LETTERS

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN.

VOL. IV.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF THE

AUTHOR

OF A

VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

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LETTERS.

LETTER LXVII.

September 27.

WHEN you receive this, I ſhall either have landed, or be hovering on the Britiſh coaſt—your letter of the 18th decided me.

By what criterion of principle or affection, you term my queſtions extraordinary and unneceſſary, I cannot determine.—You deſire me to decide—I

had decided. You muſt have had long ago two letters of mine, from ——, to the ſame purport, to conſider.—In theſe, God knows! there was but too much affection, and the agonies of a diſtracted mind were but too faithfully pourtrayed!—What more then had I to ſay?—The negative was to come from you.—You had perpetually recurred to your promiſe of meeting me in the autumn—Was it extraordinary that I ſhould demand a yes, or no?—Your letter is written with extreme harſhneſs, coldneſs I am accuſtomed to, in it I find not a trace of the tenderneſs of humanity, much leſs of friendſhip.—I only ſee a deſire to heave a load off your ſhoulders.

I am above diſputing about words.—It matters not in what terms you decide.

The

The tremendous power who formed this heart, muſt have foreſeen that, in a world in which ſelf-intereſt, in various ſhapes, is the principal mobile, I had little chance of eſcaping miſery.—To the fiat of fate I ſubmit.—I am content to be wretched; but I will not be contemptible.—Of me you have no cauſe to complain, but for having had too much regard for you—for having expected a degree of permanent happineſs, when you only ſought for a momentary gratification.

I am ſtrangely deficient in ſagacity.—Uniting myſelf to you, your tenderneſs ſeemed to make me amends for all my former misfortunes.—On this tenderneſs and affection with what confidence did I reſt!—but I leaned on a ſpear, that has pierced me to the heart.—You have thrown off a faithful friend, to

purſue the caprices of the moment.—We certainly are differently organized; for even now, when conviction has been ſtamped on my ſoul by ſorrow, I can ſcarcely believe it poſſible. It depends at preſent on you, whether you will ſee me or not.—I ſhall take no ſtep, till I ſee or hear from you.

Preparing myſelf for the worſt—I have determined, if your next letter be like the laſt, to write to Mr. ——— to procure me an obſcure lodging, and not to inform any body of my arrival.—There I will endeavour in a few months to obtain the ſum neceſſary to take me to France—from you I will not receive any more.—I am not yet ſufficiently humbled to depend on your beneficence.

Some people, whom my unhappineſs has intereſted, though they know not

not the extent of it, will assist me to attain the object I have in view, the independence of my child. Should a peace take place, ready money will go a great way in France—and I will borrow a sum, which my industry *shall* enable me to pay at my leisure, to purchase a small estate for my girl.—The assistance I shall find necessary to complete her education, I can get at an easy rate at Paris—I can introduce her to such society as she will like—and thus, securing for her all the chance for happiness, which depends on me, I shall die in peace, persuaded that the felicity which has hitherto cheated my expectation, will not always elude my grasp. No poor tempest-tossed mariner ever more earnestly longed to arrive at his port.

* * * *

I ſhall not come up in the veſſel all the way, becauſe I have no place to go to. Captain ——— will inform you where I am. It is needleſs to add, that I am not in a ſtate of mind to bear ſuſpenſe—and that I wiſh to ſee you, though it be for the laſt time.

LETTER LXVIII.

Sunday, October 4.

I WROTE to you by the packet, to inform you, that your letter of the 18th of laſt month, had determined me to ſet out with captain ———; but, as we ſailed very quick, I take it for granted, that you have not yet received it.

You

You ſay, I muſt decide for myſelf.—I had decided, that it was moſt for the intereſt of my little girl, and for my own comfort, little as I expect, for us to live together; and I even thought that you would be glad, ſome years hence, when the tumult of buſineſs was over, to repoſe in the ſociety of an affectionate friend, and mark the progreſs of our intereſting child, whilſt endeavouring to be of uſe in the circle you at laſt reſolved to reſt in; for you cannot run about for ever.

From the tenour of your laſt letter however, I am led to imagine, that you have formed ſome new attachment.—If it be ſo, let me earneſtly requeſt you to ſee me once more, and immediately. This is the only proof I require of the friendſhip you profeſs for me. I will

then decide, ſince you boggle about a mere form.

I am labouring to write with calmneſs—but the extreme anguiſh I feel, at landing without having any friend to receive me, and even to be conſcious that the friend whom I moſt wiſh to ſee, will feel a diſagreeable ſenſation at being informed of my arrival, does not come under the deſcription of common miſery. Every emotion yields to an overwhelming flood of ſorrow—and the playfulneſs of my child diſtreſſes me.—On her account, I wiſhed to remain a few days here, comfortleſs as is my ſituation.—Beſides, I did not wiſh to ſurpriſe you. You have told me, that you would make any ſacrifice to promote my happineſs—and, even in your laſt unkind letter, you talk of the ties which bind you to me and my child.

child.—Tell me, that you wiſh it, and I will cut this Gordian knot.

I now moſt earneſtly intreat you to write to me, without fail, by the return of the poſt. Direct your letter to be left at the poſt-office, and tell me whether you will come to me here, or where you will meet me. I can receive your letter on Wedneſday morning.

Do not keep me in ſuſpenſe.—I expect nothing from you, or any human being: my die is caſt!—I have fortitude enough to determine to do my duty; yet I cannot raiſe my depreſſed ſpirits, or calm my trembling heart.—That being who moulded it thus, knows that I am unable to tear up by the roots the propenſity to affection which has been the torment of my life—but life will have an end!

Should

Should you come here (a few months ago I could not have doubted it) you will find me at ———. If you prefer meeting me on the road, tell me where.

Yours affectionately

* * * *

LETTER LXIX.

I WRITE you now on my knees; imploring you to send my child and the maid with ——, to Paris, to be consigned to the care of Madame ——, rue ——, section de ——. Should they be removed, —— can give their direction.

Let the maid have all my clothes, without distinction.

Pray

Pray pay the cook her wages, and do not mention the confeſſion which I forced from her—a little ſooner or later is of no conſequence. Nothing but my extreme ſtupidity could have rendered me blind ſo long. Yet, whilſt you aſſured me that you had no attachment, I thought we might ſtill have lived together.

I ſhall make no comments on your conduct; or any appeal to the world. Let my wrongs ſleep with me! Soon, very ſoon ſhall I be at peace. When you receive this, my burning head will be cold.

I would encounter a thouſand deaths, rather than a night like the laſt. Your treatment has thrown my mind into a ſtate of chaos; yet I am ſerene. I go to find comfort, and my only fear is, that my poor body will be inſulted by an

an endeavour to recal my hated exiſtence. But I ſhall plunge into the Thames where there is the leaſt chance of my being ſnatched from the death I ſeek.

God bleſs you! May you never know by experience what you have made me endure. Should your ſenſibility ever awake, remorſe will find its way to your heart; and, in the midſt of buſineſs and ſenſual pleaſure, I ſhall appear before you, the victim of your deviation from rectitude.

* * * * *

LETTER

LETTER LXX.

Sunday Morning.

I HAVE only to lament, that, when the bitterneſs of death was paſt, I was inhumanly brought back to life and miſery. But a fixed determination is not to be baffled by diſappointment; nor will I allow that to be a frantic attempt, which was one of the calmeſt acts of reaſon. In this reſpect, I am only accountable to myſelf. Did I care for what is termed reputation, it is by other circumſtances that I ſhould be diſhonoured.

You ſay, "that you know not how to extricate ourſelves out of the wretchedneſs into which we have been plunged."

You are extricated long ſince.—But I forbear to comment.——If I am condemned to live longer, it is a living death.

It appears to me, that you lay much more ſtreſs on delicacy, than on principle; for I am unable to diſcover what ſentiment of delicacy would have been violated, by your viſiting a wretched friend—if indeed you have any friendſhip for me.—But ſince your new attachment is the only thing ſacred in your eyes, I am ſilent—Be happy! My complaints ſhall never more damp your enjoyment—perhaps I am miſtaken in ſuppoſing that even my death could, for more than a moment.—This is what you call magnanimity.—It is happy for yourſelf, that you poſſeſs this quality in the higheſt degree.

Your continually aſſerting, that you will

will do all in your power to contribute to my comfort (when you only allude to pecuniary aſſiſtance), appears to me a flagrant breach of delicacy.—I want not ſuch vulgar comfort, nor will I accept it. I never wanted but your heart—That gone, you have nothing more to give. Had I only poverty to fear, I ſhould not ſhrink from life.—Forgive me then, if I ſay, that I ſhall conſider any direct or indirect attempt to ſupply my neceſſities, as an inſult which I have not merited—and as rather done out of tenderneſs for your own reputation, than for me. Do not miſtake me; I do not think that you value money (therefore I will not accept what you do not care for) though I do much leſs, becauſe certain privations are not painful to me.

When

When I am dead, reſpect for yourſelf will make you take care of the child.

I write with difficulty—probably I ſhall never write to you again.—Adieu!

God bleſs you!

* * * *

LETTER LXXI.

Monday Morning.

I AM compelled at laſt to ſay that you treat me ungenerouſly. I agree with you, that — — —

— — — — — —

— — — — — —

— — — — — —

— — — — — —

But

But let the obliquity now fall on me.—I fear neither poverty nor infamy. I am unequal to the taſk of writing—and explanations are not neceſſary. —

— — — — — — —

— — — — — — —

My child may have to bluſh for her mother's want of prudence—and may lament that the rectitude of my heart made me above vulgar precautions; but ſhe ſhall not deſpiſe me for meanneſs.—You are now perfectly free.—God bleſs you.

* * * *

LETTER LXXIII.

Saturday Night.

I HAVE been hurt by indirect enquiries, which appear to me not to be dictated by any tenderneſs to me.—You aſk "If I am well or tranquil?"—They who think me ſo, muſt want a heart to eſtimate my feelings by.—I chuſe then to be the organ of my own ſentiments.

I muſt tell you, that I am very much mortified by your continually offering me pecuniary aſſiſtance—and, conſidering your going to the new houſe, as an open avowal that you abandon me, let me

me tell you that I will ſooner periſh than receive any thing from you—and I ſay this at the moment when I am diſappointed in my firſt attempt to obtain a temporary ſupply. But this even pleaſes me; an accumulation of diſappointments and misfortunes ſeems to ſuit the habit of my mind.—

Have but a little patience, and I will remove myſelf where it will not be neceſſary for you to talk—of courſe, not to think of me. But let me ſee, written by yourſelf—for I will not receive it through any other medium—that the affair is finiſhed.—It is an inſult to me to ſuppoſe, that I can be reconciled, or recover my ſpirits; but, if you hear nothing of me, it will be the ſame thing to you.

* * * *

Even your ſeeing me, has been to oblige other people, and not to ſooth my diſtracted mind.

LETTER LXXIV.

Thurſday Afternoon.

MR. ——— having forgot to deſire you to ſend the things of mine which were left at the houſe, I have to requeſt you to let ——— bring them o

———.

I ſhall go this evening to the lodging; ſo you need not be reſtrained from coming here to tranſact your buſineſs.—And, whatever I may think, and feel—

you

you need not fear that I ſhall publicly complain—No! If I have any criterion to judge of right and wrong, I have been moſt ungenerouſly treated: but, wiſhing now only to hide myſelf, I ſhall be ſilent as the grave in which I long to forget myſelf. I ſhall protect and provide for my child.—I only mean by this to ſay, that you having nothing to fear from my deſperation.

Farewel.

* * * * *

LETTER LXXV.

London, November 27.

THE letter, without an addreſs, which you put up with the letters you returned, did not meet my eyes till juſt now.—I had thrown the letters aſide—I did not wiſh to look over a regiſter of ſorrow.

My not having ſeen it, will account for my having written to you with anger—under the impreſſion your departure, without even a line left for me, made on me, even after your late conduct, which could not lead me to expect much attention to my ſufferings.

In fact, "the decided conduct, which appeared

appeared to me ſo unfeeling," has almoſt overturned my reaſon; my mind is injured—I ſcarcely know where I am, or what I do.—The grief I cannot conquer (for ſome cruel recollections never quit me, baniſhing almoſt every other) I labour to conceal in total ſolitude.—My life therefore is but an exerciſe of fortitude, continually on the ſtretch—and hope never gleams in this tomb, where I am buried alive.

But I meant to reaſon with you, and not to complain.—You tell me, "that I ſhall judge more coolly of your mode of acting, ſome time hence." But is it not poſſible that *paſſion* clouds your reaſon, as much as it does mine?—and ought you not to doubt, whether thoſe principles are ſo "exalted," as you term them, which only lead to your own gratification? In other words,

whether it be juſt to have no principle of action, but that of following your inclination, trampling on the affection you have foſtered, and the expectations you have excited?

My affection for you is rooted in my heart.—I know you are not what you now ſeem—nor will you always act, or feel, as you now do, though I may never be comforted by the change.—Even at Paris, my image will haunt you.—You will ſee my pale face—and ſometimes the tears of anguiſh will drop on your heart, which you have forced from mine.

I cannot write. I thought I could quickly have refuted all your *ingenious* arguments; but my head is confuſed.—Right or wrong, I am miſerable!

It ſeems to me, that my conduct has always been governed by the ſtricteſt principles of juſtice and truth.—Yet,

how

how wretched have my ſocial feelings, and delicacy of ſentiment rendered me! —I have loved with my whole ſoul, only to diſcover that I had no chance of a return—and that exiſtence is a burthen without it.

I do not perfectly underſtand you.—If, by the offer of your friendſhip, you ſtill only mean pecuniary ſupport—I muſt again reject it.—Trifling are the ills of poverty in the ſcale of my misfortunes.—God bleſs you!

