

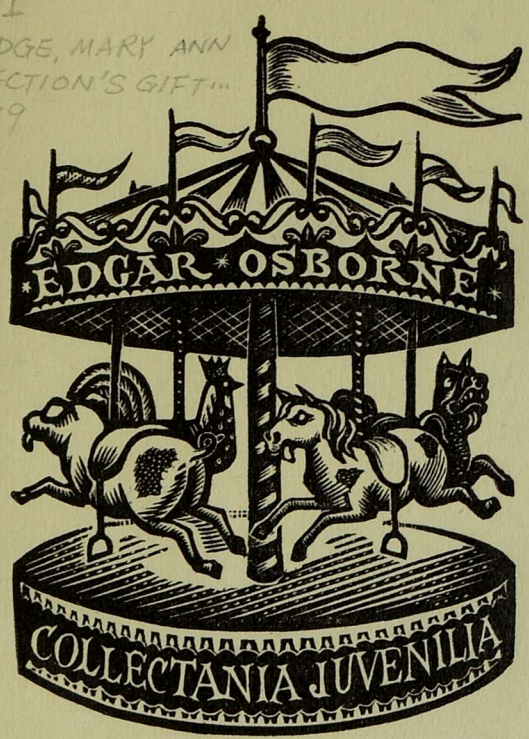
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Emma Russell.

1819.

The gift of her
affectionate Mother.

BI

HEDGE, MARY ANN
AFFECTION'S GIFT
1819



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R. Woodman Sculp^d

*Oh! may my spirit hover o'er
And Mary's guardian Angel be!*

Vide concluding Lines.

Published Dec^r 1818, by Swinburne & Walter, Colchester.

AFFECTION'S GIFT

TO

A BELOVED GOD-CHILD.

By M. H.

“ Describe with truth and affection those qualities and accomplishments you think truly attractive; which it is in her power to acquire, which it will be her glory to possess.”

“ That lesson is likely to be impressive which is insinuated through the medium of Affection.”

LONDON:

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“ With no confidence in our own powers, and with a just deference for the public opinion, we submit ourselves to view; but, supported by the integrity of our intentions, we shrink from no fair reproof, we dread no remorse of conscience, even in that hour which must make us feel unprofitable deeds as culpable.”

Hawkins.

“ Mine the ambition that altho' unknown,
Where'er my little volume may extend,
Where'er this picture of my mind is shewn,
In every reader I may find a friend.”

*Adapted from Gresset—Hayley's
Translation.*

ERRATA.

- Page 2, line 15, *for bosom, read blossom.*
25, — 13, *for transcient, read transient.*
63, — 15, *for ingeniousness, read ingenuousness.*
68, — 18, *for act, read art.*
69, — 6, *for benefit, read benefits.*

AFFECTION'S GIFT,

&c. &c.

LETTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

MY DEAR GIRL,

POSSESSED as you are of parents so competent to inculcate the truths, and convey the instructions which are feebly attempted in the following letters, it appears almost an unpardonable presumption in me, who have had so few advantages of tuition, to think of writing them. Yet, from the real maternal affection I feel for you, I cannot repress the desire of adding my trifling aid in forming your mind and heart. I have watched you with attention, and with pleasure discovered that you possess quick perceptions, a lively imagination, sweetness of temper, and an affectionate heart.

To assist in the cultivation of these qualities and dispositions became my favourite wish, and in dwelling upon it I fear I may have forgotten my incompetence to the pleasing employment.

But in the following letters I have ventured to give you the genuine dictates of my judgment, in the hope that precepts flowing from affection, may have more force upon your impressible heart than those advanced by a person uninterested.

The time may arrive when I may view your fully expanded mind; but if this happiness is denied me, you will cherish this memorial of affection, and remember her, whose fervent prayer is that the fruit of maturer years may not disappoint the hopes that the fair bosom of your infancy created. In the following letters I have adopted the sentiments and even the language of various authors, when they have expressed my meaning in clearer and more elegant terms than I was myself capable of; but in no one instance have I done this, but where I was convinced by personal experience of their truth; you are, therefore, not to look for *originality*, but to

regard them as the opinions of many, (agreeable with my own) brought to a focus, as a stimulus for you to peruse progressively the excellent volumes whence they are derived.

I can only add, that if in the smallest degree, they tend to your improvement, I shall feel a delight to which I have long been a stranger.

With the warmest wishes for your happiness,
I am, my own dear girl,

Your affectionate Friend and Godmother.

LETTER II.

RELIGION.

MY BELOVED GIRL,

As religion is the basis upon which every moral structure must be erected, if we wish for beauty and unity in the design, or strength to insure permanence, the principle to which every pursuit must be referred, I begin my correspondence with the important subject. Believe me, it is not a melancholy topic. It is not an unsocial, gloomy, or severe principle; on the contrary, nothing is so friendly to joy—so productive of true pleasure—so peculiarly suited to the warmth, the energy, the innocence of a youthful heart.

By it, it seems as if “the Creator led his favoured children by the hand, and assisted them gently to pass over the clouds of life.”

If *your* life passes without any severe trial, you will find true piety heighten every enjoyment. If your lot be the performance of any painful duties, this principle will animate you, and diffuse a serenity and cheerfulness over your mind, which can only flow from this source. It is indeed, the grand purpose of life to prepare, to educate the soul for that world where all the faculties with which it is graciously endowed by our Creator, will be exercised without limitation, or interruption.

Yes, my dear Girl, if genuine, unaffected religion is cherished in the heart, we shall, under every circumstance of life, repose with tranquillity and confidence, as in the arms of our sustaining God, without solicitude about the future, confident that all will result to good for us.

Cultivate, therefore, I entreat you, this sentiment in your youthful heart—in the spring time of your life, for it is in *it alone* you will find a solution to every moral difficulty which arises in your mind, and a safe guide in every critical circumstance, or anxious dilemma.

It is this divine principle which fosters the best sensibilities of our nature; at the same time it corrects and regulates them, which furnishes the fittest objects for their exercise, and the plainest boundaries for their limitation. Thus you perceive, my dear Girl, that religion must be a *cheerful* principle; for, by regulating the passions, improving the heart, expanding the mind, and softening the disposition, it *cannot but produce* that most desirable of all results, peace of soul, and a contented mind.

Thus far I have endeavoured to enforce its importance, in reference to your *temporal* happiness. But how will that importance rise in your mind, when you reflect, that by *it alone* you can hope for that which is to be *eternal*.

Seriously reflect, my beloved child, that before we can enjoy happiness, the mind must be prepared to receive it—that there is no transmuting power in death—that unless we habituate the soul to virtue and to piety *here*, and endeavour to attain a relish for those enjoyments, we are promised in heaven, even *there* happiness would be unknown to us.

The germs of the qualities which are to flourish through the endless ages of eternity, must be cultivated with constant and with tender care, during this scene of our probation.

Let this reflection sink deep into your mind, and it will be unnecessary for me to urge the subject more. Let the study of the Holy Scriptures be your daily employment, and you cannot fail to find in them delight; but recollect, they are not to be perused merely to be believed, and remembered, and held in *speculative* reverence; but as the grand, the only means under divine grace, of producing in your heart that awe of the Almighty, that reverence of his majesty, that delight in his infinite perfections, and of his immutable attributes, and that affectionate knowledge of him which will, which *can* alone constitute your *rest*—your *peace*—your *strength*—your *consolation*.

You cannot be too conversant with the Psalms. In those divine songs the ethereal spirit of true piety is so bright, and combined with such a rich vein of sublime poetry, that it must render

them captivating to every feeling, every grateful heart. May you, by a frequent perusal of them, transfuse into your own heart, my child, the holy flame which animated the writer, but may you escape the heart-piercing sorrow of such a repentance as that of David; for, however available such repentance to the soul *after* death, it is a state of such exquisite suffering, while the consciousness of crime presses it to the dust, as your innocent heart can form no just idea of! Oh! may you ever be ignorant of the fatal power of error—may my dear girl preserve her purity of heart, her rectitude of conduct, is the fond and ardent prayer of her affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER III.

ON THE CULTIVATION OF THE TEMPER.

You will have studied the sentiment inculcated in my last, to very little purpose, my best beloved Girl, if you imagine that its influence affects only your own happiness: religion is no selfish principle. It must not only give solidity to virtue, but must diffuse a grace over every relation of humanity; its *internal* power must be manifested by a thousand tender attentions to those around you, springing from sweetness of disposition. You appear, by nature, to be blessed with a happy temper, but the richness of the flower will degenerate without cultivation, and as the

bad propensities of our nature may be subdued by correction, so the good will expire unless cherished with the most assiduous care.

Ever recollect that the aggregate of our happiness is made up of little pleasures continually repeated; that human misery consists of petty inconveniences, constantly recurring.

Recollect, that opportunities of great exertions of virtue and forbearance seldom occur, but the influence of good temper is perpetual; delicacy and kindness are constantly in our power. Let this idea, my dear girl, prevent your giving way to any peevish, irritable, or passionate temper—let your solicitude to oblige arise from a sense of the duty we owe to our fellow-beings—your affability of speech, from a mind regulated by the humility which is the distinguishing excellence of a Christian.

A female writer of our own times has justly and truly observed, “temper is within every one’s dominion; when people who think and call themselves religious, say that it is not so, the

assertion is dangerously hypocritical; for the *first* and most *decided* change that religion operates, is upon the temper, substituting *cheerfulness* and equanimity for gloom and starts of anger; so that when there is not a well-regulated temper, we may safely infer, there is very little genuine or effective religion."—*Edgeworth*.

I have often seen girls disgusting to others and unhappy in themselves, upon being disappointed in some engagement, upon which they said "they had set their hearts." Let not my darling girl ever become one of these querulous beings. I will give you the simple rule I have, with the best effect, followed myself in such cases:—When a scheme of pleasure is proposed to you, make it a rule mentally to say, "I ought not to set my heart upon this;" this will awaken your mind to all the contingencies against its accomplishment, and qualify it to endure the disappointment without murmuring, and even enhance the enjoyment if your wishes are gratified, because it adds the warm feeling of gratitude to the pleasure.

By cultivating unceasingly, this self-controul, (for no circumstance of life is exempted from the occasions continually to render it necessary,) you will be happy in yourself, a blessing to your family, and pleasing to all; and above all, you will render yourself acceptable to that God, who gave us such a bright example of self-devotedness and humility.

Adieu, my beloved Girl.

LETTER IV.

THE REGULATIONS OF THE HEART AND AFFECTIONS.

MY BELOVED GIRL,

I AM SO deeply sensible of the consequence of your admitting the truth, and practising the duty enforced in this letter, that I almost tremble at my own temerity, in daring to offer my sentiments upon it, conscious how powerless my language must be to convey my feelings, and my deep sense of the importance of the subject. Were your existence to be limited to this life, my task would be comparatively an easy one; but to a being, an *accountable* being, destined for heavenly and immortal happiness, how essential is it to guard against, and correct those passions which can find no admittance into a world of bliss—to cultivate those virtues in humble faith, which will render you a happy participant of those gracious promises assured to the

obedient. Human motives and actions are distinguished into two kinds ; some good and right, others wrong and evil. God has implanted upon our minds a strong internal sense of this difference, together with a feeling of approbation of what is right, and the contrary of what is evil.

