The Coquette Or The History Of Eliza Wharton A Novel Founded On Fact

Hannah Webster Foster

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE COQUETTE, OR, THE HISTORY OF ELIZA WHARTON ***

[Illustration: Eliza Wharton]

THE COQUETTE; OR, THE HISTORY OF ELIZA WHARTON.

A NOVEL: FOUNDED ON FACT.

BY A LADY OF MASSACHUSETTS.

HISTORICAL PREFACE, INCLUDING A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

He who waits beside the folded gates of mystery, over which forever float the impurpled vapors of the PAST, should stand with girded loins, and white, unshodden feet. So he who attempts to lift the veil that separates the REAL from the IDEAL, or to remove the heavy curtain that for a century may

have concealed from view the actual personages of a well-drawn popular fiction, or what may have been received as such, should bring to his task a tender heart and a delicate and gentle hand.

Thus, in preparing an introductory chapter for these pages which are to follow, many and various thoughts suggest themselves, and it is necessary to recognize and pursue them with gentleness and caution.

The romance of "Eliza Wharton" appeared in print not many years subsequent to the assumed transactions it so faithfully attempts to record. Written as it was by one highly educated for the times,—the popular wife of a popular clergyman, connected in no distant degree, by marriage, with the family of the heroine, and one who by the very profession and position of her husband was, as by necessity, brought into the sphere of actual intercourse with the principal characters of the novel, and as the book also took precedence in time of all American romances, when, too, the literature of the day was any thing but "*light*"—it is not surprising that it thus took precedence in interest as well of all American novels, at least throughout New England, and was found, in every cottage within its borders, beside the family Bible, and though pitifully, yet almost as carefully treasured.

Since that time it has run through a score of editions, at long intervals out of print, and again

revived at the public call with an eagerness of distribution which few modern romances have enjoyed. Its author, Hannah Foster, was the daughter of Grant Webster, a well-known merchant of Boston, and wife of Rev. John Foster, of Brighton, Massachusetts, whose pedigree, but few removes backward in the line of her husband,[A] interlinked, as has been already hinted, with that of the "Coquette." Thus did they hold towards each other that very significant relationship—especially in the past century—of "*cousins*" a relationship better heeded and more earnestly recognized and cherished than that of nearer kin at the present day. Therefore, not only by family ties, but by similarity of positions and community of interests, was she brought into immediate acquaintance with the circumstances herein combined, and especially qualified to write the history with power and effect. Nor is this the only work which bears the impress of her gifted pen. There is still another extant, of which I need not at this time and place make mention, besides many valuable literary contributions to the scattered periodicals of that day. It is to be regretted here that a short time previous to her death she destroyed the whole of her manuscripts, which might, in many respects, have been particularly valuable.

She has, however, transmitted her genius and her powers, which find expression and appreciation in two daughters still living in Montreal, Canada East, one of whom is the gifted author of "Peep at the

Pilgrims," "Sketches from the Life of Christ," and "Confessions of an early Martyr," all of which have been very popular; the first having been republished here within a short period, and also in England with still greater success. The other daughter, the widow of the late Dr. Cushing who, while firm at his post as physician at the Emigrant Hospital, fell a victim to that terrible malady, ship fever, in 1846, is also author of many minor works, and co-editor of the "Snowdrop," a monthly publication of much merit in Montreal. Mrs. Foster died in that place, at the residence of her daughter, Mrs. Cushing, April 17, 1840, at the advanced age of eighty-one years.

It may seem, however, at a period so long subsequent to the actual transpiration of events herein recorded, that little could be said to throw light or interest upon the history, and even less upon the character, or in extenuation of the follies or the frailties of the unfortunate subject of the following pages, and upon which public opinion had long ago rendered its verdict and sealed it for a higher tribunal. Yet I am happy in assuring any who may pause over these prefatory leaves that this is not the fact; and it harms us not to believe that over every life, however full of error it may be, there is an unwritten chapter which the angels take into account as they bear upward the tearful record, and which He, the great Scribe, "who ever sitteth at the right hand of the Father," and from whose solemn utterance on earth dropped the forever cherished

words which have so often given life and hope to the penitent fallen,—"*neither do I condemn thee*,"—interpolates on the mighty leger of eternity for the great reckoning day.

"Eliza Wharton," generally known, perhaps, as Elizabeth Whitman, was the eldest of four children—Elizabeth, Mary, Abigail, and William; the latter of whom was a physician, twice married, and who also left a son of his own name, (William Elnathan,) who died in Philadelphia in 1846, unmarried. Her father, the Rev. Elnathan Whitman, was the son of Rev. Samuel Whitman, who was the third son of Rev. Zechariah Whitman, the youngest child of John, the original ancestor of the Whitman family. He (Rev. Samuel W.) graduated at Harvard University in 1696, and was for several years a tutor there. Thus having passed through the usual, though then somewhat limited, course of theology, he was ordained as minister of the gospel in Farmington, Connecticut, in 1706, at that time one of the largest towns in the state. He inherited by bequest one half of his father's lands in Stow, Massachusetts, and was thereby also made executor of his will. He married, March 19, 1707, Mary Stoddard, daughter of Rev. Solomon Stoddard, second minister of Northampton, Massachusetts. Mr. Stoddard was born in Boston in 1643, and died in Northampton in 1729. This Solomon Stoddard was the great-grandfather of Hon. Solomon Stoddard, now residing in Northampton.

It is worthy of remark here that the early ancestors

of "Eliza Wharton" intermarried also with the Edwards family; so that Hon. Pierpont Edwards, who figures in this volume as "Major Sanford," could be no less than second cousin to his unfortunate victim.

Rev. Elnathan Whitman, the father of Elizabeth, was born January 12, 1708-9, and graduated from Yale College, New Haven, where he was for several subsequent years a tutor. He at length settled as minister over the Second Church in Hartford, Connecticut, and there married Abigail Stanley, daughter of Colonel Nathaniel Stanley, treasurer of the colony of Connecticut, a woman of uncommon energy of character and of superior mental acquirements, (a correct portrait of whom accompanies these pages, taken from an original painting.) He died in Hartford also, March 2, 1776, aged sixty-eight years, after having served in the ministry in that place forty-three of the same. His tombstone bears the following inscription:—

IN MEMORY OF

THE REV. ELNATHAN WHITMAN,

Pastor of the Second Church of Christ in Hartford, and one of the fellows of the corporation of Yale College, who departed this life the 2d day of March, A.D. 1776, in the 69th year of his age and 44th of his ministry.

Endowed with superior natural abilities and

good literary acquirements, he was still more distinguished for his unaffected piety, primitive simplicity of manners, and true Christian benevolence. He closed a life spent in the service of his Creator, in humble confidence of eternal happiness through the merits of the Savior.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

His wife survived him nineteen-years, and died November 19, 1795, aged seventy-six. It was during the dark, early period of her widowhood that the sad events occurred which have furnished the historian and the novelist with themes of the deepest pathos, and to which prominence is given in the following pages. But,

"Woes cluster. Rare are solitary woes;
They love a train—they tread each other's heels."

So said the sublimest of poets, and so has all experience proved. Thus, in her case, this affliction did not come alone; but at a period nearly connected with this, in the dreary, solitary hours of the night,—*her night* of sorrow too,—her house was discovered on fire, which, for lack of modern appliances, was totally destroyed, with all its contents, consisting not only of many curious and valuable articles of furniture both for use and ornament, but embracing, also, an uncommon library, overflowing with rare books, pamphlets, &c., which her late husband had

collected with great effort and research.

Elizabeth, the eldest of her family, was born in 1752. She was a child of early promise, and remarkable in maturer years for her genius (I use the term in no merely conventional sense, as will hereafter appear) and accomplishments, as well as for her genial spirit and tender and endearing qualities. Her maternal ancestor, Thomas Stanley, was an original owner and settler in Hartford, Connecticut, and removed to, and died in, Hadley, Massachusetts, January 30, 1662-3.

Thus nobly descended and connected, so singularly unfortunate, and her fate so afflicting and disastrous, it is no wonder that the novelist pointed her pen to record, with historical accuracy, a destiny so fearful, a career so terrible. By her exceeding personal beauty and accomplishments, added to the wealth of her mind, she attracted to her sphere the grave and the gay, the learned and the witty, the worshippers of the beautiful, with those who reverently bend before all inner graces.

Prominent among these was the Rev. Joseph Howe, then pastor at the New South Church, on Church Green, in this city, a young man of rare talents and eminent piety. Unfortunately, the fear and excitement consequent on the hostile relation of the colonies at that time towards the mother country forced him from his position here; and he left, with the family whose house had been his home, for a

more quiet, temporary retreat in Norwich, Connecticut. Soon after this he repaired to the residence of Rev. Mr. Whitman, in Hartford, for a short visit, high in the anticipation of soon becoming the happy husband of the gifted daughter Elizabeth. But Providence, in wisdom, had ordered it otherwise; and, while on this visit, he suddenly sickened and died.

However much or little of soul or of sorrow she had in this event we are not to know; but another stood ready to-worship in his place, what we will endeavor to believe was in some degree worthy of homage. This was "J. Boyer," known as the Rev. Joseph Buckminster, a graduate of Yale College, and at that time tutor in the same institution, who afterwards settled as minister over the religions society in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and whose Biography was but a few years ago published.

We have no reason to believe, however, that either of these persons was her earliest choice, especially the latter, or that, in this case most certainly, there could have been at all that sacred congeniality of spirit so deeply necessary to woman's nature, bearing out from her bosom that deathless affection which nor pride, nor affluence, nor folly, nor love of conquest, with the victory every where certain, could in any wise overcome.

The feeling that existed on her part was of circumstances only, influenced by strong parental

predilection, and the desire which so often obtains in the heart of a true woman—that of soothing the love she cannot return, resolving itself at length into pity.

We might here also dwell upon the idiosyncrasies of genius as applicable to her case, which are generally banned, of whatever character they may be, and evermore shut out all sympathy, till, in despair or despite, folly is made crime. But since sin must ever be arraigned for itself, and error is prone to plead for mercy, I leave no word here that can be misconstrued or misapplied. Certain it is that Elizabeth Whitman was marked as one of strangely fluctuating moods, as the truly gifted ever are, and of a wild, incomprehensible nature, little understood by those who should have known her best, and with whom she was most intimate. Over this, in tracing her history, it were well to pause, were it not that thus we might give countenance to this prominent fact of modern days, that the eccentricities of genius are often substituted for genius itself, or are made its prime characteristics, as the gold of the jeweller is recommended for its beauty and strength in proportion to its alloy.

However much we may regret the waywardness of such a heart in the present instance, in that it rejected one so nobly qualified as was Mr. Buckminster to appreciate its genius and its love, while sympathizing with his own mortifying disappointment, (for this we must admit,) that she had in the secrets of her nature a preference for

another, we cannot altogether know its results. So cautiously and discreetly did he, through a long and beautiful life, qualify both his lips and his pen, that little or nothing remains beyond these letters of the novelist—which we may not doubt are authentic, as they were long in the possession of Mrs. Henry Hill, of Boston, the "Mrs. Sumner" of the novel—to tell how the heart was instructed, and how blighted hope and blasted affection were made the lobes through which the spirit caught its sublimest and holiest respiration. We know

"Through lacerations takes the spirit wing,
And in the heart's long death throe grasps true life."

One little remark which has been suffered to creep into his Memoirs is, however, of peculiar significance. I quote it here.

In speaking of Connecticut to a friend, he says, "My place was there; I always wished that state to be my home; but Providence has directed my line of duty far away *from the place of my first affections*."

He also—as one who had every means of knowing the fact has informed me—was deeply affected on reading the "romance" here following, and at the time remarked that, had the author been personally acquainted (not knowing that she was) with the circumstances of his engagement with Elizabeth Whitman, she could not have described them with more graphic truth.

The Hon. Pierrepont Edwards, to whom was given the preference and precedence above referred to, and who is made to assume in the chapters of the novel the name of "Sanford," was the son of Rev. Jonathan Edwards, president of Princeton College, New Jersey. His maternal grandmother was Esther, the second daughter of the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, and sister to the paternal grandmother of Elizabeth Whitman, the wife of Rev. Samuel Whitman before mentioned. A Mr. Burt has by some been identified with this "Sanford," the rival of "Boyer," yet without the least pretension in history to authenticity. Nor can we place much reliance upon the letters here introduced as his in point of originality, as there is sufficient reason for believing that these are, for the most part, of the author's invention, founded upon the current reputation of his after years. And we may be happy in so considering them, since they would betray a character, even in earliest manhood, too depraved and debased for honorable mention, although his errors were no doubt altogether beyond the palliation of a woman's pen. Yet we would fain look at him, in youth at least, as undebauched and uncorrupt, however stained may be the record of his manhood.

Between him and Elizabeth Whitman there was, notwithstanding, over all and under all, a close affinity of spirit; and there is no question, aside from the frailties and objections which the writer of the romance has introduced, that there was a marriage

of the soul, superseding all after ties which worldliness and depravity might have consummated, that overshadows sin, and may not pass into our reckoning. Not only such a marriage, but one, though secret, actually sanctioned by the laws of the land, she is known to have declared a fact previous to her death.

Question this who may, that deep down under the impulses of surging passion there existed a purer and holier affection for her, is in history sufficiently clear. They had been set in family connection, intimate by kin, intimate in earliest life by every outward tie, and especially intimate by the subtile affinities of their spiritual natures. Yet he who can, under any circumstances, entreat the love of woman, and then take advantage of her weakness or her confidence, is an anomaly in nature, and should have a special, judiciary here and in heaven.

Since so much of the romance here following is truth, veritable truth, it is to be regretted that any error of historical character was suffered to assume importance in the narrative. Yet this is so often the case in works of this kind, that it is not remarkable here. More surprising is it that truth was so carefully and conscientiously guarded and preserved.

In conflicting statements, it is difficult to determine the precise year of the marriage of Mr. Edwards, whether before or after the death of "Eliza Wharton," although it may have been long before,

even as one of his biographers has it, and that recklessness and extravagance may have lifted him to a too fearful height from the calm Eden of love and honor, till he at length compromised the influence of both to baser avarice.

That he married Frances Ogden, of Elizabeth-town, New Jersey, for his first wife, is the fact, and the date given is 1769. Yet the ciphers may be questioned, I think, as it would make him but nineteen years of age at the time of the event, besides other considerations which make it appear more doubtful still.

He was, however, as has been already stated, the eleventh and youngest child of Rev. Jonathan Edwards, and was born in Northampton, Massachusetts, *Sabbath*. His biographer has been particularly faithful in thus recording it, as if the hallowed influences of the Sabbath upon birth have a bearing on subsequent life, and were in his case either strikingly marked or missed. He was born, then, Sabbath, April 8, 1750, and was cousin, in good or evil, to the notorious Aaron Burr. He was also brother to Rev. Jonathan Edwards, president of Union College.

His mother, Sarah Pierrepont, was of aristocratic origin, and the daughter of Rev. James Pierrepont, and granddaughter of John Pierrepont, of Roxbury, from whom descended Rev. John Pierpont, the celebrated poet and divine of our own time. The

Pierrepont family was a branch of the family of the Duke of Kingston, (Pierrepont being the family name;) and the mother of Mr. Edwards was thus cousin-german to Mary Pierrepont, (Lady Mary Wortley Montague.)

Through his whole ancestral line we trace the "laying on of hands" in the most conspicuous as in the divinest order; and thus might he be truly called a child of prayer and consecration. What pity that his biographer should have been compelled to record, "The most remarkable feature of his character was his unbridled licentiousness"! But we cannot drop the curtain here. We would relieve the picture by this somewhat lighter shade. "His intellectual energies were gigantic. As a pleader and a determined and artful advocate, he had few equals. Hence, as a lawyer, he scarcely ever lost a case in his whole practice." An amusing anecdote is related of him in his professional career.

"In an insurance case, the evidence of which was strongly against him, he went in disguise to New London, where the witnesses, mostly sailors, resided. In a loafer-like swagger he proposed and secured bets from every material evidence in the case, and thus disqualified them from bearing testimony, on the ground that they were interested witnesses." In his old age he married his housekeeper, and closed an eventful and unblessed life at Bridgeport, April 14, 1826. 'Tis well to memorize him here, and thus register birth and death on the very page that

records the most mysterious chapter of his history.

Let us return to unite and conclude our story. In June, 1788, a female of uncommon beauty of person, yet with an oppressed and melancholy bearing, suddenly appeared at the old Bell Tavern in Danvers, Massachusetts, (a drawing of which is here introduced.) She was habited in black, and was seldom seen abroad, never except alone, and at twilight, when she was observed to wander as far as the old burying ground hard by, and there to pause at its entrance, gazing long and earnestly upon its silent, scattered mounds, at length retracing her steps with the same melancholy gait and air.

Here she remained nearly a month, discovering to none her real name or situation. She passed her time in writing, and occasionally playing upon a guitar, which was the only companion of her solitude. After remaining there about two weeks a chaise was seen to pause before the door, upon the lintel of which had secretly been traced in chalk, as it afterwards appeared, the letters "E.W." A gentleman hastily alighted, and was also observed through the darkness of the evening to examine the casing of the door, and then return to the chaise and drive rapidly away.

The opinion was, by those who were cognizant of the fact, that this was a secret, preconcerted sign by which the lover should recognize the place of her retreat; and being too faintly drawn, through the darkness of the night he failed to discover the

characters.

From this time, however, the spirits of the stranger evidently sunk; and in two weeks more birth and death had followed each other, and the grave had closed over all.

This stranger had, in her peculiar situation, tenderly won upon the sympathies of a few kind-hearted individuals who had made their way to her, one of whom, a Mrs. Southwick, lived directly opposite the Bell Tavern. These were with her in her last great agony, in which all sense of guilt was lost in pity. Mrs. S. has related that no word of complaint or accusation was heard to fall from her lips, while the spirit seemed brightening with an unearthly hope, till what was charming in life was indescribably lovely in death. Thus they laid the beautiful stranger in the saintly robes of the sepulchre without censure and without accusation, not knowing how painfully she was mourned and missed, as a star shut out of vision by clouds and storm, in the home of her childhood and in the heart of a widowed mother.

She had passed under the assumed name of Walker while at the Bell Tavern of Danvers, and her wardrobe was found marked with the corresponding initials, "E.W.," although applying to her real name as well. These facts, in connection with her death, were immediately published in the Boston and Salem journals, and her friends advertised to appear; and

thus were her real name and place of residence elicited.

A short time afterwards, and a stranger came and caused to be erected in the old burying ground in Danvers, on the spot where she was interred, two "gray stones," after the manner of Ossian, with the touching inscription which this volume records; and the feet of strangers, moved by pity and humanity, have worn a path to her grave which he who covets most in the world's memory might even envy.

The tombstones (which the fathers of that ancient town should shame to have recorded) have been battered and broken for relics, till much of the inscription is gone already, and the footstone entirely removed.

But I have noted that Elizabeth Whitman was of superior merit, and had been recognized as a child of genius in its most earnest sense. From her earliest childhood she had been remarkable for a deeply poetic temperament, and it appears she was recognized as a poet of no common order by the most distinguished writers of the day—Barlow, Trumbull, and others. Why her name and writings have not been handed down to us by those who have essayed to make careful compilations of the literature of the past century, I am unable to divine. She was a relative as well of the last-named poet, Trumbull, on the side of his mother, who was Sarah Whitman, a sister of Rev. Elnathan Whitman, the

father of Elizabeth.

I find in the journals of that time the following poem, which, though not the best of her productions, certainly gives evidence of much poetic power:—

TO MR. BARLOW.

By his Friend ELIZABETH WHITMAN, *on New Year's Day*, 1783.

Should every wish the heart of friendship knows
Be to your ear conveyed in rustic prose,
Lost in the wonders of your Eastern clime,
Or rapt in vision to some unborn time,
Th' unartful tale might no attention gain;
For Friendship knows not, like the Muse, to feign.
Forgive her, then, if in this weak essay
She tries to emulate thy daring lay,
And give to truth and warm affection's glow
The charms that from the tuneful sisters flow.

On this blest morning's most auspicious rise,
Which finds thee circled with domestic joys,
May thy glad heart its grateful tribute pay
To Him who shaped thy course and smoothed thy way—
That guardian Power, who, to thy merit kind,
Bestowed the bliss most suited to thy mind—
Retirement, friendship, leisure, learned ease,
All that the philosophic mind can please;
All that the Muses love, th' harmonious nine,

Inspire thy lays, and aid the great design.
But more than all the world could else bestow,
All pleasures that from fame or fortune flow,
To fix secure in bliss thy future life,
Heaven crowned thy blessings with a lovely wife—
Wise, gentle, good, with every grace combined
That charms the sense or captivates the mind;
Skilled every soft emotion to improve,
The joy of friendship, and the wish of love;
To soothe the heart which pale Misfortune's train
Invades with grief or agonizing pain;
To point through devious paths the narrow road
That leads the soul to virtue or to God.

O friend! O sister! to my bosom dear
By every tie that binds the soul sincere;
O, while I fondly dwell upon thy name,
Why sinks my soul, unequal to the theme?
But though unskilled thy various worth to praise,
Accept my wishes, and excuse my lays.
May all thy future days, like this, be gay,
And love and fortune blend their kindest ray;
Long in their various gifts mayst thou be blessed,
And late ascend the realms of endless rest.

Among her papers, also, after her decease, was found a pastoral on "Disappointment," which here follows, evidently written during her seclusion in Danvers, with this brief and pathetic letter in stenographic characters:—

"Must I die alone? Shall I never see you more? I

know that you will come; but you will come too late. This is, I fear, my last ability. Tears fall so fast I know not how to write. Why did you leave me in such distress? But I will not reproach you. All that was dear I forsook for you, but do not regret it. May God forgive in both what was amiss. When I go from here, I will leave you some way to find me. If I die, will you come and drop a tear over my grave?"

The poem, which continues in the same moving strain, is touching and tender, and betrays a heart full of refinement and sensibility.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

With fond impatience, all the tedious day
I sighed, and wished the lingering hours away;
For when bright Hesper led the starry train,
My shepherd swore to meet me on the plain.
With eager haste to that dear spot I flew,
And lingered long, and then in tears withdrew.
Alone, abandoned to love's tenderest woes,
Down my pale cheeks the tide of sorrow flows;
Dead to all joy that Fortune can bestow,
In vain for me her useless bounties flow.
Take back each envied gift, ye powers divine,
And only let me call Fidelio mine.
Ah, wretch! what anguish yet thy soul must prove!
For thou canst hope to lose thy care in love;
And when Fidelio meets thy tearful eye,
Pale fear and cold despair his presence fly.
With pensive steps I sought thy walks again,

And kissed thy token on the verdant plain;
With fondest hope, through many a blissful hour,
We gave our souls to Fancy's pleasing power.
Lost in the magic of that sweet employ,
To build gay scenes and fashion future joy,
We saw mild Peace over fair *Canaan* rise,
And shower her pleasures from benignant skies.
On airy hills our happy mansion rose,
Built but for joy—no room for future woes.
Round the calm solitude with ceaseless song,

* * * * *

Sweet as the sleep of innocence the day,
By transports measured, lightly danced away;
To love, to bliss, the unioned soul was given,
And—ah, too happy!—asked no brighter heaven.
And must the hours in ceaseless anguish roll?
Will no soft sunshine cheer my clouded soul?
Can this dear earth no transient joy supply?
Is it my doom to hope, despair, and die?
O, come once more, with soft endearments come;
Burst the cold prison of the sullen tomb;
Through favored walks thy chosen maid attend
Where well-known shades their pleasing branches bend;
Shed the soft poison of thy speaking eye,
And look those raptures lifeless words deny.
Still he, though late, reheard what ne'er could tire,
But, told each eve, fresh pleasures would inspire;
Still hope those scenes which love and fancy drew,
But, drawn a thousand times, were ever new.

Can fancy paint, can words express,
Can aught on earth my woes redress?
E'en thy soft smiles can ceaseless prove
Thy truth, thy tenderness, and love.
Once thou couldst every bliss inspire,
Transporting joy and gay desire;
Now cold Despair her banner rears,
And Pleasure flies when she appears;
Fond Hope within my bosom dies,
And Agony her place supplies.
O thou, for whose dear sake I bear
A doom so dreadful, so severe,
May happy fates thy footsteps guide,
And o'er thy *peaceful* home preside;
Nor let E——a's early tomb
Infect thee with its baleful gloom.

Still another poem, of more genuine beauty and strength than either of these, has been preserved in her own handwriting, which I doubt not the reader will thank me for introducing here, although it bears more of recrimination than the others.

Thy presents to some happier lover send;
Content thyself to be Lucinda's friend.
The soft expression of thy gay design
Ill suits the sadness of a heart like mine—
A heart like mine, forever doomed to prove
Each tender woe, but not one joy of love.

First from my arms a dying lover torn,
In early life it was my fate to mourn.

A father next, by fate's relentless doom,
With heartfelt woe I followed to the tomb.
Now all was lost; no friends remained to guide
My erring step, or calm life's boisterous tide.

Again th' admiring youths around me bowed;
And one I singled from the sighing crowd.
Well skilled he was in every winning art—
To warm the fancy, or to touch the heart.
Why must my pen the noble praise deny,
Which virtue, worth, and honor *should* supply?

O youth beloved! what pangs my breast has borne
To find thee false, ungrateful, and forsworn!
A shade and darkness o'er my prospect spreads,
The damps of night and death's eternal shades.
The scorpion's sting, by disappointment brought,
And all the horrors of despairing thought,
Sad as they are, I might, perhaps, endure,
And bear with patience what admits no cure.
But here my bosom is to madness moved;
I suffer by the wrongs of him I loved.

O, had I died by pitying Heaven's decree,
Nor proved so black, so base, a mind in thee!
But vain the wish; my heart was doomed to prove
Each torturing pang, but not one joy of love.
Wouldst thou again fallacious prospects spread,
And woo me from the confines of the dead?
The pleasing scenes that charmed me once retrace
—

Gay scenes of rapture and ecstatic bliss?
How did my heart embrace the dear deceit,
And fondly cherish the deluding cheat!
Delusive hope, and wishes sadly vain,
Unless to sharpen disappointment's pain.

These are but the fragmentary proofs of her poetic ability; still they are the most that have been preserved bearing *full authenticity*; yet these betray a skilful and accustomed pen, though stamped with the bitterness of woe.

Here, then, we will take up the idea which we left several pages back, in order to introduce a quotation from a volume of singular power in behalf of those thus gifted, who are every where looked upon with some degree of suspicion at least, as I find our heroine was even long before she wandered from the path of virtue. I quote it only to soften the harsher judgment of the world, ever eager to condemn what it cannot comprehend; yet must it by no means be made to apologize for any sin.

While I am willing to be known as believing that genius can be governed by no conventional laws, but is ever a law unto itself, I am also in the full belief of the independent moral power of every individual to regulate his own acts according to the purest code of morality. But to the quotation, which, with the above remarks, the reader would find pertinent to time and place had he turned over the historical pages having a bearing on this romance which I have.

"The strong seductions and fierce trials of the heart of genius who shall estimate? * * * What does an ordinary mind know of the inner storm and whirlwind, as it were, of restlessness; the craving after excitement and high action; the inability to calm the breast and repose in fixity; the wild beatings and widowed longings after sympathy? * * * It is the severe lot of genius that its blessedness should be its bane; *that that wherein its heavenly franchise gives it to excel mankind is the point wherein it should be cursed above its brethren*!"

More I might quote; but these few extracts are sufficient for my purpose; and I hasten to conclude this chapter with what may to the general reader appear more relevant.

* * * * *

Not many years ago the Bell Tavern, as it was ever named, was razed to its foundation, and a new building erected on the spot where it stood. At this time a pleasant *jeu d'esprit* from the humorous and ready pen—which has failed not to make its mark in the world—of Fitch Poole, Esq., of Danvers, was published, which gained a wide credence in its authenticity. This curious witticism affected to have discovered in the wall of the room which "Eliza Wharton" occupied an original letter from her to Mr. Edwards, dated May, 1778, besides various articles of her wearing apparel, such as slippers, &c., and also her guitar, all of which had been concealed in

the ceiling since the sad close of her history. Numbers flocked to see them; but, as it was a mere pleasantry, the hoax was well received, and ended in the neighborhood of Danvers with the privileged "April fool's day" of its date, although it may even yet have believers in distant places.

Thus, kind reader, have I accomplished the task assigned me with fidelity to truth and to humanity, and here lay the offering on the altar of universal love without excuse.

JANE E. LOCKE.

BOSTON, 1854.

NOTE.—For important facts which have greatly aided me in preparing this prefatory chapter I am much indebted, as I would here gratefully acknowledge, to Ezekiel White, Esq., of Easthampton, and Mrs. H.V. Cheney, of Montreal.

J.E.L.

[Footnote A: John Whitman, whose father was brother to the grandfather of "Eliza Wharton," married a daughter of Rev. Mr. Foster, of Stafford, Connecticut, who afterwards settled in Stow, Massachusetts, and who was father of Rev. John Foster, of Brighton, Massachusetts, the husband of the author of this book.]

THE COQUETTE; OR, THE HISTORY OF ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER I.

TO MISS LUCY FREEMAN.

NEW HAVEN

An unusual sensation possesses my breast—a sensation which I once thought could never pervade it on any occasion whatever. It is *pleasure*, pleasure, my dear Lucy, on leaving my paternal roof. Could you have believed that the darling child of an indulgent and dearly-beloved mother would feel a gleam of joy at leaving her? But so it is. The melancholy, the gloom, the condolence which surrounded me for a month after the death of Mr. Haly had depressed my spirits, and palled every enjoyment of life. Mr. Haly was a man of worth—a man of real and substantial merit. He is, therefore, deeply and justly regretted by *his* friends. He was chosen to be a future guardian and companion for me, and was, therefore, beloved by *mine*. As their choice, as a good man, and a faithful friend, I

esteemed him; but no one acquainted with the disparity of our tempers and dispositions, our views and designs, can suppose my heart much engaged in the alliance. Both nature and education had instilled into my mind an implicit obedience to the will and desires of my parents. To them, of course, I sacrificed my fancy in this affair, determined that my reason should concur with theirs, and on that to risk my future happiness. I was the more encouraged, as I saw, from our first acquaintance, his declining health, and expected that the event would prove as it has. Think not, however, that I rejoice in his death. No; far be it from me; for though I believe that I never felt the passion of love for Mr. Haly, yet a habit of conversing with him, of hearing daily the most virtuous, tender, and affectionate sentiments from his lips, inspired emotions of the sincerest friendship and esteem.

He is gone. His fate is unalterably, and I trust happily, fixed. He lived the life, and died the death, of the righteous. O that my last end may be like his! This event will, I hope, make a suitable and abiding impression upon my mind, teach me the fading nature of all sublunary enjoyments, and the little dependence which is to be placed on earthly felicity. Whose situation was more agreeable, whose prospects more flattering, than Mr. Haly's? Social, domestic, and connubial joys were fondly anticipated, and friends and fortune seemed ready to crown every wish; yet, animated by still brighter

hopes, he cheerfully bade them all adieu. In conversation with me but a few days before his exit, "There is," said he, "but one link in the chain of life undissevered; that, my dear Eliza, is my attachment to you. But God is wise and good in all his ways; and in this, as in all other respects, I would cheerfully say, His will be done."

You, my friend, were witness to the concluding scene; and, therefore, I need not describe it.

I shall only add on the subject, that if I have wisdom and prudence to follow his advice and example, if his prayers for my temporal and eternal welfare be heard and answered, I shall be happy indeed.

The disposition of mind which I now feel I wish to cultivate. Calm, placid, and serene, thoughtful of my duty, and benevolent to all around me, I wish for no other connection than that of friendship.

This letter is all an egotism. I have even neglected to mention the respectable and happy friends with whom I reside, but will do it in my next. Write soon and often; and believe me sincerely yours,

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

NEW HAVEN.

Time, which effaces every occasional impression, I find gradually dispelling the pleasing pensiveness which the melancholy event, the subject of my last, had diffused over my mind. Naturally cheerful, volatile, and unreflecting, the opposite disposition I have found to contain sources of enjoyment which I was before unconscious of possessing.

My friends here are the picture of conjugal felicity. The situation is delightful—the visiting parties perfectly agreeable. Every thing tends to facilitate the return of my accustomed vivacity. I have written to my mother, and received an answer. She praises my fortitude, and admires the philosophy which I have exerted under what she calls my heavy bereavement. Poor woman! she little thinks that my heart was untouched; and when that is unaffected, other sentiments and passions make but a transient impression. I have been, for a month or two, excluded from the gay world, and, indeed, fancied myself soaring above it. It is now that I begin to descend, and find my natural propensity for mixing in the busy scenes and active pleasures of life returning. I have received your letter—your moral lecture rather; and be assured, my dear, your monitorial lessons and advice shall be attended to. I believe I shall never again resume those airs which you term *coquettish*, but which I think deserve a softer appellation, as they proceed from an innocent heart, and are the effusions of a youthful and

cheerful mind. We are all invited to spend the day to-morrow at Colonel Farington's, who has an elegant seat in this neighborhood. Both he and his lady are strangers to me; but the friends by whom I am introduced will procure me a welcome reception. Adieu.

