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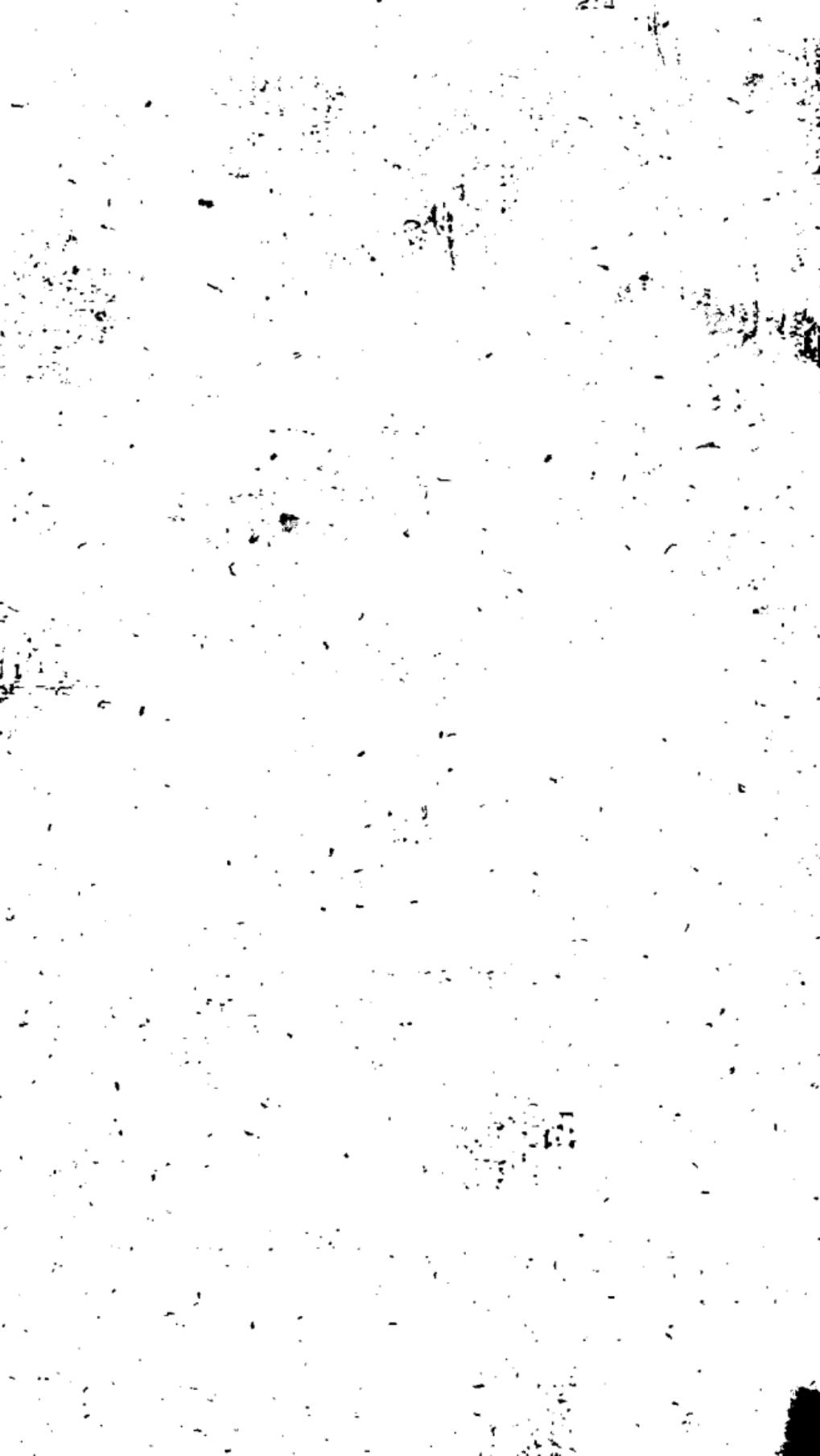
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THE
GODFREY F. SINGER
MEMORIAL
PRESENTED BY
MR. AND MRS. JACOB SINGER

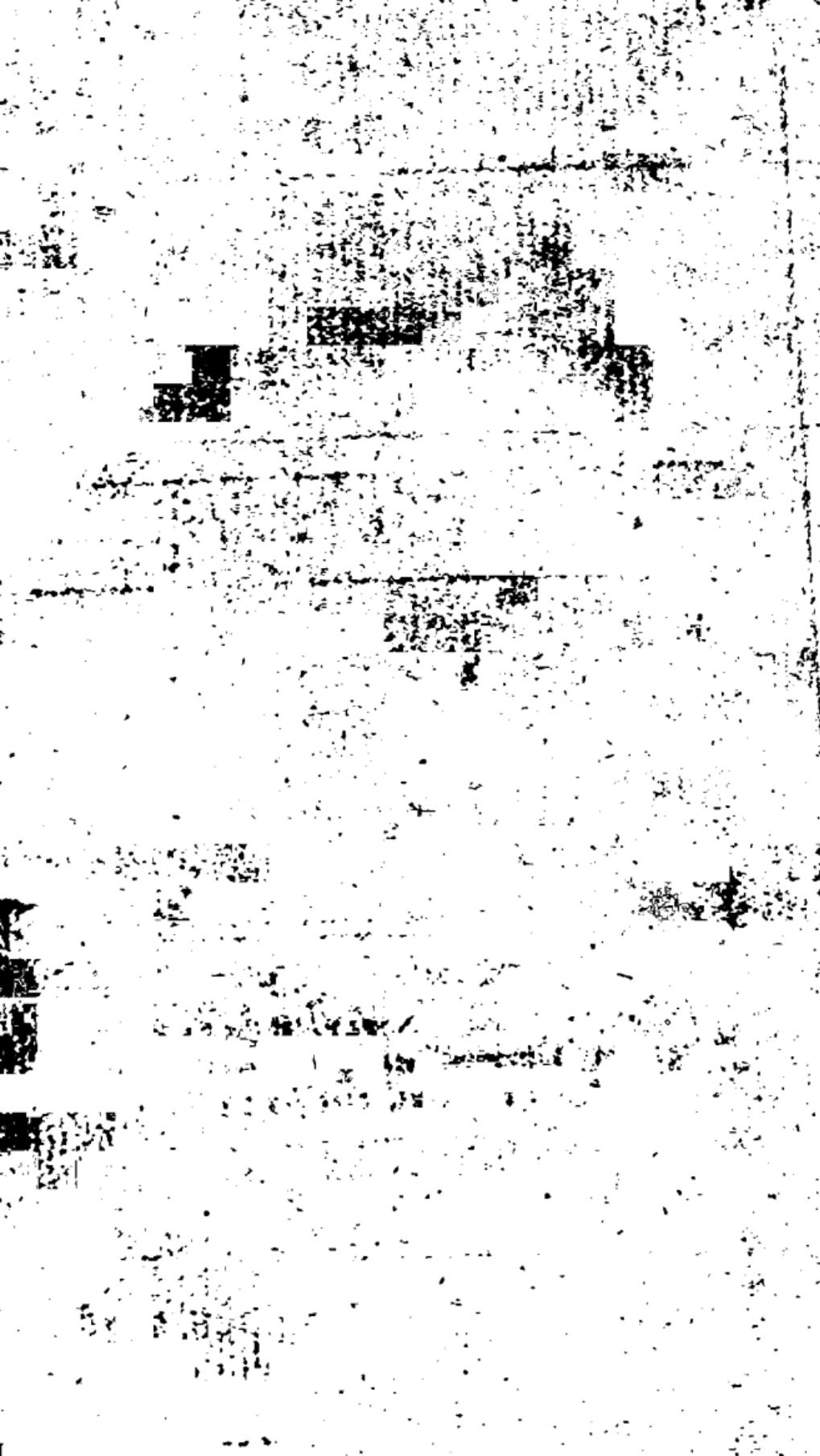










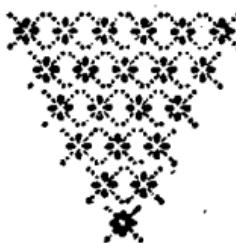


3 Tamm
2 vol

T H E
AFFECTED INDIFFERENCE,

A
N O V E L.

VOL. I.



L O N D O N:

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M DCC LXXI.

жити відомою та
заслуженою

ІІІ. ГЛАВА ІІІ

ІІІ. СІР ОЛІ

жити відомою та заслуженою

ІІІ. СІР ОЛІ

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Aug 26
V. I.

THE
AFFECTED INDIFFERENCE:
A SENTIMENTAL HISTORY.

LETTER the First.

Lady FRANCES CONNER

TO

Miss H E R B E R T.

T IS a surprising thing, my dear Bab, that people will not let me alone.—I have told Lord Altringham a thousand times, that I do not chuse to be married at all, yet he will not believe that I am in earnest. As I

VOL. I.

B

have

J. Murray's Jacob Singer
2 vols.

have refused so many men, why will he imagine that *he* shall persuade one? Does he fancy himself younger, handsomer, and even wiser than any of the men who have hitherto addressed me? Suppose I admit his superiority with regard to youth, beauty, and wisdom; may I not, at the same time, reject him even on account of that superiority which is, he imagines, the strongest recommendation? — He may not be so old as I am; and if he is younger he will be too young.— Every husband ought to be master of his family; but can a meer boy have a very magisterial appearance with a well-grown woman for his wife? — As to handsome men I have no sort of propensity to them: they are extremely apt to be self-sufficient, and to expect more esteem and regard than they can rationally demand: and as to a man who thinks himself wiser

wiser than his neighbours, I set that man down for a fool.

You see now I have advanced several substantial reasons for not listening to Lord Altringham's addresses; you cannot, therefore, imagine that I shall give him encouragement.—You, who know my dislike to a change of situation, will not wonder at my remaining as I am.—There are so few men with whom I could be happy, that I really think I should run too great a risque by running into another state—and to what end after all? Am I not happy in my present condition? Can any body assure me that I shall be happier when I am married?—Are there not a thousand chances against me? Would I be *more* than happy? “The *Italian* proverb naturally occurs to me upon this occa-

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sion ; I *was* well, *would* be better, took physick, and died."

Besides, I cannot, without the greatest absurdity, think of marrying, as I have not yet seen the man whom I can love. Indeed, Bab, the men are all entirely spoilt ; and chiefly, by the ill conduct of the women. In general, we make ourselves so cheap that they despise us ; and can we blame them ? For my part I do not—while the women are so vain, so trifling, so forward ; while they spend their time wholly in dissipation and drefs, how can they expect to gain the esteem, or preserve the affection of those to whom they are united ? In short, I begin to think that there will soon be neither marrying nor giving in marriage. Let the women then mend themselves first : when they are the character they ought to be, they may, with propriety enough, expect

expect to find themselves imitated by the men. Yet the most exemplary behaviour on the side of the wife is not always sufficient to ensure her the felicity she wishes, or even what she deserves to enjoy. Poor Lady Haverford!—has she a single fault? She has not yet, however, been able to keep the heart of the man whom she is bound to love and obey: bound! do I say? How can we tie ourselves up to love with unshaken constancy the man who marries us?—Is it not better not to be married at all?

What answer will my dear Bab return to

Her ever-affectionate

FRANCES CONNER?



LETTER the Second.

The Hon. EDWARD WALSINGHAM

TO

CHARLES D'ARCY Esqr.

I HAVE been so crowded with friends since my arrival, that I could not, till this day, seize a single moment to write to you — unquestionably you expect to find me, in this letter, giving an account of myself — but indeed I am not able to answer your expectations, for my last night's visit to Lady H — has quite obliterated every thing which passed in my mind, from the time of my arrival at Dover.

You

You will be exceedingly surprised at this information, because you do not want to be told that I have no particular propensity to her Ladyship.

"Why then hurry to *her* house before you spoke to those friends to whom you are more affectionately attached?"

I'll tell you, D'Arcy—When I left Paris, Lord H——'s brother, Col. S—, who was there, desired me to deliver a pacquet to my Lady, as it contained something very curious, which he was unwilling to put into other hands. I, therefore, hastened to execute my commission.

Her Ladyship's assembly night was the very night I happened to fix upon for the delivery of my pacquet.

There were very elegant groupes of young people of both sexes at her house. The women, indeed, were so remarkably

handsome, that I could not help telling Tryon, in a whisper, I had not seen so many beautiful creatures together since my departure from England.

He allowed that many fine girls figured before us, but added — “ You have seen Lady Frances Conner, I suppose.”

“ Not I—Is she handsomer than any of these women ?”

“ Oh ! infinitely—no comparison—she is an angel to look at, but as cold as a vestal :—a statue—she is one of those women whom every man loves, but who loves no man.”

“ Surely such a woman cannot expect to be loved ! I am not fond of a woman who is ready to fly down my throat ; but I have no idea of being enamoured with an Insensible. I should as soon think of making addresses to a *marble Venus*. ”

Floyer

Floyer came behind us just at that moment:—"Who are you talking of?" said he.

"Lady Frances Conner."

"Divine Lady Frances!" replied the Colonel: "have you not seen her, Walsingham?"

"No."

"Then you have not the least conception of what is beautiful in woman. But she is more than a common beauty: her understanding is equal to her person, and her manners are as polite as her wit is pointed."

I turned, immediately, to examine the circle around me, to see if their charms could be, possibly, surpassed.—The door opened, and a figure entered which excited all my attention. Her person was striking, but the graces with which her every look and motion were accompanied,

are beyond the power of description. Willingly would I endeavour to do justice, but I cannot attempt to make you sensible of the harmony of her voice, or of the spirited expression in her charming eyes. She is of an agreeable height and size: her complexion is clear and bright: her face is pleasingly oval. Her eyes are long, dark, and dazzling; and sometimes a delicious languor is diffused over her lovely countenance—her eye-lashes are long: her nose is strait, but her mouth—there I must drop the pencil. Her hair is of a dark chestnut—she does not defile it with powder, but dresses it in a very becoming—if not very fashionable style. Take her for all in all, I never saw a finer young creature. Her conversation is quite equal to her person: I had an opportunity to hear her talk a great while to a Mr.

Ashbury,

Ashbury, who is, they say, dying for her: (but they also add that she has refused him.) She replied to him with a sweetness which must, certainly, make him adore her. She has no airs, no vanity, not a grain of affectation—unless she *affects* to be indifferent to *me*: and I heartily wish that her indifference may be only *affectèd*.

'Tis a strange thing, D'Arcy, that there should be no medium in the behaviour of the sex to *us*: they are all frost, or all fire—I am sorry to declare that most of the women with whom I have been acquainted have been as much too forward as this Lady seems too reserved.—Not that there is any fault in her carriage in company; but if she, really, has no passions, no tender passions at least, she must be of a very unaccountable disposition, and a person

to whom one would not wish to be attached · however, do not imagine that I alarm myself about Lady Frances : I am not, in the smallest degree, inclined to be in love with her : I look on her as a beautiful, as a pleasing object ; I look on her as I do on a capital picture. —She is, indeed, the last woman I should be tempted to love—she is — I cannot explain myself—she appears to me, somehow, too much out of the common road. She is so evidently superior to the majority of her sex, that she inspires rather respect than tenderness. I admire her, but feel not the least propensity to love her.

I was saying so, during the course of the evening, in a whisper, to Tryon. He laughed, and replied, “ You are rather singular in your opinion ; but there is no accounting for taste.”

Now,

Now, will you not think that I have taken up a great deal too much of my time and paper, in writing about a woman for whom I do not care a single six pence? — To change the subject, therefore, when shall you come to town? I am impatient for a meeting, having a thousand things to communicate, which I cannot set down at present.

Yours sincerely,
EDWARD WALSINGHAM.



LETTER the Third.

Lady FRANCES CONNER

TO

Miss H E R B E R T.

I AM exceedingly out of humour; not with *you*, my dear, not with any body else but myself; and yet I cannot tell

tell why; I can only say that I wish I was any other person.

You will, most probably, exclaim at this unexpected declaration; but I am actually serious.

I was at Lady H——'s assembly last night, and found a very agreeable party.—I was desired to distinguish a Mr. Walsingham just returned from his tour through Europe—he is a handsome fellow to be sure, sensible and well-bred; and yet I don't know how, there was such a strange negligence about him—he seemed to overlook us all. His behaviour, however, was extremely polite: I never saw finer eyes, teeth, and hair, and yet, a something was wanting.—In short, I believe I wish to find fault with him, and am at a loss in what manner to begin.

You

You may, perhaps, imagine that this pretty fellow had not, in a crowded room, an opportunity to shew himself to advantage.—He shone with so much lustre that every other man was eclipsed, was nothing before him. He seemed intimate with Lord Tryon, who begged leave to introduce him to *me*.

I could not civilly refuse such an introduction you know, and, therefore, prepared myself to receive him with great good humour; but the easy *nonbalance* with which he accosted me was so totally unexpected, that I felt myself disconcerted: I was absolutely embarrassed. Indeed, Bab, I never felt myself so awkward in my life, nor did I ever look so ill—Bland suffered not a little for my disappointment; for when I came home I quarrelled with her in earnest for letting me go out such a figure. To mend

mend the matter, before I was ready to be seen this morning, Lord Haverford brought *the* very man into my dressing room, telling me, with that sarcastical laugh for which he is so famous, that he came to introduce a particular friend of his to me just arrived from Italy: there, however, his Lordship was out, for Walsingham arrived last from Paris; yet he has not caught the silly manners with which his imitating countrymen are so apt to expose themselves during their stay in that capital.—I must own, though I do not altogether like him, that nothing of the coxcomb appears in him.

Why should Lord Haverford take the liberty of bringing men into *my* apartment?

I mentioned, with some degree of warmth, the vexation which I felt on being

being taken by surprise, to my Lady ; but she, dear, good, gentle creature, cannot hinder my Lord from doing any thing he has a mind to. " I fancy," replied she, " that my Lord thinks you and Mr. Walsingham would be suitable to each other, and wishes to bring you together."

Believe me, my dear, I was still more provoked at this strange apology for my Lord's freedom—Why should he give himself the trouble to find out who will suit me, and who will not?—Really he is too officious ; impertinently so. Can he suppose that I, who have rejected so many men, though the proofs of their sincerity were indisputable, shall ever think of a man forced upon me by my guardian? Lord Haverford, as a guardian, has a right to advise me ; but he has no right to compel me, he has no right

right to make any attempts to bring me over to *his* choice.—Besides, I am very sure that this man is totally indifferent about me: not that I should be biased in his favour if—what I mean to say is, that Mr. Walsingham has a coldness, a negligence in his manner which makes me look upon him as the last man susceptible of an attachment to any woman.—How different is *his* temper from Ashbury's? One would not imagine that they were of the same species.

I wish I could persuade Ashbury to give up all hopes of me; but he *will* persist in following me every where.

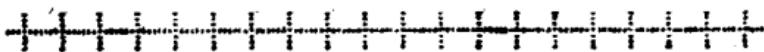
He sent up his name while Walsingham was with me—I ordered John to say I was engaged.—That was a good hint, I thought, for the other to take; but it did not prove effectual. I even fancied that he was more determined to stay

stay than he was before, he certainly grew more lively and entertaining.

I am,

Dear Bab,

Your most affectionate
FRANCES CONNER.



LETTER the Fourth.

(In Continuation.)

From the same to the same.

I COULD not endure Lord Haverford before, and now I quite hate him.

When I came down to dinner, I began to express my dissatisfaction at his bringing Mr. Walsingham into my dressing-room.

What

What do you think was his answer ?
“ You need not put yourself in a hurry
of spirits, Lady Frances ; I can assure
you that Walsingham beholds you with
the utmost indifference.”

Was there ever such a Goth to tell me
so before a room full of his company ?
I coloured up to the very eyes : I thought
I never should be cool again. Whether
Walsingham liked or disliked me, Lord
Haverford’s behaviour was extremely
rude ; but some men have a consummate
assurance. I did not know which way
to look.

Lord Tryon too was present : they,
both, smiled and whispered — at my
embarrassment, I suppose. I always
imagined that Lord Tryon was a gentle-
man, though I have long known Lord
Haverford to be a brute.—My Lady
threw down her sweet eyes as if she
pitied

pitied my confusion.—You have often laughed at me for my aversion to men, you cannot surely blame me *now*.

I shall expect you to-morrow—if you can only stay a night or two with me, you will make me very happy—I long to talk with you upon a hundred and fifty subjects. 'Tis impossible to write every thing.

Adieu.



LETTER the Fifth.

MR. WALSHINGHAM

TO

MR. D'ARCY.

IA M become intimate with Lord Haverford's family. My Lord carried me yesterday morning into Lady Frances's

Frances's dressing-room : she lives with him and Lady Haverford : the latter is her relation, and a very amiable woman.

Lady Frances looked, I thought, both disconcerted and angry at the sight of me : my appearance was certainly abrupt, but I was not answerable for it. I could not, however, be displeased, because I was gratified with the sight of a fine woman in one of the most elegant dishabilles I ever saw ; yet there was a carelessness in her dress, which plainly discovered that she intended not to have been surprised in it. Lord Haverford should not have favoured me in a manner displeasing to *her* : there was no occasion for such an unpolite proceeding. She had a glow upon her face which added new beauties to it. At first, I imputed her colouring to anger, but I changed

changed my opinion afterwards, and fancied that it arose from embarrassment —yes, D'Arcy, she was enchantingly embarrassed.

While I was with her, the servant announced her lover Ashbury.

After having given the servant orders to tell him that she was engaged, she behaved with more ease: she was not only less disconcerted, but quite conversible.

In short, I was induced, by her behaviour and conversation to stay longer than I had designed.

When my Lord waited on me to the door, he asked me if I would be of their party to the opera the next night. He is going down to Haverford-hall for the holidays, and insists upon my improving his set of friends who have promised to join him there with my company.

pany. There will be a fine house, fine liquor, and fine women—what would a man have more? I have consented—but shall we not meet in town first?

Yours as usual,

E. WALSINGHAM.



LETTER the Sixth.

From the same to the same.

I WENT to the opera with Lord and Lady Haverford, and Lady Frances: the *last* behaved with a haughtiness which was quite disgusting. As I make no pretensions to her, why should she affect a shyness to *me* more than to any body else? A truly well-bred woman will treat all men with equal politeness;

ness; singularity favours of affectation — I therefore attached myself to a very agreeable girl, a Miss Herbert, the friend of Lady Frances, most undoubtedly almost as far above the common run of her sex, as her Ladyship is.— Bab — (that is her name) lives I find the greatest part of the year at Windsor: she is now in town only for a few days upon a visit.

Bab, though not so regular a *beauty* as her insensible friend, is a very pretty woman, tall, fair, and blue-eyed. I chatted with her, at intervals, a good deal — In the middle of a song of Giardini's, extremely pathetic, I turned my eyes accidentally on Lady Frances. Never had I beheld a face and figure so affectionately alluring. She appeared to be quite melted at the musick: her head rested upon her hand; soft sighs issued

from her heaving bosom, and pearly drops stole down her blushing cheeks. She averted her face on my gazing at her, as if she was fearful of having committed a fault; but, surely, to be alive to the most enchanting passions, is to discover no small degree of merit. The heart which is touch'd by the sorrows of another will not, it may be imagined, purposelly, give pain to any human creature.—No—she cannot be an insensible. And yet they tell me that, not a man has, hitherto, been able to inspire her with love. On the contrary, I am informed that she glories in her indifference.—We will leave her, therefore.

I wonder I have not seen Burton, or heard of him, since I came to England. Tryon tells me that he has taken a woman into keeping who has almost ruined

ruined his fortune, and who bullies him in such a manner that he is afraid to see any of his friends. However, as I am not afraid to encounter this formidable female, I intend to make him a visit before I go to Haverford-hall, and see if I cannot prevail on him to come among us again. He was a good-natured, agreeable fellow when I left him. How much does he injure himself, and of how much pleasure does he deprive the world, by living thus secluded from society with a creature whom he is ashamed to introduce to his friends, and whom he dares not turn off!—I do not think that a man can give a stronger proof of the imbecility of his mind, than by attaching himself to such a woman. He lives, I am told, in the neighbourhood of Windsor: I shall, therefore, have an opportunity, perhaps, to make

myself serviceable to this inconsistent Lady Frances, by carrying a letter or a message from her to her friend.

I am,

Dear D'ARCY,

Yours sincerely,

E. WALSHINGHAM.



LETTER the Seventh.

Lady FRANCES CONNER

TO

Miss HERBERT.

AND so you really admire this man? — But why make such a fuss about him, as if there never was a more sensible or handsomer fellow in the

the world? — *You* are, I fancy, as much admired by him. It does not in the least surprise me to find you the object of his admiration; but I wonder a little, I confess, at your sudden partialities in his favour.

To be sure I am a very singular creature—I do not believe there is any woman like me: I do not, at this moment, know a man whom I could love; and, I am, probably, a great deal happier than those who have a vast quantity of sensibility. — Poor Lady Haverford! what infinite vexation does she endure from the excess of her affection for my Lord; who feels, I am afraid, a very slight regard for *her*!

I never liked Lord Haverford: yet I will allow that he has a considerable share of penetration, for he told me, in a short time, that Mr. Walsingham be-

held me with a heart perfectly at ease.— How should my Lord be acquainted with Mr. Walsingham's sensations concerning me? He has not, I imagine, informed his Lordship, that he beholds me with aversion. It was not necessary for him, you know, to make such a disclosure merely for the sake of speaking his mind freely about me. As I never expected any particular civilities from him, he had no occasion to give himself the trouble to tell my Lord how disagreeable I was to him.

IN CONTINUATION.

Mr. Walsingham has just been here with me. I was taken by surprise, but entirely on your account.

You have made a conquest of this captivating man, so followed, and so admired. He came on purpose to be
favoured

favoured with a letter, or a verbal message, if I would do him the honour to trust him.

What an excellent scheme did he hit upon in order to get at *you*? There could not have been a better contrivance.—I fell in with his design by telling him that I was, at that time, writing to you, and would fetch my letter.—And so, I conclude,

With my usual sincerity,
Your very affectionate friend,
FRANCES CONNER.

LETTER the Eighth.

From the same to the same.

YOU assure me then, very seriously, my dear Bab, that Mr. Walsingham was not at all particular

in his behaviour to you ; that his visit was short, and that he has not made a *second*. I expected a different account of him. Here is a report in town, that he went to see a mistress whom he keeps not many miles from Windsor : they say that she has a daughter by him, and that he has placed her at a boarding-school in the neighbourhood.—He must have been attached to this woman before he left England, or he could not have had a daughter old enough to go to school. I thought, by Lord Haverford's fondness for him, that their characters were similar : and since things are so, my dear Bab, I would not wish you to marry him. By finding the man of our choice, attached to a mistress, after marriage, we are cruelly disappointed ; but by chusing the man who has, we know, long kept one, we act madly indeed.

I have

I have long attributed the greatest part of the evils with which matrimony is attended to our own wrong conduct. We are, most of us, in so violent a hurry to change our condition, that we do not give ourselves time to reflect upon the unhappy consequences which may result from a hasty proceeding.— We are too apt to listen to the civil speeches addressed to us by men with whom we have only a publick acquaintance, and either to construe their civilities into declarations in our favour, or to make the first advances. — The first advances, on our side, can never be made with propriety ; and she whose forwardness runs away with her discretion, ought to be punished for it.

It has long been my opinion, my dear Bab, that men and women, both, would be more happy than we commonly see

them, if they had fewer connections together. You smile; but indeed I am not in jest, I am, every day, more and more convinced that we only plunge ourselves into numberless troubles, which we never should have experienced, by our eagerness to look out for lovers— and we throw ourselves in the way of keener vexations in our search after husbands.—Husbands are generally tyrants, or totally indifferent about us when they have been married a little while: and their unhappiness after marriage frequently arises from the connections into which they enter with women of no principles or reputation, who think only about the present moment, and make the enjoyment of *that*, at any rate, the whole concern of their lives.—A woman of virtue, therefore, cannot too nicely inspect into the disposition

position of a man before she is married to him, nor shut her eyes against his temper too closely afterwards, if it happens to be a bad one.

I have been told, a hundred times, that Lord Haverford was the most tender and submissive of lovers ; and he is, you know, far from being the most affectionate of husbands.. Lady Haverford is, however, the most obedient of wives :—but I have heard his Lordship say that a meer, tame, household dove is the most insipid of all characters : and that a wife who affects to be loving is surfeiting beyond expression.. Thus, you see, Bab, that to a man of this strange cast you would not appear in a meritorious light, by a quiet and complying behaviour : with such a man indeed, you have not the smallest chance for happiness : and pray tell me, where will you find a

man, very much favoured by our sex, who does not think in this manner?

Lord Altringham, humble, and submissive as he now is, would, I dare say, in a very short time, follow Lord Haverford's example. Nay, I actually believe that the sighing Ashbury, were he married, would soon become either inconstant or indifferent.

Before you attempt to contradict these assertions, let me beseech you to look round among your married friends; then, tell me whether I have been too severe. If I have *not*, who, in her senses, would marry with so many chances against her?

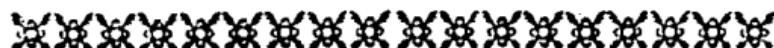
Impatient for your answer,

I remain,

Dear Bab,

Yours most sincerely,

FRANCES CONNER.



LETTER the Ninth.

Miss HERBERT

TO

Lady FRANCES CONNER.

I HAVE so often endeavoured to persuade you to have a better opinion of the men, my dear Lady Frances, and to so little purpose, that I have long despaired of bringing you over to my way of thinking.

With regard to Lord Altringham and Mr. Ashbury, I have nothing more to add to what I have said about them a thousand times : but Walsingham must not be put upon the same footing with *them*. He is superior, in every respect, to

to those, or any other men I have ever seen. There can be no sort of comparison between them. One rarely sees a man with so fine a person, with so excellent an understanding, and with so large a fortune, free from haughtiness or affectation ; free from insolence and self-conceit. I do not, however, pretend to say that Mr. Walsingham is faultless ; but I verily believe that he has fewer failings than any of his sex at his time of life, and in *his* situation in the world : nay, I am really of opinion that your sentiments correspond with mine about him.

You are piqued, my dear, because a man so universally admired has made no particular address to *you*, that's all. Were he to profess himself your lover, you would, certainly, reject him, merely to have the pleasure of saying that you rejected.

rejected him.—Now I really think this is going too far. That men have a number of foibles and weaknesses, I am very ready to allow; and I am afraid that there are some whom the best of women could not reform—yet these are only a few, and generally, the least agreeable; as he must be of a strange disposition who will not yield to reason, though it should happen to come from the mouth of a wife. *You*, and I, Lady Frances, are in no danger of falling into the hands of such a man: but we ought, nevertheless, to acknowledge merit where we really find it, and reward it if it is in our power. And I assure you I have so high an opinion of my own sex—(I hope I do not overrate them) as to believe, that we are very well qualified to contribute greatly to the happiness of those men

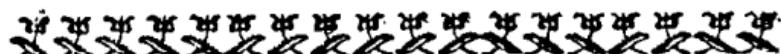
men to whom alone we ought to be united.

In spite of all the reports circulated against Mr. Walsingham, I am ready to defend him: however, I will make it my business to enquire farther—In the mean while, I cannot help imagining —don't be angry with me—that you would be extremely glad to see so amiable a man at your feet, and in the list of those who are most seriously, most affectionately attached to your Ladyship. As to myself, I am entirely out of the question.. He discovers not the slightest sensations in *my* favour.. Yet I could now almost wish, out of spite, that he *did*, that my dear Lady Frances might own herself *a little* jealous of her

Truly affectionate friend,

BARBARA HERBERT.

LETTER



LETTER the Tenth.

Lady FRANCES

TO

Miss HERBERT.

INDEED, Bab, you have said every thing in your power to rouse all the woman in me, and to make me angry—if I *could* be angry—with *you*, my long loved friend. But I shall think no more of what you have said upon a certain subject. I must, however, assure you, and assure you I *can* very seriously, that I never felt any inclination for Walsingham: consequently, it is impossible for me to be jealous of him. I wonder, indeed, how you could get such a fancy into

into your head. Whether he is virtuous or vicious I have nothing to do with him—I am totally indifferent to him. I should be exceedingly weak to be partial to the only man—almost the only man—who never discovered the smallest emotions in my favour, or the least propensity to distinguish me: and to convince you that I do not want to be distinguished by him, I positively declare I would reject him at once were he as much in love with me as Ashbury is, of whose sincerity I have no doubts. I am in earnest; nothing can alter my opinion.

I am going to make over part of my fortune to my aunt and her children. You have often heard me say, that my uncle generously added twelve thousand pounds to the fortune which my father left me; but that sum ought to have been,

been, according to my ideas of equity, divided between my aunt Lady Mary Sommers and her two daughters, as Mr. Sommers was not able to provide for them in a manner suitable to their birth. I am now of age, and at liberty to dispose of my fortune agreeably to my taste; I will therefore shew my strict regard to justice, and give the strongest proof of my affection for my above-mentioned relations, as soon as I can. I will transfer five thousand pounds to Lady Mary, and divide six thousand between my two cousins: that is, each of them shall receive three thousand on the day of her marriage, if she chuses a man of character for her husband. They cannot, I think, fall in the way of mercenary men, because their fortunes are not sufficient to tempt them. — By this proceeding, I shall enable them to bring

bring something to the men who may be inclined to marry them from inclination, and then they will stand a fair chance to be happily married.

When I mentioned my intentions to Lord Haverford, he rudely told me that I was a fool. — “ ‘Tis a very silly thing,” said he, “ to put so much money in the power of a woman ; but when she is once in possession of it, she must be an absolute ideot indeed to give it up. One would imagine, Lady Frances, that you thought the streets were paved with gold, and that you expected to take a handful at every step, as you are so ready to part with your money. You will, certainly, child, get rid of your lovers, however, by your generosity to your aunt and your cousins.”

“ I shall,

"I shall, certainly, my Lord," replied I, "put their sincerity to a trial, at least."

"Sincerity!" answered he, with a sneer; "can you expect a great deal of *that* from a man? No, no, Lady Frances, neither your large fortune, nor your pretty person, will inspire your lovers with such an old fashioned virtue, let me tell you."

"If all men are like you Lordship, I shall expect no sincerity from them."

"Smart and lively at repartee, however," replied my Lord. — "I fancy, child, you think that your money blunts the edge of your wit: but, if you will follow my advice, you will hold fast by the substance, as the shadow will afford you very fleeting pleasures."

"To contribute to the happiness of others," answered I, "is, in my opinion,
to

to enjoy the most substantial of all pleasures, consequently, the most durable."

" Why then you should keep your fortune to bestow it, with yourself, upon some young fellow, who from the slenderness of his finances, will have a keen relish for your liberality."

" Whenever I think of changing my state, my Lord, I shall not give my hand to the man of your Lordship's choice."

" I am obliged to you, Ma'am, for your compliment," replied he, bowing: " I only offer my advice as a friend: if you chuse to reject it, you must take the consequences: that's all: but the world will say that you are in a prodigious hurry to get rid of your money."

" The approbation of that part of the world, my Lord, which I am most ambitious

ambitious to please, though the smallest part — will entirely content me. I had much rather be approved of by the virtuous *few*, than admired by the undeserving *many*."

"Indeed! so very wise? You will not live long, surely, Lady Frances."

I was, by this time, quite tired of answering him: I, therefore, made him a curtsey, and, without uttering a syllable, left the room.

I expect great opposition to my design, from several persons who call themselves my friends; but those cannot, I think, be *actually* my friends who endeavour to dissuade me from the execution of a laudable action.

I am,

My dear Bab,

As usual, yours, &c.

FRANCES CONNER.



LETTER the Eleventh.

Miss HERBERT

TO

Lady FRANCES CONNER.

YOU have been in a great hurry, my dear Lady Frances; indeed you have. This man, this Walsingham is almost an angel. Every body is loud in his praise here: his whole business at *Datchet* was to cure an old friend of a violent attachment to a most vicious and extravagant woman, who had such an ascendant over him, that she managed him just as she pleased, and would have entirely spoilt a very pretty girl, whom she declares to be his own child, and whom

whom he has hitherto kept as his daughter.

Walsingham left nothing undone to convince him of the infidelity of his mistress, and of the numberless indiscretions which she committed: and not only prevailed with him to part with her, but to let *him* take care of her daughter; telling him that if he suffered his daughter to be under the direction of her mother, she would certainly make her like herself; and that if he kept the girl with *him*, she would undoubtedly be spoilt, as no man, without the assistance of a well-bred sensible woman could, possibly, educate a daughter in the manner she *should* be educated.

In this way Mr. Walsingham, I have been informed, talked to his friend, who, in consequence of his arguments and persuasions, turned off his mistress,

with a promise to allow her a hundred a year, if she would retire farther into the country, and make no attempts to see him or her daughter.

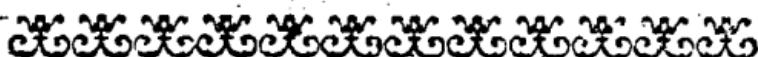
Walsingham, having brought Miss Burton to town with him, placed her with an old Lady who was a friend of his mother's, and he has ordered proper masters of all kinds to attend her.

And now, my dear, pray what fault can you find with this man? Is he not vastly superior to the common herd of pretty fellows? For my part I am quite charmed with his behaviour on the above-mentioned occasion, and I am no less struck with *your* generosity, upon which I could expatiate with as much pleasure, were I not afraid of wounding your delicacy. I have been minute in my account of Walsingham's behaviour, that you might be sufficiently informed

of

of the most amiable part of his character: for, surely, to make people sensible of their errors, and to induce them to correct them, is to be engaged in a very commendable employment: to prevent innocent girls from falling into bad hands, is to discover a godlike disposition.—Now, Lady Frances, I give you leave to become enamoured with this exemplary man as soon as you please.—Such a man will not trouble himself about the diminution of your fortune, or the increase of it: such a man can never be swayed by lucrative considerations. If he loves you, he will love you for yourself alone; and his affection will be as disinterested as that of,

Your ever sincere friend,
BARBARA HERBERT.
D 2 LETTER



LETTER the Twelfth.

Mr. WALSHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

I AM just come from Burton's — I have made him dismiss the very Lady who superintended his family. I met with several difficulties, at first, as bad habits are not easily removed. But I have not time to send you particulars of my capital manœuvre at present. As we shall meet soon, I will relate them *by word of mouth*. I have only leisure to add, that I prevailed on him to put a very pretty girl about five or six years old under my protection. I brought her

her to London in the chaise with me. The poor child wept a good deal on being taken from her papa and mama, as she called them; but as I assured her that she should see the former very often, and the latter also when she was good, she dried her pretty eyes, and prattled to me delightfully.

Were I to marry, D'Arcy, I am afraid I should be a fond father; that is, I mean I should spoil my children by indulging them too much.—Children, who are foolishly humoured, soon grow pert, saucy, and good for nothing. Children should, by kind treatment, be taught to love their parents, but they should also be early taught to revere them.—How unfit am I for the parental task?—I could not, possibly, chide this girl, though I saw that she had contracted some improper habits which

cannot be too soon rooted out: should they gather strength by age, they may never be extirpated.—I have carried her to Mrs. Stedmore, a very worthy woman who, having but a narrow income, will find her circumstances improved by taking Louisa Burton to live with her—Burton permits his daughter to be called by *his* name, thinking that if she went by her mother's, she would be more apt to enquire after her.

And now, having settled this important affair, I shall make preparations for my journey to Haverford-hall. Hoping, however, to spend some cheerful hours with *you* in town before my departure, I remain

Yours, &c.

E. W.

LETTER



LETTER the Thirteenth.

Lady FRANCES CONNER
TO

Miss HERBERT.

I THANK you, my dear Bab, for your account of Mr. Walsingham's behaviour—Let *him* thank you for the praises you have lavished on him; and take notice that, in what follows, *I* do not add to them with an ill-judging hand.

I have much to say to you, my friend, and wish to have your opinion of what I am going to mention.

As I am of age, I am, consequently, at liberty to settle myself wherever, and in what manner I please. I intend

to leave Lord Haverford's house, though I shall be exceedingly sorry to part from my Lady ; but I hope to reconcile her to my departure soon, by telling her that as my marriage—for which she is very urgent—must necessarily occasion a separation between us, it is better to wean ourselves from each other before that event. It is not my design, indeed, to be married at all ; but I cannot tell how to procure her consent by any other mode of proceeding. I shall be loth to leave her : she is a very amiable woman : my desire to remove from hence arises from my being dissatisfied with my Lord. I have thoughts about taking a house ; I must then have some person with me : how glad shall I be of *your* company, my dear Bab, but I know Mrs. Herbert cannot spare you. I will, therefore, make a visit to Lady Mary, and see

see if she is disposed to part with either of her daughters. What do you think of *that* scheme? Lady Mary lives at Broxburne; I can stop in my way to Haverford-hall, to which place I have promised to accompany my Lady.

.. In C O N T I N U A T I O N. .

I was interrupted.—Your favourite Mr. Walsingham interrupted me. He came to inform me that you was well, and to make an apology for not having given you sufficient notice of his return, that you might have sent an answer to my letter to him. I told him he had a very laudable excuse ready, as he had employed himself in doing his friend near Datchet considerable service: adding, that when the happiness of our friends and neighbours can be promoted by us, our own pleasure ought to be chearfully sacrificed.

He bowed, and said he was happy to meet with *my* approbation.

I then talked to him about his little girl as he, smilingly, called her. He told me that she was handsome and sensible, but that she had a few slight faults incidental to her age, which had been either encouraged or neglected by those who brought her up; adding, that he hoped she would make both a fine woman, and a good woman, with proper management.

I smiled, and replied, " Few girls are *now* trained to make good women, Sir."

He assented to that assertion—" However, Lady Frances," continued he, " since the happiness of our lives, which ought to result from our domestic connections, depends entirely upon the proper education of your sex, can we be too

too careful to see that it is strictly attended to?"

He then entered upon a short plan for the education of young females, which appeared to me so rational and judicious, that I could not help telling him I thought all mothers and aunts, if acquainted with it, would be glad to place their daughters and nieces under *his* tuition.

" You do me a great deal of honour, Madam".

We were, at that moment, interrupted by a crowd of those unmeaning visitors who only quit their own houses because they are weary of them, and come to ours for want of knowing whither to go. Such people seem to exist only to be troublesome to themselves, and to every body who has the smallest acquaintance with them. And

yet if we do not totally shut ourselves up from society, we cannot possibly exclude these trifling idlers, who having no business of their own, seem determined to suffer none of their friends to be employed, that they may not have it in their power, I suppose, to load them with reproaches for their indolence.

— You will tell me, perhaps, that I am too warm against a set of very inoffensive beings who do no harm in the world, if they do no good : but can idlers be deemed absolutely harmless, admitting that they have no criminal propensities? In short, I believe the above-mentioned insignificant wretches have put me out of humour: very sure I am that *their* conversation made me doubly sensible of the value of Walsingham's company.— There now, my dear — Have I not done your Favourite ample justice?

