were in of a ſuppoſed Apparition in* Broxbon *Wood. With ſome Part of the Story of* The Lady of the Cave.

Dear Arabella,

I SUPPOSE by this Time you begin to imagine that the gay Sylvan Scenes of *Hertfordſhire* have made me forgetful of every thing I left behind me in *London*; but I do aſſure you, tho' I have been very much taken up in a way, perhaps, you little think of, that of doing Good in my Generation, I ſhould not have been here ten whole Days without writing, had it been in my Power to have entertained you with any other Subject, than one which I know is the moſt diſagreeable of any. — In fine, I have ſeen you too much alarmed at every Story has been told of

of Apparitions, to ſend you an Account of one from the Country; but as the Danger is over, and I can now affirm, that a Spirit, which has made a great Noiſe here, is found to be real Fleſh and Blood exiſting, I may venture to give you the Narrative, not only as an Amuſement, but alſo as I am in Hopes it may contribute to rid you of thoſe vain Apprehenſions, by ſhewing on what ſlight Foundations, Tales of this Nature are generally built.

I KNOW not how it comes to paſs, but I have obſerved in moſt Country Places I have been, the People are ſtrangely infatuated with a Belief of Ghoſts and Spirits: — According to them, every Town, nay, almoſt every Village, has its particular Dæmon, which haunts lone Walks, and gloomy Foreſts; but till my coming down this Time, I never heard Talk of any ſuch Thing in theſe Parts, and therefore was now the more ſurprized to find, on my Arrival, every one in the extremeſt Terror, on account of an Apparition, which they told me appeared even at Noon-day in *Broxbon* Wood. — This Spirit, they ſaid, had the Form of a Woman, was in white Robes, and ſometimes ſeemed to glitter all over like a Star. — They added, that while at a Diſtance, ſhe only glided along very ſlow between the Trees of that thick Foreſt, but when any Perſon had Courage to go nearer to her, moved much faſter, and by Degrees vaniſhed. — As ſhe had been never ſeen in any other Place, they gave her the Name of the *White Devil of*

Broxbon *Wood.* — Not one of our Family, except my Uncle and Aunt, who are both confined to their Chamber, he by a Fit of the Gout, and ſhe, by her Complaiſance in keeping him Company, but what affirmed they have ſeen this Phantom various Times; but though none of them pretend they have received any Hurt from it, or that it ever aſſumed any frightful Shape, yet the Thoughts that one from the Dead was come among them, put them into ſuch a Panic, that it was not without great Difficulty, any of them could be prevailed upon to go to the next Market Town for Proviſions, there being no other Way, than through the Wood, and ſome even choſe to loſe their Places, rather than hazard encountring the *White Devil.*

I ENDEAVOURED all I could to reaſon thoſe Creatures into more Courage. — I repreſented to them, that in caſe there were any ſuch thing in reality, as the Spirits of deceaſed Perſons being permitted to appear, how improbable it was that they ſhould quit the Manſions of eternal Reſt, and reviſit the Earth, only to ſhew themſelves, and ſcare thoſe who were once their Fellow Creatures, without any other Buſineſs, or Errand whatſoever; — but all this was talking to the Wind; they inſiſting that it was a Ghoſt they had ſeen, would by no Arguments be put off from their Belief, and no doubt thought me very prophane for making ſo ſlight of it: — In a word, the Story was ſo much atteſted, and by ſuch Numbers, that my Uncle himſelf, though a Man the far-

theſt

theft in the World from Superftition, told me he knew not well what to think of it, and wifhed he were able to walk out himfelf, in order to form a better Judgment. — For my part, I could not forbear laughing at the whole, and urged that it was certainly either a Woman, who lived on the other Side the Wood, and came to indulge her Melancholy in that folitary Recefs, or elfe fomebody who walked there with Defign to impofe on weak Minds, and divert herfelf at the Expence of their Credulity. — To which he replied, that the latter of thefe Suggeftions might probably be right; but as to the former, he had been at the Pains of fending to all the Gentlemen's Seats near that Place, and was well affured there was no Perfon in any of them, that amufed herfelf in that Manner; but, on the contrary, many on the other Side the Wood had alfo feen it, and were equally terrified and amazed.

ALL this would not perfwade me to believe any thing of the Matter, and having been ufed to walk frequently in this Wood whenever I came to my Uncle's, would not now deny myfelf that Pleafure, though much I found was faid of my Prefumption in fo doing. — But I was obliged to exert all my Authority to get my Maid along with me, the Stories fhe had been told having rendered her as much a Coward, as the moft timid of them all. — She durft not, however, abfolutely refufe, and fo followed me; — but tho' we went a confiderable Way into this formidable Place, even much farther than I had ever

done before in my Life, we met no Ghoſt, nor any thing to juſtify the Accounts had been given us of one; ſo that ſhe began to aſſume Reſolution enough, not only to attend me chearfully the next Time we walked, but alſo to rally thoſe who ſtill perſiſted in their Belief.

It was either the third or the fourth Day, I cannot be poſitive which, that we were rambling as uſual, when happening to have forgot my Snuff-Box, I ſent her back to fetch it, promiſing, at the ſame Time, that I would not quit the Place ſhe left me in, till her Return. — She obeyed, though I could perceive with a Reluctance, which ſome Remains of Fear occaſioned in her; and I ſat down at the Foot of a large Oak, in one of the thickeſt Parts of the Wood. I had not been in this Poſture above ſix Minutes, before I was ſurprized with the Sound of a very ſweet and harmonious Voice, ſinging at ſome Diſtance, yet near enough for me to hear the Words, which were theſe:

Give me Love, and Liberty:
From an Iron Grate,
And the Man I hate,
Dear Fortune ſet me free.

On this I turned my Head, and plainly enough diſcerned through the Branches of the Trees, ſomewhat that appeared like a Woman, and habited, as they had ſaid, in white Garments, which ſeemed to flow looſe in the Wind; — her Back

was

was towards me, and ſhe ſeemed moving farther, but in a quite careleſs *degagee* Manner, and ſtill continued ſinging: — As I doubted not but this was the Apparition ſo much talked of, I reſolved to find the Truth, if poſſible. — *If it be a Ghoſt*, ſaid I to myſelf, *it is certainly a very harmleſs, merry one.* — I do not tell you, however, that I did not feel ſome little Palpitation, but I got the better of it; and riſing with as little Noiſe as I could, went in the ſame Tract the *White Thing* (for I knew not what to call it) puſhed on before me. — It was when I firſt got up, as I ſaid before, a good Diſtance from me, but upon the ruſtling my Cloaths made among the Shrubs, as I ſuppoſe, left off ſinging, and moved conſiderably faſter, as the People affirmed it always did at the Approach of any one: At length it ran with ſo much Swiftneſs, that I was obliged to do ſo too, or muſt have ſoon loſt Sight of it, and then might have imagined with others, that it had the Power of becoming inviſible whenever it pleaſed. — My Feet, however, were nimble enough to enable my Eyes to purſue it quite out of the Wood, into a great wide Common, where, on coming to a pretty high Hill, it eſcaped me on the other Side; but fully perſwaded in my Mind that I ſhould recover it again, as ſoon as I got over the preſent Impediment which barred my View, I redoubled the Race I had taken. — But here I found myſelf deceived. — I eaſily aſcended this Mount, which commanded the whole Common, but neither ſaw what I was in chaſe of, nor any Houſe, Hut, Grove, nor even

Thicket, where any Creature could be concealed; — this indeed alarmed me; — loth I was to think the Figure I had ſeen was any thing more than mortal, yet could conceive no natural Means by which it ſhould elude my Sight, in ſuch an Inſtant, for at moſt I could not have been, during the whole Purſuit, more than fifty Yards behind. — I deſcended ſlowly, ſtill throwing my Eyes from Side to Side, though now without Hope of recovering what I had loſt, when as I was deeply muſing on this Adventure, I was ſtruck on a ſudden with ſomewhat that looked like Smoke, coming out of the Side of the Hill I had juſt come over. — On which I drew nearer, and found it was ſo indeed, and that near the Hole whence it proceeded, there was an Opening cut out of the Earth, which ſeemed as if a Paſſage to ſome ſubterranean Cavern. — You will allow I had good Courage to attempt exploring the Secrets of ſuch a Place, yet did I venture to go in, though it was ſo low at the Entrance, that I was obliged to ſtoop almoſt double. — As I advanced a few Paces, I found it, however, ſomewhat more lofty, and I proceeded for I believe three Times the Length of myſelf, till I came into a pretty wide Place, but would have been entirely dark, only for a Lamp which burned at one Corner of it, and which plainly diſcovered to me the Form I had purſued, ſitting juſt oppoſite to me, and a Woman holding a Baſon to her, in which ſhe was waſhing her Hands. — The Light was ſo diſpoſed, that ſhe could not avoid ſeeing me, and ſtarting up came forward in a good deal of

of Confusion. — Indeed I was in little less, but stammered out as handsome an Apology as I could for my Intrusion; by the Time I had done speaking, she had recovered herself enough to reply, *Though* (said she, in the most obliging Accents) *I neither desired nor could expect any Guests in a Place such as this, where I flattered myself with being effectually bid from all the World, yet as you are of my own Sex, and have the Appearance of one who will be far from doing me a Prejudice, such Welcome as is in my Power to give, you may command.* With these Words she took me by the Hand, and in the most polite Manner led me to a Seat, ordering her Attendant at the same time to get more Light.

HER Commands were no sooner given than obeyed:—Two large Candles were immediately lighted, and I had a full Prospect of every thing about me, but the Lady herself for a Time engrossed my Attention too much to regard any thing beside: — She was not what one may call a perfect Beauty, but yet much more lovely than many I have seen who are celebrated for such; —her Age seemed not to exceed Fifteen, and, as I was afterwards informed, had not yet attained to that; but she was tall, admirably well-shaped, had a fine Complexion, and somewhat of an uncommon Vivacity in her Eyes, which gave a Lustre to her whole Frame: — She had on a *Robe de Chambre*, of white Lutestring, shot with Silver, which doubtless it was that had acquired her the Name of the *White Devil*, and

also

alſo made thoſe who happened to ſee her in the Sunſhine ſay, ſhe had the Glitter of a Star.—— I could not help ſmiling at the Thoughts of what had been told me; which ſhe taking notice of, I frankly related to her the Rumours her Appearance had occaſioned, the Fright the Country People were in, and the whole Motives of that Curioſity ſhe had been ſo good to pardon. —She laughed exceſſively at it, but aſſured me that tho' ſhe ought to be ſorry for having been the Cauſe of ſo much Terror and Confuſion, yet it would be impoſſible for her to regret it very much, if Good-Nature would excite me to a Continuance of thoſe Viſits my Curioſity had begun; *and to engage you to this Act of Compaſſion*, purſued ſhe, *I muſt entreat you to believe no diſhonourable Action, nor even the View of any, has made me ſeek a Shelter in this Cave.* — I replied, that they muſt have a very ſmall Share of Penetration, who needed the Teſtimony of her Words, for what her Appearance alone was a ſufficient Proof.

After ſome few Civilities of this Sort, I would have taken my Leave, but ſhe deſired, as it was the Hour for Tea, I would give her the Pleaſure of my Company. — I muſt confeſs I was a little ſtartled at the Name of *Tea*; for I could not imagine by what Magic Art any ſuch thing could be prepared in the Place we were; for I will now acquaint you with the Furniture of it. — There was neither Grate, Chair, nor Table; Hoops of Ozier twiſted together, ſomewhat like the Wicker of which Baskets are made, laid

laid crofs-ways, one above another, fupporting a long Piece of Board, from one End of the Cave to the other, ferved as a Bench, and was what we both were feated upon, — An old Tub, turned the Bottom upwards, fupplied the Place of a Table, and that Fire, the Smoke of which had been my Director, was contained between two little Piles of broken Bricks. — The Candles, which were lighted up at my Approach, were ftuck in Pieces of Clay, with Holes in them, and made flat at the Bottom. — A great Cupboard, that feemed of the fame Age with *Noah*'s Ark, with two Bundles rolled up, and difpofed in different Angles, which, as I afterwards underftood, were the Beds on which the Family repofed, compleated all the Moveables of the Apartment. — Yet, notwithftanding this wretched Appearance, we had our Tea ferved very elegantly. — The Maid brought a Decanter, with Water clear as the Chryftal that enclofed it, and having fet it on the Fire, laid a clean Damask Napkin over the Tub-Table, and placed a Tea-Pot, two Cups and Saucers, with a Slop-Bafon of as fine China as I ever faw. — This done, fhe fetched from the antique Cupboard a Tea-Cheft, richly inlaid with Mother of Pearl and Amber, out of which fhe took a Silver Canifter, and Gold Spoons. — We had alfo exceeding good Cake; but the Plate in which it was prefented, was not at all of a Piece with the reft of the Equipage; it was a coarfe Earthen Ware, and had the Misfortune to have loft more than one half the Brim.

So many Contradictions joined to make an Oddity which I could not imagine a Possibility of accounting for. — The young Lady easily saw into my Thoughts, and as soon as our Repast was ended, told me she would not deprive me any longer of the Light of the Sun, but attend me if I would give her Leave, into the Wood: I own the Proposal was very agreeable to me, and we walked together till we came to a Grove, formed by the Hand of Nature, and more beautiful than Art could have made it; there we sat down, and after ushering in what she was about to say, with some Compliments on the Motives which this first Interview had given her, of a perfect Confidence in my Sincerity, unfolded the whole Mystery of her Retirement, and all that had so much surprized me in beholding.

She told me she was the Daughter of ****, by whom she was promised in her Infancy to the ***, but that as she grew up, she could not be prevailed upon to entertain any Sentiments, but those of an implacable Aversion for her intended Bridegroom. — That she had endeavoured, by Prayers and Tears, not only to her Father, but also by declaring her Hatred to himself, to convince both, of the Miseries such an Union must produce; but all without the least Effect. — **** found an Advantage to his Family by the Match, and was obstinate in his Resolution; nor would the *** recede from his Pretensions, either because he really loved her, or that his Pride would not suffer him to be disappointed

appointed in a thing every body ſuppoſed him certain of poſſeſſing. — As ſhe was now looked upon of ſufficient Years, the Wedding-Day was appointed, and ſhe ſaw the Preparations making for it, with a Horror which determined her to run all Hazards, rather than it ſhould be compleated. — Finding no Way to avoid it, but to quit her Father's Houſe, ſhe reſolved on doing ſo; but to whom to have recourſe ſhe knew not, not daring to go to any of her Friends or Kindred, as ſhe was certain Search would be made for her in every Houſe which could be ſuſpected to give her Shelter. — In this Diſtreſs ſhe communicated all to her Woman, who told her ſhe had a Kinſman in *Hertfordſhire*, who had indeed but an ordinary Habitation, yet ſuch a one as might conceal her till the Search ſhould be entirely over, and ſhe might then repair to ſuch of her Relations who had the moſt Influence over her Father, in order to bring about a Reconciliation. — Never, *ſaid ſhe*, had I known ſo much Tranſport, as this Propoſal gave me. — We ſet immediately about packing up a little Bundle of Linnen; and ſome few Neceſſaries, which I thought the mean Place I was going to, would not be able to ſupply me with; and the next Morning, by Day-break, got out of the Houſe, without being ſeen by any of the Family, and came down in the *Hertford* Stage. — Her Kinſman, ſhe told me, lived within two ſmall Miles of that Town, which we eaſily walked; but how greatly was I diſappointed, when being arrived, we were told that his Goods had long ago been

ſeized

ſeized for Rent; that he had been turned out of his Houſe, with all his Family; and that nobody caring to receive them on account of their Poverty, he had been obliged to dig himſelf a Cave, where he ſoon after died of Grief, but that his Wife ſtill lived in the ſame Place: They then directed us, *continued ſhe*, to the Cave where you found me, which I thought it better to content myſelf with, than to go to any Inn, where I might have been ſeen by ſome one who had known me, and my Servant had no Acquaintance beſides this poor Widow in all theſe Parts.—She added, that it was a Fortnight ſince ſhe came, and did not dare to quit it as yet.

After thanking her for the Confidence ſhe repoſed in me, I asked her ſeveral Queſtions concerning her Manner of Life, and what ſhe did for Proviſions? To which ſhe replied, that the Widow went every Day to *Ware*, and brought her in wherewith to ſupport Nature, which was all ſhe deſired, or could expect while in her State of Exile.

She gave me this Detail with ſo much Chearfulneſs, and interſperſed it with ſo many Pleaſantries, that it was eaſy to ſee her Misfortunes had taken no Effect upon her Spirits; it growing towards Sunſet when ſhe had finiſhed, I was obliged to take my Leave, but not without a Promiſe of meeting her the next Morning in the ſame Grove.

You

You may imagine, dear *Arabella*, with how much Triumph in my Mind I came home, on account of the Discovery I had made of the supposed Spirit. — I found my poor *Abigail* at the Edge of the Wood, with two or three of my Uncle's Servants, who had been sent in quest of me, after she had missed me at the Place I had ordered her to come to. — They doubted not but the Spirit had run away with me; but my Uncle and Aunt were in Pain, lest some other ill Accident had befallen me. — My Appearance, however, made all things easy, and I related the whole Story, in the same Manner I have done to you, only concealed the Names and Quality of the Persons concerned from all but my Uncle and Aunt, whose Discretion I too well knew to make a Doubt of, or that they would not do as I earnestly wished in my Heart, which was to invite this distressed young Lady to their House. I had no sooner finished my Narration, than they cried out both together, *Why, Niece, did you not bring her from that wretched Place?* — I told them, it was a Liberty I would not presume to take, but since they had given me Authority, I would let her know the Favour they intended her, the next Day.

To conclude; I obeyed their Commands, and the Dictates of my own Inclination. — She is now with us. — I am quite charmed with my new Friend; — she seems no less so with me; and if she thinks I have done her any Service, in removing her from so incommodious a Situation,

I know myſelf well repaid in her polite and agreeable Converſation.—My Aunt is equally pleaſed with her, and my Uncle takes ſo much Part in her Diſtreſs, that though he is ſtill very lame, he reſolves to go to *London* ſome Day this Week, and try how far her Father is to be won; I mean as to breaking off the intended Marriage; for on no other Terms does ſhe deſire a Reconciliation, but will ſooner forego all the Hopes to which her Birth entitles her, and get her Bread by Service, than ever yield to become the Wife of the * * *.

As ſoon as I know the Succeſs of this Negotiation, I will not fail to communicate it to you; in the mean time I flatter myſelf you will take this as a ſufficient Excuſe for my long Silence, and withdraw no Part of that Friendſhip, with which you have hitherto favoured

Your

CARICLEA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XXI.

From the ſame to Arabella, *with a farther Account of* the Lady of the Cave.

THE Concern you expreſs for our young Gueſt, and Impatience for the Sequel of her Adventures, is ſo great a Proof of your Good-Nature, that it would be unpardonable in me not to give you all the Satisfaction in my Power; but that is as yet ſo little, that I ſhould ſcarce have wrote, but to ſhew my Readineſs to obey your Commands. — I think, for my part, every thing belonging to this Lady muſt be myſterious, and that whoever intereſt themſelves in her Affairs, muſt alſo take a Fancy to deal in Ambiguities: — But that I may not ſeem to do ſo too, I will relate in a few Words all we know here of the Matter.

MY Uncle ſet out on his Expedition laſt Monday was ſeven-night. — His firſt Letter gave an Account of his ſafe Arrival, but no more; nor indeed could any more be expected from that. — The ſecond, which was about five Days after, related that he had ſeen M****, that he had been extremely well received by him, and did not doubt but every thing would be accommodated agreeable to *the Lady of the Cave*; for ſo he always calls her. — Since this, we heard nothing from him, till laſt Night, when a large

Portmanteau, with a great many rich Suits of Cloaths, and other Wearing-Apparel, which ſhe had no Opportunity of bringing away with her, came down by the Stage-Coach, and with it a third Letter to my Aunt, wherein my Uncle deſires her to prepare the moſt elegant Entertainment the Country can furniſh out, againſt next Friday, on which Day he propoſes being at home, and ſays he ſhall bring with him a Stranger of Condition, and for whom he has a particular Eſteem.—He then tells her, ſhe may acquaint the young Lady, that ſhe muſt prepare to receive him as the Perſon who has now the ſole Power over her; that her Father has inveſted him with all his Authority, by way of Guardian, and adds, in very humorous Terms, that ſhe muſt not flatter herſelf with eſcaping from him, in caſe he ſhould happen to enjoin any thing ſhe might not ſo well reliſh. — All this we can make nothing of; but by the Air of Merriment, which runs through the whole, have no room to doubt but that he is very much pleaſed, and has ſucceeded in his Negotiation, though we are entirely in the dark, by what Means, or on what Conditions.

The poor young Lady is, however, in very great Agitations; ſhe trembles leſt this Stranger, who comes down with my Uncle, ſhould be her Father, and that under the Pretence of being reconciled, he ſhould take her home with him, and compel her at laſt to marry the * * *: Neither my Aunt, nor myſelf, omit any thing in our Power

Power to put other Thoughts into her Head, but all we can ſay is inſufficient to make her eaſy. —She can no way conceive for what Reaſon her Father ſhould delegate his Authority over her while living, to any other Perſon; and this it is, which chiefly makes her fear my Uncle has been impoſed upon by a feigned Condeſcention on his Part.

BUT I am too well aſſured of my Uncle's good Senſe and Penetration, to harbour the leaſt thought of his being capable of ſuffering ſo groſs a Deception to paſs upon him; nor is it indeed probable, that the other would attempt to treat a Perſon of his Rank and Character in the World in ſuch a Manner. — We are all, notwithſtanding, in a good deal of Suſpence, and long for Friday with as much Impatience as ever a young Heir did for the Arrival of dear one-and-twenty, or a Bridegroom for the Wedding-Night.

WHEN relieved from this uneaſy Situation, you may depend on being informed of the Reſult, as ſoon as the Poſt can bring it from,

Dear *Arabella*,

Yours,

CARICLEA.

EPISTLE XXII.

From the ſame to Arabella, *with the Sequel of the Adventure contained in the two former.*

THE Riddle is at laſt explained. — My Uncle is returned, and has brought with him— I will not tell you who, till I have prepared you to give him that Welcome in your Imagination, which he certainly deſerves. — Beſides, it would be letting you into the Plot too ſoon, and deſtroying that Surprize, which ſo much heightens the Beauty of any great Cataſtrophe. — Gradually then to begin; — My Uncle no ſooner got to *London*, than he went to M * * * *, whom he found in a good deal of Perplexity, not only on account of the little Hope he had of recovering his Daughter, but alſo on that of ſome Conſequences her Elopement had occaſioned, which he did not as yet think fit to mention. — My Uncle told him, he had caſually heard of a young Lady, who was ſaid to be concealed at the Houſe of one of his intimate Friends, and having good Reaſons for ſuſpecting it was his Daughter, he had taken the Liberty to wait on him, in order to aſſure him that, in caſe the Perſon he meant was really ſhe, he need be under no Apprehenſions that ſhe had flown from his Authority, on any Motive which could bring Diſhonour on his Family; and then proceeded to excuſe this Act of Diſobedience in her, by remonſtrating how im-

poſſible it was for any Conſiderations to overcome an Averſion, grounded on a natural Antipathy, and the ill Effects which forced Marriages, for the moſt part, produce.

M * * * * heard him with a great deal of Patience, and then told him, that he had not ſo ſtrenuouſly inſiſted on his Daughter's Obedience in this Point, on the ſcore of any Advantage he propoſed by the Marriage, but meerly to comply with the Promiſe he had given to the * * *; *for in Truth*, ſaid he, *I have heard ſome Things of late concerning him, which had I known before, I never ſhould have approved of the Alliance.* — To theſe he added many other Expreſſions, which made my Uncle ſee that a Reconciliation between them would not be difficult to accompliſh; and having brought him entirely into the Diſpoſition he wiſhed, at length ventured to inform him, that to his certain Knowledge, the young Lady he had mentioned, was no other than his Daughter; but the ſame time told him, that he muſt not expect to be made acquainted with the Place of her Retreat, till he had given his Word and Honour to forgive her, and to make no Uſe of his Authority as a Parent to force her Inclinations. To this, the other ſaid he would readily agree, provided ſtill her Conduct, ſince her quitting his Houſe, had given him no freſh Subject of Complaint againſt her.

MY Uncle thought there needed no more from a Perſon who he found was nicely tenacious

of his Promiſes, and immediately related the whole Story of her Concealment in the Cave, how I had found her there, and afterwards at his Deſire brought her home with me. — The good old Gentleman, it ſeems, liſtened to this Recital with Tears of Joy, and as ſoon as it was ended, embraced my Uncle, ſaid he never could ſufficiently acknowledge the Obligations he had to him, called him the Saviour of his Daughter's Honour, and that of their whole Family, and ſwore he ſhould always regard him with much more than a brotherly Affection.

Such extraordinary Demonſtrations of Gratitude, for an Action, which in reality was no more than common Humanity would have obliged any Man to, very much embarraſſed my Uncle; he was not ſorry, however, to find the Impreſſion it made on him, becauſe it could not but facilitate the good Work he had ſo happily begun. — Indeed there now required no more Sollicitations;— the Father threw off all Reſerve, and frankly owned, that as things had happened, he was ſo far from being troubled his Daughter had been guilty of ſwerving from that Duty, ſhe had in every other Article obſerved towards him, that he rather looked on what ſhe had done, as inſpired by Divine Providence. — *For a Girl of her Years*, ſaid he, *to run all Hazards, expoſe herſelf to all Dangers, rather than become the Wife of a Man, whoſe exterior Form has nothing to create ſo ſtrong an Averſion, ſeems to me to have ſomething ſupernatural in it; and I muſt think it was*

by

by the Direction of her Guardian Angel, that she took this only Method to avoid a Man, whom I am now well convinced she never could have been happy with, even had her Love for him been equal to her Hate.

ALL this a little astonished my Uncle; but the other soon put an End to the Suspence he was in, by telling him on what Occasion his Sentiments were changed, so much to the reverse of what they had been.

IT seems, some little Time before it was publicly known that M * * * * had resolved to dispose of his Daughter to the * * *, a young Gentleman of Family, equal in Fortune to him, and much his Superior in Accomplishments and personal Graces, came to demand Permission to make his Addresses to that young Beauty; but the Father was obliged to reject his Offers, on account of his Promise being already given; on on which the other desisted. — The Father, however, after her Elopement, was not without some Apprehensions, she had privately encouraged the Passion of this new Lover, and might possibly return it in a Manner, no way to the Advantage of her Character; till the Rivals happening to meet, in public Company, and some Talk of her coming on the Carpet, the * * * spoke of her in Terms highly injurious, which the other, who truly loved, though without Hopes, not able to support, sent him a Challenge the next Morning; but the * * * refused to accept it, saying he

knew better things than to fight on the ſcore of ſo worthleſs a Girl, who, he doubted not, but was by this Time a common Proſtitute. This Affair made a great deal of Noiſe in Town, and it was not without the Interpoſition of all the Friends on both Sides, that it was made up, by the * * * conſenting to ask Pardon, and declaring he knew no Ill of the young Lady, but had ſpoke only without a Thought. — The faithful Lover, however, was ſo uneaſy at this Slur on the Reputation of a Woman he ſincerely believed innocent, that he came to her Father, and offered to do his utmoſt in aſſiſting the Search he was then making after her; ſtill declaring, that if ſhe could be found, and would accept his Hand, he would ask no other Fortune with her, than the Happineſs of poſſeſſing her. — This Generoſity ſo much charmed the old Gentleman, that he wiſhed to retrieve her for nothing ſo much as to have the Power of beſtowing her on a Perſon ſo extremely deſerving. — This it was that had made him now expreſs himſelf in the Terms he did, on hearing the Account my Uncle gave of her.

In fine, the Lover was ſent for the next Day, to be made Partaker of the joyful News; and, after ſome Conſultation, it was thought beſt he ſhould come down with my Uncle, and make his Addreſſes in Perſon to the young Lady; that her Father was not to appear in the Affair; but that if ſhe conſented, the Marriage ſhould be ſolemnized here.—My Uncle is to act as her Guardian,

dian, and have the Management of every thing. This ſeemed, in all their Opinions, the moſt effectual Way of ſilencing the Tongue of Cenſure, on her departing from home in that clandeſtine Manner; ſince it would be ſuppoſed ſhe went away for no other Reaſon, than to have the Freedom of her Choice, in marrying the Man ſhe loved.

Now, dear *Arabella*, you have the whole of this myſterious Matter, but you would have pitied the poor Creature, if you had ſeen the Agitation ſhe was in, on hearing my Uncle's Coach was coming up the Lane that leads to the Houſe. — She ran to the Window, endeavouring to diſcover, while at a Diſtance, who was with him; but a tall Row of thick-ſet Elms, with their intermingling Branches, deprived her of the Power; and not till they alighted, and were juſt entering, could ſhe perſwade herſelf it was any other than her Father. — It is poſſible, however, that on Sight of this Stranger, who is an extreme handſome well-made Man, ſhe might gueſs Part of the Truth; for as ſhe has ſince confeſſed to me, he had given her ſome Reaſons to imagine he loved her, tho' he had never any Opportunity of declaring his Paſſion to herſelf.

MY Uncle made no Mention of any thing had paſſed, and Matters of meer Indifference filled up the Converſation all Supper-Time, till the Hour arriving for Repoſe, he ſaw his Gueſt into a Chamber prepared for him, and then re-

turned

turned to give us an Account you may believe we were impatient enough to hear. The young Lady could not be told the Conditions of her Pardon depended on her accepting this Gentleman for a Husband, without blushing excessively; the Proofs he had given, however, of his Love and Generosity had all the Weight they ought to have with her; and I do not doubt but that a very few Days Courtship will entirely subdue all the Scruples her Excess of Modesty raises, in opposition to the Wishes of so ardent and faithful a Lover.

When the Wedding is over, we shall all go to Town together; the Bride and Bridegroom are to wait on the old Gentleman in Form, and ask Pardon for having married without his Privity; after which, the Feasting, Ball, and every thing proper for celebrating the Nuptials of People of their Distinction, are already contrived; and you will have the Pleasure of seeing *the Lady of the Cave* shine out with all the Advantages of Pomp and Grandeur: It will also, I flatter myself, add to your Satisfaction, that this happy Catastrophe is greatly owing to my Courage, in pursuing and discovering the *White Devil of* Broxbon *Wood*; if it would have so good an Effect on you, as to rid you of the Fears you are in of Ghosts and Apparitions, I shall have a double Cause of rejoicing, being

Dear *Arabella*, sincerely yours,

Cariclea.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XXIII.

From Lucinda, *to the Lord* * * *, *giving him an Account of the Reason of her Brother's Retirement from the World.*

MY LORD,

IT is high Time you ſhould be undeceived concerning the Motives of my Brother's Retirement from the World; and however improper it may be to rectify the Miſtakes of others in this Point, your Lordſhip is too ſincere and experienced a Friend to our Family to be kept in the dark; nor would I have concealed the cruel Secret one Moment from you, if I had not waited the Opportunity which now preſents itſelf of conveying that to you by a ſafe and private Hand which I did not care to entruſt by the Poſt.

I DOUBT not but your Lordſhip has heard, ſince it is the common Report, that Grief for the Elopement of a beloved Wife, was the ſole Cauſe, and that meerly becauſe he is deprived of the Sight of her, he is determined to ſee no body. — I muſt own there is a great Appearance of Reaſon in this Conjecture, as he was ſeized immediately after her Departure with that Deſpair, which has robbed us of him, and himſelf of all the Enjoyments of Life; — but, my Lord, had ſhe left a Husband to whom ſhe had ſuch immenſe

menſe Obligations, on any Pique, or Want of Affection to him, I think he would have had too much Spirit to have reſented it in the Manner he has done. — So monſtrous an Ingratitude muſt have turned all the ſofter Paſſions into a vindictive Rage, and we ſhould have ſeen him act the Part of a provoked, and juſtly *incenſed Husband*, not that of a *whining Lover*. — But, alas! the Caſe is quite otherwiſe, and that unhappy Woman is an Object, not of *Blame*, but the extremeſt *Pity*.

You know, my Lord, that he married her without any other Fortune than her Beauty and good Qualities; ſhe had, indeed, enough of both to juſtify his Choice; yet he feared thoſe would not be Excuſe ſufficient to a Parent, who he knew had the Proſpect of allying him to one of the moſt opulent Families in the Kingdom, and therefore took all imaginable Care to keep what he had done a Secret. — But in ſpite of all his Caution, ſome Rumours reaching my Father's Ear, at a Time when he was ſick of that Diſtemper which proved his Death, he put the Queſtion to him in ſuch preſſing Terms, that he fell on his Knees, confeſſed the Truth, entreated his Forgiveneſs, and obtained it, on Condition the Perſon for whom he had committed this raſh Act of Diſobedience, was tolerably well deſcended, and had a good Reputation, on which my Brother heſitated not to name her, confident there could be no Objection to either of theſe Articles.

I WAS present at this Declaration, and trembled for my Brother while he was making it: My Father, however, received it with less Emotions than could have been expected, till being told the Name of the Lady who was now his Daughter, he hastily demanded, of what County, her Age, and where he became acquainted with her? All which Questions being answered, he turned to the other Side of the Bed, and cried out, with a Vehemence which expressed the utmost Agitation, *Oh God! Oh God! what have I lived to hear!* — I was terribly alarmed to see this sudden Change in him, my Brother much more so, and imagining, as he afterwards told me, that somebody had traduced his Wife, was beginning to utter something in Vindication of her Character, when my Father stopt him, by saying, *I have nothing to accuse her of*; — *but leave me, I would be alone.*

AT these Words we both went out of the Chamber, and sent in the Person who attended him, and who had been ordered to withdraw on my Brother's Entrance. — After this, my Brother several times was about to say something on the same Subject, but my Father still cut him short, and at last forbid him to mention it any more. — Just before his Death he called us both to him, gave us his Blessing in the most affectionate Terms, wished my Brother happy in his Marriage, but spoke it with a Sigh, and shook his Head, in token that he much feared what he desired.

AFTER

After the melancholly Solemnity of his Funeral was over, my Brother has frequently talked with me concerning his Behaviour in this Point, but neither of us were able to fathom the Meaning; — too ſoon alas! it is now unhappily explained. — O, would the fatal Secret had remained for ever in Darkneſs, two worthy Perſons had not been involved in the irremedible Confuſion they now are.

But not to keep your Lordſhip in Suſpence, my Siſter was ſent for laſt Week to her Mother, who the Meſſenger brought Word was then dying. — She went, but returned not the whole Night; my Brother went next Day to take Leave of the old Lady, but found her dead. — On asking for his Wife, they told him ſhe left the Houſe early in the Morning; this could not but ſurprize him, as ſhe was not come home; but thinking ſhe might poſſibly be entruſted with ſome Commands from her Mother, which required immediate Execution, he was not much diſturbed, till I was obliged to make him ſo, by ſhewing him a Letter I received from her ſome Hours after; a Copy of which I encloſe to your Lordſhip, as it will ſerve as an Explanation to the whole myſterious Affair. I am,

With the greateſt Reſpect,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt humble and obedient Servant,

Lucinda.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XXIV.

Enclosed in the foregoing.

From Monimia *to* Lucinda, *acquainting her with the sad Manner of her Mother's Death, and the Necessity she was under of never seeing her Husband more.*

Madam,

I MUST not call you Sister, tho' alas! you you are too doubly so. — But in whatever Relation I may be now supposed to stand, I know you have a Soul too gentle and too generous to refuse your Pity to the Miseries to which I am reduced, or your Pardon for the involuntary Crime I have been guilty of; — for oh, I have a dreadful Secret to impart, a Confession of Faults not my own, an Accusation against a dead, a too indulgent, yet most cruel Mother; which, when you know, you will wonder that I live to tell it; and would to Heaven the sad Discovery had at once deprived me of the Power. — Doomed to bear all the Pangs of Sin and Shame yet innocent, unblameable in Mind; — to linger out a Life of Horrors, banished for ever from all my Paradise on Earth, and perhaps by my Despair, rendered incapable of attaining one hereafter.

O *Lucinda*, I found my unhappy Mother in Agonies

Agonies far worſe than Death ordinarily inflicts. —As ſoon as I approached, ſhe waved her Hand for all about her to leave the Room, and then looking on me with Eyes all wild,— Wretched Daughter of a moſt wretched Mother, *cried ſhe*, dear does thy Birth, thy fatal Life, and my more fatal Fondneſs of thee coſt me. — But ſwear, *added ſhe*, ſwear, while I yet have Breath to bid thee, never to ſee thy Husband more, — to fly him as a Serpent, — never to hold the leaſt Communication more, nor even to think of him as thou haſt been accuſtomed. — You will eaſily believe the Confuſion I was in, would not ſuffer me to make any immediate Reply to this cruel, and as it appeared to me, unjuſt Injunction ; — till ſhe reſumed her Diſcourſe in theſe Terms: — He is, *Monimia*, he is, *ſaid ſhe*, your Brother.— In my Days of Youth and Vanity, my Husband then abroad, his Father ſeduced me to his Bed, and you are the Offspring of that unlawful Flame. —Yet when I ſaw the inceſtuous Paſſion kindled between you and the Son of your own Father, I was ſo far from attempting to ſuppreſs it, that, tempted by the Proſpect of your Greatneſs, and Opulence in the World, I encouraged it in both, and as you know, hurried you into a private Marriage. — Curſed, curſed Ambition! *went ſhe on*, to what dreadful Lengths will it not tranſport the Mind! — What followed was all Diſtraction and Deſpair ; — her Breaſt ſeemed tortured with unutterable Pains, — her Mind with yet more unutterable Anguiſh ;—her incoherent Words,— her Starts, — her Tremblings, told me more plainly

plainly than Words could have done, that no Beam of Hope darted on her departing Soul, but all was Horror there.—Thus, thus she died: Judge, Madam, what I, unhappy I, must suffer. — I can no more. — Communicate this to the dear Man who was once my Husband; I could not write to him myself. — When he knows the fatal Affinity between us, he will not, he dare not, condemn what, not the Commands of a dying Parent, but all the Principles of Religion and Morality, and even those of Nature itself, enforce me to obey. —I go for ever from him, and from the World. —I hope he will not seek after the Place of my Retreat; but if he does, I have taken effectual Care to prevent its being discovered.—I know his Virtue will receive a most grievous Shock on the opening this dreadful Secret, and believe also, that the Loss of a Companion he has so much loved, will be no less so. — Be it your Care, I beseech you, to alleviate both; but I need not urge that to you, who are so good a *Christian*, and a Sister. — Adieu, pray for the

Most forlorn of Women,

MONIMIA.

EPISTLE XXV.

From a very young Lady, in one of the Canary *Islands, to her Sister in* England, *whom she had never seen; containing a pressing Invitation to her to come over, and describing the Beauties of the Place, in order to prevail on her.*

MUST we for ever, my dear Sister, converse only at this unhappy Distance? — Are we born of the same Parents, to be eternal Aliens to each other? — I have been told Wonders of your Wit, Ingenuity, and Good-Nature. — Must Strangers, or at least very distant Kindred, reap all the Benefit of those amiable Qualities, while those who are nearest, and ought, methinks, to be dearest, mourn the Want of it. — They say there is a secret Sympathy between Persons of the same Blood, and I am sure I feel it so; how is it then with you? — Have you never any of those Earnings, those Longings to see the Daughter of your Father and your Mother, which so powerfully aggitate me in my daily Musings and my nightly Dreams? — If not Affection, Pity should make you wish to be with a Sister, who stands so much in need of your Assistance. — You know, my Father's great Affairs suffer him to be seldom with his Family; — Death has deprived me of my Mother, and Devotion of

my

my Sister; but she forsakes me only to join herself to her Creator; you have no such Plea: And as you are six Years older than myself, and of a much superior Understanding, it is a kind of Duty in you to be with me, to correct the Errors of my unexperienced Youth, and form my Mind by the Model of your own.—Believe me, I would be most obedient to your Instructions, and love the Precepts for the Teacher's Sake.—What can withold you from coming to a Place where your Presence is so ardently desired?—What can you find so pleasing to you in a Kingdom rent with internal Divisions!—Where Father against Son, and Brother against Brother, maintain unnatural Contest!—A Kingdom, where Pride, Injustice, Luxury, and Prophaneness, are almost universal, and Religion become a Reproach to the Professors!—A Kingdom, sinking by swift Degrees into Misery and Contempt, yet insatuated so far as to doat on the Cause of their Undoing!—At least this is the Account we here have of it.—Can this be agreeable to a Person of your nice and distinguishing Taste?—O, my dearest Sister! listen to the Dictates of Reason, of Duty, and of Nature, all join to call you from that worse than *Egypt*, into the Land of *Canaan*.—Here Peace and Innocence go hand in hand, and all the Graces, all the Pleasures wait upon their Steps.—No foreign Wars, no home-bred Jars, no Envy, no Distrust, disturb the soft Serenity of these blissful Seats, but all is Harmony and Love.—Eternal *Zephyrs* watch our Morning Wakings, bringing ten thousand Odours on their Wings, and tempt us to the

Groves from whence they ſpring. — In Troops we wander through the *Jeſſamin* Lanes, or ſit in *Orange* Bowers, where Fruits, ripe, and in Bloſſom, charm our Smell and Taſte. — Sometimes on Mules we take ſhort Journies to *Teneriffe*, and on the Foot of that ſtupendous Mount, recline on Banks of Roſes, umbrella'd over with ſpreading Myrtles: —Then change the Scene, and view the ſpacious Vineyards, where huge Alcoves of cluſtering Grapes hang pendant over our Heads: — Sometimes we roam through a long Gallery of ſtately Pines, whoſe loaded Boughs preſent us every Kind of Fruit in one. — But there is no deſcribing half the various Sweets which Nature, with a laviſh Hand, pours on theſe Iſles, which juſtly have the Name of *fortunate*; — nor I flatter myſelf will there be any need of farther Arguments, to bring you to us; — my Father has juſt now informed me, that Captain * * * carries his poſitive Orders for your coming, and I may now reſt in an aſſured Hope of enjoying the Happineſs I ſo long, and ſo earneſtly have wiſhed; — yet I am craving ſtill more, — I would fain, methinks, imagine if I could, that with your Obedience to our Father, ſome little ſhare of Love for me was mingled, and that you will embark with the more Readineſs, by the Thoughts that you ſhall embrace one who has ſo tender an Affection for you, and thinks it the greateſt Bleſſing to ſubſcribe herſelf,

My Dear, Dear Siſter,

Your moſt humble and moſt obedient Servant,

Maria Theresa.

EPISTLE XXVI.

