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VICISSITUDES
IN
GENTEEL LIFE.

VICISSITUDES

IN

GENTEEL LIFE

In FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Faded Ideas float in the Fancy like half-forgotten Dreams;
and Imagination, in its fullest enjoyments, becomes
suspicious of its Offspring, and doubts
whether it has created or adopted.

SHERIDAN.

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VICISSITUDES

IN

GENTEEL LIFE.

LETTER, I.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Alverston Park, Feb. 5th. 1789.

THE merits of a cause which can survive injudicious arguments in its favor, must, as a wiser man than myself has observed, be singularly strong; as every weak and erroneous sentiment advanced in its support, will have a tendency to lessen its consequence, and we shall be sedulous to find fresh reasons for our partiality to any previously-adopted contrary opinion; which, therefore, from its having been unfairly and foolishly attacked, will, in the end, be more firmly established.

Need I say any thing farther to show you what must be the fate of the cause, so absurd, so unjust in its nature, as that which you, most unaccountably, have been led to espouse; or to convince you that my darling system has received additional strength from the opposition with which it has lately encountered?

Your letter, which was put into my hands as soon as I alighted, is written in a style unusually serious; else, I should have imagined you had been ridiculing, rather than supporting, my Godfather's foolish proposal, as the arguments you advance upon the occasion, are diametrically opposite to each other; being at once expressive of a respect for, and a contempt of, riches. The contempt arises naturally in your heart; the respect is spurious: for is not the texture of your soul generosity itself? It is; or I have been mistaken in every idea I ever formed of you. Yet how is this persuasion consistent with your wishing me to sacrifice all my happiness to interest, as it is called, by determining to obey this positive old Slayton's mandate?

“If I will marry, ACCORDING TO HIS LIKING,” mind ye, within the next twelve months, he will give me down Fifty Thousand Pounds, and secure to me Fifty Thousand more to be paid at his death. If I refuse to comply, he will adopt a more distant, and almost unknown relation; who will,” he says, *“oblige him without hesitation.”*

Marry within the next twelve months, when I know not the woman with whom I wish to live three weeks; much less one to whom I should like to be fettered for life! absurd! ridiculous! am I to hunt round the island?—for she must be an english woman. Or am I to *advertise* for a female of such and such descriptions; and when she appears, though she answers all the required *expressed* particulars, find her intirely deficient in that nameless something, which alone can filch my heart from its native home, for any length of time.

For any length of time, let me repeat; it being in vain to deny that the vagrant has often over-leaped the bounds within which dame prudence would confine it. But it never staid long away. Some kind folly—some obliging weakness in its temporary queen, soon gave it its freedom, and it returned to me uninjured.

But to be a little more serious about this foolish business—I am really concerned that my father and mother enter so deeply into Mr. Slayton's plan. Good; wise; excellent as they both are, they deserve almost implicit obedience from their children. But, indeed, Charles, I cannot bring myself to comply with the sacrifice they now require. They urge the great obligations they were under in my tyrant-grandfather's days, to this whimsical, though, I will allow, well-meaning veteran. What then! must I, to pay their debt of gratitude, overwhelm myself with inevitable destruction? no: the expectation is unreasonable. They urge, that his only view is my happiness. Pray who can judge so well as myself in what my happiness consists? they urge—in short, they urge as you do, so many unadmittable reasons for my compliance, that I am now determined upon a downright refusal to all that any of you can urge farther. You, I doubt not, have been drawn in to *promise* the exertion of the influence it is well known you ever had with me. There is no other solution to the enigma of your attempting arguments against your own native sentiments. But you have, likewise, promised to *me* that your last letter shall close your remonstrances upon the irksome subject. I am heartily glad of it, because I shall now again break your seals with pleasure.

I am all impatience to see you at Alverston. Come immediately. What the plague can be the matter with my sister? I am convinced there is something more in the wind than you will tell me. Why this reserve? why this unusual absence? I insist upon knowing every particular. Emma, I will answer for it, is in fault, and that it is your tenderness for her which incites you to spare her to me. Excellent as I must own I think her, upon the whole, she has her errors: errors into which she is led by the vivacity of her disposition: but that her heart is yours, is incontrovertible. She is *my* sister, and must be capable of distinguishing such—but confound you for a blockheadly puppy, as my god-father says, I do not want to increase the vanity from which you cannot be exempt. A handsome fellow with a handsome estate and title, does not want to be told he has fifty other recommendations. Besides, are you not my chosen friend? and is not that alone, sufficient to give you consequence with the women? I tell you, Charles, to come soon to Alverston.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, II.

SIR CHARLES CONWAY, TO GEORGE
STANLEY, ESQ.

Hawthorn Grove, Feb. 5th.

YOUR messenger must not, he says, return without an answer. What can I say to you! why go to Alverston! Sir Edward and Lady Stanley have a just claim to my esteem and reverence. You, and you know it, are possessed of my most fervent friendship; and your sister—what is it that she does

not command! all the foregoing sentiments of my soul connected and heightened into the most ardent and, I think, refined affection that a mortal is capable to conceive, I boast to entertain for Emma Stanley. But her late treatment of me is more than I *can* bear: more than I *ought* to bear. Flatter me not with an idea of her partiality. If ever I was blest with the least degree of it, I have forfeited it; though by what means I know not; it being impossible for a woman of her very superior understanding to treat with such caprice any man whom she thinks of as her future husband.

The rest of your letter I cannot now reply to; nor can I, in the present situation of circumstances, go to Alverston.

Yours, ever cordially
CHARLES CONWAY.

LETTER, III.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Alverston, Friday, Feb. 13th.

FIRE and fury! distraction! destruction! and death!—with all the unmeaning exclamations of frenzical exclaimers!—what is now to be done? where can I be secure from the effect of enchantment?

She is an angel, Charles! absolutely an angel! at least, as to all my eyes can judge by; and that, perhaps, is all that with my views—with *my views*, did I say! what *are* my views? by all my hopes of happiness, I know not. I have *no* views; not one, that my eyes take pleasure in, save those in which I may possibly catch a glimpse of her. To the very sound of her steps, I listen with the greatest avidity. Charles! you never beheld any thing half so handsome. Her lips!—I never saw such a pair of beautiful lips in my life. Her eyes, it would be madness to talk about, and very dangerous to mention either her hair or complexion. As to her form—her air—her manner!—so betwitchingly genteel; so exquisitely graceful; so perfectly elegant—but what an idiot am I to endeavour to describe this undescribable beauty!

“Who in the name of amazement! is he in such raptures about!? you have, I suppose, before reading thus far, half a score times exclaimingly queried. Take a laconic answer. I do not know.

“Not know, George! and yet thus madly in love!” not know, Charles, and *yet* thus madly [madly indeed] in love. And now what farther have you to say?

You probably think it will be in vain to attempt talking rationally with a fellow who just now gives such proof of insanity; and if you do, you think right; for I have never had anything to do with rationality since I first saw her and heard her speak. And here, full in my view, comes the enchantress. She has this instant entered the gate at the end of the long elm walk. I hasten to meet her as if by accident.

Farewel. More her's than my own or yours.
G.S.

Ah! my poor godfather! thy plans are now effectually crushed indeed.

LETTER, IV.
SIR CHARLES CONWAY, TO GEORGE
STANLEY, ESQ.

Hawthorn Grove, Feb. 14th.

HITHERTO I have set you down as a strange kind of a wild fellow with some sobriety; but your last letter puts sobriety out of the question and leaves me to conclude you absolutely mad. Have I not, think you, vexation enough from that too volatile yet too charming sister of yours? Add not, my dear George, to my anxiety; for anxious I must be on every occasion which threatens the disturbance of your family; and that the subject of your last, if you are really serious in what you write, is of that tendency, is too evident from the postscript. But I am willing to believe the whole to be an effusion of your wild imagination; founded, perhaps, upon the slight circumstance of your having accidentally seen a pretty girl.

My spirits are extremely low at this time. I have been giving the finishing directions to the improvements at the bottom of my garden which were began with the sole view of rendering it agreeable to your sister's taste, and the idea that she, probably, will never see it, has cast a gloom over my mind which I cannot shake off.

I mean to write to her by the servant who is to carry this. Possibly her answer, if she will deign to give one, will fix my doom. If it's contrary to my wishes—say what you will, George—Hawthorn Grove shall not long be my residence; for I cannot, with any degree of patience, think of remaining so near my dearest friend, as I trust you ever will continue under all circumstances, and be debarred an intercourse; and as to going to Alverstton—it would be next to an impossibility. I will, therefore, at least, for a time, remove from a spot that I once thought was one of the most beautiful situations in the kingdom, and will visit the Eastern Coast, which I have often had a wish to see. Never again tell me of my being a philosopher; I find the conquest of myself much more difficult than I imagined it would have been. While your sister's heart was the expected reward, the task was pleasant; but now my hope is clouded, the natural warmth of my temper gets the lead, and I am half as impetuous as you are. I would, if I could, write with a smile, but I cannot. It will not continue a moment. Am I, I often ask myself, the gay, the high-spirited fellow who used to dispute the palm in all companies, and generally carried it, too, against every opposer but yourself? and shall I, at twenty-four, turn a mope—a melancholy recluse, because one woman frowns! no; I pronounce with an emphasis, I will not thus give way; and then determine to exert a power which I still cannot but think we shall find ourselves to be endued with, if we will but resolutely endeavour for victory. I then, for some time, go on calmly, and fancy I shall be successful; but one trick, one manoeuvre of Emma Stanley's, entirely destroys all ideas of my fancied wisdom, and I, at once, fall from the imaginary height I had gained. We all I suppose, are ready to believe there is no task so hard to perform as that which is allotted to ourselves; and this, I confess, is my opinion with regard to your sister. Were she not exactly the woman she is, I think I could shut my heart against her. But a creature so perfect in all other respects—face and form so faultless—understanding so exalted—disposition so sweet, till of late, and that still unaltered to all but me—how, my friend, can I drive

such a woman from my wishes! I even seem unjust when I accuse her, and, sometimes, endeavour to seek for faults in myself, respecting my conduct to her, that she may be acquitted. What scenes of domestic felicity have I thought were almost at hand! How fondly have I believed that she was to be the means of perfecting a reformation which I ardently wish to have effected! My future, as well as my present happiness, seemed to have been delegated to her. But I must fly from the subject. This sudden destruction of my best hopes leaves such a horrid vacuity in my soul, that I can scarce tell to what to turn my thoughts. Perhaps when all is absolutely at an end—when she shall have given her final determination, which I now mean to press for—I may, in time, arrive to a sullen kind of negative-happiness, which will very likely, take the name of tranquillity: to which name, however, it will have but small pretensions, till I can drop all thoughts of sublunary bliss, and entirely look to a coming world: for while earthly felicity holds any place in my idea, she will always present herself to me in the form of Emma Stanley.

You desire me to be more explicit upon this head and to give you particulars. What can I say? of what can I accuse her? the retrospection, necessary to comply with your injunction, is painful, and will not furnish any thing conclusive. In all my late visits to Alverston Park, her looks and her words have been at variance; the latter having expressed the most perplexing indifference, while the former have led me to hope her heart silently pleaded in my favor.

At first, I did not dare to enquire pressingly into the cause; but the last time I went, the change was too great to allow of my being silent, with any propriety, after the flattering reception she had so lately given my professions of affection. In reply to my entreaties to know the cause of this distressing alteration, she, assuming the utmost gaiety of manner, begged me not to be disturbed at such a trifle as her good and bad humours; that it was a matter of but small consequence in general, and no concern of mine. I could not then say any more, as you that instant interrupted us. Since my return I have written to her thrice, but have only received one answer; and that was to my last; the purport of it is similar to her reply in the park-avenue.

Hitherto, I have been unwilling to give you even this explanation, because I flattered myself with its being only the effect of that vivacity which, in my eyes, always added to her charms; and though I did not approve of her late exertion of it, I endeavoured to excuse her. When I began to apprehend there was too much of reality in her apparent indifference, I had another motive for my being rather silent on the subject. Sure of your attachment to my interest, I was afraid of your exerting your influence in my favor; on a *double* account afraid of it; for first, I love her too *sincerely* to endure the thought of occasioning her any irksome solicitation; and secondly, that love is too *delicate* to consent to owe the possession of even, your sister, to any one but herself.

From the hitherto unlimited confidence between you, it is probable, as I shall press for an explanation, that she may consult you upon her answer. Now I do request—nay I *insist* upon it—that you leave her entirely to her own determination; for if I ever, hereafter, should have reason to suppose that her sentiments were biased by your prejudice in my favor, I should be miserable in having been gifted with her hand. Her heart is the prize to which I aspire: to be satisfied with less, would be to be unworthy of her. It would but ill suit with the delicacy of my affection, or, allow me to say, with the dignity of my sentiments respecting her, to receive her consent, were she to give it with the least reluctance; for what would that be doing but endeavouring to secure my own happiness at the expence of her's? which, after all, it would be impossible to do, as mine can only be

perfected when her's is compleat. I, therefore, should accept her with reluctance, even *from herself*, could I know that, reason, more than affection, prompted her compliance; much less could I endure to believe it the effect of persuasion from any other. You, I am convinced, will not think me over nice in these particulars, because they are such we have always exactly agreed in: to the rectitude of which I now request you minutely to attend, lest, on the present occasion, your well-known affection to both your sister and myself, should make your wish for our union lessen the force of those sentiments which must ever oppose it, but upon the terms of mutual affection.

The substance of your frenzical letter, I wish to pass slightly over; being willing to believe it was not written with any sober meaning. Yet you are so precipitant, that I tremble at the possibility of your being seriously engaged in some wild pursuit.

Do, my dear George, do be upon your guard. If you cannot bend your heart to oblige the best father and mother in the universe, do not let it take a bias so diametrically opposite to their wishes as some expressions in your half-frantic scribble, leads me to apprehend your are in danger of doing.

“Your eyes are all that with *your views*”—ah George! let *me* ask—what *are* your views? answer candidly, and if they are wrong ones, upon which point your own heart will soon decide, renounce them instantly.

If any subject can draw my thoughts from that which, so greatly pains them, it must be one in which you are concerned. But till I know whether you are in jest, or in too much earnest, will forbear any further expostulations.

Farewel,
CHARLES CONWAY.

LETTER, V.
SIR CHARLES CONWAY, TO MISS STANLEY.
Hawthorn Grove, Feb. 14th. 1789.

I AM now, madam, set down with a determination to avoid, if possible, the incoherence with which I am apprehensive you were offended in my last. How I shall be able to carry that determination into effect, I know not; for the subject is, and I fear ever will be, too near my heart to permit my treating it with that calmness—more properly termed indifference—which you seem to expect, and of which, it must be confessed, you set me so striking an example. Pardon me: I do not mean to offend you; but my soul is so filled with vexation, that my utmost efforts are insufficient to suppress, entirely, the appearance of it.

It is now, Miss Stanley, ten years since I was first introduced into your family, in the advantageous light of your brother's most favored friend. I was then fourteen; he only one year older; and I believe a more firm friendship was never cemented between two boys of that age. You were a lovely girl of eleven, and, young as I was, I found my attachment to the brother, increase with my knowledge of the sister; though I was not sensible of the occasion of the influence. When you were permitted to join in the amusements of the evening, how, entirely were all my faculties absorbed! And how sedulous I was to place myself near you! “now Emma is here”, would your brother, sometimes, exclaim, “Charles Conway will not speak to me!” and I am still sensible of the

sudden glow, which, on such occasions, suffused my cheeks; while Sir Edward and Lady Stanley, upon whom I have turned an almost conscious eye, have smiled upon each other at the innocent attachment. What exquisite felicity was I then surrounded with! how pure, how unmixed were my delights! but I must fly from the retrospection of these truly blissful scenes; yet I could wish to draw them to your recollection. *You* need not be afraid of their effect.

When Mr. Stanley and I had finished our studies and our travels, and the death of my father and uncle enabled me to purchase this spot (which, beautiful in itself, as it is generally said to be, derived its greatest beauty, in my eye, from its situation with respect to Alverston Park) and when your brother had prevailed upon you to attend to the approbation with which Sir Edward and Lady Stanley honored my proposals, I thought my happiness drawing near to perfection: and in this blest hope, the idea every day gathering strength from that amiable; that delicate, yet frank mode of conduct which ever distinguished you, have I lived, uninterrupted, for the last sixteen months; the *very* last, only excepted. Shall I draw the alternative! shall I endeavour to paint the confusion—the distress—the almost distraction—which reigns within me at this unexpected—this most unaccountable of all changes! I cannot. It is impossible. What I endure is not to be expressed. My opinion unchanged; my affection unabated; my wishes, consequently, as ardent as ever—*my hopes almost annihilated!!!* Think not, madam, that I study for a language to affect you. I do not. If I express myself with any force, it is because my heart conveys its feelings to my pen. But I will be as concise as possible.

What, Miss Stanley, is the occasion of this alteration? What—yet I tremble to ask it—is to be my destiny? let me intreat a candid, and an immediate reply. Shorten the torments of this suspense, though you thereby fix my despair. I would not live such another month as the last, for any reward independent of yourself. Tell me why I have forfeited the confidence I once dared to think myself secure of for ever. Tell me—in short, tell me what I am to be in future; whether ranked amongst those whose existence is wretchedness; or numbered with the happiest of human beings.

I dare not use the language of former days, lest it should now offend you: else would I conclude with saying, that I am my dearest Emma's ever faithful and affectionate

CHARLES CONWAY.

LETTER, VI.
MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Alverston, Feb. 16th.

CHARLES! my dear Charles! I have not been able to obey your injunctions. Your letter transported me into a fury; and I am still in a rage. What the plague can ail this girl! I never saw such a metamorphosis in my life. My father and mother, in whose presence I read your letter, are distressed beyond conception; for, as you may suppose, I was too much affected to conceal the cause from them. After a little consultation, it was proposed to send to my sister to go down; but my mother, who has tenderness and delicacy always alive, said she would go up to her, first, by herself; which she did, leaving my father and me together. We sat, I believe, a quarter of an hour, endeavouring to conjecture what could have occasioned this change: for that her heart was undisguisedly yours—in short—that she loved you with the most genuine affection, is as I have before said, incontrovertible, if there is one atom of truth in one individual of that vexing; tormenting; fascinating, sex.

By my soul I am out of humour with all of the feminine gender, and am almost angry with even my mother, good as she is, because she is a woman. But my heart reproaches me. Admirable! charming! unequalled Lady Stanley! forgive a son, who can one moment forget the excellencies of such a parent. My whole heart is vexed; and in the same breath, I love, hate, admire, despise, my sister. When my mother returned, her fine countenance was more overclouded than I ever remember to have seen it before. My father looked alarmed, but tenderly enquired the result of her visit. I sat aghast with impatience while she related it, which she did in the following words.

“I am pained, my dear Sir Edward, to be under the necessity of repeating to you and George the conversation which has passed above stairs, because I am apprehensive it will add to the perplexity which you both are, already, under.” My father spoke not but with his eyes. I, likewise, sat mute, with enquiring looks; my mother hesitated, and at length went on. “Some very singular alteration has taken place in the mind of our dear Emma. She is, I am sure, greatly distressed, though she endeavours to appear as calm as possible. All that I can get from her, is, a disinclination, which she cannot surmount, to change her state; and that with her present sentiments, which she believes will never alter, it would be a crime to think of being the wife of any man breathing.” Astonishing! amazing! I exclaimed, scarce knowing what I said. “Unaccountable, indeed” said my father, “but how long—” “I asked her,” interrupted my mother, “when it was that her sentiments first took such a turn, at which she blushed and said it had been coming on some time; and repeated that she believed it would continue through life. My mother said, she then expostulated with her in very close terms, and used the strongest arguments she could collect to convince her of the impropriety and *injustice* of her present conduct, and added that she ought not to have taken it upon herself to have given dismission to a man of such consequence as Sir Charles Conway, without, at least, *consulting* Sir Edward and herself.

Here my mother put her handkerchief to her eyes and we again continued silent, till, at length, my father asked what followed. “The dear girl,” replied my mother, “distressed me beyond imagination; she threw her arms round my neck and rested her cheek upon my bosom; begged me not to think she had one undutiful idea; that she did not intend to proceed so far as to *dismiss* Sir

Charles, but only to give him room, by her manner, to expect what *must* follow; and this she did from a principle not ungenerous, as she believed he was too earnest in his wish for an alliance with this family, to be told of the impossibility of its ever taking place, without concern." My mother then re-urged all that prudence and wisdom could dictate, but without the wished-for effect.

What can be done! so faultless, I may almost say, hitherto! so obliging, so very—but what avails it to enumerate her *past* perfections! she is now perverse, unpersuadable, and totally unlike that sister of whom I used to be so proud as well as truly fond.

I will not, Charles, plague you with any more particulars. The result was, for upon what else could we determine, that she must previously endeavour to reason with herself upon all which had been laid before her, and, if possible, oblige us by a compliance with our very earnest wishes; but that if she *could not* satisfy herself in so doing, she must be left at liberty, so important is the matter, to pursue the dictates of her own conscience.

The enclosed letter, which I have sealed in a blank cover, that you might not be so likely to open it till you had perused this, as you would have been, had you seen upon it her direction, will speak, I doubt, too plainly her determination.

My dear Charles, farewell. I mean to see you, in a day or two, at Hawthorn Grove. My sister will set out to-morrow for Lady Davison's; from whence she will go into Oxfordshire, upon a visit to Miss Lawson.

This, my father, fond as he is of her, has insisted upon on your account; and my mother has complied from similar considerations. As to myself—I hardly care where she goes. I am excessively out of humour with her, and shall not attend her to Lady Davison's; for our being much together, at this juncture, will, probably, occasion our first quarrel; indeed, my friend, the best wishes of my heart are yours.

My own affairs, pressing as they are, are, at times, almost erased from my memory by the lively concern I am under on your account. However, as I know you are not without anxiety upon the subject of my last, which, foolishly flighty as I then was in my expressions, has too solid a foundation, I will, to-morrow, if I can, give you the particulars; for upon recollection, I cannot leave Alverston till after next Thursday, on account of the promise the two Beauchamps gave us of staying here one night on their way to Liverpool; which place they must reach, if possible, on Friday evening; consequently, I expect they will be here Wednesday and Thursday. But for this confounded affair, I would not have excused your giving them the meeting; as it is, though Emma will be set off, it will not, I know, be pleasant for you to come; therefore I shall make some apology for you.

Cordially yours,
GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, VII.
MISS STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Enclosed in the preceding.

Alverston Park, Feb. 16th. 1789.

SIR.

AS I have been accustomed to give some credit to your professions of regard, I have endeavored to defer speaking decisively till I had, in some measure, led you to expect what my decision would be. Perhaps my reasons for this measure were founded in vanity. Be that as it may, delay is no longer practicable. I am pressed on all sides, and must give you my final answer, which is that I never can; never ought to be yours. Ask me not for an explanation. Ask, rather—But ask nothing. Perhaps I wish to obliterate the remembrance of former scenes as much as you do. Remonstrance, let me add, will be in vain; for which reason it is that I venture to request your interest with my brother, to prevent my being distressed by unavailing arguments to alter this my firm determination. I wish you happy. I wish you *very* happy. May the rectitude of your heart, lead you to oblige with your hand, a woman who will receive it with gratitude.

EMMA STANLEY.

LETTER, VIII.

Miss STANLEY, TO Miss CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

Alverston Park, Monday Night, Feb. 16th. 1789.

IT is done, my dear Charlotte! the task is over! but what the effect will be, I know not. My spirits are lost; my happiness entirely destroyed. My health, surely, must give way: it can never, I think, stem such a torrent of distress. Oh Charlotte! why did Sir Charles Conway appear to be so exactly formed to my wishes! or why did I not know this one great failing before I so entirely gave up my heart to him! the contest which I have had with my father, mother, and brother, was even greater than I expected it would be. My resolution, when they so warmly pressed for the reason of my conduct, was nearly giving way, and it was with the utmost difficulty that I kept the sacred promise I had made of not divulging the cause to any one but you, whose secrecy I *engaged for*. My inward conflict was so violent that it almost overpowered my senses.

When I came to myself, I was frightened at the danger I had been in of betraying the fatal secret; for had I *not* promised, I would have endured almost the greatest tortures ere it should have been divulged. The idea of the additional distress, never to be remedied, with which it must, have overwhelmed Sir Charles, was more than I could support. Charlotte—faulty as he is, I love him better than I love myself, and feel a pleasure in having suffered in the opinion of my dear friends here, to save him from being lessened in their affection or esteem. Is this, I sometimes ask myself, *strictly right*? If he is culpable, *ought he not* to be let to sink in their opinion? and if he was not culpable, I should not have occasion to run the hazard of their displeasure on his account. These soliloquizing reasonings I should, perhaps, be unable to answer, but the recollection of my *promise* comes to my aid, and I find that I could not have acted otherwise than as I have done, without being criminal.

With regard to Sir Charles himself, I have surely obeyed the dictates of—what?—of conscience, I hope: and yet I do not find that inward satisfaction resulting from what I have done which I expected; and which a perfect obedience to conscience generally brings with it. Something seems wrong; yet I know not what. Reason, applauds me, and commends the sacrifice; but a secret

something lurks at the bottom, as if in opposition. Probably it is compassion; or, Charlotte, *more* probably a much stronger sentiment than pity can raise. It surely must be so: for that small, still, voice, which, when carefully and cautiously attended to, will lighten the soul in darkness, cannot oppose the dictates of true reason and equity. Were there a possibility of my having been deceived, I should be ready enough to suspect the imposition. But the evidence is too, too strong to admit a ray of doubt. Have I not seen the poor deluded, injured Matilda! have I not seen her in an agony of distress; while (the relief of tears being denied) grief, shame, and affection struggled in her countenance! and, oh Charlotte! have I not seen the poor orphan-infant, as it may justly be termed, setting on its mothers knee, and turning its little eyes upon first one and then another, as if to ask for pity for her! The scene still hangs before my view. My heart is still sensible of the excruciating pain which then ran through it.

She called the baby Charles—*Charles Conway* Charlotte, and I transiently thought I observed some little affinity in feature. But I cannot dwell upon the recollection. Let me strike it, if possible, for ever from my idea.

Its over, never to return, and my heart fortified against every other endeavour to prepossess it. I told my dear mother, and I told her true, that with my present sentiments, it would be a crime to think of being the wife of any man breathing. And would it not? can I ever think of *any other* as I ought to think of a husband? ah! no; no! and I must, never again, think of *him*. Charlotte—justice forbids it—I must never again think of Sir Charles Conway!!! That he loved me my dear I cannot ever doubt. Then—why!—why! But I must instantly quit this subject, and with it, for a short time, my pen.

To morrow I am to set off for Lady Davison's. If you have no engagement in view, which your last leads me to hope you have not, I have permission to visit Woodstock. The reason of this sudden intention it is not difficult to guess.

Your reply, my dearest girl, will, probably, find me at Lady Davison's; direct for me at her house, Litchfield.

Your sister will not now complain of my being too volatile. I am no longer the high-spirited girl who will distract her with "*incessant cheerfulness*." It was an odd expression my dear; but what can be expected from so unhappy a disposition as Miss Rachel's always was, more than ill-natured criticism!

Present to her, however, my respects: she is your sister. To Mrs. Lawson and Mrs. Eleanor, remember me still more affectionately. I hope they will consent to be troubled with me a few weeks. My father, mother, and brother desire their affectionate compliments may be duly distributed. They expect me to be more particular than I have now spirits to be; therefore must leave it to my dearest friend to make the distribution with propriety and warmth.

I have just received a letter from Mrs. Digby. It is meant, I believe, to be a consolatory one; The style is whimsically solemn. She professes to be sorry for being the occasion of the rupture between Sir Charles and me, which she hears is likely to be the effect of the intelligence I gained by means of her unhappy mistake; Then inconsistently congratulates herself on being the cause, though

as she industriously repeats, the involuntary one, of saving me from—a wretch—she thinks proper to stile him—who is so utterly unworthy of me; adding a multiplicity of highly-strained encomiums, and finishing with extraordinary professions of affection: she officiously brings in a repetition of her pity for the poor pineing lost Matilda, as she calls Miss Barlowe.

I cannot say that I ever *very* greatly liked Mrs. Digby, but I now like her so much less than I used to do, that I am afraid I am unjust enough to be displeased with her, because she happened to be the means of my, perhaps, *ever* having any knowledge of what, doubtless, I ought to know. Be that as it may, I never can rank her amongst my favorites; admired as, it seems, she is, by the world in general. She has, to be sure, a handsome face; fine form, and a good understanding; but there is an enquiring, artful turn in her conversation, which displeases me. Descended from a noble family, and married into one still more distinguished; left a widow at twenty three, with the sole command of immense wealth—no wonder she is admired, followed and courted: but, in my opinion, her wit seems pertness, and her good-nature, affected. I was told, the other day, that she was determined to have the man of her heart, though it cost her two thirds of her fortune. Who, I wonder, is this happy man! and what circumstances can he be under, that she needs think of buying him at such a price!

But Charlotte! I am ashamed of myself. What has Mrs. Digby done to draw thus upon herself my severity? Pity, me my beloved friend; and let your pity excuse me. My whole soul is vexed. I write, because I dare not think; and Mrs. Digby, is, in some measure, relative to the only subject upon which I can employ my pen. But the night is far advanced, and as this must go early in the morning, I will now conclude it. Perhaps I may get a little rest, for I seem very heavy.

May that Great Power, which only can soften my sorrows and render them supportable, assist my weakness. In this is placed my only hope; and, at times, a gleam seems to break through the cloud, and promise future brightness.

Ever, my dear Charlotte,
your affectionate
EMMA STANLEY.

LETTER, IX.
COLONEL GREVILLE TO THE HONOURABLE
MRS. DIGBY.

London, Feb. 16th. 1789.

My dear confederate.

IT is not more than two hours since I landed; nor above two minutes since I was set down in Pall-Mall. My first business is to enquire the success of your manoeuvrings, during my absence, which nothing but absolute necessity could have occasioned, at the juncture at which I was commanded abroad. My only consolation was, that I left my most pressing affairs in the hands of one whose abilities were equal to any undertaking, and whose concern in their succeeding, was as great as my own; for I think, my lovely cousin, *your penchant* for Sir Charles Conway, is not a whit inferior to mine for the fair Emma.

Hasten, I beseech you, an account of particulars. Be as minute as possible, that I may know all my cues. I would bowl down to Harborough, could my absence from court be dispensed with: but

as I am liable to be called upon every hour, I cannot, till after the second of next month, leave London. This will reach you in the morning about eleven o'clock. Permit my requesting you to write by the return of the mail, and I shall then have the honor to receive the consecrated paper on the morning following.

You will, I know, excuse my thus hurrying you, when you recollect that cupid and plutus are the masters under whom I serve; and they are furious drivers. Venus is my queen; and to you, her own express image, she has, of late, delegated her share of sovereignty over my destiny; which is, I think a very gallant conclusion from cousin to cousin; especially when I add that I am, my dear madam, your most affectionate and most devoted slave,

ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

I shall take care to avoid Miss Fenton, till you tell me how far she is acquainted with the extent of our plan; for as the subject will unavoidably occur in my first interview with her, I shall wish to be guarded in my questions and replies.

LETTER, X.

MRS. DIGBY, TO COLONEL GREVILLE.

Harborough, Feb. 17th.

“COURAGE my noble Colonel!” The day will be our own. I have been successful beyond my most sanguine expectations. The lovers will, doubtless, soon be separated: never, I hope, to meet again, till even destiny cannot unite them. Proud of my own adroitness, I am equally as impatient as you are, till you know all my *manoeuvrings*, as you rightly term them. Where shall I begin? To which page of the book shall I first turn? I am glad that your absence from the Kingdom has been necessary during this great period; for now, the glory of the Campaign belongs solely to me.

To me the great Arabella Digby, of Harborough, widow!!!

And now for the story of all stories—for I cannot spare time to congratulate you on your return, nor even to echo your compliments, therefore begin with telling you, it being a grand movement, that I have effectually secured a very useful ally in Sir Charles' man, who is conveniently in love with my Benson; and she is very obligingly inclined to favor his passion. By this fortunate connexion, which commenced last autumn at Matlock, I have as early an account as possible, of the enemies motions; though I cannot boast much of knowing them before hand; as Mr. Joseph is not a confidential secretary.

Soon after you sailed, Miss Stanley parted with her servant, which gave me the pretence, I was endeavouring to find, of forming a kind of correspondence with her, by requesting the particulars of that servants character; whom, I told her, I wanted for an elderly friend of mine in London; for you will pre-conceive I was obliged, pretty largely, to sacrifice to the goddess Fabula. Little frivolous circumstances, *occasioned by the whimsicalness of my supposed old Lady*, kept us in play for some time; she answered; I replied, &c. &c. At last, I thought proper to have discovered that

the young woman was *too* young to be confined to the whimsey's of an old one. I was, therefore, obliged to write, in great haste, to Miss Stanley and to my sister; to the first, to beg pardon for the trouble which, to no purpose, I had occasioned her; to the other, to request her to enquire about the person which she mentioned in her last as a fit servant for my old madam in London. Now, as the letters were both written in the same half hour, and as they were folded up and laid upon the table together, I, *by some dire mistake*, directed Miss Stanley's to my sister, and my sister's—*mistake still more direful than the former*—to Miss Stanley. This, you will allow, was *a very terrible accident*, for, *unfortunately*, the contents of the letter, addressed to my sister, were to the following purpose. I began with the affair about the servant which I wished her to procure, and after having settled every thing relative to that subject, I lamented my having engaged to do any thing about it, because I had been obliged, so often, to pester Miss Stanley with letters on the occasion; that, however, I was then going to write the final one to her on that subject, as the old lady [Mrs. Bradbury her name] objected to the person, who had been the cause of my troubling her, on account of her youth, &c. &c. As to the vexation I had had about it, it was, I told my sister, greatly, indeed, overbalanced, by the inexpressible pleasure I had received in a correspondence with one of the most amiable young women upon earth. I then launched out into some pretty high, though not *much* overstrained encomiums, upon my fair correspondent; ending, with the inexpressible concern I was under on her account, about *a strange dark affair*, upon which I had lately been led to form unpleasant conjectures: and couched my tale in such ambiguous language as could not but fail of engaging Miss Stanley's attention; having, in a round-about way, brought in the name of Sir Charles Conway, that the delicacy of her affection might prevent her taking any notice to any body of *this* part of the letter, in particular; but here, I was somewhat too sanguine; for her most intimate friend, Miss Lawson, was, at that time, upon a visit to Alverston, and to her, she communicated the whole; not much, I will assure you, to my liking; for I was apprehensive the one might help the other to suspect. I wanted to have had her kept the matter entirely to herself; as, I will engage for it, from the method I pursued, she would have done, had it not happened that Miss Lawson had been there.

You will, perhaps, think this was a very bold and hazardous beginning. Bold, I will allow it to be; but not so hazardous as you may imagine; for if, contrary to my reasonable expectations, she had made this part of the letter public, and had made a public explanation necessary, I was provided with an incomparable story, and a true one too, to which every word I had written would bear an allusion, and absorb all the intimations within its own vortex. Besides all this—for you men are so dull of apprehension that one must explain to you every little particular—could it not be almost depended upon that a lady of her extreme delicacy of sentiment would make it a point of honor to keep sacred the contents of a letter so accidentally put into her power; especially as it was against the interest of her affection to divulge it! for had it been the *contrary*, I would not [judging I confess by myself] have trusted the most delicate *pretendress* to honor and principle, existing. I finished my supposed letter to my sister with the mention of some bonds which I intended to take up, as I suspected the goodness of the security; and advised her to be cautious of engaging too far with the person who wanted the five hundred pounds on some land; as I had had a hint that that land was previously, but secretly, settled on his wife.

This I did, not only to make the letter appear natural and real, but to engage, still farther, her delicacy to secrecy. Here was contrivance! here was management! pause awhile, at this place, for I am not half through yet, and admire me.

That I was perfectly right in my presupposings, must be confessed, because the exact consequences followed which I expected. Folks in this age are so cunningly-wise as to judge by events; therefore, were all the story to be known, I should, by the major part of the world [for doubtless fools of this description *have* the majority] be fully justified.

With regard to the rectitude of the business—if the very particular ones should, hereafter, scrutinize a little too closely, it is but setting a good face upon the matter, and, fortified by success and security, turn it off with a laugh and one of the following sentences. “Every one for himself.” “Charity begins at home.” “In love and war, all stratagems and advantages are allowable, &c. &c:” and depend upon it, that, with a good estate and a good assurance on your side, the generality of the world will be so too, and applaud your ingenuity.

Carry this with you, cousin Archibald, through life.

But to return to my tale—you have, before you, a summary of the letter supposed to be written to my sister; which letter, as I before told you, I, *by a fatal mistake*, directed to Miss Stanley. *It was a sad blunder, to be sure*; but, as honest Patrick says in the play, “Faith! it was as natural a “one as if I had made it on purpose.”

Well then—after I knew that she must, if at home, have received and read it, I sent off, in a violent hurry, an express to Alverston: but I ordered the messenger, previous to his going to the house, to enquire in the neighbourhood [as the motions of these your benevolent people are generally known] if the lady had been from home for any length of time, and if she had, to return immediately; if not, to go on with my orders. All happened to my wish. She had not been out.

The letter I wrote to her was as follows.

Harborough, Friday Night, 10 o’Clock.

“I AM, my dear madam, distressed beyond imagination; having, this instant, received a note, by a special messenger, from my sister, who is, at this time, upon a visit to Mrs. Montgomery at Coventry, to tell me, that I must certainly have made a great mistake, for that the letter which she had just received from me, directed on the cover to herself, was addressed within, to you.

“Indeed, madam, I am greatly embarrassed by this strange—this really unaccountable accident. That I am too careless in general, I cannot but acknowledge; but on this occasion, I was, or endeavoured to be, more particular than usual. For some time I have been trying to give some probable cause for the vexatious mistake, and recollect that when I had written the two letters, which I did at the same time, I folded them and laid them on the stand ready for the seal and address; that before I had finished them, Miss Letty Vernon, attended by Major Osbourne and Captain Pennant, called upon me to accompany them to Stanford Hall. I requested their alighting for a moment, as I had some letters to dispatch which could not be delayed; but they excused themselves, as being in haste, and said they would wait in the carriage. I, therefore, in a great hurry, sealed and directed them: yet I thought I was *very* sure I had made no mistake, as, to be the more certain, I unfolded that to you; at which instant Miss Vernon came hurrying into the library and begged me to be expeditious, as it was beyond the time of appointment; consequently, I was a little fluttered, and in

the flutter must have committed the mistake—a mistake which has made me wretched beyond idea; for I very much fear the punctuality of the post, has, before this *can* reach you, conveyed that letter to your hands, and it is, my dear Miss Stanley, such a one as I should not wish any person, but my sister, to peruse. If absence from home, or any other incident has prevented your breaking the seal, I know the request of your returning it by the messenger, would be an unnecessary one. If you *have* read it, let me intreat you to forget the contents; or rather, to think them of no consequence. Consider them as unguarded expressions—hasty surmises—rash censures. Blame me; condemn me; *do* any thing; *think* any thing, rather than be one moment anxious about what is, really, in itself, a trifle, but which I cannot now explain to you.

“In the greatest haste,
I am, my dear madam,
your obedient
and very affectionate friend,
ARABELLA DIGBY.

“P.S. “I enclose the letter which my sister returned me, directed to her, but intended for you.”

What think you of this, “my noble Colonel” what think you of this! was it not a master-stroke? It is easy to imagine the manner in which she answered me. The letter had been received the evening before; she had nearly read it through ere she could tell to whom it was addressed [which, by the bye, I contrived that she must do, least her delicacy should stop her too soon] but the moment she *did* discover it, which was not till I mentioned something about some bonds, she folded it up, and had never since opened it, and intended to have returned it by the next post. She confessed, that being heavily pained by that part which too evidently related to herself, she had, in the strictest confidence, communicated it to her friend Miss Lawson, who had then been, some time at Alverston. She said that Lady Stanley was acquainted with her having received my letter, but that she never enquired into her correspondencies, as she held such a proceeding to be injurious to the genius of a young person, by its suppressing the genuine effusions of the rising mind: which opinion of her Ladyship’s, I was, before, perfectly acquainted with, or I should have pursued a different method when I opened the business. Miss Stanley then began her earnest entreaties that I would give her an explanation, as soon as possible, of that part in which she was concerned. She begged; she supplicated, in the most anxious terms, that I would not refuse her, but be candid and tell her all I knew, or even suspected; as, though, she had the highest confidence in the person whom she must suppose was meant, she was sure I would not have written what I did to my sister, but from a strong foundation. She asked pardon for taking hold of any intelligence which my mistake had thrown in her way, but hoped I would let the consequence, which the subject of it was to her, amply excuse her. She assured me of her inviolable secrecy and answered for Miss Lawson’s; not only, she said, from a point of honor, but in compliance with her own inclination.

She concluded with requesting an immediate answer, and said she was fatigued, dispirited and unwell.

My answer to this letter was, in effect, no answer at all. I evaded the questions; made light of every circumstance; took blame to myself, by laying the whole on my own unguarded way of writing, and begged her, therefore, not to be one moment uneasy at a matter which might be without the least foundation. This, as I expected [for do I not pretty well know the world! and do I not, still

better, know my own sex,] brought on redoubled entreaties to be made acquainted with every circumstance, however minute, which could possibly give rise to the distant intimations in my mis-directed letter; repeatedly expressing her sense of my delicate and generous unwillingness to enter upon the subject, and again begging my pardon for so taking advantage of my mistake.

To cut the matter short—after many letters on both sides, she wrote to tell me Miss Lawson was near leaving Alverston, and that, as it was agreed upon for her to convey her friend to Coventry, where she expected Mrs. Lawson's carriage to meet her, she would, with my permission, propose to Sir Edward and Lady Stanley to accept the invitation I had often so obligingly given her, to spend a day or two at Harborough; acknowledging herself to be stimulated by her wish for an explanation on the subject of her late anxiety. This, though the point against, which my whole artillery was bent, was so far beyond my hopes, that I could scarce believe it to be real. I immediately wrote her as polite an answer as I could dictate, mixed with an expressed draw-back on the expected pleasure of receiving her, from a consideration of the occasion, and begged to know when I was to expect the favor of her company; earnestly requesting Miss Lawson to oblige me at the same time: but this, from the nature of their plan, I did not expect would be accepted, or I should have been more sparing of warmth in the invitation: for they are both exceedingly clever; exceedingly lively; and exceedingly quick-sighted; so that had they been together, each helping the other to conjecture, they might have been too much for me to manage. Miss Stanley alone, and totally engrossed by anxiety and apprehension, I thought, so well had I settled all my plans, I could entangle with tolerable dexterity. I soon received an answer that my Alverston Lady expected to be with me ten days after her date; but that Miss Lawson, with acknowledgements for my friendly politeness, must decline the obliging invitation, as they could not, on account of company, leave the Park sooner than the time proposed, and she must, if possible, reach Woodstock by the end of the week.

So far, so good. All to my wish; except Miss Lawson's being in the secret.

I now pursued the execution of our grand plan, which I must, though not without reluctance, give you credit for having first suggested; but remember, all the fine movements—all the wire-drawn works were entirely my own. As soon as I had dispatched another letter to Miss Stanley acknowledging the receipt of her's which had just reached me, &c. &c. I wrote, according to your directions, to your Polly Fenton, requesting her to come down as soon as possible, and bring with her Betsey Mason's little boy. I, likewise, desired her to hire a country-looking girl, if she could meet with one, to attend her; bidding her not to hesitate at any expence; gave her particular directions about every minutiae, and ordered her to drive directly to John Dakin's, my tenant at the Brook-end Farm; where she would find private and comfortable lodgings, ready for her reception; desiring her to be careful that her attendant knew her by no other name than that of Barlowe: and summed up my injunctions with bidding her remember that your fortune, consequently her future maintenance, depended on the proper execution of the plan in hand; of which, I told her, she might, in time, know more; but of which, by the bye, I did not intend she ever should be told any thing that was not absolutely necessary for the proper performance of the part allotted to her. I ordered her to buy a pap-boat; spoon, and coral, and to have them marked with a very large C.C.

To own the truth Colonel, I was, at times, most horridly ashamed of this my *associate*, as I could not but, in my heart, acknowledge, she must truly be termed; though my pride endeavoured to consider her as a mere tool. To what, said I, in a soliloquy, have I descended! I have entered into a

concert with a kept mistress! with one, too, of the baser sort, who has so little distinction in, what she calls, her love, that she will even join to help her keeper to a wife, in expectation that he will thereby be more able to support her extravagance: according to which expectation, I since find you have given her a note for a handsome sum upon your marriage; wisely, however, concealing Miss Stanley's name under a fictitious one. What, (have I asked myself) does this creature do, but act in character with her avowed occupation! *she* might, at first, have been *betrayed* into her present situation; might have continued in it through what she thought, a necessity, till habit so perfectly reconciled her to it, that all sense of wrong was obliterated from her ideas. There is, to be sure, a force in truth which will, now and then, obtrude upon our sentiments, and it requires a considerable degree of silent oratory to out-argue its suggestions. A something like compunction I believe, took a seat in my mind, after I had sent off my letter to Polly Fenton; and now I am come to put the matter into black and white, as the phrase is, I cannot but say that it has not quite so fair an appearance as one might wish it to have. But my reply to the troublesome monitor within, is, that I am now too far engaged to make a retreat; that, indeed, there is no possibility of going back, without falling into utter disgrace; that, therefore, it is in vain to think about it; that nothing bad has yet been, nor I hope ever will be, the consequence, and that, in the end, after a few more struggles, it may, probably, make for the happiness of all the parties concerned, &c. &c.

When this silent guest invaded me in the height of my career, as I just now confessed it did with considerable force upon my writing to Polly Fenton, I had such a powerful army of arguments against it, that it very soon gave up its own cause and quietly quitted the field; for what could stand out against the following advanced matters of fact!—that I had, from an act of duty, when I was very young, married, to oblige my father and mother, a man, whom, in my heart, I detested, and continued to detest through his whole future life; that I had, thereby, acquired a right to please myself in my next engagement; that I never could be happy without Sir Charles Conway; having had a predilection for him ever since my wedding day; upon which he introduced himself to Mr. Digby; that it was by no means certain there was such an affection between Sir Charles and Miss Stanley, as I was now possessed with: on the contrary, it was reasonable to conjecture, that the intended union was merely a matter of convenience to all parties; and almost a matter of course, from the intimacy between the two families: that the noble fortune, of which Miss Stanley was in possession, by the will of her mother's uncle, and over which, therefore, Sir Edward could not have any equitable authority, would be vastly convenient to the deranged state of my Cousin Greville's affairs, who, being immediately descended from noble ancestors, had a right to expect such a lady; and, moreover, I believed that he had a real affection for her person, and might, perhaps, be miserable without her; that, as to myself, I must, by every one, be acquitted of having any lucrative motives; as though Sir Charles Conway had a fine estate, my fortune would answer that, or a still larger; that upon the whole, I did not see how any one of the four could be a loser, as I had no doubt but the Colonel would make Miss Stanley a good husband, and as I was determined to be to Sir Charles, one of the most exemplary wives in the universe.

Thus it appeared to be quite a benevolent undertaking; as four people might, thereby, be rendered happy instead of two; whereas if this scheme was *not* pursued, two of the four must inevitably be wretched. These reasonings, when summed up together, perfectly quieted, at that time, the objections of my conscience; and, upon my word, now I take a review of them, I think they are, a good comfortable string of palliatives.

When, indeed, upon my further proceedings I found Miss Stanley to be more attached than I had thought proper to suppose she was, why, then, I must own, I could not but allow there was some little—not that even then—that is, no great—however, I will not tire you by a needless repetition of these self-argumentations, but own that I was somewhat puzzled to reconcile this part of the story, to my benevolent system. At length, the consideration that my own attachment was, at least, as strong as hers; that had I been at liberty when Sir Charles first saw me, I, probably, might have been his choice; as he seemed, then to regard me with particular attention, and has, ever since, treated me with great distinction; and that, therefore, she and I might be pretty equally concerned—set all straight again; as I, justly, I think, concluded I had a right to pursue my own happiness first: and so, I once more, and I hope finally, settled the matter between my conscience and myself.

I have been led, into a long harangue upon sentiment, when I intended to pursue my narrative, and have, thereby, made it impossible to finish the whole in time for the post, as, when I began, I positively intended to do. I will, therefore, instantly dispatch what I have written, and immediately begin again, lest I should not, to-morrow, have such an opportunity for writing as the present time affords.

Adieu.

ARABELLA DIGBY.

LETTER, XII.
MRS. DIGBY, TO COLONEL GREVILLE.

IN CONTINUATION.

Late, very late, Tuesday Night.

AS soon after I wrote to Polly Fenton as the post could bring it, I received her answer of ready compliance. She had found a girl just fitted for her purpose, and would be at Dakin's on the Thursday following; at which time she actually did arrive there, accompanied by her new servant and Betsey Mason's child; highly pleasing its mother by bringing it into the country. Upon my honor, the boy's features are not very much unlike Sir Charles' at a side view. Is not this assisting circumstance somewhat singular! as I did not intend to seem to know much of your Miss Fenton, not chusing, on my own account, to be familiar with her, I told Dakin's people, it was to oblige a friend, that I proposed their taking her, &c. &c. easily settling the matter with them; and when she arrived, soon instructed her in her part of the *comedy*, as I hope it will prove. All which particulars I will pass over, and proceed to the Day of Miss Stanley's arrival. I cannot but acknowledge that I received her with considerable perturbation; trembling with apprehension, lest we should be ruined by some unfortunate discovery. However, I endeavoured to compose myself, and was tollerably successful; the more so, as she, likewise, was pretty much fluttered. The ladies had slept at Coventry, where they were met by Mrs. Lawson's carriage and servants: they parted about ten in the morning, and at three, Miss Stanley was driven into my coach-yard.

You cannot imagine how awkward—consciously awkward, I suppose—I seemed during the time of dining, notwithstanding the presence of the servants prevented any particular conversation from occurring.

As soon as the cloth was removed, I felt my perturbation increase, for she immediately began the subject. "I must now, my dear madam, request you to ease the anxiety under which I too evidently labour"—were her first words. I could not conceal the confusion I was in; however, I endeavoured to give it a serviceable turn, by leading her to suppose I was affected from a concern for her; which idea, my reply was calculated to increase.

It would fill a volume to tell you all that passed. Suffice it to say, that, after a great many intreaties on her side, and a great many denials on mine—denials adapted to raise her curiosity, and which grew more and more weak, I told her, with the greatest appearance of the strongest reluctance, the following particulars; or rather, if you please, the following story; beginning with—Well then, madam, if nothing else *will* serve—if you will so perseveringly *insist* upon knowing the whole of what may possibly be groundless conjecture—you must be complied with; though no one can tell what a heavy task it is to me, to be obliged, so against every tender feeling, to communicate, what must inevitably, whether true or not, give pain to a heart to which I only wish to convey happiness.

She, with quickness, urged me to proceed; which, after a little more hesitation, I did;

informing her that the morning after my return from a visit of a few days to Leicester, which was just before I wrote to my sister, I took a walk, as I frequently did, to the house of one of my tenants, which was situated in a retired, pleasant part of the farm, at the distance of about three quarters of a mile from my park: that the family consisted of the farmer—Dakin his name—his wife; a son, and two daughters, of about sixteen or eighteen years of age: that when I looked into the parlour window, as I passed it, I saw a very genteel woman sitting by the fire; at which, when I went in, I expressed some surprise: whereupon, Mrs. Dakin, requesting me to step aside, told me she was just going to my house, to let me know she had got a boarder, and to ask my advice about keeping her; saying, she should have consulted me before she had taken her, had I not been from home: that a gentleman from London, whose name was Sympson, and who was their deputy landlord, till Mr. Digby bought that farm, went to their house a few days before, and asked if they could take a gentlewoman, with a child and maid-servant, to lodge and board for a few weeks, or longer, as they might agree; that he offered them very high payment, and that as he said the lady was a very decent person, and they had always thought him a very sober man, they agreed to accommodate her.

Miss Stanley continued perfectly silent, while I went on informing her that I asked them the name of this their new boarder; which they could not tell me; saying that the servant only called her her lady; and they did not like to be inquisitive; that she seemed to be very low-spirited; was always sighing, and often in tears.

You may think, my dear madam, said I to Miss Stanley, that this account raised my curiosity. I could not help being desirous—But [interrupting myself] O that you would permit me to stop here! that you would spare both yourself and me the pain—“Pray madam—I beg—*pray* madam go on”, said she, in the most pressing tone of voice: at which, I shook my head, and sighing, said, in hesitating accents, well then madam—if I must—yet I wish—but I must obey you—as if I scarce knew what I said.

But Colonel! here I am calling upon you to admire my fertile imagination and dexterity—or perhaps I should not be so minute—not considering that it is possible you may, at the time of reading, be comparing, to her advantage, the artless innocence of your Emma with my *management*. Yet I will not entertain an idea which would too much humble me, and represent you as ungrateful; for have I not, hitherto, been unceasingly labouring for your service? not more than for my own, you will, perhaps, retort. Granted: but I should not—nay I could not—have undertaken to conduct this business myself. Remember—for inconsistent creature that I am! I now wish to recollect and acknowledge it—that one of the grandest plots was all your own. What occasions me thus to *recriminate*, as it were! Am I not proud of my skill—of my ingenuity! yes, certainly: yet when one endeavors to recollect all that has passed, to give an account of it, there is a something which *some people* might think is *rather too unpretty*.

But my motives—my motives!!! I will re-consider them and go on in triumph; and when every thing be successfully over, claim all the glory to myself. And *so*—as the story-telling gentry say—I told Miss Stanley she might well think that the account which Mrs. Dakin gave, raised in me, a degree of curiosity: that I prolonged my visit to the good people with some expectation of seeing the stranger; but to no purpose; that, at length, the servant, a tight-looking country girl, came out of the parlour, with the child, the similitude of whose features [thanks to kind chance, for this corroborating incident] with those of a person I had before seen, struck me at the first glance; that I

went up to it; took it into my arms, and asked the young woman its name, and that she told me it was Charles. At this, Miss Stanley lifted up her eyes, which were surcharged with tears, with a look which expressed a mixture of contending passions. You are not, my dear madam, said I, taking her hand, more alarmed by what I see you apprehend, than I was, on your account, (for you were instantly in my idea) when, upon setting the child on my knee, I observed upon its coral, which was extremely elegant, a very large cypher of C.C. the mark, as I afterwards found, of his pap-boat and spoon.

Miss Stanley, at this, hastily snatched her hand from mine; hid her face with her handkerchief, and holding it there with both her hands, stooped down till she rested her forehead upon the table; again begging me to proceed.

These circumstances, my dear and amiable friend, said I, could only *lead* to suspicion; but one, still stronger, soon followed which almost convinced me I had not been too hasty in my conjectures. I then told her that after I returned the child to the servant, she took it into the garden; at which time young Dakin entered the room, with a couple of letters in his hand, saying the lady had given them to him the evening before, to put into the post-office, which he had forgotten to do, and asked what was to be done; that, upon being told they could only go in the morning, he laid them down, requesting his mother to take care of them, upon which, excited by curiosity, I moved to the window, where he had placed them, to look at them, when [said I, in a low and slow voice] I saw one was directed to a Miss Faucett, Piccadilly; and the other to a gentleman whom I dare not name.

“It was to Sir Charles Conway madam” said Miss Stanley, suddenly lifting up her face covered with tears, while she looked at me with inexpressible earnestness, as if waiting for a confirmation of the dreadful suggestion.

It was, madam, I faultingly replied, casting my eyes upon the ground.

She ardently looked upward, and immediately fell from her chair.

And now, Colonel, I must acknowledge that this was a scene for which not all my bravery was sufficient; I cannot help saying, that I never was more affected in my life. But what could I do! it was impossible to stop where I then was. I must either, at once, confess the whole truth, or go on. How could I think of doing the first? and if that was impracticable, the only alternative was a resolute and steady perseverance. Spare my describing what immediately followed. It was sometime before we could proceed, but as soon as she recovered, and had gained sufficient strength, she begged to know if this woman was still in the neighbourhood, and if I, ever after, saw her. To both questions, I gave an affirmative. She then enquired many other particulars; to which the substance of my reply was as follows—that I generally went once or twice in a week to the houses of such of my tenants as were within a walk; that Dakin’s was a favorite one; the people in it being all particularly decent and conversable; that my curiosity, or to give it a juster name, my solicitude, on her account, had increased, rather than diminished my visits there, since the event in question had taken place; that upon some enquiry about the conduct of this young person, I could not help feeling her to be an interesting subject, and that I had frequently been told she wished (but seemed to be too timid) to give me a meeting, as if by accident, in a little pleasant paddock near the house, through which I frequently walked; but that, till the last Monday, I had only seen her *en passant*. I said, that previous

to this, I understood she had written, and received several letters; that some of the received ones were sealed with a cypher, like that upon the plate used for the child, the post-marks of which, were from Derby; and that all those she had sent, were directed like either the one or the other of those I before mentioned.

At this, poor Emma sighed most heavily, but did not seem inclined to speak. I, therefore, proceeded to the interview, telling her that on the last Monday, just as I reached the paddock gate, I perceived this lady walking along the bank, on the opposite side; that having heard she wished to speak to me, and not knowing but she might be a pitiable object, I, in some measure, advanced that way to give her the opportunity; that upon her first seeing me, she quickened her steps, as if to meet me, and then stopped; seemingly irresolute: that, upon observing this, I bent my path towards her, and came up with her; at which, I said, she appeared to be covered with confusion, and hastily dropping me a courtesy, was about to retire; when I, in pity to her apparent distress, accosted her; that she then put her handkerchief to her face, and burst into tears; after which, being, by the encouragement I had endeavoured to give her, somewhat recovered, she said—"You see before you madam an unfortunate young woman, whose once brighter prospects—" at which, I said, she stopped and was utterly unable to proceed; whereupon, observing her to be seized with a universal tremor, I called to her attendant, and had her conveyed into the house; when seeing her so much affected, and believing my presence encreased her disorder I requested her to endeavor to compose herself; telling her, that I would then leave her, but would call upon her some other time, when I should hope to find her better &c. that she thanked me as warmly as she could, and seemed too sensible of what she called my humanity.

I then said, that yesterday [it was on a Wednesday Miss Stanley came to Harborough] I sent an enquiry after her health; to which she returned for answer, that she was very much indisposed indeed, but hoped to be able to receive the honor of my visit as that morning, and should think my condescension the greatest proof of my benevolence: that I had sent to excuse my going to her at the time she had fixed, on account of company; but that I would take an early opportunity to see her.

And now my dear, my amiable friend, said I, with a warmth of which I was almost sensible, from a consideration of the situation to which I had—necessarily, as matters stood—reduced her, you have before you every circumstance and even every conjecture, which I can furnish you with. But were you not, Miss Stanley, were you not to blame in so peremptorily insisting upon being thus distressed? for what advantage can the knowledge of these circumstances produce? I am, even now, sorry that I complied with you, as I *ought* to have refused a request which was so improper to be granted. *Why, why* did you so warmly press a disclosure of what, strong as the circumstances are which awakened my apprehension, may, at last, be proved to have been without foundation!

"*My dear madam!*"—exclaimed the weeping beauty: and was going on; but I interrupted her with saying, it is possible Sir Charles' concern about some *friend* may have made a correspondence with this lady necessary; or if, as the cypher on the plate—the child's name; features, &c. rather too strongly indicate, he should himself have been the cause of this retirement, *even then*—has he not a thousand good qualities—a thousand virtues to overbalance—"My dear dear Mrs. Digby!" said she with quickness, and considerable warmth, "do you *think*, do you once *imagine*—no madam: highly as I have ever—greatly as I will own—I know not what I say. Excuse me: pity me. I am *indeed* distressed. Good heavens! can it be possible! yet it must. Yet, again, it *cannot*, surely be, that Sir

Charles Conway—Oh Mrs. Digby!—but you *do* pity me; and you soften the severity of your own sentiments, on these circumstances, in tenderness to my feelings. You wish to make more light of the matter, supposing the worst, than, were it your own case, you would allow others to make of it. Do you think that I would ever!—“NO;” said she with an emphasis, and stopped; turning away her face.

Why, to be sure, said I, I must acknowledge that if the circumstances—but, perhaps, it is *not* so. We ought to suppose the best, till the contrary is confirmed.

“I am never officious,” replied she, “to look at the dark side of a prospect; on the contrary, my hopes are, usually, stronger than my fears; but ought we to lull ourselves asleep upon a precipice? or to let a barbed sting rankle in a wound till life, itself, be in danger? besides, when justice is concerned, as who knows but it is in the present case, may I ever obey the most minute of its dictates, though the effects of its commands should be destructive of my dearest sublunary views. How, else, can I ever know any real peace of mind!”

I was struck with the dignity of her manner; and, perhaps, not a little with her sentiments, which were so opposite to my own practice. Something angelic seemed to irradiate her whole form, and made me, for a moment, sensible of a kind of awe. I was, again, half sorry that I had so entangled myself, and verily think had the crooked business, as I fancy I must call it, been then only in embryo, I should have been easily persuaded to have quietly relinquished it. However, I endeavored to collect myself, and was going to speak, but after a short silence, as if from deep contemplation, she suddenly broke out with—“Dear madam, assist my researches. Manage for me that I may see this person. Do pray, Mrs. Digby, manage that I may see her. If possible, let me know the whole truth.”

Here again, though brought within view of compassing one of my grand points, did my conscience make a coward of me, and, almost as much from apprehension, as from policy, I formed numberless objections to the request; but she over-ruled them all, and I was obliged to comply with her proposal of writing a note to the lady, telling her that I had with me, upon a visit, a particular friend who, if she would give leave, would accompany me in my call upon her the morning following; to which I received a handsome return, implying that the very high opinion which she had formed of my character, from both report and observation, was a full security to her that she should not meet with any thing from me that was either improper or unpleasant; that, therefore, she should prepare herself to receive the honor we intended her; but begged to be permitted to intimate that some unhappy circumstances in her situation, made it necessary for her to request our observing the greatest secrecy in every thing in which she was concerned.

This note, my good cousin, you will easily conceive I sent her a copy of. When it was brought, we settled it to make our visit about eleven the next morning; and I then earnestly requested that the subject might be dropped for that evening; as I was, I told her, extremely desirous of her regaining a little composure.

“Ah madam!”—said she and shook her head; while her eyes betrayed the utmost sensibility: from which, upon my endeavoring to sooth her, we proceeded to a sentimental conversation on the instability of human happiness; and, upon my word, her understanding, clouded and deranged, as it must, at that period, have been, displayed a brilliancy which was astonishing.

I have, many years, been slightly acquainted with Miss Stanley, and (as every one *must* think) have always thought her possessed of uncommon abilities, but the extreme vivacity of her temper would, sometimes, be too rapid to permit a full display of her judgment, which, at that time, was, if I may use the expression, softer and yet more strong, than when her spirits have been higher: and I think I never, before, saw her look so beautiful. Her fine eyes, whose natural lustre is almost dazzling had a languor in them which was inexpressibly pleasing.

Do not you admire the impartiality with which I speak of a rival? of a rival-*beauty* too, if you men are, at all, to be believed. However I *will* own that though I do not love Miss Stanley, I admire her. Love her, I cannot. For is she not in possession of the heart, to obtain which, I would sacrifice almost every thing dear to women!

The scene of the following morning will lead you to observe that if I was unmoved by it, I must have been composed of adamant.

I *was not unmoved*; which is all I will own: for were I to give you an account of all *the little prickings* at my heart, during the exhibition, I should, perhaps, lead you to express—*your admiration of my courage*. That is all.

Expect, therefore, no more confessions of compunction, but conclude, from what I have already acknowledged, that the restless monitor, with whom I have had so many encounters, was extremely busy upon the occasion.

But, really, I am quite fatigued. When I began, I had not the least idea of running to such a length. My vanity, I believe, led me on; for I might have told you all the necessary particulars in half the time. Without, indeed, your knowing the minutiae, you could not but have concluded that your Emma must, in this point, have been a very weak, credulous girl; whereas, in fact, the wisest, must have been deceived under the same circumstances. However, I will confess her reputation had no place in my thoughts; for she is abundantly too good for my approbation; and I do not know but it might have been a piece of charity to you to have taken her down in your opinion; as it would enliven your hopes, were you to expect an easy conquest.

I mean to sleep an hour or two and rise in the morning soon enough to finish, and send this by the post-coach; which will reach London to-morrow evening.

Can you conjecture what occasions this extraordinary diligence in me? perhaps you imagine it is from the kind motive of shortening your durance; as you intend and wisely too, to desist from visiting your Dulcinea till you shall have received from me all particulars.

No such matter, my dear cousin; for, believe me, I do not regard your absence from her, as a circumstance deserving so much consideration. The truth is, that as from my last intelligence, I have reason to expect, every day, an account of the actual separation of the parties, I want you to hold yourself in readiness to begin your overtures to Alverston, by writing, *if it is impossible* for you to go, the very first moment it can be done with propriety; which, in my opinion, will be immediately after the confirmation of the expected rupture: as your long acquaintance in their family—your

descent—your connexions; person; abilities and accomplishments, independent of your having saved the lady's life at the great hazard of your own, authorise you to expect acceptance. And, indeed, I make no doubt but that, had she been disengaged when that affair happened, the father, mother, and brother, all so famous for generosity, would have joined in offering you the fair hand of the rescued sufferer; for a *temporary* sufferer she certainly was, in having been so dreadfully scorched. When I was first told of your gallant action in darting through the flames, I could help—excuse me, Greville—I could not help having in my idea the devil upon crutches, when he took upon him the form of the Spanish Student to save the beautiful Seraphina.

It was a shocking conflagration, to be sure, and poor Mr. Symonds was greatly to be pitied, but you remember the old saying—"It is a bad wind that blows "nobody good"—of which, the case in question may be an instance; it being possible and indeed probable, that the destruction of the lodge may eventually prove to be the foundation of your *fortress*.

If I am not mistaken, young man, your modesty was not proof against the lively expressions of the fair one's gratitude; you certainly construed her sense of your heroism into sensations of a more tender kind; and notwithstanding her *entanglement*, as I remember you emphatically called it, almost believed yourself first in her affection. Lately, I fancy, you have been rather less sanguine; which is the reason why, at this juncture, I am so kind as to revive your remembrance of all these circumstances. I want to stimulate your hopes, and to encourage you to set this matter on foot as soon as possible, that the report of it, may prevent Sir Charles Conway from seeking, or expecting a reconciliatory *eclaircissement*, which he may else be willing and ready to believe, time and occasion may lead to. And then, you know, the lady's mind will be in a softened condition from her late distresses, &c. &c. all which matters, you, Colonel, exactly understand. Therefore, as I before said, I want you to have every thing under your eye, in perfect readiness.

And now—to end this sheet as I began my first—"Courage my noble Colonel! "the day *must be our own*" for are not the grand impediments going to be removed! and are not we, in ourselves, irresistible!

ARABELLA DIGBY.

LETTER, XIII.
MRS. DIGBY, TO COLONEL GREVILLE.
IN CONTINUATION.

Wednesday Morning. I am ashamed to say how early.

WHAT can either lead or drive a woman so fast as inclination?

A pretty deal might be said upon this subject; but I have no leisure for any other than the one which just now awakened me; therefore, to piece my narrative where I, last night, broke off—

I arose, in the morning, with the sun; that is to say, about half past six; yet early as it was, I found Miss Stanley had been still earlier. Hearing her moving, I sent Benson (as she did not bring her own maid) to assist her; but she was ready dressed. We met about nine; and had an almost silent

breakfasting.

I will not dignify her by a repetition of that little which she did say.

At eleven, we sat out for Dakin's. When we arrived there, we found every thing in perfect order for our reception. You may imagine we were not, at first, very talkative. The pleasantness of the situation, for some minutes, engrossed the conversation. At length, I thought it was necessary to begin something more interesting. But it is needless to give you the particulars of the first opening, or the round-about which were used to induce *the unhappy young lady* to repose a confidence in us. After some proper entreaties, she sighed very deeply and said—"I am, surely, one amongst the most wretched of my sex; and almost ashamed to say, my family is ancient; my situation, was genteel; my education and subsequent conduct, such as promised an example not unworthy of imitation."

I really Colonel was astonished at your Polly's docility. She repeated, almost word for word, the lessons I had previously given her.

Let me stop to say, that I pursued your hint of concealing Miss Stanley's real name under that of Elmy; which, by the bye, I should not have thought of doing, had not I caught it from your conditional promissary note to Miss Fenton, which she proudly let me have a sight of.

I wonder you did not acquaint me with that circumstance. My not knowing it might have been productive of awkward consequences.

After the above opening—I told *the lady* that I had some reason to believe she had wished for an opportunity of speaking to me; that if I could be of any service to her, I should be happy in exerting my power; as, from what I had heard, and observed, she seemed to be an object meriting the compassion of the more fortunate. I then begged her to confide in us, as I could answer for the benevolent intentions and secrecy of my friend, as much as for my own.

I should have told you that to make the scene the more interesting, she all the time kept the child, who is really a very pleasant lovely boy, upon her knee. His eyes are blue and full of fire, like Sir Charles'; with the same beautiful flaxen hair, which, from his fair complexion, you might suppose the Baronet's to have been at that age. Miss Stanley's attention was divided between him and his supposed mother; and the mark on the coral was, I observed, not unregarded.

As soon as I had made the above speech, Mrs. Polly thought it a proper manoeuvre to throw her handkerchief over her face, and lean her head against the back of her chair: but the duce a bit of a *tear* could she produce; for which I could have beat her.

I thought her profession had made her a better actress. However, it might easily be supposed she was *too much* affected to cry. To which observation, for I afterwards advanced it, Miss Stanley readily acquiesced. When she recovered herself she said—"I repeat, ladies, that I am the most miserable of women; which you will join with me in believing, when I tell you that my heart too justly accuses me of being a parricide."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Miss Stanley, and started.

“You may well be surprised madam,” said Miss Fenton, “at such an intimation, but, thank heaven, the matter is not so bad as you, probably, suppose from what I have said. Indeed I have too much reason to fear that my unhappy conduct shortened the days of my dear, kind, indulgent father; but I was not any *other* way, accessory to one of the greatest losses I have ever yet lived to experience. But ladies, sensible as I am of the great condescension, and of the still greater benevolence, which led you to visit so unhappy a creature as myself; and being no less convinced that I may safely trust you with my secret, yet, pardon me, so extremely peculiar is my situation, that I must not—I dare not—acquaint you with any particulars, except you will be so very good as to condescend to give me an explicit promise that you never will divulge what I shall tell you; nor ever make use of my name, or that of any other person which I shall have occasion to mention, without my consent. This, my dear ladies, may seem a presumptuous request, and presumptuously worded; but I was not always what I am now, and if justice be done me, I may, in time, appear like what I have been.”

I instantly saw Miss Stanley was surprised at this; therefore expressed my own wonder by saying, indeed madam this must, to us, who are unacquainted with your very particular reasons, appear extraordinary; not that I hesitate to make the promise you request, and I dare say my friend—“Allow me my dear Mrs. Digby”—interrupted Miss Stanley—“allow me to speak three words to you”—motioning to go to the window; which, being at the extremity of the room, was at a considerable distance from the fire. I followed her, though with reluctance; for my aim, as you may have supposed, was to get her bound in a promise of absolute secrecy; which, when once given, she would, I was sure, keep most religiously.

“I have told you madam”, said she, speaking in a whisper, “that when I first read your letter, Miss Lawson was with me, and that, to her, I communicated the part which, too assuredly, was of deep concern to myself. She was (as any real friend must have been) exceedingly anxious to know the result, which I gave her my word she should do, the first moment I was acquainted with it myself; and I would not, on *any* account, disappoint her, as it would be leaving her friendly heart in the most cruel anxiety, and preventing my being benefited by her counsel.”

I was going to interrupt her, but she continued—“rather than engage to exclude Miss Lawson from the knowledge of what I am to be informed of, I would give up the present opportunity of gaining intelligence, and, by her assistance, with the clue which already has been given me, endeavour, by some other method, to come at the knowledge of the whole.”

Here was a stroke! I was almost frightened out of my wits. My presence of mind—my policy—my courage—were all at once called upon to be exerted; and they were altogether, barely sufficient to parry this unexpected assault. However, I immediately saw that nothing was to be done by argument. She was determined, and it was necessary for *me* to determine, likewise; Wherefore, I stepped immediately to Miss Fenton, who, as it was intended, was too ill to rise from an easy chair in which she sat, still keeping the child; though she seemed as if hardly able to hold it.

This lady madam, said I, as Miss Stanley advanced towards us, has a friend with whom she is so particularly united, that she would think it almost criminal to engage to keep from her knowledge any thing with which she herself is acquainted; the more criminal, as were she so to

engage, she doubts her own ability to keep her promise; the habit of communication between them, being so strong, that she fears she should involuntarily divulge the secret: but this absent lady—stopping Miss Fenton, who was going to speak, and looking at her with meaning—is of a character so perfectly great and good, that no mischief can possibly accrue from the manner, and with the restrictions, with which this my friend, if she *does* mention the circumstances to her, will relate them.

Miss Fenton did not understand my looks; for this was a dilemma to which we did not expect to be reduced—[as who could conjecture that the girl would have been so obstinate—so scrupulous—so, I do not know what to call it—in such a case as this!] therefore we had not made any provision for it.

Polly, as I before said, not understanding me, made so many objections, and raised so many scruples, that I was again in tremors; for had Emma's *curiosity* only been engaged, her politeness would, at once, have given up the point; and she would have declined a communication which, as it must appear, it required so much persuasion to draw; and which was, evidently, to be given with so much reluctance. However, much more than her curiosity was concerned; which made her *wish* to see Miss Fenton's objections in the weakest light, and gave my assiduity, which, under other circumstances, would have appeared to her like an unpolite, and even a prying inquisitiveness, the colour of a friendly solicitude to procure her full satisfaction: therefore, upon my saying that I would answer both for the absent and the present lady, as absolutely as for myself, and asking Polly, with a show of being hurt, if she doubted my honor, she immediately complied; we having, at my proposal, given her a very deliberate and clearly expressed assurance, that whatever she thought proper to communicate, with an expectation of being relieved in her mind, or otherwise benefited, should never be divulged, on any consideration, to any person existing, by any one of the three stipulated to be in the secret: again answering for the absent lady, as far as one human being could answer for another, without presumption.

I want much to get to the end of my tale, as I expect the coach to pass the gate within little more than an hour; and if I miss that, I must wait for the next mail; therefore, I now will be as concise, as from the nature of the subject, I can be.

Emma, expecting, I fancy, to be too much affected for observation, drew her chair half behind Miss Fenton's, and leaned her head against its side; requesting she might be permitted that situation, on account of the extreme heat she felt from the fire.

When we were all fixed, Miss Fenton (again vainly endeavoring to add tears to her seeming distress) began with telling us that her real name was Matilda Barlowe; that her father was descended from the female line of the ancient family of the Montagues, and that her mother's ancestry was not less noble. She then gave a pretty circumstantial account of their supposed manner of living; her own education, &c. &c. which she made to appear were all extremely genteel; said that her father's fortune was rather small, but that a handsome annuity which was settled upon her mother, by one of her uncles, enabled them to cut a considerable figure in the polite circles: that they were obliged to live almost constantly in London, as her father had a place at court which required his frequent attendance; which place he lost upon a quarrel with the minister, just about the time of her mother's sudden death, which threw them into a most disagreeable situation; but that her

mother's sister, who was a rich widow, without children, promised to provide for *her*: she being the only child her mother ever had. And now ladies, said she, comes the tragic part of my story. At this she fell back in her chair, and I thought Miss Stanley, who looked pale as death, would have sunk from hers. She requested to be led for a moment into the air; imputing her indisposition to the warmth of the room, which, though it is extremely large, was much heated by an enormous fire. I attended Emma into the garden, where drinking a little water, she soon recovered. When we returned, Miss Fenton was requested to proceed, which she did with saying, that as they were obliged to live so much in London, her father, in consideration of her mother's weak health, removed a few years back, from St. James's Street, to Portland Place, on account of its salutary situation; that the house which joined theirs, was occupied by the late Sir John Conway.

And now Colonel could you have seen your poor Emma!—but I wont interrupt myself by any observations, if I can avoid it; which, sometimes, I cannot do; as, on these *woeful* occasions, they seem to occur so naturally that I know not how to pass them over. My comedy, it must be owned, has had a little sprinkling of the tragic; but I hope the last act will crown the whole with general joy, and justify the title of *the happy four*.

Miss Fenton went on.

“His son, ladies, the present Sir Charles, is in every respect, calculated to win the heart of a woman. Were I to describe him, such as he is, my fault, great as it has been, would be so extenuated, that pity would in time soften justice, till I was entirely exculpated.”

This was so capital a speech of your Polly's that I could not forbear to give it verbatim, though I have not time to relate her tale in the first words. She added—“perhaps, I am all this time talking to those who know him. If I am, what a hazzard do I—but no; I have your promise: pardon, me ladies, if I remind you of *my having your promise*.”

I had previously directed Miss Fenton to insist pretty much upon this promise; which I had expected would have been, *unlimitedly* obtained; as upon its observance the safety of my plot depended.

We neither of us made any reply to the foregoing flourish. I *would* not speak. Miss Stanley, I dare say, *could* not. Her naturally elegant complexion was changed to almost an ash-colour.

Polly, at this period, called for the servant to take the child, which began to be uneasy, and then proceeded to the particulars of her destruction, as she termed it; the most interesting of which were—that soon after she lost her mother, Sir Charles, then Mr. Conway, found means to introduce himself into the company and, indeed, high esteem of her father; who thought him one of the finest characters in the world; that his sole aim, as he afterwards confessed, of cultivating this intimacy, was, to have the opportunity of often seeing her; whom, by accident, he had, two or three times been in company with at public places; which she, generally attended under the protection of the Dowager Lady Lumley: and that her heart, till then her own, was, at last, his conquest. She then again was more particular, than I need to be in the repetition.

A thousand tender incidents were related, which the poor Emma, to keep up the character of

a disinterested hearer, was obliged quietly to attend to: common humanity, however, allowing her being affected with the tale; which the girl, with wondrous invention, made very pathetic.

We listened to many interesting circumstances which led to the promise given her, by Mr. Conway, of publicly marrying her after the death of his father; a private, but solemn engagement of mutual fidelity, having previously taken place, which she owned she was not weak enough to think binding; but that she trusted to his honor.

She then informed us that upon the death of Sir John, which happened soon after, the young Baronet went into the country; but that receiving from her an account of her finding strong symptoms of the effects of her indiscretion, he returned, and having had a previous negotiation with those in power, for that purpose, soon procured her father the appointment of settling a treaty with the States of Barbary; which they thought would detain him till she was delivered; but in this, they were mistaken; as she being young and unexperienced and not having, near her, any body in whom she could confide, had deceived herself in calculating the expected time of her indisposition.

She said we might easily believe his not proposing to make, what she called his marriage, public, gave her the most poignant affliction, but that she—partly from being awed by an alteration which she observed in his manner, and partly lulled by her own fond hopes—could never assume sufficient courage to press it much upon him. She then informed us that her father took this opportunity of endeavoring to increase, on her account, his fortune, by laying out the whole of his property, which was all in money, in different kind of merchandise, to take with him on his voyage; leaving her in possession of the house in Portland-Place till his return; the lease not being expired; intending then to remove to one of less rent. What she said of their parting scene, &c. &c. I shall omit.

She told us that her aunt proposed her living with *her* during her father's absence, but that she, fearful of a discovery of her situation, excused herself on account of being obliged to stay in Portland-Place to take care of the furniture, which was very valuable; that she believed the confusion she was in on this occasion, led her aunt to suspect that all was not right, which, she had since heard, caused her to keep so strict a watch over her conduct, as soon led to a discovery. She then told us of her aunts high resentment, and of the miserable life she led during her pregnancy, Sir Charles being generally in the country, and of the horrors she underwent when she received a letter from her father informing her that his voyage and negotiation had been beyond measure successful, and that, full six weeks before it could have been expected, he was landed at Falmouth; but that having, by a fall, a few days before, dislocated his shoulder, he probably should not be able, though it was mending very fast, to reach London till ten or twelve days after his date; the surgeon not thinking he could bear the motion of a carriage; that therefore he had sent to government to desire a courier might be dispatched to receive the particulars of his negotiations, as they were of the utmost consequence and could neither be trusted to a common messenger, nor delayed. She said what she endured on that occasion was beyond description; that she immediately sent for Sir Charles, who was particularly employed in regulating his domestic affairs in Derbyshire, having since his fathers death, bought an estate there on account of its nearness to some of his intimate friends.

Here, Colonel, was a fine stroke of policy! A perfectly true incident, with which Miss Stanley was well acquainted, brought in as a corroborator of the foregoing!

Do not you think your Polly was an excellent fabricator? Doubtless you do; but she shall have no more of the merit of the day than her share.

She remembered well; she described well, and she was shining in the pathetic; but be pleased to know that I, at her first coming to Harborough, penned all the heads of this tale for her continual perusal; however I will re-acknowledge that she was an admirable proficient, and excelled greatly in tender dialect. She told us that when Sir Charles arrived, he was excessively discomposed to hear of her father's being in Port, as she was then extremely large, though the Physicians, whom Sir Charles had ordered should diligently attend her, had convinced her that she, probably, would not be delivered before the end, or pretty near it, of an other month; that she then ventured to propose an immediate celebration, as the only possible method to save her from instant and utter destruction: that upon this, he seemed greatly disturbed, and with an air of displeasure, asked her how it was possible for her to think of his receiving for a wife, in the presence of any witnesses, one in her then situation; that he, thereupon, apparently endeavoured to soften himself; requesting her to make herself perfectly easy, as he would take every method to settle all matters in the best manner possible; that he then proposed to enquire who was to be sent to Falmouth; which he did; and luckily, as he thought, found it to be a gentleman over whom he had some degree of influence; that he laid before him such circumstances as he judged proper; requesting him to break the matter to her father with all possible tenderness; which as she was afterwards informed, he did; giving him some reason to suppose the marriage was to be solemnized, as soon as she was again able to go abroad; it being impossible to take place while she was in such a state, without making the whole business public. This, she said, might have passed with a man whose penetration was less quick than her fathers, or whose honor was less nice; but that *he* saw through every circumstance in a moment, and was transported into a violent rage, mixed with grief; that he made a resolution never again to see his daughter while her name continued to be Barlowe; that he likewise instantly resolved to set out for Bristol the moment he was able, as he was determined to turn all the money he brought with him from Barbary, which, as I before said, was all his property, into merchandise, and sail directly for the West-Indies; and that his return would entirely depend on the news he should receive from England: all which she said, she overheard in a conference between Sir Charles and the gentleman who went messenger to Falmouth; but that when they related it to her they suppressed the most bitter of the circumstances; telling her, her father was obliged to go, upon an affair of consequence, to Jamaica, without coming to London; and that he hoped to see her well and happy at his return. All this together, she told us, had a most violent effect upon her, she having always been excessively fond of both her parents, notwithstanding she had been unhappily led to fail so flagrantly in her duty; not only to them, but to herself and her maker.

She here wiped her eyes, and I believe did absolutely shed tears. Perhaps she was just then sensible of her real faults; so that who knows but my project may be productive of more good than I even imagined.

With all my heart; I have no objection to benefiting others, when, especially I can, at the same time, benefit myself; but "let every one take care of one," is my motto, Colonel.

Miss Fenton proceeded with telling us that her father put in practice his resolution of leaving the kingdom, and said, with eyes really swimming in tears (which were all lost upon Emma, as she

sat half behind the easy chair; still leaning her face against its side) “And now ladies was I too severe upon myself in saying I was a parricide?—My father—my dear father perished three days after he left the shore; the ship, in consequence of a violent storm, having sprung a leak and all the crew was lost except the boatswain and two sailors; who having fastened themselves to a part of the wreck, were taken up by a pilot-boat.”

She then said, that when this account reached her, she was entirely deprived of her senses, and continued in that state, with few intervals, till near the time of her delivery; that the period of her confinement was too miserable a one for her to touch upon any particulars attending it; and that therefore she would pass over everything till the time of her being able to be removed.

Miss Stanley was here again obliged to request a little water. I observed she could hardly sit, but was, I suppose, determined to hear upon what footing the lady and Sir Charles then were.

Polly now informed us that when she recovered, she found herself destitute of fortune, fame, and friends; her aunt positively refusing to have any connexion with her; that the sale of the furniture did not produce much more than sufficient to pay the rent which was due for the house; the servants wages, and some few debts which she had contracted, during the absence of her dear father; that Sir Charles settled all these affairs, and then hired lodgings for *her*; the *child*, and *one* servant, in Norfolk-street, in the Strand; where she continued sometime, but finding her health daily decline, was again obliged to call in a physician, who insisted upon her going into the country; that Sir Charles who had at that time been a few days in London, but was obliged, just then, suddenly to leave it, desired her to furnish herself with a situation, where the air was esteemed to be salutary, and, when she was fixed, to let him know the place of her residence; amply furnishing her with money. She then, she said, applied to a Mr. Sympson, who had been a great friend of her fathers [consistency observed here, Colonel] to procure her such a situation as she wanted, and that he recommended her to the family she was with; which place he confessed, was the more agreeable to her, on account of its being still nearer to Sir Charles' Country Seat; that as soon as she arrived, she wrote to inform him where she was, but received a most angry letter from him respecting her coming so far into the country; saying, that he had no idea of her going more than three or four miles from London, and peremptorily insisted upon her returning with all expedition; telling her that he cared not what expence she was at, provided she did but obey his injunctions. She said as this was the first time of his ever writing to her in a commanding stile, it had a great effect upon her spirits; that she then wrote again, to expostulate with him upon it, but received no other answer to her second letter than a re-injunction of his former orders, which, he said, could not be dispensed with; and that this arbitrary proceeding, joined to other circumstances of which she had lately come to the knowledge, made her apprehend there was some truth in the report she had heard, of his being shortly to be married to a lady with a large independent fortune; which she had reason to believe would at this crisis, be very convenient to his affairs.

“And now ladies” said she “you have the whole of my story to the present moment: from the circumstances of which you will, I hope, think me more deserving of pity than of blame; though I pretend not to excuse my first criminal failing.

“How little” continued she “do young women see the complicated distress, which—” She stopped; conscience, I believe, interrupted her. Then turning to me “excuse me madam” she said

“that soon after my coming hither I dared to intimate a wish to be admitted into your presence. I am desolate—I am entirely desolate of every good; will it, therefore, be deemed an unpardonable presumption that I formed a hope from the distinguished rank you hold in life—but more from the exalted character you bear—that my aunt might possibly listen to my supplication for a pardon, the conditions of which she herself should prescribe, if a lady of such consequence and character as you are, would humanely condescend to represent to her my repentance? which indeed has long been very sincere.

“*My dear madam*—and you my dear lady”—turning to Miss Stanley—she could say no more, for the poor Emma on this particular address, fainted and sunk upon the floor. We were all instantly in motion, vainly trying every method we could think of to recover her. She continued lifeless more than a quarter of an hour.

But upon recollection, I do not think it is quite friendly thus to let you see the strength of her affection for the Baronet.

I protest I did not consider of that before. However, what I have written must and shall go. I would not, for half the Globe, scribble it over again. Do you know that my pen never has been out of my fingers more than fifteen successive wakeful minutes since yesterday morning! ten, I am sure, served for my dinner; and five for drinking tea. Supper,—I eat none. Sleep, monopolized the most; in which I wasted almost two hours.

How strangely this narrative-writing leads one forwards! absolutely I thought when I began, that two or three sheets of paper would serve for the whole account. Few people write more swift than I do; nor do many people better love the employment; but I begin to feel myself tired, and yet cannot help turning out of the road and parading in a path which will never bring me to my journey's end. The truth is (though I would not interrupt myself by mentioning it at the moment) the coach has passed my gate sometime; therefore, as I cannot send this till the evening, I may indulge the whimsies of my pen. But I will ease your impatience, and return to Miss Stanley; whom I have cruelly left in a deplorable condition.

As I before said, our endeavours to recall her senses, were, for some time, ineffectual; whereupon, I dispatched a messenger to my people with orders to hasten, as much as possible, with a carriage; in which we conveyed her to my house, where Doctor Lansted instantly attended her. All that I will say more on the occasion is, that towards evening, she was considerably revived, and that the little she said was quite calm, and seemingly resigned. For the young lady with all her natural gaiety, is mighty religious; therefore much better suited to bear disappointments than we honest folks who do not pretend to be so wonderful good; however, I will acknowledge that she is not very ostentatious about the matter.

The chief purport of our conversation was, first, a steady determination to a strict observance of her promise; because it *was* a promise; saying, however, that she should have been glad it had been dispensed with; as though she should not have made an ungenerous, or any otherwise improper use of the communication, she might have taken different measures. [A necessity of the promise, Archibald, was here evident.] Next she said she had formed a strong resolution, which she thought nothing could divert, to break the engagements she had entered into with Sir Charles Conway, as

speedily as it could be done, without coming to an explanation; meaning that she intended to show, by degrees, an indifference, and then a dislike, to a continuance of the connexion; and to leave it to his own conscience to suggest the real, though secret cause; which resolve, she said, justice and her own happiness equally demanded.

To keep her steady to this piece of heroism, I applauded it to the skies; saying I looked upon it as the noblest effort of a female mind, and that even if she failed in the practice, I should consider her only having intended it, as an honor to the sex.

This brought on a more strongly expressed determination, which she hoped to be *enabled*—was her pious expression—firmly to adhere to; and we separated for the night: she, I suppose, to her prayers, and I to agreeable reveries in perspective.

I ought to have told you, that she ardently wished if I would excuse her, to pursue her journey in the morning, provided she found her strength sufficiently returned; which I, after decent persuasions, with a proper show of reluctance, complied with. But, again, how incautiously I write to you about your future wife! However, my dear Greville, we perfectly understand each other, and agree too well in sentiments, to differ about a few careless expressions. One circumstance I insisted upon, for the appearance of the thing, which was, that Benson should go in the carriage with her, at least, as far as Loughborough, if not quite through, and return in one of the coaches which are continually passing this place; or, if she could not get room in any of them, take a postchaise back. It was likewise settled that I should comply with Miss Barlowes request of writing to her aunt, and give Miss Stanley the result: therefore, as soon after her departure, as it was *feasible*, I wrote to tell her that I had twice *seen the fair sufferer*, and had taken her direction how and where to address her aunt; that when I came from her the last time, I found my coach-yard filled with equipages, which unexpectedly brought the family of the Davenport's, my uncle being ordered to travel slowly from place to place, as the last remedy the physicians could advise; that as they staid with me two days, I could not directly write to Mrs. Bonner, which was the name of Miss Barlowes aunt, but that the morning they left me, I composed such a letter as I thought would be most likely to produce the effect desired, and was just going to send it to Dakin's for her perusal, when I received a note to inform me that the post had just then conveyed a letter to her hands from a Miss Faucett in Piccadilly; [Remember, Colonel, this is the name which it was told Miss Stanley, was upon one of the lady's first directed letters. I am afraid you should be blind to the merit of properly arranging these little heads.] that this Miss Faucett, who was one of her most intimate friends in the days of her innocence, had, without her knowledge, began a negotiation with her aunt; in which she had been so successful that she had brought her to consent to have an interview with her niece at the house of this young lady's father; that she had informed her she doubted the conditions of perfect reconciliation would be deemed very severe ones, but that she requested her to be in London, if possible, within three days after the receipt of the letter.

I then said that the poor Matilda, after thanking me in the warmest terms for the great honor and kindness, as she termed it, which she should ever acknowledge to have received from me, and asking pardon for supposing it could be necessary, begged, once more, to remind me, and through me the two ladies who were in the secret, of the great consequence it was to her future happiness (not knowing, as she said, how matters would terminate) that the promise we so kindly condescended to give her, should be observed with the utmost punctuality; that she then took her

leave in very grateful terms, and the next day left Dakin's house, with the child and servant, in a chaise and four. And so friend Archibald, as the prim ones say, you see I have very fairly got rid of this business, without there being a possibility of discovery. For imagining the worst, that Sir Charles should ever get *an inkling* of the matter, cannot I turn the whole upon the girl herself? who was, I would dare to say (as I must then join to decry her) some vile imposter, set to work by some still viler employer—[I hope this is not true Colonel]—who knowing me to have been honored by some share of attention from both Sir Charles Conway and the family at Alverston, had thought proper to endeavour to work upon my credulity, hoping by that means to get the intelligence conveyed to Miss Stanley; as it must have been set on foot with a design to injure Sir Charles in the opinion of his best friends; that, however, they would have failed in their plan, if chance had not befriended them; as I must have had a very clear knowledge of very atrocious circumstances, ere I should have been industrious to have communicated any thing about the matter: that I had mentioned the word *credulity*, which, however, could not be any way applicable to me in the present case, as every one must have been deceived under the same appearances, every particular having been so artfully managed, that the greatest consistency, and even probability, was, through the whole, strikingly observable; that there was only one circumstance which I was puzzled to reconcile to the rest, which was, that of the pretended Miss Barlowe's requesting us to promise inviolable secrecy.

I shall chuse to make this remark Colonel, lest it is made for me.

It can only, I myself may answer, be accounted for by supposing that she concluded I had the attributed weakness of my sex, in being the more desirous of divulging a secret because a strong injunction had been laid upon me to the contrary; except it could be imagined she had a personal knowledge of Miss Stanley; for as I had thought it probable that she might be acquainted with her, from report I introduced her under a fictitious name.

Again Greville, so far so good. Will not this effectually preserve me from the most distant suspicion; allowing the possibility, which I hardly do, of its ever entering any body's head that I could be concerned in such stratagems?

“Well, but will not the Dakin's discover it?” No, Colonel, no; I have taken care about all that too; having told them that since the young woman had left Harborough, I had found her out to be a very bad person, and that I was ashamed to have it known I had been so taken in by compassion for one so little deserving; desiring them, therefore, not to let *anybody*, on *any account*, know that I was accessary to her going there, but to lay the fault entirely on one Mr. Sympson in London, who, though they did not know him, was their late landlords agent. I said that as he was the faulty person in having deceived me, the blame ought to be laid upon him; to which they all agreed. If it were ever asked what they knew about this Mr. Sympson, I told them they might say he was their late landlords deputy, and had been often in the country; which, to pacify their consciences, was, I assured them, really truth.

These kind of people, Colonel, are terribly afraid of telling fibs, as they call them; while we freer souls know that the prime use of language is to procure our wants.

They bowed and courtesied and promised to observe my orders.

And *now* what think you? are we not secure from even the possibility of a development of these shades of night? of *darkness*—some would say, but I do not like the phrase.

You may now, Colonel, visit your Polly as soon as you please: but remember this. She does not know, nor shall she ever, if I can help it, that I have any other interest in this business than what, as an affectionate relation, I take on your account. To get you married to an heiress of immense wealth, appears to her to have been the whole design of the plan; which heiress, she supposes had a strong penchant for Sir Charles Conway, and that the fabricated tale was to break (solely, as I before said, on your account) her attachment. It could not be concealed from her that the lady I introduced to her at Dakin's, was the lady in question; but as I told you, I called her Miss Elmy, and she, I dare engage for it, knows her by no other name.

I cannot forbear once more to express my wonder at your not giving me a caution upon this head. How could you be so remiss. Consider what a jumble it might have been the occasion of! I do desire you to be more careful in future, or, absolutely, I will renounce you.

Every letter I see, I expect will give some intelligence, from one quarter or another, of this business. In my last to Miss Stanley, I forgot to press for an answer; and was unthinking enough to write in such a manner as left it at her option whether to reply to it or not: and between you and me, she does not seem officious to continue the correspondence.

In that respect, she may do as she pleases after my points are all fairly gained. Perhaps she has a kind of involuntary dislike to the person who has been the means, though as she *must* think, the *unwilling* means, of conveying to her the infidelity of her deeree.

Just as she likes about that, too, Colonel.

When I am LADY CONWAY, I shall have a prodigious affection for Mrs. Greville, but Emma Stanley will never be harmony to the ears of—

ARABELLA DIGBY.

LETTER, XIV.
MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Alverston, Feb. 18th.

My dear Charles,
WHEN I finished my letter of Monday evening, I intended to have written to you again as yesterday, but my concern for this girl—this Emma—who has so thoroughly vexed us all, prevented me. I told you of its having been agreed upon that she should go first to Lady Davison's and then to Mrs. Lawson's. The proposal was my father's; Emma consented with thanks, and we all approved of it. Her intention was to have set out yesterday, but she was so much indisposed that my mother would not permit her going till she seemed better. I have not heard of her this morning. Indeed I believe she is not up yet; but as she was considerably mended last night, she will, probably, if she has had no

relapse, begin her journey after breakfast. Yesterday we had a conversation of two hours; the particulars of which will not be any relief to you; therefore I will suppress them. She worked upon my tenderness till she moulded me to her wishes. In spite of my regard for you—in spite of the resentment I was pre-determined to show upon the occasion, I could not stand out against her softness. However I did not yield, till I had tried every argument I could possibly suggest, to conquer her in my own way. You may easily suppose I could write you half a volume, were I to give you our dialogue; but I will not, as I before said, plague you unnecessarily. Suffice it to say—that she brought me to promise I never would, on any account, hereafter mention this matter to her; nor speak of you in her hearing, otherwise than as my friend; in which light, the incongruous girl said, she should always rejoice to hear you were happy, to the extent of your wishes. At this I had no patience; and though my promise was then half given, I could not help once more warmly expostulating with her on the inconsistency of her conduct with her sentiments. But she interrupted me with—“*Brother, say no more: I have told you—I again tell you—it never can be.* My reasons (ask not for them) are all *here*,” laying her hand upon her breast. “Were I to change my resolve or tell you the cause, I should sin against myself and against Heaven.”

Charles, what could I say! amazed—thunderstruck—I could only show my astonishment by a silent stare; till she so earnestly called upon my affection to endeavor to lessen the affliction with which she was evidently oppressed, and to leave the justification of her conduct to a future period, that I could not resist.

I again gave her the promise she required, and we separated with more satisfaction on her side, I believe, than on mine. However, notwithstanding this reconciliation, if it can justly be called one; I shall not attend her to Lady Davisons, because of the expectation we are under of the Beauchamps coming to dinner.

And now my earliest, and always dearest friend, I will quit this ungrateful subject, on both my own account and yours. What I have said I thought it *necessary* to say, and shall wish to know the present state of your mind on this unexpected—this, what-shall-I-call-it?—of a female mind. Write on the subject with your usual unreserve, and spare not my sister in your censures. The more severe you are upon her conduct, the more you will please me. I shall be happy to find you capable of forgetting her every perfection; if she indeed has *one*, which I now much question; and of letting your reason so master all former prejudices, that your heart may return to you uninjured.

I greatly approve your resolution of visiting the Eastern Coast, and wish, with all my soul, I could attend you: but this cursed executorship-business of my mothers uncle will, I dare swear, employ us for these three months more. Confound the old fellow! why could not he make a more intelligible will! If he had not sense enough himself, he might have employed a lawyer. There is not any thing in it clearly expressed, but my sisters legacy, and the annuity to his old doxy. To say truth, I do not believe he cared a rush for any other human being. Myself, I know he hated; because, when I was a boy, I once pretty smartly abused his veteran wench for telling him that I robbed him of his favorite nectarines. From that time, ever after, he prophesied I should be finished by either a rope, a sword or a pistol; except somebody would kindly knock out my brains—was his brutal expression—with an oaken club, before the fated period. There was an old dog for you! did he, think you, deserve christian burial!

I doubt I cannot be with you till Saturday. Write, therefore, by the return of the messenger. I am impatient to hear from you.

And now, Charles, I will ease the anxiety which I know (if a thought can wander from your own torments) you have, since my letter of the twelfth instant, been under on my account. To confess the truth, I have not been very solicitous to inform you of this piece of business; as I know you will condemn me. But none of your grave monitions at present. I am not, just now, in the humour to bear them: therefore, let the candour with which, notwithstanding your half-feared reprehension, I am determined to observe, secure to me your lenity. How long is it, pray, since you *were* one of the gayest, and almost one of the wildest fellows upon earth! At an early period you took it into your head to grow wise all at once. The task, I have heard you say, was a confounded hard one, and you sometimes despaired of being able to pursue it. However, I will own your perseverance was, what some people would call a noble one, and you now are, I think, a tolerable proficient in the sober science.

But what, pray, suppose I should take it upon me to follow your example, will “a reformation scheme” bring me in? I know your reply; but cannot, just now, give it any weight. Do not I intend, one day or other, to grow exceedingly good? Yes, to be sure; but I do not wish to be hurried out of my senses.

This delay in beginning my tale, and this kind of preface to it, look so like a sneaking apprehension of your disapprobation, attended with something like a consciousness of the superiority of your mode of thinking, that I am ashamed of myself: therefore, once for all, I prohibit all preaching, at present, on the following particulars.

The dying speech—though not the last I hope—and ingenuous confession of me George Stanley, male spinster—will that stand the test, Charles?—of Alverston Park, in the county of Derby.

And now for it.

You remember the bustle there was in our family, a few weeks back, on account of the discovery of the connexion between our tenant Baldwin's libertine son and my sister's little waiting maid, Jenny Gibbens. You know, likewise, that this girl was early entrusted to my mother's care, which made her doubly solicitous to save her, therefore kept her in a manner confined in the house, till she could fix her in some safer situation; and not finding a place of servitude for her, equal to her wishes, put her as a half-boarder to Mrs. Dykes, near Loughborough. By the bye, Mrs. Digby plagued my sister with half a score letters about her character, as she wanted her for an elderly friend of her's in London; which was such a place as my mother wished to find for her; but for which, it was at last discovered, she was too young: so she still remains at school.

After her dismissal, several smart lasses offered themselves to supply her place [for my soul, Conway, I cannot forbear going a round about path to fetch up my story] but none were suitable; as her ladyship is very dainty in her choice of my sister's attendants. At length, she had a letter from Mrs. Douglas, in Grosvenor Square, with a description, and recommendation, of the very exact female to suit both her's and my sister's taste; and had they searched through every clime on

this terrestrial ball, they could not have found one more exactly consonant to mine.

Now, Charles, you begin to see through all this business, and now read my other letter, and you will have the whole at once. But stop the lectures you are, I dare swear, notwithstanding my prohibition, already meditating, till you have particulars; and, likewise, till I protest, by all that can make protestations binding, that I never will give up my pursuit of this ignis-fatuus till—in short—till I can make something of it.

Conway, I re-protest—and that with all due form and ceremony, and in the most solemn manner—that I never will think of any other woman, till I can get this—fairly out of my head.

Be she kind or be she cruel—
Every look will but add fuel
To my passion, say what you will.

Rest satisfied that I will behave as well as I can in this matter; but I must have my whimsey out.

Soon after my mother answered Mrs. Douglas' letter, the young woman she recommended arrived in the mail coach. I was then at Normanton, where I staid four or five days. When I returned, I heard Emma mention something of the extraordinary appearance and abilities of her new maid, but thought nothing of it; being, as you well know, always determined to guard myself against the allurements of every female in that capacity; especially if she should happen to be placed in our own family; and, till lately, I maintained that indifference to all so stationed, without encountering with any thing strong enough to be called a temptation.

Near a week passed before I saw this truly wonderful production of nature. If, when I first met her, I had known who she was, it is possible—though *barely* possible—that the first view might have passed with different effects.

Had you ever caught the least glance of her, description would be unnecessary, for the whole assemblage of her beauties would, at once, so strongly have flashed upon your senses, that you never would have lost the idea: and I, ever after, should have heard you talking of her incessantly; but I know, from the awkward situation of circumstances between you and Emma, since her arrival, that she was never in your way, as she generally—too generally for my approbation—confines herself to my sister's apartments.

A few days before I wrote what you were pleased to call—and I believe not unjustly—my half-frantic letter on the subject, I was sitting with a volume of Pope's Homer in my hand, upon the bank of the little piece of pleasure-ground near the park-gate leading to the Derby road, when the noise which you know it always makes upon its being opened, occasioned my looking to see who entered it, and at that instant my eyes were struck with the finest form of which it is possible for mortals to entertain an idea.

I had been reading that part of the Iliad where the introduction of Helen into the assembly of the princes, causes their breaking out into raptures upon her beauty, and had just ended the following lines.—

“——No wonder such celestial charms,
“For nine long years, have set the world in arms.”

By my faith! thought I, here is Helen herself come to reward me for my assent to the verse.

I instantly arose, pocketed the book, and hastened to meet her, concluding that if it was neither Helen, nor her patronizing Goddess Venus, it must be some terrestrial charmer lately come into the neighbourhood—to Derby perhaps—of whom I had never before either seen or heard; and so totally was I engrossed in contemplating the angelic vision, that the circumstance of her being unattended, never once entered my thoughts.

I will endeavour to tell you, Charles, how she appeared upon my advancing within a few yards of her.

To begin with her outlines—

In her stature, neither tall nor low; but I think more nearly approaching the former than otherwise. I believe her height does not show itself to be so great as it really is, because she gathers much of it from her neck, which is long, and so elegantly united to her shoulders, that you cannot see where the one ends and the other begins. Her hair falls down her back in what I chuse to call a moderate abundance; a few elastic locks shading the sides of her neck and a part of her forehead. In its colour, it is neither flaxen nor auburn, but of a beautiful lively light brown between the two; and has that gloss upon it which answers for its being perfectly clean. Her limbs are so gracefully turned and united, that you at once observe firmness and flexibility. Absolutely, her feet and ankles are the best formed I ever beheld, and, since I have seen her with her gloves off, I pronounce her arms, hands, and fingers, to be the finest, both in shape and colour, which nature ever presented for the entertainment of my ocular organs. Her complexion is beyond description. I never before saw any one so lovely fair, and the true tincture of the pale rose of June renders it so beautiful, that imagination, in its greatest exertion, cannot reach the idea of the enchanting contrast between the pink and the white. Her lips are of a much deeper hue; and they receive an additional charm, whenever she separates them, from the appearance of a most regular set of small teeth. Her eyes, of celestial blue, are at the same time, of the brightest yet mildest lustre. Considerably darker than her hair, are her eye-brows, which are finely formed; and her nose, without one exception, is the prettiest nose I ever beheld in my life. I could go on this hour in my description, yet leave half her beauties and graces unnoticed. As she moved onwards, she seemed scarcely to press the grass, though she walked rather slow than otherwise. She was dressed in a neat white dimity gown: a figured scarf was carelessly twisted round her shoulders and waist, and a very pretty white bonnet, made either of silk, or what the ladies call tiffany, was simply yet elegantly ornamented with narrow pale pink ribband: All this, respecting her dress, I have since recollected; for, at the time, I did not know that I observed it.

Charles, you are well acquainted with my taste for beauty. Could any thing be more exactly formed to fascinate my whole soul? She is the very image which my ever-active fancy has so often created. If you do not pity me, you are a Shylock. My heart was seized by main force. It was as impossible as it would have been unavailing, to endeavour to resist the arrest.

When I approached her, which I did with the reverence due to royalty, and expressed, though I believe but in very unintelligible terms, the mixture of surprize and pleasure with which my meeting her had inspired me—I endeavoured to be very polite; but was, I am persuaded, more boobyish in that moment, than I ever was in any preceding one, throughout my existence. Upon my requesting to be permitted the honor of attending her up to the hall, whither, I told her, I presumed to hope she was going, she started, and seeming to recollect herself from some little appearance of embarrassment, interrupted the—I believe incongruous—speech I was making, by saying—“I perceive, sir, you are under a mistake, which I beg leave to remove as soon as possible. I am the person who lately came to Alverston to wait upon Miss Stanley,”—and was walking on.

You come to wait upon my sister, madam! said I, in a tone expressive of the utmost astonishment; at the same time involuntarily impeding her path. It is not possible, I continued. Heavens and earth! how! when! from whence!—uttering unconnected monosyllables, which evinced the surprise her information, though I scarce could credit it, had given me: at which

“She smiled a smile that would an Angel’s face
“have ornamented.”

and appearing as if she suppressed something which she was going to say, moved onward. I requested, I begged her to stop. Madam—pray—but one moment, were my incoherent expressions, endeavouring to take her hand: but eluding my purpose—“Excuse me sir,” she said; and curtesying, went from me with quickened steps.

Conway, I was transfixed. Folding my arms across me, I never changed place or posture till the laurel hedge of the upper pleasure-ground, hid her from my sight.

I will leave you to guess how I passed the remainder of the day. You are too well acquainted with the restlessness and impetuosity of my temper to need the description. At dinner, my mother challenged me on my looks, being apprehensive I was not well. I confessed myself to be rather indisposed.

A thousand schemes now arose in succession, in my idea; and all the thousand vanished one after another, as being poor, foolish, and insufficient to effect any material purpose. Two or three days following, every hour was devoted to the continually-disappointed endeavour of speaking to this lovely apparition. I could only meet her *en passant*. Once or twice after dinner, I made some distant enquiries of my sister about her new maid. The substance of her reply to my various questions, asked at different times, with seeming carelessness, was, “That she was the most extraordinary young woman she ever saw in such a situation; that her understanding, which she seemed modestly to suppress the appearance of, rather than officiously to display, was really brilliant; and her disposition, if she could judge properly in so short a time, one of the sweetest she ever knew; adding, that she could hardly bring herself to treat her as a servant.” My father, who was present, observed, “she was a modest pretty looking person.”

A modest pretty looking person, Charles! This angel of a woman a modest pretty looking person only!!!

Oh! for the ice which surrounds and fortifies the heart of threescore, to defend mine against the meridian charms of this scorching beauty! I fancy, my good Sir Edward, had you seen such a creature forty years back, you would have bestowed a different opinion of her, than that of her being “*a modest pretty looking person.*” I had scarce patience with my father for his insensibility. He passionately, it seems, admired my mother, who, though reckoned extremely handsome in her younger days (which, it must be allowed, her features still afford considerable proofs of) could never be equal to *this* irresistible—this all-fascinating—what shall I call her, Charles! Help me to an expression which never any other female merited, that I may devote it entirely to her. You will think I am mad in good earnest; and faith! I believe I am not much otherwise.

The rest of my sister’s reply informed me that she was, as I before told you, recommended very warmly by Mrs. Douglass, who said, she was authorised to vouch for the integrity of her character; and that she doubted not but her abilities would answer every expectation.

Her name is Maria Birtles.

Now could I sit and expatiate half a score hours upon the wonderful perfections of this wonderful creature; however, as I suppose you will think you have already had enough of the rapturous—the extatic, &c. I will endeavour to keep to the moderate.

But I am summoned to breakfast; for which I am not very sorry, being most confoundedly hungry.

What a clever fellow should I be, were I always to employ, to wise purposes, all my waking hours! three deducted from each twenty-four, would, I verily believe, give me as much sleep as my nature requires. Of late, I do assure you, I have done with less.

I am extremely impatient to see you. On Saturday, I hope I shall be with you at dinner. Previous to that time, I shall, perhaps, scratch over another sheet, as I wish you to *chew the cud*—a cleanly expression—upon all that relates to this little witch, before we meet, that you may regulate your animadversions accordingly.

Farewell,
GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XV.
SIR CHARLES CONWAY, TO GEORGE
STANLEY, Esq.

Hawthorne Grove, Feb. 18th.

WHY, my dear friend, did not you write, as you said you would, yesterday? The post is gone by without leaving me any letter from you. I am excessively dejected, and want to have my ideas driven from tormenting recollections—from distracting comparisons, between the past and the present; which nothing will be so likely to do, as an account of your promised adventures; if, indeed, they are serious matters of fact; for I cannot, George, now attend to fiction, however entertaining the drapery; yet *reality* I fly from.

Milton makes his Adam, when driven out of Paradise, an enviable being, in comparison with myself. *His* partner, still loved, though the cause of all his trouble (in that point, the case too similar with mine) was yet with him; partook of his affliction, and was sorry for her fault. Mine, surely, no less dear, renounces me. Without accusing me—without, I think, having *cause* to accuse me of one fault, respecting herself—without even deigning to give the least reason—renounces me, I fear, for ever!!! For say, George, *is there hope?* Is there the *smallest ray of hope*, that she may *again* change her sentiments? I did not mark the word, Again, to make it a reproachful one, though it has, I believe, given it that sense; for *were* she to make a second change—that second should entirely obliterate the remembrance of the first, beyond recall. I would receive the dear returning charmer without ever asking her why she had stepped aside. And yet as Emma Stanley cannot act without a motive, my curiosity would be—But ah, George! I may spare my confessions of what, in that case, I should wish to know! as I am sure you would have infused an idea of the possibility of her return, could you have done it with safety to my future peace: therefore answer me not; as you can only confirm a sentence which, to speak in moderate terms, makes me wish I could sleep out the remaining period of my existence.

With all my soul I strive to check the dark torrent which seems to rush upon me like a deluge from every side. Yet all my plans to re-begin! all my prospects to replant!—I endeavour to recollect myself; then sit down tired and dispirited; ashamed to find my fortitude so slender.

But I am not well. Come to me, my dear Stanley, as soon as you can; for I am *determined* not to *write* upon this distressing subject; yet I want to plague you with a thousand conjectures.

As soon as you leave me, I intend to pursue my plan of going to the eastern coast. I am glad you think it an eligible one; for I feel myself like a babe in leading-strings, and am thankful to the friendly hand which helps to keep me up and guide my steps. First, I believe, I shall go to London; from thence to Harwich, Ipswich, Aldborough, Lowestoff, and Yarmouth.

But more of this, amongst other subjects, when we meet.

“The world is all before me, where to chuse
“My place of rest, and Providence, I hope, my guide.”

Indeed no one spot has now any preference with me. I did not think I had been so weak a mortal. Again this subject steals upon my pen. Were I to yield to my inclination, I should fill a quire of paper, without saying one thing to any purpose.

I send my servant with this. He has orders to go on to Bartney Lodge, and as it must be late ere he can reach Alverston on his return, I will thank you to keep him all night. Send him off in the morning early, and with him, without fail, a letter.

Ever yours,

CHARLES CONWAY.

LETTER, XVI.
MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Wednesday night.

IT is now past eleven. The rational part of the family are retired to rest. I, only, am waking.

About one o'clock, the two Beauchamps, with their uncle Fitz-Osborn, arrived at Alverston. We have had a very stupid day. My sister, who was not well enough for my mother to consent to her going to Litchfield, never appeared: my mother left us very soon after dinner; therefore the two old gentlemen, the two young ones and myself, spent the day just as, I dare say, you will imagine such an unconsonant party must do. My father was the most pleasant of the group; and as much the wisest.

James Beauchamp brought me compliments from Colonel Greville; whom he grumblingly said, was one of the youngest colonels ever known in the army. He is, I find, returned with fresh laurels; landed last Monday, and will come to Alverston as soon as he has permission to leave London. I wonder he did not write.