Pray

Pray send proper acknowledgements in
your next letter to,

Your ever-affectionate friend,
FRANCES CONNER.



L E T T E R the Fourteenth.

From the same to the same.

Haverford-hall.

ALL our party are safe arrived here; but before I enter upon our various employments and amusements, you must give me leave to speak of my aunt.

I stopped at Lady Mary's just when she was fitting down to dinner, and was very cordially welcomed by *her* and the two young Ladies whom I have not seen

seen for some years, as they have resided in another part of the north since the death of Mr. Sommers. I found my cousins grown fine young women.

Caroline, the eldest; is tall and genteel! she has a fair complexion, light hair, and blue eyes, and there is an expression of sensibility and modesty in her countenance which is extremely pleasing. Cecilia, the youngest, is fair also, but much handsomer than her sister. Her features are delicate, and enlivened with a vivacity which would be delightful, were we not afraid that it would terminate in a downright giddiness. Lady Mary tells me that Cecilia is a very good girl, though her spirits run away with her sometimes. There is something, indeed, very engaging in her manner: her behaviour is insinuating to so great a degree, that though Caroline,

line, by her modesty and submission, commanded my esteem, this wild Cecy found a way to deserve my love. However, I desired Lady Mary and my two cousins to speak freely with regard to my invitation. Cecilia begged earnestly for the happiness, as she flatteringly called it, of being with me in town, and with so graceful an opportunity, that she could not be denied.

What a strange power has flattery ! Into what a pleasing delusion does it lull our senses ! and how imperceptibly does it steal away our judgment ! But I do not Cecilia justice to suspect her of adulation ; for on conversing seriously with her, I find that she has an excellent understanding, and that her vivacity arises from a constitutional chearfulness, which being accompanied with an amiable

ble simplicity, cannot fail to render her both agreeable and attractive.

I left them the next day to continue my journey hither, with a promise to call and take Cécilia with me to London; as I am sure that Lady Haverford will be glad to accomodate her till I can remove to a house of my own, in the choice and in the furnishing of which I shall be glad to have Miss Söhmers's assistance.

When I arrived here, I found a number of guests, among whom was *your* favourite, but he did not advance a step, with Ashbury and Lord Tryon, and the rest of the men, to help me out of the chaise: he left them to scuffle for my hand among themselves: — if it is really of consequence enough to occasion such a fuss about it, surely it is worth

worth having.—I have not time to say any more—I can only add that I am,

As sincerely as ever,
Your very affectionate friend,
F R A N C E S C O N N E R.

LETTER the Fifteenth.

Mr. W A L S I N G H A M
TO

Mr. D'A R C Y.

Haverford-hall.

WE have a full house here, and we pass our time as agreeably as most people do. Lady Frances is the Goddess whom every man adores; and to own the truth, she so far surpasses all the women I have ever known, and discovers, upon a nearer acquaintance, so many

many valuable qualities, that were it possible to make her —— But I am a fool to think of her—so many men have attempted to please her, and attempted in vain, that I have not the slightest chance of being successful — I will, therefore, give up all thoughts of her.—And yet, *I* who never made any pretensions to her, am treated with a great deal more consideration than Ashbury who still sighs for her. Who, indeed, would not, with the least encouragement, hope for a return of his passion?—She has, I will venture to affirm, the most elegant taste in dress I ever beheld in woman; at least, the charms of her person, and the delicacy of her manners render every dress becoming—when she moves she is——It is the hardest thing in the world to describe the appearance of a beautiful woman gracefully

fully in motion. Every feature receives an additional power of allurement from every attitude.—But to what purpose should I wish to dwell on those charms to which I must not aspire?—Let me change the subject.

The house is full, and—what is most extraordinary—the company is agreeable, lively, cheerful, and entertaining in general. Some odd characters, indeed, are intermixed, which make a pleasing variety, and serve to set off the others.

We have Mr. and Mrs. Lumley here—Mr. Lumley is a downright humourist; he is several years older than his wife, and in consequence of his seniority, concludes that he is in possession of more knowledge. Mrs. Lumley, with a very good understanding, and lively to excess, is of a different opinion—they do not absolutely quarrel,
but

but they differ in such a manner as to afford much mirth for the entertainment of the rest of the company.. . .

I never think of the Lumleys, without reflecting upon the marriages between people widely different in their tastes and dispositions — and without condemning them severely; for such people can only, one would imagine, be influenced by mercenary motives to unite themselves for life.— Whenever I turn my thoughts towards matrimony, I shall be careful not to let the woman on whom I settle my affections perceive how much I admire her; lest she should, either with a view to keep me as a lover, or to deceive me, for her diversion, make concealments, the discovery of which, after marriage, might render us both completely miserable.

Suppose

Suppose now Lady Frances should be as cautious as I intend to be on my side about the man whom she intends to marry. She may, perhaps, put on all this indifference to throw him off his guard, and to make him appear as he really is. This conjecture is not, surely, a very absurd one.—And if her Ladyship *does* adopt this mode of behaviour, I cannot blame her: she will but square her conduct agreeably to my own plan.

You will tell me, it may be, that it is utterly impossible for us two to come together—you will tell me, that if I design to marry, I must look out for somebody else.—I, certainly, *do* design to look out for a suitable domestic companion, for I find that the society of an amiable and conversible woman is absolutely necessary to my happiness; and as I find

I find also that I cannot esteem any woman who will live with me upon any other terms; there is nothing to be done but in the matrimonial way:—yet how prodigiously hazardous is *that* way? When I take a review of the married people about me, even of those among my friends and acquaintance, I can with the greatest reason assert, that he is a bold man who in this gay age ventures to marry. I do not pretend to affirm that unhappy marriages, in general, are occasioned by the misbehaviour of bad wives: I can, with pleasure, stand up in the defence of many married women: but if the younger part of the female sex are not educated in another manner, I expect to see few marriages, and still fewer happy ones: I don't know, indeed, whether I may not expect to see

our

our estates secured to our illegitimate children.

The Lumleys make me out of humour with the marriage-state; but I am going to mention a couple, residing here, at present, who make me desirous of entering into it. Mr. and Mrs. Hotham are the happiest pair I ever met with: they have been married fifteen years, and yet—I never saw a happier pair. Thoroughly satisfied with each other, they endeavour to make themselves thoroughly agreeable to every body about them: they are related to Lady Haverford, who is herself the mildest, the most—here I chuse to stop. There are men in the world with humours so unaccountable, that they had rather behave with tenderness to a scolding mistress, than barely civil to the gentlest of wives.

We

We have Lord and Lady Touchet too, Colonel Haviland, Lady Ann Eustace, and idle, simple fellows, like myself, without number.

Lord Haverford talks of a masquerade ball. My Lady thinks that such an entertainment will be more agreeable in the summer, when the weather is favourable to rambles in the gardens and woods with which this place is surrounded. A masquerade, however, having been mentioned before us all, every person, except Lady Frances and me, declared strongly for the present moment. My Lord, therefore, carried the day——by a considerable majority.

I was going to send up orders for a habit, but I hear we are to have people from Tavistock Street with us, and so I may save myself that trouble: I should only, indeed, have bespoken a Domino:

not

not chusing to play the fool in earnest, by attempting to make my appearance in a character which I cannot, for want of humour and taste, properly support. Besides, I am not at all fond of masquerades: I do not look upon them as amusements which women can enjoy without receiving impressions sufficient to hinder them from *shining* in the marriage-state.

Under proper regulations, you will say, how can masquerades be pernicious? True—But pray tell me in what manner can they be useful?—Why may we not as well dance, and chat, and play at cards in our common dresses, as looking like Turks and Shepherds, Nuns and Sultanas? For my part, I hate all disguises—Truth and daylight for *me*. We are naturally enough inclined to be frolicksome without these stimulations.

When once a woman has taken it into her head that her fancy-dress is *vastly becoming*, she may chuse to wear it all her life. In my opinion, therefore, she had better not put it on at all.

I believe I have the honour to entertain sentiments which correspond with those of Lady Frances upon this occasion, from what I heard her say in a walk we had the other morning in the park. Lady Frances is not one of those idle women who lie in bed till noon, and then only rise in order to creep to their toilets. She is up, and dressed at an early hour, and either walks or rides every morning when the weather is favourable; by so doing, she keeps herself in health, and preserves the enchanting bloom of her complexion, without having recourse to Dr. H——— to cure her of the fidgets, or to Mr.

Warren's

Warren's *milk of roses* to animate her cheeks. Such a woman who is able to contribute to your pleasures without doors, and within too, and to share them also, is a companion indeed.—But if I go on at this rate, I shall write a volume instead of a letter: besides, they call me to the billiard-table.—Mrs. Lumley and I are to play against Mr. Lumley and Lady Ann Eustace.

Lady Frances never engages in this masculine diversion: right again.—I do not, it is true, love a woman who screams at a spider, or trembles at a breath of air; but I would have her in her taste and her manners perfectly feminine.

“Will you never have done?”—Enough—

I am, D'ARCY,
Yours most heartily,
EDWARD WALSINGHAM.



LETTER the Sixteenth.

Lady F R A N C E S
TO
Miss H E R B E R T.

I AM but just returned from Broxburne, or you would have heard from me before.

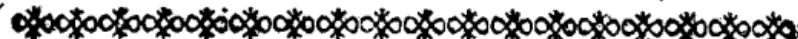
Lady Haverford, the best natured woman breathing, hearing me speak with pleasure of my cousin Cecy's vivacity, insisted upon my inviting her to this place, that she might partake of the diversion arising from the masked ball with which Lord Haverford is going to entertain us. I cannot approve of my lively cousin's being initiated so suddenly into a species of gaiety which cannot possibly be of any service to her, if

if it does her no harm. These balls only serve to put a thousand ridiculous fancies into the heads of girls—But I don't know how to refuse Lady Haverford: and as Cecilia must, I suppose, one time or other, join in these follies, she cannot play the fool any where else with more safety; for we are tolerably decent, I believe, all things considered.

Your Favourite and I have had a long conversation about the above-mentioned amusement. He is as averse to it, as I am; but owns that a rational woman may be trusted in any place.—I would give something, methinks, to know if he allows *me* to be one—The good opinion of a sensible man is always desirable.

I am,

Dear Bab,
Your never-changing friend,
FRANCES CONNER.



LETTER the Seventeenth.

Mr. WALSHINGHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

LADY Frances set out this morning to fetch a young Lady, a relation of hers.

After her departure, Lady Haverford acquainted me with her generous behaviour to this relation and her family. She is a very uncommon woman—To receive a handsome legacy, and to settle the greatest part of it upon an aunt and two cousins, because she thinks they have not so much as they deserve—She is really an astonishing creature.

No

No wonder she is out of the reach of common characters.—I cannot hope to merit her attention; I must, therefore, turn my thoughts another way.

In CONTINUATION.

She is returned—she has brought with her one of the most agreeable, but liveliest *little* girls you ever saw. Cecilia Sommers is not, however, remarkably *small*; she is delicately made: she has a very expressive countenance, pretty laughing eyes, a fine mouth, beautiful teeth, and a vivacity which borders upon wildness: yet that vivacity is accompanied with a *Naiveté* absolutely enchanting. She is, indeed, formed to lay claim to all hearts, yet she must not pretend to put herself upon a footing with Lady Frances: I wish she could: how thankful should I be to the woman powerful enough to drive this

formidable Lady Frances from my mind! but no such woman has yet appeared. If the volatile Cecilia does not prove able to conquer my heart, I shall be in a hopeless condition. I will give her every fair and honest opportunity to conquer it: however, Tryon is here, and exceedingly struck with her. She has actually done execution upon him already—I will make him write his own feelings with his own hand. Cecilia is a shrewd little gipsy. Lord Haverford, and all the men are highly pleased with her. She has, I find, little or no fortune—So fine a girl would do for Burton, and help to bring him to himself.—I am not fond of match-making; yet to serve a friend—I must, however, serve myself first, and so

Adieu.

LETTER

CHARACTERISTICS

L E T T E R the Eighteenth.

Lady F R A N C E S

T O

Miss H E R B E R T,

WE had our ball last night, but I never was more tired of an entertainment in my life: it appeared to me to be excessively flat and insipid.

I danced with Walsingham; but we danced as so—ber—ly together as if we had been a couple of Quakers just arrived from Philadelphia.

You will, certainly, say that my head is turned, my dear Bab—but I mean only that there passed as little gallantry between us as if we had been brother

E 5 and

and sister. According to *my* observations, he was not more lively with any other woman in the room.

As to Cecilia, she was out of her little wits.—By her innocent remarks, and by the joy which sparkled in her eyes, she gave delight to every body about her.—Lord Tryon was her partner, and seemed to be very much taken with her. Should this *penchant* on my lord's side grow into a real passion, I shall gladly pay *my* part of her fortune, as he appears to be as good as the young men of the age generally are— not excepting your favourite.

Cecilia would, I think, be more eligibly situated, if she was well married, than she can be at present. She wants the authority, care, and tenderness, of a man capable of loving her: of a man, in short, whom she can herself love, to keep

keep her within bounds. Not that there is the least indiscretion in her carriage; but her spirits seem ready to hurry her into imprudences, and some designing fellow may take advantage of her sprightliness and simplicity to impose upon her.

We had several odd figures among us, but as the description of them would afford you small entertainment, I shall only mispend *my* time, and take up too much of yours by attempting to describe them.—However, this I must say for *masked balls*, if no-body is more elated with them than I am, they will do no sort of mischief. And so, my dear, having nothing more of the amusing kind to send you—I conclude,

Yours most affectionately,

FRANCES CONNER

E. 6.

LETTER



LETTER the Nineteenth.

Miss CECILIA SOMMERS

TO

Miss SOMMERS.

CAROLINE, my dear Caroline, what a delightful new world am I thrown into! what numberless amusements are here from morning to night! —And then to entertain so many sweet fellows, and to be entertained by them! —O Caroline!—I could dance all night, and sing and laugh all day, but my greatest pleasure is to look at Mr. Walsingham, and to listen to him.—Such a man, my dear sister, you have never seen—and perhaps you are lucky in not having

having seen such a man—Yet he will never do *me* any harm I dare say : he is too gentle, too good. He is indeed as mild as May when he is among the women ; but he would be as fierce as blustering March I believe, were he to receive insults from any of those wretches who call themselves men, yet, who are not in the least manly characters, nor gentlemen, either in their persons or behaviour. You and I have known such men : we have never known a Walsingham. Now to the ball, a description of which you expect with impatience—Well then, Caroline—Lady Frances was drest in a white lustrous domino, flounced with black lace, her fine hair was without powder, and only ornamented with diamonds. She looked like a young and beautiful widow in her second mourning, and was admired by

every

86. THE AFFECTED INDIFFERENCE.

every body. She was so kind as to chuse *my* dres^s, which was a black satin jacket and petticoat, with close sleeves down to the wrists, and buttoned with pearls presented to me by her ladyship. I wore a small white beaver upon my hair, with a pale pink feather: and they all told me that it suited the colour of my hair, and became me prodigiously.

Lady Frances danced with Mr. Walsingham, and Lord Tryon with me. He was excessively assiduous to please me all the evening, but his assiduities could not make me lose sight of Mr. Walsingham, who dances like an angel. You never saw such a minuet as that danced between him and Lady Frances; they strove to outdo each other, I believe. *He* was drest in a blue domino, with a plume of black feathers in his hat, and a large rose of diamonds in the front.

front. This added to his height, and made him appear still more graceful : but his ease, his good humour, his good sense, his eyes, his teeth, his hair, his voice — O Caroline, my dear Caroline, — pray bear with me. — Could you but once cast your eyes on Walsingham, you would be as warm in his praise as I have been.

Where did I leave off? — O — with the enchanting fellow, and with *him* I must begin again. — He was not my partner, indeed, but as he saw me sometimes at a loss in the dance, for I had never performed in so large a company before ; he put me in, and gave me hints to go on with an ease and readiness which would have charmed you. He is to teach me to sing, for we all sung after supper, and then danced again. Lord Tryon pushed him aside, and desired he

might

might have the honour of teaching me something ; but I say I shall learn any thing ten times quicker from Walsingham.

Pray shew this letter to my dear mother, although I have wrote to her—and beg her to excuse the flights of her giddy daughter, and believe me to be, dear Caroline,

Your ever affectionate sister,

CECILIA SOMMERS.

LETTER

LETTER the Twentieth.

Mr. WALSHINGHAM

to

Mr. D'ARCY.

WERE I in a humour to write about balls, and a dabbler in description, I could give you a most flourishing one of our masquerade, fit to be printed in the Morning Chronicle: but I have other matters to mind.

This Lady Frances—what a wonderful fine creature she is?—she was drest in white; her lovely dark hair was adorned with brilliants. Your imagination cannot, possibly, paint a more beautiful object. No woman ever moved in a minuet

minuet with such exquisite grace ; she is rather too *sober* indeed, in cotillons and country dances : I mention the word *sober*, because she herself made use of it more than once during the evening, while I had the honour of her hand : whether it was by way of recommendation or reproach, I have not been yet able to determine.

Cecilia, on the contrary, was all life and spirit: her graces were judicious, and elegantly varied ; but the giddy girl, through excess of vivacity, made now and then a *faux-pas*, blushed at it like a new-blown rose, and begged me to set her right with such an innocent, engaging importunity, that I felt no small pleasure in giving her proper instructions. She is an amiable little gipsy. Tryon was quite lost in a violent passion for her, ventured to mention his prepossessions

essions on her account to her, and to solicit her favour.

What answer do you imagine she returned ?

" I am much obliged to you, my lord," replied she, " for your good opinion of me, but I have yet seen so little of the world, that I may perhaps meet with some person I like better than your lordship, and then you know we shall be both disappointed."

Tryon is chagrined at this reply ; but I think it was a very sensible one. If all women, when they are addressed by us, would be as fair and as open, we should not see so many unhappy couples dragging their chains after them.

Mrs. Lumley said it was an *artful* reply ; but I declare I think she is mistaken : I never beheld a more artless creature in my life. Tryon is of my mind.

mind. Poor fellow ! he is quite gone ; he leaves nothing undone to win her ; but she is more reserved to him than to any other man ; merely, I believe, because he professes himself her lover. She converses with *me* with the freedom of a sister. I cannot expect so favourable a behaviour from lady Frances, who becomes more and more serious and reserved every day.

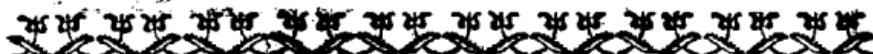
We have got a miniature-painter among us, an ingenious young fellow ; he has a good deal of business when the company come down in the summer ; and as he is known to Lord Haverford, his Lordship invited him to the hall. He is taking all our faces, and will find them profitable to *him*, while he gives *us* pleasure by his performances. The ladies are, at our request, drawn in the dresses in which they appeared on the ball

ball night. Lady Frances's head is not to be equalled ; and Cecilia looks enchantingly pretty with her auburn locks, and a carnation-coloured feather waving over her snowy forehead. If she does not like Tryon, suppose I speak for Burton ? Such a lovely girl will quite cure him of the least remnant of a passion for Mrs. Cary. Thus am I providing for others while no-body takes any care of *me*. lady Frances's heart is absolutely marble : not all the sighs of the tender Ashbury, who is really an amiable man, can melt her to love. What can *I* expect then, who never sigh at all? Nothing to be sure.

Yours as usual,

EDWARD WALSINGHAM.

LETTER



LETTER the Twenty first.

Lady FRANCES CONNER

T O

Miss HERBERT.

I begin to wish I had left Cecilia where I found her. She is, I fear, of an obstinate temper. She has the luckiest opportunity of being advantageously married, and will not hear of it. Lord Tryon is young, handsome, possest of a handsome fortune, and exceedingly fond of her ; and yet she refuses him—he desired me to use my interest with her. I not only talked to her, earnestly, myself, but wrote to Lady Mary, who has sent her a long letter upon the subject ; but she

she will not comply, she must certainly be destitute of sensibility, and, if she is, no man can be happy with her. And yet she seems affectionately attached to me : she weeps and says, she will marry Lord Tryon to please *me*. I think, indeed, that she cannot do better ; but I chuse not to urge her to act against her inclination : her heart, I believe, is engaged. I wish I had not taken her from her mother. Girls with such volatile dispositions, never know what they would have. Were I to send her back, she would imagine, perhaps, that I had some design in it. I am at a loss how to conduct myself. I fancy I shall get nothing by interfering at present ; but she has, by refusing so good an offer, fretted me so much, that I am quite out of spirits. I am tired, my dear Bab, of being always in a crowd : I am weary of myself,

and

and every body else. I am still persecuted by Ashbury, who will not take a denial. He is not like Lord Tryon, who, finding he could not succeed, went to London yesterday; telling Cecilia, when he bade her adieu, that he loved her too sincerely to improve his acquaintance with her, unless she would give him the encouragement he wished for.

I *sat* yesterday to a young painter, whom Lord Haverford patronises; but I never looked so ill in my life.—I am quite fatigued with company.

Adieu.

LETTER



LETTER the Twenty-second.

Mr. WALSHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARY.

TRYON has left us; quite disconcerted by the refusal of his little wild girl. He told me he could not write to *you* till he had been more successful. I pleaded with all my rhetoric for him to Cecilia; but she only laughed at me. She is excessively pretty. I am almost afraid to trust myself too near her. She is one of those women who affect your senses rather than your heart. She frequently runs after me, walks with me, and chats with me.

VOL. I.

F

We

We were yesterday by ourselves in the garden. She caught hold of my arm with as much innocent freedom as if I had been a female friend. While we were hurrying along, the wind blew off both her hat and cap. Her fine hair which had been but slightly turned up under her cap, as it was in the morning, fell into ringlets upon her elegantly-turned neck as white as snow.

On my stooping to reach her hat our faces met. I was strongly tempted, Charles, to ravish a kiss.

She blushed, and heaved a tender sigh. Then, pushing me back with her soft hand, and with her eyes averted from me, she cried, "Pray let me go, Mr. Walsingham."

"Not till I have assisted you in putting on your hat, Cecy," replied I, stroking her silken locks under it, which

still

still wantoned over her face, as the wind was high, and made her look doubly alluring.

What can we say for ourselves upon such occasions? Nature and the passions, are generally, on such occasions, too powerful for discretion.

I pressed her to my bosom : my ardent eyes devoured her beauties—The amiable girl melted with the tenderness of the moment, yet blushing for *my* freedom, and her own feelings, made a faint resistance to the numberless kisses which I snatched from her eyes, her lips, and even her hair, which grew with a most lovely luxuriance.

Fearing, at last, to trust myself with her any longer, I tore myself from her with so much violence, that I almost threw her down. Hastily, therefore, raising her in my arms again, I strained

her, but modestly, to my bosom, crying, “ Forgive me, my dear Cecilia; why are you so enchantingly handsome ?” Her face glowed a second time, from the delight of which, she was conscious on having filled me with such transports.

Throwing down her pretty eyes, she replied with a *Naiveté* absolutely irresistible, “ I don’t know.” While a tender sigh burst from her swelling bosom.

I could have kissed her again and again for her charming simplicity; but I respected both her and myself too much. I would not injure any woman in the world; not surely the dear girl who loves me, for I know nothing of the sex, if Cecilia Sommers does not doat on me.

Don’t

Don't think me vain, D'Arcy; do not imagine that I want to boast of my conquest over this sweet young creature, who has rather, as I told you before, captivated my senses than my heart.—Yet I will not injure her—I cannot help seeing, however, that she gives *me* the preference to every man here: I cannot help seeing that she is never so happy as when she is near *me*, listening to me, looking at me, or talking to me; that she pays an implicit deference to *my* sentiments about every thing. She is perpetually asking my opinion, and always conforms to it—She tries to dance like me, and to sing like me; and immediately sings or dances at my request. Had you seen the delicious flutter the poor dear girl was in at the tenderness of my behaviour, which the above-mentioned little incident occa-

sioned, you would have owned with me, that it was impossible for me to be mistaken.

When we had recovered ourselves, I took her hand in order to put it under my arm, to go home. She sighed, and trembled to such a degree, that I could but just support her.

She has all this day appeared to be lost in thought; stealing every now and then glances at me so timidly tender, that pity will act upon my yielding heart instead of love, and make me all her own.—And yet Lady Frances—divine Lady Frances—could she but conquer this cold insensibility, I would never think of any other woman—but *she* disdains me.—Why then should I not endeavour to be happy with the woman who loves me, since I cannot be happy with the woman whom I love?—

However,

However, when I determine to speak to Miss Sommers, and settle every thing, Lady Frances comes with all her attractions, and compels me to give up Cecilia: to give up, indeed, every other woman.

How exquisitely perplexing is my present situation! — In every situation however I shall be

Yours most affectionately,

EDWARD WALSINGHAM.

P. S. Lady Frances is indisposed: she keeps her room. Cecilia discovers great concern. She is a sweet tempered girl.



LETTER the Twenty-third.

Lady FRANCES CONNER

TO

Miss HERBERT.

I HAVE not been well, my dear Bab, but am growing better. Prepare yourself for a very unexpected piece of intelligence—I have, at last, determined to give my hand to Ashbury. I have had opportunities since we came hither, to see him in all lights—There is but one man here who can equal him, and that man is nothing to me. Ashbury's attentions, therefore, and tender assiduities, ought to be acknowledged: it will cost me dear, indeed; but

but I will be both discreet and just, if possible. I hope my resolution will not fail me. Ashbury is doubly entitled to my consideration, because he is still more solicitous to please me than ever, though he knows that I have lessened my fortune.

In CONTINUATION.

'Tis done: but I cannot support such ecstasies. If he does not behave with more composure, I shall retract my promise, and undo all I have done.—

I cannot write on—my head-ach is returned. Ashbury fatigues me with his officiousness. I must shut out him, and all the world, and try to get some rest—if it is not for ever fled from.

Your truly affectionate
FRANCES CONNER.

F 5 LETTER



LETTER the Twenty-fourth.

Mr. WALSHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARY.

Astonishing! Lady Frances has consented to be the wife of Ashbury. No more to be wondered at is her indifference to *me*—Yet why should I be surprised? Has he not followed her a great while? Is he not an amiable man, and deserving of her? Yes—if *any man* can deserve her.—'Tis very clear, at least, that she did not think *I* could ever deserve her.

I cannot help being pained—I am foolish enough to be pained—by this proceed-

proceeding, though it is really of no consequence to *me*; for I never had any hopes of Lady Frances—yet this proceeding has rendered me unusually serious. My adoring Cecilia thinks I am ill, and follows me to know what I would have, and how I find myself. I would come to London, but I cannot, politely, just now, leave Lord and Lady Haverford by themselves, as their house in Hanover Square, which has been repairing during their absence from it, is not quite finished.

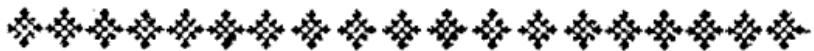
Ashbury, now the happiest of mortals, is gone to London to order the writings to be drawn with all possible expedition. I suppose he is afraid that Lady Frances should change her mind.

I am not half well — but here comes Cecilia: *she* must restore me to myself,

or I shall be no longer able to subscribe myself,

Your sincere friend,
EDWARD WALSINGHAM.

P: S. I had forgot Burton: but this girl will never have him.



LETTER the Twenty-fifth.

Miss CECILIA SOMMERS

TO

Lady MARY SOMMERS:

I HOPE my dear Mama is no longer angry with her perverse girl. I could wish she had forgot her faults, which she hopes one day to repair.

Lady Frances Conner, Madam, will soon be Lady Frances Ashbury. I sincerely

sincerely wish that she may be as happy as she deserves to be, and then she will be so to a very great degree. Mr. Ashbury adores her: he is an amiable man; so Mr. Walsingham thinks him.

Poor Mr. Walsingham, my dear Mama, is not very well: I fancy there is something catching in our complaints, for I feel as if I was going to be sick; but I hope it will go off, as I should be exceedingly sorry to give any additional trouble to this family from whom I have received so many and great civilities.

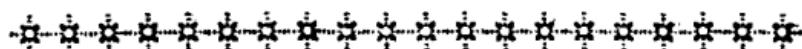
Lady Frances, Madam, intends, with your leave, to take me to London with her, as Mr. Ashbury has a very good house in Grosvenor-square. They will go to that when they are married, and they are to be married as soon as every thing is ready. The ceremony is to be performed here, at Lady Haverford's request;

request; and they are to stay till they chuse to make their appearance in London.

Pray tell my sister, Madam, that charmed as I am with Haverford-hall and its inhabitants, or as I may be with Grosvenor-square, I will chearfully return home to let her supply my place. I am, Madam, with my love to my sister,

Your very dutiful and affectionate daughter,

CECILIA SOMMERS.



LETTER the Twenty-sixth.

Mr. WALSHAM

TO

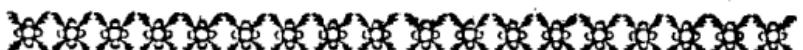
Mr. D'ARCY.

LADY Frances will be married in a few days. I will not assist at the nuptials, but make my escape a day

THE AFFECTED INDIFFERENCE. III.

day or two before the celebration of them, urging the necessity I find myself under of trying change of air. Yet how will Cecilia, dear tender Cecilia, part with me?—After the ceremony, when they come to town, I shall pay my respects to the bride and bridegroom. At present, they do not appear to be the most enamoured people with each other. The lover indeed, is in ecstasies, but the lady seems still cold, and dead to all joy: but she is superlatively lovely, and will, no doubt, when she is actually a bride, discover that she is made of warmer materials. May all happiness attend them. I have written to Burton to let him know where he may see the most amiable girl in the world: but as she has refused Tryon, it is not a clear case, whether she will accept of *him*. Every thing upon earth is uncertain.

Adieu.



LETTER the Twenty seventh.

From the same to the same.

AS I had determined to come to town, I kept my resolution, though strongly tempted to break it—by Cecilia. When I acquainted her with my design, adding, that though Lord Tryon had not proved agreeable to her; I had another friend in town, whom I begged to introduce to her; a man, who, with a pleasing person, had a very good understanding, an easy disposition, and a large fortune; she blushed, and turned pale, alternately, and faltered out—“ I am obliged to you, sir, but do not think of altering my situation.”

I did

I did not chuse to say any more upon so nice a subject, but hastened to take leave of her. She then appeared to be overwhelmed with melancholy, and affected me so much by her dejected looks, that I quitted her with the utmost reluctance.

I could not have believed that I should have felt so much on this girl's account; but so it is — These women, D'Arcy, have a strange power over us, and turn and wind us which way they will. There was, somehow, a softness in our parting moments, which made me sorry for the necessity of my separation from her. However, as lingering would have only made bad worse, I pressed her hand, and wished her happy. — Averting her face from me, she pulled out her handkerchief, and sighed a farewell, which shook my soul.

When

When I came to town, I went immediately to Burton. I found him but in indifferent spirits. I mentioned Cecilia to him, and then told him that I hoped he did not pine after Mrs. Cary.

He shrugged up his shoulders, and said, "Life is not life without a woman;" adding, "What have you done with my girl? you promised to bring her to see me."

I went directly to Mrs. Stedmore's. Louisa came jumping to me; flew about my neck, called me her dear guardian, and asked me where I had been so long.

I chid her for not enquiring after her father.

"Papa and mama are not good," replied she, "and so I have been trying to forget them!"

"You remember them however," said I.

"Yes, indeed," cried she.

"You

" You are a good girl then, Louisa. Fathers and mothers are never to be forgotten, though their failings are never to be remembered. No body is entirely without faults, my dear : but let every one of us endeavour to correct our own, and look with candour on those of our friends and acquaintance."

" Thankee, sir," answered Louisa, curt-sying ; " you never come to see me without teaching me something : and now you have made me want to go to my papa, since I find I ought to love him."

I took her with me in the chariot. Burton received us with a satisfaction which proved the goodness of his heart : but his daughter is a shrewed little gipsey.

What is all this to Lady Frances ? Why must I add, that *she* will soon be in a situation

a situation to extinguish every spark of hope in the bosom of,

Your very sincere,

But disquieted friend,

EDWARD WALSINGHAM.



LETTER the Twenty eighth.

Miss H E R B E R T,

T O

Lady F R A N C E S C O N N E R.

THOUGH I cannot but approve of every step taken by my dear Lady Frances, which is likely to be conducive to her happiness, I am not a little surprised, I confess, at her resolution. May you never have reason to repent of it.

it. Till the arrival of your last letter, I did not imagine that Mr. Ashbury had a chance for the possession of your hand. I imagined indeed, that *my* favourite, as you call him, would have been the fortunate man.

I am very sure that he prefers *you* to *me*. — Mr. Ashbury, however, certainly had a prior right to your regard. Why then, my dear Lady Frances, do you still seem dissatisfied? why do you complain of that solicitude so pleasing in a lover? why do you say you know not whether you shall ever sleep again? These are very mysterious expressions; and I cannot help wishing for an explanation of them. If any disagreeable reflections have occasioned them, I shall be very glad to hear of their removal.

Consider, my dear Lady Frances, that tho' you may think Mr. Ashbury entirely

tirely deserving, if he is not perfectly agreeable to you, you are not obliged to make your own life miserable, to render his life happy.—Surely you are under no such obligations. I wish to be acquainted with your reasons for speaking in so doubtful a manner about your intended connection, as if you expected no felicity from it—I almost wish to hear you had changed your mind, and that you was determined to wait till a more agreeable alliance offered itself. Be it as it will, let me hear from you frequently, as you must be assured that nobody is more interested in your happiness than

Your ever sincere,
Ever affectionate
BARBARA HERBERT.

LETTER



LETTER the Twenty-ninth.

WILLIAM ASHBURY Esq;

T O

Sir JAMES FERN.

I Have, at last, so far conquered the indifference of Lady Frances, that she has given me her hand : but it is still a moot point, whether I am ever in possession of her heart,—or her person: for, on the very day I believed myself at the summit of my wishes, Miss Sommers was suddenly seized with a violent fever, (and my wife, she *is* my wife: not all the powers on earth can give her dear hand to another) was so alarmed at her Cecilia's indisposition, that she could not be

be prevailed on to leave her ; and the rights of the husband were sacrificed to the calls of friendship. I could complain, and loudly too ; who, in my place, would not ? yet when I consider that I love this dear cruel angel so entirely, that I would much sooner consult *her* peace than my own, (I have, indeed, promised a thousand times, in the most solemn manner, to give up every thing to ensure *her* felicity) I am silenced : I submit : tho' my submission almost deprives me of my reason.—I will do any thing rather than oppose her will ; I should even bear this disappointment with tolerable patience, were I but so blest as to know that she was displeased at a separation so uncommon, with so much difficulty to be supported with any degree of fortitude by a man who loves her so passionately, and who has so long sighed for the moment of calling

calling her *his*. But were this impediment removed, she is so cold, and so indifferent about me, that I question whether she will not start a new one.

Is it not strange, my friend, that a woman so tenderly affected by every distressful tale, with a heart so often touched with the cries of the wretched, with a hand so frequently open to relieve them, should be so little alive to the sufferings of a man who has so long, so ardently sighed for her? A more gentle, a more benevolent bosom never heaved for the misfortunes of others: but when I complain of mine, and pronounce them the severest to be felt, because they deprive me of her dear society, she discovers an ease, a composure mortifying indeed—mortifying beyond expression. As we are thus situated, therefore, we are not in a way to enjoy a great deal of domestic felici-

ty: at least, no such felicity can be expected till Miss Sommers is better.— Her recovery is devoutly to be wished for by me, for *that* alone can, at present, calm the troubled breast of,

Your sincere friend,

WILLIAM ASHBURY,



LETTER the Thirtieth.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

T O

Mis HERBERT.

I Have been so exceedingly distract about Cecilia, who has had a very dangerous fever, that I have not been able to seize a moment to return your kind congratulations.

I have

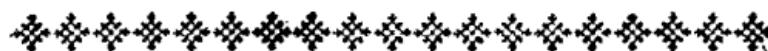
I have not stirred from my young friend's chamber, my dear Bab, for several nights.—It would, at any time, be extremely painful to me to lose her; but I should have been particularly afflicted at her decease, if she had died before Lady Mary could have seen her, as I had taken her from her maternal arms.

Lady Mary has now been to see her Cecilia, and she is better; she is on the mending hand, but very weak and low.

You will excuse my writing a longer letter, at present, as Mr. Ashbury makes heavy complaints whenever I am absent. On Cecilia's account, we have been detained here unexpectedly, and have actually hindered Lord and Lady Haverford from returning to town.—The Physicians say that she must not be moved immediately.—These, and some other unforeseen occurrences, have rendered

me incapable of corresponding with you, with my usual regularity. I hope I shall be able, by and by, to exert myself; but my spirits are just now so harrassed, that I can only subscribe myself,

Your ever affectionate
FRANCES ASHBURY.



LETTER the Thirty-first.

Mr. WALSHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

WELL—I have determined upon it at last. Humanity, compassion, let me add love, have entirely vanquished me.

When

When I had read the marriage of Lady Frances in the papers, I endeavoured to compose my mind as well as I could : I endeavoured to forget what I could not remember without pain. I spent my time chiefly with Burton, trying to persuade him to marry.

Hearing nothing from Lord Haverford, I called at his house to know if he was come to town.

The servant told me that Miss Sommers had been dangerously ill of a fever, and that her illness had prevented the family from coming up.

I started ; my tongue, involuntarily, articulated — “ Poor Cecilia ! ” — I began to fancy that I had been, in some degree, accessory to her disorder.—I was conscious, indeed, of not having been intentionally so, yet I could not be quite

satisfied with myself. A man who carries his inclination, or even his gallantry far enough to give the slightest uneasiness to a woman of character, can only repair his indiscreet—not to say criminal, behaviour, by marrying her, if she will accept of him. The least he can do is to offer her his hand.

Will you not tell me, however, that I have given myself an imaginary importance? Will you not tell me that I am a consummate coxcomb for supposing that every woman is in love with me?

Indeed you are mistaken D'Arcy; I never could bring myself to fancy that the only woman in the world whom I wished to feel a *tendresse* for me, thought me tolerable. Be that as it may, I resolved to go down to the hall, and to see whether I was right in my conjecture or not.

not. Accordingly I set out: but being overtaken on the road by my friend Orme, he insisted on my sleeping with him so strenuously that night at his house, within five miles of the place where he stopped me, that I complied, tho' reluctantly, with his request.

In consequence of my sleeping at Orme's House, I did not reach Haverford-hall till one o'clock.

The first servant who appeared, informed me, that my Lord set out for London that morning; and that my Lady, Lady Frances, and Mr. Ashbury, were gone to take an airing in the coach. He then opened the parlour-door, and discovered Cecilia. She was sitting in a pensive posture with her cheek upon her hand.

At the sight of me she started, and was, at first, pale and red, by turns:

when the beautiful rosy hue no longer animated her countenance, she looked more like a corpse than a living creature.

Seating myself by her, I took her hand, which trembled exceedingly, in mine, and expressed great concern for her illness.

She blushed again, but thanked me, and said, in a weak voice—“How came we, sir, to have the pleasure of seeing you so unexpectedly ? ”

“I came on purpose to see *you*, Miss Sommers,” replied I. “Having enquired after you, imagining you would have been in London long before this time, and heard that you had been seized with a fever, I hurried hither, and am transported to find you, in appearance, much better than I expected.”

She

She bowed her head by way of acknowledgment ; opened her mouth to speak, but closed it as if utterly unable to articulate a syllable.. .

I saw, with much anxiety, the violent agitation of her mind ; and was almost afraid to attempt to calm it in the only manner which would (I knew) prove effectual. I therefore strove, by gentle and scarce perceptible degrees, to lead her to the interesting point I wished, for her sake, to arrive at. I was fearful of overpowering her spirits by too precipitate a behaviour : yet I, at the same time, perceived that she was racked with uncertainty on *my* account.

Thinking it best to go to work indirectly, I told her, still pressing her hand—she had offered to withdraw it, but I gently detained it—“that I had not kept the promise I made her.”

She looked surprised. Her surprise answered my purpose ; I wished to draw off her thoughts, for a moment, from a subject which too much employed them, and succeeded.

“ I have not mentioned you to my friend, my dear Cecilia,” said I, “ in the terms you deserve. I could not bring myself to mention you in those terms to him.—I was apprehensive of his liking you too well.

She replied, without raising her eyes, which were cast down, “ As you please, sir.”

“ Would it then be agreeable to you, Miss Sommers, to receive the addresses of Mr. Burton ? ”

“ Oh no,” answered she, eagerly.

“ I am happy to find our sentiments the same upon this subject, my dear Cecilia : for I cannot bear to think of your being

ing married to any man but myself.
Am I not too presumptuous?"

Here I paused. Her face and neck glowed like crimson. She shook all over, as if she was in an ague-fit. At last, making a violent effort to withdraw her hand, she cried, in a faltering voice—"Do not laugh at me, Mr. Walsingham."

She then rose up, and attempted to walk out of the room.

I flew to her, and stopped her, by catching her in my arms. "How can you," said I, "think me capable of turning the most serious action of my life into railkerry?—No, my dearest girl, I swear, by every thing most sacred, that if you will accept of me, I will be yours by the strongest ties. I will wait on Lady Mary as soon as I have gained your permission, and settle every thing

in the most expeditious—I flatter myself too—satisfactory manner. Speak, my Cecilia ; tell me, Shall it be so ?”

I spoke, I called upon her to no purpose, she was motionless in my arms. Fearing that she might have been too much affected by the declaration I had made, and fearing that she might have felt some new uneasiness, as she certainly was not perfectly recovered from her late disorder, I was both pained and alarmed, but did not chuse to summon any body to my assistance, till the last extremity ; imagining that the presence of a third person might increase her confusion, and lay her under a disagreeable restraint : I, therefore, carried her to a sopha, feated myself by her, laid her head on my bosom, and began to rub her hands and her temples.—By so doing, I soon roused her : she opened her

her eyes, looked at me, sighed, and closed them again.

Animated with the hopes of her recovery, I ventured to press her lips, and then intreated her to tell me she was better if she found herself so, as I had suffered a great deal from seeing her so much disordered.

She attempted to raise herself up, but I still held her, and repeatedly assured her that I would ever be hers, if she would accept of me.

“Accept of you, Mr. Walsingham!” replied she — and burst into a flood of tears.

Her tears increased my distress: I thought there would be no end to it. I conjured her to tell me why she wept, to inform me whether I had said any thing disagreeable to her — “If I have given

given you pleasure, my dear girl," continued I, " why these tears ? "

" Be not offended with me," answered she, still weeping ; " for my tears are occasioned by excessive joy and gratitude."