Urania *to* Euphrosine, *on the Appearance of a new Star in the Firmament.*

My Dear Euphrosine,

I SHALL certainly turn Astronomer in good earnest, and renounce all the dear Pleasures of this Terrestial Globe, in search of others in the Orbs above. — This you will believe when I shall tell you, I have been wholly taken up for several Nights past, with admiring a most beautiful Appearance in the Heavens, and never so much as thought of Cards, *Vaux-hall*, nor the Drawing-Room. — This new Object of my Passion, has the Form of a Star, but is much larger, rises above an Hour before any of them, and obscures all their Lustre, — even *Venus* herself looks but like the Head of a rusty Pin, in Presence of this New-Comer. — Some tell me it is a *Comet*, but that seems ridiculous, for I never heard of a *Comet* without a Tail, and this has none, nor any thing of that fiery Aspect I remember to have observed in the Phænomena of 45. — Others cry, it is a Star just come, *spick and span*, from the Hand of the Creator, and though it now shines with so much Radiance, will diminish and become faint in Time, so as not to be distinguished from its Companions; but this Supposition I also laugh at; for I ne-

ver can think that thoſe Celeſtial Bodies are capable of fading and growing tarniſhed like a brocaded Silk. — A third Opinion (for you muſt know I have been ſtrangely inquiſitive) puzzles me yet more: AGentleman of my Acquaintance, who has ſtudied theſe Things pretty much, aſſures me, that though it ſeems globular to the naked Eye, it is not ſo in reality; and that by the Help of a Telleſcope it will be ſeen ſemicircular, and to have little Points or Darts, which ſhoot forth Rays very different from thoſe of an ordinary Star. — He adds alſo, that it made its firſt Appearance in *Italy*, ſome time in the Year 1720, and was greatly taken Notice of, by all the Aſtronomers in thoſe Parts: He affirms to have ſeen it there himſelf, and is poſitive, that this, which appears here, is the very ſame; — for my Part I cannot tell what to think of it. — If it be as he ſays, I would fain know, as it is not a Native of our Hemiſphere, on what Embaſſy it is ſent, or whether it comes only on a friendly Viſit, juſt to add a new Illumination to our Circle, and then direct its Courſe to ſome other. — If *Mira* were in Town, I fancy ſhe could ſatisfy my Curioſity in this Point: She ſeems to know the Circumference and Nature of theſe ſtarry Regions as well as if ſhe had already made the Circuit of them, and I would write to her concerning this ſame Star, or whatever it is, but am not enough ſkilled in Longitude and Latitude to know whether it is viſible or not where ſhe is, and I know too well the Value ſhe ſets on Time to intrude on any Part of it with impertinent Enquiries.

Dear

DEAR *Euphrosine*, if you can give me any new Accounts, or confirm me in the Belief of either of those I have already heard, it will be acknowledged as a particular Favour to her, who is, with the most perfect Amity,

Yours,

URANIA.

EPISTLE XXVII.

From Euphrosine *to* Urania, *in Answer to the foregoing.*

My Dear Urania,

I AM extremely pleased to hear, you find more Felicity in contemplating the Works of your Creator, than those of your Milliner, or Mantuamaker: If this new Star has no other Errand, than to take off your Attention from the superfluous Vanities of this sublunary World, it is certainly a very benevolent Aspect to our Sex, as your Genius, if properly exerted, is furnished with Materials, to make an Ornament to it.—Encourage, therefore, in yourself this happy Propensity; and having lifted your Eyes above the Tinsel Grandeur of a Birth-Day, and the fallacious Allurements of the Senses, you will also aspire to yet sublimer Heights, and from the

Wonders of the Creation, ſoar to the Almighty Author of theſe Wonders, till you can be content with nothing leſs than Infinity itſelf.

As to any other Portent this Apparatus may have, I can give you little Satisfaction: The Accounts I have received, being not only unintelligible, but alſo contradictory to each other; — the moſt knowing affect to make a Myſtery of their Conjectures, and leave the reſt of Mankind to judge according to their own Wiſhes or Imaginations; — all I can ſay is, that in caſe it proves an Omen of any extraordinary Event, if good, it ought to increaſe our Love and Adoration of the Divine Beſtower, and if evil, acknowledge our Tranſgreſſions, and arm ourſelves with the true *Chriſtian* Fortitude, Piety, and Reſignation.

My Father is at preſent a little indiſpoſed, as ſoon as it ſhall pleaſe Heaven to reſtore his Health, will wait on you; in the mean Time ſincerely wiſh yours, and a Continuance of your preſent laudable Curioſity. Adieu,

Dear *Urania*,

Yours,

Euphrosine.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XXVIII.

From Berenice *to* Aſtrea, *giving her the melancholly Account of her Siſter's Death, and the Effect which it had on herſelf.*

Madam,

JUST as I was ſetting out for *Worceſterſhire*, in order to follow my Siſter, who you know has been ſome time there, I received a Letter from my Aunt, acquainting me, that ſhe was taken ill laſt Friday and died in two Days after. — Yes, that lately ſo much admired, that ſplendid Beauty, is now reduced to a cold Lump of Clay; — for ever cloſed are thoſe once ſparkling Eyes; — huſhed is that Voice that gave ſo much Delight; — thoſe Limbs, which Art was ranſacked to adorn, have now no other Covering than a ſimple Shroud, and in a few Days will be confined within the narrow Compaſs of a Tomb. — Ah! what is Life! — What all the gaudy Pride of Youth, of Pomp, of Grandeur! What the vain Adoration of a flattering World! — Deluſive Pleaſures, — fleeting Nothings, how unworthy are you of the Attention of a reaſonable Being! — You know the gay Manner in which we have always lived, and will, no doubt, be ſurprized to find Expreſſions of this kind fall from my Pen; -- but, my Dear *Aſtrea*, hitherto

hitherto my Life has been a Dream; but I am now, thank Heaven, awake:—My Sister's Fate has roused me from my Lethargy of Mind, made me see the Ends for which I was created, and reflect that there is no Time to be lost for their Accomplishment.— Who can assure me, that in an Hour, a Moment, I may not be as she is!— And if so, Oh! how unfit, how unprepared to make my Audit at the great Tribunal!— In what a strange Stupidity have I passed fourteen or fifteen Years! (for those of my Childhood are not to be reckoned.)—I always knew that Death was the Portion of Mortality, yet never took the least Care to arm against the Terrors of it. — Whenever I went a little Journey, I provided myself with all Things necessary, yet have I got nothing ready for that long, last Voyage, I must one Day take into another World:—What an Infatuation to be anxious for the minutest Requisites for Ease and Pleasure, in a Dwelling where I purposed to stay a few Weeks or Months, perhaps, yet wholly regardless of what was wanting for making my Felicity in an eternal Situation. Reason, just kindled, shudders at the Recollection of that endless Train of Follies I have been guilty of:— Well might the poor *Berinthia* feel all their Force;— vain, gay, unthinking as myself, I tremble at the bare Imagination of those Ideas, which her last Moments must inspire, for I now faithfully believe with Mr. *Waller*, that,

Leaving the Old, both Worlds at once they view,
Who stand upon the Threshold of the New.

Whe-

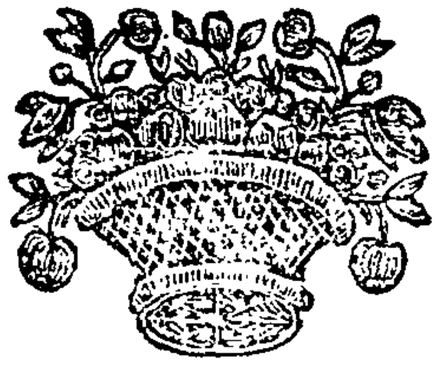
WHETHER it was the Suddenneſs of her Fate, or a Letter ſhe wrote to me not two Hours before her Death, I know not, that has made this Alteration in me; but of this I am certain, that I can never enough acknowledge the Goodneſs of that Divine Power, without whoſe Aſſiſtance it could not have been brought about.

I SHALL make no Apology for this melancholly Epiſtle, becauſe I am very ſenſible that whatever Concern you may feel for my Siſter, it will be greatly alleviated, by finding I am become at laſt a Reaſonable Creature. I encloſe you the Letter ſhe ſent, to the end that you may judge with what kind of Sentiments ſhe left this World. — Heaven has I hope accepted her Contrition, and will enable me, as you will find ſhe deſires, to be more early in mine. I am,

Dear Madam,

Your moſt afflicted humble Servant,

BERENICE.



EPISTLE

EPISTLE XXIX.

Enclosed in the foregoing.

Berinthia *to* Berenice, *wrote two Hours before her Death, to advise her, not to defer making the necessary Preparations for Futurity.*

My Dear Sister,

BEfore this can possibly reach you, the unchanging Fiat will be passed upon me, and I shall be either happy or miserable for ever. — None about me pretend to flatter me, with the Hopes of seeing another Morning. — Short Space to accomplish the mighty Work of eternal Salvation! — Yet cannot I leave the World, without admonishing, — without conjuring you to be more early in preparing for that dreadful Hour, you are sure not to escape, and know not how shortly may arrive: — We have had the same sort of Education, — have lived in the same manner, and though accounted very like, have resembled each other more in our Follies than our Faces. — Oh! what a Waste of Time have we not both been guilty of? To dress well has been our only Study, — Parade, Equipage, and Admiration our Ambition, — Pleasure our Avocation, and the Mode our God. — How often, alas! have I prophaned, in idle Chat, that sacred Name, by whose Merits alone I have Hopes

Hopes to be forgiven? How often have I ſat and heard his Miracles and Sufferings ridiculed by the falſe Wits of the Age, without feeling the leaſt Emotion at the Blaſphemy! — Nay, how often have I myſelf, becauſe I heard others do ſo, called in queſtion that Futurity I now go to prove, and am already convinced of! — One Moment, methinks, I ſee the bliſsful Seats of *Paradice* unveiled; — I hear ten Thouſand Miriads, of Miriads, of Celeſtial Forms tuning their golden Harps to Songs of Praiſe, to the Unutterable Name. — The next, a Scene all black and gloomy, ſpreads itſelf before me, whence iſſue nought but Sobs, and Groans, and horrid Shrieks. — My fluctuating Imagination varies the Proſpect, and involves me in a ſad Uncertainty of my eternal Doom: — On one Hand beckoning Angels ſmile upon me, while on the other the Furies ſtand prepared to ſeize my fleeting Soul. — I dare not hope, nor will the Reverend Doctor G * * ſuffer me abſolutely to deſpair; — he comforts me with Promiſes in Holy Writ, which, to my Shame, I was unacquainted with before, but now I feel them Balm to my tormented Conſcience. — Dear, dear *Berenice*, I muſt bid you eternally adieu, I have diſcharged my Duty in giving you this Warning, O! may my Death, which you will ſhortly hear of, give it that Weight I wiſh and pray for: You are the laſt Object of my earthly Cares: — I have now done with all below, — ſhall retire into myſelf, and devote

the

the few Moments allowed me to that Penitence which alone can entitle me to a glorious Immortality. I die,

Your sincere Friend,

And affectionate Sister,

BERINTHIA.

EPISTLE XXX.

From Clio, *to a Person of a very base and cruel Disposition, who having been thrown down in a Crowd, and trampled upon, had his Leg broke, which turning to a Mortification was cut off, and the Amputation, together with other Hurts he received, judged by the Surgeons to be mortal.*

Mr. * *

YOU have proved yourself so altogether a Stranger to the softer Emotions of Humanity, that having pitied none, might reasonably expect to be by all unpitied, and perhaps will scarce believe me when I say, I am sorry for the unhappy Accident has befallen you; yet nothing can be more certain, than that I am truly so; — not for your worthless Life, which has been of little Consequence, unless for the Work of Mischief; nor for the Family you may leave behind, if they follow not the ill Example you have given, that Power who feeds the Ravens, doubtless

doubtleſs will take care of them; but my Concern is for that immortal Part of you, which no Offences committed in this World can make me wiſh ſhould be miſerable in the next.

IT is not therefore to triumph in your Misfortune, — it is not to exult in the Juſtice of divine Providence, that I employ my Pen, but to admoniſh, to conjure you to devote whatever Time may be yet permitted you to an impartial Examination of your Heart, and a juſt Reflection how little that Ferocity of Nature you have ſo much indulged and gloried in, will qualify you for the Society of Beings, who exerciſe themſelves only in Acts of Piety and Mercy. — I will not call it a *ſavage*, but a *fiend-like* Diſpoſition to be pleaſed with, and add to the Calamities of others; — that yours has been ſuch, you cannot pretend to deny, and I hope that before you launch into Eternity, you will be perfectly convinced it requires a more than ordinary Penitence to atone for.

THERE is ſomething ſo remarkable in your Fate, that it ſeems to me as if inflicted on you by the Mercy of Heaven, in order to awake your too long ſleeping Conſcience. — The ſhort Retroſpect by *whom* the Pangs you at preſent groan under were occaſioned, I think muſt naturally carry you to one a little farther removed. You will remember with what a barbarous Aſſiduity you hired a mercenary Rabble to inſult the Diſtreſſes of Perſons every way infinitely your Superiors,

riors, and whose Actions, however criminal they might be deemed, fell not in your Province to punish; and at the same time if you reflect how very possible it is, that the Mob, by whom you are reduced to this Condition, might be partly composed of those Wretches employed by your Infernal Zeal, for the Purpose I have mentioned, you cannot surely fail of being touched with that Remorse and true Contrition, which alone can give you any Claim to Compassion *here*, or Pardon from *above*; — that you may *merit* the *one*, and *obtain* the *other*, is the sincere Wish of her, who is the Enemy of your *Vices*, not your *Person*.

Clio.

End of the Second Book.

EPISTLES

FOR THE

LADIES.

BOOK III.

EPISTLE XXXI.

From Mira *to* Euphrosine, *with the Relation of an Accident which had given her some Pain.*

My Dear Euphrosine.

THERE is no such Thing as a continued Series of Tranquility below; how happy soever our Station may be, and how calm and serene soever we are by Constitution and Temperament, some Accident or other to ourselves, or to those for whom we have a Regard, will intervene, when we least think on it, to disturb our Peace. I have lately met with one of a most uncommon Nature, which has given a sensible Interruption to the

Pleasures I should otherwise enjoy in this Retirement from the Noise and Hurry of the World.

My last informed you, that as I could not have the Happiness of your Company this Summer, I made it in my Way to call at the House of a Relation, and took his Daughter with me: —I had never seen her since an Infant, she being bred in *France*, and but lately returned; but I found her a very pretty young Creature, well accomplished, and endued with a more than ordinary Share of Wit, and Vivacity.—My Lord, you know, did not leave *London* till a Fortnight after me, and she was all that Time, as well as during our Journey, a Companion perfectly agreeable.—She has a sweet Voice, some Skill in Music, she often sung to me, and told me a thousand diverting Stories of Occurrences she had either met with, or heard of abroad, nor was she less capable of bearing a Part in the most serious Conversation.—My Lord, on his Arrival, was no less pleased with her than myself, till all on a sudden her Gaiety gave Place to Reserve, and that Reserve to the most gloomy Melancholly, and such an Absence of Mind, as made her at some Times seem delirious.—I was extremely troubled at this Change, and spared no Pains to sift out the Occasion, whether of Mind or Body, but all my Endeavours were ineffectual for this Purpose, or even to give her any Consolation; on the contrary, she rather industriously avoided my tender

Cares.—At laſt, ſhe took it in her Head to leave me, and go to an Uncle, who has a Seat about thirty Miles diſtant from mine, and in the moſt wild, unpleaſant Part of the whole County:—Nothing I could ſay, was able to engage her Stay, and ſhe went in ſomewhat, I thought, of an abrupt Manner.—She had been gone, however, but two Days, when ſhe diſpatched a Man and Horſe with a Letter to me, which I here encloſe, to ſave myſelf the Pains of relating a Story not very agreeable in the Repetition:—You will here ſee at full, the Motive which occaſioned ſo ſtrange an Alteration in her Behaviour.—I ſhall only ſubjoin, that according to her Requeſt, I ſent an immediate Anſwer, which, though I am a little diſconcerted, is wrote in ſuch Terms, as I believe will give her no Reaſon to repent having made me her Confidante.

You will excuſe the Shortneſs of this, my Concern for that unhappy Girl having rendered me, at preſent, almoſt incapable of thinking on any thing elſe.—I need not deſire you to keep this fooliſh Affair a Secret, for if I were leſs acquainted with your Diſcretion, and Good-nature, I ſhould not have communicated it to you. Adieu, my Dear *Euphroſine*, my next, I hope, will be more worth the Poſtage.

Yours,

MIRA.

EPISTLE XXXII.

Enclosed in the foregoing.

From Ismena *to* Mira, *giving her the Reasons, why no Entreaties had prevailed on her to continue longer in her House.*

CEASE, O incomparable *Mira!* cease to wonder, that my once gay and lively Temper became on a sudden converted into Pensiveness, and by degrees into the most gloomy Melancholly. — Cease to repent my quitting your House for one which, as you justly said in pressing me to stay, has not the thousandth Part of the Pleasures yours affords. — Alas! I never knew before, that I was capable of disguising my Thoughts, but now find I am the greatest Dissembler in the World, or I could not thus long have hid the fatal Truth from the all-penetrating Eyes of her who was chiefly concerned in it. — Yes, Madam, I have deceived you, — have abused your generous unsuspecting Friendship, that Friendship which is yet dearer to me than any other earthly Good; — yet was it not a voluntary Crime, but forced on me by the severest Malice of my Fate, and which, to make me guilty of, you yourself are partly accessary. — Oh! why did you, with such resistless Kindness, perswade me to come with you to that enchanting Recess, where every Thing

conspires

conſpires to ſoften the Soul, and make it fit for the moſt tender Impreſſions? — Why expoſe my young and too unguarded Heart to a Senſibility of Charms, whoſe Power you had ſo much experienced in your own? — Could I reſiſt, where *Mira* had been overcome? — You may reflect how fond I was of a Song of Mr. *Addiſon*'s, in the Opera of *Roſamond*, which will partly reveal the unhappy Secret to you. It was this:

Think on the ſoft, the tender Fires
Which in your own warm Boſom riſe,
When with languiſhing Eyes
That great, that charming Man you ſee,
Think of yourſelf and pity me.

But this was an Excuſe, which ſerved me only in the Infancy of my Paſſion, when all my Wiſhes were bounded in the Limits of Admiration, and I thought it no Offence to Virtue, to indulge an Affection, which then ſeemed innocent for the Huſband of my Friend, and Kinſwoman: And now you have the whole of my Misfortune, — but hate me not for it; — quite new to Love, I knew not what it meant, nor the Nature of that encroaching Flame; — I imagined that I paid my Lord no more than his Due, on the Account of thoſe extraordinary Merits, which all who know allow him to be poſſeſſed of, and that the Warmth of Friendſhip, with which I regarded him, was becauſe he was your Huſband; —but oh! when I found, as too ſoon I

did, that I began to love you leſs, and even to envy you, then, and not till then, my Crime appeared in its true Colours: — Alarmed, and ſhocked, I ſet ſeriouſly about examining my own Heart, and to what Aim the Ideas that poſſeſſed it, tended. — Reaſon had not ſo far abandoned me, as not to ſhew it, ſuch as if indulged would render me a Horror even to myſelf: — The Struggles I afterwards endured between Virtue, and an irreſiſtible Inclination, threw me into that Sadneſs, you with ſo much Goodneſs endeavoured to alleviate. — I merited indeed your Pity, though unworthy of your Care, — never was a Heart torn with more violent Convulſions, — in vain I thought to aſſwage the Fever in my Mind with the pure Streams of Religion: — What Antidote could work Effect, while every Day my Eyes and Ears drank in new Poiſon; — at length I reſolved to go, but what Excuſe to make for doing ſo, I knew not; — you were too well acquainted with the Affairs of our Family, for any Pretence of Buſineſs to be received, and my Father had promiſed I ſhould ſtay with you the whole Summer: — Heaven knows how long I might have continued in this dreadful Uncertainty, if an Accident had not at once determined me.

I was one Day lying on a Bank, in that delightful Grot, by the Side of a River, which ſupplies your Fountains, in a kind of ſtupid Reſvery, when my Lord happening to paſs that Way, and

and ſeeing the Poſture I was in, accoſted me with that Gallantry and Politeneſs, which is ſo natural to him;—I ſaw him not till he was cloſe to me, and took one of my Hands in order to raiſe me:—But, good God! I bluſh even at the Reflection of the Condition I was then in;—my Heart fluttered in my Breaſt like a Bird juſt caught;—every Limb trembled, and I was for ſome Moments deprived of the Power of ſpeaking one Word, in Anſwer to the obliging Things he ſaid to me on the Score of that Melancholly he had obſerved in me; nor yet do I well know what it was at laſt I uttered, but am very ſure my Words were all disjointed, wild, and incoherent as my Thoughts;—ſuch an Exceſs of Pleaſure and of Pain certainly was never felt at once;—I endeavoured to recover myſelf, but my Efforts were fruitleſs;—I was wholly incapable of behaving as I ought, or of even knowing how I did behave, when luckily for me, the two little Ladies, with their Governeſs, came up to us, one of them running to her too charming Father, took his Attention from me, and I entertained the other with ſome idle Stuff, till we regained the Houſe.

As ſoon as I had Leiſure to meditate on this Adventure, I was ſtruck with the moſt poignant Shame at the ridiculous Part I had acted in it. The moſt favourable Conſtruction my Lord could put upon it, I thought, was to imagine I was run mad, or was turned Ideot, but neither of theſe was half ſo terrible to me as the Ap-

prehenſions that he ſaw into the true Cauſe, and that the guilty Secret of my Heart was betrayed to him, by the Confuſion of my Behaviour.— This it was which gave my Modeſty ſo cruel an Alarm, that the very next Day I told you, Madam, that I would go to my Uncle's, that I had heard of ſome Particularities in his Family which I was curious to ſee, and I very well remember returned in a very awkard Manner the obliging Surprize you were pleaſed to teſtify at my harbouring any Thoughts of leaving you. — With what enchanting Sweetneſs did you attempt to detain me? — I felt all the Force of your Goodneſs, and your Eloquence, but durſt not permit myſelf to be ſwayed by it. — I am now in a Place, where, except my Uncle himſelf, the Rooks that kaw in his Woods, are the only intelligible Creatures:—But I am juſtly baniſhed from *Eden*, and the Converſation of Angels: The Pennance I ſuffer is little in compariſon to what my Folly merits, and howeve Diſagreeable the Recipe is, that I have preſcribed myſelf, I am not without ſome Hopes it will work a Cure of my Diſeaſe.— I feel my Agitations already diminiſh, ſince I have began to make you this Confeſſion: — I could not reſt without doing it, and though ſome People may think you are the laſt Perſon in the World that ought to have known it, yet I ſhould die with Grief and Shame were it to be revealed to any other: — The Confidence I have in you indeed is great, but no more than I am certain you deſerve. — I have

have ſeen, in a thouſand Inſtances, that Superiority of Soul which *Juba* aſcribes to *Marcia.*

The virtuous Mira *tow'rs above her Sex!*
True, ſhe is fair, O moſt divinely fair!
But then the lovely Dame improves her Charms
With unaffected Wiſdom, flowing Goodneſs,
And Sanctity of Manners.——

I flatter myſelf that Time, Abſence, and a due Recollection, will baniſh this Frenzy entirely from my Thoughts, and then I may boaſt ſome ſort of Title to your Forgiveneſs; till when, I muſt never preſume, or indeed could bear to appear before you:— If you would favour me with a Line, to ſtrengthen me in the pious Reſolution I have taken to center my whole Love and Wiſhes in the Divine Source of all Perfection, it would be the higheſt Act of Charity and Compaſſion to,

Madam,

Your unfortunate Kinſwoman,

And moſt obliged humble Servant,

ISMENA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XXXIII.

From Sophronia *to her Daughter of twelve Years old, then under the Care of her Grandmother, in the Country.*

My Dear Child,

THOUGH I know you want no Precepts under my Mother's Care, to instruct you in all moral and religious Duties, yet there are some Things she may possibly forget to remind you of, which are highly necessary for the forming your Mind, so as to make that Figure in the World, I could wish you to do: — I am certain you will be kept up to your Music, Singing, and Dancing, by the best Masters the Country affords; and need not doubt, but you will very often be told, that good Housewifry is a most commendable Quality. — I would have you indeed neglect none of these Branches of Education; but, my Dear, I should be grieved to hear you were so much attached to them, as not to be able to devote two Hours, at least, every Day to reading. — My Father left a Collection of very excellent Books in all Languages behind him, which are yet in being, and as you are tollerably acquainted with the *French* and *Italian*, would have you not be altogether a Stranger to their Authors. *Poetry*, if it be good, (as in that Library you will find none that is not so) very much elevates the Ideas, and harmonizes

harmonizes the Soul, and well wrote *Novels* are an Amusement, in which sometimes you may indulge yourself; but *History* is what I would chiefly recommend; — without some Knowledge of this, you will be accounted at best but an agreeable Trifler: — I would have you gay, lively, and entertaining, but then I would have you able to *improve*, as well as *divert* the Company you may happen to fall into.

But, my dear Child, I must warn you to beware with what Disposition you sit down to read Books of this Nature; for if you lightly skim them over, and merely to gratify your Curiosity with the amazing Events delivered in them, the Research will afford you little Advantage: — You must, therefore, consider what you read; — mark well the Chain of Accidents which bring on any great Catastrophe, and this will shew you that nothing happens by Chance, but all is entirely governed by the Direction of an over-ruling Power: — In distinguishing the true Causes of the Rise and Fall of Empires, and those strange Revolutions that have happened in most Kingdoms of the World, you will admire Divine Justice, and be far from accusing Providence of Partiality, when you find, as frequently you will, the Good dethroned, all Rights both human and divine sacreligiously trampled upon, a mock Authority established in the Place of a real one, and lawless Usurpation prosper; because at the same Time you will see that this does not happen till a People, grown bold

bold in Iniquity, and ripe for Deſtruction, have drawn down upon themſelves the ſevereſt Vengeance of offended Heaven, which is Tyranny and Oppreſſion, and though innocent Individuals may ſuffer in the general Calamity, yet it is for the good of the Whole, in order to bring them to a juſt Senſe of their Tranſgreſſions, and turn them from their evil Ways: — This the hiſtorical Part of the Bible makes manifeſt in numberleſs Inſtances; and this, the Calamities which at different Times have befel every Kingdom and Commonwealth, evidently confirm.

I am the more particular in giving you theſe Cautions, becauſe, without obſerving them, you may be liable to imbibe Prejudices which will pervert your Judgment, and render you guilty of Injuſtice, without knowing you are ſo. As you regard therefore my Commands, which will always be for your Improvement and Emolument, never be remiſs in this Point.

Next to Hiſtory, I ſhould be glad to ſee you have ſome ſmattering in Natural Philoſophy: — You have already read ſeveral little Treatiſes in that agreeable Science, and you may be furniſhed with more and better where you are; — the ſame Perſon that brings you thoſe Neceſſaries you deſired me to ſend, will alſo deliver to you Glaſſes of various Kinds, by the Help of which you may diſcover plainly the Form of many Inſects, which to the naked Eye appear but ſo many

many moving Moats: — Believe me, Child, the wide Creation presents nothing that affords not infinite Matter for a delightful Speculation, and the more you examine the Works of Nature, the more you will learn to love and adore the great God of Nature, the Fountain of all Pleasure.

I expect your next will be filled with no Enquiries on new Fashions, nor any Directions to your Milliner; nor shall I be better satisfied with an Account of your having begun, or finished, such or such a Piece of fine Work: This may inform you, that it is other Kinds of Learning I would have you versed in: — I flatter myself with seeing my Commands obeyed, and that no Part of what I have said will be lost upon you, which a little more Time and Knowledge of the World will shew you the Value of, and prove to you, more than any Indulgence I could treat you with, how very much I am

Your affectionate Mother,

SOPHRONIA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XXXIV.

From a Lady in Paris, *to another in* London, *giving her the Narrative of a very odd Adventure ſhe was Witneſs of, in going to ſee the Initiation of a Nun.*

My Dear Miranda,

I AM ſorry to find by yours, that you imagine the ſhort Time I have been in *France* has made me ceaſe to be an *Engliſh*-Woman, or that any Attachments here can make me forget the more natural ones I have to the Country which gave me Birth: — I can do Juſtice to the Pleaſures of this Place, without loving them beyond thoſe I have found at Home, and am not ſo enchanted with the Magnificence of *Verſailles* or *Fontainbleau*, as not ſometimes to wiſh myſelf with you, wandering in the delightful Shades of dear *Windſor* Foreſt. — That Curioſity, however, which brought me hither, inclines me to ſtay till I have ſeen every Thing worthy the Obſervation of a Traveller, and ſhould be glad to atone for that Abſence you ſo kindly regret, by faithfully communicating to you all the Occurrences which fall to my Lot to be acquainted with, — ſuch of them at leaſt, as appear to me to have any Claim to your Attention.

I

I KNOW nothing mortifies me more, than that it is not in my Power to give you any Account of that noble Stranger, of whom you are so desirous to hear News. — I have never yet been able to get the least Glympse of him; he has it seems of late kept himself extremely retired, never goes to Court, nor to any other public Place. — All his Avocations, — his Amusements, — his very Devotions are confined within the Walls of the Castle, where he at present resides, and to which I need not tell you many good Reasons forbid me to go, in case I might be admitted, which I am not sure I should. — I protest to you I have asked Questions enough concerning him, to make me pass for either a very *designing*, or a very *impertinent* Woman, yet all my Enquiries amount to just nothing. — I cannot dive into the Cause of this Reserve, but I find every one affects a great Caution in speaking of him. — I expected to hear some particulars of his *Vices* from the Lovers of Scandal, but they pretend not to have discovered any in him, and I have perceived that the *French* in general, even those among them who are the greatest Admirers of *Virtue*, speak but sparingly of the amiable Qualities of a Person not born among them; so that it will be a kind of Miracle, if ever I get his Character at full; — at present I can say no more of him than what you have heard a thousand Times over, from People who perhaps know as little of him as myself. — Instead therefore of the Detail I could have wished to give you,

you, you muſt for this Time content yourſelf with that of an Adventure, which I believe you will think as odd a one as any you ever met with in Romance; but I can aſſure you, from the Teſtimony of my own Eyes, is Fact, and happened but a few Days paſt.

It is the miſcalled Policy, and I think cruel Cuſtom of this Country, that when a Perſon of Condition has a greater Number of Daughters than his Fortune will allow him to portion off according to their Rank, to thruſt the younger, or the leaſt Favourite, into a Convent, rather than ſuffer the Dignity of their Family to be demeaned by an inferior Marriage. — By the Laws of the Church, it is true, no Woman can be compelled to take the Veil; and after the Year of Probation, the Queſtion is always aſked in the moſt ſolemn Manner by the Biſhop; but when once a poor young Creature is carried within thoſe fatal Walls, there are ſo many Inſinuations on the one Side, from the Abbeſs and Siſterhood, and ſo many Threats on the other from the Parents and Kindred, that few have had the Courage to teſtify their Diſlike.

One of theſe intended Victims to Pride and Oſtentation, I happened to come acquainted with at the Grate of the *Auguſtin* Monaſtery, behind which ſhe frequently appeared with ſome of the Nuns, to whom I had been introduced. She was extremely pretty, and her Age not exceeding

ceeding ſeventeen, but had an Air of Dejection in her Face, which ſhewed how little ſhe was ſatisfied with the Lot aſſigned her. — She had it ſeems beſides a natural Averſion to a monaſtic Life, the moſt tender Attachment to the World in the Perſon of a young Gentleman, by whom, as the Sequel will prove, ſhe was no leſs ardently beloved. — The Story of their mutual Paſſion was no Secret. — I heard it from as many as had the leaſt Acquaintance with either of them, and every one compaſſionated the cruel and eternal Separation which muſt ſhortly be between them.

But of what Service is Pity, without the Power of helping. — The Parents of the young Lady were inexorable. — Her Year of Noviceſhip was now expired, and the fatal Day appointed to tear her for ever from all her Hopes, and every Enjoyment of Life and Love.

As I had never ſeen the Ceremony of Initiation, and had been told much of it, I was very deſirous of being preſent at this, and no ſooner gave a Hint of my Inclination, than a Gentleman and his Lady, from whom I have received many ſignal Favours ſince my Arrival, offered to accompany and place me where no Part of the Solemnity ſhould eſcape me.

Accordingly we went, and had not long attended, before we ſaw the intended Nun appear, led between her Father and another grave old Gentleman, who was the next of Kin, and followed by a vaſt Number of both Sexes. — She

was habited extremely rich; — her Head, Stomacher, and the Borders of her Gown, sparkled with Jewels, and seemed rather the Magnificence of a Bride, than one who was going to be secluded for ever from the World; but my obliging Guides informed me this was always the Custom, but that the Instant of her Admission, she would be disrobed of all this State.

The Splendor in which she appeared, on so sad an Occasion, put me in Mind of those beautiful Lines Mr. *Phillips* has put into the Mouth of *Andromache*.

Thus the gay Victim, with fresh Garlands crown'd,
Pleas'd with the sacred Fife's enliv'ning Sound,
Through gazing Crowds, in solemn State, proceeds;
And, dress'd in fatal Pomp, magnificently bleeds.

For I must own, that without any of these tender Emotions she was possessed of, I look on a monastic Life as a total Privation of all the Purposes of our Being, and that whoever enters into it, is as effectually buried, as if laid in the Grave.

But as by what I had been told of her, I thought I had Reason to guess at the Situation of her Heart, I was beyond measure surprized to find, instead of that Distraction, that melancholly Gloom I expected in her Countenance, a Look more lively than I had ever seen her put on. — Her Pace indeed was even, and composed, befitting the Solemnity of the Procession, but

but her Eyes darted the moſt ſpirituous Rays, while ſhe continually turned her Head from Side to Side, as willing no one of that numerous Aſſembly ſhould be unmarked by her.—The ſhort Reflection I had Time to make on her Behaviour, rendered me incapable of believing her Heart was engaged, at leaſt ſo deeply, as had been repreſented to me; for it did not enter into my Head, that a Perſon of her Years, and ſo extravagantly in Love, could have either real Fortitude enough to make the cruel Sacrifice ſhe was about to do, without the greateſt and moſt viſible Emotions, or Artifice enough to diſguiſe the Anguiſh of her Soul, were it, in any meaſure, proportionable to what the World imagined.

As I had been told, the Form obſerved in admitting a young Nun, I was not a little impatient to ſee how ſhe would go through this laſt Scene of her Part; I doubt not but you are equally ſo, and I will not keep you in Suſpence;—ſhe knocked at the Gate of the Convent, with the Intrepidity ſhe had approached it;—the Biſhop appeared, and asked what was her Demand? to which it ſeems ſhe ſhould have anſwered, *To be admitted within theſe ſacred Walls, and that Heaven will accept my Vows of everlaſting Chaſtity.*—But, my dear *Miranda*, ſhe had prepared a Speech of a far different Nature, and putting one Knee to the Earth, and at the ſame time taking hold of the Hand of a well-made, agreeable, young Gentleman, who had preſſed through the Crowd till he got cloſe to her, *My Lord*, ſaid ſhe, *I demand this Gentleman for my Husband, to whom I*

have long ſince been engaged by the moſt ſolemn Promiſes, and from whom Death only ſhall divide me.

Never was any Conſternation greater, than that which appeared in the Faces of all preſent. — The Biſhop frowned; — the Father of the young Lady, and ſome others of her Kindred, endeavoured to force her from her Lover; but their Hands were too cloſely locked to be eaſily unrivetted, and ſix or ſeven Gentlemen, who till now had ſeemed diſintereſted Spectators of the Shew, but were in the Plot, came that Inſtant up, and each laying his Hand on his Sword, ſaid, if Perſwaſion was ineffectual, they were prepared to do Juſtice to their Friend, who was betrothed to the Lady they would compel to be a Nun.

On this, the Biſhop took the old Gentleman aſide, and, as I have been ſince informed, remonſtrated to him, that as no Convent either would, or could, according to the Orders of the Church, pretend to receive her after this public Declaration of her Pre-engagement, the moſt prudent Way would be to give his Conſent to what would doubtleſs be conſummated without it, perhaps, in a leſs honourable Way. — The reſt of the Kindred were afterwards conſulted, and after a ſhort Whiſper among themſelves, they turned to the young Lady, who was now encircled by the Friends of her Lover, and the Father ſaid, that though ſhe had taken a Step ſo contrary to his Intentions, and the Duty ſhe owed him, yet he would no longer oppoſe her Inclinations. — On which,

which, the ſame Biſhop, who was to have received her Vows of Celibacy, performed the Ceremony of her Nuptials, to the infinite Satisfaction of the whole Aſſembly, who could not contain their Approbation of the Conduct both had ſhewn, nor knew whether the Courage of the Bride, or the Conſtancy and Ingenuity of the Bridegroom, were moſt to be commended.—For my Part, as little Compaſſion as you think I have for the Woes of Love, I had been ſo much affected with thoſe ſhe had laboured under, that I was infinitely rejoiced to ſee ſo happy a Period put to them.

And now, my dear *Miranda*, I ſhall conclude this tedious Epiſtle, with aſſuring you, that wherever I am, I ſhall always be,

With the moſt perfect Amity,

Yours, *&c.*

Panthea.

EPISTLE XXXV.

From Mira *to a Lady who had desired to know her Opinion concerning the Influence which some People impute to Eclipses.*

Madam,

THE little I am able to say on the Subject you propose, will rather shew my Readiness to oblige you, than afford any Satisfaction to your Curiosity. — I know, and it is obvious to the most ordinary Understanding, that what we call an Eclipse of the Sun, is no more than when we are deprived of his Rays by the Interposition of an opaque Body; — that glorious Luminary being in itself the same at that Time, as when we behold its greatest Lustre: — That such Deprivations are frequent in one Part of the Globe or other, and that they are always foretold, even by the common Almanack-Makers, shews that there is nothing supernatural in them. — I speak not of that miraculous Phænomena at the Crucifixion of our blessed Saviour, which however, *Toland*, *Woolaston*, and some other Moderns, have impiously attempted to prove it no more than common, was far different from all that had ever before appeared, or perhaps ever will till the last tremendous Day. — The Sun did then, indeed, lose its Light, — the Darkness was total, and universal, and not confined to particular

cular Regions or Parts of the Earth. — *Dennis* the *Areopagite*, and greateſt Philoſopher and Mathematician of his Time, being then in *Egypt*, thought it ſo much beyond Nature, that he cryed out in the utmoſt Aſtoniſhment, *Either the God of Nature ſuffers, or the whole Fabrick of the World is about to be diſſolved!*

As to any other Eclipſes, it is certain they afford no matter of Surprize; but I can ſee no Reaſon why, becauſe we can account for, and foreſee thoſe Revolutions in the celeſtial Bodies, we ſhould deny the Effect they may be ſuppoſed to have over human Affairs. — Has the Sun leſs Influence in calling forth the latent Seeds to ſprout in ſo many beautiful Plants and Flowers in the Spring Seaſon, becauſe we know he is then juſt entring into the firſt Point of the equinoctial Sign *Aries*? — Are the Ebbings and Flowings of the Sea leſs regular, ſince we have diſcovered they were under the Dominion of the Moon; or does that friendly Planet ſhine more dim upon us, for our being acquainted with the Means by which ſhe receives her Light? Many Things, which in the firſt Ages of the World were hid from us, are now revealed and explained, yet ſtill they retain the Qualities beſtowed on them at the Creation, nor can all our Knowledge of the *Cauſe* deſtroy the *Effect*.

In the Infancy of Science, every Thing was aſtoniſhing, and *Eclipſes*, eſpecially when the Defection was total, made very great and alarm-

ing Impreſſions on the Minds of thoſe People, where it happened to be moſt conſpicuous. — This put the Philoſophers upon enquiring into the Nature of the Heavens, more diligently than they had done; but their Reſearches gave very imperfect Ideas, till *Aſtronomy* came in to their Relief. — The Adepts in this Science, by their Obſervation of the Stars, their ſeveral Revolutions, their Conjunctions, Oppoſitions, *&c.* became able to foretell the Time, in which any Eclipſe would happen; — the Length of its Duration, and in what Part of the World it would be viſible: — *Aſtrology* went yet farther, and pretended to predict not only what Weather, but alſo what Events theſe Detections would produce in thoſe Places under the Sign in which they happened. — I know this Science is of latter Ages much decryed. A *French* Author took the Pains to write a very large Treatiſe, on purpoſe to prove the Abſurdity and Fallacy of it; and another learned Man of our own Nation tells us, that *nothing can be more ridiculous, than to aſcribe to the Influence of the Stars, ſuch Things as depend wholly upon the Will of Man*; — but I muſt beg his Pardon when I ſay, that there is nothing convincing to me in this Argument, becauſe if the Stars have any Manner of Influence over the Diſpoſitions and Propenſities of Man, that very *Will*, which he lays ſo great a Streſs upon, is certainly the Effect of it. — There are, however, great Numbers who abſolutely deny this Suppoſition, and will tell you, that

that by ascribing so much Power to the *Creature*, we rob the *Creator* of his Due; but though this is the best Excuse can be given for their Obstinacy, yet it seems to me to be dictated by a mistaken Zeal. — I can see nothing of Impiety in believing that the Almighty, in forming this vast Universe, ordained it so that every Part should have some Kind of Connection with the whole; and all endued with a secret Force of impelling and drawing each other, as so many Links in a Chain, preserve that Order and exact OEconomy which is in the System of Nature. This is no more than what the Learned call Second Causes, and I think it so far from derogating from the Divine Architect, that it rather enlarges our Ideas of his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness. Nature and her Productions are the Works of God, as Mr. *Pope* elegantly expresses it.

All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see;
All Discord, Harmony, not understood;
All partial Evil, universal Good;
And spite of Pride, in erring Reason's Spite,
One Truth is clear, whatever is, is right.

It is not to be wondered at, that in an Age where it is so much the Fashion to *doubt* of every Thing, and almost to *deny* every Thing, the Stars should be held in very little Estimation; but those who really do allow their Influence, which by the way are more than have Courage

to

to acknowledge they do ſo, muſt certainly conſider thoſe Conjunctions, which occaſion Eclipſes, are productive of more than ordinary Conſequences; and for this I have the Opinion of moſt Hiſtorians and Phyſicians, the former of whom are alway particularly careful in making mention of them, and remarking on the Events which enſued; and the latter, make no ſcruple to aſſure us, that when theſe Eclipſes are of any long Duration, the Air is very unwholſome: They look upon the Sun as the Nurſe of Nature, his Light and Heat giving a new Life to every Thing below; *If*, ſay they, *the Animal Spirits are obſtructed by any cold Humour, all the Parts of the Body ſuffer; and in the ſame Manner, Mankind is affected, when the Moon hinders the Sun from ſhedding his Influence upon us.*

Nevertheless, when any Diſcourſe of Eclipſes comes upon the Carpet, you will hear the generality of People cry out, *they proceed from a natural Cauſe, and cannot be attended with any Conſequence either good or bad.*—I muſt confeſs the Stupidity of this Inferrence ſometimes trys my Patience: Thunders, Lightnings, violent Storms of Hail, Rain, and Wind, and Earthquakes which ſometimes tear the very Rocks aſunder, all proceed from natural Cauſes; yet who is preſumptuous enough to deny the Miſchiefs they frequently are the Occaſion of?—Does not common Experience inform us, that even the Clouds, when ſo thick as to hinder the Rays of the Sun from darting on us, cauſe an Air which every Conſtitution

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is not robuſt enough to bear up under?—How much more pernicious then muſt it be when a compact Body, ſuch as the Moon, totally deprives us of thoſe ſalutary Rays.

I AM therefore ſufficiently warranted to think Eclipſes prejudicial to our Health, what Effect they may have over the Minds of Men, ſo as to occaſion Wars, Treaſons, Rebellions, or Revolutions in Kingdoms, I will not pretend to determine even in my own Mind, though I could bring many Inſtances, both from ſacred and prophane Hiſtory, as well as from the Experience of later Ages, to teſtify they have been the Forerunners of ſuch Events; but at the ſame Time I am of Opinion that to predict and re-repreſent them as infallible, is going too great a length; and beſides the preſumption of diving into the ſecret Decrees of Heaven, is cruel to Mankind in anticipating in Idea thoſe Evils which all our Knowledge of, would not be able to prevent.—The admirable *Cowley* was certainly of this Mind, or he would not have ſaid,

In whatſoever Character
The Book of Fate is writ,
'Tis well we underſtand not it:
We ſhould grow mad with too much Learning there.
Upon the Brink of every Ill we did foreſee,
Undecently and fooliſhly,
We ſhould ſtand ſhiv'ring, and but ſlowly venture
The fatal Flood to enter:
Since willing or unwilling we muſt do it,
They feel leaſt Cold and Pain who're plung'd at once into it.

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Let us then chearfully ſubmit in all Things to the Will of that Supreme Being, who knows what is beſt for us,—a true underſtanding of our Duty, is the moſt profitable Science, and will render us moſt acceptable to God, and to Society.—Though this is an Admonition I am ſenſible you ſtand in as little need of as any one in a State of Mortality can do, yet I flatter myſelf will not be ill received from,

Madam,

Your real Friend and

Humble Servant,

Mira.

