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CHARACTER OF THE
FRUITLESS ENQUIRY;
AND
ANECDOTES OF ITS AUTHOR,
BY THE EDITOR.

THE following pages are selected from a Novel* under the same title, and from which I have only made extracts; as some of the stories it contains are inconsistent with the plan of this work, as being either gross in the subjects, or indelicate in the expression.

* By Mrs. Eliza Haywood, a voluminous novelist, born in 1696. In the early part of her life she wrote a number of loose tales, and dealt a good deal in personal slander. Mrs. Manley's *Atalantis* gave her a hint, upon which she framed *The Court of Carimania*, and the new *Utopia*, with other pieces of the same nature. She attempted dramatic writing, and acting also; but met with little success in either. However, she shewed herself a writer of great ingenuity in the manner of treating her subjects; but her latter works, among which this is one, have made proper atonement for the indelicacy and immorality of her former writings, as she appears to be a strong advocate on the side of Decency and Virtue. *The Female Spectator*, *The History of Betsy Thoughtless*, *Jenny and Jenny Jessamy*, *The Invisible Spy*, and *A Present for a Servant-maid*, are among this latter class of her compositions. She died in 1759.

CHARACTER, &c.

The idea on which this piece is founded, has a good deal of merit in it; as tending to abate envy, and conciliate content; by shewing, in a variety of instances, that appearances are frequently fallacious; that perfect or permanent happiness is not the lot of mortal life; and that peace of mind and rational enjoyment are only to be found in bosoms free from guilt, and from intimate connection with the guilty.

THE
FRUITLESS ENQUIRY.

A Certain nobleman of Venice, dying in the prime of his years, left behind him a widow called Miramillia, justly esteemed one of the most lovely women of the age, and a little son not exceeding six years old; so dear to his mother, that though her beauty, wealth, and accomplishments, attracted the love and admiration of almost as many as beheld her, and the noblest youth in the republic desired her in marriage; yet did she decline all the advantages offered her for this darling of her soul, and resolved to continue the remainder of her days in a single state; fearing, that in bestowing herself, she should also be obliged to relinquish the power she had of managing the estate for him, to one who would less consult his interest. Never was mother more anxious for the welfare of a child, nor never did any child seem more to deserve the affections of a parent; so greatly did he improve on the education she allowed him, that his behaviour was her pride, as well as pleasure: as he encreased in years, he encreased also in every manly grace. There was no art, no science, no exercise, be-
fitting

sitting his quality, of which he was not a perfect master; and in many of them he excelled those whose profession it was to instruct.

Till he arrived at the age of twenty, did his happy mother glory in maternal fondness; and was so far from believing she ever should have reason to do otherwise, that she scarce knew how to pity the misfortunes of those who lamented the undutifulness or ill management of their children: but, alas! on how weak a foundation do all human joys depend, and how little ought we to triumph in the transient blessings of fate, which in a moment may vanish, and in their room as poignant ills arise! In the height of her satisfaction, just when she had seen the promising bloom of this young man arrive at maturity, and every wish was to its height completed, then all at once did misery fall on her, and she became more wretched than ever she had been blest.

Early one morning did this beloved son go out, as was frequently his custom, to indulge meditation in a fine wilderness adjacent to the castle; but night not bringing him home, nor the ensuing day, nor many others affording any tidings of him, the fears and perplexities of a mother so tenderly fond as was his, are not to be conceived. Through every part of the city she sent in search of him, but all her messengers returned without success; he could not be heard of, nor could any person be found that had seen him: days, weeks, and months past on in this manner, and quite raving with her griefs, she fell into a sort of superstitious credulity, which before she had despised; it was that of applying to fortune-tellers, in a vain expectation of knowing that from man, which Heaven permits not the discovery of even to the angels themselves. But her good sense not suffering her to place any great dependance on what they said, she no sooner heard the predictions of one, than she went to another, comparing them together, believing that if they agreed, they

they might be worthy of belief; but being different, one telling her he would speedily return, another that he was dead, a third that he was married to a woman unworthy of him; but a fourth, wiser than the rest, would not pretend to give her any direct account, but only told her, that to engage his return, she should procure a shirt made for him by the hands of a person so completely contented in mind, that there was no wish but that she enjoyed. If you can prevail on such a woman to undertake this little piece of work, said he, before it be finished, you will infallibly hear news of your son; but you must be certain, continued he, that the person you employ be perfectly at ease; if the least anxious thought, the most minute perplexity, discontent, or care, ruffles her mind, or ever throws a heaviness upon her spirits, the work will be of no effect.---Though this afflicted mother had too much good sense to imagine such a thing could be of any consequence to the obtaining her desires; yet the enchantment being of so innocent a nature, she resolved to make the experiment; and to that end, set herself to think which of her acquaintance was the most qualified for this important piece of sempstry. One she knew had vast possessions, all the grandeur which the world idolizes, beauty, wit, health, and a sweetness of disposition, which rendered her capable of enjoying those blessings; but then she was married to a man of so perverse a nature, that it took up her whole study to please him; and the little success she had in that endeavour, frequently gave her many bitter perturbations. Another, in all appearance, was possessor of every thing that can be wished, a wealthy and good husband, many fine children, and the general esteem and good character of the world; but she had made this lady the confidante of her passion for a young gentleman; and in that criminal inclination were all the pleasures of her life overwhelmed and lost. One had an undutiful son, another an unfortunate daughter, a third an extravagant

gant husband, a fourth an unloving one, a fifth was distracted with a step-dame's overlooking eye, a sixth had married a man, whose children by a former venture were an eternal plague upon her spirits; one had so much ready cash, that she was always in care how to bestow it with the least hazard, and most advantage; another was perplexed for want of it, and the exigencies to which persons in that misfortune are reduced. Few there were to whom she could apply with any hope of success, if it were really truth what the predictor had endeavoured to make her believe: but among the number of those was a lady whose name was Anziana; she was married to one of the chief of the nobility, a man scarce to be equalled for his personal charms, or the improvements of education; and one who, both before and after his marriage, had given a thousand testimonies of the most tender regard for her: never did any pair appear to live together in a more perfect harmony; three fine sons, and two beautiful daughters were the product of their loves, all lovely, all hopeful, and promising a future age of happiness to their glad parents. Where could contentment dwell, if not in such a family? Who can be completely blest, if Anziana was not? To her therefore it was that she resolved to have recourse, and doubted not but to receive from her friendship that favour which she imagined was in her power to grant.

In pursuance of this design, she again set herself at her long neglected toilet, and resumed those ornaments which till now she had not worn since the loss of her dear son; and when dressed with all her former exactness, went to the house of Anziana, where she was received by that lady with all the demonstrations imaginable of a sincere friendship; but when she related to her the errand on which she came, she looked extremely surprized, and would fain have persuaded her from giving any adherence to advice which seemed so perfectly chimerical; but the other continuing to insist on it, and
appearing

appearing somewhat resentful that she should refuse so small a trouble, when it would do her so great a piece of service; at last she consented to make the trial, on condition she would remain in her house for the space of eight days: at the end of which time, said she, if you perceive nothing which may render me incapable of serving you in the way you mention, I shall willingly undertake it. The sorrowful mother could not but comply with so reasonable a request, and in doing so, found every thing agreeable to that character of perfect tranquillity, to which the prognosticator had directed her. She now no longer doubted but she should be able to make the experiment, if there were any dependance to be placed in the words of these soothsayers. Never had she beheld a family better managed; every thing was done with that ease, that regularity, and concord, that business was a pleasure: the servants seemed to obey more through love than fear, the mistress had not the trouble of commanding; so ready were they to observe her very looks and motions, that what she would have done, was so before her desire could form itself into words: the children observed the same decorum; but these were petty felicities compared with that which flowed from a conjugal affection, so tender, so obliging, so ardent, and unchangeable, as that appeared to be between Anziana and her husband count Caprera: never were endearments carried to a higher pitch, nor had more the look of sincerity. In fine, all that can be conceived of felicity was theirs, and was thought an exception to that general rule, that perfect happiness is not to be found on earth.

The time prefixed by Anziana being elapsed, her distressed visitor entreated the performance of her promise; to which the other, in a melancholy accent, thus replied: Alas! said she, how liable are we to be deceived by appearances! How little does the outward show demonstrate, sometimes, the real disposition of the heart! I, who seem the most fortunate of my sex, am indeed
the

the most wretched ; nor is it in the power of fate to load me with superior ills. But to ease the amazement in which my words have involved you, follow me, and you shall be informed in full of the whole dismal cause. As she spoke this, she turned hastily towards the door of the chamber, and the other going after her as she had desired, they passed through several rooms, till they came to a long gallery, at the end of which was a closet. There Anziana stopped, and taking a key out of her pocket, opened it, and went in, desiring the other to do the same : but with what horror and affright was her soul invaded, when, as soon as she entered, the first object that presented itself to her, was the skeleton of a man, with arms extended wide, as if in act to seize the adventurous gazer, and on the breast was fixed a label ; which, as soon as she was enough recovered from that terror which so unexpected and so shocking a sight had plunged her in, to be able to look upon it, Anziana took her by the hand, and bringing her nearer, shewed it her, containing these words, which to make them yet more dreadful, were writ in blood.

“ Remember, Anziana, it is for your crime that I am thus ; and let a just contrition take up your ensuing days, and peace be ever a stranger to your soul, till you become as I am !”

Let the reader imagine himself in this lady's place, and he will then be able to conceive some part of that astonishment she was in at beholding an object of this dire nature, in a house where nothing but mirth and cheerfulness appeared to reign : to describe it, is not in the power of language ; therefore, I shall only say, that it took from her the power of speech ; and though she passionately longed for the explanation of so strange an adventure, yet her tongue refused to obey the dictates of her heart ; and by the wild confusion of her looks, and eyes half starting from their spheres, alone it was that she could make known her wonder, or her curiosity :

curiosity ; but Anziana perfectly understanding what it was she desired, made her turn from that ungrateful object, and sit down by her on a couch some distance from it, where she began thus : Had I not been convinced of your discretion, said she, I should not have taken this method to shew how improper a person I am to undertake the task you came hither to employ me in : I will therefore exact no promises from you of preserving my secret, nor desire any other security for it than your own honour ; but as I have begun with bringing you into this closet, which, since thus furnished, has never been entered by any but myself, I will proceed to reveal by what strange means this dreadful guest was harboured here : but because I cannot do it clearly, without going back to some passages of the former part of my life, you must excuse the length of my narration ; which will at least be of this service to you, that your own woes will fit more lightly on you, when you shall know how infinitely more heavy those are under which I labour. These words drew a flood of tears from her to whom they were addressed, as thinking it impossible for any misfortune to exceed that which she sustained ; but composing herself as well as she could, she prepared to give attention to what the other was about to say, who immediately began the relation she had promised in these terms.

THE HISTORY OF ANZIANA, SIGNIOR LORENZO, AND COUNT CAPRERA.

IT is not unknown to you, said she, that I am descended from one of the best families in this republic, and that I had a fortune equal to my birth ; I shall therefore pass over in silence the years of my

childhood, nothing happening to me worthy of remark, till my fourteenth year : at which time, many there were who solicited me for marriage ; among the number of whom was Signior Lorenzo, a young gentleman whose equal yet I never saw, nor can believe the whole world can produce. At first, the deference I paid him I thought only was owing to his merit, and that all who knew him treated him with the same. But, alas ! too soon I found my admiration proceeded from a softer motive, and that it was love that made me so quick-sighted to his perfections ; and had sense enough to distinguish, that though he was infinitely deserving, I saw all his graces through a magnifying glass, and adored what others but approved : the infancy of love, however, affords too much pleasure to a youthful heart for the efforts of reason to be able to repel it. I suffered the sweet enchantment to grow upon me, till it overwhelmed and sunk all other considerations ; and never reflecting on the difficulties which might arise to separate us, indulged the dear delight his society afforded ; and while I listened to his vows, knew neither fear nor grief : yet had I been capable of thought, how easy had it been to me, to have foreseen my father would not look on Lorenzo with my eyes, and that all his accomplishments would not have been sufficient to make up for the disparity of his birth and fortune ! All at once, therefore, did my misfortune come upon me ; and when I was arrived at the utmost extreme of passion, did I receive a command to check it, from his mouth whence there was no appeal : in fine, just as Lorenzo had obtained my permission to demand me of my father, did he order me to see him no more ; and severely reprimanded me for having given any encouragement to his addresses. I durst not but promise to obey, though Heaven knows how little my heart was capable of making good my words : now did I begin to find there were bitters enough in love to empoison all the sweets of it ; but the disease had spread

spread too far to hope a cure ; nor indeed did I endeavour at it. I apprized Lorenzo, by letter, of what had happened, and appointed to meet him the next day at the house of a person whom I made the confidant of this affair. He failed not to come ; and instead of fulfilling the dictates of my duty in taking an eternal leave of him, I suffered myself to be swayed wholly by those of my love, and entered into the most solemn obligation that vows could form, never to be but his. That ceremony which is called Marriage, is infinitely less binding than the repeated oaths I kneeling made, and the curses I imprecated on myself if ever I swerved from them : death itself was not to dissolve the contract ; but the survivor swore to pay the same regard to the memory of the deceased as when living, and in a condition to know and to return these proofs of fidelity. Not long after this, my father unhappily incurred the displeasure of the senate to so high a degree, that he stood in need of all the interest he had, to preserve his estate from being forfeited, and himself sent into banishment : of all the friends that appeared for him, count Caprera was the most serviceable ; and indeed it was wholly owing to his great power, and steady adherence to the cause he had espoused, that my father was acquitted. So important a service required the most grateful retributions ; nor was my father deficient in paying them : he offered him the half of that estate he had preserved ; but he would accept no other recompence than Anziana : he declared himself possessor of the most violent passion for me, and that he had been prevented from discovering it but by the apprehensions of his unworthiness, till the lucky opportunity offered of conferring an obligation on my family, which, as he said, might give some pretence to hope he should not be refused. Had my father never experienced his friendship, it is highly improbable there would have been any occasion for such a fear ; the count, I must acknowledge, notwithstanding the little effect his charms

have been able to work on me, being possess of every advantage that can make marriage pleasing. But there is an awe which accompanies true affection, and indeed is often fatal to it. It was so, at least, to that the count had for me, since, had he sooner made an offering of his heart, perhaps I never should have disposed of mine to Lorenzo. Then might we have all been happy, nor would this dreadful spectacle have distracted my sight, which brings the fatal past for ever present to my tormented mind: but such was the decree of all-disposing Heaven, nor must I dare to murmur.---With these words, the swelling tears, in spite of her efforts to the contrary, burst their passage through her eyes, and she was some time before she could recover herself to prosecute her story; but when she did, it was in this manner:

My father, resumed she, was perfectly transported at this offer of the count's, and without consulting my inclination in the affair, readily promised I should be his wife, and that the marriage should be solemnized in a few days. How terrible a surprize, therefore, was it to me, when sitting one day in my chamber alone, contemplating on the perfections of my dear Lorenzo, my father entered, and informed me what I have been just now relating! I knew him positive in all his resolutions, and he expressed this on the account of the obligations he had to the count, and the honour our family would receive in an alliance with him, with an unusual warmth, and arbitrary air: I durst not utter the least syllable in opposition to what he said, but he saw enough in my countenance to make him know I was extremely dissatisfied at it. What! cried he, is it with frowns and downcast eyes that you receive the news of such a blessing? Throw off so perverse a fullness, and prepare to treat the count, who will be here this night, with that respect and gratitude which his services demand from my family; or resolve to be no more a part of it, but an alien for ever from my name and favour. Nothing can
 ere certain, had I confessed the impossibility
 there

there was for me to return the count's affection, and the obligations I had laid myself under to Lorenzo, than that the friendship he had for the former of them would have raised his indignation to the utmost violence against me; and fear at that time getting the better of my love, I fell at his feet, entreating his forgiveness, and assuring him of a perfect obedience; at which he appeared satisfied. But easily perceiving I was far from being so in reality, he left me to myself, believing that the best way to calm the disorders of my soul, and make it fit to receive the impression he desired. But Oh! when at liberty to give a loose to thought and to reflection, Heaven only knows the agonies I sustained; the idea of my dear Lorenzo, his passionate affection, the solemn contract we had made, the reiterated vows by which it was confirmed, came fresh into my mind, and made me for some moments resolve to endure all things, rather than make this double sacrifice of my love and faith: but then my father's power, the fear of being turned out a beggar, and the possibility that, in such a disgraced and distressful state, Lorenzo, for whose sake I should become so, might also abandon me; the miseries of poverty, and the unpitying world's contempt and censure, glared on my terrified imagination, and worked so far on the timorousness of my nature, as to counterbalance all that the softer passion could suggest, and even absolve my breach of vow. Long did I struggle in this painful conflict, and, wholly unable to determine to which of the prevailing dictates I should yield, at last a medium presented itself, which flattered me with some hope of evading the wretchedness I feared, in suffering myself to be overcome by either; it was to dissemble a contentment in the count's addresses; and, by seeming not to oppose my father's will, gain time and opportunity to disappoint it totally. When the count came, I treated him with that respect which was due to his quality, and the obligations we had received from him; nor did he expect more at his first visit from a maid of

my years; in those he afterwards made me, I discovered him to be master of so many perfections, that though my vow and inclinations bound me to Lorenzo, I could not help thinking, that I might have been infinitely happy in such a husband. In a word, I had all the esteem and friendship for him that one can have for the most amiable and deserving brother: but this was not that sort of affection he wished to inspire me with, and he could not forbear complaining of my coldness, in terms the most moving that love and wit could form. A thousand times have I been about to let him into the secret of my soul, and generously confess, that I had unwarily bestowed my heart and faith before I knew the honour he intended me; had I done so, I might have saved that dreadful scene which too soon ensued. But shame, and the fear of being exposed to the indignation of my father, or rather my ill genius, would not suffer me to make this declaration, which alone could have been of service. For often since has count Caprera protested to me in the most solemn manner, that had he known the true state of my heart, he would have desisted his suit, and chose rather to have been unhappy himself, than have made me so by an enforced marriage. But he, alas! was far from guessing at the truth, nor had I power to inform him. But it was not so with my father. He had intelligence of the private meetings I still had with Lorenzo, and doubted not but it was the violence of my affection for him, that made me receive the addresses of the count with so little pleasure. I had till now prevailed on him to defer our marriage, under the pretence that time might make me enter into it with less reluctance. But he was no longer to be put off by these excuses; he knew too well my secret, and was resolved to disappoint whatever intentions I might have in favour of my passion. Coming one morning into my chamber with a sternness in his air and countenance, which, before he spoke, gave me to understand some part of my misfortune: Anziana, said he,

he, your tears, and pretended aversion for marriage, have hitherto persuaded me to delay the performance of that promise I long since made to count Caprera; but I am now too well informed of the reasons which have made you blind to that happiness Heaven offers you in a husband of his quality and merit, and am determined that this day shall be the last of your continuing in a virgin state; or if you refuse to obey me, of being called my daughter. Chuse, therefore, either to be the most fortunate and envied woman in Venice by marrying with this nobleman, or quit my house, my name, and fight for ever, and become the most accurst, abandoned, despised, and wretched of your sex. It was to no purpose that I threw myself at his feet, entreated, wept, almost died before him. No rocks were more immovable than his relentless breast; nor could all my prayers, my tears, my swoonings, obtain even one day more: as soon as he was gone out of the room, I sent my woman, who was privy to my most secret thoughts, in search of Lorenzo, to whom I ordered her to relate the whole truth of what had passed; resolving, if he gave any encouragement to my elopement, to leave my father's house, and dare all the miseries he had threatened me with, rather than become false to my love and vows; but, unfortunately for both, he was gone that morning to the house of a relation, who lived at a good distance from Venice, and had sent for him on some extraordinary business. What could I now do? To whom could I have recourse? or what security for protection from the insults of a barbarous world? Much had I heard of the inconstancy and thanklessness of faithless men, and how could I be sure Lorenzo was not one of those? That peace of mind which I must forfeit in marrying with the count, I looked on as a trifle, when compared with the loss of my reputation, and the want of the necessaries of life: and as for the faith I had vowed to Lorenzo, I doubted not but the necessity I was under would excuse me from a breach of it. I loved the one indeed