About seven I received your letter, and am now set down—not to answer it, for what can I say upon it!—but to give you the intelligence you require respecting myself, and which, you will find, was chiefly written many hours before the arrival of your man. I intended to have dispatched it, in the morning, by Jerry.

Before I proceed with my story, I must just touch upon the contents of yours; though I know not what to say to them. I feared, yet was unwilling to expect, exactly such an account of yourself, as your letter has given. Time, my dear friend, with an exertion of the Christian fortitude which I know you to be possessed of, will, I am willing to believe, make you bear the *inevitableness* of this cursed affair [you cannot think how much, at times, it *galls* me] with the magnanimity which has hitherto distinguished you in arduous cases. You now think less of the powers of your mind, because they do not do every thing for you at once, than you ought to do. Were you unfeeling—insensible of pain on this occasion—I might admire the strength of your *head*, but the same strength in your heart I should hate you for, and with justice; because it would transform you into a being quite different from the friend I have so long loved—so long held in the highest estimation, for the too singular union of the great and tender which marks his character.

Talk not to me of a fellow whose pack-thread-nerves secure him from being alive to the sense of his own, or another's woe! Let all such, "as such there are," be placed where they may possibly be of some little use to the humanized part of the creation. Make them bum-bailiffs, jack-ketches, negro-merchants, or something of their kind: They are no companions for honest folks. Give *me* the man who can first feel, and then surmount affliction. Him will I set down as something of an angel incarnate.

Do not mistake me.—Some are not born with the tender susceptibilities which compose the souls of others; nor is it fit they should. The different occupations which must necessarily be

followed to keep this world in order, require different dispositions to execute them properly. Some, therefore, are born fit for their employment; others rendered so by education; and these I respectively honor as proper means, in the Great Modelling Hand, to effect the good of the whole.

The wretches I despise, are those whom the pride of riches—station—learning—philosophy (falsely so called), render callous to the distresses which, doubtless, are sent to humanize the heart, and create a sympathizing affection from one link to another of the great chain: not excluding even the brute creation.

These cynics mis-style themselves *great philosophers; great heroes; great men*: fancying, because they despise a sensation which they have rendered themselves incapable of feeling, that they are elevated “above the heads of the people;” whereas they are, in many respects, sunk below the common level of mankind.

But what an inversion is here! The pupil teaching his master! Will you not smile, my dear Charles, at my thus endeavouring to turn upon you your own sentiments! Yet who has a greater right to the benefit which may be gathered from them! I want to reconcile you to yourself; to convince you that you are acting consistently with the principles which nature gave you; which the wildness of youth, for a few years, overclouded, and which the truest and brightest wisdom revived into high lustre.

I will not flatter you with the expectation of a counter-revolution; for I never saw any thing so perverse—so obstinate—so determined.

But enough, I just now, purposely, used the word inevitableness.

My heart is with you. I almost think I shall never again so well love my sister.

And now for the sequel of my tale.

I left off with telling you that the name of this girl, who has thus enchanted me, is Maria Birtles; and have said that I could not succeed in my endeavours for more than a transient meeting. I once saw her (it was just as I had finished my first letter to you on the subject) at the farther end of the elm-walk, and hastened to cross upon her path, by going (as I could, unseen, till within a few paces of the avenue) round the hawthorn-hedge on the canal bank; but the little gipsy eluded me, by turning out of the walk to meet the house-maid, who was going to Martin’s cottage; pretending, for I fancied it *was* a pretence, to ask her to fasten some ribband about her, which, she said, was got loose. I was quite up with her, but she trifled on so long that I could not, without making it too observable, wait her going forward; I therefore turned and went over the church-road gate.

Soon after this, one morning at breakfast, the weather being remarkably fine and warm, my sister said she would take her maid and her work, and set an hour or two in the cyprus temple; in which, you know, on each side of the chimney, are large recesses generally filled with some favourite exotics. Nothing could resist the inclination I had (upon hearing her mention her design) of secreting myself in one of those places; which I knew I could do with ease; the net-work, which separates the recess from the inward part of the temple, being almost covered with foliage; therefore,

without staying to ask myself what end my sitting in this place, unseen, could answer, hastened round by the wilderness, that my going thither might not be suspected, and arrived at the spot time enough to fix myself properly before they reached it; placing one of the stools close to the chimney, and surrounding it with tall plants, so that if they had even entered, I might possibly have escaped unobserved. Upon this stool I sat down with a book in my hand, that if by any accident a discovery *should* happen, I might look rather less foolish than I, else, should have done.

I scarce know my inducement to this project. Had I given myself time for recollection, I should have despised and renounced it. Curiosity, as to the subject of their conversation, seemed not to have any share in the motive. My sole expectation, as far as I can judge, was to hear the voice of this little witch, and, if possible, to see her; which I very commodiously did, through a friendly kind of cove, formed by some large curling leaves, just about the height of my eye as I sat, which permitted my observing her very distinctly; but I was fixed in a most confounded uneasy posture, during the latter part of my concealment, and was afraid to change it, lest my moving should occasion an alarming rustling of the leaves around me.

When I saw them ascend the flight of steps, you cannot imagine how much agitated I was. By my faith, I am even now ashamed to recollect with what an unusual palpitation my heart was seized.

Pray is this any thing like being really in love? If it be, it is a plaguy disagreeable piece of business. In love—I have been in love, as the phrase is, scores of times, previous to this; but, never before, was I afraid to face a woman.

To face her! no; that, now I recollect, was the very thing. I did *not* face her; and it was the *creepingness* of my situation which made me seem so much like a fool. Nothing else, I dare say; only a kind of an apprehension of being discovered in such a strange concealment.

As they entered, the first words I heard my sister say, were—“Am I or am I not right, Maria, in the opinion I have formed?”

“That opinion, madam,” returned the lovely girl, “does me too much honor to permit my subscribing to it; yet I hope you never will have any new cause to dismiss it.”

“Every word you speak,” said my sister, “*confirms* my opinion, and I repeat that I never can think of treating you as a servant.”

“Indeed, madam,” answered Maria, “I am sorry for it. It is the height of my present ambition to attend you in that capacity. Allow me therefore to request”—

“Say no more,” interrupted Emma, “I have settled with myself the whole affair, and as soon as my mother’s approbation, which I doubt not of attaining, authorizes me, shall look out for some neat little country girl, capable of understanding the directions I shall request you to give her, and then I shall think myself singularly happy in being permitted to consider you as my companion and friend.”

I was delighted with my sister; and could have flown and pressed her to my heart for her sentiments and conduct. Maria was going to speak—gratefully, I suppose, for she looked with extreme animation—when Emma again interrupted her with—“Not another word on the subject. I have determined upon every thing; and shall be less happy than I at present am, if any thing frustrates my design. Maria,” said she, instantly changing the subject, “were you ever in love?”

Now, Conway, was I, indeed, agitated! For some moments I scarce dared to draw my breath, lest I should lose one syllable of her answer, so anxious was I to learn the state of her heart. Had Emma known the exact predicament in which I, in every respect, at that time stood, she could not have asked a more critical question.

“*Maria, were you ever in love?*”

Maria, as I evidently perceived, blushed, and hesitated. Her blush might be expected, but her hesitation tortured me beyond idea. By my soul! thought I, she cannot answer the question to my wishes. She loves another, and all my views (though I knew not that I had formed any) are chimerical. Quick as a ray of light, all the discordant passions took possession in my mind, and I sat like a statue listening for some reply. But my sister *again* spoke—“So, my good girl, you have been caught, I find, and are not frank enough to own it!”

“Upon my word, madam,” answered the dear girl, turning pale, I thought. “I brought with me into Derbyshire a heart which had never known a tender prepossession.”

At this declaration I felt the blood rush with rapidity into my face. But I will not interrupt myself by pointing out to you the different sensations which affected me, upon different parts of their conversation. You know enough of me, and by this time of the state of my heart, to form a tolerable guess, as I give you their dialogue verbatim.

Emma. Into Derbyshire, Maria? And have you then lost your heart since your arrival?

Maria. I think I *have*, madam: and the gratitude, to which you have so just a claim, will exempt me from being suspected of flattery, if I say that you have robbed me of it.

Emma. My dear girl! you delight me. I am sure you are *capable* of friendship, and am willing to believe—gratitude, as you call it, out of the question—that you can, from genuine sympathy, allow me a place in your affection.

Maria. *Indeed* I can. And permit me to have the pleasure of saying, that this is a truth which I could safely have affirmed very soon after I arrived at Alverston.

But I must suppress my sentiments on this point, lest I draw upon myself the imputation—if not of flattery, of presumption, in daring to suppose I had met with a kindred mind.

Emma. I cannot, Maria, express how greatly you charm me! The delicacy and the dignity of your sentiments and manners, from the first hour of my observing them, surprised me much.

I soon grew uneasy at being obliged to employ you in offices of the station you had entered upon; and every subsequent day increased that uneasiness, as it added fresh proof of the superiority of your mind to your situation.

Your aunt, whom Mrs. Douglass told me had had the care of your education, must not only have been a *good* woman, but a woman of great genius; as though your natural talents were, I am sure, very brilliant, they have received singular advantages from education.

Maria. My aunt was, *indeed*, an excellent woman. I owe much to her. During her life all my days were sunshine.

Emma. Some time or other I shall wish to be informed of all your adventures hitherto.

Maria. My adventures, my dear madam, have been few. I lost my aunt, and thought myself happy in being received into your protection.

Emma. And happy am I, my dear girl, in being able to afford that protection to you; for which I shall think myself amply repaid by a return of the friendship—of the affection which my heart impulsively feels for you. I, Maria, have distresses of my own [At *that* time I was surprised at my sister's saying this]. But we will not touch upon them now. My natural spirits are good; yet, of late, the appearance of them has been somewhat forced. Amidst all the adversities of your fortune, for adverse it must have been, or you never would have visited Alverston in such a capacity—let me call upon you to rejoice that you know not the distresses arising from the tenderest, yet most irresistible of all passions. By your countenance, I judge you to be about eighteen. Were you older, I should wonder such a heart as yours, could always have parried the shafts of the, almost, universal tyrant.

Maria. My countenance, madam, in this respect, I hope in no other, deceives you. I was twenty-two last month.

Emma. Impossible surely!

Maria. Indeed I was.

Emma. Nay, then, I *do* wonder at the continuance of your insensibility till this period. By what means, child, have you preserved your heart? How have you resisted the attacks which must, often, have been made upon it?

Maria. (*blushing very deeply*) Because, madam, I know of none—Because [in a hesitating tone] there are so few men, at least so few within the compass of my knowledge, capable of such an attachment as my heart can approve, and to which only, I think, it will ever be brought to surrender.

Emma. You speak, my dear Maria, with a refinement which does honor to our sex. Describe the affection you expect to meet with from MORTAL MAN.

Maria. Not a romantic one, madam: not an *unreasonable* one. Let me turn the prospect from

myself to you, for I will not descend to such a character as would suit my present station, and I will endeavour to obey you.

Emma. Ah, Maria!—But go on.

Maria. And yet I could wish to be spared. My imperfect ideas—

Emma. Well, I *will* spare you. Yet how can the subject be affecting to *you*. But I will spare *myself*. I wish to appear, to-day, as calm as possible. Mr. and Mrs. Tamworth are to dine here, and the lady has prying eyes, with an inquisitive temper, which at this crisis—Ah, Maria!

Maria. I dare not press, madam, upon any subject which seems to affect you; yet I cannot forbear saying that I am pained by the bare apprehension—

Emma. (*interrupting her*) Well, no matter. A consciousness of rectitude will carry one on to surmount seeming impossibilities [what could occasion my sister to talk thus!] Some time hence — But come, Maria, sing me a song; and let it be the same you gave me last evening.

Maria. Will that, madam, be quitting the subject you seem to wish to get rid of?

Emma. Why no; not altogether. However, never mind: sing away.

Maria obeyed; and such a melodious pipe was never heard by mortal ears. She *looked* and *spoke* as if her voice was harmony, but her execution surpassed all the ideas I had formed. Madame Mara would have listened with jealousy. Can I give you a higher idea of her perfection in this science?

“*In love should you meet a fond pair*”—was her song; and the words seemed to go from her heart.

Let me now, Conway, sum up the particulars of this conversation, which so entirely compleated my intralment.

She brought her heart with her into Derbyshire! Yet she did not affirm it was now her own: she rather evaded the question! She would not endeavour to describe a man in her own station! “*Because, madam, I know of none.*”—She blushed; she hesitated; she changed the sentence—“*Because I know of so few.*”—So few, Charles! what did she—what could she—what may I not hope that she meant! Had I cause to believe that, since her coming into Derbyshire, she had seen one whom she thought capable of such an attachment as the delicacy and true sensibility of her own heart have a right to demand; that she, therefore saw that one with a preference never before allowed to any other, AND that that *one*, that *happy one* was ME—by Heavens! the *Universe* should not buy her from my arms, though every soul to whom I am allied, should rise to oppose the union!

Let me, Charles, reason myself into this belief. *She brought with her a whole heart into Derbyshire.* And if a woman’s blushes, hesitating accent, and faltering tone of voice, speak any language—it is not, now, all her own. At the time I am talking of, she had scarce been at Alverston

three weeks. At Derby, I should suppose, though she has once or twice been there, she is quite a stranger. Who, then, can she have seen, since her arrival, to cause that blush and hesitation? I was not deceived; for the light shone so strongly upon her face, and I sat with such advantage to observe her, that I could distinctly mark every change in her very expressive countenance; which, as my sister says, does not speak her to be more than eighteen.

“Her blush was of a crimson dye,” and she cast her eyes down upon the ground. I know I was not mistaken in the symptoms: at the time she spoke, she thought of a favoured object; and now let me repeat my question; who can she have seen in Derbyshire, capable of stealing such a heart? If I here again express a hope that I am, indeed, that happy one, it may, after what I have said, bear the imputation of extreme vanity. Let it: it shall not deprive me of the exquisite pleasure such a hope imparts. She must have seen, upon every occasion which has offered, how much I have been struck with her exterior. She must, consciously, have believed that her character, of which it might naturally be supposed I had heard something from my sister, had its share in forming my evident prepossession in her favour. She must have observed that whenever I have accidentally met her, for a moment, I have accosted her with an air of respect, which, if it did not convey the most perfect admiration, but feebly expressed the sentiments by which it was inspired.

Is it, then, *very* unreasonable—is it *inexcusably* vain to suppose (her heart having avowedly been free when she came) that she has observed this with some degree of approbation? and that, therefore, (*my* character, perhaps, not having been, in this respect, against me) she has allowed herself to have an idea of my being capable of such an affection as she was about to describe? And if this *has* been the case, will it be a crime if I go a little farther, and advance the possibility of her thinking herself less free to pronounce her absolute indifference to all the sex, than she was at her first arrival? This granted—what is it short of a prepossession in my favour?

You will, perhaps, say that I am very ingenious in finding arguments to support my airy imaginations. I will allow the accusation of ingenuity, on condition you will, at the same time, confess that I am very modest.

Prithee now, might I not have urged some other inducements for her to think favourably of me! Am I so despicable a fellow, as to make it a very wondrous circumstance for a woman to consider me with partiality?

Pray, Sir Charles Conway, have a little pity on my diffidence and humility. I beseech your Worship not to discourage a poor wretch, whose modesty is so very oppressive to him, and which, in the subsequent scene, as you shall hear, was almost strong enough to overturn his hopes.

Just as Maria had finished her song, and Emma given it her approbation, a servant entered to tell my sister Mrs. Biddel was come to try on a gown for Lady Stanley, and that her Ladyship requested her to go and give directions about it.

My sister obeyed. Maria was left alone; and it was impossible for me, in that moment, to consult reason; propriety; prudence; or any thing allied to them. The wish of speaking to her—to what purpose I knew not—seemed to be in my power. It was all I thought about. I flew, absolutely flew from the place of my concealment; and, in my flight, overturned one of the large myrtles; then,

without considering—fool that I was—how such a noise, and such an apparition, might affect the tender spirits of a delicate woman, immediately presented myself to the view of the dear astonished girl; who instantly gave a violent scream; turned pale as death, and burst into tears. Alarmed at the effect of my precipitate folly, I hastened, as I would have done to my sister, to catch her in my arms, lest she should fall; but she resisted my endeavour; darted me an angry look, and interrogated me with “*What do you mean, sir?*” and “*How dare you?*” speaking with a very peremptory emphasis.

I endeavoured to appease her by the most respectful manner; assuring her, that, though I was induced by a wish to speak to her, to obtrude so precipitately into her presence, nothing could be farther from my intention than to give her the least offence: that she must have observed on every occasion—and was going on; but she interrupted me with a haughty, yet beautiful air; telling me that when she sought protection at Alverston, she expected, from the character which the family had universally obtained, to find herself exempt from insult. I earnestly requested her to hear me; but not one word would the obdurate charmer permit me to speak in my own vindication. “*She could assure me,*” she said, with a most becoming resentment, [yet I thought her eye was not severe] “that if she must be subjected to such insolent familiarity, she should, happy as she thought herself with Miss Stanley, immediately quit Derbyshire;” insisting with warmth, upon my leaving her *that moment*; and because I did not directly obey her arbitrary mandate, endeavoured, for it was *but* an endeavour, Charles—to put on a forbidding countenance, saying “Such treatment she had not been used to,” and rushed out of the temple; leaving me standing like a fool—a timid fool; *over* head and ears in love! My wishes to convince her that I meant nothing by my intrusion, but to request her acceptance of my most respectful admiration, urged me to follow her, but the deuce a bit could I persuade myself to stir from the spot on which she left me, till I recollected my sister would soon return, and that if I continued there, a full explanation would probably be the consequence, which might be attended with unfavouring effects. I therefore sprang down the steps, hastening back the way I went, and just as I reached the aviary, saw through the glade lately cut from thence, Maria going again into the temple, to prevent, as I concluded, my sister from knowing any thing of what had passed.

Since that time, I have never had one opportunity of seeing her alone, except at a distance. I often meet her with Emma, when she always puts upon her countenance as stern an air as the sweetness of her features will receive. You may be sure I endeavour to make the most of these opportunities; expressing, as much as possible, by my looks and manner, how distressed I am to be under her displeasure; and say what you will, I cannot help indulging the idea that there is a secret *complaisance*, at least, lurking in her bosom. I *may* be mistaken. It *may* be only the *unrepressable* appearance of her native sweetness: but this I admit for no other reason than to prevent your enforcing such a conclusion. And now take into the account, that I am, every day, tormented with hearing her praises reverberated, and you will have the whole of my deplorable case before you. But do not reply to it till I see you. I insist upon not having any quill-preaching. Cannot I tell what you would say as well as if I saw it? To be sure I can. You would begin with asking me what I meant to do. Then tell me that neither Sir Edward nor Lady Stanley would approve of my *marrying* a young woman in such a situation; that old Slayton—curse his hundred thousand pounds—would, particularly, object to it: that *therefore*; and *therefore*; and *therefore*: with a dozen more wise therefores superadded, it will be prudent to give up my foolish pursuit. I tell you I will not hear any such nonsense. Be moderate; be rational; or you will drive me to swear “by every saint in the kalendar,” that, *one way or other*, I am determined to have her.

So now do your best or your worst. Tomorrow my sister will, doubtless, go to Litchfield. How long she will stay there, is not determined. Lady Davison continues very ill, and will, probably, from the extreme affection she bears to Emma, press her hastening to Woodstock, as she will be afraid of continuing her with her on account of injuring her health: and I query if, at this juncture, the girl will wish to stay there: for what the plague ails her I know not! but distressed she most certainly is, on some account or other.

I could swear, most gloriously, for, at least, three hours, about this cursed inexplicable piece of business; which I believe torments me nearly as much as it does you. For are not your concerns almost as great to me as my own! They are, by Jupiter! perverse; provoking; preaching, and, what is worse, preventing dog as you sometimes are. Though *you* think proper to grow so wondrous wise, what the deuce is the reason that *I* may not continue to be a fool if I chuse it! you were once, remember that, a million times worse than ever I was. And I believe, from my heart, you owe half your reformation, as they call it, to some of my monitions. Your mad pranks are still “in my mind’s eye.”

Well, but to finish my tale. Maria does not go with Emma. For, first, Miss Lawson and she are so much more than sister-like, that one room, and one maid, generally serve them when they meet. Secondly, Emma cannot bear the idea of carrying Maria with her as a servant; and, however much *she* is pleased with her, and determined upon treating her as a companion, she cannot introduce her to Mrs. Lawson as a *guest*. Thirdly and lastly, my mother’s Mrs. Moore, for whom you know she has a considerable regard, is very indifferent in her health; therefore Maria’s continuance at Alverston is most convenient to all the parties; and, I do assure you, fir, to me, most extremely agreeable.

Friday morning, and not before, this old fellow and the boys leave us. I am bound to go with them a part of their journey; therefore cannot see you sooner than the time fixed; as on the Saturday morning, previous to my setting off, I must give audience to two or three of the most rascally lawyers under the starry canopy.

Farewell. I am drowsy; and have burnt my candles down to their last half inch.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XVII.

Thursday night, Feb. 19th.

JOSEPH PRATT, TO MRS. MARY BENSON.

Dear Molly,

THIS cums with my love to you and I have got sum news for you which is that I am just cum home from Alverston where I was forced to stay all night. But pray molly dont let it be sed that I ever opened my mouth about the matter for it was little betty the little darry maid that toud Me the whole of it which is that my maister and her young lady are all at odds and that it is not likely they should ever be at evens anny more betty say she hered her young maister storm and swear about it like any

thing to Miss Stanley her own self and that miss cried and prayed him not to say no more but to hold his tongue for that she never could and never would have nothing more to say to him and so miss is a going to be sent away and we belike are going upon our travails as well as she if now they should both go a round and meet at last twould be good fun we are a going first to London and then to Ipsich and then to Albrow and then to Yarmuth as I heard maister tell the stuart I knows all these places rite well as I often went to all of them when I lived with Sir Gerrard at the grate hall at Henningham I will rite to you Dear Molly from London and again when I get to Yarmuth where I hears we are to stay a good while as maister design to go into the see there to wash away his love I suppose but dear Molly dont be afraid I should wash away mine for not all the water in old England could wash away my true love for you as you shall hear when we cums back as I hope we shall then be able to marry sumhow for I know maister is so good as to let me have a little land and my father learnt me before I went out to do taylor work all which together would be a help but dear Molly I must leave of with my kind love to you and I am dear Molly your constant lover till death.

JOSEPH PRATT.

Pray excuse blots and blurs as I forgot to ax the stuart to make me a new pen.

LETTER, XVIII.
MISS STANLEY, TO LADY STANLEY.

Litchfield, Friday morning, Feb. 20th, 1789.

THE hasty note, my dear madam, which I, last night, sent you, by the return of the chaise, gave you some idea of the very uncomfortable situation in which I found my poor cousin. She is so extremely lame, that she cannot any way remove herself without assistance. Mrs. Pritchard has relinquished her house at Burton, and is come to reside entirely with her; which, I hope, will be a considerable relief to them both. I have not yet received any letter from Woodstock. Probably, to-morrow morning's post will bring me one.

As you, my dear madam, prognosticated, Lady Davison affectionately solicits my hastening into Oxfordshire. I never knew a previous time in which I should, with so little reluctance, comply with such a request from her: being never yet frightened by gloomy ideas from a sick room: on the contrary, I generally feel a kind of pleasure whenever my attendance in one is accepted; resulting, I suppose, from the hope of being able to give some relief to the sufferer. At this time, I must confess it, my mind is much discomposed by the occasion of our present separation. I am almost afraid to venture upon the subject, yet cannot forbear to, again, request your believing that I did not act from caprice; that I did not determine upon the conduct which so much surprised, and, I fear, in some degree, offended you, my father and my brother, without the most pressing necessity. My own heart suffered more on the occasion than I *can*—than I *dare* tell you. Could I but have related to you the *cause* of my seemingly unwarrantable determination, my task had been easier; but I was bound by the most deliberately given, though rather extorted promise, not to divulge to any body but Miss Lawson (she having been previously acquainted with some of the leading circumstances, and whose secrecy it was, therefore, required I should engage for) the communication which compelled my conduct. This, my dear madam, I dared not to tell you before. Not that I was afraid of your pressing me, after the knowledge of it, to a disclosure; the strict integrity of your principles would, I well

knew, have prevented that; but I feared my own steadiness. While freely conversing on such an affecting subject, with a mother ever so tenderly, so soothingly indulgent, I doubt—nay I am sure—my promise would have been *effectually* violated, had I forborne a verbal communication: my manner—my incautious distress, would have told you what I *ought* to conceal. Then I was afraid of my brother; inexpressibly dear to me as he is. His unlimited friendship for Sir Charles Conway [dare I own to you how much it pains me to write or speak his name! which, however, I must of necessity use myself to do] would have led him into measures dangerous to my given promise. You, my dear madam, so well know your Emma's heart, that I trust, after what I have now affirmed, neither you nor my father, will ever encourage one idea more of my being actuated by any undue motive, to oppose your joint wishes, which were too, too consonant with my own, on the occasion in question.

Oh! that I dare but tell you! But I must not trust myself, I find I must not, to even write upon the subject; for, will you believe it! though I seem to want to impart to you every circumstance, it would pain me, beyond expression, were you ever, by any means, to come at the knowledge of them. But ah! I shall say too much. Dear madam! do not try to guess my secret. I am afraid of your penetration, yet cannot restrain my hand—or rather my heart, from unfolding to you my distresses.

It now strikes me—strange that it did not sooner—of my having done wrong in giving any promise which must necessarily deprive me of the benefit of your advice on such an important concern. I declare I have all along satisfied myself with thinking, that however severely I have been pained, I have, throughout the whole, been blameless. How apt young people are to deceive themselves! the conviction which I now feel, overwhelms me with confusion. Pity and pardon me, my dear madam, for I meant to do right. It was not owing—*how could it!*—to want of confidence in you. I was pressed—I was enjoined to promise, as the only condition upon which the intelligence I received could have been given me, and of which I thought it was *my duty* to endeavour to gain a distinct knowledge. Oh that I had duly considered! That I had refused the conditions, and acquainted you with the *introductory* information! Yet what, even then, could I have done that I have not done! What could you have advised me to, that I have not pursued! But I should, at least, have been freed from any censure on my conduct. Ah! but then your opinion—Oh madam! again let me ask for your pity and your pardon. It is over! It is useless to recriminate. Yet I must ever wish that I had not given so unwarrantable a promise; and now must hasten from the subject.

I feel myself distressed beyond measure.

Friday evening.

I am again got to my pen, for I scarce know how to forbear scribbling, though the subject most ready to occur, is painful almost beyond bearing. But should I, my dear mother, say this to you? No: for which reason I will determine to refuse its importunity for admittance.

Lady Davison is, I think, rather better this evening. She kindly insists upon my frequently walking or riding into the air, therefore I mean to go to-morrow morning to Mrs. Dyke's school, though it will be rather a long ride, to see how little Jenny settles. And I was thinking, if I find it agreeable to the parties, to fix her there as an under-teacher. I have no doubt of her being capable of such an office, and it may prove the foundation of a comfortable establishment for her hereafter.

My time here will, probably, be short, or I would wait for your opinion on this matter. For, notwithstanding, I am certain of your approbation upon whatever may be beneficial to any individual, I am so sunk in my own idea, since my conviction in the morning of having done wrong, when I thought myself so perfectly sure of being right, that I believe, hereafter, I shall most distrust my own judgement when, at first, I see least against it: especially, if it accords with my inclination.

Lady Davison commands me to convey her warmest salutations; and orders me to soften the account of her illness. Indeed I fear she suffers much more than she will acknowledge. Her patience is truly exemplary.

Present to my dear indulgent father, and to my brother, the most affectionate wishes of an affectionate heart. And do you, my dearest madam, accept all that duty, gratitude and love, can offer, from Your

EMMA STANLEY.

Saturday morning.

I break open my letter to tell you I have this instant received one from Miss Lawson, who has limited me to a very short time indeed, as she intends being at Lydbrook on Monday evening, with the expectation of meeting me there; to which place Mrs. Pritchard will accompany me in Lady Davison's chaise.

As soon as I reach Woodstock, which I hope will be on Tuesday afternoon, the first employ I contemplate is writing to Alverston.

LETTER, XIX.
MRS. DIGBY, TO COLONEL GREVILLE.

Harborough, Feb. 21st, 1789.

SING! Rejoice! Triumph! and own me for a Conqueress of seeming impossibilities. It is done. It is completed. The way is open.

Benson has received a letter *from her humble servant Mr. Joseph Pratt*, to tell her all I wish to know; which is, that our turtle-doves have cooed their last, and are going to take wing, each an opposite way. This fellow, you must understand, does not know I have any interest in the affair. All he supposes is, that I am fond of news; which he is perfectly welcome to suppose, as he, therefore, to put it in his true-love's power to oblige me, picks up all he can gather; especially on this head; as Benson, who is a cunning baggage, tells him I like particularly to hear about *sweet-hearts*.

Miss Stanley is going from Alverston. To Woodstock probably; as Miss Lawson and she, *sworn female friends*, generally meet twice or thrice in a year. Therefore take your measures accordingly: only be expeditious. My plan is resolved upon. Sir Charles is going to the Eastern Coast. Yarmouth is to be the place of his longest stay. At least this is proposed. I mean to get more certain intelligence of it, and if I find it holds, to set off directly for the last mentioned place, that I may be fixed there before he reaches it; as he cannot then have any idea of my going on his account;

which, if I am not cautious, some after-circumstances may, perhaps, lead him to suspect.

As Yarmouth is a place of some note for sea-bathing, though this season of the year is not quite favourable to a design of that nature, the advantages it has, on that account, makes it a town of sufficient fashionable resort to justify the whim of an idle independent woman, living in a midland county, to take lodgings there. For, first, I am fond of the sea; and can, upon occasion, you know, be fond of it to an excess. Next, I am not well; may, perhaps, be worse; love-sick, probably; for I know the heart of my man. A braver, finer fellow, lives not. Intrepid; firm; manly; commanding: yet soft and tender to a woman's utmost wishes.

Let me indulge a little on my favourite theme.

Sir Charles Conway justifies all the passion I can shew for him. His singular merits make rectitude of wrong, and entirely exonerate the little indirect measures I take to secure him my own. Your very precise ones might censure me. But what have your very precise ones and I to do with each other! *Censure!* Who shall ever presume to censure LADY CONWAY! Thanks to the spirited freedom of my education! my unlimited soul rises superior to the little brittle bonds by which the lifeless females of this conscience-tied nation suffer their geniuses to be fettered. At seventeen, I walked in trammels; and obeyed my parents, by accompanying to the altar the Honourable John Digby; but my mind had no share in the captivity of my person: that was free to range; and range it did, ere half the day was over, in contemplation of the happiness Sir Charles Conway's wife must receive on a similar occasion; for we had not quitted the dining table when he was introduced. Imagine to yourself such a figure entering—dressed in the most becoming elegance of fashion!—Not knowing it was *wedding-day*, he came with a card of introduction to Mr. Digby, from his friend Major Boyne, with whom he had been intimate at Berlin. Heavens! how his approach struck me, when, with a countenance composed of dignity; politeness; spirit; modesty, all which were heightened by the most graceful—most attractive manner ever worn by man, he apologized for the time of day; and for his intruding on such a company! for we were indeed a *comfortable collection* of every relative the world allows. A *sweet family party*, from grandfathers and grandmothers, to second cousins: uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews by half hundreds: every one dressed in their best, to grace my *happy nuptials*. Had you not at that time been abroad, you most surely would have been doomed to have increased this blessed group; for I remember our old aunt Montgomery lamented your distant situation, and observed you were the only absent sprig of the quality part of the family.

When Sir Charles left us, which he did soon after tea, my heart went with him, and has continued with him ever since; for, as I have often confessed to you, my good cousin colonel, my honourable piece of sobriety—so still; so exemplary—never had any share of it. Sir Charles' frequent visits to Mr. Digby after our marriage, could not but produce two effects: first, the more strongly fixing my attachment to him; secondly, giving me hope that I was the principal object which drew him so often to Harborough. The first was inevitable; for who can be with him without *admiring the greatness* — and *loving the goodness* which compose his character? An understanding clear; strong; bright: in the highest state of cultivation: familiarly acquainted with every learned and every fashionable science! His disposition—his temper—his manners; sweet and bewitching: and as to his person—where will you find me such another! I know, Archibald, you are exceedingly vain of yours; and you have often contended for the superiority of Mr. Stanley's over every one within your knowledge; of which, perhaps, you think the more, because of the very great likeness between him

and his sister; who I will (now I am not afraid of her) acknowledge to be one of the most unexceptionable beauties I ever yet had a sight of. The extreme easy gentility of her person, with the enchanting liveliness of her complexion and features, distinguish her in the brightest circles.

I am in such good humour with her; with you, and with all the world, that I will gratify the *affectionate part of your attachment*, by observing that the mild sparkling of her coffee-brown eyes; her almost unparalleled small white teeth and damask-rose lips, must excite admiration from even an enemy. The Roman bend of her nose, likewise, particularly beautifies her face; and for colour—no carmine ever equalled that in her cheeks. Her hair and eyebrows give the finish to her beauty.

There, Greville, do not you think I am very kind and very ingenuous, to give this praise to a sister-toast? Her brother [I am in the humour, I think, for describing beauties] is, as I before observed, extremely like her. It has been said that he is still more handsome for a man, than Emma for a woman: but I do not think so; not but I acknowledge that, *next* to Sir Charles Conway, he is one of the most compleat figures I know; and possibly, in the eyes of some people, may equal him; but if it can be said of any man that he has too much life and fire, it may of Mr. Stanley. His eyes are really so brilliant, there is scarce a possibility of looking at them. With regard to intellectual endowment—Sir Charles and he are allowed to be so much upon a par, that, different as they are in their excellencies, there is no knowing to which to give the preference; the impetuosity of Mr. Stanley's temper receives, sometimes, an agreeable counter-balance from Sir Charles' more deliberate judgement; and I have heard it observed, that the two friends reflect a lustre upon each other.

As for you, colonel—we have been brought up together so much like brother and sister (the only reason, perhaps, why we did not fall in love with each other) that I should stand exempt from flattery, were I to give you my opinion of yourself; but as I think you have vanity sufficient, I will suppress my inclination to draw your picture; gratifying you, however, by saying that you are not unworthy to make a third with the other two.

Having finished *the first section of my discourse*—that is to say [only I ran some little way from the subject] that it was impossible to be frequently in Sir Charles Conway's company, with a heart not otherwise engaged, without finding a continual increase of attachment to him, I will *proceed to my second head*, which is, the probability of my being the principal object which drew him so often to Harborough. This I am so willing to believe, that I am ready to set it down as a fact ascertained. For what amusement could Mr. Digby's sober company be to a man of his spirit and vivacity! My help-mate was, to be sure, abundantly good, and tolerably wise; but *so* steady; *so* slow; *so*—in short—so unlike all I wished him to be, that I think he could not possibly be agreeable to any body else. Yet I have heard his praises echoed and re-echoed from a hundred mouths.

Poor man! he did all he could to please me; and, at last, as the finishing stroke to the whole, made an obliging exit at the age of twenty-eight.

Now, Greville, do not put on a queer phiz, and exclaim, as I think I hear you—"Too bad upon my soul!" I tell you I am all aether. Were I to breathe into a balloon, it would ascend without gas. The recollection of Sir Charles Conway's polite attention to me whenever he visited Harborough; his assiduity to oblige me whenever we meet in any of the public places in London; the many flattering compliments he has paid me on various occasions; with a long train of et caeteras, so

warm my ideas, and animate my hopes, that I cannot keep my vivacity within reasonable bounds.

I tell you, Archibald, I shall, ere long, be Lady Conway! How can it be prevented! You see it is plain to a demonstration, that his visits were on my account, and I dare say, had he not been inthrall'd when my captivity ended, he would very soon have been my voluntary slave, and by that means have taken me prisoner, for life.

Where was I before I was seized with the describing fit? O—I was telling you that I so well know the heart of my man, as to be assured nothing would so soon lure him into the net, as the idea of my having an affection for him. Such a belief, with nine fellows out of ten, would have the direct contrary effect; but Sir Charles Conway has *true* tenderness of heart. *He* would not despise the appearance of such *an amiable weakness*. It would awaken his pity. It would do more: for, as I am sure, he would never marry a woman whom he could not inspire with affection, the idea of her susceptibility, when directed to him, would create an attachment on his side, if there were no previous symptoms of it: much more would it increase a prepossession before existing; which, I tell you, I think proper to take for granted is the case in the present business. *How* I shall begin the siege, it is impossible to say. My measures must be directed by occasions as they offer. That we shall be old acquaintance in a new place, will be a singular advantage. Of course, we shall be intimate. The good gossips of the neighbourhood will, *of course*, likewise, set us down as *sweethearts*; which a few timely blushes of mine, corroborated by a few hints from Benson, (who, though by no means an absolute confidant, is a very necessary aid-de-camp) will so effectually settle into a certainty, that we shall always be included in the same parties, and so treated, that we ourselves shall be insensibly led to coincide with the public opinion.

Many a jarring couple, I dare say, owe the origin of their wretchedness to such circumstances as these. I can point out two or three, within the compass of my knowledge. Mr. and Mrs. Wrighten; Mr. and Mrs. Sayland; Sir James and Lady Wootton, were all talked into a belief of their being, respectively, in love with each other; were married accordingly; *and* accordingly, I am pretty confident, curse the tattling gossips who betrayed them into so false an idea.

Do you know that your letters, written since your return, particularly the last, disappointed me very considerably? “It must be confessed you are mistress of manoeuvring.” “The whole plot was exceedingly well constructed and executed.” “I admire, my adroit cousin, your skill and industry.”—would be very decent compliments on common occasions: but for such artillery as mine!—the expressions are weak; sickly; spiritless.

I pretty well know your heart, or I should suspect your conscience to be hurt at the means used to gain the end you wish to compass. Pray now, colonel, where is the difference?—But no matter: we will discuss that point when we meet.

Before I thought about going to Yarmouth, I invited my sister to come to Harborough for a month or two; and as my servants are not the most governable ones in the world, I mean to have her stay here during my absence; that is to say, if she will condescend to oblige me; for let me tell you—Miss Howard, though not very rich, is very high; or, as those who admire her, say, very great in mind. I cannot but own that she has a fine understanding, and, what the good folks call a good heart: but her appearance is so prepossessing, though she is not a beauty, that, probably, she gets credit for

more than she deserves. I do not much like to acknowledge it, but I really am half afraid of her; which, notwithstanding I was separated from her upon the death of my mother, is not to be wondered at, when it be considered that she is nearly eleven years my senior. I cannot deny her having been hardly used by my father. The unaccountable dislike he took to her from her birth, because he was disappointed in his expectation of having a son, was really farcical. Poor Matilda! He *did* use to treat her cruelly; but, I believe, would have left her a provision more suitable to her education, had she not formed such an unfortunate attachment to Henry Egerton, whose whole family he so inveterately hated. However, it must be allowed that old Egerton's conduct was, at least, as bad as my father's, in using such unjustifiable means to oblige the young man to marry Miss Athow, who, though she was esteemed a very amiable woman, could not be the object of his choice; his heart having been so long devoted to my sister. The last time Matilda was with me, she gave me more particulars of that history than she had ever done before; for she is not very fond of talking it over. I believe her view then was to draw some wholesome lessons, from it, for my future conduct; I being then just about to lay aside my dismal widow-weeds. She, at that time, told me that old Mr. Egerton encouraged the affair till my father died; but that when he found her fortune so inadequate to the expectations he had formed, he took the most outrageous measures to crush, at once, the whole business. Miss Howard professes the warmest friendship for the woman who is married to her Henry; but she must excuse me for doubting, a little, of its fervency: yet there certainly is a very singular intimacy between the three. Mrs. Egerton, it seems, never knew (or says she never knew — for I do not always credit these very pious folks) of the connexion between my sister and her husband, or, *as* she professes, she never would have been married to him, though she owns her previous prepossession in his favour. Do you believe this, Archibald? If you do, you have more credulity in your composition than your cousin Arabella. Antiquated stuff! It would be ridiculous, in such an age as this, to adopt such sentiments. Matilda did not—could not—at the time of her telling me this, know the plan which was then rumbling in my upper-room, or I should have thought she had framed that ornament to the tale on purpose to relate it to me. She says Egerton and his wife are very happy, and that he has long had that real affection for her, which she so well merits. They want my sister, it seems, to live continually with them; or, at least, near their habitation; which she declines from motives of propriety. However they all correspond, and their eldest girl generally attends Miss Howard in her excursions to water-drinking places, &c. &c. It has been pretty broadly hinted to me by that old bear, Doctor Middleton, that as I received such an enormous property (as he terms it) from my father, in prejudice to my eldest sister, to which Mr. Digby's fondness so immensely added, I ought to put it into the power of my sister's liberal heart, to diffuse the good she is so much inclined to do to every human creature. The wise doctor and I happen to be very different in our opinions on this subject. Matilda is now, more than I wish, my superior. Were I to place her in certain affluence, she, perhaps, might assume, in a still higher degree, the monitor. By making her occasional handsome presents, I hope to keep her down a little; which, by the bye, I cannot do by even that measure; for she still, upon fancied occasions, will reprove rather too freely.

In reply to the doctor's impertinence, I told him I was not so rich as many people supposed me to be: that my sister, though, perhaps, not quite situated according to her birth and expectations, had a handsome independency; that a great part of the real estate my father left me, went, if I died without will or heirs [which, believe me colonel, I do not intend to do] to my cousin Archibald Greville; that I had great expences which people seemed to think nothing about; schools; annuities to old tenants, and such other whimsical particulars in Mr. Digby's will, sinking deep into estates so highly taxed; and that, moreover, my sister must be very ungrateful if he did not know her income to

be considerably bettered, every year, out of the profits of mine; and that she had reason to think herself as secure in the certain continuance of my affection, as she would be by a deed of gift: upon which the old preacher darted at me a look of displeasure; shrugged his shoulders, and made his theological bow. I like now and then to hear him in the pulpit, because his language is novel to me; but I will dispense with his preaching any where else, in my presence.

What a scribbler I am! Looking back on my sheets, I am surprised at their number. You urge me to write long letters, and, upon occasions, make tolerable returns; but, sometimes, I think must be almost tired with the ramblings of my pen. Men of some business and great pleasure, as you are, have always a wonderful deal to do.

Answer this directly, and let me know when you intend to write to Alverston.

I am impatient till you make a beginning.

Adieu.

Tell Clarkson I detest him heartily.

ARABELLA DIGBY.

LETTER, XX.
LADY STANLEY, TO MRS. LAWSON.

Alverston, Saturday night, Feb. 21st, 1789.

THE post, my dear madam, has just now brought me a letter from my Emma, dated Litchfield, which has filled me with great apprehensions on account both of her peace of mind and her health. Sir Edward is, if possible, more alarmed about her than I am.

You, doubtless, know how much the dear girl has lately disappointed us in almost suddenly dissolving the engagements we had entered into with Sir Charles Conway: a man so highly meritorious, that any parents might think themselves happy in the prospect of consigning a daughter to his protection; especially, when she herself tenderly, though delicately, returned an affection so apparently fervent and sincere. I must own I have contemplated the felicity which the idea of such a union gave in prospect, with a satisfaction, perhaps, too compleat; hardly admitting the possibility of a disappointment.

Strange that I, who have lived upwards of fifty years in this world, should not continually—habitually—remember that its Creator's wisdom, constantly employed for our present and future felicity, has made sublunary happiness but as a passing gale, when fixed upon any thing independent of the state to which we are hastening!

I will enclose, my good friend, that part of Emma's letter which relates to the subject in question; well knowing that your kindness and prudence, with that of Mrs. Eleanor Lawson, will

lead you to take every proper measure to develop the dark folds which, at present, seem to cloud my girl's felicity.

Read, if you please, at the following space, the piece of the letter I enclose, that I may offer to you my sentiments upon it.

* * * *

You will, I presume, when you reach this part, have the whole of Emma's situation, as far as I can give it, before you. What can be done? What must be our first step? It is easy to collect, though she was not aware how much she unfolded it, that some person, or persons, have been relating to the two young friends a tale injurious to Sir Charles Conway. What the circumstances are, and how far they are to be relied upon, are the two grand questions. If Charlotte thinks herself bound by her friend's engagement, I would not, even to make Emma happy, endeavour to draw the smallest communication; but if she has not ratified her part of the promise, and if it was, till then, only conditional, I think it would not, in such a case, be any breach—But I dare not trust myself. I am too much interested to be a proper counsellor. Investigate and consider, my dear Mrs. Lawson, every minutiae, as well as every greater circumstance, and then determine for me according to your judgement; and, as I before said, that of your excellent sister.

I need not observe that we must be careful not to convey to the young people a slight idea of a promise given. Be not, therefore, *too* solicitous for me; for you will believe I had much rather trust to time for relief, than receive it from one indirect measure.

Excuse me that I repeat this. I am convinced of its being your own principle, but I feared your tenderness on my account might beyond, due bounds, increase your anxiety. That there is a time for all things—an occasion for every purpose, we have too often agreed in, to render my saying any more on the subject necessary.

Sir Edward desires his most affectionate respects to you and Mrs. Eleanor Lawson. George is this morning gone to Hawthorn Grove, to make a stay of some days. You know what an extreme affection he has for his sister: but on the present occasion he could not, at first, forbear to resent very highly—so fervent is his friendship for Sir Charles, likewise—what he called Emma's caprice. They were upon pretty good terms before they parted; but he is not, nor, indeed, are any of us, the least reconciled to the termination, as it at present stands, of this interesting event.

How many incidents daily occur to ruffle the tranquillity of even those whom the generality of the people look up to with envy, upon a supposition that they are exempt from that equal proportion of troubles, which, as I before said, are, with the most truly merciful intent, sown round every habitation! Happy are they, and *only* they, who receive with gratitude and resignation, as circumstances require, all that is dispensed by the Ever-provident Director. These will patiently wait the leisurely unfolding of intricacies, into which they are unable to penetrate.

The friendship between our children seems to revive that which, in school-days, united you and me. I would thank you for your attention to my Emma, but that I think my thanks, on such an occasion, would displease you; as, judging by myself, I doubt not your being paid by the contemplation of the happiness the dear girls receive from each other.

I offer not my compliments to either of the young ladies; not knowing whether you will think it proper to acquaint them with my having written to you; else, to Miss Rachel, as well as to Miss Lawson, I should send my cordial remembrance.

I am, my dear friend,
Yours, ever affectionately,
HENRIETTA STANLEY.

LETTER, XXI.

COLONEL GREVILLE, TO MRS. DIGBY.

Pall-Mall, Sunday morning, Feb. 22nd.

AS this is a lazy day to you, as well as to me, my date will give you to expect a long epistle; but, indeed, my sweet cuz, I have (Sunday though it be) an unusual demand for my time. I received yours, by Turkey-Tom, so early as six this morning. The fellow must have travelled confounded quick with his poultry; and, to tell you truth, I wished him extirpated, for disturbing me so out of season. Your scribble, to be sure, made ample amends for the depredations committed on the rights of Morpheus, from whom I was, at the juncture of its arrival, receiving great obligations; being under the extatic illusion of folding in my arms the complying Emma.

And now, my fair colleague, let me set you right in a particular upon which you do not seem to have a perfect idea. By all you say on the subject, it appears that you imagine my sole attachment to Miss Stanley to be a lucrative one: but upon the honor of a British soldier, you are mistaken. I love the dear Alverston girl with all the fervency of a hero; and would cope with a whole army of giants to reduce her to a surrendry. Let me tell you that I think her the first woman upon earth; and though I would not marry even her without a fortune, I would prefer her with one—with such a one as she has, and will have—to the greatest princess under the sun, though trebly portioned: and that, I think, is as great a proof of love as ought to be given by a son of Bellona.

With regard to your injunction of soon commencing the amour—I hold it impolitic.

How the plague do you imagine it can appear I should so soon have come at the knowledge of this breach, but by means of witchcraft? “Think of that, my manoeuvring cousin, think of that. Conway, you say, will soon be in town. He will, doubtless, though he stays but a day or two, go to his house in Portland Place. Cannot I, easily enough, find out when he arrives? Cannot I, *as* easily throw myself in his way? and cannot I, likewise, soon draw, from his replies to my enquiries about our Alverston friends, an opening to ask farther questions with propriety? Ah, my dear Arabella! I leave you behind me now. Confess I am here *your* superior; for will not all, after this, appear honourable; natural; and proper! I love, from my soul, to conquer a conqueress; and many a one, cousin, *have* I conquered in my time.

Respecting the rest of your letter—I cannot answer it now. Your plausible reasonings—your descriptions—your compliments to me and to yourself—must be left for the employment of some

future hour.

One matter, however, I must speak to.

My encomiums are flat—dull—insipid; for that is the English of your *weak; sickly; spiritless*. What in the name of amazement would you have had me to say! Faith! I thought I had stretched the point far enough.

O! but they came from a poor soul of a cousin! *Hence*, I fancy, their insipidity. Had Sir Charles Conway—or had even the “detested Clarkson”—whom, by the way, I do not believe you half so heartily detest as you affect to do—said a tenth as much as my two last letters to you conveyed, they would have got credit for being the gallantest sparks of the present age. Women are never surfeited by praise: modest and sincere commendation is *weak; sickly, spiritless*, truly! But enough of this now. I will again quarrel with you about it when we meet.

One thing more—“You wont die without a will or heirs.” Not without *both*, I will answer for it, my precious kinswoman, if you can help it. But remember—the will and the deed do not always go together.

Could one look into the recesses of your little manoeuvring heart, I dare say children: grandchildren; and great-grandchildren, might be seen to rise in succession, in your idea; without its ever once entering into your imagination that you, by the time such an end could be effected, must have lost almost the *remembrance*—if such a time can arrive while you have breath—of your roses—your lillies—and brilliant black eyes.

There—I love, now and then, to abuse you; and it is so long since I have been in the humour to present you with a few wholesome truths, that I am desirous to make amends for late neglects.

If your intelligence be confirmed, hasten to Yarmouth. And may you, for *my* sake, be successful there. Any assistance in my power to give, you will command, how, when, and where you think proper.

“Sweet cuz—sweet little cuz—farewell.

Notwithstanding all my abuse, believe, own, and use me

As your affectionate

and devoted slave,

ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

I mean soon to write to George Stanley, though not upon the business of love.

LETTER, XXII.
MRS. ELEANOR LAWSON, TO LADY STANLEY.

Woodstock, Monday, Feb. 23d, 1789.

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR letter reached Woodstock last night about seven o'clock; after which, my sister and I sat in consultation upon its contents, and soon agreed in thinking that the best method which could be taken, was to shew your letter to Charlotte. Accordingly we sent for her to attend us, and gave it her to read. She was extremely affected by it, and told us that Miss Stanley was indeed greatly unhappy, and as greatly to be pitied. She owned that she was, from the first of her knowing it, uneasy at the promise which her friend had been compelled, as it were, to give, of absolute secrecy; which, it seems Miss Stanley thought herself so religiously bound to observe, to the utmost extent of the *intention*, as well as expression, of the requirer, that she would not use the included liberty of clearing up to Charlotte the circumstances she was before acquainted with, till she ratified the engagement which had been made for her. The probity of this conduct is so truly exemplary, that it would be almost criminal to regret it; yet we can hardly help wishing she had been rather more *unguarded*: That she was not, is a proof of most excellent principles. Charlotte says, that if she could find the least liberty of doing it, she would immediately unfold the whole; with which she seems to be much dissatisfied; but, with pleasure, I observe that her integrity is as incorrupt as her friend's. She, it seems, was somewhat accidentally made privy to the beginning of all this business; or, probably, would likewise have been excluded from any knowledge of particulars.

That there has been given some history injurious to the *reputation* of Sir Charles Conway, must, as you observe, be concluded; and it is much to be wished some circumstance would transpire to give us an unravelling clew. Charlotte sat a considerable time in a reverie, and then said, that, after all, if circumstances were as they appeared to be, and indeed she did not see there was any room to hope the contrary, the event could not, with rectitude, have been averted, had Miss Stanley been at liberty to have laid open the whole affair; that therefore, perhaps, it was best matters should be as they were, as her friend would have been equally unhappy, and probably several others still more so, by a discovery.

It is, my dear Lady Stanley, a strange mysterious affair. Neither my sister nor I could hardly forbear to press my niece rather too closely. However, we remembered your injunctions, and checked our solicitude.

Charlotte said, if there was any "*rottenness in the foundation*," most probably a short time would discover it; that Emma Stanley had acted like an angel; much fearing, had it been her case, that she should have fallen far short of the height her friend had reached; that she did not see any thing ought, or could be done in it, at present, but asked that this letter might not be dispatched till her return with Miss Stanley. Charlotte set out this morning at seven; she requested to go in the chaise by herself; to which my sister, with some reluctance, complied. Her motive was, that they might have an uninterrupted conversation in their return. To-morrow, at dinner, we hope to see the dear girls in safety.

The judgement of these young friends is, it must be allowed, very superior to their years; which, in a great degree, lessens the apprehension of their having been imposed upon: yet, as people of rectitude and generosity are always more severe where self is concerned, than in the case of another person, Miss Stanley may have imposed upon herself a more painful task, and made a greater sacrifice, than the circumstances require. But we will defer the subject till Charlotte has conversed upon it, with her.

I ought to make some apology for my sister, that she employs an amanuensis to answer your ladyship's letter; but the reason of her so doing, will excuse her: she has crushed, in a very bad manner, the fore and middle finger of her right hand; and is, consequently, unable to hold a pen. She desires me to return the most grateful acknowledgments to you, for the very obliging sentiments in your letter: which, let me join with you in observing, she most truly merits. To Sir Edward we both request to be remembered with cordiality.

You say well, my dear madam, when you tell my sister that you believe she enjoys the happiness which the two young ladies receive from each other. She does, indeed, in a very high degree: and, let me say, we are none of us more pleased than when Miss Stanley is at Woodstock; on which account, added to the supposition that it may, at this time, be a more eligible situation for her than any in Derbyshire, we earnestly hope she will have permission for a very long visit.

My niece Rachel is, as it is too well known, of a disposition widely differing from the excellent one of her sister. She is, it cannot be denied, a strong resemblance of my unhappy brother, both in person and mind; and was, to his death, his favourite daughter. Rachel is under an engagement to spend a few weeks in London with Lady Blurton. Her ladyship's second daughter, Miss Barbara—or, as she requires to be called at every address—*the Honourable Miss Barbara Tupps*—is pretty much like Rachel Lawson, bating that she has not so good an understanding. Her eldest sister, whom the mother does not love, has resided, ever since Lord Blurton's death, with her aunt Willis; who is sensible of Miss Tupps' superior merit to that of the rest of the family. Lady Blurton and Miss Barbara are now at Oxford. The day before they leave the country, they are to dine at Woodstock, when Rachel is to be entrusted to her Ladyship's protection.

Tuesday evening.

At four o'clock dinner, we were, my dear Lady Stanley, made happy in the company of our impatiently expected young friends. Thank GOD, they arrived in health and safety. Miss Stanley looks thin, in comparison to what I have seen her look, and her spirits are, indeed, very indifferent; but Charlotte, whom, after tea, I took with me into my dressing room, tells me she is more tranquil than she expected to find her; though still very much distressed. She bids me to tell your ladyship that you are mother to an angel, if ever any one blessed the world under the appearance of a woman; and affirms that her sentiments and conduct reflect honour upon all her sex. Justice, she says, is her ruling principle, in the case before us: the mercy which she might be allowed to show to herself, she sets at a distance. It seems there cannot be any thing done in the matter at present. The promise of secrecy, Charlotte says, is sacred, and must therefore be observed: but she hopes time will unravel all to our satisfaction, and doubts not but that her Emma's exemplary conduct will, even in this world, meet with distinguished approbation.

If Mr. Stanley is at home, we request to be remembered to him. I think he deserves no inconsiderable degree of pity on this occasion. His affection for both his sister and Sir Charles, makes him a double sufferer.

During the time of Miss Stanley's continuance here, we intend to make it a point of frequently writing to Alverston, though but by short notes, that her anxious friends may rest assured of their knowing the real state of her health and spirits; which they, perhaps, may fear she herself would, in some measure, disguise to them, from motives of tenderness. She is, at this time, writing an account of her safe arrival at Woodstock.

You will, my dear Lady Stanley, accept our best wishes for your happiness, and will consider me

as your obliged friend,
and humble servant,
ELEANOR LAWSON.

LETTER, XXIII.
MISS STANLEY, TO LADY STANLEY.

Woodstock, Tuesday evening, Feb. 24th.

ABOUT four o'clock this afternoon, my dear madam, my friend Charlotte, who met me last night at Lydbrook, and myself, arrived at this delightful spot, where I was received with such a welcome as I am unable to describe; Mrs. Lawson and Mrs. Eleanor, striving which should excel in kindness. Even Miss Rachel, put on a smile, and told me she was glad to see me at Woodstock.

Our journey was not productive of any adventures sufficiently interesting to relate.

On Monday morning, at seven o'clock, I left my poor cousin. Upon the whole, I think she was better than when I first reached Litchfield. The expressions of her kindness for me, affected me greatly. Mrs. Pritchard, as was proposed, accompanied me to Lydbrook, at which place my Charlotte had arrived about half an hour before we reached it, and began to be rather anxious for my safety. We spent together an agreeable Monday evening, and separated on the Tuesday morning about nine.

As I know it will afford pleasure to my dear, ever dear, friends at Alverston, it gives me much satisfaction to be able to say that I find myself better, in both health and spirits, than when I wrote from Litchfield, and shall, I trust, be better still, when I can hear that my father, mother, and brother, are well and happy.

On Thursday morning this, I expect, will reach Alverston. I know I need not ask you to write to me by the return of the post, as I doubt not but you will, without such a request; and that I shall receive it on Saturday.

The subject which made so large a part of my last, I will entirely forbear: for why distress either you or myself by unavailing retrospections!

Miss Rachel Lawson is soon to go to London, under the protection of Lady Blurton; who, *with the Honourable Miss Barbara Tupps*, is to dine here before their return to town; they being now at Oxford, to attend to some law-business which Lord Blurton left in a ruffled situation.

You must, my dear madam, expect to find that your girl has taken with her, her satirical pen, when she gives you an account of this intended visit; as two such subjects for its employ, as this quality mother and daughter, are so seldom to be met with, that she doubts she shall never be able to withstand the bias which will lead her to describe "*the events of the day*."

I am disappointed in one of the pleasures I expected to receive at Woodstock—that of being introduced to the celebrated Lady Caroline Pemberton. Lord Danvers, as one of Charlotte's letters told us, has elegantly fitted up his cottage, as he calls it, in this place; and intended to bring his daughter down to it very early this spring, but her ladyship is gone another way, to the great vexation of the earl. The tale is rather long, and as I wish to dispatch this scribble by this post, will defer it till my next.

About half a mile from Mrs. Lawson's, and not far from Lord Danvers,' in a sweet pretty neat habitation, built since I was last here, is come to reside Mrs. Ann Stanhope, a single gentlewoman, with her niece, Miss Maria Lewis.

You, my dear madam, whose mind is true christian liberality, will not form any prepossessions against them when I tell you they are Quakers; on the contrary, I rather suppose it will give you a predilection for them, as I have often heard you express a high opinion of the principles and general conduct of that exemplary set of people. When we drove past the place, I was struck with the simple elegance of its appearance. The house is surrounded by a most beautiful lawn, which gives its name to the whole estate. Charlotte's account of her new neighbours quite enchanted me. I asked her why she did not sooner give me the character of these agreeable people. She said that this house, now, as I observed, called the Lawn, was erected last autumn for the reception of a Mr. and Mrs. Palmer, who then lived in London. Mr. Palmer was a sugar-baker, who intended to leave off business, and retire into Oxfordshire; but just as every thing was finished, and they had began to remove, he was taken ill; and died soon after. The house was then advertised; for the lady was too gay to approve a situation so distant from the metropolis, to which she had long been accustomed.

About this time, Mrs. Stanhope, who had likewise lived in London, came down to a village near Oxford, upon a visit to a Mrs. Harley, and wishing for an occasional country residence, went, upon reading the advertisement, to look at the Lawn, and being exceedingly pleased with all around it, immediately agreed for the purchase of the whole estate, which is about eighty pounds a year. Her intention was to put into it some honest poor man and his wife, to keep it airing till next May; or, I believe, till after their great yearly meeting in London; but the lease of her house in town being nearly expired, this benevolent woman gave up the remainder of her term in it, to accommodate her landlord, (who, with a large family, was under some distressed circumstances) and came down to Woodstock, unexpectedly, just as Charlotte returned from Alverston. Mrs. Stanhope brought with her the youngest niece of a deceased brother, (Miss Maria Lewis) who left a widow with five daughters, to each of whom he gave seven thousand pounds; the age of the eldest, about twenty-three; that of Miss Maria, seventeen. Mrs. Stanhope has, it seems, a very genteel income. Upon their arrival, Mrs. Lawson's family made them a visit, which they returned; and a mutual friendship soon

took place between them. Charlotte said the reason of her not informing me, by letter, of this truly valuable acquisition to their neighbourhood, was, that she knew my mind had, ever since, been too much *occupied by pressing circumstances*, to allow of her thinking to draw my attention to any foreign ones, however interesting; and not chusing to mention her new friends in a slight manner, entirely forbore any account of them.

Dear, kind girl! how full of expression is every moment, of her affection for your Emma!

Allow, my dear madam, for considerable inaccuracies in my scribble. I write in the drawing-room, surrounded by my friends, who will not suffer me to retire, because they say they very well know I can write and talk at the same time.

Mrs. Eleanor Lawson, who is certainly one of the best women in the world, is gone up to finish a letter for the post, which, she tells me, will soon be going.

It was not my intention to have written so much this evening, but I am so greatly pleased with the character of Mrs. Stanhope and Miss Maria Lewis, from whom I am told I am to receive much of my entertainment at Woodstock, that I could not check my pen in its career.

Of Lady Caroline Pemberton, you shall hear in my next.

Accept the most affectionately expressed wishes of this little circle; and convey to my father and brother all that a tender and grateful heart can feel, considering me, my dearest madam,

As your most truly dutiful,
and (which is I think still more)
ever affectionate daughter,
EMMA STANLEY.

What a disappointment! Mrs. Lawson has just received an answer to a card which she sent, this evening, to their friends at the Lawn, requesting their company at tomorrow's dinner, to tell her that they are obliged to set off in the morning, as soon as light, to Mrs. Harley's; who, about an hour since, sent to beg Mrs. Stanhope would attend her, as soon as possible, she being extremely ill, and of opinion that she is near dying. Miss Lewis is to accompany her. The length of their stay is uncertain.

From the minute incidents of the day, what continual lessons may be deduced of the folly of relying upon any of our own projections for the happiness of even one coming hour.

Not dreaming of a disappointment, we anticipated the pleasure of to-morrow's social meeting.

Tell Maria Birtles I frequently think of her, and that notwithstanding this unexpected separation, the sentiments she has inspired me with, are lively and durable, as, had I not left Alverston, she would have known upon stronger evidence than can be given by mere language.

LETTER, XXIV.
COL. GREVILLE, TO GEORGE STANLEY, ESQ.

Pall-Mall, Feb. 24th, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

YESTERDAY was se'nnight I returned from my expedition, crowned with success, and, consequently, with laurels. Indeed I was fortunate in my negociation beyond my own sanguine expectations. As I am, in some measure, indebted to Sir Edward for my nomination to the employment, my acknowledgements upon the occasion ought to have been paid on the instant of my landing; and if the continual hurry of business in which I have, every moment since, been involved, will not be admitted as a sufficient excuse for the neglect, I must stand without one. Be so obliging as to present to him, and to Lady Stanley, my most respectful compliments. Tell them as soon as possible after the second of March, I will kiss their hands at Alverston. To your ever charming sister, convey for me the highest expressions of admiration; and to that happy dog, Sir Charles Conway, my wishes for his being duly sensible of the exquisite felicity which awaits him. I expected before this time, to have been called upon for my congratulations.

But how comes it about that you and all your family have confined yourselves to the dismal regions of Derbyshire throughout the whole of this petrifying winter? By Saint Jago, it has been cold enough to freeze the fervor of a hermit, or the heart of a lover. Anderson says you will contract such a rust as not all the oil in the shop of Major Denby's father can rub off. The witty scoundrel is always cursedly severe upon the good folks of the city; not thinking that it is well known his mother was daughter to a coppersmith at Chelsea. As I am assured, by Lady Mary Henville, that this is a true piece of history, I believe I shall, one day or other, give the rascal a small hint of the matter.

Grigby was married yesterday to his jolly widow. She brings him a good forty thousand. What a lucky dog it is! But it must be considered there is rather too much of the *weighing piece*.

Jermyn sends his remembrance.

Fletcher his anti-congratulations. He hears you are verging upon the matrimonial precipice. But above all, not to be forgotten—the dowager in Grosvenor-Square sends her greetings, and commands your attendance at her birth-day ball.

Let me soon hear from you, and believe that I deem myself

Your obliged friend

and humble servant,

ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, XXV.
MR. STANLEY, TO COLONEL GREVILLE.

Feb. 25th, 1789.

YOURS, my dear colonel, this instant perused. You bid me let you hear from me soon. I obey.

James Beauchamp announced your arrival. My father's and mother's congratulations on your success, give consequence to mine. You are not under much obligation to Sir Edward, on the account you mention, for any thing but his good wishes. Neither he nor my mother will ever think their debt to you, for my sister's preservation, discharged. Emma's congratulations and respects would, I am sure, join ours, were she at home. Last Thursday she went to Lady Davison's; from thence set out, on Monday, for Woodstock, to make, I suppose, a considerable stay.

"How can I confine myself to Derbyshire?" I am tied; fettered; rivetted. "What by a woman?" you will ask.

No: by an angel.

Tell Anderson he is a fool. Jermyn and Fletcher that they are not wiser than Anderson.

My service to the dowager. She must dance alone, if she depends upon me for a partner.

You say Grigby has got a weighing-piece. Faith! I always considered her as fat ribs.

Come as soon as you can into Derbyshire. You have here three friends who will, at any time, and in any place, be glad of your company.

Serviteur,
GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XXVI.
LADY STANLEY, TO MISS STANLEY.

Alverston, Thursday, Feb. 26th, 1789.

ABOUT an hour since, I was, my dear girl, put into the possession of your letter dated from Woodstock; the contents of which have given your father and myself considerable relief from the anxiety we were under respecting your safety; health, and tranquility: nor is your brother, who returned on Tuesday from Hawthorn Grove, made less happy than we are by the substance of your epistle.

Give our united most affectionate respects to the individuals which compose the happy party at Woodstock. I feel myself obliged to them beyond expression.

And now, my dearest girl, prepare yourself to read, with as little emotion as possible, my

final sentiments, till new circumstances call for a new opinion, upon the subject which chiefly employed your pen at Litchfield.

You bid me, my Emma, not try to guess your secret. I need not *try*, my dear; the general substance of it, evidently shows itself in your artless manner of writing, though the particulars seem *bound in iron*, and possibly founded in falshood: at least—greatly deformed by misrepresentation.

Let us at once begin in this manner.

By some means or other, you have heard a story extremely opposite to the idea we have all of us entertained of Sir Charles Conway.

This is indisputable. What the story is—and how brought to light—I would give a very considerable matter to discover, could I come at the knowledge of it, without a breach of integrity: but if that must be violated ere I can be gratified, I will consent to remain in ignorance all my life.

And here let me express my high approbation of the sacred regard which you pay to a given promise.

Carry your sentiments, on this head, through life, and doubt not but their brightness will, in the end, be distinguished.

I need not caution you, my dear child, to be careful in future of making promises of secrecy on matters of such consequence, because, as you ingenuously acknowledge, you are already convinced, you too hastily entered into the engagement. Let me add that such a request as seems to have been made to you, ought *very rarely*, on *any* account, to be complied with. Indeed *never*, when there are those in being, whom it is our duty to consult, and in whom, long experience has assured us we may confide with safety.

My Emma will not suppose that I say this from any other motive than that which is created by a wish of confirming her in the conviction she has received. She knows the heart of her mother too well, to think the observation is made from the least degree of displeasure upon the occasion.

The promise *has* been given. Let us, therefore, think no more about it, but that it must be observed.

And now, my dear, we will endeavour to reason a little, with impartiality, on the *visible* circumstances of this perplexing affair.

In the first place, the person—for we will suppose but one—who communicated to you so important a matter, as that must be, which induced you to practice such an extraordinary resolution, could not but be greatly concerned in promoting either your happiness or its contrary; without we grant that the vengeance was entirely levelled against Sir Charles Conway. But this, I think, could not be the case; as, except it was managed with most uncommon art, it is a matter which would have been apt to discover itself.

That the intended end of this communication was your benefit, cannot be allowed with any degree of probability. For in that case, would such an unwarrantable method have been taken as that of poisoning your ears, and then confining you from applying to a physician? certainly not.

Must we, then, believe it to be the work of an enemy?

Who, upon earth, can be an enemy to Emma Stanley, unless from an envious wish to be in her situation? Could *that* be the case? or was the envy raised by an idea of *Sir Charles*'s happiness? For your consideration, my dear child, I advance these suppositions. Confer with Miss Lawson upon them, and if you can gather any light which may be communicated, write to me instantly: if not, consult your own inclination, and give me your present sentiments, or forbear the subject, according as you shall find yourself disposed. I will not enlarge upon it at this period.

This Maria that you have left me astonishes me beyond measure. Upon my word, I think her one of the most charming young women I ever met with in my life; and, likewise, one of the most accomplished; though she seems, I think, to endeavour to suppress her powers, rather than otherwise. My admiration of her, and my affection for her, increase every hour. She will not be denied sending her *duty* to you. I could not help objecting to the expression; but she says she thinks herself so much honored by the notice you have taken of her in your letter, which, by the bye, I *could* not tell her was confined to the postscript, that no other word can convey her sentiments. For person, mind, and manners, I scarce ever met with her equal. Poor Mrs. Moore continues extremely weak and low. Maria's tender attention to her is truly exemplary. As a relief to them both, and consequently to myself, I have taken Roger Norman's little Betty into my apartments; and the girl is really very docile and diligent.

Miss Haylin is soon to be married. I believe the day is fixed, but not yet announced. She greatly laments your absence on the occasion. Mrs. Haylin insisted upon our promise of going to the ball, which is to be given at Hazel-wood Lodge, by Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer.

It is said there is to be a very large company.

Sir Charles Conway [you are right, my dear, to endeavour to speak, as usual, his name with freedom. I follow your example] sets off for London next Monday. He means to stay there a few days; and then, notwithstanding the season of the year, to visit the Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk coast. London, I believe, he thinks, would not, at this time, much amuse him.

George goes again to Hawthorn Grove to-morrow.

We are all interested in the character of the friends at the Lawn, and impatient to hear more about them. Your supposition of my being partial to Quakers, is a true one. There are good and bad members of all societies; but when a Quaker acts up to his profession, I think he draws very near to a primitive Christian.

And to what greater character can he aspire on this terrestrial globe!

I ought not to encourage my girl's satire; yet as I know it is always harmless, and never

levelled but at wilful folly, I cannot help wishing for some little account of this Lady Blurton and Miss Barbara Tupps; of whom I have very often heard, though never saw.

But Lady Caroline Pemberton's history is what I am most solicitous to hear, as I have been told that she ranks amongst the first of women.

You cannot imagine how anxious your father is about his Emma.

He is indeed continually talking of you, and orders me to desire you will write as often as you can with pleasure; but never to perform that business when it would seem like a task. Present his respects and acknowledgments to all your friends at Woodstock.

George sends his love to Charlotte. He says he has not, at this time, leisure to think of any body else in Oxfordshire.

GOD bless you, my dearest girl. May a fond mother's wishes be answered by the brightness of your days in future.

HENRIETTA STANLEY.

LETTER, XXVII.

MISS STANLEY, TO LADY STANLEY.

Woodstock, Feb. 26th.

WITHOUT waiting, my dear madam, for any reply to my last, I begin another letter; being never more happy, though surrounded by some of the kindest friends upon earth, than when I am writing to Alverston.

We are all here much as when I finished my last. This day we were to have gone to Oxford, but were prevented by the unpleasantness of the weather.

As I have not any new occurrences to relate, I will, as I promised, give you the particulars of Lady Caroline Pemberton's flight, as it may truly be called; telling you first, the circumstances by which it was occasioned.

Lady Caroline has been greatly, and Charlotte, who was introduced to her at Tunbridge, says most justly celebrated for very uncommon perfections: as I before said, I feel myself much disappointed in not having the opportunity of seeing this ornament to our sex.

Mrs. Lawson received a letter last Monday, from her cousin, Major Carrington; a part of which, she gives me leave to transcribe.

He had been writing upon some business relative to the boundaries of Lord Danvers' estate, and then says—

“You have heard—who has not!—of the very extraordinary merits of his daughter, Lady Caroline Pemberton. A woman—who for person; understanding; and goodness, seems to be without a superior, if not unequalled, in the opinion of all who have been favoured with her acquaintance. I have never yet seen her; but Edgar Blomfield, who is, you know, a connoisseur in beauty, says she is, without one exception, the finest creature he ever saw in Europe; and that those who seek beyond appearances, assure him nothing can equal the excellencies of her head but the goodness of her heart.

Her accomplishments, I am told, are of the first rate indeed. Yet this angelic woman, was destined to be sacrificed to that wretched old usurer Lord Crumpford; a fellow who has not pretensions to any parents approbation, save that he has an immensity of wealth.

The greatest part of Lord Danvers' estate, is annexed to the title; therefore Lady Caroline, though an only child, must confine her expectations to a very small fortune. If, indeed, the son which Lord Danvers' nephew left, who is the only male heir now living, should die before him, she will be an extreme rich heiress: but of that there is no probability, as he is a strong hearty boy, about fourteen, and Lord Danvers, turned sixty, is already very infirm. The boy, whose name is Thomas William Pemberton, is scarcely known to his great uncle, as his father, whom the earl educated,

greatly offended him, by marrying an abandoned woman of the town; by which creature he had this son, who now lives with his mother in a village called Kildwick, near Skipton in Yorkshire.

Lord Danvers, as I before said, was determined upon sacrificing his lovely girl to this wretched limb of the upper house, upon the consideration, it is said, of receiving, instead of giving, a very large sum of money on the marriage: which, if true, is as scandalous a piece of business as ever was resolved upon; and there is too much reason to believe it is not entirely without foundation, as it is generally known that the earl, who is a great gambler, is in constant want of cash, and cares very little about the manner of its being procured. Lady Caroline had a thousand pounds left her by the late Mrs. Selwyn, of Bloomsbury Square, who was a very distant relation of her mother's. Poor Lady Danvers, a little before her death, sent to Mrs. Selwyn, who, it seems, had intimated her intention of leaving her a legacy, to request that she would transfer her intended favour to her daughter; as she too justly apprehended she would be reduced to some extremities upon her death; the untailed estate having, as she knew, a mortgage upon every part, except the small one in Derbyshire, which was settled upon the countess; whose father was of such a bashaw-like disposition, as to think that all women should be "kept under hatches"—was his expression—therefore would not permit his daughter's being made independent of her husband; but he lived to repent this conduct most severely.

You desired me to give you some account of your expected new neighbours, and my wish to oblige you, has led me into unnecessary explanations. To return, therefore, to Lady Caroline—What most astonished the world, respecting the contract between the earl and the viscount, was the extreme solicitude of the latter to conclude the *bargain*, as it may justly be called, at almost any rate; at least, thus says the voice of report. The charms of the lady, it is true, might easily solve the supposed enigma, was any other man than Lord Crumpford the pursuer; but the sordidness of *his* soul—his total insensibility to any convivial warmth, so strongly exemplified by his stern treatment of his former wife, who was esteemed a very amiable woman—render it impossible that he can have one spark of love for *even Lady Caroline Pemberton*. Were she the apparent heiress to the Danvers' estate, amazement would revert to the conduct of the other party, and every one be labouring to guess at the earl's motive for disposing, in so unaccountable a manner, of his jewel. But this, as I before observed, is so far from being likely, that the wretch cannot have, in his cent-percent soul, one thought about even the possibility.

"Lord Danvers and this son of Plutus have pursued their measures at such a violent rate, that they have driven the justly frightened fair out of the kingdom. For a long time she gently and dutifully expostulated on the *impropriety* of this intended union: then represented the *cruelty* of the command, as it was absolutely impossible she could ever think of Lord Crumpford in the light of a husband, but with the utmost detestation; however, every thing that she could say, was sternly rejected, till she was compelled to give a positive denial, in explicit terms. This, though delivered, it seems, in the most respectful words, and accompanied by a manner bewitchingly amiable, had no other effect on the unnatural father and his vile colleague, than to determine them to be expeditious in giving the finishing stroke to their villanous barbarity. The day was fixed for the sacrifice; after which the cottage at Woodstock was to receive the devoted victim and her two tyrannical oppressors: but she found means to escape from their clutches, having, as it has since appeared, made an agreement, by means of her nurse, with a city-coachman to wait her appearance at the corner of the square; and at length, being grown desperate by her father's inflexibility, she, on the

evening before the day fixed upon to compleat her wretchedness, resolutely sallied forth; was driven to the mail-coach, and carried to Dover in safety; as she afterwards informed the earl by a letter; the purport of which was—the great distress she had suffered, before she could resolve upon taking a step so undutiful, in appearance, as her leaving Berkley Square without his knowledge; that nothing but a prospect of inevitable wretchedness could have driven her from his protection; and in a very charming manner (as Sir William Jenyns, to whom Lord Danvers communicated it, told me) represented to him the anguish of her mind upon the occasion; and ended that part of her letter, which, as Sir William said, was elegantly pathetic and dutifully humble, by saying that she hoped one day to see him rejoice in her escape; being assured that his paternal tenderness would have been deeply wounded, had he lived to witness the miserable condition to which she must have been reduced, had she been made the wife of Lord Crumpford; which belief, she added, was a considerable stimulative to her putting in practice her resolution. She then told his Lordship that she wrote on board a ship which was bound for France, where she meant to reside till his kindness (which, notwithstanding the measures she had, being destitute of all other resources, been driven to take, she presumed to solicit) would condescend to assure her she might return in safety. She then informed him that she had taken five hundred pounds of Mrs. Selwyn's legacy, from Mr. Galliard, the day before he set off for Dublin; being *then* apprehensive that she might be driven to some extremity; after which she closes her letter, telling him they were that instant going under sail.

When this account reached the hands of the earl, it threw him afresh into a tumult of passion, and he seemed, for some time, determined to pursue her, till recollecting she would probably fly to Mr. Maynard, and put herself under his protection, he desisted.

Mr. Maynard, a very accomplished gentleman, was son to the earl's deceased sister. About two years back, he married a niece of the late Lady Danvers, who is esteemed extremely amiable. This happy couple, for very happy they are said to be, have resided, during the last twelve months, at Ostend; upon what account I cannot tell; probably, from inclination; as they are high in fortune, as well as rank, and have no family. Lady Caroline was always very fond of both these cousins, which makes it probable that the earl was not mistaken in his conjecture of her going to them; and not chusing, I fancy, to differ with Mr. Maynard, to whom, it is thought, he is under some pecuniary obligation, he leaves his daughter to her destiny. Sir William Jenyns, however, says that he begins to be uneasy; for from her not mentioning the name of the ship on which she went on board, he knows not how to get information of her, without applying to Mr. Maynard; to which measure he seems to make great objection. It is astonishing to me he did not directly go to Dover; where, notwithstanding her being gone, he, undoubtedly, might have gained some intelligence of her; she being too conspicuous a figure to pass unnoticed."

This long account of Lord Danvers and Lady Caroline Pemberton, Major Carrington gave his cousin in answer to her enquiry respecting their real characters, with which she wished to be acquainted before their arrival at the cottage. The Major is very intimate with Sir William Jenyns, who is a distant relation of Lord Danvers, therefore can speak with authority. These two gentlemen were chosen arbitrators of the difference about a piece of meadow-land of Mrs. Lawson's, which formerly belonged to the earl's estate. I cannot tell you the particulars; but the matter is now very amicably settled.

Notwithstanding this late vile piece of business, it is said that Lord Danvers possesses a very

excellent understanding; that he shows nobility in his air and manner, and, which is hardly to be credited, that he used to be fond of his daughter, to excess.

What strange havock does a love of gaming create in the mind! It was, it seems, that propensity which brought Lord Danvers to the unhappy determination of listening to the proposals of Lord Crumpford; to whom he is said to be engaged for a large sum, lost at play.

After Major Carrington had finished his letter, he adds a postscript, in which he says, Lady Caroline will be greatly disappointed in her expectations of finding her cousins, if that *was* her plan; as Sir William Jenyns, who had just been with him, told him that a letter was arrived at Berkley Square from Mrs. Maynard, directed to her Ladyship, which gave information that they should leave Ostend as soon as Mr. Maynard could dispatch some business he had in hand, respecting a certain unfortunate English gentleman who had lately taken up his residence in that place. She desired Lady Caroline not to write to her any more, as she hoped to be happy in seeing her early in March.

Lord Danvers, it seems, was, at this, excessively disturbed about his daughter's safety; said he would instantly set off for Dover; and if he could learn the route she had taken, would pursue her; and then again, unaccountably, changed his intention; telling Sir William that as it was most likely (upon finding the Maynards had left France) she would throw herself into some other protection, and then write to him, he should endeavour to satisfy himself till he heard from her.

Was there ever, as the Major asked, any thing so stupidly insensible? I am almost inclined to agree with him, in the opinion that Lord Danvers would not be very sorry to hear of the death of this charming creature, as he might then dispose of the little jointured estate in Derbyshire.

Poor Lady Caroline Pemberton! How greatly I pity her! So soon to be thrown, defenceless, into a world of troubles. Born to such expectations, and yet already deprived of the common conveniences of life! Who knows where she now is! or what she may not be labouring under!

You cannot think, my dear madam, how deeply I feel myself interested in her situation. The intimations which were scattered in the public papers, awakened my curiosity; and the excellency of her character has raised my solicitude. What an instance is here of the instability of human happiness! No situation can warrant a dependance on any thing below. How often has this been said! How seldom really believed; or even deeply considered!

Continual experience might effectually convince us, that no one here is so securely blest as to be out of the reach of misfortunes; nor any so sunk in wretchedness as to exclude relief. Felicity and calamity alike resemble the fashionable visitants of the present times: they come unthought of, and retire unexpectedly. But here ends the resemblance; for they are always sent by Supreme Benevolence. They come to correct and amend; and it is our own fault if we are not benefited by their kind admonitions.

Mr. Pelham, who dined here yesterday, says, it has been observed that Lady Caroline was once one amongst the happiest of happy beings. For though she lost a most excellent mother, her place was amply supplied by Lady Ann Maynard., the before-mentioned sister to the earl, and Mr. Maynard's mother; who, ever since the death of the Countess of Danvers, devoted her time to render

her beloved niece one of the most accomplished women of the English nation. With her, Lady Caroline constantly resided; sometimes at one of the earl's seats; sometimes at Lady Ann's country-house: at other times in London; Bath; Tunbridge, &c. &c. Admired—beloved—revered by all who had any knowledge of her. She was said to be the life of every party with which she associated. Upon the sudden death of Lady Ann, which happened soon after Mr. and Mrs. Maynard left England, Lady Caroline went to live entirely with her father, and soon began to experience misfortune, as Lord Crumpford upon his return with his daughter, (who in person and mind is the express image of himself) from a long residence in Scotland, and the northern parts of Yorkshire, where he has large estates, saw, and pretended to fall desperately in love with this charming woman. Had Lady Ann Maynard been living, it is probable she would have been saved from the subsequent persecution; as the earl always paid a great deference to his sister's opinion, in whatever related to his daughter. The continuance of her cousins in France, was another misfortune not to be remedied; as Mrs. Maynard's ill health prevented their return upon the news of Lady Ann's death; and Mr. Maynard was obliged to request Sir William Jenyns to superintend the affairs which fell to his management upon that event; not chusing to put them into the hands of his uncle, who attended so badly to the interest of his own concerns.

Sir William accepted the commission, and soon after went down into Shropshire; some of Mr. Maynard's estates laying in that county; and it was, it seems, in his absence that the horrid negotiation took place.

Astonishing that Lord Danvers, a man once highly esteemed for the great qualities of his mind; even noted for parental affection—should be so totally perverted by a destructive *penchant* for a pair of dice and a pack of cards, as to be induced to *sell* his once darling child, for the means of gratifying his inclination for gambling.

What an unhappy parent has poor Lady Caroline Pemberton!

Can I ever think with gratitude enough on the felicity I enjoy in that respect! Can I ever sufficiently prize the too rare circumstance of having a father and mother so condescending; tender, and indulgent; who seem to make the present and future happiness of their children the business of their existence!

My brother too!—Words cannot express how dear my brother is to me. Never before was I thus long absent from him without our corresponding by letters. But, my dear madam, I dare not write to him. I am afraid of his replies.

I scribble at odd bits and scraps, as I may say, of time, though I do not always date afresh when I piece my thread; as my wish it to join it so dexterously as to prevent your stumbling *at the knot*.—The present time is Saturday. I am every minute expecting the post will bring me a letter from you; therefore will not seal this till its arrival.

Saturday evening.

Your letter, my dearest madam, dated February the twenty-sixth, has reached me duly. But what can I say to its contents? Nothing—nothing adequate: therefore silence will be my best return.

Yet *can* I be silent to such language and sentiments! No: my heart is too full of duty; love, and gratitude. Accept, my ever kind, good, adviser—parent—*friend*—accept the overflowings of my mind, and convey, dearest madam, to my equally beloved and honoured father his share of every grateful and tender acknowledgement, including my dear George (with thanks for his remembrance of my Charlotte) in every affectionate sentiment and expression.

Repeat my cordial love to the truly admirable Maria; and tell poor Mrs. Moore I think upon, and pity her sufferings.

Your's, my dear madam,
ever to command,
EMMA STANLEY.

LETTER, XXVIII.

MISS MARIA LEWIS, TO MISS CHARLOTTE
LAWSON.

Second Month, 28th day.

WILL my dear Charlotte accept the fruits of a leisure hour, which her Maria confesesseth she knoweth not how to employ otherwise? It is a poor offering; yet as the best affections of the heart go with it, she will venture upon its not being rejected.

We reached Stanton by breakfast on fourth day morning, when we found poor friend Harley almost senseless.

I was shocked, my dear Charlotte, at the wild joy she expressed on seeing my aunt. Thy nature is too susceptible for me to wish to give thee unnecessary pain; for which reason I will forbear describing the scene which followed: wert thou a hard-hearted girl, I would try to soften thee by a repetition of the many tender things which passed between the afflicted husband and his children, on the deprivation they expected so soon to experience. Robert Harley is a CHRISTIAN; and, therefore, in the midst of his distress, forgot not submission.

But, my dear friend, the scene is changed. This house, late the house of mourning, is now the residence of well-tempered joy. Every countenance is expressive of gladness and gratitude. My worthy aunt, to whose presence; care, and kindness, Nancy Harley attributeth, in the second degree, a great part of her amendment, enjoyeth the happiness of every enlivened face; abated by no other consideration than the fear of their giving, too warmly, to her, those thanks which belongeth only to the One Great and Kind Physician.

My aunt's heart is the seat of the gentle—and, when occasion demands—of the severer virtues: but these last she never calleth into action when the first have sufficient efficacy to produce the desired salutary effect.

I feel myself so expanded by the contemplation of the variety of dispensations which have taken place, since our arrival at Stanton, that I cannot convey my sensations to thee in any other

words, than by saying that I seem as if I was dissolved into thin air; and as if every atom of my composition was exhilarated by the light and warmth of the sun. Doest thou understand me, Charlotte? for I scarcely understand myself; but to endeavour to express my meaning in more *material* terms, I feel something like an increase of love for every child of the Great Father's, from the recently revived sense of his paternal regard for his creatures.

I believe my ideas are too elevated for the weakness of my understanding to explain; will, therefore, trust to the susceptibility of my Charlotte's heart, for a right conception of my imperfect sketches.

* * * *

After I had written the above, I retired from my pen, and now find my feelings and capacity more upon a level with each other, than they were an hour back; therefore I will endeavour to talk a little "about the things of this world."

Robert Harley is now sitting very happy in an easy chair by the bedside of his greatly-recovered wife. My aunt in another, at her bed's-head; and the three daughters, five years of age the youngest; the eldest ten, upon the carpet before the fire, talking in whispers, that they may not disturb their mother. I enjoyed the scene some time, and then left it to scribble to my dear Charlotte, with whose mind I could, at an early period of acquaintance, mix mine without reserve.

And now, upon recalling that time to my idea, the conversation which passed in the first visit which thy family made at the Lawn, strongly recurs to my memory. The chief subject was true politeness. Doest thou not recollect it, Charlotte? I have often thought about it with attention; but a publication of very ancient date, which I this day met with in friend Harley's library, led me to endeavour to collect the particulars, and I think I now remember almost the very words in which my aunt gave us her opinion; which, she told us, was chiefly a faint recollection of what she formerly met with in some periodical publication.

I will repeat, as nearly as I can, her language, that we may compare it with what this ancient writer giveth upon the subject.

"By politeness," said the dear woman, "I have been taught to mean that disposition of mind and general mode of conduct which maketh people perfectly easy in their behaviour; desirous of conciliating the affections of others, and of promoting every one's benefit; — that rendereth even reproof agreeable; and obligation pleasing, and so doubleth the value of kind offices, that they seldom will be slighted or forgotten. It originateth from the generous and sympathetic feelings of the mind; is actuated by benevolence, and exerteth itself in beneficence."

"Chapone," continued my aunt, "saith, that true politeness consisteth not in external modes and ceremonies, but in entering with delicacy into the feelings of our companions; conforming to their inclinations; exalting them in their own opinions, and relieving them, as much as possible, from every restraint and anxiety."

The passage in the book before me is as followeth.

“True internal politeness is equally different from superficial civility—the affected manoeuvres of sly dissimulation—and impudent assiduity. It is an evenness of soul which excludeth, at the same time, both insensibility and extreme earnestness; giving the supposition of a quick discernment into the characters of men; and, by a sweet condescension, it will adapt itself to each man’s taste; not to flatter—but to calm his passions.

“In a word—it is forgetting ourselves, in order to seek what may be agreeable to others; yet in so delicate a manner as to let them scarce perceive we are so employed. It knoweth how to contradict with respect, and to please without adulation; being equally remote from an insipid complaisance and a low familiarity.”

By this, Charlotte, we find that the ancients and moderns had similar opinions respecting this *virtue* of politeness; for a *virtue* it certainly is, under the foregoing disquisitions. But I think they widely and sadly differ in their practice; as that which seemeth to be in general use in the present day, doth not appear to be adapted to any end, except that hateful one of hiding pride and envy under the veil—specious as it is—of humility and friendship.

Of *friendship*—did I say! How my heart riseth at the prostitution of that almost sacred word; which, in its genuine sense, is expressive of the most exalted attachment the heart of a mortal is capable to entertain!

But I must fly from this my favourite theme; for if I once suffer myself to be led by it, it will carry me beyond all due limits.

Perhaps, Charlotte, thou will think that my severity to the fashionable politeness, as it is called, ariseth from my dislike to it as a Quaker. What answer to make to this, I know not. If I tell thee that it is probable that that may be the case, as we are educated to have an abhorrence of this deceiving appearance as a vice, which most other young people are taught to consider, and to endeavour to attain as an accomplishment, it will appear like a design of throwing a lustre upon our principles, at the expence of those of other societies; which I have been always charged, with the utmost caution, to avoid doing: we holding it very faulty to criticise the tenets of any other religion, without pressing occasion, well knowing there are good and bad men in all professions; and that we are not authorised to disturb their consciences, unless, as I before observed, we are called upon to take up the weapons of conviction.

“There are,” as an elegant writer hath justly remarked, “a sufficient number of articles, in which all good men, of all persuasions, universally agree, to furnish conversation, of a serious kind, for a company composed of many individuals, differing in opinion, respecting external modes of offering themselves to the GREAT SUPREME.”

Shall I, Charlotte, ask thy excuse for the gravity of my theme? I will not: it would be an affront to the excellency of thy mind, which is a happy composition of the lively and serious. But wilt thou pardon my encroaching so much on thy time, now rendered doubly precious by the company of thy chosen friend? To this, I scarce know what answer to expect.

However, I will intrude no longer than in telling thee I hope, ere many days are over, thou wilt give me the consequence of presenting me to thy Emma as one, who, from thy report, already admireth her excellencies; and who presumeth to aspire to the title of *her* friend at well as thine.

MARIA LEWIS.

LETTER, XXIX.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Alverston, Monday morning, March 2d, 1789.

AS I promised you should have a letter, if the post frustrates not my design, ready for your perusal upon your arrival in Portland-Place, I have set myself down to write in a beautiful shining morning, though the cry of the hounds tingle in my ears. Can I give a greater proof of the wish I have to dispel the chagrin, which, notwithstanding all my preaching—But already I forget that I have given you my word I will forbear the subject. That is to say, as much as possible; for forbear it always, I cannot, if your letters wear that tinge of melancholy which, even through your smiles, is visible in your countenance.

But, Charles, I am, again, entirely overthrown. The faint resolutions I formed at Hawthorn Grove, grew weaker and weaker upon my nearer and still nearer approach to Alverston Park. I struggled to keep myself bound by the cobweb-cord with which you had endeavoured to fasten my affections to your standard of rectitude; but in vain. Maria—my dear charming Maria—was the first object which presented itself upon my alighting last evening at the inner gate. By her dress, she had, I supposed, been at church; having on an elegant pale pink silk gown; white silk, or sattin petticoat, and a white lustring scarf. I wish I could have prevailed upon you to have come to Alverston before you began your tour, that a sight of my charmer might have softened the severity of your advice, respecting her. She was attending my mother, who was leaning upon her arm, down the flight of steps from the saloon door. At sight of me she blushed—*indeed*, Charles, she did—red as the deepest rose. By my faith, I trembled “like an aspen-leaf.” Say what you will—But I forbear. My pen shall not be indulged in its ramblings at this sitting.

I take it for granted that you are now advanced some miles upon your journey. Doubtless you will reach London on Thursday; therefore I shall expect to hear from you by Friday’s post. If you stop at Leicester, as you proposed, and write to me from thence, I shall probably receive it on Wednesday. I must acknowledge I feel myself so continually anxious for your welfare, that I am impatient for information on the subject.

We have just received a letter from my tantalizing old god-father. He intends being with us in a short time. What I am to say to him I know not. Show him Maria, I think, and tell him she is to be my wife. Zounds! how the old fellow would splutter! Family—connections—fortune—all enquired into in an instant. How blank he would look upon receiving a negative to all his questions on these heads! Do you know I have a sort of sneaking kindness for this veteran chap, notwithstanding his plaguing me so perpetually about *settling*, as he calls it! I do believe he is a hearty, honest fellow, and earnestly wishes my happiness. My father and mother I know respect him, as, indeed, they have reason to do, above all men existing. It is a pitiable matter that he is so tyrannical and positive. I hate him for that, because it draws me into an opposition with the wishes he has created in the breasts of my truly honoured and beloved parents.

I told you my sister promised us an account of Lady Caroline Pemberton, whom you so

much admire. It is arrived, and is such a one as confirms, and that from authority, all that you, and the voice of fame, ever sounded in her praise. If my heart was not already in chains, I think I should be so fired by her character, that I should hasten in pursuit of the vagrant beauty (for the account which Paget gave of her flight is exactly true) and, if I could find her, bring her back my own. A good thought strikes me—Faith I wish you would put it in practice—which is, that you alter your plan, and pursue the flying fair one—conduct her to Hawthorn Grove, and make her Lady Caroline Conway. By my soul, Charles! I wish you would. It would be an excellent piece of heroism! I am in earnest, man; and repeat that I verily believe, if I was not bewitched by this little gipsy, I should actually turn Quixotte upon the occasion, and run the *golden monster* through the lungs, if he offered to dispute the prize on my return. With much more propriety might the adventure be undertaken by you, who have the honour of being acquainted with her. But if not Lady Caroline—look round you, Charles. There are thousands of women in England superior to my sister; though had any body told me so a month back, my sword, self-guided, would have sprang from its scabbard: and even now it might be dangerous for any other to hazard the sentiment. But I most sincerely wish you to see her demerits multiplied and magnified.

You will probably meet with Colonel Greville in London. Give, if you do, my service to him: Tell him we shall be glad to see him at Alverston. But do you know, Charles, that I think that young man is grown a thorough libertine? I never had a *high* opinion of his principles, and I have an idea they are now worse than ever. The last time I saw him, which was at Grantham, his expressed sentiments, on several serious matters, were very loose indeed.

I find we are to have a *monstrous* company, as Mrs. Cookley says, at Miss Haylin's wedding. My father, mother, and myself, have promised to attend, if nothing unforeseen prevents us. I hate the idea of the bustle; and why? Maria will remain at Alverston.

It is to no purpose to deny it—I am totally relapsed; and *Maria* is the burden of the only song I can sing.

Farewell, my dear Charles,

may the dreams of my charmer

be favoured to her, and your

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XXX.

SIR CHARLES CONWAY, TO GEORGE
STANLEY, ESQ.

Market—Harborough, Tuesday evening, March 3rd.

I Arrived at this place about five o'clock, and meant to reach Northampton before I rested, whither Joseph is gone on with the saddle-horses, but something is amiss with one of the wheels of my

chaise, and it cannot be properly repaired before morning. I feel myself excessively tired, and by no means well. If the season is in the least favourable, I will take your advice, and go into the sea, when I reach Yarmouth; as Joseph, who knows that coast perfectly well, says it is a place very commodious for bathing. It is a considerable time since I was in that part of the kingdom; but I remember enough of it to anticipate some little pleasure from seeing it again, if—I cannot help it, George—if I can find pleasure in any thing. Your sister's image haunts me perpetually. Not as she *is*, but as she *was*; I cannot see her in any other colours.

I staid longer than I intended at Leicester; yet had not an opportunity of writing to you from thence! Do not let me be disappointed in my expectations of finding a letter from you upon my arrival in Portland Place.

Till this minute, I never recollected how near I am to Mrs. Digby's. I must send a card of enquiry up to her, or, if by any accident she should hear I have been in the town, she will have some reason to impute to me a want of civility: yet I am not greatly in the humour to make compliments.

Nine o'clock.

This confounded civility has drawn me into a very disagreeable predicament. Mrs. Digby, in answer to my card, has sent me so pressing an invitation to breakfast with her, leaving the choice of the hour to me, that I cannot, with any degree of propriety, refuse, what is almost a *request*; except I were to send a lying excuse of urgent haste on material business, &c. &c. at which my nature revolts. Go, therefore, I must, though with much reluctance. Mrs. Digby is, as you have observed, a fine woman; almost a beautiful one: her understanding, likewise, is rather of the superior kind, and her temper, perhaps, agreeable; yet, notwithstanding this assemblage, she is, altogether, an *unamiable* woman—a woman with whom one cannot converse without something like an involuntary caution. Notwithstanding her, seemingly, unbounded vivacity, she always appears to speak with design; which one would think a contradiction; as that lively, pleasing disposition, which distinguishes women of the first description, often (from a conscious innocence which is a stranger to the want of disguises) leads the possessor to speak, from the genuine effusions of her heart, what duller or more crafty souls interpret to her disadvantage.

I need not set the name of Emma Stanley to this portrait. The outlines describe her too strongly to permit the likeness to escape observation. Not such is Mrs. Digby: but I need not depreciate one to exalt the other: *that other* will rise upon the strength of her own merits.

Wednesday noon.

I have been detained at the hall till this instant, and am unhinged by an event unconsonant to my plan, which was, as you know, to make my longest stay at Yarmouth; where I wished and expected to remain a stranger, unnoticed. But, would you believe it, Mrs. Digby was dressed; had all her clothes packed, and her carriage in perfect readiness to set out, the moment I left her, for that very identical sea-port! How the plague came such a whim into the woman's head! What inducement can *she* have to go to Yarmouth, at this season of the year?

Upon some conversation on travelling, she made the supposition that I was going to London. I confirmed it. She then asked me if I knew any thing of Yarmouth in Norfolk. I looked with some surprise, as it appeared like her being acquainted with my design of going thither, which

seemed impossible. At length, I told her I had been at that place some years back, and meant to stay a few weeks in it, before I returned into Derbyshire.

“In Yarmouth!” repeated she, evidently surprised in her turn; “Are *you*, Sir Charles, going to Yarmouth?”

I am, madam, and imagined, by your question, that you, by some chance, had heard of my design.

“Indeed no;” she replied: “my surprise arose [deeply blushing she said it] from the similarity of our impulses, as I wait but till breakfast is finished, to set off for that place.”

For Yarmouth in Norfolk, madam!—*I* then exclaimed; my disapprobation visible, I dare say, in my countenance.

She confirmed her intention; said she was always immoderately fond of the sea, and was, at that time, [heavily sighing] far from being in perfect health; that she had been recommended to Yarmouth on several accounts, and meant to stay there a considerable time, if the air agreed with her constitution. She then asked, having before made general enquiries, whether she might hope for the additional pleasure of seeing in Norfolk any of our friends at Alverston. No, madam; was all my reply; at which she looked with a penetration I could hardly parry; but I turned the subject, and asked her, whether she had seen her cousin Greville since his return? She said she had not, but she expected he would soon go through Harborough, as he talked of going to Alverston. I asked if Miss Howard, who was with her, accompanied her in her excursion. She said no; her sister would be so obliging as to stay at Harborough during her absence; as she should leave some matters which required a little attention.

Miss Howard, I think, ranks amongst the most amiable class of womankind. Engaging in her person; elegant in her manners; excellent in her disposition, and exalted in her understanding—gives her character. She has, I have heard, been almost uninterruptedly unfortunate through life; losing, not only the fortune she was born to possess, but the man of her affection.

George, do you not pity Miss Howard?

After unavoidable compliments about meeting in Yarmouth, I took my leave of the sisters, and returned to my inn, where I have been obliged to wait, till this instant, for the reparation of my chaise.

And now, without one line about Maria Birtles—*your sister's waiting-maid-farewell.*
CHARLES CONWAY.

LETTER, XXXI.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Alverston, Thursday afternoon, March 5th, 1789.

IT is a falsity, Charles—she is *not*—“my sister’s waiting-maid.” My sister has, in *this* case, too much discernment to permit her attending upon her in that capacity. My *mother* refuses it, likewise. My *father* sees her merits. Who does not! Old Slayton—he came last night, which was sooner than we expected him, in his way to London—seems to eye her with an eye of jealousy: a proof that he, too, thinks her an extra-ordinary creature; for were the extra left out of the account, old George would not be afraid for me. He knows I am *ordinary proof*.

But I have something to tell you—something of consequence. And that is—*Maria Birtles*, without any dispute, is *in love* with—*your happy humble servant*. “O the vanity of this puppy!”—methinks I hear you exclaim. Exclaim on, Charles, and welcome. I have received it into my heart as a certainty, and it is not within the limits of your sophistry to root it up.

But listen, listen and hear the particulars. Hear the *proofs* of this glorious circumstance, and be convinced that I am one of the finest fellows upon the habitable globe; for an inferior creature could not have conquered this exalted piece of nature’s most choice production.

My valiant godfather, as I have said, arrived last night at Alverston. My father was down at Derby when he came. Maria was sitting at work with my mother in her dressing-room, up into which, after a little conversation below stairs about our law business, I ushered Mr. Slayton. At our entrance, Maria would have retired, but my mother insisted upon her keeping her seat, and she resumed her work.

Introductory compliments, &c. being over—old George began with—“Well, boy! and when am I to be introduced to your lady?”

When I am blessed with a return of affection from a woman worthy the admiration of the universe—was my reply, without daring to lift up my eyes.

“Hey-day!” exclaimed the veteran, construing my speech as I wished he should, “am I to wait for a god-daughter [for so, you know, he says he shall term my wife] “till you meet with a phoenix?”

Till I can make a phoenix—a phoenix indeed, my good sir—my own, I shall never be in any other state than a single one.

What the deuce did I mean by all this! Am I seriously determined to marry “my sister’s waiting-maid”—I hate you for the expression, Charles—if she will signify her acceptance of me? It is a question confoundedly mal-apropos at this juncture. But thus I answer—Were my father and mother to insist upon my marrying somebody; were they inclined to think her distinguishable perfections, personal and mental, an equivalent for family; connexions; and fortune; could I be, undoubtingly, assured that to *me*, and not to *mine*, her consent would be given, by my soul, Conway, she should be Mrs. Stanley, notwithstanding all my former nonsensical prate about equal matches; for were not those foolish sentiments imbibed under an idea that it was impossible to find any woman who, in herself, could answer all my wishes; therefore I was desirous to throw into the scale some incidental advantages to make it go down easily? But Maria Birtles does answer all my wishes.

She is all that woman *can* be—all that even idea can soar to. Were she titled and fortunèd, the inequality would be almost beyond the limits of nature. What female, but herself, could be thought about! Yet what man would dare to look up to her! By lifting her from the sphere in which she now moves, and placing her in one proper for her, and which she would adorn, one might hope to be considered with some little distinction; as the generosity of her mind would lead her to look upon it as an obligation; which (the object not *absolutely* despicable) might create in her breast such an affection for the happy fellow, as the wealth of monarchs would be wisely and profitably expended to purchase.

But to affairs in the dressing-room.

My mother, taking, as I intended she should, my declaration to have been against matrimony (while Maria, I hoped, would put upon it a construction in which she herself was concerned), was evidently apprehensive of a gathering storm amidst the combustible atoms which compose the tenement inhabited by this singular old soul, ycleped Slayton; and willing, I suppose, to give another turn to the sentiments I had delivered, interrupted the speech which he, with some appearance of warmth, was going to make, beginning with—"Then let me tell you, young man"—by jocosely saying, "Perhaps, cousin, I can inform you who this phoenix is, whom George is so bent upon obtaining; and with whom he seems, I think, to be in love, from mere report."

At that moment, Maria's eyes met mine, when she immediately cast them down, and the colour in her cheeks was ten shades deepened. I instantly determined to pursue the hint my mother had given, and enlarge upon the subject; that I might gather some information, by observing the effect it would have upon the listening charmer.

"Who knows," added my mother, "but you may bring it about!"

"Come, come; come, come;"—half a score times in a breath—"there is some sense in this now; this will do. Well; but what, and who is this wonderful creature?"—asked he; poking his square face between Maria and me, as if on purpose to prevent my looking at her.

"Nothing less than Lady Caroline Pemberton, daughter to the Earl of Danvers," said my mother; "a woman, whose name honours the sex to which she belongs."

"So I have heard," replied my godfather; "but—she is no great *fortune*, I think."

Fortune, sir, interrupted I—what is fortune to such a family as ours? Believe me, I would not think of that woman *with* a fortune, whom I would not marry *without*—speaking, I fancy, with considerable warmth; the more, as I wanted Maria to know I was disinterested; without recollecting—fool that I was—that my earnestness on the occasion might lead her to think my wishes were rivetted to the lady of whom we were talking; but I, afterwards, endeavoured to lessen the force of this conjecture. Upon my concluding my speech, Mr. Slayton, with a whistle, threw himself back in his chair; when I saw the deep damask rose expanding itself over the face and neck of my lovely girl. I was, as you will suppose, exceedingly pleased; yet a considerable degree of pain blended itself with my pleasure; as I could not tell whether to attribute her being so evidently affected to satisfaction from my declaration of not thinking money a necessary ingredient in

matrimony; or from chagrin, at my so warmly asserting that the want of it could not be any objection to Lady Caroline Pemberton; to whom, as I said, it might give her to suppose I was attached.

However, upon the whole, the pain was overbalanced by the pleasure; as, every way, it evinced that she took an interest in my affection, and I considered that if she entertained the latter of these ideas, I could easily remove it, would she allow me the opportunity, and plant another in its room. My godfather, as I said, fell back in his chair with one of my uncle Toby's whistling wh—ews, saying, "Softly, young sir; no need of quite so much warmth. Lord Danvers' daughter is, undoubtedly, a most accomplished creature; and as she is a woman of family; has great connexions, and *something* of a fortune, why—I do not see but that you"—

As to family and connexions, sir, said I—interrupting his ill-timed observations—I do not understand how they, any more than fortune, can constitute a man's happiness. But let me set this matter right at once. I admire, as my mother has said, the character of Lady Caroline Pemberton beyond expression; and were I to marry, as kings do, by proxy, without being permitted to see the lady previous to the ceremony, she, really, without hesitation, should be my choice; as I acknowledge to have been charmed by her fame: but recollect that I am an entire stranger to the person of this celebrated woman; and though I have been told she is beautiful as an angel, I cannot fall in love with a portrait.

"Well, well boy, I do not say you can; and yet, faith, I have seen a piece of painted canvass, in my time, that I have thought very bewitching; for you are to know that I saw my poor Jenny's picture before I saw her; and had she lived till we had been married—However we will not talk of these things now. But pray, madam," addressing himself to my mother, "where do you think George will"—

At that instant the door was opened, and in came my father. I was extremely relieved by his entrance, being apprehensive of some more unlucky remarks. When my father advanced to the fire, Maria arose; begged my mother to excuse her, as she had a violent pain in her head, and retired, with a downcast eye; but with an air the most graceful imaginable. As soon as she was gone, Mr. Slayton enquired of my mother who she was, and was told that at her first introduction into this family, it was designed she should attend my sister in the capacity of a servant. At this the old man looked surprised, and asked from whence she came. My mother told him she never enquired particularly into her former circumstances; as though she was always ready to answer, she found the subject was painful to her; but she believed her father had once a commission in the army. Her mother, she said, had been dead some years, and this young woman, Maria Birtles her name, left to the care of an aunt, who must have been an extraordinary person, as she had educated her niece in a finished manner.

I saw my mother was cautious of praising her too much; and I guessed the reason. Mr. Slayton kept his eye fixed upon my countenance, all the time she was speaking; but he saw nothing there. I was aware of him; and took up a quill, which lay on the table, and formed it into a pen, with seeming inattention to their discourse. He then asked where she had lived till now. "In London, chiefly, I believe," my mother said, "as it was Mrs. Douglass, who scarce ever leaves Grosvenor Square, that recommended her, and that in very warm terms, to Emma."

“She is too handsome, I think, for a waiting-maid,” very justly observed my godfather.

“I think so likewise,” replied her ladyship; “but it is the superiority of her mind which prevents my considering her in that capacity.”

“Had I a son,” said old gruff, “I should not be very fond of laying in his way such a temptation.”

“Were that son like your godson,” my father said, “you need not be under any apprehension of danger on such an account. George, though full much of a rattle, has honor, and prudence, let me tell you, in no ordinary degree. The first, will secure the young woman; the last, himself.”

I was obliged to my father, and thanked him by a bow. I could not speak. He struck through my heart.

The conversation then turned; but I could not recover the blow; nor could I sleep all night. First one scale; then another; and then a third, continually preponderated. Love; honor, and prudence, seemed each to carry the weight of a hundred ton; though the scale of the last would, unhesitatingly, have kicked the beam, had not duty to the best parents in the universe, kept it down. Yet why should I not hope they might be brought to give their consent to my wishes, were I to make a proposal, and set to their view all the real benefits which would probably accrue from their acquiescence? Is not all their power exerted to make their children happy? It is. Are not their understandings of a kind so superior to that of the generality of people, as to lead them to a conviction that felicity is often a stranger where riches and nobility unitedly preside? They are; and, but for this positive old batchelor-cousin, I am pre-disposed to think I should prevail upon their *affection*, if not their *reason*, to comply. But this hundred thousand pounds!—Curse upon the proposal! My soul spurns at his offer! We want no more than we have in possession. Let him give it to whom he will, if he chuses to be unjust as well as capricious.

Charles, I am distracted.

After a sleepless night, I arose soon after six. Honor was the leading conqueror. Prudence, supported by duty, ranked second. Love followed, bound in chains, apparently much oppressed, and nearly strengthless. When I had, as I thought, left him at a distance, I turned to pity him, and saw him, not far off, assisted by Venus, Juno and Minerva, who entered into an almost unprecedented league to support the treacherous invader. At sight of his powerful allies, I resolutely flew forwards after my before-mentioned leaders, who had rescued me from the almost invincible boy, and pressed them to accompany me into the library; where they remained during our breakfasting, which was finished so early as half after eight; when, the day being remarkably fine and warm, my father proposed a ride to Derby, my mother wanting to see her milliner, and he having some business with Jesson about the particulars of a mortgage. We all agreed; the coach was ordered, and off we went; but we had not proceeded more than half a mile from the park-gate, before we were overtaken by Bob Saunders’ servant, who came to enquire if I was going to the ball, given by the Mortimers on account of Miss Haylin’s wedding; (which, by the bye, I forgot to tell you is this day celebrated) because if I was, he would dine with me at Alverston, and accompany me to Hazel-wood Lodge in the evening. If not, the man was to ride back to meet his master, who would then stop at Peterson’s,

and go with his family. Bob is grown very modest surely, thus to seek for an introducer. But, I doubt, the new acquirement will sit very awkwardly upon a fellow who has been distinguished by his impudence for more than a quarter of a century. As the servant said his master would be at Alverston within an hour, if not prevented, it was judged proper for me to return to receive him, as my father's business would probably detain him at Derby, till near dinner; I, therefore, stepped out of the coach, and walked homeward. The morning was, as I told you, uncommonly beautiful, and being in a contemplative mood, I entered the second gate of the lower pleasure ground, upon the bank of which I first saw "*my sister's waiting maid*:" Before I had proceeded many paces, the same dear, lovely image caught my eye. She was sitting, with a book in her hand, upon the bench on the left hand of the valley. I started at sight of her; my heart throbbed till it almost choaked me, and my whole frame was in confusion. Love, in full triumph, took possession of my soul; and prudence, though united with duty, vanished from my sight: but honor was detained by love; she kept her station, and forsook me not. At sight of me, Maria hastily arose, and was going. What could I do! Reason was too slow in his admonitions: there was no time to attend to him. Like a beam of light I flew to the flying charmer; caught her in my arms; gently drew her back, and re-seated her upon the bench; being determined to unfold to her my heart.

Maria. What do you mean, sir, by thus detaining me! Unhand me, this instant, and let me go.

Stanley. Excuse me, madam: excuse this compulsion. You must—you shall hear what I have to say to you.

Maria. To me, sir! what can you have to say to me, that can sufficiently apologize for conduct thus unpolite!

Stanley. That I love—that I adore you beyond all women existing!

Maria. And *that*, you have presumption sufficient to think, will amply atone for this treatment.

Stanley. Upon my honor, madam, you do me injustice; which a little consideration will, I hope, induce you to acknowledge.