* * * *

I have been treated ungenerouſly—if I underſtand what is generoſity.—You ſeem to me only to have been anxious to ſhake me off—regardleſs whether you daſhed me to atoms by the fall.— In truth I have been rudely handled. *Do you judge coolly,* and I truſt you

you will not continue to call thoſe capricious feelings "the moſt refined," which would undermine not only the moſt ſacred principles, but the affections which unite mankind.——You would render mothers unnatural—and there would be no ſuch thing as a father!—If your theory of morals is the moſt "exalted," it is certainly the moſt eaſy.—It does not require much magnanimity, to determine to pleaſe ourſelves for the moment, let others ſuffer what they will!

Excuſe me for again tormenting you, my heart thirſts for juſtice from you—and whilſt I recollect that you approved Miſs ———'s conduct—I am convinced you will not always juſtify your own.

Beware of the deceptions of paſſion! It will not always baniſh from your

mind, that you have acted ignobly—and condescended to subterfuge to gloss over the conduct you could not excuse.—Do truth and principle require such sacrifices?

LETTER LXXVI.

London, December 8.

HAVING just been informed that ——— is to return immediately to Paris, I would not miss a sure opportunity of writing, because I am not certain that my last, by Dover has reached you.

Resentment, and even anger, are momentary emotions with me—and

I wished

I wiſhed to tell you ſo, that if you ever think of me, it may not be in the light of an enemy.

That I have not been uſed *well* I muſt ever feel; perhaps, not always with the keen anguiſh I do at preſent—for I began even now to write calmly, and I cannot reſtrain my tears.

I am ſtunned!—Your late conduct ſtill appears to me a frightful dream.—Ah! aſk yourſelf if you have not condeſcended to employ a little addreſs, I could almoſt ſay cunning, unworthy of you?—Principles are ſacred things—and we never play with truth, with impunity.

The expectation (I have too fondly nouriſhed it) of regaining your affection, every day grows fainter and fainter.—Indeed, it ſeems to me, when I am more ſad than uſual, that I ſhall never

never ſee you more.—Yet you will not always forget me.—You will feel ſomething like remorſe, for having lived only for yourſelf—and ſacrificed my peace to inferior gratifications. In a comfortleſs old age, you will remember that you had one diſintereſted friend, whoſe heart you wounded to the quick. The hour of recollection will come—and you will not be ſatisfied to act the part of a boy, till you fall into that of a dotard. I know that your mind, your heart, and your principles of action, are all ſuperior to your preſent conduct. You do, you muſt, reſpect me—and you will be ſorry to forfeit my eſteem.

You know beſt whether I am ſtill preſerving the remembrance of an imaginary being.—I once thought that I knew you thoroughly—but now I am obliged to leave ſome doubts that

involuntarily preſs on me, to be cleared up by time.

You may render me unhappy; but cannot make me contemptible in my own eyes.—I ſhall ſtill be able to ſupport my child, though I am diſappointed in ſome other plans of uſefulneſs, which I once believed would have afforded you equal pleaſure.

Whilſt I was with you, I reſtrained my natural generoſity, becauſe I thought your property in jeopardy.—When I went to ——, I requeſted you, *if you could conveniently*, not to forget my father, ſiſters, and ſome other people, whom I was intereſted about.—Money was laviſhed away, yet not only my requeſts were neglected, but ſome trifling debts were not diſcharged, that now come on me.—Was this friendſhip—or generoſity? Will you not grant you

you have forgotten yourſelf? Still I have an affection for you.—God bleſs you.

* * * *

LETTER LXXVII.

As the parting from you for ever is the moſt ſerious event of my life, I will once expoſtulate with you, and call not the language of truth and feeling ingenuity!

I know the ſoundneſs of your underſtanding—and know that it is impoſſible for you always to confound the caprices of every wayward inclination with the manly dictates of principle.

You

You tell me "that I torment you."—Why do I?——Becauſe you cannot eſtrange your heart entirely from me—and you feel that juſtice is on my ſide. You urge, "that your conduct was unequivocal."——It was not.——When your coolneſs has hurt me, with what tenderneſs have you endeavoured to remove the impreſſion!—and even before I returned to England, you took great pains to convince me, that all my uneaſineſs was occaſioned by the effect of a worn-out conſtitution—and you concluded your letter with theſe words, "Buſineſs alone has kept me from you.—Come to any port, and I will fly down to my two dear girls with a heart all their own."

With theſe aſſurances, is it extraordinary that I ſhould believe what I wiſhed? I might—and did think that you

you had a ſtruggle with old propenſities; but I ſtill thought that I and virtue ſhould at laſt prevail. I ſtill thought that you had a magnanimity of character, which would enable you to conquer yourſelf.

———, believe me, it is not romance, you have acknowledged to me feelings of this kind.—You could reſtore me to life and hope, and the ſatisfaction you would feel, would amply repay you.

In tearing myſelf from you, it is my own heart I pierce—and the time will come, when you will lament that you have thrown away a heart, that, even in the moment of paſſion, you cannot deſpiſe.—I would owe every thing to your generoſity—but, for God's ſake, keep me no longer in ſuſpenſe!—Let me ſee you once more!—

LETTER LXXVIII.

You muſt do as you pleaſe with reſpect to the child.—I could wiſh that it might be done ſoon, that my name may be no more mentioned to you. It is now finiſhed.—Convinced that you have neither regard nor friendſhip, I diſdain to utter a reproach, though I have had reaſon to think, that the "forbearance" talked of, has not been very delicate.—It is however of no conſequence.—I am glad you are ſatiſfied with your own conduct.

I now ſolemnly aſſure you, that this is an eternal farewel.—Yet I flinch not from the duties which tie me to life.

That

That there is "ſophiſtry" on one ſide or other, is certain; but now it matters not on which. On my part it has not been a queſtion of words. Yet your underſtanding or mine muſt be ſtrangely warped—for what you term "delicacy," appears to me to be exactly the contrary. I have no criterion for morality, and have thought in vain, if the ſenſations which lead you to follow an ancle or ſtep, be the ſacred foundation of principle and affection. Mine has been of a very different nature, or it would not have ſtood the brunt of your ſarcaſms.

The ſentiment in me is ſtill ſacred. If there be any part of me that will ſurvive the ſenſe of my misfortunes, it is the purity of my affections. The impetuoſity of your ſenſes, may have led you to term mere animal deſire, the

ſource of principle; and it may give zeſt to ſome years to come.—Whether you will always think ſo, I ſhall never know.

It is ſtrange that, in ſpite of all you do, ſomething like conviction forces me to believe, that you are not what you appear to be.

I part with you in peace.

LETTER

LETTER

ON THE

PRESENT CHARACTER

OF THE

FRENCH NATION.

LETTER

Introductory to a Series of Letters on the Present Character of the French Nation.

Paris, February 15, 1793.

My dear friend,

IT is neceſſary perhaps for an obſerver of mankind, to guard as carefully the remembrance of the firſt impreſſion made by a nation, as by a countenance; becauſe we imperceptibly loſe ſight of the national character, when we become more intimate with individuals. It is not then uſeleſs or preſumptuous to note, that, when I firſt entered Paris,

the ſtriking contraſt of riches and poverty, elegance and ſlovenlineſs, urbanity and deceit, every where caught my eye, and ſaddened my ſoul; and theſe impreſſions are ſtill the foundation of my remarks on the manners, which flatter the ſenſes, more than they intereſt the heart, and yet excite more intereſt than eſteem.

The whole mode of life here tends indeed to render the people frivolous, and, to borrow their favourite epithet, amiable. Ever on the wing, they are always ſipping the ſparkling joy on the brim of the cup, leaving fatiety in the bottom for thoſe who venture to drink deep. On all ſides they trip along, buoyed up by animal ſpirits, and ſeemingly ſo void of care, that often, when I am walking on the *Boulevards*, it occurs to me, that they alone underſtand

the

the full import of the term leiſure; and they trifle their time away with ſuch an air of contentment, I know not how to wiſh them wiſer at the expence of their gaiety. They play before me like motes in a ſunbeam, enjoying the paſſing ray; whilſt an Engliſh head, ſearching for more ſolid happineſs, loſes, in the analyſis of pleaſure, the volatile ſweets of the moment. Their chief enjoyment, it is true, riſes from vanity: but it is not the vanity that engenders vexation of ſpirit; on the contrary, it lightens the heavy burthen of life, which reaſon too often weighs, merely to ſhift from one ſhoulder to the other.

Inveſtigating the modification of the paſſion, as I would analyze the elements that give a form to dead matter, I ſhall attempt to trace to their ſource the

the cauſes which have combined to render this nation the moſt poliſhed, in a phyſical ſenſe, and probably the moſt ſuperficial in the world; and I mean to follow the windings of the various ſtreams that diſembogue into a terrific gulf, in which all the dignity of our nature is abſorbed. For every thing has conſpired to make the French the moſt ſenſual people in the world; and what can render the heart ſo hard, or ſo effectually ſtifle every moral emotion, as the refinements of ſenſuality?

The frequent repetition of the word French, appears invidious; let me then make a previous obſervation, which I beg you not to loſe ſight of, when I ſpeak rather harſhly of a land flowing with milk and honey. Remember that it is not the morals of a particular people that I would decry; for are we not

not all of the ſame ſtock? But I wiſh calmly to conſider the ſtage of civilization in which I find the French, and, giving a ſketch of their character, and unfolding the circumſtances which have produced its identity, I ſhall endeavour to throw ſome light on the hiſtory of man, and on the preſent important ſubjects of diſcuſſion.

I would I could firſt inform you that, out of the chaos of vices and follies, prejudices and virtues, rudely jumbled together, I ſaw the fair form of Liberty ſlowly riſing, and Virtue expanding her wings to ſhelter all her children! I ſhould then hear the account of the barbarities that have rent the boſom of France patiently, and bleſs the firm hand that lopt off the rotten limbs. But, if the ariſtocracy of birth is levelled with the ground, only to make room

for that of riches, I am afraid that the morals of the people will not be much improved by the change, or the government rendered leſs venal. Still it is not juſt to dwell on the miſery produced by the preſent ſtruggle, without adverting to the ſtanding evils of the old ſyſtem. I am grieved—ſorely grieved —when I think of the blood that has ſtained the cauſe of freedom at Paris; but I alſo hear the ſame live ſtream cry aloud from the highways, through which the retreating armies paſſed with famine and death in their rear, and I hide my face with awe before the inſcrutable ways of providence, ſweeping in ſuch various directions the beſom of deſtruction over the ſons of men.

Before I came to France, I cheriſhed, you know, an opinion, that ſtrong virtues

tues might exiſt with the poliſhed manners produced by the progreſs of civilization; and I even anticipated the epoch, when, in the courſe of improvement, men would labour to become virtuous, without being goaded on by miſery. But now, the perſpective of the golden age, fading before the attentive eye of obſervation, almoſt eludes my ſight; and, loſing thus in part my theory of a more perfect ſtate, ſtart not, my friend, if I bring forward an opinion, which at the firſt glance ſeems to be levelled againſt the exiſtence of God! I am not become an Atheiſt, I aſſure you, by reſiding at Paris: yet I begin to fear that vice, or, if you will, evil, is the grand mobile of action, and that, when the paſſions are juſtly poized, we become harmleſs, and in the ſame proportion uſeleſs.

The wants of reaſon are very few; and, were we to conſider diſpaſſionately the real value of moſt things, we ſhould probably reſt ſatisfied with the ſimple gratification of our phyſical neceſſities, and be content with negative goodneſs: for it is frequently, only that wanton, the Imagination, with her artful coquetry, who lures us forward, and makes us run over a rough road, puſhing aſide every obſtacle merely to catch a diſappointment.

The deſire alſo of being uſeful to others, is continually damped by experience; and, if the exertions of humanity were not in ſome meaſure their own reward, who would endure miſery, or ſtruggle with care, to make ſome people ungrateful, and others idle?

You will call theſe melancholy effuſions,

ſions, and gueſs that, fatigued by the vivacity, which has all the buſtling folly of childhood, without the innocence which renders ignorance charming, I am too ſevere in my ſtrictures. It may be ſo; and I am aware that the good effects of the revolution will be laſt felt at Paris; where ſurely the ſoul of Epicurus has long been at work to root out the ſimple emotions of the heart, which, being natural, are always moral. Rendered cold and artificial by the ſelfiſh enjoyments of the ſenſes, which the government foſtered, is it ſurpriſing that ſimplicity of manners, and ſingleneſs of heart, rarely appear, to recreate me with the wild odour of nature, ſo paſſing ſweet?

Seeing how deep the fibres of miſchief have ſhot, I ſometimes aſk, with a doubting accent, Whether a nation can

go

go back to the purity of manners which has hitherto been maintained unſullied only by the keen air of poverty, when, emaſculated by pleaſure, the luxuries of proſperity are become the wants of nature? I cannot yet give up the hope, that a fairer day is dawning on Europe, though I muſt heſitatingly obſerve, that little is to be expected from the narrow principle of commerce which ſeems every where to be ſhoving aſide *the point of honour* of the *nobleſſe*. I can look beyond the evils of the moment, and do not expect muddied water to become clear before it has had time to ſtand; yet, even for the moment, it is the moſt terrific of all ſights, to ſee men vicious without warmth—to ſee the order that ſhould be the ſuperſcription of virtue, cultivated to give ſecurity to crimes which only thoughtleſſneſs could palliate.

palliate. Diſorder is, in fact, the very eſſence of vice, though with the wild wiſhes of a corrupt fancy humane emotions often kindly mix to ſoften their atrocity. Thus humanity, generoſity, and even ſelf-denial, ſometimes render a character grand, and even uſeful, when hurried away by lawleſs paſſions; but what can equal the turpitude of a cold calculator who lives for himſelf alone, and conſidering his fellow-creatures merely as machines of pleaſure, never forgets that honeſty is the beſt policy? Keeping ever within the pale of the law, he cruſhes his thouſands with impunity; but it is with that degree of management, which makes him, to borrow a ſignificant vulgariſm, a villain *in grain*. The very exceſs of his depravation preſerves him, whilſt the more reſpectable beaſt of prey, who prowls

about like the lion, and roars to announce his approach, falls into a ſnare.