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

NEW HAVEN.

Is it time for me to talk again of conquests? or must I only enjoy them in silence? I must write to you the impulses of my mind, or I must not write at all. You are not so morose as to wish me to become a nun, would our country and religion allow it. I ventured, yesterday, to throw aside the habiliments of mourning, and to array myself in those more adapted to my taste. We arrived at Colonel Farington's about one o'clock. The colonel handed me out of the carriage, and introduced me to a large company assembled in the hall.

My name was pronounced with an *emphasis*, and I was received with the most flattering tokens of respect. When we were summoned to dinner, a young gentleman in a clerical dress offered me his hand, and led me to a table furnished with an

elegant and sumptuous repast, with more gallantry and address than commonly fall to the share of students. He sat opposite me at table; and whenever I raised my eye, it caught his. The ease and politeness of his manners, with his particular attention to me, raised my curiosity, and induced me to ask Mrs. Laiton who he was. She told me that his name was Boyer; that he was descended from a worthy family; had passed with honor and applause through the university where he was educated; had since studied divinity with success; and now had a call to settle as a minister in one of the first parishes in a neighboring state.

The gates of a spacious garden were thrown open at this instant, and I accepted with avidity an invitation to walk in it. Mirth and hilarity prevailed, and the moments fled on downy wings, while we traced the beauties of Art and Nature, so liberally displayed and so happily blended in this delightful retreat. An enthusiastic admirer of scenes like these, I had rambled some way from the company, when I was followed by Mrs. Laiton to offer her condolence on the supposed loss which I had sustained in the death of Mr. Haly. My heart rose against the woman, so ignorant of human nature as to think such conversation acceptable at such a time. I made her little reply, and waved the subject, though I could not immediately dispel the gloom which it excited.

The absurdity of a custom authorizing people at a first interview to revive the idea of griefs which time

has lulled, perhaps obliterated, is intolerable. To have our enjoyments arrested by the empty compliments of unthinking persons for no other reason than a compliance with fashion, is to be treated in a manner which the laws of humanity forbid.

We were soon joined by the gentlemen, who each selected his partner, and the walk was prolonged.

Mr. Boyer offered me his arm, which I gladly accepted, happy to be relieved from the impertinence of my female companion. We returned to tea; after which the ladies sung, and played by turns on the piano forte; while some of the gentlemen accompanied with the flute, the clarinet, and the violin, forming in the whole a very decent concert. An elegant supper, and half an hour's conversation after it, closed the evening; when we returned home, delighted with our entertainment, and pleased with ourselves and each other. My imagination is so impressed with the festive scenes of the day that Morpheus waves his ebon wand in vain. The evening is fine beyond the power of description; all Nature is serene and harmonious, in perfect unison with my present disposition of mind. I have been taking a retrospect of my past life, and, a few juvenile follies excepted, which I trust the recording angel has blotted out with a tear of charity, find an approving conscience and a heart at ease. Fortune, indeed, has not been very liberal of her gifts to me; but I presume on a large stock in the bank of friendship,

which, united with health and innocence, give me some pleasing anticipations of future felicity.

Whatever my fate may be, I shall always continue your

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER IV.

TO MR. SELBY.

NEW HAVEN.

You ask me, my friend, whether I am in pursuit of truth, or a lady. I answer, Both. I hope and trust they are united, and really expect to find Truth, and the Virtues and Graces besides, in a fair form. If you mean by the first part of your question whether I am searching into the sublimer doctrines of religion,—to these I would by no means be inattentive; but, to be honest, my studies of that kind have been very much interrupted of late. The respectable circle of acquaintances with which I am honored here has rendered my visits very frequent and numerous. In one of these I was introduced to Miss Eliza Wharton —a young lady whose elegant person, accomplished mind, and polished manners have been much celebrated. Her fame has often reached me; but, as the Queen of Sheba said to Solomon, the half was not told me. You will think that I talk in the style of a

lover.

I confess it; nor am I ashamed to rank myself among the professed admirers of this lovely fair one. I am in no danger, however, of becoming an enthusiastic devotee. No; I mean I act upon just and rational principles. Expecting soon to settle in an eligible situation, if such a companion as I am persuaded she will make me may fall to my lot, I shall deem myself as happy as this state of imperfection will admit. She is now resident at General Richman's. The general and his lady are her particular friends; they are warm in her praises. They tell me, however, that she is naturally of a gay disposition. No matter for that; it is an agreeable quality, where there is discretion sufficient for its regulation. A cheerful friend, much more a cheerful wife, is peculiarly necessary to a person of a studious and sedentary life. They dispel the gloom of retirement, and exhilarate the spirits depressed by intense application. She was formerly addressed by the late Mr. Haly, of Boston. He was not, it seems, the man of her choice; but her parents were extremely partial to him, and wished the connection to take place. She, like a dutiful child, sacrificed her own inclination to their pleasure so far as to acquiesce in his visits. This she more easily accomplished, as his health, which declined from their first acquaintance, led her to suppose, as the event has proved, that he would not live to enter into any lasting engagements. Her father, who died some

months before him, invited him to reside at his house for the benefit of a change of air, agreeably to the advice of his physicians. She attended him during his last illness with all the care and assiduity of a nurse and with all the sympathizing tenderness of a sister.

I have had several opportunities of conversing with her. She discovers an elevated mind, a ready apprehension, and an accurate knowledge of the various subjects which have been brought into view. I have not yet introduced the favorite subject of my heart. Indeed, she seems studiously to avoid noticing any expression which leads towards it; but she must hear it soon. I am sure of the favor and interest of the friends with whom she resides. They have promised to speak previously in my behalf. I am to call, as if accidentally, this afternoon just as they are to ride abroad. They are to refer me to Miss Wharton for entertainment till their return. What a delightful opportunity for my purpose! I am counting the hours —nay, the very moments. Adieu. You shall soon again hear from your most obedient,

J. BOYER.

LETTER V.

TO MISS LUCY FREEMAN.

NEW HAVEN.

These bewitching charms of mine have a tendency

to keep my mind in a state of perturbation. I am so pestered with these admirers! Not that I am so very handsome neither; but, I don't know how it is, I am certainly very much the taste of the other sex. Followed, flattered, and caressed, I have cards and compliments in profusion. But I must try to be serious; for I have, alas! one serious lover. As I promised you to be particular in my writing, I suppose I must proceed methodically. Yesterday we had a party to dine. Mr. Boyer was of the number. His attention was immediately engrossed; and I soon perceived that every word, every action, and every look was studied to gain my approbation. As he sat next me at dinner, his assiduity and politeness were pleasing; and as we walked together afterwards, his conversation was improving. Mine was sentimental and sedate—perfectly adapted to the taste of my gallant. Nothing, however, was said particularly expressive of his apparent wishes. I studiously avoided every kind of discourse which might lead to this topic. I wish not for a declaration from any one, especially from one whom I could not repulse and do not intend to encourage at present. His conversation, so similar to what I had often heard from a similar character, brought a deceased friend to mind, and rendered me somewhat pensive. I retired directly after supper. Mr. Boyer had just taken leave.

Mrs. Richman came into my chamber as she was passing to her own. "Excuse my intrusion, Eliza," said she. "I thought I would just step in and ask you if you

have passed a pleasant day."

"Perfectly so, madam; and I have now retired to protract the enjoyment by recollection." "What, my dear, is your opinion of our favorite, Mr. Boyer?" "Declaring him your favorite, madam, is sufficient to render me partial to him; but to be frank, independent of that, I think him an agreeable man." "Your heart, I presume, is now free." "Yes, and I hope it will long remain so." "Your friends, my dear, solicitous for your welfare, wish to see you suitably and agreeably connected." "I hope my friends will never again interpose in my concerns of that nature. You, madam, who have ever known my heart, are sensible that, had the Almighty spared life in a certain instance, I must have sacrificed my own happiness or incurred their censure. I am young, gay, volatile. A melancholy event has lately extricated me from those shackles which parental authority had imposed on my mind. Let me, then, enjoy that freedom which I so highly prize. Let me have opportunity, unbiased by opinion, to gratify my natural disposition in a participation of those pleasures which youth and innocence afford." "Of such pleasures, no one, my dear, would wish to deprive you; but beware, Eliza! Though strewed with flowers, when contemplated by your lively imagination, it is, after all, a slippery, thorny path. The round of fashionable dissipation is dangerous. A phantom is often pursued, which leaves its deluded votary the real form of wretchedness." She spoke

with an emphasis, and, taking up her candle, wished me a good night. I had not power to return the compliment. Something seemingly prophetic in her looks and expressions cast a momentary gloom upon my mind; but I despise those contracted ideas which confine virtue to a cell. I have no notion of becoming a recluse. Mrs. Richman has ever been a beloved friend of mine; yet I always thought her rather prudish. Adieu.

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

NEW HAVEN.

I had scarcely seated myself at the breakfast table this morning when a servant entered with a card of invitation from Major Sanford, requesting the happiness of my hand this evening at a ball given by Mr. Atkins, about three miles from this. I showed the billet to Mrs. Richman, saying, "I have not much acquaintance with this gentleman, madam; but I suppose his character sufficiently respectable to warrant an affirmative answer." "He is a gay man, my dear, to say no more; and such are the companions we wish when we join a party avowedly formed for pleasure." I then stepped into my apartment, wrote an answer, and despatched the servant. When I returned to the parlor, something disapprobating

appeared in the countenances of both my friends. I endeavored, without seeming to observe, to dissipate it by chitchat; but they were better pleased with each other than with me, and, soon rising, walked into the garden, and left me to amuse myself alone. My eyes followed them through the window. "Happy pair!" said I. "Should it ever be my fate to wear the hymeneal chain, may I be thus united! The purest and most ardent affection, the greatest consonance of taste and disposition, and the most congenial virtue and wishes distinguish this lovely couple. Health and wealth, with every attendant blessing, preside over their favored dwelling, and shed their benign influence without alloy." The consciousness of exciting their displeasure gave me pain; but I consoled myself with the idea that it was ill founded.

"They should consider," said I, "that they have no satisfaction to look for beyond each other; there every enjoyment is centred; but I am a poor solitary being, who need some amusement beyond what I can supply myself. The mind, after being confined at home for a while, sends the imagination abroad in quest of new treasures; and the body may as well accompany it, for aught I can see."

General Richman and lady have ever appeared solicitous to promote my happiness since I have resided with them. They have urged my acceptance of invitations to join parties; though they have not been much themselves of late, as Mrs. Richman's present circumstances render her fond of retirement.

What reason can be assigned for their apparent reluctance to this evening's entertainment is to me incomprehensible; but I shall apply the chemical powers of friendship, and extract the secret from Mrs. Richman to-morrow, if not before. Adieu. I am now summoned to dinner, and after that shall be engaged in preparation till the wished-for hour of hilarity and mirth engrosses every faculty of your

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER VII.

TO MR. SELBY.

NEW HAVEN.

Divines need not declaim, nor philosophers expatiate, on the disappointments of human life. Are they not legibly written on every page of our existence? Are they not predominantly prevalent over every period of our lives?

When I closed my last letter to you, my heart exulted in the pleasing anticipation of promised bliss; my wishes danced on the light breezes of hope; and my imagination dared to arrest the attention of, and even claim a return of affection from, the lovely Eliza Wharton. But imagination only it has proved, and that dashed with the bitter ranklings of jealousy and suspicion.

But to resume my narrative. I reached the mansion of my friend about four. I was disagreeably struck with the appearance of a carriage at the door, as it raised an idea of company which might frustrate my plan; but still more disagreeable were my sensations when, on entering the parlor, I found Major Sanford evidently in a waiting posture. I was very politely received; and when Eliza entered the room with a brilliance of appearance and gayety of manner which I had never before connected with her character, I rose, as did Major Sanford, who offered his hand and led her to a chair. I forgot to sit down again, but stood transfixed by the pangs of disappointment. Miss Wharton appeared somewhat confused, but, soon resuming her vivacity, desired me to be seated, inquired after my health, and made some commonplace remarks on the weather; then, apologizing for leaving me, gave her hand again to Major Sanford, who had previously risen, and reminded her that the time and their engagements made it necessary to leave the good company; which, indeed, they both appeared very willing to do. General Richman and lady took every method in their power to remove my chagrin and atone for the absence of my fair one; but ill did they succeed. They told me that Miss Wharton had not the most distant idea of my visiting there this afternoon, much less of the design of my visit; that for some months together she had been lately confined by the sickness of Mr. Haly, whom she attended during the whole of his last illness; which confinement had eventually increased

her desire of indulging her natural disposition for gayety. She had, however, they said, an excellent heart and reflecting mind, a great share of sensibility, and a temper peculiarly formed for the enjoyments of social life. "But this gentleman, madam, who is her gallant this evening,—is his character unexceptionable? Will a lady of delicacy associate with an immoral, not to say profligate, man?" "The rank and fortune of Major Sanford," said Mrs. Richman, "procure him respect; his specious manners render him acceptable in public company; but I must own that he is not the person with whom I wish my cousin to be connected even for a moment. She never consulted me so little on any subject as that of his card this morning. Before I had time to object, she dismissed the servant; and I forbore to destroy her expected happiness by acquainting her with my disapprobation of her partner. Her omission was not design; it was juvenile indiscretion. We must, my dear sir," continued she, "look with a candid eye on such eccentricities. Faults, not foibles, require the severity of censure." "Far, madam, be it from me to censure any conduct which as yet I have observed in Miss Wharton; she has too great an interest in my heart to admit of that."

We now went into more general conversation. Tea was served; and I soon after took leave. General Richman, however, insisted on my dining with him on Thursday; which I promised. And here I am again over head and ears in the hypo—a disease, you will

say, peculiar to students. I believe it peculiar to lovers; and with that class I must now rank myself, though I did not know, until this evening, that I was so much engaged as I find I really am. I knew, indeed, that I was extremely pleased with this amiable girl; that I was interested in her favor; that I was happier in her company than any where else; with innumerable other circumstances, which would have told me the truth had I examined them. But be that as it may, I hope and trust that I am, and ever shall be, a reasonable creature, and not suffer my judgment to be misled by the operations of a blind passion.

I shall now lay aside this subject; endeavor to divest even my imagination of the charmer; and return, until Thursday, to the contemplation of those truths and duties which have a happy tendency to calm the jarring elements which compose our mortal frame. Adieu.

J. BOYER.

LETTER VIII.

TO MR. CHARLES DEIGHTON.

NEW HAVEN.

We had an elegant ball, last night, Charles; and what is still more to the taste of your old friend, I had an elegant partner; one exactly calculated to

please my fancy—gay, volatile, apparently thoughtless of every thing but present enjoyment. It was Miss Eliza Wharton—a young lady whose agreeable person, polished manners, and refined talents have rendered her the toast of the country around for these two years; though for half that time she has had a clerical lover imposed on her by her friends; for I am told it was not agreeable to her inclination. By this same clerical lover of hers she was for several months confined as a nurse. But his death has happily relieved her; and she now returns to the world with redoubled lustre. At present she is a visitor to Mrs. Richman, who is a relation. I first saw her on a party of pleasure at Mr. Frazier's, where we walked, talked, sang, and danced together. I thought her cousin watched her with a jealous eye; for she is, you must know, a prude; and immaculate —more so than you or I—must be the man who claims admission to her society. But I fancy this young lady is a coquette; and if so, I shall avenge my sex by retaliating the mischiefs she meditates against us. Not that I have any ill designs, but only to play off her own artillery by using a little unmeaning gallantry. And let her beware of the consequences. A young clergyman came in at General Richman's yesterday, while I was waiting for Eliza, who was much more cordially received by the general and his lady than was your humble servant; but I lay that up.

When she entered the room, an air of mutual embarrassment was evident. The lady recovered her

assurance much more easily than the gentleman. I am just going to ride, and shall make it in my way to call and inquire after the health of my dulcinea. Therefore, adieu for the present.

PETER SANFORD.

LETTER IX.

TO MISS LUCY FREEMAN.

NEW HAVEN.

I am not so happy to-day in the recollection of last evening's entertainment as I was in the enjoyment.

The explanation which I promised you from Mrs. Richman yesterday I could not obtain. When I went down to dinner some friends of General Richman's had accidentally dropped in, which precluded all particular conversation. I retired soon to dress, and saw Mrs. Richman no more till I was informed that Major Sanford waited for me. But I was surprised, on going into the parlor, to find Mr. Boyer there. I blushed and stammered; but I know not why; for certain I am that I neither love nor fear the good man yet, whatever I may do some future day. I would not be understood that I do not respect and esteem him; for I do both. But these are calm passions, which soothe rather than agitate the mind. It was not the consciousness of any impropriety of conduct; for I was far from feeling any. The

entertainment for which I was prepared was such as virtue would not disapprove, and my gallant was a man of fortune, fashion, and, for aught I knew, of unblemished character.

But Mr. Boyer was much more disconcerted than myself. Indeed, he did not recover his philosophy while I staid. I believe, by some hints I have received since, that he had some particular views in which he was disappointed.

Our ball had every charm which could render a ball delightful. My partner was all ease, politeness, and attention; and your friend was as much flattered and caressed as vanity itself could wish. We returned to General Richman's about two. Major Sanford asked leave to call and inquire after my health this morning; and I am now expecting him. I rose to breakfast. The late hour of retiring to rest had not depressed, but rather exhilarated, my spirits. My friends were waiting for me in their parlor. They received me sociably, inquired after my health, my last evening's entertainment, the company, &c.; when, after a little pause, Mrs. Richman said, "And how do you like Major Sanford, Eliza?" "Very well indeed, madam; I think him a finished gentleman. Will you, who are a connoisseur, allow him that title?" "No, my dear; in my opinion he falls far below it, since he is deficient in one of the great essentials of the character; and that is *virtue*." "I am surprised," said I; "but how has he incurred so severe a censure?" "By being a professed libertine; by having but too

successfully, practised the arts of seduction; by triumphing in the destruction of innocence and the peace of families." "O, why was I not informed of this before? But perhaps these are old affairs—the effects of juvenile folly—crimes of which he may have repented, and which charity ought to obliterate." "No, my dear, they are recent facts—-facts which he dares not deny—facts for which he ought to be banished from all virtuous society. I should have intimated this to you before; but your precipitate acceptance of his invitation deprived me of an opportunity until it was too late to prevent your going with him; and we thought it best to protract your enjoyment as long as possible, not doubting but your virtue and delicacy would, in future, guard you against the like deception."

"Must I, then, become an avowed prude at once, and refuse him admission if he call in compliance with the customary forms?" "By no means. I am sensible that even the false maxims of the world must be complied with in a degree. But a man of Major Sanford's art can easily distinguish between a forbidding and an encouraging reception. The former may, in this case, be given without any breach of the rules of politeness." Astonished and mortified, I knew not what further to say. I had been so pleased with the man that I wished to plead in his favor; but virtue and prudence forbade. I therefore rose and retired. He is this moment, I am told, below stairs; so that I must bid you adieu until the next post.

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER X.

TO THE SAME.

NEW HAVEN.

Upon closing my last, I walked down, and found Major Sanford alone. He met me at the door of the parlor, and, taking my hand with an air of affectionate tenderness, led me to a seat, and took one beside me. I believe the gloom of suspicion had not entirely forsaken my brow. He appeared, however, not to notice it, but, after the compliments of the day had passed, entered into an easy and agreeable conversation on the pleasures of society—a conversation perfectly adapted to my taste, and calculated to dissipate my chagrin and pass the time imperceptibly. He inquired the place of my native abode; and, having informed him, he said he had thoughts of purchasing the seat of Captain Pribble, in that neighborhood, for his residence; and could he be assured of my society and friendship, his resolution would be fixed. I answered his compliment only by a slight bow. He took leave, and I retired to dress for the day, being engaged to accompany my cousin to dine at Mr. Lawrence's—a gentleman of fortune and fashion in this vicinity. Mr. Lawrence has but one daughter, heiress to a large estate, with an agreeable form, but a countenance which, to me, indicates not much soul. I was surprised in the afternoon to see

Major Sanford alight at the gate. He entered with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, and, after accosting each of the company, told me, with a low bow, that he did not expect the happiness of seeing me again so soon. I received his compliment with a conscious awkwardness. Mrs. Richman's morning lecture still rang in my head; and her watchful eye now traced every turn of mine and every action of the major's. Indeed, his assiduity was painful to me; yet I found it impossible to disengage myself a moment from him, till the close of the day brought our carriage to the door; when he handed me in, and, pressing my hand to his lips, retired.

What shall I say about this extraordinary man? Shall I own to you, my friend, that he is pleasing to me? His person, his manners, his situation, all combine to charm my fancy, and, to my lively imagination, strew the path of life with flowers. What a pity, my dear Lucy, that the graces and virtues are not oftener united! They must, however, meet in the man of my choice; and till I find such a one, I shall continue to subscribe my name

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XI.

TO MR. CHARLES DEIGHTON.

NEW HAVEN.

Well, Charles, I have been manoeuvring to-day a little revengefully. That, you will say, is out of character. So baleful a passion does not easily find admission among those softer ones which you well know I cherish. However, I am a mere Proteus, and can assume any shape that will best answer my purpose.

I called this afternoon, as I told you I intended, at General Richman's. I waited some time in the parlor alone before Eliza appeared; and when she did appear, the distant reserve of her manners and the pensiveness of her countenance convinced me that she had been vexed, and I doubted not but Peter Sanford was the occasion. Her wise cousin, I could have sworn, had been giving her a detail of the vices of her gallant, and warning her against the dangers of associating with him in future. Notwithstanding, I took no notice of any alteration in her behavior, but entered with the utmost facetiousness into a conversation which I thought most to her taste. By degrees she assumed her usual vivacity; cheerfulness and good humor again animated her countenance. I tarried as long as decency would admit. She having intimated that they were to dine at my friend Lawrence's, I caught at this information, and determined to follow them, and tease the jealous Mrs. Richman by playing off all the gallantry I was master of in her presence.

I went, and succeeded to the utmost of my wishes, as I read in the vexation visible in the one, and the

ease and attention displayed by the other. I believe, too, that I have charmed the eye, at least, of the amiable Eliza. Indeed, Charles, she is a fine girl. I think it would hurt my conscience to wound her mind or reputation. Were I disposed to marry, I am persuaded she would make an excellent wife; but that, you know, is no part of my plan, so long as I can keep out of the noose. Whenever I do submit to be shackled, it must be from a necessity of mending my fortune. This girl would be far from doing that. However, I am pleased with her acquaintance, and mean not to abuse her credulity and good nature, if I can help it.

PETER SANFORD.

LETTER XII.

TO MISS LUCY FREEMAN.

NEW HAVEN.

The heart of your friend is again besieged. Whether it will surrender to the assailants or not I am unable at present to determine. Sometimes I think of becoming a predestinarian, and submitting implicitly to fate, without any exercise of free will; but, as mine seems to be a wayward one, I would counteract the operations of it, if possible.

Mrs. Richman told me this morning that she hoped I should be as agreeably entertained this afternoon as

I had been the preceding; that she expected Mr. Boyer to dine and take tea, and doubted not but he would be as attentive and sincere to me, if not as gay and polite, as the gentleman who obtruded his civilities yesterday. I replied that I had no reason to doubt the sincerity of the one or the other, having never put them to the test, nor did I imagine I ever should. "Your friends, Eliza," said she, "would be very happy to see you united to a man of Mr. Boyer's worth, and so agreeably settled as he has a prospect of being." "I hope," said I, "that my friends are not so weary of my company as to wish to dispose of me. I am too happy in my present connections to quit them for new ones. Marriage is the tomb of friendship. It appears to me a very selfish state. Why do people in general, as soon as they are married, centre all their cares, their concerns, and pleasures in their own families? Former acquaintances are neglected or forgotten; the tenderest ties between friends are weakened or dissolved; and benevolence itself moves in a very limited sphere." "It is the glory of the marriage state," she rejoined, "to refine by circumscribing our enjoyments. Here we can repose in safety.

'The friendships of the world are oft
Confed'racies in vice, or leagues in pleasure:
Ours has the purest virtue for its basis;
And such a friendship ends not but with life.'

True, we cannot always pay that attention to former associates which we may wish; but the little

community which we superintend is quite as important an object, and certainly renders us more beneficial to the public. True benevolence, though it may change its objects, is not limited by time or place. Its effects are the same, and, aided by a second self, are rendered more diffusive and salutary."

Some pleasantry passed, and we retired to dress. When summoned to dinner, I found Mr. Boyer below. If what is sometimes said be true, that love is diffident, reserved, and unassuming, this man must be tinctured with it. These symptoms were visible in his deportment when I entered the room. However, he soon recovered himself, and the conversation took a general turn. The festive board was crowned with sociability, and we found in reality "the feast of reason and the flow of soul." After we rose from table, a walk in the garden was proposed—an amusement we are all peculiarly fond of. Mr. Boyer offered me his arm. When at a sufficient distance from our company, he begged leave to congratulate himself on having an opportunity, which he had ardently desired for some time, of declaring to me his attachment, and of soliciting an interest in my favor; or, if he might be allowed the term, affection. I replied, "That, sir, is indeed laying claim to an important interest. I believe you must substitute some more indifferent epithet for the present." "Well, then," said he, "if it must be so, let it be esteem or friendship." "Indeed, sir," said I, "you are entitled to them both. Merit has always a share in that bank;

and I know of none who has a larger claim on that score than Mr. Boyer." I suppose my manner was hardly serious enough for what he considered a weighty cause. He was a little disconcerted, but, soon regaining his presence of mind, entreated me, with an air of earnestness, to encourage his suit, to admit his addresses, and, if possible, to reward his love. I told him that this was rather a sudden affair to me, and that I could not answer him without consideration. "Well, then," said he, "take what time you think proper; only relieve my suspense as soon as may be. Shall I visit you again to-morrow?" "O, not so soon," said I; "next Monday, I believe, will be early enough. I will endeavor to be at home." He thanked me even for that favor, recommended himself once more to my kindness, and we walked towards the company, returned with them to the house, and he soon took leave. I immediately retired to write this letter, which I shall close without a single observation on the subject until I know your opinion.

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XIII.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

HARTFORD.

And so you wish to have my opinion before you know the result of your own.

This is playing a little too much with my patience; but, however, I will gratify you this once, in hopes that my epistle may have a good effect. You will ask, perhaps, whether I would influence your judgment. I answer, No, provided you will exercise it yourself; but I am a little apprehensive that your fancy will mislead you. Methinks I can gather from your letters a predilection for this Major Sanford. But he is a rake, my dear friend; and can a lady of your delicacy and refinement think of forming a connection with a man of that character? I hope not; nay, I am confident you do not. You mean only to exhibit a few more girlish airs before you turn matron; but I am persuaded, if you wish to lead down the dance of life with regularity, you will not find a more excellent partner than Mr. Boyer. Whatever you can reasonably expect in a lover, husband, or friend, you may perceive to be united in this worthy man. His taste is undebauched, his manners not vitiated, his morals uncorrupted. His situation in life is, perhaps, as elevated as you have a right to claim. Forgive my plainness, Eliza. It is the task of friendship, sometimes, to tell disagreeable truths. I know your ambition is to make a distinguished figure in the first class of polished society, to shine in the gay circle of fashionable amusements, and to bear off the palm amidst the votaries of pleasure. But these are fading honors, unsatisfactory enjoyments, incapable of gratifying those immortal principles of reason and religion which have been implanted in your mind by Nature, assiduously cultivated by the best of parents,

and exerted, I trust, by yourself. Let me advise you, then, in conducting this affair,—an affair big, perhaps, with your future fate,—to lay aside those coquettish airs which you sometimes put on; and remember that you are not dealing with a fop, who will take advantage of every concession, but with a man of sense and honor, who will properly estimate your condescension and frankness. Act, then, with that modest freedom, that dignified unreserve, which bespeak conscious rectitude and sincerity of heart.

I shall be extremely anxious to hear the process and progress of this business. Relieve my impatience as soon as possible; and believe me yours with undissembled affection.

LUCY FREEMAN.

LETTER XIV.

TO MISS LUCY FREEMAN.

NEW HAVEN.

I have received, and read again and again, your friendly epistle. My reason and judgment entirely coincide with your opinion; but my fancy claims some share in the decision; and I cannot yet tell which will preponderate. This was the day fixed for deciding Mr. Boyer's cause. My friends here gave me a long dissertation on his merits. Your letter, likewise, had its weight; and I was candidly

summoning up the *pros* and *cons* in the garden, whither I had walked, (General Richman and lady having rode out,) when I was informed that he was waiting in the parlor. I went immediately in, (a good symptom, you will say,) and received him very graciously. After the first compliments were over, he seemed eager to improve the opportunity to enter directly on the subject of his present visit. It is needless for me to recite to you, who have long been acquainted with the whole process of courtship, the declarations, propositions, protestations, entreaties, looks, words, and actions of a lover. They are, I believe, much the same in the whole sex, allowing for their different dispositions, educations, and characters; but you are impatient, I know, for the conclusion.

You have hastily perused the preceding lines, and are straining your eye forward to my part of the farce; for such it may prove, after all. Well, then, not to play too long with the curiosity which I know to be excited and actuated by real friendship, I will relieve it. I think you would have been pleased to have seen my gravity on this important occasion. With all the candor and frankness which I was capable of assuming, I thus answered his long harangue, to which I had listened without interrupting him: "Self-knowledge, sir, that most important of all sciences, I have yet to learn. Such have been my situations in life, and the natural volatility of my temper, that I have looked but little

into my own heart in regard to its future wishes and views. From a scene of constraint and confinement, ill suited to my years and inclination, I have just launched into society. My heart beats high in expectation of its fancied joys. My sanguine imagination paints, in alluring colors, the charms of youth and freedom, regulated by virtue and innocence. Of these I wish to partake. While I own myself under obligations for the esteem which you are pleased to profess for me, and, in return, acknowledge that neither your person nor manners are disagreeable to me, I recoil at the thought of immediately forming a connection which must confine me to the duties of domestic life, and make me dependent for happiness, perhaps, too, for subsistence, upon a class of people who will claim the right of scrutinizing every part of my conduct, and, by censuring those foibles which I am conscious of not having prudence to avoid, may render me completely miserable. While, therefore, I receive your visits, and cultivate towards you sentiments of friendship and esteem, I would not have you consider me as confined to your society, or obligated to a future connection. Our short acquaintance renders it impossible for me to decide what the operations of my mind may hereafter be. You must either quit the subject, or leave me to the exercise of my free will, which, perhaps, may coincide with your present wishes." "Madam," said he, "far is the wish from me to restrain your person or mind. In your breast I will repose my cause. It shall be my study to

merit a return of affection; and I doubt not but generosity and honor will influence your conduct towards me. I expect soon to settle among a generous and enlightened people, where I flatter myself I shall be exempt from those difficulties and embarrassments to which too many of my brethren are subject. The local situation is agreeable, the society refined and polished; and if, in addition, I may obtain that felicity which you are formed to bestow in a family connection, I shall be happy indeed."

He spoke with emphasis. The tear of sensibility sparkled in his eye. I involuntarily gave him my hand, which he pressed with ardor to his lips; then, rising, he walked to the window to conceal his emotion. I rang the bell and ordered tea, during and after which we shared that social converse which is the true zest of life, and in which I am persuaded none but virtuous minds can participate. General Richman and lady returned with the shades of the evening. The penetrating eye of my cousin traced in *our* countenances the progress of the cause, and the smile of approbation animated *hers*. Mr. Boyer asked the favor of my company to ride to-morrow morning; which was granted. He tarried to supper, and took his leave. I retired immediately to my chamber, to which I was followed by Mrs. Richman. I related to her the conversation and the encouragement which I had given to Mr. Boyer. She was pleased, but insisted that I should own myself somewhat engaged to him.

This, I told her, I should never do to any man before the indissoluble knot was tied. "That," said I, "will be time enough to resign my freedom." She replied, that I had wrong ideas of freedom and matrimony; but she hoped that Mr. Boyer would happily rectify them.

I have now, my dear friend, given you an account of my present situation, and leave you to judge for yourself concerning it. Write me your opinion, and believe me ever yours,

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XV.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

HARTFORD.

I congratulate you, my dear Eliza, on the stability of your conduct towards Mr. Boyer. Pursue the system which you have adopted, and I dare say that happiness will crown your future days. You are indeed very tenacious of your freedom, as you call it; but that is a play about words. A man of Mr. Boyer's honor and good sense will never abridge any privileges which virtue can claim.

