

Author: **Mrs. Carver**  
Title: *The Old Woman*  
Place of publication: London  
Publisher: Printed for the author, at the  
Minerva Press, by William Lane  
Date of publication: 1800  
Edition: 1st ed.  
Number of volumes: 2

Copyright Chawton House Library

THE

OLD WOMAN.

A NOVEL.

*IN TWO VOLUMES.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
THE HORRORS OF OAKENDALE ABBEY.

“Fear on guilt attends, and deeds of darkness;  
“The virtuous breast ne'er knows it.”

HAVARD.

VOL. I.

*LONDON:*

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

AT THE

MINERVA-PRESS,

BY WILLIAM LANE, LEADENHALL-STREET.

1800.

THE  
OLD WOMAN.

LETTER I.

*Mrs. St. Edward to Mrs. Safforey.*

Arkley Castle, July 23, 1797.

THIS has been a long silence, my dear Elinor; but the occasion must plead for my forgiveness.—I promised, in my haste, to write immediately, and then I fully intended it. Indeed, for the first few hours after we separated, I thought every little occurrence would be worth relating, and appeared such as would interest my Elinor. Since that time my mind has been in a whirl of variety and confusion, and scarce a moment has been allowed to my heart to ascertain either its pains or its pleasures. I have, during this time, written answers to a multitude of congratulatory notes and epistles, all of which expressed the same uniform hackneyed sentiments. If chance has thrown any of them in your way, and you form a judgment from their language, you will have nothing more to expect; nothing either to hope or fear; for they pronounce me the happiest of mortals.—Alas! my friend, they are indeed the dictates of my pen; would that my heart could as easily subscribe to such sentiments. You have a right to all its sincerity; and I am now writing, not from the outward forms of etiquette, but the inward feelings of a mind undisguised and open to your censure or applause.

From a very early period of our lives, you have been acquainted with all its weaknesses, all its follies, and may form some judgment of its present state; and yet, I think, you cannot have quite a just idea of my present situation, or one at all equal to the agitation of my mind;—I had almost said, to its tortures. Ah my friend! it is not too strong a word. When in the awful marriage service Mr. Goodworth pronounced that sentence which must strike all thinking people with hope or fear; when with that stern piety and emphasis for which he is so justly admired, he said, “I require and charge you both, as ye shall answer it at the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed,” &c. &c. What at that moment did my mind undergo! You, my Elinor, are the only person who can form some judgment of its emotion, for well you know its weak propensities, and yet whatever you may suppose, will fall short of its agitation. Simpleton that I was! I was upon the point of stopping the ceremony—I was going to cry aloud there was an impediment—I was going to utter such things!—but my good or evil genius (as it may henceforth prove) prevented me, and my trembling hand and faltering voice resigned, and fixed my fate for ever.

You know how much I ever despised and reprobated those disgusting airs of affectation and design, which are not unfrequently practised by those whose hearts are firmly attached, and who would be indeed wretched were they to be divided. This was not the case with me. My agitated heart and trembling hand were but faint emblems of

my distracted feelings.—Yet, ought I to breathe such a confession? Only to you, my friend, who know all the secrets of my soul, would I dare thus to express myself. Nay, I have set bounds even to my ideas; but there are moments when they stray beyond those limits, and never so much as when I am addressing you, who, knowing all my failings, will make all due allowances for a divided, torn, and wounded heart. It is when I am writing to you, that my thoughts flow faster than my pen can express them; and surely I may not be denied this relief from the cruel anguish of dissimulation, in which I seem so involved, that I fear it will become habitual.—How am I dwelling upon retrospection, when I should be relating events, and describing those circumstances of joy and splendor, by which the heart of a bride is generally elated! Not a word neither of my husband, who should now be the chief object of my contemplations; and indeed, he is truly deserving of more praise and gratitude than I can give. He is kind, tender, and affectionate. I could even wish he were less so; for then my own duplicity would not give me so much pain.—After we left you, he used every attentive endeavour to reconcile me to my situation, and very kindly attributed all my agitation to extreme sensibility.

During our journey to Arkley Castle, he pointed out all the beauties of the country through which we passed. It abounded in hills, rich dales, beautiful woods, and distant views, all of which were justly worthy of my admiration; and the setting sun gilding the prospects, formed a truly picturesque and fine scene. The castle is a stately old building, of an immense size. I had never seen it since I was about eight years of age, when the mind is too young for much observation, and receives no impression beyond those of the moment. It was therefore new to me, and the superb magnificence of its size and its antiquity inspired me with awe, not altogether void of terror; for I remembered some idle stories of ghosts, which never fail to excite the attention of a child, and which the uninhabited part of the structure appears well calculated to inspire. I could have given way to my fears, had they not been dispelled by the ring of bells from the parish-church, the shouts of the peasants who surrounded the castle, expressing every mark of rustic congratulation, and all the clamorous joy of the domestics, some of whom I remembered, and they all seemed to show me the most marked respect, and to look upon me as a being of superior order. I hope I received all these compliments properly, but my mind was in a chaos of confusion, and I fear I acquitted myself with an ill grace.

The following day St. Edward led me through all the apartments, and in a closet he opened a cabinet, which was our grandmother's, and presented me with a superb necklace, ear-rings, and cross, of the finest brilliants I ever beheld. How would they have dazzled the imagination, and pleased the sight of most women, particularly when presented by a young and handsome husband, who likewise accompanied the action with saying, "These, my Julia, were the jewels of our grandmother, and when they are new set, will be an ornament to those charms, which will nevertheless eclipse their lustre." What a compliment! yet I received them with trembling hands and faltering thanks. The idea of *our* grandmother made me shudder. Ah my friend, first cousins are too nearly allied to marry. The son of my uncle—the nephew of my father—the same blood—only two removes from a parent—much the same as marrying my brother:—how repugnant not only to the laws of nature, but to the nicer feelings of the heart. Perhaps you have heard these sentiments from me before, and perhaps they are strengthened by the singularity of my fate. I will not pretend to say how that may be, but I think even my fondest attachment would be lessened by the knowledge of relationship. This is not a time,

however, to make these reflections, nor should I have been led to have mentioned them at all, had not particular circumstances awakened such ideas.

Yesterday, as I strolled through the gallery of family portraits, the figures of my father and uncle upon the same canvas, animated by the hand of the artist, seemed to possess the same soul. Here they were figured as children; but when they were represented in different pictures, and grown up, the same features, the same expression of countenance, shewed their relationship, and gave me a disgusting thought that the son of either should be my husband. We were certainly kindred bodies before our marriage, and now ought to be kindred souls;—but does this follow? Alas! I am running into a strain it was my intention to avoid.—I should have told you of our numerous visitors—of going to church—of a thousand things I meant to have said; but I have already trespassed on your time, and devoted too much of my own to ideas which are to have no place in my future reflections. Let me hear from you, let me know the welfare of all those most dear to you; allow me this indulgence, my Elinor, and believe me

Ever yours,

JULIA ST. EDWARD.

Copyright Chawton House Library

## LETTER II.

*Mrs. Safforey to Captain Safforey, at ————  
West Indies.*

Ledcombe, July 31.

YOUR last letter, my dearest George, brought me the best intelligence, and the greatest pleasure I can know in your absence, that of your health. How have I offered up my grateful thanks to the Almighty for having preserved you amidst that pestilence, which has been so fatal to so many of our brave countrymen. May the blessing be still continued to me; it is my constant prayer, and I trust will be heard; for, next to the protection of Heaven, your own temperance will be a great means of preserving you from infection; and I hope your next accounts will be still more favorable respecting the fate of our men.—My brother too; I have much to say concerning him; and I know not if the blow he may before this have received, may not be infinitely more severe than any pain of the body inflicted by the fever. If my intelligence is the earliest, break to him, my dear George, in the tenderest manner you can, the marriage of Julia St. Edward. Yes, she is now the wife of her cousin William St. Edward; nor do I see what could have prevented the indissoluble knot. Such a combination of circumstances rendered their union so necessary, that I think if any broken vows can be forgiven, her situation seems to claim pardon. She is truly amiable, and will, I hope, be happy, although I have not much encouragement that my wishes will be effectual, if I may judge by a letter I received from her a few days after her marriage. Many of her sentiments bespoke a heart but ill at ease, yet she mentioned her husband handsomely, nay, even kindly. The great difficulty will be to keep him ignorant of her first prepossession, and I fear she has too upright a heart to be a good dissembler.

I know not myself all the family reasons and motives for this alliance, but I am promised to have the whole particulars related by Mrs. Clifford, who has had the care of Julia from the time she lost her mother; and to whose kindness and friendship I am myself greatly indebted. Not that I doubt my Julia;—I sincerely believe she has no reserves from me;—I should not so well love her if she had:—for where confidence is lessened either in love or friendship, the ardour of the passion dies away, till all is diminished. This is a truth which experience will teach, and time will confirm; and I say it to you, my George, because I know I can claim your confidence as long as I deserve your love.

Mrs. Clifford is a sensible and a good woman, and will relate events impartially, and knows every circumstance of the family. I fear you will fancy my style is that of impertinent curiosity, and that I have adopted the sentiments of those females, who are never easy but when they are engaged in the business and concerns of other people; but be assured I have too well observed your admonitions to fall into that error. The present case is a particular one; and besides that, I am, I confess, sincerely interested for my friend, and anxious for all concerning her. Yet the feelings of my brother on this account, are not the least of my reasons for wishing to know why it was necessary that he should lose the best of women, and why her inclinations should be sacrificed to duty, or rather to

obedience; and, perhaps, when he is well informed of the real truth, there may be circumstances which may mitigate, if not perfectly heal, the wounds this intelligence will inflict.

I have dwelt so much on this subject, that I have allowed but little room for any other; indeed, the rest is comprised in affectionate wishes and tender love.—Of public events, you receive better accounts than I can give you, and I hope better than I hear.—One topic I reserve for the last, as I used, when a girl, to preserve my plumbs and sweetmeats for a *bonne bouche*. It is our dear child!—he must have a place for himself, though so young. He is every day dearer to me by a million of charms which I constantly discover, but none which endears him so much as the likeness he bears to his beloved father. O my George, when I behold the likeness which is expressed in every feature, I gaze at him with rapture till the tears gush from my eyes, and I am ready to exclaim on the cruelties of war, and all its train of severities. Ah surely no acquisitions can compensate for the loss of thousands slain by the sword, or left a prey to the ravages of disease. The cries of the widows and orphans must embitter the moments of victory, and dispirit the bravest troops. These are reflections which are ever uppermost in my mind.

May Heaven avert a continuance of the calamities of war, and preserve my husband to his Elinor, whose heart beats only for those most dear to her. Let me hear from you by every opportunity. Remember me kindly to my brother; and believe me, my dear George, all that the fondest wife can remain,

ELINOR SAFFOREY.

Accept loves and compliments from all friends, but they take up too much room to specify them. Adieu.

### LETTER III.

*Lord Fitzarnold to Lord Robert Carrington.*

CARRINGTON! I am fallen in love;—nothing but my own confession would convince you of this. Yes, there is another conviction;—could you behold the divinity of my adoration, you would not for a moment doubt my assertion; nay, you would be in love yourself;—but beware of that, for I should certainly in that case cut your throat. No, I have a rival sufficient in her husband; for she is a bride at present—a modest, timid, lovely, blushing bride; so no danger of matrimony for your friend, unless I effect a divorce, and even then I shall contrive to wave the galling fetters.

She is beautiful as an angel; but this is not all. I can view flesh and blood, in its highest colouring, unmoved; but when animated by such features!—eyes which bespeak the emotions of the soul, with every attractive grace that can ornament the body!—it is not in human nature to resist such united charms. I expect you will tell me you have seen such a thousand times. No, Carrington, you never did. Yes, I have seen the finest complexion, the finest eyes, the most perfect symmetry of form, and yet I never before saw such a model of perfection. Here are three fine girls in the same house with me; the eldest particularly handsome; but compared to Mrs. St. Edward (for that is her name) they are mere dowdies. Their eyes are continually upon the watch to see which feature is most

regarded; their mouths are opened by certain rules; and their limbs are thrown into motion by a kind of mechanic rule, which conveys the idea of automatons moved by the springs of art, and robbing nature of her choicest gifts.

As Mrs. St. Edward has received from nature her most lavish favors, so she seems to return them by never departing from her precepts. Every sentiment she utters is natural; every motion, every gesture is natural; and every attitude in which she places herself, seems directed by the most graceful natural ease. But I begin to anticipate thy wishes, which, methinks, lead thee to have less of description, and more of her history. But I shall fail in the latter, for as yet I know it but imperfectly. St. Edward has been kept out of the possession of the family estate by some derangements of economy, and a marriage with this sweet creature was the terms of inheritance. They were no hard conditions for him; for her I am not so clear. It seems she shewed a reluctance to the union, but was a sacrifice to duty and obedience, from a thorough conviction of the rules of propriety and rectitude. They are first cousins; and if I have any skill in physiognomy, or rather in the observations of the heart, he is not the man she would have chosen for her husband.

Good encouragement this for me, you will say. No; my vanity does nothing for me on this occasion. She seems purity itself; and appears at least to reverence her husband—I am mistaken if she loves him. Not that he is an object by any means unlikely to inspire the tender passion. He is handsome, well made, and what is generally termed agreeable. I should conceive him to be quick, warm, and impetuous. His eyes seem rivetted to her charms; and when she speaks, he looks round with a conscious value of his treasure. I know not how the conversation turned upon the events in the West-Indies; of the numbers we had lost there by the yellow fever. I sat near her—I observed her eye—I observed her lovely bosom heave through her thin dress—and she could not conceal a fluttering solicitude far exceeding common anxiety, when some officers were named who had fallen victims to the contagion. She saw I observed her; and the more she tried to suppress her feelings, the more conspicuous they appeared. It is a point gained to know the subject which most interests the heart of a female:—touch but the tender string, and the vibration extends to all the soft chords, and beats with fond emotion.

When I am so happy as to be alone with her, I shall introduce the subject by the most pathetic lamentations for our dear countrymen. I shall pretend to have lost a relation there, whom I shall bewail with the tenderest pity; what if she should make me in return the confidante of her sorrows: let her once entrust me with a secret, and she is mine. Yes, my fair-one, then thou art in my power; and well I know thy heart does not palpitate thus for a brother, or any of thy kindred blood. No, it is for some object infinitely more dear. Happy dog!—and my rival too,—detested fellow! I must contrive thy destruction, if no lucky chance will do it for me.

Now, Carrington, don't tell me I am wrong, for that I know already; but I must at least indulge my wishes; and no other pursuit at present interests me. I am tired of every thing besides; and if thou wilt not indulge me in my only favourite theme, I shall write to thee no more. Lovefield teases me with the merits of his hunters, his hounds, and all the etceteras of the sport; but I have no more relish for them than I have for the country dinners and cards of invitation, on which his wife is continually descanting. Nor can I, for my soul, admire the girls when they are thumping at the harpsichord, or straining their throats for my amusement. I am sick of all. Even books have lost their charms. Try thy



hand at a letter, but write to me of Julia St. Edward, or I shall find no pleasure in anything thou canst relate.

Baintree Park.

Yours,  
FITZARNOLD.

LETTER IV.

*Mrs. Clifford to Mrs. Safforey.*

Crayborne, August 2.

MY DEAR MADAM,

YOUR laudable curiosity, and your kind wishes, should have been sooner answered, had not a variety of events intervened to prevent my writing, trifling in themselves, perhaps, but such as sufficiently served to divest my mind of those powers of recollection necessary for the relation of events, in which I wish to be particularly minute.—When I am writing upon the subject of my dear Julia St. Edward, I am at once flattered and pleased; for the request you have made encourages me to hope that I shall, from time to time, be made acquainted with occurrences, about which I must ever be particularly interested; and I am well assured, that, as you know the concern I take in the events of my Julia's life, the known goodness of your heart leaves me no doubt in believing, that you will favor me with any intelligence you may have relating to her.

I have known her from her childhood, and I know her to be all that is good and amiable. I likewise know all the secrets of her heart; and although I have every reason to believe she would not wish to hide them from me, yet there is a distance which the difference of age always creates, and naturally places between that familiarity and unreserve, which I know subsists between younger people, and is best adapted to that congeniality of ideas which a more advanced period of life renders less communicative. I do not mean to be understood by this, that I am unacquainted with the great secret of her heart; on the contrary, I know it well;—for me it shall ever remain one, and may it be always as sacredly preserved;—for to be divulged, would be absolute ruin both to her and to her husband's happiness.—I only mean by the above sentiments to make an interest in your favor, in the hope of your placing that confidence in me, of which I trust you will find me deserving, and which I cannot now so well claim from Mrs. St. Edward herself.

Pardon, dear madam, my running into length upon a subject so evident, as well as detaining you from a relation of circumstances, about which you are so desirous to be informed.—It is not my intention to enter into a detail of my own misfortunes, farther than may be necessary to elucidate the history of those, concerning whose fate you are so justly solicitous.—I am the widow of an officer who fell early in the American war of 1776;—since that period every event has appeared to me comparatively small. We had been married only a few months, but years had impressed the knowledge of each others hearts, and the virtues we fondly supposed they each possessed; for we loved too well to be sensible of faults in either.—The first few months after I received the fatal intelligence of my husband's death, I was incapable of attending to anything. I wept incessantly; and

the petition I made in my daily prayers was for a speedy death to end my sufferings. Impatience under afflictions was a crime I had not then learned to subdue, and a long and severe illness was a just punishment for my murmurs against the all-wise Dispenser of events.—I had chiefly resided in the neighbourhood of Arkley Castle, and from a very early age I was impressed with an idea of the riches and goodness of its inhabitants. I have but a very faint remembrance of the old gentleman and lady, but a grand funeral for their only daughter dwelt upon my recollection; and during my childhood I remember listening to the current reports of their two surviving children being wild, dissipated, and extravagant; that the timber was cut down to supply them with money, and that when their profusion and ill conduct had made a mortgage upon the estate a necessary measure, I heard my uncle say, he was sure it would be the death of the old people, who had lived so many years in such high respectability, practising the virtues of charity and benevolence in their fullest extent. They never left their home; and if their lives were not marked by elegance of manners, and superiority of knowledge, they were nevertheless eminent for the good example they set. The most unbounded hospitality was the result of excellent economy; and the whole tenor of their lives exemplified all the Christian virtues.

The old gentleman had been persuaded to give his sons a very liberal education; they were, therefore, sent to the public seminaries of learning, where mixing with the most extravagant associates, and being allowed unlimited power to draw for what sums they pleased, (the old people being utterly unacquainted with the depravity of the times), they soon made such demands as occasioned vast and cruel depredations on this once rich and valuable domain, and reduced it to the state before mentioned. The old gentleman and lady survived each other but a few days. The loss of their daughter, and the folly of their sons, hastening the debt of nature, they died in a premature old age, lamenting that they had not brought up their sons in the simplicity and ignorance of their forefathers. What remained of the estate was remitted to these young men, who were squandering it in every act of extravagance and dissipation, never coming to the castle, great part of which was entirely shut up, and only an old part of it was reserved for the habitation of three old servants, who were allowed some small portion out of the estate for the remainder of their lives.

I was then in the fifteenth year of my age; stories of the horrible kind are then most apt to excite the attention. I listened with avidity to tales of ghosts and spectres, which the appearance of the castle in some degree authorized;—the approach to it was overgrown with weeds, the trees darkened the avenues, the rooks flew about in armies, the battlements were broken and crumbling to decay, and time had made cruel devastation throughout the whole building. Often have I looked through the broken casements in the daytime (for at night no one would venture) with an eager curiosity, expecting and almost wishing to behold some of the airy forms, of which I had heard such marvellous accounts from the common people in the vicinity. I could, however, never discover any thing but a scene of desolation, which seemed to pervade the whole building.

Soon after this period, the youngest of the brothers, Godfrey St. Edward, took a small house in the village where my uncle then resided. He brought his wife and an only daughter, then a child, the present Mrs. Julia St. Edward. They remained in this place about two years, during which time I contracted an intimacy with Mrs. Godfrey St.

Edward; and the young Julia, though many years younger than myself, always expressed a partiality for me. At the death of Godfrey St. Edward, which was occasioned by a fall from his horse, Mrs. St. Edward and her daughter left the country, soon afterwards I left it also; and during that period of happiness, which was confined to a very short space, I was entirely absent from this county; and before my return, my worthy uncle was removed to Crayborne, where Mrs. Godfrey St. Edward, then a widow, soon took a small house, and resided there with Julia. The latter was much improved, and promised all those graces and beauty for which she is now so universally admired.

There had always been a shade of melancholy over the features of Mrs. St. Edward, which conveyed the idea of misery, when I was a stranger to it. Now that my mind had experienced the greatest of all misfortunes, in the loss of a kind and tender husband, I was more alive to the feelings of others; and her recent loss still adding to her melancholy, we became more closely united by misfortune; and although I never knew or pried into the secret causes of her grief, I frequently heard her say, she laboured under a secret which she wished to reveal, but durst not. It certainly preyed upon her health; and my spirits were but just beginning to recover, when they were again deeply oppressed by the death of Mrs. St. Edward. She very earnestly recommended her daughter to mine and my uncle's care, observing that quarterly remittances would be sent by her uncle, William St. Edward, for her use; and that he was to have the sole direction concerning her in future. Mrs. St. Edward died, as she had lived, oppressed with some secret, which, I have reason to think, was buried with her, as I never heard her daughter allude to it, nor do I believe she had any suspicion either of that, or of her own destiny.

The distance of Crayborne from Arkley rendered the castle too remote to be an object of contemplation. It was seldom mentioned; nor did we for a length of time hear any thing of Mr. William St. Edward, except that he was punctual in sending the remittances to my uncle. He never came to Crayborne, although it was said he every year visited the castle, which, in consequence, had undergone some repairs. He was a widower, with one son, who, it was reported, would reside at Arkley when he became of age. As to Julia, she was a composition of all that was lovely. Her visits to you constituted her chief happiness; and the knowledge I had of your family gave me the highest opinion of every branch of it. Julia spoke of your brother as the counterpart of yourself, and I had no need of a higher encomium. When Mr. Delafore accompanied you to Crayborne, during the time you were on a visit there, I immediately saw he had no common share in her esteem; and at that time I apprehended no evil from an attachment which seemed to promise all that was desirable.

Soon after this period, Mr. William St. Edward arrived at Crayborne, late in the evening. Julia was then on a visit at your house. Never shall I forget the agitated appearance of Mr. St. Edward; his looks bespoke the perturbation of his mind. He had a long conference with my uncle; and when he took his leave, I heard him in a peremptory tone, yet trembling voice, enforce something of an important nature to my uncle, whose melancholy looks and unusual manner indicated the agitation which the abrupt and unexpected visit of Mr. St. Edward had occasioned. He did not make me acquainted with what had passed, but appeared to be musing on something very perplexing. He said that Julia must immediately be sent for home; intimating that he was sorry she had ever passed so much time where it appeared she had formed an attachment which must now be given up.

“Yes,” added my dear uncle, “the fate of Julia has been fixed by her father and her uncle long before she was capable of distinguishing the nature of choice. The most solemn vows were made by each brother that their children should be united. Mr. St. Edward has this day repeated his oath, and enjoined me to see it fulfilled. I represented to him the cruelty, nay, even the sin of forcing the will, which the heart did not sanction; but he would not admit my argument. He appears to be agitated by enthusiastic zeal; says he has too long neglected the completion of their vow, and has been warned by a departed spirit to hasten the ratification, as the only terms of peace to a mind torn by affliction.—“What,” said my uncle, “can be offered to a man under the influence of such a persuasion? You must prepare Julia for the reception of her cousin, who will be here in a few days; after which, you are to inform her that he is to be her husband; that nothing can alter the decree; and she must shortly be mistress of Arkley Castle.”

What a task was mine (who so well knew the influence of the tender passions,) to endeavour to root it from her heart! yet, faithful to the trust reposed in me, I represented to her, in the most persuasive language, the necessity of her compliance. My uncle also enforced the same doctrine, while his heart bled for her misery.—Never can I forget the day she was informed of her father’s will. She had then seen her present husband, young William St. Edward, and had been speaking of him with that affectionate regard their relationship warranted; when my uncle told her she must entertain a still more tender love for him, and that he must be her husband.—It was evident what an interest she had gained in his heart, for he had spoken of her with rapture.—She absolutely shuddered with affright.

“No—no—no!” she repeated, “never! What, the son of my uncle!—Save, protect me from such a fate:” and then, as if more determined—“My will,” said she, “cannot be forced. My heart is not mine to bestow; it is given to the worthiest of men; the most pious vows have sealed the covenant, and Heaven would punish perjury like that of breaking them. My uncle never could approve it—nor you, my friends; and why torture me with fears of such a nature?” She seemed now to assume a countenance so satisfied, that my uncle could not then urge the subject farther, but only said, in his mild persuasive tones, “We will talk this matter over at some future time; till when, my dear child, be composed, and trust in the wise Disposer of all events for happiness in this world, as well as in that which is to come, for he alone can give it.”—She stood like a trembling victim, with the tears running down her cheeks, and seemed to have lost every power of exertion. My own feelings were little better than her’s; her distress recalled to my mind ideas of too tender a nature to admit of my offering her consolation, and the subject was not resumed again for some days; nor had my uncle either spirits or inclination to attempt it, till a letter from Mr. St. Edward again pointed out the necessity of the case, when it was again renewed, and enforced by the most gentle and kind persuasions. It was represented to her that, by refusing to comply with the will of her father, she deprived herself of all inheritance whatsoever, as by some unaccountable agreement between the brothers, that circumstance made a part of the contract.

She heard these remonstrances and expostulations with the same anguish as before; she endeavoured also to preserve the same firmness; and she offered to relinquish all right and claim to any part of her share in the inheritance, and give it up, without the smallest reserve, to her uncle and her cousin, if by so doing, she might preserve her liberty, and not be compelled in her choice. “Yes,” said she, (wringing her hands,) “leave

me destitute even of the necessaries of life; let me procure my livelihood by the work of my hands—let me be any thing but a perjured wretch. Oh Sir, I have vowed to be the wife of Henry Delafore, and never to be another's; he has declared the same to me; and Heaven has witnessed our plighted faith. Can any institution, even so sacred as that of marriage, set aside vows like these?"

My uncle was prepared for this offer, and assured her it would not be accepted. He told her, hard was the task imposed on him, to endeavour to alter sentiments so resolved, and inclinations so attached; but since he knew her fate to be so inevitably fixed, and since her cousin had declared his violent love for her, he still wished she could bring her mind to that degree of compliance, as would make what was an irrevocable destiny appear like a duteous choice. He represented the shortness of life, and how valueless the choicest of its blessings were, when compared with the rewards of duty and obedience in that which would be everlasting. Above all, he urged the strongest reasons to prevent her from giving Mr. St. Edward the most distant idea of her attachment to your brother; and as that gentleman had been absent so many months without any accounts of his safety being received, he ventured to hint at the probability of his having fallen a victim, amongst the multitude of others, to the unfavourable climate whither he was gone, and this was still more to be feared, as he had never written a syllable either to her or to any of his friends. She could not bear this idea; and her sufferings were greater than I can describe.

It would be only a repetition to dwell upon the arguments my uncle used to enforce the necessity of her compliance, and the constant refusal she gave and persevered in for a length of time, and which no persuasions seemed to lessen; and I am firmly persuaded that when she did at last consent, it was in a perfect belief that she should not survive the conflict it occasioned in her mind.

Three days before her marriage took place, she asked me if I did not think her looks much changed. I told her she was thin, but not less lovely. "Oh Mrs. Clifford!" she replied, "less tortures than my mind has suffered, would have deprived many people of life; but I am not to die; it pleases the Almighty to prolong my existence, although I have so ardently prayed for a period to it. My father and his brother," she continued, "entered into a solemn agreement it seems, that their children should be united, in order to cancel the obligations they were under to each other. My cousin and myself, the innocent offspring of two unhappy fathers, were made the victims of their rash vows, which, I understand, were rendered sacred by the most awful oaths and dreadful imprecations of everlasting happiness or misery to the survivor, if they were not fulfilled;—and shall so poor a creature as I am dare to break a covenant like this?—No;—my present design is to marry my cousin, and render myself a sacrifice to their vows. Cruel, indeed, has been the conflict; nor were the vows I made less binding, though they implicated no curses on posterity.—I have prayed (I hope they were not presumptuous prayers) that death would have decided my fate before I had given the fatal promise. Heaven has pleased to order it otherwise, and I submit to its decrees. Your good uncle has comforted me with the assurance that my submission will be rewarded, at least by an approving conscience. But of this—Oh! my friend, do not I break a vow as sacred as any my father could have made? and am I not more immediately answerable for that than for any other? Whither do these ideas lead me? Oh hide me from myself!"—She then rested her head upon my shoulder with a sigh that pierced my heart, and I would have given worlds to have

comforted her, but tears choked my utterance; I could not articulate words sufficient to express my sentiments. She saw my distress, withdrew her face from my bosom, and soon quitted the room. I had not any more conversation with her on the subject; we seemed both to make a point of avoiding it; and on the day she was married, she assumed a placid appearance, except during the ceremony, when she seemed much agitated. She left us soon afterwards; and when I saluted her cheek on taking leave, it felt as cold as marble; but she preserved an easy and not altogether uncheerful countenance.—Pray heaven she may be composed; happy I dare not suppose. From your friendship I know she will derive great consolation; her own good sense will regulate her conduct; and I have every reason to believe she is married to a man who truly loves her. She asked me to write to her, and to visit her when my uncle could spare me. As yet I have done neither. In writing I could say nothing that would not in some degree, recal former remembrances; and I think the more new scenes in which she is engaged, the better.

I fear the length of this letter will tire you, but I have a pleasure in obeying your request upon a subject in which I am too much interested to be limited. I trust it will need no further apology. I shall think myself much favored, if you will have the goodness to inform me of any particulars you may chance to know concerning Mrs. St. Edward; and I remain,

Dear Madam,

Your truly obliged and  
obedient servant

ANN CLIFFORD.

LETTER V.

*Lord Robert Carrington to Lord Fitzarnold.*

Brighton, August 2, 17—.

DEAR FITZARNOLD,

YOUR letter was forwarded to me at this place. I wish you were here, or (I had almost said) at any other than your present residence. This I know would have given a scope to your wit.—You insist upon my writing to you of Julia St. Edward; so I will, and no other subject shall have a place in my letter. Does it not please you? I think I cannot pay her a higher compliment.—You desire me not to tell you, you are wrong, for you say you know it;—why then, I shall spare myself the trouble: but you do not prohibit me from saying, *I am right*, and that I will proceed to prove.

You say Julia St. Edward is not happy; and yet, instead of endeavouring to restore her happiness, you are studying the means of making her more wretched; for as you suppose her to be virtuous, you may rest assured, that every attempt you make to shake that principle, will not only contribute to her misfortunes, but at the same time defeat your own purpose. If she entertains a partiality for some distant friend, you may be very certain, as a woman of virtue, she is using her utmost efforts to correct and subdue every idea that is not consistent with the purity of her heart; and will you raise obstacles to this design? Will you light up the embers of a (perhaps) dying flame, and which, after all, may only exist in your wild imagination? Even were it otherwise, how would you be benefited by recalling remembrances forbidden and prohibited, and which, but for you, had been forgotten. It must at least be bad policy to introduce a rival in the breast where you seek an interest for yourself.—This is reasoning you cannot disallow, which your judgment must approve, though your wishes may condemn. Leave, then, Mrs. St. Edward to the protection of her husband, and to those peaceful virtues which are the reward of an innocent heart, and hasten from the fascinating object to thy ever faithful friend,

ROBERT CARRINGTON.

LETTER VI.

*Mrs. Safforey to Mrs. St. Edward.*

Ledcombe, August 19, 17—.

YOUR letter, my dear Julia, should not have remained so long unanswered, but I knew you did not expect from me a formal congratulation; neither was I willing to break in upon the many engagements and new avocations which must necessarily occupy the

hours of a bride, particularly in the situation you so deservedly fill. You will judge of the sincerity of my heart, by the kind of letter I shall write to you; for I study no forms when I am addressing my dearest friend: I write just what comes into my head, as I used to do, for I hope, my dear Julia, our friendship will continue the same as it ever was; indeed, I see no reason why it should not. I know you are incapable of changing, and I know my own heart; but besides this, your own dear husband said, he should always value my friendship, and hoped it would for ever be continued. I am persuaded, my Julia, you are a happy woman. I will hear none of your gloomy sentiments. You are the envy of your sex. How many females are there who would gladly be in your situation! Miss Langton told me, she never saw so handsome a man as Mr. St. Edward, and that when you drove past their house, she thought it was the lot of very few to be so happy: indeed the value of a kind and tender husband is incalculable. Tell me no more foolish nonsense about first cousins:—where did you pick up such obsolete notions? How many instances do I know of first cousins marrying, and being perfectly happy. Why should they not? In former ages it was considered a crime not to take a wife of our own kindred, and it is said to have grieved the hearts of the parents when their sons went out to see “*the daughters of the land.*” Really, my dear, I should have supposed that part of your letter to have been written by your nurse, or some superannuated old woman, and not by the pen of Julia St. Edward. Away with such superstition, never to be tolerated but in those days when we were silly girls, and used to consult dame Freedom upon the fortunes which were to mark our lives, and fancied she could tell us future events by poring into the grounds of a coffee-cup, or reading our destiny in a dirty pack of cards. Methinks I see her now spitting on her thumbs, and relating wonderful things of the lovers we were each to captivate; the profusion of riches which were to be showered upon us; of the delightful journies we were to take, or the superb presents which awaited us; with a thousand other promises, equally idle and ridiculous. Yet in those youthful hours we were as pleased with the old woman’s predictions, as we were with dressing our dolls at a still earlier period.

But a few years, my Julia, make as great an alteration in our sentiments as in our persons; and we look back upon them with wonder, that our minds could ever have received amusement from any trifles of this nature. As we grow to a more mature age, reason expands, and we consider those juvenile days, not less happy perhaps, but, very inferior to the more interesting pursuits which then occupy our minds. I know not any person whose prospects promise fairer than your’s. You are united to a man who appears to adore you, and by this union you are entitled to that fortune, which not only gives you the ample enjoyment of the good things of this world, but enables you to diffuse, with a liberal hand, those blessings to objects which may want or merit them.

You are placed in the seat of your ancestors, to honour their memory by imitating their example. No profession calls your husband from your arms: unless by choice, you need never be separated. No hostile mandate tears him away, nor between you does a boistrous ocean roll. These, my Julia, are inestimable blessings, and which you will, I hope, justly prize. These will bind you by stronger ties than even duty and obedience. Affection will rivet them; and you will look with pity upon those who feel almost the pains of misfortune under the dread of uncertainty; and none but those who suffer them, can tell how bitter is the potion. From evils like these you will be exempt; and amidst the choicest of your comforts, you may anticipate a race of St. Edwards adorned with virtues



like your own. You will be engaged in the delightful task of forming their minds to all that is lovely and good. I am the more anxious to have this wish realized, because it must be that of your husband. You are the only remaining branches of the family. Your uncle, from not having been heard of so long, is either dead, or living in some retirement, secluded from all belonging to him; and there is every reason to suppose he will never more visit Arkley Castle. Indeed, I understand, he made some such resolution when he was last there; and the last years he has passed, have been marked by such a train of eccentric ideas and odd fancies, that I should not be surprised to hear he was turned hermit, and would never associate again with his fellow creatures.

I beg you will write to me as often as you have leisure or opportunity. Be assured that no one living can be more interested in your happiness than I am, which I entreat you will promote, as well for your own sake as for your husband's. The welfare of both will chiefly rest in your power, and from you much will be expected. You have always been held out as a pattern to all that was amiable in the unmarried state:—in the married one you have an opportunity of being more conspicuously eminent. Let me, then, hear no more of your woes: you are, I am persuaded, too good a Christian to repine at a fate for which so many are inclined to envy you, and would gladly make an exchange with you. Let me have the pleasure of hearing that you will approve and take my counsel, which will afford the sincerest satisfaction to

Your faithful

ELINOR SAFFOREY.

Copyright Chawton House

## LETTER VII.

*Lord Fitzarnold to Lord Robert Carrington.*

Baintree Park, September 2, 17—.

YOUR letter, Carrington, has not made an atom of difference in my sentiments or my designs: you know I told you it would not. You meant it well, my friend, but you have never seen my Julia. Yes, my Julia! I will have it so. Mine she must be, the Fates have so ordained it; and you know there is no resisting their decrees. Besides, it would be too much for such a fellow as St. Edward to possess entirely a jewel of such magnitude and brilliancy; it would be absolute monopoly. Yet don't think I rave; I am acting methodically; and I will endeavour to arrange my plans, and to write them in order.

Carrington, I have conversed with Julia on a tender subject; one, too, that is next her heart. I was right in my conjecture: she is not married to her love. She did not tell me this in express words, but what she said amounted to an avowal of it; and yet she has more sense than all the females I ever conversed with; and I had almost said, more prudence. But against that thou wouldst have cried out, "I wish you would come here, and engage the girls here from persecuting one, when I could wish to be otherwise employed." Miss Lovefield absolutely makes advances, and I should have no great trouble to have her, I believe, upon any terms: but no!—one dishonorable pursuit is sufficient at a time. You see I do not pretend to palliate, and call it by any name it does not deserve. And, indeed, when the heart is deeply engaged, as mine undoubtedly is, the attentions of all other women are impertinent and disgusting. I can but just bring myself within the rules of common decency and complaisance.

Mrs. Lovefield is quite the country squire's lady. Her vulgarisms are extreme; and she has not the most distant idea of elegance. Such a fine creature as Mrs. St. Edward seems beyond her comprehension, and therefore she abuses that angel, and says, "I do not know how 'tis, but there seems to me to be something monstrous awkward in that Mrs. St. Edward. She is so grave and formal. She certainly has not seen much of the world. No; she has none of the ease of a person of fashion, and there is no being intimate with her."

No;—well I know there is not, for Julia is of a different order of beings from this woman, who thinks good breeding consists in being familiar, and calling all her neighbours Mrs. G. and Mrs. B.; and then alludes to some silly joke, of which the rest of the company are ignorant. She has likewise, in some degree, taught her daughters this pretty sort of behaviour; for they stretch their mouths from ear to ear, and nod and look significant; with a hundred other grimaces with which my sweet Julia is as little acquainted as they are with her excellencies. I could not hear her named with disrespect; and therefore told my slanderous hostess (with as much civility as I could muster, after such an affront to my feelings,) that she had entirely mistaken the character of Mrs. St. Edward; that she was reserved from diffidence, and grave from habit and modest good breeding. But they all stared as if they did not understand me; and I was afraid to be too elaborate in her praise, lest they might take whims in their heads which I would on no account engender.

During this conversation, my friend Lovefield enjoyed a comfortable repose, an indulgence he never fails to yield to soon after dinner, unless the sports of the field or the merits of his hunters are the subject. He has, however, kind soul! invited me to stay during the shooting season; and were his slumbers prolonged, his wife's vulgarity increased, and the daughters persecutions insupportable, I would still accept his invitation, for it places me in the vicinity of all that is charming and desirable in this world. If you can indulge me in this darling theme, if you can point out any new plans by which my schemes may be successful, write to me without delay; but if thou canst only repeat truths which, though they may be truths, only fill me with disgust, (for conviction without resolution is a tormenting fiend,) keep thy good counsel for thine own use, and leave to chance, and her blest propitious favor,

Thy friend,  
FITZARNOLD.

Copyright Chawton House Library

## LETTER VIII.

*Mrs. St. Edward to Mrs. Safforey.*

Arkley Castle, Sept. 4, 17—.

MY DEAR ELINOR,

YOUR intention is, I doubt not, very good, in sending me a letter which, except its assuring me of your health, could not possibly afford me any comfort. You rally me unmercifully on my low spirits and my superstitious sentiments, but you do not sooth me, and you know not how much I stand in need of that consolation. Indeed, my friend, were you a little to humour my failings, it might have a better effect. There are moments when my opprest mind flies for relief to some kind pitying heart, congenial with its own, and in seeking for such an asylum, I have, I fear, discovered, in some degree, the great secret of my soul to another besides my Elinor. It was a moment of weakness which nothing but the fullness of my heart could excuse. I have every reason to hope that the breast in which I have dared to repose it, is replete with honour.

Not to keep you in suspense, I must begin by introducing a family who are my nearest neighbours. They are the Lovefields of Baintree Park. He is a plain country squire, devoted to the sports of the field, and not a very brilliant companion. His wife is one of those notable dames who, having full power in her own department, and indeed usurping authority far beyond its extent, takes upon her not only to regulate the economy of her own household, but would be busy in the arrangement of all her neighbours. She appears to me vulgar, impertinent, and underbred. She has three daughters—the eldest a very fine woman; and one son a child. The girls have been well educated, but from the constant example before their eyes, they have imbibed some of her ideas, and have, besides, a great deal of conceit and affectation. Upon the whole, they all seem favorites with Mr. St. Edward. He is himself a great sportsman, and the horses and hounds have their full share in the conversations he holds with Mr. Lovefield. Do you think I have given you as yet any character to whom I could confide a secret; no, none of this group I have yet named: but there is one who at present forms a part of their family, and Heaven knows how he came to be a visitor to such people, or for what reason he prolongs his stay. It is Lord Fitzarnold. His manners are very pleasing, and he seems to possess an understanding far superior to any to which I have been lately used. He is certainly a man of the world, and as such, may adopt sentiments very different from his heart. But I know not how it is, his manners appear to be so regulated by decorum, and at the same time he shews such an interest and such a sensibility in all he expresses, that he imperceptibly gains upon the understanding, while his generous and liberal opinions lead you to unreserve, and divest the mind of all suspicion. Thus it was with me; and although I think well of Lord Fitzarnold, yet I did not mean to entrust him with the dearest secret of my heart: you may believe me, my Elinor, I did not. No,—let all its weakness be confined to the narrow circle which has hitherto contained it.

