

Sarah; or, The Exemplary Wife

Mrs. Rowson

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PREFACE.

You never read prefaces, you say. Pray oblige me by giving this a slight perusal; it will not detain you long.

The present work made its appearance about eight years since, in the Boston Weekly Magazine; but it was written at snatches of time, and under the pressure of much care and business incident to my profession; consequently was in a degree incorrect. It has now gone through a revision, and is offered to the public as an example of how much the human mind can bear, when supported by conscious rectitude, and whose every impulse is conformable to the strictest integrity and a love of truth. It may be objected that the example will lose its effect, as my heroine is not in the end rewarded for her exemplary patience, virtue, and forbearance: But it was because I wished to avoid every unnatural appearance, that I left Sarah to meet her reward in a better world. Characters of superlative excellence, tried in the furnace of affliction, and at length crowned by wealth, honor, love, friendship, every sublunary good, are to be found abundantly in every novel, but alas! where shall we find them in real life? Such examples therefore, instead of stimulating the young or inexperienced mind to emulate the virtues represented, misleads it by fallacious hopes and expectations which can never be realized; disappointed in the anticipated temporal felicity, where it is discovered that virtue and integrity may be overlooked by the thoughtless and unfeeling; or left to pine in obscurity by the worldly wise, and ostentatiously prudent; it slackens in its endeavour, and concludes the existence of the character portrayed to be as chimerical as the happiness represented as its reward.

It may be inquired, "Do I then deny the existence of friendship, generosity, compassion, and that first of Christian virtues, Charity?" Oh no! I should be the most ungrateful of human beings if I did; many have been the instances which I have witnessed of this reality, which, like roses scattered in a wilderness, perfumed and sweetened the journey of life; but in that journey I have also encountered many a thorn, and many a flint, that have lacerated my feelings to the very quick.

Sarah is not a faultless monster; she comes as near perfection as is the lot of humanity; but she was credulous, impetuous, and apt to decide with too much precipitation. Yet under all her misfortunes she is represented as drawing comfort and consolation from a source that is never fallacious, can never be exhausted. She looks up to her heavenly Father with love and confidence, she endeavours to make his laws the rule of her actions, and trusts in his promises for her reward. Who of common reflection but would prefer the death of Sarah, resigned as she was, and upheld by faith and hope, to all the splendors, wealth and honors that were ever heaped upon the heroine in the last pages of a novel? Here let the young voyagers, just entering on the turbulent ocean of life, fix their eyes, and they will find a comforter in disappointment, a support in the heaviest calamity, a safe and sure passport to eternal peace.

Many of the scenes delineated in the following work are drawn from real life; some of them have occurred within my own knowledge; but it was in another hemisphere, and the characters no longer exist. Darnley was a profligate; his crime became his punishment; for surely no life can be pictured so completely wretched as where two persons, knowing from experience the turpitude of each other's heart, are obliged to wear out the last remnant of existence together, in mutual jealousy, hatred and recrimination.

Beware, ye lovely maidens who are now fluttering on the wing of youth and pleasure, how you select a partner for life. Purity of morals and manners in a husband, is absolutely necessary to the happiness of a delicate and virtuous woman. When once the choice is made and fixed beyond revocation, remember patience, forbearance, and in many cases perfect silence, is the only way to secure domestic peace. What, in all marriages? asks some young friend. Why, in truth, there is seldom any so perfectly felicitous, but that instances may occur where patience, forbearance, and silence, may be practised with good effect.

LETTER I. SARAH TO ANNE.

London, – May 19, 1775.

YES! Anne, the die is cast—I am a wife. But a less cheerful bride, one who looks forward with less hope, perhaps never existed. You were surprised, you say, to hear to whom I had relinquished my hand and heart—leave out the latter, Anne, it had nothing to do with the transaction. Why were you not here, you say, to have prevented a union which you are morally certain will not conduce to my happiness? You cannot be more certain of it, than I am; but what could I do? Frederic gone to India; hemmed round with persuasive meddlers, who, I am more than half convinced, urged me to this measure, fearful I should be burthensome to them; and I was also told it was necessary for the preservation of my reputation that I should accept Darnley. I had no natural protector; my father so far distant he was the same as dead to me; Frederic gone; my health not sufficiently established to enable me to undertake the journey I meditated before you left England; my finances reduced to a very small portion, and though most earnestly entreated to forbear, Darnley continuing his visits. I found I must accede to his proposals, or be thrown on the world, censured by my relations, robbed of my good name, and being poor, open to the pursuits and insults of the profligate. One thing which encouraged me to hope I might be tolerably happy in the union was—though my heart felt no strong emotions in his favor, it was totally free from all partiality towards any other. He always appeared good humored and obliging; and though his mind was not highly cultivated, I thought time might improve him in that particular. However, I was candid with him; told him the situation of my heart, and asked if he could be content with receiving attentions which would be only the result of principle. He seemed to think this only maidenish affectation, and perfectly convinced within himself that I loved him already.

I have read and heard much of the hilarity of a wedding day. Oh, my dear Anne, when my aunt entering my chamber told me it was time to rise, my souls sunk within me, and like a condemned wretch who hears the bell announce the last hour of his existence, an involuntary ejaculation arose, that I might escape from what on its near approach seemed more terrible than death itself.

My aunt Vernon, who had invited me to her house a few days previous to the one which determined my fate; and when she was convinced I should soon have a house of my own, was very officious about dressing me; she observed the languor of my looks, and the redness of my eyes, and attempted to rally me; my spirits could not bear it. I burst into tears, "Oh why!" said I, in an agony, "have I given my assent to a transaction which my better reason disapproves. Aunt, dear aunt, indeed I do not love this man; and I fear"—"Nonsense!" said she hastily, "you are a silly romantic girl, you are too young yet to know any thing about love; marry him first, you will learn to love him afterwards" "But should I see one I may like better?"—Her look petrified me—"Impossible," said she, "impossible, a woman whose passions are kept under the dominion of reason, will never let a thought wander to another, when once she is married, though she may not love her husband, she *will* not love another." "I am very ignorant in this respect," I replied, "and I hope God will enable me to do my duty in the state I am about to enter." I endeavored to assume a tranquil appearance when I went down to breakfast; Darnley was there; he rose, put a chair to the breakfast table, seated himself beside me and took my hand. Why, my dear girl, said he, your hand is as cold as ice. It is not colder than my heart, said I, and even now, Mr. Darnley, I think you would consult your own happiness by declining this union. I know better, said he, what will promote my own happiness than you do; I love you, I cannot live without you; and I will compel you to love me; nay, you do love me now. A coach was at the door; I strove to swallow a cup of tea; it was impossible; the moment was arrived when I must dash at once into the tempestuous sea of wedlock; or recede and perish in the flames of calumny, reproach and ignominy, that would burst upon me from all sides. I rose hastily; Darnley led me to the coach, my aunt and her daughter followed. At the church we met two gentlemen and the mother of Darnley. I strove to repress my emotions as I knelt before the altar; I prayed for grace to fulfil the duties which would be required of me: Tears rose to my eyes; I endeavored to chase them back to my swelling heart; I succeeded, but the consequence was worse than had I suffered them to flow; for just as the clergyman pronounced us man and wife, my nose gushed out with blood; my handkerchief and clothes were suffused with the crimson torrent; it seemed to relieve the poignancy of my feelings, for my temples had throbbed violently, and my bosom seemed swollen almost to bursting. I felt a faint sickishness come over me, but a glass of water and the air prevented my appearing like a foolish affected girl by

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fainting. The derangement of my dress obliged a return to my aunt's. When I got into my chamber I begged to be left one hour to myself to compose my spirits. The moment I was alone, I threw myself on my knees by the bed, side, and covering my face in the bed clothes, gave a free vent to my tears. I cannot describe my feelings. I did not pray; I could not collect my thoughts. Oh! that I could call back the last hour, said I—but I cannot, I have vowed; I must, I will submit.

The remainder of the day was spent at Windsor; when we returned to town, an elegant supper was provided at Darnley's own house, and I was placed at the head of the table as its mistress. Henceforth it is my home. I have not seen much company. I have been considerably indisposed; my hectic complaints have returned; I was for a fortnight confined to my chamber; I am now convalescent. Darnley loves society—I must not make his house a dungeon—I will rouse myself from the lethargic stupor which has for more than two months pervaded every sense. I see I may be tolerably happy if I do not wilfully shun the path that leads to peace. Perhaps, Anne, my heart was not formed to be agitated by those violent emotions which some experience. It is probable the passions so forcibly portrayed by the pen of the fabulist, dramatist, or historian, are merely the children of romance, and exist only in a heated imagination. You tell me you shall not return to England until autumn. I anticipate the moment of your return as the moment in which I shall taste pure unmixed felicity. Adieu, my dear Anne; may the pleasures that hover round your head and wait upon your steps, be equal to the purity and integrity of your heart.

S. S. D.

LETTER II. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – Nov. 1775. DEAR MADAM,

I AM pleased to find by your favor of the 13th, that you are pleased with your situation. The pleasure I enjoyed in your society during our journey from Brussels, and our little voyage across the channel, has made me anxious to preserve the esteem of a person so amiable. I have no doubt but Lady M—d, will be more than satisfied to have so capable a woman take the charge of her infant daughters. She must soon learn justly to appreciate your value, and by every proper attention endeavor to secure to them, as they advance in life, a continuance of your valuable instructions enforced so powerfully by your example. I will confess, dear madam, that I am so much of an English woman, as to prefer my own country women, in almost every respect; especially where the education of the young mind is concerned, and where the future happiness and respectability of life depends greatly on the morals, manners and general habits of those with whom the early period of youth is past. I am delighted with the vivacity of the French ladies; I am convinced their manners are more captivating than those of the English; but while I have been charmed by their wit, almost fascinated by the very high polish of their manners; I could not help secretly wishing it had been tempered and corrected by the modest reserve, the inobtrusive delicacy, which always characterises a well bred English woman. You, my dear madam, by a long residence abroad, have most agreeably blended the vivacity of the one, with the chaste propriety of the other, and your perfect knowledge of the French and Italian languages, joined to an extensive knowledge of your own, renders you a very able instructor in all. I presume you will accompany the family to town after Christmas, when I shall have an opportunity of renewing an acquaintance so pleasantly commenced, and which I trust will ripen into a lasting friendship. But in the mean time, I am not forgetful of your request to be informed of the principal events in the life of Mrs. Darnley, who so much interested you, the few times you saw her previous to your journey into Berkshire. I do not hesitate to enter on the subject very freely, because there is no incident in her short life, which she could wish concealed, and many that redound to her honor. I fear she is not happily married; but being of a disposition to bear all things with patience, to look on the bright side of the picture, and not think of an approaching storm, while there is one gleam of sunshine left, I think it possible she may draw comfort from various sources, which the irritable or discontented mind would entirely overlook; and be more than contented where another would be little less than wretched.

Mrs. Darnley is the daughter of a gentleman who held a post under government which yielded him above a thousand pounds per annum. She lost her mother at a very early period, and her father's household was conducted by a maiden sister of her father's, forbidding in her looks, rigid in her principles, and harsh and unbending in her manners. She had herself enjoyed little of the advantages of a polite education, thinking and asserting at all times, that if a woman could read, write, execute various needlework, superintend domestic arrangements, understood the etiquette of the dining table, and drawing room, knew how to give every person their proper place, and pay them the proper degree of respect due to their rank or wealth, she had attained the summit of female excellence. Having no taste for the fine arts herself, she laughed at as ridiculous every pursuit of the kind, and as to a learned woman, she treated the idea as a mere chimera, or if existing, a monster in nature, which, though wonderful, was only laughed at by one sex, feared and shunned by the other. Sarah, for so I shall call her, shewed early talents for music and drawing, and was delighted with reading the best English poets. I have heard her father say, that at ten years old, she read with propriety, and seemed fully to comprehend all the beauties of Pope's Homer, Dryden's Virgil, and other works of the same tendency; Spenser and Shakespeare were great favorites with her. Sarah is an only child: she inherited from her mother a small patrimony, about fifteen hundred pounds. It was in the funds, and the interest would have been sufficient to keep her at a very genteel school, but her father had an utter aversion to schools; she was therefore attended by masters in all the polite branches, her aunt documented her about economy, sewing, flourishing muslin, &c. &c. but the larger part of her time, (her father being engaged in business or pleasure, her aunt in scolding the servants, dressing, and paying or receiving visits), Sarah was left to amuse herself with the servants, or read any books which her father's library afforded, or chance threw in her way, without any one to direct her choice, or correct her taste. Possessed of an ardent imagination, it may easily be conceived that works of fancy were read with uncommon pleasure: but this was not the worst; she read books of religious controversy, nor did the pernicious writings of fashionable sceptics escape. Her mind, eager in the

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pursuit of information, embraced it with avidity, in whatever shape it offered itself. Nor is it surprising that from such a heterogeneous jumble, her ideas became a chaos of romantic sensibility, enthusiastic superstition, and sceptical boldness; yes, contrary as those sentiments are, they each in turn, predominated in the mind of Sarah. Her father saw a great deal of company, chiefly gentlemen. A girl sensible, witty, and with an understanding uncommonly expanded for her age, introduced into the company of men, becomes early accustomed to the delicious and intoxicating poison of adulation, and too often falls a victim to the sentiments those flatterers awaken in her soul, before reason and fixed principle have power to counteract and repel the powerful impulses of youthful passion. Had Sarah been of a temperature easily called into action, she could not have escaped contamination in the scenes to which she was too often a witness. Her father was not a man of strict morals; he had supported a woman as a mistress for many years, and was frequently so imprudent as to take his daughter with him, in his visits to this woman. But Sarah's soul naturally revolted at the approach of vice, and when she understood the character of her father's *chère amie*, she resolutely refused ever again to enter her house. Her aunt was so far serviceable to her that she early inspired her with a love of virtue, and a veneration for religion, which I have no doubt through her life, in spite of her eccentricities, will ever be the leading trait in her character. She was just turned of thirteen when I became acquainted with her, and though there were seven years difference in our age, her sense was so matured, her conversation so superior to the generality of women, even at a more advanced period, that I courted her friendship, obtained it, and found her tender, ardent, and sincere, (if I may be allowed the expression,) even to a fault. Totally unacquainted with the world, she believed it to be such as the books she had read represented; she believed every profession of love or regard made to her, and would give her last farthing to relieve an object of distress, without staying to inquire whether the distress was feigned or real. I have said her father was dissipated; he was, besides, thoughtless to a superlative degree in his expenses, so that when Sarah had reached her seventeenth year, involved in debt, severely blamed by his friends, and deserted by his dissolute companions, she saw him deprived of his place, the duties of which he had for some time scandalously neglected. About six months previous to this deplorable change in her situation, Sarah had buried her aunt; and when her father, to avoid his creditors, went off to India, she found herself cast unprotected on the world, for having declared her resolution to liquidate the most pressing of her father's debts, the moment she could sell out money sufficient for the purpose: her relations declared their disapprobation of a conduct which they plainly saw would leave her a very small stipend, and were cautious of inviting to their houses, a person likely to become in some degree a burthen to them. I spoke to Sarah on the subject; her answer was, "I am fully aware, Anne, that no one can oblige me to pay these sums, and that by retaining my little fortune, I shall be secure from dependence; but one of my father's creditors is a poor tradesman, who has a large family of children and a sick wife; another is a widow, in very depressed circumstances; what right have I to retain my fortune, while they, whose actual property I have helped to waste, are driven to extreme necessity, when by paying them what is lawfully their due, I restore them to a state of comparative comfort." This argument was unanswerable; I did not attempt to dissuade her. She sold out a thousand pounds at a considerable loss, paid those she thought were most in need of the money, and remitted the remainder to her father. If you still feel interested in my narrative, I will renew it in a short period; but do not expect any romantic scenes, flaming lovers, or cruel false friends; what I have to relate, are incidents, perhaps, frequently to be met with in common life; but I love Sarah, and all that concerns her is interesting to me. Adieu, my dear madam. Believe me yours, with esteem,

ANNE.

LETTER III. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – Dec. 19, 1775.

YOU flatter me by the satisfaction you express at the receipt of my last. I am at once gratified by the praises bestowed on my friend, and the approbation you so delicately conveyed, of the style of the narrator; for I will frankly own I possess a good portion of that self love, which occasions my heart to dilate with pleasure, when I am applauded by those whom I respect, and of whose discriminating judgment I have an high opinion.

Sarah having thus discharged those duties which the strong sense she entertained of moral rectitude imposed on her, began to think of some method to enlarge her income by industry, and thus prevent her becoming troublesome to her friends; I earnestly entreated her to live with me, but in vain. "What is the reason," said she, "that I must not be allowed to support myself? Why should I become a charge to you? It is kind of you to offer it, but what right have I to avail myself of your generosity? when I have health and abilities to render myself independent? You have a mother to support, and not the most plentiful fortune to do it with; you have also a brother who can always find employment for any little sums you have to spare; continue to me those sentiments of esteem which it has been my honor to excite, and my pride to endeavor to deserve, and I shall be happier in eating the bread of industry, than I could possibly be in dependent idleness."

Her plan was to get recommended as a teacher in a boarding school. Her aunt strongly opposed it—"I wonder, Sarah," said she to her one day, "you have not more pride, than to be willing to live in a state of servitude; I am ashamed, I blush for your meanness of spirit." "I should have more cause to blush for myself, aunt," she replied—"were I, with the education I have received, to become a useless burthen to my friends. That is poor pride indeed, which, to avoid active employment, sinks into a servile being, who, to purchase the necessaries of life, must cringe to a benefactor, take the lowest place in the room, never speak but when spoken to, and be required to perform fifty menial offices, which, were that being in any other but a state of dependence, would be rejected with disdain." Mrs. Vernon colored deeply, and Sarah was allowed to follow her own plan. A young woman, whose mind was so highly cultivated as Sarah's, whose manners were so captivating, and who had abilities to be so eminently useful, was an acquisition to any school, and it proved that to the one in which she engaged, she was so in a superlative degree. The governess was not possessed of many engaging qualities; she could speak French, and understood something of the fashionable needlework; and these were the vast stock of qualifications with which she presumed to take upon herself the care and instruction of *young ladies*. She had been brought up in rather a low walk in life; had married a reputable tradesman, and at the age of forty-five, was left a widow, with very little provision, but a house full of handsome furniture; for having been of an expensive turn, she had found means to dissipate money as fast, and sometimes faster, than her husband could accumulate it. She had one daughter rather more accomplished than her mother, for she could play on the harpsichord, and make filligree. Mrs. Harrop was advised to take a school; and, as in seminaries of this kind, the teachers have all the care and labor while the governess takes all the credit to herself; her want of abilities, either natural or acquired, was no obstacle to her following the counsel. They had been settled in a very fine situation about five miles from London, nearly three years, when having lost their head teacher by her accepting a more advantageous offer, Mrs. Harrop heard of Sarah's design, and having had her character very favorably represented by a gentleman who was intimate in her father's family, she made application to her to take the superintendence of the school. Her offers were liberal, and Sarah having consulted me, determined to wait on the lady, to settle preliminaries; and I, fearing my young enthusiastic friend would engage to perform more than her strength would support, resolved to accompany her. This visit produced some singular circumstances, and indeed, as things have terminated, may be termed the great period which gave the coloring to my dear Sarah's future life. You have observed the dignity of Sarah's carriage—at that period it was more conspicuous than it is at present. At times when she supposed herself not treated with proper respect by those whose wealth or situation in life gave them a fancied superiority, it would rise into something like *hauteur*; but to her equals she was ever affable, and to her inferiors, her manners were so sweetly conciliating, that while they forgot the disparity custom and education made between them, the affectionate respect her conduct inspired, never permitted them to treat her with improper familiarity. Her dress was always the habit of a woman of fashion, without the smallest affectation of finery. As I knew to visit a school during the hours of study must be an interruption, I ordered it so as to arrive at Mrs. Harrop's, about twelve

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o'clock. Miss Julia received us with a profusion of civility. We were conveyed thither in a handsome job coach, and I made my own foot boy mount behind, being aware how much first appearances strike, so much so, that frequently the impressions made on a first interview, are never after entirely effaced. The young lady having ushered us into the drawing room, with many obsequious courtesies, requested to be honored with our commands; I perceived her mistake, and simply replied we wished to speak with Mrs. Harrop on particular business. She immediately rose, and said she would inform her mamma, who would come to receive our orders, and left the room. I laughed, Sarah smiled, and observed, that she was wondrous polite. Yes, my dear, said I, a great deal more so, than she would have been, had she guessed the nature of our business. Here we were interrupted by the rustling of silk, and Madam *la Governante* entered in all the consequence of rich padusoy, lace ruffles, and an enormous head, where gauze, wire, pompons, and ribbon, strove for pre-eminence. She was a tall, masculine figure, dark complexioned, her cheeks just lightly tinged with best vegetable rouge, large black eyes, and very strong brows of the same color, meeting over her nose, which was inclined to the aquiline. "Pray be seated, ladies," said she, seating herself at the same time, "I am extremely honored by this visit, and I hope, upon the inspection of the work, &c. that has been executed in the school, you will be so far satisfied, as to give me the preference, in the placing any young lady from home for the purpose of education. To be sure, I have unfortunately lost my head teacher; but I have great hope of having her place supplied by a young person, who has been strongly recommended as a young woman of taste, genius, and respectability; for you know, ladies, we cannot be too cautious who we engage in such a situation." I perceived the vermilion of Sarah's complexion begin to heighten, so interrupted the loquacious governess with, "True, madam, and I flatter myself my friend, Miss Osborn here, will do honor to those who spoke so favorably of her."

The broad face of Mrs. Harrop now resembled the tints of a full blown pioni. "Madam," said she, "did I understand you—this the young—" "Yes, madam," said Sarah, bowing with composure and dignity, "I am the young person to whom you addressed this letter; I feel myself competent to the business therein mentioned, and shall only add, that if I engage in the situation, I shall strive to discharge my duty conscientiously." "Upon my word, well to be sure, I thought," said the confused lady, then rising hastily, she rung the bell, and then seating herself familiarly on the sofa, between Sarah and myself—"I dare say, my dear," she continued addressing Sarah, "you will do very well; Mr. Lewis said you had a great deal of taste, was patient and good natured." "I am so, I trust, madam," said Sarah, coloring, "when not imposed on." "Certainly, no one likes to be imposed on," said Mrs. Harrop, a little disconcerted by the firmness of her reply; a servant just then entering, relieved her—"Bid Miss Julia send some of the work and painting into the back parlor; we'll go down, child, and you can judge if you think you can teach in the same manner." But before this proposal could be complied with, steps were heard ascending the stairs. The door opened, and George Darnley and his mother entered; Mrs. Darnley had a daughter at the school, whom they had come to visit. As I wished to converse with Sarah, before she made any positive engagement, I made a motion to go. "We will see you again in the evening, Mrs. Harrop," said I. "Permit me, ladies," said Darnley, with a respectful bow, "to call up your carriage, and do me the honor," presenting his hand to Sarah! she accepted it, and with a slight courtesy to the governess, and one more respectful to Mrs. Darnley, tripped down stairs, and left Mrs. Harrop to explain to her visitor, who and what she was, at her leisure. Are you weary? No—you say! well, but really I am—so peace be with you, until the next post.

ANNE.

LETTER IV. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – Jan. 4, 1776.

A PRETTY good period of time, you say, I have taken, before I bring Miss Osborn back to Mrs. Harrop's, though I only left that lady to take a few hours ride with my little friend. Well, I hate apologies when a person from either inclination or necessity, has been remiss in a correspondence; where indeed is the use of them? If inclination caused the silence, the excuses will appear forced and awkward; if necessity has occasioned it, we must have but a very poor opinion of the friend who would need an apology for what they must know is as painful to ourselves as to them; this, by way of preamble— and now to proceed with my narrative.

When young Darnley had handed Sarah into the carriage, the bow of profound respect which accompanied the action, and the fixed attitude in which he remained on the steps of the door, until the carriage drove off, occasioned me to smile, and ask her if she knew the gentleman? and if she did not think him handsome? "I am sure I don't know," answered she gravely, "whether he is handsome or ugly; I never saw him before, and have no wish ever to see him again." "I am much mistaken, Sarah," said I, "if he is quite so indifferent in regard to seeing you again." "Do not let us talk like a couple of girls," said she, with a half smile, "who never received the smallest degree of polite attention from a man in their lives before." She then turned the conversation upon Mrs. Harrop, Miss Julia, the work, &c. "I am much deceived," said she, "if I do not shew them some work and painting, at the end of the next term, superior to the daubs she so ostentatiously displayed: the work is very well, but there is a want of taste in the arrangement of the colors, the flowers want that lightness which is the greatest beauty of needlework."

I then gave her the necessary hints for not engaging to perform more than her strength would admit; she replied, "that if she was paid for her time, it would become a duty not to waste a moment, but to fill it up assiduously for the benefit of her employer." We dined with a friend, and in the evening returned to Mrs. Harrop's, made the necessary arrangements, and it was agreed that Sarah should take her new situation on the Saturday following.

She had not long superintended the school, before Mrs. Harrop discovered what a treasure she had got; the scholars naturally attached themselves to her, especially those who had been accustomed to associate with well bred persons; her manners were so gentle, yet commanding; her language and appearance were so superior to the governess and her daughter, that they loved, while they dared not disobey her. But this, while it enhanced her value, created a kind of envy in the bosoms of both the mother and Miss Julia, which sometimes shewed itself unpleasantly; and when Sarah would give her opinion, which she often did, contrary to that of these ladies, a degree of fretfulness apparent in their answers, would evince their consciousness of her superiority; yet though they opposed her arguments, they generally adopted her plans. During her residence here, she was frequently seen by George Darnley; his sister was extremely attached to her; his mother was pleased with her attentions to her daughter, and George himself fancied he was in love with her.

George Darnley had, in early life, been remarkable for the heaviness of his intellect, and the extreme difficulty with which he attained even useful acquirements. As he advanced toward manhood, he shewed a propensity for expensive pleasures, mixed with an unwillingness to procure them for himself; for dearly as he loved pleasure, he loved money better; every scene of amusement was joined with eagerness, if at the expense of another. Such a disposition was by no means likely to please Sarah; her chief pleasures were retired; she loved society, indeed, but did not often mix in it, because she could not often meet with such as afforded her satisfaction.

I have mentioned that she had no brother. There was a young man whom Mr. Osborn had educated, and got into the navy, by the name of Frederic Lewis; indeed, it was thought he was her natural brother, but of this her father never gave her any intimation. This young man felt all the fraternal love for her, which a man of sense might be supposed to feel for a sister like her; he thought her one of the most superior women the world afforded, and when on returning from a three year's station in the West-Indies, he found the great change which had taken place in Mr. Osborn's family, saw his sister (for so he always called her) employed as a teacher in a boarding school—his sensations were poignant beyond description; but alas, Frederic was but a lieutenant, and what could he do? His pay was scarcely sufficient to support the appearance of a gentleman; and prize money was not to be obtained in the service he had been engaged in. I am interrupted, adieu for the present.

Sarah; or, The Exemplary Wife

ANNE.

LETTER ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – Jan. 5, 1776.

EXACTLY what I apprehended, came to pass: Sarah, anxious to exert herself for the advantage of her employers, went beyond her strength, was constantly at her needle or pencil, when the cessation of school business might even have allowed her recreation. She uniformly declined visiting any where, except now and then spending a day with me; her aunt's family, pretending offence at her entering into what they termed a servile employment, were, whenever she chanced to see them, cold and distant; it was not therefore likely that she could reap much satisfaction from visiting them; her other acquaintance had, some of them, chosen to forget her, and the rest treated her with a haughty familiarity, inquiring into the employments, and lamenting the fatigues of her new situation, sometimes mingling with these humiliating questions and observations, oblique sarcasms on her father; which her high sense of filial duty could ill brook. This being the case, she frequently undertook the business of the other teacher, in order that she might reap the benefit of time, which, to Sarah herself, was of no value; that is, of no value to be employed as usual with persons in her situation. Such unwearied application, added to little air, and less exercise; at least proper exercise, weakened a constitution not naturally robust, and extreme languor, difficulty of breathing, and a hectic cough were symptoms too alarming to be beheld by me with indifference; but she herself treated them lightly, and would smiling say, "I am not sick; you want me to play the fine lady, which would be very unbecoming in a person in my station;" and when I have remonstrated, her reply would be, "Dear Anne, tell me where would be the loss of such an atom in creation as I am? Who would miss me, except Frederic and yourself? And to your affectionate hearts I am only a source of constant anxiety. Unconnected in the world as I am, my early prospects clouded, my future ones dreary and comfortless, what is there to make me wish existence lengthened? Do not think me discontented, or quarrelling with life because the path I am to tread is not marked out exactly as I could wish it; no, I am very sensible that I enjoy many comforts, which thousands more deserving than myself are deprived of; but feeling as I do, my desolate, unprotected state, though God forbid that I should by wilful neglect of my health, or any other means, hasten the moment of my release; yet I cannot form the smallest wish that its approach should be retarded."

Miss Darnley had, at her mother's desire, invited Sarah to pass a few months with them at a small house they had at Turnham Green, and said her daughter should continue her studies at home under her inspection; but this, from the consideration of young Darnley's pointed assiduities, she positively, though politely, rejected; nor did I blame her.

Among the many who visited the school, to inspect the improvement of pupils, whom they had placed there, was Lady Bentley; she had two children sent from the West-Indies to her care, and having had some slight personal knowledge of Sarah Osborn, during her father's prosperity, hearing that she was the principal teacher at Mrs. Harrop's, gave that school the preference. This amiable and worthy woman saw with regret the visible alteration in her interesting countenance. "My dear young lady," said she one day, when they were alone in the drawing room, "you are not well; I wish you had some situation that would be less fatiguing, and more congenial to your nature. Sir James Bentley was well acquainted with your father, and regretted to me the other day, that the daughter of his old friend was not placed in some family of rank, where she might meet associates, such as she has been accustomed to, and be useful to society, by imparting her fine talents to two or three pupils at most, without, by incessant application, endangering her health. Tell me, Miss Osborn, could such a situation be found, would it meet with your approbation?"

This was addressing Sarah, in the style which was to lead her to whatever was desired. Tears started to her eyes, she acknowledged Lady Bentley's goodness; the mention of her father's name, accompanied with expressions of respect, was so soothing to her heart, that she readily agreed to do whatever might be thought necessary for the establishment of her health. A Mrs. Beaumont, a widow lady, with two daughters, one twelve, and the other fourteen years of age, was going for the winter to Bath. Lady Bentley thought it would be the very thing for Sarah; the lady wanted a companion, who would case her of the constant care she thought necessary to be paid to girls of the age of her daughters. To be with them at the hours when their masters attended them; walk with them, visit with them, read and work with them—all which Mrs. Beaumont found it inconvenient to do herself, as (though not a dissipated woman) she kept a good deal of company, and the late hours of the preceding

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evening often prevented her rising in time to superintend their morning studies, or accompany their morning rambles.

She was a woman of a lively disposition, conciliating in her manners, perfectly well bred, and not likely to make any person feel a state of dependence. She was introduced to Sarah, was charmed with her demeanor, and made her such offers as were honorable to her own liberal nature, and highly advantageous to my friend. Mrs. Harrop was thunderstruck when she found Miss Osborn actually intended leaving her; yet she could not but be sensible that her health required it. She strove to draw her into a promise to return to her in the spring, but this Sarah was too wise to accede to. Previous to her taking her journey, she spent three weeks with me, and Frederic being with us, the lively parties and excursions he was continually contriving, helped to restore a great portion of her health and cheerfulness. Mr. Lewis himself was much better pleased with his sister's situation; he had been with her on a morning visit to Mrs. Beaumont, and was satisfied, that she was a perfectly wellbred woman; which to a person of a delicate mind, is one guarantee for happiness; for it is a certainty, no person accustomed to the forms of good breeding, and to that suavity of manners, which is dictated by a polished understanding, especially when accompanied by even the smallest portion of good nature, can be happy in the society of ill bred persons. Of her situation during her stay at Bath, I refer you to her own letter, which I enclose.

ANNE.

LETTER VI. SARAH TO ANNE.

Bath, – December 17, 1773.

YOU are dissatisfied with my short letter, what can I say to fill a long one? I am in better health than when I left London; Mrs. Beaumont is attentively polite, her daughters are pleasant children, and could I spend my time wholly with them, I should be extremely happy; yet, even as it is, I am far from being unhappy. I love company, but it must be the company of my equals. You will say, are not those with whom you associate so? Yes, but the generality of them think themselves so vastly my superiors, and when they pay me any civility, let me know in such a pointed manner, that I owe their attentions entirely to my connection with Mrs. Beaumont, that I sometimes feel inclined almost to reject their supercilious kindness. I have been to the rooms; I would gladly have been excused, but no apologies would be admitted. I was particularly careful that my dress should be as simple as possible; I never loved finery, and in my present circumstances, the smallest appearance of it, would be highly ridiculous; yet, simple as my appearance was, I was unfortunate enough to attract attention. Now, could I find it in my heart to play the romantic girl, and write you the whole occurrences of the evening, tell you how elegantly I danced, and how finely I was complimented; describe the dresses of half the company, some from memory, and supply the rest by invention; tell you of the handsome men, and affected women; but I do so despise the general style of girlish letters, and hear them so often and so deservedly ridiculed by men of understanding, that the very fear of having a letter of mine meet the eye of a man of discernment, will ever keep me from writing nonsense. Observe the compliment I pay myself, in supposing I can at any time write sense. Anne, last post brought me another letter besides your valued favor—that Darnley—what does he write for? I wish he would not trouble himself about me. Have you seen Frederic lately? When does he sail? Dear worthy Frederic, how anxious he is about my health and ease, how gladly would he sacrifice all his little earnings to place me in what he calls independence? But his ideas and mine, on that subject, are different; while by any laudable exertion of my own, I avoid being a burthen to my friends, or a tax upon society in general, I am, in my own opinion, perfectly independent.

Last week, Mrs. Beaumont went with a party to Clifton, and left me with my little companions to pass the time as I pleased, and a delightful time I had. As soon as the morning lessons were over, I sallied out to the library, provided myself with a good quantity of books, in the instructive yet amusing style, and ordering a fire in my own apartment, took out my drawing apparatus, and sat down to copy a beautiful landscape which I had transported from the drawing room for that purpose, while Eliza and Lucy read to me alternately. The day passed charmingly, we never left the room but to dine, and take tea; after which, music filled up the time till nine o'clock, when my companions retired to rest, and after an hour's indulgence with Spenser's "Fairy Queen," I followed their example. The next day, and the following, we took long walks on the parade and the crescent, and I will own, agreeable as Mrs. Beaumont is, I almost regretted when Saturday brought her home; for now we are going on as usual, dressing, visiting, and turning night into day; for though the public rooms are not allowed to keep open later than twelve o'clock, yet there are constantly large private parties. I have some suspicion that the gay and amiable widow will ere long again enter the hymeneal pale, and that with a person much younger than herself. Her kind friends sneer at the attentions he pays her, but for my own part I do not wonder at the preference given her by the men in general; her person still retains much fascination, her face is handsome, her manners engaging, her understanding highly cultivated, and her temper uncommonly good. This is not the only professed admirer who dangles after us to the theatre, dances attendance at the tea-table, and lounges with us at the libraries and pump-rooms—a Sir Watkin Alden, a baronet, young, rich, handsome, and a libertine. I can see the title has no charms with Mrs. Beaumont. The native unadorned merit of Mr. Frankly has made a serious impression on her mind, and without being what is called in love, I believe she is very sincerely attached to him. And now I am on this subject, I feel myself impelled to mention a circumstance which has given me some pain, because it has humbled me. This Sir Watkin has dared, (shall I confess it, even to you, dear Anne?) whilst openly addressing Mrs. Beaumont, to make professions of love to your humiliated friend; and when my replies were such, as affronted delicacy and wounded honor dictated, he laughed in my face, and asked me what I meant to do with my pretty person, high breeding, and splendid accomplishments? The men are not in haste to marry, except interest impels. "Oh that I were a man," said I, and my indignant passion so choked me that I could not utter another

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syllable, and could with difficulty restrain my tears. "Why, what would you do?" said he, catching my hands as I was rising to quit the room— "Strike you to the earth, for your base, your unmannerly conduct." "Would you so, fair tyrant?" cried he, insultingly. "But, my dear, if you were a man, recollect, I should not give you this cause for anger." "Wretch!" cried I, in a stifled voice, and wrenching my hands from his grasp. In the exertion I made to disengage them, my right hand suddenly burst from his hold and struck his face. The blow was not intentional, but it was not a light one; his nose gushed out with blood. I darted out of the room, and left him to make what excuses he could to Mrs. Beaumont, whose footsteps I heard ascending the first flight of stairs as I hastily ran up the second. This man's insolence has given such a wound to my sensibility, to my pride, and self love, that the remembrance embitters all my moments of retirement and reflection. What can I have done or said, what action of my life can have given him leave to hope he might succeed in his unworthy attempts upon my honor? Heaven be praised, my heart is not made of inflammable matter; it is a quiet, rational kind of heart, and has never yet fluttered at the fine speeches of a handsome man, or bounded at the pressure of a hand, sending its vital fluid to kiss the fingers which enfolded mine. Yet, these are sensations I have heard described by others; have read of in romances and novels. Perhaps you will say he might have succeeded in awakening these emotions, had he proceeded cautiously. I do not think he would; I believe I have a very sure guard against imbibing any foolish passion—I am poor, Anne, but I am proud, very proud—Oh, my full heart!— Pardon my troubling you with this silly affair; but it gave me pain, and I know you ever sympathize in the pains and pleasures of your honored and obliged,

SARAH.

