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CORRESPONDENTS,

AN

ORIGINAL NOVEL;

IN

A SERIES OF LETTERS.

between
Lord Littleton & Mrs Peach

—— Shake not thine auburn locks at me;
Thou canst not say I did it.—

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. BECKET, corner of the Adelphi, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXVI.

Mrs Peach after Lord Littleton death married his son.

THE

CORRESPONDENTS.

To *

I KNOW too well the melancholly reaſon of your preſent ſilence, and do not preſume to interrupt it, or deſire you to write till perfectly convenient; but the conſideration of this day's beginning a *New Year*, induces me to ſend you my beſt wiſhes (not my compliments) on that occaſion.

I am juſt returning from church, and there, with the moſt ardent ſincerity,

I petitioned that your valuable life might be prolonged beyond the common date of humanity; that your ſenſibility might never more be wounded by the loſs of a friend; that you might enjoy uninterrupted health and every ſpecies of happineſs.

To * *.

I HAVE no ſuitable return for your moſt kind wiſh. The ſecond article includes every thing; and is the beſt condolance I have received; for on theſe occaſions little to the purpoſe can be ſaid.

As to the reſt, when I enjoy health I am thankful; but there are not many ſpecies of happineſs that I *can* enjoy. People in advanced life, as their connexions diſſolve, grow indifferent, and find their attachment to the world decreaſe daily: the few pleaſures they can reliſh may generally be ſafely afforded them. Your correſpondence is numbered among the few that *I* regard: you will continue it to me, and accept my ſincere acknowledgments.

To *.

IT is not probable that I ſhall ever decline a correſpondence that does me ſo much honour; eſpecially whilſt I continue to obſerve your indulgent command, of writing "the very firſt thoughts that occur when I take up a pen."

I have been amuſing myſelf theſe two hours with a piece of embroidery. This eaſy occupation engages the fingers without confining the thoughts; ſo, after a variety of ideas had ran through my mind, I began on a ſudden to review my paſt life.

I contemplated the chequered ſcene with ſtrict attention; and concluded at length,

length, that the white hours were infinitely more than the dark in number; and that, far from repining, I had abundant cauſe of thankfulneſs to that good Providence whoſe bounty had exceeded my deſert. Caſting my eyes round, finding myſelf in a very comfortable retreat—independent of the world—enjoying *tolerable* health,—a few friends ſtill ſpared to me—O *Memory*, thought I, what but *thy* annihilation is wanting to my happineſs! then I could enjoy theſe various bleſſings without the reflection of their uncertainty, without the dread of their ſudden loſs.—Here I broke off my meditation, and endeavoured to confirm my tranquillity, by communicating this account of it, which I know will afford a generous ſatisfaction to your benign heart; a ſatisfaction

that may increaſe, by your recollecting to *whoſe* advice and aſſiſtance I am principally indebted for that independence which is my chief boaſt.

You have forbidden acknowledgments; yet allow me this once to ſpeak my grateful remembrance of the obligation, and ſubſcribe myſelf, with the utmoſt reſpect,

Your moſt devoted, &c.

To * *.

THE ſubſtance of your letter is a very agreeable leſſon in moral philoſophy; but I wiſh you had omitted the concluſion. How often muſt I repeat that you owe me no obligation? The act of rendering you a ſmall ſervice was its own reward; and the endeavouring to improve our acquaintance into friendſhip was to pleaſe myſelf. Why then do we not converſe upon equal term? Why any *reſpect? the utmoſt reſpect*, my *moſt devoted?* How am I to account for the uſe of theſe terms? Can the trifling and accidental difference of our *rank* make any impreſſion on your mind?—Impoſſible!—Your ſoul is undoubtedly ſuperior to that weakneſs.

To *.

I SHOULD be very ſorry if you aſcribed the marks of my *reſpectful* eſteem to a wrong motive; and think my ſoul *is* ſuperior to the weakneſs you mention.

I *may* ſeem occaſionally humble; a profound veneration *does* ſometimes make an impreſſion on my mind; but it is *character*, not *rank*, which excites that humility and veneration.—You may remember conducting me much nearer the meridian ſplendor of *title*; but you do not remember that I was dazzled by its rays.—The *higheſt* rank, if unaccompanied by that extenſive genius, thoſe exalted talents, that long and improved acquaintance with the world,

world, that perfect and universal knowledge of men and things, which unite to form the character of a certain person, could never exact from me that respect which I cherish for *him*; and which is not lessened by his acquittal of my numerous obligations.

To . * *.

IF you have not juſtified yourſelf at the expence of your ſincerity, it is all very well: but

" O beware, beware of *Flattery!*
" It is a monſter, that like Jealouſy,
" Doth make the meat it feeds on."—

Long life, as the gift of providence, is valuable, if employed to advantage; but an acquaintance with the world, a knowledge of mankind, can very ſeldom procure either reſpect or happineſs. " He that increaſeth knowledge in-" creaſeth ſorrow." Again, ſays *the Preacher*, " I conſidered all travel and " every right work, that for this a man " is envied of his neighbour. Of " making many books there is no end; " and

"and much ſtudy is wearineſs." I cannot think of theſe things, nor of the various experiments which I, like *him*, have unſucceſsfully made to obtain happineſs, without drawing the ſame penſive concluſion, that *all is vanity*.

You ſuppoſe me well acquainted with the world. I *have* ſeen ſomething of it; enough to be almoſt tired, ſince novelty has loſt its charms. New faſhions, new cuſtoms, new opinions, are daily ſtarting up. I cannot adopt them with the facility of youth. I weigh, ponder, examine, perhaps reject, them. The world, that world I am ſo perfectly acquainted with—derides me as an obſtinate old fellow, for declining its preſent mode; but pays no kind of regard to my uſeleſs experience. Every age thinks

thinks itſelf wiſer than the former; the improvements of every age confirm this idea. Take care you become not ſo unfaſhionable, as to regard any thing but the accompliſhments, the wit, the elegance, the genius, of the preſent hour!

To *.

YOUR laſt letter had very nearly put a period to our correſpondence. "*All is vanity!*" *You are almoſt tired of the world!* I neither doubt it, nor wonder, becauſe there are ſo few things, and ſo few people in it, that can poſſibly amuſe or engage a mind like yours. What preſumption in *me* to attempt either!—It is with reluctance I ſend this. Could I but know the time, the place, the circumſtances, the diſpoſition, in which you received my notes —but to intrude and break in upon your more important thoughts with ſuch frivolous inſignificance!—Perhaps the very inſtant of reading this was devoted to a better employment. Why do I

ſay

ſay *perhaps?* there is no doubt of it. Pardon therefore the interruption; and reſume (before it is wholly broken) the thread of your contemplation.

To * *.

I WAS in a very ill humour, had company with me, and had juſt done dinner, when your letter was brought. Ten times more frivolous than that was the converſation it interrupted; ſo I read it over again and again, till at length it produced a change in my temper. Your amiable and generous ſolicitude to pleaſe *me*, inſpired *me* with an inclination to pleaſe *my gueſts*. In proportion as my endeavours ſucceeded, my cheerfulneſs increaſed; every body ſeemed to improve; and the evening went off with tolerable ſatisfaction.

So, for this time, becauſe of the good effect they had on me, I pardon your diffidence, your doubts, ſcruples, and

and apologies; but repeat them not, I conjure you. Believe, that all times, in all places and circumſtances, your letters will be acceptable. Herewith I return you a pacquet, (October and December incluſive) and, to ſatisfy you ſtill farther, will in future delay opening them till the proper moment of leiſure.

Adieu! if you now perſiſt in apologies you are not the perſon I take you for.

To *.

YOU are not diſpleaſed with me? I am and will be the perſon you take me for: but indeed you could not have choſen a worſe time for the reſtoration of my letters. I have been reading them over as I burnt them, and am put entirely out of conceit with myſelf. Such low, trifling, ridiculous ſtuff; and above all, ſuch a ſeeming imitation of your ſtile and manner—Yet I proteſt it is not an imitation.—Don't laugh at my vanity.—I mean only *that* ſtyle (very different from other writing) in which you honour me with a familiar correſpondence.

I remember you were angry at ſuch an obſervation once before; but I cannot

not help being ſtill of opinion, that this mode of expreſſion, particularly the ſhort and interrogatory ſentences, however ſuitable to you, do very ill become your correſpondent.

To * *

WHEN I first proposed this friendly correspondence, you pleaded inability to maintain it; upon which, I promised never to write or require long or correct letters. A few artless lines, expressive of health, of friendship, of *any thing* but study and affectation, was all that I requested from you, or gave you to expect from me.

I established at the same time a very unexceptionable *conveyance*; and promised to return your letters: in short, according to my notion of things, I removed every objection that diffidence, discretion, or delicacy could suggest.

Your letter intimates the contrary. You are now dissatisfied because there appears

appears a ſimilarity in our ſtyle.---Have I not already told you, that when two perſons of ſimilar---but I hate repetitions---your next letter will decide the point. If you chuſe to diſcontinue the correſpondence, I ſhall readily acquieſce: but pray do not give yourſelf the trouble of writing any more excuſes.

To *

MAY I venture to write at all? for now you are indeed ſeriouſly angry, and with reaſon. Forgive me this once, and I will endeavour to merit your forgiveneſs.

We have had ſeveral new plays this winter;---but I ſuppoſe you have read them all.---*Two* I know are publiſhed, *Zingis* and *Cyrus*, which laſt I ſaw a few nights ago, and was extremely well entertained.

You muſt allow me to confine my criticiſm entirely to the *performance*, which I thought remarkably happy.---Mrs. *Yates* was amazingly great; the part is quite in her caſt; ſhe was charmingly dreſſed, preſerved the idea of royalty

royalty through every ſcene, and in every different attitude *looked* a *Mandane.* Mr. *Powell* too pleaſed me exceedingly; his perſon was greatly favoured in a ſingular and very becoming dreſs; and I thought I diſcovered ſeveral new beauties in his action. He drew tears from me without ſpeaking a word, in that ſcene where his mother urges him to acknowledge himſelf her ſon; and he with infinite emotion declines the explanation. Theſe tears were all I ſhed. I am ſeldom much affected by pompous declamation or high-wrought paſſion; and the poet had well nigh forfeited my pity for *Mandane*, by painting her ſo ſavage in her revenge.

I was pleaſed with two circumſtances in the exhibition of this piece, which I

never

never remember to have ſeen before; one was, the ſtage being wholly covered with green cloth, which appeared quite proper, as the ſcene lies without doors; and prevented the abſurdity of bringing carpets to fall upon:—the other was, ſeeing Mrs. *Yates*, in a ſuppoſed agony of terror, fall motionleſs to the ground without aſſiſtance.—The audience in general applauded this manœuvre; and ſeemed ſenſible how much better an effect it had then her being caught by attendents, whoſe unmeaning faces would probably have ſpoiled the ſcene.

Enough at this time for the patience of my noble reader, who will now, I hope, ſign a free pardon for his reformed and penitent correſpondent.

To * *.

YOUR pardon is undoubtedly ſigned, ſealed, and delivered ;---but I cannot greatly admire the epithet you beſtow on me, and muſt beg leave to diſclaim it. It is not your noble reader, but your friend, your good friend, who returns thanks for your letter ; and was very well pleaſed with your criticiſm--- Come then, let us hear a little more of the matter. Let us know what you *are* affected by in dramatic repreſentation, if not by declamation or paſſion : alſo what ſpecies of theatrical entertainment you prefer to the reſt. Here is a large field, from which I expect a copious harveſt. Adieu!

Yours very ſincerely.

To *.

THE field may be large, and the harveſt great; yet the labourer may not have ſtrength to reap it. But this is not an apology; for I enter very cheerfully upon my taſk.

My theatrical taſte, then, (without farther preface) has undergone ſeveral revolutions. When I was about half my preſent age, I admired nothing but pantomime, and the agile tricks of Harlequin, though, at the ſame time, prompted by childiſh vanity, I affected to deſpiſe them. Soon after that period, my taſte really altered. *Romeo* and *Alexander* became my heroes. I was pleaſed with alternate ſighing and ſtorming; and the moſt extravagant ſcenes

of the moſt extravagant tragedies appeared to me the nobleſt and moſt delightful. Weaned from this folly, I took a ſtrong fancy to *muſical* pieces, on account of performing them on my own inſtruments; then aſcending, as I thought, a full ſcale in the climax of refinement, nothing would pleaſe me but the *Italian* opera: this, however, was a ſhort-liv'd paſſion; and was ſucceeded by a fondneſs of the hiſtorical drama, and thoſe plays that are uſually claſſed under the title of *genteel comedy*; and theſe, with a few exceptions, continue my favourite entertainments. Regarding the theatres as the mirror of human life, I prefer ſuch pieces as reflect in my notions the moſt agreeable repreſentations of it: from hence ariſes my admiration of Shakeſpeare. I have no

time

time to conſider how he ſtrains probability in his *events*, my attention is wholly engaged by the innumerable ſtrokes of truth and nature in his *characters*. How amiable, how intereſting are ſome of theſe! I am not going to write a panegyric on this immortal bard, but I ſhall for ever love and honour his memory, becauſe he is the only poet (that I know of) who has delineated to perfection the character of a *female friend*. Now, if to this ſome *manly* critic ſhould *wittily* object, that Shakeſpeare created many *imaginary beings*, I will readily allow *that*, becauſe it does not affect this character. We *wonder* at the fairies, at the witches, at Ariel, at Caliban, but do we wonder at *Celia?* No, ſhe is generally paſſed over with inattention, which alone is ſufficient to

prove that the character is not uncommon, at leaſt not *unnatural*; but it often proves more, it proves a ſlowneſs in diſcovering the beauties of this matchleſs writer.

Pray, pray, now, good lords of the creation, let us do juſtice to my favourite heroine: while David and Jonathan, Pylades and Oreſtes, Damon and Pythias, are ſo triumphantly held up on your ſide, let us at leaſt erect one ſtandard of friendſhip on our own, and inſcribe it with the names of Celia and Roſalind.

Conſider then, in the firſt place, the *ſituation* of theſe two friend.

"Roſalind, the old Duke's daughter, is not baniſhed with her father . . . for . . . the

. . . the new Duke's daughter, her cousin, so loves her, (being from their cradles bred together) that she would have followed her exile, or have died to stay behind her."

Observe too, that *Rosalind* carried the palm of beauty; she was "tall and fair," her cousin, "low and browner." "Thou art a fool;" says the Duke to Celia, "she robs thee of thy name; and thou wilt shew more bright, and seem more virtuous when she is gone."

And now let us recollect the conduct and sentiments of this magnanimous girl.

Cel. I pray thee, Rosalind, sweet my coz, be merry.

Ros. Dear Celia, I shew more mirth than I am mistress of; and would you I were yet merrier? Unless you can teach me how to forget a

baniſhed father, you muſt not expect me to remember any extraordinary pleaſure.

Cel. Herein I ſee thou lov'ſt me not with the full weight that I love thee. If my uncle, thy baniſhed father, had baniſhed *my* father, ſo *thou* hadſt been ſtill with me, I could have taught my love to take thy father for mine.

Roſ. Well, I will forget the condition of my own eſtate to rejoice in yours.

Cel. You know my father hath no child but I, nor none is like to have: and truly, when he dies, thou ſhalt be his heir; for what he hath taken away from thy father *per* force, I will render thee again in affection; by mine honour, I will;—and when I break that oath let me turn monſter: therefore, my ſweet Roſe, my dear Roſe, be merry.

I paſs over her generous interceſſion with the Duke, when his anger breaks out againſt Roſalind, and ſhall trouble you only with what immediately follows the ſentence of her baniſhment.

Cel. O,

Cel. O, my poor Rosalind? where wilt thou go?
I charge thee, be not thou more griev'd than I am.
Ros. I have more cause.
Cel. Thou hast not, Cousin;
Pr'y thee be cheerful; know'st thou not the Duke
Hath banish'd *me*, his daughter?
Ros. That he hath not.
Cel. No! hath not? Rosalind lacks then the love
Which teacheth *me* that thou and I are one.
Shall we be sunder'd? shall we part, sweet girl?
No;—let my father seek another heir.
Therefore, devise with me how we may fly,
Whither to go, and what to bear with us;
And do not seek to take your change upon you,
To bear your griefs yourself and leave me out:
For *by this heaven*, now at our sorrows pale,
Say what thou canst, I'll go along with thee.

The heroic generosity of this resolution, and the fortitude, constancy, and cheerfulness that attended the execution of it, made a very early impression on my mind; and from the time I remem-

ber any thing, I remember a particular esteem for the character of Celia. You will pardon, therefore, my prolixity in speaking of it, and will allow too, I fancy, that the play in general abounds with moral, poetical, dramatic, and sentimental beauties.

I have now had the honour to acquaint you at large with my theatrical opinions; for you gather from what I have said concerning this comedy, that I prefer the flow of conversation to the pomp of declamation; and am more interested, more affected, and consequently better pleased by one Shakespearian touch of nature and sentiment, than by all the most florid and impassioned speeches of other tragedians.

I have

I have *laughed* at the ſorrows of *Theodoſius* and the ravings of *Roxana*:—I have *wept* at the generoſity of old *Adam*, and the tenderneſs of *Miranda*.

How beautiful her addreſs to Ferdinand!

——————Alas now, pray you
Work not ſo hard;—Sit down and reſt yourſelf.

————If you'll ſit down,
I'll bear your logs the while.—Pray give me that,
I'll carry it to the pile.

I ſhall not apologiſe for the length of this ſcribble, neither am I fearful of your *thinking* it too long. Your *corrective* letter opened my eyes and my heart. I ſee that I have nothing to apprehend. I ſee plainly that the happineſs of your friendſhip awaits me; and I accept it with the utmoſt gratitude. My *friend*, my *good friend*, I bid you moſt reſpectfully Adieu.

To * *.

