

EX LIBRIS

940
H12



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

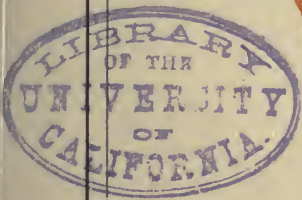
The Love Letters
of
Mr. H. & Miss R.

Hackman Green

The Love-Letters of
Mr. H. & Miss R.

1775-1779

EDITED BY
GILBERT BURGESS



CHICAGO
STONE & KIMBALL
MDCCCXCV

946

H. 2

67895-



PR3343
H3
1895
MAIN

INTRODUCTION

THE strange and pathetic story that is told in the love letters that passed between Mr. Hackman and Miss Reay, excited widespread attention and sympathy during the spring of the year 1779, and interest in the affair was revived in the following year by the publication of an anonymous book in which some of these letters, in a garbled form, were inserted.

The originals, or copies of the originals—for Hackman was sufficiently romantic to have kept copies of his own letters—were given to Kearsly, the publisher, by Mr. Frederick Booth, Hackman's brother-in-law, in consequence of Kearsly having issued a pamphlet, on the 24th of April, 1779, called "The Case and Memoirs of the late Revd. Mr. James Hackman," which was full of errors. In the *Public Advertiser* of the 24th of

Introduction

April, 1779, Booth, in view of the advertised publication of the "Case and Memoirs" by Kearsly, announced positively that no materials for a life of Hackman could possibly be obtained except through him, as all the necessary letters and documents were in his possession. Croft's edition of the letters was issued by the same publisher in the spring of the following year. It is not quite clear whether Booth was approached by Kearsly or by Croft; but that he (Booth) was satisfied with the latter's work is evident from the fact that it elicited no further protest from him.

Sir Herbert Croft, Bart., was born at Dunster Park, Berkshire, on November 1, 1751. In March, 1771, he matriculated at University College, Oxford,¹ where Scott—afterwards Lord Stowell—was his tutor.² He then entered Lincoln's Inn, but want of means did not allow him to continue in the profession of the law, so in 1782 he returned to Oxford, and decided for the Church. In April, 1785, he took the degree of B.C.L., and in 1786 he received the vicarage of

¹ Nichols' "Literary Illustrations," v. 202.

² "Dict. Nat. Biog." (Stephen.)

Introduction

Prittlewell,¹ in Essex. During his sojourn at Lincoln's Inn, he wrote many tracts and pamphlets; he also tried to compile an English dictionary, but he found that £100 a year—the amount he had available for that purpose—was hardly sufficient.

He also wrote the life of Young for Johnson's series of the Lives of the Poets.² Croft was somewhat eccentric in the management of his finances, and was always begging money or preferment from his friends; there is a letter in the British Museum³ from him to Bishop Douglas,⁴ in which he complains of having been cold-shouldered by Pitt, whose favour he had tried to gain by offering

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1816, pt. i. 470.

² Among Croft's other works were: "A Brother's Advice to his Sisters," 1775. "Fanaticism and Treason," "The Literary Fly," 1780. "The Abbey of Kilhampton," 1780—a series of anticipatory epitaphs upon prominent living personages. "Sunday Evenings," 1784, religious discourses, which Dr. Johnson disapproved of on account of their levity of style (Boswell's Johnson, Morley's edition, iv. 231), and a curious French work, "Horace éclairci par la ponctuation," Paris, 1810.

³ Egerton MSS. 2185, fol. 172.

⁴ John Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury. (*Gent. Mag.* 1807, pt. i. 475.)

Introduction

to insert verses in favour of that politician in a book he was writing. There is also a letter,¹ dated 13th of October, 1796, to Bishop Douglas' son, the Rev. W. Douglas, written from Exeter Gaol, "the common prison—*puget hoc approbria!*" as Croft says, where he was imprisoned for a debt of £40, which he hopes Mr. Douglas will send at once. Croft subsequently lived in France with the eccentric Lady Mary Hamilton.

On the death of Chatterton, Croft obtained from the poet's sister, Mrs. Newton, his letters and manuscripts, and, foreseeing that the Hackman - Reay correspondence would have a large sale, he decided to include the Chatterton matter in the volume, which he entitled "Love and Madness." He clumsily put his papers into the form of a letter from Hackman, which was marked No. 49 in the original book, and is included in the Appendix to the present volume. The difference in the style of this letter from that of all the others was so apparent that suspicion fell upon the authenticity of other parts of the volume.

¹ Egerton MSS. 2186, fol. 88-93.

Introduction

John Nichols¹ mentions "Love and Madness" as having passed through seven editions. "These letters," he continues, "are given as the correspondence of Mr. Hackman and Miss Reay. . . . They are enlivened with a variety of anecdotes, chiefly of a literary kind. Among other miscellaneous matters, the story of that extraordinary genius, Thomas Chatterton, is introduced at great length, with critical observations on his writings; an account of his publication of 'Poems,' said to have been written by one Rowley, a monk, about 300 years ago; of his other schemes of authorship, and, finally, of his unhappy exit, in the eighteenth year of his age. . . . If this be all 'borrowed personage,' as Mr. Walpole expressed it, it is so ingenious a fiction, that the author will be praised, perhaps, for his abilities even by those who may find themselves inclined to impeach his honesty."

In the *Monthly Magazine* for November, 1799, Robert Southey brought a charge against Croft of having obtained the papers and letters relating to Chatterton from the

¹ "Literary Illustrations," v. 203.

Introduction

unfortunate poet's sister, Mrs. Newton, under false pretences. Croft, who was at that time in Denmark, sent a very foolish and evasive reply to the same Magazine,¹ in which he said that he must first arrange Southey's abuse, for that gentleman wrote prose somewhat like bad poetry, and poetry somewhat like bad prose. He entirely ignored the main charge brought against him, and his vulgar attack upon Southey brought him justly into contempt among the literary men of the day.

The Rev. Charles Cuthbert Southey, who edited his father's "Life and Correspondence," writes to Grosvenor C. Bedford, upon this subject.

"Sir Herbert Croft had obtained possession from Mrs. Newton (Chatterton's sister) of all her brother's letters and MSS. under promise of speedily returning them; instead of which, some months afterwards, he incorporated and published them in a pamphlet, entitled 'Love and Madness.'

"At the use thus surreptitiously made of her brother's writings, Mrs. Newton more than

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, February, March and April, 1800.



Introduction

once remonstrated ; but, beyond the sum of £10, she could obtain no redress. Mr. Cottle¹ and my father now took the matter up, and the former wrote to Sir H. Croft, pointing out to him Mrs. Newton's reasonable claim, and urging him by a timely concession to prevent that publicity which otherwise would follow.

“ He received no answer ; and my father then determined to print by subscription all Chatterton's works, including those ascribed to Rowley, for the benefit of Mrs. Newton and her daughter. He accordingly sent proposals to the *Monthly Magazine*, in which he detailed the whole case between Mrs. Newton and Sir Herbert Croft, and published their respective letters. The public sympathised rightly on the occasion, for a handsome subscription followed. Sir Herbert Croft was residing in Denmark at the time these proposals were published, and he replied to my father's statement by a pamphlet full of much personal abuse.”

However, Mr. Cottle and Southey published the edition in three volumes 8vo, and the editors had the satisfaction of paying over

¹ A well-known Bristol bookseller.

Introduction

to Mrs. Newton and her daughter upwards of £300.

Southey again brought charges against Croft in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* for March 1800. He says "Sir Herbert does not deny his promises to the family of after assistance, nor that when Mrs. Newton applied for it, he required a certificate of her character from the Clergyman of the Parish."

In a note to the ninth edition of "Love and Madness," Croft excuses himself for having pretended that Mr. Hackman had visited Bristol to find out facts about Chatterton, by referring to an extract from the fourteenth letter in "Love and Madness."

The passage he mentions is as follows :

"Robinson Crusoe now—what nature! It affects us throughout, exactly in the way you mentioned. But, shall I finish my dissertation? come—as writing to you gives me so much pleasure, and as I cannot do anything to you but write this morning, I know you will excuse me. Did you ever hear to what Crusoe owed his existence? You remember Alexander Selkirk's strange sequestration at Juan Fernandez. It is mentioned, I believe, in Walter's account of Anson's voyage, when

Introduction

Captain Woodes Rogers met with him and brought him to England, he employed the famous Daniel de Foe to revise his papers. That fertile genius improved upon the materials, and composed the celebrated story of Robinson Crusoe. The consequence was that Selkirk, who soon after made his appearance in print, was considered as a bastard of Crusoe, with which spurious offspring the press too often teems. In De Foe, undoubtedly, this was not honest. Had Selkirk given him his papers, there could have been no harm in working them up his own way. I can easily conceive a writer making his own use of a known fact, and filling up the outlines which have been sketched by the bold and hasty hand of fate. A moral may be added, by such means, to a particular incident; characters may be placed in their just and proper lights; mankind may be amused (and amusements, sometimes, prevent crimes), or, if the story be criminal, mankind may be bettered, through the channel of their curiosity. But I would not be dishonest, like De Foe; nor would I pain the breast of a single individual connected with this story."

Introduction

Yet Croft, who thus denounces Defoe, announced subsequently that he himself had acted with precisely the same dishonesty in the matter of Mr. Hackman's correspondence. A further light is thrown upon the matter by an advertisement to the eighth edition of "The Case and Memoirs;" the author, who, on the evidence of a rhymed lampoon in one of the papers of the day, was one Manasseh Dawes,¹ a barrister and literary hack, says that, being a gentleman, he wishes to keep that character inviolate; consequently, he thinks it necessary to declare that all the facts are genuine, as he will testify and explain, if necessary, on an application to him at Mr. Kearsly's (the publisher), and he hopes that, therefore, his numerous readers will not now suppose that he has "intruded anything on the public with intent to catch the penny of curiosity, at the expense of truth and candour."

When this was written Kearsly had possession of the real facts of the case, and was able to invite investigation.

The enormous success of "Love and Madness" tempted Croft to declare him-

¹ *Public Advertiser*, June 3, 1779.

Introduction

self the author of the Chatterton excerpt, and also to hint that of the entire work only the outline was true. The word outline is easily expansible, and, considering that the letter about Chatterton, and two or three other obvious additions, formed half the volume, he was, perhaps, justified in claiming his portion. Croft says that he dedicates the ninth edition to Johnson, because the Doctor had expressed his appreciation of the work. But Boswell records¹ that Johnson censured and much disapproved of "Love and Madness," on account of the mingling of the fact with the fiction—that is to say, the inclusion of the Chatterton papers among the Hackman-Reay correspondence.

As several of the connecting links in the narrative are missing, I have endeavoured to weave the letters into a coherent narrative; in one or two instances I have been obliged to suppress certain passages, by reason of their having been written at a time when there was a greater license of expression than is permissible nowadays. I have also omitted, in two of the letters, references to Chatterton which Croft introduced to give

¹ Boswell's Johnson (Henry Morley), iv. 134.

Introduction

verisimilitude to his assertion that the long letter containing the life of the poet was written by Hackman.

No record of Croft's own work tallies at all with the idea that he created such a romance. But, apart from the controversy, the story and the letters seem to me to be a veritable "human document" of strong interest. And, after exhaustive investigation, I am convinced that such a document is only explainable on the grounds of a real living correspondence and that these letters are, without doubt, those that passed between Hackman and Miss Reay.

April, 1895.

CONTENTS

PART I

	PAGE
AT HINCHINBROOK	19

PART II

IN IRELAND	75
----------------------	----

PART III

IN LONDON	117
---------------------	-----

APPENDIX	183
--------------------	-----

PART I

AT HINCHINBROOK

JAMES HACKMAN, who figures as Mr. H. in this collection of letters, was born at Gosport, in the year 1752. His father was a retired Naval Lieutenant, with a modest income, which, however, was large enough to enable him to give his son a good general education, and to send him subsequently to St. John's College, Cambridge.

On leaving the University, James Hackman was apprenticed to a mercer in his native town but soon tiring of trade, he persuaded his father to buy him an ensigncy in the 68th Regiment of Foot. He was then quartered upon a recruiting party at Huntingdon, where he first made the acquaintance of the famous (or infamous) Earl of Sandwich, who was the First Lord of the Admiralty at that time. Cradock, in his "Memoirs," writes that a friend of Lord Sandwich's was a candidate

The Love Letters

for the Chemistry Professorship at Cambridge, and that, as Cradock had been solicited for his vote and interest, the Earl invited him to travel in his coach, and to stay with him at his seat, Hinchinbrook, on his return journey to London. Cradock continues :

“We went together and passed a very pleasant evening with a numerous party at the Rose Tavern, and having voted next morning, we returned to Hinchinbrook. Lord Sandwich, on meeting his neighbour, Major Reynolds, in the gateway with another officer, insisted on their alighting, and taking a family dinner at his house. The Major apologised for his intrusion, hoped his Lordship would excuse the liberty he had taken in bringing a brother officer with him, and then introduced his friend, Captain Hackman. The party merely consisted of Lord Sandwich, Miss Ray, and a lady with her, the two gentlemen, and myself. Dinner was soon served, and coffee called for. We played two rubbers at whist. Lord Sandwich held with Miss Ray, against Major Reynolds and myself; Captain Hackman requesting that he might only look over the cards.”

The Miss Ray (or Reay, as the name

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

should be written) mentioned by Cradock, was living at Hinchinbrook, under the protection of Lord Sandwich, to the easily imaginable distress of Lady Sandwich.

At the age of fourteen, Miss Reay had been apprenticed to a mantua-maker in Clerkenwell, and was subsequently introduced by her father, a stay-maker, to a customer of his, a woman of infamous profession, who, thinking that the girl was exceedingly pretty and intelligent, mentioned her to the dissolute Lord Sandwich. The Earl fell in love with Miss Reay the moment he saw her, and immediately took her under his protection. He gave her a good education, and had her thoroughly trained in music, of which art he was passionately fond; he himself, Cradock tells us, was no mean performer upon the kettle-drums! Oratorios and concerts were frequently given at Hinchinbrook, in which Miss Reay, owing to her beautiful voice, took part; her personal charm and manner must have been exceptionally attractive, for it is related that she even captivated a Bishop's lady, who was terribly exercised at finding herself seated directly opposite to her at a dinner-party. Hackman was so fascinated

The Love Letters

by Miss Reay that he could not keep away from the neighbourhood of Hinchinbrook, and, being a handsome, high-spirited young fellow, he soon became a welcome and frequent guest at the house. The result was that he fell desperately in love with his host's mistress, and it was not long before his love was reciprocated, and a clandestine correspondence ensued. The first two letters he sent to Miss Reay are written from Huntingdon.

Dec. 4, 1775.

DEAR MARTHA,

Ten thousand thanks for your billet by my corporal Trim yesterday. The fellow seemed happy to have been the bearer of it, because he saw it made *me* happy. He will be as good a soldier to Cupid as to Mars, I dare say. And Mars and Cupid are not now to begin their acquaintance, you know. Whichever he serve, you may command him of course, without a compliment; for Venus, I need not tell *you*, is the mother of Cupid, and mistress of Mars.

At present the drum is beating up under my window for volunteers to Bacchus. In

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

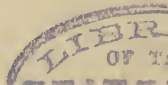
plain English, the drum tells me dinner is ready; for a drum gives us bloody-minded heroes an appetite for eating, as well as for fighting; nay, we get up by the beat of it, and it every night sends, or ought to send, us to bed and to sleep. To-night it will be late before I get to one or the other, I fancy—indeed, the thoughts of you would prevent the latter. But the next disgrace to refusing a challenge, is refusing a toast. The merit of a jolly fellow and of a sponge is much about the same. For my part, no glass of any liquor tastes as it should to me, but when I kiss my Martha on the rim.

Adieu—whatever hard service I may have after dinner, no quantity of wine shall make me let drop or forget my appointment with you to-morrow. We certainly were not seen yesterday, for reasons I will give you.

Though you should persist in never being mine,

Ever, ever

Yours.



The Love Letters

HUNTINGDON, Dec. 6th, 1775.

MY DEAREST MARTHA,

No, I will not take advantage of the sweet, reluctant, amorous confession which your candour gave me yesterday. If to make me happy be to make my Martha otherwise; then, happiness, I'll none of thee.

And yet I *could* argue. Suppose he *has* bred you up—suppose you *do* owe your numerous accomplishments, under genius, to him—are you therefore his property? Is it as if a horse that he has bred up should refuse to carry him? Suppose you therefore *are* his property—will the fidelity of so many years weigh nothing in the scale of gratitude?

Years—why, can obligations (suppose they had *not* been repaid an hundred fold) do away the unnatural disparity of years? Can they bid five-and-fifty stand still (the least that you could ask), and wait for five-and-twenty? Many women have the same obligations (if indeed there be many of the *same* accomplishments) to their fathers. They have the additional obligation to them (if, indeed, it be an obligation) of existence. The disparity of years is sometimes even

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

less. But, must they therefore take their fathers to their bosoms? Must the jessamine fling its tender arms around the dying elm?

To my little fortunes you are no stranger. Will you share them with me? And you shall tell his Lordship that gratitude taught you to pay every duty to him, till love taught you there were other duties which you owed to H.

Gracious heaven, that you *would* pay them!

But, did I not say I would not take advantage? I will not. I will even remind you of your children; to whom I, alas! could only show at present the *affection* of a father.

Martha weighs us in the scales. If gratitude out-balance love—so.

If you command it, I swear by love, I'll join my regiment to-morrow.

If love prevail, and insist upon his dues, you shall declare the victory and the prize. I *will* take no advantage.

Think over this. Neither will I take you by surprise. Sleep upon it, before you return your answer. Trim shall make the old excuse to-morrow. And, thank heaven! to-night you sleep alone.

The Love Letters

Why did you sing that sweet song yesterday, though I so pressed you? Those words and your voice were too much.

No words can say how much I am yours.

Oemiah, who is mentioned by Miss Reay in the following letter was a native of Otaheite, who was brought to England in 1775 by Captain Ferneaux in the *Adventure*, the consort of Captain Cook's ship the *Resolution*. Lord Sandwich took him up, and showed him all the sights. He went to Court and was introduced to George III., with whom he shook hands and said "How do you do?"

To MR. HACKMAN.

HINCHINBROOK, Dec. 7, 1775.

MY DEAR H.

Here has been a sad piece of work ever since I received yours yesterday. But don't be alarmed. We are not discovered to the prophane. Our tender tale is only known to—(whom does your fear suggest?)—to love and gratitude, my H. And they ought both, for twenty reasons, to be *your* friends, I am sure.

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

They have been trying your cause, ever since the departure of honest Trim yesterday. Love, though in my opinion not so blind, is as good a justice as Sir John Fielding. I argued the matter stoutly, my head on his lordship's side of the question, my heart on yours. At last they seemed to say, as if the oath of allegiance, which I had taken to gratitude, at a time when, Heaven knows, I had never heard of love, should be void, and I should be at full liberty to devote myself, body and soul, to—but call on me to-morrow before dinner, and I'll tell you their final judgment. This I will tell you now—love sent you the tenderest wishes, and gratitude said I could never pay you all I owe you for your noble letter of yesterday.

Yet—oh, my H. think not meanly of me ever for this. Do not *you* turn advocate against me. I will not pain you—'tis impossible you ever should.

Come then to morrow: and surely Omiah will not murder love! Yet I thought the other day he caught our eyes conversing. Eyes speak a language all can understand. But is a child of Nature to nip in the bud that favourite passion which his mother

The Love Letters

Nature planted, and still tends? What will Oberea and her coterie say to this, Omiah, when you return from making the tour of the globe? They'll blackball you, depend on it.

What would Rousseau say to it, my H.?

You shall tell me to-morrow. I will not write another word, lest conscience, who is just now looking over my left shoulder, should snatch my pen, and scratch out *to-morrow*.

To MISS REAY.

HUNTINGDON, *Dec. 7, 1775.*

MY DEAREST SOUL,

I hope to heaven Trim will be able to get this to you to-night. Not I only, but my whole future life, shall thank you for the dear sheet of paper I have just received. Blessings, blessings! But I could write and explain and offer up vows and prayers till the happy hour arrives.

Yet, hear me, Martha. If I have thus far deserved your love, I will deserve it still. As a proof I have not hitherto pressed you for anything conscience disapproves: you shall not do to-morrow what conscience disapproves. You shall not make me happy (oh, how

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

supremely blest!) under the roof of your benefactor and my host. It were not honourable. Our love, the inexorable tyrant of our hearts, claims his sacrifices, but does not bid us insult his Lordship's walls with it. How civilly did he invite me to Hinchinbrook in October last, though an unknown recruiting officer! How politely himself first introduced me to himself! Often has the recollection made me struggle with my passion. Still it shall restrain it on this side honour.

So far from triumphing or insulting, heaven knows—if Lord Sandwich indeed love you, if indeed it be aught beside the natural preference which age gives to youth—heaven knows how much I pity him. Yet, as I have either said or written before, it is only the pity I should feel for a father whose affections were unfortunately and unnaturally fixed upon his own daughter.

Were I your seducer, Martha, and not your lover, I should not write thus, nor should I have talked or acted, or written as I have. Tell it not in Gath, nor publish it in the streets of Askalon, lest the Philistines should be upon me. I should be drummed out of my regimen for a traitor to intrigue.

The Love Letters

And can you really imagine I think so meanly of your sex? Surely you cannot imagine I think so meanly of you. Why, then, the conclusion of your last letter but one? A word thereon.

Take men and women in the lump, the villany of those and the weakness of these—I maintain it to be less wonderful that an hundred or so should fall in the world, than that even one should stand. Is it strange the serpent conquered Eve? The devil against a woman is fearful odds. He has conquered men, women's conquerors; he has made even angels fall.

Oh, then, ye parents, be merciful in your wrath. Join not the base betrayers of your children, drive not your children to the bottom of the precipice, because the villains have driven them half way down, where (see, see !) many have stopped themselves from falling further by catching hold of some straggling virtue or another which decks the steep-down rock. Oh, do not force their weak hands from their hold, their last, last hold! The descent from crime to crime is natural, perpendicular, headlong enough of itself; do not increase it.

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

“Can women, then, no way but backward fall?”

Shall I ask your pardon for all this, Martha? No, there is no occasion, you say.

But to-morrow, for *to-morrow* led me out of my strait path over this fearful precipice, where I, for my part, trembled every step I took lest I should topple down headlong. Glad am I to be once more on *plain* ground again with my Martha.

To-morrow, about eleven, I'll be with you; but let me find you in your riding-dress and your mare ready. I have laid a plan, to which neither honour nor delicacy (and I always consult both before I propose anything to *you*) can make the least objection. This once, trust to me: I'll explain all to-morrow. Pray be ready in your *riding-dress*. Need I add, in that you know I think becomes you most? No, love would have whispered that.

Love shall be of our party. He shall not suffer the cold to approach you; he shall spread his wings over your bosom; he shall nestle in your dear arms, he shall.

When will to-morrow come? What torturing dreams must I not bear to-night?

I send you some lines which I picked up

The Love Letters

somewhere, I forget where. But I don't think them much amiss.

CELIA'S PICTURE.

To paint my Celia, I'd devise
Two summer suns in place of eyes ;
Two lunar orbs should then be laid
Upon the bosom of the maid ;
Bright Berenice's auburn hair
Should, where it ought, adorn my fair ;
Nay, all the signs in heaven should prove
But tokens of my wond'rous love.
All, did I say ? Yes, all, save one :
Her yielding waist should want a zone,

To MISS REAY.

HUNTINGDON, Dec. 8, 1775.

Then I release my dearest soul from her promise about to-day. If you do not see that all which *he* can claim by gratitude, I doubly claim by love, I have done, and will for ever have done. I would purchase my happiness at any price, but at the expense of yours.

Look over my letters, think over my conduct, consult your own heart, and read these two long letters of your writing, which I return you. Then, tell me whether we love or not. And, if we love (as witness both

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

our hearts), shall gratitude, *cold* gratitude, bear away the heavenly prize that's only due to love like ours? Shall my right be acknowledged, and must he possess the casket? Shall I have your soul, and shall he have your hand, your eyes, your bosom, your lips, your——

Gracious God of Love! I can neither write nor think. Send one line, half a line to

Your own, own

H.

To MR. HACKMAN.

HINCHINBROOK, Dec. 10, 1775.

Your two letters of the day before yesterday, and what you said to me yesterday in my dressing-room, have drove me mad. To offer to sell out, and take the other step to get money for us both, was not kind. You know how such tenderness distracts me. As to marrying me, that you should not do upon any account. Shall the man I value be pointed at and hooted for selling himself to a Lord, for a commission, or some such thing, to marry his cast mistress? My soul is above my situation. Besides, I will not take advantage, Mr. Hackman, of what may be only

The Love Letters

perhaps (excuse me) a youthful passion. After a more intimate acquaintance with me of a week or ten days, your opinion of me might very much change. And yet, you *may* love as sincerely as I——

But I will transcribe you a song which I do not believe you ever heard me sing, though it is my favourite. It is said to be an old Scots ballad, nor is it generally known that Lady A. L. wrote it. Since we have understood each other, I have never sung it before you, because it is so descriptive of our situation, how much more so since your cruelly kind proposal of yesterday! I wept, like an infant over it this morning.

AULD ROBIN GRAY.

When the sheep are in fold, and the cows are at
home,
And all the weary world to rest is gone,
The woes of my heart fall in showers from mine 'ee
While my good man lays sound by me.

Young Jamie lov'd me well, and he sought me
for his bride,
He had but a crown, he had no more beside;
To make the crown a pound, young Jamie went
to sea,
And the crown and the pound were both for me,

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

He had na been gone but a year and a day,
When my father broke his arm, and our cow was
stole away ;
When my mother she fell sick, and my Jamie at
the sea,
And auld Robin Gray came wooing to me.

My father could na work, and my mother could
na spin,
I toiled night and day, but their bread I could na
win ;
Auld Rob maintain'd them both, and, with tears
in his e'e,
Said, " Jenny, for their sakes, oh ! marry me."

