of the deepeſt guilt, In every civilized country, and in many countries where civilization has made but ſmall progreſs, the virtue of women is collected as it were in­to a ſingle point, which they are to guard above all things, as that on which their happineſs and reputation wholly depend. At firſt ſight this may appear a capri­cious regulation; but a moment’s reflection will con­vince us of the contrary. In the married ſtate ſo much confidence is neceſſarily repoſed in the fidelity of wo­men to the beds of their huſbands, and evils ſo great reſult from the violation or that fidelity, that whatever contributes in any degree to its preſervation, muſt be agreeable to him who, in eſtabliſhing the laws of na­ture, intended them to be ſubſervient to the real happineſs of all his creatures. But nothing contributes ſo much to preſerve the fidelity of wives to their huſbands, as the impreſſing upon the minds of women the higheſt veneration for the virtue of chaſtity. She who, when unmarried, has been accuſtomed to grant favours to dif­ferent men, will not find it eaſy, if indeed poſſible, to reſiſt afterwards the allurements of variety. It is there­fore a wiſe inſtitution, and agreeable to the will of Him who made us, to train up women ſo as that they may look upon the loſs of their chaſtity as the moſt diſgraceful of all crimes; as that which ſinks them in the order of ſociety, and robs them of all their value. In this light virtuous women actually look upon the loſs of chaſtity. The importance of that virtue has been ſo deeply impreſſed upon their minds, and is ſo cloſely aſſociated with the principle of honour, that they cannot think but with abhorrence upon the very deed by which it is loſt. He therefore who by fraud and falſehood perſuades the unſuſpecting girl to deviate in one inſtance from the honour of the ſex, weakens in a great degree her moral principle; and if he reconcile her to a repe­tition of her crime, he deſtroys that principle entirely, as ſhe has been taught to conſider all other virtues as inferior to that of chaſtity. Hence it is that the hearts of proſtitutes are generally ſteeled againſt the miſeries of their fellow-creatures; that they lend their aid to the ſeducer in his practices upon other gills; that they lie and ſwear and ſteal without compunction; and that too many of them heſitate not to commit murder if it can ſerve any ſelfiſh purpoſe of their own.

The loſs of virtue, though the greateſt that man or woman can ſuſtain, is not the only injury which the ſe­ducer brings upon the girl whom he deceives. She cannot at once reconcile herſelf to proſtitution, or even to the loſs of character; and while a sense of ſhame re­mains in her mind, the miſery which ſhe suffers muſt be exquiſite. She knows that ſhe has forfeited what in the female character is moſt valued by both ſexes; and ſhe muſt be under the perpetual dread of a diſcovery. She cannot even confide in the honour of her ſeducer, who may reveal her ſecret in a fit of drunkenneſs, and thus rob her of her fame as well as of her virtue; and while ſhe is in this ſtate of anxious uncertainty, the agony of her mind muſt be inſupportable. That it is ſo in fact, the many inſtances of child murder by unmar­ried women of every rank leave us no room to doubt. The affection of a mother to her new-born child is one of the moſt unequivocal and ſtrongeſt inſtincts in human nature (ſee Instinct); and nothing ſhort of the ex­tremity of diſtreſs could prompt any one ſo far to oppoſe her nature as to embrue her hands in the blood of her imploring infant.

Even this deed of horror ſeldom prevents a detec­tion of the mother’s frailty, which is indeed commonly diſcovered, though no child has been the conſequence of her intrigue. He who can ſeduce is baſe enough to betray; and no woman can part with her honour, and retain any well-grounded hope that her amour ſhall be kept ſecret. The villain to whom she ſurrendered will glory in his victory, if it was with difficulty obtained; and if ſhe ſurrendered at diſcretion, her own behaviour will reveal her ſecret. Her reputation is then irretrievably loſt, and no future circumſpection will be of the ſmalleſt avail to recover it. She will be shunned by the virtuous part of her own ſex, and treated as a mere in­strument of pleaſure by the other. In ſuch circumſtances ſhe cannot expect to be married with advantage. She may perhaps be able to captivate the heart of a heedleſs youth, and prevail upon him to unite his fate to her’s before the delirium of his paſſion ſhall give him time for reflection; ſhe may be addreſſed by a man who is a ſtranger to her ſtory, and married while he has no ſuſpicion of her ſecret; or ſhe may be ſolicited by one of a ſtation inferior to her own, who, though acquaint­ed with every thing that has befallen her, can barter the delicacy of wedded love for ſome pecuniary advantage; but from none of theſe marriages can ſhe look for hap­pineſs. The delirium which prompted the firſt will ſoon vaniſh, and leave the huſband to the bitterneſs of his own reflections, which can hardly fail to produce cruelty to the wife. Of the ſecret, to which, in the ſecond caſe, the lover was a ſtranger, the huſband will ſoon make a diſcovery, or at leaſt find room for har­bouring ſtrong ſuſpicions; and ſuſpicions of having been deceived in a point ſo delicate have hitherto been uni­formly the parents of miſery. In the third caſe, the man married her merely for money, or which having got the poſſeſſion, he has no farther inducement to treat her with reſpect. Such are ſome of the consequences of ſeduction, even when the perſon ſeduced has the good fortune to get afterwards a huſband; but this is a for­tune which few in her circumſtances can reaſonably ex­pect. By far the greater part of thoſe who have been defrauded of their virtue by the arts of the ſeducer ſink deeper and deeper into guilt, till they become at laſt common proſtitutes. The public is then deprived of their ſervice as wives and parents; and inſtead of con­tributing to the population of the ſtate, and to the ſurn. of domeſtic felicity, theſe outcaſts of ſociety become ſeducers in their turn, corrupting the morals of every young man whoſe appetites they can inflame, and of every young woman whom they can entice to their own practices.

All this complication of evil is produced at firſt by arts, which, if employed to deprive a man of his pro­perty, would ſubject the offender to the execration of his fellow subjects, and to an ignominious death: but while the forger of a bill is purſued with relentleſs ri­gour by the miniſters of juſtice, and the ſwindler load­ed with univerſal reproach, the man who by fraud and forgery has enticed an innocent girl to gratify his deſires at the expence of her virtue, and thus introduced her into a path which muſt infallibly lead to her own ruin, as well as to repeated injuries to the public at