Liber Amoris, Or, The New Pygmalion

by William Hazlitt

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The circumstances, an outline of which is given in these pages, happened a very short time ago to a native of North Britain, who left his own country early in life, in consequence of political animosities and an ill-advised connection in marriage. It was some years after that he formed the fatal attachment which is the subject of the following narrative. The whole was transcribed very carefully with his own hand, a little before he set out for the Continent in hopes of benefiting by a change of scene, but he died soon after in the Netherlands—it is supposed, of disappointment preying on a sickly frame and morbid state of mind. It was his wish that what had been his strongest feeling while living, should be preserved in this shape when he was no more.—It has been suggested to the friend, into whose hands the manuscript was entrusted, that many things (particularly in the Conversations in the First Part) either childish or redundant, might have been omitted; but a promise was given that not a word should be altered, and the pledge was held sacred. The names and circumstances are so far disguised, it is presumed, as to prevent any consequences resulting from the publication, farther than the amusement or sympathy of the reader.

CONTENTS

PART I THE PICTURE THE INVITATION THE MESSAGE THE FLAGEOLET THE CONFESSION THE QUARREL THE RECONCILIATION LETTERS TO THE SAME TO THE SAME WRITTEN IN A BLANK LEAF OF ENDYMION A PROPOSAL OF LOVE PART II LETTERS TO C. P., ESQ. LETTER II LETTER III LETTER IV LETTER V LETTER VI LETTER VII LETTER VIII TO

EDINBURGH A THOUGHT ANOTHER ANOTHER LETTER IX LETTER X LETTER XI TO S. L. LETTER XII. UNALTERED LOVE PERFECT LOVE FROM C. P., ESQ. LETTER XIII LETTER THE LAST PART III ADDRESSED TO J. S. K.—— TO THE SAME (In continuation) TO THE SAME (In conclusion)

PART I

THE PICTURE

H. Oh! is it you? I had something to shew you—I have got a picture here. Do you know any one it’s like?

S. No, Sir.

H. Don’t you think it like yourself?

S. No: it’s much handsomer than I can pretend to be.

H. That’s because you don’t see yourself with the same eyes that others do. I don’t think it handsomer, and the expression is hardly so fine as yours sometimes is.

S. Now you flatter me. Besides, the complexion is fair, and mine is dark.

H. Thine is pale and beautiful, my love, not dark! But if your colour were a little heightened, and you wore the same dress, and your hair were let down over your shoulders, as it is here, it might be taken for a picture of you. Look here, only see how like it is. The forehead is like, with that little obstinate protrusion in the middle; the eyebrows are like, and the eyes are just like yours, when you look up and say—“No—never!”

S. What then, do I always say—“No—never!” when I look up?

H. I don’t know about that—I never heard you say so but once; but that was once too often for my peace. It was when you told me, “you could never be mine.” Ah! if you are never to be mine, I shall not long be myself. I cannot go on as I am. My

faculties leave me: I think of nothing, I have no feeling about any thing but thee: thy sweet image has taken possession of me, haunts me, and will drive me to distraction. Yet I could almost wish to go mad for thy sake: for then I might fancy that I had thy love in return, which I cannot live without!

S. Do not, I beg, talk in that manner, but tell me what this is a picture of.

H. I hardly know; but it is a very small and delicate copy (painted in oil on a gold ground) of some fine old Italian picture, Guido's or Raphael's, but I think Raphael's. Some say it is a Madonna; others call it a Magdalen, and say you may distinguish the tear upon the cheek, though no tear is there. But it seems to me more like Raphael's St. Cecilia, "with looks commercing with the skies," than anything else.—See, Sarah, how beautiful it is! Ah! dear girl, these are the ideas I have cherished in my heart, and in my brain; and I never found any thing to realise them on earth till I met with thee, my love! While thou didst seem sensible of my kindness, I was but too happy: but now thou hast cruelly cast me off.

S. You have no reason to say so: you are the same to me as ever.

H. That is, nothing. You are to me everything, and I am nothing to you. Is it not too true?

S. No.

H. Then kiss me, my sweetest. Oh! could you see your face now—your mouth full of suppressed sensibility, your downcast eyes, the soft blush upon that cheek, you would not say the picture is not like because it is too handsome, or because you want complexion. Thou art heavenly-fair, my love—like her from whom the picture was taken—the idol of the painter's heart, as thou art of mine! Shall I make a drawing of it, altering the dress a little, to shew you how like it is?

S. As you please.—

THE INVITATION

H. But I am afraid I tire you with this prosing description of the French character and abuse of the English? You know there is but one subject on which I should ever wish to talk, if you would let me.

S. I must say, you don’t seem to have a very high opinion of this country.

H. Yes, it is the place that gave you birth.

S. Do you like the French women better than the English?

H. No: though they have finer eyes, talk better, and are better made. But they none of them look like you. I like the Italian women I have seen, much better than the French: they have darker eyes, darker hair, and the accents of their native tongue are much richer and more melodious. But I will give you a better account of them when I come back from Italy, if you would like to hear it.

S. I should much. It is for that I have sometimes had a wish for travelling abroad, to understand something of the manners and characters of different people.

H. My sweet girl! I will give you the best account I can—unless you would rather go and judge for yourself.

S. I cannot.

H. Yes, you shall go with me, and you shall go WITH HONOUR—you know what I mean.

S. You know it is not in your power to take me so.

H. But it soon may: and if you would consent to bear me company, I would swear never to think of an Italian woman while I am abroad, nor of an English one after I return home. Thou art to me more than thy whole sex.

S. I require no such sacrifices.

H. Is that what you thought I meant by SACRIFICES last night? But sacrifices are no sacrifices when they are repaid a thousand fold.

S. I have no way of doing it.

H. You have not the will.—

S. I must go now.

H. Stay, and hear me a little. I shall soon be where I can no more hear thy voice, far distant from her I love, to see what change of climate and bright skies will do for a sad heart. I shall perhaps see thee no more, but I shall still think of thee the same as ever—I shall say to myself, “Where is she now?—what is she doing?” But I shall hardly wish you to think of me, unless you could do so more favourably than I am afraid you will. Ah! dearest creature, I shall be “far distant from you,” as you once said of another, but you will not think of me as of him, “with the sincerest affection.” The smallest share of thy tenderness would make me blest; but couldst thou ever love me as thou didst him, I should feel like a God! My face would change to a different expression: my whole form would undergo alteration. I was getting well, I was growing young in the sweet proofs of your friendship: you see how I droop and wither under your displeasure! Thou art divine, my love, and canst make me either more or less than mortal. Indeed I am thy creature, thy slave—I only wish to live for your sake—I would gladly die for you—

S. That would give me no pleasure. But indeed you greatly overrate my power.

H. Your power over me is that of sovereign grace and beauty. When I am near thee, nothing can harm me. Thou art an angel of light, shadowing me with thy softness. But when I let go thy hand, I stagger on a precipice: out of thy sight the world is dark to me and comfortless. There is no breathing out of this house: the air of Italy will stifle me. Go with me and lighten it. I can know no pleasure away from thee—

“But I will come again, my love, An’ it were ten thousand mile!”

THE MESSAGE

S. Mrs. E—— has called for the book, Sir.

H. Oh! it is there. Let her wait a minute or two. I see this is a busy-day with you. How beautiful your arms look in those short sleeves!

S. I do not like to wear them.

H. Then that is because you are merciful, and would spare frail mortals who might die with gazing.

S. I have no power to kill.

H. You have, you have—Your charms are irresistible as your will is inexorable. I wish I could see you always thus. But I would have no one else see you so. I am jealous of all eyes but my own. I should almost like you to wear a veil, and to be muffled up from head to foot; but even if you were, and not a glimpse of you could be seen, it would be to no purpose—you would only have to move, and you would be admired as the most graceful creature in the world. You smile—Well, if you were to be won by fine speeches—

S. You could supply them!

H. It is however no laughing matter with me; thy beauty kills me daily, and I shall think of nothing but thy charms, till the last word trembles on my tongue, and that will be thy name, my love—the name of my Infelice! You will live by that name, you rogue, fifty years after you are dead. Don't you thank me for that?

S. I have no such ambition, Sir. But Mrs. E—— is waiting.

H. She is not in love, like me. You look so handsome to-day, I cannot let you go. You have got a colour.

S. But you say I look best when I am pale.

H. When you are pale, I think so; but when you have a colour, I then think you still more beautiful. It is you that I admire; and whatever you are, I like best. I like you as Miss L——, I should like you still more as Mrs. ——. I once thought you were half inclined to be a prude, and I admired you as a "pensive nun, devout and pure." I now

think you are more than half a coquet, and I like you for your roguery. The truth is, I am in love with you, my angel; and whatever you are, is to me the perfection of thy sex. I care not what thou art, while thou art still thyself. Smile but so, and turn my heart to what shape you please!

S. I am afraid, Sir, Mrs. E—— will think you have forgotten her.

H. I had, my charmer. But go, and make her a sweet apology, all graceful as thou art. One kiss! Ah! ought I not to think myself the happiest of men?

THE FLAGEOLET

H. Where have you been, my love?

S. I have been down to see my aunt, Sir.

H. And I hope she has been giving you good advice.

S. I did not go to ask her opinion about any thing.

H. And yet you seem anxious and agitated. You appear pale and dejected, as if your refusal of me had touched your own breast with pity. Cruel girl! you look at this moment heavenly-soft, saint-like, or resemble some graceful marble statue, in the moon's pale ray! Sadness only heightens the elegance of your features. How can I escape from you, when every new occasion, even your cruelty and scorn, brings out some new charm. Nay, your rejection of me, by the way in which you do it, is only a new link added to my chain. Raise those downcast eyes, bend as if an angel stooped, and kiss me. . . . Ah! enchanting little trembler! if such is thy sweetness where thou dost not love, what must thy love have been? I cannot think how any man, having the heart of one, could go and leave it.

S. No one did, that I know of.

H. Yes, you told me yourself he left you (though he liked you, and though he knew—Oh! gracious God! that you loved him) he left you because "the pride of

birth would not permit a union."—For myself, I would leave a throne to ascend to the heaven of thy charms. I live but for thee, here—I only wish to live again to pass all eternity with thee. But even in another world, I suppose you would turn from me to seek him out who scorned you here.

S. If the proud scorn us here, in that place we shall all be equal.

H. Do not look so—do not talk so—unless you would drive me mad. I could worship you at this moment. Can I witness such perfection, and bear to think I have lost you for ever? Oh! let me hope! You see you can mould me as you like. You can lead me by the hand, like a little child; and with you my way would be like a little child's:—you could strew flowers in my path, and pour new life and hope into me. I should then indeed hail the return of spring with joy, could I indulge the faintest hope—would you but let me try to please you!

S. Nothing can alter my resolution, Sir.

H. Will you go and leave me so?

S. It is late, and my father will be getting impatient at my stopping so long.

H. You know he has nothing to fear for you—it is poor I that am alone in danger. But I wanted to ask about buying you a flageolet. Could I see that which you have? If it is a pretty one, it would hardly be worth while; but if it isn't, I thought of bespeaking an ivory one for you. Can't you bring up your own to shew me?

S. Not to-night, Sir.

H. I wish you could.

S. I cannot—but I will in the morning.

H. Whatever you determine, I must submit to. Good night, and bless thee!

[The next morning, S. brought up the tea-kettle as usual; and looking towards the tea-tray, she said, "Oh! I see my sister has forgot the tea-pot." It was not there, sure enough; and tripping down stairs, she came up in a minute, with the tea-pot in one

hand, and the flageolet in the other, balanced so sweetly and gracefully. It would have been awkward to have brought up the flageolet in the tea-tray and she could not have well gone down again on purpose to fetch it. Something, therefore, was to be omitted as an excuse. Exquisite witch! But do I love her the less dearly for it? I cannot.]

THE CONFESSION

H. You say you cannot love. Is there not a prior attachment in the case? Was there any one else that you did like?

S. Yes, there was another.

H. Ah! I thought as much. Is it long ago then?

S. It is two years, Sir.

H. And has time made no alteration? Or do you still see him sometimes?

S. No, Sir! But he is one to whom I feel the sincerest affection, and ever shall, though he is far distant.

H. And did he return your regard?

S. I had every reason to think so.

H. What then broke off your intimacy?

S. It was the pride of birth, Sir, that would not permit him to think of a union.

H. Was he a young man of rank, then?

S. His connections were high.

H. And did he never attempt to persuade you to any other step?

S. No—he had too great a regard for me.

H. Tell me, my angel, how was it? Was he so very handsome? Or was it the fineness of his manners?

S. It was more his manner: but I can't tell how it was. It was chiefly my own fault. I was foolish to suppose he could ever think seriously of me. But he used to make me read with him—and I used to be with him a good deal, though not much neither—and I found my affections entangled before I was aware of it.

H. And did your mother and family know of it?

S. No—I have never told any one but you; nor I should not have mentioned it now, but I thought it might give you some satisfaction.

H. Why did he go at last?

S. We thought it better to part.

H. And do you correspond?

S. No, Sir. But perhaps I may see him again some time or other, though it will be only in the way of friendship.

H. My God! what a heart is thine, to live for years upon that bare hope!

S. I did not wish to live always, Sir—I wished to die for a long time after, till I thought it not right; and since then I have endeavoured to be as resigned as I can.

H. And do you think the impression will never wear out?

S. Not if I can judge from my feelings hitherto. It is now sometime since,—and I find no difference.

H. May God for ever bless you! How can I thank you for your condescension in letting me know your sweet sentiments? You have changed my esteem into adoration.—Never can I harbour a thought of ill in thee again.

S. Indeed, Sir, I wish for your good opinion and your friendship.

H. And can you return them?

S. Yes.

H. And nothing more?

S. No, Sir.

H. You are an angel, and I will spend my life, if you will let me, in paying you the homage that my heart feels towards you.

THE QUARREL

H. You are angry with me?

S. Have I not reason?

H. I hope you have; for I would give the world to believe my suspicions unjust. But, oh! my God! after what I have thought of you and felt towards you, as little less than an angel, to have but a doubt cross my mind for an instant that you were what I dare not name—a common lodging-house decoy, a kissing convenience, that your lips were as common as the stairs—

S. Let me go, Sir!

H. Nay—prove to me that you are not so, and I will fall down and worship you. You were the only creature that ever seemed to love me; and to have my hopes, and all my fondness for you, thus turned to a mockery—it is too much! Tell me why you have deceived me, and singled me out as your victim?

S. I never have, Sir. I always said I could not love.

H. There is a difference between love and making me a laughing-stock. Yet what else could be the meaning of your little sister's running out to you, and saying "He thought I did not see him!" when I had followed you into the other room? Is it a joke upon me that I make free with you? Or is not the joke against HER sister, unless you make my courtship of you a jest to the whole house? Indeed I do not well see how you can come and stay with me as you do, by the hour together, and day after day, as openly as you do, unless you give it some such turn with your family. Or do you deceive them as well as me?

S. I deceive no one, Sir. But my sister Betsey was always watching and listening when Mr. M—— was courting my eldest sister, till he was obliged to complain of it.

H. That I can understand, but not the other. You may remember, when your servant Maria looked in and found you sitting in my lap one day, and I was afraid she might tell your mother, you said "You did not care, for you had no secrets from your mother." This seemed to me odd at the time, but I thought no more of it, till other things brought it to my mind. Am I to suppose, then, that you are acting a part, a vile part, all this time, and that you come up here, and stay as long as I like, that you sit on my knee and put your arms round my neck, and feed me with kisses, and let me take other liberties with you, and that for a year together; and that you do all this not out of love, or liking, or regard, but go through your regular task, like some young witch, without one natural feeling, to shew your cleverness, and get a few presents out of me, and go down into the kitchen to make a fine laugh of it? There is something monstrous in it, that I cannot believe of you.