LETTER VII. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – January, 1776.

YOU perceive by the letter I enclosed in my last, that my young friend's situation was not entirely congenial to her feelings, though she would not complain. She says she is proud; it is true, she is so, but it is that kind of proper pride, which is the safeguard of female virtue. I heard from an acquaintance, who was at Bath at the period she was there, that she was an object of admiration, ill nature and envy. This you will say is a strange assertion, yet it was actually so. The simplicity and frankness of her manner, the brilliancy of her understanding, and high cultivation of her talents, made her society courted by the men, and rendered her an object of general dislike to the women, for it is a humiliating circumstance to confess, that beauty, wit and talents, are by no means possessions to secure a friend in our own sex. Why is this? Why do women suffer that degrading quality envy, to predominate in their bosoms? Men naturally esteem those who are most worthy esteem; to be brave, generous, learned, magnanimous, will gain a man the respect, the veneration of all; his society is courted, his friendship thought an honor, even though his person should not be a perfect model of the *Apollo Belvidere*. But no, I beg your pardon, I recollect a celebrated wit and satiric modern poet, avers that, *Superior virtue, or superior sense, To knaves, and fools, will always give offence.*

And here is no particular sex aimed at, it is then the wicked, the weak and the vain of both, who envy merits they strive not themselves to acquire. But I am running from my subject.

Sarah, so far from being flattered by the attentions of the men, was, as she herself forcibly expresses it, humbled; the situation of her mind, together with the irregular hours Mrs. Beaumont kept, rendered the medicinal virtues of the Bath waters of no effect. You may ask perhaps why did she not decline parties so prejudicial to her health? She did on her first entering the family make an effort to that purpose; but Mrs. Beaumont, who thought society necessary to amend the spirits of her young companion, pressed so earnestly, that there was no opposing her desires without rudeness, and let her have been up ever so late at night, she always rose in time to attend the young ladies at their lessons. In March they returned to London. But I was shocked at the appearance of Sarah; every bad symptom was evidently increased, and I was assured by a physician whom I had requested to call as by accident to see her, nothing but quiet and regular living would have any chance of restoring her. Mrs. Beaumont was unwilling to part with her, said she should not be plagued with the children, she would send them to school. Sarah smiled. The dear children, madam, said she, are my comforts; I could not have remained with you so long, had not my heart been strongly drawn towards those interesting young ladies. I am honored by your friendship, venerate and respect your virtues, am grateful for the many favors you have conferred on me; but neither my health, spirits, nor situation in life, render it proper for me to be continually mixing in scenes to which your rank make you familiar, and of which you are an ornament. And this fine flattering speech, replied Mrs. Beaumont, is to gild over the positive rejection of my proposal, and let me know as politely as possible, you are determined to leave me; well, I must submit, only believe me, should you ever want a friend, you will be sure to find one in me. When Sarah left this amiable woman, she presented her with an elegant pocket book, which on opening, was found to contain a note of fifty guineas, together with a most affectionate letter, recommending her to a widow lady, who resided at Islington, who would be glad to take her as a boarder, where she might enjoy pure air, quiet, and the exercise of walking, whenever she felt inclined, in a large garden. I should have insisted on her going with me on some tour of pleasure, but business of an important nature obliged me to visit Paris, and the speed with which I was obliged to travel, as well as the length of the journey, made it impossible she should accompany me thither. The evening before my departure, I passed a few hours with her at her new habitation, and discovered that the old lady with whom she had taken up her abode, was a distant relation of the Darnley family. This was an unpleasant circumstance to Sarah, but she was every way else so comfortably accommodated, and reflecting wherever she was, Mrs. Darnley would claim a sight of visiting her, she made no attempt to remove. Whilst I was sitting with her, we were greatly surprised by the entrance of Frederic Lewis, who had returned unexpectedly from a cruise, and I left her in better spirits, than I otherwise should, from the idea that she had in him a proper and affectionate protector. His ship was coming up to Deptford, to undergo a thorough repair; he would therefore be enabled to visit her every two or three days, and would, I was certain, in case of increasing ill health, suffer her to want neither medical, nor other assistance, which he had the power of procuring for her. She had a

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prospect, should she be restored to health, of being placed in a family of rank, as governess to the children, and to reside entirely with them, at the family seat in Merionethshire. I remained on the continent six months, and added to the satisfaction of having completed the business for which I took the journey the felicity of forming an acquaintance with you, dear madam, an acquaintance which time has ripened into a tender esteem, and has laid the foundation of a friendly intercourse, which I flatter myself is equally pleasurable to both.

I received several letters from Sarah, during my residence abroad; the last I received previous to my leaving Paris shocked me by announcing her marriage with George Darnley. I enclose the letter, as it will best inform you of her motives, her prospects, her feelings and anxieties, at this eventful period. Yours with esteem,

ANNE.

Footnotes

[1] *The reader is referred to Letter I.*

LETTER VIII. SARAH TO ANNE.

London, – June, 1777.

WHY do you tarry so long from town, dear Anne? Yet I need not inquire; you find health and pleasure in the retired shades of Wiltshire, nor once let your fancy wander to the smoke, noise, and confusion of London. Not once, do I say? Pardon me, Anne; you sometimes think on me, mentally inquire how I do, what I am about, and whether I am happy.

I want you in town, I want your advice—yet cannot wait to receive it. I will tell you what has happened, what I have heard, and what I am about to do; and though before you receive this, I shall have done it past recall, I pray you do not spare me if you think I have erred, speak to me in the language of sincerity, correct my faults, severely lash and ridicule my follies, for it is my firm opinion, Anne, that more than half the vices and follies with which this sublunary sphere so plentifully abounds, owe their origin to the want of truth, in the intercourse between the animated atoms with which it is peopled; every vice that can disgrace humanity, is dignified with some specious name, and decorated with such tinsel finery, that it almost assumes the appearance of a virtue. Why can we not speak plain, openly avow the detestation we feel toward a deviation from rectitude, and treat profligacy of all kinds, with the contempt it deserves. But this is not proceeding in a direct line with the story I was about to commence; no matter, mariners say there is more pleasure in traverse sailing, when by dexterous management they reach in safety the intended port, than in proceeding in a straight course with a fair wind.

Last Monday evening, Darnley was gone to his club. Anne, I don't like these clubs; they smoke, drink and dispute, until they fancy themselves statesmen, heroes, and demigods, and go home to their wives in a state little removed from brutality; preach about the prerogative and dignity of man, the great lord of creation, and expect their simply rational companions to bow with submission, and acknowledge their supremacy. Well, Darnley, was at his club. Mary Melbourn had past the evening with me; she is on a visit of two or three months to Darnley's mother, and having a bad head ache, had retired early. I had played until I was weary, and was sitting in a kind of listless half sleep and awake manner, when a single rap at the street door made me start; the servant, who was sitting up in the kitchen, ran to the door, but had the precaution to put the chain across before she opened it. "Does not Mr. George Darnley live here?" said a faint female voice. Betty replied in the affirmative. "Is he at home?" asked the same voice. "No," she replied, "but my mistress is." "Your mistress, what, Mr. Darnley's mother?" "No, his wife." "His wife?" she exclaimed shrilly, and seemed choked with an hysteric affection,— then pausing a moment or two, she said,— "I am to blame—I have business of importance, young woman, to transact with your master; pray give him this letter, and request him not to fail coming early in the morning, to the place I have mentioned, for I am come off a long journey, fatigued, ill, distressed, and can only look to him for comfort and repose." At every sentence the agitated female uttered, I had drawn nearer and nearer the head of the stairs, and when she had finished the last, was actually half way down, but before I could speak, she was gone, having left the letter in Betty's hands. The girl met me on the stairs, and offered to give me the folded paper: that almost irresistible propensity, which undid madam Eve, had nearly compelled me to take it; but before I had touched it I recalled my better reason. "Go," said I, "put it in the card racks in your master's counting house. I will go to bed,"—and I actually did go to bed, lest I might be tempted to pry into a letter which might be only on business, and in no way whatever concern me. There was something strange in the woman's coming at that hour of the night, for it was past ten o'clock; her voice, too, seemed the voice of wounded sensibility. These reflections kept me waking, and when Darnley came home, I told him of the letter, and bade the maid bring it to him. I am interrupted.

Adieu until next post.

SARAH.

LETTER VIII. SARAH TO ANNE. [In continuation.]

London, – June, 1777.

I WAS unable to restrain the inclination I felt to watch the countenance of Darnley, whilst he perused the letter; he appeared considerably agitated; he crumpled it up, and turning hastily to me, asked, "Who brought this letter?" "A woman." "Did you see her?" "No, I did not, but if I could judge from the tone of her voice, she was in great distress." "She is in great distress," he replied. "I hope then, you will do what you can to serve her." "You hope, Sarah?" "Yes, Mr. Darnley; are you surprised at my expressing an interest for an afflicted woman?" "No, but she is an entire stranger to you, and why should you wish or care about her?" "Only as a distressed fellow creature." "Well, I shall think about her in the morning." "And visit her, won't you? She seemed very anxious to see you." "Yes, and visit her, if you desire it." I perceived he was in one of those kind of humors, which only waits the opportunity of saying ill natured things, and is ready to catch and repeat every word, in order to cavil at it, so imagined I should shew most prudence in remaining silent. You have never been married, Anne; so cannot inform me whether it is so or not, but if every married man is so captious, and petulant, so angry at their wives' only expressing a difference in opinions in the mildest words: I wonder how any woman can be so passionately attached to them. But, perhaps, that passionate attachment prevents their seeing any fault in them, and they, supposing all the man, thus idolized, says, does, or thinks is right, never take the trouble of contradicting him; assent implicitly to his opinions, however absurd, and will not exert their own mental powers to think or decide for themselves. Happy beings! but this is a kind of felicity in which I shall never be a partaker. Yet Darnley is not what the world calls an ill tempered man, nor of the lowest order in point of understanding; and heaven is my judge, I try to view every action, every word, in the fairest point of view, and I really think if he was to take a different method from what he does, I should in time teach my heart to feel for him every sentiment, which it is necessary to form a complete system of permanent happiness, at least, as far as it depends on a mutual interchange of kind offices, and that solicitude to promote each other's peace of mind, which ought to be constantly kept in view, by persons residing continually under the same roof, and destined to pass their lives together. But to return, I have reason to think that neither of us passed a very pleasant night. Darnley was restless, and slept little, sighed frequently, and seemed anxiously watching for daylight, as he arose several times, and unclosed the shutter to look out; this being the case, it cannot be supposed I rested very well; however, about four o'clock, I fell into a sound sleep, and on awaking at half past eight, found he was risen and gone out. I dressed hastily, that I might be ready for breakfast when he returned: it was near ten o'clock when he came in. "Well," said he, throwing his hat into a chair, "why have you waited breakfast? I have been to see Mrs. Romain, and have breakfasted with her." "Been to see who, cousin George?" said Miss Melbourn, looking hastily up from a book, which she had been reading. "Mrs. Romain, my pretty Polly," said he, facetiously chucking her under the chin, "you know she was formerly a flame of mine." "So the world said," replied Mary, her face in a glow, and her large black eyes speaking a vast deal more than she permitted her tongue to utter. "Well, cousin Mary, don't you be jealous, if my wife gives me leave to visit an old sweetheart, surely you will not forbid me, and upon my honor, the last words she said to me last night, was to desire me to visit Mrs. Romain early." "And I am very glad, my dear," said I, "you obeyed my commands; and though you have breakfasted with her, seeing you are in such an obedient humor, I command you now to sit down and breakfast again with me."

He sat down, and took up the newspaper. I did not intend to have said a word more concerning the letter or lady, I felt no uneasiness; if she had once been a favorite, he had given a positive proof that I had been preferred, and why should I tease him with an affectation of jealousy, which, when proceeding from affection, however it may be thought a proof of the wife's love, pays the husband's integrity, a very ill compliment? But Mary Melbourn could not let the matter rest. "How long has Mrs. Romain been in town?" said she, addressing Darnley. "She arrived late last night from Dover." "I heard she was gone to be a boarder in the convent of St. Omers." "So she was, but her husband is lately dead? she has therefore no longer a tyrant to immure her in a prison she detested." "I heard Romain was dead, but think she had better have remained where she was; I never saw her but once in my life, I was not then pleased with her, and from what the world has said, I think the more I had known her the less I should have liked her." "I do believe, Sarah," said he, turning laughing towards me, "our cousin Mary here is in love with me, she seems so uneasy at the return of Jessey. But what will she say, when she knows

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I have offered her and her child an apartment in my family until she can get some business settled, which a friend of mine at Calais, has written to me to transact for her concerning her late husband's effects?" "I have nothing to say to it," said she, "if Mrs. Darnley has no objection to such a companion, it can be no business of mine; besides, I return to your mother's today, and leave town on Saturday." "So soon?" said he, carelessly. "Yes," was the reply, and the subject was dropped. When she had finished her breakfast, I told Mr. Darnley, that I hoped he had not from my silence imagined I should not be glad to receive any person he should think proper to invite to his house; and would, if he thought it necessary, wait on the lady in question, and second his invitation, as without that, she might be unwilling to avail herself of it." "Will you be so very good, my kind hearted Sarah?" said he; "it will indeed gratify me very much; she is a distressed woman, has been calumniated by the world, and ill treated by her husband's relations, who are endeavoring to wrest the little property her husband left, from her and her infant daughter, in order to secure it to her son, whom they have taken from her. Your countenancing her, will give her an air of respectability, and restore her to that rank in society, from which she has unjustly been driven by the ill nature and jealousy of a brutal husband."

"I think, Mr. Darnley," said I, "that the respect due to your own honor, will prevent your wishing to associate your wife with a person whose good name had been tarnished by any wilful act of guilt; in that confidence I shall cheerfully do what seems to be so agreeable to your wishes. If you will accompany me at twelve o'clock, I will pay the proposed visit, and while I see no cause to think Mrs. Romain guilty or imprudent, every mark, every office of kindness in my power, I shall be happy to shew her."

When I went up stairs to arrange my dress, Mary tapped at the dressing-room door; when she entered, I perceived that her eyes were red with weeping. "What is the matter, Mary?" "Matter, nothing, only I don't like George's design of bringing that woman here; the world has been very loud in their censures of her." "The world often censures the innocent; but even supposing she has been imprudent, may she not have seen her errors, and may she not, if countenanced by women of character, return to rectitude?" "Did you never hear of her before you were married?" "No." "Well, the world said she was very liberal of her favors to cousin George." "Again I repeat, the world often says more than is true; but were that even the case, as she is now situated, she had better be under my protection, than thrown entirely on his." Mr. Darnley at that moment called me; I went with him, gave the requested invitation; it was accepted, and last evening she became an inmate of my family. Her person is fine, though she is past thirty; her manners graceful, and her mind highly accomplished. I hope and trust the world have censured her unjustly. I shall be anxious to hear from you; write soon, for your approbation is, next to that of my own heart, of the utmost importance to

SARAH.

LETTER IX. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – July, 1777.

I ENCLOSE you two letters, which I have received from Mrs. Darnley, and they will sufficiently account for my not paying you my intended visit. You will perceive when you have perused them, that all is not right in the family of our friend. I am angry with Darnley; he has led his wife into an improper connexion, and I strongly suspect his motives are not such as would bear a strict scrutiny. I am not better pleased with the officious meddling of Miss Melbourn. She might, and indeed ought to have hinted to her cousin, the impropriety of his introducing a woman to his wife whose character was suspicious; and who had been sent into France by her husband, because he had reasons to suppose that too great an intimacy subsisted between her and Darnley. This, I say, would have been a duty; but she ought by no means to have awakened suspicions in Mrs Darnley's bosom derogatory to her husband's honor. There might have been methods taken to have shamed him out of his folly, (not to give it a harsher name,) without interrupting the peace of his wife. I do not think Sarah is of a jealous temper, but the inuendos of Mary Melbourn might awaken suspicion; and where suspicion is once called into action, every word, look and movement is considered through a false medium, and even the most innocent, construed into proofs of guilt I am convinced that more than half the uneasinesses that subsist between married persons have originated in meddling friends of either sex; but to our shame, I must own, I believe our own sex more addicted to this folly than the other. Let persons think what they will, unless they have proofs beyond the possibility of doubt, they ought to be silent; and even in that case, it is better to reason with the offending party, than to hint their discoveries to the husband or wife, whom either ardent affection, or perfect indifference, may have rendered blind; for though in the latter case, there is no fear of lacerating the heart of the person to whom the information is given; yet wounded pride will often, nay, perhaps oftener, lead to fatal consequences than slighted affection.

This Mrs. Romain bears the character of a very artful woman. Her husband was a Frenchman, and she herself, having been educated in that country, had imbibed much of that lightness and flippancy which frequently characterize the women of that nation. Her mind is cultivated; but it did not in early life receive a proper bias. She had no kind parent to restrain the exuberance of her vivacity, to teach her to keep her passions under the subjection of reason and religion. Natural consequence followed; the former hurried her into imprudencies, the latter plunged her into guilt. I say guilt, because there is no reason to doubt of her criminal intimacy with Darnley. The summer before he became acquainted with Sarah, this woman had a small house near the summer residence of Darnley's family. Her manners being polished, her temper naturally sweet, her cheerfulness exhilarating to all with whom she associated, she soon became a favorite with Mrs. Darnley, who, having met her several times at visits in the neighborhood, invited her to her house, and an intimacy ensued. Mr. Romain was considerably older than herself, but his affection to her was evident in all his actions. The difference in their age was not so great as to make their union appear preposterous; he might have been fifteen years the elder; but he was a man whom any woman might respect, and when treated by him as his wife ever was, whom it would, one would imagine, be next to impossible not to love. He was sensible, had the manners of a gentleman; was of an easy temper, and unbounded benevolence. Mrs. Romain, at the time she became intimate in Mr. Darnley's family, was the mother of a fine boy, and on the eve of again becoming a parent. Indulged by a fond husband, to whom she owed every thing, in every wish of her heart, adored, caressed; never opposed; is it not wonderful that she could be so depraved, as wilfully to throw from her this inexhaustible mine of happiness, and court ruin and infamy? I write not from hear-say; I write from incontestible proofs. My mother's sister lived in the next house, and was unwillingly made a party in the scene of confusion which followed the discovery of her lapse from virtue. Mr. Romain having confided some papers to her care, when first he began to fear his wife's affections were estranged from him, without mentioning his suspicions; when those suspicions were fully confirmed, relieved his almost breaking heart, by relating many circumstances, which might otherwise have never transpired. My aunt never mentioned the affair until after Darnley was married to my friend Sarah; and then a sudden exclamation, that he was unworthy so good a wife, led to the relation. I will continue my narrative next week. Adieu.

ANNE.

LETTER X. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – July, 1777.

THE autumn of the summer mentioned to you in my last, business of a very particular nature, took Mr. Romain to Paris. His wife having just recovered from her confinement, was not able to undertake the journey with him; though her perfect state of convalescence was evinced very shortly after his departure. George Darnley had visited there frequently, while the husband was at home; his visits were, after he was gone, as frequent as ever; this would not have been noticed by the neighbors had it rested there; but he took her often out to ride in a chaise, perhaps as often as twice a week; sometimes they would go out in the morning and remain out all day; sometimes he waited on her to the play, to the opera, and once to a masquerade, from whence they did not return until day light in the morning.

In October, Mrs. Darnley and her family returned to London, but George found various pretences for sleeping in the country, and at length they were so lost to all sense of propriety, that he passed every night at her house, alleging by way of excuse, that as the nights grew long, she was afraid to sleep alone in a house so far from town, to which place, her health and that of her infant, (who was indeed extremely indisposed) would not permit her to return.

Thus the autumn, and almost the whole winter wore away: in February, Mr. Romain came unexpectedly home. It was evening when he arrived, and expressed some astonishment at seeing George Darnley there, quite in a family way, for as it was late, he had his slippers on. But whatever he might think, he said but little. A few days after his arrival, he called on my aunt, and putting a packet of papers into her hands, requested her to keep them until he called for them, saying, they were of great consequence, and he would not have her part with them to any person whatever.

My aunt had very little commerce with Mrs. Romain, but now and then, she would come of a morning, and sit an hour or two when the weather prevented her from making longer excursions, or perhaps, when she wished to avoid any company whom she had reason to think would call at that time. In one of these chance visits, she informed my aunt, that Mr. Romain had thoughts of removing to St. Omer's; that he had a sister settled there, and wanted his family to be near her. "I do not want to go," continued she, "his sister is a stiff, formal old maid, who has lived all her life in a convent, though she is not a nun; he only wants to be there, that she may be a spy upon my conduct; and when he makes a journey, he may clap me into the stupid nunnery; for he says no woman ought to remain in society, receiving and paying visits, and going to public places, when her husband is absent."

My aunt could make no reply to such a remark, she had thought herself that Mrs. Romain would have shewn most prudence by remaining more at home, and not admitting young Darnley to be so constantly with her: she had thought her conduct very reprehensible, but she was not upon such intimate terms as could authorize a remonstrance, which, however, delicately given, or friendly designed, might have been deemed impertinence.

Mr. Romain had been home but a short time, when the death of their youngest child seemed to recal the mother to some degree of reflection, for several weeks she led a retired life, and all company was excluded the house. But the heart that has once become the slave of a depraved affection, soon grows insensible to those which do honor to humanity. A retirement with a husband who almost idolized his children, and who most severely felt the death of this little girl, by no means suited the levity of her disposition. She had made some acquaintances with women of doubtful reputation; her husband remonstrated, but she was incorrigible, and persisted even in appearing with them in public. This hastened his preparations for a removal, though in the mean time, he harbored the most tormenting suspicions; these suspicions were at length fully confirmed.

It was late one evening, my aunt was just preparing to retire for the night, when Mrs. Romain's upper servant came running into the house, and with a terrified aspect, begged her to go to her mistress, whom she believed was dying—"There has been dreadful work at our house, ma'am," said the young woman, "but master begs you will come in." My aunt threw on a shawl hastily, and followed the maid. She found Mr. Romain pale, and dreadfully agitated, leaning over a sofa, on which lay his imprudent wife, deprived of sense and motion. "Come, madam," said he, in a voice almost choaked with contending passions, "come, and do something for this unhappy woman, whom fear, shame, and anxiety for an unworthy villain, whom I have horsewhipped out of my house, have thrown into this situation." They applied volatiles to her nose, temples, and wrists, loosened her clothes, and in about half

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an hour, she began to have some recollection: the moment she saw her husband, who had been, spite of his injuries, anxiously assiduous about her, while in a state of insensibility; she raised her hands, clasped them in an agony, covered her face, and burst into tears. "Do not leave her, madam, I entreat you," said the distracted husband, "I cannot speak to her now, but will endeavor to regain some composure, and return to her in an hour or two." He left them, and shut himself up in his study. Mrs. Romain was led to her bed chamber; she spoke not a word, but her tears flowed so violently, that it appeared like hysterical affection. They prevailed upon her to take some wine and water, into which they put a few drops of a composing nature, which my aunt had sent for from her own house; this, in a measure, stilled the agitation of her frame, and towards morning, she dropped into a broken slumber. At day light, Mr. Romain sent a request to speak to my aunt; she went to his study, giving the servant a strict charge not to quit her mistress.

"You see, madam," said he, as my aunt entered, "a man almost driven to distraction, by the infidelity of a woman he adores; when I brought you those papers some few weeks since, I had great reason to suppose my wife had forfeited her good name, and made a sacrifice of my honor on the altar of illicit passion. I had picked up a paper folded in the form of a letter, but without superscription or signature, I thought the writing to be that of Jessey's; but the hand was so disguised, I could not be certain. This infamous scrawl expressed a thorough dislike to one person, whom I suspected was myself, and a most passionate regard for another, whom I imagined to be that insidious villain, Darnley. It expressed a strong desire to be released from the fetters which bound the writer to one, and set her at liberty to devote herself to the other; an offer to quit her legal protector, and go to any part of the world with her paramour; concluding with saying, she could take with her papers, which would secure her independence. This, I imagine, referred to the writings of an estate, which, previous to our marriage, I had settled on Jessey. I shewed her this diabolical paper; but she denied all knowledge of it, with such asseverations, and resented my suspicions with such an appearance of conscious innocence. that I almost doubted the evidence of my own senses, which had noticed familiarities between her and Darnley, which were very unbecoming a virtuous, married woman. Determined to put the writings mentioned beyond her reach, I placed them with you. The death of our poor little girl, whose decease I now rejoice in, as she was snatched from the obloquy which ever attends the daughter of a vicious mother; I say, madam, the death of her child made some alteration in her conduct, which was very pleasant to me; and I began to hope she would see the folly and guilt of her past behavior."—

Elenor, I know you are interested in this narrative, but I must drop my pen for the present. It is a beautiful evening, and my charming little friend Sarah waits at the door in a coach, to take me to Kensington gardens. Adieu!

ANNE.

LETTER XI. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – July, 1777.

I PURSUE my subject. Suppose Mr. Romain again speaking. "Last night, madam, I was fatally convinced, all my suspicions were just; suffer me to remain silent concerning the scene to which I was an excruciating witness. I rushed into the room, with a horsewhip in my hand, (for I had rode from town,) and made the dishonorable reptile feel its lash pretty severely. It is my firm resolution never to live with my lost Jessey again; but I will not expose her to the world. I will not drive her from me, and by so doing, plunge her into the abyss of shame and infamy; I am resolved to protect her against her will. I have feared, and I am now convinced, that a living witness of her defection will appear. But my friends in France will know nothing of what has passed, and I will place her in the convent at St. Omer's, where my sister has been from choice many years a boarder; here she may remain until the unfortunate little being sees the light. I will then consider what is best to be done. I shall leave this place, and if possible, England, this very day; and must request you to see to the packing of the plate, linen, &c. in order to their being sent after us. I shall empower a person to sell the furniture, and remit me the proceeds. I think it will be best not to take any of our present domestics, as they are but too well acquainted with Jessey's frailty; I have sent to the inn for a post chaise, and must beg you to go and prepare the unhappy woman for her removal."

My aunt returned to Mrs. Romain; she found her awake and rising. It was an awkward task to inform her of her husband's resolution. She stood with her face from my aunt while she was speaking; but when she found she was silent, she turned and thus addressed: "I am obliged to you, madam, for the trouble you have taken; I understand you have been in the house all night; and I have no doubt but it is to your advice I owe this hastily determination of Mr. Romain. I must confess I think you have been unnecessarily officious, and must beg the few moments I have to tarry in my house, I may remain unmolested."

As she was speaking, the chaise drove up to the door, and Mr. Romain entered the room. "Come, madam," said he to his wife in a solemn voice, "give orders to your servant to pack up a change of clothes, and do you prepare yourself for a journey; breakfast is ready in the parlor; take from your drawers what you want, and then deliver your keys to this lady, who will take care that every thing is sent after you." "Sir," said she in a haughty tone, "I do not choose that any stranger should have the liberty of examining my drawers." "If, madam," he replied, in a firm and pointed manner, "you have any thing is them you are afraid or ashamed of having seen, it were best you removed or destroyed it before you went away; but I desire you to be quick, as I must depart within the hour." She colored; a few tears forced themselves down her cheeks; while in an unsteady voice, she begged to be left alone ten minutes; her request was complied with; she then came down stairs, with a forced appearance of composure, habited ready for her journey. She drank a cup of chocolate with difficulty; and, when her husband inquired if she was ready to go, arose from her seat, saying, "No—neither ready nor willing; but it is your pleasure, and I must obey." She trembled so, she could scarcely stand; the color left her cheeks, and it was with unequal steps, and a bosom that throbbed almost to suffocation, that she seated herself in the chaise. Mr. Romain drew up the glasses; and a few hours took her out of England; to which, had she been prudent, she would never have returned. These circumstances, being made known to me, when it was too late to prevent Sarah from forming a connexion which, I greatly fear, will prove the ruin of her peace, I thought best not to mention them; nor have I, since my return, permitted her to think I am in the least acquainted with any circumstance concerning Mrs. Romain. But I am determined to keep a strict eye upon her, and if I see her laying any plans to regain her ascendancy over Darnley, I shall speak my mind both to him and her, in a manner that will not be very pleasing.

Mrs. Darnley, at present, seems inclined to think all the reports which she has heard, were groundless. Jessey, (as I shall henceforth call her,) is a specious woman; very insinuating in her manner; and my dear Sarah, with all her good sense, is very credulous, and open to deception; but I do earnestly hope that the film will not fall from her eyes on this occasion; for what situation in life is more mortifying, than that of a neglected wife? A knowledge of treachery on the part of her husband, would awaken all her resentment. I know her, she would never reproach him; she would never consider his breach of duty as an apology for any failure of her own. She would continue immovable in the path of rectitude; but such an exertion would cause her many bitter tears; and her sufferings would be more poignant, because she would conceal them in her own bosom, and wear the mask of serenity over a lacerated heart. I shall let you know what discoveries I make; I shall not be inquisitively prying,

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but I shall observe and draw conclusions from those observations, not to gratify any impertinent curiosity, but in order to guard the peace of the invaluable Sarah.

London, at this period, is not very pleasant; Darnley talks of taking a lodging at Islington; I think I see through his plans; his wife acquiesces in all that he proposes; she is pleased with the idea of being in the country—I hope it will, in the end, contribute to her felicity; but I greatly fear it will not. One remark I have made since my return is, that Darnley lives very freely, and has a number of men always after him, who look like professed gamblers; they are ill bred, and by no means society fit for his delicate, gentle wife. Adieu. I am in truth, Yours, affectionately,

ANNE.

LETTER XII. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – October, 1777.

THIS Jessey is more artful than I believed her to be; she has gained such an ascendancy over Sarah, that she leads her into all manner of dissipation and extravagance. She is ever on the wing, always in a crowd; a good way, you will say, of making her inattentive to her own particular conduct. The autumnal amusements have commenced, and the play, the opera, or some fashionable party occupies every evening; this leads to great expenses, constantly appearing in public requiring numerous changes of dress. Sarah, indulged from infancy in elegant habiliments, though her own taste prevents her dressing fine, is thoughtlessly extravagant; elegant laces, rich satins, with gloves, caps, shoes, &c. suitable, are not procured for a trifling sum in the course of a year; and Sarah is, perhaps, not so careful of her clothes, or attentive to the expenditures of her house keeping as she ought to be; her heart is naturally liberal; she has no idea of being imposed on by her servants, and when sometimes a slight suspicion will cross her mind, that her provisions are wasted, or her clothes wilfully lost, any plausible excuse will quiet her, and from a native love of peace, she will cease to inquire concerning her domestic concerns, or appear satisfied, when in fact, she is not convinced; she exerts but little authority in the management of her family: dressing, making and receiving visits, late hours at night, and, consequently, late mornings, have, in appearance, totally altered the character of the late interesting Sarah.

She gives dinners and suppers in very high style, and is herself the very soul of the parties she draws around her; while Jessey, satisfied with having persuaded or flattered her into these follies, with an assumed humility, declines joining the parties, and I am well convinced, has more than once instigated Darnley to blame Sarah for a conduct, which I acknowledge very reprehensible. But she should be remonstrated with mildly, and not vulgarly reproached, and taunted with having all the extravagant propensities of a fine lady, without having brought any fortune to support them. Yet this unmanly reproach was made to the humiliated Sarah, in my presence, a few days since. To which she replied, with more sincerity than prudence: "You knew my poverty, and wilfully burthened yourself with a woman, who can neither feel nor think as you do. Yet, Mr. Darnley, let me add, if you had treated me with the confidence due to a wife, you would have always found me conformable in my dress and pursuits, to the circumstances of a husband, whom it is my duty, and would be my pride, to honor if he would let me."

This occasioned a violent altercation. He told her, it was not because he could not afford it, but because he did not choose, that she should lead so gay a life, that he found fault. She flew out of the room, and gave vent to her full heart by tears, (which she ever endeavors to restrain in his presence) in her own apartment. Thither the officious, intrusive Jessey followed her, and I was astonished when we met at dinner, for I was passing the day with her, to find her dressed, and hear her declare, she meant to join a party to the play, from whence she was going to a card party, and that she meant to sup out. She entreated me to accompany her; but I very good naturedly felt at that moment a strong propensity to stay and keep Mrs. Romain company. And stay I did, much to the mortification of that *amiable* lady, and her more *amiable chere amie*.

I found a new novel in Sarah's dressing room, and bidding the maid fetch Mrs. Romain's work, told Darnley we did not want him, so he might as well follow his wife to the play; and having partly laughed, and partly satirized him into some sense of shame, I had the pleasure to see him depart, and very composedly begun and finished the novel before twelve o'clock; at which hour, Jessey being no longer able to command her impatience, and pretend pleasure, when in truth she was bursting with vexation, said she was sleepy, rang for candles, and with a profusion of civility, bade me a good night.

About two o'clock Sarah returned, and Darnley with her; he was very petulant, and taking a candle, went immediately to his room. Sarah threw herself on the sofa, and burst into tears. "What is the matter, my dear?" I asked. "Nothing of consequence," said she, "I am ashamed of myself, but—" "I am afraid, my dear Sarah," said I, in a softened, almost hesitating voice, "that you are somewhat to blame, in the little disagreement of to-day; you must not be offended, you have even given me leave to be sincere with you; why, when Mr. Darnley expressed a dislike to your leading so dissipated a life, why did you immediately dress and go out? My dear friend, you must submit a little." "Anne," said she, wiping away her tears, "I feel you are right, but I cannot command my temper at all times. I know it is wrong to complain, the die is cast, and I must be silent and unresisting. But, my dear Anne, why does he not treat me with confidence? Why am I kept a stranger in all his concerns? I know not whether he

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can afford the style in which we live, or whether he is worth a single guinea; sometimes he will give me money unasked; sometimes buy me finery in profusion; at other times, he grudges every thing, and will rail at me for wearing his presents, though it was solely to do him honor that I put them on. It is the last time, Anne, I will ever speak on the subject; but my lot is not a very happy one, even at the best; and, had I entertained the smallest idea of the misery, the certain misery that must attend a woman, married to a man from whom her nature shrinks repugnant; whose every word, opinion and action, is an outrage to her sensibility, I would have submitted to the most menial day labor, before I would have taken upon myself duties I have not the patience and fortitude to fulfil as I ought. Heaven knows," continued she, and her lips began to tremble, and her voice to falter, "Heaven knows I strive to consider him with respect; to behold him with affection; but how can I compel my heart to love a man, who one hour treats me with rudeness and contempt, and the next, with a disgusting fondness, even more repulsive to me than his ill nature? Anne, I have spoken with sincerity; I ever considered you as a second self, and must now entreat you to bury what I have said in your bosom When you see me acting wrong, as I know I have done to-day, do not hesitate to reprove me; but in regard to him, I pray you be silent; he is apparently good natured, liberal and cheerful; the world believes me happy, I would not undeceive them." "I will implicitly regard your prudent injunction," I replied, struck with the magnanimity of her resolution, "but will you allow me to mention one thing more, which I really think it my duty to point out to you, as I believe much of your happiness in future will depend on your attending to my advice on this subject. Be upon your guard against Mrs. Romain; do not let her persuade you to act in opposition to your husband's will, and gloss such a conduct over with the name of spirit, resolution, and proper independence." "Anne," said she, "do you apprehend that Jessey has any interested views in sowing dissention between us?"