I CANNOT expreſs the ſatisfaction your letter gave me. I have been reading it ever ſince; and rejoice to diſcover in you that elegant *ſimplicity* of taſte which is my chief admiration. Your heart was rather tedious in expanding; but you ſay it *is* open, and you *accept* my friendſhip. Cheriſh, cultivate that friendſhip, and give me yours in return. Be aſſured that I ſhall prize it highly.—I will compare it to a benignant ſtar. My ſun of happineſs is ſet; and the ſhades of night cannot be very far diſtant; but your friendſhip, like a ſtar glimmering in the twilight, ſhall illumine and chear my penſive walk through the evening of life.

Adieu.

Adieu. I am coming to town. Do not write till you hear from me. I hope we ſhall meet oftener than we did laſt year. You do not live wholly at * * *? I want to ſee your place there. Perhaps I may not wait for an invitation. Adieu.

P. S. Is your *ſtandard* firm? or have you recollected that you were oppoſing fiction to truth? A word to the wiſe.—I ſhall not preſs the argument. Adieu.

To the ſame.

I OWE you a thouſand apologies for yeſterday's intruſion. Your *ſurpriſe* diſconcerted me ſo much, that I do not remember what excuſes I made. It was certainly very ridiculous . . . but finding you were at home and alone, hearing too (as I went up ſtairs) the ſound of a harpſichord, and your voice accompanying, I knew you muſt be at leiſure, and entered in that abrupt manner, for which I immediately blamed myſelf, and again aſk your pardon.

Accept my thanks too for a more obliging reception than was due to ſo rude a gueſt. I am charmed with your little villa, its decorations, its furniture, and

and its miſtreſs. The thoughts of them all together ſpoiled my dinner, and made me repent having declined your *half-invitation*. My curioſity is not ſatisfied; I don't know what garden you have: did I ſee the extent of it from the dreſſing-room window? Interrupted. Adieu. Pray give me a line *per return*.

To *.

IT was quite unneceſſary to take the trouble of *apologiſing* for your ſudden viſit. I dont know but in ſome reſpects it was better than otherwiſe, becauſe I ſhall not in future expect—You underſtand and pardon this freedom, aſcribing all to the right motive. Pardon too my not enlarging on the ſubject, for the polite Mrs. ***** (who gives me the honour of taking the air with her this morning) is waiting whilſt I write this. Adieu.

To * *.

WHERE are you, my good friend, and what are you about? I have been these three days in hourly expectation of a letter. Your last was only an apology for one: so cool, so concise; but I "ascribed it to the right motive," and thought you would write again. Let me beg that you *will* do so immediately. I hope my *visit* was not *any way* disagreeable or unserviceable to the cause I wished to promote.

To *.

I DELAY not one moment to affure you, with the utmoft fincerity, that the honour of your vifit was in the higheft degree welcome and agreeable; nor was it at all unferviceable to the caufe which, I *flatter* myfelf, you defigned it to promote. I only delayed writing till I fhould hear again from you, hoping you would give me a new fubject, and fpare me the neceffity of re-entreating your pardon for declining ..... I know not how to exprefs myfelf .... for declining the favour of your particular notice.—You acknowledged on Monday, that my objections to a perfonal intercourfe were not ill-founded; but I need not embarrafs myfelf

ſelf with arguments. I know you will have the goodneſs to acquieſce, and *in ſilence* too. We *ſhall* ſometimes ſee each other *by accident*. "C'eſt aſſez." Adieu. I ſubſcribe myſelf, with pride and pleaſure,

Your FRIEND.

To * *.

"I THANK you, I am not of many words, but I thank you†," and hope you will approve my laconic acknowledgment. I am happy that you have at length *ſubſcribed* yourſelf my Friend, becauſe I believe your veracity unqueſtionable, and have long been coveting your friendſhip. Nor will you be a loſer by the bargain: for this *bribe* will induce me to *acquieſce* with your preſent determination, "and in *ſilence* too." Ah, my dear Mrs. * *, you know very well who has the worſt end of the argument.

I am juſt at this inſtant in tolerable good humour with all the world; and

† Shakeſpeare.

having

having excluded the cares of it for one half hour, may possibly contradict the assertion I began with, and prove myself "of many words:" but these little contradictions are always forgiven in a letter. They abound particularly in love-letters, where an enamoured swain frequently laughs and cries, burns and freezes, lives and dies, in the same breath, while the tender nymph, in *her* epistles, hopes and fears, doubts and believes, rejects and accepts, with equal facility and consistence.

Let me tell you just now, before it escapes my memory, that I was mightily pleased this morning by a very trivial circumstance. It was in turning over a volume of Sterne's Sentimental Journey, (you have read it no doubt) where I was struck by the following passage:

---"I was

——"I was certain ſhe was of a better order of beings—a guarded franknefs with which ſhe gave me her hand, ſhewed, I thought, her good education and her good ſenſe; and as I led her on, I felt a pleaſurable ductility about her, which ſpread a calmneſs over all my ſpirits.—

"I had not yet ſeen her face—'twas not material---but when we got to the door ſhe withdrew her hand from acroſs her forehead——It was a face of about ſix-and-twenty (*not quite ſo much*) of a clear tranſparent brown, ſimply ſet off without rouge or powder---it was not *critically* handſome, but there was that in it which attached me much more to it---it was intereſting; I fancied it wore the characters of a widowed look, &c.

&c.

&c. &c.——but you did not know *Sterne*, you did not therefore ſit to him for this picture.

" Alas, poor Yorick! *I* knew him, Horatia." He was indeed "a fellow of infinite jeſt, of moſt excellent fancy." Pity that his genius was ſo tainted, ſo impure, the more pity, becauſe his works *will* be read. He ſtrews pearls in a ditch, and *obliges* his readers to dive for them. That ſingle ſtory of *Le Fevre*, if ſkilfully detached from the life of *Shandy*, would do immortal honour to his memory: but it is too firmly incorporated; and, like the embroidery on *Martin's coat*, muſt adhere to the main ſtuff, or be torn to rags †.

† Tale of a Tub.

Adieu.

Adieu. I have other letters to write. Let me hear from you to-morrow; and pray give me *your* opinion of this writer, with a lift of thofe chapters which you prefer to the reft in his Journey.

To *.

I WRITE this afternoon becauſe you deſired me, though I am in a very unſuitable diſpoſition, being extremely peeviſh, tired, and fatigued, by the perſecution of a viſit four hours long from Mr. ——. I believe you have heard of him. I had received your letter, and was ſitting down to anſwer it the very moment that he came in. I was under the neceſſity of aſking him to dine—but ſuch a dinner! "O gentle Jupiter, with what tedious homilies did he weary my ſpirits."—For you muſt know this coxcomb is not one of that briſk lively ſpecies, who engroſs *all* the converſation, (I can bear them well enough) but a grave, ſolemn one, who pauſes—and takes ſnuff—and aſks impertinent queſ-

tions—and divides and ſubdivides the ridiculous nothingneſs of his diſcourſe —and forgets the beginning of his ſtory, and wonders you cannot remember it—then pauſes—heſitates---recollects, and begins again, the important narrative of ſome family-connexion in the laſt century---or the true and ſurpriſing hiſtory of his travels through London and Weſtminſter.

He is but juſt gone, as I hope you will imagine, by my fretfulneſs not having ſubſided, but indeed I had cauſe to be angry, for he baniſhed a train of very agreeable ideas, which are now irrecoverably loſt.

I will therefore trouble you with no farther addition at preſent, than my thanks

thanks for your remarks on Sterne, and the complimental allusion, deferring till my next the catalogue of beauties in his Sentimental Journey.

To * *.

I HAVE heard of your coxcomb visitor, and see him very plainly in your description; but you need not have told me you were angry, for I could *read* that in the spirit and volubility of your expression. Nothing more voluble than a lady's anger.——Enough of this, I have something else to communicate. You must go to the play to-morrow. *Garrick performs.* Mrs. *** has places, and will send to you in the morning. ** is of the party. I shall drop in by accident. Do not refuse. You can have no objection; and I hope have no pre-engagement.

To the ſame.

I WAS aſtoniſhed this morning at hearing that you went away ſo early. I thought at leaſt you would have ſtaid dinner, and wanted to make excuſes for my *deſertion* laſt night. Shall I ſay it was on your account? a bad *compliment* indeed, but I really fancied you ſeemed under reſtraint. You were ſo very ſilent, and the reſt ſo very talkative, that in ſhort I grew tired; and after pleading engagement, could not decently return.

Let me hope for a line to-morrow. Were you well entertained? I thought Garrick as great as ever. Adieu.

To *.

YES, my Lord, I was extremely well entertained: but (pardon me for returning your *compliment*) was much happier after your departure; not merely on account of reſtraint, but had you not withdrawn, I had loſt one of the higheſt pleaſures a ſenſible mind can enjoy, which is, hearing the praiſes of thoſe it values. Some company that ſat near us, I don't know who they were, but the moment you left the box they began to ſpeak of you . . . and . . No . . . not one word ſhall I repeat. I remember your caution, and will ever "beware of flattery." Sufficient for me that I *heard* theſe praiſes: they were honeſt and judicious, doing infinite credit to thoſe who beſtowed them, and giving exquiſite pleaſure to your Friend.

To * *.

I THANK you very ſincerely for the generous intereſt you took in thoſe people's diſcourſe, and for the communication of it: not that either reflects ſo much honour upon me as upon your own heart; but I regard the firſt as a proof of friendſhip, and the latter as a mark of confidence; and again thank you heartily for both.

There was a little error in the beginning of your letter—but excuſable, conſidering how late we converſed--- I called at * yeſterday, and heard that you intended them a viſit on Monday. They expect you to ſtay all the week. I ſhall have the pleaſure of ſeeing you perhaps more than once, but not ſo often as I could wiſh. Adieu.

To *.

NOT having an opportunity (tho' I wiſhed and ſought for it) of ſpeaking to you alone at Mr. *'s, I am obliged to this method of acquainting you with a circumſtance on which I ſhall preſume to claim your friendly advice.

It was not (as you know) till very lately that I could *properly* eſtimate my own poſſeſſions of this world's goods. Small are theſe poſſeſſions, 'tis true; yet conſiderable enough to occaſion diſpute, for which, and other reaſons, I am making my *will*. It has employed me ſome time, for I cannot pleaſe myſelf in the diſpoſitions. I wiſh to leave

more

more to charitable uſes than *ſome people* would approve, whilſt *others* would perhaps be as well pleaſed with a ring as a legacy: now theſe laſt ought in juſtice to have the preference; and yet (but herein I diſcover great weakneſs) I am hurt by the idea of leaving *any one* diſſatisfied with my memory. I would alſo—but I ſhall encloſe papers, in which my reaſon for every thing will appear. Pray read them at your leiſure, and favour me with your free opinion, which ſhall be deciſive.

I fear you will think there is too much of *trifling circumſtance*. Be pleaſed to make ſome allowance for *ſex*, and then cenſure unſparingly whatever appears like vanity, ſingularity, or affectation.

I do

I do not apologize for troubling you on this particular occaſion; becauſe there is not a *diſintereſted* perſon on earth that I can conſult, excepting your . . . . ſelf.

To * *.

AT the firſt glance of your requeſt, recollecting your age and appearance, I was ſurpriſed, and ſhould have thought a marriage-ſettlement a more proper ſubject of advice; but you are perfectly right.

I ſhall not keep you long in ſuſpenſe for my opinion, having devoted this whole day to the peruſal and conſiderations of your papers, and am determined to approve myſelf an honeſt lawyer. I am charmed with ſome of your diſpoſitions, and hope it will be.... let me ſee.... juſt ſeventy-five years before they take effect. Adieu.

To *.

"WHAT thanks ſufficient, or what recompence equal, have I to render?

You do not require any—you forbid all acknowledgements. So be it then. The draught is executed; it was copied *verbatim*; it ſatisfied all my doubts, and will do me hereafter more credit than I deſerve.

Pray my ..... I beg your pardon, but pray have you forgot aſſigning me a taſk (ſome time ago) in the *Sentimental Journey?* I am now going to execute it, by telling you what parts of it I chiefly admire——

Firſt

Firſt then, the deſcription, and character, and hiſtory, and in ſhort, every ſyllable concerning Father Lorenzo. The Preface. The art of making love. The paſſage at page 85, beginning "I pity the man." The diſtribution of the eight ſous. The character of Le Fleur. The dead Aſs. The Bookſeller's Shop, and walk to the Rue de Guineygaude. The Starling. The Captive. Le Patiſſier. The Sword. La Dimanche. Maria. The Bourbonnois. The Supper, and the Grace.

Theſe are all the chapters I *throroughly* approve. There are others perhaps equally agreeable to other taſtes; and ſome I fancy that very few can admire. I have wondered ſometimes, as Mr. Sterne ſhone ſo much in the pathetic, that

that he never introduced the diſtreſs of a tender mind on a recent loſs by death. Perhaps he might intend it, and was prevented *by* death from increaſing that ſorrow which ſome tender mind might feel for *his* loſs. "Alas, poor Yorick!" What an expreſſive epitaph! He fairly appropriated it to himſelf. "There be no more ſuch *Yoricks*."

To * *.

I HAVE not had a leiſure moment ſince I ſaw you, or I ſhould not ſo long have delayed aſking your pardon for that unwelcome viſit. Hear the true ſtate of the caſe, and believe me when I *again* proteſt it was entirely accidental, and very far from my intention.

I told you where we had been, and upon what buſineſs. On paſſing your houſe, *** remarked it as a pretty box which he had never obſerved. Returning, he pulled the ſtring in order to take a nearer view; and declared it was in good taſte. The miſtreſs of it, ſaid I, ſmiling, is a particular friend of mine. That inſtant, on the carriage ſtopping,

ſtopping, you came to the window. There's the lady, I ſuppoſe, ſaid ***; a fine woman, an *elegant* woman, by —! Let us alight for a moment. Without waiting my anſwer, he opened the door himſelf; I followed him; you know the reſt; but as we did not trouble you with *much* of our company, I will depend on your forgiveneſs.

As for ***, he is enraptured with you. He aſked a thouſand queſtions; and even talked of making you another viſit; but I put him off this, and you need not fear it, for he ſails in a few days. I don't remember whether that was mentioned in our ſhort converſation, but you obſerved, I dare ſay, how *ſatisfied* he is with his new dignity. I want your opinion of him. You will give it me to-morrow. Adieu.

To *.

I SHALL not venture to give my opinion of any perſon at a time when I am diſpleaſed with them. You will excuſe me from that taſk. Your *friend* —is he your friend?—was ſo extraordinary civil as to make me another viſit this morning. Had I been aware of this honour, I would moſt certainly have declined it. I am loth to tell you how much it diſturbed me. More indeed than it ought . . . but his ſtrange introduction, his unpolite behaviour—I had rather he had owned his motive to be ill-bred curioſity—but "a deſire of rendering me ſervice."—He "did not know but I might have ſome commands abroad." Ridiculous!——We were ſitting in aukward ſilence when the *diligence* came with your letter. I

rang

rang to have it brought in; and detained the ſervant by a motion, as if I thought *** was going. Upon this he aroſe, and very impertinently offered to look at the *addreſſe*. I concealed it; and out of all patience at ſomething he *then* ſaid, told him I had the honour to wiſh him a good morning. He ſeemed ſurpriſed and diſpleaſed, but recollecting himſelf, made his compliments, and withdrew.

But how to account for this ſtrange behaviour;—and now that I have given you theſe particulars, it appears in a ſtill more diſagreeable light, and pains me exceedingly. I ſuppoſe he thought —I don't know what he thought——I believe you will ſcarcely be able to read this, it is ſo blotted by the tears which I cannot reſtrain . . . . . the tears of pride, anger, and vexation.

To * *.

THAT fellow's impertinent visit did not give you more pain than your recital of it gave me. I am extremely concerned that any inadvertence of mine should cost you a tear. I hope he did not presume ..... pardon me, I mean not to trouble *you* with inquiries; but of this be assured, that had your letter arrived a few hours sooner ..... yet 'tis no matter, he has left England, and may perhaps never return. Dry your eyes, therefore, and think no more of an event which, after all, is not worth a *serious* thought. Some ladies would have been very well pleased with such a visit, imputing it to their *irresistable* attractions. I will allow

allow *you* to be *dis*pleaſed; but I will not allow it a place in your memory.

You muſt not be offended at my aſſuming this high privilege of controlling your thoughts. I am authorized by the knowledge of your diſpoſition. Strange indeed, after three years ſtudy and obſervation on the book of your mind, if I could not tranſlate your ideas, in whatever language they are expreſſed, with tolerable preciſion.

An inſtance in point. Your *chapters* of *Sterne* were all previouſly marked by my pencil, as what I fancied you would prefer. To ſay truth, I had marked a *few more*, and think ſtill that you would have mentioned them, but for reaſons which I can *as* eaſily gueſs.

See

See what knowledge I pretend to! Expoſe me, if I am *but* a pretender; for there are too many of them in all arts and ſciences, not excepting this moſt difficult one of human nature.

Adieu. When and where ſhall I ſee you.

To *.

INTENDING myſelf the honour of ſeeing you very ſoon, I decline any particular anſwer to your laſt.

I muſt again have recourſe to that friendſhip of which you have given ſo many generous proofs; and beſeech your advice on a ſubject of ſome importance,

I intended to have decided for myſelf; but have not ſtrength of mind to determine which of two alternatives *is right*.

From your judgment I will make no appeal, though it ſhould be contrary to my wiſhes, nor will I be partial in the

the evidence. Vouchſafe to hear and decide this cauſe *to-morrow*, if poſſible. I ſhall wait on you about noon for that purpoſe, and if you are abroad or engaged, ſhall expect to *hear* when it will be more ſuitable.