My heart it said' no, and I wish'd for Jamie
back,
But the wind it blew sore, and his ship prov'd a
wreck ;
His ship prov'd a wreck : Ah ! why did not
Jenny dee !
Why was she left to cry " Woe is me ! "

My father argu'd sore, though my mother did
na speak ;
She look'd in my face till my heart was fit to
break ;
So auld Robin got my hand, but my heart was
in the sea,
And now Robin Gray is good man to me.

I had na been a wife but of weeks only four,
When sitting right mournfully at my own door,

The Love Letters

I saw my Jamie's ghost, for I could not think
'twas he,
Till he said, "Jenny, I'm come home to marry
thee."

Sore did we weep, and little did we say,
We took but one kiss, then tore ourselves away ;
I wish I was dead, but I am not like to dee,
But long shall be left to cry "Woe is me !"

I gang like a ghost, and I do not care to spin,
I fain would think on Jamie, but that would be
a sin ;
must e'en do my best a good wife to be,
For auld Robin Gray has been kind to me.

My poor eyes will only suffer me to add,
for God's sake, let me see my *Jamie* to-
morrow. Your name also is *Jamie*.

To MISS REAY.

HUNTINGDON, *Dec.* 13, 1775.

MY LIFE AND SOUL !

But I will never more use any preface
of this sort, and I beg you will not. A
correspondence begins with dear, then my
dear, dearest, my dearest, and so on, till at
last panting language toils after us in vain.

No language can explain my feelings. Oh,
M. yesterday, yesterday ! Language, thou

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

liest; there is no such word as *satiety*, positively no such word. Oh thou, beyond my warmest dreams bewitching! What charms! What——

But words would poorly paint our joys. When, when?—yet *you* shall order, govern everything. Only remember, I am *sure* of those we trust.

Are you now convinced that Heaven made us for each other? By that Heaven, by the paradise of your dear arms, I will be only yours!

Have I written sense? I know not what I write. This scrap of paper (it is all I can find) will hold a line or two more. I must fill it up to say that, whatever evils envious fate designed me, after those few hours of yesterday, I never will complain nor murmur.

Misfortune, I defy thee now. M. loves me, and H.'s soul has its content most absolute. No other joy like this succeeds in unknown fate.

To MISS REAY.

HUNTINGDON, Dec. 24, 1775.

Talk not to me of the new year. I am a new man. I will be sworn to it I am not

The Love Letters

the same identical James Hackman that I was three months ago. You have created me—yes, I know what I say—created me anew.

As to thanking you for the bliss I taste with you, to attempt it would be idle. What thanks can express the Heaven of Heavens!—

But I will obey you in not giving such a loose to my pen as I gave the day before yesterday. That letter, and the verses it contained, which were certainly too highly coloured, pray commit to the flames. Yet, pray too, as I begged you yesterday, do not imagine I thought less chastely of you because I wrote them. By Heaven! I believe your mind as chaste as the snow which, while I write, is driving against my window. You know not *what* I think of you. One time, perhaps, you may.

The lines I repeated to you this morning are not mine. I think of them quite as you do. Surely an additional merit in them is, that to the uninitiated, in whom they might, perhaps, raise improper ideas, they are *totally unintelligible*.

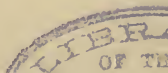
of Mr. H. and Miss R.

To MR. HACKMAN.

HINCHINBROOK, *Christmas Day*, 1775.

My old friend the Corporal looked as if he had been tarred and feathered yesterday, when he arrived with your *dear* billet. Omiah took up the sugar-caster, when he saw him through the parlour window, and powdered a fresh slice of pudding, by way of *painting* the snowy Corporal. Omiah's simplicity is certainly very diverting, but I should like him better, and take more pains with him, if I did not think he suspected something. The other day I am sure he came to spy the nakedness of the land. Thank heaven! our caution prevented him.

Respecting the poetry which you repeated to me the other day, I know not whether, as you say, those to whom it could do any harm could possibly understand it. For *uninitiated* means, I believe, not yet admitted into the mysteries, those who have not yet taken the veil; or, *I* should rather say, those who have not yet thrown off the veil. Why was I not permitted by my destiny to keep on mine, till my H., my *Mars*, seized me in his ardent arms? How gladly *to his* arms would I have given up my very soul!



The Love Letters

Cruel fortune, that it cannot be so to-day ! But we forgot, when we fixed on to-day, that it would be Christmas Day. I must do penance at a most *unpleasant* dinner, as indeed is every meal and every scene when you are absent, and that, without the consolation of having first enjoyed your company. To-morrow, however, at the usual time and place.

Your discontinuing your visits here, since the first day of our happiness, gratifies the delicacy of us both. Yet, may it not, my H., raise suspicions elsewhere ? Your agreeable qualities were too conspicuous not to make you missed. Yet, you are the best judge.

My poor, innocent, helpless babes ! Were it not on your account, your mother would not *act* the part she does. What is Mrs. Yates's sustaining a character well for *one* evening ? Is it so trying as to play a part, and a base one too, morning, noon, and night ? *Night !* But I will not make my H. uneasy.

At least, allow that I have written you a long scrawl. Behold, I have sent you a tolerable good substitute for myself. It is reckoned very like. I need not beg

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

you not to show it. Only remember, the painter's Martha is not to rob your own Martha of a certain quantity of things called and known by the name of kisses, which I humbly conceive to be her due, though she has been disappointed of them to-day.

So, having nothing further to add at present, and the post being just going out, I remain with all truth,

Dear Sir,

Your most humble servant,

MARTHA.

There is a pretty conclusion for you. Am I not a good girl? I shall become a most elegant correspondent in time, I see. This paragraph is the postscript, you know, and should therefore have been introduced by a well-flourished P.S., the Sir Clement Cottrel upon these occasions.

To MISS REAY.

HUNTINGDON, Dec. 28, 1775.

Your condescension in removing my most *groundless* cause of jealousy yesterday was more than I deserved. How I exposed myself by my violence with you! But, I tell

The Love Letters

you, my passions are all gunpowder. Though,
thank God ! no Othello yet am I.

One not easily jealous ; but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme.

and that God knows how I love you, worship
you, idolise you.

How *could* I think you particular to such
a thing as B. ? You said you forgave me to-
day, and I hope you did. Let me have it
again from your own dear lips to-morrow,
instead of the next day. Everything shall
be ready, and the guitar, which I wrote for,
is come down, and I will bring the song and
you shall sing it, and play it, and I will beg
you to forgive me, and you shall forgive me,
and five hundred ands besides.

Why, I would be jealous of this sheet of
paper, if you kissed it with too much
rapture.

What a fool ! No, my Martha, rather say
what a lover !

Many thanks for your picture. It *is* like.
Accept this proof that I have examined it.

'Tis true, creative man, thine art can teach
The living picture every thing but speech !
True, thou hast drawn her, as she is, all fair,
Divinely fair ! her lips, her eyes, her hair !

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

Full well I know the smile upon that face,
Full well I know those features' every grace !
But, what is this, my Martha's mortal part,
There *is* a subject beggars all thine art ;
Paint but her *mind*, by Heav'n! and thou
shalt be,
Shalt be my more than pagan deity.
Nature may possibly have cast, of *old*,
Some other beauty in as fair a mould ;
But all in vain you'll search the world to find
Another beauty with so fair a mind.

To MISS REAY.

HUNTINGDON, Jan. 1, 1776.

Lest I should not see you this morning,
I will scribble this before I mount honest
Crop, that I may leave it for you.

This is a new year. May every day of
it be happy to my Martha. May—but do
not you know there is not a wish of bliss I
do not wish you ?

A *new* year, I like not this word. There
may be new lovers. I lie, there may not.
Martha will never change her H., I am sure
she will never change him for a truer lover.

A new year—'76. Where shall we be in
'77? Where in '78? Where in '79? Where
in '80?

In misery or bliss, in life or death, in

The Love Letters

heaven or hell, wherever *you* are, there may H. be also !

The soldier whom you desired me to beg off, returns thanks to his unknown benefactress. Discipline must be kept up in our way ; but I am sure you will do me the justice to believe I am no otherwise a friend to it.

The closing paragraph of this letter contains an instance of Miss Reay's kindness of heart. She was never liked in London, owing to her connection with the unpopular Lord Sandwich, and she was accused of selling appointments in the Navy. In 1773, Lord Sandwich brought an action against the *Evening Post*, for having made a similar accusation against him, and obtained £2000 damages. In a contemporary pamphlet there is a story bearing on this point, told about Miss Reay's kindly intercession with the Earl on behalf of a much neglected naval officer. This unfortunate gentleman had been a lieutenant for over thirty years, and was complaining one day to a friend about the little prospect he had of promotion. His friend advised him to write to Miss Reay, which he accordingly did, with the result that

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

she placed his letter before the Earl, with the emphatic remark that thirty years' service, in her apprehension, gave an officer a better title to promotion than his being the son of a Duke.

To MISS REAY.

HUNTINGDON, *Feb. 8, 1776.*

Since the thaw sent me from Hinchinbrook the day before yesterday, I have written four times to you, and believe verily I shall write four-and-forty times to you in the next four days. The bliss I have enjoyed with you these three weeks has increased not diminished my affection. Three weeks and more in the same house with my Martha!—it was more than I deserved. And yet to be obliged to resign you every night to another! By these eyes, by your still dearer eyes, I do not think I slept three hours during the whole three weeks. Yet, yet, 'twas bliss. How lucky that I was pressed to stay at Hinchinbrook the night the snow set in! Would it had snowed till doomsday! But then you must have been *his* every night till doomsday. Now my happy time may come.

Though I had not strength to resist when

The Love Letters

under the same roof with you, ever since we parted the recollection that it was *his* roof has made me miserable. Whimsical that he should bid *you* press me, when I at first refused his solicitation. Is H. guilty of a breach of hospitality?

I must not question. I must not think. I must not write. But we will meet, as we fixed.

Does Robin Gray suspect? Suspect! And is H. a subject for suspicion?

To MISS REAY.

HUNTINGDON, Feb. 16, 1776.

Every time I see you I discover some new charm, some new accomplishment. Before heaven, there was not a tittle of flattery in what I told you yesterday. Nothing *can* be flattery which I say of you, for no invention, no poetry, no anything can come up to what I *think* of you.

One of our kings said of the citizens of his good city of London, that when he considered their riches, he was in admiration at their understandings; when he considered their understandings, he was in admiration at their riches. Just so do I with regard to your

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

person and your mind, but for a different reason. Nature was in one of her extravagant moods when she put you together. She might have made two captivating women out of you—by my soul, half-a-dozen! Your turn for music and excellence in it would be a sufficient stock of charms for the most disagreeable woman to set up with in life. Music has charms to do things most incredible; music——

Now shall I, with the good-humoured, digressive pen of our favourite Montaigne in his entertaining Essays, begin with love, and end with a treatise upon the gamut?

Yet to talk of music is to talk of you. Martha and music are the same. What is music *without* you? And harmony has tuned your mind, your person, your every look and word and action.

Observe, when I write to you I never pretend to write sense. I have no head; you have made me all heart from top to bottom. Sense—why, I am out of my senses, and have been these six weeks. Were it possible my scrawls to you could ever be read by any one but you I should be called a madman. I certainly am either curst or blest (I know not

The Love Letters

which) with passions wild as the torrent's roar. Notwithstanding I take this simile from water, the element out of which I am formed is fire. Swift had water in his brain. I have a burning coal of fire ; your hand can light it up to rapture, rage, or madness. Men, real men, have never been wild enough for my admiration ; it has wandered into the ideal world of fancy. Othello (but he should have put *himself* to death in his wife's sight, *not* his wife), Zanga, are *my* heroes. Milk-and-water passions are like sentimental comedy. Give me (you see how, like your friend Montaigne, I strip myself of my skin, and show you all my veins and arteries, even the playing of my heart), give *me*, I say, tragedy, affecting tragedy, in the world, as well as in the theatre. I would massacre all mankind sooner than lose you.

This is mere madness ;
And thus awhile the fit will work on him ;
Anon, as patient as the female dove
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,
His silence will sit drooping.

Inconsistent being ! While I am ranting thus about tragedy and blood and murder, behold, I am as weak as a woman. My tears

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

flow at but the idea of losing you ; yes, they do not drop only, they pour. I sob like a child. Is this Othello ? Is this Zanga ? We know not what we are, nor what we may become.

This I know, that I am and ever will be yours and only yours.

I send you Ossian. You will see what a favourite he is with me by some drawings and pieces of (what your partiality will call) poetry, which accompany the bard of other times. Should you quit this world before me, which fate forbid, often shall I hear your spirit (if I can be weak enough to survive you) calling me from the low-sailing cloud of night. They abuse Macpherson for calling them translations. If he alone be the author of them, why does he not say so, and claim the prize of fame ; I protest *I* would. They who do not refuse their admiration to the compositions, still think themselves justified to abuse Macpherson, for pretending *not* to be the author of what they still admire. Is not this strange ?

As we could not meet this morning (how long must our meetings depend on others, and not on ourselves ?) I was determined,

The Love Letters

you see, to have a long conversation with you.

Pray seal, in future, with better wax, and more care. Something colder than one of my kisses might have thawed the seal of yesterday. But I will not talk of *thawing*. Had the frost and snow continued, I had still been with you at Hinchinbrook.

The remainder of this (my second sheet of paper, observe) shall be filled with what I think a valuable curiosity. The officer whom you saw with me on Sunday, is lately come from America. He gave it me, and assures me it is original. It will explain itself. Would I might be in your dear, little, enchanted dressing-room, while you read it!—

A Speech of a Shawanese Chief to Lord Dunmore.

“ I appeal to any white man to-day, if ever he entered Logan’s cabin hungry, and he gave him not meat ; if he ever came cold or naked, and I gave him not clothing. During the last long and bloody war, Logan remained idle, ignominious, in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love of the whites, that those of mine own country pointed at me as they passed by, and said ‘ Logan is

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

the friend of white men.' I had even thought to live with you. But the injuries of one among you did away that thought, and dragged me from my cabin of peace. Colonel Cressop, the last spring, in cold blood, cut off all the relations of Logan, sparing neither women nor children. There runs not a drop of the blood of Logan in the veins of any human creature. This called on me for revenge. I have sought it. I have killed many. Revenge has been fully glutted.

"For my country—I rejoice at the beams of peace. But, harbour not the thought that mine is the joy of fear. Logan never felt fear. He will not turn his heel to save his life.

"Who is there to mourn for Logan? Not one."

In the following letter there was an obvious addition by Croft, which I have already noticed in the Introduction.

To MISS REAY.

HUNTINGDON, *Feb. 22, 1776.*

How silly we were, both of us, not to recollect your favourite Jenny? and did not Jamie think of her either?

The Love Letters

. . . . Though my mother did na speak,
She look'd in my face, till my heart was fit to
break.

Was not this exactly the instance we
wanted?

Something more has occurred to me on the
same subject. Rather than not write to you,
or than write to you as *descriptively* as recol-
lection sometimes tempts me, I know you
would have me write nonsense.

In Hervey's "Meditations" are two pas-
sages as fine as they are simple and natural.

"A beam or two finds its way through the
grates, and reflects a feeble glimmer from the
nails of the coffins." "Should the haggard
skeleton lift a clattering hand." In the lat-
ter I know not whether the epithet *haggard*
might not be spared.

Governor Holwell, in the account of the
sufferings at the black hole at Calcutta, when
he speaks of the length of time he supported
Nature by catching the drops, occasioned by
the heat, which fell from his head and face,
adds these words—"You cannot imagine
how unhappy I was when any one of them
escaped my tongue!" What a scene! The
happiness, the existence of a fellow creature,

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

dependent upon being able to catch a drop of his own sweat ! Shakspeare's fancy could not have invented, nor ever did invent, any thing more sublime ; for this is Nature, and Nature itself is sublimity. People write *upon* a particular situation ; they do not put themselves *in* the situation. We only see the writer, sitting in his study, and working up a story to amuse or to frighten ; not the identical Tom Jones, not Macbeth himself.

Can you become the very being you describe ? Can you look round, and mark only that which strikes in your new character, and forget all which struck in your own ? Can you bid your comfortable study be the prison of innocence, or the house of mourning ? Can you transform your garret of indigence into the palace of pleasure ? If you cannot, you had better clean shoes than endeavour by writings to interest the imagination. We cannot even bear to see an author only peeping over the top of every page to observe how we like him. The player I would call a corporal actor, the writer a mental actor. Garrick would in vain have put his face and his body in all the situations of Lear, if Shakspeare had not before put his mind in

The Love Letters

them all. In a thousand instances we have nothing to do but to copy Nature, if we can only get her to sit to our pencil. And yet how few of the most eminent masters are happy enough to hit off her difficult face exactly!

Every person of taste would have been certain that Mr. Holwell was one of the sufferers in the black hole, only from the short passage I have noticed.

* * * * *

Faldoni and Teresa might have been prevented from making proselytes, if they ever have made any, by working up their most affecting story so as to take off the edge of the dangerous example. But not in the way Mr. Jerningham has done it, who tells us, not less intelligibly than pathetically.

All-ruling love, the god of youth, possess'd
Entire dominion of Faldoni's breast ;
An equal flame did sympathy impart
(A flame destructive) to Teresa's heart :
As on one stem two opening flowers respire,
So grew their life (entwin'd) on one desire.

Are you not charmed? Perhaps you never saw the poem. I have it here, and will bring

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

it you as a curiosity. The melancholy tale will not take up three words, though Mr. J. has bestowed upon it 335 melancholy lines. The catastrophe happened near Lyons, in the month of June, 1770. Two lovers (Faldoni and Teresa Meunier) meeting with an invincible obstacle to their union, determined to put an end to their existence with pistols. The place they chose for the execution of their terrible project was a chapel that stood at a little distance from the house. They even decorated the altar for the occasion. They paid a particular attention to their own dress. Teresa was dressed in white, with rose-coloured ribbands. The same coloured ribbands were tied to the pistols. Each held the ribband that was fastened to the other's trigger, which they drew at a certain signal.

Arria and Pætus (says Voltaire) set the example; but then it must be considered they were condemned to death by a tyrant. Whereas love was the only inventor and perpetrator of this deed.

Yet, while I talk of taking off the dangerous edge of their example, they have almost listed me under their bloody banners.

The Love Letters

On looking over the sermon I have written, I recollect a curious anecdote of Selkirk.

(By-the-bye, Wilkes, I suppose, would say that none but a Scotchman could have lived so many years upon a desert island.)

He tamed a great number of kids for society, and with them and the numerous offspring of two or three cats that had been left with him, he used often to dance. From all which my inference is this—Martha will not surely deprive herself of H.'s society, but will let him find her *there* to-morrow, especially since, in Mr. J.'s *expressive* language :

As on one stem two opening flowers respire,
So grow our lives (entwin'd) on one desire.

To MR. HACKMAN.

HINCHINBROOK, Feb. 23, 1776.

Where were you this morning, my life? I should have been froze to death I believe with the cold, if I had not been waiting for *you*. I am uneasy, very uneasy. What could prevent you? You own appointment, too. Why not write, if you could not come? Then, I had a dream last night, a sad dream, my H.

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

. . . . For thee I fear, my love ;
Such ghastly dreams last night surprised my
soul.

You may reply, perhaps, with my favourite
Iphis—

Heed not these black illusions of the night,
The mockings of unquiet slumbers.

Alas! I cannot help it. I am a weak
woman, not a soldier.

I thought you had a duel with a person
whom we have agreed never to mention.
I thought you killed each other. I not only
saw his sword, I *heard* it pass through my
H.'s body. I saw you both die; and with
you love and gratitude. Who is there,
thought I, to mourn for Martha! Not one!

You may call me foolish; but I am uneasy,
miserable, wretched! Indeed, indeed I am.
For God's sake, let me hear from you!

To MR. HACKMAN,

HINCHINBROOK, *Feb. 24, 1776*

That business, as I told you it would last
night, obliges him (Lord Sandwich) to go to
town. I am to follow for the winter. Now,
my H. for the royal black bob and the bit

The Love Letters

of chalk ; or for any better scheme you will plan. Let me know, to-morrow, where you think Lady Grosvenor's scheme will be most practicable on the road, and there I will take care to stop. I take my Bible oath I would not deceive you, and more welcome shall you be to my longing arms than all the Dukes or Princes in Christendom. If I am not happy for one whole night in my life, it will now be your fault.

Is not this kind and thoughtful? Why did it never occur to you, so often as we have talked of my being obliged to leave this dear place—to me *most* dear, since it has been the scene of my acquaintance, my happiness, with H.

But, am I to leave behind me that dearest H.? Surely your recruiting business must be nearly over now. You *must* go to town. Though things cannot often be contrived at the Admiralty, they may, they *may*—they *shall* happen elsewhere.

Fail not to-morrow, and do not laugh at me any more about my dream. If it was a proof of my weakness, it was a proof also of my love.

I wish the day on which I am to set out

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

from hence could be conjured about a month further back or so. Now, you ask *why?* Look in your last year's almanack. Was not the *shortest day* somewhere about that time? Come give me a kiss for that, I am sure I deserve it. Oh! fye, Mr. H., not twenty. You are too generous in your payments. I must insist upon returning you the overplus the next time we meet—that is to-morrow, you know.

To MISS REAY.

HUNTINGDON, *Feb. 26, 1776.*

Why will not the wished-for day, or rather night, arrive? And here, I have not seen you since I know not when, not for two whole days.

But I wrote you a long letter yesterday why it would be dangerous to meet; and all in rhyme. The beginning, I assure you, was not poetry, but truth. If the conclusion was coloured too highly, you must excuse it. The pencil of love executed it, and the sly rogue will indulge himself sometimes. Let the time come, I will convince you his pencil did not much exaggerate.

Just now I was thinking of your birthday,

The Love Letters

about which I asked you the other day. It is droll that yours and mine should be so near together. And thus I observe thereon :

Your poets, cunning rogues, pretend
That men are made of clay ;
And that the heavenly potters make
Some five or six a day.

No wonder, Martha, I and you
Don't quite detest each other ;
Or that my soul is link'd to yours,
As if it were its brother :

For in one year we both were made,
Nay almost in one day
So, ten to one, we both came from
One common heap of clay.

What ? If I were not cast in near
So fine a mould as you,
My heart (or rather, Martha, yours)
Is tender, fond and true.

Corporal Trim sets off to-day for our headquarters. My plan is laid so that no discovery *can* take place. Gods, that two such souls as yours and mine should be obliged to descend to arts and plans ! Were it not for your dear sake, I'd scorn to do anything I would not wished discovered.

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

To MR. HACKMAN,

HINCHINBROOK, Feb. 27, 1776.

All your plans are useless. The corporal has made his forced march to no purpose. The fates are unkind. It is determined that I am to go up *post*. So, we cannot possibly be happy together, as we hoped to have been had our own horses drawn me up, in which case I must have *slept* upon the road. I am not clear old Robin Grey will not stay and attend me. Why cannot my Jamie? Cruel fortune! But in town we *will* be happy. When, again, shall I enjoy your dear society, as I did during that, to me at least, blessed snow? Nothing but my dear children could prevent our going with Cook to seek for happiness in worlds unknown. There must be some corner of the globe where mutual affection is respected.

Do not forget to meet me. Scratch out *forget*. I know how much you think of me: too much for your peace, nay, for your health. Indeed, my H., you do not look well. Pray be careful.

Whatever wound thy tender health,
Will kill thy Martha's, too.

The Love Letters

Oemiah is in good humour with me again. What kind of animal should a naturalist expect from a native of Otaheite and a Huntingdonshire dairymaid? If my eyes do not deceive me, Mr. Oemiah will give us a specimen. Will you bring me some book to-morrow to divert me, as I post it to town, that I may forget, if it be possible, I am posting from you? _____

But the lovers contrived to meet after all, for Hackman's next letter is written from the inn at Hockerill, where they had spent the night together. _____

To MISS REAY.

HOCKERILL, *March 1, 1776.*

It is your strict injunction that I do not offend you by suffering my pen to speak of last night. I will not, my M., nor should I, had you not enjoined it. You once said a nearer acquaintance would make me change my opinion of you. It has. I *have* changed my opinion. The more I know you, the more chastely I think of you. Notwithstanding last night (what a night!) and our first, too, I protest to God, I think of you with as much purity as if we were going to

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

be married. You take my meaning, I am sure, because they are the thoughts which I know you wish me to entertain of you.

You got to town safe, I hope. *One* letter may find me before I shall be able to leave Huntingdon, whither I return to-day, or, at least, to Cambridge. I am a fool about Crop, you know; and I am now more tender of him because he has carried *you*. How little did we think that morning we should ever make each other so happy!

Do not forget to write, and don't forget the key against I come to town. As far as seeing you, I will use it sometimes, but never for an opportunity to indulge our passion. That positively shall never again happen under *his* roof. How did we applaud each other for not suffering his walls at Hinchinbrook to be insulted with the first scene of it! And how happy were we both, after we waked from our dream of bliss, to think how often we had acted otherwise during the time the snow shut me up at Hinchinbrook!—a snow as dear to me as to yourself.

My mind is torn, rent, with ten thousand thoughts and resolutions about you and about myself.

The Love Letters

When we meet, which shall be as we fixed,
I may perhaps mention *one* idea to you.

Pray let us contrive to be together some evening that your favourite "Jephtha" is performed.

Enclosed is a song which came into my hands by an accident since we parted. Neither the words nor the music, I take it, will displease you. Adieu.

SONG.

When your beauty appears
In its graces and airs,
All bright as an angel new dropp'd from the sky ;
At distance I gaze, and am awed by my fears,
So strangely you dazzle my eye !

But when, without art,
Your kind thoughts you impart,
When your love runs in blushes thro' every vein ;
When it darts from your eyes, when it pants in
your heart,
Then I know you're a woman again.

"There's a passion and pride
In our sex," she replied,
"And thus, might I gratify both, I would do ;
As an angel appear to each lover beside,
But still be a woman to you."

However, Hackman found the temptation to follow Miss Reay to London too great to

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

resist ; and the two impassioned notes that follow were written in the course of the same day from a coffee-house near Charing Cross :

CANNON COFFEE HOUSE, CHARING-CROSS,

March 17, 1776.