I perceived her drift, and, rising, said, "I think nothing, only that Mrs. Romain is not a woman whom I could wish to see the friend of Sarah Darnley. She has a strong tincture of foreign manners, and what is dignified with the appellation of a masculine mind; but she has not one quality which should give her an ascendancy over such a mind as yours Good night," said I, kissing her cheek, "let me see you good friends with that unaccountable being, your husband, to-morrow; and while you have yourself every disposition to make your fetters easy, do not suffer officious meddlers to render them galling. Act always from the impulse of your own heart, and I am sure you will act right."

The next morning I had the pleasure to see them quite composed and civil to each other; and to prevent any interposition that might again stir up discontent, I insisted upon Mrs. Romain's going to spend a few days with me. She went home yesterday, and I have not heard from Sarah since. Yours, in sincerity,

ANNE.

LETTER XIII. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – March 20, 1778.

IT is some time since I wrote to you. My time has been variously occupied, and that not in the most agreeable manner. Mrs. Darnley has suffered much during the period in which my pen has lain dormant, and I have given myself up to her comfort. Darnley has lost his mother; she was an amiable woman, and in her society Sarah often found solace for her afflicted heart. I look upon this bereavement as peculiarly unfortunate for her, as the respectability of his mother's character, her steady, though unassuming love of virtue, made George anxious to preserve some respect to decency; but that slight restraint removed, he will no longer regard appearances. He is going, I fear, the high road to ruin. The sums he lavishes on Jessey are astonishing, while a tradesman is allowed to call repeatedly for his money to no purpose. Sarah's thoughtlessness and folly (for I must give it that harsh term) increases; the more agonized her heart, (and agonized it is I am certain in a very high degree,) the more dissipated her conduct; and to see her in company, you would suppose her the happiest of the happy. When alone, she either sits pensive and unemployed, except in reading some work of fancy, or applies to her music, playing and singing the most plaintive airs, while tears roll down her cheeks, and she seems lost to all but exquisite sensibility. Yet from such a state of depression, she will start suddenly up, dress, and fly to some scene of pleasure; often losing very considerable sums at cards, and seldom or ever returning until very late at night—sometimes she is favored with her husband's company, but oftener she is left to herself. I am almost continually with her; for I do not think a young and prepossessing woman can be placed in a more perilous situation, than to be neglected by her husband, and yet constantly mixing in that kind of society which abounds with libertines and flatterers, who think such a woman ever an object of illicit pursuit. Not that I doubt Sarah's principles, I know she loves virtue for its own sake; but she is imprudent, and might inadvertently fall into situations, which may ruin her reputation, and perhaps her peace of mind for ever. I am going this evening to her house, to remain a week with her, and shall not finish my letter until I retire for the night.

The veil is at length rent, Sarah can no longer even pretend blindness to the insult her husband has offered her. How she will conduct on this trying occasion, I cannot think, nor can I dare to advise; I can only commiserate her situation, and weep, not with, (for she has not shed a tear,) but for her. My mind is so agitated, and has been so, since the discovery was made, that I could not write last night, and even now, I hardly know how to frame my account, for the scene of last evening seems in my memory but as the traces of a horrid vision. But I will endeavor to proceed with some degree of regularity.

I have already told you, I was to go to Mrs. Darnley's last evening, with a design to spend a week. I had appointed to meet her in a large party, at a friend's house in Berkley-street, and was to proceed home with her after the party broke up. She was not there when I arrived, but came soon after accompanied by Mrs. Romain. "Where is Darnley?" said I, when she was seated beside me. "He had the head ache," she replied, "and will not come out to-night." "Then why, my dear Sarah," said I, "did you come out?" "Why, Anne," she replied, rather petulantly, "you know my company affords him no pleasure; his conversation is only fit for the gaming table, the race ground, or a worse place. I cannot, will not listen to discourse so offensive to my ears, so degrading to my feelings; and he will listen to no other."

I knew well enough this was the case, and therefore could say no more. She seemed a moment after to recollect herself, and said, "I do not mean to stay late." However she sat down to a commerce table, and forgot her good intentions until near one o'clock; I then seeing the pool was out, and that she was preparing to join another party, reminded her of the hour. Mrs. Romain had been engaged in a whist party in another room; we now inquired for her, and found she had been sent for above two hours before, a message coming that her child was ill. I must own my heart sunk at this discovery, and I thought a flash of awakened suspicion kindled upon the cheek of Sarah. It was full half an hour before the coach could get up to the door, and even when it did, and we were seated in it, whatever were the thoughts of either, we seemed mutually resolved to restrain them within the bounds of silence. When we arrived at home, just as the carriage drove up to the door, it was opened by one of the maids who was letting a visitor out; this prevented the usual rap at the door. "Where is Mrs. Romain?" said Sarah, impatiently. "In the drawing room," said the maid. "How is your master?" "Better, I believe, he has been in bed these two hours."

Sarah opened the drawing room door, the candles were burning on the table, but the room was empty. "I will

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go up and see how Darnley is," said she, taking a chamber candle from the servant, "and will see you again for a few minutes before I go to bed."

She ran hastily up stairs, she is very light of foot, besides which, the stairs are carpeted, so that her ascent seemed no more than the gliding of a shadow. I sat down by the fire; in less than two minutes she returned, her face pale, and positively gasping for breath. Her limbs scarcely supported her to the sofa, where I was sitting, on which she sunk almost insensible. Alarmed, I rang for water; she swallowed a little, and then speaking with difficulty, bade the servant go to bed; she could undress herself, she said, and as she knew where to find her night clothes, there was no occasion for her to go into the room. The poor girl, who suspected what was the matter, began to speak, but Sarah waved her from the room with an emphatic "Go," and a motion of the hand, which, in her, carries with it positive command.

When the maid was gone, she turned to me, and laying her hand on my arm, said, "Jessey is a serpent—Darnley is a wretch." What could I say? I pressed her cold trembling hand, and remained silent. "I will not expose the unprincipled woman, nor humiliate myself by reproaching the man who can thus convince me on what a degrading passion his boasted attachment to me was founded. I hardly know on what to determine, but this I believe to be my duty, not to permit Jessey to remain another day under my roof. I will go into your room," said she, rising mournfully, "and undress; perhaps I may lie down a few moments beside you." This she did, but neither of us slept, I believe, for one moment.

About eight o'clock we heard Darnley's bell ring violently; she immediately left my chamber without speaking. It is almost incredible, yet a certain fact, the treacherous husband had the inhumanity to endeavor to veil his own conduct by arraigning that of his innocent wife. "Where the devil have you been all night, madam?" said he, in a loud, imperious tone. "In Anne's chamber." "And what is the reason you did not come to your own?" "Because," she replied, in a steady, firm voice, "my place was pre-occupied." "It is a lie," said he, vociferously, "but I see your aim; you are jealous, you are envious; but by heaven, if you dare to breathe a word"—"Mr Darnley," said she, "I never loved you well enough to be jealous of you. I told you before our ill fated union took place, that our hearts could never beat in unison. I am now more than ever convinced of it." "But pray, madam," said he, "what put it into your head that your place was occupied; which of the cursed meddling servants?" "Neither of them," said she, "my own eyes convinced me; I came up the moment I returned, and the first thing I saw was Jessey's shoes—" "By the bed side," said he, interrupting her, "and so that is all the reason you have for thinking Jessey was in your place; but, madam, Jessey has twice the tenderness in her nature that you have. When she came home, she found me very ill, advised me to go to bed, made me some whey, brought it up herself, and fearing her shoes might make a noise, put them off her feet; sat down, and bathed my temples in hot vinegar: but you, madam, are a wife, you could go gallanting about, while your husband was sick at home; but I suppose you found more agreeable company and employment abroad, than nursing your husband." "If I loved you, Darnley," said she, "what a miserable being I should now be? But thank heaven, that is an agony from which I am spared." She then left him, returned to me, ordered breakfast in my room, and when she heard him go out, went to her own, in hopes of obtaining a few moments' repose. I have taken the opportunity to write thus far, but as I now hear her voice, I must conclude. You shall hear from me again soon.

ANNE.

LETTER XIV. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – March 25, 1778.

DARNLEY's dinner hour is four o'clock, the usual time for dining with all mercantile persons. Sarah kept her room until near three. Mrs. Romain had never ventured down. Darnley had been out all the morning. I really so much dreaded the general meeting at dinner, that I was almost ill; one moment my blood ran cold; another, my face flushed like fire: the least stir below made my heart beat quick, and my whole frame tremble.

About a quarter before three, Sarah came into my room; she was dressed as usual for dinner; and from her countenance, no indifferent person could have judged she had been discomposed: it was marked with a peculiar kind of sadness, which rendered it interesting; but to me, who knew her, the effort she made to conceal her emotions, was very evident. "Anne," said she, "I am determined to see and speak to Jessey, before Darnley's return. How will it be best? to go up into her room, or send for her into my dressing room?" I gave my opinion for the latter. She thought a verbal message might have a rude appearance, but wrote on a slip of paper: "Mrs. Darnley requests Mrs. Romain to favor her with a few minutes conversation previous to their meeting at dinner." The maid went with it, and, after remaining up stairs about ten minutes, returned with the following answer:

"After the suspicions of the night, and the pointed neglect of the morning, Mrs. Romain cannot suppose a personal interview can be desirable to either party; she begs to be excused seeing Mrs. Darnley, and also declines appearing at dinner; Mrs. R. will not intrude in Mrs. D's family, longer than she can procure a lodging."

Sarah's countenance changed as she perused this haughty scrawl, for the uneven letters betrayed the tremor of the hand that wrote them; she tore off the back of the billet, and wrote with her pencil:

"Madam, a personal interview is not sought from any expected pleasure it may afford, but because I think it necessary to speak a few words to you. I must insist on seeing you; if you cannot come down, I will come to you.

S. D."

The servant brought a verbal message, saying, "As Mrs. Darnley was in her own house, she had a right to go into every apartment, if she pleased; therefore, if she insisted upon coming up, she (Mrs. Romain) must submit."

Sarah walked once or twice across the room. "Anne," said she, "you must go with me; I hope I shall not forget myself; I hope I shall remember I am a rational being, and a christian, and that though this unhappy woman has injured me, I am not myself free from error, and have therefore no right to treat her with unmerciful contempt."

I do assure you, madam, when the magnanimous woman uttered this sentence, I could not help gazing at her, as a being of a superior order. "Heaven support your good resolves, my dear Sarah," said I, and was obliged to turn from her, to hide my own rising emotion. "Do not be a child, Anne," said she, taking my hand, "or you will make a fool of me, and I am weak enough already, heaven knows."

I followed her up stairs without answering. She tapped at Jessey's door; the little girl opened it, and being extremely fond of Sarah, gave an instant exclamation of joy, saying, "Come in, ma Darny; Lyza glad, Lyza want kiss ma Darny." I feared this innocent prattle would be too much for my friend, but I had judged erroneously; she stooped, kissed the child, and, ringing the bell, bade the maid take her down and give her an orange.

Jessey had risen from her seat. I saw, from her flashing eye and crimson cheek, that she expected reproaches; but this mild, dignified manner humbled her to the dust; she turned pale, and her eyes were absolutely full. Sarah seated herself, we followed her example; a pause of about a minute ensued, in which period I am not certain but I felt more than either the injurer or the injured. I perceived that Sarah's heart beat high, she struggled for composure; she attained it. "I come not, Mrs. Romain," said she, in a low, but impressive voice, "to recapitulate past events, or to awaken resentful emotions by reproaches. Whatever were the circumstances which took place last evening, I wish them to be buried in eternal oblivion. I am, from a sense of what is due to myself, under the necessity of informing you, we cannot longer both reside under the same roof; but as I do not desire the private concerns of my family, whether pleasant or otherwise, should become the theme of public animadversion, I wish the removal to take place as quietly as possible. I do not intend that even the domestics should know on what account you quit the family; but I must request you will procure a lodging as early as you can. It is for the

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respectability of all parties, that the subject be not spoken of, and particularly for your interest. You may rest assured from me, it shall never transpire, and I can answer for this young lady, that through her it will never be made public; but, should such circumstances take place again, I cannot answer for the discretion of others; and you must permit me to say, in that case your reputation will be entirely lost; nor will any woman of character countenance you."

"I am sorry," said Mrs. Romain, in a tremulous voice, "any misunderstanding should have dissturbed your peace of mind." "Do not labor under a mistake, madam," said Sarah, "you have not wounded my peace, though I greatly fear you have forever banished your own; but let us talk no more. I must request you to appear at dinner, and let our separation, when it takes place, preserve the appearance of good breeding." So saying, she left the room, and went to her own, where she remained until dinner was served. Darnley sent word he should dine out; Mrs. Romain came down, but we ate little, and spoke less. In the evening, Jessey sent for a coach, and having thanked Sarah for all favors, and received her wishes for her health, went to a lodging.

The next morning her trunks were sent after her; but the occurrences of that day must be the subject of another letter.

ANNE.

LETTER XV. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – April 6, 1778.

THE morning following, the eventful day of which I gave you an account in my last, Sarah appeared at the breakfast table with a pale, languid countenance; she had retired early the night before, and I was in hopes would have obtained some quiet repose—a refreshment which her agitated frame and tortured mind seemed greatly to stand in need of. I learnt that Darnley had not been home all night; he had come home early in the morning, and changed his clothes, but told the maid he did not wish to have her mistress disturbed.

"I am afraid," said she, "he fears reproaches, and so avoids his home; but he need not: if he is content to be silent, I am sure I shall not broach the detestable subject; he is now in the compting house, has sent me word he is very busy, and will have his breakfast sent thither. What can I do? Some method must be taken to make him banish this fear of again meeting me. I had thought of writing a note, dictated in terms which may tend to a reconciliation; for while he retains these fears of reproaches which conscience tells him he deserves, he will hide them under ill nature; and suspecting I shall accost him in taunting language, will, to prevent it, load me with the most illiberal abuse."

I approved the idea, and she wrote while eating her breakfast, the following.

"It is certainly painful to me, Mr. Darnley, to find you voluntarily avoid my society. Perhaps I can divine the cause, and by removing it the effect may happily cease. You think my sex and situation will lead me, when we meet, to recapitulate some late events, and make disagreeable remarks thereon. Such a recapitulation is by no means necessary. Let us meet as though no such events had ever taken place: let the whole pass into eternal oblivion: trust me, it shall not be my fault if it does not. I hope you will dine at home to day; Anne is engaged, and if you should dine out also, I shall dine alone.

S. DARNLEY."

This letter was evidently what it appeared to be, the effect of principle; she would perhaps rather have dined alone, than with her husband in his present frame of mind, but she felt it was her duty to endeavor to draw him back to domestic scenes and domestic peace. No answer was returned until past one o'clock, when one of the clerks brought up the following:

"You are very much mistaken, Mrs. Darnley, if you suppose I dread your reproaches: I know, with all your boasted forbearance, you dare not utter any, or it is not your regard to me would prevent you; but pray understand, madam, if I am not master of my own house, I am of my actions and person, and shall go out when and where I please, without consulting your pleasure; mind your own business, and don't trouble yourself about me; you have got a comfortable home, and may go out or come in, as you please. But you cannot suppose, after the very polite method which you took to turn Jessey out of doors, that I can see you with any degree of temper; and since you have withdrawn from her your protection, I feel doubly bound to afford her mine. She is a woman whom I esteem; she loves me with her whole soul; she has given incontestable proofs, that her affection for me supersedes all other considerations; and had she sooner been freed from her matrimonial shackles, you would never have been the wife of

G. DARNLEY."

Sarah gave vent to her swollen heart in a flood of tears, when she had perused this unmanly epistle; she wrote a few lines, which as near as I can recollect, I subjoin: Letter

"That I am your wife, Mr. Darnley, is more my misfortune, than my fault. But you are under a mistake, in supposing Jessey loves you. No woman can be under the influence of that sacred passion, (whose power I can conceive, though as yet I have never felt its influence) who degrades herself below even the pity of a man of principle, and for self gratification plunges the object of her pretended adoration into infamy, by inciting him to

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repeated breaches of every sacred and moral obligation. You say I have a comfortable home; can that home be so, from whence domestic peace is banished? You are your own master—It is well you are so. Would to God I was as free.

S. DARNLEY."

Letter

He went out at two o'clock; I saw Sarah sinking under her mental sufferings, and put off my engagement to remain at home with her. It was nearly the close of evening, when a message came, saying, Mr. Darnley was going a journey, and desired clothes to be put up to last a fortnight. This was immediately complied with. We sent the next day to inquire for Jessey, and found they were gone together!—that she passed for his wife in the house where they lodged, and went by the name of Hayley; that the maid and child were left at home; and that they said they were going a tour of pleasure.

They having thus exposed themselves to open censure, I no longer hold myself bound to withhold the whole procedure from you. I intend remaining with Sarah during his absence. She has regained her composure, and mixes again in society; but she assures me, there is now no tie between Darnley and herself, but the strong sense she entertains of what is due to moral rectitude. How they will behave to each other on his return, I cannot divine. I have no doubt but he will endeavor to incense her so far, as to make her wish a separation; but she will never do that, as there is no state in the world she thinks so humiliating and pitiable, as a woman in a state of separation from her husband; the world ever ready to condemn, does not fail ever to attach some share of blame to the conduct of a wife who is slighted and forsaken by her legal protector.

I was interrupted an hour since, by the arrival of a letter from Scarborough, where my brother has been for some time; he is dangerously ill— I must leave Sarah immediately; she has promised to write often, you shall have copies of all her letters, as she has allowed me that liberty. Farewell, may heaven bless you, ever prays Your friend,

ANNE.

LETTER XVI. SARAH TO ANNE.

London, – May 10, 1778.

THE receipt of your letter, which assured me of your health and safe arrival at the end of your journey, was welcome, but I have felt little inclination to write, as I had no pleasant subject to employ my pen. You have engaged me to write all that occurs in regard to Darnley and Mrs. Romain; it is an ungrateful subject, yet when the heart is overflowing with anguish, it naturally seeks relief by pouring out its complaints to one who sympathizes in its pains, and ever was ready to increase and partake its joys. Ah! my dear Anne, how many of the former, how few of the latter have fallen to my share. I review my past life, and strive to recall some pleasing remembrance; but it is in vain; for even in my happiest hours, when the vivacity of youth, united with the ease and plenty which reigned in my father's house, might have been expected to have crowned every hour with felicity, the unkindness of my aunt, and some other painful circumstances, prevented my youth passing with that hilarity, which in general is the attendant of that gay season. At present, the uncertainty I am in, in regard to the fate of my father, does not a little increase the painful solicitude of my situation. Had he not left England, I should never have been what I am. And indeed, when I dare think at all, I can only wonder how I ever voluntarily put on a chain, which had not even the shadow of a rose to hide the points and goads with which every link was armed. As to Frederic, I am happy he is not here; were he to return at this period, I know not what would be the consequence; but of this I am certain, he would call Darnley to a very severe account; and I should become the object of public animadversion; perhaps public censure; and certainly (humiliating idea) of public pity. Anne, to be pitied for the neglect of a husband, is something so nearly bordering on contempt, that I think were Darnley's delinquency very generally known, I should wish to shrink into oblivion, and hide myself in the shade of obscurity.

But while I am thus blaming Darnley, may not the fault have been in some measure my own? Yes! yes! I feel the fault is mine, and mine be it submissively to bear the punishment. You wonder, perhaps, to hear me thus criminate myself. My friend, was it not highly criminal to promise to love, honor and obey—when my heart sunk cold in my bosom and refused to ratify the sacred oath? It is true, I have endeavored to conform to his humor, to make his home the happiest place; but I ought to have known our thoughts, opinions, propensities, and pursuits were so diametrically opposite, that they could never meet in one point. I think it is not improbable, had he married a woman more similar to his own disposition, a woman, who loving him with her whole soul, would have not discovered his errors, or have been ready to overlook them, he might have made a more respectable member of society; but I have thrown away my own happiness, and embittered his. Why was he so precipitately ardent? And why, oh! why, was I so pusillanimously weak and tame? Had he been at liberty when Jessey became a widow, he would undoubtedly have married her, and both would have been saved from that gulf of infamy and perdition into which they are now plunged.

But I forget I have as yet given you no information concerning the time and manner of his return; it was as extraordinary as his departure. After you left me, I remembered your advice, and did not accept many of the invitations that were daily poured upon me; nor could any entreaty prevail on me to stay in a party after the close of the evening, lest I should lay myself open to the officious attendance of some person whose company might not be altogether pleasing, or proper. My time did not pass heavily: for I knew the necessity of endeavoring to bend my mind to my circumstances; and felt among other things, how happy I was, since free from tender feelings towards the person to whom duty and propriety would direct them, I had not been so unfortunate as to experience them towards any other, for that must be the height of human misery; to be wretched, and involuntarily guilty, to know you daily err, yet feel the total incapacity to suppress that error. From such a state, may Heaven, in its mercy, ever protect me. Ardent as my feelings are, what would be my sufferings? I say, the error is involuntary, because I believe it is not in our own power to awaken affection; and if we cannot call it into existence, it follows of course, when accident or an intercourse with a person of similar disposition with ourselves, or whose various attractions have aroused it, it is not in our power to annihilate it.

Yet do not misunderstand me; I am by no means an advocate for those who suffer themselves to be hurried away by their passions, and plead an inability to conquer them. No, Anne, this is the spirit of romance and folly. That the emotions of our hearts are not always in our own power, I allow, but our actions always are; besides, I do not think but that those who rush into guilt, and plead love as an excuse, are mistaken in regard to the passion by

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which they are actuated. Darnley says Jessey loves him; he is deceived; I cannot believe it possible for a woman, who loves a man with that pure, yet sacredly tender emotion, which I at present imagine real love to be, to suffer him to degrade himself in the eyes of the world, break the commands of his Creator, and infringe every moral obligation. Nor would she, I am certain, unless self gratification was the motive, render herself, by a breach of the first great feminine virtue, *chastity*, an object of contempt to the man she professes to love, and whose affection must in that case form her whole felicity. But how tedious I am, how unwilling to commence the tale you wish to hear; and so it is ever, when we have any thing to communicate that humbles us, and mortifies our self love.

Darnley had been absent early three weeks, when one morning, when I descended to breakfast, I perceived him sitting with his back towards the door, reading the paper, apparently with as much *nonchalance*, as if he had been at home all the time, and nothing disagreeable had taken place. I felt an involuntary shudder, and something like indignation arose in my bosom, and burnt upon my cheek—but prudence bade me repress these emotions, and receive him with that complacency, as might make him feel I had forgiven past transactions, and wished to live in peace.

"You are welcome home, Mr. Darnley," said I, half extending my hand towards him. He arose, took it with an appearance of cordiality, and saluting me, said, "he was glad to see me look so well. I came into town very late last night," said he, "and would not disturb your repose by knocking you up at three o'clock"—(very considerate all at once, was he not, Anne?) I smiled, and inquired if he had had a pleasant journey? "Yes," was the reply, "only he was detained by some disagreeable business longer than he expected." We chatted on indifferent subjects during breakfast, with much complacency on both sides; he told me he had invited a large party of gentlemen to dinner. "I will order preparations to be made," said I, "but now I have an opportunity, Mr. Darnley, permit me to mention that our house-keeping bills run very high; the trades—people want their money; and some of them are quite importunate. I have received no money on that account for some time, and am really entirely out of cash." "You must be very extravagant then," said he, petulantly, "how much do you think you owe?" "I cannot tell exactly, but I believe between three and four hundred pounds." "And where the devil, Sarah, do you think I can get three or four hundred pounds? I did not expect you owed more than one." "I am sorry you think me extravagant, but"—"Oh, you have an excuse ready, I dare say; women are never at a loss for that; but I will not be teased and dunned in this manner whenever I am at home. When it is convenient, I will pay the people; until then, they must be patient. There are ten guineas"—continued he, throwing the money on the table; "make the most of it; for I do not know when I can give you any more."

He then took his hat, and went immediately out. I went into the kitchen to give the necessary orders for dinner—as I came up the stairs, I met the head clerk in much consternation; he followed me into the breakfast parlor, and entreating my pardon for the pain he was about to give me, said he was afraid Mr. Darnley was likely to break—for that bills had been presented the day before, to a great amount; and that he had gone out this morning, without giving any orders how they were to be provided for.

I hear Darnley below—I will resume my pen to-morrow. Adieu,

SARAH.

LETTER XVII. SARAH TO ANNE.

London, – July 2, 1778.

YOU say you are uneasy; I do not wonder at it; yet I had neither spirit nor power to write before. When I closed my last letter, it was my full intention to resume my pen the next morning; but when that morning came, I could only add a promissory line, and send it away. I have now set down with a head and heart so full, that when I would begin, thought whirls with such rapidity through my brain, that I am at a loss where to commence, or how to frame my narrative. You will not think that strange, when I tell you, I am actually writing in a spunging house. My unhappy —, by what name shall I call him?—no matter. Mr Darnley is sleeping— yes, Anne, sleeping profoundly; he has steeped his senses in the Circean bowl, and lies in unfeeling torpor. I would moralize, but where would be the use? I would preach of patience, but alas! alas! I am feelingly convinced to preach is easier than to practise.

I will take up my narrative from the time when I broke off my last. The clerk's information alarmed me, and I resolved, whatever might be the consequence, to speak to Darnley again upon the subject of pecuniary concerns, the very first opportunity. He brought home ten gentlemen to dinner; we did not sit down until near five, and they continued drinking until seven; when they all started the idea of going to Vauxhall, and unaccountable as it may seem, Darnley insisted on my accompanying them. It was in vain I pleaded the want of a female companion; that was obviated by one, who said he would go and bring his sister to go with us; and another went for two cousins; but neither sister nor cousins were women to my taste; and I shrunk from the idea of appearing publicly with such companions; but to argue was vain.

The evening was fine. We took water at Old Swan Stairs, and entered the gardens about half past eight o'clock. We had scarcely made two circuits round the walks, when I observed a party of three or four women, dressed in high ton, escorted by an officer of the guards, and amongst them, Mrs. Romain. As they passed us, I turned my head the opposite way, and pretended not to see her; but Darnley touched my arm, and said, "did you not see Jessey?" "Where?" said I, looking another way. "She is past now," he replied, "but we shall meet her again presently, and she must not pass again unnoticed." I observed he laid an emphasis on the words *must not*; and unwilling to do or say any thing which might awaken the curiosity of my companions, I resolved, when we met again, civilly to give her the compliments of the evening. We met, I courtesied with a manner formally polite; but judge my surprise, when, advancing with an air of freedom, she took my hand, and cried, "My dear madam, how glad I am to see you? and you wretch," cried she, turning to Darnley, "where have you been these hundred years? I protest I thought you had taken a journey to the antipodes." "Probably he has, madam," said the young officer, sarcastically, "for he has, I think, been at your feet." She looked—but she made no reply. "Are you going to sup here?" said she to me, with the most easy effrontery. "I believe not," said I, faintly. "But I believe yes," said Darnley, rudely. "It is as you please," I replied; and, my dear Anne, I could hardly restrain my tears. "Yes, it is as I please, and I shall please to stay pretty late, so hold your tongue."

As this passed we had turned, and Jessey's party had actually joined us. Oh! my friendly Anne, how I wished for your supporting presence: I think, had you been present, he would not have dared thus to insult me. Jessey, at least, would have avoided your penetrating eye; but surrounded by a gay, unfeeling or unthinking, (for they are the same as to sympathy) throng, my very soul sunk within me; and when I saw the triumphant, scornful looks of that unprincipled woman, I felt so humiliated, that I wished the curtain of everlasting oblivion to fall over me. One of the young ladies who accompanied us, left the arm of her companion, and coming round, took hold of mine. "You look ill, Mrs. Darnley," said she, "the crowd and heat are too much for you; let us turn down one of the unfrequented walks, you will breathe freer and feel more air." I gladly accepted her proposal; we had taken one turn, and were preparing to join our party, when we met Darnley. "What have you left your company for?" said he, "are they disagreeable to you?" "Mrs. Darnley was oppressed by the heat in that crowded walk," said my good natured companion, "and I advised her to come here to recover." "Oh! I am obliged to you, madam," said my tormentor, "for being so attentive to her delicate feelings; she has at command, at all times, the most refined sensibility." "Well, Darnley," said I, endeavoring to laugh, as if I took what he said in pleasantry, "I will take care my delicacy intrudes not to interrupt your evening's pleasure; but if it should, you must make allowances for the weakness of human nature, and do as you would be done by." "D—n," said he, in an under voice, and being on

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the opposite side to my female companion, he actually struck my arm with his open hand. The blow was not heavy, but it was a blow; and I felt that it had broken the last small link that remained between us.

Dishonored—insulted— struck! Anne, Anne! I am a woman; the law will not redress my grievances, and if it would, could I appeal publicly? No; I can suffer in silence, but I could not bear to appear openly as the accuser of the man I had once sworn to honor.

My heart is full. I have sat down to write you a long letter; but it must be done at hours when Darnley sleeps. Heavy as my soul is, I feel at present something like the torpor of sleep stealing over my faculties; I will indulge it.

Adieu.

SARAH.

LETTER XVII. SARAH TO ANNE. In continuation.

London, – July 2, 1778.

WHEN the soul is oppressed by calamity, how little refreshment does sleep afford? The eyes close, the senses lay dormant; but the soul, ever active, finds no repose; it broods over past or present misery, anticipates future, or again realizes past pleasures. Could a rational being for one moment doubt the immortality of that intellectual spark which informs and animates this mass of clay, let him ask himself, and clearly answer this question—why, when excessive weariness, or the natural exhaustion of nature, or the more powerful effects of soporific medicine, has deadened, or suspended for awhile the animal functions, the soul still preserves (if I may be allowed the expression) its elasticity, and bounds with joy, sinks with anguish, trembles with horror, starts with terror, and that in so great a degree, as frequently to force the body to partake its emotions, and laugh, weep, and even give articulation to the impulses, by which it is then actuated? The deepest casuist could not satisfactorily solve the enigma, and yet support the doctrine of total annihilation at the hour of death. And oh, my dear Anne, what a blessing it is to the wretched, that it is not possible for human sophistry to wrest from them that sure, that supporting hope?

I return to the scene I was with my pen faintly portraying, when I broke off to indulge the lassitude of weary nature. We again joined our party in the public walk, and soon after the orchestra closed, we sat down to supper. Darnley appeared to be in excellent spirits, but I shuddered when I noticed the quantities of Madeira he poured down, for a state of inebriation ever rendered him more rude and insolent to me, as he fancied the only way to shew his superiority, and convince the world of his magisterial authority, is to use positive *will* and *won't* upon all occasions, without condescending to give any reason why he will or won't. However, for this time, he was so taken up with Mrs. Romain, that I was totally unnoticed. To be sure, Anne, I must acknowledge she appeared in all her fascinations, her dress elegant, her fine eyes and features beaming with animation, her manners all life, all wit and whim, I could not help acknowledging how superior she must appear in the eyes of all surrounding, to the depressed, heart-broken wife, who sat beside her. She laughed, sung and displayed all her powers of charming.

At a very late hour, the whole party arose to quit the gardens. At the gate were a number of carriages, and we were obliged to walk some paces before we could get to the coach. Darnley led Mrs. Romain, and I was obliged to accept the arm of the young officer, much against my inclination; for being flushed with liquor, I saw he was inclined to be impertinent.

We had proceeded but a very little way, when I saw a man touch Darnley on the shoulder, and heard Mrs. Romain exclaim, "Heavens, what's the matter?" In a moment, all was confusion. The bailiff, for such he proved to be, obliged him to go into a coach which he had ready, and into which I followed him, accompanied by two of the most uncouth, vulgar looking men that ever I beheld. Jersey either did, or pretended to faint, as we drove away. We were conveyed to a miserable house, kept by the man who served the writ; a room was provided, the hostess taking care to assure herself that we had money to pay for it. Darnley threw himself on the bed, and spite of his situation, spite of the dreadful gulf of ruin which now gaped ready to receive him, in less than twenty minutes was in a profound sleep. I traversed the chamber for some time, and eased my almost bursting heart, by an uninterrupted flood of tears.

About daylight, I laid down for half an hour, but the noise in the house and street soon chased the slumber that had fallen on my heavy eyelids. I perceived he was awake. "At whose suit are you arrested, Mr. Darnley?" said I. "At the suit of one of your tradesmen, madam," he replied, "I always thought your extravagance would bring me to a prison." "If there is no deficiency but what my thoughtlessness may have occasioned," said I, "the amount of the whole is so trifling, I should imagine it would not be difficult to raise the requisite sum." "But there are deficiencies every where," said he furiously, "and I must be a bankrupt, house, furniture, every thing must be given up; we must go to lodgings, and God knows how we are to live when we get there."

He seemed a little softened at this reflection, and continued in a milder key: "I think, Sarah, you had better go home this morning; perhaps the ruin has not reached so far as a general execution, and you may snatch a few trifles for yourself and me from the general desolation." "I will take a few clothes," said I, "but I will not touch any thing valuable; the sale of which might assist in satisfying the creditors. As to the future means of subsistence, I have no doubt but some way will open, and you will again see prosperity; I shall be willing to join your efforts."

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"Oh! to be sure," he cried hastily,—"you are very willing, and very able to work, you, who are too proud to fetch water to wash your own hands." "But I could have done it, Mr. Darnley, and will cheerfully perform that necessary office for you and myself too, since we shall no longer be able to keep a servant; and not only that, but engage in any employment which might be serviceable." "And what the devil can you do?" he replied, "come, I wish you would go home." I rang the bell. "What do you want?" said he "Some one to call me a coach." "Why cannot you walk?" "What, at this hour in the morning? In this dress?—nearly a mile and a half through London streets?" "Aye, there it is, I suppose this is a specimen of your humility and economy!" "Good heavens, Mr. Darnley," said I, "how can you be so unfeeling? we are likely to be involved in much actual misery, do not let us augment it by our own fretfulness and impatience. I cannot, will not walk this morning—In future, you shall see I can bring myself to submit to every situation in which it shall please Providence to place me."

LETTER XVII. SARAH TO ANNE. In continuation.

London, – July 2, 1778.

A COACH being procured, I went home; the domestics met me with tearful eyes, the clerks looked grieved, and the whole house appeared a scene of confusion; the glasses and china were taken down in the parlor, and stood in heaps on the tables. I ran up stairs; the drawing room was in equal disorder; the young woman, who more particularly was employed in my apartment, came to me and begged me not to go up into the bed-chambers; "it will break your heart, ma'am," said she. "When did this scene of desolation begin?" I asked. "You had scarcely been out an hour last evening," she replied, "when hearing a little noise in the compting-house, I listened, and heard a man say, he had law for what he did, and presently the head clerk came and asked me if I knew where my master was gone? 'There is said work, Nancy,' said he, 'there is an execution come into the house; I hope Mr. Darnley will not be out late; perhaps if he was at home, something might be done to prevent the depredations of these harpies of the law.' But oh! dear ma'am, when one hour went away after another, and you nor my master did not come home, when I saw the day dawn, and the sun rise, and heard soon after that master had been arrested, and you were gone with him to prison, I thought I should have cried myself sick. If I had but known where to come to, I would have brought you some morning clothes; do now, ma'am, go to my mother's, and let me bring your clothes to you." "Do you not know, Nancy," said I, "that I have no clothes but what I have on? the rest are all seized with the furniture and plate of the house." The poor girl burst into an agony of tears; I bade her not fret, and told her I would take care she did not lose her wages. "That is not what I cry for," she replied, "you have been so kind to me, if I never get a farthing more—but what will you do? Let me go with you, ma'am, wherever you go; I will serve you for less wages than I would anyother person." The artless, pathetic strain of this affectionate girl, I must own, strongly affected my feelings; but I struggled to suppress the rising burst of agony, and went up to my own apartment.

I perceived a seal had been put on all the drawers, bureaus, &c. and upon summoning courage to request permission to take a change of clothes from a linen press, was positively refused. Fortunately, Nancy recollected that there was a considerable number of clothes at the laundress's, and hastily went to procure me a change, which she took to her mother's, who lived in the neighborhood.

Coming out of my own room, I turned to take a last look at the little white room, where you always slept, and in making the furniture of which, we were so cheerful and happy, forming plans of amusement, sometimes working, sometimes reading, and often chasing the hours with music. The bed was taken down; the curtains lay in a heap in the corner of the room, and an ill looking fellow was taking down those drawings with which I had decorated this favorite room, and on which you were pleased to set so high a value. "I should like to have those trifles," said I, "they can be of no value to the creditors, and I have a friend who would prize them very highly." "You would like to have them, would you," said the unfeeling man, "perhaps you would like to have this trifle also," said he, taking my watch from his pocket, which I had unfortunately left at the head of my bed when I went out the day before. It was my mother's watch, and my father's picture was suspended from it; I felt my fortitude give way at this unprovoked insolence, and turned away, that the man might not triumph in my evident humiliation.

