

THE HISTORY OF HARRIOT AND SOPHIA

INSTALLMENT 1

HARRIOT and Sophia were the daughters of a gentleman, who, having spent a good paternal inheritance before he was five and thirty, was reduced to live upon the moderate salary of a place at court, which his friends procured him to get rid of his importunities¹. The same imprudence² by which he had been governed in affairs of lesser importance directed him likewise in the choice of a wife: the woman he married had no merit but beauty, and brought with her to the house of a man whose fortune was already ruined nothing but a taste for luxury and expence, without the means of gratifying it.

Harriot, the eldest daughter of this couple, was, like her mother, a beauty, and upon that account, as well as the conformity of her temper and inclinations to hers, engrossed all her affection.

Sophia she affected to despise, because she wanted in an equal degree those personal attractions, which in her opinion constituted the whole of female perfection. Meer common judges however allowed her person to be agreeable; people of discernment³ and taste pronounced her something more. The striking sensibility of her countenance, the soft elegance of her shape and motion, a melodious voice in speaking, whose varied accents enforced the sensible things she always said, were beauties not capable of striking vulgar minds, and which were sure to be eclipsed⁴ by the dazzling lustre⁵ of her sister's complexion, and the fire of two bright eyes, whose motions were as quick and unsettled as her thoughts.

While Harriot was receiving the improvement of a polite education, Sophia was left to form herself as well as she could; happily for her a just taste and solid judgment supplied the place of teachers, precept,⁶ and example. The hours that Harriot wasted in dress, company, and gay amusements, were by Sophia, devoted to reading.

¹ Incessant solicitation ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "Importunity, n.s.").

² Want of prudence; indiscretion; negligence; inattention to interest ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "Imprudence, n.s.").

³ Judgment; power or distinguishing ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "Discernment, n.s.").

⁴ To cloud; to obscure ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "Eclipse, v.a..").

⁵ Brightness; splendour; glitter ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "Lustre, n.s.").

⁶ A rule authoritatively given; a mandate; a commandment; a direction ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "Precept, n.s.").

A good old gentleman, who was nearly related to her father, perceiving this taste in her, encouraged it by his praises, and furnished her with the means of gratifying it, by constantly supplying her with such books as were best calculated to improve her morals and understanding. His admiration increasing in proportion as he had opportunities of observing her merit, he undertook to teach her the French and Italian languages, in which she soon made a surprising progress; and by the time she had reached her fifteenth year, she had read all the best authors in them, as well as in her own.

By this unwearied ⁷application to reading, her mind became a beautiful store-house of ideas: hence she derived the power and the habit of constant reflection, which at once enlarged her understanding, and confirmed her in the principles of piety⁸ and virtue.

As she grew older the management of the family entirely devolved upon her; for her mother had no taste for any thing but pleasure, and her sister was taught to consider herself as a fine lady, whose beauty could not fail to make her fortune, and whose sole care it ought to be to dress to the greatest advantage, and make her appearance in every place where she might increase the number of her admirers.

Sophia, in acquitting herself of the duties of a house-keeper to her mother, shewed that the highest intellectual improvements were not incompatible with the humbler cares of domestic life: every thing that went through her hands received a grace and propriety from the good sense by which she was directed; nor did her attention to family-affairs break in upon her darling amusement reading.

People who know how to employ their time well are always good economists⁹ of it. Sophia laid out hers in such exact proportions, that she had always sufficient for the several employments she was engaged in: the business of her life, like that of nature, was performed without noise, hurry, or confusion.

The death of Mr. Darnley threw this little family into a deplorable¹⁰ state of indigence¹¹, which was felt the more severely, as they had hitherto¹² lived in an affluence¹³ of all things, and the debts which an expence so ill proportioned to their income had obliged Mr. Darnley to contract, left the unhappy widow and her children without any resource. The plate, furniture, and every thing valuable were

⁷ Not tired; not fatigued ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “unwearied, adj.”).

⁸ Discharge of duty to God ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “piety, n.s.”).

⁹ More generally: a person who manages resources, esp. sparingly or effectively. Frequently with *of* and qualifying word ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), “economist”, n).

¹⁰ Lamentable; that which demands or causes lamentation; dismal; sad; calamitous; miserable; hopeless ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “deplorable, adj.”).

¹¹ Want; penury; poverty ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “indigence, n.s.”).

¹² To this time; yet; in any time till now ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “hitherto, adj.”).

¹³ Exuberance of riches; stream of wealth; plenty ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “affluence, n.s.”).

seized by the creditors. Mrs. Darnley and her daughters retired to a private lodging, where the first days were passed in weak despondence¹⁴ on the part of the mother, in passionate repinings¹⁵ on that of the eldest daughter, and by Sophia in decent sorrow and pious resignation.

Mrs. Darnley however, by a natural consequence of her thoughtless temper, soon recovered her former gaiety.¹⁶ Present evils only were capable of affecting her; reflection and forecast¹⁷ never disturbed the settled calm of her mind. If the wants of one day were supplied, she did not consider what inconveniences the next might produce. As for Harriot she found resources of comfort in the exalted ideas she had of her own charms; and having already laid it down as a maxim, that poverty was the most shameful thing in the world, she formed her resolutions accordingly.

Sophia, as soon as her grief for the loss of her father had subsided, began to consider of some plan for their future subsistence¹⁸. She forbore¹⁹ however to communicate her thoughts on this subject to her mother and sister, who had always affected to treat every thing she said with contempt, the mean disguise which envy had assumed to hide their consciousness of her superior merit²⁰; but she opened her mind to the good old gentleman, to whom she had been obliged for many of her improvements. She told him that being by his generous cares qualified to undertake the education of a young lady, she was desirous of being received into the family of some person of distinction in the quality of governess²¹ to the daughters of it, that she might at once secure to herself a decent establishment, and be enabled to assist her mother. She hinted that if her sister could be also prevailed upon to enter into the service of a lady of quality, they might jointly contribute their endeavours to make their mother's life comfortable.

Mr. Herbert praised her design, and promised to mention it to Mrs. Darnley, to whom he conceived he might speak with the greater freedom, as his near relation to her husband, and the long friendship which had subsisted between them, gave him a right to interest himself in their affairs. The first words he uttered produced such an emotion in Mrs. Darnley's countenance²², as convinced him that

¹⁴ The action of desponding, to lose heart or resolution; to become depressed or dejected in mind by loss of confidence or hope ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), “despondence, n”).