EPISTLE XXXVI.

From Zimena *to* Belliza, *giving her an Account how much ſhe had been embarraſſed with the Amour of a young Lady of Quality.*

Dear Madam,

NO longer honour me with any good Opinion of my Underſtanding or Conduct; — I have forfeited all the Character I ever had of either. — My fooliſh Compaſſion has hurried me into an Action ſo inconſiderate, and indeed ſo inconſiſtent with my former ones, that I cannot help looking on it, as enforced by ſomething ſupernatural: — Sure at that Time my Guardian Angel

Angel ſlept, and ſome envious Demon watched the luckleſs Hour to blaſt my Fame, and turn my boaſted Caution into Contempt.

You may remember I went out of Town ſome time before you left *London*, without taking leave of you, or any Body; ſtayed about three Weeks, and at my Return made an Excuſe, which, though frivolous enough, you and others of my Friends had the Goodneſs to accept. *Florimel* went with me, but the World little imagined on what Account, nor would ſcarce ever have been informed, had not her own Imprudence and Wickedneſs trumpeted her Infamy. — I need not tell you I had a great Affection for her; — there was ſomewhat I thought artleſs and innocent in her Manner, which very much attached me to her. — Heavens! how muſt I bluſh to all Eternity, at the Remembrance of that Warmth, with which I have defended her Character whenever I heard it called in Queſtion; yet ought I to take much leſs Shame to myſelf for what I have *ſaid*, than what I have *done* on her Account, as you will perceive, when made acquainted with the whole ſhocking Adventure.

I was one Morning at my Toylet, when this unhappy Creature came in: — Grief and Confuſion in her Looks, — Diſtraction in her Words. — She threw herſelf into an eaſy Chair, and told me ſhe had a Secret to communicate, on which I made a Sign to my Woman, who being withdrawn, *O* Zimene, *If ever you had*

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any Friendſhip for me, cryed this wretched Girl, *now is the Time to prove it.—Without your Aſſiſtance I am undone,—ruined for ever.—Will you have pity on me*, continued ſhe, *in the moſt terrible Exigence that ever was?*—I was ſtrangely ſurprized, as you may believe, not being able to gueſs what kind of Misfortunes, a young Maid of Quality like her could labour under, but replied that ſhe might depend on every thing in my Power.—She then told me without farther Prelude, that ſhe had been in Love with a Domeſtic in the Family, from the Time ſhe knew what the Word Love implied;—that ſhe had ſacrificed her Honour to her Paſſion, was with Child, and the Time of her Pregnancy near expired. Shocked as I was at this Confeſſion, the Tears which accompanied it worked ſtrongly on my Heart.—The Agony I ſaw her in, prevented my Reproaches, and I was able to utter no more than to aſk what ſhe imagined I could do for her. *All, all*, cryed ſhe eagerly, *that is requiſite to preſerve my Reputation, my Peace of Mind, nay and my Life too*, added ſhe; *for if you grant not the Requeſt I have to make, I am determined to put an End to my Being this very Day.*

I was ſo terrified at theſe Words, and the reſolute Manner in which ſhe ſpoke them, that I aſſured her I would refuſe nothing ſhe could deſire. On which ſhe informed me, that ſhe had provided a Place, and all things neceſſary for her Lying-in, but had no Pretence for leaving her

her Father's Houſe, much leſs for continuing out of it the Time her Condition would require; therefore conjured me, by my Humanity and Friendſhip, to aſk my Lord's Permiſſion to let her go with me as to viſit ſome Relation in the Country, which Requeſt, ſhe added, he would infallibly grant, as he had the higheſt Opinion of my Virtue and Diſcretion.—I could not think of embarking thus far in ſo ſhameful an Affair without a good deal of Reluctance; but what ſhall I ſay? I ſaw ſhe muſt be expoſed, or what is much worſe, fall a Victim to the moſt horrid Deſpair, I had promiſed, and all together prevailed upon me.—No Time was to be loſt, I went directly to entreat his Lordſhip in the Manner ſhe had deſired, he readily aſſented, and the very next Day, went with her to a little Lodging ſhe had hired in an obſcure Part of the Town, pretending to my Family that I was going out of Town on an extraordinary Occaſion, and ſhould have no need of taking any Attendants with me, being certain of finding ſufficient where I went.

We had paſſed but three Days in this wretched Habitation, before *Florimel* brought a Daughter into the World, but the Drugs ſhe had taken at firſt in order to cauſe an Abortion, and the extraordinary Methods uſed afterwards, for concealing her Condition, had deſtroyed the Infant, as the People about us ſaid, ſome Time before its Birth.

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The only Satisfaction I had during the Time I was thus ſhut up, was the Aſſurances ſhe was continually giving me of a perfect Contrition for the Fault ſhe had been guilty of; which indeed had ſo much the Shew of Sincerity, that I regretted not what I had done for her in the leaſt. In little more than three Weeks ſhe found herſelf well enough to appear again in the World, — we quitted our Concealment, I accompanied her Home, thanked her Father for the Favour he had done me in allowing me her Company, and no Perſon whatever I believe had even the moſt diſtant Suſpicion of what had happened; ſhe had managed artfully enough I own, for not even the Perſons where we had been, nor thoſe who aſſiſted at her Delivery, had the leaſt Knowledge of her Name or Quality.

But now, dear Madam, comes the moſt monſtrous Part of the Narrative: — Could ſhe have ſuppreſſed her vicious Flame, as ſhe had promiſed and ſworn to do, or even had ſhe gratified it with common Diſcretion, the guilty Secret might never have been divulged; but, alas! ſhe was grown bold in Sin, and wholly regardleſs of all that is dear to Womanhood. *Belinda* came Yeſterday to viſit me, told me ſhe had been at my Lord * *'s, that all Things there were in the utmoſt Confuſion, *Florimel* had been catched in Bed with one of the Footmen, at a mean Houſe where they paſſed for Perſons privately married; that her Father himſelf was

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brought to be a Witnefs of her Shame, and on examining into the Affair was told that fhe had lain in there, mentioned the Time, and defcribed the Friend that was with her. —When the malicious Flirt came to this Circumftance, *I could not have fufpected*, faid fhe, with a Sneer, *that a Lady of* Zimene's *Prudence would have been aiding to a Concealment of this Nature.* — I know not what Reply I made, for I was in too much Diftraction to remember either what I faid or did; — in fhort, the Thing is known among all our Acquaintance, every one puts their own Conftruction on the Part I have acted in it, and there are fo few inclinable to think the beft, that I defpair efcaping the fevereft Cenfures. —My Lord * * *, I am certain, will never forgive the Impofition I put upon him, and poffibly may aggravate my Fault in order to make that of his Daughter feem lefs. — All the Confolation I have is a Confciousnefs of having meant well, and the Hope of being not entirely loft to the good Opinion of a Lady, the Continuance of whofe Friendfhip will hinder any other Misfortune from taking too deep a Root in,

Madam,

Your moft humble and moft obedient Servant,

ZIMENE.

EPISTLE XXXVII.

From the ſame to Belliza, *with the Sequel of the Story mentioned in the former.*

Dear Madam,

HAVING troubled you with a Recital of my Vexations, it is but juſt I ſhould make you Partaker alſo of the Satisfaction I feel in being eaſed of them.—My Lord * * * is certainly one of the beſt Men upon Earth, and as his Penetration made him preſently ſee into the true Motives of my Behaviour, ſo his Generoſity prevented him from giving it any other Colours than ſuch as in reality it deſerved.—He came to me the very Day I wrote to you, and inſtead of the Reproaches I expected, accoſted me with an Air full of Good-nature and Reſpect, thanked me in the moſt obliging Terms for the Endeavours I had uſed for preſerving the Honour of his Family, which though rendered fruitleſs, by the diſſolute Inclinations of an abandoned Girl, he ſhould always remember with the utmoſt Gratitude, and ſaid ſo many fine Things on my Humanity, that I had Courage enough to relate the Manner in which ſhe came to me, and the Deſpair which had engaged me to act in the Manner I had done.—But this only gave him an Opportunity to exert his Eloquence in freſh Praiſes, ſo that I was obliged to give over

ſpeaking any farther on that Head; and after he had aſſured me he would vindicate my Character to as many as ſhould know of this unhappy Affair, he entreated I would adviſe him how to diſpoſe of this wretched Creature, whom, he ſaid, he could not think of keeping with him, not only as her Preſence would be a continual Memento of the Diſgrace ſhe had already brought upon him, but alſo as he found her Temper was too obſtinate and irreclaimable for him to aſſure himſelf ſhe might not hereafter be the Occaſion of yet more. — I would fain have declined complying with his Lordſhip's Requeſt in this Point, but he ſo abſolutely inſiſted on my giving my Opinion, that after hearing him propoſe either ſecuring her in a Madhouſe, or ſending her abroad into the Plantations, I ventured to diſcover my Diſapprobation of either of theſe Meaſures, as too cruel, and alſo ineffectual; for as an Extravagance of Paſſion had been the Cauſe of her Ruin, that Paſſion would probably inſpire her with the Means of breaking through all Reſtraints for its Gratification; and then told him, that if it were true, as I had heard from her, that the Fellow was tolerably well deſcended, and was well brought up, though the Misfortunes of his Parents had reduced him to get his Bread in Service, I ſhould think the only Way to defend the young Lady from incurring any future Infamy, was to give the Sanction of Marriage to their mutual Affection. —Finding he ſtarted at the Word Marriage, I remonſtrated to him that after what had paſſed, there

was ſcarce a Poſſibility of matching her according to her Birth, and if even ſuch a Thing could be brought about, nothing could be more likely than that ſhe would ſtill ſee this firſt Object of her Flame; that the Conſequences of ſuch Interviews might be fatal in this World, beſides incurring the Danger of everlaſting Perdition in the next; — then proceeded to remind him that Love was an involuntary Paſſion, and as her's was fixed on him, and his on her, they would be happier in each other in a mean State, than either could be in all the Pomp of Grandeur if ſeparated. — After I had urged all I could, in Excuſe for this offending Pair, I offered to his Conſideration, to beſtow a Sum of Money on them, and let them go to *Holland*, or what Part of the World ſhould be judged moſt convenient for Traffic, and try the Induſtry and Ingenuity of the young Man in acquiring a Fortune to ſupply the Deficiencies of his Birth.

His Lordſhip liſtened attentively to all I ſaid on this Score, and I could perceive it had made ſome Impreſſion on him; on which I repeated and enforced every Argument I had made uſe of, till, in fine, I gained his Conſent, on this Condition, that I would take the whole Affair upon myſelf, ſee them married, and give them a thouſand Pounds, which he would depoſit in my Hands for their Uſe. — To this I readily agreeing, every Thing was immediately ordered for the Execution, *Florimel* was ſent that Night to my Houſe, and her Lover diſcharged from the

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Confinement he had been in ſince the Detection of his Crime, was told he might come alſo.—I talked to them in what I thought a proper Manner:—I repreſented to her, beſides the Sin and Infamy of derogating from the Rules of Virtue, the Meanneſs of her Choice, and to him the Preſumption of violating the Honour of a Lady, whom he ought not even to have thought on but with the extremeſt Reverence:—Both ſeemed to hear me with a becoming Shame, but when I informed them of the Conceſſions I had obtained in their Favour, all Words would be imperfect to deſcribe the Tranſport they expreſſed,—the young Man cried out, that his Lordſhip equalled Heaven in Goodneſs, and added that he had a diſtant Relation at *Rotterdam* who was a Merchant, and would inſtruct him in the Ways of Commerce, and that he did not doubt but to improve his Thouſand Pounds in ſuch a Manner, as to prove he had a *Mind* ſuperior to his Station.

But not to detain your Attention, I ſent to the Commons for a Licence, and early the next Morning myſelf and a Lawyer, who does all my Buſineſs, accompanied them to St. *Brides*, where the Nuptial Ceremony was performed.—The ſame Perſon enquired for a Ship, and ſaw them embark, having firſt given them the Sum I mentioned in Bank-Bills.

This ugly Affair ſo happily terminated, I think, has a Right to demand the Congra-

tulations of my Friends; but I assure you it is in my Power to receive them on a different Score: — My Lord * * *, is so much charmed with the Good nature, Wit, and Address, as he is pleased to say, I have shewn in his Daughter's Concerns, that joined with the Liking he pretends to have always had of my Person, has engaged him to make an Offer of his Hand, and is as assiduous, as a Lover of one-and-twenty, to prevail on me to accept it. — I must own I have an Infinity of Respect for his Lordship, — his good Qualities exact it from all the World, and from me in particular; — but you know there is a wide Difference between Respect and Love; however I will forswear nothing, and if the *one* should happen to be the Consequence of the other, it is probable you may see me Lady * * *, but if so, beg you will believe my Dignity shall never make me less than I am at present,

Dear Madam,

Your most obedient,

And most humble Servant,

Zimene.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XXXVIII.

From Astrea *to a very worthy Gentleman under great Misfortunes, and obliged to take Shelter in a Foreign Realm where he was also ill-treated.*

Sir,

I Could not omit taking this first Opportunity of testifying how deep a *Sense* I have of your Misfortunes, but shall offer nothing by way of Consolation.— You have too much Fortitude and Philosophy to stand in need of it; but am sorry to hear you have fresh Occasions for exerting that Nobleness of Soul; and that Perfidy and Injustice reign through every Climate. It may seem strange that Fortune, changeable as she is represented, is generally pretty constant in persecuting Merit; but however some People may accuse Providence of Partiality in this Point, and prophanely cry out with the Poet,

Be juster, Heaven; such Virtue punish'd thus,
Will make us think that Chance rules all above,
And shuffles, with a random Hand, the Lots
Which Man is forc'd to draw.——

We see not the Ends which the wise Disposer of the Universe has in his Dispensations. He is doubtless just and good in all his Decrees,

and when we consider that true Greatness of Mind shines brightest in Adversity, and that nothing so much magnifies the *Hero* and the *Christian*, as well bearing *Afflictions*, we shall not be surprized to find the *one* inflicted in order to render the other *more* conspicuous. — Your very Enemies indeed confess you have Talents to give a double Lustre to *Prosperity*, and it is the Hope of your Friends, who are all the honest and disinterested, that you will yet have an Opportunity of exerting them, which is a Day sincerely wished, and ardently prayed for, not only for your own Sake, but for that of Numbers whom your Example might reform, by her, who has the Honour to be,

With the highest Respect and Veneration,

Sir,

Your most humble,

And most obedient Servant,

ASTREA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XXXIX.

From Alinda *to* Euphrosine, *on Bigottry.*

My Dear Euphrosine,

WHATEVER Accident prevented you from coming Yesterday, as you were expected, to Lady *Betty*'s, it was certainly the Contrivance of your better Genii, to save you a Mortification the less fortunate of your Friends had not the Power of avoiding.

Gay as you think me, and as indeed I am by Nature, I cannot always, with *Democritus*, laugh at the Follies of the World.—It gives me a sensible Concern when I see Persons of unquestionable Understanding in other Things, suffer themselves to be transported by their Prejudice in some one particular Point, so as to lay aside all Reason, to be deaf to all Argument, and even forgetful of what is owing to Decency and good Manners; but I have the least Patience when I hear People in Matters of Religion take upon them to censure, and even pronounce the Censure of everlasting Perdition, on every one who does not happen to be of the same Opinion with themselves, pretend to give Laws to the Almighty, and, as Mr. *Pope* says,

Snatch from his Arm the Thunder and the Rod.
Rejudge his Judgments, be the God of God!

I never ſaw her Ladyſhip have a more numerous Aſſembly,—the Converſation was agreeable enough till unluckily it turned on Religion, when in a Moment, thoſe whom I had never ſuſpected of having any at all, began to extol ſome one, ſome another Way of Divine Worſhip, and exclaim againſt every Thing that diſſented from it with a Virulence, which I thought little becoming of the ſacred Topic.—Three Parts in four of the Company durſt not open their Mouths among theſe angry Zealots, ſo they had the whole Diſcourſe to themſelves, which laſted from ſix o'Clock till near nine, and perhaps had not been broke off ſo ſoon, if not happily interrupted by the ſudden coming in of the Earl of * * * *, at Sight of whom I could ſee the pretended Sanctified of each different Perſwaſion pluck themſelves up, and endeavour to compoſe their ruffled Countenances, as if their looking agreeable in his Lordſhip's Eyes was a Matter of more Conſequence than that they had been with ſuch indecent Warmth defending.

Indeed, my Dear, it is my Opinion, that thoſe who place ſo much Merit in the *Ceremony* have little of the *Spirit* of Religion in their Hearts.—They go to the *Proteſtant* Church, the *Popiſh* Maſs-houſe, or *Preſbyterian* Conventicle, becauſe they have been accuſtomed to it, and it is the Religion of their Family, and for the ſame Reaſon might have gone to the *Jew*'s Synagogue,

Synagogue, for aught either they or I know. Mr. *Dryden* was certainly very much in the right when he wrote these Lines,

By Education most have been misled,
So they believe, *because they so were* bred:
The Priest *continues what the* Nurse *began,*
And thus the Child *imposes on the Man.*

True Devotion, in my Mind, is quite another Thing.—It inspires Sentiments and a Behaviour widely different;—the Heart is the true Temple of the Deity, and if that be pure and well prepared, we have no Room to doubt whether the Oraisons we make will be accepted.

I would not, however, have you imagine I am an Enemy to those Forms the Church has directed; on the contrary, I think we cannot address Heaven, with too much Reverence and Humility; but I am vexed to hear Disputes arise concerning the different Modes of those Forms, and that so great a Stress is laid upon them, that very often, in attempting to maintain them, the Essence they were intended to preserve is utterly destroyed.

You will wonder to find I am turned Reasoner, especially on this Argument, but I assure you there is nothing makes me so serious as when I see Superstition and Hypocrisy usurp the Place of true Piety; for whatever Attachment I may have

have to the Pleasures of this World, to be well received in the next is the first Aim of my Ambition; after which, be assured I rank your Friendship, — being,

Dear *Euphrosine*,

Sincerely yours,

Alinda.

EPISTLE XL.

From Albinus *to* Mira, *with his Opinion of a justly celebrated Divine Poem, which she had recommended to his Perusal.*

Madam,

I am no longer what I was; am grown another Creature since last I had the Honour of seeing you; that inestimable Poem you were so good to mention to me has lifted me with St. *Paul* into the third Heaven: — My former Being is exchanged for one more Seraphic and refined; I am, methinks, no more an Inhabitant of this Earth: — I mix in the extatic Society of glorified Spirits, disdain to hold Conversation with my Fellow-Mortals, and could I think of you as less than Angel, should be above writing even to you.

I had gone through the greateſt Part of the Poem, when, in the Abundance of my Heart, I wrote what I ſuppoſe you have read, and ſhould doubtleſs have gone on in the ſame Strain of Admiration, till I had probably tired you with my Rhapſodies, if I had not been interrupted by the coming in of a Friend, who ſeeing the Book lie open before me, aſked my Opinion of it, which I gave in much the ſame rapturous Terms I had begun to do to you.—*Have you read it quite through?* ſaid he: To which I anſwering in the Negative, *I will leave you then to finiſh it*, reſumed he with a Smile, *and when I ſee you next, you will tell me what you think of it.*

Theſe Words, and the Manner in which they were ſpoke, raiſed a kind of impatient Cnrioſity in me:—I ſhut myſelf up, and immediately began to do as he deſired, leaving my Letter to you unfiniſhed;—the more I read, the more I wondered any one could imagine, as my Friend had ſeemed to do, that the End of the Poem was leſs worthy Approbation than the Beginning.—Every Line glowed with the Image of the Deity diffuſing celeſtial Tranſports!—Ineffable Majeſty, Energy Divine ſhone in each Period! All was of a Piece, and the Poet's Thought, with ſacred Inſpiration fired, was lofty as his Theme!—The Poem ended, at leaſt the Buſineſs of it ceaſed, yet was there ſomething ſtill to read.—O God! what Something?—How in a Moment did my Raptures vaniſh!—The Heaven, open to me through ſo many Pages, cloſed at once

upon

upon me; — I fell, — I ſunk with the Author deep into Mortality again, and all my late elevated Ideas of the *Dignity* of *Man* were chaſed and driven from my Soul. — Oh what are Words! — What fine-turned Thoughts! — What all the Pomp of Eloquence and Learning! Meer Sounds to catch the unwary Ear. — It is Truth, — It is ſacred *Truth* alone can ſtrike the Heart, and fix a laſting Admiration there! — By *that* directed, how did the Poet charm; and Oh how weak, how enervate was his Art when proſtituted in the falſe Logic of a *Party* Zeal, for the meaneſt Ends!

In fine, Madam, this Appendix, or Addreſs, or what you pleaſe to call it, at the End of the Book, too evidently proves that *Man*, however he may magnify the Joys above the Skies, has his *Promotion*, for the ſhort Time allowed him on this Spot he treads, the moſt at Heart; but ſure he merits double Condemnation, who ſacrilegiouſly makes Heaven the Dupe to ſerve a ſordid worldly Aim. — When Scurrility is gloſs'd with holy Ardour, and the moſt cruel, it is poſſible alſo *unjuſt* Invectives are poured out under the Sanction of Devotion, what can an impartial Reader think, but that he is liſtening to a Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing! — I fear there are too many ſuch; but I am angry with this Author above all for the Diſappointment he has given me, — the great Talents he is Maſter of, and that Spirit of Piety which ſeemed to breathe through

all

all his Work, may make us imagine there is no Possibility for Mankind to be in earnest with *God*, and that all Devotion is from the Lips, while the Heart is the Votary of *Mammon*.

If to reform the Manners of the Age, by setting forth the Miseries to which a Nation given up to Vice might justly expect to be reduced, had really been his sole Intent, he certainly would have made use of other Menaces, presented other Dangers to our View than such he has thought fit to mention. — Is the Almighty divested of his Thunders, and his flaming Arrows? — Are the contending Elements no longer under his Command! — Are the Phials of his Wrath exhausted, and the destroying *Angels* idle in their Spheres? — Are there no Earthquakes to be dreaded? — No Vulcanos? — Are there no Famine, Pestilence, or other Plagues left in the Storehouse of eternal Vengeance? — And are not these Chastisements more befitting an angry Deity, and more terrible to a sinful Land, than *Papal* Bulls, Gallic Bravadoes, or a few ragged Ruffians of the North, as he calls them in Derision? — But these were the Bugbears of the Time, — the Terrors A-la-mode, — the Peal rung for Preferment both in Church and State. How ambitious soever this Author may be of a good Residence in *Heaven*, I think it pretty plain he was desirous of partaking the delicious Baits of *Earth* in his Journey to Immortality; whether he has not, in the Pursuit of one, mistaken the Road to the other, I will not pretend to determine.

I would not, however, be thought to quarrel at the Purpose of this Address: To petition the *Great* to endeavour by their own Example to bring about a Reformation of Manners, was doubtless right; since from them, or some of them at least, it is that this Torrent of Corruption, Luxury, and every Kind of Vice, which like a Deluge overflows the Land, and swallows up Morality and Religion in its rapid Course, originally proceeds. — Were our *Heads* once better, the less noble Parts would soon partake the happy Influence, and we should once more be *Britons*, — Free *Britons!* — Not the Slaves of licensed Sin, premeditated Folly: — To this had he confined himself, the Design had been noble, and truly worthy such a Genius; but by blending it with a Matter altogether foreign, he not only sinks the *Patriot* in the *Time-server*, but also renders ineffectual that which he would have us believe his only Aim is to inculcate.

If what I have said may be thought too severe of the *Man*, it is owing to my Admiration of the *Poet*. — I loved, — I revered, — I burned with the most ardent Desire of a nearer Acquaintance with a Person, whose Conversation I imagined would rectify whatever is *faulty* in my Composition, and improve the *good*; but this going out of the Way of the glorious Business, he set out upon, has made me see, to my great Mortification, that though I might receive much Benefit from his *Wit* and *Learning*, my Soul would

would be ſtill to ſeek for thoſe more valuable Advantages it expected.

As to the Work itſelf, notwithſtanding this unhappy, ill-judged Concluſion, it queſtionleſs anſwers the high Character given of it, both as a *Poem* and a *Leſſon.* — I ſhould be ſincerely glad to find it have a due Effect, and that every Reader may be convinced what ought to be the firſt Aim of *Man.* — This is a Wiſh, in which I am certain you will readily join with him, who is, with the extremeſt Reſpect,

Madam,

Your moſt humble,

And moſt faithfully devoted Servant,

ALBINUS.

EPISTLE XLI.

From Aſpaſia *to* Florella, *in Anſwer to one wherein ſhe had deſired ſome Explanation of the Quarrel between two Gentlemen, who had been long the moſt intimate Friends.*

My Dear Florella,

I THINK myſelf happy in being able to give you a pretty exact Account of an Affair which, though much talked of, is little comprehended: My Intimacy with *Delia*, the unhappy Wife of *Philarchus*, has let me into Particulars known to few beſides the Perſons concerned; you will wonder I ſay *unhappy*, as that Lady, being left an Orphan, without Friends or Dower, was married to a Man of his Rank, and treated by him with a Tenderneſs not always found even where there is an Equality of Birth and Fortune; but you will be convinced by what I have to tell you, that Peace of Mind is not the ſure Attendant on Grandeur, and that alſo there may be Oddities of Humour which rob even mutual Love of all its Bleſſings.

I WAS ſurprized with the reſt of the World when I heard thoſe inſeparable Friends, *Philarchus* and *Dorantes*, had met as Enemies in *Hyde-Park*, and that the former was brought home much wounded. I went to viſit *Delia* on the Occaſion, and found her

her in a Condition truly pitiable.—She was lying on a Couch, her Hair dishrevelled, her Looks wild, her Eyes streaming with Tears, Despair and Grief visibly painted in every Feature: As soon as she saw me, *O Aspasia*, cryed she, *I was going to send to you, but this kind Visit has prevented me.—I longed to tell you to what a Wretch my Fatal Imprudence, and too nice a Sense of Honour, has reduced me.*—I will not trouble you with my Reply, nor the Prelude she made to the melancholly Story she had to relate, which, after she had begun, was a hundred Times broke off by Exclamations on my Side, and Comments on her's, but come directly to the Matter of Fact, as it happened thus.

Some few Months after her Marriage, *Dorantes*, who was scarce ever from their House, began, on every little Absence of *Philarchus*, to behave to her in a Manner she thought unbecoming of him to the Wife of his Friend, yet loth to suspect a Man, so dear to her Husband, could be guilty of so vile a Treachery, she repelled whatever Suggestions of this Nature rose in her Mind, till one Day he declared to her in plain Terms, that he was violently in love with her, and neglected no Arguments that Men generally make use of on such Occasions, to convince her of the Ardency of his Passion: She assured me that the Answer she gave him was in the severest Terms she could invent, yet did he not appear in the least rebuffed at it, but took hold of the next Opportunity of being alone with her to repeat

his Suit with more Vehemence than before. She treated it, if possible, with yet greater Contempt, but all she could say, and the Reproaches she uttered on the Ingratitude and Basenes of his Attempt, was as ineffectual to oblige him to desist, as his Importunities were of rendering her more complying. — This preposterous Courtship went on for several Weeks; she had no Way totally to avoid him. — *Philarchus* often went abroad after Dinner, would set them two to Picquet, and when at any Time she pretended Indisposition, or any other Plea, to retire, he would say to her, *My Dear, I insist on your giving* Dorantes *your Company; — you must always regard him as my second Self, and think that in obliging him you confer the greatest Obligation on me.*

Judge, said she to me, *of the terrible Dilemma I was in, my Heart was shocked to think how much his generous unsuspecting Friendship was abused, yet durst not undeceive him lest some fatal Consequence should ensue on his Discovery of the Treachery. — I was besides,* added she, *ashamed to own, even to him, that any Man had the Confidence to address me on so dishonorable a Score, and these two Reasons joined together it was that subjected me to bear, for so long a Time, Discourses the most detestable both to my Virtue, and the sincere Affection I ever had for* Philarchus. *But at last,* resumed she,, after having given some Time to Tears, *this late bold and audacious Lover began to approach me with a more timid*

timid Air, — he still talked to me of his Passion, but that Passion now seemed altogether the Reverse of what it had been, — he even praised the Virtue which opposed him, which giving me some Hopes he was growing ashamed of his Folly, I altered my Behaviour also, treated him with somewhat more Mildness, and endeavoured, by all the little Arguments I could muster up, to bring him to Reason, and make a perfect Convert of him. — He listened to me with all the Attention I could wish, and instead of making me any Answer, O Philarchus! Philarchus! cried he, *lifting up his Hands and Eyes to Heaven, how wretched have you made me! An Exclamation of this Nature,* continued she, *might very well surprise me, but though I was utterly unable to comprehend it, forbore to desire any Explanation, till he too fatally, for my eternal Peace, gave it of himself.*

Indeed, *Florella*, I weep at the Remembrance of the Agonies this poor Creature was in when she came to this Part of her Story, which in fine had in it a Mystery such as I believe the most keen Conjecture would not be able to reach. *Philarchus* having married her merely for Love, took it afterwards into his Head that she became his Wife only through a Motive of *Interest*, and had so little Affection for his Person that she might possible be prevailed upon to listen to the Addresses of any other Man, who was young and agreeable; — he resolved however to make the Tryal; — *Dorantes* was his Friend, and he thought he could depend on his Integrity not to carry

the Matter farther than was consistent with Honour, but he was to press her by all the Means in his Power, and to try her Virtue to the utmost. The young Gent'eman was extremely loth to undertake this Task, but *Philarchus* would take no Denial, on which he began his Attack as you have heard; but, alas, how dangerous it is to sport with Fire! the Passion he but feigned at first, in Compliance with his Friend's Request, took hold on him unawares:— He became as much charmed in reality, as he had pretended to be, and as he owed the Desires he was possessed of entirely to the Whim of *Philarchus*, thought himself under no Obligation to deny himself the Gratification of them, if by any Means he could obtain it.— The most likely Means to succeed, he thought would be to acquaint *Delia* with the whole Proceeding.— He flattered himself that Resentment for so ill-grounded a Jealousy would get the better of the most inexorable Virtue, and that she would think it no Crime to indulge an Inclination she was unjustly suspected of being guilty of: But that Woman must have the Sense of Honour little rooted in her Heart that can render such a Supposition warrantable; — that of *Delia* is more firm and sincere: — Far from listening to the Arguments he urged on this Head, she affected not to believe what he said in Relation to her Husband, upbraided his double Treachery and Baseness in the most bitter Words, and flung from him with a Disdain which made him tremble.

Her

Her Displeasure against *Philarchus* however was not less for her concealing it from his Rival. The Indignity she thought his Jealousy did to her Love and Virtue, filled her with the most poignant Anguish, and compelled her to be guilty of an Indiscretion to which she owes her present Unhappiness. —Forgetful of the Obligations she had to him, in refusing for her sake Matches in point of Birth and Fortune greatly her Superiors, she poured out all the Resentment of her Soul in Words more grating than it is probable she would have made use of had Passion left the least Room for Reflection. — He heard her however without testifying any violent Emotions, till she had ended all she had to say, and then, *It is well, Madam*, cryed he, *I now see of what Value your boasted Virtue is, since I am convinced* Dorantes *never would have betrayed my Secret, without receiving another of greater Consequence from you in Exchange.*—These Words stung her to the Heart, but she had no Opportunity of replying; he shut himself into his Apartment, lay on his own Side, and would by no Means be prevailed upon to see her any more that Night, though she went several Times to his Chamber-Door entreating Admittance. Early the next Morning he went out alone, and in three Hours after was brought home in the Condition you have been told, wounded, but not dangerously. — It was soon known with whom he had fought, though the Motive of the Quarrel was by both kept a Secret. — *Dorantes*,

who had alſo received ſome ſlight Hurts, told thoſe that viſited him, that *Philarchus* came to his Bedſide, and ſwore to ſtab him that Inſtant if he did not immediately riſe and accompany him to the Place where they engaged, without mentioning the leaſt Word of the Nature of their Quarrel; — *Philarchus* makes no other Anſwer to any Queſtions put to him, than that *Dorantes* is a Villain. — It is but too plain he retains the moſt cruel Suſpicions of *Della*, for he will not ſuffer her to come into his Preſence, and whenever any one happens to ſpeak of her, crys out, that he has neither *Wife* nor *Friend*. This Miſunderſtanding between them occaſions Whiſpers little to the Reputation of *Delia*: How the Affair will end it is impoſſible to gueſs, but ſhe apprehends a Separation: — There are ſome People who though ſenſible they have been in an Error, if reproached with it, are too ſtubborn to acknowledge they were wrong; if *Philarchus* happens to be of this Number, it will indeed be difficult to bring about a Reconciliation.

Thus, my dear *Florella*, are all the Joys of this once happy Pair blaſted, I fear for ever, ſince were *Philarchus* ſenſible of his Folly, and convinced how ſmall Room he had for Jealouſy, what he has made her ſuffer on this Account would doubtleſs dwell upon her Mind, to the Deſtruction of her Peace. — She would be in continual Terrors leſt he ſhould relapſe into Suſpicions, and obliged to keep ſuch a continual Guard over all her Words and Actions, as muſt in-

infallibly deſtroy all Harmony between them: In my Opinion, parting in ſuch a Situation would be the leaſt of Evils; *Delia* however thinks otherwiſe: Were *Philarchus* as indifferent to her as I really believe he is the contrary, Rank and Equipage have Charms too flattering to a young Heart to be eaſily ſurrendered, and as ſhe brought no Portion, her future Maintenance muſt depend wholly on his Generoſity. — I endeavour to give her Hopes, ſince ſhe ſo ardently deſires it, that the Love he once had for her will in Time revive and get the better of his Caprice and Reſentment, but as he abates nothing of his Sullenneſs, all I can ſay on that Head affords ſmall Conſolation.

This is all I have at preſent to relate of the Affair, as ſoon as I receive any farther Information, will not fail to communicate it. — Let us, my dear *Florella*, thank Heaven we have not Husbands of the ſame Humour with *Philarchus*. My Compliments to yours, and believe me to be what I am, with great Sincerity,

Your moſt affectionate Friend,

And very humble Servant.

Aspasia.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XLII.

From Althea *to a Lady who had turned her Daughter out of Doors on the Discovery of her being guilty of a criminal Amour, remonstrating to her the ill Consequences that this Step may occasion, and earnestly pressing her to call home the young Lady.*

Madam,

THEY say that Advice, when unasked, is impertinent, yet sure it ought not to be accounted as such when coming from a Person whose Sincerity and Friendship we have no room to doubt.— I could not forgive myself for seeing any one, much more one I love, run blindfold on the Brink of a Precipice, without giving some Warning of the Danger: —Pardon me, Madam, if I consider you as such;—all Passion is Blindness, and though I am ready to allow the Justice of yours, I would fain prevent you from suffering it to hurry you to Lengths that may be fatal to the Honour of your Family, and your own future Peace.

It was with an unspeakable Concern I heard some Rumours to the Disadvantage of Miss * * * *'s Reputation, but that Concern received a very great Addition, on being told you had confirmed what had been said by your banishing her

her your House. — You are very sensible that Reports of this Nature are frequently no more than the Suggestions of Malice and Envy; this, however true, might have passed for such, and consequently have died away in Time, had you, who have had her always under your own Eye, and were certainly the best Judge, both of her Inclinations and Conduct, not seemed to think she could be capable of acting in a Manner so unworthy her Birth and Education. — Indeed, Madam, I cannot help thinking you have carried your Severity to too high a Pitch: — If the young Lady is in reality as guilty as she is represented, proclaiming her Fault will be far from making it less; but on the contrary rather incline her to think, that having lost all it behoved her to preserve, forfeited all she had to hope, and suffered all she had to fear, she no longer has any Measures to keep, but may indulge her Inclinations to the most ruinous Excess. — Who can answer for the Event? — Undone by Inadvertency, she may become abandoned by Despair, and irrecoverably lost to all Sense of Honour and of Virtue.

From my Soul I wish you had not taken this Step, but it is done; yet though past recall, I fancy may not be altogether past retrieve. You have forced her from your House driven her, Heaven knows where, yet I presume the Wanderer may be found: — Let her [illegible] sought, permit her to return, not in your Presence, that perhaps might be too [illegible] condescension,

and

and occaſion a Preſumption in her of as ill Conſequence as her preſent Deſpair; but ſuffer her to remain beneath your Roof, or that of ſome truſty Friend, till Preparation can be made for ſending her to your Country Seat, under the Care and Inſpection of a Perſon qualified to ſet before her Eyes the Misfortune to which ſhe had reduced herſelf, and the inevitable Deſtruction ſhe muſt have been plunged into, had not your Tenderneſs and paternal Affection prevented it. —I can think it ſcarce poſſible a young Lady, trained up in the Principles of Religion and Virtue, and who had in you the ſtricteſt Example of both continually before her Eyes, can ſo far degenerate as not to be eaſily awakened to a juſt Senſe of her Folly, if proper Means are made uſe of for that End.

There have been Inſtances where Virtue, once reclaimed, has, like a broken Limb, grown ſtronger than before. — Remembrance of what has happened, generally gives a double Caution to avoid, if poſſible, the like Accident again: It is, however, certainly worth your while to make the Experiment, and not becauſe ſhe has fallen under one Temptation, endanger her being expoſed to others, as ſhe infallibly muſt be, if left entirely to herſelf. By confining her in the Way I mention, you will at leaſt deprive her of the Opportunity of repeating her Crime, and her Seducer from any new Occaſions of Triumph.

Besides

BESIDES, Madam, Scandal, ever ſolicitous of finding freſh Objects, ſoon grows weary of the old, and as this Age, Heaven knows, preſents but too many, all Diſcourſe concerning Miſs ****, will ceaſe of itſelf, and be loſt among a Croud of more recent Adventures, eſpecially when ſhe is out of Sight, and nothing farther is to be related of her than what is already known.

THUS will you not only ſave from Perdition a Darling, and till now eſteemed a moſt deſerving Child, but alſo ſecure yourſelf from thoſe horrid Shocks, which on the Report of her future Behaviour you might probably receive. I entreat you therefore, Madam, for her's and for your own Sake, not to perſiſt in a Reſentment, the Effects of which cannot but be fatal to both. — A Moment's Conſideration will ſhew you that as the Miſchief is done and paſt recall, common Prudence requires you to prevent it from ſpreading farther; — you would not ſure, if ſome Part of your Houſe was by any Accident impaired, ſuffer the whole Building to fall to the Ground; and of how little Value is the moſt magnificent Edifice of human Invention, when compared to the glorious Workmanſhip of the Creator?

DO not imagine, Madam, that I am inſenſible of what a Situation, ſuch as yours, muſt inflict. When I reflect on the Pangs you ſuffered in bringing this fair Tranſgreſſor into the World, the Pleaſure her Infant Years afforded, and the charming

charming Hopes you had conceived of ſeeing her one Day make the moſt amiable Figure in the World, I own it muſt render the Diſappointment terrible to ſuſtain, and is of a Nature that demands all the Reſignation of a *Chriſtian*, and the Courage of a *Heroine*; — yet as I am very well ſatisfied you are perfectly the *one*, and that on many Occaſions you have given Proofs you are the *other* alſo, I hope you will, in this ſevereſt Exigence, ſummon to your Aid the noble Principles which both inſpires: — In which Confidence I remain, as ever,

Madam,

Your real Friend and

Humble Servant,

ALTHEA.

P. S. Inſtead of ſending this, I ſhould have waited on you in Perſon, but am prevented by a ſlight Indiſpoſition; as ſoon as it wears off enough for me to endure the Air, ſhall not fail doing myſelf that Pleaſure; in the mean Time conjure you to reflect ſeriouſly on the above.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XLIII.

From Lothario *to* Gloriana; *an Excuse for not having waited on her for some Days.*

Madam.

DESTINY has been extremely cruel to me of late. — I have been compelled to do the Things I would not, and altogether unable to do what I am most desirous of. — It is an Age since I saw you, — nay seven Ages, seven long tedious Days; yet did the Penalty of your future Displeasure depend upon my giving a good Account for my Remissness, I fear I must be miserable: — Business I have had none, — Pleasure I could have none out of your Company, — What then shall I say detained me? — I will tell you, Madam; there are a Sort of Creatures in the World, mere Animals, who for no other Reason than because they go upon two Legs, imagine themselves Men, and having no Ideas of their own, are continually disturbing those of other People. — When Wretches of this kind happen to be so circumstanced as neither to be shunned with Decency, nor reprehended with Safety, the Person they take it into their Heads to haunt, is in a very perplexed Situation. — This has really been pretty much my Case: — A Crowd of Country Relations are in Town, one or other of whom are every Moment breaking in upon me, and putting my Mind out of that Frame

Frame I would always wiſh to preſerve, when I have the Honour of waiting on you. — But be aſſured, that tho' I cannot preſume to approach you till I am a little more my former Self, my Heart is ſtill the ſame, and a conſtant Attendant at your *Ruelle* both Night and Day. — I toaſt your Health in Bumpers of *Champaign* and *Burgundy* juſt landed, which indeed is the only Satisfaction I can taſte in the Company I keep at preſent: Thank Heaven however for the Hope I have of being ſhortly rid of this Impediment to a Happineſs more ſublime, as well as more ſubſtantial. In the mean Time I beg you will be aſſured, that never young Senator longed more to appear the Man of Conſequence in the Chair of a Committee, nor Officer for a War to return to Plunder and full Pay, nor Judge for Store of Plots, Felonies and Murders to refine upon Law, or rather to refine it all away, than I do to teſtify how very much I am

The charming *Gloriana*'s

Moſt humble,

And moſt devoted Servant,

Lothario.

End of the Third Book.

EPISTLES

FOR THE

LADIES.

BOOK IV.

EPISTLE XLIV.

From Aſtrea *to* Leonidas, *requeſting his ſincere Sentiments in Relation to the Difference between the* Ancients *and the* Moderns, *as to the great Actions for which each have been celebrated.*

SIR,

YOU would think it ſtrange that being at preſent the Gueſt of a Lady of the firſt Quality in *England*, I ſhould have a Moment to ſpare from the Drawing-Room, Card-Table, Maſquerade, or thoſe thouſand other Amuſements of the Times, if you did not know her Grace has a Genius too re-

fined and delicate to look on theſe Things as Pleaſures; and that it is chiefly to the Averſion I have for them, that I am indebted for the Honour of being ranked among the few ſhe calls her Friends.

In this voluntary Secluſion from all the modiſh Entertainments, and conſequently from the greateſt Part of our Acquaintance, you will believe we employ many Hours in Reading; but, perhaps, you have a better Opinion of my Modeſty, than to imagine I take upon me to comment on Authors, and to arraign Antiquity; yet I aſſure you I have ſometimes the Confidence to do it. — We had laſt Night more Company than uſual, and the Converſation happening to turn on the different Manners of the *Ancients* and *Moderns*, a Preference was given to the former, which ſeemed to me to have ſomewhat of Injuſtice in it, and I could not forbear ſaying, that if thoſe who wrote on that Subject had not painted both the Men and the Women of thoſe Times in Colours rather too ſtrong for Life, yet I could not find the Merits of any of their *Heroes* or *Heroines* ſo ſupernatural to themſelves as not to be equalled by thoſe of a much later Date: — That though I ſhould be ſorry to rob them of any Part of that Admiration they had maintained through ſuch a long Train of Ages, and was ready to allow them all the great Qualities, and to have done all the great Actions recorded of them by Hiſtorians and Poets, yet

I

I could not endure it ſhould be thought that Nature, in adorning them, had exhauſted the whole Eſſence of Perfection, and left only the Dregs for future Generations.