S. Sir, you have no right to harass my feelings in the manner you do. I have never made a jest of you to anyone, but always felt and expressed the greatest esteem for you. You have no ground for complaint in my conduct; and I cannot help what Betsey or others do. I have always been consistent from the first. I told you my regard could amount to no more than friendship.

H. Nay, Sarah, it was more than half a year before I knew that there was an insurmountable obstacle in the way. You say your regard is merely friendship, and that you are sorry I have ever felt anything more for you. Yet the first time I ever asked you, you let me kiss you; the first time I ever saw you, as you went out of the room, you turned full round at the door, with that inimitable grace with which you do everything, and fixed your eyes full upon me, as much as to say, "Is he caught?"—that very week you sat upon my knee, twined your arms round me, caressed me with every mark of tenderness consistent with modesty; and I have not

got much farther since. Now if you did all this with me, a perfect stranger to you, and without any particular liking to me, must I not conclude you do so as a matter of course with everyone?—Or, if you do not do so with others, it was because you took a liking to me for some reason or other.

S. It was gratitude, Sir, for different obligations.

H. If you mean by obligations the presents I made you, I had given you none the first day I came. You do not consider yourself OBLIGED to everyone who asks you for a kiss?

S. No, Sir.

H. I should not have thought anything of it in anyone but you. But you seemed so reserved and modest, so soft, so timid, you spoke so low, you looked so innocent—I thought it impossible you could deceive me. Whatever favors you granted must proceed from pure regard. No betrothed virgin ever gave the object of her choice kisses, caresses more modest or more bewitching than those you have given me a thousand and a thousand times. Could I have thought I should ever live to believe them an inhuman mockery of one who had the sincerest regard for you? Do you think they will not now turn to rank poison in my veins, and kill me, soul and body? You say it is friendship—but if this is friendship, I'll forswear love. Ah! Sarah! it must be something more or less than friendship. If your caresses are sincere, they shew fondness—if they are not, I must be more than indifferent to you. Indeed you once let some words drop, as if I were out of the question in such matters, and you could trifle with me with impunity. Yet you complain at other times that no one ever took such liberties with you as I have done. I remember once in particular your saying, as you went out at the door in anger—"I had an attachment before, but that person never attempted anything of the kind." Good God! How did I dwell on that word BEFORE, thinking it implied an attachment to me also; but you have since disclaimed any such meaning. You say you have never professed more than esteem.

Yet once, when you were sitting in your old place, on my knee, embracing and fondly embraced, and I asked you if you could not love, you made answer, “I could easily say so, whether I did or not—YOU SHOULD JUDGE BY MY ACTIONS!” And another time, when you were in the same posture, and I reproached you with indifference, you replied in these words, “Do I SEEM INDIFFERENT?” Was I to blame after this to indulge my passion for the loveliest of her sex? Or what can I think?

S. I am no prude, Sir.

H. Yet you might be taken for one. So your mother said, “It was hard if you might not indulge in a little levity.” She has strange notions of levity. But levity, my dear, is quite out of character in you. Your ordinary walk is as if you were performing some religious ceremony: you come up to my table of a morning, when you merely bring in the tea-things, as if you were advancing to the altar. You move in minuet-time: you measure every step, as if you were afraid of offending in the smallest things. I never hear your approach on the stairs, but by a sort of hushed silence. When you enter the room, the Graces wait on you, and Love waves round your person in gentle undulations, breathing balm into the soul! By Heaven, you are an angel! You look like one at this instant! Do I not adore you—and have I merited this return?

S. I have repeatedly answered that question. You sit and fancy things out of your own head, and then lay them to my charge. There is not a word of truth in your suspicions.

H. Did I not overhear the conversation down-stairs last night, to which you were a party? Shall I repeat it?

S. I had rather not hear it!

H. Or what am I to think of this story of the footman?

S. It is false, Sir, I never did anything of the sort.

H. Nay, when I told your mother I wished she wouldn't * * * * * * * * * (as I heard she did) she said "Oh, there's nothing in that, for Sarah very often * * * * * *," and your doing so before company, is only a trifling addition to the sport.

S. I'll call my mother, Sir, and she shall contradict you.

H. Then she'll contradict herself. But did not you boast you were "very persevering in your resistance to gay young men," and had been "several times obliged to ring the bell?" Did you always ring it? Or did you get into these dilemmas that made it necessary, merely by the demureness of your looks and ways? Or had nothing else passed? Or have you two characters, one that you palm off upon me, and another, your natural one, that you resume when you get out of the room, like an actress who throws aside her artificial part behind the scenes? Did you not, when I was courting you on the staircase the first night Mr. C—— came, beg me to desist, for if the new lodger heard us, he'd take you for a light character? Was that all? Were you only afraid of being TAKEN for a light character? Oh! Sarah!

S. I'll stay and hear this no longer.

H. Yes, one word more. Did you not love another?

S. Yes, and ever shall most sincerely.

H. Then, THAT is my only hope. If you could feel this sentiment for him, you cannot be what you seem to me of late. But there is another thing I had to say—be what you will, I love you to distraction! You are the only woman that ever made me think she loved me, and that feeling was so new to me, and so delicious, that it "will never from my heart." Thou wert to me a little tender flower, blooming in the wilderness of my life; and though thou should'st turn out a weed, I'll not fling thee from me, while I can help it. Wert thou all that I dread to think—wert thou a wretched wanderer in the street, covered with rags, disease, and infamy, I'd clasp thee to my bosom, and live and die with thee, my love. Kiss me, thou little sorceress!

S. NEVER.

H. Then go: but remember I cannot live without you—nor I will not.

THE RECONCILIATION

H. I have then lost your friendship?

S. Nothing tends more to alienate friendship than insult.

H. The words I uttered hurt me more than they did you.

S. It was not words merely, but actions as well.

H. Nothing I can say or do can ever alter my fondness for you—Ah, Sarah! I am unworthy of your love: I hardly dare ask for your pity; but oh! save me—save me from your scorn: I cannot bear it—it withers me like lightning.

S. I bear no malice, Sir; but my brother, who would scorn to tell a lie for his sister, can bear witness for me that there was no truth in what you were told.

H. I believe it; or there is no truth in woman. It is enough for me to know that you do not return my regard; it would be too much for me to think that you did not deserve it. But cannot you forgive the agony of the moment?

S. I can forgive; but it is not easy to forget some things!

H. Nay, my sweet Sarah (frown if you will, I can bear your resentment for my ill behaviour, it is only your scorn and indifference that harrow up my soul)—but I was going to ask, if you had been engaged to be married to any one, and the day was fixed, and he had heard what I did, whether he could have felt any true regard for the character of his bride, his wife, if he had not been hurt and alarmed as I was?

S. I believe, actual contracts of marriage have sometimes been broken off by unjust suspicions.

H. Or had it been your old friend, what do you think he would have said in my case?

S. He would never have listened to anything of the sort.

H. He had greater reasons for confidence than I have. But it is your repeated cruel rejection of me that drives me almost to madness. Tell me, love, is there not, besides your attachment to him, a repugnance to me?

S. No, none whatever.

H. I fear there is an original dislike, which no efforts of mine can overcome.

S. It is not you—it is my feelings with respect to another, which are unalterable.

H. And yet you have no hope of ever being his? And yet you accuse me of being romantic in my sentiments.

S. I have indeed long ceased to hope; but yet I sometimes hope against hope.

H. My love! were it in my power, thy hopes should be fulfilled to-morrow. Next to my own, there is nothing that could give me so much satisfaction as to see thine realized! Do I not love thee, when I can feel such an interest in thy love for another? It was that which first wedded my very soul to you. I would give worlds for a share in a heart so rich in pure affection!

S. And yet I did not tell you of the circumstance to raise myself in your opinion.

H. You are a sublime little thing! And yet, as you have no prospects there, I cannot help thinking, the best thing would be to do as I have said.

S. I would never marry a man I did not love beyond all the world.

H. I should be satisfied with less than that—with the love, or regard, or whatever you call it, you have shown me before marriage, if that has only been sincere. You would hardly like me less afterwards.

S. Endearments would, I should think, increase regard, where there was love beforehand; but that is not exactly my case.

H. But I think you would be happier than you are at present. You take pleasure in my conversation, and you say you have an esteem for me; and it is upon this, after

the honeymoon, that marriage chiefly turns.

S. Do you think there is no pleasure in a single life?

H. Do you mean on account of its liberty?

S. No, but I feel that forced duty is no duty. I have high ideas of the married state!

H. Higher than of the maiden state?

S. I understand you, Sir.

H. I meant nothing; but you have sometimes spoken of any serious attachment as a tie upon you. It is not that you prefer flirting with “gay young men” to becoming a mere dull domestic wife?

S. You have no right to throw out such insinuations: for though I am but a tradesman’s daughter, I have as nice a sense of honour as anyone can have.

H. Talk of a tradesman’s daughter! you would ennoble any family, thou glorious girl, by true nobility of mind.

S. Oh! Sir, you flatter me. I know my own inferiority to most.

H. To none; there is no one above thee, man nor woman either. You are above your situation, which is not fit for you.

S. I am contented with my lot, and do my duty as cheerfully as I can.

H. Have you not told me your spirits grow worse every year?

S. Not on that account: but some disappointments are hard to bear up against.

H. If you talk about that, you’ll unman me. But tell me, my love,—I have thought of it as something that might account for some circumstances; that is, as a mere possibility. But tell me, there was not a likeness between me and your old lover that struck you at first sight? Was there?

S. No, Sir, none.

H. Well, I didn’t think it likely there should.

S. But there was a likeness.

H. To whom?

S. To that little image! (looking intently on a small bronze figure of Buonaparte on the mantelpiece).

H. What, do you mean to Buonaparte?

S. Yes, all but the nose was just like.

H. And was his figure the same?

S. He was taller!

[I got up and gave her the image, and told her it was hers by every right that was sacred. She refused at first to take so valuable a curiosity, and said she would keep it for me. But I pressed it eagerly, and she look it. She immediately came and sat down, and put her arm round my neck, and kissed me, and I said, “Is it not plain we are the best friends in the world, since we are always so glad to make it up?” And then I added “How odd it was that the God of my idolatry should turn out to be like her Idol, and said it was no wonder that the same face which awed the world should conquer the sweetest creature in it!” How I loved her at that moment! Is it possible that the wretch who writes this could ever have been so blest! Heavenly delicious creature! Can I live without her? Oh! no—never—never.

“What is this world? What asken men to have, Now with his love, now in the cold grave, Alone, withouten any compagnie!”

Let me but see her again! She cannot hate the man who loves her as I do.]

LETTERS TO THE SAME

Feb., 1822.

—You will scold me for this, and ask me if this is keeping my promise to mind my work. One half of it was to think of Sarah: and besides, I do not neglect my work

either, I assure you. I regularly do ten pages a day, which mounts up to thirty guineas' worth a week, so that you see I should grow rich at this rate, if I could keep on so; AND I COULD KEEP ON SO, if I had you with me to encourage me with your sweet smiles, and share my lot. The Berwick smacks sail twice a week, and the wind sits fair. When I think of the thousand endearing caresses that have passed between us, I do not wonder at the strong attachment that draws me to you; but I am sorry for my own want of power to please. I hear the wind sigh through the lattice, and keep repeating over and over to myself two lines of Lord Byron's Tragedy—

"So shalt thou find me ever at thy side Here and hereafter, if the last may be."—

applying them to thee, my love, and thinking whether I shall ever see thee again. Perhaps not—for some years at least—till both thou and I are old—and then, when all else have forsaken thee, I will creep to thee, and die in thine arms. You once made me believe I was not hated by her I loved; and for that sensation, so delicious was it, though but a mockery and a dream, I owe you more than I can ever pay. I thought to have dried up my tears for ever, the day I left you; but as I write this, they stream again. If they did not, I think my heart would burst. I walk out here of an afternoon, and hear the notes of the thrush, that come up from a sheltered valley below, welcome in the spring; but they do not melt my heart as they used: it is grown cold and dead. As you say, it will one day be colder.—Forgive what I have written above; I did not intend it: but you were once my little all, and I cannot bear the thought of having lost you for ever, I fear through my own fault. Has any one called? Do not send any letters that come. I should like you and your mother (if agreeable) to go and see Mr. Kean in Othello, and Miss Stephens in Love in a Village. If you will, I will write to Mr. T——, to send you tickets. Has Mr. P—— called? I think I must send to him for the picture to kiss and talk to. Kiss me, my best beloved. Ah! if you can never be mine, still let me be your proud and happy slave.

H.

TO THE SAME

March, 1822.

—You will be glad to learn I have done my work—a volume in less than a month. This is one reason why I am better than when I came, and another is, I have had two letters from Sarah. I am pleased I have got through this job, as I was afraid I might lose reputation by it (which I can little afford to lose)—and besides, I am more anxious to do well now, as I wish you to hear me well spoken of. I walk out of an afternoon, and hear the birds sing as I told you, and think, if I had you hanging on my arm, and that for life, how happy I should be—happier than I ever hoped to be, or had any conception of till I knew you. “But that can never be”—I hear you answer in a soft, low murmur. Well, let me dream of it sometimes—I am not happy too often, except when that favourite note, the harbinger of spring, recalling the hopes of my youth, whispers thy name and peace together in my ear. I was reading something about Mr. Macready to-day, and this put me in mind of that delicious night, when I went with your mother and you to see Romeo and Juliet. Can I forget it for a moment—your sweet modest looks, your infinite propriety of behaviour, all your sweet winning ways—your hesitating about taking my arm as we came out till your mother did—your laughing about nearly losing your cloak—your stepping into the coach without my being able to make the slightest discovery—and oh! my sitting down beside you there, you whom I had loved so long, so well, and your assuring me I had not lessened your pleasure at the play by being with you, and giving me your dear hand to press in mine! I thought I was in heaven—that slender exquisitely-turned form contained my all of heaven upon earth; and as I folded you—yes, you, my own best Sarah, to my bosom, there was, as you say, A TIE BETWEEN US—you did seem to me, for those few short moments, to be mine in

all truth and honour and sacredness—Oh! that we could be always so—Do not mock me, for I am a very child in love. I ought to beg pardon for behaving so ill afterwards, but I hope THE LITTLE IMAGE made it up between us, &c.

[To this letter I have received no answer, not a line. The rolling years of eternity will never fill up that blank. Where shall I be? What am I? Or where have I been?]

WRITTEN IN A BLANK LEAF OF ENDYMION

I want a hand to guide me, an eye to cheer me, a bosom to repose on; all which I shall never have, but shall stagger into my grave, old before my time, unloved and unlovely, unless S. L. keeps her faith with me.

—But by her dove's eyes and serpent-shape, I think she does not hate me; by her smooth forehead and her crested hair, I own I love her; by her soft looks and queen-like grace (which men might fall down and worship) I swear to live and die for her!

A PROPOSAL OF LOVE

(Given to her in our early acquaintance)

"Oh! if I thought it could be in a woman (As, if it can, I will presume in you) To feed for aye her lamp and flames of love, To keep her constancy in plight and youth, Outliving beauties outward with a mind That doth renew swifter than blood decays: Or that persuasion could but thus convince me, That my integrity and truth to you Might be confronted with the match and weight Of such a winnowed purity in love— How were I then uplifted! But, alas, I am as true as truth's simplicity, And simpler than the infancy of truth." TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

PART II

LETTERS TO C. P——, ESQ.

Bees-Inn.