¹⁵ The action of *repine v.*; discontent, complaint; discontented longing; an act or instance of this ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), “repining, n.”).

¹⁶ Cheerfulness; airiness; merriment ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “gayety, n.s.”).

¹⁷ To scheme; to plan before execution ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “forecast, v.a.”).

¹⁸ Competence; means of supporting life ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “subsistence, n.s.”).

¹⁹ To abstain or refrain from (some action or procedure); to cease, desist from ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), “forbear, v.”).

²⁰ Reward deserved ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “merit, n.s.”).

²¹ A tutoress; a woman that has the care of young ladies ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “governess, n.s.”).

²² The form of the face; the system of features ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “countenance, n.s.”).

what he had farther to say would not be favourably received. She coloured, drew herself up with an air of dignity, looking at the same time at her eldest daughter with a scornful smile.

Mr. Herbert, however, continued his discourse, when Harriot, with a pertness²³ which she took for wit, interrupted him with a loud laugh, and asked him, if going to service was the best provision he could think of for Mr. Darnley's daughters?

Mr. Herbert, turning hastily to her, replied with a look of great gravity, and in a calm accent, 'Have you, miss, thought of any thing better?'

Harriot, without being disconcerted, retorted very briskly, 'People who have nothing but advice to offer to their friends in distress, ought to be silent till they are asked for it.'

'Good advice, miss, replied the old gentleman with the same composure, is what every body cannot, and many will not give; and it is at least an instance of friendship to hazard it, where one may be almost sure of its giving offence.' But, continued he, turning to Sophia, 'my young pupil here has I hope not profited so little by her reading as not to know the value of good counsel; and I promise her she shall not only command the best that I am capable of giving, but every other assistance she may stand in need of.' Saying this, he bowed and went away, without any attempts from Mrs. Darnley to detain him.

Poor Sophia, who was supposed by her silence to have acquiesced²⁴ in the old gentleman's proposal, was exposed to a thousand reproaches for her meanness of spirit. She attempted to shew the utility, and even the necessity of following his advice; but she found on this occasion, as she had on many others, that with some persons it is not safe to be too reasonable. Her arguments were answered with rage and invective,²⁵ which soon silenced her, and increased the triumph of her imperious²⁶ sister.

Mr. Herbert, apprehensive of the ill treatment she was likely to be exposed to, offered to place her in the family of a country clergyman²⁷, and to pay for her board till such a settlement as she desired could be procured for her; but the tender Sophia, not willing to leave her mother while she could be of any use to her, gratefully declined his offer, still expecting that the increasing perplexity of their circumstances might bring her to relish his reasonable counsels, and that she might have the sanction²⁸ of her consent to a step which prudence made necessary to be taken.

²³ Brisk folly; sauciness; petulance ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "pertnes, n.s.").

²⁴ To rest in, or remain satisfied with, without opposition or discontent ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "Acquiesce, v.n.").

²⁵ Satirical; abusive ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "invective, adj.").

²⁶ Commanding; tyrannical; authoritative; haughty; arrogant; assuming command ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "imperious, adj.").

²⁷ A man in holy orders; a man set apart for ministration of holy things; not a laick ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "clergyman, n.s.").

²⁸ The act of confirmation which gives to any thing its obligatory power; ratification ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "sanction, n.s.").

A legacy of a hundred pounds being left her by a young lady who tenderly loved her, and who died in her arms, she immediately presented it to her mother, by whom it was received it with a transport of joy, but without any reflection upon the filial²⁹ piety of her who gave it.

Sophia's good friend, though he did not absolutely approve of this exalted strain of tenderness, yet did not fail to place the merit of it in the fullest light; but Harriot, who never heard any praises of her sister without a visible emotion, interrupted him, by saying, that Sophia had only done what she ought; and that she herself would have acted in the same manner, if the sum had been twenty times larger.

The same delicacy which induced Sophia to divest herself of any particular right to this small legacy, made her see the misapplication of it without discovering the least mark of dislike. Harriot, who governed her mother absolutely, having represented to her, that the obscurity in which they lived was not the means to preserve their old friends, or to acquire new ones; and that it was their business to appear again in the world, and put themselves in the way of fortune, which could not be done without making a decent appearance at least; Mrs. Darnley, who thought this reasoning unanswerable, consented to their changing their present lodgings for others more genteel, and to whatever expences her eldest daughter judged necessary to secure the success of her scheme.

Sophia lamented in secret this excess of imprudence; and to avoid being a witness of it, as well as to free her mother from the expence of her maintenance, she resolved to accept of the first genteel³⁰ place that offered; but the natural softness and timidity of her temper made her delay as long as possible mentioning this design to her mother and sister, lest it should be construed into a tacit³¹ reproach of them for a conduct so very different.

Indeed her condition was greatly altered for the worse, since the present she had made of her legacy. Her mother and sister had never loved her much, and their tenderness for her was now entirely lost in the uneasy consciousness of having owed an obligation to her, for which they could not resolve to be grateful. They no longer considered her as an insignificant person whose approbation³² or dislike was of no sort of consequence, but as a saucy censurer of their actions, who assumed to herself a superiority, [Page 25] on account of the paulty³³ assistance she had offered them: every thing she said was construed into upbraidings³⁴ of the benefit she had conferred³⁵ upon

²⁹ Pertaining to a son; befitting a son ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "filial, adj.").

³⁰ Polite; elegant in behaviour; civil ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "genteel, adj").

³¹ Silent; implied; not expressed by words ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "tacit, n.s.").

³² The act of approving, or expressing himself pleased ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "approbation, n.s.").

³³ Scoundre; paltrocca, a low whore, Italina, Sorry; worthless; despicable; contemptible; mean ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "paltry, adj.").

³⁴ To charge contemptuously with any thing disgraceful ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "upbraid, v.a.").

³⁵ To give; to bestow; with on before him who receives the gift ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "confer, v.a.").

them. If she offered her opinion upon any occasion, Harriot would say to her with a malicious³⁶ sneer, ‘To be sure you think you have a right to give us laws, because we have had the misfortune to be obliged to you.’ And Mrs. Darnley, working herself up to an agony of grief and resentment for the fancied insult, would lift up her eyes and cry, ‘How much is that mother be pitied who lives to receive alms from her child!’