When do you return to embellish our society here? I am impatient to see you, and likewise this amiable man. I am much interested in his favor. By the way, I

am told that Major Sanford has been to look at the seat of Captain Pribble, which is upon sale. It is reported that he will probably purchase it. Many of our gentry are pleased with the prospect of such a neighbor. "As an accomplished gentleman," say they, "he will be an agreeable addition to our social parties; and as a man of property and public spirit, he will be an advantage to the town." But from what I have heard of him, I am far from supposing him a desirable acquisition in either of these respects. A man of a vicious character cannot be a good member of society. In order to that, his principles and practice must be uncorrupted; in his morals, at least, he must be a man of probity and honor. Of these qualifications, if I mistake not, this gallant of yours cannot boast. But I shall not set up for a censor. I hope neither you nor I shall have much connection with him. My swain interests himself very much in your affairs. You will possibly think him impertinent; but I give his curiosity a softer name. Should I own to you that I place great confidence in his integrity and honor, you would, perhaps, laugh at my weakness; but, my dear, I have pride enough to keep me above coquetry or prudery, and discretion enough, I hope, to secure me from the errors of both. With him I am determined to walk the future round of life. What folly, then, would it be to affect reserve and distance relative to an affair in which I have so much interest! Not that I am going to betray your secrets; these I have no right to divulge; but I must be the judge what may, and what may not, be

communicated. I am very much pressed for an early day of consummation; but I shall not listen to a request of that kind till your return. Such is my regard for you, that a union of love would be imperfect if friendship attended not the rites. Adieu.

LUCY FREEMAN.

LETTER XVI.

TO MISS LUCY FREEMAN.

NEW HAVEN.

We go on charmingly here, almost as soft and smooth as your ladyship. It seems to me that love must stagnate if it have not a light breeze of discord once in a while to keep it in motion. We have not tried any yet, however. We had a lovely tour this forenoon, were out three long hours, and returned to dinner in perfect harmony.

Mr. Boyer informed me that he should set out to-morrow morning for his future residence, and soon put on the sacred bands. He solicited an epistolary correspondence, at the same time, as an alleviation of the care which that weighty charge would bring on his mind. I consented, telling him that he must not expect any thing more than general subjects from me.

We were somewhat interrupted in our confidential

intercourse, in the afternoon, by the arrival of Major Sanford. I cannot say that I was not agreeably relieved. So sweet a repast, for several hours together, was rather sickening to my taste. My inamorato looked a little mortified at the cheerful reception which I gave the intruder, and joined not so placidly in the social conversation as I could have wished.

When Mr. Boyer, after the major took leave, pressed me to give him some assurance of my constancy, I only reminded him of the terms of our engagement. Seeing me decided, he was silent on the subject, and soon bade me an affectionate adieu, not expecting, as he told me, the pleasure of a personal interview again for two or three months.

Thus far we have proceeded in this sober business. A good beginning, you will say. Perhaps it is. I do not, however, feel myself greatly interested in the progress of the negotiation. Time consolidate my affections, and enable me to fix them on some particular object. At present the most lively emotions of my heart are those of friendship, that friendship which I hope you will soon participate with your faithful

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XVII.

TO MR. SELBY.

NEW HAVEN.

I have succeeded in my addresses to the lovely Eliza Wharton—as far, at least, as I had any reason to expect from our short acquaintance. I find the graces of her person and mind rise in my esteem, and have already enjoyed in her society some of the happiest hours of my life. She is kind, affable, and condescending; yet I must own that I have not been able to infuse into her bosom the ardor which I feel in my own. I know that the native modesty of the sex would restrain the discovery; but there is an animation of countenance, which betrays the sensations of the heart, that I find wanting in hers on this occasion.

I have just taken leave of my fair, and propose returning to-morrow morning to take upon me the solemn charge which lies with such weight upon my mind that I need every support, both human and divine. Eliza has promised to correspond with me. From this I anticipate a source of pleasure which alone can atone for her absence.

I am, &c.,

J. BOYER.

LETTER XVIII.

TO MR. CHARLES DEIGHTON.

NEW HAVEN.

Do you know, Charles, that I have commenced lover? I was always a general one, but now I am somewhat particular. I shall be the more interested, as I am likely to meet with difficulties; and it is the glory of a rake, as well as of a Christian, to combat obstacles. This same Eliza, of whom I have told you, has really made more impression on my heart than I was aware of, or than the sex, take them as they rise, are wont to do. But she is besieged by a priest—a likely lad though. I know not how it is, but they are commonly successful with the girls, even the gayest of them. This one, too, has the interest of all her friends, as I am told. I called yesterday at General Richman's, and found this pair together, apparently too happy in each other's society for my wishes. I must own that I felt a glow of jealousy, which I never experienced before, and vowed revenge for the pain it gave me, though but momentary. Yet Eliza's reception of me was visibly cordial; nay, I fancied my company as pleasing to her as that which she had before. I tarried not long, but left him to the enjoyment of that pleasure which I flatter myself will be but shortlived. O, I have another plan in my head —a plan of necessity, which, you know, is the mother of invention. It is this: I am very much courted and caressed by the family of Mr. Lawrence, a man of large property in this neighborhood. He has only one child—a daughter, with whom I imagine the old folks intend to shackle me in the bonds of

matrimony. The girl looks very well; she has no soul, though, that I can discover; she is heiress, nevertheless, to a great fortune, and that is all the soul I wish for in a wife. In truth, Charles, I know of no other way to mend my circumstances. But lisp not a word of my embarrassments for your life. Show and equipage are my hobby horse; and if any female wishes to share them with me, and will furnish me with the means of supporting them, I have no objection. Could I conform to the sober rules of wedded life, and renounce those dear enjoyments of dissipation in which I have so long indulged, I know not the lady in the world with whom I would sooner form a connection of this sort than with Eliza Wharton. But it will never do. If my fortune or hers were better, I would risk a union; but as they are, no idea of the kind can be admitted. I shall endeavor, notwithstanding, to enjoy her company as long as possible. Though I cannot possess her wholly myself, I will not tamely see her the property of another.

I am now going to call at General Richman's, in hopes of an opportunity to profess my devotion to her. I know I am not a welcome visitor to the family; but I am independent of their censure or esteem, and mean to act accordingly.

PETER SANFORD.

LETTER XIX.

TO MISS LUCY FREEMAN.

NEW HAVEN.

I find the ideas of sobriety and domestic solitude I have been cultivating for three days past somewhat deranged by the interruption of a visitor, with whom I know you will not be pleased. It is no other than Major Sanford. I was walking alone in the garden yesterday, when he suddenly appeared to my view. "How happy am I," said he, seizing my hand, "in this opportunity of finding you alone—an opportunity, Miss Wharton, which I must improve in expatiating on a theme that fills my heart and solely animates my frame!"

I was startled at his impetuosity, and displeased with his freedom. Withdrawing my hand, I told him that my retirement was sacred. He bowed submissively; begged pardon for his intrusion; alleged that he found nobody but the servants in the house; that they informed him I was alone in the garden—which intelligence was too pleasing for him to consult any forms of ceremony for the regulation of his conduct. He then went on rhapsodically to declare his passion; his suspicions that I was forming a connection with Mr. Boyer, which would effectually destroy all his hopes of future happiness. He painted the restraint, the confinement, the embarrassments to which a woman connected with a man of Mr. Boyer's profession must be subjected, however agreeable his person might be. He asked if my generous mind could submit to cares and perplexities like these; whether I could not find

greater sources of enjoyment in a more elevated sphere of life, or share pleasures better suited to my genius and disposition, even in a single state. I listened to him involuntarily. My heart did not approve his sentiments; but my ear was charmed with his rhetoric, and my fancy captivated by his address.

He invited my confidence by the most ardent professions of friendship, and labored to remove my suspicions by vows of sincerity. I was induced by his importunity gradually to disclose the state of affairs between Mr. Boyer and myself. He listened eagerly; wished not, he said, to influence me unduly; but if I were not otherwise engaged, might he presume to solicit a place in my friendship and esteem, be admitted to enjoy my society, to visit me as an acquaintance, and to attend my excursions and amusements as a brother, if not more? I replied that I was a pensioner of friendship at present; that friends were extremely refined in their notions of propriety; and that I had no right to receive visitants independent of them. "I understand you, madam," said he. "You intimate that my company is not agreeable to them; but I know not why. Surely my rank in life is as elevated, and my knowledge of and acceptance in the world are as extensive, as General Richman's." "I hope," said I, "since we are engaged in the conversation, that you will excuse my frankness if I tell you that the understanding and virtue of this worthy couple induce them, without any regard to

rank, to bestow their esteem wherever it is merited. I cannot say that you are not a sharer. Your own heart can best determine whether upon their principles you are or not." He appeared mortified and chagrined; and we had walked some distance without exchanging a word or a look. At last he rejoined, "I plead guilty to the charge, madam, which they have undoubtedly brought against me, of imprudence and folly in many particulars; yet of malignancy and vice I am innocent. Brought up in affluence, inured from my infancy to the gratification of every passion, the indulgence of every wish, it is not strange that a life of dissipation and gayety should prove alluring to a youthful mind which had no care but to procure what is deemed enjoyment. In this pursuit I have, perhaps, deviated from the rigid rules of discretion and the harsher laws of morality. But let the veil of charity be drawn over my faults; let the eye of candor impartially examine my present behavior; let the kind and lenient hand of friendship assist in directing my future steps; and perhaps I may not prove unworthy of associating with the respectable inhabitants of this happy mansion; for such I am sure it must be while honored with Miss Wharton's presence. But, circumstanced as you and I are at present, I will not sue for your attention as a lover, but rest contented, if possible, with that share of kindness and regard which your benevolence may afford me as a friend." I bowed in approbation of his resolution. He pressed my hand with ardor to his lips; and at that instant General Richman entered the

garden. He approached us cheerfully, offered Major Sanford his hand with apparent cordiality, and told us pleasantly that he hoped he should not be considered as an intruder. "By no means, sir," said Major Sanford; "it is I who have incurred that imputation. I called this afternoon to pay you my respects, when, being informed that you and your lady were abroad, and that Miss Wharton was in the garden, I took the liberty to invade her retirement. She has graciously forgiven my crime, and I was just affixing the seal to my pardon as you entered."

We then returned into the house. Mrs. Richman received us politely. During tea, the conversation turned on literary subjects, in which I cannot say that the major bore a very distinguished part. After he was gone, Mrs. Richman said, "I hope you have been agreeably entertained, Miss Wharton." "I did not choose my company, madam," said I. "Nor," said she, "did you refuse it, I presume." "Would you not have me respect the rights of hospitality towards your guests when you are absent, madam?" "If you had acted from that motive, I own my obligations to you, my dear; but even that consideration can hardly reconcile me to the sacrifice of time which you have made to the amusement of a seducer." "I hope, madam, you do not think me an object of seduction." "I do not think you seducible; nor was Richardson's Clarissa till she made herself the victim by her own indiscretion. Pardon me, Eliza—this is a second Lovelace. I am alarmed by his artful intrusions. His

insinuating attentions to you are characteristic of the man. Come, I presume you are not interested to keep his secrets if you know them; will you give me a little sketch of his conversation?" "Most willingly," said I, and accordingly related the whole. When I had concluded, she shook her head, and replied, "Beware, my friend, of his arts. Your own heart is too sincere to suspect treachery and dissimulation in another; but suffer not your ear to be charmed by the siren voice of flattery, nor your eye to be caught by the phantom of gayety and pleasure. Remember your engagements to Mr. Boyer. Let sincerity and virtue be your guides, and they will lead you to happiness and peace." She waited not for an answer, but, immediately rising, begged leave to retire, alleging that she was fatigued. General Richman accompanied her, and I hastened to my apartment, where I have written thus far, and shall send it on for your comments. I begin to think of returning soon to your circle. One inducement is, that I may be free from the intrusions of this man. Adieu.

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XX.

TO MRS. M. WHARTON.

NEW HAVEN.

From the conversation of the polite, the sedate, the engaging, and the gay,—from corresponding with the

learned, the sentimental, and the refined,—my heart and my pen turn with ardor and alacrity to a tender and affectionate parent, the faithful guardian and guide of my youth, the unchanging friend of my riper years. The different dispositions of various associates sometimes perplex the mind which seeks direction; but in the disinterested affection of the maternal breast we fear no dissonance of passion, no jarring interests, no disunion of love. In this seat of felicity is every enjoyment which fancy can form, or friendship, with affluence, bestow; but still my mind frequently returns to the happy shades of my nativity. I wish there to impart my pleasures, and share the counsels of my best, my long-tried, and experienced friend. At this time, my dear mamma, I am peculiarly solicitous for your advice. I am again importuned to listen to the voice of love; again called upon to accept the addresses of a gentleman of merit and respectability. You will know the character of the man when I tell you it is Mr. Boyer. But his situation in life! I dare not enter it. My disposition is not calculated for that sphere. There are duties arising from the station which I fear I should not be able to fulfil, cares and restraints to which I could not submit. *This* man is not disagreeable to me; but if I must enter the connubial state, are there not *others* who may be equally pleasing in their persons, and whose profession may be more conformable to my taste? You, madam, have passed through this scene of trial with honor and applause. But, alas! can your volatile daughter ever acquire your wisdom—ever

possess your resolution, dignity, and prudence?

I hope soon to converse with you personally upon the subject, and to profit by your precepts and example. I anticipate the hour of my return to your bosom with impatience. My daily thoughts and nightly dreams restore me to the society of my beloved mamma; and, till I enjoy in reality, I subscribe myself your dutiful daughter,

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XXI.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

HARTFORD.

How welcome to me, my dear Eliza, are the tidings of your return! My widowed heart has mourned your absence, and languished for the company of its now dearest connection. When stripped of one dependence, the mind naturally collects and rests itself in another. Your father's death deprived me, for a while, of every enjoyment. But a reviving sense of the duties which I owed to a rising family roused me from the lethargy of grief. In my cares I found an alleviation of my sorrows. The expanding virtues of my children soothed and exhilarated my drooping spirits, and my attention to their education and interest was amply rewarded by their proficiency and duty. In them every hope, every pleasure, now

centres. They are the axis on which revolves the temporal felicity of their mother. Judge, then, my dear, how anxiously I must watch, how solicitously I must regard, every circumstance which relates to their welfare and prosperity! Exquisitely alive to these sensations, your letter awakens my hopes and my fears. As you are young and charming, a thousand dangers lurk unseen around you. I wish you to find a friend and protector worthy of being rewarded by your love and your society. Such a one I think Mr. Boyer will prove. I am, therefore, sorry, since there can be no other, that his profession should be an objection in your mind. You say that I have experienced the scenes of trial connected with that station. I have, indeed; and I will tell you the result of this experience. It is, that I have found it replete with happiness. No class of society has domestic enjoyment more at command than clergymen. Their circumstances are generally a decent competency. They are removed alike from the perplexing cares of want and from the distracting parade of wealth. They are respected by all ranks, and partakers of the best company. With regard to its being a dependent situation, what one is not so? Are we not all links in the great chain of society, some more, some less important, but each upheld by others, throughout the confederated whole? In whatever situation we are placed, our greater or less degree of happiness must be derived from ourselves. Happiness is in a great measure the result of our own dispositions and actions. Let us conduct uprightly

and justly; with propriety and steadiness; not servilely cringing for favor, nor arrogantly claiming more attention and respect than our due; let us bear with fortitude the providential and unavoidable evils of life, and we shall spend our days with respectability and contentment at least.

I will not expatiate on the topic of your letter till we have a personal interview, for which I am indeed impatient. Return, my daughter, as soon as politeness will allow, to your expecting friends; more especially to the fond embraces of your affectionate mother.

M. WHARTON.

LETTER XXII.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

HAMPSHIRE.

Can time, can distance, can absence allay or extinguish the sentiments of refined affection, the ardor of true love? No, my dear Eliza. If I may judge by my own heart, I shall say they cannot. Amidst the parade which has attended me, the interesting scenes in which I have been engaged, and the weighty cares which have occupied my attention, your idea has been the solace of my retired moments, the soother of every anxious thought. I recall with pleasure the conversation which we have shared. I dwell with rapture on the marks of favor which I have received

from you. My first wish is the continuance and increase of these favors; my highest ambition, to deserve them. I look forward and anticipate with impatience the future enjoyment of your society, and hope we shall one day experience the reality of those beautiful lines of Thomson:—

"—an elegant sufficiency,
Content, retirement, rural quiet, friendship,
Books, ease, and alternate labor; useful life,
Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven;
These are the matchless joys of virtuous love.

Mr. Selby, my particular friend, will have the honor of delivering this letter. He will be able to give you any information, relative to our public transactions, which you may wish. May I solicit the favor of a line, through him, in return? It will relieve, in some measure, the tediousness of this separation. I intend to pay my respects to you personally in about a fortnight; till when I subscribe myself your sincere and affectionate friend,

J. BOYER.

LETTER XXIII.

TO THE REV. J. BOYER.

NEW HAVEN.

I have executed your commission, and been amply

rewarded for my trouble by the pleasures I enjoyed in the society of the agreeable family to which I was introduced; especially of the amiable and accomplished lady who is the object of your particular regard. I think she fully justifies your partiality to her. She appears to possess both the virtues and the graces. Her form is fine, and her countenance interests us at once in her favor. There is a mixture of dignity and ease which commands respect and conciliates affection. After these encomiums, will you permit me to say there is an air of gayety in her appearance and deportment which savors a little of coquetry? I am persuaded, however, that she has too much good sense to practise its arts. She received your letter very graciously, asked leave to retire a few moments, and returned with a smile of complacency on her brow, which I construe favorably to you.

There was a Mr. Lawrence, with his lady and daughter, and a certain Major Sanford, at the house. The latter, I believe, in the modern sense of the phrase, *is much of a gentleman*; that is, a man of show and fashion.

Miss Wharton asked me when I should leave town, and when I should return, or have an opportunity of conveyance to Hampshire. I told her I should write by the next post, and, if she had any commands, would be happy to execute them. She would send a line to her friend, she said, if I would take the trouble to enclose it in my letter. I readily consented,

and told her that I would call and receive her favor to-morrow morning. This chitchat was a little aside; but I could not but observe that the aforesaid Major Sanford had dropped his part in the conversation of the rest of the company, and was attending to us, though he endeavored to conceal his attention by looking carelessly over a play which lay on the window by him. Yet he evidently watched every word and action of Miss Wharton, as if he were really interested in her movements.

It is said she has many admirers, and I conceive it very possible that this may be one of them; though, truly, I do not think that she would esteem such a conquest any great honor. I now joined in the general topic of conversation, which was politics; Mrs. Richman and Miss Wharton judiciously, yet modestly, bore a part; while the other ladies amused themselves with Major Sanford, who was making his sage remarks on the play, which he still kept in his hand. General Richman at length observed that we had formed into parties. Major Sanford, upon, this, laid aside his book. Miss Lawrence simpered, and looked as if she was well pleased with being in a party with so fine a man; while her mother replied that she never meddled with politics. "Miss Wharton and I," said Mrs. Richman, "must beg leave to differ from you, madam. We think ourselves interested in the welfare and prosperity of our country; and, consequently, claim the right of inquiring into those affairs which may conduce to or interfere with the

common weal. We shall not be called to the senate or the field to assert its privileges and defend its rights, but we shall feel, for the honor and safety of our friends and connections who are thus employed. If the community flourish and enjoy health and freedom, shall we not share in the happy effects? If it be oppressed and disturbed, shall we not endure our proportion of the evil? Why, then, should the love of our country be a masculine passion only? Why should government, which involves the peace and order of the society of which we are a part, be wholly excluded from our observation?" Mrs. Lawrence made some slight reply, and waived the subject. The gentlemen applauded Mrs. Richman's sentiments as truly Roman, and, what was more, they said, truly republican.

I rose to take leave, observing to Miss Wharton that I should call to-morrow, as agreed. Upon this, General Richman politely requested the favor of my company at dinner. I accepted his invitation, and bade them good night. I shall do the same to you for the present, as I intend, to-morrow, to scribble the cover, which is to enclose your Eliza's letter.

T. SELBY.

LETTER XXIV.

TO THE REV. J. BOYER.

NEW HAVEN.

I resume my pen, having just returned from General Richman's; not with an expectation, however, of your reading this till you have perused and reperused the enclosed. I can bear such neglect in this case, as I have been alike interested myself.

I went to General Richman's at twelve o'clock. About a mile from thence, upon turning a corner, I observed a gentleman and lady on horseback, some way before me, riding at a very moderate pace, and seemingly in close conversation. I kept at the same distance from them till I saw them stop at the general's gate. I then put on, and, coming up with them just as they alighted, was surprised to find them no other than Major Sanford and Miss Wharton. They were both a little disconcerted at my salutation: I know not why. Miss Wharton invited him in; but he declined, being engaged to dine. General Richman received us at the door. As I handed Miss Wharton in, he observed, jocosely, that she had changed company. "Yes, sir," she replied, "more than once since I went out, as you doubtless observed." "I was not aware," said Mrs. Richman, "that Major Sanford was to be of your party to-day." "It was quite accidental, madam," said Miss Wharton. "Miss Lawrence and I had agreed, last evening, to take a little airing this forenoon. A young gentleman, a relation of hers, who is making them a visit, was to attend us.

"We had not rode more than two miles when we were overtaken by Major Sanford, who very politely

asked leave to join our party. Miss Lawrence very readily consented; and we had a very sociable ride. The fineness of the day induced me to protract the enjoyment of it abroad; but Miss Lawrence declined riding so far as I proposed, as she had engaged company to dine. We therefore parted till the evening, when we are to meet again." "What, another engagement!" said Mrs. Richman. "Only to the assembly, madam." "May I inquire after your gallant, my dear? But I have no right, perhaps, to be inquisitive," said Mrs. Richman. Miss Wharton made no reply, and the conversation took a general turn. Miss Wharton sustained her part with great propriety. Indeed, she discovers a fund of useful knowledge and extensive reading, which render her peculiarly entertaining; while the brilliancy of her wit, the fluency of her language, the vivacity and ease of her manners are inexpressibly engaging. I am going myself to the assembly this evening, though I did not mention it to General Richman. I therefore took my leave soon after dinner.

I have heard so much in praise of Miss Wharton's penmanship, in addition to her other endowments, that I am almost tempted to break the seal of her letter to you; but I forbear. Wishing you much happiness in the perusal of it, and more in the possession of its writer, I subscribe myself yours, &c.,

T. SELBY.

LETTER XXV.

TO THE REV. J. BOYER.

NEW HAVEN.

Sir: Your favor of the 4th instant came to hand yesterday. I received it with pleasure, and embrace this early opportunity of contributing my part to a correspondence tending to promote a friendly and social intercourse. An epistolary communication between the sexes has been with some a subject of satire and censure; but unjustly, in my opinion. With persons of refinement and information, it may be a source of entertainment and utility. The knowledge and masculine virtues of your sex may be softened and rendered more diffusive by the inquisitiveness, vivacity, and docility of ours, drawn forth and exercised by each other.

In regard to the *particular* subject of yours, I shall be silent. Ideas of that kind are better conveyed, on my part, by words than by the pen.

I congratulate you on your agreeable settlement, and hope it will be productive of real and lasting happiness. I am convinced that felicity is not confined to any particular station or condition in life; yet, methinks, some are better calculated to afford it to me than others.

Your extract from a favorite poet is charmingly descriptive; but is it not difficult to ascertain what

we can pronounce "an elegant sufficiency"? Perhaps you will answer, as some others have done, we can attain it by circumscribing our wishes within the compass of our abilities. I am not very avaricious; yet I must own that I should like to enjoy it without so much trouble as that would cost me.

Excuse my seeming levity. You have flattered my cheerfulness by commending it, and must, therefore, indulge me in the exercise of it. I cannot conveniently be at the pains of restraining its sallies when I write in confidence.

Is a sprightly disposition, in your view, indicative of a giddy mind or an innocent heart? Of the latter, I presume; for I know you are not a misanthrope.

We expect the pleasure of Mr. Selby's company to dinner. You are certainly under obligations to his friendship for the liberal encomiums he bestowed on you and your prospects yesterday. Mrs. Richman rallied me, after he was gone, on my listening ear. The general and she unite in requesting me to present their respects.

Wishing you health and happiness, I subscribe myself your friend,

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XXVI.

TO MISS LUCY FREEMAN.

NEW HAVEN.

I am perplexed and embarrassed, my friend, by the assiduous attentions of this Major Sanford. I shall write circumstantially and frankly to you, that I may have the benefit of your advice. He came here last Monday in company with Mr. Lawrence, his wife, and daughter, to make us a visit. While they were present, a Mr. Selby, a particular friend of Mr. Boyer, came in, and delivered me a letter from him. I was really happy in the reception of this proof of his affection. His friend gave a very flattering account of his situation and prospects.

The watchful eye of Major Sanford traced every word and action respecting Mr. Boyer with an attention which seemed to border on anxiety. That, however, did not restrain, but rather accelerated, my vivacity and inquisitiveness on the subject; for I wished to know whether it would produce any real effect upon him or not.

After Mr. Selby's departure, he appeared pensive and thoughtful the remainder of the evening, and evidently sought an opportunity of speaking to me aside, which I studiously avoided. Miss Lawrence and I formed an engagement to take an airing in the morning on horseback, attended by a relation of hers who is now with them. They called for me about ten, when we immediately set out upon our preconcerted

excursion. We had not proceeded far before we were met by Major Sanford. He was extremely polite, and finding our destination was not particular, begged leave to join our party. This was granted; and we had an agreeable tour for several miles, the time being passed in easy and unstudied remarks upon obvious occurrences. Major Sanford could not, however, conceal his particular attention to me, which rather nettled Miss Lawrence. She grew somewhat serious, and declined riding so far as we had intended, alleging that she expected company to dine.

Major Sanford, understanding that she was going to the assembly in the evening with Mr. Gordon, solicited me to accept a ticket, and form a party with them. The entertainment was alluring, and I consented. When we had parted with Miss Lawrence, Major Sanford insisted on my riding a little farther, saying he must converse with me on a particular subject, and if I refused him this opportunity, that he must visit me at my residence, let it offend whom it would. I yielded to his importunity, and we rode on. He then told me that his mind was in a state of suspense and agitation which was very painful to bear, and which I only could relieve; that my cheerful reception of Mr. Boyer's letter yesterday, and deportment respecting him, had awakened in his breast all the pangs of jealousy which the most ardent love could feel; that my treatment of Mr. Boyer's friend convinced him that I was more interested in his affairs than I was willing to own;

that he foresaw himself to be condemned to an eternal separation, and the total loss of my favor and society, as soon as time and circumstances would allow.

His zeal, his pathos, alarmed me. I begged him to be calm. "To you," said I, "as a friend, I have intrusted my situation in relation to Mr. Boyer. You know that I am under no special obligation to him, and I do not intend to form any immediate connection." "Mr. Boyer must have different ideas, madam; and he has reason for them, if I may judge by appearances. When do you expect another visit from him?" "In about a fortnight." "And is my fate to be then decided? and so decided, as I fear it will be, through the influence of your friends, if not by your own inclination?" "My friends, sir, will not control, they will only advise to what they think most for my interest, and I hope that my conduct will not be unworthy of their approbation." "Pardon me, my dear Eliza," said he, "if I am impertinent; it is my regard for you which impels me to the presumption. Do you intend to give your hand to Mr. Boyer?" "I do not intend to give my hand to any man at present. I have but lately entered society, and wish, for a while, to enjoy my freedom in the participation of pleasures suited to my age and sex." "These," said he, "you are aware, I suppose, when you form a connection with that man, you must renounce, and content yourself with a confinement to the tedious round of domestic duties, the pedantic conversation of scholars, and the

invidious criticisms of a whole town." "I have been accustomed," said I, "and am therefore attached, to men of letters; and as to the praise or censure of the populace, I hope always to enjoy that approbation of conscience which will render me superior to both. But you forget your promise not to talk in this style, and have deviated far from the character of a friend and brother, with, which you consented to rest satisfied." "Yes; but I find myself unequal to the task. I am not stoic enough tamely to make so great a sacrifice. I must plead for an interest in your favor till you banish me from your presence, and tell me plainly that you hate me." We had by this time reached the gate, and as we dismounted, were unexpectedly accosted by Mr. Selby, who had come, agreeably to promise, to dine with us, and receive my letter to Mr. Boyer.

Major Sanford took his leave as General Richman appeared at the door. The general and his lady rallied me on my change of company, but very prudently concealed their sentiments of Major Sanford while Mr. Selby was present. Nothing material occurred before and during dinner, soon after which Mr. Selby went away. I retired to dress for the assembly, and had nearly completed the labor of the toilet when Mrs. Richman entered. "My friendship for you, my dear Eliza," said she, "interests me so much in your affairs that I cannot repress my curiosity to know who has the honor of your hand this evening." "If it be any honor," said I, "it will be

conferred on Major Sanford." "I think it far too great to be thus bestowed," returned she. "It is perfectly astonishing to me that the virtuous part of my sex will countenance, caress, and encourage those men whose profession it is to blast their reputation, destroy their peace, and triumph in their infamy." "Is this, madam, the avowed design of Major Sanford?" "I know not what he avows, but his practice too plainly bespeaks his principles and views." "Does he now practise the arts you mention? or do you refer to past follies?" "I cannot answer for his present conduct; his past has established his character." "You, madam, are an advocate for charity; that, perhaps, if exercised in this instance, might lead you to think it possible for him to reform, to become a valuable member of society, and, when connected with a lady of virtue and refinement, to be capable of making a good husband." "I cannot conceive that such a lady would be willing to risk her all upon the slender prospect of his reformation. I hope the one with whom I am conversing has no inclination to so hazardous an experiment." "Why, not much." "Not much! If you have any, why do you continue to encourage Mr. Boyer's addresses?" "I am not sufficiently acquainted with either, yet, to determine which to take. At present, I shall not confine myself in any way. In regard to these men, my fancy and my judgment are in scales; sometimes one preponderates, sometimes the other; which will finally prevail, time alone can reveal." "O my cousin, beware of the delusions of fancy! Reason must be our

guide if we would expect durable happiness." At this instant a servant opened the door, and told me that Major Sanford waited in the parlor. Being ready, I wished Mrs. Richman a good evening, and went down. Neither General Richman nor his lady appeared. He therefore handed me immediately into his phaeton, and we were soon in the assembly room.

I was surprised, on my entrance, to find Mr. Selby there, as he did not mention, at dinner, his intention of going. He attached himself to our party, and, in the intervals of dancing, took every opportunity of conversing with me. These, however, were not many; for Major Sanford assiduously precluded the possibility of my being much engaged by any one else. We passed the evening very agreeably; but the major's importunity was rather troublesome as we returned home. He insisted upon my declaring whether Mr. Boyer really possessed my affections, and whether I intended to confer myself on him or not. "If," said he, "you answer me in the affirmative, I must despair; but if you have not absolutely decided against me, I will still hope that my persevering assiduity, my faithful love, may at last be rewarded." I told him that I was under no obligation to give him any account of my disposition towards another, and that he must remember the terms of our present association to which he had subscribed. I therefore begged him to waive the subject now, if not forever. He asked my pardon, if he had been impertinent, but

desired leave to renew his request that I would receive his visits, his friendly visits. I replied that I could not grant this, and that he must blame himself, not me, if he was an unwelcome guest at General Richman's. He lamented the prejudices which my friends had imbibed against him, but flattered himself that I was more liberal than to be influenced by them without any positive proof of demerit, as it was impossible that his conduct towards me should ever deviate from the strictest rules of honor and love.

What shall I say now, my friend? This man to an agreeable person has superadded graceful manners, an amiable temper, and a fortune sufficient to insure the enjoyments of all the pleasing varieties of social life. Perhaps a gay disposition and a lax education may have betrayed him into some scenes of dissipation. But is it not an adage generally received, that "*a reformed rake makes the best husband*"? My fancy leads me for happiness to the festive haunts of fashionable life. I am at present, and know not but I ever shall be, too volatile for a confinement to domestic avocations and sedentary pleasures. I dare not, therefore, place myself in a situation where these must be indispensable. Mr. Boyer's person and character are agreeable. I really esteem the man. My reason and judgment, as I have observed before, declare for a connection with him, as a state of tranquillity and rational happiness. But the idea of relinquishing those delightful amusements and

flattering attentions which wealth and equipage bestow is painful. Why were not the virtues of the one and the graces and affluence of the other combined? I should then have been happy indeed. But, as the case now stands, I am loath to give up either; being doubtful which will conduce most to my felicity.

Pray write me impartially; let me know your real sentiments, for I rely greatly upon your opinion. I am, &c.,

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XXVII.

TO THE REV. MR. BOYER.

NEW HAVEN.

I am quite a convert to Pope's assertion, that

"Every woman is at heart a rake."

How else can we account for the pleasure which they evidently receive from the society, the flattery, the caresses of men of that character? Even the most virtuous of them seem naturally prone to gayety, to pleasure, and, I had almost said, to dissipation. How else shall we account for the existence of this disposition in your favorite fair? It cannot be the result of her education. Such a one as she has

received is calculated to give her a very different turn of mind. You must forgive me, my friend, for I am a little vexed and alarmed on your-account. I went last evening to the assembly, as I told you in my last that I intended. I was purposely without a partner, that I might have the liberty to exercise my gallantry as circumstances should invite. Indeed I must own that my particular design was to observe Miss Wharton's movements, being rather inclined to jealousy in your behalf. She was handed into the assembly room by Major Sanford. The brilliance of their appearance, the levity of their manners, and the contrast of their characters I found to be a general subject of speculation. I endeavored to associate with Miss Wharton, but found it impossible to detach her a moment from the coxcomb who attended her. If she has any idea of a connection with you, why does she continue to associate with another, especially with one of so opposite a description? I am seriously afraid that there is more intimacy between them than there ought to be, considering the encouragement she has given you.