with an unquenchable affection, and had but a bare esteem for the other; it was therefore the utmost violence to my inclinations, even but to think of complying with my father's commands; but as I could foresee nothing but misery in refusing, I was at last determined to do as he would have me; and to that end sent my woman to him, hearing he was in his closet, to let him know I was ready to obey him. But, alas! she was no sooner departed with the message, than the idea of that dear loved youth rose with its charms in my tormented soul, upbraiding me with perjury and ingratitude, levity and cowardice of nature; methought I saw him dying with despair, and crying out to Heaven to revenge his wrongs. Fully possessed with this imagination, I was about to call my woman back, and, true to love, despise all other ills: as I was rising from my chair with this intention, a book fell from the shelf; some accident happened to shake it just upon my head; which opening, I saw had the title of *L'Inconstance d'Amour*, a little French novel, which I remembered to have read some time before, and that it contained several little histories of the ingratitude of mankind, and the little they thought themselves obliged, even from the greatest condescensions our sex could make: I looked on this accident as a kind of warning to me, not to trust too much to their honour, and instead of pursuing my design, began to read in it; where the first story I happened to cast my eyes on, was a kind of parallel with my own; it being of a young lady who had forsok her father, friends and country, for the dear sake of love; yet had no sooner reduced herself to that extremity which the want of them must infallibly draw on, than the ungrateful wretch, for whom she was become thus miserable, told her, he was sorry for what had befallen her, that he would be her friend as far as a few pieces, or give her a character to get a service if she were disposed to accept of one; but she could not expect he would marry a woman in her circumstances. Heavens! cried I, as I

was reading, should Lorenzo be of this humour, what an extravagance of wretchedness would be my portion, (and why should I hope a better fate?) who pretends to love, but says and swears as much as he has done? But put the case, continued I, after a little reflection, that he should excel his sex as much in honour, as he does in all personal perfections; what happiness could there be in such a state of obligation and dependance? Would not his friends and kindred be perpetually upbraiding him, that he had married a woman without any other dowry than her love? Would not my clothes, nay my very meat, be cavilled at, as too extravagant? I cannot bear the thought, cried I again, and will pursue my resolution. It is reason bids me, and all the softening follies of my inclinations fly before his force. I was thus debating within myself, when my woman returned, and told me, my father was infinitely pleased with my return to duty, and had sent me, to grace the ceremony he was preparing to solemnize that night, a string of diamonds for my neck, of a vast largeness, and the most glorious lustre I had ever seen. I was all my life a great admirer of fine things; and as it was merely the fear of being obliged to live without them, that had made me yield to marry the count; so this addition to those my father's indulgence had before bestowed on me, greatly strengthened me in that resolution. To make it yet more firm, the count sent me by his gentleman a bracelet of pearl, which an ancestor of his had taken from the Turks, and was the most orient and richest of any in the republic. To add to all these baits, several relations, whom my father had invited to be present at the marriage, seemed, the whole day, each to endeavour to outvie the other in praising count Caprera. His wit, his elegance of behaviour, his fine shape, the delicacy of his complexion, the gracefulness of his air, his good-humour, honour, generosity, the greatness of his family, and the immense sums of money his father had left him in possession of,

were the only topicks of conversation ; and all agreed, that I could not but be extremely blest in such a husband. Betwixt the variety of company and discourse, my spirits were so much hurried, that I had no leisure for reflection ; and Lorenzo was either not remembered, or in such a manner as to be no hindrance to the completing the wishes of his rival. We were married about eight at night by my father's chaplain, and after a magnificent colation put to bed. But here, what the noise and bustle of the day repelled, the silence of the night called back ; not Caprera, but Lorenzo, was now the subject of my meditations, and it was in vain that that obliging husband repeated the vow he had given before the priest in a more soft and endearing manner, than those who had the ordering of the ceremony had ever tenderness enough to form ; the absent lover took up all my thoughts ; and that reluctance with which I suffered his embraces, was not, as he then imagined, owing to a virgin bashfulness, but to the ardency of my wishes for another. I now found that love had not lost the least ground in my heart, and having but by the extremity of my fear, been compelled a while to screen its influence, those fears removed, blazed out again with the same violence as ever. Never was there a more unhappy bride. The night I pass in tears, and early in the morning I forsook my bed, in spite of the count's endeavours to detain me ; and going into my closet with my favourite woman, disburthened some part of the heavy anguish of my soul in complaints : fain would I have written to Lorenzo, to acquaint him with what I had been compelled to do, and entreat his pardon for my breach of vow ; but could not venture to do it while he remained at so great a distance, not thinking it safe to trust a letter of that consequence to the post. With the utmost impatience I longed for his return, flattering myself that I should be more at ease, when he should let me know he had forgiven my involuntary crime. In languishments unbecoming the character of a wife, though

though then I thought them innocent, did I linger out the days of his absence; the count and my father omitting nothing which they thought might bring me into a better humour; though the latter of them, whenever he was alone, did not fail to tell me, that he was not unacquainted with the motive of my disgust, and that if balsams failed to work, corrosives hereafter should be applied. But neither threats nor persuasions were of any effect to make me alter my manner of behaviour; and it is most certain, that had not the count loved me to a very great degree of tenderness, he must have hated and despised me for my ingratitude, and forgetfulness of the station to which he had raised me.

At length my fatal wishes had success, Lorenzo returned to Venice; which I no sooner was informed of, then I sent my confidante to him with a letter which contained these lines.

“ IT is needless to tell you, that I have put count
 “ Caprera in possession of that title which ought only to
 “ be yours. I doubt not but you are already suffi-
 “ ciently informed of my seeming guilt; but of my real
 “ innocence you are not, you cannot yet be sensible.
 “ You know not with what severities I was threatened
 “ by a barbarous and inexorable father, nor can you
 “ guess how terrible was the conflict I endured betwixt
 “ love and duty; be assured, you never were dearer
 “ than at that moment when I gave myself for ever
 “ from you, nor can the name of Caprera make any
 “ change in my sentiments; I am Anziana still. Fate,
 “ cruel fate, has disposed my person to another, but
 “ the better part of me, my soul, is ever yours. Oh!
 “ then forgive what it was impossible to avoid, with-
 “ out being driven to extremities, such as would have
 “ made me despair of retaining your affections, the
 “ only thing I ever hoped, the only thing I ever feared;
 “ yes, you must pardon me, must pity, and must love
 “ me too; nor can I think that with a crime against

" him to whom compulsion, not inclination, gave my
 " hand ; but were it so, it is here excused by the ne-
 " cessity. I have been so much accustomed to proofs of
 " your affection, that they make a part of my life, and
 " when they cease, the other must infallibly be at an
 " end : I believe it not impossible to contrive a meeting
 " with you ; if so, I charge you, do not fail to come.
 " I am distracted till I see you, and receive that con-
 " solation in my misfortunes, which it is in your power
 " to afford to the unhappy, but not inconstant

" ANZIANA.

" P. S. Write to me by the bearer, consider op-
 " portunities of this kind are now become scarce ; and
 " if you can think of any means to see me, more easy
 " to be accomplished than I have yet been able to hit
 " upon, communicate them to this faithful girl, who
 " knows, as well as I, the restraint I labour under, not
 " by the observance of a husband, but a jealous father."

I ought to blush, continued Anziana, in repeating
 to you the contents of this letter, which are indeed of
 such a nature, as might make the least censorious be-
 lieve, I had a meaning in them very different from that
 virtue I profess ; but I protest to you, with the same
 sincerity as I shall answer Heaven, that I was wholly
 free from any thought of ill ; I longed indeed to see
 him ; I passionately desired that he would continue to love
 me ; and how far I might have been prevailed on by that
 desire and his entreaty, had I been permitted to in-
 dulse it in frequent conversations with him, I cannot,
 dare not to answer ; but fate thought it sufficient to
 make me miserable without rendering me vicious also,
 and contented with the sacrifice I had made of my peace,
 suffered me not to resign my virtue.

He received my letter not with the transports of rage
 which I expected ; and whatever discontents the news
 of my marriage had occasioned, they were more than
 balanced

balanced by the pleasure he took in the willingness I express of continuing a correspondence with him. The person whom I sent to him was a woman of an excellent penetration; and she assured me, in terms as plain as the station she was in would permit her to do to a mistress, that Lorenzo was not that disinterested lover we had believed him to be: she forbore, however, to express what it was she thought of him, till I had read his letter, the contents whereof are written in my heart, and never can be forgot; they were in this manner:

“ THOUGH I might justly enough complain of
 “ your want of faith in my repeated assurances, that no
 “ change of circumstances should have the power to
 “ alter that indelible affection I had vowed; yet to
 “ prove how much beyond my own I prize your interest, I wish you all the happiness the marriage-bed
 “ can yield: nor do I envy Caprera the possession of your
 “ person, since you so transportingly assure me, that
 “ your heart is mine. You have been accustomed to
 “ utter nothing but sacred truth; if this is so, I should
 “ be the most unreasonable and ungrateful of my sex,
 “ not to be highly satisfied with my condition; for
 “ what may not the happy he, who rules the heart,
 “ command! I have been talking to your obliging
 “ messenger, and she thinks it not impossible that I
 “ might be admitted into your own house late at
 “ night, when all the family are in bed; you pretending an indisposition, to avoid lying with the
 “ count ——. I mention this method as the most
 “ safe one for your reputation; for though, doubtless,
 “ either of us would be welcome alone at our usual
 “ rendezvous; yet as you know they are people of a
 “ scrupulous virtue, and we used to meet on other terms
 “ than now we can be supposed to do, they might think
 “ the liberty they allowed me with Anziana a fault, if
 “ indulged with the wife of count Caprera: it will be
 “ just the same, if seen together in any other place. I
 “ see

“ see no hazard of discovery at your own house ; but
 “ if by any unexpected means such a misfortune should
 “ arrive, be assured of my inviolable integrity, and that
 “ I would sooner lose my life than confess I came thither
 “ with your knowledge ; or had any entertainment from
 “ you, but such as drove me to despair. I would have
 “ you consider of it, however ; and if you approve of
 “ this proceeding, let me know the time and hour
 “ when I may hope to seize my own, and triumph over
 “ him, who has but by force made himself master of
 “ the right of

“ The ever faithful, and

“ passionately devoted

“ LORENZO.

“ P. S. You must extremely wrong the passion you
 “ have inspired, if you believe not I shall attend a
 “ second mandate with the extremest impatience. Re-
 “ member that it is your part, not mine, to pity ; and
 “ I expect you to show a bright example, how much
 “ you dare for love and gratitude.”

It is impossible to express what it was I felt at reading this letter ; never had I before experienced such an astonishment ; such a shock.---What means he, cried I out, as soon as I came to the conclusion, by integrity, seizing his own, and triumphing over him who by force is become master of his right ? He talks as if I had invited him to wrong the count, and had no other notion of continuing a conversation with him, than to carry on a shameful intrigue. Heaven ! how have I been deceived in the disposition of this man ! I thought he loved me with so pure a flame, that sensual enjoyment never was thought on by him ; but now I find his wishes had no other aim ; and flattered by the mistaken kindness of my letter, he imagines there wants only an opportunity to gratify them ; and believes I am a prostitute in my nature, and that the vilest passion has dominion

dominion over my soul. I could not, for some time, enough compose myself, to hear what my woman had to say; but when she spoke, it was as I before informed you; and intimating, that he expected nothing less than to possess me with the same freedom, as he would have been allowed to do, were he in count Caprera's place, I was in the utmost rage with myself, for having written in a manner to give room for such a thought: but as my designs were wholly innocent, and meant no more than to convert the love we had bore each other into as ardent a friendship, I was ashamed to think I had so much tenderness for a man of so low and groveling a soul, and who now appeared to know no more of love than the meanest part of it, that which the difference of sex excites. I despised him so heartily, that I know not if what I felt for him, for some moments, might not be called loathing: my woman, ever faithful to my interest and fame, failed not to say every thing in her power to heighten this disgust; fain would she have persuaded me to send to him no more; or if I did, to write in such a manner as should convince him of the error he had been in, and make him ashamed ever to see me more. But this advice did not relish with me, I still persisted in my intention of seeing him; whatever hazard I ran; I fancied I could make a proselyte of him; and was pleased to think, how great a glory it would be to convert this gross and footy flame into one all pure and elemental. The love of souls I aimed to inspire, that so we might enjoy a noble, disinterested, and platonic friendship. This, as far as I can be judge of my own heart, was my design; how far it would have succeeded, Heaven only knows, for I was, in a fatal manner, prevented from making the experiment. But to proceed gradually with my story, after the consideration of about a week, I writ to him in these terms:

“ That I answered yours no sooner, was owing to the
“ uncertainty I was in, in what manner I should do it;
“ and

“ and I know not, if Virtue will not be offended, that
 “ I hold any correspondence with a man, whose designs
 “ appear to be so much the reverse of those inspired by
 “ her. For Heaven’s sake, what has emboldened you
 “ to hope, from the wife of count Caprera, what you
 “ never dared to ask from Anziana? If judging of your
 “ innocence by my own, I desired the continuance of
 “ your friendship; which of my past actions have given
 “ you cause to make so vile a construction of my mean-
 “ ing? How could you dare suspect me guilty of a
 “ dishonourable thought? I told you, indeed, that I
 “ was still your lover, but it was with such a kind of
 “ love that I regarded you, as angels pay to each other
 “ in the realms of bliss; all pure and intellectual, free
 “ from all gross desires or earthly appetite. If I look
 “ on the breach of my vow to you as a crime, which,
 “ though enforced, requires my whole life’s penitence
 “ to atone; how can you think I would voluntarily
 “ violate that I have made to count Caprera before the
 “ holy priest? Such love as a chaste brother may to a
 “ sister give, I shall rejoice to find from you; and such,
 “ and no other, can I pay to you. If you think this
 “ worthy your acceptance, and that we can converse to-
 “ gether in such a manner as to have nothing to ap-
 “ prehend from our own consciences, we shall be the
 “ better enabled to contemn what the world may say
 “ of us, should our conversation be discovered; though
 “ not to give occasion for censure, I will contrive
 “ to keep it as private as possible. Send me word,
 “ after you have well examined the nature of your de-
 “ sires, if you can restrain them within the limits I
 “ prescribe, and you shall see with what speed I will
 “ meet the lover of my soul. But endeavour not to
 “ deceive yourself or me; pretend not to be what you
 “ are not, nor imagine I do so; or that I am, or ever
 “ will be, one step beyond what honour will permit,

“ Your lover, or your friend,

“ ANZIANA.

“ P. S. Burn

“ P. S. Burn my letters, as I do yours the moment I receive them; but lay the contents of this up in your heart; that if you swerve in any point from the injunction it lays you under, you may not plead forgetfulness. Adieu! As you persevere in virtue you shall continue to be dear to me.”

Fool that I was, and vain of the power of my own persuasion, I doubted not but this letter would make a convert of him, and longed for my messenger's return, which I was perfectly assured in my mind would bring me an answer such as I wished; nor was I greatly deceived: he had too much of the artifice of his sex in him to contradict what I said, till he had an opportunity to benefit himself by it; at least I judge so by what I have since been told: the contents of what he wrote ran thus:

“ VIRTUE, fair angel! has many branches, nor is chastity always the most shining one it bears; gratitude and compassion are allowed to be the prime graces of humanity; and when opposed to these, the other degenerates to a vice. Is it to be of a piece with Heaven, to destroy the man who adores you, to inflict curses where blessings are implored, and be cruel to a wretch who throws himself upon your mercy? Oh consider, Anziana! nor let a too strict adherence to one virtue make you become guilty of injuring all the others. Even justice too you forfeit, since you were mine before you were Caprera's: how often, dear perjured beauty! have you called Heaven and every saint to witness, that you never would be another's! and if compelled by arbitrary power to falsify those vows, must you also join in the wrong? You might be forced into the arms of the count, but by your own will are only debarred from mine. I solicit you, therefore, not to an act of shame, but
“ justice:

“ justice: I will, however, insist no farther on this
 “ theme till I have the blessing of your presence; if
 “ what I have then to say proves ineffectual, I will be
 “ dumb for ever on it. On this you may depend,
 “ that I shall never have recourse to violence; and if
 “ unable to convince you, that what I ask is not a
 “ crime to grant, would not receive it on any terms,
 “ which, to reflect on hereafter, might give you dis-
 “ content, or the least shadow of remorse. Believe
 “ me, that your peace of mind is of infinite more
 “ value to me than my own; and that if it can be
 “ preserved by no other means, than relinquishing
 “ those hopes to which our contract had given me a
 “ pretence, will make a sacrifice of them, and confine
 “ myself hereafter to the bounds you set, however
 “ painful or fatal they may prove. You are the
 “ mistress of my soul; all its faculties are at your de-
 “ votion, and to be directed by you; dispose, there-
 “ fore, as you please, of

“ Your ever faithful

“ And most obedient slave,

“ LORENZO.”

Though the beginning of this letter gave me some
 uneasiness, the latter part of it entirely dissipated it;
 and I rested assured, that he would be indeed as con-
 formable to my will as he had promised, and resolved
 to give him a meeting as soon as I could contrive
 the means. I considered on what he had proposed, and
 I found nothing in it but what was safe enough; but
 the tenderness the count had for me would not suffer it
 to succeed; for when I feigned an indisposition, and
 desired to sleep in my own bed, that indulgent husband
 would needs quit his also, and watch by me: but a
 small time presented me with an opportunity more
 ample than I could have hoped. Some disturbance
 happening among the tenants on our land in the coun-
 try, my father was obliged to go thither in person;

he

he desired count Caprera to accompany him, believing his presence, who in the right of me was to be their future lord, might be of service on this occasion. He would not refuse my father, and thinking the journey might be too great a fatigue to me, being then great with child, they departed, and I was left at full liberty to do as I pleased. They had no sooner left the house, than I took pen and paper, and wrote to Lorenzo in these terms :

“ THE long-wished moment is at last arrived ; my
 “ father and husband, those diligent observers of my
 “ every action, are both removed ; and before they can
 “ return, I shall have many opportunities to perfect the
 “ work I have begun. This night, about twelve,
 “ the family will be all in bed, all but myself and
 “ faithful maid, who will attend to admit you. Re-
 “ member the conditions on which I grant this liberty,
 “ and give me no cause, as you say, hereafter to re-
 “ pent my condescension. Yours,

“ ANZIANA.

“ P. S. A gentle rap against the window-shutter
 “ shall be the sign ; take care that there are no pas-
 “ sengers in the street when you make it. ’Till then,
 “ farewell.”

I dispatched my woman with this, with a haste and impatience which was not usual with me ; and might, therefore, have served as an omen of its fatality, had I been capable of reflecting on it. She discharged her trust with her ordinary fidelity, and was returning to me with an answer, when my father and the count, having met with some company in the street, which had delayed their taking horse, were just passing by the house of Lorenzo, that ill-starred moment as she came out of it. The former of them knowing well who it was that dwelt there, and fired with a jealousy of the honour

honour of his family, caught hold of her, and bid her make no disturbance, but go along with him. The terror and surprize she was in would not suffer her to have presence enough of mind to form any excuse, if there had been a possibility of making one for such a visit; and a house being near, over the master of which my father had an influence, he thrust her in: my husband followed, but was too much overwhelmed with wonder to ask the meaning of what he saw, 'till my father eased him of it, by calling the poor trembling wench all the opprobrious names his fury could invent; such as the bawd of her mistress's shame, and witness of her dishonour; and not doubting but she had some letter about her, searching for it, he immediately found one in her bosom, which contained enough to make him imagine himself confirmed in the truth of what he feared. I have had it too often repeated to be capable of forgetting it; the words were these:

“ TO go about to inform you of the raptures with
 “ which I received yours, would be as vain an endeavour
 “ as it is to represent my impatience for that dear hour,
 “ which is to put me in possession of a blessing I have so
 “ long languished for. To think that I shall see An-
 “ ziana again, and be permitted to converse with her
 “ as I have done when no curst ties made her ano-
 “ ther's right, is such a profusion, such an extrava-
 “ gance of delight, as is almost fatal to me; and I
 “ have scarce breath to speak my thanks. But our kind
 “ confidante, who sees my transports, will be better
 “ able to make a description of them, than all I can
 “ say. Depend on every thing, thou sovereign of my
 “ soul! that you would wish to find in

“ The most faithful, and most

“ obsequious of mankind,

“ LORENZO.”

