

THE WIFE;

OR

CAROLINE HERBERT.

VOL. II.

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OR,

CAROLINE HERBERT.

BY THE LATE AUTHOR

OF THE

“EXEMPLARY MOTHER.”

VOL. II.

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THE WIFE, &c.

LETTER XL.

*To Mrs. Herbert.*

THE conversation which passed between us the day before I left town, has opened my eyes to the view of a danger, I never before apprehended.

Tell me, dearest Mrs. Herbert, tell me, do you not think I have fatally indulged—what can I say? O most excellent of women, your penetration has searched the inmost recesses of my heart.—I am alarmed, terrified—but I wish, I intreat you to shew me to myself. I have been cherishing a docile spirit. Impetuous and uncontroullable by nature, I am become a convert to your sweetness.

Be so kind as to favour immediately with an answer,

Your obliged and affectionate

CLARA WOODFORD.

## LETTER XLI.

*To Miss Woodford.*

WITH what a noble frankness do you call upon me, my dear Miss Woodford, to disclose to you the secret foldings of your heart! I will be ingenuous.

I have for some time suspected that you indulged love, where you believed you only nourished gratitude and friendship. I have pitied you, and wished to assist you in overcoming a passion more fatal to your peace, than to my repose.

You understand me, my dear, my generous friend.—A fancied security too often deceives us into real danger. Gratitude insensibly betrays an unwary heart into more tender sentiments.—Ah! my love, we cannot be too strict and constant in the examination of ourselves.

Consider, my sweet friend:—A young lady, who wishes to decline marrying a worthy man, because she has a high esteem for the husband of another woman, ought to suspect the rectitude of her intentions. If she really felt only esteem, what should prevent her from entering into an engagement, where love and esteem must blend to form a perfect union?

The man, my Clara, who solicits you to make him happy, is allowed to be not only respectable, but amiable. You once acknowledged him to be so. You seemed to be sensible of his merit. Yet this man you have for some time delighted to teaze; while, with an unguarded earnestness, you have sought to attract the attention of another, that other, the husband of your friend; of one who not only depends on his fidelity, but his kindness, for all her temporal happiness.

Be not displeased with me, my sweet ward, my friend, my sister (if you will allow me the endearing tie); does not your heart answer to these tender admonitions? When I distantly touched on the interesting subject, your glowing cheek, your downcast eye, confessed you made the application. You retired with an abruptness that confirmed my fears. You shunned me; you chose to accompany Mrs. Bennet down; but your letter, my beloved friend, eases my mind of all its fears, and increases towards you my esteem and love.

Heaven be praised that you feel and condemn an error, which, though it had its source in gratitude and esteem, might have been productive of the most dreadful consequences, of mental, if not of actual, guilt. Rapid, though imperceptible, are the progressions of vice.

But do you not think, my dear Miss Woodford, that I usurp an authority you meant not to delegate? You solicited me to disclose my sentiments, but have I not been too explicit? I disclaim any superior degree of penetration in discerning this small speck in your character.—Your unguarded looks, and behaviour, my love, laid you open to observation; especially to the observation of an interested spectator; but a boasted penetration is more frequently the proof of a bad heart, than of a distinguishing head.

They, who are free from the faults of others, will most probably find on examination, some bosom failing, which renders them equally culpable. I believe that those who are nearest perfection, will always be found capable of the most exalted

tenderness and compassion.—thankful to heaven for assisting their perseverance, they will neither feel their vanity raised, nor their severity excited by comparison with the frailty of others. What! shall human imperfections dare to become a rigid censor on a fellow-creature's infirmity?

Assure me, my beloved Miss Woodford, of your forgiveness? May I again venture to address you in the admonitory strain? Deprive me not of your regard; for you have not a more sincere, nor affectionate friend, than

Your

CAROLINE HERBERT.

## LETTER XLII.

*To Mrs. Berkeley.*

HOW amazingly, my dear Madam, do some people trifle away their happiness! That Mrs. Fenning, whom I last year attended as a bride, is become quite the fashionable wife.

Is it not astonishing that any person should solicit the acquaintance of another, and yet receive no benefit from her example. From such an example as my sister? Mrs. Fenning is married to a very worthy man, one who relishes her vivacity, but dislikes her levity.

We called yesterday at the house of this lady, (who is but lately returned to town from her country seat), and were greatly surprised at the reception we met with, and at Mrs. Fenning's appearance.—She was slatternly dressed, her hair was dishevelled, her eyes were swelled with weeping; yet her tears seemed to be the effusion of resentment rather than of sorrow, and her face glowed with passion.

Our amazement keeping us silent, "Dear creatures," said she, (raising herself from a sofa, on which she reclined when we entered,) "this is very kind, but I am ashamed to be seen by you in such a dishabille; yet, as I did not expect company, you will think it excusable."

"I hope you are well, Madam," answered my sister; "for this disorder in your dress and looks makes me apprehensive for you." "Oh! child," cried Mrs. Fenning, "I have had such a lecture this morning! Would you believe it? Mr. Fenning has been accusing me of wasting time in dress when I am to appear in public, and neglecting a proper attention to neatness and decency when I am at home with him.

"Can any thing be so unreasonable? Does he think I am to employ my time in adorning myself to please a husband? Preposterous! Of what importance is it, now we are married?"

"He tells me, I am not the same woman to whom he paid his addresses.—But he should be sensible we then both acted a part, and that now the assumed character is laid aside.—Would not a reasonable man be pleased to have his wife admired, whenever she goes abroad?"

"How could the antiquated notions of neatness and decency enter his head? A fine lady is not confined to the rules of the vulgar! Neatness and decency may be proper enough for tradesmen's wives, but the polite break through these narrow limits.—A groveling wretch! What can be more mortifying? To dress for a husband? What person of fashion ever did such a thing?"

Here her tears interrupted her harangue; and my sister's answer excited in her equal surprise with that she had inspired in us. "Will you forgive me, Madam," said she, "if my opinion differs from yours? But, I beg pardon, you are certainly in jest when you say you only acted a part; indeed, were the latter the case, your good sense must convince you it is still necessary to keep up the assumed character, as you call it, unless you wish to disturb domestic harmony.—Mr. Fenning has a right, you know, to expect your utmost endeavours to please him, and surely those endeavours must constitute your highest happiness."

“A right! Mrs. Herbert,” interrupted the enraged lady; “I know not what you mean! This is new doctrine indeed. What! is he to control me in every thing?—To lay down rules for my dress, company, &c.; and am I to submit to his imperial will and pleasure? No, no:—I am not to be his slave. He shall know my spirit is not to be subdued, and if he persists in his attempts to contradict me, he will provoke an altercation, which may not perhaps conduce to his advantage.”

“You may possibly think, Madam,” replied my sister, “our short acquaintance does not authorize my freedom; but I assure you, that real concern for your neglected happiness influences me to hazard a remark. Can you think that this state of altercation is conformable to the design of the marriage union? Do you delight to render uneasy, a person to whom you have so solemnly vowed an obedience, which love would also dictate? Can you expect to be happy whilst you neglect an obvious and plighted duty?”

“Obedience! Duty!” cried Mrs. Fenning. “Are these sounds to be perpetually ringing in our ears? Perhaps they may be found in the matrimonial service, but the men made the law, and then they expect us only to keep it.—Let me ask you a question.—Do you receive from your husband the return of gratitude you ought to expect from your submission?”

I could not help exclaiming, “I look in vain for my old companion and friend in Mrs. Fenning. I am astonished, I am shocked at the alteration.

My sister struggled to disperse a little appearance of confusion.—“Indeed, Madam,” answered she, with amazing composure, “I act not from a desire of inspiring gratitude; Mr. Herbert’s esteem and affection repay my tenderness.”

“Ah! Mrs. Herbert, Mrs. Herbert,” cried Mrs. Fenning, with an eagerness which expressed triumph, “report says otherwise; and I am afraid with certainty—why do you conceal his folly?”

“And why do you, Madam,” answered I, with the utmost warmth, “suggest a suspicion, which, in a jealous breast, would soon grow into conviction? It is cruel and ungenerous!—Were my brother really forgetful of his duty, by ignorance alone, could my sister preserve a state of tranquillity.—Who would officiously withdraw a veil which might conceal a spectacle of horror? Were she even conscious of such a misfortune, would it not be doubly distressing that what she would wish to bury in oblivion, should be disclosed to the world?”

“Well,” interrupted Mrs. Fenning, “we are not likely to agree. I have no notion of these refinements. Let me be flattered and admired, let me enjoy the delightful satisfaction of shining in the drawing room, at the concert, or the ball, and I can willingly endure the occasional loss of a husband’s good humour. I enjoy teasing him sometimes.—We differ in every particular but in the choice of separate amusements. I allow, indeed, he is not covetous, and you perhaps might think him reasonable, but I cannot bear contradiction, and I will not.”

“Take care, Madam,” cried my sister, “lest you provoke him too far.”

“Oh! dear Madam,” replied the other, “you are infinitely kind. Permit me to give you a piece of advice in return.—Try to awaken your husband’s jealousy, by encouraging some admirer’s passion.—Mrs. Herbert’s beauty claims universal adoration, and when Mr. Herbert finds himself singular in his neglect of you, I do not doubt but you will regain his affection.”

“No, Madam,” answered my amiable sister, “were I as miserable as you insinuate, I would not be so guilty as you advise me to be.—I would not part from the conscious integrity of my heart, even to recover a husband’s love. The woman, who preserves her husband’s esteem, may flatter herself with the hope of being re-established in his affection; but when esteem is lost, love cannot be regained.—But this conversation has been carried too far. You will permit us therefore to drop the subject, and to take our leave,” which we did with little ceremony.

What say you, Madam, to this woman? I blush for her.—Modish manners have ruined a friendly, though gay heart. Unhappy creature! How I admire my sister’s virtues and circumspection! But the conduct of the one is as much beneath criticism, as the sentiments and behaviour of the other are superior to all praise.

I am happy in my alliance to such merit, and earnestly wish she had not reason to lament it.—Permit me to add, that I have a high degree of satisfaction in subscribing myself an admirer and humble imitator of your virtues, and that I am

Your faithful and affectionate,

LUCIA HERBERT.

## LETTER XLIII.

*To Charles Herbert, Esq.*

Dear Herbert,

THE greatest mortification I feel in being confined to the country arises from my absence from you: I doubt you are not sufficiently sensible of this truth.—They tell me you are become thoughtful and melancholy.—Surely that foolish affair cannot still render you uneasy.

Clear up, Charles—disperse the clouds that overspread your brow, and let the sun of mirth and good humour shine forth again—frequent our society—there admiration waits you—all are prepared to entertain you—Brumpton will attend you, and supply my place. If, as you say, you consider yourself obliged to me, follow my advice, chase away desponding thoughts, and avoid company that will infect you.

I hear Berkeley threatens me, for drawing you away from home.—But sure you have cast away your leading strings—or are you still a baby?—If so, confine yourself to the nursery.—A wife and puling infant are fit company for a pusillanimous, meek-spirited husband.—But you are more of a man—shake off entirely the unnatural subjection—exert yourself, and be master of your own inclinations and family.

Your wife, I suppose, has complained to her brother; and is this a proof of the duty you think she so steadily practises? No, no, Charles, she is but a woman, though I really believe her to be one of the best.

Do not indulge thought—I shall soon be in town, and will put you in a method to become as gay, and lively as

Your faithful

WILTON.

## LETTER XLIV.

*Mr. Herbert to Lord Wilton.*

OH! thou destroyer of my peace! Do you still continue to torment me? Shall I never taste of happiness again? Take from me, then, that power of reflection, which only heightens my misery, by comparing the present with the past!—On the future I hardly dare to turn my thoughts!

Great God! to what a society have I abandoned myself. I never think without being sensible of the degradation! But, instead of seeking to recover the path of virtue, I have wandered with other vagrants in the labyrinths of vice.

How have I fallen from the summit of earthly felicity, to a state below the dignity of man! I was sensible of my first deviation. Remorse assailed me—I blushed for myself, but I afterwards blushed, because the companions that diverted an idle hour, laughed at my scrupulous exactness.—I was ashamed of being happy!

My wife!—but I scarcely dare to think of her.—It is too painful a remembrance; yet you have presumed to insinuate that my Caroline betrayed me to her brother.—’Tis false, Wilton!—She never complained—she bears my faults with patience—her love for me continues unaltered. But I see that pity mingles with it, and I am a wretch to abuse such goodness.

What a return have I made!—Oh! why did you save my life, when you had betrayed my honour?—It was your barbarous triumph over my reason, which made me first forget my Caroline!—And when I forgot her, I lost all remembrance of my duty!

Shall the hours of blissful conversation, shall the time of delightful reflection never more recur?—Ah! no:—riotous mirth, distracting thoughts, have usurped their place. Could I recall the past, I should still be happy!

Would to God I had never known you, or that we had never resumed our acquaintance!—Why did you intrude on my unguarded, unsuspecting heart?—You were a witness of the happiness which you have destroyed.—But why do I blame you?—I best knew my own happiness, and the treasure I had to keep or abandon. You tempted me, indeed, but the fault was my own; I trusted too much to my own power of resisting temptation, because I loved my Caroline, because I had been enabled to perform some of the duties of life.

I had proved the sweets of the most perfect union, heaven ever sanctified.—I had nothing more to wish—I wanted not a friend.—My wife was my bosom friend—my companion—my guardian angel.—A little cherub had blessed us with an increase of delight.—What fiend induced me to seek for pleasure abroad, when I enjoyed the most exalted happiness at home?

You, Lord Wilton, were the demon, who assumed an engaging appearance to tempt a weak wretch to the purposes of hell.—I am almost distracted—I cannot think—yet mention not my wife as you have dared to mention her.

Surely I have laid aside my leading strings, you say:—no, Wilton, you have led me to my destruction. When I wandered from my duty, I ceased to be a man, and became

weaker than an infant. I struggled awhile, but the superiority of your cunning, triumphed over the weakness of my efforts, and I submitted at last to your guidance.