What humility, D'Arcy ! What tenderness ! What ravishing sensibility ! Is not Cecilia the right sort of girl for a wife ? — And yet, to my shame I speak it, I could have been glad to have placed Lady Frances in the room of this amiable young creature, even at the very moment I so exceedingly admired her. No traces, however, of my *thoughts* appeared either in my looks or actions : I discovered nothing but satisfaction, and endeavoured to mix as much delicacy with my tenderness as I possibly could ; because I saw she was embarrassed, and seemed to be overwhelmed with what
she

she called, excessive generosity on my side.—Surely, my friend, I have been only generous to myself in engaging myself to a woman who, if she loves and esteems me as much as she declares she does, is of inestimable value. Let me, therefore, study to be deserving of so much tenderness and affection, and to return it in a manner the most likely to make her happy.

Before the family came back, she grew somewhat more calm: they appeared surprised to see *me*. I told Lady Haverford that her long residence at the *ball* had occasioned my second visit to her.

I then paid my compliments of congratulation to Lady Frances, and Mr. Ashbury.

The former blushed, and looked almost like an angel. I seized her hands, and softly intreated her to speak in my favour

favour to Lady Mary Sommers, that I might gain her charming daughter Miss Cecilia.

Lady Frances's cheeks glowed with a higher lustre at this request, and her hands trembled in mine. I quitted her to return to Cecilia who looked so sweetly bashful, with a kind of tender timidity, that she was absolutely irresistible, and inspired both love and compassion.

Lady Frances, who had also, to my extreme surprise, been visibly disconcerted, recovered herself sufficiently to express her satisfaction at the *compliment* I had paid Miss Sommers; adding, that she would write to Lady Mary upon the occasion.

I have nothing now to do, but to take all possible care to re-establish my poor Cecilia's health, which was very indifferent before she was thrown into the violent

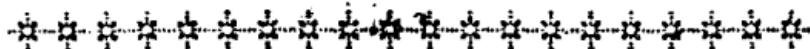
violent agitation of spirits above-mentioned: and she would have been probably worse, had she not been informed of my intentions in her favour; as I have almost brought her to own that her illness was entirely on *my* account: she has scarce lifted up her eyes to me since that confession but by stealth, as if they were ashamed to meet mine.

To morrow I am to wait on Lady Mary. Thus you see matrimony can no longer be avoided by,

Your sincere friend,

EDWARD WALSINGHAM.

LETTER



LETTER the Thirty-second.

Mr. A S H B U R Y

TO

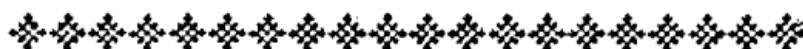
Sir JAMES FERN.

I AM the most wretched of men, though married to the most lovely of women. I cannot possibly guess at the motives which induced Lady Frances to be my wife; but I am convinced that she has not that kind of regard for me, without which I can never expect to enjoy any domestic felicity. I am very sure that Walsingham is the man whom she should have married.—He has just engaged himself to Cecilia, and I must own, that he only discovers for my wife that

that adoration which she draws from every man, by her personal attractions; nor can I say that *she* behaves with the least impropriety to him. No woman's conduct can, indeed, be more circumspect and discreet; yet, her very discretion has betrayed her. She is so extremely fearful of discovering, what, I dare believe, she wishes earnestly to conceal, that her timidity appears forced and affected, at least to *me* who, like those who love with ardor, am eagle-eyed — in other words — jealous. Walsingham and Miss Sommers, do not I think perceive what gives me so much uneasiness: I hope they do not: but my own perceptions are sufficiently tormenting. — Miserable, beyond expression, is, at this moment,

Your ever-faithful friend,
WILLIAM ASHBURY.

LETTER



LETTER the Thirty-third.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

Miss H E R B E R T.

SO—I thought where it would end. Your favourite has, at last, pitched upon Cecilia. She recovered at the first sight of him. The girl is intoxicated with joy: she absolutely deifies him. Never was there a man so beloved: but then, my dear Bab, no man, perhaps, ever so much merited the affection which is discovered for him. He ought to be a pattern to all lovers for his behaviour to her. There is a delicacy blended with his tenderness, a refine-

refinement in his address which I never observed in any other man. I believe he is excessively fond of her. You have often heard me say that Cecilia, setting aside her person, was a very engaging girl: yet I may confess, between ourselves, that I should not have imagined her to be quite the sort of woman to charm Walsingham. She is exceedingly pretty, indeed, and pleasing in her manners: she has a good understanding, and does not want sensibility; but still I think she is not properly qualified to charm such a man as Walsingham by her conversation. Conscious, perhaps, of his own uncommon powers, he has chosen a woman on account of her readiness to listen to *him* with attention, and to admire every word which falls from his lips—But I wrong him; he has not the slightest tincture of the coxcomb in

in him: he is always more disposed to do justice to the merit of another, than to display his own.—Lady Mary approves: how can she disapprove of such a man for her son?—*He* is also much pleased with her Ladyship, and declares himself delighted with the modest meekness of her daughter Caroline.

Is it not something odd that Mr. Walsingham, who has been in all the courts in Europe, who has seen and conversed with the finest women in England, should find no lasting attractions but in Lady Mary Sommers's family? They are certainly very agreeable people, but are there no women in the world equal to them? Undoubtedly, there are, though they do not happen to be to *his* taste.

Lady Mary, and the amiable Caroline, load me with acknowledgements for having

having thrown Cecilia in the way of this charming man—I have invited them all to stay with me in Grosvenor Square (to which place we shall go tomorrow) till the ceremony is over. You may imagine, therefore, that I have very little leisure to lengthen this letter—I have but just time to assure you that I shall never cease to be

Your, ever sincerely,

Ever affectionately,

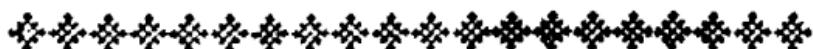
FRANCES ASHBURY.

P O S T S C R I P T.

While I went to speak to Cecilia in the next apartment, Mr. Ashbury came into the room in which I had left my letter, and read it. He tells

tells me that I have spoken of your favourite in higher terms than ever. He seems to be extremely disconcerted. I should not have hinted this, did I not wish to know if I have really been guilty of any impropriety in speaking highly of a man so generally esteemed, and who is going to pay one of my relations so great a compliment. I read over again the passages he alluded to, but I saw no improper expressions in them. I told him that if he did not approve of what I had said concerning Mr. Walsingham, I would alter it: adding, however, that as I had been writing to the friend of my earliest years, from whom I had not been accustomed to conceal my most secret thoughts, I had set them down as they occurred. He replied, sharply—"They were, indeed, I believe, your most secret thoughts"—and hurried

ried out of the room.—Pray what am I to think of this behaviour?



LETTER the Thirty-fourth.

Mr. A S H B U R Y

TO

Sir J A M E S F E R N.

MY suspicions were not groundless : but I wish I had kept them to myself. Lady Frances wrote in such high terms of Walsingham to her friend, that I could not bear the perusal of her letter. I not only gratified my curiosity by *that* perusal, but I found fault with her letter.

She said but little in reply : she changed colour, and the resentment which she

VOL. I. H laboured

laboured to conceal, has convinced me that I was not mistaken; has convinced me, that the coldness of which I before complained, is changed into a settled aversion.

I was to blame — I was too hasty. As she never loved me, she greatly condescended in consenting to a marriage which, I fear, has made us both completely wretched.

Could I but have waited with patience, till time had reconciled her to a step, which she took, I verily believe, out of mere compassion for me, I might by degrees, perhaps, have gained her heart: my rashness has undone me. — Naturally high-spirited, and entertaining a mean opinion of those women who let themselves down — to use her own words — and are too ready to yield themselves to the first agreeable man whom chance throws in their way, she will

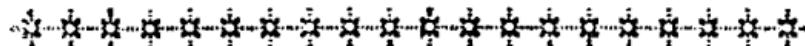
will never bear the thoughts of my suspecting her partiality to any man except her husband: and I dare say I may venture to reckon upon her fidelity. She will never go unwarrantable lengths with any other man: but she may *like* another man better than me—Such an idea is distracting—I am distracted to think of my wife's preferring another man to *me*—But she must not see how deeply I am disquieted. She shall not see the storm which she has raised in my mind. I will conceal my feelings from her, whatever I suffer from the suppression of them. If she cannot love me, she shall, at least, have no longer any reason to hate me.—No more can I presume to affirm in my present condition, but that

I am,

Your ever sincere friend,
WILLIAM ASHBURY.

H 2

LETTER



LETTER the Thirty-fifth.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

Miss HERBERT.

WITH haste I dispatch this after
my last, my dear friend, to re-
tract what I wrote in it, and to intreat
you to burn it.

I have been exceedingly indiscreet in
mentioning Mr. Ashbury's behaviour.
I condemn myself more for it than for
any action I ever committed. A wife,
my dear, should never betray the failings
of her husband. Virtue, affection, deli-
cacy,

cacy, reason, decency, all require her to be totally silent. I cannot think how I came to forget myself so strangely. I never felt so little: I never appeared so mean in my own eyes. What would I not give to recall that foolish letter?

The generality of women are too easy: by improper compliances they render themselves cheap in the eyes of their lovers: they lessen the dignity of their sex, and lose all their consequence: but when once a woman is married, she ought to behave in a very different manner. She must be, I find, tender, yielding, even submissive, if she would please.

Mr. Ashbury has taken no farther notice of what I mentioned to you. He knows not, indeed, the contents of my last letter, but he does not appear satisfied either with me, or with himself.

Destroy my last letter, my dear Bab,
I again intreat you, and forget that it
was ever written by,

Your truly affectionate,
FRANCES ASHBURY.

P. S. They will be married in a few days. Every thing relating to settlements, presents, &c. &c. has been nobly conducted.



LETTER the Thirty-sixth.

Mr. WALSHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

TH E R E is a pleasure in making others happy, infinitely superior to that which we feel on having done any

any thing to promote our own felicity. My Cecilia convinces me of the truth of this assertion every hour — Never did any woman express such heartfelt satisfaction, so much lively joy, as she has done since I mentioned my design with regard to her ; and even now she is my wife, her transports know not any bounds.

We are with Lady Mary at present, who is as agreeable, the difference of years considered, as her daughters.

Sister Caroline, one of the best of girls, will make, I believe, one of the best of wives to Burton, who has, on *my* recommendation, been introduced to her, not as a lover, but as *my* friend. He admires the gentleness of her disposition, and the softness of her manners ; doubly admires her for being so un-like Mrs. Cary ; and Caroline seems quite disposed to fall in with whatever Lady Mary and

her other friends think proper for her. Good girl! She has never been in love like my Cecilia.—'Tis very well.—Our fathers and mothers frequently tell us that 'tis no matter whether we are in love or not to a romantic degree, and that we shall be quite as happy without it; and I can readily believe them. I was not myself in that situation; I am very well satisfied, however, with my wife, whom I had certainly never married, had I not believed that I gave her encouragement, being struck with the beauty of her person, and the innocent wildness of her carriage, to suppose that I was fond of her. Had I not resolved to act like a man of honour, that behaviour of mine to her might have been attended with consequences injurious to her character; for though nothing in the least criminal passed between us, she would not, I fancy,

fancy, have permitted me to take imprudent liberties with her—But a girl is hardly ever safe who indulges herself too freely in a violent inclination for a man; for *he*, prompted by passion and opportunity, may be urged to forget what he owes her and himself, or *she* may be thrown too much off her guard, and fall a victim to a tenderness which never should have been indulged till there can be no danger in the indulgence of it.

There seems to be a very strict friendship between Lady Frances and *my* wife. Cecilia tells me that she loves her because she is indebted to her for the happiness which she at present enjoys. Had it not been for Lady Frances, indeed, she had never been acquainted with me; and I know that if Lady Frances had shewn the smallest inclination to be married to me, I never should have thought of

Cecilia. She, undoubtedly, looked upon herself as engaged to Mr. Ashbury, and, therefore, very prudently forbore to flirt with any other man: but *flirt*, is not a proper expression; she does not seem to have the slightest propensity to any kind of gallantry. She is not so averse to love, I imagine, as she appears to be; but Ashbury knows best her aversions and her desires: they are a serious, reserved couple, not so wild and so volatile as Cecilia and *her husband*.

As I would, on no account, deceive any body, or assist in bringing two persons together who may, probably, make discoveries afterwards not at all agreeable; I acquainted Lady Mary and her daughter with Burton's former connection.

I have sent two or three times for Louisa to dine with me since my marriage.

riage. Cecilia and she agree so well together, that I don't know who is the most infantine of the two. Louisa will make a fine woman; and, consequently, stand more in need of a mother to introduce her into the world. Caroline will, I hope, be a mother to her whenever her father shall think proper to take her home, as it will be better to have her early accustomed to obey the person who is to superintend her future conduct.

I cannot approve of the present mode of education for our daughters in boarding schools, at least, after a certain age. They learn nothing there but what they may learn any where else; and there is a great deal taught in them which can be of no sort of service to them.—If Burton, therefore, does not chuse to take his daughter home after he is married, I will place her under the care of my

Cecilia, who, though exceedingly lively, is, nevertheless, very discreet. She is greatly admired, yet makes no efforts to attract admiration; nor did she spread lures for any other heart than mine. Surely no married man had more reason to be contented with his lot than I have; and yet—

Good night, D'Arcy.



L E T T E R the Thirty-seventh.

Mr. A S H B U R Y

T O

Sir J A M E S F E R N.

I HAVE had neither spirits, nor strength I was going to say, to reply to your last; but indeed I have been very

very ill for two days. Being just now a little better, I am willing to seize the first moment, lest I should be rendered incapable a second time..

The truth is, I would not wish to be well, were I but sure that Lady Frances would always treat me with the *seeming* kindness she does at present: *seeming*, I say, for I dare not flatter myself so far as to believe that her feelings are adequate to her expressions.. Yet it is meritorious in her to feign a little love ; as she sees plainly enough, that even the appearance of her tenderness is delight to my heart. Pity, I suppose, has, at length, softened *her* heart ; and she certainly discovers an anxiety about me which is infinitely soothing.—But my head-ach returns. I must lay aside my pen.

pen. She comes, the angel, who, alone,
can give ease to,

Your

Cruelly disturbed Friend,,

WILLIAM ASHBURY.



LETTER the Thirty-eighth.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

Miss H E R B E R T.

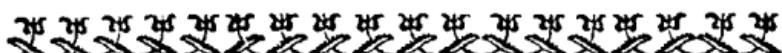
I Am very unhappy, my dear Bab.
Mr. Ashbury has been indisposed
these two or three days. He is now
confined to his bed by a malignant fe-
ver. I find I love him better than I
thought I possibly could. His suffer-
ings,

ings, and the excessive transports which he discovers at my care and tenderness about him, disquiet me prodigiously. I reproach myself continually, lest I should have neglected any thing that might have rendered him happy.—But it is a very difficult matter, my dear, to occasion an alteration in our tempers.—To new-make ourselves is, certainly, no easy task. It is, however, the indispensable duty of every married woman to render herself agreeable to her husband.

My dear Friend,

Adieu.

LETTER



LETTER the Thirty-ninth.

Mrs. WALSHINGHAM

TO

Miss SOMMERS.

I Should be the happiest woman in the world, my dear Caroline, did I not feel so keenly, as my dear Mr. Walsingham says, for the misfortunes of others.

Poor Lady Frances!—Mr. Ashbury is dead. He was ill but a short time. His death must be a great shock to her. They were not indeed so attached to each other as my dear love and I, yet she *must* be unhappy. They had not been long enough together to increase their affection,

affection, but they had less time, therefore, to find out any thing very disagreeable in each other.

I wish my good mother would come to town immediately, to persuade Lady Frances to go home with her for a little while. As Lord and Lady Haverford are at present in London, and surrounded with company, their house cannot be a proper place for her: and it would be very disagreeable for her to go, directly, to either of Mr. Ashbury's seats in the country, where she would be quite a stranger. It is said, indeed, that he earnestly desired her to take a journey into Staffordshire, adding, that he hoped new scenes would amuse her: but she cannot think of such a journey at this time: nor do I wonder at her aversion to it. She can be no where so much at ease as at my mother's. Mr. Walsingham

ham and I can then make her frequent visits, and endeavour to dispel the gloom which this unlooked for and melancholy event has thrown over her mind. I would considerably lengthen my letter, my dear sister, but I expect Mr. Burton every moment to call for it. He has kindly offered to give himself so much trouble. My dearest Edward, my love, my joy, my every thing, joins his best respects with mine to my valuable mother—adding his love to *you*.

I am,

My dear Caroline,

Your ever affectionate,

and completely happy Sister,

CECILIA WALSINGHAM.

LETTER

LETTER the Fortieth.

Mr. WALSHINGHAM
TO
Mr. D'ARCY.

WHAT unexpected turns are there in this world? Who would have thought of Ashbury's being carried off so soon? — But do not young men die daily as well as old ones? All this is true, yet I confess I was extremely surprised to hear of Ashbury's death.— I am the more concerned on Lady Frances's account; for as she preferred him to all her other admirers, I conclude that he was the only man she loved: great, therefore, must be her affliction upon the melancholy occasion.

My

My Cecilia, who is the tenderest of her sex, weeps for Lady Frances more, perhaps, than she does for herself: and when I either attempt to chide her, or to sooth her into better spirits, she tells me that she knows what her dear friend must feel from her own sensations; adding, that were she in *her* condition, she should be deprived of her senses. Poor girl! she doats on me: never, indeed, was there a man more beloved—adored, I may say: for her submissive and respectful attentions to me, are equal to her affectionate ones. Burton will, I hope, soon be happy with our amiable Caroline. They would have been, at this time, had not Mr. Ashbury's illness and death made Miss Sommers intreat her lover to stay till Lady Frances had a little recovered herself; as she could not think of her own happiness, which would,

would, on her becoming his wife, arise entirely from her endeavours to promote *his* felicity, while her dearest friend was so deeply distressed.

Good girl! What an excellent fellow am I, D'Arcy, at finding out these condescending wives? I do not believe they are to be matched in the three kingdoms. I should be glad to know what sort of a wife Lady Frances made: she was always thought to be uncommonly discreet before marriage, and uncommonly good. Her behaviour to Lady Mary, my wife, and Caroline, was truly noble: and she discovered, by the largeness of her generosity, the grandeur of her soul.—But *great* qualities alone, in a wife, will not satisfy me: I must have pleasing qualities also.—I like to *love* as well as to admire — better than merely to admire. Cecilia is delightfully formed to return

all

all my tenderness. If Lady Frances had shewn so much sensibility — had she not been, honourably, attached to Ashbury, I never had been Cecilia's. But this is a secret *entre nous*.

I am, dear D'Arcy,
Yours, &c.

E. W.



LETTER the Forty-first.

LADY FRANCES ASHBURY
TO
MISS HERBERT.

I Thank you, my dear friend, for all the kind, consoling arguments you have made use of, to enable me to conquer

quer a concern which I could not but feel at the severe shock I have sustained : —but I must ever think of Mr. Ashbury's death with regret, because it was not in my power to render him as happy as he deserved to be.—I hope, however, that he was not displeased with me, as he so frequently and solemnly declared in his last moments, that he was only afflicted at his separation from me, and that he wished only to live for *my* sake. Had the Almighty granted him to my prayers, time, with my continual reflections upon his fine accomplishments, and his extreme affection for *me*, would, doubtless, have made me equally affectionate to *him*. It was not *my* fault, you know, my dear Bab, that I could not feel as *he* did.—I even fancied, when I was married to him, that I sacrificed a great deal to compassion only ; but I have

have since learnt, that the tenderest love ought to accompany pity, to make a woman capable of doing the duty of a wife as she ought.—Yet, I hope, I am not to be looked upon in a criminal light, because my feelings were not adequate to my wishes. To behave in a friendly generous manner, was certainly in my power; but to love with the ardor which poor Mr. Ashbury discovered, was not.—However, I would not, from what I have experienced, advise any woman to give her hand to a man till she feels herself susceptible of tenderness, as she may occasion a heavy disappointment to herself as well as to her husband.—I have often heard that a virtuous woman will always love her husband well enough, if she is an obedient wife; but I am now ready to declare against that assertion. Had I thought some time ago in
the

the way I do now, I might have saved myself, and another person in the world, an infinite deal of disquiet.—What is past cannot be recalled.—I acted wrong; but my motives were right. I must, therefore, be resigned to my fate.

Lady Mary and Mrs. Walsingham have amply returned my friendship for them, by their behaviour, at this distressing juncture. They have, both of them, earnestly invited me to stay with them till I am better reconciled to my loss. The latter, as she is in Berkley Square, has offered to be denied to all company, except a few particular friends of Mr. Walsingham's, if I will be with her.

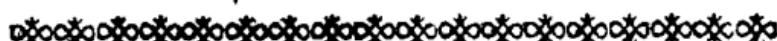
Mr. Walsingham has said some civil things also; but there was not that warmth, that energy in his expressions, by which my sweet Cecilia's were distinguished.

Lady Mary's situation will suit me best at present—I go to *her* house to-morrow. Mr. and Mrs. Walsingham carry me down, and have promised to make more frequent visits to their mother on *my* account; and so you will address your next to me at her Ladyship's. Every line from you, my dear Bab, will be gladly received by,

Your ever-affectionate,

FRANCES ASHBURY.

LETTER



LETTER the Forty-second.

Mr. WALSHINGHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

MY time—rather let me say my wife's time—has been so much taken up lately, that your letters have remained unanswered longer than usual: but when I tell you that I and my Cecilia have diligently employed ourselves in trying to administer consolation to Lady Frances, you will, I am sure, readily excuse me for having been so tardy a Correspondent.

Never was there so beautiful a widow as Lady Frances.—I know not whether

her natural loveliness is more heightened by her sable dress, or by the melancholy languor so becomingly diffused over her countenance. She is amiable beyond expression, infinitely more so than she ever appeared in my eyes.—She has all the allurements of grief, without any of the forbidding horrors of it.—She does not disfigure her face with her tears, nor wrinkle her snowy forehead with a frown.—She does not call upon you to pity her by her complaints, but she, a thousand times more forcibly, excites your compassion, by a kind of quiet suffering ; by a pensive silence, which induces you to suppose that what she feels mocks all the powers of utterance.—How unlike those clamorous persons is she, who, under the pressure of their recent sorrows, behave in such a manner, as to make you say you pity them merely to get rid of

of them!—Lady Frances, despising such little artifices to procure compassion, confines her griefs within her own breast, and only discovers them, now and then, by the tears which steal down her lovely cheeks. Sometimes, when her tender heart is quite overcharged, she seems to find relief from her sighs. Is it possible not to *feel* for such an object as this? The sensations naturally arising at the sight of such a woman, oppressed with her sorrow, stimulates you to think of methods to alleviate at least, if not totally to remove them.

My Cecilia and I have succeeded beyond our expectations. Lady Frances begins to lift up those eyes upon us, which, from the benignity, and sweetnes in them, give every beholder joy. Her mouth is sometimes dimpled with smiles, and a graceful motion of her

head, accompanied with an obliging acknowledgment of our endeavours to please, over-pays us for all our attentions.

My kind good-natured Cecilia, flies round my neck twenty times a day, and thanks me over and over again, for having contributed to the alleviation of her dear, dear Lady Frances's sorrow, and to the return of that chearfulness which lighted up her elegantly-featured face.

What a vast quantity of love is there in my Cecilia! She may well say, with the young Lady who was asked how she could be so fond of such a number of people—"I have a very capacious heart."—Whether a *married* woman ought to be possessed of such a heart—there's the question. However, I mean not to throw any reflections upon my wife, D'Arcy, who is one of the best of women; yet
she

she loves her mother, her sister, and her dear Lady Frances, and will, no doubt, love Burton, when he has married her sister, extremely ; and, as I told you before, she adores *me*. Must she not have a large share of affection then ?

Lady Frances seems to me to be of a different turn ; and she was, I imagine, never capable of loving two men in the world. Whether Ashbury was ever the man of her heart, I will not pretend to determine.

We are making preparations for Burton's marriage. He is to take Louisa home, who is to go by her mother's name, that there may be no mistakes between her and any daughter he may have by this marriage. I am still to be her guardian. I am, also, in a fair way — I hope I am — of having either a

daughter or a son, shortly of my own.
Why don't you give me joy?

Yours unalterably,

E. W.



LETTER the Forty-third.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

Miss HERBERT.

I AM still with Lady Mary, my dear Bab, who studies to make every thing in her house agreeable to me. She is continually assisted in her friendly employment by your favourite and his Cecilia. They visit us frequently. Never was there such a husband as Walsingham.

ham. Every woman who is not so very happily married must, certainly, be out of humour with her situation. Walsingham behaves to his wife with the tenderest attention: he watches over her in her present condition with the liveliest affection, and receives in return the strongest proofs of her sincere love; and with a negligence resulting from the excess of good humour, he seems to overlook her foibles.—Even Cecilia cannot but appear to the discerning eyes of her husband with *some* foibles — How happy must she be, so beloved, so attended to, and — if corrected — corrected in the gentlest manner imaginable, she *is* happy indeed. I never beheld so lively a picture of content and joy. The inconveniences of which other women in her situation complain, are not felt by *her*. The solicitude which her fond

husband discovers, perpetually, about her health, is as uncommon as it is exemplary. If she looks unusually serious, though but for a single moment, he has no rest till he is acquainted with the cause of her seriousness : as soon as he *is* acquainted with it, he hastens to remove it : if he imagines that she is inclined to eat or drink any thing particularly agreeable to her, he finds out some way to procure it for her — If she walks too much or too little, he is equally careful of her. If she seems not to sit quite so much at her ease as if she was in full health, he instantly furnishes her with another chair. No longer ago than last night, when Lady Mary had a house full of company, he flew across the room with a rapidity which startled some, while it, *apparently*, endangered others (*apparently*, I say, for he has as much address

address as tenderness) to beg a young Lady who sat next Mrs. Walsingham to change chairs, fancying that his Cecilia's had too high a seat, and too low a back for her. She blushed at the bustle he made about her, yet cast affectionate looks at him, which largely rewarded him, I dare say, for his trouble, while he uttered a thousand apologies to the Lady for removing her, who appeared to be pleased with his seizing an opportunity to address her with so much politeness.

On the night before last, Mrs. Walsingham fell asleep after supper, oppressed with fatigues incidental to her situation. Walsingham rose immediately, told her in a gentle whisper, that she had better retire, adding that he was ready to wait on her, though he was just then in the

middle of an entertaining story which engrossed the ears of the company.

Now tell me, my dear Bab, is there, can there be any merit in loving such a man? Surely no merit at all. A woman must be totally destitute of sensibility, who does not, when so adored, revere the man who idolizes her.

Caroline is to be married to morrow, and will be, according to the sentiments of most people, well-married too: but where is there such a man as Walsingham?

The bridegroom is to bring down his bride to his house in your neighbourhood. They have much intreated me to accompany them, but you will allow, I believe, that I cannot, at present, appear with propriety upon the occasion.

Burton

Burton has followed Walsingham's example: he has returned Caroline's fortune to her mother. He seems to be greatly pleased with her.—However, I repeat what I said before, no woman must expect to find a second Walsingham.

I am, my dear Bab,

With my usual sincerity,

Yours most affectionately,

FRANCES ASHBURY.

LETTER



LETTER the Forty-fourth.

Mr. WALSINGHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

WE have been at Datchet to celebrate the marriage of Burton and my sister. With what a heart-felt satisfaction did I give into my friend's arms an amiable, virtuous girl, capable of making him truly happy ! With equal satisfaction I perceive that his taste has not been entirely vitiated by a long indulgence of his irregular passions. He seems to be very fond of Caroline.

We are now returned with Lady Mary to her house, at which we left the charming widow by her own desire.

Lady

Lady Frances is, in my opinion, much handsomer than when we took leave of her; or else the satisfaction which shone in her lovely eyes, on being informed of her young friend's happiness, gave her new graces. She thanked me, in such elegant terms, for the *second happy alliance*, which I had occasioned in her family, that I should have been very stupid indeed, if I had not been delighted with her genteel behaviour. She seems also to have almost conquered her affliction; she looks, and talks with more chearfulness than ever. She is extremely kind to Cecilia, who is closely attached to her: to *that attachment* I, certainly, have no objection: but, in general, I cannot highly approve of *female friendships*: having seen *the dear creatures* quarrel about things of no more consequence than straws. When they squabble, indeed,

deed, about their lovers, their altercations are often attended with serious consequences, as they are severely punished by those lovers when they are deluded out of their characters by them. How many female friendships have been dissolved by the interposition of a *dangerous* man? We make a dreadful havock among the women, sometimes, D'Arcy, and steal into their hearts before they have time to make resistance.—I, therefore, say again, that the attachment between my wife and her fair friend is a fortunate one; the continuance may, reasonably, be expected, as it will not be, in all probability, weakened by competition. I think I may venture to answer for Cecilia: I think she will not prefer any man to her husband; and I will firmly undertake to declare that Lady Frances has no partialities in favour

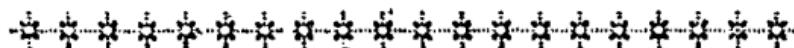
vour of your humble servant. Thus far our women are safe; but whether I can always defend *myself* from the beautiful widow's eyes — that is another question, and must be discussed at another time, as Cecilia has just sent to let me know that the chaise is ready to carry us to London.

In London I hope you will soon call on

Your sincere friend,

E. W.

LETTER



LETTER the Forty-fifth.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

Miss HERBERT.

I AM glad to hear, Bab, that you have made your visit to Mrs. Burton. Your behaviour was both polite and friendly. I am, also, pleased to find that our sentiments are the same with regard to her. She is extremely amiable; and as she deserves to be happy, she will, I hope, *be* so with Mr. Burton.

Mr. Burton is a genteel man—He is well-bred, and appears to be of a mild disposition. Caroline is all gentleness: so that they must, I think, change their natures.

natures before they can lay the foundation for a quarrel. How exceedingly fortunate have these two young people been in having men for their husbands — setting aside their superiority in point of fortune — so very suitable to them! Burton, it is true, was blameable for his imprudent connection with Mrs. Cary; yet I cannot rank him among those abandoned libertines, who endeavour to seduce every woman who comes in their way. There are few, indeed, of either sex, who are not, at some period of their lives, guilty of foibles which they should have conquered at their first setting out in the world; and I suppose that Mr. Burton's affection for his little daughter, made him both unwilling and afraid to dismiss her mother, being intimidated by her threatenings, while he was rendered unhappy by the impe-

imperiousness of her temper, when he talked of parting with her. — She at length, indeed, grew so insolent, that if Walsingham had not appeared to assist his friend, there is no saying with what consequences so scandalous an attachment might have been attended. You see plainly he had spirit enough to recover his liberty when he was convinced of the ignominy of his servitude. However, though I allow Mr. Burton to be one of those men who are to be viewed in a pardonable light, yet in how much higher a light must his friend appear who has never committed *his* follies, and who, with all the united graces of person and mind to render him desirable to so many women, has never, I am told, entered into any engagements which tend to make a man dissatisfied with his own conduct, and ridiculed by the worthy and sensible

part

part of his acquaintance! I look upon a man of Walsingham's figure and talents, so formed to please the sight, and to charm the heart, a man so universally admired, to be still more deserving than other men less accomplished, and less engaging, for having had fortitude enough to resist all dangerous temptations.

Walsingham has brought his lively Cecilia to town, lively, notwithstanding her condition, as he intends to have her lie in with every kind of assistance within her reach. She has so earnestly intreated *me* to be with her at the expected time, that I find it difficult to refuse her; and yet I have several very strong reasons to support my refusal. I have told her that Lady Mary is a much properer person than I am, being as ignorant as herself. The wild thing laughs, and tells me that I ought to be better acquainted

quainted with what must sooner or later happen to me, as I shall, certainly, by a second marriage, have occasion for my knowledge.—She is a mad creature, and will not believe that I shall not enter into second engagements—I, continually, assure her, that I shall ever remain in my present state—She only laughs at me, and exclaims, “ Pshaw, Lady Frances, this is mere talk, you will, undoubtedly, change your mind.”—In this manner does she trifle all day long; but she has nothing to trouble her. Walsingham indulges her in every thing. Even Lady Mary tells him that he will spoil her girl—He says it is impossible. Lady Mary has pressed me exceedingly to be with her daughter, declaring, that she shall be poor company to her son by herself. But I do not chuse to leave my own house. Caroline may come and stay

stay with her mother and sister.—Burton, perhaps, may be displeased; and I think, indeed, that when women are married, it is their duty to stay at home: they should not set the men a bad example by leaving them to themselves.

Adieu.

L E T T E R the Forty-sixth.

Mr. W A L S I N G H A M

T O

Mr. D'A R C Y.

YOUR stay in London was too short. Cecilia bids me tell you so. She esteems every body who is *my* friend: *you*, D'Arcy, must, therefore, necessarily, have a very large share of her regard.

regard. She is a teasing little girl for all that. She will not let me rest till I endeavour to prevail on Lady Frances to come and stay with her during her approaching confinement : she tells me that her mother and I shall be very dull by ourselves ; but she does not consider, like a thoughtless child, as she is in her fancies, that she discovers great imprudence by desiring to have so lovely a woman brought home to her husband.

I always admired Lady Frances, and I am not sure whether I should be safe with such a woman continually near me with all her personal attractions, all her powers of pleasing. — I have often, indeed, accused her of insensibility and indifference : she does not *now* appear to be either indifferent or insensible. — Don't mistake me, D'Arcy, I would, by no means, attempt to insinuate that this
amiable

amiable wóman behaves with the smallest impropriety: no creature can be more discreet; but then, at the same time, no creature can be more alluring. - She converses with more ease and freedom than ever; consequently, she discovers charms with which I was utterly unacquainted before. She has no longer that shyness, that reserve, which distinguished her till she was married, and during the life of Ashbury: she is now freely conversible, and entertaining beyond expression. Can I look at such a woman, can I listen to such a woman with indifference? No.—Indeed, Cecilia, you never made a more imprudent request in your life.—And yet, when the dear girl comes, and smiles tenderly in my face, throws her snowy arms round my neck, and tells me that she *must* have her dear, dear Lady Frances with her,

or she shall be sick ; what can I say ? To be so importuned to do a thing so agreeable to one's inclination, is really to have the business half done.

I slapped my saucy girl's face, this morning, when she urged me close upon this subject ; then kissed her, and told her she did not know what she asked.—But the pretty simpleton does not understand me : and so I shall be coaxed into some mischief. There is no resisting a fond, smiling girl, D'Arcy, when she is so kindly importunate, even to her own undoing—Yet I would not wrong my wife for worlds. If she has not a strong understanding, if she is not keenly penetrating, if she has not variegated talents to charm, she has great goodness of heart, she is tenderly affectionate, and her innocent vivacity gives pleasure, though it is not accompanied with that extreme

treme refinement of taste for which Lady Frances is so remarkable; but Lady Frances never intended, you may be assured, to *charm me*. Her reserve always kept me at a respectful distance during the only time I was at liberty to address her.

Yours entirely,

E. W.

LETTER the Forty-seventh.

LADY FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

MISSES HERBERT.

MRS. Walsingham would not let her husband rest till he begged me to accept of an apartment in *his*

K 2

house

house during her lying-in : but I refused to comply with his intreaties—I do not, indeed, think that he wished me to comply with them. 'By sleeping at *his* house, I shall act in the absurdest manner imaginable: my visits to Cecilia every day will be quite sufficient. I have promised to stay in town on purpose to attend her, though I am impatient to be at Ashbury Park.

Burton and Caroline press me to come to Datchet: I have a strong desire, I must e'en go to that place, because I can then see *you* frequently. But I have promised to stay in Grosvenor Square to please Cecilia. I love her, though I am a little angry with her just now. Why did she desire Walsingham to invite me? I dare say the invitation was not at all agreeable to *his* taste: he was forced into it; I am sure he was, by the awkwardness with which

which he appeared upon the occasion : I never saw him acquit himself with so ill a grace in my life. I would not have accepted of his invitation for millions : I am exceedingly out of hümour : I am plagued with men. I believe I shall soon hate the whole sex. Why will they persecute me ? To be once married is full enough—I must put a stop to all the impertinence with which I am worried from morning to night, or I shall never enjoy a moment's tranquility. Yet whether I am disturbed, or at ease, I shall ever remain,

With the greatest sincerity,

Yours most affectionately;

FRANCES ASHBURY.



LETTER the Forty-eighth.

Mr. WALSINGHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

LADY Frances will not consent to live with us for a month: but she comes to see us every day. Several of her admirers have found out her haunts, and pursue her to this place.

Floyer, who was always one of her warmest votaries, attacks her with redoubled ardor. I asked him, the other morning, if he had any hopes of her now, as she was a widow.

He replied that he did not know—adding, “As she has been once married, she may,

may, perhaps, have no dislike to a second marriage; and I am determined to stick close to her, for she is fine game."

I do not, however, I confess, think that Floyer has much encouragement; yet I may be mistaken. A lover sees more than other people. He is, certainly, very assiduous: he is indefatigable: and he is, you know, both agreeable, and insinuating; so that I will not be answerable for the consequences.

Lady Frances tells my wife that she is quite weary of the importunities of the men: but we are not obliged to believe every thing her Ladyship says, though she may have a very great regard for truth. In short, she is a woman; and where is the woman who does not love to be admired? And how will she be sure she is admired, if people do not talk her into self-consequence? When a wo-

man listens to the flattering speeches which are addressed to her, she may be glad to hear those speeches repeated.

I once knew a Lady who said that nothing diverted her so much as to have love *made* to her. — She was a fanciful woman, you will tell me; but I have mentioned a fact. There is no answering for women, D'Arcy: indeed there is not. The very best have their fancies —Cecilia, herself—has she not desired me to invite Lady Frances to my house? —And yet few women are better than *my wife*.

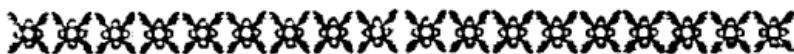
Burton writes to me, continually, about his happiness, and thanks me for his Caroline.

Mrs. Stedmore, at Mrs. Burton's request, has carried Miss Cary down to her new Mama, who is, her father tells me, very fond of her. I have succeeded
in

in my manœuvres, with regard to that affair, entirely to my wishes : but I will not have any thing to do with Floyer : at least, while Lady Frances is his flame.

Yours sincerely,

E. W.



LETTER the Forty-ninth.

From the same to the same.

FLOYER will not let me have any peace till I speak to Lady Frances in his favour. I have refused his request point blank, and he is out of humour with me.—He *will* persist in believing that I have an influence over her. What an idle notion ? But, supposing I *had*

an influence, I would not avail myself of it. Lady Frances, is at the age of discretion : she can, certainly, chuse for herself.—I have nothing to do with *her* choice. I shall not persuade her to marry.—Foyer is really a very absurd fellow.—Now I confess I should not like a woman who could be influenced by any other man : I should, probably, imagine that she preferred *him* to me : I should be, at least, assured that she was more ready to listen to him.—However, Lady Frances and I are not so situated.—We are, I hope, upon a very friendly footing, but not too intimate neither. She does not converse indeed so much with any man as with me ; but I am, you know, an old married man : forms are not so necessary with the husband of the friend.

Adieu.



L E T T E R the Fiftieth.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

T O

Miss H E R B E R T.

Y O U wonder I do not answer your letters ; but I am both out of spirits, and out of temper.

Colonel Floyer torments me beyond expression ; he not only teases me himself, but tells me that his friend Walsingham wishes him to succeed with me. How exceedingly provoking that is ? What can Walsingham have to do with regard to me ; or what have I to do with the friendship subsisting between *them* ? Why should *he* interest himself in *my* en-

gagements? Surely such a behaviour must be reckoned extremely impertinent.—Should he have any other meaning, his attachment to his friend carries him a great way. He must have a violent affection for Colonel Floyer, to wish me married to him. But I confess I cannot think that I am obliged to sacrifice my own happiness to please Mr. Walsingham.—I should pay him a very high compliment indeed, by discovering so much condescension.

Men are, actually, very unreasonable creatures.—How often am I obliged to repeat this assertion? I shall begin, in a short time, if I am thus haunted by them, to feel an aversion to the whole sex. However, whether I intend to listen to a man again or not, I think it quite incumbent on me to let Mr. Walsingham know that I am exceedingly displeased
with

with his pretending to say any thing to Floyer about me.

On second thoughts, I will not take any notice about this affair: it will be better, I believe, to let it pass over in silent contempt. Silence is sometimes more cutting than the sharpest expressions.

I am,

My dear Bab,

Yours ever affectionately,

FRANCES ASHBURY.

LETTER



LETTER the Fifty-first.

Mr. WALSHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARY.

I Have, indisputably, offended Lady Frances in some shape; and I cannot possibly tell what part of my behaviour to her has kindled her resentment against me. She looks quite cool upon me.—I am not in the least conscious of having done any thing, intentionally, to disoblige her. I have, indeed, the sincerest esteem for her.—I honour her understanding; I revere her character. The more I employ my thoughts to find out the cause of this sudden

sudden alteration in her carriage to me, the more am I at a loss to develop it. However, as I really believe that she would not be capriciously offended, and am ready to conclude that she can urge some plausible reasons—though not unanswerable ones, for her contemptuous coolness, I will take the first opportunity to ask her in what manner I have deserved it.

I once thought to bid Cecilia try to draw the secret from her; but women are so apt to say more than is necessary upon every occasion, that I will not mention the matter at all to my wife.

In CONTINUATION.

My Cecilia is taken ill. Lady Frances is sent for in a hurry.—I shall conclude by and by.

IN

In CONTINUATION.

My Cecilia is safely delivered of a daughter. Lady Frances just slightly wished me joy, while she was going to her chair.,

I offered her my hand, but she hurried away without accepting of it.—She then put her head out of the chair, and told me that she would come and sit with Mrs. Walsingham—when it was proper for her to see company.—She will not sit with *me*—and Lady Mary—I should have said.—I fancy she will marry Floyer ; he seems determined not to give her up.

I am heartily glad that my poor Cecilia is thought to be out of danger ; they tell me she has suffered a great deal.—Our dear little one appears to be but half reconciled to this world, and, for *my* part, I am almost weary of it.

I am

I am not at all well. I have felt more anxiety on Cecilia's account, than I imagined it possible for me to endure. Do all men thus sympathize with their wives in such situations?

Yours as usual,

EDWARD WALSINGHAM.



LETTER the Fifty-second:

Lady F R A N C E S

T O

Miss H E R B E R T.

I Have been greatly concerned for poor Mrs. Walsingham. She has had a very bad time, but it is thought that she is out of danger. Her little daughter is

is very weak, and it is uncertain whether she will live.

Walsingham, the tenderest of husbands, not only mourns, but seems to share the pain felt by his wife and his child. He is, himself, extremely indisposed.