You may think it too ſoon to form an opinion of the future government, yet it is impoſſible to avoid hazarding ſome conjectures, when every thing whiſpers me, that names, not principles, are changed, and when I ſee that the turn of the tide has left the dregs of the old ſyſtem to corrupt the new. For the ſame pride of office, the ſame deſire of power are ſtill viſible; with this aggravation, that, fearing to return to obſcurity after having but juſt acquired a reliſh for diſtinction, each hero, or philoſopher, for all are dubbed with theſe new titles, endeavours to make hay while the ſun ſhines; and every petty municipal officer, become the idol, or rather the tyrant of the day, ſtalks like a cock on a dunghil.

I ſhall

I ſhall now conclude this deſultory letter; which however will enable you to foreſee that I ſhall treat more of morals than manners.

Yours ———

FRAGMENT

OF

LETTERS

ON THE

MANAGEMENT OF INFANTS.

CONTENTS.

LETTERS

ON THE

MANAGEMENT OF INFANTS.

LETTER I.

I OUGHT to apologize for not having written to you on the ſubject you mentioned; but, to tell you the truth, it grew upon me: and, inſtead of an anſwer, I have begun a ſeries of letters on the management of children in their infancy. Replying then to your queſtion, I have the public in my

thoughts, and ſhall endeavour to ſhow what modes appear to me neceſſary, to render the infancy of children more healthy and happy. I have long thought, that the cauſe which renders children as hard to rear as the moſt fragile plant, is our deviation from ſimplicity. I know that ſome able phyſicians have recommended the method I have purſued, and I mean to point out the good effects I have obſerved in practice. I am aware that many matrons will exclaim againſt me, and dwell on the number of children they have brought up, as their mothers did before them, without troubling themſelves with new-fangled notions; yet, though, in my uncle Toby's words, they ſhould attempt to ſilence me, by "wiſhing I had ſeen their large" families, I muſt ſuppoſe, while a third part

of

of the human ſpecies, according to the moſt accurate calculation, die during their infancy, juſt at the threſhold of life, that there is ſome error in the modes adopted by mothers and nurſes, which counteracts their own endeavours. I may be miſtaken in ſome particulars; for general rules, founded on the ſoundeſt reaſon, demand individual modification; but, if I can perſuade any of the riſing generation to exerciſe their reaſon on this head, I am content. My advice will probably be found moſt uſeful to mothers in the middle claſs; and it is from them that the lower imperceptibly gains improvement. Cuſtom, produced by reaſon in one, may ſafely be the effect of imitation in the other.— — —

— — — — — —

LETTERS

TO

Mr. JOHNSON,

BOOKSELLER,

IN

St. PAUL's CHURCH-YARD.

LETTERS

TO

Mr. JOHNSON.

LETTER I.

Dublin, April 14, [1787.]

Dear ſir,

I AM ſtill an invalid—and begin to believe that I ought never to expect to enjoy health. My mind preys on my body—and, when I endeavour to be uſeful, I grow too much intereſted for my own peace. Confined almoſt entirely to the ſociety of children, I am anxiouſly ſolicitous for their future welfare, and mortified beyond meaſure,

when counteracted in my endeavours to improve them.—I feel all a mother's fears for the ſwarm of little ones which ſurround me, and obſerve diſorders, without having power to apply the proper remedies. How can I be reconciled to life, when it is always a painful warfare, and when I am deprived of all the pleaſures I reliſh?—I allude to rational converſations, and domeſtic affections. Here, alone, a poor ſolitary individual in a ſtrange land, tied to one ſpot, and ſubject to the caprice of another, can I be contented? I am deſirous to convince you that I have *ſome* cauſe for ſorrow—and am not without reaſon detached from life. I ſhall hope to hear that you are well, and am yours ſincerely

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER

LETTER II.

Henley, Thurſday, Sept. 13.

My dear ſir,

SINCE I ſaw you, I have, literally ſpeaking, *enjoyed* ſolitude. My ſiſter could not accompany me in my rambles; I therefore wandered alone, by the ſide of the Thames, and in the neighbouring beautiful fields and pleaſure grounds: the proſpects were of ſuch a placid kind, I *caught* tranquillity while I ſurveyed them—my mind was *ſtill*, though active. Were I to give you an account how I have ſpent my time, you would ſmile.—I found an old French bible here, and amuſed myſelf with comparing it with our

Engliſh tranſlation; then I would liſten to the falling leaves, or obſerve the various tints the autumn gave to them—At other times, the ſinging of a robin, or the noiſe of a water-mill, engaged my attention—partial attention—, for I was, at the ſame time perhaps diſcuſſing ſome knotty point, or ſtraying from this *tiny* world to new ſyſtems. After theſe excurſions, I returned to the family meals, told the children ſtories (they think me *vaſtly* agreeable), and my ſiſter was amuſed.—Well, will you allow me to call this way of paſſing my days pleaſant?

I was juſt going to mend my pen; but I believe it will enable me to ſay all I have to add to this epiſtle. Have you yet heard of an habitation for me? I often think of my new plan of life; and, leſt my ſiſter ſhould try to prevail

on

on me to alter it, I have avoided mentioning it to her. I am determined!—Your ſex generally laugh at female determinations; but let me tell you, I never yet reſolved to do, any thing of conſequence, that I did not adhere reſolutely to it, till I had accompliſhed my purpoſe, improbable as it might have appeared to a more timid mind. In the courſe of near nine-and-twenty years, I have gathered ſome experience, and felt many *ſevere* diſappointments—and what is the amount? I long for a little peace and *independence!* Every obligation we receive from our fellow-creatures is a new ſhackle, takes from our native freedom, and debaſes the mind, makes us mere earthworms—I am not fond of grovelling!

I am, ſir, yours, &c.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER III.

Market Harborough, Sept. 20.

My dear ſir,

You left me with three opulent tradeſmen; their converſation was not calculated to beguile the way, when the ſable curtain concealed the beauties of nature. I liſtened to the tricks of trade—and ſhrunk away, without wiſhing to grow rich; even the novelty of the ſubjects did not render them pleaſing; fond as I am of tracing the paſſions in all their different forms—I was not ſurpriſed by any glimpſe of the ſublime, or beautiful—though one of them imagined I ſhould be a uſeful partner in a good *firm*. I was very much fatigued, and have ſcarcely recovered myſelf.

myself. I do not expect to enjoy the same tranquil pleasures Henley afforded: I meet with new objects to employ my mind; but many painful emotions are complicated with the reflections they give rise to.

I do not intend to enter on the *old* topic, yet hope to hear from you—and am yours, &c.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER IV.

Friday Night.

My dear sir,

THOUGH your remarks are generally judicious—I cannot *now* concur with you, I mean with respect to the preface*,

* To Original Stories.

and have not altered it. I hate the uſual ſmooth way of exhibiting proud humility. A general rule *only* extends to the majority—and, believe me, the few judicious parents who may peruſe my book, will not feel themſelves hurt—and the weak are too vain to mind what is ſaid in a book intended for children.

I return you the Italian MS.—but do not haſtily imagine that I am indolent. I would not ſpare any labour to do my duty—and, after the moſt laborious day, that ſingle thought would ſolace me more than any pleaſures the ſenſes could enjoy. I find I could not tranſlate the MS. well. If it was not a MS, I ſhould not be ſo eaſily intimidated; but the hand, and errors in orthography, or abbreviations, are a ſtumbling-block at the firſt ſetting out.—I cannot bear to do any thing I

cannot

cannot do well—and I ſhould loſe time in the vain attempt.

I had, the other day, the ſatisfaction of again receiving a letter from my poor, dear Margaret*.—With all a mother's fondneſs I could tranſcribe a part of it—She ſays, every day her affection to me, and dependence on heaven increaſe, &c.——I miſs her innocent careſſes—and ſometimes indulge a pleaſing hope, that ſhe may be allowed to cheer my childleſs age—if I am to live to be old.—At any rate, I may hear of the virtues I may not contemplate—and my reaſon may permit me to love a female.—I now allude to ———. I have received another letter from her, and her childiſh complaints vex me—indeed they do—As uſual, good-night. MARY.

* Counteſs Mount Caſhel.

If parents attended to their children, I would not have written the ſtories; for, what are books—compared to converſations which affection inforces!—

LETTER V.

My dear ſir,

REMEMBER you are to ſettle *my account*, as I want to know how much I am in your debt—but do not ſuppoſe that I feel any uneaſineſs on that ſcore. The generality of people in trade would not be much obliged to me for a like civility, *but you were a man* before you were a bookſeller—ſo I am your ſincere friend,

MARY.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

Friday Morning.

I AM ſick with vexation—and wiſh I could knock my fooliſh head againſt the wall, that bodily pain might make me feel leſs anguiſh from ſelf-reproach! To ſay the truth, I was never more diſpleaſed with myſelf, and I will tell you the cauſe.—You may recollect that I did not mention to you the circumſtance of ——— having a fortune left to him; nor did a hint of it drop from me when I converſed with my ſiſter; becauſe I knew he had a ſufficient motive for concealing it. Laſt Sunday, when his character was aſperſed, as I thought, unjuſtly, in the heat of vindi-

cation I informed ****** that he was now independent; but, at the ſame time, deſired him not to repeat my information to B——; yet, laſt Tueſday, he told him all—and the boy at B——'s gave Mrs. —— an account of it. As Mr. ——— knew he had only made a confident of me (I bluſh to think of it!) he gueſſed the channel of intelligence, and this morning came (not to reproach me, I wiſh he had!) but to point out the injury I have done him.—Let what will be the conſequence, I will reimburſe him, if I deny myſelf the neceſſaries of life—and even then my folly will ſting me.—Perhaps you can ſcarcely conceive the miſery I at this moment endure—that I, whoſe power of doing good is ſo limited, ſhould do harm, galls my very ſoul. ****** may laugh at theſe qualms—but, ſuppoſing Mr.

——— to be unworthy, I am not the leſs to blame. Surely it is hell to deſpiſe one's ſelf!—I did not want this additional vexation—at this time I have many that hang heavily on my ſpirits. I ſhall not call on you this month—nor ſtir out.—My ſtomach has been ſo ſuddenly and violently affected, I am unable to lean over the deſk.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER VII.

As I am become a reviewer, I think it right, in the way of buſineſs, to conſider the ſubject. You have alarmed the editor of the Critical, as the advertiſement prefixed to the Appendix plainly

plainly ſhows. The Critical appears to me to be a timid, mean production, and its ſucceſs is a reflection on the taſte and judgment of the public; but, as a body, who ever gave it credit for much? The voice of the people is only the voice of truth, when ſome man of abilities has had time to get faſt hold of the GREAT NOSE of the monſter. Of courſe, local fame is generally a clamour, and dies away. The Appendix to the Monthly afforded me more amuſement, though every article almoſt wants energy and a *cant* of virtue and liberality is ſtrewed over it; always tame, and eager to pay court to eſtabliſhed fame. The account of Necker is one unvaried tone of admiration. Surely men were born only to provide for the ſuſtenance of the body by enfeebling the mind! MARY.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

You made me very low-ſpirited laſt night, by your manner of talking.—You are my only friend—the only perſon I am *intimate* with.—I never had a father, or a brother—you have been both to me, ever ſince I knew you—yet I have ſometimes been very petulant.—I have been thinking of thoſe inſtances of ill-humour and quickneſs, and they appeared like crimes.

Yours ſincerely

MARY.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

Saturday Night.

I AM a mere animal, and inſtinctive emotions too often ſilence the ſuggeſtions of reaſon. Your note—I can ſcarcely tell why, hurt me—and produced a kind of winterly ſmile, which diffuſes a beam of deſpondent tranquillity over the features. I have been very ill—Heaven knows it was more than fancy—After ſome ſleepleſs, wearifome nights, towards the morning I have grown delirious.—Laſt Thurſday, in particular, I imagined ——— was thrown into great diſtreſs by his folly; and I, unable to aſſiſt him, was in an agony. My nerves were in ſuch a painful

painful ſtate of irritation—I ſuffered more than I can expreſs—Society was neceſſary—and might have diverted me till I gained more ſtrength; but I bluſhed when I recollected how often I had teazed you with childiſh complaints, and the reveries of a diſordered imagination. I even *imagined* that I intruded on you, becauſe you never called on me—though you perceived that I was not well.—I have nouriſhed a ſickly kind of delicacy, which gives me many unneceſſary pangs.—I acknowledge that life is but a jeſt—and often a frightful dream—yet catch myſelf every day ſearching for ſomething ſerious—and feel real miſery from the diſappointment. I am a ſtrange compound of weakneſs and reſolution! However, if I muſt ſuffer, I will endeavour to ſuffer in ſilence.

There is certainly a great defect in my mind—my wayward heart creates its own misery—Why I am made thus I cannot tell; and, till I can form some idea of the whole of my existence, I must be content to weep and dance like a child—long for a toy, and be tired of it as soon as I get it.

We must each of us wear a fool's cap; but mine, alas! has lost its bells, and is grown so heavy, I find it intolerably troublesome.——Good-night! I have been pursuing a number of strange thoughts since I began to write, and have actually both wept and laughed immoderately—Surely I am a fool—

MARY W.

LETTER

LETTER X.

Monday Morning.