Finding myſelf oppoſed, I added, with ſome Warmth, that even the Authority on which theſe extraordinary Characters were founded, was frequently ſuſpected; — that *Herodotus*, though called the Father of Hiſtory, had been found to trip; and as for the Poets, it was acknowledged by every one, that they had a Licence to embelliſh and enrich their Deſcriptions with all the Graces they could introduce, and that many of the Characters they drew might reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be rather what Men ſhould be, than what they really were.

On this, one of the Company, who I could find regarded more the Phraſeology than Veracity of an Author, aſked me, with a kind of Sneer, if I would alſo maintain that the *Wit* of the *Moderns* came in any Degree of Competition with the *Ancients*, To which I boldly anſwering in the Affirmative; he cryed out, — A Proof, Madam! A Proof of what you ſay! Let us ſee you produce a ſecond *Homer*, *Virgil*, or *Pindar*, among the *Poets*; an *Orator* to equal *Cicero* and *Demoſthenes*; or a *Philoſopher* like the Divine *Plato*, *Socrates*, *Ariſtotle*, and many more Ornaments of Antiquity, whom I could name: — I was about to anſwer him, and had immediately in my Head a great Number of

Examples to ſet againſt thoſe he had named in each different Science; but I was prevented by another in the Company, who ſaid, you will find it leſs difficult, Madam, to find Parallels in the Spheres my Friend has mentioned, than in that of publick Spirit;— What latter Ages have been honoured with a *Regulus*, an *Ariſtides*, a *Brutus*, or a *Cato!* — I am afraid that here I ſhould indeed have been greatly at a Loſs; but luckily the Arrival of ſome other Viſiters broke off the Diſpute; but as there is more than a Poſſibility it may be one Day renewed, it will be Policy in me to prepare myſelf for it in the beſt Manner I can.

It is you, Sir, on whom I depend for this Purpoſe; I have already gone through all the Arguments I am Miſtreſs of, and if you are not ſo good to furniſh me with others, my Antagoniſts will have the better of me, and you know it is the vulgar Maxim, that nothing can be a greater Mortification, to one of my Sex, than not to have the laſt Word. — But Raillery apart, I ſhall take it extremely kind in you to oblige me with your ſincere Sentiments in this Matter, and if you add ſome Remarks on the Change of Modes and Manners in our own Nation, the Favour will be ſtill greater. — The Dutcheſs joins in my Requeſt, as knowing no Man more capable of making a juſt Diſtinction between Things which ſeem moſt perplexed to others, nor that would be more ready to contribute towards *realizing* the Character ſome of my

my Friends flatter me with, of being a Woman of tolerable Underſtanding, though I deſpair of ever giving a greater Proof of it than in being, with an unfeigned Reſpect,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient,

And moſt humble Servant,

ASTREA.

EPISTLE XLV.

Anſwer to the foregoing.

From Leonidas *to* Aſtrea, *concerning the Difference between the Characters, Manners, and Behaviour of the* Ancients *and* Moderns, *and the moſt probable Cauſe aſſigned for it.*

Madam,

AS I was not preſent when you maintained the Diſpute you mention, it is impoſſible for me to know what Arguments you made uſe of in Defence of your Opinion; but am pretty certain it will be little in my Power, or indeed in that of any one elſe, to add to what your own great Reading, and yet much greater Capacity, could ſupply you with on any Subject you were pleaſed to take in Hand.—I ſhall, however, obey your Commands in the beſt Manner I am able.

It is a ſtrange Thing, methinks, that People are fond of going ſo far backward into Time to ſearch for Objects of Admiration; — that their *Ears* ſhould be ſo open to the Prodigies of a thouſand, or two thouſand Years ago, yet keep their *Eyes* cloſe ſhut againſt thoſe of later Date; the World has doubtleſs produced many *modern* great Princes and Generals who may be put on an Equality with the moſt celebrated of the *Ancients*; —the Actions of our *Engliſh*, *Edward*, the third, his Son named the *Black Prince*, and *Henry* the fifth, are not ſo obſolete as to be quite forgotten. — *Peter*, juſtly named the Great, late *Czar* of *Muſcovy*, and his Competitor in Glory, *Charles* the XII. of *Sweeden*, are yet more recent Inſtances that *Heroiſm* was not confined to Ages long ſince paſt.

If Examples of this kind are more rare than formerly, it is not becauſe the *Abilities* of the *Moderns* are leſs, but becauſe their *Principles* are more depraved, and in that Caſe indeed it may be ſaid that the Manners of the Ancients are to be preferred to thoſe of latter Times: A Diſtinction, therefore, ought to be made between the *moral Virtues*, and the *natural Talents* of Mankind, for in proportion to the *former* will the *latter* always be exerted. — It is not to be doubted but there are, and in all Ages have been, Men capable of performing as much as is in the Power of Man, if the Ambition and noble Ardour of doing well, were not extinguiſhed in them, either by their own Vices, or by

by those of such as may have the Power of depressing them. — Every one knows that before Luxury and Corruption got Footing in the World, true Bravery and Magnanimity more abounded; and we still perceive that those Nations which most adhere to an original Plainness and Simplicity, produce both the most hardy *Warriors*, and the most steady *Patriots*. — Much in this Point is also owing to the Example of those who govern; so true are the Words of a Reverend Divine and Poet,

'Tis Power's supreme Prerogative to stamp
On others Minds, an Image of their own.

And then again he says, concerning the Glory of a Commmonwealth, that nothing can be more certain, than that,

As govern'd well or ill, States rise and sink;
State Ministers, as upright, or corrupt;
Are Balm or Poison in a Nation's Veins;
Health, or Distemper, hasten or retard
The Period of her Pride, her Day of Doom;
'Tis fix'd by Fate, irrevocably fix'd!
Virtue and Vice, are Empires Life and Death.

It is not, therefore, Madam, as you justly have observed, that Nature's Treasures are exhausted, or that the Almighty has lost either the Will or Power to continue to Mankind those Blessings he at first bestowed upon them. — The Seeds of Glory, Integrity, and all that constitutes a

Hero, are ſown in every Soul, though too frequently kept from ſprouting into Action by the Cauſe I have aſſigned. But then it muſt be acknowledged, that where they do bring forth Fruit, and glorioufly riſe above all Impediments which would obſtruct their Growth, the Wonder is yet greater, and more to be admired; ſo that no Hero of Antiquity can be ſaid to merit half the Applauſe of a *modern* good Man, who has the Corruption of the Times, the Prevalence of Example, and a thouſand other Difficulties, moſt of which were unknown to former Ages, to ſtruggle with and overcome.

You ſee, Madam, I am obliged, though I aſſure you very much againſt my Inclination, to give it againſt you in this Point; and to allow that the *Ancients*, as to their *Manners*, that is in other Words, their *Virtue* and *Morality*, very much deſerve the Preference given them over the *Moderns*; but then I hope to make my Peace with you, by ſaying at the ſame Time, that they excelled in nothing elſe: — That the Ideas of the *Moderns*, even now, are as elevated, and their Abilities as great, in every reſpect, as any *Trojan*, *Greek*, or *Roman*, of them all.

And this, I think, may ſerve as an Anſwer to the Challenge of your ſecond Antagoniſt, and am afraid it is the only one can be given to any of them. — It cannot be denied but that the *Poets* he mentioned have been equalled by few, excelled by none that came after them, yet do

I not believe this owing ſo much to *Genius*, as to the Advantage they had of being the *firſt* who trod the Paths they took. —Great Men they were it is certain, but whether had they never been born, or none of their Works been tranſmitted to Poſterity, and thereby had rendered all beſide little more than Imitation, we ſhould not have ſeen others, no leſs worthy Admiration, is a moot Point, and can only be decided by the Supreme Giver of all our boaſted Qualifications: —This, however, I can averr to my own Knowledge, that I have ſeen Writings of thoſe who never read *Homer* and *Virgil*, ſo much reſembling them, both in Sentiments and Expreſſions, that one would almoſt have imagined the Paſſages tranſcribed, which may ſerve to build at leaſt a very probable Conjecture, that the World would not till now have wanted the *Iliad, Odyſſye* or *Æneid*. — The ſame Thing may alſo be ſaid in relation to *Cicero*, *Demoſthenes*; but as to Philoſophy I am apt to think the Gentleman forgot there was a *Newton*, who perhaps is as great an Honour to the *Moderns*, as any of thoſe whoſe Works are the Trophies of Antiquity.

I COME now to the third, who had the Courage to enter the Liſts againſt ſo fair and potent a Combatant, and muſt confeſs he ſeems to be much better armed than either of the former. In theſe later Ages *Patriots*, indeed, have not been the Growth of every Clime; thoſe who have pretended to the Name, have been rather diſ-

guiſed

guiſed *Enemies* than *Friends* to their Country; their feigned Efforts to ſerve the Commonwealth but ſo many Snares for Deſtruction, and under the ſpecious Shew of a diſintereſted honeſt Zeal for *Liberty*, have laid a Foundation for a perpetual *Slavery*.

Yet, wherefore is it thus? — Theſe very Monſters want not Abilities to bring about the glorious End they ſeemed to aim at, but the *Ill* they had it in their Power to do preſented a Proſpect of more Advantage to themſelves, than the *Good* they affected to endeavour.—*Public Spirit* is but another Name for *Honour*, and where that is wanting, as a late noble Author tells us, what elſe

Enobles the rude Paſſions of our Frame
With Thirſt of Glory, and Deſire of Fame;
Strength and Courage are wild dang'rous Force,
Unleſs this ſoften, and direct their Courſe:
This the rich Treaſure of a gen'rous Breaſt,
That gives a Stamp and Standard to the reſt.

What then, Madam, can be ſaid in Defence of the *Moderns* in point of Behaviour? — Impoſſible will it be for all your flowing Wit and Eloquence, ſupported by the moſt enchanting and perſwaſive Delivery that ever iſſued from a human Mouth, to argue againſt Facts which every where, in every Country, and in every Station, are demonſtrable to all who have Eyes, and the Power of Obſervation: — Too ſure and too

too plain it is, that a ſad Depravity of Morals and Manners has been creeping on the World for a long Succeſſion of Time, and is now ſo much avowed, encouraged, and become the Mode, that many, not yet infected with the Diſeaſe, are either afraid or aſhamed to own themſelves in Health. Content yourſelf, therefore, I beſeech you for the future with vindicating the *Talents* of the Moderns, thoſe may ſhine with no leſs Luſtre than their Anceſtors, but their *Deeds*, alas! are of a quite different Caſt.

I PERCEIVE thoſe Champions for Antiquity with whom you encountered, however ſevere they might be on the preſent Failures of our Times, had the Complaiſance to ſet none of the *Heroines* of paſt Ages in Oppoſition to the Ladies of *Modern* Date, ſo find no Occaſion to make any Remarks how far they may have improved or degenerated ſince the Days of the faithful *Andromache*, the chaſte *Lucretia*, the reſolute *Portia*, the prudent *Cornelia*, the learned *Hypatia*, and a great Number of others renowned in Story for Virtue in its different Branches.

I MUST alſo, Madam, beg to be excuſed for this Time, at leaſt, from entering into a Detail of the various and unaccountable Tranſitions which have happened in the Modes, Manners, and Cuſtoms of this all-apeing Iſland: — To particularize the Changes from *Good* to *Bad*, and from *Bad* to *Good* again in a continual Alternative ſince the Reign of *Boadicea*, or indeed even ſince

our

our ſecond *Boadicea Queen Elizabeth*, would take up more Time than I can juſt now ſpare, or perhaps than you would have Patience to employ in reading, more eſpecially if I were to treat on the ſtrange Metamorphoſes the Ladies have ſuſtained ſince the old *Britiſh* Ruſticity wore off, ſince from going to Court in a *Grogram* Robe, they feed their Lap-dogs on a rich *Brocade* and *Embroidery*; — ſince from drinking *ſimple Element*, they toaſt Healths in *Frontiniac*, *Tokay*, and ſometimes *Brandy*; — ſince Bluſhing has been out of Faſhion, and they are only aſhamed if catched to look down at a *double Entendre*; — ſince they have thrown away the *Needle*, and taken up the *Whip*, hunt, and ride Races with the Men. This would require a Volume, and I am afraid the Length of this Letter has already tired you, unleſs it had been more to your Satisfaction than is conſiſtent with that Sincerity you enjoined, and which I would always wiſh to preſerve. — I flatter myſelf, however, it will not put you ſo far out of your accuſtomed Sweetneſs of Humour, as to make you omit rendering my Compliments as acceptable as poſſible to her Grace, or to imagine I am, or ever can be, other than,

Madam,

Your moſt humble,

And moſt obedient Servant,

Leonidas.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XLVI.

From Aſtrea *to Mrs.* ****, *on the Death of her only Son, a young Gentleman of very promiſing Expectations.*

Dear Madam,

THOUGH I am ſenſible nothing can be offered for your Conſolation that you are not already Miſtreſs of, and that if you do not find ſufficient within yourſelf to make you ſupport this ſevere Stroke with Patience, nobody is capable of preſcribing to you; yet as it is not in my Power to know you grieve without grieving with you, ſo it is equally impoſſible for me to refrain teſtifying how deeply I am affected with your Loſs. — The Death of Maſter ****, is indeed a Misfortune to the Publick, as his early Virtues gave the faireſt Proſpect of being one of the greateſt and moſt uſeful Ornaments to the Publick, and this very Reflection doubtleſs aggravates your Affliction. — The charming Ideas you had formed of the amiable Figure he would one Day make, all on a ſudden daſhed! To ſee thoſe Eyes, ſo lately ſparkling with all the Fires of Wit and Spirit, now cloſed for ever, and all your earthly Hopes buried in the ſilent Tomb, is a Shock which nothing could alleviate but the Aſſurance, that though you are deprived of your Expectations in this World, you will hereafter

ſee

ſee them more fully accompliſhed in a ſuperior Orb, where no Diſeaſe, no Death can deprive him of his Glory. — This Aſſurance I am well convinced you do not want, yet at the ſame time know that in theſe Caſes Nature is at Enmity with Reaſon, and will get the better in Spite of all Arguments; for as Mr. *Dryden* tells us truly,

Reaſon was given to curb our Headſtrong Will,
And yet but ſhews a weak Phyſician's Skill;
Gives nothing while the raging Paſſions laſt,
But ſtays to cure us, till the worſt is paſt.

But, my dear Madam, there are two Conſiderations that to a Perſon of your Diſpoſition may have more Weight than any in which yourſelf is alone concerned: And theſe are, that while you afflict yourſelf, you afflict all thoſe whom you would wiſh to render happy; and that as your Caſe is not ſingular, a Mother who labours under the ſame Calamity with you, and perhaps many others from which you are totally exempt, will be little able to ſupport that Load of Sorrows, a Part of which ſhe ſees you ſink beneath.

I therefore dare believe that a Lady, who in every Action of her Life has hitherto ſeemed to think herſelf born more for the Happineſs of others than her own, will in this Exigence, trying as it is, give a Proof of a Fortitude no

leſs

leſs rare and examplary, than thoſe other beneficial Virtues, which have rendered her ſo juſtly dear to all that know her, and in particular to,

Dear Madam,

Your ſincere Friend,

And humble Servant,

ASTREA.

EPISTLE XLVII.

From Aſtrea *to a Gentleman, who being under ſome Misfortunes, and relieved by her, had miſtook her Good-Nature for the Effects of a ſecret Liking of his Perſon, and on that Suppoſition preſumed to ſend her a Love-Letter.*

Sir,

I AM extremely ſorry that what I thought a Virtue in me ſhould be conſtrued into a Vice, and that my Hoſpitality and Readineſs to do you any little Service on the Account of your Misfortunes, inſtead of exciting in you a grateful Eſteem, has drawn on me the greateſt Affront that, in my Opinion, was in your Power to offer. I am not, however, ſo much concerned for your own Sake, who I perceive have Vanity enough to buoy you up under any Diſappointment,

ment, as I am for that of many others, who, through the Calamities of the Times, may ſtand in need of Aſſiſtance from thoſe to whom Fortune has been leſs averſe; becauſe it will make me for the future fearful of conferring the leaſt Obligation on any Perſon of a different Sex, as I cannot be aſſured he will not return it in the Manner you have done. — I ſend you back your Letter, and with it this Advice, — to be more wary for the future how a too good an Opinion of yourſelf tempts you to miſtake *Pity* for *Love*, leſt you convert the *one* into *Contempt*, inſtead of inſpiring the leaſt Share of the other. — I am pretty confident your Obſervation of this Rule will be of ſingular Uſe to a Man of your Way of thinking, and is the laſt Act of Charity you muſt ever expect from

Astrea.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XLVIII.

From Philenia *to the Reverend Doctor* ****, *assuring him she was a true Penitent; acquainting him with the Means of her Conversion, and beseeching his Assistance to strengthen her pious Resolution.*

Reverend Sir,

I TOOK the Liberty of intreating a Visit from you; — I own it was with good Reason you refused, — you thought it would ill become a Person of your Character to be seen with one of mine: — Oh had the beginning of my Sin been thus discouraged, I had not persevered in it so many shameful Years; but alas! bold and public as it was, no one of all my boasted Friends were kind enough to represent it to me in its true Colours. — I was still flattered, — still caressed, —and however censured and contemned in private, found nothing but Love and Respect in Public.—Pernicious Complaisance, that makes no Distinction between Vice and Virtue, in Persons of my Rank; as if Title gave a Sanction to Iniquity, and the Mean-born were the only Sinners. — But my long blinded Eyes at last are open, I see the Odiousness of my Crime; and this unhappy Wretch, who scarce a Week ago merited only your severest Displeasure, has now

a Claim both to your Care and Pity. — This, Sir, I hope you will acknowledge, when I confess to you, to what a superlative Height of Wickedness I was arrived, when Heaven was pleased to bring about my Conversion by the most extraordinary Means.

It was but last *Thursday* I was at the *Masquerade* with *Adrastus*; he came home with me, and after two or three Hours given to repose, passed the Day, as we had done the Night, in Revels, defying equally the Censure of Mankind, and the Wrath of Heaven. — We were at Supper when one of his Domestics, who always knew where to find him, came and acquainted him that his Wife was then in the Agonies of Death, and begged to take her last Farewell. *Pish*, cryed he, *this has been the Trick twenty times within these two Months*, (for so long had she been judged past Recovery by her Physicians,) *but go home*, added he, carelessly, *I shall come presently*. When the Fellow was gone, I ridiculed the Promise he had given, pretended to resent it, told him I had depended on his Company the whole Night, put in Practice all the Arts of the most Infamous of my Sex, in order to detain him; for indeed I took an impious Pride in triumphing over the virtuous Tenderness of the Woman whose Rights I invaded. — He yielded to my Pressures, left me not till Morning, nor then till I had exacted a Promise from him of returning the same Evening.

Evening. — The Hour in which I expected him being elapsed, I grew impatient at the Delay, and some Time after sent a Footman to him, with Orders to tell him, I must needs see him; but the Fellow returned with News that his Lady lying then dead in the House, he could not be spoke with by any body. — This, though I looked upon as meer Matter of Form, I was unable to brook, and went myself the next Day, resolving to upbraid him for not breaking through such an insignificant Rule of Behaviour, when he could not be ignorant I should resent his observing it. — I had been so accustomed to run in a free Manner up into his Dressing-room, that I little expected any Rebuff in doing so now, and was equally surprized as enraged, when his Valet de Chambre met me at the Top of the Stair-case, and desired I would not insist on going any farther, for his Lord had commanded him to let no body, particularly myself, be admitted to him. — In the Wildness of my Passion at that Time, it is much to be wondered at, that I did not force my Passage in spite of all he could have done to prevent it, but I contented myself with railing so loud that I knew he must hear me, till I was quite out of Breath, and at last returned Home with an Intention to write all that the Fury of a disappointed Woman could inspire. — But I had not Time to vent half the Anguish of my Soul in this only Way I had to do it, when a Servant from *Adrastus* brought a Billet in which I found these Words.

Madam,

" I am ſorry to hear that an ungovernable Paſ-
" ſion has tranſported you to a Behaviour which
" ſo much expoſes both of us; though, alas!
" that was but too much done before:—I beg
" however, that for the future you will forbear
" either coming or ſending to my Houſe. I owe
" too much to the Memory of the Perſon now
" lying dead before me, perhaps, through the
" deep Senſe ſhe had of my Ingratitude, ever
" to ſee a Perſon more for whoſe Sake I have
" rendered myſelf the worſt of Men.—I am
" now convinced there is an Eternity which
" will be dreadful to both you and me, if we
" do not endeavour by our future Conduct to
" atone for the Errors of the paſt:—Think
" no more therefore of me, but with that Hor-

tremble to repeat, and would be too ſhocking for you to be told could come out of the Mouth of a Woman of my Birth and Education. — I raved till I was half dead; — I fell into Fits, in which Condition the Fellow left me to the Care of my Woman; — I continued by Intervals, the whole Remainder of the Day, in a Condition little different from Death; ſo ſtrongly do the pernicious Paſſions work on a Mind not fortified by religious Maxims. — Phyſicians were ſent for, but I would take nothing of their Preſcriptions, well knowing my Diſtemper was beyond their Art. — I was put to Bed, and two Perſons ſat on each Side, watching every Breath I drew. — Sleep for a long Time was a Stranger to my Eyes; but at length I fell into a kind of Slumber, more dreadful by far than all my

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" atone for the Errors of the paſt:—Think
" not more therefore of me, but with that Hor-
" ror I ſhall do of you.—Farewell for ever
" in this World, may Heaven forgive and re-
" ceive us in the next.

Adrastus."

As I have begun my Confeſſion, Reverend and Worthy Sir, I ſhall go through with it, even to the laying open what paſſed in the moſt vile and hidden Receſſes of my Soul.—I was ſo far from being touched with this Remonſtrance, that after having torn it in Pieces, I burſt into Execrations againſt him, the World, and, in my impious Rage, ſpared not even Heaven itſelf;—I ſcarce remember the Words I made uſe of, but know they were ſuch as I ſhould

tremble

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could give the leaſt Claim to Mercy. — I looked on myſelf as the moſt forlorn and wretched Creature in the World, yet had not a ſufficient Hatred of the Crime which had made me ſo, and I even then had Senſe enough to know,

That while our former Flames remain within,
Repentance is but want of Power to ſin.

But, thank Heaven, my Heart was ſoon after touched with a more ſenſible Remorſe. — I received a ſecond Billet from *Adraſtus*, wherein he acquainted me that his Wife expired in about an Hour after he came home; that ſhe retained her Senſes to the laſt Moment, and amidſt the Agonies of her Diſſolution, expreſſed herſelf to him in ſuch tender Terms, that he could not avoid being greatly affected with them; but that which compleated his Converſion was a Letter ſhe had wrote to him, and ordered ſhould be delivered to him, as ſoon as ſhe was dead: — This Letter, he ſaid, had brought him to a juſt Senſe of his paſt Folly, and he therefore encloſed it to me, hoping it would have the ſame Effect on me, aſſuring me at the ſame Time, that to avoid all future Temptations on my ſcore, he was reſolved to leave *England* in a few Days.

Think not, dear Sir, that my Contrition is leſs ſincere becauſe *Adraſtus* had the Advantage of leading me the Way; — No, he was firſt aſhamed of his Error, only becauſe he was firſt con-

convinced of the Enormity of it; and were he to relapse and turn Apostate to those sacred Principles, of which all his Behaviour assures me, he is now become a faithful Disciple, and should again tempt me with all those undoing Arguments that won me to Shame, and even to glory in that Shame, I should now detest, should hate him more than I ever loved. — O be assured that my Penitence is real and unfeigned, — let your sacred Admonitions confirm it in my Soul, I am sometimes tempted to think my Crime beyond Forgiveness, — at others to seek Excuses for it, and lay the Blame on Nature, the Merits of my Undoer, and the Example of others: Shield me I beseech you from the two Extremes of *Despair* and *Presumption*: —Teach me, alass! too much a Stranger to each sacred Rite, in what Manner I shall direct my Prayers, so as to hope they may be received at the Throne of Mercy: — Instruct me by what Mortification of the Senses I may attone for the Error of having indulged them to such a guilty Excess. — Be assured I will obey your Precepts, and treasure them in my Heart as the Words of a descending Angel: — Methinks even now I find some Consolation in the Confession I have made you, — a Gleam of Joy darts through my benighted Soul, the Prospect before me is enlightened, — the gloomy Horrors vanish, and Peace, a heavenly Peace, succeeds the late distracting Images that floated in my tormented Brain: — Something seems to tell me, I cannot have sinned past the Power of Infinity to forgive; — that,

True Repentance never comes too late;
As soon as born, she makes herself a Shroud,
The weeping Mantle of a fleecy Cloud;
And swift as Thought, her airy Journey takes,
Her Hand, Heav'n's azure Gate, with trembling strikes;
She tels her Story in so sad a Tone,
That Angels start from Bliss, and give a Groan.
Repentance binds even th' Almighty's Arms
And with her Sighs and Prayers those powerful Charms,
Of all his Thunders his Right Hand disarms;
Her Power can sentenc'd Criminals reprieve,
Judgment arrest, and bid the Rebel live.

As I am too well convinced of your Zeal and Piety to doubt that any Thing will hinder me from seeing you, but the Fears of my being incorrigible, I flatter myself what I have now said will make you entertain a more favourable Opinion;—it is you, and only such as you, shall henceforth be my Companions, while I attend the awful Summons to everlasting Happiness or Misery, believe me, therefore

Reverend and worthy Sir,

The truly penitent

PHILENIA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE XLIX.

From Euphrosine *to a Lady, who was inconsolable through the Fears that her Husband's having lost his Election for a Seat in Parliament, would hinder their coming to Town so soon as she desired.*

Dear Madam,

I AM sorry to find by yours, that Sir *Thomas* has lost his Election, because I verily believe the Want of him in Parliament is a Misfortune to the Nation; but I cannot say that I think it ought to be a Subject of Mortification to you on any other Score, and am surprized you should treat it as such. — For Heaven's Sake! What other Advantage than the Pleasure of serving his Country, can a worthy honest Man propose to himself, for all the Fatigue he goes through in his Attendance. — I am pretty confident he is entirely easy under the Disappointment, and the Reason you give for not being so yourself, seems altogether inconsistent with your former Humour. You tell me, *you are under most terrible Apprehensions that you shall not come to Town so soon as you expected, — that you are quite sick of the Country, and all that is in it; and shall certainly die of the Vapours, if confined there after* Michaelmas *is past.* — How different is this Language

guage from that you made uſe of, when you firſt went to take Poſſeſſion of that fine Seat; you then called it the Garden of *Eden*, a Bower of Bliſs, a fit Receptacle for Angels; the Houſe, the Gardens, the Park, exceeded all that your moſt luxuriant Fancy could have invented; ſaid, the Society of the Gentry was no leſs agreeable to you, than the Place itſelf; — that you found every Thing there that could compleat Felicity, never wiſhed to quit, and dreaded nothing ſo much as being obliged to exchange it for this noiſy Town, though but for a few Months; you paſſed good Part of the laſt Winter there, and expreſſed no leſs a Reliſh for the Pleaſures the Country afforded in that Seaſon, than thoſe of the Summer: — Now, all at once, every Thing is inſipid, irkſome, yet aſcribe no Cauſe for this ſudden Diſguſt. — The Air you acknowledge agrees with you, — every one continues to treat you with the ſame Civilities with which at firſt you ſeemed ſo well pleaſed; — the Change therefore muſt be in yourſelf, — but take Care, my dear Friend, how you give Way to ſuch Viciſitudes of Temper: — To like, and diſlike, without being able to account wherefore we do ſo, is a Diſpoſition dangerous to be indulged, and you muſt pardon me when I ſay, a Mind that can ſo ſoon be cloyed and weary of any one Thing it has been vehemently fond of, may in Time become ſick of *every* Thing, and that there can be no firm Dependance, either on the Love or Friendſhip of a Perſon of this Caſt. — I place ſo great

great a Part of my Happineſs in that you have favoured me with, that you muſt not wonder if I labour all I can to keep you from entertaining a Propenſity, which may ſome Time or other probably break thoſe Bonds of Amity by which we have been ſo long united.

That you may not however imagine what I urge on this Score, is entirely dictated by Self-Intereſt, I would fain perſwade you to examine a little into your Heart, ſince you have been of the Temper you now are — I am very certain if you do you will find it no leſs to your own Advantage, than that of your Acquaintance, that you ſhould return to your former Way of thinking. — How unhappy is the Situation of a Perſon whoſe Thoughts are continually roving, who wanders from one Inclination to another, yet finds nothing ſatisfactory. — It is our Duty to endeavour to be content at leaſt with thoſe Things with which we cannot be delighted, but to ſtudy as it were for Objects of Uneaſineſs, to be capable of being pleaſed with nothing, ſeems to me a Misfortune of ſuch a Nature, as I ſhould be ſorry were the Portion of my worſt Enemy. Guard againſt it, I conjure you ; — the Diſtemper is but now beginning to creep on you ; — exert all your Reaſon and good Senſe to prevent it from taking too faſt a Hold; — be aſſured the ſame Caprice which deſtroys your Reliſh for the Pleaſures you were ſo lately charmed with, will, in a very ſhort Space of Time, equally deſtroy it

it for all others alſo, and then I ſee no Difference between ſuch a Condition, and that of the moſt abject Creature upon Earth: —This perhaps may make you ſtart; but pray, Is not to be incapable by our unhappy Circumſtances of *attaining* what are called the Bleſſings of Life, and to be incapable by our own Sullenneſs of Temper of *enjoying* them, when in our Power, much the ſame Thing, except that thoſe unhappy Perſons of the *former* Claſs deſerve our *Pity*, the *latter* our *Reproach!* — Is not the Miſer, who ſtarves amidſt his Heaps of Gold, as much a Wretch as he who ſtarves for want of it?

But I am willing to hope the Apprehenſions I am under on this Score are without Foundation; that it was a momentary Effect of the Spleen, which alone occaſioned your writing to me in the Manner you did, and that by this Time you are enough yourſelf to laugh at all the Trouble I have taken in this Admonition. — If the cold Fit, however, ſhould return, you cannot be too much prepared to reſiſt it, and therefore by way of Antidote, encloſe you a Letter I received the other Day from *Dione*, who, you will find, is far gone in the Diſeaſe, and I ſhould ſet her down among the Number of *Incurables*, if the Senſibility ſhe has of her Condition did not give me ſome Hopes; — ſince ſhe does me the Honour to take me for a *Quack*, I talk in the Language of one; but ſhall in my own proper Sphere ſincerely rejoice if my Preſcriptions

tions have any Effect on you, and that your next betrays not the least Symptom of a Relapse, which I assure you I impatiently expect, and am,

Madam,

Your real Friend and

Humble Servant,

EUPHROSINE.

EPISTLE L.

Enclosed in the Foregoing.

From Dione *to* Euphrosine, *complaining of her want of Relish for any of the Pleasures of this Life, and desiring she would give her a Recipe to rectify the over great Delicacy which occasioned it.*

Dear Creature,

I INTENDED to have waited on you last Night, but was prevented by a Heap of People that came in, and would needs lug me with them, to take the Air upon the River.—A Barge of Musick followed; they said the Hands were good, and the Tunes they played well chosen; every Body at least seemed pleased with it, and equally delighted to see the Beams of the declining

declining Sun play on the Water; — but, good Lord, what Novelty was in all this! — how eafily are ſome People charmed! — we landed, and juſt ſtepped into *Ranelagh* as we paſſed by, — all the World was there, both the *Great Vulgar*, and the *Small*, as the inimitable *Congreve* ſays, but no new Faces that I ſaw; — the *Rotundo* was as hot as an Oven, ſo we did not ſtay a Moment there. As we looked into the Gardens ſome of the Company were admiring how the Trees were grown ſince laſt Seaſon, as if that were a Thing to be wondered at: — We returned to our Barge and ſat cooped up till paſt Ten, then went to a Houſe on the *Surry* Side, where an Entertainment was provided for us; our Muſick landed at the ſame Time we did, played all the Time we were at Supper: — The Moon ſhone very bright as we came back, and the Firmament was clear; this afforded ſo much Matter of Pleaſure to ſome among us, that I was two or three Times tempted to aſk them if this was the firſt fine Night they had ever ſeen in their Lives. My Complaiſance, however, kept me ſilent on that Head, but I could not forbear ſmiling within myſelf at their Stupidity.

But notwithſtanding the Contempt I have for People of this Turn of Mind, I envy the Happineſs they enjoy: — I remember, that when I was very young, and allowed the Diverſions of the Town but ſeldom, I was tranſported with every Thing I ſaw; now, I can find no one Thing capable of giving me the leaſt Pleaſure; the

the fineſt Airs in an Opera only make my Head ake; — Comedy is inſipid, and Tragedy gives me the Spleen; — the Formalities of the Drawing-Room fatigue me; — Dancing is too robuſt; — Cards I am weary of after three Deals; in the *Mall* I am either poiſoned with ill Breaths, or ſuffocated with Perfumes; — a Maſquerade is deteſtable: — In fine, all thoſe Things which I ſee others run mad after, are to me not only taſteleſs, but diſagreeable, and I begin to think the World a ſad Place, and that *Lucretius* had a juſt Notion of it, when he ſays,

Where we but tread one dull perpetual Round,
Never ſtrike out but beat the former Ground,
And the ſame nauſeous Joys in the ſame Track are found.

AND yet one muſt live here, Heaven knows how long, perhaps till we grow ſo old and ugly that our own Lap-Dogs will be frighted at us. If one could therefore bring ones ſelf to like a little what falls in one's Way, it would be better; — but I have the Misfortune, I may juſtly call it ſo, ſince I came to any Judgment of Things, to ſee too plainly into the Worthleſsneſs of them, and cannot help being chagrined at what the Folly of Mankind preſents as Objects of Delight; — nay, deſpiſe and nauſeate them, the more becauſe I ſee others pleaſed with them. In fine, my Dear, it is an over Delicacy of Taſte, which will not ſuffer me to take any Satisfaction in

in thoſe Diverſions, Amuſements, or whatever they are called, which ſo much engroſs the Attention of moſt of my Acquaintance. — I wiſh it were otherwiſe, and unleſs there were ſomething more to entertain me, than any Thing I can find; that I had Ideas of Pleaſure leſs nice and refined; for as it is, I am perfectly ſick of my Being, and ready to accuſe Providence of Injuſtice for placing me in an Orb to which I have a Nature ſo little adapted.

You have the Character of a Woman of Wit, my Dear, and no body can be more ready to ſubſcribe to that Opinion than myſelf; yet I have ſeen you highly diverted where I could be only teized, ſmile at what I could not forbear frowning. — For Heaven's Sake, how do you preſerve that eternal Gaiety amidſt ſo many Scenes of Perplexity! — They ſay, there are Cures for all Diſeaſes of the Body, why not of the Mind alſo? If there be ſuch a Recipe, you muſt infallibly be Miſtreſs of it, and it would be Charity in you to communicate it to one, who would fain regulate a Nicety, ſo deſtructive of all the Pleaſures of Life. — You have been as many Years as I have in the World, have ſeen as much of its Variety, yet can contentedly run them all over and over again, and ſeem untired, unſatiated with them: — The Opera, the Play, the Park, the Country, the Town, afford you, in their Turns, a perpetual Round of ſatisfactory Amuſements; could I have a Reliſh for any one of them, I ſhould not be ſo unhappy

as

as I am: — I assure you, I am passionately desirous of reforming this Disposition; I never am told of any new Pleasure, without running to partake of it, and still flatter myself that I shall find something there, capable of entertaining me,

For still I think an absent Blessing best,
Which cloys, and is no Blessing when possest.

As I would therefore be glad to exchange all my Delicacy, for a Part of your Chearfulness and Good-Humour, I beg you will put me in a Way of taking Things as I find them, and not to be continually craving after Things that are not to be found in Nature: — Teach me how I may render Solitude agreeable, and how to forbear being sick of all the Company I come into; in a Word, how I may be a little more like other People, for at present I can join in no one Thing but being,

My Dear *Euphrosine*,

Yours,

DIONE.

EPISTLE LI.

From Aſtrea *to her Uncle, who had blamed her for an Exceſs of Liberality.*

Sir,

I SHOULD be extremely ſorry and aſhamed to have given the leaſt Cauſe for an Accuſation of Profuſeneſs, on any other Score than that you are pleaſed to mention; or even on this, if the Liberalities you condemn with ſo much Severity, were of any Prejudice to thoſe whom I know it is my Duty to have the firſt in my Thoughts: But, Sir, I beg you will inform me if any ſuch ſtand in need of my Aſſiſtance, for I proteſt I know of none that do; and if once made ſenſible there are ſuch Perſons, they may be certain of receiving all the Relief that my Reaſon tells me their Circumſtances require, or my Ability can beſtow; but till I am convinced there are Wants among my own Family, permit me I beſeech you to ſearch them out in thoſe of others. — The munificent Diſpenſer of all Bleſſings has given a more than Sufficiency for the Support of his Creatures, and if I happen to be poſſeſt of a greater Share of the Goods of Fortune than many others are, am I, like a Cormorant, to devour my All alone, while thoſe, who by Nature have an equal Title, pine for my Superfluity! — Are we not all born with the ſame Appetites,

Appetites, the ſame Cravings? Are not the pooreſt Wretches, who beg my Charity, endued with the ſame Faculties of Taſting and Smelling as myſelf?— Are they not equally ſuſceptible of Cold and Hunger? And has not the Priſoner as juſt a Senſe of the Sweets of Liberty, as I can have? In fine, are they not, however diſtreſſed and abject, born Citizens of the World, and conſequently have a Right to find Subſiſtence from it?

But you ſay, Sir, that I am ſo fond of ſquandering my Income, as you term it, that I take Pains to hunt after People to receive it without waiting till my Bounty is petitioned for:— This is certainly true, for why ſhould I give a Shock where I mean to confer an Obligation?—Thoſe who do good Actions after much Solicitation, and merely becauſe they are teized into them, deſtroy all the Merit of the Deed, both in the Eye of Heaven, and thoſe to whom the long-clenched Hand at laſt is open:— Beſides I have often obſerved, that thoſe who moſt deſerve our Compaſſion are the leaſt capable of aſking it; and what a Pleaſure is it to unveil the concealed Scenes of Miſery, and contribute as much as it is in our Power to make the unhappy Sufferer leſs ſenſible of the Injuſtice of Fortune! What Joy can an Affluence of Wealth beſtow, which can come in any Degree of Compariſon with that, which flows from drawing modeſt Merit out of that Obſcurity, which Poverty is

ſure to cloud it with? — What Satisfaction ſo refined and permanent as to ſurprize a worthy Perſon into Happineſs, and give a new Life of Gladneſs to expiring Hope?

I do aſſure you, Sir, I take all the Care I can to confer the ſmall Favours in my Power, on ſuch who not only appear to me in the greateſt Neceſſity, but alſo on ſuch, who, on Account of their good Qualities, are moſt deſerving of my Regard: — Thoſe whom Heaven has diſtinguiſhed by any extraordinary Talents, have an undoubted Title to the Love and Reſpect of their Fellow-Mortals; and how is it poſſible either to love or reſpect ſincerely, without giving ſuch Marks of it as their Circumſtances moſt require.

The Apprehenſions Mr. **** tells me you are under, of my being reduced, by my Liberalities to others, to ſtand in need of Support myſelf one Day, is very obliging, as I hope this Concern rather proceeds from a parental Tenderneſs than any other Motive, and I am therefore obliged in Gratitude to eaſe you of it, by aſſuring you, that I have too much Juſtice in my Nature to rob the Perſon who comes after me of any Part of his Birth right.—My Steward can inform you, I have neither ſold nor mortgaged a ſingle Acre of my Lands, and content myſelf with diſpoſing the annual Rents of them in ſuch a Manner as is moſt pleaſing to myſelf. — I live no Way beneath my Rank; my Houſe, my

Equipage

Equipage, my Table, my Apparel are all ſuch as might be expected from a Woman of the Fortune I am known to enjoy, but then I am an OEconomiſt in theſe Articles:— I take Care to have enough, and not too much of any Thing; and buying with ready Money, am ſure of neither being impoſed upon, nor ill ſerved by my Tradeſmen: But, Sir, the Method I take for enabling me to do thoſe Acts of Charity you have been told of, is to avoid all expenſive Pleaſures or Gallantries: By never going to Court, I ſave at leaſt three Birth-day Suits in a Year; and the Sums I muſt ſubmit to the Chance of loſing or being cheated of, if I were a Lover of Gaming, ſupply the Neceſſities of many a Perſon in Diſtreſs.

I NEVER can be brought to think we are born for our ſelves: Not only Religion, but Morality, and the Laws of Society enjoin a mutual Good-Will to each other, and a Sympathizing with the ſeveral Wants, to which Humanity is liable: Some ſtand in need of our Purſe, ſome of our Advice, ſome to be inſtructed in thoſe Things which a narrow Education has denied them, and none certainly can pretend to ſay, that all theſe Acts of Benevolence are not the Duty of every one to whom God has given the Power, as a very excellent living Poet tells us,

All Avarice but that of Time *is Sin.*

Yet ſome People contrive to laviſh both Time and Money too, in Ways which without being of Service to others, bring on themſelves Reproach, and Deſtruction of Health, Reputation, Peace of Mind, and whatever ought to be dear and valuable in this World, if not their Hopes of Eternity in the next.

I flatter myſelf, Sir, the Account I have given you, will convince you I am no Prodigal, nor have any Way forfeited the Claim my Birthright gives me to your Affection, being deſirous of nothing more than to prove myſelf, with the moſt dutiful Reſpect and Veneration,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient Neice,

And humble Servant,

Astrea.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LII.

From Hillaria *to* Clio, *accusing herself of the Want of Power to think so seriously as she imagined she ought to do on Death.*

My Dear Clio,

AMONG all the self-evident Contradictions in Human Nature, there is nothing so amazing as the Manner in which we treat Death: — We are in continual Apprehensions for our sick Friends, yet never reflect how very possible it is we may be snatched away before them. — We lament over them when dead, but remember not that we may not survive their Funerals. In fine, we behave as if we thought every one mortal but ourselves: — Nor are we lulled in this Security only while Youth continues, the Stupefaction remains on us even to extreme old Age, and People of ninety-nine receive the Fiat of their Dissolution with no less Surprize than Terror. — Yet that we must all die one Time or other is a Truth obvious to the most ignorant, as well as most knowing; neither one nor the other, however, seem to think of it as might be expected; and it is this Unacquaintance with our Fate, which renders it so dreadful on a near Approach. — I would fain methinks familiarize myself with this King of Terrors, in order to receive him with less Shock: — I endeavour

ſuch who not only appear to me in the greateſt Neceſſity, but alſo on ſuch, who, on Account of their good Qualities, are moſt deſerving of my Regard: — Thoſe whom Heaven has diſtinguiſhed by any extraordinary Talents, have an undoubted Title to the Love and Reſpect of their Fellow-Mortals; and how is it poſſible either to love or reſpect ſincerely, without giving ſuch Marks of it as their Circumſtances moſt require.

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Equipage

[illegible] being imposed upon, nor ill served by my Tradesmen: But, Sir, the Method I take for enabling me to do those Acts of Charity you have been told of, is to avoid all expensive Pleasures or Gallantries: By never going to Court, I save at least three Birth-day Suits in a Year; and the Sums I must submit to the Chance of losing or being cheated of, if I were a Lover of Gaming, supply the Necessities of many a Person in Distress.

I NEVER can be brought to think we are born for our selves: Not only Religion, but Morality, and the Laws of Society enjoin a mutual Good-Will to each other, and a Sympathizing with the several Wants, to which Humanity is liable: Some stand in need of our Purse, some of our Advice, some to be instructed in those Things which a narrow Education has denied them, and none certainly can pretend to say, that all these Acts of Benevolence are not the Duty of every one to whom God has given the Power, as a very excellent living Poet tells us,

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every Night to reflect that the Sleep I am going to take may be my last, and when I awake in the Morning, that Numbers as young and healthy as myself will never see the setting Sun: That I cannot be assured I may not be one of them; yet in Spite of all I can do, these serious Thoughts vanish like a Vapour, are immediately lost amidst a Crowd of others, and as *Shakespear* says,

Dissolv'd, and gone beyond the Clouds.