Poor Sophia used to answer no otherwise than by tears: but this was sure to aggravate her fault; for it was supposed that she wept and appeared afflicted only to shew people what ungrateful returns she met with for her goodness.

Thus did the unhappy Sophia, with the softest sensibility of heart and tendered affections, see herself excluded from the endearing expressions of a mother’s fondness, only by being too worthy of it, and exposed to shocking suspicions of undutifulness for an action that shewed the highest filial affection: so true it is, that great virtues cannot be understood by mean and little minds, and with such, not only lose all their lustre, but are too often mistaken for the contrary vices.

While Sophia passed her time in melancholy reflections, Harriot, being by her generous gift enabled to make as shewy an appearance as her mourning habit would permit, again mixed in company, and laid baits for admiration. Her beauty soon procured her a great number of lovers; her poverty made their approaches easy; and the weakness of her understanding, her insipid gaiety, and pert affectation of wit, encouraged the most licentious³⁷ hopes, and exposed her to the most impertinent addresses.

Among those who looking upon her as a conquest of no great difficulty formed the mortifying design of making a mistress of her, was Sir Charles Stanley, a young baronet³⁸ of a large estate, a most agreeable person, and engaging address: his fine qualities made him the delight of all who knew him, and even envy itself allowed him to be a man of the strictest honour and unblemished integrity.

Persons who connect the idea of virtue and goodness with such a character, would find it hard to conceive how a man who lives in a constant course of dissimulation³⁹ with one part of his species, and who abuses the advantages he has received from nature and fortune in subduing chastity, and ensnaring innocence, can possibly deserve, and establish a reputation for honour! but such are the illusions of prejudice, and such the tyranny of custom, that he who is called a man of gallantry shall be at the same time esteemed a man of honour, though gallantry comprehends the worst kind of fraud, cruelty, and injustice.

³⁶ Ill-disposed to any one; intending ill’ malignant ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “malicious, adj.”).

³⁷ Unrestrained by law or morality ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “licentious, n.s.”).

³⁸ The lowest degree of honour that is hereditary; it is below a baron and above a knight; and has the precedency of all other knights, except the knights of the garter. It was first founded by king James I. A.D. 1611. *Cowel*. But it appears by the following passage, that the term was in use before, though in another sense ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “baronet, n.s.”).

³⁹ The action of dissimulating or dissembling; concealment of what really is, under a feigned semblance of something different; feigning, hypocrisy ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), “dissimulation, n.”).

Sir Charles Stanley had been but too successful in his attempts upon beauty, to fear being rejected by Miss Darnley; and knowing her situation, he resolved to engage her gratitude at least before he declared his designs. He had interest enough to procure the place her father enjoyed for a gentleman who thought himself happy in obtaining it, though charged with an annuity⁴⁰ of fourscore⁴¹ pounds a year for the widow of his predecessor.

Sir Charles, in acquainting Miss Darnley with what he had done in favour of her mother, found himself under no necessity of insinuating his motive for the extraordinary interest he took in the affairs of this distrest family. Harriot's vanity anticipated any declaration of this sort, and the thanks she gave him were accompanied with such an apparent consciousness of the power of her charms as convinced him his work was already more than half done.

He was now received at Mrs. Darnley's in the quality of a declared lover of Harriot's; and although amidst all his assiduities⁴² he never mentioned marriage, either the mother and daughter did not penetrate into his real designs, or were but too much disposed to favour them.

The innocent heart of Sophia was at first overwhelmed with joy for the happy provision that had been made for her mother, and the prospect of such an advantageous match for her sister, when Mr. Herbert, who knew the world too well to be imposed upon by these fine appearances, gently hinted to his young favourite, his apprehensions of the baronet's dishonourable views.

Her delicacy was so shocked by this suspicion, that she could scarce forbear expressing some little resentment of it; but reflecting that this ardent lover of Harriot's had not yet made any proposals of marriage, her good sense immediately suggested to her that such affected delays in a man who was absolutely independent, and with a woman whose situation made it a point of delicacy to be early explicit on that head, could only proceed from intentions which he had not yet dared to own.

Chance had so ordered it, that hitherto she had never seen Sir Charles Stanley; whenever he came, she was either employed in the family-affairs, or engaged with her books, which it was no easy matter to make her quit. Besides, as she had no share in his visits, and as her sister never shewed any inclination to introduce her to him, she thought it did not become her to intrude herself upon his acquaintance. Sir Charles indeed, knowing that Mrs. Darnley had another daughter, used sometimes to enquire for her, but was neither surprised nor disappointed that she never made her appearance.

Sophia, however, was determined to be in the way when he came next, that she might have an opportunity of observing his behaviour to her sister; and fondly flattered herself that she should discover nothing to the disadvantage of a person whom her grateful heart had taught itself to love and esteem as their common benefactor.

⁴⁰ A yearly allowance ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "annuity, n.s.").

⁴¹ Four times twenty; eighty ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "fourscore, adj.").

⁴² Persistent endeavour to please, obsequious attention ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), "assiduity, n.").

Sir Charles at the next visit found Sophia in the room with her sister. He instantly saw something in her looks and person which inspired him with more respect than he had been used to feel for Mrs. Darnley and Harriot; a dignity which she derived from innate virtue, and an exalted understanding. Struck with the uncommon sensibility of her countenance, he began to consider her with an attention which greatly disgusted Harriot, who could not conceive that where she was present any other object was worthy notice.

Sophia herself was a little disconcerted by the young baronet's so earnestly gazing on her; and in order to divert his looks, opened a conversation in which her sister might bear a part. Then it was, that without designing it, she displayed her whole power of charming: that flow of wit which was so natural to her, the elegant propriety of her language, the delicacy of her sentiments, the animated look which gave them new force, and sent them directly to the heart, and the moving graces of the most harmonious voice in the world, were attractions, which though generally lost on fools, seldom fail of their effect on the heart of a man of sense.

Sir Charles was wrapt in wonder and delight; he had no eyes, no ears, but for Sophia: he scarce perceived that Harriot was in the room.

The insolent beauty, astonished at such unusual neglect, varied her attitude and her charms a thousand different ways to draw his attention; but found all was to no purpose. Had she been capable of serious reflection, she might now have discovered what advantages her sister, though far inferior to her in beauty, gained over her, by the force of her understanding: she might now have seen,

“How beauty is excelled by modest grace,

“And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.”

