

THE
FASHIONABLE FRIEND:

A
NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE
FASHIONABLE FRIEND.

LETTER XXXII.

Miss CAROLINE TYLNEY to Mrs.
MELVILLE.

YOUR last letter has restored my mind to more composure. The thoughts of losing my sweet suffering friend, convey a pang worse than that of death. Pardon me, Henrietta, for wishing the Almighty may still

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indulge you with many years of life—, it is a selfish, a cruel wish, unless I could restore you to happiness, and *secure* it to you. — I am delighted that you have met with an acquaintance, and have consented to go into company. Endeavour to be amused — It is impossible for you to conceal your beauteous form by the carelessness with which you ever dressed. *That* rather served to add new charms to the elegance of your figure.—I have two or three times indulged myself with an imaginary view of the ladies astonishment when you enter the assembly room at * * * * *, escorted by the venerable Mr. Ashford—the becoming black adding to the delicacy of a
com-

complexion that wants not that advantage.—You will make a conquest of half a dozen hearts at least, if there are so many in the room that have hearts to dispose of.—Mr. Ashford will instantly be applied to for his interest and information respecting his fair companion, and you will no longer be able to indulge your melancholy by living so much alone—Such I hope will be the consequence of your being seen. In a few weeks you will be restored to the fond arms of a husband, and the enamoured swains will be all in the *penferoso* stile. I was ever reckoned to tell fortunes well—therefore presume not to doubt the truth of my prediction.—

I am now composed enough to give you the account I hinted at in my last letter.—My sister begins to suspect the attachment between Mr. Cornwall and myself, by seeing us one evening earnestly conversing together in the garden. With tears she has hinted her suspicions to my parents, declaring that I only did it to deprive her of the man she loved—was sure I had made some imprudent advances, or Mr. Cornwall would not have thought of a young lady that was engaged to a man of Mr. Danby's rank and fortune.—At the end of this tale she added, that the happiness of her life depended on her being united to him, and that death would be the

con-

consequence of a disappointment.—My infatuated parents believe every syllable she tells them, and endeavoured to sooth the artful hypocrite to composure. It was at length agreed that within a few days they would send for Mr. Cornwall, and my father should inform him of Miss Lucy's passion. "If he is not prepossessed in favour of some other, he will gladly accept such an offer," continued my father; "and if he does, you and your sister shall be married on the same day; therefore cheer up, Lucy: and I promise you, if he does not marry you, he never shall marry your sister." — This was gaining a capital point—and Miss was instantly restored to spirits. In a few

days the dreaded proposal will be made. I have not given Mr. Cornwall the least hint of their designs; but will leave him to act in this affair according to the dictates of his own heart and superior prudence. People often by laying a plan in such cases encrease their own distresses, which, if they were left to chance, might end much better.—

Since the above conversation I have been perpetually tormented by the officious, detested Danby.—My father has even told me, that he, and he alone should be my husband. Sooner would I wed my grave: but I am, thanks to a nature, endued with a tolerable share of spirits, and not of a disposition to give a way to despair.—

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Do not be uneasy on my account. Heaven preserve me from adding affliction to the afflicted. Depend upon it, Henrietta, that I shall come off victorious; and the amiable Cornwall will reward me for all those fiery trials which I meet with on his account. Witness my hand,

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER XXXIII.

*Mrs. MELVILLE to Miss CAROLINE
TYLNEY.*

WISER and better is it, my Caroline, to look forward with hope, than to suffer despair to find entrance to our minds.—I admire you for your charming spirits; may they never forsake you, whilst time confirms the truth of each pleasing wished for prediction—But, like all fortune tellers, I doubt you are a flatterer.—

The assembly which I mentioned in my last, was, on account of some persons of distinction, that were coming to visit in two or three families in the
neigh-

neighbourhood, deferred till this week. To morrow is the day.—I have undertaken to be my own milliner, and therefore am busy in preparing for it. Mr. Ashford will attend me — his company alone could make it tolerable. I have begged him, if my unexpected appearance should excite the curiosity of any one to make enquiries after me, which I hope will not be the case, that he will carefully conceal every circumstance respecting me, and only know me as the widow of Mr. Melville, an old friend of his.—He has readily consented to this innocent piece of deceit, which can injure no one — Whilst to remain unknown, is some alleviation to the hard hand of misfortune — I will

—I will not close this letter till I can give you an account of our evening's entertainment.



I am just returned from the assembly—but, late as it is, have no inclination to think of rest. Would you believe it, Caroline? Sir George Beaufort, the father of my cruel, my beloved Charles, was there. When I entered the room, the companion who attended me instantly introduced me to, and procured me the notice of the genteelst part of the company, who with pleased countenances welcomed Mr. Ashford once more amongst them; and in language which spoke the sincerity of their hearts, expressed

expressed

expressed the pleasure which the unexpected addition he made to their party gave them.—The assembly was not large, but genteel. Sir Thomas Maxwell and his Lady, to whom Sir George Beaufort was visiter, were there.—The latter soon singled me out from the rest, and as I refused to dance, attached himself to me the whole evening.—I made use of this opportunity to ingratiate myself as much as possible in his favour. I listened with particular attention to the conversation he addressed to me, and, my situation considered, was in tolerable spirits the greatest part of the evening; but just as the company were going to separate, a lady, whom Sir George rose up to speak to, but who stood

stood near enough for me to hear what passed, inquired whether his son, Colonel Beaufort, was arrived in England. —He returned an answer in the affirmative—said he had been at home some time, and was now on a visit to a friend. —I had heard too much.—Returned, and not to me!—The thought was not to be supported.—I fell lifeless on the floor. My fainting so suddenly occasioned a violent bustle; but I was soon well enough to accompany Mr. Ashford home. None expressed greater uneasiness at seeing me indisposed, than Sir George Beaufort — and, at parting, begged he might be allowed to call upon me the following afternoon. Mr. Ashford answered for me, that a
visit

visit from him would be thought an honour.

At our return Mr. and Mrs. Ashford congratulated me on the fortunate meeting between me and my husband's father—recommended to me to use my utmost endeavours to get into his favour—at the same time represented to me the folly of being shocked at hearing of Colonel Beaufort's return, because I had not seen him; when it was not possible he should have discovered the place of my retreat, except he had the power of discovering things by some supernatural art.—His father said he was gone to visit some friend.—Perhaps he is in pursuit of me—or what is more likely, he may, ere now, believe the tale, which has
every

every where spread itself, of my having gone off with the vile Sir Henry Courtney. Time must unfold the mystery.— I will endeavour to be resigned—and again resume my pen when the dreaded visit is at an end.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER XXXIV.

*Mrs. MELVILLE to Miss CAROLINE
TYLNEY.*

THE visit is over, and my heart more at ease.—How was I surprised, and how rejoiced, amidst my confusion ! As the offer the father made me is a sufficient excuse for the son, whenever our marriage is discovered.—But take the whole as it past.—

Sir George made his appearance about five in the afternoon, and on his first entrance made the most tender enquiries after my health ; again signified his sorrow for my indisposition the preceding evening.—I thanked him—said I was better, but subject to frequent

quent faintings.—“ My constitution is rather impaired,” said I, sighing.—“ Has grief,” said he, “ ever found its way to your bosom, Mrs. Melville?—One would have thought angels had been exempted from its power.”—“ I have no pretensions, Sir George, to so fine a compliment,” I replied: “ I am a mere erring mortal, like the rest of the world, and young as I am, have already borne almost every outrage of fortune.”—“ The recollection of your woes (he returned) must be painful.—Let me persuade you to banish them for ever. I never, Madam, was so struck with the charms of any woman as I am with yours; your modest gentleness, your humility, and ten thousand other name-

less powers of pleasing, have determined me to make you an offer of my hand.—

Without enquiring into the incidents of your life, I am ready to make you mine. The finding you under the protection of this venerable pair, is a sufficient proof of the rectitude of your past conduct. — Sit still, my good friends,” said he, to Mr. and Mrs. Ashford, who attempted to leave the room ; “ Mrs. Melville has, I dare say, no secrets which she conceals from you ; therefore, I wish you to stay, and be a witness to the sincerity of my offers. What say you, Madam, to a husband ? I am rather older than you, ’tis true ; but I will atone for the difference of our ages, by an unwearied study to

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oblige and make you happy. Consider well before you return an answer; recent as our acquaintance has been, I did not make this offer without seriously reflecting upon it — but every added reflection confirmed me in my purpose.” — “The answer I have to give, Sir George, wants no consideration.” — “Say not so, Madam, ’tis a sign you intend to disappoint my hopes.” — “From the shortness of our acquaintance, Sir, I flatter myself that disappointment will not be very great. The compliment you have paid me, Sir George, entitles you to my esteem, and demands the utmost frankness. — You have children, Sir, and were it only on their account, I could not accept your
hand.”

hand.”—“My daughter, and youngest son,” said he, “have disobliged me.—I shall provide for them according to their future behaviour. My eldest son, Colonel Beaufort, must have my estate when I am gone, and he has promised to oblige me very soon, by marrying a lady I have provided for him.” I turned pale, but endeavoured to conquer my confusion as well as I could. “I am sorry to hear your children have disobliged you, Sir George, but hope that they will soon be restored to your favour, and continue to deserve it. I am likewise extremely obliged to you for your generous offer, and for the good opinion which you entertain of me ; but can never think of a second marriage.

My vows were once made to the man I loved ; but never shall to any other. —Early did my youthful heart receive the fond impression, which time can never erase.” He lamented my determination, made use of various arguments, which I told him I was sorry were not in a better cause. “ Were your son, Colonel Beaufort, for instance, to make his addressee to such a needy wretch as I am, what would you say, Sir George ? You would banish him, I fear, for ever from your presence.” — “ The supposition will not hold good, Madam. I begin to think there is not such another female in the world ; if there was, and my son was so fortunate as to gain the prize, the fair object

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would

would plead his excuse with me and all the world.”—When he took his leave, he desired we would not mention what had passed—“It would spare him,” he said, “the mortification of receiving jokes that would wound his heart.”—We promised to comply, and he took his leave ; but said he would call upon us again before he left the country.—Sir George had undoubtedly other reasons for wishing us to conceal his offer.—It would not only save him from the ridicule of the world, but from the mortification of having his children acquainted with his folly :—As they might at any future period plead his example in excuse for themselves.—

When he was gone, Mrs. Ashford

declared, that, had she been in my place, she would have discovered her union with his son. — “What, without knowing, Madam, whether he would acknowledge me for his wife? Has he not promised to wed another? My marriage, you know, though bound with every sacred rite, was not lawful. I have, therefore, no tie but on his honour; no dependance but on that love which alone could make me happy.—Indeed, I once thought them a sufficient barrier against every change of fortune.”—

“And such, I hope, you still will find them,” said Mr. Ashford. “Madam, Fortune seems to be coming into good humour with you; since you have conquered the father, can you doubt your triumph?”

triumph o'er the son, and that too after having suffered so much for his sake?"—

'Tis some consolation, my Caroline, to think that I shall one day be beyond the reach of sorrow, and find security from every danger; and, thank heaven, 'tis in my own power to procure myself a welcome reception in that world, where pain and grief remain unknown, where no forgetful Beauforts can disturb my peace.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER XXXV.