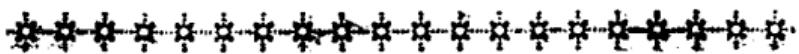
Lady Mary is much afflicted about them all; and I have been more with them, in consequence of her affliction, than I otherwise should.

I *bad* designed to let Walsingham see that he had offended me; but he looks so distressed, and so submissive, as if he acknowledged his offences, and was sorry for them, that I am not able to keep my resentment alive.—I cannot, however, get rid of Floyer: I have told him over and over again, that I will not marry, and yet he perseveres, provokingly perseveres.

Wal-

Walsingham says nothing about him. I believe indeed, that he, at present, thinks only about his Cecilia, who seems to be glad that she is recovering merely for *his* sake.

Adieu.



LETTER the Fifty-third.

Mr. WALSHAM
TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

MY Cecilia is quite out of danger. My little girl begins to thrive, and Lady Frances spends the greatest part of every day with us ; yet with all these satisfactions I feel myself not right. I have had a fever lurking about me a great

great while; I wish it would shew itself at once, that it might either be removed, or remove me out of the world. In my present condition, I am absolutely unfit for any thing. I conceal my disorder as much as I can, when I am with my wife, lest her fears, concerning *my* recovery, should retard her own. I can, therefore, only give a loose to my complaints before Lady Frances and my mother.—The flattering attentions paid to me by the former, and the uneasiness which the other discovers, would be sufficient to restore me, were I not—I am afraid I am—incurably indisposed.

Lady Frances, after all, is a perfect angel. I begin to think that Floyer will not succeed.

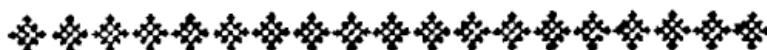
Pray believe me to remain unchangeably,

In every situation of body or mind,

Your most affectionate friend,

E D. WALSINGHAM.

LETTER



LETTER the Fifty-fourth.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

Miss H E R B E R T.

POOR Walsingham is very ill. Lady Mary is exceedingly alarmed about him. Happily, Mrs. Walsingham does not yet suspect his being out of order, and he takes the greatest care to prevent her feeling a moment's uneasiness. Yesterday, indeed, I was afraid that she would have discovered what he wishes to conceal.

I dined with Lady Mary, at her earnest request. As soon as the cloth was removed, Walsingham went up, as he does every

every day, if there is company or not, to fit with Cecilia, while her nurse goes to dinner. On a sudden we heard a noise above—for Cecilia's chamber is over the dining parlour.

Lady Mary hurried up, calling the servants all the way. I followed her.

When we came into the room, Walsingham seemed fallen to the ground, as if in a fainting fit, with his head on Mrs. Walsingham's bed, who was ringing her bell, excessively frightened.

On our entering the room, Walsingham opened his eyes, and his servant lifted him into his chair. He leant back, and was incapable of speaking for some time.

I do not know whether I was ever more terrified in my life. I thought he was actually dying. I held a bottle of salts to his nose, as Lady Mary was buried

sied about her daughter ; but I am sure I knew not what I did ; and when he pressed my hand in his clay-cold ones, I was really more dead than alive.

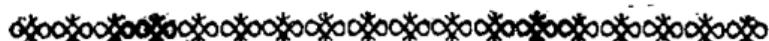
When he began to revive a little, his servants carried him into his own apartment, and put him to bed : he now lies in a fever, but the physicians say that there is no danger.

I am strangely fluttered. The sight of *him* in so melancholy a condition, and the affliction of poor Cecilia on his account, are too much for me. — In this very disagreeable situation, at present, is

Your very affectionate Friend,

FRANCIS ASHBURY.

LETTER



LETTER the Fifty-fifth.

From the same to the same.

M R. Walsingham is better, but I fear that poor Cecilia will pay dear for her affection. She would not be kept from him, when she found he was ill by his not coming to see her as usual, but rose out of her bed while Lady Mary was below, and went into his room. She had hardly strength enough to support herself till she reached him.

He received her in his arms, and kindly reprimanded her for venturing to leave her own apartment at such a time.

Lady Mary, whom her nurse immediately summoned, found *her* almost sinking

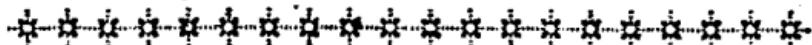
ing under her weakness and terror, and Walsingham in an agony lest her affliction on his account should prove fatal. She did her best to sooth them both.

Walsingham told his Cecilia, that if she would not return to her chamber and endeavour to compose herself, he would rise, go with her, and have a bed made for him near her.

He prevailed with her, at length, to suffer herself to be carried back; but she is so alarmed and disordered, that Dr. Hunter thinks her in great danger.

As to myself I am distressed on every side. I spend my whole time in trying to comfort Lady Mary.

Adieu,



LETTER the Fifty-sixth.

Mr. WALSHINGHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

AFTER a week's confinement I am able to resume my pen—If I had not *you*, D'Arcy, to open my heart to, I should burst.

I was disordered, a considerable time, before I could prevail on myself to keep my bed. To say truth, I could not bring myself to leave either my wife or Lady Frances. The former seemed to live only in my presence, and the latter had condescended to try to amuse my mind.

Going

Going up, one day, after dinner, to sit with my wife, I was seized with a kind of giddiness on my leaning down to speak to her—I fell, senseless, upon the floor.

The first object that struck me when I opened my eyes was Lady Frances—The divine Lady Frances was sitting by me with all the strongest marks of concern on her lovely countenance. With one hand she held mine, with the other a bottle to my nose.

Angelic creature! how could they say she had no sensibility? How scandalously have I treated her? — I would, at that moment, have implored her pardon, but my strength was not answerable to my wishes. I could only press her lovely, soft, white hands, to shew my gratitude.

I was soon removed from her; but my eyes quitted, with the utmost reluctance, the object which had so bewitchingly

attracted them.—I was confined to my bed.

Two days ago, my poor Cecilia, affectionate creature! escaped from her mother and her nurse, and came into my room.

She looked all pale and emaciated: she trembled, through weakness and agitation, and appeared to be rather the ghost of my dear girl than herself. She could scarce reach my bed.

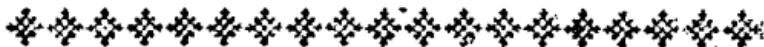
I sprung up to catch her in my arms. However, in the midst of a thousand endearing caresses, to reward her for her great anxiety on my account, I could not help chiding her for madly hazarding a life which was so dear to me: I could not help intreating Lady Mary to use her authority over her child, to oblige her to return to her bed, solemnly declaring, at the same time, that I would follow

follow her, and lie upon the ground by her side, whatever my health might suffer by such a procedure.

She would not be persuaded. She was forced from me, poor dear creature! and at this moment feels the fatal effects of her uncommon tenderness for me.— With two such women as my wife, and Lady Frances about me, how can I be unhappy? And yet it is impossible for me to say how exquisitely distressed I am by them. Oh, D'Arcy! never was a man more unhappily situated than

Your sincere and affectionate friend,

EDWARD WALSINGHAM.



LETTER the Fifty-seventh.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

Miss HERBERT..

Poor Mrs. Walsingham — dear Cecilia is — no more. She expired yesterday in the arms of him who occasioned her death. She actually died a martyr to her tenderness. Never was there a woman who more doatingly loved her husband ; never was there a husband more kind, more tender to his wife — He looks the picture of sorrow. He sighs, he lifts up his hands and eyes to heaven — he weeps, but he says nothing. How amiable is his affliction ! how affecting is his distress !

Lady

Lady Mary laments her lost child, as if she had not another. In vain I remind her of her Caroline: In vain I put the infant Cecilia into her arms—The grandmother is forgot in the mother, and she remembers only what has been taken from her.

From the distressed husband, and from the afflicted mother, I turn to my poor young friend, who smiles, and looks lovely even in death: she had no wish to live but for her Walsingham: she was only unwilling to die, because she could not bear the thoughts of being separated from *him*.

Just before she fetched her last sigh, she thanked him for his unnumbered kindnesses to her, and declared that the separation from so excellent a husband was far more painful to her than the stroke of death. She begged him not

to grieve for her, as she had the consolation not to survive him, an event she had ever dreaded more than any thing. Then, warmly recommending both her mother and her daughter to his affectionate attention, she breathed her last sigh on his bosom.

Poor young creature! how soon is she snatched from us! from a world in which she enjoyed more felicity than many women do—Yet her death may, perhaps, be reckoned a fortunate event for her, as she would, probably, have found her husband's love on the decline, had she lived much longer.—What do I say?—No—Walsingham, surely, never would have ceased to love her. I am persuaded that if he had felt any diminution of his tenderness, he would have, most carefully, concealed it from her.—

¶ How

How amiable a conduct? How few are capable of regulating their behaviour by such a pattern? How few, indeed, ever attempt to copy it?

Mr. Burton has sent a very polite, and kind invitation to Lady Mary and to Walsingham, to come and stay with him at Datchet: he says he must insist upon their compliance with his request for his Caroline's sake, who is too deeply affected with her sister's death. He has also written to *me* a most obliging, and affectionate letter, intreating me to accompany them.

I don't know what to do. Lady Mary says that I am her only comfort; and that, if I do not go with her, she shall be quite overpowered by her weeping Caroline, who loved her sister with uncommon fondness.

I tell her that Mr. Walsingham will console her, but she assures me that he wants consolation as much as herself.

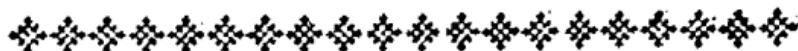
I wish very much to see you, but I cannot come down just at this time: and I dare say you will not, after having reflected upon the above written passages, expect me. You may, however, depend upon my seizing the first opportunity to enjoy a *personal* conversation with you — In the mean while,

I am,

My dear Bab,

Yours, as sincerely as ever,

FRANCES ASHBURY.



LETTER the Fifty-eighth.

From the same to the same.

LADY Mary is taken ill: she cannot go to Datchet, but returns home this day. I have, at her earnest request, agreed to accompany her. Walsingham goes with us. He looks like death. He hardly speaks a word, and scarce takes any nourishment.

Lady Mary has intreated me to desire Mr. and Mrs. Burton to come to her.— Poor Cecilia is to be carried down to Shropshire to-morrow to be interred; and I do all I can to hasten Lady Mary, and her son, out of a house which only reminds them of their loss.—The dear

little girl goes with us. I hope she will, when the first tide of grief is over, supply the place of our truly beloved, truly lamented Cecilia, to her mother.

Lady Haverford called on me yesterday. After having mentioned poor Mrs. Walsingham in the manner she deserved, with great concern, she took an opportunity to expatiate upon the considerable merit and tender passion of Colonel Floyer for me, adding, that as he had very earnestly begged her to become an advocate for him, she could not give him a refusal.

I replied — “ You have chosen a very wrong time, Madam, to comply with the Colonel’s request.” — I wondered, indeed, extremely, at her Ladyship’s eagerness to see *me* married again, as she herself had not found happiness equal to her merit in the marriage state.

“ All

"All men," answered she, "are not like Lord Haverford."

"Men are never to be known till after Marriage," said I. "They, generally, are then not the same people they were before."

"Lord Haverford did, to be sure," replied she, "appear in a very different light, when he became my husband;— no man could be more tenderly attached to a woman, than he was to *me*; he is now, indeed, quite altered; but Colonel Floyer will not, I dare say, follow *his* example; and you may, I believe, depend upon his constancy."

"I shall never put it to the trial," replied I — and desired to hear no more about him. We then fell into a conversation upon other subjects. Insensibly however, returning to Lord Haverford, she confessed, with a flood of tears, that

no man had once appeared to love a woman more than he did her ; but that she believed he had not felt the slightest affection for her for some time, as she knew he had several mistresses ; some of whom were both expensive and unfaithful to him.—“He did not always use me ill,” continued she : “I, therefore, endeavoured to bear his neglect with patience, imagining that my situation was not singular, and that few women had better husbands.”

I could not help saying — though I believe I spoke too hastily — that they should not then marry at all, and that *her* opinion of the men gave no strength to her arguments in favour of Floyer.

This answer gave rise to a short debate between us about matrimony ; and I concluded it with telling her, that, after having met with so affectionate a husband.

husband in Mr. Ashbury, and seen another still more tender in Mr. Walsingham, I should be deterred from venturing upon a second marriage, did not the great indelicacy of such a proceeding, make me resolve against it.

Finding that she could produce no alteration in my sentiments, she left me to prepare for my journey.

I am,

My dear Pab,

Yours, &c.,

F. A.

POSTSCRIPT.—I have just received your kind letter, and will answer it as soon as possible.

LETTER the Fifty-ninth.

From the same to the same.

I Received yours, yesterday, and am glad you have been obliging enough to call so often on Mrs. Burton; as her indisposition prevented her coming to her mother, or her mother's going to her. She very much wanted the affectionate attention of a friend, like yourself, my dear Bab, who cannot more agreeably prove the continuation of your attachment to *me*, than by the kind notice you take of my friends.

Lady Mary is somewhat better; but Mr. Walsingham seems to be thrown into a settled melancholy; for, not all our endeavours

endeavours to remove it, are successful. Yet it is a melancholy of such a nature, that it adds new graces to his appearance, as it has given an unusual softness to his looks, which excite, at the same time, pity and admiration. Every body must do justice to his elegant figure, and every body must feel compassion for him in his present condition.—I have, at his request, read to him and Lady Mary sometimes.—Now and then I play a concerto on the harpsichord, and accompany my instrument with my voice. By so doing, I throw him into a more composed state, and he pays me more thanks for my efforts to amuse him than I deserve. However, though he seems to be pleased with those efforts, he receives, I think, no great benefit from them. Time alone, undoubtedly, can make a change in him. As he so tenderly

derly loved Mrs. Walsingham, he cannot so soon forget her.

I am surprised to find that Lady Mary bears the loss of her daughter so well : but she is, I believe, one of those women who make no shew of their grief, yet feel it with great violence : with more violence, perhaps, than the people who loudly complain of their sufferings, and weep from morning to night. Many persons oppressed with their sorrows, are considerably relieved by giving a free vent to their tears and their lamentations. Lady Mary's behaviour is sufficient to strengthen the above assertions. She seems to have a slow, nervous fever. Walsingham complains of no disorder, but his grief ; a grief which cannot be soon alleviated, when we reflect upon the heavy loss which he has sustained :

sustained :—a loss which is, undoubtedly,
in his opinion, irreparable.

I am,

Yours as usual,

F. A.



LETTER the Sixtieth.

Mr. WALSHAM

T O

Mr. D'ARCY.

I Have, at last, brought myself to make another attempt to renew our correspondence : a correspondence which has always afforded me inexpressible pleasure, and which, nothing but the concern

concern which I felt for having been the unfortunate cause of my wife's death, interrupted. The poor, dear affectionate creature, most certainly, caught the fever, which hurried her to her grave, by coming into my room, at a time when she ought to have been in her bed.—I lament her exceedingly.—No man could be more fondly doated on, than I was by her : but knowing myself to be the immediate cause of her death, I am doubly afflicted by it. How ill have I repaid the enchanting tenderness which she discovered for me, and which—what am I going to say? and yet I cannot be mistaken, D'Arcy.—I have my sight, my hearing, all my senses—I see her charming eyes fixed with a tender pity on mine.—I hear her softoothing voice which lulls me into an ecstasy, while her words convey the kindest concern, the warmest wishes

to

to see me restored to my former tranquility and cheerfulness.—Her delightful assiduities about me, however, must entirely exclude tranquility from my disturbed mind : they throw my spirits into an agitation hardly supportable. Every time she looks at me, every time she speaks to me, my heart is in a violent flutter. But I must be dumb—I must seal up my lips—Were I to articulate my feelings, I should, probably, draw nothing but a discouraging reply from her.

After having mentioned so many particulars relating to my present sensations, need I tell you that Lady Frances is the woman who has occasioned them ?— Yes, Lady Frances, the divine Lady Frances—Angelic creature ! She—she—is the idol of my soul.

But

But supposing I have not foolishly flattered myself—supposing I may not be entirely mistaken about her, I cannot speak—I cannot give the slightest hint of my feelings so soon—In how indelicate a light must I appear to the most delicate of women, by addressing myself to her in so short a time after the decease of her friend, of whom I appeared to be—of whom I really was—so fond? whose death I, at this instant, so sincerely deplore?

I *did* love Cecilia, it is most true, and I grieve for her: yet you well know, my D' Arcy, that I loved Lady Frances with infinitely greater ardor, and even long before I ever saw Cecilia, to whom I never was fondly attached till Lady Frances was married to Ashbury, a man as young, as likely to live as myself.

Finding

Finding myself deprived of all hopes of Lady Frances by her marriage, and fearing, that I had, from a sudden flight of admiration, heightened by her behaviour to me, taken too many liberties with Miss Sommers, I prevailed on myself to marry *her*. When I *had* married her, the beauties of her person, her extreme sensibility, and modest tenderness so won upon me, that though I still admired Lady Frances, I dared only to *admire* her.

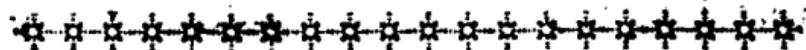
I loved my wife—Poor girl! She well deserved my affection: but as I have now been thrown into a situation which gives Lady Frances an opportunity to shew her concern for me, and to shew it in the most engaging manner, I cannot be insensible—I *must feel*: but I must not speak, lest I alarm her, lest I frighten her from discovering the charming attention

attention which she now discovers about me, an attention which constitutes all my felicity : but I endeavour to suppress the delicious satisfaction arising from her behaviour to me, though I am almost incapable of concealing my emotions— How severe are the pains which I feel, while I strive to conceal them !—I am silent—I am melancholy :—and I see plainly that my dejected appearance doubles this lovely woman's compassion for me—I could write for ever about her —But she comes, the charming source of all my future griefs and joys.

Adieu.

E. W.

LETTER



LETTER the Sixty-first.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY.

T O.

Miss HERBERT.

Broxburne.

I Am still here, though I think I am of very little service, as Mrs. Burton is now come to Lady Mary. The sight of this remaining daughter, recovered from her indisposition, and doated on by her husband (Burton can never be a Walsingham, yet Caroline is quite satisfied with him) makes her mother happy.

Walsingham continues much in the same dejected situation; but he looks

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infinitely becoming in it. You will say that I express myself in an odd manner; but I always preferred melancholy, at least seriousness, to gaiety and flutter. A man appears so much more respectable, so much more pleasing by a sensible solidity in his conversation and behaviour, than by all the ridiculous levity, and trifling chat of your empty, insipid coxcombs.

You will say that Burton is a man of sense and good breeding: granted.—But is the life and the spirit, are the numberless graces of the amiable Walsingham discoverable in him? In no other man, I will venture to assert, will they be discovered.—Cecilia was even happy in some degree by not surviving her husband, as she, certainly, would have been rendered inconsolable: her loss could not have been repaired.

The

The Burtons brought Miss Cary with them; she flew to her dear guardian—as she calls him—He took her up in his lap, though I think she is rather too old to be fondled in that manner: but the girl seemed wonderfully delighted with his attention to her, and expressed the greatest affection for him in return. Perhaps he may bring this girl to be a second Cecilia. She is very pretty, she has a remarkably quick understanding, and much vivacity: she pays the utmost regard, however, to every thing Walsingham says to her: and discovers, by every look and action, an implicit obedience to him: she seems far more inclined to obey *him* than her father, who, though extremely fond of his daughter, does not shew his fondness in the engaging manner peculiar to Walsingham.

Mifs Cary behaves also with great respect to Mrs. Burton, and more frequently calls her Madam than Mama : yet Caroline seems to be better pleased with the latter than the former appellation, and really appears very much diverted with Louisa, who has, indeed, a number of entertaining ways, and knows perfectly well how to make her court to those with whom she wishes to ingratiate herself. She is, actually, an amusing girl ; but she put me exceedingly out of countenance, yesterday.—She is, or pretends to be, very fond of me, and had been coaxing me to let her pull off my bracelet, that she might look at the picture. I consented, merely to get rid of her, as she had teased me a good deal about it.

She ran with it directly to Walsingham. It was *your* picture, my dear.—
“ Here is a pretty lady, Mr. Walsing-
ham,

" ham," said she, "I must kiss her; won't
" you kiss her, as she is so very pretty?"

He snatched the bracelet out of her hand, and casting the most respectful glance at me, turned the inside of the pearls which had touched my arm, and put it to his lips.

My face was, instantly, in a glow. I could not help it. Why did he behave so?—But it was the child's fault. Children and fools are always saying or doing some improprieties.—In short, I was so much disconcerted by the singularity of Walsingham's behaviour, that I could scarce lift up my eyes to him all day.

Yours most affectionately,

FRANCES ASHBURY.



LETTER the Sixty-second.

Mr. WALSHINGHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

Broxburne.

I Ought to have been in London ere now, but I can never quit this place while Lady Frances remains in it. She talks of going to Ashbury Park; yet having been strongly intreated to stay here by every body—except *me*—she has hitherto yielded to their wishes.

Had

Had I dared to flatter myself that she would have granted my request, I too, might, possibly, have ventured to ask her—but I am so fearful of offending, that I cannot speak when I really should not be silent.—There is, however, so great a change in her carriage, that were I not the most timid fellow in the kingdom—rendered timid only from my extreme veneration for her (if you will bear *that* expression from a man so passionately in love as I am) I should certainly construe it into the greatest encouragement. Not that there is the slightest impropriety in her behaviour: she is not in the least forward; not even free. She is always discreet, always charming; I only mean, that her behaviour has been different since Ashbury's death. There is no longer a chilling

chilling coldness in her manner; she is no longer forbiddingly reserved. I see nothing of that haughtiness in her, which prevented me, before her marriage, from entertaining the most distant hopes of success as a lover. But it is too soon for me to think of making my addresses to her, as my wife has been dead so short a time; and I am sure that she will look upon any addresses from me at present as too precipitate. We must therefore separate; that is, I *imagine* we must separate. However, I hope I may be permitted to visit her—I hope *that* favour will not be denied me. As the husband of her relation—had we never been so well acquainted—I cannot, certainly, be excused from paying my compliments to her, should I have no inclination to pay them.—She will soon be
at

at Ashbury Park : What must I do then ? I must not presume to go thither without an invitation : and I am afraid I shall not be particularly invited by her.—I must learn to live without her. If I have no hopes of living always with her, I had better never see her again . I shall act more prudently by weaning myself, at once, from so enchanting a companion. But such an undertaking is, I fear, too much for me.

Louisa Cary is very fond of this charming woman : Who, indeed, is not ? She honours my little ward by taking a great deal of notice of her—For my part, I declare that I am half mad to snatch those amiable caresses from the child which she liberally bestows upon her. — Am I not far gone ? Certainly I am—Oh ! D' Arcy, what would

would I give—But time perhaps may remove the anxieties, which, at present, disturb the mind, destroy the repose of,

Your ever-sincere friend,

EDWARD WALSINGHAM.

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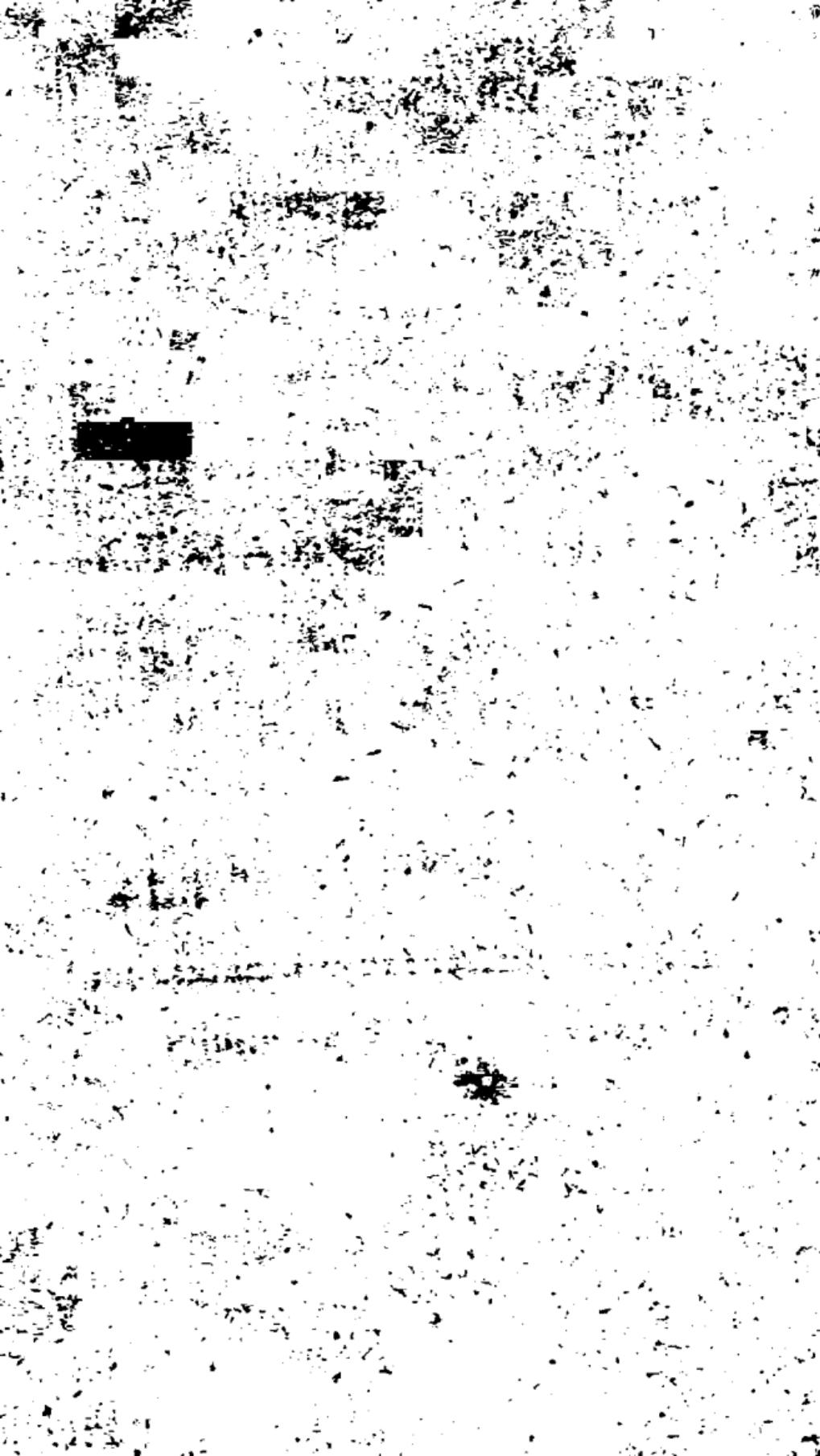
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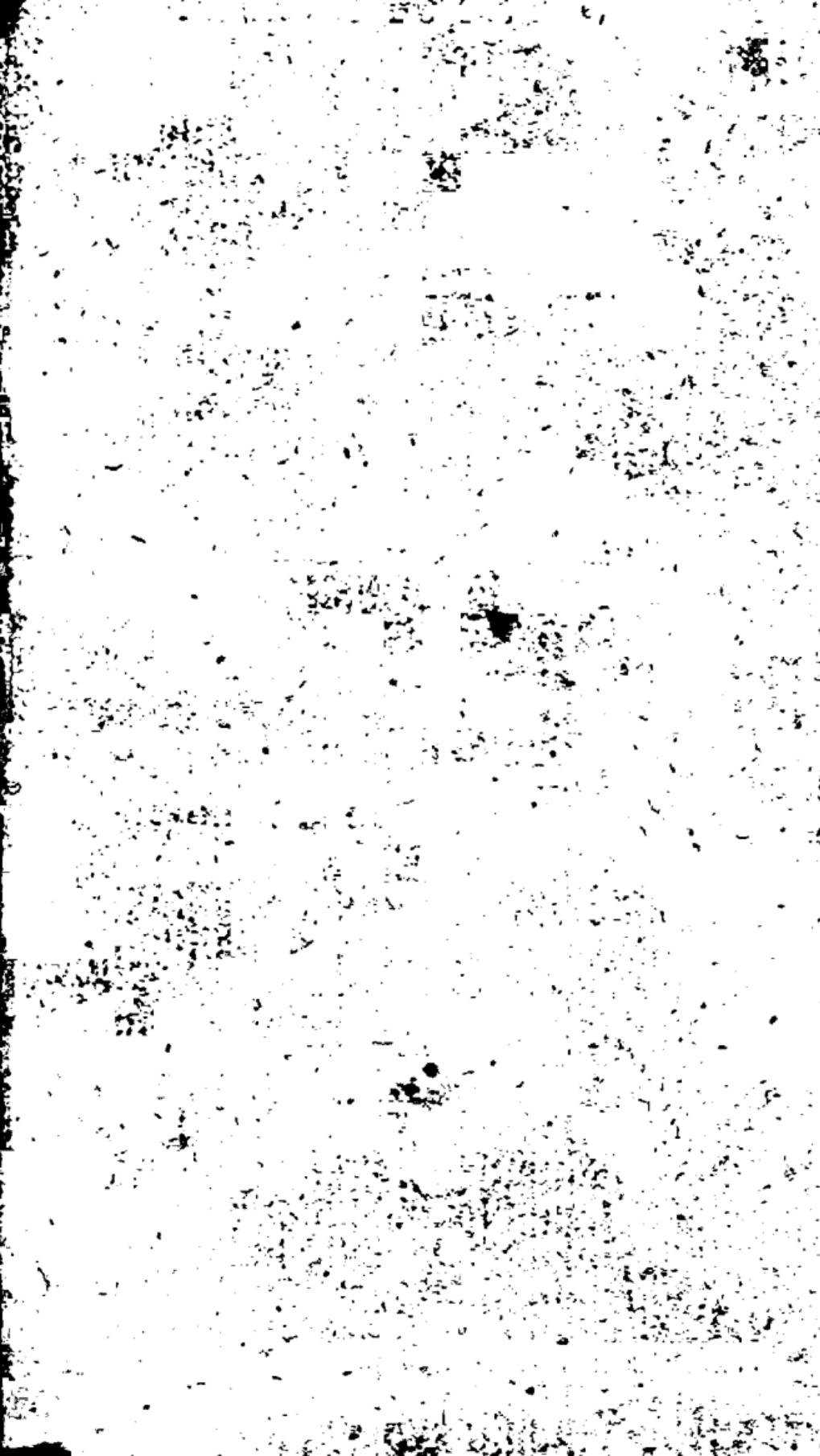
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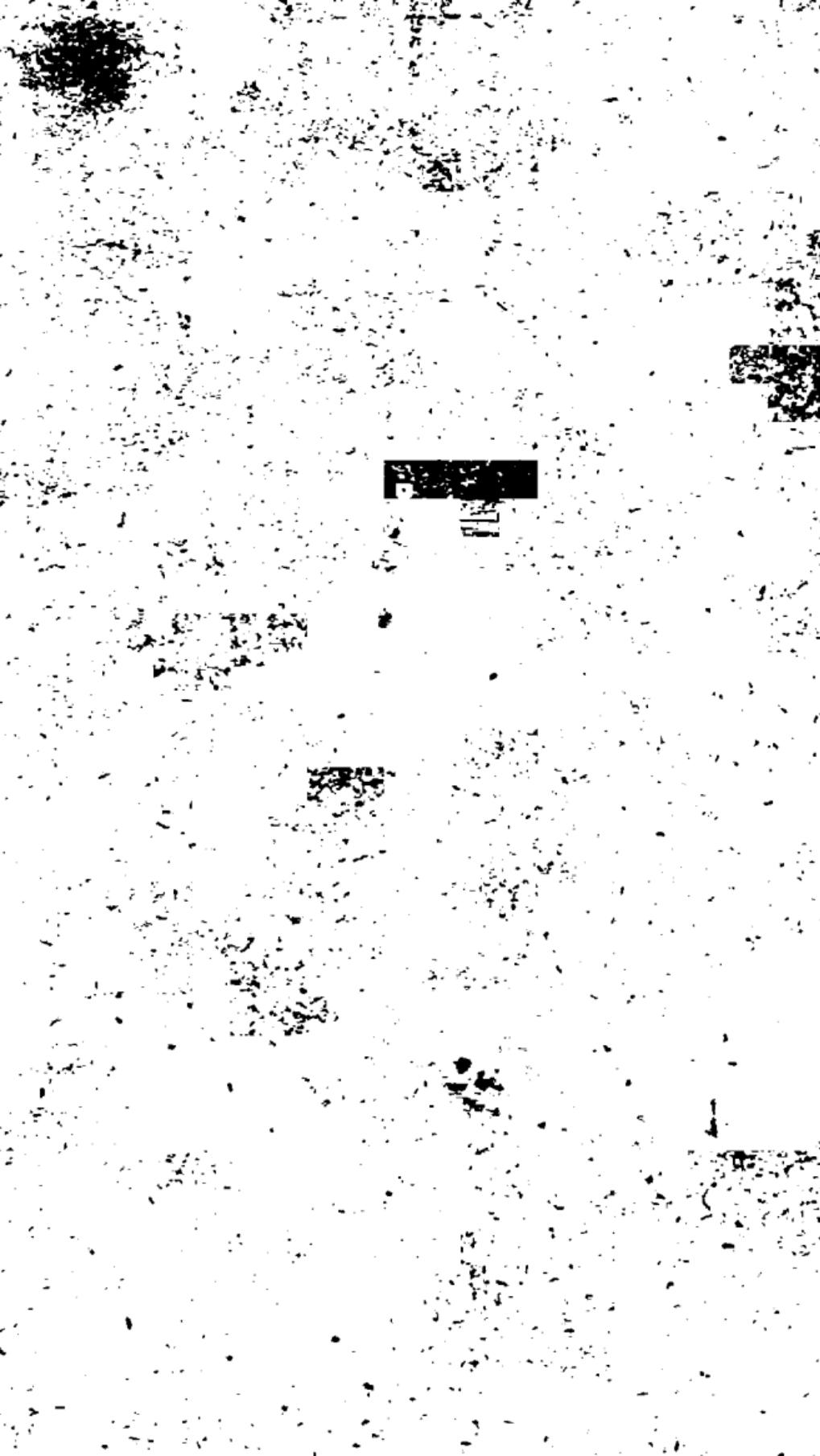
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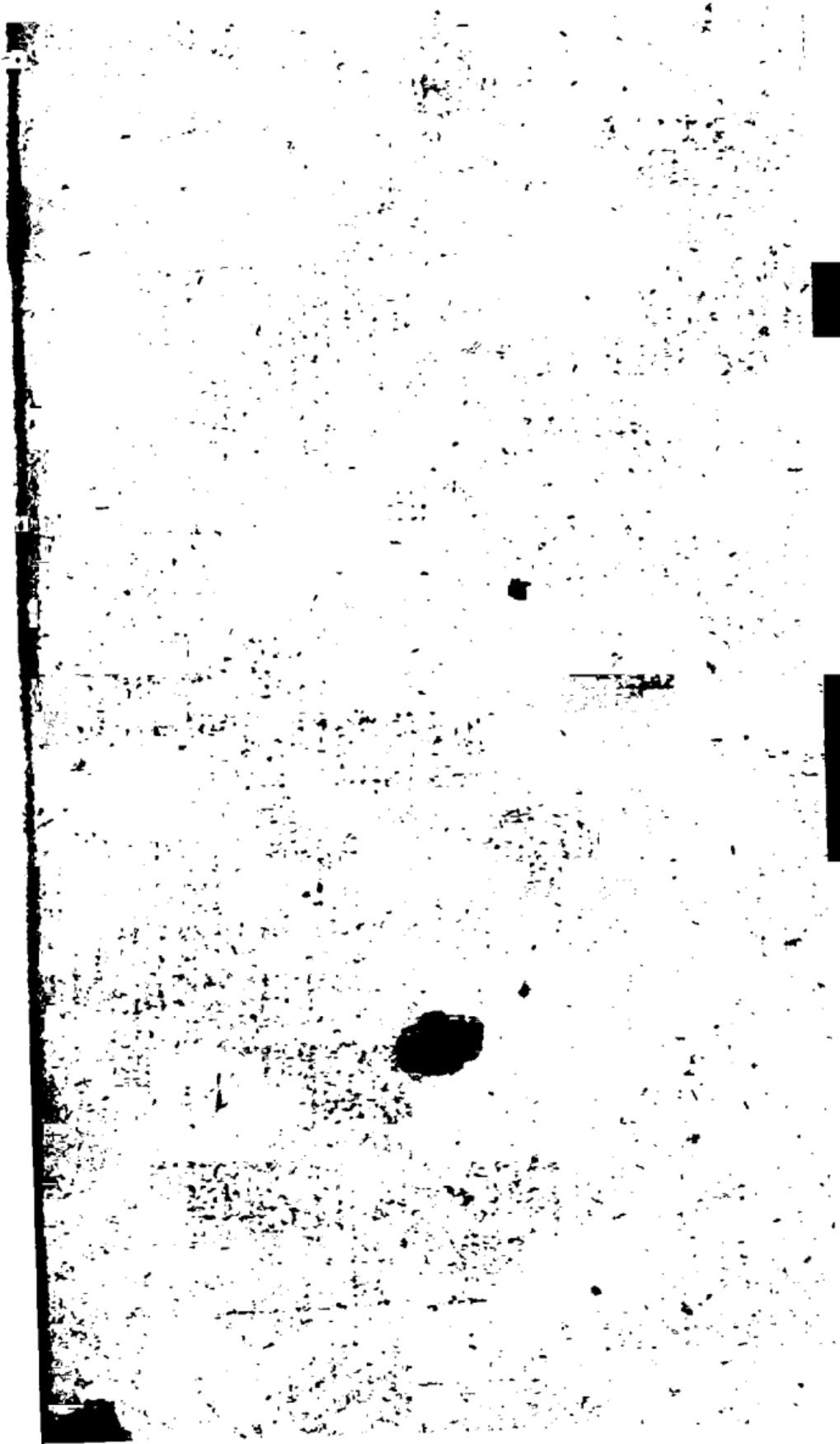
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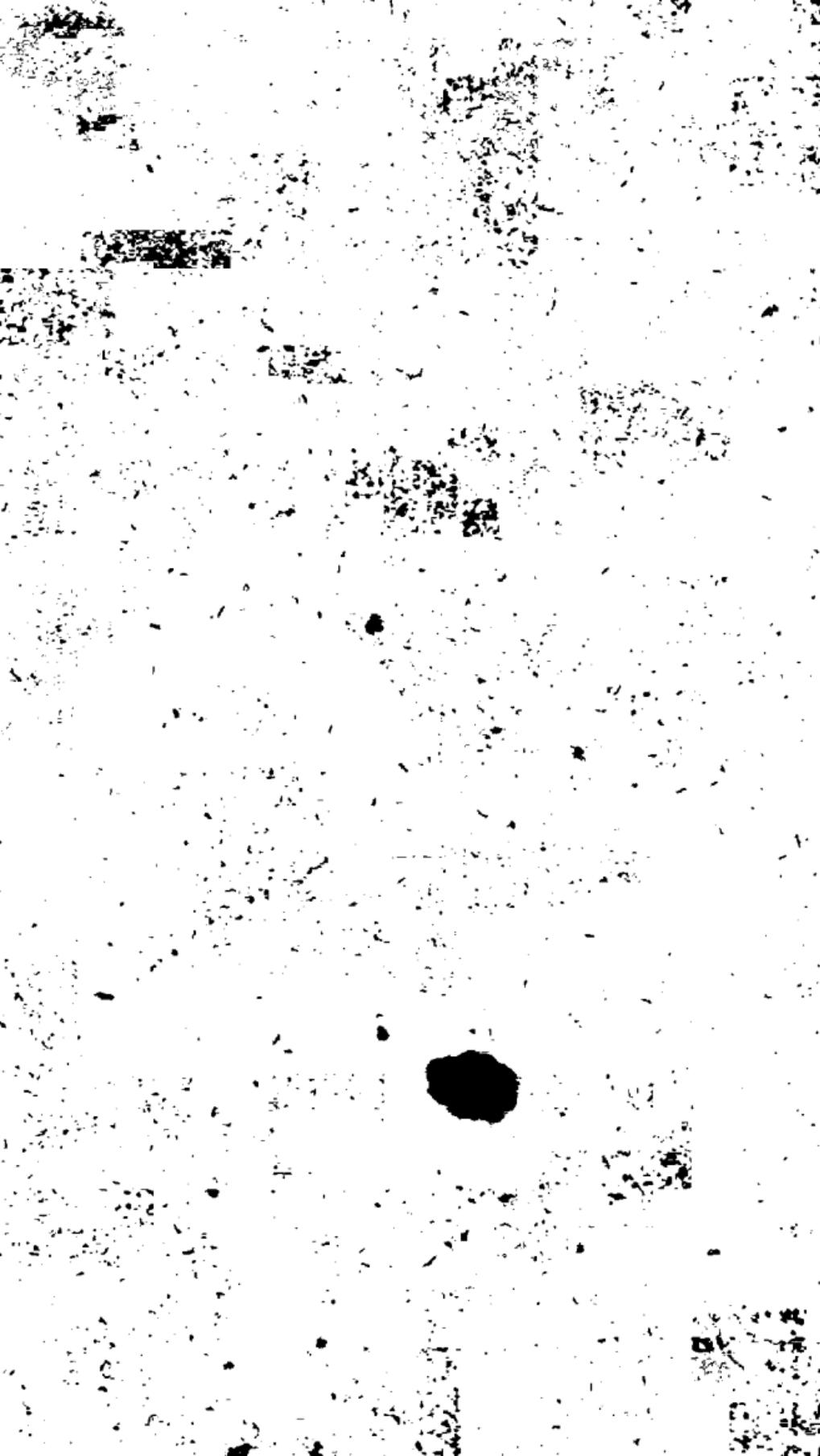
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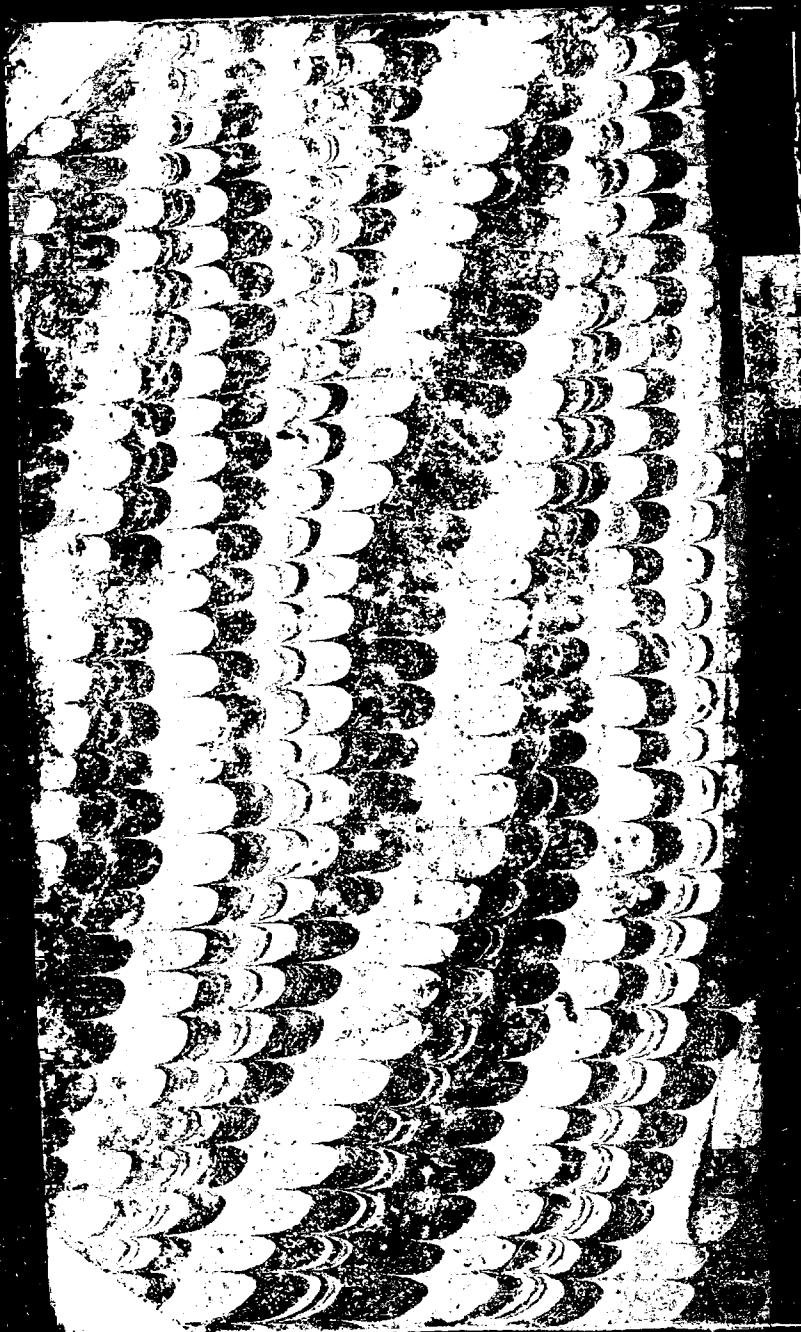
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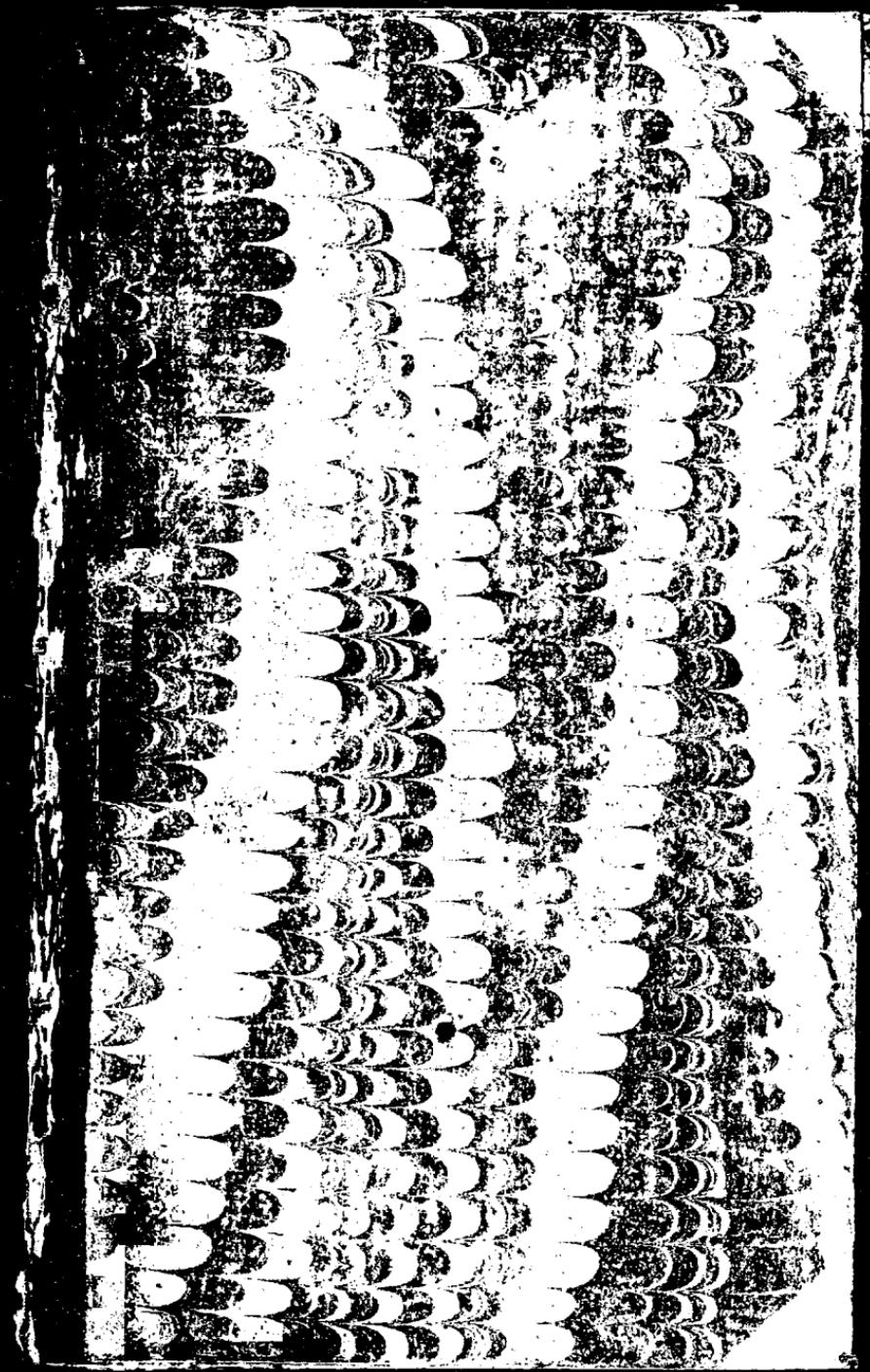
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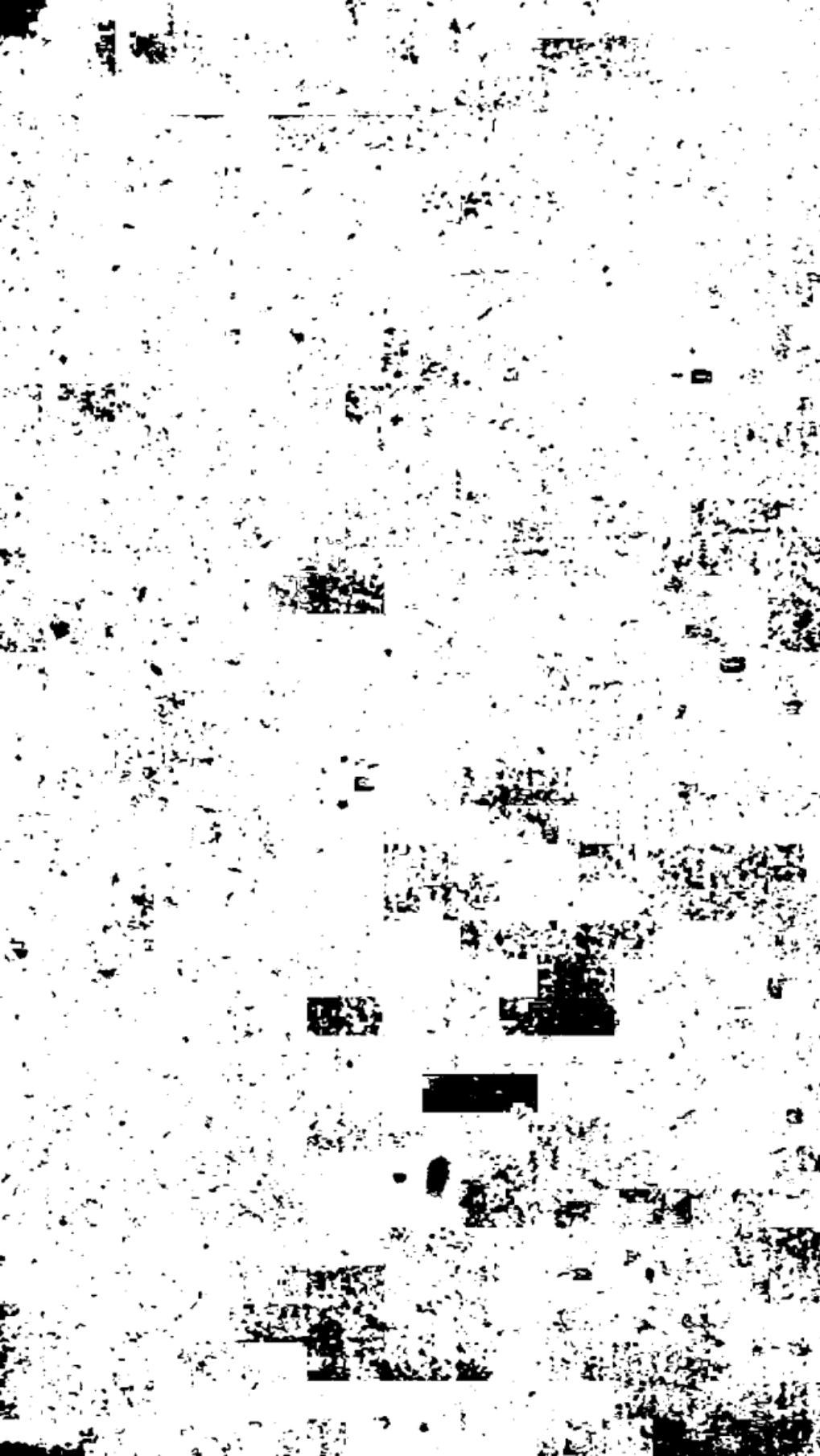
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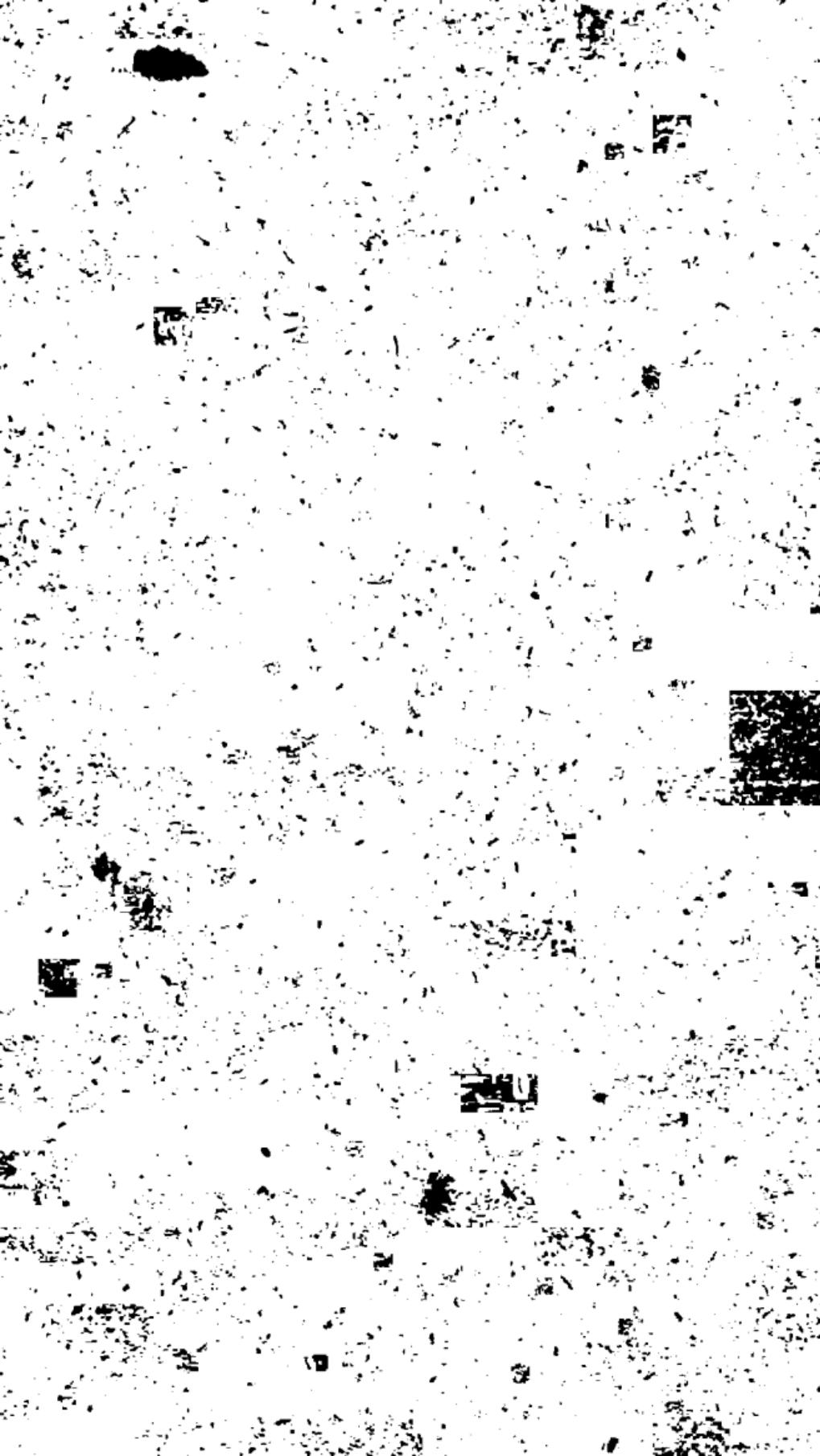
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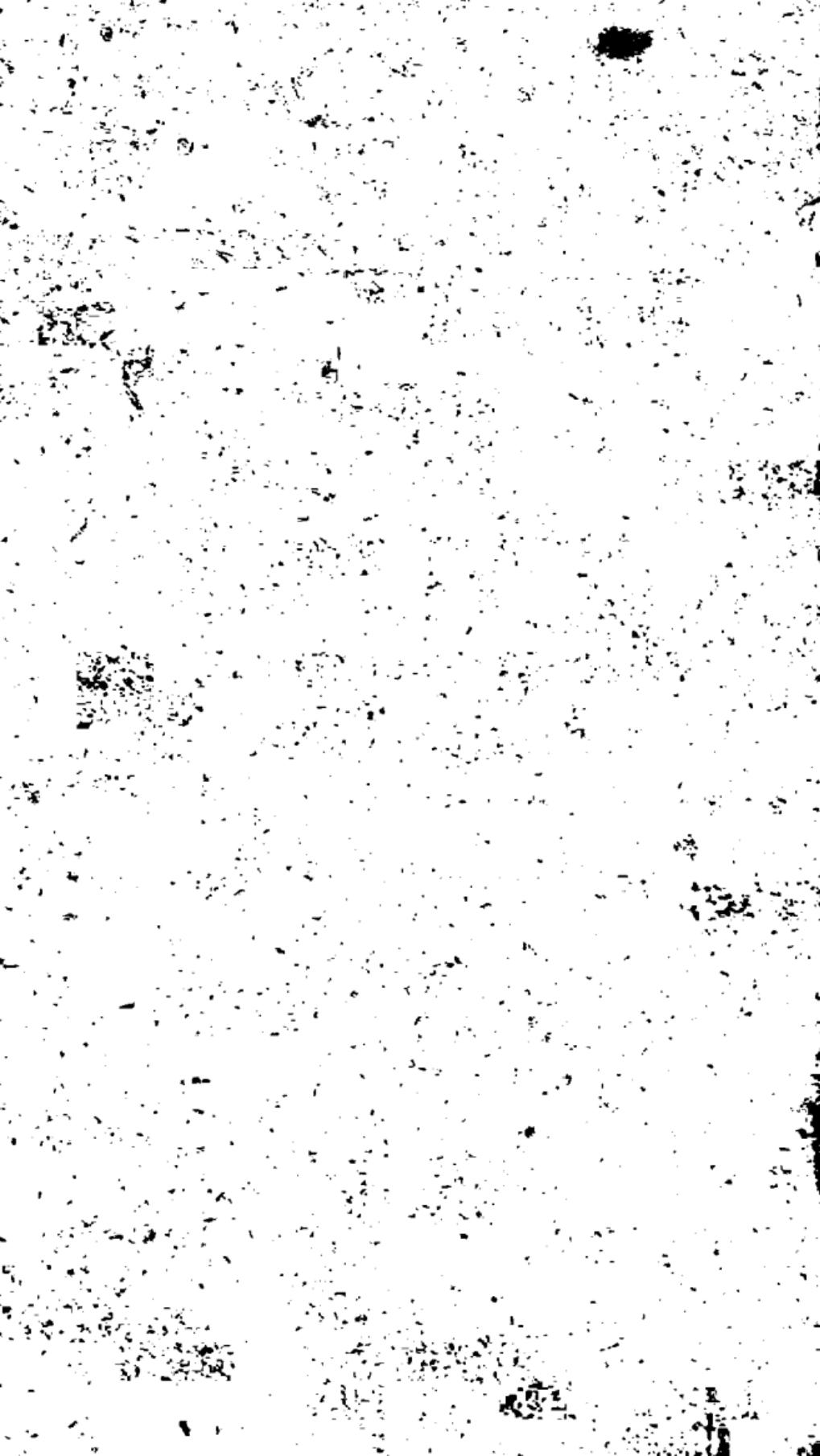