Why did I ever loosen the silken chain, that gently led my steps in the path of virtue?—Shame and remorse pursue me.—An injured wife, whose tears only have reproached me—a helpless infant, whose weakness demands my tenderness and protection—these dear objects awaken dreadful reflections, nor can all your boasted gaiety lull me again to forgetfulness.

Why must I be troubled with the impertinence of Brumpton?—I flattered myself, when you were absent, I should recover my peace.—But it will not be—solitude can afford no tranquillity to one, who wishes to banish thought. He who enjoys it, must be able to look backward without self-reproach, and forward without apprehension.

This meek-spirited, this pusillanimous husband, as you insultingly call me, is not a proper inmate of that nursery, to which you would confine him. That sweet abode of peace and innocence, is too pure for so unworthy a guest.

The joy that sparkles in my Caroline's eyes, when she beholds me, the smiles of my little infant, upbraid me more cruelly than the severest reproaches.—I can scarcely support their sight—the looks of my sister express the most friendly resentment; and indeed she has more than once hinted her displeasure.—Mr. Berkeley has gently expostulated with me.

Have I reason to be angry?—Far, far otherwise.—It is love for my wife that influences their conduct, whilst mine appears to be actuated by a contrary motive.—Yet, could they know my heart, they would find it filled with the most sincere affection man ever felt.

Why can I not disclose it?—I am ashamed to own myself convinced of an error—is it not so?—Foolish wretch! False grounded shame!—Let me confide in that faithful bosom, which will perhaps communicate to me the serenity it enjoys, and calm my troubled soul.

But you have said, it must not be—my own honour and my obligations to you forbid it!—Why, Wilton, why did you preserve a life hateful to me, and which has destroyed the peace of others? If you would reconcile me to it, hasten to town, release me from those obligations, and permit me to renounce a society, in whose circle is contagion, and whose end is ruin.

At present, there is not a wretch more miserable than

CHARLES HERBERT.

## LETTER XLV.

*To Lord Wilton.*

My Lord,

AS I assisted you during your absence from town, I expect you will bear with what you may deem my impertinence, and even facilitate my scheme by your advice.

A new scene opens:—the characters are Miss Forest, an amiable young lady, and sole heiress to £30,000. and Captain Brumpton, a fellow who dresses well, talks fashionably, and has made conquests of half the women in town.

The day after I came into the country, I accidentally met this lady on a visit.—She is really handsome, and her dress, though not fashionable, I must confess is very becoming.—She gave me a proof of her understanding, by distinguishing me, in a particular manner, from the boors who were present.

I enquired into her fortune, had a satisfactory account, and was not discouraged by hearing she has formed her expectation of a lover from romances.—A sort of reading to which I never applied—nor to any study, you will say, but how to partake the gaieties of fashionable life.

Her father is a parson, who married a woman of very large fortune, and she left only this child. Mr. Forest's character, however, somewhat allayed my assurance of success; but a servant, whom I found means to corrupt, informed me, her lady's affections might be gained by respectful assiduities, and that to conceal my love will be the most certain method to meet with a return.

By the contrivance of this maid, I have sometimes seen the fair Henrietta, and have so well improved my opportunities, that she regards me with all the complacency which I can expect.

I ran over the whole vocabulary of Cupid's inspiration.—I told her all Nature wore its brightest aspect when she appeared—that the envious roses blushed to find themselves so far excelled by the bloom on her cheeks, and the coral on her lips—that her eyes eclipsed the lustre of the sun, that the zephyrs pressed to steal a kiss, that—but I cannot repeat all the nonsense with which I have assailed her heart—you will laugh at this short sketch of my courtship.

I have had a great deal of trouble—I have sat up three or four nights, reading the Grand Cyrus, Clelia, Cleopatra, and Cassandra. Did not her fortune incite me, this girl had never tasted the satisfaction of receiving from me an heroic address.

Next week her father carries her to town, where his attendance is required in consequence of a law-suit. I shall precipitate an explanation, lest her fortune should raise me any formidable rivals.

Her father, you will tell me, may render my hopes abortive, by refusing to resign this fortune.—Why, truly, my Lord, I should be rather fearful of consequences, (for a wife is to me an unnecessary appendage,) but my rural lass has £10,000. independent of him, left by an uncle. This will enable me to support her father's resentment, if the old curmudgeon should be inflexible.

But I must conclude abruptly; for I have several tedious pages of Artamenes to turn over. You shall soon receive another letter from

Your's sincerely,

RICHARD BRUMPTON.

## LETTER XLVI.

*To Mrs. Herbert.*

O MADAM, why cannot I express my gratitude and love! I can only tell you they equal your goodness. How nobly does your practice evince the truth of your assertion, that those nearest perfection are most capable of exalted tenderness and compassion. You have acquired a right to censure infirmities, from which you are entirely free; yet how tenderly have you exercised it—but you are *all perfection*.

Happy am I that you discovered me to myself! I had often asked my heart, why it was so insensible to your goodness, which yet I could not help acknowledging, and why it was so favourably disposed to Mr. Herbert, who was less kind than you?—I sighed at the retrospect, yet still imagined my dislike could proceed from no other cause than your severe virtue.

The basis of my affection for Mr. Herbert was esteem.—I admired the uniform tenor of his conduct.—His unremitted tenderness towards you was the principal circumstance that engaged my regard for him; yet, alas! it had an undue influence upon my heart. His absence shocked me, but (inconsistent! horrid! detestable passion!) my concern was mingled with somewhat of a guilty gratification, on finding your society was not so very essential to his happiness, as I had concluded it to be. Gracious Heaven! I am disgusted, frightened, on the review of this dangerous attachment.

When Lady D—— endeavoured to withdraw Mr. Herbert from you, and attract him to herself, I felt less alarmed than incensed at her supposing him to be capable of being seduced by any personal charms, from his love and duty; yet I afterwards wished (deceitful, vile heart!) to give a softer turn to his esteem for me, than was consistent with his solemnly plighted vows, and love for you.

What chimerical scheme of felicity had I formed. I determined never to marry—I imagined I could live happy with Mr. Herbert, as a friend.—Alas! I find I rather listened to the suggestion of love than to the pleadings of virtue and reason.—You, madam, have restored me to both! I am calm, and tolerably reconciled to myself.

I esteem Mr. Herbert, but I no longer love him.—I begin to be truly sensible of Mr. Berkeley's merit, and to hope it will be in my power to reward it. For you, madam, my heart feels inexpressible sentiments of gratitude and love.

Be not apprehensive, best of friends, of disclosing all that is upon your mind. From your pen flow the purest, the most exalted dictates of the human heart. I expect, I require from you the most explicit confidence. My heart shall be open to your inspection; you shall explore every secret fold, its every shadow of a wish.—You cannot offend me but by making apologies.

Believe me, most excellent of women, no one can more truly feel for you the sentiments of love, esteem, and admiration, than  
your ever gratefully affectionate

CLARA WOODFORD.

## LETTER XLVII.

*To Richard Brumpton, Esq.*

IF the love-sick Oroondates can awhile forbear to gaze on the bright eyes of the divine Statira: if, on withdrawing his view from those celestial luminaries, he is not involved in the mists of darkness, an humble swain requests him to peruse this epistle.—I cannot proceed—but that will do for you, Dick—I wrote it merely for your instruction.

Why what an army have you to encounter! “Gorgons, and hydras, and chimeras dire.”—So this fair one is entrenched behind a huge rampart of massy folios. Will you find sufficient ammunition to maintain the siege?—This kind of attack is quite new to you.

Well, thanks to the god of love, I have nothing to read but the minds of my charmers; and let me tell you I sometimes find them obscure books, for there are so many editions, with considerable alterations, and no emendations, that I am frequently at a loss to decypher the meaning; but it is much easier than to encounter your adversaries.

Mercy on us, Brumpton! what a wild-goose chase are you entered upon! You will find it much more difficult to obtain this £30,000. than Oroondates or Artaban did to vanquish the same number of men.

Now to my own affairs, which by the bye, you had not the grace to mention,—not a word of consolation to a poor fellow, who stands in so much need of it.—Your love absorbed all your thoughts.—Not the love of woman, however; it was love of yourself, Captain, that had engrossed you.

I am horridly out of humour with my old gentleman. To be confined to his sick room so long—for no purpose agreeable to me.—I fear my presence hastened his recovery. Then to be forced to congratulate his return of health, at which all my hopes sickened—I hurried up to town on pretence of business, and left the old usurer to add to the golden hoard.

I have scarcely seen Herbert.—I fear he lives too much at home; and methinks his charming wife wears an air of ease that does not suit my designs upon her. I must disturb this harmony. I think I have the means.

I met Miss Herbert in company yesterday, where you were mentioned.—“What an odd compound,” said she, “is Captain Brumpton! he is a fop, yet not devoid of wit.—Indeed he has so much, that, when he converses only with his own sex, one would not suspect he pays such attention to his pretty person; but, when with our’s, he shews, that in his own supposed perfections all his happiness centers; and that he estimates the understanding of others, by the approbation they shew of him.”

You are an odd fellow, Dick!—I think the girl judges too favourably of you, for I have frequently thought and called you an insignificant puppy. Perhaps it is vanity that makes me assume an appearance of regard for you, and some other insects of your tribe—a desire to shew my own superiority. You have too much vanity, and are too well acquainted with my sincerity, to suspect me of truth.

Well! be it as it may—I believe we are equally capable of friendship.—I do not flatter you, Captain;—write again—perhaps I may answer your letter—but, if not, you

know it is your duty to obey—and, to encourage you, I will confess, I really believe I feel some affection for you.—When the Arcadian plains surrender up their guest, you may possibly be again serviceable to your

WILTON.

## LETTER XLVIII.

*To Lord Wilton.*

YOUR letter, my Lord, does not so much prove your disappointment as your independence. None but a man of your fortunes, could write with that elegant spirit, that flowing negligence.—You do not seem to want consolation, yet I beg pardon for my forgetfulness.

Matters here go on swimmingly.—The little rustic is my own.—Apropos—I have purchased a new suit. It is in the height of the mode.—My rogue of a taylor refused me credit, till I assured him I was on the brink of marriage with a very rich heiress.—No more hesitation, you may believe.

But what a lover you are, methinks I hear you say, to make so quick a transition from the conquest of a blooming fair one, to a new coat. Perhaps, with Miss Herbert, you may think me too much of a fop—but outside appearance, my Lord, has more effect than some may imagine on the heart of every woman, even where the predominant passion is not vanity, which reigns supreme in the hearts of most of the sex. I believe my fair romancer is not insensible to this kind of merit. Dress is the study of the sex, and they are pleased with the taste of their lovers.

I am a happy man, my Lord. The frowns of beauty cannot disconcert me, nor her smiles transport me beyond the bounds of reason. In the former case, I condemn her want of judgment; and in the latter, am only exalted into an higher opinion of my own merit—an ingenuous confession, is it not, and which hardly contradicts Miss Herbert's observation.

I shall soon bid an entire adieu to want and my shabby wardrobe. Did I tell you Mr. Forest is a clergyman?—he is, faith! and if he suspected me, would most probably read me a lecture, for he is a very eloquent advocate on the side of priestcraft.

You have sent a fine specimen of your knight-errantry—I am sometimes at a loss—my memory is deficient,—I have read enough to furnish me with materials for gaining all the romantic girls in Christendom.—Such absurdity!—Could I but obtain £30,000. by any other means, Henrietta might bless some more worthy swain with her regard.—But the time of meeting draws near, and I have not sufficiently conned my lesson. I am vapoured with the thoughts of my task.

Adieu, my Lord. I believe I shall resign my commission when I marry: for it is a disagreeable circumstance to be subjected to the commands of a superior officer: yet, on consideration, I may be glad of a pretence to quit my wife; a golden chain will not reconcile me to the loss of liberty.—What can sound more shocking than the married

DICK BRUMPTON.

## LETTER XLIX.

*To Miss Woodford.*

My dearest Clara,

IT is only a great mind that will acknowledge, with gratitude, the justness of reproof: a mean soul will rather defend than own a mistake. It resents accusations it is not ashamed to deserve, and, instead of atoning for a past error, incurs farther guilt, by rejecting the admonitions of friendship.

I congratulate you, on your delightful change.—Persevere, my love, and you will secure present happiness, and eternal felicity. I, my dear, am but the instrument of your conviction.—To Heaven you owe gratitude, adoration, love, and obedience. Let neither business nor pleasure render you forgetful of your duty.—God does not extend his grace to those who depend wholly on him without the exertion of their own powers, nor will he assist any, who rely entirely on their own strength. It must be our constant endeavour to do good, and resist evil, joined with fervent prayer to Heaven for assistance, which can alone support a lively Christian hope of divine acceptance.

You own, my dear, that you have indulged some dangerous propensities. Did not your turn of reading rather enervate your mind? You have often talked of nourishing a pure Platonic flame. Ah! my Clara, a Platonic flame is generally mixed with drossy particles. True piety is uniform and consistent. You have felt that the real heroine is she who resists the approaches of guilt whatever shape it assumes, however flattering its appearance.

I have heard you speak too lightly of matrimonial obligations. Do not human ordinances, instituted for public utility, receive the divine sanction?—They infringe the duty of Christian benevolence, who speak or think with levity of ceremonies which cement the virtue and happiness of social intercourse.

Consider, my dear, the influence of your gay conversation, and free opinions.—The libertine, whose oaths are prostituted to every woman who pleases him, will not reflect that his insincerity is offensive to Heaven, and his example prejudicial to the world, but will plead your opinion in defence of his practice. Could you support the thought of having contributed to the sufferings of innocence and the success of villainy? I am certain you would not: you want only a little more consideration, to distinguish between dangerous levity, and innocent cheerfulness.

How severely, my dear friend, did you condemn the frailty of Miss L——. Unaccustomed to any restraint of her inclinations, bred up in luxury, and never pinched by the severe hand of penury, she was terrified at its appearance. She saw no alternative, but to submit to poverty, or, by relinquishing the sweets of innocence, to preserve the splendid trappings of prodigality. Her fears prevailed, and she was miserable. The evil she attempted to shun, still haunted her.—Again affrighted, she again became guilty, and is now the wretched victim of that sex by whom she was adored.