Nancy having returned from the laundress's, I left my home—my dearly purchased home, and went to her mother's; changed my clothes, and taking her with me, with a bundle of linen for Darnley, I walked back to his place of confinement. I found he had been taking steps for his liberation, several of his intimates had been with him; a lawyer had been sent for, and things put in a train for declaring him a bankrupt. But liberty was not so easily attainable as he imagined, many detainers having been lodged against him: it was thought advisable for him to remain where he was, until his creditors were a little appeased, and brought to a disposition likely not to oppose his certificate being signed. It has been a miserable period for me; I live in the hope of being soon enfranchised; but until that event happens, must endeavor to bear his ill humor as patiently as I can; and when he is wrapped in the arms of sleep, or carousing with companions as thoughtless as himself in the public room, solace myself with conversing in idea with my dear Anne; nay, it is more than idea, it is reality; only that I cannot hear the tones of that soothing, comforting voice, which has so often said to my perturbed spirits, "Peace, be still!" and like the harp of the inspired musician, it caused the tempest of the soul to subside into perfect calm. Even now, distant as I

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am from you, the remembrance of your firmness, mildness, and intrepid resolution upon every occasion, animates me to endeavor to emulate so bright an example. I sometimes look back on my past life, and think what I had been, had not you condescended in very early life to notice, to reprove, to counsel me; to teach me to respect myself; and in order that I might be enabled so to do, warned me to shun, with the utmost care, every action which might lower me in my own estimation. Yes, I feel, while I can with confidence say, I have done nothing to forfeit the love of my friend; while I act right, she will approve, she will respect me; though I may have acute anguish of heart, I am not entirely miserable.

I have just met with something which has excited a smile. Darnley has been for some days more than commonly out of spirits, though not so churlish as I have known him; he has condescended to be amused by my reading to him, and not frequented the public room so much. I was wondering what had wrought the change, when a letter was brought him, which he read in visible agitation, and then, as if unable to conceal his feelings, exclaimed, "Jessey is gone!" "Gone," said I, "where?" "To France." "What, back to her convent?" "No—no convent for her; Jessey, whether married or single, was not made for a nun." "Well, has she taken her children?" "One of them." "And where is the other?" "In the country, at Lord G—'s seat."

So, my dear Anne, by degrees I discovered that the tender, fond, *fainting* Jessey, to pass the wearisome hours while Darnley was in confinement, had taken a trip to the continent with lord G—. The ostensible reason alleged was to place her son in some foreign seminary for education; and if she could travel in a chariot and four, with a footman, groom, and servant, out of livery attending, it was certainly a prudent saving of her own money, and a much more agreeable mode of making the journey, than either in an hired chaise or a stage coach.

Darnley was mortified. "Don't you think, my dear," said he, after he had been pacing the room for about half an hour, biting his nails and whistling, "that Jessey has behaved in a most extraordinary manner?" "I see nothing extraordinary in it," said I, "she wanted an excursion of pleasure, and a good opportunity to make one offering, with a rich and handsome young nobleman for a companion, she could not resist the temptation."

I do declare, Anne, when I had said this, I was half frightened out of my wits, for he turned pale with mingled anger and mortification. "And I suppose," said he, "you are glad she is gone?" "Why, to tell the truth, Mr. Darnley, I am not sorry, though I care very little about her, she is perfectly indifferent to me." "Oh, very indifferent indeed, only you were as jealous of her as you could well live." Here he affected a laugh. I thought I had said enough, so did not venture a reply, and he presently left the room. So there is an end of his connexion with Jessey; and I hope he will be convinced she did not love him with all the fervor and enthusiasm she pretended. Oh, how degrading to the passion of love it is, that a woman, despising every moral tie, violating every principle of virtue or decorum, should dare to plead in excuse for her libertinism, that she acted under its influence.

I will conclude my tedious epistle, by informing you, I expect to leave this dreary abode to-morrow or next day; I have been out and procured a lodging; when I am settled in it, I will write again. Heaven bless my dear Anne, and increase her felicity, in proportion to the happiness her friendship has given.

SARAH.

LETTER XVIII. SARAH TO ANNE.

London, – August 1, 1778.

TWO small rooms, up two pair of stairs, at a Stay-Makers in Greek-street, Soho, with a privilege of cooking our dinner in the kitchen, belonging to the family, is become the residence of your friend. I have no servant; Darnley cannot afford to keep one; and I think you would laugh, could you take a peep at me in a morning, and see me bustling about, getting breakfast, sweeping the rooms, &c. &c. I am awkward enough, Heaven knows; and as to cooking, I make but a poor hand at it indeed. Darnley, who loves good eating as well as any man I know, fumes and frets; well, he really has cause—but I intend to try my best, and learn all the profound mysteries of roasting, boiling, stewing, frying and broiling; then the compounding of puddings, pies, and rich sauces. I beg your pardon; I forgot we shall have but little to cook, and, therefore, a very slight degree of knowledge in the culinary art, will suffice.

Now, my dear Anne, do not think it an affectation of fortitude, for it is not so; but I do assure you, if it was only for myself, I could be as happy in these small apartments, and even with our confined income, as ever I was in my life. I am not debarred the use of my pencil, or pen. To be sure, I miss my piano, but I have my guitar, which, together with my watch, half a dozen chairs, a small carpet, a bed and furniture, were sent to my lodgings by one of Darnley's creditors, the morning after he was set at liberty. I say, if it was only myself: but Darnley is so mortified if any of his acquaintance call in, (for we are feelingly convinced that the word *friendship*, is not to be found in a fashionable vocabulary.) I am not mortified when these flutterers, from motives of curiosity, or any other as powerful, come in to stare, sneer, and take an inventory of our poor furniture; I feel so independent of them, and am so indifferent about their opinions, that I care not what they think or say. There are not more than five persons in the world, whose good or bad opinion is of the smallest consequence to my peace of mind, but of those few, I am tenaciously proud; a word, a look of approbation from one of whose judgment and sincerity one can have no doubt, is more soothing to the mind, more gratifying to one's self-love, than the most labored panegyric from those accustomed to praise indiscriminately, without being able to assign a reason for so doing.

But, my friend, though I feel inclined to make the best of my situation, there is one very important circumstance, which renders it impossible to be entirely easy. I could be content with a little, but how is that little to be obtained? Some method must be struck out; for, besides that, I think it the height of dishonesty to be running in debt, when there are no probable means of discharging those debts; and Darnley never sits down to meat, without reckoning how much it costs, and how soon our slender finances will be exhausted; yet he cannot restrain himself from his nightly visits to the tavern, and from thence, often to the theatre. As to visitors, I am resolved not to encourage any, by persevering in the resolution of not returning any visits that may be paid me; though I imagine I need not trouble myself on that score, as we have no longer the means of offering them the sumptuous dinner, or nightly revel. When I reflect on the short period that has elapsed since my marriage, I cannot help considering it as a harassing, disturbed dream, from which I would gladly awake. Would to Heaven that I could do so; but no! the feverish slumber must continue, and I must be hurried from one scene of terror to another without cessation, until the torpor of death seals up each active sense.

I was interrupted just as I finished the last sentence, and who do you think it was interrupted me? my aunt Vernon. "Mrs. Darnley," said she, "I am extremely sorry to see you in such apartments, and I am come to endeavor to persuade you to separate yourself from Mr. Darnley." "Then pray, madam," said I, gravely, "spare yourself the trouble, for it would be to no purpose." "You are very positive, Sarah," said she, "one would think you could have no great predilection for a man who has used you so ill, has run through all his property, and made himself a beggar." "I had very little predilection for him, madam," I replied, "when in compliance with your advice, and that of my other friends, I married him; he was affluent then. If I bound myself by a sacred oath at that time, contrary to my own better judgment, to share his fortunes, be they better or worse, I will not now, in opposition to my sense of duty, forsake him in the hour of humiliation." "But the world says he prefers other women to you." "The world is officiously meddling." "Well, you ever was so self-opinionated, so head-strong, Sarah!" "Had I been properly so, on a certain occasion, aunt, you would not have been under the necessity of making that remark now. But setting that aside, suppose I was willing to separate myself from Mr. Darnley, how am I to exist in this state of separation? What can I do? Who will employ me? What friends have I, to

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countenance and protect me?"

The reflection was so cutting, my dear Anne, that I could not restrain my tears, and to my great mortification, before I had dried them, Mr. Darnley entered the room. "What, telling over all your grievances, Sarah?" said he, with a sneer. "No, she is not," replied Mrs. Vernon, "she is offended because I have been advising her, as your affairs are so embarrassed, to try to do something for herself, and for you to get some employment; and in short, for you to live apart." "I think your advice very good, madam," said Darnley, with the utmost indifference. "I believe I could get into a counting-house; but merchants do not like to employ married men, lest their expenses exceeding their income, might tempt them to be dishonest." "I beg, Mr. Darnley," said I, "that I may be no hindrance to your getting employment; I am willing to provide for myself if any means can be pointed out; but while I do nothing to forfeit the title of your wife, to you I must, and will look for protection; as for the rest, I will relieve you from the trouble of providing for my necessities. I thank you, madam," turning to my aunt, "for having pointed out a plan which I own I never should have thought of adopting; but I perceive you are better acquainted with Mr. Darnley's disposition than I am." Mrs. Vernon was disconcerted, she took her leave in a few moments after; and then Darnley, by way of apology, began talking of the expenses of house-keeping, and how cheap a single man could live, &c. &c. And will you believe it, pleaded affection to me as the motive which led him to wish a separation, as he could not bear to see me employed in the servile duties of a family. I had no patience to hear him. Love me! No—he does not, and I am convinced never did! I shall look round and try to find employment of some kind; when I have, you shall again hear from

SARAH.

LETTER XIX. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – Sept. 20, 1778.

HAVE transmitted to you, my dear madam, copies of our afflicted friend's letters, and I can easily imagine what your feelings were during the perusal of them; her last gave me more pain than I can find words to express. I was divided by my anxiety for my brother, whose weakness daily increased, and for my friend, who I perceived was bowed to the earth, by the unfeeling conduct of those who ought to have protected her. I wrote her; bade her, if she thought it best, to leave her husband for a while, until more smiling prospects should make him invite her home again, and come to me. I received no answer; my anxiety increased; I almost resolved to go to London, and inquire after her, but I knew poor Henry's situation was so precarious that we had been more than a month, daily expecting his dissolution; this deterred me from taking the journey, though I need not have been absent more than two days. I wrote again, no answer; and uneasy as I was, I had no remedy but patience; indeed, for the last three weeks, my feelings have been so tortured by the sufferings and death of my beloved brother, that I almost forgot even my valued Sarah. This day week, his remains were deposited at Scarborough, as it was his wish, that his body should not be removed.

The next morning I set off for London, and immediately on my arrival, went according to her directions, to Greek Street, Soho. I found her, but how? In a very confined lodging, actually employed in ironing her husband's shirts; she looked very pale, but starting at my entrance, the crimson tide rushed over her face, and throwing herself into my arms, she seemed to experience a kind of suffocating hysterical affection; it was neither laughing nor crying, but a mixture of both, which evidenced the depression of her spirits and weakness of her frame. "Why," said she, as soon as she could speak, "why do you come here?" To see you, my dear Sarah," said I, "why have you not answered my letters?" "I had nothing either new or pleasant to write," she replied, "and I thought you must be weary of a correspondent, whose whole topic was complaint." "You have been ill, Sarah," said I, taking her hand. "And you have been afflicted," said she, tenderly pressing my hand in both of hers. The tone of her voice, and the recollection of my loss, operated powerfully on my sensibility; we wept in unison.

A pause of a few moments ensued, when she arose from her seat, put her work into the next room, stirred the fire, swept up the hearth, and going down stairs, returned with the tea kettle; which, having placed over the fire, she prepared the tea things, toasted her muffins, and performed every little necessary office, with the uncomplaining meekness of a saint, and with the case of one who had been accustomed to such employments. As I looked at her with a mixture of admiration and pity, I could not but think, I had never seen her rise so superior, appear so interesting, as in these domestic avocations. I have seen her move in a drawing room with infinite grace; I have seen her trip in the light mazes of a dance, with fascinating vivacity and ease: I have witnessed the elegance and propriety of her manners—when seated at the head of her table, she has performed the honors of it to a numerous and splendid company; but never did she appear so engaging to me, as when having finished her preparations, she said, "Come, Anne, the tea and muffins are just as good now as they used to be, only the servant is not quite so handy."

While we partook of the pleasant repast, she informed me that she had been in search of employment, and at last heard of something which she believed she should close with. It was to go with an elderly lady to Ireland, to act in the double capacity of companion to her and governess to her grand-daughter, a spoilt girl of about ten years old. "And will Darnley consent to your going so far without a proper protector?" said I. "He made but faint opposition to the plan," she replied, "and indeed, I am resolved to go, let the opposition be what it may, my mind is too proud to bear a state of dependence on any one; and with all my faults, and I am very sensible I have many, I cannot bear reproach; it irritates, it drives me beyond myself; gentle remonstrance, mild reproof, will bend me to any purpose, turn me from any plan, however I might have expected gratification in the execution; but to be treated either like a child, an idiot, or a slave, is what I cannot, will not submit to." I asked if she had informed herself of the character of the person she was going with. "Why, yes," she replied, "I have made some inquiries, and have learnt that she is a woman of respectable character; that she has a daughter very well married in Dublin, and that she has in general resided with her; but about two years since she came over on some law business, and brought her grand-child with her; that being now settled to her satisfaction, she is returning to Ireland, and wants some person who will assist her in the difficult task of governing her (to her) ungovernable grand-daughter. As to

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the old lady herself, she seems a shrewd, sensible woman; her manners are not highly polished, but she possesses some conversable powers, and seems to have a thorough knowledge of the world."

I found any attempt of mine to alter her plan would be ineffectual, for she was resolved no longer to remain with a man, who had given her such evident proofs of indifference and selfishness. But I tremble for her. She knows not the world into which she is about to plunge; open, sincere, and without disguise herself, she suspects not deceit in others. This is a disposition most liable to imposition of any in the world, and where joined to great sensibility, is the source of undescribable anguish to the possessor.

I have made some particular inquiries concerning this Mrs. Bellamy, with whom Sarah is about to embark for an another kingdom; I cannot reconcile the idea to myself, that a tract of ocean will divide us; that in distress or sickness I cannot fly to her; that contrary winds may detain her letters, even should she write on all occasions; but even this she will not promise. "I will inform you of my health," said she, "but I shall not plague you with all the little cross incidents which may occur, while I am acting in my double capacity of humble toad eater to grandmamma, and madam *governante* to little darling.

You flattered me in your last, with the hope of my seeing you in London; it will, I assure you, be a very high gratification; but as you mention January for the time of your proposed visit, I fear Sarah will long ere that have been the inhabitant of our sister island for some weeks, as she thinks of departing the latter end of October.

ANNE.

LETTER XX. SARAH TO ANNE.

London, – Jan. 9, 1779.

A MOST delectable voyage and journey I have had; bad weather, bad accommodations in the packet, bad roads, and bad tempered folks to deal with. Now is not this a bad beginning? Well, there is an old adage which says, "A good beginning often makes a bad ending;" and why not *vice versa*? We were six days crossing the Channel, the wind blew tempestuously, and two or three times, I thought we should have been obliged to revisit the coast of Wales, whether we chose it or not; and that not in the pleasantest manner imaginable.

However, here we are, all difficulties of wind and weather over; quietly set down in a very respectable lodging, in one of the most public streets in Dublin. This Mrs. Bellamy is a very different woman on this side St. George's Channel, to what she was on the other; and to deal plainly, had I known as much before I left England as I do now, I should never have thrown myself on her protection; but as I am here, I will remain a few months. I have no great predilection for another voyage, though ever so short, during the season, when "the winds let loose, lash the mad billows, until they foam and rise; threatening even heaven itself." Indeed, my dear, there is no scene that ever I witnessed before, to be compared to the sublimely terrific grandeur of a storm at sea. The horizon, contracted by the black impending clouds; the angry scud flitting with rapidity through the sky; the liquid mountains rising to the topmast heads, and from their summit, pouring with tremendous roar; the white torrent, that as it falls, threatens to overwhelm in its abyss, the fragile bark. As the gloom of night approaches, to see on the leeward quarter, the black coast o'er hung with precipices, and fenced around with rocks, over which, the rude surge incessant breaks; to hear the wind howl through the rigging of the laboring vessel, which scarce can bear the smallest spread of sail; then to reflect, that perhaps, before the morn returns, the vessel, crew, all! all! may be enshrouded in a watery tomb! No one can have an idea of the sensation that must, at such a period, prevade the mind, even of the most thoughtless, unless they have themselves been present at such a scene. And to me, it seems an impossibility, that any one who had once been in such a situation, could ever disbelieve the existence of a God, great, wise, powerful, and merciful. Who, that has once contemplated his wisdom and his power on the world of waters, would wish to disbelieve, or for one single moment encourage a doubt?

But I beg your pardon Anne, that after having got you safe to Dublin, I have hurried you back, to make you pass a stormy night at sea, with a dangerous coast on your lee; but as you have escaped shipwreck, you may even come quietly again to Dublin; and setting down by my elbow, in a little room up two pair of stairs, which is but superior to a closet, in a very small degree; the furniture of which consists of a half testerbed, a deal table, a small iron grate, that will hold a handful of fire, and two rush bottom chairs; now, is not the apartment most elegant? Come sit down, and be quiet, and I will tell you all about madam Bellamy, and her fair daughter madam O'Donnel, and her sweet pretty, peevish, petulant, perverse grand-daughter, Miss Caroline O'Donnel.

The old dame does not want ideas in her head, nor language to express those ideas; but she is one of the most changeable, capricious beings, that nature ever formed. Her manners have been formed upon the scale of high life; and she certainly has, in early days, sacrificed to the graces; for even now, she can converse with condescending affability, every word accompanied by a fascinating smile; she can be cheerful even to volatility; persuasion will hang upon her tongue, and the genius of taste, wit, and elegance preside in her apartment. But see her two hours after, you will not know her for the same woman; her brow will lour, her large black eyes will flash malignity, the demon of spite and slander take possession of her tongue; and her language will be such, as almost the lowest female would blush to utter.

But this is a part of her character, only known to those, who are unfortunately inmates in her family; those who visit her transiently, and only see her in company, think her all perfection; indeed, I had myself a very high opinion of both her head and heart, until I became a daily witness to her private conduct; so true it is, that intimacy seldom improves our opinion of those of whom, from a slight acquaintance, we might be inclined to think extremely well; and I believe it is pretty much the case with us all. We wear our best looks, best manners, best clothes, before strangers; but carelessly assume our every day appearance before our intimates. No, there is one who, the more she is known, the more she must be esteemed and beloved; it is my dear, friendly Anne, whose face and manners are ever the same; only that those who are so happy as to see her in her most retired moments, will see her most amiable. Forgive me, you know I never flatter, but speak as I feel. I will own, that I may be

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partial; self-love incites in us affection for those who are continually shewing us marks of friendship; and we are apt to think highly of the discernment and understanding of those, who discover merit in us. Now this is not by way of apology for loving you, and discovering all your excellencies; no, it is to make peace with you for daring to tell you of them.

Madam O'Donnel is a handsome, tasty, shewy belle; dresses to the extreme of the mode, rouges high, and says any thing she thinks of at all times and seasons. Now do not call me scandalous; I have not as yet seen squire O'Donnel, but I shrewdly suspect—But madam calls; so my pen and my suspicions must rest until another opportunity.

SARAH.

LETTER XXI. SARAH TO ANNE.

Dublin, – Jan. 19, 1779.

THIS elegant apartment, to which I had just invited you, when I was obliged to relinquish my pen, you must not think, is a sample of the rest of our lodging. Madam's apartments are, in reality, very genteelly furnished, and consist of a handsome parlor, drawing room and bed-chamber; within which last, there was a very pretty room, intended for a dressing room, but in which a bed was fixed for Miss Caroline. Here Mrs. Bellamy wished me to sleep; but as I do not intend to have the hours I devote to rest, broken in upon by any one, I preferred taking up my quarters in the room I have described. Here, when all are wrapt in the arms of sleep, and a dull silence reigns around, save when the drowsy watchman drawls the hour, or the footstep of the nightly reveller, returning to his neglected home, breaks upon the ear, I sit and muse, and write, and sometimes weep. Yet why should I weep? is it the remembrance of past happiness? No—no—for I do not remember any time so happy, as to have a wish that it should return. I have sometimes thought, circumstances might have concurred to have made my lot in life easier; but we are such inadequate judges of what would constitute our real felicity, that perhaps, had I fixed my own fortune, I should not have found myself happier, than I am now; and yet, Anne, when in early life I have thought upon a union for life, with one of the opposite sex, I have painted to myself scenes of domestic felicity; have been fascinated with the pictures fancy has portrayed, and simply thought time would, in all human probability, realize them. Alas! how miserably did I deceive myself!

But of what use is this retrospect? The past is gone beyond recal; the present must be endured, be its infelicities what they may; besides, I am not the only unfortunate being in the world; thousands and thousands are more wretched, more depressed than I am. I have health; I have a tolerable portion of understanding, which has received the benefit of being cultured by education; and I have what not worlds could purchase, a tried, a valuable friend. Oh shame! shame on me, that with such blessings in possession, I should dare breathe a murmur for those, which an all-wise Being, perhaps in mercy, has thought proper to withhold from me.

In looking over what I had written the other evening, I doubted whether I was acting right, in communicating even to you, the suspicions which had taken possession of my mind, concerning Mrs. O'Donnel; but circumstances have since occurred, to set aside those scruples, and I am at full liberty to tell you, that I do not think that lady is married to the man she lives with; or that his name is O'Donnel. In truth, Anne, I have got into a family every way uncongenial to my feelings, and yet I am so situated, that I cannot well leave it. But to proceed, and tell you how my suspicions first arose, and how they were confirmed. I had been with Mrs. Bellamy several times to her daughter's house, which is a very elegant one, furnished in a most expensive style, with attendants, carriages, &c. suitable to the appearance of the mansion; but in all these visits, I never saw the husband. I inquired where he was, and was told he was a great deal from home, as he was a member of parliament. I looked over the list, but did not see the name of O'Donnel. It is strange, thought I, but I will not be impertinently inquisitive; time, which develops all mysteries, will expound this.

One morning, Mrs. O'Donnel being with her mother, her son, a fine boy, about three years old, standing up in the window to look out, suddenly clapped his little hands, and cried out, Papa! there is papa. I cast my eyes towards the street, and saw a chariot passing with a coronet on it; a gentleman and a lady were in it; the gentleman looked up at the window, and I saw, by the expression of his countenance, that he knew the child, though he took no notice of him. "Whose carriage is that?" said I to Caroline, who stood beside me. "Lord Linden's," said she, and her face flushed crimson deep. "Who was that gentleman in it," said I. "Papa," said the little boy, without waiting for his sister to reply. "What, is that your father, Caroline?" said I. "No, not my—his lordship—that is Mr.—" "What is the girl stammering about," said Mrs. Bellamy, who just then caught a word or two of what we were saying, "can't you tell Mrs. Darnley, that your father is not in Ireland?" Caroline blushed still deeper; and even Mrs. O'Donnel's face wore a higher tint, than it had received from some of the best French rouge. I said nothing more; Caroline was desired to play her last lesson, and the child was child for calling after his father. "Why, papa did not hear me," said the boy. "It is well he did not," said his mother, "he would have been angry with you, and me too."

These circumstances dwelt upon my mind— but I thought it most prudent not to mention them; though fully resolved to have my suspicions removed, or confirmed, I was determined to be watchful of circumstances as they

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took place. Two or three nights after this, we were at the play; and about the middle of the first act, a large party came into the boxes immediately opposite where we sat, among whom, I saw the lady and gentleman who had passed in the carriage. There was a young person with us, who is niece to the woman of the house where we lodge; to her I put the same question I had before put to Caroline, of, Who are those? "In the box to the right," said she, "are general Parkinson's daughters; that young officer who stands behind the general, is going to be married to the eldest; that handsome man, with a star on his breast, in the next box, is lord Linden; the pale, delicate lady on his right hand, is his wife, and the lovely girl on his left, is his sister; I do not know the other ladies." "One of them is Miss Meredith," said Mrs. Bellamy, as unconcerned as possible; "she is a lovely woman; but as to that lady Linden, she is such an unmeaning, cream-faced thing, I do not wonder her lord is sick of his bargain; she had a swinging fortune; and my lord was loaded with younger children's portions; so for the sake of villas, parks, and gardens, he took the inanimate statue into the bargain." This was said with a sneer, and was followed by a laugh at her own wit. But my dear Anne, can I paint to you the horror that thrilled my heart, as I reflected, that Mrs. Bellamy's daughter was the mistress of a married man? For there was no longer room for doubt. This was the man her child called papa; one hope only remained, that she might have been a deceived woman, and that lord Linden was lately married. "How long have they been married?" said I. "Seven years," was the reply. "Have they any children?" "Three, two girls and a boy" Great God! thought I, are men all alike? Is there no such thing as stability or honor in the sex? I endeavored to suppress the uncharitable thought; yet ideas would crowd and jostle each other in their rapid flight through my brain. Man—is it only the fault of man, that so much depravity exists in the world? No! were there no Romaines, no O'Donnells, there would be no Darnleys nor Lindens. Yet here, perhaps, I err, and throw too great an odium on my own sex. Who then is to blame? Or on what must we throw the censure? On poor human nature?—How bewildered is the mind, how incapable is the judgment, of deciding on these intricate points! Say, is it the fault of education? Yet we know, nature left to herself, is liable to the grossest errors; nay, will commit without repugnance, actions, which, in civilized society, are denominated crimes; even of the blackest dye. But it may be argued, it were better the mind remained in a savage state, than imbibe false reasoning and false principles, under the semblance of proper information.

I was sitting after supper, leaning my head on my hand, and musing on this inexplicable riddle, when Mrs. Bellamy thus accosted me:—But it was a long conversation, and shall be the subject of my next. Adieu. Heaven bless and preserve my Anne.

SARAH:

LETTER XXII. SARAH TO ANNE.

Dublin, – January 30, 1779.

‘YOU seem lost in the *profundity of cogibundity*,’ said Mrs. Bellamy, laughing, and laying her hand on my arm, ‘and pray what may be the subject of your meditation?’ ‘I was thinking,’ said I, looking full in her face, ‘of lady Linden.’ ‘Humph!’ said she, ‘and I presume lord Linden and Mrs. O’Donnell were associated with the idea of her ladyship?’

‘They certainly were,’ I replied gravely—“ But to have done with “ *she said*,” and “ *I said*,” (which are ever to me the most tedious interruptions in telling a story,) I will proceed in my dialogue without them.

‘Perhaps there was a small mixture of curiosity mingled in the association?’

‘A very considerable degree.’

‘I would gratify it, but that I suppose your *primitive purity* would take alarm; you would draw up your head, and contract your little consequential brow.’

‘If you fear that, you had better leave my curiosity ungratified.’

‘I do not fear it, Mrs. Darnley, because I know too much of the world to be incommoded by any obsolete notions; and I really should like to laugh you out of some of your antiquated prudery.’

‘If by my antiquated prudery, you mean my ideas of right and wrong, you will find it a difficult matter to laugh me out of them.’

‘Perhaps an old woman may find it rather difficult, but be not too confident of your own strength until you have resisted the persuasions of a young, handsome, rich lover, with unbounded affection on one hand, and all the allurements of affluence on the other.’

‘I should be in no danger from such a one, unless I felt a predilection for him myself; and it is not in the power of beauty or wealth, to awaken any thing more in my bosom, than a kind of distant admiration.’

‘O, the heart is always thought invulnerable, until it is absolutely lost; but pray, my frigid friend, if youth, beauty, and riches, have no power on that impenetrable bosom, what may the requisites be, necessary to awaken it from the torpor of stupidity? For really, I think a woman without passion, is a kind of automaton, can speak and move indeed, but is absolutely dead to all the pleasures of life.’

‘I am not without passions.’

‘Oh! I beg your pardon, you are in love with your husband?—no, now I remember, that cannot be; no woman can be so tame as to love a man who had used her so ill.’

‘Did I ever complain to you, madam, of his ill usage?’

‘No; nor to any body else that ever I heard of; but the world talked loudly; besides, has he not shown his perfect disregard for you, by suffering you to come here without money, friends, or a proper protector? None but a madman would suffer a woman like you, in the bloom of life, with uncommon power of mind, and highly accomplished, to throw herself in the way of temptation; unless indeed he courted opportunities to be fairly rid of her; which I think must be his motive; and I should advise you, if a fair opportunity occurred, to gratify him and choose for yourself another protector.’

‘I shall certainly so far gratify him, as to ease him of all care on my account; I am able and willing to support myself; and as to my honor, I am myself the guardian of it. As to choosing a protector, where shall I find one? or what right have I to connect myself with any man while Mr. Darnley lives.’

‘Has he not broken through every moral obligation to you?’

‘That does not release me from the vows I made to him.’

‘Do you love him.’

‘No.’

‘Do you esteem or respect him?’

‘It is impossible I can in so high a degree, as the relationship that exists between us challenges.’

‘What then is to prevent your accepting the protection of another?’

‘My duty to God, and the respect I own to myself.’

She seemed struck at so firm an answer; looked silently and gravely at the fire for several minutes, and then asked abruptly, ‘Were you ever in love?’

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`No.'

`Have you any idea of the force of that passion?'

`Yes, I believe I have.'

`Again I ask, what requisites are necessary to awaken it in your bosom?'

`What?—why good sense, good nature, domestic virtue, liberal education, strong sense of moral and religious obligation; knowledge without pedantry; wit without rancor: a heart capable of experiencing all the fine sensibilities which dignify human nature; and strength of mind, self denial and moderation, sufficient to keep them strictly under the jurisdiction of reason.'

`Oh! hold, for heaven's sake! a pretty formal, old fashioned piece of clock-work you have put together; do you ever expect to meet with such a nonpareil?'

`I neither expect, nor desire it.'

`Why not desire it?'

`Because, situated as I am, to know such a character would be to feel my own bondage more intolerable.'

`You are a strange being, Mrs. Darnley; but suppose this *black swan* should appear, what would become of your fine resolutions then?'

`Such a man, madam, would never endanger the breach of any of them—to merit his esteem, I must preserve his respect; to this end it would be my constant endeavor to persevere and strive to excel in every thing laudable and praiseworthy— sensible, that by so doing, I could only hope to retain his regard.'

`Oh, you romantic creature! do you really think that platonic love can exist?'

`No. I am not talking of what is generally called love. I believe that the most perfect esteem can exist between the sexes, if the minds are properly rectified, without the smallest approximation towards criminality.'

`Well, but we have lost sight of lord Linden— shall I give you the history of my daughter?'

`As you please.'

`Well, I believe I must, for I perceive poor Caroline stands very low in your esteem.'

`Will your history, do you imagine, tend to raise her?'

`Why—y—es, I believe it may.'

`Then I should like to hear it.'

She began; so take it in her own words—no, pardon me, not until next post.

SARAH.

LETTER XXIII. SARAH TO ANNE.

Dublin, – February 13, 1779.

‘MY daughter,’ said Mrs. Bellamy, ‘was at the age of seventeen, married to Mr. O’Donnell, who was past thirty—that, however, was of no consequence; a disparity of age, unless very great indeed, not being of the importance it is generally supposed to be to matrimonial felicity; especially when the superiority is on the man’s side. O’Donnell was handsome, lively, and had the manners and education of a gentleman; his fortune was not large, but this I did not discover until some months after their marriage. Caroline was my only child I had a genteel annuity on which I lived, and her appearance had been always such that he supposed she had a very considerable fortune.’

‘Did you know he had those ideas.’

‘I knew but very little about the business until it was completed. My daughter was on a visit to a friend in the country; O’Donnell saw her, admired her, and persuaded the silly child to go off with him to Scotland.’

‘Had your daughter any reason to think, had you known of her intended connexion, that you would have disapproved, or endeavored to prevent it?’

‘I don’t know that she had; but she was the very child of romance, and loved every thing that wore an air of mystery, and required a little manoeuvring to execute.’

‘Then I should call her the child of intrigue.’

The old lady colored, and repeating in rather an elevated key, the word *intrigue*, was silent for a moment, and then proceeded:—

‘When they returned from this imprudent excursion, they came directly to London, and to my house. I was in some measure prepared for it; for the lady whom Caroline had been visiting, wrote me word of their departure, and she herself addressed a letter to me from York, where she stopped a few hours on her way to Scotland. I received them with cordiality, and indeed, imagined I had no reason to be displeased with my daughter’s choice; as from every appearance about O’Donnell, his dress, his expenses, his equipage, &c. I concluded him to be a man of independent fortune. The house I lived in was neat, but not spacious. O’Donnell loved company; our style of living did not suit his extravagant turn. He one morning, about three months after his marriage, hinted that it would be more convenient and agreeable to have a larger house, and more extensive establishment. “Well, sir,” said I, “why then do you not take a larger, have it fitted up to your own and Caroline’s taste, and remove to it? I am glad to have you continue your visit to me as long as is agreeable, but it is certainly time you thought about an establishment of your own.” I wish, Mrs. Darnley, you could have seen the woe-begone countenance of the man, when I made this remark; his cheeks lost their animated hue, his lips trembled, and deliberately setting his cup of tea on the table, he replied, “I shall be happy, madam, to provide your daughter such an establishment, when you have paid her fortune; you say it is time we thought of a removal, only that I have been waiting in daily expectation of your leading to this subject, and making this necessary settlement, I should have spared so protracted a trouble; besides which, I thought my dear Caroline would not wish to be separated from her mother; and intended, whenever that arrangement should take place, to have given you an invitation to reside with us; and even now, if she prefers this house, we will remain in it, and shall be highly honored in having you make a part of our family; but—but my wife must be mistress in her own house, and preside at her own table.”

“When she has a house of her own, Mr. O’Donnell,” I replied, “she may do so, but I beg leave to retain my place and my authority over my own family; and to express my thanks to you for the honor you have done me in requesting me to become a visitor, where I have a right to command, but I beg leave to decline it. As to what you hint about Caroline’s fortune, I am at a loss to understand you; who ever told you that she had any?”

“It was a general received opinion in the circle where I first became acquainted with her; and when I, through the medium of a friend, inquired particulars of the lady at whose house she then resided, I received for answer, that her property was supposed to be about fifteen thousand pounds—otherwise—” “You would not have married her,” I said with quickness. “By my soul, madam, had I not thought her secure in independence, I would not.”

“Upon my word, she is infinitely obliged to you.”

“She ought to be; from the first moment I saw her, I found my tenderness powerfully awakened; every succeeding interview tended to heighten my admiration, and increase my passion. But elevated as she appeared to

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be, above my hopes; educated as she had been, and accustomed from infancy to all the elegances, all the indulgences affluence could procure, I should never have dared to breathe the smallest word that might have betrayed my secret, had she not, by a thousand innocent, indescribable actions, given me reason to think I was not indifferent to her. Nor even then, would I have been the selfish villain, to desire to unite her destiny with mine, and plunge her into comparative poverty; but being told, her own fortune would secure to her those conveniences she had been accustomed to enjoy—I spoke, was accepted; and most happy in receiving her hand at the altar."

"And no doubt, sir," said I, "the hand of an automaton would have been received with equal rapture, had you supposed it conveyed to you the right of receiving fifteen thousand pounds?"

"No, by heavens," he replied with vehemence, "I loved her for herself: and if in that particular I have been deceived, I only lament it for her sake."

"You have been deceived most egregiously; Caroline has no fortune."

"So be it," said he, throwing down a pamphlet, with some emotion of chagrin which he had been perusing previous to the commencement of our conversation: "So be it: I have a small estate in Ireland, the yearly revenue of which is about two hundred pounds; if she will go with me thither, and be content with so limited an income, I will devote my life to her service and happiness; and by following the profession for which I was educated, namely, the law, I will endeavor to add to the comforts, and may by industry, in time, even procure for my beloved Caroline the elegances of life. And to convince you, madam, that I had no intention to commit depredations on your daughter's property; here is a writing, (continued he, rising and unlocking a small writing desk, which stood in the parlor) properly executed for a settlement: it only requires sums to be specified, and signatures annexed, to make it binding, even to the utmost extent of her supposed fortune."

"He must have been a man of a liberal spirit," said I, interrupting Mrs. Bellamy.

"He was a man of the most consummate art," said she.

"Was your daughter present," I inquired, "during this conversation?"

"No," she replied, "she left the room the moment it began."

