# THE

# FASHIONABLE FRIEND:

A

# NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE

# THE FASHIONABLE FRIEND.

## LETTER I.

*To Miss* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

LIFE is a fatiguing journey. I am already tired of it. Without the company of my loved Lord, I am miserable even in this paradise. No friend! no acquaintance! how dull and tedious appear the weary hours! Four years have I been married to colonel Beau-

fort; but never yet been acknowledged for his wife. Without fortune, or family, his haughty father would ſpurn me from him, and reduce his now tenderly beloved ſon to that beggary for which he would deſpiſe your friend.

Poverty, though a real, and often an unavoidable misfortune, is likewiſe in the eye of many an unpardonable fault. It was not ſo with my generous Beaufort. Chance threw him in my way, when fortune had reduced me and my venerable mother to the loweſt extremity of wretchedneſs — when an unfeeling creditor was depriving us of our little all, and another threatening my weeping widowed parent with a jail—he entered our apartment by miſtake, inſtead of that of a friend, who lodged in the ſame houſe. Our tears caught his attention, whilſt our diſtreſs found an eaſy paſſage to his benevolent heart. He became a friend,

friend, and ſoon the lover of your Henrietta. He found me ſurrounded with miſery; but not an object for ſeduction. The few charms I poſſeſſed conquered the only heart in which I ever wiſhed to find a place. A private marriage was propoſed, and ſoon agreed to. My mother, and an old friend of my father's, were the only witneſſes to our union — you, and Sir Henry Courtney, the only friends intruſted with our ſecret. Soon after our marriage he purchaſed this retreat for me; pleaſed with the romantic ſituation, and its diſtance from the metropolis, which ſerved to conceal our marriage; and notwithſtanding its diſtance, till within theſe laſt ſeven months, I have ſeen the dear owner of it very frequently. I, at his requeſt, took the name of Melville, and he always viſits me as the relation of an abſent huſband; but the eyes of

envy, and the tongue of ſlander are not eaſily ſatisfied. I am regarded as the kept miſtreſs of ſome man of faſhion; and my ſweet, innocent Jeſſa as the off-ſpring of lawleſs love. My own ſex refuſe to viſit me, whilſt they gladly take every opportunity of inſulting what they pretend to deſpiſe. The other ſex think the freedom of my conduct a licence for the freedoms they too often preſume to take with me, when ne-ceſſity drives me from my aſylum.

The friendly viſit you made, after my dear mother had ſunk to everlaſting peace, greatly helped to alleviate my anguiſh: but your abſence, my dear Caroline, makes my ſolitude the more irkſome. Did your parents know that I am branded with the tale of infamy, never would they permit you to return. —To increaſe my ſorrow, I every day expect to hear that my huſband is

ordered

ordered abroad: he has long expected it; but cruelly refuses to let me accompany him.

May heaven ever preserve my gentle Caroline from experiencing the numberless woes which seem to hang threatening o'er her friend,

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

# LETTER II.

## *Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

BE comforted, my Henrietta. What are the inſults of a misjudging world, to a heart that has ever been the votary of virtue? The hour you dread may be far diſtant. Something may happen to prevent its ever arriving: therefore, don't anticipate misfortune.

Permit me to make my father and mother the confidants of your ſecret: it will purchaſe liberty to attend my friend. I will not deceive you—they *have* doubts of your character; they *have* interrogated me reſpecting the circumſtances in which your father left you: but my parents are not of a nature to condemn without reaſon. They will make enquiries. If they find your cha-

character forfeited, they will then beg their Caroline to give up ſo improper an acquaintance. Can you fear to in-truſt them with the ſecret? But tell me your ſentiments with ſincerity. If you have any objection I will not ſpeak, though forced to hear your an-gelick purity branded with ignominy.

My affairs remain in the ſame ſtate as when I wrote before. Mr. Danby ſtill continues to perſecute me with his addreſſes; but my hour for loving is not yet arrived.

Endeavour to be eaſy; and if you muſt be parted for a time from your beloved Charles, think how ſhort that abſence may be. Learn to look for-ward with hope, and remember that whilſt peace is a ſtranger to your boſom, it muſt be ſo to that of

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

# LETTER III.

## *Colonel* BEAUFORT *to Sir* HENRY COURTNEY.

THIS Henrietta, this beloved wife, hangs about my heart. Were you to ſee her tears, to hear her plead for leave to accompany me, her only friend, you muſt be more than man, if able to reſiſt them, or, like me, have ſteeled your heart with the cold laws of prudence. Oh! Courtney! What are the calls of honour to thoſe of love! She complains of being branded and forſaken by the world—and ſhall I forſake her?—

Why did you, my loved Charles, cried the gentle mourner, once reſcue me from miſery, and now expoſe me to ſuch agonizing pangs as theſe? What are the dangers of foreign climes, and all the various diſtreſſes which too often attend

attend the hapleſs traveller, to the miſeries which your abſence will create? If once you leave me, it will be to meet no more.

I aſſumed a ſterner aſpect. "I thought, Henrietta, you would not have diſtreſſed me with theſe woman's fears. By taking you with me I muſt loſe a father, or ſubmit to ſee you treated by my brother officers with the freedom of a miſtreſs. Whatever the world now ſuſpects, is not addreſſed to me. You muſt likewiſe know that all hopes will then be over of ever placing you in the ſituation you deſerve: for in ſpite of all your lovelineſs and virtue, Sir George Beaufort will never own me for a ſon, were he to know our marriage; and the title I muſt one day ſucceed to would only ſerve to diſtreſs me ſtill more." She was ſilent,—but her tears convinced me that my arguments

ments did not alleviate her anguiſh: yet, go ſhe muſt not. In ſix weeks I muſt leave England, my Henrietta, and in her my every friend. What is to be done? ſay ſomething to compoſe my diſtracted thoughts. Will *you* guard her defenceleſs innocence? Will you be a parent to my little Jeſſa, who has juſt began to liſp the endearing name of father?

Sir George Beaufort is proud, ambitious, and ſordid. No diſtreſs could find entrance to his heart, if it acted in oppoſition to any of his favorite ſchemes. He has marked out a path for me. To ſacrifice happineſs for glory muſt be the lot of the unfortunate

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

# LETTER IV.

## *Mrs.* MELVILLE *to Miſs* TYLNEY.

THE gloomy hour is approaching that will rob *me* of my every joy —my huſband, lover, protector, friend; —*my daughter* of a father. Tell me, my Caroline, what philoſophy can be found to ſooth ſuch anguiſh as mine?

To-morrow, my Beaufort comes to take his leave *for ever*. Such are the forebodings of my agonizing ſoul. He has written to me; but all the gentle arguments of love cannot reconcile me to this parting. You muſt not, my Caroline, diſcover the marriage of your friend. My huſband has laid his commands upon me never to have any other entruſted with the ſecret. My innocence muſt be my ſupport. I dare to be wretched rather than diſobey him. This

place

place is to be my reſidence during his abſence. Sir Henry Courtney, the intimate friend of my huſband, is to ſupply me with money, and from him I am to receive whatever letters he favours me with. Neceſſity alone compelled the colonel to entruſt even this favorite friend with our ſecret.

Oh Caroline! till now, I never knew what it was to be compleatly wretched. I cculd almoſt profanely wiſh my poor mother had a few years longer been deprived of that heaven ſhe ſo well deſerved, rather than I had been left an orphan, and a widow.—Even now, that my loved Charles is perhaps within the diſtance of a few ſhort miles, I experience the agony which fate has in ſtore for me, when removed much farther—when ſurrounded with the hazards of war, the threatening enemy, the arrows of death. I ſee him in my diſ-

disturbed imagination wounded, sinking upon the bed of honour. Whilst his miserable Henrietta, far, far distant, is denied the liberty of tenderly performing those sad duties, which no friendly hand will be near to offer.

Oh, Caroline! my soul forebodes despair.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

# LETTER V.

## *Colonel* BEAUFORT *to Sir* HENRY COURTNEY.

YOUR promiſes in ſome meaſure reſtored my mind to peace: but on my arrival at * * * * yeſterday, I found my reſolution again a traytor. What a reception did I meet with from this dear romantic charmer! — On inquiring for Mrs. Melville (which name ſhe has borrowed to conceal her own) I was informed ſhe was in her dreſſing room. I would have flown to her with rapture, but the gloomy errand I came upon withheld me.—In a few minutes ſhe came into the parlour where I ſat expecting her. She was dreſt in the deepeſt mourning — her beautiful face and hair almoſt ſhaded by a large cap and crape bonnet—her eyes red with

weeping — her countenance pale as death. She was followed by her Jeſſa, who was in the arms of her maid.—She flew into my arms, and burſting into a flood of tears, ſoftly exclaimed, "Oh, cruel Beaufort! why will you forſake me?" The child held out her little hands.—

"What is the meaning of all this agony? Why this ſable dreſs, my Henrietta? Why ſo much grief for a few months abſence? By thus ſoftening my mind by your gentle ſorrows, you will render me incapable of performing that taſk which an ambitious parent and cruel fortune have aſſigned me. Let me perſuade you to lay aſide this melancholy dreſs, and with it every fear. It is idle to torment yourſelf and me with fancied ills."

"Never," ſhe cried, "will I exchange this dreſs till you return in ſafety.

safety. Without you the world is a desert. My mind is filled with unutterable grief. And shall my person be gayly decorated? — No — let them mourn together."

I endeavoured to reason her out of what appeared such groundless fears —shewed her the impossibility of taking her with me. She owned the justness of my argument.—But what has reason to do with love? Had we consulted reason, Courtney, we had never married. You once told me so. I own the truth; and for the first time in my life I wished that I had never known this Henrietta. However, fortified by your advice, and the fear of disobliging my father, I withstood all her intreaties. "Say no more," said I, "of going, my purpose is fixed; endeavour to be reconciled to what your happiness, and your daughter's, forces me

me to ſubmit to, and do not ſtrive by your tears to ſhake that courage which alone will protect me, and render me deſerving that honour of which I go in ſearch. Remember too, I go to fight for that glorious maſter, who has for four years enabled me to ſupport you in eaſe and plenty."

She turned her weeping eyes upon me. "My cauſe, I ſee, is loſt, ſaid ſhe —I have no longer an advocate in that generous breaſt. Ambition has conquered love. I will ſubmit to the hard ſentence you have paſſed."

I have ſince made uſe of every means in my power to conſole her; and hope I have ſucceeded; ſhe ſeems more at eaſe. In the morning I muſt take leave of this ſweet retreat. But I will not cloſe this letter till the hour of my departure.

*In Continuation.*

I am now ſtolen from the arms of my Henrietta, who has fallen into a gentle ſlumber. I thought it was beſt to avoid a formal parting—As to myſelf, I believe I could not have borne it; and therefore think I may anſwer for my Henrietta. With what reluctance I left her, it would be impoſſible to deſcribe. I gazed on her with agonizing rapture—twice I left her, and twice returned: —"And muſt I leave thee, cried I, for that vain bubble, ambition?—Leave thee, unprotected, to a condemning world." *I dare* not dwell longer on this ſcene. I deſired her maid to be called: and after laying ſtrict injunctions on her, and every ſervant, to be faithful and obliging to their miſtreſs, promiſing to reward them amply if I found them with her at my return,

I mounted

I mounted my horſe, and departed from all my ſoul held dear.

In a few days I ſhall leave England. Your promiſes of guarding my treaſure when I am far diſtant, are my only conſolation. May heaven reward you, as you faithfully perform them.

Yours,

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

# LETTER VI.

## *Mrs.* MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

HE is gone,—took the opportunity when ſleep had beguiled me of my wretchedneſs, to ſteal from thoſe arms to which I fear he will no more return.

To paint the horror of my preſent ſituation is impoſſible. The anguiſh of my mind has made all nature wear a dreary look. Cruel Beaufort, to leave me thus! Will you not come, my Caroline, to your hapleſs friend? never did I want your ſoothing voice ſo much as now. Entreat your parents in my name. Tell them I am not a guilty, though an unhappy wretch; teach them if poſſible to pity my diſtreſs, though the cauſe muſt be concealed. I am too much indiſpoſed to ſay more.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

# LETTER VII.

## *Mrs.* MELVILLE *to Miss* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

YOUR parents, my Caroline, unkindly refuſe the only pleaſure which Henrietta could enjoy.—For eight days I have been confined to my apartment; your letter, as it contained a denial, did not forward my recovery: but I ought to have armed myſelf for diſappointment.—I do not blame your worthy parents, my friend; no wonder they are careful of ſuch a treaſure as you are. As to their believing the tales which are ſpread to my diſadvantage, I am no longer ſurprized at it—appearances muſt be againſt me. I muſt patiently endure the ſtorms I have to encounter. One day I hope I ſhall have liberty to undeceive my friends.

Though I cannot be happy, my Caroline, I will endeavour patiently to reſign myſelf to the will of heaven, and to preſerve my life, though it is depriv-ed of every charm, and although the ſtream of adverſity has almoſt overſet my feeble bark.—Baniſhed from ſociety, branded with guilt, pointed at with the finger of contempt, left a widowed wife, in the power of ſtrangers,—forced to bear that my innocent Jeſſa ſhould be looked upon as the moſt injured, though the only ſtranger to the guilt of her erring mother: Yet all this the pride of conſcious innocence would have enabled me to ſupport; but the dreadful thoughts of my Beaufort's danger, carry with them a pang worſe than death. That war, which fills ſo many ſchemers heads with pleaſure and delight, diſtracts my ſoul with anguiſh.—I have but one treaſure, and

that

that the cruel bloody hand of devouring war will in all human probability tear forever from me.

Let them take their uncultivated tracts of land—let them have their rights of catching fiſh, or extending their conqueſts to the fartheſt extremities of the globe—ſo they ſpare but my Charles.

Ye ſons of pride, revenge, and avarice, how many boſoms do your ambition fill with grief!

I am next week to receive a viſit from Sir Henry Courtney. I never ſaw him, and although I am no otherwiſe acquainted with his character, than it was told me by the partial tongue of my beloved huſband, whoſe friendſhip he ever poſſeſſed, yet methinks I dread his arrival: ſuppoſe this unaccountable weakneſs is owing

to the grief with which my heart is humbled.

Write to me, Caroline. Say ſomething to compoſe my ſorrows. Tell your parents how much I thank them for ever permitting you to write to the wretched

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

# LETTER VII.

## *Miss* CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

TO tell you how much I ſympathize in all you ſuffer, my ſweet friend, would be a vain attempt. Endeavour to be eaſy, and patiently ſubmit to the ſevere trials which heaven has thought fit to inflict on you—Think how it would wound the boſom of your huſband, to hear that you were in danger, by immoderate grief, of ſhortening a life ſo valuable to him, ſo neceſſary to his happineſs,—and that too, for what it was not in his power, or your own, to prevent. Think how his noble heart feels the ſame pangs with yours, for this cruel abſence. Add not then to his affliction, by deſtroying your own health.