But too ignorant to know her own wants, and too conceited to imagine she had any, she was strangely perplexed how to account for so sudden an alteration in Sir Charles.

Her uneasiness, however, grew so great, that she was not able to conceal it. She shifted her seat two or three times in a minute, bit her lips almost through, and frowned so intelligibly, that Sophia at last perceiving her agitation, suddenly recollected herself, and quitted the room upon pretence of business.

When she was gone, Harriot drawing herself up, and assuming a look which expressed her confidence in the irresistible power of her charms, seemed resolved to make her lover repent the little notice he had taken of her in this visit by playing off a thousand scornful airs upon him; but she was more mortified than ever when upon turning her eyes towards him, in full expectation of finding his fixed upon her, she saw them bent upon the ground, and such a pensiveness in his countenance as all her rigors could never yet occasion.

She was considering what to say to him to draw him out of this reverie, when Sir Charles, on a sudden raising his eyes, turned them towards the door with a look of mingled anxiety and

impatience, and then, as if disappointed, sighed and addressed some indifferent conversation to Harriot.

The lady, now quite provoked, had recourse to an artifice which her shallow understanding suggested to her, as an infallible method of awakening his tenderness, and this was to make him jealous. Without any preparation therefore, she introduced the name of Lord L—, a young nobleman⁴³ who was just returned from his travels, and lavishing a thousand encomiums⁴⁴ upon his person, and his elegant taste in dress, added, 'That he was the best bred man in the world, and had entertained her so agreeably one night at the play, when happening to come into a box where she was with a lady of her acquaintance, that they did not mind a word the players said, he was so diverting.'

Sir Charles coldly answered, 'That Lord L. was a very pretty youth, and that he was intimately acquainted with him.'

'Oh then, cried Harriot, with a great deal of affected joy, I vow and protest you shall bring him to see me.'

'Indeed you must excuse me madam,' said Sir Charles, with some quickness.

Harriot, concluding her stratagem⁴⁵ had taken effect, was quite transported, and renewed her attacks, determined to make him suffer as much as possible; but the young baronet, whose thoughts were full of Sophia, and whose emotion at the request Harriot had made him, was occasioned by fears very different from those she suspected, took no further notice of what she said, but interrupted her to ask how old her sister Sophia was?

'I dare engage, replied Harriot, you would never have supposed her to be younger than I am.'

The baronet smiled, and looking at his watch, seemed surprised that it was so late, and took his leave.

Miss Darnley following him to the door of the room, cried, 'Remember I lay my commands upon you to bring my Lord L. to see me.'

Sir Charles answered her no otherwise than by a low bow, and she returned, delighted at the parting pang which she supposed she had given him. Vanity is extremely ingenious in procuring gratifications for itself. Harriot did not doubt but that she had tormented Sir Charles sufficiently; and it was the unshaken confidence which she had in the power of her charms, that hindered her from discovering the true cause of the new disgust she had conceived for her sister. However, it was so

⁴³ A man of noble birth or rank; a male peer ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), "nobleman, n.").

⁴⁴ A formal or high-flown expression of praise; a eulogy, panegyric ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), "encomiums, n.").

⁴⁵ An artifice in war; a trick by which an enemy is deceived ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "stratagem, n.s.").

great that she could scarcely speak to her civilly, or endure her in her sight: yet she found an increase of pleasure in talking to her mother when she was present of the violent passion Sir Charles Stanley had for her, and in giving an exaggerated account of the professions he made her.

Sophia did not listen to this sort of discourse with her usual complaisance⁴⁶. Her mind became insensibly more disposed to suspect the sincerity of the baronet's passion for her sister: she grew pensive and melancholy, sought solitude more than ever, and loved reading less.

This change, which her own innocence hid from herself, was quickly perceived by Mr. Herbert, who loved her with a parent's fondness, and thought nothing indifferent which concerned her. He took occasion one day to mention Sir Charles Stanley to her, and asked her opinion of his person and understanding, keeping his eyes fixed upon her at the same time, which disconcerted her so much that she blushed; and though she commended him greatly, yet it was easy to discover that she forbore to say all the good she thought of him, for fear of saying too much.

Mr. Herbert no longer doubted but this dangerous youth had made an impression on the innocent heart of Sophia, which was still ignorant of its own emotions.

He had perceived for some time that Sir Charles had changed the object of his pursuits: his visits now were always short, unless Sophia was in the way: he brought her all the new books and pamphlets that came out which were worth her reading: he adopted the purity and delicacy of her sentiments, declared himself always of the side she espoused: he talked of virtue like a man who loved and practised it, and set all his good qualities in the fairest light: he presented Harriot from time to time with fashionable trifles⁴⁷, and sent Sophia books enough to furnish out a little library, consisting of the best authors, in English, French, and Italian, all elegantly bound, with proper cases for their reception: he praised whatever she approved, and appeared to have great respect and consideration for Mr. Herbert, because he observed she loved and esteemed him.

That faithful friend of the virtuous Sophia trembled for her danger, when he considered that by this artful management the baronet was strengthening himself every day in her good opinion, and seducing her affections under the appearance of meriting her friendship; yet he did not think it proper to give her even a hint of her situation. A young maid has passed over the first bounds of reservedness who allows herself to think she is in love.

Mr. Herbert would not familiarize her with so dangerous an idea: he knew her extreme modesty, her solid virtue; he was under no apprehensions that she would ever act unworthy of her character; but a heart so nicely sensible, so delicately tender as hers, he knew must suffer greatly from a disappointed passion; and this was what he wanted to prevent, not by wounding her delicacy with suggesting to her that she was in love, but by preserving her from the encroachments of that passion.

⁴⁶ Civility; desire of pleasing; act of adulation ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "complaisance, n.s.").

⁴⁷ To indulge light amusement ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "trifle, v.n.").

He reminded her of the design she had formerly mentioned to him of entering into the service of a lady, and was rejoiced to find that she still continued her resolution. Harriot's natural insolence and ill temper, irritated by the change she now plainly saw in Sir Charles, made home so disagreeable to Sophia, that she wished impatiently for an opportunity of providing for herself, that she might no longer live upon the bounty of her sister, who often insinuated that their mother's annuity was her gift.