A certain fortunate knight (we are told in the volumes of romance) had an infallible guide or director in a myſtical pyramid of adamant, on the ſides of which there appeared every morning engraven, by an inviſible agent, the actions he was to perform that day.

While I conſult you thus frequently and have the benefit of your advice, *your friendſhip* is to me that pyramid, that guide, that ſteady and infallible director.

To * *.

I HAVE nothing to communicate, and write only to enforce my advice, which I hope you will *ſtrictly* follow. I am aſtoniſhed, that you could heſitate a moment, for, notwithſtanding the acknowledged gentleneſs of your temper, I am certain you prize your independence.

Were parents *or* children in the caſe, it would be different, but in *your* circumſtances, good God, what a ridiculous propoſal!

Let no perſuaſions affect you, haſten your *tour*. That will ſhew them you are and will be your own miſtreſs. I

wiſh

wiſh you health and a pleaſant journey. Adieu! May your adamantine pyramid be an happy omen! May our friendſhip be as durable as permanent.

To *.

I HAVE had a very agreeable excurſion, and employ the firſt moments of my return in writing to my noble friend. What do I owe . . . what do I *not* owe to his counſel! I found, after aſſuming a little reſolution, that nothing *elſe* was wanting to ſatisfy all parties.

Here then I pitch my tent, and here I find almoſt every requiſite of happineſs. You remember theſe lines:

An elegant ſufficiency, content,
Retirement, rural quiet, *friendſhip*, books,
Eaſe, alternate labour, uſeful life,
Progreſſive virtue, and approving heav'n.

I enjoy moſt of theſe: let me practiſe, let me merit the reſt!

I hear

I hear that you left town on Wednesday: this letter therefore salutes you at *. That charming, that envied retreat, where I fancy you enjoy yourself infinitely better than in London. How many reasons are there for the preference! I might perhaps regard * with a partial, a prepossessed eye, for I have never yet seen a place I like half so well. I remember walking through its sacred groves with a conscious, an enthusiastic pleasure, that, had I been a favourite of the muses, would certainly have burst forth into the raptures of poesy.

I shall think myself happy (if it adds to your satisfaction) in the continuance of this intercourse by writing. The suspension, though so short, has con-

vinced me how much I am intereſted in the renewal. You may depend too, upon never being troubled again with ridiculous apologies and excuſes. You have cured me entirely of that fooliſh pride, which was hurt by correſponding with a fine writer. I am ſenſible that it would be difficult for you to *find* an *equal* correſpondent, and I acknowledge, with gratitude, your readineſs in ſtooping to thoſe who are unable to riſe to you. In fine, I have adopted your opinion, that familiar letters may, with propriety, be incorrect, or, in Mr. Pope's words, that "The Letters of Friends are not the worſe for being fit for none elſe to read;" and the certainty that none elſe *will* ever peruſe my letters, has made me perfectly eaſy in that reſpect.

Encloſed

Enclofed I have taken the liberty to fend a few trifling remarks made by way of journal, during our little tour. They will inform you how my time has been fpent, fince I had laft the honour of fubfcribing myfelf your moft obedient.

To * *.

YOU muſt indeed regard * with a partial eye if you prefer it to other places, when you are juſt come from ſeeing ſeveral finer. I thank you for your ingenious and entertaining remarks; and will return them, preſuming, by the different writings, that you have no copy.

And are you really ſo partial to *? Shall I put you to the teſt? Come, and pay it a viſit this ſummer. Here are ſome alterations on which I ſhould like your opinion. I expect Mr. and Mrs. * * *; and ſhall be glad if their company, or any other inducement, ſhould draw you hither. Conſider of

this

this invitation. Don't you think in your heart, that mankind would be happier, if they ſacrificed more to friendſhip and leſs to punctilio.

You ſuppoſe that I enjoy myſelf better here than in town. I *do* in many reſpects: but ſhall I own (it is without *repining*) I am not ſuperlatively happy any where. Once, indeed ....

Ah! happy hours, beyond recovery fled,
What ſhare I now that can your loſs repay!

I never arrive at this place without ſome ſuch thoughts as the above; and at times, in my ſolitary rambles, I find them ..... too deeply impreſſed on my memory. Even at this inſtant ..... but no more ..... You have an intelligent mind, and a feeling

heart: You will comprehend my meaning, and perhaps add one generous tear to thoſe which involuntarily drop from the eyes of your friend.

To *.

O the ſoft commerce! O the tender ties!
Cloſe twiſted with the fibres of the heart,
Which broke, break *them*, and make it pain to live!

I CANNOT tell you how many tears I ſhed over the moſt affecting lines that ever were written. I wept from ſympathy, from too keen a ſenſe of that ſorrow, which I hoped *you* had no longer felt. I thought *your* griefs had, by the ſlow and lenient hand of Time, been changed into a remembrance rather ſweet than painful,

Which ſooth'd with tend'reſt thought your aching breaſt,
And built delight on woe.———

I am concerned to find it otherwiſe, and am at preſent in ſo penſive a mood,

that I foresee this letter will be nothing but a string of melancholly reflections. My breast harbours more griefs than one, and it will be some relief, if you suffer me to confess, that I still mourn incessantly a loss to which the world believes me thoroughly reconciled, or rather that it must have been wholly absorbed in one more recent. How are they mistaken! I had two altars in my heart. The flame of conjugal affection never eclipsed that of the *filial*; nor was the extinction of it more painful. A number of alleviating circumstances . . . . . but this is not a subject to be dwelt on. I was only going to observe, that no calamity can more forcibly, more lastingly, affect a person of my disposition, than the sudden death of a friend by whom we

knew

knew that we were beloved. I have not been wholly exempt from other trials, and may therefore venture to form a judgment. The loſs of fortune, or indeed any diſaſter that affects one's ſelf alone, leaves many reſources. There is a moderation to be ſhewn which enables one calmly to bear the ſuffering, or a noble firmneſs which raiſes one above compaſſion. The natural *vanity* of the human heart will ſometimes conſole us in adverſity. Self-admiration is often a powerful comforter, but wholly ineffectual againſt the ſtroke which lays one who loved us in the duſt. We are then awed by humility. We call to mind the good qualities of the deceaſed, which "brighten as they take their flight:" *our own* ſhrink from the compariſon,

and we are ready to enquire why we ſhould be yet favoured with an exiſtence of which they are deprived. Again, though we put ſelfiſhneſs out of the queſtion, and the delight, never more to be known, which their friendſhip afforded, yet ſtill we find cauſes enough to juſtify unceaſing regret. In the words of an admired author, "We conſider, with afflictive anguiſh, the pain we may unthinkingly have given them, and now cannot alleviate; and the loſſes we may have cauſed, and now cannot repair. We recollect a thouſand endearments which before glided off our minds without impreſſion, a thouſand favours unrepaid, a thouſand duties unperformed, and wiſh, vainly wiſh for their return, not ſo

much

much that we may receive, as that we may beſtow happineſs, and recompenſe that kindneſs which before we never underſtood."

If we add to this the reflection, that they were ſummoned from a ſtate of being in which they were uſeful, and in which they would gladly have continued longer, it increaſes our trouble to its higheſt degree, ſince almoſt every event, and even the moſt pleaſing events, may revive their idea, with all the bitterneſs of compaſſionate grief. The various charms of nature which *they* no more muſt behold, ſeem to loſe their luſtre; and every enjoyment, becauſe *they* cannot partake it, appears inſipid.

In

In ſhort, I believe it very poſſible for one to become ſuch a prey to ſorrow, as to think it wrong to ſeek conſolation. This however is not *my* caſe. I have juſt been-*ſeeking* conſolation. Pardon me; for it has been at your expence!

To * *.

Something too much of this.

I SHALL not re-peruſe you letter, and am ſorry that I gave you occaſion to write it. How came you by ſo much more ſenſibility than is neceſſary to your happineſs? You are a young woman, and, in all probability, may reckon upon many years of life. It is not for *you* to talk of "unceaſing regrets," nor to indulge a habit of melancholly that cannot be ſhaken off. You muſt look *forward*. I will venture to prognoſticate that there are many happy days in ſtore for you, many bright hours in reſerve. Beware how you *wilfully* obſcure them by unavailing ſorrow.

If

If your vanity bore any proportion to your attractions, I ſhould repreſent to you, that a melancholly air adds not to *your* charms but rather eclipſes them. I would ſay to you, (with *Malvolio*) "Thy ſmiles become thee; therefore, in my preſence, ſmile always, dear now my ſweet, I pr'ythee." This is not pleaſantry, for you really look infinitely handſomer for cheerfulneſs, and when earneſtly talking, or attentively liſtening, your face . . . illuminated with ſmiles . . . . but I will not flatter; *too* often have I ſeen this ſun-ſhine unſeaſonably overcaſt by the cloud of thoughtfulneſs.

Let me hear from you ſoon, and in a more ſprightly ſtrain. Adieu.

To *.

I OBEY your obliging command of writing *ſoon*, but as it is not juſt now in my power to aſſume a *ſprightly ſtrain*, this will be a very ſhort treſpaſs on your patience.

I mean only to apologize for my neglect in not having acknowledged the honour of your invitation to *. There is no reaſon why I ſhould be inſenſible of that favour, though, alas! there is, at the ſame time, *no reaſon why I ſhould accept it.*

Another apology occurs to me this moment (which I intended making before your prohibition of them); it is for

for the frequent uſe of quotation. I am very apt to expreſs myſelf in other people's words, merely becauſe they occur more readily, and ſeem better than my own. I wiſh to know your opinion on this head; 'tis not enough that you occaſionally *practiſe* quotation; the queſtion is, whether you allow it in a general, an unlimited degree to your correſpondent.

To * *.

I ALLOW to my fair correſpondent not only the free uſe of quotation, (which, in familiar writing requires no apology) but every advantage, every indulgence ſhe can deviſe; and all too little for the ſatisfaction her correſpondence affords.

Your letter which came yeſterday awakened me from a very pleaſing meditation on the riſe, progreſs, and preſent ſtate of *our* friendſhip, in which I had concluded it was eſtabliſhed on ſo ſolid a baſis, that neither time or chance (one accident excepted) could ever deſtroy it; and thus I argued the matter:

Friendſhip

Friendſhip between two perſons of the ſame ſex, though extremely eaſy to be formed, is liable to diſſolution by a thouſand accidents, from which ours is ſecure. Sometimes a difference in taſte, ſometimes too great a ſimilarity, ſometimes intereſt, and ſometimes love, will unite the ſacred knot. Friendſhip between thoſe of differing ſex, is harder to form and to preſerve. Put conſanguinity out of the queſtion, and where will you find your friends? Single or married, old or young, if they are of equal age, their ſentiment is not friendſhip .... it is either *too cold*, or *too hot*. Again, if their age differs conſiderably, their taſtes will, in general, be too oppoſite. Will a young man ſeek for *animated pleaſure* in matronly converſation? Can a matron

tron be *ſuppoſed* to reliſh the wild ſallies of youth? The very idea of ſuch a connexion is ridiculous; but if adopted in ſome degree, only the *ſex* of the parties exchanged, I hope it will not appear ſo.

Let us ſuppoſe that on the ground of long acquaintance, a ſtrict and more particular friendſhip is formed, between an old man tolerably free from the vices of *his* age, and a young lady ſtill freer from the foibles of *hers*. We ought to ſuppoſe, that they are both diſengaged from the conjugal tie, and their ſentiments ſhould be pretty much alike upon all ſubjects. We will allow the lady to *fancy herſelf* in ſome reſpects the inferior, particulary in learning

ing or knowledge; becauſe that ſuppoſition, adding weight to the experience of a friend, will produce truſt, counſel, and reciprocal confidence, all which are a powerful cement to friendſhip: and we may ſuppoſe alſo, that ſhe is enabled to diſcloſe her thoughts freely upon all ſubjects, without the leaſt impropriety; *he* being, from the very nature of things, abſolutely diſintereſted in her regard, and incapable of any other ſentiment than a lively generous eſteem, which can never diſturb the repoſe of either.

And now, pray what is your opinion of ſuch a connection? Is it not well formed for *duration?* Yea verily, and the rather for its being of a gentle and placid kind, forming, as ſomebody has

ſaid

ſaid, " no higher expectations than human nature can anſwer," and conſequently free from the diſquiets and jealouſies which too often extinguiſh *violent* friendſhips and romantic love.

I had not half done with my ſubject, but am very unexpectedly interrupted, and as unexpectedly coming ſuddenly to town. I think to ſee Mrs. *** on Friday afternoon..... Need I ſay more? .... I can have no other opportunity of ſeeing you. Adieu.

To the ſame.

I CANNOT reſtore your letter of this morning, for I put it into the fire the moment I had read it; being loath to *remember* that *your* pen had ever given me diſturbance.

Think not that I condemn your *motive* for writing. Friendſhip will ſometimes be officious: pardon this expreſſion. I ſaw that you were concerned for me laſt night, but as the occaſion (though too well known) did not eſcape my lips, it is more remarkable, pardon me again, that you ſhould trouble yourſelf to ſo little purpoſe.

There

There are ſome kinds of ſorrow that will not admit of conſolation. To one who has received a wound that he knows to be incurable, (unleſs the *ſovereign phyſician* ſhould pour in the wine and the oil) how troubleſome are the applications of empirics, and how impatiently does he liſten to their preſcriptions! Pardon me yet again for this alluſion; but indeed, my good friend, you are not qualified .... You remember what *Conſtance* ſays:

He ſpeaks to me that never *had* ....

Experience alone can qualify .... but I deſire not any of my friends to be ſo qualified. NO. God is my witneſs, I do not wiſh even the party in queſtion to know by *experience*.

How ſharper than a ſerpent's tooth . . . .
. . . . . impoſſible to proceed . . . .

As for your all uſion to the parable . . . . . but I cannot ſay any thing about it.

You imagine, perhaps, that this particular inſtance . . . . I cannot write . . . . . why, why did you give me the occaſion!

Two o'clock.

What a wretch am I! how fortunate that I did not ſend away the above till I had recovered my ſenſes! It is but this moment I recollect having deſired (as I led you down ſtairs) that you *would* write; that you *would* "miniſter to a mind diſeaſed."

Pardon

Pardon me now, once for all, my moſt amiable friend. I will not keep back my letter. I know you have magnanimity enough to excuſe and pity me. Beſides, I have an unhappy *additional* cauſe . . . .

With the ſtricteſt the moſt jealous ſecreſy have I hitherto preſerved *this* hoard of ſorrow; but I am now almoſt tempted to pour it, without reſerve, into your friendly boſom, and ſeek the long loſt charm of ſympathy. I know not what to reſolve . . . . I will meet *Diſpatch* in his return, and if he tells me you are alone, I drink tea with you. But do not lead to the ſubject, I conjure you. Let the impulſe of the moment determine whether it ſhall *ever* be diſcloſed. Adieu.

To the ſame.

HOW unreaſonable is your friend! He expected to ſee you but once, he has already ſeen you twice, and is now pining with regret becauſe he cannot have a third interview. But what is this urgent buſineſs that ſends you galloping away, and in a ſtage-coach too, of all vehicles, at the very inſtant when we ought to have met? I muſt ſet off myſelf to-morrow.... I wiſh I could but contrive... and why not? ... Enough... don't be ſurpriſed.

"*I'll meet thee at Philippi.*"

To *.

I AM returned already, much ſooner indeed than I expected: but what am I to ſay to my *humble friend!* You do not expect an acknowledgment? I ſuppoſe there hardly ever was ſuch an inſtance of .... I don't know what ... and yet believe me, I was more pained than obliged; but I hope you ſuffered no inconvenience.

The *woman* unfoled herſelf at laſt. She keeps a ſhop at L. in W. and the *man*, as *ſhe* told me, has a place in the navy-office. I wonder what .... but as Hamlet ſays, "There is no wonder; or elſe all is wonder."

I expect the honour of a line from you very ſoon, and ſhall be happy to hear that you are in perfect health.

To * *.

BE happy; for you have the honour to hear that I am in perfect health.

Seriouſly, I am tolerably well; I got here in very good time, and moreover I have loſt the cough, which was ſo judiciouſly pronounced to be *a troubleſome companion.*

You ſay nothing of your own health, but I flatter myſelf you are well. Your conſtitution, though delicate, ſeems naturally good. Be careful to cheriſh a bleſſing, without which you can reliſh no other.

I have frequently wiſhed, and more within theſe few days than ever, (excuſe

cuſe this abrupt introduction) that you could *conveniently* make ſome little alteration in your manner of living, and appear more in the world. You know my reaſons for this wiſh. Let me once again urge them to your conſideration. Recollect alſo, what Mrs. *** ſaid to you concerning the "folly, ſin, and danger of being righteous overmuch." It was once hinted to me, but not by *her*, nor do I inquire into the truth of it, that your annual expence in *charity* would keep you a *carriage*.

Now I think . . . . but you know my thoughts already. A little more eclat, a little more folly and impertinence, a great deal more freedom and ſatisfaction.

Adieu.

To *. -

HAVING nothing at preſent worth communicating to my noble friend, I ſhall only deſire he will not credit an idle report, and then ſubmit to his peruſal

A FABLE.

Once upon a time a poor widowed linnet (who unfortunately loſt her mate in the barbarous *ſhooting-ſeaſon*, and who was not inclined to ſeek another) found great difficulty in keeping the poſſeſſion of her own ſolitary neſt. She had moreover the ill-fortune to be entangled unawares in a *net*, which proved moſtly fatal to birds of her ſize; for the ſmaller ones often crept through the meſhes, while thoſe of ſuperior ſize and ſtrength could

could break the net and eſcape. In this diſtreſs ſhe applied to an eagle, that dwelt in the *foreſt* adjacent, by whom ſhe was ſlightly known. This generous bird readily gave his aſſiſtance towards extricating her from the *net*, and afterwards continued to ſhew her great countenance and favour. Being unuſed to the converſation of linnets, he thought her rather more cleaver than the generality of that ſpecies, and even imagined that ſhe might prove an agreeable acquaintance.