I hope you will not be offended by my freedom in this matter. It originates in a concern for your honor and future happiness. I am anxious lest you should be made the dupe of a coquette, and your peace of mind fall a sacrifice to an artful debauchee. Yet I must believe that Miss Wharton has, in reality, all that virtue and good sense of which she enjoys the reputation; but her present conduct is mysterious.

I have said enough (more than I ought, perhaps) to awaken your attention to circumstances which *may* lead to important events. If they appear of little or no consequence to you, you will at least ascribe the mention of them to motives of sincere regard in your friend and humble servant,

T. SELBY.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO MR. CHARLES DEIGHTON.

NEW HAVEN.

I go on finely with my amour. I have every encouragement that I could wish. Indeed my fair one does not verbally declare in my favor; but then, according to the vulgar proverb, that "*actions speak louder than words,*" I have no reason to complain; since she evidently approves my gallantry, is pleased with my company, and listens to my flattery. Her sagacious friends have undoubtedly given her a detail of my vices. If, therefore, my past conduct has been repugnant to her notions of propriety, why does she not act consistently, and refuse at once to associate with a man whose character she cannot esteem? But no; that, Charles, is no part of the female plan; our entrapping a few of their sex only discovers the gayety of our dispositions, the insinuating graces of our manners, and the irresistible charms of our persons and address. These

qualifications are very alluring to the sprightly fancy of the fair. They think to enjoy the pleasures which result from this source, while their vanity and ignorance prompt each one to imagine herself superior to delusion, and to anticipate the honor of reclaiming the libertine and reforming the rake. I don't know, however, but this girl will really have that merit with me; for I am so much attached to her that I begin to suspect I should sooner become a convert to sobriety than lose her. I cannot find that I have made much impression on her heart as yet. Want of success in this point mortifies me extremely, as it is the first time I ever failed. Besides, I am apprehensive that she is prepossessed in favor of the other swain, the clerical lover, whom I have mentioned to you before. The chord, therefore, upon which I play the most, is the dissimilarity of their dispositions and pleasures. I endeavor to detach her from him, and disaffect her towards him; knowing that, if I can separate them entirely, I shall be more likely to succeed in my plan. Not that I have any thoughts of marrying her myself; that will not do at present. But I love her too well to see her connected with another for life. I must own myself a little revengeful, too, in this affair. I wish to punish her friends, as she calls them, for their malice towards me, for their cold and negligent treatment of me whenever I go to the house. I know that to frustrate their designs of a connection between Mr. Boyer and Eliza would be a grievous disappointment. I have not yet determined to seduce her, though, with all her

pretensions to virtue, I do not think it impossible. And if I should, she can blame none but herself, since she knows my character, and has no reason to wonder if I act consistently with it. If she will play with a lion, let her beware of his paw, I say. At present, I wish innocently to enjoy her society; it is a luxury which I never tasted before. She is the very soul of pleasure. The gayest circle is irradiated by her presence, and the highest entertainment receives its greatest charms from her smiles. Besides, I have purchased the seat of Captain Pribble, about a mile from her mother's; and can I think of suffering her to leave the neighborhood just as I enter it? I shall exert every nerve to prevent that, and hope to meet with the usual success of

PETER SANFORD.

LETTER XXIX.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

HARTFORD.

You desire me to write to you, my friend; but if you had not, I should by no means have refrained. I tremble at the precipice on which you stand, and must echo and re√ęcho the seasonable admonition of the excellent Mrs. Richman, "Beware of the delusions of fancy." You are strangely infatuated by them! Let not the magic arts of that worthless Sanford lead you, like an *ignis fatuus*, from the path of rectitude

and virtue.

I do not find, in all your conversations with him, that one word about marriage drops from his lips. This is mysterious. No, it is characteristic of the man. Suppose, however, that his views are honorable; yet what can you expect, what can you promise yourself, from such a connection? "A reformed rake," you say, "makes the best husband"—a trite, but a very erroneous maxim, as the fatal experience of thousands of our sex can testify. In the first place, I believe that rakes very seldom *do* reform while their fortunes and constitutions enable them to pursue their licentious pleasures. But even allowing this to happen; can a woman of refinement and delicacy enjoy the society of a man whose mind has been corrupted, whose taste has been vitiated, and who has contracted a depravity, both of sentiment and manners, which no degree of repentance can wholly efface? Besides, of true love they are absolutely incapable. Their passions have been much too hackneyed to admit so pure a flame. You cannot anticipate sincere and lasting respect from them. They have been so long accustomed to the company of those of our sex who deserve no esteem, that the greatest dignity and purity of character can never excite it in their breasts. They are naturally prone to jealousy. Habituated to an intercourse with the baser part of the sex, they level the whole, and seldom believe any to be incorruptible. They are always hardhearted and cruel. How else could they triumph

in the miseries which they frequently occasion? Their specious manners may render them agreeable companions abroad, but at home the evil propensities of their minds will invariably predominate. They are steeled against the tender affections which render domestic life delightful; strangers to the kind, the endearing sympathies of husband, father, and friend. The thousand nameless attentions which soften the rugged path of life are neglected, and deemed unworthy of notice, by persons who have been inured to scenes of dissipation and debauchery. And is a man of this description to be the partner, the companion, the bosom friend of my Eliza? Forbid it, Heaven! Let not the noble qualities so lavishly bestowed upon her be thus unworthily sacrificed!

You seem to be particularly charmed with the fortune of Major Sanford, with the gayety of his appearance, with the splendor of his equipage, with the politeness of his manners, with what you call the graces of his person. These, alas! are superficial, insnaring endowments. As to fortune, prudence, economy, and regularity are necessary to preserve it when possessed. Of these Major Sanford is certainly destitute—unless common fame (which more frequently tells the truth than some are willing to allow) does him great injustice. As to external parade, it will not satisfy the rational mind when it aspires to those substantial pleasures for which yours is formed. And as to the graces of person and

manners, they are but a wretched substitute for those virtues which adorn and dignify human life. Can you, who have always been used to serenity and order in a family, to rational, refined, and improving conversation, relinquish them, and launch into the whirlpool of frivolity, where the correct taste and the delicate sensibility which you possess must constantly be wounded by the frothy and illiberal sallies of licentious wit?

This, my dear, is but a faint picture of the situation to which you seem inclined. Reverse the scene, and you will perceive the alternative which is submitted to your option in a virtuous connection with Mr. Boyer. Remember that you are acting for life, and that your happiness in this world, perhaps in the next, depends on your present choice.

I called last evening to see your mamma. She is fondly anticipating your return, and rejoicing in the prospect of your agreeable and speedy settlement. I could not find it in my heart to distress her by intimating that you had other views. I wish her benevolent bosom nevermore to feel the pangs of disappointed hope.

I am busily engaged in preparing for my nuptials. The solemn words, "As long as ye both shall live," render me thoughtful and serious. I hope for your enlivening presence soon, which will prove a seasonable cordial to the spirits of your

LUCY FREEMAN.

LETTER XXX.

TO MISS LUCY FREEMAN.

NEW HAVEN.

I believe your spirits need a cordial indeed, my dear Lucy, after drawing so dreadful a portrait of my swain. But I call him mine no longer. I renounce him entirely. My friends shall be gratified; and if their predictions are verified, I shall be happy in a union with a man of their choice. General Richman and lady have labored abundantly to prove that my ruin was inevitable if I did not immediately break all intercourse with Major Sanford. I promised a compliance with their wishes, and have accomplished the task, though a hard one I found it. Last Thursday he was here, and desired leave to spend an hour with me. I readily consented, assuring my friends it should be the last hour which I would ever spend in his company.

He told me that he was obliged to leave town for a few days; and as I should probably see Mr. Boyer before his return, he could not depart in peace without once more endeavoring to interest me in his favor, to obtain some token of esteem, some glimpse of hope that I would not utterly reject him, to support him in his absence. I thanked him for the polite attention he had paid me since our

acquaintance, told him that I should ever retain a grateful sense of his partiality to me, that he would ever share my best wishes, but that all connection of the kind to which he alluded must from that time forever cease.

He exerted all his eloquence to obtain a retraction of that sentence, and ran with the greatest volubility through all the protestations, prayers, entreaties, professions, and assurances which love could feel or art contrive. I had resolution, however, to resist them, and to command my own emotions on the occasion better than my natural sensibility gave me reason to expect.

Finding every effort vain, he rose precipitately, and bade me adieu. I urged his tarrying to tea; but he declined, saying that he must retire to his chamber, being, in his present state of mind, unfit for any society, as he was banished from mine. I offered him my hand, which he pressed with ardor to his lips, and, bowing in silence, left the room.

Thus terminated this affair—an affair which, perhaps, was only the effect of mere gallantry on his part, and of unmeaning pleasantry on mine, and which, I am sorry to say, has given my friends so much anxiety and concern. I am under obligations to them for their kind solicitude, however causeless it may have been.

As an agreeable companion, as a polite and

finished gallant, Major Sanford is all that the most lively fancy could wish. And as you have always affirmed that I was a little inclined to coquetry, can you wonder at my exercising it upon so happy a subject? Besides, when I thought more seriously, his liberal fortune was extremely alluring to me, who, you know, have been hitherto confined to the rigid rules of prudence and economy, not to say necessity, in my finances.

Miss Lawrence called on me yesterday, as she was taking the air, and asked me whether Major Sanford took leave of me when he left town. "He was here last week," said I, "but I did not know that he was gone away." "O, yes," she replied, "he is gone to take possession of his seat which he has lately purchased of Captain Pribble. I am told it is superb; and it ought to be, if it has the honor of his residence." "Then you have a great opinion of Major Sanford," said I. "Certainly; and has not every body else?" said she. "I am sure he is a very fine gentleman." Mrs. Richman smiled rather contemptuously, and I changed the subject. I believe that the innocent heart of this simple girl is a little taken in.

I have just received a letter from Mr. Boyer in the usual style. He expects the superlative happiness of kissing my hand next week. O, dear! I believe I must begin to fix my phiz. Let me run to the glass, and try if I can make up one that will look *madamish*. Yes, I succeeded very well.

I congratulate you on your new neighbor; but I advise friend George to have the Gordian knot tied immediately, lest you should be insnared by this bewitching squire.

I have been trying to seduce General Richman to accompany me to the assembly this evening, but cannot prevail. Were Mrs. Richman able to go with us, he would be very happy to wait on us together; but, to tell the truth, he had rather enjoy her company at home than any which is to be found abroad. I rallied him on his old-fashioned taste, but my heart approved and applauded his attachment. I despise the married man or woman who harbors an inclination to partake of separate pleasures.

I am told that a servant man inquires for me below —the messenger of some enamoured swain, I suppose. I will step down and learn what message he brings.

Nothing extraordinary; it is only a card of compliments from a Mr. Emmons, a respectable merchant of this city, requesting the honor to wait on me to the assembly this evening—a welcome request, which I made no hesitation to grant. If I must resign these favorite amusements, let me enjoy as large a share as possible till the time arrives. I must repair to the toilet, and adorn for a new conquest the person of

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XXXI.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

HARTFORD.

I am very happy to find you are in so good spirits, Eliza, after parting with your favorite swain; for I perceive that he is really the favorite of your fancy, though your heart cannot esteem him; and, independent of that, no sensations can be durable.

I can tell you some news of this strange man. He has arrived, and taken possession of his seat. Having given general invitations, he has been called upon and welcomed by most of the neighboring gentry. Yesterday he made an elegant entertainment. Friend George (as you call him) and I were of the number who had cards. Twenty-one couple went, I am told. We did not go. I consider my time too valuable to be spent in cultivating acquaintance with a person from whom neither pleasure nor improvement is to be expected. His profuseness may bribe the unthinking multitude to show him respect; but he must know that, though

"Places and honors have been bought for gold,
Esteem and love were never to be sold."

I look upon the vicious habits and abandoned character of Major Sanford to have more pernicious effects on society than the perpetrations of the robber and the assassin. These, when detected, are

rigidly punished by the laws of the land. If their lives be spared, they are shunned by society, and treated with every mark of disapprobation and contempt. But, to the disgrace of humanity and virtue, the assassin of honor, the wretch who breaks the peace of families, who robs virgin innocence of its charms, who triumphs over the ill-placed confidence of the inexperienced, unsuspecting, and too credulous fair, is received and caressed, not only by his own sex, to which he is a reproach, but even by ours, who have every conceivable reason to despise and avoid him. Influenced by these principles, I am neither ashamed nor afraid openly to avow my sentiments of this man, and my reasons for treating him with the most pointed neglect.

I write warmly on the subject; for it is a subject in which I think the honor and happiness of my sex concerned. I wish they would more generally espouse their own cause. It would conduce to the public, weal, and to their personal respectability. I rejoice, heartily, that you have had resolution to resist his allurements, to detect and repel his artifices. Resolution in such a case is absolutely necessary; for,

"In spite of all the virtue we can boast,
The woman that deliberates is lost."

As I was riding out yesterday I met your mamma. She wondered that I was not one of the party at our new neighbor's. "The reason, madam," said I, "is, that I do not like the character of the man." "I know

nothing of him," said she; "he is quite a stranger to me, only as he called at my house last week to pay me his respects, as he said, for the sake of my late husband, whose memory he revered, and because I was the mother of Miss Eliza Wharton, with whom he had the honor of some little acquaintance. His manners are engaging, and I am sorry to hear that his morals are corrupt."

This, my dear, is a very extraordinary visit. I fear that he has not yet laid aside his arts. Be still on your guard, is the advice of your sincere and faithful friend,

LUCY FREEMAN.

LETTER XXXII.

TO MR. CHARLES DEIGHTON.

HARTFORD.

I am really banished and rejected—desired nevermore to think of the girl I love with a view of indulging that love or of rendering it acceptable to its object. You will perhaps dispute the propriety of the term, and tell me it is not love—it is only gallantry, and a desire to exercise it with her as a favorite nymph. I neither know nor care by what appellation you distinguish it; but it truly gives me pain. I have not felt one sensation of genuine pleasure since I heard my sentence; yet I acquiesced

in it, and submissively took my leave; though I doubt not but I shall retaliate the indignity one time or other.

I have taken possession of my new purchase—an elegant and delightful residence. It is rendered more so by being in the vicinity of my charmer's native abode. This circumstance will conduce much to my enjoyment, if I can succeed in my plan of separating her from Mr. Boyer. I know that my situation and mode of life are far more pleasing to her than his, and shall therefore trust to my appearance and address for a re√ęstablishment in her favor. I intend, if possible, to ingratiate myself with her particular friends. For this purpose I called last week at her mother's to pay my respects to her (so I told the good woman) as an object of my particular regard, and as the parent of a young lady whom I had the honor to know and admire. She received me very civilly, thanked me for my attention, and invited me to call whenever I had opportunity; which was the very thing I wanted. I intend, likewise, to court popularity. I don't know but I must accept, by and by, some lucrative office in the civil department; yet I cannot bear the idea of confinement to business. It appears to me quite inconsistent with the character of a gentleman; I am sure it is with that of a man of pleasure. But something I must do; for I tell you, in confidence, that I was obliged to mortgage this place because I had not wherewithal to pay for it. But I shall manage matters very well, I have no doubt, and

keep up the appearance of affluence till I find some lady in a strait for a husband whose fortune will enable me to extricate myself from these embarrassments. Do come and see me, Charles; for, notwithstanding all my gayety and parade, I have some turns of the hypo, some qualms of conscience, you will call them; but I meddle not with such obsolete words. And so good by to you, says

PETER SANFORD.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO MISS LUCY FREEMAN.

NEW HAVEN.

My dear friend: I believe I must begin to assume airs of gravity; and they will not be quite so foreign to my feelings now as at some other times. You shall know the reason. I have been associated for three days with sentiment and sobriety in the person of Mr. Boyer. I don't know but this man will seduce me into matrimony. He is very eloquent upon the subject; and his manners are so solemn that I am strongly tempted—yet I dare not—to laugh. Really, Lucy, there is something extremely engaging, and soothing, too, in virtuous and refined conversation. It is a source of enjoyment which cannot be realized by the dissolute and unreflecting. But then this particular theme of his is not a favorite one to me; I mean as connected with its consequences—care and

confinement. However, I have compounded the matter with him, and conditioned that he shall expatiate on the subject, and call it by what name he pleases, *platonic* or *conjugal*, provided he will let me take my own time for the consummation. I have consented that he shall escort me next week to see my mamma and my Lucy. O, how the idea of returning to that revered mansion, to those beloved friends, exhilarates my spirits!

General Richman's politeness to me has induced him to invite a large party of those gentlemen and ladies who have been particularly attentive to me during my residence here to dine and take tea to-morrow. After that, I expect to be engaged in making farewell visits till I leave the place. I shall, therefore, forego the pleasure of telling you any occurrences subsequent to this date until you see and converse with your sincere friend,

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO MRS. RICHMAN.

HARTFORD.

Dear madam: The day after I left your hospitable dwelling brought me safe to that of my honored mamma; to the seat of maternal and filial affection; of social ease and domestic peace; of every species of

happiness which can result from religion and virtue, from refinement in morals and manners.

I found my brother and his wife, with Lucy Freeman and Mr. Sumner, waiting to receive and bid me welcome. I flew with ecstasy to the bosom of my mamma, who received me with her accustomed affection, testified by the expressive tears of tenderness which stole silently down her widowed cheek. She was unable to speak. I was equally so. We therefore indulged a moment the pleasing emotions of sympathizing sensibility. When disengaged from her fond embrace, I was saluted by the others in turn; and, having recovered myself, I presented Mr. Boyer to each of the company, and each of the company to him. He was cordially received by all, but more especially by my mamma.

The next day I was called upon and welcomed by several of my neighboring acquaintance; among whom I was not a little surprised to see Major Sanford. He came in company with Mr. Stoddard and lady, whom he overtook, as he told me, near by; and, as they informed him that the design of their visit was to welcome me home, he readily accepted their invitation to partake of the pleasure which every one must receive on my return. I bowed slightly at his compliment, taking no visible notice of any peculiarity of expression either in his words or looks.

His politeness to Mr. Boyer appeared to be the result of habit; Mr. Boyer's to him to be forced by

respect to the company to which he had gained admission. I dare say that each felt a conscious superiority—the one on the score of merit, the other on that of fortune. Which ought to outweigh the judicious mind will easily decide. The scale, as I once observed to you, will turn as fancy or reason preponderates. I believe the esteem which I now have for Mr. Boyer will keep me steady; except, perhaps, some little eccentricities now and then, just by way of variety. I am going to-morrow morning to spend a few days with Lucy Freeman, to assist in the preparation for, and the solemnization of, her nuptials. Mr. Boyer, in the mean time, will tarry among his friends in town. My mamma is excessively partial to him, though I am not yet jealous that she means to rival me. I am not certain, however, but it might be happy for him if she should; for I suspect, not withstanding the disparity of her age, that she is better calculated to make him a good wife than I am or ever shall be.

But to be sober. Please, madam, to make my compliments acceptable to those of your neighbors, whose politeness and attention to me while at your house have laid me under particular obligations of gratitude and respect. My best regards attend General Richman. Pray tell him that, though I never expect to be so good a wife as he is blessed with, yet I intend, after a while, (when I have sowed all my wild oats,) to make a tolerable one.

I am anxious to hear of a wished-for event, and of

your safety. All who know you feel interested in your health and happiness, but none more warmly than your obliged and affectionate

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XXXV.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

NEW HAVEN.

I write a line, at Mrs. Richman's request, just to inform you, Eliza, that, yesterday, that lovely and beloved woman presented me with a daughter. This event awakens new sensations in my mind, and calls into exercise a kind of affection which had before lain dormant. I feel already the tenderness of a parent, while imagination fondly traces the mother's likeness in the infant form. Mrs. Richman expects to receive your congratulations in a letter by the next post. She bids me tell you, moreover, that she hopes soon to receive an invitation, and be able to attend, to the consummation you talk of. Give Mrs. Richman's and my particular regards to your excellent mother and to the worthy Mr. Boyer. With sentiments of esteem and friendship, I am, &c.,

S. RICHMAN.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO MRS. RICHMAN.

HARTFORD.

From the scenes of festive mirth, from the conviviality of rejoicing friends, and from the dissipating amusements of the gay world, I retire with alacrity, to hail my beloved friend on the important charge which she has received; on the accession to her family, and, may I not say, on the addition to her care? since that care will be more than counterbalanced by the pleasure it confers. Hail, happy babe! ushered into the world by the best of mothers; entitled by birthright to virtue and honor; defended by parental love from the weakness of infancy and childhood, by guardian wisdom from the perils of youth, and by affluent independence from the griping hand of poverty in more advanced life! May these animating prospects be realized by your little daughter, and may you long enjoy the rich reward of seeing her all that you wish.

Yesterday, my dear friend, Lucy Freeman, gave her hand to the amiable and accomplished Mr. George Sumner. A large circle of congratulating friends were present. Her dress was such as wealth and elegance required. Her deportment was every thing that modesty and propriety could suggest. They are, indeed, a charming couple. The consonance of their dispositions, the similarity of their tastes, and the equality of their ages are a sure pledge of happiness. Every eye beamed with pleasure on the occasion, and

every tongue echoed the wishes of benevolence. Mine only was silent. Though not less interested in the felicity of my friend than the rest, yet the idea of a separation, perhaps of an alienation of affection, by means of her entire devotion to another, cast an involuntary gloom over my mind. Mr. Boyer took my hand after the ceremony was past. "Permit me, Miss Wharton," said he, "to lead you to your lovely friend; her happiness must be heightened by your participation of it." "O, no," said I, "I am too selfish for that. She has conferred upon another that affection which I wished to engross. My love was too fervent to admit a rival." "Retaliate, then," said he, "this fancied wrong by doing likewise." I observed that this was not a proper time to discuss that subject, and, resuming my seat, endeavored to put on the appearance of my accustomed vivacity. I need not relate the remaining particulars of-the evening's entertainment. Mr. Boyer returned with my mamma, and I remained at Mrs. Freeman's.

We are to have a ball here this evening. Mr. Boyer has been with us, and tried to monopolize my company; but in vain. I am too much engaged by the exhilarating scenes around for attending to a subject which affords no variety. I shall not close this till to-morrow.

I am rather fatigued with the amusements of last night, which were protracted to a late hour. Mr. Boyer was present; and I was pleased to see him not averse to the entertainment, though his profession

prevented him from taking an active part. As all the neighboring gentry were invited, Mr. Freeman would by no means omit Major Sanford, which his daughter earnestly solicited. It happened (unfortunately, shall I say?) that I drew him for a partner. Yet I must own that I felt very little reluctance to my lot. He is an excellent dancer, and well calculated for a companion in the hours of mirth and gayety. I regretted Mr. Boyer's being present, however, because my enjoyment seemed to give him pain. I hope he is not inclined to the passion of jealousy. If he is, I fear it will be somewhat exercised.

Lucy Freeman, now Mrs. Sumner, removes next week to Boston. I have agreed to accompany her, and spend a month or two in her family. This will give variety to the journey of life. Be so kind as to direct your next letter to me there.

Kiss the dear little babe for me. Give love, compliments, &c., as respectively due; and believe me, with every sentiment of respect, your affectionate

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XXXVII.

TO MR. CHARLES DEIGHTON.

HARTFORD.

Dear Charles: My hopes begin to revive. I am again permitted to associate with my Eliza—invited to the same entertainment. She does not refuse to join with me in the mazy dance, and partake the scenes of festive mirth. Nay, more; she allows me to press her hand to my lips, and listens to the sighing accents of love. Love her I certainly do. Would to Heaven I could marry her! Would to Heaven I had preserved my fortune, or she had one to supply its place! I am distracted at the idea of losing her forever. I am sometimes tempted to solicit her hand in serious earnest; but if I should, poverty and want must be the consequence. Her disappointment in the expectation of affluence and splendor, which I believe her ruling passion, would afford a perpetual source of discontent and mutual wretchedness.

She is going to Boston with her friend, Mrs. Sumner. I must follow her.
I must break the connection which is rapidly forming between her and Mr.
Boyer, and enjoy her society a while longer, if no more.

I have had a little intimation from New Haven that Miss Lawrence is partial to me, and might easily be obtained, with a handsome property into the bargain. I am neither pleased with nor averse to the girl; but she has money, and that may supply the place of love, by enabling me to pursue independent pleasures. This she must expect, if she marries a man of my cast. She, doubtless, knows my character; and

if she is so vain of her charms or influence as to think of reforming or confining me, she must bear the consequences.

However, I can keep my head up at present without recourse to the noose of matrimony, and shall therefore defer any particular attention to her till necessity requires it. I am, &c.,

PETER SANFORD.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO MRS. M. WHARTON.

BOSTON.

You commanded me, my dear mamma, to write to you. That command I cheerfully obey, in testimony of my ready submission and respect. No other avocation could arrest my time, which is now completely occupied in scenes of amusement.

Mrs. Sumner is agreeably settled and situated. She appears to be possessed of every blessing which can render life desirable. Almost every day since our arrival has been engrossed by visitants. Our evenings we have devoted to company abroad; and that more generally than we should otherwise have done, as my stay is limited to so short a period. The museum, the theatres, the circus, and the assemblies have been frequented.

Mrs. Sumner has made me several presents; notwithstanding which, the articles requisite to a fashionable appearance have involved me in considerable expense. I fear that you will think me extravagant when you are told how much.

Mr. Boyer tarried in town about a week, having business. He appeared a little concerned at my taste for dissipation, as he once termed it. He even took the liberty to converse seriously on the subject.

I was displeased with his freedom, and reminded him that I had the disposal of my own time as yet, and that, while I escaped the censure of my own heart, I hoped that no one else would presume to arraign it. He apologized, and gave up his argument.

I was much surprised, the first time I went to the play, to see Major Sanford in the very next box. He immediately joined our party; and wherever I have been since, I have been almost sure to meet him.

Mr. Boyer has taken his departure; and I do not expect to see him again till I return home.

O mamma, I am embarrassed about this man. His worth I acknowledge; nay, I esteem him very highly. But can there be happiness with such a disparity of dispositions?

I shall soon return to the bosom of domestic tranquillity, to the arms of maternal tenderness, where I can deliberate and advise at leisure about

this important matter. Till when, I am, &c.,

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XXXIX.

TO MR. T. SELBY.

HAMPSHIRE.

Dear sir: I believe that I owe you an apology for my long silence. But my time has been much engrossed of late, and my mind much more so. When it will be otherwise I cannot foresee. I fear, my friend, that there is some foundation for your suspicions respecting my beloved Eliza. What pity it is that so fair a form, so accomplished a mind, should be tarnished in the smallest degree by the follies of coquetry! If this be the fact, which I am loath to believe, all my regard for her shall never make me the dupe of it.

When I arrived at her residence at New Haven, where I told you in my last I was soon to go, she gave me a most cordial reception. Her whole behavior to me was correspondent with those sentiments of esteem and affection which she modestly avowed. She permitted me to accompany her to Hartford, to restore her to her mother, and to declare my wish to receive her again from her hand. Thus far all was harmony and happiness. As all my wishes were consistent with virtue and honor, she

readily indulged them. She took apparent pleasure in my company, encouraged my hopes of a future union, and listened to the tender accents of love.

But the scenes of gayety which invited her attention reversed her conduct. The delightful hours of mutual confidence, of sentimental converse, and of the interchange of refined affection were no more. Instead of these, parties were formed unpleasing to my taste, and every opportunity was embraced to join in diversions in which she knew I could not consistently take a share. I, however, acquiesced in her pleasure, though I sometimes thought myself neglected, and even hinted it to her mother. The old lady apologized for her daughter, by alleging that she had been absent for a long time; that her acquaintances were rejoiced at her return, and welcomed her by striving to promote her amusement.

One of her most intimate friends was married during my stay, and she appeared deeply interested in the event. She spent several days in assisting her previous to the celebration. I resided, in the mean time, at her mamma's, visiting her at her friend's, where Major Sanford, among others, was received as a guest. Mrs. Sumner acquainted me that she had prevailed on Miss Wharton to go and spend a few weeks with her at Boston, whither she was removing, and urged my accompanying them. I endeavored to excuse myself, as I had been absent from my people a considerable time, and my return was now

expected. But their importunity was so great, and Eliza's declaration that it would be very agreeable to her so tempting, that I consented. Here I took lodgings, and spent about a week, taking every opportunity to converse with Eliza, striving to discover her real disposition towards me. I mentioned the inconvenience of visiting her so often as I wished, and suggested my desire to enter, as soon as might be, into a family relation. I painted, in the most alluring colors, the pleasures resulting from domestic tranquillity, mutual confidence, and conjugal affection, and insisted on her declaring frankly whether she designed to share this happiness with me, and when it should commence. She owned that she intended to give me her hand, but when she should be ready she could not yet determine. She pretended a promise from me to wait her time, to consent that she should share the pleasures of the fashionable world as long as she chose, &c.

I then attempted to convince her of her mistaken ideas of pleasure; that the scenes of dissipation, of which she was so passionately fond, afforded no true enjoyment; that the adulation of the coxcomb could not give durability to her charms, or secure the approbation of the wise and good; nor could the fashionable amusements of brilliant assemblies and crowded theatres furnish the mind with

"That which nothing earthly gives or can destroy —
The soul's calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy."

These friendly suggestions, I found, were considered as the theme of a priest, and my desire to detach her from such empty pursuits as the selfishness of a lover. She was even offended at my freedom, and warmly affirmed that no one had a right to arraign her conduct. I mentioned Major Sanford, who was then in town, and who (though she went to places of public resort with Mr. and Mrs. Sumner) always met and gallanted her home. She rallied me upon my jealousy, as she termed it, wished that I would attend her myself, and then she should need no other gallant. I answered that I had rather resign that honor to another, but wished, for her sake, that he might be a gentleman whose character would not disgrace the company with which he associated. She appeared mortified and chagrined in the extreme. However, she studiously suppressed her emotions, and even soothed me with the blandishments of female softness. We parted amicably. She promised to return soon and prepare for a compliance with my wishes. I cannot refuse to believe her. I cannot cease to love her. My heart is in her possession. She has a perfect command of my passions. Persuasion dwells on her tongue. With all the boasted fortitude and resolution of our sex, we are but mere machines. Let love once pervade our breasts, and its object may mould us into any form that pleases her fancy, or even caprice.

I have just received a letter from Eliza, informing me of her return to Hartford. To-morrow I shall set

out on a visit to the dear girl; for, my friend, notwithstanding all her foibles, she is very dear to me. Before you hear from me again I expect that the happy day will be fixed—the day which shall unite in the-most sacred bands this lovely maid and your faithful friend,

J. BOYER.

LETTER XL.

TO MR. T. SELBY.

HAMPSHIRE.

I have returned; and the day, indeed, is fixed; but O, how different from my fond expectations! It is not the day of union, but the day of final separation; the day which divides me from my charmer; the day which breaks asunder the bands of love; the day on which my reason assumes its empire, and triumphs over the arts of a finished coquette. Congratulate me, my friend, that I have thus overcome my feelings, and repelled the infatuating wiles of a deceitful girl. I would not be understood to impeach Miss Wharton's virtue; I mean her chastity. Virtue, in the common acceptation of the term, as applied to the sex, is confined to that particular, you know. But in my view, this is of little importance where all other virtues are wanting.

When I arrived at Mrs. Wharton's, and inquired for

Eliza, I was told that she had rode out, but was soon expected home. An hour after, a phaeton stopped at the door, from which my fair one alighted, and was handed into the house by Major Sanford, who immediately took leave. I met her, and offered my hand, which she received with apparent tenderness.

When the family had retired after supper, and left us to talk on our particular affairs, I found the same indecision, the same loathness to bring our courtship to a period, as formerly. Her previous excuses were renewed, and her wishes to have a union still longer delayed were zealously urged. She could not bear the idea of confinement to the cares of a married life at present, and begged me to defer all solicitation on that subject to some future day. I found my temper rise, and told her plainly that I was not thus to be trifled with; that if her regard for me was sincere, if she really intended to form a connection with me, she could not thus protract the time, try my patience, and prefer every other pleasure to the rational interchange of affection, to the calm delights of domestic life. But in vain did I argue against her false notions of happiness, in vain did I represent the dangerous system of conduct which she now pursued, and urge her to accept, before it was too late, the hand and heart which were devoted to her service. That, she said, she purposed ere long to do, and hoped amply to reward my faithful love; but she could not fix the time this evening. She must consider a little further, and likewise consult her

mother. "Is it not Major Sanford whom you wish to consult, madam?" said I. She blushed, and gave me no answer. "Tell me, Eliza," I continued, "tell me frankly, if he has not supplanted me in your affections—if he be not the cause of my being thus evasively, thus cruelly, treated." "Major Sanford, sir," replied she, "has done you no harm. He is a particular friend of mine, a polite gentleman, and an agreeable neighbor, and therefore I treat him with civility; but he is not so much interested in my concerns as to alter my disposition towards any other person." "Why," said I, "do you talk of friendship with a man of his character? Between his society and mine there is a great contrast. Such opposite pursuits and inclinations cannot be equally pleasing to the same taste. It is, therefore, necessary that you renounce the one to enjoy the other; I will give you time to decide which. I am going to a friend's house to spend the night, and will call on you to-morrow, if agreeable, and converse with you further upon the matter." She bowed assent, and I retired.