Tell me, my dear, do not the circumstances that betrayed her, somewhat alleviate the heinousness of her guilt?—Should we not be rigidly severe in self-examination,

conscious of the fallibility of our own hearts, and soften the asperity of judgment, on the faults of others.—Shall not the tear of pity fall for the weakness of human nature?

Indelicacy of sentiment more easily insinuates itself into the heart, concealed under the specious name of gaiety, than when it borrows no mask to hide its natural deformity.—We cannot act with too much circumspection. All vice is progressive—every faulty indulgence exposes to farther deviations; and the woman who, by a levity of behaviour, excites improper wishes and expectations, is not only herself in a very dangerous situation, but is answerable for the blameable inclinations with which she inspires others.

Though innocence is often less careful to preserve appearances, than real guilt, yet to despise the loss of reputation, to be regardless of the effects of our example, or of any undue influence, frequently leads to the loss of virtue. An attention to reputation is sometimes the sole defence against a criminal indulgence—but I wish your conduct to be founded on more exalted and consistent motives.

My dear Clara, will you pardon the liberty I have taken?—My intention requires no apology. I love you so well as to wish to see you entirely arrived at that perfection to which you make such near approaches.—Be assured I shall rejoice when an union with my brother will give me a right to subscribe myself your sister, though that alliance cannot add to the regard with which

I am,  
my dear Miss Woodford,  
your most faithful friend,  
CAROLINE HERBERT.

## LETTER L.

*To Mrs. Herbert.*

I CANNOT be silent, my best of friends, lest you should suspect that I am offended by the dictates of the noblest friendship.

I have called your's, severe virtue; but, ah! most excellent of women, it was when my conduct degenerated from your principles.—You possess more than maternal tenderness, united with manly dignity of mind.—My whole soul is in your hands. Mould it as you please. I plead guilty to every charge, and trust to the clemency of my earthly benefactress, and to the mercy of my heavenly Judge.

Words are inadequate to express the esteem and love, with which

I am,

my dearest Madam,

your gratefully devoted

CLARA WOODFORD.

## LETTER LI.

*To Miss Herbert.*

WILL you, my dear Miss Herbert, admit once more to your friendship, the poor wanderer from her duty, who has severely suffered for forsaking it?

Did you not observe my guilty attachment, and the horrid envy which possessed my heart?—O, my dear, I have been one of the most miserable of human beings, in consequence of having been one of the most faulty. That cheerfulness, which pleased others, and was a proof of my own serenity, was entirely banished.

Who can be more wretched than she who condemns and detests herself, and who, with the loss of the most delightful consciousness, has also lost even the wish to become better?—This has been my deplorable case—but my heart is now at ease. I look back with horror on my criminal passion, and indulge none now of which I have reason to be ashamed.

I begin to resume my gaiety, but I have bidden a final adieu to levity. Conquests and flattery appear no longer desirable.—I have been a giddy and a guilty creature. No softenings, child, I am now above them. It is this detestable varnish which conceals the real deformity of vice.

How foolish have I been in ridiculing a love founded on esteem, and sanctified by every religious and moral tie. A love, such as we ought to endeavour to deserve, as a sanction which only can form the highest temporal happiness.

You have often, from pure humility, and a too high opinion of my personal attractions, told me you never expected to engage the serious attentions of any man, whilst I continued unmarried. How unjust to you, and how unworthy of themselves was the preference given to me by superficial observers!—For the future I will not desire to excel

“In a set of features and complection,  
but in

“Inward greatness, unaffected wis-  
dom,

“And sanctity of manners.”

May Mrs. Herbert’s “soul shine out in every thing I act or speak.”—I assure you, my dear, I have had some trials of my resolution, but it remains unshaken. Two admirers with very different qualifications have declared their wishes to live with me, or their inclination to die for me.

One of them is Sir Henry Farsfield, with an estate of £5000. a year; the other, a Captain Westley, with as fine a face and person as ever captivated a female heart. Mine however has not felt one palpitation, nor has my vanity protracted the siege. I gave them an absolute negative on their declaration, and have since insisted on their visiting me no more.

Would you believe it, my dear?—The creatures are absolutely, positively, both of them alive, eat, drink, and dress, as well as ever: and I hear that the Captain had power even to dance last night at a private ball.—O these deceitful men! Their tragic rant is a mere farce—their life a masquerade.

Seriously, my dear Lucy, I do not wish them to be uneasy, but I want them to be sincere. Vain expectation! but I have no more to say to them. Mr. Berkeley is an exception, and he cannot wish me to be more susceptible than I am of his merit. How happy for me that my vanity, folly, and ignorance, of my heart, did not alienate his from me. Avaunt, for ever, the spirit of coquetry! May I act from the influence of rational love, and sincere friendship, and be equal to the performance of every duty of life.

Continue to me your affection, my dear, for it is essential to the happiness of  
your sincerely faithful,

CLARA WOODFORD.

## LETTER LII.

*To Miss Woodford.*

COULD you, my beloved friend, entertain a single apprehension of your being less dear to me than ever? I own I thought you had encouraged, insensibly encouraged, a dangerous passion, and I pitied you for the delusion: but you have now resumed your former self; your gaiety is returned, and your sportive innocence enlivens and delights as usual.

Your account of your lovers made me smile, but your just sense of Mr. Berkeley's merit renders me happy. Be assured, my sweet friend, you are inexpressibly dear to my sister, and to your ever faithful

LUCIA HERBERT.

## LETTER LIII.

*To Mrs. Berkeley.*

Dear Madam,

WE have had an unexpected meeting with Mrs. Fenning at a visit we made since my last letter.—We had passed a very agreeable hour, when she was announced.

As soon as she had cast her eyes on Mrs. Herbert, disdain took possession of all her features. I saw she sat studying to make some ill-natured observations, and I dreaded their effect upon my sister. The conversation turned upon plays. Amongst the rest, the *Jealous Wife* came under our inspection. Mrs. Fenning launched forth. “It is an odious character,” exclaimed she, “and I always delight in seeing it rendered ridiculous. But the secure wife, who thinks her charms can never be slighted, is still more absurd. This is an unusual character however, for experience has convinced most women of their frail dependence on mankind; but I do know some ladies who expect their husbands should be entirely devoted to them, and centre their delights in domestic duties.

As to myself, I neither expect nor desire constancy from Mr. Fenning. I have had my share of his admiration; let others take their turn. I shall not be destitute of admirers. I would by all means have him please himself.—Let my visionary acquaintance, Mrs. Robertson, and other dove-like females, profess and expect constancy. I know human nature better. I do not ask for miracles in my favour.”

My brother sat in visible confusion during this conversation. How delightful, how animating, is the consciousness of innocence! He, who used to enliven every society, and whose exalted sentiments convinced others of their own deficiencies, was now silent, self-condemned, and unhappy.

My sister saw, and shared his uneasiness. Mrs. Fenning’s cruel attempt to occasion distress, would have had too much the appearance of a triumph, if it had remained unanswered. My sister, I believe, thought so too: “if I may judge of Mrs. Robertson by myself,” said she, “it is not vanity, but esteem, which excites her confidence in her husband. She endeavours to act as the conviction of her judgment and her heart tell her she ought to act, and she relies on the fidelity it is the study of her life to deserve from her husband. Her serenity is then the result of principle.”

Mrs. Fenning yawned affectedly.

More company entering, other subjects were introduced. She tried to coquet with my brother, but he was inaccessible to all her attacks, and I never saw him more thoughtful.—She then planted her battery against Mr. Millner, a young and very agreeable gentleman, but she met with another unexpected repulse. This was so mortifying that she soon made her exit, and the scene changed.

The remainder of the evening was spent in a very agreeable manner: my sister was all herself. She banished every painful thought, and appeared so unaffectedly cheerful, that my brother’s melancholy gave place to a delightful serenity, which displayed itself in his looks and conversation. My sister’s eyes sparkled with uncommon lustre on observing this alteration; her whole person was animated, her conversation was enlivened by the desire of pleasing her husband, who gazed on her with the tenderest admiration.

Mr. Millner observed to him, that, for cheerfulness without levity, prudence without censoriousness, and delicacy free from prudery, he never saw Mrs. Herbert's equal.—My brother enjoyed her praises, yet sighed, no doubt from a painful recollection, while she, elevated by his apparent approbation, never appeared more amiable and happy.

Surely my brother will rise superior to every allurements that alienates him from this excellent woman.—How can he be sensible to her unequalled merit?—Ah! madam, I wrong him—he is not insensible—he feels her value.—May he soon restore to her the happiness of which he has deprived her!—You will then restore him to your esteem and maternal regards, and he will be as dear as ever to the heart of  
your grateful and affectionate,

LUCIA HERBERT.

## LETTER LIV.

*To Lord Wilton.*

INDEED, my Lord, I believed myself to be equal to any task you could have assigned me, but, I find, we both over-rated my abilities.

I had read instances of consummate virtue, of unconquerable chastity, and of invulnerable fidelity; but I considered them as romance, and expected not to meet with any such real character. Your Lordship, in your description of Mrs. Herbert, seemed to have formed a mere creature of the imagination. I felt a pleasure in the expectation of tracing imperfections in the mind and person of this idolized fair one; and my vanity received gratification from her imagined deficiencies.

I introduced myself to Mrs. Herbert, as a young lady, an acquaintance of Mrs. Bennet, who wanted to solicit her advice in a matter of the utmost consequence. I had attired myself in all the elegance of a morning undress. I was presently admitted.

I entered Mrs. Herbert's dressing-room with a confidence which was soon repressed. Never did I see a more beautiful face, a more elegant form! What benign dignity shone in her fine eyes! Her dress bespoke the purity of her mind.—Nature was ornamented, not disguised.—What an inexpressibly-engaging manner!

Though prejudiced against her by your Lordship's warm encomiums, which I thought injurious to myself, yet I found the graces of her appearance and address irresistible.—I felt abashed—I blushed from conscious guilt. Her cheek seemed to be flushed with apprehension of my design. She enquired what had procured her the honour of this visit. My confusion rather befriended me.—My blushes, my hesitation were indications of my sufferings.

She heard the tale of my distresses with the tenderest sympathy.—She wept for me, but, when I mentioned the name of Mr. Herbert, she felt for him and for herself. An universal agitation affected her frame.—The colour forsook her lips and cheeks.—She raised her eyes for a moment to mine, as if to read my thoughts, then, fearful of tracing too much, she looked down with dejection.

I accused Mr. Herbert of having been the corrupter of my innocence; of having been long acquainted with me, and of having taken advantage of my distresses, to involve me in guilt.

Her cheek was instantly suffused with the deepest glow: her eyes sparkled with indignation.—She interrupted me.—“Miss Marston,” said she, with an air of dignity, “you attempt to deceive me.—I am too well acquainted with Mr. Herbert's principles and disposition, to suspect him of villainy. He is incapable of being a seducer; he never was guilty of deliberate error, nor ever persisted in irregularity. His heart is fraught with so much benevolence, that I am convinced he never could be the instrument of increasing distress by guilt.”

Her words, her manner, commanded respect and inspired awe. I never felt such reverence for any created being.—I was speechless. I dared not to re-assert what she had so positively refused to believe.

She saw my confusion;—the tears involuntarily gushed from my eyes.—“I pity you, with my whole soul,” said she, “you have not injured me, but yourself. Confess your intended deception:—tell me your real distresses, and, if it be in my power to remove, or relieve them, depend on my assistance. Your manner has exculpated Mr. Herbert,” pursued she, with some emotion.

What would I that moment have given, to have enjoyed so delightful a consciousness as she possessed! My mind was agitated. My wishes pleaded for the promotion of her happiness, but your threats alarmed my fears. I owned that I had been guilty of falsehood; that I had never seen Mr. Herbert more than once, but I solemnly assured her, though with deep contrition, that we had both been faulty.—She sighed—she lifted her eyes to heaven—she was silent.

After several minutes’ pause, she resumed: “I am still convinced that Mr. Herbert never committed a premeditated error. Were circumstances known, I make no doubt they would greatly extenuate his fault.—Whoever was most to blame, may the penitence of both offenders secure forgiveness at the throne of mercy!”

She stopped—I could not speak—and she continued, “Gracious Heaven! what frail beings are we without thy aid!—This best of men has been permitted to decline from duty—may the sense of this deviation, become his future security by increasing his dependence on thee!”

Then turning to me, “Believe me,” added she, with an energy dictated by benevolence, “I feel for you more than for myself. I have resources from conscious innocence—but it is in the Almighty alone I put my trust, or I am nothing.—You are certainly in distress; you could not come merely with a design of rendering me unhappy. Alas! it is only vice which can make us completely miserable—You have been guilty, perhaps you are still supported by the wages of iniquity. Tell me how I can serve and save you.”—She took out her purse and put it into my hand.—“Accept of this trifle till I can be more extensively useful.”

I was penetrated by her words and manner. I threw myself at her feet.—I promised to be implicitly guided by her advice; but I chose rather to write than to speak my shame.

And now, my Lord, what is the result? For you I abandoned friends and innocence! To you I gave myself, and my little fortune.—Forsaken by you, or considered merely as the vile instrument of promoting with others your lawless pleasures, I seemed to have lost all relish for virtue; but Mrs. Herbert has recalled my wandering inclinations, and I have now no wish but to return to my friends, and to endeavour to make my peace with Heaven.

I will never see you more. I only ask you to restore me to my little fortune. I hope I have yet a brother, who may be prevailed on to own, and receive me, if not entirely destitute: but, if you refuse to return me this poor pittance, I will throw myself on Mrs. Herbert’s mercy, disclose to her every particular of our guilt, and leave it to her to determine the fate of the unhappy

SARAH MARSTON.

## LETTER LV.

*To Mrs. Herbert.*

HOW completely happy, my dearest sister, should I be, if your merits were rewarded; but I dare not on this subject impart to you the dictates of my heart.

My reception from Miss Woodford has gratified my wishes. A soft, tender confusion on my entrance, rendered her appearance inexpressibly engaging. She has even condescended to acknowledge her caprice to me, and an undue sensibility of another's merit. Generous excellence! How has she exalted herself by what she calls a humiliating confession! I never before was so happy.