He has also given us reason to direct us when natural sentiment happens to fail, and by the joint aid of these two principles, he has intimated to us what course of action he requires us to pursue. But he has not left us here ; he has graciously and clearly expressed his *will*—he has revealed to us the happiness he has in store for those, who with dependence upon his ever-ready aid, endeavour to perform it, and in commanding self-denial he has been mindful of our present as well as future happiness. Thus we have the plainest rules, the most encouraging incentives, to regulate our moral conduct. Appetite, passion, temptations on all sides, prompt us to transgress these rules, and to forget we must account for our disobedience. Religion, reason, a sense of duty to our Creator, and our fellow-

beings, lead us to conform to them, and to elevate our thoughts with lively faith to our supreme reward in the approving smile of our God! who has left our will free to chuse either to give way to irregular desires, or to over-rule them by superior considerations.

“That thou art happy, owe to God;
That thou continuest such, owe to thyself;
That is, to thy obedience; therein stand.

“God made thee perfect, not immutable;
And good He made thee, but to persevere
He left in thy power; ordain'd thy will
By nature free, not over-rul'd by fate
Inextricable, or strict necessity.

“For how
Can hearts not free be try'd, whether they serve
Willing or no?”

The experience of every one, who, in the smallest degree, attend to the emotions of their own hearts, bears ample testimony of that inherent tendency to evil, which we are assured in the sacred volume characterises human nature.

Who is there that has not felt how easily external objects will obliterate from the mind the deepest conviction of their deceitfulness? Who in the retirement of the closet, has not fancied those convictions would accompany him while engaged in the different pursuits of life? And who has not felt that all these elevated thoughts, all the reflections of his understanding, all the convictions of his heart, too easily are forgotten, and are dissipated, ere he suspected their airy nature, and the trifles of time and sense resume their controul over the heart and feelings, seducing by their brilliancy and cheating by their apparent solidity? With what care then should we endeavour to gain an insight into ourselves that we may discover the vulnerable points to be guarded.

Oh! my dear Girl, many and devious are the paths by which the heart may be led into error. Watch therefore its inclinations, supplicate Him who intimately knows it, to guide it aright; for be assured, the only road to happiness is in the uniform controul of the passions.

The first step towards resisting temptation, is to regulate our notions, for before we can *act* virtuously, we must learn to *think* justly. The excursions of the imagination must be checked, as its restless nature gives it a power dangerous to our virtue and our peace, it deludes us into a false estimation of things, arraying them with fascinations which produce an insatiable desire to possess them; till, as it is most justly observed, "the balance of the soul is lost." Endeavor to keep alive in your mind the sense of its bewildering nature, and suffer it not to overbear your judgment; endeavor to fix the intrinsic value of the objects it presents, and learn to estimate them aright. A habit of recurring to reflection will be one of the strongest barriers against the inroads of error; the most effectual mode of confining your irregular wishes within due bounds. By watching the first motions you will learn to *suppress* the first risings of such wishes—you must assert the natural power of reason over the soul, and daily confirm his authority by exercising it on all occasions, however trivial you may think them: thus will you be insensibly habituated to resist the stronger solicitations which may assail your virtue.

But my beloved Girl will find all these means ineffectual, unless she seeks for internal strength from the FORMER of the heart. Prayer is the high privilege of frail and weak beings, *that* only can calm when the tumults of thought arise within, *that* only can bid the soul be still and rest upon its God!

Religion does not condemn us to sacrifice our passions, it seeks only to regulate them; they were implanted in our nature by the Supreme for the wisest and most benevolent purposes, and are in themselves void of guilt, to eradicate them would be as sinful as it would be impossible, and they are perfectly consistent with the purest virtue, which alone requires a proper choice, innocent pursuits, and moderation in our enjoyments: to act contrary constitutes vice.

But suffer me to repeat my darling Girl, that it requires incessant care to preserve the passions of our fallen nature in due subserviency to religion and reason. My caution extends even to the most laudable inclinations of the heart which as such are too apt to gain an unperceived ascendancy, and acquire such

unnatural force as finally to endanger happiness and virtue.

I shall in part resume this subject in a succeeding letter, when I mention the affections particularly and separately; will therefore relieve you for the present for I am fearful I shall become tiresome to you, let the warm maternal interest I feel plead my excuse to the heart of my dear Girl.

Yours affectionately.

LETTER V.

ON THE CULTIVATION OF THE MIND.

NEXT to the regulation of the heart, my dear Girl, the cultivation of the mind is essential to your present and future happiness; indeed the latter is one great means of effecting the former; and though we too often see melancholy instances of perverted understanding, and that the knowledge of the head is no guarantee for the rectitude of the conduct, yet these instances ought not to discourage us, or induce us indolently to suffer our faculties to languish in inaction, for the abuse of a blessing can never lessen its real worth in the opinion of the candid and the liberal. The improvement and exercise of our intellectual faculties, will probably constitute no inconsiderable part of the employment and felicity of a future state of being.

Forcibly impressed with this idea I will acknowledge that I have ever considered the improvement of our mental capacities in the the present life the indispensable duty of a being endowed with reason, and who is in general ready enough to arrogate this superiority in things indifferent.

Must not the first exercise of that reason be an aspiration of gratitude to the Almighty and beneficent Being who has breathed into us a spirit susceptible of pleasure, from so many sources in the exercise of the rational powers; and who has replenished all nature with boundless profusion to minister to these pleasures ?

But even without this superior incitement, the search after knowledge opens a wide field of enjoyment, of which the ignorant and the prejudiced have no idea. We are all endued with a desire of knowledge; the powers of genius, taste, and judgment, were not given to us to lie dormant—we were created to be happy, and the faculties of the mind are the sources from whence it flows; for in the exercise of them do we not rise from low pursuits, and find the “study of na-

ture lead us to nature's God," the centre of knowledge, and perennial spring of happiness? Why, therefore, by disregarding or neglecting them, should we prove our ingratitude to the bestower, who can, by disease, calamity, and a thousand unlooked for causes, in a moment recall his gift, can in a moment deprive us of those intellectual advantages we contemn?

Be it then, your pleasure, my dear girl, to improve your understanding; but, recollect that your duty and interest require an union of moral with mental improvement. Recollect how desirable, how essential it is to become better as you become wiser; that while, by study and reflection, you improve your understanding, you must also sedulously endeavour to improve your heart.

If you learn greater complacency of temper, greater equanimity of mind, greater humanity of deportment, the acquisition is indeed important.

If, when you contemplate the harmony, the beauty, the order of nature, which a pursuit of knowledge will open to your view, you learn to

examine the *interior* world, and the heart becomes more resigned, more contented, more humble—Who will deny the advantage you have gained over self-sufficient pride and stubborn ignorance?

As a further incentive, let me add, that the frivolity and caprice so generally complained of in our sex, greatly arises from their neglect in not exploring those sources of mental enjoyment. The mind cannot endure a vacuum; and if not filled with laudable pursuits, will have recourse to trifles to fill up the void. Hence the passions of envy and vanity, the frivolities of dress, the rivalry of beauty, which agitate successively, the bosoms of those unemployed beings. These tormentors of peace can never find place in the heart of a girl, who has learned to place delight in the performance of domestic duty and intellectual pursuits.

The disgraceful talent for scandal which proverbially attaches to our sex, will, to a mind well regulated and cultivated, afford no charm; the liberality and benevolence which are the fruit of

knowledge, and above all, self-knowledge, will induce candour, sweetness, and self-correction, and lead us to pity, rather than too hastily condemn. These, my dear Mary, are the advantages, the satisfactions arising from the cultivation of the mind; satisfactions which will grow with your increasing years, which will prove a store of enjoyment in retirement, or in situations where every thing external is insipid and unsolacing. It is this which will give grace to every virtue, render you happy in yourself, and an ornament to society.

Adieu, my dearest,

LETTER VI.

EMPLOYMENT OF TIME.

MY DEAR MARY,

WHAT I endeavoured to enforce in my last, has in some measure anticipated the subject of my present letter ; but it is so important, that it cannot be readily dismissed, by one who feels it.

The due employment of time ought to be the chief aim of life ; for, surely, of the portion allotted to beings who should aspire to perfection, no part should be suffered to elapse without some trace worthy of remembrance ? In the eyes of the Almighty, time has no limitation ; to humanity it is short and bounded ; but our hopes, our desires, nor our attainments, are confined to this transient period ; we have it in our power to extend the sphere of our existence, by daily seeking some wider expansion of moral and

mental worth, by a progressive increase of holiness, and higher aspirations towards that state where time will be lost in eternity! It is a sacred deposit, which we ought to prize, and diligently improve; for, of the manner in which we pass it, we must give a strict account. Learn, then, my beloved girl, to occupy it with useful employment.

Let a portion of it be given to the attentive perusal of those writings, which may contribute to your virtue, your usefulness, and your innocent satisfaction. Let the discharge of the relative and social duties, and the habitual exercises of benevolence and sympathy have their due share.

Of the claims of the latter, let my dear girl recollect (particularly if situated in the country) that her poorer neighbours are not to be forgotten; there are many ways of evincing humanity and charity, independent of bestowing pecuniary aid; the sympathetic look, the kind consideration, the patient attention, of an amiable girl, to the bitter tale of poverty, or oppression—

of sickness, perhaps borne down by age, convey a balm to the sufferer's heart, the sweet sensation of which, can only perhaps be equalled by the kindly warmth which glows in her own.

Believe me, my dear girl, this is no fancied picture; I have myself been placed in situations to call forth these feelings, and have (grateful to my Creator for the precious gift) felt them to their full extent of happiness; and trust me, the votaries of dissipation, and the flutterers of frivolity, never experienced, in the haunts of what *they* term pleasure, the smallest portion of the delight which flows from these sensations. The goodness of our Creator is, indeed, in no instance more manifest, than in his having formed the heart of man to sympathy, and to find its best enjoyments in acts of charity and benevolence; there must ever be a fluctuation in society; of course this sympathy is continually called forth, and its exercise is inculcated both by the precepts and practice of our Saviour, to which is attached the gracious encouragement that it is acceptable to him; and if this exercise of benevolence towards the temporal benefits of our

fellow-beings be thus acceptable to Him, (who gave us all things richly to enjoy), and reflects joy to our own hearts, how much more transcendent the consciousness if we have aided the spiritual weakness—if we have roused the moral energies of those around us?—Have taught the ignorant to know and to adore that omniscient and beneficent Being, who has formed all his creatures to please and propitiate him through a Saviour's merits. How pleasing to the Almighty—how pure the pleasure to ourselves, if we are graciously made the favoured instrument of Heaven, to recall one wandering foot—to clear one mental error—to check the thoughtless or the rash, or to sooth one anguished heart!

I have dwelt the longer upon this subject, my dear Mary, because I have observed that it is not sufficiently impressed upon the mind of youth. The sympathies of their nature being too often confined to dispensing pecuniary aid: this is a *part*, and certainly, in many instances, a most essential part of our charitable duties, but we must not rest here; it is *but a part* of that circle of benevolence which we *may* fill.

Circumstances of fortune may render this circle *small*, but it may nevertheless be made *perfect*. It is justly said by a female writer who exemplified in her practice what I have dwelt upon, "That charity is the business of a lady;" but it ought to be a charity of the most comprehensive nature, emanating from the heart and extending itself to every action of life.

The flow of the virtuous and the tender affections of the heart—of benevolence—gratitude, friendship, and love are never without enjoyment.

"Who that bears

A human bosom hath not often felt
How dear are all those ties that bind our race
In gentleness together? and how sweet
Their force, let Fortune's hand the while
Be kind or cruel?"