The next afternoon I went, as agreed, and found her mamma and her alone in the parlor. She was very pensive, and appeared to have been in tears. The sight affected me. The idea of having treated her harshly the evening before disarmed me of my resolution to insist on her decision that day. I invited her to ride with me and visit a friend, to which she readily consented. We spent our time agreeably. I forbore to press her on the subject of our future

union, but strove rather to soothe her mind, and inspire her with sentiments of tenderness towards me. I conducted her home, and returned early in the evening to my friend's, who met me at the door, and jocosely told me that he expected that I should now rob them of their agreeable neighbor. "But," added he, "we have been apprehensive that you would be rivalled if you delayed your visit much longer." "I did not suspect a rival," said I. "Who can the happy man be?" "I can say nothing from personal observation," said he; "but fame, of late, has talked loudly of Major Sanford and Miss Wharton. Be not alarmed," continued he, seeing me look grave; "I presume no harm is intended; the major is a man of gallantry, and Miss Wharton is a gay lady; but I dare say that your connection will be happy, *if it be formed*" I noticed a particular emphasis on the word *if*; and, as we were alone, I followed him with questions till the whole affair was developed. I informed him of my embarrassment, and he gave me to understand that Eliza's conduct had, for some time past, been a subject of speculation in the town; that, formerly, her character was highly esteemed; but that her intimacy with a man of Sanford's known libertinism, more especially as she was supposed to be engaged to another, had rendered her very censurable; that they were often together; that wherever she went he was sure to follow, as if by appointment; that they walked, talked, sung, and danced together in all companies; that some supposed he he would marry her; others, that he only meditated adding her name

to the black catalogue of deluded wretches, whom he had already ruined!

I rose, and walked the room in great agitation. He apologized for his freedom; was sorry if he had wounded my feelings; but friendship alone had induced him frankly to declare the truth, that I might guard against duplicity and deceit.

I thanked him for his kind intensions; and assured him that I should not quit the town till I had terminated this affair, in one way or another.

I retired to bed, but sleep was a stranger to my eyes. With the dawn I rose; and after breakfast walked to Mrs. Wharton's, who informed me, that Eliza was in her chamber, writing to a friend, but would be down in a few minutes. I entered into conversation with the old lady on the subject of her daughter's conduct; hinted my suspicions of the cause, and declared my resolution of knowing my destiny immediately. She endeavored to extenuate, and excuse her as much as possible; but frankly owned that her behavior was mysterious; that no pains had been wanting, on her part, to alter and rectify it; that she had remonstrated, expostulated, advised and entreated, as often as occasion required. She hoped that my resolution would have a good effect, as she knew that her daughter esteemed me very highly.

In this manner we conversed till the clock struck

twelve; and, Eliza not appearing, I desired her mamma to send up word that I waited to see her. The maid returned with an answer that she was indisposed, and had lain down. Mrs. Wharton observed that she had not slept for several nights, and complained of the headache in the morning. The girl added that she would wait on Mr. Boyer in the evening. Upon this information I rose, and abruptly took my leave. I went to dine with a friend, to whom I had engaged myself the day before; but my mind was too much agitated to enjoy either the company or the dinner. I excused myself from tarrying to tea, and returned to Miss Wharton's. On inquiry, I was told that Eliza had gone to walk in the garden, but desired that no person might intrude on her retirement. The singularity of the request awakened my curiosity, and determined me to follow her. I sought her in vain in different parts of the garden, till, going towards an arbor, almost concealed from sight by surrounding shrubbery, I discovered her sitting in close conversation with Major Sanford! My blood chilled in my veins, and I stood petrified with astonishment at the disclosure of such baseness and deceit. They both rose in visible confusion. I dared not trust myself to accost them. My passions were raised, and I feared that I might say or do something unbecoming my character. I therefore gave them a look of indignation and contempt, and retreated to the house. I traversed the parlor hastily, overwhelmed with chagrin and resentment. Mrs. Wharton inquired the cause. I attempted to tell her,

but my tongue refused utterance. While in this situation, Eliza entered the room. She was not less discomposed than myself. She sat down at the window and wept. Her mamma wept likewise. At length she recovered herself, in a degree, and desired me to sit down. I answered, No, and continued walking. "Will you," said she, "permit me to vindicate my conduct, and explain my motives?" "Your conduct," said I, "cannot be vindicated; your motives need no explanation; they are too apparent. How, Miss Wharton, have I merited this treatment from you? But I can bear it no longer. Your indifference to me proceeds from an attachment to another, and, forgive me if I add, to one who is the disgrace of his own sex and the destroyer of yours. I have been too long the dupe of your dissimulation and coquetry—too long has my peace of mind been sacrificed to the arts of a woman whose conduct has proved her unworthy of my regard; insensible to love, gratitude, and honor.

"To you, madam," said I, turning to her mother, "I acknowledge my obligations for your friendship, politeness, and attention. I once hoped for the privilege of rocking for you the cradle of declining age. I am deprived of that privilege; but I pray that you may never want a child whose love and duty shall prove a source of consolation and comfort.

"Farewell. If we never meet again in this life, I hope and trust we shall in a better—where the parent's eye shall cease to weep for the disobedience

of a child, and the lover's heart to bleed for the infidelity of his mistress."

I turned to Eliza, and attempted to speak; but her extreme emotion softened me, and I could not command my voice. I took her hand, and bowing, in token of an adieu, went precipitately out of the house. The residence of my friend, with whom I lodged, was at no great distance, and thither I repaired. As I met him in the entry, I rushed by him, and betook myself to my chamber. The fever of resentment and the tumult of passion began now to give place to the softer emotions of the soul. I found myself perfectly unmanned. I gave free scope to the sensibility of my heart; and the effeminate relief of tears materially lightened the load which oppressed me.

After this arduous struggle I went to bed, and slept more calmly than for several nights before. The next morning I wrote a farewell letter to Eliza, (a copy of which I shall enclose to you,) and, ordering my horse to be brought, left town immediately.

My resentment of her behavior has much assisted me in erasing her image from my breast. In this exertion I have succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations. The more I reflect on her temper and disposition, the more my gratitude is enlivened towards the wise Disposer of all events for enabling me to break asunder the snares of the deluder. I am convinced that the gayety and extravagance of her

taste, the frivolous levity of her manners, disqualify her for the station in which I wished to have placed her. These considerations, together with that resignation to an overruling Providence which the religion I profess and teach requires me to cultivate, induce me cheerfully to adopt the following lines of an ingenious poet:—

"Since all the downward tracts of time
God's watchful eye surveys,
O, who so wise to choose our lot,
Or regulate our ways?

"Since none can doubt his equal love,
Unmeasurably kind,
To his unerring, gracious will
Be every wish, resigned.

"Good when he gives, supremely good;
Not less when he denies;
E'en crosses from his sovereign hand
Are blessings in disguise."

I am, &c., J. BOYER.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

[*Enclosed in the foregoing.*]

HARTFORD.

Madam: Fearing that my resolution may not be proof against the eloquence of those charms which

has so long commanded me, I take this method of bidding you a final adieu. I write not as a lover,—that connection between us is forever dissolved,—but I address you as a friend; as a friend to your happiness, to your reputation, to your temporal and eternal welfare. I will not rehearse the innumerable instances of your imprudence and misconduct which have fallen under my observation. Your own heart must be your monitor. Suffice it for me to warn you against the dangerous tendency of so dissipated a life, and to tell you that I have traced (I believe aright) the cause of your dissimulation and indifference to me. They are an aversion to the sober, rational, frugal mode of living to which my profession leads; a fondness for the parade, the gayety, not to say the licentiousness, of a station calculated to gratify such a disposition; and a prepossession for Major Sanford, infused into your giddy mind by the frippery, flattery, and artifice of that worthless and abandoned man. Hence you preferred a connection with him, if it could be accomplished; but a doubt whether it could, together with the advice of your friends, who have kindly espoused my cause, has restrained you from the avowal of your real sentiments, and led you to continue your civilities to me. What the result of your coquetry would have been had I waited for it, I cannot say; nor have I now any desire or interest to know. I tear from my breast the idea which I have long cherished of future union and happiness with you in the conjugal state. I bid a last farewell to

these fond hopes, and leave you forever.

For your own sake, however, let me conjure you to review your conduct, and, before you have advanced beyond the possibility of returning to rectitude and honor, to restrain your steps from the dangerous path in which you now tread.

Fly Major Sanford. That man is a deceiver. Trust not his professions. They are certainly insincere, or he would not affect concealment; he would not induce you to a clandestine intercourse. Many have been the victims to his treachery. O Eliza, add not to the number. Banish him from your society if you wish to preserve your virtue unsullied, your character unsuspicious. It already begins to depreciate. Snatch it from the envenomed tongue of slander before it receive an incurable wound.

Many faults have been visible to me, over which my affection once drew a veil. That veil is now removed; and acting the part of a disinterested friend, I shall mention some few of them with freedom. There is a levity in your manners which is inconsistent with the solidity and decorum becoming a lady who has arrived to years of discretion. There is also an unwarrantable extravagance betrayed in your dress. Prudence and economy are such necessary, at least such decent, virtues, that they claim the attention of every female, whatever be her station or her property. To these virtues you are apparently inattentive. Too large a portion of your

time is devoted to the adorning of your person.

Think not that I write thus plainly from resentment. No, it is from benevolence. I mention your foibles, not to reproach you with them, but that you may consider their nature and effects, and renounce them.

I wish you to regard this letter as the legacy of a friend, and to improve it accordingly. I shall leave town before you receive it. O, how different are my sensations at going from what they were when I came! But I forbear description. Think not, Eliza, that I leave you with indifference. The conquest is great, the trial more than I can calmly support; yet the consciousness of duty affords consolation—-a duty I conceive it to be which I owe to myself and to the people of my charge, who are interested in my future connection.

I wish not for an answer; my resolution is unalterably fixed. But should you hereafter be convinced of the justice of my conduct, and become a convert to my advice, I shall be happy to hear it.

That you may have wisdom to keep you from falling, and conduct you safely through this state of trial to the regions of immortal bliss, is the fervent prayer of your sincere friend and humble servant,

J. BOYER.

LETTER XLI.

TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

The retirement of my native home is not so gloomy, since my return from Boston, as I expected, from the contrast between them. Indeed, the customs and amusements of this place are materially altered since the residence of Major Sanford among us. The dull, old-fashioned sobriety which formerly prevailed is nearly banished, and cheerfulness, vivacity, and enjoyment are substituted in its stead. Pleasure is now diffused through all ranks of the people, especially the rich; and surely it ought to be cultivated, since the wisest of men informs us that a merry heart "doth good like a medicine." As human life hath many diseases which require medicines, are we not right in selecting the most agreeable and palatable? Major Sanford's example has had great influence upon our society in general; and though some of our old ones think him rather licentious, yet, for aught I can see, he is as strict an observer of decorum as the best of them. True, he seldom goes to church; but what of that? The Deity is not confined to temples made with hands. He may worship him as devoutly elsewhere, if he chooses; and who has a right to say he does not?

His return from Boston was but a day or two after mine. He paid me an early visit, and, indeed, has

been very attentive ever since. My mamma is somewhat precise in her notions of propriety, and, of course, blames me for associating so freely with him. She says that my engagements to Mr. Boyer ought to render me more sedate, and more indifferent to the gallantry of mere pleasure *hunters*, to use her phrase. But I think otherwise. If I am to become a recluse, let me at least enjoy those amusements which are suited to my taste a short time first. Why should I refuse the polite attentions of this gentleman? They smooth the rugged path of life, and wonderfully accelerate the lagging wheels of time.

Indeed, Lucy, he has an admirable talent for contributing to vary and increase amusement. We have few hours unimproved. Some new plan of pleasure and sociability is constantly courting our adoption. He lives in all the magnificence of a prince: and why should I, who can doubtless share that magnificence if I please, forego the advantages and indulgences it offers, merely to gratify those friends who pretend to be better judges of my happiness than I am myself? I have not yet told my mamma that he entertains me with the lover's theme, or, at least, that I listen to it. Yet I must own to you, from whom I have never concealed an action or idea, that his situation in life charms my imagination; that the apparent fervor and sincerity of his passion affect my heart. Yet there is something extremely problematical in his conduct. He is very urgent with me to dissolve my connection with Mr. Boyer, and

engage not to marry him without his consent, or knowledge, to say no more. He warmly applauds my wish still longer to enjoy the freedom and independence of a single state, and professedly adopts it for his own. While he would disconnect me from another, he mysteriously conceals his own intentions and views. In conversation with him yesterday, I plainly told him that his conduct was unaccountable; that, if his professions and designs were honorable, he could not neglect to mention them to my mamma; that I should no longer consent to carry on a clandestine intercourse with him; that I hourly expected Mr. Boyer, whom I esteemed, and who was the favorite of my friends; and that, unless he acted openly in this affair before his arrival, I should give my hand to him.

He appeared thunderstruck at this declaration. All his words and actions were indicative of the most violent emotions of mind. He entreated me to recall the sentence; for I knew not, he said, his motives for secrecy; yet he solemnly swore that they were honorable. I replied in the words of the poet,—

"Trust not a man; they are by nature cruel,
False, deceitful, treacherous, and inconstant.
When a man talks of love, with caution hear him;
But if he swear, he'll certainly deceive you."

He begged that he might know by what means he had provoked my suspicions; by what means he had forfeited my confidence. His importunity vanquished

my fortitude; and before we parted, I again promised to make him acquainted, from time to time, with the progress of my connection with Mr. Boyer.

Now, my dear friend, I want your advice more than ever. I am inadvertently embarrassed by this man; and how to extricate myself I know not. I am sensible that the power is in my hands; but the disposition (shall I confess it?) is wanting.

"I know the right; and I approve it too;
I know the wrong, and yet the wrong pursue."

I have just received a card from Major Sanford, inviting me to ride this afternoon. At first I thought of returning a negative answer; but, recollecting that Mr. Boyer must soon be here, I concluded it best to embrace this opportunity of talking further with him. I must now prepare to go, but shall not close this letter, for I intend writing in continuation, as events occur, till this important business is decided.

Tuesday evening.—The little tour which I mentioned to you this afternoon was not productive of a final determination. The same plea was repeated over and over again without closing the cause. On my return I found Mr. Boyer waiting to receive me. My heart beat an involuntary welcome. I received him very cordially, though with a kind of pleasure mixed with apprehension. I must own that his conversation and manners are much better calculated to bear the scrutinizing eye of a refined

understanding and taste than Major Sanford's. But whether the fancy ought not to be consulted about our settlement in life, is with me a question.

When we parted last I had promised Mr. Boyer to inform him positively, at this visit, when my hand should be given. He therefore came, as he told me in the course of our conversation, with the resolution of claiming the fulfilment of this promise.

I begged absolution, told him that I could not possibly satisfy his claim, and sought still to evade and put off the important decision. He grew warm, and affirmed that I treated him ungenerously and made needless delays. He even accused me of indifference towards him, and of partiality to another. Major Sanford, he believed, was the man who robbed him of the affection which he had supposed his due. He warned me against any intercourse with him, and insisted that I must renounce the society of the one or the other immediately.

He would leave me, he said, this evening, and call to-morrow to know the result of my determination. It was late before he bade me good night, since which I have written these particulars. It is now time to lay aside my pen, and deliberate what course to take.

Wednesday evening.—Last night I closed not my eyes. I rose this morning with the sun, and went into the garden till breakfast. My mamma doubtless saw

the disorder of my mind, but kindly avoided any inquiry about it. She was affectionately attentive to me, but said nothing of my particular concerns. I mentioned not my embarrassment to her. She had declared herself in favor of Mr. Boyer; therefore I had no expectation that she would advise impartially. I retired to my chamber, and remained in a kind of revery for more than an hour, when I was roused by the rattling of a carriage at the door. I hastened to the window, and saw Major Sanford just driving away. The idea of his having been to converse with my mamma gave me new sensations. A thousand perplexities occurred to my mind relative to the part most proper for me to act in this critical situation. All these might have been avoided, had I gone down and inquired into the matter; but this I delayed till dinner. My mamma then informed me that Major Sanford had been with her, and inquired for me, but that she thought it unnecessary to call me, as she presumed I had no particular business with him. I knew the motives by which she was actuated, and was vexed at her evasions. I told her plainly that she would never carry her point in this way; that Thought myself capable of conducting my own affairs, and wished her not to interfere, except by her advice, which I should always listen to and comply with when I could possibly make it consistent with my inclination and interest. She wept at my undutiful anger, (of which I have severely repented since,) and affectionately replied, that my happiness was the object of her wishes and prayers;

conformably to which she felt constrained freely to speak her mind, though it incurred my displeasure. She then went through again with all the comparative circumstances and merits of the two candidates for my favor, which have perpetually rung in my ears for months. I shed tears at the idea of my embarrassment; and in this condition Mr. Boyer found us. He appeared to be affected by my visible disorder, and, without inquiring the cause, endeavored to dissipate it. This was kindly done. He conversed upon indifferent subjects, and invited me to ride, and take tea with your mamma, to which I readily consented. We found her at home, and passed the time agreeably, excepting the alloy of your absence. Mr. Boyer touched lightly on the subject of our last evening's debate, but expatiated largely on the pleasing power of love, and hoped that we should one day both realize and exemplify it in perfection. When we returned he observed that it was late, and took his leave, telling me that he should call to-morrow, and begged that I would then relieve his suspense. As I was retiring to bed, the maid gave me a hint that Major Sanford's servant had been here and left a letter. I turned instantly back to my mamma, and, telling her my information, demanded the letter. She hesitated, but I insisted on having it; and seeing me resolute, she reluctantly gave it into my hand. It contained the following words:—

"Am I forsaken? am I abandoned? O my adorable

Eliza, have you sacrificed me to my rival? have you condemned me to perpetual banishment without a hearing?

"I came this day to plead my cause at your feet, but was cruelly denied the privilege of seeing you. My mind is all anarchy and confusion. My soul is harrowed up with jealousy. I will be revenged on those who separate us, if that distracting event take place. But it is from your lips only that I can hear my sentence. You must witness its effects. To what lengths my despair may carry me I know not. You are the arbitress of my fate.

"Let me conjure you to meet me in your garden to-morrow at any hour you shall appoint. My servant will call for an answer in the morning. Deny me not an interview, but have pity on your faithful SANFORD."

I wrote for answer that I would meet him to-morrow, at five o'clock in the afternoon.

I have now before me another night for consideration, and shall pass it in that employment. I purpose not to see Mr. Boyer till I have conversed with Major Sanford.

Thursday morning.—The morning dawns, and ushers in the day—a day, perhaps, big with the fate of your friend. What that fate may be is wrapped in the womb of futurity—that futurity which a kind

Providence has wisely concealed from the penetration of mortals.

After mature consideration, after revolving and re-revolving every circumstance on both sides of the question, I have nearly determined, in compliance with the advice of my friends and the dictates of my own judgment, to give Mr. Boyer the preference, and with him to tread the future round of life.

As to the despair of Major Sanford, it does not much alarm me. Such violent passions are seldom so deeply rooted as to produce lasting effects. I must, however, keep my word, and meet him according to promise.

Mr. Boyer is below. My mamma has just sent me word that he wished to see me. My reply was, that I had lain down, which was a fact.

One o'clock.—My mamma, alarmed by my indisposition, has visited my apartment. I soon convinced her that it was but trifling, owing principally to the want of sleep, and that an airing in the garden, which I intended towards night, would restore me.

Ten o'clock at night.—The day is past; and such a day it has been as I hope nevermore to see. At the hour appointed, I went, tolerably composed and resolute, into the garden. I had taken several turns, and retired into the little arbor, where you and I

have spent so many happy hours, before Major Sanford entered. When he appeared, a consciousness of the impropriety of this clandestine intercourse suffused my cheek, and gave a coldness to my manners. He immediately penetrated the cause, and observed that my very countenance told him he was no longer a welcome guest to me. I asked him if he ought so to be, since his motives for seeking admission were unworthy of being communicated to my friends. That, he said, was not the case, but that prudence in the present instance required a temporary concealment. He then undertook to exculpate himself from blame, assuring me that as soon as I should discountenance the expectations of Mr. Boyer, and discontinue the reception of his address, his intentions should be made known. He was enlarging upon this topic, when we heard a footstep approaching us, and, looking up, saw Mr. Boyer within a few paces of the arbor. Confusion seized us both. We rose involuntarily from our seats, but were mute as statues. He spoke not a word, but casting a look of indignant accusation at me,—a glance which penetrated my very soul,—turned on his heel, and walked hastily back to the house.

I stood a few moments, considering what course to take, though shame and regret had almost taken from me the power of thought.

Major Sanford took my hand. I withdrew it from him. "I *must* leave you," said I. "Where will you go?" said he. "I will go and try to retrieve my character. It

has suffered greatly by this fatal interview."

He threw himself at my feet, and exclaimed, "Leave me not, Eliza; I conjure you not to leave me." "Let me go now," I rejoined, "or I bid you farewell forever." I flew precipitately by him, and went into the parlor, where I found Mr. Boyer and my mamma, the one traversing the room in the greatest agitation, the other in a flood of tears. Their appearance affected me, and I wept like an infant. When I had a little recovered myself, I begged him to sit down. He answered, No. I then told him that however unjustifiable my conduct might appear, perhaps I might explain it to his satisfaction if he would hear me; that my motives were innocent, though they doubtless wore the aspect of criminality in his view. He sternly replied, that no palliation could avail; that my motives were sufficiently notorious. He accused me of treating him ill, of rendering him the dupe of coquetting artifice, of having an intrigue with Major Sanford, and declared his determination to leave me forever, as unworthy of his regard, and incapable of love, gratitude, or honor. There was too much reason in support of his accusations for me to gainsay them, had his impetuosity suffered me to attempt it.

But, in truth, I had no inclination to self-defence. My natural vivacity had forsaken me, and I listened without interrupting him to the fluency of reproachful language which his resentment inspired. He took a very solemn and affectionate leave of my mamma, thanking her for her politeness, and wishing

her much future felicity. He attempted to address me, I suppose, somewhat in the same way; but his sensibility somewhat overcame him, and he only took my hand, and, bowing in silence, departed.

The want of rest for two long nights together, the exercise of mind, and conflict of passions which now tortured my breast, were too much for me to support.

When I saw that he was gone, that he had actually forsaken me, I fainted. My mamma, with the assistance of the maid, soon restored me.

When I opened my eyes and beheld this amiable and tender parent watching and attending me with the most anxious concern, without one reproachful word, without one accusing look, my reflections upon the part I had acted, in defeating her benevolent wishes, were exquisitely afflictive. But we mutually forbore to mention the occasion of my illness; and I complied with her advice to take some refreshment, and retire to my chamber. I am so much fatigued by the exertions of the day that rest is absolutely necessary; and I lay aside my pen to seek it.

Friday morning.—When I shall again receive the balmy influence of sleep, I know not. It has absolutely forsaken me at present. I have had a most restless night. Every awakening idea presented itself to my imagination; whether I had sustained a real loss in Mr. Boyer's departure, reflections on my own

misconduct, with the censure of my friends, and the ill-natured remarks of my enemies, excited the most painful anxiety in my mind.

I am going down; but how shall I see my mamma? To her I will confess my faults, in her maternal breast repose my cares, and by her friendly advice regulate my conduct. Had I done this before, I might have escaped this trouble, and saved both her and myself many distressing emotions.

Friday evening'.—I have had a long conversation with my mamma, which has greatly relieved my mind. She has soothed me with the most endearing tenderness.

Mr. Atkins, with whom Mr. Boyer lodged while in town, called here this afternoon. I did not see him; but he told my mamma that Mr. Boyer had returned home, and left a letter for me, which he had promised to convey with his own hand. By this I am convinced that the die is absolutely cast with respect to him, and that no attempts on my part to bring about a reconciliation would be either prudent or successful. He has penetrated the cause of my proceedings; and such is his resentment, that I am inclined not much to regret his avoiding another interview.

My excuses would be deemed utterly insufficient, and truth would not befriend and justify me.

As I know you are impatient to hear from me, I will now despatch this long letter without any other addition than that I am your sincere friend,

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XLII.

TO MR. CHARLES DEIGHTON.

HARTFORD.

Well, Charles, the show is over, as we Yankees say, and the girl is my own; that is, if I will have her. I shall take my own time for that, however. I have carried my point, and am amply revenged on the whole posse of those dear friends of hers. She was entangled by a promise (not to marry this priest without my knowledge) which her conscience would not let her break. Thank God, I have no conscience. If I had, I believe it would make wretched work with me. I suppose she intended to have one or the other of us, but preferred me. I have escaped the noose this time, and I'll be fairly hanged if I ever get so near it again; for indeed, Charles, I was seriously alarmed. I watched all their motions, and the appearance of harmony between them awakened all my activity and zeal. So great was my infatuation, that I verily believe I should have asked her in marriage, and risked the consequences, rather than to have lost her.

I went to the house while Mr. Boyer was in town;

but her mamma refused to call her, or to acquaint her that I was there. I then wrote a despairing letter, and obtained a conference with her in the garden. This was a fortunate event for me. True, Eliza was very haughty, and resolutely insisted on an immediate declaration or rejection; and I cannot say what would have been the result if Mr. Boyer had not surprised us together. He gave us a pretty harsh look, and retired without speaking a word.

I endeavored to detain Eliza, but in vain. She left me on my knees, which are always ready to bend on such occasions.

This finished the matter, it seems. I rose, and went into a neighbor's to observe what happened, and in about half an hour saw Mr. Boyer come out and go to his lodgings. "This," said I to myself, "is a good omen." I went home, and was informed, next day, that he had mounted his horse and departed.

I heard nothing more of her till yesterday, when I determined to know how she stood affected towards me. I therefore paid her a visit, her mamma being luckily abroad.

She received me very placidly, and told me, on inquiry, that Mr. Boyer's resentment at her meeting me in the garden was so great that he had bade her a final adieu. I congratulated myself on having no rival, hoped that her favor would now be unbiased, and that in due time I should reap the reward of my

fidelity. She begged me not to mention the subject, said she had been perplexed by our competition, and wished not to hear any thing further about it at present. I bowed in obedience to her commands, and changed the discourse.

I informed her that I was about taking a tour to the southward; that I should be absent several months, and trusted that on my return her embarrassments would be over.

I left her with regret After all, Charles, she is the *summum bonum* of my life. I must have her in some way or other. Nobody else shall, I am resolved.

I am making preparations for my journey, which, between you and me, is occasioned by the prospect of making a speculation, by which I hope to mend my affairs. The voyage will at least lessen my expenses, and screen me from the importunity of creditors till I can look about me.

PETER SANFORD.

LETTER XLIII.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

NEW HAVEN.

My dear Eliza: Through the medium of my friends at Hartford, I have been informed of the progress of

your affairs as they have transpired. The detail which my sister gave me of your separation from Mr. Boyer was painful, as I had long contemplated a happy union between you; but still more disagreeable sensations possessed my breast when told that you had suffered your lively spirits to be depressed, and resigned yourself to solitude and dejection.

Why, my dear friend, should you allow this event thus to affect you? Heaven, I doubt not, has happiness still in store for you—perhaps greater than you could have enjoyed in that connection. If the conviction of any misconduct on your part gives you pain, dissipate it by the reflection that unerring rectitude is not the lot of mortals; that few are to be found who have not deviated, in a greater or less degree, from the maxims of prudence. Our greatest mistakes may teach lessons which will be useful through life.

But I will not moralize. Come and see us, and we will talk over the matter once, and then dismiss it forever. Do prevail on your mamma to part with you a month or two at least. I wish you to witness how well I manage my nursery business. You will be charmed with little Harriet. I am already enough of the mother to think her a miniature of beauty and perfection.

How natural and how easy the transition from one stage of life to another! Not long since, I was a gay, volatile girl, seeking satisfaction in fashionable

circles and amusements; but now I am thoroughly domesticated. All my happiness is centred within the limits of my own walls, and I grudge every moment that calls me from the pleasing scenes of domestic life. Not that I am so selfish as to exclude my friends from my affection or society. I feel interested in their concerns, and enjoy their company. I must own, however, that conjugal and parental love are the mainsprings of my life. The conduct of some mothers, in depriving their helpless offspring of the care and kindness which none but a mother can feel, is to me unaccountable. There are many nameless attentions which nothing short of maternal tenderness and solicitude can pay, and for which the endearing smiles and progressive improvements of the lovely babe are an ample reward.

How delightful to trace from day to day the expansion of reason and the dawnings of intelligence! O, how I anticipate the time when these faculties shall be displayed by the organs of speech, when the lisping accent shall heighten our present pleasure, and the young idea be capable of direction "how to shoot"! General Richman is not less interested by these enjoyments than myself. All the father beams in his eye; all the husband reigns in his heart and pervades his every action.

Miss Lawrence is soon to be married to Mr. Laiton. I believe he is a mere fortune hunter. Indeed, she has little to recommend her to any other. Nature has not been very bountiful either to her body or mind. Her

parents have been shamefully deficient in her education, but have secured to her what they think the chief good—not considering that happiness is by no means the invariable attendant of wealth.

I hope this incoherent scrawl will amuse, while it induces you speedily to favor us with another visit.

My best wishes attend your honored mamma, while I subscribe myself, &c.,

A. RICHMAN.

LETTER XLIV.

TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

I am extremely depressed, my dear Lucy. The agitating scenes through which I have lately passed have broken my spirits, and rendered me unfit for society. Major Sanford has visited me, and taken his leave. He is gone to the southward on a tour of two or three months. I declined any further conversation with him on the subject of love. At present I wish not to hear it mentioned by any one.

I have received a very friendly and consolatory letter from Mrs. Richman. She invites me to spend a few months with her, which, with my mamma's consent, I shall do. I hope the change of situation

and company will dissipate the gloom which hangs over my mind.

It is a common observation, that we know not the value of a blessing but by deprivation. This is strictly verified in my case. I was insensible of my regard for Mr. Boyer till this fatal separation took place. His merit and worth now appear in the brightest colors. I am convinced of that excellence which I once slighted, and the shade of departed happiness haunts me perpetually. I am sometimes tempted to write to him and confess my faults; to tell him the situation of my mind, and to offer him my hand; but he has precluded all hopes of success by the severity of his letter to me. At any rate, I shall do nothing of the kind till my return from New Haven.

I am the more willing to leave home as my affairs are made a town talk. My mamma persuades me to disregard it; but how can I rise superior to "the world's dread laugh, which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn"?

Pray remember me to Mr. Sumner. You are happy, my friend, in the love and esteem of a worthy man, but more happy still in deserving them. Adieu.

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XLV.

TO THE SAME.

HARTFORD.

I have returned to the once smiling seat of maternal affection; but I find not repose and happiness even here.

In the society of my amiable friends at New Haven, I enjoyed every thing that friendship could bestow; but rest to a disturbed mind was not in their power.

I was on various parties of pleasure, and passed through different scenes of amusement; but with me they have lost their charms. I relished them not as formerly.

Mrs. Richman advises me to write to Mr. Boyer, and I have concluded to act accordingly. If it answer no other purpose, it will be a relief to my mind. If he ever felt for me the tenderness and regard which he professed, I think they cannot be entirely obliterated. If they still remain, perhaps I may rekindle the gentle flame, and we may both be happy. I may at least recall his esteem, and that will be a satisfaction to my conscious mind.

I wonder what has become of Major Sanford. Has he, too, forsaken me? Is it possible for him wilfully to neglect me? I will not entertain so injurious a suspicion. Yet, if it were the case, it would not affect me like Mr. Boyer's disaffection; for I frankly own that my fancy, and a taste for gayety of life, induced me to cherish the idea of a connection with Major

Sanford; while Mr. Boyer's real merit has imprinted those sentiments of esteem and love in my heart which time can never efface.

Instead of two or three, more than twelve months have elapsed, and I have not received a line from Major Sanford in all that time, which I fully expected, though he made no mention of writing; nor have I heard a syllable about him, except a report circulated by his servants, that he is on the point of marrying, which I do not believe. No; it is impossible. I am persuaded that his passion for me was sincere, however deceitful he may have been with others. But I will not bestow an anxious thought upon him. My design relative to Mr. Boyer demands my whole attention.

My hopes and fears alternately prevail, and my resolution is extremely fluctuating. How it finally terminates you shall hear in my next. Pray write to me soon. I stand in need of the consoling power of friendship. Nothing can beguile my pensive hours, and exhilarate my drooping spirits, like your letters.