Some Alterations in my House, my Furniture, my Cloaths, my Jewels, come into my Head, and though I know not but I may be past the use of them *To-Day*, am contriving what I will have done *To-Morrow*.

Lord! of what Use is all our boasted Reason, when it will not enable one to command one's own Thoughts! — I haunt the Tombs in *Westminster* Abbey, as assiduously as if I were already a Ghost, and condemned to the Mortification of viewing the wretched Remains of my former Self: — There I examine what the Marble tells me of the once Gay, and Great, and answer with the Poet, the Inscriptions I see on it,

Here lies th'Illustrious, — false Marble, where?
Nothing but Rottenness and Dust is there.

Yet I no sooner quit this awful Scene, than some Visit yet unreturned comes across my Thoughts:

Thoughts :—I direct my Chair thither in a great Hurry, and perhaps agree to make one in a Party of Pleasure, which engrosses the best Part of the Night.

A FEW Days ago, whether through the Heat of the Weather, or drinking my Hyson more strong than ordinary, or I know not to what Cause to impute it, but I was seized with a sudden Swimming in my Head, a violent Palpitation of my Heart, and a strange Confusion through every Part :—I thought myself dying, and the Horrors I felt in that Apprehension are not to be conceived, much less described; yet the Fit went off, and with it all my Terrors. I was engaged that same Evening to the Masquerade, and all that was past was less remembered than a Dream :— Is not this unaccountable, my Dear *Clio*, that what is so necessary to be thought upon, in spite of all our Efforts, flies from us, and is not to be brought back upon our Minds without the Interposition of some Accident unsought by us? —I should not have been just now in the Humour I am, but wanting something to amuse me, I took up *Otway*'s *Horace*, and happened to open the Book, where the first Thing that struck my Eyes was,

Though we each Day with Cost repair,
Death mocks our greatest Skill, and utmost Care;
Nor loves the Fair, nor fears the Strong,
And they that live the longest, die but young.

YOU

You cannot imagine how much this ſudden and unexpected Memento has ſtruck me: — I ſhudder, — I tremble as if the inevitable Stroke were already given, and I were this Inſtant quitting all the dear Delights of Life, and launching into a World unknown: — The Impreſſion is indeed very ſtrong, but yet I will not pretend to ſay how long it will laſt with me, becauſe on a thouſand Occaſions I have felt the ſame, and been as often diverted from it on the moſt trivial Object intervening.

Would to Heaven it were in my Power either not to think of Death at all, or that I could accuſtom myſelf to think ſo much of it, as to regard it with the ſame Indifference I do other Things common to Nature: — I know it is no leſs ſo than any of them; but the World and the Attachments I have to it, will not ſuffer me to reap the leaſt Benefit from this Knowledge; I eaſily perceive I ſhall never be able to conquer the Horrors I feel at the Thoughts of being no more, and that I ſhall make a very fooliſh Figure in my laſt Moments, — what *muſt be*, however *will be*, — till then, believe me,

My Dear *Clio*,

Sincerely yours,

Hillaria.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LIII.

The Answer.

From Clio *to* Hillaria, *condemning the Manner in which she reflected on Death, and attempting to direct her to a Method more likely to make the Thoughts of it less alarming.*

My Dear Hillaria,

I DOUBT not, but as you yourself imagined, you are by this Time in a Humour quite different from that in which you wrote to me; however, as you are so desirous of indulging the Thoughts of Mortality, this will be far from driving them out of your Head: — I would have you think on Death, but not in the Manner you seem to do; for that is not the Way ever to render his Approach less formidable, and you would much sooner lose your Senses in the Apprehension, than he any Part of his Terrors. — To be continually meditating on Death, *meerly* as *Death*, would be not to *enjoy Life*, and not only deprive us of all the Blessings annexed to it, but also render us incapable of answering the Ends for which it was given: — Love and Friendship would be extinct; we should become unsociable gloomy Creatures, and go mopeing about the World, as effectually lost to it, as if already shut up in a Vault: — I would, therefore, have

have you, my dear *Hillaria*, to look beyond the Grave; not bend your Mind on the *Journey*, but the *Stage* to which it will conduct you; the Thoughts of a glorious Immortality will render the Way thither, rather pleasing than the contrary, even though the Passage should happen to be a little rugged.

Nature, it is certain, has implanted in us a Horror at the Thoughts of Dissolution, otherwise there are some Sort of Calamities to be found in the World, which might tempt those who labour under them, to take improper Methods for flying from it before their Time, and impiously anticipate the Will of Heaven. That this natural Timidity is difficult to be surmounted, I also own; but as we are told from an unerring Mouth, that *by Faith we might remove Mountains*, so a strong Faith in the Blessings decreed for us hereafter, will certainly remove all those mountainous Apprehensions, which so much distract the Brain, and turn us into Cowards. — A Consciousness of having lived in the Practice of moral Virtue, and a steady Adherence to the Precepts of Religion, as far as is consistent with the Frailties of Human Nature, ought to assure us we have nothing to fear, and every Thing to hope in the Regions of Futurity.

The Time allotted for our Abode on Earth is so extremely short, even to those who live the longest, that we should be very much our own Enemies, not to make the most of it we can, and

and not ſullenly deny ourſelves the good Things it preſents, becauſe we know we muſt one Day part with them: — That would be like forbearing to gather a fine Flower becauſe its fragrant Freſhneſs will decay upon our Boſoms. It certainly was intended we ſhould indulge our Senſes, as far as Virtue and Prudence permits, with the Trifles this World affords: — Trifles they are indeed, but ſuch as are adapted to our Paſſions and Inclinations, and ſuch as, till we become more refined and ſpiritual, we ſhould be miſerable in the Want of.

Give over, therefore, my dear *Hillaria*, frequenting Tombs, and the Reliques of the Deceaſed; — repine not that you muſt one Day be as they are; but follow *Martial*'s Counſel;

Be ſatisfy'd, and pleas'd with what thou art:
Act chearfully and well th'allotted Part;
Enjoy the preſent Hour, be thankful for the paſt,
And neither fear, nor wiſh th'Approaches of the laſt.

I have no Notion that the *Stoicks* are more virtuous than other People, or that the *Fryars* of the Order of *la Trappe*, who ſpend three Parts of their Time in digging their own Graves, are better prepared to go into them, than thoſe who never once think in what Place, or in what Manner, they ſhall be buried.

I hope you will not accuſe me of treating ſo ſerious a Subject with an unbecoming Levity: Whenever I reflect on the tremendous Moment, I am ſtruck with the moſt reverential Awe for that Supreme Being of Beings, who alone can enable me to ſuſtain it without Terror, and who has put it in my own Power, to make it the Criſis of everlaſting Joy or Sorrow.

We are born Heirs of Eternity, and ſhould conſider that the Day of our Death will be the Day of our coming at Age to take Poſſeſſion of that Patrimony bequeathed to us, by Him who redeemed it for us with his precious Blood. A Patrimony ſtored with an immenſe Profuſion of unconceivable Delights! — Pleaſures without the leaſt Alloy! — Treaſures which never can diminiſh!

Where when a thouſand, thouſand Years are gone,
Our Biſs is ſtill the ſame, and ſtill to be begun.
Congreve.

These Contemplations will diveſt Death of the Horrors he appears in to a Mind unarm'd with *Innocence*, and undirected by *Reaſon:* As I am confident the *former* has been the conſtant Companion of your Life, it only requires you ſhould exert the *latter* to make you leſs diſturb'd at the Thoughts of your own Mortality, than of thoſe whoſe Society you would lament the Loſs

Loſs of on Earth. I am with the utmoſt Sincerity,

Dear *Hillaria*,

Yours affectionately,

CLIO.

EPISTLE LIV.

From a Lady in the Country, to her Friend in Town; giving her an Account of a very odd Accident, that had happened in her Family, and the Concern ſhe was in upon it.

Dear Clarinda.

I HAD anſwered your obliging Letter ſome Poſts ſooner, but for an odd Adventure which for a Time engroſs'd my whole Attention, and indeed ſtill employs great Part of it: — You may remember that in one of my former, I gave you an Account that my Woman, who had lived ſo long with me, had at laſt exchanged a Miſtreſs for a Maſter, and was married to a neighbouring Farmer, and that in her Place I had taken a young Girl of the Steward's recommending, with whom I had no Fault to find, but being ſo perfectly well-bred, genteel, and accompliſhed in every Thing, that I knew not how to treat her as a Servant, or to receive from her the Offices of one: As I wrote however at that Time but ſlightly

ſlightly concerning her, I muſt now inform you, that I every Day perceiv'd ſome new and amiable Qualification in her; and though ſhe behaved toward me with a Humility even below her Station, I could never look upon her without ſeeing ſomething in her, which made me imagine ſhe had been more accuſtomed to command than obey. — I aſked her ſeveral Queſtions concerning her Parents, and with whom ſhe had been educated; all which I could perceive ſhe would gladly have been excuſed from anſwering, yet told me in the whole, that ſhe had been left an Orphan very young, and had received what little ſhe was Miſtreſs of, from a Friend of her Father's, who was alſo dead: — As I was a little ſurprized to find in one of the Rank ſhe pretended Accompliſhments ſuch as are ſeldom beſtowed but on Perſons in high Life, I examined the Steward how he became acquainted with her; on which, he freely confeſſed ſhe came quite a Stranger to his Houſe, had deſired Leave to board there, which his Wife, being charmed with her Behaviour at firſt Sight, had prevailed on him to grant:—He added, that after having been with them about two Months, ſhe told them ſhe was a friendleſs young Creature, and could not afford to maintain herſelf in the Manner ſhe at preſent lived, for any Length of Time, and begged they would as ſoon as Opportunity offered recommend her to a Service; *therefore*, ſaid he, *as your Ladyſhip was deſtitute of a Perſon to attend you, and my Wife aſſuring me ſhe was extremely well qualified for that Purpoſe, I ventured to prefer her,*

and

and hope she has done nothing to forfeit the good Opinion her Behaviour, while with us, gave me of her. — I assured him so far from it, that it was only the Imagination that she was born to something, beyond what she was willing to reveal, that had excited this Curiosity in me.

Indeed, my dear *Clarinda*, I must own to you, that I felt an uncommon Concern for this young Creature; from her first coming to me, I had been perfectly certain in my own Mind, that some extraordinary Accident had reduced her to the Condition of a Servant; but these Conjectures were entirely confirmed, when on the Talk of my coming to *London*; as you know I intended, but was disappointed, she entreated to be left behind, saying, that as there must be a Person to take Care of the House during my Absence, nobody would more faithfully discharge that Trust, and she would much rather undertake it, than go to a Place which she pretended did not agree with her Health; as I doubted not but the true Reason of this Request was to avoid the Pain it would give her to be seen by any one who might have known her in a different Station, I complied with it, not without feeling a very great Addition to the Pity I before had been inspired with on her Account.

My Journey to *London*, however, being put off, I could perceive she was extremely rejoiced at it; having been under some Apprehensions, as she afterwards told me, that I might change

my Mind on Reflection, and think the Charge ſhe requeſted too weighty to be entruſted to one of her Years, and the little Experience I had of her; and as ſhe was determined never to ſee *London* more, ſhe ſhould then be obliged to quit my Service, which you will ſee by the Sequel would have been a very great Mortification to her.

The News of Sir *John*'s having happily terminated his vexatious Chancery-Suit, the congratulatory Letters of my Friends upon it, and the Expectation of ſoon ſeeing a Huſband who had been abſent from me for near five Months, put out of my Head, however, for a Time, all Thoughts of *Roſinda*, for ſo the unfortunate young Perſon I have all this Time been ſpeaking of, is called.

Last Week he arrived to my inexpreſſible Satisfaction, as you may believe, and brought with him a Gentleman whom I had never ſeen before, but one with whom he had contracted a very great Intimacy during his Stay in *London*, and had perſwaded to accompany him, as he afterwards told me, in order to alleviate a Melancholly which indeed it was eaſy to perceive, even at the firſt Sight, hung heavy on his Heart. I was too much taken up with my own Affairs to enquire into thoſe of a Stranger, nor did Sir *John* mention any Thing farther of the Gueſt he introdueed, than that he was a Man of Family and

and Fortune, and every Way worthy of the Civilities he desired I would treat him with.

I HAD not, indeed, Time for asking many Questions, for the next Morning after their Arrival Sir *John* brought him into my Dressing-Room; — I was at my Toilet, *Rosinda* was waiting; after paying me the Compliments of the Time of Day, he was about to sit down, when turning his Head to that Side of the Room where *Rosinda* was standing, their Eyes met. *Rosinda!* cried he, in an Extasy of Surprize and Joy, *Rosinda! — by what Miracle do I find you here, after having, with unwearied Love, sought you so long in vain?*

WITH these Words he rather flew than ran cross the Room, thinking to take her in his Arms, but the Speed he made was yet too slow to prevent her from falling on the Floor; — the various Agitations that all at once invaded her tender Heart (and for which you will hereafter find she had but too much Cause) overwhelmed her Spirits, and threw her into a Swoon. — The Agonies he was in to see her thus, had somewhat the Air of Desperation in them. — *Has Heaven mocked me with the Shadow of Happiness, — shewed me the adorable* Rosinda *only to snatch her from me in the Instant of my Joy at finding her!* said he, and a thousand other Things, which shewed the extremest Violence of Grief and Passion.

It was ſome Time before all our Endeavours could bring her to herſelf; — but as ſoon as ſhe was ſo, O *why* Philemon, cryed ſhe, *why, O too generous Man! this vaſt Profuſion of Love and Fondneſs for a Wretch unworthy of your leaſt Regard?* —*I told you I had mighty Reaſons for flying for ever from you and all the World*; —*Could you not believe me?* — *Muſt you purſue me here, and drive me from the Aſylum my kinder Fate vouchſafed me?*

It would be too tedious to relate what paſſed between them, nor would, indeed, my Memory permit me to do it, ſo I ſhall only ſay that on his Side all was Love and Tenderneſs, on her's Grief mixed with a kind of Horror. Both Sir *John* and myſelf were in too much Conſternation to be able to ſay one Word to either of them, till ſhe, turning her Eyes upon me, begged Pardon for the Confuſion ſhe had occaſioned, and Permiſſion to retire, finding herſelf, ſhe ſaid, extremely ill. — I then called ſome of the other Servants to attend her to her Chamber, and gave Orders that ſhe ſhould be waited upon as myſelf, have every thing brought to her as ſhe deſired, and not be left alone one Moment, not knowing to what dreadful Lengths the Emotions ſhe appeared to be in, might poſſibly tranſport her.

We then endeavoured to comfort *Philemon*, who had been ſo ſtruck with her Behaviour toward him, and the Expreſſions ſhe made uſe of in

in recovering from her Swoon, that he appeared more like a Statue than a living Man :— The Anſwers he gave us at firſt were a little incoherent, yet diſcovered there was ſome very great Myſtery in the Affair ; — the Botom of which he himſelf was ignorant. When we aſked him any Thing concerning *Roſinda*, he begged of us to inform him how ſhe came hither. — In fine, the Diſcourſe that paſſed between us for ſome Minutes, ſeemed rather the Children's Play of *Croſs-Queſtions* than the Converſation of ſerious People ; — at laſt however we began to underſtand each other better : He found it was not in our Power to ſatisfy his Curioſity with what he wanted chiefly to know, the Motive of *Roſinda*'s Behaviour, and after I had related in what Manner ſhe came to my Houſe, he recovered Temper enough to oblige me with her Hiſtory, from the Beginning of her Life to that unhappy Time, in which ſhe became loſt to every one who had any Knowledge of her.

He told us ſhe was the Daugher of a Gentleman, whoſe Extraction was of the firſt Rank among the Gentry, and allied to ſeveral of the Nobility, but on the Account of ſome Misfortunes in his Family, had been obliged to mortgage his Eſtate pretty deeply, ſo that at his Deceaſe *Roſinda*, then but ſeven Years old, and a Brother, yet younger than herſelf, were left in a very indiffrent Condition ; his laſt Words however bequeathing them and the Care of their Affairs

to the Husband of his Wife's Sister, they were taken into their House, and found little Want of their Parents, through the extraordinary Tenderness of both Uncle and Aunt. — When the Boy arrived at a proper Age, he was sent to *Eton* School, in order to be qualified for *Oxford*; and *Rosinda* had Masters to instruct her at Home, in all the useful and polite Accomplishments of her Sex.

The first Time, said he, with a deep sigh, *that I saw* Rosinda *was at the Opera, she was then about fifteen, and appeared so beautiful, that from that Instant I conceived a Passion for her, which can never end but with my Life: — A Gentleman, who happened to be with me, knew her, he gave me the Particulars concerning her Family and Affairs as I have related them to you, and on my entreating that Favour of him introduced me the next Day to her Uncle and Aunt: — This second Sight of the amiable* Rosinda *confirm'd those Sentiments which the first had inspired me with. — I indulged this Inclination the more as I imagined I had no Obstacles to struggle with; — the extreme Youth of my Charmer almost assuring me, her Heart was not yet engaged, and the Uncertainty of her Fortune flattering me with the Hopes that the Offer I should make of mine would be acceptable. — I had not therefore made many Visits before I declared to the Uncle and Aunt, the Desire I had of an Alliance with their Family; they received my Proposal with a great deal of Satisfaction, and I had no Reason to repine at the Reception*

ception the young Lady gave to my first Professions. In fine, continued he, *the Courtship went on as successfully as my most sanguine Wishes had made me hope. — In* Rosinda's *artless Glances, I read her Heart was no Enemy to my Suit, long before she could prevail with her Tongue to give a Sanction to it; but when at last she owned her Love, said she would never be but mine, with what enchanting Softness was the sweet Confession made! Nothing now seemed wanting to compleat my Happiness, when all at once the Uncle told me, he could not think of disposing of his Neice without a Settlement answerable to her Birth; — that she might possibly, when the Estate was cleared, have a Fortune to demand it, and that I must either attend that Event, or assign a considerable Part of my annual Rents over to her. — To this I immediately assented, and should have done so, had his Demands been the Whole I was possest of: — Lawyers were employed to draw up the Writings in the Manner he proposed, and in the mean Time I saw* Rosinda *every Day, and was happy.*

BUT now, said he, after a Pause, *when I thought my Bliss certain, when I would not have thanked Fate for a Security of it, were all my glorious Expectations dashed, and all my promised Heaven of Joy turned to a real Hell of Torments. For two Days had I been denied Admittance to* Rosinda, *on Account of Indisposition, as both the Uncle and the Aunt pretended, yet I thought I saw something in the Looks of both, especially the for-*

mer, which made me suspect the reality of what was told me, and gave me a kind of Prescience of my approaching Misfortune. — I repelled such Apprehensions however as much as it was in my Power, by reflecting how little Reason there was for breaking off on their Side, till the third Morning, pretty early, my Footman delivered a Letter to me which had been left for me by a Porter. — I knew the Hand to be Rosinda's; *and opened it with an Agitation not to be expressed.*

In speaking this he took a Paper out of his Pocket, and presented it to me to read,—saying, *That, Madam, is the dreadful Mandate.* — No wonder it indeed alarmed him, since it seemed to contain, with the most cruel Intelligence a Lover could receive, an Enigma also no less perplexing; but I will transcribe you the Contents.

" Most worthy and ever dear *Philemon*,

" An irremediable Accident tears me for " ever from you, and from all my Hopes of " Happiness on Earth; but though we must " see each other no more, my Heart would " not suffer me to leave you without a last Adieu. " The Remembrance of your Affection will " always be dear to me, but as it is now im- " possible for me to reap the Benefit of it, beg " you will transfer it to some more worthy Ob- " ject; — forbear any fruitless Enquiries either " into the Motives of this sudden Change, or " the Place of my Retirement; — both will

" be

" be alike impenetrable. Think of me as a
" Thing that *was*, but *is* no more, for such to
" the whole World must be

" The lost Rosinda.

The tender *Philemon* could not hear me read this, which I did aloud that Sir *John* might be Partaker of it, without bursting into a Flood of Tears, but when he had a little recovered himself, resumed the Narrative he had begun in these, or the like Terms.

I will not, said he, *trouble you with any Repetition of the Extravagancies I committed in the first Emotions of my Despair; my Suspicions that I had been denied seeing her for some Days past through some Motive to which her Uncle and Aunt were privy, now returned, and I flew directly to their House, and began to upbraid them, as if certain they had not dealt fairly by me; but the Grief I found them both in, and the Confusion which appeared in the Faces of the Servants, soon convinced me they had no Share in her Elopement.*

AS soon as they found me capable of listening to Reason, they told me she had been extremely melancholly for two Days past, had scarce taken any Refreshment, and intreated they would suffer nobody to be admitted to her, and mentioned myself in particular.—Her Aunt added, that fearing her Brain was disordered, she had designed to apply to a Physician for Advice, but that her sudden

den going away before any of the Family were ſtirring, had filled her with Apprehenſions yet more alarming.

AFTER ſome little Reflections, which were natural to the Occaſion, purſued he, *her Uncle ſaid, he would go in ſearch of her without reſting till ſhe was found. I made it my Requeſt to accompany him, which he willingly granting, we took ſuch Meaſures as nothing can be more amazing than that they did not ſucceed. — Yet in ſpite of all our Endeavours we were not able to procure the leaſt Intelligence: — What Event will attend my meeting with her here, Heaven and herſelf only can determine; yet ſure, if I am to be unhappy, ſhe will at leaſt be prevailed upon to let me know wherefore I am ſo, and not ſuffer me to linger out my Life in an Uncertainty more cruel than Death.*

It is impoſſible, my dear *Clarinda*, to expreſs to you, how much I was affected with this Story. — The Generoſity, the Love, the Conſtancy which *Philemon* had given ſuch Teſtimony of, throughout the whole, excited my Admiration and Eſteem; I joined all my Endeavours to thoſe of Sir *John*'s to conſole him under the Affliction he ſuſtained, and to perſwade him into a Belief, that Heaven had not ſo unexpectedly reſtored him his *Roſinda*, without deſigning to make him happy with her, in ſpite of the little Satisfaction ſhe had ſhewn in meeting with him: —After ſome Diſcourſe on this Head, I left him with Sir *John*, and went to her Chamber,

ber, not doubting but I ſhould obtain from her an Explanation of this myſterious Affair, but I ſoon found the Taſk more difficult than I could have imagined : A ſullen Grief had ſeized upon her Spirits, ſpeaking at all ſeemed painful to her, and though ſhe forced herſelf to make thoſe Acknowledgments to me ſhe thought my Civilities demanded, yet I eaſily perceived ſhe would have been better content to have been left alone; and when I mentioned any Thing concerning *Philemon*, and expreſſed ſome Impatience to be let into her Reaſons for flying a Gentleman who ſo well deſerved her Affection, ſhe anſwered, *It was her Fate : That ſhe was compelled to act in the Manner ſhe had done, by an unavoidable Neceſſity; — begged, that as my Goodneſs had extended itſelf ſo far, that I would carry it farther ſtill, and not ſuffer him to come into her Preſence; and that I would forgive her refuſing to declare the Motive of her ſhunning him, it being a Secret ſhe was reſolved ſhould die with her.*

This is all I have hitherto been able to get from her, but though I cannot ſay but this Obſtinacy a little piques me, yet in Compaſſion to *Philemon*, I ſtill continue my Efforts, but though four Days has now elapſed ſince the Accident of their Meeting, I am as far from knowing the Sentiments of *Roſinda*, as I was the firſt Moment it happened; — ſhe is extremely indiſpoſed, as it is not to be expected ſhe ſhould be otherwiſe, conſidering the Agitations ſhe ſuſtains. — *Philemon*,

lemon wants but little of Diſtraction, and I do aſſure you I have full Employment on my Hands between them both. — How this Buſineſs will end, I cannot foreſee; — I am in continual Apprehenſions of ſome fatal Conſequence, and as I know you take an Intereſt in every Thing that gives me Pain and Pleaſure I could not forbear communicating this Story to you; you may alſo depend that if I am fortunate enough to obtain any *Eclairciſement*, I ſhall not fail gratifying the Curioſity this muſt have raiſed in you, with an immediate Account, — till when, I am,

My Dear *Clarinda*,

Yours ſincerely,

Florella.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LV.

From Isabinda *to* Elvira, *with a Copy of Verses on her Sister's Marriage with the E of* ****, *and presented to the Bride and Bridegroom the Morning of their Wedding.*

My Dear Elvira.

AMIDST the incessant Hurry of which *C*** Hall* has been the Scene for ten whole Days, I might say Nights too, I just snatched Time to make my own and Sister's Acknowledgments for the Favour of your last, and to let you know you may expect an Answer from herself the first composed Moment she is Mistress of; — but when that will be is utterly impossible to guess; for the Bells, the Drums, the Trumets, the Acclamations of the Populace, and all the *Babel-like* Confusion of Rejoicings without Doors, and the Visits, Balls, and Feasts within, are as yet the very same as the first Day *Hymen* lighted the Nuptial Torch:—To shew you however that we do not quite forget our absent Friends, this brings you a Garter, and with it an *Epithalamium*, which, knowing you are a Lover of Poetry, I would needs transcribe.— It was wrote by a Country *Bard*, and presented to the Bride and Bridegroom as they entered the Porch of the Church.

Verses

Verses on the Marriage of the Right Honourable the E *of* * * * *with the Honourable Miss* * * *.

' When the vast Empire of the World began,
' And for its Monarch, God appointed Man;
' To make him worthy of the sov'reign Sway,
' Into the noble Frame he shot a Ray
' Of his own Essence, th'immortal Soul,
' To know, t'instruct, and regulate the whole!
' He gave him *Will*, with *Reason* for a Guide,
' To stem the Passions at their raging Tide.
' Thus fraught with Wisdom, and to Good
' propense,
' He felt no Wish but in a virtuous Sense.
' Half Angel for a Time, he all Things knew,
' And Heav'n itself lay open to his View.

' But Vice and Folly soon debas'd the Kind,
' In Shape imperfect, more deform'd in Mind.
' Each rolling Age still frailer than the past,
' Till sickly Nature seem'd to breathe her last.
' So different from at first Mankind became,
' As if a Dæmon Brood usurp'd the Name.

' To rectify this general Decay,
' And form a Race of more distinguish'd Clay:
' The great Creator his unerring Hand
' Again employ'd, Strait rise at his Command
' Two Wonders, soul'd alike, with Sex distinct,
' In one to center when more closely link'd.
' From a long Line of *British* Peers springs
' forth
' The noble Youth more rich in native Worth,
" Than

‘ Than all the Blaze of Heraldry e’er knew,
‘ Tho’ his great Name with Time’s first Æra
‘ grew.
‘ Each manly Charm his Virtue more endears,
‘ In *Celia*’s Form a brighter *Eve* appears.
‘ For him unnumber’d Nymphs in secret sigh’d,
‘ For her the noblest Youths despair’d and dy’d.
‘ In vain, alas, are all the Arts of Love,
‘ When sympathetic Ardor fails to move.
‘ Bodies of different Nature ne’er unite ;
‘ For as fell Darkness disappears at Light :
‘ As pure, drawn Oil with Water will not blend,
‘ Nor jarring Atoms to each other tend ;
‘ So must agreeing Spirits friendly meet,
‘ To make the blissful Harmony compleat.
‘ Each but in Theory felt the Flame, before
‘ They knew to be ador’d, but not t’adore.
‘ At last the lucky Moment brings to Light,
‘ A mutual Passion, at the mutual Sight :
‘ Like th’inward Workings of a Soul inspir’d,
‘ It acts in both, and both at once are fir’d.

‘ Lo ! *Hymen* now to crown the happy Pair,
‘ Bids them for Marriage sacred Rites prepare:
‘ With lighted Torch, the Emblem of a Flame
‘ Which burns with Purity, and still the same.
‘ The Deity attends, the Knot now tyed,
‘ Hail to the Bridegroom and the beauteous
Bride !
‘ Hence Innocence renews her ancient Date,
‘ And every Offspring brings a purer State :
‘ The destin’d Blessings future Time shall see,
‘ And Rules prescribe for late Posterity.

‘ ’Tis

‘ ’Tis not in me t’unfold the coming Bliſs,
‘ But all Delights to ſum up in a Wiſh.
‘ Peace is in Plenty, Plenty is in Peace,
‘ May both be added, and ne’er know De-
‘ creaſe.

I have a thouſand Things to tell you; but freſh Company are come in, and I have already had three Summons at my Chamber Door, ſo can only ſay, that I ſee ſo much of the Noiſe and Nonſenſe of a public Wedding, that if ever I venture to give up my Liberty, I am reſolved to ſteal in at the back Gate of a Church, in a Part of the Town where they have too much Buſineſs of their own to mind that of others. As ſoon as the Parſon has done his Office, and when we are tack’d together, make my Man run away with me to ſome obſcure Village, paſs there for People that have been married a long Time, ſtay away from all my Acquaintance till the Talk of my Marriage is grown ſtale, and I ſhall be accuſtomed enough to Wedlock, not to bluſh and look ſilly on the Congratulations and other Stuff one is ordinarily plagued with on that Occaſion, till when, which depend upon it will be a long while, I am,

My Dear *Elvira*,

Yours *&c.*

Isabinda.

End of the Fourth Book.

EPISTLES

FOR THE

LADIES.

BOOK V.

EPISTLE LVI.

From Aminta *to* Mira, *giving her an Account of the Treachery of her Friend and Lover, and the Manner in which she resents it.*

Dear Madam,

I HAVE strange Things to tell you, — *Palamede* is married, *Narcissa* is married, — and, could you ever have imagined it, to each other! — Yes, that protesting dying Lover who lived but in the Hopes of being one Day mine, — that Lover for whose Sake I have refused so many noble Matches, and suffered all that the provoked Authority of my Parents could inflict, — that Friend too, — that con-

conſtant Companion, — that Partaker of my Pleaſures and Confidant of all my tender Follies, — theſe two — this Lover ſo adored, — this Friend ſo valued — have doubtleſs long been in a League to impoſe upon my fond believing Heart, and now it is ſure, have ſealed, irrevocably ſealed the treacherous Compact. — O! two ſuch, — change but the Names, I may ſay with *Mark Antony* in the Play:

——— *Two, two ſuch!*
O! there's no further Name! two ſuch to me!
To me, who lock'd my Soul within their Breaſts,
Had no Deſire, no Joy, no Life, but them:
Had all the Globe been mine, I'd give it them
In Dowry with my Heart — I had no Uſe
No Fruit of aught but them — O Palamede!
O Narciſſa! *how could you betray*
This tender Heart, which with an Infant Fondneſs,
Lay lull'd between your Boſoms.

Methinks I ſee the Surprize you are in at finding ſuch Deceit and Ingratitude in Perſons of their Birth and Education: — It is indeed ſtrange, but I have ſomething more wonderful yet behind; which is, that I bear the Perfidy of both without Pain, or without Reſentment. — While I believed them what they ſeemed, I could have given up my Life for either; but the unparallelled Baſeneſs of their Natures now diſcovered, renders them equally beneath my Anger, as unworthy of my Love. — I look upon it as the

the peculiar Mercy of Divine Providence to me, to have been prevented, though against my Will, from falling into the Hands of a Man of so inconstant and variable a Disposition as *Palamede*, and for shewing me, how little Dependance there is on a Woman who has not the Principles of Religion for her Guide, which you, Madam, very well know *Narcissa* was but too defective in. I pity from my Heart the ungenerous Pair, and sincerely lament, that two Persons, so well versed in all the Accomplishments which attract public Admiration, should be wholly wanting in those Qualifications which make the Happiness of private Life.

I MUST own I had so little Suspicion there could be such Baseness in the World, much less in those whom partial Inclination had made so dear to me, that I looked on the Report of this Wedding to be only one of those many Artifices had been made use of, to separate my *Mind* from *Palamede*, as Force and Confinement had done my *Person*, — and though I had Reason to believe my Mother incapable of uttering a Falshood, yet I imagined that in this she had either been imposed upon herself, or been prevailed upon by my Father to join in a Deception they both thought necessary to alienate my Affections from a Man to whom they were so averse.

BUT Madam, the Day before Yesterday, which it seems was the third after the Consummation of their Nuptials, two Letters were delivered to

me, — the Characters I well knew to be those of *Palamede* and *Narcissa*, and that whatever were the Contents, had not a Possibility of doubting whether dictated by themselves: — As I believe they will appear pretty extraordinary, I have taken the Liberty to transcribe them, with a faithful Copy of the Answers I gave.

To Aminta.

" *Madam*

" THE continual Disquiets of an unsuccessful, " and indeed hopeless Passion, my Father's po- " sitive Commands, and the many Reasons I " had for settling myself in the World, has " made me at last resolve to yield to the severe " Necessity of tearing from my Heart, all that " once made its Pleasure: — To be easy in Life, " we must comply with Circumstances, and as " they happen to vary, vary our Inclinations " also: — The good Sense I know you are " Mistress of, makes me hope all Remembrance " of those Engagements, which Youth and In- " advertency alone had formed between us, will " easily wear off, and as there appeared no Pro- " bability of my being happy with *you*, that " you have Good-Nature enough, not to repine " at hearing I am so with *another*, nor to hate " *Narcissa*, because she is loved by

" Palemede.

This was the first I opened, and thought nothing could have a greater Right to astonish me

me, till I found in the Billet from *Narciſſa* theſe Lines.

To AMINTA,

" *Dear* Aminta,

" AS there was no Likelihood of your " Friends being convinced, as they ought to " have been, of the Merits of *Palamede*, and you " ſeemed not very inclinable to marry without " their Conſent, the Correſpondence between " you ſerved only to keep alive an unavailing " Paſſion, which could not but render both of " you unhappy; — you cannot, therefore, blame " him for transferring his Affections, where " there were none of theſe Impediments to bar " his Hopes of Succeſs, much leſs ſhould you " condemn me for being won to approve a " Perſon in whoſe Praiſe your own Tongue has " been ſo laviſh: — In loving *Palamede*, I but " follow the Example of one, whoſe Under- " ſtanding I acknowledge is ſuperior to my own; " and I flatter myſelf that when your Reaſon " ſhall get the better of that Reſentment, the " firſt Shock of this Diſappointment may give " you, you will neither accuſe him of Infidelity, " nor me of Breach of Friendſhip, eſpecially " when you ſhall know the Commands of our " reſpective Parents gave a Sanction to that " mutual Inclination which has now united the " worthy *Palamede*, with

" The happy NARCISSA.

I was ſome Time conſidering whether I ſhould make any Return to either of theſe Epiſtles; but at laſt I feared that to be entirely ſilent, might make them imagine I was rendered incapable by my exceſſive Grief; and this was a Suggeſtion which I confeſs my Vanity could no Way brook, ſo I took up my Pen, and as I thought neither of them deſerved a particular Anſwer, wrote the following haſty Lines to both, and directed

" *To the worthy* Palamede, *and happy* Narciſſa.

" I ſhould be extremely deficient in that good
" Senſe and Underſtanding you both are pleaſed
" to compliment me with, if I regretted the
" Union of two Perſons, who I now perceive are
" ſo very well fitted for each other, that had
" Heaven diſpoſed you otherwiſe, two beſides
" yourſelves muſt have been wretched, and I
" hope there are none whoſe Crimes merit ſo
" ſevere a Puniſhment; — neither ſhall I give
" myſelf nor you the Trouble of entering into
" any Particulars, concerning the Probability or
" Improbability of fulfilling thoſe Engagements,
" which Youth and Inadvertency indeed alone
" could have laid me under; — it is enough
" they are now diſcharged, and I am releaſed
" not only from my Vows, but thoſe yet more
" binding Claims, which a miſtaken Opinion
" had thrown about my Heart: — Whatever
" therefore you may be, I am very ſenſible
that

" that I have the highest Reason, to subscribe
" myself,

" The fortunate AMINTA.

How the incomparable *Mira* may approve my Conduct in this Point, I cannot tell; but should be glad to know her Sentiments in a Line, and that I have not acted altogether unworthy the Honour I pretend to of being, with the utmost Respect,

Madam,

Your most humble,

And most obedient Servant,

AMINTA.

EPISTLE LVII.

The Answer.

From Mira *to* Aminta, *praising her Manner of Behaviour in so trying an Exigence, and setting forth that true Greatness of Mind consists in commanding our own Passions, and being above seeking Revenge for any Injuries we receive.*

My Dear Aminta.

IT is utterly impossible to express how much I am charmed to find yourself the least concerned of any one, at the Accident has befallen you: I received an Account from *Bellira*, of

the whole Affair, and the Ingratitude and Treachery of two Persons on Earth, whom you most confided in, gave me an infinite Shock. I must confess that I expected to have it repeated by you in a Manner widely different from what lies before me:—Till this Proof of your Moderation, I never knew the Value of my Friend: Few, in so alarming a Circumstance, could have acted as you have done: Few but would at least have exclaimed against the Perfidiousness of a Lover, who, to my Knowledge left no Art unpractised to secure you to him by the most solemn Obligations; or forbore throwing out some invidious Reflections, on the Character of a Woman, who has supplanted you in the Affections of the Man for whose Sake you have suffered perhaps as much as ever Woman did:—This Conquest over the most poignant Passions that can influence a human Heart, is indeed a Triumph to which all the worthy Part of our Sex will readily contribute. Accept, my Dear *Aminta*, my Mite among the rest:—I heartily congratulate you that by bearing as you do the Loss of one unfaithful Lover, you will not only merit, but doubtless receive the unfeigned Plaudits of a Number of those who know how to distinguish what is truly valuable in our Sex:—You will now be restored to the Tenderness of your Parents, and to that Liberty which they but restrained you from, in order to preserve you; and what is yet more than all, you will be restored to that happy Tranquility, without which we can neither behave towards Heaven as we ought

ought to do, nor be ſo agreeable as we would wiſh to be to our Friends on Earth. — O! how glorious is this Conqueſt over yourſelf; — in my Eye it exalts you almoſt to the angelic Nature. I ſee among my Acquaintance, eſpecially thoſe of your Age, ſuch a Fondneſs for what they call *petty Miſchief*, ſuch a Delight to teize and fret their Companions, in Return for any little Inſult they imagine has been offered them, and ſuch a Hatred, ſuch a fixed Malice in thoſe of riper Years, to whoever has done them the leaſt Injury, that I cannot help being warm in extolling a contrary Diſpoſition; for after all, as Mr. *Oldham* obſerves,

Revenge is but a Frailty, incident
To craz'd and ſickly Minds; the poor Content
Of little Souls unable to ſurmount
An Injury, too weak to bear Affront.

As to Men, indeed, eſpecially thoſe in the military Way, a fooliſh, and I may ſay, a wicked Cuſtom, has made it Honour to reſent every little Indignity offered to them: But our Sex has no ſuch Plea; we have no Weapons wherewith we can revenge ourſelves, except our Tongues, and when we make uſe of them to any ſuch baſe Purpoſe, we only merit the Contempt of all who hear us. — There is, notwithſtanding, a certain Pride in all human Nature that renders us prone to repay Injuries in Kind: But it is the Province of Reaſon to curb that Emotion, and I know of no Occaſion in which

we

we have more need of exerting that Ray of the Divine Influence within us: — You give a noble Proof of the Strength of yours, and set an Example, which I wish every Woman in the like Circumstances would endeavour to imitate. — It world spare our Sex many Reflections, which the Ill-Nature of Man, proud of an imagined Superiority of Understanding, takes every Opportunity to load us with. — Had the *Roman* Ladies, with their boasted Greatness of Soul, produced an Instance of Magnanimity such as yours, *Juvenal*, in treating of *Revenge*, would not have recorded it as a *Female* Vice, in these Lines;

Ungenerous Passion, and for Man *too base,*
It seats its Empire in the Female *Race;*
There rages, and to make its Blow secure,
Puts Flatt'ry on until its Aim be sure.

But it must indeed be owned, these *Pagan* Heroines wanted one Help which you are abundantly stored with: The same Principles which made the *Men* think it more brave to dye, than suffer Chains, or Banishment, or any other ill Accident of Life, might also render it more glorious to the *Women* to *revenge* than *pardon* Injuries. — Our holy Religion inspires its Votaries with Sentiments of a quite contrary Nature, and I doubt not but has had a great Hand in enabling you to sustain in the Manner you have done, so cruel an Injustice. — Persevere, my Dear *Aminta*, in keeping fast hold of a Rock which

which will never fail to be your Support in every Exigence that can possibly befall. — True Piety is the Balm, the *Panacea* of the Mind; and whoever has it, is sure to be defended from all those corroding Anxieties, those *Tourbillions* of Thought which render so many People miserable; since it is not in Effect, the Thing that happens, but the Way in which we judge of it, that makes the Unhappiness of Mankind.

I EXPECT to be in Town in a few Days, and shall then hope to see you, and have the Opportunity of declaring more at large, how much I am,

My dear *Aminta*,

Your sincerely affectionate Friend,

And most humble Servant,

MIRA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LVIII.

Palmira *to* Sophronia, *acquainting her, that by the Persuasions of her Friends, she had at last consented to be separated from a Husband, who had returned the greatest Tenderness on her Part with an unparallelled Brutality and Ill-Manners.*

Madam,

QUITE wearied out with Indignities too shocking for Repetition, and too cruel for Belief, had they not been more public than I wished, I have been drove by the Persuasion of my Friends into a Resolution of quitting a House which almost from my first Entrance into it, has been a perpetual Scene of Misery to me, and am at last separated from *Manilius*;—that *Manilius*, whom I once loved with such Excess of Fondness,—that *Manilius*, whom to please was all my Pride, and whose ill Nature I only combated with Tears, and all the soft Endearments of a virtuous and sincere Affection: Long did I sustain his barbarous Treatment with a Patience, perhaps, more than was consistent with my Character; but when I found he took a Pride in affronting me, insulted the Calamities he occa-

sioned,

ſioned, and made me the Butt of thoſe Fiend-like Humours, which no other Perſon, not even the meaneſt Servant in his Family would have borne, then indeed I thought it behoved me to ſummon all my Stock of Courage, and tear myſelf at once from a Way of living, which inſtead of amending, grew every Day more inſupportable.

The little Regret he teſtifyed at parting with me, and the Difficulty my Friends had of prevailing on him to allow me a Maintenance at all anſwerable to his Fortune, would have convinced me, if I had not been too much ſo before, that his inhuman Behaviour towards me proceeded not only from a ſettled Diſguſt he had conceived for me, but from the Badneſs of his Diſpoſition, which might have abſolved me from being any Way anxious on his Account; yet I know not how it is, but I am reſtleſs and uneaſy, whenever I reflect on the Want he muſt neceſſarily have of ſo faithful, ſo tender, ſo careful a Friend and Companion, as he has loſt in me. — I could be glad, methinks, to change my Shape, and under ſome other Appearance, render him a thouſand kind Offices he may ſtand in need of, and which in my own, would loſe all their Merit in his Eyes: — Alas! I cannot forget how dear he has been to me, nor that I am ſtill his Wife, though divided from him; the Vows I made him at the Altar, are for ever in

in my Mind: I am ſometimes fearful that no Provocations ought to make me diſpenſe with the Duties I there bound myſelf to the Performance of, and that no Failures in his Part can releaſe me from the Obligations I am under, of loving him eternally, of obeying him in all lawful Commands, of doing every Thing in my Power to contribute to his Welfare and Happineſs; but then again I reflect, that the ſame Ordinance, which made me a *Wife*, was never intended to make me the Victim of a *Huſband's* unreaſonable Paſſions; that *God*, who gave the Sovereignty to *Man*, made *Woman* a *Help-mate*, not a *Vaſſal*; that the ſacred Inſtitution, which ſubjected me to *Manilius*, commanded him at the ſame Time to love and to cheriſh me; and as he has in every Reſpect ſo palpably violated the ſacred Covenant, I have no Reaſon to condemn myſelf for the Part I have acted; ſince I did in no Way violate my Duty while I continued with him, and have only flown from him, to ſhun Perſecutions too ſevere to be ſuſtained with Life.