"How did O'Donnell explain the mystery of his splendid appearances with his contracted finances?" I asked.

"You shall hear," said she.

And so shall you, Anne, another time; but now I am too weary to add any thing more, but the most fervent prayer, that health, peace, and prosperity may be the constant attendants of the chosen friend of my soul. Adieu.

SARAH.

LETTER XXIV. SARAH TO ANNE.

Dublin, – Feb. 19, 1779.

'WHEN O'Donnel made this pompous display of his intended generosity,' continued Mrs. Bellamy, 'I inquired, with an incredulous smile, why, if these were his intentions, he had not made application to me, and had the settlements properly executed, and been married in the face of the world, not artfully to steal my girl away; and having made himself master of her person, of consequence become the sole controller of her fortune? He turned very pale at this interrogation, but protested that it was at the earnest entreaty of Caroline, that he had forborne writing to me; besides, he added, "I was too conscious of the narrow state of my own finances, to wish a strict scrutiny to be made. I perceive, (said he after a moment's pause) that you are surprized at the appearance I have made since my acquaintance with your daughter: I will account for it. I had an intimate friend, who from childhood had passed the chief part of his time with me; we were playmates, school-fellows, and pursued our academic studies together. His inclination boding to the law, as well as mine, we finished our studies under the same practitioner; during the last year of our study, we purchased a ticket in the lottery between us, it came up a prize of two thousand pounds. It was suggested by my companion, that with this sum, we might stand a chance, by good management, to get wealthy wives; and a bett was actually laid, which should get married the soonest, and to the richest lady. We left Ireland together, and having arrived in London, equipped ourselves with every thing becoming men of a certain rank. He bent his course towards Northumberland and Scotland, and I took a more westerly circuit. We separated, in order that our pursuits might not clash with each other. The first interview I had with your daughter, convinced me that there my pursuit must end—I must either obtain her for a wife, or return to Ireland without one; for it was my fixed resolve never to marry any woman whom I could not love, how splendid soever her establishment might be. You have now, madam, my history; in it I have but one thing to blame myself for, which is, not informing Caroline of my poverty, before the irrevocable vow passed our lips. But I have only to plead in excuse the excess of my passion, which would not allow me resolution to be sincere, lest by that sincerity I should lose all that made life desirable: for it was death to reflect only on the bare possibility of being deprived of Caroline, or falling in her esteem."

"Well, sir," said I, "you have now to make the trial when you have put it out of her power to recede; for I do assure you, she has not more than three hundred pounds in the world; which will be little enough handsomely to clothe her." I then left the room; on the stairs I met Caroline: "So you have made a fine piece of work with your precipitancy," said I, "your husband is a beggar almost." But it would be endless to recount all the alteractions, bickerings, and ill nature, that succeeded to this explanation. At length it was agreed that we should all go to Ireland. I sold my furniture, and thought my annuity, added to their income, would enable them to assume a more respectable appearance. We settled in Dublin, and O `Donnel began to get into practice in his profession; but their annual expenses always greatly exceeded their income, and in less than three years, they were involved in debts and difficulties. Caroline had been noticed by some persons of the first distinction; and this kind of society obliging her to be expensive in her dress, he was continually upbraiding her with extravagance. At length, he was actually sent to prison; his estate, which he had previously mortgaged to its full valne, together with his household furniture, &c. was seized, and Caroline thrown again upon my protection, with her daughter, who was born in the second year of her marriage. We retired to a small inconvenient lodging. O `Donnel saw no probable means of extricating himself from his difficulties. I did not think myself bound to maintain a man, who had acted so dishonorable a part by my child; he was left to endure the punishment due to his folly. In the mean time, lord Linden offered his protection to Mrs. O `Donnel; his person was handsome; his offers liberal in the extreme; his manners most prepossessing; in a word, Caroline loved him.

'You mistake, Mrs. Bellamy,' said I, with a blush of indignation, 'she loved her own ease; her own gratification—and if in these distressing circumstances she left her husband, and threw herself into the arms of an infamous seducer, for the sake of affluence and splendor, she is the most contemptible of human beings.'

'She accepted his lordship's liberal offers,' said the despicable mother, 'and I advised her to it.'

'Great God,' said I, elevating my hands and, eyes, with a look of astonishment and horror.

'What!' said she, with the malignant grin of a demon, 'you think yourself so pure and immaculate, that it is impossible you could do such a thing.'

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`No, no,' I replied hastily, `but may Heaven in its mercy never tempt me beyond my strength, or leave me to fall into such guilt and misery.'

`Guilt!' she retorted, `Mrs. Darnley, I would have you understand that I think Caroline's leaving her husband was the most laudable action of her life.'

`Do not say so,'—I cried—`do not let me suppose you so lost to honor, to virtue; I can hear no more—permit me to wish you a good night.'

She gave her head a half scornful, half complaisant inclination, and I retired to my chamber, too much astonished to sleep; too much depressed to weep. Adieu.

SARAH.

LETTER XXV. SARAH TO ANNE.

Dublin, – March 20, 1779.

THE veil once drawn aside from a depraved character, when it is no longer conceived necessary to assume the semblance of virtue, how soon it is wholly thrown off, and vice suffered to appear in her own disgusting form. So it is with Mrs. Bellamy. She permitted the mask to be withdrawn for a moment on the morning when the child pointed out his father; it was still further dropped at the play, and after the relation of her daughter's history; after she had the effrontery to confess herself the adviser and abettor of her child's infamy, she had no longer any measures to keep I was shocked to find into whose hands I had fallen; for I had been so improvident as to come from England with her, without any written agreement, or any specified sum being agreed on for my services, and I discovered upon mentioning the morning after the conversation repeated in my last, that I must return to my friends. She said, she imagined I should not think of leaving her until she had provided some one to supply my place, in regard to Caroline. 'I perfectly remember, madam,' said I, 'that I promised not to leave you, without giving you a month's time to provide another governess for your grand-daughter, or give up a month's salary; the latter I am willing to do; but I must quit your family this evening.'

'Upon my word, Mrs. Darnley, you give yourself fine airs," cried the haughty dame, with a contemptuous sneer, her large black eyes flashing malignity, 'and pray what is the occasion of this mighty hurry?'

'My reason is, madam, that I feel a repugnance to remaining in a family, the mistress of which professes principles which I have ever been taught to hold in abhorrence.'

'You are more plain than polite, methinks.'

'Where would be the use of what you call politeness in this case? Let me allege what reason I please for quitting your family, after the relation you gave me last night, your own heart would immediately suggest to you the real one. I am sorry to offend you; I do not mean it; you certainly have a right to act as you please; and surely you will allow me the same liberty. I wish not to influence you by my opinions and conduct, nor while I retain my reason, shall yours influence me.'

'And in what manner do you propose returning to England? It is a long, and I think, go the cheapest way you can, you will find it rather an expensive journey—and you have not an immense sum to receive from me. You have been with me four months, which, at the rate of twenty guineas a year, which is the utmost I can afford to give, is but seven pounds; though to be sure,' she continued with affected indifference, 'you may have resources of your own which I know nothing of; and indeed, I hope you have, for I cannot make it convenient to pay you just now; I have overrun my income, and have but a few guineas to last me until next quarter day.'

I was thunderstruck by this unexpected declaration; my heart swelled, my eyes were ready to overflow—but pride struggled hard to suppress them; and though I thought I should have choked, I did not allow them to appear. As soon as I could command my voice, so as to speak firm, I said,

'I thought, madam, you knew my situation, when I agreed to come with you; it was the depression of my circumstances forced me from my native land; I brought but three guineas with me, half of which I have spent, and I have now only a guinea and a few shillings in the world.'

'Why, Heavens! Mrs. Darnley,' said she, with a look of astonishment, 'is it possible that you have come here without any money in your pocket? suppose you had been taken sick, did you intend to throw yourself entirely on me?'

'No, madam! nor shall now trouble you; I will, even with the trifle I possess, quit your house this night; I will send word where I may be found, and when you can make it convenient you can send the money to me.'

'Quite independent and spirited, I declare. But reputable house-keepers are pretty tenacious who they admit in their families; you will not find it very easy to procure lodgings in a respectable house, and I should suppose the immaculate Mrs. Darnley would not go into any other.'

'Not when I know the family to be disreputable, would I enter such a house; or if I had been deceived in becoming an inmate with such a family, would I voluntarily remain after I had discovered my error.'

I said this with pointed acrimony, and receiving no further answer than, 'Do as you please,' in a tone of petulant disappointment. I retired to my own apartment, and began arranging my few moveables, ready to make a retreat as soon as I had secured a place to retreat to. About eleven o'clock Mrs. O'Donnel came, and in a few

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moments *madam* went away with her in the carriage. I descended to the drawing-room for some work I had left on the table; the maid was setting the room to rights, rubbing the furniture, &c. Seeing that she had turned up the carpet as if going to scour the floor, I inquired if Mrs. Bellamy was going to dine out. 'Yes,' said the girl, 'there be a piece of cold beef mistress said we might fetch up for your dinner.'

The morning was tolerably fine, I put on my hat and cloak, and sallied out to look for a lodging. Though I have been here long, I am almost a stranger to the streets of Dublin. Mrs. Bellamy seldom walks, and I have an objection to parading the streets alone. I felt awkward—my poverty ill according with my appearance. I feared to ask the price of any apartments in genteel looking houses, and felt an instinctive repugnance to entering the abodes of poverty and wretchedness. It also appeared to my harrassed and depressed imagination, that having resided four months with such a woman as Mrs Bellamy, would throw such an odium on my good name, that none who set a just value on their reputation, would admit me into their houses. Irresolute, oppressed in spirit, and fatigued from the long disuse of the exercise of walking; I wandered up one street and down another, without having courage to knock at a single door, though I saw on several "*Lodgings to Let*;" at length in a small chandler's shop, in a narrow lane, I ventured to make the desired inquiry. The shop was small, the lane was dirty; but the woman who stood behind the counter was perfectly neat in her person, her clothes were very coarse, but withal very clean and free from rags. A little girl about seven years old sat knitting in an inner room. When I asked the question, "have you a chamber to let?" the woman eyed me from head to foot, not with any appearance of ill nature, but as if judging from my dress, what my character might be.

'I have a chamber to let,' said she, in a mild civil voice, 'but I do not think it will suit you.'

'I should like to look at it,' said I, pleased with her manner. 'It would be giving yourself trouble to no purpose,' said she, 'for I do not think we should agree.' 'And why not?' 'I am not used to let my chamber to fine ladies, my little back room will not suit fine white muslin gowns and lace handkerchiefs.' I was just going to assure her that I was a woman of character, when I recollected I had no person to refer to, who would confirm my assertions; for it appeared that the very mention of Bellamy and O'Donnell would ruin me with every one. As I paused on the step of the door, a woman came in to purchase some trifle; I turned to the mistress of the shop, and said, 'Since you think we cannot agree, can you tell me of any place, where I shall be likely to get a room?' 'What does the gentlewoman want a lodging?' said the woman customer. 'Yes,' was the answer, 'my room would not suit her.' 'Dear me, ma'am, how lucky,' said she, coming up to me, 'if you will just step to my house, only a little bit further up the lane, I've got a nice room, I would not wish to disparage neighbor Truely's, but mine is for sure, a great deal more neaterer, and I does not keep a shop—but has a pretty little bit of a parlor, where you can sit and work, or read, or see an acquaintance. You know, ma'am, every body has acquaintances, tho'f they be poor, as I often tells neighbor Truely here, if one is poor, they may be merry sometimes.' "It is likely," said Mrs. Truely, "that your house will suit the young person better than mine." "I will go and look at it," said I.

Upon examination, I found the room was tolerably comfortable, and presently agreeing about the price, I took down the name of my landlady, and the lane where she lived; paid her a week's advance, and told her I would come in the evening—passing Mrs. Truely's shop, I was turning to inquire the character of the woman in whose house I was going to reside, when conscience said, 'What right have you to inquire the character of another, who have no vouchers for your own?'

Humbled, weary, and faint, I pursued my way back to Mrs. Bellamy's; where a fresh scene of mortification and humiliation awaited me. Anne, Anne, my heart is swollen nearly to bursting, with mingled grief and resentment. Alas! what am I? whom can I look to for comfort? to whom shall I fly for protection, from indignity and insult? Adieu.

SARAH.

LETTER XXVI. SARAH TO ANNE.

Dublin, – March 25th, 1779.

WHEN I returned to Mrs. Bellamy's house in order to remove my trunk to my new habitation, the maid brought up my dinner, and while I was eating it, a porter brought a packet directed to me, and immediately departed. I was unacquainted with the writing, yet it seemed as if I had seen it somewhere before, though I could form no idea whose it was; I broke the seal, and found the two inclosed letters; I send you the insulting originals, for I have not patience to transcribe them; you see the situation they are in, I have wet them with indignant tears; have trampled them under my feet; I would have torn the infamous scrawls to atoms, and scattered them to the winds of heaven, or given them to the devouring flames, but I preserved them that you may see how low, how very low, your poor Sarah is fallen.

Letter First.—To Mrs. DARNLEY.

I AM exceedingly concerned, my dear Mrs. Darnley, at the little *brulee* which has taken place between my mother and yourself, especially as she tells me you talk of leaving her; this I lament, because I think Caroline very much improved since you have had the entire management of her; not but that it has been a matter of surprise to me, that a woman so young, lovely, and accomplished as yourself, should voluntarily submit to the humiliation of being subject to the humor and caprices of any one, and live in a state of dependence, when they might command affluence on the very easy terms of sharing it with an agreeable man, who would think himself honored by her acceptance of his protection: and this I know to be your case. The marquis of H—, who is an intimate friend of lord Linden's, and whom you have seen at my house and at my mother's, has often expressed his fervent admiration of your person, manners and accomplishments. He was present when my mother told us of your quarrel; I do assure you he took your part very highly, called you a persecuted angel; raved at my mother, and was setting off post haste, to offer you consolation, in the form of a young handsome lover and a settlement; but I stopped him, told him he must conduct himself with prudence and delicacy, if he wished to succeed with you—so while he is writing his amorous epistle, I have scrawled these hasty lines, to intreat you to give his proposal a fair perusal, and take it into serious consideration. Only reflect, my dear, on the unprotected state, in which you now are, in a strange place, without friends or money. You will perhaps say, you have reputation; but, child, will reputation pay your lodging, or buy you a new gown when you want one? No, believe me, poor reputation is many a time left naked in the street, while those who have disclaimed and turned her out of doors, are sumptuously clothed, inhabit palaces, and ride in splendid equipages. But I will say no more; your own good sense will direct you; and surely I think you cannot be so wilfully blind to your own interest, as to refuse the offers of the marquis. Do, child, be wise for once, and take the advice of a friend, though I am arguing against myself to persuade you to do so. But if you are romantic enough to prefer dependence; why, if you must leave *ma*, come and live with me, and I will take Caroline home; at any rate, pray do not, in a flight of elevation, run from those evils which you know, to those of which at present you can have no conception.

Letter second—Marquis of H—, to Mrs. Darnley.

Madam,

THOUGH I have but a few times enjoyed the pleasure of being in your company, those few have been enough to awaken in my mind sentiments of the highest esteem for your talents and virtues. I have understood from my friend, lord Linden, that you have connected yourself in marriage, with a man who knows not how justly to appreciate your worth; and who has permitted you to come unprovided and unprotected into this country, that by the exertion of your abilities, you may obtain means of subsistence; this, madam, being the case, prevents my having the honor of laying myself and fortune at your feet. But as from the treatment you have experienced from your husband, every tie must be broken between you, every obligation dissolved—permit me to offer you protection and independence; allow me to hope to be admitted among the chosen few, whom you may honor with esteem. I have a neat house, ready for your reception, a few miles from Dublin, whether you can retire, until one can be prepared in the city, should you prefer residing there; a carriage and servants shall attend your order, free of expense, and a settlement of five hundred pounds a year during your life, awaits your acceptance; only allow me the privilege of passing some hours of every day in your society, and by studying your charmingly intelligent countenance, discover and prevent your wishes, before you have time to give them utterance. I have desired the person who brings you this, not to wait for an answer. I will not hurry your gentle and delicate nature; take your own time to consider my proposals; only to give me one comforting gleam of hope, allow me to see you for five minutes this evening, at Mrs. Bellamy's; I will call about nine o'clock; I will not say one word on the subject of this letter; my visit shall be confined to the period mentioned; if it is your wish, only receive me without a frown, and I will live in the hope, that my future visits (when you are settled in your own house) will be welcomed with a smile. I am, madam, with the utmost respect, your sincere adorer,

H.

When I had read these most diabolical epistles, my beloved Anne, the first impulse of my soul was to offer humbly, on my knees, my thanks to the Giver of all good, that this marquis, this man who would thus artfully insinuate himself into my favor, is not a person who is very likely to awaken the least emotion of tenderness; next to this effusion of thanks, an ardent prayer arose, that I might not be tempted beyond my strength. I then resolved on immediate flight. For what am I but a weak mortal, liable to error, prone to frailty, the very child of weakness? Beset as I was, by poverty, unsheltered poverty, in a place where none were interested whether I lived or died—far from all who are interested in my fate, my Frederic, and my dear Anne, my father, oh! let me not think on him; Anne, I feared my own weakness; and though not assailed by passion, I knew my safety lay only in flight—I sent for a coach, put my trunk into it, and without leaving any word for Mrs. Bellamy, drove to my new lodgings.

Secure and happy in the reflection that I have done right, I slept that night with tolerable composure; but each returning day brings with it some anxiety; for, alas, how am I to live?— I will trust in God. I am willing to work, I shall surely obtain employment sufficient to purchase the mere necessities of life. I will write to you again, but do not expect long nor frequent letters. I have now to labor for a living; do not be uneasy; I shall do very well, no doubt. Heaven bless you, my good, my friendly Anne. Whilst I live I shall never cease to love and honor you.

SARAH.

LETTER XXVII. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – July 17th, 1779.

DURING your residence in London, my dear madam, you saw every letter I received from Mrs. Darnley, and were witness to the cruel anxiety I experienced upon the receipt of the last, in which she informed me of her removal from Mrs. Bellamy's; though I highly applauded her conduct, I trembled for the dangers to which she might be exposed in her miserable retreat, and as she had given no direction how a letter might find her; however, hoping that she might send to the post-office to inquire for letters, I wrote, having first placed a sum of money with a banker, who had a correspondent in Dublin, with orders to pay it to her; giving such particular instructions, that in case the letter should be lost, there might be no danger of the money being taken by an impostor. This money I entreated her to take and make what use she pleased with it, but by all means to come to England, where she might be within reach of those who love, esteem, and would protect her to the utmost of their power. Having thus done, I rested in quiet, until I imagined time enough was elapsed for an answer to arrive, but no answer came. I then flattered myself that Sarah, in compliance with my advice, was on her way home; but a month passed on, and still no intelligence arriving, I requested Mr. Lewis, the banker above-mentioned, to write to his friend, and beg him to call on Mrs. Bellamy, and make inquiry concerning her, as I did not think it improbable that curiosity might induce her to trace out my poor, deserted friend, and endeavour to prevail on her to return; or, by sending the insinuating marquis, (for such by his letter I am convinced he is,) to use all his arts in order to reduce Sarah to the degraded level with herself. Through this man I entertained a faint hope that I might discover where she was, and have the superlative felicity of relieving her necessities, administering to her comfort, and cheering her heart, by convincing her my friendship was undeviating, my esteem undiminished, my heart as warmly attached as ever.

Mr. Lewis, though an excellent man, could not feel interested as I did in the fate of Sarah, and neglected writing for above a week; after his letter was gone, it was three weeks before he received an answer; and when he did, it almost deprived me of my reason. I will give you a full account of Mr. Lewis's visit to me, and then transcribe the letter which he has left with me. He was polite enough to call the very day the letter arrived. It was about twelve o'clock when a carriage drove up to the door, and seeing from the window that it was Mr. Lewis's, I could not restrain my impatience, but hastened to the top of the stairs to meet him. 'You have news for me, dear sir,' said I, reaching out my hand. 'I have received a letter from Dublin,' said he, as he led me into the drawing-room, but I fear it will not afford you any pleasure,' continued he, as he seated himself. 'I am very much afraid, my good Miss Aubrey, that your Mrs. Darnley is an artful woman who has imposed on your unsuspecting heart.' 'Did you know her, sir, you would soon banish those ideas; she is so far from practising art, that she carries her sincerity almost to an extreme; nay, were she inclined to practise it, her intelligent countenance would betray her; for in every feature (in particular, her soft expressive eyes) you may read every emotion of her ardent, though uncorrupted heart.' 'Well, well!' said he, 'I find you are an enthusiast, so will not argue the point with you. Here is the letter I have received; read it at your leisure; from the intelligence it contains, I am led to imagine you will change your opinion; indeed I cannot but be amazed that you should think so highly of a woman who resided several months with a person of Mrs. Bellamy's description; if she is innocent, the least we can say is, she has been very imprudent.' I would have vindicated her; offered to produce her letters; but this he would not let me do, saying, he would talk to me about it when he saw me again; he then left me, and with a palpitating heart, I sat down to read the letter.

John Gallagher, Esq. to Meredith Lewis, Esq.

DEAR SIR, *Dublin, – June 22, 1796.*

IN pursuance of your advice, I sought out Mrs. Bellamy, and waited on her to inquire after Mrs. Darnley, who I perceived, by your letter, was a person in whose fate either yourself, or some of your friends, were particularly interested. When I discovered who this Mrs. Bellamy was, I will confess I was surprised how you could be any way engaged in an inquiry after a woman who had resided in her family; as she is the mother of the celebrated Mrs. O'Donnell, who has alienated the affection of the (otherwise) worthy lord Linden, from his amiable lady and her lovely children; and this Mrs. Bellamy was always supposed to be the vile agent who instigated the daughter to attempt to ensnare, and whose counsel afterwards assisted her to bind fast, the fetters which hold his lordship in his unworthy bondage. However, I presumed you had some very good reason for desiring me to be particular in my inquiry, and I set in earnest about it. The old gentlewoman received me with politeness, regretted that it was not in her power to give me the desired information where Mrs. Darnley was to be found; said she had been much deceived in her; that she had brought her from England with her, to superintend the education of her grand-daughter; but that very soon after their arrival in Dublin, she, Mrs. Darnley, made acquaintance with some low people in the neighborhood; and one day when she was out, she had taken her trunk and gone off, without leaving any message whatever; and that she imagined she was gone with a kind of sailor-looking man, who used frequently to come after her. While she was speaking, a servant came in to bring a note; of whom she inquired whether any of the people below had heard or seen any thing of Darnley, since she went away? The young woman replied, that Mrs. O'Donnell's John had said, he saw her a few days since go into a house in an alley at the lower end of the town. 'It is no great matter where she is,' replied Mrs. Bellamy, 'for what is she good for? She imposed on me, when she applied for employment, by telling an artful tale of her husband's misfortunes; said necessity had obliged her to separate herself from him; but I rather think, from what I have since heard, that he had good reasons for separating from her.' After this intelligence, my good sir, you may be sure I felt no very great curiosity to hear any more about your fair adventurer; but as you had expressed so ardent a desire for information, I took down the name of the alley where the woman said she had been seen, and went immediately there; inquired at every house where I thought it was likely I might find her, describing her person according to the description given in your letter; I had almost given up all hope, when going into a house that stood a little more back than the rest, I found she was known to the mistress of it, and had lived there several weeks.

Upon my first inquiry, I found Mrs. Darnley had left this woman, impressed with no higher an opinion of her prudence or virtue, than Mrs. Bellamy was. She seemed eager to give me all the information in her power; and as I thought, giving her permission to talk as fast and as long as she pleased, would be gratifying at once her favorite propensity, and enable me to give you a more succinct account of the person for whom you were so much interested, I remained silent, and only endeavored to connect the story, and free it from its superfluities. I learnt that about two months since, Mrs. Darnley had come to this house and taken a lodging—she did not go by the name of Darnley, but Beetham; and the woman discovered her real name by a pocket handkerchief she dropped one day in taking some linen from her trunk, on which Sarah Darnley was marked at full length. 'I took up the handkerchief,' said the woman, 'and looking at her, said, I thought your name was Beetham?' She colored, and said, 'My name was once Darnley.' 'Then you are a married woman?' 'Yes,' answered she, but she looked confused, so I thought I would question her further. 'Where is your husband?' says I. She said she believed in London. 'And what is he?' 'He was a merchant.' 'And how came you to be separated from him?' She shut up her trunk, sir, and, taking the handkerchief out of my hand, tore off the corner and put it into the fire; yes, sir, she put it into the fire, and told me that she did not know by what right I catechised her, and telling me she wanted to be alone, as good as turned me out of the room. Now, sir, this argued no good.—I thought so too; but not to weary you with her jargon, I found that this delicate Mrs. Darnley had been visited by a man several times in the course of a week; that three or four times she had gone out and stayed until between ten and eleven o'clock. At last, her landlady having remonstrated with her a little mildly upon keeping such late hours, she told her that she would not long be a trouble to her, for she had been seeking a situation in a family, and had, she thought, met with one to her satisfaction; that about a week afterwards she went away, leaving her trunk as security to the woman of the house, for she had never paid for the apartment she occupied; that having been absent nearly a fortnight, she returned one

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night, requesting to be again received, but at the same time said she had brought home no money; that she had only the clothes she had on, and what was in the woman's possession; and that she had walked twelve miles that day; but the apartment being let to another, Mrs. Darnley went away; and a day or two after she was seen at a neighboring house, where the woman said she sent her clothes after her. I went to this house, but could get no further information, only that she had been there, and was gone they knew not whither. But it was the universal agreement of all, that she was a woman of light character; and the last person I inquired of, said she had been entirely supported by a very genteel old gentleman, and she supposed was gone into better lodgings of his providing.

So you perceive, my good sir, that Mrs. Darnley is not destitute of new friends; and her having changed her name is an evident proof that she wishes to conceal herself from her old ones. I wish it had been my good fortune to procure any more satisfactory intelligence, but I could trace her no further. I hope she has neither father, brother, or husband to be dishonored by her conduct. If I can be of any further use, any directions you may be pleased to send, shall be punctually followed by Sir, your humble servant,

JOHN GALLAGHAN.

Can you conceive for a moment what my agony of mind was, during the perusal of this letter, to see how my poor friend has been misrepresented? For, until I have manifest evidence of it, I can never believe her lost to honor. She may have been betrayed, (the very supposition is torture to my heart) for if she has, she is lost to me and to the world forever; she will conceal herself from the knowledge of every one, whom she had known before. But it is not in nature for her to become a voluntary slave to vice. Indeed, it is plain to me, throughout every part of this letter, that she has been persecuted and ill used; perhaps driven to extreme distress; want of bread or clothing would not tempt her into the paths of shame; but when in distress, should a man of sense, delicacy, of polished manners, and insinuating address, relieve her, and then sue for her favors—I cannot answer for her heart; and when the heart is enthusiastically impressed with grateful sensations, how soon will assiduous tenderness, from an engaging object, make it vibrate with a warmer sensation, and then, what are our best resolutions? I speak not as a woman only, but as a child of frailty; for such are all the sons and daughters of Adam. In such a situation, I would not answer for the steadiness even of my virtuous Sarah.

Did I require any thing to convince me that she is not the depraved being they have represented her, the sincerity of her replies to the woman who interrogated her about her handkerchief, would be a sufficient proof, that she retained her native singleness of heart; which, to me, was ever the most interesting trait in her character. Before she could become abandoned, she would have learnt to dissemble. What can I do? How shall I find her? I have requested Mr. Lewis to write to his friend once more; in the mean time, I am determined, however eccentric you may think the step, to write to the marquis of H—, and endeavor to interest him in her behalf; a man of his rank has great influence in such a city as Dublin; and if he has the smallest spark of honor, he will exert himself to restore to her friends, a woman whom his insulting overtures forced to seek shelter in poverty and shame, from the solicitations of vice, and the dread of ignominy. When I have put this plan in execution, and waited a reasonable time for an answer, you shall hear again from

ANNE.

LETTER XXVII. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – August 20, 1779.

I HAVE written to the marquiss of H—, as I proposed, and received an answer—I enclose both for your perusal, and shall then proceed with my narrative, for I have wonders to recount— but you must take all in the order as they occurred to me. *To the Right Honorable the Marquis of H— – MY LORD, July 17.*

THE trouble I am about to give your lordship may, perhaps, be deemed an impertinent intrusion; and an apologizing introduction, might by some, be thought indispensable; but I trust your lordship will admit the cause, when I have explained it, of itself a sufficient excuse for the liberty I take, without my offering any other.

I have, my lord, for many years, been in habits of the strictest intimacy with a lady of the name of Darnley, who, from a concurrence of unfortunate circumstances, was an inmate in Mrs. Bellamy's family during last winter, where, I have been informed, your lordship became acquainted with her, and judging of her character from the character of those in whose society you found her, (a fair criterion, I own, in general, but in her case very erroneous,) you made her a proposal, which, though it evinced much love, breathed very little respect. The receipt of that letter, drove Mrs. Darnley precipitately from Mrs. Bellamy's, and forced a virtuous woman on a prejudiced and misjudging world, without money, without even a single friend being near, to whom she could apply for relief. These particulars I had from her own hand, since when, I have heard nothing from her. Anxious, unhappy, I employed a person in Dublin, to make inquiries concerning her, and have had the misfortune to hear, that her character has been vilely traduced by those, who, shamed by her unshaken virtue, endeavor to bring her to a level with themselves. As I presume your lordship was uncommonly pleased with the person of Mrs. Darnley, I am led to imagine, when she left the house of that dishonor to her sex, Mrs. Bellamy, you would naturally make some inquiries concerning her, and perhaps may have some knowledge of her present situation. If you have, my lord, have the goodness to inform her, that her silence has almost broken my heart, and beg her to make use of a letter of credit, which she will find at Mr. John Gallagher's, the banker, to discharge any debts she may have contracted, and return home to the bosom of friendship. If indeed, you do not know where she is, will your lordship condescend to make use of the influence, your rank and fortune give you, and cause her to be sought for; and if you will permit one of your people to inform me of the success of the inquiry you will enhance the obligation. Indeed, my lord, you will never have cause to repent any interference in her behalf; or any assistance you may give her; for in serving Sarah Darnley, you are serving the cause of virtue.

I have the honor to be, my lord, your lordship's most obedient humble servant,

ANNE.

Sarah; or, The Exemplary Wife
Marquis of H—, to Anne.

MADAM, *August 4th.*

I WAS honored with your favor of July 17, and feel myself impelled to admire a friendship so ardent and sincere, as that which you profess to feel for the charming Mrs. Darnley. You were right in your conjecture, that I should make instant inquiry after the lovely fugitive, who had taken such alarm at my letter, and fled from what she termed my persecution. In that letter, I told her I would see her in the evening; and at the hour I had appointed, I repaired to Mrs. Bellamy's house. Judge of my surprize at hearing she was gone, and had taken her trunks with her, leaving no message I inquired how she was conveyed from the house; and learning that she went in a hackney coach, on my return home, I employed one of my servants to inquire at the stands around, for the man who had taken up a fare at such an hour, in such a street—by this man I discovered where he had taken her, and went in the evening of the following day, to the lane where he directed me; intending, if I could not prevail on your fair friend to favor my suit, to insist upon being her banker, and serve her even against her will.

Upon my inquiry for the lady who lodged there, I feared there was some mistake; for the woman of the house shewed me into a little parlor, and said, she would call Miss Beetham— however, I thought I might as well stop, and see what kind of a being Miss Beetham was. But my doubts were soon removed, for I heard her soft voice say, "It must be a mistake, no gentleman can want me" "It is no mistake, dear madam," said I, advancing up two or three stairs, for from a room at the top of which the voice had proceeded. "It is no mistake; it is you I am inquiring for, permit me to say the few words I have to offer you." "You give yourself needless trouble," said she, coming out of the chamber, alarmed, I imagine, at hearing my step ascending the stairs. "I beg you will leave me, you can offer nothing I can or will accept." I took her hand and led her down to the little parlor. She shut the door, and seating herself opposite me, said, "My lord, I force myself to speak to you, that you may not, though you have discovered the place of my retreat, entertain any chimerical hopes, that I shall be wrought on, by the fear of poverty, to yield to your insulting proposal; I am, it is true, unfortunate, but I have ever maintained a conscience at peace with itself, and hope ever to do so; permit me to tell you, it is cruel, unmanly conduct, thus to persecute a woman who has no protector—even your being here this evening, if you were known, would ruin me in the opinion of those with whom I reside, and to whom I must look for a character when I can get employment: I must insist on your not repeating your visits." I would have argued, she was deaf; I offered her my purse, bills to any amount, but she would touch neither. I endeavored to hold her in conversation, to obtain leave to visit her: but she was as impenetrable as marble; and having, with the most persuasive earnestness, entreated me to leave her in peace, she darted out of the room, ran up stairs, and fastened the chamber door; nor would any thing I could say, induce her to open it.

"Bless me," said the officious landlady, bursting out of a little back room, which seemed a kind of kitchen, "bless me, what has put the lady in such a taking?" "I have brought some unpleasant news, madam," said I, and thinking it was as well to have a friend at court, I took two or three guineas from my purse, and presenting them to the woman, who eyed them with inexpressible pleasure, I continued, "Miss Beetham is rather unfortunate in some respects, and will require much of your attention to keep up her spirits. I am glad to see she is in the house of a person so interested for her, as you appear to be. Pray take these as a mark of my good will, and be assured, you shall be no loser by any attention you pay her. I hope she will not think of removing from you, if she should, I will thank you to let me know." I then gave her an address, with a feigned name, in order to her sending me intelligence of the motions of her fair lodger.

The next day, happening to meet Mrs. Bellamy at Mrs. O'Donnell's lodgings, whither I went with my friend lord Linden; the conversation turned on your charming friend; when to my great surprise, the old woman asserted, that, however far Mrs. Darnley might carry her affectation (as she chose to term it) she was certain in the end, my offers would be accepted. And you may believe me, madam, had it not been for their insinuations, and her being a resident in the house of a woman, of more than doubtful character, I should never have presumed to have offended Mrs. Darnley's delicacy, by a tender of my services, upon terms which I might have been certain any woman of honor would reject with scorn. They laughed at me, for having been so easily baffled, and imposed on by her assumed virtue; told me she had been guilty of some lapses which were the cause of her separation from her husband; and so effectually argued me out of the respect I began to experience for her, that I was resolved not

to have my schemes foiled by an artful baggage, who, in all probability, would laugh in her sleeve, at finding me so easily imposed on.

Having received intelligence from my talkative friend, the landlady, that Mrs. Darnley, or as she called herself, Miss Beetham, had advertized herself for a situation to wait on a lady, or to take care of and instruct one or more young children, I therefore dispatched an old trusty servant, (who no more than myself would have engaged in the pursuit of a virtuous woman) I told him it was her whim to be treated with respect, and be considered as a pattern of purity, and that the very semblance of virtue was so charming, that I would have her indulged. He was to represent himself as the steward of a lady who lived a small distance from the city, who wanted a companion; that he should engage her at a liberal salary, and take her to a seat of mine in the environs of Dublin, where I meant to engage a quondam acquaintance of mine to personate the lady, and thought time and concurring circumstances would smoothe the way to settlement.

But this plan was not so easily put in execution as I imagined it would be. She would make no engagements without letters from the principal; and much time was spent in this ideal correspondence: at length when all preliminaries were settled, the pretended lady chose to take a jaunt into the country, with a *chere amie* of hers, and Mrs. Darnley was obliged to be sent to the care of the house-keeper, until her intended lady should return. At length she did return, and I resolved to accompany her home, to shew my charmer, as early as possible, that I was upon a footing of easy familiarity in the family; but no sooner had she entered the parlor, and cast her eyes towards us, than uttering an exclamation of surprise, she sunk on the floor in a state of inanimation. I flew towards her, raised and supported her in my arms until some female attendants, obeying the summons of the bell, conveyed her out of the room, when, turning to my companion, I beheld her pale, and every mark of astonishment on her countenance. "Is this your Miss Beetham?" said she, ironically. "Yes— did you ever see her before?" "Oh yes! I fancy I know her better than your lordship does—I do not imagine you will find much difficulty in persuading her to accept your terms without any interposition of mine." "Was it surprise at the sight of you, do you imagine, occasioned her to faint?" "No—I rather think it was joy at the sight of your lordship; for according to the plan you have pursued, she must have supposed she had lost you. I fancy her *fit* will not prove dangerous— she will tell you to-morrow, how violent, yet how delightful her emotions were." This was delivered in such a tone of ridicule, that I began to think I must appear very contemptible to suffer myself thus to be played upon. I retired to my chamber, in a very ill humor, resolving to converse with Mrs. Darnley in the morning, and if she would not comply with my proposals, to make her a present and take a final leave of her. Still in the midst of my vexation, there was something flattering in idea that she might feel some emotions in my favor; and that being taken by surprise, she was thrown off her guard, and her sensibility, at my unexpected appearance, overcame her caution. I was kept waking until a late hour, by various reflections, and extraordinary conjectures, and slept the next morning longer than usual. When I descended to the breakfast room, I found my travelling companion waiting for me. "Go," said I to the footman, "tell Miss Beetham that breakfast waits, and if she is able to leave her apartment, we shall be glad of her company to make our tea." "Your lordship may save yourself the trouble," said the lady, "Miss Beetham has taken herself off. I sent to inquire after her when I came down, but behold, the *delicate, fainting, tender creature* is no where to be found." "Gone?" said I, "impossible!" I ordered the house, the grounds, the servants' offices, and every adjoining place to be searched, but in vain. A small trunk, with a few changes of linen in it, (the only baggage she brought with her) was left behind in her chamber.