This did my father read aloud to the count; and by what I have told you of his passion for me, it is easy for you to guess into what an excess of jealous rage it must transport him. There was all the room in the world for him to believe I was carrying on an intrigue, the most dishonourable that could be; he knew not the conditions on which I had consented to admit him; and I cannot, without being guilty of partiality, but confess that there was a warmth in this letter, which had no affinity with platonic love. It is difficult to say, whether my father or husband were now most incensed against me, or which formed the most cruel stratagems of revenge on him by whom they imagined themselves injured and affronted; but between them, there was one contrived, which I know not if any age can parallel, and I am sure none can exceed: They ordered my woman to be fast bound, and locked in an upper room; having first, with their drawn daggers at her throat, compelled her to write a billet to me, containing these lines:

“ AN accident, such as will take up more time
 “ than I can now afford to relate, takes me from the
 “ honour of your service. It may be long before I
 “ enjoy the happiness of returning. I send this, there-
 “ fore, to let you know, I delivered the letter you
 “ entrusted me with, safe into the hands of Signior
 “ Lorenzo, who cannot enjoy the blessing you would
 “ bestow on him; this night being, as he says, obliged
 “ to attend the issue of an affair on which his life de-
 “ pends. I wish you could be able to forget him
 “ entirely, or think on him but as a man unworthy of
 “ your favour. I am, with all respect and duty,

“ Your Ladyship’s

“ most devoted and faithful servant,

“ LAWRAÑA.”

It

It was to no purpose that this poor creature attested my innocence, by all the asseverations she was capable of making; it appeared evident to them, that if I had not already been guilty in fact, I intended to be so that night; and therefore leaving her in the house where they had first carried her, they went to the place where their attendants waited with the horses; they ordered them to pursue their journey, telling them, they would overtake them the next day. This being done, they concealed themselves in the skirts of the town where they were not known, till the approach of night; when, disguised and muffled in their cloaks, they returned, and waited at the end of a back lane, through which they knew Lorenzo must be obliged to pass; and as soon as they saw him, without giving him the least warning of his fate, plunged both their daggers in his breast, on which he immediately fell: the place being extremely private, gave them no apprehensions of any person coming along, and they tarried by the dead body, till some men, whom they had ordered at that hour, came and joined them, and carried it to the house of a surgeon, who had been brought up in the family of count Caprera, and was entirely at his devotion. Revenge not satiated even with the death of the supposed offender, this cruel husband and father pursued it farther yet, denying the rites of burial to the lifeless bones, which they ordered to be clean scraped, and disrobed of all their flesh, and then set up in the manner you see. For that, oh Miramillia! continued she, pointing to the anatomy, that dreadful spectacle was the once gay, admired Lorenzo.

Here the bursting grief broke in a second time on her discourse, and she was compelled to give some time to it before she could proceed; which at last she did in these words:

Little was I capable of guessing what had happened, yet was I seized with a strange disorder at the receipt of Lawrana's billet; and when afterward I was told by
some,

Some, who little imagined how nearly I was interested in the news, that Lorenzo was absconded none knew where, I was not without feeling some jealous pangs : it entered into my head, that my woman had subverted me in his esteem ; and the remonstrances she had daily given me, not to indulge too far the tenderness I had for him, confirmed me in that opinion. The girl was young, well bred, had a great deal of wit, and a more than ordinary share of beauty ; and to have them both missing at the same time, gave a kind of reason for this conjecture. The letter she had wrote to me, took from me all suspicion of the truth ; and it never once came into my thoughts, that what had passed between us, had reached either my father or my husband ; but if it had, the letters which I received from them every post, would have dispelled such an imagination ; both writing to me with a tenderness which I could not have expected from them, had I believed they had been sensible of my conduct. It was, it seems, the advice of count Caprera, that they should dissemble with me in this manner, till the time of my delivery, which now drew near, was arrived. At their return to Venice, nothing could I read in either of their countenances, which could give me cause to think they were displeased with me ; and the indulgence they shewed me, with the supposed infidelity of Lorenzo, by degrees abating the passion I had for him, I grew perfectly tranquil and easy in my mind. Oh ! had I never been undeceived, I had been happy ; but the hour which was to make me a mother being come, how prodigiously was I alarmed, when I saw my husband and my father enter the chamber, leading between them a priest, who had formerly been my confessor, but had of late been absent on a foreign visitation : the women being desired to withdraw into another room, he began to talk to me of the duties of confession, and the little hope there was of finding mercy at the eternal judgment-seat, for any person who left this world without
having

having first received absolution from those whose business it was to give it ; which, as he said, could not be done without revealing all the remembered transgressions of our lives. You are now in a condition, continued he, which brings death so near you, that the eternal dart hangs over your head, waiting but the Almighty's word to strike you to the center. Beware, then, that you have not yet some undiscovered sin which hangs upon your conscience, nor let shame, or fear of what any mortal power can do, prevail on you to hide it. Speak, and be forgiven ; or dying in silence, expect no mercy. He said much more to the same purpose, I being too much disordered, between pain and wonder, to reply ; but when by repeated abjurations urged to speak, I assured him, that I had nothing to reveal, but what I had already confessed to him, who was my spiritual director. But that is not sufficient, cried my father sternly ; a vast estate depends on the heir you are about to bring into the world, and must not be the portion of a spurious race ; answer with the same truth, as you must do at that dread Tribunal, where, perhaps, you may in a few moments appear, if it be to your husband, count Caprera, that the production of this yet unborn is owing ; and if no other man has ever prevailed on the weakness of your sex, in prejudice of your honour and your vow. The surprize I had been in to what this visit tended, now gave way to an adequate rage, when I found it was occasioned by jealousy. What ! cried I, am I suspected and taxed, in this cruel manner, of a crime my soul abhors ? Ungrateful man ! pursued I, turning to the count, since thou couldst think me false, believe me still so ; nor can I do less than inflict the punishment of doubt for such a wrong. So great was my fury at that time, that I believe, though my father protested the women should not come in to my assistance till I had made a more positive answer to the question proposed to me, I should rather have chosen death, than have given the satisfaction they required, if the interest

of my child, who they both swore should be an outcast as soon as born, had not prevailed on me; and I at length gave my oath, that never had I yielded to the rites of love but with the count my husband. This done, they left me, and the women were permitted to come in; but I was so disordered with the late treatment I had received, that it very much increased the danger of my condition, and my life was despaired of by every body in the room. I was, however, at last delivered of the eldest of those sons you see here: but never mother less rejoiced in being so. Instead of the congratulations I expected from a father and a husband, and those obliging tenderesses for which women chearfully go through that dreadful moment, mine regarded me but with frowns, and sullen discontent, civil to me but when other company was present. It is certain, that whatever people may pretend, grief, without the assistance of some other disease, will never kill; it may by degrees consume the spirits, and decay the body, but not destroy it immediately, else had not I survived the treatment I then endured; much less that which soon after was my lot. The count, who to that spirit of revenge, which is natural to the Italians in general, had a more than ordinary share of it in his composition; and though he was now pretty well convinced I had not wronged him in fact, was certain in his own mind, that I had done so in intention, and that the other also had not been wanting, had it not been prevented by the death of Lorenzo; it was not in his power to inflict more on him. I must be the next, therefore, that felt the force of his indignation; and though the condition I had been in, had till now prevented him from letting it loose upon me, now was the time to vent the long pent-up passion of his struggling soul, and shew me, that all the love he had borne me, was not sufficient to combat with the dictates of his more prevailing resentment. I was scarce able to go out of my chamber, when he told me, he had a spectacle to present me with, which had formerly

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afforded me much satisfaction : and taking me by the hand, led me to this closet, where he had ordered the bones of the unfortunate Lorenzo to be placed as they still remain. Though I had no more than an indistinct guess at the dreadful truth ; yet an object so astonishing, so shocking, had almost deprived me of my senses, before I knew the causes I had for grief. But when he related the story, and with a barbarous pleasure dwelt on the cruel triumph he had gained, my spirits, weakened with pain and inward discontent, were grown too weak to sustain a discovery so alarming ; and I fell motionless at the feet of this vindictive husband. He made use of his utmost endeavours, indeed, to recover me ; but when he had, What exclamations did I not utter ? What did I not say of upbraiding and reproachful ? How did now all my former tenderness for Lorenzo return, and with what an extremity of detestation look upon his murderers ! The names of father and husband were too little to awe the present fury of my soul. A thousand times I cried out to them to compleat their cruelty, and send me to my dear Lorenzo ; nay, was but with the greatest care and diligence prevented from giving myself that death which they denied me. The violence of my passion, I think, abated that of the count's, and he began to treat me with more mildness ; and at last to endeavour, by all the ways he could invent, to alleviate my discontents ; but I refused to listen to any thing he said : and one time, when he was more than ordinarily assiduous about me, I flung from him, and throwing myself on the floor, made a solemn vow, that since he had brought Lorenzo to me, though not in a condition to know, or reward my constancy, no day of my ensuing life should pass, without some part of it being spent with him. For many months did I refuse either to sleep or eat with the count, whom I never called by any other title, than that of murderer, ruffian, and base assassin ; but passions, which rage with that violence mine did, are seldom of long continuance. The tenderness

tenderness he now resumed for me, the penitence he now expressed for what the impatience of his jealousy had made him act, at length won me to forgive him, and endeavour to compose myself. It is now ten years since this affair happened, and time, as it decays all things, has deprived my griefs of their former poignancy. In compliance with my vow, however, I devote an hour every day to the memory of Lorenzo, in this recess, which is the repository of all that now remains of him. Lawrana was, some time after the discovery, released of her confinement, and permitted to attend me as formerly: she is very often my companion in this sad employment, and we join the mournful accents of our sighs for poor Lorenzo's fate. The decorum of the world, the love I bear my children, whose interest it is I should live well with their father, oblige me to feign a forgetfulness, as much as possible, of what is past; and the real tenderness which I believe he now again feels for me, makes him omit nothing which may induce me to return it. Thus is the secret of our misfortune concealed from all who know us; you are the only person intrusted with it, and I depend wholly on your honour for the preserving it.

Here she ceased: and the other, after assuring her that she never would reveal one syllable of what she had said, told her, she was amazed how she could wear a look of so much serenity, when it could not be but that her heart must be all confusion and disorder. Custom, replied she, renders all things easy; even dissimulation, to which my nature was ever most averse, by a long habitude I am now grown perfect in; besides, it is no inconsiderable lightening to the weight of my afflictions, that I give a loose to them in this closet. My mind, disburthened of the pressing anguish by the vent I give it in tears, and in complainings here, has something of an unaffected cheerfulness when I forsake this scene of horror. You see, therefore, Miramillia, that there are woes in the world, of a nature infinitely

superior to those you labour under, and yet are undiscovered even by the most prying eyes.

They had some farther considerations on this head, after which the sorrowful mother took her leave, being well convinced it was not from Anziana that she could hope to retrieve her dear son. At her return to her own habitation, she set herself to think whom she should next address: and in a moment, running through the whole class of her acquaintance, she bethought her of a lady, who had been married very young to a gentleman she passionately loved, and was as much beloved by him; but his relations being incensed at the match, had contrived by a stratagem to send him beyond sea, to a place where he could neither write to her, nor receive any letters from her. They were separated for many years; but the person who occasioned it being called to answer in another world for the cruelty and injustice he had been guilty of in this, the bridegroom was at last returned to the longing arms of his faithful wife. The joy of such a meeting, joined to an affluence of fortune, seemed to promise Miramillia what she had been disappointed of in Anziana; and as she had been extremely intimate with her, and had comforted her in her afflictions, she doubted not but she would be as ready to receive her now in this happy reverse of her fate: she, therefore, made all imaginable haste to her house to wish her joy, and to let her know the service she believed was in her power to render her.

She was not deceived in one part of her conjecture; Isperia, for that was the name of the lady she went to visit, embraced her, and seemed infinitely obliged to her, that she added to the number of those who came to congratulate her on this fortunate turn in her affairs. Some time was taken up in discourses on ordinary matters; but Miramillia, being full of the business which had brought her thither, entreated to speak to her in private. On which, the other taking her by the hand, led

led her into a fine garden, at the upper end of which was a grotto; which entering, as soon as they were seated, the sorrowful mother began her story, and repeating the words of the fortune-teller, begged she would make a trial of his truth, by undertaking this little piece of work; for which, she told her, she could not doubt of her being qualified, since she had, in her dear husband, all that she had ever wished to be possessed of. She had no sooner concluded these words, than the other gave so deep a sigh, that the grieved Miramilla, before she spoke, was more than half convinced her search was not here to end. It is a fault, answered Iscria, to wish with too much ardency, which Heaven sometimes punishes with the utmost severity. I cannot say, but that I have found more mercy, and that I cannot call myself unhappy, while I enjoy the society of my dear Montrano, my ever loved, and ever loving husband; yet is there not a person in the world less fit to be employed in the task you mention, than myself. But lest you should suspect my friendship, I will give you a proof of it, which I intended none ever should receive from me, that of revealing to you the truth of my affairs. After which, I shall leave yourself to judge, if by my hands the enchantment you desire can possibly be wrought. The other, making no other reply to these words than a low bow, in token that she would take it as a favour, she began the narration she had promised in this manner.

THE HISTORY OF MONTRANO AND ISERIA.

YOU know, said she, that the passion with which Montrano and myself were mutually inspired, hurried us to a private marriage, without obtaining the

consent of Polusino, the uncle of Montrano, and from whom alone he had any dependance ; his father having wasted the best part of the estate which was to descend to him on a courtesan, of whom he was so fond, that he quitted one of the best of wives in the world, and lived wholly with her. Polusino, however, had a very plentiful fortune, and having no children of his own, he declared to every body, that the young Montrano should be his heir : I, on the other hand, had but a small dowry, and that too in hands whence I could not easily call it out ; nothing, therefore, could be more unadvised, than for two people in such circumstances to join in marriage : but love is deaf to reason ; the sum of our desires being the enjoyment of each other, we looked on all the misfortunes which might arise from such an union, as nothing worthy our regard : we took all imaginable care, however, to conceal what we had done from the knowledge of Polusino ; but our caution was ineffectual, he was informed of it immediately ; and scarce two hours had we been in bed, before he broke into the house where we lay, with a great number of armed men ; who forcing Montrano to rise, tore him from my trembling arms, and bearing him away, left me in a swoon, which had like to have been fatal to me ; for the people of the house, surpris'd at what had happened, came not into the chamber for a considerable time ; but when they did, they found me on the floor, naked, cold, and in all appearance dead : they applied things proper for my recovery, however, in case there were any remains of life left in me, which, together with the natural strength of my constitution, at last brought me to myself, contrary to the expectation of all about me. I will not prolong the time by a tedious repetition of the exclamations I made ; you may believe they were excessive, and proportioned to the greatness of my misfortune. But how infinitely more wretched, even than what I feared, did I find myself, when the next morning, by break of day, I sent in search of him,

him, and heard, that the next moment to that in which he was ravished from my embraces, he was sent on board a vessel, which then lay ready to set sail, and was bound to some part of the Indies ; but which, I could not by any person be resolved ! The years of fruitless expectation, which I wasted in hope of his return, or hearing some news of him, are well known to you, who so generously visited me in that distress, and omitted no tender office of friendship to alleviate my sorrows. Seven times had the increasing sun cleared the glad husbandman and blest the fields, while all was winter and the gloom of night in my sad mind. Polusino in this time died, bequeathing his whole fortune to Montrano, if ever he could be heard of ; which clause gave a vast addition to my griefs, since till that time I had believed he had not been ignorant where it was he remained : I now doubted not but that he was dead ; men are inconstant, variable in their inclinations as the ever-changing wind, said I to myself ; but though, another object taking possession of his heart, he might forget his suffering wife, the consideration of his interest would not permit him to be remiss in his duty to his uncle. No, no, would I cry out, he is not false ! eternal truth and ever-grateful fondness have on earth no being but in his mind. But he is dead, ~~he is~~ dead ! and it is a prophanation of his memory, to harbour even a thought to the disadvantage of his honour or his love. I now looked on myself as a widow, wore the habit of one, and endured, perhaps, more real anguish in my heart, than the most truly disconsolate one ever had the capacity of feeling or than the most artful one had dissimulation enough to affect. Even time relieved not my affliction, my griefs seemed rather strengthened by age ; and the more I reflected on the merits of Montrano, the more I became inconsolable for his loss. I believe you are not insensible, that every body believing, as I did, that he was dead, I had many who addressed me for marriage : some of their offers appeared too

advantageous to be refused, and I was daily pressed by my friends to pitch on one of them ; but all my notions of love were dead, when I thought Montrano so ; and resolving to devote my future days entirely to his memory, as a grief I thought most just, I made a solemn vow to continue as I was : but that not being effectual to ease me of their importunities, it was my design to retire to a monastery, and was settling my little affairs that I might do so, without having any incumbrance from the world upon me, when Montrano returned. I had a maid, who had lived with me from the time that dear youth had first made his addressees to me ; and as I was sitting one day reading in my closet, she came running to me, with all the marks of the most strong amazement written on her countenance. Two gentlemen, said she, with an accent which seemed to hesitate with terror, entreat to speak with you ; one must be my Lord Montrano, or his ghost : he has his eyes, his mouth, his very shape and air, only more thin and dejected. It is certain, that this poor girl verily believed she had seen a spirit, for never did I behold a creature in such disorder ; but I had no leisure to think on the occasion of it, when he entered the closet ; guessing at the surprize I should be in, and having not patience to wait till it should permit me to come down Iseria ! my dear Iseria ! cried he, am I again so blest to see you ? And with these words snatching me to his breast, prevented my falling on the floor, as I was ready to do, overcome with an excess of joy and wonder. This absence of mind lasted, however, but for a moment, and I again awoke to sense, to thought, and rapture. Impossible would it be, as well as impertinent, to repeat to you the welcomes I gave him, or the softness of his reiterated endearments ; there are a thousand little incoherencies in the talk of lovers which delight beyond the expression, yet will be ridiculous when reported afterwards. The accent, the manner, is infinitely more eloquent than the words ;
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and though love is frequently obliged to wit to make himself be known; yet wit more often is glad to have recourse to the soft follies of love, to make himself rewarded. Our mutual transports would not permit me immediately to perceive there was a strange gentleman in the room; but when I did, the confusion I was in for having so long neglected him, made me blush extremely; and the more I aimed to apologize for it, the more I found myself at a loss how to do it: but Montrano guessing at my thoughts, relieved me; and with an admirable address excused me to his friend, who I soon perceived was a man of excellent good sense and breeding; he made me, in his turn, a great many fine compliments, with which he artfully mingled some praises of Montrano. When Heaven, said he, formed a pair compleat like Montrano and the beautiful Iseria, it certainly intended them as happy as they are deserving to be so. It is, therefore, enough to make us call Omnipotence in question, and ascribe too great a power to the infernal potentate, if any misfortune should arrive which might destroy their peace. I should have taken these words as mere galantry, and regarded them no farther, if I had not seen the face of Montrano covered with a scarlet blush, which was in a moment succeeded by a deadly paleness: and soon a rising tide overwhelmed his down-cast eyes, with difficulty restrained from forcing a passage hence, and gushing out in tears. You may believe so strange a change from all the symptoms of the excess of joy to those of grief, which now I observed in him, filled me with the most shocking surprize; yet resolving to conceal it as much as possible, The misfortunes which threatened us with lasting woe, replied I, are now, I hope, blown over, and all our days to come are harmony and peace. At least, continued I, they must be so, if Montrano feels as sincere a satisfaction in our re-union as Iseria does. I fixed my eyes on his face intently, as I spoke these words, and found so much confusion there, as made me certain

in my mind, something extraordinary had happened, which I should know too soon; but what, I could not be assured. A thousand apprehensions, all at once, came cross my thoughts, which, though I was impatient to discover the truth of, I feared to ask; the disorder in my soul was too visible in my countenance, for both Montrano and his friend not to perceive it; on which the former, assuming an air as much composed as possible, considering the various agitations with which he, doubtless, at that moment was possessed, and turning to the stranger, My dear Alcestus, said he, Iseria is yet ignorant of the reasons which, till now, prevented me from letting her know she had a living husband: I entreat you will relate them to her, omitting no occurrence, which either you have been an eye-witness of, or have heard from my repetition. I will, in the mean time, indulge reflection in yonder gardens, and pay my thanks to the mighty Disposer of all things, that I am permitted once more to see this treasure of my soul; and that I find her in perfect health, and not forgetful of her ever faithful Montrano. He concluded these words with embracing me in so tender a manner, as entirely dissipated all the imaginations I had lately conceived to the prejudice of his constancy: I entreated him to stay while his friend gave me the history of his adventures, or that he would let me know them from his own mouth; but he so earnestly begged, I would allow him the liberty he desired, that I at last forbore to press him contrary to his inclinations; and as soon as he had left the room, Alcestus began to execute his commands in these terms.