I once

I once more intreat you, permit me to make my parents the confidents of your marriage; I will anſwer for their ſecrecy. Then ſhould I be allowed to fly to my friend: yet why do I aſk what you ſo often have forbidden?

I agree with you that the ſocial paſſions embelliſh every ſcene of life. Without them the ſun loſes its ſplendor —the flowers all the beauties of their tints, and all the harmony of nature becomes diſcord and melancholy gloom: yet ſuffer not your mind to be wounded by the ſlights and inſults of the undiſcerning; for no ſtain of diſhonour has the bleeding heart of my Henrietta to wipe off.

Without a conſcience ſelf-approved, and a mind of virtue, what could give pleaſure to the human ſoul? Daily experience might teach the inhabitants of this world how unfit they are to judge

judge each other—and leave the cauſe of thoſe, whom ſome unlucky circumſtance may tempt them to blame, to be tried before a wiſer and better tribunal.

I hope by the time this letter reaches your hand, you will be in better ſpirits, and that you will be chearfuliy converſing with the friend of your Beaufort. I am highly pleaſed with him for his intended viſit, and wonder what ſort of a being he is—handſome as your colonel, no doubt—polite, ſenſible, genteel—ſuch is the picture my imagination has drawn of him.—Heigh ho! who knows but the ſtrange perverſeneſs of my parents may have prevented my making a conqueſt. Dread the ſeeing of him! I think you ſaid you did—what ſhould make you dread? I ſuppoſe the man will be ſtruck dumb at the ſight of ſo much beauty.

beauty. It will be happy for us all if he does not fall desperately in love with you.

I will not be disturbed—I am writing a sermonizing epistle to a beloved friend. This teazing Mr. Danby—The wretch seems to have nothing else to do with his precious time, but to employ it in tormenting me. Had I the valuable cap of which Fortunatus was once possessed, I would freely give it him, provided he would wish himself ten thousand miles distant from me, and promise never to return. Married to such a being! No, thank you, good folks, that will never do; I would as soon wed a jackanapes. The one, though frightful, is as nature made him; the other has taken pains to make himself ten times more ridiculous and ugly than nature ever designed him to be. Fortune must be blind as a beetle,

beetle, or would ſuch a being have ever been a favorite? My ſiſter Lucy has lately been a moſt preſſing advocate for this man; ſome bauble, I ſuppoſe, purchaſed her favour. In return for her good offices—I will gladly make her a preſent of the man himſelf.

But what is all this trifling to you?—Pardon me, my dear—the powdered fop has entirely broken the thread of my diſcourſe: but for him I ſhould have continued my letter in the ſentimental ſtile, even to the end—and ſpouted wiſdom as well as any Roman ſenator ever did.

Promiſe me in your next that you will endeavour to be chearful. Send me a good account of your health—and in ſpite of Danby, I ſhall be happy. Ever yours,

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

# LETTER IX.

## *Mrs.* MELVILLE *to Miss* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

SIR Henry Courtney has been here ten days, and yet he talks not of going. He has taken rooms at a farm houſe that is within a mile of my habitation, and pays me two or three viſits every day. He has ſhewn me ſeveral letters from Colonel Beaufort, and the copies of his own. My huſband, in the ſtrongeſt terms, recommends me to his care, and deſires him to furniſh me with what money I ſhould want—but he did not aſk him to come and live with me, which he has almoſt done ſince he came into this part of the world. He has told the people that he is a near relation of my huſband's—and that he has determined, during his

his abſence, to ſpend as much time with me as poſſible. I do not thank him for his tale. The world cannot have a worſe opinion of me than it has had for four years paſt—I would gladly ſhun the having recourſe to any falſehood, in defence of a character that has never yet been juſtly forfeited.—To do Sir Henry Courtney juſtice, there never was a man that behaved with a more delicate and reſpectful politeneſs — he uſes his utmoſt endeavours to amuſe me. My pretty Jeſſa is already paſſionately fond of him: her little arms are held out for him to take her every time ſhe ſees him. The idea you had of him was not an unjuſt one. With a perſon and addreſs formed to pleaſe, he has the art of ſtealing ſorrow from the miſerable. His voice is ſoft and harmonious, his manners gentle and

and inſinuating; he reads with a tone that adds beauty to the charms of poetry, and plays on the harpſichord, German flute, and violin, inimitably—ſpeaks ſeveral languages with fluency: yet I wiſh he were gone. — I cannot be amuſed during the abſence of him who alone formed my happineſs. He endeavours to reaſon me out of my fears, by making light of them; to add weight to his arguments, repeats unnumbered inſtances of people's returning in ſafety — after having been many years abroad and in engagements. To ſuch diſcourſe I could for ever liſten. The ſinking wretch will to the laſt be catching at ſtraws. He does not tell me, Caroline, how many loſt their lives to the one that returned in ſafety.

Oh! why did Beaufort cruelly refuſe to grant me my requeſt? Gladly would

would I have attended him, even to the burning ſhores of India, or Ruſſia's frozen bounds—Spare my huſband, ye ſons of war! ſhield him, kind heaven, from danger! protect him from the lifted arm of every threatening foe! May the keen arrows of death fly far from that boſom where every virtue, and all my happineſs is placed. Grant me the ſoft delight of ſeeing my ſoldier return, crowned with the laurels of victory and glory! Then will joy wanton through the boſom to which it has been ſo long a ſtranger.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

# LETTER X.

## *Sir* HENRY COURTNEY *to* WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Esq.*

THE hour is at length arrived that has deprived me of all my indifference and boasted philosophy. You know the trust my friend Beaufort left to my care—nothing less than the beautiful Henrietta.—But I have before told you of her imprudent marriage. I freely undertook the charge, whilst I laught at his fears and womanish complaints for the thoughts of leaving a wife behind him; and that too after being married four years. I will at the same time own to you, that the strict care he observed, and the solitude in which his fair one had been buried from the time of her marriage, were circumstances which gave me no high opinion of his choice.

I con-

I concluded that he was drawn into an indifferent connection—was aſhamed of the lady, and of what he had done. However, as I, at the time of his departure, ſtrictly intended to perform the promiſe I had made him, I ſoon after he had left England ſet off to pay his charge a viſit, and agree upon ſome plan of ſettling matters between us. I arrived at this beautiful romantic retreat about four in the afternoon. The lady was walking in the garden: but on being informed of my arrival, haſtened into the room, and politely welcomed me to ****.

To give you an idea of my ſurpriſe, would be impoſſible. Such a blaze of beauty—ſuch an elegance of perſon and of manners.—I ſtammered out ſome compliment: ſhe, imputing my confuſion to fatigue, immediately ordered tea. In the evening I left her,—ſlept the

firſt night at an inn, and afterwards procured two or three good rooms at a farmer's, whoſe landlord had fitted up ſome of the apartments for his own uſe, when he choſe (as it ſeems he often does) to retire a few weeks from the world at his honeſt tenant's — giving the man leave to make what he can of them when he is abſent. I propoſed ſtaying only two days in this part of the world—have been here fourteen; nor can I bring myſelf to think of leaving it. I know not what Mrs. Melville thinks of my ſtaying (Melville is the name ſhe goes by)—but this I know, that I wiſh I had never ſeen her. Had I been in Beaufort's place, never ſhould any circumſtance whatever have parted me from ſuch a woman.

I have ever yet, Will, acted up to the character I have aſſumed—but

my

my heart, I fear, will make a traitor of me. Why was ſuch a temptation thrown in my way! Reaſon, honour, friendſhip, are all on Beaufort's ſide—but love ſeems determined to ſet them at defiance.

Mrs. Melville, at preſent, weeps inceſſantly for the abſence of her huſband, nor has it been in my power to conſole her. She ſometimes, in an agony of grief, ſoftly exclaims,—"Cruel huſband! why was I left behind?" Then claſping in her arms her little daughter, who is a miniature of her angelic mother, ſhe begs my pardon, and withdraws to recover herſelf. I ſcarce dare to admit a hope—yet cannot baniſh it from my boſom. Like a furious torrent, this love overwhelms my ſoul. Prudence and honour are but a feeble defence againſt it. I know not what to do, or how

to proceed. A variety of contending paſſions makes a wreck of my mind. I know your ſentiments, therefore wiſh you not to write. You may condemn —but were you to ſee the object of my guilty flame, you would not be ſurprized.

Henrietta is the loveliеſt figure the indulgent hand of nature ever formed —and her mind is as great as her perſon is charming. Her eyes expreſs the dear, the tender ſenſibility of her heart. On her cheeks is ſometimes painted a bluſh, ſoft and lovely as the bluſh of infant ſpring, which too often gives place to a paleneſs, fair as the lily of the vale. With all this beauty ſhe is as humble too. — Black is the only dreſs ſhe wears. I have frequently begged that ſhe would lay aſide thoſe melancholy robes. " Never, Sir Henry, ſhe replied, till my Beaufort

fort returns—my heart and my perſon ſhall mourn together. I was never fond of dreſs—but at this time my gloomy ſoul has an averſion to it." However, I hope ſoon to ſee her in a gayer dreſs and humour too. The ladies of this age are not noted for their conſtancy. Beaufort is abſent, and has thrown a treaſure in my way that I am determined to make the moſt of. There was ever a ficklenefs in his temper. He has rambled, like the bee, from flower to flower. Perhaps he is tired of Henrietta. If he has thrown her from his boſom, who will blame me for ſheltering her in mine? And is not his leaving her a proof of his inconſtancy? Would any man but Colonel Beaufort have left ſo beautiful a wife to the care of a gay young fellow? It is true, our friendſhip began even in our infant years—from which period

he has been a witneſs to my indifference for the fair ſex—but was the paſt any ſecurity for the future? Regardleſs of her charms himſelf, did he think others would be ſo too? Yet how can I ſay regardleſs? He parted from her with agony; and left England, as the miſer would his wealth.

I know not what I would ſay—I believe I want to make the weakneſs of others an excuſe for my own.

HENRY COURTNEY.

# LETTER XI.

## WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Esq.* *to Sir* HENRY COURTNEY.

THE friendſhip I have ever borne you induces me to take up my pen, although forbidden to write. Can I be ſilent when in danger of loſing my friend? when he is in danger too of loſing himſelf?—

Would you take advantage of the abſence of Colonel Beaufort—to wound his boſom with irreparable wretchedneſs? Was it a proof of the want of his affection for his Henrietta, by appointing his deareſt friend her guardian and protector? Is it poſſible for Courtney to become the ſlave of paſſion, and give way to a baſe deſign that even the moſt hardened villain would ſhudder to reflect upon?—

Leave

Leave the habitation of your friend, and return no more to it till he is there to welcome you—and give him reaſon to thank you for having acquitted the truſt he repoſed in you with honour. Let the beauty, elegance, and innocence which you admire in the wife of your friend, be her protection. What a pity would it be to ruin ſo fair a fabrick! Let the tears, which you ſay ſhe ſhed for the abſence of a beloved huſband, teach you to be her friend. Make no attempt, I beſeech you, to deſtroy that virtue over which you could not triumph. Her purity, her affection for her huſband, would, one would think, be enough to reſtrain the moſt daring libertine: and have they loſt with you their power? You, who have ſo often been held up as an example by parents to their children, whoſe alliance has been

been ſought for by ſeveral noble families, and who have been a favorite with the fair ſex, though not a rake.

I find myſelf intereſted in the cauſe of this lovely widowed wife — The path ſhe is left to tread would be difficult, even if our ſex were to ſuffer her to paſs unmoleſted.—The world already condemns her—even her own ſex refuſe to hold acquaintance with her. They look upon her as fallen from that height which unſullied reputation ſtill gives to them. How cruel would it be, Harry, to add ſtill greater afflictions on this unfortunate, virtuous fair one! And were ſhe to yield to your diſhonourable ſolicitations (which I have too good an opinion of her to ſuppoſe will be the caſe) what would be the reward? Miſery and gloomy

gloomy repentance. An injured friend will return. One crime draws a man on to commit another. You would, it is likely, with your ſword, endeavour to juſtify the moſt piercing injury —if you are the ſacrifice, how would you be able to juſtify yourſelf on your ſudden entrance into eternity ?—

Conquer this paſſion, Courtney, in its infancy — permit it not to take root within your heart. The difficulty is not ſo great as you may imagine. It is eaſier to ſhun vice than to withdraw ourſelves from its ſnares, when once entangled. Pleaſure is daily ſpreading her deluſive charms to influence the innocent and ſooth the guilty. Reaſon, religion, and honour, are the ſoul's friendly monitors; which, by their inſtinctive faculties, will point out thoſe objects that are to

be

be purſued or avoided. Permit them to exert their powers—they will amply reward you in the end, for your integrity and reſolution in following the dictates they inſpire.

WILLIAM SYMONDS.

# LETTER XII.

## *Mrs.* MELVILLE *to Miss* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

THIS Courtney, my Caroline—I know not what to make of him. He took leave of me laſt week—I rejoiced at his departure; but as he is the eſteemed friend of an abſent huſband, I could not think of giving him reaſon to ſuppoſe his company was diſagreeable. His abſence, I own, gave me pleaſure; I was then able to indulge the melancholy which ſuited the gloomineſs of my heart. I could then unmoleſted wander through the ſhade, and enjoy my beloved ſolitude, —for now my Beaufort's gone, I no longer ſigh for any company but your's — ſince that is denied, any other would be irkſome.

With

With a kind of enthuſiaſtic rapture I frequented theſe walks, which your company and my beloved Charles's once made ſo pleaſing—" How oft, I cried, my dear wanderer, have we in this place rambled with delight! and whilſt the moon ſhed her ſilver influence around, ſhe has likewiſe been a witneſs to our vows." In ſhort, my friend, I had ſettled my account with melancholy — and found ſome conſolation in her ſad ſociety — for even melancholy has her pleaſures. But on the third day after Sir Henry had taken his leave, he returned.— My ſurpriſe was too great to be concealed—he obſerved it.—" I am afraid, ſaid he, my return is as unwelcome as it was unexpected. However, as I had no particular buſineſs to keep me from this place, I thought I could not better acquit myſelf

of

of my promiſe to my friend, than in ſpending the time of his abſence in endeavouring to amuſe the treaſure he entruſted to my care. I have again taken poſſeſſion of my old lodgings;—but though once more become a near neighbour, will not preſume to intrude upon you oftener, Mrs. Melville, than is agreeable."

What could I ſay, Caroline? What ought I to have ſaid? If I had appeared to have had any doubts, I muſt have ſhewn a great deal of vanity, and have diſcovered a fear it were better to conceal.