Every one that knows any thing of natural hiſtory knows that birds, like the human race, have many different degrees or claſſes of rank and precedence. The eagle, regardleſs of this, continued to viſit the linnet, and in

proceſs of time, deſirous of more *frequent interviews*, became urgent with her to remove into his neighbourhood, among the birds of diſtinction, alleging that ſhe was *extremely well qualified* to figure in a higher ſphere. The linnet knew better, but at length, with infinite reluctance, ſhe yielded to over-perſuaſion, and forſaking her peaceful thicket, was introduced by the eagle to the beau-monde of the feathered creation.

The novelty of the ſcene engaged a little attention at firſt; but ſoon, too ſoon, the grand miſtake became viſible. The linnet *was not qualified*. She could not ſing like the blackbird, ſhe could not diſplay the rich plumage of the goldfinch, ſhe could not converſe with the deep-learned falcon, nor join in the muſic of the nightingale.

A thou-

A thouſand beaks were now opened againſt her, a thouſand reaſons given for her ſudden attempt at *politeſſe*, and all equally unfavourable. She could ſee the eagle, 'tis true, every day, but that was no comfort, for every day brought new proofs that ſhe was no companion for *him*. He wiſhed her a hundred times at that diſtance, in which alone her merit appeared conſpicuous; but the removal was not without its difficulties. The birds whoſe ſociety ſhe had left were now equally prejudiced againſt her, and ſhe had neither ſpirit nor intereſt to make new friends. Alas for the poor linnet: diſregarded by one party, diſowned by the other, ſhe expired with mere ſhame and vexation; acquitting her benefactor, and condemning only her own folly!

To * *.

I AM delighted with your Fable; there is a ſingular, a very *ſtriking* ingenuity in the conſtruction of it; but like other pieces of *ancient* writing, (for you know birds have not ſpoke for ſome ages) it is liable to divers readings, at the pleaſure of different critics. I could propoſe two emendations, one reſpecting the *eagle* as you call it, but which according to *Le Pere* and *La Mere*, never claſſed ſo high, and, in fine, was but a *blackbird*; and if you conſult that venerable and deciſive critic, Father *Time*, you will find him give a different *cataſtrophe* to the fable; making the blackbird to die firſt, and to reproach the linnet with *not having accepted*

cepted his propoſal, and rendered more happy that ſhort time which his advanced age would allow him to expect in the foreſt of life. I ſhall not however attempt to influence *your* judgment by theſe remarks. Continue to read your fable juſt as you pleaſe.

But it will not be amiſs to aſſure you that I deſire not a more frequent entercourſe *merely* through ſelfiſhneſs. I am vain enough to imagine that I could occaſionally add to *your* ſatisfaction; for you have often very politely expreſſed pleaſure in my company, and ſeemed amuſed by the anecdotes which my acquaintance with former times enabled me to communicate. But I will not urge this matter farther, nor ever deſire you to do any thing irreconcilable with your own judgment. Adieu.

To *.

YOU are infinitely obliging to drop a ſubject on which I ſhould be at a loſs to ſay more. It is very certain that your converſation would at all times contribute to my improvement and happineſs; and yet .... but what would I ſay ... we have diſmiſſed the ſubject.

I am not however provided with another; and muſt conſider a little before I can determine upon what ſpecies of nothingneſs to trouble you with.

Pray have you read *Emily Montague?* an important queſtion, no doubt;—but I aſk it only with a view to obtain your opinion of Mrs. *Brooke*'s writings in *general.* I cheriſh a kind of vanity (and

hope

hope it is not inexcuſable) with regard to the merit of my own ſex; and feel gratified by every ſucceſsful effort of female genius. You will laugh at my carrying this chimerical pride ſo far; but I actually *triumph* in the notion that the ſtate of literature in England was never more flouriſhing than in the reigns of *Elizabeth* and *Anne*.

I am not equally partial to the productions of modern writers of the other ſex; and have ſometimes wondered to hear *you* ſo liberal in their commendations. But one reaſon is, I am too apt to compare them with their immediate predeceſſors, many of whom, beheld at this favourable diſtance, and advantaged by *your* accounts of them, ſeem to me above all compariſon or imitation.

And

And pray, having mentioned comparison, let me ask whether we have not at present, *comparatively* speaking, *almost* as many good authors of the one sex as of the other. *Brooke*, *Griffith*, *Macaulay*, *Carter*, *Montague*, *&c. &c.* The characters of the two last have been long established with me, because they have received the honourable stamp of *your* approbation. Upon the whole, do we not stand some chance of sharing your laurels?

To * *.

YES, I have read *Emily Montague*, and with a great deal of pleasure. Mrs. *Brooke* is a most ingenious woman. Her works are disgraced by the common appellation of novels. They are amiable and interesting pictures of life and manners, not absolutely perfect in resemblance, but sketched by the pencil of benevolence, and tinged with the delicate colouring of refined sentiment. Her descriptions of *Canada* in this work would do honour to an historian. She transports our imagination thither. We listen enraptured to the falls of *Montmorenci*.

Without answering your *comparative* question, I will allow that the ladies

you

you name, and a few others, ſeem likely enough to crop *ſome* of our laurels. I wiſh them all proper encouragement; but your ſex is ſufficiently formidable without the aid of letters; and the conſequence might be dangerous if you encroached *too far* upon our province.

You ſpeak of Mrs. *Macaulay*. She is a kind of prodigy. I revere her abilities. I cannot bear to hear her name *ſarcaſtically* mentioned. I would have her taſte the exalted pleaſure of univerſal applauſe. I would have ſtatues erected to her memory; and once in every age I would wiſh ſuch a woman to appear, as a proof that genius is not confined to ſex . . . but . . . at the ſame time . . . you'll pardon me, we want no more than *one* Mrs. *Macaulay*.

I do

I do not apologize to *you*, my fair friend, for this expreſſion. It detracts nothing from female merit, and you muſt allow that, generally ſpeaking, each ſex appears to moſt advantage in the ſphere particularly aſſigned it by Providence.

For contemplation he, and valour form'd,
For ſoftneſs ſhe, and ſweet attractive grace.

I come now to another part of your letter, and muſt tell you, that I am not yet ſo much of *an Old Man* as to refuſe praiſe to all modern productions. We have authors now living whoſe works will ſurvive them, and receive from the next age the applauſe which they ſolicit in vain from the preſent. That favourable diſtance you ſpeak of, and the dark veil of death caſt over natural imperfections, are wonderful ſofteners of criticiſm,

ticiſm, eſpecially towards the productions of real genius, which can never diminiſh in value.

Shakeſpeare is the moſt ſtriking inſtance of this truth. How gradual his progreſs from neglect to admiration, to reverence, almoſt to idolatry! But in truth, (though no writer could *deſerve* more) he owes moſt of his fame to the ſingular advantage of *a practical commentator*, and muſt certainly be content to divide *his* laurels with *Garrick*.

I have written enough at this time, or I would mention ſome of our modern writers whoſe works I like beſt, and their ſeveral merits. I *ſhall* mention one, though at the riſk of offending you, by remarking the capriciouſneſs of your ſex.

ſex. 'Tis the author of *Sermons to Young Women.* You are indebted to this gentleman for two volumes of more elegant inſtruction than has appeared ſince the days of *Addiſon.* He has held up to you a mirrour ingeniouſly conſtructed and exquiſitely poliſhed, in which you may behold every feature of your minds, and improve them to the ſtandard of perfection. At the firſt publication of theſe ſermons, recommended by novelty and the faſhion, I met them in every houſe; I ſaw them upon every toilette. But where are they *now*; and how fell they into diſgrace? Alas, they have been publiſhed more than two years; they are become *antique*; they are loſt, neglected, or forgot.

My letter is unreaſonably long, but, ſpeaking of modern merit, I cannot forbear

forbear telling you (though you will hear it ſooner perhaps by the newspaper) that *Powell* the player is dead. He will be very much lamented. A good actor is more generally miſſed than a good writer. I muſt own that I feel extremely concerned for his loſs. We can hardly forbear intereſting ourſelves about thoſe whoſe talents are publicly exhibited for our entertainment; while we are too often wholly indifferent to the more amiable characters of private life. Thouſands, like me, will acknowledge that they "could have better ſpared a better man;" and they ought as freely to acknowledge the ſelfiſhneſs of their motive. Poor Powell! He was rather a *pleaſing* than a *great* actor; but he had not reached the ſummit. That Theatre ſuffers greatly. Your favourite, Mrs. *Arne*, was an irreparable

loſs

loſs to it. I ſhall never loſe the idea of that ſweet little girl in ſome particular characters . . . characters ſo well adapted to *her*, that I ſhould not have patience to ſee any body elſe *attempt* to play them.

And *you* will not have patience with *me* if I write ſuch long letters; ſo adieu.

To *.

YOUR reflection on Mr. Powell's death, reminding me very forcibly of the brevity and uncertainty of human life, brought on that penſive frame of mind which I am but too apt to indulge, wherein every amuſement and purſuit of this tranſitory ſtate appears beneath the regard of a rational being. I ſay *too* apt to indulge, becauſe a *conſtant remembrance* of theſe things might unfit us for the common offices of life, and detach us wholly from ſociety.

Who that conſiders the unſteadineſs of the ſoul and the frailty of the body, with the relation each bears to the other, that when the latter is afflicted by pain

or

or ſickneſs, the former is often a prey to fear and doubt; or that while the body appears ſound and healthy, the ſoul may make an *unprepared* exit; who that deeply conſiders theſe things can avoid melancholly? Who, again, (ſays the moraliſt) "that conſiders the limited ſpace of our exiſtence, in compariſon with eternity, but muſt behold with contempt the buſtle that is made about paſſing this ſhort period, and the various aims and ambitions that are crowded into it?" Our whole extent of being (continues he) is no more in the eye of *him* who gave it, than a ſcarce perceptible moment of duaation; and this reflection alone is ſufficient to deſtroy our attachment to the world, to render its grandeurs contemptible, and to make one remain ſtupified in a poiſe

of inaction, void of all designs, of all desires, of all friendships.

It is well therefore for mankind that they do not long retain these ideas, that their passions flow in and destroy their philosophy .... but whither am I running, and why do I thus tire you with trite and unconnected observations? I will put an end to them and to my letter, for I know not how to enter upon any other subject: your literary remarks would in a more cheerful hour have suggested many; but I can at present only return my acknowledgments for them.

It occurs to me just now, that I never transcribed that speech from *Zingis* which you requested when I was commending it;

it; perhaps you have ſeen it ere now; but my time is of little conſequence; and it will help to fill up the paper.

Oviſa contemplating the death of her Brother.

If e'er the ſpirit of a warrior ſlain
Journey'd in ſtorms acroſs the troubled ſky,
Laſt night my brother *Zangon* paſs'd this place,
And call'd *Oviſa* home. The voice was deep
As when high *Arcl*, ſhaking all his woods,
Speaks to the paſſing thunder. Through my ſoul
A pleaſing horror ran— . . . Perhaps not long
Oviſa tarries here— . . . The ſilent tomb
Is not the houſe of ſorrow.——Airy form
Of him who is no more! Where doſt thou dwell?
Rejoiceſt thou on golden ſkirted clouds?
Or is thy murmur in the hollow wind?
Where'er thou art, mine ear with awful joy
Shall liſten to thy voice!—Deſcend with night,
If thou muſt ſhun the day. O ſtray not far
From the remains of *Aunac*'s failing line!

I fancy you will diſcover a great deal of *poetical* merit in this paſſage, and allow that it unites the ſublime and beautiful.

To * *.

WITHOUT waiting your anſwer to my laſt, I write to congratulate you on your approaching nuptials. Mrs. *, who came hither laſt night, informs me that you are on the point of marriage with Mr. ****. I was *aſtoniſhed*; not at the event, for it is more ſurpriſing that you ſhould remain three years a widow; but I rather expected that you would have acquainted .... that is, I did not immediately conſider how chary the ladies are of their love-ſecrets; and indeed I had no right to expect ſo much confidence, therefore I beg you will not apologize on that account.

Mrs. * ſays, you were at firſt averſe to the propoſal; but the perſuaſion of

your friends, and the *amiable character* of your lover, has left no doubt of its ſucceſs; in fine, that Mr. **** had told *her*, laſt week, that he would never relinquiſh his pretenſions.

Strange indeed, if ſuch gallant perſeverance did not carry its point. I muſt not venture to write again, leſt I ſhould excite his jealouſy, and be miſtaken for a rival. But by his good leave, I will juſt call when I come to town with my verbal compliments.

I ſuppoſe I ſhall hardly know you again. Adieu now to grey luſtrings and plain linen! Welcome lace, jewels, and brocade! I muſt own I am impatient to ſee this briſk youth, who has thus opportunely

Step'd

Step'd in with his receipt for making ſmiles,
And blanching ſables into bridal bloom.

I hear he has a good eſtate, and is "very much of the gentleman" There was no doubt of your making a good choice. I have only to repeat my congratulations, and wiſh you all poſſible happineſs, being very ſincerely

Your Friend and humble Servant.

I only wait the receipt of your next letter to return . . . . it is this moment put into my hands

---

I have read it attentively; but diſcover no confirmation of the news. Let me now ſee what I have been ſaying to you on the ſuppoſition.——

How petulant! but I will not ſuppreſs it. After all, I *am* a little hurt by your want of confidence. Yet perhaps it is not true . . . it ſeems unlikely . . . you would not have wrote in ſo grave a ſtyle . . . Tell me . . . but be ingenuous . . . Tell me the whole affair . . . . It will not diſturb *me* . . . . why ſhould it . . . I make myſelf ridiculous . . . Pray do not keep me in ſuſpence. Adieu.

To *.

UPON what circumſtances Mrs. * founded her intelligence I cannot poſſibly imagine, nor how ſhe came to know ſo much more of this affair than myſelf. Had I deliberated a ſingle moment on Mr. ****'s propoſal, I ſhould certainly have mentioned it to your Lordſhip; and as it was, intended it, the firſt time I had the honour of ſeeing you.

I don't know what he might ſay to Mrs. * laſt week, but this week, at my houſe when I *repeated* a poſitive refuſal of his ſuit, he acquieſced in it like a man of ſenſe and a gentleman, commending my plain dealing, and pro-

miſing never to renew a ſolicitation that he ſaw was diſagreeable.

He ſet off yeſterday for M—p—r with his ſiſter, Lady **, who is ordered thither for the recovery of her health.

I have never ſeen him above half a dozen times; and am ſorry even for theſe interviews, ſince they have produced ſuch an unpleaſing conſequence. I am *hurt* beyond meaſure by your letter.... The manner of expreſſion... The ſuppoſition of my concealing ſuch intelligence.... or that I could liſten to offers of marriage. How little are my ſentiments known to one whom I thought perfectly acquainted with them! Married! and *you* to give credit.—*Married!* I ſhould *indeed*

—be

———be dull of heart,
Taſteleſs and groſs as earth, to think with patience,
Without abhorrence, of a ſecond Hymen!"

I have never, 'tis true, made any formal declaration againſt marriage, but on *this occaſion* it becomes me to ſay, that the man lives not upon earth whoſe name I WOULD accept in exchange for that with which I have the honour to ſubſcribe myſelf your Lordſhip's moſt obliged and obedient humble Servant,

*.... **.

To * *.

CUPID and *Death*, ſays the fabuliſt, happening to ſleep at one time in the ſame retreat, their *arrows*, being ſcattered on the floor, became intermingled; and each, by miſtake, took ſome of the other's. Hence the occaſional mortality of *young* perſons, and the dotage of *old* ones.

I was fearful, t'other day, that the grim king of terrors, intending to cut my frail thread of exiſtence, had only wounded me with a ſhaft of *Cupid*'s: ſuch uneaſy ſenſations did the thoughts of your marriage occaſion; but I was miſtaken, and am glad to diſcover, that my uneaſineſs aroſe ſolely from your ſuppoſed want of confidence.

You

You now, I think, ſeem to harbour *my* opinion of ſecond marriages, but with leſs reaſon. *You* might chance to marry happily, and I beg you, my dear child, to believe, that ſuch a circumſtance would give me infinite pleaſure; that is, if you conſulted me on it, and let me buſy myſelf about your ſettlements, &c.

After all, I fear there is a little diſſimulation; and why ſhould I diſſemble? . . . Adieu for the preſent; I am going to walk . . . . and to *conſider*.

———

I have been re-peruſing your letter, my fair friend, under the ſhade of a ſpreading oak, and there came to a reſolution of entruſting you with my real ſentiments concerning it.

You

You have *voluntarily* disclaimed all thoughts of changing your condition, and I hope, therefore, that it is no breach of friendship or delicacy to say, that *I rejoice at it.*

You must not, however, inquire too strictly after my *reasons* for saying so; they are scarcely known to myself: for what so deceitful as the heart?

The late Mr. * *, (of whom you must undoubtedly have heard) upon a young lady's refusing his addresses thro' favour of another, (who yet, for prudential reasons, was not much encouraged) presented her with a handsome portion to enable her to marry that other. So at least goes the story, and I am ready enough to believe it, fancying

cying that I could have acted juſt in the ſame manner. What greater conſolation to a diſappointed lover, than to render happy the object of his love, and awaken in her ſoul a tender and lively gratitude. And it might have gone farther; for had the lady's notions of honour borne any *reſemblance* to thoſe of Prince Prettyman in the Rehearſal, ſhe would certainly have broke with the favoured lover, and married Mr. * *.

If you ſhould aſk me now, why I have mentioned this anecdote, I ſhould be puzzled to anſwer you, for it bears no reſemblance to the affair in queſtion. Perhaps it was to obſerve, that the circumſtances being wholly different, I could not have made any merit

to

to myſelf, nor received any recompenſe for the advantages I ſhould have loſt by your marriage. Do you aſk, what are theſe advantages? Your correſpondence; this familiar intercourſe, from which I derive a thouſand innocent pleaſures, and *that* place in your eſteem which I would fain *flatter* myſelf I poſſeſs, and which it is my *ambition* to preſerve.