My good friend, Here I am in Scotland (and shall have been here three weeks, next Monday) as I may say, ON MY PROBATION. This is a lone inn, but on a great scale, thirty miles from Edinburgh. It is situated on a rising ground (a mark for all the winds, which blow here incessantly)—there is a woody hill opposite, with a winding valley below, and the London road stretches out on either side. You may guess which way I oftenest walk. I have written two letters to S. L. and got one cold, prudish answer, beginning SIR, and ending FROM YOURS TRULY, with BEST RESPECTS FROM HERSELF AND RELATIONS. I was going to give in, but have returned an answer, which I think is a touch-stone. I send it you on the other side to keep as a curiosity, in case she kills me by her exquisite rejoinder. I am convinced from the profound contemplations I have had on the subject here and coming along, that I am on a wrong scent. We had a famous parting-scene, a complete quarrel and then a reconciliation, in which she did beguile me of my tears, but the deuce a one did she shed. What do you think? She cajoled me out of my little Buonaparte as cleverly as possible, in manner and form following. She was shy the Saturday and Sunday (the day of my departure) so I got in dudgeon, and began to rip up grievances. I asked her how she came to admit me to such extreme familiarities, the first week I entered the house. “If she had no particular regard for me, she must do so (or more) with everyone: if she had a liking to me from the first, why refuse me with scorn and wilfulness?” If you had seen how she flounced, and looked, and went to the door, saying “She was obliged to me for letting her know the opinion I had always entertained of her”—then I said, “Sarah!” and she came back and took my hand, and fixed her eyes on the mantelpiece—(she must have been invoking her idol then—if I thought so, I could devour her, the darling—but I doubt her)—So I said “There is one thing that has occurred to me sometimes as possible, to account for

your conduct to me at first—there wasn't a likeness, was there, to your old friend?" She answered "No, none—but there was a likeness!" I asked, to what? She said "to that little image!" I said, "Do you mean Buonaparte?"—She said "Yes, all but the nose."—"And the figure?"—"He was taller."—I could not stand this. So I got up and took it, and gave it her, and after some reluctance, she consented to "keep it for me." What will you bet me that it wasn't all a trick? I'll tell you why I suspect it, besides being fairly out of my wits about her. I had told her mother half an hour before, that I should take this image and leave it at Mrs. B.'s, for that I didn't wish to leave anything behind me that must bring me back again. Then up she comes and starts a likeness to her lover: she knew I should give it her on the spot—"No, she would keep it for me!" So I must come back for it. Whether art or nature, it is sublime. I told her I should write and tell you so, and that I parted from her, confiding, adoring!—She is beyond me, that's certain. Do go and see her, and desire her not to give my present address to a single soul, and learn if the lodging is let, and to whom. My letter to her is as follows. If she shews the least remorse at it, I'll be hanged, though it might move a stone, I modestly think. (See before, Part I. first letter.)

N.B.—I have begun a book of our conversations (I mean mine and the statue's) which I call LIBER AMORIS. I was detained at Stamford and found myself dull, and could hit upon no other way of employing my time so agreeably.

LETTER II

Dear P——, Here, without loss of time, in order that I may have your opinion upon it, is little Yes and No's answer to my last.

"Sir, I should not have disregarded your injunction not to send you any more letters that might come to you, had I not promised the Gentleman who left the enclosed to forward it the earliest opportunity, as he said it was of consequence. Mr. P——

called the day after you left town. My mother and myself are much obliged by your kind offer of tickets to the play, but must decline accepting it. My family send their best respects, in which they are joined by

Yours, truly, S. L.

The deuce a bit more is there of it. If you can make anything out of it (or any body else) I'll be hanged. You are to understand, this comes in a frank, the second I have received from her, with a name I can't make out, and she won't tell me, though I asked her, where she got franks, as also whether the lodgings were let, to neither of which a word of answer. * * * * is the name on the frank: see if you can decypher it by a Red-book. I suspect her grievously of being an arrant jilt, to say no more—yet I love her dearly. Do you know I'm going to write to that sweet rogue presently, having a whole evening to myself in advance of my work? Now mark, before you set about your exposition of the new Apocalypse of the new Calypso, the only thing to be endured in the above letter is the date. It was written the very day after she received mine. By this she seems willing to lose no time in receiving these letters "of such sweet breath composed." If I thought so—but I wait for your reply. After all, what is there in her but a pretty figure, and that you can't get a word out of her? Hers is the Fabian method of making love and conquests. What do you suppose she said the night before I left her?

"H. Could you not come and live with me as a friend?

"S. I don't know: and yet it would be of no use if I did, you would always be hankering after what could never be!"

I asked her if she would do so at once—the very next day? And what do you guess was her answer—"Do you think it would be prudent?" As I didn't proceed to extremities on the spot, she began to look grave, and declare off. "Would she live with me in her own house—to be with me all day as dear friends, if nothing more, to sit and read and talk with me?"—"She would make no promises, but I should find

her the same."—"Would she go to the play with me sometimes, and let it be understood that I was paying my addresses to her?"—"She could not, as a habit—her father was rather strict, and would object."—Now what am I to think of all this? Am I mad or a fool? Answer me to that, Master Brook! You are a philosopher.

LETTER III

Dear Friend, I ought to have written to you before; but since I received your letter, I have been in a sort of purgatory, and what is worse, I see no prospect of getting out of it. I would put an end to my torments at once; but I am as great a coward as I have been a dupe. Do you know I have not had a word of answer from her since! What can be the reason? Is she offended at my letting you know she wrote to me, or is it some new affair? I wrote to her in the tenderest, most respectful manner, poured my soul at her feet, and this is the return she makes me! Can you account for it, except on the admission of my worst doubts concerning her? Oh God! can I bear after all to think of her so, or that I am scorned and made a sport of by the creature to whom I had given my whole heart? Thus has it been with me all my life; and so will it be to the end of it!—If you should learn anything, good or bad, tell me, I conjure you: I can bear anything but this cruel suspense. If I knew she was a mere abandoned creature, I should try to forget her; but till I do know this, nothing can tear me from her, I have drank in poison from her lips too long—alas! mine do not poison again. I sit and indulge my grief by the hour together; my weakness grows upon me; and I have no hope left, unless I could lose my senses quite. Do you know I think I should like this? To forget, ah! to forget—there would be something in that—to change to an idiot for some few years, and then to wake up a poor wretched old man, to recollect my misery as past, and die! Yet, oh! with her, only a little while ago, I had different hopes, forfeited for nothing that I know of! * * * * * * If you can give me

any consolation on the subject of my tormentor, pray do. The pain I suffer wears me out daily. I write this on the supposition that Mrs. —— may still come here, and that I may be detained some weeks longer. Direct to me at the Post-office; and if I return to town directly as I fear, I will leave word for them to forward the letter to me in London—not at my old lodgings. I will not go back there: yet how can I breathe away from her? Her hatred of me must be great, since my love of her could not overcome it! I have finished the book of my conversations with her, which I told you of: if I am not mistaken, you will think it very nice reading.

Yours ever.

Have you read Sardanapalus? How like the little Greek slave, Myrrha, is to HER!

LETTER IV

(Written in the Winter)

My good Friend, I received your letter this morning, and I kiss the rod not only with submission, but gratitude. Your reproofs of me and your defences of her are the only things that save my soul from perdition. She is my heart's idol; and believe me those words of yours applied to the dear saint—"To lip a chaste one and suppose her wanton"—were balm and rapture to me. I have LIPPED HER, God knows how often, and oh! is it even possible that she is chaste, and that she has bestowed her loved "endearments" on me (her own sweet word) out of true regard? That thought, out of the lowest depths of despair, would at any time make me strike my forehead against the stars. Could I but think the love "honest," I am proof against all hazards. She by her silence makes my dark hour; and you by your encouragements dissipate it for twenty-four hours. Another thing has brought me to life. Mrs. —— is actually on her way here about the divorce. Should this unpleasant business (which has been so long talked of) succeed, and I should become free, do you think S. L. will agree to change her name to ——? If she WILL, she SHALL; and to call her so to you, or

to hear her called so by others, would be music to my ears, such as they never drank in. Do you think if she knew how I love her, my depressions and my altitudes, my wanderings and my constancy, it would not move her? She knows it all; and if she is not an INCORRIGIBLE, she loves me, or regards me with a feeling next to love. I don't believe that any woman was ever courted more passionately than she has been by me. As Rousseau said of Madame d'Houptot (forgive the allusion) my heart has found a tongue in speaking to her, and I have talked to her the divine language of love. Yet she says, she is insensible to it. Am I to believe her or you? You—for I wish it and wish it to madness, now that I am like to be free, and to have it in my power to say to her without a possibility of suspicion, "Sarah, will you be mine?" When I sometimes think of the time I first saw the sweet apparition, August 16, 1820, and that possibly she may be my bride before that day two years, it makes me dizzy with incredible joy and love of her. Write soon.

LETTER V

My dear Friend, I read your answer this morning with gratitude. I have felt somewhat easier since. It shewed your interest in my vexations, and also that you know nothing worse than I do. I cannot describe the weakness of mind to which she has reduced me. This state of suspense is like hanging in the air by a single thread that exhausts all your strength to keep hold of it; and yet if that fails you, you have nothing in the world else left to trust to. I am come back to Edinburgh about this cursed business, and Mrs. —— is coming from Montrose next week. How it will end, I can't say; and don't care, except as it regards the other affair. I should, I confess, like to have it in my power to make her the offer direct and unequivocal, to see how she'd receive it. It would be worth something at any rate to see her superfine airs upon the occasion; and if she should take it into her head to turn round her sweet neck, drop her eye-lids, and say—"Yes, I will be yours!"—why then,

“treason domestic, foreign levy, nothing could touch me further.” By Heaven! I doat on her. The truth is, I never had any pleasure, like love, with any one but her. Then how can I bear to part with her? Do you know I like to think of her best in her morning-gown and mob-cap—it is so she has oftenest come into my room and enchanted me! She was once ill, pale, and had lost all her freshness. I only adored her the more for it, and fell in love with the decay of her beauty. I could devour the little witch. If she had a plague-spot on her, I could touch the infection: if she was in a burning fever, I could kiss her, and drink death as I have drank life from her lips. When I press her hand, I enjoy perfect happiness and contentment of soul. It is not what she says or what she does—it is herself that I love. To be with her is to be at peace. I have no other wish or desire. The air about her is serene, blissful; and he who breathes it is like one of the Gods! So that I can but have her with me always, I care for nothing more. I never could tire of her sweetness; I feel that I could grow to her, body and soul? My heart, my heart is hers.

LETTER VI

(Written in May)

Dear P——, What have I suffered since I parted with you! A raging fire is in my heart and in my brain, that never quits me. The steam-boat (which I foolishly ventured on board) seems a prison-house, a sort of spectre-ship, moving on through an infernal lake, without wind or tide, by some necromantic power—the splashing of the waves, the noise of the engine gives me no rest, night or day—no tree, no natural object varies the scene—but the abyss is before me, and all my peace lies weltering in it! I feel the eternity of punishment in this life; for I see no end of my woes. The people about me are ill, uncomfortable, wretched enough, many of them—but to-morrow or next day, they reach the place of their destination, and all will be new and delightful. To me it will be the same. I can neither escape from her, nor from

myself. All is endurable where there is a limit: but I have nothing but the blackness and the fiendishness of scorn around me—mocked by her (the false one) in whom I placed my hope, and who hardens herself against me!—I believe you thought me quite gay, vain, insolent, half mad, the night I left the house—no tongue can tell the heaviness of heart I felt at that moment. No footsteps ever fell more slow, more sad than mine; for every step bore me farther from her, with whom my soul and every thought lingered. I had parted with her in anger, and each had spoken words of high disdain, not soon to be forgiven. Should I ever behold her again? Where go to live and die far from her? In her sight there was Elysium; her smile was heaven; her voice was enchantment; the air of love waved round her, breathing balm into my heart: for a little while I had sat with the Gods at their golden tables, I had tasted of all earth's bliss, "both living and loving!" But now Paradise barred its doors against me; I was driven from her presence, where rosy blushes and delicious sighs and all soft wishes dwelt, the outcast of nature and the scoff of love! I thought of the time when I was a little happy careless child, of my father's house, of my early lessons, of my brother's picture of me when a boy, of all that had since happened to me, and of the waste of years to come—I stopped, faultered, and was going to turn back once more to make a longer truce with wretchedness and patch up a hollow league with love, when the recollection of her words—"I always told you I had no affection for you"—steeled my resolution, and I determined to proceed. You see by this she always hated me, and only played with my credulity till she could find some one to supply the place of her unalterable attachment to THE LITTLE IMAGE. * * * * * I am a little, a very little better to-day. Would it were quietly over; and that this misshapen form (made to be mocked) were hid out of the sight of cold, sullen eyes! The people about me even take notice of my dumb despair, and pity me. What is to be done? I cannot forget HER; and I can find no other like what SHE SEEMED. I should wish you to call, if you can make an excuse, and see whether or no she is quite marble—whether I may go back again at my return, and whether she will see

me and talk to me sometimes as an old friend. Suppose you were to call on M—— from me, and ask him what his impression is that I ought to do. But do as you think best. Pardon, pardon.

P.S.—I send this from Scarborough, where the vessel stops for a few minutes. I scarcely know what I should have done, but for this relief to my feelings.

LETTER VII

My dear Friend, The important step is taken, and I am virtually a free man. * * * What had I better do in these circumstances? I dare not write to her, I dare not write to her father, or else I would. She has shot me through with poisoned arrows, and I think another "winged wound" would finish me. It is a pleasant sort of balm (as you express it) she has left in my heart! One thing I agree with you in, it will remain there for ever; but yet not very long. It festers, and consumes me. If it were not for my little boy, whose face I see struck blank at the news, looking through the world for pity and meeting with contempt instead, I should soon, I fear, settle the question by my death. That recollection is the only thought that brings my wandering reason to an anchor; that stirs the smallest interest in me; or gives me fortitude to bear up against what I am doomed to feel for the ungrateful. Otherwise, I am dead to every thing but the sense of what I have lost. She was my life—it is gone from me, and I am grown spectral! If I find myself in a place I am acquainted with, it reminds me of her, of the way in which I thought of her,

—"and carved on every tree The soft, the fair, the inexpressive she!"

If it is a place that is new to me, it is desolate, barren of all interest; for nothing touches me but what has a reference to her. If the clock strikes, the sound jars me; a million of hours will not bring back peace to my breast. The light startles me; the darkness terrifies me. I seem falling into a pit, without a hand to help me. She has deceived me, and the earth fails from under my feet; no object in nature is

substantial, real, but false and hollow, like her faith on which I built my trust. She came (I knew not how) and sat by my side and was folded in my arms, a vision of love and joy, as if she had dropped from the Heavens to bless me by some especial dispensation of a favouring Providence, and make me amends for all; and now without any fault of mine but too much fondness, she has vanished from me, and I am left to perish. My heart is torn out of me, with every feeling for which I wished to live. The whole is like a dream, an effect of enchantment; it torments me, and it drives me mad. I lie down with it; I rise up with it; and see no chance of repose. I grasp at a shadow, I try to undo the past, and weep with rage and pity over my own weakness and misery. I spared her again and again (fool that I was) thinking what she allowed from me was love, friendship, sweetness, not wantonness. How could I doubt it, looking in her face, and hearing her words, like sighs breathed from the gentlest of all bosoms? I had hopes, I had prospects to come, the flattery of something like fame, a pleasure in writing, health even would have come back with her smile—she has blighted all, turned all to poison and childish tears. Yet the barbed arrow is in my heart—I can neither endure it, nor draw it out; for with it flows my life's-blood. I had conversed too long with abstracted truth to trust myself with the immortal thoughts of love. THAT S. L. MIGHT HAVE BEEN MINE, AND NOW NEVER CAN—these are the two sole propositions that for ever stare me in the face, and look ghastly in at my poor brain. I am in some sense proud that I can feel this dreadful passion—it gives me a kind of rank in the kingdom of love—but I could have wished it had been for an object that at least could have understood its value and pitied its excess. You say her not coming to the door when you went is a proof—yes, that her complement is at present full! That is the reason she doesn't want me there, lest I should discover the new affair—wretch that I am! Another has possession of her, oh Hell! I'm satisfied of it from her manner, which had a wanton insolence in it. Well might I run wild when I received no letters from her. I foresaw, I felt my fate. The gates of Paradise were once open to me too, and I

blushed to enter but with the golden keys of love! I would die; but her lover—my love of her—ought not to die. When I am dead, who will love her as I have done? If she should be in misfortune, who will comfort her? when she is old, who will look in her face, and bless her? Would there be any harm in calling upon M——, to know confidentially if he thinks it worth my while to make her an offer the instant it is in my power? Let me have an answer, and save me, if possible, FOR her and FROM myself.