Thus, Madam, am I divided within myſelf: How hard is my Fate, that which Way ſoever I behave, I can neither ſatisfy the World, nor myſelf:—Many have thought me too paſſive, and condemned my Want of that proper Reſentment, becoming a Woman, who knew her Conduct to be unblameable; others may, and

doubtleſs

doubtleſs do, think I have carried Things to too high a Pitch. — My own Reaſon tells me that in Juſtice to myſelf, I ought to throw off all Tenderneſs for a Man who has ſo much abuſed it; but the Precepts of Religion raiſe Scruples in me, which make me tremble: — O did every Wife conſider the Duties of her Place as I have done, how few would venture to endure the Struggles which a Separation muſt neceſſarily inflict! — Can *Manilius* be eaſy? Moroſe, hard-hearted, and unloving as he is, ſure he muſt have ſome Moments of Remorſe, though his Pride will not permit him to confeſs it? On whom, like *Palmira*, can he now depend for the OEconomy of his Family? Who with officious Love will now attend him in every Ailment? Where will he now find a Friend, within whoſe faithful Boſom he might lock up the deareſt Secrets of his Life, ſecure as in his own? Unhappy Man! — But wherefore ſhould I pity him? — He ſought the Misfortunes he ſuſtains, mine are forced upon me.

I TAKE the Privilege of Friendſhip, Madam, to trouble you with all the little Reaſonings I have within myſelf upon this melancholly Subject, and ſhould be extremely obliged to have your Opinion, as to which Side of the Queſtion it will beſt become me to adhere: — Loth am I to render myſelf contemptible to my Sex by a mean Submiſſion, and more loth yet to act in a Manner which might ſeem inconſiſtent, either with

with my moral or religious Character; — your Advice therefore will be the highest Act of Kindness to,

Madam,

Your most perplexed

But most humble Servant,

PALMIRA.

EPISTLE LIX.

From Sophronia *to* Palmira *encouraging her by all Means to persist in her Resolution of living apart from her Husband, till she should be thoroughly convinced there was an entire Reformation in his Manners, and proving that for two People to live together in a perpetual Discord, is only aggravating the Sin of which ever of them is the Occasion. In answer to the foregoing.*

Madam,

IT is so impossible for two Persons of unequal Understanding and different Dispositions, to enjoy a perfect Happiness together, that I feared the short Date of yours from the Moment of your Marriage: I foresaw that all your natural Complaisance, though heightened by the extremest Tenderness for the Person of *Manilius*, would not always be sufficient to make you give up

up your Reason to his every wild Caprice, and that he had too great a Share of Pride, ever to own he had been in the Wrong, tho' convinced he was so.

Your Conduct, indeed, exceeded my Expectations. I have often been amazed, that a Woman, who knows so well what Politeness and Good-Manners require between Persons united as you are, could support, with any Degree of Patience, so gross, so churlish a Behaviour: Never was the Power of Love more manifest than in compelling you, in contradiction to the Justice owing to yourself, and the Privileges of your Sex, to submit to such a Series of repeated Insults as have been offered you by that injurious Man: — But you have at length regained your Liberty, and sure it is impossible you can entertain the least Thought of returning into Fetters which the Cruelty of your Tyrant rendered so galling to you! I hope not; yet if not so, wherefore these unnecessary Scruples? — You have already acquitted yourself of all, and much more than the Duty of a Wife exacted: — You can but act the same Part over again, and you have sadly experienced how little Effect your Tenderness has had on his obdurate Nature: — That amiable Softness, which would have charmed any other Man, served only to make him peevish, and that agreeable Manner of Conversation, so enlivening to all who partook of it, only to give him an Opportunity of shewing his Power over you, by contradicting all you said, tho' never so just. —

In fine, the more Graces you discovered, the more he was displeased; and the more Tokens you gave him of your Affection, the less he affected to be obliged by them, lest you should imagine yourself entitled to an adequate Return. The Truth is, *Manilius*, though not delicate in his Ideas, has some little Share of Understanding, and that making him conscious of the Superiority of yours, his Ill nature views your Perfections with an Eye of Envy, not Admiration, and as it is somewhere said of an ill Husband, *uses you worse than he would any body else, because he is sensible he cannot use you so well as you deserve.*

This being the Case between you, what Consequences would your Return produce, but such as could be of as little Advantage to your moral or religious Character, as to your Peace of Mind; it would only afford *Manilius* fresh Opportunities of violating both divine and human Laws, and of unnaturally perverting the Design of the Institution, by turning into perpetual Discord what was meant for the most perfect and lasting Harmony. —You were pleased to desire my Opinion, and I give it you with the Freedom of a Friend, and as it is dictated by my Heart, and approved by the best Reason I am Mistress of, — conquer but your own Tenderness, and I dare venture to assure you, that you need be under no Apprehensions either of offending Heaven, or incurring the Censure of your Acquaintance; by the one you will certainly be absolved, according to the Purity

Purity of your Intentions; and by the other, on Account of the public Provocations they have been witness of your receiving.

Banish, therefore, as much as possible, I entreat you, these too great Niceties which give you such Inquietude: — Content yourself with being willing to do any good Offices in your Power, for this ungenerous Husband, at a Distance, if Necessity required it, and offering up your Prayers to Heaven for his Conversion. This in your present Situation is all that can be required of you, either by the World or your own Conscience; and should you behave in a different Manner, and again expose yourself to that ill Treatment you are so happily delivered from, I will not answer but that it might be construed into a Weakness, which perhaps might be the greatest Mortification to you, to be thought guilty of.

But I hope these Remonstrances are needless, and that your good Sense will by Degrees get the better of an Affection so ill placed, and so ungratefully requited. — It is Time enough for you to forget the Injuries you have sustained when thoroughly convinced, the Person that offered them is so truly ashamed of his Errors as to be rendered incapable of repeating them: But when one considers the natural Bent of his Disposition, and how it has been strengthened and confirmed in him by a long Habitude, such a Change would be a Miracle, which I dare not

flatter you with the moſt diſtant View of, and would therefore warn you to be upon your guard againſt any Deception of that Kind:—It behoves you now to be cautious how you give Credit to Pretences which you have more than once found to be fallacious, and calculated only with the baſe Deſign of getting you into his Power, in order to exerciſe that Power with an almoſt unexampled Barbarity.—Be as wiſe, at leaſt, as the Dove,

—— Who, from Birds of Prey eſcap'd,
Enjoys the Refuge bounteous Fate beſtow'd;
Nor ventures forth to tempt a ſecond Danger.

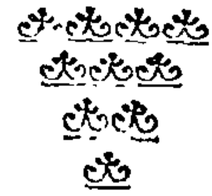
I propoſe myſelf the Pleaſure of waiting on you in a few Days, and ſhall rejoice to find you in a Situation of Mind, which will afford more Matter for Congratulation than Advice, being with all Sincerity,

Madam,

Your moſt affectionate Friend,

And humble Servant,

Sophronia.



EPISTLE

EPISTLE LX.

From Panthea *at* Paris, *to* Miranda *in* London; *giving her an Account of the Arrival of an* English *Lady, and the Motive which had brought her thither.*

My Dear Miranda,

MADAME the Countess de *M****, who is certainly one of the best-natured, as well as best-bred Women upon Earth, would needs oblige me to pass a few Weeks with her, at a fine Country Seat she has about 20 Miles distant from *Paris*: — I could give you such a Description of the Place, and the Company we found there, as in Spite of your Attachment to *Windsor*, would make you wish to have been with us: — But the Pleasures I partook there, deprived me for a Time of another, which I assure you, without Compliment, will always be the most valuable to me, I mean that of your obliging Letter, which came not to my Hands till Yesterday, that I returned; the People of my *Hotel* neglecting to forward it to me, though I had given strict Orders for any Pacquet directed for me, to be sent.

THE fresh Proofs you give me of your Friendship, demand all the grateful Acknowledgments

in my Power to make; but I am a little surprized, that among all the News you tell me, you make no mention of Lady * * * *'s having a fifth Time broke through the conjugal Hoop, and left her Lord to console himself for her Elopement, in small Beer and *Seville* Oranges. Some Days before I made this little Excursion with Madame de *M* * * *, I heard she was arrived, having come by the Way of *Holland*, and as she was my Country-Woman, and a Woman of Quality, intended to pay her the Civility of a Visit, especially as I was informed she was come without any other Company than her Servants, so that my Character could no way suffer by being known to be of the Number of her Acquaintance; but one Accident or other preventing my going immediately, I was put off from going at all, by being told, she came hither on the Invitation of a certain great Warrior, who keeps a little Seraglio in his Camp, and changes the one as often as the Duties of his Post oblige him to do the Situation of the other: — A perfect Knowledge of her Disposition rendering this Account but too probable, I suspended my Visit, and soon after heard she was actually in his House, did the Honours of his Table, and received the Homage of all his Dependants, as the Person through whose Influence alone, any Favour is to be obtained from him.

In this Situation I left her on going into the Country, and at my Return found she had quitted *Paris*,

Paris, to accompany her illuſtrious Lover to the *Low Countries*, where, no Doubt, ſhe will continue till obliged to give Way to ſome new Object; the *M**** it ſeems being no leſs inconſtant, than violent in his Amours; but as this is an Event ſhe has too often experienced to be much mortified at, I fancy you will ſee her come back to her Lord, with the ſame Charms ſhe ever had in his Eyes, and he will ſay with the Poet,

If to her Share ſome Female Errors fall,
Look in her Face, and you'll forget them all.

Indeed, my dear *Miranda*, I heartily wiſh my Country-Women would content themſelves with playing the Fool only at home, and not give the *French* the ſame Reaſon to call in Queſtion the Chaſtity of our Women, as they pretend they have for ſneering at the Underſtanding of our Men: —The Conduct of ſome other Ladies, who, as well as ſhe I have been ſpeaking of, have taken it in their Heads to bring their Frolics here, and the fat Ambaſſador in a Swing, will always afford Matter of Ridicule among the *Petit Maitres*, upon *Engliſh* Virtue and Politeneſs.

Do not laugh at me for ſetting up for ſo exploded and old-faſhioned a Thing as Public Spirit: — You cannot deny but that the Garb of Patriotiſm is ſtill worn by thoſe who find it their Intereſt to do ſo, and I ſhall always have

the Honour of my own Sex so much at Heart, as to look with an extreme Regret on every Thing that lessens it.

I am not at all surprized at the Account you give me of Colonel *G* * * *'s being turned *Methodist*: Human Nature, among People of all Nations, is very apt to run into Extreams; when *Libertinism* ceases, *Enthusiasm* frequently succeeds. Those here, who have spent three Parts of their Lives in Debauchery, imagine that in devoting the fourth to Acts of Penance and Humiliation, they shall atone for all the Misdemeanors of the past; so in *England* a Contempt of all has been said by the *old* Apostles, is only to be compensated for by a bigoted Zeal for the Doctrines of those who pretend to be *new* ones: *Whitfield* and the *Wesleys*, I hear, have made many Proselites; but their Success is not to be repined at, if under the Form of Novelty, they only aim to bring their Followers into the Paths, trod by their Fore-Fathers.

But these are Points, my Dear, which neither you nor I have any Business to discuss: — I dare say we are both as good as we can, and would be glad to be still better, and I flatter myself, that is all that is expected from any one.

Farewell, my dear *Miranda*, be assured you cannot be more desirous of my Return to *London*, than I now am myself; but at present you know it is impossible, no Passports are granted,

and

and you would not wish me to take the same Rout her Ladyship did, especially as I have no such Protector: They talk of a Peace being on the Anvil, I wish to God it were concluded, for till then I must rest satisfied with telling you at this Distance, that I am,

With the profoundest Sincerity,

Yours *&c.*

PANTHEA.

EPISTLE LXI.

From a Gentleman to Melissa, *on the present reigning Distemper, called* a Dejection of Spirits, a Fever on the Spirits, Vapours, *&c.* cum multis aliis.

Madam,

THIS Age is so extravagantly fond of Novelty, that we cannot content ourselves with a perpetual Revolution in our Habits, our Furniture, our Equipages, but we must also have new Modes of Diseases; as if the Ministers of Wrath commissioned for the Chastisement of a sinful World were as fickle as ourselves: — There is a certain Disorder pretty epidemic among the human Species, by whom alone it is felt, which has more Names than ever *Proteus* is

is ſaid to have Shapes; every Empirick that ſets up for the Cure of it, pretends to have made ſome new Diſcovery into the Cauſe, and from that Cauſe forms a new Appellation: Poor *Clariſſa* has been in a languiſhing Condition for ſome Time; as ſhe is my Wife's Siſter, Friendſhip and Good-Manners oblige me to viſit her frequently, and I never go without finding ſome new Phyſician with her, whoſe Opinion of her Diſorder is quite different from all thoſe who were conſulted before him: — One told me it proceeded from on Irruption of the Spleen; — A ſecond from too thick a Blood; — A third from an Indigeſtion; A fourth ſaid it was a Fever on the *Spirits*, occaſioned by a too great Velocity of the animal Faculties; — A fifth would have it a Fever on the *Nerves*, brought upon her by an ill State of the Fluids; — And the laſt I ſaw there, aſſured me, with an affected Air of Solemnity, that his fair Patient's Diſtemper was a *Febricula* or Little Fever, a wandering Fire which confined itſelf to no one Part, but left none unviſited by Turns. — This Variety of Opinions occaſioning a Variety of Preſcriptions, it is not to be doubted but that ſhe will at laſt be reduced to a Condition out of which it may not be eaſy to recover her.

It very much ſurpriſes me, that learned Men can ſuffer themſelves to be ſo much impoſed upon, or impoſe upon others, in relation to this Diſorder: — Not any one of them, at leaſt that

I have heard of, ever ſearched for the Cauſe of it, any farther than the *Body*, when methinks it is evident by all the Circumſtances that its true Original is in the *Mind*: To me it ſeems demonſtrable, that it is *there* bred, *there* fixes it Seat, and not till it has gathered great Strength has any Influence over the outward Frame. We often ſee Perſons in a ſtrange Dejection without the leaſt Symptoms of ill Health otherwiſe: — They eat, they drink with as good an Appetite as ever, they ſleep as well, and if you aſk them why they are ſuch ill Company, they will only tell you, that they have a Heaviness hangs upon them which they are not able to ſhake off, nor give any Reaſon for. — Well indeed may they be ignorant, when the Phyſicians they apply to for Relief, are ſo themſelves, and miſtaking the Cauſe, preſcribe Phyſic, which inſtead of working any Cure, only ſerves to weaken the Vitals and give the Diſtemper room to prey upon them much ſooner than elſe it could have done. — It muſt be owned this is making Work for themſelves, and if not owing to Ignorance, is a cruel Policy; and the poor Patient becomes at laſt a Martyr to their Gain: It is not then in their Power to relieve him, for when once the *native* Vigour of the *Conſtitution* is deſtroyed, Art cannot reſtore what it has loſt; Medicine may afford ſome Help to Nature in the beginning of a Decay, but never can bring it back to what it was before; I mean that the Breath, when ſeeming to be juſt upon the Wing, may poſſibly be detained, and for a Time prolonged,

longed, but then that very Prolongation is but what we may call a kind of middle State between Life and Death; the Patient is incapable of enjoying any of the Pleasures of the one, and feels all the Horrors of the other: — A Reprieve scarce to be wished, yet this is all the Effect of Physic even at the best, and when most judiciously prescribed: — A few Lines of Mr. *Dryden*'s comes into my Mind as often as any Occasion of the Nature I have been speaking of presents,

Physic can only mend a crazy State,
Help *it a little, but not* renovate.
The first Physicians by Debauch were made;
Excess *began, and* Sloth *sustains the Trade:*
The Wise for Cure, on Exercise *depend,*
God *never made his Work for* Man *to mend.*

But I think it may be plainly proved that this Disorder, though no doubt a very odd one, and in spite of the sad Effect it brings by Degrees upon the Body, at the beginning is nothing but a meer Inactivity of the *Mind:* — Those chiefly affected by it, are such as have the least visible Cause for being so: Rarely do we find a Person labouring under the Difficulties of Fortune, and struggling through a cruel and ungenerous World for a precarious Subsistance, discover any Symptoms of it: — No, it is certainly the Child of Ease and Indolence; the *Mind* stands in Need of Exercise as much as the *Body*, and where it has not something wherewith

with to buſy itſelf, will naturally fall into a *Lethargy*, which ſeems to me a more proper Term, than any aſcribed to it by the Phyſicians. Do we not ſee that Perſons in this unhappy Ailment, will ſit for two Hours together with their Eyes fixed on whatever happens to be planted before them, yet know not that they ſee it: Tell them the moſt intereſting Story, they will know nothing of what you have been ſaying, though in all Appearance they have liſtened to it the whole Time: — Yet neither the *Eyes* nor the *Ears* are in Fault, but that intelligent Faculty by which alone all Ideas are conveyed: What then can ſuch a State be called but an *Abſence*, or as I ſaid before, a *Lethargy of Mind*, which renders the Organs of the Senſes of no uſe.

The Affinity, indeed, between the two Parts which together conſtitute the Human Syſtem, is ſo great, that it is ſcarce poſſible for either of them to be much affected, without the other bearing ſome Share; ſo that when the *Mind* is debilitated by a Stagnation of *Thought*, it is no Wonder that the *Body* ſhould be brought by it into all thoſe Diſorders which ariſe from the want of a proper Circulation of the Blood, and an Imbecility of the Nerves.

How neceſſary it is therefore for Perſons who on Account of their Sex, Infirmities, Want of Inclination in themſelves, or any other Circumſtance, are ſecluded from the Cares of any public

lic Buſineſs, and by the Eaſineſs of their Fortunes from thoſe of private Life, to find out ſomething whereby the Attention of the Soul may be kept awake; and I know not whether it is not better, at leaſt for themſelves, to be amuſed with Things which are not altogether Praiſe-worthy than to be wholly idle. — I ſpeak as a Philoſopher in this Point, for according to the Syſtem of *Chriſtianity*, and the Belief of a Future Exiſtence, we are to beſtow no Part of the Time allotted us in this World on Trifles. — But for Heaven's Sake, what Need have we to have Recourſe to Trifles? — Is there not enough in the wide Creation to employ our Minds? — We have the Wonders of the Heavens and Earth before us, we are above, below, on every Side ſurrounded with an Infinity of Matter for Speculation. — Wherever we turn our Eyes, Nature pours forth a Profuſion of Entertainments, which in a perpetual Succeſſion of Variety, ſtill excites the moſt pleaſurable Surprize in a thinking Mind.—Could not the great *Dioclesian*, and the yetgreater *Scipio*, when retired from the Tumults of War, and the Anxieties of State, find ſufficient to employ themſelves in the narrow Compaſs of their own Gardens? — And yet how many are there, who even amidſt the Hurry of the great World are noteleſs Beholders of every Thing that paſſes! *They have Eyes*, as the Scripture phraſes it, *and will not ſee, have Ears and will not hear!* Strange Infatuation! Unnatural Mortality! The Soul is dead and yet the Body lives! Lives, but how? Why in a Condition more to be commiſerated

than Death, a Burden to itself, and a Disturbance to every one about it.

You see, Madam, I have troubled you with an Essay instead of a Letter, yet am under a Necessity of lengthening it still farther by acquainting you with the Motives I had for addressing you on this Score. — You who have rather too much than too little to keep your Mind employed, and are far removed from any occasion of Remonstrances of this Nature, permit me then to tell you, that it is not for your Sake, but that of one very near you in Blood, and yet much nearer in the mutual Affection between you; after this I need not say I mean the beautiful *Semanthe:* It is with an extreme Concern I have of late observed some Symptoms of this Disorder appear in her Behaviour: — She seems to me to be growing tasteless in those Things which she once took the greatest Pleasure in; a cold Indifference for all the Joys of Life is creeping on her; her Air, her Dress, are on a sudden neglected, and though in spite of herself she charms as many as approach her, yet she discovers rather a Discontent than Satisfaction at the Proofs given her of it: In fine, there is a kind of Lassitude in all she does, that if not shook off, in Time, may be attended with all the pernicious Consequences both of Mind and Person I have been describing.

The least Attention on your Part, I am confident, will convince you I am not deceived in

in my Conjectures, and am equally certain, that when you are so, you will employ some Part of your Cares in inventing some pretty Stratagem that may serve to give an exhilerating Turn to the Faculties of her Mind.

This, Madam, was the sole Intention of this Letter, and is the best Apology I can make for taking up so much of that Time which I know is very precious to you. I am,

With all imaginable Respect,

Madam,

Your most devoted

Humble Servant,

A. Z.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXII.

From Mira *to her Neice, to whom being lately married, ſhe gives ſome Inſtructions how to behave, ſo as to gain the laſting Affections of her Huſband.*

My dear Neice,

IT is not to congratulate you on your Nuptials that I now write to you :— You know, without my telling you ſo, that I wiſh you all the Felicity which the beſt of States, when beſt filled up, can beſtow; but it is to remind you in what Manner you are to behave, in order to render it ſuch as you hope, and I ſincerely pray it may be.

YOUR Education, and thoſe Propenſities I have always obſerved in you, lay me under no Apprehenſions for your perſevering in the ſtricteſt Rules of Virtue, and that tender, though innocent, Paſſion your young Heart has been inſpired with for him, to whom you are now united, aſſures me alſo you will omit none of thoſe material Duties of a *Wife*, which you think may oblige him to be a good *Huſband*: But, my dear, there are a thouſand other little Delicacies, of which you may not be aware,

yet are ſo highly neceſſary to preſerve that Harmony between you, that without them, even Love itſelf, though never ſo ardent, will be found too weak to make Marriage completely happy.

It is an Error fatal to our Sex, to depend too much on the Force of our perſonal Accompliſhments: — That Woman who imagines thoſe Charms which *gained* the Heart, will be ſufficient to keep it, is in great Danger of being deceived and undone by her own Vanity: — The moſt dazling Beauty, when familiar, loſes its attractive Power, and all that Admiration it at firſt inſpired, grows faint and languid by Degrees, as the humourous Poet ſays,

For after Matrimony's over,
He that holds out but half a Lover,
Deſerves for every Minute more
Than for an Age of Love before.

Take, then, a few Maxims which a twelve Years happy Experience has convinced me afford the moſt ſure Means, not only of preſerving, but of encreaſing the Affection of a Huſband.

1ſt. Always preſerve a Medium between an *Over-fondneſs*, and a cold *Inſenſibility*: — The *one* will *cloy*, and the *other* make him *indifferent*.

2d. Let the Tenderneſs you have for him diſcover itſelf more by *Actions* than *Words*: — When

When you ſay any Thing very endearing, let it appear as if it eſcaped you without Deſign.

3d. Never teſtify any Uneaſineſs if he ſhould happen to abſent himſelf oftner than you could wiſh:—Enquire not into the Cauſe, nor what Places he frequents; but when he returns, receive him with ſo much Chearfulneſs and Good Humour, as ſhall make him reflect he can no where find a more agreeable Companion.

4th. If at any Time he ſhould chance to be a little ſullen or peeviſh, be careful not to let him ſee you take Notice he is ſo, for that would only ſerve to heighten the ill Humour in him, but rather ſurprize him out of it by the Relation of ſome whimſical Incident, either of your own inventing, or that your Memory ſupplies you with.

5th. When reaſoning together on any Subject, in which you happen to differ in Opinion, ſeem at firſt to fall in with his, till you have heard all he has to urge in its Defence, then modeſtly offer your own, but do it rather by Way of *Query* than *Argument*, and never appear too poſitive; if what you maintain be *right*, he will the eaſier be convinced it is ſo, by your affecting to be dubious, than if you are tenacious; and if *wrong*, you forfeit not your Underſtanding to him, when convicted within yourſelf of your Miſtake.

6th. If (which Heaven forbid) any Emotions of Jealousy should come into your Head, use your utmost Endeavours to prevent so pernicious a Passion from taking the least Root: — Put no Methods in Practice to find out whether he gives you any just Room for Suspicion or not; but, on the contrary, if any Accident should betray his having really wronged you in this Point, be careful to conceal the Discovery from his Knowledge: — Whatever you suffer in so cruel a Circumstance, disguise it under a Shew of the most perfect Confidence, and treat even your injurious Rival, if she happen to be of your Acquaintance, with the greatest Civilities you can assume: Such a Behaviour will make a Man, not abandoned to all the Principles of Honour and Gratitude, ashamed of what he has been guilty of, and contribute more effectually to the reclaiming him, than either Reproaches or Complaints; the one would only *harden* him in his Crime, the other by *wearying* him, afford a kind of Pretence for flying where he could be more at Rest, and totally destroy the Effect of that Regret, which I believe all Men of Sense must feel, sooner or later, for having been guilty of an Injustice of this Nature, and which of itself, if left to operate, would bring them back to Virtue, and make them say with *Milton*, in his admirable Description of Marriage,

Hail, wedded Love! Mysterious Law!
True Source of Human Blessings,

Founded

Founded in Reason, loyal, just and pure;
Perpetual Fountain of domestic Sweets!
Here Love his golden Shafts employs, here lights
His constant Lamp, and waves his purple Wings;
Here reigns, and revels, not in the bought Smiles
Of Harlots, loveless, joyless, unendear'd,
Casual Fruition, nor in Court Amours,
Mix'd Dance, or wanton Mask, or Midnight Ball.

THESE, my dear Neice, are laudable Artifices in a Wife, and the only ones I should wish you to put in Practice; for the least Deception in any other Case, tho' it may seem in a meer Trifle, may prove of the utmost Importance, and, if detected, lays a Foundation for Distrust in Things of the greatest Consequence, and is the Sourse of eternal Jars.

I AM well aware that it will be more difficult for you to comply with the first and second Articles of these Preliminaries, than with any of the others; and I grant it is denying ones self a great Pleasure to restrain the Dictates of a Soul overflowing with Love and Tenderness; and you will think it an ill-natured Prudence which forbids to express, in the softest and most passionate Terms, how high a Sense you have of the Happiness of your Condition. — Indeed, my dear, I would have him be ignorant of nothing that passes in your Heart, with regard to the Affection you have for him; but there are other Ways than Words to convey the Knowledge of

it to him, which will be yet more convincing and obliging. — Love may be ſo well *counterfeited* as to paſs for *real*, but it never can be *concealed*: — Many a Wife has deceived her Huſband by a Shew of Fondneſs, but none, how little Reaſon ſoever ſhe might have for letting him ſee the Power he had over her, could ever diſguiſe her Tenderneſs under the Maſk of Indifference. Mr. *Cowley*, who, if we may judge by his Writings, was no leſs a Maſter in the Art of Love, than *Ovid* himſelf, and ſeems to know all the Turns and Windings of that Paſſion, lays it down as an unfeigned Maxim, that,

Love's fair Reſemblance may with Eaſe be ſhewn,
But thoſe who have it, ne'er can ſeem to have none.

There are a thouſand little Incidents in Life, which afford a Woman pretty Opportunities of convincing her Huſband how very dear he is to her, without offending Delicacy: I can give you an Inſtance of one which happened to a Lady of my Acquaintance, which I never think on without Pleaſure; it was this.

EGILDA, for ſo I ſhall call her, happening to be abroad ſomewhat later than was her Cuſtom, was attacked in coming home by three Highwaymen, one of whom ſtopped the Coachman, another ſecured her Footman behind, and the third preſented a Piſtol to her Breaſt, bidding her deliver her Money, and what elſe ſhe had of

of Value about her, on which ſhe immediately gave him her Purſe, Watch, and the Rings upon her Fingers; he was juſt going off with his Booty, when recollecting her Wedding-Ring was among the Number of thoſe he had taken, ſhe deſired him to ſtop; *Hold Sir*, ſaid ſhe, *I have another Jewel which I will gladly exchange with you, for one of little Value to any but myſelf*; ſhe then plucked a rich Bracelet from her Arm, and on delivering it, conjured him to return her Wedding Ring, telling him at the ſame Time, that on Condition he complyed with her Deſire in this Point, he might depend on all the Intereſt in her Power to ſave his Life in Caſe the unfortunate Methods he at preſent purſued, ſhould bring him under the Sentence of the Law. — She told me that the Earneſtneſs with which ſhe made this Requeſt, had ſuch an Effect upon this Wretch, that, though inur'd to Acts of Violence and Rapine, he could not forbear returning the Ring, burſting into a kind of rapturous Acclamation on her conjugal Virtue, and took his Leave with wiſhing ſhe might long enjoy the happy Man from whom ſhe had received that precious Pledge.

How charming a Proof was here, how ſatisfied ſhe is with the State to which this Ring had placed her, and how much muſt it endear her to her worthy Huſband! — But though, my Dear, an Incident of this kind may never happen to you, you cannot fail of meeting with others which will give you an equal Opportunity to

improve to the Advantage of your Character, and that Affection you with so much Reason wish the Continuance of.—Adieu, my dear Neice, while entertaining you on the Theory of wisely Conduct, I have perhaps too long detained you from the Practice.—I am

Your most affectionate Aunt,

MIRA.

EPISTLE LXIII.

From Aristander *to* Melissa, *being an Attempt to prove, from the Principles of Reason and Philosophy, the Certainty of a Future Existence, and the Absurdity and Meanness of those People's Notions, who degrade the Dignity of their Species, and put human Nature on a Level with that of the Brute Creation.*

Madam,

THE Conversation last Night rolled on a Subject in which I did not chuse to interfere, because I should have had but few Hearers, most of those who would have opposed the Arguments I must necessarily have urged, being such as are better pleased with what they say themselves, than any Thing can be offered by another, and too much biggoted to the Mode, to be able to endure

endure the leaſt Word in Contradiction to it: But to my inexpreſſible Satisfaction, I found the amiable *Meliſſa* ſeemed not altogether pleaſed with the Pains a pert *Would-be-Wit* took to prove the *Brute Creation* equal, and in many Reſpects even ſuperior to the *reaſonable* one: — I perceived you were more than once opening your lovely Mouth in Vindication of the human Species, but were obliged to ſuppreſs thoſe admirable Things might have been expected from you by Interruptions no leſs ridiculous than ill-mannered: —However, as the Enemies of Truth are induſtrious in propagating the Notions they are reſolved to maintain, and a perpetual Repetition of the ſame Arguments (fallacious as they are) from Perſons whoſe Society, in the Station you are, you cannot well avoid, may in Time have ſo much Influence on your preſent Way of thinking, as to give you any uneaſy Scruples concerning a Future Exiſtence, I take the Liberty to preſent you with a few occaſional Thoughts as they occurred to me after leaving the Company.

NOTHING is more aſtoniſhing to me than to hear any Man of even common Senſe, make the leaſt Doubt of the Immortality of the Soul, ſince even that very Power of doubting confutes his own Argument, and gives the ſtrongeſt Proof againſt him.— Can the Brute Creation, of which theſe Sceptics are ſo deſirous of putting themſelves upon a Level, *conſider* whether they are to live hereafter or not? — Does the Ox or the Sheep

Sheep reflect to what Purpose they are hurried through the Streets? — Or have they any previous Idea of the Slaughter-house, to which they are drove? — The most sagacious Animal has no Thought beyond what the Senses convey. A Horse on full gallop will start and stop short at the Brink of a Precipice because he sees it; but did not the optic Nerve befriend him, he would not step cautiously in the Apprehension there might be some such Danger in his Way. The Dog pursues the Hare by the Scent; the Ear of the Hare gives Warning of her Enemy's Approach: — Instinct directs all Animals of two Things to chuse the best, but it is through the Senses alone that Instinct operates: — Some are guided chiefly by the Sight, some by the Smell, others by the Ear; but none, without the Object strikes one or other of the Senses, have the Power of pursuing or avoiding. — It is *Man* alone who has the Power of Forethought, of anticipating in Idea the Good he wishes, or the Ill he fears, of judging, of comparing, and enjoying Events not yet arrived; — of forming Schemes for Happiness, and contriving Means to avert the Frowns of adverse Fortune: — Fancy and Imagination are the Attributes of an intelligent Soul, are no where to be found, but in Man, and would exist without wanting Matter for Speculation, were we deprived of all those Senses which convey exterior Objects. — *Homer* and *Milton* were blind, yet we have glorious Proofs of the discerning Mind in both those admirable Authors: — The Mind through all her

Powers

Powers ſhining irradiate, enabled them, as the latter truly ſays,

——To ſee and tell
Of Things inviſible to mortal Sight.

I BELIEVE common Experience is an Evidence with every one, that in Darkneſs, which ſhuts out all exterior Objects, we are ſo far from wanting Ideas to entertain us, that for the moſt Part our Conceptions are ſtronger, more diſtinct and clear, than in the brighteſt Day; the Reaſon of which is, the Senſes taken up with that Variety which Light preſents, are apt to occaſion a Diviſibility of Thought: — Even in Sleep, when the *Body* is the ſame as dead, the *Mind* ſtill lives and wakes: — We build, we take Journeys, make Friendſhips, revenge Injuries, do all the Offices of Love and Hate according to the Paſſion with which the Soul is at that Time agitated. — But this is ſo admirably expreſſed in the Poem entituled, *Night Thoughts, of Life, Death, and Immortality*, that not to borrow a ſhort Quotation from it, would be doing an Injury to the Subject I have taken in Hand. Speaking of the Immortality of the Soul, he ſays,

'Tis paſt Conjecture! all Things riſe in Proof,
While o'er my Limbs Sleep's ſoft Dominions ſpread,
What tho' my Soul fantaſtic Meaſures trod
O'er fairy Fields, or mourn'd along the Gloom

Of

Of pathleſs Woods, or down the craggy Steep
Hurl'd headlong, ſwam with Pain the mantled Pool;
Or ſcal'd the Cliff, or danc'd on hollow Winds
With antic Shapes, wild Natives of the Brain?
Her ceaſeleſs Flight, tho' devious, ſpeaks her Nature
Of ſubtler Eſſence than the trodden Clod,
Active, aerial, towring, unconfin'd,
Unfetter'd with her groſs Campanion's Fall.
Even ſilent Night proclaims my Soul immortal!
Even ſilent Night proclaims eternal Day!
For human Good Heaven huſbands all Events;
Dull Sleep inſtructs, nor ſport vain Dreams in vain.

It ought to be no Objection to the Veracity of what he advances here, that he is a Clergyman, and it is his Trade to preach in this Manner. He is indeed a Divine, but he is alſo a Man of Underſtanding and a Philoſopher, and whatever his Function may oblige him to ſay in the Pulpit, he is under no Neceſſity of preaching in Poetry, if he were not in Reality convinced of this great Truth, and thought himſelf bound, by all the Ways in his Power, to inculcate into others the heavenly Doctrine of the Immortality and Future Exiſtence of the Soul.

You ſee, Madam, I have mentioned not one Word of Religion, have borrowed no Arguments from Sacred Writ, nor repreſented how far we are bound, by the Precepts of *Chriſtianity*, to believe

live and depend upon a Future State; I have only endeavoured to prove the Folly and Absurdity of a contrary Opinion, and how far setting aside the Laws and Ordinances of all Churches in the World, we sin against ourselves in being of a contrary Opinion. — The *Deist*, the *Pagan*, he that scarce allows of one God, or he that worships ten thousand, are equally with the *Christian* concerned in this Dispute: — It is the Right of Reason, the Right of the Powers within ourselves, which obliges us to acknowledge the half Divinity of our Nature, and consequently that the Part which is so must be immortal and unperishable.

I have formerly very much wondered, what should give Rise to such mean Notions in Mankind, who in other Things have but too much Pride, till a little Consideration discovered to me that it was to this very Pride it was owing: — Strange Paradox! you will say, yet I think may be easily reconciled: — All Ages have produced Men, who not content with displaying their Talents in a Road, through which any had passed before them, have set up for broaching of new Doctrines, and inventing new Systems, in Contradiction to the former; so that the Pride of being thought the first who was able to arrive at *Truth*, has laid the Foundation of all the *Falsehoods* that gradually have crept into the World. This resolving all Things into *Matter*, and turning Immortality out of Doors, is doubtless derived from the same Source: — The most sure,

as

as well as most easy Method any one can take to acquire the Reputation of a *Wit*, is first to affect a Particularity of Opinion, and then to be noisy and obstinate in maintaining it: — I cannot tell how to believe that *Lucretius* himself had really those Ideas of Human Nature which some Part of his Writings have inspired in others, but has long since been ashamed of the Countenance they have given to those who wanting Capacity to imitate his nobler Works, are vain and proud of doing it in this.

But after all, these People are greatly to be pitied: What can be more melancholly than a Life of continual Doubt! for I am pretty positive no Man can assure himself of Annihilation; to doubt, therefore, and doubt on, till at last they drop into a dreadful Certainty, when Conviction will come too late, and a Sense of past Infidelity can only terminate in Despair, is a Condition, which as the truly Wise will never fall into, it is their Duty to afford all the Warnings they are capable of, against the Infatuation to which weaker Minds may be subjected.

Thus, Madam, I flatter myself you are convinced that Pride is the Original of those Notions which in the Eye of Reason appear so mean and absurd; for my Part I never hear a Person, who I know has more Understanding than to believe what he says, make use of the Privilege of Human Nature, to depreciate Human Nature, without remembring a Song, which

which in my younger Days was much in vogue, and by my changing one Word, is the exact Description of what a modern *Free-thinker* must feel within himself,

'Twas Pride hot as Hell,
That first made me rebel,
From Truth's *lawful Throne a curst Victim I fell,*
Fool, Fool, that consider'd not when I was well.

I AM ready however to confess, and am sorry to find it so, that there are many who mean well, yet are unhappily drawn into this Mode of thinking; they are deceived by the specious Pretence of *Morality*, and made to believe that it most proves a noble Nature, to do good Actions exclusive of the Hopes of future Happiness; — and that to act on a Principle of Reward, is mean, selfish, and mercenary. — This sounds well indeed, could it be reduced to Practice, Nobody will deny but that a strict *Morality* comprehends every Virtue, every beneficent Quality; it teaches us not to infringe on any Account the Laws of Society; to do Hurt to no Man, and all the Good in our Power to every one; whoever keeps up entirely to this, deserves the utmost Plaudits: — But alas! where is the Man? The *pernicious* Passions, in spite of Precept, in spite of our own Wish, will often get the better of the more *noble*; and that glorious Maxim *of behaving in all Respects to others as we wish they*

they would behave to us, yields to a Self-Gratification, and guilty Indulgence of the Senses, though in some Cases I could name to the Prejudice, if not to the utter Ruin of those we are bound to protect. — In fine, it is the steadfast Belief of Immortality alone can enable us to resist that Torrent of Temptations, the World and its Allurements are continually pouring upon us; *Morality* is of itself too weak to stem the Tide.

But I forget I am writing to a Lady, who has no need of these Remonstrances; a Lady, who though surrounded with all that renders this World so charming as to make many of her Age forgetful of a better, has in her whole Behaviour testified she regards it no other than as it really is, a State of Probation, has Views far beyond the Tinsel Splendor of a Court, and is ambitious of shining an Angel in a superior Orb.

May you ever remain firm and unshaken in these Principles which will gain you a settled Empire over the Hearts of all the Wise and Good on Earth, and alone entitle you to a glorious Hereafter. I am, with the most profound Respect,

Madam,

Your faithfully devoted,

And very humble Servant,

Aristander.

P. S.

P. S. The excellent *Sophronia* came in as I was going to ſeal this, and finding it directed to you, would needs ſee the Contents: — After peruſing what I had wrote, ſhe obliged me to add a Quotation, which nothing but her Commands could have made me inſert to you, from an old Poet, whoſe Works ſhe ſays you are well acquainted with: — The Lines are theſe:

——Fair Modeſty's a Charm
So ſtamp'd and blended in the Female Race,
That nothing but a Court can quite erace.

Once more I am, the charming *Meliſſa*'s, &c.

EPISTLE LXIV.

From Ciamira *to* Sophronia, *giving her an Account of the finiſhing a fine Building ſhe had been at an infinite Expence in erecting, and the many Inconveniences which deprived her of all the Satisfaction ſhe hoped to have found in it; with ſome moral Reflections on the Vanity and Diſappointment of all ſublunary Expectations.*

Dear Madam,

THE Labour of five Years is at laſt compleated; — nothing for Pleaſure or Convenience is wanting in my Houſe; I might

alſo add Grandeur, for there is a certain Air of Statelineſs in the Whole, which has acquired it the Name of a Palace in Epitome: — As I was the Architect myſelf, and all is executed exactly according to the Plan I drew up, you may perhaps be curious to know what Sort of Fancy, for I pretend not to any Skill in Rules, I have ſhewn in this Particular: — The Building is ſquare, very lofty, and having the Advantage of ſtanding on an Eminence, may be ſeen at a conſiderable Diſtance: — My Court-yard is encompaſſed with an Iron-Palaſadoe pretty high, will contain upwards of twenty Coaches without crowding, and leads you by a Flight of Steps into a Hall, ſpacious enough for a Houſe of ſix Times the Bigneſs of mine: It is ſupported by two Rows of Pillars, five on a Side, between which you walk to the great Stair-Caſe; on the Right-hand of this Hall, or *Salle*, a Folding-Door opens into a Parlour of the ſame Length, within which is a ſmall Drawing-room; on the Left are three other Parlours, of about fourteen Foot ſquare, and theſe take up all the Ground below Stairs. — My middle Floor conſiſts of a Gallery the whole Length of the Houſe, with arched Windows on the one Side, and Chambers on the other: — A little Avenue between leads to a large Dining-room and Drawing-room; — the third is Lodging rooms, with an Iron Balcony over the Gallery, and above all a Turret, or Lanthorn, to which you aſcend by winding Stairs, is large enough for a dozen People to be ſeated in commodiouſly, and has a

View

View of the whole Country, for many Miles round; as to the Kitchen, Confectionary, and other Offices, they are at a Diſtance from the Houſe, but have a Communication with it, by a Paſſage under Ground, ſo as every Thing comes hot to Table.

As to my Gardens, I have contrived them in a Manner no leſs out of the common-road; all the Grounds belonging to the Houſe, of which there is a vaſt Extent, except one ſmall Plat for Flowers, are laid out in green Walks, cloſe Arbours in the midſt of Thickets, Grots, by the Side of a little Canal, which, with a good deal of Expence, I have had cut out, and ſupplies ſome Caſcades I have made; and falling from a kind of Rock, which is alſo artificial, on ſome Shells and Pebbles I have filled the Valley beneath it with, makes a moſt agreeable Murmur, and might lull the Mind of a Perſon who delights in Solitude, into a Reſverie far beyond all the Pleaſures which a mixed Society of eternal Talkers can beſtow. — In fine, Madam, I ſuited this Receſs to my own Way of Thinking, and flattered myſelf with enjoying many delightful Hours of Contemplation, in a Place which ſo much indulged it: — I took ſo much Pleaſure in the Idea, that the whole Time the Work was about, I ſcarce thought of any Thing elſe: — I roſe before the Sun, encouraging the Artificers to be diligent by all the Means in my Power, and laboured as much as any of them in ſuch Things as my Strength and Capacity would permit, and

when at laſt it was completed, beheld the Product of my Brain with a Satisfaction not to be deſcribed: — I ranged through the winding Paths of the Wilderneſs, — I viewed the cloſe Alcoves, the Bowers of Jeſſamin, the ſhady Grots, and ſaid to myſelf, *Here will I ſit defended from the Noon-tide Heat; — Here with ſome choſen Friend, will I run over the Vanities of the gay noiſy World, and laugh at the Follies of the giddy Great; — here enjoy the ſweet Delights of Innocence and Peace; — here, when alone, give a loſe to the moſt rapturous Meditations on the great Author of Nature, — examine my paſt Life, and ſtudy to regulate the future:* — In fine, I expected to reap the Joys of *Paradiſe* in this *Silvan* Scene, and to enjoy what is not to be found on Earth, a perfect Repoſe, an undiſturbed Content: — I thought myſelf now in Poſſeſſion of what I ſo long and ardently have wiſhed for, a calm Retreat from Buſineſs, from Cares, from more vexatious Ceremony, and all thoſe fantaſtic Follies, which are miſcalled Pleaſures: — No longer now envyed the Fields of *Tempe* and *Arcadia*, nor wiſhing my Lot had been caſt beyond the *Alps*, cryed out, with *Addiſon*.