I REALLY want a German grammar, as I intend to attempt to learn that language—and I will tell you the reaſon why.—While I live, I am perſuaded, I muſt exert my underſtanding to procure an independence, and render myſelf uſeful. To make the taſk eaſier, I ought to ſtore my mind with knowledge—The ſeed-time is paſſing away. I ſee the neceſſity of labouring now—and of that neceſſity I do not complain; on the contrary, I am thankful that I have more than common incentives to purſue knowledge, and draw my plea-

ſures from the employments that are within my reach. You perceive this is not a gloomy day—I feel at this moment particularly grateful to you—without your humane and *delicate* aſſiſtance, how many obſtacles ſhould I not have had to encounter—too often ſhould I have been out of patience with my fellow-creatures, whom I wiſh to love!—Allow me to love you, my dear ſir, and call friend a being I reſpect.—Adieu!

MARY W.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

I THOUGHT you *very* unkind, nay, very unfeeling, laſt night. My cares and vexations—I will ſay what I allow myſelf to think—do me honour, as they ariſe from my diſintereſtedneſs and *unbending* principles; nor can that mode of conduct be a reflection on my underſtanding, which enables me to bear miſery, rather than ſelfiſhly live for myſelf alone. I am not the only character deſerving of reſpect, that has had to ſtruggle with various ſorrows—while inferior minds have enjoyed local fame and preſent comfort.—Dr. Johnſon's cares almoſt drove him mad—but, I ſuppoſe, you would quietly have told him, he was a fool for not being calm, and that wiſe men ſtriving againſt the

ſtream, can yet be in good humour. I have done with inſenſible human wiſdom,—" indifference cold in wiſdom's guiſe,"—and turn to the ſource of perfection—who perhaps never diſregarded an almoſt broken heart, eſpecially when a reſpect, a practical reſpect, for virtue, ſharpened the wounds of adverſity. I am ill—I ſtayed in bed this morning till eleven o'clock, only thinking of getting money to extricate myſelf out of ſome of my difficulties—The ſtruggle is now over. I will condeſcend to try to obtain ſome in a diſagreeable way.

Mr. ——— called on me juſt now—pray did you know his motive for calling* ?—I think him impertinently offi-

* This alludes to a fooliſh propoſal of marriage for mercenary conſiderations, which the gentleman here mentioned thought proper to recommend to her. The two letters which immediately follow, are addreſſed to the gentleman himſelf.

cious.—

cious.—He had left the houſe before it occurred to me in the ſtrong light it does now, or I ſhould have told him ſo—My poverty makes me proud—I will not be inſulted by a ſuperficial puppy.—His intimacy with Miſs ——— gave him a privilege, which he ſhould not have aſſumed with me—a propoſal might be made to his couſin, a milliner's girl, which ſhould not have been mentioned to me. Pray tell him that I am offended—and do not wiſh to ſee him again!—When I meet him at your houſe, I ſhall leave the room, ſince I cannot pull him by the noſe. I can force my ſpirit to leave my body—but it ſhall never bend to ſupport that body—God of heaven, ſave thy child from this living death!—I ſcarcely know what I write. My hand trembles—I am very ſick—ſick at heart.———

MARY.

LETTER XII.

Tueſday Evening.

Sir,

WHEN you left me this morning, and I reflected a moment — your *officious* meſſage, which at firſt appeared to me a joke—looked ſo very like an inſult—I cannot forget it—To prevent then the neceſſity of forcing a ſmile—when I chance to meet you—I take the earlieſt opportunity of informing you of my real ſentiments.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

Wednesday, 3 o'clock.

Sir,

It is inexpressibly disagreeable to me to be obliged to enter again on a subject, that has already raised a tumult of *indignant* emotions in my bosom, which I was labouring to suppress when I received your letter. I shall now *condescend* to answer your epistle; but let me first tell you, that, in my *unprotected* situation, I make a point of never forgiving a *deliberate insult*—and in that light I consider your late officious conduct. It is not according to my nature to mince matters—I will then tell you in

plain terms, what I think. I have ever conſidered you in the light of a *civil* acquaintance—on the word friend I lay a peculiar emphaſis—and, as a mere acquaintance, you were rude and *cruel*, to ſtep forward to inſult a woman, whoſe conduct and misfortunes demand reſpect. If my friend, Mr. Johnſon, had made the propoſal—I ſhould have been ſeverely hurt—have thought him unkind and unfeeling, but not *impertinent*.—The privilege of intimacy you had no claim to—and ſhould have referred the man to myſelf—if you had not ſufficient diſcernment to quaſh it at once. I am, ſir, poor and deſtitute.—Yet I have a ſpirit that will never bend, or take indirect methods, to obtain the conſequence I deſpiſe; nay, if to ſupport life it was neceſſary to act contrary to my principles, the ſtruggle

would ſoon be over. I can bear any thing but my own contempt.

In a few words, what I call an inſult, is the bare ſuppoſition that I could for a moment think of *proſtituting* my perſon for a maintenance; for in that point of view does ſuch a marriage appear to me, who conſider right and wrong in the abſtract, and never by words and local opinions ſhield myſelf from the reproaches of my own heart and underſtanding.

It is needleſs to ſay more—Only you muſt excuſe me when I add, that I wiſh never to ſee, but as a perfect ſtranger, a perſon who could ſo groſsly miſtake my character. An apology is not neceſſary—if you were inclined to make one—nor any further expoſtulations.—I again repeat, I cannot overlook an affront; few indeed have ſufficient de-

licacy to reſpect poverty, even where it gives luſtre to a character—and I tell you ſir, I am POOR—yet can live without your benevolent exertions.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT.

LETTER XIV.

I SEND you *all* the books I had to review except Dr. J—'s Sermons, which I have begun. If you wiſh me to look over any more traſh this month—you muſt ſend it directly. I have been ſo-low-ſpirited ſince I ſaw you—I was quite glad, laſt night, to feel myſelf affected by ſome paſſages in Dr. J—'s ſermon on the death of his wife—I

ſeemed

ſeemed (ſuddenly) to *find* my *ſoul* again —It has been for ſome time I cannot tell where. Send me the Speaker— and *Mary*, I want one—and I ſhall ſoon want ſome paper—you may as well ſend it at the ſame time—for I am trying to brace my nerves that I may be induſtrious.—I am afraid reaſon is not a good bracer—for I have been reaſoning a long time with my untoward ſpirits— and yet my hand trembles.—I could finiſh a period very *prettily* now, by ſaying that it ought to be ſteady when I add that I am yours ſincerely,

MARY.

If you do not like the manner in which I reviewed Dr. J—'s ſ—— on his wife, be it known unto you—I *will* not do it any other way—I felt ſome pleaſure in paying a juſt tribute of reſpe

ſpect to the memory of a man—who, ſpite of his faults, I have an affection for—I ſay *have*, for I believe he is ſomewhere—*where* my ſoul has been gadding perhaps;—but *you* do not live on conjectures.

LETTER XV.

My dear ſir, I ſend you a chapter which I am pleaſed with, now I ſee it in one point of view—and, as I have made free with the author, I hope you will not have often to ſay—what does this mean?

You forgot you were to make out my

my account—I am, of courſe, over head and ears in debt; but I have not that kind of pride, which makes ſome diſlike to be obliged to thoſe they reſpect.—On the contrary, when I involuntarily lament that I have not a father or brother, I thankfully recollect that I have received unexpected kindneſs from you and a few others.—So reaſon allows, what nature impels me to—for I cannot live without loving my fellow-creatures—nor can I love them, without diſcovering ſome virtue.

MARY.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

Paris, December 26, 1792.

I SHOULD immediately on the receipt of your letter; my dear friend, have thanked you for your punctuality, for it highly gratified me, had I not wished to wait till I could tell you that this day was not stained with blood. Indeed the prudent precautions taken by the National Convention to prevent a tumult, made me suppose that the dogs of faction would not dare to bark, much less to bite, however true to their scent; and I was not mistaken; for the citizens, who were all called out, are returning home with composed countenances,

nances, ſhouldering their arms. About nine o'clock this morning, the king paſſed by my window, moving ſilently along (excepting now and then a few ſtrokes on the drum, which rendered the ſtillneſs more awful) through empty ſtreets, ſurrounded by the national guards, who, cluſtering round the carriage, ſeemed to deſerve their name. The inhabitants flocked to their windows, but the caſements were all ſhut, not a voice was heard, nor did I ſee any thing like an inſulting geſture.—For the firſt time ſince I entered France, I bowed to the majeſty of the people, and reſpected the propriety of behaviour ſo perfectly in uniſon with my own feelings. I can ſcarcely tell you why, but an aſſociation of ideas made the tears flow inſenſibly from my eyes, when I ſaw Louis ſitting, with more

dignity than I expected from his character, in a hackney coach, going to meet death, where so many of his race have triumphed. My fancy instantly brought Louis XIV before me, entering the capital with all his pomp, after one of the victories most flattering to his pride, only to see the sunshine of prosperity overshadowed by the sublime gloom of misery. I have been alone ever since; and, though my mind is calm, I cannot dismiss the lively images that have filled my imagination all the day.—Nay, do not smile, but pity me; for, once or twice, lifting my eyes from the paper, I have seen eyes glare through a glass-door opposite my chair, and bloody hands shook at me. Not the distant sound of a footstep can I hear.—My apartments are remote from those of the servants, the only persons

who

who ſleep with me in an immenſe hotel, one folding door opening after another. —I wiſh I had even kept the cat with me!—I want to ſee ſomething alive; death in ſo many frightful ſhapes has taken hold of my fancy.—I am going to bed—and, for the firſt time in my life, I cannot put out the candle.

M. W.

EXTRACT

OF THE

CAVE OF FANCY.

A TALE.

[*Begun to be written in the year* 1787, *but never completed*.]

CAVE OF FANCY.

CHAP. I.

YE who expect conſtancy where every thing is changing, and peace in the midſt of tumult, attend to the voice of experience, and mark in time the footſteps of diſappointment; or life will be loſt in deſultory wiſhes, and death arrive before the dawn of wiſdom.

In a ſequeſtered valley, ſurrounded by rocky mountains that intercepted many of the paſſing clouds, though ſunbeams variegated their ample ſides, lived a ſage, to whom nature had unlocked

her moſt hidden ſecrets. His hollow eyes, ſunk in their orbits, retired from the view of vulgar objects, and turned inwards, overleaped the boundary preſcribed to human knowledge. Intenſe thinking during fourſcore and ten years, had whitened the ſcattered locks on his head, which, like the ſummit of the diſtant mountain, appeared to be bound by an eternal froſt.

On the ſandy waſte behind the mountains, the track of ferocious beaſts might be traced, and ſometimes the mangled limbs which they left, attracted a hovering flight of birds of prey. An extenſive wood the ſage had forced to rear its head in a ſoil by no means congenial, and the firm trunks of the trees ſeemed to frown with defiance on time; though the ſpoils of innumerable ſummers covered the roots, which reſembled

fangs;

fangs; ſo cloſely did they cling to the unfriendly ſand, where ſerpents hiſſed, and ſnakes, rolling out their vaſt folds, inhaled the noxious vapours. The ravens and owls who inhabited the ſolitude, gave alſo a thicker gloom to the everlaſting twilight, and the croaking of the former a monotony, in uniſon with the gloom; whilſt lions and tygers, ſhunning even this faint ſemblance of day, ſought the dark caverns, and at night, when they ſhook off ſleep, their roaring would make the whole valley reſound, confounded with the ſcreechings of the bird of night.

One mountain roſe ſublime, towering above all, on the craggy ſides of which a few ſea-weeds grew, waſhed by the ocean, that with tumultuous roar ruſhed to aſſault, and even undermine, the huge barrier that ſtopped its progreſs;

and ever and anon a ponderous maſs, looſened from the cliff, to which it ſcarcely ſeemed to adhere, always threatening to fall, fell into the flood, rebounding as it fell, and the ſound was reechoed from rock to rock. Look where you would, all was without form, as if nature, ſuddenly ſtopping her hand, had left chaos a retreat.

Cloſe to the moſt remote ſide of it was the ſage's abode. It was a rude hut, formed of ſtumps of trees and matted twigs, to ſecure him from the inclemency of the weather; only through ſmall apertures croſſed with ruſhes, the wind entered in wild murmurs, modulated by theſe obſtructions. A clear ſpring broke out of the middle of the adjacent rock, which, dropping ſlowly into a cavity it had hollowed, ſoon overflowed, and then ran, ſtruggling to free

free itſelf from the cumbrous fragments, till, become a deep, ſilent ſtream, it eſcaped through reeds, and roots of trees, whoſe blaſted tops overhung and darkened the current.

One ſide of the hut was ſupported by the rock, and at midnight, when the ſage ſtruck the incloſed part, it yawned wide, and admitted him into a cavern in the very bowels of the earth, where never human foot before had trod; and the various ſpirits, which inhabit the different regions of nature, were here obedient to his potent word. The cavern had been formed by the great inundation of waters, when the approach of a comet forced them from their ſource; then, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, a ſtream ruſhed out of the centre of the earth, where the ſpirits, who have lived

on it, are confined to purify themſelves from the droſs contracted in their firſt ſtage of exiſtence; and it flowed in black waves, for ever bubbling along the cave, the extent of which had never been explored. From the ſides and top, water diſtilled, and, petrifying as it fell, took fantaſtic ſhapes, that ſoon divided it into apartments, if ſo they might be called. In the foam, a wearied ſpirit would ſometimes riſe, to catch the moſt diſtant glimpſe of light, or taſte the vagrant breeze, which the yawning of the rock admitted, when Sageſtus, for that was the name of the hoary ſage, entered. Some, who were refined and almoſt cleared from vicious ſpots, he would allow to leave, for a limited time, their dark priſon-houſe; and, flying on the winds acroſs the bleak northern ocean, or riſing in an exhala-

tion

tion till they reached a ſun-beam, they thus re-viſited the haunts of men. Theſe were the guardian angels, who in ſoft whiſpers reſtrain the vicious, and animate the wavering wretch who ſtands ſuſpended between virtue and vice.