The subject of war happening to be introduced between us, he lamented in terms so pathetic the loss of a near relation in the West-Indies, as at once awakened my

attention, and led me to ask particulars. I fear my looks and manner betrayed an emotion the more apparent by endeavouring to conceal it. He looked at me as if he would penetrate my heart, while he expatiated upon the virtues of this beloved friend. "Yes," he continued, "he was in a few weeks to have returned, and been blest by the hand of a woman, lovely almost as Mrs. St. Edward." I attended not to the compliment, but eagerly asked how she bore the loss, and if she was yet unmarried. "Yet, and ever will remain so, my dearest madam," he replied; "for can you suppose that vows faithful as their's, approved on earth, and registered in Heaven, could ever be transferred to others, even though one of them were no more." This sentence, uttered with energy and warmth, was too much for my weak spirits. I felt my heart palpitate; I trembled from head to foot; and some inarticulate sentence involuntarily burst from my lips. I cannot say what it was, but I thought his looks seemed to express pity mixed with astonishment at what I had so inadvertently declared. In a moment I saw the danger as well as the folly into which I had been betrayed, and collecting all my resolution, I recovered myself, and I think came off pretty well. I said, "I have a very dear friend, whose husband is exposed to the dangers of the climate we have been speaking of, and I am so interested in whatever concerns her, that I cannot hear of its dangers without shewing an agitation, as if it were a husband of my own." I know not if he gave me credit for the truth of this, yet I cannot help fancying that he has ever since viewed me with pity: but whenever he has again led to that conversation, I have immediately changed it; for never more will I trust myself with a subject in which I have so little command of my feelings.

Lord Fitzarnold seems, by an easy politeness, and a redundancy of goodnature, to accommodate himself to all our humours. As to the Lovefields, it is impossible he can like them; yet they all speak of him in the highest terms. Mr. St. Edward too, seems pleased with his company; and, to speak truth, his sensible observations, sometimes seasoned with the most poignant wit, have beguiled, if not enlivened, some hours which would otherwise have hung heavily with your poor friend; for, my Elinor, to disclose a secret which will I know be as safe in your breast as in my own, Mr. St. Edward has but little conversation. I have tried on various subjects to engage his attention, but none seem to fix him for a moment. He is what the world calls good-humoured, that is, he always appears gay and pleased, yet is ever looking forward for a pleasure which never seems to arrive. The amusements of the field seem to engross much of his attention; and I believe it is a common observation, that where horses and dogs are in very high estimation, the more rational pleasures of society are less valued. When we are to dine at Baintree Park, or that family to dine with us, he anticipates the pleasure of it with as much joy as others would express on occasions of much higher delight, and has once or twice wondered that I was not equally elated with the idea; yet, when the day has arrived, any common observer would suppose that I was the happiest person of the two; for when the enjoyment is actually in his possession, it seems to have lost its charms, and he is then expatiating on the pleasures of some future day. This may be a happy sort of disposition to be always looking forward to felicity; it is surely better than to be looking back upon joys that must be thought of no more,—ah! never, never to return. I envy this happy propensity more than I can express. O that I could obliterate all the past, and only look forward to the joys which may be to come; yet I fear, those reserved for your Julia lie in a very narrow space.—You remind me of our juvenile days, when we consulted the old woman's astrological abilities, but you do not add how truly she prophesied my destiny.

Did she not repeatedly tell me I should not be married to the man of my heart? that I should be miserable, and he would not be happy? Few of those people tell you such unwelcome truths, but you must well remember she did, although at that time I did not believe her:—no, not a twelvemonth since would a far superior power have persuaded me that I should now be Mrs. St. Edward; that I should—Oh! but I will forbear: I grow giddy at retrospection.—Elinor, you do not use me well. You write me a nonsensical letter, and try to evade my questions, and amuse me by a trifling style of writing unlike yourself, and as if I were a child. You do not name your husband: surely, that is a subject about which you cannot even affect to be indifferent. You might at least have told me whether or not you had heard from him. You are not to learn that we should write to each other as more than common correspondents, or that there is little occasion to ransack our brains for fine sentiments, or witty sarcasms: you must remember you desired me to write you every thought of my mind; a heart like mine finds great relief in so doing, and I have strictly obeyed your injunction; but you have not fulfilled your part, and unless you do, expect to be treated with a reserve unworthy of our friendship, and truly foreign to the heart of

Your affectionate  
JULIA ST. EDWARD.

#### LETTER IX.

*From the same to the same.*

Arkley Castle, Sept. 14, 17—.

I WILL not wait, my dear Elinor, for your answer to the last; I will suppose you have taken some time to consider its contents, and, according to my desire, improve your style, and lay aside your reserve. I am now alone: St. Edward is gone to London. You cannot think with what childish impatience he looked forward to his journey; but upon this disposition I have before enlarged, and the subject had, I believe, better drop. I was invited to go with him, but as he went upon business, and the journey would have afforded me no pleasure, I thought it best to remain here. Would you could come to me, for I feel myself very sad and forlorn in this great castle quite alone. My mind, opprest with sorrows, is weakened almost into fear. I am not superstitious; and used to possess a degree of courage which some of our sex think unfeminine; but now I seem to be less under the dominion of reason than formerly, although I cannot account for it.

I sat last night in a small dressing-room at the end of a long gallery. It is not very near my chamber, but I chose it for the fine view it has of the most beautiful part of the grounds and the adjacent country. I have decorated the brown oak wainscot with some of my paintings, ornamented with fanciful frames of my own making, which have a pretty effect, and I prefer it so to a more modern style.—There are many parts of this castle in which I have never been; and its antiquity and mode of building must render it suitable to the residence of airy inhabitants. I confess this idea pleased and amused me when I first came, and I welcomed the notion of supernatural forms and noises with the pleasure the

novelty inspired; but we think and talk of things at a distance with different sensations from those we feel when we really engage in them.—I suppose it may be rats which infest the rooms, and, perhaps, they have bred for many generations in some of the uninhabited parts of this castle; but I was really terrified last night at the strange and unaccountable noises I heard. To be sure I have no faith in ghosts and goblins, and yet I started from my chair several times, and was at last compelled, through absolute fear, to ring my bell; and when Lucy attended me, she discerned so much alarm impressed on my countenance, that she ventured to speak upon the subject of terrors occasioned by supernatural appearances, without that fear of my displeasure by which she had been hitherto restrained; for, on my first coming, the servants had told her a thousand frightful stories, the repetition of which I had prohibited, being replete with folly and superstition, and gathering additions each time they were related, until they were increased to a mass of the most incoherent nonsense you can suppose. It was now, however, that my courage and resolution deserted me, and I allowed her, unreprieved, to tell a tale, the recital of which may, perhaps, divert you, although I confess it terrified me.

To keep you therefore no longer in suspense, Lucy began by saying, (in a hesitating voice and a countenance strongly impressed with terror,) “Law, mame! you look frightened;—sure you hav’n’t seen any thing! O dear me, mame, this house is sartainly haunted. I have heard sitch noises as none but spirits could make; and as sure as I stands here alive, the t’other night, as I was a coming through the gallery where all the pictures be, I heard a noise, and as I turned my head, (tho’ I generally shuts my eyes if I comes that way,) law! I thought I should a died; for the great picture of the ould lady as fronts the door, and I always thinks looks at me, but now its eyes moved, and I saw them as plain, mame, as I now see your’s move. Well—I runs screaming back again, and just as I got to the great stairs I met Mary housemaid, and so she seeing me so frightened, we took fast hold of one another, and shut our eyes, and so we run down stairs; and when I told her what had made me so frightful, she was not at all surprised, for she said she had seen it more than once or twice; and when she told it in the kitchen, Mr. Harding, master’s gentleman, said there was no occasion to be afeard, for sitch things did happen now a-days; and said as how he had read a book called the Castle of Trantum, where pictures walked out of their frames, and sighed; and I think he said, sometimes spoke! Lord bless us! it makes me shake now but to think on’t. However, I have never ventured through the gallery since; but I believe it is the same in every place in the house; for the dairy-maid, who is up sometimes before ’tis light, says she has seen lights and faces a looking through the windows in the lower buildings, and heard sitch noises, as she’s sure the ghosts must be playing strange gambols.”

Lucy was going on, and indeed I know not where she would have stopped, for the subject seemed to be inexhaustible; but here I interrupted her. I told her she was not to attend to all the idle stories she heard; that as to the eyes moving, which she knew were only painted on a piece of canvas, it was folly in the extreme to suppose it; and as to the book she mentioned, neither herself or the man understood it. It was written by a very ingenious man, in order to display the powers of fancy upon the subject of terror, but by no means intended to be considered as truth, and was called the Castle of Otranto. I reasoned with her a long time upon the absurdity of her fears, and used all my rhetoric to dissuade her from her belief in supernatural appearances or noises. Unfortunately for my argument, just as I had pronounced that the latter was occasioned by rats, a most

uncommon noise assailed our ears, and, as if to disprove my assertion, such as was impossible to have been produced by a rat. We both started;—I endeavoured to collect my ideas so as to divest my countenance of fear, although I confess I knew not what to make of it. I hardly know how to describe it, but it appeared like three sharp strokes of a stick or cane upon a door which opens upon the top of three steps leading to a colonnade. This was not all, for in a moment after I distinctly heard several chords of music, sounding like those produced from a guitar or mandoline. The sounds then died away, and soon after entirely ceased. How am I to account for these things, my friend? Can you wonder at my surprise, not to say my fear? I kept Lucy with me for the remainder of the evening, and I used all my endeavours to dissipate her fears, at the same time I stood greatly in need myself of some able reasoner to dispel my own.

Perhaps I have never told you that Mr. St. Edward retains some very old servants in the castle, consisting of a steward, a butler, and a female servant, who all lived with our grandfather, and are, from age and infirmities, past service, but are allowed to remain here during their lives, and as a reward for their fidelity and attachment to the family in all its vicissitudes. The steward is infirm, but sensible and clear; the butler very sickly; and the female servant more alive and alert than either, notwithstanding she is the oldest of the three.

I frequently make a visit to these good people, and I always find myself in better humour after hearing their praises of my ancestors, their gratitude for the comforts they enjoy, and the abundant blessings they pray may be continued to the posterity of the St. Edwards. To this ancient circle I made a visit the next morning. They received me with their usual respect and cordiality. The butler, whose name is Arthur Bennet, is a very fine old man, with his hair as white as silver. He always wears a green apron; and on very particular gala days, will still stand at the sideboard. Mr. Bond, the old steward, is too far advanced in age to make any such distinctions, or bestow much notice on anything.

Alice Grundy, the female, is a cheerful neat old woman, with a sharp nose, and a pair of eyes, which, I have no doubt, did execution in their youth. She wears her gown laced down her stomacher, and a mob cap tied under her chin, and as tight as a drum upon her head. Her faculties are so little impaired by time, that she is still of use, and spins and knits for the family. She will always resign her wicker chair to me, and overwhelms me with compliments and praises.—After enquiring the health of each, and observing on the weather, I alluded to old times, and asked Arthur Bennet, in a careless manner, if the castle had not been always famous for strange and unaccountable noises. “Yes, good madam,” he replied, “that it has; but I never minded the nonsense that was talked. I have lived in it nine-and-forty years come next Michaelmas, and, thank God, never see’d anything uglier than myself. As to noises, ’tis impossible that in such a great rambling place, but there must be noises. Why I reckon there be rats as old as I am, or nearly; and then the wind makes its way in all the long passages and staircases enough to startle a bold man. But I hope, my dear lady, you have met with nothing to fright or terrify you; and I am sorry you did not go to London with his honour: such a sweet couple should never be parted. My old master and mistress were never divided for fifty years, and then only by death. But fashions be changed since then, and they say as nobody lives in that sort of way now a-days,—the more’s the pity; for when two people loves one another, they should always be together.”



Perhaps I might have been more willing to subscribe to Arthur's opinions than most modern ladies would have done, but no matter, the subject made me grave, and a silence ensued, which was broken by Alice, who asked me, in a low voice, and an enquiring eye, if I had heard or seen any thing to alarm me. I replied, "No, nothing but what had just been accounted for, as occasioned by the wind, the rats, or various other causes, by no means worth investigating; except," I added, "the sound of music, which, not knowing any person in the castle practised besides myself, I could not easily account for." "Music!" repeated Arthur and Alice, both in a breath, and with looks of unfeigned surprise, "that cannot be!" "Certainly," I said, "it was, and heard not only by myself, but likewise by my maid, who was with me; that we distinctly heard several notes repeated upon the kind of instrument before mentioned; that I had made enquiry amongst the servants, and found that not one of them played upon any instrument whatsoever." The old man and woman viewed each other with what I thought very significant looks, but still doubting what I had affirmed; and finding I could gain no information, I concluded my visit with good wishes for their health.

This day's post brought me a letter from St. Edward. He does not talk of returning, on the contrary, he is going to Margate with a family of whom he speaks in a strain of rapture, which, from the pen of an adored husband, might create no small jealousy. Why it has not that effect on me I will leave to your penetration to discover, and content myself, as a good wife should, under such unfortunate circumstances. I have written you two long letters, and I think the least you can do is to answer them without delay, as well to console me in my widowed state, as to comfort me with the assurance that I may rely on your friendship; and ever remain,

Truly yours,

JULIA ST. EDWARD.

#### LETTER X.

*Mrs. Safforey to Mrs. Clifford.*

Ledcombe, Sept. 21, 17—.

MY DEAR MADAM,

EARNESTLY wishing that my next letter might convey to you good tidings of our friend, I have deferred, to a strange length of time, answering your kind and explanatory epistle, and for which my thanks are most gratefully due. You expressed a wish to hear from me of Mrs. St. Edward, as from the friend to whom she would be unreserved, nor have I any reason to complain of her on this score. I have two of her letters now before me, written, I am sure, from the heart. I have not yet answered either of them, for, indeed, I know not in what style to write. I rallied her on some of her sentiments, which I endeavoured to set in a childish and ridiculous light; but that would not do,—she felt offended; and to hurt her feelings would be cruelty in the extreme; yet she stands greatly in need of advice.

I like not the predicament in which she is now placed. St. Edward has been gone to London near three weeks; and now she tells me he is going to Margate. She is left a prey not only to her own reflections, but her mind, enervated by sorrow, is become subject to fears and superstition. You know the idle reports concerning Arkley Castle; my friend gives way to these chimeras, and listens to the tales of the servants. Can this be Julia St. Edward? methinks you ask: Yes;—but this is not the worst. I fear nothing in the shape of supernatural ideas;—Julia would in time be diverted at her own fears; but there is a hideous lord visiting at Baintree Park, and the intimacy between the two families, gives him frequent opportunities of seeing Julia. I have enquired his character, and do not find it such as will merit the favor of her acquaintance. He is artful and insinuating; and she has, in some of their conversations, inadvertently spoken on a subject too near her heart, to conceal its emotions. One of her letters informs me of this circumstance, and that she instantly saw the error into which she had fallen. I am alarmed on this account; not that I have any fears of the rectitude of her conduct,—Julia St. Edward is purity itself; and would shudder at any idea inconsistent with honour and integrity. Yet a man of the world, like Lord Fitzarnold, designing and engaging, is by no means a proper acquaintance for beauty and innocence like her's.

I am enraged at her husband for leaving her behind when he went to London, and still more for prolonging his stay, when no urgent cause, I am sure, requires it. Of what strange materials is the composition of some men formed. St. Edward was distractedly in love with Julia; his impatience for the marriage was beyond all bounds; but no sooner is the rich jewel entirely his own, than he leaves her in order to pursue every empty folly that has novelty for its allurements; and what is worse, he leaves her exposed to the impertinence of an unprincipled libertine. O that it were in my power to go to her, that I might watch over and guard her innocence with a zeal equal to the love and regard I feel for her; but that is now impossible. But, my dear madam, could not you give her your protection? it would be an act of the highest charity, I had almost said of piety. I know how truly she reveres your opinions, and will abide by all the counsels of your heart. In the pleasing hope that this wish of mine may meet your approbation, and suit your convenience, I will conclude, with respects to your worthy uncle; and am,

Dear madam,  
Your affectionate humble servant,  
ELINOR SAFFOREY.

#### LETTER XI.

*Mrs. Clifford to Mrs. Safforey.*

Crayborne, Sept. 27th, 17—.

DEAR MADAM,

AFTER thanking you most kindly for your letter, I am sorry to say I cannot comply with your request, respecting a visit to Arkley Castle; not, believe me, dear madam, from any

want of inclination, or that the necessity you point out does not strike me as proper at least, if not necessary. I love Mrs. St. Edward as if she were my own child; I see the danger of her situation, and I would be happy to oblige you; but there is a distance between the lady of Arkley Castle, and a dependant governess, which will not, by any means, allow of a visit voluntarily offered. 'Tis true, she asked me to visit her when she went away; but you must be sensible that both our situations demand a more formal invitation. Yet, such is my anxiety for her, and which your account has so greatly increased, that I would have broken through these bonds of propriety, and dared the imputation of impertinence, had I not yesterday heard that Mr. St. Edward is expected, and is to bring with him a great deal of company. How, then, can I be an intruder at such a time? Company will engage and amuse our dear friend; and I trust that the rectitude of her own heart will claim that protection which is never withheld from the deserving, and is so infinitely superior to all we can offer.

I cannot endure the idea of Mrs. St. Edward entertaining fears like those you mention: that a mind like her's should be warped by superstition is a sad proof of our imperfection. I can only place it to the account of depression of spirits, and a mind, not quite at ease, being left to the whimsical workings of disordered fancy. The insinuating nobleman might to any other be a dangerous object, but Julia has a heart replete with honour, firmness, and integrity: she will in a moment recal and rectify the least deviation from propriety. Her husband will return; company will engage her attention; new scenes will amuse her; and all will be well. These are my hopes, my wishes, and my prayers: that they may not be disappointed, is the sincere desire of,

Dear madam,  
Your obliged and faithful humble  
servant,

ANN CLIFFORD.

## LETTER XII.

*From Mrs. St. Edward to Mrs. Safforey.*

Arkley Castle, Sept. 30, 17—.

SO you will not write, my dear Elinor; well, I cannot help it;—but you must bear the punishment of another letter from me; and as I have received no prohibition, I shall conclude from your silence, that you like the histories of ghosts, and fears occasioned by them. I will, therefore, continue the supernatural strain, but first let me give precedence to the living. Mr. St. Edward writes me from Margate, where he has been staying with the family I mentioned in my last, that he has invited them to spend the remainder of the Autumn at Arkley Castle, and if nothing should happen to prevent them, they will be here in about three weeks. The high encomiums he passes on these new acquaintances is really diverting, and particularly the praises he bestows on the young lady; but, that you may use your own judgment, I will enclose it, because it really is an original.—Would to Heaven he had seen this enchanting creature some months back!

But to return to my first subject.—I am so habituated to noises and alarms, that I am almost grown callous to them, at least I am fearless; and have been prying into all the old rooms in the castle, some of which are, indeed, curious from their antiquity. I have traversed over every one of them, and I met with nothing that could frighten me in any. 'Tis true, it was in the day-time, when, I believe, ghosts never appear. About five o'clock in the afternoon of the same day, I strolled into the gallery of famous mention; and whether it was from what Lucy had related of my grandmother's picture, or that the painter has given the eyes an uncommon expression, I know not, but I was myself so firmly persuaded that they moved, that nothing but touching them could convince me to the contrary. I therefore took a high stool, which was in the room, and (give me credit for my courage,) stood upon it, and touched the face with my hand; nothing less would have convinced me; and canvas to be sure it was, although I could just before have confidently affirmed that it was alive. One of the noises which I have frequently heard, but cannot describe, made me jump from the stool, and hastily leave the gallery. My mind was unsettled; I felt unusually depressed; and I went into a small room below stairs, unworthy the name of a study, in which are some books placed upon shelves. I took down one after the other, without design or choice; and in an old volume of plays was a short copy of verses, which struck my fancy as in some degree applicable to my own situation; at least they were so consonant to my feelings, that I could not but admire them. The paper was perfectly clean, and the writing appeared fresh. I put them in my pocket, and have transcribed them for your perusal.

Whilst I dwell on the form which enraptures my mind,  
I forget that my wishes must still be confin'd;  
That the comfort, the hope, and delight of my soul,  
Must be govern'd by laws, and submit to controul.  
Oh, let not the sigh of a heart so sincere  
Be suppress by suspicion, or stifled by fear:

Let the mind that's congenial be lib'ral and free,  
Unfetter'd by forms of ill-omen'd decree;  
So shall register'd vows of reciprocal love,  
Be approv'd upon earth, and be blest from above.

What think you of the lines? I am no judge of poetry myself, but they convey sentiments congenial to my mind; and after I had read them, I indulged a train of ideas, not, indeed, calculated to mitigate my sorrows, nor such as I often allow, but yet such as can never, I fear, be obliterated; never, while busy memory plays about my heart.

Yesterday morning, Lord Fitzarnold called. He had been to Litchfield races, with the family at Baintree Park. He gave me a short account of them, but said, he was heartily tired before the completion of the week; that he detested such meetings; and gave a most ludicrous recital of some of their quarrels about precedence, and other matters equally trifling.

He is certainly a man of superior understanding to those with whom he generally associates, and it is for this reason that I am at a loss to account for his passing so much of his time with the Lovefields. The subject of literature happened to be introduced, when he spoke with more taste and knowledge on the subject than any person I have conversed with since I came here. I shewed him the verses I found, and asked his opinion of them. He read them carelessly, and said, all the merit they had was their being honoured by my approbation; and asked me if I was fond of poetry.—Pray, Elinor, do you ever mean to write to me again? I promise you I shall write no more till you do. Indeed, when this family arrives, of whom Mr. St. Edward speaks in so much rapture, I shall have no time, and, I may add, no inclination, unless you write to me in return. Adieu!

Ever yours,

JULIA ST. EDWARD.

### LETTER XIII.

*Mr. St. Edward to Mrs. St. Edward.*

Margate, Sept. 25, 17—.

MY DEAR JULIA

I HOPE you are well. I have been at this place near three weeks, and found it very pleasant, though the weather has been rather warm for the time of year; but it is now getting cold, so close to the sea, and I begin to be tired of it. I have engaged Mr. and Mrs. Carroset, and their lovely daughter, to return with me to Arkley. They are very agreeable people, and I am sure you will like the young lady: she is a charming handsome girl, has been educated in France, and is highly accomplished. She will be a delightful companion for you; and I have promised for you, that you will do every thing in your power to make their visit pleasant to them.

I would have Robert kill a buck; the fattest he can find. I hope our neighbour Lovefield will supply us with more game than the keeper generally furnishes. Remember you give orders to have the great pond in the close dragged; but that need not be done till the morning of the day we arrive. I expect to have a profusion of fruit. Mr. Carroset is a judge of eating; and I would have every thing appear to the best advantage. Miss Carroset will frequently give you a drive in the phaeton; she can drive four in hand:—indeed, there is nothing in which she does not excel, and you will be very happy in her company. I have every reason to think that my father is no more. After all the enquiry I have made, I can hear no intelligence concerning him, nor discover whereabouts he is concealed, if he is, indeed, living, and in retirement. Give my compliments to all friends, and believe me,

Dear Julia,

Yours affectionately,

WILLIAM ST. EDWARD.

P.S. You will order the best apartments to be ready for the family I shall bring with me. I believe we shall be at Arkley by Tuesday, but this is uncertain, and I shall write again.

Copyright Chawton House Library

## LETTER XIV.

*Miss Carroset to Miss Baynard.*

I PROMISED you a long letter, my dear Maria; I have subjects sufficient for one, and characters enough to delineate, but I have not so much time as I wish. That dear creature, St. Edward, is continually planning schemes for my amusement, and allows me no time to myself.—You can form no idea of the place we are at, nor can I give you a very just one of it. It is an immense large old castle, standing quite by itself, and is situated near the moorlands of Staffordshire. I cannot think how people could ever be so absurd as to build such a great rambling house in so forlorn a place. My father is persuading St. Edward to modernize it, but there are some queer people in the neighbourhood, who think it would be as bad as sacrilege to remove a pillar, or make the least alteration.

Mrs. St. Edward too, in a prim drawing voice, cries out against it, and says its beauty and its grandeur is derived from the antiquity of its appearance, and on no account should be changed. I'll tell you what Maria, this Mrs. St. Edward is a hateful being; I will not say what I would not do to vex and torment such a piece of starched prudery. She is said to be very handsome, and the men all seem to think her so; but for my own part, I hate such a countenance: she has a fine complexion to be sure, but that you know is not very uncommon; her eyes too are well enough; but she has such a provoking uniformity in her manner: I don't know that I have expressed it right neither, I don't know what it is. It is not nonchalance, it is not want of animation, but it is a kind of serious ease, bordering upon contempt, and yet perfectly civil. I dare say you may have met with such a character, though it is not, I believe, a very common one. Nothing seems to put her out of her way; not even the constant smiles and significant looks I every moment convey to her husband appear to have the least effect upon her. I suppose she has no great love for him; and yet, if I throw out rather a free expression, she darts such a look at me as I can scarcely encounter, for you must know she affects to be delicacy itself.

I ride, I walk, I fish, I romp, with St. Edward, yet this does not seem in the least to disturb her. If it was not for him I assure her I should not be here; but he is a handsome fellow, Maria, and between ourselves, he has no aversion to your friend:—this I knew before I came here, or nothing should have dragged me to such a place, which looks exactly like the picture of Noah's ark. In the park, indeed, there are some pleasant walks; and at the distance of about two miles, a family of the name of Lovefield, who have at present a lord for their visitor, and give themselves airs of consequence on this account. I can form but little judgment of their merits, having only seen them one morning when St. Edward drove me there in his phaeton, or rather, I drove him; for he always submits the reins to my hands, whilst he admires my dexterity in managing the horses, praises my complexion, and twists my ringlets round his fingers with admiration of my beautiful tresses, which you know are the true golden locks.

I think, Maria, this is a better way of spending the Autumn, than staying at a stupid watering place, where the men are all tired of looking at one; and where, indeed, there are such flocks of women, that they are quite a nuisance; and day after day passes, and you see nothing but petticoats. I confess I like the present way of passing my time infinitely better, and as yet I have not found it heavy. If I could chuse, I would be here

alone;—don't mistake me, my dear—not by myself for the whole world; but I mean without any of my own precious family. My mother, poor woman! affects to be what nature never designed her for, a fine lady. She is continually talking of nerves, delicacy, and fine feelings, but sadly misapplies the occasions on which they should be displayed: and as to my father, he absolutely disgusts me with his love of good things. He talks of his dinner whilst he is eating his breakfast; and when the fish and the venison, &c. &c. are placed upon the table, his eyes seem to devour every dish with the same greediness, which he afterwards displays in the actual filling his stomach with them.

It is, surely, a filthy thing to eat in such a manner, and to make it the great business of life. He is likewise very vulgar in all his ideas;—and these are the drawbacks to my present happiness: for otherwise, I have no great reason to complain. I pretty nearly follow my own inclinations; and you know, my education has given me a thousand advantages. There is but one misfortune annexed to it, which is, the inferiority of the rest of my family; for you know, I cannot shake them off as I could a very disagreeable awkward acquaintance. There is that brother of mine; Heaven forbid he should come here!—that is a circumstance that would absolutely quite overpower me;—and yet I fear nothing is more likely than his taking it into his head to, what he calls, *dash*, and make an excursion to this place; and fancy he should be admired; and, by exposing his folly, suppose himself very much the thing; boasting of his riches, and so on; and appealing to me for the truth of what he says, to confirm all his vulgar exploits. He calls me *Charlee!* at every word; and is, in every respect, tiresome. O the wretch!—defend me from his company! I hope to God he will not come here: we do tolerably well as it is. The homely phrases of my father are but little regarded; and whenever my mother is inclined to give herself airs, I take care to check her sufficiently either by words or looks, which, by the ascendancy I have gained, she appears pretty well to understand.—I am easy enough on these points here; for as to Mrs. St. Edward, I detest her, and care not what she thinks; and for St. Edward himself, (don't mention it again, my dear,) he is—no conjuror; only devilish handsome, and has enough sense to be captivated with a certain friend of your's, who gives him credit for his taste, and for whom I have some esteem; and you must allow it is a proof that he is not quite deficient in understanding.

I had written thus far, when I was summoned to the drawing-room, in order to entertain and be entertained by the family I have before mentioned, viz. the Lovefields, except the father, who, it seems, was hunting or racing, having little or no taste for anything else. The mother is a large overgrown creature, with cheeks that look as if they had been made red with saltpetre; two staring goggle eyes; and a mouth sufficiently wide to swallow a calf; she talks loud enough to deafen one; and is full of her own importance. The eldest girl is tolerably handsome, and seems to have acquired a confident stare, and a bold carriage, which I should not have expected to have been the produce of a confined and country education. Perhaps Lord Fitzarnold (who has been their visitor for some time, and who accompanied them,) has taken some pains to modernize her manners. She appeared to be endeavouring to attract his notice by every allurement she could throw out. The two other girls seemed of less consequence in their own opinion, and consequently in that of others.

Mrs. St. Edward received them with that ease and coolness of character which I have before described, and for which I could tear out her eyes: yes, Maria, it is the most provoking, because I fear it is not without its charms; at least there are people who admire such detestable manners. Give me no credit for my penetration, if that odious lord does not



view her with partial eyes. He seems to possess more knowledge of the world, and *certain ideas*, than any body I have yet seen; nor do I half like him. He watches every one's countenance, and looks as if he could read all that passes in the heart; and is the more to be feared, as it is concealed under very elegant manners and apparent good sense. I protest I felt almost afraid of him when he asked me, with a sort of ironical smile, when I had exhibited my equestrian powers, and given Mr. St. Edward an airing; and before I could collect myself sufficiently to answer him, he turned to Mrs. St. Edward, and with a significant sneer, said, "I think you never attempt "the management of the reins." "No," she replied; "it would require more skill and more courage than I can boast of." O the hateful puss! if I can detect anything between her and his lordship, it shall not be lost, nor want embellishments. I will amuse St. Edward with such a story as shall afford me ample vengeance upon the haughty dame.

It seems these people came to invite us to Baintree Park, the name of their place; but the day is not yet fixed. St. Edward addressed me with an impatience equally improper with the ill-timed compliment, to know which day would be most agreeable to me. For the first time, I believe, I gave him a look of contempt, and he appeared frightened and embarrassed; but I could not help it, for Lord Fitzarnold's eyes were rivetted upon us, and there was no bearing their scrutiny. However, I commanded my voice, and said, in a soft accent, there were others to be consulted before me, and that I should be perfectly satisfied with the determination of the rest of the company.

He whispered that I was an angel, which, I hope, was heard by no one but myself. I know not how it was decided; I only heard Mrs. St. Edward drawing out, that she should be happy to contribute to the amusement of her friends; and they soon after took their leave. She then addressed me, by asking what was my opinion of the party who had just left us. I told her, with an affected unconcern, that I had attended very little to them. They might be very good sort of people for anything I knew, but I must be better acquainted with them before I could venture an opinion. As to Lord Fitzarnold, it required but little judgment to give a decided one upon him.

"Indeed!" she replied; "Why, what is your idea of him?"

"A decided one," said I; "that he is an artful, licentious man of the world; perhaps a pleasant acquaintance, but a dangerous friend."

"Then you were acquainted with him before," she replied, with more quickness and spirit than I had ever seen her exert.

"No madam," said I, "I have no more knowledge of him than every woman must have who has seen anything of the world; and I think I have seen enough of that, to speak decidedly of Lord Fitzarnold."

She mused a moment, then lifted up her nasty eyes, and dropped the subject. I never saw any woman whose manners excited so much hatred; I fear I shall affront her.

To-morrow is Sunday, and it seems we are all to go to church. St. Edward appeared to make an apology for the custom, by saying, it was the fashion of the house. Mrs. St. Edward said she never missed going. My mother affected to be pious, and said her nervous head-achs had kept her away longer than she wished, and she should be very happy to have an opportunity of joining in the public worship. I was really ashamed of her cant. My father looked grave, and said nothing; and I asked, with a look full of meaning, if Lord Fitzarnold attended divine service.

“Yes,” said Mrs. St. Edward, “I have seen his lordship there, and have likewise observed that he behaved very properly.”

“O, no doubt,” I replied; “he knows when and where to pay his adorations.” I thought her prim countenance looked a little disconcerted at this speech, which was meant indeed more for St. Edward than for her; but he, I believe, did not even hear it, for he sat picking his teeth with the utmost sang froid, and seemed quite unacquainted with the conversation that was going on.

I shall be heartily glad when to-morrow is over. I suppose I must not take my netting to church; it would disturb the piety of the whole congregation; and yet I am sure I shall fall asleep for want of amusement, which will be as bad; and I suppose St. Edward must not make love at church. I wish in the mean time I had a letter from you; I could read that while I was pretending to say my prayers. Don’t fail to write to me by the Sunday following. Tell me every thing you can think of to entertain me; and believe me

Ever yours,

CHARLOTTE CARROSET.

Arkley Castle,  
Oct. 1, 17—.

Monday, October 3.

I open my letter again my dear Maria, to tell you of the strangest thing, and the most frightful!—Oh I am terrified to death; I have not half recovered; I never shall forget it. I’m sure the house is haunted, and I have seen a ghost. I must never be left alone a moment again whilst I stay at this detestable old place; yet, would you believe it, Maria, I am, only laughed at. But nothing shall persuade me it was a real woman; no, it had all the appearance of a ghost; for though I never before saw one, I had an idea of its gliding along and its horrible looks. Maria, do you think there is any harm in playing at cards on a Sunday, especially after one had been at church? but that was not all, neither. However, I am not at confession, nor obliged to tell you more than I choose, notwithstanding I have been so alarmed. Well, but to keep you no longer in suspense—Yesterday was a terrible stupid day, you know. To be sure, I had a little walk in the park before dinner, with St. Edward, and he made love prettily enough. I asked him how we were to pass the evening, and described to him in glowing colours the delightful amusements we used to have in Paris on that day. He is always pleased with novelty, and expressed a wish, that we could both be conveyed there by some magic power, in order to enjoy those felicities, in the praises of which I had been so lavish. However, as that could not be, we suggested a plan of meeting in the evening in an unfrequented part of the castle, where we might have a game at picquet, and enjoy a little private conversation, without giving offence to the more pious part of the family.

This being arranged, and the evening advanced, we slipped away from the rest, which was no very difficult business; for Mrs. St. Edward was gone to read a sermon, or some such frumpish thing, to her maids; and my father and mother were both fast asleep. St. Edward led me up a narrow staircase, and then through a long passage, at the end of which was a nice little snug room, just fit for our purpose. We laughed at the oddity of our situation; and I never saw St. Edward more gay. We played at picquet for kisses: the time insensibly stole away, and darkness overtook us before we expected it. St. Edward

said he would go for a light, for we did not choose that the servants should know we were there alone. Accordingly he left me, and was no sooner gone, than a door (opposite to that by which we had entered, and which I had not observed,) slowly opened, and the figure of a woman, dressed in mourning, tall and pale, entered the room. She fixed her hideous glaring eyes on me, and seemed to be advancing to where I sat. I gave a dreadful scream, and ran as fast as my fears would allow out of the room by the door I had entered, and along the passage, screaming all the way, regardless of what opinions might be formed from being found in such a place. I know not whether the spectre followed me, for I never once dared turn my head; but the first objects my eyes encountered were Mr. and Mrs. St. Edward, with two of the servants. They plainly saw that I was terrified, and Mrs. St. Edward was endeavouring to soothe me by very kind and compassionate expressions, but that blockhead St. Edward, who is thrown off his guard by every little accident, and has no more command of himself than a child, pushed her aside, and gave even the servants an advantage over us, by saying, "What is the matter, my dear angel? Has any thing alarmed you? What a cursed fool I was to leave you alone in that place!"

Never shall I forget the looks of Mrs. St. Edward: she was turning from me with all that contempt which is assumed by boasted virtue, when I instantly caught her hand, and with more humility and respect than I had ever before shewn her, I thanked her for her polite attention to me, and uttered something like an apology for having alarmed her. I added it was Mr. St. Edward alone that was to blame, for carrying me up at that time in the evening, to look at an old part of the castle, which we could not see for the darkness; and that while he was gone to fetch a light, I had been extremely terrified by the appearance of a woman dressed in black, with a long pale face, and large eyes. St. Edward was by this time a little collected, and corroborated my story, except seeing the phantom, which, he assured me, was nothing but the effect of my fears at being left in the dark.

I still persisted in what I had at first declared, and Mrs. St. Edward, with a very stiff air, said, it was possible; for that three very old and respectable servants, who were past service, resided near that part of the castle; that one of them was a female, though she did not at all resemble the figure I had represented; but for this she accounted by my fears, which of course magnified her figure, and otherwise altered her appearance. I felt myself in an awkward situation, and wished nothing farther to be said; for I could not encounter her looks with the same degree of confidence I had before assumed. I said my fright had made me unfit for company; I pleaded a head-ach; and ordering my maid to attend me, I retired to my chamber. I have seen none of them this morning.

I hate to be exposed in so foolish a way. What the devil do people keep a parcel of antiquated creatures about a house, frightful enough in itself without such appendages, and who render it still more terrible. Did you ever hear of servants being kept because they were old and good for nothing? I suppose this is a whim of Mrs. St. Edward's; I dare say she takes great merit to herself in allowing these odious creatures to stalk about the castle, to add to the antiquity of her family, and to terrify her visitors by their hideous appearance. Well—defend me from such fancies! And yet I cannot be persuaded that the thing I saw was an inhabitant of this world, nor had she in the least the air of a servant. I hope I shall never see it again. This adventure has broken in upon my arrangements; I do not like it; I am at present in a very ill humour; but I wish to send off my letter, and so must once more bid you adieu.

## LETTER XV.

*Mrs. St. Edward to Mrs. Safforey.*

I HAVE had no time, my dear Elinor, to answer your letter\* before, and I fear least you should think I resent your chidings;—indeed I do not; for I wished to thank you for them, and not only to thank, but assure you that they were not thrown away upon me. I have observed an uniform and strict mode of behaviour towards Lord Fitzarnold, and have been rigidly reserved upon every subject that could possibly throw me off my guard; but the character of that gentleman you have mistaken; and I am well assured, he never thought of your friend in any other light than as an acquaintance. I am truly glad, my dear, that you were mistaken; I wish you had been as much so in another character on whom you have spoken even more decidedly. Alas, my Elinor! I am a wretched being! Would you believe it? I am jealous!—at least I think it must be jealousy; and yet I fear I never loved St. Edward sufficiently to feel that sensation, which, I have heard, is a torment the most acute. Indeed, I can well believe it; for had I experienced the same injury and neglect from an object more dear, and placed in the same situation, I think the pangs must have been too keen for me to have supported. May I not, then, derive at least that comfort from my adverse fate? Ah no! Henry Delafore would never have behaved as St. Edward has done! You see I am grown bold, and write a name at length which I once considered as prohibited, and never allowed myself even to murmur it in a whisper; so true is that excellent proverb, *Evil communications corrupt good manners*. But I am keeping you in suspense with my observations, and you will again call me childish, and tell me I write like a silly girl; I will, therefore, endeavour to proceed with more order and method.

You must remember the family I told you I expected, and the curious letter St. Edward sent to announce their intended visit:—I confess it diverted me; so did the family when they came. I soon observed that St. Edward was wonderfully delighted with the young lady, who, to do her justice, is very handsome; but I was perfectly easy on this head, for I knew that he was always governed by the whim of the moment, and that his partialities were of no long duration. In this case, however, I have been mistaken; and I have every reason to believe, that St. Edward loves Miss Carroset with a firm and steady attachment; and in proportion as he loves her, so must he hate me; for I hope we are direct opposites. His attentions to her, though they were carried to excess, never had the smallest effect upon me, except now and then to cause a smile at the extravagance of his admiration, which, I considered, would cool and wear off with the same rapidity it had began. He could neither be said to behave well or ill to me; he seemed not to know that I existed; and was wholly absorbed in the contemplation of one object; it was, therefore, more incumbent on me to fulfil the duties of my province, and to support the character of his wife by my attention to the rest of the company. I declare my spirits are exhausted by pressing civilities on the old people; and am condemned for hours to hear the father's vulgarisms, and the no less tiresome complaints of the mother, who will persist in descanting upon the system of her nerves, and, with a tedious monotony, relate histories which can be interesting to no one creature.

---

\* This letter from Mrs. Safforey does not appear.

To all this I submit, and even bear it with patience, knowing that it will not always last; and although my prospects are not enriched by much diversity, I yet look forward to the time when there will be an end of this visit; when St. Edward will again be more collected; and again I may be considered a novelty, and become his favourite. With these hopes I shut my eyes to the tender looks he gives Miss Carroset, as I do my ears to the gallantry of his expressions. The airs of coquetry, and the allurements she is constantly practising, likewise pass unregarded; nor do I ever shew a look of reproach, except when her allusions border upon indelicacy, then, indeed, I express something like reproof; for that is a kind of conversation I detest.

This mode of behaviour has been pursued for a length of time:—her father will sometimes make a few coarse and ill-timed remarks upon it; but these are never regarded;—and her mother is too much engrossed with her nerves, to attend properly to the conduct of her daughter. However, as we have lived pretty much at home, and seldom see any visitors, except the family from Baintree Park, in whose presence the young lady seems more upon her guard, the absurdity of their indiscretions might have been confined within our own circle, had they set any bounds to their folly.