Miss CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.*
MELVILLE.

I BEGIN to think, my Henrietta, that you and I shall one day figure as the heroines of some romance.—And, let me tell you, no very despicable figures should we make. — The fiery trial, which I so much dreaded, is past—and a fiery one it was indeed—the consequences not very pleasing—however, I am determined not to be dejected. I have a lover that will not deceive the confidence which my heart reposes on his truth, and which alone affords it the only prospect of happiness.—Yesterday
Mr.

Mr. Cornwall was sent for, to hear whether he was willing to *sell* himself to misery. My sister, and myself, were desired to keep in our apartments.—She knew on what account—I was left to find it out as I could. However, I imagined what was going forward below stairs, by the restless confusion in which my sister appeared.—About six o'clock the parlour door was thrown open with the utmost violence, and I heard my father rudely desiring somebody never to enter his house again. Immediately after the well known voice of Mr. Cornwall reached my ear.—“I have too much pride, Sir,” said he, “to refuse complying with your command: On my account let not the lovely Caroline

line

line suffer one moment's uneasiness."—
 "Oh! to be sure," cried my sister,
 "she is a lovely creature. Then things
 are as I suspected: but dearly, Miss,
 will I be revenged."—"What, is it
 jealous?" said I. — "Come, come,
 Lucy, have patience, Papa will yet buy
 it a husband."—Her rage was beyond all
 bounds, and just going to break out in
 some pretty invectives, when a voice was
 thundered through the hall with, "*Come
 down, girls.*" Away tript the enraged
 Miss Lucy, I following. — When we
 entered the room, where sat our good
 father and mother, such a scene ensued,
 as would have afforded a fine piece for
 the genius of a Stevens.

By

By what I afterwards discovered, the following conversation had passed during Mr. Cornwall's visit.—On his entrance into the room my father arose, and taking his hand, told him, he had sent for him on an affair of the greatest consequence to his own peace, and his (Mr. Cornwall's) future advantage. The other desired to know what that was—Said he was ready to do any thing in his power to serve Mr. Tylney, or any of his family.—“ I have discovered, Mr. Cornwall, that my girl has a partiality in your favour; and as I would ever study to make my children happy, I sent for you, to tell you that I am so great an admirer of your character, that if you are disposed to become a
husb.

husband, I will give you ten thousand pounds with her.”—Poor Cornwall was in a transport of joy. He took my father by the hand, and in a language peculiar to himself, poured forth the grateful acknowledgments of his honest heart. When he had done: “Will you not compleat your generosity, my dear Sir, by letting me see the charming Caroline?”—“*Caroline!* re-echoed my father!—Why the man is mad. ’Tis Lucy I design for you. Caroline, you know, has been long engaged to Mr. Danby. On her I fix all my hopes of aggrandizing my family.”—Poor Cornwall was like one struck dumb with terror: at length, recovering his speech: “Pardon me, Mr. Tylney, but I cannot

not think of being married to Miss Tylney. This mistake is unlucky indeed. —Long have I seen, long have I lov'd the beauteous Caroline, nor did my heart ever own the power of any other fair one. My deluded soul was in raptures, because I thought you designed to give her to my arms." "So you have long loved the artful minx, have you, Sir? And what, she returns your beggarly love, I suppose, notwithstanding you knew she was engaged. I imagine, the next thing you do, will be to persuade the imprudent girl to go off with you—but know, I would never give her a penny. No—my other disappointed girl should have every shilling."—"I am sorry to find, contrary to

to your professions, that you have so mean an opinion of me," returned Mr. Cornwall.—"Were Miss Caroline as partial to me as you seem to suspect, why should it be deemed a greater crime to love, in one daughter, more than in the other. To shew how little I am to be led by the power of gold, give me, with the beauteous Caroline, only a quarter part of the sum you offered me with Miss Tylney—settle that quarter upon your daughter, it will be sufficient to support her, and a security from distress, gladly will I accept her hand, and though you should not give me one shilling, will never cease to thank you. But do not sacrifice the gentle maid to satisfy an ambition,

tion, which a few years must terminate ; 'tis felling her to certain misery." " And pray, who told you that she must be miserable ?"—" The character of the man you have fixt on.—Nor can any one, who sees Miss Caroline in company with the ridiculous fop, be a stranger to her just aversion." " Do but hear the insolent preaching puppy, wife."—The door was thrown open, and they parted as abovementioned.—

You may imagine, from what had happened, that on my entrance into the room I was loaded with reproaches on all sides.

Lucy wept and raved—abused Cornwall, and insulted me, whilst Papa and Mama endeavoured to console the forlorn disappointed maid.—Mr. Danby

at

at this instant entered the room.—The discovery that had been made was told him, with every aggravated addition which anger and malice could form. They declared I designed to elope with his rival. My father then asked the wretch if he could, after such a proof of my imprudence, consent to make me his wife; that if he could, next week he should receive my hand.—The spiteful envious monster readily accepted the cruel offer, and Lucy exulted in her triumph over me and Cornwall, whom she abused with every epithet which disappointed love (or rather malice) could invent. I was then desired to remain a prisoner in the house, till I purchased my freedom in becoming
a wife

wife—"Or rather give up that and happiness altogether," said I.—"With patience have I hitherto borne all these undeserved insults of rage and cruelty; but since you have taken your resolution, give me leave to take mine likewise. — With sorrow," continued I, addressing my parents, "I am obliged to act contrary to your wishes, because the complying with them would make me for ever wretched. You may drag me to the altar, but no power on earth shall force me to give *that* man my hand when there. I will, before the clergyman, declare the truth of my situation: he will not dare to act in opposition to the laws of God and man. For you, Sir," turning to Mr.

Danby, “know I never despised you half so much as at this moment; methinks your heart appears upon your countenance. If you would wish me ever to forgive your insults, never let me see you more.—As to you, Miss, though you are so many years my elder, and respect is sometimes due to age—yet will I never be accountable to you for any action of mine. It has long been my study to make you a friend; but friendship is a passion too refined to dwell in such an envious bosom.”—Without any opposition I left them to reflect on what had passed, and retired to my apartment, with no very agreeable reflections, as you may imagine—yet my spirits, at present, do not forsake me.

After my departure, last night, the good folks wisely determined to keep me a close prisoner, in my chamber, till I consented to comply with their commands; but thinking this place too near Mr. Cornwall, and knowing what a sly urchin Love is said to be, resolved to accompany me to a house which they have about ten miles distance from this place, to confine me to my apartment, and give my sister the important charge of me. I will not close this letter till I have seen my prison.



We arrived at this dreary, hateful place early this morning—The agreeable Mr. Danby of the party. In an

D 2

hour

hour after my arrival, I was shewn to my apartment, which, by the way, is the dullest and most horrid in the house. Miss Lucy was invested with the full power of guarding her obstinate, disobedient sister—Therefore, behold the fair disconsolate now figuring in the very amiable character of *jaylor*. In spite of all their watchful care, I have already found a friend to convey this letter to you—It is no other than old Jerry, the butler, who has lived with us so long. To him you must direct your future letters, and order them to be left at a little public house about two miles from ours—The servants all dislike the wretch, Danby, whilst they idolize my favourite. What can he think

think of our sudden retreat? Alarmed for my safety, he undoubtedly will perform some feats of Quixotism, and I shall one day see him arrive, armed cap-a-pee, to free me from captivity. With such pleasing hopes you need not fear my spirits will forsake me. Yours, my Henrietta, either in a prison or a palace.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER XXXVI.

Colonel BEAUFORT to Major STANMORE.

BEFORE I had proceeded thirty miles on my journey, I was luckily informed, that Sir Henry Courtney was on a visit to a friend of his who lives in a little village near * * * * *, in * * * shire. I instantly recollected the having heard him mention a friend he had there of the name of Symonds, and directly altered my course, and pursued that to * * * * *. Never had a miserable wretch a more miserable journey. My soul was torn with a variety of conflicting disagreeable passions. No social companion to cheer
the

the gloom within.—At length I arrived at the village—put up my horse, and took my lodging at a little public house, within less than half a mile of Mr. Symonds's.—Sir Henry Courtney once had courage—but the guilty are ever cowards in danger or affliction. I determined not to send a challenge, but by a verbal message desire he would come the next day to such a place, and meet a person who wanted to speak with him on an affair of some consequence. That point settled, I sat down to a simple meal which the good folks provided for me. Before I had finished my repast, I saw the destroyer of my peace go past on horse-back, accompanied by a gentleman and lady, who, I

was afterwards informed, were Mr. Symonds and his sister. The lady appeared about the age of eighteen—her face handsome, and person elegant. Sir Henry was conversing with her, whilst she seemed to regard him with an eye of approbation.—I suppose he has ere now abandoned the fallen Henrietta to all the miseries of guilt and poverty. Scarce could I keep myself from flying to the villain, and demanding instant satisfaction. Prudence, and a fear of being hindered from my purpose, alone prevented me. In the morning we shall meet. If I fail, conceal my story from the world. If justice should this once attend the guilty, I must take my chance. Many
have

have left their country on a worse account. — But where is this unhappy wife? — Though she has abandoned me, still does my heart hang round her. I would save her from farther infamy, by allowing her enough to live obscurely in some retired corner of the earth, provided she would patiently give me up my Jessa. — If I fall, save her if possible, Stanmore, from the rage of a merciless, unforgiving world. Tell her, how I lamented her infidelity, and died in endeavouring to revenge my wrongs upon the curst, the baneful cause. — Though she will not lament my fall, I would compell her to esteem my memory. — My mind is softened by reflecting on past scenes — I dare not dwell

dwelt longer on them. The clock strikes twelve. Every inhabitant of this house is retired to rest. I will to bed: the next night I may sleep on my parent earth. The thought conveys a *melancholy pleasure*—Adieu.

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER XXXVII.

Miss CAROLINE TYLNEY to Mrs.
MELVILLE.

MY sister entered my apartment this morning, just as I was going to dedicate a few lines to my Henrietta. “What! You are going to write, pretty miss—is the letter to be for a lover or friend? Entrust it to my care, you may depend on its having a safe conveyance, and I know of no other possible method your scheming wit can contrive to send it.” “You are even beneath my contempt,” said I, turning to the glass, and pretending to alter my cap: “If a few of my charms would alter your temper, I think, in pity, I would contrive some means

means to lend, or give them to you."

"Insulting, vain flirt!" cried she, throwing herself into a chair, almost out of breath with passion; "the only good they ever procured you, was the notice of Mr. Danby, who has pleaded so strongly in your favour, that your parents have consented to give you the liberty of going down stairs and spending the day with them, to see what effect their indulgence will have on your perverseness; for my part, I wish they do not repent it." "Since that indulgence was granted, only to oblige Mr. Danby, I will not accept it—I am become fond of retirement, and will not owe a favour to him or you." She flounced out of the room, and

and presently a servant appeared, who, in my mother's name, desired me to go down to breakfast. I instantly obeyed. — “As you desired me to leave my apartment, Madam, I with pleasure came down stairs—but I will never stoop to comply with the will of those who have no right to controul me” “I give them that right,” said my father; “and unless you will consent to oblige me and your mother, I still invest them in that right. Never, Caroline, shall you have your will in being married to that beggarly Cornwall.” “I want not to be married to Mr. Cornwall, whose poverty was not considered as a *reproach*, till he refused miss Tylney—
but

but I ought to have the liberty of living unmarried, if I may not have the man my heart could approve.”