Sageſtus had ſpent a night in the cavern, as he often did, and he left the ſilent veſtibule of the grave, juſt as the ſun, emerging from the ocean, diſperſed the clouds, which were not half ſo denſe as thoſe he had left. All that was human in him rejoiced at the ſight of reviving life, and he viewed with pleaſure the mounting ſap riſing to expand the herbs, which grew ſpontaneouſly in this wild—when, turning his eyes towards the ſea, he found that death had been at work during his abſence, and terrific marks of a furious ſtorm ſtill ſpread horror around. Though

the day was ſerene, and threw bright rays on eyes for ever ſhut, it dawned not for the wretches who hung pendent on the craggy rocks, or were ſtretched lifeleſs on the ſand. Some, ſtruggling, had dug themſelves a grave; others had reſigned their breath before the impetuous ſurge whirled them on ſhore. A few, in whom the vital ſpark was not ſo ſoon diſlodged, had clung to looſe fragments; it was the graſp of death; embracing the ſtone, they ſtiffened; and the head, no longer erect, reſted on the maſs which the arms encircled. It felt not the agonizing gripe, nor heard the ſigh that broke the heart in twain.

Reſting his chin on an oaken club, the ſage looked on every ſide, to ſee if he could diſcern any who yet breathed. He drew nearer, and thought he

ſaw,

ſaw, at the firſt glance, the uncloſed eyes glare; but ſoon perceived that they were a mere glaſſy ſubſtance, mute as the tongue; the jaws were fallen, and, in ſome of the tangled locks, hands were clinched; nay, even the nails had entered ſharpened by deſpair. The blood flew rapidly to his heart; it was fleſh; he felt he was ſtill a man, and the big tear paced down his iron cheeks, whoſe muſcles had not for a long time been relaxed by ſuch humane emotions. A moment he breathed quick, then heaved a ſigh, and his wonted calm returned with an unaccuſtomed glow of tenderneſs; for the ways of heaven were not hid from him; he lifted up his eyes to the common Father of nature, and all was as ſtill in his boſom, as the ſmooth deep, after having cloſed

over the huge veſſel from which the wretches had fled.

Turning round a part of the rock that jutted out, meditating on the ways of Providence, a weak infantine voice reached his ears; it was liſping out the name of mother. He looked, and beheld a blooming child leaning over, and kiſſing with eager fondneſs, lips that were inſenſible to the warm preſſure. Starting at the ſight of the ſage, ſhe fixed her eyes on him, "Wake her, ah! wake her," ſhe cried, "or the ſea will catch us." Again he felt compaſſion, for he ſaw that the mother ſlept the ſleep of death. He ſtretched out his hand, and, ſmoothing his brow, invited her to approach; but ſhe ſtill intreated him to wake her mother, whom ſhe continued to call, with an impatient tremulous voice. To detach her

her from the body by perſuaſion would not have been very eaſy. Sageſtus had a quicker method to effect his purpoſe; he took out a box which contained a ſoporific powder, and as ſoon as the fumes reached her brain, the powers of life were ſuſpended.

He carried her directly to his hut, and left her ſleeping profoundly on his ruſhy couch.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

AGAIN Sageſtus approached the dead, to view them with a more ſcrutinizing eye. He was perfectly acquainted with the conſtruction of the human body, knew the traces that virtue or vice leaves on the whole frame; they were now indelibly fixed by death; nay more, he knew by the ſhape of the ſolid ſtructure, how far the ſpirit could range, and ſaw the barrier beyond which it could not paſs: the mazes of fancy he explored, meaſured the ſtretch of thought, and, weighing all in an even balance, could tell whom nature had ſtamped an hero, a poet, or philoſopher.

By

By their appearance, at a tranſient glance, he knew that the veſſel muſt have contained many paſſengers, and that ſome of them were above the vulgar, with reſpect to fortune and education; he then walked leiſurely among the dead, and narrowly obſerved their pallid features.

His eye firſt reſted on a form in which proportion reigned, and, ſtroking back the hair, a ſpacious forehead met his view; warm fancy had revelled there, and her airy dance had left veſtiges, ſcarcely viſible to a mortal eye. Some perpendicular lines pointed out that melancholy had predominated in his conſtitution; yet the ſtraggling hairs of his eye-brows ſhowed that anger had often ſhook his frame; indeed, the four temperatures, like the four elements, had reſided in this little world,

and

and produced harmony. The whole viſage was bony, and an energetic frown had knit the flexible ſkin of his brow; the kingdom within had been extenſive; and the wild creations of fancy had there "a local habitation and a name." So exquiſite was his ſenſibility, ſo quick his comprehenſion, that he perceived various combinations in an inſtant; he caught truth as ſhe darted towards him, ſaw all her fair proportion at a glance, and the flaſh of his eye ſpoke the quick ſenſes which conveyed intelligence to his mind; the ſenſorium indeed was capacious, and the ſage imagined he ſaw the lucid beam, ſparkling with love or ambition, in characters of fire, which a graceful curve of the upper eyelid ſhaded. The lips were a little deranged by contempt; and a mixture of vanity and

ſelf-

ſelf-complacency formed a few irregular lines round them. The chin had ſuffered from ſenſuality, yet there were ſtill great marks of vigour in it, as it advanced with ſtern dignity. The hand accuſtomed to command, and even tyrannize, was unnerved; but its appearance convinced Sageſtus, that he had oftener wielded a thought than a weapon; and that he had ſilenced, by irreſiſtible conviction, the ſuperficial diſputant, and the being, who doubted becauſe he had not ſtrength to believe, who, wavering between different borrowed opinions, firſt caught at one ſtraw, then at another, unable to ſettle into any conſiſtency of character. After gazing a few moments, Sageſtus turned away exclaiming, How are the ſtately oaks torn up by a tempeſt, and the bow

unſtrung, that could force the arrow beyond the ken of the eye!

What a different face next met his view! The forehead was ſhort, yet well ſet together; the noſe ſmall, but a little turned up at the end; and a draw-down at the ſides of his mouth, proved that he had been a humouriſt, who minded the main chance, and could joke with his acquaintance, while he eagerly devoured a dainty which he was not to pay for. His lips ſhut like a box whoſe hinges had often been mended; and the muſcles, which diſplay the ſoft emotion of the heart on the cheeks, were grown quite rigid, ſo that, the veſſels that ſhould have moiſtened them not having much communication with the grand ſource of paſſions, the fine volatile fluid had evaporated, and they became mere dry fibres, which might be

be pulled by any misfortune that threatened himself, but were not sufficiently elastic to be moved by the miseries of others. His joints were inserted compactly, and with celerity they had performed all the animal functions, without any of the grace which results from the imagination mixing with the senses.

A huge form was stretched near him, that exhibited marks of overgrown infancy; every part was relaxed; all appeared imperfect. Yet, some undulating lines on the puffed-out cheeks, displayed signs of timid, servile good nature; and the skin of the forehead had been so often drawn up by wonder, that the few hairs of the eyebrows were fixed in a sharp arch, whilst an ample chin rested in lobes of flesh on his protuberant breast.

By his ſide was a body that had ſcarcely ever much life in it—ſympathy ſeemed to have drawn them together—every feature and limb was round and fleſhy, and, if a kind of brutal cunning had not marked the face, it might have been miſtaken for an automaton, ſo unmixed was the phlegmatic fluid. The vital ſpark was buried deep in a ſoft maſs of matter, reſembling the pith in young elder, which, when found, is ſo equivocal, that it only appears a moiſter part of the ſame body.

Another part of the beach was covered with ſailors, whoſe bodies exhibited marks of ſtrength and brutal courage.—Their characters were all different, though of the ſame claſs; Sageſtus did not ſtay to diſcriminate them, ſatisfied with a rough ſketch. He ſaw indolence rouſed by a love of

humour,

humour, or rather bodily fun; ſenſuality and prodigality with a vein of generoſity running through it; a contempt of danger with groſs ſuperſtition; ſupine ſenſes, only to be kept alive by noiſy, tumultuous pleaſures, or that kind of novelty which borders on abſurdity: this formed the common outline, and the reſt were rather dabs than ſhades.

Sageſtus pauſed, and remembered it had been ſaid by an earthly wit, that "many a flower is born to bluſh unſeen, and waſte its ſweetneſs on the deſart air." How little, he exclaimed, did that poet know of the ways of heaven! And yet, in this reſpect, they are direct; the hands before me, were deſigned to pull a rope, knock down a ſheep, or perform the ſervile offices of life; no "mute, inglorious poet" reſts

amongſt them, and he who is ſuperior to his fellow, does not riſe above mediocrity. The genius that ſprouts from a dunghil ſoon ſhakes off the heterogenous maſs; thoſe only grovel, who have not power to fly.

He turned his ſtep towards the mother of the orphan: another female was at ſome diſtance; and a man who, by his garb, might have been the huſband, or brother, of the former, was not far off.

Him the ſage ſurveyed with an attentive eye, and bowed with reſpect to the inanimate clay, that lately had been the dwelling of a moſt benevolent ſpirit. The head was ſquare, though the features were not very prominent; but there was a great harmony in every part, and the turn of the noſtrils and lips evinced, that the ſoul muſt have had

had taſte, to which they had ſerved as organs. Penetration and judgment were ſeated on the brows that overhung the eye. Fixed as it was, Sageſtus quickly diſcerned the expreſſion it muſt have had; dark and penſive, rather from ſlowneſs of comprehenſion than melancholy, it ſeemed to abſorb the light of knowledge, to drink it in ray by ray; nay, a new one was not allowed to enter his head till the laſt was arranged: an opinion was thus cautiouſly received, and maturely weighed, before it was added to the general ſtock. As nature led him to mount from a part to the whole, he was moſt converſant with the beautiful, and rarely comprehended the ſublime; yet, ſaid Sageſtus, with a ſoftened tone, he was all heart, full of forbearance, and deſirous to pleaſe every fellow-creature;

but from a nobler motive than a love of admiration; the fumes of vanity never mounted to cloud his brain, or tarnish his beneficence. The fluid in which those placid eyes swam, is now congealed; how often has tenderness given them the finest water! Some torn parts of the child's dress hung round his arm, which led the sage to conclude, that he had saved the child; every line in his face confirmed the conjecture; benevolence indeed strung the nerves that naturally were not very firm; it was the great knot that tied together the scattered qualities, and gave the distinct stamp to the character.

The female whom he next approached, and supposed to be an attendant on the other, was below the middle size, and her legs were so disproportionably

ſhort, that, when ſhe moved, ſhe muſt have waddled along; her elbows were drawn in to touch her long taper, waiſt, and the air of her whole body was an affectation of gentility. Death could not alter the rigid hang of her limbs, or efface the ſimper that had ſtretched her mouth; the lips were thin, as if nature intended ſhe ſhould mince her words; her noſe was ſmall, and ſharp at the end; and the forehead, unmarked by eyebrows, was wrinkled by the diſcontent that had ſunk her cheeks, on which Sageſtus ſtill diſcerned faint traces of tenderneſs; and fierce good-nature, he perceived had ſometimes animated the little ſpark of an eye that anger had oftener lighted. The ſame thought occurred to him that the ſight of the ſailors had ſuggeſted, Men and women are all in their proper places—

this

this female was intended to fold up linen and nurſe the ſick.

Anxious to obſerve the mother of his charge, he turned to the lily that had been ſo rudely ſnapped, and, carefully obſerving it, traced every fine line to its ſource. There was a delicacy in her form, ſo truly feminine, that an involuntary deſire to cheriſh ſuch a being, made the ſage again feel the almoſt forgotten ſenſations of his nature. On obſerving her more cloſely, he diſcovered that her natural delicacy had been increaſed by an improper education, to a degree that took away all vigour from her faculties. And its baneful influence had had ſuch an effect on her mind, that few traces of the exertions of it appeared on her face, though the fine finiſh of her features, and particularly the form of the forehead, con-

vinced the ſage that her underſtanding might have riſen conſiderably above mediocrity, had the wheels ever been put in motion; but, clogged by prejudices, they never turned quite round, and, whenever ſhe conſidered a ſubject, ſhe ſtopped before ſhe came to a concluſion. Aſſuming a maſk of propriety, ſhe had baniſhed nature; yet its tendency was only to be diverted, not ſtifled. Some lines, which took from the ſymmetry of the mouth, not very obvious to a ſuperficial obſerver, ſtruck Sageſtus, and they appeared to him characters of indolent obſtinacy. Not having courage to form an opinion of her own, ſhe adhered, with blind partiality, to thoſe ſhe adopted, which ſhe received in the lump, and, as they always remained unopened, of courſe ſhe only ſaw the even gloſs on the outſide.

ſide. Veſtiges of anger were viſible on her brow, and the ſage concluded, that ſhe had often been offended with, and indeed would ſcarcely make any allowance for, thoſe who did not coincide with her in opinion, as things always appear ſelf-evident that have never been examined; yet her very weakneſs gave a charming timidity to her countenance; goodneſs and tenderneſs pervaded every lineament, and melted in her dark blue eyes. The compaſſion that wanted activity, was ſincere, though it only embelliſhed her face, or produced caſual acts of charity when a moderate alms could relieve preſent diſtreſs. Unacquainted with life, fictitious, unnatural diſtreſs drew the tears that were not ſhed for real miſery. In its own ſhape, human wretchedneſs excites a little diſguſt in the mind that has

has indulged fickly refinement. Perhaps the ſage gave way to a little conjecture in drawing the laſt concluſion; but his conjectures generally aroſe from diſtinct ideas, and a dawn of light allowed him to ſee a great way farther than common mortals.

He was now convinced that the orphan was not very unfortunate in having loſt ſuch a mother. The parent that inſpires fond affection without reſpect, is ſeldom an uſeful one; and they only are reſpectable, who conſider right and wrong abſtracted from local forms and accidental modifications.

Determined to adopt the child, he named it after himſelf, Sageſta, and retired to the hut where the innocent ſlept, to think of the beſt method of educating this child, whom the angry deep had ſpared.