Maria. I *need* not consider, sir. I do not *wish* to consider. It is a palpable truth that this situation is equally as improper for you, as for me.

Stanley. Charming woman!—but hear me out. I *will* be allowed to speak, [*putting my hand upon her lips*] or I shall be necessitated to stop your words in another manner [*bending forward as if I was going to give her a kiss.*]

She looked angry, and again struggled to free herself from my encircling arm: but I abated her displeasure by assuming the most respectful countenance, and requesting her to give me a five minutes audience. She coloured; she turned pale; she trembled: attempted to speak; hesitated, and was silent. With the utmost difficulty I restrained myself from pressing her to my bosom; but I forbore, least she should persist in leaving me. For a few moments I gazed upon the agitated charmer with looks of rapture, and then began.

Stanley. You see before you, madam, a man who, till you appeared at Alverston, kept his heart from any long captivity. Temporary seizures, I acknowledge to have suffered; but none of the fair pirates who have hitherto enslaved me, were cautious to fasten the chains in which they had accidentally caught me; all trusting so much to the force of their external magic, that they neglected those charms which alone can bind me prisoner for life.

Maria. This language, Mr. Stanley, is highly improper for me to attend to. Do you think, were I inclined to believe you; and were I disposed [blushing and casting down her eyes] to permit—to indulge—

Extremely she trembled. I could not but enjoy the enchanting confusion; till involuntarily seizing her hand, and pressing it to my lips with fervency, she started, and instantly recollecting herself, so warmly insisted upon my not sitting so near her, that I was obliged to remove a few inches; which, however, I very soon, almost imperceptibly, regained, and continued—allow me, my lovely girl, to offer to your consideration a proposal for endeavouring to induce my father and mother to approve of the sentiments with which you have inspired—

Maria, interrupting. No, sir. We are neither of us at liberty to converse on this subject. It is prohibited by duty and gratitude. Think of the conversation which passed last night, in my hearing, in Lady Stanley's dressing-room; recollect the protection—the treatment I have met with from your family; and then ask yourself if I deserve to stand so low in your opinion, as to have you suppose I would encourage your having one thought of an outcast, destitute of friends and fortune.

Stanley. Exalted creature! Every word you say increases my affection; which now can never be given to any other woman. But what part of last night's conversation do you ask me to recollect, as being of sufficient consequence to prevent my yielding to you, without reserve, the sovereignty over my heart?

Maria. Every part of it. Was not family; connexion, and fortune, each so strongly insisted upon, that no two would do without the third? Was not the daughter of Lord Danvers objected to, because her fortune was deemed insufficient? How then can I—who am in a state of dependence on the bounty of the benevolent—even *wish* to be received into any family (though by the consent of its individuals) with which I must live under a constant sense of obligation?

Charles, I was astonished. Greatly as I had thought of her—she exceeded all my ideas; her manner being still more elevated and charming than even her language.

Stanley. You do injustice, my lovely girl, to Sir Edward and Lady Stanley. Their minds admit generosity as a constant resident. Were you once their daughter [to what a length, Conway, had I insensibly arrived!] they would, ever after, consider you as having always been of their rank; and as to Emma—I am convinced she would delight in receiving you for a sister. My godfather, indeed, is unreasonable in his requisitions; but I do not look upon *him* as one to whom I owe *duty*; nor can he any way be entitled to *your* consideration. But before you reply to the above, let me ask you two questions. First—have you not, for some time, been convinced of the reality of my admiration and respect? Secondly—were all the seeming difficulties removed, might I hope your

heart, without reluctance, would assent to my wishes? [*looking at the time earnestly in her face, and pressing one of her hands between both mine.*]

Maria. Your first question, sir, I will answer “with the sincerity which, I will presume to say, is natural to me,” by acknowledging that I have for some time observed you regarded me, or intended I should think so, with some distinction. Your second—as matters are circumstanced, it is unnecessary to reply to; for what end would it answer to—

She stopped; and then resumed—“Excuse me, sir: You can no longer have any thing to say to me, which will justify my staying”—and endeavoured to rise, with an intent to leave me; when, transported by the sweetness of her accent, looks and manner, and desperate at the idea of losing her, I madly clasped her in my arms; pressed her to my throbbing breast, and imprinted a dozen kisses on every part of her lovely face. At this, with the most dignified resentment, she loosened herself from my clasping arms, and, with an air truly majestic, as she stood before me, I still detaining her hand—“*How dare you*, sir, thus insolently presume [*were her words*] upon the civility with which I attended to your request of listening to you for a few minutes! If you think my compliance—now I see carried too far—arose from a weak indulgence to any inclination of my own, undeceive yourself; and know that while I saw, or fancied I saw, you laudibly endeavouring to subdue an improperly placed attachment, I pitied—foolishly pitied the imaginary conflict (which my vanity is sufficiently mortified by having supposed real;) and, in consequence of that mistaken compassion, attended to your plausible story. I still pity you, sir; but on a different account; and my pity is of that kind which is nearly allied to contempt, notwithstanding your name is Stanley; which name, let me tell you, it will never be my wish should, by you, be added to that of Maria.”

She then forcibly withdrew her hand, and left me in such an astonishment as prevented my following her till she had reached the aviary; but I then recollected myself, flew after her; caught her, and intreated her to stay till I convinced her my apparent presumption was the effect of such a fervency of admiration as I was too weak to repel; though even in the moment of my frenzy, my sincere respect for her, reproached me. And so it did, Charles; yet I could not resist. I love her to madness; and without her, shall be one of the greatest wretches in existence. Every kiss I gave her was a rivet to my affection, and the following lines, which arose spontaneously in my mind on the occasion, I have, ever since, been continually repeating.

When down in the valley Maria I kissed,
My heart, with soft raptures, beat high.
Her lip and her cheek, I alternately pressed:
Was tempted at length, to her eye.
But when I a kiss on that jewel did fix,
Sly Cupid—hid there with his dart—
Extended his bow, like the rest of his tricks,
And pierced through my lips to my heart.

As I told you, Charles, I intreated the offended beauty to listen to my vindication; but in vain. She was obdurate, and with such firmness insisted upon leaving me, that I was obliged to comply with her mandate to quit her hand; at which instant she rapidly rushed through the upper gate, near to which she was standing, and soon vanished from my pursuing eye, by turning up the avenue. After

some time, I slowly walked into the house, more distracted in my mind than I ever remember to have been in my life before, and had I not had recourse to my pen, should have been so discomposed, by brooding over my perplexities, as to have been unfit for any company, during the rest of the day.

It is now near three, and Saunders not yet arrived, though his servant said he would be at Alverstton by eleven, at latest. Maria is, probably, shut up in my mother's apartments. I every minute expect the return of the Derby party; therefore must hasten to be dressed.

I intended to have replied to the contents of your letter, respecting your visit to Harborough Hall. You are displeased, but I cannot help being glad at the probability of your meeting Mrs. Digby at Yarmouth, as it will inevitably break in upon your plan of solitude, which I greatly disapprove. I do not think you do Mrs. Digby full justice. Great allowances are to be made for a young, rich, beautiful widow, left entirely to her own discretion.

Saunders is now alighted. I must, therefore, hasten to *bedizen* my person, though my mind will remain in dishabille. The thoughts of what are called the pleasures of the evening, fatigue me; for what can happen to give me the least amusement! Nothing: positively nothing.

GEORGE STANLEY.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

VICISSITUDES
IN
GENTEEL LIFE.

VICISSITUDES

IN

GENTEEL LIFE

In FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

An Endeavour to please the Many, is not only a vain, but a
foolish Attempt, as the Success would be inglorious;
while the Approbation of the Few—the penetrating
and judicious Few—who can see, and will admire,
the Beauties that are meant, though imperfectly
expressed, rewards the Labors of a Writer,
and will perpetuate the Verdure of
his shaded Laurels.

SPECTATOR

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M. DCC. XCIV.

VICISSITUDES

IN

GENTEEL LIFE.

LETTER, I.

MISS STANLEY, TO LADY STANLEY.

Woodstock, March 5th.

I Have now, my dear madam, been introduced to the respectable friends at the Lawn, and likewise to Lady Blurton and “the Honourable Miss Barbara Tupps.”

Yesterday, about twelve o'clock, a note arrived from Mrs. Stanhope to Mrs. Lawson, telling her that her niece and herself were just returned from Stanton; that Maria being impatient to see Charlotte's friend, they had determined to take the first opportunity of being introduced to her, and offered themselves to dinner, if Mrs. Lawson's family was not otherwise engaged. Accordingly, about half after one o'clock, setting out as soon as the servant returned, they arrived.

As the appearance of genteel people of this sect, is, I believe, rather new to you, I will endeavour to be a little particular in my description of theirs, the simplicity of it strongly striking my observation.

Their chaise was one of the neatest I ever saw in my life. Its colour was a light brown, elegantly ornamented, though in a plain way, with silver beadings, &c. lined with white sattin, and drawn by a pair of beautiful grey horses. The servants livery, if it can be called one, was of the colour of the chaise; buttons, the same, and, likewise, lined with white.

When the ladies appeared, I was surprised at the graceful ease of their manner, notwithstanding all that had been said to me about it; for I could not divest myself of the idea of some stiffness and formality; so unjustly has that opinion been generally imprinted upon the minds of those who differ in persuasion from these truly agreeable people; as Mrs. Lawson, who has had a pretty large acquaintance amongst them, tells me she has commonly found them to be. Charlotte confesses she had once a strong prejudice against them, from supposing she must never laugh, nor hardly speak, when in their company, which she says was entirely removed in their first visit to the Lawn. Mrs. Eleanor Lawson was always partial to them, but Miss Rachel dislikes them, she declares, “beyond all the people she knows upon earth,” because they will neither bow nor courtesy, and because they impertinently call her Rachel; a name, it seems, which she dislikes above all others; probably, on account of its being her own; and often quarrels with her mother and aunt, for their having imposed it upon her, without giving her any other to relieve it, as she says they might

have done, without any affront to her lady-godmother. She is, to be sure, a most disagreeable tempered young woman, and ruins, as far as she is able, the harmony of this otherwise happy family.

When Mrs. Stanhope entered the room, I was struck with the agreeableness of her figure. She appears to be about fifty years of age; and has, I dare say, been very handsome when younger. Her complexion is very clear, and her hair dark. In her person she is rather tall, and inclined to be fat. She addressed me with a manner composed of true dignity and politeness; congratulating my friends at Woodstock on, what she termed, their acquisition.

I then turned to Miss Maria Lewis, than whom, I think, a more interesting figure never caught my eye. Her complexion is lovely fair indeed. Her features small, and her face so regularly pitted by the small pox, that I am sure it must have added to its beauty. Her eyes are dark; her lips a bright red. For the colour of her hair and eye-brows I can hardly find a comparison. It is not light; nor dark: yet rather dark than otherwise, and extremely glossy. It straggles about her neck; down the sides of her face, and upon her forehead, in a natural wave, forming itself, behind, into ringlets; evidently without having been curled. She is not quite so tall as Miss Lawson; rather more slender, and strikingly genteel. Her hands and arms particularly beautiful.

The elegance of her figure, prevented my noticing her dress, till a considerable time after her entrance; but I recollect she had on a light brown sattin gown; white sattin petticoat, with three welts. The sleeves of her gown came just below her elbow, and were bound with a strip of muslin: a piece of narrow black ribband was tied round her neck. Her linen was all of the finest buck-muslin; the apron laid in deep welts up to the top. There was not any thing about her which looked like trimming. Her bonnet and cloak were white sattin; the former almost round, and of the prettiest and most becoming shape imaginable: When she took it off, the simplicity of her head-dress pleased me more than all the rest. I cannot do justice to it by description. She has not yet, as I before intimated, turned her hair up from her forehead. I believe she endeavours to divest it of its curl in the fore part, but without success; its natural bend still persisting to give addition to its beauty. She wore a cap exactly calculated for the delicacy of her features. It was small and round. Her age, as I have said, is seventeen; but she appears still younger.

When Charlotte led her up to me, and put her hand into mine, introducing us to each other with a compliment to both, she animatedly said—"I am happy in being presented to the dearest friend of Charlotte Lawson, with whom I presume to hope *her* kind partiality will give me some distinction."

I was so struck with the agreeable frankness of her manner, that I doubt I made but an awkward reply: however, I meant a sincere compliment, and she received it as such: thanking me for my prepossession, and asking permission to observe, that what she had already seen of me answered so exactly the idea she had formed, from description, that she was convinced she had likewise imbibed a just opinion of my character. I made my answer by my looks; and then, our matronly friends being seated, we took our places at the fire side; Miss Rachel not being yet ready to make her appearance. A more agreeable conversation than that which succeeded, I scarce ever remember to have borne a part in; the novel simplicity of the language of *the friends*, surprised and delighted me nearly as much as the delicacy and justness of their sentiments.

We sat chatting till near three o'clock, when a servant came with a letter to Miss Rachel, from Miss Barbara Tupps, apologizing for the short notice, and requesting her to get ready to return with Lady Blurton, who would follow the messenger; and indeed no sooner was the letter read, than, at a little distance, the chariot was in view. I had been told of the extreme gaudiness of this lady's appearance, but my utmost ideas of finery were short of the glare of her superb equipage; the showiness of which was, perhaps, more strikingly observable from the resemblance of the simple one that, about an hour before, entered the court-yard: indeed, no two things of the same kind could form a stronger contrast. In a few minutes the hall door was thrown open, and in rushed the ladies, both of them rather large in their make, and rendered much more so by the extreme bustle of their clothes, dressed—the one in an orange-tawney tabby; the other in deep red-rose sattin, with a profusion of feathers; flowers, and ribbands. Can you wonder at the surprise which filled the gentle Maria at this blazing appearance, or at the strong propensity to laughter which seized your saucy Emma! almost every body was inclined to smile. Mrs. Stanhope was, I believe, the only one who appeared unmoved. Yet even she, I fancied, looked with concern; as if she pitied them, and had said to herself—“*Poor things!*”—with an inward sigh of compassion for their folly. Even Miss Rachel, who professes to have a violent attachment to “*the Honourable Miss Barbara Tupps,*” was rather ashamed of their glaring finery. The friendship, as it is called, between Miss Barbara and Miss Rachel, arose from their having been together at school, one quarter of a year. Had they both continued there, it is probable this friendship would soon have given way to as great an animosity; their tempers being, as it seems it is generally known, by their friends on both sides, alike proud and unhappy. Mrs. Lawson and Mrs. Eleanor made considerable objections to Miss Rachel's accompanying these ladies to London: but upon her coming of age, which she did last November, she gave them to understand she should no longer think herself liable to any controul. Her conduct gives great vexation to her real friends. Mrs. Lawson, very tenderly and wisely, after due remonstrances, gives sometimes an apparent consent to what she can neither approve nor prevent, to avoid coming to extremities, and to save Miss Rachel from the open defiance which she seems to hold herself ready to commence: Hence, her permission to attend Lady Blurton.

When these honourable visitors entered the room, they were first introduced to Mrs. Stanhope; upon whom they seemed to look with inexpressible contempt; then to me, and then to Miss Lewis; over whom the eyes of Miss Barbara seemed to wander in a moment. They then sat down upon a sopha in silence; till at length Lady Blurton deigning to look at me—“I think, Miss,” said she, “Mrs. Lawson pronounced the name of Stanley, when she presented you.”

I bowed an affirmative.

Lady Blurton. O! aye—of the Stanley's in Derbyshire. Your father, I believe, Miss, has not yet succeeded in his endeavours to get a *real* title.

Emma. I do not know, madam, what you call a real title.

Lady Blurton. “*Madam,*” child! I am *Lady Blurton*. Well, but I believe, *madam* is the fashion; though, I protest, a very indecent one, as it sweeps away all due distinction: but young people must, to be sure, conform to the fashion, be it what it will.

Mrs. Lawson. Does your ladyship think that is always necessary? May there not be

exceptions to the rule?

Lady Blurton. None, madam; none: none in life. If young people would cut any figures in the *circles*, they must be in the fashion; though, as the Earl of Banbury says, it should demand their walking with their heads downwards—He! he! he! he!

Mrs. E. Lawson. Then neither good sense nor morality are to stand out against this idol, fashion!

Lady Blurton. Good sense and morality, Mrs. Eleanor Lawson! you quite amaze me! How can a woman in your sphere talk in such a style! To be a fashionable person is sufficient. It includes every thing.

Mrs. E. Lawson. But are there not people in the world, Lady Blurton, who would look down with a little conscious superiority upon those who act upon this system? people too, whose opinion is truly worth regarding? And will there not come a time, think you, when these empty sentiments will prove not only very useless, but very painful to their adopter?

Lady Blurton was pursued to her last resource by Mrs. Eleanor Lawson's interrogations, which, she afterwards owned, she could not help bringing forward on account of Miss Rachel, who was so soon to be entrusted to her ladyship's protection.

The subject was now dropped, and Lady Blurton, not forgetting my reply, turned to me in front, and said—"Sure, Miss Stanley, you cannot have been brought up in so much ignorance, as not to know that a real title is such as confers *nobility*; all below that great boundary being merely nominatives. Your father, I fancy, is still nothing more than a baronet."

Emma. Nothing more, madam; nor does he *aspire* to be any thing more.

Lady Blurton. O fye! O fye! Do not convey such an idea of your father's want of spirit. I dare say you four young ladies [looking at the two Miss Lawsons; Miss Lewis, and myself] would all wish to be married to real titles.

Charlotte. And does your Ladyship exclude Miss Barbara from a supposition of joining in the wish?

Lady Blurton. O Miss Lawson! Under the tutorage of such a mama, you must know better than to think it necessary to ask such a question. Miss Barbara Tupps was *born* honorable. It is not, therefore, essential for her to stand upon such a point; because were she to marry a *plebeian*, she would still retain her primeval distinction.

Lady Blurton judged politically in thinking it necessary to make this declaration; wisely concluding, no doubt, that it was very unlikely, "*the honorable Miss Barbara Tupps*" should ever be lifted into a sphere more exalted.

"True," said Miss Rachel Lawson, to Lady Blurton's last speech, "I think your ladyship

observes with great justness.”

No chance, to be sure, could ever have jumbled together a more unconsonant party than these ladies and the friends from the Lawn. I seemed to tremble for the events of the afternoon.

Just as Miss Rachel had replied to Lady Blurton, we were summoned to dinner, the greatest part of which passed pleasantly enough; but towards the latter end, an incident of the comic kind, made some of us put on tragic faces.

After an elegant table of fish, fowls, &c. &c. we had a genteel little desert of creams; jellies, and preserves. Near Miss Lewis stood some lemon slummery, which I could not help observing was particularly pleasant; Lady Blurton joined me in opinion; and Miss Tupps (her plate at that time being empty) fixing her eyes upon it, the gentle Maria, ever willing to oblige, took the spoon in her hand, and said with a pleasant air—“Barbara, wilt thou give me leave to help thee to a little of this nice jelly?”

This was the first direct address she had had occasion to make to either of these great ladies, and the consternation which appeared in the countenance of both, upon the occasion, is indescribable. They looked at each other with all imaginable surprise, and Lady Blurton, laying down the spoon she was lifting to her mouth, repeated the word BARBARA? in a tone (casting her eyes round the table) that asked the company whether she had heard aright.

“*Barbara* indeed!”—re-echoed the honorable Miss—while the modest, but unintimidated, Maria collectedly said, looking at both—“Friends, I meant you no disrespect. Were I in company with the daughter of a prince, the opinion in which I have been educated, would lead me to address her with the same seeming familiarity.”

“I do not know, Miss,” said the haughty girl, with a deep flush of resentment in her cheeks, “what your education has been, but the proofs you have, just now, exhibited, are not very strong in favour of its gentility.”

Mrs. Lawson, greatly hurt upon the occasion, and concerned for her innocent young friend, told this “honorable Miss Barbara Tupps,” that she would answer for it, Miss Lewis was very far from intending the least incivility; on the contrary, she evidently wished to oblige her, by helping her to some of the slummery which her friends had been so kind as to recommend.

Dinner was by this time finished; for no slummery would Miss Barbara taste; the table cleared; fruit and wine set on, and the servants going out, when the dowager lady took upon her to criticise Mrs. Lawson's address to her darling.

Lady Blurton. You say, madam, that Miss—I protest I forget her name—meant a civility, when she offered to serve Miss Barbara Tupps with some of that slummery, which, to be sure, was very nice. By the same rule, madam, you would affirm that the mistress of a London gin-shop coming to the door, and, with an offensive breath, asking you to walk in and drink, was a civil personage.

At this I saw Mrs. Stanhope, who had, hitherto, appeared unmoved, was offended; and, I believe, thought it was incumbent upon her to take some notice of this palpable affront to her niece; which she did by saying—"Permit me, neighbour Blurton, to observe that the dialect thou hast chosen to convey thy ideas in, is so new to Maria Lewis, that I apprehend she will not understand the allusion."

The edge of this reproof was too fine for her ladyship's feelings to be hurt by, because she was insensible to its keenness; but she seemed to suppose it was a tart reply—not by Mrs. Stanhope's manner; for that was perfectly composed; but, probably, because she was conscious her speech merited one: therefore, drawing up her head, she said—"I cannot tell, madam, what you mean, madam; nor do I know that I ever was any neighbour of yours."

Mrs. Stanhope. And yet I hope I should be a neighbour to thee, were I called upon by occasion, without removing into thy vicinity. I have been accustomed to think of, and to use, the word neighbour in an extensive sense.

Lady Blurton. Are you going to teach me the sense of words, madam? Or do you suppose I do not know what a neighbour is?

Mrs. Stanhope. It appeared as if thou wert a stranger to the sense in which I used the word; as else, thou wouldst not, I think, have been offended.

Mrs. Eleanor Lawson observing the attitude of consequence which Lady Blurton was preparing to speak in, and apprehending the argument might increase in unpleasantness, prevented her reply, by saying—"I do not pretend to understand the true etymology of the word neighbour; but we have the highest authority for using it for any one who would do another an office of kindness; though, as the example alluded to, says, they should be so far from living near each other, that they should even be of different nations: and this, doubtless, is the sense—the benevolent sense—in which it is constantly used by that sect of people, of which Mrs. Stanhope is a member; and, permit me to say, an ornament."

Mrs. Eleanor Lawson, as she afterwards said, hoped this would finish the subject; but Lady Blurton, who always thinks, what she calls, her opinion, ought universally to be subscribed to, was not to be so answered. Without giving time for any body to introduce any other topic of conversation, as every one was endeavouring to do, she proceeded with—"Upon my word, Mrs. Eleanor Lawson, you are all too wise; too learned, and too good for me. I protest I know not what to say to you. Pray what authority, and what example can you give, to bring that old-fashioned and vulgar word of *neighbour* into use?"

Mrs. E. Lawson. Your Ladyship certainly remembers the story of the good Samaritan.

Lady Blurton. Yes; I remember reading something about it when I went to school; though I protest I have almost forgot it. But the higher circles, madam, are not ruled by any of these things now; for if they were, all due distinctions would be laid aside, and we should be all friends and neighbours in a lump. He! he! he!

Miss Barbara, [continuing the he, he, he.] What, I wonder, would Colonel Morrington think of such antique doctrines! Cannot your Ladyship imagine you see that charming man, whom your ladyship always allowed to be a poignant wit, listening in the attitude of surprise, to such novel sentiments?

To the question of her daughter, Lady Blurton made the following reply—"Novel sentiments indeed! my dear Miss Barbara. Why we shall, by and by, have all the old stories in the Bible laid before us, as fit examples for us to follow. Pray madam"—turning herself in front to Mrs. Stanhope, in a disputing attitude—"is there in that old book any account of personages of real nobility?"

At that instant the door of the dining-room was thrown open, and Doctor Griffith, the venerable Rector of Woodstock, made his appearance. We all of us arose at his entrance, for which we received a reprimand, as he desires always to be permitted to come and go without any ceremony. After he had seated himself, which he did between Mrs. Stanhope and myself, Mrs. Eleanor Lawson, desirous, as she owned after they were gone, to give, if possible, some check to the haughtiness of this really ridiculous woman, said, "Doctor, you are come in the right time to give an answer to a question of Lady Blurton's; her ladyship wanting to know if there were in the ages in which the Bible was written, any people of real nobility."

Doctor G. [addressing Lady Blurton.] Certainly, madam, a great number.

Lady Blurton. Well, I protest, I am heartily glad of that. Now, madam, [to Mrs. Stanhope] you will see your error. Doctor Griffith, you are a very learned gentleman. Well, and who were they? I protest I did not know this before. I declare I shall like that book better than ever I did in my life.

Doctor Griffith. Some of the most renowned in the earliest ages of the world were Abraham; Jacob; Moses, and David.

Lady Blurton. And pray how were they distinguished? And what titles did their ladies bear?

Doctor Griffith. The first, madam, was called THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL: Jacob was generally termed THE PATRIARCH: Moses, THE MEEKEST OF ALL MEN; and David—THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. As to their ladies, as you term them, I believe they thought themselves happy in being the wives of such GOOD MEN, without any desire of being considered as *great* women.

Lady Blurton. Well, but Doctor, I believe you are in jest all this time, and I protest—

Doctor Griffith. Indeed, madam, I am not in jest; this is to me a serious subject; and rather a melancholy one. To bring our ideas down to our own times—were the female part of the creation to think *goodness* of heart the best recommendation our sex could obtain, no one undeserving of that distinction would dare to offer himself to any woman of character. Were he inclined to make himself happy in marriage, he would first endeavour to retrieve his lost reputation. And were the male part of the world to give that due preference to the meek; the modest; the good-humoured, and domestic, though lively fair ones, which they so justly merit, we should not see our modern belles so studious to display such tinsel ornaments of person, and empty qualities of mind, as they now consider to be a

first distinction. But, madam, [addressing Mrs. Stanhope] I did not know you were returned to Woodstock, or I certainly should have treated myself by a call upon you and my little dove here— [by which appellation he always distinguishes Miss Lewis.]

This, as the good doctor intended it should, gave a turn to the conversation. The rest of the afternoon was passed in lively chit-chat; and Lady Blurton seemed to regard Mrs. Stanhope as increased in consequence from the respect with which she was treated by Doctor Griffith, who being the son of a gentleman possessed of what she acknowledges to be a real title, had much of her observance. As the doctor has always been distinguished for his fine understanding; great goodness, and likewise true politeness, we were all somewhat surprised at his so unceremoniously replying to Lady Blurton; and, after they were gone, we remarked it to him; upon which he told us he so thoroughly knew the character of the woman, that he was convinced she needed some reproof, the moment he heard what subject we were upon, and was determined to endeavour to silence her.

About seven o'clock the ladies left us, taking with them, to her great delight, Miss Rachel Lawson, whom, I must confess, I was not sorry to see depart; except on account of the concern her going with such introducers into gay life, gave her mother, aunt, and sister: *but she would not be prevented.*

The remainder of the evening was convivial and agreeable, beyond my powers of description.

Mrs. Stanhope and Doctor Griffith are upon a very intimate footing, and greatly respect each other; a proof of the goodness of both their hearts.

Other subjects press for admittance, but I will not at this time enter upon any new ones.

By to-morrow's post I mean to write to Maria; who, let me repeat, is often in my remembrance. Her letter particularly obliged me.

I cannot suppress a wish to know if Sir Charles Conway keeps his intention of not making any long stay in London.

With an affectionate heart, I am,

My dear madam,
Your's, by every tie of
duty and gratitude,
EMMA STANLEY.

LETTER, II.

SIR CHARLES CONWAY, TO GEORGE
STANLEY, ESQ.

Portland Place, March 5th.

I Have received yours, dated Monday, and thank you for the smile with which some lines in it inspired my features. The sensation seemed new to me; and when it ceased, I wondered how it could have been effected.

To the first part of your letter, I say nothing; except that I hope you are not to be *caught by a pink gown and white petticoat*.

I arrived in town this morning at ten. As I told you, I intended to have been here last night, but was induced to stop at Barnet by our fellow-student, Herbert Evelyn. There never was a better hearted fellow in existence than Herbert. He has taken orders, and has, for some time, been enquiring for a curacy; for, would you believe it! his father has married that young baggage, who was his housekeeper at Reading, and since that time, poor Herbert has scarce known what to do with himself. I think he is grown extremely handsome, and his understanding seems even brighter than it used to be; yet it was always considered as of first rate: but he has too much real merit, and is too diffident to advance himself. I have, therefore, taken him entirely under my care. He is to accompany me in my present ramble, and, at my return, to live at Hawthorn Grove till our good old rector shall be translated to a richer inheritance, and then he shall be instituted to that living: but to prevent his having any temptation to wish for the arrival of the poor old man's last hour, I will settle an annuity upon him till that period, not greatly short of the good rector's income.

Herbert received my proposal with a peculiar grace. His eyes glistened: he pressed my hand; bowed, and left me. When we again met, he revived the subject, and ended it with expressing a hope that Mr. Eachard would, at our return, accept his constant assistance in the church.

I know you will be pleased at my having picked up such a companion; whom, by what is *called mere accident*, I met with half a mile on the other side of Barnet. We were driving pretty smartly along a smooth piece of road, when the rein of one of the fore horses got loose from its buckle, and James dismounted to fasten it; at which instant I observed a very genteel young man, exceedingly well mounted, who met and passed the chaise. I was struck, when I saw him, with an idea that I had some knowledge of him, but the difference, much to his advantage, which his canonical dress made in his appearance, prevented my recollecting who he was. Just as James had replaced the buckle, and was going to remount, Mr. Evelyn returned, and advancing to the chaise window—"Sir Charles Conway's carriage, by the arms," said he; "and sure I see my old friend!" At that instant I recognized his features; gave him my hand, and, upon finding his business could as well be pursued in the morning, insisted upon his giving his horse to Joseph, and taking a seat in the chaise. Till we reached Barnet, we had only common chat; but alighting there, and ordering some coffee, the conversation became very interesting. Old Evelyn, as I told you, has married his housekeeper; Peggy Southern her name; who proves such a virago, and so entirely governs her old

cully, that his father's house is no longer a residence for poor Herbert.

His mother's dying request that he might be educated for a clergyman, seems to have been a prophetic one. At the time she made it, it was hardly thought consistent with rectitude; as nobody considered him in any other light than as the undoubted heir to fourteen hundred a year; two only of which were settled upon the late Mrs. Evelyn; therefore the father has unlimited power over the other twelve; which, it is ten to one but he disposes of to the children of this young hussey, if she has any; though, perhaps, they will not be indebted to him for their existence.

Herbert has lately occupied lodgings in London; and, when we met, was going to a village near North-Mims, where he has a friend who promised to recommend him to a vacant curacy in that neighbourhood. He enquired very cordially after you, and sends his compliments.

Upon my word I have several times been surprised, since the short time of our meeting, at the extraordinary qualities which appear to be in the mind of this young man. You, George, will, I know, be particularly pleased with him, as he at once united the scholar; the good man, and the gentleman. The difference between what he is now, and what he was when we called upon him at Reading, two years back, is incredible.

The enclosed allegory respecting fate and free-will, which I scribbled last night before I went to bed, will give you my opinion upon what will, probably, be called the *chance* of my meeting with Mr. Evelyn. It is so entirely in your own way, that I will not apologize for presenting you with such a serious performance.

I have not yet fixed the day for leaving London, but mean not to stay in it long. My mode of travelling will now be altered, and, as you advised, shall go down with my chaise and four; but shall take only one saddle horse, as Mr. Evelyn's must go likewise.

And now to another part of your letter—your Quixottic scheme.—The advice you give is, I think, exactly calculated for you to follow. It would be acting up to the very essence of your character. Leave Maria Birtles to your footman—though I must own, by what you say of her, and her conduct, she is rather too superior: but I do not credit one half of your account—and pursue the noble Lady Caroline. I will furnish you with a letter of introduction to her; and Stanley will supply the place of Pemberton, as well as Conway. Pursue and bring her back. This will be an atchievement worthy of you; and though, for various reasons, I decline the *Knightship*, as *Sancho*, I am at your command. Seriously though, I am under much concern for the fate of that justly celebrated young lady. Had I not known her, I should have pitied her from report; but whoever has once seen her, must be doubly interested for her. Who knows what she may not, at this time endure! In a foreign country, and, probably, if she misses the Maynards, without one friend near her! How severely must she feel her present destiny! Her misfortunes have frequently had a place in my contemplation since I have known the particulars of her history: the *more* frequently, because of my thorough acquaintance with that old hypocrite, Lord Crumpford; than whom I do not think there is a viler fellow breathing.

Such a wife as *Lady Caroline Pemberton*, George, I should joy to see you in possession of. She is *the very woman* to suit you. Want of fortune in *her*, ought not *once to be named*. If you hear

any more of her, transmit to me the account.

* * * * *

Just as I was going to close my letter, Colonel Greville was announced. He met Joseph in Piccadilly; stopped him, and enquired for me. I could almost wish he had not known I was in town, for I do not want company. His enquiries about friends at Alverston were so very particular, that he unavoidably caught some knowledge of the present situation of circumstances; at which, as indeed he well might, he seemed astonished. We had not much conversation; he being engaged to a masquerade-party. I think he talked of going soon to Alverston.

Hang him! he seems to have oppressed my spirits. His questions, though obliging in intention, were, at this time, particularly irksome.

Farewell.

CHARLES CONWAY.

LETTER, III.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Alverston, Friday night, March 6th.

YOUR letter, my dear Charles, dated yesterday, was put into my hands just as I was sitting down to scribble to you. The contents greatly please me; at least, the major part of them. Your meeting with Herbert Evelyn, is just such an incident as I could have wished for. I have always loved that fellow for his generosity to the Hadderleys. Very few people would have acted as he did, in that business. Give my hearty service to him, and bid him not postpone his ideas of having a living in Derbyshire till your reverend friend leaves his terrestrial heritage, for Fowler is returned from Bath worse than when he left Alverston, and his dissolution is expected soon to happen. Poor young man! I but little thought, when he was inducted to this benefice, he would vacate it so soon; as who, at that time, was more strong and hearty than Fowler! While he lives, I shall say no more upon this subject; save that my father has given it to me to supply the loss we are so soon likely to experience.

Believe me, I perfectly coincide, and in my rational moments always did, with the allegorical realities which you enclosed. I firmly believe all you meant to infer upon the subject, yet cannot, *for the blood of me*, as my godfather says, bring my practice to my principles. My soul seems to be like tinder; the least spark sets it on fire; and, in half a minute, I am blown into a blaze. At this very juncture, I seem all combustible, and I did a violence to myself in suppressing a rhapsody respecting the events of last night, till I had paid my compliments to the receipt of your letter; which, however, I re-affirm has so much, on many accounts, pleased me, that it confined for some minutes, after perusal, my thoughts entirely to its subjects: a proof, and a strong one, as you will by and by acknowledge, of its importance in my estimation.

Lady Caroline Pemberton indeed! No; no, Charles, no Lady Carolines for me, I do assure you! Greatly as I admire and reverence her fame, I would not marry her were she sole heiress to the whole Danvers estate; and, indeed, that would have but little weight in determining my election. Tell me not, therefore, of Lady Caroline Pemberton. Tell me not, at this time, even of Maria Birtles: but tell me, Conway, tell me of my invisible enslaver—of the dear, charming, beautiful creature, who, for aught I know, may be as ugly as Hecate, as I am an entire stranger to her identity; yet I rave—I burn—I die to throw myself at her feet.

“Is the fellow mad!?” you will exclaimingly question.

Mad indeed, Charles! very, very mad: and mad I am likely to continue, without hope of relief. But I will try to tell you the rise of my distemper, with all the leading particulars.

I finished my last letter with the arrival of Bob Saunders, and the impossibility of any thing happening at the ball to afford me even amusement.

What incompetent judges we are one hour of what we shall be the next! How often are the most important events at hand—decisive of our happiness or its contrary—when we think ourselves

in a perfect, and, as perhaps we call it, a stupid serenity!

Could you ever have supposed—but no; it was impossible. So listen, and be convinced.

Mr. Slayton not chusing to accompany us to the lodge, as he meant to pursue his journey to town early in the morning, my father was under the necessity of remaining likewise at Alverston. It was, therefore, agreed that our coach should convey my mother, Mr. Saunders and myself, and wait till morning (as it was not probable we should leave the ball till after midnight) for Bob and me; and that *his* chaise, my father's being at Derby to be new lined, should be sent for my mother between eleven and twelve, as she would not consent either to stay longer, or to permit our deserting the company so early. To the ball, then, about seven o'clock last evening, we were conveyed, where we met, I think, the most elegant company I ever saw selected. Beauties swarmed in every corner of the room; amongst whom, the most distinguishable were Miss Asheton; Miss Williams; Miss Prettyman; Lady Jane Stafford; the young Dowager Lady Brewster; Miss Sparkes, and Miss Louisa Levett. The smartest beaux—Lord Ramsey; Lord Ashburne; Sir George Nassau; Sir Cotton Delwyn; Sir John Byron; Captain Forbes; Mr. Smythes; Mr. Gladwyn, and Mr. Derelincourt; not forgetting myself and Bob Saunders. Bob danced with a Miss Allenton, and I with Lady Brewster. But the bride—I forgot the bride—was one of the prettiest women there; and her dress, by far the most elegant.

The first minuet was danced by Lady Jane Stafford with the bridegroom. The second, by the young dowager with Lord Ashburne. But I cannot go through all the ceremony. Suffice it that the bride begged off, and that I walked the Z with Miss Lucy Browne. After minuets, we proceeded to country dances; after country dances to supper; which was announced about half past ten. I told you I danced with Lady Brewster. The evening, as I prognosticated, had, hitherto, no particular charms for me; though my partner was handsome; lively, and good-humoured: but Maria Birtles held her place in my idea. About twelve o'clock, the dons and matrons began to retire; my mother was amongst the early ones; upon which occasion I was very near offending our ceremonious Squire Saunders, by preparing to attend her. He brushed past me; took my mother's hand, and asked me if I recollected in whose carriage she was going. I begged his pardon; bowed, and resigned to his care my mother; who, by the bye, was near losing one of her diamond earrings, in the anti-room. She was not sensible of its dropping, but a servant accidentally set his foot upon it, while she was putting on her cloak. Of this incident, Saunders made a long story to the ladies upon his return; observing to them how careful they ought to be upon such occasions; and ending his harangue with an account of the nobleness, as he termed it, of Lady Stanley's bounty to the fortunate finder. What a strange fellow this is grown! His particularities increase upon him most intolerably.

We returned to the ball-room, and continued dancing till after one, when a sudden confusion ensued, occasioned by the fainting of Lady Sardon, who fell lifeless upon the floor, no one being near enough to save her; but when she was down, she was surrounded in an instant: the dancing ceased; the music stopped, and all was bustle and hurry. Lord Ramsey and myself took her up, and carried her into the anti-room, where we placed her upon a sofa. The ladies thronged round her; each endeavouring to be of service. One drew from her pocket some eau-de-luce; another some hartshorn; a third a smelling-bottle, and so on all round, till at length she revived, and in a short time was entirely recovered.

The spirit of dancing seemed to be now evaporated, and two or three of the young ones began a gentle game of romps, which soon became general, and a universal hoity-toity filled the place. I seized upon the youngest of the Miss Bouvres, and was going to place her by my side as I sat upon the sofa, which stood behind the opening of the door; but she struggled from me, and ran to the other side of the room; at which, setting one foot back to spring after her, I trod upon some thing that lay just under the sofa, and was partly hid by the fringe at the bottom of the cover; when, upon stooping down, I saw and picked up a very neat vellum case, with a small gold stamped border, the contents of which I was strongly tempted to inspect; but honor forbad; therefore I took with me into the ball-room a small stool which was used to accommodate the ladies in stepping from the door to their carriages, mounted it, and proclaimed aloud my good fortune, offering to restore my prize to its fair owner (as, by its delicacy, it evidently belonged to a lady) for the reward of a kiss from the hand which received it, upon proof of just claim. I then made many little flourishes upon the nature of the oath I required to be taken upon the occasion, offering my right cheek (as a book might not be at hand) for sealing the affirmation; and soon drew round me a great number of auditors; but the perverse charmer, whose property it was, refused to make her claim; which, at the time surprised me, as there was no doubt of her being present; it having, probably, been dropped by some of the fair ones who bustled round Lady Sardon, and my O Yez! pronounced three times with a very audible voice, had charmed round my stage, every lady, and I believe every gentleman of the party. But the reason for this disingenuity soon appeared very obvious; for having continued my enquiry for some time, without effect, I stepped into an adjoining room to inspect the contents, that I might gain intelligence of the owner, and then saw the cause of its not being claimed. And now, Conway, figure to yourself the surprise; the astonishment; the something, for which I cannot find a name, that seized me when I drew from the little case a miniature portrait of myself. I started—I gazed—for the likeness was so wonderfully strong, that it struck me in a moment—I disbelieved the evidence of my senses; rubbed my eyes, and asked myself if I was awake. It was fortunate that I did not examine the contents of my prize in the ball-room, as every one who had seen me, must have wondered at my antic behaviour. I went to the glass—held the image by its side—looked at that—at myself, and was convinced it was my exact resemblance: no representation could possibly be more true: it was done in crayons, and executed by a most masterly hand indeed. This incident seemed to me to be the effect of enchantment; but the magical spell had not yet arrived at its greatest height, nor produced its greatest effect; for recollecting my absence from the company might possibly be noticed and wondered at, I was about to replace the little figure in the recess I had drawn it from, and return to the occupied rooms, when I again suspected my eyes of being under illusion upon their wandering over the following lines which appeared to be written with the greatest accuracy, and in the most particularly elegant characters I ever saw, on the back of the paper, which was double.

“The portrait which my pencils trace,
“Will give you Stanley's form and face:
“But not his form and face conjoined,
“My heart could steal, without his mind.
“*There* gentleness and spirit meet—
“*There* wit and sense each other greet;
“And form one, in my eyes, compleat.”

Charles, not the strongest—the most active—the most powerful imagination ever given to man, can come up to the idea of the effect these lines, added to the circumstance of the portrait, had

upon my heart. From my not being able to fix upon any one individual, the dear performer was represented to my imagination as the most beautiful of all beautiful creatures. Of her mental perfections, I had the most absolute proof; and that her affection was decidedly mine, even modesty herself must allow. My *vanity*, Charles, was not awakened, high as were the encomiums of the poetry; but my tenderness—my *gratitude*—all the sensibility of my soul—was absorbed by this real—yet ideal charmer. For some time I stood lost in contemplation; fixing first upon one—then upon another of the angels (as I now thought they all were) which graced the wedding feast; every one being, in my opinion, more handsome than she was before this incident; but my idea could not rest upon any; so effectually had the real one guarded both her manner and her countenance, when the case was offered to public claim. I now determined to return to the rooms with the most watchful eye; judging it would be almost impossible the lovely creature could escape my observation, in the strict scrutiny I meant to set on foot. Upon going into the ball-room I found it vacated; dancing having been given over by universal consent, and the company retired to the drawing-room, having ordered their carriages to be got in readiness.

I now separately addressed every individual female present; endeavouring, by all the methods I could think of, to draw the confession I so ardently wished to obtain; but to no purpose. Some smiled—others blushed; but they were not the smiles nor the blushes of consciousness. Yet I was convinced the *charming she* must then be present, as no one had left the ball but elderly matrons, in whom not one idea could center upon the occasion.

I examined the possibility of the magic performance having been dropped by a mother or aunt of some absent enchantress; but my suppositions wearied me, without bringing to my view the least probable conjecture, and I was obliged to seem to forget the incident, though it united with my every idea. I wished to have set on foot some little puzzling play of the species of fortune-telling, making it necessary for every lady to give a sentence in writing, which at once would have rendered the veil transparent; the characters of the poetry being, as I have told you, so remarkably beautiful, that it was not likely any others would resemble them. My sister's writing is the most similar of any I ever saw; but it does not equal it. This method, therefore, I would certainly have taken, had it been an hour sooner; but it was then too late to permit my practising it with any degree of propriety; the company being all about to depart.

I would have given worlds to have detected the sweet assassinating thief who has thus wounded and robbed me under these impervious shades, and I think should have been tempted to have insisted upon the immediate sacrifice of her name as a recompense.

By my faith, Charles! I never before was under such perplexity. What can I do! How can I think of any other creature! The execution of the portrait, and the poetry, give proof of her genius and accomplishments: the sentiments of the verses evince her delicacy; her tenderness; her goodness: *and* the choice she has made FOR AN OBJECT OF HER SENSIBILITY—gives her, *in my estimation—every power to charm*. Maria Birtles—so late the image of my idolatry—seems nearly vanished from my remembrance; perhaps, because I have not seen her since my return.

Charles—knowing my temper *as you know it*—if you do not compassionate me, you are worse than a barbarian.

By my soul! I believe I shall go distracted. I cannot write: I cannot think: I cannot do any thing. I am ashamed of myself—ashamed of finding my heart, which I absolutely believed to be even more fixed than I would own to you, capable of being so changed—so divided—so I know not what to call it.

Yet can it be wondered at! A circumstance so singular—so extraordinary! I am, beyond measure, perplexed.

And you, I now recollect, will rejoice at this incident. You will think it a fortunate circumstance, if it frees me, in any degree, from what you dare to consider as an inglorious captivity.

Be not too sanguine. I own I feel, at present, rather awkward; but the effervescence occasioned by this ignis-fatuus must cease in time, if it continues to elude my exploration; and then the blaze, after its temporary suppression—

But, Charles! Charles! this is only to plague you; for I have not one distinct idea of what is probable, or of what my wishes lead to. My soul is all confusion.

I repeat that I cannot write: I cannot think: I cannot do any thing.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, IV.
MISS RACHEL LAWSON TO MISS LAWSON.

London, March 6th.

ABOUT two hours back we safely alighted in charming Hanover-Square with health and spirits unimpaired: for if they *were* a little wasted by the fatigues of the journey, they were instantly recruited by the very first view we caught of dear London.

Poor Charlotte! how I pity your situation! yet not so much as if your exile from all that is delightful was not voluntary. Strange that a young woman of your vivacity and accomplishments should have such an antiquated taste as to give Oxfordshire the preference to Middlesex!

Astonishing sister! absolutely astonishing!

I do not mean to offend any one in the circle which I have been taught to revere—else I should be tempted to repeat the hackneyed quotation of

“—Croaking rooks,
“Dull aunts and godly books.”

While Miss Stanley is with you, indeed, Woodstock may be supportable; provided—pray, Charlotte, do not be offended, but provided you could keep clear of—THE FRIENDS AT THE LAWN.

Miss Barbara Tupps has talked of nothing since she left Woodstock but Doctor *Griffith's* "*Little Dove*," who, she observes, and I think not very unjustly, can never be of any earthly use but to soil a real fine lady.

But poor Charlotte! I must not make you quite sick of your sylvan scene, neither; therefore I am almost afraid that the contrast will strike you too forcibly when I tell you that we are going this evening to Drury-Lane Theatre; as Lady Blurton says that will be the best method to proclaim her return to town—To-morrow to Mrs. Linsted's, her ladyships cousin; on Sunday to Lady Beever's card-rout, which Lady Blurton never fails to attend when in London; on Monday to a concert; on Tuesday to Covent-Garden; on Wednesday—but I forgot myself—I quere whether my mention of the Sunday's engagement has not so astonished you as to render you incapable of proceeding. But, child! I am not at this time within the precincts of the *friends at the Lawn*; nor yet in hearing of old Doctor Griffith's lectures. I must now conform to the fashion of the times, or I had better have staid at Woodstock.

When I have experienced the enchantments of the town, I think I will venture to give you a slight sketch of them, as you are so rooted to your native soil—alias dirt! Excuse me, Charlotte—that I need not, I believe, be *very* apprehensive of destroying you by envy.

Remember me, my good matronly sister, with due reverence, duty, love and compliments to my mother, aunt, and Miss Stanley; believing that this vortex has not yet so totally absorbed me as to prevent my still continuing

Your's, affectionately,
R. LAWSON.

LETTER, V.

MRS. LAWSON, TO MISS RACHEL LAWSON.

Woodstock, March 7th, Saturday morning.

YOUR letter to your sister, my dear Rachel, reached Woodstock just as we were sitting down to breakfast, after which Charlotte was retiring to answer it, but being disposed to write to you myself, I told her the employment should devolve upon me.

We are all glad, my dear girl, to hear of your safe arrival in London. Your aunt; your sister, and Miss Stanley, request to be remembered to you with tender cordiality, wishing your excursion may prove beneficial as well as agreeable.

Present the compliments of our circle to Lady Blurton and Miss Barbara Tupps.

And now, my dear, allow a mother, ever solicitous for the best happiness of her children, to express her apprehensions on your present situation; which, I must confess, is not exactly what I could wish it to be.

Lady Blurton is a woman of gaiety: for a woman of her years—of *great* gaiety. Miss Barbara Tupps is pretty much like her mother in almost every respect. My Rachel has, three times doubled, the understanding of either, and is greatly more qualified to lead both, than to be led by them; for which reason, I hope she will not give herself up to their guidance.

Were you, my dear child, a few years younger, I should think it my duty to write to Lady Blurton, requesting her attention to the principles in which you have been educated; and intreating her rather to leave you to amuse yourself, which you are exceedingly well qualified to do, than to introduce you to company unconsonant to such as you have been accustomed to, and likewise, I hope, to your disposition. But you are now of an age, and, as I before said, of ability to advise the person who is, at present, in the world's eye, your leader.

Lady Blurton, you say, constantly attends Lady Beever's Sunday's card-routs. I know Lady Beever well. I knew her when she was Hannah Smith, and a seemingly modest young woman. Her father was an industrious, honest man, and happy in the notice his daughter attracted from our family; which was not withdrawn till the atrociousness of her conduct made it highly improper to be continued. When she was about eighteen, she went to live with Mrs. Beever, who died within a year after her going thither; but not before she found reason to lament her husband's ever having known Hannah Smith.

Soon after Mrs. Beever's death, Mr. Beever was knighted, and, in a few weeks, ushered Hannah Smith into the great world as his lady. The poor man lived long enough to recollect he had had *one* good wife; but his reason failed, and while he, for three years, was confined in a private mad-house, Lady Beever—or, as many people still think and call her—Hannah Smith—had her routs; her drums, and her gallants.

Such is the woman to whom my Rachel is to be introduced by Lady Blurton! whom, by the way, I wonder that her ladyship notices; because, to use her own expression, she is not of quality. Such is the woman who, upon the death of the man whose name she bears, removed to what is called "*the other end of the town*," and has her Sunday card-meetings; to which people of reputation condescend to resort, because, as the phrase is, "she lives in style!"

Exert, my dear child, the reason with which GOD ALMIGHTY has so liberally blessed you, and instead of submitting to follow Lady Blurton and her daughter in their mistakes, give yourself the consequence, so justly your due, of endeavouring to teach them rectitude from error.

In a state where individuals, in general, are happy in the good order and government extended to every corner of the kingdom, it is wrong to infringe upon its laws (though, perhaps, there may be some which, in themselves, are of but small consequence) because it may prove an introduction to general disorder; for when the observation of customs, established by authority, shall cease, who can tell what bounds shall be set to the infringement? therefore, every law of the nation which is not *contrary* to the law of GOD, ought to be attentively observed, though in itself, as I have said, immaterial. Allowing, for a few moments, that the observation of the Sabbath is merely by human appointment, and that it might be as well if all respect to it were abolished—still, upon the foregoing considerations, it ought to be esteemed as the law of the kingdom requires, though it

answers not the purposes for which people, in general, hold it in reverence. There are six successive days in which we have perfect freedom to pursue the fashionable diversions of the age; and if we will not be restrained by higher considerations, it is only *varying* our amusements *to make the Sunday supportable!!!*

The *first* part of *any* day is seldom spent in either card-playing; dancing, or theatrical entertainments. It is only a few hours in the evening that are employed in the prohibited diversions; and it is very hard if modern ingenuity cannot invent some method to kill this short period, less offensive to society, than an open defiance of law and decency. If the fine ladies of the present age, will not punish themselves so much as to be *exemplary*, let them be *negatively* virtuous, and not set a pattern to their children and servants, which, if generally followed, would, without dispute, bring inevitable destruction upon the nation: and what exclusive right have *they* to mis-spend the Sabbath-day? Where is the privilege to stop? At what ranks of people?

I have done with supposing the institution to be merely a harmless one. It is positively useful; and even necessary for the good order of society—for the well-doing of mankind: and it is, likewise, by Divine Command.

That it was a fundamental part of the *old law* will not be disputed. And was it ever repealed? No: it was enforced by the Great Teacher of the Gospel Faith.

“Keep the Commandments”—was an edict of His who enjoined nothing superfluous. The other nine, are, by every one, allowed to be reasonable, and why should this be singled out for exemption?

I am not contending for such an observance of the Sabbath as some people think necessary: that is to say, that we ought to look upon it as a day of austerity, throughout which, we must continue to mortify ourselves and all about us. By no means: let it be devoted to the *happiness* of society; but not in an inverted sense—not to the partial [and that false] happiness of a few; nor in dissipation by any individual.

It has been foolishly said, that by fixing one day in seven for the more particular exercise of religion, it is taken, by some people, as a licence for laying aside all serious thoughts till the return of that period. Let such superficial observers be asked whether it is probable that those people, who take this licence, would ever have any serious thoughts at all, if they were not, now and then, called upon to recollect.

Why (some are ready enough to *ask*) is SUNDAY more than any other day? Without entering into disquisitions about “times and seasons”—it may be answered by saying, that as all ages have agreed in thinking one day in seven a proper portion of time to set apart for rest from worldly business; and as all the Christian world *has* used the Sunday for a Sabbath, why should *not* Sunday be the Sabbath day? Without saying what reason there is for it, let it be asked if there is any against it, to authorise a change.

In support of a Sabbath it has been said—“We may surely afford the ALMIGHTY GOD one day in seven for his service.”

This, I must confess, is not an argument I am fond of using. Had it been advanced that the Almighty of his bounty has given *us* one day in seven, I should readily have subscribed to it. For is it not designed to be a day of rest from care and labour—from fatigue and all anxiety? A day of general jubilee, not only to man, but to even the working beasts of the field? Did GOD for his own sake command the Sabbath? No: for ours: for the poor and the rich: for the low and the high: for the servant as well as for his master. How, then, is the question, ought it to be observed? Doubtless in such a manner as shall most exclude every kind of labour. And what method so proper on *that* account, as well as others, as a due attendance upon public worship? In these solemn assemblies, all ranks of people are, or ought to be, upon an equal footing. Distinction then ceases; no one being more acceptable, to the Great Maker of all, than another, because of his being more rich; nobler in ancestry, or higher in power. And does not the aptitude of almost all mankind to forget the primeval and future equality of the human race, make it necessary to awaken, at stated periods, the consideration that there is no real—no durable distinction between the present Great and Small, save what is acquired by different degrees of purity of soul?

It has always been my opinion that we ought so to manage our worldly affairs as to give all possible rest on the Sabbath day to ourselves; our servants, and our cattle; which cannot be the case where assemblies are opened for public amusement; there being then no cessation from the drudgery of our domestics; the labour of our horses; or from *the fatigues of pleasure*—a slavery more injurious to the mind and the body than those who inlist in it will believe till too late.

Again—I do not, as I before said, wish it to be understood that I think it necessary to observe that formal severity which inverts (though by a contrary method) the design of this lenient donation, as I will call it—in almost as great a degree as its opposite extreme; [making it, however, more equal to all orders of people] and which our Redeemer censured in the professors of the Jewish institution, by the parables of the strayed beasts and withered hand; recorded by three, if not by all the Evangelists.

“*The Sabbath was made for Man.*” The institution is here confirmed by, at least, implication; its intended benefit to man ascertained; with a power given to his reason to employ it in moral and benevolent—as well as religious exercises: but his abuse—his total inversion of it—is not any where authorised, or even tolerated.

It therefore stands distinguished by divine—by civil—and by moral law; and must be approved by justice and reason.

You will therefore, my dear Rachel, very highly oblige me, by declining to mix with Sunday card-players; particularly with those of Lady Beever’s party. With peculiar earnestness I request what I will not command, because I hope to prevail by entreaty; and am very sorry this will not reach you in time to prevent your first introduction.

If you want *an excuse*—make a merit of your obedience, and plead the *promise* I request you to give me in an early letter: though I would rather you would give your own judgement against the practice. But this as you please—so you do but absent yourself.

Perhaps though you mean to assemble with the party, you have pre-determined—and indeed I hope so—not to be an *actual* partaker of the amusement.

Ah! my dear child! this will be playing with sharp-edged tools upon a precipice. For, in the first place, as every one is *but* one, and Rachel Lawson a young woman of reputation and *some* distinction, your presence will be a sanction to the more inconsiderate; as it will be obvious that though you abstain from being a performer, you are only prevented by your obedience to a mother, or by the not-yet-conquered prejudice of education; but that the practice is far from being offensive to your principles. Yet even this, my dear, is not the worst. How can you say how long you shall maintain your resolution of being only a looker-on? Pressed on all hands, as you undoubtedly will be (for it is the nature of degeneracy to endeavor to emit its contagious virus; the principles which have been sown in this island still remaining with such strength as to make their violators wish for the unavailing countenance of numbers) laughed at, perhaps, for your unfashionable objections by those who envy your uncorrupted integrity, and are maliciously bent upon its destruction—what in such a situation will not my girl descend to, if her principles, insensibly weakened by a frequent and familiar observation of their violation are not deliberately firm against the practice.

And now, my love, if what I *have* said prevails not; all I *can* say will be ineffectual; except my dear child will comply in simple pity to my feelings, and in consideration of the poignant affliction her refusal will give to her fondly anxious, and tenderly affectionate mother,

ELIZABETH LAWSON.

P.S.

The clock now strikes eleven. I subscribed to the above about half an hour back, after which I found the subject of my letter so pressing upon my mind, that I could find no quiet till I ordered Richard to get ready to set off for London directly, that my request may reach you before your consent to the first introduction at Lady Beever's Sunday's-meeting, renders your refusal on the second occasion more difficult and disagreeable to you.

In doing this, my dear girl, I consult your ease and benefit; being desirous to relieve your duty as much as possible from all hard conditions.

Richard has orders to continue in London till six o'clock Monday morning. By his return my dear Rachel will tell me she is well and happy—that she considers and accepts my anxiety, and the step I am taking, as the strongest proof of my tenderest affection—and that, *as* a relief to herself, she *promises* to decline all such Sundays' engagements as are incompatible with the long established, and universally approved custom of the nation—with morality—and with the tenets of the Christian dispensation.

And now, my dear-loved girl, will I pray to the Supreme that He may direct and strengthen you, till your happiness is fixed beyond reverse.

LETTER, VI.

MISS RACHEL LAWSON, TO MRS. LAWSON.

Hanover Square, Sunday evening, March 8th.

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR letter by Richard, I received, and read, with much surprise; and I cannot but say that I was sensibly hurt at the contents.

Permit me to observe, that if the occasion of your express were to be known, it would give room for a conjecture of my having been strangely educated, that at twenty-one years of age I do not know how to chuse my company. However, to show that I am not so disobedient as may sometimes have been thought, I will give the promise you so very particularly require (though the punctual observance of it will make me appear very singular) of not joining in Sunday card-parties, except when they are held at Lady Blurton's, and then I am sure you will allow it would be an impossibility to avoid them without rendering myself more ridiculous than you, I hope, would wish me to be; therefore, my dear madam, I must, in my turn, be a little peremptory in almost insisting upon it that you do not lay upon me this injunction; with which, if you do, I really cannot comply; and I should be unwilling, as I hope you have some reason to believe, to act in direct opposition to your commands.

As to Lady Blurton and Miss Barbara Tupps—I do not want the information of their both being fools, because I never yet considered them in any other light: no great fear, therefore, that I should make either of them my pattern; nor do I think it worth my pains to set them one. As they are, they answer my purpose; which is, by their means, to see and enjoy the gaieties of life in a somewhat greater degree than it was possible to do in Oxfordshire; the pleasures of which are not, I must confess, much adapted to confine my affections within their circle. The very air I breathe in this place, exhilarates my spirits, and I feel in good humour from morning till night; else, let me observe, I should have been more sensibly affected by the severe sentiments of your letter, which are not calculated to draw my preference from London to Woodstock.

I may, perhaps, have written rather saucily; at least what I have said may meet with a stern construction; but my meaning is to prevent your troubling yourself, in future, on these occasions; as, though I have now submitted to the very unreasonable requisition, I will not promise any future concessions.

Excuse me, madam: excuse my explicitness. *I* now mean to *spare* you. Let it, however, be understood that I am sensible of the *motive* which induced you to take what was really an extraordinary step; and doubtless my thanks for it may be expected. I therefore *will* thank you; but as I feel a little acrimony arising in my mind, at the absurd difficulties this strange prohibition will lay me under, I believe I had best conclude my letter.

Lady Blurton says when she excuses me to Lady Beever, whom last night I promised to attend, she shall be obliged to make a little free with the obsolete prejudices of the Woodstock

Bowerians; to which I gave my hearty concurrence.

With my love at large, to your domesticated—I was very near saying rusticated—party,
I am, my dear madam,
your affectionate,
and, I hope, dutiful daughter,
R. LAWSON.

LETTER, VII.

LADY CAROLINE PEMBERTON, TO MRS.
MAYNARD.

March 9th, 1789.

I Was this morning, my dearest Harriet, made inexpressibly happy by a letter from our good foster-sister, Mrs. Thompson, informing me that you and my dear Augustus are expected in St. James's Square next Thursday.

Thank GOD for the intelligence. I hope I shall now soon be relieved from some of my perplexities, as I rest much upon Mr. Maynard's influence with my father. To describe the various distresses I have undergone since we parted at Canterbury, would take up too much time at present, as I wish to hasten this, that it may be ready for your reception the moment you alight, knowing the anxiety you must both be in, respecting my safety. But before I give you my little narrative, which is not crowded with the most agreeable incidents, let me make you smile by telling you that I am, at this time, retained as a waiting-maid upon Miss Stanley, of Alverston-Park in Derbyshire; and that the name I at present bear, is that of Maria Birtles.

After assuring you that I am in perfect health—easy in situation—and in as good spirits as you can well suppose, I will proceed to give you a few of the particulars respecting my affairs, with which you are unacquainted.

The last letter that I am certain of your receiving from me, was the one which told of my father's harsh determination about that vile Lord Crumpford—one of the most avaricious—most detestable old wretches, that ever could be thought of for the torment, and almost inevitable destruction of any young creature.

In my next letter, which I dare say never reached Ostend, till you had left it, I informed—or, rather, meant to inform you — of my father's continued inflexibility, and that if he could not be softened, I should be obliged to fly from his authority; in which case, I would hasten directly to you. Another letter, and another after that, both very long ones, mentioned particularly what happened till the night I was compelled to leave Berkley Square; the chief circumstances of which were, that I had got every thing in readiness for a speedy flight, should I be driven to any emergency; that our good nurse Pooley, and her daughter Thompson, had taken to their house the clothes I should want to carry, for both myself and Jenny; packed them into proper trunks, and agreed with a hackney-

coachman to wait for me every evening, at the corner of the Square, and that I had taken of Mr. Galliard, the day before he left London, five hundred pounds of the legacy left me by Mrs. Selwyn.

I then gave the particulars of the conversation I overheard between my father; Lord Crumpford; a villainous lawyer, and a parson still worse than the lawyer; from which I understood that the writings were all ready, and could be effectually executed without my signing them; that a special licence had been actually procured, and a determination made for the ceremony to be performed on the coming Thursday [and this was Tuesday] without any more deliberation, by the wretch of a parson, then present, who had once been a horse-jockey, but, by the interest of Lord Crumpford, who presented him to the living of Branton, had been ordained, to the disgrace of the clerical dignity. After what they thought proper to term the marriage, it was intended I should be carried to the new-fitted-up house in Woodstock, called the Cottage, accompanied by my father and Lord Crumpford; with his daughter, as bride-maid.

Harriet—Augustus—could I resolve to stay and be the victim of such—But hush, rash girl! Thy father was of the number thou art ready so severely to censure. He was: and it grieves me to recollect it. I have always loved him with the affection of an affectionate daughter. I loved him *then*. I love him *still*, with *unabated* love; and the idea of saving him from future regret, strengthened my resolution to leave him: for regret he must have had when he found how irretrievably wretched he had rendered a daughter, whom, till of late, he had always treated with an indulgence expressive of genuine affection.

What *could* be his motive! What *could* be his inducement to doom me to such destruction! If he thought of securing my happiness by ensuring to me the continuance of rank and fortune, how widely did he mistake the happiness I covet! Dear, calm, domestic felicity! how was it possible you could mix with such a union! *Union*—did I say? No: dissonance through life.

But I will proceed with my narrative. Yet first let me observe that it is wonderful my father did not prevent both my going out and receiving visitors. But I believe he had not the least idea that I would take the step I have taken: for though I often expostulated with him on the impropriety of what he called the match; and the impossibility of my ever reconciling it to either my heart or my conscience, I always endeavoured to speak in the language of respect and tenderness; and this, I suppose, led him to think I might be conquered.

Ungenerous—But—again—I am speaking of *my father*; of my father who placed such a confidence in me as to suppose I would not run from what he thought my duty; and indeed my heart would severely reproach me, had I pursued such a measure upon any less emergency.

As soon as I had heard the before-mentioned conversation, I hastened to Jenny, and ordered her to get ready for our leaving the house at seven o'clock, my father having, at that time, an engagement in the city, as I was determined not to venture staying any longer. It was then about four, and not having any thing to do, I set down and wrote a letter to you of all the particulars which had occurred since the dispatch of my preceding packet, that in case any thing should happen to frustrate my concerted plan, you might have the whole before you. This letter I did not intend to send to you, except I found myself disappointed; because by the time you could receive it, I hoped to be with you. However, after it was finished, I, in the hurry I then began to be in, as it was drawing

near the time of my going, sealed, directed and gave it to a servant to take, with other letters, to the post-office; not considering how much you would be distressed on account of my safety, if, by any chance, it should reach your hands before you saw me; as I finished with telling you I was then upon the point of leaving my father's house, and meant to go directly to Dover; from whence it was my intention to take a passage in the first ship that would sail, after my arrival, for any part of the coast of France, and that after landing, I should proceed directly to Ostend.

I told you I should take no attendant but Jenny, and that I had not one apprehension respecting the danger of the expedition; having not been rash in my determination upon the extraordinary measure I was pursuing; for hour after hour, in day after day, did I—to speak in a language you perfectly understand—enter in the most retired examination; offering my ardent prayers for direction; and found no path opened for either my own safety, or my father's, but the one which flight led into.

In one of my letters—for I mention particulars as they occur, without any respect to method—I gave my reasons for not chusing to seek protection of any friend in England; the chief of which, next to the preference I naturally gave to you and Augustus, was the difficulty of my being concealed in the kingdom; as it was most likely my father would make strict search amongst those with whom I was most intimate; in which case, there must either be a great deal of evasion practiced, or I must openly brave his authority: all which, I hoped, would be avoided by my taking refuge with you, till Mr. Maynard had reconciled my father to my refusal of his very unreasonable command.

What, Harriet, would I not give to be reinstated in my father's favor! How happy did I use to think myself in the approving smiles he, till lately, always bestowed upon my conduct in almost every particular.

What, again let me exclaim, *could* induce him to contemplate, with complacency, such a sacrifice!!!

But I will avoid, as much as possible, all animadversions upon what has happened. Yet my wonder is sometimes so predominant, that I cannot suppress my exclamations.

But for the above consideration of improbable concealment in England, I think I should have sought a refuge, till your return, if my father had not before that time relented, with Sir John Warburton, as I could not but believe that Fanny would experience much happiness in her father's being able to afford me protection.

After I had finished, and inconsiderately dispatched my letter to you, I stood upon the watch, with a throbbing heart, for my father's going out, and, in a few minutes, saw his coach driven from the door, when (summoning Jenny to attend me) I hastened down stairs, and she followed me; but just as she reached the second landing, her foot slipped, and she fell to the bottom.

To describe the consternation I was in, is impossible. I stood some moments in a perfect stupor, till the noise of her fall bringing into the saloon two or three servants, I recollected myself, and assisting to raise her, said, after she was a little revived, I do not think it will be proper for you to go to-night, Jenny; therefore will send for Mrs. Thompson to attend me here. This thought happily

came in my head, with the idea of the good woman's anxiety when she found we went not; as about two hours before, I sent her a note to tell her my determination was fixed for that evening. This I hoped would obviate any suspicion that might arise upon sight of the parcel which Jenny let fall; therefore dispatched Peter to Mrs. Thompson, with orders for her to go to me directly and carry my gold dimitty gown, that she might try it on.

That she had one to make for me was actually true; yet, O! my dear father! why did you drive into such crooked ways a young creature whose ambition it ever was to tread the one, strait, unveiled path of rectitude!

When Jenny could speak, which was not till after she had shed a shower of tears, I found she was more hurt than, upon first lifting her up, I had supposed her to be. I therefore ordered her to be carried back into my dressing-room, for she could neither walk nor stand, and immediately sent for Mr. Bell, who, upon inspecting her hurts, found she had dislocated her ankle, and very much bruised her leg and foot.

I was extremely concerned, as you will believe, not only on my own account, but on the poor girl's; who cried as if her heart would break; the chief cause of which, I well knew, was her anxiety for me, as I had long been convinced of the sincerity of her affection.

I asked Mr. Bell how long he thought it would be before she would be able to walk. He said he doubted a fortnight or three weeks, as the dislocation seemed to be a very bad one. Therefore after requesting him to give her all possible attendance; ordering her to be put to bed, and telling her I would soon see her again, I retired to my closet to ruminate upon this accident, and to consider the measure I must next pursue.

At first I was almost superstitious enough to view the casualty as a forbidding omen to my undertaking, but when I was more composed, I found myself still persuaded that it was the only plan I could pursue; and my judgement was so far from being in opposition, that it commended and confirmed the impulse.

Thus re-assured, I went into Jenny's room, where I found Mrs. Thompson, whom I requested to come next evening in the coach which she had ordered to be at the corner of the Square. My trunks, she told me, were all in readiness, her husband having carefully corded and directed them, as I desired, for Mrs. Wilson, passenger; that being the character I meant to assume through my voyage. I then requested her to secure me a place in the Dover mail-coach; which I thought was preferable to going by myself, in post-chaises, through the night; but if no place was vacant, to have a post-chaise and four in readiness.

Poor Jenny and Mrs. Thompson were distressed, beyond measure, at the idea of my venturing by myself; but no argument could prevail with me to alter my purpose. Mrs. Thompson, good creature, earnestly requested to be permitted to attend me, to which she was sure her husband and mother would cheerfully consent, rather than that I should go alone; but this, as you may suppose, I would not, on any account, permit; though I shall not soon lose the remembrance of the offer.

After giving orders about Jenny, I very early retired to bed, and, in good truth, to rest; for, strange as it may seem, I never remember to have slept more comfortably. You would smile if I were to tell you that my very dreams were refreshing; but it is absolutely true.

The next morning at breakfast, my father was so very kind in his behaviour, that he greatly distressed me. I would have given the universe that his command had been such as I *could*—such as I *ought* to have obeyed. But, my dear cousins, *was* it possible a compliance to his dreadful edict could have the least place in my contemplation! He was called out, and, for a few moments, left me to myself, when I again looked into my heart to see if duty demanded the sacrifice; but a strong negative immediately stopped the investigation. My father returned, and I once more endeavoured, by the most gentle means, to soften his determination; intreating his compassion in the most persuasive language; accent, and manner I was capable of using; but he started into a fury, and, by the immediate change, convinced me his prior tenderness was, in some degree, assumed; probably, to soften me to his measures. My father left the room with a menacing brow; telling me he should dine with Lord Crumpford; and bidding me avoid his presence till a sense of my duty produced obedience.

I was now more strongly determined; as I found no dependance could be placed upon the hope of my father's relenting in the moment of my danger and distress, as I had sometimes fondly imagined.

To pass over immaterial circumstances—the evening arrived; the coach was ready; Mrs. Thompson attended, and I was driven to her house about half after six; from whence, in another coach, she went with me to the Dover-mail; in which, a place having been secured, I took my seat, and the next morning found myself in the desired port. I was excessively fatigued, but having intelligence that a vessel, called the Ceres, was just going under sail for Calais, I entered immediately, and as soon as I was on board, wrote to my father; the copy of which letter I inclose for Mr. Maynard's perusal, that he may know how to proceed in the negotiation I am impatient to have him commence.

And now, as I am not *absolutely* mistress of my time, and as, therefore, something may occur to prevent my finishing the whole of my narrative in time for your receiving it upon your immediate arrival, I will conclude, and send this my first scribble by the next post.

Harriet—my dear Harriet! I long to see you. Write to me the first possible moment. You will remember and direct to Maria Birtles, Alverston Park, Derbyshire.

Tell Augustus, his prognostication that I kept not my heart a twelvemonth after you left England, was not verified.

“And have you, Caroline, *really* preserved it your own till this period?”

Do not be too inquisitive. That question varies from the point.

“Ah, Caroline!”

And ah, Harriet! It cannot now be helped. Heigh-ho! But I hope the case is not desperate.

Give my love to Mr. Maynard, and trust me that I continue his and yours with unabated fervency, notwithstanding the depredations which may possibly have been made upon my affection.

CAROLINE PEMBERTON.

LETTER, VIII.

LADY CAROLINE PEMBERTON, TO MRS.
MAYNARD.

(In Continuation.)

March 10th.

I Last night, my dearest Harriet, dispatched to you the first part of my secret history; therefore, as that letter and this will probably be both put into your hands at the same time, it is an even chance which of the two you first unfold. If this should obtain the preference, lay it aside, and let the other have its due precedency, or you will not know what you are reading about.

I left myself on board a little inconvenient vessel named the Ceres; the captain, as he was called, of which was good-natured and civil; though not without a tincture of the roughness of a British sailor. His name was Warder. There were two more female passengers, and several gentlemen; one amongst the latter, who was made the means of my now existing.

The captain intended to sail in about an hour after I went on board, but the wind continued contrary all the day. At ten at night he put off a little, and went about a league, but was then obliged to drop anchor, [you see I have learned the technical terms] and continue stationary all that night and the next day, there being a perfect calm. I found myself rather sick, but hoped, as I was no worse, I should weather the voyage, as the phrase is, tolerably well, without considering that as the vessel was perfectly still, there was no cause for my being otherwise than well, except the perturbation of my spirits. However, as I did not labour under a sense of having acted wrong on the occasion which fixed me in that situation, I was tolerably composed: and, indeed, I should be highly ungrateful were I to forbear saying that I was sensible of very great support through the whole of this—in itself—afflicting event.

About eight o'clock on the Saturday evening the wind arose, very strong from the South-East. This set the vessel into a violent motion; it being, you know, contrary to our course; which brought upon me so extreme a fit of sickness that I thought every moment must be my last; it being attended with an excruciating pain in my stomach. A most terrible storm indeed now came on: all hands were called upon deck, and I was left upon the cabin floor.

What language shall I use to describe the horrors of that period! None that I am versed in can give the least adequate idea of the scene which ensued. Some of the particulars I was sensible of at the time; of the rest I was afterwards informed.

In the little cooking place upon deck called, I think, the caboose, were two sailors; the one

lame; the other (an apprentice just entered) extremely sick: these two poor creatures, caboose, and all the boats, were swept over-board, in one dark moment, by the violent rush of an immense wave that almost overwhelmed the vessel, which all this time lay nearly flat on one side.

I was entirely drenched in water, for by the inexcusable negligence of the carpenter, the dead-lights were not to be found; the sea, therefore, poured in at the cabin-windows in torrents, while the cups and glasses were tumbling about my head. Thus I lay, hour after hour, in total darkness; cries and shrieks echoing from every corner. At length the morning broke, when the storm, if possible, increased; and this continued till twelve o'clock on the Sunday night, when the repeated cry of "*all lost!*" made me hope the end of my distresses was at hand. The main and foremasts were broken and gone over-board; almost all the rigging was lost, and it was thought the vessel had sprung a leak; which, however, proved to be a mistake.

But what am I thinking of, thus to terrify you by this description!

Suffice it, that another morning appeared, when it was found we were within view of land; but no one on board could tell upon what coast we were; for during the storm, which, I ought before to have said began now to cease, the wind had shifted to every point in the compass, and we were driven to and fro. However, it was soon discovered we were within sight of Seaford in Sussex, but the wind was still blowing pretty brisk from the North, which made it be apprehended we should not be able to reach the shore.

About seven o'clock, my kind friend, before-mentioned, whose name I cannot now recollect, but which I have in a memorandum-book that I left in London, came down to see what was become of us females, when he found me in the condition I have described. He instantly called the steward, who, though the frightfullest black man I ever beheld, was one of the most humane and tender creatures existing. They raised me up between them, for I was utterly incapable of the least motion, and carried me to a bench, upon which they seated me, and pressed, as much as they could, the water from my clothes. My kind friend then left me, for a few moments, to the care of the steward, who, I had just sense enough to know, supported me in his arms, while he went to see if either of the ladies could give me any assistance. They had been so fortunate as to get upon their beds, and had suffered no personal inconvenience, save that of being violently rocked from side to side. They were then perfectly well, and were got together, "making themselves," as they said, "*fit to be seen;*" till when, they told him, they could not do me any service. My friend was so offended with what he termed their inhumanity, that he left them in disgust, and returned to me, when asking the good steward for a blanket, he divested me, with the greatest decency, of my upper garments; wrapped me in it, and conveyed me to bed; after which, he made me drink a rich and strong cordial, and that threw me almost immediately into a very sound sleep, which continued till one o'clock, when I was awakened by a shout of gladness, occasioned, as I was soon informed, by the arrival of two boats from the Seaford coast, from whence the signals of our distress had been observed by some gentlemen who were walking along the shore; for we lay near a mile sideways of the town, or we must sooner have been perceived.

My friendly attendant now came to my bed-side to see if I was able to be dressed, when he observed, with evident pleasure, the happy effects of his kindness; for I could raise myself without assistance, and at last made shift to put on some fresh clothes, which, very fortunately, had been

preserved from the water; but the box which contained them was the only part of my luggage I could find. Several trunks and large parcels had been thrown over-board to lighten the vessel: probably mine were amongst the number, for I never afterwards could gain any intelligence of any thing belonging to me. In one of the trunks which I lost, I had packed the five hundred pounds I received from Mr. Galliard, which I had requested him to let me have in cash; as I thought I might meet with some trouble in exchanging bills. However this loss did not give me one moment's concern. *We were saved*—and I had clothes to go ashore in; a few guineas in my purse, and about seventy pounds in bank notes, in my pocket-book.

Gratitude now took entire possession of my soul. The sense of the great deliverance almost overwhelmed me; and it never, I hope, will be erased from my remembrance.

As soon as we were ready, we were put into one of the boats, and rowed to Seaford. It was about three o'clock when we reached the shore, which was lined with spectators. I immediately asked if a carriage could be had, and was soon accommodated with one that conveyed us (for I offered seats to the two ladies and my kind friend) to the head inn, where, ordering a fire in a chamber, and sending for a physician, I soon went to bed; neither of the insensible women offering me the least assistance, though I was then greatly indisposed.

The doctor, upon hearing the cause of my illness, ordered me some strengthening medicines, and desired me to take as much nourishing diet as possible; telling me I had more occasion for that than for physic. I was much pleased with this good gentleman, and asked him to recommend me to a nurse who could continue with me, during my stay at Seaford. He told me he would, and, within half an hour after he left me, a very matronly woman was brought to attend me.

I now seemed very comfortable, and soon after my nurse's arrival, sent to beg the favor of seeing my kind fellow-passenger, whom I requested to dispose of some money from me to the good steward and amongst the sailors.

After this, I took my medicines and went to sleep, and next morning found myself so much recovered, that I arose and wrote to you an account of my late disasters and present safety, and of my being necessitated to lay aside all ideas of another voyage; having neither clothes nor money sufficient for that purpose. I then wrote to Chesnut Manor; giving Miss Warburton a succinct account of my distresses, and entreated *her* father's protection, till my own could be brought to dispense with the hard conditions he had annexed to my duty.

For an answer to this letter, I waited four days at Seaford (having procured inconvenient lodgings in the house of a cousin of my nurse's) with extreme impatience, and on the fifth, received the reply which I mean to inclose. You will read it at this place, and then will not wonder at the effect the great unkindness of it had upon my spirits, so much, before, oppressed! The only favor which she granted me was, as you will see, a promise of the required secrecy.

It is not in the compass of words to describe the surprise and grief I experienced upon this occasion.

But I will draw a veil over the period; as it would only give distress both to you and myself

to describe the many painful days I afterwards spent at Seaford. Yet I confess them to have been the most profitable I ever lived through. It was there I was first taught to know, truly, the little dependance that can, with safety, be placed on the strongest human hope. It was there I was first led to rely *entirely* on the great FATHER of the Human Race. It was there I was convinced He was indeed my Guide, and that I must not look for help from any mortal creature. *At first*, I seemed to be forsaken both by GOD and man; but the brightness which afterwards broke in upon my mind, was like the sun gilding the sky in a fine summer's evening, after a dismal tempest; every dark cloud being chased away, and a sweet calm taking place of the horrors of the storm.

To the Almighty GOD alone did I then look for strength and assistance; and in HIM found all I wanted. My mind was refreshed in a manner I cannot describe.

From Seaford I proceeded to London; and ordered my stages so as to reach Mrs. Thompson's (to whom I had previously written) about six o'clock, where I was received by her and nurse with tears of joy, and by her good husband with every token of respectful affection. Their best bed-chamber, which is really a decent room, was got in perfect order for my reception; of that I took possession; and in that little abode experienced real tranquillity. However, I dared not to think of continuing there, as I must either totally have confined myself, or have hazarded being discovered. The first would have been detrimental to my health; the other, to my happiness. I therefore determined to disguise myself in humble garments, and take lodgings in some country place.

But as I have still a considerable deal to say, I will here conclude this letter, and begin afresh after Lady Stanley is retired to rest. Farewell.

C.P.

LETTER, IX.
LADY CAROLINE PEMBERTON, TO MRS.
MAYNARD.
(In Continuation.)

LADY Stanley is not well. She retired early. I am therefore sole mistress of the present hour, by the side of a good fire, in a pleasant apartment, destined to my use during my continuance in this really magnificent mansion.

“And are you then known to be the daughter of the Earl of Danvers? I thought your highest distinction had been *Mrs. Maria Birtles!*”

Have patience, my good cousins. All in due time. I have a variety of circumstances to acquaint you with before I lay aside my pen.

“Ah! Caroline—that love affair!”

We are not, Harriet, coming to that yet. I must first take a view—an unpleasant one — of what passed at Berkeley-Square after I left it.

By Mrs. Thompson’s means I was informed that poor Jenny was still exceedingly lame; having, through carelessness, caught a violent cold, which settled into her ankle; but that, however, she was, it was hoped, in a way to do well.

She told Mrs. Thompson (who sometimes went to speak to her when my father was from home; he not giving permission for her to enter the house, as she and nurse were suspected of facilitating my escape) that his Lordship was in a most tremendous passion when it was first intimated that I was not to be found.

Mrs. Dickerson, our new housekeeper, is a favourite with my father’s valet-de-chambre, and as Mr. Dupre is an almost continual attendant upon his master, very few things happen in the family with which he is not in some measure acquainted. Through Mrs. Dickerson, therefore, Jenny gained a considerable deal of intelligence.

It seems my father did not return home on the Wednesday night till several hours after I had left the house. Taking it therefore, I suppose, for granted, that I was in bed, he made no enquiry for me. The next morning he arose very early, and about eight o’clock, Lord Crumpford; a clergyman, and another gentleman—probably the lawyer—were driven to the door, and ushered into the library; where they continued some time in conversation with my father, who at nine o’clock ordered me to be called. It was then that the storm began. I tremble at the recollection. The idea of my dear father’s displeasure pains me beyond expressing.

Dupre was the messenger. After an absence of a few minutes he returned with—“Lady Caroline, my Lord, is not at home.”

“Not at home?” interrogated my father, “then order her to be sent for immediately. Whither is she gone?”

Dupre went out to make enquiries; his second return gave information that I had not been at home since the evening before.

My father began to look wild; Lord Crumpford groaned, it seems, sat down; repeated the word *dammed*—and slapped his hand upon his forehead; the parson and the other man staring with surprise.

Jenny was ordered to attend.

Jenny was ill in bed.

It was a lie, my father swore. “Ill; dying; dead, bring her hither this instant.”

It was confirmed that Jenny could not be moved.

You have often rallied me upon the apparent affection of all our domestics, which now was of the greatest service to me; for had they given all the circumstances within their knowledge, my father might, possibly, have collected sufficient light to have pursued me before I had been secured from his authority.

Mrs. Dickerson was summoned; but Mrs. Dickerson could give no other information than had been given before.

“Lady Caroline went out between six and seven last evening; and we have sat up all night, every minute expecting her coming home”—was the sum of her evidence.

“Perhaps”—intimated the supposed lawyer—“she went to a play: Possibly some misfortune.”—

This set my father upon a different kind of enquiry. Who saw me go out? Who attended me? In what was I dressed?—were questions I wonder he did not ask sooner; but it is evident that my having escaped the intended persecution, was the first idea he entertained upon hearing that I was gone from home.

The porter was summoned—“At what time did Caroline go out last night?”

“Between six and seven, my Lord!”

“Who attended her?”

“She went without an attendant, my Lord,” said Jones; after his ceremonious manner.

“Without an attendant!—In what was she dressed?”

“She was *all in black*, my Lord.”

“*In black!* What does the fellow mean!”

“*Indeed*, an’t please your Lordship, she was in black; and I wondered what was the matter.”

Jones was right. I chose a mourning dress as convenient for the occasion.

“Did she not order a carriage?” proceeded my father.

“No, my Lord; she left the house on foot.”

“Which way did she turn?”

“She turned to the right, my Lord; and I thought went in at Lady Stebbing’s.”

Lady Stebbing was sent to. She had not seen me. Messengers were then dispatched to every place where it was the least probable information could be given, and to those who were the evening before at public entertainments; but no intelligence could be procured.

The return of every messenger with a negative, drove my dear father into repeated fits of fury. But I wish to close this day’s scene. Yet one ensued which was, if possible, still worse; the receipt of my letter, sent, as I told you, by the return of the mail, confirming my father’s suppositions of my escape. At first, it seems, he determined to pursue me to France; but soon laid aside the intention, leaving me, he said, to my destiny. Since that time he has not been much in London; therefore I cannot learn any thing of his present sentiments.

Poor Jenny is quite distressed about me; and would, doubtless, be made happy by the information of my return; but I think it would not be right to let her know any thing of what has happened. The belief of my having left the kingdom is so firmly established, that no one, now, will think of searching for me in England; whereas if the least syllable of the truth were to transpire, such an enquiry might be set on foot as I should find it hard to elude. Sir John and Miss Warburton; nurse Pooley; Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, are the only people intrusted with the knowledge of my return. Therefore, as I think I am at present tolerably safe, it surely would be wrong to run any unnecessary hazard.

Jenny told Mrs. Thompson several letters directed for me had arrived at Berkley-Square: amongst the rest, one from you, which my father opened, (as I suppose he did all the rest) and found you were upon the point of leaving Ostend. — This, it seems, alarmed him for my safety, and he again declared a resolution to pursue me; which resolution, like the former—Jenny knew not why—soon subsided.

You will now return with me to Mrs. Thompson’s, where I have told you I did not think it eligible to continue, therefore determined upon country lodgings; but before I put my plan in execution, Mrs. Thompson was sent for by Mrs. Douglas, of Grosvenor-Square, to take orders about a gown she was making for her, who (the time Mrs. Thompson was there) received a letter from

Miss Stanley, with an enquiry after a young woman that once lived with her as a servant; Miss Stanley wishing to have her supply the place of one she was going to part with. This letter Mrs. Douglas read to a young lady—her niece I believe—who sat in the room at work, and from what passed, Mrs. Thompson found the young woman enquired for, was married. A conversation now opened between the two ladies upon the Stanley family; who Mrs. Thompson observed, seemed, by the character given them by Mrs. Douglas, to be all angels. Miss Stanley, the old lady said, was, she believed, one of the best and most amiable young women upon earth; and, indeed, I have, since that time, found Mrs. Douglas' opinion of her to be a just one.

When Mrs. Thompson, at her return, recited the particulars of this conversation, I was instantly struck with a thought—a whimsical one you will say—of offering myself to attend Miss Stanley in the capacity of lady's-maid; and the more I considered of it, the more eligible the idea appeared.

That you may not think my late adventures had infected me with the spirit of romance—attend a little to my situation at that juncture.

The intention of continuing with Mrs. Thompson had given way, as I told you, to considerations of health and privacy. Good as my constitution is, you know I was always made ill when debarred of air and exercise; neither of which, as I before said, could I enjoy without hazarding a discovery. Country lodgings, therefore, I had determined upon, and meant to enquire about that very day in which Mrs. Thompson attended Mrs. Douglas. My finances were slender—the time of your return uncertain—the resource I looked for from the Warburtons, shut up—In short, I thought an asylum in so respectable a family would, upon future investigation, best secure my reputation in the eye of the world, and likewise prevent my being under any embarrassment for want of money. The *business* of an attendant to such a young lady as Miss Stanley was represented to be, would, I conjectured, be only an agreeable amusement to one who always loved employment, and whose prospects were not so lively as to make rumination entertaining; and I fancied myself tolerably well qualified to execute such an office to the satisfaction of my patroness. Mrs. Thompson burst into tears when I mentioned my design. Nurse was, likewise, very uneasy; but I laughed away their scruples, and, at length, silenced their objections.

Ordering, therefore, a coach to be called, I dispatched Mrs. Thompson to Grosvenor-Square, desiring her to tell Mrs. Douglas she had, at that time, under her care a young woman—Maria Birtles her name—who would think herself very happy in the protection of the Alverston family. That she had been genteelly brought up under the care of an excellent aunt; after whose death she found herself in distressed circumstances; having some years before lost her mother; and her father—formerly an officer in the guards—more inattentive to her happiness than it were to be wished.

Except the fictitious name—not one syllable was here that deviated from the strictest truth. Mrs. Thompson added her own encomiums upon my character and abilities, and finished with saying the terms of my retention would be left entirely to Miss Stanley.

With this description, Mrs. Douglas, whose benevolence led her to wish to be of universal service, was so well satisfied, that she desired to see me as soon as possible. It was then settled that I

should wait upon her the morning following, when dressing myself in some of my late-bought humble garments—the top of my finery being a pale pink silk gown and white petticoat—I took a coach, and, with Mrs. Thompson, was driven to Grosvenor-Square, where I was introduced to Mrs. Douglas as she sat at breakfast.

To finish my account of this business as soon as possible—the good lady was so super-abundantly satisfied with me and my character—given by Mrs. Thompson—that she immediately wrote the strongest recommendation of me to Miss Stanley; shewing Mrs. Thompson what she had written; the consequence of which was, my being, the next week, whirled down, in the Derby mail, to Alverston Park.

Had I leisure, I would give you a description of this beautiful situation; which, certainly, is one of the most enchanting spots in the universe: but this must be deferred till some future opportunity.

My reception at Alverston was pleasing beyond expression. Never, in the days of my prosperity, was I introduced into a family so perfectly amiable. Sir Edward Stanley is a phenomenon. I never before saw the steadiness and respectability of years so happily blended with the cheerfulness of youth. He has been, and indeed still is, extremely handsome. In his temper there is a generous warmth, which makes his conversation pleasing past idea. His principles are unsullied. Charity and generosity have made his heart one of their mansions; while true courage, mercy and tenderness, are so inseparably united with his nature, that he must cease to exist when they are extinguished from his breast. This charming veteran, who never stirs abroad without receiving marks of almost adoration, has the most lively penetrating blue eye you can imagine; is an adept in every science, and, likewise, such an ingenious mechanic, that he sees, in an instant, how every machine which he hears talked of, must be constructed. I often sit and listen to him with the greatest admiration.

Lady Stanley is a wife exactly calculated for such a husband. Her person is truly elegant, and her face still descriptive of beauty. Her understanding is exalted; her judgment particularly excellent. Her disposition is sweetness itself, *enlivened*, as I may say, by a little aptitude to passion; which, however, she so corrects that one can but just perceive she has it in her temper. It seldom has any other effect upon those about her than to make them smile; which, indeed, she encourages, by smiling herself the moment she is sensible of having spoken with quickness. Her *delicacy* is the most *genuine* I ever observed, and compassion beams from every feature of her face.

On the day which compleated her twenty-fourth year, was this amiable woman (then Miss Henrietta Wilbraham) married to Sir Edward Stanley; since which time this accomplished pair have lived in the highest harmony, but not without experiencing considerable affliction in the death, or premature birth, of several children during the first years of their marriage. Miss Stanley, now about twenty-one, is the youngest of six that were born alive.

The chief of these particulars I gathered from Mrs. Moore, a worthy gentlewoman of scarce any fortune, who attends—or rather *did* attend, for she is now very ill—upon Lady Stanley.

I would hasten to give you some description of the darling daughter of this respectable

house, but from a consciousness that I cannot do the subject justice. When I was first received by her at Mrs. Biddle's, a mantua-maker in Derby, I seemed as if I had met with a long-lost beloved sister. Never before did I see a woman so fascinating. Her eyes; her air; her manner; her conversation, full of fire, duly tempered by the softest and most winning affability. As to her person—she is one of the most beautiful women I ever beheld. Her understanding is equal to any thing in nature. Her temper above praise: no wonder she is almost idolized by all ranks of people.

When she first saw me, she looked with apparent surprize; and though she was perfectly familiar, treated me with such distinction, that I began to forget the character I had assumed, and to listen for the sound of Lady Caroline.

She took me with her in her chaise from Derby to Alverston. During the little journey we had a great deal of conversation upon various subjects. After I had been giving my sentiments on a late new comedy, with rather more freedom, I fancy, than became my situation—"It is well, Maria," said she, "you brought me a letter from Mrs. Douglas, or I should have suspected you had been some person of distinction in disguise"—adding, with a lively air—"Why your sentiments, child, would do honor to a peeress."

At this I blushed very deeply; not, as *she* must naturally conclude, at the height of the compliment; but, as *you* will readily conjecture, from consciousness.

"Do not blush, Maria," said the charming girl; "I will not pain your modesty; therefore I suppress my opinion."

When we reached Alverston she presented me to Lady Stanley; telling her, at the same time, in Italian, that she had found a wonder. At this—fool that I was—my face and neck were all in a glow. She then looked at me with a smiling penetration—"Italian too, my good girl!" said she. "French—I could allow you. But come, we shall understand you better by and by."

My father, madam, I replied, is an adept in Italian. I did not always live with him, but I saw him, sometimes, at my aunt's, and he would, now and then, give himself a little trouble in instructing me.

How fortunate that this was true. How else could I, with any consistency, have accounted for my information?

I must suppress the sequel of my tale till I see you; when you, I know, will take pleasure in hearing by what gradations I rose to my present distinction in this family, where I am now upon the footing of a companion, and that *not* an humble one, to Lady Stanley, during the absence of her daughter, who has been some time at Woodstock with Miss Lawson; the young lady with whose amiable manners we were so much pleased when she was introduced to us at Tunbridge.

When I first came to Alverston, it was expected the lovely Emma would soon be married to our old Weymouth friend, Sir Charles Conway. I had heard this before I came into Derbyshire; but it never occurred to my recollection till I arrived at my journey's end, and I had not ventured the chance of his recognizing me. However, as it was some time since he saw me, I hoped my dress and

situation would be my security, should I ever meet with him, which I thought it probable I might never do, as my station would authorize retirement; for at my first coming I did not think of being treated as I now am. Nor did I wish it. For some time I earnestly contended to act in the capacity I had entered upon; but all in this family seem so assured I was not born to servitude, that I am obliged to accept the distinctions they are determined to pay me; of which, and of Miss Stanley's agreeable offer of a cordial friendship, I will tell you more when we meet. All I will add is, that I was obliged to be a little peremptory in declining to eat at their table: my motive was an apprehension of there meeting with company to whom I might not be unknown. Lady Stanley sometimes permits me, her own woman being, as I before observed, at this time very ill, to assist her in dressing, &c. and in instructing in the business of a lady's-maid, a pretty, docile, little girl, who, if she proves tractable, will, I believe, be taken in that capacity by either Lady or Miss Stanley; as poor Mrs. Moore is not likely to get well again, and I am positively rejected, though I have earnestly requested, and that for a variety of reasons, a continuance *in* my servitude. The last time I mentioned it to Lady Stanley, she silenced me at once; telling me she should reproach herself while she lived, were she to permit a person of my appearance and qualifications [high compliments, cousin] to live with her as a servant. She gave me at the same time, as from Sir Edward, a thirty pound note; which I was obliged to accept, but shall lay by to return some time hence; desiring me to equip myself with such apparel as Emma, at her return, would wish to *see a friend of her's* appear in.

What true generosity of soul runs through this family, Harriet!

It has, as I told you, been some time expected that Miss Stanley would, ere long, be Lady Conway.

What the matter is, I cannot yet exactly say; but the dear Emma told me it was all over, and owned to me her distress upon the occasion; adding—she wished to tell me all, but dare not. She dare not, she said, even tell her mother. She was promise-bound, and *must* be secret, though the task was *very heavy*. It was on this account that she suddenly left Alverston; and, I find, all the family are greatly dissatisfied with what has happened. For my part, I cannot help ardently wishing a reconciliation may take place between this, at present, separated couple; for I think they seem exactly calculated for each other. We all, you know, agreed Sir Charles Conway was one of the most amiable men we had ever seen; and that he was the life of our Weymouth party.

How long Miss Stanley will stay at Woodstock, I know not. She greatly obliged me last week by a most agreeable letter, which I answered immediately. If she does not return soon, it is probable she will never again see Maria Birtles; but I hope she, some time hence, will think *her friend* Caroline Pemberton an equivalent for the loss of her waiting-maid.

I am impatient to be with you, but will wait Mr. Maynard's advice how to proceed, before I leave Derbyshire.

Having now brought you down to the present period, I think I will conclude this my last packet in the narrative way; or have you, Augustus, any questions to ask, before I finish?

“Why, yes, Caroline, I want to know if Sir Edward and Lady Stanley have no other child living than the amiable daughter you have been talking about.”

And pray, sir, why do you ask *that* particular question? Suppose they *have* a son—What then? Does it follow that I—Ah, my cousins! I doubt, I doubt—shall I own it? Come; yes, I will. I will confess that if my father, instead of Lord Crumpford, had proposed Mr. Stanley, I should not—have ran away from him. That is all. What a wonderful reputation should I have had, in such a case, for implicit obedience to parental authority! an absolute pattern of submission to all the girls of the age. *Because my father had commanded*—I, probably, should have been brought to accept of one of the most—what shall I say about him, Harriet, to express what he is, that will not, to my sarcastical kinsman, sound like the partiality of a simple girl in love? One of the most—*what*? I cannot find a fit phrase; therefore summon to your idea a very fine figure of a man, endowed with an uncommon understanding; of a most excellent disposition, though rather too impetuous; a sparkling wit, with finished erudition; then call him George Stanley, and you will have the person; the mind, and the name of the man who has—it would be a folly to deny it—stolen the heart of my father's daughter; and that, I greatly fear, beyond retrieve. How all this came about, and what reason I have to suppose my swain is caught in the same net, must be the subject of some future conversation.

A few evnings back, I found myself in a very whimsical situation, through which I scarce knew how to conduct myself.

An old Mr. Slayton, of Oakley-Hill, a few miles from Mansfield, a relation to the Wilbraham family, was one of Mr. Stanley's godfathers; and, I believe, means to present him with a very handsome sum of money—if I understand aright, a hundred thousand pounds—provided he marries with his approbation. This gentleman came last week to Alverston, in his way to London, and was introduced into Lady Stanley's dressing-room, while she and I sat there at work. It was after tea. Sir Edward was not at home. Mr. Stanley came up with him. For some time the conversation ran on trifling subjects, but at length, according, as it seems, to his custom, Mr. Slayton began upon matrimony, and who should, in my presence, be talked of to Mr. Stanley as a wife, but myself! Do not mistake—not me, as Maria Birtles, but as Caroline Pemberton. Never before was I so overwhelmed with confusion. I absolutely thought I should have fainted; the throbbing of my heart being so great, that it made me quite sick. Fortunately the old squire's broad shoulders, behind which I screened myself, prevented my embarrassment from being observed; otherwise, some strange construction must have been drawn from my emotion.

I must forcibly tear my pen from the paper, or I shall scribble over half a ream. Never did I know where to stop when writing to you, and the last subject *is not quite exhausted*.

Seriously, my dear cousins, as you have now the whole of my situation before you, I request you to advise me, and to manage for me, as your judgment directs; depending upon my approbation of your sentence. Let me hear from you immediately: yet I shall tremble when I see your letter, on account of the expected information of my dear father's displeasure. I think you must not tell me if he is *very* angry; and yet you *must*; for except I am assured I know all, I shall be distressed by my own suppositions.

Farewell. I will not add another line.
CAROLINE PEMBERTON.

LETTER, X.

COL. GREVILLE, TO GEORGE STANLEY, ESQ.

Pall-Mall, March 10th, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

ABOUT five days since, I had the pleasure of seeing, in Portland-Place, our friend Sir Charles Conway; but my satisfaction on the occasion received considerable abatement, from the apparent lowness of his spirits. His dress told me he did not mourn the death of any body, or, by the solemnity of his manner, I should have concluded the existence of some beloved friend had been just terminated. He is no longer the lively—the gay companion we mutually have held in admiration. My concern for his happiness led to enquiries that produced answers which unfolded the cause; when my wonder changed its subject. I was no more surprised at his dejection of spirits. *Such* a deprivation happening to me, would, I honestly confess, have extinguished not only all my hope of happiness, but my whole portion of reason: for as the felicity he formerly enjoyed, was, in my opinion, the highest any man could experience upon earth, the loss of it must, consequently, be the greatest degree of torment. My wonder, therefore, when I learned the occasion of his melancholy, was, that he was not still more deeply afflicted. Such a woman as Emma Stanley!—Heavens and earth! who would not exchange every other species of bliss for that one of calling her his!

Another part of my amazement was what could occasion the rupture between a pair seemingly so affectionately attached to each other. That the primary cause of blame rested with Sir Charles, I not one moment hesitated to pronounce: for that Miss Stanley would not—*could* not have capriciously dissolved such an engagement, is an immovable article of my creed.

The sum total is—the affair is concluded; never, most likely, to be revived.

And now how shall I summon sufficient courage to enter upon the only purport of my letter! My hand trembles while it obeys the dictates of my heart.

Were the greatest monarch upon the habitable globe to pretend to merit the hand of Miss Stanley, he ought to be punished for his presumption, as it is impossible for any human being to deserve a jewel so inestimable. How then dare I breathe a wish to call her mine! Yet that I would contemptuously spurn at diadems, if put in competition with her yielding hand, is a truth which has long, long been fatal to my felicity. I have endeavoured to consider her as so absolutely united to Sir Charles Conway, that it would have been criminal to have even wished a dissolution of the engagement; but no ideal representation could silence the whispers of my heart, which always told me she was absolutely necessary to my ever knowing happiness; nor could I prevent my envy from resting upon a man blessed with Miss Stanley's favor.

Convinced of the true nobleness of mind which inspires every individual of the Alverston family—shall I mention the present disparity of my fortune to that which your sister is already in possession of? Shall I imagine myself to stand so low in your opinion, as to suppose it necessary to

disclaim every view of a mercenary tendency? No; I will not. Neither will I, to lessen, in appearance, my presumption, dwell upon the nobility of my ancestry and present connexions; nor upon the expectation of reversionary riches!

The whole of this great business I commit, my dear friend, to your management. Favor me with your interest, and oblige me with three lines by to-morrow's post, to tell me I have not presumed too much upon the experienced generosity of your soul; which, great as I have often been convinced it is, my timidity, on the present occasion, tells me may be offended by this enormous intrusion.

Some times I am apprehensive of being too early in the disclosure of my sentiments; but my fear that delay should give an opportunity for some more resolute, and perhaps less-truly adoring presumer to succeed, impels me to urge to you my wishes; leaving the time and manner of further proceedings to your friendly direction.

On the greatly interesting subject, I will not now say any more; and after it, what can to me appear of consequence? Nothing—but the pleasure I take in seeing my name witnessing an avowal of the respect and affection with which I have the honor to be,

My dear sir,

your obliged

and devoted

ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, XI.

MR. STANLEY, TO COLONEL GREVILLE.

Alverston, March 11th, Wednesday evening.

DEAR SIR,

YOUR letter has this instant reached me. As you desire, I answer it directly, though it cannot go by this day's post; that having been gone through some time back.

I write—not only at your request, but that I may shut the subject from my thoughts as soon as possible.

You mistake, Colonel—greatly mistake the point in question. My sister—whom on this occasion I could almost renounce—is the only culpable person concerned. Sir Charles Conway's conduct is absolutely unimpeachable. It ever was, and will remain so. Justice, and my affection for my friend, which is at war with that for my sister, obliges me to give this testimony.

The caprice of woman—heard you never of this inherent quality in the sex?—is the only known cause of Emma Stanley's rendering wretched the very man on earth most calculated to make her happy. To your success I shall not oppose any thing; but you, and every one who may think me a proper person to apply to on such an occasion, must excuse my declining taking any concern in her

future choice.

Whomever she thinks proper for her husband, I shall, doubtless, consider as my brother; though if she elects with no more judgment than she has discarded, I shall blush at my relation.

Colonel do not mistake me. If she chuses you, you will not have any reason to complain of my want of cordial wishes for your mutual happiness. Had not my sister's unaccountable *excentricity* so highly offended me, as to make me determine never more to give my voice in such an election, I would have espoused your cause with all due fervency. As it is, I repeat you must excuse me; still, however believing me to be

Your affectionate friend,
GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XII.

COLONEL GREVILLE, TO SIR EDWARD
STANLEY.

Pall-Mall, March 13th.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE many instances of friendship I have received from all your family, give me hope you will indulgently listen to the request I am now presuming to make to you. It is of a very aspiring nature, and flattered as I always have been by your too high sense of an action which was nothing more than an office of common humanity, I am almost apprehensive you will think me too presuming when I tell you that my hope is to take from you, and that with the joint consent of your house, the rescued and inestimable jewel of your family.

The moment of my being assured Miss Stanley was at liberty from her late engagement, my wishes, before too unrestrainable, beat high to call her mine. For some days I hesitated; unable to summon sufficient resolution to dare the attempt: but equally unable to silence the importunities of a heart ever devoted to that most charming of women, I wrote, on Tuesday last, to Mr. Stanley, who obligingly gave me an immediate answer; but on account of his intimacy with Sir Charles Conway, declined taking any active part in the affair. To you, therefore, and to Lady Stanley, I make my appeal, and presume to hope for your concurrence with my wishes.

To delineate the circumscribed limits of my present fortune, would, on several accounts, be an affront to you. The first reason of my forbearance arises from a knowledge of the true nobleness of soul which so particularly distinguishes all of your name; my next—because you are as perfectly acquainted with the state of my finances as I am myself; you, likewise, well know the reasonableness of my expectations of reversionary riches and other distinctions. The promises I have received—not only from the minister, but from the king himself—give me a hope of being able to place Miss Stanley in a sphere not unworthy her distinguished merits. Of the sincerity and ardency of the affection I have long entertained for her, I could write volumes; but of this, I trust you will not entertain one doubt, as it must be a matter of easy belief, that a man, honored as I have been by her

avowed sentiments of regard (to which, from the effusions of a mind too sensible of what she termed an obligation, she gave the appellation of gratitude) should conceive a tender prepossession *for such a woman*; though the idea of her predilection for another, kept down, in some measure, the rising wish of being *the happy first* in her affection.

With you, my dear Sir Edward, and with Lady Stanley, I now implicitly rest the affair which must constitute or destroy all the felicity this world can afford me; subscribing myself in the language of truth,

Your greatly obliged,
respectful, and
obedient servant,
ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, XIII.

COLONEL GREVILLE, TO THE HONOURABLE
MRS. DIGBY.

Pall-Mall, March 13th.

YOUR letter, my dear cuz, without a date, informing me of your safe arrival at the intended scene of action, reached me, a few days back, at Lord Farnham's; and that dated Yarmouth, March the eleventh, I received yesterday. To the first I did not reply, because you sent me no address;—what, I wonder, were you thinking of when you wrote that letter!—To be sure it might be supposed that a cover directed to so celebrated a character as that of *the Honorable Mrs. Digby*, would have found its way to your hands, all over the king's dominions; yet what I was then in the humour to have written, was not to be hazarded to the *possibility* of a miscarriage.

Do you not know from experience, Bella, that the old observation of every thing's being made more dear by the difficulty of obtaining it, is most unquestionably true? Myself I acknowledge to be a melancholy proof of its verity, on the subject of our late—or, if you please, of *your* late, dexterous manoeuvring. While Miss Stanley was *in danger* of being Lady Conway, I would have given all the globes in the vast extent of ether, for the chance Sir Charles then had of possessing her—*AND—her fortune*. A mighty convenient thing that last, an't please your ladyship, to a man who has dipped at both ends, (though I believe that is a circumstance not much known) a scanty patrimony: yet no sooner had you, with mighty art, loosened the silken fetters which tied this envied pair, than I found my relish for matrimony, which, let me confess, was never particularly strong, much abated; however my passionate tenderness for “the glittering bait,” continues in full transport. To facilitate, therefore, its gratification, I wrote, a few days back, to George Stanley, who gave me an immediate answer; but neither very polite, nor in the style I expected; for I had ventured to suppose he would have told me that next to his discarded friend, I was the man he wished to call brother: and considering the professions of gratitude which I had so repeatedly heard from all the family, for my heroic preservation of the phoenix from the flames, I do not think this supposition was a very unreasonable one. However it was not realized. The zealous friend of the outed member refused to have any thing to do in a new election. This disappointment stimulated, I believe, my

wishes. I again found myself very much in love; therefore immediately wrote a letter to the father; giving him, as I had done the young one, a gentle hint of the conflagration at Mr. Symond's; intertwining an address to the mother, and throwing myself upon their clemency. If the old don gives me an answer as laconic as that I have received from the heir-apparent, I am determined to besiege the girl herself, without delay; and if *she* refuses me—no more begging and praying: I will, at once, strike a grand stroke; seize my prey, like the monarch of the woods, and secure her from all others of my species.

But this plot is still in petto. I will not yet trust you with even the outlines; but keep, till the word of command shall be given, the why; the how; the when, and the where, in impervious darkness.

Having done with myself—let me talk about you.

Sir Charles is not yet, you say, arrived at Yarmouth; I did not expect to hear he was; as by his conversation, when I saw him in Portland-Place, I found he meant to take a view of the towns and villages upon the coast of Essex and Suffolk. When he left London I know not; for the day after I saw him I went to Windsor, and I was not, at my return, industrious to seek another meeting with him.

My letter, which met you at Mrs. Betterson's, made but slight mention of the Mr. Evelyn who is to accompany your knight in his tour. I have since dined with him at Barclay's, of Reading, in which town his father lives; and I now pronounce him to be one of the most accomplished young Levites I ever saw. I think if you manage right, he may be of use in your designs; as his friendship for Sir Charles will naturally lead him to wish his forgetfulness of *the ungrateful* Emma. This hint I give you, that you may make the most of it.

I cannot but say that I pride myself in your approbation of my managing conversation with Sir Charles Conway. The commendations of MRS. DIGBY—though she is my cousin—so confirm my sentiments, that I am quite elated at the recollection; therefore, in the height of my exaltation I subscribe myself her most respectful

and most obedient servant,
ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, XIV.

SIR EDWARD STANLEY, TO COLONEL
GREVILLE.

Alverston, March 14th.

YOUR letter, my dear sir, reached my hands about an hour since. I directly carried it to Lady Stanley, to consult upon the contents, and we immediately agreed in thinking there is but one answer which can be given to it with propriety.

Sir Charles Conway, as you well know, had not merely our consent to address our daughter, but our warmest wishes for his success. On every account he was the man to whose protection we were desirous to consign her; and it was our expectation, and the expectation of all our friends, that the affair would soon have been happily concluded. It has, however, been proved we were too sanguine; and the disappointment considerably affected us; being an added instance of the instability of human hope; for we were almost presumptuous enough to think nothing could frustrate the felicity we proposed to ourselves in this seemingly eligible union. And now, unwilling as we are to charge Emma with capriciousness, justice to Sir Charles Conway compels us to exonerate him from every degree of blame respecting the termination of this greatly approved engagement. Indeed we blame not any body; for as our dear girl was evidently much distressed; [we mean to be honest with you, Colonel] as we have great reason to believe she had a real predilection for Sir Charles, and as we never had occasion to suspect the goodness of either her head or her heart, we rest the matter on a belief that the whole is the effect of some cause which it is not yet given us to develope. Our answer to your letter, therefore, is, that we are firmly determined not to interfere in any new proposal which shall be made to our daughter; trusting she will not make a choice to our disapprobation. For this resolve, we have several reasons: one of the number is, a consideration for Sir Charles Conway; as we cannot but think his affection for Emma leads him to consider himself as a great sufferer from her very unexpected change of sentiments; though he has too much true goodness to distress us with his complaints. But it is an ill compliment to so finished a character as his is, to suppose a necessity for expatiating upon his merits.

You have now before you, my dear Colonel, our sentiments as plain as simple language can convey them. We wish to be frank and sincere to all the world; particularly to one to whom we shall ever think ourselves under obligation for the preservation of the darling child in question.

Point out some way wherein I can be of use to you; give me some opportunity of serving you. It will afford peculiar happiness to both Lady Stanley and myself to be able to shew a sense of our obligation by something more than language; but till an acceptable method can be found for that purpose, I must content myself with requesting you, my dear sir, to consider me as your ever grateful and affectionate friend,

EDWARD STANLEY.

LETTER, XV.

LADY STANLEY, TO MISS STANLEY.

Alverston, March 14th.

Notwithstanding I this morning dispatched to my dear Emma a large sheet of paper full written, I must again take up my pen to address her. But I will now be as concise as possible.

Inclosed, for your perusal, is a letter from Colonel Greville, with your father's answer to it.

Read them both with attention; consult *your inward mind*, and then form your own conclusion.

I shall be glad to hear from you, when your sentiments are fixed; but do not write hastily.

May GOD Almighty direct my dear child in all her researches for true and lasting happiness.

I forbear to say more than that I am
her anxiously affectionate mother,
HENRIETTA STANLEY.

LETTER, XVI.

COLONEL GREVILLE, TO MISS STANLEY.

Pall-Mall, March 15th.