She tells me, the spirit of coquetry is entirely evaporated, and she convinces me, by her conduct, of the truth of her assertion. Every advantage of wealth, every charm of person has been tendered to her acceptance, and she has rejected them for my sake.—“And for my own, Mr. Berkeley,” she adds, “for these are not the materials for husbands. The texture of their attachment is too slight for lasting wear, and as to money, you know Mr. Selden offered me my weight in gold, but I did not like the superabundance of lead in his own composition.”

I must repeat that this amiable woman makes me the happiest of men.—Then she talks of you with such raptures, yet with so much judgment—no exaggeration—my heart expands with delight and love. Truly I can say with Jaffier:

“O woman! lovely woman! nature  
 made you  
 To temper man; we had been brutes  
 without you;  
 Angels are painted fair to look like  
 you;  
 There's in you all that we believe of  
 heaven,  
 Amazing brightness, purity, and truth,  
 Eternal joy, and everlasting love.”

And as truly subscribe myself  
 your ever affectionate brother  
 and faithful friend,  
 HENRY BERKELEY.

## LETTER LVI.

*To Henry Berkeley, Esq.*

My dear Berkeley,  
MY heart overflows with gratitude and thankfulness.—I have been enabled to discharge a duty. Ah! how many have been my omissions! how accumulated my transgressions!

You know Brumpton.—He formed a design on the fortune and person of a rich and beautiful heiress. She has a romantic turn, on which he built his hopes, and, with the assistance of a mercenary chambermaid, had very nearly completed his plan of operations. He solicited me to be the lady's father on the occasion.

I blushed then, Berkeley, and I still feel a conscious shame, and regret, on the reflection, that I have long been duped by a fellow void of humanity. With what arrogance and insensibility did he convince me that the fortune only was the object of his attachment. And then, degrading thought! he would not have dared to have made me the confidant of his intended enterprize had I not meanly degenerated into vice, and been fearful of detection.

But it would have been madness in me to have revenged myself on him for my own folly. I peremptorily told him I should take effectual means to prevent the prosecution of his purpose. He left me without making any answer.

Fearful of his undue influence, I immediately waited on the father, Brumpton having, when he requested my assistance, given me a direction. He appears to be one of the most amiable and respectable of men. His behaviour, his sentiments, all contributed to inspire me with this opinion. I am sure he is one of the tenderest, best of fathers.

He introduced me to his daughter—her appearance is truly engaging and interesting—her manners are soft and gentle. Mr. Forest, the father, gave me an opportunity of imparting to her the purport of my visit: her generous, unsuspecting, and prepossessed heart, unwillingly credited the deception; but at last I gained her entire belief; and her gratitude was as lively as her attachment had been sincere.

Her father oppressed me with acknowledgements, and wished to cultivate a friendship of which, alas! he thinks I am not unworthy.—I, who have wounded the peace of a whole amiable family, who have involved in distress the most excellent of women! And how miserable have I made myself. I, who was once the happiest of human beings!

Gracious Heaven!—I have erred against the conviction of my reason, and my conscience; against the law of my God, against my temporal and eternal happiness.

The beam of joy that enlivened my soul on having been the humble instrument of saving a fellow-creature from distress, has also invigorated my resolution of breaking those chains of vice which have long enthralled me.

“Aid me, blest providence.”

At present, my dear Berkeley, I am unworthy of your esteem, and can only claim your pity.

Ever, ever your's,  
CHARLES HERBERT.

## LETTER LVII.

*To Lord Wilton.*

YOU were surprised, I make no doubt, my Lord, to find me not punctual to my appointment; but my scheme is utterly destroyed. That wretch Herbert threatens to acquaint Mr. Forest with my design. I have therefore left my lodgings privately, lest the intention of stealing an heiress should produce fatal consequences, and as my landlady may probably wish I had performed the usual ceremony of taking leave, I choose to lie perdu.

It is a lucky circumstance that I am ordered abroad so soon; but, my Lord, you must assist me.—Faith, I have very little of the ready, and travelling is expensive.—I must have a new suit. This is actually shabby. Your wardrobe is well filled.

Perhaps you will admire my calmness in supporting the loss of the lady.—I wish the lady had been the greatest loss. I should then have been quite a hero. The attendance, submission, and the thousand sedulities Miss Forest expected, were intolerable fatigues.—The attraction of fortune was indeed powerful. I was indefatigable. My dress and address were irresistible.

I wish you would make an attack on Herbert's wife.—You are very tedious in preparation. Surely you have not altered your purpose?—I must be revenged on him.—Be you my instrument—but I beg your pardon—you will disdain that office. Well then, let love to Mrs. Herbert, and hatred to her husband, as your unworthy rival, animate you.

I must leave town in a few days. Rejoice me before I go with an account of your success. It will be some consolation for the disappointment Herbert has occasioned me, as I know his happiness depends on his wife's fidelity.

Remember, my Lord, the deplorable consequences of an empty purse, and dispatch to me some relief. I am at —— which is no very creditable place for your Lordship's reception. If you cannot come, send by a porter, that there may be no discovery; but, if the cordial can be administered with your own hand, it will have the most salutary effect on

your affectionate,

RICHARD BRUMPTON.

## LETTER LVIII.

*To Richard Brumpton, Esq.*

So your scheme is entirely destroyed.—Poor Captain!—your purse is empty, and your dress shabby.—What a complication of distresses!—I cannot assist you with money, Dick, positively I cannot; for I have been stripped of every farthing this morning at White's.—I may perhaps send you a suit by and by,—I cannot see you this afternoon; my time is too precious.

Prithee, Dick, what sort of girl is thy Henrietta?—Is she handsome?—Will she repay the trouble of a pursuit?—The loss of the finest woman in the world would not affect you. It is only your vanity which seeks gratification.

Leave Herbert to me.—I do take upon me amply to revenge your cause.—I hope by artifice and rhetoric, to lull his wife to a forgetfulness of her honour. A fine woman neglected by her husband, is in a dangerous situation.—I am charmed with Mrs. Herbert, but I cannot slight every other woman to gratify this inclination.

I have not lost time with the husband, for I have tolerably fleeced his pockets, and seduced him from his happiness and duty.—You know it was for his wife's sake, I renewed my acquaintance with him; yet, wonderful effect, her majestic virtue has inspired me with so much awe, I have never dared to utter the remotest hint of love.

As to Sally Marston, would you believe it? the girl is squeamish.—She is so charmed with Mrs. Herbert, that she is eager to begin a reformation plan.—She chooses to take herself entirely out of my knowledge.—A little simpleton! I never wish to see her again; yet she has not a corrupt heart.—She was really unwilling to undertake the deception on Herbert, and was shocked on reflection.

I was a fool to trust her with Mrs. Herbert, yet, I hope, no harm is done. She has imparted to her his infidelity. That must have laid a foundation for me to build upon.

Sally wants me to refund, truly; I had £300. of her, but every sixpence has been long since gone; yet I did promise her, she should be repaid, if she entangled Herbert. She waits my answer, or she may discover all to Mrs. Herbert.—I will make one attempt,—if I fail, I must, by Sally's means, engage in some other trial.

This day, I hear, Herbert and his sister are to dine abroad. Berkeley and Miss Woodford are in the country.—Mrs. Herbert's little boy being somewhat indisposed, the mother's tenderness keeps her at home. I will manage, if possible, to infuse suspicions into her mind, which may facilitate my purpose. You shall know the result, if I have time from happier engagements to visit you. Adieu! your's,

WILTON.

## LETTER LIX.

*To Charles Herbert, Esq.*

Dear Sir,

THE obligation you have conferred on me, in rescuing my only child from destruction, excited in my breast, sentiments of the most perfect gratitude and esteem. Your appearance was sufficient to inspire regard.

I could not help wishing for a more intimate acquaintance; but, as I learned from your own information that you were married, I was prompted by parental caution and tenderness, to enquire whether the character of your lady, in the opinion of the world, corresponded with the picture your love had painted.

Mrs. Herbert, the whole town proclaims, is a model of female perfection. Not even envy dares to vent a whisper to her prejudice.—Was it possible for the insinuating seducer to withdraw an husband's affection from such a wife?—And after she had blessed him with a sweet pledge of love?—Pardon me, if the incredulity excited by my esteem, was constrained to yield to the force of repeated information.

It is the advice of an excellent writer, "Not to believe all we hear, nor officiously to report all we believe." I was influenced by this precept.—I thought him, who had been the protector of innocence, incapable of betraying it to misery; especially where obligations claimed a right to the most constant affection.—I do not believe all I heard, but I have too much reason to be convinced every report is not without foundation.

You will think perhaps that I make an improper use of an acquaintance so lately begun, and from which I have derived such considerable advantage. You may censure me for officious zeal in attempting to dictate, where I am neither authorised by alliance, nor supported by intimacy.—But is not friendship a sufficient plea? Should not gratitude strongly incite us to save our benefactor from destruction? Do not social and religious ties prompt us to redress and prevent the misfortunes of our fellow creatures?

Mr. Herbert's heart feels the force of every generous emotion, though its effects have been for a time suspended where they should have been most powerfully exerted.—O let me intreat you to be influenced by the pleadings of your own heart, by conscience, by religion!

Think not that age has rendered me forgetful of the pleasure of youth. Cheerfulness and content have always attended me. Heaven be praised, I enjoy them unmixed, because I have not to reflect on capital errors.—This assertion, if I know myself, is not the result of spiritual pride, but an effusion of humble gratitude. Far be it from me to conclude that I should have been victorious in trials where others have failed.—I mean only to recommend the armour of Christianity, which is alone impenetrable.

I attribute my serenity more to an uncommon care exerted by the best of parents in my education, and to the protection, the solicited protection of Heaven, than to my own strength of resolution.

Be assured that happiness does not consist in the indulgence, but restraint of unlawful inclinations, and that it is much easier to prevent the rise of passions, than to subdue them.

You are young, and perhaps unacquainted with mankind.—Early attached to a woman, worthy of the most exalted regard, your heart dilated with joy.—Truth, generosity, frankness, and delicacy, actuated every part of her conduct. From her, you judged of the world in general; and because she possessed the reality of virtue, you suspected not that any one could be satisfied merely with its appearance. And that a person dignified by truth, distinguished by fortune, and favoured by nature, could be capable of descending to the meanness of vice, was a suspicion your generous breast would not entertain.

By the unsuspecting goodness of your heart, you were first ensnared.

But remember, my dear sir, that true friendship can only be founded in virtue.—Be not influenced by bad example and ill-judged ridicule, to neglect the practice of essential duties!

Ah! do not defer to the winter of life, the extirpation of those weeds of vice, which, if suffered to take root, will over-run the soil, and obstruct the growth of every salutary plant.—Youth and health are the seasons for cultivating mental improvement; and how mean a sacrifice do we offer to God, when we delay it till we can no longer continue the votaries of pleasures!

How deplorable is their situation, who have stifled the workings of conscience, and lost the power of reflection!—How soon must they awake from a dream of sensuality, to all the horrors of a dreadful eternity.

You, sir, who possess every blessing, which reason can request or Heaven bestow, want only to be convinced of your happiness to secure the enjoyment of it.—You are united, by the most solemn ties, to a woman, whose merit alone should be esteemed sufficient to entitle her to the undivided possession of your heart.

Our divine law-giver has not only by his presence, sanctified the ceremonial of marriage, but, by a positive declaration, has enforced the duty of a strict observance of the connubial vow. “What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

Marriage is the state most agreeable to reason, and conformable to the dictates of morality.—A state, instituted by the divine author of our nature, to soften the asperities, and heighten the blessings of life.—Beware how you obstinately pervert the gracious purpose, and be assured, you cannot, with impunity, continue to violate those sacred vows which are registered in Heaven.

I have not mentioned the breach of that duty, the observance of which every man owes to himself, as well as to the community of which he is a member.—Can you reconcile the duties of a man and a Christian, with the commission of adultery, and an inattention to religious obligations?—Can any sensual pleasures compensate for the loss of innocence?—Impossible! On the contrary, experience evinces, that they are attended by disquietude, and succeeded by remorse.—For surely, when calm reflection takes place of insinuating passion, you must condemn yourself, and confess, there is no temporal happiness equal to that which results from the testimony of a good conscience; no hope so delightful, so invigorating, as that of receiving the plaudit of divine approbation.

In the female sex, reputation once lost, is scarcely ever to be regained; and though, from custom, and the degeneracy of mankind, unchastity is not considered as an heinous crime in ours, yet with the Almighty there is no distinction, and he will as severely punish the one as the other.

I hope you, sir, cannot be abandoned to guilt.—But if the considerations of duty, and futurity, are too weak to reclaim you from a habit of vice, let the fear of present misery deter you from an erroneous pursuit of happiness. Tremble, lest a perseverance in error, should estrange from you the affections of a wife, in whom all the perfections of her sex are centered.—Does her constant, her delicate regard, her submissive resignation to your will, her sedulous attention to please, appear less amiable, because they are the effects of duty, as well as the result of tender affection? This consideration should heighten your esteem and tenderness; for love, when under the guidance of virtue and religion, will subsist when time shall be lost in eternity!

From you, sir, I expect the most exalted triumph; the triumph of true honour over false shame.—A mind once fully impressed with a sense of duty, will soon, I hope, be enabled to recover its native dignity.

Were I writing to a man of the world, I should apologize for assuming a style, which would be deemed preceptive and dictatorial, but I have rated you by a higher standard, and, in addressing you, I have considered only the duty I owe to God, the cause of truth and virtue, and the best interests of a fellow creature and benefactor.

Believe me ever your grateful  
servant and sincere friend,

ROBERT FOREST.

P.S. I find Brumpton embarks immediately for Jamaica. My daughter therefore is no longer obliged to shelter herself in retirement.

## LETTER LX.

*To Richard Brumpton, Esq.*

I HAVE scarcely power to write; rage and disappointment tear my heart!—Yet I must disclose, or madness will ensue.—Prithee, let me have none of your nonsensical observations:—it is to avoid them, and your importunities, I determine not to see you.—I am unfit for conversation—I could do some horrid act, and leave my country for ever.—But I must begin.