You may easily imagine, madam, that this intelligence gave me great uneasiness; I was sensible it could only be a wish to avoid me that prompted her flight, and that whatever might be the motive for her conduct, she had now carried it too far to be any longer attributed to affectation. I returned to Dublin, and employed the same man who had negociated the business of a place, &c. as related, to watch round the house where she had lodged, and if she returned thither to offer her money, of which I was sure she must be in great need; and a letter of apology for my former conduct, entreating her to pardon a fault I had been led to commit, by the malignity of her enemies. I professed my full conviction of the purity of her heart, and requested she would permit me to nominate some proper person to protect and conduct her in safety to her friends in England. But he returned in the evening, informing me, she had not been there. I could not, upon reflecting on the circumstances of the preceeding evening, help suspecting that Mrs. Ryan, the woman whom I mentioned to have been with me, had deceived me, as well as the detested Bellamy; and that she knew more of Mrs. Darnley than she chose to declare. Accordingly the next day, I repaired to her house, in order to make more minute inquiries. I found her surrounded by several

gentlemen, but my impatience would brook no delay. I however considered it would be doing the object of my search an injury to inquire after her, of such a woman; for I must not pretend to disguise from you, that this Mrs. Ryan was a Cyprian votary, who some years since, took a trip with me from London to the continent; and from thence came with me to Dublin, where we parted by mutual consent; though I had never entirely foreborn to visit her. I therefore inquired for her by her assumed name. "What, have you not found your little run-away yet?" said she, "it seems to be my lot to fall in with the admirers of the eccentric Sarah." "Sarah! Sarah! who?" exclaimed a young naval officer, with a look of alarmed tenderness. "Oh! what—here is another lover I suppose," said she, laughing; "who would have thought the homely Sarah would ever have become so formidable?" "But what was her other name?" said the young officer with increased vehemence. "Oh, I dare not call her by her right name," said she, scornfully, "my lord H— will never forgive me if I do; but to satisfy you, and that you may be convinced, whether it is your Sarah or not, I will shew you her picture, which I stole one evening in sport from a lover of mine, and he never after demanded it, to let me see how indifferent he was to the original." The agitation of the stranger was extreme, while she was gone up stairs to get the picture. "Here," said she, presenting it, "it is a great likeness, I assure you, though I think her handsomer now than when it was taken." He took it—he gazed on it—he clasped it in his hands, and elevated them towards heaven with a look of indescribable anguish—exclaimed, "Oh God! Oh God! my sister. Where is she? how came she here? Lead me to her—Yet—no! no! tell me she is no longer in existence, for I should rather hear she was dead, than find her what every thing I hear and see leads me to fear she is. Dear, unhappy Sarah, well might you neglect to answer my letters. God of heaven, can it be my sister! my sister!" All this was uttered with a vehemence and rapidity that totally precluded interruption; but at the end, his heart's anguish overflowed at his eyes, and throwing himself on the sofa, he hid his face and gave a free course to his feelings. Mrs Ryan, when she perceived what she had done, was frightened. "Lord bless me," said she, "who would have thought Mrs. Darnley was your sister?" "Peace, woman," said I, "leave me a few minutes with the gentleman; your unfeeling thoughtlessness has pierced him to the heart." She withdrew to another apartment with her other visitors, and I seated myself by the brother of Mrs Darnley; silently waiting a pause in his grief to speak and administer consolation. At length he raised his head, and looked at me, said, "Do you know my wretched sister? but why do I ask? perhaps it is to you she owes—" His countenance reddened, and I perceived what past in his mind. "Do not form, sir," said I gravely, "hasty and erroneous conclusions. I have had the honor of being in Mrs. Darnley's company, and do not hesitate to profess myself one of her warmest admirers; I believe her to be unfortunate, but I would pledge my life that she is innocent." I then related to him all that had taken place after my first seeing her at O'Donnell's, not in the least sparing myself, though I pleaded the characters of the women with whom I found her as some extenuation of my offence; he was willing to allow it, but was lost in conjecture how it was possible she could be thrown among such people. We questioned Ryan as to what she knew about Mrs. Darnley, and could get nothing from her, but that she once lived in the same neighborhood where she resided. Mr. Lewis had heard of his sister's marriage, but had not received a line from her, nor any intelligence concerning her, for eighteen months past; however, he resolved to go to Mrs. Bellamy's and insist on learning from her, what had induced his sister to accompany her to Ireland. We went immediately, but found to our great mortification, that she was gone on a jaunt of pleasure with her daughter, and would not return under a fortnight or three weeks.

Disappointed in the point we aimed at, that of forcing Mrs. Bellamy to tell Mr. Lewis all she knew concerning his sister; I found it almost impossible to bring his perturbed spirits to any tolerable degree of composure. I accompanied him to the place where she had lodged; but there the woman gave such a strange account of her, as threw him almost into a paroxysm of phrenzy. He did not expect to remain in Dublin more than a week or ten days, (the ship he belonged to coming to Ireland having been entirely accidental.) I found by his conversation, that Mrs. Darnley is only a nominal sister, he having been adopted by her father. I was led to suspect from that circumstance, that it might be more than fraternal affection which made him so anxious; but he soon dissipated that doubt, by an assurance to the contrary, in such terms as necessarily enforced belief. He wrote to her husband a letter of such bitter reproach, demanding his sister at his hands in terms so peremptory, that if Darnley is a man of the least spirit, whenever they meet, a duel will most probably ensue. He inserted an advertisement in the papers, couched in such terms, as if it fell into her hands, and she wished to return to her friends, she could not but understand it; yet so delicate as not to wound her feelings by making her situation a topic for public animadversion. But before either an answer could arrive to the letter, or any good effect arise from the latter

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expedient, his ship was ordered away—and he departed, earnestly conjuring me to continue my endeavors to find and succour Mrs. Darnley, and have her conveyed in safety to England, where he expected to be in the course of a few months. On taking leave, he requested me to inquire for his letter and open it, whenever it should arrive. I did so—it contained these lines: Letter "MR. LEWIS,

THE woman you call sister, and who has, to my misfortune, been for some years my wife, having voluntarily separated herself from me; after having by her love of dissipation and thoughtless extravagance, combined with other circumstances, reduced me to bankruptcy; and having been absent now five months without writing to me above twice, which was in the early period of her absence, I cannot inform you of any thing concerning her; nor do I desire ever to be troubled on her account; I hold myself in no degree whatever accountable for her actions, nor will I pay any debts of her contracting. I have heard from Mrs. Bellamy, the person with whom she left England, that she has left her protection; has given herself up to folly and infamy; and from this hour, I renounce any connexion whatever with her.

GEORGE DARNLEY."

Letter

My soul rose indignant, as I perused this unfeeling, unmanly scrawl, for it deserves not the name of a letter; and I sincerely rejoiced, that Mr. Lewis was not here to read it. The conduct of Bellamy is most detestable; I was impatient for her return, that I might reproach her as she deserved, and oblige her to write to Darnley and unsay all she had asserted; nay, despicable as the wretch appears to me, I had resolved to write to him myself, and defend his aspersed wife to the utmost of my power; but upon reflection, I feared, as I had not discovered her retreat, and could not account for her conduct in thus keeping herself concealed, I might, by interference, when I could not fully vindicate, injure rather than serve her. In this suspense, I was obliged to leave Dublin, to which place I did not return until a few days before the receipt of your letter. The earnest solicitude you expressed, again awakened my desire of finding your friend; for I had before, in some degree, quieted my mind, by the flattering supposition that she might be returned to England. I now again saw Mrs. Bellamy, and in a tone of authority, demanded if she had heard any thing of the woman she had so ill treated. "Oh yes," said she, with a smile of contempt, "I can direct your lordship to her lodgings, where the *delicate, virtuous* lady is supported by O'Donnell." "Impossible," said I. "Not at all impossible," said Mrs. O'Donnell, who was present. "I believe she has been under his protection above two months." I waited to hear no more, but taking the direction, hurried to the place where they said she resided. As I was entering the door, for it was late in the evening, a man jostled me, and turning quick, seized my arm and exclaimed, "Have I found you then!" I endeavored to shake off his hold, but in so doing, his hat fell off, the lamp at entrance shone faintly into the passage, and I discovered Frederic Lewis. "Heavens, Mr. Lewis," said I, "how came you here?" "I came to rescue a sister from infamy," said he, then slacking his hold, he continued in a tone of sorrow, "but that you, my lord, after all your pretended friendship, after all your affected search for the poor fallen frail one, should prove her seducer." "Do not irritate me, Lewis," said I, "that I came here in search of Mrs. Darnley, I will allow, but I call Heaven to witness"—"Your asseverations, and base subterfuges, will no longer avail you," said he in an elevated tone. The bustle in the passage, which did not immediately belong to the house, but led to the door, attracted attention, and it was opened by a woman, who inquired what was the matter. "Does Sarah Darnley lodge here?" said Lewis. The woman replied in the negative. "You have a female lodger," said he, "and I wish to see her. "She admits no male visitors," replied the woman, "especially at this time of night." "I must see her," said he, with vehemence, "I have reasons for supposing her my sister; is not her name Sarah?" A shriek from the parlor within, announced that we were overheard; and in an instant, a female rushed by the mistress of the house, and throwing herself into the arms of Mr. Lewis, fainted—It was Mrs. Darnley herself. She is now safe in the protection of her brother, and I presume you will embrace her nearly as soon as you receive this letter. She will inform you of every particular during her period of concealment. The recital will cost you many tears; it melted me almost to a childish weakness. Adieu, madam. I hope I have convinced you, that however blameable my conduct was, at first, in regard to your amiable friend, I endeavored to repair my errors, the moment I discovered they were such. Be pleased to accept my wishes for your happiness, and that of the woman so deservedly esteemed by you, and allow me to hope for a place in both your memories; for to be numbered among the friends of Mrs. Darnley, will ever be deemed an honor by

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Your humble servant,

H.—

LETTER XXIX. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – August 6, 1780.

I WILL suppose you to have read the marquis's letter, and am sure I need not expatiate on the delight it conveyed to my mind. I became impatient for the arrival of Sarah; moments appeared hours, hours days, and days weeks. Think then, by this mode of computation, what an immense period a whole fortnight must have appeared; for so long it was before I embraced my friend; and when she did come, to pale, so changed was she, that my heart bled as I contemplated her depressed countenance. Frederic Lewis could only deliver her in safety to me, and set off the next morning to join his ship which had arrived at Plymouth. When he left Dublin, as mentioned by the marquis, in a state of suspense concerning his sister, the anxiety of his mind, joined to a cold which he took about that time, brought on a fever; and he obtained leave to return in a pilot boat which passed them the second day after they were out. But on his reaching land, his disorder became so violent as to confine him to his bed for a very considerable period; and left him so weak that it was much longer before he was enabled to renew his inquiries, and he had only discovered the place of Sarah's residence the day previous to his encountering lord H. He had in the course of his inquiries, heard so many things to her disadvantage, that even his faith in her virtue began to be staggered, and he resolved to watch and ascertain who visited her, and by what means she was supported. Resolved, should he find her involved in shame and guilt, to write to her, give her the means of returning to England, but to see her no more. He had placed himself in the long passage for this purpose but a few minutes, when lord H— entered, and he immediately concluded him to have been the original seducer, and present supporter of his sister; notwithstanding all his pretended anxiety. Indeed, he said it had often, during his illness occurred to him, that the marquis knew where she was, and concealed her, pretending she left him only to blind Ryan, who considered her (it was plain) as an object of envy and jealousy. You know how this rencountre terminated. When Frederic found his sister perfectly innocent, which was evinced by her pale countenance, exhausted frame, and plain coarse habiliments, he execrated the wretches who had so inhumanly persecuted her. He conducted her to another lodging, and thought of nothing but hastening her departure from Ireland; but before they had proceeded a day's journey, he perceived it would be impossible to proceed in her present weak state. He stopped at a pleasant village, and having procured medical advice; having satisfied himself that nothing but rest and peace were necessary to restore her; he wrote to the admiralty to lengthen his time of leave, and quietly awaited for her strength to recruit. This occasioned the delay which was to me so intolerable; for as they knew I had heard from the marquis of H— of her safety, and whose protection she was under, they did not think it necessary to write, daily hoping to recommence their journey.

When Frederic took leave of his sister, he recommended her not to take any steps to see her husband; he even thought she ought to oppose any advancement made by Darnley for a re-union; and I was of his opinion. I will give you her answer. "I will own to you, my brother, that I never found any great portion of felicity in my union with Mr. Darnley; yet when I entered into marriage with him, I resolved, to the utmost of my abilities, to perform the duties incumbent on the sacred obligation. My separation from him was enforced by necessity; but had I known the misery of a state of separation, how forlorn, how desolate, how totally unprotected a married woman is, when separated from her husband; how every one thinks he may insult her with impunity, and no one will take the trouble to defend her, but rather unite in aspersing and depressing her, even to the very earth—I would have never thrown myself into so deplorable a situation. I will make no overtures towards a re-union; but should he solicit me to pardon his unkind neglect, and again share his fate, I shall certainly do it; I apprehend that I have by no means been free from blame in my conduct towards him; I have been thoughtless in my expenditures. I perhaps have not fulfilled his expectations in respect to the tenderness of a wife. Alas! it is hard to teach the countenance or tongue to express what the heart does not feel. Do not be angry, Frederic, but I am convinced I shall never again appear respectable in the eyes of the world, until I am again under my husband's protection."

Frederic would have combatted her opinion, but it was useless; all he could obtain, was a promise that she would no farther seek him, than to acquaint him with her return, and then act as circumstances should direct. She has accordingly written a note, which to-morrow I shall dispatch to him. I hardly know whether to censure or applaud her resolution. She has suffered greatly both with him, and from him; perhaps, should any means of their living in some degree of ease and plenty offer, they may taste more happiness than has yet fallen to their portion.

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He, so long abridged of the comforts of domestic regularity, and the pleasures which must arise from the society of a good humored, rational companion, will, I should think, hear of her return with delight, and invite her home with the ardor of a lover long separated from his mistress.

My dear Sarah has kept a regular journal, if so it can be called, of every occurrence which took place, from her quitting Mrs. Bellamy's to the time of her meeting Frederic. It was addressed to me, with a design should any event have put a period to her existence, it might have been transmitted to me, and have justified her to her father, should he ever return, or her brother, whom at that time she had but little hope of seeing again so soon. I have obtained leave to send it to you; it will explain many circumstances which at present appear problematical, and will, I think, greatly interest your feelings. When you have perused, you will be so good as to return it by the next post, as every thing which bears the impression of Sarah's hand is valuable to me. When any new circumstances occur, I will inform you.

ANNE.

LETTER XXX. ANNE TO ELENOR.

Sarah's Journal from the time she left Mrs. Bellamy's, to the period of her meeting her brother.

[This Journal is without date, from the beginning to the end, but as the incidents refer to some already related, the reader can easily, by comparing them, ascertain the period when they took place.]

SOLITARY and alone in the world, how dreary pass my hours, how desolate is the prospect by which I am surrounded. Society! when shall I again taste thy sweets? I am to all thy joys and comforts as much lost as the shipwrecked mariner, who having sailed from his native land in some gallant bark, surrounded by many brave companions, has seen them snatched from him by the merciless ocean, and finds himself on an island, fertile indeed, but inhabited only by the shaggy natives of the woods, who approach him but to destroy; who wait only for a favorable moment, to spring on and devour him. But where the human face divine is never seen; where the sweets of converse is not; where the soul, appalled by the near vicinity of savage neighbors, shrinks into apathy and torpor, and becomes by degrees a gloomy, cheerless waste!

I have wandered by the glimmering twilight in the fields which skirt this vast city. I listened to the distant hum of rattling coaches, bells and mingled sounds of human voices; I leaned pensively on an old gate which opened from the field to the great road. A couple passed me; the woman bore a bundle of faggots on her head, the man bore a heavier load upon his shoulders, they led a little half naked boy between them. "You are tired, Bett," said he in a voice which, though rough, spoke kind solicitude. "No, Thomas," she replied, "not very tired; but poor little Jack is, I believe. But come, Jack, trip along while daddy carries home the gentleman's trunk; you and I will go make a fire and get his supper." They were now so far I could hear no more: but the words they had uttered, rested on my mind, and servile as their situation in life appeared to be, and menial as was evidently their occupation, yet the solacing accents of kindness in which they addressed each other, the tender care each appeared to feel for the other's ease and comfort, made my forlorn and desolate situation appear by contrast so dreadful, that had not an impetuous gush of tears relieved me, I must have fallen into a fit.

The night air was cold—I had tarried until darkness had rendered every object of one sombre hue. My garments are damp: my limbs chilled I look round my apartment—no friendly flame blazes on the hearth—no face looks a smile of welcome; the poor taper, the purchase of a farthing, sheds a pale ray of light, and shews my hard, uncurtained bed. Hard! Oh, let me not complain of that, while many a worthier being sleeps on straw.

By this time Betty and Thomas are at their supper. The fire burns cheerly, their little urchin of a boy has fallen asleep on his father's knee, his head reclining on his shoulder. Fancy! whither, whither wouldst thou lead me? Thomas and Betty love; are all the world to each other; their hearts united, their minds suited, nor have habit, thought or wish beyond what a comfortable fire, and coarse but plentiful meal, and flock pallet can supply.

I am not without society, why do I say I am? The friend I most esteem is in existence; here is pen, ink, and paper, I can write, can pour forth my agonized soul, though oceans roll between us, though we were separated as far as the polar circles from each other. No, I am not alone, I have a Guardian ever near, and ever powerful. Oh! thou whose word called worlds unnumbered into being—whose breath could make them vanish, like the mist before the rising sun, nor leave a trace of what they were behind; no creature is so mean but thou regardest it; no being is so depressed, but thou canst raise it. Father! have I a father? yes, one who rides upon the tempest, is borne on the wings of thousands and ten thousands of cherubims—but for my earthly father!—perhaps I never shall behold him more.

I am more composed, I have been to the mercy seat of my Almighty Father, and he has vouchsafed to hear and comfort me. Anne, when you shall behold this, perhaps the writer may sleep in that dark and narrow tenement to which she is daily hastening. When you read it, remember this maxim, and deliver it to the broken-hearted mourner for comfort. In affliction there is no helper like God. When pressed to the earth by undeserved slander, there is no judge like the Searcher of all hearts. He will console;—He will forgive;—He will justify.

My dear friendly Anne, I have several times attempted to inform you of what has befallen me since I quitted that bad woman, Mrs. Bellamy; but my mind has been so distracted, my heart so lacerated, and my spirits so depressed, that when I have taken up my pen to write, it has wandered off into some wild apostrophe or unconnected remark. And even now, when I set down determined to relate things as they happened, I ask myself,

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why should I?—Of what use will it be to grieve you by a relation of sufferings you cannot alleviate? I am resolved then I will write; but until I am either dead or some favorable change takes place in my affairs, you will not peruse the writing. I write, because it is my pleasantest occupation; I forbear to forward it, because it contains nothing that can give pleasure to any one by whom I am held in the least estimation.

I told you my mind wanders—it does so—and I was obliged just now to lie down my pen—My thoughts and wishes ever tend to dear England— Oh! why, why did I so precipitately leave it?

In a closet belonging to the room where I sleep, and indeed, where I pass almost all my solitary hours, I found an odd volume of Smollett's works; it was the first volume of Roderic Random; I sat down in the hope that it might occupy my mind, and draw me for a few moments from myself. I opened it at the part which gave an account of young Roderic and Strap, his companion, setting forward on their journey to London. When I came to the pleasure they felt on being admitted into a waggon, which was going that road, I felt so forcibly that not even that humble mode of travelling was open to me, that I was, perhaps, separated from every being who was in the smallest degree interested in my fate, that I dropped the book, and burst into an agony of tears. Yes, my Anne, I am so sensible of my unprotected, forlorn situation, that I wished with all my soul, that I had never been provoked, by any treatment whatever, to quit my husband; his name was at least a protection from insult; to him I had a right to look for support, and scanty and grudgingly as that support might be given, it still was no obligation to receive it from him. The house which shelters him is mine, I have purchased the right to share it at the price of all earthly happiness. I have never forfeited it, and if ever I am again united to him, I will never again be separated but by death; I can but be wretched, that I was so while with him, is true; but I am equally so now, and have added to my other miseries the knowledge that my good name is tarnished, my reputation aspersed by the blackest calumny, and I am supposed to affect a virtue and delicacy which I no longer in reality possess.

The marquis of H— discovered my retreat very shortly after I had escaped from that house of infamy where he first saw me. I found from his conversation, that he thought me not entitled to the respect which unsullied virtue never fails to extort, even from the most depraved. I hope I need not assure you, that I resisted every allurement, though pressed on me in the most fascinating forms,—independence—attendants— equipage: but the equivalent to be relinquished, was self approbation—a treasure too invaluable to be bartered for such worthless trifles. Independence— yes! Power Eternal, give me independence, but let it be independence of mind— let me persevere in doing right; let my actions be ever such as may secure thy favor, and the applause of my own conscience; and then, though the unfeeling world may oppress, may break my tortured heart, I shall have that comfort left which will never forsake me, but will support my fluttering spirit even through the gloomy vale of death.

I do not like my landlady, she is impertinently inquisitive and curious. I do not go by my name, I took another in the hope it would elude any inquiry which my persecutor might think proper to make after me, and though it answered not the designed purpose, I still continued my assumed one. The woman came abruptly into my room one morning, while I was looking over my little wardrobe, she examined every thing on which she could lay hold, made some impertinent remarks on the fineness of the linen, and the richness of that lace, with which you, my dear Anne, presented me on your return from France, soon after my marriage, and which was the only article of the kind, which I retained on Darnley's bankruptcy. She at length laid her hand on a pocket handkerchief, which was marked with my name at full length. I have an utter aversion to duplicity of every kind, and when she asked me whose name that was? I replied, It *was* mine. She immediately replied hastily, "Oh! then you are a married woman," and in a few moments inundated me with so many questions, answering some of them herself, according to her own vague conclusions, and interlarding all with so many old adages and wise sayings about prudence and virtue, withal intimating that she guessed I was a frail one, when I came there in such a hurry, and that when a woman has once ventured ancle deep, she may as well go on, for it was impossible to go back, I stood petrified at her effrontery: mistaking my silent astonishment for attention, she thus proceeded: "I suppose you thought now that we should have known nothing about you, but you had not been here three days, before I heard the whole story—how you have been living with madam Bellamy, and every body knows what she is—but for my part, I wonder you treated lord what d'ye call'em there so rudely—I dare say he would be very generous to you, and there is such a thing as overstanding one's market." I had risen from my chair, while she was speaking, and holding the handkerchief which I had taken from her in my hand, was so absorbed in vexatious thoughts, that I tore it in small strips, and threw it, strip at a time into the fire, without being sensible of what I was about. "Well,

you may burn your handkerchief," said she, "if you please, but that argues nothing. I remember the name—Darnley, that was it, so Mrs. or Miss, or Madam, or my lady Darnley—" "Quit my room, woman," said I, almost choaked with indignation, and not giving her time to finish her taunting speech. "Quit the room I desire, I am busy, I do not want company of any kind. Think what you please, draw what conclusions you please, I only beg not to be tormented by hearing them." She made use of a few more exasperating words, and then went muttering down stairs.

I am in hopes to get into employment here; I have made application to be received into some family as a companion to an elderly lady, or to superintend the instruction of children, and yesterday a person came to speak to me on the subject. It was a middle aged man, who said he had been employed by a lady in the country, to inquire for a well educated woman, with the habits and manners of a gentlewoman, who would bear confinement, and be content to see but little company: For such a one she wanted as a companion, to read to her, sometimes to act as an amanuensis, as she is a person fond of literary pursuits. I did not feel inclined to enter into any engagement with this man, but told him such a situation would exactly suit me, but I must hear from the lady herself; he told me he would write, and that in a day or two I might expect an answer; and in truth, my dear Anne, it is high time, for I have changed my last crown; what I am to do if I am much longer without the means of earning bread, Heaven only knows. I wrote to Mrs. Bellamy for the money she owed me; she had the effrontery to tell the messenger, that she knew nothing about me. I know the selfish disposition of my inquisitive landlady too well, to indulge the hope that I shall be allowed shelter under her roof many days, after she makes the discovery that I have no money to pay my lodging.

The negotiator, whose name is Manton, was with me again about an hour since; he tells me the lady is not at home at present, she is gone on a short visit, but the letter is sent after her; in the mean time, he seemed so sure of my obtaining the place, that he offered to advance me any money I might want. But this I have refused; I will suffer any necessity, rather than accept an obligation I may never have the power to return—especially from a man.

My dear good Anne, you will hardly believe what bad hearts there are in this world. I have subjected myself to an insult, which has given my sensibility so keen a wound, that were I to live an hundred years, if memory retained a trace of any past transaction, the remembrance of it will ever give me an indescribable pang.

Pressed by necessity, and having no idea that human nature could be so depraved, I went in the close of the evening to the house of the infamous Bellamy. As I was known to the servant who opened the door, I found no difficulty in gaining admittance, but when, on being informed she was at home, I made an attempt to ascend the stairs, the girl told me, she dared not let me into her mistress's apartment, but if I would wait, she would carry up any message. "Only tell her I am here, and wish to speak to her," said I. "It will be to little purpose," she replied, "but I will go." Determined to see her if possible, I followed the girl up stairs.

The servant opened the door. I perceived there were several persons in the room "Ma'am," said the girl, "Mrs. Darnley is below, and wishes to speak to you." "Who?" cried Mrs. Bellamy, "Darnley, did you say? What does she want here?" "I came," said I, advancing into the room, "to request the payment of the money." "Money, woman? what money? I believe if there is any account to settle, it is vastly in my favor; did I not pay your journey from London? and did you not board in my family three months?" "Was not that your engagement?" I asked. "Don't talk to me of engagements, creature, you have broken every engagement you ever entered into. Did you not agree to remain with me, and take the care of my grand-daughter, and yet you took yourself off without assigning any reason, without giving me even the smallest notice; putting me to the expense and inconvenience of hiring a French maid for the child. But I know all your tricks; your going out when I was not at home; your private assignations with the men. Yes, and I know who you went away with too; the marquis did not so suddenly leave Mrs. O'Donnell's that evening, and be absent two or three hours, for nothing, after he had engaged himself to sup and spend the evening there with lord Linden. Your husband shall know all your fine pranks, I promise you. I have written to him; poor man! I dare say he has thought you a pattern of virtue, but I have undeceived him."

"And what have you dared to write?" said I, with some degree of spirit. "Pretty innocent," said she, tauntingly, "you have done nothing, I suppose, to make a husband *horn mad*;—you are all purity, but indeed I wonder I domean myself by talking to you; go, pray walk off, and let me hear no more of you."

Anne, I do protest to you, conscious as I was of not deserving this treatment, of never having swerved from my duty as a wife, my innocence would not support me under this torrent of abuse; I felt my heart sicken within me,

and I caught by the back of a chair to avoid sinking, (for she had insolently kept me standing, while she spoke to me.) Poor little Caroline, who was in the room, had been sidling towards me from the moment of my entering; she now took hold of my hand and said, "Sit down, Mrs. Darnley." "Sit down, indeed?" said the unfeeling Bellamy. "I say, walk down; come away, Caroline, I won't have you speak to the impudent—," and she called me a name, my beloved Anne, which my pen refuses to trace upon my paper. Fluttered as my spirits were, and—and—why should I conceal it? I had not broken my fast that day—awakened resentment, struggling sensibility, joined to want of food, overcame me, and I fell. My insensibility was not of long continuance; the first thing I was sensible of, was, that Mrs. O'Donnell was supporting my head against her bosom, and Caroline's little hand was bathing my temples with Hungary water. "Poor thing," said one of the visitors, in a voice so gentle and tender, that though I knew she was a woman of despicable character, I felt grateful; and if looks could speak, I thanked her for the soothing accent. I endeavored to rise. "Lean on me," said the same person, offering her arm. "Give her a glass of wine," said Mrs. O'Donnell. Caroline flew to the side board. "Let the wine alone," said Mrs. Bellamy, "she has had enough already, I can see that, she is drunk, it is not the first time I have seen her in these kind of fits—" "come," continued she, addressing me, "you had better make the best of your way home; bed is the fittest place for you; if you had been in your senses you would never have presumed to come here dunning me for money; there, Molly, take the creature down stairs; give her a little small beer, and as soon as she can walk without staggering, let her go about her business; for my part, I wonder how she got here." I would have spoken, I would have given some answer to this opprobrious language, but the tears flowed almost to suffocation, I raised my clasped hands to heaven, and my sobs increased with such violence, that I feared I should have an hysteria fit. "Take her away, take her away," vociferated the old woman, "she has got quite in her tragedy airs." I found that to speak was impossible; so, leaning on the arm of Molly, I bowed my head in resignation to my fate, and left the room. The servant had some feelings of humanity; she took me into the back parlor, and procured me from the kitchen a cup of tea and a slice of bread and butter. I took them, and felt refreshed. While I was drinking the tea, Caroline came in. "I am sorry," said she, grandma has been so cross to you; mamma sends you this, and says if you will call on her to-morrow, she will do something for you." The donation sent, was half a guinea. Anne, my soul revolted, but necessity was strong, and reflecting that more than four times that sum was owing me, I took the money, and having in some measure recovered myself, returned to my lodging.

Is it possible, that woman can have been so base, as wilfully to calumniate a being who never injured her? Can she have written to Darnley such an infamous falsehood? And will he believe her? I know not how she can have learnt how to direct to him, unless she has noticed his address on my letters at any time whilst I was with her. You too, my dear Anne, will hear the shocking tale, I have no doubt; but you will not believe it—I know you will not. Oh! my poor heart, how it aches. I will try to rest—nay, forlorn and desolate as I am, I shall rest, for I can lay my throbbing head on the pillow and say, "I am persecuted, but I am innocent," at least of the humiliating, degrading crimes of which my enemy accuses me; and for the errors to which human nature is prone, I can say in perfect confidence, "Father! Father of all! forgive me, as from my inmost soul I forgive others." Yes, I am not so wretched as I might be, I can sleep in peace.

Several letters have passed between me and Mrs. Ryan, the lady with whom I am about to engage as companion. She tells me, she does not expect to be home these ten days yet, but I may go to her house in the country, and wait for her. This permission is very agreeable to me, as I am here very much distressed. You are certain that I have never been to Mrs. O'Donnell for assistance, and the half guinea she sent me is exhausted. My terror of again encountering the vulgar abuse of that savage Bellamy is so great, that I think I could suffer almost the extreme of hunger, rather than solicit her again, for what is indubitably my right. I shall be obliged to leave part of my scanty wardrobe with the woman with whom I have lodged; I have no other means of satisfying her demands: she has set her mind upon the lace you gave me, but that she shall not have.

I have settled every thing with this harpy of a landlady, and my stock of apparel is now reduced very low; she has promised, if I send her the money I owe, within a month, that I shall have my clothes again. To-morrow, I set out for the country; Mr. Manton will convey me in a post chaise. I shall not feel right until I see the lady of the mansion. I catch myself frequently painting in imagination, her person, her manners, her style of conversation, &c. I have drawn twenty different pictures, and it is ten to one if either of them bears the smallest resemblance to the original.

The mansion where I now am, is more like the family seat of an opulent nobleman, than the dwelling of a

private gentlewoman. I inquired of the house-keeper, (who is the only servant except the housemaid and gardener, who is at present at home,) if this house had been long the family mansion? She replied, that it was the seat of her lady's father; that she was an only child, consequently an heiress. The park and grounds are delightful, and kept in very excellent order. I understand that there is a fine library, but this was locked; however, I found a few novels and poems in one of the bed chambers, and flimsy as the materials which compose the generality of novels are, they have afforded me some hours amusement, and drawn me from myself; a comfort grateful to the unhappy, by whatever means procured.

After the turbulence, the mean and sordid scenes, and depraved companions with whom it has within these four last months been my lot to mix, the quiet and conveniences I here enjoy, seem a cordial to my depressed spirits. I can collect my thoughts; I can read, or work, for I found the house-keeper engaged in making up some very fine linen, which she said was for a gentleman in the neighborhood, and I have taken some of it to help her; employment is always necessary to my comfort, and never more so than at present. Where the mind is painfully occupied, the hands should never be a moment idle. If the imagination is active, and ardent, it naturally partakes in the occupation of the fingers, and fancy will wander from our own selfish concerns to the work, from the work to those for whom we are executing it, painting as she goes, persons, places, and events, in which, though we are no wise connected, we find a kind of pleasing amusement in depicting to ourselves.

I often wander for hours in the park and gardens, and I say within myself, These are scenes congenial to my soul; here is quiet, order, neatness; the eye glances round and still gleams in its wanderings, some charm, some soothing sensation which it conveys to the heart, to soften, cheer, and elevate it. Yet believe me, dear Anne, I have never felt the most distant wish to possess such a house, such a park, or gardens; no! I am well assured, many are the vexations accompanying wealth; many the inconveniences to which the possessors must submit, as a tax for the luxuries they are permitted to enjoy; a decent competence best suits my disposition; a neat dwelling removed from the noise, hurry, and dissipation of the gay, thoughtless and commercial world; my income sufficient to supply all my comforts, and some few of the elegances of life, with means to make those friends, whose talents or merit might render them dear to my heart, welcome to share my abode and table whenever it might suit their inclination; and just so near a capital town, as might enable me, by way of enhancing the sweets of retirement, sometimes to mingle in its amusements. Such a state would be the height of my ambition. I have not mentioned the power of assisting the poor, because they who with an hundred pounds a year, cannot find the heart to give relief, would, I am sure, find themselves equally reluctant, though their annual income should be five thousand. Nor is it by money alone, their wants are to be alleviated; a woman benevolently inclined may, from the overplus of her family provisions, from the refuse of her wardrobe, make many a poor child comfortable; but where the one is permitted to be wasted by the improvident servants, and the other is thrown carelessly away, or is heedlessly destroyed, (when a few hours work might convert them into respectable and useful garments,) even a large fortune will not allow of much liberality.

You perceive, my Anne, by the style of my letter, that my spirits are greatly composed since I wrote last. To-morrow Mrs. Ryan is expected home; I understand she brings company with her; two chambers are prepared; my apartment is a very neat chamber, with a large light closet, containing all the dressing apparatus; it joins the one that I understand is Mrs. Ryan's; a small but very convenient writing desk, containing paper, &c. with a well assorted box of colors, crayons, drawing paper, and all the implements for drawing, were placed in it; but as my lady was not here to put me in possession of them, I have not presumed to use any of them, though the house-keeper told me they were designed for me. If I should be so happy as to find this lady agreeable, and the situation such as I can remain in until my salary shall enable me to pay what debts I have contracted, and return to England with respectability, I shall esteem myself fortunate. It is late in the evening— before this time to-morrow night I shall have seen this formidable woman. Yes, it is a truth, that I have thought on her so much, formed so many conjectures concerning her, that the very anticipation of the meeting, sets my heart a beating. The window at which I am writing, looks upon a beautiful pond, over which impending willows hang, darkening with their thick foliage the translucent element on the side on which they grow; the moon is nearly at the full, her bright rays peeping between the pendant umbrage, seems to sprinkle here and there large orient pearls, and now the freshening breeze wafting aside a ponderous bough, her whole face flashed upon the liquid mirror, a stream of burnished silver, scarce seen before it was gone. So it has been with my life; a shade hung over, even its earliest part; as I advanced, a few rare gems were scattered in my path, and now and then a sudden flash of pleasure

enlivened my bosom; but ah! how scanty was the portion, hardly felt, hardly realized, before it vanished. To-morrow—well, patience—a few hours more, and I shall feel easier.