But indeed, I do not like this man—his behaviour is to the higheſt degree alarming. To add to my regrets, and apprehenſions, no news from the Colonel. I have mentioned my fears and impatience to Sir Henry; he has ſent a ſervant to ****, to wait the arrival

arrival of the packet, not doubting but there will be letters — Pray Heaven ſend there may! Sir Henry has ventured lately to tell me of charms I wiſh not to poſſeſs—and has even blamed the coldneſs of his friend, in letting the calls of honour conquer thoſe of love. I have vindicated my Beaufort for what has wounded my poor boſom with the keeneſt woe—and he ſeemed convinced by my arguments in his friend's favour—at the ſame time gave ſome hints of the ficklenеſs of his ſex, particularly that of the gentlemen of the ſword. "Perhaps, ſaid I, they are rovers, like too many others, till Hymen has bound them in chains—and then, Sir Henry, their gallantries are at an end — I mean with thoſe whoſe ſouls, like Beaufort and Henrietta, were firſt united in the bonds of love—an angel could not

rival him in my heart."—" An angel has already conquered his, ſaid he, ſighing, therefore you can be in no danger of loſing it." " I have but a mean opinion of my own power of pleaſing, Sir Henry, but I have ever ſtudied to deſerve the generous love of my noble huſband, who raiſed me from the moſt abject miſery to eaſe and happineſs, — who ſoftened the ſorrows of age for my helpleſs parent —and eaſed the pangs of death by taking her daughter to his arms; and by that means ſheltering her from the dangers and hardſhips of a cruel world." Our converſation was here interrupted, by a man driving up to the door in the moſt elegant little whiſky I ever ſaw. Sir Henry went out and preſently returned:—" Pardon me, madam, ſaid he, for the liberty in having purchaſed the poor trifle for

for your uſe.—You had no convenience of breathing the healthful fragrance of the air, but by the laborious fatigue of walking. I hope it will ſerve two purpoſes—that of amuſing, and preſerving health—therefore, in my friend Beaufort's name, I muſt beg you to accept it—and I luckily have a horſe with me that will ſuit."—I made a thouſand objections—however, after all, was obliged to conſent to make uſe of it whilſt he remains in this part of the country. In the ſame manner every rarity the ſeaſon produces is ſent me. I endeavour to ſhew the impropriety of a married woman's accepting preſents from any but her huſband. "Situations muſt be conſidered, he ſays, —he is left to ſupply a huſband's place in being a protector and friend; —he intrudes himſelf as a gueſt very often, therefore the obligations are

ſtill on his ſide." As to my Jeſſa, ſhe is as fine as the daughter of an Indian king—already has this man rivaled me in her little heart—If he is abſent half a day ſhe is, in her language, continually inquiring for him, and going out to meet him.

The ſervant is returned. No letters from the Colonel, though he waited the arrival of two packets. What can be the meaning of his ſilence? What, has he already forgotten an abſent wife? This man too adds to my diſtreſs — The chaiſe is at the door—I muſt not indulge vain fears — a thouſand things may have happened to prevent his friend from writing.

Adieu, my Caroline — I go with a heart too heavy to be amuſed. This letter has been written at different times. You muſt excuſe the length

length of my ſilence, and the ſhortneſs of my letters:—I am too unſettled to attend to any thing.

Yours,

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

# LETTER XIII.

## *Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

BY giving way to ſo many fears you will deſtroy your health, and render yourſelf unable to ſupport the abſence of the man you love. If poſſible, never at any certain time expect a letter. Adverſe winds, or a thouſand unavoidable events, may prevent its arriving at the time your impatience may lead you to expect it.—As to Sir Henry Courtney, I know not what to ſay of him. To ſee you, Henrietta, is to love: but I do not think you have reaſons to encourage apprehenſions on his account. I have lately heard a moſt amiable character of him; and, though in all the pride of youth, he is noted for his ſobriety

and

and unſullied honour. Of ſuch a man as this your huſband could have no doubts. In any other he would not have repoſed ſuch confidence. Rather rejoice, my friend, that you are indulged with ſuch a companion, to ſooth your tender fears.

Theſe obſtinate old people, and perverſe young ones, will not permit me to ſee you. I could almoſt wiſh my envious ſiſter married to her favourite Danby. Indeed the puniſhment would be rather ſevere—but ſhe deſerves it for her ill nature and folly.

Why will you not ſuffer yourſelf to be amuſed, my Henrietta? The proſpects of almoſt every one afford a gloomy, as well as a pleaſing ſide—keep not therefore your eyes conſtantly fixed on the diſagreeable, but turn them ſometimes on the pleaſing.

As to my own ſituation, it is ſtrangely altered — My parents, determined to favour the addreſſes of the hateful Danby, are become ſuſpicious of my conduct. My ſiſter is ſet over me as a ſpy, and well does Lucy acquit herſelf in her new employment. It is not unſuitable to her diſpoſition. The being no favourite with nature has given a ſourneſs to her temper that is intolerable. Her ſenſe is of the ill-natured kind, and every pleaſing figure is inſtantly the object of her envy.

Though my heart is indifferent to all the merits and accompliſhments which others diſcover in Mr. Danby, or rather in his fortune—it is not ſo to the ſhining virtues, the ſuperior good qualities of a Mr. Cornwall, a young Clergyman, who has only been a few months in this neighbourhood.

Chance

Chance has often brought us together —and I have reaſon to fear we are but too pleaſing to each other; but the difference of our ſituations, baniſhes every hope. It is that alone has withheld the youth from diſcovering the amazing power my charms have had on his honeſt heart.—However, if he knew the real ſentiments of his favourite, he would not have ſo much reaſon to fear as he ſeems to apprehend.

You may, poſſibly, enquire how I came to diſcover my power over the heart of this youth, when he never informed me of it. Pſha! Henrietta—you in love—and married too in the moſt agreeable, and even romantic manner, to aſk ſuch a queſtion—Why lovers have a language only intelligible to themſelves. It is true, till very lately, I never made the impor-

tant

tant diſcovery. However, I cannot ſet about explaining, what it is poſſible I may one day wiſh I had never learnt; —but it is certain my heart has taken its flight—and if it is not to be found in the boſom of Cornwall, it may be gone to Japan, for what I know of the matter. You cannot therefore wonder if I ſhould readily accept of his, to ſupply the loſs I have ſuſtained.

Adieu — thank me for the ſecret I have entruſted you with—endeavour to be chearful and eaſy—and you ſhall ſtill poſſeſs the ſame place in my heart you ever did, in ſpite of the fly thief that has ſtolen it.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

# LETTER XIV.

## *Sir* HENRY COURTNEY *to* WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Esq.*

I HAVE for the first time forfeited my honour. I have withheld Beaufort's letters from his wife. I here inclose you a copy of those I received; but have committed the originals to the flames. Every other that he sends will share the same fate, without being read. I will spare myself the mortifying agony of perusing them. I intend writing to him immediately—and must contrive some excuse for Mrs. Beaufort's not answering his letters. He will hear from *me* no more.

By sending you the inclosed, I furnish you with weapons against myself. Perhaps I would wish to do so. I cannot conquer this unlucky passion.

It

It ſubdues my reaſon, and muſt be gratified. I almoſt die for this Henrietta. To ſee her in the arms of another—it muſt not, cannot be. She ſhall be mine. Talk not of honour, friendſhip, and a thouſand other ridiculous chimeras, — the rights of love are ſuperior to every other.

My faithful Thomas proves a moſt uſeful aſſiſtant. Till now, I never gave the ingenious raſcal an opportunity of diſcovering his good qualities. Already he is in poſſeſſion of the affections of Mrs. Melville's favorite ſervant, who is nurſe to the little Jeſſa. To her he has ventured to diſcloſe his maſter's paſſion, and given ſome hints of the inconſtancy of Beaufort—ſaid, his maſter was ſecretly diſtracted with fear on account of her miſtreſs — as he ſuſpected the Colonel had made uſe of this opportunity

tunity to abandon her forever—hinted as if ſhe were not the firſt. Nor do I doubt, but from ſo good a channel, this tale will ſoon be conveyed to the ears of Henrietta; a part of it I believe already has. With a trembling voice ſome tender doubts have gently tranſpired—to theſe doubts I have returned ambiguous anſwers. No time is to be loſt — Henrietta's ſilence cannot long remain unaccounted for. Love is attended with ſuſpicion; of that, this young beauty has convinced me. In her boſom the ſeeds of jealouſy are timely ſown, and I'll take care they ſhall be carefully foſtered.

Spare your reproofs, my friend—they diſtreſs me perhaps; but they cannot conquer. I have proceeded too far to retreat—and without the aſſiſtance of this paſſion, the fear of a diſcovery would urge me on. The

attempt

attempt would be attended with equal ſhame, whether crowned with ſucceſs or not. You ſee I am but half a villain, yet ſpare thy reproof; my ſoul is ſteeled againſt them.

HENRY COURTNEY.

# LETTER XV.

## *Colonel* BEAUFORT *to Sir* HENRY COURTNEY.

ABSENT from all I love — my hopes all reſt upon your friendſhip. Endeavour to conſole my Henrietta. You promiſed to ſee her. Exert your influence to baniſh every tormenting fear from her gentle, timid boſom.

With ſafety I reached the army; but cannot partake the chearfulneſs of my gay companions. The lovely Henrietta alone engroſſes my thoughts. I ſtill ſee her tears, — ſtill hear her ſoft complaints. Love is ſaid to be the parent of noble actions; but when doomed to bear the pangs of abſence, it is all gloom and diſcontent. Scarcely can an ambitious

thought

thought find entrance into my boſom. In vain the ſun unfolds its ſplendor, and chears the inhabitants of earth—I find no pleaſure in its rays. The negro train of night ſuits me much better.

Believe me, Courtney, till now I never knew how much I loved—A huſband, parent, lover, — you will one day know the force of theſe endearing ties. My heart hovers round that ſweet retreat which holds my weeping fair, whoſe rural beauties, I truſt, will help to ſooth her cares. Oh! Courtney! you know not the ten thouſand virtues of my Henrietta—her perſon, all lovely as it is, conceals a mind which only could excell it. Rage, hateful in all, is ſtill more deteſtable in the fair ſex — but no rude paſſion ever yet found entrance to her boſom. Yet the world looks coldly

coldly on my Henrietta, and brands her as if the practiſer of vice. Merit, beauty, and virtue, ſeldom eſcape envy and detraction.

Rude and harſh are the clamors of war to my bleeding heart, but deſpair will give me courage — whilſt the tendereſt affection will make me careful of that life, which is of ſo much conſequence to the peace of her I love. We have every kind of diverſion going forward, even in the camp. The common ſoldiers are ſometimes expoſed to diſtreſſes; but our enemies furniſh us with plenty. I have met with many agreeable companions in my brother officers, and ſome old friends. They ſee the cloud which hangs upon my brow, and kindly try to drive it thence—they are delighted with the path which ambition has marked out for them, and even

exult in that war, which alone would enable them to gain the wiſhed for ſummit.

With me how different is the caſe! my ambition was all gratified when heaven gave me Henrietta. I tremble at the thought of war; becauſe it expoſes, not only her, but a thouſand mortals to the ſhafts of ſorrow. Could I have been permitted to paſs my days with my angel companion, and able to ſupport her above diſtreſs, I had been content. How do I envy the happy ſhepherds, the inhabitants of that dear village from which I am baniſhed, whoſe minds do not aſpire above what can be purchaſed with innocence and eaſe, whoſe fortune is equal to their wiſhes, and whoſe induſtry is health and amuſement. They know no fears, no agonizing torments of abſence and ſuſpence; no

malignant

malignant clouds of envy or ambition hover near them. Strangers to guilt, they fear no ſhafts of ill fortune; but with happy ſecurity can laugh at the unconſtancy of greatneſs—whilſt I, a ſlave to the pride and ambition of others, am baniſhed from old England's hoſpitable ſhores, with a heart bleeding with every woe—forced to lead a party of men to ſpread deſolation and murder around—compelled to conceal a union that would do honour to the greateſt monarch in the world—and ſuffer the faireſt excellence to be robbed of reputation, the brighteſt ornament the ſex can boaſt.—

Pardon me, Courtney, for tiring you with fond complaints; but you know my heart, know it has cauſe to mourn; and therefore will not grudge me this poor relief.

Write to me, my friend, and honeſtly tell me how Henrietta ſupports my abſence. Say, how did ſhe receive you? Did ſhe not weep? Sigh ſoftly for her Beaufort? And breathe a prayer for his return? Yes, I am ſure ſhe did—her gentle mind can know no peace now I am abſent.

I muſt now conclude this letter—and reſume the pen in the painful pleaſing taſk of writing to my Henrietta. How different muſt appear my ſentiments! Every fear muſt be carefully concealed—leſt they add to thoſe agonizing ones placed within her heart. You, my Harry, muſt be the friend, the comforter of both; and may heaven bountifully reward you for your generous friendſhip, and undoubted ſincerity.

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

# LETTER XVI.

## *Colonel* BEAUFORT *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

(Encloſed in the foregoing.)

WITH what joy does Beaufort ſit down to addreſs his Henrietta! now arrived in ſafety at the army. Set your heart at reſt, my fair one—your virtues will guard me from every danger; you muſt be a favorite with heaven; and on that account its care and mercy will be extended over thoſe you love. In the midſt of war we talk of peace. And although but juſt arrived, a ſpeedy return is expected. Therefore recall thoſe ſpirits your fears had baniſhed — and again be all yourſelf. Notwithſtanding I am for a few weeks to be abſent from you, my heart will not one moment

leave you — ſleep cannot baniſh your idea. I ſee you, my Henrietta, all lovely as you are,—and even at this diſtance, hear the ſound of your loved voice. You are all the real treaſure I poſſeſs. Obſerve, and be careful of, the truſt your huſband has repoſed in you. If I find any alteration in the looks of Henrietta, I ſhall call her wilful heart to a ſevere account; with eager tenderneſs ſhall I examine that dear countenance, which is too deeply printed on my heart to be inſenſible of the leaſt alteration: fears and tears leave their traces behind them—therefore give not way to either, as you expect a favourable ſentence.

Fear magnifies every danger. Our ſituation is not what it is deſcribed: our enemies fear us. Plenty and chearfulneſs fill our hearts with courage, and inſure ſucceſs to our arms. Write

ſoon

ſoon and often, my Henrietta; your letters will baniſh ſorrow from my boſom, and enable me to gain a laurel to lay at your feet, therefore indulge me with them; Sir Henry Courtney will convey them to me. Continue to teach our Jeſſa to liſp my name; my abſence will not give her time to forget me.

I hope my worthy friend Courtney has paid you the promiſed viſit, and that he was a welcome viſitor to our cottage. He is an amiable, accompliſhed man, and till you took my heart intirely into your own poſſeſſion, he had a large ſhare of it; conſequently it is but juſt that you endeavour to attone for the theft you committed. From him I ſhall expect a good account of you:—therefore give me no reaſon to complain. You find I am become

a threatener — you know who made me ſo.