I went to Herbert's house soon after his sister and he had left it. I was apprehensive Mrs. Herbert would refuse me admittance, but most fortunately, as I then thought it, she crossed the hall, when the servant opened the door. As I bowed to her, she could not avoid speaking; yet she immediately told me, Mr. Herbert was not at home. I hastily answered, "I would then beg a few moment's conference with her."—As I made this request before the servant, she could not refuse the grant of it, but I saw, by her looks, how much her heart disdained me.

When we entered the drawing-room, she coolly asked if I had any particular business with Mr. Herbert.—"No, madam," replied I, "nothing of importance—to say the truth, I rather wished to find you alone, having somewhat to communicate that demands your private ear."

"Whatever you have to say to me, my Lord," answered she, "cannot be improper for my husband to know.—I receive no private intelligence."—"I heartily wish, madam" said I, "Mr. Herbert's conduct was equally meritorious.—But"—

She started up—"My Lord," cried she, with an air of contempt,—"the man who dares to speak unfavourably to me of my husband, I regard as my worst enemy."

She approached the door—I caught her hand, and drew her gently back.—"What do you mean, my Lord?" said she, struggling to free herself.—"You must not leave me, madam," returned I.—"How? must not," repeated the charming creature, her eyes sparkling with indignation.

"No, madam, permit me to detain you," said I—"I come, as a friend, to offer you my advice and my assistance. If my zeal is offensive, it is well meant.—You are too tame. Are you not a mother as well as a wife? Upbraid him with your wrongs; force from him a different conduct.—His deviations shall be kept secret from the world for your sake."

"I disdain the appearance of an obligation to you," interrupted she; "my husband I consider as my best friend and safest counsellor."—"That husband," resumed I, "has neglected you, has been unfaithful, but while he sees you are easy, and depends on your fidelity, he will persist in his present conduct.—I have known many wives successful by exciting their husband's apprehensions of losing them.—The means will be sanctified by the proposed end."

"Lord Wilton," said she, with an air that commanded respect, and awhile silenced every selfish passion, "you convince me that you have rather expressed your wishes, than communicated your knowledge. I am not to be deceived by your sophistry; would you advise me to live a falshood?"

Her whole soul spoke in every animated feature.—On my honour, Brumpton, mine was awed by the dignity of virtue. Never before was I so humbled! It was some time before I could rally my scattered faculties. I then mentioned her husband's obligations to her.

She again interrupted me.—“Mr. Herbert,” said she, “would have acted the same in similar circumstances.”—“Yet,” answered I, “are not all your duties fulfilled? Are not all his, violated? Are you not constrained to abridge even the exercises of beneficence? He has distressed himself and you by his love of play and other extravagancies—I have assisted him. He is again greatly involved:—he knows not, but by my assistance, how to extricate himself. I will cancel his every former obligation, I will remove his every present difficulty, and ask no higher favour than your smile of approbation, and freely, kindly-extended hand.”

I threw myself on my knees before her, and offered to seize her repulsive hand. She gazed on me with an eye which penetrated my very soul. “Pecuniary debts,” said she, “can only be discharged by pecuniary considerations. The smile of approbation and the hand of kindness, can only be extended to the sincere friend. Have you been such, Lord Wilton?”

By my soul, I trembled and turned pale as her eye met mine.

I was attempting to speak, when she continued, lifting up her fine eyes to Heaven, “Can there be such villainy in man?—Do not dare to imagine that I am the dupe of your vile insinuations.—Thou mean invader of the rights of an injured husband, thy artifice is too gross to impose on me!—To seduce the wife, the husband's character must be the sacrifice.—I despise thy cruel stratagem.—Mr. Herbert's merit rises to my delighted remembrance, and I am confirmed in the opinion of his excellence, by this farther conviction of thy depravity.—But to converse with thee is injurious to the dignity of affronted virtue.—May remorse awaken you to amendment, and may you never more attempt to corrupt innocence!”

She then hastily quitted the room.—With what elevation of sentiment did she triumph over me!—I was flying after her, when I met, in the next apartment, the happy husband.

He saw my confusion.—I knew I had injured him in intention. I wished to revenge on him my disappointment.—But, the deuce take him—the fellow would not fight.—He talked of duty, and honour, and—I know not what; a pretended fit of awakened conscience. A fool! his conscience should have restrained him from yielding to my insinuations.

Where was this bosom friend, when this wife was forsaken by him, and he joined me in pursuits, which he knew were contrary to his duty?—But the truth was, he feared to engage with me—so I left the house, disappointed both in love and revenge.

What could be done with such a woman? I had early tried the arts of flattery—but why do I call it flattery?—She is superior to all praise.—I followed her every where. I endeavoured to please, to be useful to her. A thousand little officious services have I rendered her, to which she returned only a cold politeness.—I was always of her opinion.—I praised no one else.—Never did any other woman ever treat me with such indifference.—Did you ever know these methods fail?—She has annihilated my whole system.—Had her guardian angel for one moment deserted his charge, had she in the least

relaxed from her rigid watchfulness, I should have thought myself secure of a deliberate success.

But I can waste no more time on you. I must invent some new project, or, I believe, I shall entirely lose my senses.—I cannot bear a formal conclusion.—You know the characters of

your

WILTON.

## LETTER LXI.

*To Miss Herbert.*

WHAT monstrous encroachers these men are, Lucy!—I had resolutely determined on absolute monarchy for several months to come, when this Berkeley, this usurper, invades my rights, tramples on my laws, wants me, truly! to delegate all my authority, and to render to him my oath of allegiance.—To acknowledge him as my supreme head, and to become a subject, instead of a sovereign. What a bashaw!

And must I vow “to love, to honour, and to obey, and to keep him not only for better, but for worse; not only in health, but in sickness; and this as long as we both shall live”? I am well read in the matrimonial service,—I have got it by heart, (as it is vulgarly exprest) and this man has certainly taken possession of my heart, or I should never promise to subscribe to these articles, which I believe I shall soon do with my whole heart and soul.

He has written to Mrs. Berkeley, and she has answered his letter\* with her wishes joined to his.—Mrs. Bennet is teasing, and her husband provoking.—She is my only relation, she urges, and she cannot go to London.—And Mr. Bennet has no notion of such long courtships.—The parties, he says, have worn their love suit quite threadbare, before they make up their wedding garments.

Then Mr. Berkeley is so—what shall I call it?—so generously tender, that he has almost triumphed over all my resolves.—Yes, my dear friend, I believe I shall actually have entered upon the formidable estate of matrimony, before we meet again. It is however an honourable estate.

I shall promise nothing but what I will religiously endeavour to perform, as, I am convinced, what is enjoined, is no more than ought to be performed.—I have not yet however consented to fix a day, but every day of my life shall be devoted to Mr. Berkeley’s happiness.

In witness whereof I set my hand and seal.

CLARA WOODFORD.

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\* These letters do not appear.

## LETTER LXII.

*To Miss Woodford.*

MY sweet, lively friend! My heart sincerely congratulates you on your approaching happiness, and applauds you for your ingenuous confessions.

Mrs. Bennet has reason in her argument, yet my sister and I are unwilling to be from you at such a time; and for me to lose the office of bridesmaid, is it not mortifying?—But we shall expect you in town very soon after the ceremony, and be impatient till you arrive.

My brother has been more at home than usual; he is more than ever attentive to my sister. He gazes on her “till the big tear stands trembling in his eye.”—Surely their fate is near its crisis!—Dear, dear creatures, my heart bleeds for both! May all happiness attend you, my sweet friend, prays

your ever affectionate,

LUCIA HERBERT.

## LETTER LXIII.

*To Henry Berkeley, Esq.*

MY brother! my friend! I now dare call you by that expressive name. My whole soul is overwhelmed with the deepest remorse, and yet expanded with the most lively gratitude.—Read the enclosed letter.\* The God, whom this good man and my Caroline have always served, is able to deliver me.”

Lord Wilton is a villain. He has attempted to poison my Caroline’s mind, and to make to himself an interest in her affections.—I met him in my house. Never shall I forget the conscious rage and guilt that flashed in his eyes, nor the mingled terror with which he viewed me. He endeavoured to pass me. I asked him to explain his behaviour.—“My Lord! you leave not the house till you have satisfied my enquiry.—Speak, lest I violate the laws of hospitality.” My soul was in tumults.

He stammered—“Come, prithee Herbert, what reason have you for anger? Do you think, because you have no eyes to admire the most lovely of women, that others must be blind to her beauty? Have you a right to insult me? You, who have most cruelly injured her!”

“Ah! wretch,” said I, “did you not estrange me from my duty, and withdraw my person, you cannot say my heart, from the most excellent of women?”

This parley encouraged him to answer readily,—“Had you been settled in your principles, my insinuations had not prevailed.”

Though from the mouth of an enemy, I could not be deaf to the voice of truth.—What a caution would this example afford to the unsteady mind! I became the object of his contempt to whom I had sacrificed my duty!

I stood abashed on the recollection of my design.—Passion had almost hurried me into the commission of another crime.—My wife and child rendered life desirable that I might discharge the debt I owed to them. I dared not rush to meet death, and leave unperformed the duties of life.—I considered that I might live to be happy, and to make others happy, and that my misery commenced with my deviation from duty.

My continued silence, and an appearance of irresolution, inspired my treacherous adversary with some sparks of courage.—“Come, sir,” said he, “I will follow where you please. I do not mean to parley.”

“No,” answered I,—“I have reflected on my own conduct, which appears to be so blameable, I dare not defend it.—My deviations have indeed more cruelly wounded my wife than even your baseness. It shall be the study of my life to make all the atonement in my power. Be it your’s to correct your vicious inclinations.—Begone! I forgive you—I seek no revenge.—You have defended my life—I will not attempt your’s.—Let me never see you more, lest I forget my resolution and chastise you for a villain.—In a just cause, my sword shall always be readily exerted, but I dare not venture myself, nor would I send you into the presence of offended omnipotence.”

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\* See Mr. Forest’s Letter, No. LIX.

My behaviour, the place, and the sight of some of the servants at a little distance, animated him so much that he cried,—“You have no obligations to me—I saved not your life—it never was in real danger—I always meant to betray you.—And are you really afraid?—Poor Herbert!”

I frowned indignant.—He changed colour, and only added, “Well then, to part friends, it is best to leave you abruptly”—and instantly quitted the house.

How my heart rejoiced in my escape from farther guilt!—I retired to my study to indulge reflection, for I was too much discomposed to appear before my wife.

O! Berkeley, though my heart has been bewildered in the labyrinth of vice, it never ceased its wishes to regain the path of virtue.—Difficulty weakened my endeavour.—A false friend deceived me with the shadow of honour.

Ah! if my Caroline will accept a sincere penitent, her forgiveness, and restored affection will excite my hopes of the divine pardon, and, I humbly trust, secure my reformation.—But can she forgive me?—Shall I solicit Mr. Forest to plead for me?—No, I will owe all to her own goodness and affection: to that excellence, which, like Heaven, will receive and accept the contrite offender.

But I must attend Mr. Forest. My soul is humbled by a deep sense of guilt. I dread to appear before him, but I will conquer all false shame, and confess all my obliquities. I will write again on my return from this good man.—Adieu! till then.

I am  
ever most cordially your's  
CHARLES HERBERT.

## LETTER LXIV.

*To Henry Berkeley, Esq.*

Dear Brother,

I FOUND this sincere friend at home, and alone. He received me with the utmost benignity; and after the usual civilities, seeing me in apparent confusion:

“Mr. Herbert,” said he, “the motive which induced me to write, acquits me to myself of impertinent zeal, and, I hope, will plead my apology with you. There is an ingenuous concern expressed in your countenance, which convinces me I did not err in my opinion of the goodness of your heart.—You will become all I wish you.”

The tears gushed from his eyes as he endeavoured to say more. He grasped my hand with all the warmth of gratified benevolence. It was some time before I was enough composed to reply, “O! my father—my heart has long struggled between the conviction of duty, and the influence of error.—What have I suffered since my deviation! I supplicated for divine assistance, determined never more to tread the slippery paths of vice; but alas! whilst I prayed to be delivered from temptation, I rashly ventured into its mazes.—Your advice strengthens my every good purpose. Continue to me that friendship you have so generously exerted—I will study to deserve it.”

Softened by his tender sympathy, and truly affected with a sense of past errors, I was constrained to be silent. “These tears,” said Mr. Forest, “flow from a contrite heart, and will doubtless be accepted by the Almighty.

“But let me caution you against a depression of spirit, hardly less fatal to the practice of religion, than the sallies of passion.—The melancholy of enthusiasm, and the rigours of superstition, but ill supply the deficiency of those virtues they mean to represent. Religion diffuses an unclouded cheerfulness over the aspect, and beams forth in the perpetual sunshine of benevolence.

“Let the examples in holy Scripture of pardon to offenders, revive your hopes, and animate your practice. These examples, whilst they afford encouragement to true penitents, should soften the severity of virtue, and teach her professed votaries to be merciful, even as our Father which is in heaven, is merciful.”

I could not refrain from interrupting the venerable man, by catching his hand, and exclaiming, whilst I gave it a strenuous pressure,—“Proceed, dear sir, and instruct me how to practise those duties in which you are so well established.”

“I was afraid,” he answered, with a glow of benevolence, “you would have thought my advice tedious; but I beg your pardon. There are subjects, on which to trifle is a proof of folly; and duties, which to neglect, is the height of madness. Believe me, sir, a time will come when those who have squandered happiness in pursuit of pleasure, will vainly wish to recall the precious hours they have mispent.—A state of health is the proper season for repentance.”

“What thanks,” cried I, “what gratitude I owe you! But alas! will not the knowledge of one sad stain of guilt tincture the whole of an otherwise unblemished life?—Will not common frailties be deemed the result of a vicious inclination?”

“With the truly good and candid,” answered Mr. Forest, “repentance being succeeded by perseverance in duty, will not only be a proof of sincerity, but secure a re-establishment of reputation. The good opinion of the world ought not to be disregarded, though it does not constitute our real merit; but let a nobler incitement animate your practice, and suffer not the insinuations of malice to ruffle your tranquillity, nor disturb your laudable pursuits.—Remember there is, there can be no safety but in religion.