LETTER VIII

My dear Friend, Your letter raised me for a moment from the depths of despair; but not hearing from you yesterday or to-day (as I hoped) I have had a relapse. You say I want to get rid of her. I hope you are more right in your conjectures about her than in this about me. Oh no! believe it, I love her as I do my own soul; my very heart is wedded to her (be she what she may) and I would not hesitate a moment between her and “an angel from Heaven.” I grant all you say about my self-tormenting folly: but has it been without cause? Has she not refused me again and again with a mixture of scorn and resentment, after going the utmost lengths with a man for whom she now disclaims all affection; and what security can I have for her reserve with others, who will not be restrained by feelings of delicacy towards her, and whom she has probably preferred to me for their want of it. “SHE CAN MAKE NO MORE CONFIDENCES”—these words ring for ever in my ears, and will be my death-watch. They can have but one meaning, be sure of it—she always expressed herself with the exactest propriety. That was one of the things for which I loved her—shall I live to hate her for it? My poor fond heart, that brooded over her and the remains of her affections as my only hope of comfort upon earth, cannot brook this new degradation. Who is there so low as me? Who is there besides (I ask) after the homage I have paid her and the caresses she has lavished on me, so vile, so

abhorrent to love, to whom such an indignity could have happened? When I think of this (and I think of nothing else) it stifles me. I am pent up in burning, fruitless desires, which can find no vent or object. Am I not hated, repulsed, derided by her whom alone I love or ever did love? I cannot stay in any place, and seek in vain for relief from the sense of her contempt and her ingratitude. I can settle to nothing: what is the use of all I have done? Is it not that very circumstance (my thinking beyond my strength, my feeling more than I need about so many things) that has withered me up, and made me a thing for Love to shrink from and wonder at? Who could ever feel that peace from the touch of her dear hand that I have done; and is it not torn from me for ever? My state is this, that I shall never lie down again at night nor rise up in the morning in peace, nor ever behold my little boy's face with pleasure while I live—unless I am restored to her favour. Instead of that delicious feeling I had when she was heavenly-kind to me, and my heart softened and melted in its own tenderness and her sweetness, I am now inclosed in a dungeon of despair. The sky is marble to my thoughts; nature is dead around me, as hope is within me; no object can give me one gleam of satisfaction now, nor the prospect of it in time to come. I wander by the sea-side; and the eternal ocean and lasting despair and her face are before me. Slighted by her, on whom my heart by its last fibre hung, where shall I turn? I wake with her by my side, not as my sweet bedfellow, but as the corpse of my love, without a heart in her bosom, cold, insensible, or struggling from me; and the worm gnaws me, and the sting of unrequited love, and the canker of a hopeless, endless sorrow. I have lost the taste of my food by feverish anxiety; and my favourite beverage, which used to refresh me when I got up, has no moisture in it. Oh! cold, solitary, sepulchral breakfasts, compared with those which I promised myself with her; or which I made when she had been standing an hour by my side, my guardian-angel, my wife, my sister, my sweet friend, my Eve, my all; and had blest me with her seraph kisses! Ah! what I suffer at present only shews what I have enjoyed. But "the girl is a good girl, if there is goodness in human nature." I thank

you for those words; and I will fall down and worship you, if you can prove them true: and I would not do much less for him that proves her a demon. She is one or the other, that's certain; but I fear the worst. Do let me know if anything has passed: suspense is my greatest punishment. I am going into the country to see if I can work a little in the three weeks I have yet to stay here. Write on the receipt of this, and believe me ever your unspeakably obliged friend.

TO EDINBURGH

—"Stony-hearted" Edinburgh! What art thou to me? The dust of thy streets mingles with my tears and blinds me. City of palaces, or of tombs—a quarry, rather than the habitation of men! Art thou like London, that populous hive, with its sunburnt, well-baked, brick-built houses—its public edifices, its theatres, its bridges, its squares, its ladies, and its pomp, its throng of wealth, its outstretched magnitude, and its mighty heart that never lies still? Thy cold grey walls reflect back the leaden melancholy of the soul. The square, hard-edged, unyielding faces of thy inhabitants have no sympathy to impart. What is it to me that I look along the level line of thy tenantless streets, and meet perhaps a lawyer like a grasshopper chirping and skipping, or the daughter of a Highland laird, haughty, fair, and freckled? Or why should I look down your boasted Prince's Street, with the beetle-browed Castle on one side, and the Calton Hill with its proud monument at the further end, and the ridgy steep of Salisbury Crag, cut off abruptly by Nature's boldest hand, and Arthur's Seat overlooking all, like a lioness watching her cubs? Or shall I turn to the far-off Pentland Hills, with Craig-Crook nestling beneath them, where lives the prince of critics and the king of men? Or cast my eye unsated over the Firth of Forth, that from my window of an evening (as I read of AMY and her love) glitters like a broad golden mirror in the sun, and kisses the winding shores of kingly Fife? Oh no! But to thee, to thee I turn, North Berwick-Law, with thy blue cone rising out of

summer seas; for thou art the beacon of my banished thoughts, and dost point my way to her, who is my heart's true home. The air is too thin for me, that has not the breath of Love in it; that is not embalmed by her sighs!

A THOUGHT

I am not mad, but my heart is so; and raves within me, fierce and untameable, like a panther in its den, and tries to get loose to its lost mate, and fawn on her hand, and bend lowly at her feet.

ANOTHER

Oh! thou dumb heart, lonely, sad, shut up in the prison-house of this rude form, that hast never found a fellow but for an instant, and in very mockery of thy misery, speak, find bleeding words to express thy thoughts, break thy dungeon-gloom, or die pronouncing thy Infelice's name!

ANOTHER

Within my heart is lurking suspicion, and base fear, and shame and hate; but above all, tyrannous love sits throned, crowned with her graces, silent and in tears.

LETTER IX

My dear P——, You have been very kind to me in this business; but I fear even your indulgence for my infirmities is beginning to fail. To what a state am I reduced, and for what? For fancying a little artful vixen to be an angel and a saint, because she affected to look like one, to hide her rank thoughts and deadly purposes. Has she not murdered me under the mask of the tenderest friendship? And why? Because I have loved her with unutterable love, and sought to make her my wife. You say it is my

own “outrageous conduct” that has estranged her: nay, I have been TOO GENTLE with her. I ask you first in candour whether the ambiguity of her behaviour with respect to me, sitting and fondling a man (circumstanced as I was) sometimes for half a day together, and then declaring she had no love for him beyond common regard, and professing never to marry, was not enough to excite my suspicions, which the different exposures from the conversations below-stairs were not calculated to allay? I ask you what you yourself would have felt or done, if loving her as I did, you had heard what I did, time after time? Did not her mother own to one of the grossest charges (which I shall not repeat)—and is such indelicacy to be reconciled with her pretended character (that character with which I fell in love, and to which I MADE LOVE) without supposing her to be the greatest hypocrite in the world? My unpardonable offence has been that I took her at her word, and was willing to believe her the precise little puritanical person she set up for. After exciting her wayward desires by the fondest embraces and the purest kisses, as if she had been “made my wedded wife yestreen,” or was to become so to-morrow (for that was always my feeling with respect to her)—I did not proceed to gratify them, or to follow up my advantage by any action which should declare, “I think you a common adventurer, and will see whether you are so or not!” Yet any one but a credulous fool like me would have made the experiment, with whatever violence to himself, as a matter of life and death; for I had every reason to distrust appearances. Her conduct has been of a piece from the beginning. In the midst of her closest and falsest endearments, she has always (with one or two exceptions) disclaimed the natural inference to be drawn from them, and made a verbal reservation, by which she might lead me on in a Fool’s Paradise, and make me the tool of her levity, her avarice, and her love of intrigue as long as she liked, and dismiss me whenever it suited her. This, you see, she has done, because my intentions grew serious, and if complied with, would deprive her of THE PLEASURES OF A SINGLE LIFE! Offer marriage to this “tradesman’s daughter, who has as nice a sense of honour as

any one can have;" and like Lady Bellaston in Tom Jones, she CUTS you immediately in a fit of abhorrence and alarm. Yet she seemed to be of a different mind formerly, when struggling from me in the height of our first intimacy, she exclaimed—"However I might agree to my own ruin, I never will consent to bring disgrace upon my family!" That I should have spared the traitress after expressions like this, astonishes me when I look back upon it. Yet if it were all to do over again, I know I should act just the same part. Such is her power over me! I cannot run the least risk of offending her—I love her so. When I look in her face, I cannot doubt her truth! Wretched being that I am! I have thrown away my heart and soul upon an unfeeling girl; and my life (that might have been so happy, had she been what I thought her) will soon follow either voluntarily, or by the force of grief, remorse, and disappointment. I cannot get rid of the reflection for an instant, nor even seek relief from its galling pressure. Ah! what a heart she has lost! All the love and affection of my whole life were centred in her, who alone, I thought, of all women had found out my true character, and knew how to value my tenderness. Alas! alas! that this, the only hope, joy, or comfort I ever had, should turn to a mockery, and hang like an ugly film over the remainder of my days!—I was at Roslin Castle yesterday. It lies low in a rude, but sheltered valley, hid from the vulgar gaze, and powerfully reminds one of the old song. The straggling fragments of the russet ruins, suspended smiling and graceful in the air as if they would linger out another century to please the curious beholder, the green larch-trees trembling between with the blue sky and white silver clouds, the wild mountain plants starting out here and there, the date of the year on an old low door-way, but still more, the beds of flowers in orderly decay, that seem to have no hand to tend them, but keep up a sort of traditional remembrance of civilization in former ages, present altogether a delightful and amiable subject for contemplation. The exquisite beauty of the scene, with the thought of what I should feel, should I ever be restored to her, and have to lead her through such places as my adored, my angelwife, almost drove me beside

myself. For this picture, this ecstatic vision, what have I of late instead as the image of the reality? Demoniacal possessions. I see the young witch seated in another's lap, twining her serpent arms round him, her eye glancing and her cheeks on fire—why does not the hideous thought choke me? Or why do I not go and find out the truth at once? The moonlight streams over the silver waters: the bark is in the bay that might waft me to her, almost with a wish. The mountain-breeze sighs out her name: old ocean with a world of tears murmurs back my woes! Does not my heart yearn to be with her; and shall I not follow its bidding? No, I must wait till I am free; and then I will take my Freedom (a glad prize) and lay it at her feet and tell her my proud love of her that would not brook a rival in her dishonour, and that would have her all or none, and gain her or lose myself for ever!—

You see by this letter the way I am in, and I hope you will excuse it as the picture of a half-disordered mind. The least respite from my uneasiness (such as I had yesterday) only brings the contrary reflection back upon me, like a flood; and by letting me see the happiness I have lost, makes me feel, by contrast, more acutely what I am doomed to bear.

LETTER X

Dear Friend, Here I am at St. Bees once more, amid the scenes which I greeted in their barrenness in winter; but which have now put on their full green attire that shews luxuriant to the eye, but speaks a tale of sadness to this heart widowed of its last, its dearest, its only hope! Oh! lovely Bees-Inn! here I composed a volume of law-cases, here I wrote my enamoured follies to her, thinking her human, and that "all below was not the fiend's"—here I got two cold, sullen answers from the little witch, and here I was —— and I was damned. I thought the revisiting the old haunts would have soothed me for a time, but it only brings back the sense of what I have suffered for her and of her unkindness the more strongly, till I cannot endure the

recollection. I eye the Heavens in dumb despair, or vent my sorrows in the desart air. “To the winds, to the waves, to the rocks I complain”—you may suppose with what effect! I fear I shall be obliged to return. I am tossed about (backwards and forwards) by my passion, so as to become ridiculous. I can now understand how it is that mad people never remain in the same place—they are moving on for ever, FROM THEMSELVES!

Do you know, you would have been delighted with the effect of the Northern twilight on this romantic country as I rode along last night? The hills and groves and herds of cattle were seen reposing in the grey dawn of midnight, as in a moonlight without shadow. The whole wide canopy of Heaven shed its reflex light upon them, like a pure crystal mirror. No sharp points, no petty details, no hard contrasts—every object was seen softened yet distinct, in its simple outline and natural tones, transparent with an inward light, breathing its own mild lustre. The landscape altogether was like an airy piece of mosaic-work, or like one of Poussin’s broad massy landscapes or Titian’s lovely pastoral scenes. Is it not so, that poets see nature, veiled to the sight, but revealed to the soul in visionary grace and grandeur! I confess the sight touched me; and might have removed all sadness except mine. So (I thought) the light of her celestial face once shone into my soul, and wrapt me in a heavenly trance. The sense I have of beauty raises me for a moment above myself, but depresses me the more afterwards, when I recollect how it is thrown away in vain admiration, and that it only makes me more susceptible of pain from the mortifications I meet with. Would I had never seen her! I might then not indeed have been happy, but at least I might have passed my life in peace, and have sunk into forgetfulness without a pang.—The noble scenery in this country mixes with my passion, and refines, but does not relieve it. I was at Stirling Castle not long ago. It gave me no pleasure. The declivity seemed to me abrupt, not sublime; for in truth I did not shrink back from it with terror. The weather-beaten towers were stiff and formal: the air was damp and chill: the river winded its dull, slimy way like a snake

along the marshy grounds: and the dim misty tops of Ben Leddi, and the lovely Highlands (woven fantastically of thin air) mocked my embraces and tempted my longing eyes like her, the sole queen and mistress of my thoughts! I never found my contemplations on this subject so subtilised and at the same time so desponding as on that occasion. I wept myself almost blind, and I gazed at the broad golden sunset through my tears that fell in showers. As I trod the green mountain turf, oh! how I wished to be laid beneath it—in one grave with her—that I might sleep with her in that cold bed, my hand in hers, and my heart for ever still—while worms should taste her sweet body, that I had never tasted! There was a time when I could bear solitude; but it is too much for me at present. Now I am no sooner left to myself than I am lost in infinite space, and look round me in vain for suppose or comfort. She was my stay, my hope: without her hand to cling to, I stagger like an infant on the edge of a precipice. The universe without her is one wide, hollow abyss, in which my harassed thoughts can find no resting-place. I must break off here; for the hysterica passio comes upon me, and threatens to unhinge my reason.