With ſincerity, and never dying love, I can be only and ever yours,

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

# LETTER XVII.

## *Sir* HENRY COURTNEY *to Colonel* BEAUFORT.

AT one part or other of their lives men are made fools by that dangerous creature, woman. The folly of others is my guard againſt their ſnares. I have ſeen your Henrietta, and I yeſterday took my leave of her, and your favorite retreat — the beauty of her perſon, and the pleaſing ſimplicity of her manners, are indeed an excuſe for you. Mrs. Beaufort is in perfect health; but has, in playing with her daughter, and endeavouring to ſave her from falling to the ground, ſprained her wriſt in ſo violent a manner, that ſhe has deſired me to make her excuſes for not writing, till after the receipt of your next letter. She is in tolerable

ſpirits

ſpirits — therefore endeavour to be ſatisfied with an abſence, the time of which is employed much better than in ſighing and whining at the feet of a female.

You had ever a decent ſhare of vanity, and I doubt not but it led you to think, that Henrietta could not ſurvive your leaving her and England. Have done with all womaniſh complaints. Let not ſuch reflections impede your way to glory. I ſaw no tears, — heard no complaints, during my ſtay at ****. On the contrary, we were as chearful as the ſeaſon, and every day after dinner drank your health and ſucceſs to the Britiſh arms. Many times did I hear her ſyren voice, tuning ſome melodious air. At that moment I liſtened, and forgave you. You know my paſſion for muſick. She ſighed at reading your very

diſmal complaints, and, ſmiling, gave me your letter to peruſe, enquiring if I did not admire your amazing conſtancy. "It is, I own, unfaſhionable, and rare, ſaid I; but the fair object"—"Huſh, Sir Henry, I had rather be able to partake the pleaſing amuſement of the polite world, than hear compliments from any of your ſex: but muſt be content to remain in this my priſon, till my hero returns to free me."

Yet in ſpite of all their pretended indifference to the charms of flattery, the man who would with to gain a female heart, muſt flatter, lye, and cringe: therefore I ſtand no chance.

Tell me in your next what is going forward abroad, and whether we are likely to triumph over theſe ſcoundrels the French. Let me hear of every heroic feat our arms perform.

Such

Such a letter will purchaſe a much longer one from me—and I will then endeavour to ſend you an account of what is going forward on this ſide of the water. Yours,

HENRY COURTNEY.

# LETTER XVIII.

## *Mrs.* MELVILLE *to Miss* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

TO call in queſtion the wiſdom and juſtice of heaven, is to act like the child of guilt and folly—that pre-ſumptuous child am I. No letters are yet arrived from my beloved Beaufort. I hear too, from undoubted authority, that he has been faithleſs and a rover: even his friend did not contradict that character. Perhaps he has left me forever — perhaps he wiſhes to ſhake me off, and I am to be abandoned to my fortune. Sure he did not leave me to be the prey of his artful friend. Our marriage, I believe, would not ſtand good according to the cruel laws of this land. We were both under age, when united — even now I have only

only ſeen twenty years of life. An old clergyman, tottering on the brink of an opening grave, and ſurrounded with poverty, for a conſiderable bribe, joined our hands. Death ſoon after ſealed his lips, and reſcued him from the danger of a diſcovery. At that time I was too young to conſider of theſe matters, and my poor mother was unacquainted with them. I am interrupted.

* * * * * *

*In Continuation.*

Alas! what will become of me! My ſoul is ſunk down, and humbled by deſpair. Oh that I were permitted to lay down my ſorrows and ſink at once into the peaceful grave. Sir Henry has dared to talk of love—he has given hints that would turn every faculty of the gentleſt mind to rage and fury. Colonel

Colonel Beaufort long ſuſpected my truth—long had repented of his imprudent union, and wiſhed me to ſeek happineſs with ſome other lover. He, the hateful Courtney, was appointed the meſſenger of theſe tidings. Do not his ſilence, and the not giving me a direction where to find him, confirm my wretchedneſs.

*His friend would always take care to convey my letters to him.* I ſuſpected no deceit, and ſubmitted. He wiſhed not, he deſigned not to hear from the deſerted Henrietta. His father has provided a proper match for him, a lady of rank and fortune.

And is this poſſible? Am I in reality ſo miſerable a wretch? It is even ſo, my Caroline; my ſorrows wear no friendly maſk to conceal the horrors they bring with them. Sir Henry Courtney has offered to protect me.

This

This man of probity and honour, has dared to inſult the wife of his friend with the offer of a ſettlement; provided ſhe will conſent to diſgrace her ſex, by becoming his miſtreſs.

Yes, Caroline, I am, in ſpite of all the powers of injuſtice, Beaufort's wife: nor will I ever give up my right to that dear name, but with my life. Yet I will not interrupt his happineſs. I will not prevent his marrying ſome other fair. Write no more to me at this place. I have ſtrong ſuſpicions that my ruin is deſigned. I know not where I ſhall go to find protection, but will put my cauſe into the hands of him that made me, and follow the only path that appears to ſave me. Be ſecret, my Caroline, and ſoon I hope to convey a letter to you from a place of ſafety.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

# LETTER XIX.

## WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Esq.* *to Sir* HENRY COURTNEY.

HE that ſtands ſelf-condemned wants no other accuſer: Yet, ſtop your baneful deſigns, my friend. Raſhneſs and guilt muſt produce miſery. "The truly great and noble ſpirit (I once heard you obſerve to a friend, who was ridiculing your gravity and pretended ſcruples of conſcience, reſpecting the deſtruction of the fair-ſex) takes a pride in protecting innocence" —and dare you become the deſtroyer of it?

Love is a heavenly paſſion, planted in the breaſt to create happineſs. It ſubdues to ſoftneſs the moſt ſavage

heart; but the paſſion which has no virtue for its baſis, deſerves a much coarſer name than that of love. To gain a compleat victory over ourſelves may be a difficult taſk, but conquest would amply reward our pains. Why will you forfeit the ſelf-approving ſatisfaction of looking back on a well ſpent life? Why ſo carefully are you nurſing torments for your own boſom, and laying up cares for the decline of life, which will want the downy pillow of uninterrupted peace? But if your own future happineſs has no weight, think of your friend—think of the blooming Henrietta: What daggers are you placing in their boſoms! Beaufort, you ſay has been your friend from infancy; and will you thus repay him for the unbounded confidence he has repoſed in you?

But what avails arguing with a madman? In few words, give up your baſe deſigns, or you are no more my friend. Every means in my power ſhall immediately be exerted to ſave this ill-fated pair. I here return you the copies of the letters which you ſent me. Read them, Courtney, and let them bring conviction to your heart. Let them reſtore you to that honour which you ſeem going to baniſh. Let them induce you to become again deſerving of Beaufort's generous unſuſpecting friendſhip. Give them to the affronted wife of your injured friend, and make a candid confeſſion of all your baſeneſs.

My heart bled when I read the colonel's letters. They at once confeſs the huſband, lover, friend. And can you form the baſe deſign of breaking theſe tender ties aſunder, a deſign which my

ſoul ſhudders even to think of? are you already become ſuch an adept in wickedneſs? Repent, make reſtitution, or I ſhould bluſh to call you by the name of friend.

WILLIAM SYMONDS.

# LETTER XX.

## *Sir* HENRY COURTNEY *to* WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Esq.*

YOUR letter came too late to save Henrietta from wretchedneſs: whilſt her own watchful timid innocence and virtue have protected her from ruin. She is gone I know not where, driven by me from her own habitation, from the aſylum her huſband had choſen for her. A curſe upon her raſhneſs! but more juſtly may I curſe my own guilt. With what indignation did ſhe receive the offers of my love! With what ſpirit expreſs her deteſtation of my pretended generoſity! "If I am ſo miſerable, ſaid ſhe, as to be abandoned by colonel Beaufort, I will never be the ſlave of vice. I can learn to be content with poverty, ſo long

long as innocence is mine. Leave this houſe, Sir Henry, never preſume to enter theſe doors again. When colonel Beaufort returns, you and I muſt account for our conduct: but if ever you wiſh me to pardon, or yourſelf to be excuſed by heaven for your unequalled inſolence and guilt, lift not your arm againſt my Beaufort."

She left the room. I admired her noble ſpirit; but my pride was wounded. However I inſtantly departed. For a conſiderable bribe my fellow the ſame evening obtained a promiſe from his believing nymph, to admit me into the apartment of her miſtreſs. Whether the injured Mrs. Beaufort overheard the bargain I know not, but the next morning ſhe was gone, even her little Jeſſa left behind. In vain has every place for twenty miles round, been ſearched to diſcover her retreat. Not the leaſt tidings

tidings can we hear of her. This morning, on ſearching the draws of her dreſſing table, the following lines were found directed to me.

" I am above reproaching the guilty.
" Suffer not my ſweet Jeſſa to want a
" friend, till her father returns. If he
" has forſaken his wife, he ſurely will
" protect his child.

" HENRIETTA BEAUFORT."

To deſcribe the agonies I felt when I found ſhe was gone, would be impoſſible. The poor girl, whoſe integrity had been forfeited to the united powers of love and intereſt, was almoſt diſtracted. She raved, wept, and was in ſuch diſtreſs, that I was obliged to make uſe of every art to ſave her from the fatal effects of her own deſpair. "Oh! what a miſtreſs had ſhe betrayed! What a friend had ſhe loſt!" She then

embraced the child, and on her knees begged I would permit her to attend Miſs Jeſſa, and by her tender watchful care, in ſome reſpect to make atonement for her guilt. I conſented, and when I found that no tidings could be heard of Mrs. Melville, paid the ſervants their wages and diſcharged them, putting an old woman into the houſe, whoſe honeſty her ſimplicity confirmed, and giving her ten guineas, left her to take care of the houſe and furniture, till ſome of the family returned.

The next morning I ſat off for London, with the maid, and her little charge, and have, at their intreaties, ſince conſented to the marriage of her and the guilty, but now repenting Thomas, and agreed to pay them according to the care they took of the child. They departed for the country, and are to live at * * * * *, the village where

Thomas

Thomas was brought up, and where he intends following the buſineſs of a gardener. With the utmoſt regret I parted from the ſweet child—but thought it better to ſuffer it to remain with its penitent nurſe, than tear it from her arms, and to place it in thoſe of ſtrangers. I have given orders to my ſteward to viſit her every week, and pay for her board.

I am now going to retire to the melancholy ſeat of my anceſtors in the north of England—and in ſolitude endeavour to conquer a paſſion which has effectually deſtroyed my peace. Should Beaufort fall, I will, if 'tis poſſible to diſcover the wretched Henrietta, make her all the atonement in my power by an offer of my hand; which if ſhe refuſe, I will force her to accept enough to ſupport herſelf and daughter above dependance, and bind myſelf with a

ſacred

ſacred oath never to ſee her more. Should my injured friend fall a victim in his country's cauſe, and his Henrietta remain undiſcovered, I will be a father to their hapleſs orphan. Never ſhall ſhe want a parent; and at my deceaſe ſhe ſhall be heir to my fortune. Should he return, I will ſuffer every inſult which his rage and injuries may load me with, rather than lift my arm againſt his life. With cowardice I may be branded. I once defended a juſt cauſe; but never will a bad one.

What deſolation have I occaſioned! Rapid was the progreſs which a guilty paſſion made in my boſom; ſtrange and fatal may be its effects, whilſt on every ſide the innocent muſt ſuffer for it.

The war is drawing to a concluſion. In a few weeks Beaufort will return. It is ſo long ſince I received his laſt letter, that it would be in vain to write,

as

as he undoubtedly is, ere now, removed two or three hundred miles another way with the army. To time, therefore, I muſt leave the unraveling this ſtory, and explain a myſtery which, when diſcovered, ſhews me to the world the worſt of villains, and throws diſgrace on a family that, till now, had none to brand it with infamy. I acknowledge, Symonds, the juſtneſs of your arguments; they ſtruck conviction to my ſoul: but had not Henrietta eſcaped, I fear ſhe had fallen a victim to my baſeneſs. I deſerve not the continuance of your friendſhip; but I beg you will indulge me with it. Endeavour to hear what is going forward in the great world, to which I will never return, unleſs they are reſtored to happineſs whom I have ſo cruelly injured: Whilſt the thoughts of thoſe dangers and ſufferings to which I have expoſed the fair Henrietta, will

deprive

deprive me of enjoying a moment's peace. I ſtill make uſe of every means in my power to diſcover her; but at preſent without ſucceſs. How great muſt the fears of this lovely woman have been to force her even from the arms of her child! What a monſter muſt I appear to her affrighted boſom! I cannot bear to indulge the thought.

Yours,

HENRY COURTNEY.

# LETTER XXI.

## *Mrs.* MELVILLE *to Miss* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

AT laſt your miſerable friend has found a place of ſafety. Two heavenly ſtrangers kindly took me in, and beneath their roof I, for a time, ſhall hide my wretchedneſs. But as you undoubtedly are impatient to be acquainted with the motives which could drive me to take the raſh ſtep of quitting my own houſe, and even forſaking my child, I will no longer defer the ſatisfying your curioſity.

I informed you in a ſhort unconnected epiſtle, which you received before my departure from * * * *, that Sir Henry Courtney, after filling my mind with the moſt racking doubts, and alarming fears, reſpecting the conſtancy of my

beloved husband, presumed to affront me with his abandoned offers. I refused them with that indignation and contempt they deserved; and commanded him to leave the house for ever. He took his leave with an affected penitence. I retired to my apartment early in the evening, and providentially heard his vile servant tampering with my maid for the destruction of her mistress. For a long time the girl resolutely refused his bribes; at length her honesty gave way to the threats of her lover, for such I now discovered that he was, who swore, if she refused his request, he would never see her more.

"Colonel Beaufort, said he, has for ever left your lady. My master, young, handsome, and with ten times his fortune, will supply his place. Many a woman has a worse chance. Only admit him into your mistress's chamber to-

to-morrow night; you have nothing farther to do. The lovers will ſoon agree, no doubt; and believe me, Molly, Mrs. Melville will thank you in her heart for the friendly part you acted."

This ſpeech was accompanied by careſſes—and the poor believing girl promiſed to grant his requeſt. A purſe of twenty guineas was then put into her hand, with a promiſe of another as good the enſuing evening. Thus they parted.