“Suffer neither the dread of contempt, nor the prevalence of bad example to render you ashamed of shewing an invariable esteem and affection for your wife. I am far from recommending that childish and troublesome fondness, which makes the spectators uneasy, and the parties ridiculous, but there is a conspicuous, manly tenderness, an exalted friendship, which feels and imparts delight, and reflects equal honour on those who pay, and those who receive it.

“Never be influenced by the modish custom of appearing disgusted with diversions, because your wife is present.—You pay an ill compliment to your own judgment, when you are guilty of inattention to her. The pursuit of different amusements dissipates the affection; and though absence is sometimes unavoidable, true love will never find it necessary to its own preservation. I grant that the joy of meeting calls forth all the tenderness of susceptible hearts; but they who wish to prove the satisfaction by losing awhile the object who is to inspire it, are conscious there is a coolness in their affection which requires particular circumstances to exalt it to a degree worthy of the name of love.”

“My reason and my heart,” replied I, “assent to the truth of your opinion. Happy is he who finds a gentle monitor to advise, and a bright example of Christian virtue, to animate him to the discharge of his duty!—Most happy he who never erred! The world’s contempt, and distressful circumstances, may plunge many into repeated acts of guilt, whom a more favourable situation, and milder treatment, might have reclaimed.”

“You are certainly in the right,” rejoined Mr. Forest, “and I wish the abhorrence generally expressed against vice, was the effect of a settled habit of virtue; but alas! were it so, the truly penitent would be received into the number of the virtuous, with as much joy, as the real criminal was expelled from their society with pity and regret. ‘The Deity (say some) is the only true judge of sincere repentance. Man is frequently deceived by appearances—They who have once been frail, may naturally be suspected of being again endangered by the force of temptation, and therefore ought not to be trusted.’

“Are these sentiments the dictates of humanity? Shall the tormenting passions of suspicion and distrust be permitted to banish from the breast that charity which is the essence of the Christian religion?—Should the same temptations solicit, where is the bold champion of virtue, who dares engage the attacks of vice with a certainty of conquest?—How often has presumption suffered, when it has *sought* occasions of triumph?

“Is there any man who, in judging another, can on an impartial retrospect, acquit himself of having never swerved from his duty? When he finds himself fallible (and who is impeccable?) he will drop a tear of pity for his weak brother, and implore the Almighty’s forgiveness for *him*, as he hopes forgiveness of his own offences.—Forgiveness of injuries if a ruling principle of Christianity—Universal benevolence is true charity. We may be circumscribed by providence in our ability to distribute alms, but the social feelings of the heart, may extend towards all human kind.

“It afflicts me, Mr. Herbert,” continued this excellent man, “when I find the doctrines of Christianity contemned and disregarded, because they are promulgated by those who appear to be actuated by motives of temporal interest to defend them. I am afraid it will always be the case, that where worldly advantages are annexed to the profession of teaching duty, the professors will be deemed by some to be hypocritical and interested, and their instructions considered by others as unmeaning declamations.—Perfection is expected from a clergyman, when, alas! the same passions incite, the same temptations solicit, the same frail creature is overcome! yet it is certain that men of our profession, from the natural tendency of their studies, have better opportunities than others, of improvement; and from persons of superior abilities, ‘to whom much has been given, from them much will be required:’ but whilst, on the one hand, the holy office is degraded into contempt, by an improper choice of its ministers; on the other, the generality of mankind will not be convinced a man chooses to devote himself to the church on spiritual, rather than temporal considerations.—If any persons are displeased with his doctrine, they will very strictly search into his life, view it with the jaundiced eye of prejudice, and be much more ready to magnify the mote in his eye, than to cast the beam from their own. It is likewise greatly to be lamented, that they who actually feel the true spirit of charity, are not able to practise what they teach;—that they can only breathe forth their prayers and wishes, and contribute their mite towards the assistance of their fellow creatures, without the power of bestowing *sufficient* relief.—Even where domestic claims forbid the exertion of public charity, want of ability will frequently be misconstrued into want of benevolence.”

Every word this good man uttered increased my esteem and admiration. My heart glowed with the most tender sensations of gratitude.—I soon after took leave, intreating him to honour me with his friendship and acquaintance, and to permit me to introduce my Caroline to Miss Forest.

Adieu! my dear Berkeley.—I intended to have sought an interview with the best beloved of my heart, but I am not equal to it.—I must write—I tremble, and am a coward when I look up to her superlative excellence.—If she receive me to her favour, how inexpressibly happy, yet alas! how self-condemned will be

her ever devoted,  
and your truly affectionate,

CHARLES HERBERT.

## LETTER LXV.

*To Mrs. Herbert.*

IN what manner, dearest, most amiable, and excellent of women, shall I presume to address you, after my sad defection from you and duty?—Ah! my Caroline, how little did I once imagine I could have been capable of injuring you:—that even a thought could wander from the object of my plighted vows.

Fatally trusting to my own strength, and to my love for you, I resumed an acquaintance with a wretch, whose aim I am convinced, was to mislead me, and seduce you.—Your ever-wakeful dependence on Heaven, preserved you:—my self-confidence betrayed me.—Yet, dearest excellence, believe me whilst I assure you, my heart, my esteem, never wandered from you.

Vanity, false shame, the levity of the objects around me, contributed to my deviation; yet I avoided many occasions, by which the arch enemy meant to ensnare me.—Alas! even in my escapes I had cause for humiliation, for do not the laws of Christianity search out the thoughts, and prove the heart, and did not the necessity of flight determine mine to be culpable?

The dishonourable Peer, I am now certain, contrived a tale which engaged my sympathy.—He influenced the object who deceived me, and armed the ruffians who attacked me, that he might make himself appear to be the instrument of my defence. Best of women! Am I not an alien from your affections? have you not entirely banished me from your heart? Despair surrounds me at the thought; for if you abandon me, I must be forsaken by Heaven.

You once loved me, my Caroline.—Ah! how inestimable a proof did you give me of your affection. Why did I say a proof? Your whole life has been an invariable testimony of your love.

Alas! how many tears must I have caused you to shed!—yet lest I should be made unhappy by the knowledge of your sufferings, you endeavoured to wear the semblance of cheerfulness. How painful must have been that task to the most ingenuous of human minds. And could that appearance lessen the sense of guilt to any other than an infatuated wretch?—My Caroline! I detest myself when I reflect on your sufferings.—I know you will not reproach me, but my whole future life must be marked with self-upbraidings.

I dared not to speak on this heart-affecting subject. I was convinced I could not have said all that my mind has long laboured with.—My Caroline! My Wife! O, will you re-admit to your love, your friendship, your confidence,

Your truly penitent and  
ever faithful husband,

CHARLES HERBERT.

## LETTER LXVI.

*To Mr. Herbert.*

IT is impossible for me, my dearest life, to describe the contrary emotions which assailed my heart on reading your letter.—Tender grief, joy, self-reproach, by turns agitated my mind.—But oh! my beloved Mr. Herbert, can you for a moment encourage a doubt of my affection and esteem?

I own, I *have* suffered.—I have been greatly distressed.—I knew not how to act.—Sometimes I intended gently to insinuate my apprehensions and wishes.—Then I feared to offend, or wound you.—I dreaded lest I should seem to arrogate to myself, a supposed superiority.—I saw you thoughtful and disquieted.—I hoped the workings of your mind would have a happy effect on your conduct, and I wished to see you re-instated in every duty, by the force of your own Christian principles.—My dearest husband! never would I have trusted my present and future happiness to any but a man of principle. The reformation of a libertine, and an infidel, was a task of too Ethiopian a dye for me to attempt, and such a connexion is injurious to female delicacy.

I had long known your benevolent heart, and found it to have been invariably actuated by religious motives.—An acquaintance with a specious profligate, gay company, infectious examples awhile entangled that generous and unsuspecting heart; but with a noble exertion of principle, you burst the fetters of vice, and with the assistance of Heaven have obtained the triumph of virtue.

Do not, my beloved husband, my best of friends, do not indulge a desponding thought. Even your past errors will be converted into the means of your future security by a firmer reliance on Providence.

You feel the necessity of an unremitted dependence on Him, who alone is able to save; of constant and fervent supplications, united supplications at the throne of grace. We were formed in weakness, that we might *rely only on His strength*. Let us resume, let us never omit the noblest of family exercises.

I beg, I intreat, my dearest Mr. Herbert, that you will never more mention a subject which would give pain to both. Be assured, that my love and esteem, which were ever yours, are increased to the highest degree.

Come then, my best beloved! Let there be but one heart, one soul, to animate our actions, and oh! let every painful remembrance be banished from the breast of the most affectionate of husbands, as it shall be from the memory of

his ever-tenderly faithful wife,

CAROLINE HERBERT.

## LETTER LXVII.

*To Miss Herbert.*

Honoured Madam,  
MY poor old heart is almost broke.—My dear master is almost distracted.—I'll tell you the reason as well as I can.

He went this morning to Mr. Milton's.—I was to call him, and when I got there, I found him walking backwards and forwards about the room, like a madman. I begged to know what was the matter, but he could not tell me.—A man, who was with him, and who I found had been a servant of Lord Wilton's, told me, that his master went off this morning with an intention of going abroad, he did not know where, and that he knew he meant to surprise, and take Mrs. Herbert with him.

You know, Madam, my mistress and the child went an airing this morning, and he may very possibly have taken her away, yet the servant don't seem to be certain of any thing. He has been turned off, and he has heard my lord mention such a design.

For God's sake, Madam, come to us, for I am afraid my master should do himself a mischief.—O! that my mistress may be come home.—Dear, good Madam, come and save my master, and comfort the heart of

your old faithful and distressed servant,

JOHN STANLEY.

## LETTER LXVIII.

*To Mrs. Henry Berkeley.*

INSTEAD of congratulating you on your marriage, ah! my dear friend, how must I alarm you!

What an interruption to your and our happiness!

Where, oh where is my angelic sister?—Mr. Bennet's servant calling to enquire after us, I am fearful he should drop a hint of our present uneasiness, which might be more alarming to you if possible, than particulars of the truth.

O my dear, we have some reason to fear that Lord Wilton has surprised, and carried off my sister, who went out this morning with the child, and is not yet returned. I expected my mantua-maker, or I should have attended her.

About three o'clock, a note was brought to me, from John Stanley. I inclose it—You may believe I flew immediately to my brother. I found him violently agitated. His looks were disordered. John Stanley was on his knees before him, the tears trickling down his aged cheeks.

As soon as my brother saw me, he started, ran to me, and clasping me to his breast, "O my sister," he cried, "I have lost my Caroline!—My God, what will become of me!"

The tenderest sympathy kept me awhile silent—at last, I joined my intreaties with those of the good old servant, that he would return home, and we would think of every means to recover my sister, if the misfortune was real.

The hope I encouraged, suspended his affliction. We came home, Mr. Milton with us, whom I intreated to accompany my brother to Sir Henry Romney's for information. They were just gone as your servant called.

\* \* \* \* \*

Good God! what various agitations. We lamented a fancied evil, and have now to deplore a real calamity.—My sister and the child have been overturned.—The coach brought them home about an hour since; the child very little bruised, but my sister in fits.—Dr. H—— is with her, and I think his looks betray her danger.

\* \* \* \* \*

My brother is this moment returned, relieved from some fears, but distressed by others. Sir Henry solemnly protested that though Lord Wilton might lightly talk of such a project, he never seriously designed to attempt it; and to convince him, shewed him a letter from that nobleman, which affords some gleams of hope of his reformation.

My brother's anxiety is inexpressible.—Judge of it from his love and her merits.—Alas! it was on the eve of a reconciliation that this dreadful misfortune happened. This circumstance increases our regrets.

I slipt out of the room to give you this intelligence, as your servant says he must return this evening. I am shocked at the uneasy suspense I must occasion.—My heart is torn with apprehension.—O gracious God, spare her to us!—Come to town immediately.

Your's most truly,

LUCIA HERBERT.

## LETTER LXIX.

*To Charles Herbert, Esq.*

I HAVE reason to believe, my dearest Mr. Herbert, that a few hours will consign me to immortality, and death has no terrors but the thoughts of a separation from you, my mother and my child, and our fraternal friends. There I own, resolution fails, and fortitude is shaken!

O best beloved of my soul, to lose you now, when we were more tenderly, and firmly united than ever.—Human nature knows not how to support the idea.—yet do not I intreat you, do not cherish a fruitless affliction for my death; but transfer to our child that tender love which is now my highest temporal blessing.

I am still dear to you;—I know I shall *ever* be very dear to you, but mourn not for the happy! I trust not in my own merits that I *shall* be happy.—If you would exalt even my heavenly felicity, O my best and dearest of earthly friends, it must be by becoming a partaker of it.—I still offer up my most fervent prayers for you!—The same Almighty Being, who has been my defence in trouble, will sustain you. When you arrive at the last awful moment, you will find with me that the recollection of virtuous and religious actions, and principles, affords the only pure delight.

When I think that I shall soon part from you, never to meet again in this world, and that most probably, I have given my mother and child a last embrace, conjugal, filial, and maternal love divide my soul!

My heart is too deeply affected, to express its emotions, but the struggle will soon be over!—I feel the efficacy of Christianity!—I acknowledge the gracious assistance of the Omnipotent!—Though unconscious of unintentional errors, it is a CHRISTIAN *hope* alone that supports me—The pains of dissolution are transient, and beyond this life, all is felicity!—Whilst I contemplate future bliss, methinks I already feel a Heaven in my breast!

Dearest of men! farewell! May our enlarged spirits meet again in an happy eternity!

CAROLINE HERBERT.

A Letter to Mrs. Berkeley, with some account of the sad accident, is omitted, as its contents are similar to those in Letter LXVIII.

## LETTER LXX.

*To Lord Wilton.*

ALAS! my dear Lord, my revenge is still imperfect—What a mean wretch is this fellow!—I once declined turning my sword upon him, for reasons too tedious now to mention.