HAVING been attached to Miss Stanley for a series of years, by ties of a most tender friendship, hardly restraining my wishes for a connexion of a *still more tender* kind, by the belief of her heart's being the property of another, it is not to be wondered at that the moment which informed me she was at liberty to elect, to the first seat in her favor, that fortunate individual to whose petition she would compassionately listen, should give birth to—or, rather, mature—my most ardent aspirations towards that long envied—that most blest of all sublunary distinctions.

I have been accustomed to consider a general at the head of his army as one of the most glorious objects in the creation. But, believe me, madam, he would, when compared with the man of your choice, sink, in my eye, beneath the meanest of those whom he commands.

These are my real sentiments, and with them I offer myself a suppliant—an admiring—an adoring suppliant—for your favor. Riches and titles will soon be laid at your feet. Candidates of the first distinction will crowd to enter the lifts, as soon as it is known you have a preference to bestow. But of these opponents I am not afraid. Riches and titles, with you, madam, have no very powerful charms; else would I dwell upon my considerable expectancies. But you know my reversionary rights; and you know, likewise, I am partly promised a revival of the title of my mother's father.

Excuse me that I mention these matters. I repeat my conviction of their being considered as immaterial to you when put in competition with sincerity and affection; with which qualities I can boast myself to be nobly enriched. In these articles my wealth has been accumulating with rapidity ever since my first acquaintance with the treasures of your mind. Think of then, and pity me for, the torments I have endured in the constant empty wish for a *return*. Not but that I acknowledge my heart has been often elated by instances of your highly valued *friendship*. But what did *that* do for me!—increase the ardency of my wishes for the first share of your *affection*, to almost distraction.

I cannot paint the bitter heart-aches I have endured under the mask of a smile, when I have visited Alverston. Many times have I intended going thither, and then altered my intention; being unable to endure the idea of witnessing the happiness I so greatly envied.

But I will not at this time enlarge upon this head.

I have written to Sir Edward and Mr. Stanley on the interesting subject, and have been favored with letters from both, not prohibitory. Yet they decline interfering; rightly judging they may safely trust to your own discretion; which no one ever saw cause to question.

And now, madam, I will conclude; earnestly requesting a speedy release from that torment of suspense I must necessarily endure till you deign to favor me with a reply: such a one as will, I must presume to hope, open to me a prospect of future happiness.

I am, my dear madam,
your most fervently affectionate,
and truly devoted adorer,
ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, XVII.

COLONEL GREVILLE, TO LORD FITZ-MURRAY.

Pall-Mall, March 15th.

I Rather think I shall, at last, be obliged to adopt your scheme of conquest; which, however, goes most plaguily against my pride; not, you will believe, against my principle; for now all these pains have been taken to separate the cooing turtles, the fair one *shall* be brought to surrender by means of strength or stratagem.

Confound the stupid family for their stoical indifference about such a business. *They ought* to have interfered—to have *enforced my proposal*; instead of that, the young one, for I wrote first to him, laconically begged to be excused from having any hand in the affair, because of his friendship, forsooth! to his dear Sir Charles Conway! A curse upon such friendship! Is he not *my* friend too? and has he not reason to imagine I am so foolish as to be his, without any regard to interest? Besides are they not all under obligation to me? They have, it is true, made, what they may think, considerable returns; but can any favor pay the great debt of saving the young lady from such terrible destruction? Positively, no; they will ever remain my debtors.

My second letter was to Sir Teddy himself. His reply was rather more prolix than the youngster's, but it amounted to the same sum total. He, truly! would not direct the matter, because his daughter was so well calculated to judge and chuse for herself. Dame Stanley, according to the tenor of his letter, was of the same opinion. I wonder the late dismissal so contrary to their approbation, did not lower the parental partiality of these sentiments; as, according to all *they* can judge by, the girl must have acted very capriciously. Something the old fellow talked about a hidden cause, not yet developed. I did not quite understand what might be the full extent of his meaning, but faith! he made me tremble by his intimation. I must finish this business as soon as possible, lest any malicious demon should whisper a secret which may throw me at a distance. I this day received the father's answer; have just now written to the girl herself; and beginning to find a wonderful increase of my passion, from the idea of its being likely I may meet with more difficulty in my pursuit than I had before permitted myself to apprehend, have, I do assure you, flourished off in style; for I am not yet *enough in love* to prevent my senses from having free exercise.

It most certainly is an observation founded upon incontrovertible facts, that a man who is fool enough to be *in good earnest*, as they say, in these matters, is never so likely to succeed as the honest fellow who has prudence and policy in view; and therefore reason and discretion at command.

I, working by this rule, have, as I told you, composed a gallant billet-doux for my lass; which I fancy to be the most lucky hit, my hand ever guided. Had I been quite sincere in all I said, my scribble would have wanted many of its little ornaments; for, as I have observed, a man who is really in love with a woman, without any regard to her appendages, can seldom, or never, either write or speak with pointed elegance.

Let us now suppose this celebrated fair should, out of pure constancy to her first flame, reject my humble petition. What, after that, must be my next step? Why this: to seize her, as you six months back proposed, and convey her to your Welch castle. Where I will treat her with so much love, that, surfeited with the richness of the banquet, she shall be glad to resign—nay to *offer* the name of Stanley, as a ransom for her liberty from that sweet thralldom; joyfully—even thankfully—consenting to exchange it for the one from which death only can release her.

I will inclose the particulars of the plan, that your useful Pandarus, and his still more useful spouse may have it for perusal.

Your scheme I have considerably improved upon; and have, as you will see, included Miss Lawson; that you, likewise, may have some little amusement.

And now, my Lord, if I can but execute the double plan of perfecting my own scheme and frustrating that of Mrs. Digby, I shall *indeed* be a man; which is one reason for my being in haste to pursue my project; though I take care to let my precious kinswoman, who has one of the most artful, plotting, guileful hearts that ever inhabited a female breast, suppose I am backward and dilatory. But the moment I am secure, I will blow her up, and spoil her match. She never, if I can prevent it, shall have another husband. No young fry to cut me out of the estate, do I want her to produce. I have recommended Herbert Evelyn to her acquaintance, who will, I think, soon see and frustrate her designs; as I employed Vandeput to give him a hint of her character.

She pretends ignorance—for I believe it *is* pretence—of the real purport of her father's will; which, doubtless, is a very complex piece of business; but thus far the meaning is perfectly clear. If she dies without a child, what he left her goes to her sister; and if she likewise leaves this world without children (as most likely she will; it being improbable she should ever marry) it was to revert to James Bentley, who died soon after old Howard; *and then*, after his death, to rest in me; merely, I believe, because he did not care what became of it any farther. Had *any* distinction been made between the sisters, it ought to have been in favor of Matilda; but the artful Arabella was his darling; and, by her little serpent-like tricks, took effectual care to keep herself so, and likewise, it is said, to continue his resentment against Matilda; who, according to the voice of fame, for I never saw much of her, though we are so nearly related, is a most amiable character.

With Arabella's disposition I am thoroughly acquainted, by means of our so often living together, in puerile days, at our old aunt Montgomery's, and I know her to be fraudulent.

As I told you—she believes, or affects to believe—that if she has no child, she has a power of disposal; and that only in case of her dying intestate, the estate goes as the will directs. But if I survive her, I shall let her executor know better things, with respect to all that was her father's property.

Let me hear from you soon, and tell me if you have still any intention of carrying Fanny into Wales; or if she is now so well reconciled to her fate that you dare trust her at Bernford during your stay in London. Her brother, I find, has not the least idea of her being with you. Williamson is the person he suspects.

Till we meet, my Lord, farewell. *That you may escape the due reward of your actions*, is, I think, a very friendly wish; for which, I expect you will acknowledge you owe me obligation.

ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, XVIII.

MISS STANLEY, TO COLONEL GREVILLE.

Woodstock, Tuesday, March 17th, 1789.

SIR,

YOUR letter, dated the fifteenth, which I just now received, has distressed me beyond measure.

Why will you lay me under the disagreeable necessity of refusing any request of yours so earnestly made? for refuse it I must, or be accessory to the destruction of both my own happiness and yours. Believe me, my good friend, I speak from certain knowledge, or I would not speak so decisively. I have an infallible intelligencer to instruct me on this head, whose dictates, on such an occasion, it would be certain wretchedness to disobey. I owe you obligation of the highest worldly nature; and should experience inexpressible gladness to be able to add materially to your welfare; to promote which, I would make considerable sacrifices; but in the case in question, most sure am I that a compliance with your expressed wishes, would not only deprive *me* of felicity, but prevent *your ever again* having the least prospect of it while we both should remain in existence; it being utterly impossible you could be happy with a woman whose heart must constantly continue sullenly insensible to your affection; and it is this conviction, sir, that confirms my determination (which is indeed fixed unalterably) of never being more to you than

your much obliged,
and truly grateful friend,
EMMA STANLEY.

LETTER, XIX.

SIR CHARLES CONWAY, TO GEORGE STANLEY, ESQ.

March 17th, 1789.

YESTERDAY morning I wrote to you from Harwich. I now date from Framlingham, a pretty little market town in Suffolk, famous for its church and castle; the latter, as you know, celebrated for the refuge it afforded *bloody Queen Mary*, as she is called. It is one of the most agreeable pieces of

decayed antiquity I have seen lately. Within-side is a very long room of rather modern date; built for the reception of the parish-poor, who are here maintained in great order and decency. The prospect from the top of the walls of the castle is very pleasant; affording a view of an estate of several hundreds per annum left to the poor of this place by Sir Robert Hitcham. His desire to have only a plain stone laid over him was prettily evaded by his executors, who ordered the repository to be distinguished by a large black marble slab, supported at the corners by four angels; each kneeling upon one knee. Though there are in this chancel several superb monuments to some of the Norfolk family, this of Sir Robert's, from its simple elegance, claims the pre-eminence. The church is, I think, take it without and within, one of the handsomest structures I ever saw in a country town. As soon as I entered, I remembered to have seen it before; it was when I was brought by Lord Bristol upon a visit to a relation of his who lived in a village within four miles of this place: but I was either never shown, or had forgotten, the castle. My passion for music, I believe, imprinted the church upon my idea, as I now perfectly recollect hearing its organ touched by a gentleman whose very amiable and respectable character did honor, as our party afterwards observed, to advanced life. I still remember that I was, at the time, particularly struck with the similitude of his person and manners to those of your father.

These recurrences led me to enquire for him of the mistress of the inn, whose singular reply was—"O dear, sir! he has a long time been in Heaven!"—adding that he certainly was one of the best men that ever breathed. This led me to wish to extend my enquiries, and just as I had began to ask her the particulars of this exemplary character, an elderly gentleman of a respectable appearance, was walking through the gate-way, in which we were standing. He immediately caught our subject; stopped, and looked attentive. Seeing he wished to speak, I transferred to him the conversation, and received a compleat description of a truly good man. After talking some time with this gentleman, he said—"I was last night, sir, with a large company, in the room over our heads, when the virtues of my old friend made a subject of conversation. They were discussed some time, and the closing opinion was this—*that no one could recollect a single fault in his disposition.*"—Saying this, my intelligencer made a bow, and walked off, to conceal, as I conjectured, his emotion.

Just such an emulating character as the above, will Sir Edward Stanley leave behind him.

From Framlingham I mean to go to Orford, to look at the castle in that place; from thence to Aldborough, and along the coast, by Southwold and Lowestoff to Yarmouth.

Mr. Evelyn is now writing an answer to the letter he received from you yesterday. From poor Fowler's sudden alteration for the worse, you will probably be his first patron. The idea of presenting him to you—not as an old acquaintance but as a friend, affords me considerable pleasure: but this is such a leading sentiment, that if I write any longer I shall glide into the prohibited subject; therefore I will bid you farewell.

CHARLES CONWAY.

After this reaches you, direct to me at Aldborough, Suffolk; to be left at the post-office. I mean to wait here till I receive your answer to my first from Harwich.

LETTER, XX.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Alverston, March 17th.

TEN thousand things crowd to the point of my pen. To which to give the preference I know not. My mind is in a tumult. Tell me not of moderation—of placidity—of philosophy, and such trumpery stuff; but give me the wings of a swallow, and the eye of an eagle, that I may fly, and penetrate at once, into the secret recesses of that shaded labyrinth, a woman's heart.

But here I am proseing away with my pen, when I am in the greatest haste to let you into the light of interesting matters of fact. Take them, then, as soon as a swift quill and the mail can convey them.

I have found her, Charles. At least I know who she is, and am going to pursue the tender; trembling; sickening; flying, charmer. Conway! I am transported. Who but that elegant creature Lady Lucinda Harrington, (whom three years back, from the slight view we had of her, we agreed had all the symptoms of growing beauty in her face) should be the dear, submitting angel that dropped my resemblance at the foot of the sofa in the anti-room at Hazel-wood Lodge! Sweet, lovely Lady Lucinda! How I already adore her! What shall I do when I see her, and hear her condescendingly acknowledge, in delicate, hesitating accents, that her pencil had delineated my features; her blushes, and her timid eye, confessing her partiality! If I do not pity her—if I do not return her affection, I shall deservedly be reckoned a barbarian.

An earl's daughter—a rich heiress—a beautiful creature, [as I chuse to believe, for I own I have not a very distinct idea of her features] and, as the lost, and happily found performance evinces—a woman of genius, sense and sentiment, absolutely and beyond a doubt, as you shall hear by and by, prepossessed in my favor! In short—to put the matter into plain English—is in love with me.

And now, Sir Charles Conway, what is it you have to say upon this occasion? Do you not think I am a gentleman of high renown? Do you not envy me? Do you not—But I must hasten to the particulars of this glorious event.

About eleven o'clock this morning, Mrs. Raymond; Mrs. Willet; Mrs. Butler, and Miss Parker, were driven into the court-yard. I was walking in the garden; and hastening to hand them out of their carriage, conducted them into the library where my mother was sitting. After a little chit-chat, Miss Parker began with—"Well, Mr. Stanley, and how is poor Lady Lucinda Harrington?"

With a look of surprise, I asked the meaning of her question; when Mrs. Willett, joining in the conversation, pertly said, "Nay, nay, Mr. Stanley, no affectation! We are all in the secret."

What secret, madam? asked I, with increased amazement.

Mrs. Willet. What secret! *Why no secret at all:* for every body knows that Lady Lucinda Harrington is in love with Mr. Stanley.

Stanley. Upon my word, madam, you do me high honor; but I must confess it is very unmerited.

Mrs. Butler. Mr. Stanley this is indeed affectation. Not but that you are right, too, to keep the young lady's secret.

Stanley. My dear Mrs. Butler I must request to be believed, when I tell you that Lady Lucinda Harrington and myself may almost be called perfect strangers to each other, as we never met but once, and that was three years since, at an inn in Huntington; where we stopped, at the same time, to change horses.

Mrs. Raymond. Be that as it may, give me leave to assert, it is an undoubted fact, that she is deeply in love with you.

Miss Parker. To be sure it is. For why, else, did she turn pale when she heard your name mentioned? Why faint when she was told you were expected in the evening, at Mr. Mortimer's, on Miss Heylin's wedding-day? Why so impatiently request Lady Glynn to convey her home before your arrival there? Are not these incontestible proofs of her being in love with you?

Stanley. Upon my credit, Miss Parker, these particularities, if appearing upon my account, bear at least an equal similitude to instances of dislike. But I never before heard that either Lady Lucinda Harrington or Lady Glynn had been, on the day you mention, at Mr. Mortimer's.

Lady Stanley. Nor I; which is somewhat strange; as these incidents, at such times, are generally subjects of conversation.

Mrs. Butler. O dear madam! it was delicacy which prevented its being mentioned to either Mr. Stanley or your ladyship. You were supposed to be parties concerned; for which reason delicacy, likewise, prevented the mention of either of the ladies names.

Faith! thought I, there is something strangely plausible in that idea! and *in spite of my burthensome quantity of native modesty*, the circumstance of the picture immediately popped into my head. Pray, ladies, said I—for I was determined to gather all the light I could—pray what is the serious meaning of all this jesting? It is impossible you can be in earnest about the cause of the young lady's illness; therefore I take the whole to be some curiously invented fable.

“Upon my reputation, sir,” said the pert Miss Parker, “the fable, as you are pleased to call it, is a real truth, as Mrs. Willett; Mrs. Raymond and myself can witness.”

Mrs. Butler. And I, likewise, can answer for its reality, though I saw not the scene; as Lady Glynn, her own aunt, told the story to Mrs. Brahim; who told it to Miss Patty Macpherson; who told it to *me*: so you see, Mr. Stanley, though I had not the honor of an invitation to Miss Heylin's wedding, as I had some reason, I think, to expect, I am pretty well authorized to confirm what these ladies have advanced; and can answer for it, however strongly you may chuse to deny it, that Lady Lucinda Harrington has certainly been a great sufferer upon your account.

Lady Stanley, [preventing my reply.] Well, but my dear ladies, be so obliging as to give us the particulars of this seeming mystery; which has, I confess, rather excited my curiosity.

Miss Parker. Why then, madam, I will take it upon me to be the speakeress, as I was amongst the foremost in attending the distressed fair. After dinner, when we ladies retired to the drawing-room, and were walking backward and forward, and talking and laughing, and so forth, Mrs. Mortimer lamented the absence of Miss Stanley, and likewise, expressed her concern that your Ladyship was not able to oblige us with your company at dinner, but that she hoped to see you and Mr. Stanley early in the evening.

“Is Mr. Stanley coming hither?” asked, or rather, as I have since recollected, exclaimed Lady Lucinda.

“He is expected, madam,” replied Miss Prettiman.—“And I hope will come,” joined in Mrs. Willet.

Mrs. Willet. You say right, Miss Parker; and I thought Lady Lucinda looked very languishing when she asked if Mr. Stanley’s name was not George.

Miss Parker. Indeed she did: and when Miss Sparkes told her that it was, she repeated the name in the most tender accent. “George!”—said she, and sighed as she spoke—“George is surely the prettiest name in the world! *My dear George!* is a sweet beginning to a letter of love. Do not you think so, Miss Parker?” said her ladyship, addressing herself to me.

Yes, Lady Lucinda, I replied; the name has a very good sound.

“A good sound!” echoed she. “Oh Heavens! It is divine!” Just then, as you, madam, [to Mrs. Raymond] may remember, for you stood near us, Lady Glynn’s servant returned with an answer to the card which Mrs. Mortimer had prevailed upon her ladyship to send to Sir Philip, pressing his going in the evening; and this, for a few moments, engaged the attention of us that stood near, but presently turning to reply to Lady Lucinda, I observed she looked pale; when, upon my noticing it to her, she exclaimed in a tone somewhat theatrical—“Any thing sudden, madam; any thing unexpected—I did not know who was coming,” [expecting you, Mr. Stanley.] “But I doubt I shall faint. Indeed, Miss Parker, I shall faint. Carry me, carry me away; or Lady Stanley will increase my distress, by entering in the midst of the bustle.”

At her repeated importunity, we conveyed her down stairs, and led her into the anti-room; that being the most airy; where placing her upon the sofa, she went into an hysteric fit. Her aunt, who is extremely fond of her, was very much alarmed, though it seems she has, of late, been subject to this disorder. Almost every one present produced a smelling-bottle, but Lady Glynn requested Miss Sparkes to put her hand into Lady Lucinda’s pocket for some drops, which she always carries about with her; they having been found to be of singular efficacy; and indeed they presently recovered her; but no sooner was she sensible, than she asked, with quickness, who took the bottle out of her pocket, as if she was afraid of something being found—a love-letter, Mrs. Brewster said—[doubtless the picture, Charles]—which she would not have to be seen.

Upon being satisfied Miss Sparkes had taken the bottle only, she was easy, and turning to Lady Glynn—"My dear, dear madam!" said she, "let us go. Call Chapone, Lady Stanley will be here presently. I cannot, cannot stay. I can not support the bustle of any new introductions. Chapone. Come Chapone, and carry me—carry me away!"

I have given you two or three of Miss Parker's speeches in one, that you might have the account entire, without the interruptions which were made by the consent the others gave to the exactness of her detail.

The talkative lady finished with the following observations.

"It must be owned the young lady seems a little tinctured with affectation and romance; her air and her accent being quite theatrically tender; but all was attributed to her delicate reluctance to be seen by you, Mr. Stanley, in such disorder; for she again mentioned Lady Stanley's expected arrival; and as she walked to the carriage, supported by myself and Chapone, she started upon seeing a coach (which proved to be Mr. Proby's) at a distance; and, I am confident, pronounced the name of George, with a sigh, in a half whisper."

This, Charles, was the sum total of Miss Parker's evidence. And from the circumstances collected together, not forgetting that of her sitting upon the anti-room sofa, and her alarm at her pocket's having been rummaged, there cannot remain a shadow of a doubt that she—the identical Lady Lucinda Harrington; daughter to the late Earl of Blanford; and heiress to an hundred and fifty thousand pounds—SHE dropped my depicted form which *she*, out of partiality to my sweet person, and as the dear creature says—to my mind, however she came by any knowledge of it, had portrayed upon the lost piece of vellum.

The remainder of the information which I gained from these chattering gypsies was, that after Lady Lucinda returned to Sir Philip Glynn's, (who is one of her guardians, and with whom, at his house in Cavendish Square, she has resided ever since the death of her father, till the Friday before the ball; when Sir Philip was summoned into Derbyshire) two physicians were sent for, who gave it as their positive advice that she must immediately be carried to Bristol. To Bristol, therefore, she went: at Bristol she now is; and to Bristol am I hastening in pursuit of the lovely girl, whom I am determined to bring back Lady Lucinda Stanley, for I find I cannot hold out against the allurements which unite in this one charmer.

Maria Birtles!!! Oh Charles! I wish I had *never seen her*. But gratitude prevails; and honor shall be triumphant. May you, my humble maid—ever lovely—too lovely—Maria! may you meet with a kindred mind in an equal situation! Yet that is nearly impossible! as few in her rank—But I must fly from the thought, as I do the sight, of her. One idea that she gives, in secret, a sigh to my name, would undo me. Were *she* under the same circumstances—or were Lady Lucinda to be found a Maria!—what an increase of rapture would rise in my mind! But let me be moderate. Let me be content, and even thankful. Maria Birtles—Heavenly creature!—so endowed, would, as I before have said, convey too large a portion of happiness, without some great counterbalancing check, to one individual. Possessed of her, his lot would be too distinguished; for it always was my opinion that happiness is more regularly dispensed than, from a cursory view of mankind, we are apt to

suppose. I never believed there is that inequality in the distribution of felicity to the human race, which those in the two extremities of station are particularly disposed to imagine. Such as are destitute of outward, have, without one doubt, inward blessings to which the others are strangers. This is a steadfast article of my creed, which *self-love* prevents from lessening my charity, as I likewise believe if I refuse to afford that relief, to those who any way want it, which it is put into my power to bestow, *I myself*, and not *they*, fare the worse for the omission. For as the happiness of a fellow-creature can never be left to my caprice, his necessities are assuredly supplied by other means, till his measure of relief is full, and I (as I have said) am, upon the occasion, the eventual and deserving sufferer.

Let me consider. If I am not mistaken, this is the substance of the doctrine contained in a part of your allegory. It is. I have imbibed it, and was now going to palm it upon you as my own: but I scorn the plagiarism, and own the obligation.

The felicity which the lovely Maria would give to the man of her choice, led me into this digression. Let me, before I finish, indulge myself in saying that were I to consider only my own satisfaction, my "*sister's waiting-maid*"—I still hate you for the expression—should be Mrs. Stanley; my pride, in that case, would be too weak to combat, with success, my affection. But when I consider my father; my mother—two of the best parents upon earth—with some others who deserve *a little* of my consideration; when I think of the situation to which, it seems, an amiable young creature is reduced on my account, and recollect the delicate reluctance, as Miss Parker aptly expressed it to be, which she found in her gentle bosom to my being acquainted with her unsought partiality to me—In short, when I suffer myself coolly to investigate every circumstance and its consequence, I yield to the force of conviction, and determine to sacrifice to *prudence*; to *propriety*; to *gratitude*; to *duty*, the ardent affection of my heart for the amiable—the more than amiable, Maria Birtles. Yet how hard the task! I dare not trust myself to look at her. The sound of a female foot alarms me, and I fly from the apprehended temptation of her appearance. After what has passed, what must she think of me! But I dare not reflect. Do I, in this, act like myself! No; and you will be glad of the change. The tenderness of my heart for Lady Lucinda's delicate distress, and my gratitude for her partial sentiments, have drawn me to a conduct I had determined never to pursue. Nothing but these dispositions and circumstances *could* have prevented my resolution to make Maria my own. I have said I never will marry till I can find a woman whom I can *admire*; *esteem*, and *love*: and to that, indeed, I *still* adhere, because I doubt not but the titled fair will engage my admiration; my esteem, and my affection. Yet my meaning was, that I would marry no woman but the one who could engross *my whole heart*. And does Lady Lucinda do that? No; nor ever will till the remembrance of Maria Birtles is extinguished. But what am I saying! Distraction will return if I proceed. My resolution is already tottering. I will finish, and prepare for my journey to Bristol, while I have one remnant of heroism left.

Remember me to Evelyn. Fowler is much as when I wrote three days back.

The date of your last letter was from Harwich. If this next post does not bring me another, I shall be disappointed.

Mr. Kelby is returned from London. He has brought Whitman to terms, and says our law matters are in a good train; but Hayward continues obstinate.

As soon as I reach Bristol, you shall hear from me again. Farewell.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XXI.

MRS. MAYNARD, TO LADY CAROLINE
PEMBERTON.

Cavendish Square, March 17th.

THE hasty note which I dispatched to my dearest Caroline on Saturday evening, to inform her of our safe arrival in London, and of the receipt of her packets, expressed but imperfectly the joy we experienced in hearing of her safety, and in finding ourselves once more in the same country with a friend ever so dearly beloved. Soon, very soon, we shall, I hope, be in the same house; never more to be separated for any long period. There is no describing my sensations when I think of meeting you. My dear Augustus talks of nothing else. But I must hasten to the business in which you are so greatly concerned, without expressing either my happiness; my amazement, or indignation.

About an hour after we arrived in Cavendish Square, just as I had dispatched my little scribble to you, Lord Danvers was announced, and immediately ushered up stairs. Expecting us on the Thursday, he had sent several times to enquire if we were at home, or had been heard from. After mutual congratulations, his lordship immediately, with apparent impatience, mentioned your *elopement*, as he termed it; wanting, as it seemed, to prejudice Mr. Maynard in favor of his plan; but he soon found Mr. Maynard was not to be so prejudiced; for after a very short conversation he, with his usual sincerity, told his uncle, that he must excuse him for speaking his sentiments with freedom, as he thought his cousin had acted, in every particular which had come to his knowledge, as a wise and good woman, and even as a *kind* and *dutiful* daughter *ought* to have acted, or indeed *could* have acted, without forfeiting her title to both characters: insisting upon it that you must have saved your father from a great deal of after-regret.

This astonished his lordship; at least he thought proper to *appear* to be astonished; and put on that air of dignity for which he has been so noted. However, Augustus, not in the least intimidated, soon brought him about, and almost to tears, upon shewing him the letters we had received from you on the subject while we were at Ostend, and leaving him to form his own suppositions upon our missing your others by our, rather suddenly, leaving the Continent, without telling him we had heard of you since our arrival.

Your father now intreated Mr. Maynard to use every possible endeavour to discover the place of your retreat; confessing he had been wretched ever since you left him, though he had, in some measure, comforted himself by concluding you were under our protection. Mr. Maynard promised to use his utmost diligence in the affair, and asked his uncle what terms of accommodation he would authorise him to propose. "Terms!" repeated the earl, with all the symptoms of a rising passion—"None, but her accepting the hand and immense fortune of Lord Crumpford; which are terms not only of lenity but reward."

This produced a conversation so much to the honor of your cousin, that, on the account of a still nearer relation, I will suppress the particulars. Arm yourself, my dearest girl, with a little

patience before you ruminate with too much earnestness on the idea of your being to be made a piece of merchandise. But it will not avail to mince the matter; and as you have acted so exemplary, you ought to be comforted by every confirmation of having done right, even in the opinion of those cunningly-wise people who judge by events. You are entitled to every consolation; every supporting and strengthening information. And as your dutiful tenderness to your father may give to your recollection a sting, whose barb may be withdrawn by the unfolding of truth, I *will* tell you that you were actually to be sold by Lord Danvers to Lord Crumpford for an enormous sum of money; *how much*, Mr. Maynard, (whom this discovery worked up into a fury) cannot yet ascertain. By mere accident he gained the first hint, which he pursued, and will still pursue, if possible, to full knowledge.

I have no patience with your father. Chide me not, Caroline, for reason, in this case, justifies my passion, and *I will not even endeavour* to be moderate.

That *vile* Lord Crumpford! What could be *his* inducement to part with so much of the “gold he worships” for a jewel of whose value he can form no estimate! *Lord Danvers’* motive, and a horrid one it is, was more easily developed. He has lately lost much more than he can pay, at the gaming table, and this savage wretch, who thought to have drawn *you* into his den, was not only to have paid the debt of honor, as (by a total inversion of words) it is generally called, but likewise to have given a release of the jointured estate in Derbyshire, and then, with an unaccountable appearance of such generosity as his sordid soul cannot have the least real sense of, the horrid creature was to have taken you without a fortune. What the monster’s inducement could be, must ever remain unfathomable, unless we conclude he meant to sell you again; rightly judging from the voice of report—for no eyes has this barbarian for female beauty, unless for Queen Anne’s head upon his darling metal—that he should draw high bidders for his SINE QUA NON, who he must consciously believe would be glad to change her bargain.

And now, my dear, to the other part of your story — your Alverston adventures; for I pass over, till we meet, all *intermediums*.

Mr. Maynard desires you will not give yourself the trouble to collect any proofs of Mr. Stanley's return of *tendresse*, as he holds it as an incontestible truth, that there is not a man in existence, *of whom you can think favorably*, who would not lay himself at your feet, be his fortune or station next to royalty. He does indeed love you, Caroline, with the fondest fraternal affection: even equal to that which, from earliest years, has united you and your Harriet. Shall I be jealous of Miss Stanley? No; I hope to have cause to love her next to yourself. I could expatiate till I tired even your patience, on the merits of the worthies you have depicted. *Such* a family have I wished you to find and honor by your addition to it. Mr. Maynard knew Mr. Stanley at Eaton, and says he then promised to be much such a character as you have given him. Do you know I enjoy the idea of your one day rewarding this family for their generous treatment of you? I am in love with every soul of them; and, were it proper, should skim down to Alverston, to have the pleasure of discovering to them your name and family; which could not fail of giving them all, peculiar satisfaction. Mr. Stanley is, doubtless, disengaged, or you would have known it; therefore I see no probable impediment to your union: for when Lord Danvers comes to his senses, he will be happy in such an alliance, if he has any affection for you: and as for them, they will, without dispute, rejoice—for have they not discernment—at so lovely an addition to their family, without bestowing one thought

upon the article of fortune.

I could scribble a week without intermission; wanting to prate about all your haps and mishaps, but I must forbear.

Mrs. Thompson was with me last night, and showed extreme gladness to see me; chiefly I dare say on your account. Her husband and poor nurse have been, it seems, half frantic about you. She told me she had acquainted you with Jenny's recovery.

But, Caroline, I must finish. You will receive this, if it goes duly, to-morrow evening. Write to me again before you allow yourself to sleep, that I may have the scribble as soon as possible.

Farewell. I need not ask you to believe that I am yours, most faithfully,

HARRIET MAYNARD.

LETTER, XXII.

LADY CAROLINE PEMBERTON, TO MRS.
MAYNARD.

Alverston Park, March 18th.

I HAVE received and read my dear Harriet's letter; and, as she commands, prohibit sleep till I have replied to some of its contents.

The part respecting my father, was less distressing than I had reason to expect it would be; as I doubted not that I should be informed of the whole truth without reserve; and as I had dreaded his being quite furious. I will pass over the subject as lightly as possible, because I cannot expatiate on my father's conduct. But, Harriet—Augustus—let me intreat, let me *insist* upon it, that my father be immediately assured my ready—my *officious* consent waits to sign any deed, however binding, which shall give liberty to the whole of the jointured estate. Indeed this must—this shall be done; and that without delay. I *will not* live under the apprehension of my father's owing obligations which I can discharge; therefore if Mr. Maynard will not act as my agent in this affair, I am determined to write to him myself, let what will be the consequence. You both know my inflexibility in a matter of this kind; therefore, my dear cousins, offer not one remonstrance on my determination which, permit me to affirm, is unalterable. Let me but do my duty, and depend upon the Almighty GOD for a provision. What though I have not one in proportion to the situation in which I was born!!! The grandeur of the mind is, surely, superior to that of the person! And if the one or the other must suffer an eclipse, as, in the matter in question, must inevitably be the case, which is it the greatest glory to keep undiminished? But glory, my dear cousins, is not the object of my pursuit; except it be that which no eclipse can ever affect. Excuse this seeming affectation of being above the world—above myself and all my wishes. To you I write the honest dictates of my heart at the time they rise; and I am now particularly conscious of the force of this truth—that all the united riches and honors of the universe can never make an adequate compensation for the least diminution of *those riches and honors* which the world in general, and I myself, at other times, am too apt too lightly to estimate. My mind is raised, Harriet, I seem to look down on all that is sublunary. For a few minutes I will lay aside my pen.

* * * * *

I am returned to my scribbling not yet divested of my seeming exaltation, but I will try to write a little “like one of this world.”

You, my cousins, whose affection for me will lead you to think more of the before-mentioned release, than, were the case your own, you would allow me to think of the matter, will immediately revert in idea to the obstacle my being totally unfortunated may raise to my being received into this family as a relation. At present—though I own that all my wishes which the great futurity can spare, are centered too much, as the case stands, in one vortex—at *present* I seem above them all, and find such immense consolation from a consideration of the occasion; or from some still Greater Source, that the probability of my want of fortune being an insurmountable objection to views of this nature, hardly gives me one sensible pang. How, when I descend to my usual level, the

idea will affect me, I know not, I will not pretend to answer for myself in future. It certainly cannot be supposed that, noble as their minds are, it will to Sir Edward and Lady Stanley be alike indifferent whether their son marries a rich heiress or a beggar: in the nature of things it cannot be, even were they left to themselves unstimulated; which they are not; for the Mr. Slayton I mentioned, who really seems to be a good man, though a little whimsical and somewhat attached to money, is, I can now say from more full information, to give Mr. Stanley a fortune of an hundred thousand pounds, provided he marries with his approbation; which he is not likely to do, except he marries to riches. This Mr. Slayton [I partly told you the circumstance in one of my first letters] was present when Lady Stanley mentioned me, *as my father's daughter*, with some approbation, and as one who would make a proper wife for his godson. The old gentleman replied that he had heard something of my character, but failed not to observe upon the smallness of my fortune. Mr. Stanley, indeed, immediately reprobated this observation with some warmth; and, I believe, spoke his real sentiments; probably, however, with the *more* warmth to fix with *Maria Birtles* an opinion of his disinterestedness. On several occasions he has made downright love to me; never, I must do him the justice to observe, presuming *very* much upon my situation. Instances of his conduct, when chance has afforded him an opportunity to speak his sentiments on this point, I cannot now give; and, indeed, my inclination to give them is a little subsided; as of late he has seemed to shun me; and if, by accident, we have met, has appeared under perplexity and confusion. I should have imagined Sir Edward or Lady Stanley had observed and spoken their disapprobation of his complaisance to me, were there any alteration in their conduct; but as that is not the case—or if there be any alteration it is from kind to still kinder—the change must be occasioned by a fluctuation in his own mind. Perhaps he is naturally capricious. With all my heart; and I wish his caprice and his other faults to appear together: for as neither his merit nor his evident partiality would, singly, have been sufficient to attach me, so the failure of both—or indeed of one—must effectually give my heart its liberty.

When I fancy that he acts against his sentiments, in agreement with what he think Sir Edward's and Lady Stanley's wishes, were circumstances (as far as he is acquainted with them) to be known, the task of regaining my freedom is not so easy; as it raises my opinion of him still higher, without giving me room to suppose the affection he has professed for me is abated. I must confess I too easily, though I did not wish him to know it, believed his declarations of respect and tenderness; for, my dear cousins, I have very foolishly parted with a large share of my heart; simply believing an easy path to happiness lay through this vista. In time to come I may, perhaps, smart pretty severely for this credulous folly.

To-morrow Mr. Stanley goes for Bristol. Upon what occasion, or when to return, I know not. I believe the call was sudden and unexpected. Sometimes I fancy a Lady is concerned; and that that causes his change of conduct to me; which is, I must acknowledge, the most unpleasant idea I ever in my life entertained. I wish Miss Stanley was at home; for though her ladyship is extremely communicative, one cannot talk so *inquiringly* to a woman of her years, as to one of one's own age. And yet I must recall this; for, except upon the subject in question, I can speak to her with the greatest freedom. Twice this morning I thought she was going to mention this journey, but was both times interrupted. I wish she had: I wish she had only given me an opportunity—But what a way am I got into. How insensibly have I written myself into anxiety! A few minutes back I thought myself above the world, and now—I am ashamed of myself, Harriet; ashamed of my want of stability. *So soon* to descend! How weak is human nature! Perhaps I am weaker than others. And yet—But I repeat that I am ashamed of myself. Harriet, did you ever suppose I should be found to be so poor a

creature? Yet did you know this Mr. Stanley, I think you would soon find him to be so exactly adapted to what you know my sentiments are, that you would, in some measure, excuse my folly; though I cannot excuse it myself. Sometime back, I took a hasty sketch of his figure, and was fanciful enough to scribble under it six or seven lines of rhyme, with an intent to send it to you, but by a piece of unpardonable carelessness, I have lost it: and this incident has vexed me considerably; as who knows what conjectures its being found may occasion! I cannot imagine when or where I could lose it. I took it two or three weeks back, and gave it its finishing stroke one evening when Lady Stanley, attended by the original of my little representative, went to a ball given on account of the wedding of a Miss Heylin. Sir Edward was detained at home by Mr. Slayton. About twelve o'clock the chaise of Mr. Saunders, who went to the ball in the Alverstton coach, was sent for Lady Stanley, and it being rather a pleasant night, I officiously offered my attendance, that her ladyship might, in her return, have company; which very much, I saw, pleased Sir Edward; who, so delicate was his consideration for me, would not intimate the least wish to that purpose; and Mrs. Moore was too ill to be permitted to venture. *I hope* my motive was to prevent Lady Stanley's return from being disagreeable to her; though, at the same time, I fear a wish to obtrude myself on Mr. Stanley's idea, composed a part of it. You see, Harriet, I am very honest in my confessions. It was natural for me to conclude that a son so dutiful and so polite, would attend his mother to her carriage; but I was mistaken in my conjectures. Mr. Saunders, the gentleman I mentioned above, handed her down stairs; which I was surprised at, and not much pleased with. However, I afterwards recollected that as her ladyship was going in his chaise, this young man, who appears to be very ceremonious, might think it his office to see her seated in it.

Be it as it may—I saw nothing of Mr. Stanley, though I was in a kind of saloon, which I believe they call the anti-room near ten minutes. For after Lady Stanley had put on her cloak and was just stepping to the door, a servant set his foot upon something which, upon examination, was found to be one of her diamond ear-rings; she having dropped without missing it. This occasioned some little bustle, and her ladyship requested me to take care of the jewel, which I did; putting it into a little ivory box, without being sensible of drawing any thing with it, when I took it out of my pocket; but upon searching the next day for a small vellum case, into which I had deposited the portrait, I was alarmed at not being able to find it, though I examined every recess with the greatest attention. What became of it I know not. I might drop it in the anti-room. It might fall from my pocket as I was getting into the chaise, or I might lose it in a walk I took the next morning; for I missed it not till the afternoon. The loss of this trifle lest it should lead its finder to form improper suppositions, or to make an improper use of it, gave me for some time much perplexity. However as near a fortnight has elapsed without my having heard any mention of its being found, I am willing to conclude I dropped it into the canal, as I was walking on its bank that same morning; for I recollect taking my handkerchief out of my pocket to tie round my neck; the wind blowing rather sharp across the water.

I fancy the likeness was pretty striking. At least, I found myself wonderfully well satisfied with my performance, and were not matters in a train so seemingly unfavorable I would endeavour to repair my loss.

I must now finish. A little quiet will I hope re-produce the happy tranquility which prevailed when I wrote the first part of this letter; and which I am sorry to find can be so easily interrupted.

Farewell my dear friends. I know I need not request you to write soon to
your
CAROLINE PEMBERTON.

LETTER, XXIII.
MRS. MAYNARD, TO LADY CAROLINE
PEMBERTON.

Cavendish Square, March 20th.

YOUR letter, my ever dearest Caroline, has half broken my heart. I cannot bear to think of the meditated sacrifice of your estate. Small as it is, it would keep such a moderate mind as yours, in independence. Yet I very much fear it must be given up. And for what? Who deserves such an instance of nobleness? you will be offended with me; and yet I must go on. Lord Danvers—no longer your father, or our uncle—is a strange man. Indeed, Caroline, he is a strange man. Yet angry with him as I am, I must do him the justice to say I think he has a tender affection for you. Though it takes a very odd kind of drapery. To judge by *appearances*, he hates you with vehemence. The horrid Crumpford too!—I can scarce endure his name. Lord Danvers, to palliate the vile engagement he has entered into with such a wretch, insists much upon the proof he gives of his great regard for you, by offering to take you upon such terms; and this, he says, was his inducement to comply with his proposals; as it was a security for his treating you well, would you have accepted him without a show of dislike: and he pretends not to doubt but that with such an ascendancy over him, you might have moulded him to your wishes.

How could a man with your father's understanding talk such nonsense!

But I will pass over a deal of such-like conversation, and turn to your proposal. Indeed you must not entirely ruin yourself to free Lord Danvers from the effects of his imprudence. Yet you are *so* peremptory. And certainly while Mr. Maynard and I have existence—but I do not want that a mind so over and above sensible of what you call obligation, should be brought to fancy yourself in a state of dependance; *even upon us*. You think too deeply of such matters; though were you the *disposer*, you would justly call them trifles.

Really, Caroline, you vex me sadly. But here comes Mr. Maynard.

* * * * *

I am now somewhat better pleased, though by no means fully satisfied.

Mr. Maynard has again been in Berkley Square, where he has had a great deal of conversation with his uncle about you. Some part of it was commendable; some censurable; but the repetition is unnecessary.

When Lord Danvers was convinced that you *never would* consent to be Lady Crumpford, and his passion upon the conviction was somewhat subsided, he asked Mr. Maynard what course he

could possibly think of his pursuing. Much altercation passed on this head, till at length, against his judgement, and in downright obedience to your commands, (though not till various other means had been proposed and rejected) Mr. Maynard hinted a supposition that it was possible your affectionate duty might induce you to liberate the jointured estate. By the avidity with which his ungenerous lordship received this intimation, one must think he had been in waiting for the proposal; which idea so provoked Mr. Maynard, that he, as from his own judgement, raised several objections to the execution of the plan; all which Lord Danvers immediately over-ruled, and the result was, that Augustus engaged to endeavour to procure your consent.

To *endeavour* to procure it, mind you; for as he could not, without owning he had heard from you, answer for your compliance, you are still free to retract your too liberal intention; and I heartily wish you would: *even on your father's account* I wish it; because by experiencing the difficulties resulting from his imprudence, it may guard him against such folly in future, whereas if he be immediately relieved, without being taught to feel—You understand me, and I wish you would take my advice. But if you *are* unpersuadable—if you are still *determined* to take upon yourself the bondage which straitens your father—the matter is thus to be managed. The estate in question, for the sake of form, and for a reason still better than that, is to be assigned over to Mr. Maynard. That is to say, he is to buy it firm and fast, with this proviso—that whenever Lord Danvers wishes to re-purchase it, *for the purpose of again settling it upon you*, he is to have it at the same price: Thus the estate is not to cease being yours for more than one day. It will not, let me say in my turn, be to any purpose to oppose this design; therefore you may spare yourself the trouble of setting about it. We can be peremptory as well as you. And in this case you will find us so. Submit you must. There is no remedy. So you may as well do it with a good grace. I hope, for his credit's sake, that this is what Lord Danvers *expected* his nephew would do; and you must admit this supposition, or you leave your father without one excuse for accepting your noble resignation. I must give it that title, unwilling as I am that it should be practised. However, his lordship is not to have the consolation of knowing the estate is still your own, for a great variety of very good reasons. I know you will have a string of seemingly powerful arguments against this intended procedure, or I should not have said more than ten words, and those merely to give you the necessary information upon the matter; but I want to silence you at once, as I re-tell you it will not be to any purpose to oppose; therefore, in addition to my *commands*, let me furnish your *scrupulosity* with this palliating consideration—that Lord Danvers has promised Mr. Maynard to lay by yearly a handsome stipulated sum, out of the income of his estate, till he redeems this small one in question; which surely, from such a large revenue, he may do, even without cramping the magnificence of his spirit, as you, my dear, are to live with us, while you remain single. Besides this, your father has started another plan (and that I think a very feasible one) to repair this fracture. He had, as you know, a liberty by the will of his grandfather, to mortgage the principal estate for a large, but limited sum, in cases of emergency, which liberty the testator, in a long preamble, advised might be sparingly used; but to this advice your father has not very strictly adhered, having taken up to the last allotted shilling. From this source, therefore, no farther relief can be expected; but your great uncle Richard, the Nabob, who entailed upon the male heir all that part of the estate which goes by the name of the Eastern Farms, did not specifically annex his donation to the title; for which reason, it seems, any two heirs of full age may sue a fine and cut off the entail; and upon this resource your father rests himself; probably, I think, conjecturing that the son which his nephew left, who must inevitably inherit all the entailed estates, as well as the title, will gladly consent to sue this fine when he comes to age, and divide the money with Lord Danvers, as he must already be greatly in want of cash, and will, by that time, find

his wants still greater. I never knew the particulars of his situation till yesterday, when Sir William Jennyns was telling Mr. Maynard that your late cousin Thomas William Pemberton appeared, before his death, to be sincerely grieved about his past conduct; that it was believed he had a real affection for the woman, dissolute as her life had been, whom he had married; she, it seems, having always behaved well to him; that, therefore, depending upon his uncle to make some provision for his son, he scraped together the remnant of his fortune, and purchased for his wife an annuity of one hundred and fifty pounds, upon which, as soon as her husband died, Mrs. Pemberton went down into the northern part of Yorkshire to live in splendor: and Sir William says she really does manage to make a tolerable appearance with this stipend; for going this time twelvemonth into Scotland, he passed through the village where she lives, and being accompanied by a gentleman who had some acquaintance with the clergyman of that place, he went with him to call upon him, when they found him surrounded by six or eight boys, to whom he taught the rudiments of grammar; the eldest of which, being considerably bigger than the rest, attracted his notice, when Mr. Broomley (the clergyman) told him that the youth he noticed was the heir to the title and great estate of the Earl of Danvers. This, as may be supposed, led to other enquiries, and Sir William was informed that Mrs. Pemberton lived in a genteel house in the village; that her income was supposed to be but slender; that she was desirous to give her son as good an education as she could afford; that therefore Mr. Broomley had consented to his remaining with him till his age exceeded that of the boys he wished to have under his tutorage, but that he was very soon going to Edinburgh for farther improvement. Sir William said he never saw a much finer boy in his life;—that he was full of fire and sprightliness, and quite sensible of his future dignity. I think I wish to have this youth taken from the tutelage of his mother; and have a scheme rumbling in my head, which, if practicable, may be of great utility to all of the house of Pemberton.

I am not going to marry you to your cousin Thomas William, Caroline; though were he ten or twelve years older, and your heart free, it would be the very plan I should adopt. As it is, I had rather see you Lady Caroline Stanley than any other lady whatever; because I know when once such a heart as yours has suffered itself to yield—You know my meaning, child, and I have not time for unnecessary explanations.

Let me hear from you immediately, and tell me something which, contrary to your last, will give me more pleasure than admiration. Farewell.

H.M.

Since I concluded my letter, Lord Danvers has been here. He has just left us. I cannot but say that he appears extremely anxious to hear of your safety, and likewise very impatient to see you; which Mr. Maynard says proceeds *chiefly* from affection. It seems he is much distressed about informing Lord Crumpford of the plan in agitation; which leads to a supposition that he is already under some pecuniary engagement to that savage. He will not suffer his nephew to acquaint him with it; lest, as must be concluded, he should discover the depth of the agreement between them. In other words—should come at the knowledge of the sum total for which Lord Danvers sold his daughter!

Horrid creatures both! I am glad I know there is *one* good man in the world. You, Caroline, will, I hope, ere long, present to me another.

LETTER, XXIV.

LADY CAROLINE PEMBERTON, TO MRS.
MAYNARD.

Alverston Park, March 20th.

HARRIET, as soon as you have perused this scribble, send immediately for Mrs. Thompson, and desire her to copy such a letter of your dictating as will demand my instant return, in such a manner as I can show to Lady Stanley, whom I would not, for the world, offend by an abrupt departure, without show of reason. Let the given cause be the return of a friend from abroad—my father's desire to see me—any thing that can be said with truth. Here I cannot—must not stay.

I know I alarm you by this abrupt way of writing, and wish I could be more guarded, but I cannot, though I have been endeavouring for some composure.

Harriet! I have long thought myself very foolishly entangled, and I have candidly confessed it to you; but thus very much engaged—thus weakly yielding—Indeed, Harriet, I am very unhappy.

But you shall hear the cause.

This Bristol journey!—I thought, from the first, there was something in it very particular; it was so sudden. And then the great alteration in his behaviour too! I told you I suspected a lady was the occasion: and so it proves. And who do you suppose the lady is? But it is impossible you can guess. For who could believe that such a man as Mr. Stanley would ever think of marrying a woman who has no one single circumstance to recommend her but riches? as you, Harriet, will join with me in saying is the case, when I tell you that the object of his pursuit is not other than that affectedly romantic girl, Lady Lucinda Harrington. Are you not surprised at his want of distinction! Such a coquette! So very silly! vain! pert! without even the flimsey recommendation of beauty! For what little pretensions she once had to think herself pretty, are now destroyed by her obstinacy respecting inoculation; to which she never would submit, because her nurse, a simple woman who disliked the practice, endeavoured to prepossess her against it, by telling her it would bring a humour into her face; which immediately made her resolve never to be inoculated; the consequence of which was, that about two months after, she caught the small-pox; and had it so violently as to endanger her life. Her face is considerably marked by it, and it has occasioned a very displeasing turn in her right eye.

Such is the lady to whom Mr. Stanley, for the sake of a fortune he wants not, is going to unite himself for life! Astonishing! absolutely astonishing!

Is this his disinterestedness! Is this his noble contempt of every thing sordid! I have no patience to think of him. Was this conduct in compliance with the expressed wishes of Sir Edward and Lady Stanley, (which I cannot find reason to suppose) the matter would wear a different appearance; yet even in *that* case, it would not be commendable: for can it, on *any* account, be right to make a sacrifice of conscience? No: not even to parental command: else—how culpable must I be deemed! Shall we suppose Mr. Stanley to be really attached to Lady Lucinda Harrington?

Impossible! No two beings in nature can be more opposite to each other than they are. If he be, what can I think of his treatment of me? For I must own my vanity led me to believe I saw in him all the marks of genuine affection. If I was mistaken, how dared he to affront me by a pretended respect! But to him I was only his sister's waiting-maid. In what a labyrinth am I involved! I have considered and re-considered and re-considered, till I am sick of conjecture. However, I cannot believe Mr. Stanley to be possessed with a real affection for such a woman as he is now pursuing. Besides, if my consternation did not bewilder my comprehension, the first of his meeting with her was at the ball I mentioned in my last; since which, a change in his conduct has, as I have told you, been flagrant.

Indeed I feel myself very much above him; and doubt not but my foolish partiality will, in a short time, be as much lessened as my opinion.

But I must tell you how I came by my intelligence—Intelligence which I was greatly desirous of gaining, and now, when I have it, almost wish I had never received.

After breakfast this morning, Lady Stanley asked me *if I would be so obliging*—was her polite expression—as to make an alteration in a cap which she thought too large for her. My reply soon produced my employment, and she sat down by me to thread my needles and assist me with pins. After a little conversation about London and its fashions, she asked me (probably from hearing me occasionally mention two or three young women of distinction) if I had ever heard of Lady Lucinda Harrington. I answered in the affirmative. She then asked me if she was reckoned sensible; to which question, really believing she knew to the contrary, I only smiled; whereupon her ladyship said, with some appearance of surprise, “You smile, Maria. Have I asked a smiling question?”

This, seeing Lady Stanley look rather serious, somewhat disconcerted me, and willing to prevent any ill effects from my almost involuntary risibility, I replied that Lady Lucinda was very young, and sometimes very lively, which might occasion severity to call in question her understanding.

“Maria,” said her ladyship, with peculiar earnestness, “I repeat my question, and entreat you to be candid. Is Lady Lucinda Harrington reckoned sensible?”

Any request of yours, madam, so earnestly made, must, I answered, be complied with. Lady Lucinda has *not* a reputation for wisdom.

“Give me what you know of her character, Maria,” said Lady Stanley, with a countenance which she seemed to endeavour to compose.

Upon my word, I know but little of the lady, madam, said I; and am consequently very ill qualified to speak on the subject.

“Is she handsome?” asked her ladyship.

No, madam, was all my reply.

“She is very diffident and timid, I believe,” said Lady Stanley, “for which, perhaps, she is

indebted to having been brought up in retirement; as those innocent and amiable appearances generally vanish too soon after a young woman is permitted to see company.”

A look of real astonishment was all the answer I made to this sentiment, for some moments, till at length I repeated—very unpolitely, as I now recollect—*Lady Lucinda Harrington diffident and timid!*

“Your tone expresses your thinking otherwise, Maria,” observed my venerable benefactress: “and once more I *entreat* you to tell me freely *what you know* of her character.”

I was now obliged to give my full opinion; and never was any body more disconcerted than Lady Stanley was when she heard it. “If this,” said she with a sigh, “is the case, George will be greatly disappointed; but I hope he will not be too hasty.”

Astonishment now changed sides. All my faculties were lost in wonder; till comprehending, in one moment, the whole force of her meaning, and connecting it with the expedition to Bristol, where I know Sir Philip Glynn has a house, I was so confused—so overpowered—that I burst into tears.

Lady Stanley, as well she might be, was extremely surprised at my emotion, till her own benevolent heart gave rise to a construction which made me blush at the undeserved honor it conferred upon mine. The dear mistaken woman supposed I was generously pained at having spoken so freely about a person who, if the premeditated union took place, it would be a grief to her to have occasion to think of with disrespect; and, as was obvious, upon this conclusion she endeavoured to console me, by telling me I had said no more than what she had, perhaps a little unjustifiably, pressed from me; and that however it had disappointed her expectations, she would endeavour to prevent being so biassed by it as to occasion her being prejudiced against the young lady, should it ever happen that there was any alliance between the two families.

“I talk to you, my dear Maria,” added she, “very freely. I talk to you as to *a friend*; and happy do I think myself to have, in the absence of my daughter, *such* a friend to talk to.”

She then opened her sentiments relative to Miss Stanley and Sir Charles Conway, and very *piously*, as well as pathetically, argued upon the allay of happiness which those in the most envied situations are—in *mercy*—was her observation—taught to experience. And most charmingly she expatiated upon the topic; though feeling very deeply, as she confessed, the keenness of the disappointment which was likely to be allotted to her dear Sir Edward and herself, in the frustration of their wish for a union between Emma and Sir Charles Conway, and in the future daughter-in-law, which they had presumed to hope the judgement of their son would select to present them with. “But his judgement” she said, “is not, perhaps, to have, in this case, its free exercise.”

Harriet, what could this speech of Lady Stanley’s import?

“His judgement in this case, not to have its free exercise!”

It surely is very strange! Who, or what, in an affair of such consequence, ought to bias—or,

indeed, *can* bias his judgement?

Perhaps his godfather is grown arbitrary, and insists upon his compliance.

Yet how unpardonable would it be in this noble and independent family to submit to such usurped authority, for the paltry recompense of a sum of money which, however great, would, it may truly be said, be to them useless!—bartering real happiness for that which is merely imaginary!

But I weary myself with conjectures, and will conjecture no longer.

Send for me immediately. Get me snug lodgings in one of the villages near London. I think the Essex side will be preferable to Hampstead; Highgate, or the more frequented places; in which I should be apprehensive of being discovered before Mr. Maynard's final settlement with my father gives me the liberty I am so impatient to receive, of soliciting, upon my knees, his pardon.

This is Friday. On Sunday I hope the post will bring my summons, that on Monday—not, I fear, without much reluctance—I may leave Alverston; probably *for ever*! The exquisite pang my heart feels at that thought, is greater than I dare attempt to describe.

Excellent Lady Stanley! Admirable Sir Edward! Dear, lovely Emma! And—oh, Harriet!—too, too agreeable brother of the last! what joy had I permitted myself to take in the prospect of an *equal* acquaintance — in a friendship —But, tormenting ideas, begone. I will not, if I can help it, harbour such enemies to my tranquility.

Harriet!—Augustus!—dear, ever dear friends of my heart! from you I hope soon to receive the soothing I seem so much to covet.

Where is that happy placidity of which I so lately boasted! It is gone; and I cannot regain it, though I exert my utmost power. It is right that I should be convinced I am weak and helpless—nothing, of myself: unable to correct, in the least degree, the working; the wandering; the sinking of my spirits! But *I will pray* to be better; and will hope to find strength in a sense of my weakness.

For a short time—adieu.

CAROLINE PEMBERTON.

LETTER, XXV.

SIR PHILIP GLYNN, TO LIONEL BARNARD, ESQ.

Stratford, March 20th, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

IT is with a considerable degree of pleasure I set down to inform you that I hope our anxiety about our young ward will now soon be over, as I have this day had proposals made me from a gentleman, which will, I am pretty well assured, meet with your approbation. The gentleman's name is Stanley.

He is the only son of a baronet of whom you probably have heard, whose family-seat (Alverston Park) is within a few miles of my newly purchased estate in Derbyshire. I am a stranger to the person of Sir Edward, but by his character I know him well, and indeed I must needs say few people are better spoken of in the country, than he and all his family. The estate, quite unincumbered, is very large, and his godfather, old Slayton of Oakley-Hill, whom I know very well, is to give him a hundred thousand pounds; part now, the rest at his death, provided he marries with his consent, which I should suppose there is no great doubt of his doing, if he marries Lady Lucinda Harrington. By mere accident I met with Mr. Stanley at Coventry, just as your nephew and his clerk had left me. It seems he heard my name mentioned, and directly introduced himself, requesting, at the same time, in a most polite manner, the honor, as he called it, of being permitted to dine with me, if I was not engaged; to which I readily consented, as I knew him to be a very agreeable companion, having spent some hours with him at the last Warwick assize. In the course of conversation, he introduced the name of our ward, and spoke so warmly in praise of her character, that I, partly in jest, partly in earnest, asked him if he was in love with the lady. He said he had seen her, but that he was not so happy as to be of her acquaintance; adding a wish to be introduced to her, which I told him he soon should be, if he would give himself the trouble of taking a ride to Bristol, and offered him, if he were in earnest, my interest. My young spark caught at this in a moment, and said that Bristol was the destined end of his journey. In short, I drew him on by little and little, till we came to a right understanding with each other, and at length, so far enticed him, (for I thought it would be a clever thing) that he made me such proposals as I could not make any objection to; therefore promised him your influence; my own, and Lady Glynn's.

Thus then this matter is settled as far as it can be at present; at which I am extremely glad; for notwithstanding her aunt's very partial fondness, I do not, as I have often said, think our young lady very marketable, though she has such a lumping fortune: and then, as I told you in my last, I am every day more and more convinced she has some private amour upon her hands, only she manages so cunningly that I cannot discover the secret; but her languishing airs; her conversation, and her manner upon divers occasions (as well as her constant refusal of several gentlemen whom I have named to try her) confirm it to me; though Lady Glynn will not be convinced. I do not pretend to so much penetration as to say I should have suspected it, if Mr. Langley had not given me the hint, but after he mentioned it (and I think he knew something more than he would say) I thought I saw it plainly, and have for some time been determined to get at some of her letters *myself*, as her aunt refuses her assistance. I have lectured Mrs. Sally upon it two or three times, but she firmly denies any knowledge of the matter; yet I still suspect that by means of my man Chapone, who courts this girl of Lady Lucinda's, the intrigue, if there be one, is managed; and the other day I questioned him, likewise, upon the subject; but he disowns being acquainted with any such an affair as strongly as Sally does; so I know not what to conclude. It would be a confounded slur upon us all to have an heiress of such consequence intrusted to our care and elude our sagacity. I therefore tell you every particular I can gather, that your suspicions, by being awakened, may lead to some probable conjecture. One particular I can answer for, which is, that the business is carried on by letter only; for I positively affirm no suspicious person whatsoever has visited her since she has been under our protection; and I farther protest that she never is suffered to go out without being attended by some trusty person; so that you see I am every way careful of our young heiress: nevertheless, I shall be very glad, as I know you will be likewise, when she is under another—and, in her case—better protection; and for that reason I must own I took some pains to allure the Alverston Squire to the noose, which he very readily fell into. I told him I had, before now, heard my ward mention his

name, but that I must not betray a young lady's secrets. This took him mightily, and he was very curious in enquiring what opinion she entertained of him; but I told him he must learn that from herself, repeating that it was not right to betray a young lady's secrets. For two reasons I hinted that she was very coy and shy to the men. First, because he is a high-spirited spark, and would like her the better for it; next, to prepare him for rather a cold reception; as it is ten to one that she will treat him with disdain. However, I shall give her to understand, that except she behaves to him with complaisance, we shall be convinced she entertains improper partialities; it being impossible she could, were her heart as free as it ought to be, refuse such an eligible offer; and that, therefore (as I shall take upon me to answer for you) we shall all think ourselves justified in securing her from improper acquaintances, by sending her back to the convent till she shall be of age. This I know will so terrify her, that, in all likelihood, she will receive him at first with civility, by which means, as he is a very handsome and fine young fellow, he may, in a short time, so gain upon her fickle temper, as to make her bend to our wishes. She will, perhaps, object to his not being high enough in rank; but it is telling no great secret if I say that none of rank will have her, except they want her fortune; and, indeed, I cannot but wonder at young Stanley's inducement, as both he and his family must be above the temptation of riches, I should suppose. He talked something about her beauty; which, as he said he had seen her, rather surprised me. Her understanding too, he mentioned. I wish he does not find himself disappointed when he is more acquainted with her. However, as I had that thought in my head, I drew him on, as I have said, to plain proposals, so that he will not find it an easy matter to go back with honor. Perhaps, said I to myself, her being an earl's daughter is the charm; and if that is the case, it is all well enough. After dinner we determined to post on to this place; where, as Mr. Stanley was obliged to retire to write some letters as soon as we arrived, I took the opportunity of penning the above particulars to you, knowing they would give you pleasure.

Let me hear from you immediately after you have asked council about the settlements, for I well know we must take the capricious lady as soon as we can catch her in the humour.

I am, dear sir,
your friend,
and humble servant,
PHILIP GLYNN.

LETTER, XXVI.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Stratford, March 20th, 1789.

WELL, my dear Charles! I am thus far arrived on my Quixotte expedition, and upon considering coolly of the matter, seem half afraid *you* will think it was, *indeed*, began under the guidance of the spirit of chivalry; a symptom that I myself am verging to that opinion; and, to confess the truth, it does seem to favour a little of romance.

Is it a peculiar unhappy quality in me, or do I share the failing in common with the rest of my species, that I am apt to set a mighty value upon things seemingly hard to be attained, and abate in my relish for them, when they are given to my hand? I believe the question is thus to be answered.

Mortals of my temper are very liable to this mental illness; whereas those with better hearts and wiser heads enjoy what they possess without taking pains to make themselves miserable, by heightening, in idea, the good of those things they are without.

I left Alverston yesterday, and reached Mr. Bellard's before dark. With him I staid all night; breakfasted with him this morning, and about noon arrived at Coventry, where, as I alighted, I heard the name of Sir Philip Glynn, and found myself somewhat fluttered upon the supposition that the ladies were with him; but it proved otherwise. He had been at the inn two days, transacting business with some gentlemen from London, who had just left him: presuming, therefore, upon the slight acquaintance I made with him last autumn at Warwick, I introduced myself to his notice, and proposed, if he was not otherwise engaged, our dining together; which proposal he accepted with readiness. I am not in the humour for description, or I could make you smile at the baronet's *peculiar*s, which were, to me, rather novel. The good man is not over wise; but he has a mighty open, and, seemingly, honest heart.

What the plague ails me, Charles! I am either very much tired, or not well; for it cannot *be* that my spirits are depressed, because I seem to have a probable view of gaining the very point which I set out to compass.

But I must tell you a few plain matters of fact, and leave you to make your own comments.

Sir Philip and I, both of us being desirous to pursue our journey, agreed upon an early dinner; during which, in the course of conversation, I led to a topic that naturally introduced the name of Lady Lucinda Harrington. It would be labour to me, at this time, to give you minute particulars: suffice it that Sir Philip's sedulity to continue his ward the subject of our discourse, together with several good round intimations—one of which, accompanied with a significant look, was—"I can tell you, Mr. Stanley, I have heard my niece mention your name *before now*,"—so convinced me of the reality of her partial opinion of me, that (softened still more by the presenting idea of the scene at Mr. Mortimer's) I was so much worked upon by rising compassion; so opened by my own too sanguine temper, and so led, or rather pressed, by Sir Philip's encouragement, that I, at length, fairly—I hope not foolishly—made him the proposals which my father (for I acquainted both him and my mother with my whole design) enabled me to offer, if I found circumstances to answer my wishes. The baronet accepted them (and indeed they were unobjectionable) with an avidity which confirmed my idea of his knowledge of the lady's partiality. He likewise promised me, in addition to his own, the influence, *were it necessary*—with a significant emphasis he spoke—of Lady Glynn and Mr. Bernard, his brother-guardian; not doubting but we should *wind up the business* to the satisfaction of all parties; though I must expect a little difficulty with his ward, at first, as she was naturally shy to the gentlemen.

Upon the whole, there was somewhat particular in Sir Philip's ready acquiescence with what I so hastily proposed: however, it is easily accountable for, if Lady Lucinda's obliging prepossession in my favor be allowed. Yet I feel myself dissatisfied, and want to remove the fault, if any fault there be in the case, from myself. But why, you will ask, am I otherwise than pleased, when I have so nearly attained what, this morning, seemed to be the summit of my wishes? That, Charles, *is the question*, and if it is not owing to a naturally craving and unsatisfiable disposition, I know no solution for the mystery but—the name of *Maria Birtles*.

Now you will begin to rave and call me by all the vile epithets your recollection can furnish you with.

Rave on, and welcome. I care not. Neither your applause nor your censure can set me *to rights* within. Of the two, I think I had rather, in the present situation of circumstances, have your blame than your praise, for then I should be put upon seeking for—and should, perhaps, find—a defence for my conduct and sentiments.

But I *hate* sentiments: I hate myself; I hate all the world; Maria Birtles more than all the rest; for has she not greatly interrupted my peace? she has; and the only pleasure I can find, is in the revengeful idea that I, likewise, have injured hers. Yet oh! that thought only wounds mine more deeply. The sweets arising from a revenge so glorious, turn and sink into my heart, and give death to my happiness.

I will write no more. I will think no more. Yet what can I do? If I go to bed I cannot sleep.

Sir Philip now sends up to ask if I am ready for supper. I cannot eat: but I must attend him.

After dining together at Coventry, we agreed to post off for Stratford: both, seemingly eager to pursue the journey. He, probably, was really so; and I wanted to be going *somewhere*; hardly caring whither.

After supper, I must write, as I promised my mother, to Emma. But why do I plague you with the mention of *her* name!

Woman! woman! detested!—beloved!—baneful!—blissful creature! at once our torment and delight—*with* thee, no happiness; *without* thee, no felicity—the only foundation yet certain destruction of gladness and content!

O! Charles! Charles! pity me; write to me, and soothe me.

Direct to me at the post-office, Bristol.

GEORGE STANLEY.

I received yours from Framlingham half an hour after I sealed my last. This, as you order, I shall send to Aldborough; but my next I will address to you at the post-office Yarmouth, as by your account you will be arrived at that sea-port by the time my letter will reach it.

LETTER, XXVII.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Saturday night, Bristol March 21st.

IN the human mind are strange vicissitudes; and in mine, perhaps, as sudden changes from one extreme to another as in that of any mortal breathing. I am now a happy—a very happy fellow, and wonder what ailed me when I wrote my last. My spirits must have been depressed by some demon of envy.

After I had finished; directed and sealed my letter to you, I went down to the baronet who, likewise, had been writing, and found him very impatient for his supper, which was presently brought in. My appetite was, at first, very sickly, but sir Philip's heartiness revived mine, and I made a pretty comfortable meal; after which, we each of us sipped a bottle of excellent port, and retired with a mutual desire of pursuing our route so early as six in the morning; wishing to reach Bristol in good time this evening. Before I went to bed I wrote my letter to my sister, giving her an account of my plan, &c. and then paid a larger tribute to Somnus than I expected, who very bountifully rewarded me, by ordering Morpheus to enliven my fancy with the most pleasing images; but I have no leisure, now, to relate visions. Sir Philip called at my chamber-door this morning before six. I obeyed his summons, and we were upon the road a few minutes after. At Gloucester we took an early dinner, and reached this city by five o'clock. Upon Sir Philip's recommendation I was immediately accommodated with comfortable apartments in a genteel lodging-house near the Exchange, from whence I now write, but I would have you continue to direct to me at the post-office.

After I was dressed I went to Captain Jones', and it happening to be the anniversary of his wedding, I there met with Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright; Mr. Mrs. and Miss Wharton; James Pyeford and Sir John Cottingham; with a crowd of beaux and belles to whom I was a stranger; but being introduced by Jones, was soon acquainted with half a hundred.

Lady Lucinda Harrington was a topic of conversation; the men affirming she had a hundred and fifty thousand charms—alias guineas—and was, consequently, the object of general admiration. But it seems she has confessed her heart is not her own; and this, she says, she declares, that she may not be pestered by the gentlemen. An extraordinary proceeding surely; and such as but few ladies would adopt. However, it must be allowed it is a very generous method, as it shows she does not wish to make unavailing conquests.

But is it not rather strange, Conway, that this young beauty—as I have taken it into my head to suppose she is, though I have not I think heard much said upon that particular—should be so determinedly prepossessed in favor of a person of whom she has such a slight knowledge? Well, but so it is. There, certainly, is no accounting for female partialities. She, probably, has *heard* something of me that she *does* like; and, perhaps, not *seen* any thing, in our short interview, that she does *not*, [I do not speak from vanity, Charles, for I am not in a vain humour] and having a heart to dispose of, which, we may conclude, she did not think any one who solicited it worthy to possess, it is not, all these suppositions allowed, so very strange, is it? that she should bestow it upon me: for surely there cannot, after all, be any doubt about the matter! I shall look like a pretty puppy indeed, if there *be* a mistake in this particular. But avaunt mistrust and diffidence! it must be so. Her fainting upon hearing I was expected at the wedding—her delineating, as she certainly did, my features—Sir Philip's intimations, and eagerness to hear and accept our proposals—her declaration that her heart is not her own, yet visited by no evidently preferred addresser—in short, there are so many presumptive proofs, and these pretty strong ones, of her having conceived *a penchant for my*

identity, that even modesty herself, with a blushing cheek, must acknowledge it would be inexcusable infidelity to withhold belief: mine I therefore yield with transport; and accept, with gratitude, the flattering predilection, which I mean to return with all possible fervency.

To-morrow morning—or rather *this* morning—I am to breakfast at Sir Philip Glynn's, and to be introduced to the ladies; though in no other light, I suppose at present, than as a new acquaintance of the good gentleman's. I should not chuse to be too early presented as a lover, because it might prevent Lady Lucinda from behaving with that freedom which would give a true display of her character: not but that it is, I must own, as matters have been managed, rather too late for a scrutiny; as the election seems to be *uninvalidable*.

And now, that I may not look so stupid in the morning as to discredit my future charmer's prepossession, I will try to get some sleep.

The party at Captain Jones' broke up at twelve, on account of its being Saturday night; else, I believe, they would there have hailed the rising sun, for they seemed to be very convivial.

Adieu, Charles. I think I shall dream of Lady Lucinda.

GEORGE STANLEY.

I make no particular mention of Mr. Evelyn, as I take it for granted you have taught him to know enough of me, to convince him that I shall remember him always.

LETTER, XXVIII.

MISS STANLEY, TO LADY STANLEY.

Woodstock, March 22nd.

AS you, my dear madam, know that Sunday is not my general letter-writing day, my date will lead you to expect I have a more than ordinary call upon me to exercise my pen: and indeed I have; for I feel myself distressed beyond expressing. But how blameable am I thus to alarm my dear mother! Let me hasten to say that the occasion of my present vexation is the substance of a letter, which is just put into my hands, from my brother. It is dated from Stratford, and informs me he is so far on his journey to Bristol, in chace, as he calls it, of *Lady Lucinda Harrington*. Never could astonishment exceed that which seized me on reading this intelligence. Who in their senses would single out Lady Lucinda Harrington for a daughter to Sir Edward and Lady Stanley! Why, madam, she is one of the most—But what am I going to say! Is she, *indeed*, to be my sister! If she is, I shall do well to suppress my opinion of her. *My* opinion did I say? It is, it seems, the opinion of every individual who knows her, that she is weak, vain, proud, capricious and coquettish. Young as she is, it is, without hesitation, reported that she has been engaged in more than one intrigue. Report, indeed, is often fallacious; but, my dear madam, I cannot, I cannot consent she should be my brother's wife; as such a woman as would make him happy, never could have the character which this, whether justly or not, as to several particulars, has universally obtained. What *can* George mean! What *can* be his inducement! Riches he wants not; nor *would* he, I hope, think of marrying to acquire an addition to his fortune. Had the lady of whom he is in pursuit, even the poor recommendation of *beauty* to engage him, it would abate my *wonder*, though not my concern; but, by all accounts, she is very far, indeed, from being handsome.

Mrs. Clifford, who was last week at Mrs. Lawson's, was speaking of her and her family in general, who, it seems, are all reckoned *odd kind of people*. I did not understand this expression, nor did I ask for an explanation, as I had then very little idea of its ever being to me of any importance. I remember she answered a question of Mr. Robert Shemmon's respecting the *person* of Lady Lucinda, by observing, that when she had a cloak on she did not appear ungenteel, but that without one, her being awry was very discernable; and that her face, since she had had the small-pox, wore but an unpleasing appearance.

Tell me, my dear madam, tell me what has induced my brother to think of this lady. I am all impatience for some information. Sometimes I am inclined to write to him; yet know not what to say. I would welcome such a fit of illness as would justify my sending for him by an express.

The letter I received from you last Thursday, demands a thousand acknowledgements. I intended to have replied to it to-morrow, but my present subject totally engrosses all my ideas. Surely on Tuesday morning, the time you dated, you knew not of my brother's intended expedition to Bristol. I *conclude* you did not, or you would have mentioned so material a circumstance. How sudden then—But I bewilder myself to no purpose with conjectures.

Pray do ease my anxiety by an early reply.

To-morrow is to be spent at Mrs. Stanhope's: but I doubt I shall be very uncomfortable; even when surrounded by such amiable and dear friends.

I am greatly obliged by, and as well pleased with, the contents of the two letters sent me by your Maria. Give my love to her, and tell her that she is, however, a saucy gipsy, to insinuate that I shall be jealous of your partiality for her, and that, when my spirits are more free than they are at this period, I mean to write her a chiding reply. But to you let me say that I am happy in your having such a companion.

I wrote to Alverston about an hour before your last reached Woodstock. You have, I doubt not, received the scribble, and will be so kind as to give me your opinion upon the subject.

I am very happy in my dear father's approbation of my reply to Colonel Greville, from whom I have again heard in a short note, intimating an intention of being soon in Oxfordshire. I hope he does not think of coming on my account, as I shall be really distressed to contend with him, having *no other* answer to give than what the mail conveyed.

Sir Charles Conway's stay in London was lengthened to my expectation. Sir Charles, madam, has, in London, several acquaintance.

Pray do not be so distressed about my health. Indeed I am better than I have been; and my good doctor affirms that the fine weather will entirely drive away my malady.

All at Woodstock send the most affectionate remembrance. They bid me tell you I am very good and manageable. Mrs. Eleanor Lawson, in particular, charges me to say that she will answer for my being your's, and my dear father's,

ever dutiful daughter,
EMMA STANLEY.

LETTER, XXIX.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Bristol, March 22d.

NOW, Charles, bedizened in the best array I brought to Bristol, and perfectly satisfied with my appearance, am I waiting for the important hour. The clock this instant strikes eight. At nine I am to be received at Sir Philip Glynn's. I cannot but say that I feel a little flutteration, as the girls call it, at the approach of this momentous interview. I hope Lady Lucinda will come up to the expectations I have formed of her. To be sure *beauty* is not essential in a wife; yet I cannot help wishing I may find my ideas of her, in that respect, realized. However, if the contrary be the case, I will endeavour to make the abatement with cheerfulness; consoling myself by contemplating the superiority of the beauties of her mind.

I forgot to tell you that I wrote, from Stratford, to my father; communicating my unexpected

success from my accidentally meeting with Sir Philip, and requesting him, for the sake of form, to give that gentleman, by letter, a ratification of the proposals he so generously enabled me to offer. This, perhaps, was unnecessary; however it is of no other consequence than to bind me more strongly to fulfil my own warm wishes.

My spirits are quite in alt; and I am quite a happy fellow.

* * * * *

A note from Sir Philip is now arrived, desiring my attendance as soon as convenient. What now, I wonder, is the matter! Sure she does not pretend to stand out! I shall not be pleased with her if she uses too much affectation upon the occasion. A little, I can allow her; as I should be disgusted with an *apparent willingness*; but no uncandidly expressed reluctance!

And now, Conway, for the day, adieu. I do not expect much leisure for scribbling till drowsy mortals have submitted to the chains of slumber, as I suppose I shall be permitted to attend Sir Philip and the ladies to church.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XXX.

SIR PHILIP GLYNN, TO LIONEL BARNARD, ESQ.

Bristol, March 22d.

DEAR SIR,

I Take the opportunity which my early rising gives me, of telling you that I hope I have used such means with our young lady as to induce her to comply with our wishes; and I will tell you what I said to her.

As soon as ever I alighted, I told Lady Glynn the whole affair, who, even more readily than I imagined, came into the plan; and then I went up to Lady Lucinda, whom I found in a very sullen mood. Upon my informing her that I had received very eligible proposals from a young gentleman who had the united countenance of all those who had any right to controul her, she assumed a haughty air, and, as usual, declared against receiving the addresses of any body. I then grew peremptory, and told her it was our determination (making her believe you were acquainted with the business) she should either comply or return immediately to France, and remain in her old convent till she was full twenty-one years of age; as we had received information that she, by some means, held improper correspondencies, and we did not chuse to be outwitted. At this she coloured like scarlet, and desired to know with whom we thought proper to suspect her being indiscreetly acquainted. I told her that was the mystery, and that it led us to apprehend she might be too cunning for us, if we did not take care, in steps of more consequence. I then told her the name of her intended lover, and left her with a desire to see her when she was disposed to be obedient. After this I went into my study, and in about half an hour sent up Chapone with a note, desiring to know her determination, as, upon her refusal, I should immediately write to you to procure her a passage to

France as soon as possible, and likewise to seek out a proper person to attend her. It was, as I expected, a considerable time before she would deign to give me an answer; but, at length, sent to request I would go up to her, and when I went, she received me with tolerable good humour, and after some expostulation told me she would comply, if I would let her be allowed a handsome sum for pin-money. I assured her she might rest herself contented about that matter, as Mr. Stanley had exceeded our very wishes. I then explained his proposals, with which she seemed perfectly satisfied; and upon my giving her two fifty-pound notes, to keep her in this good humour, she thanked me, and owned she had sometimes been very stubborn, but said she had always a due sense of our care and kindness, and was often ashamed of herself.

So far so good, brother-guardian; and I have now sent for Mr. Stanley to come to me before the ladies appear in the breakfast-room, that I may tell him how matters stand. I have led him to expect a cool reception, and as she has promised to behave with complaisance, I will give an intimation that I found it very difficult to persuade her to comply when I first proposed the matter, but that when I mentioned his name, she seemed mollified, and, soon after, gave her consent. This is, to be sure, rather stretching the point; but we will pass over that, as it will give our young gentleman a little courage if he supposes she has heard any thing of his character (and I shall enlarge upon that hint) to prepossess her in his favor.

I every minute expect his coming, so will conclude with congratulating you upon the probability of your wishes, respecting our ward, being soon fulfilled, and am,

dear sir,

your friend,

and humble servant,

PHILIP GLYNN.

Last night I received two hundred and seventy pounds for Mr. Whalley, which I put to account.

LETTER, XXXI.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Bristol, Sunday night, past eleven.

I Am too sleepy, Charles, to write even the events of this day. It has been observed that when the mind has been overcharged, it feels a lassitude upon its retiring into itself. Of this lassitude, however, I never was before so sensible. Perhaps I never before had my mind so *greatly* overcharged. What the cause is, I know not; but though I have a great deal to say, I feel an averseness to scribbling. However I will do so much violence upon my inclination as to tell you that I have spent the day at Sir Philip's, where I met with a most gracious reception from him and from the ladies. I intended to have been home early, on purpose to have given you a minute account of what has passed; but could not, without absolute rudeness, disengage myself from the baronet's importuning invitation.

Let me just observe, that my expectations relative to Lady Lucinda's beauty were not quite answered. She is not handsome, Charles. She is not in the least handsome. I think rather the contrary. Not, as I before observed, that beauty is essential to conjugal happiness, and it was a fault in me to raise my ideas so high; for, upon recollection, (and it now strikes me forcibly) I never heard her person much celebrated. I believe I mentioned this last night: but it then only simply occurred without my thinking of it with attention. I cannot but say that I admire female beauty; especially since I have been so feelingly convinced that every amiable—every great and good quality, may inhabit a beautiful form.

However, as you will think this is bringing Maria Birtles too forward in the picture, I will suppress my sentiments on this particular, and at the same time betake myself to rest. Whether I shall sleep or not, or if I do, of whom I shall dream, I cannot pre-determine; nor can I tell whether I shall have leisure to write to you to-morrow.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XXXII.

LADY LUCINDA HARRINGTON, TO MISS
BELINDA HORTON.

Bristol, March 23d.

I Arise, my dear Belinda, before one beam from Sol's refulgency has gilded with its glorious brightness our horizon, to tell you that I now hope for permission to see you in Bath in a very few days, and that I shall doubtless be attended by *my dear George*, who being, yesterday, dressed with the greatest nicety, (doubtless to secure his conquest) looked handsomer—positively handsomer than ever. When we were at church, how greatly did he outshine, in my eye, all others who ever sought my favor! And am I not convinced—But I must suppress my raptures. Volumes of panegyric would leave half his charms unblazoned.

In my last night's hasty note, I told you upon what prodigious good terms Guardy and I now are; but I forgot to mention the material circumstance of his graciously presenting me with two fifty-pound bank notes, and after Stanley left us, told me, in a fond fit, that I might now be permitted to pay you the visit I had so earnestly petitioned for.

I therefore write in haste, to prohibit your going from home till I see you, and to desire you to ask your aunt to send for me in a hurry about next Wednesday, *on account of your being very much indisposed*. I cannot at this time give my reasons for this procedure; but when I see you, you shall know every thing.

I will only add that I am exceedingly happy. Scenes of Arcadia seem to dance before my eyes; my loved Corydon appearing in every view irresistible. You cannot think how pleased I am with your approbation of my flame, nor what an ease it gave me when I confessed it to you. Dearly as I have loved you, I think I should have found an abatement of my friendship, had you reprobated my affection, my voluntary affection, for the dear lad of my wishes.

Ah, Belinda! before this week be ended! Heavens! what may not happen before this week be ended!!! With joy; with apprehension; with fear; with delight, I tremble. What an extatic pleasure will it be to me to reward with my hand and fortune the dear man who has so long possessed my heart.

Adieu, Belinda. Belinda, adieu. Remember you are not only to accompany me to the awful altar of Hymen, but to live with me ever after, and be a partner of, as well as a witness to, the happiness of
your too tender

LUCINDA.

LETTER, XXXIII.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Monday morning, Seven o'clock.

I Can neither write nor let it alone. What to do with myself till dinner I know not. I am to dine at Sir Philip's.

* * * * *

Charles, what ails me! I am restless, impatient, and low-spirited. Am I ill? Is the disorder in my mind or my body? You are a casuist, and must both tell me what my malady is, and how a cure will be best effected. Every thing that I have wished, goes on with celerity; and the end of my labours seems to be nearly accomplished; for Lady Lucinda has received and even accepted me as her husband elect: Lady Glynn has expressed her happiness at the union in prospect; and, as to *Sir Philip*, he drives on at the rate of fifteen miles in an hour. This very day I am invited, or rather impressed, to meet, at his house, an attorney, who is to make a rough draft of the settlements, which are to be sent up to London for immediate engrossing, if Mr. Barnard, the other guardian, approves them; and, so generous has my father been, it is almost impossible he can do otherwise.

I modestly intimated to Sir Philip, that in a day or two he might expect a ratification of the proposals in a letter from Sir Edward to himself; but he carelessly replied that that was not of the least consequence, as the well-known character of both my father and myself was sufficient security for him to place entire reliance upon; adding, with a very high compliment, that he knew *who* he accepted as a husband for his niece when he accepted me; or he should not so unceremoniously have *chimed in* with my offer. He then said that as all parties appeared so well satisfied, he did not know why the wedding should not be solemnized as soon as the settlements could be executed.

What a cursed hand have I made of this job! Into what a labyrinth am I drawn by my own stupid folly! And now—which way to turn—how, by any means to extricate myself from this dilemma, I know not.

“But why,” you will exclaim, “do you wish to be extricated from those fetters you were so willing—so eager to put on.”

O Charles! Charles!—there is no denying it any longer—I am—I am a most miserable dog—made so, from a very happy fellow, by my own contrivance.

What demon could persuade me to form and follow so ridiculous a plan—for I now see it clearly in that light—as to set out upon a full gallop—puppy as I was—in pursuit of a woman to whose person, and even character, I was almost a stranger! I did not, it is true, intend to proceed to these lengths before I had made some acquaintance with her; and had I not met with Sir Philip at Coventry—had I not so precipitately introduced myself to him—and had he not been so confoundedly ready to forward this plaguey business, I had still been my own man; for the first

visit—almost the first sight of the lady—would have, at least, cooled my endeavours to effect a second.

Indeed, Conway, I am a miserable being. To go forward, is destruction; to go back, so cursedly am I hampered, is almost impossible. Tell me, my friend! my better genius! what I must do to rid myself of this wretched piece of business.

I think I will now give you particulars. Last night, and when I began this letter, I was unwilling to enter upon the subject, being ashamed of myself, and wanting to brave it out; but now I yield; conscience urges me to confess my folly, and to deplore its effects.

Yesterday morning, soon after eight, a note from Sir Philip, as I told you, demanded my instant attendance. I immediately went in the height of impatience to know the cause of the hasty summons; fearing something destructive to my then stupid wishes. The baronet received me with bows and smiles; and I thought myself happy when he told me that the evening before, he announced to his ward the arrival of a new lover, at which she was excessively displeased, and absolutely refused to receive him, till he mentioned my name; when, it seems, she blushed; courtesied, and owned her approbation! A great deal more to this purpose, Sir Philip told me; all which enforced the conviction of her really unaccountable prepossession; so that *that* part of my inducement retains its full force; indeed is strengthened, by the increased confirmation of her, perhaps, increased partiality.

At nine o'clock we were told that breakfast and the ladies waited for us, and were ushered into an elegantly furnished dressing-room, where Lady Glynn and Lady Lucinda were sitting upon a sofa. The first arose to receive us as soon as we entered, and immediately approaching me with an offered hand, welcomed me to her house; adding, that *my errand there*, and the character she had heard of me, not only from Sir Philip, but from all the world, rendered ceremony unnecessary and impertinent.

To this dainty speech I made as polite a reply as my surprise would suffer my ideas to furnish me with, but being led by the elder to the younger lady, I was absolutely astonished at hearing the aunt address the niece in the following words, and at that niece's reply.

“Lucinda, my ever beloved child, arise and receive, at the warm recommendation of your most careful friends, this gentleman, whom I now, with real pleasure, introduce to you: receive him, my dear, as your lover, and look upon him as your future husband.”

I was at this absolutely struck dumb with amazement; as I neither expected nor wished for any thing of the kind; but endeavouring to recover myself to relieve the young lady, whom, I must necessarily suppose, would nearly sink with confusion, I was going to make a reply, which *she herself* interrupted, by saying—“*Your* recommendations, my dear madam, and those of Sir Philip and Mr. Barnard, have ever had additional weight with me since I was consigned to your care by my dear indulgent parents deceased; I, therefore, neither hesitate nor blush to receive Mr. Stanley as you desire; and I go farther—I even thank you” [with a courtesy she spoke the words] “for rendering my obedience so easy; so pleasant; so agreeable.”

Now, Charles, if you can find a word hitherto unknown in any language to express the height of amazement, let it sound in your ears to convey the sense of what I in vain seek to communicate. My head was turned to all the thirty-two points of the mariners compass in the course of a few moments. I absolutely stared with my mouth open, and verily believe that in the first moment of astonishment, uttered, in a tone of the strongest surprise, the word MADAM!?!—as if I doubted the evidence of my sense of hearing; but collecting myself as soon as possible, I took her partly held-out hand, and made, I believe, a very incoherent speech; for, upon my soul, I can scarce remember one syllable of what I said. However, she smiled and looked pleased; taking, I suppose, the appearance of my confusion for symptoms of love.

And now, Charles, I could wish to convey to your idea the exact figure of the woman I was standing before (as she appeared totally different to the little girl we saw at Huntington) but that I never like to make natural deformities the sport of my pen; and I could not describe the person of Lady Lucinda Harrington without an appearance of ridicule. However, you will readily believe I am now too deeply serious to attempt a style of gaiety, even if the occasion would justify it, I will, therefore, say that the outward form of this young lady is extremely unprepossessing, and her countenance still more unlovely. When we met her, which was, I think about three years back, I recollect we agreed in admiring her complexion; which, though pale, was very pleasing. This beauty is already fled. The small-pox has made such ravages in her face as I never before beheld: but I will not be minute. Her being distinguishably bent in her shape, escaped our notice, as we saw her not without a cloak. The colour of her hair was, likewise, unobserved; it being then loaded, as I perfectly remember, with brown powder, and I mistook it for an auburn; whereas it is, in reality, the most disagreeable red I ever saw. This particular *may* be mentioned with severity, because she has taken it into her head that it is very beautiful; for which reason she wears it extremely long without powder; and not content with what nature has given her, which is a very sufficient quantity, has added a monstrous load of artificial ringlets which cover her shoulders. That she feels no mortification from the twist in her back, she took pains to signify, by hinting that she thought *there was* such a thing as *elegant deformity—if she might so express herself*—and that a certain bend in the shape gave a dignity to the person.

Charles! guess what I felt at hearing such a ridiculous assertion from the lips of a woman who seems inevitably fated to be my wife!

Lady Lucinda does not appear to be much grown since we saw her; is, consequently, a woman of under size; but her hands and arms denote she was framed by nature upon a larger scale. With these, likewise, she appears to be more than contented; for, from their being of a pale sallowish colour, she fancies they are beautifully white; therefore is industrious to display them, ornamented with rings and pearl bracelets.

I will wait till I return from my this-day's visit before I speak *more* decisively upon her mind. At present, I cannot see any thing to contradict her being silly; proud, and ill-natured. How the plague could such a woman as this ever adopt the whim of being in love with me! for that, as I told you remains incontrovertible. Besides the circumstance of the portrait, [and that it was dropped from her pocket, her replies to my *distant* intimations on that head confirmed; strange as her being capable of such a performance seems] her whole behaviour appeared studiously calculated to convince me of her affection.

What, Conway! shall I—can I—ought I to do? To judge from circumstances—her happiness is absolutely dependant upon me. I am already bound to her by the laws of honor; both Sir Philip and Lady Glynn introducing and dwelling upon such topics as *inevitably* drew me to confirm to Lady Lucinda, in their presence, the design upon which I came to Bristol.

Charles, what *could* I do! How, *possibly*, avoid professing my intention!

May my most inveterate enemy never know so bitter an hour as the one which succeeded that profession!

I cannot describe all the ensuing circumstances of the day: the retrospection is too painful. At eleven we went to church. This was some relief; but when we returned, Lady Glynn, with horrid indelicacy, proposed to Sir Philip a little walk before dinner; saying she would leave Lucinda to entertain Mr. Stanley; adding, with a disgusting smile, that she dared to say I should not find their absence insupportable.

Heavens and earth! what a load of distress entered, at that moment, into my heart! I verily think I was hardly in my senses for an hour after. But for the relief of a harpsichord, I know not how I should have gone through this interval with decency. Lady Lucinda sat down, at my entreaty, to the instrument. I believe she played tolerably well; yet I hardly know, for I was very absent; but the unrequested shrieks of her voice almost stunned my ears. This, to a being who could live upon harmony, was almost beyond enduring. However my whole soul was so out of tune, that the music of the spheres would, at that time, have sounded as discord.

At length Sir Philip and his lady returned: we dined; we drank tea; we supped, and I came home. And now, as I told you, am I going to meet this cursed attorney.

Oh Conway! Conway! whatever have been your plagues, you have not—you never had—that bitterest of all bitter reflections to encounter with, of having brought them upon yourself by your own foolish plans and practices.

Had I *never known* MARIA BIRTLES, Lady Lucinda Harrington would have been my disgust and my torment: so lay no fault on that dear—neglected—angelic maid, for fascinating my eyes and judgement.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XXXIV.

SIR PHILIP GLYNN, TO LIONEL BARNARD, ESQ.

March 23d.

DEAR FRIEND,

I Have this instant your letter by Tom Hawkins, and send by his return, a rough draft of the settlements between Lady Lucinda Harrington and George Stanley Esq. If you approve them (and I

think you cannot do otherwise) lay them before our old friend in the Temple, and let them be finished ready for signing, and sent down the first possible moment. I am glad my letter from Stratford so well pleased you. We drive on here very fast. Lady Lucinda is as fond as a young Turtle. I never before saw her in such good humour; and *my* lady is talking of bespeaking bridal clothes. I think it would be as well for you to come down with the settlements, and we then will have the wedding directly; for you know it is not the custom for such a great heiress to have a long wooing-time. It would, as Lady Glynn says, be ridiculous to defer the affair; all parties being of one mind, and the house in readiness for their reception; for Lady Lucinda chuses to go to Harrington-Hall after the ceremony, rather than to London.

I am, my dear friend,

in great haste,

yours, &c. &c.

P.G.

LETTER, XXXV.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Monday night

NOW Charles my ruin is nearly compleat. This cursed baronet has netted me over head and ears, while I lie like a stupid fool and lament my miserable situation without endeavouring—indeed without knowing how to endeavour—to extricate myself.

Lady Lucinda is a fool, as well as ugly and illnatured. I am *sure* she is illnatured though she aims at appearing extremely agreeable. Indeed Sir Philip, by a bad stroke of policy, observed he never before saw her so pleasant for so great a length of time; meaning, probably, to have me suppose myself the cause, without considering what an opening it gave for a supposition that she is not so naturally.

I sicken at the recollection of the transactions of the day, and cannot recapitulate them: will therefore try to sink the remembrance of the effects of my folly in oblivion.

Tuesday morning, eleven o'clock.

Heavens and earth! what shall I do now! How shall I keep in my senses! Blockhead! Idiot! Puppy! as I am—how shall I prevent instant distraction; A curse upon my folly!—my stupid; senseless; conceited folly! Yet *somebody* must have dropped this bewildering—this *ruinating vellum-case and portrait*. For, Charles! *Lady Lucinda Harrington never had it in her possession!* I *now know* this as a truth—I thought I did before—from the most incontestible proofs. Her hand-writing—strange that I did not sooner *contrive* to see that: but I did not seek for confirmation of the matter, because I thought it needed none—Her hand-writing, accidentally displayed—vile pot-hook scrawls! as the characters are—was what first awakened the idea of a possibility of my being mistaken. I then immediately investigated the circumstances; every one of which stared me in the face with a negative. So far from Lady Lucinda's being a painter and a poet—she has not the least idea of either of the arts. With regard to a *portrait*—she declares she never saw one in her life that conveyed to her senses the least resemblance of the person for whom it was intended: and as to rhymes!—But what signifies talking about the matter? It is too assuredly true that she is not the woman for whom I began this wild-goose chase.

And here—settlements have been roughly drawn out by a villainous petty-fogger, and sent to London for Mr. Barnard's inspection; and if he approves them, for engrossing!—a letter from my dear indulgent father to Sir Philip, to whom I foolishly—in conformity with all my late conduct—gave him a direction from Stratford, to ratify the proposals he authorised me to make; to thank him for the honor he conferred upon us by his ready acceptance of me, and to tell him that he left the final settlement of every thing to his discretion and mine.

To my discretion! To *mine*! Yes, a pretty instance I have given of discretion, truly!

What the plague is to be done! Charles, why do you not write to me? What the deuce ails *you* that I do not hear from you? I am sure I might, ere this, have received an answer to the letter which I sent from Stratford, had you, as I desired you to do, written immediately.

Excuse me, Conway, I am out of humour with myself; with you, and with every existing being.

Do not expect me to write any more at present. What can I have to say that will make the employment a pleasant one?

I will not write again till I hear from you.

G.S.

LETTER, XXXVI.

SIR C. CONWAY, TO GEORGE STANLEY, ESQ.

Yarmouth, March 24th.

I Have two letters of yours unanswered now before me; one dated Alverston, March the seventeenth, the other, Stratford, twentieth; both of which have given me considerable uneasiness. I would have written yesterday, but was then, as now, at a loss for expression.

Before this time—before any letter of mine, in reply to either of your two last, can reach you—advice will probably be useless, or I would send an express with a hint for you not to be too precipitate in executing your design. On Tuesday you wrote from Alverston. On Thursday I received the letter. In that, you said you were going to Bristol, and that I should hear from you upon your arrival in that city; but never said how, nor when, you meant to begin your journey; consequently there was no probability of getting a letter to such a flying fellow soon enough to answer my wishes. However, when I received your account from Stratford, I most earnestly wished I had attempted it. Till that reached me, I satisfied myself, in some measure, with the belief that a first interview with the lady in question would cool the ardor of your pursuit, and that you would soon relinquish your design; but when I read your letter above-mentioned, I was more distressed than I have been since I left Derbyshire.

Could I, by any means practicable, get you out of the intanglement into which I suspect you plunged last Friday, I would not spare any pains to effect your release. But I know not what plan to pursue. Indeed I have harassed my thoughts so much about you, that I have given myself a violent head-ache, which has lasted twelve hours.

Sir Philip Glynn I am well acquainted with *per renommee*. Colonel Bridgwood, who, as I told you, supped with me at Harwich, gave me twenty ridiculous stories of *him*; his *lady*, and his *ward*; but as the conversation was, at the time, uninteresting, it escaped my pen. Most heartily do I wish I could have presaged its ever being of consequence to you.

This oddity of a baronet—this Sir Philip—is extremely sedulous to dispose of his charge to any eligible mate; apprehending, as it seems, that she may, else, dispose of *herself* without any regard to discretion. So far his anxiety, *if he has reason for it*, is laudable; but methinks I should not wish George Stanley to marry any woman whose guardian deems it necessary *to provide for her in time*. Bridgwood says he offered her to his cousin Morrison, and, after that, to Lord Wickham; adding, with a laugh, that *he* hoped to come in for a turn some day or other; and that, if he did, the gilded bait would be too alluring for him to resist; though he doubted he should find a barb on the hook.

What, consistently with my ardent wish for your happiness, can I say more upon this subject! If what I *have* said, reaches you in season, it will be sufficient; if not, it is more than enough.

You will be sure to write immediately upon receiving this: though I hope there are now some letters upon the road.

I never remembered myself to have been more actuated by impatience than at this interval. It is with the utmost difficulty that my pen is restrained by discretion. I therefore tear myself from the subject.

Last Tuesday I wrote to you from Framlingham in Suffolk; on Wednesday evening, from Yoxford, a village in the same county; for, altering my plan, I proceeded directly from Framlingham to Yarmouth, without touching upon any of the intermediate towns upon the coast; but I sent Joseph to the post-master of Aldborough, with a request that he would forward any letters directed to me, which might fall into his hands, to the post-office in Yarmouth; by which means I yesterday received yours from Stratford.

And now, as I cannot say any more about your affairs, I will touch upon my own.

I am very pleasantly situated as to lodgings, in this agreeable sea-port. Mr. Evelyn gratifies me greatly, by telling me that he never before found himself so happy. But, George, I cannot boast much in that particular! Your sister's image attends me every moment, both in solitude and in company; and I do not feel the least abatement in either the affection or esteem I ever entertained for her. You may *call* this a weakness; but when you consider the woman your sister is, you cannot *think* it one. For has she not every good, great, and amiable quality, by which a female head or heart can be ornamented or rendered valuable? She has; and that in the most distinguishable degree. And amongst *beauties*—who but Emma Stanley has the universally-allowed—the almost ungrudged (so bewitchingly soft is her manner) pre-eminence! For a gentle liveliness of disposition—for sweetness of temper—most assuredly she stands unexcelled, if not unequalled.

Oh George! George! what poignant pain I feel upon a retrospection of former scenes! Yet tormenting as this retrospection is, I cannot help almost perpetually dwelling upon what once afforded me such pure—such animating happiness; happiness that bid me look forward—that lifted my ideas to scenes of endless bliss; and for which I had presumed to hope it would be a gradual preparation.

But if I can help it I will not murmur, though whilst I have existence I can never cease to

regret the deprivation.

Herbert Evelyn, to whom I have communicated particulars, is a CHRISTIAN: not a stern religious Priest. He instructs, at the same time that he soothes me; and by encouraging me, in some measure, to indulge my grief, relieves me from its importunity.

We arrived at this place on Thursday, where almost the first object that I saw, was Mrs. Digby. I cannot imagine how it came into that woman's head to chuse such a situation as Yarmouth at such a season of the year. A month or two hence, it is much more likely to be agreeable. But, perhaps, she is as ready to wonder at the motive which brings *me* hither. Can she have a reason of the same nature? Probably, not: but, perhaps, one as stimulating.

I am *displeased* with her being here, and want to criticise the unknown occasion.

Indeed Stanley, I am fearful of growing splenetic. The Providence which sent Herbert Evelyn to my benefit, was more kind to *me*, than, at first, I was sensible of. I blindly and, perhaps, vainly, thought the blessing was confined to him; feeling probably, more self-complacency at what I *did*, than gratitude for that which I received.

You must allow me, George, now and then, to moralize a little deeply. Adverse events will produce their advantage if, instead of the poisonous, we are careful to extract the salubrious particles. May I at least *endeavour* to grow wiser and better from this bankruptcy of human happiness.

Mrs. Digby is almost a torment to me. Soon after our arrival on the Thursday evening [we reached Yarmouth by dinner] she sent to request seeing me. The message seemed pressing: I could not but go; but I was extremely displeased, upon entering her rooms, to find them filled with company. This very alert gentlewoman, though she has been here but so short a time, has managed to get acquainted with almost all the genteel people in the place. To be sure her figure, which, it must be allowed, is what is called handsome, though it pleases not me—the liveliness of her wit—her apparent good humour—and, above all, the style in which she appears, which is truly elegant—must make an acquaintance with her, flattering to people in general. She that evening had given a public invitation to all the fashionable Yarmouth world; and this was the reason she said—an obliging one I suppose she meant it—why she sent express for me; as she thought it a favourable opportunity for my being, at once, introduced to every body.

I told her I was under much obligation to her for her motive, but that it was rather my wish, and indeed my plan, to be pretty much retired, during my stay in this part of the country.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, “such a plan as that must be universally reprobated.” It would be a crime, she added, for such a man as myself—was her intended compliment—to hide from society, when I must naturally benefit every one with whom I conversed. All which she spoke with the most careless air imaginable; hastening to introduce me to the company; for this debate passed in a little hall in which she met me at my entrance. I then told her I had a friend with me, whom I could not leave by himself, and that I must request—

At which she interrupted me—"A friend with you! better and better. Who is he?" Then, without waiting for an answer—"let him come. We will have him amongst us; his being your friend is his sufficient recommendation."

There was no resisting her importunity without absolute rudeness. I was therefore, at length, obliged to comply with her request of sending for Mr. Evelyn, and was then ushered into a very handsome apartment, crowded with ladies and gentlemen; many of whom were engaged at cards: but I do not intend to carry you through the whole of the evening, which, to me, was very fatiguing. However, by means of a Mr. Sherrett, I secured the comfortable lodgings I now occupy, of which he had been, some time, in possession, and was going to quit next morning. My only objection to them is their vicinity to those of Mrs. Digby, who is continually forming what she calls parties of pleasure: and (which not a little vexes me) we are, I find, supposed to be lovers.

You cannot think how this woman plagues me. Evelyn, being in better spirits, is quite entertained with her. He humourously insists upon it that she is in love with one of us, and says he flatters himself that *he* is the favoured object, as he hopes she has too much discernment to throw away her heart upon one who would be so insensible to the favor. And yet I query if Herbert would be a whit more grateful; as though every one must, upon a first observation, be struck with admiration of Mrs. Digby's face; form; air, and manner, which certainly are somewhat fascinating, she is not, I am sure, such a woman as a man of his turn would select for a wife. Yet, when it is considered how much such an affair would advance him in the world, I do not know what to think of the matter.

You will, perhaps, imagine I am canvassing about a piece of business that is never likely to have any foundation in reality. But, between you and me, George, this fair widow thinks Mr. Evelyn a very handsome young man; and she has found out he has an excellent understanding, and that he is extremely polite and accomplished. This was her observation to me four days back; and I do not think she has seen or heard any thing since that time to alter her opinion. Evelyn, as I said, smiles about her extraordinary civilities to us both; but, I dare answer for it, has not sufficient vanity to raise one idea of her thinking of him with, even approbation: and yet I really believe she is extremely pleased with his company.

On the Thursday, as I have said, we arrived, and spent the evening at Mrs. Digby's rooms. On Friday morning, by appointment, we attended her in a walk round the town; and she insisted upon it that we should drink tea with her in the afternoon. On Saturday morning she sent to request our obliging a friend of hers—a Mrs. Chilcot, who was of her party on the Thursday—with our company in the evening; and hoped we would excuse her having answered for our attendance; which she did upon the presumption of our not yet having formed engagements of our own. I sent an excuse of not being quite well; upon which Mr. Evelyn received a note from her, expressing her concern for my indisposition, and begging to know if he thought it was of a serious nature. If it was, she could recommend me to a woman who would give me the best of attendance as a nurse; and to a physician who was a very eminent practitioner; adding, that if I was very ill, she should think it much *greater* to obey the dictates of duty and inclination in visiting me in my confinement, than to submit to the censure of hearers and lookers-on. After this, she says if I am *not* so ill as my message led her to apprehend, she should think herself obliged to Mr. Evelyn if *he* would countenance the hasty promise she had given, by favoring Mrs. Chilcot with two or three hours of his presence.

“Is the deuce in this woman!”—said Herbert, upon reading the note; “What can we do with her? Faith, Sir Charles! it is a florid conquest. Get your heart free, and try to secure hers.”

I insisted upon it that her battery was levelled at him; as an increase of her vivacity was visible whenever he approached her; whereas, to me, I had, sometimes, thought her a little reserved.

“All cunning! all design!”—he exclaimed—adding—“If she be not one of the most artful amongst women, I will give up all knowledge of the female sex.”

Thus we bandied some time upon this vivacious young dowager; neither of us allowing—because neither was willing to believe—*himself* the object of her peculiar favor: but I fancy Evelyn was a little conscious of the weakness of his side of the argument.

The aggregate of the answer to the note with which we had been honored, was, that I was only slightly indisposed, and that Mr. Evelyn would attend her appointment.

Between five and six, therefore, he called upon her, and went with her to Mrs. Chilcot’s, where they continued till near ten, and, at parting, she proposed our going with her to church the next morning, if my indisposition would permit my being abroad.

I cannot say but that the frequency of these proposals was already extremely irksome to me, as it threatened an entire demolition of the plan upon which I had determined.

Mrs. Digby’s first motive was, doubtless, to introduce us, as we were perfect strangers in the place, to the Yarmouth gentry. Had she known my wish to have continued unnoticed, she would have abated of what I was so ungrateful as to term officiousness; and which, I thought, if encouraged, would probably increase till it was insupportable. This consideration, absolutely led me to form ideas of removing from Yarmouth; till the suggestion arose of Mrs. Digby’s having, in reality, a beginning partiality for my friend, which might, for aught I knew, terminate to their mutual interest. For as she has fortune enough for both, he has the judgement and discretion, in great abundance, for which she seems to have some occasion. I therefore determined upon treating her with continued civility, and likewise upon suppressing, a little, my sentiments upon the subject; for as Herbert has a pretty deal of delicacy, he might be hurt, should the matter turn out seriously, at the recollection of its ever having been made a topic of jesting. I, as I before said, have the reputation of being the lover; which opinion, probably, arises from the supposed similarity of circumstances; for people who carry their servants about with them, are sure to have their title; family; fortune, and even private character, laid open to every frivolous enquirer.

I have ordered Robert to attend particularly upon Mr. Evelyn, and, indeed, to consider himself as his servant, during our travels: and, this morning, as I was leaning out of a window over the entrance-door, I heard a postillion of Mrs. Digby’s asking him whether it was *his* master, meaning Mr. Evelyn, or Sir Charles Conway, that was to have his lady. To which Robert, without any hesitation, replied—“O Sir Charles to be sure! we stopped at her house as we came along; and it was then, Joseph says, all agreed upon.”

A couple of prating rascals! I could very freely have given them a hearty drubbing.

From the above considerations respecting my friend Herbert, I agreed to attend the lady to church on the Sunday morning; though had I then known so much as I now do, of the ideas which, even at that early period, were scattered about, I should, upon her account, for it is not of much consequence to me, have thought it right to have declined going. When we walked up the aisle, I saw, in their looks, the thoughts of the gentlemen and ladies whose seats we passed.—I saw they considered me as the husband elect of this gay widow.

Yesterday we heard from Joseph, who has, I believe, formed some attachment to one of her women, that Mrs. Digby was extremely indisposed. Upon this, common civility made it necessary for us to send an enquiry; the answer to which, confirmed the information; and this morning at breakfast, Herbert said he thought it would not be amiss were he *to call* and ask how she did. I was of his opinion, and he went when I sat down to write this letter; and now I every moment expect his return; therefore will not finish till I see him.

* * * * *

Mr. Evelyn is at home. When he went to Mrs. Digby's he met her physician just coming down stairs. Of him he made particular enquiry, and was told she was exceedingly ill, and that the disorder seemed to be upon her spirits. When he was coming away, her woman met him, and said, "Are you going, sir? My lady would, I think, be glad"—She stopped. Herbert stood still a few moments, expecting her reply; but she said no more; he therefore left my compliments with his own, and went to take a walk.

There was something very particular, Herbert observed, in the woman's manner when she spoke to him; *so* particular, that, added to the doctor's opinion, it awakened an idea of her understanding's being deranged. Poor woman! if that is the case, I do indeed pity her greatly.

Mr. Evelyn desires to be remembered to you in very cordial terms. He desires me to tell you that he is quite impatient to see you, as he was always very ambitious of being distinguished by your notice; but, as he has often told me, he used to think you considered him as too spiritless to merit your attention.

And now George farewell. You will believe that I shall continue in anxiety till I receive your next accounts.

CHARLES CONWAY.

LETTER, XXXVII.

MRS. DIGBY, TO COLONEL GREVILLE.

Tuesday morning, Yarmouth, March 24th.

I Am now performing the part of a sick woman; and I perform it to admiration. The fit came upon me on sunday evening; on monday, I grew worse, and now am extremely ill.

I think I am entering into the last act of the comedy, and have not one doubt but that the piece will close with a wedding;—with two, if you play your cards as well as I have done mine.

My Benson is a dexterous manager. I am more obliged to her than I intended to be; however I am pretty well assured of her fidelity, *because* I make it her *interest* to be faithful. I am not very fond of waiting-maid confidants; but in the present case a little *prudent* communication has been absolutely necessary. This Mrs. Useful has very ingeniously circulated the report of my being addressed by Sir Charles Conway. She hinted it round even before he arrived; so, upon his appearance, it was immediately and universally adopted.

The Mr. Evelyn whom you prepared me to expect, attends my gallant knight. The moment I saw him, I entered into his whole character. My plan was immediately formed and pursued; and it must be successful. Mr. Evelyn is the very thing I wished him to be. There is some merit in managing such a man as this. I have only one fear about him, which is—that he should have a desire to be *more* than my friend. Anglois—that his admiration of me—I *intend* he should *admire* me—should lead him into love before the grand affair be over. *Afterwards*, he must do as he pleases and take the consequence.

If Sir Charles sees his friend's partiality, nothing could induce him to commence rival. These your honorable gentlemen are moved by such fine wires, that the least touch stops their progress, and puts them into a contra direction; for which reason I mean to drop some hints to my clerical friend that my heart is enthralled by the invincible Conway; this will, for a time at least, put a stop to any sneaking kindness he may be beginning to entertain for me, and out of pure heroism, lead him to promote his companion's happier destiny. I am you see perfectly acquainted with the fine-spun delicacy of these sentimental moralizers.

But I intend to be a little deranged. A *very* little; just enough to countenance a few extravagant flights. Benson may hint to my physician that she is apprehensive my case is love: and as it would be hard of belief that such a blooming young relict could love in vain—and as I should not chuse to hazard such a derogating idea—she must fill the great vacancy under the doctor's great wig (in answer to the surprise which will naturally seize him upon the communication) with a suggestion of my extreme delicacy's being so averse to a second marriage, that she believes I had rather *die* than give the gentleman *the least reason to suppose I have the least affection for him*. This will take. The good man proud of the discovery *made by his Esculapian knowledge*, will whisper the secret about, and about, till it reaches the ears of our itinerants: or Benson may add that it would be charity to give the gentleman (who, in great confidence, she may tell the doctor, is Sir Charles

Conway) a hint of the matter, as he himself is dying for love of her lady.

As to the opinion of the public on all this—I value it not a rush: besides, the idea *my amiable delicacy's* being unable to endure a second attachment, will bring me off with the *very* prudent dames, and the gay ones will laugh at me for what they will call my double folly, while I, in triumph, shall look down upon the whole universe.

And now Colonel Archibald Greville, what think you of your cousin Arabella!—*Digby*, no longer. I shall soon order my women to have my linen marked with the letters A.C.