Last Sunday, a day which should have been marked by better conduct, they chose to retire, when the evening was far advanced, to an unfrequented part of the castle, where they remained till it was too dark for them to find their way back without a light. St. Edward therefore left her for the purpose of procuring one, when this fair-one, who had boasted of such Amazonian courage! who derided religion as a superstitious form! and ridiculed the timidity natural to the sex! was by some strange occurrence thrown into a dreadful alarm. She screamed with the terror of real affright, and her looks expressed so much agitation and dismay, that I could not help shewing my compassion and pity, by endeavouring to soothe and recover her; what then was my astonishment (I had almost added my contempt), when I was rudely pushed aside by St. Edward! Yes, Elinor, roughly pushed away before all the servants, who were drawn together by her screams, and were witnesses of the frantic way in which he addressed her; and whilst he held her in his arms, fondly kissing her forehead and her eyes, speaking to her by the kindest and the most endearing epithets, and cursing himself for having left her to the possible chance of alarm. During this scene I stood motionless; every eye was turned from them to myself alternately; pity, and contempt by turns agitated me; and I flew to my chamber, where a violent burst of tears in some degree relieved me. I believe pride had the greatest share in my affliction, for as to any other passion—Oh Elinor, my pen shall never describe the feelings of my heart upon this occasion! To be thus treated before the servants, and to hear their comments, which I could neither avoid nor reprove; their indignation getting the better of all respect;—one wishing she had been frightened to death; another declaring it was no wonder the devil should come in person to wait upon her; and a third pronouncing that it was only her own wicked conscience that had terrified her.

As soon as I could command a tolerable appearance of composure, I ventured into the drawing-room, where I found Mr. Carroset and St. Edward, both sitting in sullen sadness, and Mrs. Carroset was holding volatiles to her nose. On my entrance, St. Edward turned his eyes toward the door, in hope, as I supposed, of seeing his fair-one return; but she was retired for the night, and after repeated enquiries sent from him to know of her health, the concluding answer was, that she found herself too much indisposed to return any more that evening.

My part now became a difficult one: I own I felt so much resentment, that I thought it would be mean to solicit the notice of St. Edward. Had he shewn any compunction, I would not for a moment have hesitated to have offered him consolation, and assurances of my forgiveness; but of neither was he in any degree solicitous; and I verily believe, so much was he employed in the study of his enamourata, that he totally forgot that there was such a being as myself existing. I therefore addressed Mrs. Carroset, and hoped she had recovered from the fright the alarm had occasioned. She assured me she had not, and added, that her nerves were shattered to pieces, and she had not even power to go and console her dear girl; at the mention of whom, St. Edward started from his reverie, and asked, with an impatient solicitude, how the dear creature was. His manner and expression drew from the old man something like an oath, which he half-mutteringly pronounced; and rising from his chair, and stumping up to me, he said—"We should apologize to you, madam, for all this uproar; and I cannot find words to express my anger at that foolish girl; but it is her mother's fault, who would have her educated in France, where she has learnt such free manners and unrestrained notions, that she is not fit to be a visitor in a decent sober house."

I never heard him express so much good sense before, but it was entirely thrown away upon the major part of his auditors; for Mrs. Carroset only begged him not to shock her weak nerves by any cruel reflections, either upon her, or her dear child; and St. Edward said there was no occasion for apology; he was only afraid that Miss Carroset had received such a shock from the fright, as would deprive us of the pleasure of her company for the remainder of the evening, and, perhaps, he added in a fretful tone, give her a dislike to the house: then turning to me, said, "Do you know how she is?"

I could have made him a severe reply; but I knew not in the humour he then was, how it might be received, and I dared not venture it. I suppress my resentment, and told him I would go and enquire, if he wished it. My manner in saying this was marked, and he might have discovered what passed in my mind, but he thought not of me, and my condescension only subjected me to fresh insult, for I was no sooner at her chamber-door, and making enquiries of her maid, than he was there also; and, upon hearing that she was very much indisposed, he pushed himself before me, and with a voice full of compassionate tenderness, said, "My dear Charlotte, how are you?" It was too much:—I did not stay to hear the answer, but returned to the parlour, where he soon joined me; and the arrival of the supper having perfectly restored Mr. Carroset's good-humour, the evening was concluded with its usual dullness.

Since I came up to my dressing-room I have given you this detail, upon which I expect your opinion; yes, Elinor, your candid free opinion. Do not any longer affect to view me in a different light from that in which I really appear: you must know my wretchedness. Was it not sufficient to be torn from all that was dear to me, to be united to one for whom I felt not even a partiality; to feel the bitter remorse of a broken vow; and to know myself the wife of a man who has not a decided preference beyond the whim of the moment; but that I must bear with insolence as well as ignorance, and be insulted before my own servants, for the sake of a woman, whose conduct has rendered her truly contemptible, even in the eyes of those very servants. Oh, my friend, I will lay aside my pen, but not close my letter till to-morrow.

I resume my pen to inform you of the events of this morning. I find my spirits better than they were last night, and for a reason which might seem extraordinary to those who are unacquainted with my real situation: it is no other than because I am again to be left alone in this castle, which is said to be the abode of supernatural inhabitants. When we met at breakfast, Miss Carroset appeared in a new character: she was grave, formal, and gave herself airs of consequence. After the usual complimentary enquiries were past, she said, in a very serious manner, that the extreme terror she had experienced on the preceding evening, had given a severe shock to her spirits. Whether what she had seen was a real person, or only a phantom of her imagination, was a matter she should never have resolution, or, indeed, inclination to discuss, still less to investigate; but whatever it might be, the result was, that she could no longer stay in the castle; and as Mr. St. Edward had proposed a tour to explore the wonders of Derbyshire, she thought there could not be a better opportunity than the present to make that excursion. The time would be just sufficient to fill up the space which would intervene from the present moment, and when they would be wishing to go to London; and she supposed that this proposition would be agreeable to all parties.

In the mean time, Mr. St. Edward looked all agitation; and her mother was beginning to expatiate upon the weak system of her nerves; when the old man, with the strongest expression of disappointment, vociferated the following elegant harangue: — “Why, Charlotte, you are enough to drive anybody mad. Is there any such thing in the world as pleasing you? Did not we come driving from Margate just as the prime fish were coming in, because forsooth you languished for the retirements of the country? and no sooner are we got to one of the charmingest places that can be, again—the best venison I ever tasted, and the choicest fruit!—and because you could not spend Sunday like a Christian, but be following after some of your d—d French fancies, and raising such an uproar as if the house was on fire, only because a poor old servant came into a room where you had no business; so we are now to be posted again to some heathenish place, where we shall get nothing either to eat or to drink, or a bed to sleep on. If we should chance to light upon any comforts, you’ll be then sure to set up your pipes, and away we must be hurried off again to some other quarter:—and I tell ye now, miss, once for all, that I will not be raced about like a post-horse any longer; for I have neither money, nor inclination, to gratify such whims.”

Miss Carroset stared at him for some moments, and the poor man looked half afraid of what he had said; but when she burst into tears, he seemed again to renew his courage, and was going to add something more to what he had advanced, when our whole attention was engaged by Mrs. Carroset, who had fallen back in her chair in a fainting fit. Mr. Carroset seemed alarmed, and dropt his subject: but whether or not these fits are frequent, or whether the young lady was too much absorbed in her own sorrows, she appeared to take but little notice of her mother, and seemed to consider her fainting as a matter of course. For my own part, I have heard of these fits being counterfeited, and adapted to occasions for which they may be best calculated; but never having been in the way of these deceptions, I can form no decided opinion as to the reality of the disorder. My attention, therefore, was natural, and I gave her all the assistance my province required, as well as that which humanity excited.

She soon recovered, and was carried to her chamber, bewailing the violent disposition of her husband, whose boisterous behaviour had ruined her poor nerves!

Having left her to the care of her maid, and busied myself in superintending some domestic arrangements, I returned to the breakfast-parlour, where I soon discovered that all Mr. Carroset's reasoning had been overruled, and the Derbyshire tour was fixed on to take place in a few days. As neither my opinion or my concurrence had been at all consulted, I had nothing to say on the subject, and I verily believe it would never once have been thought of, had not Mr. Carroset asked me if I had ever been in that county, and if I should like the jaunt as well as the rest of the party?

I replied, "I never was in Derbyshire, and should by no means wish to go now, unless I am particularly desired by Mr. St. Edward." "Not go! my dear lady," said Mr. Carroset; "why to be sure, Mr. St. Edward and all of us must wish and desire you to go."

St. Edward was in earnest conversation with Miss Carroset, but upon this speech, and before I could return any answer, he said, "Why, as to going—you know, it is entirely your own affair. I really think—I—I would have you do as you like: it is no manner of con—— that is, it is not necessary that you should go; and——"

"Mr. St. Edward," I replied, with more spirit and haughtiness than I knew I possessed, "I shall not go, unless my company was particularly wished: neither the journey or the party would afford me any pleasure."

"True," said Miss Carroset, with an air the most insolent I ever saw, "every thing depends upon people's own feelings on these occasions." "Certainly!" echoed St. Edward. I did not deign to give any answer, and soon after left the room.

No, Elinor, I will not go with them; both my pride and my resentment urges me to this determination: I am indeed both proud and angry. There is nothing that calls forth the malignant passions so much as ill-usage; and I cannot help thinking myself ill-used. The style of contemptuous indifference with which St. Edward treats me, is to me far more mortifying than a few hasty sentiments would be, uttered in the warmth of honest anger. I shall not be sorry when they are gone; when I shall roam about this ancient castle by myself, and be less annoyed by the fearful phantoms it is said to contain, than I am by its present visitors. I am the better reconciled to this plan now Lord Fitzarnold has left the country; for although I have no fears either on his account or my own, his behaviour to me having been uniformly proper, yet this artful Miss Carroset has more than once thrown out hints, which would have created suspicions dangerous to my peace, if St. Edward had not been so entirely devoted to her, that he had not a thought to bestow upon any other object. For these reasons, I repeat, I am glad that Lord Fitzarnold has left the country. Could you, my friend, come with your boy, you would be most welcome visitors. Is such a plan an absolute impossibility? Am I condemned to renounce all my comforts? There was a time when I thought myself surrounded by them;—how few are now remaining! How painful is the remembrance of past enjoyments, when we know they are never to return.

A number of circumstances recal events endeared by tender recollection; and the preparations now making for the intended tour, remind me of a little journey we once went. Do you not know what I mean, Elinor? How I wished for the morning! It was one of the finest I ever beheld! How gaily the sun illumined every object! How light were our hearts! We were in a chaise, and Safforey and Delafore rode on each side. They gathered the hawthorn and the wild flowers with which the hedges were then loaded, and flung them into the chaise in profusion. But you will chide me for thus alluding to scenes like these. Indeed, it is a subject on which I hardly dare think, much less trust my pen; and it



is time that I laid it aside. Let me hear from you, if I must not expect to see you; and believe me,

Arkley Castle,  
Oct. 7, 17—.

Ever yours,  
JULIA ST. EDWARD.

## LETTER XVI.

*From the same to the same.*

ALTHOUGH my last letter was so long, and bore so late a date, I am still furnished with fresh matter to communicate, and, I may add, fresh mortification. On the very day I sent away my last, just as we were all assembled in the eating-room, I observed a phaeton driving up the avenue, and before I could express my conjecture of whose it might be, every voice was at once exerted in vociferously exclaiming "It is George! aye, it is him indeed!" "It is the young dog himself!" said the old man, "It is the dear fellow!" said Mrs. Carroset. The young lady only said "Mercy on me! this was what I dreaded!" and St. Edward's looks spoke him pleased at any novelty; and he said, "Aye, he is just in time to go with us!" This brought him to the door; and without waiting for the ceremony of being announced, he rushed into the room in the most boisterous ungentlemanlike manner I ever saw. As to describing him, I know not how to begin!

Figure to yourself a young man, awkwardly tall, with a face not altogether unhandsome, if it had not been disguised by the extreme of fashion, and distorted by grimace; for his hair was absolutely sheared close to his head, and his throat so enormously stuffed out with wrap, that the former bore no sort of proportion to the height and breadth of his body: his coat was dark brown, with small shining buttons; and he had pale pink pantaloons tied with white ribbon. You will, perhaps, wonder at my being so particular in the description of his dress, but really he diverted me, and I am desirous that you should partake of all my amusements, as they seem now to be confined to those of this nature. I believe he made a slight bow, or rather an inclination of the head to me, and then bawled out, in a voice totally void of grace or even modulation, "Well, how are ye all? you see I have followed you;—left all my friends at Margate. Bob Guzzle vows he'll never forgive me;—wanted me to stay and see him run his Juniper against Jack Flyer's bay mare;—goes to Brighton next week;—Prince a Wales expected;—a deal of company;—every house full;—and yet I left all this fun to come to this here rum old place, that looks for all the world like an old church:—good rooms too within side—" looking round and up to the ceiling.

"Good rooms!" replied the father; "aye, faith are they; and good dinners too my boy. My friend here," putting his hand upon St. Edward's knee, "has some of the best venison I ever tasted;—fat, that thickness!" crossing one finger over the other to give him the exact measure; "and yet for all this," he added, "we are going to leave it."

"Leave it!" said the young man; "why when, where are you going! Damme, did not you send me word you should stay a month longer; else, d'ye think I should have been at the trouble and expence of coming all this here way for nothing. To be sure I

liked seeing a new country; and as to money, why you know I don't mind that; but then I expected for to be a little entertained, and seen something of this place."

"I hope you will, Mr. George," said St. Edward, who had not before spoken; "we are now only going to make a little excursion into Derbyshire, and at our return, I shall hope to prevail upon you to prolong your stay to a longer term than a month."

"I thank you, sir," said the young man; "but where are you going? and how do you travel? All trundle into a coach together, hay mother?" turning to Mrs. Carroset, who replied, "I don't know, my dear, but I believe not." He then looked round with the most conscious puppyism I ever beheld, and, with a half whistle, said, "I wonder who will go with me in my phaeton?" implying by his manner it was an honour of such magnitude as would be almost presumption to aspire to;—but fixing his eyes on me, and making a kind of inclination of his head, "I believe, madam, you will be the person I shall choose to take with me." I said I was obliged to him, but I should not go.

"Not go!" said he, with his mouth extended; "what stay here by yourself! No, no,—we'll talk about that bye-and-bye."

By this time the dinner was announced, and at the table every body seemed so occupied, that there was room for very little conversation. As soon as we left the gentlemen to their wine, Miss Carroset and her mother entered into a conversation, but which might, with more propriety, be termed altercation, on the arrival of our visitor, in which the former shewed no very sisterly affection, and the latter a very evident partiality to her son.

"Yes," said Miss Carroset, "your darling favourite, who is no better than a blockhead, is come here to destroy all our pleasure. He is so vulgar, and so full of himself, that one is ashamed to be seen with him; and I declare now he is to be of our party, I would not give a pin to go."

"Don't talk so, my dear Charlotte," said Mrs. Carroset; "you know how it affects my nerves; and as to your dislike to your poor brother, I can't see what it is for. Does not he dress and behave like a gentleman; and has more money in his pocket than he knows what to do with?"

The entrance of the gentlemen put an end to their discourse, and the evening being fine, a walk in the park was proposed, when Mr. St. Edward and Miss Carroset walked by themselves arm in arm, and appeared to be engaged in particular conversation. The young man offered me his arm, with an assurance of having it accepted, which would have disgusted me had I been inclined to take it; but he is not one of those that are easily repulsed. He not only persisted in soliciting me, but he rudely snatched my hand, and was placing it under his arm with a violence I could not endure, at the same time saying, "You shall take my arm! Why I don't come here to say soft things to my mother. Don't you see how kindly my sister hangs on the arm of your husband; and if you had been educated in France, as she was, you would not have had these prudish old-fashioned notions."

I gave him a look of the utmost contempt;—told him I was sorry he did not approve of my manners, but I could not with him lament that they were not formed exactly upon the plan of his sister's. I know not what possessed me to make this speech; I was vexed the moment I had said it; for it not only gave him an opportunity of displaying his folly in the most conceited terms, but subjected me afterwards to the impertinence of Miss Carroset; and what was worse, the resentment of my husband: for this silly coxcomb was no sooner in their company; than he related all I had been saying, swearing

he never was so treated in all his life. This was not lost on his sister, whose face reddened through the rouge; and she retorted upon me by all the spiteful speeches she could invent. St. Edward pretended to laugh it off, but it was visible enough for me to see how angry he was; and I was compelled to atone for the slip of my tongue, during the remainder of the evening, by the greatest attention and complaisance to each party. This was a mode of behaviour which, in some degree, mortified the pride of the young lady, pleased the old people, and so far humanized the youth, as to render him bearable. As to St. Edward, I saw he was in an ill-humour, which he took but little pains to conceal; and seemed to take a cruel and exulting pleasure in seeing me teased by young Carroset, who again offered to take me in his phaeton, to join the party into Derbyshire. I again declined accepting his offer, but with the utmost politeness; for fear made me timid, and a wish to preserve peace made me civil to the whole party.

Ah Elinor, you now behold your friend a hypocrite! Little did I ever suppose that I should have been under the necessity of disguising my feelings; and acting a part my soul disdains: far different were my ideas of a married state. The picture I had drawn was that of an union of hearts which should know no disguise, should have no secrets, no reserves, but confidence unlimited. Are there not such?—but whither am I wandering? I will return to my narrative. I was just got into my dressing-room, and began to feel myself relieved from the embarrassment of being the principal actor in a part for which I am totally unfit, when St. Edward entered, and in a voice of anger told Lucy to retire. He then threw himself into a chair, and looking at me with a degree of fierceness and resentment I had never before seen, he said, “Pray, madam, how is it that you treat my friends in this unhandsome manner? Do you think your beauty a sufficient reason to entitle you to these airs? As to your education, if it has not taught you to behave better, you should be silent to those who have had the advantage of a superior one; and for your prudish airs, they make me sick. You would not have refused the arm of Lord Fitzarnold, nor declined a place in his phaeton, had he offered it; but he knew better than that: you only served to amuse him just whilst he was down here, and had nothing better to look at. You may rest assured he has forgotten you by this time, and so you may as well behave properly to my friends, though they are not graced with titles, or honoured by the approbation of a silly girl, who fancies her conduct and her knowledge superior to every body’s.”

I was going to reply, but after repeating the last words, which he drawled out in the most contemptuous voice, he flung out of the room; and though I intreated him to return and hear me, he would not, but hastened to his own apartment, whither I had not courage to follow him. I passed several hours in ruminating on what he could mean respecting Lord Fitzarnold: it must have been caused by some vile insinuation of Miss Carroset's, for I never, to the best of my recollection, accepted his arm in my life, nor do I know any part either of his conduct or mine, that should call forth the smallest censure. To you I related every thing that passed, and except one instance in which I dropped an unguarded expression, I know of nothing that my own heart should condemn.

When we met at breakfast the next morning, each appeared conscious of some embarrassment, and nobody seemed inclined to begin a conversation. The young man paid all his attention to me, and again importuned me to make one of the party in the intended tour, and as I timidly declined his offers, (for I begin to be afraid of St. Edward,) he the more forcibly pressed them; and I thought the looks of my husband and Miss Carroset seemed to speak a language of suspicion on my conduct: when, therefore, I said

I should remain here during their absence, young Carroset asked me if I should stay here alone, and the looks which were then so directly pointed, made me answer in a hesitation, I believed I should. "Then, by G—d, madam," replied this tormentor, "the laws of gallantry will not permit me to leave you alone, had I no other inducement; but with your permission," bowing to St. Edward, "sir, I shall stay and endeavour to amuse Mrs. St. Edward."

I confess my heart beat with passion I believe, for I felt the colour rise in my face when my husband replied, with the utmost coolness, he had no objection. As soon as I could command my voice into a tone of composure, I begged him not to think of such a thing, for I assured him I should be a very dull companion, and should make a rule of not stirring out whilst Mr. St. Edward was absent. "Oh—what a Gothic notion is that," said he: "Yes, yes,—I shall make you break that pious resolution I promise you: we'll find some pleasant drives and excursions, and you'll soon change your note, or my name is not George." Did you ever hear such a wretch? I was obliged to exert myself by very seriously assuring him, that I should strictly adhere to the plan I had laid down; and I was otherwise well aware, that his ideas of amusement and mine were so totally opposite, that our time would be rendered extremely irksome to each other. He looked conceitedly significant; and during our altercation, St. Edward and Miss Carroset were conversing in a half whisper.

Cannot you, my friend, come to me, should I be reduced to the necessity of remaining alone with this coxcomb? Gladly will I receive any admonitions you may think necessary, to enable me to steer a right course in the labyrinth of unmerited evils which seem to await me, and for which I feel at times totally unequal. Before the family of the Carrosets came, and during St. Edward's absence, I thought of inviting Mrs. Clifford to come and stay with me; indeed, since the Derbyshire scheme has been projected, I began a letter of invitation to her, which I left upon my writing table, but have never been able to find it since. As it happened it was of no consequence. I urged my wishes to see her, and to enjoy her company when I was alone, with that warmth of expression which my sincere friendship for her dictated; but I wrote no particulars of my situation, or gave any of my free opinions, which I so unreservedly relate to you. I would on no account have any of my letters to you seen, they are to you alone, and for many reasons, are only fit for your perusal. The feelings of my heart are apt to be too pointedly expressed, and, perhaps, ought to be less so; but I am got into the habit of writing my thoughts as they flow, and I feel that it eases my heart of oppression. In the belief that you feel an interest in whatever concerns me, and although my narrations can boast of but little variety, and as far as regards myself, can afford you no pleasure, I will nevertheless continue them as a relief from dwelling upon reflections cruelly painful. Adieu, and believe me

Ever yours,

JULIA ST. EDWARD.

Arkley Castle,  
Oct. 11, 17—.

LETTER XVII.

*Mrs. Safforey to Mrs. Clifford.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

I MUST begin my letter with the subject nearest my heart, and I must beg and entreat that, if nothing very particular should detain you at Crayborne, you will, as soon as you conveniently can after the receipt of this, make your long promised visit to our friend at Arkley. I urge this request in the strongest manner, as your going to her at this time will be of the most important service; and the necessity of your visit will be proved by the relation I am going to communicate.

In several letters lately received from Julia, I am led to believe she stands greatly in need of a proper female companion; one who can protect her as well as give her counsel; and I had (on discovering traits in her husband's character which I never suspected) intended to have taken my boy with me, and to make her a visit myself. Every thing was arranged for this purpose, and I meant to have surprised my friend by appearing before her without any notice of my intention, when the enclosed letter arrived from the West-Indies. I make no scruple of putting it into your hands; the contents will secure secrecy, and shew you the reasons why my visit must now be postponed, as well as the necessity of making your's. I will not therefore detain you from reading my husband's letter, and delay you from the necessary preparations for your journey, which I entreat may be speedy, and allow of no punctilious ceremony. The sad predicament in which my friend now stands must apologize for all intrusion, as well as the earnest request of,

Dear Madam,  
Your truly obliged and sincere friend,  
ELINOR SAFFOREY.

Ledcombe, October 17.

## LETTER XVIII.

*Captain Safforey to Mrs. Safforey.*

MY DEAREST ELINOR,

TWO days before your letter arrived, your brother heard of Julia's marriage. The intelligence came from a quarter we could not doubt, and which your's corroborated. I should fail in attempting to give you any idea of what he has, and still does suffer, although he is now much more calm and composed than he was; yet I know not from which I have most to fear, the violence of frenzy which first seized him, and was in some degree vented in the ravings of a lunatic, or the sullen agony in which he pours forth the most melancholy and bitter lamentations. Three nights I watched him in the ravings of despair; and on the two following nature was so exhausted, that I really doubted his existence. Since that time he has been slowly recovering, but with such frequent relapses of wildness and misery, as to render me fearful for the preservation of his senses. It would seem unkind, my dear Elinor, to execrate your sex when I am writing to one who possesses all its excellences, and is entitled to my fondest love; but why did Julia behave thus to your brother? Ah why did she marry? No vows of whatsoever nature could have been more binding than were theirs. These were all upon which he rested his security, all that enabled him to look forward with hope, and mitigated the pangs of parting. It was this which enabled him to combat with sickness and contagion, gave spirit to his heart and valour to his arm. Indeed, my dear Elinor, it is not in my power to describe his sufferings, and I fear a still deeper tragedy will close the scene. I do not mean his death, which might probably prevent still greater misfortunes, I mean his coming to England to investigate his wrongs.

Before this fatal blow to his peace, he had settled every thing for his departure; and in the last few days, when he appeared to possess cooler moments, I urged him to remain here; I assured him I would not leave him, but would stay and do everything in my power to afford him comfort. He replied, with more calm deliberation than I had before observed, or indeed wished, for it seemed the result of a fixed purpose, that it was not now in the power of any human being to give him comfort; he had laid down a plan to which he would adhere with determined resolution. As his leave had been for some time obtained, and he had before only waited for me to accompany him, he should now go immediately, as he did not wish to have me a witness of the consequences which might follow his return.

I dread the effects of his disappointment, and I lose not a moment in giving you this intimation of his design. I hope it will reach you before he arrives; but this is very uncertain, as he will lose no time. I have used every endeavour to get leave to accompany him, but without success.—I think it might be proper to give Mrs. St. Edward some hint of his return, that she may be in some degree guarded against the surprise of seeing him, as well as prepared for the effects of that despair to which she has so unfortunately driven him. The gloomy steadiness he has adopted gives me a fearful presage of his designs.

I know you will do all in your power on this trying occasion, which will likewise be an apology to you for my writing on no other subject. A thousand thanks to you for

your good wishes, for your kind expressions; I return them sevenfold. May every blessing be redoubled on you and my boy, and both be preserved for the arms of, my dearest Elinor,

Your faithful and affectionate  
husband,  
GEORGE SAFFOREY.

— Sept. 19, 17—.

Copyright Chawton House Library

LETTER XIX.

*Mrs. Clifford to Mrs. Safforey.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

I DELAY not a moment to answer your letter; I wish I could as readily comply with your request. A strange fatality seems to hang over our friend, as well as to render our designs abortive. My uncle has been confined near three weeks with an unsettled gout, and for the last few days has been dangerously ill with spasms in his stomach. Were he not in the most imminent danger, and my duty and attendance absolutely necessary, I would not for a moment delay going to our dear Julia, whose situation is indeed most critical. The apprehensions so justly entertained by Mr. Safforey, as well as the hints you have thrown out of St. Edward's conduct, adds to my uneasiness at not being able at this time to leave Crayborne. I know not what to advise, nor how to suggest any method whereby we might prevent the impending danger. I see with you the necessity of your remaining where you are; for should Mr. Delafore arrive, and find you at Arkley, it will admit not the shadow of a doubt but he would follow you thither; an event which, if possible, we must endeavour to counteract. Why does not Mrs. St. Edward accompany her husband in all the excursions he makes? I cannot think it right that she should always remain at home. It may still not be too late for her to make one in their party; or she may be persuaded to follow them. Whatever happens, she will be most safe in her husband's company. But if she cannot gain that succour and protection to which she is intitled by the tenderest claim, may that just God, who permits the distresses of his creatures for the wisest and best purposes, which our finite reason cannot discover, guard and preserve her. In this trust I remain,

Dear madam,  
Your ever faithfully obliged  
ANN CLIFFORD.

Crayborne, Oct. 12, 17—.

LETTER XX.

*Mrs. St. Edward to Mrs. Safforey.*

I AM once more alone, my dear Elinor; and this stupendous castle, contrary to all other instances, exhibits a more lively picture, and conveys more content to my mind, than when its late gay visitors inhabited its walls: yes, the solemn stillness which now reigns in every apartment, the gloomy light admitted by the small panes of glass, and the echoing footsteps, which vibrate in hollow sounds as they pass through the spacious rooms, are more congenial to my mind than the numerous candles, the perpetual hum of voices, and the quick clatter of hasty steps in the busy occurrences of employment. With



much difficulty I evaded the pressing solicitations of young Carroset to take me in his phaeton; with difficulty was I restrained from affronting him; for his behaviour grew to such a height of impertinence, that nothing but my fears of offending the rest of the family kept me from declaring my real sentiments. St. Edward, as I before observed, seemed to take a particular delight in hearing him make fulsome speeches to me, and seeing my distress at being, as it were, compelled to receive them. He had even the audacity to hint to me the terms of fondness upon which his sister and St. Edward were; and added, that it was setting an example worthy my imitation, and which my husband seemed pointing out to me to follow. My patience was nearly exhausted, and I said loud enough for the whole family to hear, that however he might think to profit by so pernicious an example, it only served to fill me with disgust and contempt; and, I added, that if he had any thoughts of staying at Arkley with me, he would find himself disappointed, for from the specimen I had of his behaviour now, I should in that case think myself obliged to be shut up entirely from his company, in order to preserve the honour and credit of my husband as well as my own. I fixed my eyes full upon St. Edward as I closed my speech, half trembling and half assured; but he seemed to be too much engaged with Miss Carroset to regard any thing I said.

On the silly young man my speech had the desired-effect; he bit his lips, and coloured with passion: "Very well, madam," said he, "just as you please: faith I don't want to carry you away against your inclination. I suppose you have been reading romances; but no such things happen now-a-days;—no, no, depend upon it you'll never be carried off by force: but let me tell you, madam, there are those, aye, and handsome ones too, that won't stay to be asked twice to ride in my phaeton. As to staying here, I never intended that; I only said so out of fun, for I'm sure I should find it plaguy dull; and I would not interrupt your meditations in this here old castle: no, no, we'll leave you to make assignations with the rooks, or whatever else you can find."

Vulgar and impertinent as were these remarks, and uttered with the most evident tokens of anger, yet I could in my heart have thanked him for it, since it relieved me from the most irksome attentions, and freed me from the apprehension of being left alone with him.—The following morning was fixed for their departure, and I hope I may be forgiven when I confess that I hailed its approach with joy. St. Edward took a cold leave of me; Miss Carroset, affecting an affable smile, put out her hand with an air of haughty freedom; the old man bustled up and took a kiss, saying he hoped we should meet again sooner than we expected; Mrs. Carroset made some formal speeches like thanks, wished I was going with them, and hoped they should encounter no dangers to terrify and alarm her. She, with her husband and maid, the lap-dog, and band-boxes, very compleatly filled their chariot; St. Edward and Miss Carroset in the phaeton; and the young man in his own alone, in which he stood up to display his figure, bowed with an affected air of carelessness, and drawing the reins up to his chin, smacked his whip and drove off.

Could I be sure of never seeing them again, I should feel still more pleased than I do, but the idea of experiencing the same again hangs over me, and throws a damp upon my spirits, which are at no time very good. Yet, surely, St. Edward will grow tired of his present attachment; I never knew him fond of any thing for such a length of time before; but he seems as much pleased with her now as when she was the novelty of a day. Perhaps he is really in love with her, and never felt that passion in its truest extent before, for I believe there are many spurious sorts; if so, I pity him, and perhaps I ought not to

have told his weaknesses as I have done, even to you, my friend; and yet there is such a relief in unburdening the mind of its griefs, in depositing our secrets in a bosom faithful as one's own, that although I have ever held that woman in contempt who exposed the faults of her husband, yet to you it does not strike me in the same light; or is it that blindness to my own faults makes me thus extenuate them? It may be so, but they seem to me pious confessions, by which my mind is strengthened, and better enabled to support those vicissitudes of adverse fortune to which I am subjected. I endeavour to dissipate reflections, the indulgence of which would absorb all my faculties, by various avocations. I have been since their departure arranging my domestic affairs as far as comes within my province; I have visited my old family, from whom I derive a very great pleasure; and though last, not least, I have been employed in giving a relation of events, trifling indeed in themselves, yet such as, being nearest my heart, are, I am certain, not uninteresting to you. Adieu my ever dear friend. I know if you can, you will come to

Your affectionate,  
JULIA ST. EDWARD.

Arkley Castle,  
Oct. 18, 17—.

#### LETTER XXI.

*Miss Carroset to Miss Baynard.*

Buxton, October 21.

YOU will wonder, my dear Maria, to see a letter dated from this place, and particularly so late in the season, but the weather is uncommonly fine, and Buxton is what is called full, that is, there are several families, and some very pleasant people. You may congratulate me, my dear, on having left that horrid place Arkley Castle, where I was absolutely near being deprived of my senses, and where I was liable to continual affronts from that squeamish thing Mrs. St. Edward. She is left there alone, and it is the fittest place for her. Would you believe it, she affects propriety, or rather prudery, in so high a degree, that she refused to accept a place in my brother's phaeton; and because he said a few gallant things to her, she thought proper to resent it; when, if she had engaged in a little harmless flirtation, we might all have been comfortable, and made the journey pleasant: but she is, as I said before, such an old-fashioned starched piece of goods,—well, I will leave her and her old notions in the old castle as relics of antiquity, while I proceed to give you an account of our journey. To be sure there never was such places as we have been to see! How people can take pleasure in such sights I cannot imagine! They got me into one cavern all dripping with wet, with great stones rolling under one's feet, in a place where you cannot stand upright, and two or three of the most hideous old women to attend you I ever beheld, who talked in a dialect I could not understand, but seemed to express the beauties as well as the wonders of the place; at the same time holding out their shrivelled hands, from which I shrunk back as I would from a toad. St. Edward, George, and my father went to another cavern, which they said was much larger, but I

would not proceed with them, for when I came to the entrance, several of these creatures, whom I can scarce believe to be human, took off my hat without even asking my leave, crushed the feather, told me I must tie a handkerchief over my eyes, and would have put a filthy tallow candle into my hand, in order to light me into this subterraneous abode. I pushed them away, recovered my hat, and desired St. Edward would conduct me back to the inn. He grumbled with a kind of childish impatience, lest he should lose the sight, and would absolutely have refused to return with me, had not the rest of the party promised to wait till he came back. I refused his arm, and walked as slow as I could on purpose to vex him, and so sullen, that I would not speak a word. I have no notion of his giving himself such airs, to prefer going into a nasty damp frightful cave to the pleasure of my company! Was it not insufferable?

When we came to the inn, we found my mother in the chaise with the horses taken off. She was so impressed with fear by accounts she had been told of the cavern, that she fancied the house unsafe, and no persuasions could get her into it. I soon laughed her out of her fears, and she ventured into the parlour, where we waited more than an hour before we were joined by the rest of our party, who seemed highly pleased with the wonders they had seen, all but my father, who declared nothing should ever again get him to venture into such an infernal hole; that he never expected to come out alive; that he felt the damps in his stomach; and he supposed from the appearance of the inn, he should get nothing fit to eat. Aye, it was just what he expected when he left Arkley, to come upon such a wild-goose chase, at such a time of the year too!

During this time George was relating to my mother the dangers he had been encountering in the cavern, where he said he had crossed a wide river under a rock, which hung down so close upon him, that he was put to the necessity of lying upon his back in the boat, with nothing but candles to light them! "Tell me no more, my dear boy," said my mother, "for I shudder to think of the escape you have had." "Aye," replied my father, "and I must needs be hoisted upon a fellow's back as if I was going to be flogged, and so carried through what George calls a river!" "Calls a river!" retorted George; "and so it is a river, and a wide river too!" "Pooh pooh—a little water only," said my father, "which your fears magnified into a river!" "My fears," replied George, "that's a good one! when the truth is, your's were so great, that you shut your eyes all the way to prevent seeing the danger." It is impossible to say how this altercation would have concluded, had not the dinner at that instant made its appearance, which gave but little satisfaction; nothing was good; every one of us seemed to be out of humour. St. Edward promised a better repast where we were to sup; and so indeed it happened, for we find every thing good and in proper order here.

The next day we dined in a large mixed company, which is the fashion at this place, in a very large inn called the Hall. We have a motley set, it is true; but I like to see such a variety of characters, as they afford matter for a deal of amusing criticism. I will give them to you just as they strike my fancy, and pretty much as they are. To begin with the church, as in duty bound, because, instead of setting an example of humility, they are always the foremost in pride and consequence,—Doctor Bullface, a dignitary of the church, his wife and daughters, take up more room, give themselves more airs, and would be considered of more consequence, than any others. Two maiden sisters named Crotchet, are of a more harmless nature: it is the first time they have ever ventured into a public place by themselves, though their age would have insured their safety any time

these last fifteen years; but they still affect an air of childish fearfulness, which subjects them to continual alarms. Alderman Pasty, his wife and niece, are no small fools. The widow of an eminent brewer, with a sickly son, does not think little of herself. These, with a physician, a couple of Irishmen who seem to belong only to themselves, and are of no profession, an old officer on half-pay, with a few other insignificants not worth noticing, compose our party. I have seen no one person here yet that I would be at the smallest pains to make a conquest of, I therefore still retain St. Edward in my chains, notwithstanding he sometimes provokes me, and we have had several quarrels; but to do him justice, he does not seem comfortable till they are made up again.—We were very well received in this goodly company, for we make no despicable appearance. We have three carriages, five men servants, and two Abigail. I overheard, from my window, Doctor Bullface making enquiry who and what we were; and I observed at supper that he relaxed somewhat of his pompous dignity, asked my mother after her nervous head-ach, and if the young lady, meaning me, did not honour Buxton for amusement, not health, as, if he might judge by her looks, she seemed to enjoy an ample portion of that choice blessing. During this speech his wife and daughters were surveying me from head to foot. To some people this might have been distressing, to me it was not: I have none of that mauvaise honte which awkward English-educated girls feel on these occasions; it is long since I experienced any of those symptoms. I returned stare for stare, and would have entered into conversation with them, had I not thought it would have flattered their pride, of which they seem to have a full share; and St. Edward that moment coming up and taking my hand, I walked off.

George amuses himself in playing off the two Miss Crotchets, and inventing stories to alarm them. It is very well he has found such an exercise for his genius, as he is a sad boor, and would be an eternal plague to me, if he had nothing else to engage his attention. As to my father, he does pretty well, as the table is in general well provided, and that is all he cares about; though he frequently sends sighs of regret for the venison at Arkley. St. Edward mentioned sending for some, but he does not love trouble, and I shall not remind him of anything there. By the way I am inclined to think his carasposa will not pass all her solitary hours alone: she could not possibly have been so averse to either of my brother's plans, if she had not a pleasanter one of her own. I gave a little hint of this to her husband, but he either did not or would not understand it. What a delectable treat a discovery of this nature would be! He is warm in all his pursuits; and I think he would not be deficient in resentment. Who knows but your friend may one day be the sovereign lady of Arkley Castle! I say the sovereign, because I would admit of no competitors. Ah—how I would change the whole arrangement there; ferret the old spectres out of their holes; and totally annihilate those hideous old servants about whom they make such a fuss. These are castles which I build at present, but which may be as firm as that at Arkley in some future time.—The Misses Bullface have asked me to accompany them in a walk: perhaps they may think this mighty condescending, but I shall soon give them to understand my opinion on that subject. However, it obliges me to lay down my pen, but I will not close this at present.

These girls are insufferably proud; they think nothing is equal to fat preferment, rolling at ease, and looking down upon their inferiors. I was perfectly sickened with their great acquaintance; nothing under a title seemed to come under that denomination.

“When papa dined with Lord this, and mama went a shopping with Lady that; and we were asked by Sir Thomas what we thought!” This was the nature of their conversation: to be sure I gave myself as many airs in my turn, though not exactly in the same way; and thus we parted with no very good opinion of each.

When I returned to the Hall I perceived that something more than usual was in agitation, and although I saw no new faces or any fresh retinue, it was confidently announced that a lord was arrived, and not only a lord, but Lord Robert Carrington, brother to the Duke of Delmont.—I hastened to my apartment; I summoned my maid to arrange my wardrobe, and from it I selected such of my paraphernalia as I thought most captivating, and best adapted to looks which I determined should be pointed to do execution. Yes, Maria, I should like to hook this lord; it would be a conquest worthy your friend; and although I had arranged in my mind a plan of execution respecting Arkley and its present inhabitants, yet the arrival of this nobleman has caused my ideas to soar to a much higher region. I dare say I shall have many competitors even in this narrow circle; but I defy their powers:—I think I may without vanity presume I have more knowledge in the arts of conquest than all the misses here put together. You, my friend, too, must give place to so important an undertaking, so farewell for the present. Perhaps I may again add more before I conclude.

I have seen and conversed with Lord Robert Carrington, Maria! and he is just such a person as I should like to lead captive in my chains; I say literally as to person, for he is too reserved, too particular, too scrutinizing, too conscientious, and let me add, too modest for the chosen companion of my heart. But that you may form some judgment, I will give you a sketch of what has just passed. When he made his entrée, he joined our motley set with an ease of manners which spoke him the man of fashion, and took his place at our table. Doctor Bullface affected to know him; and after puffing out his cheeks, erecting his eye-brows, and pretending a consequential cough, he made his way next to him,—hoped his grace the Duke of Delmont was well, and that he had the honour of seeing his lordship in perfect health. The satisfaction he had of meeting him at this place would, he hoped, not be lessened by hearing that his lordship came to Buxton on account of his health. To this profusion of civility Lord Robert answered with the utmost politeness, and assured the worthy doctor, that he did not come here for his health, but merely took it in his way as he was passing through the county. These compliments being over, Lord Robert addressed one of the Miss Crotchets, as she was placed next him; but whether or not she had never been spoken to by a lord before, or for what other reason I know not, but she coloured, hesitated, and gave him no answer.