“ There,” cried the malicious Lucy, who had till that moment sat silently swelling with passion and envy, “ I hope that is at once a free confession that she is in love, even to you she scruples not to avow it: Miss is quite in high airs to day ; but I did not expect she would carry them so far !”

“ The wishing to live unmarried, if I could not have a man I could love, was no confession of partiality to any one.—Mr. Cornwall is an amiable man, and not the less so, for the generous preference he has shown in my favour.”—“ Girls, girls,” cried my mother, “ have done; do,

do, Caroline, try to restore us all to peace, by accepting the offered hand of Mr. Danby." "Why, my dear madam, must my happiness be sacrificed to pride and envy? I could be content with a very small part of my father's fortune: let him give the rest to my sister, to purchase her a husband that will make her and you happy." — Mr. Danby came into the room; my sister, weeping with passion, run out, declaring she would die rather than be so insulted.—Mr. Danby, with a fawning air of ill-affected compassion, approached me, and offering to take my hand, lamented my cruelty which still made him miserable, as well as myself, —and induced my parents to treat me

with

with a rigor that wounded his heart. —“ Convince me of the truth of what you assert,” said I, “ by instantly withdrawing your hateful pretensions. I shall then regard you as a friend ; but at this instant I look upon you as my worst enemy. You have been the means of robbing me of liberty, and the affections of once indulgent parents. To you I am indebted for the insults I am continually receiving from a cruel sister. Such are the ways you make use of to gain my heart—and do you think it possible to succeed?” “ Consent to be mine,” said he, “ and every pleasure the world affords shall be yours.” “ Never. By wedding you, I should wed every care.” —“ To
your

your room this instant, and never let me see your face again," said my father, "till you accept that generous young man for a husband."—"Permit me, Madam, to take one hour's walk in the garden," said I, "ere I return to my prison. My health will inevitably be destroyed for want of air."—"Why will you destroy it, Caroline? You know not how you distress me and your father. You may go into the garden—but don't stay abroad too long." Mr. Danby offered to accompany me.—"Suffer not that man, dear Madam, to deprive me of the scanty pleasures with which I am to be indulged. I would prefer a dungeon to a paradise, if forced to hold conversation with him."

—“Oblige her this once,” said my mother.—“Your turn will come next,” interrupted my father, as I left the room, and then, with an oath, confirmed the promise he had made him, of forcing me to be his.—

The morning was fine—The garden, which is large, and laid out in the most pleasing and romantic taste, was profusely strewn with ten thousand sweets.—I was not in a humour to relish the beauties with which I was surrounded. The gloom that hung upon my mind, threw a gloom over every flower and every sweet.—I could see that it was my artful sister who urged my parents to this unheard of cruelty, in endeavouring to force me into the arms of
a man

a man I despised; parents too, that had once been so tenderly indulgent. I had supported my spirits whilst in the presence of them and the hateful Danby; but they now sunk to the lowest dejection. I wandered to the furthest part of the garden, which is bounded by a thick hedge, at the back of which is a lane that leads to some of the farmers houses. I sat down on a garden seat, and bursting into tears, gave some relief to my over-burthened heart. Before I had sat there five minutes, I heard a rustling behind the hedge, and instantly Mr. Cornwall bounded over, and was kneeling at my feet.—I gave a faint scream of surprize and joy—He put his hand to my mouth, and softly

begged me to accompany him to a more retired part of the garden for a few minutes.—I arose and conducted him. He there informed me, that he had been waiting about the garden several days, in hopes of meeting with an opportunity of speaking to me—Lamented, in the most pleasing terms, the sorrow he felt at my present dangerous, and gloomy situation, and urged me, with all the eloquence of love, to make use of the present moment in escaping with him, and for ever putting an end to the pretensions of his mean, ungenerous rival.—“Consent, my ever dear Caroline, cried the generous, honest youth, to share with me the poor pittance I enjoy. Gladly would I brave every difficulty,

difficulty, encounter any hardship, to keep your dear bosom a stranger to distress." "Nor is your happiness, Mr. Cornwall," I returned, "of less consequence to your Caroline. For myself, I have no ambition but to be yours: Yet I cannot consent to bring distress and poverty upon the man I love." "Think not of such gloomy prospects, but accept the present lucky moment which offers freedom. To call you mine, would for ever keep me a stranger to discontent. Your present situation, the danger you are in of falling a victim to the arts of an envious woman, and unworthy lover, are the motives which induced me to offer this expedient."—I was silent.—"Hesitate

not, my Caroline—Let us fly this detested place for ever. Your Cornwall cannot give you affluence; but it shall be the unwearied study of his life to make you happy.”—At that instant a voice, which I knew to be my sister’s, and who had, unknown to us, overheard the whole of our conversation, being concealed from us by the profusion of leaves with which the trees are drest, cried out, “Help! help! This moment come, or Caroline will be gone with that villain, Cornwall:” Running, and screaming, as she went along. Mr. Cornwall, instead of flying, clasped his arms around me.—“Unfortunate wretch that I am!” cried he—“to be only a means of encreasing your distress.”

“Leave

“Leave me this moment, dearest of men, or my fears on your account will distract me. You have no weapon to defend you, and will be murdered amongst them.”—“I cannot forsake you, Caroline; for you I would brave any danger.”—“Call it not forsaking, but preserving me,” I cried, almost frantick. “I have no other treasure in life but you.” We heard some persons coming, he saw my distress; and to end my fears, embraced me, and was gone in an instant, first promising to leave no means untried to see me again. My father, mother, sister, Mr. Danby, and two men servants advanced. I was instantly loaded with reproaches, whilst each countenance bore the marks of dis-

appointment at finding me alone. “Little did I think,” said my mother, “that you, Caroline, would have made so ill a use of my indulgence.”—“Curse me,” cried the insulting beau, who received courage from finding his rival gone, “but I would have thrashed the poaching scoundrel most finely, if I had chanced to have found him here—His petticoats should not have protected him from my resentment.”—I gave him a look of contempt, but said nothing. Any excuse I could have made, would not have been regarded. I was hurried to my apartment, which I am not to leave again, it seems, till I consent to *buy* my freedom with the loss of peace—Or, what’s more dear, of Cornwall.

Cornwall.—Since my unexpected meeting with that dear youth, my heart is more at ease—His generous, his disinterested love, amply repays me for all I suffer. Think not, my Henrietta, that my own situation, disagreeable as it is, banishes from my mind the thoughts of yours. I rejoice at the conquest you made of the heart of Sir George Beaufort, whilst I begin to be surprised at the silence of the son? Yet, perhaps, even now he is in search of you—If so, you soon will meet. To make that discovery the more easy to your Charles, go more into company. The love which Sir George has so freely confessed for you, will pave the way to an easy recon-

reconciliation, when he knows you to be the wife of his son.—

I hope you will rely on *me* as a fortune-teller for the future. Write oftener, my Henrietta ; be sparing of your tears, but more free of your letters ; 'tis an age since I have heard from you. This letter is almost swelled to the size of a volume—But the cause must plead my excuse for its tiresome length. The people below are in a close cabal, laying their wise heads together to help forward some pretty scheme.—They are mistaken if they think to bend me to their purpose. They, on the contrary, furnish me with weapons against themselves. A generous treatment would have done much. I should
then

then have been in some danger of obliging them : but, treated as I am, it will never do. Better to be unhappy in compliance with the will of one's own heart, than with that of other peoples.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER XXXVIII.

*Mrs. MELVILLE to Miss CAROLINE
TYLNEY.*

INDEED, my Caroline, my heart bleeds for your distress, and uncomfortable situation. I cannot advise you to oblige your parents, by giving your hand to so despicable and unworthy a being as that Mr. Danby; but, in pity to yourself, and your beloved Mr. Cornwall, avoid going off with him, and consenting to a private marriage. Alas! you know not the miseries with which it may be attended. I should hope, that in a little time, when your parents are convinced that you are not
to

to be prevailed on to marry Mr. Danby, they will give over persecuting you on his account. Your sister, too, must grow tired of the disagreeable office, which she at present fills with so much discredit to herself and the feelings of her heart. Mr. Cornwall has acted like the real lover, and man of honour.—I rejoice that your spirits do not forsake you, my Caroline, at a period when you so much want them, for, like false friends, they too often leave us when we most want their assistance.—

My situation, my friend, remains the same as when I last wrote. The uncertain suspense with which my mind is burthened, grows almost too heavy to be supported, notwithstanding the con-

soling arguments of Mr. and Mrs. Ashford. Solitude and tears are my greatest consolation. Separated from my Beaufort, life is death ; the world a grave. You advise me to go into company ; but I cannot consent to follow that advice. Diversions rather encrease than lessen such woes as mine. At this instant my mind is unusually heavy.—When I began this letter I determined not to complain ; but this hated *self* clings so close about me that I could not shake it off. Pardon me, my Caroline, for adding to your sorrows by a repetition of my own. 'Twas ungenerous, unlike the friendship which I with so much sincerity profess. Sir George Beaufort
is

is still in this part of the world, therefore the farewell visit is still to make.

To oblige me, Mr. Ashford, a few days since, sent a servant to my long abandoned habitation, to discover if any one had been there to enquire for me, or whether any letters had been sent. The old woman gave him a packet, directed to Sir Henry Courtney, on his promising to get it conveyed to him, but which I took the liberty to open; seeing it directed in the colonel's hand.—I have sent you a copy of the letters enclosed within it.—Think how much they wounded an already wounded heart. By the date of them, they must have laid somewhere long concealed or neglected—and must likewise have fallen
fallen

fallen into some one's hands, that knew of Sir Henry's visit to me.

The woman likewise mentioned a gentleman's having been there, who commanded her to make him up a bed for his reception, and said, he was the master of that house ; and who, to use her own expression, *took on* most sadly about some lady. In what a labyrinth of grief and confusion does all this involve me ! I dare not think.

Endeavour to be easy, Caroline ; suffer not your temper to be ruffled by the malignant insults of your sister ; convince her how much you are above being hurt by them—by shewing no resentment.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

LETTER XXXIX.

(Inclosed in the foregoing.)

Colonel BEAUFORT *to* Sir HENRY
COURTNEY.

WHAT can be the meaning of this alarming silence? How ungenerous, thus to play with my impatience! Courtney, from you I never expected such treatment. My heart is tortured by the most distracting suspense. Is it just thus to use the man for whom you profess a friendship? The time is drawing near for my return. 'Tis your own conduct that must determine whether I am to be a friend, or enemy.—

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER XL.

(Inclosed in the foregoing.)

Colonel BEAUFORT to Mrs. MELVILLE.