No further than this can I get from you, before I assure you that every word I said just now came from the bottom of my heart. I never shall be happy, never shall be in my senses, till you consent to marry me. And notwithstanding the dear night at Hockerill, and the other which your ingenuity procured me last week in D. Street, I swear, by the bliss of blisses, I never will taste it again till you are my wife.

To MISS REAY,

CANNON COFFEE HOUSE, *March 17, 1776.*

Though you can hardly have read my last scrawl, I must pester you with another. I had ordered some dinner ; but I can neither eat, nor do anything else. "Mad !" I may be mad, for what I know. I am sure I am wretched.

For God's sake, for my life and soul's sake, if you love me, write directly hither, or at least to-night to my lodgings, and say

The Love Letters

what is that *insuperable* reason on which you dwelt so much. "Torture shall not force you to marry me." Did you not say so! Then you hate me; and what is life worth?

Suppose you had not the dear inducement of loving me (*if* you love me! Damnation blot out that *if!*) and being adored by me, still, do you not wish to relieve yourself and me from the wretched parts we act? My soul was not formed for such meanness. To steal in at a back door, to deceive, to plot, to lie—Perdition! the thought of it makes me despise myself.

Your children—Lord Sandwich—(if we have not been ashamed of our conduct, why have we cheated conscience all along by "he" and "his," and "Old Robin Gray?" Oh! how we have descended, Martha!)—Lord Sandwich, I say, cannot but provide for your dear boys. As to your sweet little girl, I will be a father to her, as well as a husband to you. Every farthing I have I will settle on you both. I will, God knows, and you shall find what I will do for you both, when I am able. Good God, what would I *not* do!

Write, write; I say, write. By the living

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

God, I will have this *insuperable* reason from you, or I will not believe you love me.

Miss Reay answered his notes immediately; but it is evident from the tone of her reply that she was afraid lest Hackman's presence in London should awaken the suspicions of Lord Sandwich, even if they had not already been aroused by the hints of the faithful Omiah, who seems to have suspected the existence of the intrigue from its very commencement. Croker, in his "Memoirs," says that Miss Reay was, at this period, in a very nervous and unsettled frame of mind.

"Miss Reay, towards the latter part of the time that I frequented the Admiralty, did not continue to speak of her situation as before, complained of greatly being alarmed by ballads that had been sung, or cries that had been made directly under the windows that look into the Park, and that such was the fury of the mob, that she did not think either Lord Sandwich or herself were safe whenever they went out; and I must own that I heard some strange insults offered, and that I, with some of the servants suddenly rushed out, but the

The Love Letters

offenders instantly ran away and escaped. One evening afterwards when sitting with Miss Reay in the great room above stairs, she appeared to be much agitated, and at last said, 'she had a particular favour to ask of me; that as her situation was very precarious, and no settlement had been made upon her, she wished I would hint something of the kind to Lord Sandwich.' I need not express my surprise, but I instantly assured her, 'that no one but herself could make such a proposal, as I knew Lord Sandwich never gave any one an opportunity of interfering with him on so delicate a subject.' She urged that her wish was merely to relieve Lord Sandwich as to great expense about her, for as her voice was then at the best, and Italian musick was particularly her *forte* she was given to understand that she might succeed at the Opera House, and as Mr. Giardini then led, and I was intimate with Mrs. Brooke, and Mrs. Yates, she was certain of a most advantageous engagement. I then instantly conjectured who one of the advisers must have been; and afterwards found that three thousand pounds and a free benefit had been absolutely held out to her; though not

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

by the two ladies, who managed the stage department.”

To MR. HACKMAN.

ADMIRALTY, March 17, 1776.

And does my H. think I wanted such a letter as this to finish my affliction? Oh, my dear Jamie, you know not how you distress me.

And do you imagine that I have *willingly* submitted to the artifices to which I have been obliged, for your sake, to descend? What has been *your* part, from the beginning of the piece, to *mine*? I was obliged to act even to *you*. It was my business not to let you see how unhappy the artifices to which I have submitted made me; and that they did embitter even our happiest moments.

But fate stands between us. We are doomed to be wretched. And I, every now and then, think some terrible catastrophe will be the consequence of our connection. “Some dire event,” as Storgè prophetically says in Jephtha, “hangs over our heads;”—

Some woeful song we have to sing
In misery extreme—O never, never
Was my forboding mind distress'd before
With such incessant pangs!

Oh, that it were no crime to quit this

The Love Letters

world like Faldoni and Teresa, and that we might be happy together in some other world, where gold and silver are unknown! By your hand I could even die with pleasure. I know I could.

“Insuperable reason.” Yes, my H., there is, and you force it from me. Yet, better to tell you than to have you doubt my love, that love which is now my religion. I have hardly any God but you. I almost offer up my prayers *to* you, as well as *for* you.

Know, then, if you were to marry me, you would marry some hundred pounds’ worth of debts; and *that* you never shall do.

Do you remember a solemn oath which you took in one of your letters, when I was down at Hinchinbrook? and how you told me afterwards it *must* be so, because you had so solemnly sworn it?

In the same solemn and dreadful words I swear that I never will marry you, happy as it would make me, while I owe a shilling in the world. Jephtha’s vow is past.

What your letter says about my poor children made me weep; but it shall not make me change my resolution.

It is a further reason why I should not.

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

“If I do not marry you, I do not love you!”
Gracious powers of love! Does my H. say so? My *not* marrying you is the strongest proof I can give you of my love. And Heaven, you know, has heard my vow. Do *you* respect it, and never tempt me to break it—for not even *you* will *ever* succeed. Till I have some better portion than debts, I *never* will be yours.

Then what is to be done? you ask. Why, I will tell you, H. Your determination to drop all particular intercourse till marriage has made us one, flatters me more than I can tell you, because it shows the opinion you entertain of me in the strongest light; it almost restores me to *my own* good opinion. The copy of verses you brought me on that subject is superior to anything I ever read. They shall be thy Martha’s morning prayer, and her evening song. While you are in Ireland——

Yes, my love, in Ireland. Be ruled by me. You shall immediately join your regiment there. You know it is your duty. In the meantime, something may happen: Heaven will not desert two faithful hearts that love like yours and mine. There are joys; there

The Love Letters

is happiness in store for us yet. I feel there is. And (as I said just now) *while you are in Ireland*, I will write to you *every* post, *twice* by *one* post, and I will think of you, and I will dream of you, and I will kiss your picture, and I will wipe my eyes, and I will kiss it again, and then I will weep again. And——

Can I give a stronger instance of my regard for you, or a stronger proof that you ought to take my advice, than by thus begging my only joy to leave me? I will not swear I shall survive it; but, I beseech you, go!

Fool that I am! I undo with one hand all that I do with the other. My tears, which drop between every word I write, prevent the effect of my reasoning; which, I am sure, is just.

Be a man, I say—you *are* an angel. Join your regiment; and, as sure as I love you (nothing can be *more* sure), I will recall you from what will be banishment as much to me as to you, the first moment that I can marry you with honour to myself, and happiness to my H.

But, I must not write thus. Adieu!

Ill suits the voice of love when glory calls,
And bids thee follow Jephtha to the field.

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

To MISS REAY.

CANNON COFFEE HOUSE,

March 17, 1776.

And I will respect the vow of Jephtha, and I will follow to the field. At least, I will think of it all to-night, for I am sure I shall not sleep, and will let you know the success of my struggle, for a struggle it will be to-morrow. I will wait for you at the same place in the Park, where I shall see you open the Admiralty door. Should it rain, I will write. It was my intention to have endeavoured to see you now, but I changed my mind, and wrote this, and I am glad I did. We are not in a condition to see each other. Cruel debts! Rather, cruel vow! for, would you but have let me, I would have contrived some scheme about your debts. I *could* form a plan. My Gosport matters—my commission.

Alas! you frown, and I must stop. Why would not fortune smile upon my two lottery tickets? Heaven knows I bought them on your account. Upon the back of one of them I wrote, in case of my sudden death, "This is the property of Miss *Reay*." On the

The Love Letters

back of the other, that it belonged to your daughter. For what am I still reserved?

To MR. HACKMAN.

ADMIRALTY, *March 17, 1776.*

Why, why do you write to me so often? Why do you see me so often? when you acknowledge the necessity of complying with my advice.

You tell me, if I bid you, you will go. I have bid you, begged you to go.—I *do* bid you go. Go, I conjure you, go! But let us not have any more partings. The last was too, too much. I did not recover myself all day. And your goodness to my little white-headed boy! He made me burst into tears this morning by talking of the good-natured gentleman, and producing your present.

Either stay, and let our affection discover and ruin us—or go.

On the bended knees of love I entreat you, H., my dearest H., to go.

This earnest appeal induced Hackman to obey her wishes, and he departed for Ireland immediately.

PART II

IN IRELAND

To MISS REAY.

IRELAND, *March 26, 1776.*

IRELAND! England! good heavens! that Martha should be in one part of the world and her H. in another! Will not our destinies suffer us to breathe the same air? Mine will not, I most firmly believe, let me rest, till they have hunted me to death.

Will you not give me your approbation for obeying you thus? Approbation! And is that the coin to pass between *us*?

Yet, I will obey you further. I will restrain my pen as much as possible. I will scratch the word love out of my dictionary. I will forget: I lie—I never *can*, nor ever *will* forget you, or any thing which belongs to you. But I will, as you wisely advise, and kindly desire me, write as much as possible on other subjects. Everything entertaining

The Love Letters

that I can procure I will. I will *Twissify*, and write Tours—or anything but love-letters. This morning pardon me: I am unable to trifle; I *must* be allowed to talk of love, of Martha.

And, when I *am* able, you must allow me to put in a word or two sometimes for myself. To-day, however, I will not make *you* unhappy by telling you how truly so *I* am.

The truth is—my heart is full; and though I thought, when I took up my pen, I could have filled a quire of paper with it, I now have not a word to say. Were I sitting by your side now (oh, that I were!) I should only have power to recline my cheek upon your shoulder, and to wet your handkerchief with my tears.

My own safety, but for your sake, is the last of my considerations. Our passage was rather boisterous, but not dangerous. Mrs. F. (whom I mentioned to you, I believe, in the letter that I wrote just before we embarked) has enabled me to make you laugh with an account of her behaviour, were either of us in a humour to laugh.

Why did you cheat me so about that box?

Had I known I should find, upon opening

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

it, that the things were for me, I would never have brought it. But that *you* knew. Was it kind, my Martha, to give me so many *daily* memorandums of you, when I was to be at such a distance from you? Oh, yes, it was, it was, *most* kind. And that, and you, and all your thousand and ten thousand kindnesses I never will forget. The purse shall be my constant companion, the shirts I will wear by night, one of the handkerchiefs I was obliged to use in drying my eyes as soon as I opened the box, the——

God, God bless you in this world—that is, give you your H., and grant you an easy passage to eternal blessings in a better.

If you go before me, may the stroke be so instantaneous that you may not have time to cast one longing, lingering look on H. !

To MISS REAY.

IRELAND, *April* 8, 1776.

Yours, dated April the first, would have diverted me had I been some leagues nearer to you. It contained true wit and humour. I truly thank you for it, because I know with how much difficulty you study for any thing like wit or humour in the present situation of

The Love Letters

your mind. But you do it to divert me ; and it is done for one, who, though he cannot laugh at it, as he ought, will remember it, as he ought. Yet, with what a melancholy tenderness it concluded ! *There* spoke your heart.

Your situation, when you wrote it, was something like that of an actress, who should be obliged to play a part in a comedy, on the evening of a day, which, by some real catastrophe, had marked her out for the capital figure of a *real* tragedy.

Perhaps I have said something like this in the long letter that I have written since. Never mind.

Pray be careful how you seal your letters. The wax always robs me of five or six words. Leave a space for your seal. Suppose that should be the part of your letter which tells me you still love me. If the wax cover it, I see it not—I find no such expression in your letter—I grow distracted—and immediately set out for Charing Cross, to ask you whether you do indeed still love me.

In the hospitality of this country I was not deceived. They have a curse in their language, strongly descriptive of it—“May the

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

grass grow at your door !” The women, if I knew not *you*, I should find sensible and pretty. But I am deaf, dumb, blind, to everything, and to every person but *you*. If I write any more this morning, I shall certainly sin against your commands.

Why do you say nothing of your dear children? I insist upon it that you buy my friend a taw, and two dozen of marbles ; and place them to the account of

Your humble servant.

To MISS REAY.

IRELAND, *May 3, 1776.*

My last, I hope, did not offend you. The bank note I was obliged to return ; although I thank you for it, more than words can tell.

Shall I, whom you will not marry, because you will not load me with your debts, increase those debts ; at least prevent you from diminishing them, by robbing you of fifty pounds? Were I capable of it, I should be unworthy of your love. But be not offended that I returned it. Heaven knows how willingly a quire of such things should have accompanied it, had heaven made me so rich.

Be not anxious about me. Talk not of the

The Love Letters

postage which your dear letters cost me. Will you refuse to make your H. happy? And think you that I can pay too dear for happiness?

But, Lord! you rave. I am rich—as rich as a Jew; and without taking into the calculation the treasure I possess in your love. Why, you talk of what I allow *that relation*, poor soul! That does not swallow up all my lands and hereditaments at Gosport. Then there's my pay, and twenty other ways and means besides, I dare say, could I but recollect them. Go to—I tell you I *am* rich. So, let me know you got the silver paper safe, and that I am a good boy.

Rich! To be sure I am; why, I can afford to go to plays. I saw Catley last night, in your favourite character. By the way, I will tell you a story of her, when she was on your side the water.

Names do not immortalise praiseworthy anecdotes; *they* immortalise names. Some difference had arisen between Miss Catley and the managers, concerning the terms upon which she was to be engaged for the season. One of the managers called upon her, at her little lodgings in Drury Lane, to settle them. The maid was going to show the gentleman

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

upstairs, and to call her mistress. "No, no," cries the actress, who was in the kitchen, and heard the manager's voice, "there is no occasion to show the gentleman into a room. I am busy below [to the manager] making apple-dumplings for my brats. You know whether you have a mind to give me the money I ask, or not. I am none of your fine ladies, who get a cold or the tooth-ache, and cannot sing. If you have a mind to give me the money, say so; my mouth shall not open for a farthing less. So good-morning to you, and do not keep the girl there in the passage; for I want her to put the dumplings in the pot, while I nurse the child." The turnips of Fabricius, and Andrew Marvel's cold leg of mutton are worthy to be served up on the same day with Nan Catley's apple-dumplings.

Come; I am not unhappy, or I could not talk of other people and write thus gaily. Nothing can make me truly unhappy but a change in your sentiments of me. By the Almighty God of heaven, I know my own feeling so thoroughly, that I do not think I could survive such a thing.

As you love me, scold me not about the

The Love Letters

poplin which you will receive next week. It cost me nothing ; I may surely give what was given to me !

To MISS REAY.

IRELAND, May 29, 1776.

Do you think that to make such proposals, as your last contained, is the way to reconcile me to this worse than banishment? You refused to come into my scheme of marriage. Nothing shall tempt me to come into *your* scheme. Persist in your idea of going on the stage, and, as I live, I will come over and make a party to damn you the first night of your appearance. Since you will not share my fortunes, I will not share your earnings.

The story which you mention at Flamborough, of Boardingham, who was murdered by his wife and her lover, is most shocking. The reflections you draw from it are most just, and what you say of our situation most true. The woman must have been beyond a savage. Yet their feelings, when she and Aikney were at the gallows together (supposing anything like love remained), must have been exquisite. I protest I would wil-

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

lingly embrace with M. the cruellest death which torture could invent (provided she were on a bed of roses) than lead the happiest life without her. What visions have I conjured up! My pen drops from my hand. Well, I must not think.

To MISS REAY.

IRELAND, *June* 18, 1776.

My Laura is not angry with me, I hope, for the three or four *tender* letters I have written to her since the beginning of this month. And yet, yours of yesterday seems to say you are. If I bear my situation like a man, will you not allow me to feel it like a man?

Misfortune, like a creditor severe,
But rises in demand for her delay.
She makes a scourge of past prosperity,
To sting me more and double my distress.

But you say I must not write thus. If I can help it, I will not.

Shall I write about the weather or politics?
The sun shines to-day, yesterday it rained.
If you wish to appear learned, tell the next

The Love Letters

company you go into that the distresses of this country will soon oblige England to grant her a free trade or something very much like it ; and add, that her grievances are more real now than when in 1601 she complained to Elizabeth of the introduction of trials by jury. Another slice of politics. Assert boldly that " Junius " was written by Grenville's secretary. This is a *fact*, notwithstanding what Wilkes relates of Lord Germaine's bishop.

Is this the style of letter-writing you allow me? Try again, then.

The favours I have received from the worthy man I mentioned in a letter or two ago are by his goodness every day increased. Some superior souls have affected to hate mankind. Here is one who, with an understanding and an experience inferior to none, never loses an opportunity of befriending a fellow-creature. I am afraid sometimes that misfortune will one day or other play him some confounded dog's trick, because he takes such pleasure in thwarting every scheme that she lays for any one's ruin.

Yet even this amiable character is not without his defects. The following lines I

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

sent him this morning after playing at vint-
un in company with him last night :

To Hackman, says a certain friend
(Both idle, rhyming bards),
“ —, with good manners and best sense,
Can't bear to lose at cards.

With such a head “—” And such a heart,”
Adds Hackman, “ ’tis high treason.
But I, who knew that heart so well,
Have found, I think, the reason.

Friend to the poor, his purse their box,
He always would be winner ;
For then they win. But, should he lose,
The poor, too, lose a dinner.”

This country's facetious Dean said, that
his friend Arbuthnot could do everything but
walk. My friend can do everything but lose
at cards.

Feeling, and all the commanding powers of
the mind, were never perhaps before so mixed
together. A tale of sorrow will make his
little eyes wink, wink, wink, like a green girl's.
Before the company came last night, I showed
him “ Auld Robin Gray,” and, though he had
seen it before, he could not get over “ My
mother could na speak,” without winking

The Love Letters

For the credit of your side of the water, he is an Englishman. His agreeable wife, by her beauty and accomplishments, does credit to this country. She is remarkable also for her feeling, though in a different way. You shall relate an anecdote of distress, or read a story of ill-usage, and while his eyes are winking for the object of ill-usage or the distress, hers shall be striking fire with rage against the author of it. "Good God!" she exclaims, "if that villain was but in my power!" And I sometimes think she is going to ring for her hat and cloak, that she may sally forth, and pull his house about his ears. Bound up together (as they are, and as I hope they will long continue) they form a complete system of humanity.

It would have gratified me much to have been with you when Garrick took his farewell of the stage. Do you remember the last paper in the *Idler* upon its being the *last*? The reflection that it was the *last* time Garrick would ever play, was, in itself, painful. How, my Laura, my Martha, my life, shall I bear it, if I ever should be doomed to take my last leave, my last look of you!

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

To MR. HACKMAN.

ENGLAND, *June 25, 1776.*

Let me give you joy of having found such kind and agreeable friends in a strange land. The account you sent of the gentleman and lady, especially of the latter, quite charmed me. Neither am I without my friends. A lady, from whom I have received particular favours, is uncommonly kind to me. *For the credit of your side of the water, she is an Irishwoman. Her agreeable husband, by his beauty and accomplishments, does credit to this country. He is remarkable also for his feelings.*

Adieu ! This will affect you, I dare say, in the same manner your account affected me.

To MISS REAY.

IRELAND, *July 1, 1776.*

Your little billet, of the 25th of last month, was a proper reproof for the contents of one of mine. Until I saw the joke I was truly unhappy. If you had not written the long and kind letter the next day, which came in the same packet, I should have been miserable. Yet, I wish you happy, *most* happy ; but I cannot bear the thoughts of your

The Love Letters

receiving happiness from any hands (man, woman, or child) but mine. Had my affections not been fixed, as they are unalterably elsewhere, the wife of my *friend*, with all her charms, would never fix them. I have but two masters, Love and Honour. If I did not consider you as my wife, I would add, you know I have but *one* mistress.

A friend of mine is going to England (happy fellow I shall think him, to be in the same country with you). He will call at the Cannon Coffee House for me. Do send me, thither, the French book you mention, *Werther*. If you do not, I positively never will forgive you. Nonsense, to say it will make me unhappy, or that I shall not be able to read it! Must I pistol myself, because a thick-blooded German has been fool enough to set the example, or because a German novelist has feigned such a story? If *you* do not lend it me, I will most assuredly procure it some time or another; so, you may as well have the merit of obliging me. My friend will send a small parcel for you to D. Street. The books I send you, because I know you have not got them, and because they are so much cheaper here. If

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

you are afraid of emptying my purse (which, by-the-way, is almost worn out), you shall be my debtor for them. So send me a note of hand, *value received*. The other things are surely not worth mentioning.

To MR. HACKMAN.

ENGLAND, *August 20, 1776.*

For God's sake! where are you? What is the matter? Why don't you write? Are you ill? God forbid! Am I not with you to nurse you? If you are, why don't you let somebody else write to me? Better that all should be discovered, than suffer what I suffer. It is more than a month since I heard from you. A month used to bring me eight or ten letters. When I grew uneasy, it was in vain, as I said in my last, that I endeavoured to find your friend who brought the parcel (for I would certainly have seen him, and asked him about you). What is become of all my letters for this last month? Did you get what I returned by your friend? Do you like the purse? The book you mentioned is just the only book you should never read. On my knees I beg that you will never, never read it! Perhaps you *have*

The Love Letters

read it. Perhaps!—I am distracted. Heaven only knows to whom I may be writing this letter!

Madam, or Sir,

If you are a woman, I *think* you will, if you are a man, and ever loved, I am *sure* you will, oblige me with one line to say what is become of Mr. Hackman, of the 68th Regiment. Direct to Mrs. —, D. Street, London. Any person whose hands my letter may fall into, will not think this much trouble; and, if they send me good news, heaven knows how a woman, who loves, if possible, too well, will thank them.

To MISS REAY.

IRELAND, *Sept. 10, 1776.*

As I am no sportsman, there is no merit, you may think, in devoting a morning to this employment. Nor do I claim any merit. It is only making myself happy.

Now, I hope, you are quite at ease about me. My health, upon my honour, upon our love, is almost re-established. Were I not determined to keep on *this* side the truth, I would say *quite*. The four letters I have

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

written to you, since I received your frantic sheet of paper, have explained and made up everything. How can I sufficiently thank you for all your letters? Especially for that of this week? Never did you pen a better. Did I know anybody employed in a work, where that letter could properly appear, he should insert it in your own words.

Excuse me, I am unwillingly called away.

What I said this morning about your letter, brings to my recollection something of that sort. Shall I tell it you? I will.

James Hirst, in the year 1711, lived servant with the Honourable Edward Wortley. It happened, one day, in re-delivering a parcel of letters to his master, by mistake he gave him one which he had written to his sweetheart, and kept back one of Mr. Wortley's. He soon discovered the mistake, and hurried back to his master; but unfortunately for poor James, it happened to be the first that presented itself to Mr. Wortley, and, before James returned, he had given way to a curiosity which led him to open it, and read the love-told story of an enamoured footman. It was in vain that James begged to have it returned. "No," says Mr. Wortley, "James,

The Love Letters

you shall be a great man, this letter shall appear in the *Spectator*."

Mr. Wortley communicated the letter to his friend, Sir Richard Steel. It was accordingly published in his own words, and is that letter, No. 71, volume the first of the *Spectator*, beginning "Dear Betty."

James found means to remove that unkindness of which he complains in his letter; but, alas! before their wishes were completed, a speedy end was put to a passion, which would not discredit much superior rank, by the unexpected death of Betty. James, out of the great regard and love of Betty, after her death, married the sister. He dies, not many years since, in the neighbourhood of Wortley, near Leeds, Yorkshire.

To marry you is the utmost of my wishes; but, remember, I do not engage to marry your sister, in case of your death. . . . Death! How can I think of such a thing, though it be but in joke.

To MISS REAY.

IRELAND, *September 15, 1776.*

The commands of your last letter, for the reasons you give, I have immediately obeyed.

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

My enquiries about the young Englishman you mention amount to this. He is liked tolerably well here. He would be liked more, if he took more pains to be liked. His contempt for some people in the world, whom others despise perhaps as well as himself, is sometimes too conspicuous. Accident has given me an opportunity to see and know a great deal of him ; and with certainty. His heart is certainly not bad. His abilities are as certainly not equal to what he once confesses to have thought them ; perhaps they are superior to the opinion he now entertains of them. He has ambition and emulation enough to have almost supplied any want of genius, and to have made him almost anything, had he fallen into proper hands. But his schoolmasters knew nothing of his human heart, nor over much of the head. Though indolent to a degree, a keen eye might have discovered, may still discover, industry at the bottom ; a good cultivator might have turned it, may still turn it, to good account. His friendships are warm, sincere, decided—his enmities the same. He complains now and then, that some of his friends will pretend to know him better

The Love Letters

than they know themselves, and better than they know anything else. "They would play upon him; they would seem to know his stops; they pretend to be able to sound him from his lowest note to the top of his compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in a little pipe, yet cannot they make it speak. Do they think," he demands, "that he is easier to be played upon than a pipe?" Why, really, I do not think this is the case at present, whatever it may have been. Secrecy is not brought *into* the world, it is acquired *in* the world. An honest heart can only acquire it by experience. The character which he had certainly gotten among some of his intimates has been of service both to them and to himself. They made a point of secrecy, after they chose to discover a want of it in him; and now he has made a point of it himself. My dearest secret (*you* know what that is) should now sooner be trusted to him than to any of his former accusers. The loudest of them, to my knowledge, was little calculated to judge; for though he might not absolutely think him a coward, he certainly did not suspect his friend of courage, till sufficient proof of it

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

was given under his own eye. Now, in my opinion, true courage and resolution are this gentleman's marking characteristics. This is no great compliment ; for, without them, I would not give a farthing for any man.