* * * * *

Since I wrote the above, my doctor has been here. He has already caught, from Benson, a hint of my *pitiable disease*, and I dare say will set about making *the wonderful discovery* when he comes for his next fee.

* * * * *

Fortune seems to assist my designs most marvellously.—Mr. Evelyn—poor Evelyn—called just now to enquire about my health. To my wishes, at the bottom of the stairs, he met the doctor, who, it seems, proportioned the length of his visage to the deplorableness of the case, and from him Mr. Evelyn took his answer. Benson, likewise, after running up to me with the intelligence (for he arrived while she was talking, upon the stairs, to the doctor) hastened down again to conduct him out, and spoke *a little darkly* about her lady's illness.

But I must, for a short time, lay aside my pen; having to arrange a few particulars with which you are not yet acquainted; and let me tell you that your ever knowing them depends upon my success.

Tuesday evening.

Having resumed my pen, I will likewise resume my subject; it being impossible for me to write upon any other.

In my letter of Friday last, I told you of our preceding evening's entertainment, and that I presaged it would be right to be very familiar with the parson, but a *little* reserved to my dear baronet. I do not exactly mean *reserved*, but a little shy—bashful—awkward—*conscious*. To look down; to try to blush, and rather to avoid him, than otherwise, whenever he approached me. You men are so dull in comprehending the nice *artlings* by which the wisest and gravest amongst you are entrapped, that I almost despair of making myself understood.

If a woman is completely skilled in the science of manoeuvring, all she does will pass for nature, when a truly honest girl—as she is called—especially if she has a good understanding, will be said to be artful and cunning. I speak to this point decisively, because it is so strongly exemplified in the character of Amelia Blandford, whose heart is as transparent as crystal, and whose natural philanthropy leads her to wish to oblige universally; yet because she is extremely happy in a vivacity of temper, and blest with distinguished quickness of intellect, is, by the surface-skimmers of her

acquaintance, termed an artful gypsy. I hate to see people's characters so mis-read. Let Miss Blandford have the *native* reputation she merits, but does not possess, and give me that, which I more glory in, of being *skilful*.

Under five and twenty, colonel, and yet—thanks to a dear monastic education—a perfect Urganda, in the mystery of fascination.

But what a wanderer this pen of mine is! Confined at home *by my increasing indisposition*, the time seems to hang heavy, or I believe I should not have written at this crisis. I now begin to be tired of my employ, therefore cannot tell you any thing more of the last three days, save that every thing has gone on exactly to my wishes. My next step shall be to find out when my doctor (from whose house Benson is this moment returned, having now, as she tells me, fully tutored him to my wishes) shall have conveyed his intelligence to Mr. Evelyn; for that is the hint she gave him to pursue; and then to send to the young Preacher with a request to see him for a few minutes. What I shall say to him, I cannot justly ascertain, but the purport of my conversation must be my *esteem*—my high regard—my *preference* of Sir Charles Conway over all the men I know, which will doubtless set some bounds to the too favorable sentiments I cannot but think likely to arise in the heart of this very agreeable man, from the friendly familiarity wherewith, to compass my point, I must necessarily treat him: Yet I am continually apprehensive lest Sir Charles' observation of any consequential predilection should cast an eternal blight on the growth of that affection which I hope soon to see springing up in his soul for your then happy kins-woman.

Mr. Evelyn once secured as an ally—as who can doubt but he will be by this method of procedure?—my way, my work, will be easy;—*so* easy, that I am half apprehensive I shall be almost inclined to flight the ready conquest. However, if circumstances make it necessary—if he is *not quite* so tame as I expect he will be—I then, to give it the finishing stroke, will, without more ado, write him a letter, fairly acknowledging my prepossession; confessing my late indisposition was entirely owing to the great struggle between delicacy; propriety, and an affection that had been long and deeply fixed;—fixed at a time when duty demanded its extirpation: then represent what a series of affliction it occasioned me;—how resolutely I suppressed its appearances in trying situations; and will gently intimate with what propriety I conducted myself under this unrevealed distress, which was greatly increased by occasional incidents, that I cannot then mention.

I shall probably add many little things which do not just now occur, and then finish the *rational* part of my letter with saying, that after this confession, made necessary by the insinuations which have, I am well informed, been conveyed to his ear—which, you will remember, I intend to be authorised to say before I write—I cannot think of seeing him again; therefore, if he has no very particular reason to lengthen the time of his stay in Yarmouth, I should consider it as the greatest obligation I could receive, if, under a pretence of sudden and pressing business, he would hasten the visit which he talked of making to Norwich and the more Northern part of the Eastern shore, before an endeavour to restore my health should make it necessary for me to go abroad. This I shall observe, may seem rather an extraordinary request; yet as not only my tranquility, but my reputation is concerned (as after the former apparent intimacy, our avoiding each other cannot but infuse ideas detrimental to my character) I have hope, *from the rectitude of his judgment*, my courage, in defence of the delicacy of my fame, now trusted solely to his discretion and honor, will, from such a mind as his, meet with not only excuse, but approbation.

I shall then intimate that it is not my *partial bias* in his favor which leads me, with this ingenuity, to be so perfectly unreserved to him in an affair of such importance, but *my opinion of him, as a man and a gentleman*, which convinces my judgment that it is the most proper method to pursue; as it will put a stop to every unfavourable conjecture and distressing embarrassment, without having recourse to falsehood; it ever being my opinion [prepare yourself, Archibald, for a little surprise at the assertion] that honesty of heart, take its good and bad consequences, is the wisest; best, and every way, most eligible companion we can carry through life: in other words—in the words of an old adage—that “Honesty is the best policy.”

What think you of this, my lad! Will not this method be a sure one to win the heart of such a man as Sir Charles Conway? It will: it must. There remains no doubt of it. He will rejoice at finding such a woman ready to accept—as he must think, notwithstanding my delicate pretensions of delicacy which my simple doctor is to whisper in his ear—to soothe—to console him for the “ungrateful Emma.”

After this my valiant cousin, my reported derangement will make a few absurd slights very natural; as it must be supposed such a recapitulation of affecting circumstances will disorder a mind so susceptible. I shall, therefore, a little inconsistently, request that I may once more see him before he leaves Yarmouth; and, perhaps, I may ask this with some degree of wildness; then desire him *not* to oblige me, as his presence must necessarily add to the difficulty of my task; because, as I shall delicately hint, such a visit, after the candid confession I have made, cannot but lead to a conjecture respecting the tendency of his sentiments, which will—which must—endanger a resolution that, for the honor of my sex I greatly wish to be enabled to adhere to; after which I shall express something like distraction at the idea of his going without taking leave of me, and then again revert to the conclusion I must inevitably form, upon seeing him at my rooms; adding that I shall with difficulty prevent myself from flying to receive with transport a man whose sentiments I shall then judge are congenial with my own.

All this, extravagant as it may seem, the nature of my illness (which, you see, it is requisite should be of this kind) will exonerate. I do not, you may believe, intend to be *so much out*, as to raise any apprehension of some future return of my malady; therefore shall only be sufficiently disturbed to evince the greatness of my delicacy and the truth of my affection; and to justify a few extraordinary, but necessary movements.

I believe I once before observed to you, that a man of Sir Charles Conway’s turn would be so far from thinking negligently of a woman for showing an affection for him, that without such a proof he would not, I am well convinced, marry the greatest princess in the universe. Remember—he is neither a fool nor a coxcomb. From which conviction arises my plan of besieging him with an avowal of regard; being assured it will prove my strongest battery.

And now to sum up—He cannot, with common humanity, after having read my letter, think of leaving Yarmouth without seeing me. Yet his coming *will be—must be—SHALL be*—a tacit confession, followed, I hope, by an *oracular* one—of his consonant regard for me. As such, I shall appear to receive it; and shall so conduct myself as will make it impossible for him to recede from my evident conception of his visit; even though, when he enters, his intention should be quite

diverse. In short—I shall not stumble at *any* measures to effect the purpose upon which I am so strongly resolved; which resolve, my motive justifies; being determined to make the kindest; tenderest, and the best wife breathing; to reward—to make him the happiest of mankind;—for can you—dare you—doubt, in that respect, my power?

If all this *should* fail—if there remains a possibility of a defeat—my dernier resort—yet I am unwilling to mention it; and still more unwilling to enter upon it. However, if all other means fail, it *shall be* practiced. But I will follow your example. You boast of a scheme in petto. So do I. You shall not know it till emergency calls for its execution. Suffice it, *that it will be infallible*; and that it can only be justified *by necessity*; for, Greville! I WILL BE LADY CONWAY.

How comes it about that to you—to a man-creature—I write with such total unreserve on an affair of such immense importance! I will tell you why. First, because you are so necessarily involved in the consequence of my success or defeat, that, for your own sake, you cannot betray me. Secondly, because I must write about it to some body, and know no woman, nor any other man, whom I dare trust with the particulars. Thirdly, because I have been so used to confide in you—we having, I believe, two roguish hearts, true cousins—in all my little manoeuvrings from infancy, that I have got *a habit*—I would not have you too proud of my confidence—of communication whenever I take up my pen to scribble to you. I am desirous to explain my motives for two reasons:—first, to confine, as I said, *your* vanity; and next, to prevent your thinking it the effect of *mine* that I write so minutely. Not that I deny being somewhat proud of my management; which, I hope you will gratify me by allowing is of superfine texture.

Could I despotically confine my sister from disclosing the important secret, I should have the greatest pleasure in the world in putting her upon the fidgets by a minute display of all my late manoeuvrings. Poor Matilda's "*rectitude and integrity*"—words upon which she is continually ringing dull changes—would be tortured beyond revival. Never were there two children of the same mother so totally different as she and I are, in every respect. She is all innate honor; and I—and am proud of it—all conscious roguery: such roguery as the dull souls who cannot aspire to it, pretend to censure and despise. Apropos. Do you know Mrs. Egerton, of Lanston, is dead? Matilda, with all her delicacy, will take the widower, depend upon it! just before the poor woman died [she was not ill above a week] she expressed a wish to see Miss Howard, but recollecting, it seems, that a compliance with her request, would, as she appeared convinced her death was at hand, draw her friend into an after-situation rather embarrassing, she contented herself with writing her a letter, in which she made it her earnest request that she would, *indeed*, be a mother to her children; and that, as soon as a due respect to *her own* character would permit. Thus, as the moralizing gentry will say, things seem to be in a train to give Matilda a reward for the exemplary conduct she has pursued throughout life. I received the account of Mrs. Egerton's death from aunt Montgomery; who has been to visit my sister at Harborough.

The old gentlewoman writes a long prosing letter upon the occasion, and says Miss Howard was very much afflicted at the intelligence.

Believe this who will. I know better things. *Affected* she might be; but her feeling affliction at such an event, under such circumstances, is beyond the reach of my credence.

Let me hear from you immediately. How undiligent men are when compared with women! Had I been in your situation, Emma Stanley should, ere now, have taken the name of Greville. Your last letter tells me you are all alive in hope, though she has given her negative. Hasten, hasten, I beseech you, the execution of your boasted plan. It will help to facilitate mine: for *that* reason, therefore, as well as for the affection of cousin-ship, I wish you speedy success.

ARABELLA DIGBY.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

VICISSITUDES
IN
GENTEEL LIFE.

VICISSITUDES

IN

GENTEEL LIFE

In FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

Bear with me now, I have a timid Mind: but if you will
encourage my first Shoots, my future Aim shall be to
give you Pleasure.

TUDOR.

STAFFORD:

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VICISSITUDES

IN

GENTEEL LIFE.

VOL. III.

LETTER, I.

LADY STANLEY, TO MISS STANLEY.

Alverston, March 24th.

YOUR letter, my dearest Emma, dated the twenty-second, I have now received, and the contents strengthen an apprehension which has, for some days past, greatly disturbed me. Your father is no less uneasy than I am; but I will lead you progressively to the cause of our disquiet.

It is unnecessary to descant upon the impetuosity of your brother's disposition. We all know it well; and I must needs say that, in so young a man, I have thought it no unfavourable prognostic: however, experience has taught me that it is to be deplored.

About eight days back, Mrs. Butler; Mrs. Willett; Mrs. Raymond, and Miss Parker, made me a morning-visit. George was present; and the conversation almost immediately turned upon the partiality with which he was honored by Lady Lucinda Harrington; whom, he says, he never saw but once; and that was at Huntingdon, three years back, when Sir Charles Conway and he were coming from Newmarket races. However, from her conduct at Mortimer Lodge, at Mrs. Manwaring's wedding, and from some other circumstances, which I have no spirits now to give minutely, it appeared no less true than strange, that he was distinguished by her favourable opinion.

After the ladies were gone, your brother was unusually silent, and seemed very thoughtful. I enquired the cause, when, with his natural candour, he informed me that he could not help being more impressed by what he termed the prating of the gossips who had just left us, than, perhaps, he ought to be; and then showed me a little vellum case which he found at the Lodge, and which, he was then assured, was dropped by the young lady of whom they had been talking. I must own I was exceedingly surprised when he opened, and drew from the recess, the most elegant performance I ever saw done in crayons. It was a portrait of himself; and so extremely like, that I gazed at it with increasing surprise. At the back of the picture were a few lines of poetry which demonstrated the equal excellency of the head and heart of the performer, who, beyond doubt, appeared to be Lady Lucinda Harrington; but the circumstances which gave the

confirmation are, as I said, too numerous and particular for my present relation. George immediately declared his resolution to follow her to Bristol. I opposed his sudden determination; yet when he asked for my reasons, I could not give any one he thought material; therefore told him I would lay the whole before his father; which I did; and though we both wished him to postpone the matter for a short time, we were at length prevailed upon by his importunity to consent to his going to Bristol, and thinking (as no objection could be offered to circumstances) that he would, upon seeing the lady, be able to judge how to proceed. Sir Edward empowered him to make generous proposals with respect to her fortune. This happened on the Tuesday, just after I had sent off to you my letter of that day, and I should immediately have written again, but your brother promised you should hear from him within two days.

The morning after he left Alverston, I went, as soon as breakfast was over, into my dressing-room, and requested my amiable companion, who encroached hourly upon my affection, to alter a cap I had just received from Derby, and finding, upon falling into chat, that she knew many young ladies of fashion about town, I asked if she had ever seen Lady Lucinda Harrington. Her affirmative produced other enquiries, to which her replies considerably perplexed me; as the substance of them, though delivered in rather softer language, was nearly equal to the opinion you gave, of the lady above-mentioned, in your letter dated Sunday.

I immediately told Sir Edward of what Maria, with much unwillingness, had informed me; he was concerned; but as we thought it would only be a simple disappointment to your brother, we did not disturb ourselves much about it; and, indeed, rather hoped it might be of some advantage to him, by giving a little check to his impetuous manner of proceeding. However, when his letter, dated Stratford, reached us, we were considerably uneasy, as he informed us of his having actually entered into engagements with Sir Philip Glynn, whom he accidentally met with at Coventry; and requested Sir Edward would write a letter to that gentleman, giving a formal ratification of the proposals. What now to do we knew not. It was possible George had intimated to Sir Philip that he would soon have a letter from his father; therefore hoping Maria (who it was not to be supposed was personally acquainted with Lady Lucinda) had imbibed her character from the representation of prejudice, he wrote to that gentleman as your brother desired, and told him he left every thing to be settled by the discretion of himself and his son; after which, we remained tolerably satisfied till the arrival of your letter this morning. I will not, my love, say how much we are distressed by your account, which so exactly tallies with that of Maria's. However, as nothing can be done, we have only to endeavour to wait, with patience, the issue of the event: for in the present situation of circumstances, it would be highly improper to interfere, as we know not how far the native impetuosity of your brother's temper, aided by the *extraordinary* ready concurrence of Sir Philip, may have carried matters. Before any caution could reach him, he may have so fettered himself as to make it unavailing; and if so, probably it would be productive of serious mischief. Besides, what caution can be necessary for a young man so capable of judging, as George is; whose eyes are perfectly open; he not being under that fascinating illusion of passion, miscalled affection, which often fatally blinds the understanding!

After much consultation, therefore, we concluded that if Lady Lucinda Harrington deserved the character which has been given of her, George would soon see she was not the woman to make him happy; if she did *not* deserve it—[you likewise had it from report] it would be cruel, as well as unjust, to insinuate a derogatory idea. Not, my Emma, as I before said, that either your father or myself approved your brother's hasty measures upon a matter so important. Yet, when he left Alverston, his plan did not seem *very* reprehensible, as he meant only to *see* a lady, of whom fame, in this part of the country, spoke approvingly; of whose favourable sentiments for himself he had received very strong presumptive proofs, and who, as to family and fortune, was surely unobjectionable.

Wishing, therefore, as we earnestly do, to see him married—we were willing to hope his pursuit (from which, indeed, it would have been hard to have diverted him, without being more peremptory than we think we ought to be with such children as ours) might produce, with happiness, that desired event: And had he not met with Sir Philip Glynn, the disappointment of finding the young lady other than he expected, would not have been of any consequence, or *if* of any, perhaps, as I observed, of a good one, in correcting his precipitance in future.

Just after your father had written to the baronet, an account was brought of poor Mr. Fowler's death, which made a letter to your brother immediately necessary. Sir Edward having, as you know, given to him the power of supplying the vacancy; and before he went from home, he informed us of his having promised the benefice to Mr. Evelyn, the gentleman who, I told you, accompanies Sir Charles Conway in his tour.

From the foregoing considerations, no subject was touched upon in this letter to George, except that which occasioned its being written; but he was desired to let us hear from him immediately. That we impatiently expect his reply I need not affirm.

And now, my love, for *another* subject of an unpleasing kind.—My amiable—my truly admirable, and really beloved Maria, has left Alverston! She went this morning; and I cannot express my concern at her absence. Your father feels it almost as much as I do; for he says she is one of the most interesting—one of the most bewitching characters he ever met with. She was, indeed, to us, almost as another daughter. I cannot express how she has stolen upon us since your departure. Her merits seemed to increase every hour.

One day last week Sir Edward said he would walk as far as the Lilly-copse; and it being exceedingly pleasant, I set out, about half an hour after he went, with an intent to meet him upon his return in the long meadow; but your father seeing old Walden as he passed the lodge, and hearing from him that the carpenters wanted him at the dairy-house, he crossed over to them, and after directing them how to proceed (finding himself a little tired) came straight home, with a design of asking me to take a ride with him in the chaise, and, it seems, entered the lesser hall just as I left the garden. When he opened the door of the saloon he heard the organ, and concluding I was playing upon it, hastened to the library, when thinking the music was unusually fine, he stopped a moment at the

door, being unwilling to interrupt me; and was more and more struck with the harmony of the sounds, which were, to use his own words, so wildly sweet, that he was convinced what he heard was a true voluntary. As this was the kind of music I, when young, most delighted in, your father fancied I was endeavouring to recover past ideas in the science; yet confessed, though he used to be partial to my finger, that he listened with surprise, as he never remembered to have heard me play so well before. After he had stood at the door a few minutes, the music ceased, and he was going into the room, but it immediately began again, and, at the same time, his ears were arrested by tones from a voice which seemed harmony itself. For a moment, he said, he fancied his Emma was returned; but recollecting the improbability of that, he stepped into the little study, and putting aside the curtain of the glass door which opens into the library, he thought he saw, in the person of Maria Birtles, an angel's form sitting before the organ. Never in his life, as he affirms, was he so stricken with amazement. Her attitude—her manner of playing, was beyond all description. He was rivetted to the spot; but she sat not long; for starting up suddenly, she hastened away, as if she apprehended somebody's over-hearing her; for which reason, as we afterwards conjectured, she played in the softest diapason stop. As you may suppose, this incident was more than once the subject of our conversation; which, as often as it occurred, was always concluded with a declaration from us both, that Maria Birtles, take her person and mind, stood in the foremost rank of British females: I have much more to say about her, but must defer it till I see you, and hasten to tell you of her leaving us. Yesterday morning Jonathan brought letters from Derby; amongst which, was one directed to Maria. I took it and carried it to her. She retired to read it, and did not return sooner than in a quarter of an hour. At length she came to me with tears starting from her eyes, and with the beautiful rose in her cheeks much heightened.

"My dear madam," said she, sighing very deeply, "I must leave you; at least, for a time. But how can I express my regret?"

I was as if thunder-struck. Indeed I was greatly affected; but I cannot enter upon the ensuing scene which insensibly grew to be exceedingly tender. The occasion of her going was to see her father, from whom she has been some time absent. What his determination would be, respecting her situation in future, she did not know. The letter which summoned her to London was written by a female friend of hers, whose name is Thompson. She shewed it to me. The anxiety of her father to see her was feelingly described; yet there were some expressions of resentment against him for his past unkindness to such a daughter—was the expression—as never man before was blest with. Mrs. Thompson then urged her hastening up, and consoled with her on the pain she would feel at leaving a family so congenial with herself; and, in a very obliging manner, mentioned every one of us with particularity. She then informed her of the almost sudden death of poor Mrs. Douglas, who, as you, probably, saw in the newspapers, had been to Weymouth, in hope of receiving benefit from the sea.

When I had finished reading the letter, I lamented, in very warm and sincere terms, the necessity there was for her leaving me, by which the dear amiable girl was so penetrated that she burst into tears, being unable, as she said, to express her sensations. She then spoke of you in the most grateful and affectionate terms. But as I cannot do

justice to her sentiments, and as the recapitulation of the scene really distresses me, I will postpone any farther account of it till I can give you a verbal one. Suffice it, that Sir Edward, as well as myself, sincerely regret Maria's departure from Alverston. She went about nine o'clock, leaving an earnest request that she might be remembered to you in the warmest expressions which gratitude and friendship—if she might be allowed the familiar term—could dictate; promising to write to me as soon as she reached London. At parting I pressed her to receive a small bank note, but she so earnestly entreated permission to decline the acceptance, that, struck with the dignity of her manner, I involuntarily withdrew my hand, and was near asking pardon, with a courtesy, for the tender.

What an extraordinary young creature this is! I think, my Emma, warmly as you admired her, you saw not half her merits; for they continually expanded till the last moment. I am impatient for her promised letter, that I may write a repetition of the pressing invitation I gave her to return to us *as a visitor*, as soon as her father would consent to spare her.

And now, my dear girl, will you forgive your mother for having a thought to interrupt your happy scenes at Woodstock? Indeed, my child, I wish for your return. I feel a vacancy for which I know not how to account. Sir Edward is rather unwell, and my poor Moore will probably soon quit this lower world.

If Mrs. Lawson and Mrs. Eleanor *could* spare my *two* girls—and if Mrs. Stanhope would trust the amiable Maria to my maternal care for a limited time—I think I should soon be better. But I will not enforce this request, lest the compliance should be destructive to some agreeable plan: only, my dear, come as soon as your leaving Woodstock can be made quite easy to your friends in that place, and to yourself; but I charge you not to hasten improperly. If you do, I shall, indeed, be displeased. You know me so well that I need not say any more upon this subject.

Your father sends his tenderest love to his girl; and his cordial respects to all her friends in Oxfordshire, to which she will unite and dispense those of her other ever affectionate parent,

HENRIETTA STANLEY.

LETTER, II.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Bristol, March 25th.

I Have this instant, my dear Conway, received a letter from my father on the subject of poor Fowler's death. He went off, at last, rather suddenly; if that can be said of a man who has been lingering several weeks.

Mr. Evelyn is now Rector of Alverston. Give my compliments to him, and request him to oblige me, by omitting the acknowledgments customary upon these occasions. In short—tell him I will not receive any letter from him upon the subject.

But can you spare him? Can you allow of his going, for a few days, immediately to Alverston? My father wishes to see him there. You know he is rather particular about these matters. It is his desire that Mr. Evelyn may be inducted, and every relative to the business settled, as soon as possible.

I forbear writing to him because I will not have his answer.

And now—Why do not I hear from you? Yet, upon consideration, I believe no letter of yours, sent since you knew my address, could have reached me. I forgot, when I wrote from Stratford, to ask you to direct to the Bristol post-office; but it might be thought you would have supposed that to have been sufficient.

Excuse me, Charles. I am confoundedly ill-humoured, and know not when I shall be any better.

Lady Lucinda has received a pressing request from a Mrs. Bellmin at Bath, that she would oblige Miss Horton, her niece, who is very much indisposed, with a visit. These ladies, I find, do not bear the brightest of characters, and Lady Glynn does not much wish my dulcinea to comply. But she claims Sir Philip's promise, given her two or three days back, that she shall now be permitted to see this friend, which, it seems, she has long desired, as she professes to be extremely fond of her. Another blessed proof of her wisdom and prudence! She goes, I fancy, this afternoon. I am, doubtless, to escort her; though I think I could welcome a broken limb for affording me an excuse for non-attendance.

Once more—A curse upon my stupid folly! And a curse, indeed, is likely to be its effect. O Charles! Charles! I envy you on the subject of your late distresses. You had the great consolation of not deserving what you endured. While I—

But adieu. I shall run distracted.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, III.

COLONEL GREVILLE, TO THE HONORABLE
MRS. DIGBY.

Pall-Mall, March 25th.

YOUR letter is before me. I have read every line with admiration, and feel myself a man of encreased consequence every time I reflect on the nearness of our relationship. But, Arabella, be piteous. Spare the divine his heart. By all accounts he is an honest fellow. Let the conquest of your baronet—which, I think, you cannot fail of compleating—entirely satisfy you; at least at *present*. When you are Lady Conway—no advance, by the bye, to the Honorable Mrs. Digby—I believe I shall be tempted to veil my remembrance of our consanguinity, and inlist myself in the number of your dying swains; and if you should find yourself inclined to be a little grateful—it will only, you know, be in a family way.

"Think of this, my sweet cuz. Think of this."

And now for myself—I have a very pretty plan just going to be brought into practice. When I last wrote, I had it in agitation, but since that time, I have considerably improved upon it; which improvement makes it necessary for me to go to Alverston immediately. But I know you have curiosity in no small degree; therefore, *in expectation of some future reward*, I will e'en indulge you, contrary to my intention, with a few hints of my design.

Lord Fitzmurray—that tool of intrigue—has, you know, a castle upon the borders of South Wales. To that my fair Emma is to be conveyed, without waiting for her consent, which I doubt it would be somewhat hard to obtain. I was to have assisted in person, though in masquerade, at the seizure of this capital prize; but Fitzmurray has undertaken the whole of that part of the business, and as he wishes to be somewhat more than an agent, Miss Lawson, for his amusement, is to accompany my charmer in her expedition. Previous to this, I go to Alverston; not *merely* to ingratiate myself with the old people—the young one, which gave birth to this point in my plan, Captain Jones (in a letter to Jack Brampton) says is at Bristol—but to evince *I could not have any hand in the rape*. As soon as the girls are taken, the Lawsons will, doubtless, dispatch messengers all over the kingdom; certainly one to Alverston: but not to trust entirely to their sending, I have given Lord Fitzmurray a letter, without a signature, to put into the post-office, upon his going off, (directed to George Stanley, Esq. *or in his absence to any other of the family*) to give the alarm. I, you will remember, am there at the time, and instantly, with my trusty valet, fly in search of the ravished fair ones; and, "*by the luckiest chance in the world*," discover the route they were carried; — pursue, find, and rescue them from the hands of the villains who had unlawfully seized them.

How I shall proceed, depends upon the grateful or *un*-grateful behaviour of my Venus. If she be softened to compliance, I will carry her back in safety: if not, she must take, and thank herself for, the ensuing consequence. *I will*, to pay myself for my trouble, prevent her ever being any other than Emma Stanley or Mrs. Greville, though I then abscond the kingdom.

A few particulars remain to be settled, which I doubt not of making easy, and *then*—for Alverston.

But I have quarrelled with, and dispatched, my girl of convenience. Polly Fenton—alias Matilda Barlowe—no longer belongs to me. She grew very expensive, and was unfaithful. In words of truth—her face was *amazingly* familiar to me: and she had so long obliged me, that to oblige longer, was not in her power. I, therefore, this morning sent her a gallant; then went and discovered them together; abused her, and packed her off; allowing her but three hours to collect and box up her trumpery.

Her rooms, furnished in style, are now tenantless, and will probably remain so till the remembrance of Emma Stanley (for she must, in the end, comply) shall be lost in Mrs. Greville.

There, cuz: there is multum in parvo for you, in return.

Fitzmurray gives me an account of the arrangements he has made towards perfecting our project, and bids me expect his being in town on Sunday; therefore, *to give proofs of my innocence*, I intend going to Alverston on Monday, as on Thursday or Friday, or Saturday—as opportunity serves—he will attempt the glorious seizure. If Miss Lawson, he says, be one of *his* beauties, she shall for life be mistress of the castle. But I doubt she would hold her sovereignty by a very frail tenure.

Suppose you give a hint to Sir Charles, through the medium of the parson, that I have made proposals to the Stanleys, *and have been accepted!* I shall gently intimate that, by means of your meeting at Yarmouth with the baronet, I shall probably have the honor of, very soon, ranking him amongst my kinsmen.

It is a lucky thought. Improve upon it to our mutual benefit.

As I go down into Derbyshire, I think I shall call upon Miss Howard, and *congratulate* her upon the death of *her dear friend* Mrs. Egerton.

And now sweet cuz! farewell.

With *profound respect*—
perfect admiration, &c. &c. &c.
yours,
ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, IV.

MAJOR CARRINGTON, TO MRS. LAWSON.

London, March 25th.

DEAR MADAM,

YOUR counsellor authorises me to tell you, that you are perfectly right in all you have asserted, and have offered such very fair proposals as cannot but be accepted if Hawkins retains his perfect understanding; and he doubts not but that he shall be able to conclude every thing to your satisfaction, before the end of next term.

I heartily congratulate you on this probability.

Your affair too with Lord Danvers may now be finally adjusted, and that personally, as his lordship means very soon to visit his cottage. Since my last letter to you on that subject, a great revolution has happened in the earl's family. Sir William Jennyns is out of town, therefore I have not heard minute particulars; but the substance is, that Lady Caroline Pemberton, and Mr. and Mrs. Maynard, are all returned to England; that through Mr. Maynard's interposition, the earl is reconciled to his next to divine daughter, and that he received her with transport, without one reproach. It is however whispered about, that she has dearly earned this affectionate treatment, by giving up her right in the jointured estate, and thereby rendering herself entirely penniless, except his lordship has gratitude sufficient to induce him to determine upon laying by a yearly sum for her future support. His engagement with Lord Crumpford is entirely broken, to the furious displeasure of that *ig*-nobleman, who talks of suing the earl for non-performance of articles. If this matter *should* be brought forward, I fancy the agreement will not redound much to the honor of either of the titled gentlemen: but Mr. Maynard's superiority of management will, most likely, put a stop to such kind of proceedings. That gentleman and his lady are, I believe, to accompany the earl and his daughter to the Woodstock cottage—as his lordship chuses to have it called.

You expressed yourself so well pleased with my former account of these personages, and seemed to take so much interest in the fate of Lady Caroline, that I imagined I could not more entertain you than by giving the above particulars.

I beg you will remember me with respect to Mrs. Eleanor and Miss Lawson. Miss Rachel I saw last week. I fancied she looked rather pale and thin. Perhaps the London air does not agree with her constitution. She said, however, she was as well as usual.

Miss Ellison lately requested me to convey (when I should write again) her compliments to all my cousins at Woodstock; with the execution of which commission I subscribe myself, my dear madam,

your obliged, and affectionate friend,
JOHN CARRINGTON.

LETTER, V.

MR. BROOMLEY, TO AUGUSTUS MAYNARD, ESQ.

March 25th, 1789.

SIR,

HAVING had the honor of being once or twice in your company in Edinburgh, and knowing still more of you from character, my judgment points you out as the person proper to be made acquainted with an affair of considerable consequence to the noble house from whence you sprang, and to which you are otherwise allied.

Without more preface, I will submit my story to your consideration.

I am the vicar of a little village called Kildwick, near Skipton in Yorkshire, where I have lived from my infancy. It would be vanity to suppose myself remembered by name; but when I mention the circumstance of Captain Hubbard's offending Mr. Macdonald at the last Edinburgh election, possibly you may recollect the person who took the liberty to give him a severe reprimand.

A few years back, a lady, apparently of middle age, came and hired a genteel house in my parish, bringing with her a boy about eight or ten years old. Her name, Pemberton; the youth was her son, and, as I soon found, the incontestible heir to the title and estate of Danvers. It has always been my wish to gain such information respecting any new comers into my parish, as would enable me to converse with them for both their profit and pleasure, where they were not incompatible with each other; as experience has taught me is too often the case.

Think not, sir, that I am boasting of conduct which is but a bare performance of duty. I only mean to elucidate a motive (which might else be termed curiosity) for enquiring into the characters and connexions of those who become my parishioners. A man, verging upon fourscore, can hardly fail of being too well convinced that all beneath the sky is vanity, to indulge any principle of it in himself.

Mrs. Pemberton (to which you cannot be a stranger) had formerly wanted either the benefit of good advice, or the resolution to follow it. By her retiring to this part of the country, I had hope that she sincerely wished to obliterate the remembrance of her former conduct, and I made it my endeavour to facilitate that design. Her *behaviour* was not reprehensible, though her conversation was, sometimes, rather more airy than became the character she seemed desirous to establish; for which reason I was rather cautious in permitting my darling grand-daughter Alethea (left to my care by an only and beloved son; her mother dying at her birth) to be often in her company, except when I was present; and I wished to have the boy, who was lively; promising, and might, I thought, after I had left the world, be of some consequence to the nation, as little with his mother

as he could be with propriety; for which reason, though I could not well afford it, I boarded him at my house upon low terms; telling her that his future probable situation required all possible care should be taken in his education, and that I wished her to send him to Edinburgh as soon as his age permitted. She listened pretty attentively to what I said, and always seemed desirous he should be well instructed; but from time to time requested his continuing with me till his age far exceeded that of the youths I wished (for the sake of accumulating some trifle for my girl) to have under my tuition. However, I last summer insisted upon his being removed, as I did not think myself capable of being of service to him any longer. She therefore carried him to Edinburgh, and placed him with Mr. Blythe, of whose abilities I had some knowledge.

About last Michaelmas she received a letter directed with speed, informing her that Master Pemberton had been thrown from a horse; that his skull was fractured, and his death apprehended. This intelligence almost distracted her; not, as I have often thought, from any great degree of affection for her child, but from apprehension of the abolition of her future prospects, of which she used to be continually talking, and seemed greatly to enjoy, in idea; not doubting but her son, when Earl of Danvers, would settle her in splendor; and indeed, from the youth's noble disposition, she formed but probable conclusions.

I am thus particular, sir, because I wish to give you an idea of the woman you are to manage.

Mrs. Pemberton immediately set off for Edinburgh. When arrived there, she found that her son was at the house of a cottager, in a small village about four miles from the city; he having met with the accident, in company with two other boys (who, as a reward, were allowed an evening's ride) near that place; and she was bid to prepare herself for his decease.

This was the substance of a letter which she wrote to me, in compliance with my request, as soon as she had seen the youth, for whom I had always a kind of pitying regard.

About a fortnight after this, I received a second letter from her, in which she excused herself for not having written again before that time, on account of an illness occasioned by her close attendance upon her son, who, however, she said, she was happy to tell me, had entirely recovered the accident, contrary to the predictions of three eminent surgeons. She then informed me that, by mere accident, she had met with a friend of her deceased husband's, who greatly interested himself in the child's welfare, and earnestly requested that she would send him to Eton, and that when she objected the narrowness of her finances, he offered to be at the additional expence, provided she would enter into a written engagement to use her influence with her son to repay him whenever he should inherit the Danvers estate. The gentleman's name, she said, was Ditton.

Notwithstanding all this appeared probable, there was an air of confusion which ran through the letter; and the style was strikingly different from the first; nevertheless, I passed it over without thinking much of it, till late circumstances brought it to my recollection.

Mrs. Pemberton returned, and appeared more gay than formerly. She often used to tell me of her having heard from her son at Eton, who sent his duty to me; but never, as before, showed me any of his letters, which rather surprised me; but I attributed it to the youth's not having really made any mention of me; which she was unwilling I should know.

About two months after her return she was visited by a gentleman who called himself Leigh. He staid with her two days, and when I looked in upon her one of the mornings, I found the table spread with writings, and she, upon seeing me, looked round her in evident confusion; but recovering herself, presented to me the Mr. Leigh, as her late husband's intimate friend. This gentleman, upon understanding Master Pemberton had been my pupil, told me he could give me pleasure, by informing me that the young rogue, as he termed him, was extremely improved in his person; but that in learning he made no great progress; and gave it for a reason that his old master had taught him more than his new one understood. I was sensible of, and displeased at the extravagance of the compliment, therefore made no reply, but asked if this was the gentleman who had taken Master Pemberton to Eton. Mrs. Pemberton blushed, and said no: that was a Mr. Ditton, but Mr. Leigh was his intimate friend, and joined with the other in a proper support for Thomas William—as she always would have him to be called. Conjectures, not very favorable to Mrs. Pemberton, spontaneously arose in my mind upon the seeming strangeness of the visit of this Mr. Leigh; though of a very different nature from the circumstances by which, as it now appears, it was occasioned. However I was so much displeased by it, that I requested my child not to be too hasty in again visiting Mrs. Pemberton.

About Christmas this Mr. Leigh again made his appearance, when a servant whom I had reared from infancy, and who had obtained leave from his master, who lives in York, to make me a visit, saw and knew him to be Lord Crumpford. This servant was just returned with his master from London; had often been at Lord Danvers' house, and had heard from the domestics of that nobleman a most despicable account of this feigned Mr. Leigh, and of the persecution which Lady Caroline Pemberton underwent from her father, on his account; for, it seems, the matter was grown very public, though the two lords aimed at all imaginable secrecy.

These suggestions filled my head with a set of incoherent ideas, which I could not reduce to order. Something, I seemed convinced, was wrong, but what, I could not guess with probability. Why Lord Crumpford, who wished to marry Lady Caroline Pemberton, should come twice into Yorkshire with a feigned name, on a visit to the mother of Lord Danvers' heir—was a mystery I could not fathom. My first reasonable alarm was for the youth's safety; on which account I was inclined to write to the master at Eton; but being minded to begin my enquiries at the school in Edinburgh, from whence he was said to be

taken, I staid till Lord Crumpford had left Kildwick, and then sent a letter to Mr. Blythe, desiring to know if he had heard from his young pupil, Thomas William Pemberton, since he left his school. The answer to this, you will easily believe, surprised me, when I tell you that it was a circumstantial account of HIS DEATH, with many expressions of wonder that I had not heard of it from Mrs. Pemberton.

To tell you all my sentiments—conjectures and conclusions—at this intelligence, would swell my letter to a volume. The result of my ponderings were—that I hastened back a particular enquiry of every minute circumstance attending his decease, with a request for a proper certificate of that event from the register of the parish where he was buried.

My letter was immediately answered: the particulars were given, but no certificate—the place of his interment being unknown to the lad's Edinburgh friends, Mrs. Pemberton having put into a hearse, which she followed in a coach, the coffin which contained the remains of her son; being desirous, as she said, to deposit him by the side of his father.

I was now somewhat puzzled to know how to proceed; but after examining very attentively the dictates of my mind, I determined to go to Mrs. Pemberton before she could have any information of the intelligence I had gained, and by an abrupt taxation to put her off her guard, and then, by confronting her with my evidence, endeavour to lead her to make a confession of the intended end of this dark business.

After some very hard conflicts, this method answered to my wishes: but for a considerable time she resolutely affirmed that her son had recovered; was still alive, and, at that period, at Eton: At length, upon my telling her that I knew her Mr. Leigh to be Lord Crumpford, and showing her the letters I had received from Edinburgh, she began to hesitate; thinking, without doubt, that it was probable her scheme would prove abortive. After much arguing, she intimated that as all her hopes of fortune must be entirely extinguished by the confession I pressed her to, she could not be worse off by keeping silent; hinting that her evidence would overturn any other. Finding, therefore, that nothing was to be done without, and being willing to prevent the probability of a public trial, by securing her before any measures were concerted between her and Lord Crumpford (who I then gathered by her confused intimations was deeply concerned in the affair) I rather too hastily, and perhaps reprehensibly, gave her my word that I would exert my utmost influence with every individual of the house of Danvers to procure her an annuity of fifty pounds during her life, if she would fully elucidate the business in question; and farther (for she would not even then comply) that I would not give up any papers which she should sign or put into my hands till I had gained security for this donation. She then (considering, I suppose, that Lord Crumpford would not have it in his power to perform the conditions, greatly in her favor, into which he had entered; and depending, it seems, upon the assurance I had given her) explicitly laid open the whole affair, and gave me his lordship's letters upon the subject.

The aggregate of the matter is, that Lord Crumpford, accompanied by his daughter, Miss Bomton, was at Edinburgh when Mrs. Pemberton lost her son, which she did in two days after she reached him, and that, hearing of the incident, he waited upon her, with much appearance of respect, to condole with her; being, as he said, a friend to all the family. After this, the treaty soon began, and was, I believe, soon finished. The corpse was carried several miles from Edinburgh, and, by the assistance of some hired creatures of Lord Crumpford's, buried in an unfrequented place; the youth's death was to be kept secret from all but those who, previously, had necessarily been made acquainted with it; and the story of his being gone to Eton propagated.

Lord Crumpford could not suppose this plot could long be kept concealed; but he doubtless expected to carry his point before it should become public; after which, it may be supposed from his character, he would have braved the opinion of the world.

Before Mrs. Pemberton would fall in with his measures, she insisted upon knowing the scheme he meant to pursue, upon which he pretended—for, beyond dispute, it *was* pretence—that he had long been passionately in love with Lady Caroline; that as he had already one child to provide for, and might have more, he could not afford to marry her with the small fortune to which, before the event in point, she was intitled; that now, he was determined to make himself happy with the finest young woman in existence, for which reason he did not wish it to be known that she was heiress to the Pemberton estate till after the marriage, as it might make his work difficult; that before the event should transpire, he was convinced Lord Danvers would readily comply with the proposals he should make, as he was his debtor for large sums of money; some of which Mrs. Pemberton believes were lost at gaming; that his taking the lady, as she herself must suppose, without a fortune of any consequence, would so gain upon such a disposition as hers, as to produce affection, and that, therefore, the plan in which he wished her to join, was not only innocent but laudable.

With these and such like plausible arguments, and with what, I doubt, prevailed still more, a promissory note of two thousand pounds to be paid on his marriage with Lady Caroline, (after which, poor Thomas William's death was to be announced as a recent event) did Lord Crumpford entice Mrs. Pemberton to come into his scheme, in which he would probably have succeeded had not Lady Caroline withheld her consent, and made her escape (for an escape I think it may justly be called) from the persecution she had, it seems, in part suffered. Of this, Lord Crumpford wrote Mrs. Pemberton a short account; telling her at the same time that, though this part of his plan might prove abortive, he had another which could not fail; therefore desired a continuance of secrecy. This was a letter of only a few lines, but he made her a promise of writing to her again as soon as his intention was digested; since which time she had not heard from him, therefore was in continual expectation of the promised information.

Having thus far succeeded, I immediately wrote down the particulars for her to sign, to which she, at first, objected, but upon my representing to her that I should not scruple to take my oath that I had heard from her what I had written, and that if she refused to assist in making the affair quite clear, she must expect obloquy instead of a

reward, she complied, on condition that I would promise to keep the matter as secret *as possible* in that part of the world. To this I readily assented, as though my hope of her thorough conviction of her errors was a little abated, I should be sorry to have her *hardened* in the practice of them; which might be the effect of public reproach. I therefore sent for my clerk and my grand-daughter, for Alethea is of sufficient age to be a witness, and my clerk Mrs. Pemberton was assured would not divulge any thing contrary to my commands, and she signed the paper in their presence; I likewise putting my name at the bottom.

After this I was minded to wait for Lord Crumpford's promised letter; therefore went to the man at whose house our letters are left, and desired him to let me know when any one came for Mrs. Pemberton before he sent it, as I wished to be with her when she received it. I was not under any apprehension that this man should wonder at my request; as on the present occasion I may allow myself the pleasure of saying, that all my parishioners have an implicit confidence in me, and never would think of my asking them to do any thing wrong. This man supposed the letter I was anxious about, was one from poor Thomas William. Without answering his surmise, I left him to continue in his mistake.

Once or twice I was disappointed by letters from other quarters, but yesterday, which was the third time of his sending to me, I went upon his message, and was sitting with her when a letter from Lord Crumpford was put into her hands.

Upon her reading it, a repetition of my question, as upon the two former occasions of—From the Viscount, Madam?—was answered with the deepest blush of confusion. I see I am right, I added: What plan is he now pursuing? For some moments she continued silent; then told me that she could not possibly show me the letter she had received, though she knew it would not be to any purpose to deny its being from his lordship.

It would be needless to repeat the ensuing altercation. After some time spent in conversation on the subject, I arose in displeasure; telling her that our treaty was at an end: that as she refused her assistance—the terms on which she had agreed to be benefited—I likewise refused to exert my influence in her favor; and would leave her to consider whether Lord Crumpford [she must remember the information of which I was in possession] could keep any promise which (as she intimated) he then, or before, had made her, on the successful issue of any plan he could form on this event.

"You have ruined my fortune Sir," said she—rising from her chair in a rage.—"No; he cannot proceed in his scheme. I am *convinced* he cannot. *It is impossible*;" she added, after a pause, "therefore remember *your* engagements; take the letter and make, with all my heart, your most of it."

I was strongly tempted to reject her offer, as what I had already obtained was sufficient to reinstate in their rights the injured party; but as I had given my promise that if *she would* assist to the utmost of her power, I would endeavour to procure the before-mentioned stipend, my refusing that assistance which she, however reluctantly, was at

last, inclined to render, would be such an evasive breach of engagement as I could not reconcile to rectitude, though I could not but think her entirely undeserving any consideration: I therefore took the letter, and, when I had read it, did not grudge its price. The substance of it is an account of his vile new plot, which is already in its progress.

Lord Crumpford, encouraged by the belief that the incident of little Pemberton's death has not yet transpired, is led on to hope it will subside as a trivial circumstance; which he says is not likely to undergo any investigation, as the Danvers family are prepossessed with a continual idea of his existence. He has, therefore, dressed; instructed, and put to Eton school, under the assumed name of Thomas William Pemberton, a lad about sixteen years old; who, he darkly intimates, is a natural son of his brother the late viscount, from whom, about two years back, he inherited the title and estate. But these expressions are so ambiguous, that this particular cannot be ascertained. The boy, he says, is sharp and promising; exceedingly pleased with his new situation, and elate with the prospect of his future dignity—for he was obliged to trust him with the outlines of the scheme, as it was necessary the masters and scholars should acknowledge and treat him as the undoubted heir of the Danvers Earldom. So far, he says, from running any hazard by this communication, it will bind the youth to keep the secret with the utmost caution; he having a pretty ripe understanding, though it has not been much cultivated; for which reason it was represented in the school that his education had been sadly neglected, through the straitness of his mother's fortune. He then says he is not incited to adopt this plan to revenge himself on Lady Caroline, though she has so ungratefully refused him, nor of resentment to Lord Danvers for his shameful breach of articles (whom he will effectually prevent from ever being benefited by the suing of any fine, as he has heard him project) but to save the title from extinction, and to benefit and aggrandize his own family, as he intends this boy should privately (as if without his knowledge) marry his daughter, ere much time elapses, and that the matter shall, in due time be made public. From this grand part of the plan I am willing to hope I was mistaken in an idea, raised by the cloudiness of the expressions when he first mentions him, of this youth's being more nearly related to him than a nephew. Yet what will such a dark spirit stick at! He may think incest a crime of but small magnitude; especially (he may advance in palliation) as the parties, if kept in ignorance of the consanguinity, may justly be termed innocent.

I hope I do not judge him too severely; though I must own my charity for his lordship burns very dimly.

Lord Crumpford's capital piece of art to seduce Mrs. Pemberton to connivance is yet to be told. After describing the effects of measures he endeavours to extenuate, he sums all up by urging her to allow him to hope she will agree to participate in the wealth and honors thus secured to his family, by accepting, some time hence, the title—the hand—and the heart, of the present head of the house of Crumpford. He then assures her that he would hasten down to solicit this favor directly, did he not think an immediate union between them might suggest inconvenient ideas; but tells her that as soon as his *son in law and daughter* are Earl and Countess of Danvers, (hinting in very odd language that the present possessor of the title seems drawing near his end—*being very infirm for his years*—) she may depend upon his honor; not only as a reward for her assistance, but

as an indulgence to himself. He says he shall consider the intermediate time as suspending his happiness, but consoles himself with a repetition of the probability *that the lease of Lord Danvers will soon be expired.*

This, sir, is the sum of the intelligence of which I am possessed.

I will not add unnecessarily to the length of this epistle by useless comment, as every particular will speak for itself; but, depending upon hearing from you immediately, subscribe myself

your respectful
and obedient servant,
ANTHONY BROOMLEY.

LETTER, VI.

LADY CAROLINE PEMBERTON,
(In the Character of Maria Birtles)
TO LADY STANLEY.

London, March 26th.

Ever dear and truly honored Madam,
IN obedience to your very kind injunction, I write as soon after my journey as fatigue allows me to use my pen. I know not why I was so extremely tired with travelling so small a number of miles, except from the great reluctance I found to proceed in a road that carried me from a house in which I could dwell with pleasure during the remaining period of my existence.

Shall I endeavour to paint the happiness, so congenial with the inmost feeling of my heart, which I, for many weeks, experienced within the pale of Alverston Park? I will not. I cannot. Shall I give a description of the regret which filled my soul at quitting, perhaps for ever, the inhabitants of its beloved inclosures? Equally impossible.

For ever—did I say? I did. Ah madam! there is the sting! This was more than, when I saw you, I dare trust myself to say. My grief at raising the probable conjecture, would have been too extreme for observation: and till within a few days of my leaving you I had hoped—what did I *not* hope. But my hope is destroyed; and its destruction was the cause of my being obliged to fly, with such velocity, to London.

Yet to what purpose thus wanders my pen in delineating the shades of past felicity and its contrary!

Revered Lady Stanley! How shall I express my thanks for the kind—the affectionate, the *parental* treatment I received from you and the *equally* revered Sir

Edward, during my residence at Alverston Park! I feel the poverty of my language when I attempt to speak my gratitude, in this my farewell letter.

Pardon the presumptuous hope which led me to look forward to the time of my being distinguished as Miss Stanley's friend—of its being no more remembered that I ever entered your family in any other capacity.

Pardon, my dear madam—pardon and pity all the deficiencies of your too much obliged,

ever grateful,

and respectful humble servant,

MARIA BIRTLES.

LETTER, VII.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Bristol, Thursday night, March 26th.

I Wrote to you, Charles, yesterday morning. I was then a miserable dog; but am now one of the happiest fellows existing.

The dear—the lovely—the charming Lucinda—Harrington no longer—has compleatly blest me. I now think of her with transport and extacies. Her beauty shall be the subject of my contemplation; and the fiery squint of her eyes—lately thought almost disgusting—now be allowed to kindle the most grateful raptures. But let me lead in order to this surprising revolution—to the subject of my almost unbounded felicity.

In my last I told you that my charmer—not then distinguished by that appellation—was going to Bath to see Miss Horton whose aunt, Mrs. Bellmin, had sent a pressing request that Lady Lucinda would favor her niece with a visit, as she was very much indisposed and greatly desired her dear friend's company for a few hours. Lady Glynn, as I said, objected to this request, but was over-ruled, and it was agreed that Lady Lucinda should go in the afternoon. I, as a matter of course, offered to attend her, but the sweet creature, in the most obliging manner and with an enchanting smile, said her dear Belinda would some-time hence, think herself greatly distinguished by a visit from a man, to whom—with a down-cast eye she said it—she was so soon to vow duty: but that, at present, it would, she doubted, greatly disorder her; as her nerves, *poor dear!* were extremely weak.

I submitted; and it was agreed the young lady should go in Sir Philip's chariot and four; her maid with her; and to be attended by Sir Philip's gentleman and another servant on horse-back; and that she was to be at home *in good time* in the evening.

Soon after one o'clock—so desirous was she of spending a long afternoon with "*her dear friend*"—she was ready to step into the chariot, having eat a piece of cold chicken and a slice of ham, as she had not patience to wait till dinner was ready, though Lady Glynn had purposely ordered it to be early. Delivered from what I was then so insensible as to think a miserable clogg—I spent the rest of the day pleasantly enough in walking round a considerable part of the town. In the evening, about half after eight, Sir Philip called at my rooms and showed me a letter which he had just received from his niece: the purport of it was—that Miss Horton was so extremely ill she found it impossible to leave her that evening; that she should detain the chariot, but would send home the horses, which she requested might return for her the next day as soon as dinner was ended; and that she should keep Chapone to attend her orders, lest any other message should be necessary, as her friend, who was at times, delirious, seemed to be quite in a frenzy whenever she offered to leave her.

Sir Philip was, I found, a little angry at the young lady's taking the liberty of staying from home all night, without his leave; from which, and from some other past incidents I found they had thought it necessary to keep her under pretty close confinement.

About three o'clock this afternoon the servants were again sent with the horses to Bath, to conduct Lady Lucinda to Bristol. At the entrance of the town they were met by Mrs. Sally—her ladyship's waiting-maid—who told them that Miss Horton still continued extremely ill, and that they must go to the inn and wait there till she saw them again. She then gave them a crown, which she said her lady had ordered them for liquor.

The command to spend the money they did not hesitate to obey, therefore went to the inn as desired; called for a bowl of punch, and waited quietly till near six o'clock, when recollecting their master's injunctions to be home early, one of the men went to the door, and there saw, talking to the coachman of the London diligence, Mrs. Sally, who, as soon as she saw the servant, took from her bosom a letter, telling him in the greatest seeming hurry and confusion, that Miss Horton was drawing very near her end, and that he must make all possible haste home with the chariot and all the horses, as it was impossible for Lady Lucinda to leave her friend; and giving him the letter, desired him to deliver it to his master the moment he should reach home. The man hesitated, and was going to speak, but she stopped him with—"Ask no questions. Do as you are ordered, and away."—At which instant she hastened from him, and turned into the next street. About nine o'clock the chariot was driven into Sir Philip's yard, at which time, according to an extorted promise to attend at supper, I was sitting in conversation with him and his lady, who, upon hearing the rattling of the carriage, immediately exclaimed, with evident pleasure, "The dear child is now come."—and rose to go to meet her; but before she could reach the door, a servant entered and laid upon a table that stood between Sir Philip and me, a letter directed, as I instantly saw, TO SIR PHILIP AND LADY GLYNN BARONIGHT—Sir Philip stared with astonishment, and the lady was seemingly struck mute; for she likewise (following the servant) saw the singular direction. The baronet at length recollected himself; took up the letter and perused (as I afterwards knew, for he read it first to himself) the following lines, written in a legible school-boy hand.

Wednesday forenoon.

Hornered Sir and Lady,

Before this can have reached your hands Lady Lucinda and myself will neerly have reeched Cretny Green and be marred in the holly bands of matrimoney. You will be pleased to consider that it never will be to no purpose to go after us, as we shall have near forty hours the start, as this letter is not to be given to you till nine at clock of Thursday night and we left Brister at one at clock to day, and though I am a servant and no scollar it is my intention not to disgrace my lady's choice, so shall go with her to France to learn French and to go to school for other things to be as far as I am able a gentleman, therefore I hope for this good design you will be so good now that things cannot be helped as to let us have some money for you knows sir as I am now yours and her ladyship's relation and

cannot help it it will be better than my staying in England till I know how to behave myself. I write this at home before we set out while her dear ladyship is dressing herself that we may not have nothing to do when we arrives at Bath but to whip forward all three in a post chaise and four, for Miss Horton is to go with us in our tower as my dear lady and I you must know sir and madam has kept company for all the time since she came home from France, and we have been a long time been trying how to manage all these matters. Mrs. Bellmin is to go to London and Sally is gone too as soon as she have given Nicholas this letter that you may not do nothing to punish neither of them, and Nicholas is not to ask Sally no questions about where I am for if he do Sally is not to give no answer. My lady send her duty to you and her ladyship and I remain sir yours and her ladyship's dutiful servant to command and by this time kinsman

GEORGE CHAPONE.

Now, Charles, for the pencil of Hogarth, or the pen of his congenial genius—Fielding—to give you an exact picture—mind and body—of our trio, upon the publication of the contents of this letter. But previous to our being made acquainted with the catastrophe, the baronet was no sooner sensible of the *sum total*, than his eyes were perfectly glazed—he foamed at the mouth—threw his fine queue-wig into the farthest corner of the room, and rising in a rage, uttered a string of tremendous oaths, without connexion; without meaning; and then—“She is *gone*. She is *off*. That rogue—that cursed rogue Chapone has carried her away. *I tell you they are gone to Gretna Green, and are by this time married.*”

Down, at the conclusion of this speech, dropped poor Lady Glynn—Sir Philip stamping and storming about the room. I rang the bell; ordered assistance, and desired her ladyship might be carried into her own chamber, and then sent for medical advice. To describe the scene which ensued between the baronet and me, is absolutely beyond my power. However, as soon as I could, I persuaded him to listen to reason, and convinced him of the impropriety (as all pursuit must be in vain) of making more bustle about the affair than could be helped; and advised him to mention it as a matter for which he was extremely sorry; but that as Lady Lucinda Harrington had acted so indiscreetly, she must take the consequence. I likewise represented the propriety of complying, after some little time, with the request for money; as I thought the plan of going to France ought, after such an event, to be encouraged.

To all this Sir Philip listened in sullen silence, but at length confessed I was right; said he would endeavour to act according to my advice, and would write in the style I recommended to Mr. Barnard.

He then sent down for the servants who had been at Bath, and examined them, when they informed him of the particulars, respecting their dismissal by Sally, which I just now gave you. After this, I motioned to take my leave, but he requested me to see Lady Glynn before I went, and to endeavour to *mollify* her a little. Upon my consenting to stay, Sir Philip sent, not wishing, as it seemed, to see her alone, to request her ladyship's company in the drawing-room. In about a quarter of an hour she appeared; her face covered with tears. The baronet gave me a push on the side to begin my *mollifications*,

and I, after a previous attempt to soothe her, repeated the same arguments I had advanced to Sir Philip, and, after a much longer time, with the same success.

Their seeing me (whom they must suppose to be greatly interested) so calm upon the occasion, was a considerable relief to them; as they were, I believe, ashamed of the treatment I had received from their relation.

Before I finished my visit, the matter was talked over with some degree of temper; though their grief was truly poignant.

And so, Charles, the lady has now got her own George. For this George—George Chapone, or (as I have been informed he was always called till Sir Philip chose to Frenchify him) GEORGE CAPON is THE George. This was the occasion—But thus elate, I cannot sit to reconcile particulars. Look into my first account of this business, and you will find the whole elucidated. All my young madam's conduct is, from this clew explainable. Her fainting at Mortimer Lodge, and the airs she there assumed—her request that Chapone might convey her home — In short, the entire farce, the occasion of which was so misconstrued by a parcel of conjecturing gossips, is laid open to view. And most bravely did I swallow the deluding dose, which was so nicely made palatable by that confounded misleading portrait. And now the wonder returns. Who the plague could—But I will not, at this time bewilder my imagination. Present matters of fact shall occupy my ideas. The termination of this event delights me. I seem so easy—so happy—so like a new creature in a new world, that I cannot express my sensations. Lately so heavy—so fettered—so oppressed! now all air; all freedom; all spirit. My ideas seem at liberty to range round the universe: but, Charles—chide not: frown not; for they rest, and will rest, with MARIA BIRTLES; and in the morning, as soon as it be light, not intending to go to bed, will I fly upon the wings of the most ardent affection, *to that only charmer of my heart*. This is all I mean to say at present upon this subject.

After I left Sir Philip's, which I did about eleven o'clock, I went to Lady Bingham's card-rout, (having previously received an invitation) where were all the people whom I know in Bristol; and to the principal amongst them, I imparted, in confidence, *the events of the day*, that when they were made public, it might not be supposed to have been any concern of mine; for fortunately Lady Glynn, from what motive I know not, had particularly desired *the intended union* might be kept as secret as possible, till we came slap-dash upon them—was her ladyship's expression—with a wedding. To this all parties—I in particular—readily assented; and I was looked upon as an acquaintance of Sir Philip's; though, I believe, not without some *surmises* respecting his ward. To obviate this entirely, I ought to stay a few days longer in Bristol, instead of disappearing just at this crisis; but, Charles, I must—I will go to Alverston: and that directly. My call at Lady Bingham's, where I staid till after one and where I was in *random spirits*, was calculated to quiet any apprehensions that my pride might otherwise have been under; therefore as soon as I have finished this, and a short note to Emma, I shall call up Jerry and prepare for Alverston, being determined to reach it, if no unforeseen accident intervenes, to-morrow evening.

Jones will take care to transmit to the Park whatever letters may arrive for me after my departure. Yours of the twenty-fourth, I received just before I went to Sir Philip's. Its contents are singular. To some of them I shall reply in my journey; as I must unavoidably, though unwillingly, make some few stops upon the road. When I first perused your letter, your sentiments of Lady Lucinda, though so sparingly expressed, and though only demonstrative of what I was before well convinced of, vexed my very soul. But I am now happily delivered from the effects of my own folly; for folly in a superlative degree I must ever acknowledge it to have been; and hope to profit from the remembrance.

With respect to Mrs. Digby—I know her better than you do. But more of that another time. Only depend upon this—It is *you* she is aiming to entrap; and she has such a boundless confidence in her powers of fascination, as to allow herself to believe no man, upon whom she looks with favor, can elude her enchantments.

So much for Mrs. Digby.

Charles, farewell. Send me soon your congratulations.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, VIII.

SIR C. CONWAY, TO GEORGE STANLEY, ESQ.

Yarmouth, Friday evening, March 27th.

JUST after I had sent off my last letter to you, I received three of yours; one dated Saturday, and the two others, Sunday morning and night. From the last of these I saw, with inexpressible concern, the disappointment (though you were unwilling to enlarge upon it) you had met with in the course of the day. On the Wednesday and Thursday I received two more, and was still more distressed; yet so critical was your situation, I resolved not to write till something was finally determined. However my resolution gave way, and I was just sitting down, with my pen in my hand, to ask you if my sending for you by an express, as if on business of the greatest consequence, as surely this may be called, would not necessarily procrastinate the matter till some effectual relief might arise, when yours, respecting poor Mr. Fowler's death, was brought up to me. I cannot, Stanley, speak my anxiety. Rouse yourself to action; exert your resolution to get out of this miserable dilemma. But what do I urge! You who are so intimate with the circumstances must best know what *can* be—what *ought* to be done. Only remember this—every atom of power that I possess is accompanied—is exceeded—by my will to free you from future wretchedness.

And now, on this subject, no more.

Notwithstanding your prohibition, Mr. Evelyn was urgent to write to you, but knowing the true nobleness of your mind, I requested an answer to your letter might devolve upon me. He, with some unwillingness, acquiesced, and I ought to make, in his

name, the most lively acknowledgments of one of the most grateful hearts in the universe. But your own is calculated to supply, on this head, all I omit to express. Mr. Evelyn sets out within half an hour for Alverston.

Mrs. Digby plagues me heartily. But I will spare you a recital of my disquietudes, at this juncture. You have borne with me long and often, and have now torments of your own sufficient.

Write every hour till your fate is decided.

Ever and faithfully yours,

CHARLES CONWAY.

LETTER, IX.

MISS STANLEY, TO LADY STANLEY.

Woodstock, March 27th.

YOUR letter, my ever dearest madam, of Tuesday's date, reached me but a few hours back. I ought to have received it yesterday, and I much wish I had; as I then should have set off this morning for Alverston; whereas, except I make Sunday one of my travelling days, I must now defer my journey till Monday.

Mrs. Lawson and Mrs. Eleanor are kind beyond expression: they not only give my Charlotte most willing leave to accompany me, but to stay in Derbyshire as long as she pleases.

We this morning breakfasted at Mrs. Stanhope's, where I received your letter; all of which (except the most material parts about my brother, and to which I will not even attempt a reply) I read to the happy circle. I dare not tell you their sentiments upon it, lest you suspect your girl of having lately learned to flatter.

Mrs. Stanhope has, for some days past, been rather indisposed; for which reason Miss Lewis cannot be persuaded to leave her, though her good aunt warmly presses her accompanying Charlotte and me to Alverston; she, however, promises, if nothing preventing occurs, to go a few weeks before Charlotte leaves it, that they may together return to Woodstock.

Mrs. Lawson had yesterday a letter from Major Carrington, about some of her law-business. In it he tells her that Lord Danvers, now reconciled to his lovely daughter, intends very soon to visit his Woodstock cottage; and that Lady Caroline and, he believes, Mr. and Mrs. Maynard, are to accompany him. I will not express a wish to see this celebrated of our sex, lest it implies a regret to leave Woodstock, when, upon my word, it is with unaffected pleasure that I think of setting out on Monday morning,

because I hope thereby to convey some satisfaction to my dearest mother. We are to go in Mrs. Lawson's carriage to Coventry, where, on Monday evening, that we may pursue and finish our journey next day, we hope to be met by your order.

But, my dear madam, I cannot tell you my concern at knowing Maria Birtles has left Alverston. Often have I, with pleasure, contemplated the idea of her being at my return (for I would have insisted upon her compliance) raised from a situation to which she is greatly superior, and placed in the light of one of my favored friends, whose company I consider as an obligation.

Nothing can console me for her absence but the hope of soon hearing from her, that I may prevail upon her to return quickly into Derbyshire. Your account of her was very interesting to our party. They all say they long to see the admirable girl.

Mrs. Lawson had the other day a letter from Miss Rachel. She professes a hearty contempt for Lady Blurton and *the Honorable Miss Barbara Tupps*, but is so bewitched by London and its gaieties, that rather than leave it, she will endure their company. Upon my word she does, in some parts of her letters, make them appear extremely ridiculous; and that, as she says, by merely relating their actions.

I mean to write half a dozen lines to my brother, to inform him of my leaving Woodstock; but shall avoid touching upon *any other* subject.

Yesterday I had a letter from Mrs. Pritchard, which gave me a very pleasing account of Lady Davison's health. She thinks herself so much mended from her residence at Runcan, that she means to continue there some time longer.

It is with difficulty that I forbear to mention my brother's affairs, but as I hope so soon to see you, I will, till I have that pleasure, suppress my inclination, and conclude with the kindest compliments of all around me; with expressing my hope that my father's indisposition (as you mentioned its being but slight) is already removed, and with subscribing myself

yours, my dear madam,

with affectionate duty,

EMMA STANLEY.

LETTER, X.

MR. MAYNARD, TO THE REVEREND ANTHONY
BROOMLEY.

St. James's Square, March 27th, 1789.

THE inclosed note, reverend and worthy sir, will be your security for the annuity you promised to procure for the widow of my late cousin Pemberton.

The astonishment with which I read your letter is beyond expressing; and I cannot forbear to say that the character of the writer, so visible in every line of it, made no small part of my surprise. Let not this, my dear sir, be construed flattery. I have too warm a wish to stand well in your opinion to dare to offer you such an incense: but you must prepare yourself to expect the most fervent expressions of applause and veneration, and must permit your consciousness to do me the justice of crediting my sincerity.

Take no thought for Miss Broomley's future provision. That is no more an object of your concern. One of the loveliest and best young women in England—Lady Caroline Pemberton—courts her acceptance of her future friendship; and Lady Caroline stops not at words where deeds are requisite.

I write, my good sir, as you will observe, in the most concise manner possible, because I hope very soon to have the happiness of making my acknowledgments, and of consulting you, respecting my procedures, in person.

It is a great pleasure to me that I can claim the honor of perfectly remembering you. I have more than once retrospected your conduct at the Edinburgh election; which is all I will venture to say on that subject.

Your letter, ever since its arrival, has constantly employed me. But for the business it has occasioned here, I should, immediately upon the receipt of it, have set out for your village. On Monday morning, however, I hope to begin my journey; and as I shall not think of sleeping much on the road, I expect to be with you on Tuesday evening.

Will you believe and excuse me, if I say that I seem as if I was going to see an old friend? Your letter has made me so familiar with you, that I cannot help thinking I have known you from my infancy. Mrs. Maynard commands me to convey her *duty* to you; it is her own expression—and her love to Miss Broomley, whom she hopes very soon to have the pleasure of seeing: but Lady Caroline's gratitude and sentiments of affection for you and your Alethea, sets expression at defiance. Yet I am persuaded that the chief satisfaction which my amiable cousin reaps from this event, arises from tenderness to her father. As for his lordship—he is not yet, for some prudent considerations, acquainted with this change in his circumstances. When I see you, I am convinced I shall lay open to you all particulars; being, dear and worthy sir,

your obliged, grateful,
and respectful humble servant,
AUGUSTUS MAYNARD.

LETTER, XI.

MR. MAYNARD, TO SIR WILLIAM JENYNS.

St. James's Square, March 27th.

THE enclosed letter, my dear Sir William, from the reverend Mr. Broomley, which I send express, will speak for itself. Doubtless your surprise at its contents will be equal to that which seized me upon perusal. Mrs. Maynard was almost beside herself with joy. Lady Caroline was the calmest of the three; yet truly happy and truly grateful did she seem on account of a father whom she so devoutly loves. I am convinced the pleasure she received at this sudden turn of events, arose chiefly from considerations respecting him; for to own the truth to you, Sir William, I doubt the heart of our lovely girl is not quite undisturbed. But of this not now. I have a plan arising, which I hope will produce some relief to her disquietude.

I must request your coming to town immediately. Lord Danvers, yesterday, confessed the whole of his situation. It was—and he thinks still is—a deplorable one. Lady Caroline was necessarily made acquainted with it, upon which she so peremptorily insisted upon being allowed to part with her jewels, that there was no resisting her. Their value was to be given in to-morrow by Heathcote. This circumstance very fortunately retarded the signing of the deeds already engrossed; for now will I take advantage of his lordship's ignorance of this turn of his fortune, to secure my beloved cousin a handsome future provision: in doing which, I am certain of your approbation, but I want your assistance likewise, as I do not intend to carry on this piece of *kind* deceit, even to himself, one moment longer than is necessary, but as soon as Caroline be secure, ask his pardon and unfold the whole: for which reason I request your presence; it being impossible to conclude in what manner he will receive the explanation. However as he is a man of sense, and, I think, keenly alive to the wretched effects of his unhappy propensity to gaming, I have hope his conscience will involuntarily justify me; as he cannot impute to me any regard to self-interest. If it happens otherwise, I shall be quite insensible to his anger, because, knowing him so well as I do, I shall be self-satisfied: for were I to be accessory in throwing the whole power over his estate into his hands, without any provision for his daughter, I should think myself criminal.

Lady Caroline knows not the measure I am pursuing. I have requested her to be silent respecting this event for a day or two, to which she very reluctantly consented. But I told her I must be complied with, if she wished her father's future happiness.

My design is this—The signing of the deeds respecting the Derbyshire estate, was, as I have said, retarded on account of the insufficiency of the sum arising from its valuation; for which reason my cousin insisted upon disposing of her diamonds; but even their produce, great as it must be, would have left a deficiency; so greatly beyond conjecture has this unthinking man involved himself. I will therefore offer to his lordship to raise a sum sufficient to set him entirely at liberty, if he will execute a deed which shall

secure to his daughter all the estate round the Priory (which is, I think, a good five thousand a year, and which he had no power to mortgage) if ever he becomes heir to the estates in general: but this only if he dies without a son; for in that case the deed shall be void, upon payment of twenty thousand pounds to Lady Caroline.

With this I think my uncle will immediately fall in; but I cannot say that I am quite indifferent to the disapprobation which may possibly succeed; and to own the truth, I feel myself rather awkward in my pursuit of a measure so *indirect*. Yet what *can* I do! Put it into the power of one of the most indiscreet men upon earth not only to bring, a second time, to the brink of ruin, one of the most deserving young women existing, but again to involve *himself* in destruction? Forbid it prudence! Forbid it rectitude! I am determined—and will not permit a false delicacy to destroy the future welfare of my family.

Suppose I were to neglect the present opportunity, and afterwards the earl should repeat his folly, and madly throw from himself and his daughter the means of happiness now once more offered to his acceptance—how should I be blamed and condemned by every individual who would know I had had the power to stop the *might-be-apprehended* devastation!—though perhaps (if by the intended management all things go smoothly on) the same beings will favor me with their censure. And *let* them censure me. The opinion of such people must always be despised, because none but the weak-minded ever judge by events. The *motive*, when it can be made to appear, is the criterion of human actions; and the *only* one to which either the Wise or the Good will attend; and by that for justification I abide. However, I earnestly request your presence; not *alone* because I shall be happy to have the sanction of your approbation, but as you have more influence with this uncle of mine than any other man breathing.

I am, my dear sir,
your affectionate,
and obedient servant,
AUGUSTUS MAYNARD.

LETTER, XII.

SIR WILLIAM JENYNS, TO AUGUSTUS
MAYNARD, ESQ.

Enfield, March 27th, 1789.

DEAR SIR,
I Return you Mr. Broomley's very extraordinary letter, without comments; for my sentiments upon its contents would exceed the limits of four pages.

Were I able to move, I would be with you by the time you receive this, but the gout has seized both my knees and one ankle: consequently, I write in bed.

Go on and prosper, my dear friend, in your well-concerted scheme, which I would not, on any account, have you relinquish.

Show this scribble, which I write with extreme difficulty, to Lord Danvers, that he may see, from under my hand, my high approbation of your plan, which is truly consonant with all your generous and spirited exertions, shown on divers occasions, to promote the honor and happiness of his family. Tell him I wish to revive in his memory the transaction of the summer in the year eighty five; and then assure him and Lady Caroline that I most cordially congratulate them upon this great event.

With my compliments to Mrs. Maynard, whose happiness on this occasion I can easily conceive,

I am, dear sir,

yours affectionately,

WILLIAM JENYNS.

I will thank you to let me soon hear from you again, and if you will inform Major Carrington I greatly wish him to come to Enfield.

LETTER, XIII.

MR. MAYNARD, TO SIR WILLIAM JENYNS.

March 28th, 1789.

I May now, my dear sir, defy the verdict of even the cunningly-wise ones who judge by events, as the effect of my plan was happy beyond my expectation. However, as I should have exonerated myself had it not been so successful, I will not claim, nor even accept any praise for the good it produced more than I projected.

After I received your letter, for which I much thank you, I went and gave my lawyer the finishing directions about the deed, which was ready for signing this morning at nine, when I went to Lord Danvers, who was then at breakfast, and made him the intended offer, which, as I expected, he accepted very readily, and calling up the witnesses, it was immediately executed, but the disagreeable part was still to come: however, as soon as I found myself alone with his lordship, I told him I had then to congratulate him and beg his pardon, but that before I explained myself, I requested him to read that letter—putting into his hand yours of yesterday. With considerable surprise, as you will imagine, but with seeming attention, he perused it, then asked me what it meant. I repeated that I must beg his pardon; and that I hoped he would not *determine* to be angry before he had well considered the motive which excited me to take advantage of a communication which had been made to me. I then assured him Lady Caroline was entirely a stranger to what had that morning been done; but that I would then go home and acquaint her with the particulars. At saying this, I put into his hands the letter of Mr. Broomley, and telling him I would presume to wait upon him again in about an hour and half, withdrew.

I then went home to Lady Caroline, who has resided with us ever since her return to London, and gave her the deed for her perusal; which (as I expected from her) procured me more blame than praise. She could not bear the idea of such an advantage having been taken of the earl, though I convinced her that *his* benefit was, at least, as much promoted by it as her own. Between eleven and twelve, I again went to Berkeley Square, and chusing, at this crisis, to send up my name, was desired to walk up immediately. And now I cannot do justice to his lordship. He was affected, even to shedding tears; and thanked me in such expressions for the active concern I had ever shown for his welfare, that I began to be almost sorry for the late transaction, from the idea of its having been unnecessary.

My uncle, most assuredly, has a fine understanding and a noble spirit, would he but correct that ruining inclination for gambling, and for some of its kindred vices; and with great pleasure I tell you that I have now very lively hopes of his thorough conviction and reformation.

We soon turned to the business of the reverend vicar's letter. The earl's rage when Lord Crumpford was brought upon the carpet, is beyond description. Indeed I believe he is one of the vilest wretches upon the habitable globe. What measures can be taken with him I do not know. When matters are settled (and till then we mean to keep every thing respecting this event between ourselves) his lordship will have opinion of council how to proceed to bring him to some exemplary punishment—not adequate; for that is impossible: and if that cannot be inflicted by a legal process, equal to his wishes, he will have all given at large in the public papers; mentioning as lightly as possible (from a due regard to good Mr. Broomley's promise) the part of Mrs. Pemberton; her readiness to comply, or reluctance to confess, making the case neither better nor worse for Lord Crumpford; therefore it will not be *necessary*, from a principle of justice, to insist upon either. Not that I think she *merits* this consideration, even though every allowance be granted in her favor: but Mr. Broomley's engagements must be sacredly attended to, and his motive for this promise was a pious one—He was not willing to suffer a lost sheep to be prevented from returning, by reproach for having strayed, which is too often effected by the violent *outwardly* virtuous of the human race, who, because they never were assailed by temptation, or are, perhaps, placed by fortune, out of the reach of its influence, press, without mercy, on the less happy, though *not* less valuable of our species, who, by a complicated train of events, fall from a height, probably, much greater than that in which their condemners stand; for which reason they wish to keep them down, lest (rising from their fall, bettered perhaps by its painful effects) they should obtain a state of superiority still more elevated than the former.

However I doubt, with the worthy divine, that Mrs. Pemberton does not come within this description; nevertheless, as we are incompetent judges of the human heart, it is worthy of his character to wish to reclaim her; and from the late discoveries he will have a right to urge, in terms explicit, her reformation.

When I sat down to give you an account of our proceedings, I did not, Sir William, intend to moralize; but the subject naturally produced serious reflections.

It was now agreed that I should set off for Kildwick on Monday morning by break of day; and after I had settled matters with its reverend pastor, proceed to visit his lordship's estate in Cumberland; which, if I judge right of its condition, may be sold to advantage; and the money arising from that sale will, doubtless, more than answer all present occasions. His lordship talks of a magnificent present for Miss Broomley. Five thousand guineas he mentioned. What he will determine upon I do not know. After we had settled the above particulars, he expressed a wish to see *his dear Caroline* (very tenderly, indeed, he spoke) immediately. I therefore dispatched a note to my Harriet, desiring her to hasten with her cousin to Berkeley Square, and, when arrived, to send up for me. My summons was obeyed without loss of time, and when they alighted, I went down to receive them, and as Caroline wished to see her father by himself for a few minutes, Mrs. Maynard and I went into an adjoining room, where staying till we thought we heard Lady Caroline's voice as if crying, we went into the study, and when I opened the door, were struck by the sight of the lovely girl kneeling at her father's feet, while his

arms were clasped round her neck, and both in tears. The cause of this affecting appearance which we afterwards *gleaned*, from first one, then the other, was as follows.

Lady Caroline, upon seeing his lordship, sprang to him with open arms, and with the most lively expression of joy, at the means of happiness being once more offered to his acceptance, congratulated him on this important event; and immediately dropping on one knee, put into his hands the bond which he had signed that morning; protesting her ignorance of its being drawn, and requesting his re-acceptance of it, as he valued her tranquillity. The earl, it seems, was so deeply penetrated by this instance of her duty; affection, and nobleness of spirit, that he could make no reply; but throwing his arms around her neck, wept over her till we, by our entrance, interrupted the affecting scene.

“Augustus! Harriet!” said his lordship as we advanced, “see here one of the best, as well as loveliest daughters of the human race. But I always knew her merits. Happier had it been for me, had I always rewarded them. For the future—nephew”—interrupting himself—“take this deed”—giving me that which my cousin had returned—“keep it in security; and let not Caroline come at it any more. And now be it your first care that another bond be drawn up to oblige me to pay her in quarterly payments, a thousand pounds a year, during my life, for her own private use; after that, assist me in making my will, and to all besides I will be indifferent.” And then, after a pause—“Maynard I will seek happiness upon a new plan, and here, in the presence of all you, most near to me, make a vow never to loose nor to win, at one sitting, or in one day more than ten guineas,”—to which he bound himself by the most solemn oath; and then calling to him Lady Caroline, who, had risen at our entrance and was at that time sitting upon a sofa leaning against Mrs. Maynard, he embraced her with the greatest fervency; calling her his Angel-daughter, and telling her his highest future happiness should be in making hers as compleat as possible.

But I must not go on with this description. Suffice it that we spent together a most happy day; his lordship regretting only your absence. He says he *must* soon see you, therefore on Monday, after I shall have left London, he means to take Caroline and Harriet with him to dine at Enfield; and knowing I intended writing to you, he bid me tell you that if their company will not mend you he shall deem you incurable.

I do not remember for these dozen years to have seen Lord Danvers so pleasing a companion. It would be a pleasure to me to relate the conversation till, and during, dinner; but I must not indulge myself, having much business to transact before I sleep, and the night advances. We had an early repast at his lordship’s, and at five returned to St. James’ Square, since which time I have been employed in writing.

If an opportunity offers, I mean to morrow to give the earl some intimation of the state of his daughters heart, that if I find my plan for her more particular happiness can be practised with equity and propriety, I may be authorised to take the measures I have conditionally resolved upon.

I am as impatient as the earl can be to see you, having a considerable deal to consult you upon; but must defer particulars till my return from my northern expedition.

I am, my dear sir, yours, with cordial wishes for your recovery, though I did not formally express my concern for your indisposition,

AUGUSTUS MAYNARD.

LETTER, XIV.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY,

Alverston, Sunday morning, March 29th, 1789.

WHAT a phantom is human happiness! how illusive the pursuit of this "shadow of a shade!" It seems to be every where, except the very place in which one is. Seek it—and it is gone. It shrinks from the grasp at the moment we think we are on the point of securing it for ever.

When I was at Alverston, I fancied it was to be found at Bristol. When at Bristol—I was convinced I had left it behind me. I returned—the phantom was vanished, and I now know not where to look for its abode.

The last date of my itinerant letter was Lichfield, in which I deplored the perverse accident that detained me so long at Mr. Webbers. By the bye, after it was gone I was half sorry for having been so severe upon Mrs. Digby; for though what I said was true, I gave it, I must confess, the highest colouring; being at that time, from a reperusal of your letter, extremely out of humour with her, as it brought fresh into my remembrance the instance which I related.

After I had done writing, I went to Lady Davison's; never recollecting, till I had entered the house, that she was gone to Runcan for change of air. However, I had the satisfaction of hearing she had received benefit from removing her residence.

At five o'clock last evening with an agitated mind, I entered Alverston Park. I fancied every distant figure that I saw was the lovely Maria! but in all, I was mistaken. I much wished to meet and surprise her by a sudden and unexpected appearance, that I might observe the effects, before she had time to be guarded, but being afraid by that means of *too much* surprising my dear mother, I sent Jerry forwards to inform her of my arrival; upon which, both my father and her ladyship came out to meet me and welcome my return. I alighted at their approach. My mother seemed greatly agitated. I hastily enquired the cause of her being so affected; when my father interrupted me with—"my dear George tell us how your engagement stands with Lady Lucinda Harrington?"

Seeing their anxiety, I informed them in four words that it was entirely over.

"How—how?" said my father.

"Over!" repeated my mother, in an exclamatory tone.

Their earnestness surprised me; but to put an end to their suspense, I explicitly told them that Lady Lucinda Harrington had eloped from her guardian's house with his valet; or, as he used to style him, with his gentleman; that their route was to Gretna

Green; that before that time, they probably were married, and that I was returned to their presence with a little purchased wisdom.

At hearing this account, the joy of both my father and mother was extreme; which when we entered the house and were seated in the drawing room, they accounted for by telling me that since I had been gone they had heard such a character of the lady in question as greatly alarmed them, lest I should precipitately have involved myself in an engagement from which I could not recede with honor, when I found, as they supposed I soon should do, her mind unconsonant to my own. We had a great deal of conversation on this subject, and I candidly informed them of every particular which had passed in the course of the event. My sister, it seems, sent a character of Lady Lucinda, “which,” said my mother, “confirmed what Maria Birtles” [I felt myself blush at the mention of her name] “had before intimated.”

Is Lady Lucinda, asked I, known to Maria Birtles?

“With her character,” replied my mother, “she is certainly perfectly acquainted;” adding, that when, at her importunity, the dear girl had given her opinion of the young lady, and found she was likely to be allied to the family, she burst into tears, because (*as her ladyship supposed*) she was apprehensive of having spoken what might create an unfavorable prejudice.

What a blow, Charles, was this upon my senses! Maria knew I was gone in pursuit of Lady Lucinda Harrington! Knowing her as she knew her—how must she despise me for such an attachment! To what inducement could she attribute my design! But she burst into tears at the communication my mother then unguardedly made. And for what!—Not, as the dear lady imagined, because she was apprehensive of having given her concern. NO, Conway; fine as are her susceptibilities—this was not the case. Those tears were shed—I WILL believe so—from the hurt she *herself* received upon the occasion of my supposed attachment.

For a moment this thought pained me most exquisitely; but a hope immediately arose that I should be soon able to convince her my heart was truly hers, though, by a strange concurrence of circumstances, I was led to think my gratitude and even my *compassion* concerned in my journey to Bristol.

I should like, said I, to hear Maria’s account of this young lady. Pray—with seeming indifference—is she at home?

“Ah!” replied my mother, shaking her head, “I have lost the dear girl since you left Alverston.”

Lost her! repeated I, more than half out of breath, and scarce knowing what I said. How? Which way? When?—all command over myself being at that instant entirely gone.

My mother then informed me of her having received a summons to go to London, about four days after I set out for Bristol. To see her father, was the ostensible reason, but it strikes me very forcibly that, some way or other, I was the occasion of her leaving Alverston. The idea was torture to me, but as my mother said she had received a letter from her from London, I turned the conversation (not indeed finding it entertaining) intending shortly, in a careless way, to ask her to let me see it; that by its particular date I might know where to find her, without enquiry; being bent upon pursuing, till I could regain this real charmer.

After supper my father again mentioned "*my sister's waiting-maid*," and gave me a penetrating account of his over-hearing her play upon the library organ in the most harmonious and finished style. He said she likewise accompanied it with her voice, which was one of the most melodious he ever listened to.

But let me break off before my senses are quite bewildered.

Breakfast is ready. I rose early on purpose to write; being unable, last night, to touch a pen.

Mr. Evelyn is to dine with us. He arrived yesterday, but had left the park before I reached home. We are this morning to have a specimen of his talents in the preaching-way.

Half after eleven.

NOW, Charles! am I *indeed* miserable! I am sick—quite sick at heart. The noblest jewel the world can produce has been within my reach, and I have tossed it away—tossed it for ever from my view—and now what have I to do with happiness! That, too, was put into my power; and that likewise I have slighted—slighted for an airy dream of incoherent fiction, till it has fled beyond my power of pursuing.

At breakfast I asked my mother if she had in her pocket the letter she mentioned having received from Maria Birtles, telling her I wanted to see it on account of the elegance of the writing of which she had spoken so highly.

"I believe it is in yonder letter-case," replied my mother, looking at one which lay upon the library writing-table. I arose to seek for it; soon distinguished, and, with her ladyship's permission, opened, and was going, with eagerness, to peruse its contents, when I was, *indeed*, struck with the hand-writing.

Charles, it was indubitably the same as that on the back of my little resemblance!!! Its certainty flashed in one instant upon my soul like electrical fire. I stood mute and transfixed; till recollecting myself, I bowed, without speaking, to my father and mother as I passed to the door, and hurried to my own apartment, where, taking from my escritoir the portrait, I examined, with minuteness, the characters; though

I wanted not any farther proof of *their identity*. Lost in a reverie, I never changed place or posture till my mother's entrance into the room made me start.

"My dear George!" said this tender parent, "what is the occasion of the agitation under which I perceive you still continue? Your father and I are equally alarmed with apprehensions for our son's tranquility."

Madam, said I, without regard to consequences, look at the lines on the back of this little picture. Whose writing is that?

I had, as I told you, acquainted my mother with all the circumstances of my finding the *vellum case*; and she had told them to my father. Treated as my sister and I ever were by our parents, it is no merit in us that we, in return, confide in them, *in most cases*, with the same freedom and unreserve that we would in each other. *In most cases*, I repeat; for conscience reminds me of the carefulness with which I avoided my father's eye whenever the name of Maria Birtles was sounded in his presence, and *you* perhaps will remind me of some other instances of a breach of *entire confidence*. However, in the present case, caution was involuntarily banished—*Whose writing*, said I to my mother, *is that?* At my question, asked I know with a fixed concern, she hastily turned to the table, and looking at the portrait and letter alternately, at last said—It *must* be so. But how"—

That madam, interrupted I, is the question. *How* could the writer of this *letter* drop *that* picture at Hazle-wood Lodge?

"It is possible," answered my mother, "that when she went in the carriage for me"—

And *did* she!—Did Maria go to attend you home from the ball?—abruptly interrupted I.

"She *did*," replied her ladyship: "and when Mr. Mortimer's servant found my earring, she went into the anti-room and sat down on the sofa, while she took from her pocket a little ivory box, and in it carefully deposited the jewel."

Enough, said I; my conviction is complete. But why, madam, did you not sooner tell me this? why did not you insist upon my attending you to the carriage? you ought not to have permitted Mr. Saunders to have usurped my office. All had then been well, and I—

Thus madly did I run on to my dear patiently-attentive mother, till recollection stopped my career and, ashamed of my transport, I threw myself into an armed chair, requesting to be left alone.

"But, George,"—said my mother.

Dear madam leave me—leave me to myself for a few minutes, said I, with earnestness.

She did; saying she must ease my father of his anxiety, as far as that could be done by telling him the cause of my being so suddenly affected, asking my leave to take with her the portrait.

I bowed assent.

When she was gone I recollected that I had not read the letter, therefore eagerly took it up to look for her present abode; but how shall I tell you my distraction upon finding she had carefully concealed it, and had written a kind of farewell! her date simply London.

I immediately thought of applying to Mrs. Douglas for information respecting this angel of a woman, when it occurred that I had read in the papers, a short time back, an account from Weymouth of her death. Who upon earth can give me any intelligence of her! *where* can I think of seeking my dear lost charmer!

Conway I am scarce right in my intellects.

I will enclose a copy of the letter which has distracted me. By that you will see, though it probably escaped my mother, the reason of her “flying with such velocity to London.” I cannot dwell upon it. Allow that the hope which was destroyed was founded, in a belief of my attachment to her and the whole is explicable.

She mentions my sister—She mentions my father; but of me she writes not one syllable! Cruel girl! Inhuman — barbarous—But what do I say! It is *I* who have been inhuman and barbarous to myself and to her. Little cause had she to think that my whole soul was in reality devoted to her, when I went galloping near a hundred and fifty miles after *such* a girl as Lady Lucinda Harrington; with whose character she was so well acquainted. How stupid—how *sordid*, must I appear in her eyes. Distraction! I cannot bear the idea! *Why* did my mother disclose to the dear girl the cause of my *idiotical* journey to Bristol? my mother was blamable in saying any thing about the matter.

But how foolishly I endeavour to throw from myself the conscious reproaches of my own heart! I, and I only, am the culprit; and I am the sufferer.

Maria, dear offended maid! how amply art thou avenged for my undue valuation of thy all-surpassing beauties of both mind and person!

But I will—I *must* tear myself from the subject, or I shall not be fit for any company.

My father and mother are gone to church. I really was not well enough to attend them. It is drawing near the time for their return. Mr. Evelyn will not now think me "*a mad fellow*." Heavy; dull; stupid, are the epithets I expect he will bestow upon me.

Jerry waits to dress me.

Farewell.

Sunday night.

I have been considerably mortified by appearing in such an unfavorable light to Herbert Evelyn; a character interesting beyond what my ideas could rise to. The moment I saw him he fixed my respect. Charles, we owe you increased obligation for your gift of such a successor to poor Fowler.

Just before our dining time my precious godfather arrived at Alverstton, in his return from his journey to town. I wish he was an hundred miles distant. We shall now, I suppose, be often plagued with him, for he has purchased Hazle-wood Lodge, with its furniture, of Mr. Mortimer, who is going to reside in the neighbourhood of Mrs. Manwaring. Tattisford is the name of Mr. Manwaring's country seat, situated near Salisbury; a distance too great for Mrs. Mortimer, who is exceedingly fond of Mrs. Manwaring, to think of often travelling.

Had I been any thing tolerable, I should have thought the day pleasant enough; for though Mr. Slayton tormented me, as usual, about matrimony, Mr. Evelyn's most agreeable and friendly manner made amends for the other's teasing. Last night my godfather slept at Mr. Bellard's, who told him of my having been at Bristol, and that he heard I was returned; which greatly displeased him, because I did not call upon him in my way home. The old fellow then enquired, with some authority, into the business which carried me to Bristol. To silence at once his importunity, for I knew he would not rest till he was answered, I told I had been upon a matrimonial errand; but that the lady very judiciously preferred her guardian's valet to me, and therefore took a trip with him to Scotland: for the rest, I must refer him to my father and mother; requesting him to excuse me, as I had promised Mr. Evelyn to attend him in a walk round the park. Herbert and I then left the elders to themselves, and rambled about the distant pleasure-grounds till it was almost dark.

It is impossible to tell you how much pleased I was with my companion. Our conversation was chiefly about you, and your situation with Mrs. Digby. As I expected—her aim is to entrap *you*, Charles. Shall I then be sorry that I have written so freely of her? Will she ever, think you, be Lady Conway? Evelyn seems to hesitate in his answer. Not that he thinks she will be *your choice*, but he is apprehensive of your being so entangled by *her affection*, that, well stocked as you are, in the great qualities of the human mind, you will find it difficult to escape. Write, I beseech you, at large upon this matter as soon as possible.

When Mr. Evelyn and I returned from our walk, my mother, as soon as I entered, took me aside to tell me what had passed between Sir Edward; herself, and my godfather, during my absence. It seems I was no sooner out of sight than he desired an account of the Bristol expedition; expressed some disapprobation, if there was any truth in the tale, at his not having been apprized of it; but supposed the whole to be a fabrication to amuse him. Upon this, my father, to convince him that I was not so averse to matrimony as he always chuses to suppose I am, and telling him it was the suddenness of the matter, with the expectation of soon seeing him, which prevented his having been previously made acquainted with it, informed him of the whole rise of the affair from the circumstance of my finding the picture;—the very strong presumptive proofs that Lady Lucinda Harrington was the delineator—at least the loser—with all the ensuing corroborating circumstances of her thinking favorably of me: that, therefore, I hastily—perhaps too hastily—determined upon going to Bristol; my design, however, being only to get some acquaintance with the lady; to which neither he nor my mother could make any reasonable objection; as, if I liked her, and was accepted, none could lie against either her descent, her connexions or her fortune; and they were sure of his [my godfather's] hearty concurrence.

My father then, without telling him how foolishly I was entrapped by my own precipitancy and Sir Philip's great readiness [which I now do not wonder at] to dispose of his niece, informed him of the young lady's flight with Mr. Chapone; *whose name being George*, was, in some measure, the cause of the supposition, at least corroborated it, that I was favored with her approbation.

I have many times, Conway, been ashamed of having had sufficient vanity to believe so easily this imaginary conquest; yet when all circumstances and incidents are considered, a wiser fellow than myself might have been mis-led. The incidents, it may be said, were very slight ones. True: and so must all incidents be which discover the instant affection of a delicate woman. It must be a gross affair, indeed, which under such circumstances is delivered in plain terms; and were I the object of a predilection, declared without any regard to that modest, hesitating timidity, so bewitching on these occasions, I believe my disgust would be sooner excited than even my compassion; whereas a prepossession in my favor concealed—suppressed—and at length accidentally discovered, would—must—were my heart free and the object amiable—create in my soul a real and ardent affection. I should not be such a pitiful coxcomb as to disesteem and slight a lady's tender regard because it was given me unsought. Far from a generous mind must ever be such senseless ingratitude; therefore as there were some circumstances which favored the idea of her partial opinion of me—such as her seeming to be so disordered at hearing I was expected at the ball as even to faint—occasioned probably by the sudden and, perhaps, unlooked-for appearance of her beloved Chapone (for being, as you may suppose, pretty attentive to the relation, I remember Miss Parker said something about the servants entering the room at that time with a message from Sir Philip) her afterwards admiring so tenderly the name of George; then earnestly begging she might be hurried away, because of her being so discomposed, before the arrival of the Alverston carriage; and these, with other minutiae, *so* corroborated by the seeming certainty of her having dropped the *vellum-case*—an incident constantly upper-most in my remembrance—that I

could not, I even *now* think, act otherwise than I did, consistently with generosity; except I had determinedly given way to my admiration of the dear Maria; but as there was in *that*, some impropriety—in the pursuit of *this*, none—I think I deserve the attribution of some merit for sacrificing my real inclination to prudent and humane considerations; and had I succeeded—and the lady’s predilection and character answered the given account—I should have been extolled to the skies for the delicacy and true generosity of my proceedings.

There, Charles! I think I have got myself off very handsomely. If ever I am called to the bar of justice, I most assuredly will be my own pleader.

With the account which my father gave of this affair, Mr. Slayton seemed quite satisfied. “So, so, so! Well, well! So, so! this is all right; all fair; all right”—was repeated over and over. “I am pleased to find the boy has *some* thoughts of marrying. And I am glad his heart—as I hope it is—is his own. I was afraid—faith I was afraid—But well, well; no fear I hope. All is as it should be, I dare say. George is a good boy, *upon the whole*. But, pray now, who owns this picture? Faith, it is like him” [for my mother, at the beginning of this conversation, had put it into his hand]—“very much like him I think. Aye, I remember the time—I very well remember it—when I myself was bewitched by a picture. But I want to know who did it. To be sure—for this is a woman’s writing at the back; and very pretty writing it is—to be sure it is somebody who is in love with him. I would give fifty guineas to know who did it. Suppose we were to have it advertised! Do you not think the owner would claim it?”

Thus he ran on some time: for though my mother, to strengthen the circumstances from which my credulity respecting Lady Lucinda’s prepossession, arose, showed him the portrait, neither she nor my father thought it proper to acquaint him with the accidental discovery of the morning; therefore gave no particular answer to his querying observations.

When we returned, we found my god-father in a wonderful good humour. He prated incessantly during the whole time of supper, and after that was over, enquired very particularly about my sister; when he was told it is expected she will be home on Tuesday evening, accompanied by Miss Lawson. This enquiry was, I believe, intended as a prelude to his next question, which was, what was become of the fine Madam whom he saw when he was here before, that was her waiting-maid?

My mother told him she left Alverstun a few days back.

“And pray,” turning his eye upon me, but addressing himself to her ladyship, “where is she gone to?”

“To London”—was my mother’s reply.

“To what part of London?”

Nobody knew; which he thought was *very* strange.

"Boy," [to me] "cannot *you* tell what is become of this beauty?"

I cannot, sir. But do you then allow her to be handsome?

"Well, and suppose I do! Is that any thing to you?"

It gives me pleasure, sir, when we agree in opinion.

"Then *you* think her a beauty, do you sir?"

You ask the question, my good god-father, as if an affirmative would displease you; but I must answer truly. I *do* think her the handsomest woman I ever saw; and I likewise think her a young woman of great merit.

Charles, I could not, for the soul of me, desist from giving this testimony to the dear creature's excellence: and, upon recollection, I am not sorry that I did; for as neither my father nor my mother could have any reason (save from the discovery of the morning) to suppose I was under any concern about her, my open manner of speaking was the most likely way to quiet any apprehensions which that discovery might have given rise to; and *on their own account* I do not wish them to form any vexing suppositions.

The old Squire looked alarmed, and with his head on one side—"Then, sir, I suppose you know to what place this pretty creature is retired."

I just now told you, sir, *that I did not*, and it is a new thing for any one who knows me to question my veracity.

"Mighty well, sir: mighty well. But you need not be so snappish on the occasion. However, if you don't, you don't, and there's an end of it."

"I think," said my father, "George has lately given some proof that his heart is at liberty."

"Why true," replied the other, "and upon *that* account, as well as from the consideration I before mentioned, I am pleased with the story you have been telling me."

After this, the evening was finished with universal good humour; and could I have had the least probable hope of ever gaining intelligence of my dear enslaver, I should have enjoyed the happiness of those around me.

At present, I know not what to determine upon. Going to London to find, at Mrs. Douglas's house, some of her relatives, and to ask *if they can give any intelligence of MARIA BIRTLES*, is all I can think of. I will therefore take hold of the first plausible pretence for a trip to town; for I have no other resort. To avoid setting afloat any

suspicions, I will wait till I have a seeming call to go up on some other occasion; as it is not long since I declared my intention of not seeing London till the birth-day; and that I should then return as soon as it was over. The house in Grosvenor Square will now soon be completed. Had not the workmen been idle, it might have been done long since; but Jephson says it is now *habitable*. To that I will go; and surely I shall stand *some* chance of finding out *something*, one way or other, by means of the people at Mrs. Douglas's; if the house in which she lived, opposite my father's, be now occupied; and I should think her executors cannot yet have disposed of its furniture.

For the present adieu.

Remember I shall be impatient for some intelligence subsequent to Evelyn's account.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XV.

SIR CHARLES CONWAY, TO THE REV.
HERBERT EVELYN.

Yarmouth, March 29th.

SINCE you left me, my dear Evelyn, I have spent three very disagreeable days; and should, in consequence of the occasion, immediately leave Yarmouth, had I not weakly given a promise to stay another fortnight, unless unexpectedly called away by business of consequence.

What will you conjecture respecting my situation with Mrs. Digby, when I tell you that it is her to whom this promise—this extorted promise—has been given! Be not, my friend, under any alarm on my account. Mrs. Digby keeps the same place *in my opinion* which she possessed when you left Yarmouth.

And now for the communication, which friendship demands, of the particulars of my present situation.

Very soon after you were gone, Mrs. Digby sent a card requesting to see you on business of the greatest consequence; desiring you to settle your engagements in such a manner as to enable you to afford her, at least, an hour of your company. This card, which was carelessly folded in a piece of paper unsealed, I made no scruple to take from its cover and peruse, supposing it to be a matter of trifling consequence, but after I had read it, I did not (for her delicacy's sake) wish her to think I was acquainted with her having made the request, therefore covered it with another piece of paper, in which I informed her of your departure *and the occasion of it*; for being persuaded that my conjectures of her seeing you with a favorable eye, were to receive a confirmation in the

desired conversation, I did not judge it right she should have reason to think you had left Yarmouth without paying your respects to her, but on pressing business; not knowing what effect a certainty of her partiality might have on your sentiments and tenderness. I, therefore, informed her that I expected your return as soon as your new engagements would permit. Impressed with the opinion I have mentioned—guess, if you can, the surprise with which I read a letter, received on the evening of the day, directed to myself on a subject so unexpected, that, during my perusal of it, I several times adverted to the direction, to see if my eyes had not deceived me.

Delicacy—generosity—*honor* would have obliged me to have for ever buried the contents of this letter in oblivion, had not Mrs. Digby's unguarded behaviour and her determination to write *to you* on the subject, made it absurd to even attempt concealment. However I do not wish it to transpire from either you or me, but to be hushed on all sides as soon as possible.

Mrs. Digby, in one part of her letter, expressed sentiments of distraction at the idea of my leaving Yarmouth without seeing her; yet anticipated the pleasure she should receive from my visit, in such terms as showed she should construe my going, into a profession of *a consonant regard*; though she previously urged me to hasten, on her account, my departure.

But I cannot, Herbert, enter into the particulars of this very incoherent epistle, which distressed me beyond imagining. She says she has a particular reason for writing to you upon the subject. Probably because she believes you have considerable influence with me, which she hopes to persuade you to exert in her favor.

I am well convinced I need not ask you to forbear the task.

It was some time before I could determine upon what method I ought to pursue. To go, as she first desired, immediately from Yarmouth, and without seeing her, would render me liable to two very disagreeable imputations—either that I was conceitedly afraid of my own powers, and therefore forbore seeing her from motives of compassion; or that I meant to show a silent contempt of her expressions of kindness: both which constructions must have been very humiliating to her. By attending her, I was certain I should inevitably experience a great degree of pain; but I concluded that I ought not to excuse myself on that consideration. It appeared, therefore, as if the only proper mode of conduct would be to make her a visit previous to my leaving the town; at which, all I should have to do would be to endeavour to unite a proper degree of conciliation with firmness.

When thus determined, I wrote her a note, intimating my intention of removing from Yarmouth, but that I would call upon her to take my leave at any time it was agreeable to her to appoint.

From this my whole intention must be obvious, but, by what has followed, I am persuaded she was determined not to see it in a light contrary to her inclinations. Had I been sooner convinced of this, my work would have been easier.

An answer to my note, appointed Saturday evening for my visit. I went, and was received with—But I cannot go through the subject. My firmness was strongly attacked; and had I not been greatly fortified by an undiminished and most invincible affection for a woman of quite a contrary character, my imbecility of mind, upon the occasion, might have led me into still greater inconveniencies than I now am under. In the most respectful manner I acknowledged to Mrs. Digby the situation of my heart; assured her that I was perfectly sensible of the honor of having her good opinion, for which I wished to make all possible return; but that, from my prepossession, a consonant one was not in my power.

I omit giving you *her* part of the conversation, save that she requested me to promise I would not marry within the next twelve months. This I absolutely refused, because I thought it wrong to concede so far, as it might lead her to form conjectures which could never be realized. She then abated in her request, by pressing me to tell her I would not, within twelve months, marry *without giving her some previous information*. To this I objected, likewise; but she appeared so much hurt by my refusing such a trifle, which she said could no way injure me, and might be a means of her reconciling herself to an event—so grievous, she chose to term it,—and asked it with such *wild* earnestness, that not thinking it of any great consequence, I gave her the promise she required; after which, she prevailed upon me for the other, with the mention of which I began my letter. So here I stand—hampered, by weakly yielding to what my judgment tells me I ought to have resisted. On *her* account resisted—if I am to admit the reality of her prepossession.

Never let it be said that the female sex are weak and defenceless. They have arms invincible when they are exerted with prudence and delicacy; such as the bravest hearts and wisest heads must bow before. It is only those undesirable members of society, who are hardened beyond the feelings of humanity, that can withstand their influence.

How Mrs. Digby managed it I cannot tell, but she has not lost either in dignity or delicacy, by the extraordinary step she has taken. On the contrary she has, in my eye, rather raised herself upon the occasion. I believe if I were to give you the whole of her letter, I should exalt her in your opinion; and yet its expressions are so favorable to myself that I cannot submit it to any other's perusal.

Time here seems now to drag heavily. After next Sunday I hope you will, with propriety, be able to leave Alverston for a few weeks.

You are now, Herbert, introduced into one of the best families upon earth. How exquisitely happy have I been at Alverston Park!—a place where I cannot expect ever to meet with happiness again.

I am, as you will perceive, exceedingly low. Mrs. Digby, instead of drawing my ideas *from* Emma Stanley, has caused them to revert to her with increasing liveliness. A needle once touched by a magnet will ever remain steady to its attractive pole; to which it will fly with the same avidity that it resists the other. I need not otherwise explain the state of my heart.

Since I began this, I have had a letter from Mr. Stanley. He probably arrived at Alverston on Saturday night; a circumstance upon which I dwell with pleasure; the idea of your introduction to him affording me peculiar satisfaction. Tell him he shall soon hear from me; and congratulate him in my name upon the very happy turn his affairs have taken; the account of which gave me more relief than any thing I have met with lately.

What shall I say to this friend of my heart respecting Mrs. Digby? To conceal *any thing* from him would be new to me, and would seem a breach of that friendship which has so long cemented our minds. Yet to disclose, *unnecessarily*, such an affair as this, is not quite consistent with my ideas of that honor with which we ought to treat every individual of the gentler sex. But by a hint in his letter, he has, I find, some suspicion of her bias; from—*he says*—a thorough knowledge of her character; upon which subject he tells me he will, some other time, write more at large. Mr. Stanley seems to entertain but very indifferent thoughts of Mrs. Digby. It is possible that a knowledge of the *explicitness* with which she has treated me, may raise his opinion. You will easily come at his sentiments upon this, and indeed upon every subject; for his heart is as open as your own. I therefore leave to your discretion the management of the matter.

For the present, my friend, I will bid you farewell. You will write to me soon; and if you have heard any thing of Miss Stanley, will transmit the intelligence.

CHARLES CONWAY.

LETTER, XVI.

COLONEL GREVILLE, TO LORD FITZMURRAY.

Alverston Park, Monday night, March 30th.

A Curse upon fortune for a jilting jade! Our plan is entirely ruined: at least for the present.

In the first place—George Stanley is returned. *He* therefore would join in pursuit of the girls and spoil my sport, could the seizure be effected, which is impossible, as they were to leave Woodstock this morning, and are expected at Alverston to-morrow evening. Who the plague thought of this little witch's so soon quitting Oxfordshire! I supposed she meant to stay there a considerable time, or our work should have been executed long ago. Had I received the information respecting her return before my journey hither, we might have laid a plan to have intercepted them: but it is now too late to think about that. Would it answer any serviceable purpose, I should execrate till my

pen would be worn to a stump. As it is, I may spare myself the plague of raving about what irritates my very soul. The *skirts* of my plan must now be changed. I will proceed by sap, till another opportunity offers of securing by storm this seemingly impregnable fortress. For a time I will drop the hero, and assume the submissive, though adoring swain. Who knows but time may give me an interest in the affection of my nymph!

I am now stationed at Alverston, and mean to continue here for a considerable period; it being a place always pleasant to me, on account of the distinguished treatment I have received at it, ever since my rescue of the lovely Emma from the soldier's ruthless element: and if I seem, though with reluctance, to give up my pursuit, there cannot be any reason why that friendly treatment should not be continued.

The young parson, who I told you accompanied Sir Charles Conway, is amongst the groupe at the Park. He is come to take possession of the Alverston Rectory. Him I design to make a tool of; whispering in his ear a tale, as if in confidence, though in ambiguous language, respecting a little love affair between Miss Stanley and his most obedient humble servant; which tale he will indubitably convey to his other patron, the Hawthorn-Grove Baronet.

Old Slayton, George Stanley's godfather, from Oakley-Hill, who is to give riches to this already rich family, left the Park this morning. I was not sorry he decamped before I arrived, as I query if he would much approve my union with his fair cousin; because, though I am a *votary*, I am not one of the favorites of his master Plutus; so ungrateful is the monster to my sacrifices.

I can tell you, Lord Fitzmurray, I have difficulties enow before me to excite the spirit of chivalry to action;—difficulties so great, that was not the reward, in view, of a most glorious *shining* quality, a little persuasion would lead me to relinquish the pursuit: but Emma Stanley, *decked with golden ore*, is more than I can forbear.

Let me, my lord, have a letter from you; but order Bridgen to direct it, and seal it with a common head. It must not be known that you and I correspond, as that might be destructive to some future design. Adieu.

Yours, with esteem,
ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, XVII.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Alverston, Tuesday evening, March 31st.

IN safety, health and spirits, we arrived, my dear Maria, at Alverston Park, about half an hour back, and it is now near eight. I write the first moment I can get opportunity, that my revered friends at Woodstock may, as soon as possible, be eased of their anxiety. Miss Stanley sends more love; *duty* and thanks than I will undertake to convey. Love to you; duty to the mama and aunts, and thanks to all, is, she says, her meaning.

As for *my* heart, Maria—the poor thing is overwhelmed by its own sensibilities. Remember me to all at *dear* Woodstock in a language expressive of the utmost tenderness.

My mother forbids my writing to her; my aunt refuses to hear from me. Both constitute you to be the *Receiver General* of my letters. And why? Because they wish to give pleasure to me and to you; and command as an instance of duty what is, in fact, the highest indulgence.

But how I *lose* time, Maria! Would any mortal woman, except she were as stupid as myself, sit scribbling up-stairs when there are in the drawing-room three smarts of the highest order! First — Mr. Stanley. And indeed, first he is in all companies; though I never before saw him so in-alert. Next, Colonel Greville. Of these two gentlemen you have often heard mention: but the third is a character new to both you and me. The Reverend Herbert Evelyn, distinguishes him by name. A very handsome, sensible young man; perfectly polite and accomplished, and of apparent sweetness of temper, gives him by description. He has been at Yarmouth with Sir Charles Conway, and is now come to receive from Sir Edward Stanley the living of Alverston.

Emma is this instant come up. Her spirits are low. Sir Charles Conway has, probably, been mentioned. His name always affects her. Colonel Greville's presence distresses her too. She owes him gratitude, but he seeks affection. Emma has none to give him.

We found Sir Edward but very so, so. Lady Stanley looks as well as I ever saw her. Emma and I met with a rapturous reception: but I think her brother and she are more ceremonious than usual. All on account of the discontinuance of the engagement between his sister and Sir Charles Conway.

Dear lovely Emma Stanley! How greatly is she to be pitied! Her happiness is entirely destroyed.

But I must, my Maria, bid you farewell.

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

LETTER, XVIII.

MR. EVELYN, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY,

Alverston, Tuesday night, March 31st.

YOUR letter, my dear Sir Charles, has just now reached me; and its contents have very much distressed me, because I know the subject upon which you write has pained you greatly.

Surely Mrs. Digby's proceedings are extremely singular. That she saw—and even *acknowledged she saw*—you were distinguished in the qualities of your mind, shall be attributed to her as a merit; but her *method*—her *manner*—is strikingly particular.

Yet let me suspend my censures. I may be too hasty in forming my opinion.

Her letter to me—for she actually did write, was dated Saturday, yet it reached me but with yours of Sunday. Her style is truly whimsical. When we meet I will show it to you. I must now be brief on this subject, as the servant is just going off with letters to the post.

With respect to matters here—I am at some loss what to say; for though, my dear sir, the greatness of your mind makes a palliation of real truth unnecessary, yet I could wish to be spared giving you any intimations which would raise disagreeable ideas, could I forbear, consistently with the sincerity I owe you.

Mr. Stanley reached Alverston on Saturday; on which night I slept at the Rectory; but on Sunday I was introduced to him, and at once found him to be all that my raised imagination had led me to expect. We were FRIENDS directly. Of him, I need not say any more.

Sir Edward and Lady Stanley are, in my opinion, amongst the most exalted of the human race. Of them likewise, so well are they known to you, this is sufficient. My reception from them, and from the people in general, was such as you predicted. I do not see the least prospect of any difficulty respecting parish affairs.

Mr. Slayton, from Oakley-Hill, came to Alverston on Sunday. He jealously interrogated Mr. Stanley respecting the Maria Birtles whom you wished me to observe with attention. She has left the Park about a fortnight. I have several times heard her name mentioned, and find she stands very high in every one's opinion.