A person, said he, who was indebted to my father for a considerable sum, having removed himself and his effects to Ceylon, one of the Asiatic islands, I was obliged to go there; the governor of the fort being a particular friend of our family, we judged he would have interest enough with the Dutch factory there, to compel the villain to do us justice; I embarked in the same ship, on which Montrano, at the dead of night,
was

was forced on board; we began an intimacy there, which I hope will end not but with our lives. He related to me the history of his passion for you, his marriage, and that that was the reason of his being sent to Ceylon, where one, who had been formerly a servant to his uncle, lived now in great repute; having had the good fortune to please the widow of a Dutch merchant, who made him her husband, and put him in possession of all her effects; which was very considerable. With this person, he told me, he was to tarry till commanded back by his uncle, which he expected would not be soon: he concluded his narration with those praises of you, which your beauty merits, and a thousand vows of an eternal fidelity. Though I was extremely troubled at his misfortune, a little motive of self-interest made me pleased, that I had so agreeable a companion in my voyage, and the time I was to remain at Ceylon; but to alleviate his melancholy, I gave him my promise, and indeed spoke no more than I designed, that I would use the utmost of my endeavours at my return, and oblige my father to do the same, to prevail on his uncle to recal him: but Heaven was pleased to disappoint the designs of us all. After having failed with a fair wind and prosperous gale, till we came within a few leagues of our intended port, a storm arose, as violent as it was sudden; we lost all our masts, the bolt-sprit was split in two; and after being tost to and fro for several hours at the pleasure of the waves, a great sea came in, and drove us on a little island belonging to the Maldives, called Ekber, short of Ceylon about seven leagues; it was with great difficulty we got on shore, all those little spots of earth being encompassed with huge craggy rocks, and the savage inhabitants so unskilful in every thing that can be called an art, that their harbours are little better than so many whirl-pools. With an infinite deal of toil and care, however, we at last got our long-boat in, which landing a few men at a time, returned for the rest; but the captain, chief mate,

and five mariners, staying till the last, a sudden hurricane rising in a moment, were all lost by the vessel's splitting, as was great part of the cargo; the rest lodged on the rocks, whence they were afterwards brought away by the inhabitants of this barbarous place. We soon found, that though we had escaped the sea, we were not free from dangers as formidable as that could threaten. We had no sooner gained the shore, than we were descried by two or three of the natives, who sending forth a loud cry, ran up farther into the country; and before we could well resolve in what manner we should behave among a people whom we easily perceived to be wholly uncivilized, we saw near a hundred of them coming towards us; some armed with great branches torn off the trees, some with axes, and a few with bows and arrows: we now repented that we had taken no care to bring our guns from on board, but on second thoughts had reason to rejoice; for though we could have made a pretty good defence against this little troop, they would certainly have fallen on us in greater numbers, and, over-powered by them, at last been provoked to have given us worse treatment; we therefore opened our arms, and presented to them our naked breasts, in token of submission; on which they seemed to receive us kindly; but drawing round us in a circle, conducted us, hallooing and shouting all the way they went, till we came to a place, which, as we found afterwards, was a kind of market, where slaves, such as we were now become, were disposed of to the best bidder.

In this island, and it seems in most of the others belonging to the Maldives, there is a sort of Incas, or king, but all tributary, and acknowledging an obedience to one sovereign of all, who resides in Male, the chief of the islands, and styles himself the emperor of thirteen provinces, and of a thousand islands. He has a great number of slaves, and when he comes abroad, is worshipped as a god. There was at this time a person in Ekber employed by him to buy slaves, and the market-day

day happening to be the next day after we came, we were exposed to sale; myself, with two of our mariners, were chosen for this mighty sovereign, but Montrano was the purchase of the Incas of Alfoore, who had sent a messenger thither also on the same errand. The reason that the great market was generally kept at Ekber, was not only because it was the largest of all the islands, but likewise that, lying at a more considerable distance from any of the others, than they did from one another, and more in the main sea, there was a greater probability of unhappy persons, distressed by weather, taking refuge there than in the others. I thought it a very great addition to my misfortunes, that I was to be separated from Montrano; and I believe he spoke no more than the truth, when he afterwards assured me it was so to him. I will not trouble you with what befel myself in a five-years servitude among these barbarous wretches. The charms of Montrano gained him, for some time, a milder fate. He had been employed in the vile offices, for which he was bought not many days before, as he was working in the garden of the Incas, a piece of paper, folded like a letter, fell at his feet; he took it up, and found it directed, in the Italian language, ‘To the accomplished slave;’ and seeing no person near him, he concluded it must be thrown from some of the palace-windows. The oddness of the adventure at first gave him an infinite surprize; but curiosity, at length, getting the better of it, he unfolded the letter, in which he found a great jewel; rich, but ill set, according to the manner of so unpolite a country. But the value of this present was no ways considerable, when compared with the knowledge, that there was a person among these Pagans, with whom there was a probability he might converse; casting his eyes, therefore, hastily over the letter, he found it contained these lines:

“SOME exclamations which I overheard you make the
 “other day, informed me that you are my country-man;
 “your

“ your air and mien demonstrate you not to be of the
 “ inferior rank of men ; I should be glad to entertain
 “ you in a manner becoming your rank, but dare not
 “ make a public show of the regard I have for you, lest
 “ it should be fatal to us both, but will soon contrive a
 “ way to lessen the hardships you endure ; in the mean
 “ time, desire you will not fail to be in the grove of
 “ oranges, behind the banquetting-house, this night
 “ at twelve o’clock. Burn this billet, and take care to
 “ conceal the diamond which I inclosed in it, more to
 “ give it weight, than that I thought such a trifle
 “ worthy the notice of a man I am resolved to favour.”

There was no name at the bottom ; nor was it in his
 power to form any conjecture, to whom it was he was
 so much obliged : it is needless, therefore, to say he
 longed, with the utmost impatience, for the hour in
 which he hoped to have this riddle solved ; you must
 believe, that in the circumstance of being a slave among
 the most barbarous people in the world, condemned to
 offices with which he was no way acquainted, and for
 want of understanding the language in which he was
 commanded, little able to comprehend his master’s
 meaning, was but by stripes made to discover their
 otherwise unintelligible directions ; languishing his
 nights, painful his days ; and what doubled the misery
 of both, was the belief, that his service was eternal ;
 that the whole remainder of his life must be passed
 among those wretched savages, for ever debarred from
 all social conversation, his friends, his country, and his
 more dear Iferia. You must, I say, believe, madam,
 that in such a state, it was no inconsiderable consolation
 to think there was a person of his own country who pi-
 tied him, and seemed to have power to afford some mi-
 tigation of his misfortunes.

At last the expected moment came, he attended at
 the appointed place, and had not waited long before he
 saw, by the light of the moon, which at that time shone
 exceeding

exceeding bright, an old woman, whom he had often beheld at a distance in the palace, and knew to be an attendant on the wife of the Incas: he told me that he was so much surprized at the sight of her, that he knew not how to receive her with that ceremony, which the station she was in seemed to require, as being the chief favourite of the greatest woman in the island. She perceived the disorder he was in; and approaching him with a smile, I am afraid, said she, in Italian, that the appearance of an old woman may have put a damp to those glorious hopes the letter you received must certainly have inspired you with; but I dare swear, you have too much understanding not to know, that our good genius does not always appear to us in the most pleasing shape. However disagreeable my form may seem, I bring you tidings which may excuse my age and wrinkles. The wife of the Incas of Alfoore, as well as myself, is of your country, both born and bred up in Venice; but her inclinations being somewhat more gay than was consistent with the customs of that republic, she was sent to Brussels, where she had some relations, in order to be made a recluse; I was ordered to attend her to that place; but in our way we happened to meet with a Dutch officer, who being captivated with the charms of Elphania, (for so was then my mistress called) prevailed on her to accompany him to Holland: we lived with him some time; but the inconstancy, natural to mankind, rendering her unhappy in the loss of him, we were reduced to very great hardships, which compelled us to do something contrary to the laws; we were sent to Ceylon, to expiate, by an eternal slavery, a sin, which nothing but necessity could have made us guilty of. Being exposed to sale in the market-place, some persons belonging to this Incas bought us for his service; but we had no sooner arrived here, and were brought into his presence, than he fell so passionately in love with Elphania, that from a slave he raised her to his bed and throne: with this condition only, that she should renounce the christian

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tian faith ; which she did, and is now the most favoured and best-beloved of any of his queens ; though he has some of a birth equal to his own. This, continued she, is the sum of our history before your arrival ; but since you appeared, my royal mistress has been no more herself, all her days and nights have been taken up with contemplating in her mind the perfections of her lovely slave ; but that passion, which the sight of you inspired, was extremely heightened, when happening to be in a close bower in the garden the other day, unseen by you, she heard you lament your ill fortune, and cry out for death, in terms, she said, the most tender and moving that tongue ever uttered. She was, however, extremely pleased to find you were an Italian ; and her thoughts, which had till then been divided, if she should make you acquainted with the tenderness she had for you or not, were now wholly determined to do it the first opportunity. It is charity, said she to me ; it is that natural instinct which prompts us to have a pity for those of our own country, as well as love, which now obliges me to ease the sufferings of this lovely slave ; nor can I, will I, ought I to see him languish under miseries to which I am certain he is a stranger, and cannot long support. She had no sooner formed this resolution, than she wrote the billet, and plucking a diamond off her breast, and folding it in it, that she might be able to hurl it at a greater distance than the paper of itself might have fallen, we saw it light directly at your feet ; at which we shut the window immediately, lest, in the hurry of surprize and joy, you might have approached more near than was convenient, where there are so many spies and guards perpetually attending. This is the intelligence I bring you, sir, pursued she, which if you receive not with the extremest pleasure, you are not only ungrateful, but also perverse ; blind to your own interest, and deserving of the misfortunes you have already fallen under, and those which may ensue from slighted love, and tenderness abused. Montrano assured me, in
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relating this part of his story, that he never in his whole life had been capable of feeling so much scorn and detestation as at that minute; the name of wife to the Incas could not inspire him with such respect, as to take off his contempt for that of a transported felon, in which circumstance he found this queen had been brought to Ceylon; he had his heart already too much devoted to his beloved Iseria, for any other charms to work the least effect. Those of this queen, though she had been the greatest beauty nature ever formed, would not have been able to have compensated for the deformities of her mind. Scarce could he regard the old beldame, who came from her, with patience; he had, however, presence enough of mind to reflect on the danger of disoblighing her; but never, said he, did I go through a greater or more difficult task, than that of affecting a satisfaction at the news she brought; he did it, notwithstanding his reluctance, in such a manner as passed for truth; and the amorous Elphania, not doubting, by what her confederate informed her, but that he was as susceptible of her favours as she wished him, prevailed on her doating husband to give her leave to retire to a little palace they had farther in the heart of the country: she pretended that the air had been prejudicial to her health; and for the recovery of it, he willingly consented she should be for a little time removed. She had the liberty of chusing what slaves she pleased to attend her, and Montrano, for whose sake all this was done, was the first singled out; as for the rest, they were either such whose fidelity she could depend on, or such who had not capacities to fathom the meaning of any thing which was not directly told them. With this equipage she took leave of the Incas, and being arrived at the place to which she intended to go, the slaves were appointed each to their several employments; that of Montrano's was to overlook those that kept the rooms in order, and see that they did their duty; an easy task as to the bodily exercise of it, but his mind was in agitations

tions more violent than ever ; the humour of the mistress he now served, was more perplexing to him than the tyranny of his former masters ; nor had he less to expect from her revenge, when she should find how little he was disposed to comply with her intentions, than from the most inhuman of his own sex. She presented herself to him, her natural beauties illustrated with all the aids and embellishments of art ; she talked to him in so free a manner, that had he not been apprized of her desires by the discourse of her confidante, yet he could not have been ignorant what they were by her behaviour ; but thinking the safest, as well as most galant manner of denying, was, not to seem to know that any thing more was expected from him than submission and respect, he never approached her but with the same awe as that we enter the sacred temples ; but as this was not that sort of adoration which she expected from him, she grew extremely peevish, and after she had dismissed him from her presence, complained to her confidante of the little compliance she found in him, on which the shameless procurer of her pleasures took upon her to chide him severely ; but, while she was doing so, a sudden thought came into his head, which might gain him some time : he told her, that no man could be more sensible of the beauties of her mistress, but that he was under a solemn vow not to know the joys of love for two whole years. More than one of them, said he, is already elapsed ; and as I have kept my promise inviolable till now, have cause to fear, that if I break it, some sudden and unheard-of judgment will fall upon me. This monster of her sex endeavoured, partly by railing at his superstitious regard of oaths, as she termed it, and partly by hinting, that no punishment could ensue the breach of it, equal to that which threatened him in losing the favour of the queen to alter his determination ; but neither persuasions nor menaces being of any use, she was obliged to leave him as she found him, and return to her mistress with an account little pleasing to her. What discourse passed between

between them was unknown as to the subject of it; but he doubted not, by the gloom which sat next day upon both their brows, that it had not been in his favour, and that he should shortly experience all that a cruel and revengeful woman, restrained by no principles of honour, religion, or generosity, could inflict; but, contrary to these suggestions, the intelligencer of the other's meaning told him, that in spite of the coldness with which he had received her queen's affections, and the disregard he paid her, in preferring a foolish vow to her embraces, she still retained a tenderness for him, which would not suffer her to cast him off, and had prevailed on her to wait the expiration of the time he mentioned, for a proof how worthy he was of the passion she had entertained for him. Montrano, said he, answered this message in terms as obliging as he could; and from that time forward was put to no further trouble till the expiration of the year. They soon removed to the great palace, where the deceived Incas received this perjured woman with such demonstrations of kindness, that the knowledge of her ingratitude to such a husband, whose love had raised her from the lowest ebb of fortune, and still continued to support her in all the pomp that that part of the world could afford, made her yet more hateful in his mind; he often told me, that he abhorred even to look upon her. But not to spin out my narration to a tedious length, the whole year of his freedom from her solicitations, he past in contrivances to get from that detested place; but found that impossible, since, had he made his escape to any of the other islands, as perhaps he might have done in a canoe, the Maldives have so good an intelligence with each other, that he must infallibly have been discovered, and sent back to endure the most cruel punishments imaginable. You may think it strange, perhaps, that neither he nor I could have any opportunity of sending to Ceylon, where we both were known, and might early have been ransomed; but the temper of those wretches

wretches is so barbarous, that, besides the use a christian slave is to them, they take delight in triumphing over and detaining them; and having no correspondence with any other nation in the world, they know not the value of their own commodities; and having every thing within themselves, which they are capable of having any relish for, regard nothing which may be offered in exchange for their slaves: gold nor silver is of any estimation with them, their current coin being a white shell which is found upon the mountains, and which the Incas keeps a guard about, it being death by the law for any person, but those appointed by him, to pick up any of it. For these reasons they have, on the frontiers of the island next to Ceylon, a constant number of troops always maintained, who suffer no boat nor person to pass either to or from that place, without a token from the Incas; for that being a place of trade, and having a factory in it of christians, without this caution it would be impossible to keep those people, who are so miserable as to fall into their hands, from regaining their liberty. Montrano, therefore, having no way to fly from solicitations so displeasing to him, to evade them, pretended sickness: a few days before the expiration of the year, he counterfeited so well the most violent pains, that none who saw him but verily believed he languished under them. One thing, indeed, was a great advantage to his feigning, which was, that there were no physicians in that place, their way of curing diseases being to shoot arrows into many parts of the patient's body, believing phlebotomy a remedy for all disorders. Montrano suffered this experiment to be tried on him, but afterward pretended to be much worse than before. In fine, he carried on this deception for the space of seven months, at the end of which time he had an unexpected relief; Elphania fell in reality as sick as he pretended to be; her life was despaired of; and having before made an excuse that the sea air did not agree with her constitution, the Incas would needs have it, that her present disorder
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sprung from the same occasion, and ordered her to be removed on a litter borne on six men's shoulders, thinking that the easiest way of carriage. Montrano seeming not yet perfectly recovered, was dispensed with for not officiating in his employment, but obliged soon after to pretend a relapse; for being, on the queen's being somewhat better, sent for to come to the place where she was, and thinking this would not be a lasting pretence, he feigned madness, and committed a thousand irregularities, though none hurtful or mischievous to any body: Elphania, as well as others, was deceived for a long time; but at length discovered the imposition, by the same means she had done he was an Italian: his misfortunes growing, by their continuance and little appearance or hope of relief, more heavy to be borne, he could not forbear giving them vent in tears and exclamations whenever he was alone: he was one day overheard by the confidante of Elphania's desires, and the report that he was but seemingly mad immediately conveyed to her mistress; on which she resolved no longer to be disappointed in her love, or failing in that of her revenge, for the contempt thrown on her beauty. She again desired leave of the Incas to retire into the country; which being easily obtained, among the number of slaves she took with her, was Montrano---The antick postures of that poor lunatick, said she, may divert in the absence of my dear lord. Nobody in the least suspecting her intentions, whatever she did in those affairs was unquestioned. It was now three full years Montrano had carried on his disguise of madness, without any person in the world believing him otherwise; nor had he any thought that Elphania had discovered the deceit, till they arrived at the little palace which she had made choice of for the scene of her pleasures or revenge; but she was no sooner settled there, than sending for him into her own apartment, where nobody but the old Venetian woman was present, she began to question him, for what reason he had imposed

posed on a queen who loved him. The knowledge that he was suspected did not surprize him so far, but that he had presence of mind enough to endeavour to wave it off, by replying in the same wild and incoherent manner, as he had done since he first affected to be frantick; but she would not suffer him to go on for any long time; but telling him, she was convinced of the imposition he had so unworthily put on her, and that if he did not immediately confess the true motive which obliged him to it, he should suffer the most cruel death she could possibly invent. He paused a little on these words; not, as he said, that he feared to die, but thought, that to die in this remote corner of the world, without the power of acquainting any person with his fate, was something too terrible to be borne; and thinking, that as she was so positive, no worse could befall him in a declaration of the truth, than in a fruitless endeavour to conceal it; he threw himself upon his knees, acknowledged her beauties to be infinite, returned his most humble thanks for the condescensions she had made him; but withal confessed, that he was rendered wholly unable to return her affections, by having, before he saw her, devoted his whole soul to another object; and then proceeded to relate to her the history of his love for you, his marriage, and the cruelty of his uncle; who, separating him from you, had occasioned his falling into the condition of a slave. He told her, he relied entirely on her generosity; and entreated, she would look on him with the eyes of pity and forgiveness.