Such, in my judgment, is the young gentleman about whom you wished me to inquire, and with whom I have happened to live a good deal. His principal merit is that my amiable friend (the mention of whose wife just jogged your jealousy) sincerely loves him. That worthy man seldom threw away his attachment where it is not deserved. Nor do I know anything in the gentleman whose character I have been sketching which gives me more pleasure, or which it would give him more pleasure to have noticed, than the love and respect which I am sure he feels for my friend ; unless perhaps, his affectionate sense of the obligations which I believe I have told you he lies under to a Mr. B——.

So much for business. Now for an article of news. The latter end of last month a lady and her servant, as they were riding in Phoenix Park, were stopped by a man on foot, very genteelly dressed in white clothes and a gold-laced hat. He demanded the lady's

The Love Letters

money, which she gave him, amounting to twenty-six guineas. The person put the cash into one of his pockets, and took from the other a small diamond hoop-ring, which he presented to the lady, desiring her to wear it for the sake of an extraordinary robber who made it a point of honour to take no more from a beautiful lady than he could make a return for in value. He then, with great agility, vaulted over the wall and disappeared.

This you may perhaps call an Irish way of robbing. There certainly was something original in it. The gentleman seems clearly to imagine that an exchange is no robbery.

As to your threat, I will answer it in the same style. "I *will* love you—and, if——!" But neither my answer, nor your threat is original. Reading this morning a history of this country, I found the following anecdote: In 1487, a dreadful war was carried on in Ulster, between the chieftain O'Neal, and the neighbouring chieftain of Tirconnel. This war had nothing more considerable for its immediate cause than the pride of O'Neal, who demanded that his enemy should recognise his authority by paying tribute. The laconic

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

style, in which the demand was made and rejected, would not have disgraced a nobler contest. "Send me tribute—or *else!*——" was the message of O'Neal. To which was returned, with the same princely brevity, "I owe you none—and *if!*——!" But I talk nonsense, this does not prove *your threat* to have been borrowed; for I dare say, you never heard of O'Neal till this moment. It only proves that two people may express themselves alike.

Should any man who loved like me (if any man ever did love like me) have spoke of his love in terms like those I used to speak of mine, follows it therefore that I have borrowed either his passion or his language? Were it possible for you to think so, I never would forgive you. Pray copy the music you mention in your next.

To MISS REAY.

IRELAND, *September 18, 1776.*

How happens it that I have not sooner noticed what you say, in a letter the beginning of last month, about the new punishment of working upon the Thames? Politicians may write more learnedly upon the matter, but I will defy Beccaria to write more

The Love Letters

feelingly or humanely. There certainly is much truth in what you say. Experience, however, will be the best test. Perhaps my true reason for noticing your sensible letter thus late, was to introduce a scene which passed in the quicksilver mines of Idra, a still more unpleasant abode than Mr. Campbell's academy. This used to be Colonel G.'s method, you remember, of introducing his home-made jokes. Not that my story is home-made. I take it from some Italian letters which a brother officer lent me, written by Mr. Everard, and I give it you almost in his own words, except in one or two passages, where I think he has lost an opportunity of surprising the reader.

“The pleasure I always take in writing to you, wherever I am, and whatever I am doing, in some measure dispels my present uneasiness, and uneasiness caused at once by the disagreeable aspect of everything around me, and the more disagreeable scene to which I have been witness.

“Something, too, I have to tell you of Count Alberti. You remember him one of the gayest, most agreeable persons at the

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

Court of Vienna, at once the example of the men and the favourite of the fair sex. I often heard you repeat his name with esteem as one of the few that did honour to the present age; as possessed of generosity and pity in the highest degree; as one who made no other use of fortune but to alleviate the distress of mankind. But first of all, the scene I mentioned.

“After passing several parts of the Alps, and having visited Germany, I thought I could not well return home without visiting the quicksilver mines at Idra, and seeing those dreadful subterranean caverns where thousands are condemned to reside, shut out from all hopes of ever again beholding the cheerful light of the sun, and obliged to toil out a miserable life under the whips of imperious taskmasters. Imagine to yourself a hole in the side of a mountain of about five yards over. Down this you are let in a kind of a bucket more than an hundred fathom, the prospect growing still more gloomy, yet still widening, as you descend. At length, after swinging in terrible suspense for some time in this precarious situation you at length reach the bottom and tread on the ground,

The Love Letters

which, by its hollow sound under your feet and the reverberations of the echo, seems thundering at every step you take. In this gloomy and frightful solitude you are enlightened by the feeble gleam of lamps here and there disposed, so that the wretched inhabitants of these mansions cannot go from one part to another without a guide. And yet, let me assure you, that though they by custom could see objects very distinctly by these lights, I could scarce discern for some time anything, not even the person who came with me to show me these scenes of horror.

“From this description, I suppose, you have but a disagreeable idea of the place; yet let me assure you that it is a palace if we compare the habitation with the inhabitants. Such wretches mine eyes never yet beheld. The blackness of their visages only serves to cover an horrid paleness caused by the noxious qualities of the mineral which they are employed to procure. As they in general consist of malefactors condemned for life to this task, they are fed at the public expense, but they seldom consume much provision. They lose their appetites in a short time,

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

and commonly, in about two years, expire from a total contraction of the joints of the body.

“In this horrid mansion I walked after my guide for some time, pondering on the strange tyranny and avarice of mankind, when I was accosted by a voice behind me, calling me by name, and enquiring after my health with the most cordial affection. I turned and saw a creature all black and hideous, who approached me with a most piteous accent, demanding, ‘Ah! Mr. Everard, do not you know me?’ Good God! what was my surprise, when, through the veil of his wretchedness, I discovered the features of my old and dear friend, Count Alberti! I flew to him with affection, and, after a tear of condolence, asked how he came there? To this he replied that, having fought a duel with a General of the Austrian infantry against the Emperor’s command, and having left him for dead, he was obliged to fly into one of the forests of Istria, where he was first taken, and afterwards sheltered by some banditti, who had long infested that quarter. With these he had lived nine months, till, by a close investiture

The Love Letters

of the place in which they were concealed, and after a very obstinate resistance, in which the greatest part of them fell, he was secured and carried to Vienna, in order to be broken alive on the wheel. When he arrived at the capital, he was quickly known, and several of the associates of his accusation and danger witnessing his innocence, his punishment of the rack was changed into that of perpetual confinement and labour in the mines of Idra. A sentence, in my opinion, a thousand times worse than death.

“As Alberti was giving me this account, a young woman came up to him, who, at once I saw, had been born for better fortune. The dreadful situation of the place was not able to destroy her beauty, and even in this scene of wretchedness she seemed to have charms to grace the most brilliant assembly.

“This lady was daughter to one of the first families in Germany, and, having tried every means to procure her lover's pardon without effect, was at last resolved to share his miseries, as she could not relieve them. With him she accordingly descended into these mansions, from which few ever return; and with him she is contented to live,

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

forgetting the gaieties of life; with him to toil, despising the splendours of opulence, and contented with the consciousness of her own constancy.

“ I am, dear Sir,

“ Yours, &c.”

Now can I tell all the feelings of your dear heart. Now see I your fancy busy with her magic pencil; and affecting is the picture it has begun. Begun; for your weeping eyes will not suffer you to finish it. Can not you, through all your tears, distinguish Alberti and his wife dying in each other's arms after about half a year? What a scene!

Is there any sum of money you would not give to have this tragedy end happily? That, of course, is impossible. But Everard speaks of the poor souls in his next letter, which I may perhaps send you in *my next*.

Come, Martha, be a good girl, and you shall have it now, though it will not give you *much* consolation.

“ My last to you was expressive, and perhaps too much so, of the gloomy situation of my mind. I own the deplorable condition of the worthy man described in it was

The Love Letters

enough to add double severity to the hideous mansions. At present, however, I have the happiness to inform you, that I was spectator of the most affecting scene I ever yet beheld. Nine days after I had written my last a person came post from Vienna to the little village near the mouth of the greater shaft. He was also followed by a second, and he by a third. The first enquiry was after the unfortunate Count; and I, happening to overhear the demand, gave them the best information. Two of these were the brother and cousin of the lady, the third was an intimate friend and fellow-soldier of the Count. They came with his pardon, which had been procured by the General with whom the duel had been fought, who was perfectly recovered from his wounds. I led them with all the expedition of joy down to his dreary abode, and presented to him his friends, and informed him of the happy change in his circumstances. It would be impossible to describe the joy that brightened up his grief-worn countenance; nor was the young lady's emotion less vivid at seeing her friends, and hearing of her husband's freedom: some hours were employed in mending the appearance of

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

this faithful couple, nor could I without a tear behold him taking leave of the former wretched companions of his toil. To one he left his mattock ; to another his working clothes ; to a third his little household utensils, such as were necessary for him in that situation. We soon emerged from the mine, and he once again revisited the sight of the sun, which he had totally despaired of ever seeing. A post-chaise was ready the next morning to take them to Vienna, whither, I am since informed by a letter from himself, they are returned. The Empress has taken them into favour ; his fortune and rank are restored ; and he and his fair partner now have the pleasing satisfaction of feeling happiness with double relish, because they once new what it was to be miserable.”

Says not our friend Sterne, that the circumstance of his being at Rennes at the very time the Marquis reclaimed his forfeited nobility and his sword, was an incident of good fortune which will never happen to any traveller but a sentimental one ? I believe it ; and may every other incident of good fortune befall all such travellers.

Did I not say this second part of the story

The Love Letters

would not afford you *much* consolation? Excuse me for such a falsity. That was only to surprise you. Well I knew what would be my Martha's feelings.

Are you as deep in astrology as when you wrote last to me? On the page I have to spare I will send you some some hasty lines which I scribbled the other day to ridicule the weakness of a Dr. W., who is as great a—fool at least as Dryden, and never fails to cast the nativity of his children :

Kind heaven has heard the parent's prayer,
Each gossip hails the son and heir.

“ Pray let the Doctor see,”

“ My master, ma'am ? Your labour past ;
He's got among the stars, to cast
His son's nativity.”

Three hours elaps'd, our sage descends,
With “ Well, and how's the child, my friend?”

“ He's happy, sir, ere this.”

“ Happy ! why yonder stars ne'er shed
Benigner influence on the head
Of happier, I guess.

“ Worth, virtue, wisdom, honour, wealth,
Man's best and only riches, health,
Assuredly await

Heav'n's favour'd child—or never more
Say I have knowledge to explore
The secret page of fate.

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

"'Twas there I read my happy boy
Full seventy summers should enjoy,
 "Ere"—when nurse sobb'd and said,
"Good lack! the babe to whom kind heaven
So many bounteous gifts hath given,
 These two hours hath been—Dead."

To MISS REAY.

IRELAND, *January 26, 1777.*

One of Lord Harcourt's suite will carry this to England. His lordship was relieved from guard yesterday by the arrival of a new Lord Lieutenant. As politics have not much to do with love, I shall not trouble you with a history of the late reign, or with a prophecy of what will be the present. Only let our great actors take care they do not play the farce of America in Ireland. My spirits, I thank you, are now tolerable well. But you know I am, at least I know I have been ever since you have known me, a strange comical fellow. Neither one thing nor t'other. Sometimes in the garret, but, much oftener, down in the cellar. If Salvator Rosa, or Rousseau, wanted to draw a particular character, I am their man. But you and I shall yet be happy together, I know; and then my spirits and passions will return into their usual channels.

The Love Letters

Why do you complain of the language of my letters? Suppose they were not tender. What would you say, what would you think, then? Must not love speak the language of love? Nay, do not we see every day that love and religion have mutual obligations, and continually borrow phrases from each other? Put Jamie or Jenny, instead of Christ, and see what you will make of Mr. Rowe's most solemn poems, or of Dr. Watts' hymns. Let me transcribe you a letter written by another person to a lady.

“Sir Benjamin telling me you were not come to town at three o'clock makes me in pain to know how your son does, and I can't help inquiring after him and dear Mrs. Freeman. The Bishop of Worcester was with me this morning before I was dressed. I gave him my letter to the Queen, and he has promised to second it, and seemed to undertake it very willingly: though, by all the discourse I had with him (of which I will give you a particular account when I see you) I find him very partial to her. The last time he was here, I told him you had several times desired you might go from me, and I have

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

repeated the same thing again to him. For you may easily imagine I would not neglect doing you right on all occasions. But I beg it again, for Christ Jesus's sake, that you would never name it any more to me ; for, be assured, if you should ever do so cruel a thing as to leave me, from that moment I shall never enjoy one quiet hour. And, should you do it without asking my consent (which if I ever give you, may I never see the face of heaven) I will shut myself up, and never see the world more, but live where I may be forgotten by human kind."

What think you of this letter ? If it should have been written by a woman to a woman, surely you will allow H. to write a little tenderly to his own Martha ! This was really the case. It is transcribed from "An Account of the Conduct of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough," printed for W. Smith, Dame Street, Dublin, 1742, which I bought at Wilson's in Dane Street yesterday. This pamphlet contains others as loving. This I find, page 40. It was written to Lady Marlborough by her mistress (one would have thought the word *mistress* in one sense did

The Love Letters

belong to one of the parties) when she was only Princess of Denmark. It refers to the quarrel between the Princess and her royal sister and brother-in-law, because she would not part with her favourite, upon Lord Marlborough's having displeased the king. These two female lovers always corresponded, under the names of Mrs. Freeman and Mrs. Morley, at the particular desire of the Princess, who fixed upon the names. And this, after she was Queen Anne. Be assured, my Martha, that, although I write to you with almost the same madness of affection, I will never imitate her example, for all its royalty, and exchange you for a mushroom of your own raising.

From this date Hackman's letters have a morbid vein running through them. He mentions that he has received several letters from Miss Reay, but none of them, however, seem to have been preserved.

To MISS REAY,

IRELAND, Feb. 6, 1777.

My last was merry, you know. I cannot say as much for *your* last. To-day you must

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

suffer me to indulge my present turn of mind in transcribing something which was left behind her by a Mrs. Dixon, who poisoned herself not long since at Inniskillen. It was communicated to me by a gentleman, after a dinner yesterday, who is come hither about business, and lives in the neighbourhood of Inniskillen.

The unhappy woman was not above nineteen years of age. She had been married about two years, and lived with her husband all that time with seeming ease and cheerfulness.

She was remarkably cheerful all the fatal day, had company to dine with her, made tea for them, in the evening set them down to cards, retired to her chamber, and drank her cup of arsenic.

She left a writing on her table, in which is obscurely hinted the sad circumstance which urged her impatience to this desperate act.

Enclosed is an exact copy even to the spelling.

“This 'is to let all the world know, that hears of me, that it is no crime I ever committed occasions this my untimely end ; but

The Love Letters

despair of ever being happy in this world, as I have sufficient reasons to think so. I own it is a sinful remedy, and very uncertain to seek happiness, but I hope that God will forgive my poor soul; Lord have mercy on it! But all I beg is to let none reproach my friends with it, or suspect my virtue or my honour in the least, though I am to be no more.

“Comfort my poor unhappy mother, and brothers and sisters, and let all mothers take care, and never force a child as mine did me; but I forgive her, and hopes God will forgive me, as I believe she meant my good by my marriage.

“Oh! that unfortunate day I gave my hand to one, whilst my heart was another’s, but hoping that time and prudence would at length return my former peace and tranquillity of mind, which I wanted for a long time; but oh, it grieves me to think of the length of eternity; and the Lord save me from eternal damnation! Let no one blame Martin Dixon (her husband), for he is in no fault of it.

“I have a few articles which I have a greater regard for than anything else that’s mine, on

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

account of him that gave them to me (but *he* is not to be mentioned), and I have some well-wishers that I think proper to give them to.

“First, to Betty Balfour, my silver buckles ; to Polly Deeryn, my diamond ring ; to Betty Mulligan, my laced suit, cap, handkerchief, and ruffles ; to Peggy Delap, a new muslin handkerchief not yet hemmed, which is in my drawer, and hope for my sake those persons will accept of these trifles as a testimony of my regard for them.

“I would advise Jack Watson [her brother] to behave himself in an honest and obedient manner in respect to his mother and family, as he is all she has to depend upon now.

“I now go in God’s name, though against His commands, without wrath or spleen to any one upon earth. The very person I die for, I love him more than ever, and forgive him. I pray God grant him more content and happiness than he ever had, and hope he will forgive me, only to remember such a one died for him.

“There was, not long ago, some persons pleased to talk something against my reputation, as to a man in this town ; but now,

The Love Letters

when I ought to tell the truth, I may be believed. If ever I knew him, or any other but my husband, may I never enter into glory; and them I forgive who said so; but let that man's wife take care of them that told her so; for they meant her no good by it.

“With love to one, friendship to few, and goodwill to all the world, I die, saying, Lord have mercy on my soul; with *an advice to all people never to suffer a passion of any sort to command them as mine did in spite of me.* I pray God to bless all my friends and acquaintance, and begs them all to comfort my mother, who is unhappy in having such a child as I, who is ashamed to subscribe myself an unworthy and disgraceful member of the Church of Scotland.

“JANE WATSON, otherwise DIXON.”

My pen shall not interrupt your meditations hereon by making a single reflection. We both of us have made, I dare say, too many on it. She, too, was *Jenny* and had her *Robin Gray*.

To MISS REAY.

IRELAND, *April*, 20, 1777.

Now you see there is something in dreams.

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

But why is not your alarming letter more particular about your complaint? Do they nurse you as tenderly as I would? Are they careful about your medicines? For God's sake tell them all round what happened lately here to Sir William Yorke, the Chief Justice.

Sir William was grievously afflicted with the stone. In his severe fits he used to take a certain quantity of laudanum drops. On calling for his usual remedy, during the most racking pains of his distemper, the drops could not be found. The servant was despatched to his apothecary; but, instead of laudanum drops, he asked for laudanum. A quantity of laudanum was accordingly sent, with a special charge not to give Sir William more than twenty-four drops. But the fellow, forgetting the caution, gave the bottle into his master's hand, who, in his agony, drank up the whole contents, and expired in less than an hour.

Why, my dearest love, did you conceal your illness from me so long? Now, you may have revealed the situation of your health to me too late. God forbid! If I write more, I shall write like a madman. A gentleman takes this who sails for England

The Love Letters

to-day. To-morrow or next day the Colonel will be here. If Lord Sandwich, as I have reason to expect, has influenced him to refuse me leave of absence, I will most certainly sell out directly, which I have an opportunity to do. At any rate, I will be with you in a few days. If I come without a commission you must not be angry. To find you both displeased and ill, will be too much for your poor H. For my sake, be careful. Dr. — I insist upon your not having any longer. His experience and humanity are upon a par. Positively you must contrive some method for me to see you. How can love like mine support existence if you should be ill, and I should not be permitted to see you. But I can neither think nor write any more.

Hackman then sold out and left at once for England, arriving in London in the beginning of May 1777.

PART III

IN LONDON

To MISS REAY,

CANNON COFFEE HOUSE, *May 4, 1777.*

DID you get the incoherent scrawls I wrote you yesterday and the day before? Yours I have this instant read and wept over. Your feeble writing speaks you weaker than you own. Heavens, am I come hither only to find I must not see you! Better I had staid in Ireland. Yet, do I now breathe the air with you. Nothing but your note last night could have prevented me, at all hazards, from forcing my way to your bedside. In vain did I watch the windows afterwards, to gather information from the passing lights whether you were better or worse. For God of heaven's sake send me an answer to this!

To MR. HACKMAN.

ADMIRALTY, *May 4, 1774.*—3 o'clock.

My dear mistress bids me write this from

The Love Letters

her mouth: "These are the last words I speak. My last thoughts will be upon you, my dearest, dear H. In the next world we shall meet. Live and cherish my memory. Accept the contents of this little box. Be a friend to my children. My little girl."

TO THE SAME.

ADMIRALTY, *May 4, 1777.*—5 o'clock.

MY DEAR SOUL,

At the hazard of my life I write this to tell you Heaven has spared my life to your prayers. The unfinished note, which my hasty maid—I cannot go on.

"Sir,

My dear Mistress bids me say, Sir, that her disorder has taken a turn within this hour, and the physicians have pronounced her out of all danger. Honoured Sir, I humbly crave your pardon for sending away my scribble just now, which I am afraid has made you uneasy; but indeed, Honoured Sir, I thought it was all over with my poor dear mistress; and then, I am sure I should have broke my heart. For, to be sure, no servant ever had a better, nor a kinder mistress. Sir, I presume to see your honour

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

to-morrow. My mistress fainted away as she began this, but is now better.

"Admiralty.—6 o'clock."

To MISS REAY.

CANNON COFFEE HOUSE, *June 27, 1777.*

5 o'clock.

As I want both appetite and spirit to touch my dinner, though it has been standing before me these ten minutes, I can claim no merit in writing to you. May you enjoy that pleasure in your delightful situation on the banks of the Thames, which no situation, no thing upon earth, can in your absence afford me!

Do you ask me what has lowered my spirits to-day? I will tell you. Do not be angry, but I have been to see the last of poor Dodd, Yes, "poor Dodd!" though his life was justly forfeited to the laws of his country. The scene was affecting—it was the first of the kind I had ever seen, and shall certainly be the last. Though, had I been in England when Peter Tolosa was deservedly executed in February, for killing Duarzey, a young French woman with whom he lived, I believe I should have attended

The Love Letters

the last moments of a man, who could murder the object of his love. For the credit of my country, this man (does he deserve the name of *man*?) was a Spaniard.

Do not think I want tenderness because I was present this morning. Will you allow yourself to want tenderness, because you have been present at Lear's madness, or Ophelia's? Certainly not. Believe me (you *will* believe me, I am sure) I do not make a profession of it, like George S. Your H. is neither *artiste* nor *amateur*, nor do I, like Paoli's friend and historian, hire a window by the year, which looks upon the Grass-market at Edinburgh.

Raynal's book you have read, and admire. For its humanity it merits admiration. The Abbé does not countenance an attendant on scenes at this sort by his writings, but he does by his conduct. And I would sooner take Practice's word than Theory's. Upon my honour Raynal and Charles Fox, notwithstanding the rain, beheld the whole from the top of an unfinished house, close by the stand in which I had a place.

However meanly Dodd behaved formerly, in throwing the blame of his application to

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

the chancellor on his wife, he certainly died with resolution. More than once to-day I have heard that resolution ascribed to his hope that his friend Hawes, the humane founder of the Humane Society, would be able to restore him to life. But I give him more credit. Besides, Voltaire observes that the courage of a dying man is in proportion to the number of those who are present, and St. Everemond (the friend of the French M.) discovered that *les Anglais surpassent toutes les nations à mourir*. Let me surpass all mankind in happiness, by possessing my *Ninon* for life, and I care not how I die.

Some little circumstances struck me this morning, which, however you may refuse to forgive me for so spending my morning, I am sure you would not forgive me were I to omit. Before the melancholy procession arrived, a sow was driven into the space left for the sad ceremony, nor could the idea of the approaching scene, which had brought the spectators together, prevent too many from laughing, and shouting, and enjoying the poor animal's distress, as if they had only come to Tyburn to see a sow baited.

After the arrival of the procession, the pre-

The Love Letters

paration of the unhappy victim mixed something disagreeably ludicrous with the solemnity. The tenderest could not but feel it, though they might be sorry that they *did* feel it. The poor man's wig was to be taken off, and the nightcap brought for the purpose was too little, and could not be pulled on without force. *Valets de chambre* are the greatest enemies to heroes. Every guinea in my pocket would I have given that he had not worn a wig, or that (wearing one) the cap had been bigger.

At last arrived the moment of death. The driving away of the cart was accompanied with a noise which best explained the feelings of the spectators for the sufferer. Did you never observe, at the sight or relation of anything shocking, that you closed your teeth hard, and drew in your breath hard through them, so as to make a sort of hissing sound? This was done so universally at the fatal moment that I am persuaded the noise might have been heard at a considerable distance. For my own part, I detected myself, in a certain manner, accompanying his body with the motion of my own.

Not all the resuscitating powers of Mr.

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

Hawes can, I fear, have any effect ; it was so long before the mob would suffer the hearse to drive away with his body.

Thus ended the life of Dr. Dodd. How shocking, that a man, with whom I have eaten and drunk, should leave the world in such a manner ! A manner which, from familiarity, has almost ceased to shock us, except when our attention is called to a Perreau or a Dodd. How many men, how many women, how many young, and, as they fancy, tender females, with all their sensibilities about them, hear the sounds, by which at this moment I am disturbed, with as much indifference as they hear muffins and matches cried along the street ! *The last dying speech and confession, birth, parentage, and education.* Familiarity has even annexed a kind of humour to the cry. We forget that it always announces the death (and what a death !) of one fellow being ; sometimes of half-a-dozen, or even *more*.

A lady talks with greater concern of cattle-day than of hanging-day. And her maid contemplates the mournful engraving at the top of a dying speech with more indifference than she regards the honest tar hugging his

The Love Letters

sweetheart at the top of "Black-eyed Susan." All that strikes us is the ridiculous tone in which the halfpenny balladmonger singer chants the *requiem*. We little recollect that, while we are smiling at the voice of the charmer, wives or husbands (charm she never so wisely), children, parents, or friends, perhaps all these and more than these, as pure from crimes as we, and purer still, perhaps, are weeping over the crime and punishment of the darling and support of their lives. Still less do we at this moment (for the printer always gets the start of the hangman, and many a man has bought his own dying speech on his return to Newgate by virtue of a reprieve)—still less do we ask ourselves, whether the wretch, who, at the moment we hear this (which ought to strike us as an) awful sound, finds the halter of death about his neck, and now takes the longing farewell, and now hears the horses whipped and encouraged to draw from under him for ever the cart which he now, now, now feels depart from his lingering feet—whether this wretch really deserved to die more than we. Alas! were no spectators to attend executions but those who deserve to live, Tyburn would



of Mr. H. and Miss R.

be honoured with much thinner congregations.