What was to be done, my Caroline? My own ſervant had agreed to betray me—the others might all have done the ſame before. I had no friend, to whom I could apply in this diſtreſs. Every inhabitant of the village was pre-poſſeſſed againſt me. They would believe no ties but ſuch as were to my diſadvantage.

tage. In flight only appeared ſafety. I inſtantly determined to leave my houſe, the habitation my Beaufort had placed me in; and likewiſe to forſake my Jeſſa, the ſweet pledge of our once happy loves. But her innocence would make her friends. Sir Henry could not be an enemy to her. I put two lines, directed to the artful deceiver, into a drawer in my dreſſing-table, in which I deſired him to protect my child till her parent returned. With what agonies I wrote thoſe few words, you may better imagine than I deſcribe. Then putting all the money I had into my pocket, which was in the whole about eighteen guineas, hiding my face as much as poſſible with an old large bonnet, and ſlipping a petticoat, which belonged to a riding-dreſs, over my others, ſtole ſoftly down the ſtairs. In the paſſage I luckily found one of the maids

maids old cardinals hanging up; I inſtantly put it over that on my ſhoulders to conceal my black cloak. Thus equipt, with a ſmall bundle of linen tyed up in a handkerchief, I left my houſe—it was about two in the morning, and began to be tolerably light. I knew it would be many hours before I was miſſed. Imagine my ſituation, Caroline, in the middle of the night ſtealing from *my own* dwelling, with the ſecrecy of a thief—forſaking the ſweeteſt infant that nature ever made—without any other companion than my own gloomy thoughts, to attend me through this ſcene of horror—and unacquainted with the way to any one particular place. Luckily, the fear of being purſued, and carried back to ruin, gave wings to my feet, and ere the inhabitants of the farm houſes by which I paſſed had riſen to their

daily toil, I was many miles from my own home.

When I had wandered thus for ſeveral hours, taking every bye path that I could ſee, I ſat down beneath the friendly ſhelter of an oak, to reſt myſelf for a few minutes. It was then that reflection brought to view the miſery of my preſent ſituation, and that of the paſt: I burſt into tears—A poor woman, at that inſtant paſſing by, took compaſſion on me, and invited me to her cottage, which ſtood a few paces off, to take ſome refreſhment. I accepted the kind offer, and after telling her, in anſwer to her inquiries, that I was going to ſee a friend, but being unuſed to walking was tired and low ſpirited; ſhe pitied me, ſaid I did not look as if I had been uſed to hardſhips; and immediately brought ſome milk and bread,

which

which hunger made me eat with an appetite that rendered it more grateful than the richeſt repaſt I had ever taſted. I offered to pay the good woman for my breakfaſt — but ſhe refuſed with a bluſh—" Though not very rich," ſaid ſhe, " I have, thank God, a plentiful meal for thoſe who ſeem to want it, and to which they are always welcome."

I left the poor cottage with reluctance, and envied the moſt miſerable being that paſſed me. " Is there upon this earth," ſaid my repining ſoul, " ſo compleat a wretch as Henrietta? Not a friend to whom ſhe can fly for protection — Not a habitation beneath whoſe roof ſhe can reſt her weary limbs.—Far diſtant is he, who once loved, once protected her!"

Luckily, none inſulted me as I paſſed along—but ſome addreſſed me with the familiar epithet of *My girl*,

enquiring whither I was going, from whence I came, and many other to them trifling queſtions. To all which I returned evaſive anſwers. Thus I wandered, till about ſeven in the evening—when chance, or rather the goodneſs of heaven — conducted me to a pretty dwelling, which was only divided from the road by a pleaſant garden, at the farther end of which, upon a garden ſeat, were placed a venerable pair, the benignity of whoſe looks made me inſtantly determine to addreſs them. Nature was almoſt exhauſted. I ſoftly opened the gate: they were earneſtly converſing, therefore did not obſerve me till I reached them—I threw myſelf on my knees at their feet.

" Save me," I cried—" ſhelter me from a cruel world—I am innocent, though compelled to wear the myſte-

rious

rious appearance of guilt." Life at this inſtant forſook me, and I fell to the earth without motion. Servants were inſtantly called, and every means made uſe of to reſtore me to life. When I recovered, I found myſelf in a neat little parlour, my kind, unknown benefactors hanging over me with the tendereſt ſolicitude. I attempted to apologize for the trouble I had given, and for the abrupt manner in which I intruded myſelf upon them—but was forbidden to ſpeak—A bed was made up for me, to which I was inſtantly carried.—Soon after ſome ſack whey was ſent up by a ſervant, and followed by Mrs. Aſhford, the name of my humane friends. She inſiſted on my not attempting to talk, or think of making excuſes for what ſhe already looked upon as a fortunate event—begged that I would endeavour to

compoſe my mind to reſt—then left me.

The tender friendſhip I had met with—the thoughts of being in a place of ſafety—with the wearineſs which terror and fatigue had brought upon me—lulled me to repoſe—and for ten hours ſleep kindly baniſhed ſorrow from my boſom.

Thus lodged in ſecurity, I will put an end to this epiſtle, but will continue my narrative the firſt opportunity.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

# LETTER XXII.

## WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Esq.* *to* *Sir* HENRY COURTNEY.

SINCE Henrietta is escaped, I can forgive you. But what is become of the poor hapless wanderer? May she not meet with other Courtneys, who will seek to destroy that innocence they ought to protect? Without money or friends, where will she find a refuge, or what consolation can her own forlorn dejected thoughts afford her breaking heart? upon which you have fixed that scorpion, jealousy. False to your friend—cruel and unjust to the helpless Henrietta — your own thoughts must indeed be a sufficient punishment—therefore I will not reproach you. Time, and a future unerring conduct may restore you to the

place you once held in my heart; but your wonderful ſobriety, I am convinced, aroſe from the want of temptations, rather than from any principle of honour. The obſervation is a juſt one, that a long acquaintance only can diſcover to us the *real character* of another.

You are become the general topic of converſation. It is ſaid you are gone off with a young beauty; but who, or of what family the lady is, ſtill remains undiſcovered. However, as the tale runs, ſhe was ſuppoſed to be the miſtreſs of ſome friend, whom you were ſo fortunate as to rival. By ſome means your name was diſcovered by the talking neighbours of Mrs. Melville, and from that village aroſe the tale. At the diſtance of a hundred and fifty miles—the news have reached me, and as you were known in this

place

place to be my friend, I was not the *laſt* to hear it. My ſiſter, whoſe favorite you once were, is filled with aſtoniſhment. She lifted her eyes up to my face — "Who would have thought, brother, that Sir Henry Courtney had been ſuch a rake? Well! I ſee there is no truſting to appearances. That London is a horrid place —it ruins half the young fellows of the nation."—"And the young girls too, my Lucy; therefore I do not intend you ſhould go amongſt them." —"Nor do I deſire it," ſhe returned —"but this Courtney, brother—is it not a pity he was ſuch a hypocrite?" —"Do you think it is a pity?" "Indeed I do," ſhe replied with a bluſh; "I could not help thinking favorably of him, becauſe he was ſuch a favorite with you."

The

The beauty and loveliness of my sweet sister, I once hoped, would have made an impression on your heart. I was piqued at your indifference—and shocked at seeing the progress you made in the esteem of my sister. I now rejoice at what I then lamented, and never was more ready than at this moment, to adopt this sentence of Pope, that "Whatever is, is right."

Let the sincerity with which I have ever treated you, be the test of my friendship.

When was the flatterer found to be a friend?

WILLIAM SYMONDS.

# LETTER XXIII.

## *Mrs.* MELVILLE *to Miss* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

WHEN the morning arrived, I waited with impatience for the ſummons to breakfaſt, that I might make ſome acknowledgment to my preſervers, and rid them of the trouble which I had brought upon them. About eight o'clock I received a meſſage to enquire if I was well enough to go down ſtairs—I immediately followed the ſervant into the parlour, and was welcomed by them with the ſame freedom as if I had been a long acquaintance.

" The manner in which you laſt night addreſſed us, and the lovelineſs of your figure, my young friend," ſaid Mr. Aſhford, " have greatly excited our

our curioſity, pity and eſteem. If it would not be deemed impertinent, we would, after breakfaſt, be glad to know what ſtrange event brought you [illegible] to our retired, and obſcure part of the world, alone, and in diſguiſe. Our only buſineſs and pleaſures in this life are to aſſiſt the unfortunate: therefore, if we can be of any ſervice to you, freely may you command us."

What an addreſs was this! Long had I been unaccuſtomed to ſuch benevolence—long had it been ſince the worthy part of my own ſex had deigned to ſmile upon me. My mind was ſoftened by affliction. I burſt into tears—but they were tears of gratitude and joy. "Excuſe me," I cried—"ſuch goodneſs, ſuch tenderneſs, almoſt overpowers me. I will beg a diſh of tea—and then I will unfold every ſecret of my heart and life with the ſame ſincerity

cerity as to my Maker."—Breakfaſt was ſoon ended, — and your Henrietta related the hiſtory of her unfortunate life—from its beginning to the preſent period, without even concealing the name of her huſband from them.—They liſtened with attention—wept at the cruel hardſhip of my fate—Long had they been guided by one will. At the ſame inſtant both aroſe to embrace me—

"That heaven directed you to us," ſaid the venerable Mr. Aſhford, "I am thankful — There is ſomething divine that ever attends on truth and innocence; you ſhall live with us, till fortune wears a kinder aſpect. We once had a daughter—her gentle ſoul was pure as that of angels—ſhe was too good for ſuch a world as this—and therefore her Creator in pity called her to that heaven in which we one

day hope to meet again. Weep not, my Eliza; perhaps it kindly ſaved her from experiencing ſuch woes as this young beauty does—whilſt to atone for that natural ſorrow we ſo long have felt, it ſent this lady to ſupply her place."

What did I feel as thus I heard him ſpeak! I threw myſelf at their feet—and when my tears would give me leave, thanked them with that heartfelt gratitude which ſuch generoſity demanded. "How ſhall I find words," ſaid I, "to expreſs the feelings of my ſoul? You are more than friends—more than parents — whilſt Henrietta lives ſhe will endeavour to ſupply the place of your angel daughter—and in ſome meaſure repay the generous protection which you give her. I am an unhappy wretch — but ill fortune can never make me baſe or ungrateful.

ungrateful. Thrown off, abandoned by a huſband, who once fondly loved, and who will ever be beloved whilſt life is given to Henrietta; forced to forſake a poor helpleſs child, whoſe artleſs innocence, and pleaſing infancy had cloſely twined themſelves about my bleeding heart—forſaken by all the world, but by one gentle friend—the world united in tearing my fame to pieces—and for you to take me in; to offer me a refuge and protection!—Surely heaven never formed any others hearts like yours."

"Many, I hope, fair ſufferer," ſaid he—"but buſineſs, families, pleaſures, and the cares of life, prevent ſome from exerting that benevolence and candid way of thinking, with which nature at firſt endowed them. For us—we are favoured by providence with enough to ſupport us above dependence,

pendence, and are verging to the end of life. The death of our child weaned us, in a manner, from the world—but let us not indulge the melancholy of our humours by theſe ſad ſubjects. I can tell you, young lady, my old woman and I ſhall teach you to be chearful." — "I will endeavour to be all you wiſh," ſaid I — "but as to chearfulneſs, I fear it is baniſhed for ever from my boſom. Whilſt I poſſeſſed my Beaufort's heart, the ſhaft of misfortune had been bent in vain —but now it is open to its keeneſt dart." — "And how do you know but you ſtill poſſeſs that huſband's heart?" ſaid Mr. Aſhford. "Sir Henry Courtney was ſo well ſkilled in deceit, that you ought not to credit the tales he told: perhaps they were falſe, meant to forward his own baſe deſigns." "It might be ſo, good Sir

—but

—but I never once heard from my husband since he left me—not one line to soften the pangs of absence."—" It is time alone can discover the cruel enigma—I am unacquainted with every one with whom you are connected. In fact, I have so long lived a life of retirement, that I am a stranger in the world I inhabit—the merciless hand of time has left me but few friends, and they are almost all of them as old fashioned and as much forgotten as myself;—therefore my will is greater than my power to serve you—Time is an enemy, and a friend—to that and heaven you must trust your cause—Remember, Mrs. Melville, (for by that name I still begged to be called) that there is a secret providence which often terminates events contrary to human expectation and appearances."—

What thinks my Caroline of my new friends? Angels I may ſurely call them. Victim as I am to misfortune, I think none ever was ſo fortunate in ſuch diſtreſs.—" It is aſtoniſhing," ſaid I one day to Mr. Aſhford, when he was expreſſing the parental tenderneſs he began to feel for me, " that you did not ſuſpect my uncommon ſtory to be the invention of art or guilt."—" Were we always to ſuſpect the unfortunate to be guilty," he returned, " what an opinion ſhould we have of half the world?"

Thus tenderly they judge of others, and employ every hour of their lives in promoting the temporal as well as the eternal intereſt of all who make application to them.—Mr. Aſhford has preached twenty years in this village; he is idolized by his pariſhioners,

and

and illneſs alone can prevent his performing his duties.

But oh, Caroline, what balm can be found to heal ſuch woes as mine! Am I never to ſee my Beaufort more? Never again to embrace my Jeſſa, who perhaps is fallen into the hands of ſtrangers, leſs kind than thoſe who ſheltered her unhappy mother? What ſaid the vile Courtney to my flight? Would you think it? This place, is reckoned fifty miles from that I lived in—but by coming through ſuch bye paths, Mr. Aſhford imagines I muſt have come a much ſhorter way—I know not, only that the way appeared very long and tedious—nor did I ſtop but once, and that only at the poor cottage mentioned in my laſt. I have now been here a fortnight. Write to me, Caroline, tell me what is become of the amiable Corn-

wall.—It is dangerous to love, my friend—Think, oh think of what I ſuffer—may a happier fate ever attend you, than has done your