Akenside.

But to return from this digression from my immediate subject—though books, relative and social duties, and benevolence have each their appropriate share of your time, you will find hours unoccupied, let those hours be devoted to

innocent amusement, and elegant accomplishments. Music—drawing—work—all or each afford their aid to fill up those vacancies in life which may be thus rendered pleasing to ourselves and others. These several accomplishments will afford me subject for succeeding letters to my beloved Pupil, and believe me my own dear Girl, profitable employment makes the hours fly like minutes, lightens present care, banishes the vain regrets of the past, and the weak dread of future contingencies.—By profitable employment I mean that which tends to improve and fortify the heart, to enlarge the ideas, and enlighten the understanding. But before I quit this subject, let me add that the contemplation of nature in her various beauties of hill, and dale, and grove, in the health-inspiring walk; must be remembered in your employment of time. To a contemplative and intelligent being these walks, while they give health and vigour to the frame, convey an endless source of delight to the soul. Should it be your lot to reside amidst the awful and majestic scenes of nature, or where she sports in simple beauty, she still affords an ever abundant pleasure.

“Whom Nature's works can charm, with God himself,
Hold converse, grow familiar day by day,
With his conceptions, act upon his plan
And form to his *the relish of their souls.*” *Akenside.*

That you my Mary may learn to realise this
sweet idea of the poet, is the ardent wish of
your most affectionate.

LETTER VII.

ON THE STUDY OF HISTORY AND READING IN
GENERAL.

MY DEAREST GIRL,

I HAVE in a former letter recommended the the constant and attentive perusal of the Holy Scriptures, and have pointed out the certain advantages you will derive from the practice. The study of history, in which I include voyages, travels, and biography, demands the next place in your attention. It is this which expands the mind, enlarges the ideas, and eradicates those narrow and illiberal prejudices which obscure the understanding and indurate the feelings. I have myself experienced so sensibly the disadvantages of reading without method, that I cannot too strongly urge you to observe it, as it is essential to the study of history with advantage.

Let the history of your native country form the first subject of your enquiries, to which add that of the neighbouring kingdoms, and those states dependent upon, or allied to it.

A cursory knowledge of ancient and general history is also requisite. Perhaps you will think I am imposing a heavy task upon you; but, believe me, if you experience a disrelish for this delightful study at first, you must not be discouraged; the taste will grow and improve by exercise, till your mind will learn to resort to it as an intellectual feast at which you may fearlessly banquet.

I presume not to recommend any works upon the subject in general, as you possess your father's unquestionable judgment to direct you; appreciate, my dear Girl, this advantage, and reward his care by your docility and diligence.

But think not I mean to confine you to this most interesting kind of reading, or that I would have you continue it unceasingly; works of a lighter kind may be read with advantage during the period you are pursuing a course of history.

Poetry affords a rich source of improvement, interest, and amusement: but it must be of that kind which elevates the thoughts, ameliorates the heart, kindling benevolence by pathetic narrative or description, and presenting vivid pictures of what is grand and beautiful in nature, or good and fair in morals.—These essential qualities you can never be at a loss to find in the works of Milton, Gray, Beattie, Cowper, Akenside, Hurdis, and innumerable other writers of our own country who have devoted their creative imagination to the noble task of elevating the minds and refining the taste of their readers. In the works of Shakespear, “Nature’s darling child,” we have a mine of wealth from which we may continually draw without apparent diminution, so rich, so copious are the veins of sterling ore; it is certain however, that the allusion may be justly carried on, as much dross is mingled with the ore; the taste of the age he lived in rendered this unavoidable; but a correct taste will soon know how to separate that which is valuable from what is worthless.—Neither do I mean to exclude you, my dear Mary, from the perusal of those works to which it is asserted our sex are particularly attached; few I think

would be so, had they enjoyed the advantage of a guide to more interesting and more improving works.

It is a fact, which is borne out by experience, that the *indiscriminate* perusal of novels, and works of mere imagination, tends much to vitiate the taste, and to render it unfit for more solid reading,—that they greatly corrupt the judgment and bewilder the understanding, and thus most effectually and easily inflame the passions, and shake the principles. Far be it from me to say this is the tendency of all works of this kind, but many which have the cause of virtue professedly for their object, in tracing the progress of vice to unhappiness, initiate the guileless reader to scenes which insensibly wear away the quick feelings of delicacy, and thus remove both the ornament and safeguard of innocence.

Yet I am far from thinking it right that women should be brought up ignorant of the world circumstances must oblige them to enter; ignorance of existing vice is perilous, as it lulls

suspicion, and induces us to judge of others by ourselves; and thus leads the unwary astray, or hurries them on the rocks which abound in the rapid stream of life.

Several female writers of our own country and time have, in some works of this kind, put the negative against any general censure of them; there are many that may be not only read with perfect safety, but with advantage. They have exhibited characters, whose elevation must quicken our disgust of what is mean or base, and tend to form the mind insensibly to elegance and dignity, and while the characters are naturally and successfully drawn, the weaknesses of the heart are exposed in such a manner as to carry an irresistible conviction to the reader's judgment, of their dangerous influence. In fact, I would wish you, my dear girl, never to peruse works of this description, unless recommended by a judicious friend; nothing is to be depended upon from its mere title; and should you trust to this, the purity of your mind may be contaminated ere you are sensible of the danger. I would also wish you not to read even the periodi-

cal works, which are so often put into the hands of young people, without availing yourself of the judgment of some friend, on whom you can rely, for very many of them are liable to the same objections I have made to novels.

I am fearful, my beloved girl, you will find me tedious ; but I have your well being so much at heart, that I find it difficult to relinquish any subject that I think may conduce to it.—That my care may produce the good intended, is the fond wish of your affectionate friend.

LETTER VIII.

GEOGRAPHY AND CHRONOLOGY.

You will not, my dear Pupil, be able to read history either with pleasure or advantage, unless you acquire some knowledge of geography and chronology, you will find them easily attained in a degree that will be useful to you. It is almost unnecessary for me to tell you we can feel but little interest in the history of a country, the relative situation of which we are ignorant of; and that is to little purpose to mention a fact, unless we at the same time can ascertain the period in which it occurred.

Geography is the easiest of all sciences, and a competent knowledge of it may be acquired without labour; indeed it forms a most agreeable amusement,—there are so many ingenious modes of impressing its principles upon the mind.

Chronology, if I may judge from personal experience, you will find rather more difficult; but if you avoid bewildering yourself by attempting too much at first, you will, I am persuaded, soon acquire sufficient knowledge to assist you to study history with pleasure and advantage.— There is a variety of elementary books upon the subject, which, if you think uninteresting, as certainly chronology is to the student, remember it may be compared to the alphabet, the simple sounds of which are tiresome, but open to you a rich field of knowledge and delight.

Adieu, my ever dear Girl.

LETTER IX.

MYTHOLOGY.

MY DEAR GIRL,

THE subject of my last, although dry in itself, is intended to open to you both pleasure and advantage in the perusal of history; that of the present to illustrate the imagery of poetry, as the deities, deprecated or adored by the ancients, are continually referred to by poetical writers; nor can you understand or form a taste for the fine arts without some knowledge of those deities and their several attributes; the due appropriation of which, in his design, communicates beauty, and calls forth the fancy and taste of the artist.

But what renders the study of mythology most essential, is its *moral* uses in poetry; for

without this knowledge you discern not the intent and principal beauty and the uses which may be made of sportive fancy, and vivid imagination.

The Iliad of Homer presents an example of what I mean; in which he exhibits the superiority of the Greeks over the Asiatics: this superiority is shewn not only in the conquest of Asia by the Greeks, and the destruction of its capital, but also in the division and arrangement of the deities who took part with the contending nations. On the side of Asia, Venus, or sensual passion, pleasure, and effeminacy; on the side of Greece was Juno, or matronly gravity and conjugal love; together with Mercury, invention and eloquence; and Jupiter, political wisdom: on the side of Asia was Mars, who represents brutal valour and blind fury: on the side of Greece was Pallas, or military discipline, and bravery guarded by judgment.

This instance, my dear Pupil, will sufficiently prove to you how essential is the study of

mythology to the understanding the true beauties of poetry. It will require no labour to obtain a sufficient knowledge for your purpose, a book entitled the Pantheon will afford you all the information necessary.

Adieu, my dearest.

LETTER X.

BOTANY, CHYMISTRY, AND MINERALOGY.

MY DEAREST GIRL,

ANY pursuit which tends to enlighten your understanding, and supply you with ideas to reflect upon in the hours of retirement, to render you an intelligent and companionable being, is well deserving your attention.—I have no intention however of recommending you to become a natural philosopher, although the title of my letter may have alarmed you into the supposition.

It would be neither consistent with your sex, nor the duties of it, to enter such an exhaustless field of observation, but the elements of botany, chymistry, and mineralogy, will be necessary for the above named purposes, to which perhaps may be added the simple principles of mechanics. In the first mentioned branch of science you will find such a never-ending variety in the

beautiful forms of nature which every hedge, and field, and grove presents; it will give such an interest to your walks, it will be such a stimulus for you to accustom yourself to activity, that I cannot too strongly recommend it; and I am the more earnestly induced to do so, having had reason to regret the very slight knowledge I had of it at a period of life when I could have felt its pleasures. It is also connected so much with the delightful accomplishment of drawing, that it must greatly enhance the pleasure derived from the facility.—To sketch with truth the beautiful forms of the flowery creation, must surely be preeminently pleasing.

“Nor is the mead unworthy of thy foot;
Full of fresh verdure and unnumber'd flow'rs,
The negligence of nature, wide and wild,
Where, undisguised by mimic art, she spreads
Unbounded beauty to the roving eye.” *Thomson.*

Chymistry is a science which has been so much studied of late years, is subservient to so many useful purposes, and so often the subject of conversation among intelligent persons, that

I wish you to make yourself acquainted with the elements of it, that when you have the advantage of mixing in the society of such intelligent persons, you may derive interest and improvement from the subject discussed. It is besides a science well suited to the capacities of women. It is not one of parade, or display, it affords occupation and infinite variety, it demands no bodily strength, it can be pursued with advantage in retirement, it applies immediately to the useful and domestic purposes; and while the ingenuity of the most active mind may be exercised in it, there is no danger of inflaming the imagination, because the mind is intent upon *realities*; the knowledge that is acquired is exact, the results continually keep alive curiosity, and the pleasure of the pursuit is an ample reward for the trouble of the acquisition. I need not urge it further, for your father, who is so entirely acquainted with it in theory and practice, can fully bear testimony to what I assert.

I urge the study of mineralogy from the same

motives as botany, as the knowledge of it will further unfold to you the vastness, the beauty of the creation, and the beneficence and power of that Almighty Being whose divine skill is displayed in the misshapen stone and encrusted ore, equally as in the more beautiful operations of His hand.

Mechanics have contributed so much to the comfort and convenience of man, engages, from its usefulness, so much of the attention and conversation of those who wish well to their fellow beings, that I would by no means have my Mary ignorant of the first principles of it; for though it is unlikely she will ever be called to exercise her knowledge, yet she cannot visit a manufactory of any kind with the least interest, if she is unable to understand the meaning of the terms which her guide must use in describing the different parts of a machine; and as such visits are very interesting to those who appreciate properly their use to the comfort of every one, it will, I trust, be a sufficient stimulus not to neglect this branch of education.