* * * * *

Well, I have made an uncomfortable sort of a meal on tea, and now I will continue my conversation with you. *Conversation*—a plague on words, they will bring along with them ideas. This is all the conversation we must have together for some days. Have I deserved the misery of being absent from my M. ? To bring proofs of my love would be to bring proofs of my existence. They must end together. Oh, Martha, does the chaste resolution which I have so religiously observed ever since I offered you marriage deserve no smiles from fortune ? Is then my evil genius never to relent ? Had I not determined to deserve that success which it is not for mortals to command, I should never have struggled with my passions as I did the first time we met after your recovery. What a struggle ! The time of year, the time of day, the situation, the danger from which you were hardly recovered, the number of months since we had met, the languor of your mind and body, the bed, the everything. Ye cold-blooded, white-livered sons and daughters of chastity,

The Love Letters

have ye no praises to bestow on such a forbearance as that? Yet, when your strength failed you, and grief and tenderness dissolved you in my arms; when you reclined your cheek upon my shoulder, and your warm tears dropt into my bosom, then who could refrain? then——

What then, ye clay-cold hypercritics in morality?

Then, even then, “I took but one kiss, and I tore myself away.”

Oh that I could take only one look at this moment!

Your last says *the sun will shine*. Alas! I see no signs of it. Our prospects seem shut up for ever.

With regard to the stage, we will talk of it. My objections are not because I doubt your success. They are of a different kind—the objections of love and delicacy. Be not uneasy about my selling out. The step was not so imprudent. What think you of orders? More than once you know you have told me I have too much religion for a soldier. Will you condescend to be a poor parson’s wife?

But I shall write to-morrow at this rate.

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

To MISS REAY.

July 7, 1777.

Since last night I have changed my mind, totally changed it. I charge you not to see Mrs. Yates this morning. Write her word that your mind is changed. Never will I consent to be supported by your labours. Never, never shall your face, your person, your accomplishments be exposed for so much an hour. By heaven! I will not forgive you if you do not give up all thoughts of such a thing.

Miss Reay seems, after all, to have abandoned her intention of going on the stage, although she was studying at the time with Signora Galli, an Italian opera-singer, who had been appointed companion to Miss Reay by Lord Sandwich. It is probable that Galli was also instructed to play the part of spy over Miss Reay's actions. The following four letters from Hackman cover a period of twelve months, during which time he was preparing to enter the Church.

The Love Letters

To MISS REAY.

CROYDON, Sept. 20, 1777.

That you have taken to drawing gives me particular pleasure. Depend upon it, you will find it suit your genius. But, in truth, your genius seizes everything. While your old friend is eating his corn I sit down to tell you this, which I would not say to your face lest you should call it flattery, though you well know flattery is a thing in which *we* never deal. My opinion of the great man's style of painting who condescends to improve you in drawing is exactly yours. Posterity will agree with us. The subjects you recommended to his pencil are such as I should have expected from my M.'s fancy. While I walked my horse hither this morning two or three subjects of different sorts occurred to me. All of them would not suit his style. But I know one or two of them would not displease you if well executed. Some of them I will send you.

Louis XIV. when a boy, viewing the battle of St. Anthony from the top of Charonne. In 1650, I think.

Richard Cromwell, when the Prince de Conti, Condé's brother, told him in conver-

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

sation, at Montpelier, without knowing him, that Oliver was a great man, but that Oliver's son was a miscreant for not knowing how to profit by his father's crimes.

Milton, when the idea first struck him of changing his mystery into an epic poem.

Demosthenes declaiming in a storm.

William the Conqueror and his rebellious son Robert discovering each other in a battle, after they had encountered hand to hand for some time.

Charles XII. tearing the Vizir's robe with his spur.

And again, after lying in bed ten months at Demotica.

. . . . Though my mother could na speak,
She look'd in my face till my heart was like to
break.

The Abra of Prior's Solomon.

When she, with modest scorn, the wreath
return'd,
Reclin'd her beauteous neck, and inward
mourn'd.

Our Elizabeth, when she gave her Essex a box on the ear.

Chatterton's Sir Charles Bawdin parting from his wife.

The Love Letters

Then tir'd out with raving loud,
She fell upon the floor ;
Sir Charles exerted all his might,
And *march'd* from out the door.

The Conference of Augustus, Anthony and Lepidus (you are deep in Goldsmith, I know). Do you remember the scene? Equally suspicious of treachery, they agreed to meet on a little island near Mutina. Lepidus first past over. Finding every thing safe, he made the signal. Behold them, yonder, seated on the ground, on the highest part of a desolate island, unattended, fearful of one another, marking out cities and nations, dividing the whole world between them, and mutually resigning to destruction, agreeably to lists which each presented, their dearest friends and nearest relations. Salvator Rosa would not make me quarrel with him for doing the background. Your friend, if any one living, could execute the figures.

Let me suggest one more subject. Monmouth's decapitation, in the time of James II. History speaks well of his face and person. The circumstances of his death are these: He desired the executioner to dispatch him with more skill than he had dispatched

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

Russel. This only added to the poor fellow's confusion, who struck an ineffectual blow. Monmouth raised his face from the block, and with a look (which I cannot describe, but the painter must give) reproached his failure. By the turn of the head, the effect of the blow might be concealed, and left to fancy ; which might collect it from the faces of the nearest spectators. The remainder of the scene is too shocking for the eye, almost for the ear. But, I know not how, whenever I am away from you, nothing is too shocking for *me*. Monmouth again laid down his head. The executioner struck again *and again*, to as little purpose ; and, at last, threw down the axe. The sheriff obliged the man, whose feelings all must pity and respect, to renew his attempt. Two strokes more finished the butchery.

Were it possible to tear off this last subject without destroying half my letter, I really would. It will make you shudder too much. But, you see, it is not possible ; and you prefer such a letter as this, I know, to none. The paper only affords me room to say my horse is ready. Every step he carries me from you will be a step from happiness. My

The Love Letters

imagination *would* busy herself just now about the manner in which I should behave, if I were to die as ignominiously as Monmouth. But, as I feel no inclination for rebellion, fancy threw away her pains.

To MISS REAY.

Feb. 5, 1778.

Oh! my dearest Martha, what I have gone through since I wrote to you last night it is impossible for me to describe. Thank God, you were not in town! Suffice it that my honour and life are both as you wish them. Now, mine of last night is more intelligible. How strange, that the kindest letter that you almost ever wrote me, should come to me precisely at the time I was obliged to make up my mind to quit the world, or, what is more, *much more*, to quit you! Yet, so it was.

The story my letter mentioned, of a friend who had received such an affront as no human being could away with, was my own. Your feelings agreed with me, I am sure. Duelling is not what I defend. In general, almost always, it may be avoided. But cases may be put, in which it can be avoided only by worse than death, by everlasting disgrace

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

and infamy. Had I fallen, I know where my last thoughts would have lingered; and you and your children would have had some tokens of my regard. Be assured the matter is for ever at an end, and at an end as properly as even you can wish. How happy shall we be in '79 or '80 (for before that time we shall surely be blest with each other!), to have those friends about us who were privy to this day, and to talk over the possibility of it!

H., in all thy future life, sacred be every fifth of February!

My mind is too much agitated to write any more this evening. To-morrow I will be more particular. My last I am sure could not alarm you; though, had anything happened, it would have prepared you. Do not be alarmed by this. Upon my honour (with which you know I never preface a falsity) I am not hurt; nor, as it since turns out, is the other gentleman, at least, not materially.

One trifling circumstance I must mention. As I was determined either to kill or be killed (unless sufficient apologies should be made), *the only proper and least pernicious idea of duelling*, I did not see why I should

The Love Letters

not recruit my strength as much as possible. So, about three o'clock, I took some cold saddle of mutton and brandy and water at my friend's. After which I went home to seal up some things for you, where my friend was to call for me. When I saw him coming to my door between four and five, I had just wrung the affectionate hand of the man I most value, and committed to his care you and your dear little girl, and my dear sister, &c. &c. Love, honour, revenge, and all my various feelings would, in spite of myself, parch my tongue. As I took my hat out of my dressing-room, I filled a wine-glass of water, and drank half of it, to moisten my mouth. When I saw that glass again, about an hour ago, on returning to that home, which I never again thought to see, in order to write to her of whom I thought I had taken my last leave in this world—when I took that glass again into my hand, recollected my feelings on setting it down, and emptied the remainder of its contents, a libation of gratitude to the superintending Providence of Heaven, oh! M., no pen, not even yours, can paint my feelings!

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

Only remember, in all our future life, each fifth of February be ever sacred!

To MISS REAY,

March 2, 1778.

Your going out of town so suddenly has not served to mend my spirits. But I will be as merry as I can. Were I to be *very* miserable after my late miraculous adventure, I should be guilty of *sullenness* against Providence. The minute account I gave you of it last week, was, I assure you, dictated by my feelings before they had forgotten the affecting circumstances. Your observations are truly just and striking. Unpardonable as the affront which I had received appears to mortal eyes, I should not readily, I fear, have found an answer to the question of the enquiring angel, on entering the world of spirits "What brings you hither?"

Did I not tell you on Saturday the particulars of the poor fellow who suffered this day se'nnight for murdering Mrs. Knightly? They are singular. He was an Italian, I understand. Such a thing is not credible but of an Italian.

Mrs. Knightly's account was, that on the

The Love Letters

18th of January Ceppi came into her room (she being in bed), locked the door, sat himself in a chair, and told her he was come to do her business. She, not understanding this, asked him to let her get out of bed, which he did. He then took from his pocket two pistols. She went towards the door in order to get out, but he set his back against it. She, to appease him, told him he might stay to breakfast. He answered he would have none, but would give her a good one. She then called out to alarm the house, ran towards the bed, and said, "Pray do not shoot me!" and drew up close to the curtains. He followed, and discharged the pistol, after which he threw himself across the bed and fired the other pistol at himself, which did not take effect. During this a washerwoman ran upstairs, and with a poker broke the bottom panel of the door, through which Mrs. Knightly was drawn half naked, and Ceppi, following, ran downstairs, but was pursued and taken. In his defence, he said he had proposed honourable terms of marriage to her, but that she had refused and deserted him; that he was overcome with grief and love, and that his design was

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

not to hurt her, but to shoot himself in her presence.

It appears, I am afraid, from all the circumstances, that, whatever his despair meant with regard to his own life, he certainly was determined to take away hers. How unaccountably must Nature have formed him. Besides the criminality and brutality of the business, the folly of it strikes *me*. What! because the person, on whom I have fixed *my* affections, has robbed me of happiness by withdrawing *hers*, shall I let her add to the injury by depriving me of existence also in this world, and of everything in the next? In my opinion, to run the chance of being murdered by the new object of her affections or of murdering him, is as little reconcileable to common sense as to common religion. How much less so to commit complicated murder, which must cut off all hopes in other worlds.

Yet, could I believe (which I own I cannot, from the evidence in this case) that the idea of destroying her never struck him till his finger was at the trigger; that his only intention was to lay the breathless body of an injured lover at her feet—had this been

The Love Letters

the fact, however I might have condemned the deed, I certainly should have wept over the momentary phrenzy which committed it. But, as nothing appears to have past which could at all make him change his plan, I must (impossible as it seems) suppose him to have deliberately formed so diabolical a plan; and must rejoice that he was not of the same country, while I lament that he was of the same order of beings with myself.

* * * * *

If the favour I mentioned to you on Saturday be at all out of course, pray do not ask it. Yet the worthy veteran I want to serve has now and then seen things happen not altogether *in* course. When he called this morning to learn how I had succeeded, I observed to him, while we were talking, that he was bald. "Yes," said he, shaking his grey hairs, "it will happen so by people's continually stepping over one's head."

He little suspected the channel of my application, but he asked me this morning whether £50, if he could scrape it together, properly slid into Miss Reay's hand, might not forward his views. My answer was, that I had no acquaintance with the lady, but I

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

knew *for certain* that she had never in her life soiled her fingers with the smallest present of this sort.

Happy, blest, to know you, to love you, and be loved by you !

To MISS REAY.

HOCKERILL, *September 5, 1778.*

Here did I sit, more than two years ago, in this very room, perhaps in this very chair, thanking you for bliss, for paradise, all claim to which I soon after voluntarily resigned, because I hoped they would soon be mine by claims more just, if possible, than those of love. Two years—how have I borne existence all the while ! But delicacy and respect for you enjoined forbearance ; and Hope led me on from day to day, deceiving Time with distant prospects which I thought at hand. When will the tedious journey end ? When will my weary feet find rest ? When shall I sleep away my fatigues on the down-soft pillow of the bosom of love ? Should hope continue to deceive me, you never shall make me happy, till you make me your husband. Yet, as we sate upon the grass, under the trees near the water,

The Love Letters

just before you returned me my stick, because you thought the gentleman coming along the path by the mill was a certain person—yet, had I then loosened another button or two of my favourite habit which was already opened by the heat; had I then (you remember, my Laura, the conversation and the scene) forgotten my resolution, forgotten everything, and rioted in all your glowing charms, which only love like mine could withstand—who is he that would dare to blame me? Who would dare to say I had done what he would not have done? But the scene must be shifted. Sally Harris, you know, arrived only at the dignity of Pomona at Hockerill. Had my Martha her due, mankind at large would admit her double claim to the titles of Minerva and of Venus.

To sleep *here* is impossible. As well expect the miser to sleep in a place where he once hung in raptures over a hidden treasure which is now lost. This letter I have an opportunity to send to our old friend, for you, without taking it to town. Let me fill up the remainder of my paper with an almost incredible anecdote I learned from a gentle-

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

man who joined me on the road this morning and travelled some miles with me. It happened last week, I think. Peter Ceppi you remember. Surely that Providence which prevents the propagation of monsters, does not suffer such *monstrous* examples as these to propagate.

One Empson, a footman to Dr. Bell, having in vain courted for some time a servant belonging to Lord Spencer, at last caused the banns to be put up at church, without her consent, which she forbade. Being thus disappointed, he meditated revenge; and having got a person to write a letter to her, appointing a meeting, he contrived to waylay her, and surprise her in Lord Spencer's park. On her screaming, he discharged a pistol at her, and made his escape. The ball wounded her, but not mortally.

Oh love, love, canst thou not be content to make fools of thy slaves, to make them miserable, to make them what thou pleasest! Must thou also goad them on to crimes! Must thou also convert them into devils, hell-hounds!

The Love Letters

To MISS REAY.

CRAVEN STREET, *Jan.* 28, 1779.

The short note I wrote to you last night, immediately on my reaching town, you received. But why no answer to it? Why do you not say when we shall meet? I have ten thousand things to tell you. My situation in Norfolk is lovely. Exactly what you like. The parsonage-house may be made very comfortable at a trifling expense. How happily shall we spend our time there! How glad am I that I have taken orders, and what obligations have I to my dear B. to Mr. H. and Dr. V.! Now, my happiness can be deferred no longer. My character and profession are, now, additional weights in the scale. Oh, then, consent to marry me directly. The day I lead you to the altar will be the happiest day of my existence.

Thanks, a thousand thanks for your tender and affectionate letters while I was in Norfolk. Be assured Galli could mean nothing by what she said. She is our firm friend, I am persuaded. About an hour ago I called there; but she was out. Presently,

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

I shall go again with this, in the hope of hearing something about you.

Oh, Martha! every day I live I do but discover more and more how impossible it is for me to live without you.

Do not forget the 5th of next month. We *must* keep that day sacred together.

There seems to be a mistake in the date of this letter, as Hackman was not ordained deacon until Wednesday, February 24, 1779; he became a priest at a general ordination on the following Sunday, and received the living of Wiveton, in Norfolk, on March 1 of the same year, the day on which he wrote the last letter he ever sent to Miss Reay. Full of hope and happiness he looks forward to the new life that is before them, and he expresses his thankfulness for Signora Galli's kindness. But there is no doubt that this woman, whose conduct throughout was sinister, is morally responsible for the events that followed.

To MISS REAY.

March 1, 1779.

Though we meet to-morrow, I must write you two words to-night, just to say that I

The Love Letters

have all the hopes in the world that ten days at the utmost will complete the business. When that is done, your only objection is removed along with your debts ; and we may, surely, then be happy, and be so *soon*. In a month, or *six weeks at furthest*, from this time, I might certainly call you mine. Only remember that my *character*, now I have taken orders, makes expedition necessary. By to-night's post I shall write into Norfolk about the alterations at *our* parsonage. To-morrow ! Galli's friendship is more than I can ever return.

But Miss Reay, either out of consideration for the future welfare of her children, or because she found that she was no longer in love with Hackman, gave him to understand, through the agency of Signora Galli, that, after all, she could not consent to marry him. Hackman, almost crazy with disappointed love, wrote immediately to a friend in the country, who replied advising Hackman not to believe anything that Galli had said ; he also offered to come to town if he could be of any assistance. Hackman then wrote, in answer, the following letter.

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

March 20, 1779.

Your coming to town, my dear friend, will answer no end. Galli has been such a friend to me, it is not possible to doubt her information. What interest has she to serve? Certainly none. Look over the letters, with which I have so pestered you for these two years, about this business. Look at what I have written to you about Galli since I returned from Ireland. She can only mean *well* to me. Be not apprehensive. Your friend will take no step to disgrace himself. What I shall do I know not. Without her I do not think I can exist. Yet I will be, you shall see, *a man*, as well as a lover. Should there be a rival, and should he merit chastisement, I know you will be my friend. But I will have ocular proof of everything before I believe.

Yours ever.

A fortnight later Hackman wrote again to the same friend.

It signifies not. Your reasoning I admit. Despair goads me on. Death only can relieve me. By what I wrote yesterday you must see my resolution was taken. Often have I

The Love Letters

made use of my key to let myself into the Admiralty, that I might die at her feet. She gave it me as the key of love ; little did she think it would ever prove the key of death. But the loss of Lady Hinchinbrook keeps Lord Sandwich within.

My dear Charles, is it possible for me to doubt Galli's information ? Even *you* were staggered by the account I gave you of what passed between us in the Park. What then have I to do, who only lived when she loved me, but to cease to live now she ceases to love ? The propriety of suicide, its cowardice, its crime, I have nothing to do with them. All I pretend to prove or to disprove is my misery, and the possibility of my existing under it.

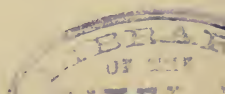
Till within this month, till Galli's information, I thought of self-murder as you think of it. Nothing now is left for me but to leap the world to come. If it be a crime, as I too much fear, and we are accountable for our passions, I must stand the trial and the punishment. My invention can paint no punishment equal to what I suffer here.

Think of those passions, my friend ; those passions of which you have so often, since I

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

knew Miss Reay, spoken to me and written to me. If you will not let me fly from my misery, will you not let me fly from my passions? They are a pack of bloodhounds which will inevitably tear me to pieces. My carelessness has suffered them to overtake me, and now there is no possibility, but this, of escaping them. The hand of Nature heaped upon every species of combustible in my bosom. The torch of love has set the heap on fire. I must perish in the flames. At first I might perhaps have extinguished them; now they rage too fiercely *If* they can be smothered, they can never be got under. Suppose they should consume any other person beside myself? And who is he, that will answer for passions such as mine? At present, I am innocent. . . .

Hackman dined the next day with Mr. Frederick Booth and his sister. He went afterwards to the Admiralty in the hope of catching a glimpse of Miss Reay, and, seeing Lord Sandwich's carriage standing there, he guessed that she was going out in it and would probably call on Signora Galli, who had rooms in the Haymarket. So he walked



The Love Letters

to the Cannon Coffee House, in order that he might see the carriage pass. Miss Reay soon drove up and he followed the carriage from the Haymarket to Covent Garden Theatre, where "Love in a Village" was being performed. The moment Miss Reay and Galli alighted, the handsome Lord Coleraine came forward to meet them, whereupon Hackman, mad with jealousy, decided to commit suicide. He went away and, having bought a brace of pistols (in case one should miss fire) he returned to the Opera House. Croker says: "The ladies sat in a front box, and three gentlemen, all connected with the Admiralty, occasionally paid their compliments to them. Mr. Hackman was sometimes in the lobby, sometimes in an upper side-box, and more than once at the Bedford Coffee House to take brandy-and-water, but still seemed unable to gain any information." When the opera was over, Miss Reay was standing in the vestibule waiting for the carriage to be announced, and it is related, in the "Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis," that "Mrs. Lewis happened to make some remark on a beautiful rose which Miss Reay wore in her bosom. Just as the words were uttered

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

the flower fell to the ground. The poor girl, who had been depressed in spirits before, was evidently affected by this incident, and said, in a slightly faltering voice, 'I trust I am not to consider this as an evil omen!'

Hackman, who was watching her, tried to push his way through the crowd, but was unable to do so, until Lord Sandwich's carriage being called, Miss Reay tried to get to the door. A Mr. Macnamara, of Lincoln's Inn, seeing the difficulty she was in, offered his arm to her and led her towards her carriage.

This seems to have added fresh fuel to the jealousy which was consuming Hackman, so forcing his way up to Miss Reay, he drew one pistol out of his pocket and shot her in the forehead, shooting himself with the other the instant after, and they fell together on the pavement. Hackman, to his infinite despair, found that he had not inflicted a mortal wound upon himself, so he beat his head frantically with the butt-end of the pistol as he lay upon the ground, crying out the while "Kill me! Kill me!" He was prevented from doing himself any further injury by Mr. Mahon, an apothecary, of Russell Street, and

The Love Letters

both he and his unfortunate victim were removed to the Shakespeare Tavern, where, a medical examination having been made, it was found that Miss Reay was dead. A letter to Mr. Booth, Hackman's brother-in-law, was found in one of his pockets, which shows that Hackman's original intention was to kill himself, and that the murder was only the result of a momentary impulse.

April 7, 1779.

MY DEAR FREDERICK,

When this reaches you I shall be no more, but do not let my unhappy fate distress you too much. I strove against it as long as possible, but it now overpowers me. You know where my affections were placed; my having by some means or other lost hers (an idea which I could not support) has driven me to madness. The world will condemn, but your heart will pity me. God bless you, my dear Frederick! Would I had a sum of money to leave you to convince you of my great regard. You were almost my only friend. I have hid one circumstance from you which gives me great pain. I owe Mr. W. of Gosport one hundred pounds, for which he has the writings

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

of my houses ; but I hope in God, when they are sold, and all other matters collected, there will be nearly enough to settle your account. May Almighty God bless you and *yours* with comfort and happiness, and may you ever be a stranger to the pangs I now feel ! May Heaven protect my beloved woman and forgive this act, which alone could relieve me from a world of misery I have long endured ! Oh, if it should be in your power to do her any act of friendship remember your faithful friend,

JAMES HACKMAN.

When Hackman had so far recovered as to be able to speak he inquired anxiously of Mr. Bond the surgeon as to the condition of Miss Reay. Being informed that she was dead he earnestly implored him to prevent her corpse being exposed to the gaze of the public.

The news of the tragedy was at once carried to the Admiralty, and Croker says that Lord Sandwich “ stood, as it were, petrified, till suddenly seizing a candle, he ran upstairs and threw himself on the bed, and in an agony exclaimed, ‘ Leave me for awhile to myself ; I could have borne anything but

The Love Letters

this.' The attendants remained for a considerable time at the top of the staircase, till his lordship rang the bell and ordered that they should all go to bed."

Sir John Fielding, the magistrate, was sent for, about three o'clock the next morning, from Brompton. He arrived two hours later, and finding that Hackman's wounds were not dangerous, he ordered the surgeon to take him to Tothill Fields prison. The corpse of Miss Reay was removed to an undertaker's in Leicester Square, and she was subsequently buried near her mother in the parish church of her native village, Elstree, in Hertfordshire, where, says Leigh Hunt, "she had been a lowly and happy child, running about with her blooming face, and little thinking what trouble it was to cost her."

On the following day there was an article in the *Morning Post* upon the tragedy, which contained a eulogistic reference to Miss Reay :

"There was scarce any polite art at which she was not an adept, nor any part of female literature with which she was not conversant. All the world are acquainted with the universal sweetness of her vocal powers ; but it

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

was the peculiar pleasure of a few only to know that her conversation, her feelings, and indeed her general deportment, all participated of an unparalleled delicacy which had characterised her through life."

Miss Reay's personality must have been singularly fascinating, as otherwise she could never have kept her hold upon her dissipated "protector" for so many years. Croker relates that Lord Sandwich after her death went away into the country, "but, after a great length of time, he was persuaded by our open-hearted friend, Admiral Walsingham, to meet a select party at his house. All passed off exceedingly well for a while, and his lordship appeared more cheerful than could have been expected ; but, after coffee, as Mr. and Mrs. Bates were present, something was mentioned about music, and one of the company requested that Mrs. Bates would favour them with "Shepherds, I have lost my love." This was unfortunately the very air that had been introduced by Miss Reay at Hinchinbrook and had been always called for by Lord Sandwich. Mr. Bates immediately endeavoured to prevent its being sung, and by his anxiety increased

The Love Letters

his distress; but it was too late to pause. Lord Sandwich struggled for a while to overcome his feelings, but they were so apparent that at last he went up to Mrs. Walsingham and in a very confused manner said he hoped she would excuse his not staying longer at that time, but that he had just recollected some pressing business which required his return to the Admiralty, and bowing to all the company, rather hastily left the room."

Unpopular as the Earl was, there was general sympathy felt for him as the following quatrain from the *Gentleman's Magazine* shows :

Britannia weeps, since S——'s heart can feel,
That heart long tempered of the hardest steel!
These tears most generous—we may all aver
To weep for him who never felt for her.

On the morning of April 8, Hackman wrote to his friend, the Rev. Charles Porter, of Clapham, to whom he afterwards entrusted these letters and the fragments of manuscript, which he wrote while in Newgate, asking him to bring him some poison.

TOTHILL FIELDS, *April 8, 1779.*

I am alive—and she is dead. I shot her
and not myself. Some of her blood and

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

brains is still upon my clothes. I do not ask you to speak to me. Only come hither, and bring me a little poison; such as is strong enough. Upon my knees, I beg, if your friendship for me ever was sincere, do, *do*, bring me some poison.