Mr. Herbert, who had other reasons besides those she urged, from freeing her from so uneasy a dependance, promised to be diligent in his enquiries for something that would suit her.

Neither Mrs. Darnley nor Harriot opposed this design, which soon came to the knowledge of Sir Charles, who had bribed a servant of the family to give him intelligence of every thing that passed in it.

Impatient to prevent the execution of it, and tortured by the bare apprehension of Sophia's absence, he resolved to break through that constraint he had so long laid upon himself, and acquaint her with his passion.

But it was not easy to find an opportunity of speaking to her alone. At length having contrived to get Harriot engaged to a play, and prevailed upon a maiden kinswoman of his to invite Mrs. Darnley to a party of whist, he went to the house at his usual hour of visiting this little family, and found Sophia at home, and without any company.

Not all the confidence he derived from his rank and fortune, his fine understanding; and those personal graces which gave him but too much merit in the eyes of many women, could hinder him from trembling at the thought of that declaration he was about to make. As soon as he came into Sophia's presence he was awed, disconcerted, and unable to speak; such was the power of virtue, and such the force of a real passion! Two or three times he resolved to begin, but when he looked upon Sophia, and saw in her charming eyes that sparkling intelligence which displayed the treasures of the soul that animated them; when he observed the sweet severity of her modest countenance, the composed dignity of her behaviour, he durst not own a passion which had views less pure than the perfect creature that inspired it.

His conversation for near an hour was so confused, so disjointed, and interrupted by such frequent musings, that Sophia was amazed, and thought it so disagreeable, and unlike what it used to be, that she was not sorry when he seemed disposed to put an end to his visit.

Sir Charles indeed rose up to be gone, but with so deep a concern in his eyes as increased Sophia's perplexity. She attended him respectfully to the door of the room, when he suddenly turning back, and taking her hand, 'Do not hate me, said he, nor think ill of me, if I tell you that I love and adore you.'

Sophia, in the utmost confusion at such a speech, disengaged her hand from his, and retiring a few steps back, bent her eyes on the ground, and continued silent.

Sir Charles, emboldened ⁴⁸by her confusion, made a tender, and at the same time respectful declaration of the passion he had long felt for her.

Sophia, not willing to hear him enlarge upon this subject, raised her eyes from the ground, her cheeks were indeed overspread with blushes, but there was a grave composure in her looks that seemed a bad omen to Sir Charles.

‘I have hitherto flattered myself, sir, said she, that you entertained a favourable opinion of me, how happens it then that I see myself to-day exposed to your raillery⁴⁹?’

The baronet was beginning a thousand protestations, but Sophia stopt him short. ‘If your professions to me are sincere, said she, what am I to think of those you made to my sister?’

Sir Charles expected this retort, and was the less perplexed by it, as he needed only to follow the dictates of truth to form such an answer as was proper to be given. ‘I acknowledge, said he, that I admired your sister, and her beauty made as strong an impression upon me as mere beauty can make upon a man who has a taste for higher excellencies. I sought Miss Darnley’s acquaintance. I was so happy as to do her some little service. I wished to find in her those qualities that were necessary to fix my heart—Pardon my freedom, Miss Sophia, the occasion requires that I should speak freely. Miss Darnley, upon a nearer acquaintance, did not answer the idea I had formed to myself of a woman whom I could love for life; and the professions I made her, as you are pleased to call them, were no more than expressions of gallantry⁵⁰; a sort of homage⁵¹ which beauty, even when it does not touch the heart, exacts from the tongue. My heart was not so easy a conquest—tell me not of raillery, when I declare that none but yourself was ever capable of inspiring me with a real passion.’

The arrival of Mr. Herbert proved a grateful interruption to Sophia, in whose innocent breast the tenderness and apparent sincerity of this declaration raised emotions which she knew not how to disguise.

Sir Charles, though grieved at this unseasonable visit, yet withdrew, not wholly despairing of success. He had heedfully⁵² observed the changes in Sophia’s face while he was speaking, and thought he had reason to hope that he was not indifferent to her. Loving her as he did with excessive tenderness, what pure and unmixed satisfaction would this thought have given him, had he not been conscious that his designs were unworthy of her! The secret upbraidings⁵³ of his conscience

⁴⁸ To render bold or more bold; to hearten, encourage ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), “embolden, n.”).

⁴⁹ Slight satire; satirical merriment ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “raillery, n.s.”).

⁵⁰ Splendour of appearance; show; magnificence; glittering grandeur; ostentatious finery ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “gallantry, n.s.”).

⁵¹ To reverence by external action; to pay honour to; to profess fealty ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “homage, v.a.”).

⁵² Attentively; carefully, cautiously ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “heedfully, adj.”).

⁵³ Reproachful, reproving ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), “upbraiding, adj..”).

disquieted him amidst all his flattering hopes of success; but custom, prejudice, the insolence of fortune, and the force of example, all conspired to suppress the pleadings of honour and justice in favour of the amiable Sophia, and fixed him in the barbarous resolution of attempting to corrupt that virtue which made her so worthy of his love.

Mr. Herbert having, as has been already mentioned, interrupted the conversation between Sir Charles and Sophia, was not surprised at the young baronet's abrupt departure, as he seemed preparing to go when he came in; but upon looking at Sophia, he perceived so many signs of confusion and perplexity in her countenance, that he did not doubt but the discourse which his entrance had put an end to, was a very interesting one. He waited a moment, in expectation that she would open herself to him, but finding that she continued silent and abashed, he gently took her hand, and looking tenderly upon her, 'Tell me, my child, said he, has not something extraordinary happened, which occasions this confusion I see you in?'

'Sir Charles has indeed been talking to me, replied Sophia blushing, in a very extraordinary manner, and such as I little expected.'

Mr. Herbert pressed her to explain herself, and she gave him an exact account of Sir Charles's discourse to her, without losing a word; so faithful had her memory been to all he said.

Mr. Herbert listened to her attentively, and found something so like candor⁵⁴ and sincerity in the baronet's declaration, that he could not help being pleased with it. He had never indeed judged favourably of his views upon Harriot, but here the case was very different.

Harriot's ignorance, vanity, and eager desire of being admired, exposed her to the attacks of libertinism⁵⁵, and excited presumptuous hopes.