Bear me ſome God to Baia's *gentle Seats,*
Or cover me in Umbria's *green Retreats,*
Where e'en rough Rocks with tender Myrtle bloom,
And trodden Weeds ſend out a rich Perfume;

Wh

Where Western Gales eternally reside,
And all the Seasons lavish all their Pride;
Blossoms, and Fruits, and Flowers together rise,
And the whole Year in gay Confusion lies.

But, dear Madam, what I had thought so permanent, proved but a flattering Illusion, a shadowy Prospect of Felicity, formed only by my own sanguine Imagination: — I had scarce began to taste the Sweets of this Solitude, before it lost that Name, and became a perfect Theatre where People of all Degrees appear, and act their several Parts: — My Hall is crowded with Footmen, my Drawing-room with Persons of perhaps not a superior Understanding: — My Walks so formed for Loneliness, seem now the Mall in St. *James*'s Park in a hot Summer's Evening: — My Arbors, my Groves, resound with amorous Tales instead of pious Ejaculations, all is the Reverse of what I intended: — Not only the neighbouring Gentry, but those from distant Countries, such as I never had the least Acquaintance with, take the Pretence of complimenting me on my good Taste, as they are pleased to term it: — Curiosity at first excites, and, as they say, a prodigious Liking some of one Thing, some of another, obliges them to repeat their Visits: — One admires the Situation of my House, another the extensive Prospect from the Turret, a third is transported with my Gardens, and thus to my very great Misfortune, some Part or other has a Claim for every Body. — I now find that I have been all this while labouring to

purchase, at an infinite Expence, what I would gladly give the same Sum over again to be rid of, and this indeed I might have known before, had I given myself Liberty to reflect how seldom we see anyThing in the End really advantageous, which we have with too much Eagerness pursued, how innocent soever it may be. As the Poet truly says,

So blind we are, our wishes are so vain,
That what we most desire, proves most ourPain.

I MIGHT have enjoyed that Solitude I chose, had I contented myself with the old Mansion House of my Fore-fathers; but I must be elegantly rural, romantically solitary, and by my Parade attract the Gazers I intended to avoid.

You will certainly laugh at me, and I heartily deserve it; but this Disappointment, dear as it hast cost me, has done me one very great Piece of Service, it has taught me the Folly of setting my Heart upon any one Thing, and will I hope enable me for the future to check all those inordinate Emotions of Impatience and Expedition, which when frustrated give so much Pain to the Breast that has entertained them.

I FLATTER myself, however, you will pity the Inconveniencies into which my Folly has involved me, and from which I have no Way to extricate myself without being uncivil and unhospitable: — Winter and unpassable Roads are all

all that can relieve me, but then I ſhall be equally unhappy in being deprived of thoſe I wiſh to ſee, as I am at preſent in being compelled to ſee thoſe I would avoid; ſo that in all Seaſons, and in all Weathers, my Condition is like to be uncomfortable enough: — As I know your ill State of Health will not permit you to take ſo long a Journey, I beg that, as often as you are able to write, the Poſt may bring me Aſſurances of the Continuance of that Friendſhip you have favoured me with, and which will always give the higheſt Satisfaction to,

Madam,

Your moſt obliged

And moſt humble Servant,

CIAMARA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXV.

From Oriana, *to a Gentleman who had courted her a long Time, and was encouraged in his Addresses both by her Parent and herself; but whom she was obliged to break off with, on Account of some extraordinary Obligations another, who demanded her in Marriage, had conferred upon their Family.*

Sir,

I HAVE weighed in the Balance of unbiassed Justice, what it is my Duty to the best of Parents demands from me, with what is owing to my own Qualification, and find the former, in spite of Love, who with all his Might strives to pull down the Scale, extremely preponderates: — You are not unacquainted with the infinite Obligations my Father has to *Honorius*, when on a late unhappy Occasion he was in Danger of losing both his Life and Fortune; that generous Man, that best of Friends, stepped in between him and the offended Laws, employed all his Influence, all his Credit, spared neither Cost nor Pains to rescue him from a Fate which seemed inevitable: — Such a Redemption from Infamy and everlasting Misery, surely, deserves the most grateful Acknowledgments of all our Family; and can I, the Child of the Person

Perſon thus preſerved, alone be thankleſs for the Bounty? — Can I remember my Father's forlorn Condition, my Mother's Agonies, the Terrors and Confuſions of all my Kindred, without remembring alſo by whom we were delivered from this Scene of Woe? — By whom it was that the direful Proſpect was reverſed, and one all Peace, all Joy ſubſtituted in its Place? And ought not this Remembrance to excite in me all the Tenderneſs and good Will a Soul is capable of feeling? You are too generous not to confeſs this Truth, tho' it is an Enemy to thoſe ſoft Deſires, which ſo long have mutually engroſſed our Hearts. — You cannot, you will not I hope, complain that as my poor Perſon is all the Recompence demanded, or all in the Power of a diſtreſſed Family to offer, I have at laſt reſolved to ſacrifice the Wiſhes of my Virgin Heart to pay the Debt of Gratitude and Duty: — It was with the extremeſt Reluctance my Father ſignified his Pleaſure to me on this Score; — you would have pitied the Struggles his honeſt Heart endured between the Senſe of what he owed *Honorius*, and the Promiſe he had made to you: — Scarce could he pronounce the dreadful Command, that I muſt ſtudy to forget our Loves without Tears, and I know not if a little Oppoſition on my Part would not have overcome his Reſolution. — But, *Philocles*, could I ſee him thus, without wiſhing to put an End to his Anxieties? — No, I reſolved rather to do the greateſt Violence to myſelf that Nature could ſuſtain, and at once yielded to receive *Honorius*,

and

and abandon you: — I told him alſo that I was certain you would rather pity than condemn the ſevere Neceſſity we both were under; give no Teſtimony that I was deceived in my Opinion, I conjure you by all the Love you have profeſt for me, and by all the innocent Marks you have received of mine; — think of me as little as poſſible, as I have now promiſed, and ſhall ſincerely endeavour to do of you: — My Heart, alas! and all its Wiſhes will ſhortly be the Right of another, let yours, therefore, ſeek out ſome happier Object: — To reſign chearfully thoſe Expectations which you have ſo often ſworn made the whole Happineſs of your Life, will prove you more the Hero, than all the Danger you have ſo glorioufly faced in the Field of Battle.

I FLATTER myſelf I need not make it my Requeſt, that you will hereafter avoid coming into my Sight: — You muſt know, that ſuch a meeting would but add to our preſent Diſtreſs, by reviving the Remembrance of thoſe happy Hours we have paſt together: — It could not but be afflicting to you, and might render me utterly unable to act with Decency the Part I am determined to perform: — I even deſire you will ſend no Anſwer to this, but look upon it as the laſt Breathings of a Paſſion which muſt now be dead, and for ever as effectually loſt to you, as if the Heart that harboured it, had ceaſed its vital Motion.

I

I HAVE put all the written Proofs I have received of your Affection, into the Hands of *Florinda*, who will deliver them to you with this, and by whom I beg thoſe I have given you of mine, may be returned: — Farewell, O *Philocles!* — How hard it is to ſay, eternally Farewell.

ORIANA.

P. S. I cannot cloſe this without doing Juſtice to your Rival, by aſſuring you he was, and is entirely ignorant of any Pre-engagement my Heart had entered into, and ought therefore to be abſolved in your Opinion, from the Guilt of having endeavoured to ſupplant you in the Affections of

ORIANA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXVI.

From the same to Philocles, *on hearing he had spoken disrespectfully of her in public Company, and made a very great Jest of her intended Marriage with* Honorius, *intimating as if being forsaken by him, on some Reasons he thought he had for so doing, she had laid hold on the first Offer that presented itself.*

Most ungenerous and unworthy Man!

YOU have conferred an Obligation on me, which I am well convinced it was not in your Nature to intend. — You thought to blacken my Reputation in the Opinion of my Friends, instead of which you have destroyed your own, and entirely cleared me from the Guilt of Inconstancy, if any there were who would have condemned my Change: — But this is the least Service you have done me; the Discovery of your Basenes has utterly extinguished in me all the Remains of an Affection, which, perhaps, it would otherwise have been difficult for me to have surmounted: — I now thank Heaven for having enabled me to resist the Dictates of so mistaken a Tenderness, and defending me from falling into the Hands of a Man so void of Honour, Justice, and even common Decency: — You have now, I thank you,

you, put it in my Power to reward the Affection of the virtuous *Honorius*, with a whole Heart: In going with him to the Altar I ſhall now feel no Reluctance, no ſecret Remorſe, to caſt a Cloud upon my Brow, and render the ſacred Union but half compleat.

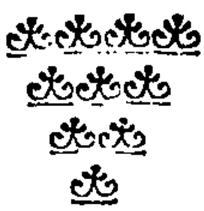
You doubtleſs imagine you have behaved extremely artful in this Affair, and as your Pride would not bear to have it ſaid you had been forſaken by me, ſo you were willing alſo to avoid the Cenſure of Infidelity, by pretending you had mighty Reaſons for breaking off with me. — The Falſhood of this your Letters will demonſtrate, which I have deſired *Florinda* not to part with, in order to defend my Character from any Imputations your Malice, or your Vanity, may attempt to brand it with. — You may expoſe mine, if you think proper. — Thoſe who read them will only ſee I was deceived by an Opinion of you which you little merited, and I flatter myſelf that all reaſonable People will forgive an Error wich my Youth and Inexperience of Mankind betrayed me into, eſpecially as that good Opinion was productive of no Conſequences in the leaſt inconſiſtent with the ſtricteſt Modeſty and Virtue.

It would indeed have been hard to have prevailed on me to give any Credit to a Story of ſuch unparallelled Baſeneſs, had what you ſaid at Lady *Betty*'s Aſſembly, not only been affirm'd by Perſons of unqueſtionable Veracity, who were

were there, but alſo proved by the diſreſpectful, the almoſt contemptuous Manner in which you treated my laſt Letter, when delivered to you by *Florinda*, a Letter dictated by a bleeding Heart, and blotted with the ſincereſt Tears: — Perfidious and ungrateful Wretch! How aſhamed am I to have ever thought you worthy ſo tender a Concern! But your fair Profeſſions deceived my Father, and might well impoſe upon an artleſs Maid. — I ſhall now endeavour to baniſh all Remorſe, as I have already done the tender Folly that occaſioned it, to the end I may have nothing to put a Damp to the Satisfaction I ought to feel in having eſcaped the Snares of the very worſt of Men, and being under the Protection of the beſt.

However, if any Thoughts of you ſhould hereafter come croſs my Mind, as thoſe we leaſt deſire to indulge will ſometimes do, my Reſentment will be mixed with ſome Share of Pity, for your having by ſuch an inadvertent and ridiculous Behaviour diſcovered a Baſeneſs of Diſpoſition, which muſt for ever loſe you the Eſteem of as many as ſhall know the Injuſtice you have done

The injured Oriana.



EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXVII.

From Juliana *to* Euphrosine, *excusing herself for having omitted writing to her by the Want of a proper Subject to communicate.*

My dear Euphrosine,

I Received your Letter of Reproach at a Time when I had more need of Condolance, on the very Account for which you condemn me.— I longed to write, yet was at a Loss for a Subject to employ my Pen. — What can the wretched Nook I am in afford worthy the Attention of a Woman of your Taste and Genius?—Shall I tell you, that the Parson of the Parish, to supply his miserable Stipend of Five-and-twenty Pounds a Year, tucks up his Canonicals, and trudges after the Smell of the Roast and Boyled;—how he haunts the Fairs and Wakes, in hope the Glee and good Humour of the Place will tempt the young Couples to enter into the Covenant of *I take you for better and worse?* Or that the best House in the Village is suffered to go to Ruin, because a Ghost has taken up its Quarters in it?— Or would you know, that *Cicely* the Dairy Maid was got with Child last Sheepsheering by *Roger* the Thresher, and that the Fellow is run away upon it?— Or that Miss *Fig*, the Grocer's Daughter, has got a new Head-Dress from *London*, and the

the Church was crowded laſt Sunday to get a Sight of it? — that a great Swarm of Caterpillars have made ſad Havock among *Plouden*'s Cabbages and Turnip-Tops? — Or that the Wife of the Blind Fidler, at the Croſs, had two Children at a Birth? — Theſe, my dear, with the Riſe and Fall of Corn, are all the Topicks of Converſation here; if it were not for *Veny*, my little Lag-Dog, I believe I ſhould forget I was born for Society. The moſt intereſting Thing has happened to me ſince my Arrival in, his Recovery from a dangerous Fit of Illneſs, in which I was afraid I ſhould have loſt him; — poor Creature! he ſeems as little pleaſed with the Place he is in, as his Miſtreſs, and, I dare ſay, would teaze me to Death to leave it, if he could ſpeak.

Judge, therefore, what ought in Reaſon to be expected from me, while obliged to continue where I am; and, inſtead of accuſing my Neglect of writing, rather furniſh me with ſome Ideas to write upon. — Without you are kind enough to do this, I cannot flatter myſelf with being able to ſay any thing farther, than what you are very well convinced of already, that

I am,

With the greateſt Sincerity,

My dear *Euphroſine*'s

Very humble Servant,

Juliana.

End of the Fifth Book.

EPISTLES

FOR THE

LADIES.

BOOK VI.

EPISTLE LXVIII.

From Florella *to* Clarinda, *with a Continuation of the Story of* Rosinda, *as began in the Fourth Book.*

Dear Clarinda,

I TAKE the Opportunity of the first Post, to gratify the good-natured Curiosity you express for the Fate of poor *Rosinda*, but I know not whether you will think you have any Reason to thank me for it, since I have nothing to inform you of, but Accidents, which to hear of, must give an Infinity of Pain to a Mind so generous as yours.

My last acquainted you, how that unfortunate young Creature was deaf to all the Arguments I could urge to bring her to a Discovery of her real Circumstances; but at last Gratitude for the Favours I had conferred on her, as she said, prevailed to overcome the Resolution she had taken of carrying that fatal Secret to the Grave: She told me, she would force herself, in Obedience to my Commands, to write the whole shocking Account of her Misfortunes, being unable to give it me by Word of Mouth.

According to her Promise, the next Day she presented me with a Paper, conjuring me at the same Time, that when I had considered the Contents, I would afford her my Advice and Assistance to dispose of herself in some Manner, so as never to be seen again by any one who had ever known her. — I told her she might depend on any thing in my Power for her Consolation, and retired to my Closet to examine what she had wrote, which I found as follows.

The Story of the Undone Rosinda.

" *Madam*,

" As your Ladyship is informed by *Philemon*
" of my Birth, and the Affairs of my Family,
" till a few Days before that appointed for my
" Marriage with him, there is no Occasion for
" my troubling you with the Repetition: — O!
" would to Heaven that all had ended there!
" That it had been the Period of my Life, and

" I

" I had then slept with my dear Parents, in " Innocence and Peace! — But how unavailing " are Complaints, — my Woes are past Re- " trieve, and I am a Wretch confirm'd!

" *PHILEMON* has doubtless told you " the Price my Uncle set upon me, and how " his lavish Love granted all was asked of him; " but he knew not with what little Satisfaction " his Compliance was received by the Person " who exacted it: — As I was far from imagin- " ing the horrid Motive, I have often been " amazed at this extraordinary, and indeed un- " reasonable Care of my Interest in a Man, who " was allied to me only by his Marriage with " my Aunt, and even she, though partial enough " in her Affection for me, thought, that in my " precarious Situation, the Offers of *Philemon* " sufficiently advantageous, without that extra- " vagant Settlement he had agreed to make me. " — Alas! I have since a dreadful Reason to " know it was never expected from him, and " that my inhuman Uncle proposed it with no " other View, than to break the Match, as the " Sequel of my unhappy Story will but too " plainly evince. — I was, however, too much " taken up with my Tenderness for *Philemon*, " and the Preparations for our Nuptials, to give " much Attention to any thing else, and was " now so far from suspecting there could be any " Impediment to my Happiness, that I looked " upon it no less certain, than if already ac- " complished.

" There wanted not above four Days to
" that in which my Hand was to be given to
" him who had been long in Possession of my
" Heart, when my Aunt received a Letter,
" acquainting her, that a beloved Son she had
" at Board about fifteen Miles from *London*,
" was taken ill of the Small-pox, on which she
" went directly to him, accompanied by a Phy-
" sician and her own Woman: — As she could
" not propose coming back the same Day, my
" Uncle promised to go the next Morning and
" fetch her: — You will doubtless, Madam,
" think this Incident of little Importance to
" the Story you expect from me, yet was it of
" the greatest, and had it not happened, it would
" have been impossible for me to have been
" the Wretch I am.

" *PHILEMON*, who never failed seeing
" me every Day, supped at our House that
" Night, and my Uncle, in Complaisance to us
" both, as he pretended, would not go out as
" his Wife was absent. — He treated *Philemon*
" with an extraordinary Civility, but seemed
" more pensive than usual, which I imputed to
" his Concern for my little Cousin's Indisposition.
" I was not long, however, in a Condition to
" take much Notice of any Thing, for the
" Cloth was scarce taken away before such an
" excessive Drowsiness fell on me, that I had all
" the Difficulty imaginable to keep my Eye-lids
" from closing. — *Philemon* observing it, took
his

" his Leave, and the Moment he was gone,
" I begged my Uncle's Permiſſion to retire, and
" made all the haſte I could to Bed, where I
" was no ſooner laid, than I fell into a profound
" Sleep; had Heaven been pleaſed that it had
" been my laſt; but oh! too ſoon I awaked!
" awaked to eternal Miſeries and Shame! —
" Imagination ſickens at the Remembrance! —
" A thouſand Horrors riſe to my diſtracted
" Mind, and drive me to Deſpair! — Swift
" let me haſten to the ſhocking Period; I found
" myſelf cloſe lock'd in the Arms of a Man!
" At firſt I thought it was a Dream, and ſtrug-
" gled to be more awake, and throw off the
" odious Idea, but oh! my Ruin was too real,
" and the Author of it my perfidious Uncle.—In
" that Inſtant of my Fury I would have broke
" from his Graſp, and with my Cries raiſed all
" that were in the Houſe to have been Witneſſes
" of his Villany, but alas! I could do neither
" the one nor the other; all the Strength I
" could muſter up, was infinitely too feeble when
" oppoſed to his, and he took Care to muffle
" me ſo in the Bedcloaths, that my Voice could
" not be heard, ſo was in Spite of all my Ef-
" forts, obliged not only to remain the help-
" leſs wretched Victim of his baſe Deſires, but
" alſo to hear the impudent Defence he made
" for his Proceedings! — O let the Name of
" Love henceforth be held in Deteſtation, —
" let it never be pronounced by any virtuous
" Youth, or modeſt Virgin, ſince ſo abhorred
" a Monſter made it his Plea for the undoing

" the Innocence he was bound by all the Laws
" of God and Man to have protected.

" He confeſſed to me, that he had long
" formed the Deſign he now had taken the Op-
" portunity of my Aunt's Abſence to per-
" petrate; that ſhe had no ſooner left the Houſe
" than he had procured a ſleeping Potion, which
" unſeen by any Body, he had mingled
" in a Cup of Wine and Water, out of which
" I being always accuſtomed to drink, was
" filled for me, and ſtood on the Sideboard.

" Day-break at length releaſed me from his
" loathed Society; but need I tell you, Madam,
" the dreadful Images that Reflection on what
" had paſt, preſented to my tortured Brain.—
" The Remembrance of the faithful, the gene-
" rous *Philemon*, that which the Day before
" made all my Joy, was now my Curſe;—
" his Diſappointment, my own irremediable
" Ruin, the Uncertainty in what Manner I
" ſhould behave, gave me a ſaid Variety of
" Anguiſh:— When I thought of ſeeking ſome
" Means of Revenge, the Shock of expoſing
" my own Shame, together with my Uncle's
" Wickedneſs, deterred me; beſides, I knew
" not to what Lengths ſuch a Diſcovery might
" tranſport my poor Aunt, who is but too fond
" of this unworthy Huſband; ſo that on the
" whole, I reſolved to keep the fatal Secret to
" myſelf; but how to conduct myſelf in doing
" ſo, was the extreameſt Difficulty:— It was
" not

" not in Nature to find a Pretence for breaking
" with *Philemon*; — and to continue in the
" House and in the Presence of my barbarous
" Undoer; to wear an inforced Civility to him
" in public, and whenever any Opportunity
" offered, to be liable to be a second Time
" abused, struck fresh Horrors to my Soul;
" in fine, the more I weighed the Circumstances
" of my Situation, the more I was confounded
" in my Purposes: — As I could not, however,
" bear the Sight of *Philemon*, whom I still
" loved with an Excess of Passion, and to whom
" I was for ever lost, I feigned myself indisposed
" and kept my Bed; — my Aunt on her Re-
" turn was extremely concerned to find me in
" the Condition I pretended: — *Philemon* was
" inconsolable at being refused Admittance to
" my Chamber, all my Acquaintance were
" persecuting me with Messages to enquire after
" my Health, but above all I was perplexed
" with my wicked Uncle, who having the Pri-
" vilege of coming to my Bed-side would even
" in his Wife's Presence take hold of my Hand,
" as to feel my Pulse, and press it between his,
" and many other Actions which by those in
" the Room were taken for parental Tender-
" ness, but which I too well knew the odious
" Meaning of: — Every thing contributed to
" render my continuing where I was insup-
" portable to me, yet how, or where to go, I
" knew not; — for three Days I continued in
" Agitations not to be expressed, and should
" have continued so yet longer, had not my

" Aunt talked of consulting a Physician on my
" Account, the Apprehensions that he would
" discover the Feint I had made use of, deter-
" mined me to go privately away from that de-
" tested House, and get into some Place of
" Concealment, no Matter where, so I escaped
" the Sight of all who knew me; — accordingly
" I rose in the Night, packed up the few Jewels
" I was Mistress of, and what other Things I
" could carry in a Bundle, and opening the
" Door as softly as I could, got out before any
" of the Family were stirring: — As mine was
" not a Condition to admit of making any Con-
" fident, I would go to none of my Acquaint-
" ance, but went to the Waterside and got into
" the first Boat I found. — I made the Fellows
" row to *Greenwich*, where I went into a House
" rather to consider what Course I should now
" take, than for any Refreshment, though in-
" deed I stood in Need of it. — After some
" little Time of Reflection, I thought it would
" be the surest Way to disappoint the Search
" which I knew would be made for me, to get
" over to *France*; accordingly I hired a Barge,
" for at *Gravesend* the Boat, which usually carries
" Passengers, was gone off: — When I arrived
" there, I was informed no Ship was ready to
" sail for any of the Ports in *France*; this
" Intelligence at first alarmed me, but I imme-
" diately after found a little coasting Vessel
" bound for ——, just going out: — It was
" indifferent to me whither I went, provided
" I was far enough from Pursuit, and as I knew
" no

" no Body in this whole Country, it was not
" likely it was here I ſhould be ſought; your
" Steward has doubtleſs made you acquainted
" with what followed, till I had the Honour of
" being preſented to you, with whom I have
" taſted ſo much Eaſe and Content, as rendered
" me almoſt forgetful of my Misfortune, till
" *Philemon*, becoming unhappily a Gueſt here,
" renewed the Memory with double Force: —
" I had forgot to mention, that not being able
" to quit him forever, without a laſt Farewel,
" which I ſent by a Porter I picked up in the
" Street, I know not whether he received it; if he
" did, I doubt not but he has acquainted you
" with the Contents.

" THESE, moſt dear and honoured Madam,
" are all the Particulars of my unhappy Fate,
" and ſuch as I believe you will own, muſt for
" ever render me unworthy of the Felicity I
" once thought myſelf ſo near poſſeſſing: —
" Pity is all the Conſolation can now be af-
" forded to the

" Betrayed and ruined

ROSINDA.

JUDGE, my dear *Clarinda*, how much I have been affected with this ſad Relation; Sir *John*, to whom I communicated it, bears a Part with me: — *Philemon* is yet a Stranger to it, and ſhall be, unleſs I can get her Conſent for that Purpoſe,

Purpoſe, which I do not abſolutely deſpair of, as I have endeavoured to convince her, that the Suſpence he labours under is more afflicting, and may be even of worſe Conſequence, than the cruel Certainty: — A few Days will doubtleſs put ſome Period to the whole Adventure, which I will not fail to acquaint you with; in the mean Time, could not omit letting you into as much of it as I was Miſtreſs of myſelf: — Adieu, I have time to add no more at preſent than that I am,

With an unfeigned Sincerity,

My dear *Clarinda*,

Yours, *&c.*

FLORELLA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXIX.

From Florella *to* Clarinda, *with the Sequel of the Story of* Philemon *and* Rosinda.

Dear *Clarinda*,

I CAN now give you the Sequel of a Story which is indeed too interesting not to justify all the Impatience you express. — Poor *Rosinda* has at length come to a Resolution, and taken that Part, which, in her irremediable Misfortune, she thought was most befitting her. — But you shall judge whether she has not strained Honour to a Pitch too high, in acting as she has done.

THE Distraction *Philemon* was in, to be under the same Roof with his beloved *Rosinda*, yet be denied the Sight of her, or even the Knowledge of the Reason wherefore he was so, gave me a great deal of Anxiety; but I had given my Word to *Rosinda*, and would not communicate what she had entrusted to me, without her Permission: When I represented to her the Condition he was in, and set before her Eyes the fatal Effects so cruel a Suspence might prove, she wept bitterly, and told me, that nothing prevented her from consenting he should be made acquainted with the shocking Circumstance of her Undoing,

but

but the Fears that the Love he had for her would make him revenge her Wrongs upon her wicked Uncle: — *Much*, said she, *I owe to the Tenderness and Generosity of* Philemon; *but I owe also much to that maternal Care my dear Aunt has always taken of me:* — *She doats upon that Monster of Mankind*, continued she, *and I am certain could not support with Life the Knowledge of his Crime, much less the Punishment it deserves, and which* Philemon *would not be restrained, by any Considerations, from inflicting on him.*

I found so much Weight in this Argument, that I said no more to her at that Time; but the Despair of *Philemon*, and Sir *John*'s incessant Importunities on that Score, I again repeated all I had urged before, and added all I could to exaggerate the Truth; which was indeed but little, for certainly there could not be a greater Object of Pity, than that passionate and despairing Lover, whose Cause I took upon me to plead; which at last I did with such Success, that she consented I should shew him the Paper she had given me, on Condition I first enacted a solemn Vow from him to keep the Contents an inviolable Secret from all the World, and whatever Resentment he might conceive against the Person mentioned therein, to restrain it from breaking out by any Words or Actions whatsoever.

There needed, indeed, no less than the Obligation she required, to have kept *Philemon* from

revenging her Cauſe in the Manner ſhe ſo much apprehended, for though he gave me the Oath I inſiſted on, with Readineſs enough, as being doubtleſs far from imagining of what Nature the Secret was he was going to be entruſted with, yet he had no ſooner read it, than after the moſt dreadful Execrations againſt the Raviſher, he confeſt, that not all the Vows Words could form would have been ſufficient to have bound him from letting looſe all his Fury on the Villain's Head, were he yet in a Condition to feel the Effects of it. — *But*, ſaid he, *he is gone to receive the Reward of his Wickedneſs in another World*; — *I have juſt now received a Letter, which gives me an Account of his Death.*

You cannot imagine, my dear *Clarinda*, how glad I was to hear this; I ran immediately to acquaint *Roſinda* with it, who lifted up her Hands and Eyes, crying, *Heaven, thou art juſt!* — I was beginning to relate to her how *Philemon* had behaved on reading the Paper I gave him, when he came into the Room, I having forgot to lay him under the Injunction I had been accuſtomed to do, not to attempt ſeeing her without her Leave.

She ſeemed, however, leſs diſconcerted than I expected at his Preſence, which, when I perceived, made me not ſorry at the Liberty he had taken, being not a little deſirous to ſee in what Manner he would accoſt her after the Knowledge of her Misfortune. — She prevented

what

what he intended to ſay, by crying out as ſoon as he appeared ; — *Well*, Philemon, *you will not now condemn my flying from you ? — As much as ever*, replied he, *ſince it was unjuſt to make me ſuffer for the Fault of another.* — As ſhe made no immediate Anſwer to theſe Words, he proceeded to aſſure her, that the involuntary Violation ſhe had ſuſtained, had not in the leaſt abated either his Love or Eſteem, and that as ſhe had once reſolved to make him happy, he hoped ſhe would baniſh all Ideas that might forbid his being ſo. — *No*, ſaid ſhe, haſtily interrupting him, *I was unworthy, infinitely unworthy of you in my Days of Innocence, much more as I am now.* — She then told him, that ſhe had determined to ſeclude herſelf from the World, and go into a Convent, where the little Fortune ſhe was Miſtreſs of, would maintain her as a Penſioner. — It would be too tedious, if my Memory would permit, to repeat all the Arguments he made uſe of, to prevail on her to be more juſt to him and herſelf : — All that Love and good Senſe could dictate, was exerted on this Score, but neither at that Time, nor ever after, could ſhe be won either by his Grief, or the Perſwaſions of Sir *John* and myſelf, to recede from her Declaration : — Never did I ſee ſuch Steadineſs and Strength of Reſolution in ſo young a Heart.

PHILEMON was at laſt obliged to deſiſt his unavailing Importunities, though with what Emotions you may gueſs by the Proofs he

he had given how ſincerely and paſſionately his Soul doated on her: — To comply with her Requeſt, Sir *John* got her a Paſſage in the firſt Ship that went to *Boulogne*, and a Recommendation to the Convent of *Engliſh* Nuns, where a Letter I juſt now received from her acquaints me ſhe is arrived, and received with all imaginable Kindneſs. Her Lover took his Leave of us the next Day after her Departure, in order to loſe, if poſſible, the Memory of all has paſt, in Travel through foreign Parts: — Nothing could equal the Agonies he was in at taking his laſt Farewel of *Roſinda*; ſhe too, I believe, felt her Share, in Spite of all the Heroiſm ſhe aſſumed.

Now in my Opinion, all this Diſtreſs might have been ſpared: — The Wretch who had abuſed her was gone to anſwer, in another World, the baſe Action he had been guilty of in this: The Violation of her Perſon, left no Guilt upon her Mind, that ſtill was chaſte and pure: — Her Lover regarded her as ſtill the ſame, and to render both herſelf and him unhappy, appears to me an Over-Delicacy of Sentiment. I long to hear what you will ſay upon the Subject, and will not entirely fix my Judgment, till I have the Pleaſure of yours. I am, with the moſt ſincere and perfect Amity,

My dear *Clarinda*,

Yours, *&c.*

FLORELLA.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXX.

Stella *to* Eusibia, *acquainting her with her Recovery from a dangerous Fit of Sickness, and the Change it had made in her Way of thinking.*

Dear Madam,

SOME few Days past, had I been born the Heiress of Empire, gladly would I have resigned my Pretensions, and yielded up the glittering Prospect for the more valuable Assurance of enjoying once again the Happiness of writing to you. — The sacred Rites of a departing Soul had been administred to me: — I saw my Mother's Anguish, my Sister's Tears, I heard the solemn Sentence of my immediate Dissolution pronounced by the Physician who attended me, and felt that within myself which more than all confirm'd me in the Belief that I was going to make my everlasting Exit from this World. — O what did I not for some Hours endure! — The Pains which had reduced me to this Condition were no longer felt; — all lost and swallowed up in the more dreadful Agonies of the Mind! — How did I wish, how pray but for one Day's Reprieve! — My Remissness in reflecting on the Fate that now seemed just falling on me, all my youthful Vanities came fresh into my Mind, and were

were now ſo many Scorpions which ſtung me to the very Soul:—Every Pleaſure, every Amuſement I had with ſo much Eagerneſs purſued, now reproached me with a wretched Waſte of Time,—with ſinning againſt my own Reaſon, and rendered me contemptible to myſelf.

In the midſt of theſe terrible Ideas I fell at once into a Slumber, as it appeared to me on coming out of it, but all thoſe about me ſay it was a Convulſion Fit; but whatever it may be called, it certainly was the laſt Effort of my Malady.—Nature in me had ſtruggled hard, and at length got the better of her Enemy, or rather the Great Author of Nature was pleaſed to liſten to my ardent Vows, and ſnatch me from the Graſp of Death.—I came to myſelf, when every one believed me gone for ever. O Thou Great Supreme! whoſe Mercy ſaved me juſt ſinking into Eternity's tremendous Gulf, vouchſafe to keep me ever grateful for the Bounty: Let the kind Chaſtiſement I have paſt, dwell ever on my Mind, and warn me of my Duty, that, whenever the determined Date of Life is expired, I may receive the inevitable Fiat without Horror.

Teach my beſt Reaſon, Reaſon; my beſt Will
Teach Rectitude; and fix my firm Reſolve
Wiſdom to wed, and pay her long Arrears;
Nor let the Phial of thy Vengeance, pour'd
On this devoted Head, be pour'd in vain.

Dr. *Young.*

Yes, Madam, Death, in holding the Mirror of Futurity before me, gave me at the same Time, a Retrospect on what I was going to leave behind me; and, ah! How little worthy of Attention did this World appear, when stript of those false Colours which our Imagination puts upon it: — All seemed a dull, ill-acted Farce, where some Scenes were shocking, some ridiculous, and the best but insignificant and trifling: I now see clearly the Folly and Absurdity of those vain Pursuits, — those mistaken Attachments, — which so much engross the Minds of most People, and can say with the Epitaph which I have been told Mr. *Gay* ordered to be put upon his Marble,

This World's a Jest, and all Things shew it;
I thought so once, but now I know it.

If there be any Thing like real Happiness below, it is in Friendship, and the Conversation of such as can discern the *true* Blessings of Life from the *counterfeit*; can discover through all their tinsel Covering, the innate Worthlessness of the greatest Part of all sublunary Enjoyments. Such who are incapable of Flattery themselves, and know how to despise it in others: — Such who love and revere Virtue, in the most abject Garb, and can treat Vice at it deserves, though clad in purple Robes: — Such who are equally the Enemies of Business and of Ceremony, and alike fly the Hurry of *Change-Ally*, and the Formalities

Formalities of the Drawing-Room; and finally, ſuch who, truly ſenſible they have a glorious *Home* to which they ſhall one Day be called, behold, with Unconcern, whatever Events may happen to them at the *Inn* where they at preſent are, and as I have ſomewhere found it deſcribed,

With equal Temper, and with Soul ſerene,
Can view the tranſient ever-changing Scene,
Nor charm'd, nor yet diſmay'd——

You will ſay, that if I confine myſelf only to Perſons of this Claſs, I ſhall keep but very little Company: — They are indeed rarely to be met with, and if more numerous could not hope that many would fall to my Share; but that is a Misfortune I ought not to regret, as I am ſure of one at leaſt in the excellent *Euſebia.* My greateſt Concern is, that you may imagine this Change in my Way of thinking is more owing to Vapours, which my late Indiſpoſition may have left upon me, than to a real and confirm'd Senſe of my Duty, in what is owing to Heaven, and myſelf; it is Time and Perſeverance that can alone convince you of the contrary; I will not, —I dare not preſume to ſay, I am enough aſſured of my own Heart, to tell you it is an utter Impoſſibility for me to relapſe into any Part of thoſe Follies, which have too much employed my former Years: — This however I may aver, that my Converſion is at preſent ſincere; to make it permanent I rely on Heaven,

and the charitable Assistance of those on Earth who wish me well.

I long with the utmost Impatience for your Return, and am not afraid that the testifying that Impatience will in the least break through the Scheme I have determined to pursue, of not being over anxious for any Thing in this Life, because I am very certain, your Conversation will enable me to deserve a better: — Hasten therefore, I beseech you, to strengthen the Resolutions I have formed; for though I had always an extreme Love and Veneration for you, both are now greatly increased, since the Almighty Dispenser of all Blessings, has been graciously pleased to inspire me with Sentiments and Inclinations more conformable to yours.

Though I have had no Returns of my Fever, since the dreadful Time I mentioned in the Beginning of this Letter, when I believe it entirely left me, and am now I think perfectly recovered, they will not as yet suffer me to quit my Chamber: — Your Niece, the amiable *Euphrosine*, has been so good, to pass an Hour or two with me every Day throughout the whole Time of my Confinement, — As I have her, I the less miss her Aunt, but in my present Situation, in spite of my boasted Resolution, have need enough of you both to shield me from the thousand Temptations my launching out again into the World may involve me in: —

You

You ſee I am far from placing too much Dependance on my own Abilities, which I flatter myſelf you will look upon as a good Sign in,

Dear Madam,

Your moſt affectionate Friend

And very humble Servant,

STELLA.

EPISTLE LXXI.

From Caliſto *to* Lucilla, *confeſſing her criminal Paſſion for* Alexis, *how far ſhe had ſuffered it to get the better of her Virtue, and that ſhe was now converted, by the Arguments and Example of her Lover; with an earneſt Exhortation that ſhe would not, if compelled to marry againſt her Inclination, ever be prevailed upon to violate thoſe ſacred Ties.*

Dear *Lucilla*,

YOU are ſurprized at not hearing from me in ſo many Days: — You kindly chide my Remiſſneſs, and enjoin me to let you into the Secret that has occaſioned it: — A Secret indeed, and you may believe a ſtrange one, that could render me for half that Time forgetful of our Friendſhip; but I am now again myſelf, and

and have the Power of complying with your Desire, which I shall do without reserve, how shameful soever the Confession may be to myself.

My last gave you an Account I had seen *Alexis* by Accident, my Pen I know was lavish in his Praise, but fell infinitely short of the Dictates of my Heart; he entertained, he talked to me with a Politeness peculiar to himself, but seem'd not to distinguish me from other Ladies who were in Company, by any particular Address; yet did this first, this fatal Interview, produce in me Emotions I had never known before:—In fine, I was in love, distractedly in love, as you will soon perceive, and might then say with *Leonora* in the Play;

Iv'e loved away myself,—in one short Hour
Already am I gone an Age of Passion.

Night and Day my Head ran on him, I had no Pleasure in any Coversation that did not turn on him:—I hated all that did not admire him as much as I did, and was jealous of all who did:—I haunted all the publick Places he frequented, whenever I saw him I was filled with new Languishments, new Sensations of such a Nature as I cannot well describe, and when I saw him not, came Home in such a sullen, peevish Humour, as, I believe, made my Servants imagine my Brain was turned, for I quarrelled with every thing about me:—No Chance, however,

however, brought me again into his Company for near a Month, though I ſo often ſought, and ſo ardently wiſhed it. — At laſt being in a publick Walk, with ſome Ladies of Wit and Pleaſantry who were known to him, he immediately joined us, and happening to be in a more gay Humour than when I firſt ſaw him, promoted a Converſation the moſt gallant and ſpirituous that can be imagined : — But would you think it, *Lucilla*, I was utterly incapable of mingling in it : — My Heart fluttered, my whole Frame was in Agitations, all my Faculties in a Hurry, and though I had longed with the utmoſt Paſſion for ſuch an Opportunity, yet now when Fortune threw it in my Way had not the Power of making any Uſe of it to my Advantage; inſtead of diſplaying the little Talents I had received from Nature, I behaved like a Creature bred in a Country Village ; whenever he directed his Diſcourſe to me, as he ſeveral Times did, I bluſhed, hung down my Head, ſtammered when I ſpoke, and in ſhort, appeared ſo very ſilly, that had he not afterwards been but too well convinced of the true Cauſe of my ſeeming Stupidity, I muſt till now have paſſed in his Opinion for a perfect Ideot. — The other Ladies, however, being under no ſuch Enchantment, generally took up the Word as ſoon as he dropt it, and gave him ſo full Employment for his Talent of Repartee, that he had not Time to afford me much Attention ; — and I found afterwards, that he had never ſaid any

Thing to them concerning me, or even enquired who I was.

This second Meeting served to complete the Destruction of those Remains of Reason the the former had left in me: — I could neither eat, sleep, or rest in any one Place, — I sigh'd all Night, — I languished all the Day, — a thousand romantic wild Ideas rose in my Brain, I wanted to be in some Disguise that I might be always near him, I would have preferred the meanest Office about his Person, to being Empress of the Globe: — Never was Infatuation equal to mine, yet, believe me, I had not all this while one Wish injurious to Virtue: — My Desires were violent, but not unchaste, the utmost of my Longings extended no farther than such Embraces as a Sister might allow a Brother, and oh, what would I not have given to have enjoyed that innocent Delight! You will tell me, perhaps, I know little of the Passion I was possest of; it is true, I did so, but I assure you this was, at that Time, the Condition of my Heart.

But I should write you a Book instead of a Letter, were I to repeat the thousandth Part of all my tender Follies; I will therefore trouble you with no more, but come to the Crisis of my Fate, the little expected Consequence of the mighty Preparation Love had made in my unguarded Soul.