You will not miſinterpret what I have now written. I mean not to ſhackle your affections or vitiate your opinions. I deſpiſe the ridiculous doctrine of Platonic love, and would no more be a Platoniſt than a libertine. All I contend for is the preference in friendſhip. You will allow there is ſometimes a difference even in the *na-*

ture

ture of the ſentiment. That which attaches me to you could not perhaps be eaſily defined: nor is a definition neceſſary. You may return it exactly in kind, without bewildering your fancy or endangering your peace.

Adieu. I pardon the formality of your ſubſcription, having (very probably) given the example . . . and I would apologize for the *ſtyle* . . . "*the manner of expreſſion*" in my laſt . . . but . . . how can I be vain enough to imagine that it diſturbed you!

To *.

HAVING company who will prevent my writing by the Diligence to morrow, I take the liberty of returning by Dispatch my sincere but hasty thanks for your most obliging favour.

I am flattered extremely by your generous professions of regard, and equally delighted with your approbation of my conduct, or more properly speaking, with your acquitting me from the change of levity in sentiment.

It will ever be *my* "ambition" to deserve *your* good opinion; having long adopted this maxim of an indisputable judge, that "*The thoughts of wise men are the true measures of glory.*"

To * *.

I AM to thank you for a piece of flattery ſo very delicate, that I could not avoid reading it with pride and pleaſure. Theſe little elegant compliments, "where more is meant than meets the ear," are, of all others, moſt inſinuating. I never expected that ſentence to be ſo applied.

But do you know that I am coming to town again? You will know it very ſoon; for I ſhall make you one of my firſt viſits, and to ſave the trouble of *introducing* the ſubject, will acquaint you before-hand with my principal errand. I am under the neceſſity of altering ſome diſpoſitions of my effects,

and

and intending to bequeath you a ſmall token of my ſincere regard, I would chuſe to do it in the manner moſt agreeable to yourſelf. Nor let your delicacy be hurt by the idea of this legacy. Remember you will not receive it till a time when the *diſintereſtedneſs* of the motive will appear; but as Heaven only knows how near that time may be, it behoves me not to delay my intention. Adieu.

To the ſame.

"THE firſt wrote, wine is the ſtrongeſt; the ſecond wrote, the king is ſtrongeſt; the third wrote, women are ſtrongeſt."——

The third was in the right: neither wine or the King would have been ſtrong enough to have altered my reſolution, but I ſubmit to my *female* conqueror.

Yet obſerve that in this acquieſcence with your pleaſure, I am (like our general parent)

——————Not convinc'd,
But fondly overcome by female charm.

I yield not to the ſtrength of your reaſoning, but to the force of your perſuaſion,

ſuaſion, and now that I no longer *hear* you, am wiſhing to renew my intention.

Let this, however, reſt at preſent; for there is another thing that *muſt* be mentioned. I had not courage enough for it yeſterday . . . do not be offended. To-morrow, about noon, a carriage will ſtop at your door. It is yours. Your arms are on it. It was built for you. You cannot refuſe it. The horſes are the colour you approve. They were bought on purpoſe. I cannot endure your going about in ſtage-coaches. Pardon this foible in your friend, and make him happy by accepting his preſent.

To *.

I HAVE ſent for Diſpatch to bring you this, for I cannot wait the Diligence. Recall your orders, I entreat you. Let it not come. I will not accept; I will not ſee it. Cruel obligation. Diſtreſſing generoſity. What return? . . . What acknowledgement? How could you *imagine* I would receive ſuch a preſent? I need it not. I don't go about in ſtage-coaches. I have a chaiſe to come to town, and when there, find a chair more convenient.

I ſhall be at *** this evening. If you ſhould chance to look in, let me read in your eyes the forgiveneſs of this

poſitive

positive refusal, and a benevolent concern for having given so much pain to my sensibility. If you cannot come, deign to call on me at * either Thursday, Friday, or Saturday morning, to receive my humble apologies and most grateful acknowledgments.

To * *.

I LEFT you very reluctantly yesterday, and had you *invited* me to dinner, ſhould have broke my *engagement*. We had a mighty inſipid feaſt. I went home very early, and ruminated all the evening upon your verſes. But my memory is bad. Poſitively you muſt oblige me with another ſight of them. Without ocular demonſtration I would not have *believed* that you or any body could write ſuch an extempore.

I have ordered Diſpatch to bring you a coach and horſes. Now don't be alarmed again. 'Tis not for you, but your little viſitor. I hope ſhe will

not mortify me by the refusal of *a toy* .....*you* have done that effectually.

I am not in good spirits to-day, The air seems *gross* to me and heavy. I have not, for some years, breathed freely in London, at least I fancy so, and intend to decamp very soon. I wish you could let me know when it will suit you to receive a tedious visit. I must drink tea and sup with you. Be alone; it is uncertain *when* we shall meet again. Adieu.

To *.

IF I am to fix a time for receiving the honour of your viſit, let it be Wedneſday next. You will let me know whether that day is ſuitable; but *I* ſhall certainly be diſengaged, and I think too, you will than have the advantage of returning by the light of a *full moon.*

You had charmed my little gueſt by your condeſcending notice, and have now won her heart by your preſent. "She would give all the world, ay *twenty* worlds if ſhe had them, to ſee you again, and thank you for it, and ſit on your knee, and ſing you another ſong." 'Tis an amiable little creature

and knowing enough for her age. "What a fine coach!" ſaid ſhe; "O Ma'am, if it was but a *little* bigger, and the horſes alive! "*Why what then?* "Oh then I'd get into it, and ſay, Here you Mr. Coachman, carry me to the place you come from."I wonder," purſued ſhe archly, "I wonder where he would carry me to?" *I can't tell really, but to the toyſhop perhaps.* She looked grave. "Ay, very likely, but I don't want to go *there*."

Need I apologize for this childiſh prattle? Will you not rather eſteem it as a pleaſing proof that the human heart is *very early* ſuſceptible of gratitude.

To * *.

I SWEAR to you my amiable friend, that I have not, thefe twenty years, enjoyed fo many happy hours fucceffively, as I did laft night in your company.

The variety of entertainment you provided, the elegant tranquility of the fcene, the harmony of the invifible concert, the fimplicity of the repaft, the charms of your converfation ... I never faw you fo fprightly, fo animated .... Ah my fair friend! provide me no more fuch banquets ... I fhould purchafe them too dear,

What an odd compliment it is, to tell you I had a moft agreeable ride

home; I ought rather to ſay, I left you and happineſs together; but it was no ſuch thing; for the ſerenity of the air, the brightneſs of the moon, and the ſtrength of ſome very pleaſing ideas, inſpired me with ſo much chearfulneſs, that I perceived not the length of the way, and was even ſorry to quit my reverie.

But how will you excuſe yourſelf for making ſuch a rake of me? and how long do you think it is, ſince I loſt a whole night's reſt? Are theſe frolics ſuited to *my* time of life? You will ſay I might have gone to bed this morning. That's true; but the riſing ſun would have reproached me; and moreover—but your pardon . . . beſides, *one* reaſon is ſufficient.

My

My dear Mrs. * *, I ſhall eſteem it a very particular favour, if you will immediately ſit down, and acquaint me how *you* employ yourſelf, and what were *your* meditations, from the moment I left you till breakfaſt time. *Mine* are committed to paper, and if you deſire it ſhall accompany my next letter.

I muſt alſo requeſt copies of your garden-inſcriptions. I know they are from Shenſtone and Akenſide, but I want to compare the alterations at my leiſure.

Adieu. Accept a thouſand acknowledgements, and haſten your anſwer.

To *.

IF I did not comply with your requeſt *immediately*, I ſhould moſt probably decline it; but am juſt now ſo pleaſed and flattered by your obliging compliments, that I cannot diſpute your commands.

The moment, then, that your carriage was out of ſight, I retired to my chamber, and as ſoon as all around me was quiet, I threw up the ſaſhes for air, and began to walk very gravely backwards and forwards, endeavouring to recollect every circumſtance of the evening, in order to cenſure or acquit my own behaviour and converſation. But this was not a very eaſy taſk: for the

Domeſtic

Domeſtic Deity, as Sterne moſt elegantly phraſes it, "was either talking or *purſuing*, or was *in a journey*, or peradventure he ſlept, and could not be awoke."

So I ſat me down by the window, and watched the progreſs of the moon, who now,

Apparent Queen, unveil'd her peerleſs light
And o'er the earth her ſilver mantle threw.

Immediately ſeveral images of the poets, relative to this beautiful luminary, crouded into my thoughts; but I have more charity than to load you with the quotations.

I then imagined to myſelf, how far you were got by that time, and fancied that you (and perhaps numbers beſides)

were *juſt then* contemplating and enjoying the mild luſtre of Cynthia.

> The conſcious moon, in every diſtant age,
> Hath held a lamp to wiſdom.—

Theſe meditations at length brought on a ſuitable diſpoſition for Reflection to aſſume the *cenſorial dignity*; and it was aſſumed. The trial laſted near an hour, when, after a full hearing, the defendant was acquitted of captial impropriety, but convicted of ſome trivial miſdemeanors, as too great a ſolicitude to pleaſe, a little affectation, more vanity, and a large ſhare of ſimple credulity. She was alſo indicted for having received too much ſatisfaction; but pleaded in excuſe, her intention of future ſelf-denial: upon which the court broke up, without adjudging any *other* puniſhment.

Now

Now morn, her rosy steps i'th' eastern clime,
Advanc'd.

I was not inclined to sleep, and scarcely knowing how to employ myself, I went softly down stairs, and took a few turns in the garden. Passing by the grotto, I chanced to espy on the table some flowers that you had gathered. They looked faded, but I thought that water and a little attention might revive them; so I returned with them to my chamber, and presently after, addressing myself to sleep, had a comfortable repose of two hours before I arose to breakfast.

Here ends my journal, which I will send to you without reading it. lest I should repent of its unnecessary frankness. Let me add, that the flowers being quite revived, I have disposed

them in a groupe, and am painting their portraits in water-colours, with this motto,

Live a little longer.

You defire copies of my infcriptions. I ought to mention, that the *tablets* are moveable, and very rarely exhibited; for the generality of my vifitors have no notion of fuch things, and would make them a matter of *wonderment*.

This is the firft.

O ye, who bathe in courtly blifs,
Or toil in fortunes giddy fphere,
Do not too rafhly judge amifs
Of one who lives contented here.

Nor yet difdain the narrow bounds
That fkirt this gardens fimple pride,
Nor yet deride the fcanty mounds
That fence yon waters peaceful tide.

The

The tenant of the ſhade forgive,
For wand'ring at the cloſe of day,
With joy to ſee the flow'rets live,
And hear the linnet's temp'rate lay.

And O remember, that from ſtrife,
From fraudful hate, aud frantic glee,
From every fault of poliſh'd life,
Theſe ruſtic ſcenes are haply free.

The ſecond bears the alterations better; as you ſhall judge. Indeed the grotto was made to the inſcription, and not *that* to the grotto.

To me, whom in their lays, the ſhepherds call
Felicia, daughter of content and health,
This cave belongs.—The fig-tree and the vine,
Which o'er the rocky entrance downward ſhoot,
Exclude the beams of Phœbus.—Cowſlips pale,
Primroſe, and purple lychnis deck the green
Before my threſhold; and my ſhelving walls
The honeyſuckle covers. Here at noon,
Lull'd by the murmur of my riſing fount,
I ſlumber;

I ſlumber.— Here my cluſt'ring fruits I tend,
Or from the humid flow'rs, at break of day,
Freſh garlands weave, and chaſe from all my bounds
Each thing impure or noxious.---Enter in,
O ſtranger, undiſmay'd! and if a friend
To virtue, not unwelcome ſhalt thou tread
My quiet manſion; chiefly if thy name
Wiſe Pallas and th' immortal muſes own.

I finiſh this tedious letter, having nothing further to add or "*deſire*," only that you will pleaſe to believe me, with the moſt reſpectful attachment,

&c. &c,

To * *.

AND ſo you have no curioſity—at leaſt you do not "*deſire*"——it's very well; and you certainly are—No—I will not compliment you at the expence of your ſex.

I will not oppreſs you with compliments of *any kind*; but I thank you for the little narrative, and am charmed beyond expreſſion by your amiable frankneſs.

As for your *flower-piece*, (what an intereſting, what an elegant thought!) remember that *I* beſpeak it. You ſhall not refuſe it me; I will keep it for ever as a pledge of your generous regard.

I am

I am going out of town this very afternoon, to which I feel a ſecret reluctance that makes it more neceſſary.

" Il y a quelque fois dans le cours de la vie de ſi doux plaiſirs, & de ſi tendres engagemens, que l'on nous défend qu'il eſt naturel de deſirer du moins qu'ils fuſſent permis: de ſi grands charmes ne peuvent être ſurpaſſés que par celui de ſavoir y renoncer par vertu."

Adieu, ma belle veuve, vous étes *trop* aimable!

To the ſame.

I SHALL not ſet out till to-morrow, and have two reaſons for writing to you again.

I recollect ſome expreſſions in my letter this morning, that I fear will diſpleaſe you. I ſtumbled upon them unawares, but they expreſs *too much*, and almoſt imply the exiſtence of a ſentiment, wholly unbecoming my age, and your character. We ſomehow contract and retain a habit of what is called gallantry in ſpeech; but 'tis ridiculous. —My good friend, I do *not* think you too amiable; I am abſolutely diſintereſted in your regard; nor can I be painfully or *improperly* affected by the

united

united force of beauty, merit, and kindneſs.

You need not trouble yourſelf to anſwer this; I ſhall write again the moment I arrive. Only be ſo good to return the *incloſed*. It's the little picture you gave me ſo long ago. I have had the drapery altered, and though preſume on your approbation, was willing you ſhould ſee it before the artiſt is paid. Adieu.

To the ſame.

I AM arrived, and am tolerably well; but have very little elſe to ſay to you. The *eſſential* in a letter of friendſhip may generally be comprized in very few words. I intend ſoon to give you a ſpecimen (not a pattern) of brevity in writing, at preſent *I have not time.*

In our laſt converſation but one, you were obſerving, (and perhaps by way of reproach) that I never wrote to you *like a writer:* that if by great chance we entered upon a ſubject of importance, either moral or literary, I never treated it in a ſerious or argumentative manner. All this is very true; and yet I have been

been far from thinking my fair correſpondent

> ----------Not with ſuch diſcourſe
> Delight; or not capable her ear
> Of what was high;------

But I have ſeveral correſpondences of the head, and wanted one of the heart. I find ſo much pleaſure in this indolent chit-chat, the ſpirit of which would wholly evaporate in improvement, that I wiſh to confine it to the moſt familiar ſubjects, or, more properly ſpeaking, not to confine it at all; for the leaſt degree of reſtraint would produce delay, diſguſt, diſcontinuance.—You have more than once charged yourſelf with imitating my ſtyle; but, with ſubmiſſion, it is juſt the reverſe; for I often catch myſelf adopting yours; nor did I

ever

ever before this intercouſe admire what may now be called *our* manner of writing; becauſe it leaves the *meaning* too often wholly dependent on the genius or ſenſibility of the reader.

And now to convince you of my deſire to oblige you in *all* reſpects, I incloſe a manuſcript for your more ſerious peruſal, your opinion, your ſtrict and unſparing criticiſm. You will pleaſe to return it by the Diligence on Sunday, with as many obſervations on it as ſhall occur, and at the ſame time, pray favour me with a complete and *exact* catalogue of your *library*. This is a mighty whimſical requeſt; but I want much to know your favourite authors. Adieu.

To *.

I AM infinitely obliged to you for this laſt favour, aud return the manuſcript with my obſervations and the requeſted catalogue, all which have taken ſo much time, that I can only juſt tranſcribe a few haſty lines, written yeſterday, and entreat you to let them paſs without one ſingle word of cenſure or commendation. They are beneath criticiſm.

The poliſh'd labour of his heav'n-taught mind
  See the fam'd *Atticus* to *Mira* ſend,
  And bid her freely cenſure or commend
What his creative genius has deſign'd!

And though unſkill'd in ſcience' mazy writ,
  She all unequal to the taſk be found;
  And though the work be with perfection crown'd
By wiſdom, learning, elegance, and wit.

Yet

Yet not in vain he makes the gen'rous loan,
And not in vain the pleasing task requires,
Which gives her honour, lessens not his own,
And her wrapt breast with gratitude inspires:
So potent Phœbus bids the queen of night
Shine in the borrow'd beams of his reflected light.

To * *.

WELL, then, I will not praiſe your little ſonnet, though it is *really* deſerving; but I may thank you for the *obſervations*, which are extremely ingenious and valuable. If the work ſhould ever *appear* (but that is unlikely) you would ſee how much I regard them.

But why ſhould you entreat me to let your verſes paſs without notice. In my opinion they are *not* below criticiſm, and I am in a criticiſing humour; yet 'tis the leſs neceſſary for me to indulge it with regard to this little piece, becauſe your own judgment in theſe matters is exceedingly good, and I durſt

ſay

ſay you know the *exact* degree of its merit.

It is one thing to taſte the perfection of an art, and another to excel *in* that art, but you might eaſily unite theſe attainments; and although I do not think poetry your *forte*, nor would adviſe you to employ much *labour* in cultivating the laurels of Parnaſſus, yet now and than an occaſional eſſay will be an agreeable amuſement not only to yourſelf, but to as many as you ſhall think proper to oblige with a ſight of your performances.