The study of animated nature it appears unnecessary to recommend, as it is so peculiarly adapted to the curiosity and inclinations of youth.

If you possess the smallest desire, therefore, to become acquainted with the wonders of creation, you will require no persuasion to induce you to give a portion of your time to this inexhaustible source of amusement and instruction.

In the works of creation alone is found perfection; the contemplation of this perfection must produce delight. Endless pleasure to those who cultivate this taste, is to be derived from the endless variety which nature exhibits.

“ One Spirit—His

Who wore the platted thorns, with bleeding brows,
Rules universal nature.”

“ Happy who walks with Him! whom what he finds
Of flavour or of scent, in fruit or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the Sun,
Prompts with remembrance of A PRESENT GOD.”

Cowper.

The fossil, the vegetable, the animal world, all afford their boundless varieties, all their delightful studies. That you may acquire a taste for these delights, is the earnest wish of

Your affectionate Friend, &c.

LETTER XI.

ASTRONOMY.

THE subjects of my last letter naturally leads me, my dear Girl, to the sublime and elevating science I make the subject of this. It is one, above all others, calculated to prove to us the goodness, the wisdom, and the power of that Almighty Being, who created those innumerable worlds which shine resplendent in the heavens, and to elevate our minds far above the transitory and illusive pleasures of the present world, which forms but a speck in the midst of the stupendous planetary system, and justly may we exclaim at the view—"Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him." From heaven, thy dwelling-place, we may add, "Thou beholdest the minutest

work of thy hands, or we beings of a day would sink into nothing."

The mind of the being must be lost to all sensibility, who can view without reverence the immensity of space, filled with innumerable lights, suspended from on high, and moving with solemn and undeviating regularity at the behest of the Almighty. Can it be possible to contemplate a nocturnal sky without having the thoughts detached from the earth, and find the soul calmed from the tumult of human passions, rising above human anxieties? There the God of Creation sits sublime, clothed with the high attributes of perfect wisdom, and unsullied Majesty. The consolatory conviction forces itself on our minds, that this immutable Being, dwelling in light inaccessible, is as gracious as He is omnipotent; that, although surrounded by bright and pure intelligences, ever ready to obey his behests, yet is ever mindful of the smallest atoms of his creation, and whose superintending and preventing goodness is never ceasing, never diminished, and will endure for ever! Must not joy, gratitude, love, and admiration, animate the heart of all who thus contemplate the only object worthy of those exquisite emotions?

Cherish, my beloved Child, a transport like this; it will elevate your mind above the low pleasures of sense which debase our nature, and will animate you to an imitation of those graces and benevolent emanations so conspicuous in the dispensations of Providence.

“The more we know of the extent of nature we shall have a loftier conception of Him who sits in high authority over the concerns of so wide a universe; and is it not adding to the bright catalogue of his other attributes to say, that while magnitude does not overpower him, minuteness cannot escape him, and variety cannot bewilder him? and that at the very time while the Deity is abroad over the whole vastness of creation, there is not one particle of matter, there is not one single world, in that expanse which teems with them, that his eye does not discern as constantly and his hand does not guide us unerringly, and his spirit does not watch and care for as vigilantly as if it formed the one and exclusive object of his attention.” To this masterly illustration of the omnipresence of a beneficent Creator, I will add the beautiful

lines of *Thomson* as a conclusion to my letter on this subject.

“ Was every falt’ring tongue of man,
Almighty Father, silent in thy praise,
Thy works themselves would raise a general voice,
Ev’n in the depth of solitary wood,
By human foot untrod, proclaim thy pow’r.
And to the choir celestial thee resound
Th’ eternal *cause, support, and end* of all.”

With the tenderest affection, yours.

LETTER XII.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

THESE, my dear Mary, I shall divide into two classes, viz. the domestic, or useful, and the elegant; the intellectual have formed the subject of some of my former letters.

Economy demands our first attention:—By this I do not merely allude to pecuniary expences, but the art of conducting the affairs of that home in which a woman at once should place her pleasure and her pride; for it is her proper sphere of action. She is there the presiding spirit of a thousand nameless comforts, which, while she dispenses, she invariably must find her own highest happiness.

Many a heart which has been taken captive by a beautiful exterior, has been lost for want of that harmony of character which teaches the happy art of conducting with propriety and

neatness the concerns of that domestic scene where a husband ought always to find his chief attraction; to constitute it such, every thing should proceed without apparent effort, the good should be felt, but the springs which actuate the regularity of the machine should not be apparent: where this is neglected disgust ensues, and the careless or inattentive wife incurs the punishment, in the alienated confidence of the husband of her affections.

It is not necessary to become a practical cook, but I would have you perfectly acquainted with the *theoretical* knowledge of the art in general, and of the *practical* part of preparing those delicacies which are calculated to stimulate the palled appetite of sickness, and which are rendered delicious by being prepared and offered by the *hand of affection*: the heartfelt pleasure to be derived from this use of the culinary art, will repay a hundred-fold the trouble of the acquisition.

The due regulation of expences is also a necessary part of economy; and suffer me to

say, that if you wish to be generous, you must be economical.

Ease, hospitality, and frank benevolence, will mark your conduct as a mistress of a family, if you study to regulate your income: as a great means to render this art easy and familiar to you, observe it in the little expences of your youth, for it is the fountain of liberality and independence; and, by possessing economy, you will be enabled to be truly generous; generosity consisting not altogether in the value of the gift, but in the ease and pleasure with which it is conferred. Many young people claim great merit for their economy in making their own dress; I wish you by all means to do every thing you possibly can for yourself, but if (which I have seen very often the case) from this facility you are induced to attend too much to the fluctuations of whim and fashion, you had far better be without the boasted talent. Let your dress be ever modest, neat, and perfectly simple, equally removed from singularity and a too close adherence to fashion.

I would never recommend ornaments; youth and innocence are the most precious you can possess; and a taste for trinkets is very apt to degenerate into profuseness, and to induce expences which cannot be compatible with the calls of benevolence.

A perfect use of the first rules of arithmetic, and to write with facility and plainness, are two accomplishments I earnestly recommend to you, my dear Girl, as they are essentially requisite.

Adieu, my love.

LETTER XIII.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

THE second class of accomplishments, is the elegant; under which head are reading, music, writing, drawing, and dancing. The first of these, I hope, my dear Mary, you will cultivate with the greatest attention, as affording a most delightful fund of amusement to your friends, and rendering you a valuable companion. I forbear giving you any rules, as it would be inconsistent with the plan of my correspondence. I shall therefore only say a clear articulation, proper emphasis, comprehension of the subject, and *perfect attention* to it, are essential in order to read well.

A knowledge of the French language is now required, to constitute a good education; and, as it opens a wider source of knowledge and entertainment, and, by the study, renders you better

acquainted with the construction and idiom of your own language, may be pursued with advantage. Italian will not be found difficult of attainment, should your taste incline you to it.

As to music, I would not recommend it, unless you possess a decided taste for it; for to render it at all pleasing, or to attain any excellence in it, requires so much time that the sacrifice is not balanced by the acquisition; as, in the middle rank of life, it must necessarily preclude attention to more important pursuits, and the fulfilment of many duties.

Dancing tends to strengthen the frame, and improve the carriage; and is, indeed, an amusement so calculated for the liveliness of youth, that you will need no persuasion to acquire it. I think a sensible well-informed girl never appears more interesting than when her intelligent countenance is lighted up by the vivacity which this amusement inspires; and such a girl will never devote too much of her time to an amusement which ought strictly to be considered *only as such*.

Drawing I would by all means wish you to cultivate; nature may, and I hope, has given you a taste for this delightful accomplishment; cherish it with care, but even if she has not, be not discouraged, but make the essay, imagine not yourself defective in *any thing*, till you have made the trial. *Dr. Young* I think, has said "We cannot think too highly of our *nature*, or too lowly of *ourselves*." Drawing opens a source of rich entertainment, a delightful resource in the hours of retirement, and of power to beguile the hours of langour, sickness, and dejection. But let my dear Girl ever recollect, that accomplishments, of the elegant class, are to be but the secondary objects of her care; that the true end of them is not to display to the world, but as a resource in retirement, as a refuge from the frivolities of life, and as a means to render *home* attractive to her dear connections; that, by cultivating them, she will be rendered more susceptible of their several excellencies when displayed by others; while whatever knowledge she may acquire, if embellished with elegance and softened by modesty, cannot fail to add dignity and attraction to her character.

But, perhaps you will say, that, amongst all the modes I have recommended to occupy your time, I have omitted public amusements; yet from these I have no wish to exclude you; on the contrary, desire you to partake of them, lest you imagine they possess a charm, which, in reality, they do not. If you acquire a taste for the pursuits I have recommended, I am under no apprehension that your mind will ever know a vacuum sufficient to require a *large* portion of public amusements to fill it. Moderate participation, I am well assured, will be all you will wish for.

Believe me, my beloved Girl, you are most dear to the heart of your affectionate.

LETTER XIV.

CONVERSATION.

BOOKS, alone, will never form the character; it is conversation which must unfold, enlarge, and apply the use of them. Without this familiar comment, what you read may only fill your mind with fallacious models of character, and false notions of life. It is conversation with intelligent, sensible, and candid persons, which can alone develope what is obscure, correct false notions, and gently and almost imperceptibly raise the understanding, form the heart, and fit the taste.—*Dr. Young* says—

“As bees mix'd nectar draw from fragrant flowers,
So men from friendship, wisdom, and delight;
Twins tied by nature; if they part they die.
Hast thou no friend to set thy mind abroad?”

Good sense will stagnate. Thoughts shut up, want air,
And spoil like bales, unopen'd to the sun.

Had thoughts been all, sweet speech had been denied ;
Speech, thought's canal ! Speech, thought's criterion too ;

* * * * *

Thought too, delivered, is the more possest ;
Teaching we learn ; and, giving, we retain
The births of intellect ; when dumb forgot.

* * * * *

'Tis converse qualifies for solitude ;
As exercise for salutary rest—”

Some are of opinion that young people should be silent and reserved in company, but there is a wide difference between pertness and intelligence. Ever preserve modesty, and act naturally ; and you must, if your mind is improved, be agreeable ; learn to *think* correctly, and to *assume nothing* ; and you will ever be an interesting and pleasing companion ; while to the observant eye, the propriety with which you veil the mental resources you really possess, will add to the natural attractions of youth and modesty ; and you may, without fear, exercise that talent of speaking, which holds the first rank in the art of pleasing.

Ever pay the strictest attention to the conversation of others, for it is the most delicate kind of praise you can offer; if any subject is started in which you are able to bear a part, do so without affectation. Our sex are accused, and I am afraid but too justly, of suffering their conversation to dwell too much upon dress, fashion, and amusements: I trust my dear Girl will have richer sources from whence she may derive *her* conversation, and that it will ever be marked by that ease and elegance which results from clear and lively ideas, expressed with simplicity, truth, and candour, and improved by cultivation and reading. Let it ever be marked by sweetness and ingeniousness, and if you are unfortunately compelled to listen to a tale of slander, let your silence evince your disapprobation, unless in your power to disprove the calumny with coolness and firmness.

Think not, my Mary, that I mean to prohibit what is termed trifling in conversation, by no means; nothing is more agreeable, when kept under proper restriction; but levity and cheerfulness are far removed, the former is excited by

a weak mind and unfeeling heart, the last flows from a cultivated mind, at peace with itself, and a heart alive to the happiness of others. I have little doubt, my dear Girl will possess this understanding and this sympathy. I cannot wish her a more perennial spring of happiness.