On Monday came Colonel Greville. He is, I observe, distinguished at Alverston, on account of some eminent service afforded by him to Miss Stanley. His complaisance, though he seems, with almost officiousness, to court my acquaintance, does not gratify even my vanity. His mind and mine can never mingle. In an undoubting manner he

speaks of your being soon to be his cousin. That this assertion is advanced to farther his designs, which are professedly directed to Miss Stanley, I cannot absolutely affirm, but such appears to me to be his motive, for so industriously talking upon the subject. Occasionally, I oppose the intimation; but he bows; smiles, and tells me he must beg my pardon, that he perceives I am not in the secret; but that he can affirm, from the first authority, that matters are *en train*.

His assurance absolutely puts me out of countenance; and his assertions are so flat and peremptory, that without an open disclosure of particular circumstances, I cannot, *at present*, contradict him with success. However his *hardiesse* determined me to show your letter to Mr. Stanley: the effect it had upon him you will easily conceive. It was with difficulty he afterwards behaved with politeness to Colonel Greville. Something, he says, very mysterious is, to use his own expression, floating in the air, which he is determined to reach and explore, after a little silent observation. The Colonel has intimated to me, as if in confidence, (yet still as a matter with which he seems to suppose I must have some knowledge) his having made proposals *in form* to the father; mother, and brother of—shall I tell you that he says—*of his Emma?*—giving an idea that the plan was pursued in pre-concert with herself, and that he hoped very soon to be honored with her hand by joint approbation.

This is the sum of a few minutes of accidentally-private conversation: he officiously making such a use of an opportunity afforded by Mr. Stanley's being summoned to attend Sir Edward in his study. We were interrupted by the arrival of company. I have not since been alone with Mr. Stanley, or I should have had his sentiments upon this communication.

There was such an air of mystery in what the Colonel *infused*, that had I not formed an opinion of Miss Stanley quite opposite to such a proceeding, I should have concluded they had long been upon what is called a good understanding with each other; and this floating idea did not *loose* strength from his arrival at Alverston just before Miss Stanley's return; who I have still to tell you, has been for three or four days expected home as this evening.

Now my dear friend, *if there be* any truth in these insinuations; and if, they would have any influence upon your determination—And yet it cannot be that you—But what am I saying! We are such incompetent judges of the fit and unfit—and a person of the most exalted character is (for doubtless great reasons—such as correcting error, and levelling the mental qualities of mankind) so often paired with one less meritorious—that I know not how to fix my judgement; therefore lay before you all particulars, as you then may form and draw your own conjectures and conclusions.

Sir Edward Stanley has insisted upon my residing at the Park till my return to Yarmouth (which, if Mr. Clark can officiate at Alverston for a short time, will probably be next week) but I often walk to the Rectory to set on foot some few necessary arrangements; this worthy baronet having taken upon himself to answer for all delapidations. After tea, this afternoon, Mr. Stanley accompanied me to my new

territories. Colonel Greville chose to stay within; as it appeared, to receive Miss Stanley; who, just before we reached the Park on our return, was driven up the avenue with her friend Miss Lawson, so I saw not the meeting between her and her military admirer; but I afterwards thought she treated him with a kind of *reserved freedom*;—if you can understand opposite words so united—and in spite of the natural liveliness of her temper, evident in her first appearance, I observed at times, a kind of pensiveness inconsistent with meeting a favored lover.

And now my dear Sir Charles, having given you materials which will enable you to form your judgement, I will conclude my letter with expressing most ardent wishes for your enjoying all the happiness this world can afford, as far as it will be consistent with your pursuit of happiness hereafter, subscribing myself

your greatly obliged,

most grateful, and

most affectionate friend,

HERBERT EVELYN.

LETTER, XIX.

MR. MAYNARD, TO MRS. MAYNARD.

Kildwick, March 31st.

MY DEAREST HARRIET,
BEFORE this reaches you, you will, I hope, have received a six-line scribble, dated from Nottingham, to inform you of my safe arrival at that town. I now write from the snug habitation of one of the most respectable and, at the same time, amiable Christian veterans I know amongst the order. I have not been arrived more than two hours, but during that period I have wished for you half a score times, as I know you would find yourself delighted with the inhabitants of this rural dwelling; Miss Broomley being the most charming little country maid I ever saw.

She is very pretty and genteel; and, notwithstanding her garb is not in the London taste, has an air of fashion hanging about her which surprised me. It is fashion in its simplest style; consequently a thousand times more alluring than the finished labours of a courtly belle.

But I must reserve these kind of accounts till I see you.

The good Vicar has so arranged all the particulars necessary to be attended to, that my work here will be trifling. To morrow afternoon, therefore, I hope to set off for

Cumberland, where I shall just look about me and leave Valence to advertise and finish the sale of the whole, if I find the farms are in such order as I expect.

And now for a matter still more immediately relative to the happiness of our Caroline.

I told you I would, by some means or other, either in my going or return, manage if possible, to see Mr. Slayton of Oakley Hill, and endeavour to learn from him the circumstances of Mr. Stanley's supposed pursuit of Lady Lucinda Harrington. Stopping a few minutes at Mansfield, I took up a St. James's Chronicle, in which I saw the account of that young lady's elopement with her guardian's valet. This eased my anxiety on that subject, as it left me to conjecture Mr. Stanley's being at liberty. However, I still wished to have some conversation with this old Squire; therefore finding his house was about two miles from Mansfield, and that it stood pretty near the road, almost upon the top of the hill from whence it takes its name, I walked forward, under pretence of being tired with riding; which, by the bye, was *more* than pretence; ordering the carriage to follow slowly in about an hour. The weather was exceedingly fine, and this walk was really relieving. When I came pretty near the gentleman's habitation, which stood in a kind of park, though it could not properly be called one, being surrounded by a neat clipped hedge, instead of a pale, I sat down upon a stile, from which went a path to the house, where I continued a considerable time without seeing a human creature; but at length I observed a man coming out of a door in the middle of the building, who had in his hand a short telescope, through which he looked, directing it to me. I continued sitting till I saw him advance towards me, and when he was pretty near, arose, crossed the stile, and went to meet him, making first my bow and then my speech.

I believe, sir, you have some curiosity to know the reason of my having sat so long on yonder stile. To which he replied—"Why, sir, I must confess, I was rather surprised to see a person of your appearance in such a situation; and I came to learn the occasion of it, apprehending you might have received a hurt by some accident."

Your humanity, sir, I returned, deserves acknowledgment. But that is not the case. I have travelled several miles in a few hours; have still many more to go, and being tired with riding, I walked from Mansfield up this hill, ordering my servants to follow with the carriage, which I every minute expect.

Mr. Slayton then expressed his wishes that I had walked to his house; giving me an invitation *then* to go, if my regard to time would permit; boasting of being able to amuse me with some tolerable paintings.

I told him painting was a science of which I was a passionate admirer; that, at that period, my time was particularly limited; but that, with his permission, I would call and look at his collection upon my return from the North; whither I was going to transact some business relative to my uncle the Earl of Danvers.

This, as I expected, immediately brought us acquainted. He put on a respectful air; presumed my name was Maynard, and remembered having once had *the honor* of dining with me at the late Lord Rushford's, though he did not, at first, recollect my person.

This was beyond my hopes. I engaged to be his visitor, upon my return; and taking my leave, for the chaise had been some minutes come up, was driven off, extremely well satisfied with this beginning of my negotiation.

Do not, my dear Harriet, expect to hear from me again till my return from Cumberland to this place. My straightest road home would be by Lancaster; Preston; Wigan, &c. but bating my wish to call at Oakley-Hill, I must return this way, as I shall leave the final adjustment of matters with Mrs. Pemberton, till I come back, or I must wait here for the finishing some writings, longer than I else shall have occasion to do. Not but that I really should be very happy to spend a few days with my reverend friend in his tranquil abode, but my impatience to return to London forbids my loitering.

I almost despair of prevailing with Mr. Broomley to carry his Alethea—or even to permit her going—to St. James's Square. However, I shall, by and by, press still more strongly to see them both, either there, or in Hertfordshire.

When I leave Kildwick I must proceed to Skipton, from whence I intend writing to the worthy divine, to communicate Lord Danvers' and Lady Caroline's intention respecting his grand-daughter. I cannot tell him of it, while with him, as I should be hurt at receiving any acknowledgments from a man so much my superior.

My dearest girl, farewell. I am already impatient to see you. "The universe, without my Harriet, would appear to me as a desert." Write to me upon the receipt of this, and direct it to the care of Mr. Broomley, that it may be ready for me at my return; and about two days after, order another to be left till demanded, at the post-office, Mansfield.

Yours, with still encreasing affection,

AUGUSTUS MAYNARD.

Be cautious not to let Caroline know any thing of my self-introduction to Mr. Slayton. Her delicacy would take the alarm, and prohibit my proceeding.

LETTER, XX.

POLLY FENTON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

London, Tuesday, March 31st.

MADAM,

I Was once deemed worthy of your notice, and that of Mrs. Stanhope, but I confess I have long since lost all pretensions to that honor. I will not—I need not—enlarge upon the particulars which led to my destruction. You were too well acquainted with them, and with the misery which was the consequence of my deviating from the principles which good Mrs. Stanhope used to endeavour to impress upon my mind, when she permitted my attendance upon you at Hampstead. Had my father and mother treated me with half the tenderness I received from her, I should not, though a stray sheep, have been a lost one. Their severity, for which, when in the depth of wretchedness, I almost execrated their names, drove me from error to guilt; from guilt—to guilt repeated and avowed. Oh! had they fostered; soothed, and healed the wounded soul of the once humble—once returning penitent! how much happier should we all have been Here and Hereafter!—For what can they expect in another world, for having, in this, “bruised the broken reed.”

But, madam, this is not the business of my letter. I am not now, I own, in a repentant mood. Revenge—Revenge to *one* of my guilty partners, by whom I have lately been again abandoned to poverty, stimulates me to an act, which wants but purity of motive to procure me applause.

About nine months back, left in distress, by that agent of the devil’s, Lord Partington, who drew me from innocence and happiness at once, I was glad to accept of a maintenance from Colonel Greville, and lived in lodgings of his procuring, till he very lately, upon a pretence of jealousy, drove me back to penury. While I was under his protection, he transacted all business of consequence at the rooms he had furnished for my reception, where, in a bureau (which stood in a little place called my dressing-closet) he usually deposited all his letters and other papers, because he thought them more secure there than at his lodgings in Pall-Mall, which, when he went into the country, were generally left empty.

Near the latter end of January, at which time Colonel Greville was absent from England, I was sent for by a Mrs. Digby, a relation of his, to go down into Leicestershire, there (assuming the name of Matilda Barlowe) to act the part of a young woman seduced by Sir Charles Conway; about which business I had had a hint given me by the Colonel, previous to his leaving London, with a strict injunction to attend to Mrs. Digby’s instructions. I obeyed, and, from really feeling the force of the truths I was taught to utter, acted my part with success, *as I have since found*; for I was not then made acquainted with the whole of the business: but a short time before this ungrateful man causelessly quarrelled with me, that he might have some pretence to throw me again upon the world

poor and friendless, he heedlessly left, as indeed he frequently did, the key in his bureau, which, at this time, excited my curiosity, and knowing the Colonel was going out of town, not to return till next day, I opened this repository, and observed such and such arched niches were appropriated to such and such business, over which, pieces of paper were affixed with wafers to signify the nature of the writings deposited in each place; for Colonel Greville is a man of business as well as pleasure; though I found in my search that his affairs are in a shattered condition. Over the middle niche, to which was a little door locked up, I saw *Emma Stanley*, which, not knowing the lady by her real name, awakened in me some sentiments of jealousy. I therefore endeavoured to find a key to fit the lock, which at last I did, and examining the contents of the place, found the whole history, which before I was only in part acquainted with, of my journey into Leicestershire; it being all laid open in several long letters from Mrs. Digby and Lord Fitzmurray. I will not tire you, madam, with my sentiments upon what I read; but being desirous to peruse them with attention, I carried them to my chamber, intending to replace them before Colonel Greville's return, which, however I was prevented doing by his coming back sooner in the morning than I expected, at which time he locked the bureau, and put the key in his pocket. I trembled lest he should miss the letters; till I recollected having re-locked the little door within.

For two days I watched for an opportunity to re-place the papers, knowing he would not pardon what I had done, and I did not chuse to quarrel with him till I had some security for a promised future maintenance; but for the opportunity I wanted, I watched in vain; and on the third day after, he fermented the dispute which occasioned my dismissal. I was ordered to quit my habitation within three hours, which I did; taking with me the letters I had obtained, that I might use them to his confusion. It is now just a week since I left him; during which period I have been very miserable. Sometimes I have had thoughts of endeavouring to get my livelihood in a reputable way; but the door seems shut against me, and repentance banished.

Believe me, madam, I did not, when I began, intend to write in this style. I verily think it is from recollecting the character I am addressing, that some faint compunction seems to arise. Oh! my dear young lady! you do not know—and may you never know—the wretchedness—the deplorable wretchedness of guilt; especially when those are involved in it who once had hope of happiness with innocence.

But to what purpose do I go on thus! Before this reaches you, I, probably, (and cannot help confessing it) shall have lost the ideas which are now awakened.

I will proceed to tell you how it came into my mind to send to you the enclosed packet of letters, which I at first thought of conveying directly to Miss Stanley.

The day after I left my late lodgings, I was seized with a violent rheumatic pain in my face, occasioned by having caught cold, which continued to torment me for four or five days, or I should, before this time, have wreaked my revenge. When I was well enough to write, I began a letter to the lady above-mentioned, who, I had reason to suppose, was then at Woodstock; but recollecting that the time which Lord Fitzmurray

had fixed for the execution of his diabolical plot was near at hand, I was apprehensive that my information might not reach her soon enough to frustrate it, as I had not any certain direction to her, and having heard from Betty Johnson that you were gone with Mrs. Stanhope to live at that place, I had no doubt but that you must know the family of the Lawson's whom Lord Fitzmurray talks about, therefore went to Mrs. Ashby, and begged she would tell me how I must address a letter to you upon urgent business. The good lady hesitated some time, but at length obliged me.

To you therefore, madam, I transmit the whole of this important affair; being assured you will, from better motives than I can boast, find out, and save, if possible, an innocent young lady from destruction.

And now if you could—But I am ashamed to ask it—Yet my necessities are *so* pressing, that if you *could* procure me some trifle—reward I dare not call it—for the service my intelligence may be of, it would be a present relief to an undeserving object, who always admired—though she had not the grace to follow—the precepts she has often heard in your presence.

Any little matter directed to me at Mrs. Burchell's, opposite St. Clement's Church, in the Strand, will be received with gratitude by, madam,
your distressed,
but ever respectful,
humble servant,
MARY FENTON.

LETTER, XXI.

MISS MARIA LEWIS, TO POLLY FENTON.

Woodstock, first day of fourth month.

I Write to thee, Polly, by my aunt Stanhope's command, which well agreeth with my own inclination, within five minutes after the perusal of thy letter, to invite—to entreat—thy immediately coming to the Lawn in Woodstock, where, my poor unhappy girl! thou wilt be received without one reproach, and continue to be treated with the greatest tenderness by one of the best women in the world.

Hasten, Polly, hasten, instantly, to thy real friends. Thy story here is not known. Fear not that thou shalt ever be reminded of thy past errors with severity. We will endeavour—not to *drive*, but—to *lead* thee into the path from whence thou hast strayed, and thou shalt be as secure of a future provision as the instability of this world can give.

Now is the time. *Now*, that adversity is kindly sent to awaken the bitterness of self-reproach. Stay not till the thorny, though flowery path, be again opened, lest, by once more entering it, thou shouldst lose thyself for ever!

My dear aunt in the first moment of zeal for thy real happiness, was going to send thee a draft upon her banker; but fearing what she intended as a relief, should, by enlivening thy mind, and causing thee to think of gayer scenes, prove thy sure destruction, she suppressed her intention.

If thou hast sufficient money to defray the expences of thy journey hither, delay not thy setting out one hour. If thou art straitened in that respect, carry the enclosed letter to Friend Ashby, and she will supply thee with a sufficiency; but if thou art not in immediate want, bring the letter back to Woodstock, whither thou must come, if it be only to receive the gratuity which I dare promise thee from the generosity of Emma Stanley; who, with her friend Charlotte Lawson, left Woodstock yesterday morning; frustrating, I hope, thereby, the wicked plan of that Greville, and him thou stilest Lord Fitzmurray: but we shall not be quite at ease about them till we hear they are safe arrived at Alverston.

And now, Polly, farewell. In a few days I hope to see thee, when thou shalt be convinced I am still thy friend—thy compassionating friend,

MARIA LEWIS.

LETTER, XXII.

MISS MARIA LEWIS, TO MISS LAWSON.

Woodstock, first day of fourth month.

TO give immediate ease to the anxiety my dear Charlotte will be under upon opening a letter sent by a special messenger from Woodstock, let me hasten to say that our friends here are all well, and that the packet I am ordered to convey by this expeditious method, is more likely to produce felicity, than its contrary, to those highest in thy estimation.

And now let me endeavour to express the surprise—the astonishment—with which we were all seized upon reading the letters which Richard, who is to give thee this, will have to deliver to thee. When I say we, thou wilt understand that I mean thy mother and our two aunts; for as soon as I had written to the young woman, whom, if thou receivest the packet in safety, thou wilt know by the name of Polly Fenton, my aunt and I were driven off to thy house to call a consultation; in which (after expressing our hopes that thou and our dear Emma arrived last evening at the Park in safety; about which we were not very apprehensive, as Richard said he saw you seated in the Alverston carriage before he left you at Coventry yesterday morning) we all agreed in thinking it right to send off a messenger to thee, late as it was, with the information which hath so greatly amazed us, lest Greville and Fitzmurray, disappointed in their original plot, should form some other; and I was ordered up to thy closet to write a few lines, during the time of Richard's getting in readiness for the journey.

We anticipate the sensations thou wilt experience on this occasion; and the dear Emma, and indeed all who are interested in the event, are before us in imagination. But I must not stay to express my sentiments. Let us have a minute account of every circumstance relating to the unfolding this discovery, as thou must suppose the subject will be the chief one, for some time, of our conversation.

Thy prudence, my Charlotte, will have a trial. How thou wilt proceed, I cannot conjecture. We have each of us formed a separate guess, but I will not tell thee what any one's is, lest it should improperly bias thee; and thou who art amongst those most interested, must, as my aunt observeth, be best qualified to know how to act in a case so delicate respecting Emma Stanley.

Dear girl! what pain must she experience before she can enjoy the felicity which will, we all hope, result from this sad—this vile—and hitherto successful contrivance.

My letter is now called for. Richard is ready. He engages to be with thee—no accident intervening—to-morrow evening. By his return we hope to hear thou and Emma are in safety.

Need I say that all here join in the kindest remembrance—in sympathy and in congratulation—

with thy

MARIA LEWIS!

As I know thou wilt not be without anxiety respecting Polly Fenton, I have taken a slight sketch of what I have written to her, to enclose for thy perusal.

LETTER, XXIII.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Alverston, April 2^d.

I Am all surprise! All confusion! All *amazement*! So pleased! So distressed! So angry! So happy! What shall I do? How shall I manage? Why did not you tell me how to proceed? Why did not my matronly friends send their advice? What *shall* I do? Mr. Stanley is so precipitate, and Colonel Greville is *here*. *Colonel Greville*—vile dissembler—is *at Alverston*, Maria! But that I believe you have gathered from the horrid Fitzmurray's last letter, though I have only just skimmed any of them over. I had not time—I had not patience—to read them deliberately.

If I tell Mr. Stanley — an immediate challenge will be the consequence. Yet sure he would not draw his sword upon *a visiter*! However, I dare not trust him: nor can I first tell my dear Emma. Her delicacy would not permit her to either act or advise. I must unfold the matter gently to Sir Edward and Lady Stanley. But what can *they* do! To be officious in preventing Mrs. Digby's detestable art from succeeding, would seem like inviting Sir Charles Conway's return to their daughter. Well, and what of that! Is not Sir Charles too noble to misconstrue an act of bare rectitude! To be sure he is. I wonder how I could let so false a delicacy one moment prevent my determining to reveal the matter to them. I hope they will not delay writing to Sir Charles. I hope their letter will reach him before it be too late to countermine that Mrs. Digby's dark workings.

With regard to Colonel Greville—What can Sir Edward do about him?

But how I perplex you and myself!

Richard shall go directly back to Swarkston to get some rest. He shall not stay here, lest Emma interrogates him. And what *shall* I say to her about his coming! I must flatly tell her she must not know the business at present. But what a perplexity will that be to such an active mind as hers, which is so greatly interested in all that concerns *me*, as she must suppose something that is going forward does particularly! However I *must* go through with it.

I will now send off Richard, and will soon write again. You need not ask me to be minute in my account of the *process* of this affair. I shall not be able to forbear giving you every particular.

On Tuesday evening I wrote you intelligence of our safe arrival at the Park. You will probably receive that scribble before this reaches Woodstock.

The drawing-room is filled with company who dined here. I shall, I dare say, be abominably absent the whole evening. I believe a dance, after tea, has been proposed. If I can be excused, I will again retire to my pen and ink.

My dear Maria farewell. Dispose of my love and duty.

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

Pray ask my mother or aunt to look into my large cabinet and to take from the middle drawer a letter from Emma Stanley dated, as I well remember, the sixteenth of February. It is an account of her dismissal of Sir Charles Conway. Let this be enclosed in your next.

LETTER, XXIV.

COLONEL GREVILLE, TO LORD FITZMURRAY.

Alverston April, 2d, 1789.

YOUR messenger is now arrived. Well may you, as I have done and still do, curse that vile strumpet Fortune. But be comforted. All is not yet lost: on the contrary, we may find ourselves gainers by this present frustration of our enterprise.

I wrote to you on Tuesday evening, when I was most plaguily out of humour. Since that time I have been better, as I think I make considerable progress in my *amour*, and I doubt not but I shall conquer by submission. If my hopes are fallacious, and I mean very soon to try their strength, I shall call upon you to assist in the execution of a project I have been three days in digesting, which will effectually answer both your purpose and mine. For have her I will; or die in the attempt. You know the strength of my determinations, when once they are fixed.

I will just give you a hint of my new intention.

In a week or two, if the baronet's gout be civil—which I shall pray that it may; and of the efficacy of my prayers who ever doubted?—we are to make an excursion to an estate of his honor's which lies along the coast of North Wales. Need I say any more? Will not this hint, to a man so perfect as you are in the science of intrigue, be sufficient?

If this meditated event takes place you shall have due notice, that previous *to execution*, you may come in your seamans habit down to Derby, where we may meet and consult about particulars.

But if my goddess should be kind, and I have great faith in that conjecture, I will furnish out some plan for your amusement. You are, it must be confessed, the most active spirit in England when you are well set to work. What a strange thing, then, it is, that you cannot cut out for yourself. I know you hate to be idle, for which reason I was doubly

sorry for the frustration of the Woodstock business. But never fear—I will soon employ you some way or other.

I fancy the Alverston Parkites universally credit Conway's going to be married to Mrs. Digby, notwithstanding this plaguey parson hints to the contrary; and that idea, probably, smooths Miss Stanley's brow when she looks at me.

This Charlotte Lawson is, I believe, a confounded spirited girl. Her eye is sometimes turned upon me with such a penetrating cast, as if she would dive into the recesses of my heart. Once or twice I have almost thought she was in love with me.

But I must finish. The drawing-room is crowded with beauties. After tea we are to have a dance. Emma Stanley must dance with me.

George is, sometimes, very queer; but I pass it over, *for the present*. The baronet and his lady are still, upon all occasions, *my obliged humble servants*. I have not, you know, had a *negative*—strangely ungrateful if I had—from any one of the family but the girl herself; and to her I shall soon renew my *addresse*, which I think will not now *mortally offend*.

Adieu.

ARCHIBALD GREVILLE.

LETTER, XXV.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Alverston, Friday morning.

NOTWITHSTANDING we sat up last night to a very late hour, I arose this morning with the sun, that I might uninterruptedly pursue my subject of yesterday.

Emma is, I believe, still asleep, and I am fearful of making the least noise lest I should disturb her.

I will now give you an account of my first reception of your letter.

We had yesterday, as I told you, a great deal of company to dinner; after which, we walked to the green-house to look at a very beautiful shrub, for which we do not yet know a name, that arrived last week as a present from Captain Sellinger; and as we returned, we observed a man riding pretty fast up the avenue, which I soon perceived to be Richard, and was, consequently, considerably alarmed; therefore hastened to meet him as he alighted, when the faithful creature, seeing my anxiety, immediately told me I need not be frightened, for that all was well at Woodstock; he then gave me your letter, and after that, the packet, with which I hastened to my chamber, and, after skimming the

contents, wrote the incoherent scribble which I gave to Richard, and was just going down with it, to send him off, when Miss Stanley entered the room.

“What, Charlotte,” hastily asked she, “is the matter at Woodstock?”

Nothing, my dear Emma, that is, in any degree, unpleasant.

“But what,” said the dear girl, “occasioned Richard’s coming to Alverston? And what is the cause of the hurry in which I see you?”

Will you, my Emma (smiling in her face) be patient for a short time without my telling you the particulars of the packet I just now received?

“Why, Charlotte, you astonish me. What *can* be going forward that I must not know?”

If I tell you that I expect soon to hear of a wedding, you will still be inquisitive about the parties; especially if I add that they are amongst the number of those in whose happiness I am greatly interested.

“I will be whipped if Rachel be not going to be married.”

Emma be quiet. You must not sift. In a few days you shall know the whole. Ask not one more question, for she was going to speak; I must not yet hear another syllable upon the subject. And down I went, she following me, repeating—“I am all astonishment!”

Having dispatched Richard to Swarkston, I returned to the drawing-room, where, as soon as I entered, Mr. Evelyn, who improves upon me every time I see him, approached me, and led me to a seat in one of the bow windows, placing himself next me, upon which Emma soon joined us, and we entered into a pleasant conversation on the subject of secret-keeping; which, had I not more consequential business in hand, I would amuse you with. At last Emma promised to be very good, and very patient, till I thought it right to develop the mystery—for she had told Mr. Evelyn I was a secret in her debt.

It now, for the first time, occurred that this very gentleman was the most proper person, of all others in the world, to manage the whole of this important affair. To him, therefore, I instantly determined to apply; wondering it had not been my first and immediate resolve. I now cast about how to find an opportunity, and in what manner to begin; when the purposed dance presented itself to my idea, and all in a flutter, without any consideration, and I verily believe, preventing him from making, that instant, the request of me—I exclaimed—O Mr. Evelyn! will you—will you dance with me this evening?

The moment I had spoken, that moment I recollected the seeming impropriety of what I had said, and began to stammer out an apology, by telling him that as

extraordinary as my proceeding might appear, I believed I should be justified when my motive was explained, which — and was going on, when he interrupted me by saying that he thought himself affronted by any apology; as I could only think it necessary to make one, by supposing him so void of penetration as to believe I could say or do any thing inconsistent with the strictest rules of rectitude and delicacy; which in his own justification he must take leave to say, was diametrically opposite to the idea he had, at first seeing me, imbibed, and which, with encreasing conviction, he continued to entertain.

Do you not think that I was pleased with this compliment? I was indeed. I never remember myself to have been so gratified by flattery; for never before did I hear it conveyed with such a grace; or with so much modesty and seeming sincerity.

Now, Maria, do not be ill-natured, and criticise the honesty of my acknowledgements. Surely one may yield due praise to a deserving object without—without. I really do not know what to say to you, because you will think—What am I talking about! I was so earnest in my supposition that you would judge me strictly, that I almost fancied I heard you speak.

Mr. Evelyn—to go on with my story—reconciled me to myself, by assuring me he was just going to solicit *the honor* of my hand for the evening, when I, with such a frankness, as adorned my character, anticipated his intention.

Tea was now brought in; soon after which, country-dances commenced. Miss Stanley was engaged, greatly I saw against her approbation, to Colonel Greville. Mr. Stanley danced with Miss Emmeline Stafford: but he was so very inanimate, that it was not in the power of his agreeable partner to enliven him. How the rest were paired is not of much consequence. We had ten couples.

When Mr. Evelyn went up to me to lead me into the line, I said—I do not wish to dance much, I want to talk to you. However, we must go down once or twice. I will not, Maria, say that he was the best partner I ever danced with, because it will again lead you to criticise. And yet, how can I, good Doctor Griffith! be afraid of the censures of *your little dove*? My gentle friend, I ask your pardon. Forgive me, and *do not* say I was *conscious*.

At the end of the second dance I sat down in a distant part of the room; Mr. Evelyn by me; when without any circumlocution, for I was afraid of its being remarked if I sat long there, I told him every particular of the affair in question.

No expressions of surprise that I ever before observed, exceeded those which, while I was speaking, appeared in Mr. Evelyn's countenance, mixed with an equal share of indignation. He never once interrupted me during the whole of my narrative, which I ended with telling him the reason of my not daring to trust Mr. Stanley upon the occasion.

“Exceedingly right, Miss Lawson—exceedingly considerate. But where shall I find language to speak the surprise—the abhorrence—the *happiness*—which fills my mind upon this discovery. Have you, madam, the letters in your pocket?”

No, Sir: but I will go up for them, and will give them to your servant; who, without any particular appearance, may call you out to deliver them. Do not hasten your return on my account; I will go and sit by the card tables, for I am not much in the humour for dancing; therefore I beg you will read all the letters with attention, beginning with that signed Mary Fenton, that your judgment may have every thing in view.

“Excellent Miss Lawson!”—was all I allowed him time to say, for hastening out of the room, I went up for the letters, gave them to his servant, and returned to the ball-room. He was soon called out, and I went and sat by Lady Stanley; saying to those who enquired for my partner, that he was sent for out upon some business.

In about half an hour he returned. When he entered the room his eyes, darting fire, seemed to seek Colonel Greville; whom, he afterwards told me, he was obliged industriously to avoid speaking to; it being impossible to treat him with common civility.

As soon as Mr. Evelyn could get an opportunity of speaking at large, without particular observation, he said he never before met with an incident which had raised such a variety of passions; that it was impossible for him to convey the least adequate idea of his sentiments upon the letters I had given him. Miss Stanley, from what I had told him of her sentiments and conduct, was, he thought, still more to be pitied than Sir Charles Conway; as he had only to *endure*—she to *inflict* and endure likewise—sufferings of the most acute nature. Persuaded as Miss Stanley was (and as any one must have been by such a train of artful falsehoods) that rectitude required a discontinuance of the engagement between her and Sir Charles, she had acted most nobly indeed; and her character was fixed, in his opinion as one of the first amongst women. With regard to Mrs. Digby—he knew not how to express himself; as the softest language he could use, with any degree of sincerity, would be more harsh than he should wish to deliver in my presence. Against Colonel Greville he was, *if possible*, still more irritated, because of his after-plans. Lord Fitzmurray he knew personally, as well as by his character, which, to speak without ceremony, was that of a fool and a libertine—a mere tool to any one who would set him at work in an intrigue, however vile and hazardous. His description of this wretch made me shudder at recollecting the danger from which my dear Emma and I have so providentially been delivered; for which I hope my heart, and hers, when she is apprized of it, will ever feel truly grateful.

Mr. Evelyn expressed an anxiety for Polly Fenton’s future welfare; and seemed apprehensive she might suffer from Colonel Greville’s vengeance, should he hereafter find out that it was she who had made this discovery; upon which I told him in what manner you had replied to her letter.

And now, Maria, I must desire you not to come to Alverstton till my conquest be confirmed, for I very much apprehend your power would be absolute. The difference of

your persuasions would stand me in but little stead; because the liberality in both your hearts is so distinguishable that though each would prefer partners with similar sentiments—However I will not anticipate evil, and rather than appear to be a coward, will *invite* danger by expressing my most ardent wishes that you, my dear girl, may hasten, as soon as Mrs. Stanhope's indisposition will permit, to this enchanting scene, where you will meet with characters similar to those celebrated in the Golden Age.

Do not think, Maria, that by an *enchanting scene*, I mean the illuminated ball-room in which I was last night engaged. Whenever my taste is so vitiated as to prefer (or put in competition) a confined space enlightened by the most heightened brilliancy of wax-candles, and prepared for the reception of even royal birth-night visitors, to a rural prospect gilded by the rays of sun, or by moon, renounce me as a friend; it being impossible to happen whilst my senses continue entire, and my heart uncorrupt.

Mr. Evelyn was visibly affected by my account of Mrs. Stanhope's intention respecting the poor unhappy creature who unfolded this important matter, and by the manner in which that intention was communicated to her; saying that you, however, must not monopolize the merit of providing for her in future.

He then greatly honored me by asking my advice how to proceed. I was pleased; but told him he must be both judge and council, and wished to hear his sentiments; expression my apprehensions of Sir Charles Conway's being entangled by Mrs. Digby.

"*Entangled*, madam, he *may* be—but not in his affection. *That* remains unalienably Miss Stanley's. Peruse this letter, Miss Lawson;" [putting into my hand one he received last Tuesday from Sir Charles] "your judgment—your prudence, may, I am well convinced, be relied upon. Make what use of it you please. Perhaps it will not be an improper prelude to your discovery of the affair to Miss Stanley."—And, Maria! he gave me a letter — *such* a letter! I have no patience to talk about it. *O THAT Mrs. Digby!* It is such designing creatures as she, which brings the artless part of our sex into suspicion. I cannot speak my detestation of Mrs. Digby. As Mr. Evelyn told me I might make what use I pleased of the letter, it cannot be a breach of confidence to copy it for you. I will therefore enclose it. But let it be destroyed, Maria, as soon as it has been read to the venerable three.

Mr. Evelyn was attended to Alverstton by a servant of Sir Charles Conway's, who still continues with him; and him he determined to send express to Yarmouth with a letter to his master, in these words.

"*Whatever may* be your engagements, my dear sir, with Mrs. Digby, they must be renounced. The tale I have to unfold would authorise a cessation in even the marriage ceremony, were it began. I will only stay to secure an official for Alverstton church next Sunday. As soon as possible after that be done, I mean to be with you. Let me presume to request you not to take any one step relating to Mrs. Digby, till I see you."

To the *purport* of the above—for he *repeated* it to me—did Mr. Evelyn write to Sir Charles, and sent it off, as he afterwards told me, rather before ten, desiring the servant to go on till twelve, and then to get some rest, to enable him to pursue his journey early in the morning.

The reason of his sending so expeditiously is to prevent, if possible, Mrs. Digby from succeeding in any more of her contrivances; as the delay of a few hours, in such a predicament, might be productive of disagreeable — if not of fatal consequences; Sir Charles Conway being distinguished by the *generosity* of his sentiments, and is impressed—for which Mr. Evelyn very much censures his own credulity—with some idea of its being possible that Colonel Greville's address to Miss Stanley may, in time, be successful; which, from what he then thought proper motives, he had intimated in his last letter to the baronet.

How could you, Mr. Evelyn!—I exclaimed, without thinking what I said—How could you—"My dear madam,"—interrupted he—"ought I not—impressed with such an idea—ought I not to have given to my friend—my patron—my benefactor—an intimation of a *probability*, which, if realized, might release, in some measure, the pressure from his spirits? But perhaps I was culpable in imagining the woman so sincerely beloved by Sir Charles Conway, could ever condescend to think of Colonel Greville as a husband."

I now said all that I thought ought to be acknowledged of my Emma's attachment—unabated, though her opinion was lessened—for Sir Charles; and at length went so far as to promise him a perusal of the letter which, in my last, I requested you to convey to me.

I could not when I wrote, being in haste, tell you why I made this request. My reason arose from an idea that it might be necessary to be produced to justify Miss Stanley's conduct — to *her brother*, more than to any other person. However I told Mr. Evelyn as much of it as I could remember; [which was a pretty deal] especially of that part which adverted to the promise. And here Mr. Evelyn asked me if I thought that promise ought to have been given. I told him I did not; and that Miss Stanley had long since been convinced of her error in that particular, though she could not have the least idea of its having been extorted for bad purposes. But consider, said I, Mr. Evelyn, how the dear girl was led on, and by what art—"I do. I do." interrupted he. "and allow that under such circumstances her compliance was greatly more to be lamented than blamed. Miss Stanley madam, now the veil that clouded her character is removed, shines in my eye, like a star of the first brilliancy. Every one who sees her must immediately be prepossessed in her favor. Determined as I was against being pleased with her on account of her very reprehensible conduct (as I then thought it) respecting my truly noble friend, I could not shut my eyes to the striking beauties of her person and mind."

Mr. Evelyn then said several very agreeable things upon the attachment between her and me; which again introduced the name of my little Quaker friend. But I will not tell you all, Maria.

Colonel Greville came next under consideration.

What was to be done with *him*? He had certainly cancelled the obligation that all the Stanleys thought they owed him; but how to proceed without awakening George's resentment before he was gone from Alverston—was the question. It was a point which required some consideration.

We were now called upon to join the dance. When it was finished, Mr. Evelyn again stepped out, returning in a few minutes with a piece of paper which he asked me to peruse, and to tell him if I thought it would be improper to put such a note into Colonel Greville's hands, upon his retiring for the night.

What he had written was as follows—

“A wish to prevent disagreeable consequences, urges me to tell Colonel Greville that several very long letters—the first dated February the seventeenth, the last March the twenty-fourth, subscribed Arabella Digby, and addressed to him—with four or five from Lord Fitzmurray, displaying the whole business of a happily frustrated design, will, it is probable, be read to-morrow morning in the library to those most interested in their subject; with one from the person who occasioned their conveyance to Alverston.

What mode of conduct Colonel Greville will think it wisest to pursue, upon this literally true information, I do not pretend to conjecture, though I could advise.”

HERBERT EVELYN.

There was no possible objection to be made to this note. It was therefore fixed for him to receive it at his going to his chamber; and that Mr. Evelyn should go to the Rectory in the morning, leaving the letters with me that I might open the discovery to the family in any manner I judged proper, after Colonel Greville's departure; as it was not to be doubted that he would immediately leave Alverston. Mr. Evelyn, in the mean time, would endeavour to get the church supplied for Sunday, then directly set out for Yarmouth; first sending for the packet of letters to take with him, as he did not wish to see any of the family before he saw Sir Charles Conway; lest Miss Stanley's delicacy should urge his proceeding contrary to his wishes and determination.

This business put in a train—the evening seemed extremely pleasant. We continued dancing till a late hour. I will not say *how* late, lest you should think I am turning rake.

And now I will dress, and then awaken Emma.

Half after eight.

Miss Stanley is up. She has been questioning me about my early rising. What had I been doing—was her enquiry; for I confessed my seeing the sun's first rays.

Thinking about Mrs. Digby, Emma.

By the bye, I forgot to tell you that this Colonel Greville has several times intimated Mrs. Digby was to be Lady Conway, which had filled us with a thousand various conjectures that were the constant subject of our retired conversation. Something there was, we were convinced, strangely mysterious in the affair. But what could we do!

Only wonder in private.

Thinking about Mrs. Digby, Emma, was my reply.

“Oh, Charlotte!” said the dear girl, bursting into tears, “I cannot, I will own, endure the ideas which the mention of her name raises. Never, never,” said she, after a pause, “expect to hear me numbered amongst those whose hearts are truly happy. In resignation *alone*, can I ever know felicity.”

My dear Emma! I still hope to see you blest to the extent of your wishes.

“What do you mean! What bliss—what happiness—Ah Charlotte!”

Well, it strongly dwells in my mind that you will at last be Lady Conway.

“How can you speak thus lightly upon a subject which so greatly—too greatly—distresses me! Indeed Miss Lawson”—

Miss Lawson, Emma! Take back Miss Lawson, and I will tell you a tale. *Mrs. Digby* will never be Lady Conway; depend upon it.

“*What do you mean*, Charlotte? What *can* you mean thus to raise alarms, which, though they tend to nothing, greatly disturb my spirits. Most sincerely do I wish to lose every remembrance of Sir Charles Conway: yet—fool that I am—I take a pleasure, though it is a melancholy one, in mentioning his name.”

Sir Charles, too, is melancholy, Emma; at least if there be any truth in what he writes to his friend — [taking from my pocket his letter to Mr. Evelyn.]

Emma hastily rising and blushing a deep crimson—“For goodness sake, Charlotte, what—what letter is that?”

If you will promise, said I, with a smile, not to be *very* angry with either the writer or the written-to, I will, as I want to finish my dress, leave it in your hands for perusal, expecting, when I come back, your sentiments upon it at large: and laying the letter upon the dressing-table, I left her; thinking it would be best for her to read it entirely by herself.

And now I must again attend her; and as this scribble is of a tolerable length, I will here finish it; subscribing myself, ever fervently
yours,

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

Tell my mother I wrote to my sister on Wednesday.

LETTER, XXVI.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Friday evening.

WHAT a busy morning have I passed! Till now I have not had leisure to write one syllable.

But to piece my narrative—

Just as I finished my last sheet, Miss Stanley's maid came to attend me. I did not want her assistance, but wishing to hear something of Colonel Greville, I detained her, and asked her if the gentlemen were assembled in the library for breakfast—that being the room in which the day at Alverston is usually began.

She told me Sir Edward and Mr. Stanley had just met there; but that Mr. Evelyn breakfasted at the Rectory, and that Colonel Greville was gone.

Gone, said I, where to?

“Gone home, madam,” said little Betty—“gone quite away; and Jonas said he thought he seemed as if he was not sober this morning, for he was in a terrible passion, and *had liked* to have knocked his own man down all along.”

But for what reason, asked I, did he abuse his servant?

“No-body knows, madam,” replied she; “for the man said he never saw him in such a way before. And he *swore*—dear my heart! how he did swear! We heard him, madam, up into the housekeeper's room before five o'clock.”

I was quite satisfied with the intelligence I had gained, respecting Colonel Greville, of whom I hope I shall never hereafter hear mention. There is no reason to fear his return to Alverston. He has, I dare say, taken his last leave of the Park and its inhabitants. What a mortification must the wretch have endured!

When I had dismissed Betty, I returned to Miss Stanley, whom I found in a *deep reverie*. At seeing me, she started and burst into tears. I sat down beside her, and she leaned her head upon my bosom; sighing most heavily.

Why this, my dear Emma! said I. Why *so much* agitated by Sir Charles's letter to his friend?

Emma. Oh, Charlotte, my heart is bursting. You know not—you know not—what I endure.

Charlotte. Be comforted, my dear girl. All will, I hope, be well. All will, I hope, *soon* be well.

Emma. Illude me not, Charlotte. Give me not *false* support.—But what a woman is Mrs. Digby! How can *she* justify to herself—Charlotte what a mystery is here!

Charlotte. Shall I solve it, Emma?—[smiling in her face.]

Emma. What! How? [greatly alarmed.] Tell me—tell me if you have any thing to say.

Charlotte. I have a letter, my lovely friend, [almost as much agitated as herself] which will, I hope, be the means of your coming happiness. Shall I leave it with you, or shall I read the contents?

Emma. I cannot read—I cannot hear it read. Dear Charlotte tell me all at once.

Charlotte. Shall I then whisper it to you, that Sir Charles Conway never deceived you?

Emma. Oh Charlotte!

Charlotte. He never did, I dare aver. Guard yourself against the effects of surprise, when you hear that the whole tale of the Matilda Barlowe, whose real name is Polly Fenton, was a fabrication of Mrs. Digby's, to induce you to break your engagement with Sir Charles Conway, that she might secure him to herself.

The dear Emma clasped her hands, and lifted up her streaming eyes to Heaven, but never spoke for several minutes; till at length—"Heavens and Earth!—And is it possible!—But, Charlotte, *are you sure?*"

Charlotte. Very sure, my dear. I have it under her own hand; though not with her knowledge.

Emma. What then have I done!!! *Oh!* Charlotte! [deeply sighing] I cannot bear my own ideas. *What must Sir Charles Conway think of me!*

Charlotte. Sir Charles, my dear Emma, will soon be apprized of the whole. The tale is long: the circumstances many. When you are composed, every particular shall be laid before you.

Emma. I cannot doubt; yet I can scarce believe. You say you are VERY sure.

Charlotte. *I am indeed.*

Emma. Well, then—But, Oh! my heart is tortured. *When* will Sir Charles know—!

She could say no more; but looked with impatience for my reply.

I told her that by to-morrow evening he would doubtless be informed of every circumstance.

“*To-morrow evening!*”—she faintly repeated, and lifting up the hand I held not, turned still paler, and sunk lifeless into my arms. In a few minutes, however, she recovered, when, without ringing for assistance, I conveyed her to the bed, and laid her upon it; sitting down by its side. I then told her as many of the *heads* of the story as were necessary to relieve her *wonder*; after which, she requested to be left by herself, and believing she would then be best alone, I complied, upon her promise to ring for some chocolate during the time of breakfasting below; which, fortunately for the circumstances, was this morning much later than common; Lady Stanley being rather fatigued by having sat up last night so long beyond her accustomed hour: however, when I went into the library, I found she had been waiting some little time, with Sir Edward and Mr. Stanley, for the rest of the party.

The usual salutations over, Emma was enquired for.

Miss Stanley, said I, begs permission to breakfast in her own apartment.

“Is not Emma well?” asked Sir Edward, with concern.

As well as can be expected, I think, returned I; smiling with a meaning he did not then understand, but, doubtless, supposed I alluded to the preceding evening’s *pleasurable fatigues*.

Mr. Evelyn and Colonel Greville were then called for. Mr. Evelyn was gone to the Rectory; the Colonel *rode out*—was the report: no one, I imagine, chusing to give in the account of his frenzical departure.

After a few minutes of indifferent conversation, I addressed myself to Mr. Stanley.

I think, sir, you have seen the letter which Mr. Evelyn received this week from Sir Charles Conway.

Mr. Stanley, [with some surprise.] I have, Miss Lawson; and by your manner of speaking, so I suppose have you.

Charlotte. I have; and for a particular reason must request your reading it to Sir Edward and Lady Stanley. [Laying it before him.]

They all looked at me with earnestness.

Proceed; said I. Let Mrs. Digby be introduced.

When you read this letter, a copy of which I will enclose, you will readily conjecture the sentiments it must have occasioned. Mr. Stanley stormed. Sir Edward and her Ladyship were greatly affected, especially by that part which more immediately related to their Emma.

Spare your exclamations, said I to George. You will presently fancy you have a still stronger demand for them. I then gave him Mrs. Digby's letter to Colonel Greville, dated February the seventeenth, but to tell you the execrations he made use of—the storms into which he was thrown during the reading of it—sometimes rising and crossing the room with long and hasty steps; then stamping and vowing revenge upon the heads of these vile actors—would swell my letter beyond all bounds; and be, moreover, a repetition of such violent language as neither you nor I could bear to write or peruse. Lady Stanley once or twice called upon him to be moderate; but Sir Edward—admirable—excellent as he is—was almost transported beyond his guard. *Execrable!—diabolical!*—escaped him once or twice while George was reading; who did not stop at any of these *simple* expressions.

The first letter was, I suppose, began early in the day; the second, which relates the dear Emma's distress, dated "Late—very late, Tuesday night," was more than even Lady Stanley could support. She sat determinedly attentive till she burst into a flood of tears, and Mr. Stanley's task was suspended. Upon recollection, I cannot forbear smiling at the whimsicalness of George's agitation. He execrated and whistled—both in the height of passion—alternately. Then said he would be perfectly calm; and for a few minutes was so; till meeting with fresh aggravation, he again gave vent to his fury.

When at Lady Stanley's request, he laid down, for a short time, the letter he was reading, I stepped up to Emma, whom I found very languid and low; but as much composed as I could expect. Upon my telling her how we had been employed in the library, she begged me to return, and not to go any more to her till the whole was ended. I then, wishing her to see every thing by degrees, gave her your letter to me; Polly Fenton's to you; your reply, and mine to you of this morning; all which I thought it best she should peruse at her leisure.

I now returned to the library, when (having satisfied the anxious enquirers about their Emma, whom they wished not to see till after they had all circumstances before them; and assured them they need not fear any interruption from Colonel Greville) the business of reading re-commenced, and Mrs. Digby's second letter finished, but not without many a hearty imprecation from Mr. Stanley; who, though in the presence of his father and mother, swore most valiantly. They both endeavoured to moderate him; but to no purpose. The matter was beyond his endurance.

The third letter, with the whimsical date of—"Wednesday morning, *I am ashamed to say how early,*" and beginning with—"What can either lead or drive a woman so fast as inclination?"—made Mrs. Digby appear still more detestable; as it heightened our ideas of her natural endowments, while it showed her application of them to the very worst of purposes. Her's is the most hateful character upon the face of the globe. Yet, Maria, this woman has a face that would charm a stoic, and is not more than twenty-three or four. Where can she so early—But if I once begin to animadvert, adieu to narrative; for my sentiments are exuberant indeed.

The fabrication of the Matilda-Barlowe tale, was surely beyond any thing of its kind ever heard before.

What to make of her frequent confessions of compunction, I know not. Some times they appear to proceed from the force of truth; at other times, it seems as if she acknowledged, only to have an opportunity of drawing excuses. Not that she was afraid of the censure of her associate; for she needed not to have made herself appear so bad as she did; but *her pride in her art* is vastly superior to any idea she has of rectitude. She would not suppress the relation of any little *contrivance*, though she must at the same time, evince the sacrifice of every thing valuable in executing it. On *some* occasions her conscience *was* I believe, rather troublesome; and she was obliged to apply sophistical arguments as opiates.

The fourth letter is dated February the twenty-first.

"Sing! Rejoice! Triumph!"—its singular beginning. I mention their dates and first lines, as I go along, that, if you remember any thing of the letters, your ideas may keep pace with our employment and present our sensations.

This letter is a very vile one indeed. Her expressions respecting Mr. Digby, who was it seems, a very excellent and an amiable man, made such hard words rise to my lips, as I found it difficult to suppress.

The two or three single-sheet letters upon this abominable woman's first going to Yarmouth, are not of much consequence but that dated March the twenty-fourth which she begins with saying *she was acting the part of a sick woman*, is one of the most extraordinary compositions I ever saw upon any subject. I hope there is not Mrs. Digby's counterpart to be met with under a female semblance.

We now adverted to the letters of that Fitzmurray; all written upon one subject and in one style: the same unvarying string of oaths and impudence. I think he is as great a fool as libertine. His last letter is a display of the most abominable scheme that ever a villainous heart contrived. What destruction was designed for both Emma and myself! I tremble to think of the nearness of its execution. To that protecting power ever watchful for the safety of poor defenceless mortals, our preservation from this dreadful evil must be solely acknowledged.

These letters done—I again stepped up to Emma for those I left for her perusal. She was greatly affected by the explanation she gathered from Polly Fenton's; for I had not unfolded to her half the story; fearing to overwhelm her by telling her too much at once. However she permitted my going down again with the letters she had just perused; all of which, except mine to you, I put into Mr. Stanley's hands, and after he had read, and we had together *digested the contents* (in no very unfavorable way to *you* Maria) I told this anxious party what Mr. Evelyn had done and intended to do, respecting Colonel Greville and Sir Charles Conway, which met with their entire approbation; and they all, even our impatient George, thought it best for them not to see Mr. Evelyn previous to his going to Yarmouth; though had the delicacy of his sister permitted, Mr. Stanley would eagerly have posted directly to that place himself.

At this juncture I received a note from Mr. Evelyn, to tell me he could not set off till after dinner, being obliged to wait the return of a messenger from Rowden, who was gone there with a letter to a clergyman, whom he had before engaged to officiate at Alverstton the Sunday *after* next, and during his absence. He now wrote to solicit his coming *next* Sunday, as he was unexpectedly summoned away by business of consequence.

Mr. Evelyn desired me not to hurry over the perusal of the letters with the family, as he would send again for them before his going.

This note I gave to Mr. Stanley. He read it aloud, and it gave general satisfaction; but George now fell with such unrestrainable violence upon Colonel Greville as really frightened us.

He threatened to pursue him to the Antipodes, should he flee thither, to take vengeance. It was a long time before he could be brought to moderation; but at length, by a mixture of entreaty and command, he did promise not to take any one step in the affair till Sir Charles Conway's return to Hawthorn Grove.

They all now wished to see their Emma, to whom I went up to prepare for their visit, soon after which, Lady Stanley entered the apartment, and with eyes sparkling with pleasure, congratulated the dear, trembling, blushing girl upon the recent discovery, and herself upon her child's preservation; not forgetting *my* danger and escape; bidding us both be grateful to Him to whom all gratitude is due.

My beloved friend threw herself into her mother's arms, and, with her head upon her bosom, sobbed out her request for pardon, for having given a promise of secrecy which excluded her from her confidence; adding—"I have paid—I have dearly paid"—

"Say nothing, my beloved Emma, interrupted this tender mother, "on that head. I do not mean to warp your judgement by telling you I *approve* your promise; but though it is not meritorious, it is extenuable; and if the confession will give you any satisfaction, I will freely acknowledge that, under the same circumstances, I think I should have fallen into the same error."

Emma was pouring out her gratitude for her mother's condescension when Sir Edward and Mr. Stanley entered the room. The father, with the greatest tenderness, repeated his lady's sentiments; pressed his lovely daughter to his breast with fervency, and, with a countenance of encreased vivacity, bid her look forward to happiness.

Positively, Maria, if Lady Stanley were to leave this world, Sir Edward, were he to sue for my favor, would distance all competitors.

"Parson and all, Charlotte?"

I tell you, child, he would distance *them all*. What then signifies singling out *one* for exception!

As to George—he was so boisterous, I thought he would have hugged poor Emma to death. She was again his sister—his beloved sister: and if it had not been for that vile!—And here he began to swear again most outrageously; begging us not to stop him, as his heart, if he must not speak, would boil over with madness.

The morning was now far advanced. They, therefore, left Emma and me to ourselves; when, after she was a little composed, I began to read to her the letters of Mrs. Digby, thinking it necessary she should be acquainted with every particular; but she was so much affected, that I was obliged to desist. I then prevailed upon her to rest again upon the bed, by the side of which I have ever since sat writing, during which time she has scarce spoken ten words; but she now seems revived, and is talking of getting up and dressing herself for dinner. I, likewise, must endeavour to make some little amendment in my appearance, but will first write a note to Mr. Evelyn, with the packet of letters, to tell him I have made the discovery general, and that Miss Stanley is very much indisposed, but better than she was two hours back.

Emma's delicacy was considerably pained when she read the promise I had given my clerical friend, of shewing him the letter she had written to me upon her dismissal of Sir Charles Conway. Indeed I was not aware of that circumstance when I put my scribble into her hand: and, upon recollection, there were several trifling matters with which she should not *at present* have been made acquainted.

However I have appeased her by arguments superior to the mere forms of delicacy.

And now, my dear Maria, it is, I think, high time to end this very long epistle.

I do not mean to write again till something of consequence occurs respecting this interesting business.

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

LETTER, XXVII.

COLONEL GREVILLE, TO LORD FITZMURRAY.

Pall-Mall, Friday evening.

WHAT language shall I use to express the whirlwind by which my soul is agitated!

No fury in Bedlam can feel more raging torments than I do at this moment.

May the confusion and distraction which tear me to pieces, seize upon the hearts of my enemies.

Some agent of Lucifer's has conveyed my letters from you and Mrs. Digby, which disclose the whole of my past, present and future designs upon Emma Stanley, to Alverston—a curse upon his or her head, be it whom it may—and I was obliged to fly like a culprit (at the intimation of a puppy of a parson) from the faces of the inhabitants of the Park; though had my power equalled my will, I would have staid till I had seen them all extirpated from existence.

Nothing short of witchcraft has been used upon this cursed occasion! O! I could execrate the perpetrators till I lost my breath, could I thereby blast their souls to nonentity! Who to suspect I know not, or every wretch within the compass of suspicion should feel my vengeance.

The letters were in my bureau at the lodgings late Polly Fenton's; at which, since she left the place, I have more than once transacted business; not having had leisure to remove the papers, some of them of consequence, which I used to deposit there. I should immediately have suspected her to have been the criminal, did I not recollect [I think I am not mistaken] having had recourse to these very letters the day after I dismissed her. Yet mother Hornsby strongly affirms that there has not been one soul within the rooms since she left them, but myself. If it *does* appear—or if I only come at one suspicious circumstance—that this revengeful strumpet *has done this deed*, I will most assuredly hurl her headlong to endless perdition: she shall not, by all that is sacred, have time for one repentant sigh.

Friday midnight.

Since writing the foregoing, I have been to look for the wretch above-mentioned, but cannot find her. She occupied a miserable garret at old mother Burchel's, that fink of viciousness, for some days, where she was, or pretended to be, very ill; but this morning went away in a hackney coach with all her cargo of trumpery; paying, it seems, all she owed, having somewhere or other picked up a handful of money. This old brute says, that madam had a letter carried to her by the post-man yesterday, which set her to crying most bitterly, and that, soon after, she went out and came back with the pelf.

What the plague can all this mean! But let her go and be cursed! Criminal or not criminal in *this* case—my comfort is, that she will soon rot or starve in some polluted den. Mrs. Digby too, which is another faint relief, will experience some kindred tortures.

As to myself—Before you receive this, I shall be off—out of the kingdom. I have been with Bullen, and have taken up as much money as the remains of my estate could procure; for which the dog would have a bond and judgment. So the rest of my creditors may go to the devil, and I wish he may pay some of them with interest.

Do you think that I, who have been company for the first men in England, will stay in the paltry island to be, in all likelihood, a subject for a newspaper, and the standing topic of scandal amongst *titled courtesans*, who used to boast of my having escorted them, and would, if I had succeeded, though they had known the means, have extolled me to the skies!

No: Archibald Greville dares—and will dare—to do heroic deeds, but he will not be made the hero in a fall; though another Milton should arise to immortalize his name.

I go: and if ever I return to my native country, it shall be in a situation to buy a smile for all that has passed, from every face but the now hated crew in Derbyshire. Destruction seize them all! If they feel but half the torments which my soul at this moment endures, I shall be well revenged.

My fortune ruined—my reputation destroyed—my prospects blasted!—

What have I to do with existence!!!

LETTER, XXVIII.

MR. EVELYN, TO MISS LAWSON.

Yarmouth, April 4th.

I Did not reach this place, my dear madam, till half after four, when I found my friend in anxious expectation of my arrival. My note had alarmed him, and his alarm awakened mine, as it led me to apprehend he was more deeply entangled by the arts of this Mrs. Digby than when he wrote to Alverston; but I was happily mistaken; it arose from the generosity of his nature; lest, as my note might lead him to apprehend, he should hear she had been guilty of some atrocious crime; but of what kind he did not attempt to form the least conjecture.

“What, my dear Herbert,” asked Sir Charles, as soon as we were seated, “can this unhappy woman have done to occasion this extraordinary proceeding?”

She has done a deed, said I, which, though cognizable by the laws of England, cannot, by them, be sufficiently punished.

Sir Charles looked amazed and attentive; but spoke not. I therefore proceeded to acquaint him with the whole affair; from the first to the last circumstance.

To endeavour, my dear Miss Lawson, to convey to you an idea of his looks—his manner—would only mark my poverty of expression. I cannot even repeat, to do justice to it, his language upon this occasion.

The man: the Christian: the lover; were alternately distinguished; and the three characters—each throwing a lustre upon the others—shone with resplendence in Sir Charles Conway. But when I had given, from your words, an account of Miss Stanley’s sentiments and conduct; and when he had perused all the letters I brought with me — the LOVER stepped forward; but without eclipsing the brightness of either of the other characters: nay, if possible, it exalted them, as it assisted to extinguish resentment; for the sense of the injury was almost lost in the idea of succeeding felicity.

For a short time, I left my patron—my friend—to digest the intelligence I had brought him. When I returned, I saw in his then more collected countenance that his ideas were arranged; for the judgment of Sir Charles is quick; strong, and active. By the heightened vivacity of his eyes, it was easy to imagine the probability of ensuing happiness had been a subject of his contemplation; for the prospect of which, I doubt not but this CHRISTIAN had given his thanks where alone they are greatly due.

We now talked the whole affair over with some degree of calmness. Polly Fenton; Colonel Greville; Mrs. Digby, and Lord Fitzmurry—begging pardon of the first for putting her into such company—were all restricted upon, respectively; and it was agreed

that of Mrs. Digby no notice should be taken till to-morrow; when, towards evening, I am to make her my last visit, and give her a short but full intimation of what has occurred.

Do you know, Miss Lawson, that I have so much malevolence in my temper as to lead me to accept, with some degree of pleasure, this commission? She *ought* to be punished, and the utmost which can be inflicted upon her, *except her own heart turns accuser*, will be greatly inadequate to her deserts. I do not remember ever to have been more angry with any body than I am with Mrs. Digby. Yet, as I have said, at times I feel a rising pity; which, however, I endeavour to suppress.

On Monday morning early we mean to take leave of Yarmouth, and expect to reach Hawthorn Grove in the evening. Need I say that Sir Charles Conway hopes to be received at Alverstton Park the morning following!

I mean, madam, to keep on writing occasionally till we arrive at our destined harbour; to carry the scrawl with me, and to send it to you with the information of our arrival, that Miss Stanley may be informed of every interesting circumstance.

Saturday night.

We have had a visiter, my dear madam. Who but *Mrs. Digby*, just at the close of evening, should be driven up to the door! This, it seems, is the first time of her venturing out since she took it upon her to "*act the part of a sick woman*." What character she is now preparing to appear in, will not, perhaps, be known.

A servant came in with a request from Mrs. Digby to speak to Sir Charles Conway. For a moment we were both in a consternation. My friend however, with a presence of mind almost peculiar to himself, stepped to the door, and asked her commands, which, to his great astonishment, were that he would engage to join a party she had formed to go to Lowestoff on Monday morning.

"You shall hear from me to-morrow, madam"—he said: "At present, I am particularly engaged. Mr. Evelyn is with me, and we are upon business of consequence."

"Is Mr. Evelyn returned to Yarmouth?" asked she, with seeming surprize.

"He is, madam."

"And when am I to see him?"

"To-morrow evening, if you will not then be otherwise engaged."

"Certainly I will not. But I hope I shall see you with him."

Sir Charles only bowed, and she went on with—"Well, well; do as you like about that. I want much to talk with Mr. Evelyn."

She smiled; bowed, and ordered the postillion to drive forward.

Mrs. Digby means, I presume, to favor me with her confidence personally. I must not think too much upon the bitter disappointment she will suffer, lest my pity undermines my fortitude; a considerable deal of which will, I begin to think, be necessary in the execution of my commission.

Sunday evening.

After sending an excuse to Mrs. Digby for not being able to wait upon her at tea, I am now preparing myself to attend her; not without some reviving inclination to compassionate what her feelings must be when, to perform Sir Charles's promise, I shall have informed her that business *does* call him from Yarmouth, and that he probably will be married to Miss Stanley long before the time she stipulated: her treachery having been fully discovered.

Sunday night.

My task is ended. And glad am I that it is not again to be performed. Never before, my dear Miss Lawson, did I execute such an office. I cannot attempt to give you a description of what passed. My respect for your sex makes me wish to forget the language I have heard from Mrs. Digby. When I first met her, my resentment was greatly softened by the consideration of what she was going to endure, and after the first salutations—preventing her beginning the subject of her letter—I opened, with all the tenderness I am master of, my commission.

At first, she sat aghast with astonishment and apprehension; but no sooner did I hint, in a manner she could not misunderstand, that Sir Charles Conway was in possession of her late letters to Colonel Greville, than she broke out into the most outrageous fury that ever was heard or read of.

For a considerable time I endeavoured to soften her sense of this discovery; but all in vain: her ravings—her execrations—increased; and I was obliged to leave her to the care of her women, in a paroxysm of rage I could not stay to behold, and wish ever to forget; for which reason, and to spare you the very shocking description, I will finally close the subject.

Let me repeat that as soon as we arrive at Hawthorn Grove, I mean to dispatch this letter to you. Permit me to request the favor of a reply by the messenger I shall send to Alverstun. Sir Charles Conway declines writing to any one. I believe no pen, not even his own, could do justice to his sentiments and sensations upon this occasion. He talks of meeting *Mr. Stanley*, after this interruption to their mutual happiness, with a fervency I cannot describe. How then could I do any justice to the language he uses, when he talks of his Emma!

Who, my dear Miss Lawson, would not wish to experience such pure—such exalted felicity, as in all probability will soon fall to the lot of Miss Stanley and Sir Charles Conway! That young lady is, in my opinion, greatly raised above the generality of her sex: but she is not absolutely without an equal. Sir Charles, too, stands nearly alone: yet even he, *in the sincerity and ardency of his affection*, may be equalled, likewise.

But I am adding to a letter of an already sufficient length. Excuse, my dear madam, all my imperfections, and believe me sincere in subscribing myself

your greatly admiring,

and respectful humble servant,

HERBERT EVELYN.

LETTER, XXIX.

MRS. DIGBY, TO COLONEL GREVILLE.

Yarmouth, Sunday, midnight.

IF there are plagues never yet heard of amongst mankind—may they be poured, in torrents, upon thy accursed head! May tortures, unconceived by the human race, surround and fix themselves, in the midst of thy heart—thy guilty heart—for ever! What does not thy treachery deserve! Frustrated, I suppose in thine own schemes, thou—devil-like—hast betrayed thine associate, lest she should be more successful than thyself; for to no other motive can I attribute—nor any other way account for—thy delivering up my letters written to thee, thou execrable wretch! in the strictest confidence.

O! mayest thou go on sinning till repentance will be too late; and then, convinced of those tremendous truths thou hast hitherto endeavoured to disbelieve, may remorse—bitter, soul-harrowing remorse—seize thy despairing heart! May thy death-bed be a scene of terror to thyself and to all around thee! May thy torments upon it, be so dire as to make thee wish to be delivered from it, though thou shouldst know assuredly that the next step would lead thee to endless perdition.

I go—I fly from the face of all who used to call themselves my friends. I go—I care not whither. Friends—Fortune—Reputation I value not one straw. England I despise, and all its inhabitants.—It is *my love*—the dear *interest of my heart*, that I so heavily lament. An interest to which *thy sordid soul* will ever remain a stranger. But I will not gratify the malevolence of thy savage breast by a description of my wretchedness; and lest, by increasing to an insupportable weight of woe, it should (driving me to madness) urge me to free my soul from its prison, and thou, therefrom, by any contingency, become benefited, I will to-morrow morning send for a lawyer to make, as secure as words can bind it, my will in favor (greatly as I have hated her for what is called her goodness) of my sister; and in case of *her* dying without heirs, and intestate, to another Branch; which will effectually secure it from thee, thou wretch! for ever. And this I tell thee to blast thy every hope, as thou hast cut off mine. With my last breath, Greville, I shall curse thee, and if after this life be ended, the greatly wished-for blessing of annihilation shall be refused, and my soul consigned to the Fathomless Abyss—I shall be sensible of a relish, though in the midst of torments, from seeing thee sink still deeper into destruction.

ARABELLA DIGBY.

LETTER, XXX.

MRS. DIGBY, TO MISS HOWARD.

Monday morning, two o'clock.

THIS day I leave Yarmouth, and as soon as possible—the kingdom. I shall send you authority to manage my estates, and, if I die, to inherit them. I believe you will not wish for my death from this information. Yet I should for yours, were our situations changed.

Upon second thoughts, I will not send you this, till the deeds and the will be ready; for I do not choose to receive any remonstrance. When I want money I will draw upon you.

As you have always treated me with some regard, I ought not to finish abruptly; and without pretending to an abundance of affection, I can truly say that I am as much yours, as any one's existing.

ARABELLA DIGBY.

LETTER, XXXI.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Alverston, Monday morning six o'clock.

AGAIN up with the sun, Maria, that I may oblige you by scribbling about our goings-on at the Park. Saturday and yesterday I was too much taken up with my dear Emma, to give any time to writing.

As soon as I had finished my letter of Friday, and made a little renovation in my dress, we were summoned to dinner, and were received, by the party below, with looks of pleasure. Before Emma went down, her countenance was pale, but as soon as she met the smiles of her friends, her eyes sparkled, and the roses flushed in her cheeks. It had been agreed upon that the subject of the morning was not to be revived in the dining room; but it obtruded itself as soon as the servants were withdrawn. Indeed every one's heart was filled with it; and it would have been affectation to have introduced any other topic of conversation.

Mr. Stanley's impatient temper broke the restraint, and Mrs. Digby was the theme of his discourse. Colonel Greville—bad as his part has been—bore no competition with that famous—*in-famous*—heroine. It seems she was always a professed Free-thinker, and prided herself in her liberty of sentiment. Miss Howard, her sister, is said to have taken great pains to furnish her mind with good principles; but hitherto, in vain: the poison of libertinism was early imbibed. She was her father's darling, and he was a man without

any ideas of either religion or morality, whose only wish was to have his Arabella a fine lady; therefore sent her to France to be educated.

But why do I spend my time in talking about Mrs. Digby?

Friday afternoon was throughout a very agreeable one. Every countenance was expressive of happiness. Yet, at times, I thought Mr. Stanley was pensive, and I have, upon several occasions, had an idea of his having formed some attachment which he is unwilling to acknowledge.

As to Lady Lucinda Harrington—his heart had nothing to do in that business. He was decoyed by a belief—But I cannot now tell you the story; having far better subjects at hand. You have seen in the papers an account of the young lady's elopement with a servant of her guardian's.

With respect to the cause of Mr. Stanley's diminished vivacity—I have a kind of a rumbling notion about the very extraordinary young woman of whom Emma talked so often when she was at Woodstock, and about whom Lady Stanley wrote such an interesting account. Since I have been at Alverston I have frequently heard her mentioned, and always with the greatest respect; but I have thought when George was present, Lady Stanley has rather avoided the subject. If it *has* been continued after his entrance, he has always expressed the most unbounded admiration of her. In her person, it seems, she is beautiful beyond imagination, and her mind is said to be equal to her appearance. Maria Birtles, you remember, is her name.

Once or twice, since my suspicion was first awakened, I have watched Mr. Stanley whenever she has been brought upon the carpet, and I have always observed that his natural brilliancy of eye, and vivacity of countenance, has been instantly heightened, and that he has dwelt upon her praises with evident pleasure. The family are all under concern at not knowing where she is; wishing to entreat her to make a *visit* to Alverston.

The other day, as I was walking with Mr. Stanley upon the terrace, I carelessly asked him if Maria Birtles had the appearance of a gentlewoman.

“Of a gentlewoman!”—repeated he in accents of surprise. “Heavens and earth! madam—But I ask your pardon. You never saw her. Of a *gentlewoman!*—why no. Of something above mortality. It is impossible, Miss Lawson, to give you, by description, the least idea of either her face; her person, or her mind. They are exactly answerable to each other; and, altogether, scarce to be equalled; certainly not to be excelled.”

As he spoke, his face was in a glow. I did not notice it, but turned the subject; nor yet did I mention it to Emma; as it would probably have occasioned her some pain; either on Maria's account, or on her brother's.

But to revert—Friday was passed extremely pleasantly. On Saturday morning we had a long ramble; dined without company, and spent the evening very cheerfully. You

may suppose the late important discovery was a chief subject when we met; and you will likewise easily imagine that Emma and I made it our *only* one when we were retired. Her apprehension of seeing Sir Charles Conway, and her surmises of what must have been his opinion of her conduct, some times greatly distress her.

I have continually forgotten to tell you, that I have several times been charged with the most grateful acknowledgments of every individual of this family for your considerate; kind, and speedy management of this discovery. I am likewise bid to request Mrs. Stanhope will fix Polly Fenton in any situation her prudence shall judge to be most conducive to her reformation, without stopping at any expense; and to bring Lady Stanley in sole debtor. This her ladyship earnestly entreats may not be denied: and indeed I must urge a compliance with her proposal, as I think a refusal will render her quite unhappy.

I ought to have began with telling you, and thanking you for it, that I received your packet, with Emma's letter to me enclosed, last evening. The pleasure you are all so kind as to express on perusal of my unconnected—and I sometimes think *unintelligible*—accounts of matters here, gives me great happiness; as to contribute to the amusement of friends so dear to me—But shall I, Maria, make any professions of love and duty? No: I will not degrade the sense I have of both, by thinking professions necessary.

I thank my aunt for her two lines at the bottom. But do, dear madam, tell me your secret. I am quite impatient to know what can have happened since I left Woodstock "*in which, when I know it, I shall feel myself so interested.*" I could conjecture twenty things, were I to begin to puzzle myself; but I will endeavour to rest till the next packet arrives, which will, I hope, satisfy my curiosity.

Pray return the most affectionate remembrance of Miss Stanley and myself, with the addition of real reverence, to good Doctor Griffith. Emma, who begins to be as saucy as she used to be, before Mrs. Digby's vile machinations took effect, says she expects that either you or I will soon have to do homage to him as uncle; except my mother thinks it proper to give her girls a new father. She adds that she shall envy the lucky one whom he distinguishes with his preference.

A summons to breakfast prevents my continuance. I will resume my employment as soon as I have an opportunity.

Monday night.

Well, Maria! Sir Charles Conway is arrived at Hawthorn Grove!

About nine o'clock, just as we had finished a little concert of vocal and instrumental music in the library, a servant brought me a letter from Mr. Evelyn, which I will inclose. You will there see particulars. He likewise returned me those of Mrs. Digby; Fitzmurray, &c. I was called out of the room to receive them. The servant brought compliments from Sir Charles and Mr. Evelyn to all the family.

As soon as I had slightly looked over that to me, I returned and gave it to Mr. Stanley, whispering Emma to prepare to hear news.

“Is Sir Charles come?” asked she with quickness.

To Hawthorn Grove, said I; and, probably, will come to Alverston to-morrow.

“Oh! Charlotte!”

And Oh! Emma!—What is the matter pray?

She was going to chide me, when she was called upon by Mr. Stanley to attend to Mr. Evelyn’s letter.

Not one word did she speak during its perusal, though George often interrupted his reading by his exclamations. Miss Stanley sat all the time, by my side, upon the sofa, with her head leaned upon my shoulder.

When it was finished, every one spoke in praise of the writer; and all, but Emma (who I am sure *thought* deeply) in language of gratitude of the discovery. But without being aware of it, I came in for a share of Mr. Stanley’s smartness.

“Pray, Charlotte, said he, “to whom does the divine allude when he intimates that my sister *may* have a compeer? and that the ardency of Sir Charles’s affection may be equalled? Who, I wonder, had he then in his idea!”

Maria, I was struck all of a heap. Neither when I read the letter, nor when I heard it from Mr. Stanley, did that passage strike me so *very* forcibly as it has done upon re-perusal. I cannot tell you how I seemed at being so attacked.

“Upon my word, Miss Charlotte,” continued the teasing creature, “the game seems to be all in your own hands. You have done a great deal of business in a very short period.”

I really could scarce stand his raillery. What, I wonder, made me seem so much like a simpleton! But it was so unexpected. However, thanks to his eccentricity, he interrupted himself by hastily rising and ringing for his servant, whom he ordered to get his horses ready immediately.

“Why, George,” asked Lady Stanley, “whither are you going?”

“Whither am I going, Madam! Why to Hawthorn Grove to be sure.”

“To-night, child!”

“Indeed I am. I would not sleep at Alverston for five hundred guineas. Emma, what say *you*? Shall I, or shall I not go to Hawthorn Grove to-night?”

“The morning, surely, would be time enough,” replied the blushing girl.

“Now for that piece of affectation of yours, sister,” returned he, “could I find it in my heart to go and keep Sir Charles this week from Alverston.”

“George is right in his intention of going to Hawthorn Grove,” said Sir Edward; “and I rather wonder, my dear Henrietta, at your not expecting it.”

“Father and son against me—! said she, “it is time to call back and confess that I spoke without due consideration. Emma, my dear, acknowledge with me that your brother *ought* to go to-night: I am sure Charlotte will support the same opinion.”

Indeed I will, said I.

“Or,” joined in Mr. Stanley, “may the young Rector find himself disappointed in his ideas of equality.”

The horses were now ready. George prepared to go; telling his sister that the baronet; the parson, and himself, would breakfast at Alverston in the morning; but to this she seriously objected, requesting they might not come before eleven o’clock; to which, after a little altercation, he agreed. When he left the room, I followed him, desiring him to convey to Mr. Evelyn Emma’s letter to me, on the occasion of her breaking with Sir Charles; enclosing it in a cover wherein I wrote the following.

Miss Lawson transmits to Mr. Evelyn Miss Stanley’s letter; not because she thinks there is now any occasion for its appearance, but because her word, that he should see it, has been given.

I would not thank him for the minute intelligence his letter conveyed to Alverston, because I would not seem to be officious in taking the obligation to myself; as in that case—

Ah Maria!—“But I know my own heart for all that.”

After George was gone, and supper over, I proposed to Emma that she should then read, or hear read, the letters which Mr. Evelyn had returned, as she was still a stranger to the minutiae of *that Mrs. Digby’s* manoeuvring, and likewise to the *particulars* of the horrid plot of Colonel Greville and Lord Fitzmurray; for she had been so extremely weak, that we thought it right not to enter too deeply into the affecting subjects before; but as she has to-day been considerably better, I (for several reasons) wished her to be thoroughly acquainted with every circumstance, before her first interview with Sir Charles. My strongest motive for the motion was, that she might know how far he had been made acquainted with the affection she had evidently showed upon

his supposed detection, and which was most strikingly painted by Mrs. Digby; I was fearful she might permit the high sense she always entertained of female delicacy, to lead her to such a *dis*-acknowledging manner as, after what he had read, must appear like an affectation unworthy *her* character and *his* merits.

Lady Stanley seconded my proposal, and Sir Edward voted for my reading aloud the whole packet. I immediately complied, and the dear Emma was almost over-powered by what she heard. Colonel Greville's part shocked her extremely, and she returned audible thanks to Heaven for our preservation; but Mrs. Digby's hateful, vile art, agitated her still more than Colonel Greville's. In many parts I was obliged to suspend my reading; so extremely affected was Emma at the repetition of scenes which originally very greatly distressed her; and at Mrs. Digby's representation of the effect of her own detestable manoeuvrings.

We sat some time talking over the particulars, and when the rest of the party retired to bed, I sat down to my pen and ink.

I think Miss Stanley is asleep, for she has not lately spoken to me. Her last words were — "Charlotte, convey my remembrance of Woodstock in the most affectionate language your heart can furnish you with."

I best obey her by giving her words a simple repetition.

Tuesday morning.

Again up early; but Emma will not permit me to write. She requires all my attention. I never before saw her in such a flutter; nor I think scarce ever remember her to look so pretty. There is a timidity—an apprehensiveness—in her countenance, which becomes her exceedingly. If I attempt to move out of her sight she instantly begs me not to leave her.

Tuesday noon.

The meeting is over. Sir Charles Conway has been here some time.

Take the particulars.

We breakfasted this morning about nine o'clock, after which, Emma and I went into the little drawing-room, where we sat talking on very interesting subjects till near eleven; both in anxious expectation of the striking of the clock, which, however, we did not hear that hour, for about ten minutes before, Sir Charles, Mr. Evelyn, and Mr. Stanley alighted at the outward gate. They were conducted into the library, where they were received by Sir Edward and Lady Stanley (as her ladyship afterwards told me) with a joy beyond expressing. As soon as the salutations were over, Lady Stanley went into the drawing-room.

"My dear girl—my Emma!—Sir Charles Conway waits—"

“If—If you please, madam”—hesitatingly interrupted Emma; scarce knowing what she said.

Lady Stanley withdrew, and in half a minute the door gave way to Sir Charles.

We arose at his entrance. He instantly hastened to my lovely, blushing friend, and caught her in his arms, or I verily believe she could not have stood up. I never in my life before saw her so destitute of presence of mind. Sir Charles perceiving how much she was affected, seated her upon the sofa, between himself and me. For some moments they neither of them could speak. At length—

“My dearest girl — ! my ever lovely Emma—! what exquisite happiness has this day led me to experience! I cannot express half the transport which surrounds my heart at the reception I meet with at Alverston.”

He paused. She deeply sighed, but still was silent; while a sweet confusion played upon her face, and prevented her lifting her eye up to his.

Sir Charles continued—“But tell me—let me not flatter myself—am I *indeed* welcome *here*?”—gently pressing her with a mixture of tenderness and respect to his bosom.

I have since thought that he needed not to have asked the question, as Emma’s every look and manner evinced an affirmative; which Sir Charles’s enraptured countenance as expressively showed he understood. But he would not permit the sense he had of her silent language to appear, lest it should pain her delicacy.

Sir Charles Conway, Maria, stands in the foremost rank of sublunary beings. For elegance of face and figure; for dignity, yet sweetness of manners, I never beheld his equal; and his native vivacity (almost perhaps as great as Mr. Stanley’s) is so happily blended with—or rather bounded by, a *generous discretion* (to use a new term to express ideas almost *unconveyable*) that every one who sees, and hears him speak, is obliged to love him.

“Am I *indeed* welcome here?”—was his last question to Miss Stanley.

She attempted to look at him, but could not; and her words were hardly articulate when she replied—“*Indeed you are.*”

The eyes of Sir Charles darted transport, and he was going I thought to bend his knee, when she, endeavouring to assume courage, continued — “but can you, Sir Charles, forgive me?”

“Can I forgive *my Emma*!” he exclaimed. “Let the question be reversed, and say that *you* can pardon *me*. It was *I*, madam, who was culpable: I deservedly suffered—And what did I not suffer!—for believing you *could* act with caprice. I ought to have been

convinced there was some latent cause which would have justified—which would have *more* than justified you, for what appeared to us an extraordinary proceeding; and under that conviction I should, through the medium of your friends, have investigated your motives; for being conscious—excuse the seeming vanity of the assertion—that I did not merit your displeasure, I ought to have *suspected* some hidden mystery: *therefore* it is, that I solicit your forgiveness, and own myself to have been justly punished.”

The dear Emma was now a little more courageous; the force of her consciousness lessening as Sir Charles avowed his; and she thanked him for endeavouring to excuse her to herself.

“I just now, madam,” said he, “mentioned your being *more* than justified. What” [with a smile he spoke] must be my sentence if, on this occasion, I applaud your magnanimity? Shall I, my Emma,”—holding one of her hands between his, and fixing his eyes upon her face—“shall I dare to suppose there was any exertion of resolution?”

“I will be satisfied,” replied she—a smile and a blush contending for distinction—“with justification, without being ambitious of praises which, perhaps, I do not merit.”

Hold, my dear friend!—joined in your Charlotte—you are too modest: the most meritorious action of your life shall not pass without its due applause, as the true greatness of mind which carried you through the arduous task—

“My dear Charlotte!” — interrupted she—“what do you mean? You surely would not—”

“Miss Lawson,” said Sir Charles, “my obligations to you are beyond my acknowledgment. There *is* a way—But of that not now. At present I will only thank you for setting in my view the *merits* of my Emma. The contemplation of them upon *any* subject is pleasant, but upon this, most particularly so indeed.”

“Upon my word I shall chide you, Charlotte,” said Emma. “I did not think”—

You will excuse me, my dear, said I, rising from the sofa, that I do not chuse to stay for a chiding-lecture; and making my courtesy, I hastened out of the room before she was well aware of my intention.

I had watched, Maria, for a plausible pretence to make my exit, as it was against my inclination that I complied with Emma’s entreaty to be present when Sir Charles was first introduced. I was convinced *she* would not find herself under any restraint from my being with her; but I was apprehensive he might think it necessary to treat her with a more distant respect (after such a cessation of their engagement) in the presence of a third person, than if he had been admitted to her alone.

When I left the room, I chose to go upstairs, rather than into the library; as I did not wish it to be observed that I thought it necessary to leave Sir Charles and Emma by

themselves; therefore sat myself down to my pen; and now, having brought you to this period, will go and see what is doing below stairs.

But, Maria, I hope you are perfectly sensible of the obligation of my writing *at such a time*. I hope you consider—Yet I shall have you think that I suppose—What *do* you think? Tell me. And I will tell you—if you are right.

Emma is now come up. She pretends to chide because I left the drawing-room. How ungrateful some people are for favors received! You must know, Maria, the lady in question is impertinently peeping over my shoulder; being afraid I should tell you—but let me whisper that—what is literally true. That is to say, that happiness shines out from every feature of her face; that she is in reality very much obliged to me for so *cleverly* finding a pretence to leave her with Sir Charles; as I am convinced—[do not deny it, Emma]—that the conversation took a still more tender turn after my departure. I rather think—but this, likewise, must be whispered—that her justice prevailed over her *dignity*; and that she condescended more explicitly to ask Sir Charles's pardon for having believed—strong as the circumstances seemed—any tale to his prejudice.

She raves at me for this. But I will go on for all that, and tell you, in whisper the third, that I believe her pardon has been sealed on condition of her *submitting—a most terrible punishment!*—to be Lady Conway within

What a gipsey! At the word within, she arrested my hand, and forcibly took away my pen; nor would she restore it, but upon condition that I would promise not—at *this* time, mind ye—to add another syllable upon the subject.

The reason is—I *will* write that—that she is impatient to go down stairs, and cannot decently make her appearance in the circle without my attendance.

And here she raves again.

Rave on, my lass, and welcome. I now have you *under hatches*, and will bind you over to your good behaviour.

Tuesday night.

What a delightful day, my dear friends, have we spent at Alverston Park! Your own hearts can assist the idea, or I should despair of conveying to you any picture of the general felicity now reigning in this “Mansion of peace.”

Mr. Stanley, who is most fervently attached to both his sister and his friend, goes whistling and singing about as if his happiness was too great for expression; yet, sometimes, I fancy I see the cloud stealing over his countenance; but the moment he finds he is observed, he endeavours to brighten up; resuming his usual gaiety. This revolution

in his face and manners has taken place at least half a dozen times this afternoon and evening.

Just after supper, a servant returned from Derby with letters and newspapers. In the General Evening Post was an account of Lady Lucinda Harrington [now Chapone]—of her journey to and from Scotland; of her interview with her guardian, &c. This naturally led to some circumstances that passed during Mr. Stanley's stay in Bristol, upon which I rather rallied him, when he took from his pocket-book a piece of paper, and, presenting it to me, asked me to accept it as his apology. Every body else being engaged when this conversation passed, I read what he had given me, and found the inducements, at large, of his pursuit. The circumstance of his finding a miniature portrait of himself, was the first misleader; as he had great reason to believe Lady Lucinda was the partial delineator. His tenderness, therefore; his *compassion* was engaged; and from pure—But upon consideration I will send Mr. Stanley's paper to you; as Emma, if she observed his giving it to me, may perhaps ask me about it, and some part of it would, I am sure, make her considerably uneasy; as it is obvious that his heart was very tenderly and strongly attached to some body [Maria Birtles, beyond doubt] whom he left behind; evinced by his boasting the merit of the *sacrifice* he made to an imaginary propriety; humanity, and justice; saying, that the conflict with himself—But you will see the whole, and will think it best to have it sent out of Emma's reach.

Let me return to the supper-room, and take my leave of the party.

Miss Stanley continued a little pensive through the evening; but she is positively handsomer than ever. Her pensiveness greatly becomes her.

Sir Charles Conway, as I have often said, is one of the finest figures I ever beheld. Mr. Stanley may, by some people, be thought to equal him. And perhaps he does; but it is in so different a way that they bear no comparison.

“Any other handsome man in the room, Charlotte?”

O yes, Maria. Sir Edward Stanley—as my mother will tell you—is a very fine man of his years.

“And pray, Charlotte—”

And pray, Maria, do not ask me any more questions. I think I have already given you a sufficient account—male and female—of our beauties. But if you are not satisfied, take the whole at once—We are all handsome—all very handsome—And there is an end of the subject.

When I shall be able to write again, I know not. To-morrow we are to go to Litchfield, to welcome the return of Lady Davison; who is to come back much sooner than she intended, and greatly amended. It is a long journey to Litchfield; but we are to set out early in the morning, that we may be able to come back in the evening. Our

vehicles are to be Sir Edward's post-coach with six, and the chaise with four horses. The coach is the most commodious one I ever saw; the seats being circular, which gives ample room for three persons upon each. There are windows entirely round it, and the divisions between them so small, that when they are all let down, it appears like an open carriage with a canopy. Before it—not very near the windows—is fixed, occasionally, a small low seat, for a coachman; but this is not often used; it being generally driven by three postillions. This carriage is to be devoted to Emma; myself; Sir Charles Conway; Mr. Evelyn, and George: Sir Edward and Lady Stanley chusing to go in the chaise.

If we return to-morrow evening, we are to spend Thursday at Hawthorn Grove. The proposal was Sir Edward's, and readily assented to by all the party: by Sir Charles, with a *lively* pleasure; by Emma with a silent one and a blush. After this, it is intended we should go to Hazle-wood Lodge, a seat lately purchased by Mr. Slayton, which is a very romantic neat place upon the skirts of a pretty little village. We are to stay there a day or two, for the purpose of taking some diversion in fishing. From thence, there is a talk of our going a round by Matlock; Buxton, &c. and home by Oakley-Hill, the residence of Mr. Slayton, which is near Mansfield; though Sir Edward rather wishes to go there first, and take him with us; but this remains to be settled. Mr. Stanley is not, I believe, very fond of his godfather's company, as he is always tormenting him about matrimony. Lady Stanley has been writing to Mr. Slayton an account of the recent discovery.

In the tour above mentioned, we are to have some led horses, that the gentlemen may, at pleasure, change their mode of travelling. When I first came, there was some talk of a journey into Wales; but Sir Edward, though he is now pretty well recovered, does not wish to go so far from home, for fear of a relapse.

And now, my dear, Maria, farewell. I have written myself sleepy.

If I do not find a letter from you, upon our return to-morrow evening, I shall be greatly disappointed.

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

Wednesday morning.

We are just setting off for Litchfield.

I unseal my letter to tell you that our plan is altered. We go to-morrow to Oakley Hill instead of Hawthorn Grove; Sir Edward having received a letter upon business which makes him wish to see Mr. Slayton.

LETTER, XXXII.

MR. MAYNARD, TO MRS. MAYNARD.

Kildwick, Tuesday night, April 7th.

AFTER a week's absence, longer by two days than I expected, am I again safely arrived at the serene residence of my truly reverend friend, who received me with the utmost cordiality. The lovely Alethea, too, came forward with looks of animation; and both expressed the most grateful sense of Lord Danvers' and Lady Caroline's *intended* return for what this too singularly great and good man termed a bare performance of his duty. The word *intended*, let me repeat and remark upon; for Mr. Broomley objects—and that almost peremptorily—to his grand-daughter's accepting what he calls an enormous donation. He says, unbounded generosity on one side should, and shall, be limited by moderation on the other: and he looked so grave when he spoke, that I hastily quitted the subject, lest he should insist on my promise not to press the matter any farther; which, however, I am determined shall be adjusted according to the original proposal.

I found every thing here in readiness for final settlement; and in little more than an hour we finished the whole of the business with Mrs. Pemberton; whose appearance, let me observe, is not very prepossessing. I take her to be a very artful woman. She lamented her own weakness, and reviled Lord Crumpford in terms of *exaggerated* detestation. The good divine is perfectly right in keeping Miss Broomley from too much of her company.

You have, I hope, my dear Harriet, received my two letters—the one dated Kildwick, March the thirty-first, the other, Penrith, April the fourth. I confess I was greatly disappointed at not finding one from you directed, according to my request, to Mr. Broomley's care. I hope you are well. I hope nothing disagreeable prevents—But avaunt unpleasing conjectures! I will depend upon meeting with one at Mansfield.

Taking it for granted you have received both mine, you have, I presume, summoned Lord Danvers from his Woodstock cottage, to consult with his lawyer about the vile Tomkins; than whom, there does not, I believe, exist a more complete scoundrel. What greatly vexes me is, that I shall be obliged to go down again into Cumberland, as soon as possible after I shall have received from his lordship proper authority to proceed. If Mr. Robinson has not made a wrong calculation, Tomkins will be obliged to refund between four and five thousand pounds.

I arrived at Kildwick just as Mr. and Miss Broomley were rising from dinner; having myself taken an early one at Skipton, that I might not put them to any inconvenience by coming, at such a time of the day, unexpectedly. Early in the morning I mean to pursue my journey, intending to reach Mr. Slayton's by five or six in the evening; and, if I find him at home, to stay two or three hours as occasion requires, on pretence of viewing the paintings of which he boasted; and to sleep at Mansfield; where, if I do not meet with a letter from you, the rest of my journey will not be very pleasant.

Ever yours,

AUGUSTUS MAYNARD.

LETTER, XXXIII.

MRS. MAYNARD, TO AUGUSTUS MAYNARD, ESQ.

London, Wednesday morning, April the 8th.

THE post-man has this instant brought me your two letters: one written at Kildwick, March the thirty-first; the other at Penrith, April the fourth. By the date of the first, I ought to have received it last week; and the second should have reached me yesterday. I cannot imagine what has occasioned such a delay, which has done me considerable injury, as I have, for the last three or four days, been extremely anxious about your safety and welfare. Thank Heaven I am now relieved. Your Nottingham note came duly.

I will not attempt writing to you at Kildwick, as in all probability you will again have left the place before any scribble from me can reach it; but I hope this will meet you at Mansfield. On second thoughts I will address a few lines to Mr. Broomley, that if any accident detains you with him, *your* apprehensions may, likewise be relieved; as I fear you will be alarmed at not hearing from me according to your directions; which idea half as much disquiets me as did my not duly receiving your letters.

What simpletons we women are to render ourselves liable to these frights and fancies! When I was Miss Pelham, what, foolish girl as I was! had I to disturb me! Nothing; but a very cross mother; a covetous father; two peevish aunts, and a severe governess; and yet—not knowing when I was well off—I must add to my torments a *husband*, who so totally engrosses every moment of my thoughts, that my poor parrot and Pompey are entirely neglected.

But ah! my dear Augustus! I am richly repaid for all my anxiety by knowing that I am the sole object of your tenderest concern. To mother, and father; aunts; governess; parrot, and Pompey I bad a willing adieu.

And now to the subject of your letters.

That of the earliest date delights me from its first to its last sentence. Your account of the Broomleys charms me. Some time or other, I must and will see the little maid of Kildwick, though it costs me a Yorkshire journey.

But Mr. Slayton is the burden of my song. Manage cleverly with him, and I will compound for numberless blunders in any other business. The public account of Lady Lucinda Harrington's elopement had a considerable effect upon our Caroline. She wondered; and she conjectured, and was at last obliged to set down with her perplexity unravelled; by no means satisfied with his [Mr. Stanley's] having pursued her; as she thinks he could not have any excusable inducement: indeed *none*, but the greatness of her fortune. However, she endeavoured to fasten the fault upon his godfather, and again gave

way to her prepossession; which, between ourselves, she would find it very hard to conquer.

Your letter gives a very striking picture of a very striking rascal. Valence will not, I think, if he can help it, let him escape.

According to agreement, Lord Danvers; our lovely cousin, and myself dined at Enfield on the day you left us. We found Sir William in the mending way; and indeed I do not know how he could be very bad, for Mr. Hurford was with him, and his company is, in my opinion, a great antidote to illness.

Last Thursday, Lord Danvers and Lady Caroline began their Oxfordshire journey and arrived at the Woodstock Cottage on Friday morning, as a letter on Saturday from Caroline informed me. I am glad I declined going with them, as I should have been wretched at the still longer delay of your letters. The last post brought me Caroline's account of their retired abode, which she highly praises.

Doctor Griffith, the Rector of Woodstock, dined with them on Sunday; and yesterday, they were welcomed by several of the neighbouring gentry: amongst others were the Lawsons and the Quaker-Family at the Lawn, of whom Caroline mentioned having heard so much from Miss Stanley's letters to her mother: and she says they are indeed equal to the highest encomiums; Mrs. Stanhope being one of the most amiable and respectable women she ever saw; and Miss Lewis the loveliest little girl. Mrs. Lawson and Mrs. Eleanor Lawson she commended, likewise, very greatly; but confessed herself to be much disappointed at Miss Stanley's having left Woodstock a few days before they reached the Cottage. She is returned to Alverston, accompanied by Miss Lawson. The expectation of seeing this lady was, I dare aver, (though perhaps she, herself, scarce knew it) Caroline's chief inducement to promote her father's plan of visiting his Oxfordshire estate at this juncture. She therefore will not be sorry for the summons I shall now send my uncle to return. He will probably be in town on Friday or Saturday.

Caroline transmitted me a long and pleasing account of Miss Stanley and Sir Charles Conway, which I shall not now enter upon.

Just as I had written the last line, Sir William Jenyns sent up his name. I immediately received him, and he staid with me near an hour; during which time a great part of his conversation ran upon devising a method to expose Lord Crumpford's villainy in the most open manner in public company; as the law, he says, cannot inflict an adequate punishment. His intention is to invite him to the London Coffee-house to settle the pecuniary accounts, at which time he will request Lord Clare; Lord Elford; Sir Harry Browne; Major Sandford; Mr. Hurford; Mr. Lewis; Mr. Freer, and Mr. Mollineux to oblige him with their company; when, after opening the ostensible business of the meeting, he will put a written account of his lordships villanous proceedings into the hands of one of the gentlemen, requesting his reading it aloud, as the best means of

informing the company of the particulars which remain to be settled between the two noblemen; and which, he will make it to be understood, are, the next day, to be in all the public papers.

What you will think of it, I know not, but I came into his scheme the first moment; and shall be greatly disappointed if it is not put in execution.

And now, my ever-dear husband—an appellation it delights my heart to use—I will please myself with anticipating your early return; though when the expected time draws near, I shall be ready to quarrel with the driver of every carriage which stops at the house, or comes near it, if it brings not you.

Ever yours,

with the truest affection,

HARRIET MAYNARD.

LETTER, XXXIV.

MISS MARIA LEWIS, TO MISS LAWSON.

Woodstock, eighth day of fourth month.

WHEN I peruse thy letters, my dearest Charlotte, I am ashamed to attempt a reply; so simple; so trifling, must all I have to say appear upon the comparison.

The accounts thou hast given us of thy proceedings are interesting beyond description. Thy last date was sixth day, therefore we are in expectation of soon hearing the sequel of thy story.

But ah Charlotte! I doubt thou wilt return quite *heart-less* to thy friends at Woodstock. Herbert Evelyn will, I fear, deprive us of thy best affection. Thy aunt saith she hath something to write to thee, at the bottom of my letter, which no one is to be permitted to peruse. It is, I imagine, upon this arduous subject. Were it not for the distance—But what a presumptuous girl am I to breath one murmuring sigh upon the prospect of what may be ordained for thy lasting benefit! Self is *so* ready to intrude upon all occasions! Excuse me, Charlotte, that I cannot think, without regretting the cause, of the probability of thy leaving Woodstock.

I have now to tell thee of our having been, at length, favored with the long-expected company of our new neighbours of the Cottage. Last sixth day, in the morning, the Earl of Danvers, accompanied by his lovely daughter, but not, as was expected, by their cousins, the Maynards, arrived at Woodstock. On first day they went to public worship, and were attended home by the reverend preacher, who staid dinner with them, and engaged that thy mother, our aunts, and myself, should visit them the following day, which we did; Friend Griffith kindly accompanying us. We were met at the Cottage by the Rayners, the Smythes, and the Sansons; forming, altogether, a very large party. The Earl of Danvers is a very handsome, sensible and polite man. Prepossessed as I was against him by thy cousin Carrington's account, I could not help admiring him as soon as he appeared.

But how shall I describe his truly charming daughter! I never, Charlotte, saw a more faultless face and form than Caroline Pemberton's: and her manners are so indicative of the strength and sweetness of her mind, that I cannot conceive an idea of any thing mortal to excel her. We all returned home in the highest admiration of this justly celebrated young woman. Our party was there some little time before the rest of the company, and was received with a cordiality beyond expressing. My aunt was particularly distinguished by the lovely Caroline. I mention this distinctly, because people of our sect are not apt to catch the attention of those in gayer life. She expressed a very lively regret at thy and Emma's having left Woodstock before her arrival; and asked if we had heard from thee since thou wentest, and if there were any probability that the disagreement which she heard had happened between Emma and Sir Charles Conway—

as he is called—would be adjusted. The Stanley family, at length, became our chief conversation; and she appeared so interested in all that concerned them, having, she said, imbibed a strong prejudice in their favor, that thy aunt (upon finding the circumstance of the disagreement was known, and that the lovely Caroline was, as she told us, personally acquainted with Charles Conway) thought it right to acquaint her with the heads of the whole story; at which she expressed the utmost astonishment, and begged, since she was already so far favored, that she might, at a proper opportunity, be still farther obliged with the particulars of an affair which had deeply engaged her attention. The earl now came in, and soon after, the rest of the company. We, therefore, settled it that she should return our visit the next morning but one; call at thy house, and take with her, to ours, thy mother and aunt; as her father, she said, would on that day be engaged till near dining time, with a party of gentlemen.

Thus thou seest we all at once commenced intimate acquaintance, and this morning, about ten o'clock, she arrived, according to agreement, bringing with her in the carriage thy worthy relatives.

After a little free and friendly conversation had passed, the business of thy letters was entered upon. We recounted to her as many of the particulars as memory could furnish, and then it was appointed for me to read all that we have received from thee since thy arrival at Alverston; beginning at thy first short note of intelligence respecting thy and Emma's safe and pleasant reception at the Park. Caroline was exceedingly attentive to every circumstance. She seemed to breathe with caution lest she should miss a syllable. Had the accounts concerned her dearest friends, she could not have appeared more interested. When she mentioned Emma's father and mother, she spoke in terms of admiration: in pity, when she talked of the dear girl herself; and smiled at the liveliness of George's character. In thy first note, thou observest upon his unusual inalertness. Upon which she remarked —“A love fit I suppose. Young men of his turn are apt, for a time, to be very violent in their attachments.”

Thou afterwards mentionest his being impetuous.

“I have understood so,” said she, “and it is a part of his character that I almost admire, because I think it has something noble for its foundation.”

She really spoke with such animation when he was mentioned, that had she had a personal knowledge of him, I should have thought he was favored by her particular partiality.

Thy letter written on sixth day morning came next under my eye.

I cannot tell thee the praises she gave to the friend of my heart; to whom she said she had had the happiness of being introduced at Tunbridge, and repeated her regret at thine absence from Woodstock.

She was greatly entertained with the letter last mentioned, and delighted with thy method of opening the important business.

When thou mentionest the dancing couples and George's inanimation, though paired with Emmeline Stafford—"Mr. Stanley again stupid!" said she: "It is as I said. He must certainly be in love."

My Charlotte and the Oxonian did not escape her notice and applause. It was, she observed, a charming beginning.

Polly Fenton's history greatly affected her. And when she heard the account which I gave thee in my last of sixth day's date, respecting her arrival at the Lawn; the reception she met with from my aunt and at thy house; with the great hopes we all have of her real reformation and future well-doing, the charming creature was softened into tears.

"You burst my heart, my dear friends"—was her pleasing expression—"by filling it with various passions." She then deeply sighed; dried her moistened eyes, and requested my going on.

Charlotte, I cannot speak a tenth of our admiration of this truly admirable beauty. We have almost continually dwelt upon her praises since she left us; expressing *our* regret that she came not before thou and Emma went to Alverston. However we hope some future occasion will be favorable to our wishes for your meeting.

I cannot give thee all her observations on the subject of thy letters. At almost every sentence she expressed her applause. George Stanley's impetuosity of temper entertained her. Yet once or twice she thought him, she said, too violent. Arabella Digby, and, as they are styled, Colonel Greville and Lord Fitzmurray, had their respective shares of her expressed abhorrence. After the letters were finished, we continued conversing upon the incidents they contained, and she requested to be favored with some intelligence from thy next packet; which we told her we every day expected to receive. We promised compliance, and she accepted the invitation thy mother gave her of spending a day at her house towards the latter end of the week. Sixth day was therefore fixed upon; it being the day that the tenants of the earl, in this part of the country, are to meet at the Cottage to revise some leases and other business, which Webber wisheth to lay before him. In the mean time, her father, she said, would call upon us, as he intended to accompany her in some visits round the neighbourhood.

She continued with us till two o'clock, and then returned to dinner, leaving with us thy mother and aunt, who are now below stairs.

Since I wrote to thee last, we have had company to stay with us. Robert Harley and his wife, with the little Maria, came to the Lawn on sixth day evening, and returned early on second day morning. Sally Harley's brother, Henry Colville, whom I once saw at Stanton, and who is an agreeable, lively, sensible, young man, accompanied them. About two years back, a distant relation of his mother's died, and left him an estate in

Leicestershire, of near two thousand pounds a year; upon which he has lived ever since he has been possessed of it. He was educated for a physician, but doth not chuse to practice. Thou, Charlotte, wouldst, I think, have been much pleased with Henry Colville, and he with thee.

But I must now lay aside my pen, and give this up to thy aunt to finish; as I believe she and thy mother are preparing to return.

Thine, my dear Charlotte,
and, next to thine,
thine Emma's,
in true cordiality,
MARIA LEWIS.

LETTER, XXXV.

MRS. ELEANOR LAWSON, TO MISS LAWSON.

Woodstock, Wednesday evening.

WE are just now, my dear Charlotte, returned from the Lawn. I brought with me Maria's letter, that I might write a few lines after her; but the little chit has scribbled so near the bottom, that there is not room for half a dozen lines. I therefore take a fresh sheet.

Maria supposes I am going to employ my pen about your agreeable and worthy young parson; but interesting as that subject may hereafter be, it is not my intention to investigate it at present. Miss Lewis herself is now my theme; and she herself has opened the business in question.

When Mrs. Stanhope attended Mrs. Harley in her late illness, Maria you know went with her. During their stay at Stanton, Mr. Colville, Mrs. Harley's brother, made a visit there, and was extremely struck with the grace of our little friend, while she was quite unconscious of her influence. After his sister recovered, he returned into Leicestershire; but, as it appears, Maria's image was too strongly impressed, to let him remain there in quiet, therefore last Monday was a week, he wrote—or rather, on that day Mrs. Stanhope received—the following letter, which I have permission to copy for your perusal. I intended to have *enclosed* it, with only a few lines of explanation at the bottom of Miss Lewis's, had she not so circumscribed my limits.

MR. COLVILLE, TO MRS. STANHOPE.

Twenty-eighth, of third month.

“Encouraged by the known lenity of my sister's much respected friend Stanhope, I presume to take up a pen to address her on a subject which is of the greatest importance to me; and to her, of considerable consequence.

Not to be prolix—I will at once declare Maria Lewis to be the occasion of this address.

I am aware, my friend, of the difficulties I have to encounter in my present pursuit. I know thou wilt object to my earnest wishes; and I, likewise, know from whence thy objections will originate. But let me lay the matter plainly before thee, and then let thy compassion unite with thy judgement, and, by softening it, induce thee to give a decision in my favor.

When I was last at Stanton I, for the first time, saw Maria Lewis, of whom I had before heard very often. I saw her. I conversed with her. Need I now say that I greatly admired her? surely not; for no one, however insensible, can avoid doing that, after admission into her company. To me she appeared to be all that can be wished for in a

companion—a friend—a WIFE. And to call her mine, is all the additional bliss I desire on this side the grave.

For a considerable time I combated with the affection I have imbibed; believing thou wouldst object to every engagement of the kind, at so early a period of Maria's life. But combat is, I find in vain. My heart urges me, *and my mind accords*, to solicit thy compliance with my wishes. Young as she is, she will soon be sought after by numbers; to one of which, the amiable tenderness of her disposition, unprohibited by prudence, may impel her to give her partiality; and should I, through my own forbearance, shut myself from a chance of this truly desirable election, I think it might greatly hurt me in more respects than one.

I will not multiply words. Thou hast my heart before thee, and wilt consider that *my* earthly felicity, as well as that of the dear Maria, seemeth to be put into thy power; therefore thou wilt not let a trifling consideration prevail against me.

My circumstances are, I imagine, well known to thee. If not, my sister will give thee information on that head. My present place of abode is reckoned a very pleasant one; but if any other would be deemed more eligible, and I could procure it, that article should not prevent my wishes.

As soon as I have written and sent this letter, I mean to set out for Stanton, and from thence hope to be admitted to visit thee at Woodstock to receive thine answer. A written one, I must petition against. If my hope is to be crushed by a negative, I pray thee to let it be given me personally.

“I am, my revered friend,
whether thou favorest me or not,
thine in sincerity,
HENRY COLVILLE.

To this, Mrs. Stanhope, wrote the following; directing it to the care of Mr. Harley.

“Last day of third month.

“My worthy young friend,

Notwithstanding thou requesteth to have no answer but a personal one, I cannot satisfy myself without addressing thee in writing, that, before I see thee, thou mayst know my sentiments.

When thou conjecturest that I shall withhold my consent to Maria Lewis' forming a very early engagement, thou conjecturest truly. I think her much too young at present to be a wife; and I should be sorry to be accessory in fettering her mind, or thine either, for any great length of time, in prospect of an event which, at last may not be permitted to take place. A union for life, must engross the cares of a thinking person; and when it is long in contemplation it giveth a habit of fixing all ideas to this world; consequently

maketh less familiar than is for either our future or *present* good, the thoughts of another! Besides this—young persons with good principles and tender dispositions must, of necessity, become very dear to each other, with such a view in perspective; and then if any thing divideth them—for Henry, we cannot ensure for futurity—what sad work is the separation! We are not our own carvers; nor is it fit we should be. Events are doubtless pre-disposed. I do not use the word ordained, because I would not convey the idea of fatality. We certainly may chuse the good and refuse the evil; or we may chuse the evil and refuse the good. But I believe if we duly attend, we shall all be sensible of a bias which will lead us into the given path; from which if we stray, we may again be brought into, though by a round-about way.

Thy letter to me is a letter I highly approve; nor can I wish for Maria a better heritage than thine. Her time of life is my only objection: yet young as she is, I had rather see her enter immediately into matrimony, which (do not let me mislead thee) I cannot consent to, than into a probable long connexion.

Thou wilt scorn the supposition of thy mind's undergoing an alteration. Remember, however, that thine own strength is thy greatest weakness; and that when we fancy ourselves to be very valiant, we are, in mercy, often left to ourselves, that a sense of our own frailty (for it is too probable that we shall then fall into the very errors against which we think ourselves most secure) may teach us true humility. Allowing, therefore, the possibility of this change in thy affection, how wretched might the poor Maria be made (for the female heart is formed to be *won* by tender solicitation) whether, in that case, thou didst, or didst not, fulfil thine engagements.

And now I have said all my sentiments on this side of the question, I will tell thee that I shall not be averse to thy sometimes—not too often—visiting here with thy brother and sister Harley. I cannot consent to thy coming by thyself, because it would too evidently proclaim thy purpose; for though I should not be displeased to see Maria, in time, and as a friend, sensible of thy good qualities, I should rest upon thy truth not to endeavour to engage her *affection* by any over sedulous methods. And this is going farther than I purposed, because it may continue thee in a labyrinth, when it is possible Maria may remain insensible to thy merits. But if I see this likely to be the case (and thou must expect that I shall watch very strictly) thou must not be offended at my then entirely prohibiting thy visits; and even now, I bid thee to remember that I have already said they must not be too frequent.

It is possible thou mayest apprehend that some other, perhaps a less honorable one than thou hast, in this case shown thyself to be, may in the interim, *without my knowledge*, succeed in his endeavours to win my girl. It may occur to thee (as indeed thou intimatest) that the gratitude of her gentle mind, for the highest proof of esteem a man can show to a woman, may be softened into affection, while she remaineth insensible to thine attachment. But rest thyself satisfied on this head. It is very improbable any address should be made to Maria but through me; as she would reject every indirect attempt of such a nature; and I promise thee, as far as I ought to answer for any thing, that thy proposal shall be the first which shall be offered to her consideration; and that, at a proper

time, I will support it with all *due* influence, if thou shouldest determine to wait the uncertain event.

And now if thy calm reason dost not tell thee it would be better to avoid Woodstock till a future period—if thou wilt not be satisfied without being permitted to make thy visit here—in short, if, after what I have said thou art not afraid for *thyself*—then tell thy brother and sister I hope to see them with thee at the Lawn, and likewise the little Maria, at any time after fifth day next. But thou must not, Henry, come by thyself, as I repeat I shall esteem it a breach of confidence if Maria Lewis be made sensible of the purport of thy visit.

And now I will thank thee for the manner of thy proceeding, which hath fixed thee high in my esteem.

The path of rectitude is the path to happiness in which it is my hope thou wilt evermore be conducted.

Let my best respects be given to thy brother and sister, and do thou Henry rank me in the number of thy cordial friends,

ANNE STANHOPE.

I need not Charlotte make any comments upon either of the foregoing letters—They speak for themselves—but proceed to tell you that in case Maria ever mentions Mr. Colville with such favorable sentiments as may raise the idea of a partiality for him, it will accord with our good friend Stanhope's wishes if you forbear to take any notice to her of it, as you probably might be led to do in a jesting manner; she being desirous to keep, at present, from her mind all surmises of Mr. Colville's attachment. Maria's youth considered—I cannot but applaud Mrs. Stanhope's sentiments upon the occasion; though they are too opposite to the general method of proceeding.

We had yesterday a letter from Rachel. She says she has received yours from Alverston, and has replied to it. The style she writes in, is very unpleasing to your mother; consequently disagreeable to me.

The account which Miss Lewis gave of Polly Fenton, in her last letter, may be given of her now. Indeed she behaves exceedingly well. Yesterday she was introduced to Doctor Griffith under her assumed name of Mrs. Wyreley. However, she knows that he is acquainted with her story, as it is requisite he should be, that he may suit his advice to her circumstances.

Of the lovely Lady Caroline Pemberton I forbear to speak much, because Maria has been so copious on the subject. Mr. and Mrs. Maynard were prevented coming with the earl and his daughter. A very few words settled your mother's business with his lordship.

You will remember us to the inhabitants of the Park; will accept one half of your mother's best affection, and I am sorry to have cause to add, three fourths of mine. I would willingly divide it equally, but I cannot, between you and your sister.

ELEANOR LAWSON.

LETTER, XXXVI.

MR. MAYNARD, TO MRS. MAYNARD.

Wednesday night, April 8th.

I AM now, my Harriet, a visitor at Oakley Hill, and should feel myself very comfortable, had I not been so greatly disappointed in my expectations of finding that a letter from you had been left for me at Mansfield. The return of my messenger from that post-office, empty-handed, chagrined me considerably. Yet I am willing to believe the prevention to my hearing from you is trifling; endeavouring to persuade myself that if any accident had befallen you, I should have had intelligence of it from some-body about you, as a direction to Mr. Broomley must have been recollected.

Under this persuasion, I make myself tolerably satisfied, and will now recount to you my adventures.