Wretched! unhappy! oh my dear Anne, I am surely the very game of fortune. What a plot have I escaped! This marquis with all his pretended generosity is a mean designing wretch. But I am away, I am my own mistress—I have a home under the roof of an honest though very poor woman, and am in a way to purchase the immediate necessities of life—namely, food to support it. But let me be a little methodical—you may one day see this, and I would not have my Anne think it was written by a maniac; you may one day see it—yes, I hope you will soon see it, and if my aching head, and debilitated frame prognosticate aright, a very short period will put an end to my sufferings; my heart is broken—my very soul is bowed to the grave—I have wept the fountains of my eyes dry, and now they burn and shoot, while my heart that lately swelled and struggled even to agony, seems like an icicle in my bosom, as torpid and as cold.

The whole day in which I expected the return of Mrs. Ryan, was past in a state of anxiety which I have not power to describe. Every unusual noise I heard, alarmed me, until I had wrought myself into such a state of trepidation, that the rustling of a leaf, or foot of the house maid in the adjoining apartment, pursuing her usual avocations, made me gasp for breath. At length about an hour after sun set, the sound of carriages, and a confused mixture of voices, horses' feet, and running up and down stairs, convinced me the dreaded, yet wished for time was arrived. In about half an hour a footman came up with Mrs. Ryan's compliments and would be glad if I would walk down. I followed trembling; he opened the door of the parlor; I entered, when the first object that met my eyes, was the marquis of H—, and on the sofa near him, Jessey Romain! Had I broken unexpectedly into a nest of vipers, I could not have been more appalled—I know not what I said, but I believe I gave a loud and terrified exclamation; my limbs refused their office; I caught at the door; but my sight forsook me, and I fell.

The momentary suspension of my faculties could hardly be called a swoon; the multitude of painful ideas which pressed imperiously upon my brain, on seeing the woman who had been the bane of my domestic peace, associated with the man who had presumed openly to make overtures derogatory to my honor, struck me with horror. I seemed petrified; I could neither hear nor see distinctly, and to have articulated a single syllable would have been impossible; I remained above half an hour a mere passive machine in the hands of the house-keeper and a young woman who, I afterwards found, was waiting maid to the infamous Romain, alias Ryan. When I had recovered sufficiently to speak, "Tell me," said I, "in whose house I am." "Do you not guess?" said the house-keeper, with a leering smile, impossible to describe, and shocking to behold. "I fear I can," I replied; "but why was I brought here?" "Nay," she answered, laughing outright, in a most insolent manner, "as you came here voluntarily with my lord's old confidential valet, I should suppose you might guess that too, without making such a fuss." "La, ma'am," said the young woman, in an affecting lisping tone, "perhaps the lady feels a little jealous or so, at seeing my lady, who is very handsome for sarten, so familiar with the marquis; but dearee me, miss, they have been separated above six months; to be sure, my lady did take a *tower* to the *continent* with him some little time ago, but my lord and she had a few words—" She was going on with disgusting familiarity and volubility, when I interrupted her, "You are mistaken as to the cause of my agitation; I was surprised—I am distressed—but you cannot comprehend why I should be either the one or the other." "Oh, dearee me, I'm sure I don't want to inquire into nobody's secrets, you knows your own business best; as the saying is, there is nobody knows where the shoe pinches, so well as they that wears it." "Well, Mrs. Flimsey," said the house-keeper, "will you go down and have some tea? Miss Beetham seems quite recovered, and if she wants any thing, she will ring, and Betty the housemaid will answer her bell—shall I send you up some tea, mem?" continued she, turning towards me with affected respect. "I shall not want any thing to-night," I replied; "I will go to bed, and endeavor to rest." I said this to be rid of their intrusive rudeness; but the moment I found myself alone, I began to reflect seriously on my perilous situation. I was neither romantic enough, or so much of a child, as to imagine I could in a civilized country be compelled to submit to treatment which would render me, in my own opinion, the most degraded and wretched of all beings; but I was well aware, should it be known that I had voluntarily resided at the seat of a young nobleman, remarkable for his gallantry, nearly a fortnight, my reputation would be inevitably ruined, and should I remain one night after I knew whose house it was and that the master of it was at home, I should, in a great degree, deserve the obloquy which might be thrown upon me.

To leave the house this very night, was then my first concern; but how? I was twelve miles from Dublin, and had not a sixpence in the world—yet go I must—it was night—I was a stranger to the road. Yet, should I remain,

something might happen to prevent my making good my retreat. I had been carried to my apartment in such a state of weakness, that I was certain, the marquis and his associate would not have the smallest suspicion of my leaving the house before morning; and the woman having left me with the avowed intention of going to bed immediately, would give that information, should any inquiry be made concerning me. I therefore determined to leave the place immediately; and for that purpose was preparing to change my clothes, which, being white muslin, were by no means suited to the making a pedestrian journey, when I discovered that my closet, in which was my trunk containing every habiliment I possessed in the world, was locked, nor could I find the key any where. I was afraid to ring for the maid, lest something might occur to prevent my putting my design into execution; so quitting the apartment, locking the door, and taking the key with me, and with only a shawl thrown over my shoulders, I went softly down the back stairs, unbarred a door which opened into a retired part of the garden, I passed unobserved through it into the park; and from thence, without being interrogated, though several of the servants passed me, I reached the great road.

I had enough of the fears inherent in my sex to feel extremely disagreeable at finding myself on the public road, leading to and almost in the vicinity of a populous city, at ten o'clock at night. The sound of approaching boisterous travellers terrified me exceedingly, and I turned out of the road, crossing a stile which led to a little coppice, in which, by the light of the moon, which was now risen to a considerable height, I discovered a foot path, which I struck into and pursued, until I came in view of a neat cottage.

To continue my journey at this late hour, or to remain in the open fields all night, was equally repugnant to my feelings; I resolved, therefore, to knock at the door, and request to repose in the cottage for the night. I knocked several times before I obtained any answer; at length a window opened, and a female voice inquired, "Who is there?" "I have lost my way," said I, "and intreat to be admitted into the house until morning." "But who are you?" "I am an inoffensive woman, whom an unfortunate circumstance has obliged to be out at this late hour; but if you will let me in, and allow me to repose, I have no doubt but I can amply compensate you for your kindness." "Well," said the voice, "I will ask mistress, and if she has a mind to let you come in, I will open the door—but be you sure you be a woman," continued she, stretching her head out of the window to look at me, "because I think you looks monstrously like a ghost." Having assured the simple rustic that I was a living being, she went from the window, and in about five minutes came down and admitted me within the door, at the same time saying, "Mistress says she does not much like letting strangers come in at night; but seeing as how you be a woman, and alone, you may come up and lay down by me." I perceived this simple wench as she was talking, to take hold of my shawl, my gown, and at last she laid her hand upon my arm—"Why, you be warm flesh," said she, "I did verily think you might be a spirit after all; which way did you come? for sartin you did not come through the coppice." When I assured her that I did, she all astonished, inquired if I saw any thing. I replied in the negative. She then told a tragical story of seduction, and murder of a child, the premature and horrid death of the mother, and finished with "Poor Katy O'Conner, she walks every night in the coppice near the place where she buried her baby; sometimes in one shape and sometimes in another; but if any body offers to go near her, she sets up a dreadful howl and vanishes in a flash of fire. O! and by my conscience, I would not go through that coppice after night fall, for all the silver cups and spoons in my lord's great house yonder."

Upon the mention of my lord's great house, I perceived, it would be necessary for me to recommence my journey early in the morning, as it was more than probable that this girl had seen me there, if she went thither often, as I spent much of my time in the park and grounds, and was consequently in the way of being seen by the rustics, who were daily passing through them, to the mansion. I questioned her as to her knowledge of the family, and learnt that this was a poultry and dairy house, belonging to his lordship, and was kept by her mistress who was a widow, and had been a domestic in the family many years. I learnt also, from this communicative creature, that this estate had belonged to the marquis's mother; that she was lately dead, that from this mother his immense wealth had proceeded; I immediately concluded, that this was the lady of whom the house-keeper had spoken, when I imagined she was speaking of Mrs. Ryan.

At the first appearance of day, therefore, I arose; awoke my companion, who had been for several hours in a profound state of insensibility, and taking a sash which I had worn round my waist the day before, I presented it to her, telling her, I had no money; but I hoped that would satisfy her for the trouble I had given her. She took it with delighted eagerness; it was bright lilac, and though the faint beams of day hardly allowed her to be a judge of the color, she saw enough to be wonderfully pleased. "Won't you have some breakfast?" said she, holding up the

ribbon, with her arm raised above her head, to admire its length. "I will take a draught of milk," I replied, "if you can give it me without offending your mistress." We descended the stairs together; she brought me a bason of milk, and a slice of bread: I took them with thankfulness, and saying I should soon find my way home, bade the credulous, good natured creature adieu, and pursued my solitary way toward the city.

I had wandered so far from the great road, that the day was considerably advanced before I regained sight of it; and the moment I reached it, I again experienced the fear of being known, and on some pretext or other, obliged to go back to the mansion of the marquis. Thus wandering, sometimes in the road, sometimes in bye paths which seemed to tend to the same point, avoiding every passenger with the care and trepidation of a condemned criminal; the wearisome day passed on, and just at its close, I found myself at the entrance of the city; having from fear and ignorance travelled several miles more than I otherwise should have had occasion to do; my limbs were fatigued, my feet sore, my spirits depressed, and my stomach faint; for the bread and milk taken at the cottage in the morning, was all the sustenance I had that day received. Harrassed and desponding as my mind was, I am not heroine enough to say I forgot my bodily sufferings in the more poignant mental misery. I wept, my dear Anne, for very hunger and weariness, and every other feeling was for the time absorbed in the reflection that I had no where to repose my head, nor wherewithal to satisfy my appetite.

At length I reached the house where I had lodged, previous to my making this unfortunate journey, and tapped at the door. The woman herself came to it. "So—so you are returned," said she, with an impertinent sneer, "and pray what has brought you back in this trim?" "Let me come in," said I, faintly, "I am fatigued almost to death, I have walked twelve or fourteen miles to day." "And pray what is that to me?" said she fiercely, "you did not pay so well when you was here before, as to think I will put myself out of the way to take you in again." "Is my room occupied by any other?" "Your room, quotha, pray which room is that? The one you left your trumpery in has been let to a gentlewoman this week past; one who can pay her way as she goes; none of your has *been unfortunate ladies*, but a right arnest lady with plenty of guineas in her purse." "Have you sold my clothes?" I asked timidly. "Clothes! what clothes? the few rags you left in your trunk? No, since you chose to take all the best of your things with you when you went away, yon may now take the rest; I'm sure I shan't keep them; so when you have got a lodging you may send for them." "But I can get no lodging; I have no money; let me only come in for to night," exclaimed I frantically. "I tell you I have no room for you," said she, in a calm, deliberate accent, "what would the woman have? There's plenty of lodgings to be had for such as you, but I never harbors nobody of suspicious character, after I knows'em. You runn'd away from your husband in England—and then you runn'd away from your fine madam Bellamy— and now I suppose you have runn'd away from the old man that you went into the country with, arter all your lying backwards and forwards about going to wait on, or be companion to a lady; pretty stories for them that choose to believe them; but I knows you better than to be flammed so; you is too proud to wait on any body, and as to a companion, Lord help us, I wonders what lady would bemean themselves to accompany with you. Well, what does the woman stand for? I tells you, you can't come in" She then shut the door, and left me standing on the step, holding by a slight railing, which was on one side. I slowly descended the steps, and going a few paces from the inhospitable door, sat down on some old timber which lay in the street—I shed no tears—my heart did not beat with violence. I leaned my head on my hands, resting my elbows on my knees, and a torpid coldness pervaded every sense. I heard human voices, but they spoke not to me. I raised my eyes; a small shop before me displayed some rolls, two or three polonies and some cheese; but they were not for me. I saw lights pass into the chambers of the surrounding houses, indicating that the inhabitants were retiring to rest. Alas, thought I, there is no place of rest for me. To describe my feelings at this moment, this horrid moment, is impossible; I could neither weep, think, nor pray. My hands relaxed their support—my head sunk; I reclined myself on the timber, and a sleep, like that of death, seemed stealing over me. At that moment I felt a warm hand touch mine. "Are you asleep?" said a soft, female voice. I raised myself, but could not articulate a word; my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth. "My neighbor," said the same voice, assisting me to rise upon my feet, "tells me you want a lodging, she is full, I have a room that is empty—come home with me, you have had a long walk to day—come, we shall not disagree about the price." So gently leading forward as she spoke, without my being able to speak, or resist her offered kindness, the good creature brought me to her home, and gave me some wine—whey, helped to undress and put me into bed, and telling me if I wanted any thing in the night, to knock against the wainscot, placed a light in the chimney, and left me.

Excessive fatigue and complete dejection had the same effect on my frame that a powerful opiate would have

had. I fell into a profound sleep, nor did I awake until the sun, darting his rays upon my face, chased the sweet oblivion of my senses; I opened my eyes and looked around me; was some time before I could comprehend where I was, or how I came there. The room, the bed, every article of furniture, though clean, bespoke poverty. I closed my eyes again, and endeavored to collect my thoughts; by degrees the torturing circumstances of the preceding day returned to my recollection; my heart which on my first awaking had beat violently, now subsided into something like tranquillity; I felt a gentle emotion steal over it, it was gratitude to the good creature who had humanely snatched me from the horrors of passing the night on those timbers on which I had sunk supine and hopeless, and shielded me from the dreadful insults or casualties, to which such a situation exposed me; from gratitude to her my thoughts elevated themselves to the Divine power, whose immediate agent she was. The tears flowed plentifully, but they tranquillized my spirits, and I wished to arise and thank my protectress for her humanity. I left my bed, and began to dress myself; but in a few moments a faintish sickness came over me, and I sunk again on the bed side. I now became sensible to the calls of hunger; they were imperious, and I endeavored to finish putting on my clothes that I might solicit from my good hostess something to satisfy its cravings.

I imagine she must have heard me stir, for she came in, and kindly inquiring how I had slept, assisted me to finish dressing myself; she led me into the next room where a comfortable breakfast was prepared, which I partook with an eagerness, and thought it tasted more exquisitely than any breakfast I had ever before enjoyed. When I had finished my meal, reflection and honesty told me it would be unjust to continue with the woman, whose appearance denoted her poverty, and partake of her store, which in all probability, was scanty enough for herself. Yet what to do, or how to preface a discourse which I feared must end in my becoming an outcast, I was at an equal loss. At length she seemingly, without design, led to the subject by remarking, that she believed I had lodged in that neighborhood before; I replied in the affirmative. "Neighbor Conolly," said she, "has let her room to a mighty fine lady, who, I suppose, will stay a good while; she has a sight of folks come after her, and I suppose pays handsomely for the use of the parlor; to be sure, I have not got a room entirely to yourself to offer, but if such a place as I can offer will do—" "Ah, my kind hearted woman," said I, laying my hand on her arm, "I have no means of paying you, even for my last night's lodging and this morning's refreshment." "Well, well, may be not now," said she hastily, "but you will have; you can work at your needle, I suppose?" "Yes, very well and very fast," said I, "either plain work, dresden, or embroidery." "And you are willing to work, I hope?" she asked seriously. "Indeed I am; only procure me employment, and you shall see I will not be idle," I replied with earnestness. "Then depend on it, my good lady, we shall do very well; a woman who is honest and both able and willing to work, will never be suffered to want while there is one good christian upon earth; but I say *honest*, she must be *honest in thought, in word, in deed*."

Spite of my uneasy situation, I could not help smiling at the woman's earnestness. "I hope I am honest in thought, word, and deed," said I. "I hope you are," she replied, gravely, "but you have been living with some bad folks, that old ugly madam Bellamy, and her good for nothing daughter, won't fit company for an honest young woman; neighbor Conolly too, said some hard things of you last night, but I thought if you were ever so naughty, that was no reason why you should die in the street, so I took you in; but now I must tell you I am willing to have you stay here, and I can get you work enough; but I must have no men folks coming after you, no walking out with old gentlemen, no advertising for places. When we have had a hard day's work, you and I will go and fetch a walk together, and a Sunday's we'll go to church; I always goes to a little chapel two or three miles out of town, because the walk is good for one's health." I readily subscribed to all these conditions, more pleased than offended with her blunt sincerity—but she had not finished. "You must know," said she, "there is a gentleman comes here very often; heaven bless him, he loves to come and see his poor old Peg. I lived in his father's family when he was a child; though he has been very unfortunate, I love him as well as if he had been a rich lord or duke; but you must not see him; no, nor even know his name, for reasons that I know of—he don't come here very often, but for fear of his coming unexpectedly, you must live and work in the little bed-room; he never goes in there, and though the room is small and has a bed in it, it is lightsome and clean, though I say it."

"I have no objection to your proposal," said I, "I have only to remark, that I must write one letter to England; that letter you shall yourself put in the post-office, and if you will take the trouble, inquire for the answer; and when that answer arrives, you shall see the contents. I will deal openly with you; I will inform you of my real situation, but at present, I am inadequate to the task of speaking much." And really, my dear Anne, I felt very ill; my head began to ache, and the fluttering at the heart to return, accompanied with excessive faintness. The good

old woman, whose name was Peggy McLean, saw my situation, and helped me into the bed-room; smoothed the pillow, assisted me in lying down, covered me, and with the simple exclamation of "Poor thing," pronounced in a voice of compassion, left me, shutting the door softly after her.

I soon fell asleep; but it was neither sound nor refreshing. My fatiguing journey, the barbarous language of Mrs. Conolly, the anguish I endured when she shut the door upon me, were in this feverish slumber again repeated. I started; my flesh burned, my pulse throbbed; extreme thirst urged me to rise, but the weight on my eyelids, and the strong inclination I felt to dose, prevented my attempting it. At noon, Peggy, or as I shall call her, Mrs. M'Lean, brought me a little broth; I could take but a few spoonfuls. "You are sick, child," said she, "I must have a doctor for you." "No," said I, "it is only fatigue, I walked a long way yesterday, and was very warm; rest will restore me." But rest now fled from me: I remained on the bed until towards evening, without forgetting myself a moment; I then arose, and took a little tea, but was unable to sit up. Retiring for the night, I asked Mrs. M'Lean where she slept? The good creature evaded my question, but on my repeating it, confessed she had no other bed, and had slept the preceding night on a rug upon the floor, in the next room. What an act of Christian charity was this, my Anne, that a woman should deprive herself of her own bed to put into it a poor wretch whom she had reason to suppose was lost to virtue, and who had no recommendation but her distress!

From that night until the expiration of the ten following days, I was confined by a fever, occasioned by being exposed so long in a state of inactivity to the night air, after having been heated by walking; but at length I recovered strength enough to work, and obtained sufficient employment in tambouring and embroidering muslin, to supply me with the necessaries of life. I wrote to Darnley, but received no answer. I began to experience something like entire resignation to my fate; for I saw no way of again revisiting my dear native land, but by strict parsimony, endeavoring to save a sufficient sum to bear my expenses thither; but it would take a considerable time to save so much.

I was one evening at work with old Margaret, when a loud knock at the door made us start; she opened it, and I heard a sound of altercation; I drew near the stairs to listen—a voice I thought I knew, caught my ear; I descended half way down, and was convinced I had not been deceived; I rushed down the remaining steps and out at the door, and on recovering from a momentary insensibility, I found myself in the arms of my brother.

LETTER XXXI. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – August 30, 1780.

I INFORMED you in my last, that Sarah had written to her husband, to announce to him her arrival in England; he returned no answer, and I began to think all connexion between them was forever at an end; indeed, I did not much regret it, only as it respected her own ideas of propriety, which led her to wish to see him, that she might clear up all misconceptions, which aspersed as her character has been, was absolutely necessary to be done; though, until she saw him, and knew exactly what had been said by that arch fiend Bellamy, or whether she had really written at all or not; to attempt an explanation before she was accused, was to acknowledge a consciousness of error.

One thing I rather imagine appears enigmatical to you, the assertion of her being kept by O'Donnell; I will unravel the mystery. O'Donnell, still hampered by the effects of his wife's extravagance, and not choosing to appeal to a court of justice for a divorce from her, lest a public exposition of his conduct, in regard to her before marriage, might point him out as an object of contempt and ridicule, was content to live within the rules of the prison; and being a man of considerable ability and literary knowledge, gained a very decent subsistence, by writing, selecting and correcting a periodical publication, which is issued to the world by a principal bookseller. Peggy McLean had lived with his parents, and O'Donnell retained a very strong affection for the worthy creature, who had indulged many a vagary of childhood, and concealed many a boyish fault, which might have exposed the culprit to a whipping, if discovered. His lodging was near her's, and she washed and repaired his linen; this occasioned a frequent intercourse between them. The evening our poor Sarah was driven from the door of the unfeeling Conolly, O'Donnell, who had been to pay his ancient friend a visit, and was passing just as she was on the steps entreating admission, he heard the name of Bellamy, and stopped; a few moments attention to the scene convinced him Sarah was in great distress, and from his knowledge of the persons she had been among, he thought it more than probable, she might be an innocent, ill used woman. He saw her sink down upon the timber, and running hastily back to Peggy, thus addressed her:—"Good Peggy, go directly into the lane; there is a poor creature in distress. From what I have heard her say, she has no means of procuring a lodging. I know nothing more about her, she may have brought her misery on herself, but be that as it may, she must not lie in the street." "No, indeed, heaven forbid she should," said Peggy, "while Peg McLean has a matrass and a blanket; come, shew me where she is, and tell me what I shall say to her." "Speak to her as from yourself, for on no account must my name be mentioned to her; tell her you have a room you can let her have; take her home with you, treat her kindly, and you shall be no loser; but I will never see her, and again I charge you never mention my name to her."

After Peggy had executed O'Donnell's benevolent commission, in the manner Mrs. Darnley, in her journal, has related, he tapped at the door, and softly inquiring if her lodger was retired, hearing she was in bed, he ventured in, and informed the honest creature of what he had gleaned from her talkative and malignant neighbor, concluding with these words: "If she is virtuously inclined, she will be willing to work, and I have no doubt but she can have employment from some of the warehouses; when you have talked with her, if we find her what I think she is, I will mention her to the wife of my friend, the bookseller, who, I am sure, will interest herself to get her work; but you see it would be highly improper to let her know I have done any thing for her, knowing what she does of my wife, she would not, I am sure, receive the smallest favor from me; her delicacy and prudence, if she is possessed in any degree of those amiable qualities, would equally forbid it." How this plan was executed, we have been informed, and as O'Donnell frequently called to inquire after her, though he never saw her, Bellamy, who it seems had spies upon her, wrested these circumstances into a tale of dishonor, and retailed them in order to injure the woman whom she never could forgive, for daring to avow her detestation of vice in her presence.

September 7

I broke off abruptly, being told Mrs. Darnley wished me to come down, as there was a gentleman below who would not tell his business, (though it concerned herself) to any but me. I obeyed the summons, and found an elderly person, whose appearance and manner evidenced the well bred man. "I come, madam," said he, "to ask a

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question of this lady; but it must be in your presence, and you must confirm or contradict her answers, as I have from report such an opinion of your integrity—" "Hold, sir," said I, interrupting him, "whatever Mrs. Darnley asserts, to those who know her, needs no other confirmation; her characteristic is sincerity, nor did I ever know her in the smallest degree to deviate from it." "Well, madam," he replied, "she has, no doubt then, in the sincerity of her heart, related to you every occurrence which took place during her late residence in Dublin?" "She has." "I am commissioned by Mr. Darnley to inquire whether you, madam, (turning to Sarah) were, during that period, acquainted with Mr. O'Donnell?" "I was," she replied with a steady voice, though the glow of resentment crossed her cheek, as she remembered how vilely, on his account, she had been reduced; "I received obligations from him which I can never repay, and the grateful remembrance of them are deeply engraven on my heart." "You are candid, indeed, madam," said he, with a look of astonishment; "he was your frequent visitor during the latter part of your residence in Ireland?" "He was frequently at the house where I lodged, but I never saw him until within a few days of my quitting that place. But why these interrogations, sir? If Mr. Darnley wishes to find me innocent, he may easily trace me through every scene in which I was engaged during my absence from England. If he wishes to believe me guilty he had better avoid all particular investigation of my conduct; I court, rather than shrink from scrutiny, and letters addressed to—" "Pardon me, dear madam, Mr. Darnley is in no condition to make this scrutiny, and could he behold you at this moment as I do, truth is so strongly marked in every line of your countenance, he would need no other confirmation of your innocence. He is ill; a fall he got on board an Indiaman, where he had dined with a number of other gentlemen, and partook too freely of the juice of the grape, has brought on a fever."

Sarah arose from her seat. "I will go," said she; "lead me to him, sir; I will go, and perform my duty in attending him; if, when he recovers, he bids me leave him, I can return again to the only friend fortune has left me, and she will not refuse to receive me." She held out her hand to me; the tears gushed from her eyes, and hastily throwing on her bonnet and cloak, the gentleman led her to a coach, leaving me a card where I might find her, and they drove off.

I have heard from her every day since; Darnley yet continues ill, but is, I believe, now out of danger. I am to see her to-day, and will write again soon.

ANNE.

LETTER XXXII. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – Sept. 18th, 1780.

COMFORT seems again to dawn on our good Sarah; her tender assiduity, her care, and unremitting watchfulness, have been the means in the hands of an all powerful God, of restoring Darnley to health. They also have awakened in his heart a degree of that affection he once professed so ardently to feel for her, and it certainly is more likely to be permanent, since what he experienced for her at the time of their union, was the effervescence of youthful passion; but the present sentiment is softened by gratitude, and founded on esteem.

The old gentleman who came to inform Sarah of her husband's illness, is a Mr. Vaughan, a half pay officer, who has a wife and several children to maintain, and a very confined income to do it with; he was in service at the commencement of the war, but receiving a wound, returned home, and his health has since been in so precarious a state, as to prevent his again joining his regiment, which continued still abroad. To increase the means of living, they let part of their house to several respectable gentlemen, who boarded with them at an easy rate, and experienced that kind of style and manner of conducting the family, table, &c. as is peculiarly agreeable to men of good education and polished manners. Here Darnley has boarded for some time past, being recommended to the family by a person, who writes in the counting house with him, and who had some little knowledge of his character, and knew from good authority how foolishly he had trifled away his happiness, and involved himself in debts, by being subject to the dominion of an unprincipled woman.

Mr. Vaughan, though advanced considerably in life, is uncommonly attractive in his manners; his education has been liberal; his understanding is far above mediocrity, and having seen a great deal of the world, was qualified for giving counsel to the thoughtless and inexperienced. He soon gained Darnley's confidence; he imparted to this new friend, the doubts which had arisen in his mind concerning his wife's conduct, during her absence from him; shewed him the letter Bellamy had written to him, and which accused poor Sarah of almost every vice. Vaughan inquired if he ever had any reason to suspect her while she was with him; what her general conduct and principles were, and learnt that though volatile and improvident in many things, she cherished the strictest principles of virtue and religion, and utter abhorrence of vice; that while herself by look, by word, or action, never in her gayest and most thoughtless moments transgressed the laws of female propriety, she was ever ready to overlook the faults of others, pity their errors and relieve their distresses, though the natural consequence of those errors. He concluded, that it was not very probable that such a woman would become all at once abandoned to vice and profligacy. This he frequently urged, and advised him to write to his wife, send her money to discharge her debts, and invite her home. Darnley was inclined to do this, and would actually have put his design into execution, when he received her letter, written the day after her being received into the dwelling of Peggy McLean, but the very day in which he formed this resolution, another diabolical epistle arrived; not from Mrs. Bellamy as before, but from Jessey Romain, *alias* Ryan; who, though unacquainted with the place of his residence, rather than not have a chance to traduce his innocent wife, directed her letter to a coffee house in the city, where she knew, if he was in London, he would certainly find it, as he seldom passed a day without calling there. This letter contained an account that might have staggered the faith of almost any one. Sarah was represented as having resided several weeks at the marquis of H—'s, and eloping from him one night to Dublin, in company with a married man, by whom she had been ever since supported.

The consequence was, that when Sarah wrote to inform him of her arrival in England, he flew into a violent paroxysm of rage, and swore he would never see her again. All Mr. Vaughan's arguments were vain. But when from his fall, he found a long and painful confinement would most likely be the consequence, nay, perhaps the loss of life would follow, the good man renewed his solicitations that he would see and be reconciled to his wife. Darnley said faintly, "If I could but think her innocent, and yet if she is, Mr. Vaughan, how can I expect her to pardon my neglect of her? If she is innocent, I have used her shamefully—cruelly." Mr. Vaughan found the heat of his passion was subsided, and imagined he would be even glad to find she had been traduced; he therefore resolved himself to see her, to question her concerning the subject of the information officiously given by Ryan and Bellamy, and draw his conclusions from the manner in which she should receive and reply to his questions. Her frankness charmed him, and the readiness, even to eagerness, which she shewed to go immediately and attend her husband, prejudiced him highly in her favor.

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Their meeting was singular, yet affecting. "I have brought," said Mr. Vaughan, opening the curtains of the sick man's bed, "I have brought Mrs. Darnley to nurse you." "Who, Sarah," said he, "where is she?" "I am here, Mr. Darnley," cried our friend, advancing and putting forth her hand. "I am grieved for your accident, and wish it may be in my power, by performing every kind office, to alleviate your sufferings and accelerate your recovery." "Did you come voluntarily?" said he, "was it affection prompted?" "I came voluntarily, George," she replied gravely, "I never was, never can be, a professor; you must judge of my motives from my conduct; actions speak louder than words." "Oh," said he emphatically, "were I to be judged by my actions—" She laid her hand on his which lay outside of the bed, and looking at him with an impression of kindness, "We have both erred," said she, "but let us not now talk of it; time past cannot be recalled, but it remains with ourselves to make the future either happy or miserable; for the present let us think only of your getting well." "Do you wish it, Sarah?" "How unavailing the question, Darnley? If I do not wish it, I would not avow such an indifference, and if I say I do, you may suspect me of dissimulation." "No, Sarah, I believe you would not assert what you did not feel. You ever were sincere." "I am so now, when I tell you I ardently wish your recovery."

When Darnley was well enough to sit up, Vaughan thought as there was every reason to suppose a reconciliation and reunion would take place between him and his wife, it was to be wished that reunion might be rendered permanent; he therefore proposed to Darnley that he would write to the marquis of H—, and to O'Donnel, as an indifferent person who had heard these reports, and wished to know the truth, as it was of infinite consequence that Mrs. Darnley's character should either be effectually cleared, or at any rate the truth should be fully known; to this he assented, and Mr. Vaughan wrote immediately. Darnley awaits the answer of these letters with anxiety; I am equally impatient with him, but my impatience proceeds from a wish to witness the triumph of my beloved Sarah, and in the pleasure that event would confer, I am sure you will partake. Yours,

ANNE.

LETTER XXXIII. ANNE TO ELENOR.

London, – Oct. 7, 1780.

THE expected letters from Dublin have arrived, and have effectually removed every doubt from the mind of Darnley; his health is perfectly re-established, and next week they remove into Warwickshire; but I must inform you of the cause of this removal. I really hope my dear Sarah has her happiest days yet to come; and that they will commence the moment she is again comfortably settled in a home of her own.

Darnley, apparently delighted with the reconciliation which has taken place, seemed only uneasy that his income was so contracted as not to allow him to procure lodgings and attendants such as he thought becoming his wife. This vanity still predominates in him; but Sarah's taste for shew and expense is entirely quenched; and she sat about purchasing some plain furniture for two small rooms with that complacent cheerfulness which evinced her contented mind. But before they were settled, or had fixed on any apartments to remove to, a gentleman one morning called on Darnley, bringing a letter from the marquis of H—, to this effect: "That the esteem Mrs. Darnley's conduct had impressed on his mind, had made him take an interest in whatever concerned her happiness; that he had been informed that misfortune had rendered their situation perplexing in regard to pecuniary circumstances, and being sensible that any offer of assistance in the form of benevolence would be rejected, he had taken the liberty to mention Mr Darnley to a gentleman who wanted a steward to superintend his estates in England, which were extensive; he being obliged from a public employment to reside in Ireland, of which he was a native; that the steward would be expected to reside on the principal estate, which was in Warwickshire; that a neat house was provided for his family within a few miles of the town of Warwick; that the salary was three hundred pounds a year, and half a year would be paid in advance on his entering on the employment; which he might do immediately, should he accept the offer; that there were two rooms which had been fitted up at the mansion house for an aged relation, who had ended her life there; and as the furniture of those rooms was entirely useless to the owner, Mrs. Darnley was requested to accept of it as it might answer until she could accommodate herself with something better."

This was the purport of the letter, but you must have seen it, to form a just idea of the delicacy which ran through the whole; the style was elegant, and every sentence expressed, that though addressed to her husband, it was expected to meet the eye of Sarah; that he considered her as a superior and highly respectable woman, and was at once studious to avoid wounding her delicacy or sensibility. The gentleman who brought the letter was empowered to engage with Darnley, and advance the money. It may readily be supposed that this was an offer not to be rejected by a man who, writing with the utmost assiduity in a merchant's counting house, could earn no more than seventy-five pounds a year, and whose taste for expense was ever hurrying him into thoughtless extravagance; he closed with the proposed terms with eagerness; the gentleman paid him a hundred and fifty guineas, and informed him that by Sir Richard Bourke's order, a post chaise would be ready to convey them to the estate, which is called Woodlands, on any day in the ensuing week they should be ready to go.

It will be particularly pleasing to Sarah to reside in the country; and if there should be a few rational, well informed persons in her vicinity, I am certain she will feel no regret at being obliged to relinquish the gaiety of a town life. I hope Darnley will keep away from Warwick, as he will not be so certain to meet with companions likely to draw him into his former follies in a country village, as in a populous town. Keep him from low and unprincipled associates, and the man will do well enough; but he is weak, easily persuaded by those who have no right to interfere in his concerns, to adopt any measures which may facilitate their own interested views; but so tenacious of the prerogative delegated by the Creator to his creature *man*, that the opinions of a wife would be treated with scorn; her advice neglected, and her injunctions laughed at. But however Sarah may have erred heretofore in her conduct in regard to economy, and in not endeavoring to conceal her indifference towards him; she at least ever has practised, and will continue still, the needful virtue of PATIENCE. I say needful, because there is no passing through life with any degree of comfort without a pretty good share of it; and in the married state, I believe a double portion is absolutely necessary. I cannot speak from experience, as I have never entered the holy pale, and being now on the wrong side of thirty-five, in all probability never shall, unless some spruce young squire of twenty-one, (I would not marry one older) very rich and gallant, should fancy me the *Ninon* of the age and fall in love with me. But this is not very likely; it does not happen very often that men become

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seriously attached to women considerable older than themselves, though often that they are deeply enamoured of their fortunes. Now and then indeed, a woman appears, who, like the celebrated madam Maintenon, maintains her sovereignty over the young, the wealthy, the noble, the learned; and is beloved and courted to the very verge of her grand climacteric; but never was such a phenomenon known as such a woman being an old maid— Prithee, Anne, you say, a truce with your nonsense, and let me hear a little more of Mrs. Darnley. In good truth, I have nothing more at present to tell you about her. Don't you know when a heroine is married, the novel always ends—there is nothing worth relating in the every day incidents of a family circle; and why will not a reconciliation answer as well? I wish with all my heart, her future days may pass on so placidly as to have their whole history comprised in these three words, *health, peace* , and *competency*. Yet I would write to you, though it were only to relate the sly tricks of my favorite puss, or the amiable qualities of my all accomplished Fidelle; aye, and I know you would be glad to read a whole sheet of such trash, rather than I should remain silent. However, keep up your spirits, and when I hear from Mrs. Darnley, how she likes her new residence, &cI will inform you—until when, adieu.

ANNE.

LETTER XXXIV. SARAH TO ANNE.

Woodlands, – November 13, 1780.