Let me know how you are to be entertained this winter at the theatre. That, you know, is a favorite amusement of mine. You see I can step out of myself a little. Afford an assisting hand, and perhaps I may again be fit for society.

ELIZA WHARTON

LETTER XLVI.

TO THE REV. J. BOYER.

HARTFORD.

Sir: It is partly in compliance with your desire, in your last letter to me, in which you tell me "that when I am convinced of the justice of your conduct, and become a convert to your advice, you shall be happy to hear it," and partly from a wish to inform you that such is in truth my present state of mind, that I now write to you.

I cannot but hope that this letter, coming from the hand which you once sought, will not be unacceptable.

Pope very justly observes, that "every year is a critic on the last." The truth of this observation is fully exemplified in my years. How severely this condemns the follies of the preceding, my own heart alone can testify.

I shall not offer any palliation or apology for my misconduct. You told me it admitted none. I frankly confess it; and if the most humble acknowledgment of my offences, with an assurance that they have cost me the deepest repentance, can in any degree atone for them, I now make that atonement. Casting off the veil of dissimulation, I shall write with frankness, believing you possessed of more honor than to make any ungenerous use of the confidence reposed in you.

To say that I ever esteemed you may, perhaps, appear paradoxical when compared with certain

circumstances which occurred during our acquaintance; but to assert that I loved you may be deemed still more so. Yet these are real facts—facts of which I was then sensible, and by which I am now more than ever affected.

I think you formerly remarked that absence served but to heighten real love. This I find by experience. Need I blush to declare these sentiments, when occasion like this calls for the avowal? I will go even further, and offer you that heart which you once prized, that hand which you once solicited. The sentiments of affection which you then cultivated, though suppressed, I flatter myself are not wholly obliterated. Suffer me, then, to rekindle the latent flame, to revive that friendship and tenderness which I have so foolishly neglected. The endeavor of my future life shall be to reward your benevolence, and perhaps we may yet be happy together.

But let not this offer of myself constrain you. Let not pity influence your conduct. I would have your return, if that pleasing event take place, a voluntary act. Receive, or consent not to confer, happiness.

I thought it a duty which I owed to you, and to myself, to make this expiation, this sacrifice of female reserve, for the wrongs I have done you. As such I wish you to accept it; and if your affections are entirely alienated or otherwise engaged, if you cannot again command the respect and love which I would recall, do not despise me for the concessions I

have made. Think as favorably of my past faults and of my present disposition as charity will allow. Continue, if possible, to be my friend, though you cease to be my lover.

Should this letter find you in the full possession of happiness, let not the idea of your once loved Eliza, thus intruding itself again upon your thoughts, interrupt your enjoyments. May some distinguished female, as deserving as fair, partake with you of that bliss which I have forfeited.

Whatever may be my destiny, my best wishes shall ever attend you, and a pleasing remembrance of your honorable attentions preside, till death, in the breast of

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER XLVII.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

HAMPSHIRE.

Madam: As I was sitting last evening in my study, a letter was handed me by a servant; upon which I no sooner cast my eye than I recognized, with surprise, the hand and seal of my once loved, but to me long lost, Eliza. I opened it hastily, and with still greater surprise read the contents.

You write with frankness; I shall answer in the same manner.

On reviewing our former intercourse, be assured that I have not an accusing thought in my heart. The regard which I felt for you was tender and animated, but it was not of that passionate kind which ends in death or despair. It was governed by reason, and had a nobler object in view than mere sensual gratification. It was excited by the appearance of excellent qualities. Your conduct, at length, convinced me it was misplaced; that you possessed not in reality those charms which I had fondly ascribed to you. They were inconsistent, I conceived, with that artifice and dissimulation of which you strove to render me the dupe. But, thank Heaven, the snare was broken. My eyes were open to discover your folly; and my heart, engaged as it was, exerted resolution and strength to burst asunder the chain by which you held me enslaved, and to assert the rights of an injured man.

The parting scene you remember. I reluctantly bade you adieu. I tore myself from you, determined to eradicate your idea from my breast. Long and severe was the struggle; at last I vanquished, as I thought, every tender passion of my soul, (for they all centred in you,) and resigned myself to my God and my duty, devoting those affections to friendship which had been disappointed in love. But they are again called into exercise. The virtuous, the amiable, the accomplished Maria Selby possesses my entire

confidence and esteem; and I trust I am not deceived when I think her highly deserving of both. With her I expect soon to be united in the most sacred and endearing of human relations, with her to pass my future days in serenity and peace.

Your letter, therefore, came too late, were there no other obstacle to the renewal of our connection. I hope at the close of life, when we take a retrospect of the past, that neither of us shall have reason to regret our separation.

Permit me to add, that for your own sake, and for the sake of your ever-valued friends, I sincerely rejoice that your mind has regained its native strength and beauty; that you have emerged from the shade of fanciful vanity. For although, to adopt your own phrase, I cease to style myself your lover, among the number of your friends I am happy to be reckoned. As such, let me conjure you, by all that is dear and desirable, both in this life and another, to adhere with undeviating exactness to the paths of rectitude and innocence, and to improve the noble talents which Heaven has liberally bestowed upon you in rendering yourself amiable and, useful to your friends. Thus will you secure your own, while you promote the happiness of all around you.

I shall ever cherish sentiments of kindness towards you, and with gratitude remember your condescension in the testimony of regard which you have given me in your last letter.

I hope soon to hear that your heart and hand are bestowed on some worthy man, who deserves the happiness you are formed to communicate. Whatever we may have called errors will, on my part, be forever buried in oblivion; and for your own peace of mind I entreat you to forget that any idea of a connection between us ever existed.

I shall always rejoice at the news of your welfare, and my ardent prayers will daily arise for your temporal and eternal felicity.

J. BOYER.

LETTER XLVIII.

TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

Health, placid serenity, and every domestic pleasure are the lot of my friend; while I, who once possessed the means of each, and the capacity of tasting them, have been tossed upon the waves of folly, till I am shipwrecked on the shoals of despair.

O my friend, I am undone. I am slighted, rejected, by the man who once sought my hand, by the man who still retains my heart. And what adds an insupportable poignancy to the reflection is self-condemnation. From this inward torture where shall I flee? Where shall I seek that happiness which I

have madly trifled away?

The enclosed letters[A] will show you whence this tumult of soul arises. But I blame not Mr. Boyer. He has acted nobly. I approve his conduct, though it operates my ruin.

He is worthy of his intended bride, and she is—-what I am not—worthy of him. Peace and joy be their portion both here and hereafter. But what are now my prospects? What are to be the future enjoyments of my life?

O that I had not written to Mr. Boyer! By confessing my faults, and by avowing my partiality to him, I have given him the power of triumphing in my distress; of returning to my tortured heart all the pangs of slighted love. And what have I now to console me? My bloom is decreasing, my health is sensibly impaired. Those talents, with the possession of which I have been flattered, will be of little avail when unsupported by respectability of character. My mamma, who knows too well the distraction of my mind, endeavors to soothe and compose me on Christian principles; but they have not their desired effect. I dare not converse freely with her on the subject of my present uneasiness, lest I should distress her. I am therefore obliged to conceal my disquietude, and appear as cheerful as possible in her company, though my heart is ready to burst with grief. O that you were near me, as formerly, to share and alleviate my cares!. To have some friend in

whom I could repose confidence, and with whom I could freely converse and advise on this occasion, would be an unspeakable comfort. Such a one, next to yourself, I think Julia Granby to be. With your leave and consent, I should esteem it a special favor if she would come and spend a few months with me. My mamma joins in this request. I would write to her on the subject, but cannot compose myself at present. Will you prefer my petition for me?

If I have not forfeited your friendship, my dear Mrs. Sumner, write to me, and pour its healing balm into the wounded mind of your

ELIZA WHARTON.

[Footnote A: See the two preceding letters.]

LETTER XLIX.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

Your truly romantic letter came safe to hand. Indeed, my dear, it would make a very pretty figure in a novel. A bleeding heart, slighted love, and all the *et ceteras* of romance enter into the composition.

Excuse this raillery, and I will now write more seriously. You refer yourself to my friendship for consolation. It shall be exerted for the purpose. But I must act the part of a skilful surgeon, and probe the wound which I undertake to heal.

Where, O Eliza Wharton, where is that fund of sense and sentiment which once animated your engaging form? Where that strength of mind, that independence of soul, that alacrity and sprightliness of deportment, which formerly raised you superior to every adverse occurrence? Why have you resigned these valuable endowments, and suffered yourself to become the sport of contending passions?

You have now emerged from that mist of fanciful folly which in a measure obscured the brilliance of your youthful days.

True, you figured among the first-rate coquettes, while your friends, who knew your accomplishments, lamented the misapplication of them; but now they rejoice at the returning empire of reason.

True, you have erred; misled by the gayety of your disposition, and that volatility and inconsideration which were incident to your years; but you have seen and nobly confessed your errors. Why do you talk of slighted love? True, Mr. Boyer, supposing you disregarded him, transferred his affections to another object; but have you not your admirers still among men of real merit? Are you not esteemed and caressed by numbers who know you capable of shining in a distinguished sphere of life? Turn then, my friend, from the gloomy prospect which your disturbed imagination has brought into view. Let reason and religion erect their throne in your breast; obey their dictates, and be happy. Past experience

will point out the quicksands which you are to avoid in your future course.

Date then, from this, a new era of life; and may every moment be attended with felicity. Follow Mr. Boyer's advice and forget all former connections.

Julia accepts your invitation. Nothing short of your request could induce me to part with her. She is a good girl, and her society will amuse and instruct you. I am, &c.,

LUCY SUMNER.

LETTER L.

TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

My Julia Granby has arrived. She is all that I once was—easy, sprightly, *debonnaire*. Already has she done much towards relieving my mind. She endeavors to divert and lead my thoughts into a different channel from that to which they are now prone. Yesterday we had each an invitation to a ball. She labored hard to prevail on me to go, but I obstinately refused. I cannot yet mix with gay and cheerful circles. I therefore alleged that I was indisposed, and persuaded her to go without me.

The events of my life have always been

unaccountably wayward. In many instances I have been ready to suppose that some evil genius presided over my actions, which has directed them contrary to the sober dictates of my own judgment. I am sometimes tempted to adopt the sentiment expressed in the following lines of the poet:—

"To you, great gods, I make my last appeal;
O, clear my conscience, or my crimes reveal!
If wandering through the paths of life I've run,
And backward trod the steps I sought to shun,
Impute my errors to your own decree;
My feet were guilty, but my heart was free."

I suppose you will tell me that the fate I accuse through the poet is only the result of my own imprudence. Well, be it what it may,—either the impulse of my own passions or some higher efficiency,—sure I am that I pay dear for its operation.

I have heard it remarked that experience is the preceptor of fools, but that the wise need not its instruction. I believe I must be content to rank accordingly, and endeavor to reap advantage from its tuition.

Julia urges me to revisit the scenes of amusements and pleasure, in which, she tells me, she is actuated by selfish motives. She wishes it for her own sake. She likes neither to be secluded from them nor to go alone. I am sometimes half inclined to seek in festive

mirth a refuge from thought and reflection. I would escape, if possible, from the idea of Mr. Boyer. This I have never been able to accomplish since he dropped a tear upon my hand and left me. I marked the spot with my eye, and twenty times in a day do I view it, and fondly imagine it still there. How could I give him pain! I hope his happy Maria never will. I hope she will reward that merit which I have slighted. But I forbear. This theme carries away my pen if I but touch upon it. And no wonder, for it is the sole exercise of my thoughts. Yet I will endeavor to divert them. Send me some new books; not such, however, as will require much attention. Let them be plays and novels, or any thing else that will amuse or extort a smile. Julia and I have been rambling in the garden. She insisted upon my going with her into the arbor, where I was surprised with Major Sanford. What a crowd of painful ideas rushed upon my imagination! I believe she repented of her rashness. But no more of this. I must lay aside my pen, for I can write nothing else.

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER LI.

TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

Dear madam: You commanded me to write you respecting Miss Wharton, and I obey. But I cannot

describe to you the surprising change which she has undergone. Her vivacity has certainly forsaken her; and she has actually become, what she once dreaded above all things, a recluse. She flies from company as eagerly as she formerly sought it; her mamma is exceedingly distressed by the settled melancholy which appears in her darling child; but neither of us think it best to mention the subject to her. We endeavor to find means to amuse her; and we flatter ourselves that the prospect of success rather increases. It would add greatly to my happiness to contribute, in any degree, to restore her to herself, to her friends, and to society.

We are all invited to dine abroad to-morrow; and, to oblige me, she has consented to go.

Pray, madam, write to her often. Your letters may do much for her. She is still feelingly alive to the power of friendship; and none can exercise it upon her to greater acceptance or with more advantage than yourself.

Major Sanford's house is undergoing a complete repair. The report is, that he is soon to be married. Miss Wharton has heard, but does not believe it. I hope for her sake it will prove true; for, at any rate, he is about returning; and from her mamma's account of his past conduct towards Eliza, were he to return unconnected, he would probably renew his attentions; and though they might end in marriage, her happiness would not be secured. She has too nice

a sense of love and honor to compound with his licentious principles. A man who has been dissolute before marriage will very seldom be faithful afterwards.

I went into Eliza's chamber the other day, and found her with a miniature picture in her hand. "You pretend to be a physiognomist, Julia," said she. "What can you trace in that countenance?" I guessed whose it was; and looking wistfully at it, replied, "I believe the original is an artful, designing man. He looks to me like a Chesterfieldian. Pray who is he?" "Major Sanford," said she; "and I am afraid you have hit his character exactly. Sure I am that the appearance of those traits in it has made my heart ache." She wept as she spoke it.

Poor girl, I wish he may never give you greater cause to weep! She is strongly blind to the vices and imperfections of this man. Though naturally penetrating, he has somehow or other cast a deceptious mist over her imagination with respect to himself. She professes neither to love nor esteem him, and owns that his ungenerous artifice misled her in her treatment of Mr. Boyer. Yet she has forgiven him, and thinks him a pleasing companion.

How prone to error is the human mind! how much lighter than the breath of zephyrs the operations of fancy! Strange, then, it should ever preponderate over the weightier powers of the understanding.

But I will not moralize. My business here is to dissipate, not to collect, ideas; and I must regulate myself accordingly.

I am endeavoring to prepare Eliza, by degrees, to accompany me to Boston the ensuing winter, but think it doubtful whether I shall succeed. I shall, however, return myself: till when, I am, &c.,

JULIA GRANBY.

LETTER LII.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

BOSTON.

My dear Eliza: I received yours of the 24th ult., and thank you for it, though it did not afford me those lively sensations of pleasure which I usually feel at the perusal of your letters. It inspired me both with concern and chagrin—with concern lest your dejection of mind should affect your health, and with chagrin at your apparent indulgence of melancholy. Indeed, my friend, your own happiness and honor require you to dissipate the cloud which hangs over your imagination.

Rise then above it, and prove yourself superior to the adverse occurrences which have befallen you. It is by surmounting difficulties, not by sinking under them, that we discover our fortitude. True courage

consists not in flying from the storms of life, but in braving and steering through them with prudence. Avoid solitude. It is the bane of a disordered mind, though of great utility to a healthy one. Your once favorite amusements court your attention. Refuse not their solicitations. I have contributed my mite by sending you a few books, such as you requested. They are of the lighter kind of reading, yet perfectly chaste, and, if I mistake not, well adapted to your taste.

You wish to hear from our theatre. I believe it will be well supplied with performers this winter. Come and see whether they can afford you any entertainment. Last evening I attended a tragedy; but never will I attend another. I have not yet been able to erase the gloom which it impressed upon my mind. It was Romeo and Juliet. Distressing enough to sensibility this! Are there not real woes (if not in our own families, at least among our own friends and neighbors) sufficient to exercise our sympathy and pity, without introducing fictitious ones into our very diversions? How can that be a diversion which racks the soul with grief, even though that grief be imaginary? The introduction of a funeral solemnity upon the stage is shocking indeed!

Death is too serious a matter to be sported with. An opening grave cannot be a source of amusement to any considerate mind. The closing scene of life can be no pastime when realized. It must therefore awaken painful sensations in the representation.

The circus is a place of fashionable resort of late, but not agreeable to-me. I think it inconsistent with the delicacy of a lady even to witness the indecorums which are practised there, especially when the performers of equestrian feats are of our own sex. To see a woman depart so far from the female character as to assume the masculine habit and attitude, and appear entirely indifferent even to the externals of modesty, is truly disgusting, and ought not to be countenanced by our attendance, much less by our approbation. But, setting aside the circumstance, I cannot conceive it to be a pleasure to sit a whole evening trembling with apprehension lest the poor wight of a horseman, or juggler, or whatever he is to be called, should break his neck in contributing to our entertainment.

With Mr. Bowen's museum I think you were much pleased. He has made a number of judicious additions to it since you were here. It is a source of rational and refined amusement. Here the eye is gratified, the imagination charmed, and the understanding improved. It will bear frequent reviews without palling on the taste. It always affords something new; and, for one, I am never a weary spectator. Our other public and private places of resort are much as you left them.

I am happy in my present situation; but when the summer returns, I intend to visit my native home. Again, my Eliza, will we ramble together in those retired shades which friendship has rendered so

delightful to us. Adieu, my friend, till then. Be cheerful, and you will yet be happy.

LUCY SUMNER.

LETTER LIII.

TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

Gracious Heaven! What have I heard? Major Sanford is married! Yes; the ungrateful, the deceitful wretch is married. He has forsworn, he has perjured and given himself to another. That, you will say, is nothing strange. It is characteristic of the man. It may be so; but I could not be convinced of his perfidy till now.

Perhaps it is all for the best. Perhaps, had he remained unconnected, he might still have deceived me; but now I defy his arts.

They tell me he has married a woman of fortune. I suppose he thinks, as
I once did, that wealth can insure happiness. I wish he may enjoy it.

This event would not affect me at all were it not for the depression of spirits which I feel in consequence of a previous disappointment; since which every thing of the kind agitates and overcomes

me. I will not see him. If I do, I shall betray my weakness, and flatter his vanity, as he will doubtless think he has the power of mortifying me by his connection with another.

Before this news discomposed me, I had attained to a good degree of cheerfulness. Your kind letter, seconded by Julia's exertions, had assisted me in regulating my sensibility. I have been frequently into company, and find my relish for it gradually returning.

I intend to accept the pleasure, to which you invite me, of spending a little time with you this winter. Julia and I will come together. Varying the scene may contribute effectually to dissipate the gloom of my imagination. I would fly to almost any resort rather than my own mind. What a dreadful thing it is to be afraid of one's own reflections, which ought to be a constant source of enjoyment! But I will not moralize. I am sufficiently melancholy without any additional cause to increase it.

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER LIV.

TO MR. CHARLES DEIGHTON.

HARTFORD.

Dear Deighton: Who do you think is writing to

you? Why, it is your old friend, metamorphosed into a *married man*! You stare, and can hardly credit the assertion. I cannot realize it myself; yet I assure you, Charles, it is absolutely true. Necessity, dire necessity, forced me into this dernier resort. I told you some time ago it would come to this.

I stood aloof as long as possible; but in vain did I attempt to shun the noose. I must either fly to this resource or give up all my show, equipage, and pleasure, and degenerate into a downright, plodding money catcher for a subsistence. I chose the first; and who would not? Yet I feel some remorse at taking the girl to wife from no better motives. She is really too good for such an imposition. But she must blame herself if she suffer hereafter; for she was visibly captivated by my external appearance, and wanted but very little solicitation to confer herself and fortune on so charming a fellow. Her parents opposed her inclination for a while, because I was a stranger, and rather too gay for their taste. But she had not been used to contradiction, and could not bear it, and therefore they ventured not to cross her. So I bore off the prize; and a prize she really is—five thousand pounds in possession, and more in reversion, if I do not forfeit it. This will compensate for some of my past mistakes, and set matters right for the present. I think it doing much better than to have taken the little Lawrence girl I told you of with half the sum. Besides, my Nancy is a handsomer and more agreeable person; but that is of little

consequence to me, you know. "Beauty soon grows familiar to the lover." Were I a lover, it would be of no great avail. A lover I am, yet not of my wife. The dart which I received from Miss Wharton sticks fast in my heart; and, I assure you, I could hardly persuade myself even to appear unfaithful to her. O Eliza! accuse me not of infidelity; for your image is my constant companion. A thousand times have I cursed the unpropitious stars which withheld from her a fortune. That would have enabled me to marry her; and with her even wedlock would have been supportable.

I am told that she is still single. Her sober lover never returned. Had he loved as I did, and do, he could not have been so precipitate. But these stoic souls are good for nothing, that I know of, but,

"Fixed, like a plant, to one peculiar spot,
To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot."

I want to see Eliza, and I must see her; yet I dread an interview. I shall frankly confess my motives for marrying, and the reasons of my conduct before I went away. I shall own that my circumstances would not allow me to possess her, and yet that I could not resign her to another.

When I make up the matter with her, I shall solicit her friendship for my wife. By this means I may enjoy her society, at least, which will alleviate the confinement of a married state. To my spouse I must

be as civil as possible. I really wish she had less merit, that I might have a plausible excuse for neglecting her.

To-morrow I shall go to Mrs. Wharton's. I am very much taken up with complimental visits at present. What deference is always paid to equipage! They may talk of their virtue, their learning, and what not; but, without either of them, I shall bear off the palm of respect from those who have them, unadorned with gold and its shining appendages.

Every thing hereabouts recalls Eliza to my mind. I impatiently anticipate the hour which will convey me to her presence.

PETER SANFORD.

LETTER LV.

TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

A new scene has opened upon us to-day, my dear Mrs. Sumner—a visit from Major Sanford. My mamma, Miss Granby, and myself were sitting together in the chamber. Miss Granby was entertaining us by reading aloud in Millot's Elements of History, when a servant rapped at the door, and handed in the following billet:—

"Will Miss Wharton condescend to converse a few moments with her once-favored Sanford? He is but too sensible that he has forfeited all claim to the privilege. He therefore presumes not to request it on the score of merit, nor of former acquaintance, but solicits it from her benevolence and pity."

I read and showed it to my mamma and Julia. "What," said I, "shall I do? I wish not to see him. His artifice has destroyed my peace of mind, and his presence may open the wounds which time is closing." "Act," said my mamma, "agreeably to the dictates of your own judgment." "I see no harm in conversing with him," said Julia. "Perhaps it may remove some disagreeable thoughts which now oppress and give you pain. And as he is no longer a candidate for your affections," added she with a smile, "it will be less hazardous than formerly. He will not have the insolence to speak, nor you the folly to hear, the language of love."

He was accordingly invited in. When I rose to go down, I hesitated, and even trembled. "I fear," said I to myself, "it will be too much for me; yet why should it? Conscious innocence will support me. This he has not." When I entered the room he stepped forward to meet me. Confusion and shame were visibly depicted in his countenance. He approached me hastily and without uttering a word, took my hand. I withdrew it. "O Miss Wharton," said he, "despise me not. I am convinced that I deserve your displeasure and disdain; but my own heart has

avenged your cause." "To your own heart, then," said I, "I will leave you. But why do you again seek an interview with one whom you have endeavored to mislead—with one whom you have treated with unmerited neglect?"

"Justice to myself required my appearing before you, that, by confessing my faults and obtaining your forgiveness, I might soften the reproaches of my own mind." "Will you be seated, sir?" said I. "Will you," rejoined he, "condescend to sit with me, Eliza?" "I will, sir," answered I "The rights of hospitality I shall not infringe. In my own house, therefore, I shall treat you with civility." "Indeed," said he, "you are very severe; but I have provoked all the coldness and reserve which you can inflict.

"I am a married man, Eliza." "So I understand," said I; "and I hope you will never treat your wife with that dissimulation and falsehood which you have exercised towards me." "Would to Heaven," exclaimed he, "that you were my wife. I should not, then, fail in my love or duty as a husband; yet she is an amiable girl, and, had I a heart to give her, I might still be happy; but that, alas! I can never recall." "Why, then," said I, "did you marry her? You were, doubtless, master of your own actions." "No," said he, "I was not. The embarrassed state of my affairs precluded the possibility of acting as I wished. Loving you most ardently, I was anxious to prevent your union with another, till I could so far improve my circumstances as to secure you from poverty and

want in a connection with me. My regard was too sincere to permit me to deceive you by a marriage which might have proved unhappy for us both. My pride forbade my telling you the motives of my delay; and I left you to see if I could place myself in a situation worthy of your acceptance. This I could not effect, and, therefore, have run the risk of my future happiness by marrying a lady of affluence. This secures to me the externals of enjoyment, but my heart, I fear, will never participate it; yet it affords me some degree of satisfaction that I have not involved you in distress. The only alleviation of which my banishment from you is capable, is your forgiveness. In compassion, then, refuse it not. It cannot injure you. To me it will be worth millions." He wept. Yes, Lucy, this libertine, this man of pleasure and gallantly, wept. I really pitied him from my heart. "I forgive you," said I, "and wish you happy; yet on this condition only, that you never again pollute my ears with the recital of your infamous passion. Yes, infamous I call it; for what softer appellation can be given to such professions from a married man? Harbor not an idea of me, in future, inconsistent with the love and fidelity which you owe your wife; much less presume to mention it, if you wish not to be detested by me, and forever banished from my presence." He expressed gratitude for his absolution, even upon these terms, and hoped his future conduct would entitle him to my friendship and esteem. "That," I replied, "time only can determine."

One favor more he begged leave to solicit; which was, that I would be a neighbor to his wife. "She was a stranger," he said, "and would deem my society a particular privilege." This, I told him, I could not grant at present, whatever I might do hereafter. He did not urge it any further, but inquired after my mamma, and expressed a wish to see her. I rang the bell, and ordered her and Miss Granby to be called. When they came he was very polite to them both, and, after usual compliments, told my mamma that he was happy in having obtained my forgiveness, to which he was anxious to have her seal affixed. "My daughter," said she, "is the injured party; and if she be satisfied, I shall not complain." He thanked her for her condescension, informed her that he was married, and requested her to visit his wife. We then conversed upon different subjects for a short time, and he took his leave. A sigh escaped him as he departed, and a gloom was visible in his countenance which I never observed before.

I must acknowledge that this interview has given me satisfaction. I have often told you, that if I married Major Sanford, it would be from a predilection for his situation in life. How wretched must have been my lot, had I discovered, too late, that he was by no means possessed of the independence which I fondly anticipated! I knew not my own heart, when I contemplated a connection with him. Little did I think that my regard for Mr. Boyer was so deeply rooted as I now find it. I

foolishly imagined that I could turn my affections into what channel I pleased. What, then, must have been my feelings, when I found myself deprived both of inward peace and outward enjoyment! I begin now to emerge from the darkness in which I have been long benighted. I hope the tragic comedy, in which I have acted so conspicuous a part, will come to a happy end.

Julia and I talk, now and then, of a journey to Boston. As yet, I have not resolution to act with much decision upon the subject; but, wherever I am, and whatever may be my fate, I shall always be yours in truth,

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER LVI.

TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

I begin to hope we shall come to rights here by and by. Major Sanford has returned, has made us a visit, and a treaty of peace and amity (but not of commerce) is ratified. Eliza appears to be rapidly returning to her former cheerfulness—if not gayety. I hope she will not diverge too far from her present sedateness and solidity; yet I am not without apprehensions of danger on that score. One extreme commonly succeeds another. She tells me that she

assiduously cultivates her natural vivacity; that she finds her taste for company and amusements increasing; that she dreads being alone, because past scenes arise to view which vex and discompose her.

These are indications of a mind not perfectly right. I flatter myself, however, that the time is not far distant when her passions will vibrate with regularity.

I need not repeat to you any thing relative to Major Sanford's conciliatory visit. Eliza has given you a particular, and, I believe, a faithful detail. I was called down to see this wonderful man, and disliked him exceedingly. I am astonished that Eliza's penetrating eye has not long since read his vices in his very countenance. I am told by a friend, who has visited them, that he has an agreeable wife; and I wish she may find him a husband of the same description; but I very much doubt the accomplishment of my wish, for I have no charity for these reformed rakes.

We were walking abroad the other afternoon, and met Major Sanford and lady. Eliza did not see them till they were very near us. She started, turned pale, and then colored like crimson. I cannot but think a little envy rankled in her heart. Major Sanford very politely accosted us, and congratulated Mrs. Sanford on this opportunity of introducing her to a particular friend, presenting Eliza. She received her with an easy dignity, and bade her welcome to this part of

the country. Mrs. Sanford answered her modestly, hoped for the pleasure of a further acquaintance, and urged us, as we were not far from their house, to return with them to tea. We declined, and wishing each other good evening, parted. Major Sanford's eyes were riveted on Eliza the whole time we were together, and he seemed loath to remove them when we separated. I suspect there is some truth in his tale of love. I shall therefore discourage Eliza from associating with him under any pretext whatever. She appeared more pensive and thoughtful than common as we returned home, and said little the rest of the evening, but next morning was as chatty as ever.

She is warm in the praises of Mrs. Sanford, thinks her an accomplished woman, and wonders that the major could suggest an idea of marrying her for her money. She intends, she says, to visit her soon, and wishes me to accompany her. This, for her own sake, I shall defer as long as possible. I am, &c.,

JULIA GRANBY.

LETTER LVII.

TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

By Julia's advice we have neglected the repeated invitations of Major Sanford to visit and commence

neighborhood with them till yesterday, when we received a polite billet requesting the honor of our company to dine. My mamma declined going, but said she had no objection to our compliance with the message if we thought proper. Julia and I accordingly went. We found a large company assembled in a spacious hall, splendidly furnished and decorated. They were all very polite and attentive to me, but none more so than Major Sanford and his lady, who jointly strove to dissipate the pensiveness of my mind, which I found it impossible to conceal. When we were summoned to dinner, the major, being near me, offered his hand, and, leading me into the dining room, seated me at a table furnished with all the variety which could please the eye or regale the taste of the most luxurious epicure. The conversation turned on various subjects—literary, political, and miscellaneous. In the evening we had a ball. Major Sanford gave the hand of his wife to a Mr. Grey, alleging that he was a stranger, and therefore entitled to particular attention, and then solicited mine himself. I was on the point of refusing him, but recollecting that it might have the appearance of continued resentment, contrary to my declaration of forgiving what was past, I complied. He was all kindness and assiduity; the more so, I imagined, with a view to make amends for his former ingratitude and neglect. Tenderness is now peculiarly soothing to my wounded heart. He took an opportunity of conversing with his wife and me together, hoped she

would be honored with my friendship and acquaintance, and begged for her sake that I would not be a stranger at his house. His Nancy, he said, was far removed from her maternal friends, but I could supply their place if I would generously undertake the task. She joined in expressing the same sentiments and wishes. "Alas! sir," said I, "Eliza Wharton is not now what she once was. I labor under a depression of spirits which must render my company rather painful than pleasing to my friends." The idea of what I had been, contrasted with what I then was, touched my sensibility, and I could not restrain the too officious tear from stealing down my cheek. He took me by the hand, and said, "You distress me, Miss Wharton; indeed you distress me. Happiness must and shall attend you. Cursed be the wretch who could wound a heart like yours."

Julia Granby now joined us. An inquisitive concern was visible in her countenance.

I related this conversation to her after we returned home; but she approved it not.

She thought Major Sanford too particularly attentive to me, considering what had previously happened. She said it would be noticed by others, and the world would make unfavorable remarks upon any appearance of intimacy between us. "I care not for that," said I; "it is an ill-natured, misjudging world, and I am not obliged to sacrifice my friends to its opinion. Were Major Sanford a single man, I

should avoid his society; but since he is married, since his wife is young, beautiful, and lovely, he can have no temptation to injure me. I therefore see no evil which can arise from the cultivation of friendship with her at least. I relish company so little, that I may surely be indulged in selecting that which is most agreeable to my taste, to prevent my becoming quite a misanthrope." I thank you, my dear Mrs. Sumner, for your kind letter. It was a seasonable cordial to my mind, and I will endeavor to profit by your advice. Your remarks on the public entertainments are amusing, and, as far as I am a judge, perfectly just. I think it a pity they have not female managers for the theatre. I believe it would be under much better regulations than at present.

With cordial respects to Mr. Sumner, I subscribe myself, yours in sincerity,

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER LVIII.

TO MR. CHARLES DEIGHTON.

HARTFORD.

Rejoice with me, my friend, that I have made my peace with the mistress of my heart. No devotee could have been more sincere in his penitence than I was in mine. Indeed, Charles, I never knew I had so much sensibility before. Why, I was as much a

woman as the very weakest of the sex.

But I dealt very plainly and sincerely with her, to be sure; and this atones for all past offences, and procures absolution for many others yet to be committed.

The dear girl was not inexorable; she was as placable and condescending as I could expect, considering the nature of the crime, which was apparently slighting her person and charms by marrying another. This, you know, is one of the nicest points with the ladies. Attack their honor, that is, their chastity, and they construe it to be the effect of excessive love, which hurries you a little beyond the bounds of prudence. But touch their vanity by preferring another, and they will seldom pardon you. You will say I am very severe upon the sex; and have I not reason to be so, since I have found so many frail ones among them? This, however, is departing from my subject.