Adieu. Simply adieu; for I know not what epithet to ſalute you with. I may ſay to you in the *very* words of Queen Elizabeth to the biſhop's wife, "*Miſ-*

tres I *will* not call you, and *Ma Dame* I *must* not call you." More's the pity! Adieu. Pray obſerve and admire this quotation, for it is the beſt I ever made in my life.

To the ſame.

HAVE you a mind to hear a very ridiculous inſtance of the moſt trifling vanity?

I was ſo pleaſed with the ſudden recollection, and *the aptneſs* of Queen Elizabeth's ſaying, that I ſent away my letter this morning without its principal errand, which was to invite you to dine with us at * to-morrow ſe'nnight. I am not yet certain whether I ſhall be at *the Jubilee*; but in either caſe ſhall keep the above appointment, as it will be convenient in returning, and agreeable if I do *not* go, to meet thoſe who have been there, and catch all their various reports before they circulate far-

ther. Come therefore if you can; Mrs. *** will attend you; ſhe talks of a party; I know you will not have the heart to refuſe *her*? and ſilence ſhall give conſent. But why ſilence?—Why, becauſe I am compoſing *another letter*, which you muſt anſwer before we meet; and which will require a good deal of time and attention. The ſubject is of ſome conſequence. I think to divide it into three ſeveral parts or ſections, and would have you do the ſame by your reply, in order to preſerve that clearneſs or preſpicuity which ought to diſtinguiſh performances of this nature from eſſays of leſs importance. In a word, I am diſpoſed to make a full proof of your literary abilities. Go then, ſtudy philoſophy, and prepare yourſelf to anſwer the challenge.

To the ſame.

ETES vous bien ?
Je vous aime.
Dieu vous beniſſe.

The Anſwer.

OUI.
Je vous remercie :
Et le bon Dieu vous beniſſe encore.

To * *.

YOU will rejoice at finding your ſtray ſheep ſafely incloſed in the fold of this letter; nor muſt you be angry with your friends. I told you very truly, that I had not ſeen it; and Mrs. ***, with equal veracity, proteſted that ſhe had not got it; but we played the fable of the two thieves upon you; for ſhe put it (unknown to me) into my pocket, and did not tell me of it till we were coming away.

I cannot however perſuade myſelf to prolong your uneaſineſs, and have therefore returned it at this uſeaſonable hour, (and after *one* reading only) depending upon *your honour* for a ſecond

peruſal.

perusal. It *must* be finish'd, indeed it must. Mrs. *** declares that you were no longer about it than whilst she was dressing. Indeed, my friend, you are .... but I durst not say what. I durst not say any thing more.

Good night! "*a thousand times good night!*"

Daughters of *Britannia*'s isle,
Of ev'ry age and each degree,
Leave your native plains awhile,
And haste to *Shakespeare*'s Jubilee.

O gather ev'ry beauteous flow'r,
And roses fair with laurels twine,
And rob each fragrant myrtle bow'r,
To deck your poet's hallow'd shrine.

And let no gentle voice be mute
  In the full chorus of his praiſe,
And let the ſweetly ſounding lute
  Your ſoft harmonious concert raiſe.

But firſt, arrang'd in decent throng,
  Repoſe on *Avon*'s verdant ſide,
(How oft to hear the poet's ſong
  Has *Avon* ſtopp'd his cryſtal tide!)

Repoſe, and liſten to my lays;
  Trembling, I ſeize the vocal ſhell,
And in *peculiar* ſtrains of praiſe
  Your *Shakeſpeare*'s merits aim to tell.

Let heroes ſing his warlike pow'r's,
  Let kings his regal talents own,
Let poets, patriots, lovers - - - -
  - - - - - - - - - - - -

Far diff'ernt theme - - - - -
  I ſing the man, of taſte refin'd,
Whom wiſe unerring nature made
  The judge, the friend of *woman kind*.

O maſter

O maſter of the female heart,
  To whom its ev'ry ſpring was known,
What rapt'rous joy did'ſt thou impart
  To thoſe who once poſſeſs'd thine own.

How bleſt her lot, how envied now!
  Who claſp'd in thee a darling heir,
Or ſhar'd thy tender plighted vow,
  Or claim'd thy fond paternal care.

Ye virgins, pluck the freſheſt bays,
  Ye matrons, deck his honour'd bier,
Ye mothers, teach your ſons his praiſe,
  Ye widows, drop the ſilent tear.

Now ſpread the immortal volumes wide,
  And mark - - - - - - -
- - - - - - - - - - - -
  - - - - - - - - - - -

No female guilt deforms the ſcene,
  No female plots of terror riſe,
Save where he ſhews the murth'rous Queen
  Stain'd with ambition's *manly* vice.

E'en while he acts *th' historian*'s part
He ſmooths unnat'ral Regan's brow,
And ſoftens Cleopatra's art,
And faithleſs Creſſid's broken vow.

Nor partial fact - - - - -
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- - - - - - - - - - - -
Behold the lovely train appear.

With innocence Miranda charms;
With virgin honour, Iſabel;
The filial heart Cordelia warms,
And Portia's praiſe let *Wiſdom* tell.

Bright ſhines the hymenæal flame
When Imogen's diſtreſs is paſt,
And vindicated Hero's fame,
And Helen's patience crown'd at laſt.

Thus diff'rent ſtates are mov'd by turns;
E'en aged hearts for Cath'rine glow;
And when diſtracted Conſtance mourns,
Maternal boſoms throb with woe.

But

But where, O Muſe, can ſtrains be found
T' expreſs each virtue, charm, and grace
With which benignant *Shakeſpeare* crown'd
The female mind, the female face?

Let me reſtrain my grateful tongue,
And the exhauſtleſs ſubject quit;
Let Celia's truth remain unſung,
And Roſalinda's ſprightly wit.

More tragic ſcenes I now relate,
And tears of ſoft compaſſion crave:
O pity Deſdemona's fate!
O weep on poor Ophelia's grave!

And check not yet the tender tear,
Nor *yet* the riſing grief reſtrain?
O'er hapleſs Juliet's early bier,
Still let it flow, nor flow in vain.

When virtuous ſorrow prompts the ſigh,
And ſwells the gen'rous feeling heart,
She adds to ev'ry gliſt'ning eye,
A charm beyond the reach of art.

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Cetera desunt.

To * *.

I DID not get home till very late laſt night, and was extremely fatigued.

Parties of pleaſure are in my opinion the moſt unpleaſant things in the world. Indeed, nothing can be agreeable to me that requires the leaſt activity, unleſs it be in ſome degree intereſting; and whenever I am buſying myſelf to no purpoſe, I think on the labour of *the Danaides*.

The oftener I look on your *flower-piece* the more I am charmed with it. Mr. * has pronounced it *beautiful*; and yet (ſo capricious is my taſte) I have been chuſing a place for it this morning,

ing where ſcarcely any body will ſee it but myſelf.

Have you ſeen your books? Do you like them. They were to be ſent durring your abſence. Now you know why I requeſted a catalogue; that I might not order any you had, Your library was too ſmall; and if you ſcruple to accept this trivial addition, I ſhall ſcruple to call you my friend, or ſubſcribe myſelf yours.

To *.

YOUR menace, my generous friend, has its effect. I dare not *ſcruple* to accept your preſent; but could I have divined your reaſon for enquiring after my books, I ſhould certainly not have ſent the catalogue. As it is—if I muſt ſubmlt—if you will not allow me to return a few of the moſt coſtly, particularly the Natural Hiſtory, I muſt endeavour to be eaſy—as eaſy as a mind not ungenerous can be under an oppreſſive weight of obligation.

I think, if I know my own heart, it is in theſe inſtances above affectation; nor is it deſtitute of ſenſibility: . . . . I need not explain what you very well underſtand . . . *May I return any of the books.*

To * *.

I AM afraid, by the ſtyle of yours, that my laſt letter was *too authoritative.* I remember being in an ill humour, but ſurely it extended not to you, nor could you miſinterpret *the menace.*

I know very well that you have leſs affectation and more ſenſibility than half your ſex; but have you not alſo rather too much punctilio? . . Return the books! Return the Natural Hiſtory! which, of all others, I marked out for your particular amuſement, having heard you in a manner wiſh for it. You muſt *not* return any of the books, nor muſt you be uneaſy at accepting them. You would not, if you were thoroughly acquainted with the

diſpoſition

diſpoſition of the giver : for I think if (in your language) " I know my own heart," it feels for you all the *beſt parts* of the ſentiments which form the different characters of a father, a brother, a guardian, and a lover. Are not theſe affection without authority, eſteem without jealouſy, watchfulneſs without intereſt, and tenderneſs without deſire ? . . . . . But perhaps you do not like theſe *abſtracted* notions, nor will, upon ſuch terms, acknowledge yourſelf my daughter, ſiſter, ward, or miſtreſs. Continue then, my *friend*, and believe that I ſhall ever be yours.

To *.

FINDING myſelf in a ſcribbling mood, I am going to write without waiting to hear from you, but ſhall not ſend away my letter till I have that pleaſure.

I cannot *juſt now* recollect *who it was* that one of his friends complimented by ſaying that "his entertainments pleaſed not only at the time he gave them, but the day after." I ſhould have liked vaſtly to have been a gueſt at ſome of theſe entertainments, for I am not fortunate enough to find many that pleaſe at the time, much leſs in recollection. I am juſt returned from a viſit, and have left a circle of company, all polite and accompliſhed, all in *Smirk*'s words,

words, fine in figure, high in taſte, *tout magnifique et galant*. I have left this circle without pleaſure or improvement, and reckon the time loſt that I ſpent in it; yet was in good ſpirits all the while, and as talkative as any preſent.

And now you will expect me to give a reaſon for my diſſatisfaction. Believe me, it is not that I think myſelf wiſer or better than other people, nor am I juſt now unqualified for *polite converſation*; my late attendance on Mrs. *** having enabled me to give my required opinion on *moſt* of the faſhionable topics.

But I mean to obſerve, that however well ſuch kind of diſcourſe may beguile

the

the preſent moment (and it will not do *that* unenlivened by remark and repartee) it leaves no agreeable traces behind. It reſembles "a ſwiftly paſſing cloud, on which ſome faint beams of light have imprinted their weak and tranſient colours;" while the animated converſations of real friendſhip remain faſtened on the mind, and as the wiſe Man ſaid of words that were fitly ſpoken, are like "apples of gold in pictures of ſilver." In fine, my peculiar diſpoſition is ſuch as would enduce me (with Mr. Pope,) to "value one tender well-meant word, above all that ever made me laugh in my life."

Interrupted.——Your letter.——What ſhall I ſay to it? O my beneficent friend, you may gueſs its effects on the

the temper I have ſo artleſsly confeſſed. Yes, I will accept your perſent, I will eſteem—I will acknowledge . . . . but whither does my ſenſibility tranſport me? Allow me to break off———

Aſhamed of the inequalities in my own mind, I have often endeavoured to diſcover the ſame failing in others; and of all perſons upon earth, I am the moſt apt to compare myſelf with *Rouſſeau*. We certainly do reſemble each other. I was very deſirous of ſeeing him on that account, and regret that I did not. I can allow for all the peculiarities that ſo ſtrongly mark his character. Like him I cannot avoid being fretful, haughty, uneaſy, diſturbed even by the ſhadow of an obligation; yet place the ſame circumſtance

ſtance in a different light, it ſoftens me into condeſcenſion, and overcomes me with joy. People of this very ſuſceptible caſt have a thouſand pleaſures and uneaſineſſes of which others have no idea; but the latter too generally predominate, and verify theſe elegant and often-quoted lines:

Nor peace nor eaſe the heart can know,
  Which like the needle true,
Turns at the touch of joy or woe,
  But turning, trembles too.

But the principal inconveniences of ſtrong ſenſibility are the abſurdities of conduct it gives riſe to, which though involuntary at the moment, are ſoon keenly felt, and ſeverely repented. You will eaſily imagine I ſpeak not of vices but follies; thoſe little ridiculous follies of fancy beyond the borders of cuſtom,

to

to which we are ſometimes impelled, though ſure of making a diſgraceful retreat.

I was thinking of Rouſſeau this morning as I rambled before breakfaſt through the neighbouring fields. Two or three little birds were hopping about in the path. At my approach they fled to a greater diſtance—as I advanced they fled farther—as I drew ſtill nearer they took ſhelter in a hedge. I was concerned.—Why do ye fly me, gentle and apprehenſive creatures? I would not captivate or injure ye—I would gladly contribute to your felicity. Obſerve, theſe were only my *thoughts*, but mark the ſequel. "Rouſſeau," *ſaid I*, "would perhaps have *ſpoke* to the birds." *Madam!* cried my attendant.

I ſmiled

I ſmiled at my own folly, and made ſome inſignificant anſwer.

But I need not illuſtrate this weakneſs. 'Tis ſufficient to ſay, that I am very ſeldom ſatisfied with myſelf, and ſhould I, at any future time, peruſe what I am *now* writing, it would moſt probably appear highly cenſurable and ridiculous.

Pray don't you think, (for I am unwilling to be quite ſingular) that my favourite Mr. Shenſtone poſſeſſed a good deal of this ſelf-created uneaſineſs? I don't recolect ever hearing you ſay much about him or his writings. Was he not a good poet? His benevolence was certainly admirable, and illuminated all his works. I always peruſe

them

them with pleaſure; with ten times the pleaſure than more witty performances would give me. But this, I know, is becauſe of my own deficiencies, not having a ſpark of wit, nor a grain of humour in my whole compoſition; nor indeed any qualification to entitle me (without great allowance of courteſy) to the honour of being ſtyled *your* correſpondent and friend.

To * *.

I AM going to write a long and particular anſwer to every part of your letter, though at the ſame time I have buſineſs of much greater conſequence that ought to engage my attention. You are not, however, obliged to me for this civility. I have recourſe to it in my own defence, againſt a ſet of melancholy ideas, which I hope to diſſipate by thus converſing with you; and ſhall then be more fit for what I could not at preſent undertake.

But, O frail and inſufficient *Humanity!* thou who haſt recourſe to ſo many different expedients to ſupport thyſelf

in

in tolerable ſerenity, why aſpireſt thou not more ardently after *celeſtial* expedients? after the Hope that remains ſteady and immoveable, the tranquillity that fadeth not away!

I think myſelf obliged, in the firſt place, by your ſitting down to write before my letter came to hand, becauſe it ſhews that you thought of me without being reminded.

You have *by this time*, recollected "*who it was*" that his friends complimented, &c. If I were not in a very grave humour, I could ſmile at that expreſſion.—We are apt now to fancy that ſuch a man muſt be *happy*. Elegance united with philoſophy conveys

this idea through the medium of *time*; becauſe we ſee not the clouds of perplexity, error, doubt, fear, and ſorrow that might ſecretly over-ſhadow his happineſs.

"The cup of felicity pure and unmixed, is by no means a draught for mortal man;" nor can the utmoſt perfection of mortality *deſerve* it. Sufficient for us, if, with patience and reſignation, we imbibe the intermingled ſweets and bitters of our allotted potion, and find *hope* remain at the bottom!

We are ſo accuſtomed to call things by wrong names, that I am not ſurpriſed at your finding *dulneſs* in a *brilliant* aſſemblée, and *good* company the *worſt* company of all; but you ſhould

conſider

conſider by whom and for what end theſe circles are formed. It is very natural for people who are incapable of amuſing themſelves to aſſociate with each other. They ſeek not *happineſs* but *amuſement*, and *expect* no other ſatisfaction than barely employing the time which hangs heavy on their hands. But no more on this ſubject—'tis the beaten track of the moraliſt, and is worn to the very edge.

I come now to your acknowledgment of my letter.—It flatters me—a gleam of ſatisfaction enlightens—but why—why did you break off ſo abruptly?—Why could you not for *once* intruſt a ſincere friend with the *genuine* effuſions of your heart.

How ſeldom do we diſcover to one another our real ſelves! Cuſtom and education enwrap us in a thouſand diſguiſes, all more painful to an ingenious mind than the European habit to a ſavage, or fetters to a ſlave. Nature and ſentiment revolt from this tyranny —occaſionally they each endeavour to get free—their efforts are vigorous and ſudden, agreeing with the impulſe of the paſſions.—But reſerve, who ſtands centinel, gives quick alarm, and we continue the ſlaves of cuſtom.

I believe I am writing nonſenſe—my thoughts wander far from the ſubject—but 'tis no matter—I ſhall write on.

Senſibility, or the characteriſtic of a ſenſible mind, is a faſhionable and almo ſt

almoſt thread-bare topic. Much has been written, much is every day ſaid about it, and numbers affect to poſſeſs it, who have no *other* claim than thinking it a recommendation.

This obſervation does not extend to *you*, my ſenſible friend, who do, in reality poſſeſs more than a neceſſary ſhare. I only mention it becauſe you are "unwilling to be quite ſingular." There are people enough to keep you in countenance, by running into greater abſurdities merely through affectation.

As for Rouſſeau, you injure yourſelf in a compariſon with him. Not that I accuſe him of much affectation, for his feelings are amazingly ſtrong; but he

has ſuffered what was once but a reſpectable weakneſs, to degenerate into a fixed habit of diſcontent, which is now the ſource of perpetual unhappineſs to himſelf and others. Your feelings are as delicate, but leſs irritable than his. Rouſſeau's peculiarity of temper unfits him for ſociety, and conſcious of this, he endeavours to looſen the bands which hold it together. But his doctrines make few converts; we diſcover inſtantly the ſpring from which they ariſe, and are content to let *him* remain *le ſolitaire* . . It is fit it ſhould be ſo. I cannot help eſteeming Rouſſeau in ſpite of all his vagaries,, and perhaps *for* ſome of them, but I would no more chuſe him for an aſſociate, than I would uſe conſtantly a fine porcelain veſſel,

veſſel, if its owner ſtood as conſtantly by, deſiring me not to break it.

I have inſenſibly written myſelf into better ſpirits, but muſt continue the medicine a little longer.