CRUEL, forgetful, offending Henrietta! Why have you not wrote to him who condescended so often to supplicate for what he had a right to demand? Have you forgotten that you are a mother, and a wife?—Do you no longer remember how chearfully you once promised to obey?—Can you—But surely 'tis impossible—You must be all that's good, as you are all that's fair. Some accident—sickness—something unexpected, unforeseen—must have intervened. Pity me, my wife,
my

my Henrietta, and ease this insupportable suspense. Remove this wounding anxiety from the heart of him — who still loves — forgetful, cruel, thoughtless, as you are.—

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER XLI.

Colonel BEAUFORT to Major STANMORE.

WE have met—and I am come off victorious. On my return to town I left my false friend, to the care of some peasants, with few signs of life. The wounds he has received, I fear, are mortal. No sooner did he appear than I drew my sword. He would have expostulated.—Murmured something of innocence and Henrietta:—But, I told him, I came not to talk, but fight, and bade him stand on the defensive. Some people saw, and were running to part us; but my well pointed sword had, ere they arrived, found its just revenge. Yet the sight of his blood,
whom

whom I once had called my friend, softened my resentment. I would have exchanged forgiveness with him, but he was speechless. After strongly recommending him to the people's care—and giving them directions where to carry him, I set off with a mind much discomposed, and at war with itself. I have received a slight wound in my arm and shoulder ; but intend stopping at some place, in my way, to rest myself and get it dressed. In a few days you may expect to see me in London.

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER XLII.

*Mrs. MELVILLE to Miss CAROLINE
TYLNEY.*

O H Caroline! thou dear suffering friend of the now completely wretched Henrietta; tell me what will fate at last do with me? My only consolation now arises from the certain knowledge of its not being possible that ill-fortune can have greater or even equal trials in store for me like those I have experienced. Was it not enough that I was driven from a husband's arms? — Left within the power of a base artful villain—forced to abandon a helpless infant, the only treasure that

was

was left me? But must I be suspected of a crime which my soul shudders but to think of? Must I, after so long, so painful an absence, be spurned with contempt by the man I love? — Loaded with reproaches which I ne'er deserved, and branded with every epithet which could scarcely be deserved, but by the basest of my sex? — All this I have borne; and yet I live to tell it. The infant dawn of hope, which I so foolishly began to cherish, is now fled for ever. Calamity has marked me for her own.

Why was I ever permitted to be an inhabitant of this miserable world? Completely wretched to myself—calumniated, and deserted by him who

ought to have sheltered and protected me—the dire cause of sorrow to all those who ever regarded me with an eye of friendly pity—can I have farther business with life? Too credulous Beaufort! Unhappy, injured Henrietta! — All my fortitude gives way before this last, but heaviest stroke.

When my mind is enough composed, I will endeavour to give you an account of what has happened, and which has rendered the fictitious name of Melville no longer necessary to conceal that of

HENRIETTA BEAUFORT.

LETTER XLIII.

Mrs. BEAUFORT *to Miss* CAROLINE
TYLNEY.

AS soon as I could call home my scattered and distracted thoughts to any degree of composure, I sat down to give the promised melancholy tale to my dear Caroline. Without any farther complaining prologue, receive the dreadful account.

A few days since, Mr. Ashford, seeing my spirits unusually low, prevailed upon me to accompany him to *****, to make a visit to Mrs. Freeland. We met with a welcome reception from that lady and her husband. She told me I had chosen a lucky day to pay
her

her my long promised visit, as she had a party of her most particular friends coming in the afternoon, to whom she could give pleasure by introducing me to them—as she had heard several of them express a desire of meeting with such an opportunity. I silently returned her obliging compliment with a bow; but was never in a worse humour to mix with company. On their arrival at Mrs. Freeland's, I found them as agreeable as they had been represented, and became tolerably chearful. Opposite Mr. Freeland's house is a large inn, which is noted for the goodness of its accommodation, and which is generally resorted to by strangers. When it was my chance to be out from the
card

card table, I placed myself by the window, to see the people that were passing and repassing in the street—I had not sat many minutes, when, if it is possible to convey any idea of that astonishment, that rapturous joy, may you imagine it, when I saw Colonel Beaufort ride past, and turn his horse into the inn yard. His hair was hanging carelessly about him—his cloaths were dirty—his countenance bore on it the traces of grief and rage—and he seemed to be in pain—whilst marks of blood were on one side of his cloaths. Unable to conceal my emotion, or contain my impatience within bounds till a message could be sent to him—
“My God! I exclaimed, there is
my

my Beaufort, my beloved husband!" I flew out of the room, and the moment he was off his horse, caught him in my arms,—“My Charles! my husband!" I softly cried—“are you at last returned to your Henrietta? Do I live once more to embrace, to clasp you in safety to this fond bosom?"—Oh, Caroline! think, now think what I suffered, when he hastily disengaged himself from my embraces, and with a coldness, a scorn that almost harrowed up my soul, burst into the following invectives, — “Infamous strumpet! base adulteress! these artful blandishments are now too late. I have sent your paramour to that world in which alone justice is sure to triumph over vice.

Think

Think you that I will receive pollution to my bosom?" "Heaven have mercy!" I cried; "Who do you mean?" Many people were by this time assembled, amongst the rest, Mr. Ashford, and the company from Mrs. Freeland's. "Vice ever merits shame," said he, trembling with rage—"before these people I declare I will hold no farther converse with so base a prostitute." I knelt, I took hold of his coat: Sir George Beaufort that instant came by; attracted by the croud, he came amongst them. "Mrs. Melville, and on her knees to my son, what can be the meaning of this?" He leapt off his horse; but I, unmindful of his friendly notice, again caught hold of my husband's coat—"I

am innocent, indeed I am," said I; "condescend, in pity to my wretchedness, to speak one tender word. Permit me at least to vindicate my conduct. Indeed I cannot support the loss of you many months. Sir Henry Courtney will one day clear that innocence, which he vainly attempted to destroy." "His lips are, ere now, for ever closed," said he, spurning me from him with indignation — then calling for his horse — "I am ready to perform my promise, Sir," turning to his father, "whenever you please." "Oh stay till I am dead." — I could say no more. My agony had found its way to the father's heart, though unable to move the son's. "Have patience, Charles," cried the proud,

proud, but softened old man—"Here must be some mistake. Mrs. Melville is the best of her sex; but how you came to know her, and to be authorised to treat her thus, is a mystery I wish to have explained." "Cease to enquire it, Sir; that woman, that pretended Mrs. Melville, is the vilest, the most artful of her sex; in spite of that look of innocence, she is no stranger to the dark joys of guilt. Oh, Henrietta! why did you mimic virtue? Why force me to fly your arms for ever?" — He mounted his horse, and was out of sight in a moment; surprise deprived every one of the power to detain him. I was instantly bereft of life. Mr. Ashford and Sir George caught me in their arms,

arms, and prevented me falling to the earth. The chaise was ordered immediately, and they attended me home. I remained insensible the greatest part of the way, and for many hours after my arrival my faintings continued. During the time in which I appeared in so much danger, Mr. Ashford unfolded the whole affair to Sir George. He was much affected at some parts of my story.—Said, “He could not refuse to pardon his son, notwithstanding the imprudence of his marriage, and the obstinacy with which he had so many years concealed it. I will, in a few days, set off for London in pursuit of my distracted boy,” said he, “and, if possible, get matters cleared up ; but
fear

fear it will be a difficult task to convince him of his Henrietta's innocence, if he has madly robbed his false friend of life."

As soon as I had any interval of returning reason, Sir George approached the bed, and taking hold of my hand, with the tenderest sollicitude, enquired how I found myself, assured me of pardon and his protection, and promised to use his utmost endeavours to reconcile affairs between his son and me. Sir George would not leave the country 'till I was able to quit my apartment, which I did, for the first time, this afternoon, and Sir George sets off in the morning.—

At his departure, he told me, "That though I would not accept him as a

lover, I should ever find in him a father.”—

But, all this time, what is become of my mistaken, unhappy Beaufort? He appeared wounded, and looked as if he was in a raging fever. His hand just reeking with the blood of the deceitful Courtney, perhaps his own life in danger from that crime. Perhaps soon forced to fly for ever from his country, whilst the weight of murder upon his mind will untimely sink him to the grave— And I the cause, the fatal cause of all this grief and misery! I have scarce a thought to give to my poor deserted Jessa— If I die, be you, my Caroline, a mother to her, and, if possible, say something

something to save my bewildered soul
from this distraction. O! Beaufort!
thy love alone, I fear, can soften death,
and ease these agonizing pangs.

HENRIETTA BEAUFORT.

LETTER XLIV.

Mrs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.*
BEAUFORT.

WHY will my Henrietta encourage such blind despair? Why give way to a dejection that must render a change of fortune of little consequence? Without health, 'tis not in the power of those we love to make us happy. Your trials, my friend, are indeed severe—The last was hardly to be supported, even by the satisfaction of knowing yourself innocent of those crimes with which you are so unjustly branded. “Virtue blooms most lovely on a rugged soil :” How much do you
rise

rise superior to your fortune! Heaven, I hope, will fortify your soul, and soon convince you that virtue triumphs over evil.—

Colonel Beaufort, at present, labours under some unfortunate mistake, which a little time will assuredly clear up. Even at the instant that resentment had banished every tender emotion from his heart, the agony he discovered was a proof that he still loved.—Sir George Beaufort has undertaken to plead your cause.—From such an advocate you have every thing to hope: therefore, do not torment yourself with idle fears, which have no other foundation than that of a distempered mind. Should Sir Henry Courtney die of his wounds,

Colonel Beaufort will undoubtedly be acquitted.

Your sorrows, my Henrietta, have almost made me forget my own. Still do I remain a prisoner, and am continually exposed to the rude insults of an unfeeling, jealous sister ;—but a discovery will, I hope, soon be made, that will effectually turn the tables in my favour, and free me from this irksome and undeserved confinement.

I have not seen any thing of Mr. Cornwall since my last letter—am kept too close a prisoner to admit even a hope of seeing him at present ;—yet I do not doubt but that happy time is drawing near. Let your heart, my Henrietta, be governed by such hopes. When
the

the tempest has spent the worst of its rage, the clouds must pass away to give place to a clear and serene sky.

Adieu, my Henrietta; ever, and truly yours.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER XLV.