Eliza is extremely altered. Her pale, dejected countenance, with the sedateness of her manners, so different from the lively glow of health, cheerfulness, and activity which formerly animated her appearance and deportment, struck me very disagreeably.

With all my gallantry and fluency in love matters, I was unable to acquit myself tolerably, or to address her with any degree of ease and confidence. She was

very calm, and spoke with great indifference about my marriage, &c., which mortified me exceedingly. Yet I cannot consent to believe that her present depression of spirits arises solely from Mr. Boyer's infidelity. I flatter myself that I am of sufficient consequence to her to have contributed in a degree.

When I inquired after her health, she told me she had been indisposed; but was now much better. This indisposition, I am informed, was purely mental; and I am happy to observe her recovering from it. I frequently visit her, sometimes with and sometimes without my wife, of whom, through my mediation, she has become a favorite. I have married, and according to the general opinion reformed. Yet I suspect my reformation, like most others of the kind, will prove instable as "the baseless fabric of a vision," unless I banish myself entirely from her society. But that I can never do; for she is still lovely in my eyes, and I cannot control my passions.

When absent from her I am lost to every thing but her idea. My wife begins to rally me on my fondness for Miss Wharton. She asked me the other day if she had a fortune. "No," said I; "if she had I should have married her." This wounded her sensibility. I repented of my sincerity, and made my peace for that time. Yet I find myself growing extremely irritable, and she must take heed how she provokes me; for I do not love her, and I think the name of wife becomes more and more distasteful to me every day.

In my mind, Eliza has no competitor. But I must keep up appearances, though I endeavor to regain her love. I imagine that the enjoyment of her society as a neighbor and friend may content me for the present, and render my condition supportable.

Farewell, Charles. I hope you will never be embarrassed with a wife, nor lack some favorite nymph to supply the place of one.

PETER SANFORD.

LETTER LIX.

TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

Dear Lucy: I intended this week to have journeyed to Boston with Julia Granby; but my resolution fails me. I find it painful even to think of mixing again with the gay multitude. I believe the melancholy reflections by which I am oppressed will be more effectually, if not more easily, surmounted by tarrying where they are rendered familiar, than by going from them awhile and then returning.

Julia will therefore go without me. I envy her no enjoyment there, except your company.

The substitution of friendship, in the place of love, for Major Sanford, I find productive of agreeable

sensations. With him, he assures me, it is a far more calm and rational pleasure. *He* treats me with the affection and tenderness of a brother, and his *wife,* who exceeds him in professions of regard, with all the consoling softness and attention of a sister. Indeed, their politeness has greatly contributed to revive the cheerfulness of my natural disposition. I believe the major's former partiality to me as a lover is entirely obliterated; and for my part, I feel as little restraint in his company and his lady's as in that of any other in the neighborhood.

I very much regret the departure of Julia, and hope you will permit her to return to me again as soon as possible. She is a valuable friend. Her mind is well cultivated, and she has treasured up a fund of knowledge and information which renders her company both agreeable and useful in every situation of life. We lately spent the afternoon and evening at Mr. Smith's. They had a considerable number of visitants, and among the rest Major Sanford. His wife was expected, but did not come, being indisposed.

I believe, my friend, you must excuse me if my letters are shorter than formerly. Writing is not so agreeable to me as it used to be. I love my friends as well as ever, but I think they must be weary of the gloom and dulness which pervade my present correspondence. When my pen shall have regained its original fluency and alertness, I will resume and

prolong the pleasing task.

I am, my dear Lucy, yours most affectionately,

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER LX.

TO THE SAME.

HARTFORD.

Dear madam: Agreeably to your desire every art has been tried, every allurement held out, every argument used, and every plan adopted, which Mrs. Wharton and I could devise to induce Eliza to accompany me to Boston; but all in vain. Sometimes she has been almost persuaded to a compliance with our united request, but soon has resolutely determined against it. I have observed her sentiments to be suddenly changed after being in company with Major Sanford. This alarms us exceedingly. Indeed, the major seems to have insinuated himself into her good opinion more than ever. She is flattered into the belief that his attention to her is purely the result of friendship and benevolence.

I have not so favorable an opinion of the man as to suppose him capable of either. He has become very familiar here. He calls in almost every day. Sometimes he but just inquires after our health, and sometimes makes long visits. The latter is his

invariable practice when he finds Eliza alone. Mrs. Wharton always avoids seeing him if she can. She dreads, she says, his approaching the house.

I entered the parlor the other day, somewhat suddenly, and found him sitting very near Eliza, in a low conversation. They both rose in apparent confusion, and he soon retired.

When he was gone, "I suspect," said I, "that the major was whispering a tale of love, Eliza." "Do you imagine," said she, "that I would listen to such a theme from a married man?" "I hope not," said I, "but his conduct towards you indicates a revival of his former sentiments, at least." "I was not aware of that," said she. "As yet I have observed nothing in his behavior to me inconsistent with the purest friendship."

We drank tea not long since at Mr. Smith's. Late in the afternoon Major Sanford made his appearance, to apologize, as he said, for Mrs. Sanford, who was indisposed, and could not enjoy the pleasure of the visit she had contemplated. He was very gay the whole evening; and when the company separated, he was the first to present his arm to Eliza, who accepted it without hesitation. A Mr. Newhall attended me, and we endeavored to keep them company; but they evidently chose to walk by themselves. Mr. Newhall observed, that if Major Sanford were not married he should suspect he still intended a union with Miss Wharton. I replied, that

their former intercourse, having terminated in friendship, rendered them more familiar with each other than with the generality of their acquaintance.

When we reached the house, Mr. Newhall chose not to go in, and took his leave. I waited at the door for Eliza and Major Sanford. At some little distance, I saw him press her hand to his lips. It vexed me exceedingly; and no sooner had they come up, than I sullenly bade them good night, and walked directly in. Eliza soon followed me. I sat down by the fire in a thoughtful posture. She did the same. In this situation we both remained for some time without speaking a word. At length she said, "You seem not to have enjoyed your walk, Miss Granby: did you not like your gallant?" "Yes," said I, "very well; but I am mortified that you were not better provided for." "I make no complaint," rejoined she; "I was very well entertained." "That is what displeases me," said I; "I mean your visible fondness for the society of such a man. Were you averse to it, as you ought to be, there would be no danger. But he has an alluring tongue and a treacherous heart. How can you be pleased and entertained by his conversation? To me it appears totally repugnant to that refinement and delicacy for which you have always been esteemed.

"His assiduity and obtrusion ought to alarm you. You well know what his character has been. Marriage has not changed his disposition. It is only a cloak which conceals it. Trust him not, then, my dear Eliza; if you do, depend upon it you will find his

professions of friendship to be mere hypocrisy and deceit. I fear that he is acting over again the same unworthy arts which formerly misled you. Beware of his wiles. Your friends are anxious for you. They tremble at your professed regard and apparent intimacy with that unprincipled man." "My friends," said she, "are very jealous of me lately. I know not how I have forfeited their confidence, or incurred their suspicion." "By encouraging that attention," I warmly replied, "and receiving those caresses, from a married man which are due from him to none but his wife. He is a villain if he deceived her into marriage by insincere professions of love. If he had then an affection for her, and has already discarded it, he is equally guilty. Can *you* expect sincerity from the man who withholds it from an amiable and deserving wife? No, Eliza; it is not love which induces him to entertain you with the subject. It is a baser passion; and if you disdain not his artifice, if you listen to his flattery, you will, I fear, fall a victim to his evil machinations. If he conducted like a man of honor, he would merit your esteem; but his behavior is quite the reverse: yet, vile as he is, he would not dare to lisp his insolent hopes of your regard if you punished his presumption with the indignation it deserves; if you spurned from your presence the ungrateful wretch who would requite your condescension by triumphing in your ruin."

She now burst into tears, and begged me to drop the subject. Her mind, she said, was racked by her

own reflections. She could bear but little. Kindness deceived, and censure distressed her.

I assured her of my good intentions; that, as I saw her danger, I thought it a duty of the friendship and affection I bore her solemnly to warn her against it before we parted. We talked over the matter more calmly, till she professed herself resolved in future to avoid his company, and reject his insinuations.

The next day, as I walked out, I met Major Sanford. He accosted me very civilly. I barely bade him good morning, and passed on.

I made it in my way to call at his house, and bid Mrs. Sanford adieu; not expecting another opportunity equally favorable. When I entered the parlor, she was playing a melancholy air on the harpsichord. She rose, and gave me a polite and graceful reception. I told her, as I was soon to leave the town, I called to take my leave of her—a compliment which her attention to me required. "Are you going to leave us then, Miss Granby?" said she. "I shall regret your departure exceedingly. I have so few friends in this part of the country, that it will give me sensible pain to part with one I so highly value."

I told her, in the course of conversation, that I expected the pleasure of seeing her yesterday at Mr. Smith's, and was very sorry for the indisposition which prevented her favoring us with her company.

"Indeed," said she, "I did not know I was expected there. Were you there, pray?" "Yes," said I; "and Major Sanford excused your not coming, on the account I have mentioned." "Well," said she, "this is the first word that I ever heard about it; he told me that business led him abroad. Did he gallant any lady?" "O," said I, "he was with us all together. We had no particular gallants."

Seeing her curiosity excited, I heartily repented saying any thing of the matter, and waived the subject. Little did I suspect him to have been guilty of so base an artifice. It was evidently contrived to facilitate an interview with Eliza.

When I returned, I related this affair to Mrs. Wharton and her daughter. The old lady and I expatiated largely on the vileness of this conduct, and endeavored to expose it to Eliza's view in its true colors. She pretended not to justify it; yet she looked as if she wished it in her power.

I am now preparing for my journey to Boston, which I must, however, defer another week for the sake of a more agreeable passage in the stage. I regret leaving Eliza. I tremble at her danger. She has not the resolution to resist temptation which she once possessed. Her mind is surprisingly weakened. She appears sensible of this, yet adds to it by yielding to her own imbecility. You will receive a letter from her with this, though I had much difficulty to persuade her to write. She has unfortunately become

very averse to this, her once favorite amusement.

As I shall soon have the pleasure of conversing with you personally, I conclude without any other addition to this scrawl than the name of your obliged

JULIA GRANBY.

LETTER LXI.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

BOSTON.

My dear friend: I have received your letters, and must own to you that the perusal of them gave me pain. Pardon my suspicions, Eliza; they are excited by real friendship. Julia, you say, approves not Major Sanford's particular attention to you. Neither do I. If you recollect and examine his conversation in his conciliatory visit, you will find it replete with sentiments for the avowal of which he ought to be banished from all virtuous society.

Does he not insidiously declare that you are the only object of his affections; that his union with another was formed from interested views; and, though that other is acknowledged to be amiable and excellent, still he has not a heart to bestow, and expects not happiness with her? Does this discover even the appearance of amendment? Has he not, by false pretensions, misled a virtuous woman, and

induced her to form a connection with him? She was a stranger to his manner of life, and doubtless allured, as you have been, by flattery, deceit, and external appearance, to trust his honor, little thinking him wholly devoid of that sacred tie. What is the reward of her confidence? Insensibility to her charms, neglect of her person, and professed attachment to another!

Is he a man, my dear Eliza, whose friendship you wish to cultivate? Can that heavenly passion reside in a breast which is the seat of treachery, duplicity, and ingratitude? You are too sensible of its purity and worth to suppose it possible. The confessions of his own mouth condemn him. They convince me that he is still the abandoned libertine, and that marriage is but the cloak of his intrigues. His officious attentions to you are alarming to your friends. Your own mind weakened, and peculiarly susceptible of tender impressions, beware how you receive them from him. Listen not a moment to his flattering professions; it is an insult upon your understanding for him to offer them; it is derogatory to virtue for you to hear them.

Slight not the opinion of the world. We are dependent beings; and while the smallest traces of virtuous sensibility remain, we must feel the force of that dependence in a greater or less degree. No female, whose mind is uncorrupted, can be indifferent to reputation. It is an inestimable jewel, the loss of which can never be repaired. While

retained, it affords conscious peace to our own minds, and insures the esteem and respect of all around us.

Blessed with the company of so disinterested and faithful a friend as Julia Granby, some deference is certainly due to her opinion and advice. To an enlarged understanding, a cultivated taste, and an extensive knowledge of the world, she unites the most liberal sentiments with a benevolence and candor of disposition, which render her equally deserving of your confidence and affection.

I cannot relinquish my claim to a visit from you this winter. Marriage has not alienated nor weakened my regard for my friends. Come, then, to your faithful Lucy. Have you sorrows? I will soothe and alleviate them. Have you cares? I will dispel them. Have you pleasures? I will heighten them. Come, then, let me fold you to my expecting heart. My happiness will be partly suspended till your society renders it complete. Adieu.

LUCY SUMNER.

LETTER LXII.

TO MISS JULIA GRANBY.

HARTFORD.

Dear Julia: I hope Mrs. Sumner and you will

excuse my writing but one letter in answer to the number I have received from you both. Writing is an employment which suits me not at present. It was pleasing to me formerly, and therefore, by recalling the idea of circumstances and events which frequently occupied my pen in happier days, it now gives me pain. Yet I have just written a long consolatory letter to Mrs. Richman. She has buried, her babe—her little Harriet, of whom she was dotingly fond.

It was a custom with some of the ancients, we are told, to weep at the birth of their children. Often should we be impelled to a compliance with this custom, could we foresee the future incidents of their lives. I think, at least, that the uncertainty of their conduct and condition in more advanced age may reconcile us to their removal to a happier state before they are capable of tasting the bitterness of woe.

"Happy the babe, who, privileged by fate
To shorter labors and a lighter weight,
Received but yesterday the gift of breath,
Ordered to-morrow to return to death."

Our domestic affairs are much as when you left us. Nothing remarkable has occurred in the neighborhood worth communicating. The company and amusements of the town are as usual, I suppose. I frequent neither of them. Having incurred so much censure by the indulgence of a gay disposition, I am

now trying what a recluse and solitary mode of life will, produce. You will call me splenetic. I own it. I am pleased with nobody; still less with myself. I look around for happiness, and find it not. The world is to me a desert. If I indulge myself in temporary enjoyment, the consciousness or apprehension of doing amiss destroys my peace of mind. And when I have recourse to books, if I read those of serious descriptions, they remind me of an awful futurity, for which I am unprepared; if history, it discloses facts in which I have no interest; if novels, they exhibit scenes of pleasure which I have no prospect of realizing.

My mamma is solicitously attentive to my happiness; and though she fails of promoting it, yet I endeavor to save her the pangs of disappointment by appearing what she wishes.

I anticipate, and yet I dread, your return; a paradox this, which time alone can solve.

Continue writing to me, and entreat Mrs. Sumner, in my name, to do likewise. Your benevolence must be your reward.

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER LXIII.

TO MISS ELIZA WHARTON.

BOSTON.

A paradox, indeed, is the greater part of your letter to us, my dear Eliza. We had fondly flattered ourselves that the melancholy of your mind was exterminated. I hope no new cause has revived it. Little did I intend, when I left you, to have been absent so long; but Mrs. Summer's disappointment, in her plan of spending the summer at Hartford, induced me, in compliance with her request, to prolong my residence here. But for your sake, she now consents to my leaving her, in hopes I may be so happy as to contribute to your amusement.

I am both pleased and instructed by the conduct of this amiable woman. As I always endeavored to imitate her discreet, and modest behavior in a single state, so likewise shall I take her for a pattern should I ever enter a married life. She is most happily united. Mr. Sumner, to all the graces and accomplishments of the gentleman, adds the still more important and essential properties of virtue, integrity, and honor. I was once present when a person was recommended to her for a husband. She objected that he was a rake. "True," said the other, "he has been, but he has reformed." "That will never do for me," rejoined she; "I wish my future companion to need no reformation"—a sentiment worthy the attention of our whole sex; the general adoption of which, I am persuaded, would have a happy influence upon the manners of the other.

I hope neither you nor I, Eliza, shall ever be tried by a man of debauched principles. Such characters I conceive to be totally unfit for the society of women who have any claim to virtue and delicacy.

I intend to be with you in about a month. If agreeable to you, we will visit and spend a few weeks with the afflicted Mrs. Richman. I sincerely sympathize with her under her bereavement. I know her fondness for you will render your company very consoling to her; and I flatter myself that I should not be an unwelcome guest.

Make my respects to your mamma, and believe me ever yours,

JULIA GRANBY.

LETTER LXIV.

TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

Dear madam: I have arrived in safety to the mansion of our once happy and social friends. But I cannot describe to you how changed, how greatly changed this amiable family appears since I left it. Mrs. Wharton met me at the door, and, tenderly embracing, bade me a cordial welcome. "You are come, Julia," said she, "I hope, to revive and comfort us. We have been very solitary during your absence."

"I am happy, madam," said I, "to return; and my endeavors to restore cheerfulness and content shall not be wanting. But where is Eliza?" By this time we had reached the back parlor, whither Mrs. Wharton led me; and, the door being open, I saw Eliza reclined on a settee, in a very thoughtful posture. When I advanced to meet her, she never moved, but sat, "like Patience on a monument, smiling at Grief."

I stopped involuntarily, and involuntarily raising my eyes to heaven, exclaimed, "Is that Eliza Wharton?" She burst into tears, and attempted to rise, but sank again into her seat. Seeing her thus affected, I sat down by her, and, throwing my arm about her neck, "Why these tears?" said I. "Why this distress, my dear friend? Let not the return of your Julia give you pain; she comes to soothe you with the consolations of friendship." "It is not pain," said she, clasping me to her breast; "it is pleasure too exquisite for my weak nerves to bear. See you not, Julia, how I am altered? Should you have known me for the sprightly girl who was always welcome at the haunts of hilarity and mirth?" "Indeed," said I, "you appear indisposed; but I will be your physician. Company and change of air will, I doubt not, restore you." "Will these cure disorders of the mind, Julia?" "They will have a powerful tendency to remove them, if rightly applied; and I profess considerable skill in that art Come," continued I, "we will try these medicines in the morning. Let us rise early, and step into the chaise, and, after riding a few miles, call and

breakfast with Mrs. Freeman. I have some commissions from her daughter. We shall be agreeably entertained there, you know."

Being summoned to supper, I took her by the hand, and we walked into another room, where we found her brother and his wife, with her mamma, waiting for us. We were all very chatty; even Eliza resumed, in a degree, her former sociability. A settled gloom, notwithstanding, brooded on her countenance; and a deep sigh often escaped her in spite of her evident endeavors to suppress it. She went to bed before us, when her mamma informed me that her health had been declining for some months; that she never complained, but studiously concealed every symptom of indisposition. Whether it were any real disorder of body, or whether it arose from her depression of spirits, she could not tell, but supposed they operated together, and mutually heightened each other.

I inquired after Major Sanford; whether he and Eliza had associated together during my absence. Sometimes, she said, they seemed on good terms, and he frequently called to see her; at others they had very little, if any, correspondence at all. She told me that Eliza never went abroad, and was very loath to see company at home; that her chief amusement consisted in solitary walks; that the dreadful idea of her meeting Major Sanford in these walks had now and then intruded upon her imagination; that she had not the least evidence of the fact, however, and,

indeed, was afraid to make any inquiries into the matter, lest her own suspicions should be discovered; that the major's character was worse than ever; that he was much abroad, and frequently entertained large parties of worthless bacchanalians at his house; that common report said he treated his wife with indifference, neglect, and ill nature; with many other circumstances which it is not material to relate.

Adieu, my dear friend, for the present. When occasion requires, you shall hear again from your affectionate

JULIA GRANBY.

LETTER LXV.

TO MR. CHARLES DEIGHTON.

HARTFORD.

Good news, Charles, good news! I have arrived to the utmost bounds of my wishes—the full possession of my adorable Eliza. I have heard a quotation from a certain book, but what book it was I have forgotten, if I ever knew. No matter for that; the quotation is, that "stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." If it has reference to the pleasures which I have enjoyed with Eliza, I like it hugely, as Tristram Shandy's father said of Yorick's sermon; and I think it fully verified.

I had a long and tedious siege. Every method which love could suggest, or art invent, was adopted. I was sometimes ready to despair, under an idea that her resolution was unconquerable, her virtue impregnable. Indeed, I should have given over the pursuit long ago, but for the hopes of success I entertained from her parleying with me, and, in reliance upon her own strength, endeavoring to combat and counteract my designs. Whenever this has been the case, Charles, I have never yet been defeated in my plan. If a lady will consent to enter the lists against the antagonist of her honor, she may be sure of losing the prize. Besides, were her delicacy genuine, she would banish the man at once who presumed to doubt, which he certainly does who attempts to vanquish it. But far be it from me to criticize the pretensions of the sex. If I gain the rich reward of my dissimulation and gallantry, that, you know, is all I want.

To return, then, to the point. An unlucky, but not a miraculous accident has taken place which must soon expose our amour. What can be done? At the first discovery, absolute distraction seized the soul of Eliza, which has since terminated in a fixed melancholy. Her health, too, is much impaired. She thinks herself rapidly declining, and I tremble when I see her emaciated form.

My wife has been reduced very low of late. She brought me a boy a few weeks past, a dead one though.

These circumstances give me neither pain nor pleasure. I am too much engrossed by my divinity to take an interest in any thing else. True, I have lately suffered myself to be somewhat engaged here and there by a few jovial lads who assist me in dispelling the anxious thoughts which my perplexed situation excites. I must, however, seek some means to relieve Eliza's distress. My finances are low; but the last fraction shall be expended in her service, if she need it.

Julia Granby is expected at Mrs. Wharton's every hour. I fear that her inquisitorial eye will soon detect our intrigue and obstruct its continuation. Now, there's a girl, Charles, I should never attempt to seduce; yet she is a most alluring object, I assure you. But the dignity of her manners forbids all assaults upon her virtue. Why, the very expression of her eye blasts in the bud every thought derogatory to her honor, and tells you plainly that the first insinuation of the kind would be punished with eternal banishment and displeasure. Of her there is no danger. But I can write no more, except that I am, &c.,

PETER SANFORD.

LETTER LXVI.

TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

O my friend, I have a tale to unfold—a tale which will rend every nerve of sympathizing pity, which will rack the breast of sensibility, and unspeakably distress your benevolent heart. Eliza—O, the ruined, lost Eliza!

I want words to express the emotions of indignation and grief which oppress me. But I will endeavor to compose myself, and relate the circumstances as they came to my knowledge.

After my last letter Eliza remained much in the same gloomy situation as I found her. She refused to go, agreeably to her promise, to visit your mamma, and, under one pretext or another, has constantly declined accompanying me any where else since my arrival.

Till last Thursday night she slept in the same bed with me, when she excused herself by saying she was restless, and should disturb my repose. I yielded to her humor of taking a different apartment, little suspecting the real cause. She frequently walked out, and though I sometimes followed, I very seldom found her. Two or three times, when I happened to be awake, I heard her go down stairs; and, on inquiry in the morning, she told me that she was very thirsty, and went down for water. I observed a degree of hesitancy in her answers for which I could not account. But last night the dreadful mystery was developed. A little before day, I heard the front door open with great caution. I sprang from my bed, and,

running to the window, saw by the light of the moon a man going from the house. Soon after, I perceived a footstep upon the stairs, which carefully approached, and entered Eliza's chamber.

Judge of my astonishment, my surprise, my feelings upon this occasion. I doubted not but Major Sanford was the person I had seen; and the discovery of Eliza's guilt in this infamous intrigue almost deprived me of thought and recollection. My blood thrilled with horror at this sacrifice of virtue. After a while I recovered myself, and put on my clothes. But what to do I knew not—whether to go directly to her chamber, and let her know that she was detected, or to wait another opportunity.

I resolved on the first. The day had now dawned. I tapped at her door, and she bade me come in. She was sitting in an easy chair by the side of her bed. As I entered she withdrew her handkerchief from her face, and, looking earnestly at me, said, "What procures me the favor of a visit at this early hour, Miss Granby?" "I was disturbed," said I, "and wished not to return to my bed. But what breaks your rest, and calls you up so unseasonably, Eliza?" "Remorse and despair," answered she, weeping. "After what I have witnessed, this morning," rejoined I, "I cannot wonder at it. Was it not Major Sanford whom I saw go from the house some time ago?" She was silent, but tears flowed abundantly. "It is too late," continued I, "to deny or evade. Answer my question sincerely; for, believe me, Eliza, it is not malice, but

concern for you, which prompts it." "I will answer you, Julia," said she. "You have discovered a secret which harrows up my very soul—a secret which I wished you to know, but could not exert resolution to reveal. Yes, it was Major Sanford—the man who has robbed me of my peace, who has triumphed in my destruction, and who will cause my sun to set at noon."

"I shudder," said I, "at your confession! Wretched, deluded girl! Is this a return for your parent's love and assiduous care; for your friends' solicitude and premonitory advice? You are ruined, you say! You have sacrificed your virtue to an abandoned, despicable profligate! And you live to acknowledge and bear your infamy!" "I do," said she; "but not long shall I support this burden. See you not, Julia, my decaying frame, my faded cheek, and tottering limbs? Soon shall I be insensible to censure and reproach. Soon shall I be sequestered in that mansion 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.'" "Rest!" said I; "can you expect to find rest, either in this world or another, with such a weight of guilt on your head?" She exclaimed, with great emotion, "Add not to the upbraidings of a wounded spirit. Have pity upon me, O my friend, have pity upon me. Could you know what I suffer, you would think me sufficiently punished." "I wish you no other punishment," said I, "than what may effect your repentance and reformation. But your mother, Eliza! She cannot long be ignorant of your

fall; and I tremble to think of her distress. It will break her widowed heart. How has she loved, how has she doted upon you! Dreadful is the requital which you have made." "My mother," rejoined she, "O, name her not! The very sound is distraction to me. O my Julia, if your heart be not shut against mercy and compassion towards me, aid me through this trying scene. Let my situation call forth your pity, and induce you, undeserving as I am, to exert it in my behalf."

During this time, I had walked the chamber. My spirits had been raised above their natural key, and were exhausted. I sat down, but thought I should have fainted, till a copious flood of tears gave me relief. Eliza was extremely affected. The appearance of calamity which she exhibited would have softened the most obdurate anger. Indeed, I feared some immediate and fatal effect. I therefore seated myself beside her; and assuming an air of kindness, "Compose yourself, Eliza," said I; "I repeat what I told you before—it is the purest friendship which thus interests me in your concerns. This, under the direction of charity, induces me again to offer you my hand. Yet you have erred against knowledge and reason, against warning and counsel. You have forfeited the favor of your friends, and reluctant will be their forgiveness." "I plead guilty," said she, "to all your charges. From the general voice I expect no clemency. If I can make my peace with my mother, it is all I seek or wish on this side the grave. In your

benevolence I confide for this. In you I hope to find an intercessor. By the remembrance of our former affection and happiness, I conjure you, refuse me not At present, I entreat you to conceal from her this distressing tale. A short, reprieve is all I ask." "Why," said I, "should you defer it? When the painful task is over, you may find relief in her lenient kindness." "After she knows my condition, I cannot see her," resumed she, "till I am assured of her forgiveness. I have not strength to support the appearance of her anger and grief. I will write to her what I cannot speak. You must bear the melancholy message, and plead for me, that her displeasure may not follow me to the grave, whither I am rapidly hastening." "Be assured," replied I, "that I will keep your secret as long as prudence requires. But I must leave you now; your mamma will wonder at our being thus closeted together. When opportunity presents, we will converse further on the subject. In the mean time keep yourself as composed as possible, if you would avoid suspicion." She raised her clasped hands, and with a piteous look, threw her handkerchief over her face, and reclined in her chair, without speaking a word. I returned to my chamber, and endeavored to dissipate every idea which might tend to disorder my countenance, and break the silence I wished to observe relative to what had happened.

When I went down, Mrs. Wharton desired me to step up and inform Eliza that breakfast was ready. She told me she could not yet compose herself

sufficiently to see her mamma, and begged me to excuse her absence as I thought proper. I accordingly returned for answer to Mrs. Wharton, that Eliza had rested but indifferently, and being somewhat indisposed, would not come down, but wished me to bring her a bowl of chocolate, when we had breakfasted. I was obliged studiously to suppress even my thoughts concerning her, lest the emotions they excited might be observed. Mrs. Wharton conversed much of her daughter, and expressed great concern about her health and state of mind. Her return to this state of dejection, after having recovered her spirits and cheerfulness in a great degree, was owing, she feared, to some cause unknown to her; and she entreated me to extract the secret, if possible. I assured her of my best endeavors, and doubted not, I told her, but I should be able in a few days to effect what she wished.

Eliza came down and walked in the garden before dinner; at which she commanded herself much better than I expected. She said that a little ride might, she imagined, be of service to her, and asked me if I would accompany her a few miles in the afternoon. Her mamma was much pleased with the proposition, and the chaise was accordingly ordered.

I observed to Eliza, as we rode, that with her natural and acquired abilities, with her advantages of education, with her opportunities of knowing the world, and of tracing the virtues and vices of mankind to their origin, I was surprised at her

becoming the prey of an insidious libertine, with whose character she was well acquainted, and whose principles, she was fully apprised, would prompt him to deceive and betray her. "Your surprise is very natural," said she. "The same will doubtless be felt and expressed by every one to whom my sad story is related. But the cause may be found in that unrestrained levity of disposition, that fondness for dissipation and coquetry, which alienated the affections of Mr. Boyer from me. This event fatally depressed and enfeebled my mind. I embraced with avidity the consoling power of friendship, insnaringly offered by my seducer; vainly inferring, from his marriage with a virtuous woman, that he had seen the error of his ways, and forsaken his licentious practices, as he affirmed, and I, fool that I was, believed it.

"It is needless for me to rehearse the perfidious arts by which he insinuated himself into my affections and gained my confidence. Suffice it to say, he effected his purpose. But not long did I continue in the delusive dream of sensual gratification. I soon awoke to a most poignant sense of his baseness, and of my own crime and misery. I would have fled from him; I would have renounced him forever, and by a life of sincere humility and repentance endeavored to make my peace with Heaven, and to obliterate, by the rectitude of my future conduct, the guilt I had incurred; but I found it too late. My circumstances called for attention; and I had no one to participate

my cares, to witness my distress, and to alleviate my sorrows, but him. I could not therefore prevail on myself wholly to renounce his society. At times I have admitted his visits, always meeting him in the garden, or grove adjoining; till, of late, the weather and my ill health induced me to comply with his solicitations, and receive him into the parlor.

"Not long, however, shall I be subject to these embarrassments. Grief has undermined my constitution. My health has fallen a sacrifice to a disordered mind. But I regret not its departure. I have not a single wish to live. Nothing which the world affords can restore my former serenity and happiness.

"The little innocent I bear will quickly disclose its mother's shame. God Almighty grant it may not live as a monument of my guilt, and a partaker of the infamy and sorrow, which is all I have to bequeath it. Should it be continued in life, it will never know the tenderness of a parent; and, perhaps, want and disgrace may be its wretched portion. The greatest consolation I can have will be to carry it with me to a state of eternal rest; which, vile as I am, I hope to obtain, through the infinite mercy of Heaven, as revealed in the gospel of Christ. I must see Major Sanford again. It is necessary to converse further with him in order to carry my plan of operation into execution."

"What is this plan of operation, Eliza?" said I. "I am

on the rack of anxiety for your safety." "Be patient," continued she, "and you shall soon be informed. To-morrow I shall write my dreadful story to my mother. She will be acquainted with my future intentions; and you shall know, at the same time, the destination of your lost friend." "I hope," said I, "that you have formed no resolution against your own life." "God forbid," rejoined she. "My breath is in his hands; let him do what seemeth good in his sight! Keep my secret one day longer, and I will never more impose so painful a silence upon you."

By this time we had reached home. She drank tea with composure, and soon retired to rest. Mrs. Wharton eagerly inquired whether I had found out the cause of Eliza's melancholy. "I have urged her," said I, "on the subject; but she alleges that she has particular reasons for present concealment. She has, notwithstanding, promised to let me know the day after to-morrow." "O," said she, "I shall not rest till the period arrives." "Dear, good woman," said I to myself, "I fear you will never rest afterwards."

This is our present situation. Think what a scene rises to the view of your Julia. She must share the distress of others, though her own feelings on this unhappy occasion are too keen to admit a moment's serenity. My greatest relief is in writing to you; which I shall do again by the next post. In the mean time, I must beg leave to subscribe myself sincerely yours,

JULIA GRANBY.

LETTER LXVII.

TO THE SAME.

HARTFORD.

All is now lost; lost indeed! She is gone! Yes, my dear friend, our beloved Eliza is gone! Never more shall we behold this once amiable companion, this once innocent and happy girl. She has forsaken, and, as she says, bid an everlasting adieu to her home, her afflicted parent, and her friends. But I will take up my melancholy story where I left it in my last.