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[The laſt branch of the education of Sageſta, conſiſted of a variety of characters and ſtories preſented to her in the Cave of Fancy, of which the following is a ſpecimen.]

CHAP.

CHAP.

A FORM now approached that particularly ſtruck and intereſted Sageſta. The ſage, obſerving what paſſed in her mind, bade her ever truſt to the firſt impreſſion. In life, he continued, try to remember the effect the firſt appearance of a ſtranger has on your mind; and, in proportion to your ſenſibility, you may decide on the character. Intelligence glances from eyes that have the ſame purſuits, and a benevolent heart ſoon traces the marks of benevolence on the countenance of an unknown fellow-creature; and not only the countenance, but the geſtures, the voice,

voice, loudly ſpeak truth to the unprejudiced mind.

Whenever a ſtranger advances towards you with a tripping ſtep, receives you with broad ſmiles, and a profuſion of compliments, and yet you find yourſelf embarraſſed and unable to return the ſalutation with equal cordiality, be aſſured that ſuch a perſon is affected, and endeavours to maintain a very good character in the eyes of the world, without really practiſing the ſocial virtues which dreſs the face in looks of unfeigned complacency. Kindred minds are drawn to each other by expreſſions which elude deſcription; and, like the calm breeze that plays on a ſmooth lake, they are rather felt than ſeen. Beware of a man who always appears in good humour; a ſelfiſh deſign too frequently lurks in the ſmiles the heart never

never curved; or there is an affectation of candour that deſtroys all ſtrength of character, by blending truth and falſhood into an unmeaning maſs. The mouth, in fact, ſeems to be the feature where you may trace every kind of diſſimulation, from the ſimper of vanity, to the fixed ſmile of the deſigning villain. Perhaps, the modulations of the voice will ſtill more quickly give a key to the character than even the turns of the mouth, or the words that iſſue from it; often do the tones of unpractiſed diſſemblers give the lie to their aſſertions. Many people never ſpeak in an unnatural voice, but when they are inſincere: the phraſes not correſponding with the dictates of the heart, have nothing to keep them in tune. In the courſe of an argument however, you may eaſily diſcover whether vanity or conviction

ſtimulates the diſputant, though his inflated countenance may be turned from you, and you may not ſee the geſtures which mark ſelf-ſufficiency. He ſtopped, and the ſpirit began.

I have wandered through the cave; and, as ſoon as I have taught you a uſeful leſſon, I ſhall take my flight where my tears will ceaſe to flow, and where mine eyes will no more be ſhocked with the ſight of guilt and ſorrow. Before many moons have changed, thou wilt enter, O mortal! into that world I have lately left. Liſten to my warning voice, and truſt not too much to the goodneſs which I perceive reſides in thy breaſt. Let it be reined in by principles, leſt thy very virtue ſharpen the ſting of remorſe, which as naturally follows diſorder in the moral world, as pain attends on intemperance in the phyſical.

phyſical. But my hiſtory will afford you more inſtruction than mere advice. Sageſtus concurred in opinion with her, obſerving that the ſenſes of children ſhould be the firſt object of improvement; then their paſſions worked on; and judgment the fruit, muſt be the acquirement of the being itſelf, when out of leading-ſtrings. The ſpirit bowed aſſent, and, without any further prelude, entered on her hiſtory.

My mother was a moſt reſpectable character, but ſhe was yoked to a man whoſe follies and vices made her ever feel the weight of her chains. The firſt ſenſation I recollect, was pity; for I have ſeen her weep over me and the reſt of her babes, lamenting that the extravagance of a father would throw us deſtitute on the world. But, though my father was extravagant, and ſeldom

thought of any thing but his own pleaſures, our education was not neglected. In ſolitude, this employment was my mother's only ſolace; and my father's pride made him procure us maſters; nay, ſometimes he was ſo gratified by our improvement, that he would embrace us with tenderneſs, and intreat my mother to forgive him, with marks of real contrition. But the affection his penitence gave riſe to, only ſerved to expoſe her to continual diſappointments, and keep hope alive merely to torment her. After a violent debauch he would let his beard grow, and the ſadneſs that reigned in the houſe I ſhall never forget; he was aſhamed to meet even the eyes of his children. This is ſo contrary to the nature of things, it gave me exquiſite pain; I uſed, at thoſe times, to ſhow him extreme reſpect. I

could not bear to ſee my parent humble himſelf before me. However neither his conſtitution, nor fortune could long bear the conſtant waſte. He had, I have obſerved, a childiſh affection for his children, which was diſplayed in careſſes that gratified him for the moment, yet never reſtrained the headlong fury of his appetites; his momentary repentance wrung his heart, without influencing his conduct; and he died, leaving an encumbered wreck of a good eſtate.

As we had always lived in ſplendid poverty, rather than in affluence, the ſhock was not ſo great; and my mother repreſſed her anguiſh, and concealed ſome circumſtances, that ſhe might not ſhed a deſtructive mildew over the gaiety of youth.

So fondly did I doat on this dear pa-

rent, that ſhe engroſſed all my tenderneſs; her ſorrows had knit me firmly to her, and my chief care was to give her proofs of affection. The gallantry that afforded my companions, the few young people my mother forced me to mix with, ſo much pleaſure, I deſpiſed; I wiſhed more to be loved than admired, for I could love. I adored virtue; and my imagination, chaſing a chimerical object, overlooked the common pleaſures of life; they were not ſufficient for my happineſs. A latent fire made me burn to riſe ſuperior to my contemporaries in wiſdom and virtue; and tears of joy and emulation filled my eyes when I read an account of a great action—I felt admiration, not aſtoniſhment.

My mother had two particular friends, who endeavoured to ſettle her affairs; one was a middle-aged man, a mer-

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chant; the human breaſt never enſhrined a more benevolent heart. His manners were rather rough, and he bluntly ſpoke his thoughts without obſerving the pain it gave; yet he poſſeſſed extreme tenderneſs, as far as his diſcernment went. Men do not make ſufficient diſtinction, ſaid ſhe, digreſſing from her ſtory to addreſs Sageſtus, between tenderneſs and ſenſibility.

To give the ſhorteſt definition of ſenſibility, replied the ſage, I ſhould ſay that it is the reſult of acute ſenſes, finely faſhioned nerves, which vibrate at the ſlighteſt touch, and convey ſuch clear intelligence to the brain, that it does not require to be arranged by the judgment. Such perſons inſtantly enter into the characters of others, and inſtinctively diſcern what will give pain to every human being; their own feelings are

ſo varied that they ſeem to contain in themſelves, not only all the paſſions of the ſpecies, but their various modifications. Exquiſite pain and pleaſure is their portion; nature wears for them a different aſpect than is diſplayed to common mortals. One moment it is a paradiſe; all is beautiful: a cloud ariſes, an emotion receives a ſudden damp; darkneſs invades the ſky, and the world is an unweeded garden;—but go on with your narrative, ſaid Sageſtus, recollecting himſelf.

She proceeded. The man I am deſcribing was humanity itſelf; but frequently he did not underſtand me; many of my feelings were not to be analyzed by his common ſenſe. His friendſhips, for he had many friends, gave him pleaſure unmixed with pain; his religion was coldly reaſonable, becauſe he want-

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ed fancy, and he did not feel the neceſſity of finding, or creating, a perfect object, to anſwer the one engraved on his heart: the ſketch there was faint. He went with the ſtream, and rather caught a character from the ſociety he lived in, than ſpread one around him. In my mind many opinions were graven with a pen of braſs, which he thought chimerical: but time could not eraſe them, and I now recognize them as the ſeeds of eternal happineſs: they will ſoon expand in thoſe realms where I ſhall enjoy the bliſs adapted to my nature; this is all we need aſk of the Supreme Being; happineſs muſt follow the completion of his deſigns. He however could live quietly, without giving a preponderancy to many important opinions that continually obtruded on my mind; not having an enthuſiaſtic

thuſiaſtic affection for his fellow creatures, he did them good, without ſuffering from their follies. He was particularly attached to me, and I felt for him all the affection of a daughter; often, when he had been intereſting himſelf to promote my welfare, have I lamented that he was not my father; lamented that the vices of mine had dried up one ſource of pure affection.

The other friend I have already alluded to, was of a very different character; greatneſs of mind, and thoſe combinations of feeling which are ſo difficult to deſcribe, raiſed him above the throng, that buſtle their hour out, lie down to ſleep, and are forgotten. But I ſhall ſoon ſee him, ſhe exclaimed, as much ſuperior to his former ſelf, as he then roſe in my eyes above his fellow creatures! As ſhe ſpoke, a glow

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of delight animated each feature; her countenance appeared tranſparent; and ſhe ſilently anticipated the happineſs ſhe ſhould enjoy, when ſhe entered thoſe manſions, where death-divided friends ſhould meet, to part no more; where human weakneſs could not damp their bliſs, or poiſon the cup of joy that, on earth, drops from the lips as ſoon as taſted, or, if ſome daring mortal ſnatches a haſty draught, what was ſweet to the taſte becomes a root of bitterneſs.

He was unfortunate, had many cares to ſtruggle with, and I marked on his cheeks traces of the ſame ſorrows that ſunk my own. He was unhappy I ſay, and perhaps pity might firſt have awoke my tenderneſs; for, early in life, an artful woman worked on his compaſſionate ſoul, and he united his fate to a being made up of ſuch jarring ele-

ments, that he was ſtill alone. The diſcovery did not extinguiſh that propenſity to love, a high ſenſe of virtue fed. I ſaw him ſick and unhappy, without a friend to ſooth the hours languor made heavy; often did I ſit a long winter's evening by his ſide, railing at the ſwift wings of time, and terming my love, humanity.

Two years paſſed in this manner, ſilently rooting my affection; and it might have continued calm, if a fever had not brought him to the very verge of the grave. Though ſtill deceived, I was miſerable that the cuſtoms of the world did not allow me to watch by him; when ſleep forſook his pillow, my wearied eyes were not cloſed, and my anxious ſpirit hovered round his bed. I ſaw him, before he had recovered his ſtrength; and, when his hand touched mine,

mine, life almoſt retired, or flew to meet the touch. The firſt look found a ready way to my heart, and thrilled through every vein. We were left alone, and inſenſibly began to talk of the immortality of the ſoul; I declared that I could not live without this conviction. In the ardour of converſation he preſſed my hand to his heart; it reſted there a moment, and my emotions gave weight to my opinion, for the affection we felt was not of a periſhable nature.—A ſilence enſued, I know not how long; he then threw my hand from him, as if it had been a ſerpent; formally complained of the weather, and adverted to twenty other unintereſting ſubjects. Vain efforts! Our hearts had already ſpoken to each other.

Feebly did I afterwards combat an affection,

affection, which ſeemed twiſted in every fibre of my heart. The world ſtood ſtill when I thought of him; it moved heavily at beſt, with one whoſe very conſtitution ſeemed to mark her out for miſery. But I will not dwell on the paſſion I too fondly nurſed. One only refuge had I on earth; I could not reſolutely deſolate the ſcene my fancy flew to, when worldly cares, when a knowledge of mankind, which my circumſtances forced on me, rendered every other inſipid. I was afraid of the unmarked vacuity of common life; yet, though I ſupinely indulged myſelf in fairy-land, when I ought to have been more actively employed, virtue was ſtill the firſt mover of my actions; ſhe dreſſed my love in ſuch enchanting colours, and ſpread the net I could never break. Our correſponding feelings confounded

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our very ſouls; and in many converſations we almoſt intuitively diſcerned each other's ſentiments; the heart opened itſelf, not chilled by reſerve, nor afraid of miſconſtruction. But, if virtue inſpired love, love gave new energy to virtue, and abſorbed every ſelfiſh paſſion. Never did even a wiſh eſcape me, that my lover ſhould not fulfil the hard duties which fate had impoſed on him. I only diſſembled with him in one particular; I endeavoured to ſoften his wife's too conſpicuous follies, and extenuated her failings in an indirect manner. To this I was prompted by a loftineſs of ſpirit; I ſhould have broken the band of life, had I ceaſed to reſpect myſelf. But I will haſten to an important change in my circumſtances.

My mother, who had concealed the real ſtate of her affairs from me, was now

now impelled to make me her confident, that I might aſſiſt to diſcharge her mighty debt of gratitude. The merchant, my more than father, had privately aſſiſted her: but a fatal civil-war reduced his large property to a bare competency; and an inflammation in his eyes, that aroſe from a cold he had caught at a wreck, which he watched during a ſtormy night to keep off the lawleſs colliers, almoſt deprived him of ſight. His life had been ſpent in ſociety, and he ſcarcely knew how to fill the void; for his ſpirit would not allow him to mix with his former equals as an humble companion; he who had been treated with uncommon reſpect, could not brook their inſulting pity. From the reſource of ſolitude, reading, the complaint in his eyes cut

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him off, and he became our conſtant viſitor.

Actuated by the ſincereſt affection, I uſed to read to him, and he miſtook my tenderneſs for love. How could I undeceive him, when every circumſtance frowned on him! Too ſoon I found that I was his only comfort; I, who rejected his hand when fortune ſmiled, could not now ſecond her blow; and, in a moment of enthuſiaſtic gratitude and tender compaſſion, I offered him my hand.—It was received with pleaſure; tranſport was not made for his ſoul; nor did he diſcover that nature had ſeparated us, by making me alive to ſuch different ſenſations. My mother was to live with us, and I dwelt on this circumſtance to baniſh cruel recollections, when the bent bow returned to its former ſtate.