I wanted to enter into conversation with him, and he seemed particularly to distinguish me by his looks, but it was absolutely impossible; that insufferable Doctor Bullface engrossed him wholly; and such was his pride and pomp that he would not deign to speak to any other person. When my father said “Well doctor, have you rode out this morning?” a stiff nod was the only answer; and when somebody else asked if he had seen the papers, a haughty “No!” was the only return. Lord Robert did not appear to like his situation, so encircled by the doctor’s greatness: he tried several times to make the conversation more general, but he failed in the attempt; and it was rendered still more unpleasant by my stupid brother, who, thinking to make himself conspicuous, bawled out from the bottom of the table, “Is there any news my lord? I should be glad to hear

something that was new, for we are all getting d—d dull!” Doctor Bullface contrived to engage his lordship’s attention, so as to prevent his giving any answer to the ill-timed question of George, which served to make the company more reserved than they were before, except one or two, who endeavoured to stifle a laugh; and I expressed my resentment sufficiently by my looks. But this was to be a day of mortification for me; for when a walk was proposed, and I thought I might secure a chance of introducing myself to his lordship, that foolish fellow St. Edward came up, and taking my hand, addressed me by the appellation of his dear, a silly way he has, which he knows not how to confine to proper times and places. This led to a most unpleasant mistake; for having reached the ear of Lord Carrington, he instantly supposed us to be man and wife!—no great proof you will think of his sense; for few men and their wives use such endearing epithets in these days: however, upon hearing the name of St. Edward, he immediately asked if I was not Mrs. St. Edward, and being answered in the negative, he professed a sort of wonder, and honoured me with a very scrutinizing look. I had soon after this an opportunity of exchanging a few words with him, and then formed that opinion of his merits which I gave you at the beginning of this: nevertheless I shall not abandon my project for a little difference in opinion; perhaps I can adopt my sentiments to his! I would make a greater sacrifice to become a duke’s sister! I will conclude my long letter in the delightful hope that I shall succeed; and believe me in all situations, my dear Maria,

Ever yours,

CHARLOTTE CARROSET.

## LETTER XXII.

*Lord Robert Carrington to Mr. Audley.*

Buxton, October 31, 17—.

WHEN I left you, my dear Audley, I had no design of visiting this place, still less of making any stay here, nor, indeed, do I know that I shall remain another day; and when I tell you I have not met with a single being I can call my acquaintance, you will wonder that I have already passed three days at Buxton. The variety of odd characters which compose the present inhabitants of the Hall, on my first introduction to them, in some degree disgusted me: on a nearer acquaintance, their several humours served to amuse me; and as I became intimate, I also became interested and diverted. It is no matter how a man passes his time or where, provided he can derive satisfaction from the companions with whom he associates. There are few from whom we can gain knowledge, but there are many from whom one may glean some information; and in a mixture, such as forms our present society, a knowledge of the human heart is more easily obtained than in a more select circle. As this is a study which no man can be too well acquainted with, I therefore do not think my time absolutely thrown away in devoting a short portion of it to this investigation.

I shall not pretend to give you each character as it presents itself, but relate some of our conversations as they happened, by which you may form your own opinion of my

new acquaintance; and were I a vain fellow, I should begin with telling you, that a pair of the most brilliant eyes I ever saw have spoken more in my favour than words could express. "How do you like Buxton, my lord?" said Miss Carroset; "I am afraid it has not charms sufficient to give us hopes that your lordship will honour us with your company for any time." This was uttered in the kindest accents, from lips of coral guarding rows of pearls. My answer was I hope expressive of the honour she did me, but it would have been returned with more gallantry and better grace, had not a small mistake at the moment helped to embarrass my manners by confusing my ideas. A Mr. St. Edward, to whose name I was not quite a stranger, had addressed this fair-one by the appellation of "My dear!" I had heard Mrs. St. Edward was beautiful, and I was such a confounded old-fashioned dog, as to form the strange supposition that they were man and wife; and I had but just time to correct my exploded opinion, when the before mentioned speech from the lady required my attention. In this awkward moment, therefore, I am afraid I acquitted myself but ill, and still added to my want of gallantry by asking (which I could not for the life of me avoid,) where and which was Mrs. St. Edward; for by the freedom of his address to Miss Carroset, I supposed her to be the sister of his wife, who, I imagined, must needs be in the company.

It was an unlucky question:—the languishing softness of the young lady's eyes was instantly changed to a fierceness of expression by no means engaging, and she hastily replied, "Mrs. St. Edward! do you know her? Why she has no taste for travelling or mixing with company; she takes more pleasure in sitting whole days in a hideous old castle, finding out beauties of nature in the park and the grounds, taking sketches of them, and making discoveries of this kind, which seem to suit her taste; and indeed she is a very odd character take her altogether." "But surely these are amiable traits! Are you not related to her?" "Related to her!" repeated Miss Carroset; "Heaven and earth forbid! I assure you, my lord, all these simple amusements are only a pretence of innocence. Visiting the sick, administering to the wants of the poor, were all mighty pretty things to talk of, but charity covers a multitude of sins: and I hope I am not ill-natured, but I could venture to pronounce that Mrs. St. Edward, with all her love of solitude and retirement, is at this very moment *not alone!*" "But my dear Miss Carroset," said I, and taking her fan, began flirting it with great gallantry, for I had my reasons for wishing her to go on, "does her husband suspect any thing of this nature? Is he not fond of her? They have not I think been married long; and as her friend, it is pity but you would advise her, and with your superior knowledge of the world, admonish her against appearances which may be prejudicial to her peace." "O—as to that, she was sufficiently intreated to accompany us here, but she had her reasons, I dare say." I was going to reply, when Doctor Bullface interrupted the discourse, by begging pardon for breaking in upon our tête-a-tête, but his daughter, Miss Georgina Bullface, had brought one of the most beautiful spars to shew my lordship; "And really," said this stately prebendary, "she has shewn a wonderful taste in the collection she has made since we have been here, and wishes to have your lordship's opinion."

I answered him, I am afraid, rather impatiently, though with due respect to the young lady's attention, for I wanted to hear more of Mrs. St. Edward, about whom I am in some degree interested, for a reason you shall some time know. I respect the church as a body, but there are members of it which I do not respect. Doctor Bullface is a sycophant, who runs after titles, and has gained his dignities by meanness. He had been

giving me a history of the people who are here, all of whom he held in the most sovereign contempt; not for any particular vice in their characters, but because they had most of them gained an independency from their industry, being, as he said, sprung from trade, and ignoble of descent; not but if the doctor's own pedigree had been traced, it could not have boasted of more noble ancestors than those on whom he looked down with so much insolence. Mr. St. Edward, he said, was of good family, and was now in possession of a good estate; but who the Carrosets were he did not seem to know. The father was vulgar, and had evidently been in trade, but the daughter seemed to know something of genteel life, and were she not so very forward and conceited, he should not object to his girls being acquainted with her; but as to the son, he was the most incorrigible puppy he had ever beheld. "And it is a cruel thing, my lord," said the doctor, "that one is obliged to associate with people of this cast. For my own part," continued he, "though I am not proud, I confess I always seek the company of my superiors, and my dear Mrs. Bullface and myself have so brought up our girls, that they never degrade and let themselves down, by making any acquaintance with those beneath them; and we have given them educations which will, in some degree, supply the want of fortunes, and fit them for situations in life, should they be called into them, of the highest rank."

Mrs. Bullface is a mere echo to her husband; and the girls are two strange uncouth things, with whom I can form no intimacy: instead, therefore, of talking to the young lady on the beauties of spars and minerals, I asked the doctor if he did not think it odd, that Mrs. St. Edward, who, I had been informed, was a very beautiful young woman, and lately married, should not accompany her husband here. He said he knew nothing of them: it was not the age for married people to be much together; but he never investigated matters of that sort. I could have answered this in a way he would not have liked, but he has lived too long under the influence of his own opinions to be easily put out of them, and I am not going to set up for a reformer of manners.

A Mr. Tracy added to our group at supper. He said he came from London; and upon being asked for news, he replied that the papers must have informed us of events later than any he could bring, as he had been five days coming from the metropolis. "Five days!" repeated young Carroset; "then I suppose, sir, you have been ill upon the road!" "No, sir, I have not; I never was better in my life." "Why then," replied the young man, "how did you travel?" "In my own carriage," said the stranger; "And your own horses I presume," replied Carroset. "Yes, sir." "Why even then you must have been a devilish time crawling on!—surely you had better have posted! You have only a pair I suppose?" "But one, sir," returned Mr. Tracy. "O—a gig: well, but the devil's in it if you might not have come at a better rate, or your horse must be devilishly out of condition!" "Not the least, sir: there is not a horse in England in better condition, or he should not draw me." "Well, sir, I do not comprehend your mode of travelling; but rot me if I had not rather get into a stage-coach, which does now and then whip off pretty rapidly, than I would be condemned to be five days creeping from London to Buxton!" "It is very possible you would, sir," replied Mr. Tracy; "and could I feel myself comfortable in a stage-coach, I should have no objection to travelling in one; for, on account of weather, and other inconveniences, I might find it preferable to the carriage I have; and I would by no means have you suppose, that I am above travelling in a stage-coach; I think them excellent modes of conveyance: but I have particular notions, and as I make these excursions to afford satisfaction to my mind as well as health to my body, I cannot for the life of me



enjoy the beauties of the country, or sit at my ease, while the noblest animal of the brute creation is under the most excruciating and cruel tortures, that he may, by a velocity more rapid than can be pleasing, bring me a certain stage at a certain hour. The poor creatures are allowed a very short portion of time for their rest, but just long enough to cool their limbs, which, by the stiffened state they are then brought to, subjects them to the merciless blows of the horsekeeper to bring them again into their harness, where they are exposed to the no less merciless coachman, who whips them on till a fever relaxes every joint, and they are loaded with the accumulated pangs of torture and disease. I confess the weakness of my nature is such, that were I to be gratified by the most beautiful scenery, were my body indulged in the most luxurious ease, and my mind enlightened by the most sublime conversation, it could be no counterpoise for the feelings I should experience at the sufferings of these poor animals: but when, added to this, I should be crammed into a space not half large enough to fit in comfort, be whirled past the most beautiful prospects without a possibility of seeing them, compelled to endure the dirt of the inside passengers, and be annoyed by the discourse of those without, whose numbers are increased by the sordid avarice of the coachman, till the roof is in danger of falling in upon you,—these, sir, exclusive of the perils of an overturn, and numerous other accidents, are my objections to a stagecoach, a conveyance originally meant to be safe, pleasant, and humane. It is the inhumanity likewise which operates on my mind against posting: you are certainly yourself then more at ease, but the poor horses not a whit more; and you have the additional mortification to be an eye-witness of the injuries they receive. Thus, sir, I have explained my reasons for preferring an uncouth vehicle, constructed for convenience rather than show, to any more elegant, fashionable, and rapid method of travelling; and when you see my horses, for my servant rides one, which draws alternately, you will not be surprised at the length of time I have been coming from London.

Mr. Tracy ceased speaking; and whatever opinions his sentiments had excited in his auditors, they were not expressed; every one preserving a profound silence, which I was first to break; for I must confess, so much did my ideas coincide with Mr. Tracy's, particularly in the treatments of horses, that I could not help warmly applauding his sentiments. Young Carroset yawned, threw himself back in his chair and said, "Aye, why he believed a stage-coach was but a bad conveyance; but every one as they liked: for his part he was partial to getting on. Keep moving, hey George?" said the old man; while his lady mother protested it quite shook her nerves to see how he drove sometimes; but then to be sure, she added, the horses were such pretty creatures! Miss Carroset observed, that she thought moderate travel was best; but men were in general such impatient creatures! This led to a conversation too trifling to relate. We concluded the evening with a dance. I was honoured with the hand of both Miss Bullface and Miss Carroset in the course of the evening. They are rival beauties, but the latter has every personal advantage, though I am mistaken if a great share of duplicity does not pervade her mind. She adapted her opinions to mine in too studied a manner, however flattering the idea: I fear I did not make the returns she seemed to be laying out for. Miss Bullface too was not deficient in her modes of attraction; and the doctor, who was joined by his lady, whispered me that Miss Carroset was not just the character with whom they wished their daughters to associate; that she had acquired a certain boldness from her French education; and her conduct towards Mr. St. Edward, who was a married man, was not strictly decorous. I

think I had observed this before; but were I inclined to indulge my vanity, I might chance to rival this benedict: I have, however, no such intentions. My stay here will not be long. If I find Tracy, on a further acquaintance, to be the intelligent man I suppose him, it may be an inducement to keep me here a few days longer.

I wish to gain some information respecting our friend Fitzarnold: I cannot hear where he now is. He was some time since in Staffordshire, on a visit at a gentleman's house in the neighbourhood of Mr. St. Edward: I have reason to think he is not there now. I named him to St. Edward, but he appeared to know nothing of him.

I have had a great deal of conversation with Tracy. He has a fund of knowledge, and is a very singular character. I have received more information from his opinions than I ever did before. He has descanted upon serious subjects in a manner which has led me to see them in a light entirely new. I am not, I hope, among the worst of mankind, but I find I have much to reform; and I shall think myself indebted to his counsel for a clearer conscience than I might otherwise have experienced. How much more is to be gleaned from his sensible well-timed remarks, than from the pride and consequential nothings which flow from the lips of the stately Dr. Bullface. Surely, if pride ever appears in its most hateful form, it is when displayed by an order of men, whose profession should be marked by humility, as one of the Christian virtues, more particularly exemplified in the life and doctrines of their great master. You see I have already profited by the lectures of my new acquaintance; not that I ever looked upon sacred truths in a light manner; but I am not going to sermonize, unless my letter should come under that denomination by its length, to which I will not add, except to inform you that I shall leave this place before a letter from you can reach me here; and always remain,

Truly yours,

CARRINGTON.

## LETTER XXIII.

*Miss Carroset to Miss Baynard.*

MY scheme upon Lord Robert Carrington has failed; I despise him. He is as silly and as squeamish as Mrs. St. Edward, and adopts all the old-fashioned absurd notions of that frumpish fellow Tracy. How sick I should be of a husband who would be every moment giving me lectures upon propriety of conduct: O defend me from such an one! Yes, I assure you Lord Robert is absolutely pious, and bores one to death about principles of virtue and honour; very good things in their way, perhaps, but not fit to be brought and exhibited at a public place. I now relinquish all hopes of a coronet, and all its fascinating appendages; I must content myself with being plain Mrs. St. Edward, and to secure that I will spare neither time nor trouble. I have, as I told you I would, already thrown out some hints to St. Edward, in order to found a jealousy, upon which I must build my fabric. I had made several attempts of this nature before I had so much interest in the cause as I now have, and merely for a matter of amusement, and to promote a little dear mischief; but he either had so little of jealousy blended in his composition, or so implicit a confidence in his wife, (I know not which,) that he never appeared to understand any of my hints, and never wished to have them explained. This, however, is of little consequence; I have a grand effort in reserve, and I think the time is now arrived when I shall put it in execution.

I love to tell you my plans; for though I shall abide by no decision but my own, I take a pleasure in your approving and admiring my ingenuity. Know then, Maria, and as you hear be secret, that during the time I was on the visit at Arkley Castle, I went one day accidentally into Mrs. St. Edward's dressing-room: she was not there, but on her table lay an unfinished letter to some female friend, as I suppose, but it was marked by no particular address, and might have been designed for either sex. No matter how that was, it suited my purpose. I took the liberty of concealing it, and have preserved it against a time when it might be of infinite use in my operations.

Yesterday I asked him if he did not think Mrs. St. Edward must be very dull in that old castle by herself; he said, "Yes, it must be dull;" but added, "you know it was her own choice; she might have been here if she pleased, therefore she can't complain of any restraint upon her inclinations; and she likes solitude, and has various ways of amusement." "And do you think," I replied, "that she had no particular reason for wishing to stay there by herself?" "No,—no other reason than because she did not expect to find any pleasure in coming here." "And do you think," I replied, "that she is quite alone?" "Yes, I suppose so; who should be with her there?" "Why—but it may be only conjecture, and," I hesitatingly said, "I would not on any account give you suspicions of circumstances which, perhaps, you would be the last person to know, and of which you seem so entirely ignorant, that—" I was going to proceed, but the spark was kindled, and it was not time to let it blaze yet. "What is it you mean? tell me: Do you know anything of which I ought to be informed? Do not keep me in suspense." "Indeed, Mr. St. Edward," returned I, with great gravity and consequence thrown into my countenance, "it is a subject on which I must beg to be excused speaking, that is, speaking my real opinion. There is a delicacy, nay, danger in mentioning subjects of this nature; and I

would be the last person in the world to give you ideas of Mrs. St. Edward's being partial—that is, I mean, having a preference—a not being exactly what you wish her.” So saying, I left him to the workings of his fancy. I have begun with a gentle dose, the next shall be stronger; and I am certain from what I have observed, it will not fail in its operation. In the mean time, to you I will confess my weakness, and the restless jealousy which pervades my active mind: it is this,—although I cannot build my own advancement upon any structure but the ruin of Mrs. St. Edward, which must be the consequence of St. Edward's jealousy, yet does not that very jealousy, necessary as it is to my design, imply a degree of love? Yes, where there is no love there can be no jealousy; it is love's truest standard; and such are my fine feelings, that I cannot bear St. Edward should retain one particle of that tender passion for any one object but myself.

Yet how to arrange my plans without raising these emotions I know not. If he has no jealousy he has no love; and if he has no love he would have no jealousy; then of course he could have no resentment, the usual concomitant of that passion; and resentment, if well nurtured, will soon produce hatred: only I must wait these charming effects; and as I am the principal actor in the drama, I must observe the gradations of these passions, and with patience more than human be a witness to the expiring flames which once, and that but lately, twisted the fetters of enamoured fancy, which, when once firmly united, must cause a pang to be undone. Yet such a task is mine, Maria: but there is a necessity far more powerful than any claim I have yet mentioned. I am no whimperer; and as to love, my heart has long been steeled against its utmost incitements, and left callous to all its attacks; and besides, I never intended to lead a single life. St. Edward is the kind of husband I can manage as I please, for I have gained an amazing ascendancy over him now; and when once I can break off all his regard for that doll of a wife he has at present, I shall fear no rival. You shall hear what progress I make in my enterprize, and I have no doubt but success will crown my wishes.

Adieu,

Ever yours,

CHARLOTTE CARROSET.

Buxton, Oct. 25.

#### LETTER XXIV.

*Mrs. St. Edward to Mrs. Safforey.*

Arkley Castle, October 27, 17—.

GLOOM and solitude, my dear Elinor, have again infected me with superstition and dread: I should be ashamed to confess my fears, or relate my weakness to any other but such a dear friend. My spirits, whilst they were engaged by passing events, or agitated by resentment, were supported from that drooping languor which I now feel so very oppressive. I have had recourse to books, to music, to drawing, besides inspecting

domestic arrangements, and yet the day hangs heavy; and when the evenings begin to close, which you know at this season is early, I feel my spirits scarcely equal to encounter the many hours between that and my bed-time. Time and use would, perhaps, reconcile me to this solitude, and I might grow so enamoured of my own company as to wish for no other; but this is not all. This castle is calculated to inspire terror. Last night I was greatly alarmed. I had been walking in the park as long as I deemed it safe to be alone; I had given way to a variety of melancholy recollections; I traced the opening of my early prospects, with the pleasing gaiety they then promised; I recalled the youthful days we had passed together; the innocent and delightful amusements we had shared; the playful exploits of an object ever dear to my memory; and the harmless sports in which this trio used to engage: time was not then marked by leaden wings; ah, no,—it flew with too much rapidity. I sat ruminating on these past pleasures, till the lengthening shadows began to depart; the owl hooted, which was returned by melancholy echos; the moon appeared rising behind a dark cloud;

And drowsy tinklings lulled the distant folds.

My mind was in unison with the scene: I could have remained there for a much longer time, but fear impelled me to return to the castle. I retired to my dressing-room, where, after beguiling a few tedious hours, I prepared to go to bed. I had dismissed Lucy, and was nearly undressed, when my ear was arrested, as once before, by a few notes of soft music. As the sound proceeded from under the window, I concealed my light in a closet; I wrapped my bedgown round me, and went on tip-toe to the window. I gently opened the shutter, and as the moon shone very bright, I could plainly distinguish a man, whose figure and appearance were not of an inferior order. I started, and drew back; I felt alarmed in a way I cannot describe: my mind had been oppressed with unusual lowness the preceding part of the evening, and the sound of the music gave me a fear annexed to that one of supernatural lights and noises.

I stood for some minutes, as if recollecting myself; I felt afraid to approach the window a second time; my trembling limbs would scarce support me; and I plainly heard gentle footsteps passing to and fro. I knelt down, I prayed for protection; and I felt my courage revive. I again ventured to the window; all was still, and nothing appeared. I had almost assumed confidence enough to open it, but I instantly suppress the idea, as no curiosity could possibly justify hazarding myself to such an exposure; I therefore gently fastened the shutter, and having resumed my light, I searched every part of the room, the closet, and under the bed; I fastened the door, and I again addressed that Being, on whom alone we can rely for safety.

During the first part of the night, my mind dwelt upon a thousand images of fear and dismay; but towards morning, I sunk into a sweet and composed sleep, which sovereign balm so renovated my faculties, and restored my spirits, that I did not recollect the circumstances of the preceding night with that degree of horror they had at first occasioned. Nevertheless, my dear Elinor, I am extremely puzzled by the adventure. Were I inclined to give way to the superstitious opinions, which pervade the inhabitants of the castle, I could not in this instance allow my fancy to be deceived. The sounds I heard were those of some instrument, and the form I saw was that of an inhabitant of this world. Where or why he comes here is beyond my comprehension. I have not stirred out

today, though it is uncommonly fine weather; yet I am not afraid; I see no reason to be apprehensive; for what should any being attempt that could signify to me, and what advantage would be gained by alarming me? I have servants enough to protect me, and they seem well disposed and attached. I could indeed wish that I had some female friend, to whom I could confide such secrets as these; for I do not love to tell servants any thing that has the appearance of marvellous, they are so ready to add so much of their own. Had I told Lucy what I saw and heard last night, it would by this time have been magnified into a dozen men, with a band of music. I wish Mrs. Clifford could have come; but when her uncle is in so dangerous a state, it would be cruel to desire it. A still dearer friend too would have been still more desirable; but I must likewise admit your excuses, for I know there must be cogent reasons, or you would not have allowed them to act against your wishes. I hope and trust I am safe, and that this unknown, whose serenades so much alarm me, will confine himself to them alone, or what is still better, to hope that I shall neither see or hear any thing more of him.

I believe there are few young women that are just in the same predicament as myself. I have been married little more than three months, to a man whose conduct at that time led me to believe he preferred me to all other women; I am not conscious of having given him any reason to complain of my want of affection, or any other flagrant breach of duty; yet he has not only totally neglected me, but has shewn a decided preference to another, and has left me a prey to melancholy reflections, as well as exposed to the dangers and attempts of the midnight assassin, or more dreaded invader of my peace. Yet I have not the most distant guess at the person of my nocturnal visitor; but am inclined to suppose, that he is still more formidable than a robber, inasmuch as any intimation of a person of this description watching me at such an hour, would be more injurious to my reputation, than any deprivation of my property could possibly be; and where a woman has lost her best protection, she is left to the mercy of a thousand wicked agents of malice and revenge, with no other shield but her own rectitude and innocence. These are truths which make me very sad; and there are moments when still more acute reflections render my heart the seat of misery. I am sorry, my dear Elinor, to close my letter with such mournful ideas, but I feel an uncommon lowness of spirits, and the longer I write the more keenly I find they oppress me. I will, therefore, no longer dwell on ideas so painful, but with the most fervent good wishes bid you adieu.

Ever yours,

JULIA ST. EDWARD.

## LETTER XXV.

*Miss Carroset to Miss Baynard.*

Buxton, October 30, 17—.

MARIA! the fates work for me! nay, they improve upon my plan! This morning an express arrived from Arkley that Mrs. St. Edward was gone off; the pious, proper, uniform Julia; she that was held out as a pattern for her sex, that looked with disdain on every one who had not sufficient art to affect her prudish affectation; yes, this fair paragon has eloped! When I told St. Edward I thought she had some plan for wishing to remain alone at Arkley, I really did not suspect she had any. I thought I could discover that Lord Fitzarnold had a penchant for her, but so artfully did she conceal her feelings, I never could discover that she had the most distant partiality for him; and I frequently wondered at it, when I considered the slights she received from her husband, than which nothing is more likely to make the gentlest spirits retort; but these opinions must be entirely confined to your own breast, for to you alone I confide them. I hold a very different language to others; I pretend to have known her propensities long ago, and shew no sort of surprise at her elopement; and when St. Edward came to tell me the news, he seemed mad with rage, jealousy, and compassion: yes,—with compassion; for he accused himself for having neglected and forsaken the sweetest creature in the world, whom he had left a prey to the vile machinations of some concealed enemy. This, Maria, was the language he held forth to me, even to me his distinguished chere amie. Was it in human patience to endure such mortification? Yet I commanded a coolness I did not feel. Now was the moment to fix my fate for ever. I told him he was deceived; that to my certain knowledge Mrs. St. Edward had carried on a secret intrigue with somebody for a long time; that she staid there alone the better to facilitate her amour; and that I had a convincing proof of her infidelity in my pocket, which should have remained for ever concealed, had not this flagrant act of her elopement made it unjust to conceal any longer such proof of her iniquity. In saying this, I drew forth the unfinished letter I had purloined from her dressing-room, which ran thus:

“Mr. St. Edward means to accompany the family who have been our visitors into Derbyshire. I know you wish to enjoy my company alone, and then indeed it will be on every account most desirable. I know the tender concern you take in my interests, and I anticipate with sincere affection the happy hours we shall pass together, uninterrupted by any other visitors. I have a thousand things to say to you, and I depend on the reciprocal communications you may have for me. Lose not a moment, my dear friend, in coming to me when I shall inform you I am alone, and be assured that my affectionate regards can never be altered, although—”

When St. Edward had read this fragment, which he was well assured was the identical hand-writing of his wife, all the tenderness which a few minutes before had found a place in his heart, at once gave way to the most bitter invectives against her: and I came in myself for a share of his anger, for he asked me, with the fury of a madman, why I did not shew it him before? and why I did not inform him of every thing I knew

before we left Arkley, that he might have detected the wretched culprits, and if possible have preserved her's and his own honour?

I knew not what arguments to use in defence of my own conduct, and to corroborate the evidence, which already appeared so much against her, but required farther proofs to criminate her character. In reality, I suppose there was something between her and Lord Fitzarnold, and I hope there was, because it will in that case bring things sooner to an issue, and I shall feel my conscience more easy than I should had she been entirely innocent; for though I do not in general allow qualms of that sort to cramp my enterprising genius, yet if she had been accused and sacrificed quite wrongfully, I should not have felt so comfortable when I am the mistress of Arkley Castle, lest if she had broke her heart, her ghost should have taken it into its head to terrify and alarm me in that place, which seems to be the residence of evil spirits; not that I shall ever reside there for any length of time, for I shall make St. Edward take a house in London; I should be moped to death to live entirely in that odious castle. But it shall not remain in the state it now is, for I will have it entirely new modelled; it shall not look like a place for the residence of hobgoblins; all the old-fashioned trumpery, and all the old inhabitants shall turn out; I will leave no relics of antiquity:—but I fear these schemes will be some time in adjusting; it is a long time before a divorce is compleated;—those abominable lawyers are so tedious. I cannot doubt but there will be proof sufficient now they are gone off together, but there must be so many tiresome forms. I think I could make a new code of laws quite as beneficial to society without so much parade.

Well, St. Edward will, however, lose no time, for he is gone as fast as his horses can carry him, but not so fast as my impatient spirit would convey him. I shall be miserable till I hear from him; and he has promised to write the moment he has any intelligence to communicate, which I think must be before long. I suppose we shall leave this place too very soon, and make the best of our way to London; but if anything particular occurs, you shall hear from me again; and believe me always

Most truly yours,

CHARLOTTE CARROSET.



## LETTER XXVI.

*Mrs. Safforey to Mrs. Clifford.*

THE most extraordinary intelligence, my dear madam, has this moment reached me;—pray heaven it may not be true, and yet I have every reason to fear it is. Mrs. St. Edward is missing! our dear Julia! What villain has dared to molest innocence like her's? You know my fears, and how much they were excited on account of my poor brother, whose return I have been hourly expecting; but he is clear of all suspicion relating to this event, for the ship in which he embarked is not yet arrived. I know not on whom to fix my surmise. She had so few acquaintance, has led such a retired life, that I can form no guess; and yet from her last I was not easy: somebody was lurking about the castle the night before she wrote her last letter, which she concluded with unusual low spirits, as if she had a presentiment of what was to happen; not that I mean to attach any guilt to her,—no, she is as pure as human nature can be.

I have thought of Lord Fitzarnold, who was lately visiting at Baintree Park, but from all the accounts I can collect, he has left the country some time. I know not what to think. I hear an express is sent to St. Edward at Buxton; he had no business to be absent. The servants can give no satisfactory account; they are all as much perplexed as I am. A labouring man, whose family are much indebted to the charity of Julia, brought me the first intelligence. He was sent by Lucy, her maid, who said she never had stirred out the whole day; that when she left her at night she appeared perfectly composed; talked to her during the time she was undressing about a poor woman in the village, to whom Lucy had been sent in the course of the day to carry child-bed linen and other things, as she was near lying-in; that in the morning, not hearing her mistress's bell ring at the usual hour, and having waited some time beyond it, she ventured to rap gently at the door of her chamber, and not having any answer, she rapped still louder, but hearing no return, she called, and no answer being given, she then began to be alarmed. There was a drop-bolt to the door, which, upon trying to open, she found was down; and she felt so frightened and so fully persuaded her dear mistress was dead, that she stood for a minute and cried; but recollecting herself, she called for help, and ran down to the rest of the servants with her alarming account, and they returning with her, the door was instantly forced open, and the room found empty. It did not appear that Mrs. St. Edward had been in bed, nor was there the least trace by which they could mark by what means she had departed. Various were their conjectures, and having made a search throughout the park, gardens, and offices, they gave up all hopes of discovery, and dispatched servants different ways to inform those most nearly concerned of this sad and unaccountable catastrophe. This is the substance of the account the man brought to me, only that I have omitted relating his belief that she is carried away by supernatural power, to prove which, he related wonderful sights he had witnessed, and as firmly credited. For my own part, I am lost in wonder at the circumstances, such as he has related them; but can form no decided opinion till I hear a more rational account. I dare say there are clues which might lead to some investigation, were a proper examination to be made; but until such can be effected, we must submit to that patience which only can make us bear a suspense almost

insupportable. I know you will join with me in prayers for the preservation of the most deserving of women; and believe me,

Ever yours,  
ELINOR SAFFOREY.

Ledcombe, Oct. 30.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LANE, MINERVA PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.

Copyright Chawton House Library

THE

OLD WOMAN.

A NOVEL.

*IN TWO VOLUMES.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
THE HORRORS OF OAKENDALE ABBEY.

“Fear on guilt attends, and deeds of darkness;  
“The virtuous breast ne'er knows it.”

HAVARD.

VOL. II.

*LONDON:*

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

AT THE

MINERVA-PRESS,

BY WILLIAM LANE, LEADENHALL-STREET.

1800.

THE  
OLD WOMAN.

LETTER I.

*Miss Baynard to Miss Carroset.*

London, Nov. 1, 17—.

I THINK, my dear Charlotte, you are drawing your schemes to a conclusion, but I fear you have reckoned without your host; for it does not appear to me by any of your letters, that St. Edward has offered you his hand, should the desirable event happen, which the present train of circumstances seems so fairly to promise; but as you have on more than one occasion mentioned your swain as changeable and roving, I think you should have secured a retreat, and brought him to terms, before you had let him march off. Were this the case, I would go some lengths to assist you, as I know something of Lord Fitzarnold, and have a little degree of spite and pique against him, for having the consummate assurance to neglect some tender looks which I levelled at his heart last winter: it gave me a bad opinion of him; and his taste in preferring a poor, awkward, country, uninformed creature to one of *us*, proves the justice of my ideas. But I still think you have not acted with your accustomed prudence: surely it was not love that absorbed your faculties; *we* are, I hope, callous to that tender silly passion, only fit for girls and boys, and I believe, in these days, felt by them alone.

What could be your reason, when you had so fair an opportunity at Arkley, not to give Lord Fitzarnold a hint that he was far from being indifferent to Mrs. St. Edward; a thousand circumstances might have been contrived to corroborate your assertion; and by a proper and well-timed infusion of jealousy into the pate of the stupid husband, you might by this time have been near sailing into port. Instead of this, you have been loitering away the precious hours at a watering place, and, except in securing the unfinished letter, have not taken a step towards effecting that mischief which must be a prelude to more decided achievements. You should have secured a ground for jealousy before you took those pretty rambles in the obscure parts of the castle, and suffered yourself to be frightened at your own shadow. I thought this a silly business when I read the account. You should have secured the servants on your side, especially as they were those of a spoiled nature: you may be sure they would all side with their sweet gentle mistress. Fye, Charlotte; why did not you apply for my counsel and advice, which I am not fond of giving gratis, and never even to a friend unasked. You told me of your exploits, which you thought so famous, but you asked no assistance, and I am willing you should now see your error, that in future you may acknowledge my known superiority.

Something may yet be thought of, and I heartily wish you success. Don't fail to let me know all the particulars of the elopement. Did not St. Edward promise to write? Perhaps you had better follow him to Arkley; you know you can do any thing with your

father and mother. The mind of St. Edward should not for a moment be exposed to any tender remembrances, nor should he hear the most distant surmise of her innocence. Resentment must be kept alive, and is the more necessary, as he has a weak mind, which is liable to be warped by every impression. Mrs. St. Edward is, I dare say, cunning, and her gallant careful; yet in all these instances, there is a glaring degree of carelessness and absurdity, which exposes them to censure, and then to conviction. Were it not for these circumstances, so many divorces could not be obtained, for they require the clearest evidence; and nothing but the all-powerful passion, which infatuates the senses to a degree of forgetfulness and incaution, as to afford ample proof, could procure sufficient testimony of guilt.

An elopement to be sure is a good foundation to build upon, but then we must first be convinced that she is eloped. Might she not be taking the benefit of the morning breezes? or might she not be making her charitable visits to the old superannuated servants, who, you say, are kept as monuments of antiquity? or after all our conjectures, may she not be carried away in a supernatural manner by those very spirits and goblins which are said to haunt the castle, and of whom you made such terrific mention? Joking apart, however, she must first be proved to be gone, with a male companion too, besides abundance of etceteras essential to your grand scheme. I am so interested in your cause, that I have no time to give any account of my own embarrassments, and still less in your present situation, would you attend to them. I can only say, that I verily believe the old fellow will never die, although I do my part to plague him: the sounds of his grumbling and grunting will never be out of my ears; and notwithstanding my wishes and endeavours to the contrary, he is likely to live much longer, with the gout remaining in his legs and feet, instead of aspiring to the higher regions, where it might be of service in relieving him from his misery, and easing me of the trouble and mortification his existence occasions. I'm sure it would be a law of humanity, if all people of a certain age were ordered to be put to death. For what should they live?—to be wretched in themselves, and an eternal nuisance to every one else. I shall be absolutely dying with impatience till I hear from you: may success attend and crown your wishes. Depend upon my advice and friendship, for I am

Always yours

MARIA BAYNARD.

## LETTER II.

*Mrs. Clifford to Mrs. Safforey.*

Arkley Castle, Nov. 3, 17—.

THE contents of your letter, my dear madam, shocked me beyond expression, and my uncle being somewhat relieved from his late indisposition, I determined at all events to go myself to Arkley Castle; for besides the account your letter brought me, I received a variety of vague and improbable intelligence, which nothing but personal investigation could reduce to certainty. My uncle too was as anxious as myself to hear tidings of our

dear Julia, and hastened my departure by every attention towards the accommodation of my journey. I scarce dare hope that my coming may be attended with success to our friend, yet I am willing to flatter myself, that the violence which at first possessed the mind of Mr. St. Edward is, by my interposition, in some small degree mitigated. Indeed, his suspicions and implacable resentment could not have been formed and supported merely upon the event of her absence, had he not been previously instigated by some secret enemy. This made my task more difficult; but as I well know you must be impatient to hear the particulars, I will proceed in regular order, without any of my own observations.

When I arrived at Arkley, I found the servants in the greatest confusion imaginable. Her own maid Lucy ran to me with eyes swelled by weeping, and a countenance of the utmost distraction: "Oh, madam!" she cried "have you seen anything of my dear mistress? if you have not, what will become of me? for my master says, I knew of and helped to assist her in going, when I am as innocent as the child unborn, and would gladly have gone with her if I could, for nobody don't want to stay here now she's gone; but I'm sure she's carried away by the spirits, and they'll never let sitch an angel as she come back again." I told her to be pacified; that no spirits could carry her away; and I had no doubt but a short time would clear up all difficulties, and restore her to her family; and I desired to be conducted to Mr. St. Edward as soon as possible.

I was soon introduced to him, and found him (as I had been taught to expect) full of rage and violence. He was sitting alone in the eating-parlour, and the moment he saw me, accosted me in the following words:—"Well, Mrs. Clifford, can you bring me any account of Julia: if you know anything of her, I insist upon your telling me instantly, but don't say a word in her favour; don't excuse her, make no such attempt; I am determined never to forgive her; I will be divorced immediately; I'll never see her; I have convincing proof of her infidelity; I'll hear nothing in her favour; there never was a plan more artfully concerted."—It was impossible to be heard: I made several attempts to speak, but he would not allow me; he continued repeating several times over, all that I have related, each time with fresh vehemence, and adding still more bitter invectives. His passion being at last in some degree exhausted, I ventured to speak, first to assure him that I knew no more of Mrs. St. Edward than he did himself; that my surprise, my sorrow, and my wish for information had prompted me to come unasked to Arkley; and I entreated him to be calm, and moderate his resentment, until time should clear up the mystery; and I then ventured, though with fear and trembling, to vouch for the innocence and integrity of Mrs. St. Edward. This, however, at first put him into fresh passion, and I was again obliged to hear a variety of the most improbable conjectures and ill-placed suspicions, before he would allow me to answer; and when I made an attempt to convince him of the absurdity of them, he perfectly astonished me by producing the fragment of a letter written in Mrs. St. Edward's own hand, to her supposed lover. It contained some warm expressions of regard, and an invitation to him to come when the rest of the family should be absent, and they might enjoy the time without interruption. There was no name to this epistle, and it appeared unfinished.

I read it over several times; it is certainly her hand-writing, or so well imitated as not to be detected; but it might apply either to you or myself, and I hazarded this conjecture to Mr. St. Edward, but he would not admit the idea; nay, he even accused me of being an accomplice in her secrets and her elopement; but not choosing to bear such an insult, I exerted a sort of spirit which had some effect, and induced him to ask my pardon.

From this time he became more cool, and conversed with more composure. He asked me if I had ever seen or heard of Lord Fitzarnold. I assured him I had never seen him, and had only heard of him as a visitor at Baintree Park. I added, that if he supposed him at all concerned in the business, enquiry should be made concerning his present place of abode; and I took that opportunity of again defending Julia from concerting any plan dishonourable to herself and him; and if Lord Fitzarnold had been accessory in taking her away, search should be immediately made after both him and the unfortunate victim of his daring atrocity; for I would hazard my life upon her innocence, and if she was actually with him, she had been carried off by the most cruel violence, and was probably at this very moment suffering under the worst of apprehensions.

This remark seemed a little to abate his fury, and induced his mind to admit a small degree of tenderness and compassion. Were it as I represented, nothing but Lord Fitzarnold's life should satisfy him; but again his features hardened, and he vowed it was impossible she should be innocent; he repeated the circumstance of the letter, and mentioned her having been seen at a very late hour on the evening preceding her elopement, walking by herself, and seeming to be anxiously waiting for some one; that the window of her chamber had been heard to open at a late hour, and that it was evident she had gone out by a private staircase, the bottom of which led to a passage, which opened on a terrace in the garden; and a door of a closet in her chamber led to this staircase, though not generally frequented. All this I allowed might be true, but I suggested that she might be forcibly conveyed through these places; that had the plan been preconcerted by herself, she would undoubtedly have taken some change of apparel with her, and I asked if this had been investigated, to which he answered sullenly, "No!"

I then desired to be shewn her room, that her maid should be called, and that he might entertain no suspicion of my acting in concert with any design injurious to him, I besought him to accompany us in the search. To this he consented, and we proceeded to her chamber, Lucy with tears and many sobs telling us the manner in which she was frightened on the morning she attempted to open the door, found the bolt down, and could obtain no answer to her repeated calls. The poor girl visibly trembled, and turned pale when she entered the room, where she had never been since the fatal morning, from a foolish apprehension that she should encounter some supernatural evidence of her mistress's concealment. St. Edward reprobated some fears of this nature, which she could not help shewing, and we proceeded to examine the drawers of the unfortunate Julia, where appeared every article of her dress, except that she had worn the day before her non-appearance, I cannot call it elopement. The bed had not the least evidence of being slept in, and every thing, as Lucy expressed herself, looked exactly as natural as if she had prepared it for the night. Upon opening a wardrobe we found the very bonnet and cloak she had worn the preceding day; and I did not lose a moment to enforce the belief this circumstance could not fail to impress, of her having no intention to go off. I commented upon it with all the arguments such a circumstance could adduce in her favour; and I could not help being affected at the sight of these memorials of her I so much loved, and whose fate I so truly lamented; like the cloaths of a deceased friend, which always recal to my mind the image of the wearer, and a thousand tender and mournful ideas are connected with their appearance.

Such now were my recollections, and my utterance was, for several minutes, impeded by my tears. St. Edward looked at me; I thought his countenance seemed

softened, and taking my hand, he led the way to the closet, where a door seemed to be recently forced open on the outward side. This was apparent, as the hangings, which were of old-fashioned gilt leather, were entirely pasted over the door, and had been evidently torn, by its being forced, from the other side. It is probable Mrs. St. Edward did not herself know of this door; it opened to a little low stone staircase, dark and steep, and this led to a passage that communicated with the garden, and in which were deposited garden-tools. I was too much absorbed in the contemplation of our dear friend's fate, of whom no traces could be discovered, to animadvert upon the seeming inutility of these private doors and staircases, which seem so universally to belong to buildings of this date; and this appears to be a very ancient structure.