Yesterday morning, I left my reverend friend and his Alethea; proceeding without interruption on my journey till I reached Plesly, which is about six miles from Oakley Hill, and stopping there a short time, sent John forward with my compliments to Mr. Slayton, if he found him at home, and that if it were convenient to him I would call, in consequence of his obliging invitation, and take a view of his paintings. John met me upon his return, soon after I left Plesly, with a polite message from the gentleman, importing that my company would be esteemed a most particular favor. Onward, therefore, I went, and was met by Mr. Slayton at his gate with great respect. I desired the postillion to take back his horses, and ordered Robert to go to Mansfield for fresh ones to come up directly; but this my present host would not permit, as he very earnestly requested to have the *honor*, he again termed it, of entertaining me at his house till—at least—to-morrow; adding, that as he understood, by my commands to my servant, I meant to sleep at Mansfield, he should think it quite an affront if I preferred an inn to his house.

There was no answering this, but by a compliance; to which indeed my wishes strongly urged me. I therefore sent Robert to the post-office, and came into the house with the old Squire, who immediately ordered tea and coffee, which after having drank, we proceeded to take a view of his pictures; and much entertained I was with them, for they absolutely are a very fine, though not a very large, collection. The pictures surveyed—we walked in the pleasure-grounds and gardens till near supper, and then sat down to conversation.

Mr. Slayton himself ushered in the name of the Stanleys, by informing me of a great discovery which has lately been made respecting Miss Stanley and Sir Charles Conway. The story is an extraordinary one. I reserve it till we meet; which GOD grant we may do happily, and that I shall find my dear Harriet perfectly well.

I cannot, you see, quite divest myself of my apprehensions.

From the young lady we adverted to the rest of the family. The old gentleman is extremely fond of his godson. He informed me of his intention to make him his Heir general; and added a wish that he could see him well married.

What a fine opening was here! The very one I wished for. My reply was—Why indeed, in this age of libertinism it ought to be the wish of all parents for their children; and you seem to act the part of a father to the gentleman in question.

Mr. Slayton. I love the boy, sir, as I love myself. I always did. I love his sister too. In short, I love the whole family. They are the nearest relations I have in the world.

Maynard. So I have heard; and I wish you may live to see your relations in that family encreased by the happy marriages of both brother and sister: but Mr. Stanley does not, I presume, think of a wife at present.

I would not, Harriet, seem to know any thing about Lady Lucinda Harrington; as I thought it would only lengthen my preface.

Mr. Slayton. Why I cannot absolutely speak to *that point*. George is *difficult*; and to say truth, he has some *pretension* to be nice in this particular. You have a large acquaintance, Mr. Maynard, in the world—cannot you help me to a lady suitable to my godson?

Recollecting *his* part of the conversation in Lady Stanley's dressing-room, respecting our cousin—I immediately saw his drift, and replied accordingly.

Maynard. Why I think I am acquainted with one of the finest young women in existence; but she, like your godson, is extremely difficult.

Mr. Slayton. She must, let me tell you, sir, be difficult *indeed*, if George Stanley cannot please her fancy.

Maynard. I can say the same thing for my cousin. The man who would not think himself happy with Lady Caroline Pemberton, ought never to know happiness upon earth.

Mr. Slayton. Aye, aye! Say you so, sir? Why if there are two such nonpareils, it would be a pity they should be parted. What say you! Shall we make a match of it?

Maynard. Upon my word I should not have the least objection to such a matter. For my uncle, I can answer; and I pretend to have some little influence with my cousin.

Mr. Slayton. But how shall we prevail with George?

Maynard. Prevail with him, sir! What a question is that, when *such a woman* is in prospect!

Mr. Slayton. Why truly I have heard great talk of her; and so has my boy. I remember his once saying that he never saw Lady Caroline Pemberton, but that if he was disposed to marry any one from character, she should be the woman: and he generously added, in answer to a remark of one present at the time, that if she were not possessed of a *single shilling*, his sentiments would be the same.

Maynard. A proper way of thinking at his time of life. But my cousin is not destitute of the goods of fortune.

Mr. Slayton. True: true. Not *destitute*; though not so abundantly favored as some others in her elevated situation.

Maynard. At the time, probably, that the conversation passed, which you mention, she was not; at least, it was *supposed* she was not. At *this* period she may be deemed one of the richest heiresses in the kingdom.

Mr. Slayton. How—how is that, sir! I thought—I supposed that the *son* which *young Pemberton* left had been heir to chief of the estate.

Maynard. He is dead, sir. He has been dead some time; but by a most villanous procedure the circumstance has been kept from disclosure. The business of my journey into the North, was to investigate the particulars of the event, which now stands acknowledged and properly confirmed; and the title of my cousin—there being no other male heir of the name—incontestable.

You never, Harriet, saw more wonder and anxiety in any countenance than now appeared in Mr. Slayton's. He sat in perfect silence during the time that I told him the story; which I did particularly; and when it was ended, seemed not to know what to say. At last—"Why bless my heart! this is a wonderful *turn-about*. But how—but how can we now think of looking up to such a lady? Nothing beneath a *Duke*—"

I interrupted him—Caroline Pemberton, Mr. Slayton, wants not rank. She *is* of rank, and can never be degraded: and if she cannot give her husband a title, she will give him distinction; as it will ever be believed the man of her choice must be a man of merit. Besides, Mr. Stanley has distinction from his family and from *himself*; and you may depend upon what I say, when I tell you that my cousin will see him through the same medium now, as she would have done had she been left a pennyless orphan; so exactly can she retaliate his own generous sentiments.

At the conclusion of my speech, the old gentleman's eyes betrayed his sensibility, and—"Noble; noble; upon my soul noble"—was all that for a few minutes he could utter. "But we will not be outdone in generosity, I can tell you. You shall see we will not"—said he; nodding his head.

After another silence, he arose; stood upon tip-toe, and, with his eyes sparkling and twinkling by turns, began to talk very fast. "If this matter could be brought about—If this thing could be done—zoodikers! we should be *first every where*. But do you think—do you think—it can ever be?"

Maynard. Upon my word I see no reason to the contrary. The earl, I have told you, I can answer for; and at his instance, and my Harriet's, (of whom Lady Caroline was ever very fond) I think I am not much afraid to undertake for my cousin likewise.

I never beheld a man so transported upon such an occasion. He almost danced for joy; and it was some time before I could so reduce him to moderation as to attend to the plan I wanted him to pursue. At length, however, he listened to me, and I repeated the sense of his own question — "*How shall we prevail with Mr. Stanley,*" who perhaps has not yet any great relish for matrimony, to come into measures that to us appear so eligible?

This question from you, Mr. Slayton, a few minutes back, I will confess, a little displeased me. However I now see it in its proper light, and will answer it myself. *Let him see the lady*. After that, depend upon it, we shall not have any farther difficulty. But let him see her before he knows any thing of the negociation between us, or you probably will find him refractory. Young men of his spirit love to *chuse* their partners. If they know the affair is concluded upon, and the lady won, they pursue it coldly, and as a matter of course: which method, let me warn you, will never succeed with Caroline Pemberton.

He promised to observe all I said and informed me that he should be obliged to go to London in about ten days to settle his late purchase of Hazle-wood Lodge; that he would request his godsons company, and then carry him to my house as on a visit to me.

About the time you mention Mr. Slayton, I shall probably be obliged to go again down into Cumberland, Lord Danvers having had a Steward there who is the veriest rogue in being, and must be closely looked after: but my absence will not be of any consequence. Mrs. Maynard will assist you in any manner you can wish. Make her a visit before you carry Mr. Stanley to my house, and settle with her all preliminaries; to which my cousin must be kept an entire stranger; as she has a great deal of delicacy, and would be much displeased to know that this matter had been previously settled.

We had a considerable deal more conversation upon the subject, in which we both found ourselves particularly interested. Mr. Slayton told me what great things he intended to do for his godson, and I dare say I very easily could have prevailed upon him to have sent off directly for a lawyer to make a rough draft of settlements. He much wanted to fix a place of residence for the couple his wishes had already united, and mentioned resigning the house in which he lives, or adding to that he has lately purchased.

There could not I told him, were the meditated union to take place, be any occasion for him, or any body to be put to inconvenience on account of residence, as the earl had several fine seats on different parts of his estate; particularly one in Rutlandshire, near to a summer retirement of mine on the borders of Leicestershire, which was a delightful situation indeed; and that I was very certain his lordship would yield up any one his daughter preferred.

In the height of our conversation we were interrupted by a servant's bringing in a letter, which proved to be from Mr. Stanley, importing the intention of a large party from Alverston Park to dine with him the next day, if he should be at home, and the proposal met with his approbation: that they meant to set out early in the morning for Hazle-wood Lodge (which is about midway between Alverston and Oakley Hill) where they should wait the messenger's return, and if Mr. Slayton were from home or otherwise engaged, they would pursue the plan they had formed of a short tour through a part of Derbyshire and take Oakley Hill in their return.

With this the old gentleman was quite delighted. "You now, Mr. Maynard shall see my godson and shall confess that he deserves a very fine lady."

I told him I must leave him early in the morning, as I purposed reaching London to morrow evening.

"I wont hear a word of it. I wont hear a word of it. I *insist* upon your staying to see George. Excuse me Sir: excuse my being so peremptory; but *pray* do oblige me, if your business will any way permit."

I smiled at his urgency, and agreed not to leave Oakley Hill till after dinner. Mr. Slayton then called in the Alverston messenger to enquire if he knew who was to be of the party, and was informed that it consisted of Sir Edward and Lady Stanley; Miss Stanley; Miss Lawson; Sir Charles Conway; Mr. Evelyn and our hero.

"Well done; well done. I am mighty glad of all this"—exclaimed Mr. Slayton; and when he went to write a note of answer, gave me Mr. Stanley's letter to peruse, with which I was most particularly pleased. The air—the spirit—and the good sense it conveyed, being singularly striking.

After this we separated for the night, and being determined to send off Robert in the morning, that he might reach home tomorrow, I sat down to write a few lines of mere information respecting my return, and was betrayed by the subtilty of my subject to this unreasonable length.

Early in Friday I hope to be with you; as I intend going from hence to-morrow as soon after dinner (which Mr. Slayton tells me he always has ready by two o'clock) as propriety will admit. I confess I feel a strong inclination to stay and see our cousin-elect, or I should have been off by six in the morning.

My dearest Harriet, adieu.

Ever truly yours,
AUGUSTUS MAYNARD.

LETTER, XXXVII.

LADY CAROLINE PEMBERTON, TO MRS.
MAYNARD.

Woodstock, April 10th.

YOUR summons, my dear Harriet, reached us yesterday. We should immediately have obeyed it, had not engagements on both my father's side and mine prevented us. Those of my father could not be deferred; and *mine*, fastened themselves upon my *inclination*. I doubt I need not now tell you they are relative to Alverston. To-morrow morning, by the time this will reach you, we mean to set off for London, and hope to see you in the evening.

Shall I reserve the information I have gained till we meet? Or shall I, while my sentiments upon what has passed, are lively, give you particulars?

Harriet, I fear they will *long* be lively on this subject. I need not, I doubt, apprehend their fading on my remembrance. Therefore I will only just mention the heads of what I have gathered since my short residence in Woodstock.

In my note of Monday evening, I told you I was engaged to go on the Wednesday morning to the Lawn with Mrs. Lawson and Mrs. Eleanor Lawson, to hear read some letters from their Charlotte respecting affairs at Alverston. I went, and was greatly interested in what I heard. Miss Stanley's whole story was particularized, and much said about Mr. Stanley's depression of spirits, with a supposition of his being in love.

The idea of his having been disappointed respecting Lady Lucinda Harrington—now Chapone—at first presented itself, and was, I will candidly confess, very unwelcome; and, as I have since found, very untrue; for this day (though I should not mention it quite yet, as I am talking of Wednesday; but it will intrude) I saw a whimsical paper written by Mr. Stanley, and presented to Miss Lawson. He calls it his apology for his Bristol excursion, which—can you believe it, Harriet!—the little portrait, that I was so much disturbed about losing, was the great occasioner of his journey! Fact, upon my word! He found this image of himself at Hazle-wood Lodge, [I thought there was a probability of my having dropped it there] and from several circumstances was led to believe it had been produced by the pencils of Lady Lucinda, and that she was partial to him to a degree of distress; upon which, with a precipitance—increased he says by sentiments of compassion—quite in character with himself, he set off for Bristol: being, as may be supposed, desirous of coming at the real truth of the circumstances and of the lady's character; to which he was at that time an entire stranger. Miss Lawson sends this

apology of Mr. Stanley's out of his sister's reach, lest his evident attachment to—*Maria Birtles*, though she says, the name is not mentioned—should, were she to see it, occasion her some concern. In a previous letter, she tells Miss Lewis that she has long had a rumbling notion of this *much talked of* young woman, and that she once asked him if she had the appearance of a gentlewoman.

I cannot, Harriet, give you his reply, as the opinion he expressed was extravagant: nevertheless, I was weak enough to be pleased with it.

Miss Lawson, in several other parts of her letters, afforded me much pleasure by the instances she gave, as well as by her own conjectures, respecting Mr. Stanley's remembrance of this *Maria Birtles*; under which name (though the time I wore it, I was on another account greatly distressed) I experienced more real satisfaction than—than perhaps I ought to have done. For, Harriet, let me assure you that, notwithstanding I so freely acknowledge—

But we will talk of these matters another time. In the humour I am in at present, I will not trust myself upon the subject. Yet just let me observe that, all things considered, I cannot say that I think I have any *very* great reason to take offence at his leaving me at Alverston at such a crisis, and on such an occasion. I was, you know, but as a servant in the family, though they would not treat me as such; and it certainly would have been a degree of imprudence to have given entire way to any prepossession he might find himself inclined to entertain for me *in that character*.

But you will say that I am determined, at any rate, to excuse him. I doubt I am; and that the unravelling this affair has fettered me faster than before. Well, I cannot help it. All things must have their course.

Upon the conclusion of my Wednesday's visits, having heard read all the letters which had then been received from Alverston, I engaged to dine at the Lawn as on this day; (upon which my father had fixed to settle with his Woodstock tenants) the Lawsons, or rather Miss Lewis, for *she* receives the letters, expecting to be able to entertain me with the sequel, as I may call it, of Miss Stanley's story; which sequel, with some other particulars, I have accordingly heard.

I forbear to say any thing farther of my Woodstock neighbours, than that they have improved upon me at every interview.

My father bids me to ask your sending an order for Mr. Orgall's attendance in Berkley Square to-morrow evening.

I doubt not Mr. Maynard's safe arrival in London before this time. It grieves me to think of his having another journey into Cumberland on this villanous Tomkin's account. Sure the business might be settled by agency! My father was, as you may suppose, much hurt by the behaviour of a man whom he had ever treated with the greatest kindness. He says he shall leave the whole management of the business to my cousin.

The post-man blows his horn.

Farewell.

CAROLINE PEMBERTON.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

VICISSITUDES
IN
GENTEEL LIFE.

VICISSITUDES

IN

GENTEEL LIFE

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

The Shafts of Envy dart at strongest Forts. But what can Envy
have to do with me? Pass by, perhaps, and smile. Envy
gives Honor. Envy acknowledges Superiority in
wishing to be like the one she hates, and holds
in feigned Contempt.

SMITH.

STAFFORD:

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M.DCC. XCIV.

VICISSITUDES

IN

GENTEEL LIFE.

LETTER, I.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Oakley Hill, April 10th.

I Now, Maria, write from the seat of Mr. Slayton, at which we arrived yesterday to dinner. It was our plan to have proceeded this morning upon the intended tour, but the master of the mansion would not permit our departure.

Shall I venture to say that I never remember to have lived a happier time than the present? Or shall I forbear, from an apprehension of a critical investigation into the cause?

Conscious then, you will say, that it will not bear examining. Indeed, Maria, I am not. I only threw out that line to alarm you. The cause of my present pleasantness may easily be accounted for. Every body is pleasant round me; and I must be a misanthrope not to be pleasant too at this juncture. Sir Edward and Lady Stanley look about, and then upon each other, with the lively rapture of seventeen, rationalized by the tranquility of sober sixty; so greatly do they enjoy the returning prospect of a union between Sir Charles and their Emma; while she, dear girl, has regained all her former bloom and liveliness; which, it must be confessed, the late unhappy period considerably diminished. She is now, as formerly, the life of the party she helps to compose; every heart is hers; and when she leaves the company, we are all sensible of a deprivation till her return. The *very* fine edge of her vivacity is, I think, rendered rather less keen; or if its sharpness is retained, it appears not; she seeming to have acquired additional softness by her late painful exercises; which renders her a completely charming character.

As to Sir Charles Conway—his felicity appears to be beyond description. The natural liveliness of his disposition is so sweetly blended with dignity and gentleness, that, as I suspect I have before more than once observed, it is next to impossible to see—to hear him, and not be charmed. His ardent affection for Miss Stanley is evident in his every look and action; not from such a manner as *presses upon the observation* of the nicest sensibility; nor would a third person ever feel himself in the way; as is too often the case when in company with a pair so circumstanced. *Her* affection may be seen as well as his; but it wears a different appearance. A sweet, modest, *withdrawing* acknowledgment—if I may be allowed to coin a phrase—answers candidly, though with delicacy, his more tender and open avowal. I never saw love assume so beautiful—shall I, Maria, say so *inviting*—an aspect?

Mr. Stanley—of whom more in a few lines—exhibits a meridian sky with quick passing clouds. His countenance, all lively and glowing as it naturally is, shines upon every beholder, till a

sudden thought seems to steal upon his features, and the glow is abated; but upon being spoken to, he starts, and is instantly re-animated.

What am I to say, Maria, about Mr. Evelyn? Why this—that the philanthropy of his heart enjoys the happiness of all around him; and that his goodness and good sense partake of, and encrease the general felicity.

Can I, my dear friends, be insensible to pleasure in such a society? Impossible: my heart is dilated, and I seem all expansion.

You must allow me some peculiar expressions, because the sentiments which lead my pen are of a peculiar nature.

Come Maria—come soon into Derbyshire. Your company is warmly requested by every individual of our party. Emma says she will write to you by the post which goes this evening, to entreat the performance of your given promise. I know no one's consent is wanting but your own; so we will not admit of any excuses, as we hope Mrs. Stanhope's amendment continues.

Mr. Slayton—whom, though a principal person in the groupe, I had absolutely forgotten—is a character I know not how to delineate.

In his person, he is neither stout, nor thin, nor ungenteel. His features are strong and rough, but not unpleasant. In his disposition he is whimsical and positive, but not unpersuadable; and his understanding is naturally good. At an early age he was deeply in love with a lady who died in a consumption; since which time he has never attempted matrimony. His godson is his darling; though he often jars with him. Their quarrels generally begin about Mr. Stanley's not being willing to put on the hymeneal fetters at present. A short time back, he made a proposal to the family that if George would marry within a twelve-month, to his approbation, he would immediately put him into possession of fifty thousand pounds and secure to him the like sum to be paid upon his death; but if he refused the conditions, he would present ten thousand to Miss Stanley, and find an heir from a distant and different branch of his family. The reason he gives for this preceeding, is, that he thinks if Mr. Stanley's senior friends leave him in a single state he never—such an opinion has he of all the young men of the present generation—will enter any other; and he professes *so mortally to hate lady-keeping*—I use his own words—that sooner than leave one shilling of his fortune to a batchelor he declares he will give it all to the Magdalene College. Sir Edward abets his proposal; being likewise very desirous to see his son married. However I cannot think Mr. Slayton will leave his estate from the Stanley family, do George what he will; as he has no other relations but some very distant ones from a half brother of his mother's.

And now, Maria, for some news about your amiable new favourite, Lady Caroline Pemberton. We were yesterday, at our arrival at Mr. Slayton's, introduced to Mr. Maynard, nephew to Lord Danvers; who was upon his return from his journey into the North, to investigate and settle Lady Caroline's reversionary right to the whole of the Pemberton estate; there not being, it seems, any apprehension of his lordship's marrying again; as he never could be prevailed upon to do that, even when it was supposed his nephew's son, if he had none of his own, would inherit the estate and title. But it now appears that this presumptive heir has been dead some time, and by the most

complicated villany of that wretch, Lord Crumpford, aided by the child's mother, kept a secret from the world; while a little usurper—supposed to be an illegitimate son of either the vile Lord's or his brother's—has been dressed up and put to Eton as the deceased heir of the earldom.

The story is very long and very wicked. I cannot now give you any particulars. Suffice it, that every thing has been proved incontestably.

Mr. Maynard is extremely genteel in his person, and one of the most complete fine gentlemen I ever beheld. I had not, when he was here, received your Wednesday's packet, or I should, at my introduction to him, have expressed my concern at having been absent from Woodstock when Lady Caroline Pemberton made her first visit there; which circumstance, to my great surprise, he, after some time had elapsed, informed us of; politely saying, that a letter he had just then received from Mrs. Maynard, mentioned his cousin's disappointment at finding I was from home; adding, that he supposed she would return with the Earl to London the latter end of this week, as he had sent his lordship a summons to meet him there upon business of consequence. So Maria you have probably, by this time, lost your new friend; of whom I think I should have been jealous, had she staid amongst you much longer.

Mr. Maynard left us after dinner. He seemed impatient to get home; having been out longer than he expected. Till that morning he had, he said, been very uneasy at not having received any letter from Mrs. Maynard since he left her, and spoke with so much affection upon the occasion, that I was quite charmed with him.

I am called away; therefore lest I should not find an opportunity to write again before the post goes out, will here subscribe the name of

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

Tell my aunt that I thank her for the addition she made to your packet, (which greatly pleased me) and that I mean to obey her injunctions.

LETTER, II.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Oakley Hill, Friday night.

Another opportunity offers for a little writing, which I with the more pleasure make use of, as you tell me my relation of our goings-on affords amusement to my dear friends at Woodstock.

After Mr. Maynard left us yesterday, we walked round the grounds of this pleasant little habitation, and were very agreeably entertained the whole evening. This morning we had a fishing party, and when we returned, found a messenger with letters conveyed by the morning's post to Alverston; amongst the number of which, was my dear Maria's.

I am sorry to tell you, that happy as I am in this part of the country, I find a grumbling in my

heart at Lady Caroline's visiting Woodstock during the time of my being absent from it. Of this, however, I am most truly ashamed; though I find a little excuse for it from the extreme amiableness of the lovely creature's character. I think I never heard a woman more celebrated. Mr. Maynard spoke of her in the warmest terms of affectionate admiration; saying she was the joy and pride of all her relations.

Having perused your packet before dinner, I, after that was over, read the part which related to Lady Caroline (and indeed some other parts) to my friends here, by way of a desert; and this occasioned an argument between Mr. Slayton and his godson.

"I think," said the old gentleman, "that Lady Caroline Pemberton must make any man in the world very happy. George, are not you of my opinion?"

Mr. Stanley. Fancy, my good sir, in these matters, is some times apt to overrule the judgment.

Mr. Slayton. But what a fanciful fancy must it be that could not fancy such a charming creature.

Mr. Stanley. Good changes upon the word fancy, sir; but to carry them a little farther—I fancy that if at a fanciful time of life your fancy had been fixed upon any other woman, you would not have fancied this, or any second; however justly celebrated for beauty and goodness.

Mr. Slayton. And is *that* the case, George? Is your fancy fixed, boy? This comes [angrily he spoke it] of handsome waiting-maids.

The crimson deepened upon Mr. Stanley's cheek; but he seemed to be upon his guard. Emma looked surprised; Lady Stanley concerned; while George with apparent carelessness (passing over his innuendo) replied—"My fancy, sir! I am not talking of myself. Your question was a general one, and I gave it a general answer."

Mr. Slayton. Well, well: perhaps I spoke without much thinking. But to end the matter—Will you make this fine lady your wife?

Mr. Stanley. Upon my word, sir, you must think me very presumptuous if you suppose I can have an idea of looking up to a young lady who, with respect to family; fortune, and endowments, both personal and mental, stands in one of the most elevated situations in the kingdom; and that, without ever having been the least acquainted with her.

Mr. Slayton. Well, but suppose she would consent to have you, godson! What would you say then?

Mr. Stanley. You suppose a very improbable matter, sir. Lady Caroline Pemberton has just pretensions to look up to a ducal coronet. Can you then *fancy*—to repeat the battered word—that she would condescend to think of an alliance with the family of a private gentleman?

Mr. Slayton. Well, but let us talk for talking's sake; and let me repeat my question. If this fine young lady were to notify that she would accept you, would you promise to make her your wife.

Mr. Stanley. If you must be answered categorically—I would not; except I found, upon an acquaintance, that I could give her the first place in my *heart* as well as in my esteem and admiration.

Mr. Slayton. Foolish boy. But suppose, upon seeing her, you found you *could* love her above all other women, would you *then* consent to marry her?

Mr. Stanley. You now, sir, ask a question that requires no answer. If I loved Lady Caroline Pemberton above all other women, and if she would condescend to accept me, you must suppose me to be either a fool or a madman to have any doubt of my ready—my *grateful* compliance.

Mr. Slayton. Very well, young man; very well. This now is as it should be. Well, and will you then go with me to London? Will you consent to see this fine young creature with a princely fortune?

Mr. Stanley. Consent to see her, sir! In what light? Not I hope—But go with you to London! Yes; when you please. I am ready to attend you at a moment's warning. But it must be upon this condition—that you promise me I shall not be mentioned to Lady Caroline Pemberton as one who is so ridiculous as to have the least idea of soliciting her particular distinction.

Mr. Slayton. I *will* promise: I *do* promise that she shall not have any occasion from me to look upon you in any other light than as one who accompanies me upon a visit I have promised Mr. Maynard to make at his house, (where Lady Caroline, doubtless, frequently resides) the next time I go to London.

Mr. Stanley. Well, sir, we then mutually promise. *I*—to attend you to town. *You*—that I shall not be made to look like a fool when I arrive there.

It was then agreed that the gentlemen should set out for London at our return, and that we should proceed on our tour to-morrow morning. As we do not mean to make a stay at any place, you must not, Maria, expect to hear from me till I again see Alverston: but do not let me be disappointed in my hope of finding there, at that time, a letter from Woodstock.

After tea we had a pleasant walk to a little village about a mile from Oakley Hill, to look at some curious pieces of old coin lately found there in a little meadow. As we were coming back, I missed my pocket-book, in which I had made some memorandums respecting some of the pieces, and wishing to return in hopes of finding it, Mr. Stanley offered to accompany me; insisting, in his rattling way, that the rest of the party should go forward. Back, therefore, we went, and found the lost book in the little cottage where we saw the coin; the mistress of which had just called in one of her daughters to bring it after us.

As we returned, Mr. Stanley and I had a great deal of serious conversation respecting his sister and Sir Charles Conway, and after that, on a variety of other subjects. At length his going to

London was mentioned, and I bid him take care of his heart, or the celebrated young lady whom he would probably see at Mr. Maynard's, would release him of it. When, with a very serious air he replied—"Indeed, madam, it is far—too far—out of the reach of even Lady Caroline Pemberton's attracting influence: but I go to London in hope of finding its mistress."

Charlotte. You surprise me, sir, by speaking on this subject with an air of gravity unfamiliar to your features. Is it possible you can in earnest have parted with your heart?

Mr. Stanley. Miss Lawson, I have. You are, I know, too good to let any re-communication of this kind distress either my mother or my sister; therefore I dare to speak to you upon this pressing subject without any apprehension; without any reserve.

Charlotte. Your opinion of me, sir, obliges me. Permit me to say my heart witnesses your sentiments upon this particular. I would not give either of them pain on any consideration.

Mr. Stanley. I am convinced of it, or I would not tell you that my affections are rivetted to a young woman who has neither fortune; friends, nor I believe descent to boast of. She is only, Miss Lawson, one of the most beautiful creatures upon earth, with a head and heart contending for superiority in goodness, and both excelling her outward form.

Charlotte. Let me spare you a farther communication, by mentioning the name of Maria Birtles.

Mr. Stanley. My dear Charlotte! I am delighted with you. And do you then think Maria Birtles answers the description I have given?

Charlotte. Of that, you know, I cannot be a competent judge. My ideas are gathered from what I have heard you and the rest of the family express.

Mr. Stanley. Well, madam, my description goes not one syllable beyond the truth; and I confess to you my every wish is centered in that one of calling her my own.

Charlotte. May I ask where she now is, Mr. Stanley?

Mr. Stanley. That I unhappily cannot tell you. Her letter to my mother gave not the least insight into the place of her present abode; and it is that which distracts my very soul.

I cannot, Maria, give you all the particulars of our long conversation on this subject; though there are many parts of it you would be pleased with: but this is a matter which seems to threaten an overthrow to the happiness of this, at present, very happy family; as Mr. Stanley protests most solemnly he never will speak to any woman upon matrimony till he has seen or heard something of Maria Birtles. Knowing his temper thoroughly, I am greatly concerned for the strong partiality he has imbibed for this young woman; which, upon my word, I do not wonder at, when I recollect what every one who has seen her says of her. Since our return, he has shown me the letter she wrote to Lady Stanley after her leaving Alverston, which is truly expressive of her given character. The sentiments and language are admirable; and it is written with the greatest accuracy. As to the hand-

writing—it is one of the most elegant I ever saw: but what surprised me more than any thing Mr. Stanley told me, was, her being the delineator of the little portrait which I told you was found at the ball at Hazle-wood Lodge; which, he says, has given him hours of disquietude; as he could not, for a considerable time, form the least conjecture of the person who had so distinguished him. But when he saw the above-mentioned letter it appeared, beyond doubt, to be Maria Birtles, as the handwriting was the very same as that on the back of the picture.

This discovery, as you may suppose, from his character, almost drove him to madness. His anxiety; admiration; *gratitude*, and affection, were now all centered in this lovely maid, who, beyond a dispute, was sympathetically sensible of his attachment, though her delicacy and discretion kept back any acknowledgment; but the lines at the back of the picture discovered her sentiments.

I asked Mr. Stanley to permit my taking a copy of them. He hesitated; but, at length, complied. I will enclose them for your perusal. I do not, Maria, pretend to be a great judge of poetry, but they please me extremely, and my approbation of them delighted Mr. Stanley, who is, in good truth, most deplorably in love with your namesake.

What the event will be I cannot conjecture. I am quite concerned about it indeed, but dare not give the least hint of it to either Lady Stanley or Emma; for what end would that answer? Distress them, and perhaps drive him to extremities. He is soon going to London with Mr. Slayton; for no other intent, he confessed to me, but to endeavour to find out his enslaver, which made him so ready to accompany the old gentleman; being previously determined to make use of the first pretence that offered for going thither. He would have set out the moment he had read the letter to Lady Stanley, had he not been fearful of awakening her apprehensions; and then she would probably have laid him under a promise opposite to his wishes.

Sir Charles Conway is acquainted with all the circumstances of this affair, and labours to persuade Mr. Stanley to relinquish his purpose; but his labours are unavailing.

Mr. *Evelyn*, Maria! It is, I think, some time since I mentioned his name. My not more frequently talking about him may probably appear like affectation; or perhaps *forbearance*. I do not know how it is, but I really do feel a little awkward upon the subject; yet I know not for what reason; for though I must confess that he treats me with a most pleasing attention, it does not, I *think*, indicate any particular meaning. Emma indeed says—But what signifies her opinion in such a case? She can only *conjecture*; and that I can do myself. I wonder, Maria, what (if his complaisance should encrease) my mother and aunt would wish me to say to him! It is but scribbling for scribbling sake you know; and as I have pretty nearly exhausted all my subjects, I may as well fill up this little remnant of paper with suppositions.

Mr. Evelyn talks of going to Oxford in a few days after our return to Alverstun. At the time he mentioned it, he looked at me; bowed, and said he hoped, when he went, to be honored with some commands of mine to Woodstock.

Like a very simpleton I made no other answer than by a return of his bow; which a foolish blush officiously accompanied. I was quite ashamed of myself. Why did I blush? And why did I not speak? It looked as if I thought—as if I fancied—I cannot tell *what* it looked like. Emma says I

appeared conscious. Conscious of what? Why, she adds—of having formed an idea that I myself am the subject of his errand into Oxfordshire. She rallies me most abominably, and would persuade me that I am going to be in love. But she only speaks her wishes, that she may have one to keep her in countenance. Soon after Mr. Stanley's return, she will, I believe, be Lady Conway; as Mr. Slayton, who has a great knowledge of law-business, has authority to direct the settlements. The old gentleman this evening told me he should present her with five thousand guineas on the day of her marriage. After all, he is an honest, generous, veteran. His peculiarities are, to be sure, rather striking; but I have a kind of sneaking regard for him; perhaps, because he professes that I am one of his very great favorites.

Emma has now brought me her letter to enclose. What can she have written! She has sealed it, and refuses to tell me its contents. I will venture a wager she has been prating about—I declare I am half afraid of her. Do not believe, Maria, that I—But perhaps I am too suspicious. Conscience, *you* will say, awakens my alarms. You are mistaken. This girl is now all roguery, and will make great from small; *therefore* it is that I fear her.

But adieu. I will finish, and subscribe to the incontestible truth of my being yours, in the height of friendship,

the name of
CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

We think of returning to Alverston tomorrow fe'nnight.

LETTER, III.

MR. SLAYTON, TO AUGUSTUS MAYNARD, ESQ.

Oakley Hill, April 16th.

DEAR SIR,

I Take the liberty to inform you that I have received a letter from my lawyer, to tell me my presence in town will be necessary next week. I therefore think of setting out on Monday or Tuesday, if my godson, who has promised to accompany me, will by that time be ready. He is still absent with the party upon a tour through the North of this county, but they all purpose returning to Alverstton next Saturday. I hope, sir, we shall make a job of this business. Miss Lawson read us a letter received just after you left us, from one of her friends at Woodstock, which more than confirmed the account you gave of your charming cousin. I then, as from myself, proposed the matter to my young man. But I cannot say that he received the mention of it quite so tractably as I could have wished; but, as you observe, sir, he has not yet *seen* the lady.

Youth is very headstrong. I wish this boy would be ruled by me, and I think he would be one of the greatest men in the kingdom: for, as you said when we parted, every thing is his own, both as to person and mind.

With my respectful compliments to your lady, at present unknown,

I am, sir,

your most obedient servant,
SAMUEL SLAYTON.

LETTER, IV.

MISS MARIA LEWIS, TO MISS LAWSON.

Woodstock, sixteenth day of fourth month.

IF this letter goeth duly, and thy friends keep to their purposed time of return, thou wilt receive it on seventh day next, and we shall hope, as soon after as the mail can bring it, to have information of the safety of thyself and party after your excursion.

Thy journal from Chapel in Frith reached us this morning. The account it gave of the Peak entertained us exceedingly. We expect thou wilt give us in another letter the rest of thy adventures.

And now, Charlotte, I must give thee a little friendly pain, by informing thee that my dear aunt's health will not permit my thinking of leaving her at present. Last second day she had a return of her disorder, which, however, doth not alarm me so much as it at first did, because Doctor Allen hath pronounced it to be the gout, which I am bid to hope will be of service to her constitution. She is now confined to her chamber. Thy kind mother and aunt are our constant visitants; and good

Doctor Griffith, likewise, generally seeth us once every day. My aunt's spirits are exceeding good, and she saith she is extremely comfortable and happy now the pain is encreased in her foot and ankle, as the disorder seemeth to have entirely left her head and stomach.

Tell Emma Stanley I am greatly sensible of her kindness. With singular pleasure should I accept immediately her invitation could I leave my dear aunt Stanhope; and that as soon as she is restored, I shall not hesitate to exchange, for a time, the serene pleasures of Woodstock for the more lively ones of Alverston Park: and, Charlotte, tell her, likewise, that I thank her for her intelligence respecting a certain pair of lovers-elect, about whom I am greatly interested. From her account, as well as from thy hints, I think Herbert Evelyn's chief business in Oxfordshire will be confined to Woodstock.

Thou pretendest to wonder, Charlotte, respecting the sentiments of thy mother and aunt, should the young preacher make to thee an offer of his heart—for that, in simple English, is thy meaning of the encrease of his complaisance. Why, my dear friend, dost thou hesitate to conclude that thy choice will be theirs? They do not believe thou wilt chuse amiss; therefore leave the election entirely to thyself: and if such a chit as thy Maria may presume to give her opinion upon this occasion, the present candidate need not much fear any opposition.

Excuse me, Charlotte. I will confess I have waded beyond my depth. This is a science in which I am so little versed, that I ought not to presume to give one sentiment on the subject. Yet thy happiness so nearly concerneth me, that I cannot prevent my ideas from wandering to the probability of Herbert Evelyn's success; being pretty strongly persuaded that he will gladly give thee his heart for thine.

Mayest thou, my dear Charlotte, be directed by the Great Director in this and all other occasions throughout thy existence; and with this expressed wish will I bid thee farewell.

MARIA LEWIS.

LETTER, V.

MR. MAYNARD, TO SAMUEL SLAYTON, ESQ.

St. James's Square, April 17th.

DEAR SIR,
YOUR letter, dated yesterday, is now put into my hands.

I am glad to know of your intended journey to town, though at the time you think of beginning it, I shall probably have left London, as I am necessitated to set off for the North, respecting the business which carried me thither before, next Monday; but this cannot be of any detriment to our meditated event, as Mrs. Maynard can assist you as well—perhaps better than I could, were I to be present. She is perfectly acquainted with all that passed between you and me, when I was so hospitably entertained at Oakley Hill; and she has her cousin's happiness so warmly at heart, that (being much pleased with my account of Mr. Stanley and his connexions, and knowing he will not find any prior preference to combat with) she particularly interests herself in the success of our negotiation. The earl is likewise extremely well satisfied with our treaty; but Lady Caroline is, and must be kept, a stranger to our plan till after Mr. Stanley's introduction.

Let me request you to oblige Mrs. Maynard with a card of information as soon as you arrive in town, which I hope you will not leave till my return from Cumberland, when I please myself with thinking I shall find matters advancing to our wishes.

I am, my dear sir,
your obliged,
and obedient servant,
AUGUSTUS MAYNARD.

LETTER, VI.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Alverston, Saturday, April 18th.

JUST before dinner we returned, my dear Maria, safe and happy to this charming spot, which is much more beautiful in every respect than any of the fine places we have seen in our late ramble; some of which have been admired for their simplicity; others for their magnificence; the rest for a romantic appearance—for neatness—for a hospitable air, &c. all which are united in this one habitation. Hazle-wood Lodge is a sweet pretty retired situation, but neither the house nor park are of any great extent when compared with Alverston; but it has some singular advantages. Like this place it is partly encompassed by an elegant little village; to which Mr. Mortimer, in imitation of Sir Edward Stanley, whose character he particularly venerates, has drawn a set of very agreeable people, and the river which runs beyond it, is well replenished with most excellent fish of various kinds. It is situated mid-way between Alverston Park and Oakley Hill, and forms a triangle with this place and

Hawthorn Grove; which, it seems, is Mr. Slayton's inducement to think of making it his residence; though he is so fond of Oakley Hill that he cannot persuade himself to quit it entirely. Hawthorn Grove, now the alterations are compleated, is said to excel even Alverston Park, which I can hardly suppose. The last time of my being in Derbyshire I did not see it, and the time before it was all pulling to pieces: yet I then thought it a delightful spot, though not equal to Alverston. I have before told you we are to make a visit there.

Soon after our alighting, your letter was put into my hands. I thank you for it, Maria, but I am much concerned that you are prevented coming to us: concerned for the *cause* as well as the effect. As soon as Mrs. Stanhope's greatly wished-for recovery takes place, we hope to see you in Derbyshire.

With yours, I received a letter from my sister. She tells me she is going with Lady Blurton and the *Honorable Miss Barbara Tupps* to Aldborough in Suffolk; Lady Blurton being advised by her physicians to use sea-bathing for a violent eruption in her face; which Rachel says, quite disfigures her. But of this you have, I suppose, had an account at Woodstock.

On Monday we are to dine at Hawthorn Grove, where we are to be joined by Mr. Slayton, who is to return with us and set off, with Mr. Stanley, for London on Tuesday. Mr. Evelyn goes at the same time for—*Oxford*, Maria; not for *Woodstock*; though he will probably call there. And this is all I will say upon that subject, at this period. I am afraid of you. You are a little critic. I thought when I was writing *to you* I might with perfect unreserve; but find I was mistaken.

* * * * *

At the word mistaken I laid aside my pen and went down stairs, when I was informed Sir Charles Conway had received a letter from Miss Howard, who is at Harborough Hall, requesting to know if he can give her any intelligence, about her sister; she having received a very alarming letter from her by one of the servants who attended her at Yarmouth, and from him, some intimation respecting Sir Charles Conway, which puzzles her still more than even the letter.

Miss Howard has written in so pathetic a style and her character is so exalted that Sir Charles has determined to go to Harborough—Mrs. Digby you are to understand, having quitted the kingdom—to acquaint Miss Howard with such of the circumstances relative to the infamous conduct of her sister, as are necessary for her to know; and this he chuses to do in person, rather than by letter, out of respect to this truly excellent woman; therefore, intending first to write to her, he means to set out with the rest of the gentlemen on Tuesday morning.

For some days we shall probably be a reduced party; as Sir Charles will from Harborough take a turn to Coventry, near which place he has an estate that wants inspecting. But I fancy we shall be very busy, as Lady Stanley thinks of commissioning Mr. Stanley to order down some patterns for cloaths for the approaching wedding of our dear Emma, though she absolutely forbids what she calls such a hasty procedure; but I believe she will be over-ruled.

Tell my dear mother I mean to be very extravagant upon the occasion; therefore request she will be so kind as to convey to me the two bank notes, one of forty pounds the other of thirty, which

are in the slip in my writing bureau.

When I left Woodstock I had but little thought of this event, or I should have been better provided for it. I likewise, and that through forgetfulness, left behind the pearl roses for my shoes. Mr. Evelyn will not I dare say think it any trouble to put the little box, at the request of my mother or aunt, into his pocket.

Emma's affectionate respects finish my letter.

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

LETTER, VII.

MR. MAYNARD, TO MRS. MAYNARD.

Bedford, April 20th.

Stopping at this place, my dear Harriet, and having occasion to open the chaise-trunk, I found I had left behind me the parcel of papers I last night received from Lord Danvers. I cannot imagine how they escaped my recollection when I packed up the parchments.

Let them be sent by to-morrow's mail-coach, directed to me at Mr. Broomley's, where I must wait their arrival; as without them I cannot proceed with Tomkins.

You will not forget to forward Bailey's affidavit to the same place, if it reaches you before Thursday.

That I shall write to you frequently, and that you will let me hear from you as often as possible, is the chief pleasure I expect till I see you again, save what the peaceful abode of my reverend Kildwick friend promises.

Adieu, my dearest Harriet.
Yours ever faithfully,
AUGUSTUS MAYNARD.

LETTER, VIII.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Tuesday morning, April 21st.

I Was this morning summoned to an early breakfast; Mr. Slayton being very impatient to begin his journey to London. We met in the library by seven o'clock, and before eight the gentlemen left us. Sir Charles Conway for Harborough; Mr. Stanley and his godfather for town; *and*, Maria, Mr. Evelyn for Oxford—*shire*. Now, do not think—but I care not. Think what you please. All I have to say about the matter is, that—That what? Why I do not know; for if, after all, he should only—Well, I cannot help it; and it would be folly to deny it; therefore may as well acknowledge that I think Mr. Evelyn is one of the most worthy and agreeable characters amongst my acquaintance.

And so now to other matters.

Sir Edward and Lady Stanley are gone to pay a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Layton; Emma is writing to Lady Davison, and I will amuse myself with giving you an account of our yesterday's engagements, which surely were the most agreeable the world could offer.

Sir Charles Conway left Alverston on Sunday morning; and Mr. Evelyn dined at the

Rectory, with four or five respectable farmers, but returned to the Park in the evening. Our going to Hawthorn Grove was finally settled before Sir Charles left us, therefore, according to the purposed plan, we arose at six in the morning, and, not long after, were seated in the carriages—Sir Edward and Lady Stanley in the chaise; in the coach, Emma; George; myself, and—you know who.

The sky was clear and the morning warm. Could we then be otherwise than pleasant!

We were received at Hawthorn Grove with the most expressive welcome by its master, who conducted us into the breakfast-room, where we found Sir John and Lady Seymour; Lady Morden; Colonel Jenkinson, and Miss Sparkes: and, soon after, there arrived Mr. and Mrs. Browne; Miss Letty Stanford; Mr. Mrs. and the two Miss Brookes; Lady Catherine Villars and Mr. Edgar.

Sir Charles was determined to celebrate his Emma's return to Hawthorn Grove. At his request, Lady Stanley was mistress of the ceremonies; but Miss Fanny Brooke and myself made tea and coffee; her ladyship presiding at the chocolate tray. A more elegant private breakfast was never given to any company. The urns; trays; waiters, and canisters, were all of silver, engraved with Sir Charles's arms; the china was *beautiful*; in short, the whole equipage was handsome beyond any one I ever saw.

Breakfast was not over till near twelve, after which, Lady Catherine Villars insisted upon having a dance; music was therefore ordered, and to dancing we went; but the weather for the season was so warm, and the morning so inviting, that every one soon began to wish for a walk in the pleasure-grounds; and accordingly we gave over dancing and sallied forth.

And now, Maria, I want to lead you step by step through the enchanting glades; groves, and gardens, which encompass the elegant structure inhabited by Sir Charles Conway; but I despair of giving you the least adequate idea of their beauty. I thought myself, the whole day through, in Fairy-Land. Never before did I wander in such fascinating scenes. The house too is entirely altered. I should not have known it to have been the same I saw when I was last in the same place. Every thing in it, and about it, is finished in the highest style of elegance to please Miss Stanley's taste. What, as Sir Charles whispered me, during our walk, was his distress when he had reason to think she would probably never see what had been done entirely upon her account! To speak a paradox—the more he was pleased, the more he was *dis*-pleased with all around him.

Emma, throughout the day, appeared very much affected and sweetly softened at the proofs every spot afforded of Sir Charles's endeavour to accommodate and entertain her. It is now a considerable time since she was at Hawthorn Grove; for previous to the short-lived triumph of that Mrs. Digby and the horrid Greville, (who, by the bye, has, we hear, taken his leave of England) her natural delicacy made her backward to visit there; though in company with Sir Edward and Lady Stanley; which reluctance I have sometimes thought she too much indulged.

Once in the morning I overheard her confess to Sir Charles (who had I believe been telling her that her acceptance of what had been done was the highest reward he could receive) that if her sense of his affection and sedulity for her happiness, was to be considered as payment, she was, in no degree, his debtor.

She spoke in a tender accent, and he received her acknowledgement with expressions of rapture.

Soon after this, she came up to me, for we, at that time, were walking in the wilderness and said with a sigh—"Oh, Charlotte! Charlotte! why did I come to Hawthorn Grove! My heart was before oppressed by a sense of obligation; but my gratitude now overwhelms me, and I have no power to oppose my affection."

Sir Charles and Mr. Stanley were that instant seen on the other side a row of shrubs. They heard the sentence and came forward; the happy lover, dropping upon one knee, seized and kissed the trembling hand of our blushing friend, while George, with a lively air, telling his sister she had won his heart, led me off to the next avenue, and began a discourse about Maria Birtles, confessing he was all alive to the hope of hearing something about her by means of the people who were probably left in Mrs. Douglas's house in Grosvenor Square.

He was going on in a strain of extasy, when we were joined by Lady Stanley and Mr. Evelyn (for at this period the company seemed all divided into parties) which put a stop to our conversation.

To carry you through the beautiful verdant windings and over the particular fine terrace that lead to the centre of the celebrated grove which gives its name to the Seat (so as to convey to you the least adequate idea of the charms of the place) is far beyond the powers of my language. Nothing short of the famed arcadian scenes can equal Hawthorn Grove. The temples in different parts of the gardens; the alcoves; grottos; the pavilion—But what am I doing! The very thing I had determined to avoid—endeavouring to describe the beauties of a scene which must be injured by the attempt. Royalty itself might be suitably accommodated in the superb and enchanting abode of Sir Charles Conway.

Did you never Maria hear it observed that time in wretchedness seems doubly long;—When spent in agreeable amusement, particularly flitting;—and again lengthened in our imagination, when passed in deep and real happiness? The reason given for the last change, is, that every moment is so strongly marked, it rests in our idea.

This solves the wonder of my thinking that the day at Hawthorn Grove seemed one of the longest I ever lived. When we returned, it appeared as if we had near a week been absent. Indeed it was the general sentiment of our party. Even Emma made the acknowledgement.

Our dinner and evening's entertainments, at which we had a large encrease of company, were in conformity with the amusements of the morning, and with the truly elegant taste and magnificent spirit of Sir Charles Conway, who himself directed the whole.

I the other day said that I thought Mr. Maynard one of the most complete fine gentleman I ever beheld; and *one* of the most he may be, but I think Sir Charles stands, in that particular, without an equal: even Mr. Stanley seems half veiled by the comparison. Yet see him by himself—and who would think him a second to any first! Lady Catherine Villars who professes greatly (it has been said particularly) to admire Sir Charles observed to me that whoever saw and knew him must think it impossible for any woman existing to merit his affection; but that when Miss Stanley appeared,

every beholder would give *her* to him and *him* to her. If Lady Catharine *be* sensible of a particular partiality, her acknowledgement was a generous one; but she is so volatile there is no discovering her real sentiments. Indeed throughout the day the superiority of our lovely friend was strikingly conspicuous. The beauty of her person; the native vivacity of her mind, so enchantingly softened by the sweetness of her temper and manners, occasioned the above observation to be made by more than Lady Catharine Villars.

Just before dinner, in the half hour usually thought so awkward, Sir Edward moved our going into the music-room, where we were most harmoniously entertained till dinner was announced. Almost every one was, in turn a performer. Amongst the Ladies, Miss Stanley and Miss Fanny Peirson were eminently distinguished, upon the forte piano. Lady Catherine Villars touched the guittar; which she accompanied with her voice to admiration. Mr. Stanley blew the german flute; and the little concert was closed with a most melodious voluntary upon the organ, by Sir Charles Conway: previous to which he sang a lively air to Lady Catharine's guittar; in which she was, likewise, a vocal assistant.

The evening of this happy day was concluded in dancing; card-playing &c. We had not any formal supper, but in one of the apartments were some side-boards; with several tables for tea; coffee &c. Wine; negus; rich cakes of divers kinds; sweetmeats, foreign and english; wet and dry; creams; jellies and fruit; with one board of cold chicken; potted meats, &c. &c. completed the viands.

But it will not be to any purpose to go on with this subject; for were I to write upon it a week, I should still have much to say; therefore I will finish it abruptly.

* * * * *

This Emma is very impertinent. She has been insisting upon reading my letter, and pretending to be angry, is gone, she says, to give you some intelligence respecting *my* engagements of yesterday.

But pray now do not credit her. That is if she—ah Maria! I am half afraid of Emma now. She is *so* alive: so—so—what would I say? I know not, and must conclude with requesting you to believe my heart is with you all at Woodstock.

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

LETTER, IX.

MISS STANLEY, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Alverston Park, April the 21st.

AND so, Maria, this Charlotte of ours is over head and ears in love. True as that I exist to tell you so. The young preacher has stolen her heart, though the gipsy will not own it quite so fairly as she ought to do. Yesterday afforded her a charming opportunity to allow, without much particularity of his

tendresse. I gave many a sly look towards the happy pair, and every time observed her countenance was dressed in smiles, and that her soft eyes were doubly full of vivacity and sweetness; while his reverence evidently showed the satisfaction his heart experienced.

In good truth Maria, this Evelyn is a charming fellow. It is well matters have so turned out that I am not violently inclined to dispute her conquest; for, let me tell you, such a prize would have put our friendship to a trial. Yet I will honestly confess I fear I should not have stood much chance in the contest, for he seems so fascinated by her speaking looks and lively artless manners, that I believe no other witchcraft would have been successful. *As sure as a gun* he is gone into Oxfordshire purposely to solicit permission to address this little Phenix. Mind now and let me know all about it, that I may have the pleasure and consequence of first imparting to her the circumstance. I shall be mortified if she has prior information of it through any other medium.

But Maria—though I will not be so unpolite as *absolutely* to contradict all that Charlotte has advanced, I must warn you not to believe the whole; for she has multiplied and magnified to a most enormous degree. I mean when she has been talking about myself; for as to Sir Charles Conway — But I believe I may as well avoid the subject, for (how it comes about I know not) I find such an increase of an undefinable something when I mention his name that I am quite alarmed. It seems allied to reverence, I think; but perhaps connoisseurs in the sentiment would give it a softer epithet. There was a time in which I hardly knew my own mind. There was a time when I did not deem a certain conquest absolutely invaluable. Careless—volatile—excentric—I did not know that I—But enough. Come, my amiable friend, come to Alverston. Come and see Charlotte grown gay, and Emma grave. This love—if *love it be*—works different effects in different dispositions. What, I wonder, will it do when it pervades the gentle bosom of my dear Doctor Griffith's little dove! But it never can make her otherwise than truly amiable; nor can it, with all its magical effects, change me from being her fervently affectionate friend,

EMMA STANLEY.

LETTER, X.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

Grosvenor Square, April 23d.

Congratulate me. Pronounce me the happiest of mankind. Presume not to make any comparison between yourself and me.

Charles! Charles! I am transported almost beyond my reason, and can scarce believe I tread on earth. The harmony of the spheres is heard around. I breathe pure aether; and the summum bonum of all beneath the spangled arch is mine.

To say all in one sentence—**MARIA IS FOUND**. She is found, and *will be—shall be*—is my own, notwithstanding all you can alledge: notwithstanding all the world can oppose. Yet mind you—it will be necessary [you deserve to be plagued about this matter, Conway, for ever daring to object to my pursuit of this angelic charmer] that I appear to fall in with my godfather's views,

respecting Lady Caroline Pemberton. I must even (so far has he engaged me) make the lady herself believe I am devoted to her charms. But be not alarmed: I mean soon to throw off every veil; for though the lovely charmer of my heart cannot indeed be Mrs. Stanley, I am unalterably determined never to marry any other; however strong the inducement.

And now, Charles, I must prohibit your writing to me. I *will not* have any of your preachments: besides I hope ere long to see you. And *then*, Charles—and THEN—! with what pleasure do I anticipate the surprise—the astonishment you will be under at the blaze of beauty I shall exhibit.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XI.

MR. STANLEY, TO MISS STANLEY.

Grosvenor Square, April 23d.

WE arrived in London, my dear sister, so early as nine o'clock yesterday morning; Mr. Slayton and myself being equally impatient to reach the end of our journey. We were both set down in the place from whence I date, but my diligent godfather soon hastened to Gray's Inn to enquire about the business of transfers, &c. and left me to follow my own concerns, which to me appeared to be of moment: but I hunted and hunted for two hours to no purpose. I could not gain any lights, sister.

"Of what?" you will ask. Of a flitting star—Of an ignis fatuus—Of a WITCH, my dear Emma, who has charmed away my tranquility.

But to have done with riddles—Mr. Slayton returned to Grosvenor Square just before dinner, which he had desired might be ready at half past two, and he was obeyed. I must confess I was rather displeased with his officious haste in claiming the promise I had given him of suffering myself to be introduced into the company of Lady Caroline Pemberton. I had expressly stipulated that it should be as if by accident, and that I would not be presented to her in any manner the least particular; therefore when he told me that he had engaged me to drink tea at Mr. Maynard's, where Lady Caroline spends chief part of her time, I was greatly disposed to quarrel with him, and to refuse going: but he a little moderated me by informing me that calling in at St. James's Square he was introduced to Mrs. Maynard, as the gentleman was from home, and that she so cordially invited him to spend the evening with herself and Lady Caroline, that he could not refuse; particularly as upon his telling her I came with him up to town, she requested his carrying me to be of the party. I therefore acceded to the proposal, and soon after five, the time appointed by Mrs. Maynard, we were driven to St. James's Square, where I was introduced to the celebrated daughter of the Earl of Danvers. His lordship, than whom I scarce ever saw a finer gentleman, was present. In his person he is extremely handsome; in his manners, perfectly polite. With respect to the young lady—I must acknowledge her beauty is equal to all the descriptions I ever received of it; and her mental qualifications have been as justly depicted. I declared my admiration of this phenomenon; and while she and Mrs. Maynard went, for about twenty minutes, to make a first visit to the new Lady Lorimer, it being the last day of her ceremonials, I made my proposals to the Earl, which with

answerable candour he accepted, and when the ladies returned, presented me to his angelic daughter as one whom he honored with his approbation. The lovely creature blushed; but not with disdain. I attempted to speak of the happiness I experienced in that hour, but could only blunder about my meaning; for words came not readily to hand. Mrs. Maynard addressed me as her cousin elect, and every one seemed happy; so you see, Emma, matters are already *in a train*, and it is possible that I shall very soon present you with a sister; who, let me not forget to say, sends her compliments to Miss Lawson.

Mr. Maynard is gone to take some measures relative to a roguish steward of Lord Danvers' in the North. It was therefore proposed by my godfather, and acceded to by all the party, that Mrs. Maynard, should write and desire him to stop at Oakley Hill; and that the earl; Lady Caroline; Mrs. Maynard, and myself should accompany Mr. Slayton down, and give at his house, Mr. Maynard a meeting; and this morning at breakfast—for I was in St. James Square before nine—her ladyship expressed a wish to call at Alverston Park in our way; being desirous to make there her first visit.

What think you child of this celebrated beauty's condescension? Does it not appear to you very extraordinary?

"Yes, to be sure" you say, " and I do not believe what you are telling me."

It is however madam sister, very true; and on *our* part of the party it is settled that we are to go very soon to the Park, and that Sir Edward and her ladyship; Miss Lawson and young Clericus; yourself and your baronet, are to accompany us to Oakley Hill; where, as I before said, we are to be joined by Mr. Maynard. Of the time of our setting out, you shall have due notice, that you girls may have all your rigging in order.

I mean to write to Evelyn, for I know where a letter will find him—and that is more than Charlotte does—to accelerate his return, that he may not be absent from Alverston when we go down. His business at Woodstock cannot I think, fail of being soon completed; as the letter of introduction to Mrs. Lawson which my mother gave him—But faith! if I do not take care I shall make the affair public; and I would not do that on any account. No, no: I shall continue true to my trust, I can tell you: therefore pray do not expect any intimation of the matter from me.

My godfather sends his love to you all; particularly to Miss Lawson. I have some idea that he means to endeavour to supplant the young Rector.

Tell my father the upholster thinks he shall complete every thing in this house next week. Upon my word it will, when finished, be a truly elegant habitation.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XII.

MR. STANLEY, TO MISS LAWSON.

Grosvenor Square, April the 23d.

I Have so often, my dear Miss Lawson, made you an auditor to my plainings, that common gratitude urges me to refresh your ideas with an account of my present felicity. But mind that you keep my secret, for what I have to say is to me of the greatest consequence, and must not be known by any but those to whom I chuse to make the communication.

I have been writing a very fine piece of rodomontade to my sister about Lady Caroline Pemberton; which will serve to amuse my friends in Derbyshire till I dare acquaint them with the true state of my present situation, which is happy far beyond my powers of description, for Charlotte, my dear Charlotte! I have found MY MARIA—found her under the roof of a female cousin who admitted me to her presence upon my first request.

Need I, after this, say any more to convince you that I think myself one of the happiest sons of mortality! Oh! I am blessed beyond my highest hopes; for the dear, lovely creature is not inexorable.

But I forbear to unfold my purpose. Let the tale of Lady Caroline Pemberton puzzle my sister till my happiness is nearer its completion.

If I be frustrated in my present views, adieu to sublunary felicity.

As to you, Miss Lawson—! His Reverence is gone to Woodstock with such credentials!—But I must not betray my mother's secrets; and so I have told my sister: yet being happy myself, I am desirous of reviving, with a few grains of comfort, a sighing, and perhaps a despairing fellow-creature.

G.S.

LETTER, XIII.

MRS. MAYNARD, TO AUGUSTUS MAYNARD, ESQ.

St. James's Square, April the 23d.

MY short note of Tuesday and my letter of last night, you will, I hope, duly receive. In the latter, I gave you information of the arrival of Mr. Slayton and his godson.

I could not then be particular, nor had I indeed, at that period, much to say; but I will now endeavour to give you some accounts of the “events of the day.”

Soon after I received a card from the senior—or rather, soon after he received my answer—he made his appearance in St. James's Square.

To prevent the probability of his being seen by our cousin, I ordered him to be ushered into the little study, where I attended him. We were soon acquainted, and soon entered into business. Your visit to him at Oakley Hill introduced the subject, and in a quarter of an hour all preliminaries were settled. He engaged to bring his godson to afternoon tea, and I fixed the time soon after five, as Caroline and I had agreed to go in the evening to Lady Lorimer's; which circumstance I was pleased with, as I wished her to be in full dress when first seen by Mr. Stanley in her own character. After Mr. Slayton left me, I sat in a reverie, anticipating the pleasure I should receive from the surprise of the interested parties; but recollecting myself, I ordered the carriage to be drawn up, and was driven to Berkley Square, where finding his Lordship at leisure, I requested him to be present at the scene; to which he readily agreed, and seemed greatly to enjoy the idea of his lovely daughter's ensuing happiness; being convinced, as indeed every one who knows all circumstances must be, that Lady Caroline and Mr. Stanley had imbibed for each other the most disinterested and fervent affection. At coming away I put into his hands the letters her ladyship wrote me from Woodstock, which as he afterwards told me, made him apprehend the scene might be too affecting to both the parties to be exhibited before witnesses, without some preparation; however as we were all interested, I thought it might be hazarded, and that it would be right each should be convinced of the others affection in a manner which such an unexpected meeting would make incontestable.

His lordship agreed to my sentiments, and we waited the event with impatience.

I ordered dinner earlier than usual, and after it was over, asked Caroline to go with me into my dressing-room, to give *her* directions to Woodward relative to a fancy part of my dress which I wanted for the evening. This employed her while I went down to receive the earl. Matters were then all adjusted, and I returned to finish my dress; but not wishing her ladyship to go with me into the drawing-room, threw a book in her way, which I thought would engage her attention. It did; and I left her absorbed in reading.

I think I never saw our Caroline look more lovely. Her dress was particularly elegant and becoming, and her eyes were more than usually full of fire and sweetness; owing perhaps to the conversation I had designedly engaged her in about the Alverston family. She was without powder; her hair in small curls and ringlets, and her head ornamented with pearls and Italian flowers. Altogether, a more angelic appearance than this lovely creature now made, never met the organs of sight.

When I went into the drawing-room I found Lord Danvers re-perusing the letters I had given him in the morning, and it was then we had the short conversation I just now mentioned, and which was interrupted by the arrival of the expected gentlemen. Mr. Slayton entered first. I introduced him to the earl. Mr. Stanley then advanced, whom Mr. Slayton introduced in great form to me, and then, in the same manner, to his lordship; who received him with expressive looks of approbation.

Notwithstanding the high opinion I had imbibed of this young gentleman's person and address from your description, my ideas of him fell short of the reality. But not to multiply words unnecessarily—he struck me in a moment as being the very counterpart of Lady Caroline: and that I

think is as high an eulogium as can be given.

After they had been a few minutes seated, I stepped up-stairs and found my cousin still reading; therefore, wishing to have a little chat with the gentlemen, I left her, telling her I would send for her when tea was ready, and returned to the drawing-room.

The ensuing conversation was animated: every one seeming in good humour. Mr. Stanley said many brilliant and very just things. The earl appeared highly pleased with him. Mr. Slayton was all attention, and Mrs. Maynard all prate. In truth, I could not resist a more than usual inclination to volubility. At times I fancied Mr. Stanley's countenance was over-cast, and I was ready to conjecture he was ruminating upon Maria Birtles; as he frequently sighed very deeply.

Occasionally, I mentioned our intended visit to Lady Lorimer; telling the gentlemen we did not expect to be more than twenty minutes absent, and hoped they would excuse our going; for which there was a kind of necessity; it being her ladyship's last day, &c. Upon this the earl kindly observed, that as he considered St. James's Square as one of his *homes*, he would do himself the honor to look upon himself *as one of the visited*; which he hoped would make my excuses the more admissible. We all bowed to his lordship; some compliments passed, and then, as I intended, Lady Lorimer's whimsical courtship was adverted to. This led (which was the end of my design) to the subject of romantic affection, on which every one present said something. Then pray, asked I, upon a dissenting remark of Mr. Stanley's to a dainty speech of mine, what, in your opinion, *is real* affection?

"My opinion of real affection, madam," said he with animation, his face in a glow, "is that sympathy which arises in congenial minds; not perhaps at first sight, but upon a short acquaintance; without any regard to interest or convenience; or even a thought about any coming event."

But, said I, would you shut prudence entirely from your view?

"Not," replied he, "when I contemplated a permanent union. I should then wish prudence to accompany—though not to constitute my attachment; and for this reason chiefly: It would be a probable mean to unite the friends of the lady I should wish to call mine, with my own; which could hardly fail of encreasing our happiness, because it would make its circle more diffusive; a consideration that must give additional pleasure to a benevolent mind; else, conjugal felicity, confined within domestic bounds—But I ask your pardon. I am running into lengths."

Go on, sir, said I; your sentiments are excellent. But do you fancy you shall carry them through life?

"By your question, madam," replied my hero, "you think they are the sentiments *of a young man*. Pardon me," added he, "if I aver that I know no reason why I should not retain them when I arrive *at years of discretion*. But permit my appealing to these gentlemen. They must, by this time, know something of the matter."

Mr. Stanley spoke with an air of perfect good humour; though I do not know whether he was not a little hurt by my question. Perhaps because it might somewhat strengthen his godfather's

arguments; as it led to an idea that I opposed his sentiments; which, as you will suppose, was very far from being the case.

The carrying in of tea interrupted the subject. Lord Danvers asked, as he had done once before, what Caroline was doing. I told him she was rather engaged, but would attend at tea; I then sent up to her my compliments, and requested her company in the drawing-room; desiring the servant to tell her his lordship was below. This, as I expected, brought her immediately. We heard her advancing, and every eye turned towards the door, when the servant opened it and in came the lovely girl.

Lady Caroline Pemberton—said I to Mr. Stanley as soon as she appeared, while she was hastening to her father; but her eyes were arrested by the figure of Mr. Stanley, who stood near him; at which she started, and looked around her in amazement; the beautiful pink in her cheeks being heightened to a crimson; while her heart, as she afterwards confessed, throbbed so violently she thought it would have prevented her drawing breath.

What I relate of the sentiments of the actors in this comedy, you will conclude I gathered from their after-communications; as I could not, being myself so much interested, even endeavour to guess them at the time: but I weave them into my account to make it the more complete, as I think you will wish to entertain with it your reverend friend and his little Alethea.

When Caroline saw Mr. Slayton, she concluded it was known at Alverston that she was Maria Birtles, and that they were come with the apologising compliments of the family. She therefore endeavoured—but it was only an endeavour—to compose herself, that she might receive them as became her father's daughter.

All this time Mr. Stanley stood fixed in astonishment, with looks expressive of contending ideas. When Lady Caroline first entered, the universal brilliancy of her figure attracted general notice. Mr. Stanley looked in wonder, as if at her beauty, but in a moment his eye recognized her features, and instead of approaching her, he started back several steps and exclaimed in a tone of the wildest surprise—"Heavens and earth! Who do I see!" Then springing forward as if going to take her hand—"But it cannot be any other. It *must* be—it *is* my beloved Maria." Then again stopping, as if the seeming impossibility made him doubt—"Yet how *can* it be! My Lord—Mrs. Maynard"—in almost a frenzy: but seeing my cousin smile, he flew towards her; bent his knee, and caught her hand, which he pressed to his lips with the utmost ardour.

"Lovely vision!" said he, "enchanted heavenly maid! By what name—what title am I to address you! Yet that concerns me not. I see you again—I hold your hand in mine. For all the rest I care not. MARIA BIRTLES has been the object of my pursuit: the sole object of my thoughts and of my tenderest affection."

"But what am I saying?"—Then rising up—"perhaps I have been too unguarded. How concerned shall I be if"—and he looked his apprehension of having said too much; an idea arising of the possibility of the earl's not being acquainted with the circumstances of his daughter's retirement. This his lordship observed, and wishing to relieve his fears, stepped between him and Caroline, and taking Mr. Stanley by the hand — "Accept, sir," said he, "as the representative of your House, my

most grateful acknowledgements for the protection my dear fugitive found at Alverston, when under a persecution unworthy her character to suffer, or mine to occasion. But she has been so good as to forgive me; though I do not know that I can ever forgive myself."

"Oh my dear sir!" said our cousin to her father, reclining her face upon his shoulder, "you oppress me by your kindness and condescension. What return can I make—"

"What return can we both make," interrupted the earl, "to this gentleman for the obligations we are under to his family? Say, Caroline, what must we do?"

"My—my thanks"—replied the blushing beauty—"My warmest gratitude is all—is all"—

"And are you then, my dearest girl, so poor in your expedients?"—again interrupted his lordship. "Well then I must request Mr. Stanley [turning to him] to make his own demand."

Encouraged by the earl's looks, with a countenance of encreased vivacity, Mr. Stanley replied—"But that I dare not presume, my Lord, or I *could* point out a reward which would lay me, and all of my race, under the most unreturnable of all obligations."

Upon this, as the sentiments of both had been sufficiently demonstrated, Lord Danvers, to give general relief by an early eclaireissement, turned to his daughter and said—"Dare you, Caroline, after what is past, trust me with the direction of your choice?"

"My dear sir!"—was all the lovely girl could say.

"I know your worth, my child,"—the earl continued—"and think I shall not wrong your value if I give you here"—taking her reluctant—yet, from the surprise, half resisting—hand, and putting it into one of Mr. Stanley's, whose looks—whose words—whose manner upon the occasion, it would be folly to attempt to give any description of. Every attitude and feature declared his extasy. He spoke not. He could not speak. His soul seemed too large for its bounds. I never saw joy so strikingly expressed. Dropping on one knee, he silently received the truly inestimable boon, which he again pressed to his lips, with a mixture of tenderness and respect. Then arose: then thanked the earl in unconnected sentences; when seeing Lady Caroline so affected by the expressive kindness of a father she so greatly loves; and by the evident happiness of a man to whom—to speak in plain terms—she has long ago given her heart, that she could hardly support herself, he put one arm round her, and gently drawing her from Lord Danvers, who looked delighted, he seated her upon a sofa, and again kneeling before her, endeavoured, for her sake, to be more composed; yet expressed his happiness and acknowledgements in the tenderest and most impassioned words of language. Lady Caroline looked sweetly confused, yet lost not her native dignity, though scarce able to speak. At length, at her entreaty, Mr. Stanley arose; he then seated himself upon the sofa by her, while the almost equally happy father sat down on her other side.

It is inconceivably strange that your uncle—loving this angel-daughter of his as he always did, with the greatest warmth of affection—could ever enter into such a league against her with that hideous Lord Crumpford. However when a man is possessed by the demon of gaming, there is no saying what sacrifices he will not make.

But to continue my story.

You are not to suppose that during the scene I have been describing, Mr. Slayton and I were absolutely mutes; though it must be confessed we spoke more by our actions than by language. I was all attention; he astonishment.

When Lady Caroline first entered the room, the old gentleman was evidently struck with admiration. For a few moments he stared in silence, and then exclaimed—"An angel! if ever there was one upon earth!"

Mr. Stanley's agitation next attracted his notice. He stood absorbed till he heard him pronounce the name of Maria Birtles, and then coming to me with his eyes enlarged, cried out—"Upon my soul and so it is. How, madam—how is this! Who is that young woman now before us?"

The lady you see, Mr. Slayton, said I, is Lady Caroline Pemberton; daughter to the Earl of Danvers.

"Well, but how then!"—

Have patience, sir, and the riddle shall be unfolded.

He again was absorbed in attention till he comprehended the whole, and when he understood it, was at a loss how to express his sentiments of surprise and joy. His head was turned upon first one; then another; and he looked *so pleased*, that a by-stander might have judged him to have been the happiest being in the room.

As to myself—I even fairly sat down and cried. However I was not observed, and being ashamed of such an expression of the interest I took in my dear Caroline's happiness, started up and began to rally Mr. Slayton upon his former jealousy of *Miss Stanley's waiting maid*, as he confessed his having been afraid of her while in that capacity, and that his fear of his godson's forming an attachment with her, was a reason, added to some others, for his hastening him towards matrimony.

This was a smiling topic with us, at times, during the whole evening: the delighted squire often saying to my cousin—"Faith, madam, I did not much like you, I can promise you. I knew—I knew you were exactly to George's taste. Let me tell you I took more notice of you than you supposed; and faith I thought you were much too handsome for a chambermaid; and I was glad, madam, when I found you had taken your flight; little thinking I myself should so soon and so warmly join in chace of you."

The old gentlemen was vastly pleased to take occasions of bringing in those retrospective kind of ideas, which occasioned us considerable pleasantry.

As soon as we were sufficiently composed, I rang for attendants, and we drank tea, after which Caroline and I went to Lady Lorimer's, leaving the three gentlemen to settle their business; which, it seems, they did highly to the satisfaction of every party; Mr. Slayton offering in Sir Edward

Stanley's name and his own, such proposals as Lord Danvers could only object to from their too great liberality. However affairs were soon adjusted, and Mr. Slayton, who loves to dabble in law-business, minuted down the particulars, that the settlements might be engrossed as soon as possible; every one of the trio being impatient to have matters brought to a conclusion expeditiously.

When we returned, Lord Danvers desired an audience of me, in which he communicated the above particulars, and I made a re-communication of them to Lady Caroline, who appeared to be almost frightened out of her wits at the idea of their driving on so hastily; and averse to the thought of returning to the drawing-room: however, partly by laughing at, and partly by soothing her, I prevailed with her to go down, where the affectionate; the tender; the respectful reception she met with from her father; Mr. Stanley, and the Squire of Oakley Hill, soon reconciled her to herself, and, at length, to their measures, and after as pleasant an evening as I ever spent in your absence, she was *half* prevailed upon to agree to a scheme proposed by Mr. Slayton, and seconded by the rest of us, of giving you the meeting at Oakley Hill in your return from Cumberland; therefore our time of setting out on the journey, so particularly agreeable to me (which consideration I know quickened the dear girl's compliance) depends on your telling us when you expect to be able to reach the Squire's mansion.

When we had retired, and were about to part for the night—"Harriet—my dear Harriet!" said Caroline, with a deep sigh, "I am *happy*. I *acknowledge* myself to be happy, and yet—"

Yet *what*, Caroline? Why *yet*? And why that very heavy sigh?

"I cannot tell," said she, sighing still more deeply, "but I seem oppressed."

And can you wonder at that, my dear girl? asked I. Your mind, though a lively one, is solid. Happiness, in your sense of the word, is greatly beyond mere pleasure. It does not dance upon the surface of your thoughts, but sinks into your *heart*, and must return *from thence*, before it can brighten into a smile congenial to your features. But go to bed, my dear, and try to sleep, while I spend an hour in giving Mr. Maynard the occurrences of the day past.

"Well, but do not tell him how foolish I am, Harriet," said our cousin.

The condition of my compliance, returned I, must be your growing wiser.

"Tell him what you will then," said she in a pet, "but he knows too much already:"—for, as you may suppose, I had informed her how it came about that Mr. Slayton brought Mr. Stanley to St. James's Square.

Apropos. The time we were gone to Lady Lorimer's, the circumstance of Mr. Stanley's finding his own miniature at Hazle-wood Lodge; the chace, the false attribution of it led him after Lady Lucinda Harrington; his discovering it to be MARIA BIRTLES' performance by means of the letter she sent Lady Stanley, which showed the identity of the writing, &c. &c. were all discussed by the three gentlemen; all told to me by his lordship, and by me retold to my cousin; so that the lovers perfectly understood each other, to the exclusion of every pretence to display one atom of Lady-like affectation, had Caroline been disposed to have used any. But let me do this lovely creature the

justice to say she has no affectation in her nature. Pure ingenuousness presides in her disposition; yet the native delicacy of her mind raises a blush at being, by circumstances, so early obliged to make—at least a *tacit* confession of her partiality.

When we talked over the proposed journey to Mr. Slayton's, Lady Caroline was led by gratitude to wish (should the scheme take place) to return her thanks at Alverston, and asked my opinion as to the propriety of our calling at the Park in our way, as it would not be very much out of the line.

I was pleased with the idea, and said, situated as she had been there, and accompanied by Mr. Stanley, it would, under the present circumstances, be so far from being the least inconsistent, that to avoid it she must be chargeable with affectation; false delicacy, or a strange insensibility; and I wondered it did not present itself to my consideration. I therefore promised, upon the full adoption of the plan, to lead a way for her to advance the idea, as I thought it would be best it should appear to originate with herself, it being exactly in character with the ingenuous gratitude of her temper, and would show she was above giving way to mere forms, when any thing superior demanded their being a sacrifice.

At what an enormous rate have I written! How swiftly glides the pen when we are pleased with our subject, and when our hearts are with those we address.

Thus doubly induced, at this time, no wonder that I know not when to stop my hand. In the absence of my dear Augustus, nothing gratifies me so much as writing to him, and no subject more interesting to us both than the happiness of our Caroline. Even now I lay down my pen unwillingly, for I have not yet told you the occurrences of this day. I intended to have written last night, after I parted from Caroline, but was too sleepy. If I have time before the post goes out, I will begin anew; if not, this shall go by itself.

Till I see you, you will live continually in my thoughts. This you doubt not; well knowing you have no competitor in the heart of

YOUR HARRIET.

LETTER, XIV.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Saturday, April 25th, 1789.

THE post-man brought letters to Alverston last evening, which have put Emma and me almost beside ourselves. Sir Charles Conway, likewise, is very much disturbed on the occasion which so greatly perplexes us. What Mr. Stanley can mean is beyond all conjecture.

Sir Charles dined with us yesterday, having returned the evening before, from Harborough, where he left Miss Howard, under great affliction for her sister's vile conduct. Just as Sir Charles reached the Hall, she received a letter from her without any date. He said she declined showing it to

him, but he gathered that the expressions in it were strangely wild; and that she had vowed never to return to England.

Poor vile, unhappy woman! Would she sincerely *repent* I would try to pity her.

But, as I was telling you—Sir Charles Conway dined with us yesterday. Towards evening a letter was brought from Mr. Stanley to Emma with one enclosed for me, which she immediately gave me, and I perused with astonishment; it containing an account of his having found his Maria: but he said that I must keep his secret, he having amused his sister with a rodomontade story, as he calls it, about Lady Caroline Pemberton. I was almost petrified by the contents of this unaccountable letter. What to do I knew not, for we were altogether just set down to the tea-table.

“You look grave, Charlotte,” said Lady Stanley, “but Emma smiles, or I should be alarmed.”—for it was known Miss Stanley’s packet came from George and concluded that mine did likewise.

I coloured like scarlet; upon which it very fortunately entered her ladyships mind that Mr. Evelyn was the subject and she immediately exclaimed, —“Sure George has not betrayed a secret! ah Charlotte! that is a conscious blush. Tell me now, candidly, has the rogue said any thing about—But hold; if I do not take care I shall myself be the betrayer, in suspecting him.”

Willing to strengthen an idea which, indeed, had some foundation—How *could* your ladyship, said I join in—But I will not let any body see his impertinence—putting the letter hastily into my pocket.

“Mighty well Miss Charlotte,” with a significant motion of her head, said Lady Stanley; “I shall know how to deal with you by and by. But”—turning to Emma—“pray young lady what has your brother said to *you*?”

And now Maria before I go any farther with that story, I must tell you what her ladyship meant by betraying secrets &c. Yet before this reaches you—and that vexes me not a little—you will know more than I do about the matter. You will know the real business that this man—this Mr. Evelyn—went upon into Oxfordshire: at least if this inconsistent, unaccountable creature has not given me a false alarm. I did not think of that till now. Surely Lady Stanley *did* write such a letter as—But how I puzzle myself! Why yes to be sure she did: for what else, could *she herself* mean by her suspicions! Foolish girl as I am. I began to be in a panic lest it should *not* be so: Yet am no less fluttered when I think that *it is*. Ah Maria! how I betray—how I expose myself!

But attend, and you will find how awkwardly I am circumstanced.

Mr. Stanley in his letter to me, intimates Mr. Evelyn’s being gone to Woodstock *with credentials*, as he phrases it; and hints that Lady Stanley keeps the secret. This he mentions more explicitly to Emma; talking about a letter of introduction from her ladyship to my dear mother; but in both letters whimsically disclaims divulging the secret. Why he wrote to me, I know not; except to torment me. And tormented me *he has* with a vengeance, on all accounts.

And is Mr. Evelyn *indeed* gone to Woodstock! But it must be so. O Maria, in what a flutteration is your poor foolish Charlotte! *If* you do not pity me, *may you* be paid in kind!

And now, if possible will I for a time dismiss all ideas of myself and revert to the subject with which I began.

“What,” asked Lady Stanley of Emma, “has your brother said to you?”

“Your question, my dear madam,” replied Miss Stanley, “cannot, in a few words be answered. But give me leave, and I will read to you a part of his Epistle.”

She did; and surprised us all; for it contained an account of his introduction to Lady Caroline Pemberton; of her beauty and accomplishments; of his having made his proposals in form, and of their being in form accepted. He then says the young lady has been so condescending as to accede to the proposal of coming *with the party* to Mr. Slayton’s to meet Mr. Maynard on his return from a journey into Cumberland; and more than so that she intimated a wish to make her compliments at Alverston in her way thither.

Was there ever any thing, my dear, so astonishing. What can he mean by it! It is impossible he can *expect* to be believed; for even were matters in such a situation as he describes, it could not be imagined that Lady Caroline Pemberton, a perfect stranger to every one of the family at Alverston, could, under such circumstances, think of making a visit here before receiving one from them, and even previous to their having made her any written compliments. And then at so early a period! I have no patience to talk about such an inexplicability. Emma did not read to me till afterwards, that part of George’s letter which related to Mr. Evelyn, because she thought, and she thought justly, it would confuse the conversation, every one being so much taken with the strangeness of the account respecting Lady Caroline Pemberton.

Lady Stanley rather *looked* than *expressed* her surprise; yet could not help saying that so early a visit was more than she expected.

“From such a character as Lady Caroline’s,” said Emma, “I could not have thought it possible. Ingenuousness is a valuable quality, but—” She said no more, though she seemed rather hurt at the strange proceeding.

“We must make allowances,” observed Sir Edward, “for the abruptness of George’s manner of communicating intelligence, as we all know the precipitance of his ideas. His whole letter, at least as far as Emma has read of it, seems enigmatical. What else, my dear,” [to Miss Stanley] does he say?”

“Nothing, sir,” replied Emma, “of importance to that subject. I have read to you every thing, except a slight hint or two to Miss Lawson, which” [smiling at me] “I reserve for her private hearing,”

“We will have *that* by and by,” said the cheerful Sir Edward Stanley, “and I believe we had best forego any farther comments on this puzzling boy’s epistle, which perhaps was scribbled in an

idle humour, with little more design than to amuse you; though it must be confessed it is not a proper theme to jest upon: but he has an exuberance of spirits which will not always be confined within proper bounds.”

Every one was silently attentive, for no one knew what to say, when Sir Edward continued—“There is one part of his letter more unintelligible than the rest. What is it he says about a witch and an ignis fatuus? I cannot comprehend his meaning?”

“My dear sir,” now joined in Sir Charles, who hitherto had sat nearly silent, with looks, I thought, expressive of vexation, “at present let this matter drop. You know my friend’s vivacity. You likewise know he loves to play with the curiosity of these ladies:” [smiling upon Emma and me] “The party, of which Lady Caroline is one, may or may not be coming into Derbyshire. If *not*—his motive for the fabricated tale will appear. If they come—the circumstances of their inducement are, doubtless, such as will justify them to the strictest decorum, or Lady Caroline would not, I dare aver, agree to the proposal.”

Every one looked upon Sir Charles with approbation, and he continued—

“I will write to Mr. Stanley and request his explicitness. Let us wait his answer; and till it arrives, think no more of that part of the letter received.”

Sir Charles’s motion was unanimously agreed to, and Sir Edward immediately called for what Mr. Stanley had written respecting me, which accordingly was read, and which, as you may suppose, brought them upon me without pity. However I endured it pretty well.

“Not” (perhaps you will say) “much displeased.”

Be that as it may—I was glad to wave the conversation from the former subject, which, from what this eccentric genius had written to me, was really irksome.

When tea was over, Sir Edward, observing the evening was particularly fine, proposed a walk to Mr. Hutchinson’s, which was agreed to; Lady Stanley, therefore, and Emma went up to equip themselves. I staid below, having put on my bonnet before tea. Sir Edward went into the little study, therefore Sir Charles Conway and myself were left together.

“Miss Lawson, will you tell me—”

Sir Charles, have not you—We both, at the same instant, said to each other.

I stopped, and at my earnest desire Sir Charles continued.

“Think me not, madam, impertinent, when I request to know whether Mr. Stanley has said any thing particular to you respecting himself.”

He has, sir: and let me ask, returned I, if you have not a letter from him?

“I have, madam; and Lady Caroline Pemberton is not the only”—

—Lady mentioned in it, interrupted your friend.

“Not the only *woman*, Miss Lawson. As to the epithet of Lady, perhaps”—

Well, we will not dispute about epithets. Maria Birtles—

“Enough, madam: dare you exchange communication?”

Why—why yes. I hesitatingly replied. It cannot be a breach of confidence, because I am sure you will not *extend* your knowledge on the subject.

“Certainly not, madam. And I have the same belief in you. The peace of this admirable family is, beyond doubt, equally dear to us both.”

What Mr. Stanley had written respecting Mr. Evelyn, was no more than what Emma had read, I therefore gave to Sir Charles my letter, and received his; both of which were perused with astonishment, though nearly alike in their contents.

"Extremely strange!" and "Very unaccountable!"—were the exchanged exclamations at the moment of Emma's entrance into the room. She is always quick in dressing, but was now more expeditious than usual; or else we were so earnestly engaged we heeded not the lapse of time.

“What is strange? And what is unaccountable?”—asked she immediately, in an anxious tone of voice.

Sir Charles, with instant collection of mind, took hold of her hands, and smilingly said—
"Why, my dear Emma, we were taking the liberty of criticising a little upon the perplexing volatility of our really unaccountable friend George; who dearly loves to create a wonder."

“There is something more in this than I understand,” said she with penetrating looks, “why that heightened colour in your cheeks Charlotte? and why that perplexity in your countenance Sir Charles? Tell me I earnestly request, if you know any thing more of my brother than I do.”

We would have evaded her question, but she would not be evasively answered, and having seen the two letters as she entered, which she said she knew were both from George, she entreated to be told the contents of, at least, that to me.

Finding she could not be diverted from her purpose, we, at length, promised she should see both letters as we walked across the park; to facilitate, therefore our design, Sir Charles went forward with the truly reverend pair, while Emma and I lingered behind. Lady Stanley, as indeed we supposed she would, took it for granted I was reading George's letter to his sister; concluding it solely related to hints respecting Mr. Evelyn. Sir Charles did not discourage this idea.

As soon as we got into the Park. Emma expressed her impatience for the promised account

of her brother; but I told her she must have it by degrees, as I had to ask her a few previous questions.

"What can you mean Charlotte? But begin then what are they?"—hastily asked this affectionate-anxious sister.

I then said—you have frequently talked to me of your Maria Birtles, and always in high terms. Give me now, in a few words, your collected opinion of this young woman.

"Oh Charlotte, Charlotte!" said she with concern, "this question revives my fears. But thus I answer you—Maria Birtles is, in my estimation, one of the most extraordinary creatures I ever met with. In her person, she is beauty itself. In her understanding—bright and exalted; and her disposition is particularly sweet. In short, she is most lovely—accomplished—charming woman."

You must then said I, be extremely sorry at finding she had left Alverston.

"But upon one account," replied Miss Stanley, "I should have been grieved at it beyond expression."

Upon what account were you reconciled to it? asked I.

"*Upon my brother's*," said she: adding—"I saw with concern his growing admiration of her shining qualities, and was alarmed for the consequence. His god-father claims, and is allowed an interest in him. The severity of my father's father was, as you have been often told, carried into cruelty. Mr. Slayton was more than a parent to both my father and mother for many years. They therefore look up to him with gratitude. He is a good man, but whimsical and positive, and would, I was convinced, oppose George's uniting himself to any woman circumstanced as was the one in question: for which reason I dreaded the disquiet his observation of her excellencies would probably make in the family. But for this—I could have held Maria Birtles to my heart with yourself. She chained my affection to her in the first conversation, and every hour so increased my partiality that I was impatient to demand her as a FRIEND.

"I could expatiate largely on this subject, but am too anxious for your reply, to go on. What Miss Lawson have you to unfold?"

Prepare yourself for an affecting surprise, answered I, and read these two letters from your brother—putting into her hands, mine and Sir Charles Conway's.

To tell you how often Emma interrupted herself during her perusal of these strange epistles, would enlarge my packet beyond due bounds. She was both astonished and affected to an extreme degree, and lamented—first her brother's unpardonable proceeding; then the danger which she feared Maria Birtles was in; yet doubted not her standing firm against all seducement.

That you may be better able to judge of her emotions, I enclose a copy of the letters in question.

Miss Stanley's fervent affection for her brother—the purity of her own principles—her great regard for Maria, and the vexation this affair would probably introduce at Alverston—all conspired to distress her. When she read what George said about “his charmer's” never being Mrs. Stanley, yet that he would not marry any other, astonished her; as well it might; and it was with difficulty she composed herself enough to prevent any suspicion of her being so greatly affected. But at length she was a little calm, and determined to endeavour to wait the effect of Sir Charles's letter with patience. I asked her if she ever thought Maria Birtles saw Mr. Stanley's attention to her. She said she thought it could not escape her. Next I enquired whether she imagined she observed it with any degree of satisfaction.

Maria had, she told me, professed herself to be unprepossessed when she came into Derbyshire: “Is it probable then, Charlotte,” continued this fond sister, “that such a distinguishing woman could see the partiality of such a man as my brother is, with eyes of indifference? It is not in nature,” added she; “Maria Birtles *must* have been sensible of George's attention, and though she is, I believe, destitute of hereditary distinction—of fortune and connexion—incidental advantages, generally held in too high estimation by those who possess them—I would receive her as my sister with open arms; and I doubt not but my father and mother would accept her for a daughter, when they came to consider, with that equity which distinguishes them, all the attending circumstances. But Mr. Slayton would be ever averse. And then this Lady Caroline Pemberton—My dear Charlotte! I am greatly distressed. But let us walk forward. Our so long lingering may create some suspicion.

“To the Almighty I pray to preserve Maria in safety; my brother in honor, and our family in peace.”

I fervently joined her; we hastened after the party before us, and proceeded to Mrs. Hutchinson's, from whence we returned just in time for supper; very soon after which we separated; Sir Charles Conway, Emma and myself retiring to our pens, that our letters might be ready for the post, which goes from hence early to-morrow morning.

Miss Stanley now summons me away. She has finished her task, and will not permit my writing any longer. She says she wants to talk about her brother, though she does not know to what purpose.

I therefore, my dear Maria, abruptly bid you adieu.

C.L.

LETTER, XV.

SIR C. CONWAY, TO GEORGE STANLEY, ESQ.

Alverston, Saturday, April the 25th.

NOTwithstanding your prohibition, my dear George, I must write half a score lines upon the subject of your last very inexplicable epistle; but I will not *preach*, as you would term my remonstrating, I will only pray, beg, supplicate that you will develope the mystery in your last.

Your sister, by accident, has seen your letter to me, and likewise that which you wrote to Miss Lawson. This was not intended, but was, at last, unavoidable. Of consequence she is greatly anxious on your account; though she can hardly be more so than I am.

I forbear to make any comments on particular passages: I forbear—but with great difficulty—to request you will not involve yourself, and every one you love best, in perplexity and wretchedness irremediable, for the gratification of reprehensible inclinations.

You will not complain of my treating you with severity; but you will know, by the calmness I endeavour to assume, how sincerely I am concerned at what you have written.

Pity me, George; and write to me immediately.

CHARLES CONWAY.

LETTER, XVI.

MR. MAYNARD, TO MRS. MAYNARD.

Saturday, April 25th.

MY DEAREST HARRIET,

I Wrote to you on Wednesday from Kildwick. I now write from Penryth, but I am in so much haste to finish my business, that I cannot spare time for any particulars. Beyond my expectation, I have been successful, and mean to leave this place on Monday; reach Kildwick (where I hope to find some letters from you) on Wednesday, and on Friday, call at Oakley Hill, though not with much expectation of seeing its possessor. However, I intend to call; and for this reason amongst others—I wish you to direct a letter to be left for me there, as I shall then have more certainty of receiving it than if ordered to be left at an inn.

I have many things to tell you, but have no leisure; yet cannot omit giving you and Caroline the satisfaction of knowing that the good Kildwick Divine has consented to Miss Bromley's making you a visit at our house in Leicestershire, and as he has given up his school to a neighbouring clergyman, I have some hope that he will accompany her. The plan is to be finally settled at my return.

I wish I could translate this excellent man to a richer benefice; but if any of either the earl's or mine *should* become vacant, I quere if he could easily be persuaded to leave his present situation. The consideration most likely to prevail with him would be, that the living he at this time possesses would, upon his relinquishing it, be given the worthy man—Mr. Yates—to whom he has resigned his school; he having but a slender income to support a large family. As to the advantage his removal might be of to his Alethea—it would not weigh with him, as he does not wish her to be too much modernized; nor does he desire to increase her fortune beyond its present bounds: and he still persists in calling Lord Danvers' acknowledgment a preposterous one. However, I have made him promise never again to talk upon the subject.

Mrs. Pemberton enters into very gay life. Her reform is, I fear, at some distance.

But I must, my Harriet, bid you adieu, as I every minute expect the lawyers to make a final settlement.

Give my love to Caroline, and remember me duly to his lordship. Tell him I cannot give him any particulars till I shall be so happy as to see him.

Ever, my dearest girl, your faithful
AUGUSTUS MAYNARD.

LETTER, XVII.

MISS MARIA LEWIS, TO MISS STANLEY.

Woodstock, twenty-fifth day of fourth month.

THY letter, my dearest Emma, enclosed in our Charlotte's, reached me yesterday. I will first thank thee for thy friendly invitation to Alverston, which I hope ere long to be able to accept, as my dear aunt Stanhope seemeth to be getting quite hearty, for which my bosom beateth with gratitude.

We undoubtedly ought always to hold ourselves in readiness to resign to their better inheritance our nearest connexions; yet oh Emma! what a pang would fix in the heart of thy Maria were her beloved aunt to be soon summoned to another world.

But I will not indulge this theme: thy letter calleth for a livelier reply.

And so our Charlotte is fairly caught, since she left this harmless region, in the traps of love! At this rate, who is safe? I did not, when she went from Woodstock, expect she would so soon have parted with her heart. But so it is: and, Emma, I must confess she hath every excuse that a woman can have for submitting to the bondage, as from account, and from appearance, Herbert Evelyn is well calculated to promote her happiness. My aunt is particularly pleased with him. She sayeth he cometh up to her highest expectation.

I need not say more to confirm to thee that his errand into Oxfordshire was to solicit the approbation of her mother and aunt to his wish of offering himself to their Charlotte. He did solicit it, and he likewise obtained it. The enclosed letter from Friend Lawson to her daughter, will let thee into particulars. To answer thy request of being first informed of the affair, I am permitted to send it under cover to thee.

Thou knowest not, Emma, how sincerely I have participated of the happiness thou hast experienced since thy return to Alverston. The character of Charles Conway prepossesseth every one in his favor, and giveth a probable hope that thy happiness will continue. The poor—the once wretched—instrument of the discovery which so much affected thee (Polly Fenton) is now in a comfortable situation. Friend Eleanor Lawson, with a charity which doth honour to her name, hath taken her to wait upon her in the room of her Peggy, who is married to William Rush; the servant that lived with Doctor Griffith, when thou wert last at Woodstock, and whom the Doctor hath made his clerk upon the death of poor old Roger.

Polly sayeth she is now as happy as she can ever expect to be in this world. Her spirits, at times, are very low; more, I hope, the effect of remorse for what she hath done, than of regret for the gay life she hath quitted.

We cannot, thou knowest, my dear Emma, form infallible opinions of the human heart; but as far as we may judge from appearances, Polly Fenton is a real proselyte to virtue. She is not *officious* to talk of the past, nor doth she decline it, when, for good reasons, she is called to it by

those whom she hath cause to think her real friends. In her dress she is greatly soberized, without being reminded of the necessity of any alteration. Her understanding is a very good one, and her disposition naturally agreeable; therefore I have strong hope she may some time hence be as much an example, as she has hitherto been a warning, to her sex.

My aunt desireth her love to thee; and she likewise requesteth thine excellent mother to accept her respects and her thanks for the invitation her Maria hath received to visit Alverston, which she hath given her liberty to accept in a few weeks.

The reason of my not being immediately able to set out for Derbyshire, where so large a piece of my heart is confined, is on account of a promise my aunt gave the Harleys, that she and I should spend some days with them at Stanton, after their return from Leicestershire, (where they have been upon a visit to Henry Colville) if nothing unexpected should prevent us; upon which Sally Harley engaged an old acquaintance of mine—Eliza Brewster—to give me, at her house, a meeting.

And now, my dear Emma, farewell. I will not at this time write to Charlotte, as her mother hath sent her such a packet: but tell her I congratulate her very sincerely; though a little concerned at the probability of her soon leaving Woodstock; for I apprehend Herbert Evelyn will not delay to secure his jewel.

Thine, my dear friend, in sincerity,
MARIA LEWIS.

LETTER, XVIII.

MRS. LAWSON, TO MISS LAWSON.

Woodstock, Saturday, April 25th.

AS my dear Charlotte is already in expectation of the subject upon which I am going to write, I will instantly begin with it, by telling her Mr. Evelyn arrived here yesterday morning, and did not leave us till this day after dinner; when he went to Oxford.

Notwithstanding I am exceedingly obliged to Lady Stanley, as, with my affectionate compliments, I desire you will tell her, for the very agreeable letter of intelligence she sent me by him—it was I think almost unnecessary, as his appearance so instantly confirmed to both your aunt and myself, the ideas we had imbibed of him from your occasional descriptions: I mean of his mind, for of his person, prepossessing as it is, I remember you scarce ever made any mention; a circumstance I reflect upon with much pleasure.

That Mr. Evelyn has our full approbation, it would, after what I have said, be superfluous to add.

With respect to rank and fortune indeed—you might probably do what is called better; but in our estimation not so well. Shall I at this time observe upon the particulars which in general constitute happy marriages? or point out with what sentiments a young woman ought to enter into conjugal life? No; I need not: my Charlotte has not now this lesson to learn. She has often heard our opinion upon these important subjects.

Mr. Evelyn has nothing more in his possession at present than the Alverston living, which, however, is an exceeding good one; but this, as you probably know, he means to resign upon the death of the Hawthorn-Grove Rector; Sir Charles Conway having already secured to him the next presentation to that benefice, which is, it seems, nearly the same in value, but which he would prefer, as he thinks it would be more pleasant to *you* to live near Lady Conway elect.

“Then you will not,” said my sister Eleanor to him, smiling, “be a monopolist?”

“Not upon any account, madam,” said he, “where the benefices are so large; and I hope my determination upon that point meets your approbation.”

Having perfectly satisfied him on this head—he added that he could not think it would be consistent with the principles of Sir Edward Stanley to have the living of Alverston united with that of Hawthorn Grove, though he had forbore from sentiments he believed, of delicacy, to speak to him upon that head; but he—Mr. Evelyn—had requested Sir Charles Conway to mention the particulars to Sir Edward in his absence, and to ask him to excuse his intention of relinquishing Alverston, if it should be that he survived the Hawthorn-Grove Rector.

Need I tell you how much pleased your aunt and I were with this mode of conduct!

We now proceeded, taking it for granted you were not *averse* to this good young man, [Were we right, Charlotte?] to the article of fortune; upon which we very soon came to an agreement.

Mr. Evelyn's father has an estate of fourteen hundred a year; two only of which were settled upon his lady; therefore over the other twelve he has absolute power, which it is to be feared he will not use much to the interest of this his only child by his first wife, having lately married a young woman much beneath him in every respect.

When we informed our visitant of the considerable sum you were already possessed of, and what we farther intended should be yours, he was evidently surprised and uneasy; having, I am persuaded, no idea of your being mistress of half that sum, as indeed he afterwards affirmed; adding, that had he been rightly informed on that particular, he should have been deterred from his present pursuit from many considerations; a principal one—lest the professions of his affection should have been suspected to be interested.

Upon this point we had some conversation not unpleasing to two *mothers*—for surely your aunt well deserves the title—anxious for the happiness of a beloved child deserving their tenderest attention.

I will not now, Charlotte, enlarge upon this subject.

Yesterday I had a letter from Lady Blurton, and a strange one it is, telling me your sister has received a particular address from *the Honorable* Benjamin Tupps, brother to her late lord, which she seems to think an honor not to be refused, though the gentleman, more than twice her age, has scarce an independency, and is much too high to think of encreasing his fortune by any commercial method. It would doubtless be very convenient to him to marry Rachel, but it is a matter from which (though at *her own* importunity we might be induced to give our consent) we must ever, I fear, withhold our approbation. I have written to her ladyship, and likewise to your sister, my opinion with more unreserve than may be approved; but on such an occasion as this, what is falsely termed politeness, ought to give way to higher considerations.

I cannot help being somewhat surprised that a young woman of Rachel Lawson's really good understanding should attend to such an address as that which employed Lady Blurton's pen. But I will endeavour to dismiss from my thoughts this subject till I hear from your sister; as I cannot but think what I have said upon it will be effectual.

I must not forget to tell you that Mrs. Cartright was here last Monday and desired she might be remembered to you with particularity.

Mr. Epsom is returned to Mowbray. His sister is gone to Exeter.

Mrs. Kemble means to continue at Summerfield, having taken under her tutorage Miss Morton and Miss Lucy Wyatt. She mentioned, some time since, to two or three of her friends, her having a wish to take a couple of young girls, of good families, from the age of ten to fourteen, to teach reading; writing; arithmetic; grammar; geography, and music; and to instruct them in the

manners of polite life. Her wish was immediately answered; for as soon as Lady Morton and Mrs. Wyatt heard her sentiments, they requested her to take a daughter from each of them, which she did, and manages them in the cleverest manner possible. She instructs them to use the pen with the greatest facility. Their writing tasks are in the form of letters to herself and to each other; their subjects various; but frequently on grammar, geography and astronomy. She often makes them exercise themselves in dancing but thinks they can be better taught this accomplishment at a school where there are many pupils, and as there is a tolerable good one in the neighbourhood, she attends it with them.

I never saw a mode of instruction I so greatly approve. If the children continue under her care for any length of time, they will, I think, be highly polished. She does not treat them like scholars, but as daughters of her own; and the affection they have for her is very observable.

I wish more people in Mrs. Kemble's situation and with her abilities, would employ themselves to the same exemplary purpose. It would be a universal benefit to the female sex. Had I a girl to educate and chose not to undertake the charge, I should think myself happy in finding a Mrs. Kemble to entrust her with.

Miss Lewis is to give you an account of Polly Fenton. I will not, therefore, say any more about her than that we have great hopes of her future well-doing.

You will, my Charlotte, remember us in the highest terms of affection and respect to all at Alverston; and will believe me to be, with the tenderest sentiments,

your fondly anxious mother,
ELIZABETH LAWSON.

Your aunt insists upon your acceptance of the enclosed bank-note, and bids me to charge you not to be too good an œconomist.

LETTER, XIX.

MR. STANLEY, TO SIR CHARLES CONWAY.

London, Monday, April 27th.

YOUR letter, my dear Charles, is now received. I was just going to write to my sister; but a reply to yours, will answer all my purposes.

Set your heart at rest. I mean to be a good boy. Let this suffice. It is not now in my power to unriddle my last, were I inclined; which I more than half am, on account of the evident anxiety of your friendly scrip. But have patience till Thursday. On that day I hope to see you. Tell this to my father; my mother, and the girls: and tell them, likewise, that I am to be honored by the company of the Earl of Danvers; Lady Caroline Pemberton; Mrs. Maynard, and my ungovernable godfather. Our plan is to reach the Park by dinner; sleep there on Thursday evening, and the next day trundle to Oakley-Hill; our party I hope enlarged by the happy one now at Alverston; which I conclude you conspire to compose.

Need I assure you, of the sincerity of my meaning in the above? No: I will not. If you hesitate in believing me—go and be hanged.

Evelyn is just arrived. He intended setting out for Derbyshire on Wednesday, but I have, partly by threats, partly by entreaty, prevailed upon him to stay till Thursday and accompany us down. He therefore sends a letter to *his* witch by the messenger I dispatch with this, who is to take answers, and with them meet us at Leicester on Wednesday evening. Herbert and I are both upon tip-toe; but I think I am the veriest fool of the two. I believe I have never shut my mouth since I saw you last; being always either laughing or singing; except I now and then draw my lips to a whistle.

But do not think I shall write any longer. I shall not indeed.

I have a prodigious regard for you Conway, but—but I am mad—that is all.

Fare you well.

GEORGE STANLEY.

LETTER, XX.

MRS. MAYNARD, TO AUGUSTUS MAYNARD, ESQ.

Monday, April the 27th.

THE information, my dear Augustus which your letter has this instant afforded, respecting your return, fixes our determination to leave London early on Wednesday; to proceed that day to Leicester, where we mean to sleep; to continue next morning our route to Alverston Park, and on the Friday, post to Oakley-Hill to meet him who presides over my every wish. As it is probable—or at least possible—that you may be at the place of assignation before we can reach it, I send this letter to

detain you till our arrival, as it would be a horrid baulk should you escape us. I shall moreover send James on Thursday to your Mansfield Inn; lest by any means, this should be miscarried.

That you have received my packet of Wednesday's date, I take for granted. If not, you will wonder what I am writing about; therefore in a few words let me lead you to expect at Oakley-Hill Lord Danvers; Lady Caroline; Sir Edward, Lady, Mr. and Miss Stanley; Miss Lawson; Mr. Evelyn; Sir Charles Conway and your Harriet; escorted by the Squire of the mansion, who engages for our being accompanied by the party at Alverston. I need not to this information, add that of the present state of our affairs. These arrangements will let you into the whole at once. However as I have a bit of spare time, and as you may want some amusement before we reach you, I will allow my pen to wander half an hour.

Ever since my last, we have been wonderous happy. Caroline—our beloved Caroline is now all herself; and I verily think grows more and more handsome every day. Without any dispute she is *one* of the finest, if not *the* finest creature in the kingdom; and of this Mr. Stanley seems perfectly persuaded, for never did I see a man more completely fascinated.

I made a most abominable mistake the other day which our cousin has hardly yet forgiven.

After an agreeable evening spent at the earl's, where the conversation (began by his lordship) turned upon Lady Caroline's leaving Berkley Square; her going to Dover; disastrous sail, &c, it was earnestly requested by Mr. Stanley that he might see the account she herself gave of it in her letters to me; it having been said that she had written of it minutely. With her permission, Mr. Stanley having secured the earls vote in his favor, I promised to look it out down to the period of her going to Alverston, and put it into his hands. He petitioned for the remainder of the letters soon but this grant was peremptorily denied.

Some after this was settled, we parted for the night: the gentlemen being next day to dine with us (for our party has been almost inseparable ever since last Tuesday:) however the young one arrived to breakfast, being impatient for the promised letters, which Caroline and I the night before had parcelled out; dividing one of them, so that the detail he was to receive closed just before the introduction of himself; which, you may remember, you smiled at, as it was ushered in by a supposed question of yours, relative to Sir Edward's having a son as well as the daughter she had been describing; and was followed by Caroline's confession of partiality, and indeed with every circumstance down to her leaving Alverston in a pet on receiving the intelligence of Mr. Stanley's being gone in pursuit of Lady Lucinda Harrington.

These last I wrapped up by themselves and as I thought, put them into a drawer in my escritoir. However I was mistaken, for I secured the others, and gave to Mr. Stanley at breakfast, those which were prohibited. He very gratefully received and put them into his pocket; and Caroline and I being under an engagement, to Miss Delwin, took the opportunity of our absence to peruse them.

He says he did not at first comprehend the mistake; acknowledges that when it appeared he ought not to have read on, and believes, had we been at home, he should have set the matter right immediately; but as that was not the case, and being forcibly attacked by an ardent desire to know

his Caroline's continued sentiments of him, the monitions of conscience were unheeded, and indeed till he had finished, so enchanted was he by what he read, that he did not perfectly consider the reprehensibleness of his perseverance.

I felt the force of his excuse, and though I did not exculpate him, made great allowances for what he had done; but did not chuse to tell him so.

As soon as we returned from Miss Delwin's, Caroline went up to her dressing-room, I to seek Mr. Stanley, when the foregoing explanation took place, upon which I gave him a very hearty scold, yet could not help smiling at the uncommon expressions of happiness which appeared in his countenance, while he was professing his concern for having read what he ought to have shut his eyes against. Encouraged, I suppose, by my smile, he took hold of both my hands, and looking earnestly in my face, asked me what I really thought I should have done under the same circumstances.

Suppressed, I hope, my inclination, replied I, or afterwards have been very severe upon myself for my faulty indulgence.

He owned he had been blameable, yet acknowledged he could hardly repent; such extreme happiness had he reaped from the perusal of the forbidden lines; but he begged with such earnestness that Lady Caroline might not be apprized of the mistake, lest she should be pained, however unnecessarily, at the idea of his having seen her sentiments, that I almost forgave what he had done on account of the delicacy of this request; and we agreed to keep the secret to ourselves; therefore I stepped up-stairs for the other packet, that he might peruse what Caroline expected he had seen, before he met with her.

However after I left him, I, upon consideration, concluded it would be best for her to know what had happened, that she might conduct herself accordingly; fearing, if it were hidden from her, her naturally ingenuous mind might be liable to the charge of affectation. I therefore acquainted her with the circumstance in full, which, as I apprehended, pained her beyond expressing; but I summoned a whole string of arguments, which I enforced with the recollection that he would not know she was privy to the event; and then looking over with her the letters he had perused, and observing upon the delicacy of her expressions through the whole, she was, at length, somewhat reconciled to what had happened, though it left a kind of a timid, apprehensive air upon her countenance.

I was not quite satisfied with myself for coinciding with Mr. Stanley, that Caroline ought not to know this business, yet as soon as I parted from him went and informed her of it. However, I seriously acted to the best of my judgment; and, perhaps, it is better it should be thus than otherwise.

When Mr. Stanley met Caroline, I was charmed with the delicacy of his manner; and she, I know, observed it to his advantage. He approached her with rather more distance than ordinary; but I saw restrained rapture dancing in his eyes. I almost think his behaviour must have half reconciled our fair cousin to the mistake of the morning. In a very pathetic manner he touched upon the contents of the letters she had allowed him to see. "But how," said he, "must I manage to be sorry that the events happened which carried you to Alverston?"

The lovely girl blushed, and most gracefully looked down. Just before dinner they had half an hour's conversation, which Lady Caroline owed to me to be a very agreeable one. It began with the pleasure all at Alverston would receive from seeing Maria Birtles in Lord Danvers' daughter.

Mr. Slayton has been so industrious, that whenever the parties are agreed to conclude their comedy, the writings can be finished at a short warning. Caroline is a little vexed at what she calls this unnecessary haste, but the old Squire will not be impeded in his motions.

About an hour since, Mr. Stanley's servant brought a little parcel directed to my cousin, upon opening which, we found a neat shagreen case containing a gold medallion. Upon one side was an elegant pearl basket, filled with small flowers, which were entirely composed of various coloured jewels. I never saw any thing of the kind more beautiful. On the back side, a cypher of G S was neatly engraved. We admired it some minutes without perceiving its greatest beauty, when touching a spring, the head of which was a table-diamond, the medallion opened, and our eyes were presented with that identical miniature of Mr. Stanley, which Lady Caroline dropped at the ball at Hazle-wood Lodge. It was set in plain gold without ornament, and underneath it were written the following lines:

“Accept, fair Excellence, this little piece,
“More valued than the brightest tints of Greece.
“By thee portrayed, my face receives a glow
“Superior to what GAINSB'ROUGH bestow.
“Charmed with my form—thus honored by thy art—
Narcissus like—I gaze and loose my heart.”

I must own this little piece of gallantry pleased me mightily. Lord Danvers was with us when the present arrived, and insisted upon it that Lady Caroline should sit for a picture of the same size; which he would order to be jewelled for Mr. Stanley.

There is not, I think, in the kingdom a more magnificently-minded man than this uncle of yours, who now shows himself in his own colours; being, as he affirms, more happy than he ever was before.

Apropos—Lord Crumpford had a most complete dressing the other day at the London Tavern, in the presence of upwards of twenty gentlemen of high rank.

By some means or other, the whole story respecting Lady Caroline and poor Thomas William Pemberton was inserted in the St. James's Chronicle, with every circumstance, and indeed every aggravation, that could be given. It was said this precious ornament to the English nobility now refuses to pay for the board of the poor lad whom he trimmed out as the heir of the earldom; yet a conjecture is offered that he is actually married in private to his daughter. I could almost wish this latter circumstance were true; for the girl is said to inherit very exactly her father's disposition, which an education under his own eye has ripened to maturity. An intimation is given, that at any rate he is his son; but whether naturally or legally, is the question. A third insinuation is his own marriage with Mrs. Pemberton, in order to secure her secrecy; but that he knows how to invalidate engagements of this kind, and to silence the complainant.

I cannot imagine who it is that can have done all this: for it must be a person intimately acquainted with the truth, though it is given in this suppositious manner. Be it who it will, it has pulled the town about, him, as he cannot deny the great circumstances. It seems he had not read this paper when he went to the meeting, else he certainly would not have ventured out. I am told there was quite an uproar upon his appearance. None of the gentlemen would stay in his company. He was therefore desired to quit the room, but refused; endeavouring to brave it out, till at length our old friend the admiral, no longer master of his temper said some very severe things which produced from Lord Crumpford the most abusive language, upon which the admiral went up to him; took him by the nose, by which he led him to the door, and then kicked him out of the room; all which this infamous poltroon—you know he always bore the character of a coward—took very patiently, and sneaked off to a hackney coach, into which he jumped with the utmost expedition, and was driven away (doubtless according to his own desire) with great velocity.

So much for this rascally lord, whom I hope I shall never more see near me. I feel myself greatly gratified by this disgrace of his; with the account of which I will conclude my letter; subscribing to the unnecessary assertion of my being ever yours, the name of

HARRIET MAYNARD.

LETTER, XXI.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Alverston, April 30th.

MARIA, we are all here in the utmost astonishment. I can hardly arrange my ideas sufficiently to give you any tolerable account of the events this day has produced. Such a tale! where to begin I know not. But I will try to let you into the light of things if I can; first preparing you to expect that this will be a very incoherent letter; pieced, probably, in twenty places; for I cannot this day spare you more than a quarter of an hour together, upon any account.