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

# LETTER XXIV.

## *Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

JOY to my ſweet friend on the happy refuge ſhe has found: May heaven reward, both here and ever, the generous pair that took you in when in diſtreſs—and ſaved my Henrietta from the ten thouſand dangers with which ſhe was ſurrounded. — So handſome, ſo gentle, timid, and unacquainted with the world; ſo unable to ſupport hardſhips and fatigue—to become a wanderer—ſet off in the night, alone and unattended!—My boſom was diſtracted for you—I wept inceſſantly. Mr. Cornwall diſcovered my uneaſineſs—he begged to know the cauſe; never had I ſo great an inclination to diſcover your ſecret as at that moment;—but my pro-

miſe, and the fear of your diſpleaſure, reſtrained my tongue. However—I hired a countryman to go over to your houſe, and if poſſible bring ſome tidings of you—he returned without being able to procure any. My uneaſineſs encreaſed—ſo did the importunity of Mr. Cornwall, who has lately been a great deal at our houſe. My father admires him as a companion, and has not the leaſt ſuſpicion of his wiſhing to be more nearly connected with him.—At length I became ſo very unhappy with my apprehenſions on your account, that I ventured to inform him of your name and where you lived; begging he would endeavour to gain ſome intelligence of you.—I ſaw him not for ſix days after this converſation: he then entered the apartment where I was ſitting at work — his countenance was unuſually grave. I enquired, with ſome degree

degree of eagerneſs, I believe, What was the matter with him?—"I am very ſorry, Miſs Tylney, to find you are ſo intimately connected with a woman of Mrs. Melville's character, to which undoubtedly you are no ſtranger." "I am well acquainted with my Henrietta," ſaid I:—"too well I know that malevolence, with its ruthleſs tongue, has ſtolen the character of my fair ſuffering friend, in whoſe ſpotleſs boſom every virtue dwells. Appearances, Mr. Cornwall, are often deceitful—I thought you had known enough of the world not to ſuffer your judgment to be led by them alone." "Pardon me, Miſs Tylney, I do not judge in the manner you ſuſpect me to do; I ſaw your uneaſineſs on your friend's account, and determined to alleviate it if in my power?—I therefore ſat off the morning after we laſt parted—for the

place in which you had informed me your friend reſided, and arrived at her houſe the following evening. When I rapt at the door, an elderly woman made her appearance—and I begged to ſpeak with Mrs. Melville. "Dear heart, Sir," cried ſhe, "Mrs. Melville is not here."—"Where is ſhe then?" ſaid I. —"Heaven only knows; ſhe went off with Sir Henry Courtney the beginning of laſt week." — I turned from the door with indignation. At the inn, and in the village, I heard the ſame confirmed by every tongue, with the aggravated addition of her having been a kept miſtreſs to ſome man of faſhion, whom it was ſuppoſed Sir Henry had rivalled in his abſence. Indeed, Miſs Tylney, I was ſhocked at hearing this, and would intreat you by all means, to give up any future connection with a woman of ſo bad a character."—"What

is

is your opinion of me, Mr. Cornwall?" ſaid I, with all the calmneſs I could aſſume—"tell me without flattery."—"I believe you to be all that is good and amiable."—"I have not a virtue, Sir, in my boſom, or an accompliſhment of mind or perſon, but what is ten times ſurpaſt in thoſe of my Henrietta—'twas from her I learnt to be what I am. There is a hardſhip, a ſingularity in her fate, that is as uncommon as 'tis ſevere—but I am not at liberty to diſcloſe the tale, any more than my ſweet ſuffering friend is to undeceive the world, a world which I am ſure ſhe muſt deſpiſe."—Tears ſtole down my face—Mr. Cornwall was affected. "Since you, Miſs Tylney, are convinced of her worth, it is ſufficient evidence for me—I beg you and your friend ten thouſand pardons for my unjuſt ſuſpicion—the plauſible tale I heard can alone plead in my

my behalf. — Your generous boſom, Miſs Tylney, ſo nobly ſuſceptible of friendſhip, can it poſſibly be a ſtranger to love?" "Would you have me make confeſſion?" ſaid I, ſmiling.—"No—I was rather inclined to aſk that permiſſion for myſelf."—The converſation of lovers is mere nonſenſe—therefore to own the truth, his readineſs to oblige me and acquit you, becauſe the friend of Caroline, had put me into ſuch good humour, that I gave him liberty to ſpeak, and not only granted him free pardon and abſolution for the daring offence he had committed, but believe I confeſſed the having loved a certain perſon much againſt my inclination;—and even diſcovered how much I deſpiſed his hated rival Mr. Danby—Mutual vows then paſt—my boſom was the happier for them. The virtues of Mr. Cornwall juſtify to my own heart its partiality in his favour—indeed they would

would not juſtify me to my parents and the world for loving a begger, as my lover is at preſent without the poſſeſſion of a ſingle ſhilling but what his curacies bring him in. We have agreed to conceal our attachment to each other with the greateſt caution, as it would, if diſcovered, be a means of forcing me into the arms of a wretch I deſpiſe.—Some favourable event may take place—we are both young, my ſiſter is quite an Argus—but I hope ſhe will not be able to diſcover my acquaintance with Mr. Cornwall, who has, without deſigning it, rivalled Mr. Danby in her favour—indeed I fear ſhe has cheriſhed hopes of gaining him herſelf. Mr. Cornwall is known to be no favourite with fortune—and the large one ſhe muſt one day poſſeſs, ſhe undoubtedly thinks, would amply compenſate for the want of perſonal charms—But were ſhe poſſeſt of

every

every outward beauty, the deformities of her mind would inſpire him with diſguſt.

Thus am I embarked, my Henrietta, on a ſea, to which, till now, I remained a ſtranger. Will you be the friendly pilot to guard me from thoſe rocks and ſands on which I may otherwiſe be loſt?—As to a private marriage, I will never think of it. Sooner would I conſent to be for ever parted from my lover. No, Henrietta—the hardſhips it has brought on you are ſo many, and ſo ſevere, that I would wiſh them not only to be a warning to me, but to all our ſex.—

I have complied with your requeſt in exactly informing you how matters ſtand—Now let me entreat you would endeavour to be eaſy—credit not the tales of that baſe defamer, that falſe friend, Sir Henry Courtney. Undoubtedly they were only meant to aſſiſt him

in

in his ſchemes. That you have not heard from colonel Beaufort, is, I own, ſurpriſing—are you certain he did not write? Yet Courtney durſt not withhold his letters. The colonel's regiment has been every day expected to land in England, for ſome time paſt—ſurely you will then hear from him—he may even now be in England;—if ſo, no doubt but you will ſoon be reſtored to him and happineſs.

Write to me, Henrietta, tell me you are well, doubt not but your Jeſſa is taken care of; how abandoned to every feeling of humanity muſt be that wretch who could hurt, or refuſe to protect ſo ſweet an infant!—Her innocence too *muſt* be the care of a watchful providence.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

# LETTER XXV.

## *Mrs.* MELVILLE *to Miss* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

THE field of calumny is extenſive—'tis a fertile ſoil. For me, I care not as to the opinion of the world—that anxiety has long been ended. I bear within me the witneſs of my innocence—*that* would ſupport me, Caroline, though princes were to pronounce me guilty. I even think it would, though my Beaufort, the man my ſoul loves better than its exiſtence, were to condemn me—but from that fate may heaven defend me!—'Tis a thought, which, 'till this moment, never found entrance to my boſom—ſurely it has not reaſon for its foundation.—Did I ſay I could ſupport the being thought guilty by my huſband? Vain boaſter

that I am: Oh, Caroline, there's madneſs in the thought—I dare not look that way.

I have now been ſeven weeks with Mr. and Mrs. Aſhford—every day brings with it ſome proof of their encreaſing tenderneſs—yet ſtill I am the child of diſappointment. About a fortnight ſince I mentioned my little girl.—With a mother's partial fondneſs repeated ſome tender tales, and lamented, with a flood of tears, the cruel neceſſity I was under of leaving her behind. The next day Mr. Aſhford, unknown to me, ſent a countryman to my forſaken habitation, to learn ſome tidings of her—and if it were poſſible, diſcover with whom ſhe was placed—to pay whatever was demanded for her board, and bring her with him. I knew not of this additional obligation till the meſſenger returned, and was then acquainted with what had

paſt.

paſt. An old woman occupied my houſe, as you before informed me; ſhe was placed here, ſhe ſaid, to take care of the furniture; but could give no intelligence of the child, or ſend me any cloaths, as ſhe had no right to part with what did not belong to her. She told the man that a ſervant, and two gentlemen, had been there before to enquire for Mrs. Melville—and that on telling the laſt that I was gone off with Sir Henry Courtney—he raged and ſwore in ſuch a manner as almoſt frightened her out of her ſenſes—and on going away, had commanded her not to leave the houſe, or ſuffer any thing to be made away with, and ſhe ſhould be well rewarded for her honeſty. Who could this be, my Caroline? Surely no other than the vile Sir Henry.—Perhaps he expected to find me returned to my habitation, and the diſappointment,

ment, added to the report which prevailed, threw him into ſuch a rage. This account has determined me to remain ſtill more concealed; I ſhall now be afraid even to indulge myſelf with a walk; who knows, but he may take it into his head to ſearch for me around the country? However, if that ſhould be the caſe—he will hardly think of finding me here. Obſcure and few are the peaceful happy inhabitants of this almoſt unfrequented village—which lies at a conſiderable diſtance from any great road.—But what is become of my child? Pardon me, Caroline, for tormenting you with a mother's tender fears.

The woman's not ſending any cloaths was a proof of her honeſty: the man neither told her from whence he came, or who ſent him—only that they were for Mrs. Melville. With

ſome reaſon ſhe might conclude he was a cheat. — Mrs. Aſhford kindly offered me any of her cloaths: I accepted a black ſilk night gown, have ſince made ſome trifling purchaſes, and have likewiſe received ſeveral preſents from them. As the Brunſwick I had on when I left my houſe was almoſt new, I want no addition to my wardrobe—therefore excuſe me, my Caroline, for returning you the bill which you ſo kindly encloſed in your laſt, but which you delicately avoided mentioning in your letter—I am ſtill very rich—ten guineas remain untouched. Henrietta muſt be much poorer, ere ſhe could conſent to deprive her generous friend of ſo conſiderable a part of her allowance.

May you, my Caroline, have a more fortunate, and more experienced guide than your ſuffering friend, to conduct

you

you through the trying labyrinths of life! You have a monitor in your own bosom, that will ever lead you to what is right. — May the loves of Tylney and of Cornwall remain constant and unshaken by time, and the various changes it produces, if in that love they are to find happiness.—May consenting parents and a smiling world, assist in crowning all your hours with delight! I do not approve of carrying on clandestine acquaintances, any more than of private marriages. Think how I have suffered in the opinions of the world—as well as in my own bosom—perhaps have pulled down ruin on the man I love—But can so faulty a creature presume to advise the unerring? The praises bestowed by the friend we love must be grateful, it will almost make us vain; I wish to deserve them more.

The chearfulneſs of Mr. and Mrs. Aſhford ſerves to keep up my ſpirits. A placid temper greatly helps to ſecure people from many of the infirmities of life. At the age of ſeventy, it is aſtoniſhing to ſee the health which this venerable pair ſtill enjoy. We paſs our time in a manner quite pleaſing to me—No other company break in upon us, except now and then the wife of an honeſt farmer. We read, walk, and work by turns; Mr. Aſhford often reads to us on entertaining as well as on religious ſubjects—but there is a ſtriking ſolemnity in his manner of reading the latter that adds grandeur and even greater importance to the ſubject.—The Sundays are paſt in the ſame rational manner, as every other day—Mr. Aſhford, though very obſerving of every religious duty, is far from being ſevere in his opinions; all inno-

cent

cent amuſements he encourages; for he is entirely a ſtranger to that ill-nature and narrowneſs of thinking, which are too often the companions of the aged.

Adieu, my Caroline; join with me in returning thanks to heaven for giving ſuch friends to

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

# LETTER XXVI.

## *Miss* CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Mrs.* MELVILLE.

CRUEL unkind Henrietta! What a pleaſure did you deprive me of by refuſing to accept the ſmall proof which my friendſhip offered!—Inadequate was it to the wiſhes which actuated my heart. I would ſhare with you whatever I poſſeſs, were it in my power—but even the little which I could, you refuſe; however, I ſhall reſerve it for you, ſhould fortune ſtill continue to deny you a more liberal indulgence of her favours.—Why do not you write oftener? It is now a month ſince I heard from you laſt—and my anxious heart ſighs to be conſtantly informed of your welfare.—Excuſe me, Henrietta, for I have ven-

ventured to unfold to Mr. Cornwall, enough of your ſad ſtory to baniſh every unfavourable idea of you from his boſom, and to make him your friend.

The name of your huſband ſhall never paſs my lips till your marriage is diſcovered—therefore ſet your heart at reſt on that account. You have painted your pleaſing retreat in ſuch romantic, flattering colours, that I often wiſh I could pay you a viſit *en-paſſant*, and become acquainted with the amiable pair, who in ſo generous and uncommon a manner ſupply the place of parents, and of every other endearing relation to my Henrietta.—How would their feeling and benevolent hearts have exulted, could they have reſtored your Jeſſa to your arms! On her account I conjure you to be

be eaſy; depend upon it, ſhe is in a place of ſafety.

Things here are in the ſtrangeſt train imaginable. My ſiſter Lucy has fallen ſerioufly in love with Mr. Cornwall, my parents ſee her attachment, and do not appear to diſcourage it—They are not inſenſible that the unhappy deformities of her mind and perſon will prevent her marrying upon an equality; and therefore I ſuppoſe, to hinder her ever forming an imprudent attachment, would gladly give her to the arms of a worthy man.—Mr. Cornwall has a ſweetneſs in his temper that will always prevent his treating any one with unpoliteneſs or diſlike; he ſees her partiality in his favour, and though he does not encourage, his manly pity and polite notice give her hopes that ſhe is not indifferent to him.—This has put her into the higheſt

good

good humour, and not in the leaſt ſuſpecting that there is any connection between me and her favourite, ſhe has for ſome days ceaſed to torment me on Mr. Danby's account. My parents are ſtill giving him all the encouragement in their power, and notwithſtanding they are poſſeſſed of a fortune of forty thouſand pounds, with only two daughters to beſtow it upon, they would ſacrifice the happineſs of their favourite — by marrying her to the greateſt booby in nature—becauſe he is maſter of an eſtate of eleven thouſand *per annum*; and to add to his worth, is next heir to a title.—Would you think it, Henrietta? I overheard that wretch Danby a few nights ſince tell my ſiſter—" that he would marry me with joy the following morning—though I was dragged to the altar, and my hand given to him by force. When once married, he would ſoon cure

me

me of whining, and teach me to love him." To this ſpeech my ſiſter returned a laugh of approbation.—Are they not a fit match for each other? Mr. Cornwall has ſeveral times ventured to hint his diſapprobation, and that of every generous mind, to the cruelty of forced marriages; endeavoured to impreſs the force of what he ſaid, by mentioning the fatal conſequences which too often attend them. "From lips like his, what precepts fail to move?" At the time they were employed in my behalf, they had even an effect on the mind of my father—but when avarice takes poſſeſſion of the heart, it cloſes it againſt every noble, every tender feeling. —'Tis aſtoniſhing to me that people raiſed from dependence to affluence ſhould become ſordid—but ſo it frequently happens. My father had, when he in a manner depended on his own induſtry for ſubſiſtence, the moſt generous

generous way of thinking—his heart, his purſe were ever open to a friend—he had no ambition to ſee his children great, but happy. The various changes of the human mind muſt proceed from a ſource that only he who formed them can ever explain. My mother, accuſtomed to think my father always in the right, refuſes to liſten to any of my complaints, treats Mr. Danby with the moſt diſtinguiſhing attention, and entreats me to make them all happy by giving him my hand. "One would think," ſaid I, yeſterday, when ſhe was urging me in the above manner, "that you imagine the ſacrificing one's own happineſs to the humours of other people, was a matter of little conſequence. Since you are ſo deſirous of having Mr. Danby for a ſon-in-law, marry my ſiſter Lucy to him." "How can you talk ſo, Caroline? You know your ſiſter is in love

with

with Mr. Cornwall." "And pray, madam, have not I as great a right to the liberty of making a free choice as Lucy?"—"No—your father has chose to make one for you—he always expected you would make your fortune, and he will not suffer your perverseness to disappoint his hopes."—How provoking was all this—I cried for vexation—and in the evening walked out to speak to a young lady, who lives about a quarter of a mile from our house—There I unexpectedly met with my lover, who had accompanied the gentleman and lady he boards with, on a visit to my friend—He saw I was uneasy, and took an opportunity to enquire the cause—Too soon was it explained, he became as grave as myself; and Miss Meadows, laughing, told me that my coming had made Mr. Cornwall dull, which was directly contrary to the effect my charms usually had

had on the minds of the gentlemen.—"Whilſt ſome are revived by the dazzling rays of the ſun," ſaid he, "others may be fainting beneath the power of its beams.—When I ſee a being ſuperior to myſelf, it awes me into a ſerious reflection on my own littleneſs."—"Mighty ſmart, humble, and ſentimental," ſaid ſhe, laughing—"however, I am glad my obſervation provoked you to ſay ſuch fine things in excuſe for your dulneſs—but Miſs Caroline is ſo uſed to receive compliments and adoration from the enamoured Mr. Danby, that it takes the novelty and charms from the compliments of other men." The mentioning of that hated name at once determined me to put an end to my viſit. I excuſed myſelf by ſaying, "I called her to walk—but finding ſhe was engaged would return, and aſk my ſiſter to favour me with her company." Mr. Corn-