I used my utmost endeavours to prove to Mr. St. Edward the utter impossibility of Julia's being able to open this door on the inside. He mused for some time, and then said, it was true, she might not open it herself, but he saw nothing to convince him that she had not made an assignation with some person to open it on the other side; and he again referred to the letter, adding that there were persons who suspected her intimacy with Lord Fitzarnold before their departure into Derbyshire. I ventured to say in answer, that I execrated such persons; that even purity like her's could not be a defence against such malignity; and I greatly apprehended she had enemies of her own sex, whose malice would help to destroy her innocence: that it highly concerned his honour, as well as her fame, to investigate to the utmost this business; and if upon the clearest and most impartial judgment, she did not fully acquit herself of every charge of deception, I would forfeit all I held most dear, and give up all love and esteem for her.

This and much more I said in order to persuade him to think of her in a favourable light, and I hope I have gained some degree of attention to what I have advanced; at least he seems less violent, gives me rational answers, and does not, as he did at first, forget the common rules of hospitality and politeness. He was perfectly civil to me at supper, seemed thoughtful at times, and sighed deeply. In these moments I did not forget to expatiate upon the many excellences of Julia, to lament her absence, and to speak of it as a circumstance in which she was the greatest sufferer. He is going to-morrow to Baintree Park, to make all the enquiry he can concerning Lord Fitzarnold. I will not close this letter till his return.

Wednesday Morning, Nov. 4.

Mr. St. Edward set out this morning as soon as it was day, and not being yet returned, I have been amusing myself with walking, first over the castle, and then in the park. The season is not that which is the most favourable, but the day is uncommonly fine, and the different shades of the foliage render the views beautiful. The grandeur and magnificence of the building is inexpressibly fine, and the rude state of the park seems admirably to correspond with the ancient pile. It must formerly have been in the midst of a wood, for I understand that a great quantity of timber has been felled some years back, yet there still remain trees of an immense size, and some whose spreading branches, even in this advanced season, afford a delightful shade. When I viewed the castle from parts of this park, I do not wonder at the ideas of spectres and goblins being said to inhabit it. The small windows, the low towers, and the turrets, with the arched doors and broken battlements, are sufficient to impress weak minds with ideas of this nature; nor can I



wonder that even Julia, whose mind was far superior to the generality of those who only formed their judgment from appearances, should be a little prone to fear.

It is by no means a place calculated for one of the finest young women in the world to be shut up in alone: mortification and superstition are of themselves sufficient to weaken the mind, and are oftentimes incitements to vice. I do not, however, mean to insinuate that our friend was in any degree influenced by them, but they might have had dominion over a less virtuous and unprincipled heart, and afford no small advantage to those who make it their business to delude the innocent and unwary.—Mr. St. Edward is just returned; he appears gloomy and dispirited; I must go to him, and will finish this after I have heard the result of his embassy.

I am sorry to be under the necessity of relating still more unpleasant circumstances. When I attended Mr. St. Edward, I perceived, by the gloom which hung upon his countenance, that he had received no favourable intelligence, and he very soon informed me that the Lovefields knew nothing of Lord Fitzarnold, except that they believed he was not in London, nor did they know of his having been in the country since he had left their house, which was early in the last month. He said that an universal silence and reserve was observed during his visit, a conduct which I thought perfectly natural, and consistent with the occasion; but with him it added confirmation to the suspicions he before entertained, and I perceived with regret that his visit to Baintree had not in the least contributed to ease his mind.

I was considering in what manner I should endeavour to bring it again to harmony, when a servant entered the room and presented him a letter; he hastily tore it open, and seemed agitated by the contents. I could not suppress my wish to hear something favourable, and I asked (perhaps impertinently) if it brought any good accounts. “No good accounts of your favourite, madam,” he replied, in a tone of contempt and displeasure, which at once shocked and silenced me. He continued reading the letter attentively, which seemed a long one, and as soon as he had finished it, he got up, and hastily rung the bell. When the servant appeared, he told him to inform the housekeeper to get the rooms and every thing in order and readiness for Mr. Cassoset’s family, whom he expected possibly to night or else to dinner the next day. The servant withdrew with apparent marks of disappointment in his countenance: as to myself, I felt mortified beyond description. The manner in which he had before spoken to me prevented me from again addressing him, and I sat like a statue. He referred to his letter, and again rung the bell: when answered, he enquired the state of the larder, ordered the ponds to be dragged for fish, and, happy and alert in these preparations, he seemed to have totally forgotten the fate of his poor wife.

I felt his behaviour so very forcibly, and her image in all the distress her situation represented her so deprest my mind, that an involuntary burst of tears claimed his attention. “What is the matter, Mrs. Clifford?” said he; “I am not going to turn you out this evening, nor to-morrow, if you like to stay: the family who are coming are very amiable people, who have a great regard and friendship for me, and would have taken Julia with them in order to prevent the mischief which has ensued, for they suspected the business long ago. But she, I suppose, had formed her plans; and now they are kindly coming to afford me consolation, and at the same time, see justice done, for they will not let me be imposed upon.” As I now knew my staying here could be no benefit to our friend, and as I could be of no service, I was the less afraid to risque my opinions; I

therefore, collecting all my spirits, said,—“Allow me, sir, once more to speak in behalf of your wife, I will add, your much-injured wife; and, however you may despise my sentiments, suffer not yourself to be influenced by those who are not her friends. I have before vouched for her innocence, and I again repeat it; let your own unprejudiced judgment and a candid investigation decide your opinion, but let not her precarious situation be rendered still more dreadful, by giving her up to the mercy of her own sex, nor withdraw from her the protection of a husband. Remember your own honour is concerned in the vindication of her’s, and waste not the precious moments that should be dedicated to her cause. I speak warmly, but I hope justly,—pardon me if I offend you; but be assured, sir, there will come a time when you will think of what I am now saying. I shall take my leave to-morrow, and when next we meet, may my beloved friend be as fully justified to you and every other person, as clearly as her spotless mind is pure from all guilt.” “Be it so,” replied St. Edward; “and when that is the case, and not till then, shall I confess myself a culprit to Mrs. Clifford;” and he immediately quitted the room. A burst of tears relieved me; and I hastened to my apartment to make the little preparations that were necessary for the journey, which I would on no account delay longer than the next morning.

I had just finished these little arrangements, when a bustle in the house, and the sound of wheels in the outward court, proclaimed the arrival of some new-comers. I concluded it was the already expected guests; yet a latent hope that it might be some tidings relating to Julia made me eagerly run to the window, from whence I perceived to my great mortification, that the bustle was occasioned by the return of the Carrosets. They were no sooner entered the house, than I heard the joyful exclamations of Miss Carroset at seeing Mr. St. Edward: “How d’ye do? I am glad we are come; you must have been so melancholy by yourself, with not a soul to speak to. I hastened my father and mother as much as possible, and you can’t think how far we have come to-day that you might be alone as little as possible.” I could not plainly distinguish the words which conveyed St. Edward’s answer to her, but I dare say they were full of politeness, and strongly expressed his joy at seeing her, for she replied, “That’s a dear creature! I knew you would be rejoiced to see us.”

I now thought it best to make my appearance, which at first I had determined not to do; but in consideration of my young friend, I changed my design, as I concluded my secluding myself from their company would give them an advantage I did not wish they should gain; and however unpleasant I should find my situation it would be wrong to leave anything untried in the cause in which I had engaged. I therefore boldly advanced to the drawing-room, and Mr. St. Edward introduced me with more good-breeding than I expected.

I don’t know who they took me for at first. The old lady professed an humble civility, bordering upon meanness; the old man stumped up to me, talked of the weather, the roads, and the shortening of the days; whilst the young lady viewed me with a supercilious kind of contempt, made a half curtsy, then took St. Edward by the arm, and whispered him, I suppose to know who I was; she then passed me with an impertinent stare, hummed a tune, and began to relate some ridiculous anecdote which had happened since he had left Buxton. I thought this trifling behaviour highly improper under the present circumstances, and I assumed an air of as much importance as I could command; for St. Edward looked so perfectly satisfied and pleased with their company, that my

forbearance and my patience were nearly exhausted. The conversation was trifling and insipid, such as I could neither take part in or relate.

When supper was served, Miss Carroset seemed anxiously to expect that Mr. St. Edward should desire her to take her seat at the head of the table, but in this she was disappointed, for he sat there himself. Mrs. Carroset sat at his right hand, and he pointed to the other side for her daughter; but not having it in her power to sit where she wished, she looked sullen, and throwing herself into the chair at the bottom of the table, she said with an affected air of tenderness, "I will save my dear papa the trouble of this place." St. Edward seemed conscious of having offended her, and tried by every attention to regain her favour. The old people are ignorant, mean, and stupid; the daughter a compound of all that is artful, deep, and designing. What a set to arraign the conduct of our dear friend, and to influence that of her weak husband! Miss Carroset affected an obsequious kind of civility towards me, at the same time that she cast the most significant glances at St. Edward.

I retired early, and have written this since I came up to bed. I fear I can do nothing for our poor friend; and I shall return to-morrow, truly lamenting the fate of her I am unable to serve. Adieu.

Dear madam,

I am ever yours,

ANN CLIFFORD.

Copyright Chawton House Library

### LETTER III.

*From the same to the same.*

Arkley Castle, Nov. 5, 17—.

YOU will be surprised, my dear madam, to hear from me again from this place, and still more so when you hear that I have just now declared to Mr. St. Edward, that I will not stir from it until my mind is more thoroughly satisfied respecting the concealment of his wife, and an investigation be made in order to discover the mysterious causes which, I apprehend, conceal the truth. I know not where to fix suspicion, and I am so bewildered in a labyrinth of conjectures, that I know not if I am capable of giving a clear relation.

After I had retired from the company last night to my own chamber, I sat ruminating for some time on the strangeness of the circumstances which occasioned my being now here, of the infatuation of St. Edward, and of the many virtues and extraordinary fate of poor Julia. No reflections produced information, and the result of my reasoning left me in the same uncertainty which has so strangely marked this unhappy business. As I designed to set out early in the morning, and as I felt no inclination to sleep, I determined only to throw myself upon the outside of the bed, without taking off my cloaths. This I was preparing to do; I looked at my watch, it was past midnight; I put the light in the chimney, and recommended myself to that Being who is our only protector. I heard a slight noise near the door, and, as I listened, a light footstep. I knew not exactly in what apartments the visitors slept; I had no fears, but curiosity prompted me to investigate the cause of alarm, and snatching up the light, I instantly opened the door, when a tall figure, which a terrified imagination might have formed into a most formidable ghost, arrested my attention at the farther end of the gallery. I am not fearful, nor am I superstitious, but the manner of its disappearing was singular. I walked hastily up to the place, but it was gone, and by what way I could not possibly discover, for there was no door or staircase at that end by which any person could pass. I stood for some moments lost in conjecture; I listened, and I even called, but received no sort of information. I stood for some moments in that state of uncertainty, which the circumstance had occasioned; and I knew not whether to alarm the family, or to wait till the morning, before I made known my apprehensions. A little recollection, however, served to convince me that it would be better to wait for the morning, when I might form my opinions with more precision, and be more likely to gain credit for my story, than by giving a hasty recital of what might be deemed the effects of superstition or fear. I returned, therefore, to my chamber, but not to rest; I could collect my ideas into no kind of method; the more I ruminated the more my conjectures were bewildered; and I could only form the determination of relating exactly what I had seen and heard to Mr. St. Edward in the morning, and this, if possible, before any of his visitors were stirring, that his mind might be left free to direct his judgment, unprejudiced by the opinions of others.

Tedious, indeed, were the hours till the morning appeared, and even that was far advanced before any one of the family gave indications of their being risen. As soon as I could with propriety, I sent a footman to Mr. St. Edward's chamber, to inform him that I requested to speak with him upon a subject, the importance of which would admit of no

delay: his answer was, he would wait on me as soon as possible. In a shorter time than I expected, he sent to say that he waited for me in the breakfast-parlour. Thither I hastened, although my limbs trembled, and my heart palpitated with the trepidation of a culprit. When I related my story with only the simple truths which attended it, I added, with all the arguments I could collect, the necessity there was of immediately investigating the causes for such an appearance: I even hinted that Mrs. St. Edward might, at the very moment, be concealed in some obscure part of the castle, and be suffering a cruel confinement by some secret inhabitant, hitherto unknown to us. I besought him to think favourably of her, and to use every endeavour to discover the mysterious cause of her absence.

He heard me with more patience and composure than I expected, and when I ceased speaking, he answered me with politeness. He never, he said, gave heed to the idle tales that had been propagated as to the supernatural appearances in the castle, and he was surprised to hear a woman of my sense and judgment corroborate such ridiculous opinions: that with respect to what I took for footsteps, it might be occasioned by rats, of which there were great numbers; and as to what I saw, it could only be the effect of fancy; or some deficiency in my sight: that as to Julia's being in the castle, it was utterly impossible; and by what method, he asked me, was he to ascertain this, even could such a wild imagination be at all allowed. "No," he added, before I could make any reply, "she has abandoned me, and it is highly proper I should forget her." "O no, no," I replied, "let me entreat you to make no such resolve: I would pledge my life upon her innocence; she is by some means cruelly betrayed."

He stood silent, and then as if recollecting something he had heard against her, his colour rose in his face, and he said with a stern look, "No, Mrs. Clifford, I am not the fool you take me for; I have evident testimony of her duplicity; and the whole world would laugh at me were I weak enough to adopt the opinions of her being carried away by supernatural means, or indeed by any other but the concurrence of her own inclinations." "True," said I, "I would by no means wish you to countenance any thing improbable; I laugh at the idea of supernatural means as much as you can do; but if no remembrance of tender pity remains in your breast, if every sentiment of conjugal affection for the wife of your choice is done away, you are still called upon to vindicate the honour of your cousin, and even by that tie, investigate and justify her fame; nor till the most flagrant proof of her guilt can appear, ought you to allow the most distant insinuation to be breathed against her. Turn from those who would blast her reputation as from poison, and admit those tender sensations of pity, which every manly breast must feel for the sufferings of an injured and unprotected woman. Perhaps, at this moment, she is imploring the aid of Heaven; an arm of courage to defend her virtue; and above all, a friend to shield her reputation."

I was proceeding, and expressing myself with great warmth, which I saw was not unfavourable to the cause, when the door opened, and that plotter of iniquity, Miss Carroset, entered the room. Her eyes were directed to me, and might truly be said to flash fire. I was not, however, to be intimidated: I turned towards her, and said, "Miss Carroset, you are come in a happy moment, as I trust, to join with me in favour of our dear friend, whose fame must not be traduced by suspicion, nor her conduct arraigned by appearances." "No, madam," replied Miss Carroset, "neither shall my judgment be decided for me. If Mr. St. Edward is weak enough to be amused by a parcel of idle

stories, raised merely for the purpose of concealing guilt, I am not thus to be imposed upon: and let me tell you, Mrs. Clifford, it would be much more to your credit to be attending your poor uncle, than to be pushing yourself into houses uninvited, and intruding your company upon people who move in a different sphere of life than that to which you have been accustomed. As to Mrs. St. Edward, it would ill become the purity of any modest woman to join in defending her cause: you may have your reasons for your partiality to her, but *we*, who are better informed, are not so easily to be duped.”

To this I replied, with as much calmness and temper as I could command, after so insolent a speech,—“As to my partiality, madam, it is founded upon a complete knowledge of her many virtues from her earliest years, from the sincerest friendship, and from a perfect conviction of her rectitude, honour, and integrity. As to my being now here, my uncle dispensed with my attendance, and urged me to defend a cause in which he enters as warmly as myself. I hope I am not an unwelcome intruder to Mr. St. Edward; for however distant may be our situations in life, he has in happier days honoured me with a pressing invitation to Arkley. Little then did I imagine that my first visit would have been under such circumstances as the present; and were every body now in their proper places, you and myself, madam, would not have met under this roof, where it cannot be more unpleasant to you than to myself. But I cannot answer to my own conscience, nor to those friends of Mrs. St. Edward’s who are most anxious for her, to leave this place before some clearer investigation has been made concerning this business; and from some strange occurrences which passed under my observation last night, I am led to believe that some uncommon mystery remains to be unfolded, and which I am persuading Mr. St. Edward to lose no time in discovering.”

When I ended my speech, Miss Carroset threw herself upon a sofa, and seemed to be absolutely choking with rage: Mr. St. Edward seated himself by her, and affected a gaiety in his looks and manner by no means proper for the time and the occasion; but I suppose it was to please and bring her into good-humour. “And what,” said he, “Mrs. Clifford, would you have me do?” and without allowing me time to answer him, he turned in a childish way to Miss Carroset, and said, “One of the castle spectres appeared last night, and sent me an order to pull down the whole structure in order to find my wife!—was it not so, Mrs. Clifford?” I could not return an answer; I walked to the window to suppress my emotion, as well as to hide the tears which flowed for our poor Julia. I heard Miss Carroset ask him if he would not obey the ghost, and prove a dear good husband to his affectionate wife. After this they conversed in a whisper too low for me to hear, but I could distinguish the word insolent as if meant to me; and finding I could have no chance of influencing his mind at this time, I retired to my chamber, waiting for the summons of the breakfast-bell, and have written thus far.

Irkesome, indeed, is my situation, for as Miss Carroset says, I can but consider myself as an intruder, and since the late conversation, I have every thing to apprehend both from the malice of her designs, and the influence she has upon the mind of St. Edward; yet if my stay can be of the smallest service to our Julia, I will bear all they can inflict, and nothing but being absolutely turned out of doors, shall force me from hence. Yet after all, I fear I can do nothing to serve her; there seems to be a combination against her. I rest my hopes in some degree on those nocturnal visitors, who, whatever or whoever they are, must have some design; and no timidity shall prevent my following a being, who is, perhaps, employed in a righteous cause. I will not suffer sleep to prevent

my watchfulness; I will lose no opportunity of engaging Mr. St. Edward, and in endeavouring to counteract the designs of this most artful young woman.

May these my intentions be rendered propitious by that all-ruling Power who governs all our actions, and without whose permission not a sparrow falleth to the ground. I will write as often as I have opportunity of sending my letters, or whenever anything occurs worthy your notice; and I remain,

Dear madam,

Ever yours,

ANN CLIFFORD.

Copyright Chawton House Library

## LETTER IV.

*Miss Carroset to Miss Baynard.*

Arkley Castle, Dec. 2, 17—.

YOU see, my dear Maria, I have obeyed your commands, or rather your advice, and am once more safely lodged under the roof of Arkley Castle. Thus far you must approve; but, Maria, I will not be scolded; I cannot bear it; my mind is greatly disturbed; for although the elopement of Mrs. St. Edward bids fair for a favorable eclaircissement, yet there are formidable obstacles to overcome. If St. Edward were as warm in investigating the cause as the urgency of the case requires, I might soon be released from my present anxiety; but then on the other hand, were he to be active in the pursuit, it might bring on discoveries injurious to my plan: I am, therefore, under the necessity of keeping him in this lukewarm temper of mind, as the surest method of success to my wishes. Then again, he is such an egregious fool, that he may be drawn by a thread.

Do you know, there is a dreadful woman come here, a Mrs. Clifford, who was a kind of governess to Mrs. St. Edward. It seems she is well descended, has been handsome and unfortunate, with all the etceteras annexed, to claim pity and respect. She is absolutely one of the most hateful beings I ever beheld, and has such an influence over St. Edward, that were I not here to counteract and undermine her designs, he would be a lost man; for well do I know when she has been talking to him: but of this I take pretty good care, and never fail to tell him how much he would be ridiculed by the world, were he to be influenced by the whining cant and advice of an old governess. This rouses his spirits, for he can't bear to be thought gentle; and, poor soul, fancies himself a sensible man.—In love with him indeed! No, Maria; that passion was over with me at a very early period of my life, and reason enough had I to be sick of it, when the object of my affection so basely deserted me, after he had obtained all he could possess; yet he was worth a thousand St. Edward's—but no more of this.

To return to Mrs. Clifford; she is the niece of a clergyman, and the widow of an officer; is an enthusiast in the cause of Mrs. St. Edward, and came here post-haste upon hearing of her elopement. I wish she had broken her neck in the journey, for I assure you she is a formidable enemy. She possesses that abominable steady sense and cool resolution, which generally bear down all opposition: there is a settled ease and hauteur in her manner, which almost strikes *me* with a certain awe, not to say dread; for she has those kind of penetrating eyes that look one through. She has determined to stay here till Mrs. St. Edward is restored, that is her word; and she is a sort of woman that one cannot turn out of doors. I think if you were here, something might be struck out to get rid of her, but alone, I confess myself unequal to the undertaking. Do come, Maria;—I have influence sufficient here to promise you a welcome: we can then contrive to hit upon something for the destruction of her plans; and I assure you she deserves to be strangled. Let me hear that you will come; but remember you are not to rival me in the affections, nor even the attentions of St. Edward. I have had one or two tart altercations with this Mrs. Clifford, but cannot say I gained much advantage. I tell St. Edward how extremely artful she is, and that is really true, for she leaves no opportunity of taking advantage of



his weakness.—Adieu my friend. If you can suggest anything favourable to the cause, do not omit giving me your opinion, and I will from time to time give you a faithful relation of our proceedings.

I am, ever yours,  
CHARLOTTE CARROSET.

Copyright Chawton House Library

## LETTER V.

*Lord Robert Carrington to Mr. Tracy.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I TAKE the earliest opportunity in availing myself of your kind permission to exchange a few lines. I feel myself greatly honoured by your attention; and I should be unjust to myself, were I to neglect the great advantages to be derived from a man of your learning, principles, and extensive knowledge. I hope you will not deem me a flatterer from these expressions, which, I assure you, flow from the sincere effusions of a grateful heart. In the short term of our acquaintance at Buxton, your ideas were so perfectly new to me, that I could not fail to admire and adopt your sentiments. As you profess yourself to be a citizen of the world, to have no limited station, nor domestic calls to engross any fixed period of your time, I shall flatter myself that you will at least give me your opinion upon a subject interesting to me, if not distressing.

I passed through school, and likewise the university, with a particular friend, the knowledge of whose acquaintance commenced at so early a period, as to create a friendship stronger, perhaps, than a later intimacy might have inspired. Our situations in life, our ages, and above all, our dispositions, were so congenial, as to unite us in no common bond. We had neither of us any brothers or sisters, either to take from or to share our regards. The most unlimited confidence secured our friendship, for I believe neither had a thought concealed from the other; and as we advanced in life, a thousand occurrences became interesting to each. As my friend was of a more volatile disposition than myself, I will confess that he frequently engaged me in acts of dissipation, which my cooler moments could not but condemn; however, as we never spared each other's faults, I generally began with admonition, to which he would listen with good-natured attention, and ended with promises of amendment. Thus some years rolled on. My friend was naturally susceptible, and would speak in raptures of charms in females which I could not discover.

Last Summer he went to pay a visit to an acquaintance in Staffordshire, from whence he wrote to me of a very beautiful married woman, with whom he seemed desperately enamoured. I at first treated it as a joke, but finding him positive in the pursuit, and more serious than was usual in these cases, I endeavoured to dissuade, but not too pressingly, lest opposition might but augment the flame; and as I understood the lady was a pattern of honour and virtue, I had no doubt but his passion would be defeated by the best of all possible methods, her own integrity. I therefore forbore my admonitions, and for a time our correspondence ceased. On my return to London, I heard with grief and surprise, that the lady had eloped, but with whom was not yet ascertained. Suspicion glanced at my friend as the companion of her flight; hints have been thrown out in the public papers; and there are those who scruple not to affirm that they are both gone to an estate which he has in Ireland. You must know who the lady is, as the papers have been too explicit on this head; but I forbear to mention the name of my friend, in the faint hope that he may yet be acquitted of this most flagrant breach of honour. I have made all possible enquiry concerning the present residence of my friend, but hitherto

without success. I am surprised there are no letters for me, but on an occasion of this nature he would be silent; and I presaged no good consequence when he ceased to inform me of his designs. I confess I am extremely hurt at this violation of laws so sacred, and I should feel the truest pity for her husband, had not some recent instances of his conduct, which fell under my own observation at Buxton, led me to believe, that the faults of the lady were but the natural consequences of the example of her husband. These are sentiments we have before discussed, and as there is nothing new in them, I shall no longer animadvert upon the subject. If your humanity and prudence can devise any means by which I may be able to develop this mysterious affair, or to recommend to the parties to return to their respective duties, before the voice of ignorant slander gives the final stab to their reputation, I shall consider myself as particularly,

Dear sir,  
Your gratefully obliged and  
faithful servant,  
ROBERT CARRINGTON.

London, Dec. 4, 17—.

Copyright Chawton House Library

LETTER VI.

*Stephen Macardoe to John Ladwick.*

Blanzey Lodge, near Limerick,  
Dec. 5th, 17—.

DEAR JOHN,

YOU nose as I promised to rite, and I be the moor willen so to do because you nose of my parshality to Mrs. Jane, and I shud a rit soonder, but we a been in so mutsh bussle an confushion that I had no hart to set down to rite. My lord is gon now, marcy on him—I wish weed niver comed hear, but I musent tell tails. Sitch wachings an ridings by day an by nite, an for wat, for nothin but wat wull be a disgrace an the sweetest lady—but she as gin us the go by, an now we be all left at Blanzey upon bored wages, an not a thing can we get for our munny, for theres nothen to be had. Ireland is tore to peces, sad doins, indeed you may meet we rebles evry step you stur, an evry body goes harmed, an fokes hear mins no moor bein murdurd then if they was goen to a feest. Lord help us say I, but this is nothen to the purpus of wat as I ment to rite about. Tell Mrs. Jane as how in all my trubbles, an all my gurneys, an all my walkins, I niver forgot she, nor was niver arter thinkin of any thing else, tho my lord kep us up nite arter nite, and now we ha bin skuwring ovver the contry ater madam, I musent menchun her name for fear of axidents. I think she must be dead or killed by the rebles, for wear can she be gon to, she ha no frends hear, an dont no nothen of her way, how shoud she poor fowl, an she was carred off in sitch a frite an a urry from her oun hous as she niver rekoeverd, an she woudnt speke to my lord if she cood help it, an was resentful to the last, but when my lord whent away, he sayed as how hed niver com bak till hed foond her, for she was all he walled in lif, so how it will hend God only nose, but bein as how she was a marred whoman, hit may prov a bad gob, and my pore Lord git into trubble, but whenever you tels hit hit must be a seekret. I shal be glad to here from you. Pleas to remembar me to all freends, and in partikilar to Mrs. Jane. Dereckt to me at write honnabel Lord Wycount Fitzarnolds Blanzey Lodge near Limerick Ireland, an if you pays the postadge it wull com free, so no more to command your

Loving freend  
STEPHEN MACARDOE.

P.S. If you shoud here of Madam Sent Edward you may let me no, an you shall sheer sum of my reward, but her nam musent be menshend.

## LETTER VII.

*Mrs. Clifford to Mrs. Safforey.*

Arkley Castle, Dec. 9, 17—.

THIS is the last letter I shall write from this place, where I can be of no possible service to our dear friend. I find the resolution of St. Edward so weak, and he is so easily led away by the arts and vile insinuations of Miss Carroset, that all attempts to counteract her devices are vain. My situation too is so truly irksome; but I should not regard these inconveniences, had I any hopes of succeeding, but really there are none; and I am by no means certain that I am not weakening the cause I wish to strengthen; for after every attempt to rouse Mr. St. Edward from his present opinions, I am only giving a fairer opportunity to Miss Carroset of displaying her power over him, and giving a latitude to her inventive fancy to detract and vilify the object of her hatred and revenge.

Indeed the total silence attending this uncommon business, adds wonder to the misfortune, and gives disappointment and grief to her friends,—exultation and triumph to her enemies. I hope I have omitted nothing in my power towards the elucidation of the mystery. I have traversed over every part of this huge castle, as far as I could: but there are rooms and places beneath, which I could not penetrate to, secured by heavy doors with immense hinges, filled with large nails, overgrown with cobwebs, and which seemed to have remained unopened for ages; nobody knew where the keys were; and when I mentioned my wish of seeing what they contained to Mr. St. Edward, he only treated my anxiety as a mark of womanish curiosity, and would not allow his own to conquer his usual apathy.

I visited the room appropriated for the old domestics, and was not a little pleased, as well at their venerable appearance, as with the zeal and warmth in which they expressed their gratitude to their former masters for the benefits and comforts they now enjoy; to their present one, for the fulfilment of their claims; and sincere lamentations for the late unhappy event. They spoke in raptures upon the merits of Julia, and had no doubt but she would be restored, as she must, they said, be an object of peculiar preservation and providential favour. After I had made this visit, I rambled in the park; the day was tolerably fine for the season. In a little shrubbery near the house, I had an opportunity of admiring many elegant marks of the taste and ingenuity of Julia. The shrubs were beautifully disposed by her order, as the gardener informed me, and though at this season little judgment could be formed of their effect, yet it was a proof that she meant to superintend and watch their growth and beauty in the ensuing spring.

This reflection produced many melancholy ones, for, alas! I fear they will not blow for her; and I could almost be reconciled to the idea that she is no longer an inhabitant of this earth, but is gone to meet with a reward for her merits and sufferings in a better world: for what are her prospects in this?—exposed to the certain resentment of a weak husband, to the envy and revenge of her enemies, to the suspicions of all, and the universal pity and censure of an ill-judging multitude.

There is an idea which sometimes crosses my mind, but is scarcely allowed a moment's residence, and I hardly dare name it:—cannot you, madam, guess?—your

brother,—yet it cannot be; Julia possessed the greatest rectitude; and I should apologize for an opinion of any one so near and dear to you. But my mind is harassed and disturbed, harbouring and allowing ideas foreign to its usual suggestions, and rendered alive to suspicion from the conduct of those about me. Let these excuses plead for me, my dear madam, and say, in a letter to Crayborne, that you forgive

Your sincere and obliged  
humble servant,  
ANN CLIFFORD.

#### LETTER VIII.

*Mrs. Safforey to Mrs. Clifford.*

Ledcombe, Dec. 15, 17—.

PREPARE your mind, my dear Mrs. Clifford, to hear some faint tidings of our Julia. I will neither raise your hopes, nor suffer my own to be too sanguine, but will hasten to inform you what is my intelligence, from which you will form your own judgment, as to the probability of what we have to expect. Yesterday's post brought me a letter from a Mrs. Eastbrook. She formerly lived with my mother, and though in the capacity of a servant, was, from her good conduct and uncommon abilities, far removed above the general standard of that order. She is now housekeeper in the family of Lord Duncarrel; and I wrote to her upon the subject of my friend soon after her disappearance. I enjoined the most strict secrecy, consistent with the indefatigable zeal which the cause demanded. I knew her situation in life was of that nature as to give her a more extensive knowledge of what passed in different families, than a more exalted sphere would allow, as servants are more particularly inclined to speak of the secrets of a family, as well for the pleasure of mutual communication, as the pride of consequence they think it gives them. They are, for these reasons, dangerous implements to use, nor are their opinions often guided either by judgment or veracity; and as a community they are rather more to be dreaded than trusted. I hope the present instance will prove an exception to the general rule, and that you will acquit me of any meanness in the application, when you consider the urgency of the case. I have already given you the outlines of the character of Mrs. Eastbrook; you will judge of the rest from the inclosed letter; and make allowances for the style and manner of a person, who, you may observe, stands not a little exalted in her own estimation.

## LETTER IX.

*Mrs. Eastbrook to Mrs. Safforey.*

London, Dec. 11, 17—.

DEAR AND HONOURED MADAM,

I WAS favoured with your's of the 2d instant, and am greatly obliged for the honour of your commands, as well as truly distressed for the sad occasion of them. I remember poor Miss St. Edward, and a sweet creature she was! Your dear mama, madam, used to say, she was too charming to be happy; but I don't know why that should be neither, for we all know handsome ladies that are, aye, and that deserve to be, happy. I had heard of the elopement as it is called, before your letter arrived, for there is nothing but what I hear; and you could not, madam, have addressed a more proper person than myself on this occasion, for I suppose there is not a house in town where such multitudes of people resort as this of our's; indeed, the hurry and bustle, and the late hours we keep, were too much for my nerves, and I was under the necessity of leaving his lordship's house, and retiring to my niece's at Edgware, until my health was recovered; but I was soon requested to return, and higher emoluments offered to induce me to stay. Indeed, my lady said to me, "Eastbrook, you are absolutely essential to my existence!" and you know, madam, there was no resisting that: indeed, there is nothing done in this house wherein I am not consulted; and my young lord, who is just going to the university, said to me the other day, "Mrs. Eastbrook, I must consult and advise with you on the subject of my allowance, for I know you have liberal notions, and have seen a great deal of the world." And then my young ladies too, whenever they are going to have new dresses, always pass a whole morning with me before they make a choice;—to say nothing of the number of people of all ranks who ask my opinions before they undertake any great scheme.

It was but the other day that Mrs. Westphalia, Lady Rantum's superintendant, (who gives the best entertainments, and has the most superb fêtes in London,) came to me to be best informed how to arrange these matters. But I fear, madam, I shall tire you with this account of myself, when you may be impatient to hear of another subject; but I could not help mentioning the above circumstances, just to shew you how proper a person I am to give you the desired information, and to negotiate any further commands you may honour me with.

Last Sunday evening I went to the chapel, where I heard Dr. Dormouse preach a very excellent sermon. You must, madam, have heard of Dr. Dormouse: he made choice of his lady from the same station which I now fill; and very fine preferment he has got, and is not, as many others are, at all lifted up by it; on the contrary, he is as affable and pleasant as ever, always enquiring how I am, and wondering I look so well under the fatigues I encounter. I cannot say just the same of his lady; she carries herself very high, and seldom deigns to speak, and when she does, it is in a high tone; "How do ye?" as if she had quite forgot (indeed, I suppose she has,) when she used to come with her squeezing humble curtseys to beg I would do her the honour of returning her visits.

Well, but to return,—as I said, after I had been at the chapel, I invited a few friends to take tea with me, and amongst others Mr. O’Nettle, Lord Connor’s gentleman. They are but just come from Ireland. To be sure it was terrifying to hear the account he gave of that distracted country, and says he, “There is a d—d business of another and more private nature;” I must give it you in his own words, madam, because you would not like to lose any part of it. “Lord Fitzarnold, a fine young man with a very large estate, has made so free with an English gentleman, as to carry off his wife per force!” “Aye,” replied some of the company, “how happened that?” “True upon my soul!” says O’Nettle; “it was neither by your leave or with your leave; and if report says true, what was most extraordinary, it was against the lady’s own consent!” “Why then,” replied others, “won’t his lordship be hanged?” “Why no,” says O’Nettle; “I suppose circumstances will come out to prevent that; for it seems the lady and her husband lived upon very ill terms, and that will go a great way to exculpate Lord Fitzarnold.” “O now I think of it,” said Mrs. Lacy, “it was mentioned in our still room the other day, and one of our servants had got a letter from one Macardoe, who lives with Lord Fitzarnold; and moreover, he said that the lady was got away, and gone nobody knew whither, and that she was the sweetest creature that ever was seen.”

Many more things were said which I now forget, and thought no more about, little supposing it was Miss St. Edward; but upon the receipt of your letter, madam, I went to Lord Connor’s, and I asked Mr. O’Nettle to tell me all the particulars, which were much the same as what I have related; but he advised me to go to Sir Charles Elliot’s, and enquire for one John Ladwick, who could give me the best information. Accordingly I did so, and after some intreaty, I got a sight of this Macardoe’s letter: a curious epistle it is, and so vilely written, and so badly spelt, that it was with difficulty I could make out the sense of it; however, it left no room to doubt of the facts; and though he affects secrecy, he mentions the name of Mrs. St. Edward in the postscript, and then like a true Irishman, says it must not be named. It appears from this letter that she has got away from Lord Fitzarnold, and that she was positively carried away against her consent. I tried every possible means to get the letter into my possession, and I would have inclosed it to you, madam, but I could not prevail with the man to part with it, and he seemed not satisfied with himself that he had been induced to let me have a sight of it. If I can be of farther service in this business, or any other, please, madam, to command my best services, being always ready and happy to oblige as far as can be in the power of,

Dear and honoured madam,

Your obliged and very obedient  
humble servant,

MARY EASTBROOK.



*(Mrs. Safforey in continuation.)*

I will suppose, my dear Mrs. Clifford, that you have read the inclosed, if your patience could endure the prolixity of Madam Eastbrook: I confess mine has seldom been tried more severely. What can be done for our poor Julia? and what may she not be suffering whilst we are debating upon the method of recovering her? It is absolutely necessary that her fame should be restored by the full declaration of her being carried away by force; and the guilt of Lord Fitzarnold must likewise be made public: yet I shudder to reflect upon the consequences of an enraged husband's resentment; for enraged he must be when he has such proof of his wife's innocence, however supine he may hitherto have been.

I have written to Mrs. Eastbrook to get further information. I wish we could get Macardoe's letter; St. Edward should be shewn this: and yet I dread to think how it must end. I could have been glad that you had staid longer at Arkley; possibly in that case things might have been better managed; for, my dear Mrs. Clifford, we want some able adviser; women are but weak negotiators in any arduous undertaking; we fancy we can do a great deal, but when judgment, policy, and safety are required, we want the steady sense, the clear precision of the wiser sex, and feel our inability and weakness. What says your worthy uncle? Were he young and freed from his infirmities, we should need no better champion. He may still direct and counsel our opinions, and I know you will consult him on this trying occasion. My ideas are sadly confused; I know not what will be for the best; I am impatient for the vindication of my dear friend's honour, and yet I feel a dread, a horror, in the necessary execution of it. Let me have your's and your worthy uncle's advice as speedily as may be; and believe me always,

Your truly affectionate friend,  
ELINOR SAFFOREY.

LETTER X.

*From the same to the same.*

Ledcombe, Dec. 19, 17—.

I CANNOT, my dear Mrs. Clifford, wait for your answer to my last, before I again address you. My wishes are granted, and we have a friend and an able advocate in the cause of Julia, in the person of Lord Robert Carrington. Were I to copy the style of Mrs. Eastbrook, I should detain you with drawing a picture of his person, his good sense, and elegant manners, as well as the polite compliments he made me on the steadiness and warmth of my friendship; but I will hasten to inform you, that he is the professed friend of Lord Fitzarnold, but not so to his vices, for he seems, as far as a judgment can be formed upon so short an acquaintance, worthy of a better friend.

He met Mr. St. Edward at Buxton, and made some observations upon his conduct toward Miss Carroset, and felt, he says, he knew not why, interested for his wife. Upon hearing the full conviction of Lord Fitzarnold's having carried her off, (a violation which he highly reprobates,) he, in concert with a Mr. Tracy, a man of known probity and universal benevolence, formed the resolution of investigating the matter, and having learned from enquiry that I was her particular friend, he bent his course to Ledcombe, whilst his companion is gone to reconnoitre the spirits at Arkley Castle, a task by far the most formidable, but for which he says Mr. Tracy is perfectly calculated.

Lord Robert's truly polite enquiries respecting Julia, his detestation of Lord Fitzarnold's conduct, yet joined with a wish to extenuate his fault, if possible, bespeak him at once the true friend and the man of honour. I confess myself greatly prejudiced in his favour. There are the most striking marks of an ingenuous mind both in his looks and sentiments, added to a very quick discernment and finished address. His visit was long, and he had from me all the particulars which I have been able to collect since Julia's departure, as well as the uncommon merits which had shone in her conduct with undiminished lustre, before this fatal catastrophe. I said not a word of her attachment to my unhappy brother, or gave him the smallest reason to suppose that St. Edward was not the chosen husband of her heart; this is not a time to make mention of a circumstance of that nature; would it could be for ever buried in oblivion.

Lord Robert Carrington sincerely joined me in my wishes that a perfect reconciliation might be brought to bear, by a full conviction of her innocence; but how is this to be effected? The world will not be persuaded by a set of people, all of whom are her professed friends; and even could the fullest conviction of her innocence appear as clear to them as to ourselves, they would not willingly relinquish the pleasure which malignity and censure would afford them. Lord Robert assured me that he would for ever renounce all friendship and acquaintance with Lord Fitzarnold, if he did not publicly confess her virtue and his own crime; and this he says, he is the more inclined to believe he will do, as he has known him intimately from a very early age; and although led away by the violence of his misguided infatuation, he has many good traits in his character.

I could not entirely subscribe to this opinion of his friend; but we parted with a mutual wish to be informed if any thing favourable should occur: and yet, my dear Mrs. Clifford, I must be content to receive my information through another channel; and I have referred him to you for any future intelligence. I think I need not say what are my reasons for this; you have, I am sure, already anticipated them:—I am young, and my husband absent. Could I engage in a correspondence with a man like Lord Robert, upon a subject of this nature, with propriety?—No!—my own heart would condemn me were I to consent to it; you will therefore have the goodness to inform his lordship of any circumstance which may occur within your knowledge; and he will address you as soon as he knows the result of Mr. Tracy's visit at Arkley. In the course of the correspondence, I must entreat you will not forget that there lives not a person more interested in this cause than,

Dear Mrs. Clifford,  
Your truly faithful friend,  
ELINOR SAFFOREY.

## LETTER XI.

*Mrs. Clifford to Mrs. Safforey.*

Crayborne, Dec. 29, 17—.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE the favour of both your letters, which deserve my grateful thanks. I cannot but be glad we have some tidings of Mrs. St. Edward, though her situation is truly critical; and the small comfort of knowing that she is innocent, is deeply embittered by the various reflections which her ill-fated circumstances call forth. Believe me, dear madam, and I am sure I need no arguments to enforce this belief, there is not a being in the world who would more sincerely rejoice at her being reinstated to her honours, her home, her husband, and her friends, with that innocence and purity which, I am assured, belong to her; but, alas! it will never be. Do not suppose that because I say this, I am inclined to look only on the dark side of the perspective;—no, I would most willingly view it on the fairest side. You will, I trust, excuse me for saying, that both yourself and Lord Robert Carrington are young disciples in the school of censure and oppression: you judge of hearts by the measure of your own, when the greater number are composed of materials totally different.