Sophia's good sense, modesty, and virtue, placed her out of the reach of temptation. No one could think it surprising that a man of sense should make the fortune of a woman who would do honour to his choice, and where there was such exalted merit as in Sophia, overlook the disparity of circumstances.

But justly might it be called infatuation and folly⁵⁶, to raise to rank and affluence a woman of Harriot's despicable turn; to make a companion for life of a handsome idiot, who thought the highest excellencies of the female character were to know how to dress, to dance, to sing, to flutter in a drawing-room, or coquet at a play; who mistook pertness for wit, confidence for knowledge, and insolence for dignity.

While he was revolving these thoughts in his mind, Sophia looked earnestly at him, pleased to observe that what the baronet had said seemed worthy his consideration.

⁵⁴ Sweetness of temper; purity of mind; openness; ingenuity; kindness ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "candour, n.s.").

⁵⁵ Irreligion; licentiousness of opinions and practice ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "libertinism, n.s.").

⁵⁶ Criminal weakness; depravity of mind ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "folly, n.s.").

Mr. Herbert, who read in her looks that she wished to have his advice on this occasion, but would not ask it, lest she should seem to lay any stress upon Sir Charles's declaration, told her it was very possible the baronet was sincere in what he had said to her; that his manner of accounting for his quitting her sister, was both sensible and candid; that she ought not to be surprised at the preference he gave her over Miss Darnley, since she deserved it by the care she had taken to improve her mind, and to acquire qualities which might procure her the esteem of all wise and virtuous persons.

He warned her, however, not to trust too much to favourable appearances, nor to suffer her inclinations to be so far engaged by the agreeable person and specious⁵⁷ behaviour of Sir Charles Stanley, as to find it painful to renounce him, if he should hereafter⁵⁸ shew himself unworthy of her good opinion.

He advised her, when he talked to her in the same strain again, to refer him to her mother and to him for an answer; and told her that he would save her the confusion and perplexity of acquainting her mother and sister with what had happened, by taking that task upon himself.

You will, no doubt, added he, be exposed to some sallies⁵⁹ of ill temper from Miss Darnley, for robbing her of a lover; for envy is more irreconcilable than hatred: but let not your sensibility suffer much on her account: if you deprive her of a lover, you do not deprive her of one she loves: she is too vain, too volatile, and too greedy of general admiration, to be affected with the loss of Sir Charles, any farther than as her pride is wounded by it: and one would imagine she had foreseen this desertion, by the pains she has taken about a new conquest lately.

Mr. Herbert was going on, when Mrs. Darnley knocked at the door. Sophia, in extreme agitation, begged him to say nothing concerning Sir Charles that evening. He promised her he would not, and they all three conversed together upon indifferent things, till Harriot returned from the play.

Mr. Herbert then took leave of them, after inviting himself to breakfast the next morning; which threw Sophia into such terror and confusion, that she retired hastily to her own room, to conceal her disorder.

Mr. Herbert came the next morning, according to his promise; and Sophia, all trembling with her apprehensions, retired immediately after breakfast. He entered upon the business that had brought him thither⁶⁰; but sensible that what he had to say would prove extremely mortifying to miss Harriot, he thought it not amiss to sweeten the bitter pill he was preparing for her, by sacrificing a little flattery to her pride.

⁵⁷ Showy; pleasing to the view ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "specious, adj.").

⁵⁸ In time to come; in futurity ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "hereafter, adj.").

⁵⁹ An issue forth, a sudden rush ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), "sally, n.").

⁶⁰ To that end; to that point ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "thither, adj.").

You fine ladies, said he, addressing himself to her with a smile, are never weary of extending your conquests; but you use your power with so much tyranny, that it is not surprising some of your slaves should assume courage, at last, to break your chains. Do you know, my pretty cousin, that you have lost Sir Charles Stanley; and that he has offered that heart, which you no doubt have despised, to your sister Sophia?

Miss Darnley, who had bridled⁶¹ up at the beginning of this speech, lost all her assumed dignity towards the end of it: her face grew pale and red by turns; she fixed her eyes on the ground, her bosom heaved with the violence of her agitations, and tears, in spite of her, were ready to force their way.

Sir Charles had indeed for a long time discontinued his addresses to her, and had suffered his inclination for her sister to appear plainly enough; but still her vanity suggested to her, that this might be all a feint⁶², and acted only with a view to alarm her fears, and oblige her to sacrifice all her other admirers to him.

What Mr. Herbert had said therefore, struck her at first with astonishment and grief; but solicitous to maintain the fancied superiority of her character, she endeavoured to repress her emotions; and taking the hint which he had designedly thrown out to her to save her confusion,

Sir Charles has acted very wisely, said she, putting on a scornful look, to quit me, who always despised him, for one who has been so little used to have lovers, that she will be ready to run mad with joy at the thoughts of such a conquest: but after all, she has only my leavings.

Mr. Herbert, though a little shocked at the grossness⁶³ of her language, replied gravely, ‘However that may be, Miss, it is certain that he has made a very open, and to all appearance, sincere declaration of love to Miss Sophia, who, not knowing how to mention this affair to her mother herself, commissioned me to acquaint her with it, that she may have her directions how to behave to Sir Charles, and what to say to him.’

‘One would have imagined, interrupted Miss Darnley eagerly, that she who sets up for so much wit, and reads so many books, might have known what to say to him.’

‘Pray, Miss, said Mr. Herbert, what would you have had her say to Sir Charles?’

‘Why truly, replied she, I think she ought to have told him that he was very impertinent, and have shewn him the door.’

⁶¹ A restraint; curb; a check ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “bridle, n.s.”).

⁶² A false appearance; an offer of something not intended to be ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “Feint, n.s.”).

⁶³ Want of refinement; want of delicacy; intellectual coarseness ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “grossness, n.s.”).

'Sure, Harriot, said Mrs. Darnley, who had been silent all this time, You forget that Sir Charles is our benefactor, and that I am obliged to him for all the little support I have.'

'It is not likely I should forget it, retorted Miss Darnley, since I am the person who am most obliged to him for what he has done; if I mistake not, it was upon my account that he interested himself in our affairs.'

'Well, well, Harriot, replied Mrs. Darnley, I have been told this often enough; but why should you be angry at this prospect of your sister's advancement?'