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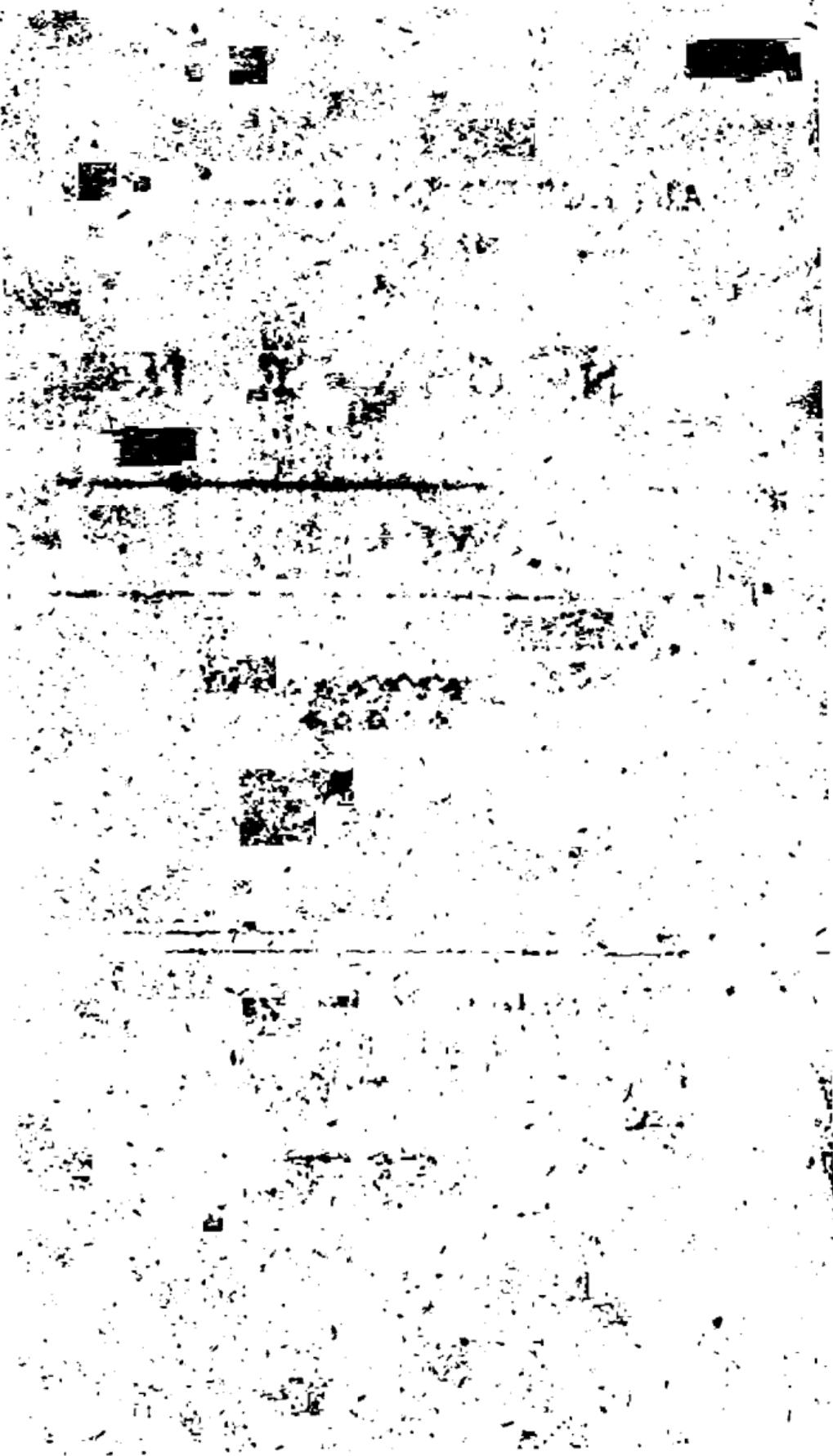












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THE
AFFECTED INDIFFERENCE:
A SENTIMENTAL HISTORY.

LETTER the Sixty-third.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

Miss HERBERT.

Grosvenor Square.

I HAVE at last taken leave of Lady Mary, and shall to morrow set out for Ashbury Park: though very much intreated by Mr. and Mrs.

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Burton to go to Datchet, to which place Mr. Walsingham is to accompany them.

I did not decline being of the party merely on Walsingham's account — I had intended, you know, to take a journey into *Staffordshire*, and only staid in town to oblige Lady Mary, who has now brought herself to be quite resigned to the loss of her daughter.

Walsingham appeared to be revived a little before I talked of coming away; but as soon as my departure was fixed, his dejection returned, and he seemed to be either buried in thought, or absent: he frequently committed strange mistakes, as if from a total want of attention to any thing; though nobody is more observing. He was indeed so penetrating about my behaviour, that I was obliged to keep a strict guard upon it: a guard which became troublesome to me. Not that

that I had any particular reason to be so extremely circumspect; but as he watched my looks more narrowly than those of the rest of the company, I could not help being embarrassed by them.

When I had taken leave of Mr. and Mrs. Burton, and Miss Cary, Walsingham advanced, with his eyes thrown down.

After having fixed them on me till I was quite disconcerted, he wished me a pleasant journey. Then, raising them again, added, with a sigh, "May I be permitted, madam, to have the honour of waiting on you at Ashbury Park?"

That question confused me—I felt myself look silly—Could there be any impropriety in a visit from the husband of my aunt's daughter?—Certainly not: and yet—to be sure I never behaved in

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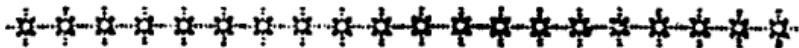
so ridiculous a manner—I made him no answer: I only made him a curtsey, which he might have, undoubtedly, converted into a permission, if he had been so inclined.

I don't know any thing so vexatious as a propensity to be disconcerted. Lately I have been frequently disconcerted; but I was not always so foolish. One gets unaccountable habits sometimes, nobody knows how—But I have got a still worse habit than that which I have mentioned. I am grown ill tempered; and speak so fretfully to my people, and am so peevish, and so disagreeable to myself, as well as to every body else, that I care not what becomes of me.—I condemn myself severely for my fretfulness, for suffering it to triumph over my natural disposition, which was never reckoned intolerable, I believe, before.

Lord

Lord and Lady Haverford are to accompany me to Ashbury Park: the latter, I knew, would not have been so well pleased had I not invited the former: I, therefore, much against my inclination, I honestly confess, invited his lordship, of whose manner and behaviour I cannot possibly approve—But one must often wear a mask in this world, however disagreeable it may be to us to encourage hypocrisy. After all, what a farce is this life!

Yours, &c. F. A.



LETTER the Sixty-fourth.

From the same to the same.

Ashbury Park.

MY arrival here has occasioned a dejection, which makes me dis-

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agreeable to myself, and will render me so to every body else. The house, the situation, the gardens, the park are all fine, but they fill my mind with a train of melancholy ideas ; and they bring back past scenes which were never pleasing, which I now only remember with anxiety and regret.—How much happier should I have been, had I never had a right to *this* place, had I never been entitled to the name of Ashbury ? But what is past cannot be recalled : I will, therefore, endeavour to think no more of it.

I am surrounded with company—I am praised, flattered, courted, and admired ; yet I am a poor, joyless, tasteless creature. Never am I so pleased as when at a distance from every body : never so happy as when alone. — By no means, however, am I happy even *when alone*.

I could

I could not well avoid coming hither; but I have, a thousand times, wished myself at the place from whence I came. There was something inexpressibly agreeable in the society of Lady Mary's family: and though you may, perhaps, think that my hours were melancholy ones after the death of Mrs. Walsingham, I do assure you I did not find them unpleasingly so — Besides, I was *there* employed in comforting the afflicted, in soothing the unhappy, in dissipating the gloomy thoughts of the distress, and turning their attention to cheerful subjects. I was *there* of some use, but *here* I am quite good for nothing; a poor idle wretch! set up merely for a crowd to stare at, and to praise or blame at the command of caprice.

These reflections, Bab, whatever impropriety *you* may discover in them, natu-

rally arise in my mind, as I am at present situated. I am quite a new being in this part of the country; and as the widow of Mr. Ashbury, as the mistress of this park, people from every quarter pour in upon me; not so much out of respect to the memory of the deceased, or out of attention to the living, but entirely out of curiosity. — “What sort of a person has she? How does she look? What does she say? Is she gay or serious, affable or proud, silent or talkative?” These questions have, I dare say, been continually repeated among my new neighbours ever since my arrival. — However, there are, certainly, a great number of agreeable people within my reach, and I might receive no small pleasure from their company in any other situation. The truth is, I believe, I have only myself to blame, for not receiving

ceiving pleasure from my neighbours. I am not in a humour to be pleased with any living creature; with any thing about me.—My eyes and my ears are perpetually offended. I never could be amused with your large assemblies: I was ever of opinion that there is more conversation — though perhaps not so much talking—in a little circle than a great one.—And yet a solitary life is extremely unpleasant; hardly justifiable indeed—I am thoroughly convinced that hundreds have had their intellects disturbed, their tempers soured by plunging themselves into retirement, and giving up all commerce with the world. What I mean, my dear Bab, by all this is, that I should like to have a few select companions quite suitable to my taste, with whom I might live upon an easy footing; with whom I would wish

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to be neither too reserved nor too free.— Your society, my dear Miss Herbert, and the conversation of two or three more as agreeable and entertaining as yourself, would be sufficient to make my life glide away in the most desirable manner.

How often have I wished that *you* and I could be nearer to each other for a longer time than we have lately enjoyed ourselves together! But since there is a less probability than ever of our enjoying each other's company, as you will, undoubtedly, be married; and as we may be still at a farther distance from each other, I feel a strong desire to return to Lady Mary, or to go to Mrs. Burton—I should, at Mr. Burton's, be in *your* neighbourhood. It was necessary indeed for me to come down here; but I should have accepted of Mr. Burton's invitation,

invitation, had he not so warmly invited Walsingham at the same time.

Could I, my dear friend—tell me, Bab; could I with any propriety go again into the house with Walsingham, so peculiarly situated as I was? Had I not known of his being of the party, I might have ventured; but circumstanced as I was, I could not, you plainly see, have acted otherwise, without revolting against discretion.

Adieu.



LETTER the Sixty-fifth.

Mr. WALSHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

Berkley Square.

WE have now been separated for some time; and I hover about the place in which my heart's treasure

was deposited like a discontented spirit. And who are WE? you say.—Why, Lady Frances and your melancholy friend. That lovely woman is gone to Ashbury Park, and I did not take leave of her in the manner I wished. I did not dare to utter the slightest part of what my soul felt upon the very disagreeable occasion.—How cruel was the separation!

Haverford, who accompanied her at the request of his Lady, tells me that she is, at present, surrounded with a new train of admirers. He does not give me this information imagining that I am in the least concerned in it, for I never trusted such a thoughtless, unfeeling mortal with my sentiments relating to this charming woman. Besides, he does not like her; he writes only what passes, by way of news, *pourtuer le tems*. He tells me that Lord Berners, whose estate

estate joins to Ashbury Park, appears to be captivated with Lady Frances, and stands as fair a chance to carry the day as any man in her *suite*.—Had he known how this piece of intelligence would have tortured me, surely he would have suppressed it.

How can I prevent her receiving the addresses of her admirers? How can I, till a decent time is elapsed since the death of my Cecilia, mention my passion for her? I shewed, indeed, what I felt by every sign in my power, without deviating from my respect for Lady Frances, and without affronting her delicacy; but if she neither understood me, nor chose to understand me, what is to be done? I cannot go down and tear her from Lord Berners, if she is willing to accept of him: but I can go down, and throw myself in her way; and if matters are

are not gone too far, I may, perhaps, make a diversion, at least; and this is the only hope left for me.—Burton, 'tis true, assures me, that she will come to Datchet when she leaves Ashbury Park, and has invited me to be ready to meet her: but that invitation comes too late. The mischief is, certainly, already done, or it will be done before that time: by that time she will be either married, or honourably engaged.—I must, therefore, go down to Staffordshire, and see how the land lies. But suppose my apprehensions should be groundless, why should I flatter myself that she will ever be mine: she, who, when I had the fairest opportunity to crown my wishes, drove me to despair by the most chilling, the most cutting indifference? Why should I imagine that she will ever honour *me* with her hand?

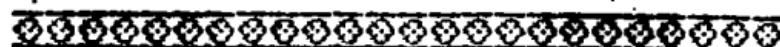
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— There has been, indeed, a favourable change in her behaviour to me since the death of Ashbury ; but as permanency is not common in this world, may she not be totally altered a second time, and turn all her attention to a new lover ? — What a disquieting idea ! — I will, immediately, set out for Ashbury Park — Though I must not speak my feelings, I will try to read my fate in her eyes.

Adieu.

P. S. Berners has person, understanding, character and fortune, to recommend him. What powerful recommendations ! He will, certainly, succeed — and I am lost.

LETTER



LETTER the Sixty-sixth.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

Miss H E R B E R T.

Ashbury Park.

I AM just returned from the county assembly, to which I was dragged quite against my inclination: and yet I think it is of service to us to change the scene sometimes.

At the assembly I was *surprised* in such a manner, that my spirits were almost overpowered; my spirits, indeed, are not half so good as they used to be. I wonder what ails me.—My frequent flutterings

terings become extremely disagreeable : they make me fit for nothing.—

Walsingham appeared, on a sudden— Why should I be so affected at the sight of him ? — I never was so much disordered in my life : I believe I found myself so disordered because I had, after having been repeatedly intreated to dance with Lord Berners, given him my consent. He had just taken my hand when Walsingham appeared.

To say I was astonished at his unexpected appearance, is to express, very imperfectly, my sensations upon the occasion — I am sure I looked like a fool. My hand dropped from Lord Berners's : I opened my eyes as if I had never seen a man before ; and then cast them down again, wishing to shrink into myself, to hide a confusion, for which I could not account, and which was increased by

by the supposed observations of every body about me.

With what a grace did he approach to pay me the most respectful compliments! Those compliments were delivered in the most elegant language, and uttered with a voice so full of melody, that they almost stole away my senses. I saw, however, that every person in the room drew back on his advancing, as if he alone merited the attention of the whole assembly.

When the first civilities were over, he asked me, with the most beseeching looks and accents, if I was engaged for the country dances.

I stammered out, Yes : but I scarce knew in what manner I pronounced that monosyllable, as all eyes were fixed on me.

“ I was

"I was once favoured with that lovely hand," said he, "for a whole happy evening. "How inexpressibly unfortunate am I," added he with a sigh, "in having arrived too late!"

Shall I confess the honest truth, Bab? I was nearly as sorry as he himself was. However, there was no remedy.—To make the matter worse, I had not danced since the death of Mr. Ashbury, and should not *then* have consented, had I not been teased beyond all enduring by Lord Berners, who is, really, a well-bred man, and has nothing of the coxcomb in him.

Seeing Walsingham sit down, as soon as the dances began, without having asked any other Lady for her hand, and look dejected and disappointed, I actually felt for him.—I could not help it. I am grown excessively silly. Yet why should

should I think it a weakness to be concerned about such a man as Walsingham; a man whom all women admire? Whom all women, I may add, love? A man without a fault?—But did not I behave too particularly, by sitting down after the second dance? I could not but be supposed desirous of hearing something about Lady Mary, Mrs. Burton, &c. &c.

Luckily, I had told Lord Berners at first, that I would dance but one dance, and as I consented to go down another with him, he could not, reasonably, complain of my behaviour; and, indeed, my Lord, who is perfectly polite, after having conducted me to my seat—guessing, I imagine, that Walsingham had something to say to me, as he came and sat by me—left me for some time.

Walsing-

Walsingham, whose chearfulness returned, on Lord Berners's departure from us, entertained me with a thousand amusing things, till his Lordship joined us, and even then still kept up the conversation with uncommon spirit.

When the assembly broke up, Walsingham almost overset Lord Berners in seizing my hand to lead me to the coach.—As there was a corner in it to spare—Lord Haverford not being of our party—My Lady or I—I really cannot remember who was the person—asked him to accept of it.—He wanted no pressing; and we left him at Sir James Caldwall's, whose house is about half a mile on the other side of Ashbury Park.

And now, my dear, tell me, tell me sincerely, have I behaved in a ridiculous manner? I am so shocked at myself, that I blush even when I am alone, to think what

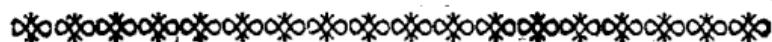
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an embarrassed figure I made : and for no reason in the world : but there are some things in this world out of the reach of human comprehension ; and this affair is, I am sure, quite beyond the faculties of

Your very sincere,

But very perplexed friend,

FRANCES ASHBURY.



LETTER the Sixty-seventh.

Mr. WALSINGHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

Caldwall-house.

I Could neither bear London, nor the absence of Lady Frances ; every place was joyless without her.

Having,

Having, for some time, promised a visit to Sir James Caldwall—(which will now prove, I fancy, a visitation)—I wrote to know if he was in *Staffordshire*. He answered in the affirmative, and repeated his wishes to see me.

I went down, therefore, to Caldwall-house, and made all the necessary enquiries about my Lady Widow, before I made my appearance any where. I then accompanied Sir James to the county assembly, having heard that she was to be there.

She was there indeed: but what a sweet confusion did the amiable creature discover at the sight of me!

My happy rival was close to her when I entered the room: he took her hand, on my advancing; but either from the suddenness of my appearance, or the precipitation of my approach—for my eagerness

gerness hurried me to her—the Gentleman and the Lady were both strongly affected: the latter, while her hand fell from that of the former, blushed, and trembled, on my approach, like a poor fluttering dove just deprived of its liberty.

This was the time, D'Arcy, to push my fortune. I, therefore, after I had addressed her upon our meeting, begged the honour of her hand.

Her blushes increased, while she informed me that she was engaged. She even looked as if she blushed for having engaged herself, and seemed to pity me extremely.—In what pathetic sorrow did I lament my too late arrival!—How did I regret the loss of that happiness for which I had sighed!

The dear angel looked quite abashed, and sorry for my disappointment. When she had gone down two dances, she returned.

turned to her seat. Guessing that her seat was near Lady Haverford's, I waited for her coming to it, and strove to make the remainder of the evening pass away, in a manner agreeable to her. The charming creature appeared to be not less satisfied with me, than I was with her, though she was inconceivably disconcerted.—However, her embarrassment was, to me, the most favourable symptom imaginable.

Her admiring lord, to do him justice, was well-bred, and discovered no suspicions : but *I* find some rising, at this moment, in my breast. Might not the embarrassment which, at first, animated me with hopes, have been occasioned by her appearance in publick with Berners?—It must be so ; and I have been buoying myself up with the most delu-

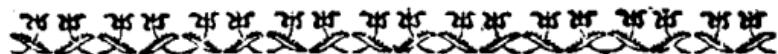
five expectations ; expectations which can never be answered.

Between you and I, D'Arcy, I did not think I had been such a coxcomb : but this love is the very devil, and turns our dispositions topsyturvy. Yet, why did she ask me to let her set me down!— civility—mere civility—nothing more.— When a fine woman is only decently polite to a man, he is very apt—too apt—under the dominion of vanity—to construe her common civilities into particular attentions.—I am then, indisputably, become a downright blockhead ; I have most egregiously duped *myself*.

Oh ! woman ! woman ! how very easily canst thou make a fool of the wisest man !—Yet I will not give Lady Frances up, till I am thoroughly convinced that she is, unalterably, engaged to another.

Yours, &c. E. W.

L E T T E R



LETTER the Sixty-seventh.

From the same to the same.

ALL is right, my friend ; at least, I flatter myself that all is right.

I am become a frequent visiter at the Park—I mix with all the company : I am invited by Lady Frances herself to all her parties both at home and abroad: but I have not yet had *a tête à tête* with this charming woman : She discovers, however, no kind of aversion to me ; on the contrary, she gives me, I think, all decent encouragement.

Berners seems to be distanced : that is, she treats him rather with a cool politeness, while she behaves to me with all the

warmth of friendship. Yes—I cannot be deceived. Her eyes brighten at my approach, smiles dimple round her delicious mouth, and a glow gives a lustre to her complexion, which renders her something more than mortal.—There is also such a sweet bashfulness when I gaze on her, and such a bewitching langour in her eyes when I throw down mine for fear of offending—such a melody in her voice when she addresses herself to me, and such a flutter in her lovely bosom when I speak to her—No—I cannot be mistaken.—Heavens ! how transported am I to find the first wish of my heart, the first passion of my life returned with an ardor equal to my own!—I tell thee, D' Arcy, I would no more marry a woman whose tenderness I did not believe equal to mine, than tie myself for ever and ever

to

to a woman merely for a fortune, or even for her person : The person of a woman alone will not content *me*, though it be ever so beautiful, if it is not accompanied with a bright and cultivated understanding, and a breast replete with the most exquisite sensibility.

I once fancied, like a stupid fellow as I was, that this amiable Lady Frances had no feeling ; I am now sufficiently certain that I greatly wronged her. She is tremblingly alive to ever tender impression.

What an enchanting discovery !

Lady Frances has just now sent to let me know that Lady Haverford and she are going to see Lord T——'s new house about three miles off, and that she shall be obliged to me for my company on horseback.

Obliged to me ! What an expression ! The least hint would have been sufficient to make me follow her to the extremity of the globe—but when she tells me that she shall be *obliged* to me for my company — I fly to obey her ; to make myself blest by giving all the pleasure in my power to *her*.

I am almost intoxicated with joy.

Adieu—Adieu.



LETTER the Sixty-eighth.

From the same to the same.

WHAT a delightful morning ramble have we had in Lord T——'s woods !

Lady

Lady Frances looked like a sylvan deity; she was dressed with an elegant simplicity, which added new charms to her captivating person; and her whole behaviour, suitable to her appearance, was so soft, so gentle, so delightful!—

No man, but myself, being of the party, my hand and my arm, when offered to support her, to assist her while she walked, was not refused. She even condescendingly thanked me more than once for my assistance, and seemed as much pleased to have me near her, as I could possibly be.

When I helped her into the chaise to go home, I ventured to press her hand ardently, and she discovered no sort of dislike to my pressure. Instead of shewing any aversion to it, she leant forward before the chaise drove off, and made a smiling bow.

When we stopped at Ashbury Park, she said, " You dine here, Mr. Walsingham; you will not think of leaving us to day?"

Luckily, we had no other company than the curate of the village, a sensible, exemplary man, whom Lady Frances patronizes, as he has a large family, and only a small income.

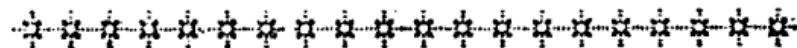
After dinner, the ladies sat down each to her *tambour*, while I read *Fernegan's Deserter* to them. That pathetic little poem drew tears from the eyes of the tender-hearted Lady Frances. Let me again exclaim—How could I say she had no sensibility? How could I make so unjust an assertion? Her heart is as tender as her form is inviting: and her sentiments concerning the above-mentioned poetical piece were as judicious, as they were pleasingly delivered.

I shall

I shall be at liberty, I hope, in a little while, to pour out my whole soul at her feet—What a happy fellow am I! —What delicious prospects are dancing before me !

Yours, yours as usual,

E. W.



L E T T E R the Sixty-ninth.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

T O

Miss H E R B E R T.

Ashbury Park.

I Have been so perpetually engaged, my dear Bab, so fatigued with company since my arrival here, that it has

C 5 not

not been in my power to steal a moment to answer your last till now. Your letter was a very flattering one, as it complimented my taste in distinguishing Walsingham from every other man: but I am certainly not particularly partial in his favour, for all the world is ready to do him justice, by their high encomiums, to his uncommon merit. There is indeed such a propriety in every part of his behaviour, and his manners are so exceedingly winning, that we can hardly say too much in his praise.

IN CONTINUATION.

Bless me, how I tremble! How strangely one may be deceived!

Walsingham, the Walsingham so much admired by us all, my dear Bab, has carried off Sally Goodyer, the curate's

curate's daughter, the prettiest, and most innocent-looking girl you ever saw.

The poor father is almost distracted; and indeed I am little better—To have the man whom I countenanced, who passed for my friend, my relation, to have *him* guilty of such a blameable action—I am thrown into the greatest confusion by it: especially at this time too. I confess I could not have expected it.—But there is no reliance on man—From this hour I will never believe any thing men say.

You cannot conceive, my dear Miss Herbert, how this affair has shocked me.—Scarce out of mourning for his wife; a woman of whom he was so fond; a woman whom he married merely from inclination.—

The poor, distressed father came to me to relate his griefs—"My daughter," said he, "asked my leave to go and stay a week or two with her aunt who lives about five miles from hence; and I sent her under the care of a servant who had often attended her thither. That servant informed me that she had left her safe at Mrs. Carter's. But, yesterday, I received a letter from my sister, in which she enquired very much after my niece, and gave her an invitation to come and stay with her. This letter quite astonished me, for I had concluded that my daughter was with her aunt, and it also considerably alarmed me—I made an immediate search after her, but could hear nothing of her till to day. To day I have heard that she is at a house of no reputation in the "neigh-

"neighbourhood, and that Mr. Walsingham visits her."