On Friday, April 9, at half-past nine in the morning, Mr. Hackman was brought up to Sir John Fielding's private office, by the governor of Tothill Fields prison. A contemporary account says that "the surgeons, constables, and witnesses attended, and were severally sworn to their depositions taken on Thursday last. Mr. Bond read over these depositions to the prisoner, who wept very much, and was quite convulsed each time the name of the deceased was mentioned. He did not attempt to palliate his offence; but said he eagerly wished to die. Upon the whole, it was impossible to behold him without pity, notwithstanding the enormity of his offence. He was committed to Newgate, and Sir John Fielding desired that a person might be set over the prisoner to prevent him destroying himself. Lord Essex and several other noblemen and

The Love Letters

gentlemen were present at the above examination."

The same day he wrote to Mr. Porter, who had refused, at first, to visit him.

April 9, 1779.

Your note just now, and the long letter I received at the same time, which should have found me the day before yesterday, have changed my resolution. The promise you desire, I most solemnly give you. I will make no attempt upon my life. Had I received your comfortable letter when you meant I should, I verily do not think this would have happened.

Pardon what I wrote to you about the poison. Indeed, I am too composed for any such thing now. Nothing should tempt me. My death is all the recompense I can make to the laws of my country. Dr. V. has sent me some excellent advice, and Mr. H. has refuted all my false arguments. Even such a being as I find friends.

Oh, that my feelings and his feeling would let me see my *dearest* friend. Then I would tell you how this happened.

Two days before his trial, he wrote again.

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

To THE SAME.

NEWGATE, April 14, 1779.

My best thanks for all your goodness since this day se'nnight. Oh, Charles, this is about the time. I cannot write.

* * * * *

My trial comes on either Friday or Saturday. It will be indeed a trial. God (whom I have so outraged) can alone tell how I shall go through it. My resolution is not fixed as yet about pleading guilty. The arguments by which they tell me I may escape that death which is so much my due, I certainly will not suffer to be used.

* * * * *

Whatever the world may think, you, I know, believe that I had no intention against her till the *very instant*. The account I wrote to you of the shocking business since it happened, was the real truth. All Tuesday, after I had finished my letter to you, I, in vain sought for an opportunity to destroy myself in her presence. So, again, on the Wednesday, all the morning. In the afternoon, after dining at poor Booth's, I saw Lord Sandwich's coach pass by the Cannon Coffee House, where I was watching for it. I followed it to Galli's

The Love Letters

(inhuman, and yet not guilty, Galli !) From her house I saw it; take them to the play. Now, I was determined ; and went to my lodgings for my pistols, where I wrote a letter to Booth which I put into my pocket, intending to send it ; but, as I forgot it, the letter was found there. When I returned to Covent Garden, I waited for the conclusion of the play, in the Bedford Coffee House. What a figure must I have been ! Indeed, I overheard one gentleman say to a friend, that I looked as if I was out of my senses. Oh, how I wished for the play to be over ! I had charged my pistols with the kindest letter she ever wrote me, a letter which made me the happiest of mortals, and which had ever since been my talisman. At last, arrived the end of the play, and the beginning of my tragedy. I met them in the stone passage, and had then got the pistol to my forehead, but she did not see me (nor did any one, I suppose). And the crowd separated us. This accident I considered as the immediate intervention of Providence. I put up my pistol, turned about, and should (I most firmly believe) have gone out the other way, and have laid aside my horrid resolution, had I not looked round and seen

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

Mr. Macnamara (whom I immediately construed into the favoured lover described by Galli) offer her a hand, which I thought was received with particular pleasure. The stream of my passions, which had been stopped, now overwhelmed me with redoubled violence. It hurried me after them. Jealousy suggested a new crime ; and nerved anew the arm of despair. I overtook them at the carriage, and—and, at about the time I am now writing this, felt more than all the tortures of all the damned together.

What shall I not feel at the necessary recital of the tragedy at my trial !

On Friday, April 16, Hackman's trial came on before Judge Blackstone, "for feloniously, wilfully, and with malice aforethought, shooting Miss Reay in the forehead." Mr. Fielding and Mr. Howarth prosecuted for the Crown ; Hackman was defended by Mr. Davenport. After all the witnesses had been heard, Judge Blackstone called upon Hackman to make his defence. In a nervous and affecting manner, which produced a painful impression on all present, he made the following speech :

The Love Letters

MY LORD,

I should not have troubled the Court with the examination of witnesses to support the charge against me, had I not thought that the pleading guilty to the indictment would give an indication of contemning death, not suitable to my present condition ; and would, in some measure, make me accessory to a second peril of my life. And I likewise thought that the justice of my country ought to be satisfied by suffering my offence to be proved, and the fact to be established by evidence.

I stand here the most wretched of human beings, and confess myself criminal in a high degree. I acknowledge *with shame and repentance* that my determination against my own life was formal and complete. I protest, with that regard to truth which becomes my situation, that the will to destroy her, who was ever dearer to me than life, was never mine until a momentary frenzy overcame me, and induced me to commit the deed I deplore. The letter which I meant for my brother-in-law, after my decease, will have its due weight, as to this point, with good men.

Before this dreadful act, I trust nothing will be found in the tenor of my life which

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

the common charity of mankind will not readily excuse. I have no wish to avoid the punishment which the laws of my country appoint for my crime ; but, being already too unhappy to feel a punishment in death, or a satisfaction in life, I submit myself to the disposal and judgment of Almighty God, and to the consequences of this enquiry into my conduct and intention.

Mr. Davenport urged Hackman's acquittal on a point of law—that of insanity, and also pleaded that the letter to Mr. Booth, which was found in Hackman's pocket, proved that it was not his previous intention to kill Miss Reay. Judge Blackstone, in the course of his summing-up, said that to constitute murder it was not necessary that there should be a long form of deliberation ; that the bare wilfully shooting at one man and killing another was wilful murder ; that it was also wilful murder if a man, in attempting to shoot himself, should kill another ; that the prisoner had rested his defence on the ground of insanity, but it was not every fit or start of passion that would justify the killing of another, but it must be the total loss of

The Love Letters

reason, and incapability of reason in every part of life. With regard to the letter found in the prisoner's pocket, his lordship said he was sorry to say that it argued a coolness and deliberation which in no way accorded with the ideas of insanity. On the whole, he left it to the jury to consider of the fact and not the point of law, adding that, if in discharge of their consciences, they were convinced that the prisoner was totally dispossessed of his reason and understanding, they would acquit; if not, they must find him guilty. The jury consulted for a few minutes, then brought in a verdict of guilty; and Baron Massieres, the Recorder's assistant, immediately pronounced sentence of death. Hackman behaved with perfect fortitude, and, bowing to the court and jury, retired. Lord Sandwich, who had great personal influence with George III., wrote to Hackman, that if he wished to live, "the man whom he has most injured will use all his interest to procure his life."

But Hackman replied that "the murderer of her whom he preferred, far preferred, to life, suspects the hand from which he has just received such an offer as he neither

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

desires nor deserves. His wishes are for death, not for life. One wish he has. Could he be pardoned in this world by the man he has most injured—oh, my Lord, when I meet her in another world, enable me to tell her (if departed spirits are ignorant of earthly things) that you forgive us both, that you will be a father to her dear infants !” J. H.

During the trial, Hackman's brother-in-law, Mr. Booth, who was too agitated to remain in court, waited outside until the verdict should be delivered. The officious Boswell was the first person to inform him that the death sentence had been passed upon his relative. “How did Hackman behave?” asked Booth, eagerly.

“As well, sir,” answered Boswell, with an echo of the Johnsonian pomposity in his words, “as you or any of his friends could wish ; with decency, propriety, and in such a manner as to interest every one present. He might have pleaded that he shot Miss Reay by accident, but he fairly told the truth, that in a moment of frenzy he did intend it.”

“Well,” said Booth, “I would rather have found him guilty with truth and honour, than escape by a mean evasion.”

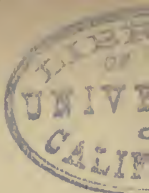
The Love Letters

“Which” (says the chronicler of the above conversation, the author of a pamphlet containing a full report of the trial) “was a sentiment truly noble, bursting from a heart rent with anguish !”

Boswell says, in his “Life of Johnson,” that “the Doctor was much interested by my account of what passed, and particularly with his prayer for the mercy of heaven. He said, in a solemn, fervid tone, ‘I hope he *shall* find mercy.’”

Horace Walpole wrote the same day to the Rev. Mr. Cole :

“I do not know whether our clergy are growing Mahometans or not : they certainly are not what they profess themselves ; but as you and I should not agree, perhaps, in assigning the same defects to them, I will not enter on a subject which I have promised you to drop. All I allude to now is the shocking murder of Miss Reay by a divine. In my own opinion we are growing more fit for Bedlam than for Mahomet’s paradise. The poor criminal, I am persuaded, is mad, and the misfortune is the law does not know how to define the shades of madness ; and



of Mr. H. and Miss R.

thus there are twenty out-pensioners of Bedlam, for one that is confined."

The Countess of Upper Ossory, in a letter to George Selwyn, mentions that Hackman and Miss Reay were the sole topic of the town. She adds that Hackman's behaviour during his trial was wonderfully touching.

The following disconnected papers, which were written by Hackman in the condemned cell, show that as the date of his execution grew nearer, he became resigned to his fate, and earnestly desired to die.



NEWGATE, Saturday Night.

April 17, 1779

MY DEAR CHARLES,

The clock has just struck eleven. All has, for some time, been quiet within this sad abode. Would that all were so within my sadder breast!

That gloominess of my favourite, Young's "Night Thoughts" which was always so congenial to my soul, would have been still heightened had he ever been wretched enough to hear St. Paul's clock thunder through the still ear of night in the con-

The Love Letters

demned walls of Newgate. The sound is truly solemn, it seems the sound of death.

Oh that it were death's sound! How greedily would my impatient ears devour it!

And yet, but one day more. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit, till then.

And then!

My God, my creator, my first father! Thou who madest me as I am, with these feelings, these passions, this heart! Thou who art all might, and all mercy! Well Thou knowest I did not, like too many of Thy creatures, persuade myself there was no God before I persuaded myself I had a right over my life. Oh, then, my Father, put me not eternally from Thy paternal presence! It is not punishments, nor pains, nor hell I fear: what man can bear, I can. My fear is to be deemed ungrateful to Thy goodness, to be thought unworthy of Thy presence, to be driven from the light of Thy countenance.

Well Thou knowest I could not brook the thoughts of wanting gratitude to things beneath me in Thy creation, to a dog, a horse, almost to things inanimate, a tree, a book, and thinkest Thou that I could bear the charge of want of gratitude to *Thee!*

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

And might, oh might I resign the joys of the other world, which neither eye can see, nor tongue can speak, nor imagination dream, for an eternal existence of love and bliss with her, whom——

Presumptuous murderer! The bliss you ask were paradise.

My Father who art in heaven, I bow before Thy mercy, and patiently abide my sentence.

These papers, which will be delivered to you after my death, my dear friend, are not letters. Nor know I what to call them. They will exhibit, however, the picture of a heart which has ever been yours more than any other man's.

NEWGATE, Sunday, *April 18, 1779.*

Four in the Morning.

O, Charles, Charles—torments, tortures! Hell, and worse than hell!

When I finished my last scrap of paper, I thought I felt myself composed, resigned. Indeed I was so—I am so now.

I threw my wearied body—wearied, Heaven knows, more than any labourer's, with the workings of my mind—upon the floor of my dungeon.

The Love Letters

Sleep came uncalled, but only came to make me more completely cursed.

The world was past, the next was come; but, after that, no other world. All was revealed to me. My eternal sentence of mental misery (from which there was no flight), of banishment from the presence of my Father, or more than poetry ever feigned or weakness feared, was past, irrevocably past.

Her verdict, too, of punishment was pronounced. Yes, Charles—she, she was punished—and by whose means punished?

Even in her angel mind were failings, which it is not wonderful I never saw, since Omniscience, it seemed, could hardly discern them. O, Charles, these foibles, so few, so undiscernible, were still, I thought in my dream, to be expiated. For my hand sent her to heaven before her time, with all her few foibles on her head.

Charles, I saw the expiation—these eyes beheld her undergo the heavenly punishment.

That past, she was called, I thought, to the reward of her ten thousand virtues.

Then, in very deed, began my hell, my

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

worse than woman ever dreamed of hell. Charles, I saw her, as plainly as I see the bars of my dungeon, through which the eye of day looks upon me now for almost the last time. Her face, her person were still more divine than when on earth—they were cast anew, in angel moulds. Her mind, too, I beheld as plainly as her face, and all its features. That was the same—that was not capable of alteration for the better.

But, what saw I else? That mind, that person, that face, that angel—was in the bosom of another angel. Between us was a gulf, a gulf impassible! I could not get to her, neither could she come to me.

Nor did she wish it. There was the curse.

Charles, she saw me, where I was, steeped to the lips in misery. She saw me; but without a tear, without one sigh.

One sigh from her, I thought, and I could have borne all my sufferings.

A sigh, a tear! She smiled at all my sufferings. Yes, she, even she, enjoyed the tortures, the wrackings of my soul. She bade her companion angel, too, enjoy them.

The Love Letters

She seemed to feast upon my griefs; and only turned away her more than damning eyes to turn them on her more than blest companion.

Flames and brimstone, corporeal sufferance, were paradise to such eternal mental hell as this.

Oh! how I rejoiced, how I wept, sobbed with joy, when I awoke, and discovered it was only a dream, and found myself *in the condemned cell of Newgate.*

* * * * *

Mr. H. and Dr. V., neither of whom you know, I believe, are exceedingly kind to me. The latter writes to me, the former sees me, continually. Your poor Hackman finds more friends than he merits.

NEWGATE, Sunday, *April* 18, 1779.

Five o'clock in the afternoon.

Since I wrote to you this morning I have more than once taken up my pen. For what can I do, that affords me more pleasure than writing to such a friend as you are, and have been, to me?

Pleasure! Alas! what business has such a

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

wretch as I with such a word as that? However, pouring myself out to you thus upon paper is, in some measure, drawing off my sorrows ; it is not thinking.

Cruel Galli ! And yet I can excuse her. She knew not of what materials I was made. Lord Sandwich wished to preserve a treasure which any one would have prized. Galli was employed to preserve the treasure. And she suspected not that my soul, my existence were wrapped up in it.

O, my dear Charles, that you could prevail upon yourself to visit this sad place ! And yet, our mutual feelings would render the visit useless. So it is better thus.

Now, perhaps, you are enjoying a comfortable and happy meal. There, again, my misfortunes ! Of happiness and comfort, for the present, I have robbed you. H. has murdered happiness.

But this is the hour of dinner. How many are now comfortable and happy? While I——

How many, again, with everything to make them otherwise, are at this moment miserable !

The meat is done too little, or too much.

The Love Letters

(Should the pen of fancy ever take the trouble to invent letters for me, I should not be suffered to write to you thus, because it would seem *unnatural*. Alas! they know not how gladly a wretch like me forgets himself). The servant, I say, has broken something—some friend (as the phrase is) does not make his promised appearance, and, consequently, is not eye-witness of the unnecessary dishes which the family pretends to be able to afford—or some *friend* (again) drops in unexpectedly, and surprises the family with no more dishes upon the table than are necessary.

Ye home-made wretches, ye ingenious inventors of ills, before ye suffer yourselves to be soured and made miserable, for the whole remainder of this Sunday, by some trifle or another, which does not deserve the name of accident, look here—behold, indeed, that misery of which your discontentedness complains!

Peep through the grate of this my only habitation, ye who have town-houses and country-houses. Look into my soul—recollect in how few hours I am to die, die in what manner, die for what offence!

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

I was obliged to lay down my pen. Such a picture as this, in which myself made the principal figure, was rather too much.

* * * * *

Good God! to look back over the dreadful interval between to-day and last October two years. What a tale would it make of woe! Take warning from me, my fellow creatures, and do not love like H.

Still SUNDAY. 7 o'clock.

When these loose, incoherent papers shall come into your hands, after my death, it will afford you some consolation to know my temper of mind at last.

Charles, as the awful moment approaches, I feel myself more and more and more composed, and calm and resigned.

It always, you know, was my opinion that man could bear a great load of affliction better than a small one. I thought so then—now I am sure of it. This day se'nnight, I was mad, perfectly mad. This afternoon I am all mildness.

This day se'nnight! To look back is death, is hell. It is almost worse than to look forward.

The Love Letters

But—is there not a God? Did not that God create me? Does not that God know my heart, my whole heart? Oh! yes, yes, yes!

To-morrow, then. And let to-morrow come. I am prepared. †

God (who knows my heart, and will judge me, I trust, by that heart) knows it is not with a view to diminish my own guilt, the magnitude and enormity whereof I acknowledge—but let those, who survive me, flatter themselves that all the guilt of mankind goes to the grave, to the gallows (gracious Heaven!) with H.

I shall leave behind me culprits *of the same kind as myself*—culprits who will not make my trifling atonement of an ignominious death. Oh, may they see their crimes, and weep over them before they are confronted with the injured parties at the footstool of the throne of the God of heaven!

These are crimes (as indeed are all the crimes of men, however noiseless or inaudible) with which the listening angel flies up to Heaven's chancery, but these are not they upon which the recording angel drops a tear as he notes them down. The pencil of eternity engraves such crimes as these on

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

adamantine tablets, which shall endure to the end of time. Mine, mine, perhaps may head the list.

Be merciful, O God! be merciful!

Reflection in this world is almost worst than the worst which offended Omnipotence can inflict upon me in the next. I must fly from it.

And are there not crimes as bad as mine? It is far from my intention to argue away the badness of my crime; but there surely are, and worse.

Let that gallant, gay, young gentleman yonder hold up his hand. Yes, sir; you I first arraign. Not for breach of friendship, not for false oaths to credulous virgins, not for innocence betrayed—these are no longer crimes; these are the accomplishments of our age. Sir, you are indicted for slow and deliberate murder. Put not on that confident air, that arrogant smile of contempt and defiance. Demand not with a sneer to have the witnesses produced, who were present when you struck the stroke of death. Call not aloud for the blood-stained dagger, the dry-drawn bowl, the brain-splashed pistol—are these the only instruments of death?

The Love Letters

You know they are not. Murder is never at a loss for weapons.

Sir, produce your wife. See, see! what indignation flashes in his eyes! A murderer, and the murderer of his wife! May the calumniator—— Sir, no imprecations, no oaths; those are what betrayed that wife. You did not plant a dagger in her breast; but you planted there grief, disease, death. She, sir, who gave you all, was destroyed, was murdered by your ill-usage. And not suddenly, not without giving her time to know what was to happen. She saw the lingering stroke, she perceived the impossibility to avoid it; she felt it tenfold from the hands of a much-loved husband.

* * * * *

Were these scraps of paper to be seen by any other eye than yours, common people would wonder that, in proportion as the moment drew nearer, I got further and further from myself. It may be contrary to the rules of critics, but so it is. To think, or to write about myself, is death, is hell. My feelings will not suffer me to date these different papers any more.

Let me pay a small tribute of praise. How

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

often have you and I complained of familiarity's blunting the edge of every sense on which she lays her hand? At her bidding, beauty fades even in the eye of love; and the son of pity smiles at sorrow's bleeding breast. In her presence, who is he that still continues to behold the scene of delight, or that still hears the voice of mourning? What, then, is the praise of that gaoler, who in the midst of misery, and crimes, and death, sets familiarity at defiance, and still preserves the feelings of a man? The author of the life of Savage gives celebrity to the Bristol gaoler, by whose humanity the latter part of that strange man's life was rendered more comfortable. Shall no one give celebrity to the present keeper of Newgate? Mr. Akerman marks every day of his existence by more than one such deed as this. Know, ye rich and powerful, ye who might save hundreds of your fellow creatures from starving by the sweepings of your tables—know that, among the various feelings of almost every wretch who quits Newgate for Tyburn, a concern neither last nor least is that which he feels upon leaving the gaol of which *this man* is the keeper.

The Love Letters

But I can now no longer fly from myself. In a few short hours, the hand which is now writing to you, the hand which——

I will not distress either you or myself. My life I owe to the laws of my country, and I will pay the debt. How I felt for poor Dodd! Well, you shall hear that I died like a man and a Christian. I cannot have a better trust than in the mercy of an all-just God. And, in your letters, when you shall these unhappy deeds relate, tell of me as I am. I forget the passage, it is in Othello.

You must suffer me to mention the tenderness and greatness of mind of my dear Booth. The last moments of my life cannot be better spent than in recording this complicated act of friendship and humanity. When we parted, a task too much for us both, he asked me if there was anything for which I wished to live. Upon his pressing me, I acknowledged I was uneasy, very uneasy, lest Lord Sandwich might withdraw an allowance of fifty pounds a year, which I knew he made to her father. "Then," said Booth, squeezing my hand, bursting into tears, and hurrying out of the room, "I will allow it him." The affectionate manner in which he spoke of my sister

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

would have charmed you. God for ever bless and prosper him ! And my sister and you !

While he was in Newgate he received, says the author of Hackman's "Case and Memoirs," many anonymous letters, one, as the handwriting showed, was from Galli, saying :

"O ! Mr. Hackman, for God's sake, die in the Roman Catholick faith !"

He also had a letter from a woman he did not know, saying that she had long privately loved him, but that her love was hopeless because she was poor, without beauty, and had nothing to boast of. The author of the "Case and Memoirs" goes on to say that Hackman also received many letters from "those superabundant good Christians called Methodists, who, negligent of themselves, affect the highest concern for the future welfare of others. . . . Bedlam is the place for such men to rave in, rather than the chamber of an invalid, or the apartments of a condemned prisoner."

Hackman spent the evening preceding his execution with his friend, Mr. Porter ; he went to bed at eleven, and slept for some

The Love Letters

hours. At five he arose, and after he was dressed, drank a "bason of tea" and remained in prayer until half-past seven. Mr. Porter and Mr. Vilette, the prison chaplain, then went to him, and led him to the chapel, where they remained until nine. By this time the sheriffs were waiting, and Hackman was taken to the press-yard, where a rope was fastened round his shoulders and under his arms. He was, however, spared the additional degradation of having a rope put round his neck, and his hands were not tied at the wrists. He was then brought out and put into a coach, and, accompanied by the two clergymen and a sheriff's officer, the dreary progress to Tyburn commenced. Owing to the enormous crowds that blocked the streets he did not arrive there until eleven o'clock. In a second coach were seated the Earl of Carlisle and Boswell—the latter, however, did not deem it expedient to mention this fact to Dr. Johnson. As soon as he was in the cart, which in those days took the place of a fixed platform, he spent some time in prayer, kneeling down with his face towards Paddington. His friends then took leave of him, and it is recorded that he behaved with

of Mr. H. and Miss R.

the utmost fortitude, although Mr. Porter was so moved by his emotions that he had to be supported. Hackman, desiring that he might drop his handkerchief as a signal when he was ready, kneeled down again, and, amid the silence and suspense of the largest crowd that had ever witnessed an execution at Tyburn, prayed for five minutes. When he dropped the handkerchief it fell underneath the cart, causing a delay of half a minute while the executioner and his assistants scrambled for it. Then the horses were whipped up, and James Hackman paid the last earthly penalty for the crime of having loved Martha Reay so passionately that he was irresistibly impelled to murder her. In his last moments he scribbled a few words in pencil to his friend, Mr. Porter :

“ Farewell for ever in this world ! I die a sincere Christian and penitent, and everything I hope that you can wish me. Would it prevent my example’s having any bad effect if the world should know how I abhor my former ideas of suicide, my crime will be the best judge. Of her fame I charge you to be careful. My poor sister will”

APPENDIX

THE following account of the life of Chatterton, which Croft prefaces with a few sentences in clumsy imitation of Hackman's style, is copied from a reprint of "Love and Madness," which was issued by an Ipswich bookseller in 1810. It is more connected and concise than the versions in the earlier editions.

The task you have set me about Chatterton is only a further proof of your regard for me. You know the warmth of my passions, and you think that if I do not employ myself they may flame out and consume me. Well, then, I will spend a morning or two in arranging what I have collected respecting the author of Rowley's poems. Every syllable you will read I assure you shall be *authentic*.

Did you start at "The author of Rowley's poems?" My mind does not now harbour a doubt that Chatterton wrote the

Appendix

whole, whatever I thought when we read them together at H. The internal evidence of the matter shall not puzzle you, but you shall tell me^s whether you do not think it easier for Chatterton to have imitated the style of Rowley's age (which he has not done exactly, if you believe those who think as I think), than for Rowley to write in a style which did not exist till so many ages after his time. To suppose him to have found half, and to have added to them, or to consider him as a cat's paw in the business to some contemporary Rowley, in order to extricate a fictitious Rowley from oblivion, would in my humble opinion be nonsense. For my own part, though he might find some old MSS., I cannot believe he found a syllable which he has attributed to Rowley. Who will engage to prove from internal evidence the antiquity of *any one* of Rowley's compositions? What he did find certainly suggested to him the idea of pretending to have found more; but how shall we persuade credulity to believe that all Rowley's poems were copied from old MSS., when the only MSS. produced in confirmation of the story are indisputably proved to be modern? Is

Appendix

any one fool enough to believe C. was the only blind, subterraneous channel through which these things were to emerge to day, and float for ever down the stream of fame? This (without mentioning other objections to such a ridiculous belief) were to suppose two people to determine on the same strange conduct, and two people (the real and the foster father) to keep with equal fidelity the same secret. And would the foster father have been as fond and careful of another's secret, as of the offspring of his own invention?

It is not clear to me that C.'s life (if such a scrap of existence can be called a life) does not exhibit circumstances still more extraordinary, if possible, than his being the author of Rowley's poems. But I possess not the abilities which Johnson displayed in his famous life of Savage, nor is this a formal life of Chatterton; though such a thing might well employ even the pen of Johnson. This is only an idle letter to my dear M. Oh, my M., you, who contributed so liberally last year to extricate from distress the abilities of a ——; what would you not have done for Chatterton!

Appendix

Thomas Chatterton, destined to puzzle at least, if not to impose upon, the ablest critics and antiquarians which the most polished age of England has produced, was born at Bristol, Nov. 20, 1752. His father had been master of the free school in Pile Street in that city, and was sexton of St. Mary Redcliffe Church. History condescends not to relate anything more of such an ignoble family, than that they had been sextons of the same church for near a century and a half.