With a burſting heart and a firm voice, I named the day when I was to ſeal my promiſe. It came, in ſpite of my regret; I had been previouſly preparing myſelf for the awful ceremony, and anſwered the ſolemn queſtion with a reſolute tone, that would ſilence the dictates of my heart; it was a forced, unvaried one; had nature modulated it, my ſecret would have eſcaped. My active ſpirit was painfully on the watch to repreſs every tender emotion. The joy in my venerable parent's countenance, the tenderneſs of my huſband, as he conducted me home, for I really had a ſincere affection for him, the gratulations of my mind, when I thought that this ſacrifice was heroic, all tended to deceive me; but the joy of victory over the reſigned, pallid look of my lover, haunted my imagination, and fixed

fixed itſelf in the centre of my brain.—Still I imagined, that his ſpirit was near me, that he only felt ſorrow for my loſs, and without complaint reſigned me to my duty.

I was left alone a moment; my two elbows reſted on a table to ſupport my chin. Ten thouſand thoughts darted with aſtoniſhing velocity through my mind. My eyes were dry; I was on the brink of madneſs. At this moment a ſtrange aſſociation was made by my imagination; I thought of Gallileo, who when he left the inquiſition, looked upwards, and cried out, "Yet it moves." A ſhower of tears, like the refreſhing drops of heaven, relieved my parched ſockets; they fell diſregarded on the table; and, ſtamping with my foot, in an agony I exclaimed, "Yet I love." My huſband entered before I had calmed

these tumultuous emotions, and tenderly took my hand. I snatched it from him; grief and surprise were marked on his countenance; I hastily stretched it out again. My heart smote me, and I removed the transient mist by an unfeigned endeavour to please him.

A few months after, my mind grew calmer; and, if a treacherous imagination, if feelings many accidents revived, sometimes plunged me into melancholy, I often repeated with steady conviction, that virtue was not an empty name, and that, in following the dictates of duty, I had not bidden adieu to content.

In the course of a few years, the dear object of my fondest affection, said farewel, in dying accents. Thus left alone, my grief became dear; and I did not feel solitary, because I thought I might,

I might, without a crime, indulge a paſſion, that grew more ardent than ever when my imagination only preſented him to my view, and reſtored my former activity of ſoul which the late calm had rendered torpid. I ſeemed to find myſelf again, to find the eccentric warmth that gave me identity of character. Reaſon had governed my conduct, but could not change my nature; this voluptuous ſorrow was ſuperior to every gratification of ſenſe, and death more firmly united our hearts.

Alive to every human affection, I ſmoothed my mother's paſſage to eternity, and ſo often gave my huſband ſincere proofs of affection, he never ſuppoſed that I was actuated by a more fervent attachment. My melancholy, my uneven ſpirits, he attributed to my extreme ſenſibility, and loved me the

better for poſſeſſing qualities he could not comprehend.

At the cloſe of a ſummer's day, ſome years after, I wandered with careleſs ſteps over a pathleſs common; various anxieties had rendered the hours which the ſun had enlightened heavy; ſober evening came on; I wiſhed to ſtill "my mind, and woo lone quiet in her ſilent walk." The ſcene accorded with my feelings; it was wild and grand; and the ſpreading twilight had almoſt confounded the diſtant ſea with the barren, blue hills that melted from my ſight. I ſat down on a riſing ground; the rays of the departing ſun illumined the horizon, but ſo indiſtinctly, that I anticipated their total extinction. The death of Nature led me to a ſtill more intereſting ſubject, that came home to my boſom, the death of him I loved.

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A village-bell was tolling; I liſtened, and thought of the moment when I heard his interrupted breath, and felt the agonizing fear, that the ſame ſound would never more reach my ears, and that the intelligence glanced from my eyes, would no more be felt. The ſpoiler had ſeized his prey; the ſun was fled, what was this world to me! I wandered to another, where death and darkneſs could not enter; I purſued the ſun beyond the mountains, and the ſoul eſcaped from this vale of tears. My reflections were tinged with melancholy, but they were ſublime.—I graſped a mighty whole, and ſmiled on the king of terrors; the tie which bound me to my friends he could not break; the ſame myſterious knot united me to the ſource of all goodneſs and happineſs. I had ſeen the divinity re-

flected in a face I loved; I had read immortal characters displayed on a human countenance, and forgot myself whilst I gazed. I could not think of immortality, without recollecting the ecstacy I felt, when my heart first whispered to me that I was beloved; and again did I feel the sacred tie of mutual affection; fervently I prayed to the father of mercies; and rejoiced that he could see every turn of a heart, whose movements I could not perfectly understand. My passion seemed a pledge of immortality; I did not wish to hide it from the all-searching eye of heaven. Where indeed could I go from his presence? and, whilst it was dear to me, though darkness might reign during the night of life, joy would come when I awoke to life everlasting.

I now turned my step towards home,

when

when the appearance of a girl, who ſtood weeping on the common, attracted my attention. I accoſted her, and ſoon heard her ſimple tale; that her father was gone to ſea, and her mother ſick in bed. I followed her to their little dwelling, and relieved the ſick wretch. I then again ſought my own abode; but death did not now haunt my fancy. Contriving to give the poor creature I had left more effectual relief, I reached my own garden-gate very weary, and reſted on it.—Recollecting the turns of my mind during the walk, I exclaimed, Surely life may thus be enlivened by active benevolence, and the ſleep of death, like that I am now diſpoſed to fall into, may be ſweet!

My life was now unmarked by any extraordinary change, and a few days

ago I entered this cavern; for through it every mortal muſt paſs; and here I have diſcovered, that I neglected many opportunities of being uſeful, whilſt I foſtered a devouring flame. Remorſe has not reached me, becauſe I firmly adhered to my principles, and I have alſo diſcovered that I ſaw through a falſe medium. Worthy as the mortal was I adored, I ſhould not long have loved him with the ardour I did, had fate united us, and broken the deluſion the imagination ſo artfully wove. His virtues, as they now do, would have extorted my eſteem; but he who formed the human ſoul, only can fill it, and the chief happineſs of an immortal being muſt ariſe from the ſame ſource as its exiſtence. Earthly love leads to heavenly, and prepares us for a more ex-

alted ſtate; if it does not change its nature, and deſtroy itſelf, by trampling on the virtue, that conſtitutes its eſſence, and allies us to the Deity.

ON

POETRY,

AND

OUR RELISH FOR THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE.

ON

POETRY, &c.

A TASTE for rural ſcenes, in the preſent ſtate of ſociety, appears to be very often an artificial ſentiment, rather inſpired by poetry and romances, than a real perception of the beauties of nature. But, as it is reckoned a proof of refined taſte to praiſe the calm pleaſures which the country affords, the theme is never exhauſted. Yet it may be made a queſtion, whether this romantic

mantic kind of declamation, has much effect on the conduct of thoſe, who leave, for a ſeaſon, the crowded cities in which they were bred.

I have been led to theſe reflections, by obſerving, when I have reſided for any length of time in the country, how few people ſeem to contemplate nature with their own eyes. I have "bruſhed the dew away" in the morning; but, pacing over the printleſs graſs, I have wondered that, in ſuch delightful ſituations, the ſun was allowed to riſe in ſolitary majeſty, whilſt my eyes alone hailed its beautifying beams. The webs of the evening have ſtill been ſpread acroſs the hedged path, unleſs ſome labouring man, trudging to work, diſturbed the fairy ſtructure; yet, in ſpite of this ſupineneſs, when I joined

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the ſocial circle, every tongue rang changes on the pleaſures of the country.

Having frequently had occaſion to make the ſame obſervation, I was led to endeavour, in one of my ſolitary rambles, to trace the cauſe, and likewiſe to enquire why the poetry written in the infancy of ſociety, is moſt natural: which, ſtrictly ſpeaking (for *natural* is a very indefinite expreſſion) is merely to ſay, that it is the tranſcript of immediate ſenſations, in all their native wildneſs and ſimplicity, when fancy, awakened by the ſight of intereſting objects, was moſt actively at work. At ſuch moments, ſenſibility quickly furniſhes ſimiles, and the ſublimated ſpirits combine images, which riſing ſpontaneouſly, it is not neceſſary coldly to ranſack the underſtanding or memory, till the laborious efforts of judg-

ment exclude preſent ſenſations, and damp the fire of enthuſiaſm.

The effuſions of a vigorous mind, will ever tell us how far the underſtanding has been enlarged by thought, and ſtored with knowledge. The richneſs of the ſoil even appears on the ſurface; and the reſult of profound thinking, often mixing, with playful grace, in the reveries of the poet, ſmoothly incorporates with the ebullitions of animal ſpirits, when the finely faſhioned nerve vibrates acutely with rapture, or when, relaxed by ſoft melancholy, a pleaſing languor prompts the long-drawn ſigh, and feeds the ſlowly falling tear.

The poet, the man of ſtrong feelings, gives us only an image of his mind, when he was actually alone, converſing with himſelf, and marking the impreſſion which nature had made on his own

own heart.—If, at this ſacred moment, the idea of ſome departed friend, ſome tender recollection when the ſoul was moſt alive to tenderneſs, intruded unawares into his thoughts, the ſorrow which it produced is artleſsly, yet poetically expreſſed—and who can avoid ſympathizing?

Love to man leads to devotion—grand and ſublime images ſtrike the imagination—God is ſeen in every floating cloud, and comes from the miſty mountain to receive the nobleſt homage of an intelligent creature—praiſe. How ſolemn is the moment, when all affections and remembrances fade before the ſublime admiration which the wiſdom and goodneſs of God inſpires, when he is worſhipped in a *temple not made with hands*, and the world ſeems to contain only the mind

that formed, and the mind that contemplates it! Theſe are not the weak reſponſes of ceremonial devotion; nor, to expreſs them, would the poet need another poet's aid: his heart burns within him, and he ſpeaks the language of truth and nature with reſiſtleſs energy.

Inequalities, of courſe, are obſervable in his effuſions; and a leſs vigorous fancy, with more taſte, would have produced more elegance and uniformity; but, as paſſages are ſoftened or expunged during the cooler moments of reflection, the underſtanding is gratified at the expence of thoſe involuntary ſenſations, which, like the beauteous tints of an evening ſky, are ſo evaneſcent, that they melt into new forms before they can be analyzed. For however eloquently we may boaſt of

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our reaſon, man muſt often be delighted he cannot tell why, or his blunt feelings are not made to reliſh the beauties which nature, poetry, or any of the imitative arts, afford.

The imagery of the ancients ſeems naturally to have been borrowed from ſurrounding objects and their mythology. When a hero is to be tranſported from one place to another, acroſs pathleſs waſtes, is any vehicle ſo natural, as one of the fleecy clouds on which the poet has often gazed, ſcarcely conſcious that he wiſhed to make it his chariot? Again, when nature ſeems to preſent obſtacles to his progreſs at almoſt every ſtep, when the tangled foreſt and ſteep mountain ſtand as barriers, to paſs over which the mind longs for ſupernatural aid; an interpoſing deity, who walks on the waves,

and rules the ſtorm, ſeverely felt in the firſt attempts to cultivate a country, will receive from the impaſſioned fancy "a local habitation and a name."

It would be a philoſophical enquiry, and throw ſome light on the hiſtory of the human mind, to trace, as far as our information will allow us to trace, the ſpontaneous feelings and ideas which have produced the images that now frequently appear unnatural, becauſe they are remote; and diſguſting, becauſe they have been ſervilely copied by poets, whoſe habits of thinking, and views of nature muſt have been different; for, though the underſtanding ſeldom diſturbs the current of our preſent feelings, without diſſipating the gay clouds which fancy has been embracing, yet it ſilently gives the colour to the whole tenour of them, and the

dream

dream is over, when truth is groſsly violated, or images introduced, ſelected from books, and not from local manners or popular prejudices.

In a more advanced ſtate of civilization, a poet is rather the creature of art, than of nature. The books that he reads in his youth, become a hot-bed in which artificial fruits are produced, beautiful to the common eye, though they want the true hue and flavour. His images do not ariſe from ſenſations; they are copies; and, like the works of the painters who copy ancient ſtatues when they draw men and women of their own times, we acknowledge that the features are fine, and the proportions juſt; yet they are men of ſtone; inſipid figures, that never convey to the mind the idea of a portrait taken from life, where the ſoul gives

ſpirit and homogeneity to the whole. The ſilken wings of fancy are ſhrivelled by rules; and a deſire of attaining elegance of diction, occaſions an attention to words, incompatible with ſublime, impaſſioned thoughts.

A boy of abilities, who has been taught the ſtructure of verſe at ſchool, and been rouſed by emulation to compoſe rhymes whilſt he was reading works of genius, may, by practice, produce pretty verſes, and even become what is often termed an elegant poet: yet his readers, without knowing what to find fault with, do not find themſelves warmly intereſted. In the works of the poets who faſten on their affections, they ſee groſſer faults, and the very images which ſhock their taſte in the modern; ſtill they do not appear as puerile or extrinſic in one as the other.—

other.—Why?—becauſe they did not appear ſo to the author.

It may ſound paradoxical, after obſerving that thoſe productions want vigour, that are merely the work of imitation, in which the underſtanding has violently directed, if not extinguiſhed, the blaze of fancy, to aſſert, that, though genius be only another word for exquiſite ſenſibility, the firſt obſervers of nature, the true poets, exerciſed their underſtanding much more than their imitators. But they exerciſed it to diſcriminate things, whilſt their followers were buſy to borrow ſentiments and arrange words.

Boys who have received a claſſical education, load their memory with words, and the correſpondent ideas are perhaps never diſtinctly comprehended. As a proof of this aſſertion,

I muſt

I muſt obſerve, that I have known many young people who could write tolerably ſmooth verſes, and ſtring epithets prettily together, when their proſe themes ſhowed the barrenneſs of their minds, and how ſuperficial the cultivation muſt have been, which their underſtanding had received.