Affectionately and truly, &c.

LETTER XV.

THE AFFECTIONS AND PASSIONS.

I HAVE, in a former letter, my dear Girl, urged the necessity of regulating the affections and controuling the passions; it remains for me to endeavour to explain to you the nature of those affections and passions, as far as my ability will allow me, in order to warn you of their influence. The subject is an important one, and I lament how inadequate I am to do it justice. I will, however, give you the result of my own experience, and the opinions of others, who have had greater opportunities of remarking their effects; and trust, that in the various situations and trials to which, in your progress through life, you may be exposed; *that* experience and *those* opinions may be useful to you.

The affections are divided into two classes, the benevolent and the malevolent: Oh may my

dearest Mary cherish with daily care the first, and never suffer the last to disorder her mind or agitate her heart!

I shall begin my subject with *politeness*: you may think it extraordinary that I should class this quality with the affections, but when I have, as well as I am able, defined *true politeness*, you may not think it misplaced among those qualities of the heart which endear us to our fellow-creatures, and constitute our own happiness.

A consideration for the feelings of others, and a *quick perception* of what those feelings are, under the different circumstances of life, constitutes, I think, true politeness, and those who possess it not, whatever be their rank, are vulgar.

Some people seem born with this quality, but it is in every ones power to acquire it. A good temper is necessary, to which must be added, in most instances, a good understanding. Humility is a grand essential in true politeness; for a mind contented to be known for what it really is, is

unembarrassed, and ever willing to concede to superior talent, and to every circumstance which does not affect its rectitude.

You thus perceive, my dear Girl, that the benevolent affections form the very ground-work of politeness. In fact it is benevolence in trifles, or the preference of others to ourselves in the continually passing occurrences of life. It is a perpetual attention (by habit rendered pleasing and easy) to the wants and wishes of those with whom we associate, and by which we either prevent the one, or favor the other.

Bowing, ceremonious formal compliments, can never be politeness, which is easy, natural, and apparently unstudied; and what can give this but a heart benevolent and ever attentive to the peculiar situation of those we are with.

The exercise of this amiable disposition, while it renders her beloved and esteemed, will communicate a lively pleasure to the heart of my beloved Pupil.

Adieu, ma chere.

LETTER XVI.

BENEVOLENCE AND GRATITUDE.

BENEVOLENCE has this peculiarity ; that the more we exercise it, the more pleasure we feel in the exercise. We invariably attach ourselves to the unfortunate object we comfort or relieve ; and what was at first an affection, becomes a delightful habit of the soul. A person who has once caused the tear of gratitude to flow, and can afterwards seek a sweeter pleasure, is not worthy of the feeling ; for this divine quality harmonizes the mind with every thing around, and feels itself most pleasingly connected with every living being.—Let my dear Girl attentively study that which is often neglected, viz. when she confers a favor to attend to those minute circumstances that stamp the benefits on a grateful mind, by gratifying its wishes, without wounding its feelings ; this is the true act of benevolence.

Gratitude is a most pleasing affection. Did we but consider how much it repays itself, it would not be so rare a quality as it is, and the number of hearts wounded by its contrary would be far less. It is excited by a lively sense of benefit received, and in its purity and strength is the powerful re-action of a well-disposed mind, upon whom benevolence has bestowed some important good, and immediately produces a personal affection towards the benefactor.

The grateful mind is impatient of a passive and silent reception of the blessing ; it cannot be restrained from acknowledging its obligations, either by expressions or deeds ; it considers every return in its power as an act of the strictest justice, and considers itself bound in honour as well as affection, either to repay or acknowledge the debt, as by a bond which cannot be cancelled. It chiefly desires to give pleasure to the benefactor, and to prove that the person benefited is not unworthy of the kind interest manifested. To secure and preserve the esteem of its benefactor becomes the first wish of a grateful heart, and which the greatest mind does not think

unworthy of its attention. Cherish, my dear girl, this delightful affection towards your fellow-creatures, nor let the many instances of the contrary you will meet with in your progress through life, chill the warmth of it in your own bosom; with an affectionate heart and enlightened intellect it will ever dwell.

To inculcate the exercise of this affection towards your Creator is surely unnecessary. What but gratitude have we to offer to God for all his benefits? To that God who

“ Not content

With every food to nourish man,
But makes all nature beauty to his eye,
And music to his ear.”

If from his works we turn to his word, we shall find the same inexhaustible goodness exercised to still nobler purposes, presenting the sweetest subjects for grateful meditation upon the divine source of all the benefits of nature and of grace we enjoy; from it flows cheerfulness and peace, confidence, comfort, and encouragement. Yes, surely gratitude must warm the

heart, must rise pure and spontaneous from the bosom which contemplates the mercy of the Almighty ; and if we thus contemplate the high attribute of the Divinity, shall we not learn gratitude to those of our fellow-beings who are made the instruments of his favor towards us ? What can be more natural, what can be more pleasing to a being, united on all sides with beings of kindred wants and kindred feelings ?

Adieu, my dear Girl.

You cannot judge of the warm interest I feel in your happiness, unless you could read the heart of

Your ever affectionate Friend, &c.

LETTER XVII.

CANDOUR.—RESERVE.

MY DEAR MARY,

I AM so strongly impressed with the necessity of your understanding the true meaning and proper application of these qualities, so sensible of their importance to your happiness, that I dread lest I should fail in defining them accurately.

I shall not trust altogether to my personal experience, which has abundantly proved to me that the above named amiable quality of candour may be carried to excess, but avail myself of the diffinition of others. In regard to candour in our opinions of others, the weakness of our own hearts should plead the apology for the errors of our fellow-creatures, and the consciousness of our own frailty inspire us with that

tenderness to others which we shew to ourselves; and teach us to look upon their faults with as much indulgence as we do our own. Whence the propensity to think the worst of others, but the neglect of examining the springs of our own actions, and the thousand nameless influences the circumstances of our life exercise over the heart?

Let us but impartially examine how often our conduct falls short of our best intentions, of our best-formed resolutions; let us but study the weakness of our heart, the impatience of our will, and the waywardness of our temper, we shall then learn to think charitably of errors, or their appearance in the conduct of others: perhaps, did we know those we censure, we should judge them with less rigor; for we might then perceive the conflicts, the hesitations which preceded the committed error, we might then perceive the temptations, the opportunities which conducted to it, and the remorse, the misery which followed its commission; and, instead of too severe condemnation, we should learn to bless that God whose preventing grace

may have saved *us* from the precipice from which another has been hurled! I have dwelt upon this subject because I have too often known a character devoted to public obloquy, by being the subject of a hasty judgment and uncandid representation; and some, who from imputed error have been precluded from the exercise of those sterling qualities of heart and mind which distinguished them from their fellow men, and which, but for the voice of calumny, might have flowed with rich and fertilizing streams for the benefit of their fellow creatures.

But whatever I *can* say must fall short of the following beautiful and just definition of this virtue—"Candour consists not in fairness of speech, but in fairness of heart: it may want the blandishments of external courtesy, but supplies its place by humane and generous liberality of sentiment: its manners are unaffected, and its professions cordial. Exempt on the one hand from the dark jealousy of a suspicious mind, it is no less removed on the other from that easy credulity which is imposed upon by every specious pretence.

It is perfectly consistent with a knowledge of the world, and with a due attention to our own safety. In the various intercourse we are obliged to carry on with the world, suspicion, to a certain degree, is a necessary guard: it is only when it exceeds the bounds of prudent caution that it degenerates into vice. There is a proper mean between undistinguishing credulity and universal jealousy, which a sound understanding desires, and the candid person studies to preserve. He makes allowance for the mixture of evil with good, which is to be found in every human character. He expects none to be faultless; and is unwilling to believe there is any without some commendable quality. In the midst of many defects, he can discern a virtue, Under the influence of personal resentment he can be just to the merit of an enemy. He never lends an open ear to the defamatory reports, and dark suggestions which are circulated with so much avidity amongst the censorious. He is not hasty to judge, and requires full evidence before he will condemn. As long as an action can be ascribed to different motives, he holds it no mark of sagacity to attribute it to the worst.

Where there is just ground for doubt, he keeps his judgment undecided; and, during the period of suspense, leans to the most charitable construction. When he must condemn, he condemns with regret, and without those aggravations which the severity of others add to the crime. He listens calmly to the apology of the offender, and readily admits every extenuating circumstance which equity can suggest. For one wrong opinion he does not infer the subversion of all sound principle, nor from one bad action conclude that all regard to conscience is overthrown. He commiserates human frailty, and judges of others according to the principles by which he would think it reasonable they should judge of him."

I believe, my dear Girl, I need not apologize to you for this long quotation, as its excellence must make it admired, and the truth of it cannot be too firmly imprinted on your heart. It leaves me but little to say respecting the virtue it so well describes; but, suffer me to remind you, that our divine Guide has condescended to direct our judgment upon our fellow creatures, their failings and their weakness.

“He among you who is without guilt, cast the first stone at her.” “There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” “Because she hath loved much, much shall be pardoned to her.”

In as far as this virtue regards ourselves, it may be considered as the best safeguard of rectitude and peace of mind; a naturally open heart must be miserable under concealment, which imperceptibly, but surely leads us to the labyrinths of falsehood and error; and in departing from that confidence due to those whose affection and experience might have extricated us from difficulty, we assuredly lose that self-confidence of deserving protection and regard, which is our support, and next to that of heaven, enables us to meet the vicissitudes of life; nay, we *forfeit that divine support itself*, by departing from the integrity which candour would have preserved.

Reserve.—After the above, it is almost unnecessary to mention reserve. The great pleasure of conversation and society arises from a certain *correspondence* of sentiments and opinions: but

this cannot be obtained, unless there is a free communication of them: this, reserve forbids. The open and candid cannot fail of pleasing, if possessed of good temper and the courage to utter their real sentiments as they feel them, and because they feel them. It is this unreserved sincerity which makes the prattle of a child agreeable.—*Dr. Johnson*, I think, has said—“Incommunicative taciturnity neither imparts nor invites friendship, but reposes on a stubborn self-sufficiency, self-centred; and neglects the interchange of that social officiousness by which we are habitually endeared to one another.” But a reserved person, though seldom a very amiable character, has rarely any reason to repent of his caution; he is not much praised or beloved, but he is as little hated or blamed. He seems to feel coldly towards us, and we feel coldly towards him.

Perhaps the rule we ought to prescribe to ourselves should be, inviolable secrecy in important affairs, or in the secrets of others intrusted to our fidelity, in ordinary occurrences a prudent reserve, and in the connections of the heart, unlimited confidence: this last is not, I

well know, without its dangers, but I have myself, and wish you rather to risk them by observing it, than to deprive yourself of the pleasure resulting from it. I will not conceal from you that both candour and reserve will be difficult to observe, consistent with your own happiness. During your progress through life, events may arise which may make you repent the one, and close up your heart with the other. Think not, however, I mean before the time to destroy those happy illusions which make every object delightful in early youth, and which are amongst the most precious sacrifices which simplicity has to make to experience; but I cannot deceive you by concealing that candour and ingenuousness are too often in danger, from the unfeeling and the treacherous.

That these instances of perverted nature may be rare to the knowledge of my dear Girl, is the fervent wish of her true friend, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

FRIENDSHIP.

THE attachments of the heart form a most interesting inquiry, as almost the whole of the happiness or misery of our life depends upon them.