*Sir GEORGE BEAUFORT to the Rev.
Mr. ASHFORD.*

ON my first arrival in London I went to my son's lodgings ; he was confined to his bed with a raging fever —The consequence of some wounds which he had unfortunately received in a duel—and a violent hurry of spirits which he had undergone. Such was the true opinion of the physicians who attended him. I enquired if I might be permitted to see him —said, I had some circumstances to communicate, that would be a means of restoring his mind to peace. After cautiously preparing

paring him to receive my visit, I was admitted—but found him in a state that far exceeded even my fears. He was quite delirious, and often repeated the name of Henrietta. It was two days before he took any notice of me, when the fever luckily abated, but left him in the weakest state, with several painful wounds in his arm and shoulder, which, for want of being timely attended to, will, in all probability, be a long while before they are healed. The first time I found him tolerably composed, I ventured to name his Henrietta to him: It ruffled him very much; he even raved against her, branded her with inconstancy and ingratitude, begged my forgiveness, and still persisted in declaring,

declaring, that, as soon as he was well, he would perform the promise he had made me, in paying his addresses to the daughter of Lord G——. Thus prepared, I ventured to disclose the whole of that history which I had heard from you,—told him the manner of my first meeting with her; and in consequence of that, the offer I had made.—He was some time buried in profound thought, then, starting, as if just awaked from a delusive dream, declared it could not be—That his wife was as artful as she was guilty. 'Twas in vain I argued in her favour. Disbelief had taken deep root in his heart. Luckily, the next morning, a letter arrived from a Mr. Symonds, a friend of Sir Henry Courtney's,

Courtney's, which contained an account of his being alive, and even likely to recover, though with the loss of an arm : In which letter was likewise enclosed a confession of the whole affair, taken from the lips of Sir Henry when he thought himself dying ; and which so exactly corresponded with that which you had received from Mrs. Beaufort, that it instantly banished every doubt.— And what added to the value of the letter, was a direction where to find their little Jessa, who I shall to-morrow restore to the arms of her parent. My son is now as impatient to see his Henrietta, as he was, a few days since, averse : but as a removal might, at this time, be attended with fatal consequences,

ces, I have prevailed upon him to stay here till he is better able to bear the fatigues of a journey. I have told him in how indifferent a state of health I left his wife, and that it would be equally imprudent for her to come to him. She must not think of it. The bare idea of her undertaking so hazardous a journey fills him with terror.

Your friendship, my good Mr. Ashford, will teach you to break this matter to your adopted daughter, in a manner she can bear : gently hint at the indisposition of her husband, and by degrees give her reason to think that matters will be happily terminated.—The goodness and benevolent pity which you and Mrs. Ashford so timely exerted in favour

your of the hapless, wandering Henrietta, have gained you a son as well as daughter. Colonel Beaufort declares he shall ever venerate you as a father— That he will never fail seeing you every opportunity. Indeed, I believe, if we can happen of houses that will suit us, we shall become your neighbours.—

Yours, with real friendship and esteem,

GEORGE BEAUFORT.

LETTER XLVI.

Mr. SYMONDS to Colonel BEAUFORT.

AT the request of an almost dying friend, I take up my pen to address you. Let not my being the friend of the unhappy Courtney render you regardless of the following lines.—Few have been his failings—Dearly has he paid for them. Yet I am not the friend, but discourager of vice. Sir Henry never, but in this instance, forfeited that rectitude of heart and conduct for which the world so much admired him. You left him to guard a young beauty, whose charms, by the powerful impression they made on him, in a manner
deprived

deprived him of his reason, and made him determine to gratify a passion which till then had been a stranger to his bosom. When he was brought home, the day you so unfortunately met, he was speechless, and remained so for some time. The first use he made of returning reason, was to acquit you of the name of murderer, declaring, you fairly met, and fought in a just cause : that he alone was the aggressor. He then gave me the following account of every circumstance that occurred during your absence, which I here enclose.

[Here follows an account of what happened during the absence of Colonel Beaufort,—Of the declaration which Sir Henry made of his passion,—The
 I attempt

attempt which was made to bribe her servant,—Henrietta's flight,—His repentance,—The care which had been taken of the child,—And a direction where to find her,—exactly as has been recounted before.]

The above is an exact and true recital of every thing that past when you was absent from England. Sir Henry never either saw, or heard the least tidings of Mrs. Beaufort since her flight: Nor could he ever, after the greatest care, the strictest search, discover any traces by which she might be found. He says, his only chance of happiness depends on your being more fortunate. He likewise begs that you would write a line to me, to assure him of your forgiveness

of

of what is past ; he will not ask you to write to himself : If you are again blest with your Henrietta, to ask the same favour from her.

For a long time the surgeons were doubtful of his recovery ; his wounds were many and dangerous. They now think he will live, but are of opinion that he will lose the use of his right arm.

If so fatal are the attempts of vice, what misery must the success of such base designs bring with them ! And how many are often involved in ruin by one bad action ?—Justice is due even to an enemy.—Rapid was the fall of Sir Henry ; short the continuance of that fall ; quick and sincere his repent-

ance. 'Tis certainly virtue to forsake vice.

How often do the innocent suffer with the guilty ! I have a sister in all the bloom and pride of life, who unhappily saw our fallen friend with too great a partiality for her future peace. She feels his wounds within her heart. When he continued insensible, she would suffer none but herself to attend him, and now submits that others supply her place to conceal her weakness from the man she loves. Sir Henry is no stranger to her tender attachment, and, I believe, makes an equal return : She now reigns unrivalled in his heart. It was once, and is again, my first wish to call him brother. An unerring conduct

duct is not to be expected from such frail mortals as we are.—Sir Henry Courtney, though not faultless, has a thousand virtues.—Write immediately, and give ease to a suffering penitent by granting the pardon he solicits. To return good for evil, is a sure proof of a noble and great mind.

WILLIAM SYMONDS.

LETTER XLVII.

The Rev. Mr. ASHFORD to Sir

GEORGE BEAUFORT.

I RECEIVED the honour of your letter, and followed the directions it contained; but Mrs. Beaufort, unable to bear either suspense or surprize, insisted with such eagerness to see a part of its contents, that it would have been the highest cruelty to have denied her.—I shewed her the place where you mentioned your son's having been indisposed, with the account of his being better—Gently hinted at his suspicions being in part removed, and that the most pleasing consequences were likely to ensue.

Not-

Notwithstanding all this care, in breaking the matter to her, she fainted twice during our conversation. I would advise, by all means, that you, Sir George, the Colonel, and the little Jessa, come to this place with all possible expedition. Mr. Freeland thinks that the life of Mrs. Beaufort depends on her mind's being restored to peace. She read the letter which the colonel received from Mr. Symonds ; said, Sir Henry had strictly done justice in his account, and wished him to receive that pardon which she long had granted. I hope the Colonel will not refuse to grant him his request. Much sweeter is forgiveness than revenge.

Talk not, Sir George, of any favours which my good woman and I have conferred on Mrs. Beaufort ; the obligation is greatly on our side. She has restored to us the daughter we had lost. The sweet uncomplaining sufferer has taught us a lesson of patience and resignation to the will of heaven, such as we never saw before. The hopes you gave us, in your letter, of settling in this part of the world, have given pleasure to us all. Our beloved daughter, Henrietta, (permit me still to call her so) expressed her desire of never being parted from us, till that final separation takes place which must divide the tenderest of friends. We have had some difficulty to prevail with Mrs. Beaufort not to
 attempt

attempt writing to her husband, which, for some time, she seemed determined to do ; but as the attempt must be attended with a review of that painful scene to which you were a witness, it were better to be avoided.—

I once more entreat you, Sir George, that you will lose no time, but set off for this place the very earliest opportunity. I have the honour to be Sir George Beaufort's obedient and very humble servant.

NATHANIEL ASHFORD.

LETTER XLVIII.

Colonel BEAUFORT *to* WILLIAM
SYMONDS, *Esq.*

THE first use I make of my being able to hold a pen, is to comply with your request, and to thank you for the favour of your letter. Assure Sir Henry Courtney of my forgiveness, and that of my Henrietta. Tell him, that although I cannot consent to hold any farther acquaintance with him, after being so cruelly deceived, I sincerely wish his happiness, and that of your lovely sister; between whom, I hope, an union will one day take place.—Human nature is degenerate. We should, I allow, condemn none, unless
we

we knew the power of the temptation they had to encounter. My Henrietta is safe. I can pardon and even pity the man I wounded; because I know how great is the power of those charms which subdued such a mind as his.— I have much to be forgiven. I have not seen my Henrietta but once, and then by chance, when my mind was loaded with the most unjust suspicions of her honour, and when my reproaches wounded her gentle bosom more severely, than my sword did that of an offending friend. The wounds I received in my encounter with Sir Henry, are far from being healed, owing to my neglect of them at first. Would passion and injured
love

love have suffered me to listen to the voice of reason, it had not been. Till now, I never repented drawing my trusty sword; and had Sir Henry Courtney fallen by my hand—it would ever have been a burthen to my soul.—

Vainly does man boast of strength and fortitude to subdue his passions, and conquer the trials of human life. To talk of a power over nature, is the folly of philosophers—I cannot boast of such a power. The husband, lover, father, friend, are the inhabitants of my heart. In defence of those endearing ties, nature will exert her utmost efforts; yet far be it from me to vindicate the custom of duelling. By myself I stand condemned for
daring

daring even to lift my hand against the life of *him* who appeared to have robbed me of a treasure, far dearer than life itself.—In return for the pardon I have granted, I now solicit the same from him and heaven.—

Within a few days I hope to be able to pay a visit to my Henrietta, and to restore the gentle sufferer to that felicity which she so well deserves.

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER XLIX.

*The Rev. Mr. ASHFORD to Miss
CAROLINE TYLNEY.*

YOUR amiable friend, young lady,
in pity to your anxiety on her
account, has solicited me to write.
She is better than she has been for
some time past; but till quite recovered,
is forbidden to use the pen.—The
most pleasing prospects have succeeded
those gloomy ones, which for so long
a time hung threatening o'er her
head. Colonel Beaufort, convinced
of her innocence, and the cruel in-
justice he has done her by his sus-
picions, is impatient to make atone-
ment;

ment; but at present has been prevented by illness. He is expected by your fair friend with an impatience equal to his own: she will be ready to grant him pardon, the moment he arrives to ask it.

Your Henrietta desires you to be perfectly easy on her account, as the serenity of her mind will, she hopes, soon restore her to health. She likewise requests by me, her amanuensis, that you would write immediately.—It was not clever of this Henrietta to introduce me to her friend, in so disadvantageous a manner. My time for being a good letter writer is past; I am now become the child of age. However, shew some attention to
my

my trifling letter, by answering it immediately—Your friend is impatient to hear from you. Remember how expectation clips the wings of time. Yours, madam, with respect and esteem.—

NATHANIEL ASHFORD.

LETTER L.

Miss CAROLINE TYLNEY to Mrs.
BEAUFORT.

JOY to my Henrietta, on that reverse
of fortune which has taken place.
May returning health and every smiling
joy crown many succeeding years with
uninterrupted peace. May our stories,
my Henrietta, prevent every mortal
from presuming to doubt the goodness
of a protecting providence: how often,
when we are led by despair to ima-
gine ourselves the most wretched of
human beings, do we find our suf-
ferings at an end, and that those evils
of which we complained, were to be-
come

come the very means of making us happy !

By this time, I hope, you are restored to the arms of a fond, mistaken husband, and that your little Jessa is prattling by your side :—Whilst her sweet innocent caresses convey additional transport to your delighted heart. Had happiness still been denied to you—it could not have dwelt with me.—

Before I proceed to unfold the pleasing change which has taken place in my affairs, since I last wrote to you, I must beg you would make my acknowledgment to the good Mr. Ashford for the favour of his letter, which was a most acceptable visitant, and I pressed the dear stranger to my lips.

Tell

Tell him too, that he could not have been introduced in a more pleasing manner, had it been on any other account than the illness of the dear sister of my heart. — However, as it brought hope and consolation with it, it is regarded as a treasure, and placed amongst my most valued letters.