Cornwall would inſiſt upon attending me home. When we were got ſome diſtance from the houſe we had left, he prevailed on me not to go home immediately, but to lengthen my walk.—I complied, and notwithſtanding the reaſon we had to lament the preſent unfavourable aſpect of affairs, I never experienced a more heartfelt delight than in this ſhort ſtolen ramble with the man I loved.—Ambition, and all the alluring power of greatneſs, appeared diſguſting or vaniſhed into nothing—mere phantoms all.—

To do Mr. Cornwall juſtice, he has, with the becoming gravity of his profeſſion, the politeneſs and ſpirit of the ſoldier, the ſenſe of the ſtudent, the eaſe of the man of faſhion; the utmoſt livelineſs of wit, with the trueſt good-nature; to which are joined the charity and religion of a chriſtian, with a benevolence

volence of heart, that will ever procure him happineſs in the next world as it does in this—He is too good to be vain, too great to be proud—and though poor, too generous to be mean. He never reflects on the difference which fortune has made between us, without being wounded by the compariſon—a thouſand times has he lamented his own want of fortune, and the largeneſs of mine. He wiſhes me to be his—but would ſhudder at the thought of my marrying ſuch a poor beggar, without the approbation of my friends—he has even hinted, that if I ever meet with any other man, that by marrying I ſhould oblige my friends, and ſecure happineſs to myſelf, that he would inſtantly remove to ſome obſcure retreat, and never appear to interrupt my peace. Such, my Henrietta, is the real character of

Mr.

Mr. Cornwall. If my attachment wants any farther excuſe, I have none to make.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

# LETTER XXVII.

## *Mrs.* MELVILLE *to Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

WHY will you reproach me, Caroline, for not writing oftener, when my letters are ſo dull and ſtupid that they muſt be more diſagreeable than pleaſing even to thee, an indulgent friend? I have nothing elſe to fill them with but a repetition of paſt misfortunes, and fruitleſs complaints. In a manner ſecluded from the world, and fond of brooding over my own ſorrows, nothing of an entertaining nature can flow from my pen.

The loſs of thoſe we love, is ſurely the greateſt trial human nature has to encounter. Even the leſſons of wiſdom which I ſo frequently hear from Mr. Aſhford, are often inſufficient to reſtore my mind to any degree of ſerenity.

Colonel Beaufort, I begin to think, has thrown me off forever—and who will be found to vindicate, and reſtore to peace the injured Henrietta? I ſometimes ſit, and in review traverſe through every ſcene of my paſt life—Indeed I cannot reflect with any pleaſure, but on thoſe happy days of early youth which were paſt with you at the boarding ſchool, in which our parents had luckily placed us together—Where our young hearts were firſt united in the ſacred bond of friendſhip,—and which ſecured me a conſolation through ſucceeding years of anguiſh.—I mean the generous friendſhip of my Caroline.

Love is the child of caprice—friendſhip the offspring of reaſon and virtue—ſenſibility the nurſe—Its ties are ſtronger and more noble than thoſe of nature—becauſe formed by an exact ſimi-

larity

larity of ſentiment, inclination and free choice.

In a converſation that paſſed a few days ſince, between me and Mr. Aſhford, I was lamenting the cruel uncertainty of all our enjoyments on earth—our lives, our friends lives, and what is of equal value, the continuance of their love, endearments and protection all hang upon the ſame fickle ar uncertain thread — Had we no oth:r trial, that alone would rob us of every real enjoyment.

" That enemy, as you name uncertainty, my child," he returned, " is in reality our beſt friend—it is that alone which muſt give the mind reſolution to prepare for that change which muſt at length arrive—for be aſſured, Mrs. Melville, did we know the final period in which our favorite enjoyments, or in which the mortal life of our friends or

ourſelves were to terminate, our minds would be conſtantly fixt on that ſolemn hour, and by ſo doing we ſhould loſe our reliſh for every neceſſary amuſement, and become incapable of performing thoſe duties and employments which nature has aſſigned us to fulfil—Whilſt uncertainty will often lead our hopes beyond that era, from which mortality ſo often ſhrinks affrighted—but which, whether near or far diſtant, religion, innocence, and prudence, with a ſmiling train of virtues, will lead Mrs. Melville through every change of fortune to reflect on without terror or regret."

—I bent my knee in thankful gratitude to my venerable inſtructor—told him he had ſent conviction to my heart.—

My health is at this time in a very unpromiſing way. The continual agitation of my ſpirits is too great for my weak frame to ſupport—my tender

watchful friends ſee the alteration with ſorrow. Air and moderate exerciſe have been ſtrongly recommended to me. I frequently ride out behind the ſervant —have been ſeveral times at ********, a market town within ſeven miles of Mr. Aſhford's: it is a lively genteel place—a number of ſtrangers are often paſſing through it in their way to London. The apothecary, who attended me a few times in the beginning of my indiſpoſition, or rather decline, but who was too honeſt to offer phyſick for a diſtempered mind, has a very agreeable woman for a wife—I have at his requeſt called upon her, and we ſpent ſeveral chearful hours together—ſhe has likewiſe been twice at Mr. Aſhford's, who is pleaſed that I have met with ſo accompliſhed a female for an acquaintance. She keeps a vaſt deal of company; for by her account, there is a very

large and genteel neighbourhood round *******, there are alſo very good aſſemblies. She has much entreated me to accompany her to the next—but were I furniſhed with a dreſs, I could not think of going into any public company with ſuch a burthen at my heart.—

The portrait you have drawn of your lover, my Caroline, is a very pleaſing, and I hope not a flattering one. May you, on a longer acquaintance, find every part of it true. He already ſhares with you in my friendſhip—yet I tremble for you both in your preſent ſituation, each of you ſuch a rival to contend with—I wonder not at your diſlike to Danby—his character is contemptible, and baſe: after knowing the averſion you have for him, his only inducement to wiſh you his, muſt be to make you miſerable. I am incapable at

at this time of offering you any advice —I know not how I ſhould act were I ſituated as you are — but your own prudence, and the honour and goodneſs of your lover, will lead you through an undeviating path.

No news yet of Colonel Beaufort; undoubtedly he has been many weeks in England. Yet I dare not write to him. As I know of no other way to get a letter conveyed to his hand, but by directing it to him at his father's country ſeat, ſhould he open it—never would he pardon the offence, or Beaufort forgive my imprudence. Silence, and a patient ſubmiſſion to my fate, is all that is left

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

# LETTER XXVIII.

## *Sir* HENRY COURTNEY *to* WILLIAM SYMONDS, *Esq.*

RETIREMENT ſuits not a guilty conſcience. I can fly from the world, but cannot from myſelf. The ſuffering, injured Henrietta is continually preſented to my diſturbed imagination, in every diſtreſſing, dangerous ſituation. I muſt muſt leave this place. Will you take me in, my friend? Will you aſſiſt me in my endeavours to diſcover the hapleſs fair one, that I may make all the atonement in my power, by reſtoring her to a huſband's arms? The virtues of your blooming ſiſter made a deep impreſſion on my mind, though they did not ſubdue my heart. The manner in which you mentioned her in your laſt letter, has occaſioned a ſtrange

revolution

revolution in my boſom. A thouſand little circumſtances did it bring to remembrance. I have, it is true, behaved unworthily; I planned the ruin of the beſt of women; but her prudence ſaved me from never-ending wretchedneſs—I will not think of peace till it is reſtored to thoſe from whom I baſely ſtole it: except in this inſtance, Symonds, I never was unworthy the name of friend—Fear not for your ſiſter; I will, without reſerve, unfold the whole infamous tale before her; if ſhe once had a partiality in my favour, it will baniſh it forever. Falſe to my friend, — falſe to Henrietta,—unjuſt to myſelf—I deſerve not to be happy. From that miſerable *ſelf*, I call upon you now to ſave me.

What has ſerved to encreaſe the torments of my own guilty conſcience, is a melancholy circumſtance which has lately happened in this part of the

world,

world, occaſioned by a wretch who is in ſome reſpects more blameable than even I was, when led away by the unjuſt deluſive paſſion, which made me form the horrid plan to ruin Mrs. Beaufort—for ſurely to ruin, and then abandon the hapleſs injured ſufferer to all the horrors of reflection and deſpair, are aggravated crimes that would even chill with terror a ſavage boſom.

Miſs Emma Goodwin, the natural daughter of an officer, was left by her father to the care of a ruined and unhappy mother—who had fallen a victim to his arts—and the ſpecious vows he made of honour and marriage. Too ſoon was ſhe convinced of his baſeneſs, and all the miſery of her fate; ſhe retired with her infant daughter to the houſe of a ſiſter who now lives in a village a few miles from this place, there ſhe lingered out a few melancholy months

—and

—and then left a world wherein ſhe had drank ſo deeply of the bitter cup of dark misfortune. Before ſhe died, ſhe ſtrongly recommended the care of her darling Emma to her ſiſter, who promiſed to comply with this her laſt requeſt.

Theſe two ſiſters had been brought up rather beyond the manner which the lower rank of females uſually are, being indebted to a godmother, who, on account of their being twins, had anſwered for them both — and generouſly gave them a good education. Mrs. Spilman, the name of the ſurviving ſiſter, to the beſt of her power, acquitted herſelf of the promiſe ſhe had made; but her poverty, and the having a bad huſband, diſabled her from being the friend ſhe wiſhed to be to the little Emma—whom ſhe ſoon loved with the ſame fondneſs as if ſhe had been a child of her own.—

The

The virtues and various accompliſh-ments of this young beauty, ſoon made her an object of general obſervation—ſhe was mentioned in all companies, as the queen of the village ſhe inhabited —whilſt her modeſty, ſweetneſs, and prudent conduct made her appear as a ſuperior kind of being to the people ſhe was thrown amongſt—Unfortunately for her—ſhe was one day painted in ſuch flattering colours before Sir John Loveleſs, that it raiſed in him a ſtrong deſire to ſee her. Diſguiſed in the livery of one of his ſervants, he eaſily became acquainted with the worthleſs Spilman, and by him was conducted to his cottage—The moment he ſaw the blooming unſuſpecting Emma, he determined her ruin; for to marry ſo poor, ſo mean a girl, was a thought his haughty ſoul could not bear. The equality which there *appeared* in their ſituations

ſituations baniſhed all that caution and reſerve which would have taken place had they known the rank of their gueſt. He appeared ſuch a good-natured, ſober, good young man, that he was ſoon received by Mrs. Spilman and her niece as a welcome viſiter, and made a ſtrong impreſſion on the heart of the unfortunate Emma — When he found what a favorite he was with the aunt, and the power he had gained over the heart of the niece, he diſcovered himſelf to them, and made no ſcruple of declaring the violence of his paſſion. He then told an artful tale of a mother he had, who was too proud to conſent to his entring into an alliance with one who had no fortune, and as his own greatly depended on her humour, ſaid, he durſt not diſoblige her by marrying contrary to her will—but that at her death, he would inſtantly convince them

of

of the ſincerity of his paſſion, by making the charming Emma his wife. The ſeeming candour and truth with which all this was ſpoken, the dazzling proſpect which ſeemed to open before them, and what was ſtill more powerful, the love which the artleſs Emma felt for Sir John, baniſhed every fear, and the diſguiſe which he at firſt made choice of to gain admittance and conceal his viſits from the world, he ſtill continued to wear. This point gained, he had whatever opportunities he wiſhed to converſe with the youthful innocent maid: often did ſhe lament with tears the difference which fortune had made between them, and wiſhed her lover had been only what he appeared to be. Doomed, like her unhappy mother, to feel the utmoſt violence of that dangerous paſſion, love, ſhe even borrowed her very ſmiles from the man who had ſo artfully planned her ruin, and on

whoſe heart all her innocence and bloom-
ing ſweetneſs made no other impreſſion
than to urge him to the completion of his
baſe deſigns—Too ſoon he ſucceeded, and
triumphed over the honour of the really
virtuous Emma.—When his paſſion be-
gan to abate, with an unfeeling levity of
heart, he left *****, and ſoon after
England, with a deſign to make the grand
tour—and that too without even taking
leave of, or making any proviſion for
the poor ſufferer, who had, with a
burſting heart, informed him of her being
with child. Barbarous was the ſpoiler
of ſo much innocence, but ſtill more cruel
was it to forſake her at ſuch a miſera-
ble period, without ſecuring her from the
wounding ſting of infamous, chearleſs
poverty.—Emma, though ſhe ſo unfor-
tunately inherited her mother's frailty,
had, with a proper ſenſe of the charms
of virtue, juſt notions of honour, and
ſome

ſome pride — When ſhe found herſelf ſo cruelly abandoned, a phrenzy ſeized her, and ſhe made confeſſion to all around of her dreadful ſituation—ſhe, who was once as blooming as the vernal ſpring, and as gentle too, became a very fury: whilſt the effects of her diſtraction often diſcovered itſelf in various affecting ſhapes. At her intervals of reaſon, when her aunt, indeed her only friend, uſed to endeavour to ſooth her ſorrows, ſhe would claſp her arms around her—declare ſhe could not live without her Loveleſs, without honour, an object of univerſal deteſtation—"I am a victim to cruelty and baſeneſs, would ſhe cry, too poor to bribe the hand of juſtice—the offspring of guilt, ſorrow and misfortune. Vain are all your cruel kind endeavours to preſerve me; ſoon will my ſpirit force its way to ſome other world—in ſpite of every art

made

made uſe of to withold it—How ready, how thankful ought ſuch a wretch as I to be for that refuge, that peaceful aſylum the grave—which alone can free me from the ſharp ſtings of injured diſappointed love, and the injuſtice of mankind!"