When Montrano related this part of his history to me, said his friend, he told me, I must make use of my own imagination to conceive, what kind of fury it was that seized the soul of this most vile woman, and sparkled in her eyes. You, madam, pursued he to me, if your soft soul can form an idea so horrible, must tell yourself what was not in his power, who saw it, to describe, much less in mine.---What, cried she, is it for another that I am despised? Is it for the idea of an absent wo-

man the beauties of the present are contemned? The bursting rage prevented her from speaking any farther to him at that time; but turning to the advising fiend, who stood near her, they had some discourse together; after which, in a loud voice, It shall be so, said she; since he is no man for me, he shall not for another. With these words she flew out of the room, leaving only the old wretch with him; who bidding him follow her, conducted him to a room at the farther end of the palace, where having locked him in, she left him for some hours to meditate on what had happened; but towards evening, coming in again, Well, said she, have you considered of your late folly, in the manner you ought to do? Have you repented? And are you now resolved to accept that happiness the queen designs you?---I have already told her, answered he, that it is not in my power.---But have you reflected, resumed she, that your life is wholly in her's? and that with a breath she can dispose your fate?---I have, said he; and whatever miseries Heaven may make her the instrument of inflicting on me, I must endure.---It is well, ungrateful wretch, cried she, but she has more of mercy than thou meritest from her: your life she will not take; but as you slight the joys of love, when proffered you by her, she will take effectual care you never shall taste them with another. Montrano protested to me, that he could not guess what it was she meant, till giving a stamp with her foot, six lusty slaves rushed in, and, in spite of his struggling, bound his hands and feet with great cords: the beldame saw it done; and asking him, once more, if he repented, to which he answered in the negative, she went out of the room, and bade the fellows do their office: on which one of them plucked out a sharp instrument, drew nearer to him, and by some actions discovered to the amazed prisoner his inhuman intent. For, madam, now, continued he, comes on the dreadful part of your unhappy husband's fate. Husband, did I say? Alas! he, from that cruel moment, had no more the power of being

being so ; deprived for ever of the dear names of father and of husband ; robbed of his sex, and doomed to an eternal sterility.

In some time after this fatal event, Elphania, either repenting what she had done, or that it were true, as she said, that she had given orders only to threaten, not really to inflict such a misfortune ; to make what reparation was in her power, gave him his liberty, and a large sum of money, that he might transport himself to Ceylon. In spite of the just hatred Montrano had conceived against her, the circumstances he was in made him accept of her favours ; and hiring a canoe, embarked in it for Candea, the chief city of Ceylon ; but the weather changing, they were obliged to land him among the mountains, fifty miles short of the port he desired : the necessity, however, being unavoidable, he was forced to comply. He found some poor Dutch on the sea-coast, one of whom he took with him as a guide ; but they had not travelled many miles before they were met by a gang of robbers, with whom making some resistance, he was dangerously wounded, after being deprived of all that had been given him by Elphania. The poor guide continued by him till some passengers coming by, he was taken up and carried to a house ; where being taken some care of, and his wounds dressed, though after a very indifferent manner, the strength of his constitution at last brought him to himself ; but the only Christians in that place being Dutch, a people who never were greatly famed for hospitality or charity, so little was contributed towards his support, that the want of necessaries kept him weak much longer than the hurts he got by the thieves would else have done. In fine, he recovered, but had not strength enough, for a long time, even to walk about his chamber, 'till that small pittance, which had been allowed him, being taken away, and the appetites of nature craving support, he crawled out into the street ; an object, he said, of so much pity, that he appeared
more

more like a ghost than a living man. Having been so long kept from air, coming into it all at once, made him faint away, and he fell down at the door of a rich native of the isle; as it happened, he had less of the savage in him than most of them, and could not see a creature of his own species in so lamentable a condition, without affording him some relief; he took him in, had him laid on a bed, applied proper things for his recovery, and gave him the best refreshment he had in the house. Neither of them knew the language of the other; but the Ceylonese made him understand by signs, that if he would serve him, he would be kind to him; but Montrano, as well as he could, let him know he was a passenger, who had been deprived of all he had of value by the robbers; and that he was travelling to Candea, where he had friends who would support him, but that he must beg his way thither. The other shook his head at this information, in token that his countrymen had little charity to strangers; but Montrano being determined, he gave him some small matter toward his support in the journey; with which, after having stayed three or four days to recover his strength, he departed. But, alas! his long indisposition and want had enfeebled his limbs in such a manner, that he rather crept than walked; he moved on, however, in this slow pace for a whole week, half a mile a day being the most he could boast to have travelled; at the end of which time he unfortunately mistook his way, and happened into a wild place, which they call the desarts of Cayamas; there did he wander up and down, unable to extricate himself from that labyrinth of rocks, which lie thick scattered in that dreadful waste; and must certainly have perished, had not Providence sent him a relief by the most unexpected means. A gang of robbers having taken a rich booty, for which, in all probability, they were pursued, had taken shelter in this place, where it was almost impossible for any to overtake or find them. Thinking themselves secure,

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they had sat down to rest and divide the prize at the foot of a great heap of stones, which seemed as if they had been thrown up by some earthquake. When Montrano came on the other side, he heard their voices; and said, he thought he never had heard a sound so pleasing as this was; which gave him intelligence, he should once more see the faces of human creatures, and he hoped he guided from that uninhabited wild. The pile which parted them was vastly long, but not very high, and they happened to lie so on the side he was, that he might easily climb to the top of it; in spite of his weakness, therefore, he attempted it, and with such success, that in a few minutes he gained the summit; whence looking down, he saw five men sitting pretty close together, counting money, which lay in a heap on the ground before them; he was considering in what manner he should get down the ridge of stones, being much more perpendicular on this side than the other, when one of the robbers, happening to cast up his eyes, saw him; the wildness of the place, his pale and ghastly looks, the guilt of the gazer, every thing conspired to terrify; and concluding him to be the ghost of some person he had murdered, gave a great shriek, and presently fell down in a swoon; his companions believing him struck with sudden death, started from their seats, and had all of them, at the same time, a sight of this affrighted object; every one took immediately to his heels, without any regard either of the booty for which they had ventured their lives, nor what became of him they left behind; and the natives of this country being extreme swift runners, they were out of sight in a moment. Montrano guessed what occasioned their terror, and cried out to them to stay; but fear had either made them deaf, or not understanding what he said, they took it for something contrary to what it was. In spite of the numberless miseries of his present condition, he has often told me, he could not forbear smiling at their flight, and falling into some reflections: how inseparable,

nable, thought he, are cowardice and villainy! The place and circumstance he was in, however, giving him little opportunity for indulging them, he deferred it until another time, and made what haste he could to descend; which when he had done, he was in some debate within himself, if he should take the money, so convenient for him in his necessity, and leave the wretch, who had assisted in the unlawful gaining it, to recover as he could; or if he should endeavour to bring him to himself, and by that act of charity engage him to be his guide out of the desert; the latter of these suggestions took place, not only because he had already experienced how difficult it was for him to find his way of himself, but also that it was agreeable to the sweetness of his disposition. Determined to do this, he kneeled down by him, rubbed his breast and temples, bent him forward, and did every thing in his power to restore him to his senses; which when he had done, by signs and some few words which he had learned from the Ceylonese language, he made him at last convinced, that he was no more than a man, and had no design to hurt him. The fellow, thus re-assured, looked about for his companions, and finding they were gone, began to scramble up what they had left behind. Montrano assisted him in gathering it, and by beseeching postures, and such expressions as he could make intelligible, entreated he would conduct him from that desert, which the other promised to do; but by going round about, for fear his companions, when they had considered on the matter, should return and claim their share of the treasure, they were two days before they gained the road, but rejoiced was Montrano once more to see it. At parting, the thief seeing the miserable condition he was in, gave him somewhat to help him on his journey, and on he travelled till he came to a little town, called Javira; there I had the good fortune to renew my acquaintance with him, I having procured my liberty, by having served the sovereign of the Maldives in an exigence,

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which,

which, but for me, had cost him his life. I was taking some refreshment at a house of entertainment, such a wretched one as that place affords, when I saw a person featured like Montrano, but in such an abject and deplorable condition, and so altered in every thing from what he was, that I could not believe the first dictates of my mind, which told me, it was no other; yet resolving to be convinced, I drew nearer to him, as he was asking charity of the landlord of the house. He saw me not 'till then; but as soon as he did, Alcestus! said he. I will not go about, madam, continued this obliging friend, to represent the satisfaction I conceived at meeting with him; which would, indeed, have been as great a grief, had I not, at that time, been master of sufficient courage to ease those calamities which were visible to me: the others which were not, and which, as soon as we were alone, he informed me of, gave me a concern equal to my surprize, that any thing, which had the shape of a woman, could act in so abhorred and shameless a manner as Elphania and her confidante had done; but as there was no relief for a misfortune such as that, but patiently enduring it, I omitted nothing in my power which might console him. We made the best of our way toward Ceylon, which at last we reached; I had the good fortune to execute my father's commands on the villain who had endeavoured to impose upon him; and Montrano found the merchant to whom he had been sent by his uncle, and received from him this pleasing intelligence, that the old gentleman, repenting what he had done, had writ letters to recal him; and when the answers had let him know he had not yet arrived on that coast, had sent others full of grief, and entreating he would make all imaginable search for him. Neither of us, therefore, having any longer business at Ceylon, we resolved to leave it the first opportunity, but were obliged to wait near two years before any ship set sail for Europe; and
when

when after that time we embarked, it was in a Dutch merchant-man, bound for Rotterdam; there were we also compelled to stay a considerable time before any ship offered for Venice; but at length meeting with one, we came together without any farther difficulties, and landed last night; he has not yet paid his duty to his uncle, nor would suffer me to see my father, the tenderness he had for you calling him first here, where, he said, I must also accompany him; not being able, he said, to relate to you himself the misfortune which you now are acquainted with from my mouth.

Thus, said Iseria, did the generous Alcestus end his melancholy narration; which having thanked him for, we went together to the garden, to see what was become of Montrano, whom we found lying in this very grove, in so sad and melancholy a posture as must have moved any one to pity, much more a wife, who loved him more than all things on this side Heaven; and whose affection was not in the least abated by the knowledge of the injury that had been done him. I entreated him to rise; but he refusing to do so, saying, the earth, darkness, and solitude, were fit for such a wretch as he was; I threw myself down by him, protesting that I would never leave him; and that if he did not wish to see me the most unhappy woman in the world, he must throw off all thoughts, and, forgetful of past misfortunes, join me in thanks to the Almighty Disposer of all blessings, that he was at last past over them, and safe in his Iseria's arms, as he should ever be in her heart. As I was speaking in this manner, Oh thou most excellent of all thy sex! interrupted he, think not I come to claim thee as a wife, to curse thy youth and beauty with the shadow of a husband: No; it would be a sin Heaven could never pardon, should I condemn thy charms to cold sterility: thou, who may'st bless the world with a race of angels like thyself. No, my Iseria! I came but to see thee once, then take my everlasting leave, and in some distant cloyster hide me for ever from thy sight.---

Unkind Montrano, answered I, think you my love was sensual? Are you not as dear as ever? And would you leave me, leave me by your own choice? Have I not endured enough, when torn from me by an inhuman uncle? I wasted seven whole years in grief; but you must now inflict a second wretchedness more dreadful than the first: that was unavoidable, but this free-will, and want of love to me, or want of mine to you. But do not think that I will suffer it; no, continued I, embracing him, thus will I cling about you ever, nor shall you throw me off; through lands and seas will I accompany you, and wheresoever you go, Iseria will be there; I am your wife, your lawful wedded wife, and will maintain my claim against the united force of the whole world. Many more expressions, of the same nature with these, did I make use of, to convince him, that I regarded him with the same tenderness as ever, and thought no misfortune equal to that of being separated from him; but could not prevail on him to alleviate his sorrows for a considerable time. Never was there a scene more moving, more truly touching to the soul, nor never conflict more equally carried on by both; fondness with fondness warred, and love was opposed against love; mine at last, however, gained the victory, and he consented to live with me in the manner you see; we pass our days in a mutual endeavour to oblige each other, and our nights in such endearments as a chaste brother might allow himself with a sister he tenderly loved. Our misfortune is entirely concealed from all the world but Alcestus and yourself, on whose discretion I dare rely, else had not made you partaker of the secret. I believe no woman could be more tranquil, in such a circumstance, than myself; yet, Miramillia, loving as I do, and beloved with the same ardour, judge, if I can bring my wishes to that pitch of resignation and content that is necessary to qualify me for the task you would have me undertake.

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The afflicted mother sighed at the little success she had hitherto met with, and having thanked Iseria for the good opinion she had of her secrecy, took her leave, and departed with a heavy heart. The next it came in her head to address, on this score, was a lady in whose fortune there was indeed the utmost appearance of serenity. She was married to a man she long had loved, but had been prevented from being his wife by her parents, who looked on him as her inferior in point of wealth. She now seemed to be possessed of all she had to wish, and was universally believed to be among the happy few. The manner in which she received Miramillia, and the influence of every thing about her, with the tender affection she observed between her and her husband, made this afflicted mother conceive great hopes that her search was here to end.

For which reason letting her know she had something to communicate, she engaged her to retire with her into a room apart from the company, and there related to her the occasion of her coming; at which the other appeared not less surprized than those to whom she had before addressed this suit; fain she would have dissuaded her from suffering herself to be imposed on by the arts of those fellows, who have no other livelihood than what they extract from the ignorant and credulous; but Miramillia, who still continued resolute on making the experiment, would not suffer her to proceed for any time on this theme; and Stenoclea, for so she was called, had too much complaisance to enter with her into an argument which she perceived her friend determined to defend; with an air of pleasantry therefore, which had in it, however, somewhat of dissatisfaction, she told her, that whatever reasons she might have to think herself unqualified for this employment, she would undertake it; because, said she, how little soever you may benefit by it, I am certain of receiving one very great advantage by it, which is the happiness I shall enjoy in your society, which of necessity you must afford me for

the time in which I am at work for you. Miramillia, extremely pleased at the grant of her request, answered this compliment only with a smile and bow, and returned with her to the company, having obtained her promise of beginning the work the next day.

Three days had Miramillia past in this house, in which time both Stenoclea, and Armuthi her husband, seemed to study nothing so much as to divert her melancholy; but all the feats and sports their kindness invented, afforded but a small portion of satisfaction, when compared with that she conceived, at seeing this lady busily employed in that task, which so many had refused to undertake, and from which she had a greater hope than she would make show of, of obtaining her desires; and once more embracing her beloved son. It was now more than half accomplished, when Armuthi being abroad, and the two ladies sitting together conversing on ordinary affairs, a servant, with grief and confusion visible in his face, entreated to speak in private to Stenoclea, who trembling, as if fearing some expected ill, bade him follow her into another room. Stenoclea returned not to Miramillia, till she had heard a great noise below stairs, and a strange confusion of voices, which now gave this unsatisfied mother sufficient cause to apprehend, that something had fallen out which would render this lady also incapable of doing her the service she required. As she was thus reflecting and lamenting the misfortunes of others as well as herself, Stenoclea, with streaming eyes, and all the symptoms of grief, appeared: Oh! Miramillia, cried she, it is now no longer in my power to impose on you: those fears which made me ever incapable of doing you the service you required, though I concealed them, in hopes to put an end to so fruitless an enquiry, are now come to pass, and I must now be known to be the wretch I am; fain would I have deceived you into an opinion of my happiness, by shewing you how ineffectual the performance of what you asked would prove, to prevent you
from

from being any longer deceived by the subtilty of that vain predictor, who advised you to this search——but I am prevented in my design, and so far from that happiness you wish to find, must own my breast a perfect chaos of wild confusion, grief, despair, and shame.

It is hard to say, whether Miramillia was more surprized or troubled at so sudden an alteration ; but having made use of her utmost eloquence to persuade her to a patient enduring of her fate, entreated she would relate by what means she was become unhappy ; on which the other endeavouring to subdue her passions, replied, that she had not thus long made a secret to her of her most private affairs, but with an intention to put her off giving credit to the fortune-teller, and perplexing herself with a vain enquiry after what it was scarce probable she would ever find, or if she did, would be of no consequence to her desires in the end.

Long, said she, have I been wretched, through the fears of that misfortune which is now arrived ; and when you addressed to me as to a happy person, my full eyes were ready in a flood of tears to convince you of your mistake, and proclaim the situation of my heart ; but friendship interposed, and told me, that by deceiving you this once, I should preserve you from continuing to be deceived, since in finding no effect from that piece of sempstry which you believed performed by hands proper to undertake it, you would no more have relied on that fabulous prediction, which I perceive has already given you so much fruitless toil. But my designs are now disappointed, the cruel certainty of my fate leaves me no room for hope, or for concealment ; you and the whole world must now be sensible, the sun in his extensive progress sees not a wretch so lost, so dead to comfort, as the undone Stenoclea.

The distraction of her thoughts here broke in, and for a considerable space of time would not permit her to utter one coherent sentence ; but summoning the whole force of that resolution she was mistress of, she at length re-

covered herself enough to satisfy the high-raised curiosity of Miramillia; and being again desired by her, prepared to give her the account she was so impatient of, and seating herself by her, began in these or the like terms.

THE HISTORY OF STENOCLEA, AND THE SIGNIORS ARMUTHI AND BARNIBAR.

TO make you acquainted, said she, with the means which has brought the sad catastrophe of my fate about, as also to let you a little into the nature and dispositions of the persons concerned in it, I must enlarge my story, by going back into those years which may properly enough be called my childish ones; many things happening at that time, though long since past, which have drawn on the misery of the present.

Know then, dear Miramillia, that I was bred the darling of my doating parents, my only brother being many years elder, and then abroad on his travels; I was looked on as the comfort of their age, their marriage having never produced any other offspring than us two. I need not tell you how careful they were of my education; the little understanding I still retain in poetry, mathematics, music, dancing, and those other accomplishments proper for a person of my sex, will sufficiently inform you; they desired I should be mistress, in as high a degree as my capacity would permit, of every thing desirable in a woman. The reputation of improvement, however, which those who had the care of instructing me favoured me with, joined to a tolerable share of beauty, gained me, before I reached the age of fourteen, a great number of visitors, who pretended themselves devoted to my charms; how much the generality

reality of them were so in reality, I gave myself not the trouble to examine, my whole wishes and desires being centred in the agreeable Armuthi, a gentleman, whose maturity may inform you, was all that was love-inspiring in his bloom ; his age did not at that time exceed mine above five years, yet was there something of a manly majesty, which, mingled with the native sweetness and innocence of his unexperienced youth, gave such charms to his air, which I am unable to express : but he was inferior in point of fortune ; and that deficiency, in the eyes of my parents, (who partially imagined the merits of their daughter might entitle her to the greatest expectations) over-balanced all his perfections. 'They could have given me a dowry which might have served as a competence for both, and made his wants unfelt : not all the tenderness I regarded him with, though not unknown to them, could prevail on them to consent, that I should match with one whose only jointure was his love. In fine, they were now past all remembrance of what once they were, had lost in age the softening desires of youth, and looked on grandeur as the only felicity in marriage. They were continually preaching to me the pleasures of title and precedence ; representing to me the instability of those desires which personal perfections excite, and the numberless ills to which a woman is exposed, who gives herself away merely for the sake of love ; they bid me reflect on the mutability of all passions, and especially on that by which I was at present influenced ; how wretched I should be if Armuthi, after becoming my husband, should swerve from his love, or I repent that which had made me his ; reminded me that the tie of marriage was irrevocable, and that if either of us deviated from our first flame, with what anxiety the chain would be dragged by both. But this was a doctrine in which I had no faith ; I could not believe there was a possibility for love, like ours, ever to diminish ; and as to any other mischiefs, I set them at naught. A thousand times [good Heaven ! pardon

the wild exclamation] I have cried out, O let Armuthi be but mine, and I will defy the worst that fate can do!