In my last letter I hinted at a discovery which was likely to be made. The misery of my situation alone, could lead me to wish for such a discovery, which must inevitably expose the guilt of my imprudent sister—but not to anticipate the events which succeeded, I will endeavour to describe them as they occurred.—

For many days after I had sent my last letter to you, I continued a close prisoner within my chamber. I was left to the mercy of a sister, who dealt me pleasure with a scanty hand. Whenever she saw my spirits lower than usual, she exulted with the most reviling triumph, and that determined me to conceal my grief as much as possible. Mr. Danby, instead of being hurt by the sorrow and oppression he had brought upon me, seemed to join with my sister in her envious triumph: frequently have they walked underneath my window, when the pleasant breezes of the evening have succeeded the sultry heats of day, laughing at me for my well chosen confinement. “It

was time," said Lucy, "for the pretty bird to be secured within a cage, or it had surely flown away with the demure, sanctified Cornwall; but it shall have a mate when it has shaken off its sulky humour." "Dear Miss Tylney," cried the smiling wretch, "spare your cruel sister." "Oh, I beg, Sir, you would *spare* your entreaties on *my* account. Miss is extremely welcome to shew her wit, since it is at her own expence. I am above being wounded by such low revenge. As to you, man, who have the art to hide beneath a gaudy dress, and fawning manners, a heart replete with every vice, I would prefer death in any shape, rather than a union with thee."—"Let us be gone,

good Mr. Danby," cried Lucy, catching hold of his arm; "the girl looks and talks as if she were going to act a Roman's part. Oh, these beauties have such fine romantic notions. The man is to be pined that has any thing to do with them. Believe me, *Brother Danby*, you will have a hard task of it to subdue her stubborn spirit, and make her act and think like a reasonable creature." — "With souls mean and base," said I, "and I fear the private practisers of vice, you are poorly but agreeably employed, in aggravating the sorrows and failings of others; that, if possible, you may bring them to appear upon a level with yourselves; you envy the happiness

you cannot know.—I have a pleasure seated in my own breast which you cannot deprive me of—the pleasure of having acted right.” I closed the window, and left them to amuse themselves as they thought proper, retiring to the farther end of the room, and taking up a book which laid on a chair; but I had not sat five minutes, before I was interrupted by my maid, Constance,—who had lived with me from my being five years old,—but who had been forced, on this change of affairs, to attend my sister; whilst a pert Abigail, who delighted to imitate the ill-becoming airs of her mistress, poorly supplied her place. “Thank God,” cried the faithful creature, “that I have

at last found you, my dear young lady, alone. Oh ! miss Caroline, you cannot think how many hours I have grieved on your account ; but things are coming round, and a fine discovery will soon be made—then some folks will know how to value other folks. I have suspected it a long time.” “ What do you mean, Constance ? You know I never allowed you to speak disrespectfully of any one in this family.” “ Yes, yes, I know you have ever been too good for those you had to deal with ; but I say again, things are now coming round, it is what I have long wished.—I hope you will permit me to speak the truth, now your own happiness is so much concerned in it.” I bade her
proceed ;

proceed; for indeed, Henrietta, my curiosity began to be prodigiously awakened. After carefully looking at the door, to see if any one listened to our discourse, she went on:—

“ You must know, miss Caroline, that before we came to this house, I shrewdly suspected that there was a more intimate acquaintance between Miss Tylney and Mr. Danby than there ought to have been; but as I know you to be good and un suspicious, I did not say a word: howsomever, the night after our coming here, I overheard a conversation that past between them, which confirmed my suspicions.

“ I own, I should have liked Corn-
 “ wall,” said your sister, “ better than

“any man I know, for a husband;
 “because I could easily have imposed
 “on his foolish unsuspecting nature,
 “and our acquaintance might have con-
 “tinued. You must allow, though, that
 “I am mighty civil in taking so much
 “pains to procure you a wife;—how-
 “ever, the promise you have made me
 “of giving into my possession a part of
 “Caroline’s fortune, and the delight
 “of triumphing over, and even rival-
 “ing that proud beauty, who, from
 “infancy, has been the idol of her
 “parents, and every other heart, whilst
 “I have remained unnoticed, slighted,
 “and sometimes almost forgotten, have
 “determined me to pursue my point.—
 “The prospect too of making that pe-
 “dantick

“ dantick coxcomb suffer, who has
 “ even dared to refuse me, is another
 “ prevailing motive.” “ These were
 “ nearly her words. Mr. Danby em-
 “ braced her, and by some words that
 “ followed, I heard him appoint a
 “ place to meet her; I was determined
 “ to watch them, and after the family
 “ were all in bed, as they thought, I
 “ saw him go into her chamber; and, a
 “ few mornings after, saw him stealing
 “ from Miss Tylney’s—to his own
 “ apartment.—Pardon me, Miss Ca-
 “ roline, for making old Jerry the part-
 “ ner of my discoveries.—He has fre-
 “ quently been a witness to the truth of
 “ what I tell you, and the next time he
 “ fees

“ sees Mr. Danby go into your sister’s
 “ room, is determined to call my master
 “ and make him a witness likewise.—I
 “ see you are shocked,” said the good
 creature, “ but, indeed, Miss Caroline,
 “ I have told you only the truth.”—

After desiring her to conceal this diabolical affair as much as possible, and to impose the same silence on Jerry, I dismissed her, without endeavouring to counteract the scheme they had planned, thinking it quite right my father should be acquainted with it, and not choosing myself to be the messenger of such ill tidings—Nor did I doubt but he would take every precaution to conceal his daughter’s infamy from the world.

world. — But, indeed, my Henrietta, this additional proof of the depravity of my sister's heart, with the certain knowledge of the extensiveness of that malice, which she so unjustly harboured against me, filled my bosom with regret and anguish. With what horror, too, did I reflect on that *wretch* with whom my mistaken parents had taken so much pains, and even proceeded to such unwarrantable lengths, to force me to be united.—Had they gently entreated—I had yielded, and been undone. What an abandoned hypocrite! Justly founded was my dislike, which I could never conquer from the first hour he pretended to be my lover.

Adieu,

Adieu, my Henrietta. Without waiting for an answer, I shall proceed with my narrative the earliest opportunity.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER LI.

Miss CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.*
BEAUFORT.

I SAW my sister no more that evening, after the conversation mentioned in my last, which had past between Constance and myself. In the morning, as soon as it was light, I heard a most violent bustle in the adjoining apartments, and a screaming as if some one was in fits.—I durst not ring the bell to enquire the cause. About seven o'clock, my mother entered my chamber, and softly opening the curtains to see if I was awake ; I immediately rose up in my bed, and with enquiring eyes, looked

looked as if I wished to know the cause that had procured me the uncommon favour of a visit. "Oh! Caroline!" cried she, bursting into tears, and throwing her arms around me, "your unhappy sister has placed daggers in the hearts of her parents. Mr. Danby was" — "Spare the rest, my dear madam," said I, mixing my tears with hers, "I too well guess what you would add; my faithful Constance, last night, told me the whole." "And can you weep, my dear injured girl," said she, "for the distress of those who have so cruelly treated you? 'Tis a generosity natural to my Caroline." "But what is to be done," cried I, "or how is this horrid story to be concealed from the world?"

"Mr.

“Mr. Danby,” said she, “terrified at the sudden and unexpected appearance of your father, has offered to make all the restitution in his power, by marrying his partner in iniquity, and they are this morning to be united. The disagreeable face of affairs will admit of no delay. He is to give her ten thousand pounds ; and as soon as the ceremony, is performed they are to set off for Mr. Danby’s country house. Your father, like me, is impatient to clasp you to his repenting, and again parental bosom ; but will not request you to come down stairs, till the designing, and, I fear, miserable pair have left us. I must now leave you, my Caroline, to attend your humbled sister ; she has,

’tis

'tis true, forgot the duty of a daughter, but I cannot forget that I am a mother." With tears, my poor distressed parent left the room. Cruel, as Lucy had ever been to me, I could not help lamenting her situation, and must have pitied the most depraved wretch living, that was doomed to spend her life with such a man.—Not to keep you in suspense, the next day they were married, and within two hours after the ceremony was performed, took their leave. They appeared discontented with each other; and Mr. Danby could not forbear giving several proofs of his dissatisfaction and ill-humour as soon as he became a husband. Fear alone compelled him to give his hand to Lucy. He once
called

called me an angel—at the same instant giving his wife a look of contempt. My father and mother strongly recommended to them to endeavour to be happy ; gently hinted at their imprudence and injustice. Before Lucy left the house, she begged leave to speak a few words to my mother. When they had retired to another apartment, she threw herself on her knees, confessed her guilt, begged my mother's forgiveness, and entreated that she would intercede for her with me : Said; she could not bear to take any leave of me. Soon after, a hired chaise came to the door, and they departed.

As soon as they were gone, my father and mother hurried to my room ; both

eagerly embracing me, by turns, condescended to entreat I would pardon what had past, and even acknowledged the cruelty of parents in endeavouring to force their children to give their hands contrary to the wishes of their hearts. My father, with regret, mentioned the sordidness and ambition which he had, for a long time, cherished in his bosom, and thanked heaven for timely discovering his folly, ere he had sold me to certain misery. Unknown to me, a servant had been sent to Mr. Cornwall to desire his company in the afternoon.—When he arrived, he found the dear youth in a state of the most painful distraction. The news had been carried to * * * * *, that Miss Tylney

was

was that morning married to Mr. Danby ; and as he had so long been known as my declared admirer, no one doubted but I was the happy bride. Poor Cornwall, who had, for many days, vainly attempted to see me, concluded that I had been compelled, by force or stratagem, to give my hand to his rival.—By the misery he endured—and the complaints he made, he discovered his passion to all around him. When the servant delivered his message, and so agreeably undeceived him, with respect to the name of that sister who had submitted to wear the matrimonial fetters — (and heavy fetters I fear they indeed will prove) he was as much elevated by an extravagance of

joy—as he, before, had been deprest by sorrow. On his arrival at our house, my father cheerfully bade him welcome, and with a delighted countenance introduced him to his Caroline. “You have both discovered such penetration,” said the now good, and tender parent, “in refusing the person proposed to you, though offered with such considerable bribes, that I imagine your penetration is equally good in discovering merits and charms in each other; and I think it would be a pity, and even cruel, to part you—therefore, Mr. Cornwall, I here give you the hand of our beloved Caroline, with fifteen, instead of ten thousand pounds, which I once offered you with a less deserving female, and as

an atonement for the uneasiness I made you suffer." We threw ourselves at his feet, and were raised with grateful fondness. — On observing that Mr. Cornwall looked pale and hurried, I begged to know the cause, and he gave me the above account : said, his extreme, and unexpected happiness would, for the present, prevent his spirits from being composed.—In the evening, those two faithful servants, Constance and Jerry, were summoned into the parlour, and had each of them a handsome reward for their fidelity, and promised secrecy. To compleat the felicity of my maid, she was again reinstated in her place.