The first affection felt by a young and ardent mind, is friendship. I fear it would be useless to tell you what mistakes I have made in the choice of my early friends; how much I have been deceived in believing they felt an equal share of it as filled my own warm heart. It is melancholy to consider that the judgment can only be formed by experience, that the feelings too often anticipate it, and that in order

to pass a *right judgment* it is necessary to have *unbiassed* affections.

Our sex are thought peculiarly susceptible of the tender affections, yet are accused of being inferior to the other in friendship.

It is said, and perhaps with some truth, that if one woman be the friend of another, self-love and rivalry interpose, and change their sentiments, or apprise them they are liable to change. I am afraid, generally considered, the accusation is a just one, yet I think there are very many exceptions. Friendship is brought forth by esteem, and nourished by virtue and confidence ; two affectionate hearts cannot be acquainted without pleasure—without wishing for, and seeking the company of each other—without cooperating in promoting each others welfare and happiness. It has for its object, the interchange of good and kind offices, without the anticipation of individual interest, beyond the pleasure of serving each other, and independent of rank, fortune, or other adventitious conside-

rations. This esteem—these sentiments acquire strength, firmness, and consistency, by a communication of ideas, tastes, and wishes; it is by these we feel the advantage of having a friend, for it is in the bosom of friendship that while pleasure is shared, it is augmented and extended; that pain and grief is allayed and softened; it is with a friend we can express our feelings without fear. True friendship keeps alive the delicacy of feeling, expands a generous soul, preserves a just and equitable mind, and renders the disposition upright, pliable, and tender.

“Celestial Happiness, when'er she stoops
To visit earth, one shrine the goddess finds,
And *one* alone, to make her sweet amends
For absent Heav'n—the *bosom of a friend*;
Where heart, meets heart, reciprocally soft,
Each other's pillow to repose divine.

* * * * *

Friendship delicate as dear,
Of tender violations apt to die?
Reserve will wound it, and Distrust destroy.

* * * * *

Judge before friendship, then confide till death.”

Young.

This sentiment has no dependence on the senses; the soul alone receives the impression, and it loses nothing of its value by yielding itself to several at the same time.

I well know I have not given you an exaggerated picture; but if you will reflect upon the necessity of these qualities, and the difficulty of finding them united, you will not be surprised that true friendship is so rare; but yet these qualities do not exclusively belong to the sex who arrogate to themselves the superiority in this affection. If it should be your good fortune to meet with one or more individuals, remember it is intimate confidence that must govern all your conduct towards such a friend. When a real esteem, well established and *reciprocal*, admits of your abandoning yourself to the feelings it will excite, let perfect candour be your guide; for you must ever recollect, that the end of true friendship is the good of its object, and the cultivation of right principles in two hearts emulous of virtue, and desiring to perpetuate their society beyond the grave. Never let a mistaken self-love induce you to conceal a fault

from your friend, for if you wish to derive the advantages I mention from having a *true one*, you will never swerve from sincerity.

Remember, my dearest Girl, that a just mind sees its mistakes, and avows them; acknowledges its errors, and renounces them; to entrust our faults to our friend, is the best way of ensuring his heart; for by frankness, truth, and simplicity, we may merit the confidence of a feeling heart. But while I press upon you the blessing of possessing a friend, let me remind you you are not to expect perfection; you may not meet that warmth of affection you may yourself feel; you may even suppose yourself treated coolly, nay, ungratefully.

But pause well, ere you admit jealousy or distrust to trouble the repose you found in the bosom of your chosen friend; they are the bane of friendship as well as happiness, whose very essence is esteem and affiance. Let no upbraidings escape you; tenderness is not so expressed: it is indeed deeply sensible of unkindness, but it cannot be *unkind*, it may be weakened by ingra-

itude, but it cannot be converted into hatred: where we have long loved, we do not easily cease to love.

Let me again repeat, so many qualities are necessary, to constitute friendship, that you are not to be surprised if you do not meet with it. That which the world dignifies by the false application of the term, is a mere league of convenience, profit, or interest; and declines or closes altogether, when either party, from whatever cause, becomes in arrear.

Women, who appear so well calculated for this affection, from their natural sensibility, and the ingenuousness and delicacy bestowed upon them by Providence, are rendered but too frequently incapable of it, from their education; which, exhausting itself on trifles, and fostering all the little passions by superiority of dress and admiration, more worthy objects of excellence are neglected. Hence is it astonishing that if competitors arise in these frivolous objects of emulation, that every thing contrary to feeling and friendship is excited, in the unimproved

hearts and uncultivated minds of such young persons?

Believe me, my own dear Girl, it is only by cherishing the mental powers, informing the understanding, and by regulating and amending the heart, that the affection of true friendship can exist for our own benefit and pleasure, and for that of our chosen hearts' companion.

I cannot quit this subject without entreating you to consider the importance of forming a right friendship from the influence it must have on your own character. When we love any one, we wish to please, the taste which our friend has for virtue, excites and strengthens ours; the desire of making ourselves amiable, makes us study the means of becoming so; we wish to make ourselves *worthy* of our friend.

These are the advantages of this dear connection, my Child; if the essential qualities of it were more studied, and more strongly felt, there would assuredly be more virtue, and consequently more happiness. I will add, that in a brother,

you may ever find a friend; cherish this fraternal friendship, and you will possess a source of happiness, which, next to that derived from the conscious presence of a protecting God, will support you under every trial appointed to discipline your soul for a better and a brighter world.

Adieu, my dearest, &c.

LETTER XIX.

VANITY.

THE next subject of our consideration is, those passions of our nature, implanted by our Creator, for great and wise purposes; but which, suffered to rise unchecked, become noxious to the soul, and the bane of our virtue and happiness.

Vanity is a passion peculiarly attributed to our sex; like most other unqualified assertions, it is not altogether just; we are not considering the *degree* in each sex, but its operation upon the mind and character. I believe it to be a great motive of action with *human nature*, and conducive to our happiness and benefit, but it is one which requires the most vigilant care to regulate; nor do I know a passion which gains so silent and insidious an empire over the heart, as the actions it produces appear to proceed from the most laudable motives.

Generally speaking, it is the foible of superficial and weak minds, who think more of their attainments than of their deficiencies; yet it is frequently founded on the excessive love of praise in those who possess a considerable degree of merit. The vanity which is usually ascribed to women is produced by a supposed superiority of beauty, dress, admiration, fortune, or other adventitious circumstances; but I must think the sex who make the accusation, foster this passion by their general conversation with women; rarely studying to raise it above these circumstances. Did they pursue a different line of conduct over a sex they may so easily influence, how much might they effect? The men undoubtedly have it in their power to give solidity to the female character, without destroying the charms of timidity, modesty, and gentleness.

But vanity is by no means even in the female heart, confined to the qualities I have named. If a woman is not possessed of beauty, rank, or fortune, she may be vain of her real or imaginary mental strength and acquirements; and perhaps this is by far more dangerous to the health of

the soul; particularly if she has not had the advantage of a knowledge of the world, as it lays her mind open to false opinions, induces her to place too much reliance on her own strength, and too often finally involves her in a labyrinth of error from which she is unable to extricate herself. But a temperate desire to be loved and to please, is so far from being a proof of vanity, that it indicates the contrary; for reasonably to wish for the good opinion of others evinces that you do not overvalue yourself. Let my dear Girl watch with unceasing care, the rise of this passion in her heart, and check it ere it arrives to an undue height. I have observed very many instances of its baneful power over minds, which, but for it, would have been fruitful of virtue, and have communicated delight and service to mankind.

Believe me, my beloved Girl, your ever tender
Friend, &c.

LETTER XX.

PRIDE AND ANGER.

MY BELOVED GIRL,

I CLASS these passions together, as the latter is very often produced by the former; and I am the more anxious to define them, as pride is sometimes even boasted of by persons who would blush to acknowledge the empire of any other passion; and anger is often mistaken in its object and carried to excess.

Perhaps you will think it unnecessary to be warned against this frightful passion, it being almost as disgraceful for a woman to be subject to violent anger, as to be inebriated.

There are various kinds of pride. What we usually deem such, is that exalted idea of our state, qualifications, or attainments, which induces

us to look down upon our supposed inferiors with contempt and derision. When this elevated idea of ourselves becomes a motive to avoid or despise any thing mean and unworthy, and leads to right conduct, it is then only it deserves the name of *laudable pride*. When it is manifested by an ostentatious display of wealth, station, or accomplishments, it is with propriety termed a *vain* pride. When carried to still greater excess, so as to look down with disdain upon others, equal, perhaps superior, it has received the just title of *insufferable* pride.

You, my dear Girl, will readily distinguish which sentiment of pride it is *alone allowable* for you to cherish; the others, it has justly been observed, "were not made for man." Consider for one moment, my child, how soon may the being who prides himself upon the possession of those things which inflate his heart, be deprived of them. Often reflect, how precarious are the blessings, the advantages of life, and I do not fear, improper pride will ever find a place in your bosom. And believe me, that one of the companions of happiness is humility; it is this

which adorns and really *exalts* the human character.

When I speak of the passion of anger, I do not confine myself to what is usually stiled such, viz. violence of invective and recrimination; this is so disgraceful to a woman, so inconsistent in a reasonable being, that I am sure I need not caution my dear Girl against it. Anger never arises to this height but when we are conscious of blame, and when we believe we have laid ourselves open to contempt. Whenever, therefore, you feel yourself very angry, suspect yourself in the wrong, and resolve to examine your heart, before you accuse the supposed offender.

But in case of real injuries, which call for and justify resentment, there is a noble and generous sort of anger, (very remote from passion,) constituting a proper and necessary part of our nature, and which has in it nothing sinful or degrading. Never can I wish you to be insensible to the invasion of this, for if you feel it not, you must be equally incapable of being properly affected by benefits; but virtue forbids even this

anger to exceed the magnitude of the offence. Virtue requires anger to be of short duration, where offences are not permanent—strictly prohibits it from seeking revenge, or from sinking into habitual hatred or malignity; and where the character and conduct of the offending party are changed by repentance and reformation, virtue then absolutely requires us to pardon.

I must again repeat, that a knowledge of our own heart, and its abounding frailties, can alone teach us to allow for the weaknesses of others. If my dear Mary will earnestly supplicate the former of her heart, to disclose to her its secret faults, and vouchsafe the aid of his spirit to correct them, she will never be surprised into passion, will never evince undue anger, will never harbour unjust resentment in her bosom, which will thus be rendered peaceful—serene—calm. That it may ever prove so, is the ardent wish of her affectionate Friend.

LETTER XXI.

ENVY AND CENSORIOUSNESS

MAY this hateful passion, and its equally hateful companion, never find place in the bosom of my beloved child! Envy, the direct contrary to benevolence, virtue knows not. It is excited by anger at the good of others, which we are incapable of enjoying—heightened by a false idea of our own merit, and a tacit opinion that Providence or the world has been unjust. It hates to hear the virtue, the wealth, the happiness of another mentioned; it soon, if suffered to remain in the heart, becomes malice, and attempts by words or actions to destroy or diminish the good it cannot participate.

Censoriousness is the general term for this malice. Think you, can it exist in a benevolent heart, or cultivated mind?

It dwells with a satisfaction peculiarly its own, upon the foibles, the passions, the persons, and the fortunes of its victims. It eagerly transmits from house to house the slanderous tale, each time adding something from its malignant heart; it attributes every word and action to some sinister motive; in short, judging from its own darkened mind and depraved feelings, it finds no good.