But I will not detain you with any particulars of the extravagance of my passion, which are not altogether material to my story; it shall suffice to tell you, that I loved too well to listen to the pretences of any other, though there were many who solicited my father on my account, and some of them very advantageous; but I was not to be moved by their despair, by the entreaties and commands of my parents, nor by any considerations of my own interest; and made no scruple of resolutely declaring, that since I could not be the wife of Armuthi, I would be so of no man. This equally passionate lover would fain have persuaded me to make my escape, and wholly neglecting all future contingencies fly with him to some place, where unknown we might obtain the means of being made one, and consummate our loves; nay, once had he, for a handsome bribe, prevailed on a priest to join our hands without the knowledge of my obdurate parents; but neither to the one nor the other would I give consent; not that I denied through any fears of what might happen to myself for such an act of disobedience, but that I could not bear the thoughts of involving him in the misfortunes which must inevitably fall on me. I loved him with too much real tenderness to consent he should be unhappy with me; and even wished he loved me less, since I found he could not be so without me.

In spite of the diligence with which I was observed, I made use of stratagems which frequently gave us the blessing of meeting, if that can be called so, which was indeed no other than an opportunity of condoling each other, and lamenting our mutual woes. My mother's death, which happened in this time, rid me of one very watchful spy; and though I regarded her with a dutiful respect and love, yet it was so inferior to that I bore Armuthi, that the joy I took in finding myself more at liberty to see him, took away great part of
that

that sorrow I should else have felt for the loss of so near and dear a relation. My father, who had, perhaps, more tenderness for her than he was sensible of himself, survived her not more than half a year, but died with the same resolution that he had lived, to prevent my marriage with Armuthi; and that he might the more certainly do so, he left my fortune dependent on my brother, and to be forfeited to him if ever I became the wife of that present gentleman; and lest my tears should work on his yielding nature to consent to it, the estate was to descend to him, to be the portion of another; both of us to be cut off from his name and title, and as we obeyed this injunction to be blessed or cursed. Severe decree of a dying parent! yet such was the aversion he had conceived for this match, that he would omit nothing which he thought might be a means to hinder it. All the hopes I had on the known sweetness of my brother's disposition were now vanished, since he could not consent I should be the bride of Armuthi, without incurring the curse of our father; nor had the power to preserve me from beggary, without being made a beggar himself. I thought my condition now more desperate than ever; I had indeed no longer obstacles to keep me from conversing with this idol of my soul, as often or as freely as I pleased; but to what end did I see or converse with him, but to become more unhappy by the daily discovery of some new charm, and the reflection that I must never be more his than now I was? I had but one faint shadow of comfort, and that was, that at my brother's return, which was now expected every hour, I should persuade him to mitigate the sentence of my father's testament; and though he could not suffer me to receive my dowry, might evade the penalty of paying it, by allowing me the interest of it per annum, under the denomination of charity. This I sometimes flattered myself I should persuade him to do, and it was this alone which the unhappy Armuthi and myself had to preserve us from despair; for he,
alas!

alas ! had no probable view of maintaining the charges of a family, his whole dependance being on the favour of an uncle, who, though he very much encouraged his addresses to me, while there was the least hope of prevailing on my father to consent to the marriage, was now as much averse, since he had heard the cruel conditions of his will ; and often chid Armuthi for continuing his visits to me. I had not seen him for two days, when, to my inexpressible surprize and grief, I received this letter from him.

Here Stenoclea opened her cabinet, and taking out a paper, read to Miramillia the following lines:

“ MY tongue has for some time been endeavouring
 “ in vain to tell you, oh my for ever loved Stenoclea !
 “ what now I force my pen to do. Oh ! with what
 “ words shall I express what it is I mean ? Can I live,
 “ and say that I no more must see you ; no more must
 “ listen to the enchanting harmony of your heavenly
 “ voice ; no more must hear you own a tenderness,
 “ which to be blessed with, there is not a saint but might
 “ forego his heaven, and stand excused for change of
 “ rapture ? To what a hell am I accursed that must
 “ endure all this ? nay, like Bellerophon, must my
 “ own sentence bear. Yet will I not complain, nor
 “ utter one syllable to express the anguish of my soul,
 “ or excite an unavailing pity in yours. Fate, who
 “ ordains me to this misery, will soon, I hope, be
 “ kindly cruel, and make it too violent to be lasting,
 “ and strike me dead at once. For oh, Stenoclea ! I
 “ have resolved to go for ever from you ; to carry from
 “ your sight a wretch, whose contagious woes drive
 “ peace and happiness from their loved mansion---your
 “ gentle breast. Never, never will I renew those vain
 “ desires of unaccomplished love, nor persecute you
 “ with a fruitless suit. Far from your sight will I con-
 “ ceal for ever this ill-fated form, too much beloved,
 “ since too little worthy of being loved ; and leave you

“ to regain that peace which I have too long destroyed.
 “ Guilty, as miserable, should I be to wish, much less to
 “ attempt, the obscuring of so bright a star ; and in-
 “ volving in the gloom of mine, a life which has so many
 “ opportunities of shining with the utmost splendor.
 “ Oh ! may no thought of me overcloud your future
 “ joys, but an eternal round of blessings crown each
 “ ensuing day ! Farewell ! believe, that in forsaking
 “ you, I now do more to prove my love, than had I
 “ spent the best part of my blood in fighting with some
 “ happier rival ; nay, even in dying for you : that had
 “ been a glorious end ; but this I now go to seek a mean,
 “ lingering, and painful one. Pity me ; oh ! to the
 “ last moment of my life, adored and loved Stonoclea !
 “ for I would still be pitied, though not loved. Hea-
 “ ven ! that I should wish Stenoclea not to love me !
 “ What is there but that dear comfort to withhold me
 “ from running madly into some desperate action, and
 “ breaking through all laws both human and divine ?
 “ Yet, till you cease to afford it, peace must be a
 “ stranger to your breast. Forget me then, banish me
 “ your thoughts ; but wish me not to live : in mercy
 “ pray for the speedy death of

“ The despairing,

“ The distracted,

“ Yet adoring

“ ARMUTHI.

“ P. S. What I have resolved, not even your
 “ commands shall prevent me from executing ; this
 “ therefore comes expecting no reply, and before you
 “ can have formed one, I shall be past the reach of it.
 “ Adieu, once more, too lovely, and too good for my
 “ repose or your own !”

I cannot express the grief I was in at the receipt of
 this letter ; I was nearly touched with the generosity of
 his behaviour, and joined with him in the opinion, that
 since .

since there was scarce a possibility of our being at peace, and indeed the reputation of both demanded our separation, yet could I not consent to it; I found my soul too weak to resolve against what gave me so much pleasure as his society, even though it were only a partnership in misfortunes. I sent immediately to his lodgings, charging the messenger to tell him, I must speak with him before he went. But my commands arrived too late, and I was soon after informed, by one who was intimate with his uncle, that he was gone to travel, but to what part of the world was kept a secret. His only design, as he has since told me, being to seek a cure for his hopeless passion, he thought it would be an ill recipe to feed the distemper by letters or messages from the beloved object. This relation of his alone knew where he went; and having so great a desire to prevent his nephew's throwing himself away, as he called it, on a woman, who if she married him must have no fortune, there was little probability he would reveal it. Inconsolable was I for his departure, sometimes believing his proceeding had been occasioned by an excess of love, and regard for my repose; at others, that it was owing to the want of it; and whenever this last reflection came across my thoughts, it gave me pains too terrible for description.

Soon after this I received letters from Barnibar, so my brother was called, dated from Padua, which brought me word, he was on his return, and would speedily be in Venice: never was there a more tender affection than that with which we had regarded each other before he went to travel; and as I had not abated any part of that which I had felt for him, so I suspected not that absence had diminished his for me, and promised myself in his society a real consolation for the loss of Armuthi: but, O God! when I expected to embrace him, and every moment thought the next would bring him to my arms, I received an account of his death, that he was killed by a gentleman on the road with whom he unfortunately happened to quar-

rel; and a servant he had with him endeavouring to revenge his master's death, was also left for dead; that the person by whom this misfortune had happened was unknown, and had made his escape, so that all hope of doing justice to his manes was extinguished.

Judge what a surprize this must be to a sister that so tenderly loved him; I found no comfort in the vast fortune which by his death I became mistress of, and looked on myself as the most forlorn creature in the world. O, Armuthi! would I cry, thou hast abandoned me, and Heaven knows where thy despair will carry thee---And Barnibar! thou who alone, by thy advice and tender friendship, couldst have brought peace to my afflicted soul, art torn from me by some inhuman hand---O! bring the murderer to light, good Heaven! pursued I, that I may prosecute him with the severest vengeance---let him be taken, let him be detected when he least fears the danger, and sudden ruin overwhelm him, as that he brought on Barnibar, my unhappy brother!

But I will not, continued she, weeping afresh at this part of her story, prolong the sad catastrophe of my fate, by repeating to you the exclamations I made, or the thousand vows I offered up to Heaven, and every saint, for bringing forth this unknown destroyer of my brother's life. I had scarce celebrated the solemnity of his funeral, before I heard Armuthi was brought back to Venice, being seized on the road with so violent an indisposition, that he was unable to pursue his journey, and had taken the first opportunity of a litter for his return. It was reported he was at the point of death, and entreated to see me. Sure never any heart was subjected to such vicissitudes of anguish, as was mine, to have him restored; but restored in such a manner as must deprive me of him for ever, was infinitely more dreadful than all I had before endured. I now perceived that he was still more dear than Barnibar had been, and that all the ties of blood are far inferior to those of love:---In spite of the disgust I had conceived
against

against his uncle, I flew to his house, and regardless of the censure of the world, omitted nothing which I thought might contribute to the recovery of this soul-sick lover, for well I saw grief was his only distemper. My kindness was so great a cordial, that, contrary to the judgment of the physicians, who some hours before I came had said he could not live, I left him very much restored, and in so fair a way of recovery, that it amazed all about him. His uncle, now as obliging to me as he had formerly been the reverse, gave my generosity and constancy such praises, as whoever had heard might have believed; he also was my lover: but I took little notice of them, well knowing that to have a great fortune, independent by the death of my brother, was the greatest charm I had for him. Early the next morning did I visit my dear patient again, and found him in a condition, such as gave me great hopes I should complete the cure I had so fortunately begun; in fine, I left him not till it was fulfilled, and having now no obstacle to prevent his being my husband, was married to him in a short time after, to the great satisfaction of his now obliging uncle.

Nothing ever was more ardent, or more tender than the affections of Armuthi; all his actions, all his words, were so many demonstrations of his sincerity; and as I had given him the utmost proofs of mine, he could not but think his lot extremely fortunate; yet in the midst of all the joy he expressed at my being his, I every now and then observed some starts of anguish breaking out, and giving a check to rapture; deep groans, and sighs too heavy for restraint, would ever and anon burst from his troubled breast, even when surrounded with his most gay companions; nor could the cheerful glass, when swiftly passing round in jocund healths, repel their force, though oft I have seen, and wondering seen him, struggle with the innate disturbance; but in unguarded sleep, with what dire furies seemed his brain possessed! It is false, he would cry, wildly starting up, I killed him not; and then, again, throwing himself
on

on the floor in strange convulsions, Hide, hide me, roared he out, from the offended ghost! Stop, stop that stream of blood! it will swallow me! See! I am encompassed with a liquid fire! all hell is on me! Awaked and frightened with such dreadful sounds, I have perforce broken the chain of sleep, and taken him to my arms; but, oh! what tremblings had the dire visions left on all his frame! in vain, with every art of fond, endearing love, did I endeavour to bring him back to peace; too well I saw tranquillity was banished from his breast, and he but wore a show of soft contentment. As nothing ought to be a secret between persons whom love and law had united in the sacred tie of marriage, I pressed him, with all the tenderness I was capable of expressing, to reveal to me the cause of his affliction; but never could I obtain from him this proof of what he had so often sworn, to deny me nothing I could ask, and in his power to grant; but, on the contrary, he told me that he had in reality no cause for grief, that those troubled visions were a disorder hereditary to his family, and that it was madness to impute the wild ideas of fancy, in which reason had no part, to any real disorder in the waking mind, which he assured me was entirely free from remorse, or guilt of any secret sin, which should occasion such confusion, as he was sensible sometimes appeared in him. I cannot say I was perfectly satisfied with this reply; but having frequently spoke to him on this head, and finding him still the same, and at last to grow a little uneasy, that I expressed a diffidence in what he said, I was obliged to give over any farther interrogatories concerning the affair: his disorders, however, encreasing, especially in sleep, gave me also perturbations which were very terrible to sustain: he so frequently crying out on blood, made me indeed think some had been shed by unwarrantable means; and more than once it struck into my mind, how dreadful a ruin we must be involved in, if by any accident he and my brother should have met, and it should be

the ghost of that unhappy youth, whom he so often named; and the bare apprehensions that such a thing was possible, gave me horrors which I am not able to express; but I endeavoured to banish such thoughts as much as possible, and whenever any thing happened to renew them, strove with all my might to overcome them by arguments of a contrary nature; yet would they not wholly forsake me, and the condition I was in was far from happy.

About five months since our marriage, did I live without any certainty, that there was something in the bottom of all this, more than what I have told you. Oh! would to God I never had been convinced! Suspence, tormenting as it was, was yet inferior to what ensued the dreadful detection of Armuthi's crime, and my irremediable misfortune; but murder though for a time concealed, will, sometime or other, break forth, and blood will call for blood. I was sitting this morning in a low parlour, when I observed a man who seemed to be enquiring for some person in the neighbourhood; I imagined I had seen the face, and looked more earnestly, when presently I saw him come to our gate, and on his near approach knew him to be Stilicon, an old servant in our family, who had attended my brother in his travels, and the same who was reported to have been murdered with him at Padua: I was infinitely pleased to find him alive, hoping by him I might discover who was the destroyer of my dear brother, and take that vengeance which his death required: I ordered he should be admitted immediately, and as soon as he was, began to question him concerning the manner of that unhappy accident; to which he replied in these terms:

We had not, madam, said he, left Padua more than half an hour, before we met a gentleman well mounted, but unattended; either through design or chance, he rode so near my master, that their horses jostled, and the stranger's horse being somewhat fiery, gave a sudden spring, which was very near throwing his rider;

he

he taxed Signior Barnibar with incivility, imputing the cause to him, as not having taken care to guide his beast, or turn him out of the way. My master not thinking he owed that respect to a person unknown to him, and whose appearance seemed not to command such a deference, answered him in terms befitting the arrogance of the demand; on which the other, who, I believe, was heated with wine, challenged him to the proof, which of them merited to be esteemed the bravest man: my master, unwilling to decline the combat, leaped in a moment from his horse, commanding me to take care of him, and, drawing his sword, ran to meet his antagonist, who was already prepared, and, at the first push, received a wound under his left breast of which he immediately expired; I, distracted at what I saw, flew to the sword of my dear dead master, resolute to revenge him, or perish with him: I confess myself too weak to do the former, but was pretty near obtaining my desire in the other; for the murderous weapon which had deprived him of life was buried in my body, and but with difficulty drawn thence by its remorseless master, who, leaving me weltering in my blood, to all appearance dead, made the best of his way toward the city. Some passengers soon after coming that way, the body of Signior Barnibar was conveyed back to Padua, whence you know it was afterwards conveyed to Venice, to be interred with his noble ancestors: I was put under the care of an able surgeon, who, contrary to all expectations, worked a cure on me; but I continued so weak, that I was unable to begin my journey till three days since. Heaven has, however, enabled me to return at a season to revenge the untimely death of my dear master. Early this morning, as I was coming to enquire where I might pay my dutiful respects to you, I saw the barbarous assassin, the idea of whose face, since that cursed moment in which I first beheld him, has never been absent from my mind. I followed, unnoticed, and no doubt
forgotten

forgotten by him, till I saw him enter a magnificent house a few streets off; whence running immediately to a magistrate, I made oath of what I knew, and had proper officers, and a warrant granted to apprehend him. He is now under a strong guard, and I can salute you, madam, continued he, with the joyful news that your brother's ghost will shortly have the vengeance it requires.

So strongly, said Stenoclea, did the fears I have already acquainted you with work in me, that for some moments I was incapable of asking Stilicon the name of him whom he had apprehended; but when I did, he answered me, that he was ignorant either of the name or quality of the person, but that having caused him to be seized, he presently enquired where he might find me, being willing to be the first who should acquaint me with the pleasing tidings.

Never was such a mixture of hope and terror as that I endured all the time he was speaking; I could not think it Armuthi, yet would have given almost my life to have been certain it was not. About this time I heard you coming down stairs, I ordered the fellow to be entertained by the servants, and came into the room to you; I concealed my disorder as well as I was able, and indeed the more I considered the matter, the more I found comfort; I could not think, if it were really my husband who was in custody, but that I should have heard of his misfortune from himself; I resolved, however, to be informed of the truth, by sending a person to the prison; but before I had well determined in what manner to proceed, I was called to one who brought me a letter, the character of which, on the superscription, I knew to be that of Armuthi, and guessed the fatal purport before I read it in these lines.

As she spoke these words, she took out of her pocket a letter, which she put into the hands of Miramillia to read, while she indulged the greatness of her sorrows in

ears, now again past the power of utterance by speech : her sympathizing friend considering, to repeat the contents of that paper would serve but to encrease her griefs, read to herself as follows :

“ I Need not now be demanded the reasons of
 “ that despair you have so often observed, and which
 “ were indeed too justly visible for you not to perceive,
 “ yet Heaven will, I hope, forgive a crime which was
 “ involuntary.---Oh ! that you would as readily be
 “ brought not to hate the man, whose death will soon
 “ atone the murder of Barnibar ! But that were too
 “ vain a hope : by one rash act I have deprived you of
 “ a brother, who was extremely dear to you, and of a
 “ husband who valued nothing in competition with you
 “ ---What can I say in vindication of what I have done,
 “ which will not seem rather to add to the heinousness
 “ of it ? Yet had I loved you to a less violent degree, I
 “ had not thus been criminal ; the grief I conceived for
 “ having taken the life of an innocent gentleman, and
 “ the brother of Stenoclea, should have made me, the
 “ next moment I knew to whom my sword had been
 “ so fatal, resign myself to justice ; and, self-accused,
 “ testified how little my heart was capable of taking
 “ the part of murder, though acted by my own hand :
 “ but, oh ! I must then have gone to the grave un-
 “ blessed with your possession---it was not life, but the
 “ enjoyment of Stenoclea, that made me screen the
 “ murderer of your brother from the just censure of the
 “ law ; yet, oh ! I confess it was a self-interested flame,
 “ and you ought never to forgive the man, who, to
 “ feast on your charms, involved you in his destruction.
 “ Horrid guilt ! I tremble to think how much I have
 “ wronged you ; pity me, it is all I ask ; as for a mi-
 “ tigation of my first crime, the killing of your brother,
 “ it is what I neither hope, nor will endeavour ; the
 “ law requires my blood, and I will yield it a willing
 “ sacrifice ; be you no more severe, nor hate, after
 “ death,

“ death, him who only wished to live for you, and
 “ never can be other than

“ Your most passionately

“ affectionate, though unhappy,

“ and too guilty husband,

“ ARMUTHI.

“ P. S. I dare not entreat to see you, in the circum-
 “ stances under which I am ; yet hope you will not re-
 “ fuse that comfort to my latest moments, which shall
 “ be all employed in imploring blessings on you. Once
 “ more pardon and pity the wretch, who was your
 “ faithful husband !”

Now tell me, Miramillia, resumed Stenoclea, gentle lady, advise me what to do, if a condition so truly desperate as mine can admit of any which may afford the least shadow of a comfort. The moment I had read these heart-wounding lines, officers came into my house, are now in possession as of the goods of a delinquent, and shortly will the lost Armuthi be made an example of public justice, and I, his wife, be driven out to ills, the least of which is beggary.