Mr. Cornwall, thus encouraged to

hope every obstacle was removed, that so lately appeared to impede his happiness, ventured to solicit me, in the presence of my father and mother, to fix an early day. I then, my Henrietta, unfolded to them the whole of your melancholy history: declared I could not think of becoming a bride till your affairs were in a happier train; said, that I would wish to have every painful regret removed from my heart, that not one sigh might overcloud that day on which I gave my hand to Mr. Cornwall, which could not be whilst you were so distressed. They admired your conduct, and shed tears at the repetition of your sorrows, and acquiesced in my determination.

Thus

Thus stand affairs at present. Tell me you are happy, nor shall I feel the less pleasure at that agreeable confession, though my lover immediately claim my promised hand. I was in a good humour when I made that promise, to be sure ; however, I don't mean to retract it.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER LII.

Mrs. BEAUFORT *to Miss* CAROLINE
TYLNEY.

PERMIT me to return my Caroline the same congratulations which she sent to me, with every added wish for happiness that her own heart can form.—Present them from me to your worthy lover. The coming from your lips, my sweet friend, will make them of some value. I now, my Caroline, with an heart at ease, and a bosom overflowing with gratitude to that bountiful Providence which has heaped such unnumbered blessings on my drooping, and almost despairing head, can tell
you,

you, I am happy, even raised to that pitch of enviable felicity, that not one wish is left ungratified. My health is mended far beyond even the expectation of my anxious tender friends ; for with such only am I now surrounded. The meeting between Colonel Beaufort and your Henrietta was solemn, and tender beyond description. The day before he arrived, a note was sent to Mr. Ashford, to inform him that Sir George Beaufort and his son would be with us the next afternoon by tea. Soon were the joyful tidings communicated to me, and my fond heart was thrown into the most agreeable agitation, but which, the weak state of health I was in, would hardly support. My cloaths had been
sent

sent to me some days before, and I dressed myself, against his arrival, in white satin. Every moment of that day appeared lengthened to a month, till that happy one arrived which brought him to me. The instant the chaise stopt at the door, the little anger I had felt, for the unjust suspicions he had harboured of me, subsided. With a graceful, and dejected air, he approached me, and kneeling at my feet:—“Can you forgive, and restore to favour, a guilty, but repenting husband? Oh! Henrietta! much have I suffered for my folly, my almost unpardonable insulting rage.—I might have known that an angelick guard would be near to protect your purity.”—“Rise, Oh! Rise,

Rife, my beloved Charles; your suspicions were indeed cruel, unjust both to yourself and me; but indeed I harbour no resentment against you for them. Thus, kneeling by your side, let me thank that benevolent Being who has at last so graciously restored you to my arms." — "I would not hinder your gentle triumph," cried Sir George, entering the room with my little Jessa in his arms, "but I have still another valuable present to make my daughter." Another scene of luxuriant joy ensued. The child clasped her little arms around me, and conveyed an added transport to my heart.—Mr. and Mrs. Ashford, with friendly *cruelty*, interrupted the scene of soft delight, by reminding me
of

of my health, and advising me to subdue the violence of my emotions. The caution alarmed my Beaufort: he arose, and, with an agony of pity, and softened love, looked with surprise and terror at seeing the alteration which grief had made in my once healthy countenance. At the same instant I was employed in the like agonizing manner. He looked pale and emaciated; one arm was in a sling, and he seemed so weak he could hardly walk; but it was not so with our blooming Jessa! who looked the picture of health and ease, and soon began to entertain us with a Scotch dialect which often wanted an interpreter.—The next morning, Mr. Ashford, at the request of *Sir George*, once more joined our

hands

hands in the parish church; whilst with his *he* presented me to his son. At our return he gave him a writing, which insured him an income of twelve hundred pounds per annum, out of which he desired a handsome settlement might be made on me. This, with what his commission brings in, will enable us to live in a very genteel manner.

To add to our happiness and pleasure, we have happened of a handsome house within two miles of Mr. Ashford's, which Sir George has purchased for his son, and has agreed to live with us, whenever he chuses to reside in this part of the world. My husband has likewise used his utmost endeavours to reconcile his father to his brother

and

and sister, and has so far succeeded, that he has promised to write to Harry, and give him an invitation to return; and likewise as soon as we are settled, to go down into Derbyshire, and free his daughter from her disagreeable captivity. She is then to be my visitor for as long a time as I please. Colonel Beaufort speaks very highly of his sister; says, she was once of a most amiable disposition; but her mother dying when she was very young—she was, unhappily, always left to the power of strangers—the mistresses of boarding schools seldom attend to any other than external accomplishments; therefore, for want of proper instructions being early instilled into her

her young mind, she was gay and thoughtless; who can wonder at her indiscreet connection? — Mistress of a pretty person, exposed to the flattery of the men, the prospect of having a large fortune, and often driven to seek pleasures abroad, by the strangeness of her father's temper; she is much to be pitied, and I am impatient to embrace, and endeavour to render her more happy.—

Mr. and Mrs. Ashford share in our felicity; already they are become fond of my little Jessa. — Never will it be in our power to acknowledge enough the obligations which they have conferred; as the best of parents I shall ever regard them, and it is a considerable

able addition to my happiness, that I shall live within so short a distance from them. We have received congratulations from many families in the neighbourhood, on our happy reunion ; with wishes, that no disagreeable occurrence may ever intervene to part us more.

Colonel Beaufort has been over, accompanied by his father, to our former habitation ; Sir George greatly admired the pleasantness of its situation. At his return, laughed at us, for the indulgence it once afforded our romantic loves. They would have had me accompany them ; but I begged to be excused. The old woman who had been left by Sir Henry Courtney, was
still

still there. The Colonel rewarded her for her honest care. After paying the rent, giving warning to leave it, and likewise giving directions for the packing up, and sending the furniture to us, he took his leave, with reluctance he said, of that spot where he had spent so many happy hours. Our new habitation will be ready in four months. We have agreed to stay with Mr. and Mrs. Ashford till our healths are more perfectly re-established: then we are to accompany Sir George to London, and remain at his house till our own is ready; in which time I am to be introduced to Miss Beaufort.

Mr. Freeland declares that *Love* is a doctor that works miracles—that

his art excels that of any son of Esculapius.—A few weeks ago, he declares, that he despaired of my life. I am now too lively, he says, to be *very* ill, and he doubts not but in a few weeks I shall be perfectly restored to health. The Colonel too is finely, and has recovered his former healthy and pleasing looks.—

I think Jessa is not so happy at this time as her mother ; for notwithstanding my caresses, those of her father, grandfather, and other friends, she frequently weeps, and calls for her nurse : it is a proof of her kind treatment of my child, during my absence from her. I have sent her a handsome present for her care and humanity ; but as she

once

once deceived me, and had even received a bribe to betray my innocence, can never think of seeing her more: those tender attachments, though at first deeply imprest on the minds of children, soon wear off.

The length of this letter, my Caroline, is a sure proof of my returning health. I thank you for the very kind compliment you paid me, in deferring to complete your own happiness, whilst mine remained in a state of uncertainty; but indeed, my friend, you ought not to have made a compliment at so great an expence to the man you love:—it was enough to make him dislike me. —Now every obstacle is removed, I

hope you will soon reward his patient acquiescence with your request.

I cannot close this letter without mentioning your unhappy sister, for such I think we may venture to pronounce her. Can we imagine a more miserable situation, than for a woman to be married to one who must despise, and have the meanest opinion of her? even a man, whom she herself despises. Is it not natural for such a man to suspect that the woman, who could give up her innocence to gratify her revenge and avarice, would scruple to err again, whenever she met with one more agreeable than himself?—On the contrary, your sister knows that she was not the object of Mr. Danby's love,

love, and consequently her thoughts will soon fix on one that she thinks is so. Thus, suspicion, that dire enemy of love, is unavoidably planted on both sides, whilst dissatisfaction will introduce disgust.—I pity, as much as I despise them, Caroline—Fear and shame are two great restraints upon mankind: they are deeply rooted too in almost every heart; but with this pair they had no influence. How fortunate was your escape from both!—

Write soon; but remember I do not expect your letter to be signed with the name of Tylney.

HENRIETTA BEAUFORT.

LETTER LIII.

Mrs CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.*
BEAUFORT.

NEXT Tuesday fortnight is fixt on
for the day in which I am to give
my hand to Mr. Cornwall. The law-
yers, who, you know, my friend, are,
in general, mighty slow with their pieces
of parchment, occasion this delay : but
I shall have but little reason to regret
it, if you will kindly consent to favour
me with your company on that day.—
My father and mother desire me to pre-
sent their entreaties, with mine, to Sir
George Beaufort, the Colonel, Mr. and
Mrs. Ashford, and beg they would
escort

escort you hither. They can have no excuse for denying this request ; therefore, I will not listen to a refusal. My mother is very desirous of seeing you, which she has not done for several years before you became a wife ; but think, my Henrietta, how great my impatience is for that delightful pleasure. Think too, how much it will add to my happiness to have the dear friend of my heart with me at such a time, and let *that* generously induce you not to refuse me. The apartments are already preparing against you arrive.—I was once so happy as to be a favourite with colonel Beaufort, and hope he will kindly stand my friend on this occasion.—The journey, and change of air, will be

of infinite service to you, and I will take great care of you whilst here.—

We lately received a letter from my unhappy, imprudent sister, which has thrown a damp upon our hearts. She sends word, that she is as completely miserable as she deserves to be: that Mr. Danby has taken to drinking; and, when disguised with liquor, treats her with the most savage cruelty. He will not allow her to see any company, and denies her every indulgence which her present situation so much requires. She concludes her letter with saying, she deserves the misery which she feels, and even condescends to ask my forgiveness, which my mother has assured her of.—
When I am become the wife of Mr.
Cornwall,

Cornwall, my father intends going over, and endeavouring to soften matters between them. — He may succeed for a time; but where people wantonly give up their best friend, a mind at peace with itself; little hopes are there of securing them happiness by our most friendly endeavours. There are reflections, too, much more cutting than even those which bring to our remembrance what one *has*, or *might have* been — especially if our own misconduct has brought about the miserable change. — Such is the case with Lucy. —

Mr. Cornwall continues to be all that the heart of Caroline can wish. He is likewise such a favourite with my parents, that they regret his absence, if
but

but for a few hours. Already has he rivalled me in their affections ; but he has gained the conquest by ways that have done himself honour, and given me the highest pleasure.—Already has his conversation, and the nobleness of his sentiments, made such an impression on the mind of my father, that it seems to have altered his very nature ; he is become kind and considerate to his domestics ; nor can he now bring himself to affront distress with that insulting air of superiority and power as once he did.—My mother, by regaining her former influence over his heart, is restored to that placid sweetness of temper, which, whilst it convinces us of
the

the goodness of the mind, I ever think does honour to human nature.

Come then, my Henrietta, and be a witness to our felicity, which 'tis in your power still to encrease. Let your Jessa be of the party; though she is the last invited, she won't be the less welcome.—As I have not a lawful right to the name of Cornwall, you must, for this once, permit me to sign that of

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LETTER LIV.

Mrs. BEAUFORT *to Miss* CAROLINE
TYLNEY.