LETTER XI

My dear and good Friend, I am afraid I trouble you with my querulous epistles, but this is probably the last. To-morrow or the next day decides my fate with respect to the divorce, when I expect to be a free man. In vain! Was it not for her and to lay my freedom at her feet, that I consented to this step which has cost me infinite perplexity, and now to be discarded for the first pretender that came in her way! If so, I hardly think I can survive it. You who have been a favourite with women, do not know what it is to be deprived of one’s only hope, and to have it turned to shame and disappointment. There is nothing in the world left that can afford me one drop of comfort—THIS I feel more and more. Everything is to me a mockery of pleasure, like her love. The breeze does not cool me: the blue sky does not cheer me. I gaze

only on her face averted from me—alas! the only face that ever was turned fondly to me! And why am I thus treated? Because I wanted her to be mine for ever in love or friendship, and did not push my gross familiarities as far as I might. “Why can you not go on as we have done, and say nothing about the word, FOREVER?” Was it not plain from this that she even then meditated an escape from me to some less sentimental lover? “Do you allow anyone else to do so?” I said to her once, as I was toying with her. “No, not now!” was her answer; that is, because there was nobody else in the house to take freedoms with her. I was very well as a stopgap, but I was to be nothing more. While the coast was clear, I had it all my own way: but the instant C—— came, she flung herself at his head in the most barefaced way, ran breathless up stairs before him, blushed when his foot was heard, watched for him in the passage, and was sure to be in close conference with him when he went down again. It was then my mad proceedings commenced. No wonder. Had I not reason to be jealous of every appearance of familiarity with others, knowing how easy she had been with me at first, and that she only grew shy when I did not take farther liberties? What has her character to rest upon but her attachment to me, which she now denies, not modestly, but impudently? Will you yourself say that if she had all along no particular regard for me, she will not do as much or more with other more likely men? “She has had,” she says, “enough of my conversation,” so it could not be that! Ah! my friend, it was not to be supposed I should ever meet even with the outward demonstrations of regard from any woman but a common trader in the endearments of love! I have tasted the sweets of the well practiced illusion, and now feel the bitterness of knowing what a bliss I am deprived of, and must ever be deprived of. Intolerable conviction! Yet I might, I believe, have won her by other methods; but some demon held my hand. How indeed could I offer her the least insult when I worshipped her very footsteps; and even now pay her divine honours from my inmost heart, whenever I think of her, abased and brutalised as I have been by that Circean cup of kisses, of enchantments, of which I have drunk! I am choked,

withered, dried up with chagrin, remorse, despair, from which I have not a moment's respite, day or night. I have always some horrid dream about her, and wake wondering what is the matter that "she is no longer the same to me as ever?" I thought at least we should always remain dear friends, if nothing more—did she not talk of coming to live with me only the day before I left her in the winter? But "she's gone, I am abused, and my revenge must be to LOVE her!"—Yet she knows that one line, one word would save me, the cruel, heartless destroyer! I see nothing for it but madness, unless Friday brings a change, or unless she is willing to let me go back. You must know I wrote to her to that purpose, but it was a very quiet, sober letter, begging pardon, and professing reform for the future, and all that. What effect it will have, I know not. I was forced to get out of the way of her answer, till Friday came.

Ever yours.

TO S. L.

My dear Miss L——, EVIL TO THEM THAT EVIL THINK, is an old saying; and I have found it a true one. I have ruined myself by my unjust suspicions of you. Your sweet friendship was the balm of my life; and I have lost it, I fear for ever, by one fault and folly after another. What would I give to be restored to the place in your esteem, which, you assured me, I held only a few months ago! Yet I was not contented, but did all I could to torment myself and harass you by endless doubts and jealousy. Can you not forget and forgive the past, and judge of me by my conduct in future? Can you not take all my follies in the lump, and say like a good, generous girl, "Well, I'll think no more of them?" In a word, may I come back, and try to behave better? A line to say so would be an additional favour to so many already received by

Your obliged friend,

And sincere well-wisher.

LETTER XII.

TO C. P——

I have no answer from her. I'm mad. I wish you to call on M—— in confidence, to say I intend to make her an offer of my hand, and that I will write to her father to that effect the instant I am free, and ask him whether he thinks it will be to any purpose, and what he would advise me to do.

UNALTERED LOVE

"Love is not love that alteration finds: Oh no! it is an ever-fixed mark, That looks on tempests and is never shaken."

Shall I not love her for herself alone, in spite of fickleness and folly? To love her for her regard to me, is not to love her, but myself. She has robbed me of herself: shall she also rob me of my love of her? Did I not live on her smile? Is it less sweet because it is withdrawn from me? Did I not adore her every grace? Does she bend less enchantingly, because she has turned from me to another? Is my love then in the power of fortune, or of her caprice? No, I will have it lasting as it is pure; and I will make a Goddess of her, and build a temple to her in my heart, and worship her on indestructible altars, and raise statues to her: and my homage shall be unblemished as her unrivalled symmetry of form; and when that fails, the memory of it shall survive; and my bosom shall be proof to scorn, as hers has been to pity; and I will pursue her with an unrelenting love, and sue to be her slave, and tend her steps without notice and without reward; and serve her living, and mourn for her when dead. And thus my love will have shewn itself superior to her hate; and I shall triumph and then die. This is my idea of the only true and heroic love! Such is mine for her.

PERFECT LOVE

Perfect love has this advantage in it, that it leaves the possessor of it nothing farther to desire. There is one object (at least) in which the soul finds absolute content, for which it seeks to live, or dares to die. The heart has as it were filled up the moulds of the imagination. The truth of passion keeps pace with and outvies the extravagance of mere language. There are no words so fine, no flattery so soft, that there is not a sentiment beyond them, that it is impossible to express, at the bottom of the heart where true love is. What idle sounds the common phrases, adorable creature, angel, divinity, are? What a proud reflection it is to have a feeling answering to all these, rooted in the breast, unalterable, unutterable, to which all other feelings are light and vain! Perfect love reposes on the object of its choice, like the halcyon on the wave; and the air of heaven is around it.

FROM C. P., ESQ.

London, July 4th, 1822.

I have seen M——! Now, my dear H——, let me entreat and adjure you to take what I have to tell you, FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH—neither for less, nor more. In the first place, I have learned nothing decisive from him. This, as you will at once see, is, as far as it goes, good. I am either to hear from him, or see him again in a day or two; but I thought you would like to know what passed inconclusive as it was—so I write without delay, and in great haste to save a post. I found him frank, and even friendly in his manner to me, and in his views respecting you. I think that he is sincerely sorry for your situation; and he feels that the person who has placed you in that situation is not much less awkwardly situated herself; and he professes that he would willingly do what he can for the good of both. But he sees great difficulties attending the affair—which he frankly professes to consider as an altogether unfortunate one. With respect to the marriage, he seems to see the most

formidable objections to it, on both sides; but yet he by no means decidedly says that it cannot, or that it ought not to take place. These, mind you, are his own feelings on the subject: but the most important point I learn from him is this, that he is not prepared to use his influence either way—that the rest of the family are of the same way of feeling; and that, in fact, the thing must and does entirely rest with herself. To learn this was, as you see, gaining a great point.—When I then endeavoured to ascertain whether he knew anything decisive as to what are her views on the subject, I found that he did not. He has an opinion on the subject, and he didn't scruple to tell me what it was; but he has no positive knowledge. In short, he believes, from what he learns from herself (and he had purposely seen her on the subject, in consequence of my application to him) that she is at present indisposed to the marriage; but he is not prepared to say positively that she will not consent to it. Now all this, coming from him in the most frank and unaffected manner, and without any appearance of cant, caution, or reserve, I take to be most important as it respects your views, whatever they may be; and certainly much more favourable to them (I confess it) than I was prepared to expect, supposing them to remain as they were. In fact as I said before, the affair rests entirely with herself. They are none of them disposed either to further the marriage, or throw any insurmountable obstacles in the way of it; and what is more important than all, they are evidently by no means CERTAIN that SHE may not, at some future period, consent to it; or they would, for her sake as well as their own, let you know as much flatly, and put an end to the affair at once.

Seeing in how frank and straitforward a manner he received what I had to say to him, and replied to it, I proceeded to ask him what were HIS views, and what were likely to be HERS (in case she did not consent) as to whether you should return to live in the house;—but I added, without waiting for his answer, that if she intended to persist in treating you as she had done for some time past, it would be worse than madness for you to think of returning. I added that, in case you did return, all you would expect from her would be that she would treat you with civility and

kindness—that she would continue to evince that friendly feeling towards you, that she had done for a great length of time, &c. To this, he said, he could really give no decisive reply, but that he should be most happy if, by any intervention of his, he could conduce to your comfort; but he seemed to think that for you to return on any express understanding that she should behave to you in any particular manner, would be to place her in a most awkward situation. He went somewhat at length into this point, and talked very reasonably about it; the result, however, was that he would not throw any obstacles in the way of your return, or of her treating you as a friend, &c., nor did it appear that he believed she would refuse to do so. And, finally, we parted on the understanding that he would see them on the subject, and ascertain what could be done for the comfort of all parties: though he was of opinion that if you could make up your mind to break off the acquaintance altogether, it would be the best plan of all. I am to hear from him again in a day or two.—Well, what do you say to all this? Can you turn it to any thing but good—comparative good? If you would know what I say to it, it is this:—She is still to be won by wise and prudent conduct on your part; she was always to have been won by such;—and if she is lost, it has been not, as you sometimes suppose, because you have not carried that unwise, may I not say UNWORTHY? conduct still farther, but because you gave way to it at all. Of course I use the terms “wise” and “prudent” with reference to your object. Whether the pursuit of that object is wise, only yourself can judge. I say she has all along been to be won, and she still is to be won; and all that stands in the way of your views at this moment is your past conduct. They are all of them, every soul, frightened at you; they have SEEN enough of you to make them so; and they have doubtless heard ten times more than they have seen, or than anyone else has seen. They are all of them including M—— (and particularly she herself) frightened out of their wits, as to what might be your treatment of her if she were yours; and they dare not trust you—they will not trust you, at present. I do not say that they will trust you, or rather that SHE will, for it all depends on her, when

you have gone through a probation, but I am sure that she will not trust you till you have. You will, I hope, not be angry with me when I say that she would be a fool if she did. If she were to accept you at present, and without knowing more of you, even I should begin to suspect that she had an unworthy motive for doing it. Let me not forget to mention what is perhaps as important a point as any, as it regards the marriage. I of course stated to M—— that when you are free, you are prepared to make her a formal offer of your hand; but I begged him, if he was certain that such an offer would be refused, to tell me so plainly at once, that I might endeavour, in that case, to dissuade you from subjecting yourself to the pain of such a refusal. HE WOULD NOT TELL ME THAT HE WAS CERTAIN. He said his opinion was that she would not accept your offer, but still he seemed to think that there would be no harm in making it!—-One word more, and a very important one. He once, and without my referring in the slightest manner to that part of the subject, spoke of her as a GOOD GIRL, and LIKELY TO MAKE ANY MAN AN EXCELLENT WIFE! Do you think if she were a bad girl (and if she were, he must know her to be so) he would have dared to do this, under these circumstances?—And once, in speaking of HIS not being a fit person to set his face against “marrying for love,” he added “I did so myself, and out of that house; and I have had reason to rejoice at it ever since.” And mind (for I anticipate your cursed suspicions) I’m certain, at least, if manner can entitle one to be certain of any thing, that he said all this spontaneously, and without any understood motive; and I’m certain, too, that he knows you to be a person that it would not do to play any tricks of this kind with. I believe—(and all this would never have entered my thoughts, but that I know it will enter yours) I believe that even if they thought (as you have sometimes supposed they do) that she needs whitewashing, or making an honest woman of, YOU would be the last person they would think of using for such a purpose, for they know (as well as I do) that you couldn’t fail to find out the trick in a month, and would turn her into the street the next moment, though she were twenty times your wife—and that, as to the

consequences of doing so, you would laugh at them, even if you couldn't escape from them.—I shall lose the post if I say more.

Believe me, Ever truly your friend, C. P.

LETTER XIII

My dear P——, You have saved my life. If I do not keep friends with her now, I deserve to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. She is an angel from Heaven, and you cannot pretend I ever said a word to the contrary! The little rogue must have liked me from the first, or she never could have stood all these hurricanes without slipping her cable. What could she find in me? "I have mistook my person all this while," &c. Do you know I saw a picture, the very pattern of her, the other day, at Dalkeith Palace (Hope finding Fortune in the Sea), just before this blessed news came, and the resemblance drove me almost out of my senses. Such delicacy, such fulness, such perfect softness, such buoyancy, such grace! If it is not the very image of her, I am no judge.—You have the face to doubt my making the best husband in the world; you might as well doubt it if I was married to one of the Houris of Paradise. She is a saint, an angel, a love. If she deceives me again, she kills me. But I will have such a kiss when I get back, as shall last me twenty years. May God bless her for not utterly disowning and destroying me! What an exquisite little creature it is, and how she holds out to the last in her system of consistent contradictions! Since I wrote to you about making a formal proposal, I have had her face constantly before me, looking so like some faultless marble statue, as cold, as fixed and graceful as ever statue did; the expression (nothing was ever like THAT!) seemed to say—"I wish I could love you better than I do, but still I will be yours." No, I'll never believe again that she will not be mine; for I think she was made on purpose for me. If there's anyone else that understands that turn of her head as I do, I'll give her up without scruple. I have made up my mind to this, never to dream of another woman,

while she even thinks it worth her while to REFUSE TO HAVE ME. You see I am not hard to please, after all. Did M—— know of the intimacy that had subsisted between us? Or did you hint at it? I think it would be a CLENCHER, if he did. How ought I to behave when I go back? Advise a fool, who had nearly lost a Goddess by his folly. The thing was, I could not think it possible she would ever like ME. Her taste is singular, but not the worse for that. I'd rather have her love, or liking (call it what you will) than empires. I deserve to call her mine; for nothing else CAN atone for what I've gone through for her. I hope your next letter will not reverse all, and then I shall be happy till I see her,—one of the blest when I do see her, if she looks like my own beautiful love. I may perhaps write a line when I come to my right wits.—Farewel at present, and thank you a thousand times for what you have done for your poor friend.

P. S.—I like what M—— said about her sister, much. There are good people in the world: I begin to see it, and believe it.

LETTER THE LAST

Dear P——, To-morrow is the decisive day that makes me or mars me. I will let you know the result by a line added to this. Yet what signifies it, since either way I have little hope there, "whence alone my hope cometh!" You must know I am strangely in the dumps at this present writing. My reception with her is doubtful, and my fate is then certain. The hearing of your happiness has, I own, made me thoughtful. It is just what I proposed to her to do—to have crossed the Alps with me, to sail on sunny seas, to bask in Italian skies, to have visited Vevai and the rocks of Meillerie, and to have repeated to her on the spot the story of Julia and St. Preux, and to have shewn her all that my heart had stored up for her—but on my forehead alone is written—REJECTED! Yet I too could have adored as fervently, and loved as tenderly as others, had I been permitted. You are going abroad, you say, happy in

making happy. Where shall I be? In the grave, I hope, or else in her arms. To me, alas! there is no sweetness out of her sight, and that sweetness has turned to bitterness, I fear; that gentleness to sullen scorn! Still I hope for the best. If she will but HAVE me, I'll make her LOVE me: and I think her not giving a positive answer looks like it, and also shews that there is no one else. Her holding out to the last also, I think, proves that she was never to have been gained but with honour. She's a strange, almost an inscrutable girl: but if I once win her consent, I shall kill her with kindness.—Will you let me have a sight of SOMEBODY before you go? I should be most proud. I was in hopes to have got away by the Steam-boat to-morrow, but owing to the business not coming on till then, I cannot; and may not be in town for another week, unless I come by the Mail, which I am strongly tempted to do. In the latter case I shall be there, and visible on Saturday evening. Will you look in and see, about eight o'clock? I wish much to see you and her and J. H. and my little boy once more; and then, if she is not what she once was to me, I care not if I die that instant. I will conclude here till to-morrow, as I am getting into my old melancholy.—

It is all over, and I am my own man, and yours ever—

PART III

ADDRESSED TO J. S. K.——

My dear K——, It is all over, and I know my fate. I told you I would send you word, if anything decisive happened; but an impenetrable mystery hung over the affair till lately. It is at last (by the merest accident in the world) dissipated; and I keep my promise, both for your satisfaction, and for the ease of my own mind.

You remember the morning when I said "I will go and repose my sorrows at the foot of Ben Lomond"—and when from Dumbarton Bridge its giant-shadow, clad in air

and sunshine, appeared in view. We had a pleasant day's walk. We passed Smollett's monument on the road (somehow these poets touch one in reflection more than most military heroes)—talked of old times; you repeated Logan's beautiful verses to the cuckoo,* which I wanted to compare with Wordsworth's, but my courage failed me; you then told me some passages of an early attachment which was suddenly broken off; we considered together which was the most to be pitied, a disappointment in love where the attachment was mutual or one where there has been no return, and we both agreed, I think, that the former was best to be endured, and that to have the consciousness of it a companion for life was the least evil of the two, as there was a secret sweetness that took off the bitterness and the sting of regret, and "the memory of what once had been" atoned, in some measure, and at intervals, for what "never more could be." In the other case, there was nothing to look back to with tender satisfaction, no redeeming trait, not even a possibility of turning it to good. It left behind it not cherished sighs, but stifled pangs. The galling sense of it did not bring moisture into the eyes, but dried up the heart ever after. One had been my fate, the other had been yours!