Few people had more the art of persuasion, or a greater share of good-nature to comfort the distressed, than Miramillia ; but the case was here too desperate, and all she could do for a long time, was to bear her company in tears ; but recovering herself as well as she was able, she at last begged she would not give way to sorrow ; and starting on a sudden, as one waked from a trance, Since you desire my advice, Stenoclea, said she, I will give it you, and have bethought me of a way, which, if it succeeds, will save you from all the miseries you dread ; Armuthi will live ; your reputation will be safe, and goods and lands preserved. You must, continued she, bend your whole study to raise friends to procure a pardon for your husband ; thus far the duty of a wife obliges you to do ; but as it is your brother he
 has

has killed, ill would it become you to live with the murderer of so near and dear a relation. No, you must save Armuthi, but must see him no more. You must be content to pass the remainder of your days in lonely solitude, a widow while your husband lives; and I think, said she, should you dispose, in charitable uses, one half of that estate which by his death would all be forfeited for a less pious end; and with the other retire to a cloyster, there to pray for the expiation of the sin of him, who, doubtless, must still be dear to you; it would be the greatest means of bringing peace to your own mind you could make use of; and besides, be a glorious pattern of virtue, thus fulfilling both the conjugal and fraternal duty.

It was without the least hesitation that Stenoclea assured her, she would gladly take her counsel in every particular, but seemed to entertain little hopes of prevailing for a pardon for Armuthi; on which Miramillia readily made her an offer of using what interest she had with the Senate; and indeed she so effectually made good her promise, that in a week's time she raised this afflicted lady from that extremity of despair she had been in, by obtaining the life of her dear husband. His pardon was signed, and he was released from prison; but before he was so, Miramillia, who thought Stenoclea could not continue to live with him with honour, took care to remove her to a monastery. The distraction of Armuthi, when he found on what terms he was saved, being nothing material to the intent of this book, I shall not go about to describe; therefore shall only say, that when all he could do had proved ineffectual to move Stenoclea from that resolution she had taken by the advice of Miramillia, and by the latter of these ladies being convinced, that he owed no less than such a self-denial to the memory of Barnibar, he followed the example of his wife, and withdrew into a convent, where, among the society of the holy fathers, he was in a little time taught to despise the vanity of all sensual enjoy-

ments, and to spend the days allotted him in this world, in preparations for a better. Stenoclea grew a great example of piety; and after their mutual conversion, there passed letters between them, which have been printed since their deaths, for the edification of others in piety and virtue.

Miramillia left them not till she had seen every article of her advice obeyed, and this so lately unhappy pair in a fair way of being tranquil in their own minds; and looked upon as eminent examples of resolution and strength of virtue, by all who knew them or had heard their story.

But now having so happily finished this good work, her own misfortunes, and the memory of her dear son, made her begin again to think on the fortune-teller's prediction, and renew the search she had for some time neglected, to serve the unfortunate Stenoclea.

In her way home, she passed near the house of a lady who seemed to live in a perfect tranquility, and who being pretty well advanced in years, she thought might at least be free from that destructive passion which had been almost always the cause that she had hitherto found it so difficult to have her wish accomplished.

She ordered her coachman, therefore, to drive to the house of this lady, and was received by her in a manner which left her no room to doubt she should be refused in the grant of her request, as did the appearance of every thing about her make her hope there was no danger of its not being in her power: she did not, however, immediately acquaint her with the cause of her coming, being determined before. She did so, to be fully assured that her search would not here also be as fruitless as it had hitherto been. She continued with her three or four days without letting her into the secret, in which time she observed nothing that could give her cause to fear she should have less success than she wished. Never woman had a more deserving and obliging husband; two fine sons and one daughter were the product of their marriage

marriage joys ; they had an affluence of the goods of fortune, lived beloved and respected by their neighbours, and in a perfect tranquillity at home, all the family seeming to study nothing but the satisfaction of the other. Such a concord, thought Miramillia, must infallibly produce a happiness, which without it grandeur cannot give ; and now determined to pursue her project, communicated to Tellisinda, for so was the lady called, the motive which, joined to the regard she had for her, had engaged her to this visit ; but no sooner had she done speaking, than the other, by a deep sigh, testified how little she was qualified for such an undertaking : which greatly surprizing Miramillia, Alas ! said she, am I also here deceived ? Is Tellisinda so unthankful to Heaven for the blessings she enjoys, as not to be contented with her state ? What secret care, or rather what imaginary ill, intrudes upon your peace, and poisons the real felicities of your life ?---Ah, my dearest Miramillia ! replied that lady, have a better opinion, I beseech you, of my understanding, than to believe I create dæmons on purpose to disturb and fright me : no ; I assure you, on the contrary, that it was only my too strenuous endeavours to preserve my peace that has destroyed it ; I feared to be unhappy, and have made myself so ; by aiming to avoid misfortunes, I have met them ; but I know I speak in riddles, and as my breast has long laboured with the secret, I will explain it to you, and make you judge, if the griefs I labour under have a substantial source or not. Miramillia was preparing to give her some assurances of her fidelity, but the other would not suffer her to proceed ; telling her, that if she had not an entire confidence in her, she should have taken the same care to conceal her discontent from her, as she had done from the rest of the world. Some few compliments of this kind being past between them, Tellisinda prepared herself for the performance of her promise, and soon after accomplished it in these terms.

THE HISTORY OF TELLISINDA.

THOUGH, perhaps, said she, never any persons, linked in the bonds of Hymen, loved with a more true affection than myself and the chevalier; yet having been married four years without any child, he grew so excessively discontented, that I had reason to fear a decrease of his tenderness: I endeavoured to console him for the want of a blessing, which, indeed, I then thought I never should afford him, by arguments such as these: I told him, that if we were not permitted to enjoy the comforts of children, we were also free from the troubles and cares which necessarily attend a paternal state; that if Heaven had thought fit to make us parents, we should have been so; and that we ought not to repine at the decrees of him, who knew better what was good for us than we did for ourselves. In fine, I omitted nothing that my little reading, both in divinity and philosophy, enabled me to say; yet still he was uneasy; and though he said nothing in contradiction to what I offered, yet did a sullen peevishness sit on his brow while listening to me, and sometimes he would fling from me, leaving the room while I was in the middle of my discourse. This distemper grew every day more upon him; and I began at last to fear I should entirely lose his affections; the apprehensions of so terrible a misfortune threw me into a deep melancholy; I became oppressed with it, and could not forbear imparting it to a friend, in whom I had great confidence; by her I was persuaded, contrary to my reason, my religion, and that aversion I was bred to have to every thing which bordered on a deceit, to feign myself with child. But as there appeared no other way of regaining the affections of my husband, I was prevailed on to follow her advice. I did so; and the joy which from that time appeared in the countenance of the chevalier, made me well enough satisfied

with what I had done. Estharia, for so she was called, who had counselled me to this stratagem, took it upon her to provide a child against the time in which it was expected I should be delivered. I will not trouble you with the particulars of our management; it shall suffice to tell you, that the fraud passed undiscovered, and I was supposed to be the mother of a fine boy. I had scarce leisure for reflection, so much were my thoughts employed in answering the congratulations of my friends, and the now renewed endearments of the chevalier; but when I had, I cannot say I was perfectly at ease; the natural antipathy I had to all kinds of deceit, made me look on myself with a kind of contempt; and conscious how little I deserved the tenderness I received from my husband, at least for that which had engaged it, was ashamed within myself for receiving it. I was for some time also before I could fashion myself, to behave to the child in any manner becoming a mother; but time, which renders all things easy, brought me at length to dissemble with a good grace enough; and at last, indeed, accustoming myself to fondle and caress it, grew to have a sort of tenderness: but, alas! it could at most be no more than that of a good-natured nurse, as I soon after was convinced; for my supposed son being about a year old, I became, indeed, with child; and I no sooner found I was so, than I perceived a vast difference in my affections, even to that unborn product of my own, than I had ever known for that, whose little engaging actions could not but excite a sort of love in me. In due time he, who now passes for my younger son, but is, indeed, the only one I ever had, made me in reality a mother; and with that name informed me with all those softening fears, those tender perplexities, and ravishing fondnesses, which I had so often observed and wondered at in others. But when the joy of seeing that dear image of myself gave way to cooler consideration, how severely did I accuse myself for the deceit I had used! how greatly did I blame Estharia

for the advice she had given me ! But she was now dead, and past the reach of my reproaches. The thoughts that he must be the inheritor of the estate of my dear son, drove me almost to madness, and filled me by degrees with a kind of hatred to that poor innocent, who was but guilty of offending me through my own fault ; for I must acknowledge, that from his earliest infancy till this time, he has discovered such a sweetness of disposition, as would have made me happy in being the mother of such a son, had I in reality been so. He is now esteemed the finest gentleman in this part of the country ; and, in spite of the prejudice of nature, I cannot but confess, that in many things he very much excells his supposed brother ; yet, deserving as he is, oh Miramillia ! he is a stranger to my blood, and is it not hard that he should deprive him, who is not, of his inheritance ? Yet, by what means shall I avoid it ? A thousand times, in the fondness of soul for the other, I have opened my mouth to tell the chevalier the whole story ; but fear and shame as often prevented me from speaking. I cannot discover the fraud I have been guilty of, without exposing myself at once to the indignation, and, perhaps, eternal hatred of a husband who is very dear to me, and the just censure and reproaches of the whole world ; for it cannot be supposed, but that Herranius, so is my pretended son called, would inveigh loudly against the injustice of my proceedings. But if I were so disposed, I know not by what means I should make out the truth of what I say ; Estharia is dead, as I have before observed ; there was but one person beside her let into the secret, who also is no more. I know not from whom that subtle creature procured him ; nor can I, by any other proof but my own oath, make out that he is not mine : I should incur the hate and scorn of all who know me ; and, perhaps, leave things in the same position they were in before. Was ever affliction equal to mine ? Have you, in all your inquisition after happiness, found a person more truly

truly distant from it, than the unfortunate Tellisinda? ---It is easy, madam, replied Miramillia, for any one, who is a mother, to guess a mother's grief in so perplexing a circumstance; yet cannot I advise you to throw Herranius off: he is your son by adoption, though not by birth; and you know the old Romans made no difference between the one and the other, but according to the virtues they observed in them. Herranius, you say, has merit; let that endear him to you; you have robbed him of parents, to whom, perhaps, he might have been dear; though misfortunes prevailed on them to part with him for the hope of a better provision: not that, methinks, I would have him, who is really your son, be deprived of his birth-right; there may be ways and means found out to make them at least equal in their fortunes; and it will be of much better consequence to study that, than, by betraying the secret to the chevalier, run the hazard of forfeiting his affections; and, at the same time, be guilty of a cruelty to an unhappy youth, who thinks himself your own.

Tellisinda could not but approve her reasons; she assured her she would take the advice she had so kindly given, but could not bring herself to that state of tranquillity which was necessary to oblige her in the affair which had brought her thither; nor did the other, since made acquainted with her story, expect it from her; and therefore took her leave in a short time.

Having made so many vain essays among the married ladies, she began to imagine that there was no possibility of finding one in that state entirely free from care, and therefore resolved, if she prosecuted her search, it should be only to those who had not yet given up their freedom she would apply. She bethought herself of a young lady, who by the death of her parents was left mistress of a very considerable fortune; she was very beautiful, and had accomplishments enough to make her a fit wife for the first nobleman in Venice; but her gaiety, and the unaffected ease of her conversation, made it evident

she was yet wholly free from any infection from that dangerous passion, which is generally the original of all the misfortunes of the fair.

Miramillia had no sooner recovered the fatigues of her journey, than she went to visit Amalia, for by that name was this lady distinguished; she found a vast deal of company with her, and her good humour alone it was which gave life to the conversation. Our afflicted mother did not doubt but that contentment dwelt here, and longed till she had seen the other ladies depart, that she might communicate to her the request she had to make. At length this part of her wish was fulfilled; and she was beginning to endeavour for the other, when a woman in an ordinary habit came into the room; on the sight of whom Amalia rose from her seat, and begging pardon of Miramillia for a moment's absence, ran with her into a closet, with all the appearance of a most eager impatience in her looks and air. She returned not in a considerable time; and when she did, the alteration, which was visible in her countenance, made Miramillia believe some very extraordinary accident had happened; and in that opinion, Madam, said she, I hope you have heard nothing which should rob you of any part of that cheerfulness which lately was so entertaining to your friends?---Oh, madam! replied she, the saddest accident! I never was so much perplexed in my whole life; I would rather have given half my fortune, than have met with such a disappointment. It is not to be borne. Good God! continued she, fretting more and more, to be debarred of one's will in such a thing as this; sure I have the hardest fortune of any one in the world.---I hope, said Miramillia, you are not entering into a lawsuit?---No, no, answered the other, I have enough to trouble me without that, of a more vexatious nature; never any body was so disappointed, so mortified. These words filled Miramillia with a kind of curiosity to know what had worked so great a change in her; she continued to ask her several questions concerning the cause of her disorder,

disorder, as if it proceeded from the news of the death of some one she had a friendship for, and several other such demands; to all which she answered in the negative; but joined to it still, that her misfortune was far worse: which words raising to a greater height Miramillia's desire of knowing, she entreated to be made the confidante of this secret; but it was not in the power of the other presently to comply with her request, the disturbance of her mind not permitting her to bring forth any more than broken sentences: tears at length afforded her some relief; and after giving a loose to them for about two or three minutes, she regained the power of speech, and related her calamity in these words: you know, said she, that there is a great ball at court next week; all the Beau monde will be there, and every body is endeavouring to be as fine as they can: Sabina, who is, without exception, the vainest creature in the world, showed me a piece of the richest brocade I ever saw in my life, that is to be made up for her against the time; and you never heard any thing boast with so much insolence as she did, that she should be the best dressed of any body; silly creature! she forgot she was talking to a person who could as well afford to purchase a handsome thing as herself. I was resolved to be even with her, and had formed a design, which, if not prevented by the laziness or treachery of the person I employed in it, would have been an excellent piece of revenge. With a vast deal of industry, and some artifice, I procured a pattern of Sabina's brocade, and finding it was not to be matched, sent it to my mercer, whom I ordered to show it to the weaver, that he might make a certain number of yards for me exactly of the same figure, but with a vast deal more silver in the ground: there are also some large green leaves in it, on which I intended to have had here and there several small diamonds and rubies, and other precious stones tacked on. Oh! it would have been the most beautiful fancy, and the richest, that ever was seen; but, oh Miramillia! the

base wretch, that I depended on, that promised me so faithfully, has disappointed me; he sent word just now, that he begged my pardon, but could not possibly get it done in the time. Was ever such a neglect, such an impudence, when I had told the fellow he must work night and day to do it? I could tear him in pieces, and myself too, that I must be triumphed over by such a creature as Sabina, who, though she is neither handsome nor very young, will have all the world staring at, and admiring, her clothes, while nobody takes any notice of me, though, without any vanity, there is no comparison between us.

Miramillia could scarce contain her laughter at the recital of so ridiculous a misfortune; and, willing to console her as well as she could——But, dear Amalia! said she, why should you afflict yourself so deeply? Methinks this vexation might easily be removed; there are without doubt other very handsome silks in town; buy the richest the shops will afford, and pursue your design of embroidering it with diamonds; I am confident you may make it appear equally glorious with her's, whatever it be. That is true, replied Amalia; but, my dear, you mistake the thing: the mortification I proposed to give her pride was this, to have of the very same pattern a silk so infinitely to outshine her's. I would not give a ryal to be finer than she in any other dress; but it would have been the most elegant satisfaction to have observed the baulk it would have been to her, to have beheld her own pattern so much outdone. But why do I talk of it? continued she; my hope is past; all my designs are frustrated; and I must content myself either to feign an indisposition and stay at home, or, by going there, resolve to endure all the fine compliments that will be made her on the delicacy of her fancy.

All that Miramillia could say to her was of little service to make her in a better humour, and she was obliged to leave her to indulge it, not imparting any thing of the reasons which had induced her to this visit; rightly
judging,

judging; that when people set their hearts on trifles, a disappointment, even in them, is as hard to be endured, as things of the greatest consequence are to others.

Not being willing yet to give over her search, the next whose character promised her success was Clorilla, a young lady of great birth, beauty, and education; but she was inconsolable, because her father, being of a different turn of mind, had refused a post of honour offered him by the Senate, and another had accepted it, who had daughters, that by virtue of their father's office were now entitled to sit above her in all public assemblies. She bore this vexation with much the same degree of moderation, as Amalia had done the disappointment of her silk: Miramillia concluding nothing was to be expected here to forward the experiment she was so much desirous to make trial of, ordered her coach to drive to the house of Claribella, a young lady who seemed to have every thing that can complete happiness excepting a husband, and that was every day in her power to be possessed of, being solicited in marriage by the richest and most accomplished noblemen in Venice; but she appeared no friend to love, and declared to all her acquaintance, that she had yet never seen the man who had any temptations for her to quit her liberty. She had the reputation of being of the most easy, as well as gay temper imaginable; and Miramillia accused herself of want of thought, that she had not made the first application to her, which might probably have saved her the trouble of the rest: but, alas! she had not time to communicate to her the intent of her visit, before she had reason to suspect it would be of little purpose: she received her indeed with all the civilities due to a lady of her quality and character, but yet there might be seen a sort of peevishness in all her air, which denoted she was far from being perfectly at ease; which Miramillia perceiving, asked if she was well; and that question presently informed her how much fame had deceived her in reporting this lady for a woman of so much good hu-

mour. I am not at all surprized, madam, answered she, that you should take me to be indisposed; not that I think I am at all altered since you saw me last, but the prodigious charms of Ismenia make too great an eclat to suffer any other woman to be thought tolerable. It would be impossible to represent the surprize in which these words involved the person to whom they were addressed; she knew, indeed, there was a lady called Ismenia; that she was the daughter of a senator, and esteemed a very lovely maid; but what concern this should be of Claribella's, or why she should name her to a person who had not the least acquaintance with her, she could not imagine: to ease herself, therefore, of this perplexity, As I am ignorant, said she, of any of the affairs of that lady, I cannot guess of what consequence her beauty can be to you.---Pardon me, madam, resumed the other, your late griefs have, perhaps, made you regardless of the news of the town, else it is impossible but you must have heard the vast reputation Ismenia has acquired by the death of Charino.---You would oblige me with the relation of it, said Miramillia; for I assure you I never heard it mentioned, though I had formerly some acquaintance with Charino, and looked on him as a most accomplished gentleman.---He was so, replied Claribella; and no doubt, but if he had made his application, might have been thought well of by women of greater distinction than Ismenia: but what he saw in her, Heaven knows! to inspire him with so prodigious a passion; the more he adored, the more she insulted. I never saw any thing in my life arrive at that monstrous height of vanity she did; nor a man, especially one who had sense too, degenerate to so low and mean a submission as did Charino: he was like her shadow, followed her wherever she went, talked of her in all company as of the most lovely creature in the world. Thus it went on between them for about three months, at the end of which, she continuing to use him ill, he shot himself through the head, leaving a letter behind him,

him, to acquaint the world for what cause he did it. Since this demonstration of her power, there is no enduring Ismenia; she is grown so assuming, that it is impossible to converse with her; and yet you cannot imagine how much she is admired by the men. I suppose they think, because one has been fool enough to die for her, that she really deserves to be cried up in the manner she is; in fine, there is nothing now talked of in town but her beauty; she is the general toast; and it is looked on as folly or envy not to join in the ridiculous praises which are given her.---This is the first time I ever heard of this adventure, said Miramillia, and am extremely sorry that Charino should have so small a sense of the duties of religion, and so poignant a one of a foolish passion. But I cannot see why you should be discontented at it, any farther than common compassion for the untimely death of so agreeable a chevalier. If Ismenia has stupidity enough to be pleased with so fatal an effect of her charms, and is induced by her vanity to behave in the manner you describe, it is easy to break off all acquaintance with her; for my part, though I am concerned when I see any of my sex give way to foibles of that kind, I think it not my duty to afflict myself for what I cannot prevent, nor happens through any fault of mine.---But can I stop my ears from the encomiums with which I am perpetually persecuted? cried Claribella. Can any thing be more provoking, than to see mankind so much bewitched to a creature, that, in my opinion, has no one good quality to attract their admiration? Does not the whole world run mad after her, worship her as a goddess? The meanest of the people, unblest with opportunity to view the mighty wonder near, stand in the street in throngs, watching her coming out, then croud about her chariot, crying, How fair she is! How exquisitely charming! Wherever she goes, all eyes are fixed upon her; all tongues seem to outvie each other in her praise, as if the folly of Charino had spread its infection through all the race of man.

man. No, certainly, replied Miramillia, (with a half smile, now plainly perceiving the cause of her disquiet) not through all, I dare say; you have your admirers, who confess your power of charming. --- Coxcombs! wretches all! resumed the fair votary of envy, what avails their pretending a passion for me, when they do nothing to attest it to the world? Oh, Miramillia! a woman gains more glory to have one man die for her, than to have a thousand live and languish at her feet. It was not all Charino could say or swear, that set up the fame of Ismenia; but in that one action, his death, he has recorded the force of her charms to all posterity. Heavens! how fortunate some women are, and how much the contrary others! Notwithstanding my great estate, allowed good qualities, and birth, I pass for nothing in the esteem of the world, am unregarded, slighted; and yet, without my glass extremely deceives me, she is far from having the pre-eminence over me, either in face or shape. Good God! how is it possible to be contented under such visible partiality? She had not, perhaps, given over her exclamations for a much longer time, had the torrent of her tears allowed the power of farther speech: nor could Miramillia offer any thing to interrupt her, so greatly was she amazed that a woman, endued with good sense in other things, should so much suffer it to be debased by her excessive vanity and desire of admiration. But perceiving she had left off speaking, she could not forbear mixing some grave-reproofs with her consolations; she begged her to consider how little essential to true happiness was the being accounted beautiful, and how much better it was to be sincerely loved by one worthy man, than to have the noisy encomiums of the whole sex; and at the same time reminded her, that nothing was more an argument of a mean and ungenerous soul than to envy another, either for real or imaginary perfections. But how little effect such kind of discourses were able to work on her, any one, who in the course of their life has met with a

woman

woman of Claribella's temper, may easily believe. She said nothing, however, in opposition to her persuasions; but the other finding little hopes of making a convert of her, shortened her visit, and departed with a perfect indignation in her mind, that persons, whom Heaven designed to bless, should, by their own perverseness of disposition, render themselves unhappy. But her own misfortunes hindering her from giving too much attention to the calamities of others, whether real or imaginary, she resolved to make yet one more essay.