The idea of Julia's being carried away, and into another kingdom without her own consent, may, and will be implicitly believed by those who are best acquainted with her virtues; but to a misjudging and ill-natured world, such a story will only serve for ridicule and amusement. 'Tis true, no evidence has yet been produced to prove the contrary, and a strong one in her favour is Macardoe's letter, but that may be destroyed; and there will not be wanting persons who may be bribed to perjury, or even wantonly abuse and villify a character too fair for imitation, and too virtuous to escape the shafts of envy and detraction. These are my uncle's opinions as well as my own: he says Julia must be happy in the consciousness of her own integrity and innocence, a consolation far superior to the world's estimation, but for the rest, except the opinions of a chosen few, she must not expect either favour or affection. Hard, indeed, is her lot; and my heart bleeds for the sufferings she may have endured, as well as for the feelings of a mind so delicate.

I am honoured by your commands to engage in a correspondence with Lord Robert Carrington. I hope he is all that he appears to be; but his intimacy and professed friendship with that odious Lord Fitzarnold, does not, I confess, prejudice me in his favour. Nothing could be more proper than your declining a correspondence with him. If all young women were as prudent, the world would become better both by practice and example; but, as an old woman, I am impatient for a letter from him; and if I can allow of the smallest hope, it is from the interference of Mr. Tracy. He is a man of acknowledged worth, and universally esteemed. He will have occasion to exert all his powers to awaken the torpid mind of Mr. St. Edward, and to circumvent the influence and artful wiles of Miss Carroset.

I left Arkley with a sad presentiment that I should never again enter its walls; every thing conspired to make me gloomy; the hopes I entertained when I went there

were cruelly dashed by disappointment; Miss Carroset's insolence was insufferable; and St. Edward's indifference still worse. The mysterious figure I saw there was never cleared up, and my dear young friend's character was traduced and slandered. Circumstances like these could not fail to depress my spirits to a degree of lowness almost unsupportable, and when I arrived here, it was only the kind soothing of my ever revered and affectionate uncle, that could reconcile me to myself. Adieu, my dear madam. Pardon the despondency of some parts of my letter, yet allow for the force of my arguments; and believe me,

Your ever obliged and affectionate,  
ANN CLIFFORD.

## LETTER XII.

*Mr. Tracy to Lord Robert Carrington,*

Stafford, Jan. 2, 17—.

MY LORD,

MY embassy has proved unsuccessful: it is ever so, I believe, when men trouble themselves with what does not belong to them; yet I am still inclined to think that we are engaged in a good cause, with a view to defend the innocent, and detect (if not punish) the guilty. Your lordship will, no doubt, be impatient for the particulars, and I will give them as briefly as I can.

When I arrived at Arkley Castle, I sent in my name, and desired to speak with Mr. St. Edward alone. I waited some time before he appeared, and I confess I did not presage much hope from his countenance: it did not augur in our favour. I apologized with as much politeness as I could muster for the intrusion of my visit, which the late extraordinary circumstances that had happened in his family would in some degree authorize, if not justify. I proceeded to inform him that I was honoured with your lordship's acquaintance; of your intimacy with Lord Fitzarnold, whose conduct, though your friend, you wished to have clearly investigated, in order to prove the innocence of Mrs. St. Edward, and if possible to reinstate both the lady and himself in their former happiness. I animadverted upon several circumstances which had arisen in her favour, and I particularly dwelt upon the evidence of Macardoe's letter, which I would endeavour to procure as a sufficient testimony that Mrs. St. Edward had been forcibly carried away, and had since appeared to have evaded their pursuit. Without having studied Lavater, I could read from St. Edward's looks what passed in his mind, and although they are far from intelligent, (for his eyes always seem to be hunting for his wits,) yet I could collect distrust, malice, and something like exulting pleasure at the idea that she was proved to be in another kingdom with another man, for upon this he dwelt strongly in his answer, which was composed of violence, common-place opinions, and ill-judging resentment. He would give no hearing to any circumstances favourable to Mrs. St. Edward, and repeatedly assured me that he should immediately sue for a divorce. This, I told him, he

would find very difficult, as no evidence had yet appeared to prove that she had held any correspondence, or made any assignation previous to her going, and much on the contrary had transpired to prove it was not with her consent.

It would be tedious to relate all that passed; it was a repetition on both sides; and ended just where we began. As all our altercation passed with tolerable good manners, and the day was pretty far advanced, he could not avoid asking me to stay dinner, which invitation I accepted, not either for the pleasure of his company or the good things of his table, but because I wished to make some observations on his guests, who are no other than those very delectable beings, the family of the Carrosets, with whom he seemed so much entangled at Buxton, and who have gained still more permanent footing, both in his house, as well as in the arrangement of his ideas and conduct. The young woman appears to be almost a disgrace to her sex, and I had well nigh told her so; nor did I part with St. Edward without a hint of this nature, and the impropriety of her present interference. And there again I got my knuckles rapped, for, what business had I there?

Sorry I am that I have been so unsuccessful a negotiator, but the cause is a bad one in its consequences, however equitable our intentions, and I fear poor Mrs. St. Edward must not expect a just reward for her merits in this world, but as an example of suffering virtue. It will be extremely difficult for St. Edward to get a divorce, and it will be equally so to prove her innocence; it must be a length of time before anything decisive can be determined. If your friend has the smallest particle of honour remaining, he will not fail to exculpate her's at the expence of his own; in the mean time, we must rest our hopes upon a more certain power. I shall travel in my usual mode by slow stages to Bath, where my future services will wait your commands; and I have the honour to remain,

Your lordship's  
Very faithful and obedient  
humble servant,  
OSMOND TRACY.

### LETTER XIII.

*Lord Robert Carrington to Lord Fitzarnold.*

NOT as my friend, Fitzarnold, do I now address you; you have forfeited that title from all men of honour; and I am sorry to add, that I blush to be considered as your intimate acquaintance. Your long silence and total concealment of your abode, suits well with the part you have acted; nor should it have been invaded on your own account, but in defence of a more valuable ornament to society. You have been traced and detected by a letter from one Macardoe, now in your service, and though a vile agent of your's, has sufficiently proved your guilt. Had you been the seducer only of Mrs. St. Edward's virtue, you would have been held in detestation by all good men; but as a robber and violator, you must abide by the offended laws of your country. These, indeed, however severe, will be light in comparison of your own guilty conscience, the stings of which will be sharpened by reflecting upon the virtues of her you have injured; for, however she

may have escaped your machinations, her fame is for ever lost unless you retrieve it. Fitzarnold; this is yet in your power, for I understand from all that have known her from her earliest years, that she is purity itself. Shew her your affection by this proof of justice, the only service you can now render her. Do this as well in pity to Mrs. St. Edward, as in mercy to yourself. Make her virtue as clear to the world as it has appeared to you; and spare yourself the guilt of denying her this recompence for her sufferings, as this is all that remains. I dare not call myself your friend; but if any former remembrance should have rendered that name valuable to you, let it have some influence at this trying period; and if you accede to the request of my letter, you will still find a place in the memory of

CARRINGTON.

London, Jan. 4, 17—.

LETTER XIV.

*Miss Carroset to Miss Baynard.*

Arkley Castle, Jan. 7, 17—.

MARIA, I was never less inclined to indulge you with a letter than now, for I am almost deprived of my patience, and I must have recourse to my pen to vent the spleen of my heart. St. Edward makes no dispatch in the business of this divorce; he is as easy and contented, and I had almost said as foolish, as if no such advantage had been given him; and whenever I ask what steps he has taken, he nods his stupid head, and cries, "I have consulted the lawyers, and every thing is in a train." Aye, and a tedious train it is; and to add to my mortifications, a hideous fright of a fellow came here the other day, and was closeted for two hours with St. Edward. His name is Tracy; we met him at Buxton; the most horrible wretch you ever beheld; one of those odious monsters that are called humane good sort of men. He used to expatiate for an hour upon the barbarity of a man's whipping a horse, with a thousand other ridiculous whims. Do you know, Maria, he had the consummate assurance to reflect upon my being here as an impropriety; and spoke again to St. Edward about it! Does not he deserve to be strangled? I wish he may break his nasty neck, but of that there is no chance, for he drives a little low chaise, as old-fashioned and ugly as himself, with two fat horses that he treats like Christians, and, my brother says, never goes faster than they like. St. Edward should take care how he invites such guests here; but I believe this shocking creature came unasked; yet St. Edward had no business to ask him to stay dinner; and this I gave him to understand, and told him I had never been used to such company. He was even worse than Mrs. Clifford, and I had no little difficulty to get her out of the house; but no sooner is one plague gone than another comes. I am cruelly annoyed with it all.

I declare, Maria, I would have given up the pursuit, and turned my mind towards some other, if I could have foreseen the trouble and difficulty of this; and yet there would have been a fair prospect if St. Edward had any sense, but he is such a blockhead, and sometimes I fancy he is cool towards me; yet his resentment to Mrs. St. Edward seems

completely alive. I lose no opportunity of encouraging that as much as possible. Well do I know how jealousy and an idea of having been used ill, quenches every spark of love, and creates a substitute little short of hatred. To add to my misfortunes, my foolish father has taken it into his head that we should leave this place; he wants to buy stock or some such nonsense: and my no less silly mother fancies the air is too keen for her tender nerves. But I promise them they will not stir from hence till things are more decidedly settled. Upon my word, my dear, parents are very troublesome. After a certain age, there is not one in fifty that know how to behave themselves, or what is due to their children. I protest all relationship's a great bore: I hate the name of kindred.

Pray, Maria, when you write again, do not forget to tell me how people dress themselves. I am absolutely as ignorant of fashions here as I should be in the deserts of Arabia. I dare say if you were to see me, you would think I came out of the Ark, for I have made no change in my dress these three months. I saw not a creature at Buxton who knew anything of the matter. I am informed, indeed, that people of fashion wear very few cloaths, and appear beautifully naked: I do not think it good policy to have no concealments. Remember likewise to send me some pots of rouge and some pearl-powder; I dare not send for these articles from the market-town, for the boors of this country would then swear I wore paint. Thank my stars, when I am once Mrs. St. Edward, I shall bid adieu to all rural scenes and country cousins, calculated only to depress the spirits and enervate the mind. Would you believe that people here talk about Christmas as they used to do, I suppose, in the time of their forefathers; and even the lower order of them have the assurance to wish one many happy returns of this season, and expect a gift of charity. What can the wretches mean? I'm sure I desire no return of seasons fraught with so much anxiety and care as I now experience: nothing but the hope in perspective could enable me to bear it. No heroine of renown ever went through half my difficulties. I promise myself, however, a speedy and happy end to my misfortunes, and with that wish I will conclude.

My dear Maria,

Ever yours,

CHARLOTTE CARROSET.

#### LETTER XV.

*From the same to the same.*

MY DEAR DEAR MARIA,

MY wishes are granted; there is an end to all my misery! Mrs. St. Edward is no more! Oh—the delightful news! I can scarce hold my pen for the palpitating joy which still agitates my whole frame, and extends its trembling sensations to my fingers! It is charming! The marriage will not now be delayed by tedious lawyers, and seeking evidence for a divorce. Will you not come to the wedding?—But I am keeping you in suspense, and you would, I dare say, like to hear the dear particulars.

Soon after I had concluded my last, St. Edward was called out to speak with two countrymen upon business of the last importance. Oh—how my heart fluttered! for I guessed it was something relating to Mrs. St. Edward. Last importance indeed! Thank my stars, it was the last, for it was an account of her death! Yes, Maria, a dear good fisherman brought the heavenly news that she was drowned in the sea near Holyhead. Dear blessed man! such people can never be sufficiently rewarded. The other man was a parish-officer, who came to certify the account, and to know what is to be done with the body. Thanks to her unfortunate stars, and my better fate. She had lain too long in the water for any means to be used towards effecting her recovery; yet St. Edward, silly fellow! had so forgotten his resentment as to make this the first enquiry. “Lord help your honour,” says the good countryman, “her a been dead a long while; why the fish had begun upon her, and you could scarce tell a feature that her had: her cloaths all drapt off by bits, and we could only save these here papers that was in her pockets—they be dried and persarved—and two rings upon her fingers, as we have honestly brought to your honour; and it is all a had about her.” What an honest good creature is this poor man! it seems he lives near Holyhead, and gets a livelihood by fishing.

Several days, he says, had been very tempestuous, and no boats could go out. When he first ventured, he saw something white floating upon the water, which on a nearer approach, he found to be the body of a woman. With some difficulty he got it into his boat, and brought it to his hut; then he went for the parish-officer and the coroner, who brought it in accidental death; then he went to fetch the clergyman, who would not bury her, because, upon looking at the papers, the name of Julia St. Edward was found in them; and it was by his order that he came to Arkley. There was nothing found in her pockets besides the papers, but a smelling-bottle, a handkerchief, and two shillings, which money, the man says, he gave to two others who helped to haul the body on shore, and the smelling-bottle, which he believes to be gold, the clergyman keeps till somebody comes to own the body. Lucy, her maid, is to be dispatched for this purpose; not that there can be any doubt of the identity of the person. The body is to be brought here, and deposited in the family-vault, and I hope we shall make some excursion during that dismal ceremony.

The papers are all addressed and directed to Mrs. Safforey. I confess I wished to take a peep at them, just to see what the poor creature had been about all this time, but St. Edward actually exerted himself and forbid their being opened, and sent them off express that night to Ledcombe. Do you know, Maria, he was low, and several times held his handkerchief to his eyes; and to make it better, my foolish mother (I could have smothered her) began to whine out the virtues of Mrs. St. Edward, but I insisted upon her not speaking on so melancholy a subject, as I knew it would bring on her nervous fits. After all, I have enough to do, to keep every one in proper order; and notwithstanding so joyful an event, am not quite free from anxiety, for St. Edward looks grave, and sighs bitterly. I have used every method to dissipate his thoughts, and told him it is wicked to grieve for the dead; and so it is you know; and then I did not fail to remind him of her running away.

Well, I wish she was safe in her grave, and then I see no reason why we should not immediately be married; for it would be absurd for St. Edward to pretend to mourn for her, from whom, but for this happy event, he was going to be divorced; and I wish to hasten the match as much as possible before Mrs. Safforey makes known the contents of



the papers, in which there may be some attempts to prove her innocence, at least some whining cant, which may have an effect upon the weak mind of St. Edward. There can be no sweets without some ingredients of bitter; this truth is fully exemplified in my present circumstances.—I will not close my letter till to-morrow, because something may occur of which you would like to be informed, so adieu for the present.

The servant who went to carry the papers to Mrs. Safforey is just returned, with looks as melancholy as a fright. He gave a hideous account of Mrs. Safforey's lamentations for the loss of her friend; but after all, what are they in comparison of my state of mind! Her's only suffers the pain of an unpleasant certainty, whilst mine is tortured by a thousand anxieties. I thought when first I knew that Mrs. St. Edward was really dead, that all my cares were at an end, but every hour brings with it some fresh cause for my apprehensions; and nothing but the indissoluble knot can give me perfect security.—Mrs. Safforey wrote a few hasty lines to St. Edward, to thank him for the papers, the contents of which, she says, he shall be fully informed of as soon as she has read them; and she begs that Mrs. Clifford may be permitted to see the corpse before it is buried, for which purpose she is to come again to Arkley. There is another of my torments. I'm sure I ought to be endued with the patience of Job. I wonder St. Edward (but why should I wonder at anything he does?) will be weak enough to allow these women all their whims and fancies. Mrs. Safforey testifies her grief in the most romantic terms; and now we are to have Mrs. Clifford to weep and wail. I suppose I shall not be able to get St. Edward away from these scenes of woe; yet, if possible, he shall not remain here, for nothing renders the mind so easy of impression as when it is softened by melancholy ideas, and tender claims of pity.

I feel a great deal of curiosity to know how Mrs. St. Edward will have made out her story,—in her own favour no doubt; but we are not all bound to believe it, which is a great comfort; and I fancy the generality of the world will have lost much of their pity, when they find she has been so long absent with another man. Let her own story be what it may, you shall not fail to be informed of all I can tell you; and I hope my next will convey still better tidings, that all my cares and fears are deposited in the grave of Mrs. St. Edward; and as I shall not write again before this dismal business is completely over and forgotten, I will hope and trust that this will be the last letter I shall sign with

CHARLOTTE CARROSET.

#### LETTER XVI.

*Mrs. Clifford to Mrs. Safforey.*

Arkley Castle, Jan. 26.

I WOULD not address you, my dear madam, till I had seen the last of our dear and much lamented friend; nor indeed were my spirits equal to the task at first. I arrived here on the evening of the day which brought the last remains of our poor friend to Arkley. Mr. St.

Edward and the Carrosets were all gone to some place about twenty miles from this, in order to be out of the way upon the melancholy occasion. I did not lament their absence, but I thought there was something improper and unfeeling in Mr. St. Edward's being gone. All the servants that were left behaved in the most respectful manner, at the same time lamenting the unfortunate fate of their poor mistress with sincere tokens of regret.

I took some slight refreshment, and endeavoured to collect my spirits in order to encounter the sad scene in which I had engaged, and to inspect, as far as circumstances would admit, the body of our unfortunate friend, both for my own satisfaction as well as your's. According to my directions, Lucy had ordered the coffin to be so slightly screwed, that the lid was easily again taken off.—There is a something in the contemplation of a dead body, even under the most uninteresting circumstances, which is awful in the extreme. I confess, when I entered the room, I shuddered, not with horror or fear, but an indescribable sensation seemed to overpower me, and it was some moments before I could recover myself sufficiently to approach the coffin, and when I beheld the mangled features of our dear departed Julia, I could not avoid uttering a shriek of terror. Lucy supported and encouraged me to examine the features of her beloved mistress; the frequent sight having rendered her less shocked at the contemplation of an object so dreadful.

The body was dressed exactly as it was found in the water, that is, the remains of the dress, for it was partly torn to pieces, and the face so entirely mutilated, that it must be impossible to ascertain from that whether or not it was really Julia. The size and shape corresponded with her's, and the hair is the same colour, but upon examining the hands, I think they appeared larger, and not so beautifully formed as were Julia's; but this might be accounted for by having been so long under the water, and being swoln. Her stockings and the remains of her linen were marked J.S. and Lucy says, she could swear to the work being her's. The gown was the very one in which she had dressed her on the day she was missing. These are proofs strong enough of the body's being no other than that of our unhappy friend, even were any wanting; but the letters, the rings, and the smelling-bottle, which is now sent, and was a present from myself to her, with the initials of my own name upon it, are all such convincing testimonies, as to require no other; and as to the face, as I said before, it is so entirely mutilated, that no trace of feature or countenance could possibly be discovered.

After I had contemplated the body, heard, and joined in the lamentations of Lucy, and breathed a most humble and devout wish for her eternal happiness, I ordered the coffin to be screwed down, and attended by all the servants, who were, I believe, real mourners, we proceeded to the parish-church, which is very near the castle, and there in the vault of her ancestors were deposited the sad remains of Julia St. Edward, brought to this untimely grave by the licentious atrocity of a peer of the realm, and the careless conduct of a weak and unfeeling husband. I trust she is taken from a world not worthy of her virtues, and to meet a reward due to her excellence. Mine were not the only tears that were shed at her funeral; all that were present seemed truly affected. I could wish to have seen Mr. St. Edward, and to have seriously impressed him with the solemnity of the occasion, but as I find he is not expected to return for some days, and as I am impatient to hear the contents of her papers, I must be satisfied with having paid this last sad tribute to her memory, and purpose leaving Arkley to-morrow.

The family of the Carrosets are still here, and had I staid, I should only have subjected myself to the insolence of Miss Carroset, a humiliation I am not well calculated to support.—I shall write to Lord Robert Carrington as soon as I know the particulars of Mrs. St. Edward's story. His assiduous interest well deserves this attention at least, and I have no doubt that he will leave nothing untried to bring Lord Fitzarnold to do public justice to the merits of our lost friend, and that he will join with us in bewailing the loss of so much excellence: yet when I say bewail, I know not if I use either a proper phrase, or one congenial to my own feelings; for after all, why should we bewail her? She is, I trust, far happier than any share in this world could have made her; for what were her prospects? married to a man who knew not her just value, and would be better pleased, nay, is so, with one in every respect her inferior. There were other causes too that I forbear to mention, which might have been productive of misery, if not misfortune, to our friend. Why then should we lament? 'Tis true, the circumstances of her death were shocking, and it was impossible to behold her disfigured corpse without terror; but the ultimate event to her is the same as if she had been surrounded by pitying friends and weeping kindred.

To the lovers of this world, death is more formidable than to all others; it appears to them an end to all enjoyment, and a suspension of all hopeful expectation: but to those who have experienced the pangs of disappointed hope in all they held most dear, what is it but a relief from toil, from sorrow, and anxiety, and opens to them a prospect of everlasting peace in a world of better spirits. Pardon, dear madam, these solemn reflections, which, addressed to the young and gay, whose prospects may be gilded by the fairest tints, may seem improper, but at an age like mine, are seldom excluded from recollection, and are more forcibly felt on an occasion like the present.

I remain, dear madam,

Ever yours,

ANN CLIFFORD.

LETTER XVII.

*Mrs. Safforey to Mrs. Clifford.*

Ledcombe, Jan. 29, 17—.

MANY thanks are due to you, my dear Mrs. Clifford, for the truly kind part you have lately performed. I know it was a satisfaction to you, though a melancholy one; and to be assured that one sincere friend and mourner paid the last respect, and attended her to the grave, gave a relief to my mind, and in some degree mitigated the extreme sorrow which I have felt, not only from the loss of my friend, but the cruel manner in which her life has been cut off. Bitter is my loss, and most severely do I feel it; yet I am willing to subscribe to your opinions, that her lot here was by no means such as could make her friends wish her a long continuance in it. She was one of those many on whom fortune had set a mark of persecution at a very early period, and there was but little reason to expect any turn in her favour. To be snatched, therefore, away to an early grave, however afflicting to those who lament her, cannot, we hope, be a misfortune to herself. These are reflections by which I endeavour to correct, or at least suppress, the most poignant sorrow; yet there are times when it overpowers this reasoning, and I give way to an excess of grief. I know you will condemn me for it, and I also know that you are right; and I have, likewise, ties of the dearest nature to interest my affections.

Yesterday brought me a letter from my husband. He is, thank God, in perfect health, and speaks with some degree of certainty upon the subject of coming home, and that subject seems nearest to his heart; but he mentions my brother as being returned to England, and enquires of him from me. Pray Heaven he may not too have found a watery grave like his beloved Julia. Should he return, I dread the effects of his distraction when he is acquainted with her fate; but I will hope for the best, and perhaps he will be better enabled to contemplate her death, than to see her the wife of another. In that case, all may be well. Indeed, I am fully convinced that nothing is permitted, which has not a tendency to some good design, though our weak and frail natures cannot comprehend that infinite Wisdom, which worketh all things together for good, to those who truly love and fear God.

I have enclosed the papers found in the pockets of our loved Julia. It is extraordinary they should be so well preserved; but by being closely folded, the wet did not rot them. You will have cause to admire the conduct of our friend in many instances, and as I know you must be impatient to learn her story, I will not longer detain you from what is so interesting. I know you will be particularly careful of them, and open the folds with caution, as they are not perfectly whole.—Adieu, dear madam, and believe me

Affectionately yours,

ELINOR SAFFOREY.

*Paper the Ist.*

Adair, Jan. 7, 17—.

MY DEAREST ELINOR,

I KNOW not if you will ever receive this sad proof of the existence of your Julia, and, perhaps, I may now no longer find a place in your affection; for appearances must have been sadly against me, and the world is not a kind one; but I am allowed writing materials though not to send letters; yet, as I must cherish the pleasing idea of your still loving me, together with the hope that you may one day read this, I think I cannot better fill up my sad hours than by relating my misfortunes.

On the evening of the day in which I wrote my last letter to you, I felt an unusual oppression on my spirits. I believe I had mentioned some little alarms which had rather surprised me on the preceding night, and although I did not allow them to have any great influence upon my designs, yet I did not stir out the whole day, which was filled up by various amusements, and when the evening closed in, I walked about in the different apartments till my supper-time, which, being slight and solitary, was soon ended. I then read for two hours, and a little before eleven o'clock Lucy attended me to my chamber. It was always my custom to dismiss her before I undressed, and not finding myself sleepy, I sat by the table ruminating on the uninteresting life I led, and various other matters, till I heard the bell of the great clock strike the half hour; I then rose in order to undress, when I was alarmed by a sudden and violent crash in the closet which adjoined my chamber.

I had frequently heard rats before, but this was a noise which could not possibly be occasioned by any creature of that sort. I started, and was advancing to my bell at the head of the bed, when, before I could proceed two steps, the door which opened into the closet was burst open, and to my extreme terror and affright, two men, with black crape over their faces, rushed into the room and seized me. I screamed violently, and was greatly afraid that my terror would deprive me of my senses; and I recollected that no person slept very near my chamber, nor consequently could hear my screams, even had any of the family been awake; and likewise that my door was fastened on the inside. I determined, therefore, to exert my spirits. I demanded, with as much resolution as I could muster, who, and what they were, who had dared to invade my chamber, and thus forcibly attempt to detain me. They made no answer, but proceeded to drag me towards the closet. I redoubled my cries, and made all the resistance I was able; but they dragged me between them into the closet, and then hurried me through a door I had never before seen, down some steps into the garden. I then used intreaty. I besought them to release me, and I would return with them to my chamber, and give them a very considerable sum of money which I had in my escritoire, besides some jewels of value. One of the villains answered in a low voice, "That is not our object;" and I found they hurried me very fast, whilst my feet scarce touched the ground. I then exerted my voice to the utmost pitch, in the hope that some one in the out-offices might hear me, but a dreadful stillness seemed to prevail, and I heard nothing but the echo of my own cries. I bent down upon the ground several times, and I supplicated them to release me, but in vain.

I perceived that they were hurrying me towards a gate in the park, which led to the road, and I instantly perceived a chaise with four horses. One of the men got in, while the other held me fast, and then lifted me into the chaise, and stepped in after. The door was immediately shut, and the chaise proceeded at a rapid pace. The men continued silent, but held me between them. I entreated and I threatened by turns. I told them that the first moment I was missing we should be pursued, and what a dreadful punishment would be inflicted on perpetrators of a crime like this; that I would come into no terms either with them or their employers, except they would take me back from whence they had brought me, or even put me out of the chaise where we now were, and leave me to find my way as I could, for which kindness I would take care they should be handsomely rewarded.

During this time, the chaise drove on with great violence; the men were silent; and I found my voice grew hoarse, and my strength exhausted. I wished to be relieved by tears, but I could not shed one; my heart palpitated almost to bursting; and in a tremulous and faint voice, I begged to have some air. They seemed alarmed; the glasses were instantly let down; and some biscuit and wine offered me. I refused to touch either, but I found myself relieved by the air. I tried to collect my terrified senses into some order. Surely, I thought, this could be no contrivance of St. Edward's, strange as had been his conduct. I could not have become so hateful to him, as to cause a barbarity of this nature; and Miss Carroset could not dare, I thought, make such an attempt.

I said to the men, with as much composure as I could command, "Since I am to be your prisoner, I beg to know what is your design, and for what reason I am thus forcibly detained; where you are going to carry me, and by whose order I am thus treated?" One of the men replied, in a voice not harsh or ungentle, "Madam, these are questions we are not at liberty to answer. You may rest assured no violence will be offered, and a very short time will bring you to those who will inform you what are their designs, and for what reason you are placed in this unpleasant confinement. In the mean while, we would entreat you to be composed, and at the same time to be assured it is not in our power to release you, or to render your situation less painful."

I knew not what to do; my mind was distracted; and I made several efforts to force open the door of the chaise, and was as often gently restrained, and held back by the men. During the night we drove through a pretty considerable town, when I again exerted my voice, in hopes to have been heard by some of the inhabitants; but against this my persecutors had guarded, for one of the postilions, or some one else on horseback who attended, blew a horn, resembling that of the mail-coach, which effectually drowned my cries, and prevented any person who might be up from observing the carriage. When we had gone about a mile from the town, we stopped, and the horses were changed for fresh ones. I was again offered refreshment, and pressed to partake of it, and again I refused; but when the day began to break, and I perceived we were going through a village, I begged to have a glass of water, and this I did in order to make an attempt for liberty, as I observed some countrymen getting up to their work, and one or two already threshing in a barn; but my request was not granted till we were completely past the village, when the chaise was stopped. One of the men stepped out, and soon returned with water in a pint mug. I eagerly drank some, for my throat was parched, and I found myself relieved by it.

We proceeded, and as daylight fast approached, the blinds of the chaise were carefully drawn. I had ceased to intreat, and I found all resistance vain; I therefore gave

myself up, and sat sullenly ruminating upon a fate so miserably singular. You, my Elinor, and all my friends, seemed lost to me for ever; and the idea of how this strange business would terminate, or what I had to dread, was not so painful as the disgrace attending it. It was not the first time I had wished for death as a reliever of greater woes than these, but I subdued such wishes, and such recollections. I addressed that Being who never forsakes the innocent, and I collected better thoughts. I resolved to be calm, and the idea that no act of my own had brought me into this predicament in some degree soothed my mind to something like resignation. I suppose it appeared to my companions like stupefaction, for the morning was far advanced, and we had stopped at a decent looking house, into which they were preparing to take me, before I shewed any signs of animation. I was carefully lifted out of the chaise, and taken in a room which seemed prepared for my reception; breakfast was placed on a table, and a middle-aged woman, of no bad appearance, seemed desirous of recommending herself by her attentions and wishes for me to partake of the repast.

The men withdrew, and left me alone with her, when, instead of eating, I again began my intreaties that she would inform me where I was, and what my destination. She returned the same answer the men had given before, viz. she was not at liberty to inform me, adding, that no evil was intended me, and if I chose to have an attendant of my own sex, she would, if I pleased, go with me the remainder of my journey. She begged me to be composed, and at last persuaded me to take a dish of tea, and a piece of toast. I looked out of the window, but could collect nothing from what I saw likely to favour my escape, had I attempted to make it. I returned, therefore, dispirited to my chair, and found they were again preparing for my departure. I asked the woman if she were to be my companion, and she said she would have the honour to attend me. She produced a shawl and bonnet, and asked me if I would not wear them. I said I would, if I might be allowed to purchase them, but I would accept of nothing. She said she knew not their just value; but as they were of common materials, I laid down what was a sufficient equivalent, and insisted upon her taking the money. I then expatiated upon the crime in which she was now about to be assisting and abetting; and told her that, notwithstanding I might now seem meek and calm for want of spirits, there would most assuredly come a time when I should exert every power to punish all those who had engaged in so outrageous an act. But she was as deaf to my remonstrances as my two former companions had been. I now felt my resentment rise to a very high pitch, and when the chaise was announced, I absolutely declared that nothing should make me voluntarily step into it; upon which the men again seized me, and forcibly conveyed me into it. The woman and one of the men went in with me, and we drove off at a violent pace.

The face of the country soon began to appear rude and uncultivated, and after going over an immense barren heath, I perceived the sea at no great distance. I confess the finest of all objects now struck me with terror; a thousand wild suggestions floated in my fancy, and I gave an involuntary shriek. A few tears came to my relief, and I strove to subdue my accusing murmurs. I plainly perceived we were advancing to the ocean, whose dashing waves vibrated upon my heart with dread and apprehension. My eyes were strained to view every object around me, and I presently espied a small vessel as near to the shore as might be; and then I gave myself over for lost. I once more had recourse to intreaty, but with as little success as before. A total silence prevailed, except that the woman seeing me almost frantic with apprehension, begged me to be composed,

advised me to take some wine, and assured me no harm would befall me. I do not remember what I said in return; I found my spirits violently agitated; and the chaise stopped within a few paces of the water. I was taken out and placed in a small boat, the woman and both the men holding me. I addressed the boatmen; I told them I would make their fortunes if they would rescue me: but they likewise seemed prepared for my ravings. The boat soon reached the vessel, and I was carried on board as I had been before conveyed to the boat. I sunk down with fatigue and despair, and as soon as we were in motion a dreadful sickness seized me, and I remembered nothing till they were preparing to carry me on shore.

I recovered of my sickness, but my mind suffered more anguish than I can express; and I could perceive that we were advancing towards a large house, situated upon an eminence in a kind of park. This I concluded was to be the termination of my journey, and such it proved; for I very soon found myself seated in a handsome room, decorated with rather expensive furniture. When I reflected on my situation, my spirits sunk to a degree of despondency. I looked back upon the time I had spent at Arkley Castle with self-condemnation for not having set a higher value upon it. You know I considered the days as dreary when I was left alone there; what would I not have given to have been there now! If I had not exactly the society I most valued, I was at liberty, I was sole mistress of all it contained, and my character was as spotless as my days were pure. What a reverse did I now experience! Forcibly torn from my home, irritated almost to madness by confinement, brought I knew not whither, and made a prisoner in a house calculated no doubt for some scene of villainy. Much as I had reason to dread the result of all this contrivance, I yet wished to know for what purpose so deep a laid scheme was perpetrated, and the tortures of suspense were not the least of my misery. I was treated with the same mock respect as had been observed during my journey; delicacies of every kind were brought to invite me to eat and drink; but I was never for a moment left alone. The woman who had accompanied me was my chief attendant, but several other female domestics were assiduous in offering their services; and all of them observed a profound and uniform silence upon the subjects on which I wanted information.

At night I was shewn to a handsome bed-chamber, ornamented in the same style and taste with that I had seen below. Here too I was not left. I gave way to violent bursts of grief, which, together with the fatigue I had endured, so exhausted me, that towards morning I threw myself upon the bed, and was overpowered by sleep for more than two hours. When I awoke, the same silent caution was repeated, and again I was ushered into the room below. Sleep had greatly refreshed my senses, and I began ruminating upon the singularity of my fate with a degree of composure I had not before experienced. There were moments in which I feared St. Edward might have been the contriver of this outrage, but again I reprobated the idea as impossible and unnatural; for let a man dislike his wife even to hatred, he would not place her in a situation that should cast reflections or suspicion on his honour, which must be the consequence of a secret departure from his house. Then the malice and evil propensities of Miss Carroset rested for a moment upon my imagination, and was as quickly dismissed. No;—she had not the power (whatever might be her inclination) to engage in such an enterprize; it must have been attended with great expence as well as powerful command, and could not be executed by a woman.— Thus my bewildered brain could fix upon no certain point, and naturally recurred to those objects most dear to me.—Ah, my Elinor, what tender remembrances did it not recall!—



But here I will lay down my pen for a few minutes. Adieu, my friend, I hope you still think of me with your usual kindness.

*Paper the 2d.*

I now write in security.—I think I left off by telling you, that my ruminations could not furnish me with one satisfactory idea, or lead me to any clue likely to unravel the mystery. I was silently brooding over my sorrows, when a light footstep at the door attracted my attention: the woman my attendant rose, and Lord Fitzarnold entered the room. An universal trembling seized me as he approached, yet I tried to collect my ideas, and I felt the glow of resentment burning in my face. He, too, looked abashed, and with the most humble deportment besought my pardon. “Never!” I replied; “no pardon can possibly be obtained for an outrage like this. In what my lord,” I added, “could I have deserved such treatment? In the few and short conversations I have held with your lordship, did I betray such vanity, such duplicity, such want of love to my husband, of honour, of every social virtue, as should encourage you to such an act of violence? or did my want of knowledge in the great world, render me deficient in the forms of politeness, for which you have taken such ample revenge, as scarcely the worst of crimes could have merited? For what am I torn from my husband, and from my home? and why is my name disgraced, my reputation blasted, and my peace and happiness destroyed for ever?”

Here my voice faltered, and I sunk down in a chair near me. I observed that my attendant had left the room, and Lord Fitzarnold stood before me, with his arms folded, in total silence, when I was going to proceed, but he prevented me by saying,—“Dearest Mrs. St. Edward, accuse me not of crimes at which my soul shudders. That I may have appeared to blame, and perhaps am so, I am most willing to confess; and that I have spared no pains to steal you from a husband who knows not how to value you. I am likewise ready to allow, that I have made you a kind of prisoner; and more I will add, that no power on earth shall take you from me.” I was going to reply, but he said, “Hear me out.—From the moment I beheld you, my heart fell a victim to your charms. I do not mean to address you with the common rant of a lover, but I must assure you that I loved to madness,—I adored you. Each interview but added to my frenzy. I left you; I flew from your fascinating powers; I tried to conquer myself, but I tried in vain. What was the world to me, deprived of all I valued in it? I returned again:—I saw you, ah—how did I see you? Neglected by your husband, insulted by the woman he preferred, your spirits depressed; and, ah Mrs. St. Edward, what did I not collect from your sentiments—the dictates of truth and unsuspecting innocence? Then did I form the design of taking you from a situation unworthy of your merits. Thus I reasoned:—if Mrs. St. Edward loves not the husband to whom she is destined, (not by her choice, but by her fate,) why should she not be divorced? The delicacy of her mind is too pure to admit of causes which could give her this enlargement; but should a gentle violence produce the happy consequences, be mine the part to render freedom where it’s most desired:—and let me humbly hope for that reward which would repay a thousand toils! Yes, dearest of women, let your husband sue for a divorce in consequence of your supposed elopement;—say that you will be mine when it is determined;—and from this moment you shall be free to go wherever your

choice shall lead you, with what attendants you shall please to take, and with every other appendage that the fondest love and fortune can bestow.—Whatever necessity there has been for restraint, believe me, it has hurt my feelings more than it could have done your's; let me rejoice that it is now ended. Say that you will sanctify my plans, your word shall be sacred as is your honour; your person safe and inviolate, dearly as I love you. I would not accept you but upon terms of your own acquiescence, and you shall ever find my principles guided by honour.”

“Hold,” I replied; “prophane not the name of honour by such false reasoning. I never gave you cause to think St. Edward was not the husband of my choice; I condemn no part of his conduct; he never was unkind; I am his true and faithful wife, and never will I be another's. No, my lord, this crooked path by which you have made me wretched, by which you have deprived me of all succour, by which you have shut me out from every avenue of pity from those most dear to me, shall never have my sanction, shall never through my means be crowned with triumph. There is but one way by which forgiveness can be obtained: let me be immediately conveyed back again with the same expedition I was brought here, that, if possible, I may return before my husband's doors are for ever shut against me, and before any vile process of divorce may have commenced; and I will promise to take no step in order to bring a prosecution against you for an outrage so illegal: for know, my lord, the laws of your country are formed upon the noblest basis, and would on no account mitigate the punishment due to a crime like this. But should my fame be lost, should the busy voice of slander have already rendered me as wretched as you would make me, I shall even in that case rest upon my own conscious innocence, and for the short time which may remain, enjoy a far superior share of happiness than that your name would give me. Say then, I am free, my lord, and if you will not convey me back, let me follow wheresoever my unhappy destiny may lead me.”

I was rising to depart, when he caught my hand:—“Oh Mrs. St. Edward, I cannot part with you, treat me with what scorn you please. Why will you oblige me to restrain you? Tell me not of laws; I follow none but those of nature. Believe me you are safe; I would not offer violence to your delicacy for all the world could give me. What man would say this, that did not love you with a purity equal to your own?—but to part with you—no, never. You must, you shall be mine: no power on earth shall take you from me. I am more proud to have you within these walls, than I should be of any other blessing. Be but composed, and take time to consider. You shall command, you shall be obeyed in all things but in your desire to leave me; to that I never will consent, nor allow any steps to be taken which can facilitate such a design.”

Oh Elinor, should you ever peruse these lines, how will your heart bleed for me. To what was I now reduced!—to be in the power of a man who defied all laws, who was restrained by no principles. 'Tis true, he promised me security from violation: but what was my reliance on a character like his? I knew not what to determine. I considered whether it would not be best to dissemble in order to effect an escape; yet I resolved I would never give him the smallest reason to suppose that I would come into his proposals. I remained silent, and had the mortification to hear his repetitions of love and admiration. I assumed as much composure as I could command, and asked him to inform me where I was. He replied, at Blanzey Lodge in Ireland, an estate he inherited from his ancestors. “Gracious powers!” returned I; “am I then out of my own kingdom, and in so short a space of time?” “Yes, madam; and the richest diamond this or any other kingdom

can boast; nor would I forego the delight of only knowing that you are here for the riches of any.” “But how will you manage, my lord, when Mr. St. Edward will demand me? for depend upon it, it will be known that you ordered me to be brought here.” “Oh, my dear madam, Mr. St. Edward will not demand you, he is on a different pursuit; and it was this assurance which encouraged and aided my designs.”

I was not prepared for this answer; it grieved me, and I wept. He seemed hurt at my tears, but they were a great relief to my oppressed mind. Several days passed in this state of misery; I saw no hope of escaping; my patience was nearly exhausted. Lord Fitzarnold observed the same mode of behaviour, and I relaxed nothing of my disgust. I asked for pen, ink, and paper, but was not allowed to send any letter from the house. I examined the country from the windows, and observed that the house stood in a park, with a distant view of the sea; but I could discover no road which might promise to favour my escape, should an opportunity offer. I had desired to purchase some change of apparel, and insisted upon dealing with the seller myself, from which I formed some hope of success, but was so closely watched, that I was disappointed in my scheme. My confinement made me extremely wretched.