Imagine my surprise at this intelligence. I could hardly support the unwelcome recital : I was, by no means, prepared for so severe a blow—a blow which I never could have expected—I was, therefore, incapable of saying anything to comfort the good old man, who, perceiving me exceedingly afflicted, began to beg my pardon for having mentioned the unhappy affair to me, as it had given me so much uneasiness.

I could not indeed conceal the uneasiness which I felt—I was all over in a tremor—My face was in a glow, this moment, and the next, as cold as ice. I could hardly recover myself sufficiently to tell him that I was sincerely concerned for his daughter's indiscretion, and doubly so to think that a person
with

with whom I had a friendly connection, had distressed him in so unwarrantable a manner. I then added, “the best thing you can now do, sir, in my opinion, is to fetch your daughter home, as you have heard of the place of her concealment, and to endeavour by a mild and gentle treatment to make her sensible of her error.”

He thanked me for my advice, told me that he would, implicitly, follow it, and left me.

He afterwards whispered in Bland's ear, “Your Lady is, I find, too much disordered by what I have mentioned, to be fit for company.”

It is but too true—I feel myself very unfit for company—I am all over out of order.—I am extremely ill.

If Walsingham, whom I believed to be a pattern for his sex; if Walsingham,

ham, whom I believed to be the most amiable of men, has actually, so deceived me, I can never more have any confidence in!— How cruel are these disappointments! They almost make one disgusted with the whole world.

Surely he will never have the assurance to—— I am interrupted.



LETTER the Seventieth.

Mr. WALSHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

WHAT unaccountable creatures are women! and how easily one may be mistaken in them!

In

In fact, it is impossible but to be mistaken in them.—What a high opinion had I of Lady Frances, from my first acquaintance with her; and even, while I accused her of indifference and insensibility, I thought her conduct irreproachable. There was a propriety in her behaviour which I observed in few women, and which raised her, every moment, higher in my esteem; but upon my marrying a relation of hers, and becoming, unavoidably, intimate with her, I discovered charms unseen before; new charms, new graces, accompanied with a large train of virtues, which almost rendered her, in my eyes, an object of adoration. I was still farther transported with her, when I found, upon my wife's death, that she appeared to take more than a relation's part in my affliction; that she endeavoured, by a thou-

sand

fand soft, engaging ways, to alleviate my distress ; and that she encouraged me to believe her to be my sincere, my affectionate friend. Stimulated by so animating, so flattering a carriage, I was induced to hope that I might, in time, gain upon her, and prevail on her to listen to the passion I had long felt for her ; to listen to it, and to return it. The moment decency would permit me to follow the impulse of my inclination, I hurried down to this place to be near her. The charming flutter into which she was thrown on my sudden appearance, the particular attention which she paid me, and the pleasure with which she, apparently, received my assiduities, gave me the strongest encouragement to imagine that I might, at a proper time, venture, in a proper manner, to inform her of the tender sentiments which I had long-

long entertained for her. Conceive my surprise, if you can, when I was this morning told by the servant who came to the door, that his lady was not at home; though I saw her, at the same time, standing by the window, with her back to me. I confess, I was exceedingly astonished at so singular a treatment, especially as I had supposed myself to be upon a more desirable footing with her than ever. Conceive, if you can, what I must have felt at this abrupt, this unaccountable denial. This severe disappointment has, I own, pained me to the quick; it has pained me beyond expression; it has rendered me incapable of attending to any thing.—I can think only of this lovely woman's capricious behaviour.

I have a great deal more intelligence to communicate to you, but my mind is
so

so much disturbed, at present, that I cannot proceed.

Oh D'Arcy, never was such a disappointment felt by

Your affectionate friend,

EDWARD WALSINGHAM.



LETTER the Seventy-first.

From the same to the same.

I WAS too hasty. I have been wrong —Lady Frances is still the dear, amiable creature I ever believed her to be. She was, unavoidably, obliged by an unlucky concurrence of circumstances, of which I was ignorant, to act in the manner I mentioned in my last letter.

Restless

Restless to a degree on being forbidden to see her, I ventured again to make my appearance at the *Park*. I returned to the charge; and telling the servant that I knew Lady Frances was at home, added, that I would on no account presume to press upon her when she was otherwise engaged; but that I should esteem myself particularly happy to be admitted to see her, whenever it was most convenient to her to favour me with such an indulgence.

The servant, who had ever treated me with the highest respect, desired me to walk into the parlour while he went up to his Lady.

He staid a considerable time. He then came down, and in the most submissive manner, having begged my pardon for making me wait, informed me
that

that his Lady was not very well — he believed—and could not see me.

The honest fellow hesitated while he spoke, and seemed unwilling to deliver such a message to me.

Before I could make any reply to it, the bell was pulled with great violence.

He flew up stairs—He returned, with the greatest precipitation, and desired me to walk up.

I followed, with equal haste. He opened his Lady's dressing-room, in which she was sitting by herself.

She rose, and blushed, as I advanced with a respectful, but tender air, intreating her to know what I had done to be cruelly denied the sight of her.

This question, with the actions which accompanied it—for I, instantly, seized both her soft hands, and strove to detain

tain them in mine by a gentle force—roused her—as she had rather a bashful and embarrassed appearance when I entered the room. Her bright eyes sparkled with anger: they penetrated my soul with a fierceness which, however discouraging, animated her to a loveliness not to be expressed.

I stood, and almost gazed away my senses.

“Have you not, sir,” said she, with a voice not less spirited than her looks, “given me sufficient reason, by behaving in a dishonourable, in a dishonest manner, to break off all acquaintance, all connections with you? Is the seduction of a girl from her worthy father’s house, in which she has been modestly and virtuously educated, a crime of so light a nature? And is it possible for you, after the commission of it, to be astonished at
my

my scrupling to receive you upon the usual footing? Is it not my duty, as a woman, to resent your injurious behaviour to Mr. Goodyer by deluding his innocent child from his fond, paternal arms? I should be a disgrace to my sex, were I to give the slightest encouragement to a man so destitute of principle, so void of honour—You have proved yourself wholly unworthy of my regard; and I should not have admitted you now, had I not hoped you might have feeling enough left for a poor, exemplary old man, as to deliver immediately into his hands his unhappy, undone child: to suffer him to conceal her from the eye of the world, and bury her shame in the bosom of her mourning family."

Here she stopped.

Transported to find that I could soon exculpate myself from the heavy charge laid

laid against me, in the most satisfactory manner; and delighted to see with what a becoming spirit, sweetly tempered with a blushing modesty (for she averted her lovely eyes at the conclusion of her reprimand, lest they should, I suppose, be too much pained by looking at me) I almost devoured her with love and admiration—I could not speak for some moments.

As soon as I found words at my command, I earnestly begged her to hear me with attention, while I assured her, that had I been the character she imagined me to be, I should not have had the assurance to appear before her.—“I am as much concerned, Madam,” added I, “for Mr. Goodyer and his daughter as you can be: and my concern, on their account, has, no doubt, occasioned the sudden alteration in your sentiments relating

lating to me. From the purest regard for Mr. Goodyer, and from the sincerest pity for his daughter, I prevailed on the latter to leave her seducer, and to go to an honest farmer's in the neighbourhood, till I could prepare the former to receive her.—In consequence of those emotions, I waited on your Ladyship to request your assistance towards bringing about a reconciliation between the father and the daughter."

Here I paused, to see what effect my attempt to vindicate myself would have on her.

There was a remarkable change in her countenance, instantaneously. Her eyes sparkled with satisfaction, and every feature was brightened with a smile—But she suddenly checked her smiles—doubtful, perhaps, of the truth of my declarations. Then, looking at me

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steadily, she said, " Pray, sir, if *you* have not carried away this girl, *who* has? and how came *you* to know of her seduction?"

" I am extremely concerned, madam," replied I, " to be obliged to name the person who has seduced her; and indeed, from a tender and delicate respect for the parties interested in the discovery, I wish to conceal it; but *your* commands, whatever they are, Lady Frances, shall never be disobeyed."

I delivered the few last words in a tone entirely expressive of what my heart felt. All the passions with which I was agitated on her account, were plainly discernable in my looks and gestures.

She saw those passions, but she appeared not to see them.—" I must have this affair thoroughly cleared up to me,"
replied

replied she, “ before I can think of interceding for Miss Sally with her family.”

“ From you, madam, I will make no concealments,” answered I; “ but, for the sake of a particular friend of your Ladyship’s, I wish to keep Miss Sally’s seducer’s name a secret from every body but yourself.”

She looked as if she waited for the disclosure of it.

“ Will not your Ladyship think it kind, as well as prudent, to conceal Lord Haverford’s name, upon the occasion?”

“ Lord Haverford!” replied she—“ Lord Haverford! What can you mean, sir?—Surely you cannot think of concealing your attachment to Miss Sally, under the name of your friend? Mr. Walsingham, surely, would not have recourse to such a mean proceeding.”

"Walsingham would sooner perish than be guilty of such a proceeding," said I:— "a proceeding which would lessen him in the eyes of Lady Frances, whose good opinion he so earnestly wishes to retain: but indeed, madam," continued I—perceiving that she threw down her eyes, as if oppressed by the eager gaze of mine—"it was, by meer accident, that I came to the knowledge of Lord Haverford's connection with Miss Goodyer: and, as I really felt both for the poor girl, for Lady Haverford, even for my Lord himself—I took the most likely measure I could think of to reclaim the imprudent couple, by endeavouring to make Miss Goodyer sensible of the great injury she would do herself, her own family, and my Lord's family, by encouraging an attachment which might absolutely end in her ruin.—I attacked
the

the lady rather than the gentleman, because I believed myself likely to meet with success, as I was certain that she would be more ductile, and more easily prevailed on to hear reason, than *him* : I so far gained my point, as to induce her to let me conduct her to farmer Oates, at whose house I hoped she would be safe, as she had promised me not to receive any more visits from Lord Haverford : she also promised me not to receive any notes or messages from him. This is the real state of the case, Lady Frances ; and I flatter myself that you will do me the justice to believe, that I set too high a value upon your Ladyship's esteem, and have too great a regard for my own honour, to be engaged in any affair which would weaken the first, or injure the last."

I paused, to observe what impression that speech made on her.

She looked sweetly embarrassed—yet I soon found that she rather affected to treat the conclusion of it as a piece of unmeaning gallantry, than to take it seriously, as it was intended; and she continued, artfully enough, to evade any further mention of herself, by expressing her surprise at Lord Haverford's conduct, which was, she said, the more indefensible, as he had seduced the daughter of a clergyman, a man so justly, so universally esteemed; a man, who had given his children so virtuous an education: and that he had acted so indiscreetly when my Lady happened to be with him, who could not be well kept ignorant of his behaviour.

“ It was in order to prevent Lady Haverford's unhappiness,” replied I, “ that I chose

chose to appear myself in the affair.— On her account I screened Lord Haverford, as he has all along endeavoured to keep himself concealed: and removed Miss Goodyer publickly, from one place to another, that I only might be mentioned to her Ladyship upon the occasion.”

She lifted up her charming eyes with an approving smile—“ I am exceedingly obliged to you, sir: it is a great pity that Lady Haverford cannot know how much you have suffered for her.”

“ Suffered for her, Madam!” replied I.

“ Yes; suffered for her, Mr. Walsingham! for you have, undoubtedly, suffered extremely in your reputation, by your behaviour to Sally Goodyer:— however, since it is cleared up so happily, I will go directly to Mr. Goodyer, and

desire him to fetch his daughter from Oates : I will desire him also to endeavour to make him sensible of her error, and to pardon her on her sincere repentance."

I was going to make an answer in a rapturous strain, to pour out my acknowledgements for her goodness, which might have led, perhaps, to the very point I had particularly at heart ; but Lady Haverford entered the room.—I then took my leave, pretending urgent business.

And now, my friend, I perceive—but it may be I only fancy I perceive, a satisfaction in Lady Frances's lovely face, which gives new brilliancy to her eyes, animates her complexion, and throws an additional lustre over her whole form.—Have I not now sufficient encouragement to expect pleasing consequences from such

such promising appearances?—*I must—
I will* expect them; how enlivening are my hopes!

Adieu.

LETTER the Seventy-second.

Lady FRANCES, ASHBURY

TO

Miss HERBERT.

WALSINGHAM is, a second time, found to be innocent of the indiscretions laid to his charge. He was generous enough to place himself in a very unfavourable light in order to save the wife of his friend from the knowledge of his infidelities. How great, how infinitely amiable is such a

D 5 conduct!

conduct!—I may venture to tell *you*, that the guilty wretch was Lord Haverford.—How I pity my Lady! What obligations is she not under to the man who has so humanely saved her from the exquisite distress of being acquainted with my Lord's perfidies! What an unfortunate creature has this abandoned Lord Haverford made Sally Goodyer! What could bewitch the girl to give up her innocence to such a man? a man with no personal attractions; a downright libertine in his principles and manners, and who is certainly twice her age? What a strange infatuation! one would be almost led to imagine from this attachment, to believe that there were such things as philters and love-powders: What else could induce a seemingly modest young girl to sacrifice her honour, and of course her peace to a man

a man *old* compared with *her*: married, and in no respect agreeable? She has nothing, she has not a syllable to say in her defence: she must have been actuated by the very worst, the grossest motives. I have thought, however, of a retreat to fix her in; for though her father is willing to take her home on her promise of amendment, I am afraid of her corrupting her sisters: I am afraid that she may, from the freedom of her behaviour which she has acquired by living with Lord Haverford, expose herself and his family to censure at least, if not to other inconveniences. If, therefore, either her father or I could pitch upon a discreet woman ready to receive her, and to try to work a thorough reformation in her, she might be considerably benefited. All this I am going to talk over with Mr. Goodyer;

and so I put the finishing hand to my letter with assuring you, that I am still,

That I never shall cease to be,

Yours most affectionately,

FRANCES ASHBURY.

LETTER the seventy-third.

Mr. WALSHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARY.

LADY Frances, since she has been convinced of my not having been connected with Sally Goodyer, has treated me with greater consideration than ever—and so enchanting a confidence, indeed, does she place in me, that she

she has undertaken to provide for her apart from her family, and sent her to board with a person of education, but small fortune. — How discreet, how humane, how benevolent ! to conceal the shame of a fallen sister, to guard her from future temptations; and to endeavour to reform her ! How many women do I know; who are esteemed both virtuous and good-natured, who would have treated this poor girl who has undone herself, from mere thoughtlessness, perhaps, with a cruel contempt, with a neglect which might have made a considerable addition to her misfortunes, and have involved her in still deeper distress ! — The reputation of a woman is so extremely delicate, that it requires the utmost care to preserve it unfullied. Sorry am I, indeed, to say, that women have been more injured

jured by their own sex than by ours. I am very sensible that this assertion is not much to the credit of the ladies ; but I have asserted a serious truth. How invaluable, then, is this charming Lady Frances, who not only thinks but acts so nobly in an affair which—How delightful a companion must she make to the man whom she can love !—She really gives me room to hope I shall one day be that man.—Am I not a vain fellow ?—I, certainly, am

Your very sincere and affectionate friend,

EDWARD WALSINGHAM.

LETTER

LETTER the Seventy-fourth.

From the same to the same.

I Was animated with the liveliest the most encouraging hopes, when I finished my last letter. I could not be such a puppy as to make a mistake : those hopes, however, are all crushed, all vanished *in fumo*.

I will relate, minutely, all that passed between us.

I have already informed you of every part of this engaging woman's conduct from the first commencement of our acquaintance: I have acquainted you with the prodigious change which appeared in my favour. Flattered by *that* change,

change, I fondly imagined that I might be attended to as soon as it was decent for me to speak upon a subject which had so long been nearest to my heart. I seized, as I thought, the luckiest opportunity conceivable to bring about the completion of my wishes.

On my calling, this morning, at Ashbury Park, the servant told me that the ladies were in the temple in the grove, and did not even offer to go before me to announce my arrival.—I imagined, indeed, that he might have been guilty of a piece of negligence, and that his Lady might be a little displeased with me for breaking in abruptly upon her retired hours.—However, I hastened to the temple, without considering whether my presence would be disagreeable to her or not; I thought of nothing but

but of the pleasure of flying to her without any interruption.

She was sitting in an elegant undress, writing at a table. Lady Haverford was netting lace, and soon afterwards, rising up, went into the garden.

I took her seat near Lady Frances, who, instead of appearing in the least reserved, laid down her pen, and with an alluring glow over her face, put her papers into my hand. “I do not know, said she, whether you approve of a woman’s employing herself in this manner or not, Mr. Walsingham; but as I do not think I am quite mistress of the Italian language, I fancied, that by translating some pieces from different authors, and studying their different styles, I might quicken my progress in it.”

I was

I was so much transported with the judgment which she discovered upon this occasion, with the modest diffidence with which she solicited my approbation, and with the flattering confidence she repos'd in me, that I am pretty sure every thought in my mind was discernible in my countenance.

Unab'e to support my tender looks, she threw down her lovely eyes, while I delivered the sentiments which her address and behaviour had excited. I could not indeed help bestowing the warmest encomiums on her employment, and on the charming freedom and ease with which she communicated it to me.

Her embarrassment increased while I spoke ; but it was a sort of embarrassment which rendered her still more beautiful than she was before ; and it, at the same time, prompted me to hope,
that

that I might be listened to upon a more interesting subject.

Encouraged to proceed, I ventured, after a little hesitation, naturally arising from the timidity with which true love is always attended, to tell her all that my doating heart had long felt for her.

She heard me, with her eyes fixed upon the paper which lay before her : and when I ceased to speak, she still continued silent.

Gently taking hold of her hand, I intreated her to inform me, if she was too much offended with what I had presumed to mention, as not to think me worthy of a reply.

Raising up her eyes, at length, with an apparent reluctance, she said, "I cannot be offended with you, Mr. Walsingham ; but I desire to hear no more upon this

this subject. I wish you had not mentioned it at all."

" Since you are not offended with me then, my amiable Lady Frances," said I, " give me leave to express my extreme concern at your wishing me to have been silent upon a subject which has, for a long time, engrossed my attention; give me leave, also, to hope, that you will change your opinion, as you will, by refusing to hear me upon *that* subject, entirely destroy my peace.—From the first moment I beheld you, madam, I was charmed with the loveliness of your person, the strength of your understanding, and the elegance of your manners; but, upon a nearer acquaintance, I became still more attached to you, because I discovered innumerable fine qualities and accomplishments.

With

With such strong prepossessions in my favour, perhaps you will say, "Why did you conceal them from me? — Mere curiosity might have urged you to see how I should be affected by them."

My answer is, "You kept me at so great a distance by your indifference, and by the coolness of your behaviour, that I concluded it would be impossible for me to prevail on you to give me that hand which, I found afterwards, you had reserved for the happy Ashbury; happy, madam, even in death, as he had been selected from his sex by *you*. These considerations alone, I call heaven to be my witness, determined me never to declare the ardent passion I felt for you—Despairing, at length, of having it returned, I endeavoured to direct my attention to Miss Sommers, who gave me all modest encouragement to believe, that
she

she wished I would particularly distinguish her: but I never should have distinguished *her*, had I not been certain that *you* was entirely lost to me.—Upon my marriage with that amiable woman, whom I endeavoured to make happy, you treated me like a man who was become your relation; and on the decease of your Mr. Ashbury and of my Cecilia, kindly shewed so much sweetness of disposition in listening to my consolations, and in offering yours in return, that I began to fancy I was really not so odious to you as I at first imagined myself to be. I even went farther, I madly presumed to suppose, that when you had 'got over the loss of Mr. Ashbury, and when I could decently open my lips, I might be permitted to plead for my happiness, which depends entirely upon *you*: it is in *your* power, with a single

single word, to make me completely happy, or completely wretched.—If I have made my appearance too abruptly, if I have taken an improper time to unbosom myself freely to you, if you cannot yet bring yourself to give me a favourable answer, I will endeavour to wait with patience for a more fortunate moment, though I am assured that if you could be made sensible of the acuteness of my sufferings from such a delay, you would, from the natural benevolence of your temper, be willing to shorten the hours of my probation.”

She appeared to be exceedingly disconcerted during the above speech: she was, actually, fluttered to such a degree, that I concluded she could not be unmoved at what I had said—I was, indeed, rendered desirous, by her embarrassment, to spare her blushes, and to give her

her a reasonable time to frame a reply; though I was half distracted all the while to be certain of my felicity, by hearing her lovely lips pronounce her consent, which I so ardently wished to obtain.—But she soon convinced me of the error I had committed, in buoying myself up with flattering hopes, by saying, though with seemingly great emotion, “Indeed, Mr. Walsingham, I must not hear you talk in this manner; I cannot listen to you, indeed I cannot.”

“Not just now, perhaps, my excellent Lady Frances,” said I, eagerly seizing her hand, which she had withdrawn, and still imputing her coyness to a delicacy which rendered her a thousand times more desirable; “not now, Lady Frances, because I may have interrupted you at a time when you chuse

to

to be quite retired ; but you will permit me, I hope, to see you again in the evening to renew my intreaties.—I would, on no account, distress the woman whom I adore, by being too importunate, though my life hung upon her answer. The man, madam, who prefers his own happiness to the happiness of her with whom he wishes to spend the remainder of his life, must give but a very indifferent idea of his concern for her peace.”

“ Your sentiments are very generous, sir,” replied she, still more discomposed : “ I will even confess that I am pained, because I cannot return the answer you wish to receive from me, the answer you certainly deserve. But it is totally out of my power to return that answer ; and I should grossly injure you by a trifling behaviour—I must, therefore, tell you

plainly, at once, that I will never marry again: I will as plainly add, that were I disposed to change my situation, I never can become the wife of Mr. Walsingham."

" And why not?" cried I, astonished, and shocked beyond expression — " For God's sake tell me what I have done, to be for ever excluded from the only happiness left for me in this world! — Reflect, madam, let me conjure you, seriously reflect, a single moment; recall your cruel words, and do not drive me to despair."

" I am determined," said she, quite recovered from the embarrassment under which she before laboured. — " I am resolved never to retract what I have said — I am sorry I am obliged to be so peremptory, but I can never be the wife of Mr. Walsingham. Let me, therefore,

fore, desire you, sir, to leave me, and to think no more about me."

"Your *first* command, madam," replied I, "painful as my submission will be, shall be obeyed, if you insist upon it. With the *last* I can never comply—I have too, too long reflected upon your numerous virtues, your innumerable attractions, to give you up so easily, and without knowing your reasons for requiring me to sacrifice all my peace of mind. What have I done, Lady Frances—I *must* repeat *that* question—to make you behave with so much severity to me? *You* who, of late, have honoured me with your notice? I do not pretend, indeed, to merit the favour which I solicit; but I am sure I have studiously endeavoured not to let my behaviour to you be offensive."

She blushed excessively—“ I shall afford you no satisfaction, sir,” said she, “ by acquainting you with the reasons by which I am influenced upon this occasion.”

“ It will afford me a great satisfaction,” replied I, “ to know that you are not disgusted with me for any thing I have said or done.”

“ You have not,” said she, “ I sincerely assure you, either said or done any thing to displease me. Let this assurance make you satisfied with yourself, and me—I have unsurmountable reasons for a steady adherence to the sentiments which I have already disclosed, and insist upon your saying not another syllable upon this subject.”

The seriousness—I may add, the sternness which appeared in her countenance,
when

when she pronounced the last words of the above speech ; the tone of her voice, the total alteration in her aspect, and her hasty departure from the temple, sufficiently convinced me that her resolution was not to be shaken. And yet the former part of her behaviour was so widely different from the latter, so extremely flattering, that I own I cannot, possibly, account for so strange an inconsistency in her carriage.—I am certain it has cruelly affected me : I am certain that I can keep up no acquaintance with a woman whom I cannot see without admiring, without loving ; but with whom, as she is under the dominion of caprice, I can never hope to be happy in the manner I wish to be.

I am, dear D'Arcy,

Yours, &c.

E. W.

E 3 LETTER



LETTER the Seventy-fifth.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

Miss HERBERT.

O H ! Bab, my dear Bab, what a fate is mine? Walsingham, the amiable Walsingham, has made an offer of his hand : an offer I dare not accept ; an offer, of which the refusal has half distracted me.—However, as I was but too sensible I could not, without discovering the most unpardonable inattention to delicacy; encourage his addresses, circumstanced as I am, I had fortitude enough to reject them : though I sometimes wonder how I could bring myself

myself to act in a manner so very opposite to the dictates of my heart, as I have been, from my first acquaintance with Walsingham's virtues, strongly prepossessed in his favour.

You are surprised, I imagine, to hear me make this frank confession; but I am very ready to own that he is the only man whom I ever did, whom I ever *can* love; and I, the more readily, permit myself to make this avowal of the preference I give him, in order to make myself some amends for the cruel violence I have done my heart by such a sacrifice to—what shall I call it?

Oh! Bab; I can no longer conceal from you the every secret of my full heart.—I *must* tell my faithful friend, that Walsingham is entirely master of all the movements of *that* heart.—Yet, conscious of having preferred *him* to Mr.

Ashbury, at the very time I was married to him ; and conscious of Ashbury's uneasiness on his account, I neither can, nor ought, I think, to be the wife of Walsingham, supposing I could conquer my other scruples, with regard to the indelicacy of a second marriage.—I have, indeed, been long of opinion that no woman should consent to take a second husband, unless she is particularly situated, and can advance very powerful reasons for her conduct. Now as I am not in a situation to make that conduct defensible, I declined an offer from Mr. Walsingham, which would have been accepted, at our first acquaintance, in a manner sufficient to discover the just sense I had of his merit, had he not informed me that he was prevented from the communication of his feelings on my account, to the coolness, the indifference of my behaviour

to

to him; yet why should he who never gave me the least reason to imagine that he was in love with me, or that he ever entertained the most distant idea of addressing me, attribute his disappointment to *me*? If he is disappointed, he must blame no body but himself.—He has certainly destroyed *my* peace.—A woman of real virtue, a woman even of common modesty will not—ought not to encourage a man who pays her no particular attention. Do not those women who endeavour to draw the eyes of every man who comes in their way, and to attract his notice, lessen themselves in the eyes of all prudent people, and shew a very considerable disregard for their reputation? Besides, could I ever have imagined that Walsingham would have endured such a woman? He has complimented me highly upon my virtues, as

he calls them ; would he have so complimented me, had I been a downright flirt ? Certainly not. If I have lost him, then, only by a discreet reserve becoming my sex, and rank in life, I must bear it. I must submit to what cannot be remedied, and strive to think no more about him as a lover ; I must think of him only as a friend : but *as a friend*, *as* the husband of my Cecilia, I may, surely, still esteem him—still esteem the most deserving of men on earth.

Tell me, my dear Bab, tell me your sentiments on this very awkward situation of

Your affectionate

F. A.

P. S. Could you prevail on Mr. Herbert to spare you for a few weeks, what a satisfaction should I feel in your society at this time !

LETTER

L E T T E R the Seventy-sixth.

Mr. WALSHINGHAM

T O

Mr. D'ARCY.

Berkley Square.

I Am come hither to be as much as possible out of the way of the fascinating eyes of that adorable woman, Lady Frances: but I do not find the advantage I expected from my arrival; change of place will not, I see, occasion a change of ideas...Lady Frances still engages all *my* attention.

I will go and pay a visit to Burton: but I get nothing by that movement; for, by conversing with this amiable Ca-

roline, I shall, insensibly, think of Lady Frances.—In no place shall I ever be at rest.—Do you not pronounce me to be rather unfortunate, D'Arcy, in my connections with the female sex? I lost a lovely wife, very soon after having married her; and I now lose a more lovely mistress, even before the accomplishment of my wishes.—What can I do, but resign myself, patiently, to my fate?—Time, perhaps, may alleviate the disappointment severely felt, at present, by

Your ever sincere

and affectionate Friend,

EDWARD WALSINGHAM.

LETTER

L E T T E R the Seventy-seventh.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

Mrs HERBERT.

I Thank you, my dear friend, for your early letter, in which you have inserted every consolation which could, possibly, be conceived, except that very kind and most necessary one at this time, the promise of your company.—My uneasiness is considerably increased, when I think of your being still farther from me—that is, if I should accept of Mr. and Mrs. Burton's invitation, half my expected pleasure will be lost, if you are not their neighbour. How few are my

satisfactions, at this moment ! They will lessen, I am afraid, every day. I am unfortunate, Bab, but do not impute a studied indifference to me. No, my friend, I could not, certainly, take pains to behave with coolness to the man of whom I so much approved ; but when I saw his whole attention fixed upon another, I should have been very impertinent, indelicate indeed, to a degree, by throwing myself in his way.—I should have made myself, by such a forward proceeding, cheap indeed : and he would have despised me—justly despised me. In the midst of my vexation and disappointment, I feel no small comfort by considering that I have not rendered myself an object of contempt to the man whom I so highly esteem. *His* contempt would be truly insupportable.

To

To be obliged to refuse the only man whom I ever *did* — (forgive me Ashbury !) or ever *can* love.— Oh! my dear friend, think of the conflict which I endure in my agitated bosom. — All the arguments which you so very strongly urged, and so methodically ranged, may be confuted in an instant. How great will be the impropriety of my behaviour, if I give my hand to the man of whom my husband was jealous ? of whom he had, I know, reason to be jealous. Do not mistake me, Bab ; nor start, on a supposition that I ever gave Mr. Walsingham the most distant encouragement during Mr. Ashbury's life.— Walsingham, himself, will vindicate me under such an accusation ; but is not a woman, who is conscious of having liked a man better than her husband, in some shape culpable, if not actually criminal ?

nal?—If I have been culpable in that way, I am sure I have been involuntarily so.—Severely, indeed, have I reproached myself, for my feelings, on many occasions, and ardently have I wished it was in my power to controul them.—I have kept myself—I still keep myself continually upon my guard; no other atonement can I make for faults, which, however you may endeavour to palliate them, I cannot think absolutely venial. If a woman gives encouragement to any man after she is married, she is, 'tis true, guilty of a capital crime: but *she* who secretly entertains wishes which revolt against her affection and duty to her husband, cannot, in my opinion, be quite exculpated.—And can I lay my hand upon my heart, and say, I never harboured *such* wishes?—No—I can only then make atonement for the indulgence

indulgence of them, by refusing the man, in spite of all his amiable virtues and agreeable accomplishments, who has, though innocently, undesignedly occasioned them: and this I am determined to do, whatever it cost me.—Yet why must we not be friends, because we cannot be lovers?—I know not a person in the world for whom I have so great a regard as for Walsingham: of whose sentiments I so much approve, whose manners are so agreeable to me.—Now I cannot imagine why I should be deprived of the satisfaction of keeping up an acquaintance with *him*, with the man who was united to a relation of mine, and a particular friend, merely because I cannot, without indiscretion and indelicacy, be married to him.—Walsingham, however, seems to think it necessary to break off all connection with me,

me, as he has left Sir James Caldwall, and is gone to town without taking leave of me: piqued, I suppose, at my behaviour, to which he could not advance any reasonable objections, if he knew my motives; motives which never *must* be made known to him. I should die with shame to have him only surmise that Ashbury was jealous of him, as he could not encourage such a conjecture, without concluding that I had given occasion for it: he cannot but be sensible that he himself was never particular enough in his behaviour to me to excite jealousy in my husband.—I even tremble, at this moment, lest this letter should miscarry, and fall, by accident, into the hands of those who may inform him of my too great prepossession in his favour at this juncture.—If it reaches *your* hands safe, I shall be perfectly satisfied,

fied, so much do I rely on my dear Bab's friendship and secrecy.—It is very painful to keep either our joys or our sorrows within our own breasts.—From you, I expect, in return for this unlimited confidence, all the relief which the nature of my distress will admit of, and am,

My dear Bab, with my usual sincerity,

Yours, &c. F. A.



LETTER the Seventy-eighth.

Mr. W A L S I N G H A M

T O

Mr. D'A R C Y.

Datchet.

I CAME hither almost in spite of myself; I actually believe that an involuntary desire to hear, and converse about

about this lovely woman, impelled me to order my chaise to drive to this part of the country ; in which if I have not met with the relief which change of place generally affords to a mind ruffled by disappointmet — at least, I am, accidentally, thrown in the way of a very amiable woman, to whom, I flatter myself, I may be serviceable. There is some consolation arising from our endeavours to make other people happy, though we are not blessed with the means to ensure our own felicity.

Here is, in this neighbourhood, a Mrs. Leland whom her husband left entangled in a law-suit, and so much distressed in her circumstances, that though a woman of no contemptible family, and well-educated, she found herself under a necessity of offering herself as a servant for a subsistence. A few days ago she offered

offered herself to Mrs. Burton whose own servant is going to be married.

Mrs. Burton mentioned Mrs. Leland in such high terms to her husband and to me, that we wanted to see her, and desired Mrs. Burton to let us be present when she came again. She readily complied with our wishes.

We were in her dressing-room when Mrs. Leland entered it.

Though I had heard so much of her, I was quite struck with her appearance—With a very fine, and desirable person, she had a modest dignity in her carriage, and appeared so submissive to the will of the mistress whom she was going to serve, while she looked, at the same time, formed to command, that I confess I was pained to see her in so humiliating a situation, and I could not help flying to reach a chair for her.

Mr.

Mrs. Burton intreated her to sit: she went immediately to a chair at the bottom of the room.

Mrs. Burton's condescension to a woman of Mrs. Leland's appearance was, at once, so kind, and so judicious, and her affability gave her so many new graces, that I never saw her in so engaging a light before. She appeared so compassionate, and to wish so earnestly—her looks sufficiently discovered the movements of her excellent heart upon the occasion—to be useful to Mrs. Leland, that if she had not been in a distressful and humbling condition, she would have, undoubtedly, received not a little consolation from a behaviour which did Mrs. Burton so much honour. How many people have I seen conferring favours with a haughtiness mortifying beyond expression ! A haughtiness
which

which did no credit either to their heads, or to their dispositions. There is something in our nature which prompts us to aim at independence ; as every generous bosom necessarily wishes to give, rather than to receive : to oblige, rather than to be obliged. To succour the unfortunate, to provide for the fatherless, to wipe away the widow's tears — these are pleasures becoming a rational creature ; — pleasures which can never pall ; pleasures which will be heightened by reflection.—Are not such pleasures deserving of our attention, and can we be too studious to improve them ?

But to return to Mrs. Burton : she continued to charm me by telling Mrs. Leland in the softest, and most benevolent accents, that she was obliged to her for the favour she did her in so freely offering

offering to make herself necessary to her.—“But I hope, madam,” added the humble, the exemplary Caroline, while tears of compassion rushed into her eyes, “I hope to be able, very soon, to think of a situation more suitable to you, and I must desire your leave to inform you of it whenever it is in my power.”

The modest widow rose, and, with a graceful curtsy, assured her that she should think herself but too happy in deserving the favour she shewed her, by an unremitting assiduity about her person, if she would permit her to have the honour of attending her.—Then, casting her eyes, timidly, on Burton and me, she added—“I will take a more convenient time to wait on you, madam,”—and quitted the room.

As soon as she was gone, the excellent Mrs. Burton, turning to her husband,
who

who had looked on her all the while with admiration, and laying her hand upon his shoulder, cried, “ I could not, my dearest love, I could not think of having such a woman to be my servant.—There is something in her behaviour which discovers her very unfit for my place.”

Burton pressed his wife to his lips, and to his bosom ; and I told them that I desired their leave to do every friendly office to Mrs. Leland in their stead.

“ You will always rise superior to me, Walsingham,” replied Burton ; “ but as there are favours to be conferred upon the widow which will come better from my wife, than from any *man*, you must not refuse the assistance of my sympathizing Caroline.”

After having assured *him* that *her* concurrence with me would do me

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honour, I slipped out after Mrs. Leland; and by that time she had reached her home, and a little recovered herself, presented myself before her.

She started at the sight of me: a delicate glow was spread over her fine countenance. She is, really, very handsome.

“ I opened my design by telling her, that I believed I could be of service to her, if she would but condescend to place some confidence in me, by employing me.

She seemed to be abashed, or rather surprised at my offer; which I repeated with much frankness, and pressed her so earnestly to accept of it, that she, at length, sat down, and burst into tears. “ Good God ! ” cried she, “ are you a man, sir, or an angel, appearing thus, unexpectedly, to my relief ? ”

“ Be

"Be composed, dear Mrs. Leland," said I, taking her hand, "don't hurry yourself"—perceiving that she trembled, and was exceedingly agitated—"I will call again when it is more convenient—tomorrow, or any other time you shall appoint;"—rising to go.

"No, pray, sir," said she, stopping me—"pray let me give you no more trouble than is necessary."

I then sat down, and she addressed me in the following manner;

"My husband, sir, having spent both his own fortune, and what little I brought him, recommended me, on his death-bed, to the protection of his brother, who not only refused to assist me, but declared that he must sue me for a thousand pounds which he had lent Mr. Leland; telling me at the same time, with a very mortifying harshness, that I

must pay the money immediately, or go to jail, as he could produce living witnesses to the loan of that sum."

I asked her if she had ever heard her husband mention such a debt?

"Never, sir.—He always told me that Richard Leland his brother was under the greatest obligations to him, and that he would, therefore, recommend me to *his* care. When I found that Mr. Richard Leland not only refused to assist me, but was determined to distress me also, I thought of seeking for an asylum in some gentleman's family; and hearing that Mrs. Burton wanted a servant to wait on her, I offered myself, hoping, by my attention to do my duty, and to endeavour to please the Lady, I might not only gain a decent subsistence, but merit the protection of so good a family, as I had no relation

relation or friend capable of supporting me."

The modest diffidence with which Mrs. Leland related her story, the simplicity of her manner, and the nobleness of spirit, which urged her to throw herself into a way of life so much beneath her former situation to procure a subsistence, pleased me extremely, and I commended her resolution. I told her, that I believed I could think of a more eligible settlement which would meet with *her* approbation; but that the settlement projected by me, could not be adjusted till we had silenced her troublesome brother. I then begged her again to make herself easy; adding, that I would call the next morning to look over Mr. Leland's papers, that I might be the better able to instruct my lawyer; desiring too, that I might be her banker, till her

affairs were settled. I put a fifty pound bank note into her hand, and before she had time to make any reply, ran out of the house.

Calling again at the hour I had named, I found her full of gratitude, but very desirous to return the note; telling me that she could never be in a situation to repay me; and that if she could but get into a service, she should not want any money for herself.

"But you *must* have money, madam," said I, "to fee counsel, to pay lawyers bills. I beg, therefore, that you will neither fay any more about such trifles, nor think about them: I only beg that you will favour me with a sight of your papers, that I may write immediately to town."

She complied, and, in a manner, which convinced me both of the goodness of
her

her heart, and of the strength of her understanding.

When my business was done, we entered into a conversation in which she discovered much more sense and spirit, than I had expected.

How could such a woman ever think of demeaning herself by servitude ! It must never be thought of. Such a woman is a companion for a prince. She reminds me, frequently, of Lady Frances : there is something in the turn of her countenance, something too in her air, which resembles that charming creature. She is older, indeed, and is, by disappointment and perturbation, worn a little ; but she may, notwithstanding, be reckoned a desirable woman.—Exquisitely so, is the lovely capricious disturber of my peace !

I have spoken of Lady Frances to Burton and his Caroline : I have mentioned her refusal of my offer, in terms which discovered my chagrin at it.— They very kindly strove to console me upon the occasion; but they did not seem to *feel* my disappointment, nor to know any thing relating to *her* sentiments about me. Mrs. Burton, indeed, never was so much in her confidence as my Cecilia was.— Could I have seen Miss Herbert, she might have, perhaps, given me some interesting intelligence; but she is gone to a relation's house in Devonshire.— How unfortunate a journey for me, just at this time, when she might have acquainted me with many occurrences, of which I most impatiently desire to be informed!— But she never would have betrayed—(she ought not, I allow, to betray) her friend.

Adieu,

E. W.

LETTER the Seventy-ninth.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY
TO
Miss HERBERT.

I THANK you for your kind letter, and for the arguments of which you avail yourself to bring me to consent to what, you imagine, would compleat my felicity; but I cannot suffer my inclination to get the better of my judgment. It may revolt against it; but it must not conquer it—Besides, Walsingham has, I dare say, no farther thoughts about me. I am, indeed, *assured*, that he *has* not. I have received a very friendly letter from Mrs. Burton in

which, however, she touches but slightly on my discouraging behaviour to Walsingham. She speaks of him in the highest terms—*He* has found out an *amusement* for himself; the detail of his new proceedings takes up a great part of Mrs. Burton's letter. He is employed, my dear, in administering consolation to a very agreeable widow; in assisting her to carry on a lawsuit against one of her late husband's litigious relations. Mrs. Burton extols his benevolence, generosity, and delicacy to the skies. I will confess, I always thought he was both benevolent and generous, and refined in his sentiments and behaviour to an uncommon degree: and then his tenderness to Mrs. Walsingham; I never knew any husband carry his tenderness to such a height: yet all his amiable qualities may be readily called forth in a less

a less susceptible heart than Walsingham's. When a pretty woman is in the case, his natural sensibility and affectionate disposition may render him, of all men, most willing to relieve an amiable object in distress. If the woman whom he relieves, is likely to afford him pleasure in return, 'if he should marry her, she will be the happiest of her sex. If he should win her affections, and if he should, either by *her* situation in life, or his own engagements, be prevented from forming the strictest connection with her, how much will she be an object of compassion ! She will then, I think, be the fittest companion in the world for *me*; and we may both sit together, and lament our hard fortune which would not suffer us to enjoy the greatest happiness this world can afford, resulting from the society of the most deserving of men.

I have not been at all well lately. Lady Haverford presses me to go to Brighthelmstone, Southampton, or some of those places at which I may bathe : she thinks my spirits are a good deal affected : she imagines, I believe, that a change of scenes and company, may contribute to amuse me, and give a new turn to my thoughts ; but I am well assured, no such places, as the above-mentioned, nor any other, will restore tranquility to my half distracted mind.—The bustle of any publick place will only hurry my spirits, instead of raising them ; but she is, I believe, really uneasy about me.— She is an excellent woman, and well deserves the generous efforts of Walsingham, to spare her the anxiety she must necessarily have felt, if she had discovered my Lord's attachment to Sally Goodyer, who is, I hope, by this time, convinced

vinced of the error into which she was drawn by vanity ; a passion which has ruined many girls.

I fancy I may venture to say that I am, at this very moment, doing penance for the gratification of *my* vanity ; for had I not appeared to be offended with Walsingham for not distinguishing me particularly, on our first acquaintance, I might, long ago, have been happy with him : but my ridiculous vanity made me suppose that I was a very extraordinary person, because I had so many admirers ; and, therefore, I could not bring myself to condescend to give the least encouragement to a man till he had declared himself my lover, though I had given him no reason to imagine he could have been listened to, if he *had*.