HAVING had time to look about me, and get a little settled, I have taken up my pen to tell you how I like my situation. I hardly know how to define my sentiments on the subject, but every thing is so much better than I think it ought to be, every circumstance considered; that I am not satisfied. I cannot feel easy under a weight of obligation, and I very much suspect that the marquis is at the bottom of all the elegancies so profusely provided in this place. Not that I am so vain or romantically ridiculous, as to imagine he has any sinister designs, or that he means to take the trouble of visiting me in this retirement, and by appearing suddenly before me when I thought him in Ireland, surprise me into an appearance of something very far from indifference. Though I am sensible this would be quite in the novel style, I believe such scenes very seldom take place in real life. But I think from some conversation which passed between Frederic and his lordship, that his sensibility was hurt, by reflecting that he had made a virtuous woman the object of illicit pursuit, and he thought he never could make a sufficient reparation for the persecution I had suffered. Mr. Darnley does not see or feel, as I do upon this subject; and it is a topic so delicate, that I cannot discuss it with him; I will therefore describe to you the circumstances which give me uneasiness, and request your advice in what manner to conduct myself.

When we arrived at the inn at Warwick, a servant in livery opened the chaise door, for which he had been evidently waiting, and having inquired if it was not the gentleman and lady going to Woodlands, led the way to an apartment where the cloth was laid for supper; two wax candles were burning on the table, and with marked respect the young man informed Mr. Darnley that his master had written to him to procure accommodations at the inn for that night, as he imagined the lady would be too much fatigued to proceed to the mansion house without repose; then turning to me, he asked, if he should send the chambermaid that I might look at the chamber, for if I did not like it, I could have it changed. Darnley answered in the affirmative, and when the young man left the room, said, "This looks well, Sarah; it looks as if Sir Richard meant to have us respected." To me it appeared more than well, for though I know that a gentleman's steward was always reckoned as a respectable situation in life, upon an equality with the better, and looked up to by the lower class of tenants residing on the estate; yet it was not often that the owner of the estate interested himself in such trivial concerns as the comfort and convenience of the steward's and his wife's travelling, especially when never having seen or known the family. As I made these reflections, it first occurred to me, that Sir Richard Bourke was the ostensible employer, and the marquis the directing hand, supplying all these superfluous attentions. Oh, vanity! vanity! thy name is woman! said a wise man. Well, I acknowledge it is vain in me to suppose myself of so much consequence; but trust me, Anne, however the suggestion may flatter my self-love, it is too humbling to my pride, to occasion any very agreeable emotions; it is living in a state of perpetual obligation; and that of all others is to me the most painful.

A plentiful and elegant supper, excellent wine, and the chat of the host who is a facetious man, of great information, concerning the families, &c. of the gentlemen and nobility, made the time pass very agreeably to Mr. Darnley; but I felt myself somewhat fatigued and retired early.

In the morning, while I was breakfasting, the same young man who had spoken to us the night before, informed me, that Sir Richard had ordered the furniture to be removed from the large house, to the one we were to occupy; which I found was denominated Woodlands Cottage; that he had in consequence of orders from the same quarter, engaged two female doraestics, a cook and a chambermaid; but if on trial I did not approve them he had only engaged them for a month, and was to pay them their wages as soon as they had got others to supply their places.

When breakfast was over, I expressed a desire to go immediately to my new home, and in a few moments, a very neat, plain travelling chariot drew up to the door. "Why do we not go in the post chaise, Mr Darnley?" said I. "Because John informed me last night," he replied, "that this chariot and pair are always kept at Woodlands, for the use of the steward's family." "It is certainly superfluous," said I, "a horse might have been necessary for you, but for my own part, I had rather walk at any time; besides, I do not want a carriage at another person's expense." "But if it is customary for the steward to have the use of this chariot, why should we be particular in refusing such a convenience?" said he hastily. "John told me also," he continued, "that he is to reside with us, and that Sir Richard had written to his agent in London, to make arrangements with me concerning him there, for he hoped he

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should give satisfaction. I forgot to tell you it was mentioned to me the day before I left town, that fifty pounds a year is added to our income on that account, as it was necessary that I should have a man to go on messages, &c. &c."

I saw Mr. Darnley was too well pleased in having so many conveniences to refuse one of them; so turned the conversation to the beauty of the country. It was a very fine morning, and you know, even late in October, autumn retains much of her beauty; the rich and glowing tints which variegate the woods, the short grass impearled by the exhalations which at this time of the year can hardly be denominated either dew or frost, irradiated by a clear, mild, though distant sun, inspires the mind with sensations, though perhaps not quite so cheerful, yet, in my opinion, more exquisitely delightful, than the gay exuberance of flaunting spring.

On our arrival at the mansion prepared for us, its neat and retired situation struck me very pleasantly. The woodbine and jessamine, which almost covered the front, had not entirely faded, as the house has a south aspect; the garden is laid out with simplicity and taste; and the part appropriated to kitchen purposes contained every thing useful; a large asparagus bed, plenty of artichokes, and some excellent wall fruit trees. The interior of the house is by far too expensively furnished; all of which appear to me to be entirely new. A breakfast parlor with cottage chairs, pembroke and work tables; a dining parlor with mahogany furniture; a drawing room, elegant chintz furniture, sofa, curtains, &c. and two large glasses; also, sparr ornaments over the chimney. Three handsome bed-chambers furnished with white dimity and chintz; with china glass, kitchen utensils, &c. for every purpose; in the cellar, a plentiful stock of ale, wine, &c. a cow for the family's use, was grazing in a pasture near the house, and a poultry yard, well stocked, completed the whole of the possession of which it seems I am instituted mistress. There is but one circumstance which in the least reconciles me to accepting these accommodations—which is a note which was laid on a table in the chamber, which I had selected for myself, when I retired for the night, and which the chambermaid told me John had desired her to lay there. It was from Lady Bourke, and the following is a copy. "*To Mrs. DARNLEY.* –

"THOUGH Lady Bourke has not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with Mrs. Darnley, she knows and respects her character; she begs Mrs. D. to consider the furniture, &c. which she will find at Woodland Cottage, as her own; and use it as such, as long as the situation Mr. Darnley holds, may render a residence there agreeable. Lady B. hopes Mrs. D. will find every accommodation, and enjoy much happiness in her new habitation."

Lady Bourke, I understand, is an English woman; I have written my acknowledgments to her, and hope I am not imprudent in partaking of the comforts thus unexpectedly provided for me.

I have now only to pray that Mr. Darnley may fill his station worthily; that he may grow fond of domestic pleasure; that he may meet with rational, respectable associates; and that my heart may be moulded to consider his happiness its own, and that I may so conduct myself, as never to give him wilful pain or offence. Add to this, should my dear Anne approve of my availing myself of the bounty of my new benefactors, and by coming to increase my pleasures by sharing them, convince me I do not act with impropriety, I think I shall be happier than ever I was in my life.

Adieu,

SARAH.

Note by the Editor.

IT appears from a number of letters which passed between Mrs. Darnley and her friend, that she continued to reside at Woodland Cottage for a period of seven or eight years; but as these letters contained no material incidents, it was thought better to suppress them, giving only an abstract of any occurrence of consequence for the reader to know, in order to the better understanding the subsequent letters.

Mrs. Darnley's father returned from India with a broken constitution, and but very little richer than when he left England. His affectionate daughter procured him apartments in a farm house so near that she could herself attend to his comfort; but this was an unfortunate circumstance for her. Mr. Osborne was a man of loose morals, and dissipated habits, and neither distress, or ill health, had in the least amended those defects. Though he could no longer practise the vices which he had ever indulged in without restraint, yet it seemed his chief pleasure to retrace scenes of past riot and debauchery; and his conversation was in general such that no delicate woman could wish to remain long in his company. Unhappily, this was a companion too congenial to the mind of Darnley, for him to avoid the contagion which such a character spreads around, and which, like the spotted pestilence, lays all waste and desolate. Peace, virtue, honor, fall sacrifices to its malignant influence. The voice of conscience is silenced, religion totally neglected, and the most shocking depravity pervades the whole system. Though Mrs. Darnley was too delicate to make many complaints of the irregular conduct of two persons with whom she was so nearly connected, yet her friend Anne, who frequently visited her, delivered her sentiments very freely upon the subject in her letters to Elenor. An extract from one of these, which appears to have been written in the third year of Sarah's residence at Woodlands, is particularly interesting, and therefore it is given here.

Extract of a letter from Anne to Elenor.

"I have, since I have been with my dear Sarah, this autumn, found her particularly gloomy and depressed. The cause is evident, and needs no explanation. Darnley's circumstances are again embarrassed, and it is with the utmost difficulty she can obtain from him money for housekeeping; and whenever necessity obliges her to make a demand, he flies into such passions, that terrified, she will submit to every difficulty, by running bills with those who will give her longest credit, and who must necessarily repay their courtesy by advancing the price, and thus by the demands being larger than he had expected, he seems to think he has reason on his side, when he scolds and complains at what he chooses to term extravagance. And here I must digress to remark, that in my opinion, the state of total dependence in which women in general are, must tend to weaken that affection, that confidence, which should subsist between married persons. I cannot imagine but the domestic happiness would be greatly increased, were wives released from that solitude and anxiety which every woman of sensibility must feel, who is obliged to apply to her husband for every shilling she expends; a man who does not provide, that is, make the purchases necessary for his family, but simply commissions his wife to do it, is very ill able to judge how much money is requisite for the daily expenditure; and will content himself with merely calculating the great and most obvious articles, totally overlooking the thousand little minutia which, though they make no *show*, cost nearly as much in the course of a year, as things apparently of greater consequence. But to return to Sarah.

She appeared to reap much satisfaction from my visit; for she is a good part of the time alone. As her father and Darnley go frequently to Warwick and stay several days together, I asked her if he had long accustomed himself to be thus estranged from home. She answered with a sigh, Yes, that she did not possess the art of making his home agreeable to him, and to confess a truth, were it not for his reputation's sake, which suffered from the company he associated with, she was happier when he was away, than when he was at home. "We were not made," said she, "to constitute each other's happiness; our minds, our habits, our pursuits are totally dissimilar, and though we are chained to the oar, for the life of one of us, we have never as yet made the discovery of any circumstance that might lighten the weight of the fetter, or prevent its galling us even to the quick."

This conversation passed one evening as we were walking out; we had gone farther from home than we had intended, and a shower beginning to fall pretty briskly, we looked around for some place of shelter, where we might stop until the rain ceased, or send home for a carriage. A neat looking cottage presented itself, almost hid in a tuft of willow trees; we hastened in, but the interior of the habitation did not agree with the appearance of comfort the outside had denoted. Every thing was mean and dirty; six or eight dirty ragged children were playing in the room, which seemed to answer for parlor, dinner room, and kitchen, all in one; a miserable looking woman was nursing one child about eight months old, and another, apparently of the same age, was crying in an old, offensively filthy cradle. "You have a large family," said Mrs. Darnley; then asking leave to remain a few moments, she seated herself on one of the miserable stools which helped to furnish the apartment. "Aye, Heaven help me," said the woman, "more than is good, I don't know what is to become of us all next winter." "Where is your husband, good woman?" said I, "has he no trade, or can he get no employ?" "He work, Lord bless me! I should think the bread would choak him that he earnt; no! no! John can spend money fast enough, but he don't like the trouble of working for it." "Are those children twins?" asked Sarah. "No," she replied, petulantly, "one is a cross bastard, that is no child of mine." "A nurse child?" "Yes, it was put here to nurse thirteen months ago, but I never saw the color of the woman's money since she brought it, and now she is gone nobody knows where. To be sure, I should have sent it to the parish long ago, but Mr. Steward there, that lives at the cottage near the great house, came when I lived two miles off at the hut on the green, and gave me three guineas, and told me I might come and live in this house for nothing; so I came, and folks do say, if every one took care of their own, he ought to maintain the brat." She was going on, but I perceived that Sarah changed color; first crimson red, then ashly pale, then red again; therefore interrupted the woman's loquacity; but Sarah had heard enough to awaken curiosity. "Whom do you mean?" said she, "by Mr. Steward?" "Why, Mr What's-his-name there, Sir Richard's steward; he brought a fine madam they say, from Warwick, and she and an old woman lived three or four months in this here house, and here this boy was born, and here she stayed until she was tired of him, or he of her, and so she went off; I wish she had taken her brat with her."

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Mrs. Darnley could not support herself; and though it continued to rain, she arose, walked toward the window to hide her emotions, and proposed going. I did not attempt to prevail on her to stay, for I was sensible her being drenched through with rain would not to her be more dangerous or painful, than to endure the conversation of this woman. She hurried home without speaking, and went immediately to her own apartment, only saying as she passed up stairs, "Anne, change your clothes immediately, and have a glass of wine." "Will you do the same, my dear Sarah?" said I. She replied, "Yes, certainly," and I saw her no more until supper time.

Darnley was in the room when I went down; he was lolling on a sofa, and whistling in a thoughtless, unconcerned manner. He had just inquired for his wife; when, hearing her foot on the stairs, he started upon his feet, and going to the door to meet her, said peevishly, "Where the devil have you been all this evening? it is half an hour since you were called to supper, and it is quite cold." "I came as quick as I could," said she, coldly, and taking her seat, helped me to a bit of chicken. "You have been walking," said he, addressing himself to me. "Yes, Mrs. Darnley and myself have been finely wet." "That was unlucky." "It may be unlucky," said Sarah, gravely, "as far as it concerns ourselves, but I trust it will prove most lucky to a helpless, unprotected being, who, but for this shower, I should never perhaps have known was in existence." "Come, none of your charity sermons," said he. "I am not wishing to excite compassion, but awaken justice, Mr. Darnley. I must beg a candid, unequivocal answer to a question I am about to ask."

"Well, ask your question, and then I will choose whether I will answer it or not." "Do you know any thing concerning a child put to nurse with the woman who lives at the white cottage?" "What is that to you?" said he hastily; but his face crimsoned as he spoke, and his lips quivered. "Do not put yourself in a passion, George," said she calmly, "I do not mean to have any disagreement about it; the child is neglected, and will either peevish in its infancy, or grow up to be a burthen to itself and a nuisance to society, unless those whose duty it is to provide for its maintenance and education, snatch it from so deplorable a fate. I ask no questions, I will not trouble you to make an excuse; if the child owes its being to you, give orders that it be brought home, and I will see it is properly taken care of; but let me entreat you not to add to the offence already committed against religion and morality, the unpardonable one of leaving your offspring to perish." "D—nt—n," said he, throwing down his knife and fork, "of all the plagues a man can have, a moralizing, sentimental, canting, hypocritical wife, is the worst. What the devil business had you to be prying into matters that did not concern you? Such troublesome, curious, jealous women are the torment of men's lives." "Will you send the child home?" said she, endeavoring at composure. "You may take the child, and its mother, and the nurse, and all her dirty brats, and all go to — together, so as I hear nothing more of you."

"Grant me patience, Heaven!" said she, rising hastily from table, and rushing out of the room. When, will you believe it? He rang the bell very deliberately, and with the most perfect appearance of composure bade the servant clear the table; then turning to me, said, "As Sarah is so indisposed, I will not disturb her to-night; perhaps you will like to take my place;" then bidding the servant order a bed in one of the spare rooms to be got ready for him, he bade me good night. How my dear Sarah spent the night, may be easily imagined. However, in the morning she gave orders for the child to be brought home; appointed a room as much out of the way as possible for a nursery, and hired a woman to take care of it.

[Editor's note continued.]

Some time after this, Mrs. Darnley's father paid the debt of nature; her husband, from gaming, extravagance, and folly of different kinds, offended his employer, and was dismissed from his situation. The marquis was dead, and though he left to Mrs. Darnley a bequest of one hundred and fifty pounds a year, during her life, yet that was trifling compared to what Darnley had been accustomed to expend. They removed to Wales, and here her brother Frederic Lewis visited her. During this period, she was deprived of her friend Anne, and her mind became, to use her own expression, in a letter she addressed to her brother, "dead to love and joy," and alive only to a sensation of peace which arose from a conviction of having, to the utmost, performed her duty. She was now at an age when every impulse of the soul is in full vigor, especially, in a well regulated mind; for the senses at this time are more under the control of reason; the heart selects its associates and pleasures with caution, and its choice is sanctioned by judgment. But Sarah, with a mind formed for all the gentle delights of love, friendship, and domestic happiness, had not one object on which to lavish its tenderness. A short letter which she addressed to her brother on his return from a six years station in America, from whence he had brought an amiable wife and two lovely children, will give a better picture of her mind, situation and feelings, than any transcript could possibly do.

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LETTER XXXV. SARAH TO FREDERIC.

Section

YOU are returned to your native land, my dearest brother, and have brought with you love and peace: Heaven grant they may long, very long, be the inmates of your dwelling, the solace of your heart.

Many are the changes that have taken place, since last we met. Am I happier? you ask— perhaps I may be thought so—perhaps I am so, if absence of pain is pleasure; then the torpid state into which my heart is fallen is happiness. I have suffered much, my brother, but my sufferings are ended. I seldom weep now—but then I as seldom smile; and my heart, which once would bound and flutter with indescribable sensation, now in dull and monotonous pulsations, receives and discharges the vital fluid in slow, unvaried measure. Frederic, this is not happiness.

My father rests in the house appointed for all living. Here was a link dissolved in the great chain of my existence; but, though I felt the dissolution of so near a connexion awfully impressive, I could not regret one, whom I had never (since reason had the power to direct my judgment,) respected; whom I had long ceased to love. Oh! that parents would consider the consequences of setting bad examples to their children. You, my dear brother, have been as deeply wounded by the errors of the departed, as I have; and had you lived at home as much as I did, I greatly fear your principles would have been perverted by the scenes which would unavoidably have passed beneath your observation. I was saved from so dreadful a misfortune, by my good aunt; she was austere in her manners, severe in her temper, and scrupulously particular in her opinions of female manners, and religious duty; but yet it is that aunt, unkind as in early life I used to think her, to whom I owe all that I ever knew of happiness.

But this is a subject ungrateful to us both; I will drop it when I have made one remark. You are now a parent, Frederic, and do not, I conjure you, forget that you are not only answerable to your Maker for your own conduct, but for the example you set your children; for it is more than probable, that their eternal, as well as temporal happiness will originate in you. Precept, my brother, will do nothing, unless backed by example; and what parent can hope or think a child will be benefited by correction, given by one who knows not how to correct himself?

The last time my heart felt acutely, was in the loss of my valued Anne. I had a friend— Yes, that is an inexhaustible source; the tears still gush forth when I remember I have a friend no longer. You will say, you are my friend. I know you are, as much as any man can be the friend of a sister, when he has a wife and children whom he loves sincerely, ardently, and who deserve to be so beloved. Connubial love! domestic felicity! are ye then realities? Alas, to me, ye have been like fairy tales, credited indeed in youth, but never experienced in any part of life.

You inquire concerning our finances; we are neither rich nor poor; our circumstances are in unison with my feelings; no luxuries to enjoy, no pressing wants to lament. What you heard of the marquis's legacy is true; in addition to which, Darnley has employment in the warehouse of a manufacturing company, to receive orders, and note them in a day book; for this he receives a stipend of sixty pounds per annum. We occupy a very small house, more like a cottage than any thing else, about half a mile from the town; our whole establishment consists of one girl to do the drudgery, my little Charles, Mr. Darnley, and myself. Could you come and see me, methinks my heart would once more beat with pleasure, and would fortune permit me to embrace the wife of your choice, and your dear children, I should say, I knew what happiness was.

Editor's note.

[In another letter bearing date eighteen months after the preceding, we find the following paragraphs, evidently written after Mr. Lewis had visited her.]

"You are pleased with our situation, and with the little society that surrounds us. I am glad you are; I do not wonder at the approbation you express of the manners, conversation, and general character of our good curate, Mr. Hayley. He is all that man ought to be; and since his residence among us, it seems as though I felt awakened to the joys of society. My brother, let my heart stand open to your view; I feel, had such a man been presented to my notice, in early life, I should have experienced a different sentiment to what I have ever yet known. Perhaps I do not properly comprehend what love is; at least such as the visionaries of romance describe it; I never yet saw the man who could make me defy the opinion of the world, slight the moral duties, and forget the respect due to myself. But methinks for such a man as Hayley, I could suffer every temporal inconvenience —bear poverty, contempt, reproach, yes, all reproaches but those of my own heart; but thinking him, as I do, the first of human beings, I could never commit any action that would sink me in his esteem, or expose him to the contempt of the world. I ever thought, and am now more fully convinced, that the woman who experiences the sentiment which alone is deserving the name of love in all its purity, can never be guilty of aught that would call a blush to her own cheek, or brand the object of her esteem with infamy.

"I am not hypocrite sufficient to offer an apology for the candid avowal of my sentiments in regard to Mr. Hayley. They are not the impulse of a momentary passion, they are the result of reason and observation. I feel that his esteem is necessary to my peace of mind, and to obtain that esteem is so desirable an object, that it has aroused the sleeping faculties of my soul, and called them into action. I have now some pleasurable object in view; I pursue some daily amusement; I execute some little work of taste, or fancy; I practise a new air upon my guitar, or from my window sketch the outline of a landscape, or a group of sportive children, and have the hope of receiving approbation from one of whose judgment I have the highest opinion, and who I know, if he cannot praise with truth, will remain silent. I offer no apology. No, why should I? You require none. Acquainted as you are with my strong sense of moral rectitude, of my full persuasion of a superintending Deity, and the certain rewards and punishments that await us in a future state, you cannot believe me depraved; knowing as you do the character of the person I esteem, you will dismiss all fear.

But mistake me not: it is neither affection to my husband, nor the dread of the world's censure, binds me to Darnley. No, every moral tie he has himself voluntarily and repeatedly broken; but I have never yet infringed my duty, I am his wife. Love him, alas! I never did! never can. Though had he taken the proper means to conciliate tenderness, my heart would have soon become his own; it was formed for unbounded tenderness, but its impulses never expanded; they were repelled by unkindness, and shrunk again within itself. But if I have found a source of happiness, which religion and honor does not disallow, why should I reject it, for one, who never studied my peace, but made self gratification his sole object? Ah, my brother, if I am to be a stranger to pleasure, till my ideas of it are in unison with his, I shall remain unacquainted with it forever."

LETTER XXXVI. SARAH TO FREDERIC.

November, 1793.

MY brother, the world and I have done with each other; the grave yawns, I stand shivering on its brink, and whispering spirits seem to say, "a moment more, and you will burst through the veil of mortality, and stand in the presence of the Eternal." I have surveyed my past life, and what does it appear? a vast blank, on which my history may be written in one expressive word, *disappointment*. I have lived for others, lost to myself.

In the early part of my life, the friendship of Anne was a firm rock on which I could rest secure, even though the dashing tempests of calumny and persecution threatened to overwhelm my devoted bark. She passed to her place of rest, and the ice of indifference benumbed with its petrifying power every sensation of my soul. Separated from every being with whom I could hold communion; thrown among strangers at a period of life, when, though the sensibility is supposed not to be so impetuous as in youth, yet when called into action by merit, and sanctioned by reason, it is more lasting, more powerful; and being divested of passion, becomes at once a source of delight, and an excitement to all that is laudable and praise worthy.

Thus situated, with discernment to discover, and judgment to appreciate sterling worth, wherever I found it, I became acquainted with Mr. Hayley. Our intercourse gradually grew into intimacy, and that intimacy ripened into a strong and lasting friendship; from that time the color of my fate became more cheerful, and I cannot describe to you the pleasure that pervaded my mind when I discovered, there was one worthy being in the world to whom my peace, my reputation, my welfare was of consequence. I was naturally of a social communicative disposition; but after the experience I have had of the duplicity, weakness, and wickedness of the world, is it surprising, that while I mixed in the circle of visitors which comprised the society of my place of residence, I shrunk from every advance to confidential intimacy with any? Of my own sex, I have seldom met with any who are formed for more than the companion of an hour. Your sex, in general, accustom themselves to consider women in so inferior a light, that they oftener treat us like children and playthings, than intelligent beings. I must be candid enough to confess, it is too frequently our own fault, that we are not held in higher estimation. How gratifying, then, was it to my self love, to be considered by a man of sense and erudition as an equal, and to be conversed with as a rational companion.

I recapitulate these particulars, to let you see, my brother, I am not passing out of life, without having had, during my last years, some bright gleams of sunshine, which gave me a full conviction that happiness was attainable in this world; though it was placed beyond my grasp. When I first married, had we each pursued a different course to what we unfortunately took, we might have come very near happiness, at least, as near as any one can approach it in a married state, whose heart is silent to the language of affection; but my soul refused to commune with a sensualist, and where love really exists it requires so many delicate attentions, such a decency of manner, purity of language, and cleanliness of person, to keep it alive after so near a connexion has taken place; that where all those circumstances are entirely neglected, or the direct contrary practised, it could never be expected to arise in a heart where it had never the smallest previous admission. Want of confidence in a husband, is death to the affection of a wife, and she who is by turns the slave of capricious passion, or the object of contempt or neglect, if she is possessed of the least degree of delicacy and feeling, must suffer a bondage more severe than the slave who is chained to the oar.

I think, my good and dear Frederic, that this will be the last letter I shall ever write you. My health has been declining for several months. My strength fails daily, and it has cost me many trials to write this. I wish you could come and see me before I go hence; but the distance is great, and I know your finances are bounded. I pray you, my brother, keep up a correspondence with Mr. Hayley; should you not be able to visit me, he will communicate to you the tidings of my departure. I have said much to him concerning Charles. I know he will have a watchful eye upon him, and ever be his friend and counsellor; I have nought to leave him, poor lad, but my blessing; and yet methinks I bequeath him an invaluable treasure in giving him such a friend. Adieu.

SARAH.

LETTER XXXVII. SARAH TO FREDERIC.

I THOUGHT when I concluded my last to you, dear Frederic, that I never again should resume my pen: the languid flame of life but faintly glimmered, and it seemed as though the smallest breath, from the fiend adversity, must have extinguished it forever. But the human heart is not so easily broken as is in general believed; oft may it be lacerated until it bleeds to its very quick; oft may it be wrung, until every fibre cracks, and yet will beat and supply the vital stream that nourishes existence.

A circumstance has taken place, my brother, which, even in health, I should have dreaded to encounter, yet my weak frame sunk not under it, and I have acted, I hope, as a Christian should. It is about ten days since, that Mr. Hayley called on me in the morning, and asked me if I was adequate to taking a short ride and making a charitable visit? This, in fine weather, he has frequently done, since my increased debility, always taking care to hold out some object, the pursuit of which might engage me to take the exercise, though the languor of my strength and spirits might lead me to decline exertion.

I felt uncommonly cheerful that morning, and Darnley seconding his entreaty, I complied. When Mr. Hayley and myself were seated in the chaise, he told me there was an old woman in the neighborhood of our village, who had been very ill of a fever; that when her life was despaired of, he had been sent for to pray with her; that on visiting her, he found her delirious, and that she had several times called on my name in such a manner, as led him to suppose she had injured me. Upon her partial recovery he questioned her.

From the day of this excursion, I have been endeavoring to gain strength and composure to inform you of the interview.

It is in vain, my heart sickens at her name. God of mercy! oh, pour thy peace upon my soul, that I may enter into thy presence in charity with all; bend! oh bend, this stubborn heart! which, though it forgives, cannot forget.

I am reduced to almost infantine weakness, and when I attempt to write, the letters swim before me, my hand trembles; a cold dew hangs on my forehead.

The approaches of death are not painful—but this fluttering at my heart—Adieu, the blessing of the Almighty rest upon my broth—

LETTER XXXVIII. Rev. Edward Hayley to Frederic Lewis, Esq.

Letter

DEAR SIR, *May 22, 1794.*

THE painful task has fallen to my lot to inform you, that the mortal part of your sister, Mrs. Darnley, rests on its last bed; but we have strong reason to hope and believe, that her soul rejoices in the presence of her Creator. She slept in death on the 13th of this month, and was interred on the 20th, yet could I not summon sufficient composure to address you, until to-day, on the heart wringing subject. If I, who have known her but a few years, feel her loss so severely, what language can be employed to soften the intelligence to a brother who grew up with her from childhood, and who knew and justly appreciated her value!

Enclosed is a letter, which, as its writing was attended with peculiarly affecting circumstances, I imagine will be extremely valuable to you. Mrs. Darnley desired me to acquaint you with the circumstance she there alluded to. I must previously inform you, that during your sister's long illness, the greatest pleasure she could enjoy was riding round the village, and visiting the poor, the sick, and the afflicted; and though from various circumstances, I have reason to suppose she was not rich; it was astonishing to see by how many ways she would assist, comfort and relieve the necessitous; practically shewing, that where the desire of being useful exists in the heart, the means will always be found. And a trifle bestowed in warm clothing, ready for wearing, and a few of the comforts of life to the sick and aged, such as sago, tea, sugar, a little wine, chocolate, or coffee, distributed with discrimination, will do more essential service, than hundreds lavished without judgment by the hand of prodigality. As I frequently had the honor of attending her in these excursions, Mr. Darnley being prevented that pleasure by his employment, I was ever solicitous to discover objects that would interest her; as for many weeks previous to her dissolution, no other means would promote the desired end of her taking air and exercise. I now proceed with the narrative the dear deceased was unable to finish, continuing from where she broke off.

I questioned the woman if she knew Mrs. Darnley; she hesitated, and then replied, "Yes, I wish I could see her." From further conversation, I found something lay heavy on her mind. I perceived also that she was in want of many comforts and necessities which your sister knew so well how to supply with delicacy, that I did not attempt any thing myself until I had her better judgment to direct me. There was a middle aged woman with her, whose manners, language and appearance, indicated that she had not been always the child of abject poverty.

On the morning when I accompanied Mrs. Darnley to the lodging of the invalid, whose name I then understood was Manners, her companion was absent. Mrs. Darnley approached the bed, and addressed her in those consolatory accents which ever flowed from her lips: but the old woman was so agitated, that for some time she could not speak, at length she articulated, "Forgive—I am punished—vice is its own reward." "Who are you?" said Mrs. Darnley; but before she could receive an answer, the companion entered "Good God!" exclaimed the woman, starting back. "Jessey—Jessey Romain!" said your sister, with quickness, and catching her breath as though oppressed with a sense of suffocation, covered her face with her hands, and fell into an hysterical fit of tears. I now too late perceived that I had brought my valued friend into a situation too distressing for the weak and irritable state of her nerves. I threw up the window, and seeing some drops on the table, poured a little into some water, and entreated her to swallow it. She recovered her voice, and turning again to the person in the bed, she said, "Is it possible that you can be Mrs. Bellamy?" I will not pretend to describe the scene that ensued. I almost forced Mrs. Darnley out of the house, and hastened her home, bitterly repenting my officiousness in taking her to visit these women. She retired immediately to her own apartment, only requesting to see me in the evening. When I went, I found her extremely low; in a few short, but emphatic sentences, she gave me to understand that she had received from both these women the highest injuries that one human being can receive from another; her peace of mind had been destroyed, her domestic quiet broken, her character calumniated. She thus concluded. "I had hoped to have died without again beholding those disgraces to womanhood; but this is no time to indulge resentment, I have too much need of forgiveness myself to hold enmity with any one. You say they are distressed. What little is in my power, I will cheerfully do for them, but indeed I cannot see them again." Then after a short pause, she continued: "I will confess I am at a loss to account for their present distressed situation. I wish, Mr. Hayley, you would see them."

I readily promised to visit them, obtain all the information in my power, and administer to their necessities. I found Mrs. Bellamy had been deserted by her daughter, who had left lord Linden, and gone to Italy with a French

adventurer; her grand daughter Caroline had fallen from one grade of vice to another, to which she had been incited by her wretched mother and grand mother, until, in the very bloom of life, she fell a victim to disease and wretchedness in a common prison. Thus the sins of the parent were visited upon the child. Jessey Romain had become the companion of Mrs. Bellamy, and finding themselves reduced to the very last ebb in fame and finances, they resolved to try their fortune in England. They embarked at Waterford, but a variety of concurring circumstances threw them sick and destitute on the coast of Wales, where they fell under my notice. The woman Bellamy seems hastening to her final audit; her terrors are great, nor can I inspire her with the least hope that penitence will obtain the pardon of her Judge. "I cannot think of it now," she cries, "for I cannot prove my sincerity by altering my course of life."

Mrs. Darnley, from the day of this unfortunate visit, drooped hourly. Yet she was not confined to her bed, and as she ever was particularly fond of writing, she always had the pens, ink and paper, on a stand by her easy chair; though for above six weeks, she seldom had written more than two or three lines at a time. The day she wrote the last line in the letter I enclose, her husband and myself were sitting at the other end of the room, when we heard her breathe a deep sigh; a deathly paleness overspread her face, the pen fell from her fingers, and before we could get to her, she sunk lifeless back in her chair. We lifted her on the bed, and summoned assistance; in about half an hour, respiration returned, and lifting her dying eyes with an expression, never to be erased from my memory, she said faintly, "It is the last struggle." This was about five in the afternoon; upon the arrival of the physician, he pronounced that she would never again leave her bed, though she might possibly linger three or four days, but in all probability a much shorter period would close the scene. During the night, she had several hours of composed rest. I did not leave the house; my heart was wrung with inexpressible anguish, and Mr. Darnley stood in need of comfort and support; indeed, at times, it seemed as if his reason would forsake him; he execrated himself, execrated the women, whose presence he imagined had hastened the approaching dissolution of his wife. Mr. Lewis, it was a night of distress and misery. About sun rise, being told that I was in the house, she desired to see me. "My worthy friend," said she, "God has been very good to me, and has afforded me a short repose to recruit my strength, that I may perform all my duties before I go hence. I wish to partake of the solemn rite of the Lord's supper; will you pray by me and administer it? that I may die in peace with all my fellow creatures, and oh, my friend, pray! pray earnestly, that I may enter into the peace of my Savior." While I was preparing for this solemnity, she desired to see her husband and son. When all was prepared, and she supported in the bed by a domestic who was very much attached to her, (as indeed all are who have had an opportunity to investigate her character) she held out one hand to me and one to Mr. Darnley, at the same time placing Charles between us. "George," said she to her husband, "whatever disagreements may have been between us, I pray you believe I never meant wilfully to give you pain, or offend you. I have had many faults; when I am gone, remember them not against me, but consign them with my memory to oblivion; and believe me, as I stand on the verge of eternity, one thought that tended to your dishonor has never been amongst them. Mr. Hayley, I owe much to your friendship; it has been the sweetener of the last years of my life; it has smoothed my passage to the grave; it will, I hope and trust, be renewed beyond it. Charles, my good lad, I leave you. May God bless you, may you be virtuous, and in the end be assured you will be happy; be dutiful to your father. George, be a faithful father to this poor boy, he has no mother. Mr. Hayley— though the whole world forsake him, be you his friend. One thing more, tell those unhappy women, Bellamy and Romain, my last religious act will include a prayer for their eternal welfare; and if I have hated them, I hope it was their vices, not themselves, towards whom I nourished that sentiment" Then folding her hands, and elevating her eyes with the most affecting fervor, she audibly repeated the Lord's prayer, and turning her face toward me, begged me to proceed in my office. I do assure you, dear sir, it was with the utmost difficulty that I could perform the service; my voice was choaked, and I could scarcely restrain the sobs that labored in my convulsed bosom; a sweet and solemn serenity pervaded her voice and countenance as she joined in the responses. When it was over, she embraced us all; the chill of death was on her lips which pressed against my cheek. "It is an awful thing to die," said she, "to stand in the presence of a God of purity; oh! what have I to plead?—nothing—and only that I know, He, who said, "Lazarus, come forth," and the dead obeyed his voice, can and will purify me from my offences, I should fear greatly. But he has said, "I am the resurrection and the life, and whosoever believeth on me shall not perish." Her voice faltered, she sunk back, her eyes were fixed upwards, and her ardent spirit took its flight to the regions of immortality.

After this account of her exit, to offer any thing by way of consolation, would be impertinent and superfluous.

Sarah; or, The Exemplary Wife

I will therefore drop my pen, after having entreated a continuance of your friendship. I am, dear sir, Yours with esteem,

EDWARD HAYLEY.

Note by the Editor.

The sincerity of Sarah's dying declaration that "even in thought she had never dishonored her husband," was confirmed by the confession of Mrs. Bellamy. Indeed, it was hardly possible for any one to doubt her truth who were acquainted with her, as she never seriously averred the thing that was not; professed an affection she did not feel, or disguised a disgust that she did. Her husband felt her loss for a few *days*, very severely; for a few *weeks* was decently grave; but the seductive Romain tried means to comfort him, and he was comforted, until he *married her*. Alas, poor Darnley, she then paid him with interest, all he had inflicted on the uncomplaining, unoffending Sarah From this account of our Heroine's sufferings, let no one say, where then is the reward of virtue, if such a woman is not happy? but let them reflect on her peaceful, beatified end, and cry, "Vice, where are thy fascinations? will they take out the sting of death?—No—It is the sincere and pious spirit alone that tried in the thrice heated furnace of affection, comes out like refined gold, bright and pure, fit to be placed in the palace of the Most High."