It is with the deepest concern I tell you, my innocent Girl, that this picture is not drawn by spleen or disgust, but from too many dark originals; and I fear you will not attain the age of your warning friend without proving the truth of the portrait. That you may be aware of the dreadful resemblance, is the earnest prayer of that friend.

After the description I have given, I have no fear you will endeavour to copy it, for its deformity is only to be seen, to be ever after shunned by an upright and generous heart. We should not see this baneful passion so often disgrace our sex, if they would furnish themselves with more just

objects of observation and sentiment than the faults and failings of those around them. Let my dear Girl learn, when she meets with such characters, how necessary it is to guard herself from the contagion of their example, if she would preserve her heart from guile, her disposition from severity, and her mind from disorder. Let her, from the knowledge that such *do* exist, use double diligence in the culture of candour, sweetness, humility, and *self-correction*.

If we attended to what is amiss in ourselves we should have little leisure to remark on the conduct of others. To find out one fault in ourselves, is a far more valuable discovery than to detect ten in another.

Adieu, my dearest.

LETTER XXII.

SENSIBILITY.

THERE are so many counterfeits of the quality which forms the subject of my present letter, and it has been in so many instances perverted from its genuine meaning, *that the term itself has* been brought into disgrace; yet it is in its simple beauty, one of the greatest ornaments of our sex, as well as the source of our most amiable virtues. True sensibility is the offspring of a strong mind, fully conscious that its powers were not intended by a beneficent Being to remain inactive, but to be exerted for the good of suffering humanity. It is no sooner excited by a detail, or the view of this suffering, than with a total forgetfulness of self, it with promptitude calls forth the whole energy of the soul for the relief of the sufferer. This quality, when of genuine worth, is ever accompanied by fortitude, which in the greatest calamity, does not forsake it; for as suffering first awakened the feeling, it considers *that suffering* cannot be relieved

without the exertion of fortitude, thus the very excess of the one, increases the force of the other.

This view of sensibility is most beautifully exemplified in the Scriptures. The parable of the good Samaritan delightfully illustrates that sympathy of our nature, which induces us to claim kindred with calamity, that we may sooth its pangs, and encourage its hopes.

Those who fly from the sight of sorrow and of anguish, because the view excites painful feelings in their bosom, must not arrogate to themselves the possession of sensibility; they must rather term themselves selfish, and beware, lest the indulgence should close up their hearts to the purest feelings implanted in our nature.

Ask the person whose heart is cheered—whose afflictions, if not removed, have been mitigated by a proper exercise of sensibility—who is entitled to the praise of possessing it *in truth*; such an one, or one who shed abundance of tears, who lamented his fate, but who never

stretched out a hand to relieve; or, in the emphatic language of the parable alluded to, "passed on the other side?" The inference is plain to the most untutored mind.

Sensibility, as far as concerns ourselves alone, is liable to equal perversion, and certainly to far superior mischiefs. It may be so misdirected and distempered as to bewilder us in the paths of error, if it does not hurry us to the precipice of guilt. It may be so refined as to render us ill calculated to meet the disappointments, to bear the coarseness, and unfeeling judgments to which our situation in life may expose us.

This morbid sensibility, this delicacy of feeling, I would earnestly exhort my dear Girl vigilantly to guard against; many are the avenues of sorrow connected with it.—Perhaps you may be constituted by nature with acute perceptions, and strong passions; these may very easily produce the sensibility I name.

Supplication for divine aid, regular and constant occupation, in which the powers of the

understanding are exercised, are its only correctives; for by these the force of external impressions will be diminished, we are reminded of their vanity, and the imagination will be kept under restraint.

But it is not alone in the dark shades of distress, and in the excess of gloomy imagination that sensibility is exercised: It gives us a double share in the happiness and prosperity of others, and enables us to partake, with lively interest, every good which occurs to those around us: it enables us to view the beauties of Creation, the vicissitudes of the seasons, with a relish unknown to the selfish. It contemplates the enjoyments of the sensitive creation; and, by interesting our benevolence lends new charms to the bounties of the Almighty surrounding us on every side.

“ Are they not *his* by a peculiar right;
And by an emphasis of interest *his*,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy:
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind,
With worthy thoughts of that unweari'd love,
That plann'd, and built, and still upholds a world,
So cloth'd with beauty, for rebellious man? *Cowper.*

There is a delicate and modest reserve of behaviour proceeding from nice sensibility, united to a dignified pride, which distinguishes a mind that trembles at a moral, while it scorns a physical evil; but this is not to be found where sensibility is unregulated and uncontroled; in this case the whole character will be destitute of consistency, continually shifting its actions, from the influence of transient states of feeling, whose evanescent and treacherous nature will be proved under important trials.

Sensibility to give worth to the character, to be the perfume which sheds its fragrance on our severer virtues, must be sustained by reason, and founded upon principle.—It is an observation of that virtuous and great man *Neckar*, that “There must be a conductor to the electric fluid, and one is equally wanted to the ethereal flame of the imagination.” This observation is perfectly appropriate to the subject under review.

Study therefore, my dear Girl, to obtain that command over your sensibility that it may never

rise above the pleasing participation in the joys, or the sympathy with, and the active relief of your suffering fellow beings, which I have endeavoured to enforce upon your attention; and you will assuredly feel that internal peace, a greater blessing than which I cannot wish you.

Adieu.

LETTER XXIII.

LOVE.

IF our sex are thought inferior to the other in the affection of friendship, every one agrees in allowing their superiority in the passion of love, the strongest of our nature ; and if felt so powerfully, it becomes the more necessary to guard against its admission, before judgment has given it its sanction. Perhaps advice is of little service upon the subject, but if ever it can be useful, it must be before the heart becomes the seat of an exclusive attachment, and puts to silence its guards, reason and principle. When passion speaks, the still voice of reason is, alas ! but seldom heard, impressions once formed cannot without anguish be erased in a soul endued with sensibility, and hence a cool and rational choice is too often precluded. Fix therefore in your mind, my dear Girl, every rule

of duty and prudence, which, with a heart unfettered, you may think reasonable. It is a point of the greatest consequence, that whereon depends not only the temporal, but the eternal happiness of yourself, and the being who is the object of your regard, whose influence may confirm every virtue, or blight the fair promise of your youth. Oh! may you never know the unutterable misery which strong affections, unguided by discretion, involve so many of our sex!

It is to be deeply lamented that we now rarely meet with that tender, delicate, and ennobling sentiment, formed on the real merit of the object beloved, aspiring only to the happiness of pleasing, fearing to offend by its own ardour, and scarcely presuming to indulge itself with hope; which thinks itself dishonored by a thought or a sentiment the severest virtue may not avow. Yet a young, inexperienced, ardent, and susceptible mind, is too apt to imagine, that this love exists in every object that pleases her fancy; she easily raises him to that standard she has erected in her own bosom, and number-

less are the wretched victims to this delusion of their own hearts. Far be it, however, from me to say, that this *genuine love* is no longer to be met with. I trust it yet is ; and if you should meet with such, and are yourself the object of it, you will unquestionably enjoy the greatest earthly happiness ; but never, my dear child, engage your affections, even to one thus deserving of them, unknown to those who have a right to your confidence, on a point so materially affecting your happiness and virtue ; your parents have a claim, of which no consideration can justify the neglect. Numberless dangers threaten our sex, from their inexperience, and the ardency of their feelings in this passion. I must repeat, that such love as I have named is very rare, but the *counterfeits* are many, and so good, that it is not possible for an artless mind to discover them.

If you love virtue, you will indeed never give your love unless you can feel esteem ; you will be in no danger of attaching yourself to an openly vicious character ; but your innocent heart may alas, be easily ensnared by an artful one.

When *we feel*, the men *calculate*, while *they study*, we abandon ourselves with trusting love; from this danger nothing can save you but the protection of heaven, earnestly implored, diffidence of your own strength, and the experience of others, seriously reflected upon.

But our danger is not confined to the artful. There are men whose minds and hearts are open to the most refined and tenderest feelings of humanity, incapable of any thing unjust, and with the keenest sense of what is honourable; yet, from the ardency of their temper, and the weakness of their will, sometimes hurry into crimes repugnant to the better sentiments of their own hearts. It is from such, that our virtue and happiness are peculiarly in danger; and the more so, as the virtuous feelings of these individuals never shine more brightly than after these lamentable and transient eclipses. By this means they excite an interest, and insensibly steal into our affections. Pity also powerfully excites to love. You may be placed in situations to call forth this sentiment. The gratitude which this

pity inspires, is accompanied by the most favourable sentiments of the disposition of the sympathizer, and produces in an affectionate heart, a predeliction.

It may be detected by this criterion :—If your mind loves to dwell upon the circumstances which gave it being ; if it recalls each incident past—anticipates those that may arrive ;—if the expression of these feelings glows with the subject, and you dwell upon it with pleasure, you may then believe a passion to disturb its serenity, has entered your bosom. May you never know the pang inflicted by the unworthiness of the object of your attachment ; for the heart is long, very long, in receiving the conviction forced upon it by reflection. Affection still lingers in the bosom, long after esteem has taken its everlasting flight, nor does it finally forsake it, till the heart has experienced the most exquisite degree of anguish in the contest. Be it then your care, my beloved Girl, to preserve the stream of your affections pure, and unsullied ; and if heaven ordains to extend your sphere of usefulness,

and to increase your happiness by granting you the blessing of a reciprocal affection from a congenial mind; let not the virtues and attainments which first gained his heart, be suffered to languish by inaction; think not you have accomplished the end of your being, by *gaining* a heart, but let it be your unceasing care to *retain* it, by assiduously cultivating those qualities which rendered you attractive.—Remember, in giving your affections, you have entered into a solemn engagement to contribute, as far as in your power, to *increase* the happiness and the welfare of a being whom you have professed to love above every other. If you have ever felt pleasure in the pursuits I have recommended in the foregoing letters, how much will their value rise in your estimation, when you recollect, that *by them* you will be enabled to enhance the pleasures, and form the happiness of a second self. Home is the female theatre of action; it is there alone its merit can be ascertained, it is there alone the interior graces are called forth, which shrink beneath the gaze of the world, but expand in the warmth of a husband's smile, expand in health and beauty.

" 'Tis yours to elevate, 'tis yours to bless:
 Your interest *one with his*; *your hopes the same*.
 Fair peace on earth, in death undying fame—
 And bliss in worlds beyond——"

Are you a mother? the value of your intellectual acquirements still rises; for hence will you be qualified for the delightful task—"To teach the young idea how to shoot," to form the disposition of the fair plants which rise from so dear a parental stem.

Whence is it, that with all the capability of happiness derivable from this endeared connection, that it is often seen the direct reverse? It is because the intent of it is too often forgotten by those who enter into the solemn responsibility it involves. Entered without reflection, with little knowledge of disposition, and with tempers unwilling to allow for the weaknesses and faults of each other, peevishness, passion, mutual recrimination, and perhaps, above all, *indifference*, render this state, capable of such exalted delights, a scene of irksome dullness, of wayward bickerings, of cruel upbraidings, and of cold disgust.

May heaven avert from you, my dear Mary, the horrors of such a state; and should the Providence of God think fit to limit your enjoyments to a single life, let your cheerfulness, your gentleness, your compassion, render you a blessing to your relatives, and be assured, many occasions remain in your power to produce happiness to yourself.