A Lady of Quality, with whom I have been extremely intimate ever ſince my Arrival, took me to a Maſquerade, where only Perſons of the firſt Rank were admitted: — The Aſſembly was numerous and brilliant, the Habits ſparkling, and I took Care mine ſhould not be the leaſt elegant, not knowing but *Alexis* might be there, whom I did not doubt being able to diſcover in whatever Shape he appeared, and flattered myſelf with being able, in a Maſk, to entertain him in ſomewhat of a more aſſured Manner than I had Courage to do bare-faced: — I was not deceived in the former Part of my Conjectures; he was there, and my Heart ſoon told me which was he: Indeed his Stature, his majeſtic Air, the fine Proportion of his Limbs, made him eaſily diſtinguiſhed from all others, but alas! though I had prepared in my Mind ſome Things to ſay to him, which I thought would have engaged his Attention, when I approached him had not the Power of uttering a ſingle Syllable: — He two or three Times accoſted me, but finding I made other Sort of Replies than might be expected in ſuch a Place, ſoon quitted me for Converſation more enlivening: — He once took hold of my Hand, in order to mingle in a Dance juſt then leading up, but this ſudden Touch, ſet me in ſuch a Trembling and Diſorder, that I feared I ſhould faint, and was obliged to quit the Room that Inſtant in order to recover myſelf. — There were ſeveral Rooms in the Gallery which led to the Ball-Room,

Room, all illuminated for any Perſon that had a Mind to retire into, I went into one, and ſeeing a Couch at the upper End, threw myſelf upon it, full of Confuſion for the fooliſh Figure I had made. — But O Heaven! What was my Condition, when preſently I ſaw *Alexis* enter with his Vizard in his Hand, and threw the Door after him, which having a Spring-bolt, was immediately made faſt. — He had retired to take ſome little Reſpite from the Hurry of the Maſquerade, and perceived not any one was there till he was very near the Couch: — He ſtarted at ſeeing me, and begged my Pardon for this Intruſion, on which I was about to riſe, but he would not permit me, ſaying, he would retire himſelf. This, I thought, I ought to oppoſe, in Point of common Manners, and there aroſe a little Diſpute between us, which ſhould remain in Poſſeſſion of the Place: — I had by this Time however got upon my Legs, and was drawing towards the Door, when he ſtepped between, and laying his two Hands upon my Shoulders, No Madam, cryed he, I muſt not ſuffer that, if you will not permit me to leave you as I found you, give me leave to ſhare with you in that Relaxation I ſuppoſe you came to indulge. — I was now ſo overcome with inward Convulſions, at finding myſelf ſo near him, that I could make no Anſwer to his laſt Words, nor ſtir a Step either backwards or forwards, but ſtood trembling like a Bird juſt caught: — I found he looked on me with a good deal of Surprize, and miſtaking the true Reaſon of my Tremblings,

You

You ſeem, Madam, ſaid he, to be under ſome Apprehenſions, which it is my Duty to remove by inſtantly retiring, all the Advantage I ſhall take of finding ſo beautiful a young Lady alone is the Favour of a Salute; I ſtill was ſilent, and attempted not to prevent his doing as he ſaid; the Kiſs he gave me ran through my Soul, — my Head turned round, — I knew not where I was, — all my Confuſion redoubled, and, unable to ſuſtain the Shock of thrilling Pleaſure, I quite fainted and fell upon his Breaſt. — My Senſes, however, were not ſo entirely loſt as not to tell me what he did, — I found he took me in his Arms with the extremeſt Tenderneſs, and ſet me gently down, then with a Penknife he had in his Pocket, ript the lacing of the Habit I had on, in order to give me Air. — I opened my Eyes, and ſaw his were fixed upon me. — Do you fear me, Madam? ſaid he, No, replied I, but I fear, — What reſumed he? taking one of my Hands, and tenderly preſſing it between both his: — This Action was again more than I could bear, — my Senſes once more half forſook me, and unknowing what I did, I threw the Hand I had at Liberty upon his Breaſt, and ſighed and looked (as Recollection ſince aſſures me) in ſuch a Manner as might well convince him, if he were not ſo before, whence the Diſorders he beheld proceeded: — With Tranſport, equal to his Surprize, he ſeemed to receive the Diſcovery, and preſſed my Lips with Ardors not to be expreſſed; it is with Shame I own, that I had no Power that Moment to make the leaſt Kind of Re-

ſiſtance

ſiſtance, but ſuffered myſelf to be held in a ſtrenuous Embrace, while Kiſſes were the only Language paſſed between us; — at length, I broke from his Arms, but it was only to burſt into Exclamations which had nothing of Reſentment in them: — I am betrayed, cried I, the long hid Secret of my Soul is betrayed to him, to him from whom of all the World it ought to have been eternally concealed: — O what has one unguarded Moment done?— Shew me, interrupted he, that I am more happy than any Man can merit to be; — Repent not, my Angel, of the ſoft Confeſſion. The laſt Accents of theſe Words were printed on my Breaſt, on which Shame, at ſeeing myſelf expoſed, brought me to a Glympſe of Reaſon: — I now made ſome few feint Efforts to repel his Preſſures; — Leave me, cryed I, O too charming *Alexis*, leave me to bluſh alone, and die with Shame; go, I conjure you, go, yet ſtill, without being ſenſible I did ſo, held him faſt with both my Hands. — I ſaw him ſmile; — If Love demands a Bluſh, ſaid he, let us bluſh together. — We had all this Time been only ſitting upright on the Couch, but he claſping me again between his Arms, and joining his Breaſt, his Lips to mine, I could no more diſſemble a Reluctance, no more make a Shew of ſtruggling, but ſunk with him quite down: — I need not tell you what enſued, and yet I will, — It was Extacy in Profuſion, Bliſs, beyond all that the moſt warm and lively Imagination can conceive, — Raptures which no Man but himſelf can give, no Woman who did

did not love like me be capable of feeling: — My Paſſion long pent up knew now no Bounds; his, but juſt kindled, gave the fiercer Blaze. — O, *Lucilla*, what tumultuous Ideas does the Remembrance ſtill raiſe within my Soul, though conſcious of my Crime, tho' reſolved not even to wiſh a Repetition, I ſcarce can refrain curſing the rigid Maxims which tear me for ever from the Circle of thoſe tranſporting Arms.

After what had paſſed, all Reſerve was baniſhed: — I diverted him with the Extravagancies of my Paſſion, related to him the whole Progreſs of it, and all the little Whims that had come into my Head for following him in ſome Shape or other, ſo as to be near his Perſon; told him how much I had languiſhed for an Opportunity of ſpeaking to him, and reminded him how incapable I had been of doing ſo whenever he approached: — A Narrative, which tho' he ſeemed charmed with, he could not forbear frequently interrupting, by crying, How many bliſsful Moments have we loſt; but the *future* muſt pay the Omiſſion of the *paſt*: — Then would he preſs me to his Boſom, — gaze on me, as if each Look were to be his laſt: — I, equally inſpired, returned his Ardours with Intereſt, — at every melting Kiſs each gave a Soul; that loſt in mutual Extacies, we thought of nothing but the preſent Bliſs, till the Noiſe of Somebody trying to open the Door, reminded us that it was poſſible we might be miſſed by our reſpective Friends: — We then agreed to ſeparate,

ſeparate; — I was too much diſconcerted to return to the Ball, ſo reſolved to go down and pop into a Chair as privately as I could, while he went in and joined the Company; it was now Time for him to aſk where we ſhould meet again: I told him at my own Lodgings, and having that very Day received a Letter from my Lord, tore off the Direction, and gave it to him to prevent any Miſtake: He put it carefully into his Pocket-Book, calling it his Paſſport to *Paradiſe*; after which he embraced me with an Intention to take Leave of me for that Night, but we both found, to part was not a Taſk ſo eaſy to be accompliſhed as we had imagined, one Endearment was productive of another, till we became again abſorbed in Extacies unutterable: Poſſeſſion ſeemed but to enflame Deſire in him, the Tranſports he received and gave, inſtead of growing languid by Repetition, became more vehement, and the laſt dear Embrace was warmer than the firſt.

At length, however, we yielded to the cruel Neceſſity of tearing ourſelves aſunder, and having appointed the next Evening for re-enjoying that Heaven of Joys we were now obliged to quit, he retired to the Company, and I came home, as yet too much charmed to regret the Sacrifice I had been making to an unlawful Flame. — The high Birth, the amiable Qualifications, the enchanting Perſon, the whole World's Admiration of my lovely Conqueror, I thought a Sanction for my yielding, and juſtified Diſhonour; nay I know

know not whether I was not infatuated enough to glory in my Undoing as a Merit in me, and rank my Crime among the Virtues.

The present Tranquility of my Mind, eased of the Burden it had so long sustained, and the many restless Nights I had endured, made me sleep so profoundly, that I awoke not till the Day was far advanced. — I rose full of a thousand pleasing Images, little suspecting the Horrors I was soon to encounter: — *Love*, that had betrayed me into *Guilt*, gave me no Warning of the dreadful *Punishment* attending it, but suffered my Fate to rush upon me at once, and Despair, with all its black Attendants, to take me by Surprize. — I was scarce dreſt when my Woman presented a Letter to me, which she said was left for me by a Footman in a rich Livery, which, on her describing, I knew must be that of *Alexis*: — My Heart fluttered when I opened it, was apprehensive some Accident had happened to delay the Happiness I expected, for an Hour or two beyond the appointed Time, or perhaps the whole Evening; this would have been a Disappointment my fond impatient Soul could have but ill supported, — judge, then, what became of me, when I found the Contents were as follow.

To the too amiable Calista.

" FULL of the Joys I had possessed, and " already panting to renew them, the Moment " I

" I came home, my greedy Eyes devoured the
" dear Direction to my expected Scene of Bliss.
" But happening to turn my Regards on the
" other Side of the Paper, I found, *affectionate*
" *Husband*, with the Name of *Altamont* sub-
" scribed, — O Heaven! how deadly a Damp
" did these few Words cast on my warm De-
" sires! I shuddered at the Injustice I had been
" guilty of :— What, my *Calista*, married? —
" cried I, a Wife! — Have I been rifling
" another's Treasures? — Basely stealing those
" Kisses, those Embraces, all those nameless
" Blessings which Marriage had before made
" the sole Property of another! — O *Calista*,
" what have we done? — To what a Crime
" have we been betrayed by Youth and Nature?
" Think too, charming Woman, think you are
" a *Wife!* — Think on the Vows you made
" before the Altar, and let the Remembrance
" of them hereafter, secure you from all the
" Approaches of unlawful Love.'—You are not,
" alas! the Mistress of yourself, you have no-
" thing to bestow, all that you are is *Altamont's*,
" nor dare I, now I know his Right, invade it.
" Would Heaven forgive the Violation, the
" Laws of Society and of Honour, forbid us
" ever to meet again. — Break therefore through
" the sweet Enchantment by which we both
" were seized, and return to Virtue and those
" Joys which *Hymen* warrants: — For me,
" I shall endeavour, though difficult the Task,
" to banish from my Mind all Memory of
those

" those transporting Moments we passedtogether,
" since as I cannot think on them without *Plea-*
" *sure*, I cannot without *Guilt*. — Pity, but
" vouchsafe no more to

ALEXIS.

MADNESS, *Lucilla*, the most raving Madness, was short of what I felt in the first Shock this cruel Billet gave me: — I imagined it proceeded from Disgust, that something in my Person or Behaviour had been less pleasing than he pretended, and accused him of Deceit, Perfidiousness, Ingratitude; branded his Character with every Epithet the Fury of a disappointed Woman could invent; for I could not presently believe a Sense of Virtue, in an Affair of this Nature, could in his Sex, and at his Years, be carried to so high a Pitch; but when I reflected on that wild Exuberance of Transport he had received, and those furious Emotions, with which even our last Embrace was accompanied, I found they had all been such as no false or luke-warm Inclination could have feigned. — My Resentment then ceased, and the most poignant Grief succeeded; — awhile I gave a Loose to Tears and Complainings, but at length some Glimmerings of Hope darted upon my Mind, and abated my Despair: I fancied, if I could but once more see him, I should be able still to allure him back to Love, and triumph over all his boasted Virtue and Resolution. — Alas, I wickedly judged of

him by myſelf. — I loſt no Time in making an Experiment, ſo flattering to my Wiſhes. — I wrote to him in Terms which I thought it would be in the Power of no Man, who had the leaſt Affection, to reſiſt: — I aſſured him that my Marriage had not been the Effect of Choice; that though a *Wife* he had my *Virgin* Heart; and begged to ſee him once more, even though he brought with him only the cool Affection of a Brother; in fine, I omitted nothing that the extremeſt Love, Grief, and Deſpair, could in their different Turns enable me to urge. — This I ſent by a Servant, who after waiting a conſiderable Time for an Anſwer, at laſt brought Word, that *Alexis* would wait on me that ſame Evening. — I now half aſſured myſelf of Conqueſt, I thought I knew enough of his Conſtitution to depend on his relapſing into Love and fond Deſire, in ſeeing me on all that Height of mingled Grief and Deſperation, which I too truly felt to take any Pains to diſplay.

My inward Agitations did not hinder me from taking all imaginable Care to make my outward Form as agreeable as poſſible: Having dreſſed myſelf in the moſt becoming Negligence, I paſſed the Time till his Approach in conſulting my Glaſs, and practiſing every captivating Look: At length he came, I received him in my Bedchamber, pretending the Diſorder his Letter had involved me in, would not permit me to quit it. He frankly told me, he expected no leſs Effects from

from what he had wrote, but conjured me to consider how necessary it was for my future Peace I should confess the Justice of it. Should we, said he, indulge the Gratification of this guilty Flame for the present, it could not be of long Continuance; — our criminal Endearments must break off in Time; — it is not in the Nature of Things that we can always be together; — you must one Day return to your native Country, to your Friends, and to your Husband; or if even you would quit all for Love, my Affairs may oblige me to marry; — a thousand other Accidents might part us; — an Amour of this kind must be transient,—they ever were, and ever will be so. Had you indeed been free from any other Engagement, we might have gratified our mutual Inclination while Convenience permitted us to do so, and the soft Error might have found Excuse; but, Madam, continued he, I never can be guilty knowingly of violating a Husband's Rights.

I SUFFERED him to go on in this Manner, without Interruption, but the Coldness of his Expressions struck me to the Heart, and beginning now again to think this Prudence in him sprung merely from the Want of Love, burst at last into Reproaches little becoming of me, or the Resolution I had formed: — How much you wrong me, replied he, Heaven and my Heart is witness; — nothing but the sincerest good Wishes for the Re-establishment of your Peace of Mind, should have prevailed upon me to ex-

pose myself to the Temptation of seeing you again. — May I then believe you do not hate me, cried I weeping? — Could I be capable of such Ingratitude, replied he, as not to love you, it would be a Sin equal to indulging that Love in Opposition to the Dictates of Reason and of Honour. — Fain would I have found some Arguments to confute what he had said, but there were in Nature none; my Soul avowed the Justice of his Reasoning, and I could only tell him, I could not live if banished from his Presence, that with this Passion, this Languishment about me, I never could think of returning to a Husband, who was always *indifferent*, and now *hateful* to me; and such Stuff, which shewed rather the Violence of my Love, than the Force of my Understanding. I could see, however, a certain Tenderness in his Eyes, which made me hope, his Heart was not unaffected by my Despair. — I have Reason, indeed, to think it was so, though he forbore any farther Testimonies, and entreating I would attend to what he had to say with Patience, began to display the Folly and Danger of suffering ourselves to be guided by guilty or inconvenient Passions, with so much Eloquence, that I was presently convinced, even in spite of myself: — While expatiating on the Beauty of Virtue, and the sweet Content which rises from a Consciousness of doing well, I thought an Angel spoke, seraphic Energy flowed in each charming Accent, — all Heaven was in his Voice, and while he uttered

what

what Sacred Truth inſpired, the Divinity of his Morals ſeemed to brighten all his Aſpect; celeſtial Glories darted from his Eyes, and thrilled my Soul with pure and hallowed Fires, far different from thoſe I had ſo lately felt: — I now looked on him as a ſuperior Being diveſted of the groſs Senſations of Fleſh and Blood; the Paſſion I had for his Perſon was now converted into an Adoration of his Precepts; I threw myſelf at his Feet, bathing them with Tears of true Contrition, and bleſt the Virtue which had recovered me from Guilt and Shame. — But, O *Lucilla*, ſee the Tranſition! — this angelick Preacher was very near being incapable himſelf of practiſing the Doctrine he had taught, — he raiſed me with indeed no more than a Brotherly Affection, but in kiſſing off the Tears which ſtill hung upon my Cheeks, began to deviate from his Sublimity, and fall into meer Man. — As I was every Thing he pleaſed to make me, and my Converſion yet weak and uneſtabliſhed, I ſympathized in the Relapſe, and returned his Preſſures with more Warmth than became a Saint; on which he, ſenſible of the Danger, tore himſelf away, crying O, it is too much for Nature to ſuſtain, farewell, too charming of your Sex, farewell for ever. — With theſe Words, he ſhot out of the Room, leaving me to bluſh at my Weakneſs, and reflect with Amazement on his tranſcendent Virtue.

If to have the entire Command of oneſelf be the greateſt Proof of Heroiſm, *Alexis* muſt

ſurely be allowed to excel all Precedent. — Bred up in all the Gallantries of a luxurious Court, formed beyond all his Sex for the Delights of Love, and of a Complection to reliſh them in the moſt exquiſite and ſuperlative Degree. — Skilled in every Art to pleaſe, and feeling Pleaſure in exceſs, yet at the vigorous Age of two and twenty, thus tempted by me and his own amorous Emotions, had Strength of Reaſon and Reſolution to break through the Excitements of Youth and Nature, even in the Moment they moſt demanded Gratification.

This glorious Example I am endeavouring to imitate. I quitted the Town the very next Day, and went to a Country Village about twenty Miles off, but my unſettled Thoughts ſuffered me to continue there but three Days; from thence I came to ****, where I now am, and expect the Favour of a Letter from you, but you muſt write ſoon, or it will be in Danger of miſſing me; for I cannot flatter myſelf with being able yet awhile to remain long in any one Place; —this I am certain of, that it will be a long Time before I ſhall have the Happineſs of ſeeing you, without you had Friendſhip enough to take a Voyage to me, for as to my Return, I know not when, or whether I ſhall ever bring myſelf to ſee again a Huſband whom I cannot love, and am conſcious I have injured.

Let

Let my Example be of this Advantage to you, dear *Lucilla*, to avoid, if possible, becoming a *Wife*, without being first enough a *Lover* to secure your Heart from any future Impressions; but if your hard Fate, and the Will of unrelenting Parents, should compel your Inclinations, think not yourself at Liberty after that to make any other Choice. — *Alexis* has convinced me, that Marriage-Vows are not less binding because forced: — The Violation of them is unpardonable by Heaven and Mankind, all good Angels forsake the transgressing Wife, and the Contempt of the World pursues her Steps: — Her Family, her Friends, look on her as their Shame, she is the Ridicule of her Acquaintance, and in the End, scarce pitied by her Seducer.

But these are Exhortations which I dare believe you will stand in little need of, Love is however so powerful a Passion, and of a Nature so insinuating, that the strictest Virtue may sometimes call for Example and Remonstrances to guard against its Encroachments; mine at least will be of no Prejudice, and I am certain will be looked upon by you as well meant, and proceeding from the sincerest good Wishes that your Lot may be as happy as mine is miserable. — I live in a dismal Solitude; no Conversation but my own disturbed Thoughts; the oftner therefore you write, and the longer your Epistles are, the more welcome they will be. If you can find nothing to alleviate my

Shame, for having departed from the Path of Virtue, congratulate my Return to it, and assist me in the Perseverance. Adieu, I fear I have tired you with these tedious Particulars, and it is Time now to conclude with subscribing myself,

My dear *Lucilla*,

Yours, *&c.*

CALISTA.

EPISTLE LXXII.

In Answer to the foregoing.

From Lucilla *to* Calista, *endeavouring to console her with the Hopes that the Fault she had been guilty of might find Excuse, as it was unpremeditated, and occasioned by the Force of an involuntary Passion, and acquainting her that her Husband lived publickly with a Mistress.*

Dear Madam,

THE Confidence you are pleased to repose in me, in an Affair of so nice and delicate a Nature, is an Honour which I can never too much, nor too gratefully acknowledge, yet not all the high Sense I have of it, can keep me from being extremely surprized to find the Effects of Love

Love ſo violent in a Heart, I thought guarded againſt all the Approaches of that Paſſion in whatſoever Shape they came. — To be captivated to the Degree you were, and to be ſo, without any Attacks for that Purpoſe on the Side of your Conqueror, ſeems to me to have ſomething ſupernatural in it, and is a Prodigy beyond all I ever heard of, except the Sequel to your Amour, and that indeed is ſuch as would gain no Credit with me from any other than yourſelf. — I can eaſily believe *Alexis* has all the Graces you paint him with, and ſtand leſs amazed at your Behaviour in the firſt Scene between you, when Love, Surprize, and Opportunity, all joined to inſpire mutual Wiſhes, than I can at that of *Alexis* after knowing you were a Wife. — He that could know Deſire to ſuch Exceſs, yet ſuppreſs that Deſire when moſt enflamed, the Object preſent, nay, even languiſhing with equal Wiſhes, and ſnatch himſelf away to obey the Calls of Virtue and Honour: — He that could do this muſt ſure be more than Man. — Such Lovers, Madam, are not the Growth of every Age; he ſtands alone, the Nonpariel of the Times. — I am no Judge of the Raptures you deſcribe with ſo much Energy, but am of the Difficulty of Self-denial; it is therefore this latter Part of your Lover's Character which charms me, and I know not whether, unſeeing, I am not in love with him myſelf. — It is certain, that ſhould Fortune ever throw him in my Way, I ſhould behold him with the extremeſt Admiration, and

as

as I have been told, that Admiration of a Person of a different Sex, has a Danger in it, I think it will be best for me to keep at a Distance, and content myself with idolizing the Beauties of his Mind.

You will say, perhaps, I am too gay on a Subject which has proved so serious to you; but I do it to divert you from thinking too deeply either on the having indulged, or subdued a Passion of so extraordinary a Nature, and which as it was involuntary, and the Consequence unpremeditated, I hope will find Excuse.

And now, dear Madam, I have somewhat to acquaint you with, which before the Receipt of your last Letter, I should not have presumed to have mentioned, but in your present Situation of Mind, I think cannot be displeasing to you.

You had not left *London* many Days before it was known that your Lord had been inspired with a most violent Flame for a young Girl called *Cloe*, who though of a very mean Birth and Education, had Virtue enough to resist all the fine Things he said to her, nor yielded till he had not only made her a large Settlement, but also provided for all her Family.—At first he kept her in a private Lodging, but for some Time past has taken her into his House, where she now in all Respects supplies your Place, does the

the Honours of his Table, has the entire Command of all the Servants, and ſo great an Aſcendant over him, that he declares publickly he will make her his Wife, if Fortune ſhould ever put it in his Power ; — a civil Way, you will ſay, of wiſhing you out of the World ; but that can have little Effect either on your Health, or Peace of Mind; on the contrary, the Inſult gives you a fair Pretence of living ſeparate from a Huſband who has now proved himſelf unworthy of you; and you may return without any Danger of being teized by your Kindred with Importunities for a Reconciliation. — The Blame of your former Diſagreement falls now wholly to his Share, and the World will pity you for that which in ſecret gives you Matter of Rejoicing.

Hasten then, dear Madam, your Departure from a Place, which in ſpite of all your Reſolution, cannot but preſent you with continual Occaſions for Reflections of a Nature dangerous either to your Virtue or your Peace of Mind. Whatever contributes to preſerve the too charming Idea of *Alexis*, muſt be fatal to the *one*, as the Memory of thoſe unhappy Circumſtances which eternally divide you muſt be to the *other*. An entire Forgetfulneſs of both, can alone reſtore you to that Tranquility you once enjoyed, and it is therefore neceſſary, that new Scenes, new Amuſements, ſhould chaſe away the Images of the paſt; — theſe will not be wanting among Friends from whom you have ſo long been abſent

ſent, and to whom your Return will be as welcome, as it has been impatiently longed for, I beg you will be aſſured by none with more Sincerity, than by

Dear Madam,

Your moſt obliged

And moſt faithfully devoted

Lucilla.

P. S. I have been ſo much taken up with your Affairs, that I had little Thought of any Thing relating to myſelf, and had almoſt forgot to entreat you will accept my Thanks for the kind Advice you are ſo good to give me.—But I aſſure that I am ſo perfectly convinced from your Example, and that of many others of my Acquaintance, that a ſolid and ſincere Attachment to *one*, is the beſt Defence againſt the Attacks of Paſſion in Favour of any *other*; that I am abſolutely determined never to give my *Hand* but to a Perſon who has before fully engaged my *Heart*, nothing being in my Opinion, more ſtupid than to imagine the Familiarities of a *Huſband* will effect that which the Aſſiduities of a *Lover* ſtrove for in vain. Once more, dear Madam, adieu.

EPISTLE LXXIII.

In Answer to the foregoing.

From Calista *to* Lucilla, *acquainting her, that she was rejoiced to hear her Husband lived publickly with a Mistress, and assuring her that she would now forthwith return to* England, *as his Behaviour had given her a Pretence to refuse living with him again.*

Dear *Lucilla.*

HOW strange is the Condition of my Heart, how different am I from my Sex, and how changed from what I was once myself: — That which would fill any other Woman with Rage and Grief, affords me the extremest Satisfaction, and what to have known a Month ago, would have fired me with Resentment, now is the only Consolation I could possibly receive in my present Situation. — The Knowledge of *Altamont's* Perfidy and Unworthiness has rendered him more agreeable than any Thing else in his Power could have done. — Little does he, or the World imagine, how much I prize the Favour he confers on me by this public Insult: — I am no longer tenacious of the Privileges of a Wife; no longer has the Pride of Beauty any Influence over me; gladly I resign my Rights, and yield

yield to the Charms of my Rival : — Long may *Cloe* triumph; *Calista* envys not, nor will attempt any Disturbance to her Peace ; — her Conquest is my Gain, and I recover my Liberty by my Husband's being made a Slave. Fortune that will not make me blest, at least has made me easy, and I ought not to complain, since as I cannot be happy with the Man I love, I am not doom'd to be wretched with the Man I hate.

I have no Objection to return to my native Country, and those Friends, from whom, alas I have too long been absent ; I shall, therefore, take your Council, and make all the Haste I can, from a Place so fatal to my Honour, and my Repose. — Too true indeed it is, that I can never hope to be easy while I breathe in the same Air with my still adored *Alexis* : -- Whether Change of Place will make any Change in my Sentiments, I know not, but I have still Remains enough of Discretion to make the Experiment, and do every Thing in my Power to lose all Memory both of the Pleasure and the Pain of what has past. If I am not so happy to succeed, I have the Comfort of knowing I have one Friend into whose faithful Bosom I may pour out the secret Anguish of my Soul. I know you will indulge the tender Folly, if Reason and the utmost Efforts I can make should prove ineffectual to subdue it entirely. — Do not however imagine I shall persecute you too much on this score; for I assure you I am more the Heroine than I knew I was myself, till just now

I

I have given a Proof of it, which after what I have ſaid you would little expect from me; it is this, happening to be at a Sale of Curioſities, a Picture of *Alexis* was among the Number; my firſt Emotions tempted me to buy it, and I was going to count down the Sum demanded, when all at once Reflection told me, that this was not the Way to gain a Victory over Paſſion, and I exchanged my Purchaſe for a St. *Agnes* ſet with Emeralds.—This, *Lucilla*, you muſt own was a great Piece of Self-denial, and I am not without Hopes will be followed by others, which in Time, will reſtore me to that State of Mind I once enjoyed.

This is the laſt Letter you will receive from me; I have already began to prepare for my Journey, and if no croſs Accident intervenes ſhall be with you in about ten or twelve Days. Adieu.

My dear *Lucilla*,

Believe me ever yours, *&c.*

Calista.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXXIV.

From Philoclea *to* Eusebia, *giving her the Relation of a very remarkable Dream she had the Night before, and the Interpretation she put upon it; with some Reflections concerning Dreams in general.*

My dear *Eusebia*,

IT is necessary I should know you no less than I do, to venture to write to you on the Subject which now employs my Pen, I should otherwise infallibly become the Jest of all the Assemblies in Town. — To be fashionably polite, one must turn into Ridicule every Thing relating to the Intellectual World: — The present Judgment will admit of no Intuition by Dream or Vision, though our Forefathers, who in other Things are allowed to be at least as wise as we are, had great Faith that Way, and History, as well profane as sacred, is full of Instances, which might, I should think sufficiently, authorize Belief. It is however my Happiness, that I have one Friend to whom I may communicate my Sentiments on this Head, with the same Freedom I revolve them in my own Mind.

IT must be confessed, that every Dream is not to be regarded: — Those Things which the waking

waking Mind is anxious for, or even what we happen to be discoursing on before going to rest, is frequently presented to us, by some incoherent Images, in Sleep.— The Distempers of the *Body* also, have a very great Influence over the *Mind*, insomuch, as Persons afflicted with the Dropsy, shall imagine themselves falling into Water; others troubled with the Rheumatism, Gout, or Stone, shall fancy they are extended on a Rack; and in such Cases one must be very weak indeed, to look on them as any other than the Symptoms of our present Situation; as Mr. *Dryden* justly expresses it in his Fable of the Cock and the Fox.

When Choler overflows, then Dreams are bred
Of Flames, and of the Family of Red,
Red Dragons, and red Beasts, in Sleep we view,
For Humours are distinguish'd by their Hue;
From hence we dream of Wars and warlike Things,
And Wasps and Hornets with their double Stings.
Choler adust, congeal our Blood with Fear,
Then black Bulls toss us, and black Devils tear,
In sanguine airy Dreams aloft we bound,
With Rheums oppress'd, we sink in Rivers drown'd.
The domineering Humour *makes the Dream;*
And as we waking are, *in* Sleep *we* seem.

But it is not of such Dreams as these I speak, there are others which can neither have any Connection with the *Accidents* relating to the *Body*, or be instigated by the *Passions* of the *Mind*;

ſuch as are not, nor can be, of ourſelves, but owing to the Interpoſition of ſome ſupernatural Power.

Of theſe there ſeems to me to be two Sorts: The *one*, inſpired by our *evil Genii* filling us with Emotions, and tempting us to Actions deſtructive of our Well-doing here, and Happineſs hereafter; the, *other* I cannot but think are the Admonitions of our *Guardian Angel*, warning us of any impending Danger, and exciting in us Sentiments worthy of our Being.

I Believe there are few People who have not experienced them in both theſe Kinds, tho' the Remembrance frequently paſſes off, and is loſt amidſt the Hurries of the Day; for my own Part, I muſt aver that nothing extraordinary, whether of Good or Ill, has ever befallen me, without having had ſome previous Notice of it in a Dream, though I perhaps diſregarded and thought no more of it, till the Event brought it afreſh into my Mind.

You will wonder, perhaps, what has put it into my Head to make this Definition; but I ſhall ſoon eaſe you of your Suſpence, by telling you in what Manner my Soul has been employed while my Body lay quietly in my Bed laſt Night. I do aſſure you, I went to ſleep with a Mind void of Care, — my Thoughts were bent on no Deſigns, — my Heart panted with no Deſires, my Brain was vacant of all Sorts of Ideas, and

was

was therefore more at Liberty to receive whatever Impreſſions the intellectual Powers had Leave to put upon it.

I imagined myſelf on a Plain of ſuch vaſt Extent, that on which ever Side I looked, nothing appeared to terminate the Proſpect. — I do not remember I made any Reflections on the Place I was, but know I ſeemed to wander on, till all at once the moſt magnificent Temple that Imagination can form, roſe to my tranſported View. — The Roof was all of burniſhed Gold, and of a ſtupendous Height, ſupported by an infinite Number of Pillars of Jaſper, intermixed with Porphyry and Emerald, and wreathed with Diamonds of a prodigious Magnitude, in the Form of Stars, — the Cupulo ſeemed loſt in the Sun-Beams, or rather was itſelf a Sun too dazzling to behold. — So glorious an Object attracted me no leſs in Sleep than it would have doubtleſs done had I been waking: — I made what haſte I could toward it, and as I drew more near, heard Sounds too raviſhing for Deſcription, compared to theſe, how harſh, how diſcordant are all the boaſted Choirs of *Rome* and *Venice!* O that it were poſſible for me to make you ſenſible of even the thouſandth Part of the Claims of this ſeraphic Sympathy! but Tongue cannot utter, nor Heart be able to conceive what it was I heard: — My Soul was all diſſolved, and though, as you know, I have no Voice, and underſtand but little of Muſic, had then the Vanity to fancy I could join in the Celeſtial Chorus, and

to that end ſent my Eyes round the Temple in Search of ſome Paſſage where I might enter: — I looked, — I wandered through every ſpacious Area between the Pillars, but could find no Gate nor any Way which led to the Inſide, till, when I was beginning to deſpair, a ſmall winding Stair-caſe at one Corner preſented itſelf to me, by which I haſtily aſcended, imagining it would conduct me to a Gallery, as indeed it did: — Having reached the Top, I was met by a Woman, whom I took to be one of thoſe, who in Churches make a Profit of opening the Pews, and plucked out my Purſe in order to make her the Preſent uſual on ſuch Occaſions; but how great was my Confuſion when I found it entirely empty! — I was going to make ſome Apology, but ſhe prevented me, by telling me I could have no Admittance, and at the ſame Time waved her Hand in Token that I muſt go down again. — No Horror, no Diſtraction ſure ever equalled what methought this Diſappointment involved me in. — It broke not, however, the Bonds of Sleep till I was quite deſcended, and turning back to take yet one more View of that glorious Receſs from which I had been driven, I ſaw it no more; — the heavenly Proſpect was vaniſhed, and inſtead of the fine Plain I had paſſed over, I now found myſelf in the middle of a kind of Market-place, crowded with a confuſed Rabble, which in ſtruggling to get through I awaked; but in a Diſorder which I cannot well expreſs; — the Glories of the Temple, and that angelic Company into which I was not permitted

to

to mingle, dwelt ſtill upon my Mind, and it was ſome Time before I could recollect that all had paſſed was but a Dream.

It was no more, it is certain; yet, O *Euſebia!* my Reaſon tells me there was a Meaning in it of the utmoſt Importance to my future State; — In what Manner can I interpret my being refuſed Admittance to that Manſion of Divine Bliſs, (for what I ſaw could be a Repreſentation of nothing leſs) but to being found an unworthy Gueſt? — I am not ſo ſuperſtitious as to imagine St. *Peter's Pence* was the thing required of me, the Money ſeemingly expected, and which I had not to offer, was only an Allegory, and meant my being unprepared with the only real Paſſport to immortal Happineſs, a pure Heart and an unblemiſhed Mind. — I endeavour indeed to keep my Conſcience as void of Offence as poſſible, — am guilty of no groſs Crimes, — do all the Good that is in my Power, and am far from even wiſhing Hurt to any one; — but alas! I want that true Spirit of Piety, — that Energy of Devotion without which I am of Opinion none can be qualified for the Society of Beings who breathe nothing but celeſtial Raptures. Yet how difficult are theſe ſublime Ideas to be attained in a World which has but too many Allurements for the Senſes! Where every Day ten thouſand thouſand Images, trifling in themſelves, but all enchanting to our groſs Capacities, ſtart up and drag the Soul back from its wiſhed-for Height, to earthly Pleaſures, and the Joys

of Nature.—After all, my dear *Eusebia*, this Clay of ours, which we are so extravagantly fond of, and takes so much Pains to adorn, is our greatest Enemy, and while we carry it about us, our utmost Endeavours to become as Spiritual as we ought, will be in vain; to *make those Endeavours*, therefore, I flatter myself, is all that is expected from us, and it is for that Purpose only our Guardian Angel is commissioned to remind us.

But I have troubled you too long on a Theme which you know so much better than myself how to reason upon, and I ought rather to have asked your Opinion, than pretended to give you mine; —you will however pardon it, from

My dear *Eusebia*,

Yours sincerely,

Philoclea.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXXV.

Aſtrea *to* Publicola, *a Gentleman of great Wit and Learning, requeſting him to write in the Defence of Virtue and Morality; and ſetting forth the abſolute and indiſpenſable Obligation on every one who had a Capacity for it, to uſe their utmoſt Endeavours for a Reformation of Manners.*

Sir,

TO adhere to the Rules of Virtue in Times when Vice is the ſureſt Title to Reſpect and Favour, is truly great in you: — Publickly to eſpouſe the depreciated Precepts of Religion and Morality; — to dare the Tongue of Cenſure in a juſt Cauſe, and to be above the Sneers and Sarcaſms, which Wit ill-applied is capable of throwing out on every Thing that oppoſes the Mode of Libertiniſm, is Chriſtian Heroiſm; yet pardon me when I ſay I cannot think this enough: Heaven, who has endued you with ſuperior Talents, demands you ſhould exert them all in its Defence againſt the Affronts and Contumelies daily offered by wicked and impious Men. — Your exemplary Way of living is confined only to thoſe who have the Happineſs of being intimately acquainted with you: — What you *do*, is known but to few; and what you *ſay*, reaches

the Ears but of an inconſiderable Number, in Compariſon with the Millions who ſtand in Need of the Remonſtrances in your Power to make. — The Degeneracy and Depravity of the Age, calls loudly for a Pen like yours. — Public Enormities ſhould have public Reproof. — Thoſe who are not to be won by Precept or Example from their Errors, may perhaps be ſhamed out of them by Satire; — at leaſt, all Methods in this Caſe are to be tried, when Corruption and Immorality are at their Zenith, and Vice no longer ſculks in Corners, and ſeeks to hide its odious Head, but proudly ſtalks with gigantic Strides over all the guilty Land, licenſed and uncontrouled. — The Crimes of *Greece* had an *Ariſtophanes*; thoſe of *Rome*, a *Perſeus*, a *Horace*, and a *Juvenal*; ſhall *Britain* then want her *Publicola?*

Indeed I have heard ſome judicious Perſons ſay, that the Nation in general is not ſo wicked, as it is infatuated; that the Blame of thoſe Miſdeeds acted by the whole, ought to be laid upon a few, whoſe Artifices to enſlave and ruin could not ſucceed, without rendering the Community equally guilty with themſelves, and in great Meaſure acceſſory to their own Perdition; and I have the Charity to think this Obſervation right; but if ſo, Sir, it doubtleſs the more behoves every one, who is qualified for ſo noble an Undertaking, to uſe his utmoſt Efforts for opening the Eyes of the poor miſguided Multitude, for pointing out the Snares laid for them by

by their pretended Friends, and the headlong Destruction, into which a little, a very little Time, must inevitably bring upon them, if they persevere in following the Paths they now pursue. — To remind them that it is not Titles, it is not Power, it is not Wealth, that makes the Possessor worthy of Imitation, but as a learned and Reverend Poet has already told them,

'Tis Virtue *crowns the Statesman, and the Man ;*
Sole Source of public, and of private Peace :
For deep beneath the Monument's proud Base
In black Oblivion's Kennel shall be trod
Their execrable Names, who high in Power,
And deep in Guilt, most ominously shine
The Meteors of the State, give Vice her Head,
To License leud, let loose the public Rein,
Quench every Spark of Conscience in the Land,
And triumph in the Profligate's Applause :
Or who to the first Bidder sell their Souls,
Their Country sell, sell all their Fathers bought
With Funds exhausted, and exhausted Veins :
Who plunge (but not like Curtius, *down the Gulph,*
To bring back public Honour, *well nigh lost)*
But down the Gulph of narrow-minded Self,
Which gapes, and swallows all they ought to save.

Those, whose sole Aim is the Gratification of their sensual Appetites, delight to live like the Beasts that perish; and believe that when they leave

leave this World, they ſhall too, like them, *die all*, and be accountable for nothing they have done, are perhaps incapable of being rouſed by any Admonitions concerning a Future State, yet is it poſſible that ſome, even among thoſe, may on a pathetic Repreſentation, be touched with Remorſe for any Injuſtice they have been guilty of to others, though inſenſible of what they have done to their own Souls: — They may not be dead to *Humanity*, though to *Religion*, and thereby become leſs prejudicial to the World, if not to themſelves.

But the Number of ſuch, I hope, will be found ſmall, when ſet againſt thoſe who act meerly by *Imitation*, who *mean well*, though they *do ill*: — Poor Creatures, who never give themſelves the Pains to examine into the Merit of any Cauſe, nor the Juſtice of any Principle, but take all upon Truſt from their Superiors. — Thoſe certainly deſerve to be ſet right, and it is for their Sakes chiefly that I take the Liberty of reminding you of what is expected from you, by all who have any Remains of Virtue, or Public Spirit in them, and moſt ardently deſired by,

Sir,

Your moſt ſincere Friend

And very humble Servant,

Astrea.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXXVI.

The Answer.

From Publicola *to* Astrea, *allowing of the Necessity for doing as she desired, but excusing himself from the Attempt, as impossible for him to succeed in, for many Reasons.*

Madam,

I WILL not go about to excuse myself from complying with your Commands, by alledging Want of *Time* and *Capacity*: — You know I have enough of the *one* upon my Hands, and as for the other, *Truth* will always furnish those who fight under her Banner with Arguments sufficient to get the better of every Antagonist of Common Sense; but there are other Reasons, which I believe you will own have their Validity, that utterly deny me the Honour of encountering the Public in her Cause.

LUXURY and *Corruption* are the Vices, *Prejudice* is the Folly of the Times; and as you have been pleased, with a great deal of Justice, to observe, there is a fatal Infatuation reigns among the People, which makes them court Evil as their Good, and comes pretty near what *Moses* complained of in the *Israelites*; their Hearts are hardened, they have Eyes, and will not see, they have

have Ears, and will not hear: — We may write, but did our Pens become Scorpions in our Hands, this Age is too insensible to feel the Stings: — The admirable Author, whom you have quoted, has left little on this Score to be added by any that shall come after him, yet what does all his fine Reasoning, his Promises of immortal Joys to all the Friends of *Virtue*, and his Menaces of Destruction to the Lovers of *Vice* avail? — All praise the *Poem*, but neglect the *Precept*: — Besides, Madam, had I the Vanity to imagine I should succeed where he has failed, I should be greatly at a Loss for Means to convey my Sentiments to the World. The Pulpit you are sensible is not my Province; and the Stage is under Restrictions to which no Man of any tolerable Genius is willing to submit. The Government indeed as yet allows the Liberty of the *Press*; but yet no Author can assure himself that either his Words or Sentiments will be presented to the Public: Booksellers are of late grown Critics, and take upon them to correct the Works they exhibit: I heard of one who was so great an Adept in the Art of Mutilation, that the Author of a certain Book knew it not to be his own when published: This it seems, they do without any previous Leave; and if you ask them for what Reason the Sense is so curtailed, disfigured, and sometimes wholly reversed, they will tell you they thought it glanc'd too much on the Character of this noble Lord, or that fine Lady (their Customer perhaps) and were fearful of giving Offence. — Personal Re-

Reflections are indeed unjustifiable and unfair; it neither becomes a Gentleman nor a good Man to descend to them; *Scurrility* is not *Satire*, but *Abuse*, yet ought not Crimes to escape Censure because some one or other may be suspected to have sat for the Picture: — The Innocent have nothing to apprehend, but as *Hamlet* says,

Let the stricken Deer go weep.

Virtue and *Vice* are best shewn by being opposed to each other, — the Contrast hightens the Character of both: — Our *English Homer*, the immortal *Spencer*, excelled in this Manner of Writing all that ever went before, or have come after him; — in his Poem of the *Fairy-Queen* every pernicious Passion, and every laudable Qualification are distinguished as particular and distinct Persons: Chastity is represented in a beautiful Woman, Temperance and Fortitude in a graceful young Man; Lust and Cruelty have Forms given to them adapted to their Nature, and so on of the rest: — In the allegorical Contests between these different Characters, the Reader perceives the continual Struggles the human Mind sustains, agitated by Turns both by a *good* and a *bad* Propensity, and if he pleases may thence learn how to improve and cherish the *one* in him, and suppress the *other*.

As much however, and as deservedly this excellent Poem is still held in Estimation, I do not believe that another, though wrote with equal Spirit,

Spirit, and calculated for the ſame Intent, would be at all reliſhed at preſent. — The late Mr. *Thompſon*'s Eſſay that Way has indeed met with much greater Succeſs than I expected; yet, alas! what Effect do we find it has had on the Manners of the Age? Are the indolent more active? Are the Slaves of Pleaſure leſs fond of the enchanting Circle? — No, Madam, it is too evident that Men are as they were before the writing of that excellent Endeavour for a Reformation; and I am of Opinion, that were a commiſſioned Angel to deſcend with a Mandate from the Moſt High, offering Remiſſion for paſt Faults, and Menaces for the future, we ſhould content ourſelves with admiring the Glories that attended him, but be altogether untouched with the Purpoſe of his coming.

These, Madam, are Part of the Difficulties which deter me from becoming a public Writer; and I flatter myſelf, will be a ſufficient Apology for not launching into an Ocean whoſe every Wave is ſure to wreck my beſt Attempt; — in all elſe believe me, with the greateſt Sincerity and Reſpect,

Madam,

Your moſt devoted,

And moſt obedient Servant,

Publicola.

EPISTLE

EPISTLE LXXVII.

From Angelica, *in the Country, to* Lesbia, *in Town, reproaching her for not coming when she was expected, on some Disappointment in her Dress.*

IS it possible, my dear *Lesbia*, that you can make so frivolous an Excuse, for denying me the Pleasure of your Company, at a Time when I so much wanted it.— "Your Robe-maker had "disappointed you of a new Riding-Habit, and "you were ashamed to appear in one had been "already seen."—Nothing but seeing this under your own Hand should have made me think you capable of it:—Are you so little acquainted with your own Merit, or have so mean an Opinion of my Understanding, as to imagine you would not be the same to me in any Shape?—O! but you think others would take notice; upon my Word, those who pay regard to so poor a Trifle as Dress, are little worth dressing to please.

You give me Hope of seeing you, however, next Week, by which Time I presume you expect your new Habit to be done: I have a great Mind to mortify you, for this Delay, by insisting upon it, as a Proof of your Friendship,

to

to come in the very worſt you have; but that would be laying too great a Streſs on your Good-Nature, ſo that, on ſecond Thoughts, I ſhall leave that Matter entirely to your own Option, and only tell you, that come how you will, your Preſence will always be infinitely agreeable to,

My dear *Lesbia*,

Your's ſincerely,

Angelica.

The End of the Sixth Book.