Pray why did you not *expreſs* your deſire of ſeeing Rouſſeau before he left us? It might very eaſily have been gratified. I ſhould have been happy to have brought you together, and am juſt now diverted by the thoughts of your interview, of which you may take the following for a deſcription. Gravely preſenting you to the philoſopher, "See," I would ſay, "Monſ. Rouſſeau, behold in this lady -

- - - - - - - - - - - - -
- - - - - - - - - - - - !"

Caught by these sounds, he repeats *O sacred virtue!* and glances a look towards you. Your countenance strengthens his ideas—the singularity of his character overspreads it with an attention equally interesting and flattering—your eyes, enlivened by curiosity and softened by complacency, must *penetrate* the susceptible soul of John James. He cries out! he embraces you with tears of joy! You become his disciple, and I, perhaps, lose my correspondent.

See, by this inference, that I allow something of a sympathy in your taste, though not enough to justify a comparison.—What I have now been writing

was

was to amuſe myſelf;* but I will tell you more ſeriouſly that I knew a character to which yours bears a much greater reſemblance; it is that of the pious and ingenious *Mrs. Rowe*; nor will you think it bad counſel, if I adviſe you to improve the reſemblance to perfection. May your life be as amiable, and your death as happy!

I have nothing to ſay with reſpect to your *ſelf-depreciation*, being unwilling to charge *you* with the foible of *begging applauſe*; not that wit and humour are ſuch very eſtimable qualities—but I will acquit you—and will believe you are not ſenſible of poſſeſſing either.

You inquire my opinion of *Shenſtone*, and his writings.—Good—very good

—you yourſelf have given them a juſt character. I eſteemed—I regretted—I *ſtill* regret him—and that for more reaſons than you can poſſibly imagine. Alas! how many worthy people have I outlived! I pray God that *you* may never be added to their number!

Adieu.

To *.

THE firſt part of your letter, my ever-honoured, my revered correſpondent, ſhall paſs without notice. I can *ſympathize*, though I do not *inquire*; and whatever were the ideas that diſturbed you, I wiſh not to recall them. Haſtening, therefore, to the paragraph where you beſtow ſuch an unmerited compliment, I acknowledge it moſt gratefully, and am fired with emulation to copy the illuſtrious pattern. How generous, how worthy of yourſelf are thoſe wiſhes in my favour! O may they be anſwered!

I hardly know how to interpret what you ſay about begging applauſe. I hope you *do* acquit me; for indeed I

can

can acquit *myſelf*, though I readily acknowledge a pleaſure and pride in *your* approbation.

Lætus ſum laudari à te laudato viro.

Searching for amuſement, this morning, among the treaſures of your beneficence, I found ſome verſes in a poem of Mr. Whitehead's ſo extremely applicable to my thoughts, that I could not forbear tranſcribing them, and ſubjoining another ſtanza, borrowed from two different authors, to give it the air of a ſonnet.

Yes, I remember, and with pride repeat
  The rapid progreſs which our friendſhip knew!
Even at the firſt with willing minds we met,
  And ere the root was fixt the branches grew.
In vain had Fortuue placed her weak barrier,
Clear was thy breaſt from pride, and mine from
    ſervile fear.

I ſaw

I ſaw thee generous, and with joy can ſay,
My education roſe above my birth;
Thanks to thoſe parent ſhades, on whoſe cold clay
Fall faſt my tears, and lightly lie the earth!
To them I owe whate'er I dare pretend,
Thou ſaw'ſt with partial eyes, and bade me call
thee friend.

And now, while chear'd by thy ſuperior praiſe,
I bleſs the ſilent path the fates decree,
And from the liſt of my inglorious days
Gladly eraſe the moments crown'd by thee—
O let this boaſt to future times deſcend,
Thou wert indeed my guide, my counſellor, my
friend!

The tranſcription of theſe verſes brought on a poetical appetite, which I gratified immediately by peruſing ſome *certain pieces* that I hardly durſt venture to ſpeak of, leſt I ſhould incur an imputation that my ſoul diſdains.

You

You never ſhall accuſe me *juſtly* of flattery; yet I *muſt* ſay, in the language of Plato to Fenelon, "When one reads your compoſitions, one thinks that one hears Apollo's lyre, ſtrung by the hands of the Graces, and turned by the Muſes," *or rather by Apollo himſelf.*

To * *.

ALL praiſe is foreign but of true deſert,
Plays round the head, but reaches not the heart.
Ah! why recall the toys of thoughtleſs youth?
When flowery fiction held the place of truth;
When fancy rul'd; when trill'd each trivial ſtrain,
But idly ſweet, and elegantly vain.

O! in that ſtrain, if all of wit had flow'd,
All muſic warbled, and all beauty glow'd;
Had livelieſt nature, happieſt art combin'd,
That lent each grace, and this each grace refin'd;
Alas! how little were my proudeſt boaſt!
The ſweeteſt trifler of my tribe at moſt.

To ſway the judgment while he charms the ear;
To curb mad paſſion in its wild career;
To blend with ſkill, as loftieſt themes require,
All reaſon's rigour and all fancy's fire;
Be this the poet's praiſe.—With this uncrown'd,
Wit dies a jeſt, and poetry a ſound.

In

In Maſon's Monody on the death of Pope you may read this poetical anſwer to your poetical epiſtle. Adieu.

To *.

YOUR poetical reproof, for I can hardly call it a letter, has rather disconcerted me, and made me doubt whether I may pursue my intention, which was to transcribe any little occasional piece of poetry that should seem applicable to my purposed subject. I ever loved to clothe my own thoughts in other people's language; but this is an unnecessary remark; for I am sure you must often smile at my frequent quotations, and compare them to *Sancho*'s proverbs. They are at least as *ready*, and perhaps equally well chosen.

The intended subject of to-day was a copy of verses addressed to my Lord Chesterfield,

Chesterfield, which I found in the Magazine, and suppose to be lately written. There is a vein of delicacy runs through it that softens the hyperbole—in short, I must transcribe it, and pray do not throw it into the fire without reading, but rather (leaving out the allusion to Lord C.'s misfortune) consider it as addressed to yourself by

Your most obliged and obedient.

To the Earl of CHESTERFIELD.

Reclin'd beneath thy shade, *Blackheath!*
From politics and strife apart,
His temples crown'd with laurel wreath,
And virtue smiling at his heart;
Will *Chesterfield* the muse allow
To break upon his still retreat?
To view, if health still smooths his brow,
And prints his grove with willing feet?

Though

Though gratitude be rarely found
  In courts or ſpacious drawing-room,
Still ſhall ſhe tread poetic ground,
  And favours paſt ſhall ne'er intomb.
'Twas this awoke the preſent theme,
  (And bade it reach thy diſtant ear)
Where if no ray of genius beam,
  Sincerity at leaſt is there.
May pale diſeaſe fly far aloof
  O'er vernal domes its flag diſplay,
And health beneath thy peaceful roof,
  Add luſtre to thine evening ray!
If this my fervent wiſh be crown'd,
  I'll deck with flow'rs the god-head's ſhrine;—
Nor thou, with Wiſdom's chaplet bound,
  At any abſent gift repine.
What tho' thou doſt not grace a throne
  Where ſubjects bend the ſupple knee,
No other king the muſes own,
  And ſcience lifts her eye to thee.
'Tho' deafneſs, by a doom ſevere,
  Steals from thy ear the murm'ring rill,
Or Philomel's delightful air,
  You deem not *this* a partial ill.

Ah!

Ah! if anew thine ear was ſtrung,
  Awake to every voice around,
Thy praiſes by the many ſung
  Would ſtun thee with the choral ſound!——

To * *

I AM not very well this morning I was taken with a ſhivering yeſterday, and had a feveriſh, bad night, but am in hopes it will wear off again. Doctor * at leaſt *bids* me hope ſo, and tells me there is no doubt of it.

I thank you for your verſes; for tho' I had ſeen them long ago, I was pleaſed with the re-peruſal. I was pleaſed too with the fairneſs and elegance of the tranſcript. I admire your *Italiano*.

——'Tis a fair hand:
And whiter than the paper it wrote on
Is the fair hand that writ.——

Theſe verſes reminded me of your *extempore*. It is realy very unkind to deny

deny me ſo often another ſight of it. You dont know how ſoothing theſe things are at a certain time of life; neither is there any fear that *poetry*, if tolerable, will ever meet an unwelcome reception. The humours of mankind are ſo different at different times, that one muſt not judge them by a ſingle event: beſides, the poetical reproof, as you call it, was only ſent as a quotation that appoſitely anſwered *your* quotation; nor does it intimate the prohibition of rhyme, it only reſtrains the praiſe of it. I would have all praiſe confined to meritorious actions. *Virtue* would tire before ſhe got to her journey's end if *Vanity* did not give her a lift now and then; but the more trivial accompliſhments ſhould be ſparingly commended.

For

For this reaſon, and becauſe I hate to ſay the ſame things inceſſantly, I often forbear paying the *due* tribute of civility to my fair correſpondent. My letters would be a mere ſtring of panegyric were I to expreſs the juſtice my heart does to your good qualities, or even to the common productions of your ingenious *pen.*

And really I was guilty of *ingratitude* as well as neglect when I forebore acknowledging your very polite application of Mr. Whitehead's verſes, in the management of which, and the connexion of the other lines, there is more ingenuity and merit than in many original poems. I ſhould be aſhamed to tell you *how much* I was pleaſed with that generous compliment. Abundance

of the fine things which poor mortals beſtow upon one another by way of *praiſe*, are received with coldneſs and inattention; but what boſom is proof againſt the delicate inſinuations of kindneſs and *eſteem?* In ſhort, no compliment can be acceptable to a perſon of *merit*, though it ſhould raiſe a bluſh on the cheek, unleſs it produce at the ſame time *a glow in the heart.*

To amuſe myſelf *and you*, I think I will tranſcribe a few lines, very much in the ſtyle of thoſe to Lord Cheſterfield: they were written before you were born, and appeared firſt in the Magazines of thoſe days. As you *did not* know the author, I may ſay the thought is not inelegantly turned. *Ecoutez*,

To

To A LADY,

Written on the Banks of a River near her Father's Villa.

While thefe clofe walls her beauties hide,
For whofe dear fake forlorn I rove;
On the clear ftream's oppofing fide
The Mufe fhall wail my haplefs love.
My love!—which nothing can outvie,
Which never fhall a period know;
Ye breezes tell her as ye fly,
Ye waters bear it as ye flow.—
And tho' (by adverfe friends confin'd)
My yielding fair I vainly crave;
O bring her murmurs, gentle wind,
Her image, ev'ry paffing wave!
Ah no!—Ye winds her fighs conceal,
Nor you, ye waves, reflect her face,
Left Æolus my paffion feel,
And Neptune fue for her embrace.
Small need ye fhould her accents bear,
Or to my view her form impart,
Whofe voice dwells ever on my ear,
Whofe image ever in my heart.

Adieu for the preſent; I am obliged to break off, but will add a few lines anon.

You will be ſorry to hear that I left off through indiſpoſition. My diſorder is increaſed. It is with difficulty that I write—but this will be in time three hours hence; ſo I can ſend you a later account.

I was not able to reſume in time for the Diligence; ſo Diſpatch ſhall carry you this, and ſatisfy all your enquiries.

I *really* am extremely ill; and fancy myſelf worſe for not having..... yet why repine..... Many there are with

equal

equal propenſities to domeſtic tenderneſs who are denied the ſweets of it. Perhaps the exalted ſhare I once partook .... but away with theſe uſeleſs complainings .... yet 'tis natural at the inſtant of ſuffering to wiſh relief.

My preſent wiſh is for the ſociety of a kindred mind. Why ſhould I not ſay for *your* ſociety, my amiable friend? for *your* ſoothing converſation. You are capable of generous ſympathy ... You would ſuffer my drooping head to repoſe on your gentle boſom .... You would ſhed the tear of compaſſion on my pale cheek .... and above all, you would deſire, in the words of your admirable motto, which I have been contemplating this half hour, I ſay, you

would desire with *sincerity* that I should

"*Live a little longer.*"

Adieu. Pardon this weakness... I will conquer it.... Adieu.

To *.

WHAT can I ſay to your letter? —O my friend! And are you really ſo much indiſpoſed!—I am diſtracted with grief and apprehenſion—perhaps you are worſe by this time—yet God forbid! Write inſtantly, I conjure you—on my knees I conjure you to write inſtantly: and if you wiſh for my company—but, alas! what ſervice can I render?—yet ſay the word—ſhall I come?—If you deſire it I will come—regardleſs of fame, regardleſs of cenſure—happy, too happy, if my care, my aſſiduity, my unwearied and affectionate attention, can procure you one moment's ſatisfaction.—What *can* I ſay?

—*You* ſhall determine for me.—I cannot write.—God Almighty reſtore you to health; or I know not what will become of your Friend.

To * *.

I RECEIVED yours more than thirty hours ago, and have waited till now for an interval of eaſe to anſwer it, being deſirous of expreſſing myſelf as fully as poſſible.

Do not be ſurpriſed .... or ſhocked ... if I tell you ... that the doctors have juſt left me ... with compliments on what they were pleaſed to call the *magnanimity* of their patient.

And does it then require greatneſs of mind to hear with tranquillity a ſentence that one ought hourly to expect—or rather their prognoſtic of that ſentence?

Perhaps ſo—but it may be that *my* compoſure ariſes from a doubt of their preſaging ſkill: I feel at leaſt a firmneſs of *hope* that ſeems to contradict their opinion.... Yes... I will tell you, (though 'tis too ſtriking a proof of human frailty) that I ſtill *hope* to recover.

Be that as it may, I was determined to ſeize the opportunity of writing, and reſtoring your letters. I incloſe even the laſt, for the contents are engraven on my heart. Nor let this precaution alarm you—it is no argument of danger—I may recover—I may write again—again I may thank you for the pleaſures your friendſhip has afforded.—But if not—who ſhall diſpute the decrees of Providence!

In

In this caſe, remember that (in the Biſhop of Lucon's words to Madame de Rouvraie) "I make it my laſt requeſt, that you will not grieve overmuch for the loſs of the ſincereſt friend that ever had being; and yet not worthy of a friend like you." Preſerve for my memory an affectionate, a *friendly* regard; but if ever you cheriſhed in my favour *the very ſlighteſt degree* of a more tender ſentiment, transfer it with *addition* to ſome deſerving perſon, and confirm your gift at the altar. It is my ſerious and deliberate advice that you will not paſs the prime of your life in an unconnected ſtate. You are formed to ſhine in the domeſtic circle, to receive and impart the very eſſence of conjugal happineſs. Commit to ſome

worthy man the charge of your felicity. May he endeavour as ſincerely to promote it as I myſelf would have done had the envied and too ardently wiſhed-for office been attainable. However ill-timed this declaration may be thought, it is no more that what every . . . . . I cannot proceed . . . I am extremely ill . . . Adieu.

A ſhort interval ſeems afforded . . . . I embrace it to finiſh this letter and remove your friendly anxiety—or at leaſt that uneaſy *ſuſpenſe* with which I am vain enough to think your mind is agitated.—At ſuch a ſeaſon as this, can I add ſelfiſhneſs to vanity?—can I tell you that I derive comfort from your bene-

benevolent ſorrow? Yes, I *muſt* tell you that the idea (ſuggeſted by your laſt) of your unfeigned regard, is a cordial to my very ſoul!

Again I muſt pauſe through inability .... the pen drops from my hand ....

I would by no means have you think of coming hither—nor did I expect you to make the generous offer. I complained of being debarred your company, but did not ſolicit you to grant it. Your fame is, and was ever, as dear to me as your friendſhip; and when I conſider the true nature and extreme delicate texture of female honour, I regret not the ſacrifices I have made to it,

it, nor even that I let your opinion prevail againſt the *bequeſt*.

Adieu. I cannot perſuade myſelf that this is the laſt time of addreſſing you; but leſt it ſhould . . . I ſend you my beſt wiſhes . . . . . God Almighty protect, ſuſtain, preſerve, and bleſs you . . . here and for ever!

Adieu, my tender, my ſincere friend. —Dearest and moſt amiable of women —Adieu.

To the ſame.

I LIVE.——I am recovering—and the ſecond effort of my pen is to acquaint you with it. The firſt was dedicated to that POWER which beſtowed the ability; and the *encloſed* contains my ſentiments on the occaſion. You muſt however return it uncopied.—No eye but yours and the ALL-SEEING ſhall ever behold it. Be pleaſed alſo to uſe caution in giving your opinion of this haſty production. Faults it doubtleſs may have; but not ſuch as will warrant criticiſm. You now perhaps think I reſemble the archbiſhop in *Gil Blas*; and that my indiſpoſition having weakened the mental powers, I am no more capable

pable of judging than of writing—but I only intended to obſerve that an effuſion of gratitude or tranſport ſhould not be tried by the rules of colder compoſitions. On the other hand, you muſt by no means *commend* it; for whatever degree of merit it poſſeſſes, is in reality detracted from *my* character. Every ardent expreſſion conveys a ſecret reproof; and the general tenor of it is a reproach to a man who has at times affected to be weary of the gift which it celebrates, and ought rather to have been prepared to *reſign* it with equal cheerfulneſs.

Yet who, to dumb forgetfulneſs a prey,
This pleaſing anxious being e'er reſign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful clay,
Nor caſt one longing ling'ring look behind.

I am

I am now impatient to receive the congratulations that your gentle and friendly heart will dictate upon this occaſion. Diſpatch, who travels all night, will call again for your anſwer. From him too you may learn more particularly the circumſtances of my amendment. I am ſtill very faint and languid, but while returning health ſmiles within my view, I can eaſily ſupport ſo trivial an inconvenience.

Adieu. I rejoice to ſubſcribe myſelf yet once again your friend—your ſincere and very affectionate friend.