Selinda was a young lady very much celebrated for an uncommon share of wit and understanding; and being endowed with every thing she could wish for in life, she imagined not that such a one would discontent herself with any fancied ills. To her therefore she resolved to apply, and in a few days made her a visit, with all that form which is made use of among people who live in the great world, and are not sufficiently acquainted with each other, to have made a mutual agreement to throw off those tiresome and indeed unnecessary ceremonies.

But she was soon convinced how much she was deceived in her expectations here; for desiring to speak with her, the chief attendant, with air affected, and all that mimicry of good breeding which those sort of people abound with, told her, that her lady could by no means appear; that her favourite lap-dog had died of an apoplexy some few days ago, and she was inconsolable for so great a misfortune; but that as soon as she saw company, she was very certain she would think herself favoured in a visit from her. This put Miramillia beyond all patience: Heavens! cried she to herself, are all our sex devoted to disquiet? Is there a fate upon us to be wretched? Must we labour under woes of our own formation, when Fortune contributes all she can to make us happy? Good God! continued she, that even wit is not a defence from vanity and affectation! Thus, like Amalia, Clorilla and Claribella, do we torment ourselves with 'childish and imaginary
ills,

ills, till taught by real ones how mad we have been, and wish the past could be again recalled.

These reflections induced our afflicted mother to return to her house, with a firm resolution to give over an enquiry which she was now convinced would be altogether fruitless, and depend wholly on Heaven for the restoration of her peace; either by hearing of her dear son, or by obtaining a stock of patience to support the uncertainty.

She had not fixed this determination many days, before she found the good effects of it: that son, whose absence she had so long deplored, and who nobody now believed was in the world, was, when she least expected it, returned to her embraces. A coach-and-six, containing the young Adario, so he was called, a grave old gentleman, and a most beautiful virgin, came to her gate. The transport she was in to behold once more that darling of her soul, left her not the power of observing by whom he was accompanied: she hung upon his neck; she clasped him with raptures, such as only mothers know; she gazed on him with an agony of pleasure; for a long time she could bring no other words, than, My son! My son! Adario! My dear Adario! But extasy at length giving way to reflection: Where have you been? she cried, and why, by your absence and your silence, have you involved me in griefs which have been very near fatal to me?—Oh pardon the transgression of my seeming neglect, best of parents, and of women, answered he; but as it is to this gentleman you are indebted for my life, be pleased to hear from his mouth my vindication. These words making her turn her eyes on the company, she immediately knew the person he mentioned to be signior Clotario, one who had been the most passionate of her adorers, when in a virgin state; but being rejected by her for the father of Adario, his despair had made him several times attempt the life of that more happy rival, for which there had ever since remained an extreme hatred between the families;

lies ; but to be told that he had been instrumental in preserving Adario, chased from her breast all sentiments but those of gratitude : she received him with all civility ; and being told by him, that the young lady who came with him was his daughter, made her all the compliments her beauty and fine air demanded from as many as saw her. After which, being impatient to know by what means they had become acquainted with her son, she pressed for the gratification of that desire ; and Clotario, pleased to oblige, began in this manner :

THE HISTORY OF FELICIA AND ADARIO.

THIS young girl, said he, pointing to Felicia, is the only child I ever had by a lady who, after Miramillia, seemed most worthy of my affections ; but the present she had made me of her, proved fatal to herself : she died in child-bed ; and though I was extremely afflicted for her loss, I thought it would better become the love I bore her, to transplant it to the dear pledge she left me, than to waste my whole thoughts on what was not to be recovered by all my cares. Few fathers regard their children with that tenderness I have ever done Felicia, and to do her justice, none ever seemed more to deserve it. When grown to an age to be sensible of my indulgence and her own duty, she made it all her study to let me see the one was not thrown away, by her strict observance of the other. I shall pass over in silence the improvements she made in all the accomplishments I thought it proper she should be instructed in, lest you should imagine I consider her with too partial an opinion. Such as she is, however, the noblest chevaliers in the country solicited my consent to obtain her in marriage ; but she appeared so far
from

from having any inclination to enter into that state, that she entreated me with the utmost earnestness to permit her to remain as she was. I loved her too well to press her to any thing she disliked, and assured her I would never exert my authority in that point, unless I should see her agitated with a blind passion for one unworthy of her; she protested, she would never entertain the least emotions of that kind, without first knowing if I was willing she should indulge them; and I observed in her so much discretion in other things, that I made no scruple of believing her. I depended entirely on her conduct, and was free from those corroding cares which so much perplex the generality of fathers. But the greater my imagined security, the greater my disappointment, when I had reason to believe myself deceived. One morning, surprized that she came not to pay her usual testimonies of obedience, I sent to her chamber to enquire her health, and was informed that she went early into the fields, accompanied by a young man called Ferronese, the son of a person who had formerly been a servant to me. I was not pleased to hear she was gone out so attended; not that I thought she could be inspired with any affection for a man so much beneath her; but that having heard a bad character of him, I suspected he might be employed as an emissary from some other, whom I was certain I should not approve, thus recommended. I was just sending to order she should return, when a poor man, who happened to be at work in the grounds, came running almost out of breath to inform me, he had seen Ferronese on horseback with Felicia before him, who shrieking and crying out for help, plainly testified she had no hand in her own rape. I demanded which way they went, and having been informed, made my servants immediately mount in their pursuit. They obeyed with diligence, and were so successful in their search, that in the forest of Adorno, behind your castle, they found my daughter rending the air with cries, and standing between two persons who
seemed

seemed dead, or dying; one of them was the false Ferronese, and the other her valiant defender, the gallant Adario: but his name or person being utterly a stranger to her, she told them, that as it was to that brave unknown she was indebted for the preservation of her honour, she should think herself the most ungrateful of women, if she did not use her utmost endeavours to bring him out of a condition in which he fell but for her sake. She added, That there were signs of life in him, and therefore ordered some of the men to ride with all speed to the next town for a litter; while she endeavoured, as well as she could, to bind his wounds. Her commands being obeyed, he was brought in that manner to my house; where the truth being related to me, I commended her behaviour, and was no less zealous than she had been, to save the life of a person to whom I was obliged for the restoration and protection of my child. The surgeons no sooner looked on his wounds, than they informed me none of them were mortal, and that his only danger consisted in loss of blood, and having lain so long. They gave me hopes, however, of his life, and nothing was omitted which might prevent the disappointment of those hopes. In a few hours he opened his eyes, and soon after had the use of speech; but we forbore asking him any questions, being told, that nothing would be so prejudicial to him as noise or light. We exactly observed the orders given us by those to whom we committed the care of him; but I could not avoid taking notice that Felicia enquired of his health, with a concern which seemed to have in it something more than gratitude. When she related how bravely he had fought in her relief, and with what courage and gallantry he flew, in the defence of her chastity, on the villain who attempted it, her eyes sparkled with fire I had never seen in them before. She seemed agitated with an unusual warmth. She took pleasure in repeating the tale whenever she had an opportunity. She was transported at the hopes given her

her of his recovery: she could not conceal her disorders whenever any suspicious words were let fall, that it was dubious: in fine, her very look and action expressed a tenderness which made me tremble. Pardon me, excellent Miramillia, I knew him not for Adario; and though, even in that dismal state, I perceived enough about him, to believe him not unworthy of her; yet the uncertainty whether he might look on her with the same eyes, or indeed might be in a condition to return her affection, made me fear she should place it on him. I concealed my sentiments, however, till I should be more assured, judging with reason, that if my conjectures were true, she would be more wary in her behaviour before me. The great skill and care that was employed, in a week's time relieved us from the fears of the death of our guest, and the young Felicia could not conceal a joy at the news, which heightened my suspicions. It was more than a month, however, before we were permitted to speak to him, and then no more than to testify our zeal for his recovery, so extremely weak was his condition. We were told by the persons employed to watch with him, that the chief use he made of his recovered speech, was, first, to enquire in whose house he was; and being told it belonged to the person in whose daughter's cause he had received those wounds, he expressed the utmost satisfaction; but that on the hearing my name, it visibly abated, and he seemed rather troubled, than the contrary, to receive any obligations from Clotario. He could not, however, refrain asking many questions concerning Felicia; such as what solicitations she had for marriage, who were the pretenders to her, which of them she seemed most to favour, or to whom I was inclined to dispose of her, by what means she came to be exposed to the danger from which he had delivered her? All which being answered according to the direct truth, they said he expressed an infinity of pleasure, to hear she was not yet engaged either by duty or inclination. I
could

could not be told these things, without believing the same sentiments had inspired them both; and having myself, as you very well know, madam, experienced the force of love, sincerely wished he might be of such a quality as might not render their's unfortunate, which I very much feared, because of the regret with which he heard of her's. Admittance at last being allowed, I went to visit him, taking Felicia with me; decency and gratitude I thought obliging her to pay this respect to one to whom she was indebted for all that was most dear to her: I imagined also, that by being present at this interview, I should be able to assure myself of the sentiments of them both, more fully, perhaps, than any other way; and indeed there required but little penetration to read in their countenances what passed in their hearts. Their affection for each other was as apparent as the care they took to conceal it; nor can I say, that I was much troubled at it; there was something in the face and voice of Adario that insensibly attached me to him. I did not indeed, Miramillia, think of you at that time, much less imagine that this noble youth was your son; yet it is certain, that great resemblance he has to a form which had been once so dear to me, it was that filled me with impressions so much in his favour. The first civilities being over, I desired him to let me know to whom I had been so much obliged; but never did I see so sudden and so strange an alteration as appeared in him at this demand. That extreme paleness, which the weakness of his condition had spread over his face, now gave way to a flushing red; it seemed as if his whole little remains of blood had forsook all other parts to paint his blushing cheeks. His lips trembled as he was about to make reply, nor could he presently bring forth a word; but when he did, it was in this manner: How easy were it for me, said he, to impose on your belief, by giving myself a name to which I have no pretence! But know, my lord, that whatever I am, I was bred to hate deceit; and as there

is an unfurmountable reason for my concealing from what family I am descended, think it a less misfortune to run the hazard of passing in your esteem, as a person who has done something, for which he is afraid to be ashamed to own himself for what he is, than to be conscious of a crime like falsehood. This only (continued he) I entreat you to believe of me, that I am wholly devoted to your service, and am so far from regretting that in it I have spent part of my blood, that I would gladly shed the remainder on the same account, and bless Heaven for nothing more earnestly, than that I have been the happy instrument of restoring the admirable Felicia to your embraces. Here he ceased to speak, and the astonishment his words involved me in, left me not the power of making him an immediate answer; I was confounded, I knew not what to think, I could not believe he was of a birth inferior to what his pride would make him wish to be thought; there was something so noble in his air and countenance, as presently checked all suggestions of that kind. Nor could I imagine he had been guilty of any thing which should oblige him to conceal himself: that galant freedom with which he spoke, and that love of truth which he preferred to all things, made me conceive the highest opinion of his honour, and his justice: in fine, what he said was both pleasing and disturbing to me; I admired him more than I had done, but was more fearful than I had been, lest Felicia should do so too. When the tumults of my thoughts would give me leave, I told him, that the obligations I was under to him, forbade I should press to know any thing he was unwilling to reveal; nor, as I had done nothing to deserve his confidence, could not take it ill that he refused it me. However, pursued I, before we part, you may perhaps have a better opinion of my discretion and my gratitude; and as a proof that you are desirous to make trial of both, I beg you will command every thing in this house, with the same freedom as you would your

own. He made no other reply to these words than bowing his head, for he had not yet recovered strength enough to move his body in the least ; after this we began to talk of the villainy of Ferronese, and the little security a young woman can have out of the presence of those whom duty and nature oblige to be tender of her honour. Felicia excused her going into the field with him, by saying he told her, there was that moment a great mountain raised at the end of it in that night, which he imagined had been done by an earthquake ; she added, that not having the least suspicion that he had any design on her, nor could apprehend a danger of any kind so near the house, she had run out to see this wonder, at the garden-gate which led to the field, and happened to be then open ; but that she was no sooner out of hearing, than she perceived a horse tied by the bridle to a tree, on which he mounted, taking her by force in his arms, and making no stop till he came to that wood, where Adario found him ready to sacrifice her honour to a passion she would not consent to gratify by marriage with him. I observed, while Felicia was relating to Adario the means by which she was carried away, she took a more than ordinary pains in excusing her inadvertency ; and this served to convince me more, that she was in reality as sensible of the tender passion as it is possible for a young heart to be. We continued in the chamber till a certain faintness, which his countenance, in spite of him, betrayed, reminded me that we had put him on the necessity of speaking more than his strength would bear ; and indeed the surgeon found him so disordered at his next visit, that he desired we would forbear any further conversation with him for a good while. It was near another month before we were suffered to go into his chamber, any farther than the door, to enquire after his health, which I constantly did every day. But I took notice, that after this, Felicia grew extremely melancholy, and at last so pale, and her whole air so dejected,

jected, that she was scarcely to be known : I guessed, that this change in her proceeded from the endeavours she made to conquer the passion she had entertained for a person who was resolved to continue a stranger to her ; and to forward her cure, sent her to the house of a sister of mine, who had many children of much the same age with herself, in whose society I hoped her melancholy might abate : I perceived an unwillingness in her to go, but not so much as offered any thing in opposition to it. But she had not been there many days before my sister sent her back, fearing some sad effect of her distemper, which, from the moment she left home, had increased by such swift degrees, that at her return she seemed but like the spectre of the once gay Felicia. Adario too, on hearing she was gone, fell into convulsions, which were near being fatal to him ; this new disorder, however, retarded his recovery so much, that it was near four months before he was able to walk about his chamber. I was so greatly affected with their mutual distress, that I resolved to relieve it, if by any means I could : but neither of them having declared their sentiments to me, I was at a loss how to break the knowledge I had of them, either to the one or the other. My concern for my child, whom I saw almost at the point of death, made me at last cast aside all scruples. I revealed to her the discovery I had made, and perceiving she was in a confusion scarce supportable, I endeavoured to comfort her, and told her it was no breach of modesty for a young maid to be charmed with merit such as our guest appeared to be master of. I assured her also, that I saw the same passion working as powerfully in his soul as in her's, and that if there was no greater impediment than I could yet foresee, marriage should, in a small time, complete their mutual wishes. The answers she made were but short, and consisted only in thanks for the tenderness I expressed for her repose ; yet could I plainly discern the greatest indulgence

Indulgence on any other score would have availed but little to the recovery of her peace.

From her I went to the chamber of Adario, whom I found extremely pensive; I would not, as yet, take any notice to him of my design, being desirous of seeing if he would reveal to Felicia more than he was willing to do to me: to accomplish which intent, I ordered dinner to be served in his chamber, seeing he was now in a condition to endure company. This was done every day; and, sometimes pretending sudden business, I would retire, on purpose to give him the liberty of explaining himself, if he had courage to do so. I questioned my daughter concerning his behaviour, and she with blushes at last confessed, that he had declared himself her lover; that having told him she could not, without breach of modesty, accept of any proposals of that kind from a person, who, while he made an offer of his heart, concealed his name; he assured her, that his quality was not inferior to hers; but that, when she pressed him to make it known, he only sighed, and turned his head away. I need not repeat the trouble I was in at this latter part of the account. You may believe, on the one side, I was infinitely concerned at the despair of a child so dear to me; and, on the other, could not think of giving her to a man, from whom nothing could draw the secret of his birth. After a long consideration, I commanded Felicia to inform him, she would listen no farther to the declarations he ceased not to make her, nor on any terms believe his pretensions were such as were consistent with honour, unless he made them known to me, and also from what parents he derived his being. She obeyed, and he appeared in all the confusion imaginable; he told her, that he had not the least hope of succeeding; that all the reason he had so long concealed himself was, that he was certain of losing all that good-will the service he had done me had acquired, when once that fatal secret should be discovered:—There is, said he, an enmity

between our parents, which, on the side of yours, I fear will never cease. But why should I delay your attention? He, at length, was prevailed on to discover himself your son; which I was no sooner made acquainted with, than I felt a transport which no tongue is able to express.---The merits of Adario seemed now to shine with double lustre, when I knew they were derived from Miramillia. Miramillia! whom I have never ceased to admire, even when my rash despair made me attempt the life of the man most dear to her: I flew immediately to Adario, I embraced him with all the demonstration of a paternal affection, assuring him, I should think myself blessed in making him my son. There remains, said I, but one impediment to our common satisfaction, the consent of your excellent mother, her forgiveness of a crime, which I have since severely repented of, and vouchsafing to join your hands. Adario returned my endearments as became his affection to my daughter, and gave me hopes you would not be less bounteous to his wishes than I had been.

Thus, madam, continued he, have you heard the history of a passion, which, as violent as it is, has not transported the persons influenced by it to act any thing contrary to duty, or to honour; all the tenderness Felicia has been so fortunate to inspire in the soul of Adario, has never made him once intreat the gratification of his desires, till authorized by your permission. If then the mutual love of these darlings of the hearts of us both, can be of any power to move you; or the sincere penitence of Clotario mitigate the guilt of his former rashness, behold I join in their submissions, and intreat you will not be refractory to their wishes.

Here ceased Clotario to speak; and taking Adario in one hand, and Felicia in the other, they all three fell on their knees before Miramillia; who expressing some confusion to see Clotario in that posture, first raised him in the most obliging manner, then embraced Felicia and Adario with a tenderness, which denoted she would be far

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Here ceased Clotario on one hand, and Felicia in the other, on their knees before Miramillia in confusion to see Clotario in that manner, the most obliging manner, the most tender, which