[* "Sweet bird, thy bower is ever green, Thy sky is ever clear; Thou hast no sorrow in thy song, No winter in thy year."

So they begin. It was the month of May; the cuckoo sang shrouded in some woody copse; the showers fell between whiles; my friend repeated the lines with native enthusiasm in a clear manly voice, still resonant of youth and hope. Mr. Wordsworth will excuse me, if in these circumstances I declined entering the field with his profounder metaphysical strain, and kept my preference to myself.]

You startled me every now and then from my reverie by the robust voice, in which you asked the country people (by no means prodigal of their answers)—"If there was any trout fishing in those streams?"—and our dinner at Luss set us up for the rest of our day's march. The sky now became overcast; but this, I think, added to the

effect of the scene. The road to Tarbet is superb. It is on the very verge of the lake—hard, level, rocky, with low stone bridges constantly flung across it, and fringed with birch trees, just then budding into spring, behind which, as through a slight veil, you saw the huge shadowy form of Ben Lomond. It lifts its enormous but graceful bulk direct from the edge of the water without any projecting lowlands, and has in this respect much the advantage of Skiddaw. Loch Lomond comes upon you by degrees as you advance, unfolding and then withdrawing its conscious beauties like an accomplished coquet. You are struck with the point of a rock, the arch of a bridge, the Highland huts (like the first rude habitations of men) dug out of the soil, built of turf, and covered with brown heather, a sheep-cote, some straggling cattle feeding half-way down a precipice; but as you advance farther on, the view expands into the perfection of lake scenery. It is nothing (or your eye is caught by nothing) but water, earth, and sky. Ben Lomond waves to the right, in its simple majesty, cloud-capt or bare, and descending to a point at the head of the lake, shews the Trossacs beyond, tumbling about their blue ridges like woods waving; to the left is the Cobler, whose top is like a castle shattered in pieces and nodding to its ruin; and at your side rise the shapes of round pastoral hills, green, fleeced with herds, and retiring into mountainous bays and upland valleys, where solitude and peace might make their lasting home, if peace were to be found in solitude! That it was not always so, I was a sufficient proof; for there was one image that alone haunted me in the midst of all this sublimity and beauty, and turned it to a mockery and a dream!

The snow on the mountain would not let us ascend; and being weary of waiting and of being visited by the guide every two hours to let us know that the weather would not do, we returned, you homewards, and I to London—

“Italiam, Italiam!”

You know the anxious expectations with which I set out:—now hear the result—

As the vessel sailed up the Thames, the air thickened with the consciousness of

being near her, and I “heaved her name pantingly forth.” As I approached the house, I could not help thinking of the lines—

“How near am I to a happiness, That earth exceeds not! Not another like it. The treasures of the deep are not so precious As are the conceal’d comforts of a man Lock’d up in woman’s love. I scent the air Of blessings when I come but near the house. What a delicious breath true love sends forth! The violet-beds not sweeter. Now for a welcome Able to draw men’s envies upon man: A kiss now that will hang upon my lip, As sweet as morning dew upon a rose, And full as long!”

I saw her, but I saw at the first glance that there was something amiss. It was with much difficulty and after several pressing intreaties that she was prevailed on to come up into the room; and when she did, she stood at the door, cold, distant, averse; and when at length she was persuaded by my repeated remonstrances to come and take my hand, and I offered to touch her lips, she turned her head and shrunk from my embraces, as if quite alienated or mortally offended. I asked what it could mean? What had I done in her absence to have incurred her displeasure? Why had she not written to me? I could get only short, sullen, disconnected answers, as if there was something labouring in her mind which she either could not or would not impart. I hardly knew how to bear this first reception after so long an absence, and so different from the one my sentiments towards her merited; but I thought it possible it might be prudery (as I had returned without having actually accomplished what I went about) or that she had taken offence at something in my letters. She saw how much I was hurt. I asked her, “If she was altered since I went away?”—“No.” “If there was any one else who had been so fortunate as to gain her favourable opinion?”—“No, there was no one else.” “What was it then? Was it any thing in my letters? Or had I displeased her by letting Mr. P—— know she wrote to me?”—“No, not at all; but she did not apprehend my last letter required any answer, or she would have replied to it.” All this appeared to me very unsatisfactory and evasive; but I could get no more from her, and was obliged to let her go with a heavy, foreboding

heart. I however found that C—— was gone, and no one else had been there, of whom I had cause to be jealous.—"Should I see her on the morrow?"—"She believed so, but she could not promise." The next morning she did not appear with the breakfast as usual. At this I grew somewhat uneasy. The little Buonaparte, however, was placed in its old position on the mantelpiece, which I considered as a sort of recognition of old times. I saw her once or twice casually; nothing particular happened till the next day, which was Sunday. I took occasion to go into the parlour for the newspaper, which she gave me with a gracious smile, and seemed tolerably frank and cordial. This of course acted as a spell upon me. I walked out with my little boy, intending to go and dine out at one or two places, but I found that I still contrived to bend my steps towards her, and I went back to take tea at home. While we were out, I talked to William about Sarah, saying that she too was unhappy, and asking him to make it up with her. He said, if she was unhappy, he would not bear her malice any more. When she came up with the tea-things, I said to her, "William has something to say to you—I believe he wants to be friends." On which he said in his abrupt, hearty manner, "Sarah, I'm sorry if I've ever said anything to vex you"—so they shook hands, and she said, smiling affably—"THEN I'll think no more of it!" I added—"I see you've brought me back my little Buonaparte"—She answered with tremulous softness—"I told you I'd keep it safe for you!"—as if her pride and pleasure in doing so had been equal, and she had, as it were, thought of nothing during my absence but how to greet me with this proof of her fidelity on my return. I cannot describe her manner. Her words are few and simple; but you can have no idea of the exquisite, unstudied, irresistible graces with which she accompanies them, unless you can suppose a Greek statue to smile, move, and speak. Those lines in Tibullus seem to have been written on purpose for her—

Quicquid agit quoquo vestigià vertit, Componit furtim, subsequiturque decor.

Or what do you think of those in a modern play, which might actually have been composed with an eye to this little trifler—

—“See with what a waving air she goes Along the corridor. How like a fawn! Yet statelier. No sound (however soft) Nor gentlest echo telleth when she treads, But every motion of her shape doth seem Hallowed by silence. So did Hebe grow Among the gods a paragon! Away, I’m grown The very fool of Love!”

The truth is, I never saw anything like her, nor I never shall again. How then do I console myself for the loss of her? Shall I tell you, but you will not mention it again? I am foolish enough to believe that she and I, in spite of every thing, shall be sitting together over a sea-coal fire, a comfortable good old couple, twenty years hence! But to my narrative.—

I was delighted with the alteration in her manner, and said, referring to the bust—“You know it is not mine, but yours; I gave it you; nay, I have given you all—my heart, and whatever I possess, is yours! She seemed good-humouredly to decline this carte blanche offer, and waved, like a thing of enchantment, out of the room. False calm!—Deceitful smiles!—Short interval of peace, followed by lasting woe! I sought an interview with her that same evening. I could not get her to come any farther than the door. “She was busy—she could hear what I had to say there.” Why do you seem to avoid me as you do? Not one five minutes’ conversation, for the sake of old acquaintance? Well, then, for the sake of THE LITTLE IMAGE!” The appeal seemed to have lost its efficacy; the charm was broken; she remained immoveable. “Well, then I must come to you, if you will not run away.” I went and sat down in a chair near the door, and took her hand, and talked to her for three quarters of an hour; and she listened patiently, thoughtfully, and seemed a good deal affected by what I said. I told her how much I had felt, how much I had suffered for her in my absence, and how much I had been hurt by her sudden silence, for which I knew not how to account. I could have done nothing to offend her while I was away; and my letters were, I hoped, tender and respectful. I had had but one thought ever present with me; her image never quitted my side, alone or in company, to delight or distract me. Without her I could have no peace, nor ever should again, unless she

would behave to me as she had done formerly. There was no abatement of my regard to her; why was she so changed? I said to her, “Ah! Sarah, when I think that it is only a year ago that you were everything to me I could wish, and that now you seem lost to me for ever, the month of May (the name of which ought to be a signal for joy and hope) strikes chill to my heart.—How different is this meeting from that delicious parting, when you seemed never weary of repeating the proofs of your regard and tenderness, and it was with difficulty we tore ourselves asunder at last! I am ten thousand times fonder of you than I was then, and ten thousand times more unhappy!” “You have no reason to be so; my feelings towards you are the same as they ever were.” I told her “She was my all of hope or comfort: my passion for her grew stronger every time I saw her.” She answered, “She was sorry for it; for THAT she never could return.” I said something about looking ill: she said in her pretty, mincing, emphatic way, “I despise looks!” So, thought I, it is not that; and she says there’s no one else: it must be some strange air she gives herself, in consequence of the approaching change in my circumstances. She has been probably advised not to give up till all is fairly over, and then she will be my own sweet girl again. All this time she was standing just outside the door, my hand in hers (would that they could have grown together!) she was dressed in a loose morning-gown, her hair curled beautifully; she stood with her profile to me, and looked down the whole time. No expression was ever more soft or perfect. Her whole attitude, her whole form, was dignity and bewitching grace. I said to her, “You look like a queen, my love, adorned with your own graces!” I grew idolatrous, and would have kneeled to her. She made a movement, as if she was displeased. I tried to draw her towards me. She wouldn’t. I then got up, and offered to kiss her at parting. I found she obstinately refused. This stung me to the quick. It was the first time in her life she had ever done so. There must be some new bar between us to produce these continued denials; and she had not even esteem enough left to tell me so. I followed her half-way down-stairs, but to no purpose, and returned into my room, confirmed in my most

dreadful surmises. I could bear it no longer. I gave way to all the fury of disappointed hope and jealous passion. I was made the dupe of trick and cunning, killed with cold, sullen scorn; and, after all the agony I had suffered, could obtain no explanation why I was subjected to it. I was still to be tantalized, tortured, made the cruel sport of one, for whom I would have sacrificed all. I tore the locket which contained her hair (and which I used to wear continually in my bosom, as the precious token of her dear regard) from my neck, and trampled it in pieces. I then dashed the little Buonaparte on the ground, and stamped upon it, as one of her instruments of mockery. I could not stay in the room; I could not leave it; my rage, my despair were uncontrollable. I shrieked curses on her name, and on her false love; and the scream I uttered (so pitiful and so piercing was it, that the sound of it terrified me) instantly brought the whole house, father, mother, lodgers and all, into the room. They thought I was destroying her and myself. I had gone into the bedroom, merely to hide away from myself, and as I came out of it, raging-mad with the new sense of present shame and lasting misery, Mrs. F—— said, “She’s in there! He has got her in there!” thinking the cries had proceeded from her, and that I had been offering her violence. “Oh! no,” I said, “She’s in no danger from me; I am not the person;” and tried to burst from this scene of degradation. The mother endeavoured to stop me, and said, “For God’s sake, don’t go out, Mr. ——! for God’s sake, don’t!” Her father, who was not, I believe, in the secret, and was therefore justly scandalised at such outrageous conduct, said angrily, “Let him go! Why should he stay?” I however sprang down stairs, and as they called out to me, “What is it?—What has she done to you?” I answered, “She has murdered me!—She has destroyed me for ever!—She has doomed my soul to perdition!” I rushed out of the house, thinking to quit it forever; but I was no sooner in the street, than the desolation and the darkness became greater, more intolerable; and the eddying violence of my passion drove me back to the source, from whence it sprung. This unexpected explosion, with the conjectures to which it would give rise, could not be

very agreeable to the precieuse or her family; and when I went back, the father was waiting at the door, as if anticipating this sudden turn of my feelings, with no friendly aspect. I said, “I have to beg pardon, Sir; but my mad fit is over, and I wish to say a few words to you in private.” He seemed to hesitate, but some uneasy forebodings on his own account, probably, prevailed over his resentment; or, perhaps (as philosophers have a desire to know the cause of thunder) it was a natural curiosity to know what circumstances of provocation had given rise to such an extraordinary scene of confusion. When we reached my room, I requested him to be seated. I said, “It is true, Sir, I have lost my peace of mind for ever, but at present I am quite calm and collected, and I wish to explain to you why I have behaved in so extravagant a way, and to ask for your advice and intercession.” He appeared satisfied, and I went on. I had no chance either of exculpating myself, or of probing the question to the bottom, but by stating the naked truth, and therefore I said at once, “Sarah told me, Sir (and I never shall forget the way in which she told me, fixing her dove’s eyes upon me, and looking a thousand tender reproaches for the loss of that good opinion, which she held dearer than all the world) she told me, Sir, that as you one day passed the door, which stood a-jar, you saw her in an attitude which a good deal startled you; I mean sitting in my lap, with her arms round my neck, and mine twined round her in the fondest manner. What I wished to ask was, whether this was actually the case, or whether it was a mere invention of her own, to enhance the sense of my obligations to her; for I begin to doubt everything?”—“Indeed, it was so; and very much surprised and hurt I was to see it.” “Well then, Sir, I can only say, that as you saw her sitting then, so she had been sitting for the last year and a half, almost every day of her life, by the hour together; and you may judge yourself, knowing what a nice modest-looking girl she is, whether, after having been admitted to such intimacy with so sweet a creature, and for so long a time, it is not enough to make any one frantic to be received by her as I have been since my return, without any provocation given or cause assigned for it.”

The old man answered very seriously, and, as I think, sincerely, “What you now tell me, Sir, mortifies and shocks me as much as it can do yourself. I had no idea such a thing was possible. I was much pained at what I saw; but I thought it an accident, and that it would never happen again.”—“It was a constant habit; it has happened a hundred times since, and a thousand before. I lived on her caresses as my daily food, nor can I live without them.” So I told him the whole story, “what conjurations, and what mighty magic I won his daughter with,” to be anything but MINE FOR LIFE. Nothing could well exceed his astonishment and apparent mortification. “What I had said,” he owned, “had left a weight upon his mind that he should not easily get rid of.” I told him, “For myself, I never could recover the blow I had received. I thought, however, for her own sake, she ought to alter her present behaviour. Her marked neglect and dislike, so far from justifying, left her former intimacies without excuse; for nothing could reconcile them to propriety, or even a pretence to common decency, but either love, or friendship so strong and pure that it could put on the guise of love. She was certainly a singular girl. Did she think it right and becoming to be free with strangers, and strange to old friends?” I frankly declared, “I did not see how it was in human nature for any one who was not rendered callous to such familiarities by bestowing them indiscriminately on every one, to grant the extreme and continued indulgences she had done to me, without either liking the man at first, or coming to like him in the end, in spite of herself. When my addresses had nothing, and could have nothing honourable in them, she gave them every encouragement; when I wished to make them honourable, she treated them with the utmost contempt. The terms we had been all along on were such as if she had been to be my bride next day. It was only when I wished her actually to become so, to ensure her own character and my happiness, that she shrunk back with precipitation and panic-fear. There seemed to me something wrong in all this; a want both of common propriety, and I might say, of natural feeling; yet, with all her faults, I loved her, and ever should, beyond any other human being. I had drank in the poison

of her sweetness too long ever to be cured of it; and though I might find it to be poison in the end, it was still in my veins. My only ambition was to be permitted to live with her, and to die in her arms. Be she what she would, treat me how she would, I felt that my soul was wedded to hers; and were she a mere lost creature, I would try to snatch her from perdition, and marry her to-morrow if she would have me. That was the question—"Would she have me, or would she not?" He said he could not tell; but should not attempt to put any constraint upon her inclinations, one way or other. I acquiesced, and added, that "I had brought all this upon myself, by acting contrary to the suggestions of my friend, Mr. ——, who had desired me to take no notice whether she came near me or kept away, whether she smiled or frowned, was kind or contemptuous—all you have to do, is to wait patiently for a month till you are your own man, as you will be in all probability; then make her an offer of your hand, and if she refuses, there's an end of the matter." Mr. L. said, "Well, Sir, and I don't think you can follow a better advice!" I took this as at least a sort of negative encouragement, and so we parted.