How dearly do we often pay for the indulgence of an idle fancy, which appears

pears to be of no importance at the time, but which afterwards proves of the utmost consequence towards our future felicity! The point on which the happiness and reputation of a woman depends, is so extremely delicate, that we cannot be too careful of our conduct. The commission of *one* error may destroy our character and tranquility for ever.

Adieu.

L E T T E R the Eightieth.

Mr. W A L S I N G H A M
TO

Mr. D'A R C Y.

M Y hours have rolled away so agreeably with Mrs. Leland, that, though I have not forgotten Lady Frances,
this

this new connection has made me more easy than I thought I should have been.

But why do I say connection? Surely it is not come to that yet? I protest, however, that there is something so pleasing in her conversation, so attractive in her manner, that I never find myself so well satisfied as when I am in her company.—You are not to be told, D'Arcy, how seducing the soft society of so agreeable a female is to a man of *my* temper; and yet, I feel myself ready to start at the bare idea of an attachment into which I am, imperceptibly, running. I have asked myself, more than once, since I quitted Lady Frances, with a regret which has alarmed me, “What am I about?—I cannot think of marrying a woman circumstanced as Mrs. Leland is; neither do I like keeping a mistress. My principles will not suffer me to take any improper

proper advantages over her; and were she to fall, unsolicited, into my arms, I should love, and I should pity her; but I should, also, despise her. Let me, therefore, move with caution.—Am I not, however, already past all circumspection? She, sometimes, looks so like Lady Frances,—when Lady Frances does not put on her *forbidding* face—that when she smiles, or, upon my touching her hand, either sighs or blushes, I am half gone:—another look I often think will utterly undo me.—Why may not a man trifle away his time thus agreeably, without being apprehensive of any disagreeable consequences? Why must the pleasantest moments, perhaps, in our whole lives, be gloomed by the dread of some future evils to result from the indulgence of them?

“ What

" What evils *can* result from them, if your indulgences be not criminal ? " say you.

Mine, surely, with the widow, are not criminal ; they may, however, be dangerous ; and a fellow of *my* susceptibility, is hardly ever safe when he is in a *tetê à tetê* with a lovely woman whose person charms his senses, and whose understanding conquers his heart. I am, I will honestly confess, an amorous pup-
py.—I hate to sit near a woman, who, if I happen to touch her, starts as if a pi-
stol was fired within a yard of her ; and how awkwardly two people are situated in a room, when they are obliged, by their distance from each other, to hollow across it for a whole afternoon. You cannot but laugh at the absurdity of such a mode of proceeding.

I don't

I don't know how to account for the incident; but I got so much closer to the widow yesterday than usual, that my hand was, somehow, on hers, the best part of the time I was with her: at last her hand got into mine: let me perish if I can tell you in which way. I only know that it *was* so; that it was a very pretty, soft, white hand, and that I was very loth to give it up. If you would not set me down for an egregious coxcomb, I should, perhaps, tell you, that she seemed full as loth to withdraw it. Now this contact between us, is of an alarming nature.—If any accident should happen either to Mrs. Leland or to me, in consequence of it, Lady Frances must take it upon herself: She, alone, is to blame—as I should have been pouring out all my nonsense at *her* feet, had not she positively rejected me, and thrown
me

me almost into the arms of Letitia—
that is the name of my widow.—Will
not that capricious angel, therefore, have
a great deal to answer for, on Mrs. Le-
land's account, as well as on mine, if
we should, accidentally, forget ourselves?
Oh! D'Arcy, what tumults do such
ideas raise in the bosom of

Your affectionate

WALSINGHAM!

LETTER the Eighty-first.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

Miss HERBERT.

YOUR Letter, my dear friend, should
have been acknowledged sooner,
but I have been confined to my bed by
a fever.

a fever. I insisted, indeed, upon Lady Haverford's not acquainting you with it, lest you should be alarmed about me unnecessarily.—I was in no danger, Bab: I shall not be so happy as to die. I was, however, extremely ill; I am not so bad, at present, as to be confined even to my chamber; yet I am so weak, and so languid, that I rather seem to exist than to live. My physician tells me that my complaint is a nervous fever: a disorder of a lingering kind, and not easily, I believe, to be removed.—This indisposition has so lowered me, that nothing gives me any sort of pleasure; nor will the affectionate efforts of my friends, to amuse me, afford me even a momentary satisfaction.—I feel myself inexpressibly disturbed: I am discontented with every creature, with every thing.—I am quite weary of talking so long upon so worthless.

less a subject: of talking about myself.

I have had another Letter from Mrs. Burton; she again earnestly intreats me to come to Datchet for change of air.—What a request is this? No body, except so young a woman who has scarce seen any thing of the world, would have made it. Does she not know that Walsingham is in the very house to which she has invited me? Indeed, Bab, she is more thoughtless than a meer girl.—The little Louisa would not, I believe, have committed so capital a blunder.—I wonder that Burton, who is a man of sense, a man of the world, should not have acquainted her with the impropriety of her invitation. But she means well. Besides they know, I suppose, that Walsingham is too much engaged with his widow, to fall a great deal in *my* way; yet, as we must

must be under the same roof together, people will give themselves great liberties with their tongues. I hear, indeed, that he is quite infatuated with this woman.

Just before I was taken ill, I met with Colonel Floyer at Lord Grover's, at whose house Lady Haverford and I spent the day.—Floyer told me that every body thinks he will either marry her, or attach himself to her for life; by either of these proceedings he will, I am also informed, give great displeasure to his family, who wish to see him married to a Lady suitable in point of rank, if fortune should be disregarded. He has only a daughter, you know, by Cecilia; and the want of an heir occasions no small murmurings among a set of very worthy uncles and aunts. Family-pride is, undoubtedly, a foolish passion; and yet every body

body must be hurt to see such a man as Walsingham united to so low a woman. I was a little surprised, I own, at his *first* choice; and you may be sure I am still more astonished at this *second*. Yet are not all men inconsistent creatures, Bab? Had you seen him at my feet when he so ardently pressed for my hand, you would have said—you would have almost been ready to declare in the solemnest manner—that he was the most impassioned, the sincerest of men.—Now, as he has, in so short a time, totally forgot me, as he is become desperately enamoured with this woman, I am naturally inclined to believe that he might not have been so very constant, if I had consented to the accomplishment of his wishes. However, to do him justice, no man was—no man could be—more tenderly, more truly attached to a wife than he was to Mrs.

Walsing-

Walsingham.—There is no accounting for the freaks of fancy—with any man so extremely prone to change no happiness can, possibly, be expected: for my part, I have, for some time, given up all hopes of happiness: but—I cannot help *feeling* even for Walsingham—I shall not be able to see him degrade himself, to lower himself in every body's opinion, unconcerned.—Should he repent after having married Mrs. Leland; should he, in consequence of his repentance, be miserable, how dreadful will be his disappointment!—To throw himself away in the bloom of life, admired, esteemed, beloved—I shudder at the thoughts of a union which must doom him, in all human probability, to perpetual disquiet.

My

My spirits are too weak to suffer me to proceed.—I can only add that I am, invariably,

Yours most affectionately,

F. A.



L E T T E R the Eighty-second.

Mr. WALSHINGHAM

T O

Mr. D'ARCY.

I actually believe, that if I continue my friendship with Mrs. Leland, I shall be drawn into something that may be, hereafter, attended with very disagreeable consequences. Our intimacy increases; and an intimacy with an agree-

able woman, is often dangerous. I should not chuse to marry my widow, nor do I wish to enter into a connection with her, of which, however pleasing it may be, in some respects, I cannot thoroughly approve.—My principles will not permit me to proceed in a dishonourable manner. Besides, to confess the truth, I feel sensations swelling in my heart, which prompt me to wish that this amiable woman may have fortitude enough to rise superior to temptation. I dare affirm that *interest* will never hurry her into any indiscretion; but as she is possest of an uncommon share of sensibility, and as I am, you know, a very insinuating fellow, I will not pretend to answer for consequences.—It is, undoubtedly, therefore, highly incumbent on us both to be upon our guard: but then by a guarded behaviour on both sides,

sides, all the pleasure arising from our connection will be destroyed : how insipid, how joyless will be the hours passed between us, if they are not enlivened by liberty ; if they are spent in restraint !— I mean not liberty in the worst sense of the word : you may be assured that I have too great a regard both for the Lady and myself, to take any dishonourable freedoms.

Mrs. Leland's affairs will, I hope, through my interposition, be soon accommodated, in a manner advantageous to her : I hope, too, that the rascal, her husband's brother, will be obliged, not only to relinquish his claim to any of the deceased's remaining effects, but also to restore what he had iniquitously demanded and seized, as due to him. However, when she has recovered all to which she has a right, even that all will be in-

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sufficient for her decent subsistence ; and in what way I shall be able to provide for her, without wounding her delicacy, or injuring her character, I cannot tell at present. Something *must* be thought of, and speedily ; for such a woman must, on no account, be distressed ; and if she will not, if she ought not, to accept any thing from me, but my assistance, I will prevail on some female to be my purse-bearer, and let her take the merit of the action upon herself. Lady Frances, now, were she and I upon our former friendly footing, would, with pleasure, I dare say, assist me upon such an occasion : her heart overflows with benevolence ; and yet though love is so nearly allied to that noble passion, I could not find a single spark of it in her bosom, at least, not for *me*. I will, therefore, hasten to obliterate all remembrance of her in the soft society of the amiable Leland.

Adieu.

LETTER the Eighty-third.

Miss HERBERT

TO

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY.

I AM sorry to say, dear Lady Frances, that I am both surprised, and chagrined at your conduct. After having exhausted all the arguments I could muster up in favour of Walsingham, I began to think that I should be obliged to give up the day to you: not because I really imagined that you had the better of me in your defences, but because I knew you was too proud to yield: but do, my dear Lady Frances, con-

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fider

sider that though you may have too much spirit to make *yourself* happy, you have no right to exert that spirit merely for the sake of distressing, or ruining other people.—If you do not relent, if you do not receive Walsingham into favour again, and give him your hand—your heart, I am sure, is favourable to him—he will actually be driven by you into the arms of this alluring widow. Pray will not you, and you alone, be the cause of such an event; an event which may prove fatal to the parties concerned?—You ought immediately to rectify your carriage; you ought to take this man yourself, and put it out of his power to hurt himself with Mrs. Leland, or with any other woman. Reflect upon what I have urged, my dear friend, seriously, and set about the alteration I wish to see in you, as no time is to be lost.

lost. Go and stay with Mrs. Burton; you have long promised to be her guest: she wants such a friend at present: do not seem, at first, to remember whether Walsingham is there or not. You have a right to visit your relations and friends whenever it is agreeable to you, as well as *be*. By shifting the scene, you will, I hope, re-establish your health, and find all your usual vivacity restored—Besides, the meeting between you and Walsingham, by appearing accidental, will reconcile you to the sight of him, and enable you to behave with the ease and indifference with which you would wish to behave when you happen to be near each other in publick; and meet in publick sometimes, you certainly will. You may be disconcerted, at first, perhaps; but your embarrassment will soon be over, and you will be much happier,

I dare say, after the first interview, than if you had never fallen in each other's way. As to the talk of the world, never think about it—People must divert themselves with something, and there will be really so little to laugh at, or wonder at, when you only go to stay a few weeks with your cousin; that people must be entirely destitute of the least matter to talk about. Besides, are you not your own mistress? Let them say what they please. Is there not a satisfaction arising from the pleasure we give ourselves, preferable to that which we can possibly feel by all our attempts to gain the voices of the million, who, if a woman takes, ever so much pains to oblige them, are not the more contented with her? To give felicity to those who are inclined to shew their gratitude, is delightful indeed; but by punishing ourselves to please a perverse

verse multitude who are never to be satisfied, is to discover a weakness I would wish most studiously to conceal. When a woman rejects a man, she is not under a necessity of vowing never to see him again, or to speak to him. She rather, in my humble opinion, owes him more civility than another person, for the great compliment he has paid her by being willing to pass his life with her: and if Walsingham had made the offer of his hand to *me*, I should never have thought it necessary for me to shun him, though I had not listened to his overtures.—You cannot be injured by seeing Walsingham, because you have ever conducted yourself with the greatest propriety, except in this last affair—What could have induced you to refuse his offer, but a dislike to the man who made it? By harbouring a dislike to *him*, you can only

be excused; for a marriage against inclination can never be defended.—Undoubtedly, you cannot bring yourself to love Walsingham, though you esteem him; for as to the indelicacy of a second marriage, or the jealousy of Mr. Ashbury, the ideas are too absurd to be entertained by any woman.—A woman who is married young is not supposed to continue for ever in a state of widowhood. By so doing she deprives some man of an amiable and deserving wife, and the world of an exemplary mother, fit to educate children who might be useful and ornamental members of society. With regard to Ashbury's fancies about Walsingham—while you are sure they were *only* fancies, and that there was no foundation for them, they ought to be treated as fancies. No man should marry a fine woman, if he cannot bear to

to have her thought so by other people: if she gives no improper encouragement, the more she is admired, the more will the world compliment him upon his taste. Punish not yourself, therefore, my dear friend, by a severity which is altogether needless; and which, if continued, may hurry an amiable man into an attachment which may be highly disagreeable to his family, and injurious to himself. Set out directly to Datchet: the ride to *that* place will, I am persuaded, be of more service to your health, than legions of physicians; and I dare venture to assert that you will, in a very short time, thank me for my prescription: confessing, also, that my advice was infinitely more beneficial to you than that of your doctor.

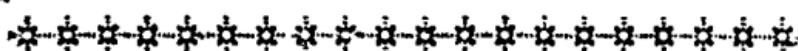
I am, my dear Lady Frances,
With the sincerest hopes that my friendship may
be of some advantage to you at last,

Yours ever faithfully,

BARBARA HERBERT.

G 6

LETTER



LETTER the Eighty-fourth.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

Miss HERBERT.

WHAT a strange, wild girl you are, Bab! But I know you cannot be serious: you cannot, possibly, mean what you wrote in your last letter: especially towards the conclusion of it. How can you imagine me capable of making myself look so little as to throw myself in Walsingham's way? in the way of a man whom I rejected, when he thought only of *me*, when I had all the reason in the world to believe that I was the unrivalled mistress of his heart? and who

who now — but I am too ill to enter upon a subject which harrasses me to death. Yet I say, Bab, can you, actually, entertain so very unjust an opinion of me, as to suppose that I will take any steps to supplant the woman whom Walsingham has thought fit to prefer to *me*? By such a proceeding, I should appear very small indeed : by such a proceeding, I should fall even below contempt. — No, I am sure that if you have the least regard for me, you will not think of my submitting to give so mortifying a proof of my weakness. Yet, though I can never subscribe to your sentiments upon this subject, I will fairly own that I cannot help feeling for Walsingham : I am indeed very much concerned to find that he is on the point of injuring both himself and his family, by hastening into an improper connection.—

tion.—But though I am sorry to see a man whom I so truly esteemed, so exceedingly degrade himself, and know not how I shall be able to meet his eyes; yet I do not imagine that I ought to be kept from visiting Mrs. Burton at a time when she so much wants the presence of a friend. I am, 'tis true, more powerfully than ever, called upon by humanity, as well as friendship, because Lady Mary is confined at home with a gouty disorder, and is extremely desirous of my being substituted in *her* place with her Caroline: I am, however, so very ill myself, that I am not in a condition to leave my own house, though every body tells me, with the doctors, that change of air, and situation, are absolutely necessary: and yet I am so apprehensive of meeting with this strange man—(that ever I should say *strange man*, when speaking of

of Walsingham !) I shall certainly—I know I shall—be fluttered: I am afraid, therefore, to trust myself—Not that I would on any account in the world change my situation in life, were he, with the greatest earnestness, and humiliation to desire me. No—Bab; he ought to be brought down—But I declare I cannot restrain myself from being anxious about him; from thinking in what an unfortunate affair he is engaged: yet never tell me, Bab, that I am the occasion of it. Because I do not chuse to be married to him, must he, therefore, throw himself away? Surely he behaves like a madman. I am really affected by his behaviour beyond expression; I neither eat nor sleep: I am grown pale, and look like a meer shadow. Lady Haverford, who though very kind, wants, I dare say, to stay in London, persuades me

me to go to Datchet by all means, telling me that my refusal can only be occasioned by the remains of an inclination for this once esteemed man, or by a false delicacy which I ought to conquer. I cannot make my sentiments conform to hers upon the subject: but nothing that I can say has the least effect upon her or any of my friends.—I will go to Datchet, and shew them that I am quite as indifferent about Walsingham, as he is about

Your sincere friend,
FRANCES ASHBURY.



LETTER the Eighty-fifth.

Mr. WALSHAM
TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

I TOLD you that I could not always be discreet when exposed to danger.

—This

—This agreeable woman has affected me more than any of her sex have done, except Lady Frances: even my Cecilia, poor girl, never touched my soul so nearly as the charming Letitia has: charming she is in every sense of the word—You shall hear.

When I had received her account from my lawyer entirely adjusted, and accompanied with bills for five hundred pounds, which I had taken care to make the brother refund — you understand me — I presented them to her, expressing my concern at the same time, that no larger sum could be obtained for her; and begging her to look upon me always as her sincerest friend, and to employ me without any ceremony or reserve, whenever she stood in need of my assistance.

She bowed, blushed, looked earnestly at me, and at the bills, alternately, as if

she

she had some suspicions, but was not willing to appear suspicious, and then rising, stepped into the next room.—Returning in a short time, she put the fifty pound note I had given her, into my hand, and thanked me for the loan of it. I was charmed with the modest timidity with which she gave it me, for she seemed fearful of offending me, while she appeared to think it absolutely necessary for her to repay me; but as she could not imagine that I should ever want so trifling a sum, I placed it in her hand again, and intreated her to lock it up as a part of Mr. Leland's effects.—“It is truly,” added I, “a part of them, as we cannot, immediately, get every thing out of his brother's hands.”—“No sir,” replied she, with great emotion, “no sir; I see through your generosity, but it must not be carried too far. I

am afraid that I have here in my possession — looking upon the bills which I had just before presented to her — more than I have a right to. — You must excuse me, sir, but I cannot be so greatly obliged to you, as it is not in my power to make adequate acknowledgments." —

" You have made sufficient acknowledgements, madam," said I, " by the acceptance of such trifles, which can only be for your present use. Something farther must be done," continued I, " when you can think of a mode of living agreeable to you." — " I cannot, just now," replied she, " think of receiving such valuable favours from you, sir, which will be, indeed, useless to me, as I am determined to endeavour to procure a subsistence by waiting on a Lady. I have no occasion for such large sums; but I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude

titude for your generosity."—"Pray do not mention the word generosity, madam," answered I—"The satisfaction which I feel by having, in any shape, contributed to *your* happiness, is so great, that I fear you will find little merit in my behaviour: but if you really imagine that you are under obligations to me, you have it in your power amply to repay me, by allowing the justness of my taste in having distinguished you from all your sex, and permitting me to employ all my thoughts about you."

I went too far here, D'Arcy; I am very sensible I did; but I really felt every word I uttered, and more: only I should not have, perhaps, discovered my feelings; for the dear creature was thrown into such a flutter by my last speech, that she could not answer me.—Transported with every proof of her regard,
expressed

expressed as forcibly, it is probable, by her silence, than if the most grateful effusions had streamed from her ruby lips, I caught her trembling hand, and carried it, involuntarily, to my mouth.— She made no attempt to withdraw it for some time.—She actually seemed to be in a delirium of joy.

On a sudden recovering herself, she started out of the reverie in which she was plunged, and cried, “ Good God! what am I about? let me go, sir—this situation is by no means proper for me.” — Then, with a heart-fetched sigh, while her eyes confessed every emotion of her soul, added, “ The difference between us is too great.”

“ No, my dearest Mrs. Leland,” replied I: “ The warmest friendship may subsist between people in different spheres of life—I have been, hitherto, engaged

in the bustle of the world ; *you* have lived in a more retired way, that's all : and as we *have* been engaged in such different spheres, we may be the better company to each other. *You*, by having had so much leisure for reading and reflection will furnish me with perpetual entertainment ; and as I have mixed with the gay world, I hope I shall be able to enliven your serious hours."

She blushed, but made no answer. She seemed again to be buried in thought : I strove to amuse her with several different topics, and she assented by faint smiles to what I said ; but she did not appear really more cheerful. Thinking it possible, therefore, that she might chuse to be left a little to herself, I rose, and took my hat. She again begged me to resume my bills—I assured her that they belonged to *her*, and that I could
not

not receive them. To avoid any farther altercation upon the subject, I hurried down stairs, and out of the house, with my head and heart so full of the good sense, disinterestedness, delicacy, and let me flatter myself, rapturous tenderness of this amiable woman, that I did not recover myself in an hour.

I am quite a fool, D'Arcy, with regard to women. They gain, by their winning manners, such an ascendant over me, that I am, too often, under the dominion of their attractions, carried beyond the rules which I have chalked out for my conduct.—Into what inexcusable errors may not my aptitude to be influenced by female attractions lead me?

Adieu.

LETTER



LETTER the Eighty-sixth.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY
TO
Miss H E R B E R T.

Datchet,

ARE you not quite surprised, my dear Bab, to read the name of the place from which I date this letter? I am sure I am entirely astonished at myself: but if I am in the wrong, I can truly say that I have acted agreeably to the advice of my friends. As Mrs. Burton happened to repeat her invitation just after I had dispatched my last letter to you, and as Lady Haverford earnestly pressed me to accept of it (who wanted,

ed, I know, to be in London, though she did not care to leave me by herself) I complied, ordered the chaise immediately, and hurried into it as soon as it was ready, that I might not allow myself time to contradict my first determinations.

Before I got half way to Datchet, however, I began to repent of the hasty-ness of my resolution, and more than once wished myself back again.—Bland, who sat mightily contented by my side, urged me to proceed, telling me how rejoiced Mrs. Burton would be to see me, and of how much service the change of air would be to me, with new scenes; and added twenty ridiculous reasons for the continuance of my journey.—I listened, unresolved; uncertain whether I should go on, or go back.—We had

galloped too far to think of *returning*, when I talked of it.

Mrs. Burton received me with a sincere joy. Burton expressed great pleasure at my arrival. While they were loading me with the most affectionate civilities Walsingham came, abruptly, into the room:

The sight of *him*, my dear, I was not, in the least, prepared for : though I was very foolish, indeed, not to expect him, as I knew he was there. I was so totally disconcerted at his appearance, that I could not utter a word : I could scarce support myself ; my limbs trembled, my head was giddy, my eyes closed, and I was on the point of falling.—He flew to my assistance, held me till I recovered myself a little, and then led me to a sofa, sat down by me, and, with a respectful solicitude, offered me salts, &c.

This

This unexpected — and let me add, overacted — officiousness, at this particular time, considerably increased my embarrassment ; and it was a great while before I grew well enough to be able to thank him for his polite attentions.

He comprehended the full meaning of my acknowledgements, for he bowed again, and kept a respectful distance, as if he imagined I should be offended if he came too near me ; though, to be sure, I only fancied that his thoughts were so much employed about me : for he is too much attached to Mrs. Leland to bestow a single thought upon Lady Frances Ashbury. Impelled by his natural humanity, he flew to my assistance when I was ready to faint ; and he would have done so, had I been old, ugly, or one of the meanest of my sex. This consideration restored me entirely to myself ;

and I endeavoured to behave with as much ease and indifference, as if nothing had ever passed between us.

In the evening he was absent—with the Lady, I suppose—but returned to us before we sat down to supper.—He was very thoughtful while we were at table, yet still appeared attentive to me; though his attention evidently gave him no satisfaction, it, of course, filled me with a thousand uneasy sensations.

Soon after supper, I retired; excusing myself on account of the fatigue I felt after my journey. My mind was, indeed, more fatigued than my body: but I went away as much to relieve Walsingham, as myself, who seemed to wish to be at liberty. He imagined, perhaps, that he owed me the civilities which he paid me, but I could plainly perceive that he was wearied by the payment of them.

I en-

I endeavoured to take some rest; but I could not sleep, nor could I drive from my mind the numerous ideas which disturbed it. How strangely is this man altered!

Adieu.

LETTER the Eighty-seventh.

Mr. WALSHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

Datchet.

WHAT astonishment! Lady Frances Ashbury is come hither upon a visit. — Never was surprise equal to that which I felt on being informed of her arrival: yet I was still more amaz-

ed to see her so altered. I started at the intelligence ; but when I entered the saloon, and beheld her emaciated, though a lovely figure, and saw the emotions which my sudden appearance occasioned in her ; wonder gave way to a thousand soft sensations, and I could not restrain myself from flying to support her, as she was sinking under the violent oppression upon her spirits.—My compassion not only revived, but increased all my former tenderness ; and I assisted her with an eagerness which discovered how sensibly I was affected at the sight of her disorder : but immediately perceiving that she looked exceedingly disconcerted at my freedom, which she, probably, thought impertinent or troublesome, as she had rejected me, I withdrew, kept the distance she appeared to expect, and paid her all the deference due to her

sex and rank.—By that change in my behaviour, I occasioned an immediate alteration in hers. She soon recovered, and behaved with an astonishing ease, and unaffected coolness, which sufficiently convinced me that I never had made the wished-for impression on her.—Shall I own, D'Arcy, that her coolness drove me directly to Mrs. Leland, to find in *her* unreserved society, that satisfaction which was never to be expected from the company of Lady Frances?

My Letitia—ought I to call her so?—was not only pleased to see me, but discovered an unusual softness, and a real tenderness which were infinitely soothing, just at the very moment when I had been so affected by the caprice of Lady Frances—for I *must* accuse her of *caprice*, as she sometimes appears to be exceedingly pleased with me, and some-

times behaves with the most chilling indifference. Letitia's carriage, therefore, awakened every gentle passion in my mind ; it made me more ready both to give, and eager to receive, every little advantage which is allowable in a *tête à tête* with an amiable woman ; Mrs. Leland is indeed uncommonly amiable. I seized her hand, I dare say, a hundred times ; it was frequently drawn back, yet I now and then detained it a considerable time, and pressed it to my bosom, and at last to my lips. She blushed and struggled a little, but soon grew composed—though the indulgences with which I was favoured by her were accompanied with sighs and dejected looks. I was exceedingly touched with the anxiety which was visible in her countenance.

I urged her to tell me the cause of her melancholy, and to place some confidence in

in a man who was so warmly, so sincerely, her friend ; but I could not prevail on her to give me any satisfactory answer ; yet I thought she beheld me with inexpressible tenderness, and seemed unusually affected with every thing I said to her. I became, insensibly, more attentive to her than ever, and my attentions were received in a very flattering manner.

Recollecting, on a sudden, that I acted very rudely, by absenting myself the very night on which Lady Frances arrived at Datchet, I took out my watch, rose, pressed the hand of *one* widow, and hastened to the *other*.

In my way to the *latter* I reflected so seriously upon what had passed between me and Mrs. Leland, that I began to think I had gone too far both on *her* account and my own.—To *marry* her I never intended, and my principles will

not permit me to take her into keeping : were she ever so well inclined to be my mistress, I could not bear to see so amiable a woman so lowered in my esteem. Besides, I am arrived at a period of life when I ought to look upon myself as a family-man—Had my Cecilia lived, I should not have been thus embarrassed. Situated as I am at present, I am afraid that Mrs Leland's personal charms, and pleasing conversation, and the frequent *tête à têtes* we have enjoyed together, have had a stronger effect upon me than I imagined they would have had.—I have certainly, thrown myself into a very disagreeable situation ; yet I am still more distressed by encouraging Mrs. Leland to believe I am enamoured with her : I am really enamoured with her ; but in my present circumstances, I ought to have concealed my passion from her
with

with the utmost caution: for as I cannot think of marrying her, I should not have given her the least reason to suppose I am in love with her: and yet I could sooner die than neglect her, or even discover the least indifference for her:— I should act meanly, by neglecting her, and cruelly, to be indifferent; as I cannot help seeing that she looks upon me with very partial eyes.—All I fear is, that by the assiduities to which I have been, involuntarily, prompted, I have encouraged emotions, that will lead us both into unwarrantable situations.—I am, however, so strangely infatuated with this bewitching woman, that I cannot stay away from her, though I am but too sensible that my frequent visits increase her prepossessions in my favour.

With these reflections rolling in my mind, I returned to Burton's.—I found

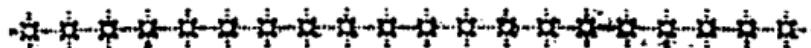
Lady Frances as I had left her. During supper she extremely shocked me, by the increased paleness of her face, and by her entire loss of appetite.—Can I, possibly, love two women at the same time, D'Arcy, and to be so violently disquieted about them? Surely I cannot.—After having remained for some moments in a deep reverie, I felt myself really attached to Lady Frances, and looked upon Mrs. Leland only as a woman who merited my compassion. And does not compassion for an amiable, agreeable woman, border closely upon love? The affectionate esteem, indeed, which she discovers for me naturally excites a return: but then this very return must strengthen her partiality for me; and it will, of course, injure her in every shape, as her connection with me cannot be a discreet one—But I may assist

assist her, without loving her. Certainly I may. I cannot, however, assist her; because her gratitude — her delicacy — and let me add — her tenderness, which is indeed indisputable — impel me to take measures which would prove ruinous to us both.

Thus have I fairly stated the case as it at present stands with regard to Mrs. Leland; but were Lady Frances to get over her false delicacy (for so I must call it) and shew a willingness to accept of me, all my difficulties would soon be removed. *She* would then reign — She has always reigned — the sovereign mistress of my soul: and she would, I am sure, assist me in making a proper provision for Mrs. Leland: a provision suitable to her merit, which she might enjoy without the least injury to her character. But there is not the smallest hope

hope of so desirable a revolution in Lady Frances's mind. Colder than marble itself is the bosom of this lovely Lady Frances:—yet, infinitely concerned am I, at present, to see her in so bad a state of health.—I have not, it is true, occasioned *that* state; but I cannot think of it without distracting reflections.

Adieu.



LETTER the Eighty-eighth.

LADY FRANCES ASHBURY

—
TO

MIS HERBERT.

Datchet.

I pass my time here much as I did at Ashbury Park: I am sick, melancholy, and discontented. I am, indeed, grown

grown so ill humoured, and peevish, that I wonder Burton and his wife can bear with me—In vain do I chide myself when I am alone, and check myself when I am in company: nothing will do. I am even, sometimes, ready to quarrel with Walsingham, though when he is at home he is continually striving to please me—But I believe my want of health makes me so fretful. Mr. and Mrs. Burton weary themselves in trying to find out remedies for me. Dr. H— whom they *would* send for in spite of all my oppositions, has prescribed riding on horseback.

Walsingham, who was present when that prescription was ordered, offered his horse as a very safe, and gentle creature, with whom I might, without the least fear, trust myself.

I fancy

I fancy I looked vexed, though I was secretly delighted : the offer was, certainly, a good natured one. Mr. and Mrs. Burton have insisted upon my mounting to-morrow morning.

I don't approve of this proceeding : people I know will talk.—I did not tell Walsingham so, indeed, because I would not have him suppose that I think about *him* ; but I am sure, Bab, you must accuse me of indiscretion, if I take airings upon *his* horse. I wish *you* was here, your friendly chat would do me more good than any thing.

Walsingham still follows this woman : certainly she must be vastly attracting—I should like to see her, but I don't know how to bring it about : yet, as she is known to be in a low way of life, why might I not send for her, or call on her to make some proposal about settling

tling her in the world again? But by acting in this manner, I fear I shall make my curiosity appear stronger than my benevolence. A terrible confession this, Bab; but the inmost secrets of my heart are ever open to *you*.—I should blush at only endeavouring to impose upon my friend, by making myself appear wiser and better than I am.—By telling her how she shall conquer all my weaknesses, you will highly oblige

Your very sincerely-affectionate Friend,

FRANCES ASHBURY.



LETTER the Eighty-ninth.

From the same to the same.

THEY would not let me wait for your advice. I have been forced into a regimen which is but too agreeable.

able to me, though I cannot yet say whether it will be a salutary one.—It has fluttered me strangely. In short, they make me do any thing by the contrivance of this Caroline, whom I always imagined, foolishly enough, to be an artless creature.

Walsingham's little horse was brought a few mornings ago, ready dressed with Mrs. Burton's furniture, accompanied with two other Horses. From my window I saw this parade. Mrs. Burton insisted upon my getting ready. I, at length, consented; but asked if I was expected to ride the three horses at once, like Astley?

"No, my dear Lady Frances," answered she, smiling, "but you will like to have your servant; and Mr. Walsingham desires to attend you."

I am sure I coloured like a fool while I replied—"I shall be sorry to give him so much trouble." Caro-

Caroline made no answer. Walsingham immediately appeared, and with a gracefulness peculiar to himself, intreated to have the honour of waiting on me.

I was unwilling to comply with his request, yet I knew not how to refuse it. All eyes were fixed upon me.

Walsingham offered his ready hand. I hesitated, I even drew back; but he led me on till I came near the horse: then, catching me up in his arms, he seated me at once, and I felt myself quite unable to make any resistance.

During our ride, which, under *his* direction, was uncommonly pleasant, he conversed upon such a number of entertaining subjects, that I almost forgot how I came in his company.

When he, attentive to my every look and motion, proposed our return, lest I should be too much fatigued the first time

time I ventured out, I blushed at my own want of thought, for, certainly, Bab, I ought to have mentioned something about going home. I never was so mistaken in my behaviour.—But I recovered myself sufficiently to thank him for putting me in mind of what the pleasantness of the morning had made me forget.

When we returned to the gate from whence we set out, he took me off the horse with the same readiness which he had before discovered.

I felt my face in a glow at his approaching so near me, though he certainly conducted himself with a delicacy which could not but be agreeable. And then he was so very solicitous about my health when we came into the house, that I was obliged to make my escape from him merely because I did not know
how

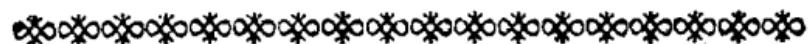
how to behave to him. After his extreme politeness, I could not be rude to him, you know; and I was afraid of trusting myself to be too civil, lest odd reports might have been spread concerning me.

I really scarce know how to act. I believe I shall go to Grosvenor Square.—It is surely very improper for me to be here, and encourage Walsingham in such intimacies; that is—by not putting a stop to them.

Mrs. Leland too—I make no doubt but that he behaves to her in the same manner.—Oh! Bab!—It must not be suffered.

Adieu.

LETTER



LETTER the Ninetieth.

Mr. WALSHAM

TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

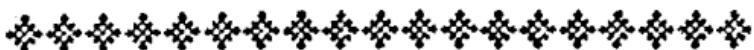
I Am happy, and unhappy at the same time. This Lady Frances—I told you how distracted I was on account of her indisposition.—Burton kindly insisted upon Dr. H——’s being sent for—He came, and prescribed riding—I offered my little horse to her—which is, you have often said, only fit for a woman. She neither refused nor accepted my offer: I, therefore, ordered the horse to be brought, with the hunter I generally ride.—Mrs. Burton had prepared her friend. When she came down, I ventured to solicit the honour of attending her. I seized her, seemingly, reluctant

reluctant hand, while she was hesitating about a reply. Finding myself not absolutely refused, I caught her up in my arms, and placed her on the back of my little *Squirrel*. She looked like a Diana ready to punish the daring Actæon, but discovered no actual displeasure at my freedom. I strove, by all the eloquence I was master of, to banish every disagreeable idea from her mind; and I hope I succeeded, as she smiled, sweetly smiled, and cast such glances of satisfaction at me.—I hope she was not disgusted with my solicitude about her, which I could not check—
I love her still.—I find I still love her.—I actually trembled lest she should suffer any inconvenience from her morning's excursion, as she is in so weak a state. I was too much affected to behave with any kind of gallantry, and, there-

therefore, when I thought she had been out long enough, for the first trial after her fever, I proposed going home—She blushed, and, undoubtedly, looked on me as a strange, unpolished fellow ; but she is a stranger to the feelings which she has raised in my bosom.—Did she know to what excess I love her, she would not, could not, have refused me. Were she sensible of the ardor of my passion for her—But I must conceal it all I see, as she forbids me by her whole behaviour to make any affectionate approaches to her, though I have encouragement enough to approach her in the character of a friend.—Friendship alone will never agree with *my* constitution : I am no Platonist, D'Arcy; and Lady Frances seems to be different from every other woman in the world.—I doat on modesty in a woman, but I detest

detest a prude.—When I took Lady Frances from her horse, she was extremely delicate in her carriage, but she did not shrink from my assisting arms, as if they had been contagious.—Yet what is all this to the purpose? Has she not, peremptorily, declared, that she will never be mine?—To renew my solicitations, therefore, would only be to obtain a new dismission. I *must*, however, admire, I *must* love her; and her declining state of health, demands my tenderest attentions.—I will do every thing in my power to restore it.

Yours, as usual, E. W.



L E T T E R the Ninety-first.

From the same to the same.

NO sooner out of the way of one woman, than ready to fall into the arms of another. While Lady Frances

was reposing herself after her excursion, I went to see Mrs. Leland, whom I found still amiable, but oppressed with a melancholy which I strove to divert, at least, if I could not totally remove it, by entering into a cheerful conversation with her upon several subjects. But nothing that I could say had the desired effect : she was still extremely low-spirited. I was just going to enquire into the cause of the gloom which hung over her, fearing that she had met with some new misfortune, when she, with some difficulty, addressed me in the following terms ; " I am exceedingly obliged to you, sir, for all that you have done for me ; but I am now going to enter into a way of life which will, by no means, permit me to hope for the honour of seeing you."

Here she stopped, from an inability to proceed. Tears rushed from her eyes,

she

she trembled, and appeared in the highest degree distressed.—I felt for her exceedingly, and strove, by the most soothing language—accompanied by a tender pressure of her hands—to restore her to tranquility; but she continued to sigh, and replied that she was weak enough not to be capable of reconciling herself immediately to a change of life so very different from that which she had been encouraged to expect.

“And what is that change?” said I, leaning over her: “what necessity is there for any? I shall think of a plan of life for you, and I dare say that it will be agreeable to you: only rely upon me as your faithful friend.—Do you distrust me, my dear Mrs. Leland?”

“No,” replied she, with a tender air, and half-suppressed sigh: “but I distrust myself.”

" You have, hitherto, acted with the greatest propriety; why then should you fear that you shall never have any thing more to do, or to think of, than you have at present? You shall be in a still more eligible situation. Make yourself entirely easy; resume your customary chearfulness, and think only in what manner to amuse yourself."

" Amusement is the last thing to be thought of," answered she, " in my circumstances. I cannot enjoy life till I render myself independent, even of you, Mr. Walsingham, my first, my best, my most amiable friend."

" And you shall be independent even of *me*, madam," replied I. " I will endeavour to merit all that you have said of me."

" You *do* merit every thing," answered she, eagerly—" You are every thing a man ought to be: you are only too amiable." Who

Who can hear such encomiums from a gentle, generous, lovely woman, and not be moved? I could not I assure you, unmoved, hear what Mrs. Leland warmly delivered in my praise. I was softened to a degree beyond expression at the kind creature's grateful behaviour; I could not controul my thrilling desires—I seized her hand, with transport, and pressed it to my lips.

She withdrew it but slowly, and, apparently, with rather a timidity, ever attending a real passion, than from any dislike—This timidity, with the languor swimming in her lovely eyes, filled my whole soul with an unusual softness. I could no longer confine the sensations which I had for a considerable time experienced in our private interviews, but which I had never before ventured to indulge. I caught her to my throbbing

bosom, and held her closely to it while I gazed, delighted, on her half-averted blushing face. I cannot, actually, say what might have become of us had not this excellent woman, tenderly as she loves me, D'Arcy, recovered herself most seasonably, and saved us both.

"Good God!" exclaimed she, "what am I doing? am I not ruining myself, and the very man too who, of all men in the world, is the most deservedly dear to me?"

Her face and neck were like crimson while she spoke those words, which evidently broke from her while she was off her guard, but which gave me inexpressible satisfaction. I cannot describe my feelings upon the melting occasion: I can scarce repeat what I said. I am sure, however, that I endeavoured to strain her a second time in my fond arms,

arms, and to hide her blushes in my bosom, but she sprung from me, and sat down in a distant part of the room.

I followed her slowly, not being willing to alarm her too much, and taking another chair very near her, asked her, why, after having given me such an infinite deal of pleasure by so animating a confession, she had contradicted herself by so sudden a reserve.

"I have been very indiscreet sir," replied she, "but it is yet in my power, I hope, to repair my errors. I do not wish to recall my words. I am under the greatest obligations to Mr. Walsingham, and I am ready to make every acknowledgement to him which can be made with honour, but I cannot go a step farther. I should then ill deserve the favours I have received. If I had given myself time to consider, indeed,

I should not, I believe, have uttered words which ought never to come from the lips of a modest woman; but when I assure you, sir, that my words convey no meaning which can be disadvantageous to you or to myself, I hope I shall be excused."

" You have not the least reason to reproach yourself, my dear Mrs. Leland," replied I, tenderly pressing her hand, " for any words which you have spoken ; but you have given me the sincerest transports by the delivery of the *last*. I have long thought you amiable beyond expression, and the proofs of your affection and esteem which I have just received from you, cannot but increase the tenderness which I have, almost from our first acquaintance, felt for you. Let me, therefore, enjoy the supreme satisfaction to contribute to your felicity
in

in every sense of the word. An elegant house, with an income every way suitable to your situation, shall be yours for life, with the additional society of the man whom you have blest, by declaring your sentiments in his favour."

Believe me, D'Arcy, it was with a secret condemnation of my principles that I articulated the above speech; but what will not a beloved and lovely woman, after having immediately declared her fondness for him, oblige a man to say?—However, I had a very short time for reflection.—This amiable creature quickly replied—“I am then deceived in Mr. Walsingham, I find: from this instant he appears to me in a new light.”

This reply, delivered with a cool firmness, convinced me that Mrs. Leland was an angel, and that I had behaved

like a coxcomb : but before I had time to make any reflections upon it she rose, and was going to leave the room.

"Stay, madam," said I, catching hold of her gown ; "you must not leave me, at least, not till I have made amends for the fault I have committed, and regained—if it can be regained—your good opinion. I love you, my dear Mrs. Leland, too sincerely to give you up so easily : I have, I confess, been guilty of a capital transgression : I have justly incurred your censure ; I have lessened myself in attempting to lessen *you*, but can I, in no shape, atone for an unpremeditated crime ?—Will not my name, my fortune, and the whole attention of my future life prevail on you to pardon what is past, and to accept of me ?"

I

I paused

I paused here. She looked full of astonishment.