Is not this a very good opportunity to ſolicit a copy of the *extempore* verſes that I have ſo often requeſted

in

in vain? Surely you will not know how to refuſe me juſt now. I ſhall expect to ſee them encloſed with the Ode.

To *.

YOU are impatient to receive the congratulations that my heart ſtill dictate on this occaſion, and moſt probably expect more from me than you will receive, for the language of *my heart* is not expreſſibly, nor could any degree of eloquence convey an idea of its joy. I bleſs and adore the goodneſs of that *Being* whoſe favour has reſtored you to health; and beſeech him to keep you for ever in his holy protection---but why ſhould I attempt to tell *you* how ſincerely I rejoice;---how fervently I wiſh you long life and happineſs? The warmeſt profeſſions are no more than empty ſounds, and might be uſed by the moſt indifferent perſon.

if

If wiſhing well had but a body in it
That might be felt, then, we the poorer born,
Whoſe baſer ſtars do ſhut us up in wiſhes
Might with effects of them follow our friends.

But as it is, I will only deſire you to delineate in your fancy the ſincereſt and moſt ardent effuſion of tenderneſs and friendſhip, and believe that it ſprings from my heart.

I return you the Ode with a thouſand acknowledgments, and *uncopied* too, but in "the volume of my brain." I dare not give my opinion---you would accuſe me of flattery—neither could any panegyric—but I will not ſay a word about it.

Encloſed with this inimitable piece, O Heavens, what an unworthy companion!

nion!—You will find the *extempore*, which as length, (though reluctantly) I ſubmit to your peruſal, becauſe "*I knew not how to refuſe.*"

Upon ſecond thoughts, I will not encloſe, but tranſcribe it, *in this place*, for I proteſted (if you remember) that it never ſhould go out of my hand---but I will copy it *verbatim et literatim*

When pleaſure thrills through ev'ry vein,
  And trembling nerves confeſs its ſway,
How hard to pen the meaſur'd ſtrain!—
  But *you* command and I obey.
And *** ſhould be my theme—
  But he, alas, is now too near,
Nor in his preſence can I frame
  A verſe to pleaſe his critic ear.

My

My heart with gratitude oppreſt,
Would fain its honeſt tribute pay,
But whilſt I *ſee* my honour'd gueſt,
The pow'rs of language ſhrink away.
When Phœbus darts his noontide beam,
We ne'er to ſing his praiſe aſpire,
O'erpower'd by glory's fervid ſtream,
We pant; and drop the ſilent lyre.
But when he ſinks behind the hill,
And paints with radiance *diſtant* ſkies.
Our freſhen'd ſouls exert their ſkill.
And hymns in chearful chorus riſe.
O pardon then my languid muſe,
As theſe unpoliſh'd lines you view,
And own they merit ſome excuſe
For being wrote to pleaſure you.

I ſhould tell you, my noble friend, that I have been much indiſpoſed myſelf within this week paſt---a kind of feveriſh complaint---with loſs of reſt and

and appetite--but am now greatly amended, and going for the firſt time to take an airing. The chaiſe is at the door.---Perhaps I may fetch Mr. ** to dine with me---but I need not apologize, for my letter is ſufficiently long when the ſubſcription is added---which, if I knew how to compoſe it, ſhould be as reſpectful---as affectionate---as joyful —but ah !—*c'eſt impoſſible*——Adieu. Adieu.

To * *.

YOUR gratulation, my amiable friend, fell not ſhort of the demand my fancy had made on it---it exceeding that demand, and has laid me under freſh obligations.

I admire your diſclaiming the help of eloquence at the inſtant that you practice the moſt refined ſpecies of it. What think you of the *break* in your concluding ſentence? or even the ſimple repetition of the word *adieu?* 'Tis theſe kind of ſtrokes that, through an underſtanding ear, produce the moſt powerful effects. Let me tell you, in the language of Shakeſpear, "You do

ſneak

ſpeak maſterly." Your expreſſions are ſo touching—ſo tender—

> They give a very echo to the ſeat
> Where love is thron'd.——

I peruſe them every hour in the day, and always with increaſing pleaſure.

> O you that have a heart of ſuch fine frame
> To pay this debt of love but to a *friend*,
> How would you love---if *Cupid*'s potent ſhaft---

Would to Heaven the trial could be made!

---

5 o'Clock.

I left off abruptly this morning, and ought to apologize for the levity of my concluding line; but you will excuſe it—you cannot be diſpleaſed with a cheerfulneſs that ſprings from the re-

turn of health, and which, I hope, you will ſoon increaſe by an account of your own perfect recovery. Shall I add——No, I will not——I will for ever baniſh from my heart the ſuggeſtions of a vanity ſo intolerable—and I beg you never to deſire an explanation of this ſentence.

Let me inform you, my good friend, (for you are poſſibly ignorant) what is the chief merit of my letters. 'Tis their incoherency. A ſtrange recommendation, but one that proclaims them the effuſion of the *moment*, which ought to be the characteriſtic of all familiar writing.

And pray now, let me inquire (for I have often intended it) what becomes of

of my letters... Do you preſerve or deſtroy them? Methinks I have a curioſity to know what I have been ſaying to you this year and a half, but more particularly within theſe ſix months. God knows I very ſeldom take the pains of reading what I write to you, leſt any ſtriking tautology ſhould induce me to *correct* or *tranſcribe.*—— Apropos to tranſcription—let me thank you a thouſand times for the *extempore.* The moment I caſt my eyes on it, I ſmiled at diſcovering in two particular lines (which had eſcaped my memory) the *abſolute* reaſon of your unwillingneſs to part with it. Come now—what wager?—but this is not generous—pardon me—I accept it very gratefully upon your own term, and will copy it myſelf.

I have no thoughts of coming to town at preſent.—My movements, in general, are very uncertain. It will, perhaps, be a long time ere we meet, but when we do, I ſhall moſt probably ſay with *Iachimo*, "I'd make a journey twice as far, &c."—Adieu. I know not how to conclude.—Write, write *ſoon*, I beſeech you!

To *.

EXCEPTING two or three on particular ſubjects, as the counſel's inſtruction, &c. I have no letters of yours, my Lord, but what are of this year's date. I deſtroyed the reſt, but have preſerved all theſe in a ſeries, beginning with one that I wrote on New-Year's-Day. I have numbered them according to the dates, and having eraſed every ſyllable that could gratify impertinent curioſity, I keep them very ſecurely in my cabinet, and intended not to review them till after Chriſtmas; —however they ſhall at any time obey your ſummons.

But there are certain reflections ſuggeſted by the contents of your laſt favour, that almoſt induce me to wiſh I had never engaged ſo heartily in this correſpondence. Freedom, unreſerve, were the propoſed conditions—and I *have* wrote freely—ſo freely—that—in ſhort—I don't much like to recollect *how* freely.—Not that I repent of having expreſſed—any thing that *is* expreſſed. —The refinement of delicacy, I know, is incompatible with familiar writing—Indeed our ſex has very little buſineſs with familiar writing. It generally creates embarraſſments of one kind or other—but I thought my ſituation and circumſtance exempted—I don't know what I would ſay—my very ſtyle is perplexed. The meaning of it all is

an

an apprehenſion of having ſuffered in your opinion through a ſuppoſed want of delicacy or proper reſerve.

Nevertheleſs I had rather) if you pleaſe) decline entering into any diſquiſition of the ſubject. It is a cauſe that will not bear examination; and I beg that my acquittal of this charge (if I am acquitted) may paſs in ſilence, which I ſhall regard as a ſufficient juſtification, and begin immediately upon a new ſcore.

After the many obligations you have conferred, I cannot doubt of this being added to the number, and am, &c.

To * *.

I WILL ſpare you "the *examination* of this cauſe," and would have readily granted the whole of your requeſt, had you not talk'd of "beginning a new ſcore if acquitted in *ſilence*."

Let us have no new ſcores, I beſeech you.—My age is a very improper one for beginning new leſſons, and a very ſufficient reaſon for continuing the old.

An apprehenſion of having ſuffered in your opinion through a ſuppoſed want of delicacy or proper reſerve."—Ah! my good friend, of what *texture* is

is this newly-aſſumed veil, that, without diſguiſing, attracts a cloſer obſervation. You knew *my* opinion better; but you were afraid of ſuffering in *your own* for certain expreſſions—(the truth muſt come out; I gave you a hint of it about the extempore) for certain expreſſions of *kindneſs* that had dropt unawares from your pen.———"Don't much like to recollect"——Indeed.—You are aſhamed then of having expreſſed kindneſs for a benevolent old man who regards you with paternal affection.

Are you aware of the inference that ——but I ſpare you—becauſe you have not ſuffered nor ever can "ſuffer in my opinion through ſuppoſed want of de-

licacy," or even "the refinement of delicacy."

In a letter wrote during my illness, I remember disclosing my sentiments with a freedom that I thought became the occasion. Has this openness created a distance between us? It ought not. To the best of my remembrance, I told you, with great simplicity, that I preferred you, in all respects to all women; and had destiny permitted, would have gladly *evinced* that declaration; but is this a reason for your drawing back as it were, and withholding the marks of an esteem of which I am *not* permitted to avail myself? Why do you force me to be unpolite? Why do you oblige me to declare that

I am

I am proof againſt all your attractions; that I never can become your lover; and that, *therefore*, your delicacy can never be impeached, or your reſerve acquitted?

What can I ſay more to ſatisfy you? From the firſt moment of our acquaintance, I marked you down as a ſubject of examination, (my uſual method when tempted to form a friendſhip) and you have not yet failed in the trial. I have ſtudied your diſpoſition; I have fathomed your capacity; I have tried your temper.. I have weighed, in the balance of impartiality, your virtues and your foibles. How do the former preponderate! Let me entreat you not to throw a ſcruple into the oppoſite

ſcale. In a word, I have ſeen you at all hours, in all dreſſes, in all companies, and have obſerved a uniform, an *invariable* delicacy preſide over your whole conduct.

Do theſe acknowledgments anſwer your demand? or will you ſtill diſqualify, and ſtill ſolicit applauſe? Pardon this laſt expreſſion—'tis too ſevere. I had forgot the influence that diffident modeſty has over conſcious merit; and yet I cannot conclude without telling you, in very plain language, my fixed determination.

The abſurd and ridiculous cuſtoms of the world we inhabit, makes it neceſſary (in ſome degree) for us to live apart.

apart. Deprived of your converſation, I am ſolaced by your familiar correſpondence. If you over-ſhadow *this* with unneceſſary reſerve, I will exchange it for the other, and become, in ſpite of oppoſition, your inceſſant viſitor. Chuſe, therefore, one of theſe alternatives, and abide by your choice. Believe me, I had much rather be your gueſt than your correſpondent, and when I recollect my laſt viſit to ***, I can never forbear *wiſhing* to repeat it.

That viſit——You know not, my dear Mrs. **, how many circumſtances, how many agreeable reflections——The moonlight in the garden—Do you remember it?—Twas in croſſing the little

little lawn near the houſe, that we ſtopt ſhort to admire the beauty of the ſcene, and liſten, more attentively to the concealed muſic that vibrated along the hedges. Your hand was within my arm .... It had felt the preſſure of my lips .... You withdrew it ..... Have you forgot that moment? ... *I never* ſhall forget it. Apprehenſive delicacy forbad thoſe natural, innocent, ſilent expreſſions of ſatisfaction; whilſt VIRTUE, in *your* accents. directed our eyes and our thoughts to the ſtarry heavens, and almoſt enabled them to penetrate the azure canopy. What an apoſtrophe! What ſublimity! What tenderneſs! O had the excellent creature to whom ..... but no more, leſt I injure the ſubject. This was indeed

one

one of thoſe precious and unfrequent moments, when, by a happy concurrence of circumſtances, Humanity ſeems raiſed above itſelf, and feels ſenſations of which the vulgar, the ignorant, or the licentious mind cannot form an idea!

I have been reading what I have written, and am pleaſed with my unpremidated digreſſion. I hope it will not *diſ*pleaſe my fair reader. Come, come, my dear friend, for ſo I will call you, think better of this matter. Diſcard affectation. Return my *ſincere* my *diſintereſted* affection with *equal* ſincerity and franknefs. The journey of life is, with me, drawing faſt to a conclufion,

cluſion. *Short* indeed is the remaining paſſage; but rugged to the feet of a weary traveller, and barren to his decaying ſight. Continue, then, to beguile the irkſomeneſs of the way, ſooth him with the ſong of ſympathy, and ſtrew the flowers of friendſhip in his path.

Wedneſday.

This will be a moſt unreaſonable letter, for a freſh ſubject has offered, and one that I have *intended* at leaſt twenty times to mention, and it has always eſcaped me: *Junius*, and his writings. Pray what is your opinion of them, particularly the laſt letter? I am ſure his repreſentations muſt intereſt you a little; but you ſhould diſtinguiſh the

the matter from the manner, and hear both ſides of the queſtion, before you decide on the merits of this popular writer.

I think now that this is a very *opportune* change of our ſubject. Let us then, if you pleaſe, drop entirely all diſcourſe of ourſelves, our ſituation, our ſentiments, and commence politicians without loſs of time. Take no notice of *the firſt part of this letter*, but acquaint me, as ſoon as poſſible, with all your political notions, and, in Quidnunc's language, "*What you take to be the balance of power.*"

But firſt you muſt let me know—though that is needleſs too; for I'll be ſworn

ſworn you are a *Patriot*, a true daughter of Britain; "*always for liberty.*"

No love but that of Carthage fires my boſom.
————for thee, O what for thee,
My ſinking country, would I not endure!

Ay, ay, ſhe did *endure.* She deſerted the fortunes of a decrepid old huſband who was indifferent to her, and threw herſelf.... not from the top of a precipice.... nor into a caldron of boiling oil.... but.... O unparalleled ſacrifice.... ſhe threw herſelf..... into the arms of a handſome young man whom ſhe loved! Poor Sophoniſba! Do you not ſympathize in her ſufferings?

Raillery apart, I beg you will give me your free opinion of this celebrated writer

writer and his compoſitions. I ſhall not influence your judgment by any previous remarks, nor add another line after bidding you very heartily

Farewell.

Thurſday morning.

An unexpected delay obliges me to break my word; but Diſpatch ſhall bring you this, and inform you what a droll accident has befallen the Diligence. I encloſe your two laſt letters to be numbered and claſſed with the reſt, and then be pleaſed to make them all up in a pacquet for him to bring me hither. I want to review, at my leiſure, this little ſeries of billet-doux, nor will you, I hope . . . . . but hold—I had like to have infringed our newly eſtabliſhed

law

law, which is, to ſay nothing of ourſelves at preſent, but as much as we pleaſe on any other topic.

I have already *given* you a topic from which I expect great entertainment. Spread your intellectual pinions, and ſoar at once into the region of politics, ſinging IO *Junius*.

To *.

I WANTED Diſpatch to come for the pacquet in his return from town, as it could make but a few miles difference; but he pleads your commands to the contrary; ſo I ſhall only detain him while "*I write theſe few lines*," and adjuſt the other letters.

The *extorted* commendations and corrective raillery of this laſt favour makes me extremely willing to obſerve your "newly-eſtabliſhed law," and "drop all diſcourſe of ourſelves;" though at the ſame time I muſt aſſure you, upon my word and honour, that my meaning was not rightly interpreted; nor did I think

think that the "beginning a new ſcore" would be underſtood as a deviation from our uſual plan of writing; but let all that paſs. I have now another taſk allotted me, and ſhall engage in it very cheerfully, if you will but hold out the proper lights, and condeſcend to be my political preceptor. I fancy I have not ſeen the laſt letter of Junius. Pray mention in your next who it is addreſſed to. I ſhall for ſeveral reaſons be rather impatient till I have the honour of hearing from you. I am ſorry for the poor Diligence, though the accident was truly ludicroûs; and ſhall be glad to reſume the more eligible conveyance.

There was no forbearing to laugh at your ridicule of poor Sophoniſba's *ſecond*

cond marriage; but you take no notice of the poiſon that was her nuptial preſent, nor of her courage in drinking it. I don't mean (like the young ſtudent in *Emilius*) on account of its nauſeous taſte; but at all events, and moſtly according to *your* repreſentation of the affair, it required ſome magnanimity.

You know very well that I am jealous of my ſex's honour; and there are ſeveral *other* paſſages in your letter, which, notwithſtanding the prohibition —but 'tis no matter.—Be aſſured only, that I abhor affectation as much as indelicacy, and am ſorry for having ſhewn any *appearance* of it. Your reproofs are indeed *ſevere*, but I will profit by them, and intreat you, my honoured friend

friend, never to ſpare my foibles. You ſhall not find me incorrigible. I do acknowledge that I was to blame (though not perhaps in the identical inſtance or degree that you apprehend) and now having, *as you very juſtly obſerve*, no *reaſon* for diſguiſing my ſentiments, I *avow* them, and proclaim myſelf

Your obliged

and moſt affectionate Friend.

FINIS.

Finger-Menden-hall
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Van Tine, Mary Lindsay
mva@upenn.edu

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O maſter of the female heart,
  To whom its ev'ry ſpring was known,
What rapt'rous joy did'ſt thou impart
  To thoſe who once poſſeſs'd thine own.

How bleſt her lot, how envied now!
  Who claſp'd in thee a darling heir,
Or ſhar'd thy tender plighted vow,
  Or claim'd thy fond paternal care.

Ye virgins, pluck the freſheſt bays,
  Ye matrons, deck his honour'd bier,
Ye mothers, teach your ſons his praiſe,
  Ye widows, drop the ſilent tear.

Now ſpread the immortal volumes wide,
  And mark - - - - - - -
- - - - - - - - - - - -
  - - - - - - - - - - -

No female guilt deforms the ſcene,
  No female plots of terror riſe,
Save where he ſhews the murth'rous Queen
  Stain'd with ambition's *manly* vice.