TO THE SAME

(In continuation)

My dear Friend, The next day I felt almost as sailors must do after a violent storm over-night, that has subsided towards daybreak. The morning was a dull and stupid calm, and I found she was unwell, in consequence of what had happened. In the evening I grew more uneasy, and determined on going into the country for a week or two. I gathered up the fragments of the locket of her hair, and the little bronze statue, which were strewed about the floor, kissed them, folded them up in a sheet of paper, and sent them to her, with these lines written in pencil on the outside—"Pieces of a broken heart, to be kept in remembrance of the unhappy. Farewell." No notice was taken; nor did I expect any. The following morning I requested Betsey to pack up

my box for me, as I should go out of town the next day, and at the same time wrote a note to her sister to say, I should take it as a favour if she would please to accept of the enclosed copies of the Vicar of Wakefield, The Man of Feeling and Nature and Art, in lieu of three volumes of my own writings, which I had given her on different occasions, in the course of our acquaintance. I was piqued, in fact, that she should have these to shew as proofs of my weakness, and as if I thought the way to win her was by plaguing her with my own performances.

She sent me word back that the books I had sent were of no use to her, and that I should have those I wished for in the afternoon; but that she could not before, as she had lent them to her sister, Mrs. M——. I said, "very well;" but observed (laughing) to Betsey, "It's a bad rule to give and take; so, if Sarah won't have these books, you must; they are very pretty ones, I assure you." She curtsied and took them, according to the family custom. In the afternoon, when I came back to tea, I found the little girl on her knees, busy in packing up my things, and a large paper parcel on the table, which I could not at first tell what to make of. On opening it, however, I soon found what it was. It contained a number of volumes which I had given her at different times (among others, a little Prayer-Book, bound in crimson velvet, with green silk linings; she kissed it twenty times when she received it, and said it was the prettiest present in the world, and that she would shew it to her aunt, who would be proud of it)—and all these she had returned together. Her name in the title-page was cut out of them all. I doubted at the instant whether she had done this before or after I had sent for them back, and I have doubted of it since; but there is no occasion to suppose her UGLY ALL OVER WITH HYPOCRISY. Poor little thing! She has enough to answer for, as it is. I asked Betsey if she could carry a message for me, and she said "YES." "Will you tell your sister, then, that I did not want all these books; and give my love to her, and say that I shall be obliged if she will still keep these that I have sent back, and tell her that it is only those of my own writing that I think unworthy of her." What do you think the little imp made answer? She raised

herself on the other side of the table where she stood, as if inspired by the genius of the place, and said—"AND THOSE ARE THE ONES THAT SHE PRIZES THE MOST!" If there were ever words spoken that could revive the dead, those were the words. Let me kiss them, and forget that my ears have heard aught else! I said, "Are you sure of that?" and she said, "Yes, quite sure." I told her, "If I could be, I should be very different from what I was." And I became so that instant, for these casual words carried assurance to my heart of her esteem—that once implied, I had proofs enough of her fondness. Oh! how I felt at that moment! Restored to love, hope, and joy, by a breath which I had caught by the merest accident, and which I might have pined in absence and mute despair for want of hearing! I did not know how to contain myself; I was childish, wanton, drunk with pleasure. I gave Betsey a twenty-shilling note which I happened to have in my hand, and on her asking "What's this for, Sir?" I said, "It's for you. Don't you think it worth that to be made happy? You once made me very wretched by some words I heard you drop, and now you have made me as happy; and all I wish you is, when you grow up, that you may find some one to love you as well as I do your sister, and that you may love better than she does me!" I continued in this state of delirium or dotage all that day and the next, talked incessantly, laughed at every thing, and was so extravagant, nobody could tell what was the matter with me. I murmured her name; I blest her; I folded her to my heart in delicious fondness; I called her by my own name; I worshipped her: I was mad for her. I told P—— I should laugh in her face, if ever she pretended not to like me again. Her mother came in and said, she hoped I should excuse Sarah's coming up. "Oh, Ma'am," I said, "I have no wish to see her; I feel her at my heart; she does not hate me after all, and I wish for nothing. Let her come when she will, she is to me welcomer than light, than life; but let it be in her own sweet time, and at her own dear pleasure." Betsey also told me she was "so glad to get the books back." I, however, sobered and wavered (by degrees) from seeing nothing of her, day after day; and in less than a week I was devoted to the Infernal Gods. I could

hold out no longer than the Monday evening following. I sent a message to her; she returned an ambiguous answer; but she came up. Pity me, my friend, for the shame of this recital. Pity me for the pain of having ever had to make it! If the spirits of mortal creatures, purified by faith and hope, can (according to the highest assurances) ever, during thousands of years of smooth-rolling eternity and balmy, sainted repose, forget the pain, the toil, the anguish, the helplessness, and the despair they have suffered here, in this frail being, then may I forget that withering hour, and her, that fair, pale form that entered, my inhuman betrayer, and my only earthly love! She said, “Did you wish to speak to me, Sir?” I said, “Yes, may I not speak to you? I wanted to see you and be friends.” I rose up, offered her an arm-chair which stood facing, bowed on it, and knelt to her adoring. She said (going) “If that’s all, I have nothing to say.” I replied, “Why do you treat me thus? What have I done to become thus hateful to you?” ANSWER, “I always told you I had no affection for you.” You may suppose this was a blow, after the imaginary honey-moon in which I had passed the preceding week. I was stunned by it; my heart sunk within me. I contrived to say, “Nay, my dear girl, not always neither; for did you not once (if I might presume to look back to those happy, happy times), when you were sitting on my knee as usual, embracing and embraced, and I asked if you could not love me at last, did you not make answer, in the softest tones that ever man heard, ‘I COULD EASILY SAY SO, WHETHER I DID OR NOT; YOU SHOULD JUDGE BY MY ACTIONS!’ Was I to blame in taking you at your word, when every hope I had depended on your sincerity? And did you not say since I came back, ‘YOUR FEELINGS TO ME WERE THE SAME AS EVER?’ Why then is your behaviour so different?” S. “Is it nothing, your exposing me to the whole house in the way you did the other evening?” H. “Nay, that was the consequence of your cruel reception of me, not the cause of it. I had better have gone away last year, as I proposed to do, unless you would give some pledge of your fidelity; but it was your own offer that I should remain. ‘Why should I go?’ you said, ‘Why could we not go on the same as

we had done, and say nothing about the word FOREVER?'" S. "And how did you behave when you returned?" H. "That was all forgiven when we last parted, and your last words were, 'I should find you the same as ever' when I came home? Did you not that very day enchant and madden me over again by the purest kisses and embraces, and did I not go from you (as I said) adoring, confiding, with every assurance of mutual esteem and friendship?" S. "Yes, and in your absence I found that you had told my aunt what had passed between us." H. "It was to induce her to extort your real sentiments from you, that you might no longer make a secret of your true regard for me, which your actions (but not your words) confessed." S. "I own I have been guilty of improprieties, which you have gone and repeated, not only in the house, but out of it; so that it has come to my ears from various quarters, as if I was a light character. And I am determined in future to be guided by the advice of my relations, and particularly of my aunt, whom I consider as my best friend, and keep every lodger at a proper distance." You will find hereafter that her favourite lodger, whom she visits daily, had left the house; so that she might easily make and keep this vow of extraordinary self-denial. Precious little dissembler! Yet her aunt, her best friend, says, "No, Sir, no; Sarah's no hypocrite!" which I was fool enough to believe; and yet my great and unpardonable offence is to have entertained passing doubts on this delicate point. I said, Whatever errors I had committed, arose from my anxiety to have everything explained to her honour: my conduct shewed that I had that at heart, and that I built on the purity of her character as on a rock. My esteem for her amounted to adoration. "She did not want adoration." It was only when any thing happened to imply that I had been mistaken, that I committed any extravagance, because I could not bear to think her short of perfection. "She was far from perfection," she replied, with an air and manner (oh, my God!) as near it as possible. "How could she accuse me of a want of regard to her? It was but the other day, Sarah," I said to her, "when that little circumstance of the books happened, and I fancied the expressions your sister dropped proved the sincerity of all your

kindness to me—you don't know how my heart melted within me at the thought, that after all, I might be dear to you. New hopes sprung up in my heart, and I felt as Adam must have done when his Eve was created for him!" "She had heard enough of that sort of conversation," (moving towards the door). This, I own, was the unkindest cut of all. I had, in that case, no hopes whatever. I felt that I had expended words in vain, and that the conversation below stairs (which I told you of when I saw you) had spoiled her taste for mine. If the allusion had been classical I should have been to blame; but it was scriptural, it was a sort of religious courtship, and Miss L. is religious!

At once he took his Muse and dipt her Right in the middle of the Scripture.

It would not do—the lady could make neither head nor tail of it. This is a poor attempt at levity. Alas! I am sad enough. "Would she go and leave me so? If it was only my own behaviour, I still did not doubt of success. I knew the sincerity of my love, and she would be convinced of it in time. If that was all, I did not care: but tell me true, is there not a new attachment that is the real cause of your estrangement? Tell me, my sweet friend, and before you tell me, give me your hand (nay, both hands) that I may have something to support me under the dreadful conviction." She let me take her hands in mine, saying, "She supposed there could be no objection to that,"—as if she acted on the suggestions of others, instead of following her own will—but still avoided giving me any answer. I conjured her to tell me the worst, and kill me on the spot. Any thing was better than my present state. I said, "Is it Mr. C——?" She smiled, and said with gay indifference, "Mr. C—— was here a very short time." "Well, then, was it Mr. ——?" She hesitated, and then replied faintly, "No." This was a mere trick to mislead; one of the profoundnesses of Satan, in which she is an adept. "But," she added hastily, "she could make no more confidences." "Then," said I, "you have something to communicate." "No; but she had once mentioned a thing of the sort, which I had hinted to her mother, though it signified little." All this while I was in tortures. Every word, every half-denial,

stabbed me. “Had she any tie?” “No, I have no tie!” “You are not going to be married soon?” “I don’t intend ever to marry at all!” “Can’t you be friends with me as of old?” “She could give no promises.” “Would she make her own terms?” “She would make none.”—“I was sadly afraid the LITTLE IMAGE was dethroned from her heart, as I had dashed it to the ground the other night.”—“She was neither desperate nor violent.” I did not answer—“But deliberate and deadly,”—though I might; and so she vanished in this running fight of question and answer, in spite of my vain efforts to detain her. The cockatrice, I said, mocks me: so she has always done. The thought was a dagger to me. My head reeled, my heart recoiled within me. I was stung with scorpions; my flesh crawled; I was choked with rage; her scorn scorched me like flames; her air (her heavenly air) withdrawn from me, stifled me, and left me gasping for breath and being. It was a fable. She started up in her own likeness, a serpent in place of a woman. She had fascinated, she had stung me, and had returned to her proper shape, gliding from me after inflicting the mortal wound, and instilling deadly poison into every pore; but her form lost none of its original brightness by the change of character, but was all glittering, beauteous, voluptuous grace. Seed of the serpent or of the woman, she was divine! I felt that she was a witch, and had bewitched me. Fate had enclosed me round about. I was transformed too, no longer human (any more than she, to whom I had knit myself) my feelings were marble; my blood was of molten lead; my thoughts on fire. I was taken out of myself, wrapt into another sphere, far from the light of day, of hope, of love. I had no natural affection left; she had slain me, but no other thing had power over me. Her arms embraced another; but her mock-embrace, the phantom of her love, still bound me, and I had not a wish to escape. So I felt then, and so perhaps shall feel till I grow old and die, nor have any desire that my years should last longer than they are linked in the chain of those amorous folds, or than her enchantments steep my soul in oblivion of all other things! I started to find myself alone—for ever alone, without a creature to love me. I looked round the room for help; I saw the tables, the

chairs, the places where she stood or sat, empty, deserted, dead. I could not stay where I was; I had no one to go to but to the parent-mischief, the preternatural hag, that had “drugged this posset” of her daughter’s charms and falsehood for me, and I went down and (such was my weakness and helplessness) sat with her for an hour, and talked with her of her daughter, and the sweet days we had passed together, and said I thought her a good girl, and believed that if there was no rival, she still had a regard for me at the bottom of her heart; and how I liked her all the better for her coy, maiden airs: and I received the assurance over and over that there was no one else; and that Sarah (they all knew) never staid five minutes with any other lodger, while with me she would stay by the hour together, in spite of all her father could say to her (what were her motives, was best known to herself!) and while we were talking of her, she came bounding into the room, smiling with smothered delight at the consummation of my folly and her own art; and I asked her mother whether she thought she looked as if she hated me, and I took her wrinkled, withered, cadaverous, clammy hand at parting, and kissed it. Faugh!—

I will make an end of this story; there is something in it discordant to honest ears. I left the house the next day, and returned to Scotland in a state so near to phrenzy, that I take it the shades sometimes ran into one another. R—— met me the day after I arrived, and will tell you the way I was in. I was like a person in a high fever; only mine was in the mind instead of the body. It had the same irritating, uncomfortable effect on the bye-standers. I was incapable of any application, and don’t know what I should have done, had it not been for the kindness of ——. I came to see you, to “bestow some of my tediousness upon you,” but you were gone from home. Everything went on well as to the law business; and as it approached to a conclusion, I wrote to my good friend P—— to go to M——, who had married her sister, and ask him if it would be worth my while to make her a formal offer, as soon as I was free, as, with the least encouragement, I was ready to throw myself at her feet; and to know, in case of refusal, whether I might go back there and be treated as

an old friend. Not a word of answer could be got from her on either point, notwithstanding every importunity and intreaty; but it was the opinion of M—— that I might go and try my fortune. I did so with joy, with something like confidence. I thought her giving no positive answer implied a chance, at least, of the reversion of her favour, in case I behaved well. All was false, hollow, insidious. The first night after I got home, I slept on down. In Scotland, the flint had been my pillow. But now I slept under the same roof with her. What softness, what balmy repose in the very thought! I saw her that same day and shook hands with her, and told her how glad I was to see her; and she was kind and comfortable, though still cold and distant. Her manner was altered from what it was the last time. She still absented herself from the room, but was mild and affable when she did come. She was pale, dejected, evidently uneasy about something, and had been ill. I thought it was perhaps her reluctance to yield to my wishes, her pity for what I suffered; and that in the struggle between both, she did not know what to do. How I worshipped her at these moments! We had a long interview the third day, and I thought all was doing well. I found her sitting at work in the window-seat of the front parlour; and on my asking if I might come in, she made no objection. I sat down by her; she let me take her hand; I talked to her of indifferent things, and of old times. I asked her if she would put some new frills on my shirts?—"With the greatest pleasure." If she could get THE LITTLE IMAGE mended? "It was broken in three pieces, and the sword was gone, but she would try." I then asked her to make up a plaid silk which I had given her in the winter, and which she said would make a pretty summer gown. I so longed to see her in it!—"She had little time to spare, but perhaps might!" Think what I felt, talking peaceably, kindly, tenderly with my love,—not passionately, not violently. I tried to take pattern by her patient meekness, as I thought it, and to subdue my desires to her will. I then sued to her, but respectfully, to be admitted to her friendship—she must know I was as true a friend as ever woman had—or if there was a bar to our intimacy from a dearer attachment, to let me know it frankly,

as I shewed her all my heart. She drew out her handkerchief and wiped her eyes “of tears which sacred pity had engendered there.” Was it so or not? I cannot tell. But so she stood (while I pleaded my cause to her with all the earnestness, and fondness in the world) with the tears trickling from her eye-lashes, her head stooping, her attitude fixed, with the finest expression that ever was seen of mixed regret, pity, and stubborn resolution; but without speaking a word, without altering a feature. It was like a petrifaction of a human face in the softest moment of passion. “Ah!” I said, “how you look! I have prayed again and again while I was away from you, in the agony of my spirit, that I might but live to see you look so again, and then breathe my last!” I intreated her to give me some explanation. In vain! At length she said she must go, and disappeared like a spirit. That week she did all the little trifling favours I had asked of her. The frills were put on, and she sent up to know if I wanted any more done. She got the Buonaparte mended. This was like healing old wounds indeed! How? As follows, for thereby hangs the conclusion of my tale. Listen.