YOUR invitation was such, my Caroline, as could not be refused. —I shall be with you in a few days; Sir George and colonel Beaufort will be my escort. Mr. and Mrs. Ashford were much pleased with your genteel and friendly invitation, which they cannot think of accepting; but hope, at some future period, to be introduced to you. Jessa is to remain with them during our visit to you, and our excursion to London. It would be cruel, they

they said, to rob them of all their company at once.—You will be delighted, I am sure, at being a witness to the encreasing tenderness of my husband ; and at a time, too, when sickness, grief, and despair, have so plainly played the thief with the little beauty which I once possessed, and so often make me a lifeless companion, a tiresome complainer. Often does he reproach himself for the only action which ever gave me just reason to complain of him ; but which, circumstances candidly considered, could hardly be deemed a fault, as the cause was in itself an excuse. Appearances were certainly against me. Gone, no one could tell where—An injurious report, which carried

ried with it all the appearance of truth, told by every tongue.—No wonder that disappointed love and friendship excited such rage within his bosom—for, how terrible is that evil which comes cloaked under such enchanting masks? Even now I tremble when I recollect the stern front of my dear, and then cruel Charles. Imagination will sometimes be employing herself in bringing to review disagreeable, as well as past pleasing occurrences: However, I hope never to see that brow again deformed with passion, on which serenity sits so graceful. May you, with your worthy Cornwall, for many succeeding years, experience the soft, the generous inter-

4

course

course of united hearts, and the pleasures of mutual love.

Adieu, my Caroline. I expect to pay you a visit almost as soon as this letter.

HENRIETTA BEAUFORT.

LETTER LV.

Colonel BEAUFORT to Major STANMORE.

WITH what different and pleasing sensations do I now take up my pen to address my worthy friend, compared to those which I experienced a few weeks since, when such a mob of horrid passions almost deprived me of my reason, of which jealousy, revenge, and disappointed love, stood foremost. With such companions a man has no chance for peace. How sweet, how pleasing the reverse ! Every flying moment now bears the signature of happiness restored. Returning health again has blest me, by placing the roses on my

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Henrietta's cheek. My wounds still continue troublesome ; but my health is perfectly re-established. Were it possible, I would give you a description of my meeting with my Henrietta, and convey to you an idea of the ten thousand beauties which, at that happy moment, played around her. She had drest herself in white satin, the very same which she met me in, a few years since, to plight our vows. Like it's angel wearer, it retained all its native spotless purity, and, like her, seemed to have acquired additional beauty by its long concealment. I had prepared myself to receive some gentle reproaches for my more than savage cruelty ; but she was all herself ; not

one wounding word escaped her lips. The indisposition which she so long had suffered, had thrown a not unpleasing languor over her once lively animated countenance. She was much thinner; but even from sickness she could borrow charms. Nothing could surpass the elegance, the gentility of her appearance. My father,—who, a few weeks since, confessed himself her admirer,—and so far conquered his pride of family and love of money, as to make her an offer of his hand,—at sight of those charms, which received additional advantage from the assistance of dress, was struck with surprise. Hardly would she permit me to make an acknowledgment for my fault, before

fore she claspt her snowy arms around me, with the same eagerness as she had done when I so basely spurned the kneeling beauty from me.—When her child was presented to her by Sir George, all the mother appeared within her countenance.—Mr. and Mrs. Ashford deserve a better pen than mine to do justice to the real goodness of their characters. To sum up all in few words—they are possessed of every virtue.—In all their actions unwearied charity appears—a benevolence founded on principle—to which is added a cheerful serene, and evenness of temper, that is surprising.—Without being ever branded with practising any guilt or folly themselves, they are ever ready to find ex-

cuses for the failings of others ; and at a time of life when so many, by their fretfulness and ill-humour, drive even their nearest relations from them, their acquaintance are uneasy to think they refuse to mix with society ; but they thought it time, they said, to withdraw from the world, and make that a matter of choice, which the infirmities of old age would soon render it necessary for them to comply with ; and, another motive was, they did not like to burthen their indulgent friends with their company, when it must be attended with greater pain than pleasure. Mr. Ashford still converses with the wisdom of a Mentor : from his mouth, such are the charms of religion and an
easy

easy piety, such the power of truth and eloquence, that even guilt might be pleased to hear itself condemned. He recommends to every one to taste the innocent amusements, and partake, with moderation, the enjoyments of life. “The many blessings which our Maker has given,” says he, “were given to be enjoyed ; and ’tis we, ourselves, alone, who destroy their end and design by an immoderate use of them.” Providence has indulged them with an easy fortune, which, as they have no superfluous, luxurious wants to supply, is not only a blessing to themselves, but to many others. Their habitation is situated in the pleasantest manner imaginable ; every thing within it, simple,

neat and elegant; the neighbourhood around is genteel and numerous. All these circumstances combined, have determined me, and my Henrietta, to fix our residence in this part of the world; and, accordingly, we have purchased a house, which will be ready for our reception within a few months, and to which place my heart, as well as tongue, will bid you welcome. However, I shall have an opportunity of introducing you to my lovely wife in a few weeks, as we intend making a short stay with my father in London.

Adieu, Stanmore; I must throw aside my pen to obey a summons from my Henrietta; the messenger no other than my Jessa.

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER LVI.

Mrs. BEAUFORT to Mrs. ASHFORD.

WITH joy we set down to comply with the request of those we love—as by so doing, we confer a pleasure on ourselves.—My Caroline yesterday plighted her vows with those of the best of men,—whose happiness, at receiving so inestimable a treasure, was pictured on his animated countenance. Her parents attended the ceremony, and cheerfully resigned their Caroline to the arms of Mr. Cornwall.—Never did I see the friend of my heart look so strikingly lovely. She was dressed in a muslin negligee, with coloured sprigs, of her

own working.—Every other part of her dress was white. The genteel elegance of Mr. Cornwall's person wants not the assistance of dress.—The happy union of this young and amiable pair spreads a general joy throughout the village: Nothing but mirth and festivity appeared. Mr. Tylney might be said to keep open house on the occasion; for all who came were welcomed with the utmost hospitality; the pleasure which every one shews at the confirmation of their happiness—is a sure proof of the goodness of their hearts—And although my Caroline is possessed of so many accomplishments, yet she has no enemy to repine because she is raised to felicity. How differently was that day spent,

spent, on which Miss Tylney gave her hand to Mr. Danby, and of which I gave you an account. The contralt is as great as that between the two sisters. We have received several accounts of their encreasing unhappiness : Next week Mr. Tylney proposes setting off to pay them a visit, and, if possible, reconcile or soften matters between the unworthy pair. At the united request of our friends, we have agreed to stay here till the venerable, and now good parent returns. My Caroline, with a generosity and tenderness peculiar to herself, laments the fate of her unworthy suffering sister—and mourns because she cannot alleviate her sorrows.

Mr. Cornwall, with a liveliness, and
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even flow of spirits, has a sensibility of soul that bleeds for every one's distress; and she has that delightful benevolence joined with it, that leaves no probable means untried to soften the woes which she regrets, of which her long tried, and never failing friendship to your Henrietta, when burthened with almost unequal hardships, was a proof. The world might condemn and vilify—but Caroline Tylney would not suspect or forsake her friend. How much did her soothing talents, her gentle tenderness soften the cruel hand of misfortune! Her happiness now redoubles mine, and adds new charms to my Beaufort's return.

Adieu, my dear Madam; I am called upon by the happy bride to go with her
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in pursuit of our lords and masters, who are fishing in a canal at the bottom of the garden. As I leave you to go on such a pleasing errand, I know you will excuse me. Say every thing for me to Mr. Ashford that will be acceptable and render me more dear. To more than you can say my heart with gratitude assents; and I must ever remain, with duty, love, respect and veneration, yours,

HENRIETTA BEAUFORT.

LETTER LVII.

Colonel BEAUFORT *to* Major STANMORE.

YOU will be surprized at seeing this letter dated * * * * *, as you no doubt expected to see me in London ere now. We have been here near a month; but at first intended staying here only a few days: shall set off to-morrow for Mr. Ashford's, and within a week, from thence to London, accompanied by a Mr. and Mrs. Cornwall, — whose nuptials we came here to celebrate. Mrs. Cornwall, late Miss Tylney, has been from infancy the beloved, faithful, and sympathizing friend of my Henrietta—in person and mind nearly her equal. Her match
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with Mr. Cornwall was an union of love, not interest; and happiness will, in all probability, reward the generous fair one, who has made a most judicious choice. Cornwall is a young clergyman, whose exemplary life has already brought honour upon himself and his profession — his manners are plain, simple and easy, his person graceful and pleasing, his behaviour chearful, his conversation entertaining; he has seen but little of the world, but politeness seems natural to him; he has an honest open soul. His Caroline, who is a most lovely, lively woman, has, in his eyes, all the graces of her sex. With chearful voices they registered their vows to heaven; and nature,

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in forming them, seemed to have formed their tempers and their hearts alike.—Each lovely friend would have thought her happiness incomplete, had not her sister excellence shared an equal felicity. To describe the manner in which we spend our time, and the romantic pleasures we enjoy, when rambling with our fair ones o'er the flowery carpets, which at this delightful season, the bountiful hand of nature so profusely has spread around, would possibly, in your opinion, be to tell you we were the stupidest animals breathing ; but which affords an almost equal pleasure to my father, and Mr. and Mrs. Tylney.—You people of consequence, Stanmore, who are engaged in a continual

tinual bustle with the great world, and condemn yourselves to walk in the thorny road of ambition,—hear nothing of murmuring streams, flowery meadows, and pleasing groves, any more than if they had no existence but in the head of a poet; but my heart receives an additional softness—and the truest pleasure amidst these scenes.—When I embrace my Henrietta, I am ready to exclaim, Let victory and glory crown the brave—my victory is here.—

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

LETTER LVIII.

Mrs. BEAUFORT to Mrs. ASHFORD.

WE shall return to you, my dear madam, within a few days, and I have the pleasure to inform you that we shall be accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Cornwall, who are impatient to be reckoned amongst the number of your friends. My Caroline, who so chearfully (as I informed you in my last) vowed obedience, seems as chearfully inclined to practise it, and every returning day appears to bring with it an encrease of happiness. Amply am I now rewarded for all the sorrows which I had to encounter. But I will not
court

court disappointment by encouraging hopes, that such uninterrupted felicity as I now enjoy, can long be mine.— Though accompanied by my Beaufort, though each revolving hour generally presents me with some new proof of his increasing love; I shall pay a visit to the metropolis with reluctance. The busy scenes of that bustling place I never liked: — the sweet serenity of the country suits me much better; nor can the approach of winter make me view it with any kind of terror. Who, my dear madam, would prefer the vanity and vices of a court, to the sweet and peaceful contentment of a rural life? In the charming retreat which is preparing for our reception,

I hope to pass the evening of my days ; and in endeavouring to copy the amiable example of you and Mr. Ashford, cheerfully prepare for that life which is so much superior to this.—But even this strange world, my Beaufort's never dying love has rendered all delightful—and every woe is hushed to peace.

Embrace my daughter for me—remember us all in the most respectful manner to my venerable benefactor, my more than parent : whilst Henrietta lives, she must be gratefully and affectionately your's.

HENRIETTA BEAUFORT.

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