“Fear not that virtue shall neglected live,
 Neglected die, if woman's heart be cold,
 And cautious to engage. Wait for the man
 Who merits much; and if none such appear,
 (For 'tis a world that scarce deserves your love,)
 Then live unwedded, and unwedded die,
 Scorn the contemptuous sneer of little minds,
 Of wives who feel the yoke, and forward maids,
And dare be happy tho' you live alone.” *Hurdis.*

The theme I have chosen is as inexhaustible as it is important, but as observation can alone render you able to judge of the truth of my assertions, I will not tire you by further prosecuting the subject, but conclude with the most unfeigned prayer that you may never experience the agonies of a hopeless or misplaced attachment, but that you may, by your virtues and attainments gain a heart worthy of your own,

and having contributed to the happiness of each other on earth, may your fond affection be confirmed and rendered eternal in a future state of existence.

“Love refines

The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat

In reason, and is judicious; is *the scale*

By which to heav'nly love thou may'st ascend;

Not sunk in carnal pleasure——”

Milton.

My heart expands with the thought, that such
may be the lot of my darling Girl.

Adieu.



CONCLUDING LETTER.

I HAVE now concluded a pleasing task, my beloved Mary. It is the result of my experience and reflection, and though my field of observation has been limited, it has been sufficiently extended to assure you, I have not advanced an assertion, without an entire conviction of its truth.

The virtues I have enforced are all perfectly practicable; the employments, the accomplishments equally so, to a diligent and active mind. The Affections will prove their own reward, if with the Passions, they are vigilantly guarded. But I have not deceived you by saying it requires no effort to be virtuous; all things worthy of attainment, both in the moral and natural world, must be won by attention and diligence.

I have made religion the basis of my plan, for futile indeed is human reason without its aid! The lessons I have learned in the school of life have been severe; may you, by reading the reflections which have resulted, be warned, with-

out encountering the sorrow experienced by your friendly monitor. If I am denied the blessing of witnessing the full expansion of that flower, I have with tender interest watched in its bud, you will receive this little volume as a memorial of my affection, and offer up your innocent prayers to the All-merciful Being that we may meet in his presence, and that I may be enabled humbly to say, "I have endeavoured, under the influence of Almighty grace, to contribute to the purity, innocence, and virtue of this angel."

I feel the most painful sensations in bidding you adieu, my darling child. Let faith and hope encourage me that it may not be an eternal one!



CONCLUDING LINES.

Should the weak effort of a mind,
 To which Heav'n grants a feeble ray,
But aid my Mary truth to find,
 And guide her inexperienced way:

Should it her little tender bark,
 From the dark rocks of error save;
Or like a faithful pilot mark,
 Where rage the passion's stormy wave:

Should it direct her youthful sight,
 To the unerring pole-star's beam;
By which to steer her course aright,
 Down life's uncertain rapid stream:

My trembling heart again will feel,
 Of chastened joy the balmy pow'r;
Which shall the wounds of sorrow heal,
 And tranquilize life's closing hour.

And when my pulses throb no more,
 And nature yields to death's decree,
Oh! may my spirit hover o'er,
 And Mary's guardian angel be!

Aphorisms.

“The Greeks had a happy custom of marking the margin of their books opposite to any passage which particularly struck them; this mark was generally the initial of the Greek term *useful*, and the collection afterwards made of these distinguished passages they called by a synonymous appellation.” *Observer.*

“Every thing he read he compared with similar passages which occurred within his own observation, whence he made reflections, and regulated his conduct.” *Life of Rienzi.*

“Discoursing is like planting a tree—the success of which is precarious; but *adages* resemble the sowing a seed, which strikes a surer and deeper root.”

De Crui.

APHORISMS.

APPLICATION.—To a determined spirit, scarcely any thing will be deemed unattainable.

Application is all that is necessary, but that is much more frequently wanting than ability.

We do not, unhappily, feel it ourselves, but idleness is the infirmity, to which, above all others, we are most apt to yield without resistance. How often in truth does it subdue our best resolutions. This inert tranquility of spirit when indulged becomes a malignant supineness, which lulls and cheats us into sluggish procrastination.

ACTION.—“ Action is really the life, happiness, and *rest* of the mind.

Promptitude of action is the consequence of clear judgment and well-defined principles.

BENEVOLENCE.—The performance of benevolent actions, however small, may produce

effects so beneficial as to mock calculation, and in ways beyond the reach of human conjecture, and at times when expectation is dead;—how much encouragement then have we to practice it to the utmost of our power?

CHARITY.—“When we obey the commands of Him who told of the Samaritan binding up the wounds of the stranger, he did not say, enquire of his virtue *first*; but *behold his misery, and relieve it.*” *Porter.*

“It is the duty of every person above poverty to live in such a manner, as to be able to afford some relief to others.” *Crespigny.*

DUTY.—“In the path of duty there is no uncertainty to fear; and no satiety, for the charms of virtue are immortal. Sometimes we may regret other pleasures, but when the heart is at peace with itself, it can remember the disappointment of its fondest hopes without bitterness. If it reflects on the happiness it cannot enjoy, it is with a tender feeling, which makes up, in a great degree, for the blessing denied.”

Freely from De Stael.

EXAMINATION SELF.—“ If we wish to preserve our hearts pure, we must not shrink from self-examination; we must conquer the repugnance we feel of acknowledging to ourselves the bad sentiments which lie concealed in our bosoms, before they usurp over it a supreme dominion.”

De Stael.

FACULTIES.—“ It was not for our selfish benefit that so many noble faculties were bestowed upon us; they were given for promoting the intentions of Providence, by checking evil, and doing good to the beings of his creation.”

Freely from De Stael.

GRATITUDE.—“ They who possess the *power* ought always to feel the *inclination*, and ought never to omit the *opportunity* of shewing attentions to those from whom they have received them.”

Crespigny.

GENEROSITY. — “ The genuine kind is implanted in the mind, takes its root there, tinctures every sentiment, blends itself with every action, and its possessor can never foster

illiberality, parsimony, or any other mean propensity.”

“The spurious sort has no root in the soul, and only accidentally shews itself upon the ostentatious occasions where it may deceive, though it can easily be detected by a scrutinizing eye.” *Crespigny.*

HUMILITY.—“One of the companions of happiness is humility. He who sows in humility, reaps in honor; humility being the companion of wisdom, as vanity and presumption are the companions of folly.”

IMPROVEMENT MORAL.—Moral improvement ought to be the end of all our pursuits, and of all our exertions; and while we endeavor to increase our store of knowledge, let us also exert ourselves to add to the number of our virtues.

INGRATITUDE.—“If thou hast the brow to endure the name of traitor, perjured, or oppressor, yet cover thy face when ingratitude is thrown at thee; if that degenerate vice possess thee, hide thyself in the shadow of thy shame, and pollute not noble society.!”

KNOWLEDGE SELF.—"The knowledge of ourselves consists as much in knowing what we *are not* as what we *are*, and to understand this we have but one criterion, and *one book* of reference." *Hawkins.*

LEVITY.—"Levity in principle will soon lead to levity in morals."

LIE.—"A lie debases the heart, and unfits it for the culture of great and generous virtues."

LOVE SELF.—"Sensible minds only know how to act without hurting the feelings of others. Self-love, so susceptible itself, never regards the susceptibility of others."

MIND.—"The mind is a kind of torch to guide the heart; it burns, but without warmth or splendor, if we fail to feed it. If directed properly to external objects, there is little danger of its recoiling on itself and inflaming the passions."

NATURE.—"The sketches of nature are still more delightful than the fictions of pleasure,

its scenes increase progressively in interest with the drama of life. The rigid eye of the philosopher can contemplate them without confusion; his chaste tongue can describe them, and the ear of the innocent may listen to them."

St. Pierre.

OPINION OF THE WORLD.—“A respect for the opinion of the world is one of our immediate protections against evil. It gives a habit of self-denial, which tho' exerted in trifles, prepares the mind for encountering greater temptations: It teaches decorum, which is an outwark of virtue; it corrects the asperities of the heart, and that fictitious virtue which it teaches, often grows into principle from the force of habit.”

Misanthropist.

PIETY.—“Piety exalted above all respect to man is one assured proof of probity; cheerful submission to labour is another.”

St. Pierre.

PRESUMPTION.—“Woe to the rash mortal who seeks to know that of which he should re-

main ignorant, and to dive into mysteries mercifully veiled from his eyes." *Beckford.*

POETRY.—“Poetry may be rendered a pleasure of the highest kind, if it makes us feel more strongly what it expresses, and elevates the mind to a contemplation of its native dignity, and a consciousness of the powers of enjoyment beyond whatever this world can satisfy.”

Bowdler.

REPROACH.—“Candor should teach us to distinguish between a person *under* reproach, and *one* who *deserves* it.”

Necker.

REPROOF.—“There is a hard and repelling mode of reproof, which tends rather to shut up the heart than to soften and unfold it. The tempest may roar and point its hail shot at the traveller, but he will rather wrap himself closer in his cloak, than quit it till the sun breaks out again.”

Cox.

RELIGION.—Religion, of which the rewards are distant, will glide by degrees out of the mind

unless it be invigorated and re-impressed by ex-

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And holding up to honor and esteem
The great example."

Hurdis.

unless it be invigorated and re-impressed by external ordinances and the salutary influence of example.

SOLITUDE.—“Solitude appears to the child of misfortune as a quiet harbour, from whence he beholds the tide of other men’s passions roll on, without being himself carried away by the current. But while he congratulates himself upon being immovable, time is insensibly hurrying him down the stream.” *St. Pierre.*

SLAVERY.—“The greatest slavery is that of being obliged to serve those who are unworthy to command us; but it is a kind of agreeable servitude to be obliged to those whom we esteem.”

TRUTH.—He who seeks for truth with a mind willing to receive it, and a heart humble enough to attend to its dictates, will never seek in vain.

TRUTHS GENERAL.—“General truths are what we all acknowledge, and all forget. We

acknowledge them, because a general assent of the understanding costs but little; and we forget them, because the remembrance would force upon the conscience a great deal of practical labour.”

More.

VIRTUE.—“Virtue is not apathy; it feels under the rack—it bleeds under the axe—but where the weakness of corrupted nature would shrink and *fly*, it is stedfast; combats, and sustains to the end. Virtue is not a heathen idol, a block, or a stone. It is a *christian spirit* in a *human body*; and comfort may wipe the drops from its suffering brow.”

Porter.

VIRTUES MINOR.—“Exactness, punctuality, and the other minor virtues contribute more than many are aware, to promote and facilitate the exercise of the higher qualities. It is inconceivable how it saves, how it amplifies time, that web upon which all the virtues must be wrought.”

More.

WOMAN.—“In every thing in which woman makes use of her own privileges, she has the

advantage over men ; but where she would *assert theirs*, she becomes inferior.” *Rosseau.*

WOMEN.—Women must be careful even how they follow a virtuous impulse ; they must calculate the consequences that may arise even from benevolence itself ; and study to combine goodness of heart, with propriety of manners, and the duties imposed upon them by society.

WISHES.—“ Whatever we wish is painted in the fairest and strongest colours ; we take no attendant inconvenience into consideration ; but a thousand occur in possession, and our purest joys are liable to be poisoned by evils that have no immediate connection with them.

For our comfort, however, the objects of our fears, as well as our hopes, diminish in a contrary ratio to the rules of perspective, and are never so much magnified as when they are at a distance.” *More.*

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