I had sent a message one evening to speak to her about some special affairs of the house, and received no answer. I waited an hour expecting her, and then went out in great vexation at my disappointment. I complained to her mother a day or two after, saying I thought it so unlike Sarah’s usual propriety of behaviour, that she must mean it as a mark of disrespect. Mrs. L—— said, “La! Sir, you’re always fancying things. Why, she was dressing to go out, and she was only going to get the little image you’re both so fond of mended; and it’s to be done this evening. She has been to two or three places to see about it, before she could get anyone to undertake it.” My heart, my poor fond heart, almost melted within me at this news. I answered, “Ah! Madam, that’s always the way with the dear creature. I am finding fault with her and thinking the hardest things of her; and at that very time she’s doing something to shew the most delicate attention, and that she has no greater satisfaction than in gratifying my wishes!” On this we had some farther talk, and I

took nearly the whole of the lodgings at a hundred guineas a year, that (as I said) she might have a little leisure to sit at her needle of an evening, or to read if she chose, or to walk out when it was fine. She was not in good health, and it would do her good to be less confined. I would be the drudge and she should no longer be the slave. I asked nothing in return. To see her happy, to make her so, was to be so myself.—This was agreed to. I went over to Blackheath that evening, delighted as I could be after all I had suffered, and lay the whole of the next morning on the heath under the open sky, dreaming of my earthly Goddess. This was Sunday. That evening I returned, for I could hardly bear to be for a moment out of the house where she was, and the next morning she tapped at the door—it was opened—it was she—she hesitated and then came forward: she had got the little image in her hand, I took it, and blest her from my heart. She said "They had been obliged to put some new pieces to it." I said "I didn't care how it was done, so that I had it restored to me safe, and by her." I thanked her and begged to shake hands with her. She did so, and as I held the only hand in the world that I never wished to let go, I looked up in her face, and said "Have pity on me, have pity on me, and save me if you can!" Not a word of answer, but she looked full in my eyes, as much as to say, "Well, I'll think of it; and if I can, I will save you!" We talked about the expense of repairing the figure. "Was the man waiting?"—"No, she had fetched it on Saturday evening." I said I'd give her the money in the course of the day, and then shook hands with her again in token of reconciliation; and she went waving out of the room, but at the door turned round and looked full at me, as she did the first time she beguiled me of my heart. This was the last.—

All that day I longed to go down stairs to ask her and her mother to set out with me for Scotland on Wednesday, and on Saturday I would make her my wife. Something withheld me. In the evening, however, I could not rest without seeing her, and I said to her younger sister, "Betsey, if Sarah will come up now, I'll pay her what she laid out for me the other day."—"My sister's gone out, Sir," was the answer. What

again! thought I, That's somewhat sudden. I told P—— her sitting in the window-seat of the front parlour boded me no good. It was not in her old character. She did not use to know there were doors or windows in the house—and now she goes out three times in a week. It is to meet some one, I'll lay my life on't. "Where is she gone?"—"To my grandmother's, Sir." "Where does your grandmother live now?"—"At Somers' Town." I immediately set out to Somers' Town. I passed one or two streets, and at last turned up King Street, thinking it most likely she would return that way home. I passed a house in King Street where I had once lived, and had not proceeded many paces, ruminating on chance and change and old times, when I saw her coming towards me. I felt a strange pang at the sight, but I thought her alone. Some people before me moved on, and I saw another person with her. THE MURDER WAS OUT. It was a tall, rather well-looking young man, but I did not at first recollect him. We passed at the crossing of the street without speaking. Will you believe it, after all that had past between us for two years, after what had passed in the last half-year, after what had passed that very morning, she went by me without even changing countenance, without expressing the slightest emotion, without betraying either shame or pity or remorse or any other feeling that any other human being but herself must have shewn in the same situation. She had no time to prepare for acting a part, to suppress her feelings—the truth is, she has not one natural feeling in her bosom to suppress. I turned and looked—they also turned and looked and as if by mutual consent, we both retrod our steps and passed again, in the same way. I went home. I was stifled. I could not stay in the house, walked into the street and met them coming towards home. As soon as he had left her at the door (I fancy she had prevailed with him to accompany her, dreading some violence) I returned, went up stairs, and requested an interview. Tell her, I said, I'm in excellent temper and good spirits, but I must see her! She came smiling, and I said, "Come in, my dear girl, and sit down, and tell me all about it, how it is and who it is."—"What," she said, "do you mean Mr. C——?" "Oh," said I, "Then it is he! Ah!

you rogue, I always suspected there was something between you, but you know you denied it lustily: why did you not tell me all about it at the time, instead of letting me suffer as I have done? But, however, no reproaches. I only wish it may all end happily and honourably for you, and I am satisfied. But," I said, "you know you used to tell me, you despised looks."—"She didn't think Mr. C—— was so particularly handsome." "No, but he's very well to pass, and a well-grown youth into the bargain." Pshaw! let me put an end to the fulsome detail. I found he had lived over the way, that he had been lured thence, no doubt, almost a year before, that they had first spoken in the street, and that he had never once hinted at marriage, and had gone away, because (as he said) they were too much together, and that it was better for her to meet him occasionally out of doors. "There could be no harm in them walking together." "No, but you may go some where afterwards."—"One must trust to one's principle for that." Consummate hypocrite! * * * * * * I told her Mr. M——, who had married her sister, did not wish to leave the house. I, who would have married her, did not wish to leave it. I told her I hoped I should not live to see her come to shame, after all my love of her; but put her on her guard as well as I could, and said, after the lengths she had permitted herself with me, I could not help being alarmed at the influence of one over her, whom she could hardly herself suppose to have a tenth part of my esteem for her!! She made no answer to this, but thanked me coldly for my good advice, and rose to go. I begged her to sit a few minutes, that I might try to recollect if there was anything else I wished to say to her, perhaps for the last time; and then, not finding anything, I bade her good night, and asked for a farewell kiss. Do you know she refused; so little does she understand what is due to friendship, or love, or honour! We parted friends, however, and I felt deep grief, but no enmity against her. I thought C—— had pressed his suit after I went, and had prevailed. There was no harm in that—a little fickleness or so, a little over-pretension to unalterable attachment—but that was all. She liked him better than me—it was my hard hap, but I must bear it. I went out to roam the desert

streets, when, turning a corner, whom should I meet but her very lover? I went up to him and asked for a few minutes' conversation on a subject that was highly interesting to me and I believed not indifferent to him: and in the course of four hours' talk, it came out that for three months previous to my quitting London for Scotland, she had been playing the same game with him as with me—that he breakfasted first, and enjoyed an hour of her society, and then I took my turn, so that we never jostled; and this explained why, when he came back sometimes and passed my door, as she was sitting in my lap, she coloured violently, thinking if her lover looked in, what a denouement there would be. He could not help again and again expressing his astonishment at finding that our intimacy had continued unimpaired up to so late a period after he came, and when they were on the most intimate footing. She used to deny positively to him that there was anything between us, just as she used to assure me with impenetrable effrontery that "Mr. C—— was nothing to her, but merely a lodger." All this while she kept up the farce of her romantic attachment to her old lover, vowed that she never could alter in that respect, let me go to Scotland on the solemn and repeated assurance that there was no new flame, that there was no bar between us but this shadowy love—I leave her on this understanding, she becomes more fond or more intimate with her new lover; he quitting the house (whether tired out or not, I can't say)—in revenge she ceases to write to me, keeps me in wretched suspense, treats me like something loathsome to her when I return to enquire the cause, denies it with scorn and impudence, destroys me and shews no pity, no desire to soothe or shorten the pangs she has occasioned by her wantonness and hypocrisy, and wishes to linger the affair on to the last moment, going out to keep an appointment with another while she pretends to be obliging me in the tenderest point (which C—— himself said was too much). . . .What do you think of all this? Shall I tell you my opinion? But I must try to do it in another letter.

TO THE SAME

(In conclusion)

I did not sleep a wink all that night; nor did I know till the next day the full meaning of what had happened to me. With the morning's light, conviction glared in upon me that I had not only lost her for ever—but every feeling I had ever had towards her—respect, tenderness, pity—all but my fatal passion, was gone. The whole was a mockery, a frightful illusion. I had embraced the false Florimel instead of the true; or was like the man in the Arabian Nights who had married a GOUL. How different was the idea I once had of her? Was this she,

—"Who had been beguiled—she who was made Within a gentle bosom to be laid— To bless and to be blessed—to be heart-bare To one who found his bettered likeness there— To think for ever with him, like a bride— To haunt his eye, like taste personified— To double his delight, to share his sorrow, And like a morning beam, wake to him every morrow?

I saw her pale, cold form glide silent by me, dead to shame as to pity. Still I seemed to clasp this piece of witchcraft to my bosom; this lifeless image, which was all that was left of my love, was the only thing to which my sad heart clung. Were she dead, should I not wish to gaze once more upon her pallid features? She is dead to me; but what she once was to me, can never die! The agony, the conflict of hope and fear, of adoration and jealousy is over; or it would, ere long, have ended with my life. I am no more lifted now to Heaven, and then plunged in the abyss; but I seem to have been thrown from the top of a precipice, and to lie groveling, stunned, and stupefied. I am melancholy, lonesome, and weaker than a child. The worst is, I have no prospect of any alteration for the better: she has cut off all possibility of a reconcilement at any future period. Were she even to return to her former pretended fondness and endearments, I could have no pleasure, no confidence in them. I can scarce make out the contradiction to myself. I strive to think she always was what I

now know she is; but I have great difficulty in it, and can hardly believe but she still IS what she so long SEEMED. Poor thing! I am afraid she is little better off herself; nor do I see what is to become of her, unless she throws off the mask at once, and RUNS A-MUCK at infamy. She is exposed and laid bare to all those whose opinion she set a value upon. Yet she held her head very high, and must feel (if she feels any thing) proportionably mortified.—A more complete experiment on character was never made. If I had not met her lover immediately after I parted with her, it would have been nothing. I might have supposed she had changed her mind in my absence, and had given him the preference as soon as she felt it, and even shewn her delicacy in declining any farther intimacy with me. But it comes out that she had gone on in the most forward and familiar way with both at once—(she could not change her mind in passing from one room to another)—told both the same barefaced and unblushing falsehoods, like the commonest creature; received presents from me to the very last, and wished to keep up the game still longer, either to gratify her humour, her avarice, or her vanity in playing with my passion, or to have me as a dernier resort, in case of accidents. Again, it would have been nothing, if she had not come up with her demure, well-composed, wheedling looks that morning, and then met me in the evening in a situation, which (she believed) might kill me on the spot, with no more feeling than a common courtesan shews, who BILKS a customer, and passes him, leering up at her bully, the moment after. If there had been the frailty of passion, it would have been excusable; but it is evident she is a practised, callous jilt, a regular lodging-house decoy, played off by her mother upon the lodgers, one after another, applying them to her different purposes, laughing at them in turns, and herself the probable dupe and victim of some favourite gallant in the end. I know all this; but what do I gain by it, unless I could find some one with her shape and air, to supply the place of the lovely apparition? That a professed wanton should come and sit on a man’s knee, and put her arms round his neck, and caress him, and seem fond of him, means nothing, proves nothing, no one concludes anything from it; but that a

pretty, reserved, modest, delicate-looking girl should do this, from the first hour to the last of your being in the house, without intending anything by it, is new, and, I think, worth explaining. It was, I confess, out of my calculation, and may be out of that of others. Her unmoved indifference and self-possession all the while, shew that it is her constant practice. Her look even, if closely examined, bears this interpretation. It is that of studied hypocrisy or startled guilt, rather than of refined sensibility or conscious innocence. “She defied anyone to read her thoughts?” she once told me. “Do they then require concealing?” I imprudently asked her. The command over herself is surprising. She never once betrays herself by any momentary forgetfulness, by any appearance of triumph or superiority to the person who is her dupe, by any levity of manner in the plenitude of her success; it is one faultless, undeviating, consistent, consummate piece of acting. Were she a saint on earth, she could not seem more like one. Her hypocritical high-flown pretensions, indeed, make her the worse: but still the ascendancy of her will, her determined perseverance in what she undertakes to do, has something admirable in it, approaching to the heroic. She is certainly an extraordinary girl! Her retired manner, and invariable propriety of behaviour made me think it next to impossible she could grant the same favours indiscriminately to every one that she did to me. Yet this now appears to be the fact. She must have done the very same with C——, invited him into the house to carry on a closer intrigue with her, and then commenced the double game with both together. She always “despised looks.” This was a favourite phrase with her, and one of the hooks which she baited for me. Nothing could win her but a man’s behaviour and sentiments. Besides, she could never like another—she was a martyr to disappointed affection—and friendship was all she could even extend to any other man. All the time, she was making signals, playing off her pretty person, and having occasional interviews in the street with this very man, whom she could only have taken so sudden and violent a liking to him from his looks, his personal appearance, and what she probably conjectured of his circumstances. Her sister had

married a counsellor—the Miss F——'s, who kept the house before, had done so too—and so would she. "There was a precedent for it." Yet if she was so desperately enamoured of this new acquaintance, if he had displaced THE LITTLE IMAGE from her breast, if he was become her SECOND "unalterable attachment" (which I would have given my life to have been) why continue the same unwarrantable familiarities with me to the last, and promise that they should be renewed on my return (if I had not unfortunately stumbled upon the truth to her aunt) and yet keep up the same refined cant about her old attachment all the time, as if it was that which stood in the way of my pretensions, and not her faithlessness to it? "If one swerves from one, one shall swerve from another"—was her excuse for not returning my regard. Yet that which I thought a prophecy, was I suspect a history. She had swerved twice from her avowed engagements, first to me, and then from me to another. If she made a fool of me, what did she make of her lover? I fancy he has put that question to himself. I said nothing to him about the amount of the presents; which is another damning circumstance, that might have opened my eyes long before; but they were shut by my fond affection, which "turned all to favour and to prettiness." She cannot be supposed to have kept up an appearance of old regard to me, from a fear of hurting my feelings by her desertion; for she not only shewed herself indifferent to, but evidently triumphed in my sufferings, and heaped every kind of insult and indignity upon them. I must have incurred her contempt and resentment by my mistaken delicacy at different times; and her manner, when I have hinted at becoming a reformed man in this respect, convinces me of it. "She hated it!" She always hated whatever she liked most. She "hated Mr. C——'s red slippers," when he first came! One more count finishes the indictment. She not only discovered the most hardened indifference to the feelings of others; she has not shewn the least regard to her own character, or shame when she was detected. When found out, she seemed to say, "Well, what if I am? I have played the game as long as I could; and if I could keep it up no longer, it was not for want of good will!" Her

colouring once or twice is the only sign of grace she has exhibited. Such is the creature on whom I had thrown away my heart and soul—one who was incapable of feeling the commonest emotions of human nature, as they regarded herself or any one else. “She had no feelings with respect to herself,” she often said. She in fact knows what she is, and recoils from the good opinion or sympathy of others, which she feels to be founded on a deception; so that my overweening opinion of her must have appeared like irony, or direct insult. My seeing her in the street has gone a good way to satisfy me. Her manner there explains her manner in-doors to be conscious and overdone; and besides, she looks but indifferently. She is diminutive in stature, and her measured step and timid air do not suit these public airings. I am afraid she will soon grow common to my imagination, as well as worthless in herself. Her image seems fast “going into the wastes of time,” like a weed that the wave bears farther and farther from me. Alas! thou poor hapless weed, when I entirely lose sight of thee, and for ever, no flower will ever bloom on earth to glad my heart again!

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