Lord Fitzarnold preserved a polite attention, but was alike deaf to my intreaties, and to my threatenings. He urged his suit with the same ill-success which attended mine. He had all the English newspapers, and he exultingly shewed me a paragraph alluding to my supposed elopement. This was a cruelty for which I was ill prepared; it sunk deep into my heart, and completed all my sufferings. I seldom spoke, or even moved; and I found myself falling fast into that kind of apathy more injurious to health than the most poignant torture. I was not desirous of life, but I wished to preserve my fame, and this roused me from my lethargy of woe, and prompted me to make every effort for my release. For this purpose I kept myself constantly at the window, in order to observe every object which chance might throw in my way; and here I noticed a poor girl, who was, I supposed, employed in some menial offices in the house. She was young and not unhandsome, and as she frequently passed the window, I fancied I saw a mark of melancholy in her countenance which corresponded with my own; but I was more particularly struck with her voice, for she was frequently singing, and though it could not be called good, yet certain plaintive notes made it both interesting and pleasing. As she was one day collecting some kind of herb which grew near the window, I heard her sing the following song, in so melancholy a key, as convinced me she felt the words she repeated:—

Since Patrick left his Peggy,  
How lonesome seems the day;  
To break my heart was ready,  
When Patrick went away:  
Alas! he's gone and left me,  
And gone with fighting men;  
Will Patrick to his Peggy  
Then e'er return again?

“Farewell,” said he, “my Peggy,  
“My heart I leave with you;

“For battle now I’m ready,  
“Though still to love I’m true:  
“’Tis honour now that calls me,  
“With the bravest of our men;  
“But Patrick to his Peggy  
“Will soon return again.”

Now three long months are over,  
And Patrick’s not returned;  
But Peggy for her lover  
Has still sincerely mourned:  
Ah me! I’ll weep for ever  
For the best of Irishmen,  
If Patrick to his Peggy  
Should ne’er return again.

There was a something in her voice peculiarly engaging, and the Irish tunes are admirably adapted to their words. I should have been pleased with her singing, even under happier circumstances; as it was, I had a further view in my admiration, though I confess, at that time, not with much hopes of the success with which it was crowned.

The first opportunity I had, I told Lord Fitzarnold I had been amused at hearing one of his domestics sing, and I affected a more passionate love for music than I really have, in order to facilitate my design. Whether he was delighted at the idea of my being pleased with any thing, or whether suspicion was for a while suspended, I know not, but certain it was, he fell himself into my scheme. He earnestly intreated to know who it was that had been so happy as to engage my notice, and when informed, lost no time in making inquiries after Peggy. She was daughter to an under gardener, or rather labourer, and was employed by the cook, and the other servants, in various business of drudgery. He asked me if she should be ordered to sing under the window, or whether I wished to hear her sing nearer to me. I told him that her voice lost much of its sound by singing in the open air, and as soon as she could throw off the timidity natural to her situation, her tones would receive great addition by the echo of a room. Upon this, Peggy was ordered to put on her best apparel, and to attend me immediately.

She came; she sung Patrick and Peggy, which seemed to be her favourite, and several other little songs, and I pretended to be wonderfully pleased with her. Lord Fitzarnold did not discover so many charms as I did, but he thought I seemed pleased, and that was enough. I saw he was fairly duped, and this idea gave me so much pleasure, that it added to the deception. Peggy came again in the evening, and so little suspicion was entertained of this poor girl, that at length I was left alone with her. I asked her if she was happy; she said, no, because she could not hear of her dear Patrick; “And Peggy,” returned I, “I am much more unhappy than you can be; for I am confined here, and kept away from all I hold dear. Patrick, you say, is gone to fight the rebels, and he will probably return, and you will be happy; but I have no such prospect, unless you, Peggy, could contrive for me to make my escape, in which case I will not fail to reward you.” Peggy curtsied, and said she wished she could. “But you must be secret, Peggy, secret as the grave, and mention it to no one living soul.” “That I will not, madam,” said Peggy,

with a warmth of sincerity which gave me an assurance I might trust her. "Thank you a thousand times," said I: "come to-morrow morning, and by that time I shall have considered by what means you are to serve me; but go now, for fear of creating suspicion."

I formed and rejected many plans, before I could fix upon one that pleased me. At first I intended writing a letter, and getting Peggy to convey it to the nearest post town; but then I considered, as she never went from Blanzey, she must either employ another person, or go herself, which would of course raise suspicion; and moreover, my first wish was to get away. I had three guineas and some silver in my pocket: one of the guineas I intended giving to Peggy if I succeeded, as an earnest of what I would do for her hereafter. I had no fear of any danger I might encounter if I was but away: every moment now seemed an age while I remained. I knew Peggy must be well acquainted with all the ways in and out of the house, and if she could procure me a key of any of the doors, I might by that means let myself out at night, for it was in vain to think of it in the day-time.

Peggy came the next day. As soon as we were alone, I interrogated her as to the different passages and avenues of the house. She described them all; and beyond my most sanguine wishes, informed me of a door at the end of a gallery not far from where I slept. This door was seldom opened, but the key was in the inside; and Peggy said she would undraw the bolts the last thing before she went home for the night. This door opened immediately into the park, from whence I might get out by following a path to the left; this would bring me to a gate which I might easily get over, and should then be in a lane leading to the small village of Blanzey, where Peggy lived; and from thence I might get to Currah, a still larger place. Peggy did not invite me to stop at her hut, because, she said, her father would take me back to the lodge; and the poor girl seemed truly interested that I should make my escape. I could not thank her sufficiently. We parted, and I longed for the approach of night with an impatience I could scarce command.

Mrs. Dyson, the person who had always attended me, slept in my chamber; but I had observed that she slept very sound. I always fastened the door myself, and it was easy to leave it unfastened at the time I pretended to make it sure. Mrs. Dyson had not an idea of my attempting to get away. I pretended uncommon drowsiness, and I soon perceived my guard was in her first sound sleep. I waited until every thing was perfectly quiet in the house; no sound was heard. I arose softly, and recommended myself to that Power who can alone protect us; I humbly implored his more immediate blessing on the design in which I was about to engage. I opened my door; I shut it again with as much caution, and proceeded to the gallery: I scarce allowed myself to breathe for fear of being heard. I found the door at the bottom of two steps, and my faithful girl had undrawn the bolts. It was heavy, and made a horrid creaking as I pulled it open, I was terrified lest it might be heard, but all seemed still, and I proceeded. I would not venture to draw it close again when on the outside for fear the noise might awaken some of the family. I found myself safe in the park, and I lost no time in making the best of my way to the gate: this I easily climbed, and got over. Here I stopped, as well to recover my breath (for I had almost run) as to fasten my bonnet and cloak tight, and to tuck up my gown so that it might not impede my steps.

Thus equipped for this nocturnal expedition, the first I had ever made, I walked at no slow pace through the lane. The night was cold and dreary; and, though a frost, the

ground wet and slippery; the wind murmured in hollow sounds, and the moon was obscured by clouds. I passed a house or two, and saw a church to the left. I supposed this to be the village of Blanzey, and I prayed for a blessing upon the friendly Peggy, whose innocent slumbers were not, I hoped, interrupted by any fears for my safety.—At the end of the village I came into a broader road, which I pursued with the same avidity. My feet became painful by fast walking and the rough road, and because my shoes were thin; but I yet felt no bodily fatigue. The joy of having thus far succeeded in my escape gave me spirits, and I did not allow myself to reflect upon the dangers I had to encounter. Little did I ever suppose, my Elinor, that I should have been in such a situation.

Copyright Chawton House Library

*Paper the 3d.*

I CONTINUED this road and descended a hill, which brought me to another village. This I supposed to be Currah. The houses were but thinly scattered, with good distances between each. All was silent; the inhabitants seemed to be wrapped in those leaden slumbers which are the sure prognostics of peaceful minds. At the end of the village a better looking house than any I had before seen arrested my notice. There appeared a light in one of the upper chambers, and upon the whole gave me an idea of comfort I had not lately experienced. I was almost tempted to knock, and ask admittance and shelter for the night, but I reflected that this village was most probably Currah, and could not be far from the vicinity of Blanzey, both on account of the distance, and because it was well known to Peggy, who had been no great traveller. It was, too, only under cover of the night that I could hope to elude Lord Fitzarnold's search; and gaining so many hours gave me the only chance; and it would be infinitely more safe to seek a shelter when day began to appear and my flight became known at Blanzey. Under these apprehensions, I turned with haste from the house as from a temptation dangerous to my designs.

I continued my way with redoubled haste, and soon found myself upon a wild heath or common. The wind blew piercingly cold, the clouds gathered, I could discover no path, and I frequently stumbled over hillocks and rough places. I was dreadfully afraid lest I should fall into some pit and break my limbs, or be smothered in a bog. We are all apt to wish for death, but none of us like the mode in which it approaches. I shuddered at the situation in which I found myself; my hands were numbed with the cold, I felt myself sick, and my limbs were weary. My spirits began to fail, because I feared I was unequal to the task I had undertaken; I paused fearfully; the wind blew dismally around me, and a distant and frightful howling added to my terrors. My feet seemed rivetted to the spot where I stood, and I expected every moment to be assailed by I knew not what. The desire of life and the wish to escape, at length roused me from falling a prey to my fears. I knew that I was in this situation not by any fault of my own, but from a desire to preserve my innocence. I began indeed to repent that I had not stopped at the last village I passed, and requested succour from that friendly light which seemed held out to my assistance, but to return would be madness, nor could I have found my way through the darkness, had I been certain of a cordial reception. I had no alternative but to proceed; my thoughts took a different turn, and better reflections got the better of my fears. The heavenly assurance that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the permission of the great Ruler of all things, encouraged me to hope that I was of more value than many sparrows. I reprobated my desponding terrors, and proceeded.

I came to the end of the heath, and found myself in a more beaten track. I fancied I saw a moving object at a distance, and I was not mistaken; a man approached me with hasty steps. I was not determined whether to speak to him or no; perhaps he might first accost me. On coming near, and perceiving me, he started; and stepped out of the way, as more afraid of me than I was of him. Perhaps he took me for some supernatural form, as he seemed struck with wonder, and stood gazing at me after I had passed him for some paces. I supposed him to be some labourer going early to work, and my conjecture was soon confirmed by the dawning of day. I heard the barking of dogs, and the lowing of

cattle, which were sure indications of being near some habitable place, and I resolved to solicit the first human being I saw for protection, as well from fear of pursuers, as to escape the observation of light. I felt no calls of hunger, but thirst in the extreme; and I would have been most thankful for a cup of cold water. Day-light broke fast upon me, and I perceived myself within a short distance of a small hamlet. I quickened my steps, but felt disgust and disappointment at its appearance on my nearer approach. The houses (if so they might be called) were built of mud, extremely dirty and wretched; children and hogs were feeding together; and that filthy animal seemed to make a part of each family. Over several of the doors was written *Dry lodging*; but all of them so mean, and so little inviting, that I passed them without stopping. Nature, however, began, to be exhausted, and it became absolutely necessary that I should rest.

In one of these cabins I saw a middle-aged woman raking some cinders near the door. I asked her to let me rest in her cabin, and to give me some water to drink. She stared at me for some moments, and then said, in the true Irish accent, "Arrah, my dear, but you look like after being a gentlewoman! Pray God ye be not a spy from the rebels." I assured her I was not; that I would do her no harm; and only wanted to take a little rest, and have something to drink. "Why then, come in," said the good woman; "and be after making yourself welcome, for ye seem to be haggard and weary." I did not wait for a second invitation, but stepped in, and seated myself upon the first bench I saw, fully experiencing the joys of rest to the weary traveller. The woman eyed me attentively, but seemed to be void of suspicion. She would not comply with my request for water, but brought me some whiskey, which, though very nasty, I found to revive me. She then brought me a kind of pottage, which I was obliged to take, though not very palatable.

Indeed, she did not disgrace the hospitality for which her country is famed, for, as the fowls pecked and perched around me, she offered to kill and cook one for my eating. This kindness I declined, but as the woman won my gratitude, and I felt myself refreshed, and in some degree safe, I asked her if she would allow me to remain there till the evening; for although it was a wretched place, in which I was almost stifled with smoke, and where cleanliness seemed to make no part of their occupation, yet still I felt safe in comparison of being exposed to the terror of pursuit, and the danger of observers, to which, till the evening closed in, I was liable. The woman (whose name I learnt was Meg Blarney,) told me, her husband was gone to Ballyshannon, to 'Squire Macreedy's, whose family had been dreadfully alarmed by a party of the rebels; that he was gone to stay and help guard the house till the family went to Dublin; and if I liked I might keep her company till his return. I thanked her most cordially, and in my forlorn situation it was a noble offer, but I wished to be farther from Blanzey, the name of which place I durst not mention, least it might lead to inquiries I should fear to answer.

I asked how far it was to Dublin, and secretly wished to have been of the party with the Macreedys, for from Dublin I could easily get to England. The good Blarney answered my question by saying, it was a long way off: that this place was called Killock, and the nearest town was Killarney. I wished to purchase a more ordinary garb, as well as one better adapted to my present mode of travelling, having only muslin and dimity for my dress, but the good woman had no more cloaths than those she had on, nor were any of her neighbours better clad; such is the poverty of this country, which, compared to our own, is wretched in the extreme! All she could do for me was to sell me a pair of shoes thicker and better calculated for my pedestrian journey. These she got at a neighbour's,



for she wore none herself. I enjoined her to secrecy on the score of my having been her guest, should any inquiries be made concerning me; and I rewarded her, but not so liberally as her kindness merited, or my gratitude dictated; but too much would have caused suspicion; and besides that, my pockets were not very well furnished, and I knew not what demands I might have upon the little I possessed. As soon as it began to grow dark, I took leave of my hostess, with many thanks on my part, and a profusion of good wishes on her's. She would fain have known which way I was going, but this I thought best to conceal:—indeed, I should have been puzzled to have told her what I did not know myself, for I meant to trust to the mercy of Providence; and prudence directed me to say it was a secret, lest the power of gold might have dazzled the eyes and corrupted the heart of Meg Blarney.

And now, my dear friend, behold me once more pursuing the first track I came to, unknowing the course I was steering, and to what point it would lead me. I felt encouraged by the preservation I had experienced the preceding night, and I trusted that the ensuing morning would afford me at least as good an asylum. It is such trials as these which teach us to set a proper estimate upon the blessings of life. Prosperity can only be properly valued as it is the counterpoise to adversity, and the latter loses much of its severity by that resignation which its infliction produces. But I am running into sentiment, when you are impatient for my story. If I am prolix, you must likewise excuse it, for I am willing to give you the most minute circumstances, because I know I am addressing a friend truly interested in them; and as I write this at my leisure, and now under a safe and dear protection, I have time to collect them with precision, and trust the time will not be very long before I shall deliver them to you with my own hand. And now to proceed:—

I kept on a steady pace as I had done the preceding night. I met, indeed, with more people, which led me to judge that I was arrived at a populous and less unfrequented part of the country. Few of those I met appeared to notice me, except two men on horseback, who seemed disposed to affront me by their conversation. I parried off their questions, and their more offensive jokes, with as much evasion and courage as I could assume; but when they asked me from whence I came, and whither I was going, my entire ignorance of the country kept me silent, and exposed me to the resentment of my persecutors, who swore they would dismount, and make me speak, with other language too shocking to repeat. I was terribly alarmed; they were in the very act of alighting; when the rattling of wheels engaged my attention. My heart beat violently; fear that the chaise (which was by this time very near us,) might contain Lord Fitzarnold on the one hand, and dread of the horsemen on the other, made me heartily wish that I was now upon that dreary heath, which, but the night before, had appeared so tremendous. In this terrified situation, and unknowing what I said, I told the men the chaise was mine, and they would repent their impertinence as soon as it came up. “It is your's, is it?” said one of the men; “why then, that's a d—d good one, for, by St. Patrick, it is a return chaise.—Here,” said he to the driver, who was now even with us, “here is your lady, and a precious lying jade she is. What has she done that you set her out of the chaise at this time o'night?”

“I knows nothing of a lady,” replied the post-boy, (drawing up his horses, and scratching his head,) “but if anybody wants a cast, I'll take 'em to the turn-pike for a can of whiskey.” “O pray take me, young man,” cried I, “and I'll give you something more than the whiskey.” “And so you shall to us, mistress,” replied one of the horsemen, “for

all your airs and your sullen fits;” at the same time laying violent hands on me. I screamed with all my power, and earnestly intreated the post-boy to protect me. He asked them if they were not ashamed to behave so to a decent young woman, and prevent his having a fare? I held a shilling in my hand to him, when he instantly jumped down, took the shilling, and proceeded with no very gentle manners towards my enemy. The other man rode gently on, leading the horses; and while the two combatants were exchanging some hearty blows, I ran away as fast as my trembling legs would carry me, not keeping the straight road, but turning aside over some fields. I ran till my breath was almost gone, jumping over the stiles, and regardless of every impediment, till I could no longer hear the voices; I then stopped to recover my breath, and recollection.

I poured forth my thanks for my preservation, and then proceeded through fields and lanes, till I came to a pile of building, which, by the faint light of the night, I took to be a church. I sat down on what I thought one of the tomb-stones, and having no dread of supernatural forms, I considered myself in safety. I took from my pocket a piece of brown bread, which was given me by Meg Blarney, and I eat it with that thankfulness my situation demanded. I rested here a considerable time, and although it was a place calculated to inspire fear, I felt a composure I had not before experienced. The hollow murmurs collected by the wind through the building, might, by a fearful mind, have been taken for groans; and the shadows of high waving trees be formed into shapes of departed spirits. They only served to recall to my mind the unaccountable noises and sights said to have been heard and seen at Arkley Castle. What would I not have given to have now been within its walls? My husband too,—What must he think of me? and will he ever receive his Julia again? The days of my earliest remembrance were recalled; your friendship, my Elinor; the worthy Mrs. Clifford, and her revered uncle; other tender recollections recurred:—what was my situation now? Alone, in another kingdom, wandering I knew not whither, fearful of pursuers, and dreading those I met, driven to find a shelter in the abode of the dead, weary, yet unknowing where to rest, uncertain of the evils which might befall me at the return of day, fearing to stay, yet dreading to proceed—what a fate was mine! A violent flood of tears afforded me some relief, and the day broke upon me before I had power to remove from the spot to which some unknown cause seemed to rivet me.

When the day was sufficiently advanced, I perceived, to my surprise, that what I had taken for a church, was a pile of ruins, the beauty of which attracted my attention. I should suppose it had formerly been a monastery of very great extent. No part of it was entire, but a long pile of high building seemed to form a compleat side of it. The Gothic windows, the remains of which were ranged in two rows, bespoke its former magnificence. A part of the chapel was still standing, and the broken arches were overgrown with ivy. The whole formed a most picturesque and interesting appearance. I staid gazing and exploring till the day was far advanced, and I persuaded myself that I might be hid in some of these recesses, during the remainder of the day, with more safety than in any inhabited building; for I was well assured the appearance of the place would inspire enough of supernatural dread to keep away the common people; and Lord Fitzarnold would never think of searching for me in these ruins. The idea pleased me, and I ventured up some broken steps which led to a sort of terrace, defended by a crumbling wall.

The view of the country from this eminence was delightful: I observed several gentlemen's seats, but not one which appeared like Blanzey Lodge. This gave me a security which afforded me great satisfaction. I could distinguish a river, which I took to be the Shannon; and I was musing upon the beauty of the scene, and the singularity of my fate, when all my faculties were at once agitated by fear, astonishment, and wonder, at hearing the name of St. Edward expressed in a faint but clear accent. My affrighted senses took the alarm; I ran first one way and then the other; I could scarce believe that my organs of hearing were not impaired by my late fatigue; and I had almost given way to this idea, when gently advancing up the broken steps I perceived an elderly man, of no mean appearance. He started at seeing me; for I dare say, fright and fatigue had given me a distracted countenance. I stood motionless, and the person before me seemed equally incapable of inquiring from whence I came, or who I was; and I was the first to break the silent consternation which seemed to have taken possession of both, by exclaiming, "Tell me, good sir, if you come in search of me from the vilest of men, or if you are some good angel sent to relieve me from the misery of fear, and from perishing by cold and want?" "Fair creature," replied this unknown, "I am neither: I am not sent in search for I have nothing in this world to seek, and am equally surprised with yourself at a meeting so extraordinary. You seem, indeed, perishing with cold and want;—allow me to conduct you to such accommodations as I have, and be assured you will be in perfect safety."

His manner, his appearance, and above all, the soothing tones of his voice, engaged my confidence in his assurance, and I allowed him to lead me down the broken steps, and through several turnings of the ruin, until we came to a little square piece of ground, concealed from the view by abundance of shrubs and evergreens, so fancifully placed, as to render them both an ornament and security. In this sequestered spot stood a small cottage, plain, but neat, and conveyed at once the idea of safety and comfort. An old woman, with coarse but benign features, came to the door, and testified her surprise only by her looks, for a silent respect seemed to govern her deportment. As to myself, I know not whether joy or surprise were most predominant, but something precluded the power of utterance, and my trembling limbs, as I hung upon his arm, impressed him with the idea that I was overpowered by fear. He gave me a most penetrating look, and then said, "Fear not, young lady; you are perfectly safe, and shall be shielded from your enemies, if any you can have, as far as the arm of an old man can protect you; an arm once powerful, and now more enfeebled by misfortune than by time." I returned him my thanks in the best manner I was able, at the same time assuring him that I felt happy under his kind protection.

By this time we were seated in the cottage, where every thing had the appearance of comfort, without ostentatious shew. I was placed by a fire made of peat, which gave great warmth, and toasted some slices of bread and oat-cake very nicely, which, with some coffee, were preparing by the quiet domestic for my breakfast. Such marks of attention filled my heart with gratitude, and I said, "Sir, your kindness and hospitality demand of me that I should immediately inform you of my situation. My appearance has, perhaps, impressed you with no very favourable opinion, and when I tell you that I have been for these two nights past travelling on foot, not knowing whither, you may form but an unfavourable idea of your guest; but suspend your judgment till you have heard my story, and tell me in the mean time whether my ears deceived me, or if I did not hear you pronounce the name of St. Edward?" "Most assuredly I did," replied my host; "but before

we discuss any further points, I must insist on your taking that refreshment so necessary to recruit the fatigues you have undergone, after which, I would advise some hours of repose in a clean but homely bed, before you enter upon a detail to satisfy a curiosity, which, however strongly excited, would willingly wait the recovery of your spirits, and for which, rest is so absolutely necessary.” “No,” returned I; “how needful soever rest may be to the fatigues of my body, my mind could receive none before I have disclosed to you that my name is St. Edward; and as it is not a very common one, I must beg to be informed if it was me you meant to address, when you pronounced it at the foot of the terrace.”

Here I ceased speaking, and he viewed me with a most scrutinizing look; then turning from me in seeming agitation, he uttered an inward exclamation which I could not distinguish, and then in trembling accents said, “No,—I called you not by a name I could not suppose belonged to you; a name I have disgraced, and yet am proud to own.”—“Is your name then St. Edward?” I replied. “Most assuredly it is.” “And of Arkley Castle?” “The same.” He hid his face for a few moments, and appeared much agitated; then looking stedfastly at me, he cried, in a voice interrupted by sobs and passion, “My feelings tell me more forcibly than words that you can be no other than Julia St. Edward.” “I am!—I am!” said I; “to where will this lead? Are you not my uncle, for whom we have wept as dead?” “No—I am not, Julia. Did you never hear of two brothers, William and Godfrey St. Edward?” “Yes!—and in me you behold the daughter of Godfrey?” “No, no, child of error and misfortune! I am William St. Edward, and I am—thy father!” at the same moment he stretched his arms to fold me to his bosom, but was withheld by the horror of my countenance, whilst convulsively I shrieked, “Great God!—then I am married to my own brother!”

The perturbation of my mind, joined to the fatigues I had suffered, together with such a termination of my misfortunes, had so violent an effect upon my whole frame, that I fainted away, and it was some hours before I discovered any signs of life. On my returning senses, I found myself laid on a bed, my father kneeling on one side of it, and the woman on the other, who, on seeing my eyes open, exclaimed, “Sir, she recovers!” My father pressed my hand to his lips, saying, “Be composed, my dear child, and rest assured that you are not married to your brother. This is all that is necessary for you to know at present; when you are more recovered I will unfold to you the mystery of your birth; but as this will take up some time, and is an undertaking for which I must collect all my spirits, I must beg that you will, in the mean time, endeavour to get some sleep.”—Indeed I found myself now so weak, I do not know that I could have heard the recital, had he been disposed to have given it. I required, therefore, but little persuasion to take a cordial, and for a short time to forget my misfortunes.

The last words my father had spoken to me, had the effect of quieting my mind, and I fell into a sound and refreshing slumber, which lasted for some hours. When I awoke I found only the woman sitting by me. I asked her for my father, and she said he had retired for a short time in order to compose his mind, which seemed much disturbed, but had ordered her to call him as soon as I awoke. I told her not to disturb him yet, and that I wished to be left alone for some minutes. She complied with my desire; and I could not sufficiently adore and admire that unbounded care of Providence, which in so wonderful a manner had preserved me, and to whom I poured forth the effusions of a grateful heart. I found my strength recruited, and my mind invigorated, and I grew

impatient for the important intelligence my father had to communicate. When he appeared before me, the extreme marks of sorrow depicted on his worn countenance, were manifest tokens of a mind ill at ease. He saluted and congratulated me on my recovery with the affection of a parent, and I returned his embrace with feelings to which I had long been a stranger. He testified his love by every mark of attention, and had provided me a change of apparel as necessary to my comfort. He made several efforts to begin his relation, and was as often prevented by the oppressive tumults of his mind, which appeared to subdue and overpower all his faculties. At length, after some emotions of wounded remembrance, he began the following story, which I shall reserve for a paper by itself.

*Paper the 4th.*

“You tell me, my Julia, that you have heard of William and Godfrey St. Edward, sons of as worthy parents as Britain’s isle could boast. Our days of childhood were marked by no circumstances but such as usually attend that early period. We lost a sister younger than ourselves; and our youthful and inexperienced minds considered the riches of our father’s domain as an inexhaustible fund, of which we could never be too lavish. No sort of difference was made between us; we possessed an equal share of the love of our good parents, who gave us a most liberal education, and spared no advantages which the university, foreign travel, and every accomplishment could give us, in order to render us worthy specimens of their good example. Alas! such are the events of human life, that the very means by which they would establish our credit, and secure our happiness, were those of our destruction.

“We were every where known to be young men of fortune, and we took pride in establishing that character by the most unbounded and flagrant acts of extravagance. It would be far from amusing to you, and at the same time mortifying to my own feelings, to relate the several wretched ways by which we found means, in a very short time, to squander such immense sums, as to render even the estate at Arkley insufficient to satisfy our demands; suffice it to say, that my father fell a victim to our ill conduct at a premature old age, and in a few days our worthy mother followed, an untimely sacrifice to grief.—Neither of these melancholy events made any lasting impression on our unfeeling hearts. We continued in the mad career of folly in which we were so deeply immersed; and whilst the mansion of Arkley was shut up, and only inhabited by three old domestics, we rioted upon the sale of the old venerable oaks, till no more remittances came.

“We began now seriously to consider by what mode we were to improve our fortunes. Godfrey had made some little proficiency in the study of the law, for which he had been designed; but having dissipated away the best of his time, it was too late to think of retrieving what was past.—We had formed an acquaintance with two young women of fortune; one named Julia Montreville, an orphan, and a ward in chancery, but within a few months of being of age, when she would be mistress of ten thousand pounds. This alone would have been attraction enough, had she possessed no other charms; but

she had all the amiable recommendations of her sex. To know her, and not to have loved her, would have been impossible. The other lady was named Sedley, neither so young, so amiable, or so handsome as Julia, with whom she lived as friend and superintendent. Her fortune too was inferior to Julia's, but sufficient to attract a younger brother. Godfrey and myself, therefore, not being deficient in the art of making ourselves agreeable, found no great difficulty in being well received, and they madly bestowed themselves upon two men who were by no means deserving of so much merit and beauty. I found some difficulty with the chancellor about the settlement of Miss Montreville's fortune, but as she was of age, and now in possession of it, it was too late to make any arrangements of this sort.

"We lived in London, and our expences were not regulated by the most strict economy. Our wives grew pregnant, and were delivered within three days of each other, mine of a daughter, and my brother's of a son. As the estates of Arkley were to descend to a male heir, I was disappointed, and wished it had been reversed; and so much did this circumstance affect my mind, that I proposed to my brother to make an exchange of the children, to which he agreed, upon condition of my signing a contract, that if they both lived to be of age, they should be married to each other; and as by that time the estate of Arkley would be productive of its former value, these children should be the sole possessors of it, without any reservation for myself, or any future branch of the family. Thus did the infatuation of youth and extreme folly lead me to an act of injustice to myself, and cruelty to those who ought to have been most dear to me.

"Godfrey was artful and ambitious; he knew the means of keeping me steady in a wrong cause, as well as to divert me from pursuing one of more rectitude; he, therefore, applauded my design as a truly laudable one, telling me, that by making the marriage of the young people a fulfilment of the contract, I was making my first child an heir equal to that of a son; and so securely and advantageously had he made it for his own son, that I found myself excluded from every share in it after the time of his coming of age. His wife also joined in the agreement with an ardour natural to the advancement of her child's fortune, but without that feminine tenderness so generally annexed to the feelings of a mother, for she shewed not the least regret at the idea of changing the infants; but not so the tender heart of Julia! O my child, her supplicating words, tears of anguish, still agonize my heart, and torture my remembrance, though my hardened feelings were then deaf to her intreaties; and those accents still vibrate on my ear in which she urged me to preserve to her her own dear infant, and not, by so cruel an act of injustice, deprive any future son she might bring me of his birthright and inheritance.

"I endeavoured to laugh away her scruples, and named her sister-in-law as a pattern for her imitation. In return, she told me, it was the idea of giving up her child to a woman who cared not for her own, which made her grief more poignant, and increased her reluctance. I assured her it would be taken the greatest care of, and that she should see it at proper periods. Ah, my Julia! all I could say availed nothing; and when I persuaded myself that she was obstinately perverse in a cause on which I was so foolishly bent, I hardened my heart, and reprobated her fears in language by no means proper for her weak state. How painful is the recollection! I tore you from her trembling arms with a violence at which my soul now shudders.—By well-timed bribes, the nurses and hirelings, eagerly willing to contribute to the deception, brought the infant Godfrey to the arms of her you

should have filled; and as my brother had taken a house in a distant county, you were soon after carried away with the rest of the family.

“The effects of all this was a violent fever, under which my wife suffered more from the anguish of her mind than the evil of the malady. I still trusted to her youth and the goodness of her constitution, for her recovery, when I thought I should use such arguments in favour of my scheme, as would entirely reconcile her to it; but my hopes were fallacious. She did indeed recover of her fever, and with a faint-like meekness strove to submit to her misfortune. She shewed the tenderest love and pity towards the little infant we had forced her to adopt, and offered never-ceasing prayers that the same attention might be shewn her Julia; but her health visibly declined; and although I loved her as I thought tenderly, yet the melancholy complaints she sometimes poured forth for her lost child, together with the afflicting symptoms of her disorder, drew not from me that tenderness and pity which they ought to have excited, but rather rendered me more careless; and I flew to company and dissipation in order to quell certain emotions which would at times arise.

“Julia’s complaint was slow, but not less decisive. In about ten months from the time of your birth she departed this world, I trust for that blessed abode of spirits far more congenial to her own than any she could meet with on earth. Her last hours were marked by piety and resignation, and whenever I could bring myself to go into her chamber, she always addressed me by the most tender expressions of love and kindness. She conjured me in a solemnity of manner, which ought to have had an immediate influence, never to neglect, still less forsake you, for whose protection she prayed with fervency. She conjured me never to relinquish that right of paternal care to which nature had given you so just a claim, and at such a time I could deny her no request; yet I promised with an unfeeling careless haste, in words little adapted to give her comfort, as even at this distance of time fills my mind with severe remorse.

“Ah my child, there are, I verily believe, moments in which we are under the power and influence of evil spirits, or at least when a total neglect of all good propensities has provoked the supreme Ruler to leave us under the guidance of our own wretchedness. Such must have been my deplorable state when I wished for the death of your dear mother, and not as an end to her sufferings, but from an impatient desire of being released from that confinement and way of life, which, under such circumstances, the etiquette of the world demanded. As soon, therefore, as decency would permit, I again launched out into all the fashionable follies of the day. I sometimes visited my brother, and observed your growth and improvements with a negligence highly reprehensible. So much was I delighted with the success of my project, that I bestowed all that fondness on my nephew which should have been reserved for you.

“He, likewise, grew promising; I spared no pains or expence on his education; and pride and folly supplying the place of affection, I really believed I felt the partiality of a father. When he was twelve years old, I carried him to Arkley. The small demands I had made upon the estate since my marriage, had accumulated the profits to a considerable amount. I had hitherto lived upon my wife’s fortune, with very little from the estate, and my brother, having received a large acquisition from a relation of his wife’s, had made no demands upon me. When I came to Arkley, I had the house put into some order, and better appearance, than it had lately exhibited; I shewed my son to the neighbours and tenants with that pride and consequence as if he were really so; and I never experienced a

moment of remorse for the part I was acting; indeed, I seldom or ever allowed myself to think. But the time was approaching, when the stings of conscience would embitter all my reflections.

“After a few months residence I left Arkley, with the exulting hope of returning to it every year, of the profits arising from my good management, and the pleasure I should receive when the time arrived that the union of the two young persons (destined for each other by design, not choice) would crown all my wishes.—I had not seen you for some years. On my return into Essex, where I chiefly resided, my brother paid me a visit. I thought there appeared a cloud upon his brow which indicated uneasiness, and he talked of taxes, of distress, and expence, like a man grown sordid with the love of money. It was a new character, in which my brother had never before appeared, and I could scarce believe he was in earnest. I talked to him of his son and my daughter, but we had both of us so far forgotten the sacred name of father, that we spoke of them, and considered each in the light we had chosen to adopt them. He complained of the expence attending your education; and when I would have retorted upon him in the same I had experienced on account of his son, he grew rough, and at once surprised me by saying, he should go and reside at Arkley till the boy was of age; that by the contract I had signed I had utterly excluded myself from any share or inheritance from that estate, and in right of his son he should enjoy it till the period arrived which should put his son in possession of it.

“To all this I only coolly remonstrated, that, however he might take advantage of the hasty contract I had signed, he would, by adopting these measures, make known to the world a secret we were bound to keep, and expose ourselves thereby to the severe censures of it. To that he said he was perfectly indifferent; the blame would fall more upon me than on him; and for his own part he began to be tired of what was both unjust and foolish: that it was not too late to relinquish the plan; and he advised me, for the sake of my future peace, to think otherwise. It was still a plan I approved, and even were it not, it was by no means a time now to declare the secret, when so many people, and even the children themselves, were grown up under the deception. I know not what were my brother’s real motives, or whether he was struck with remorse, but he used such arguments as only exasperated me, and kept me firmer in my purpose. At last he told me it had occasioned the death of my wife. This was a string I could not bear to have touched; it threw me into an agony of passion; and being both of us warmed by violent language, we flew into the most cruel invectives: all our juvenile errors were repeated with acrimony and aggravated remembrances; and we parted with determined hatred, neither of us convinced or persuaded, but still more confirmed in the opinion each maintained. Alas! we parted for ever; for whether it was the effect of violence, or whether it was occasioned by a fall from his horse, could not be ascertained, but certain it was, from that day he never was well. Some internal abscess caused his death in a very short time after we had met.

“I could not but lament for a brother with whom, but in this last instance, I had ever lived in the greatest harmony. I wrote condoling letters to his widow, and recommended you to her care; but I could not bring myself to see you. Mean time William (for he had both our names, and I chose to call him by my own,) grew up. I placed him at the university, and though his talents were not of that shining sort as to render him conspicuous, yet he shewed no bad propensities, and might, I thought, pass through life without either censure or applause. I anticipated the pleasure I should receive



in joining your hands, by which time, I hoped, the reluctance I felt towards seeing you would cease. I visited Arkley every year, and heard that Mrs. Godfrey St. Edward was come, with her supposed daughter, to reside at a clergyman's in the county of Stafford.

"I was planning my designs at Arkley Castle, and contriving which part of it should be considered as more particularly my apartments, when a circumstance happened, which not only drove me from that seat of my ancestors, but had nearly deprived me of my senses. I was sitting one evening alone, in a large oak wainscot parlour on the left side of the great hall; it was about ten o'clock at night; I was resting my elbow upon a small table on which stood two candles. Observe me, Julia! I was not intoxicated with wine, nor had I for a moment been sleeping, when, as clearly and as plainly as I now behold you, my mother stood before me, in the same dress, and exactly with the same appearance, as I remembered her at our last interview, which was then eighteen years, for so long had both she and my father been dead. Surprise took from me all power of speech; I only gazed with horror; and as her eyes were stedfastly fixed upon me, so were mine for a moment rivetted on her's; but as the recollection of her being a supernatural form pressed upon my mind, the power of fear overwhelmed me, and in an agony of terror I held my hands before my eyes to hide me from such a spectre. My heart throbbed with so much violence, that I was obliged to take my hands from my face in order to recover respiration, when, behold, the figure was vanished.

"I was, *and still am*, so, certain of what I saw, and that the apparition bore the exact resemblance of my mother, that no power on earth can ever persuade me that my senses were deceived. My mind was in a tumult; with trembling hands I snatched up both the candles, and with eager looks and dreadful apprehensions I explored every corner of the apartment. All the doors were fast shut, and nothing offered to convince me that it was not a supernatural form which had thus terrified me. I rang the bell for my servant, whose looks, when he appeared, testified his observation of mine, for when I ordered him to attend me, in a voice scarcely articulate, he stared at me with evident marks of astonishment. I retired to bed, but never closed my eyes. The more I reflected upon the vision I had seen, the more my imagination was disordered, and I determined the next morning to leave Arkley, and to visit you: for this purpose I directed my course to Craybourne, a village about thirty miles distant; and knowing that you and your mother resided with a Mr. Goodworth, the clergyman of that place, I immediately went to his house.

"I was received both by him and my sister with a kindness and hospitality which for a few moments soothed my melancholy, but I was disappointed in seeing you, as you were then upon a visit to a Mrs. Safforey. Mrs. St. Edward expatiated upon the merits of your charms and accomplishments with the affection of a real mother, at the same time that she heard of her son's improvements with equal ardour. I could not but be pleased with her, and Mr. Goodworth so gained upon me by his unaffected piety and good sense, that I was glad to relieve my oppressed heart, by disclosing to him the account of the vision which had made such an impression on my mind. He heard my story with attention, and with the most candid mildness, told me that he by no means disbelieved it. He confessed he was not very ready to subscribe to the opinion of any spirit taking a visible form, nor had he before ever received so positive a proof of it; nor could he even in the present case suppose that the spirit of my mother was in any degree conscious of its appearance; but how far such an imposition might be permitted to act upon our senses for

some wise purpose, was not within the scope of our finite capacities to determine. "If," added this good man, "the appearance, which has had so serious an effect upon your mind, should have occasioned any alteration in your wishes, any unburthening of your conscience, and secret to reveal, fail not to do it immediately, as the only means of acknowledging the favour and justice of supreme mercy, and restoring peace to your own mind."

I then related to him the whole secret of your birth, and the strong desire I had that it should still be inviolably observed. He could not, he said, approve of any deceptions of this nature, but as so many years had elapsed, there might be difficulty, if not impropriety, in its being *now* revealed. If the young people liked each other, their union would certainly be the best mode of doing justice to each. "It is that period," replied I, "for which I wait with the most earnest impatience; but as the children have seen but little of each other, I would make the condition in some degree depend upon their choice; at the same time I must add, that nothing but their marriage can ever satisfy my wishes or appease my conscience. It was the express desire of my dear departed wife, it was likewise that of my brother, until some fancy possessed him at our last interview; it is the express condition of the contract; and it is an event upon which my present peace and future happiness must depend. When it is completed, I may at some distant period return to Arkley to contemplate their happiness; but before that time arrives, I shall remain unknown. If after two full years from this hour I am not heard of, conclude me dead. I will dedicate that time to penitence for the sins of my past life, and in prayers for these deluded children. Perhaps I may wish things had been otherwise, but it is now too late to make a discovery, which could be attended by no immediate good, and would only serve to fill me with shame and confusion." Mr. Goodworth did not endeavour to persuade me from my purpose; he strenuously advised me to adhere to all pious resolutions; and I took my leave fully prejudiced with a high sense of his worth, and my mind somewhat relieved by his admonitions, and his information.

"Having arranged all my affairs, I wandered about in quest of some retirement, where meditation and repentance for my manifold sins should, in some degree, make an atonement for my past life; for O, my Julia, though I have not throughout my relation extenuated my faults, I have not told you those enormities of my youth which would have shocked your delicacy, and wounded my mind by the repetition. After an unsettled wandering, I came to this country, and remained sometimes in one place and sometimes in another, always avoiding large towns, and carefully shunning all manner of society. At length chance brought me to this place, which is called Adair; and this ruin has, from its size and structure, been a monastery of some note. The solitary and melancholy appearance it exhibited was so congenial to the state of my mind, that I determined to make it my place of abode. I occupied a whole day to examine this immense pile, on which the hand of time had made such devastation; and under the southern wall I discovered a cavity, which, with the assistance of a few poor labourers belonging to the village, was soon converted into the cottage you now inhabit.

"The new scene this employment afforded, gave a relief to my mind till it was completed, when I again sunk into that state of wretched despondency which my past life had occasioned. The image of your dear departed mother was continually before me; her prayers and entreaties for ever in my ears: my unrelenting obstinacy, my last quarrel with my brother, with other cruel remembrances, added to the extraordinary vision of my

mother, which I considered as a dreadful testimony of reproof;—all these circumstances so wrought upon my mind, that I came to a determination of living a recluse, and submitting entirely to that great and wise Ruler of the universe for those future events, which I had hitherto so arrogantly and presumptuously endeavoured to pervert. I knew not, I inquired not, concerning the completion of the contract: I supposed it had taken place, and I prayed for your mutual happiness. My agent in London remits me such sums as are necessary for my present wants, and a person at Limerick supplies me under a feigned name. The woman who is my servant, is not a native of this country. She is unfortunate; and having rendered me some faithful services in a severe fit of sickness, I sent for her as the most proper person to attend me. The mute attention she preserves in her service suits well my own reserve; and we have now passed two years in an almost uninterrupted state of silence. And now, my child, for I am proud to call thee so, if you are happy, it will afford me a satisfaction to which my heart has long been a stranger; but I fear your appearance speaks the language of misfortune, and if that is the case, the measure of my woes will be completed.”