Yesterday—for I must go back—Yesterday—no, Tuesday I mean, the post-man brought your very agreeable packet; which I should be pleased to expatiate upon, had I leisure. Tell my dear, dear mother—tell my aunt, that I am greatly obliged by the contents of the letter I received. O Maria! I dare not say *how much* I am obliged, because—because—I *cannot*. Every line was pleasing to me. I *will* confess it, and I would have made the confession sooner, but that I was stung upon my right hand last Sunday by a poor little bee which, unheedingly, I crushed upon the green-house window. For two or three days it was swelled and very painful. I could scarce move my fingers; and *this* prevented my immediately writing to Woodstock my grateful acknowledgements.

And now for the tale which caused, at the beginning of this sheet, my expressions of surprise.

The weather being yesterday rather cloudy, though not wet, we determined to spend the day

within-doors, and accordingly sat down after breakfast in the library, but I being unable to do any work, was deputed to read to Lady Stanley and Emma. We had not sat long before we saw Sir Charles Conway's carriage driven up the great avenue, and he soon entered the room with rather a serious air, which he presently accounted for by reading a letter he had received from Mr. Stanley (in reply to his remonstrating one) by a special messenger whom he brought with him to Alverston; the man having orders to return to Leicester that evening with an answer.

He likewise brought one for me Maria, which I will first tell you the purport of, that the mention of it may not, afterwards interfere with my story.

It was, my dear, from Mr. Evelyn; the substance of it his visit—his successful visit to Woodstock. He then in a most delicate and tender manner—But I will enclose it for the perusal of your happy circle, for two reasons. First because I am in haste to write on; and lastly and chiefly, because I cannot do it full justice by dissection. I have in compliance (as you will see) with his earnest request given it an answer, the copy of which I will enclose likewise, and hope it will not be disapproved. My endeavour was to be as candid as delicacy would allow; yet I could not Maria be quite, *quite* unreserved; nor could I help expressing a *little* surprise at the confessed purport of his journey into Oxfordshire.

And so much for this subject at present.

Mr. Stanley in his letter to Sir Charles Conway, makes some apology for having given him any concern; bids him be easy till Thursday, when he hopes to see him at Alverston, and tells him he shall be accompanied by the earl of Danvers; Lady Caroline Pemberton; Mrs. Maynard; Mr. Slayton, and Mr. Evelyn, who intended to have been down as yesterday, but whom he had persuaded to stay and attend the party. He then intimates that they will expect our going with them, the next day, to Oakley Hill.

It is in vain Maria to attempt describing the wonder we were all in at this unexpected, unrequested visit. It seemed mighty odd that such a lady as Lady Caroline Pemberton, should condescend, under such circumstances, to be the first to seek the acquaintance; and that she should be countenanced in it by relations of such consequence. We could not but look upon it as somewhat forward. However Emma, Sir Charles and I suppressed, in some measure, our sentiments till we were by ourselves, and then we conjectured till we were tired, without coming to any conclusion; but we dispatched the messenger with the letters, and then made what little preparations were necessary to receive, and likewise to accompany them to Oakley-Hill. During the remainder of the day, this ensuing visit engrossed our conversation. We sometimes determined to drop the subject, but it again and again insensibly arose till our party separated for the night, and then it was revived between Emma and me.

This morning, (not knowing how early in the day they might be with us, as they intended to sleep, which they did, last night at Leicester) Emma and I arose rather sooner than usual, and, having dressed ourselves, went down to breakfast, when it was proposed by Sir Charles and agreed to by all, that he and I (we having both been introduced to the two ladies, and Sir Charles to the earl) should go down into the garden upon the first sight of the carriages that we might receive and accompany the visitors into the drawing-room. Accordingly about one o'clock (previous orders having been

given for that purpose) a servant announcing the distant approach of equipages, which it was conjectured could be none but those expected, down into the garden, attended by the baronet, I went, where having walked a few minutes a most elegant landau, followed by a very handsome coach and a chaise, approached the outward front gates, and were in an instant at the door of the saloon. Sir Charles and I were already upon the steps when Mr. Stanley sprang from the first carriage and handed out the ladies, whom, with his usual grace, and with even more than usual vivacity sparkling in his countenance, he introduced to me and the baronet; or strictly speaking, I believe he presented *us* to *them*. Mr. Evelyn followed the ladies out of the landau. His address to me was graceful and dignified. I felt myself at once relieved from the awkwardness I had apprehended. Sir Charles Conway's reception of him was more than brotherly.

While these salutations were passing the landau made way for the coach; out of which came Lord Danvers and Mr. Slayton, and having made our mutual compliments, the earl led Mrs. Maynard; Mr. Slayton conducted Lady Caroline, and Mr. Stanley handed me—Sir Charles and Mr. Evelyn following—into the drawing-room.

And now Maria endeavour to form to yourself the surprise we all experienced (after the earl and Mrs. Maynard had been introduced by Mr. Stanley, who had quitted me upon our entrance into the room) when upon Mr. Slayton's leading up the lovely, blushing, sparkling Lady Caroline Pemberton, Lady Stanley, in advancing to receive her, started and stopped; then hastening to her, and throwing her arms around her, exclaimed—"My dear, lovely girl!—my often regretted Maria! But who is it"—continued she, as if recollecting all circumstances, and partly withdrawing from Lady Caroline's returning embrace, as she seemed going to speak—"that I have now had the pleasure to salute?"

"Give *me* leave, my dear madam," said Mr. Stanley stepping between them and taking the lovely creature's hand, while we stood gazing in wonder—"to have the supreme felicity of restoring to you your lost Maria Birtles in the person of Lady Caroline Pemberton, who has been generously impatient to see and to thank you for the protection she found at Alverston, though by taking refuge here, she laid upon *us* the highest of all obligations."

Can you guess, my dear girl, the astonishment which all we, who were not in the secret, were seized with on hearing that the Maria Birtles of whom we had so often talked as a servant, was no less a person than Lady Caroline Pemberton! Our eyes were enlarged by surprise, and we all looked upon each other as if we knew not what to say.

Lady Stanley, ever present to herself, was immediately collected, and having re-embraced Lady Caroline, led her to Sir Edward, saying to Mr. Stanley—"Let *me*, my dear son, have the pleasure of presenting this admirable lady to your father, who always greatly—*more* greatly than at the time I dare tell you, George—observed and admired *Maria Birtles*."

Lady Stanley smiled as she spoke, and her smile conveyed the intelligence of her having seen Mr. Stanley's partiality for the beautiful refugee, who blushed at the intimation, and looked sweetly confused, while Sir Edward, with the vivacity and politeness so natural to him, confirmed his lady's sentiments.

Emma now claimed Lady Caroline's more immediate attention; and greatly interesting to the by-standers was the evident happiness they mutually experienced; expressed in the warmest language of genuine friendship.

I cannot, Maria, tell you half the polite and agreeable things which were said from one to another upon this occasion. It was long before any thing arose which could be called conversation. Some very pleasing salutations passed between the earl; Sir Edward and Lady Stanley, who were joined by Mr. Slayton. The old Squire seemed all joy, and called for the congratulations of every one present upon his having found a *god-daughter*, as he says he shall always call Mr. Stanley's wife, to the great confusion of Lady Caroline, who was not prepared for such an early explanation as now in some measure necessarily took place.

"Let me tell you, cousin," says the old gentleman to Lady Stanley, "I did not much like your fine chambermaid. Faith! I thought her too—too—you understand me—to be thrown into the boy's view. I thought the bait was much too tempting, faith! Or else it was like showing a lamb to a lion."

To this delicate speech of Mr. Slayton's, Mr. Stanley bowed, and ironically thanked him, and to relieve Lady Caroline, respectfully led her up to Sir Charles Conway, saying—"Permit me, madam, once more to present to you my friend from early years, for whom you already know my sentiments. As for you, my dear Conway—the happiness I see you experience on the present occasion, adds to that which I before enjoyed. Forgive me that I suffered you to remain till now in perplexity. Yet, Charles, you deserved it for your former saucy epithets"—alluding it seems to Sir Charles' having taunted Mr. Stanley about "*his sister's waiting-maid*."

"It was well for the strength of my arguments"—with a polite and pleasing air returned the baronet—"that I knew not your inducements; as however much I might have wished you to have guarded your heart, consciousness would have forbid my expecting you to remain insensible: indeed the impossibility of a defence would have kept me silent."

The company now, for a few minutes, divided into groupes. The four elders made one: Mrs. Maynard; her lovely cousin; the brother and the sister, with Sir Charles Conway, constituted another; and Mr. Evelyn drew *me* to one of the bow-windows, where a short conversation ensued, which I will give you, Maria, in some other opportunity. Its effect was to set me perfectly at ease, and to give, I believe, some relief to himself.

And now for a few words to account for Lady Caroline's having sought protection at Alverston Park. Her being driven from Berkley Square, we were apprized of by Major Carrington; and likewise that she had entered on board a ship for some part of the coast of France: but the Major knew not that she was thrown, by a dreadful storm, upon the Hampshire shore, where she was, at length, safely landed. After this event she went to London, to very private lodgings; and in a short time, by means of the late Mrs. Douglas of Grosvenor Square, she procured a recommendation to Miss Stanley.

Thus Maria have I ended my tale, which I am sure has been very interesting to my dear friends at Woodstock, about whom Lady Caroline several times in the course of the day enquired with affectionate expressions of respect. To my Maria she requested to be mentioned with the

kindest remembrance. The earl, likewise desired his compliments to every one of those I so often think of in Oxfordshire.

It is now past midnight. I have written till my fingers ache; therefore will forbear to give any farther account of one of the most pleasant days in which I ever existed. Every mortal present seemed happy beyond description. Mrs. Maynard, indeed, who is extremely lively, affected to be disconsolate because, to use her own expression, she was *swain-less*; but she declared she would make an offer to Mr. Slayton as soon as ever he returned from a walk he was then, according to his constant custom, taking after dinner; and she was as good as her word; for upon his coming in, she went up to him, made a very demure courtesy, and offered herself to his acceptance; which he—for they perfectly understand each other—accepted; and they agreed to be beau and belle till they should see Mr. Maynard to-morrow at Oakley Hill; that expectation, you are to understand, being the primary occasion of this jaunt; but Lady Caroline's gratitude led her to wish to take Alverston in the way.

How much to the honor of this charming woman is the motive, when investigated, of this almost censured visit! It is strange that mortals, from their so daily experiencing a lack of foresight, do not learn to suspend their judgement till they can have all facts in their view!

Lady Caroline Pemberton sacrificed to gratitude the false delicacy of avoiding Alverston. She was, I dare say, above all concern respecting any misconstruction of her visit; which, indeed, could *not* be misconstrued by any one acquainted with the circumstances. But if I indulge myself upon any thing particularly relative to the merits of this ornament to our sex, I shall write till daylight. It is now considerably past the dismal hour of twelve, and I find myself inclined to drowsiness. For this night, therefore, Maria, I will finish, but as I know you will be impatient to hear of our goings-on, will resume my employment as soon as opportunity offers.

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

LETTER, XXII.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Friday night, Oakley Hill, May 1st.

We have passed another day, my dear friend, in uninterrupted happiness; and I again feel from experience the truth of that observation, which tells us of the seeming length of *very* happy hours. Almost every *minute* of the day past has, I think, impressed itself distinctly on my ideas. No wonder, therefore, that the day itself seems to have been protracted.

We were none of us stirring this morning till rather late. The agreeable fatigues of *yesterday* made us, I suppose, all sleep found. Mr. Slayton was the first who was seen; and he, being impatient for his breakfast, summoned three or four of the servants who were musical, at the head of which was the butler (who I believe taught some of the rest) and serenaded us from the chains of Somnus. A French horn was amongst the instruments which awakened us; and we all, it seems, instantly left our beds to develope the cause of the harmony, and in a short time were assembled in the library.

Every countenance I saw appeared to beam satisfaction; and a general vivacious conversation ensued; which, however, was soon interrupted by the arrival of a letter to Sir Charles Conway, who seemed to be affected by what he read. He sat a few moments silent, and then informed us that the letter he had received, contained an account of the death of the good old Rector of Hawthorn Grove. This gentleman, upwards of eighty; perfectly sound in his intellects and senses, was last night found sitting in an easy chair in his closet, with the last twenty lines of Doctor Young's third night in his hands; which, as the ink was scarce dry, and the transcript not verbatim, it was presumed he had just been writing from memory.

When his servant went to enquire the cause of his longer stay than usual, he saw him sitting as if asleep; but upon standing to observe a few minutes, and gently endeavouring to move him, he found him breathless. The family, consisting entirely of antient domestics, was presently alarmed, and Doctor Spalding sent for, who soon pronounced him to be flown to a brighter region. The Doctor then ordered him to be laid upon a bed, by the side of which (as the man who carried the letter informed us) he sat down near an hour in perfect silence; then arose and wrote to Sir Charles Conway.

I make no comments upon this event, Maria; nor suffer myself to look forward to its consequences; only adding to what I have said, that Sir Edward; Sir Charles, and Mr. Evelyn, had a conference in the library-closet just before we left Alverston.

Our breakfasting lasted till almost noon, when Mr. Slayton reminded us that it was high time for us to prepare for our journey to Oakley Hill, as the carriages would be in readiness in half an hour. We therefore attended to his intimation; separated to dress, and appeared pretty near the time prescribed. The cavalcade was arranged by Mrs. Maynard, who is too vivacious to be unemployed; and whose vivacity was increased by the expectation of seeing Mr. Maynard at the end of the journey; they being, it seems, an extremely happy couple. The carriages were a coach; a landau, and a post-chaise. In the first were placed Sir Edward; Lady Stanley; Emma, and Lady Caroline Pemberton. In the second, Lord Danvers; Mrs. Maynard; Mr. Slayton, and your Charlotte. Sir Charles Conway; Mr. Stanley, and Mr. Evelyn, rode on horseback, and the post-chaise conveyed the female attendants.

The conversation during the journey was lively and interesting. Lord Danvers, as you have observed, is a truly fine gentleman. I am told he is the most altered man in the world since this turn of his affairs; that gaming, which he has now formally renounced, had so entirely engrossed his ideas, and, for a time, corrupted his heart, that his daughter, of whom he always used to be exceedingly fond, was entirely disregarded by him till Lord Crumpford's wicked proposals drew his attention upon her to destroy her happiness. His lordship now speaks of this transaction with officiousness, as if he wished to evince his sense of his folly [to give it a soft name] and consequent repentance.

The letters which Lady Caroline wrote of the whole affair, were mentioned, and I was promised a sight of them; Mrs. Maynard having brought them with her at Mr. Stanley's earnest request. I doubt not, Maria, but I shall get leave to transmit them to Woodstock; if not, I will employ my memory in your service, and give you as much of them as that will retain.

When we reached Oakley Hill, Mrs. Maynard's countenance spoke the anxiety she was under to know if Mr. Maynard was arrived; and when she saw him, which was immediately upon the stopping of the carriage, her eyes sparkled with joy. This happy pair, as I have before observed, are a proper example for all in the conjugal life.

As soon as we alighted, we were ushered into a very neat drawing-room, where, after mutual compliments had been given and returned, chocolate was ordered; but Mr. Maynard told Mr. Slayton he had some other guests to introduce, and then informed us that as soon as he had received a letter from Mrs. Maynard, which was directed to him at Kildwick, and which communicated the design of the party to meet him at Oakley Hill, he had spared no pains to induce Mr. and Miss Broomley to accompany him, that he might receive the thanks of the family he had so unreturnably obliged.

"Not to receive *their* thanks for a bare performance of duty," replied the good man, "but (if we *do* go) to return our own:—or rather to express our disapprobation of the unreasonable donation you obliged us to receive, as a recompence for an employment annexed to the duties of my office."

After a contest which Mr. Maynard said he was determined not easily to give up, Mr. Broomley dispatched a messenger to a young gentleman in the neighbourhood, who was waiting for a curacy in that part of the country, to request his officiating at Kildwick till his return; which request was thankfully complied with; and as Miss Broomley asked but a few hours to get herself in readiness, they agreed to leave Kildwick the next morning; which they accordingly did, and arriving at Oakley Hill about three hours before we reached it, were in another room waiting to be introduced.

At hearing this, Lord Danvers instantly arose, and taking Lady Caroline by the hand, they were conducted by Mr. Slayton, attended by Mr. Maynard, to this worthy, reverend man and Miss Broomley, with whom they staid near a quarter of an hour, and then led to the company in the drawing-room, where they were received with the most respectful politeness. Indeed their appearance alone would have ensured them this reception; for never did I behold two figures more interesting. Mr. Broomley's face, air and manner are all expressive of goodness and greatness of heart. Love and reverence must seize the mind of every one to whom he is introduced; and his conversation, which is at once animated and solid, confirms the prepossession. As to Miss Broomley—were I not writing to Maria Lewis, I would say that these two young ladies bear a very near resemblance to each other. Every one who knows both, joined in the observation. Lady Caroline Pemberton was the first who mentioned it, and Mr. Evelyn joined in it with such a warmth!—But I will not tell you what he said, Maria; nor what I have often heard him say since his return from Oxfordshire. For two reasons I will not. First, because—But now I think of it, I will not even tell you my reasons. Chide if you can, my dear; but I rather doubt your power in that particular.

The charming little Alethea, whose complexion no lily can out-vie, was dressed in a fine thin muslin round-gown, welted up to the top, and worn over a pale straw-coloured silk. Her cap was nearly as simple as your own, and her hat almost as plain. She is extremely innocent and lively; not the least embarrassed by appearing in such a large circle: yet sweetly delicate and timid.

I do not know her exact age, but suppose it to be about fifteen: perhaps rather more.

And now I must try to get some sleep, or I shall not be able to go through with the expected bustle of the ensuing day.

Mr. Slayton's house is quite full, and he quite delighted. To-morrow we are, I believe, to go to Mansfield.

Being charged with respectful remembrances from the Earl; Lady Caroline, Emma, and Mr. Evelyn, I will, with executing my commission, finish my letter.

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

LETTER, XXIII.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Oakley Hill, Monday, May 4th.

THREE days since the date of my last! during which time I have not been able to find one leisure half hour. Pleasure after pleasure has engrossed my every minute.

On Saturday, as I expected, we *walked* down to Mansfield; two short miles from Oakley Hill; the landau being sent after, for those who might be tired, but it was not accepted by any of us. Without exception, this was the pleasantest ramble which ever fell to my lot to experience.

When we returned we found a servant from Alverston with letters; yours, my dear, for which I return my acknowledgements, amongst the rest; and one from my sister; who does not mention a syllable about the subject respecting herself, which my dear mother, in her last favor, communicated. But she gave me a very laughable account of the courtship between the Honorable Miss Barbara Tupps and the Right Honorable Gregory Beltshazzer, Lord Clutterbuck, a bluff old batchelor lately arrived from the East, to take the title of his uncle, who died last October was a twelvemonth. Rachel, who is too apt to sport upon the deformities of nature, says that this bonny nobleman, (I use her own words) who is almost square in his form, appears in the eye of Miss Barbara *an elegant Personage*.

But I suppose she has transmitted the account to Woodstock; else, I should be half inclined to copy that part of her letter; as it is almost impossible to read it without risibility.

Mr. Evelyn had likewise a letter by the same conveyance. It came from a friend of his in Reading, and contained an account of the bad conduct of his young mother-in-law, who having been discovered in an intrigue with the butler, had robbed her husband of upwards of two hundred guineas, and was gone off with her gallant. The letter says the old gentleman is violently enraged against both the criminals; but professes to be happy that she left him before she increased his family.

Mr. Evelyn means to write immediately to his father, to offer him every consolation in his power to administer; he having, it seems, lamented his own ill behaviour to his son, whom he cannot bring himself to wish to see at present; otherwise Mr. Evelyn would immediately have set off for Berkshire.

Very pleasing arrangements, Maria, have been made respecting the Alverston and Hawthorn Grove Rectories—the last taking its name not from the parish, but the seat of its patron. My enclosed letter to my mother will give the particulars.

Sir Edward, as you will see, has accepted Mr. Evelyn's resignation of Alverston, which it was immediately proposed by Mr. Stanley should be offered to good Mr. Broomley. It therefore *was* offered; but he respectfully requested a few days consideration, as he could not immediately determine about leaving his Kildwick parishioners; but Mr. Maynard says, that as that living will probably at his decease, or resignation, be given to a gentleman who really wants it, he has no doubt but we shall have Mr. Broomley in Derbyshire.

Mr. Stanley, who is highly pleased with Alethea, told her just now in jesting language, but I dare answer for it, with a serious meaning, that he will, if she marries a clergyman, secure the benefice to the man of her choice.

"Then you may depend upon it, sir," said she, with native vivacity, "I will have a parson if I can get one. But I think I will submit my fate to you; for you have chosen so well for yourself that I am sure you will not determine amiss for me."

We are all delighted with this lively little girl, who, now she is acquainted with the party, is always entertaining us by sprightly sallies of humour. On *her* account, I think it is probable that Mr. Broomley will consent to live at Alverston, having, at Lady Stanley's request, written to the patron of Kildwick living.

Arrangements have likewise been made respecting the two happy couples, who will probably soon be rendered still happier by an entrance into the conjugal state.

The marriage writings, it seems, of both parties want nothing but signing; so indefatigable has been our Oakley-Hill host; to whose management, I just now learned from Lady Stanley, Sir Charles Conway, unknown to the Alverston family, submitted the intended unexceptionable settlements upon my dear Emma. She, of course, is to reside at Hawthorn Grove. Mr. Slayton has given up Hazle-wood Lodge to Sir Edward and Lady Stanley, who mean to resign Alverston Park when Lady Caroline blesses with her hand the enraptured man of her heart. Mr. Maynard has a seat in Leicestershire: Lord Danvers one in Rutlandshire; another in Suffolk, and several little boxes, like his cottage in Woodstock, in different parts of the kingdom.

Hazle-wood Lodge, as I believe I before observed to you, forms nearly an equilateral triangle with Alverston Park and Hawthorn Grove, and is just mid-way between the first-mentioned place and Oakley Hill; so that no situation can be more desirable for Sir Edward and Lady Stanley than that.

The four elders are, I find, extremely desirous that the weddings should take place before the party separates. Mr. and Mrs. Maynard support the design, and I had just now the honor of being admitted to the consultation; but I doubt the brides elect will not readily submit to such a sudden summons.

The plan they mean, if possible, to pursue, originated, with Sir Charles Conway, who, upon catching the general wish that the two weddings might be celebrated in one day, intimated to Mr. Slayton that no place was more proper for the performance of the ceremonies than Oakley Hill, it being impossible that either of the brides could make any objections of delicacy to it, as it was not the residence of either of the gentlemen. Alverston Park, he said, would not be approved of by Lady Caroline; nor Hawthorn Grove by Miss Stanley; therefore if Mr. Slayton would support the plan, he hoped every one might be brought to agree with his opinion.

Nothing could be more consonant to the wishes of the old Squire than this proposal. It seems he snapped his fingers, and actually jumped for joy; saying (not injudiciously) that Mr. Broomley and Mr. Evelyn—the first for Mr. Stanley and Lady Caroline; the other for Sir Charles Conway and my Emma—should officiate as priests of Hymen; which, he says, he is sure his friend Mr. Graham (to whom the fees will most certainly be presented) will excuse, when he shall be made acquainted with the circumstances.

Emma I doubt will be refractory, and I think Lady Caroline will not be easily reconciled to such hasty conclusions. But they will both find strong opposers to contend with; for as Mr. Slayton has bound *the council* by promise, to support his measures, there will be no resisting the strength of the current; Mr. Stanley's natural precipitance of temper will carry *him* forward, and Sir Charles has so long solicited his Emma to name his day (which upon first one, then another, pretence, she has hitherto declined) that he, I am persuaded, will not relinquish this reinforcement.

Miss Broomley just now asked me—But I am called away. A summons from Mrs. Maynard to attend her in the garden, is brought by Lady Stanley's woman.

* * * * *

I am returned from a walk with the lady, whose summons I obeyed. Her business with me was to consult upon the article of dress for the ensuing affair, which, she says, must and shall be forwarded with all possible expedition.

I asked her if the brides elect had been made acquainted with her resolution.

"No, to be sure," she said; "nor was the information proper; it being right to prepare the altar before the victims were apprized of the intended sacrifice."

And *are* they to be victims, madam? and *will* it be a sacrifice?—asked I. You frighten one out of one's wits. I had hoped—But you know best. I dare not presume to dispute the matter.

"Now, Miss Charlotte," said she archly, "will I be revenged of you for your saucy questions. Depend upon it you shall not escape the punishment you merit: so prepare yourself to be offered

upon the same altar at the same period. Mr. Evelyn”—called she out with a raised voice, stepping forward into a turning walk as if she had seen him—“I just want to speak to you.”

I thought at the instant I should have sunk to the ground; but recollecting myself, I sprang after her, and caught her by the arm, entreating her not to distress me by the least intimation of—

She interrupted me by a hearty laugh, and bid me then be good, or she would put in execution her meditated revenge.

As no Mr. Evelyn appeared, I was soon somewhat tranquilized (though I really am still sensible of a tremor) and, being joined by Lady Stanley, we consulted about proper dresses for the connubial day.

A genteel dishabille was determined upon, though Mr. Slayton had insisted upon inviting all his friends within the vicinity, which are, some of them, people of high rank; amongst whom are the Earl and Countess of Stradbroke; with Lord Dennington, and Lady Sophia Sommerville. Lord Eastcourt; his second sister, Miss Amelia Hamilton, with a son and daughter of Lord Playton’s. Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont—who are at this time upon a visit to Lord Eastcourt. Sir James Harrison; his celebrated lady, and her sister. Captain John Ashton; Captain Billington; Mr. Charles Wyndham, and a great many others which I have no inclination to particularize.

On account of this intended brilliant assemblage, it was necessary we should be as smart as undress would allow; therefore it was determined that Lady Stanley should wear a mazarine-blue spotted with silver. Mrs. Maynard a peach-blossom. Miss Broomley and your Charlotte, as bridesmaids, simple white lustrings, which are to be made at Mansfield with all possible expedition. Similar dresses are likewise to be provided for the two Miss Grahams; daughters to the clergyman before mentioned; the eldest of which, with Miss Broomley, is to devote herself to Lady Caroline; the youngest and myself to attend Miss Stanley.

The dress of the brides now only remained to be concluded upon; but that we were obliged to postpone; for as there was not time (nor indeed any occasion, till their making what is called an appearance and receiving company) to provide new ones, it was necessary to gain some intelligence of what clothes they had with them suitable for such an occasion. Mr. Slayton, before he left London, had intimated that he should not part with his friends in a hurry when once he got them to Oakley-Hill, and that therefore the ladies must take care to provide themselves *with a good quantity of rigging*—to speak in his own phrase; for which reason the trunks were well stored with spring-garments; but what Miss Stanley had taken with her—or what Lady Caroline—that would suit the purpose we did not know, for we have been too much engaged to make dress the subject of our conversation, and have not yet had occasion for any change, except for church yesterday, when Lady Caroline wore a dark silk and Miss Stanley a light blue, neither of which were thought to be proper for the *day of days*. I was therefore dispatched to the two ladies who with Miss Broomley, were sitting in the library, with a command to enter into such a conversation as would lead to a disclosure of the contents of their travelling wardrobes. I obeyed; was successful, and returned to my directoresses with the account; who determined upon an elegant muslin, striped and sprigged with silver, for Miss Stanley, and another, with gold cords and spots for Lady Caroline; both to be worn over petticoats of plain white sattinet. The head-dresses to be left to their own fancy.

This article settled, we were next to endeavour to bring the two ladies to consent to the design, and I was deputed to hint the matter to Emma, that when Sir Charles should importune her compliance, she might know it was *expected* she would oblige him. Mrs. Maynard undertook to prepare her cousin to listen to Mr. Stanley on the same subject.

We all now went into the library, where we were soon joined by the gentlemen, who had, we understood, been preparing some fishing tackle, that they might amuse us by drawing a large pond about half a mile distant. We therefore equipped ourselves to accompany them, and were very much entertained with their labours.

But I must lay aside my pen and dress for dinner, as we are to have a large company to day at Oakley Hill. Amongst the foremost—the Earl and Countess of Stradbroke; Lord Dennington; Lady Sophia Somerville; Mr. Graham, and the two young ladies; Mr. Charles Wyndham; Captain John Ashton; Miss Anna Rawlinson, and Mrs. Larkin; to whom Miss Rawlinson is upon a visit.

Monday night, almost 12 o'clock.

We have had a very pleasant party, which have but just left us. I should like to lead you through our amusements, but am, as usual, too full of business. The Miss Grahams are very agreeable young ladies; the eldest quite accomplished; the other—Miss Lucy—the prettiest, demure little thing I ever saw. I have some idea of her being in love; for though she has a very good understanding, and is extremely good-natured, she is prim; pensive, and continually sighing.

But now for other intelligence.

After I was dressed, Emma asked me to take a walk in the pleasure-ground; we being ready a considerable time before the company arrived. I complied, and we soon began an interesting conversation.

At length I asked her if she did not mean to give any orders about clothes for the approaching occasion.

“What occasion, Charlotte?” asked she, looking with surprise.

No affectation, Emma, said I. You *must* know that I mean for your own and your brother’s wedding.

“Neither my brother nor myself,” replied Miss Stanley, “are yet going to be married, I dare answer for it.”

Do not be too positive, my dear girl, returned I, lest you should find yourself mistaken.

“What do you mean, Charlotte?”—asked she, with quickness.

That Lady Caroline Pemberton, said I, looking at her with a smile, will soon drop the name

of her family; and that you, ere many days, will be Lady Conway.

The dear girl looked astonished; again exclaiming—"What do you mean?"

I mean what I say, child, returned I; so prepare yourself for a compliance.

Sir Charles at that instant appeared in sight. Emma's cheek was of a crimson hue in a moment. "Ah! Charlotte," said she, "this is treachery! This is a scheme against me!"

How can that be, I asked, when this walk was proposed by yourself?

"Well, leave me not; leave me not"—said she, speaking in a hurry, and taking hold of my arm. "Promise but to stay with me, or I fear"—

Sir Charles was now advanced, and catching her last words—"Of what is my Emma afraid?" he asked; "and why," taking her hand, "does she thus tremble?"

"We must not now be interrupted, Sir Charles," said she, "Miss Lawson and I were earnest in conversation, and wish to be by ourselves."

"Strange," replied he, "that I appear to doubt my lovely girl's veracity; but I cannot obey till Miss Lawson confirms that wish to be mutual."

Upon my word, said I, preventing Miss Stanley's reply, it is a wish in which I take no part: on the contrary, I particularly desire the subject in which we were engaged—

"My dear Charlotte," said Emma, looking at me with earnestness, "what are you about to say! For goodness sake"—

"The apprehensions of my Emma," said Sir Charles, "lead me to suspect what the subject was; and you, Miss Lawson, will, I hope, support me in my request, if I now urge for the greatest favor I can ever receive."

The dear Emma seemed ready to sink upon the ground. Indeed I believe she could not have walked three steps farther, which Sir Charles, with evident concern, observing, seated her on a bench that was near at hand, and placed me on one side of her; sitting down himself upon the other: then looking at her with inexpressible tenderness, and taking one hand, his arm being thrown round to support her, he said, in an accent expressive of affection and respect—

"My beloved Emma well knows that it is painful to me to be the occasion of giving her the least discomposure, yet as the subject upon which I am about to speak is of too much importance—I hope to both—to be deferred for smaller considerations, she will pardon me if I press for a compliance to the earnest entreaty I must make for more perfect happiness.

"I speak, madam, without prefacing my petition, that I may as soon as possible relieve you from a subject which, I am sorry to see, is so painful to you."

“It is not, sir—it is not because”—stammered out the blushing Emma, but could not speak another syllable. So greatly confused was she at the unexpected attack.

“My lovely girl!” said Sir Charles, looking at her with rapture, “I cannot bear thus to distress you. Allow me, therefore, to apply to your Charlotte, and let me conclude upon her answer.”

“O no, no!” she cried, “I dare not—I dare not permit”—

“I thank you, madam, for that confession,” interrupted the happy man.—“Your Charlotte then will decide in my favor. Miss Lawson, what reward shall I offer to induce you to fix an early day for making me one of the happiest of sublunary beings?”

I ask no reward, Sir Charles, returned I, with a smile. My disposition is so philanthropic, that I love to oblige for obliging sake; therefore if Lady Caroline Pemberton will submit to my award, I shall have the pleasure to attend a very happy party to church next Thursday.

Poor Emma knew not which way to look. She endeavoured to disengage herself from Sir Charles, and half out of breath, exclaimed,—“My dear Miss Lawson, how can you thus”—

And now, said I, unmindful of Emma’s exclamation, I must leave you sir to plead my pardon; for I fear I have grievously offended. But you are so far from being bound by my decision, that if you can prevail for a still earlier day, my approbation will attend the alteration.

At which I arose, and, notwithstanding Emma’s endeavour to detain me, turned down into an avenue near which we sat, and was out of their sight in an instant.

I then went in quest of Mrs. Maynard, whom I found in her dressing-room, with Lady Caroline sitting by her. Seeing them look very grave, I just entered the room, and was about to retire, but Mrs. Maynard hastily arose, and requested me to return; when seating me near her, she told me she had been acquainting her cousin with the universal wish, and was sorry to find her so averse to oblige such a number of her friends.

“My dear Harriet,” said Lady Caroline, with a little warmth, “do you consider how lately it is that Mr. Stanley made any direct address to me? I wonder you can support such a cause!”

“Bad as you may think it,” replied Mrs. Maynard, “you will be borne down by its torrent; depend upon it. Why, child, your father and I are at the very head of the plan! And when did you ever succeed in opposing any thing we joined in?”

“Too surely never,” said the lovely creature; “because you”—

“Never joined in any thing unreasonable,” added her cousin. “But as to direct address — Pray had you not enough of that as Maria Birtles?”

“A great deal too much,” returned she, “when I was in that character; but in such a

manner”—

“A fiddle faddle for the manner,” again broke in this lively woman; “the manner was not so much amiss, except you have told me fibs, considering what you appeared to be. But answer me before Miss Lawson one question. Do you not prefer Mr. Stanley to all the men you know in the world?”

“What a strange creature you are, Harriet!” said Lady Caroline: “but I will not pay Miss Lawson so ill a compliment to deny, because she is present, what you know I have acknowledged in her absence. I *do* prefer Mr. Stanley to all the men I know.” At which she blushed; turned her eyes down, and looked sweetly confused.

I could not forbear to raise her hand to my lips, and thank her for the enviable honor of her confidence.

Her reply was too flattering for me to repeat; but it pleased me greatly.

“You are a good girl upon the whole, Caroline,” said Mrs. Maynard; “and after what you have said, will not be angry if I ask you one or two more questions.

“Do you not intend to be Lady Caroline Stanley one day or other?”

"To that question, Harriet," said her ladyship, "you cannot want any answer."

“Well then,” returned Mrs. Maynard, “taking it for granted *that you do*, what can prevent a young woman so much above affectation and false delicacy, as you always were, from obliging so many friends on both sides; not one of whom would wish you to do a thing the least improper; especially in a case of such importance?”

“Indeed, Harriet, you distress me,” said her ladyship.

“But *why*, Caroline,” enquired Mrs. Maynard, “are you distressed? Do you think that your advisers are not competent judges of true delicacy?”

“I know you *are* competent judges of delicacy,” replied she; “but—”

“But *what*, Caroline?” asked her cousin. “Are you not convinced of the sincerity and disinterestedness of Mr. Stanley’s affection?”

“Indeed I am;” said this enchanting beauty, with another crimson blush, “but still—”

“Pray Miss Lawson,” said Mrs. Maynard, “permit my appealing to you. Let us have your sentiments on the subject we are debating.”

I will not presume to *advise* Lady Caroline, said I, but my *wishes* are that you, madam, may be successful in what you have undertaken.

"And are you serious, Miss Lawson?" asked her ladyship.

Indeed I am, I replied; and must take the liberty to observe, that your refusal to indulge the wishes of all around you, not only delays to make happy the man in whose happiness you candidly acknowledge to have an interest, but likewise that of Sir Charles Conway; as I am convinced Miss Stanley will recall whatever consent she may by this time conditionally have given to be Lady Conway, ere another week elapses, except a consideration for her brother's felicity induces her to confirm her compliance. And can Lady Caroline Pemberton endure to hold in suspense the happiness of all around her, when by completing that of others, she will, I hope, insure her own?

"Oh, Miss Lawson," returned she, "how you press upon me! But has Miss Stanley indeed consented to such an early day?"

Thursday, replied I, has been named to her, but whether or not she will abide by the nomination I cannot tell. I just now left Sir Charles Conway with her in the garden, and think it probable she will be induced to give such a consent as your ladyship can either annul or confirm.

"You know not, my dear friends," said Lady Caroline, "how you distress me. So early—so very early to think of giving"—

"Well, well"—said Mrs. Maynard, rising from her chair—"we will not pursue this subject. I hear the rattling of carriages, and presume our company will be expected below-stairs. Mr. Stanley must settle this matter for himself. He has already indulged the hope that you will not, thus circumstanced, remain obdurate. You will therefore soon hear from him upon the subject, and to him I refer you for better reasoning."

"O my dear cousin!" exclaimed Lady Caroline, "let me not be left to argue this case with him! I cannot yet enter into this subject with Mr. Stanley."

"Your servant, sweet cuz!" returned Mrs. Maynard. "You are a coward I see. Pray is it the badness of your cause, or the eloquence of the pleader, that awakens your apprehensions? But come, come along girls. Let *me* conduct you to the company in the drawing-room."

Just as she had spoken, her woman entered the room to tell us that Lady Stanley requested our appearance below, as the Earl and Countess of Stradbroke; Lord Dennington, and Lady Sophia Sommerville, were arrived; and Mr. Graham, with the two young ladies, just at hand.

We therefore hastened down, and were met at the bottom of the stairs by Mr. Stanley, who was coming out of the picture-closet, as Mr. Slayton terms a room furnished with very beautiful paintings. He instantly advanced to Lady Caroline, and said—taking both her hands with a gallant air—"Five minutes, madam; only five minutes before you join the company"—drawing her to the closet from whence he had issued.

"O no; no, sir!" said she, resisting, "I cannot; indeed I cannot—Harriet! Miss Lawson! do not, pray do not go without me."

We smiled; bowed, and went on; leaving her a little cruelly, I have since thought, without any attention to her entreaty.

Mrs. Maynard afterwards informed me that Mr. Stanley had been breathing forth to her his ardent wishes that her lovely cousin would not condemn him to a long—novitiate—was his expression; and entreating her to use her influence in curtailing the tedious state of expectation which he dreaded the outrageousness of female punctilio—he would not, he said, call it delicacy—would consign him to.

After teasing him a little, which she dearly loves to do, she intimated the plan in agitation, though she had bound Sir Charles not to divulge one syllable of it, on pain of her opposing his designs; alledging, that Mr. Stanley's precipitance would destroy all her endeavours to bring Lady Caroline to yield, if he was too importunate before she had prepared her, by laying before her the wishes of her friends. On this consideration, Sir Charles consented to keep the plan a secret; therefore when Mrs. Maynard gave Mr. Stanley a hint of it this morning, he seemed transported beyond himself at the unexpected intention of his friends in his favor, and determined immediately to make his advantage of it by pressing his Caroline to comply with a wish so universally espoused, and hastily arose to go in instant pursuit of her, nor could Mrs. Maynard prevent him till she assured him he would destroy his own hopes by his haste, and promised to go directly and prepare her cousin to expect the proposal; therefore, without waiting for a confirmation that the promise had been performed, he seized the first moment of Lady Caroline's appearance to urge his suit, and for that end drew her, as I before said, into the picture-closet; Mrs. Maynard and I going immediately into the drawing-room, where, as soon as introductions were properly over, I seated myself in one of the windows by Miss Stanley, and, without speaking, looked at her as if supplicating for pardon: she understood me, and exclaimed—"Wicked Charlotte! I will *not* forgive you, but lay up the injury in my memory till an opportunity offers for retaliation; and then, depend upon it, I will be most gloriously revenged!"

I trembled at the idea of the terrible effects of her resentment, and earnestly implored an oblivion to my offence; but instead of being pacified, she redoubled her threatenings, and dared me to tell her if my conduct had been consistent with that golden rule *of doing as I would wish to be done by*.

Without replying to her question, I told her with an assumed humility, that I sincerely solicited her forgiveness, as, from the violence of her resentment, I feared the effects of my offence would be dreadful, apprehending she had, in consequence, been plunged into a deplorable situation from which she would never recover! I then begged to know *the extent* of the crime I had committed.

She would not answer me; but demanded where Lady Caroline Pemberton was.

Undergoing, I fear, said I, the same kind of persecution from which you, though, I doubt not, without some loss, have so lately escaped.

"Oh my stars!" she exclaimed, "what shall I now do! If *she* gives way—if *she* consents—

and who can withstand the torrent of George's precipitating temper!—If Lady Caroline be not firm, I am gone. Horrid Charlotte! this, like-wise, is of your concerting."

I endeavoured to exculpate myself from being any way concerned in the last incident; but she did not—or pretended she did not believe me. I therefore motioned to Sir Charles Conway that I wished to speak to him, upon which he advanced to us, and I began with desiring him to procure for me his Emma's forgiveness.

"My Emma," said he, "does not, I hope, find herself offended by what I consider as the greatest proof of friendship which could be offered to me, and by which I am so much obliged, that I shall ever think myself a debtor for the favor till I can—*return it in kind*. What say you, my dear Miss Stanley—shall we join in an act which will at once acquit me of obligation, and gratify your resentment?"

"With all my heart," returned she. "That is the only method to reconcile me to either the culprit or myself. Where is Mr. Evelyn? Do, Sir Charles, tell him I want to speak with him this instant."

Happily for me, Sir Charles was just then summoned away. A servant entered to inform him that a gentleman in the saloon wished to speak with him. I was glad of this, as I was now very serious in requesting Emma to consider at how early a period she jested upon a subject of such consequence to my future happiness; and so effectually convinced her of the pain she gave me, that she promised to be cautious *in some measure*; yet vowed she would some times return a few of the rubs I had, at different period, given *her*.

I never remember Miss Stanley to look more beautiful than she has done this day. A kind of a pensive air softened the vivacity of her features; which, by rendering more visible the native tenderness of her heart, made her still more charming than when in higher spirits. Not that she was low: she was only *placid*; and now and then a little absent. Sir Charles seemed to observe her with rapture. Her dress, I believe, which was blue, was particularly becoming to her, and her head-dress, something of the turban kind, extremely pretty.

We now joined the general conversation, which, for a few minutes, we had, perhaps, rather too much neglected; but the liveliness of Mrs. Maynard's manners, well supplied our inattention.

Lady Caroline entered just before dinner was announced; and the moment she appeared every eye was rivetted to her. She is, to be sure, a most unexceptionable beauty, and the graceful manner of her entering a room, strikes the beholders with no less love than admiration. Lady Caroline's dress was a purple silk; and her cap (entirely her own fancy) exactly suited to her features. The colour in her cheeks was of a finer pink than ordinary, and an agreeable perplexity appeared in her eyes, which increased their lustre. I afterwards understood she had had a most fatiguing contest with Mr. Stanley.

The striking characteristic in the face of both Emma and Lady Caroline, is, I think, sweetness of disposition; yet there is a direct opposition in the *style* of their beauty: the features of the first, are assisted by a pleasing vivacity; the other, by an agreeable serenity. Between the two, all the variety

of female charms appear to be monopolized, and it may be said of these beauties, with at least as much propriety as it was of the Grecian and Italian poets—

“The force of Nature” can “no farther go.
“To make a third she” must unite the “two.”

I should have told you that just before the entrance of Lady Caroline, the rest of the expected guests arrived, ushered in by Mr. Stanley, of whose animated behaviour on the occasion it is needless to animadvert; as every one who has any idea of his character, will see it in their “mind’s eye.”

The day has been an agreeable one; and when I tell you that Mr. Evelyn made use of a favorable opportunity to address some particular conversation to me, relative to his future residence at Hawthorn Grove, you will think—But think what you will. I grow hardened from being so continually tormented by the teasing creatures here.

But this man—you know whom I mean—had the audacity to intimate a wish that the same day which is to enslave Lady Caroline Pemberton and Miss Stanley, might witness your poor Charlotte’s enthraldom likewise. Was there ever any thing so presuming. Had he talked about that day’s *anniversary*, I might not have thought him so *very* unreasonable. But *thus soon*—I had not patience with him, Maria, and was about to give him a very hearty chiding when we were interrupted.

And now, no more egotizing.

We have had quite a superb entertainment to day. Hospitality is a distinguishable trait in Mr. Slayton’s character. He is immensely rich, and he *loves* riches; but he likes to *spend* as well as *get* money; and that with almost profuseness.

Our visitors, of whom, had I leisure, I would give you a particular account, returned home to supper, and, after their departure, a general eclaircissement took place relative to the matrimonial business; an account of which, I must defer till my next, adding no more to this than that I am my
dear Maria’s

ever affectionate

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

LETTER, XXIV.

MISS MARIA LEWIS, TO MISS LAWSON.

Stanton, fourth day of fifth month.

THY letter, my dearest Charlotte, dated fifth day, reached me on seventh day evening, and early the next morning I sent a messenger with it to thy mother and aunt. I cannot express the surprise we experienced when we understood the intelligence it conveyed. Almost beyond imagination it astonished, entertained and delighted us. The attention of my dear aunt Stanhope was deeply absorbed by every line. But I must not indulge in any endeavour to give an idea of our sensations and sentiments on this truly novel history of the lovely Caroline; yet I can hardly forbear the subject; which, however, I must fly from. My aunt desireth me to unite with my own, her best respects to every one of thy party whom she hath the pleasure of knowing; amongst which number thou, Charlotte, wilt not forget thy Herbert Evelyn is to be reckoned. I doubt, I doubt thy future residence at Woodstock, will not be long continued: but we will not anticipate—I was going to say misfortunes, Charlotte.

About one o'clock this day we reached Stanton, where I found my friend Eliza Brewster, who is, if possible, more lively than ever. Henry Colville is likewise here. He returned with his sister and brother from Leicestershire. Eliza expects soon to be married to Richard Parker, or I should almost think that Henry and she were upon a more than friendly footing. I have found them twice this afternoon in close conversation, which they discontinued upon my approach; but I once heard Eliza say—"Ah Henry! thou betrayest thyself every minute; however, I will keep thy secret."

I must own I thought this rather particular; but as it did not, you know, concern me, I would not seem to observe it. Eliza is a pretty girl, and Henry Colville is formed to excite esteem. If she were not already engaged, I do not know where she could make a better choice. I hope he will meet with an agreeable partner, and I wish Eliza Brewster to have a good husband; so that their union would be what I could wish, for both; and yet it doth not seem likely that it will be effected.

But how I prate about subjects foreign to my chief intent of writing! which is to inform thee that I have leave from my aunt to tell thee that I may expect to set out for Derbyshire in about ten days, as friend Harley's cousin, Patty Henderson, thinks of going, about that time, into Yorkshire; and though Derby is not her direct road, will go through it upon my account.

I seem to have much to say to thee, Charlotte, and yet I know not what it is about. But I must hasten to finish, as Eliza will be impatient for my return.

Thine, in true affection,
MARIA LEWIS.

LETTER, XXV.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Oakley Hill, Wednesday, May 6th.

I could not, my dear Maria, find leisure to write one syllable yesterday, and yet I wish you to have the thread of this story unbroken; so now to begin where I left off—As soon as the visitors—

But I am interrupted.

* * * * *

—And an agreeable interruption it was. Your letter, my dear friend, dated Monday, was put into my hands as I laid down my pen. What shall I say to it, Maria? Not what I think, I do assure you; and that you will look upon to be very strange: but there is a time for all things, my dear, and the time for my telling you my sentiments upon the major part of what you have written, is not yet arrived. To another point then—your coming to Alverston.

As soon as I had read your letter I went down, and communicated to the party your intention of being soon in Derbyshire, which gave a universal pleasure; not less I verily think to those who do not, than to those who *do* know you personally. Mr. Stanley is quite impatient to see the little Quaker-girl, of whom he has been told so much; and Sir Charles Conway insists upon being one of the deputed to escort you from Derby. Miss Broomley anticipates the happiness of having a counterpart in company; for she says she seems so alone—so unpaired—while every one else is attended by a lover, that she looks forward to you as a great relief.

The demureness arising from a domestic education, is in this little girl so agreeably contrasted by native wildness, that her character is quite novel. Her understanding is excellent; her disposition very sweet; and, when she is in a small circle, she speaks whatever her heart dictates in the most artless manner imaginable. Amongst those who particularly enjoy, in expectation, the arrival of my Maria, Lady Caroline Pemberton and Miss Stanley ought to be mentioned with distinction. I cannot tell you half the affectionate things they said upon the occasion. Lord Danvers likewise spoke very respectfully of both your aunt and you; telling Mr. Broomley he thought he would be particularly pleased with Mrs. Stanhope, as the Christian and the gentlewoman are distinguishably united in her character.

Mr. Broomley answered the earl's implied compliment by a bow; saying, at the same time, that Mrs. Stanhope is of that sect which deserves respect from both church and state; as the general tenor of their principles forbid them to disturb either.

This reverend man is a great ornament to our circle, and considered as such by us all. Mr. Maynard says he looks upon him as a second father, and that he sometimes can scarce forbear to address him by that appellation.

But to the business of the day.

As soon as our visitors left Oakley Hill, Mrs. Maynard summoned a female cabinet; ordering Lady Caroline and Emma to attend, and requesting Lady Stanley and me to assist her in passing judgment on the two she termed criminals. The court of judicature was the picture-closet. As soon as we were seated, she directly opened the business, demanding of Miss Stanley what answer she had given to Sir Charles Conway relative to the wedding-day. Emma looked somewhat surprised, and evaded the question. She then appealed to Lady Caroline, who, likewise, evaded her inquiries. However, after a great deal of cross questioning and as much cross answering, [I cannot lead you through the whole, though it would, I am sure, much entertain you] they were brought to acknowledge that, after a long contest with the gentlemen, they had referred to each other, and at length to consent to abide by the decision of Lord Danvers and Mrs. Maynard for Lady Caroline; and of Sir Edward and Lady Stanley for their Emma. I was then sent to summon the two fathers, and when they arrived it was soon determined—Emma's fate being first fixed—that Miss Stanley and Lady Caroline Pemberton should ON TUESDAY NEXT, receive and pay the nuptial vows at the Altar; that Mr. Broomley should perform one ceremony, and Mr. Evelyn the other, and that the Earl and Sir Edward should each present his daughter to her lover: the arrangements respecting dress and bride-maids, remaining as before settled.

After every thing was determined upon, the fathers went to announce the decision to the rest of the party who were still in the drawing-room. When they were gone, Emma said it was a very strange piece of business, and she did not understand its having been so hastily concluded upon. Lady Caroline maintained a perfect silence, but her countenance spoke her to be deep in thought. However they were awakened from their expressed and silent animadversions by the entrance of Sir Charles Conway and Mr. Stanley, who, in the best chosen terms of fervency and politeness, made their acknowledgments, first to Lady Caroline and Emma for their condescension, as they termed it, and then to Lady Stanley, Mrs. Maynard and myself, for our interposition in their favor; without which they (rather ungratefully, Emma told them) questioned their having had so near a view of happiness. A great many agreeable things passed upon the occasion. But I got some pretty severe rubs amongst them, for which your gentle mind, had you been present, would I think have pitied me. George was unmerciful. I was obliged to call upon Lady Stanley to reduce him to order.

A servant, by Mr. Slayton's command, now appeared to ask if it would be agreeable to have supper within a quarter of an hour. An answer was given in the affirmative, and Lady Stanley proposed our previously adjourning to the drawing-room, where, when we arrived, general congratulations took place, and the business of Tuesday was talked upon with unreserve; which gave relief to all around. Mr. Maynard's address to his cousin-elect was truly elegant.

Mr. Broomley gave *the devoted victims* a previous benediction; to which Mr. Evelyn requested to add his Amen.

Mr. Slayton expressed his joy in his own manner. The two fathers again spoke the happiness which the prospect afforded them, and the little Alethea, quite delighted at the idea of being a bride-maid, made a very pretty native compliment to the two queens of the hour.

After this, the evening passed away in the most agreeable manner possible. It seemed to be

the wish of every one to please and be pleased, and we parted not till a very late hour, yet were all up early the next morning, and as soon as breakfast was over, Mr. Slayton, Miss Broomley and myself, walked to Mr. Graham's, and, under the seal of secrecy, imparted to them the arrangements which, the evening before, had been made at the Manor-House—as that of Mr. Slayton's is always termed. Mr. Graham politely agreed to every proposition, and they all promised to obey the injunction of secrecy; whereupon I began to settle with Miss Broomley and the two sisters, the more minute articles respecting our appearance, soon fixing upon going to church in white silk scarfs and bonnets; white lustring gowns and petticoats having, as I told you, been previously determined upon for us damsels in waiting.

We now, attended by Miss Graham (Mr. Graham promising to join us at dinner) returned to Mr. Slayton's, when Mr. Maynard's landau was immediately ordered to convey us to Mansfield, where we were accompanied by Lady Stanley and Mrs. Maynard; leaving the three elder gentlemen and Mr. Maynard in the study, surrounded by papers, parchments, &c. and Mr. Evelyn writing in the library; while *the happy four* devoted the hours of our absence to a walk in the gardens.

At Mansfield we settled all the mantua and millenary matters, returning, soon after two, to Oakley Hill, where we found Lady Caroline and Emma sitting together in a woodbine bower; the two gentlemen having just before been sent for into the library, to give the final sentence respecting the settlements; which are truly noble on all sides.

Mr. Graham arrived before dinner, and entered into a consultation with Mr. Broomley and Mr. Evelyn, relative to licences and such matters; which was presently over, and we were all assembled in the drawing-room when Mr. Graham, who had been called out, returned with a beautiful youth about seventeen, whom he begged leave to introduce to the company, informing us it was his son Robert, who was unexpectedly arrived from Westminster.

This young man who is destined for the church has never confined his hair, which is a light brown, and falls in beautiful rings about his shoulders. His cheeks glow with the bloom of health, and his eyes sparkle with intelligence.

I told Miss Broomley in a whisper, that I fancied I saw in Mr. Robert Graham the future Rector of Alverstton; at which she burst into a flood of tears. I was surprised at her emotion, and requested the reason of her being so affected. She could not speak for some time, but at last sobbed out that I had raised an idea of the death of her dear grandfather, as she doubted not but, on Mr. Yates's account, he would be induced to give up Kildwick. I could not forbear giving the lovely girl a kiss upon her cheek, as we were screened from observation by two or three of the company in conversation before us, and afterwards, in her absence, reported the affectionate sensation to her great advantage in our original party; upon which I saw a tear of paternal gratitude—if I may so express myself—steal down the cheek of the venerable Divine.

To return from this little anecdote—we finished the evening with a concert of vocal and instrumental music; in which Miss Graham bore a most distinguished part; her voice being melodious in a remarkable degree.

This day, it being a moist one, has been devoted to working; reading; writing, etcetera. To-

morrow we are to go to Hazle-wood Lodge, to see and order what alterations are necessary to be made for the reception of Sir Edward and Lady Stanley, who, as I have said, determine to make that their future residence. For some time to come, it is probable we shall make but one family, as, after we shall have received company and returned the visits, we are all to go to London; from thence to some of the earl's seat in the country; not neglecting his Woodstock cottage; and to finish our ramble at Mr. Maynard's Leicestershire residence. This is the plan which we mean to pursue, if nothing beyond our view prevents us. By the time of its being completed, autumn will warn us of the approach of winter; when the party intends to settle into families.

I have not quite finished my intelligence; but must attend below-stairs.

Wednesday evening.

Mr. Broomley has just received a letter from Sir Peter Rowley, his Kildwick patron, which determines him to accept of Alverston. Mr. Yates, the worthy gentleman who is to succeed him at Kildwick, writes likewise, and is all gratitude upon the joyful occasion; as Mr. Broomley in his letter to Sir Peter concluded upon resigning it, if it was his intention to give Mr. Yates the next turn. This I did not, before, properly understand. Mr. Yates offers to Mr. Broomley to exchange duty with him at any time that he may wish to visit his old flock; which, he says, will always be glad to see its greatly revered teacher; whose example he shall be earnestly desirous to follow. Two young gentlemen—the one from Derby, the other a visiter at Mr. Letsom's—are to officiate at Alverston and Hawthorn Grove till the present engagements shall have been fulfilled.

It is expected our travelling party will consist of the Earl of Danvers; Sir Edward and Lady Stanley; Mr. and Miss Broomley; Mr. Slayton; Mr. Evelyn; the new-married four; Mr. and Mrs. Maynard; my Maria, and her Charlotte; besides several female attendants. What a groupe will there be of us!

Shall I tell you how much the idea of your making one in it, adds to my pleasure? I will not; but leave it to your own imagination.

We are to have carriages sufficient to accommodate us all; with led horses for both gentlemen and ladies, if the weather should invite us younger ones to form a cavalcade. Mr. Maynard is to be steward-general; but the expences are to devolve upon Lord Danvers; Sir Edward Stanley, and Mr. Slayton.

Our female attendants are to be four in number. One for Lady Caroline and Mrs. Maynard; another for the then Lady Conway and myself; a third for you and Miss Broomley; the fourth, a little girl whom Lady Stanley has taken to supply the place of Mrs. Moore, whose dissolution, poor woman! will probably come on before our return; she being in a deep consumption, and pronounced incurable by the physicians, who, however, still constantly attend her by Lady Stanley's direction.

Mr. Broomley is to set out for Kildwick as soon as the nuptial ceremony is over, and to return with all the expedition circumstances will allow. His Alethea, out of genuine affection, was desirous to accompany him; but as he means to bring to Alverston an elderly woman of the name of D'Oyley, who, since the death of Mrs. Broomley, (which happened about nine years back) has superintended his family, it is thought best she should continue with us; as Mrs. D'Oyley will

doubtless take care to have what clothes, et cetera, Miss Broomley has left behind, properly conveyed.

And now I must lay aside my pen and ink for a day or two to come. To-morrow, as I told you, we are to go to Hazle-wood Lodge: on Friday to Lord Stradbroke's: on Saturday to Nottingham, to take a view of the castle: on Sunday to church: on Monday to—I know not where; AND on Tuesday—to the awful ceremony; for after all, Maria, gay as, at Oakley Hill, the face of matrimony appears, there is something very solemn in such a material change of situation; which (except we experience a melancholy deprivation) must continue throughout the term of our existence.

How incumbent then is it upon every one, whether man or woman, who thinks of entering this state, to determine upon such a mode of conduct as will be most likely to render it a happy one! The plan must be laid down and pursued in the beginning; as, in general, I believe, the first year or two will fix “the colour of our fate” for life! a reform in the conjugal constitution being, I fancy, very difficult to effect.

But what a preacher am I grown! You will think I have the subject very deeply at heart. And can it be otherwise when my beloved friend, from earliest remembrance, is going to plunge into the abyss!

But I have a piece of intelligence for you, Maria. Henry Colville is well known to both Mr. and Mrs. Maynard; the place of his residence not being more than a dozen miles from their seat in Leicestershire, where they have often seen him before they went abroad, when he was a visiter to the late Mr. Selby.

This, my dear, is not an unpleasant circumstance. We shall probably see Mr. Colville during our abode with Mr. Maynard, who, with his lady, desires I will convey remembrances to him, if he should be at Stanton when you receive this letter.

With which commission I will bid you farewell.

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

I doubt not your sending this letter to my mother and aunt the first possible opportunity.

LETTER, XXVI.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Oakley Hill, Monday, May 11th.

THE day before THE DAY is now arrived, and so sincerely do I find myself interested in all that concerns my dear Emma, that I seem to tremble at the nearness of its approach. Yet with such a prospect as her's to look to, what is there unpleasant to apprehend? Yet again—There is not any thing in this sublunary world that has a certainty of continuance.

“O Charlotte,” you will say, “correct thyself; dispel those unworthy fears, and confide in the All-directing hand, which will ever lead the creatures that submit to its guidance.”

Of this great truth, Maria, I am indeed convinced, which makes all doubting doubly reprehensible. But *I do not doubt*. I only seem to be sensible of a *tremor* when I think of Miss Stanley’s fate being so near a decision. However, I will endeavour to drop all ideas but those which conduce to gaiety of countenance.

Monday night, near eleven.

I snatch a few minutes before I sleep, to tell you that the writings were all signed about seven o’clock, and every thing finished ready for the morning. Lady Caroline and Emma conducted themselves with as much propriety as could be expected upon such an occasion; but not without being pretty much affected. However every eye was expressive of the most lively satisfaction; though those of the two brides-elect shone through a moistened medium; but they tried to smile. Lady Stanley’s cheek was not quite dry, and I was obliged to twinkle away the gathering tear. As to Mrs. Maynard—she laughed at us all round, and asked *me*, in particular, why I looked so demurely; pursuing her humour till she insensibly brought every one of us into a lively train, and the evening was concluded with hilarity.

Whether or not I shall have leisure for one line before we go to church, must depend upon circumstances.

Farewell.
C.L.

LETTER, XXVII.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Oakley Hill, May 12th.

TUESDAY IS COME. The clock now strikes six, and I am already dressed. Apprehensive my dear Emma might want my attendance, I requested Mrs. Morgan [the housekeeper] to let me be awakened by her order as soon as she was stirring, and the good woman herself was at my bedside soon after five. I arose at the instant, creeping about the room like a thief, lest I should disturb the sleepers.

The morning is as fine a one as I ever saw, and promises as bright a day.

May the blessing of Heaven be showered upon those whose fate it will probably decide.

And now, for the present, adieu to sentiment. Matters of fact only shall employ my pen; for if I allow myself to think too deeply, I shall appear to be more serious than will suit the occasion. But I seem very different to what I did last night. My heart is disposed for mirth, and every thing around looks bright and lively.

I forgot to tell you what an unreasonable quantity of cake is arrived from London. It was unpacked yesterday, and we were taken into the housekeeper's room to look at it. Some of it is to be sent to Hawthorn Grove; and some to Alverston; the rest to be distributed at Oakley Hill.

Invitations have been given and accepted by almost all the gentry round. I would copy you the list of them, but I am now as much too busy, as I was last night too thoughtful, to be particular on several little incidents with which I intended you should have been made acquainted.

Miss and Miss Lucy Graham are expected every minute. Their brother is likewise to attend; with Mr. Brereton; Colonel Holland, and Captain Royden; these last three (gentlemen from Derby) being sent to, express, yesterday by Mr. Slayton; and Mrs. Morgan tells me a servant is come forward to give information of their arrival at Mansfield, with their intention of being speedily at Oakley Hill.

Mr. Brereton made the tour of Europe with Sir Charles Conway and Mr. Stanley; and Colonel Holland and Captain Royden, now stationed at Derby, are relations of the Warburton-family. These are three very sensible, polite and agreeable men. Captain Royden is reckoned particularly handsome.

* * * * *

As I wrote the word handsome, Miss Stanley called. I instantly went to her bedside, and found her under some little concern at having slept so long, lest the company should arrive before she could be seen. She then immediately arose, and, every thing being in readiness, her dress was very soon completed, when she made a most lovely appearance. Her spirits were tolerable, and we had an interesting conversation on not improbable future events. I then, at her own request, left her by herself, and went into Lady Caroline's room, where I found Mrs. Maynard, who had been assisting to dress, and was then sitting in conversation with, her cousin, whose beauty shone in its full lustre.

Apprehensive of interrupting them, I turned to withdraw upon seeing them apparently engaged; but they called me back, and invited my staying a few minutes; which I did, and we talked with the same unreserve that my Emma and I had done just before. Mrs. Maynard then went down. I staid with Lady Caroline a short time after she was gone, but seeing Mr. Graham; the two young ladies, and their brother, coming up the walk, I called for Miss Broomley, and with her, went to meet them in the saloon. They were all in high spirits: Miss Lucy more so than I had ever seen her. Upon Mrs. Maynard's appearance, I left them in the great drawing-room, and went up-stairs, when finding Emma was with Lady Stanley, I sat down and wrote to this period.

* * * * *

Lady Stanley has just been with me. She has left Lady Caroline and Emma in her room, and as all the company is arrived, except those who come not till dinner, is hastened down to order breakfast to be carried in; at which my sister-bridesmaids and I are, of course, to superintend.

I believe I omitted to tell you that Mr. Slayton has collected a most excellent set of musicians, who have been playing in full concert in the saloon ever since six this morning; which greatly assists to exhilarate the spirits of the hearers.

And now I shall call upon the two devoted beauties, that I may attend them to the expecting company.

Tuesday evening.

Tea is just over and I am stolen up again for half an hour to oblige my dear, ever dear friends in Oxfordshire. The company is so numerous that I cannot suppose myself of sufficient consequence to be missed.

But to be expeditious.

I called, as I told you I would, upon Emma and Lady Caroline, wishing them to go down directly; but they kept me with them till Mrs. Maynard came up, insisting, in her humorous way, upon their instant appearance, at which we prepared to attend her; the two lovely girls both “blushing ruby red.”

I should have a pleasure, Maria, to conduct you through every hour of this day, but I cannot possibly find time for a minute account. Suffice it that we had a most elegant breakfasting, and that very soon after it was over, Mr. Slayton motioned for the carriages to be got in readiness. The general voice was with him, and they were ordered; upon which Miss Stanley and Lady Caroline arose, and went to one of the bow-windows, looking at me to follow them. I did, and saw them both so greatly affected that I was alarmed. Lady Stanley’s attentive eye caught their situation, and going up to them, led Lady Caroline, while I attended Emma into an adjoining parlour. Mrs. Maynard soon followed, and after a few minutes, we saw the dear creatures tolerably composed. Sir Charles Conway and Mr. Stanley now made their appearance; and surely never two—But, Maria, I must not; cannot; will not, be particular. My subject is beguiling, and, unchecked, will lead me to lengths immeasurable. If I go on at the rate in which I began, the day will last me a month; so various and so interesting have been the incidents. Let your imagination assist me: suppose every thing to be in readiness. Suppose us all in a bustle—a charming bustle which seems to please every one. Suppose the musicians playing in soft strains at a little distance from the house, suppose us all seated in the carriages, and at length arrived at the church-yard, which was filled with spectators, where, by the great expedition of the performers (they, however, going a much nearer road) a grand chorus saluted our ears as soon as the carriages stopped, and continued till we were within the church.

You must now, my friend, suppose the ceremony—the awful ceremony—over, and as soon as it was ended, a very harmonious set of bells, which I this moment hear at an agreeable distance, instantly raised. In short, you must fancy every thing that your ideas can furnish of the pleasing kind, applicable to such an occasion.

After the business in the church was completed—after Sir Charles Conway and Mr. Stanley were respectively in unalienable possession of two of the most charming women in the world, we returned to the carriages, and were driven back; though by a mistake of orders in the postillions who drove the first coach, we were carried a round-about road, which was treble the length of the direct

one. However the mistake proved an agreeable incident, as the weather was very inviting, and the unintended jaunt shortened the, otherwise, too long time before dinner.

When we alighted at the Manor-House, we were again entertained by a full symphony, which preceded an admirable epithalamium. It was performed without doors, and was encored; during which time the company walked in the garden near the house. When this was over (the music still continuing) the party separated; the visitors remaining in the gardens and pleasure-ground, while Lord Danvers; Sir Edward and Lady Stanley; Mr. and Mrs. Maynard; Mr. Slayton, and myself, attended the brides and bridegrooms into the picture-closet, where mutual congratulations passed from one to another, with heart-felt cordiality; and the happy mother and fathers gave their children an affecting benediction; Mr. Slayton claiming his right (which indeed he has greatly—nobly, proved) to join in the parental blessing.

Soon after this, the rest of the company arrived; they being particularly desired by Mr. Slayton to come early in the day, and we were all led into the drawing-room, where we were served with cake; chocolate; sack, and rhenish, in great profusion; in partaking of which we passed more than half an hour, and then (some casual observation being made respecting the fineness of Mr. Slayton's green, a game at bowls was proposed, which every one approving, we sallied out and amused ourselves till near dinner time very agreeably. A large number were first engaged in bowling; during which time the music was ordered to be played on the other side of the house, but upon Lord Dennington's having singled out a party who expressed a wish for a dance on one side of the green, which is very large, two of the violin-players were desired to come round, and a set of six couples entertained those who were not so volatile. I joined them for one dance—Mr. Evelyn my partner—then went and sat down in an alcove with Lady Caroline *Stanley*—no longer Pemberton; and my dear Emma, now Lady Conway. Our attention was fixed upon the lively groupe before us, and we were much pleased with the pretty *native* manners exhibited by Miss Broomley and Mr. Robert Graham, who instinctively, I believe, had formed themselves into a couple. Miss Lucy Graham is, I doubt entangled by the too conspicuous arts of Mr. Beaumont, who, as I have told you, is upon a visit to Lord Eastcourt. Mr. Beaumont has not been in the country more than a month, but during that period has, it seems, been frequently in company with the Graham family; and if there be any truth in appearances, this insidious smooth-tongued libertine—for that is his character—has wounded the peace of the innocent Lucy. What detestable wretches are these savages in human shape! They commit with impunity the worst of all thefts—the theft of the tender affections, which to borrow an idea from General Burgoyne, is generally followed by a murder of the reputation of the unhappy pilfered girl, which seldom long survives the loss of her heart; the less unfortunate—not the less criminal—of her own sex severely condemning some *innocent imprudencies* (if I may venture to connect terms in their *strict* sense so unconnectable) which their conscience, at the moment of their pronouncing the fatal sentence, upbraids them for giving; as it loudly whispers their own inability of keeping securely on their guard against such subtil and destroying felons, who are yet permitted to exist, while many unhappy victims suffer for crimes of not half the magnitude of theirs. But no *human* law can find a punishment for mental villany, else we should often see an oppressor change places with the culprit whom he pursues to ruin. But let us wait a few—a very few years, and we shall then behold the suffering unfortunate and the triumphant criminal each in his proper colours.

I have widely wandered, and that before I was aware of it, from the point at which I first set

out. But you must know that this letter, short as it is, has been written at half a score different periods, only I would not break the thread of my tale by fresh dates. At the end of almost every dance, for dancing has been one of our evening's amusements (telling my partner, (you will guess his name) the cause of my so often stealing away) I have given five minutes to Woodstock; and Mr. Beaumont's behaviour has so provoked me, that I could not suppress my angry sentiments.

Many a one would observe that this moralizing is very mal-apropos to the times. But I know to whom I am writing. You, Maria, will never think a serious observation out of season; especially when it falls naturally from the consideration of the sufferings arising from the often unpitied misfortunes to which the most innocent—because most unexperienced, of our sex are particularly liable; an unsuspecting heart being undoubtedly too apt to fall into the hidden snare. I am not at *this* time, my dear, as you will understand, pleading for those who are *indeed* fallen, but for such as have listened with too attentive an ear; with too much apparent pleasure; and who have given too many opportunities to the meditating destroyer to put his vile, destructive plans into execution. Of this number is, I doubt, Miss Lucy Graham. But Lady Stanley having made her observations, is determined to warn Mr. Graham (who appears to be astonishingly blind to Beaumont's manoeuvrings) of the character, which is well known in what is called the polite world, of this insidious miscreant. His sister is his exact counterpart, being as much upon the lure for victims to her power as is her brother. Mr. Slayton could not avoid inviting Lord Eastcourt, who is one of his most friendly neighbours; else we none of us wished for a second interview with this courtly beau and belle; of whom Miss Augusta Hamilton (Lord Eastcourt's sister) seems to be most heartily tired.

But I must conduct you back to the morning's dance upon the green, which conveyed an idea of true rural felicity. After that was given over, we quitted the garden, and in a short time were conducted to a most elegant dinner, consisting of three entire courses and a handsome dessert; after which, the table was covered with every kind of fruit that could be procured. In short — the entertainment was really sumptuous. When the servants were withdrawn, the music, which, during the time of dining, was heard from the saloon, ceased, and we entered into a very convivial conversation; every one seeming so pleased—so happy—that we did not think of retiring till just before tea and coffee were carried into the drawing room; after which, as I told you, I made my first elopement, and returned just as the company were moving to the ball-room.

How, Maria, shall I give you any adequate account of the festivity of this truly joyous evening! I think I will not attempt it, as I am conscious that I have no powers of expression to do justice to the hilarity of the scene. Let your fancy again be exercised, and present a large and genteel assemblage of evidently happy people, conducting themselves with ease and elegance; many of them deeply interested in the felicity of the event which occasioned the entertainment: both gentlemen and ladies, of whom there is pretty nearly an equal number, endeavouring to please by an elegant freedom of manner; not an exception, save Mr. and Miss Beaumont, and they are not of sufficient consequence to disturb any body but poor Lucy Graham.

At the end of the last dance, Lady Stanley advised our sitting down till supper (which she said would soon be ready) should be announced. Her advice was observed, and that gave me my present vacation, which I the more readily devote to my pen, as Miss Broomley (Mr. Slayton's house being completely full) is this night to share my bed; which will probably prevent my writing after we are retired; and to-morrow, when the company will be somewhat reduced, my absence will

be less allowable than at present. However I have not been away long at one period; and indeed I believe the whole time put together, would not much exceed half an hour; so very fast, as you will see by the effect of my haste, have I driven my pen. I shall not, I fear, be able to make another escape this evening; else I would assist the fancy I have desired you to exercise, by a little more particular description.

But here comes Miss Broomley. She summons me away. I must attend her delegated orders; and lest I should not have another opportunity before the post-man goes with our letters, will here subscribe the name of

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

LETTER, XXVIII.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Oakley Hill, Wednesday night, May 13th.

NEVER since last evening have I found leisure for one single syllable. Engagements upon engagements have demanded every moment. We have, to be sure, had a most delightful bustle ever since yesterday morning; every individual seeming to rejoice upon the occasion of the meeting. It is next to an impossibility to lead you regularly through the passing hours, therefore I will only say that the whole entertainment was conducted with the greatest propriety and pleasantness. Mr. Maynard, who was the deputed general of the day, was every where at once; and was, indeed, the life of every thing. He had always something to say to every body. No individual, under his management, had any cause to fear neglect.

The behaviour of the brides and bridegrooms to each other was exactly such as the most delicate and affectionate could wish. It charmed every observer, and was frequently mentioned with exclamations of applause. Their friends—their delighted friends—

But I really must run from the subject. It is too copious—too fascinating, for my limits.

The company which staid all night has just left us, and we again seem to be of but one family; so interested are we in each others happiness.

About ten o'clock this morning a servant arrived from Lady Davison, whom Emma has informed of all her proceedings, bringing letters of general congratulation, and a most magnificent watch for Lady Conway. The ground of its outward case is small pearls, in the middle of which is a cypher of E. C. set in diamonds. Amongst its trinkets, a miniature of the presenter, surrounded with diamonds likewise; with a vacant oval case to match it, which Lady Davison requests may be filled with the figure of Sir Charles Conway.

The letter which accompanied this elegant present, is very affectionate, but gives a poor account of the writer's health; she having had a dangerous relapse.

Lady Davison, who is said to be immensely rich, has declared her intention of making her favorite Emma her heir. Sir Charles Conway inherited a noble estate and large sums of money from his father, and two uncles; besides a legacy, about twelve months back, from a very distant relation of his mother's, said to be eighty thousand pounds; if not more; so that his fortune will be equal to even Mr. Stanley's who is looked upon to be, in possessions and reversions—

But what are riches Maria! I am ashamed that I have added the above enumeration to the account of my Emma's happiness. A competency, indeed, is one of the great blessings of life! and though immense wealth in the hands of all those of whom I have been writing, would be a blessing, perhaps to hundreds, yet in themselves—I am convinced that with a tenth of their possessions they would experience as much true happiness as with the whole of their estates.

I will therefore have done with the subject, and give you a few lines of other intelligence.

Mr. Maynard has received a budget from Town, which brings so good an account of every thing relative to the business upon which he has been into Cumberland that neither his presence, nor that of the earl will yet be necessary. The following plan is therefore agreed upon. We are to leave this place to morrow morning, and to dine at Alverston: the next day is to be spent at Hawthorn Grove; but we are to return in the evening to Alverston. On Saturday we hope to be quite snug at home and on Sunday to go to church; therefore it is probable the beginning of the week must be devoted to receiving company. The week after (before which time you will I hope be amongst us) it is intended for us to return the visits, and the Monday following to go to London, that the brides and bridegrooms may be presented to the King and Queen before the birth-day; which it is thought proper they should attend at this period.

Amongst other letters from London, Mr. Maynard has received one from Sir William Jenyns, which gratifies the resentment that even good Mr. Broomley has conceived against Lord Crumpford; who, Sir William says, is grown so notorious from the public knowledge of his villanous conduct, that he dares not stir out of his house; as upon two or three attempts to go abroad he was so violently handled by the mob, which at the instigation of old Peter, the famed hackney coachman of Piccadilly almost immediately gathered about him, that he has scarce been able to see ever since. It seems there are some proveable actions of this bad lord's which are liable to prosecution, and which Sir William Jenyns says he is taking steps to bring to full light. Mr. Broomley, who this day left Oakley Hill with the hope of seeing us again next Tuesday, entered into a consultation with the earl; Sir Edward Stanley and Mr. Maynard, upon the contents of Sir William's letter as soon as it was read. What the result was, I do not yet know.

Lady Stanley has requested Mr. Graham to give her an audience early in the morning; being determined to warn him of his Lucy's danger from that vile Beaumont.

I am more and more charmed Maria with the behaviour of the two gentlemen to their lovely partners; and likewise, with the return which *they* make to the treatment they receive. So tender; so respectful; so polite on all sides as they are, their conduct is a proper example to every one in their situation.

As to Mr. Stanley—I could not have thought—

But I am this instant summoned to attend in the drawing-room.

* * * * *

I am returned to my pen and will now tell you for what I was wanted.

Sir Edward Stanley has insisted upon presenting the female part of our happy society with new court dresses; and I was called to assist the consultation upon the fit and the unfit for the several individuals.

I will enclose you a copy of the paper of orders which now lies upon my dressing-table.

Mrs. Maynard has a magnificent taste for dress, and wears a great number of diamonds. That of both the brides is more simple; to many particulars they made objections; but she over-ruled them by showing what she called, the *necessity* of their compliance on the present occasion of their introduction to their Majesties.

The dress which Mrs. Maynard had determined upon for me—for though we were called to a consultation, she was Lady Dictatrix—was much too glaring for my approbation. With some difficulty I prevailed for an alteration.

Mr. Evelyn, Maria, is a teacher; and ought to be a teacher of humility. Would it then be excusable in any one who has a view—perhaps not *very* distant—of putting herself under his protection, to make an appearance flagrantly opposite to his precepts? I know you will join in a negative to this question; and so will my dear mother and aunt; and will coincide in this opinion—that be the fortune of a clergyman ever so high, it ought not to be employed in *disgracing* his profession. But how old fashioned should I be deemed, were I to add that it would be far better to cloth the almost-naked with what should be found superfluous, than to waste it upon vanity!!!

Hide this sentence Maria from the polite world lest, in Mrs. Kennedy's phrase, I should be hooted at for a monster.

Miss Stanley—Pshaw! Lady Conway, I mean—has insisted upon presenting me with a complete set of pearls. When she first intimated her intention, that I might make my choice of figures, I so warmly objected to receiving it (knowing how difficult it would be to keep, within due bounds, the magnificence of her temper) that she burst into tears; at which instant Sir Charles appeared, and I was obliged to submit to the joint mandate.

Mrs. Maynard had likewise fixed upon a most elegant *habillement* for Miss Broomley, in which Lady Stanley required considerable alteration, as she said Miss Broomley had not been accustomed to any thing of the kind, and she thought it would not be right to invite her young mind to a love of finery. She was, Lady Stanley observed, daughter and granddaughter to the clergy; and she could not think Mr. Broomley would approve of her being made to appear very showy.

Mrs. Maynard said Miss Broomley would now have a handsome fortune, and she did not see

why her being descended from clerical parents should prevent her being dressed with elegance.

“By no means,” Lady Stanley returned, “provided simplicity has the ascendancy. But Miss Broomley is very young; and I cannot consent to infuse a too early taste for ornament; which she will, doubtless, imbibe full soon enough.”

Lady Caroline, Emma and myself were of Lady Stanley’s opinion; and Mrs. Maynard was at length convinced of its rectitude.

One dress, which I have not yet added to the written orders, is to be of plain white silk; the petticoat to be laid in deep welts up to the top. Over it is to be worn the finest buck-muslin which can be procured; the train, very full and long, to be welted like the petticoat. And this it is hoped my Maria will not refuse to accept from the venerable Sir Edward Stanley; who, as I have said, insists upon being the provider-general of attire.

Mrs. Maynard was very desirous to have had you decked with pearls; alledging their not making a showy appearance; but I told her I could answer for it that they would be rejected. Lady Conway, however, would hear no objection to a pair of pearl roses for your shoes; they not being inconsistent, she said, with your strictest order. To these, therefore, Maria I acceded; and hope my compliance will not be thought reprehensible by Mrs. Stanhope; of whose disapprobation on that particular, I am half apprehensive.

The *gentler sex* provided for, the dress of the gentlemen came next under consideration; but it was not absolutely fixed.

Mrs. Thompson, a foster-sister of Lady Caroline’s and I believe of Mrs. Maynard’s likewise, who lives in London, is to get the orders executed.

With this account of our finery, I must, my dear girl, bid you adieu, till we arrive at Alverston.

Respectful remembrances are desired by all *our* family to the *two*, which often makes but one, in Oxfordshire. If your next does not convey intelligence of the day of your setting out for Derbyshire, it will occasion a general disappointment, as we are all impatient to have you amongst us. Lady Conway bids me to entreat your hastening your coming as much as possible; and the little Alethea requests you to accept her love. She says she *quite longs* for your arrival.

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

LETTER, XXIX.

MISS MARIA LEWIS, TO MISS LAWSON.

Woodstock, fifteenth day of fifth month.

THY letter of fourth day, my dear Charlotte, hath just reached us, and as soon as I have written a few lines in answer to thy conclusion, my aunt and I are going with it to thy mother's.

With regard to the dress intended to be provided for me, I cannot help saying—Yet no: as I hope so soon to see thee I will, at present, forbear that subject.

We returned last evening from Stanton. Of what passed there, I will likewise forbear to talk till we meet.

Patty Henderson meaneth to set out to-morrow morning for Yorkshire. My dear aunt Stanhope, whom I cannot think of leaving without its costing me a tear, giveth me leave, she sayeth, with pleasure, to attend her. With not the less pleasure, I believe, from the intimation of thy party's intention of taking dear Woodstock in their route. But what a traveller shall I be made! I expected when my aunt first gave me leave to accept the dear Emma's invitation to Alverston, to have spent the time there in a domestic party; and instead of that, I am to be carried through nearly half the Island.

I have so much to say to thee Charlotte, that I dare not begin upon any subject, lest it enticeth me beyond my leisure.

My aunt desireth her very cordial respects to *all thy family*; particularly to the benevolent mistress of Alverston Park; to whose kind care she, with sincere satisfaction, committeth her Maria. Remember me with affection to the lovely brides, and to the sprightly Alethea, to whom I am already partial. Her worthy grandfather claimeth reverence from us all.

We mean to set out to-morrow morning by break of day, and to travel post; because Patty Henderson wisheth to sleep to-morrow night at Coventry, and likewise to spend first day there. On second day morning we intend again to speed forward, and that night, to reach Derby; where I purpose to sleep with my travelling friend, and on third day morning I hope to see my truly dear Charlotte Lawson.

As we do not know the signs of the Derby Inns, we mean to put up where the mail-coach stops; therefore if it will be convenient for thee to meet me at Derby, thou wilt know where to find me; but if I neither see nor hear from thee by eleven o'clock, Patty Henderson will put me into a chaise, with some proper attendant to convey me to Alverston Park.

I shall carry with me Charlotte a whole budget full of love and best wishes to thyself and friends; particularly a large quantity of both, from worthy Doctor Griffith.

Thine in sincerity and with the truest cordiality,

MARIA LEWIS.

I write this postscript at thy mother's, who with thy aunt, sendeth tenderest remembrances. They bid me to tell thee that a letter is just arrived from thy sister; who hath resigned her *right honorable* admirer; to the great displeasure of the baroness.

LETTER, XXX.

MISS LAWSON, TO MISS MARIA LEWIS.

Alverston, Monday, evening May 18th.

THE continual round of engagements in which, since my last, I have been involved, has prevented my being able to write one line to my Maria since we returned to Alverston. A letter to my sister, is all for which I have found leisure.

Our time has been employed pretty much as we expected. Friday at Hawthorn Grove was a most enchanting day indeed. We hope to have one or two more such, before we leave the country; but Lady Conway does not mean to receive company there till her return from the meditated ramble. You, Maria, will I hope soon see this piece of fairy-land; but as my mother and our aunts are not likely to visit it at present, I will copy, for their perusal, some part of the description which Lady Conway requested me to give of it to Lady Davison, who not having been well enough to visit it since Sir Charles began his improvements, has desired a particular account of the place of her Emma's future residence, which she says she has heard much celebrated, but cannot believe the report of its being superior to Alverston Park, as that, she observes, was always esteemed to be one of the most beautiful spots in the Island. My mother and aunt can describe this last earthly paradise, and then you may draw the comparison.

I know I cannot do justice to either the house or gardens, as I have no talent for these kind of delineations: all my aim has been, and shall be, to give a faint sketch of what I think most worth notice.

The mansion of Sir Charles Conway is built of fine white freestone, forming in front a very large angular crescent with two wings, which, after running a considerable length, fall back and form two smaller half-circles; angular like the middle one; a wing, likewise, running from each; which finishes with a right angle. These extremities are composed of offices, and are so connected with the main building by means of large, light interior passages, that it is one of the most convenient, as well as beautiful, habitations I ever was in. A great recommendation to it in my opinion, is, that every room is perfectly dry; being all, even those occupied by the servants, considerably above ground: and in the vaults underneath, many of which are cellars, fires are frequently made, that the whole may be kept free from that damp so often seen upon the walls of lower apartments.

I disclaim architectival terms, but I think the edifice is chiefly of the corinthian order. The windows are large, and many in number, and the sculpture round about them strikingly magnificent. The flight of stone steps to the front door is in five angles, over which is a covering, supported by a

balustrade, which extends so far that they are always dry. Upon this defence from rain, around which is a gilded iron net, are pots upon a rising stage, filled with hardy ever-greens, and so defended are they by the circular form of the building, it having likewise a south aspect, that they brave the greatest part of the winter. All round the house, at the bottom, urns of myrtles and various other shrubs stand quite thick in two rows; the top rows reaching the windows.

From the flight of steps in the front, is the entrance into a grand octagon saloon; in the middle of which, rises a dome to the top of the house, and appears considerably above it. After it leaves the roof, it is covered with glass and defended by a thin net-work of brass. Round the saloon is the grand stair-case, and within the dome are three galleries, one above another, supported by fluted columns; the lowest of which, are of beautiful white and brown marble. The roof of the house is flat, and on each side of the dome, but not quite so high, is a little turret, glazed round, furnished with all kinds of telescopes. They are very neat boxes, and are dedicated, the one, to day—the other, to night objects. Their outside corresponds with the dome and the rest of the building; which is finished with a turreted parapet wall.

We will now descend from the top of the house, and once more enter the saloon, which leads by eight different doors to as many different apartments and passages; besides one opposite to that at the entrance, which opens into a neat little garden, from which is a gate into a back avenue.

The house is very lofty, and, from the lowest to the highest floor, furnished with new and elegant furniture; but so numerous are the rooms, that I must not undertake to go through them regularly; I will therefore only mention a few; by which you may guess at the others.

On the right hand of the saloon, are the common dining and drawing rooms; the first furnished with light green; the other, with a pale pink armozeen corded with white, and both trimmed with white silk fringe. The great dining room is a light straw coloured sattin, the fringe silver; the chandeliers are elegant; and the side-board magnificent indeed. The great drawing room is sattin, of a light blue, with a small white sprig. Over the first plain covering, a deep festoon hangs from the top, which is trimmed with a handsome silver fringe, with small tassels at each festoon. Round the room and about the doors; windows; chimney-piece, &c. is a broad corresponding silver lace. At a little distance it looks like fringe, only it does not hang loose. The looking-glasses are extremely large, and their frames of silver filligree. The seats in the windows are broad and circular; with cushions of the same sattin as that which covers the walls; the fringe rather narrower than the lace around the room: the sofas; chairs, &c. to answer. The curtains are drawn back from the windows, on each side, in a very handsome manner. They have a second row of fringe about half a yard from the bottom. The carpet is a fine broadcloth to match the sattin; upon which are worked with white silk, in close tent-stitch, so that it will not easily wear out, bunches of snow-drops; jessamin, and lilly-of-the-valley; finished with a handsome double border. Upon the whole, I never entered a room which made a more truly elegant appearance. The chandeliers—I forgot to give them their due place—are silver, neatly wrought.

Could I spare time you should be entertained with a description of the apartments dedicated to the study of different arts and sciences; but I must reserve a minute account of these for personal conversation. However I will just mention them, and will begin with the library, which is entirely furnished with green; a colour favorable to a reader's eye. This room, in which Sir Charles usually

breakfasts, is very large, and is completely filled with books, upon all subjects, handsomely bound. In the middle, is a long table, upon which are materials for writing; and large turning stands for the great books. At the farther end of the room are two arched recesses (one on each side) which lead into two other apartments; that on the right hand, is filled with globes, and astronomical as well as optical instruments of various kinds. A fine representation of the solar system, particularly engaged my attention. Out of this room are two closets; in one of which is a camera obscura; in the other a solar microscope.

The recess on the left hand side of the library leads to what may truly be called a museum, having in it a variety of curiosities. The room is long: the windows all on one side. At the farther end are several artificial trees; such as myrtles; oranges, &c. At the back part, in the middle, is a stem of a fig-tree; which affords a stand for some large birds. Many of these trees are in blossom, and reach from the floor to the ceiling, apparently growing out of the earth; that part of the room being covered with moss; the other, with green cloth. This grove, as it may be called, is full of birds of various kinds, which are preserved with such skill that the eye can hardly be convinced they are not alive. Their position is perfectly natural, and the floor has such a spring, that one cannot walk across it without setting the whole in motion; which adds greatly to the idea of its being the production of nature. This elasticity of the boards has a particular good effect upon some birds which—being suspended by an almost invisible wire—appear in the action of flying; two or three as if pursuing butterflies, which are suspended in the same imperceptible manner. Several wasps and bees, likewise seem to be darting at the blossoms of the shrubs. What particularly struck my eye was a pair of eagles of the sun, male and female, fixed in different attitudes, upon the top branches of the fig-tree, placed just in front. They are most admirably preserved, and their eyes incomparably imitated. Just underneath them, screened by a broad orange leaf, sits a beautiful little humming bird upon her nest; her mate, still more beautiful than she (on account of the brighter colour of his head and breast) standing beside her, on a slender twig, seemingly in fear of their enormous neighbours; but the leaf is to them a large umbrella; and indeed, were they all living, these little ones would probably be objects of indifference to this King and Queen of the feathered specie. With a kind of an adoring wonder, I contemplated the striking difference between these two pairs of birds;—so much alike in their mode of existence; yet so greatly different in their size, and nature! The little ones, so timid!—so trembling! Afraid of every rustling leaf! While the royal pair seem to threaten destruction to all around them. I have passed over the rest of the birds, beautiful as they are, with some indifference; so absorbed have my ideas been by those I have described.

The bottom of the grove is occupied by hares; rabbits; spaniels; snails; caterpillars, &c. &c. In one corner is a little kitten springing at a mouse, which, I remember, very much entertained the still more kittenish Lady Catherine Villars; while Miss Letty Stanford's attention was fixed upon a young lamb, that seemed to look up for protection. At another corner, is a large rock, partly covered with moss; from whence issue, in different directions, several small streams of water, which are received at its foot, into an oval bason, lined with holland-tiles: the banks and a little way down the sides, are of green moss. Upon its surface, several small aquatic fowls, in fine preservation, are kept in motion by the falling of the water (which is let out below unseen) as well as by the living gold and silver fish which are in the bason. This has a most admirable effect, and makes the whole appear alive; in opposition to conviction. There are in the grove several curious nests of different birds; and in the middle of the ceiling, suspended by wires from above, a hawk pursuing a linnet; a horned owl in flight, with a mouse in one claw; and indeed many more things of the same kind than I can take

the least notice of; for the room is lined, and filled almost, with all kinds of curiosities, both native and foreign.

I am quite impatient to get out of the house, but cannot avoid the music-room, which is superb, and furnished with almost every instrument that I have hitherto heard named. This room is large and lofty; its ceiling is a concave and the windows arched. On one side of the wall, the story of Orpheus charming the beasts of the forest with his harp, is painted in a most masterly manner. Over the chimney piece, is a very fine Cecilia at full length; but the most beautiful painting in the room is round the lower part of the cupola. The principal figure—just over a magnificent organ—is Euterpe, the muse presiding over music, and is such a striking representation of the lovely Emma that it catches and detains every eye. I have learned that Sir Charles borrowed of Lady Davison the full length piece for which the then Miss Stanley sat to Gainsborough, for his painter to copy, when he sketched this figure; and he has most exactly caught both her face and air. Her hand and arm, so remarkable for their beauty, are unaffectedly displayed to the greatest advantage. She is seated upon an ivory throne, under a canopy held up by nymphs and cupids, receiving with inimitable grace a garland of flowers from Apollo. At a little distance, is the muse Erato, smiling upon a lovely girl, who has in her hand a small book, seemingly of poems, which Erato appears to encourage her to present to Apollo and Euterpe, with a view, as a spectator may suppose, to have the sonnets set to music. The whole painting in the dome forms one fine landscape. Over the windows are several nymphs playing on different instruments of music; near to them, and seemingly listening in admiration to the sounds below, is a company of shepherds with their sheep and lambs. Amongst which, Sir Charles Conway and Mr. Stanley are easily distinguished. The last appears all vivacity; but Sir Charles' attention seems to be directed to the nearly opposite Euterpe.

I forgot to tell you that this noble and gallant master of the magnificent structure which I am delineating, gave me an intimation that he intends to have the Cecilia over the chimney-piece, altered into a likeness of Lady Caroline Stanley; for which purpose Mrs. Maynard, who is in the secret, is to order down a full-length portrait of her cousin, that Sir Charles' painter may make the alteration in our absence.

The closing groupe of figures in the cupola, consists of several beautiful young girls forming themselves into a dance under the inspection of the Graces. The top of the concave shows a bright sky with fine white curdled clouds. At a distance, the seven other Muses are seen upon Mount Parnassus, viewing the scene described; on which Minerva, gracefully seated upon one of the fleecy clouds, appears to smile approbation.

With regard to the upper rooms—they are so numerous, and so differently elegant, that I cannot permit myself to enter upon a description of them. The second and third stories are equally convenient, and alike handsomely finished. Lady Conway's apartment is the only one I will lead you to. A sleeping-room; two dressing-rooms, and two very large light closets, compose it. The furniture is a silver corded muslin, lined with pale pink silk. Two dressing-tables, with silver boxes, &c.; two large Indian cabinets; a forte piano; a neat book-case, with sofas; stools; chairs; wardrobes; a writing table, &c. all handsome of their kind, are amongst the moveables. The carpeting, which entirely covers the floors of this suit of rooms, is particularly handsome.

We will now, Maria, leave the house, and descend to a broad fine green terrace, (beautified

by several irregular-shaped little plats of flowers) which lies close round it. This is bounded by a hard gravel walk; then another verdant one, and then a beautiful slope to a spacious bowling-green; gardens; shrubbery; wilderness; grove, &c.

It is impossible for me, my dear girl, to convey you through all these places regularly. I am not rich enough, either in time or abilities, to do them justice; therefore will only observe that they are all absolutely enchanting, and then close the scene with a view of the grove from which the whole takes its name.

O! but the park—I had forgotten the park; and it well deserves particular notice; being, perhaps, one of the finest in the kingdom: the ground in it is very unequal, and adorned by a great many clumps of trees; avenues, &c. At some distance from the house, are several fine pieces of water. Close to the south side of the park-pale lies the great London road, and on the other side of that, a new navigable canal; which, being in frequent use, prettily diversifies the scene. Little spots, called pleasure-grounds, with either alcoves, arbours or temples in them, are in every part of the park, which is occupied by a great variety of creatures. Deer in abundance; with horses; oxen; cows; sheep, &c. are grazing all around: there is, also, vast quantities of the feathered tribe of almost all descriptions, which, by frequent intercourse, are made quite familiar. I was much pleased with the broods of two hens; one being of partridges, the other pheasants; and likewise with the young ones of a peacock; which have been particularly attended to by Mrs. Wilson (the good old housekeeper of Sir Charles Conway's father) and are rendered remarkably tame. Hares and rabbits frequently crossed our steps, and pigeons of various kinds came cooing round us, we being attended by a little girl who carried baskets of wheat; peas, &c. to allure and feed these feathered families. The pieces of water are all occupied above and below; being well stored with fish, and their surfaces covered with great quantities of different kinds of fowl; amongst which, the princely swan appears distinguished. From the north to the south side of the park, is a considerable descent; which renders the situation of the house uncommonly pleasant. Just without the pale, and somewhat eastward of the north, rises a hill of large extent, whose sides and top are covered with lofty firs; pines; larch trees, and laburnums; intermixed with flowering shrubs. This is not only a defence from the cold winds, but affords a most agreeable prospect of the beauties around, and the winding walks up to its summit, are inexpressibly charming; little benches being fixed on different parts of the ascent; and upon the top, amidst four trees, a turret glazed on every side.

Between this hill and the house, is the celebrated grove; which is chiefly composed of very flourishing hawthorns; intermixed with the blackthorn, and lauristinus; with laurels; laburnums; sweet-briars; woodbines, &c; the ever-greens placed so advantageously as to make the visible part of it appear in perpetual foliage.

There are above an hundred double rows of these trees and shrubs united; forming avenues which are some of them straight; others circular, and many of no determined shape; leading unexpected into each other. Some of these walks are broad; others, narrower: some few of fine hard gravel; but the major part of grass, so short and soft that it seems like velvet carpeting. The trees generally run up to a dozen feet; though some of them are much higher and, meeting at the top, form an arch, which, in very warm weather, affords a delightful parasol. Along the sides, are rows of flowers and fruits: lilly-of-the-valley, in great quantity, mixed with the former; and amongst the last, strawberries of every kind, in abundance.

In the center of this beautiful grove is a spacious lawn; in different parts of which, are large clumps of trees, whose branches bend downwards till they sweep the grass, which is kept short and even by some small welch sheep that graze about at will. Round the trees, are various kinds of seats: some open; others covered; with conveniences for drinking tea; syllabubs, &c. At the entrance, on one side into this rotunda, is a building which appears like a temple, but which is, in fact, a neat little cottage, occupied by a venerable old man; his wife, and the widow of his son, with her three girls; the eldest of which is about twelve years of age; the youngest eight. The old man was a soldier in the regiment of Sir Charles Conway's father. The present employment of himself and family is to attend the feathered specie: even the wild choristers of the grove are his care; Sir Charles having given particular orders that they should have all possible inticement to partake of the scattered corn. In this little cottage, is a dairy for the use of the visitors to the grove. It is supplied by three beautiful small french cows; the cream of whose milk is particularly rich. Within this enclosure, are several hillocks; consequently some little valleys; but its situation is so high in the park that there is not the least damp, nor the idea of any. At a distance, through some of the straight walks, is seen a winding river, over which are thrown several bridges; one a light Chinese; another a Gothic, &c.; through the arches of which, some of the swans are frequently seen swimming. Another of the vistas is terminated by a windmill; and one by the parish church.

The music of the birds in this place is beyond any thing I ever heard. I was quite enchanted with it, but Lady Catherine Villars, when she was there, lamented that the rookery was at such a distance that we could not hear the cawing of its sable occupiers; which, she said, would be greatly preferable to the whistling of little birds.

I will now, Maria, conduct you to the Temple of Pomona, which is situated at the upper end of one of the straight broad green walks. It is a large octagon building, ascended by above a dozen semi-circular steps. Including the door, which is sashed, it has eight windows, with niches about two yards between each. The walls on the outside are intirely covered with foliage of different kinds, from the bottom to the top. It rises in a concave, which is glazed in the same manner as that I described in the house, and like that, defended on the outside from the pecking of birds by a wire net; with the difference, of its being painted green. The inside of the Temple, even to the top of the cupola, is entirely lined with vines, of various kinds; which produce, in general, an abundance of grapes; the walls being kept of an equal, moderate warmth, by means of the Franklin stoves. There are, likewise, a great variety of lemon, lime and orange trees; several very fine pomegranates; with geraniums and myrtles, quite round, without number; so that it appears a complete arbour; for even the windows, which are very large, and in large squares, are partly covered with leaves. Just at the rise of the concave, are placed four Æolian harps, in opposite directions; which produce sweet wild notes of music.

In every one of the niches between the windows is a figure about four feet in height. The most striking one, upon a first entrance, is a Pomona, which is placed nearly opposite to the door. This figure is most beautifully painted. Her hair appears to be flowing about her shoulders without any ornament, except a small bunch of strawberries on one side. Her robe is an apple-green, with bunches of purple grapes and morella cherries; and on her sash, which is white, is painted a variety of fruits. Upon a stand, close by her, is a silver bason, with partitions, which is occasionally filled with the fruits in season. To this the figure seems to turn her hand as in invitation to the company to

partake of the treat. Next to Pomona, stands a lovely Flora. A garland of flowers adorns her hair; her robe is pale pink, with bunches of jessamine, and myrtle in blossom. Her bosom almost covered by an elegant bouquet, and in one hand she holds a basket, like that of Pomona's, filled with various flowers, which, in the same manner, she seems to present to the company. Hebe is in a third niche. *Her* offering is generally a bowl of lemonade; which she holds in a silver concave waiter. Opposite to her is Ganymedes, who presents, in like manner, a bason of negus.

The other niches are occupied by various nymphs, who usually treat the company with cakes and sweetmeats of different kinds.

One of the beautiful figures seems to be unemployed, till she is requested (by somebody who is acquainted with her powers) to oblige the visitors with some music; when, upon a hidden spring being touched, which may be done without observation, she raises a lute, held till then carelessly in her hand, and some charming notes are produced, seemingly by her skill. Just as she rests, a little bird pops from amongst some artificial branches, which every one must suppose to be real, and makes most delightful harmony: next, a robin-red-breast appears, and then a gold-finch; all whistling together for several minutes. When I first heard them, I absolutely, for a moment, thought they had been real: and at that juncture, one of the Æolian harps gave sweeter tones than common; so that altogether the very air seemed melody.

Lady Stanley, who has often seen the celebrated Cox's museum, the account of which, you and I have read with so much wonder, says that the little piece of mechanism in this temple, is equal to any one in that formerly famed collection.

A hundred beauties at Hawthorn Grove still remain to be told; but I will here close my description, and likewise my letter, after I have said that we have this day had, at Alverston Park, as many friends as could well be accommodated. I came up to my pen as soon as they were gone. Tomorrow we expect as many more. Form, upon this occasion, seems to be banished. All is conviviality and happiness.

Lady Caroline Stanley and Lady Conway just now proposed to Mr. Evelyn

* * * * *

My dear Maria's letter, dated Friday, which informs me of her intention to be at Derby, as on this evening, was brought up to me just as I had written the name of Mr. Evelyn. I am all joy upon its contents, and must go down to communicate my happiness.

Monday night, almost eleven.

It was near nine o'clock when I went with my letter into the drawing-room, where it produced expressions of, I am sure, unfeigned satisfaction. It was with difficulty that I obtained permission to come up again thus soon (as they said there was no answering your letter) till I told them that I meant to put what I *had* written, and *should* write, into the post-office at Derby, directed to Mrs. Stanhope; as it would give her early intelligence of the safe arrival, at that place, of her beloved niece; and that she would send it for the perusal of my mother and aunt; to whom, on the

same account, it would, I well knew, convey much satisfaction.

To you, therefore, my three revered friends, I now address myself, to tell you it is settled that Sir Edward and Lady Stanley; Sir Charles Conway, who, as I have said, insists upon being of the party, and myself mean to be at Derby to-morrow morning by eight o'clock, to fetch my dear Maria to breakfast: and to prepare her for so early a summons, as well as to satisfy her that her letter had been received, a servant was instantly dispatched to Derby, with a note from Lady Conway.

But for the incivility of her leaving Mrs. Henderson, we all wished for her conveyance, this night, to Alverston; from that consideration only, it was agreed to post-pone her arrival till the morning.

I wonder she did not send up a messenger as soon as she reached Derby. I shall chide her, when I see her, for the omission. For suppose her letter, by any accident, had been delayed, in what a disagreeable state of expectation must she have waited! A little chit! to depend, in such a case, upon the punctuality of the post!

But I must hasten to bed, that I may not, in the morning, over-sleep myself.

Lady Stanley commands me to give her best respects to Mrs. Stanhope, to whom she intends writing in a few days; and to thank her for the precious trust she has reposed in her; of which, she bids me to say, she hopes to exert her utmost care to be found not unworthy.

Accept, my dear friends—and convey a share to good Doctor Griffith—of my duty, love and reverence.

CHARLOTTE LAWSON.

I do not mean to put this letter into the post till I have seen Maria. You will therefore, upon its reaching Woodstock, receive a proof of her safe arrival at Derby.

LETTER, XXXI.

MISS MARIA LEWIS, TO MRS. STANHOPE.

Alverston Park, twentieth day of fifth month.

I Am now, my dear maternal aunt, safe, well and happy, thanks to the Great Preserving Power, at this beautiful and hospitable mansion.

My dear Charlotte told me the contents of the letter which she put into the Derby post-office, directed to thee; therefore, if it duly reacheth thee, thou wilt know from it, the mode of my conveyance from Derby to Alverston; as the plan, therein mentioned, was executed.

Just as the clock had stricken eight, the carriage stopped at the inn door; out of which the respectable father and mother of our dear Emma; her husband, and my Charlotte, instantly alighted.

They were shown into a parlour, down to which I was hastening to receive them, but met Charlotte on the stairs-head. The meeting, my dear aunt, was, I cannot doubt, equally joyful to her and thy Maria. We then went to the friends below, who, upon Charlotte's introduction, received me as one they had long known. I never remember to have experienced such an instant congeniality; which, had I not been previously intimate with their characters, I should have endeavoured, in some measure, to have curbed, lest the sudden partiality should have been erroneously placed; but not having there, any thing to apprehend, I checked not the impulse.

The father of Emma Conway is one of the most charming men I ever beheld. His countenance, open as day, is expressive of the utmost serenity and cheerfulness. I never saw in any face goodness of heart more conspicuous. His wife is his exact counterpart. I loved her as soon as I looked at her, and wished to have called her mother. She must have been, and indeed still is, very handsome. Our dear Emma's husband next claimed my attention. To say he is without an exception the handsomest man I ever before saw, would be poor praise. The elegance of his manners should come in before that of his person; but they must both give way to the eminent superiority of his mind. I admire him beyond expression, and think that with such a woman as he hath married, his habitation must, in all human probability, be the residence of what we mortals term true felicity.

By general desire, Patty Henderson was requested to go down, where she was received with true politeness; and the kind Lady Stanley, as she is called, thanked her in thy name, for her care of Maria Lewis.

Patty, to whom I spoke in private before my leaving her, desired me to tell thee she is delighted with these my new friends.

We arrived at the Park about half after nine, yesterday morning. I am glad it doth not rest with me to give thee a description of this beautiful place, as I should have despaired of conveying an adequate idea of either the structure or its environs. Till now, I never was in so charming a spot of earth. Yet every one telleth me that Hawthorn Grove, which it is intended I shall soon see, is still more enchanting. Charlotte sayeth that she gave some account of it in the letter which she put into the Derby-office. The probable place of *her* future residence, is, I am told, to be finished in a truly elegant style; the situation, in itself, being extremely pleasant.

As soon as the carriage stopped at Alverston, the lovely Emma Conway, and the equally lovely Caroline Stanley, were at the door; and both received me in such a manner as I cannot do justice to by relating. Such charming women as these two, were never, surely, before united in one family.

Of George Stanley, what is it possible I can say! My praise is too much exhausted to do him justice.

At Derby, I thought the *husband* of Emma Conway to be the handsomest man I ever saw. I had not then seen her *brother*; who, though not superior to the first, is, I think, his equal. With the characters of both, thou art well acquainted; and, better than I, canst determine to which to give the preference; for so exactly do their merits strike me, though in different lights, that I cannot make either scale preponderate; nor do I know which of the two married couples would soonest attract an

envious eye; so very happy doth it appear to me they are both likely to continue. But let me finish these characters with saying that my reception from George Stanley was at once familiar; respectful; polite, and singularly generous; for if I persist in being thus particular, I shall far exceed the limits of the time allotted me for my employ; which was only half an hour.

Herbert Evelyn welcomed me as the sister of his Charlotte. He is held, I perceive, in the high estimation of which he is deserving, by every one at Alverston.

The politeness of the Earl upon seeing me, did honor to his rank. It can hardly be credited that this now kind father was so lately a wretched gamester. The great change is talked of by every one acquainted with the circumstances.

But the venerable Broomley, who rather unexpectedly reached the Park last evening, excited, in a high degree, my admiration and my reverence. Thou rememberest the account which Caroline Stanley—then Pemberton—gave us, at Woodstock, of his conduct, respecting the widow of her late cousin. All that she said was in my mind, upon his appearance.

The lively little Alethea confirmeth, by her behaviour, the favorable ideas that Charlotte raised of her character, by her letters. Just before I left the company this evening, her grandfather desired her to look—up to me—my dear aunt Stanhope, was his injunction; which I should be ashamed to write, but from a motive of doing justice to his expression—for a pattern. A pattern of what! Of a silly girl; for I fear I made a very confused reply to his too great compliment; meaning, however, to turn it upon himself, and to express my thanks for his too favorable opinion; for which I said I was proud to think myself indebted to the kind partiality of my friends then present; looking with gratitude, if my eyes spoke the feelings of my heart, at Charlotte; Emma, and Caroline. Alethea said she would love me dearly, and wished I would let her call me sister; to which thou mayest believe I hesitated not, with due acknowledgments, to comply.

Harriet Maynard may be termed a fine woman. Her temper is lively; her understanding and disposition apparently good. Her husband is a complete gentleman; being genteel in his person; manly; polite, and very affable in his manners. His judgement, I observe, is much respected. Their reception of me secured to them my partiality.

The old Squire from Oakley Hill is a singular character; but, when known, not an displeasing one. He appears to be what is often called a true English spirit—uncorrupt in his integrity; strict in his morals; and loveth, as Charlotte hath said, both to get and to spend money. He saluted me, at first, with much cordiality and now calleth me his last-found daughter.

Charlotte—my dear Charlotte—greatly enjoyeth the kind treatment I meet with at Alverston; which, as I tell her, is a great compliment to *her*: but this, though it is strictly just, she will not allow. Charlotte is, I think much improved since she left Woodstock. Indeed I never before saw her look so handsome. Her fine dark eyes have acquired additional lustre; yet without losing any of the softness for which they have been so distinguished: the colour in her cheeks, too, is still more vivid; especially when she is addressed by Herbert Evelyn; whose attachment to her, is immediately evident; though politely displayed. Charlotte's partiality for him is expressed by her blushes; which are often called up, on that subject, by the lively archness of George Stanley. The conversation at

Alverston Park, is exactly such as thou, my dear aunt, wouldst approve; topics of laughter, being kept within due bounds; while serious ones, are rendered agreeable by a cheerful manner.

Is not thy Maria surrounded by such companions as thou wouldst wish her to be always conversant with? I know, could I hear thee speak, I should receive an affirmative to my question; as thou hast ever made it thy study to blend the pleasant and the useful.

To-morrow I am to attend Alethea Broomley to her intended new habitation at Alverston, which is in the village not far from the park-pale. The reverend Anthony hath brought hither the matronly woman of the name of D'Oiley, whom Charlotte mentioned in one of her letters. I went with Alethea into the housekeeper's room, to ask how she was after her journey, and was much pleased with her appearance and behaviour. We, likewise, visited the poor Mrs. Moore, who continues weak in person, but happy in spirits.

The drawing-room hath been filled with wedding visitors both yesterday and to day. I believe we all shall be glad to have these ceremonies—if they can properly be so called—at an end; being none of us, except I am mistaken in the early-formed judgment, of a disposition to be pleased with any thing like formality.

How happy, in my opinion, is rural life, when compared with the tumults of cities or a court! Pleasure, in the common acceptation of the word, may perhaps be found, with her gaudy train, in those noisy scenes; while happiness, true happiness, will shun confusion.

But at what am I venturing! To give *my* opinion of happiness! How vain! How presumptuous! yet the subject so naturally ariseth from a contemplation of the apparent felicity around, that I can hardly suppress it; nor, without difficulty, forbear to observe how short a time it is since several, in this now happy circle, were deeply distressed! *so* deeply, that they despaired of ever again knowing, in this world, any thing like even content! How great the change they now experience! And how often, in other cases would it, upon close observation, appear that the grant of our wishes is at hand, when—so far from expecting it—we are almost ready to think all hope is over! Strange, my dear and revered friend, that we cannot better learn to trust, where only we can trust with safety!

But what a scribbling girl is thy Maria grown!

How swiftly glides my pen when addressing myself to thee, with whom so large a share of my truest affection remaineth! I must endeavour to express that exuberance of tenderness which my heart at this instant experienceth, and finish my letter.

When thou favorest me with a reply, let me know how the poor Polly Fenton proceedeth. And tell her she is thought of here. Emma Conway is very anxious for her reform; as, indeed, are all those who know her history. Happy themselves—happy beyond the power of my faint language to express—they turn their thoughts to those whom they have reason to think are otherwise; glad if it be given to them to relieve any kind of distress; particularly if the sufferers have a more than ordinary claim to their attention.

I cannot do justice to the expressions of love and respect which I am desired to convey to Woodstock; therefore will only say I have a general order to deal out kind wishes to thee; our kind friends the Lawsons, and the venerable Doctor Griffith. But those of my dear Charlotte must be particularly brought forward. The next letter is to be produced by her energetic pen; for we have agreed to write alternately; perhaps, sometimes, to unite our labours in one packet, as we intend to be diligent in giving all the circumstances of our *peregrinations*, and likewise, till they commence, all interesting domestic occurrences.

I am unwilling to finish, though I have so much exceeded the time to which I was limited.

Our Woodstock worthy friends will, I trust, accept *my* grateful respects, as well as those which my pen just now conveyed.

The Harleys likewise will, I presume to hope, favorably receive my remembrances.

But what have I to offer to my dear aunt Stanhope? What she will not refuse—the duty; gratitude, and tenderest affection of her

MARIA LEWIS.

FINIS