But hark ye, my Lord;—let me give you one piece of advice. Your seduction of the young lady, which you imagined to be a profound secret, is divulged to her father, who vows revenge for the injury.—Her death, with every horrid circumstance, is known to him. He is as violent in vengeance, as you are in your passions for the fair sex.

I wish you had satisfied your own inclination, and revenged my quarrel. Then you would have had an additional reason to have fled the kingdom—but it is now too late for farther attempts.—Your life is most certainly in danger. I had this intelligence from a person who knows nothing of our connexion, and I cannot doubt the truth of the report.

Come then, my Lord, let us embark together.—We can be as happy in another country, as in England. Change of climate need not produce any change of manners.—You may pursue your favourite amusements, and assist your old friend in a less expensive folly. Or to speak more *tenderly* and *poetically*,

We'll still improve the talents we  
     possess,  
 Your study, pleasure, *mine*, a taste for  
     dress.

Come, my Lord, support your usual gaiety.—You will not leave many friends behind you, and by being a friend to me, you will secure to yourself one in

RICHARD BRUMPTON.

## LETTER LXXI.

*To Richard Brumpton, Esq.*

Must I then leave thee, paradise?  
 Thus leave  
 Thee, native soil? This *happy town*  
*and court,*  
 The haunt of *beauties*?

Is this the result of my projects?—To be driven from my native land?—Forced to seek asylum amongst strangers?—But to confess the truth, Brumpton, I must seek happiness, if I stay at home, for I never yet have found it.—Instead of procuring my own gratification by promoting the welfare of others, my whole life has been made a scene of wretchedness, by the indulgence of every vagrant inclination.

Herbert was entangled by my snares, not misled by his own vicious inclinations. His reflections are sweet, when compared with mine. And his wife, even since his estrangement, has been happier than the villain who seduced him from her.—There is a delightful serenity which accompanies suffering virtue, and renders it superior to temptation. Methought Mrs. Herbert, when she repulsed me, appeared more angelic than ever. Offended virtue sparkled in her eye, and glowed on her cheek.—Never was the cause of heaven so well supported.

I felt abashed.—I secretly acknowledged the superiority of goodness;—yet, as if animated by some spirit, an enemy to mankind, I wished to debase her character, and to render guilty, the object of my adoration. Her good angel prevailed—she flew from me.

I have injured Herbert, but I cannot forgive him for knowing me, nor for being happier than myself.

So *you* once declined turning your sword upon him, *for reasons too tedious to mention*. Rather, Brumpton, too obvious to require to be mentioned. Thou art a conceited fellow.—What! I imagine you had a desire to inspire me with a good opinion of your courage. It will not do, Captain—but how I trifle.

Herbert certainly intends to reform, and his wife will receive him. I have hastened my own, in the endeavour to complete his ruin.—Fool!—Blockhead!—Madman!

You have also mentioned another cause of despair.—Yes! I was the seducer of Miss Juliet R——. She was promised, you know, to Lord M——. I handed her one night from the play to a chair I had hired, and carried her to a proper house for her reception. Her father was at an estate in a distant country, and had entrusted her to the care of an aunt, negligent of her charge, and corrupt in her principles. Miss R—— was a very amiable woman. I hoped her love for me would have secured her secrecy; but on her vowing revenge, I would not permit her to return home.

Whether, in my absence, she was accessory to her own death, or whether the wretch with whom I placed her, learning her rank, dispatched her to avoid discovery, I know not, but I received the former account.

I believe you were before only imperfectly acquainted with this affair.—Lord M——

— was then on his travels. He lately returned, and I heard was determined to find out the author of Miss R——'s misfortunes. Her father has made many fruitless enquiries. To my servant I must attribute this discovery. He has decamped, after robbing me of whatever valuables he could collect.

I *must* pursue your advice, and shall take post horses early in the morning, for I have no time to lose. I shall not join you at Portsmouth till you are ready to sail, and then in disguise. I shall hire servants entirely unacquainted with me, and assume a borrowed name, by which means I hope to escape without observation.

I have written to my uncle, confided to him the trust of the whole sad affair, and intreated him to solicit my pardon, with promises of entire reformation.—The old man is not hard-hearted.—I am the hope of his family, and I flatter myself, he will even unlock the strong box to facilitate my return.

Courage, Brumpton! I shall revisit England. In the mean time, (for this is rather a distant prospect,) you shall share my purse and wardrobe.—I have converted what furniture my servant left me, into money, and begged of my uncle to be regular in his remittances.—You and I may be useful to each other.

\* \* \* \* \*

I fear I have been too long a villain, to commence a life of virtue.—And I am too young to reform.—Is not repentance the last act of life?—O Brumpton, shall I own I almost envy thy insipid state? I have proved that the success of all those contrivances, on which my boasted superiority was founded, has only shewn the inefficacy of guilty stratagem to procure happiness.

What horrors filled my mind, when in my violent fever, I revolved my past crimes, and feared future punishment!—Despair of life made me consider the consequences of death!—In these hours of solitude, heavy reflections will not be banished.—I dare not fly to company for relief, and the wicked have few real friends.—My most intimate acquaintance are those from whom I have most to fear.

You, Brumpton, whom I have considered as the mere tool of my vile purposes, I am now convinced are a happier being than myself.—You have not been enslaved by vice, but seduced by folly.—How does conviction impress this truth on my soul, that superior talents are only properly exerted when they render us useful members of society.—Our abuse of intended blessings, is the certain cause of our condemnation.

Believe me, I would willingly relinquish every lucrative possession, every ambitious prospect, every gay delight, to be enabled to recollect one virtuous action, the remembrance of which would cast a ray of comfort on my benighted soul, and render my exile less dreadful!

The disorder of my mind affects my body—sometimes my veins feel scorched by a consuming fire, at others, chilled by the frost of bitter despondency.—I am afraid of laying aside my pen, lest a more offensive weapon should present itself.—Yet I can write no more.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have scribbled all night—Methinks a dawn of joy breaks in to dissipate my gloom. Though I can receive no satisfaction from a retrospect, my future conduct may be an improvement on the past, and open before me a more enlightening prospect.—Though I am old in vice, my age permits me to hope for many added years. Continued excesses

might have been the means of abridging, but regularity may prolong, and teach me to enjoy them.

I had an excellent father, but he died too soon for my advantage. My mother lost her life in giving me birth.—Brumpton! I *will* endeavour no further to degenerate from their examples.

My banishment, which till this moment I considered as a misfortune, I now hope may contribute to my greatest, most lasting happiness.—I shall leave all those companions, whose examples influenced, whose contrivances assisted, and whose contempt might have intimidated me.

For you, I know your heart is so ductile, it will pursue with pleasure the path I tread.—Pardon me, for drawing you into one which would have terminated in your destruction.—You want only resolution to practise every duty.—You will forsake your follies, when you consider them as an introduction to guilt.

I have been a veteran in overcoming the difficulties that opposed the triumphs of vice. I am now convinced, he only is a true hero, who conquers the obstacles which impede his advancement in virtue.—As a proof of my sincerity, I have written to Sally Marston's brother, acknowledging myself to have been her seducer. I have also sent her a letter, and inclosed a draught on my uncle for £500. to be paid into her hands on her return to her brother. Would to God I could make restitution of her fame and virtue; and restore to many injured innocents, the honour, of which, by repeated perjuries, I have deprived them.

You will imagine, perhaps, my change is too sudden to be permanent. I shall neither be surprized nor displeas'd at such a suspicion, for though (according to an excellent and admir'd writer whom I once dipped into) "To know ourselves diseas'd, is half our cure," yet Rowe was a more competent judge of human nature, when he says, "*Habitual* evils change not on a *sudden*

"But *many* days *must* pass, and *many*  
sorrows

"Conscious remorse and anguish *must*  
be felt,

"To curb desire, to break the stub-  
born will,

"And work a second nature in the  
soul

"Ere virtue can resume the place she  
lost;

"'Tis else *dissimulation*."

But, as I observed before, I shall have no enemy soliciting without, to assist the seducer within.—Besides, I feel diffident of my own strength, at the same time that I determine to exert it.—I will if possible

—————"conquer difficulties  
By daring to oppose them. Sloth and  
folly

Shiver and shrink at sight of toil and  
danger,

And make th' impossibility they fear."

But the horses are at the door.—I have hired for the direct contrary road to that I propose taking.—This will elude any search.

Adieu! Brumpton.—As you have been the assistant of vice, be now the promoter of virtue, and aid with your counsels and example, the good resolutions of

Your sincere friend,

WILTON.

## LETTER LXXII.

*To Mrs. Berkeley.*

THANKS to Heaven, dear Madam, my sister is out of danger. After I had sent away my hasty scrawl, she appeared to be more composed, and wrote a letter to my brother, which she carefully concealed under her pillow.

The fatigue of writing, of her emotions from the subject of her letter, occasioned a relapse, which greatly alarmed us all.—I concluded we had lost this most excellent of women, and gave her letter to my brother in an agony of distress.—Ah! what were his sufferings.—She at length recovered from the swoon which bore so strong an image of death, and sunk into a gentle slumber.

On her awaking the next morning, she gave us the delightful assurance, that she felt far less pain than she had yesterday suffered, and much recruit of strength.—As I was seated by her bed side, “My dear,” said she “I thought yesterday I had but few hours to live, and I could not leave the world without addressing a few words to the partner of my soul, which endeavoured to console him. He loves me more than ever.—With what tenderness does he fear to lose me!”

My blushes betrayed my precipitance.—“I am sorry he has seen the letter,” resumed she, “it affected him. Ah! my Lucy, to be summoned so soon after our blessed reconciliation, it was a most severe trial:—but that gracious Being, who knoweth whereof we are made, who saw it was good for me to be in trouble, supported me under affliction.”

My brother, who had left the room just before she awaked, now returned. He flew to the bedside: he saw the alteration in her looks. She threw her arms round his neck.—“My husband!” “My Caroline!” was all, either could utter.—Well did they verify Shakespeare’s observation, “I were but little happy, if I could say how much.”

After some minutes speechless ecstasy, my brother raising his eyes to heaven, exclaimed, “Almighty, ever-gracious Being, wilt thou restore to me this best of women? Wilt thou permit her to guide my every future step?”

“Ah! my best beloved,” resumed she, “may I endeavour to render added life a blessing to you, to others, and to myself!”—She was fearful of his saying more. “We will not talk,” pursued she, “only give me your hand and sit by me.”—She pressed his hand to her lips.—The conscious tear stole from his eye. I led to indifferent subjects.

\* \* \* \* \*

My sister was drest this morning, when I went into her chamber, and looked as if almost restored to health. Little Charles was with her, and she fervently returned thanks to Heaven, for his and her own preservation. How is even this most excellent of human beings elevated by sufferings!—My brother must be a convert to the most exalted virtues.—I am certain he feels for her an heightened admiration, love, and esteem.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Berkeley arrived in town the evening after the sad accident, and we want only to be with you to be the happiest of human beings.

Since my sister's recovery, Mrs. Bride had been wonderfully jocose.—“She cannot bear,” she says, “that I should wear the willow garland, when Hymen has woven so many myrtle wreaths to surround the brows of my friends.”

She rallies me about a gentleman who has visited here lately, and who, she is sure, though he professes little, means much. Perhaps there may be some slight attachment, but for my own part, I have been so engrossed by the situation of this dear family, that I have found no leisure for other thoughts.—Have I, dear Madam, enkindled any spark of friendly curiosity?—I know you love me, you wish me happy.—This gentleman is Sir Henry Romney; he has long been acquainted with Lord Wilton, but instead of sharing, always cautioned him against his excesses. He is, I suppose, fifteen years older than myself, but he is very estimable, very amiable, and—but when he is explicit, I will be more communicative.

I am, dear Madam,  
Your now happy,  
and ever affectionate  
LUCIA HERBERT.

## LETTER LXXIII.

*To Charles Herbert, Esq.*

ACCEPT, dear Sir, my most cordial congratulations on the recovery of Mrs. Herbert. I am certain the excellence of your principles and disposition must, on the prospect of your suffering so severe a loss as of this best of wives, and of women, have operated with their full force towards the completion of a perfect reunion.

Let the strictest confidence ever subsist between you, and, my dear Sir, do not think me impertinent for offering advice. Permit me to recommend to you a duty, which alone can secure you in the practice of every other religious obligation. I mean that of constant family and private prayer.

Ah! how often do we experience that we must be deprived of the blessings of Heaven, to become truly sensible of their value. Whilst a constant succession of bounties flows in upon us, we expect a repetition of them without an endeavour to deserve them; and what ought to augment, destroys our thankfulness and gratitude. When we receive a *single act* of friendship from *men*, we are eager to return the obligation, or at least to pay our grateful acknowledgments, whilst the *repeated*, the *inexhaustible favours* of the Deity are frequently received without observation, and therefore without thanks.

On you, my dear Mr. Herbert, the mercies of Providence have been very liberally bestowed. Forget not to adore the divine source of every blessing, and let no earthly attachment weaken your aspirations after a glorious eternity. Remember there is not so strong a defence against vice, as *constant prayer!* The fervent prayer “of a righteous man, availeth much.”—If you would preserve in your children and servants a regard to their several duties, be regular in your *family prayers*. Let *your example*, as well as *your precepts*, influence their practice.

I would be no means recommend forms of prayer which would fatigue by their length. It is in general necessary to begin with some particular form, even in our private supplications, or we shall become unsteady in the performance of this duty; but different situations, dissimilar dispositions, require varied modes of address to God, for the peculiar virtues necessary to each state and frame of mind. The Deity regards not the length of the address, but the sincerity and fervour of the supplicant. I would choose such prayers as shew our penitence for offences, our dependence on God, and gratitude for his mercies.—He has appointed for us the means of grace, and from the use of these alone, through the merits of a Redeemer and Mediator, can we derive our hopes of glory.

Nothing but a *constant sense* of an *omniscient eye*, can *preserve us steady in our duty* at all *times*, in *all places*, and on *all occasions*, can influence our *intentions*, excite our *wishes*, and animate our *endeavours* to *please God in every action of our lives*.