It seems to have been determined by fortune that this poor lad—I ought rather to say this extraordinary human being—should have no obligation but to genius and himself. His father, as he was a schoolmaster, and reported to have been a tolerable poet for a sexton, might perhaps have given his son a free-school education, had he lived to see him old enough for instruction. The sexton died very soon after, if not before, the birth of his son ; who indisputably received no other education than what he picked up at a charity school at a place called St. Augustine's Back in Bristol. Reading, writing, and accounts, composed the whole circle of sciences which were

Appendix

taught at this university of our Bristol Shakespeare.

On July 1, 1767, he was articled clerk to an attorney of Bristol, whom I have not been able to find out. From him, I understand, has been procured a strange, mad MS. of Chatterton, which he called his *will*.

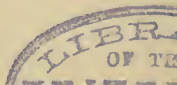
When the new bridge at Bristol was finished, there appeared, in Farly's *Bristol Journal*, an account of the ceremonies on opening the old bridge (the piece is prefixed to the volume of Chatterton's "Miscellanies"), preceded by these words: "To the Printer. Oct. 1, 1768. The following description of the 'fryars' first passing over the old bridge, taken from an old MS., may not at this time be unacceptable to the generality of your readers. Yours, Dunhelmus Bristoliensis." Curiosity at last traced the insertion of this curious memoir to Chatterton. To the threats of those who treated him (agreeably to his age and appearance) as a child, he returned nothing but haughtiness and a refusal to give any account. To milder usages and many promises, the boy, after some time, confessed that he had received that and other

Appendix

MSS. from his father, which he had found in an iron chest placed by William Canynge (the founder of the church of which C.'s family had so long been sextons) in a muni-ment room over the northern portico of St. Mary Redcliffe. Warton (in his history of English poetry) says when this appeared he was about seventeen. Days are more material in C.'s life than years in the lives of others. He wanted, you see, something of sixteen. One fact is curious, that, though it was not possible for him to have picked up Latin at a charity school where Latin was not taught, his note to the printer has, for no apparent reason, a Latin signature, Dunhelmus Bristolensis. This Latin certainly was not Rowley's. It must have been C.'s. The memoir procured C. the acquaintance of some gentlemen of Bristol, who, because they condescended to receive from him the compositions which he brought them, without giving him much, if anything, in return, fondly imagined themselves the patrons of genius. Mr. Catcott and Mr. Barrett, a pewterer and a surgeon, of his obligations to whom he speaks in his letters, were his principal, if not his only, patrons. To these

Appendix

gentlemen he produced, between October 1768 and April 1770 (besides many things which he confessed to be his own, and many which, in the interval, appeared in the *Town and Country Magazine*), all Rowley's poems, except the "Ballad of Charitie." Of these only two, I think, and those the shortest, he pretended to be the original MSS. The rest were transcripts, in his own hand, of some of which he acknowledged himself the author. Concerning these curiosities no distinct or satisfactory account, by friend or enemy, by threat or promise, could ever be drawn from him. For these curiosities how much he received from his Bristol patrons does not appear. His patrons do not boast of their generosity to him. They (Catcott at least) received no inconsiderable sum for Rowley's poems; nor has the sale of them turned out badly. In consequence of the money got by poems which Chatterton certainly brought to light, and which I firmly believe C. to have written, his mother acknowledges to have received the immense sum of five guineas, by the hands of Mr. Catcott; and Mr. Barrett, without fee or reward, cured the whitlowed



Appendix

finger of the sister. Talk no more of the neglect of genius in any age or country, when *in this age and country* Rowley's poems have produced such fortunes to the author and his family. Should I ever appear in print on this subject, I would publicly call upon the gentlemen concerned in this transaction to state their accounts.

Has not the world a right to know what Catcott fairly bought of Chatterton (he does not pretend to have bought all), and what was the fair purchase-money of these inestimable treasures? Let us know what the editors of Rowley's poems gave and received for them, and what the sale of them has produced? Is the son to be declared guilty of forgery? Are his forgeries to be converted into (I believe, no inconsiderable sums of) money? And is the mother and sister's share to be five guineas?

Either mean envy of C.'s extraordinary genius, or manly abhorrence of his detestable death, leads almost every person, who talks or writes about this boy, to tell you of his shocking profligacy and his total want of principle.

When C. left this world in August, 1770, he wanted as many months as intervene

Appendix

between August and November to complete his eighteenth year. If into so small a space he had contrived to crowd much profligacy and much want of principle, some perhaps may be ascribed to his youth, and to want of friends. Johnson, I remember, defends even the life of Savage, which differed from Chatterton's in more circumstances than its length, by some such observation as this: that the sons of affluence are improper judges of his conduct, and that few wise men will venture to affirm they should have lived better than Savage in Savage's situation. Do *profligate* and *unprincipled*, some of the tenderest epithets vouchsafed unto poor Chatterton, mean dishonest or undutiful, an unkind brother or an unfeeling child? The dullest enemies of his genius can produce no proofs of any such crime. Some of the papers that I shall send you will contain the fullest proof of the negative. Do they mean that, being a young man, he was addicted to women, like all youths of strong imaginations? Do the epithets mean that he exhibited those damnable proofs of his crimes which Bougainville exported into the country of Omiah? The proofs (if there were any,

Appendix

which his bedfellow at his first lodging in town denies) only show that he was unlucky. The crimes must be admitted. Do they mean that, writing to procure bread for himself, his mother, and his sister, he wrote on any side and on any subject which would afford bread?

Let me now make you acquainted with the indisputable history of this boy till he left Bristol. As he says, in his "Story of Canynge."

In all his sheepen gambols, and child's play,
At every merry-making, fair or wake,
I kenn a purpled light of wisdom's ray;
He ate down learning with the wastle cake,
As wise as any of the aldermen,
He'd wit enough to make a mayor at ten.

Beattie has hardly been able to invent a more striking picture of his minstrel than is exhibited of Chatterton in a letter written by his sister, last year, to a gentleman who desired her to recollect every circumstance concerning him, however trifling it might seem to her. The letter is lent to me, with many charges of care. Pray be careful of it. In transcribing it, you will naturally preserve the false spelling and stops. Let Chatterton's

Appendix

sister tell her own story in her own way. The anxiety shown in this letter to prove "he was a lover of truth from the earliest dawn of reason," is owing to what these two poor women (the mother and sister) have heard about deceit, imposter and *forgery*. For Chatterton's sake the English language should add another word to its dictionary; and should not suffer the same term to signify a crime for which a man suffers the most ignominious punishment, and the deception of ascribing a false antiquity of two or three centuries to compositions, for which the author's name deserves to live for ever. Suffer me to ask what the prudery of our critics would have said had the song to Ælla, or the chorus to Godwin, been produced by Mr. Warton's nephew, or by a relation of Mr. Walpole? Should we then have been stunned in this manner with repetitions of imposter and *forgery*? The sins of the *forgery* and the imposter would then have been boasted by the child's most distant relations, unto the third and fourth generations. Is lady A. L. accused of *forgery* for her "Auld Robin Gray?" Is Macpherson's name mentioned in the same sentence with this unfeeling word *forgery*, even by those

Appendix

who believe Macpherson and Ossian to be the same? "When a rich man speaketh," says the son of Sirach (you see I have not taken orders in vain), "every man holdeth his tongue: and lo! what he says is extolled to the clouds: but if a poor man speak, they say, 'What fellow is this?'"

A gentleman, who saw these two women last year, declares that, in his opinion, they might easily have been persuaded that injured justice demanded their lives at Tyburn, for being the mother and sister of him who was suspected to have *forged* the poems of Rowley. Such terror had the humanity of certain curious enquirers impressed upon their minds, by worrying them to declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about the *forgery*. Strange-fated Chatterton! Hadst thou possessed fewer and less eminent abilities, the world would now give thee credit for more and for greater.

With regard to the fact, the mother and sister, either believe, or pretend to believe, that all Rowley's poems came out of the old chest in the church. The case is, not one of the three knows anything of the matter. Most readily I admit that, if Chatterton be an

Appendix

impostor (*i.e.*, the wonderful human being I firmly believe him), he imposed upon every soul who knew him. This, with me, is one trait of his greatness.

It has been thought that murders and other crimes are pointed out to discovery by the finger of Providence. But "God's revenge against murder" is, in fact, only the sociableness of man's disposition. That we may have been wisely formed for this purpose, among others, I do not deny. But Tyburn would see fewer executions were man a less sociable animal. It is not good for him to be alone. Joy or sorrow, villainy or otherwise, *we must have society, we must communicate it.* Man, in spite of grammar, is a noun adjective. Does any one admire Junius for saying that his secret should die with him, and for keeping his word? But this was only saying he would not enlarge the circle of those to whom his secret was already known, for that he was, as he says, "the sole depositary of his own secret," I cannot think.

The original letters are clearly written in a female hand. But Junius is now known.

Let any man, at any time of life, make an experiment of not communicating to a single

Appendix

individual, during twelve months, a single scheme, a single prospect, a single circumstance respecting himself. Let him try how it is to lock up everything, trifling or serious, sad or merry, within his own solitary breast. There are easier tasks. This boy did it during his whole life.

Very few such men as John the Painter * have appeared in the world, from whom his secret was only stolen by the traitorous hand of friendship. No such human being as this boy, at any period of life, has ever been known, or possibly ever will be known. The Spartan lad was far inferior, and that was the effect of education. Psalmanazar and D'Eon are not to be compared with him. That, at his timid and sociable age, when other

* Do not smile at my lugging in John the Painter till you consider how it applies. His secrecy was wonderful, yet less wonderful than Chatterton's in exact proportion as his secret was more criminal and more nearly concerned his life. But you will not deny it to be *odd*, what I know for a fact, that among his papers were some observations on Rowley's poems. If they have not been destroyed, they might surely be published. They could not endanger our dockyards, though written by John the Painter. Cannot you give a hint of this kind, some day, at your house? Most probably *he* has them.

Appendix

children are almost afraid to be left alone, Chatterton should wrap his arms round him, stand aloof from the whole world, and never lean upon a single individual for society in his schemes (in schemes, too, neither odious nor criminal), is with me almost more wonderful than the schemes which I firmly believe him, without any assistance, to have planned and executed. It shall make a trait in the character of a general, if he have strength of mind enough not to communicate his plans to his first favourite, till the communication is no longer dangerous. Shall not a boy of eighteen, of seventeen, of *sixteen*, have merit for secrecy much more singular?

In one part of the sister's letter, you will not fail to recollect Dryden, who speaks of the alliance between understanding and madness. I am sure that "Love and Madness" are near relations.

"Conscious, of my own inability's to write to a man of letters. And reluctant to engage in the painful recollection of the particulars of the life of my poor deceased brother. Together with the ill-state of health I've enjoyed since it has been required of me, are

Appendix

Sir, the real causes of my not writing sooner. But I am invited to write as to a friend, inspired with the sacred name, I will forget the incorrectness of my epistle and proceed.

“My brother very early discover'd a thirst for preheminance, I remember before he was 5 years old he would always preside over his play mates as their master and they his hired servants He was dull in learning not knowing many letters at 4 years old, and always objected to read in a small book. He learnt the Alphabet from an old Folio musick book of father's my mother was then tearing up for waste paper, the capitals at the beginning of the verses. I assisted in teaching him. I recollect nothing remarkable till he went into the school, which was in his 8th year. Excepting his promising my mother and me a deal of finery when he grew up as a reward of her care. About his 10th year he began (with the trifle my mother allowed him for pocket money) to hire books from the circulating library and we were informed by the usher made rapid progress in arithmetick. Between his 11th and 12th year he wrote a caterlogue of the books he had read to the number of 70. History and

Appendix

divinity were the chief subjects, his school mates informed us he retired to read at the hours allotted for play. At 12 years old he was confirmed by the bishop, he made very sensible serious remarks on the awfullness of the ceremony and his own feelings and convictions during it. Soon after this in the week he was door-keeper he made some verses on the last day, I think about 18 lines, paraphrased the 9 chapter of Job and not long after some chapters in Isaiah. He had been gloomy from the time he began to learn, but we remark'd he was more cheerful after he began to write poetry. Some saterical peicis we saw soon after. His intimates in the school were but few and they solid lads and except the next neighbour's sons I know of none acquaintance he had out. He was 14 the 20th of Novr. and bound apprentice the 1st of July following. Soon after his apprenticeship he corresponded with one of his school mates that had been his bedfellow, and was I believe bound to a merchant at New York. He read a letter at home that he wrote to his friend, a collection of all the hard words in the English language, and requested him to answer it.

Appendix

He was a lover of truth from the earliest dawn of reason, and nothing would move him so much as being bely'd. When in the school we were informed by the usher, his master depended on his veracity on all occasions. Till this time he was remarkably indifferent to females, one day he was remarking to me the tendency sever study had to sour the temper and declared he had always seen all the sex with equal indifference but those that nature made dear, he thought of making an acquaintance with a girl in the neighbourhood, supposeing it might soften the austerity of temper study had ocationed, he wrote a poem to her and they commenced corrisponding acquaintance. About this time the parchments belonging to my father that was left of covering his boys books, my brother carried to the office. He would often speak in great raptures of the undoubted success of his plan for future life. He was introduced to Mr. Barret, Mr. Catcot, his ambition increas'd daily. His spirits was rather uneven. Some time so gloom'd that for many days together he would say very little and that by constraint. At other times exceeding chearfull. When in spirits he would

Appendix

injoy his rising fame. Confident of advancement he would promise my mother and me should be partakers of his success. Mr. Barret lent him many books on surgery and I believe he bought many more as I remember to have packt them up to send to him when in London and no demand was ever made for them. About this time he wrote several saterical poems. One in the papers of Mr. Catcot's putting the pewter plates in St. Nicholas tower. He began to be universally known among the young men. He had many cap acquaintance but I am confident but few intimates. At about 17, he became acquainted with Mr. Clayfield, distiller in Castle-street, who lent him many books on astronomy. Mr. Cator likewise assisted him with books on that subject, from thence he applyd himself to that study. His hours in the office was from 8 in the morning to 8 in the evening. He had little of his masters business to do. Sometimes not 2 hours in the day, which gave him an opportunity to pursue his genius. He boarded at Mr. Lambert's, but we saw him most evenings before 9 o'clock and would in general stay to the limits of his time which

Appendix

was 10 o'clock. He was seldom 2 evenings together without seeing us. I had almost forgotten to add, we had heard him frequently say that he found he studied best towards the full of the moon and would often sit up all night and write by moon light. A few months before he left Bristol he wrote letters to several booksellers in London I believe to learn if there was any probability of his getting an employment there but that I cannot affirm as the subject was a secret at home. He wrote one letter to Sir Horace Warpool, and except his correspondence with Miss Rumsey, the girl I before mentioned, I know of no other. He would frequently walk the college green with the young girls that stately paraded there to show their finery. But I really believe he was no debauchee (tho some have reported it). the dear unhappy boy had faults enough I saw with concern. he was proud and exceedingly impetuous but that of venality he could not be accused justly with. Mrs. Lambert informed me not 2 months before he left Bristol, he had never been once found out of the office in the stated hours as they frequently sent the footman and other servants

Appendix

there to see Nor but once stayd out till 11 o'clock; then he had leave, as we entertained some friends at our house at Christmas.

"Thus Sir have I given you, as before the great searcher of hearts the whole truth as far as my memory have been faithful the particulars of my dear brother. The task have been painfull, and for want of earlier recollection much have been nay the greatest part have been lost. My mother joins with me in best respects which conclude me.

" Sir,

" Your very humble servant,

" MARY NEWTON.

" BRISTOL, SOMERSETSHIRE SQUARE,

" *Sept. 22, 1778.*"

Chatterton remained in the attorney's office at Bristol till April 1770. The life he led there you may collect from Mrs. Newton's letter. In addition to that, she and her mother relate that his Sundays were generally spent in walking alone into the country round Bristol, as far as the day would allow his return before night. From these excursions he never failed to bring home

Appendix

with him drawings of churches, or of something which had struck him. That he had a turn of drawing you will see by the figure of a warrior (perhaps Ælla) presenting a church on his knee, which shall accompany this letter (and you are now a judge of drawing, you know). It was one of his first attempts.

But any single self-acquired accomplishment ceases to surprise, when we recollect his other acquisitions of heraldry, architecture, music, astronomy, surgery, &c. Our surprise has been long since called forth. Had Chatterton, without any instruction but reading, writing, and accounts, *before he was* 18, arrived at the ability of *only* putting together, in prose or in verse, something which was deemed worth insertion in the most worthless magazine, it would have been surprising. What master would not be astonished to discover such a talent in a servant (grown grey in the acquisition of it) who had only learnt to read and write? Stephen Duck, and others, have been lifted to independence, to wealth, for little more. The author of our existence can alone determine to what He has made his creatures equal.

Appendix

That Chatterton should acquire particular things, without instruction, is not singular, since it was with him a favourite maxim that man was equal to *anything*, and that *everything* might be acquired by diligence and abstinence. Was anything of this sort mentioned in his hearing? All boy as he was, he would only observe that the person in question merited praise; but that God had sent His creatures into the world with arms long enough to reach anything, if they would be at the trouble of extending them. This idea he could not but feel confirmed by what he knew of a Mr. Burgum (I think), Mr. Catcott's partner, who taught himself Latin and Greek.

How very strongly the idea, that a human being may accomplish anything, had taken possession of Chatterton. He desires his sister to improve herself in copying music, drawing, and *everything which requires genius*; as if genius were no less common to man and woman than a pair of eyes or a nose. He gave all his fellow-creatures credit for what he felt so plainly himself.

When Voltaire tells us, in his history of Charles XII., that on such a day he quitted

Appendix

Stockholm, *to which he never returned*, we are interested enough, even in such a savage, to feel something like concern. In April 1770 Chatterton quitted Bristol (from which place he never had before been absent further than he could walk in half a Sunday, and to which place *he never returned*), to try his fortune in London.

He lodged first at Shoreditch, afterwards (when his employment made it necessary for him to frequent public places, I suppose) in Brook Street, Holborn. The man and woman where he first lodged are still living in the same house. He is a plaisterer. They and their nephew, niece, and Mrs. Ballance, who lodged in the house, and desired them to let Chatterton (her relation) lodge there also. The little collected from them you shall have in their own words. But the life he led did not afford them any opportunities to observe him, could they have imagined that such a being was under the same roof with them, or that they would be asked for their observations upon him, after an interval of so many years. Mrs. Ballance says he was as proud as Lucifer. He very soon quarrelled with her for calling him "Cousin

Appendix

Tommy," and asked her if she ever heard of a poet's being called *Tommy*? But she assured him she knew nothing of poets, and only wished he would not set up for a gentleman. Upon her recommending it to him to get into some office, when he had been in town two or three weeks, he stormed about the room like a madman, and frightened her not a little by telling her, he hoped, with the blessing of God, very soon to be sent prisoner to the Tower, which would make his fortune. He would often look steadfastly in a person's face without speaking, or seeming to see the person, for a quarter of an hour or more, till it was quite frightful, during all which time (she supposes, from what she has since heard) that his thoughts *were gone about something else*. When Beckford died, he was perfectly frantic, and out of his mind, and said he was ruined. He frequently said he should settle the nation before he had done; but how could she think her poor cousin Tommy was so great a man as she now finds he was? His mother should have written word of his greatness, and then, to be sure, she would have humoured the gentleman accordingly. Mr. Walmsley saw nothing of

Appendix

him, but that there was something manly and pleasing about him, and that he did not dislike the wenches. Mrs. Walmsley's account is that she never saw any harm of him, that he never *mislisterd* her; but was always very civil whenever they met in the house by accident; that he would never suffer the room, in which he used to read and write, to be swept, because, he said, poets hated brooms; that she told him she did not anything that *poet folks* were good for, but to sit in a dirty cap and gown in a garret, and at last to be starved; that, during the nine weeks he was at her house, he never stayed out after the family hours, except once, when he did not come home all night, and had been, she heard, *poeting* a song about the streets. The night, Mrs. Ballance says, she knows he lodged at a relation's; Mr. Walmsley's house was shut up when he came home.

The niece says, for her part, she always took him more for a mad boy than anything else, he would have such flights and *vagaries*; that, but for his face, and her knowledge of his age, she should never have thought him a boy, he was so manly, *and so much himself*; that no women came after him, nor did she

Appendix

know of any connection ; but still that he was a sad rake, and terribly fond of women, and would sometimes be saucy to her ; that he ate what he chose to have with his relation (Mrs. B.) who lodged in the house, but he never touched meat, and drank only water and seemed to live on the air.

The niece adds that he was good-tempered, and agreeable, and obliging, but sadly proud and haughty ; nothing was too good for him, nor was anything too good for his grandmother, &c., at a time when she (the niece) knew he was almost in want ; that he used to sit up almost all night, reading and writing, and that her brother said he was afraid to lie with him ; for, to be sure, he was a *spirit*, and never slept ; for he never came to bed until it was morning, and then, for what he saw, never closed his eyes.

The nephew (Chatterton's bedfellow, during the first six weeks he lodged there) says, that, notwithstanding his pride and haughtiness, it was impossible to help liking him ; that he lived chiefly upon a bit of bread, or a tart, and some water, but he once or twice saw him take a sheep's tongue out of his pocket ; that Chatterton, to his knowledge, never

Appendix

slept while they lay together ; that he never came to bed until very late, sometimes three or four o'clock, and was always awake when he (the nephew) waked, and got up at the same time, about five or six ; that almost every morning the floor was covered with pieces of paper not so big as sixpences, into which he had torn what he had been writing before he came to bed. In short, they all agree that no one would have taken him, from his behaviour, &c., to have been a poor boy of seventeen, and a sexton's son : they never saw such another person before nor since—he appeared to have something wonderful about him. They say he gave no reason for quitting their house. They found the floor of his room covered with little pieces of paper, the remains of his *poeting*, as they term it.

And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy ;

Deep thought oft seem'd to fix his infant eye.

Dainties he heeded not, not gaude, nor toy,

Save one short pipe of rudest minstrelsy.

Silent, when glad ; affectionate, though shy :

And now his look was most demurely sad ;

And now he laugh'd aloud, yet none knew why.

The neighbours stared and sigh'd, yet bless'd the lad .

Some deem'd him wondrous wise, and some believ'd him mad

Appendix

Mrs. Angel, to whose house he removed from Shoreditch, I have in vain endeavoured repeatedly to find out. A person in distressed circumstances, as I understand her to be, is slow to believe that an inquiry after her hiding-place is only set on foot by the curiosity of honest enthusiasm. Little versed in the history of mankind, she cannot imagine how any one can be curious or concerned about a person, so many years after his death, for whom in his lifetime no one cared a farthing. Every stranger is to her imagination a bailiff in disguise. In every hasty tread she hears "the monster Bumbailiano, keeper of the dark and black cave." Poor hunted animal! If thou wert kind to Chatterton; if, by thy charitable means, his young hairs were brought down with somewhat less of sorrow to the grave, never may the monster lay his cruel paw upon thy shoulder!

Could Mrs. Angel be found, much might not be learnt from her short knowledge of Chatterton, for he remained nine weeks in Shoreditch—at least, not much more, perhaps, than has been gotten from Mrs. Walmsley and her family. Mrs. Wolfe, a barber's wife, within a few doors of the house in which

Appendix

Mrs. Angel lived, remembers him, and remembers his death. She speaks also of his proud and haughty spirit, and adds, that he appeared both to her and Mrs. Angel as if he were born for something great. Mrs. Angel told her, after his death, that, as she knew he had not eaten anything for two or three days, she begged he would take some dinner with her on the 24th of August; but he was offended at her expressions, which seemed to hint that he was in want, and assured her he was not hungry.

Ah! who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines
afar!

Ah! who can tell how many a soul sublime
Hath felt the influence of malignant star,
And wag'd with fortune an eternal war!
Check'd by the scoff of pride, and envy's frown,
And poverty's unconquerable bar,
In life's low vale remote hath pin'd alone,
Then dropt into the grave, unpitied and unknown!

Such was the short and incredible life of Thomas Chatterton. Over his death, for the sake of the world (he is out of the reach of our pity or concern), I would willingly draw a veil. But this must not be. They who are in a condition to patronise merit, and they


Appendix

who feel a consciousness of merit which is not patronised, may form their own resolutions from the catastrophe of his tale: those, to lose no opportunity of befriending genius; these, to seize every opportunity of befriending themselves; and, upon no account, to harbour the most distant idea of quitting the world, however it may be unworthy of them, lest despondency should at last deceive them into so unpardonable a step. Chatterton, as appears by the coroner's inquest, swallowed arsenic in water on the 24th of August, 1770, and died in consequence thereof the next day. He was buried in a shell in the burying-ground of Shoe-land workhouse. His taking such a rash and unjustifiable step is almost as strange as his fathering his poems upon Rowley. That he should have been driven to it by *absolute* want (though I do not say it was *not* so) is not very possible, since he never indulged himself in meat and drank nothing but water. The coroner has no minutes of the melancholy business, and is unable to recall any of the circumstances at this distance of time to his memory. The witnesses before the inquest, as appears by his memorandum, were Frederick Angel, Mary

Appendix

Foster, and William Hamsley, none of whom I have been able to find out. That his despair should fix on August, that it should not have staid at least till the gloomier months of winter, must surprise those who are sensible of the influence of such a climate as ours. Recollecting what Mrs. Newton says of the effect which the moon had upon her brother, I searched for the moon's changes in August 1770. Much cannot be presumed from them. The moon was at the full on the 6th, and in the last quarter the 14th. The 20th, at eleven at night, there was a new moon. The fatal day was the 24th. But who can bear to dwell upon, or argue about, the self-destruction of such a being as Chatterton? The motives for everything he did are past finding out.