The miſery which thoſe muſt feel who are endued with ſentiments above their ſituation—can by ſuch only be deſcribed—To complete this ſhocking tragedy, this unhappy girl took an opportunity to eſcape the watchful tenderneſs of her aunt, when ſhe was employed about ſome of her domeſtic affairs, and running to a river which was not far diſtant from their houſe—threw herſelf in, and unfortunately no aſſiſtance was near to ſave her from the fatal effects of her own deſpair. In the evening her body was found, and conveyed to her inconſolable adopted

parent—who is now deprived of every joy during the ſhort remnant of her life.

To bear our trials with fortitude, is greater than to die—but this poor innocent was unable to acquire a fortitude equal to her trials—Providence to her had been cruelly bountiful: it had given her the moſt exquiſite ſenſibility; and by ſo doing ſhe was the more exquiſitely miſerable.—By chance I rode through the village as they were carrying the youthful victim to her grave: all the young men and maidens, with dejected countenances, attended for the laſt time their fair companion—they had decorated the coffin with flowers—herſelf once a fairer flower than thoſe they threw around.—

Could Sir John Loveleſs have been a witneſs to this ſcene, it would have found its way to his heart. The uncommon

common ſolemnity with which this funeral was attended — the number, and the general grief of its numerous followers firſt attracted my attention. I enquired who it was they were ſo carefully, and with ſuch apparent concern conveying to their laſt home—and ſoon learnt the above tale. I have ordered a monument to be put up for the poor departed ſufferer. But to deſcribe what I felt during the recital of her ſad ſtory, is not poſſible; gratefully did I return thanks to heaven for ſending conviction to my ſoul—and that I had never drank ſo deep of the poiſoned cup of unlawful pleaſure, as the too thoughtleſs, abandoned Loveleſs had done.—I will not wait an anſwer to this letter, leſt it ſhould contain a refuſal of my requeſt, but be with you a few days after it has reached your hand.

HENRY COURTNEY.

# LETTER XXIX.

## *Miſs* CAROLINE TYLNEY *to Miſs.* MELVILLE.

HOW much did your laſt letter, my friend, alarm me? Your indiſpoſition has filled the anxious boſom of your Caroline with a preſaging terror —I know you muſt be ill, or you would not have complained—For heaven's ſake, my Henrietta, be careful of yourſelf: conſider the happineſs of many depend on you—think not too much of the preſent face of affairs; it is too true they wear but an unpromiſing aſpect; but how ſoon may they be changed! My own ſituation is become worſe, more diſagreeable than ever — but I can hardly beſtow a thought upon it, ſince the receipt of your laſt letter. May heaven ſhower down the choiceſt of

its

its bleſſings on the generous Aſhfords, for their tender care of the dear ſiſter of my heart. May ſorrow ever remain a ſtranger to them here!—Their own virtues will, no doubt, procure them a very diſtinguiſhed place in that heaven which few like them deſerve.—

Write to me, Henrietta — eaſe this wounding ſuſpence — tell me you are better. My mind at this moment feels your every grief.

CAROLINE TYLNEY.

# LETTER XXX.

## *Mrs.* MELVILLE *to Miss* CAROLINE TYLNEY.

WHY would my Caroline alarm herſelf with ſuch groundleſs apprehenſions? I am not well, it is true—Yet in no danger of loſing that life, on which my gentle friend ſets ſo much value.—The worm of ſorrow has driven the roſes from my cheek: it has preyed upon my heart. The body will ſympathize with the mind:—but grief is an enemy that will wound long before it deſtroys; therefore be convinced you have nothing to fear on my account—Self preſervation is the firſt law of nature:—guided by that truth, can you doubt of my utmoſt endeavours to preſerve health? though not poſſeſſed of an equal portion of happineſs which makes ſo

ſo many the more eagerly ſigh for that bleſſing which alone can enable them to enjoy every other. — Mrs. Aſhford was a witneſs to the invitation which Mrs. Freeland gave me to accompany her to the next aſſembly. This afternoon, as we ſat at tea, a piece of black ſilk was brought into the room — She aroſe, and preſenting it to me, deſired I would do her the favour to accept it, and have it made up directly, that I might have it in my power to comply with the requeſt of my new acquaintance. "Your preſent ſituation, my dear child," ſaid ſhe, "requires amuſement, therefore I muſt inſiſt on being obliged. I heard you once ſay that you would never wear any dreſs but black, till the return of your huſband, or I would with pleaſure have made a more lively choice for you."

My heart is bending beneath a weight of obligations, ſuch as I think were never conferred before. Can I have a wiſh in oppoſition to theirs?—No, my Caroline, indeed I could not; the mantua maker is therefore ſet to work, and I am, the latter end of next week, to make my appearance. Mr. Aſhford will attend me, if his health will permit him. He ſays our unexpected appearance will create as much ſurprize, as ever a young lady's did, attended by an old man.—

Your laſt letter, my friend, awakened my impatience, and greatly excited my curioſity to know what has happened amongſt you. If there is an alteration, I hope it will ſoon produce one more pleaſing. Your ſiſter was never a favourite with me; but diſappointed love carries ſuch pangs with it, that I would not wiſh my moſt cruel enemy

to

to feel them.—You may in return ſay, that ſhe had never any hopes to build upon, and that if people court diſappointments, they ought to abide by the conſequence. Very true, my Caroline; but people often love, and act contrary to reaſon — However, if we may judge from the diſpoſition of your ſiſter, ſhe is one that does not poſſeſs the moſt ſuſceptible of hearts, therefore ſhe may be able to ſurvive a diſappointment of the tender kind; but heaven protect you and Mr. Cornwall from being the objects of her revenge: therefore, if ſhe has diſcovered your mutual attachment, be upon your guard, my Caroline—a revengeful diſappointed woman is an enemy to be greatly feared—Adieu, be at eaſe on my account—indeed you have nothing to fear.

HENRIETTA MELVILLE.

# LETTER XXXI.

*Colonel* BEAUFORT *to Major* STANMORE.

I Now ſit down to perform the promiſe I made you.—Imperfectly ſhall I acquit myſelf of that promiſe. A variety of diſtracting paſſions have a falſe ungrateful woman, and deceitful friend, planted round my ſoul—but I will have revenge, to earth's remoteſt bounds will I purſue the curſt perfidious pair.

You were a witneſs to the many agonizing torments I ſuffered during my ſhort abſence from England. What was the tempeſt of war to that I felt within my boſom!—You endeavoured to lighten the heavy burthen which you ſaw was fixed upon my mind—you kindly ſolicited my friendſhip—Unable to find conſolation, I for a time ſhunned your ſociety; you perſiſted and conquered.

quered.—I made you the confident of a tale that once appeared ſo pleaſing. You ſaw the many letters I wrote; to none of which did I ever receive an anſwer, except one alarming one, which added to my grief, anxiety, and ſuſpence. I had no friend to whom I could apply for information—None to whom I dare diſcloſe my imprudent marriage. Fortune, as if in pity to my impatience, put an end to the war ſooner than was expected. We landed in England. Juſt after I parted from you, Stanmore, my father met me, and with a fondneſs which I never found before, bade me welcome to my native country—complained of the miſery he had ſuffered on my account, and vowed never to expoſe his darling ſon again to the dangers of war. Such a reception was as pleaſing as it was unexpected. I never till that inſtant had

received

received ſuch ſtriking proofs of his regard. Naturally haughty and auſtere, he had ever kept his children at too great a diſtance to make them friends. At his requeſt I accompanied him to *****, where he, in an agony of paſſion, informed me, that my brother George had diſpleaſed him by running him ſome thouſands in debt, and he had ſent him a voyage to the Eaſt Indies—That he had lately diſcovered my ſiſter carried on an acquaintance with a Captain of marines, for which offence he had ſent her to a ſeat he has in Derbyſhire, where he had ordered her to be cloſely confined.—"In you, my ſon," he continued, "are placed all my hopes. I have, during your abſence, provided a proper match for you, which I muſt inſiſt on your accepting—'tis the only daughter of Lord G——, an agreeable young lady.—She is of noble extraction,

tion, has a large fortune, and an unexceptionable character." I was like one thunder-ſtruck with this intelligence, and could not ſpeak.—" What! are you ſilent," ſaid he, " and like the reſt determined to counter-act and deſtroy every ſcheme which would promote your own happineſs as well as mine! Sure I am the moſt miſerable of fathers. —However, Sir, unleſs you comply with my requeſt, you are no more my ſon. I give you ten days to conſider of it.—Weigh well your determination. I am not an old man, and if I find you as great a fool as your brother and ſiſter have been, I will marry again, and leave every ſhilling I have to ſtrangers." He left the room.

For ſome minutes I remained like one deprived of ſenſe. Such a ſudden change — ſuch an arbitrary parent — compelled to marry whilſt my hand and

heart

heart were the property of another—already a husband and a father, my Henrietta perhaps dying, false or injured.—I rung the bell—a servant appeared, and I ordered him to saddle my horse immediately.—When it was ready, I mounted him, and instantly sat off for this place.

But, Oh! Stanmore, what a scene presented itself!—On alighting at the door of that house which I so often have entered with delight, I was surprised at seeing all the shutters closed, and every thing wear the appearance of melancholy. I rapt impatiently at the door—an elderly woman made her appearance. I enquired for Mrs. Melville.

"Lord, Sir, cried she, Mrs. Melville has been gone from this house many months."—"Gone, cried I, scarce able to support myself, where is she gone, where

is

is her little girl?"—"Why ſhe went off with a very fine gentleman—a Sir Henry Courtney—and took her child with her, I ſuppoſe. He put me in here, and deſired me to take care of every thing, which I am ſure I will do, for he paid me nobly for my trouble. God bleſs his ſweet face, I don't wonder the lady liked him better than ſhe did her huſband, who, ſome ſay, went away and left her, but others will tell you ſhe was never married at all, and if ſo, ſhe was in the right of it to pleaſe herſelf, you know."

—This was ſo heavy, ſo unexpected a ſtroke, that I was not able to bear it —had not the old woman ſupported me, I muſt have ſunk to the floor. "Bleſs us all! What is the matter!" cried ſhe, "Why you ſeem very ill.—You are Mrs. Melville's brother, I ſuppoſe. But if ſo, your ſiſter wants for nothing."—"I am the unhappy maſter of this houſe,"

houſe," ſaid I; "therefore prepare me a bed directly." She ſeemed to doubt my ſincerity.—"What I tell you is fact, good woman—as a proof of which I can name almoſt every piece of furniture in the room which I would have you prepare for my reception." I did ſo, and her doubts at once ſubſided. But think, my friend, of the diſtraction which took poſſeſſion of my ſoul. I raved at, and curſt all the perfidious ſex. I threw myſelf on the bed on which I had ſo often embraced my Henrietta—and even melted into tears. I wandered through every apartment, calling upon the name of my falſe wife—and even imagined I heard her footſteps, followed, as they ſometimes uſed to be, by our little Jeſſa. Was it not enough, Stanmore, to rob me of my wife? muſt I likewiſe be deprived of my child?

In

In this manner paſt the night. The next morning I returned to London; deſiring the woman to continue in the houſe and take care of the furniture, ſatisfying her for the trouble I had given. On my arrival in London, I enquired amongſt my acquaintance for Sir Henry Courtney. By them I was informed that he was gone off with a young lady, and had retired with her to his ſeat in the north of England. This intelligence was ſufficient for me, and I took my reſolutions accordingly.

The next day I waited upon my father—told him I was under an abſolute neceſſity of paying a viſit to a friend who lived at ſome conſiderable diſtance from the metropolis; but at the end of a month I would return and give my hand to the lady he had made choice of for me.—My ready, and unexpected

compliance with his wishes, restored me instantly to favour. He embraced me in a transport of joy, and freely gave his consent to my intended expedition, without making any enquiries about the place I was going to; at the same time presenting me with a bank bill of a hundred pounds, to enable me to pay any extraordinary expences I should be at in travelling. Thus we parted. In the morning I shall set off in pursuit of that wretch who made use of the sacred name of friend to betray the important trust I reposed in him.—My sword shall revenge my cause, by finding its way to his perfidious heart.—Mine he has wounded in a manner that no time can heal.—

You may possibly be desirous of knowing what could induce me to give my father a promise which was not in my

my power to fulfil.—You are miſtaken, my friend, I mean to perform that promiſe; yes, I will take advantage of the law in my favour, and leave the abandoned hypocrite, that I ſo long fondly cheriſhed in my boſom, to the fate ſhe merits.—When I ſo fooliſhly entered into this ill-fated engagement, we were both under age. — A conſiderable bribe prevailed with a needy and infirm ſon of the church to join our hands contrary to the laws of this nation.—Soon after he, and both the witneſſes, took their leave of life.—Had Henrietta continued the ſame ſpotleſs angel I once thought her, no bribe the world could have offered ſhould have drawn me from her. I ever regarded the tye as ſacred as the law could poſſibly have made it. But ſince ſhe is become abandoned—a proſtitute in the arms of her huſband's *friend*,

I will never own her more. Happineſs I have for ever loſt—therefore I pay my father no great compliment in giving him the power of beſtowing his ſon on whom he pleaſes. The lady ſhall have no reaſon to complain; if I cannot love, yet I will endeavour to make her happy. She ſhall enjoy the fortune ſhe gives to me in the manner moſt pleaſing to her; I will never reſtrain her pleaſures—and as carefully conceal my ſorrows in my own boſom, as the guilty murderer would hide himſelf from his purſuers. —The world may blame me for going in purſuit of the dark aſſaſſin of my peace, and venturing my life upon an equal footing with him. They muſt firſt feel my injuries ere they could tell how they would act in my ſituation. Courtney ſhall not triumph unpuniſhed. I will tear the paramour from the laſci-

vious

vious arms of his baſe proſtitute.—I will have my child reſtored to mine.—Shall her blooming innocence be left to the mercy of ſuch a mother?—By early becoming a witneſs to guilt, ſhe would be an eaſy prey to the wiles of another Courtney.

Yet, Stanmore, is it poſſible? can Henrietta be ſo baſe? Wonder not that I doubt the voice of truth. How could deſtruction wear ſo ſweet a face? Beneath her beauteous form I thought each virtue dwelt. Whole hours I've gaz'd with rapture on her face, liſtened with pleaſed attention to that harmonious voice, which once conveyed ſuch noble ſentiments to my enraptured ſoul. At this moment, methinks I hear it pleading for Courtney. My brain's on fire. Mercy, I know thee not—farewel—perhaps we ne'er ſhall meet again.—

Beware

Beware of that curſt ſex, my friend, which brings deſolation to the ſoul.—Beware of a falſe friend, leſt he ſhould rob you of a Henrietta.—Once more, farewel—'till death I ſhall be yours.

CHARLES BEAUFORT.

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