Faith, D'Arcy, I was almost astonished at myself, yet I could not restrain my wishes to call her mine. Lady Frances, the only woman who, in my opinion, surpasses Mrs. Leland, will never, I know, give me her hand.. Why then should I hesitate to make myself happy, with another?—But I am not destined to enjoy even *that* felicity: for this excellent woman—upon my soul, she is a noble creature—with a glow upon her features which rendered her more beautiful than I had ever seen her before, replied—“The man who so immediately confesses his errors, and renounces them, ought to be readily pardoned; but while I am pardoning the faults of another, I should be particularly careful to correct my own. That I feel

emotions in your favour I cannot, I will not deny ; but the woman who thinks she loves a man too well to be able to conquer an improper passion for him, can never be a wife proper for Mr. Walsingham ; nor can that woman love him as she ought, who, sensible of the immense difference between them, wishes to draw him into an alliance so much beneath him—We were never designed for each other, sir : I think myself far too low to be your wife, but I have too much spirit to be your mistres. I thank you, most gratefully, for all you have done for me ; I know I have no right to these bills”—(presenting them to me) “and I return them ; begging that our acquaintance may end here, as I must positively declare, that nothing upon earth can shake my resolution never to be yours ; at the same time I

will

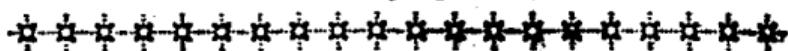
will freely own, that while I remember you, I shall never taste the blessings of tranquility."

As soon as she had uttered those words she darted out of the room; nor could all my endeavours to make her return prove effectual. And now, D'Arcy, pray tell me, is not such a mind superior to all the birth and fortune in the universe? I ask myself, continually, "Would Lady Frances, in this woman's circumstances, have acted like *her*?"—I am afraid to hear the answer. Yet, how infinitely dearer to my heart is this capricious Lady Frances than ever Mrs. Leland could have been, though I really loved the latter extremely! Something *must* be done for her, and immediately too. I will consult Mrs. Burton—and why not Lady Frances? — Why — if I was not afraid of her delicacies—

I will

I will venture; but I must take a little time for consideration — Was I not very nearly entangled in a very *ineligible* manner? — Yet what an unexceptionable wife would Letitia make? And had not Lady Frances been at the bottom of my heart, I solemnly declare, that I would, on no account, have taken Mrs. Leland's denial.

Adieu.



LETTER the Ninety-second.

LADY FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

MISS HERBERT.

WALSINGHAM is so prodigiously engaged with Mrs. Leland, that we see little of him, and when he *is* visible—he is so dejected, and so much out of spirits—He must be exceedingly attached.

attached to her—But why then is he so melancholy? She cannot surely make him sigh in vain. I have expressed so foolish a curiosity to have a sight of her, that Mrs. Burton and I are to call upon her this very day. When I have seen her, I will communicate my opinion of her.

In CONTINUATION.

Just returned from Mrs. Leland: a lovely woman indeed—No wonder he admires her; but she tells me that their acquaintance is at an end.

Bless me! why should she speak to *me* about him? Why should she imagine that I am interested in any thing concerning *him*?—But to my narrative.

Mrs. Burton, having seen her before, very properly, you know, called to ask her how she did. She introduced *me* as a relation, and particular friend, and in

in order to apologize for her enquiring, before me; if she was settled at Datchet..

Mrs. Leland replied, "As I have not been so happy, madam, as to merit *your* place, I have applied to Lady Tennet, and her Ladyship has promised to try me: I have no favour, madam, to ask of you, but to beg you would speak favourably of me to her Ladyship, if she should happen to mention me."

This request, - Bab, was delivered with a modest dignity which prejudiced me extremely in her behalf; and I answered — "I know something of Lady Tennet. Mrs. Burton and I am afraid that your dispositions will not suit. — Will you give me leave, madam," continued I, addressing myself to Mrs. Leland, "to offer you all the assistance in my power? You have not been bred to a life of ser-
vitude; I fear, therefore, that such a
life.

life will not be agreeable to you. If you should prefer the millenary way, I will undertake to furnish you with all requisites for such an employment; and I think I can answer for your success: you, certainly, shall not be on the losing side."

I waited a moment before I proceeded, because I wished her not to reply till she had considered of my proposal: but the grateful creature could hardly be kept from throwing herself at my feet to thank me—"It is the life, madam," said she, "which I should have chosen, had I been in the possession of a sum sufficient to place me in so desirable a situation.—I only desire, madam, to thrive by honest industry."

I cannot tell how I behaved upon this occasion: I only know that my eyes were filled with tears; and I felt myself quite

quite happy in having it in my power to serve a woman with so valuable a mind, in having thought of a method so agreeable to her disposition.

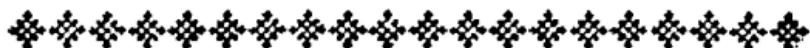
When we rose to go, I promised Mrs. Leland to call upon her in a day or two at farthest.

She curtseyed, and thanked me.

When we left her, I could not help wondering, for *my* part, how it happened that Walsingham, with his known generosity, should have conversed so long with so amiable a woman, without offering to make her, in some shape, easy in her circumstances: but men are strange, inconsistent creatures.

I desired Mrs. Burton to take no notice to Walsingham of what had passed, and she promised she would not. I think I will talk to him myself upon this subject. There can be no great attachment

ment to her, certainly, as she was so ready to accept of my assistance.—I am afraid, however, that I want spirits for such a conversation. I cannot conquer this nervous disorder. I am one day better, and another worse; and I am frequently seized with tremblings which make me unfit for any thing. Adieu.



LETTER the Ninety-third.

Mr. W A L S I N G H A M

TO

Mr. D'A R C Y.

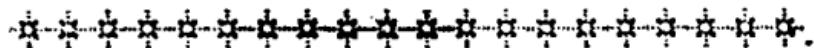
I RETURNED from Mrs. Leland quite disconcerted, and dispirited; and though I could not recover myself, as soon as I saw Lady Frances, I secretly rejoiced to think that Letitia had not accepted of me. I even wondered how I came to bestow a thought upon her, there

there was such a sweet expression in the fine, languid countenance of Lady Frances. She looked at me with compassion, and softened her voice when she spoke to such a bewitching tone, that I could have almost sworn she loved me. I was not mistaken, you know, with regard to Mrs. Leland : *she* honestly owned her sentiments, and opposed an inclination which she believed to be indiscreet.— Well — why may not Lady Frances *love*, but at the same time imagine that an attachment to me may appear imprudent ? Women have whimsical fancies sometimes. She did, indeed, almost make such a confession. Yet how can such an attachment be imprudent ?—We are both free—I suppose *I am*; and she has declared that she herself is : yet still she absolutely refuses her hand—I must, therefore, give her up, whatever disquiet

disquiet I endure by offering so much violence to my inclination. I must resolve to quit England, and by shifting the scene, try to drive her from my memory: at present I am ever in the mortifying condition of Tantalus; I am tempted with the perpetual prospect of what I can never enjoy. It is impossible to describe the charms of her whole behaviour last night: how officiously she recommended to me every thing that was brought to table, though it was not at all necessary for her to do the honours of it. She ate nothing herself, nor has she taken much nourishment for a considerable time—I sigh while I behold the alteration in her person; yet is she not half so melancholy as I am: and indeed, why *should* she be so? She can have nothing to disturb her. If she loves me, she knows she may command me: but *I* am

am very differently situated: I cannot, by the most fervent supplications, prevail on her to pity me. What a strange perverseness is there in some women! A perverseness never to be accounted for.

Adieu.



L E T T E R the Ninety-fourth.

Lady FRANCES ASHBURY

T O

Miss HERBERT.

I Have been astonished to a degree beyond expression. Would you believe it? Walsingham has offered to marry Mrs. Leland. I received this intelligence from himself: and I received a confirmation of it from her, whom I have placed in a genteel shop at Bath. But that is nothing to the present purpose.

When

When I had settled Mrs. Leland's little affairs, Walsingham came to me one morning, when I was alone, and thanked me, in the highest terms, for my generous behaviour to the amiable widow —(I had not affected to conceal the part I took in her distress, nor had I talked of it to any body, except Mr. and Mrs. Burton) adding, that he had intended to solicit for her the very favour I had conferred, as he thought her extremely deserving, and as she would accept of no favours from *him*.

“ No !” answered I, willing to hear — as he had mentioned the affair — “ what could have induced Mrs. Leland to decline your assistance ? ” “ She *did* suffer me to do my endeavours to deliver her from the prosecutions of her husband’s brother,” replied he, “ but she never would take any pecuniary civilities.”

“ And

“ And yet you saw her frequently ? ”

“ Frequently : but she refused me, Lady Frances ; refused me, even at the time she owned I was most dear to her. I should not make this confession, were it not greatly to her honour, madam — But how comes it that your sex has more fortitude than ours, my Lady ? And how can they relinquish so easily all pretensions to the man whom they love — or *pretend* to love ? ”

I believe I looked exceedingly disconcerted ; yet I had presence of mind enough to say — “ Improper offers, Mr. Walsingham, ought always, you know, to be refused.”

“ I will readily allow that such offers ought to be refused, Lady Frances ; and will also, honestly own, that I am ashamed of myself for having affronted Mrs. Leland, by making any such proposals ; but the best

best of us, madam," added he, with his eyes cast down with the most humiliated air, "are not always masters of themselves. Our passions are continually rebelling against our reason; and yet, Lady Frances"—(venturing to raise his eyes again, as if half afraid to meet mine)—"Oh these men, Bab—what artful deceivers) "Mrs. Leland's situation demanded a behaviour different from that which would have been proper to a woman of equal birth and fortune. I would not, however, insinuate that virtue is not to be as much respected in a woman of the lowest birth, and in the straitest circumstances, as in a Lady of rank, and blest with affluence; but women in such circumstances being more liable to temptation, if they have fortitude sufficient to enable them to preserve their virtue unfullied, ought doubly to be

VOL. II. K respected.—

respected.—How could I have been a competent judge of Mrs. Leland's merit till I had tried her? But I will ingenuously own, Lady Frances, that at the time I mentioned a settlement to this amiable widow, I had no thoughts of marrying her."

I started, Bab; my colour went and came, when those last words were articulated, in such a manner, that I thought I should have expired with astonishment and shame on his seeing me so much affected; for what construction might he not have put upon my embarrassment? — Seemingly regardless of my emotions, however, he proceeded—
“Had I offered her my hand, madam, before I tried her, might I not have feared that she was allured only by the hopes of placing herself advantageously in life; and that her affection for me

was

was quite out of the case? But when she rejected me, when she refused to be my wife, merely because she thought such an alliance might be injurious to me, and at the same time declared, that she must never see me again if she expected any tranquility, I could not help being convinced that her love and virtue were very uncommon."

I felt my face glow excessively at the conclusion of that speech: my heart fluttered intolerably; yet I strove to appear composed, and at last made a shift, with much difficulty, to tell him, that he was greatly to be pitied for having been rejected by a person who, according to his account of her conduct, was better qualified than any other woman to make him happy.

He looked earnestly at me — sighed, but was silent. I turned the conversa-

tion immediately, and Mrs. Burton soon joining us, went up stairs to write to *you*.

Thus you see, my dear friend, you was entirely mistaken when you imagined that Walsingham still regretted my non-acceptance of him. He *has* been, and *is*, I dare say, violently in love with Mrs. Leland, who must certainly be a very extraordinary woman; and she well deserves, indeed, every thing I can do for her. Do not laugh at me, if I confess that I feel an additional satisfaction to that arising from a consciousness of having done a benevolent action, in knowing that this formidable woman is planted quite out of Walsingham's way, and in a style of life to exclude any honourable designs on *his* side, as he will certainly never think of marrying a woman who keeps a publick shop: and for the sake of his *family*, you know,

my

my dear B.b, one would not have him descend so *low*. This little adventure, however, makes me thoroughly sensible of the value he sets upon *me*; and I hope I shall so far conquer my prepossessions in his favour, as to be able to keep myself at a proper distance for the future. If *he* does not leave Datchet soon, *I* must: yet I cannot so early in the season think of London neither: it will be a desert for some months; and I have no spirits for publick places. I shall, therefore, make Lady Mary a visit. She will be as much surprized as I am to hear what I have communicated to *you*.—I repeat what I have often said, “there is no answering for men:” they are the most fickle and capricious of all beings: are we not, then, a thousand times better without them?

Adieu.

LETTER the Ninety-fourth.

Mr. WALSHAM
TO

Mr. D'ARCY.

I have spoken, in the sincerity of my heart, to Lady Frances ; a sincerity to which she was, I thought, entitled ; and I flattered myself that I should be strongly recommended by it to a woman of a liberal mind ; but it has by no means, been answerable to my expectations.—She is more cool, more indifferent, more reserved, more distant than ever—She is piqued, perhaps, at my behaviour to Mrs. Leland : but I did not discover any inclination for another woman, till *she* had given me sufficient reason to believe, that I must never hope to be

be distinguished by her in the manner I wished : could she suppose that I never was to endeavour to be happy with any of her sex, because she would not permit me to be happy with her ?—I should have had a very slight opinion of myself, could I have been capable of concealing my transactions with Mrs. Leland from the woman for whom I have long pretended to feel an honourable passion — and on whom I still doat with such ardor, that I cannot be happy without her affection—without her esteem at least. Her esteem, indeed, I thought I had secured by a frank confession of my follies ; especially, when my confession was accompanied by the strongest disapprobation of them from my own lips. But I am mistaken: she is totally changed with regard to *me* ; and what reason can there be, after all, for such a change?

Perhaps I may have discovered a freedom in my behaviour which she deemed reprehensible ; but as that freedom was only discovered when my passions were too warmly excited to obey the sober dictates of discretion, and as I always endeavoured to repair my errors, as soon as I became sensible of them, surely I may appear in a pardonable light to her. Need a woman of the strictest virtue start from me as from an abandoned libertine, who has neither principles nor feeling ? Certainly not.—On the contrary, Lady Frances, as my relation, my friend, ought to *feel* for me, to consider me, and to encourage my return to the paths of honour, by a mild, indulgent carriage. By what authority, as she will not accept of me as a lover, does she assume a right to be offended with me for my behaviour to another woman, while

while I pay *her* all the deference due to rank, character, and fortune?—In short, she divests me of all my patience.—In spite of all my provocations, however, I find that I cannot help loving her—As I cannot help loving her, I will, undoubtedly, take myself out of her way.—While she treated me like a friend, I bore her caprice, which made her reject me as a lover; but her present forbidding deportment is intolerable.

Yours, &c. E. W.

LETTER the Ninety-fifth.

LADY FRANCES ASHBURY

TO

MISSED HERBERT.

Datchet.

I Should have left this place ere now, but Mrs. Burton, who was expected to lie-in a month ago, was taken ill last

night, and claims my promise to stay with her till she is, at least, out of danger: but I cannot possibly perform my promise, nor can I go to Lady Mary, who, being well enough recovered to leave Broxburne, and impatient to see her daughter, arrived here last night.

Walsingham and I are as distant and as civil as if we were utter strangers to each other. Lady Mary and Mrs. Burton take his part with regard to his behaviour to Mrs. Leland. They say that her carriage, though he might have put a wrong construction upon it, was well intended; and only blame her for having told him that she loved him, as she, by that unguarded confession encouraged him to make improper proposals to her, proposals which he had, indeed, atoned for by an offer of marriage.

My answer is—"No woman can, I think, decently marry the man who has been guilty of so gross an insult."

They

They are silent about the insult; but they are of opinion, that though Mrs. Leland acted right by rejecting Walsingham, her refusal ought not to influence any other woman, whom he addresses in an honourable manner, against him: they add, that as his character was never, in the slightest degree, impeached before, this single failing ought to be overlooked, even by a woman of delicacy.

Shall I own the truth, Bab? I felt myself half-inclined to be brought over to their candid sentiments: but it is *his* turn now to be capricious; and he seems to resent my neglect of him extremely.

IN CONTINUATION.

Mrs. Burton is safely delivered of a fine boy: the mother and the son are both in a fair way. Burton expresses the highest satisfaction: but the affectionate Lady Mary recollecting poor Celia's

Cecilia's unfortunate situation, fluctuates between hopes and fears, and trembles for her Caroline.

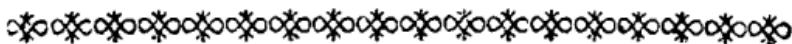
Walsingham seems also to recollect past scenes of distress, and sighs—thinking, I suppose, about the lost Cecilia.

A few hours ago he expressed himself very tenderly concerning his little daughter, and recommended her in the strongest and most pathetic terms to the care of her grandmother, as if he intended to have no share in the education of her himself. I thought he hinted something about quitting England for a considerable time.—What a strange fancy ! Apparently melancholy, and disgusted with every thing, he is still, however, the polite, the elegant Walsingham. I had a notion that he pined after Mrs. Leland ; but he has declared again and again, both in my hearing, to the Burtons, and

to

to Lady Mary—(who has been made acquainted with the whole affair) that he is most happy in having been rejected by her.

What an inconsistent creature is man! Very possibly he may charge *me* also with inconsistency.—“When men flatter most, they mean least.” This is an old assertion, but how just a one is it! Adieu.



LETTER the Ninety-sixth.

Mr. W A L S I N G H A M

T O

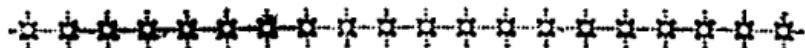
Mr. D' A R C Y.

I Shall set out, in a few days, for Paris, stay about six weeks, and then pursue my *route* to Italy—where I propose to winter. I only stay to promise and vow for Burton's boy, who may be, perhaps,

perhaps, my adopted heir by and by, if I have no son of my own. I am not, however, very desirous of answering for the children of other people in this solemn manner; because I think it is a business of too serious a nature, not to be highly regarded: it is indeed a business of very great importance, in *my* opinion; and a man should reflect maturely upon the duty of a godfather, before he appears in the character of one.

The lovely Lady Frances, still lovely, though still indisposed, and forbidding in her behaviour to *me*, is to be my associate upon this occasion; so that, in spite of all her Ladyship's delicacy, we shall have a child between us. Heaven bless the boy! He is to be called, in compliment to us both, Francis-Edward; and so

Good Night.
LETTER



LETTER the Ninety-seventh.

From the same to the same.

MY business is all done. I set out to-morrow. I have taken leave of every body, of Lady Frances particularly. The separation-scene was a trying one to *me*: and even the Lady seemed to be affected by it. I believe I came upon her a little abruptly, after having declared my intention to leave England, and to settle abroad. She changed colour, and seemed to be greatly agitated. I wished her returning health, and every felicity which her native land—which I was so eager to quit—could afford her. I then took the liberty to mention my little girl, and to intreat her Ladyship to honour her, sometimes, with her notice:

I in-

I intreated her also to forget the failings of the father, while she remembered the virtues of her mother, and pressed her to be the friend of my infant Cecilia.

She turned away her face at the remembrance of my poor, dear, lost girl, and wiped away her starting tears.—I staid a moment, till she had recovered herself a little, and heard her softly say, in a voice sufficient to drive any man from his purpose—“ Why, why will you leave us, Mr. Walsingham ? ”—But as I had finally resolved to pursue my journey, I was not willing to undergo the pangs of a second adieu; I, therefore, only replied, that England, without the blessing I had once fondly hoped to enjoy in it, would be to me a melancholy desart.—I then bowed, and took my last leave.

As we have been long separated from each other, my dear D'Arcy, I hope we shall

shall still continue to exchange our thoughts with the greatest freedom. Farewel. On whatever coast your Walsingham is thrown, he will be, most assuredly,

Your sincere,

and affectionate Friend.

L E T T E R , the Ninety-seventh.

LADY FRANCES ASHBURY

T O

MISSES H E R B E R T .

I Am lost—undone—miserable beyond expression—Oh ! Bab ! who could have believed it ? Walsingham has taken leave of me for ever : he has left England for some years—perhaps, he never will return. Be not surprised at these ex-

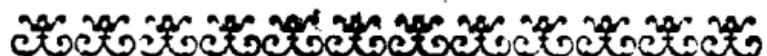
exclamations—though you well may be surprised at them—I never till now knew how very dear he was to my heart.

He took a serious and affecting farewell of me—My heart died within me at the bare idea of such a cruel separation, and I wished, I longed to say something—(must I own it?)—to ask him to lay aside a design so disagreeable to all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance; but my tongue refused its assistance, and I was obliged to let him depart.—I only was able to mutter out—“Why will you leave us?”—But he either did not hear me, or questioned my sincerity; for he quitted me after a forced compliment, which I might or might not take to myself as I pleased. Yet can I blame him? Did he not make an offer of himself to me in the most respectful manner, at a time when we were

were both free to chuse each other? I rejected him—but should I not have thoroughly reflected upon my refusal before I delivered it? I fear I have trifled with a valuable heart, which is now for ever lost to me. Could I have controuled my sorrow I might have spoken to him, I might have swayed him from his purpose: but all my faculties were over-powered by grief. I have pleaded illness to hide myself from my friends here, as I should blush to see the face of any person but of him whom I have driven from me.—There is but one step for me to take—a step, indeed, for which all the world will condemn me—a step which I should, myself, severely condemn in another. Yet, if he ever loved me, he cannot so soon be changed: nor can he be disgusted at my giving him the strongest proof

proof of my feelings, of my affection for him. However, I must try — If I succeed, I *must* be happy: if I fail, I shall be cruelly censured, though free from guilt.—But the consciousness of innocence will be a considerable consolation: though I ever was, and still am, of opinion, that a *woman* ought to pay the greatest regard to *character*. However, if Walsingham approves of my conduct, I shall trouble myself very little about the sentiments of other people concerning it.

Adieu.



LETTER the Ninety-eighth.

Mr. W A L S I N G H A M

T O

Mr. D'A R C Y.

Dover.

A STONISHMENT beyond all conception!

I arrived

I arrived here last night. The wind not being fair, I put up at the principal inn: bespoke a chicken for my supper, went to bed early, and ordered my servant to call me when the pacquet was ready to fail.

As no change happened all night, I rose in the morning, and drank my tea with much composure.

On a sudden a chaise and four galloped into the yard, attended with servants. A Lady immediately, in a negligée, with a hood over her face, and her attendant got out, and were conducted by the master of the house into a room adjoining to that in which I was at breakfast.—There was an uncommon dignity in her mien, and she moved in the most graceful manner imaginable, though she hurried in, holding the lace of her hood quite over her face with her hand.

hand. Her companion followed her, in a bonnet, and seemed to be not in the least desirous of concealing herself from me: instantly I recognized the features of Mrs. Bland, Lady Frances's *woman*. —Heaven and earth! how my heart throbbed and fluttered at the bare idea of such a rencontre! “Lady Frances! Surely it cannot be,” thought I—“no—impossible: yet I must enquire.”—I, then summoned my fellow immediately, who though, in general, very respectful, replied with a smothered grin, upon my asking who the Lady was—“Lady Frances Ashbury.”

“Are you sure of what you say?” replied I.—“I am not in a humour to be trifled with.”

“Upon my life and soul, sir,” said he, staring, with a solemnity which made ample amends for his former propensity

pensity to laugh, "I have told you the truth. I just now spoke to her Ladyship's servants."

"Well then," answered I, "go and speak with them again, and ask them whither her Ladyship is going."

He obeyed, and brought me back word that they could not tell.

"Leave me then, for the present," said I, "but keep a good look out; and if she makes any movements, inform me of them immediately."

"She is not going in a hurry from hence, sir," replied he, "for Mrs. Bland has ordered a dinner."

All this, you may imagine, increased my surprise—if it *could* be increased. I was half mad with impatience to see her, and to hear the motives which had urged her to so unexpected a proceeding; but I considered that great circumspection

tion was necessary. I was very unwilling to give a new affront to her Ladyship's delicacy. There could not, however, be any impropriety in my desiring leave to wait on her—I should have been guilty, indeed, of an unpardonable rudeness, in taking no notice of her, when I knew that we were in the same house together. Still, however, I hesitated, and could not conquer the dread of being again rejected: yet I was wild to make a trial. At length I got the better of all my retarding apprehensions, and sent Salway, with my respectful compliments, to desire the honour of waiting on her Ladyship. The answer was, that "she should be extremely glad to see me." Excellent! thought I—and hurried Salway to dress my hair, which, circumstanced as I was, waiting to go aboard, had been quite neglected.

When

When I was decent—and I could hardly keep my impetuosity within bounds, till my fellow had done—I flew into the apartment of my divinity, who had never been so nearly upon a footing with a mere mortal in her life before.

She received me, blushing like a rose dropping with pearly dew, and with a tremor throughout her whole frame, which gave her a thousand new graces which I seemed not to see, and, consequently, allowed her time to recover herself.

When we had chatted a little while on common topics, the weather, the wind, &c. &c. and when I had informed her that I waited till the pacquet was ready to sail, she said, with downcast eyes, and a gentle sigh, “ You are determined then to leave England, Mr. Walsingham?”

"I am," madam. Has your Ladyship the same design?"

"I believe," replied she—hesitating—and in great disorder—"I believe I have."

"Will you permit me, madam, to conduct you to Paris, &c. As I have been the same route already, I may be capable of being of some service to your Ladyship."

She blushed again, bowed, and thanked me. In return, I invited myself to dine with her. I then told her that if she would give me permission, I would procure proper accommodations on board the vessel in which I had hired a passage.

She only assented by her silence, and I left her.

When I returned to dinner, I found her new dressed, and still more agitated.—She was pale and red alternately; yet

she

she looked inexpressibly beautiful. She was most tenderly dejected, and as my assistance seemed necessary for her ease, I resolved, with the more eagerness, to offer it. However, I kept down all the lover, and only suffered the friend to appear.

We were, soon afterwards, summoned on board. I took hold of her trembling hand, and led her to the pacquet-boat. In a short time she was seized with a violent sickness, and secluded from my sight; but my enquiries after her were almost momentary.

About an hour before we reached Calais, the wind blew very fresh, and there was so high a sea, that she could not help discovering all the terrors natural to her sex. There was, indeed, no possibility of her walking from the vessel; and I could not bear to see any body

touch her but myself. Taking her, therefore, in my arms, I carried her safe, and dry on shore.

She thanked me in the sweetest accents for my care of her, and suffered me to conduct her to the nearest hotel, accepting of my offered arm for her support.

She shook, so violently was she agitated, as if she had been in an ague-fit; and when I placed her in a chair, and called for some refreshment, turned as pale as death.—I desired leave to order dinner—She hardly tasted a morsel. I, then, studious of procuring her every kind of satisfaction, left her with Bland, that she might have time to compose herself.

And now, tell me, D'Arcy, is not this Lady Frances a dear, whimsical creature? What *can* be her design by falling in with me, but to put herself under my protection? If that is the case,

I shall

I shall soon carry my point.—And yet I am afraid to expect so much happiness, after having been so often disappointed.—*Hope*, however, who never forsakes even the most wretched of the human species, still keeps up my spirits : but I swear by all that's solemn, that I scarce know whether I am awake; so much has this Dover adventure astonished me.

Yours, &c. E. W.



LETTER the Ninety-ninth,

From the same to the same.

NO W the game is up & now I have succeeded to my wishes—I have succeeded, and I triumph.—Yes, Charles, the dear enchanting creature is mine. But you will, I know, expect a particular account of this affair.

L 3

After

After having spent a delicious evening with my adorable Fanny—“ Is it come to *that*,” methinks I hear you say?

When I returned to the room in which I had left my angel, I asked her—finding her with her head leaning upon her hand, and, apparently, low spirited to an extreme—I asked her “ if she chose to set off for Paris next morning, or to stay a few days to rest herself, and to view Calais and the *environs*. ”

She made me repeat my question, being too much absorbed in thought, to return an immediate reply. Then, raising her eyes, red with weeping, said—“ I shall return to England, sir, tomorrow.”

Guess my astonishment.—“ To England, madam! you amaze me.—I hoped to have had the happiness of your company to *Paris*, at least.”

“ I am

"I am sure that Mr. Walsingham would condemn such a design," replied she, "were I weak enough to carry it into execution.—My friendship for *him*, indeed, has prompted me to take a step, which he, I fear, as well as the world, will sharply censure; but I confess I could not bear to think of parting with him for ever, without wishing for another adieu.—I have followed you, to take a last farewell, and I leave you to pursue your journey.—I am ashamed of my folly, yet"—

She would have proceeded, but tears and sighs deprived her of the power of utterance—and I was so full of wonder, and so transported, that I had not the slightest inclination to interrupt her. I caught her hand, indeed, and sat gazing on her face, devouring every feature, and longing to wipe away every

falling tear.—Finding that she was silent from a distress which, while it rendered her a thousand times more dear to me, called for immediate relief ; I ventured to catch her in my arms, to fold her to my throbbing bosom, and to ask her, in accents as tender as hers, “ if she would permit me to silence the world, and her own fears, and to gratify my ardent wishes, by making her mine for ever. ”

She blushed like crimson.—She strove to withdraw herself from my arms : she struggled ; she trembled.—Still gently holding her hand, I asked her why she made so cruel a resistance to *my* desires and to her own.—“ As you have kindly confessed, my dear Lady Frances,” continued I, “ that you entertain a friendship for me sufficient to render you affected by my absence, why will you not

not permit me to see *that* friendship, by the tenderest attentions on *my* side, ripen into love? Come, come, you will, you must. — The world will talk, 'tis true; and there is but one way to put a stop to its talking: do it by consenting to be mine immediately. A clergyman of our persuasion may be found even here, and he may unite us in a short time; and then we may defy the utmost malice of a tattling multitude, envious of our mutual happiness.”

The dear, delicious little prude averted her face while I addressed the above speech to her; and, by so doing, discovered the most elegantly polished neck, and finest profile imaginable. I suffered her to remain in that attitude for some moments, merely for the pleasure of gazing on her. My impatience then to secure the delight which I enjoyed, hurried

ried me to rise, and to press her so eagerly to grant my request, that she turned with half a smile, and cried, “ What would you have, Mr. Walsingham? I cannot be teased, indeed I cannot.”

“ You shall not be teased, my life; only let me engage a proper person to perform the ceremony, and I will leave you to recover your spirits.”

“ I cannot, indeed,” replied she, “ I cannot think of such a thing, without a friend, and in a foreign country.—It is impossible, indeed Mr. Walsingham.”

“ Indeed then, Lady Frances,” answered I, rather in a peremptory manner—“ I must come to terms.—If you will not consent to be married as soon as we arrive at Canterbury, at which place I have a particular friend in one of the prebends, I must take a final leave

leave of you here, and set out for Paris to-morrow morning, for I cannot bear to be tantalized any longer."

I then rose, and walked about the room.

" If you are so indifferent, sir," replied she, with an agitated voice, " we must part, for I cannot agree to act in opposition to all decency."

" Nor will I ask you, my angel," said I, sitting down by her again, " to do any thing which may shock your delicacy, that charming delicacy which has hitherto so raised you in my esteem. — But, my dear Lady Frances, your own excellent understanding will tell you, that even delicacy carried too far degenerates into downright prudery; that the excess of every thing is wrong; and that we can only gain the approbation of our own consciences, and render ourselves respectable to others, by regulating

ing our conduct with a happy mediocrity.—Give me leave also to add, that if you had yielded at first to the man, who has ever adored you, all the anxiety which we have both endured, would have been saved : we should have been reciprocally happy long ago.—In short, I can have no rest till I have secured the person, as well as the heart of *her* who is so necessary to my felicity.—It is neither indifference nor indelicacy which urges me to insist upon your compliance with my request ; it is my impatience which impels me to complete my own happiness, and to spare *your* blushes at the same time.—Come — give me this dear hand for ever, and let me hide that sweet glowing face in my bosom.”

“ Say no more,” answered she ; “ but leave me now, Mr. Walsingham, I cannot talk any longer upon this subject.”

“ I con-

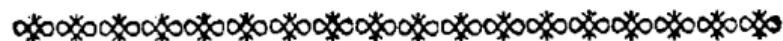
"I consent, madam, most readily ; provided I have your promise to return, with the first fair wind, to England, and to give me your hand the moment we arrive at the cathedral at Canterbury."

"I will, if I am alive," replied she.

"Enough," replied I, closely embracing her, though she struggled hard to disengage herself, more, I believe, from a natural modesty, than from any aversion which she felt to my endearments.

I kept my word, bowed, left her, and sat down to write to you, knowing that you would enjoy the intelligence I had to communicate to you.—If Lady Frances deceives me again, I will never see *her* or England any more.—But I wrong her by harbouring any suspicions against her : has she not, by following me, given me the most indisputable proof of her tenderest attachment to me ? . . . Adieu.

LETTER



LETTER the Hundreth.

From the same to the same.

Berkley Square.

HERE we are safe arrived; and, let me add, the happiest pair in the universe. We had a very stormy passage. During that passage, my Fanny was not only glad to be supported in my arms, but every moment accused herself of having led me into unnecessary danger, and confessed that she loved me, that she had ever loved me with the most impassioned tenderness from our first acquaintance.

Imagine my raptures, D'Arcy. I blessed the storm which had extorted so transporting an avowal from her, and told her that I would contentedly be drowned for the supreme satisfaction of being assured I was beloved by her.

She

She chid me for my unseasonable levity, with her charming eyes full of tears, and pressed me still closer and closer to her delicious bosom, while the danger continued.

Take *my* advice, Charles — Never marry a woman who owns her passion when she is first solicited, but stay and take one who has quite tired you out with repeated refusals.—Such a one will catch at you eagerly, at last, as if to save herself from perdition ; and, by a rapturous flow of undissembled love, no longer to be confined, lift you above mortality. Such a woman is my Fanny, Charles.

The indissoluble knot was tied as soon as we arrived at Canterbury, by my old friend, whose family, at my request, obligingly accompanied Lady Frances to church, and then insisted upon our taking a breakfast with them.

The

The dear creature seemed to be a little re-assured when she saw some genteel people of her own sex about her ; and was all condescension, all winning compliance from the blissful hour.

I sent a servant post before to order every thing here ready for her reception ; and she is now retired to her dressing-room to write to Lady Mary, Miss Herbert, &c. &c.

Wish me joy, D'Arcy, or rather wish me a continuance of the felicity I, at present, possess in the society of the most lovely, the most engaging of women ; who told me but this morning, that if the coldness with which she till very lately had behaved to me, should be converted into the most extravagant tenderness, I must blame only myself, whose behaviour with regard to *her*, had been too engaging not to merit the warmest returns.

returns. Amiable creature! I can no longer be absent from her—

I will write more fully to you at a leisure hour. Adieu.



LETTER the Hundred and First.

LADY FRANCES WALSINGHAM

T O

MIS HERBERT.

O H! Bab! were I to relate the adventures of this last week, how would you blush for your friend? Yet she has been only weak—she has not acted criminally: indeed she has not.—But can I allow it to be a weakness to be affectionately attached to so amiable a man as Walsingham is? He *has* convinced me, *he* alone *could* convince me—that an overacted delicacy, like every other passion carried to excess, destroys itself.—

itself.—To extricate myself from the distress, in which my *outrageous* delicacy involved me, I was obliged to give up all pretensions to it, and to act in opposition to the natural modesty of my sex; but I am amply recompensed for what I have done, by being united by the strongest ties to the man who made the tenderest of husbands, to a woman whom he married rather from a point of honour than from inclination; and who lets me see, every hour, that he is more passionately attached to your happy friend, than he ever was to any woman in the world.

I am, my dear Miss Herbert,
Still, unalterably, yours,
FRANCES WALSHAM.

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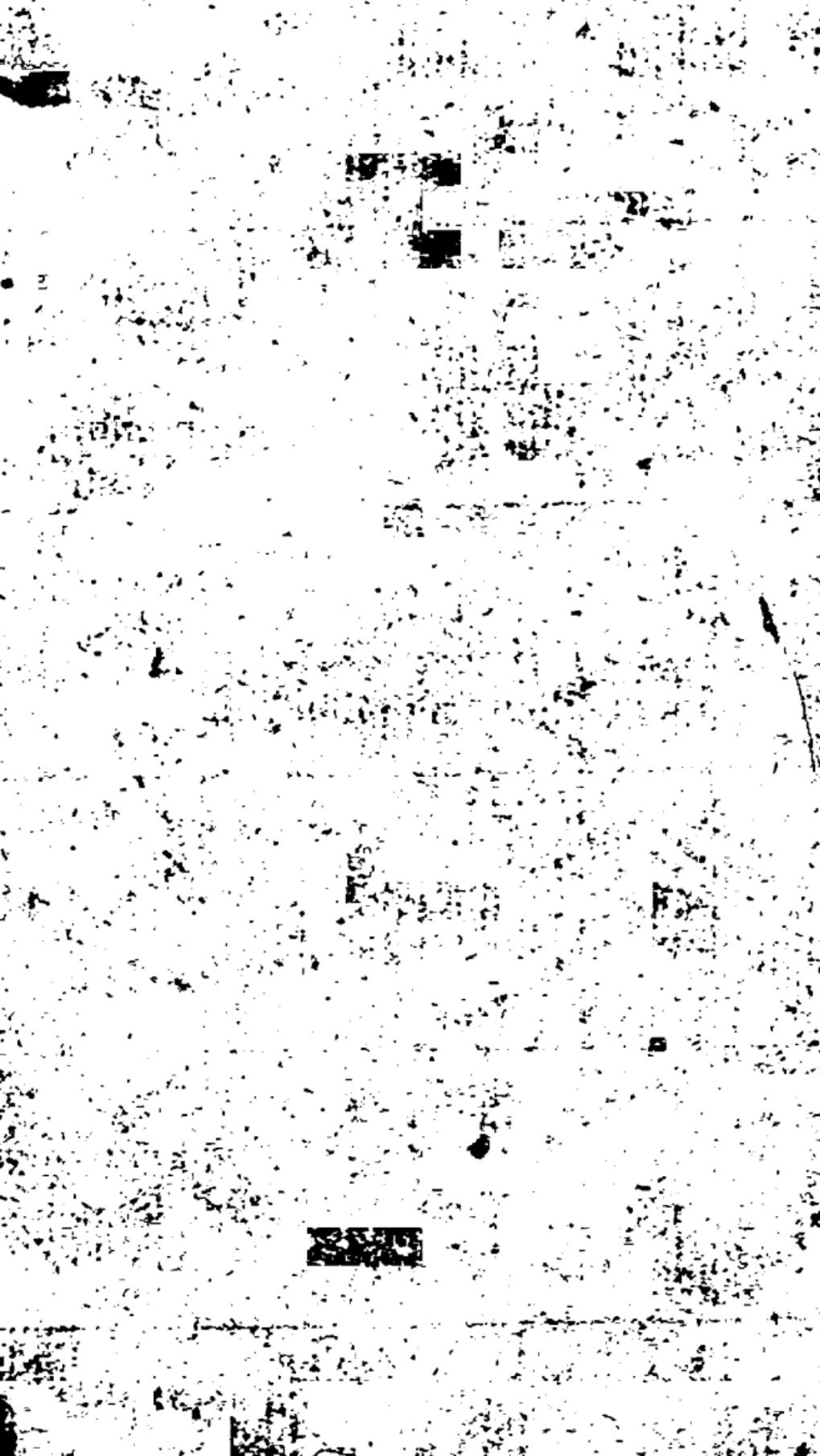
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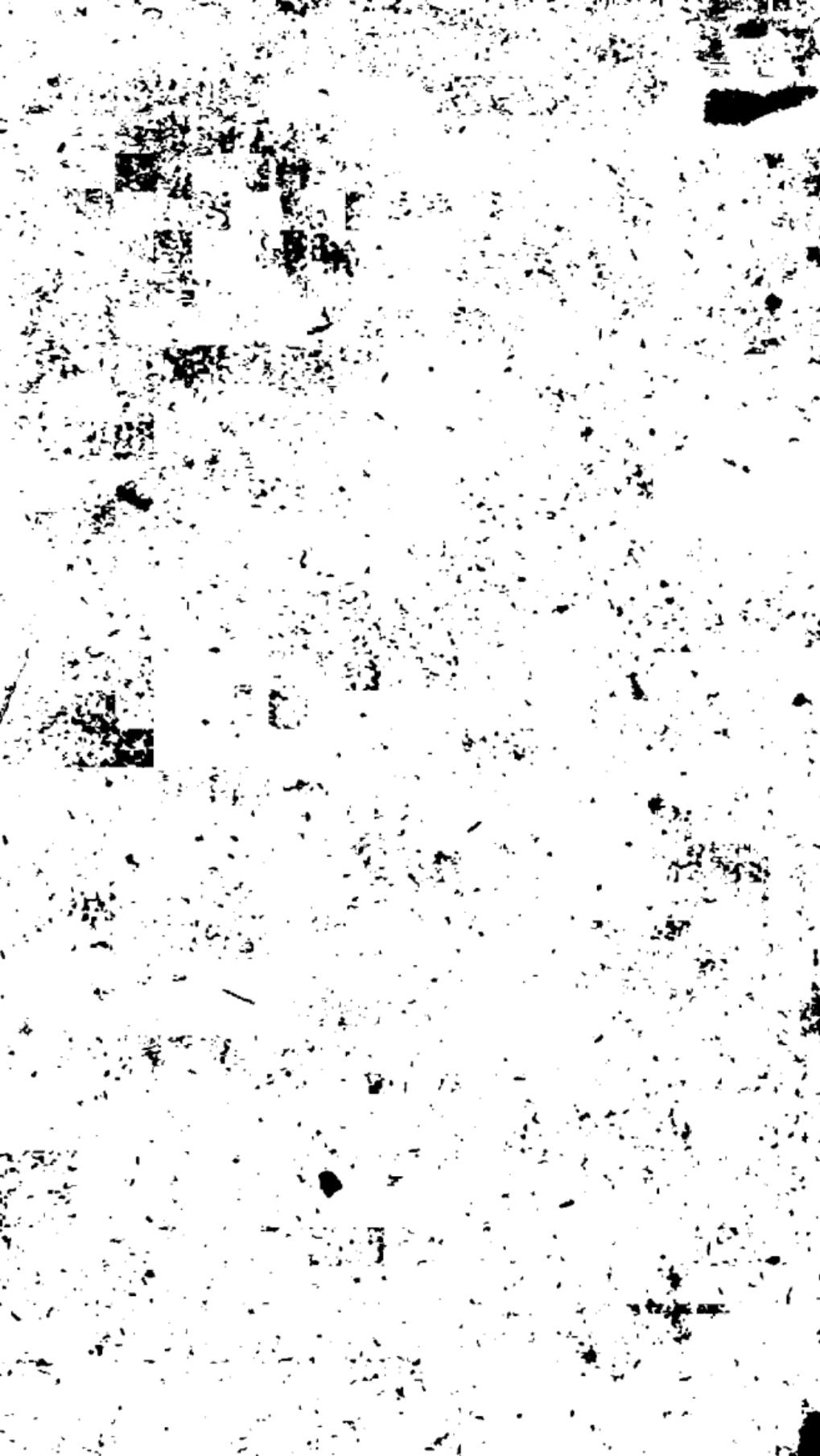












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