'I angry at her advancement, madam! exclaimed Miss Harriot, not I really: I wish the girl was provided for by a suitable match with all my heart; but as for Sir Charles, I would not have her set her foolish heart upon him; he is only laughing at her.'

'It may be so, said Mr. Herbert, though I think Miss Sophia the last woman in the world whom a man would chuse to laugh at. However, this affair is worth a little consideration—Miss Sophia, madam, pursued he, addressing himself to Mrs. Darnley, intends to refer Sir Charles entirely to you. You will be the best judge whether the passion he professes is sincere, and his intentions honourable; and I can answer for my young cousin, that she will be wholly governed by your advice, since it is impossible that you can give her any but what is most advantageous to her honour and happiness.'

Harriot, no longer able to suppress her rage and envy, was thrown so far off her guard as to burst into tears. 'I cannot bear to be thus insulted, cried she; and I declare if Sir Charles is permitted to go on with his foolery with that vain girl, I will quit the house.'

'Was there ever any one so unreasonable as you are, Miss, said Mr. Herbert, have you not owned that you despised Sir Charles; and if your sister is a vain girl, will she not be sufficiently mortified by accepting your leavings, as you said just now?'

'I am speaking to my mother, sir, replied Harriot, with a contemptuous frown; depend upon it, Madam, pursued she, that I will not stay to be sacrificed to Mr. Herbert's favourite—either she shall be forbid to give Sir Charles any encouragement, who after all, is only laughing at her, or I will leave the house.'

Saying this, she flung out of the room, leaving her mother divided between anger and grief, and Mr. Herbert motionless with astonishment.

[To be continued.]

INSTALLMENT 2

MR. Herbert having recovered from the astonishment into which he had been thrown by the strange behaviour of Miss Darnley, endeavoured to comfort her mother, whose weak mind was more disposed to be alarmed at the threat she had uttered upon her quitting the room, than to resent such an insult to parental tenderness.

After gently insinuating to her, that she ought to reduce her eldest daughter to reason, by a proper exertion of her authority, he earnestly recommended to her to be particularly attentive to an affair which concerned the happiness of her youngest child, from whose piety and good sense she might promise herself so much comfort.

He advised her to give Sir Charles Stanley an opportunity of explaining himself to her as soon as possible; and to make him comprehend, that he must not hope for permission to pay his addresses to Sophia, till he had satisfied her that his intentions were such, as she ought to approve.

Mrs. Darnley appeared so docile and complaisant upon this occasion, so ready to take advice, and so fully determined to be directed by it, that Mr. Herbert went away extremely well satisfied with her behaviour, and full of pleasing hopes for his beloved Sophia.

Harriot, in the mean time, was tormenting her sister above stairs: she had entered her room with a heart full of bitterness, and a countenance inflamed with rage, flinging the door after her with such violence, that Sophia letting fall her book, started up in great terror, and in a trembling accent asked her what was the matter with her?

Her own apprehensions had indeed already suggested to her the cause of the disorder she appeared to be in, which it was not easy to discover in that torrent⁶⁴ of reproach and invective with which she strove to overwhelm her. Scornful and unjust reflections upon her person, bitter jests upon her pedantick⁶⁵ affectation, and malignant insinuations of hypocrisy, were all thrown out with the utmost incoherence of passion; to which Sophia answered no otherwise than by a provoking serenity of countenance and calm attention.

That she was able to bear with so much moderation the cruel insults of her sister, was not more the effect of her natural sweetness of temper, than her good sense and delicate turn of mind. The upper region of the air, says a sensible French writer, admits neither clouds nor tempests; the thunder, storms, and meteors, are formed below: such is the difference between a mean, and an exalted understanding.

Harriot, who did not find her account in this behaviour, sought to rouse her to rage by reproaches still more severe, till having ineffectually railed⁶⁶ herself out of breath, she awkwardly imitated her sister's composure, folded her hands before her, and seating herself, asked her in a low but solemn tone of voice, whether she would deign to answer her one plain question?

Sophia then resuming her seat, told her with a look of mingled dignity and sweetness, that she was ready to answer her any question, and give her any satisfaction she could desire, provided she would repress those indecent transports of anger, so unbecoming her sex and years.

⁶⁴ Rolling in a rapid stream ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "torrent, adj.").

⁶⁵ Awardkly ostentatious of learning ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#). "pedantic, adj.").

⁶⁶ To complain about something/somebody in a very angry way ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), "rail, v.").

Why, you little envious creature, said Harriot, you do not surely, because you are two or three years younger than I am, pretend to insinuate that I am old?

No certainly, replied Sophia, half smiling, my meaning is, that you are too young to adopt, as you do, all the peevishness of old age; but your question sister, pursued she—

Well then, said Harriot, I ask you, how you have dared to say that Sir Charles Stanley was tired of me, and preferred you to me?

Tired of you! repeated Sophia, shocked at her coarseness and falshood, I never was capable of making use of such an expression, nor do I familiarise myself with ideas that need such strange language to convey them.

Harriot provoked almost to frenzy by this hint, which her indiscreet conduct made but too just, shew down stairs to her mother, and with mingled sobs and exclamations, told her, that Sophia had treated her like an infamous creature, who had dishonoured herself and her family.

Mrs. Darnley, though more favourably disposed towards her youngest daughter, since she had been made acquainted with the baronet's affection for her, yet was on this occasion governed by her habitual preference of Harriot; and sending for Sophia, she reproved her with great asperity⁶⁷ for her insolent behaviour to her sister.

Sophia listened with reverence to her mother's reproofs; and after justifying herself, as she easily might, from the accusation her sister had brought against her, she added, that not being willing to be exposed to any farther persecutions on account of Sir Charles Stanley, whose sincerity she thought very doubtful, she was resolved not to wait any longer for a place such as Mr. Herbert's tenderness was in search of for her, but to accept the first reputable one that offered.

'I have not the vanity, madam, pursued she, to imagine that a man of rank and fortune can seriously resolve to marry an indigent young woman like me; and although I am humble enough to go to service, I am too proud to listen to the addresses of any man who, from his superiority of fortune, thinks he has a right to keep me in doubt of his intentions, or, in a mean dependance upon a resolution which he has not perhaps regard enough for me to make.'