His room, when it was broke open after his death, was found, like the room he quitted at Mrs. Walmsley's, covered with little scraps of paper. What a picture he would have made, with the fatal cup by his bedside, destroying plans of future *Ællas* and *Godwins*, and of unfinished books of *The Battle of Hastings*? M. I have had the (call it what you will) to spend half an hour in the



Appendix

room. It was half an hour of most exquisite sensations. My visit of devotion was paid in the morning, I remember; but I was not myself again all day. To look round the room; to say to myself, here stood his bed; there the poison was set; in that window he loitered for some hours before he retired to his last rest, envying the meanest passenger, and wishing he could exchange his own feelings and intellects for their manual powers and insensibility! Then, abhorrence of his death, abhorrence of the world, and I know not how many different and contradictory but all distracting ideas! Nothing should tempt me to undergo such another half-hour.

Bristol, stand forth! Too just are even these
rhymes

Without a trial to condemn thy crimes.

Come forward, answer to thy cursed name;

Stand, if thou dare, before the bar of fame.

Bristol, hold up thine hand, that damned hand

Which scatters misery over half the land,

The land of Genius!

We come now to the question of most difficulty, but of least consequence. What could induce Chatterton to lay such a plan? Was it the credit of imposing upon the world, which he was determined never to claim,

Appendix

since he never owned the imposition? My answer is, that I neither know nor care; and the conjectures of the *rustiest fellow* of the Antiquarian Society cannot give an answer much more to the purpose. Are the motives of men's and women's conduct so plain that he who runs may read them? How much less obvious are we to expect the motives of a boy's conduct? Chatterton, with some, with many things about him, superior to most, to all men, was still but a boy. Though he did see seventeen before his death, he must have been *literally* a boy when he laid the foundation of his plans. If Macpherson and Ossian be the same, if Chatterton thought them to be the same, Chatterton is an original in poetry only, not in suppositiousness. Good men are satisfied with the applause of their own consciences, and scatter charity with the invisible hand of bounty. May not great men be formed in the same mould? May not obscurity appear to enlarge an ideal as well as a real object? God would, perhaps, be something less of God were He visible. But, as I said, I neither know nor care what was Chatterton's motive.

Appendix

Am I still asked for it? Like many a man in conversation, I will get off by telling a story. D'Alembert, in his pamphlet upon the destruction of the Jesuits, relates that one of the Order, who had spent twenty years upon a mission in Canada, did not believe even the existence of a God. Notwithstanding this, he had, numerous times run the hazard of his life in defence of that religion which he preached with success among the savages. To a friend, who expressed surprise at the warmth of his zeal, the missionary observed: "Ah, you have no idea of the pleasure there is in having 20,000 men to listen to you, and in persuading them what you do not believe yourself."

By what was the scheme suggested to Chatterton's invention? This question, it is, perhaps, still more impossible to answer, nor do I pretend to answer it. If you can ground any conjecture on a few facts I will mention, so: Psalmanazar died about the time Chatterton's scheme was born, and bequeathed his methodistical memoirs to the world. Walpole, about the same time, endeavoured to turn a whole national current of belief with respect to Richard III., and

Appendix

not long before, acknowledged the imposition he had put upon the public in the preface to "Otranto." The Douglas cause was, about the same time, in high agitation. Ossian, with Blair's dissertation, in which the name of *Ælla* is mentioned, had not long made its appearance. "The Concubine," in Spenser's manner, appeared in 1767. Percy's "Reliques" had not long been published. Page xxiv. of the first volume (second edition, 1767), mention is made of "Colgrin, son of that *Ælla* who was elected King of the Saxons in the room of Hengist." Chatterton must have admired "Hardyknute" (vol. ii. p. 94), which Mrs. Wardlaw *pretended* to have found on "shreds of paper employed for what is called the bottoms of clues," and must have seen through the *pretended* extract of a letter from *Canton* to James Carland, Esq., at the end of the third volume, which vouches for the *truth* of Percy's *Hau Kiou Choaau*, there advertised as *translated from the Chinese*. On the 21st of January, 1769, the *invisible* Junius printed his first letter. In May 1769, Mrs. Montague published her Essay on Shakespeare, from which it is not impossible

Appendix

that Chatterton's *tindery* ambition might catch the fire of rivalry. Farrer's Essay on the learning of Shakespeare had appeared about a twelvemonth. In the wonderful extent of his reading, Chatterton could not be ignorant of Parnell's imposition on Pope, by means of a pretended Leonine translation of some of his lines in the Rape of the Lock, or of Parnell's Fairy Tale, *in the Ancient English style*. Better memories may, perhaps, recollect other things of this kind. That Chatterton had Walpole and Ossian in some measure present to his mind, is manifest from his fixing upon the same person (Mr W.) to introduce Rowley to the world, whom Macpherson chose for Ossian. And, surely, to prove Earl Godwin a good man and true, in spite of history, is much such an attempt as Mr. Walpole's concerning Richard. The first stanza of Canynge's prologue to Godwin, is little more than a versification of the ingenious supposition in the article *Godwin*, in the "Biographia Britannica," and is rather the language of our *distant* age, than of a man writing *three hundred years nearer* Godwin, who was not then *ungently* treated in *so many* histories as now.

Appendix

Whilomme, by pensmen, much ungentle name
Has upon Godwin Earl of Kent been laid,
Thereby bereaving him of faith and fame.
The unforgiving clergymen have said,
That he was known to no holy wurche,
But this was all his fault, he gifted not the church.

It may be said that hardly one of the schemes which I have mentioned succeeded. Let me, in my turn, tell what Fontenelle, in his "Dialogues," puts into the mouth of the Russian Pretender. When he is asked how he dared to assert a claim, for which two or three impostors had suffered the cruellest death, he answers, it was upon that very circumstance he grounded the probability of passing for a true man and no impostor.

Of the impossibility to prove imitation I am well aware. But for intentional imitation I do not here contend. The originality of his sublime genius would not have stooped from its height to imitate any man that ever existed. By the nature of his plan, the folding-doors of imitation were effectually shut against Chatterton. His hands were tied up from picking and stealing. What other poet, ancient or modern, except Homer (and even Homer had his ancients, perhaps), can produce an octavo volume, in the whole

Appendix

course of which, after a search of some years, the best and oldest heads are not able to detect him with certainty more than six or eight times? And those coincidences must of course have been the effect more of memory than design.

If Chatterton did endeavour to catch the public by other baits besides genius who can blame him?

Ill-fated Chatterton! Why didst thou not attend to *Orestes* "On the Poverty of Authors"? (*Town and Country Magazine*, Aug. 1769, p. 399.) How couldst thou imagine that even thy parts would prevent thy adding one to his long but faithful list of the starved children of genius? Could thy penetrating sight discover no truth in his borrowed observation, that "We more readily assist the lame and the blind than a poor man of genius; for every one is sensibly affected with the apprehension of blindness or lameness; but who is in the least dread of the accidents which attend on genius?"

Here let me stop a moment to rescue the world from blame it does not merit. The world is not accountable for the death of

Appendix

every man of abilities who has perished, however miserably, in an alehouse, or a prison. Profligacy and genius, ability and prodigality, are not, as many imagine, the same things. But genius too often thinks it necessary to be profligate, and profligacy often demands to pass for genius. To behold genius confined in a prison, or skulking in an alehouse, and not to lend relief, were infamous, provided the spectator could be sure he was lending *effectual relief*. But if to rescue from one prison, be only to give an opportunity to visit another—whose humanity is sturdy enough to bear such insults even from a friend or from a child? Churchill reproached the world with suffering Lloyd to pine in the Fleet, and Johnson has moistened many an eye with the sufferings of Savage. But the world, if it be ever accountable, is only accountable for the death of such a being as Chatterton, who (let his enemies or enviers persist, as they choose, in asserting what they cannot prove) was not extravagant, was not profligate, was not unprincipled. All his profligacy consisted in quitting the attorney's office, and penning *Ælla*—"when he should have engrossed." His only extravagance was

Appendix

lavishing unnecessary presents upon his grandmother, mother, and sister, a few shillings, the earnings of his genius, which might otherwise, perhaps, have saved him from starving. Unprinciples belongs to those who accuse him of crimes without a shadow of proof.

One other question remains to be answered. It may be asked why Chatterton's own "Miscellanies" are inferior to Rowley? Let me ask another question. *Are* they inferior? Genius, abilities, application, we *may* bring into the world with us; these rare ingredients *may* be mixed up in our compositions by the hand of Nature; but Nature herself cannot create a human being possest of a complete knowledge of the world almost the moment he is born into it. Is the knowledge of the world, which his "Miscellanies" contain, no proof of his astonishing quickness in seizing everything he chose? Is it remembered when, and at what age, Chatterton for the first time quitted Bristol, and how few weeks he lived afterwards? Chatterton's "Letters" and "Miscellanies" exhibit an insight into men, manners, and things, for the want of which in their writings, authors who have died

Appendix

old men, with more opportunities to know the world (who could have fewer than Chatterton ?) have been thought to make amends by other merits.

Again, in his own character, he painted for booksellers and bread ; in Rowley's, for fame and eternity. Why are a boy's *tasks* at school inferior to what he writes for his amusement ? Then it is not impossible that he might designedly underwrite himself. He certainly did when he wrote "Ladgate's answer to the Song of Ælla." After all, he was no modern ; the boy was born an ancient ; and he knew mankind well enough to see that, in the present age, there was a greater facility of emergence from obscurity to fame, through the channel of curiosity, for a monk of the fifteenth century than for a sexton's son of the eighteenth. Shame upon that age, which still persists in bearing testimony to his knowledge of it !

With regard to Chatterton's face and person, all agree that he was a manly, good-looking boy, that there was something about him which instantaneously prepossessed you in his favour. Mr. Barrett and Mr. Catcott, as well as all who remember him, speak

Appendix

particularly of his eye. Catcott says he could never look at it long enough to see what sort of an eye it was ; but it seemed to be a kind of hawk's eye, he thinks ; you could see his soul through it. Mr. Barrett says he took particular notice of his eyes from the nature of his profession. He never saw such. One was still more remarkable than the other. You might see the fire roll at the bottom of them, as you sometimes do in a black eye, but never in grey ones, which his were. Mr. Barrett adds, that he used often to send for him from the charity school (which is close to his house) and differ from him in opinion on purpose to make him earnest, and to see how wonderfully his eye would strike fire, kindle, and blaze up.

So ends what I have to say about Chatterton, when I shall have just observed that his *innocent* imposition on the world is exactly the story of M. Angelo's buried statue of Cupid ; and, finally, that Miss More is oftener boasted of by Bristol, and has acquired more fame and wealth for an "Ode to Garrick's Dog" than Chatterton for all Rowley's poems. Prefix to this letter, if you please, the *comforting* discovery of Lord

Appendix

Shaftesbury in his "Characteristics," that "an ingenious man never starves unknown." Such a being as Chatterton should not have been suffered to starve at all. But *comfort* like this is to be expected from "Knights and Barons."

Bards may be Lords, but 'tis not in the cards,
Play as you will, to turn Lords into Bards.

The employment has been of the service to me that you meant it should. In some measure I have forgotten myself, and, as much as it was possible, forgotten my M. during the hours I have spent upon this business. If the story be not told as regularly as it might, the situation of my mind with regard to you must be my excuse. Besides, were I cold enough to tell such a tale as Chatterton's with as much regularity as I put a common occurrence upon paper I should despise myself. All I shall further add is, that I do not hold out Chatterton as the first character in the world. An army of Macedonian and Swedish butchers, indeed, fly before him; nor does my memory supply me with any human being who, at such an age, with such disadvantages, has produced such

Appendix

compositions. Under the heathen mythology superstition and admiration would have explained all by bringing Apollo upon earth. Nor would the god ever have descended with more credit to himself. But, after all, the world is only indebted to Chatterton for a few inimitable poems. If barbarity and fanaticism be suffered to destroy mankind, genius will write in vain, when there is none to read. To preserve our fellow-creatures is still a greater praise than to instruct or amuse them. Perhaps, all circumstances considered, the first character that ever existed was Bartholomew las Casas.

Let me conclude these tedious sheets of paper with a most capital subject for a painter, from Chatterton's *tournament*, which you may add to the subjects I have before suggested to you. It will surprise you to find how *very* modern it is. The advocates to Rowley must explain this to you, if they can, and if Rowley has still any advocates; for I do assure you, as you will find by turning to the poem, that I have only altered *four* words, and those *only* by changing them for Chatterton's words of explanation in his notes to the poem.

Appendix

When battle, steaming with new-quicken'd gore,
 Bending with spoils and bloody dropping head,
Did the dark wood of ease and rest explore,
 Seeking to lie on pleasure's downy bed—
Pleasure, dancing from her wood,
 Wreath'd with flowers of eglantine,
From his visage wash'd the blood,
 Hid his sword and gaberdine.

The manner in which you account for the self-destruction of that most wonderful boy, Chatterton, is physical, I assure you, as well as sensible. Tissot, in his "Essay on the Diseases Incident to Literary Persons," starts some ideas very much like yours, only they are wrapped up in harder words. You shall see :

"When the mind, long time occupied, has forcibly impressed an action upon the brain, she is unable to repress that forcible action. The shock continues after its cause; and, re-acting upon the mind, makes it experience ideas which are truly delirious: for they no longer answer to the external impressions of objects, but to the internal disposition of the brain, some parts of which are now become incapable to receive new movements transmitted to it by the senses."

Appendix

“The brain of Pascal was so vitiated by passing his life in the laborious exercises of study, thought, and imagination, that certain fibres, agitated by incessant motion, made him perpetually feel a sensation which seemed to be excited by a gulph of fire situated on one side of him ; and his reason, overpowered by the disorder of his nerves, could never banish the idea of this fiery abyss. Spinello painted the fall of the rebel angels, and gave so fierce a countenance to Lucifer, that he was struck with horror himself ; and during the remainder of his life, his imagination was continually haunted by the figure of that dæmon, upbraiding him with having made his portrait so hideous. Gasper Barlæis, the orator, poet, and physician, was not ignorant of these dangers. He warned his friend Hughens against them : but, blind with regard to himself, by immoderate studies he so weakened his brain, that he thought his body was made of butter, and carefully shunned the fire, lest it should melt him ; till at last, worn out with his continual fears, he leapt into a well. Peter Jurieu, so famous in theological dispute, and for his “ Commentary on the Apocalypse,” disordered his brain

Appendix

in such a manner that, though he thought like a man of sense in other respects, he was firmly persuaded his frequent fits of the cholic were occasioned by a constant engagement between seven horsemen, who were shut up in his belly. There have been many instances of literature persons who thought themselves metamorphosed into lanterns; and who complained of having lost their thighs."

No one can deny that Chatterton must have gone through as much wear and tear of the imagination as any person whom Tissot mentions. But I would give a good deal, were it possible for me never again to think about Chatterton, or about his death, as long as I live, for I never do without being miserable.

What you let fall about the propensity of the English to suicide, is not true; though a very popular idea. And yet I will relate to you, in the words of another person, an instance of English suicide much more cool and deliberate than any you ever heard, I daresay. It is a fact, and happened in 1732.

Richard Smith, a bookbinder, and prisoner

Appendix

for debt within the liberties of the King's Bench, persuaded his wife to follow his example, in making away with herself, after they had murdered their little infant. This wretched pair were, in the month of April, found hanging in their bedchamber at about a yard's distance from each other ; and in a separate apartment the child lay dead in a cradle. They left two papers inclosed in a short letter to their landlord, whose kindness they implored in favour of their dog and cat. They even left money to the porter, who should carry the inclosed papers to the person to whom they were addressed. In one of these the husband thanked that person for the marks of friendship he had received at his hands ; and complained of the ill-offices he had undergone from a different quarter. The other papers, subscribed by the husband and wife, contained the reasons which induced them to act such a tragedy on themselves and their offspring. This letter was altogether surprising for the calm resolution, the good humour, and the propriety, with which it was written. They declared that they withdrew themselves from poverty and rags ; evils that, through a train of unlucky accidents, were

Appendix

become inevitable. They appealed to their neighbours for the industry with which they had endeavoured to earn a livelihood. They justified the murder of their child by saying, it was less cruelty to take her with them, than to leave her friendless in the world, exposed to ignorance and misery. They professed their belief and confidence in an Almighty God, the fountain of goodness and beneficence, who could not possibly take delight in the misery of His creatures : they therefore, resigned up their lives to Him without any terrible apprehensions ; submitting themselves to those ways, which, in His goodness, He should appoint after death. These unfortunate suicides had been always industrious and frugal, invincibly honest, and remarkable for conjugal affection.

This tragedy I have shown you, because I think France, lively France, in whose language suicide is an *Anglicism*, can supply me with an anecdote as authentic of something still more cool and more deliberate, since the motives to the crime (to which no motive can be sufficiently strong) were so much weaker.

Appendix

On the day before Christmas Day, 1773, about eleven o'clock, two soldiers came to the Cross-Bow Inn, at St. Dennis, and ordered a dinner. Bordeaux, one of the soldiers, went out and bought a little paper of powder and a couple of bullets, observing to the person who sold them to him, that as St. Dennis seemed to be so pleasant a place, he should not dislike to spend the remainder of his life there. Returning to the inn, he and his companion passed the day together very merrily. On Christmas Day they again dined as merrily, ordered wine, and about five o'clock in the afternoon were found at the fire, on breaking open the door, sitting on the opposite sides of a table, whereon were three empty champaign bottles, the following will and letter, and a half-crown. They were both shot through the head; two pistols lay upon the floor. The noise of the pistols brought up the people of the house, who immediately sent for M. de Rouilleres, the Commandent of the *Maréchaussée* at St. Dennis.

The will I translated myself from a formal copy, which was taken for a friend of mine at St. Dennis in 1774.

Appendix

THE WILL.

A man, who knows he is to die, should take care to do everything which his survivors can wish him to have done. We are more particularly in that situation. Our intention is to prevent uneasiness to our host, as well as to lighten the labours of those whom curiosity, under pretence of form and order, will bring hither to pay us visits.

Humain is the bigger, and I, Bourdeaux, am the lesser of the two.

He is drum-major of *mestre de camp des dragons*, and I am simply a dragoon of Belzunce.

Death is a passage I address to the gentleman of the law of St. Dennis (who, with his first clerk as assistant, must come hither for the sake of justice) the principle; which, joined to the reflexion that everything must have an end, put these pistols into our hands. The future presents nothing to us but what is agreeable. Yet that future is short and must end.

Humain is but twenty-four years of age; as for me, I have not yet completed four lustres. No particular reason forces us to interrupt our career, except the disgust we

Appendix

feel at existing for a moment under the continual apprehension of ceasing to exist. An eternity is the point of re-union ; a longing-after which leads us to prevent the despotic act of fate. In fine, disgust of life is our sole inducement to quit it.

If all those who are wretched would dare to divest themselves of prejudice, and to look their destruction in the face, they would see it is as easy to lay aside existence as to throw off an old coat, the colour of which displeases. The proof of this may be referred to our experience.

We have enjoyed every gratification in life, even that of obliging our fellow-creatures. We could still procure to ourselves gratifications : but all gratifications must have a period. That period is our poison. We are disgusted at the perpetual sameness of the scene. The curtain is dropped : and we leave our parts to those who are weak enough to feel an inclination to play them a few hours longer.

Two or three grains of powder will soon break the springs of this moving mass of flesh, which our haughty fellow-creatures stile the King of Beings.

Appendix

Messrs. the officers of justice, our carcasses are at your discretion ! We despise them too much to give ourselves any trouble about about what becomes of them.

As to what we shall leave behind, for myself, Bordeaux, I give to M. de Rouilleres, commandant of the *maréchaussée* at St. Dennis, my steel-mounted sword. He will recollect, that, last year, about this very day, as he was conducting a recruit, he had the civility to grant me a favour for a person of the name of St. Germain, who had offended him.

The maid of the inn will take my pocket and neck handkerchiefs, as well as the silk stockings which I now have on, and all my other linen.

The rest of our effects will be sufficient to pay the expense of the useless law proceedings of which we shall be the subject.

The half crown upon the table will pay for the last bottle of wine which we are going to drink.

BOURDEAUX.
HUMAIN.

At St. DENNIS, *Christmas Day*, 1773.

Appendix

Of the following letter from Bordeaux to his lieutenant in the regiment of Belzunce, I have not seen the French ; I cannot therefore answer for the translation, which does not appear to have been done carefully. Another friend supplied me with it. You shall have it as I had it from him.

“SIR,

“During my residence at Guise, you honoured me with your friendship. It is time that I thank you. You have often told me I appeared displeased with my situation. It was sincere, but not absolutely true. I have since examined myself more seriously, and acknowledge myself entirely disgusted with every state of man, the whole world, and myself. From these discoveries a consequence should be drawn : if disgusted with the whole, renounce the whole. The calculation is not long. I have made it without the aid of geometry. In short, I am on the point of putting an end to the existence that I have possessed for nearly twenty years, fifteen of which it has been a burden to me ; and, from the moment that I write, a few grains of powder will destroy this moving

Appendix

mass of flesh, which we vain mortals call the King of Beings.

“I owe no one an excuse. I deserted, that was a crime; but I am going to punish it; and the law will be satisfied.

“I asked leave of absence from my superiors, to have the pleasure of dying at my ease. They never condescended to give me an answer. This served to hasten my end.

“I wrote to Bord to send you some detached pieces I left at Guise, which I beg you to accept. You will find they contain some well-chosen literature. These pieces will solicit for me a place in your remembrance.

“Adieu, my dear lieutenant; continue your esteem for St. Lambert and Dorat. As for the rest, skip from flower to flower, and acquire the sweets of all knowledge, and enjoy overy pleasure.

“ Pour moi, j'arrivé au trou
Qui n'échappe ni sage ni fou,
Pour aller je ne scais où.”

“If we exist after this life, and it is forbidden to quit it without permission, I will endeavour to procure one moment to inform you of it; if not, I should advise all those who are unhappy, which is by far the greatest part of mankind, to follow my example.

Appendix

“When you receive this letter, I shall have been dead at least twenty-four hours.

“With esteem, &c.,

“BOURDEAUX.”

Is there any thing like this in English story? *If we exist after this life.* Ah, my brave Bourdeaux, that is the question; and a question which even you could not answer in the *negative*.

. . . . There's the retrospect
That makes calamity of so long life,
For who would bear the whips and scorns o'
th' time,
The pangs of despised love,

(Which I could never bear.)

. . . . The law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
Which patient merit of th' unworthy takes?
But that the dread of something after death
Puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of.

The pains these two poor fellows took (or rather Bourdeaux, for he seems to have been the principal) to prevent any trouble or uneasiness to their survivors, lead me to reflect how very uniformly the contrary is the conduct of suicides with us. One would some-

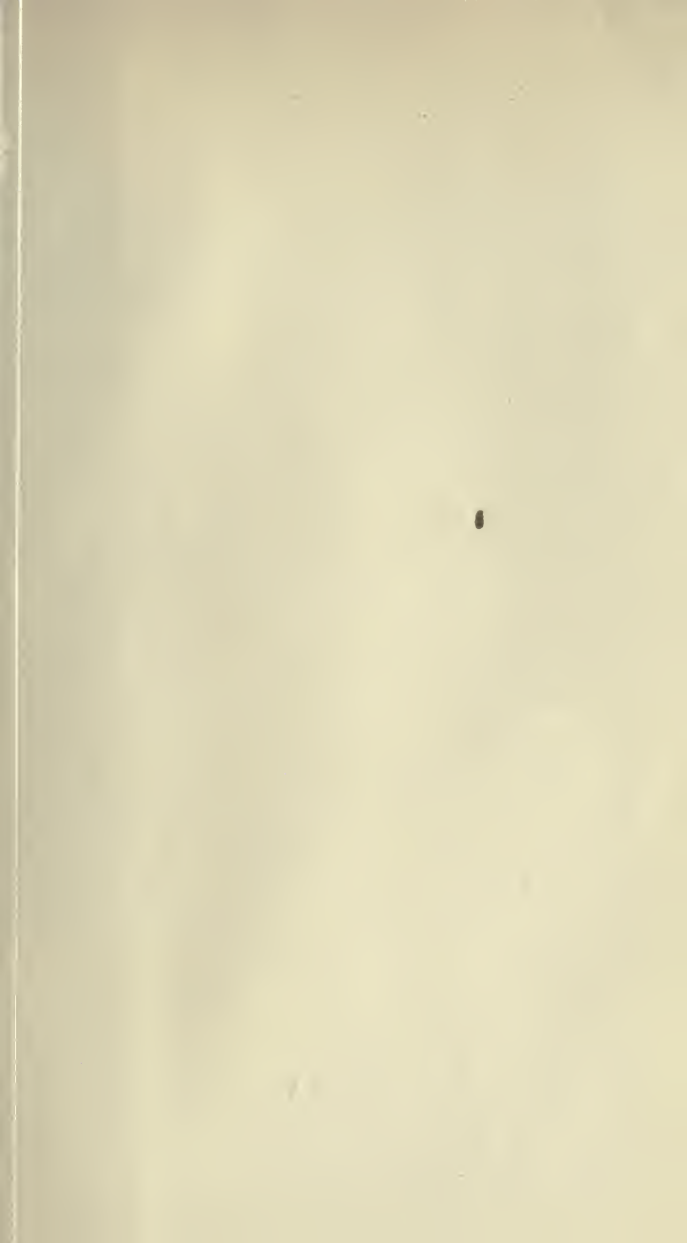
Appendix

times almost fancy that they studied how they might commit the abominable crime so as to be found by those whom the discovery would most affect. Have they wives, children? It must be done sometimes in their presence, in bed with them; often in their hearing; almost always in such a manner that they may be the first spectators of it. Mr. Y., Lord F., Mr. S., Lord C., Mr. B., are cruel instances of this. Oh, for Omnipotence, to call such savages back to life, and chain them to the hardest tasks of existence! Is not the crime of suicide sufficient, without adding to it the *murder*, or a heartbroken wife or child? Hence you may, perhaps, draw an argument that every suicide is a madman. For my part, I have no doubt of it; and if Humain had fallen into the hands of a friend less mad than Bourdeaux, he might have lived to have fought another day.

And here ends a long, dull letter, about a short, entertaining conversation (on your part at least).

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO.
London and Edinburgh.





UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
BERKELEY

Return to desk from which borrowed.

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

May 50 LB

May 50 LP

May 50 RM

YB 14028

U. C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES



C045997862

67895

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