She went, as she told me she expected, into the garden, and met her detestable paramour. In about an hour she returned, and went directly to her chamber. At one o'clock I went up, and found her writing, and weeping. I begged her to compose herself, and go down to dinner. No, she said, she should not eat; and was not fit to appear before any body. I remonstrated against her immoderate grief, represented the injury she must sustain by the indulgence of it, and conjured her to suppress the violence of its emotions.

She entreated me to excuse her to her mamma; said she was writing to her, and found it a task too painful to be performed with any degree of composure; that she was almost ready to sink under

the weight of her affliction; but hoped and prayed for support both in this and another trying scene which awaited her. In compliance with her desire, I now left her, and told her mamma that she was very busy writing, wished not to be interrupted at present, but would take some refreshment an hour or two hence. I visited her again about four o'clock; when she appeared more calm and tranquil.

"It is finished," said she, as I entered her apartment; "it is finished." "What," said I, "is finished?" "No matter," replied she; "you will know all to-morrow, Julia." She complained of excessive fatigue, and expressed an inclination to lie down; in which I assisted her, and then retired. Some time after, her mamma went up, and found her still on the bed. She rose, however, and accompanied her down stairs. I met her at the door of the parlor, and, taking her by the hand, inquired how she did. "O Julia, miserably indeed," said she. "How severely does my mother's kindness reproach me! How insupportably it increases my self-condemnation!" She wept; she rung her hands, and walked the room in the greatest agony. Mrs. Wharton was exceedingly distressed by her appearance. "Tell me, Eliza," said she, "tell me the cause of your trouble. O, kill me not by your mysterious concealment. My dear child, let me by sharing alleviate your affliction." "Ask me not, madam," said she; "O my mother, I conjure you not to insist on my divulging to-night the fatal secret which engrosses and distracts my mind; to-morrow I

will hide nothing from you." "I will press you no further," rejoined her mamma. "Choose your own time, my dear; but remember, I must participate your grief, though I know not the cause."

Supper was brought in, and we endeavored to prevail on Eliza to eat, but in vain. She sat down in compliance with our united importunities; but neither of us tasted food. It was removed untouched. For a while, Mrs. Wharton and I gazed in silent anguish upon the spectacle of woe before us. At length Eliza rose to retire. "Julia," said she, "you will call at my chamber as you pass to your own?" I assented. She then approached her mamma, fell upon her knees before her, and clasping her hand, said, in broken accents, "O madam, can you forgive a wretch, who has forfeited your love, your kindness, and your compassion?" "Surely, Eliza," said she, "you are not that being! No, it is impossible! But however great your transgression, be assured of my forgiveness, my compassion, and my continued love." Saying this, she threw her arms about her daughter's neck, and affectionately kissed her. Eliza struggled from her embrace, and looking at her with wild despair, exclaimed, "This is too much! O, this unmerited goodness is more than I can bear!" She then rushed precipitately out of the room, and left us overwhelmed in sympathy and astonishment.

When Mrs. Wharton had recovered herself a little, she observed that Eliza's brain was evidently disordered. "Nothing else," continued she, "could

impel her to act in this extraordinary manner." At first she was resolved to follow her; but I dissuaded her from it, alleging that, as she had desired me to come into her chamber, I thought it better for me to go alone. She acquiesced, but said she should not think of going to bed, but would, however, retire to her chamber, and seek consolation there. I bade her good night, and went up to Eliza, who took me by the hand, and led me to the toilet, upon which she laid the two enclosed letters, the one to her mamma, and the other to me. "These," said she, "contain what I had not resolution to express. Promise me, Julia, that they shall not be opened till to-morrow morning." "I will," said I. "I have thought and wept," continued she, "till I have almost exhausted my strength and my reason. I would now obtain a little respite, that I may prepare my mind for the account I am one day to give at a higher tribunal than that of earthly friends. For this purpose, what I have written, and what I shall yet say to you, must close the account between you and me." "I have certainly no balance against you," said I. "In my breast you are fully acquitted. Your penitential tears have obliterated your guilt and blotted out your errors with your Julia. Henceforth, be they all forgotten. Live, and be happy." "Talk not," said she, "of life; it would be a vain hope, though I cherished it myself.

'That I must die, it is my only comfort;
Death is the privilege of human nature,
And life without it were not worth the taking.

Thither the poor, the prisoner, and the mourner
Fly for relief, and lay their burdens down.'

You have forgiven me, Julia; my mother has assured me of her forgiveness; and what have I more to wish? My heart is much lightened by these kind assurances; they will be a great support to me in the dreadful hour which awaits me." "What mean you, Eliza?" said I. "I fear some dreadful purpose labors in your mind." "O, no," she replied; "you may be assured your fear is groundless. I know not what I say; my brain is on fire; I am all confusion. Leave me, Julia; when I have had a little rest, I shall be composed. These letters have almost distracted me; but they are written, and I am comparatively easy." "I will not leave you, Eliza," said I, "unless you will go directly to bed, and endeavor to rest." "I will," said she, "and the sooner the better." I tenderly embraced her, and retired, though not to bed. About an hour after, I returned to her chamber, and opening the door very softly, found her apparently asleep. I acquainted Mrs. Wharton with her situation, which was a great consolation to us both, and encouraged us to go to bed: having suffered much in my mind, and being much fatigued, I soon fell asleep; but the rattling of a carriage, which appeared to stop a little distance from the house, awoke me. I listened a moment, and heard the door turn slowly on its hinges. I sprang from my bed, and reached the window just in time to see a female handed into a chaise by a man who hastily followed her, and drove furiously away. I at

once concluded they could be no other than Eliza and Major Sanford. Under this impression I made no delay, but ran immediately to her chamber. A candle was burning on the table, but Eliza was not there. I thought it best to acquaint her mamma with the melancholy discovery, and, stepping to her apartment for the purpose, found her rising. She had heard me walk, and was anxious to know the cause. "What is the matter, Julia?" said she; "what is the matter?" "Dear madam," said I, "arm yourself with fortitude." "What new occurrence demands it?" rejoined she. "Eliza has left us." "Left us! What mean you?" "She has just gone; I saw her handed into a chaise, which instantly disappeared."

At this intelligence she gave a shriek, and fell back on her bed. I alarmed the family, and by their assistance soon recovered her. She desired me to inform her of every particular relative to her elopement, which I did, and then delivered her the letter which Eliza had left for her. "I suspect," said she, as she took it; "I have long suspected what I dared not believe. The anguish of my mind has been known only to myself and my God." I could not answer her, and therefore withdrew. When I had read Eliza's letter to me, and wept over the sad fall, and, as I fear, the total loss of this once amiable and accomplished girl, I returned to Mrs. Wharton. She was sitting in her easy chair, and still held the fatal letter in her hand. When I entered, she fixed her streaming eyes upon me, and exclaimed, "O Julia,

this is more than the bitterness of death." "True, madam," said I, "your affliction must be great; yet that all-gracious Being who controls every event is able, and I trust disposed, to support you." "To him," replied she, "I desire humbly to resign myself; but I think I could have borne almost any other calamity with greater resignation and composure than this. With how much comparative ease could I have followed her to the grave at any period since her birth! O, my child, my child! dear, very dear, hast thou been to my fond heart. Little did I think it possible for you to prepare so dreadful a cup of sorrow for your widowed mother. But where," continued she, "where can the poor fugitive have fled? Where can she find that protection and tenderness, which, notwithstanding her great apostasy, I should never have withheld? From whom can she receive those kind attentions which her situation demands."

The agitation of her mind had exhausted her strength, and I prevailed on her to refresh and endeavor to compose herself to rest, assuring her of my utmost exertions to find out Eliza's retreat, and restore her to a mother's arms.

I am obliged to suppress my own emotions, and to bend all my thoughts towards the alleviation of Mrs. Wharton's anxiety and grief.

Major Sanford is from home, as I expected; and I am determined, if he return, to see him myself, and

extort from him the place of Eliza's concealment. Her flight in her present state of health is inexpressibly distressing to her mother; and unless we find her soon, I dread the effects.

I shall not close this till I have seen or heard from the vile miscreant who has involved a worthy family in wretchedness.

Friday morning.—Two days have elapsed without affording us much relief. Last evening, I was told that Major Sanford was at home. I immediately wrote him a billet, entreating and conjuring him to let me know where the hapless Eliza had fled. He returned me the following answer:—

"Miss Granby need be under no apprehensions respecting the situation of our beloved Eliza. She is well provided for, conveniently accommodated, and has every thing to make her happy which love and affluence can give.

"Major Sanford has solemnly sworn not to discover her retreat. She wishes to avoid the accusations of her friends till she is better able to bear them.

"Her mother may rest assured of immediate information, should any danger threaten her amiable daughter; and also of having seasonable notice of her safety."

Although little dependence can be placed upon this man, yet these assurances have, in a great

degree, calmed our minds. We are, however, contriving means to explore the refuge of the wanderer, and hope, by tracing his steps, to accomplish our purpose. This we have engaged a friend to do.

I know, my dear Mrs. Sumner, the kind interest you will take in this disastrous affair. I tremble to think what the event may be. To relieve your suspense, however, I shall write you every circumstance as It occurs; but at present, I shall only enclose Eliza's letters to her mamma and me, and subscribe myself your sincere and obliged friend,

JULIA GRANBY.

LETTER LXVIII.

TO MRS. M. WHARTON.

TUESDAY.

My honored and dear mamma: In what words, in what language shall I address you? What shall I say on a subject which deprives me of the power of expression? Would to God I had been totally deprived of that power before so fatal a subject required its exertion. Repentance comes too late, when it cannot prevent the evil lamented: for your kindness, your more than maternal affection towards me, from my infancy to the present moment, a long life of filial duty and unerring rectitude could hardly

compensate. How greatly deficient in gratitude must I appear, then, while I confess that precept and example, counsel and advice, instruction and admonition, have been all lost upon me!

Your kind endeavors to promote my happiness have been repaid by the inexcusable folly of sacrificing it. The various emotions of shame and remorse, penitence and regret, which torture and distract my guilty breast, exceed description. Yes, madam, your Eliza has fallen, fallen indeed. She has become the victim of her own indiscretion, and of the intrigue and artifice of a designing libertine, who is the husband of another. She is polluted, and no more worthy of her parentage. She flies from you, not to conceal her guilt, (that she humbly and penitently owns,) but to avoid what she has never experienced, and feels herself unable to support—a mother's frown; to escape the heart-rending sight of a parent's grief, occasioned by the crimes of her guilty child.

I have become a reproach and disgrace to my friends. The consciousness of having forfeited their favor and incurred their disapprobation and resentment induces me to conceal from them the place of my retirement; but lest your benevolence should render you anxious for my comfort in my present situation, I take the liberty to assure you that I am amply provided for.

I have no claim even upon your pity; but from my

long experience of your tenderness. I presume to hope it will be extended to me. O my mother, if you knew what the state of my mind is, and has been for months past, you would surely compassionate my case. Could tears efface the stain which I have brought upon my family, it would long since have been washed away; but, alas! tears are in vain; and vain is my bitter repentance; it cannot obliterate my crime, nor restore me to innocence and peace. In this life I have no ideas of happiness. These I have wholly resigned. The only hope which affords me any solace is that of your forgiveness. If the deepest contrition can make an atonement,—if the severest pains, both of body and mind, can restore me to your charity,—you will not be inexorable. O, let my sufferings be deemed a sufficient punishment, and add not the insupportable weight of a parent's wrath. At present I cannot see you. The effect of my crime is too obvious to be longer concealed, to elude the invidious eye of curiosity. This night, therefore, I leave your hospitable mansion. This night I become a wretched wanderer from my paternal roof. O that the grave were this night to be my lodging! Then should I lie down and be at rest. Trusting in the mercy of God, through the mediation of his Son, I think I could meet my heavenly Father with more composure and confidence than my earthly parent.

Let not the faults and misfortunes of your daughter oppress your mind. Rather let the conviction of having faithfully discharged your duty to your lost

child support and console you in this trying scene.

Since I wrote the above, you have kindly granted me your forgiveness, though you knew not how great, how aggravated was my offence. You forgive me, you say. O, the harmonious, the transporting sound! It has revived my drooping spirits, and will enable me to encounter, with resolution, the trials before me.

Farewell, my dear mamma! Pity and pray for your ruined child; and be assured that affection and gratitude will be the last sentiments which expire in the breast of your repenting daughter,

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER LXIX.

TO MISS JULIA GRANBY.

TUESDAY.

My dear friend: By that endearing title you permit me still to address you, and such you have always proved yourself by a participation of my distresses, as well as by the consoling voice of pity and forgiveness. What destiny Providence designs for me I know not, but I have my forebodings that this is the last time I shall ever accost you. Nor does this apprehension arise merely from a disturbed imagination. I have reason to think myself in a

confirmed consumption, which commonly proves fatal to persons in my situation. I have carefully concealed every complaint of the kind from my mamma, for fear of distressing her; yet I have never been insensible of their probable issue, and have bidden a sincere welcome to them, as the harbingers of my speedy release from a life of guilt and woe.

I am going from you, Julia. This night separates us, perhaps, forever. I have not resolution to encounter the tears of my friends, and therefore seek shelter among strangers, where none knows or is interested in my melancholy story. The place of my seclusion I studiously conceal; yet I shall take measures that you may be apprised of my fate.

Should it please God to spare and restore me to health, I shall return, and endeavor, by a life of penitence and rectitude, to expiate my past offences. But should I be called from this scene of action, and leave behind me a helpless babe, the innocent sufferer of its mother's shame, O Julia, let your friendship for me extend to the little stranger. Intercede with my mother to take it under her protection, and transfer to it all her affection for me; to train it up in the ways of piety and virtue, that it may compensate her for the afflictions which I have occasioned.

One thing more I have to request. Plead for me with my two best friends, Mrs. Richman and Mrs. Sumner. I ask you not to palliate my faults,—that

cannot be done,—but to obtain, if possible, their forgiveness. I cannot write all my full mind suggests on this subject. You know the purport, and can better express it for me.

And now, my dear Julia, recommending myself again to your benevolence, to your charity, and (may I add?) to your affection, and entreating that the fatal consequences of my folly, now fallen upon my devoted head, may suffice for my punishment, let me conjure you to bury my crimes in the grave with me, and to preserve the remembrance of my former virtues, which engaged your love and confidence; more especially of that ardent esteem for you, which will glow till the last expiring breath of your despairing

ELIZA WHARTON.

LETTER LXX.

TO MR. CHARLES DEIGHTON.

HARTFORD.

I have, at last, accomplished the removal of my darling girl from a place where she thought every eye accused and every heart condemned her.

She has become quite romantic in her notions. She would not permit me to accompany her, lest it should be reported that we had eloped together. I

provided amply for her future exigencies, and conveyed her by night to the distance of ten or twelve miles, where we met the stage, in which I had previously secured her a seat. The agony of her grief at being thus obliged to leave her mother's house baffles all description.

It very sensibly affected me, I know. I was almost a penitent. I am sure I acted like one, whether I were sincere or not. She chose to go where she was totally unknown. She would leave the stage, she said, before it reached Boston, and take passage in a more private carriage to Salem, or its vicinity, where she would fix her abode; chalking the initials of my name over the door, as a signal to me of her residence.

She is exceedingly depressed, and says she neither expects nor wishes to survive her lying in. Insanity, for aught I know, must be my lot if she should die. But I will not harbor the idea. I hope, one time or other, to have the power to make her amends, even by marriage. My wife may be provoked, I imagine, to sue for a divorce. If she should, she would find no difficulty in obtaining it, and then I would take Eliza in her stead; though I confess that the idea of being thus connected with a woman whom I have been enabled to dishonor, would be rather hard to surmount. It would hurt even my delicacy, little as you may think me to possess, to have a wife whom I know to be seducible. And on this account I cannot be positive that even Eliza would retain my love.

My Nancy and I have lived a pretty uncomfortable life of late. She has been very suspicious of my amour with Eliza, and now and then expressed her jealous sentiments a little more warmly than my patience would bear. But the news of Eliza's circumstances and retirement, being publicly talked of, have reached her ears, and rendered her quite outrageous. She tells me she will no longer brook my indifference and infidelity; intends soon to return to her father's house, and extricate herself from me entirely. My general reply to all this is, that she knew my character before we married, and could reasonably expect nothing less than what has happened. I shall not oppose her leaving me, as it may conduce to the execution of the plan I have hinted above.

To-morrow I shall set out to visit my disconsolate fair one. From my very soul I pity her, and wish I could have preserved her virtue consistently with the indulgence of my passion. To her I lay not the principal blame, as in like cases I do the sex in general. My finesse was too well planned for detection, and my snares too deeply laid for any one to escape who had the least warmth in her constitution, or affection in her heart. I shall, therefore, be the less whimsical about a future connection, and the more solicitous to make her reparation, should it ever be in my power.

Her friends are all in arms about her. I dare say I have the imprecations of the whole fraternity. They

may thank themselves in part, for I always swore revenge for their dislike and coldness towards me. Had they been politic, they would have conducted more like the aborigines of the country, who are said to worship the devil out of fear.

I am afraid I shall be obliged to remove my quarters, for Eliza was so great a favorite in town that I am looked upon with an evil eye. I pleaded with her, before we parted last, to forgive my seducing her, alleged my ardent love, and my inability to possess her in any other way. "How," said she, "can that be love which destroys its object? But granting what you say, you have frustrated your own purpose. You have deprived yourself-of my society, which might have been innocently enjoyed. You have cut me off from life in the midst of my days. You have rendered me the reproach of my friends, the disgrace of my family and a dishonor to virtue and my sex. But I forgive you," added she. "Yes, Sanford, I forgive you, and sincerely pray for your repentance and reformation. I hope to be the last wretched female sacrificed by you to the arts of falsehood and seduction. May my unhappy story serve as a beacon to warn the American fair of the dangerous tendency and destructive consequences of associating with men of your character, of destroying their time and risking their reputation by the practice of coquetry and its attendant follies. But for these I might have been honorably connected, and capable, at this moment, of diffusing and receiving

happiness. But for your arts I might have remained a blessing to society, as well as the delight and comfort of my friends. You being a married man unspeakably aggravates both your guilt and mine. This circumstance annexes indelible shame to our crime. You have rent asunder the tenderest ties of nature. You have broken the bonds of conjugal love, which ought ever to be kept sacred and inviolate. You have filled with grief and discontent the heart of your amiable wife, whom gratitude, if no other principle, should have induced you to cherish with tenderness; and I, wretch that I am, have been your accomplice. But I cease to reproach you. You have acted but too consistently with the character which I was sufficiently apprised you sustained. The blame, then, may be retorted on myself, for disregarding the counsels, warnings, and admonitions of my best friends. You have prided yourself in the character of a libertine. Glory no longer in your shame. You have accomplished your designs, your dreadful designs, against me. Let this suffice. Add not to the number of those deluded creatures who will one day rise up in judgment against you and condemn you."

By this time we had nearly reached the inn, and were soon to part. I seized her hand, and exclaimed, "You must not leave me, Eliza, with that awful anathema on your lips. O, say that you will forget my past faults." "That," said she, "I shall soon do; for in the grave there is no remembrance." This, to my mind, was a harsher sentence than the other, and

almost threw me into despair. Never was I so wrought upon before. I knew not what to say or do. She saw my distress, and kindly softened her manner. "If I am severe," said she, "it is because I wish to impress your mind with such a sense of your offences against your Maker, your friends, and society in general, as may effect your repentance and amendment. I wish not to be your accuser, but your reformer. On several accounts, I view my own crime in a more aggravated light than yours; but my conscience is awakened to a conviction of my guilt. Yours, I fear, is not. Let me conjure you to return home, and endeavor, by your future kindness and fidelity to your wife, to make her all the amends in your power. By a life of virtue and religion, you may yet become a valuable member of society, and secure happiness both here and hereafter."

I begged leave to visit her retirement next week, not in continuation of our amour, but as a friend solicitous to know her situation and welfare. Unable to speak, she only bowed assent. The stage being now ready, I whispered some tender things in her ear, and kissing her cheek, which was all she would permit, suffered her to depart.

My body remains behind; but my soul, if I have any, went with her.

This was a horrid lecture, Charles. She brought every charge against me which a fruitful and gloomy imagination could suggest. But I hope when she

recovers she will resume her former cheerfulness, and become as kind and agreeable as ever. My anxiety for her safety is very great. I trust, however, it will soon be removed, and peace and pleasure be restored to your humble servant,

PETER SANFORD.

LETTER LXXI.

TO MRS. LUCY SUMNER.

HARTFORD.

The drama is now closed! A tragical one it has proved!

How sincerely, my dear Mrs. Sumner, must the friends of our departed Eliza sympathize with each other, and with her afflicted, bereaved parent!

You have doubtless seen the account in the public papers which gave us the melancholy intelligence. But I will give you a detail of circumstances.

A few days after my last was written, we heard that Major Sanford's property was attached, and he a prisoner in his own house. He was the last man to whom we wished to apply for information respecting the forlorn wanderer; yet we had no other resource. And after waiting a fortnight in the most cruel suspense, we wrote a billet, entreating him, if

possible, to give some intelligence concerning her. He replied that he was unhappily deprived of all means of knowing himself, but hoped soon to relieve his own and our anxiety about her.

In this situation we continued till a neighbor (purposely, we since concluded) sent us a Boston paper. Mrs. Wharton took it, and unconscious of its contents, observed that the perusal might divert her a few moments. She read for some time, when it suddenly dropped upon the floor. She clasped her hands together, and raising her streaming eyes to heaven, exclaimed, "It is the Lord; let him do what he will. Be still, O my soul, and know that he is God."

"What, madam," said I, "can be the matter?" She answered not, but, with inexpressible anguish depicted in her countenance, pointed to the paper. I took it up, and soon found the fatal paragraph. I shall not attempt to paint our heartfelt grief and lamentation upon this occasion; for we had no doubt of Eliza's being the person described, as a stranger, who died, at Danvers, last July. Her delivery of a child, her dejected state of mind, the marks upon her linen, indeed every circumstance in the advertisement, convinced us, beyond dispute, that it could be no other. Mrs. Wharton retired immediately to her chamber, where she continued overwhelmed with sorrow that night and the following day. Such in fact has been her habitual frame ever since; though the endeavors of her friends, who have sought to console her, have rendered her somewhat

more conversable. My testimony of Eliza's penitence before her departure is a source of comfort to this disconsolate parent. She fondly cherished the idea that, having expiated her offence by sincere repentance and amendment, her deluded child finally made a happy exchange of worlds. But the desperate resolution, which she formed and executed, of becoming a fugitive, of deserting her mother's house and protection, and of wandering and dying among strangers, is a most distressing reflection to her friends; especially to her mother, in whose breast so many painful ideas arise, that she finds it extremely difficult to compose herself to that resignation which she evidently strives to exemplify.

Eliza's brother has been to visit her last retreat, and to learn the particulars of her melancholy exit. He relates that she was well accommodated, and had every attention and assistance which her situation required. The people where she resided appear to have a lively sense of her merit and misfortunes. They testify her modest deportment, her fortitude under the sufferings to which she was called, and the serenity and composure with which she bade a last adieu to the world. Mr. Wharton has brought back several scraps of her writing, containing miscellaneous reflections on her situation, the death of her babe, and the absence of her friends. Some of these were written before, some after, her confinement. These valuable testimonies of the affecting sense and calm expectation she entertained

of her approaching dissolution are calculated to soothe and comfort the minds of mourning connections. They greatly alleviate the regret occasioned by her absence at this awful period. Her elopement can be equalled only by the infatuation which caused her ruin.

"But let no one reproach her memory.
Her life has paid the forfeit of her folly.
Let that suffice."

I am told that Major Sanford is quite frantic. Sure I am that he has reason to be. If the mischiefs he has brought upon others return upon his own head, dreadful indeed must be his portion. His wife has left him, and returned to her parents. His estate, which has been long mortgaged, is taken from him, and poverty and disgrace await him. Heaven seldom leaves injured innocence unavenged. Wretch that he is, he ought forever to be banished from human society! I shall continue with Mrs. Wharton till the lenient hand of time has assuaged her sorrows, and then make my promised visit to you. I will bring Eliza's posthumous papers with me when I come to Boston, as I have not time to copy them now.

I foresee, my dear Mrs. Sumner, that this disastrous affair will suspend your enjoyments, as it has mine. But what are our feelings, compared with the pangs which rend a parent's heart? This parent I here behold inhumanly stripped of the best solace of

her declining years by the insnaring machinations of a profligate debauchee. Not only the life, but, what was still dearer, the reputation and virtue? of the unfortunate Eliza have fallen victims at the shrine of *libertinism*. Detested be the epithet. Let it henceforth bear its true signature, and candor itself shall call it *lust* and *brutality*. Execrable is the man, however arrayed in magnificence, crowned with wealth, or decorated with the external graces and accomplishments of fashionable life, who shall presume to display them at the expense of virtue and innocence. Sacred name attended with real blessings —blessings too useful and important to be trifled away. My resentment at the base arts which must have been employed to complete the seduction of Eliza I cannot suppress. I wish them to be exposed, and stamped with universal ignominy. Nor do I doubt but you will join with me in execrating the measures by which *we* have been robbed of so valuable a friend, and *society* of so ornamental a member. I am, &c.,

JULIA GRANBY.

LETTER LXXII.

TO MR. CHARLES DEIGHTON.

HARTFORD.

Confusion, horror, and despair are the portion of your wretched, unhappy friend. O Deighton, I am

undone. Misery irremediable is my future lot. She is gone; yes, she is gone forever. The darling of my soul, the centre of all my wishes and enjoyments, is no more. Cruel fate has snatched her from me, and she is irretrievably lost. I rave, and then reflect; I reflect, and then rave. I have no patience to bear this calamity, nor power to remedy it. Where shall I fly from the upbraidings of my mind, which accuse me as the murderer of my Eliza? I would fly to death, and seek a refuge in the grave; but the forebodings of a retribution to come I cannot away with. O that I had seen her! that I had once more asked her forgiveness! But even that privilege, that consolation, was denied me! The day on which I meant to visit her, most of my property was attached, and, to secure the rest, I was obliged to shut my doors and become a prisoner in my own house. High living, and old debts incurred by extravagance, had reduced the fortune of my wife to very little, and I could not satisfy the clamorous demands of my creditors.

I would have given millions, had I possessed them, to have been at liberty to see, and to have had the power to preserve Eliza from death. But in vain was my anxiety; it could not relieve, it could not liberate me. When I first heard the dreadful tidings of her exit, I believe I acted like a madman; indeed, I am little else now. I have compounded with my creditors, and resigned the whole of my property. Thus that splendor and equipage, to secure which I have sacrificed a virtuous woman, is taken from me.

That poverty, the dread of which prevented my forming an honorable connection with an amiable and accomplished girl,—the only one I ever loved,—has fallen with redoubled vengeance upon my guilty head, and I must become a vagabond on the earth.

I shall fly my country as soon as possible. I shall go from every object which reminds me of my departed Eliza; but never, never shall I eradicate from my bosom the idea of her excellence, nor the painful remembrance of the injuries I have done her. Her shade will perpetually haunt me; the image of her—as she appeared when mounting the carriage which conveyed her forever from my sight, waving her hand in token of a last adieu—will always be present to my imagination; the solemn counsel she gave me before we parted, never more to meet, will not cease to resound in my ears.

While my being is prolonged, I must feel the disgraceful and torturing effects of my guilt in seducing her. How madly have I deprived her of happiness, of reputation, of life! Her friends, could they know the pangs of contrition and the horrors of conscience which attend me, would be amply revenged.

It is said she quitted the world with composure and peace. Well she might. She had not that insupportable weight of iniquity which sinks me to despair. She found consolation in that religion which I have ridiculed as priestcraft and hypocrisy. But,

whether it be true or false, would to Heaven I could now enjoy the comforts which its votaries evidently feel.

My wife has left me. As we lived together without love, we parted without regret.

Now, Charles, I am to bid you a long, perhaps a last farewell. Where I shall roam in future, I neither know nor care. I shall go where the name of Sanford is unknown, and his person and sorrows unnoticed.

In this happy clime I have nothing to induce my stay. I have not money to support me with my profligate companions, nor have I any relish, at present, for their society. By the virtuous part of the community I am shunned as the pest and bane of social enjoyment. In short, I am debarred from every kind of happiness. If I look back, I recoil with horror from the black catalogue of vices which have stained my past life, and reduced me to indigence and contempt. If I look forward, I shudder at the prospects which my foreboding mind presents to view both in this and a coming world. This is a deplorable, yet just, picture of myself. How totally the reverse of what I once appeared!

Let it warn you, my friend, to shun the dangerous paths which I have trodden, that you may never be involved in the hopeless ignominy and wretchedness of

PETER SANFORD.

LETTER LXXIII.

TO MISS JULIA GRANBY.

BOSTON.

A melancholy tale have you unfolded, my dear Julia; and tragic indeed is the concluding scene.

Is she then gone? gone in this most distressing manner? Have I lost my once-loved friend? lost her in a way which I could never have conceived to be possible?

Our days of childhood were spent together in the same pursuits, in the same amusements. Our riper years increased our mutual affection, and maturer judgment most firmly cemented our friendship. Can I, then, calmly resign her to so severe a fate? Can I bear the idea of her being lost to honor, to fame, and to life? No; she shall still live in the heart of her faithful Lucy, whose experience of her numerous virtues and engaging qualities has imprinted her image too deeply on the memory to be obliterated. However she may have erred, her sincere repentance is sufficient to restore her to charity.

Your letter gave me the first information of this awful event. I had taken a short excursion into the country, where I had not seen the papers, or, if I had,

paid little or no attention to them. By your directions I found the distressing narrative of her exit. The poignancy of my grief, and the unavailing lamentations which the intelligence excited, need no delineation. To scenes of this nature you have been habituated in the mansion of sorrow where you reside.

How sincerely I sympathize with the bereaved parent of the dear, deceased Eliza, I can feel, but have not power to express. Let it be her consolation that her child is at rest. The resolution which carried this deluded wanderer thus far from her friends, and supported her through her various trials, is astonishing. Happy would it have been had she exerted an equal degree of fortitude in repelling the first attacks upon her virtue. But she is no more, and Heaven forbid that I should accuse or reproach her.

Yet in what language shall I express my abhorrence of the monster whose detestable arts have blasted one of the fairest flowers in creation? I leave him to God and his own conscience. Already is he exposed in his true colors. Vengeance already begins to overtake him. His sordid mind must now suffer the deprivation of those sensual gratifications beyond which he is incapable of enjoyment.

Upon your reflecting and steady mind, my dear Julia, I need not inculcate the lessons which may be drawn from this woe-fraught tale; but for the sake of my sex in general, I wish it engraved upon every

heart, that virtue alone, independent of the trappings of wealth, the parade of equipage, and the adulation of gallantry, can secure lasting felicity. From the melancholy story of Eliza Wharton let the American fair learn to reject with disdain every insinuation derogatory to their true dignity and honor. Let them despise and forever banish the man who can glory in the seduction of innocence and the ruin of reputation. To associate is to approve; to approve is to be betrayed.

I am, &c.,

LUCY SUMNER.

LETTER LXXIV.

TO MRS. M. WHARTON.

BOSTON.

Dear madam: We have paid the last tribute of respect to your beloved daughter. The day after my arrival, Mrs. Sumner proposed that we should visit the sad spot which contains the remains of our once amiable friend. "The grave of Eliza Wharton," said she, "shall not be unbedewed by the tears of friendship."

Yesterday we went accordingly, and were much pleased with the apparent sincerity of the people in their assurances that every thing in their power had

been done to render her situation comfortable. The minutest circumstances were faithfully related; and, from the state of her mind in her last hours, I think much comfort may be derived to her afflicted friends.

We spent a mournful hour in the place where she is interred, and then returned to the inn, while Mrs. Sumner gave orders for a decent stone to be erected over her grave, with the following inscription:—

THIS HUMBLE STONE, IN MEMORY OF ELIZA WHARTON, IS INSCRIBED BY HER WEEPING FRIENDS, TO WHOM SHE ENDEARED HERSELF BY UNCOMMON TENDERNESS AND AFFECTION. ENDOWED WITH SUPERIOR ACQUIREMENTS, SHE WAS STILL MORE DISTINGUISHED BY HUMILITY AND BENEVOLENCE. LET CANDOR THROW A VEIL OVER HER FRAILTIES, FOR GREAT WAS HER CHARITY TO OTHERS. SHE SUSTAINED THE LAST PAINFUL SCENE FAR FROM EVERY FRIEND, AND EXHIBITED AN EXAMPLE OF CALM RESIGNATION. HER DEPARTURE WAS ON THE 25TH DAY OF JULY, A.D.——, IN THE 37TH YEAR OF HER AGE; AND THE TEARS OF STRANGERS WATERED HER GRAVE.

I hope, madam, that you will derive satisfaction from these exertions of friendship, and that, united to the many other sources of consolation with which you are furnished, they may alleviate your grief, and, while they leave the pleasing remembrance of her virtues, add the supporting persuasion that your Eliza is happy.

I am, &c.,

JULIA GRANBY.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE COQUETTE, OR, THE HISTORY OF ELIZA WHARTON ***

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