Will you, my dear Sir, indulge me with your permission to introduce my Henrietta to Mrs. Herbert? We shall return into Oxfordshire within a few days, and I cannot be satisfied without laying the basis of a personal intercourse with your amiable and respectable family,

I am, with sincere esteem,

Your obliged and affectionate



## LETTER LXXIV.

*To Mrs. Berkeley.*

Dear Madam,

MY heart overflows with joy, and gratitude. We are happier than ever. The penitent has been forgiven, and love and harmony have resumed their united dominion.

When I entered the room, this morning, my sister's features glowed with peculiar animation, and joy seemed to have taken possession of her soul. She arose with a smile of ineffable sweetness, and folded me to her heart. I understood the embrace.—My brother took my hand.—“My angelic Caroline,” said he, “has forgiven her wanderer, and he must likewise be reconciled to you.” I wept, while I gave him my hand, and for some moments we were all silent.

I thought it was in my power to increase their happiness. I ran to the nursery, took little Charles in my arms, and re-entered the apartment of his fond parents.—The sight of the child strongly affected my brother. He cast down his eyes with a conscious embarrassment, but soon, gazing on the dear babe, he seemed to be forgetful of our presence.

My sister wept.—“I fear,” said she, “you have affected him too much. How steadily he fixes his eyes on the child!”—I drew nearer to him:—he threw his arms around me, and the sweet infant, and burst into tears.

My sister was overcome with the scene.—She sunk into a chair. Her cheek was pale with agitation, and I saw her fainting. My brother also observed her altered countenance. He eagerly flew to her, caught her in his arms, and sustained her declining head on his breast. She recovered; the colour revisited her cheek.

At this moment, a servant entered, and presented her with a letter. She did not know the hand, but on opening the letter, gratified benevolence shone on her expressive countenance.

It came from one who had been a mistress of Lord Wilton, and who, by his instigation, had endeavoured to persuade my sister of my brother's repeated guilt. Her conjugal tenderness, and penetrating judgment, rejected the poison. She even promised to assist the poor weak instrument of Wilton's baseness, and to rescue her from indigence, if she would avoid vice.

It is impossible to describe the emotions which were depicted on the countenances of the reunited pair. My sister, whilst reading the letter, could not forbear glancing a look sometimes at my brother; the fear of giving him pain, suffused her cheeks with blushes, whilst her eyes expressed the tender sympathy of her heart.

My brother's curiosity was expressed by an humiliating apprehension.—At last, in an accent tremulous with the agitation of his mind,—“Has not my Caroline,” said he, in a faltering voice, “received a confirmation of my guilt?”

“No, best beloved of my heart,” answered she, “it rather bears testimony to your undeviating will.—Read the letter, my dear Mr. Herbert, and do you read it, sister, and join with me in blessing Heaven for the penitence it strongly delineates.” She then withdrew into an adjoining room to write an answer.

Be pleased here to read the letter of the poor penitent.

*“To Mrs. Herbert.*

“You promised, Madam, to relieve my self-inflicted sufferings, if I gave no new cause of disapprobation, and to contribute to her ease, who had endeavoured to destroy yours.

“Alas! how am I humbled by comparison with your excellence. Lately I was a proud, vain mortal, proud of a “set of features and complexion,” which exposed me to temptations too powerful for my weak virtue.—Ah! how far do you outshine me even in exterior.—I was vain of an understanding I had perverted, and elevated by trappings, for which I had paid the guilty price of innocence and reputation.

“Lord Wilton was my seducer. He it was who bribed me by his deceitful tenderness, to impose upon Mr. Herbert by a feigned tale of distress. Only Lord Wilton and I were guilty. Shame to my sex!—O! Madam, let me bury my guilt in silence. Spare me, best of women!

“Assure yourself, Madam, depend on my most solemn protestations, I never saw Mr. Herbert except that time; that his momentary forgetfulness was immediately expiated by contrition. How could I, after this proof of his unalienated affection for you, endeavour to withdraw your’s from him? I abhor myself for the attempt; I admire and reverence you beyond expression; but I need not become a petitioner for your bounty.

“Heaven be praised! Lord Wilton gives hopes of his reformation. He has not only restored into my brother’s hands the little fortune I resigned to him, but even added to it. I accept this present as a proof of his repentance, and as an exercise of my humility.

“My brother, with a kindness as unexpected as unmerited, has received me into his house and favour. His behaviour is so inexpressibly tender, that it increases my shame and my penitence, and sets virtue in the most amiable light.

“Lord Wilton is gone abroad.—I rejoice in this circumstance, as it gives me more time to disengage my heart, and fortify my mind.

“Will you, Madam, deign to assist with your advice a poor weak creature, who is diffident of herself. A line from your hand will confirm and strengthen every good resolution, and enable me to put them in practice.

“Permit me, with the most grateful sense of your goodness, and the most humble consciousness of my own offences, to thank you for that truly christian benevolence, by which you exalt me to hope, and encourage me to attempt, a thorough regulation of manners.

“Ah! join your prayers with mine. The address of so pure a heart will be accepted at the throne of mercy, and, I hope, draw down a blessing on the head of

Your ever grateful  
and eternally obliged  
SARAH MARSTON.”

My brother wept over the letter, and when he had finished the third perusal of it, his uplifted eyes thanked Heaven for the penitence of the writer. I congratulated him on the prospect of Lord Wilton’s reformation. He again raised his eyes to Heaven.

My sister soon after joined us. She gave my brother her answer. She lifted his hand to her lips, and again retired. I inclose a transcript of her letter.

*“To Miss Marston.*

“You accuse yourself, dear Miss Marston, of having been the cause of my uneasiness. Give me leave to assure you, I have received from your present sentiments a very high degree of satisfaction.

“I will not attempt to palliate what you condemn, but from a consciousness of my own frailties, I have learned to pity those whose conduct I cannot approve. I am convinced that it is more difficult to reform than to persevere; and that angels rejoice in the conversion of offenders.

“You solicit my encouragement and support. I readily grant it. You may task my power to its utmost extent, but depend not on *human aid*. Constantly and fervently supplicate the Almighty that his providence may be your guard. Remember, dear Miss Marston, you have not only to attend to a *regulation of manners*, but to a *reformation of principles*. My constant and fervent prayers shall be offered for you.

I rejoice for your sake, in Lord Wilton’s absence, but though your greatest danger is removed, endeavour before you re-enter the world, to fortify your mind against its delusions.

“The world’s infectious, few bring  
back at eve

“Immaculate the manners of the  
morn;

“Something we thought, is blotted;  
we resolv’d,

“Is shaken; we renounc’d, returns  
again,

“Each salutation may slide in a sin

“Unthought before, or fix a former  
stain.

“Present example gets within our  
guard.

“A slight, a single glance

“And shot at random, often has  
brought home

“A sudden fever to the throbbing  
heart,

“Of envy, rancour, or impure desire.”

“The remembrance of a known error tends to exclude presumption, as it proves the necessity of a stricter subsequent conduct; but let not humility occasion a dejection of spirit equally prejudicial to the interests of religion.

“Deserve the good opinion of the world and you will most probably in time regain it; but let not human approbation be the motive, nor consider it as the reward of your actions.

“Endeavour to *sanctify every* action by an *intention of pleasing God*, who sees the heart, and will reward the glorious purpose, even where it *cannot* be ripened into performance.

“In every circumstance of your future life, where I can promote your happiness, I beg you will remember you have a real and constant friend in

CAROLINE HERBERT.”

I will not attempt to paint the tender scene which succeeded.

My brother is exalted in my affection and esteem. My sister,—but I should wrong her excellence by an endeavour to praise it. May their happiness be uninterrupted, and may you, dear Madam, long, long live to enjoy this blessed reunion, is the fervent prayer of

Your obliged and affectionate

LUCIA HERBERT.

## LETTER LXXV.

*To Mrs. Herbert.*

My dear Child,  
I COULD in my letters to you, suppress my melancholy participation in your grief, because I would not injure the dignity of your conduct, but when I know you are acquainted with the informations I have received, and that you experience the most delightful change, I cannot forbear to join the warm congratulations of a mother, with other of your truly affectionate, yet less interested friends.

What have you suffered! And how nobly have you acted!—And are you well, are you quite well, my dearest daughter?—Heaven be praised for your preservation. Ah! what anguish have I endured, lest I should survive the darling of my heart!

Mr. Herbert is again my beloved son. He has entitled himself to the love and esteem of every good mind.—Your happiness is restored.—Your brother's is completed.—Come, my dear children, come and render mine perfect—I long to embrace the sweet image of your perfections, and to thank the friendly Miss Herbert. You and they, share my love, blessing, and affectionate respects.

Your sufferings and your virtues, my Caroline, have endeared you still more to the ever-fond heart, of

Your affectionate mother,  
ELIZABETH BERKELEY.

## LETTER LXX.

*To Mrs. Berkeley.*

Dear and honoured Madam,

THE accident which befel my beloved sister, suspended all our joys on the happiest event of my life.—Never did my Clara or I experience so violent a shock as we felt on the receipt of Miss Herbert's letter.

We hastened to town; our fears were increased, my brother's wretchedness was inexpressible. All was silent, unutterable anguish.—But thanks to an ever-gracious Providence, our past woes serve only to increase our present delights.

My brother sometimes sighs.—Reflection wounds him, but it has produced the most salutary effects. He is more endeared than ever to us all.—It is with exultation and gratitude I can now assure you, my sister is almost as happy as she is good. How have the mother, the daughter, and the wife, suffered; but the *Christian*, God be praised! the *Christian* triumphed, in every character. The bloom of health has revisited her cheek, and beauty re-animates every feature.

My Clara has made me the happiest of men! O delightful reflection! she is ever and only mine. Your natural tenderness will be gratified by these communications, and the happiness of your children be completed, when they can receive your personal congratulations and blessings. In a few days I hope to present to the best of mothers the daughter of her wishes, in the chosen and beloved wife of

her ever dutiful,  
grateful, and affectionate Son,  
HENRY BERKELEY.

## LETTER LXXVII.

*To Mrs. Berkeley.*

AFTER all my flippancies and levities, I think myself happy, dear and honoured Madam, that you have deemed me not unworthy to be admitted into a family, where the life of each individual forms an example for my imitation.—Never had I so awakening a call upon my humility, as since I have seriously compared myself with the Herberts and the Berkeleys.

I congratulated myself yesterday, and condoled with my spouse. A Mr. and Miss Forest paid Mr. and Mrs. Herbert a visit. The old gentleman is not a fit subject for a gay pen. He commands my reverence and respect.

The young lady is most strikingly agreeable. Ah! luckless event, Berkeley, said I, “if you had not been fettered, what a blissful choice might you have made!” The man returned a bride-groom like answer. He is satisfied with me at present. I will endeavour to deserve that he shall always be so.

With the name of Woodford, I hope I have bidden adieu to folly. I am now incorporated amongst the worthies. Never may I disgrace the respectable name I now bear! I am impatient, dearest Madam, to throw myself at your feet, and to be acknowledged by you as

Your dutiful

and affectionate daughter,

CLARA BERKELEY.

## LETTER LXXVIII.

*To Mrs. Berkeley.*

Dearest, ever honoured Madam,

IT is impossible to convey the effusions of gratitude, joy, and love, with which my heart is filled.—My mind is no longer a prey to corroding grief. My health is restored. My prospects in this life are enlarged. My child is unhurt!

Shall I soon see you again? O! best of parents, shall I be clasped again to your maternal bosom? A few days since, I dared not to indulge the hope, but my heart now throbs quick with joyful expectation.

I wrote a last farewell.—I breathed the emotions of my heart; that heart which felt all the tortures of approaching separation. Yet I looked forward to a blissful reunion. I never considered my dear husband as merely the partner of this transitory scene, but as an help-mate to an eternity of happiness. It has pleased God to grant me a longer date of life. Whilst I am truly thankful for the blessing, I will endeavour to make it a lesson of humility. I am not yet qualified for an admittance into that state, where, founded on faith in the merits of a Redeemer, superiority of virtue alone can exalt to a pre-eminence of happiness.

A thousand thanks to you, dearest Madam, for your sympathetic tenderness. You forgave my silence. Ah! little did I imagine you to be acquainted with my misfortune. But banished be all further retrospects.—I never lost Mr. Herbert's esteem nor love; his heart now fully repays the tenderness, the anxiety of mine. He acts not from the present influence of passion; his conduct is not merely the effect of my unrepining submission: he is restored by a sense of duty, the force of Christian principles.

“The consequence of my dissipation,” says the best beloved of my heart, “was the neglect of family and private prayer, and that neglect the cause of my farther deviations. Never, my Caroline, never let us omit to offer our heart-felt supplications at the throne of grace; supplications which prove at once, our insufficiency and our sure dependence. How weak indeed are human endeavours, unless supported by divine assistance.”

\* \* \* \* \*

My sister Berkeley, has in her lively way introduced Mr. and Miss Forest to your acquaintance. I hope you will be a personal sharer in our satisfaction on the acquisition of two such friends. He is one of the most respectable of men. She, one of the most amiable of women.

My sister Herbert tells me, she has slightly hinted to you Sir Henry Romney's attachment to her. I believe he deserves her. Can I do more justice to his merit? Her heart is really touched. The similarity of our sentiments on the subject of love has drawn closer that silken tye of amity, which has long “entwined our hearts in one,” and my sister Berkeley forms the triple band.

\* \* \* \* \*

This moment my dear Mr. Herbert tells me, we may hope to be with you on Wednesday. My little Charles will smile his joy on seeing you. My beloved husband fears he shall not be re-admitted to that share of your affection he once enjoyed. Ah! my dear parent, he shall not indulge a suspicion injurious to you and to himself.

Oh! Madam, how delightful are the rewards of duty, even in this life! How amply are all my sufferings repaid. As Christianity has a resource in the most afflicting incidents of mortality, so its delights are heightened by the certainty of their future increase and perpetual duration.

Animated by the enjoyment of temporal happiness, and the prospect of eternal felicity, I can truly subscribe myself,

Your happy, dutiful,  
and affectionate daughter,  
CAROLINE HERBERT.

THE END.

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