Here my father ceased speaking, and in the full assurance of his kindness, and in consideration of his self-accusing misery, I resolved to suppress great part of my unhappiness; yet what could I relate that was not unfortunate? I did not relate the unkindness of my husband, but I could not conceal the conduct of Lord Fitzarnold; and I observed it caused a violent emotion of resentment in my father. His face glowed with anger, and he frequently interrupted my narrative by repeated epithets of villain! robber! and the like; and when I concluded, it was with difficulty I could persuade him from immediately going in search of Lord Fitzarnold. Nothing but the danger of leaving me exposed in a place like this, and the uncertainty of finding his lordship at Blanzey Lodge, would have prevented him. He is now as desirous of escorting me to England. Oh my Elinor, with what confidence shall I return under the all-powerful protection of a kind and indulgent father! These are comforts which correct and counteract certain fears and dread of I know not what; yet I trust I shall shortly behold my friends, and be restored with unsullied reputation. May no tragic events arise to circumvent my better prospects, and may my forebodings be only chimeras of an agitated mind. Adieu, dearest Elinor;

I am ever yours,

JULIA ST. EDWARD.

*(Mrs. Safforey in continuation.)*

I WILL add a few lines, my dear Mrs. Clifford, upon the supposition that you have read our poor Julia's narrative, and shed as many tears over it as I have done. How are her fairest prospects cut off! It seemed as if Providence had designed that she should return with the protection and credit of a father's care; and no other could so effectually wipe away every particle of blame that might have been annexed to her unfortunate disappearance: but it has been (I cannot doubt) wisely ordained that she should perish. I could have wished there had been some written memorial under her father's own hand, both of the truth of his existence, as well as to ascertain her story, for I am well aware of the malice of her enemies; and we have every reason to fear that her poor father lost his

life at the same time and in the same manner she did herself. His having lived so long a recluse too, is a circumstance unfavourable to our cause. The agent in London, and the person at Limerick, are the only vouchers we must have recourse to, and we know not their names. My own opinion is, that Mr. St. Edward should immediately be made acquainted with the contents of Julia's papers, but I shall determine upon nothing till I hear from you; I can, therefore, only desire you will favour me with the papers, together with your answer, as soon as you possibly can; and be perfectly assured, dear madam, that your observations and opinion, will fully decide that of

Your truly affectionate  
ELINOR SAFFOREY.

LETTER XVIII.

*Mrs. Clifford to Mrs. Safforey.*

Crayborne, Jan. 31, 17—.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE read and wept over the dear creature's papers, and I could fill a letter with observations upon her extraordinary fate, but another almost equally interesting must be the subject of this epistle.—I had no sooner finished your letters and the inclosed papers, and was lamenting the untimely end of our poor sufferer, when the post brought me a letter from Lord Robert Carrington, with a hasty information that he had just received an account of Lord Fitzarnold's having been dangerously wounded in a duel. He does not say whether he knows who was the antagonist, but only adds that he is going immediately to set off for Ireland accompanied by Mr. Tracy. What, my dear madam, are we to think of this? Is then Mr. St. Edward yet alive? It is possible he might not have perished with Julia; for who else could have called Lord Fitzarnold to an account. I fear her husband did not value her sufficiently to have exerted so much spirit to avenge her wrongs, neither is he absent from this country, nor has yet heard the account given in Mrs. St. Edward's papers.

I know not what to think, and shall be impatient for the particulars. I pray to Heaven, and indeed have no doubt, that the innocence of that suffering angel will be ascertained, and her memory defended, as her virtue was spotless. In the mean time, my uncle thinks it highly necessary that Mr. St. Edward should be made acquainted with her story, and as you justly apprehended she has enemies within the walls of Arkley Castle, he purposes (with your permission) to be himself the bearer of those papers to Mr. St. Edward. It is a great undertaking at his advanced age, and especially when I reflect that he has never once been out of his own parish for more than thirty years; but when I consider that, as he says, his evidence will be of material use in corroborating that part of the story, in which he is mentioned as giving his opinion and advice to the elder Mr. St. Edward before he went to Ireland, I do not oppose his intention; determining also, on my part, that he shall not go unaccompanied.—I know not any thing which can at all

compensate for the loss of our dear friend, but that of seeing her character restored to its just value: this is all for which, on her account, I can now be solicitous; and I trust the time is not far distant when I shall see the accomplishment of my wishes on that score.

I remain, dear madam,

With very sincere regard,

Most truly yours,

ANN CLIFFORD.

Copyright Chawton House Library

## LETTER XIX.

*Lord Robert Carrington to Mrs. Clifford.*

Dublin, Feb. 2, 17—.

MADAM,

THE hasty account I gave you in my letter of the 30th, required an earlier explanation, which a variety of events have prevented till this moment.—I received a letter from Lord Fitzarnold's steward, informing me that his lord lay dangerously ill of a wound he had received, in consequence of a duel he had fought with a gentleman of the name of Delafore. He addressed me on this occasion as the intimate friend of Lord Fitzarnold, and as knowing more of his affairs than any other. It is true I once considered him in the light of my friend, but for these last three months I have literally heard not a syllable concerning him, nor, till the atrocious act by which he has so shamefully disgraced himself, did I know in what part of the world he was. I trust that neither my former intimacy with him, or my present compassion for his situation, will draw on me any part of that censure for which he alone stands condemned. The interest I took in the fate of the amiable Mrs. St. Edward, was well known both to you, madam, and to Mrs. Safforey, who, I understand, is sister to the before-mentioned Mr. Delafore. It was impossible to collect from vague accounts and improbable stories, how the case really was. Mr. Tracy recounted such a strange apathy in Mr. St. Edward, as would have discredited all belief but for his testimony. I was turning in my mind what would be the best means of investigating the whole with the least prejudice to each party, when I received your letter relating to poor Mrs. St. Edward's untimely and much lamented fate. I had written an answer of condolence to you, with sincere expressions of sorrow for one who, though I had not the honour of knowing, was, as I understood from every one who did know her, a most lovely young woman. I bewailed her loss with the greater sorrow, when I had the mortification to reflect, that the man whom I once loved as my friend was the cause of her misfortunes. I was giving way to these unavailing regrets, when the above-mentioned letter from his steward arrived.

I had no particular business on my hands, and I knew that the most certain road to the truth was, by witnessing the events. I did not hesitate a moment; I hastened to Tracy, who I found as desirous as myself to make the investigation. We lost no time, for I could not consent to his usual mode of travelling. The urgency of the case obtained his acquiescence, and in a few hours we found ourselves by the water-side. We landed at Waterford, near which place, at a small village, Lord Fitzarnold lay wounded. When I was announced, he shewed great satisfaction at seeing me, but nothing of contrition for the event which had brought me hither. I understood that his wound was of a dangerous nature, and the ball not extracted. The agitation of his mind and the violence of his disposition had occasioned his fever to run very high; and it was only at short intervals that he was sensible. He repeatedly told me, in agonies bordering upon frenzy, that Mrs. St. Edward had run away from him, that he had pursued and overtaken her, but she was again rescued, and by the man who had wounded him; at the same time he expressed a

pleasure in saying that her defender had received a pistol-shot in his body, and was in no better plight than himself. I found this was no time to expostulate, and still less to inform him of the calamitous fate of her about whom he incessantly raves. I urged patience, quiet, and moderation, which if he would permit to observe, I assured him of my services in all that was proper for him to employ me. "Ah Carrington," he replied; "I know you condemn me, but you know not Mrs. St. Edward; she is a prize worthy of a thousand wounds, nay, of death itself, could that obtain her." I asked him if this was the way to observe my advice, or obtain my regard, and if he thought these ravings would hasten his recovery? He then talked still more incoherently; and I left him to the care of those about him, and endeavoured to seek information where it was more likely to be gained.

I soon learned that he had taken Mrs. St. Edward forcibly away from Arkley Castle, having, by indefatigable watchings, discovered a door in a closet leading to her chamber, concealed by plastering and paper on the inside, and which he found means to burst open from without; and when all the family were in bed and asleep, to convey her through this door-way into the park, from thence into a chaise, to the side of the river near Holyhead, and then conveyed her in a small vessel to a little creek not far distant from his house at Blanzey. Here she was strictly confined for many days, though treated with the utmost respect and attention. How she got away from this place alone and unprotected is still unaccountable. The moment she was discovered to be missing, every servant was dispatched different ways in search of her, whilst Lord Fitzarnold himself followed every track which could lead to the most probable place of her concealment, but all to no purpose; they returned to Blanzey Lodge without obtaining the most distant clue of information: and although fatigued and disappointed, Lord Fitzarnold again set out in search of this ill-fated fair-one.

He took with him only one trusty servant, leaving the rest at Blanzey, under orders to receive her with every mark of respect, should any of the many emissaries he had employed in the service find and bring her back to the lodge. He was well armed, and his servant likewise, and they took the road to Waterford upon the supposition that she would make for the nearest port to England. Within a few miles of that place he discovered a chaise going at a pretty fast rate, with four horses, and attended by one servant on horseback. Lord Fitzarnold interrogated the servant as to the persons in the chaise, who replied, it was his master and mistress. "And who are you master and mistress?" said Lord Fitzarnold, "and what are their names?" To this question the servant made no answer, and his Lordship instantly rode up to the carriage, and perceived Mrs. St. Edward seated by a middle-aged man. He hastily passed the chaise followed by his servant, when turning short upon them, with a pistol in his hand, he ordered the drivers at their peril to stop. Obedience was forced by necessity, and at the same instant the gentleman jumped out of the chaise, and brandishing a pistol, called to Lord Fitzarnold to dismount, at the same time adding, that if he was not a villain and a poltroon, he would come upon terms of equal combat. In the same moment Mrs. St. Edward screamed from the chaise, "Lift not your hand against my father!" Lord Fitzarnold, at the sound of a voice so beloved, retreated a few steps, (for he had upon the first call dismounted,) and could not imagine what she meant by her father, well knowing she had no father, and was turning towards her, when the above-mentioned gentleman called out, "Cowardly miscreant, art thou seeking protection from my just resentment? Turn, villain, and receive thy death from the hand best calculated to chastise thy daring attempts." In an instant

both their pistols were presented; Lord Fitzarnold's flashed in the pan, and the ball of the gentleman's grazed his shoulder.

Mrs. St. Edward uttered screams fainter and fainter, until her voice could be heard no longer. She had alighted from the chaise, and now sunk down by the side of it in a fainting fit. During this time the two servants, together with the postillions, were endeavouring to part the combatants, when another gentleman, alone, but well mounted, rode to the spot, to which he seemed rivetted at the sight of Mrs. St. Edward to all appearance dead. "All gracious powers!" he exclaimed; "it is Julia St. Edward!" and jumping from his horse, he cried, "Are ye her murderers that I see before me?" He raised the body of Mrs. St. Edward, exclaiming, "For Heaven's sake afford assistance to this lovely angel, and be it myself to punish the author of her wrongs." Mrs. St. Edward now shewed manifest signs of recovery; the last-mentioned gentleman held her in his arms, gazing upon her with a countenance in which was depicted the most tender melancholy, while her sighs, which became almost convulsive, too plainly indicating the tumults of her heart, at length gave way to articulation, and she said, "Henry! is it thus we meet? O save my father, and let me rest in peace!"

Lord Fitzarnold now attempted to take her from the arms of the other, but he waved his hand for him to keep at a distance, and had not the condition in which she appeared engrossed all their attention, a fresh duel might have ensued; but humanity seemed for the moment to subdue all other feelings, and each hostile intention was yielded to the more tender passions. She was again replaced in the chaise, and again the gentleman Mrs. St. Edward called her father was seated by her. Thus, attended by the rest on horseback, they proceeded to a small village near Waterford, where Lord Fitzarnold had his arm dressed, which was grazed by the ball, and Mrs. St. Edward took some refreshment. She appeared very weak and faint, and upon some altercation arising as to their pursuing their route to Waterford, she declared herself so unable to bear a repetition of violent proceedings, that it was for the present finally determined for them all to remain at this place. A sullen deportment took place on the brow of each, and jealousy and distrust pervaded the whole party.

The gentleman who had last joined them was named Delafore. He had served two years in the West-Indies, and in coming home was taken by a French privateer, and carried into Brest, where he remained a prisoner several months; and when exchanged, was wrecked in his passage to England, and thrown on the Irish coast, where hearing of circumstances in the sister kingdom which deeply affected his mind, he altered his intentions, and determined not to visit that country. He, therefore, joined the Irish brigade, and was reconnoitring the rebel army when he met with the above rencounter. He had a long conference with the gentleman who attended Mrs. St. Edward, after which he said that gentleman *was* her father, and was named St. Edward. This appears mysterious; but as I have my information from the servant who attended them, I can speak with no degree of certainty till I receive further evidence. Mrs. St. Edward continued very weak and much fatigued; her father insisted on her taking rest. Mr. Delafore, with great reluctance, took leave of them, being obliged to attend his party on duty.

Lord Fitzarnold kept a close watch, though not permitted to be in the house with them; and either in the evening, or during the night, Mrs. St. Edward, with her guardian, contrived to escape, but were again pursued by Lord Fitzarnold, who, not being able to



come up with them, turned all his vengeance upon Delafore, being firmly persuaded that he had been contriving and aiding their escape: a formal challenge was therefore given and received. They met in a field near the village where they now lie, and fought with a fury not to be described, the consequence of which was, that they were both dangerously, but not mortally, wounded. It is not possible to say which of them appear to have the most dangerous symptoms. Mr. Delafore has the best chance for life, as he is perfectly resigned, feels happy that Mrs. St. Edward has escaped, and says he could not, except by fighting for his king and country, have fallen in a better cause. Mr. Tracy, who visits him constantly, and is highly pleased with his sentiments, strongly suspects him to have been a lover of Mrs. St. Edward's, though on this subject he has never opened his lips. Lord Fitzarnold, on the other hand, is very far from being composed; on the contrary, we have every thing to fear from his violence. He calls upon Mrs. St. Edward with the ravings of a madman; and the two extremes of impatience and indifference for life, may be prejudicial to both parties.

It would, under their present circumstances, be impossible, at least dangerous, to inform either of them of the dreadful catastrophe which terminated the lives of the poor fugitives; for there can be but little doubt of their having perished, as a small boat was seen to have put out to sea from Waterford at a very late hour in the evening, and the wind growing tempestuous during the night, there is every reason to suppose that they were lost before morning; and the time of the body being found, as mentioned in your's of the 27th, exactly corresponds with that on which they were supposed to have sailed.

At present I do not find any change likely to take place for the better or worse in either of our patients. If any circumstance should arise, or any information gained, that is either satisfactory or interesting, I will not fail to give you the earliest intelligence. You will use your own discretion as to informing Mrs. Safforey of her brother's danger; and I have the honour to remain,

Dear madam,  
Your faithful and obedient  
humble servant,  
ROBERT CARRINGTON.

## LETTER XX,

*Miss Carroset to Miss Baynard.*

I MADE a resolution, my dear Maria, that I would not write again till I should be able to give you some good account of myself. I think that time is now arrived, for with a great deal of contrivance and good generalship, I have at length brought St. Edward to solicit me to name a day for our marriage. You may believe me I shall not fix upon a very distant one. If we had regarded all the stupid opinions of people who talked of decorum and respect to memory, and all such nonsense, we might never have been married; or had we attended to all the idle tales which are daily propagated, we might have remained as we are;—for one brings a story that Mrs. St. Edward's father is come to life again; another, that a very dreadful duel has been fought in Ireland on Julia's account; and then there is a long narrative produced of her sufferings, which those may believe that choose; and old Mr. Goodworth, that hateful Mrs. Clifford's uncle, intends coming here to defend her fame. Did you ever hear such stuff? as if it signified what became of a woman's fame when she is dead and buried, which, thank my stars, she is: and besides I have heard that it is wicked to disturb the ashes of the dead; and what fools must those be who would fight for a woman after she is in her grave. However, such a combination of nonsense might have had an effect upon the weak mind of St. Edward, and, therefore, no time was to be lost.

I believe I told you that my father had expressed a wish to go to London: I made use of that as a hint. I told St. Edward that if they went, I must go likewise, as under the present circumstances I could not with any propriety stay with him: that if we were married indeed, the case would be very different; then I should be happy to pass my whole life with him alone. This had the desired effect, and he urged me, with a degree of earnestness I never before observed, to fix the day. I verily believe he would have been afraid to have staid by himself; however be that as it may, I lost not the opportunity, and next Monday, yes, my dear, next Monday I am to be the happy bride! Don't envy me, Maria! I well deserve my fortune; for I don't think any other girl in the world would have gone through so many difficulties, and with so much perseverance and fortitude.

He says we must be married in the parish-church! What an obsolete notion!—as if it would not be just as well in the parlour. Well, I'll humour him on that day, and go to church, but he will never find me there again: indeed, I don't believe he'll ever catch me in the country again, for it is a place I detest, and particularly this old hideous castle. I intend to have a house in town. Maria, I think I shall have a box at the opera next winter! I shall shine too in jewels! O my sweet husband, I will shew you a little of life; I will so model him! for he has some shocking old-fashioned notions; and a good person, with the look of a gentleman, is wretchedly deficient, if he does not acquire that certain stare of indifference, the easy loll, and the whole nonchalance of a man of fashion. Then when he hears a double entendre, instead of adding zest to it, or looking upon it as a matter of course, he looks pleased, grins like a monkey, but gives no meaning shrug, or—In short, I shall have enough to do to give him lessons of behaviour. Then again, I shall be horribly plagued with my father and mother, and my still more odious brother, who is a compound of vulgar impertinence and puppism. O! how I hate my brother! Indeed, between

ourselves, Maria, all relations are sad bores. I know you will subscribe to this opinion, for you are shockingly tormented with one. People in general make more fuss about relations than enough, I am inclined to think, much more than they feel, and I am sure, more than is necessary. I confess I possess none of that milkiness of human nature.

Do you remember how poor Mrs. Loveless was reprobated, for having her daughter's teeth taken out after she was dead, and placed in her own mouth? Why now really, I see no such great matter in it. The girl died when she was only seventeen; had an amazing fine set, which it would have been a sin to have let rot in the grave. Mrs. Loveless's were beginning to decay, and whose could have been so natural to her as her own child's? I declare I should have done just the same, only I would have taken care to have been more secret, and not given an opportunity for people, who affect fine feelings, to have abused me. Concealment, you know, is the grand art of credit, yet I have no secrets from you, my dear, nor ever shall. It is a great pleasure to me to unbosom myself to such a friend, and I assure you my husband will be no rival to you in that respect, for I flatter myself I shall never be so weak as to make a friend of him; no, husband is enough, without any confidential repose. Well, Maria, adieu. To-day is Tuesday, next Monday is the day. I shall not write again till after the ceremony, therefore this is the last time I shall sign myself, though always yours,

CHARLOTTE CARROSET.

Arkley Castle,  
Feb. 5, 17—.

Copyright Chawton House Library

## LETTER XXI.

*From the same to the same.*

Litchfield, Feb. 12, 17—.

MARIA!—I am distracted! I shall never more recover my right senses! my hopes are all destroyed; my plans overturned; and all my designs annihilated! I am scarce sufficiently recovered from my fright and astonishment, to write, with any degree of clearness, an account which will fill you with wonder, as it does me with amazement and indignation; yet I find a relief in unburthening my grief and mortification, and will endeavour to try at some method and accuracy in the relation of one of the most horrid scenes that ever befel your poor friend.

You know I told you that Monday the 11th was the day fixed for our marriage,—a day I had hailed with delight, as one that would exterminate all my fears and suspense, and secure my safety and my happiness. We met at breakfast with the utmost harmony, and the fairest prospect. My father and mother dressed in new suits; the clergyman, black, sleek, and simpering; some queer-looking quiz of St. Edward's acquaintance to give me away; St. Edward himself looking handsomer and better pleased than I had ever seen him before; and as to your humble servant, I was dressed in a negligent sort of dishabille, and affected a timid kind of reserve, which I had studied for the occasion. The servants did not shew much delight in their countenances; I suppose they were thinking of that hateful puss, their former mistress.

It is such a step to the church, that we had no occasion for carriages, and the day being tolerably fine, we were scarce out of the castle when I found myself in the church. The gloom of the windows, painted with strange figures, the frowning monuments of this ancient family, the solemnity and awe it inspired, altogether struck such a chill upon my heart, as in some degree gave me a pre-sentiment of what was going to happen. Oh Maria!—we approached the altar; the *man* began the service, but had no sooner pronounced something about the day of judgment, when a confused noise, as if proceeding from under the church, made every one start, and in a moment appeared to our astonished sight, Mrs. St. Edward! yes, Mrs. Julia St. Edward, led by a middle-aged man, who likewise supported that very identical old witch, whose figure so much alarmed me one evening in the castle, and in a hollow hideous voice bawled out, "Proceed no farther in the "marriage;" in the same moment taking Mrs. St. Edward by the hand, she said, "Here is the true and lawful wife of this man;" taking the hand of St. Edward, and joining it to that of his wife.

He stood like the image of wonder, with his eyes wide open, as if he had been strangled. As to myself, I had just power to cry out, "An imposture!—A horrid imposture!" "Peace, woman!" returned this diabolical old creature, "and be thankful that you are preserved from a marriage, which would only have rendered thee more infamous than thou art already." My passion choaked me, and I was nearly going into a fit; my mother was actually in a *real* one; and the confusion became so general, that I can give but a very imperfect account of what passed during the next half hour. I did not hear the

sound of St. Edward's voice, and he never once came near me to offer that soothing kindness my situation so much required.

When I am better recovered, and my spirits more composed, I will give you a particular account of these strange and unhappy events; at present I can only say, that this abominable old woman is the grandmother of St. Edward, who took the horrid freak of concealing herself upon the death of her husband in an old part of the castle, where, for upwards of twenty years, she has been at times terrifying the whole family, by appearing through trap-doors made by her order, and removing the eyes of the old pictures by a method in which she could replace them again, and sticking her own frightful ones in their places, with a thousand other odious tricks, by which she has for a long time terrified the servants, rendered the castle famous for being haunted, with a variety of contrivances, for which she deserves, in my opinion, to be put to death. She has been assisted in all these pranks by those very old servants, who were said to be kept and respected for their fidelity; and an old steward has, in concert with herself, saved and amassed an enormous sum of money out of the estates. Surely they should be hanged for this, although they pretend it was all done for the good of the family. The gentleman who appeared with them, is it seems her own son, who for some whim like her own, has been hid in Ireland for some years past, and proves to be the uncle, *not* the father of St. Edward. So he is finely off for his marriage with Julia, as it seems the only terms upon which he can inherit.

How she came to be alive, after the farce of her death and funeral, I am yet to learn; but I am not likely to be soon informed, for we left Arkley on the evening of the day on which these circumstances happened, and I never desire to behold it again. No, Maria; St. Edward, without the estate, is, in my opinion, a mere man of straw. I shall comfort myself with the hopes that they will be miserable, and of this I think there can be little doubt; for although St. Edward is a very weak man, yet not quite so great a fool as to sit down contented, and receive with kindness, a woman who has been traversing the country with nobody knows who, and is now in a manner forced upon him again. No, no,—I have not failed to give him some ideas, for which he will be the better as long as he lives; at least they will prevent his being imposed upon.

We are now at Litchfield on our way to London, where I hope soon to give you a more clear and verbal account.—I lament that I have lost so much time in devoting myself to what has ended so ridiculously, and all by the whims and contrivance of a hideous old woman. My father puts me out of all patience by talking of supernatural causes, and my mother has scarce recovered her fright. Would to Heaven I were rid of them all! I shall see you very soon, but I will not be laughed at nor pitied; positively, Maria, I will not be pitied, for I have suffered enough; and I know contempt and pity generally go together, which is more than could be borne by your

CHARLOTTE CARROSET.

## LETTER XXII.

*Mrs. Julia St. Edward to Mrs. Safforey.*

IT is a long time, my dearest Elinor, since I addressed you, and you, it seems, have mourned for me as dead: perhaps it had been better were it really so, yet how ungrateful am I to repine at a preservation for which I ought to be most thankful! You have, I am informed, read my papers, which were so marvellously preserved in the pockets of the young woman, whose body was taken for mine. In these papers I was left under the kind care and protection of a newly-discovered father, whose intentions were to bring me to England, and restore me to a husband, of whose love and anxiety for me he entertained not the smallest doubt. I was, on my part, equally desirous of returning to that home from which I had been so unfortunately and forcibly carried away. My future happiness, indeed, depended on the reception I should there meet, and nothing but the conscious shield of my own virtue, protected by the fostering wing of a kind parent, could have enabled me to approach it with fortitude and patience.

Our preparations were soon concluded, having little to convey besides ourselves.—My father and myself, attended by one servant on horseback, set out from Adair to Waterford. We had not proceeded a great way on our journey, when I observed a gentleman, who had very much the air of Lord Fitzarnold, attended by one servant, pass hastily by the chaise. My heart began to palpitate with affright; when certainty completing my fears, I gave an involuntary scream at the appearance of Lord Fitzarnold, who, with a pistol in his hand, was ordering the postillions to stop at their peril. My father instantly let down the glass, and demanded the cause of such insolence; when turning towards me, and seeing me pale and almost breathless, he at once comprehended the nature of the violence. Being himself armed, he instantly stepped from the chaise, and calling to the servant to assist him, a combat the most terrible my eyes could witness was going to ensue, when exerting all my strength, and collecting all my fortitude, I sprang from the carriage, and threw myself between them. In the same moment, how were my astonished senses transfixed, and as it were rivetted to the spot, at the sight of your brother. Oh, my Elinor, never did I experience such a moment. I uttered something I know not what, but I meant to ask protection for my father. I remembered no more.

When I came to myself, I found I was again seated in the chaise, and Henry Delafore gazing tenderly upon me. I enquired hastily for my father, who not being known by that name to the rest of the party, my senses were supposed to be deranged; I had, however, the satisfaction to see that he was safe; and finding my situation extremely painful, I entreated that we might be suffered to proceed. Consideration to my embarrassed state and apparent disorder, influenced the minds of the enraged combatants to give a truce to their anger, and with my father seated by me, we, escorted by the gentlemen and two servants, arrived at the nearest village, where, in spite of all my efforts to conquer my fears, and regain my resolution, I fell into the most violent hysterics, which lasted for some hours. I knew not what became of Lord Fitzarnold and your brother, but finding myself considerably better, and being extremely desirous to get my father away from Lord Fitzarnold, I proposed an endeavour to make our escape. The evening favoured our design, and the people of the house were not unwilling to lend us

their assistance. We got off without difficulty, and arrived at Waterford about one o'clock in the morning.

We did not think it prudent to go to a capital inn, but took up our abode at a small house pretty near the water. The man who kept it appeared to be a foreigner, and a daughter, who was very assiduous in attending me, seemed perfectly French. My father was better pleased at this circumstance, as he said we should be less liable to discovery. He asked the man if we could not engage a vessel to take us to England with the first fair wind; the man promised we should be accommodated by the morning. My father was imprudent enough to say that it must be secret, which, no doubt, led them to suspect that we were carrying money out of the country. I imagine that, feeling myself in safety, I eat of such ordinary food as they could procure for us, with great satisfaction and a good appetite; my father did the same; and we drank of some light wine mixed with water, in which, I am inclined to think, they infused some sleeping potion, as I felt an uncommon drowsiness, which I attributed to the hurry of spirits I had undergone; and although the accommodations were very moderate, I went to bed with a certain prospect of sleeping well; the young woman who attended me promising to call me as soon as the wind served. My father slept in a room very near me, and the servant in the same with him.

I never awoke till the morning was pretty far advanced, when rising hastily, to my surprise, I could not find any part of my dress, which I had taken off the preceding night, except a bed-gown, which I had upon the bed. I threw it over me, and hastily running to the door, which I perceived open, I went into the room where slept my father and the servant. They were both still in a profound sleep, and it was with difficulty I awoke them. Our surprise was mutual; they had not been stripped of their cloaths as I had been, but a small box, in which was a pretty large sum of money, was taken away. As to myself, I had not so much as my wedding ring left, which, with others, I had carelessly taken from my fingers the night before. What I considered as my greatest loss were my pockets, as they contained those very papers which were so miraculously preserved.

We found the house intirely deserted; and there is no doubt but the poor wretches who perished in the storm, had made use of the very boat they had at first hired for us, and as they were French, were, perhaps, making for their native coast, when the vessel was driven by the wind to that of England; and I am not surprised that the body of the young woman was taken for mine, as she was about my size and age, and had, I dare say, dressed herself in all my cloaths, some of her's being left in the house. She might too, for anything I know to the contrary, resemble me; but I understand, poor creature, that her features were totally defaced. We next consulted what was best to be done. We thought ourselves tolerably safe where we were, as Lord Fitzarnold would never think of looking for us in so obscure a place; and it would be necessary to remain a few days, in order that my father might get a supply of money from the agent, who lived in the town of Limerick; and likewise to provide myself with cloaths. Our trusty servant, therefore, put on an old coat and hat he found in the house, and went upon the above errands. He likewise made inquiry when the packet would sail for England.

On his return he brought the sad intelligence that surgeons had been sent for to the village we had left, to attend two gentlemen who were both desperately wounded in a duel. It was easy to guess these were no other than Lord Fitzarnold and Henry Delafore. My heart sickened at the news, and my father, with a humanity which seems to guide all his actions, said he would not leave Ireland until we could hear a more decided account

of these duellists. For my own part, I shuddered to think of their desperation, and waited with an anxiety not to be described. At length the servant one day returned, with information that their wounds were both said to be less dangerous, and that two gentlemen were just arrived from England, who seemed much interested in their safety. After this intelligence, we came to a determination to proceed to England. We set sail with a fair wind, and, after a pleasant passage, arrived at Milford-Haven, from whence we came post to Arkley. My father knew many of the secret passages and avenues to the castle; and as the appearance of two persons supposed to be dead would naturally occasion some alarm, he thought it best to send for the old steward to the porter's lodge, where we were set down. The sight of the venerable pile, together with a variety of ideas which passed rapidly in my mind, and the uncertainty of my reception, caused emotions poignantly felt, but not easily expressed.

The old steward came; he was greatly surprised, but said the time was now arrived when a still more wonderful discovery would be made, for that his old mistress, my grandmother, Elinor, was still living! that she had caused a rumour of her death to be propagated for very wise and good designs; that she had lived for twenty years in a very remote and unfrequented part of the castle; had often, by ingenious devices of trap-doors and other contrivances, been an eye-witness both of my sufferings and Mr. St. Edward's ill-behaviour; that she once appeared before my father, which accounts for the fright he then received. The time was now come when she would make known her existence, for that, as my death was so well ascertained and believed, Mr. St. Edward had fixed the day for his marriage with Miss Carroset, a measure the old lady so highly disapproved, that she intended making her appearance in her own proper person, in order to prevent the match; and this was fixed and determined, whether we had arrived or not. Our coming, he added, was a circumstance which would greatly facilitate her design; and the good old man testified his delight with tears of joy.

We were introduced to the old lady, after the family were retired to rest, in an apartment of the castle I had never seen. The old steward prepared my grandmother for the meeting, and I felt happy at being folded in the arms of another near relation. She likewise embraced her son with a joy and fondness which can only be experienced by the feelings of a mother. She informed us of the great improvement she had made in the estate during the time that she, in concert with the old steward, had the management of it.—We remained three whole days concealed in her apartments, which afford every comfort we could desire. In this time she shewed me all the means she had used to make herself as it were invisible; and on the fourth, which was the day appointed for the marriage of St. Edward with Miss Carroset, she led us by a subterraneous passage under the parish-church, where, just as the clergyman began the service, we appeared through a trap-door, and stood before them.

To describe the astonishment of each, is not in my power. I was so much alarmed myself, and trembled so exceedingly, that I scarce know what passed. St. Edward looked cold and unbelieving; the Carrosets soon departed; and the remainder of the day was devoted to explanations. I assure you my grandmother is a wonderfully clever woman for her age, and she pays me a most affectionate attention, which cannot fail to be pleasing. I should think my situation and my prospects greatly mended, could I see anything like satisfaction in the countenance of my husband; but sorry am I to add, that he preserves a sullen reserve, which must place an everlasting bar between our mutual happiness. He



produced the fragment of a letter, which I had began, to send to Mrs. Clifford, and never afterwards could find, as a proof of my guilt, or rather of his suspicion; and although nothing can be more clear than my story, he affects unbelief, and says, time only can convince him. Ah my friend, can riches, can honours, can relations, make up for the odium of such suspicions? I fear I am not born to be happy. Let me hear from you soon; and believe me, dearest Elinor,

Ever yours,  
JULIA ST. EDWARD.

Arkley Castle,  
Feb. 15, 17—.

Copyright Chawton House Library

LETTER XXIII.

*Lord Robert Carrington to Mrs. Clifford.*

MADAM,

I TROUBLE you with a few lines to inform you of the death of Lord Fitzarnold. The news of Mrs. St. Edward's fate, which was hastily communicated to him by a person who knew not the interest he took in every thing concerning her, caused such violent symptoms in his weak state as eluded all the efforts of art, which were vainly administered to save him. I trust he died a penitent, as he was allowed many hours of calm reflection, and his senses were perfect to the last. I will not dwell upon a melancholy subject, which has greatly affected me. I have known him from a very early period, and excepting in this last infatuated instance, he possest many good qualities. I shall myself attend his funeral, and take every other business upon me in the execution of his will, &c. as it was his last request; after which, I purpose returning to England with Mr. Tracy and Mr. Delafore. The wound of the latter is nearly healed, and he is in a convalescent state. He knows not as yet the fate of poor Mrs. St. Edward. With my respectful compliments to Mrs. Saffory,

I remain, dear madam,

Respectfully yours,

ROBERT CARRINGTON.

## LETTER XXIV.

*Mrs. Clifford to Mrs. Safforey.*

Crayborne, March 3.

MY DEAR MADAM,

MY last conveyed to you the account of Lord Fitzarnold's death; this brings you that of Mr. St. Edward's, our dear Julia's husband. That unhappy infatuated man could never be brought to acknowledge the merits of his wife; a sullen reserve took intire possession of him; and pretending business called him to London, he left Arkley in about ten days after her return. Two days since his servant came back with the melancholy intelligence, that his master was run through the body by a gentleman whom he found in company with Miss Carroset. I am not yet able to give you all the particulars, but although that imprudent young woman had so far gained the heart of poor St. Edward that he could not be happy without her, yet her pretence of regard for him was of a far different nature. Her ambition to be the mistress of Arkley Castle, and to share his fortune, led her to deceive him with a shew of affection; and when Mrs. St. Edward was supposed to be dead, she redoubled all her art and dissimulation, and had firmly persuaded him that he was an injured husband.

From the time of her departure from Arkley, he appeared discontented and miserable; and had he lived, I fear there would have been but little prospect of happiness either for him or Mrs. St. Edward. His behaviour and manners cast a gloom upon her's; and when I arrived at Arkley, which was a few days after the discovery, I never saw the appearance of more discontent. When he left the castle, he took no leave of any person, but shewed a visible satisfaction at the idea of going. He travelled post to London, and immediately went to Mr. Carroset's house. The young lady was not at home, she was gone to visit a Miss Baynard, a particular friend. Thither this unfortunate man, led by impatience, sought her, not in the least doubting but he should find the same reception he had hitherto experienced. He hastily followed the servant, and rushed into the room, where he found her seated upon a sofa, with a man in a military dress sitting by her. It is supposed that upon his addressing Miss Carroset with his usual freedom and expressions of affection, the other, who was her present lover, began to call him to account for his behaviour. St. Edward, naturally impetuous, now under the power of united passions, returned the affront with redoubled fury. A scuffle ensued; and St. Edward's servant arrived at the house at the same moment that they agreed to decide it by the sword. The servant used all his endeavours to persuade his master from engaging with he knew not whom, but it was in vain; he would hear nothing; but instantly proceeded to a small space of ground near the house in which they had met. St. Edward fought with desperation, and quickly fell. He lived but a few moments, and his servant, the only person present, was so much engaged with his poor master, that the antagonist made his escape. Miss Carroset and Miss Baynard are both supposed to have left the kingdom with him, as neither of them can be found.

Our dear Julia seems opprest with accumulated misfortunes, but I trust brighter days await her. Few people's sufferings have been so little merited as her's, for I know not any one instance in which blame could have been charged to her conduct; and as I am persuaded there is a portion of happiness annexed to the fate of every one, though, perhaps, not distributed according to our ideas of equality, her brightest days are yet to come. This is not a time even to anticipate future events, but I cannot divest myself of an opinion, that some future day we may see our lovely friend rewarded for all her sufferings, by a union with the chosen of her heart; and your beloved brother not dissatisfied with her choice. Adieu,

Dear madam;  
I am ever yours,  
ANN CLIFFORD.

LETTER XXV.

*Mr. Delafore to Mrs. Safforey.*

Waterford, March 10.

MY DEAR SISTER,

THE length of time which has elapsed since I heard from or addressed you, has been filled up by events of so extraordinary a nature, as to have engrossed all my attention; and as I have reason to believe that you are well informed of most of them, I shall forbear to repeat any, except those which most materially concern myself.

When I heard of the marriage of Julia St. Edward, the effect it had on my mind occasioned a frenzy fever, during which time I was deprived of all my powers of reason, and on my recovery could only recollect the kind attentions of your husband. As my bodily faculties were restored, my mind became more composed, though not less wretched: I was unfitted for my employment, and obtained leave to return to England. I formed a plan of seeing Julia, of upbraiding her with her falsehood, and in some moments I meditated the design of putting myself to death at her feet. This mad projection for a while took up all my thoughts, and in some degree mitigated the sorrows with which my heart was surcharged. Dwelling continually on these gloomy intentions, my appearance was observed to wear a sullen dejection, which all your husband's solicitations and kind remonstrances could not remove.

I left the West-Indies deeply sensible of his friendship, but still more deeply impressed with my own desperate resolves. I have now reason to admire the wise and just dispensations of Providence, which prevented those acts of violence I had so rashly concerted. On my passage home, I was taken (after fighting with a fury which nothing but my wish for death could have actuated,) by a French privateer, and carried into Brest. There it was that the most acute bodily sufferings, both of hunger, sickness, and every extreme of wretchedness, brought my mind to a state of recollection it had never before experienced. I reprobated my intentions of self-destruction with the abhorrence which

such cooler judgment creates. I now not only gave up all these wretched designs on myself, but I also determined to avoid seeing Mrs. St. Edward with as much care as I had been before desirous of throwing myself in her way. For this purpose I formed the resolution of returning back to the West-Indies, should I survive my sufferings, but fate disposed of me otherwise, for on an exchange of prisoners, I was destined to return to England. The elements, however, still favoured my design, by throwing me on the coast of Ireland. Here I found a country distracted with internal broils, and the inhabitants waging war with each other. I again engaged in the cause of honour, and I encountered with ardour in my endeavours to extirpate those enemies to my king and country, which were every where infesting the island by the most atrocious acts of cruelty and injustice, terrifying the peaceful subject, and almost annihilating industry and trade.

The zeal with which I engaged for a time dissipated the sorrows of my heart, when, in a moment of enterprize, in search of the rebel army, my sight and all my faculties were suspended by the appearance of my beloved Julia! In what a scene of distress did I behold her! Every emotion of my heart was turned towards her safety, and every exertion of my arm was engaged for her protection. I believe you have been better informed of the result of this meeting than I can describe it, for my mind was in a tumult of anxiety, which has prevented accurate recollection. After escorting her to a place of safety, I was ordered on duty, and obliged to leave her. On my return I found she had escaped, and I received a formal challenge from Lord Fitzarnold. We met, we fought with equal desperation, and we both fell in the same instant. Our wounds were dangerous, but I have reason to think mine was aided in recovery by my resignation and total indifference to life; while on the other hand, Lord Fitzarnold's was rendered worse by his agitation and impatience. I feel a kind of satisfaction in this belief, as I cannot place it to my own account that he is now no more. His wound was in as fair a way of recovery as mine, when a rumour of Mrs. St. Edward's being drowned was incautiously related to him. The distraction this intelligence occasioned threw him into a violent fever, which terminated in his death. In his last moments he acquitted me; and since this event, I am informed that Julia is in safety, and her husband, by a violence of passion equal to Lord Fitzarnold's, has lost his life. Indeed, I am informed, and from very good authority, that every advantage was taken both of his temper and unguarded situation, insomuch that those who were chiefly concerned in the rencounter have fled the country, to avoid the justice of its laws. Mr. St. Edward was, it seems, a very weak man; his conduct, from what has fallen under my own observation, evidently proved it.

I have found in Lord Robert Carrington and Mr. Tracy the most excellent friends, and the best advisers. My health is every day improving, and I am looking forward to a time when I may hope to meet my Julia St. Edward under happier circumstances than in the last interview we had. I say, my Julia! Yes, my dearest sister, she must be mine; allow me this fond hope, and I ask no more.—I am coming home in a very short time. I will not, by any improper impatience, break through those rules of decorum so necessary to propriety and good example, but I shall not hesitate to obtain that prize to which I have so just a claim, and which, when in my possession, will be estimated by its own worth. It is not Arkley Castle, it is not riches that I covet; no, it is a brighter gem, it is Julia St. Edward! When we are united, I will never leave her, but remembering the words of a celebrated poet, I will be her constant guardian;—

“The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,  
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,  
Who guards her; or with her partakes  
The danger.”——

I hope to find you in perfect health. I indulge the fondest hopes; and remain,

My dear sister,

With true affection,

Ever yours,

HENRY DELAFORE.

FINIS.

Copyright Chawton House Library