Dr. Johnſon, I know, has given a definition of genius, which would overturn my reaſoning, if I were to admit it.—He imagines, that *a ſtrong mind, accidentally led to ſome particular ſtudy* in which it excels, is a genius.—Not to ſtop to inveſtigate the cauſes which produced this happy *ſtrength* of mind, experience ſeems to prove, that thoſe minds have appeared moſt vigorous, that have purſued a ſtudy, after nature had diſcovered a bent; for it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe, that a ſlight impreſ-

ſion

ſion made on the weak faculties of a boy, is the fiat of fate, and not to be effaced by any ſucceeding impreſſion, or unexpected difficulty. Dr. Johnſon in fact, appears ſometimes to be of the ſame opinion (how conſiſtently I ſhall not now enquire), eſpecially when he obſerves, " that Thomſon looked on nature with the eye which ſhe only gives to a poet."

But, though it ſhould be allowed that books may produce ſome poets, I fear they will never be the poets who charm our cares to ſleep, or extort admiration. They may diffuſe taſte, and poliſh the language; but I am inclined to conclude that they will ſeldom rouſe the paſſions, or amend the heart.

And, to return to the firſt ſubject of diſcuſſion, the reaſon why moſt people are more intereſted by a ſcene deſcribed

ed by a poet, than by a view of nature, probably arises from the want of a lively imagination. The poet contracts the prospect, and, selecting the most picturesque part in his *camera*, the judgment is directed, and the whole force of the languid faculty turned towards the objects which excited the most forcible emotions in the poet's heart; the reader consequently feels the enlivened description, though he was not able to receive a first impression from the operations of his own mind.

Besides, it may be further observed, that gross minds are only to be moved by forcible representations. To rouse the thoughtless, objects must be presented, calculated to produce tumultuous emotions; the unsubstantial, picturesque forms which a contemplative man gazes on, and often follows with

ardour till he is mocked by a glimpſe of unattainable excellence, appear to them the light vapours of a dreaming enthuſiaſt, who gives up the ſubſtance for the ſhadow. It is not within that they ſeek amuſement; their eyes are ſeldom turned on themſelves; conſequently their emotions, though ſometimes fervid, are always tranſient, and the nicer perceptions which diſtinguiſh the man of genuine taſte, are not felt, or make ſuch a ſlight impreſſion as ſcarcely to excite any pleaſurable ſenſations. Is it ſurpriſing then that they are often overlooked, even by thoſe who are delighted by the ſame images concentrated by the poet?

But even this numerous claſs is exceeded, by witlings, who, anxious to appear to have wit and taſte, do not allow their underſtandings or feelings

ings any liberty; for, instead of cultivating their faculties and reflecting on their operations, they are busy collecting prejudices; and are predetermined to admire what the suffrage of time announces as excellent, not to store up a fund of amusement for themselves, but to enable them to talk.

These hints will assist the reader to trace some of the causes why the beauties of nature are not forcibly felt, when civilization, or rather luxury, has made considerable advances—those calm sensations are not sufficiently lively to serve as a relaxation to the voluptuary, or even to the moderate pursuer of artificial pleasures. In the present state of society, the understanding must bring back the feelings to nature, or the sensibility must have such native strength, as rather to be whetted than

deſtroyed by the ſtrong exerciſes of paſſion.

That the moſt valuable things are liable to the greateſt perverſion, is however as trite as true:—for the ſame ſenſibility, or quickneſs of ſenſes, which makes a man reliſh the tranquil ſcenes of nature, when ſenſation, rather than reaſon, imparts delight, frequently makes a libertine of him, by leading him to prefer the ſenſual tumult of love a little refined by ſentiment, to the calm pleaſures of affectionate friendſhip, in whoſe ſober ſatisfactions, reaſon, mixing her tranquillizing convictions, whiſpers, that content, not happineſs, is the reward of virtue in this world.

HINTS.

[*Chiefly designed to have been incorporated in the Second Part of the* Vindication of the Rights of Woman.]

HINTS.

1.

INDOLENCE is the ſource of nervous complaints, and a whole hoſt of cares. This devil might ſay that his name was legion.

2.

It ſhould be one of the employments of women of fortune, to viſit hoſpitals, and ſuperintend the conduct of inferiors.

3.

It is generally ſuppoſed, that the imagination of women is particularly

active, and leads them astray. Why then do we seek by education only to exercise their imagination and feeling, till the understanding, grown rigid by disuse, is unable to exercise itself—and the superfluous nourishment the imagination and feeling have received, renders the former romantic, and the latter weak?

4.

Few men have risen to any great eminence in learning, who have not received something like a regular education. Why are women expected to surmount difficulties that men are not equal to?

5.

Nothing can be more absurd than the ridicule of the critic, that the heroine of his mock-tragedy was in love with the very man whom she ought least

leaſt to have loved; he could not have given a better reaſon. How can paſſion gain ſtrength any other way? In Otaheite, love cannot be known, where the obſtacles to irritate an indiſcriminate appetite, and ſublimate the ſimple ſenſations of deſire till they mount to paſſion, are never known. There a man or woman cannot love the very perſon they ought not to have loved—nor does jealouſy ever fan the flame.

6.

It has frequently been obſerved, that, when women have an object in view, they purſue it with more ſteadineſs than men, particularly love. This is not a compliment. Paſſion purſues with more heat than reaſon, and with moſt ardour during the abſence of reaſon.

7.

Men are more ſubject to the phyſical

love than women. The confined education of women makes them more ſubject to jealouſy.

8.

Simplicity ſeems, in general, the conſequence of ignorance, as I have obſerved in the characters of women and ſailors—the being confined to one track of impreſſions.

9.

I know of no other way of preſerving the chaſtity of mankind, than that of rendering women rather objects of love than deſire. The difference is great. Yet, while women are encouraged to ornament their perſons at the expence of their minds, while indolence renders them helpleſs and laſcivious (for what other name can be given to the common intercourſe between the ſexes?) they will be, generally

rally ſpeaking, only objects of deſire; and, to ſuch women, men cannot be conſtant. Men, accuſtomed only to have their ſenſes moved, merely ſeek for a ſelfiſh gratification in the ſociety of women, and their ſexual inſtinct, being neither ſupported by the underſtanding nor the heart, muſt be excited by variety.

10.

We ought to reſpect old opinions; though prejudices, blindly adopted, lead to error, and preclude all exerciſe of the reaſon.

The emulation which often makes a boy miſchievous, is a generous ſpur; and the old remark, that unlucky, turbulent boys, make the wiſeſt and beſt men, is true, ſpite of Mr. Knox's arguments. It has been obſerved, that the moſt adventurous horſes, when tamed

or domeſticated, are the moſt mild and tractable.

11.

The children who ſtart up ſuddenly at twelve or fourteen, and fall into decays, in conſequence, as it is termed, of outgrowing their ſtrength, are in general, I believe, thoſe children, who have been bred up with miſtaken tenderneſs, and not allowed to ſport and take exerciſe in the open air. This is analogous to plants: for it is found that they run up ſickly, long ſtalks, when confined.

12.

Children ſhould be taught to feel deference, not to practiſe ſubmiſſion.

13.

It is always a proof of falſe refinement, when a faſtidious taſte overpowers ſympathy.

14. Luſt

14.

Luſt appears to be the moſt natural companion of wild ambition; and love of human praiſe, of that dominion erected by cunning.

15.

"Genius decays as judgment increaſes." Of courſe, thoſe who have the leaſt genius, have the earlieſt appearance of wiſdom.

16.

A knowledge of the fine arts, is ſeldom ſubſervient to the promotion of either religion or virtue. Elegance is often indecency; witneſs our prints.

17.

There does not appear to be any evil in the world, but what is neceſſary. The doctrine of rewards and puniſhments, not conſidered as a means of re-

formation, appears to me an infamous libel on divine goodneſs.

18.

Whether virtue is founded on reaſon or revelation, virtue is wiſdom, and vice is folly. Why are poſitive puniſhments?

19.

Few can walk alone. The ſtaff of Chriſtianity is the neceſſary ſupport of human weakneſs. But an acquaintance with the nature of man and virtue, with juſt ſentiments on the attributes, would be ſufficient, without a voice from heaven, to lead ſome to virtue, but not the mob.

20.

I only expect the natural reward of virtue, whatever it may be. I rely not on a poſitive reward.

The juſtice of God can be vindicated by

by a belief in a future ſtate—but a continuation of being vindicates it as clearly, as the poſitive ſyſtem of rewards and puniſhments—by evil educing good for the individual, and not for an imaginary whole. The happineſs of the whole muſt ariſe from the happineſs of the conſtituent parts, or this world is not a ſtate of trial, but a ſchool.

21.

The vices acquired by Auguſtus to retain his power, muſt have tainted his ſoul, and prevented that increaſe of happineſs a good man expects in the next ſtage of exiſtence. This was a natural puniſhment.

22.

The lover is ever moſt deeply enamoured, when it is with he knows not what—and the devotion of a myſtic has

has a rude Gothic grandeur in it, which the reſpectful adoration of a philoſopher will never reach. I may be thought fanciful; but it has continually occurred to me, that, though, I allow, reaſon in this world is the mother of wiſdom—yet ſome flights of the imagination ſeem to reach what wiſdom cannot teach—and, while they delude us here, afford a glorious hope, if not a foretaſte, of what we may expect hereafter. He that created us, did not mean to mark us with ideal images of grandeur, the *baſeleſs fabric of a viſion*—No—that perfection we follow with hopeleſs ardour when the whiſperings of reaſon are heard, may be found, when not incompatible with our ſtate, in the round of eternity. Perfection indeed muſt, even then, be a comparative idea—but the wiſdom, the happineſs

pineſs of a ſuperior ſtate, has been ſuppoſed to be intuitive, and the happieſt effuſions of human genius have ſeemed like inſpiration—the deductions of reaſon deſtroy ſublimity.

23.

I am more and more convinced, that poetry is the firſt effervescence of the imagination, and the forerunner of civilization.

24.

When the Arabs had no trace of literature or ſcience, they compoſed beautiful verſes on the ſubjects of love and war. The flights of the imagination, and the laboured deductions of reaſon, appear almoſt incompatible.

25.

Poetry certainly flouriſhes moſt in the firſt rude ſtate of ſociety. The paſſions ſpeak moſt eloquently, when they are not ſhackled by reaſon. The

ſublime

ſublime expreſſion, which has been ſo often quoted, [Geneſis, ch. 1, ver. 3.] is perhaps a barbarous flight; or rather the grand conception of an uncultivated mind; for it is contrary to nature and experience, to ſuppoſe that this account is founded on facts—It is doubtleſs a ſublime allegory. But a cultivated mind would not thus have deſcribed the creation—for, arguing from analogy, it appears that creation muſt have been a comprehenſive plan, and that the Supreme Being always uſes ſecond cauſes, ſlowly and ſilently to fulfil his purpoſe. This is, in reality, a more ſublime view of that power which wiſdom ſupports: but it is not the ſublimity that would ſtrike the impaſſioned mind, in which the imagination took place of intellect. Tell a being, whoſe affections and paſſions have been more exerciſed than his rea-

ſon, that God ſaid, *Let there be light! and there was light*; and he would proſtrate himſelf before the Being who could thus call things out of nothing, as if they were: but a man in whom reaſon had taken place of paſſion, would not adore, till wiſdom was conſpicuous as well as power, for his admiration muſt be founded on principle.

26.

Individuality is ever conſpicuous in thoſe enthuſiaſtic flights of fancy, in which reaſon is left behind, without being loſt ſight of.

27.

The mind has been too often brought to the teſt of enquiries which only reach to matter—put into the crucible, though the magnetic and electric fluid eſcapes from the experimental philoſopher.

28. Mr.

28.

Mr. Kant has obſerved, that the underſtanding is ſublime, the imagination beautiful—yet it is evident, that poets, and men who undoubtedly poſſeſs the livelieſt imagination, are moſt touched by the ſublime, while men who have cold, enquiring minds, have not this exquiſite feeling in any great degree, and indeed ſeem to loſe it as they cultivate their reaſon.

29.

The Grecian buildings are graceful—they fill the mind with all thoſe pleaſing emotions, which elegance and beauty never fail to excite in a cultivated mind—utility and grace ſtrike us in uniſon—the mind is ſatisfied—things appear juſt what they ought to be: a calm ſatisfaction is felt, but the imagination has nothing to do—no obſcurity darkens

darkens the gloom—like reaſonable content, we can ſay why we are pleaſed—and this kind of pleaſure may be laſting, but it is never great.

30.

When we ſay that a perſon is an original, it is only to ſay in other words that he thinks. "The leſs a man has "cultivated his rational faculties, the "more powerful is the principle of "imitation, over his actions, and his "habits of thinking. Moſt women, "of courſe, are more influenced by "the behaviour, the faſhions, and the "opinions of thoſe with whom they "aſſociate, than men." (Smellie.)

When we read a book which ſupports our favourite opinions, how eagerly do we ſuck in the doctrines, and ſuffer our minds placidly to reflect the images which illuſtrate the tenets we

have embraced? We indolently or quietly acquieſce in the concluſion, and our ſpirit animates and connects the various ſubjects. But, on the contrary, when we peruſe a ſkilful writer, who does not coincide in opinion with us, how is the mind on the watch to detect fallacy? And this coolneſs often prevents our being carried away by a ſtream of eloquence, which the prejudiced mind terms declamation—a pomp of words.—We never allow ourſelves to be warmed; and, after contending with the writer, are more confirmed in our own opinion, as much perhaps from a ſpirit of contradiction as from reaſon.—Such is the ſtrength of man!

31.

It is the individual manner of ſeeing and feeling, pourtrayed by a ſtrong imagination in bold images that have

ſtruck the ſenſes, which creates all the charms of poetry. A great reader is always quoting the deſcription of another's emotions; a ſtrong imagination delights to paint its own. A writer of genius makes us feel; an inferior author reaſon.

32.

Some principle prior to ſelf-love muſt have exiſted: the feeling which produced the pleaſure, muſt have exiſted before the experience.

THE END.