This discourse was not at all relished by Mrs. Darnley, who conceived that many inconveniences were to be submitted to, for the enjoyment of affluence and pleasure; but Sophia, who had revolved in her mind all the mortifications a young woman is exposed to, whose poverty places her so greatly below her lover; that she is to consider his professions as an honour, and to be rejoiced at every indication of his sincerity; her delicacy was so much wounded by the bare apprehension of suffering what she thought an indignity to her sex, that she was determined to give Sir Charles Stanley no encouragement, but to pursue her first design of seeking a decent establishment, suitable to the depress'd state of her fortune.

⁶⁷ Unevenness; roughness of surface ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "asperity, n.s.").

Mrs. Darnley, however, combatted her resolution with arguments which she supposed absolutely conclusive, and added to them her commands not to think any more of so humiliating a design, which so offended Harriot, that she broke out again into tears, exclamations, and reproaches.

Her mother would have found it a difficult task to have pacified her, had not a message from a lady, inviting her to a concert that evening, obliged her to calm her mind, that her complexion might not suffer from those emotions of rage which she had hitherto taken so little pains to repress.

As soon as Harriot retired, to begin the labours of the toilet, Mrs. Darnley, with great mildness, represented to Sophia, that it was her duty to improve the affection Sir Charles express'd for her, since by that means it might be in her power to make her mother and her sister easy in their circumstances, and engage their love for ever.

This was attacking Sophia on her weak side; she answered with the softest tenderness of look and accent, 'That it was her highest ambition to make them happy.'

'Then I do not doubt, my child, said Mrs. Darnley, but you will employ all your good sense to secure the conquest you have made.'

Sophia, melted almost to tears by these tender expressions, to which she had been so little used, assured her mother she would upon this occasion act so as to deserve her kindness.

Mrs. Darnley would have been better pleased if she had been less reserved, and had appeared more affected with the fine prospect that was opening for her; but it was not possible to press her farther. Nature here had transferred the parent's rights to the child, and the gay, imprudent ambitious mother, stood awed and abashed⁶⁸, in the presence of her worthier daughter.

Sophia, who expected Sir Charles would renew his visit in the evening, past the rest of the day in uneasy perturbations⁶⁹. He entered the house just at the time that Harriot, who had ordered a chair to be got for her, came fluttering down the stairs in full dress. As soon as she perceived him her cheeks glowed with resentment; but affecting a careless inattention, she shot by him with a half courtesy, and made towards the door: he followed, and accosting her with a grave but respectful air, desired she would permit him to lead her to her chair. Harriot, conveying all the scorn into her face which the expression of her pretty but unmeaning features were capable of, and rudely drawing away her hand, 'Pray, Sir, said she, carry your *devores* where they will be more acceptable; I am not disposed to be jested with any longer.'

⁶⁸ To put into confusion; to make ashamed. It generally implies a sudden impression of shame ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), abash, v.a.").

⁶⁹ A cause or factor of disturbance or agitation ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), "perturbation, n.").

Sir Charles, half smiling and bowing low, told her, that he respected her too much, as well upon her own account as upon Miss Sophia's, for whom indeed he had the most tender regard, to be guilty of the impertinence she accused him of.

Harriot did not stay to hear more: offended in the highest degree at the manner in which he mentioned Sophia, she darted an angry look at him, and flung herself into her chair.

It must be confessed that Sir Charles discovered upon this occasion a great share of that easy confidence which people are apt to derive from splendid fortunes and undisputed rank; but as he wanted neither good sense, generosity, nor even delicacy, he would have found it difficult to own to a lady whom he had been used to address in the style of a lover, that his heart had received a new impression, if the contemptible character of Harriot had not authorised his desertion of her. Pride, ignorance, folly, and affectation, sink a woman so low in the eyes of men, that they easily dispense with themselves from a strict observance of those delicate attentions, and respectful regards, which the sex in general claim by the laws of politeness, but which sense and discernment never pay to the trifling part of it.

Sir Charles was likewise glad of an opportunity to shew Miss Darnley, that he did not think the little gallantry which had passed between them, entitled her to make him any reproaches; or to consider the passion he professed for her sister as an infidelity to her; and now finding himself more at ease from the frank acknowledgment he had made, he sent up his name, and was received by Mrs. Darnley with all the officious civility she was used to shew him.

Sophia was in the room, and rose up at his entrance in a sweet confusion, which she endeavoured to conceal, by appearing extremely busy at a piece of needle-work.

Sir Charles, after some trifling conversation with her mother, approached her, and complimented her with an easy air upon her being so usefully employed, when most other young ladies were abroad in search of amusement.

Sophia, who was now a little recovered, answered him with that wit and vivacity which was so natural to her; but looking up at the same time, she saw his eyes fixed upon her with a look so tender and passionate, as threw her back into all her former confusion, which increased every moment by the consciousness that it was plain to his observation.

The young baronet, though he was charmed with her amiable modesty, yet endeavoured to relieve the concern he saw her under, by talking of indifferent matters, till Mrs. Darnley seeing them engaged in discourse, prudently withdrew, when he instantly addressed her in language more tender and particular.

Sophia, shocked at her mother's indiscretion, and at his taking advantage of it so abruptly, let all the weight of her resentment fall on him; and the poor lover was so awed at her frowns, and the

sarcastic raillery⁷⁰ which she mingled with expressions that shewed the most invincible indifference, that not daring to continue a discourse which offended her, and in too great concern to introduce another subject, he stood fixed in silence for several minutes, leaning on the back of her chair, while she plied her needle with the most earnest attention, and felt her confusion decrease in proportion as his became more apparent.

At length he walked slowly to the other end of the room, and taking up a new book which he had sent her a few days before, he asked her opinion of it in a faltering accent; and was extremely mortified to find she was so much at ease, as to answer him, with all the readiness of wit and clearness of judgment imaginable.

Another pause of silence ensued, during which Sophia heard him sigh softly several times, while he turned over the leaves of the book with such rapidity as shewed he scarce read a single line in any page of it.

He was thus employed when Mrs. Darnley returned, who stood staring first at one, then at the other, strangely perplexed at their looks and silence, and apprehensive that all was not right. Sophia now took an opportunity to retire, and met an angry glance from her mother as she passed by her.

Her departure roused Sir Charles out of his revery⁷¹, he looked after her, and then turning to Mrs. Darnley, overcame his discontent so far as to be able to entertain her a quarter of an hour with his usual politeness; and finding Sophia did not appear again, he took his leave.

As soon as he was gone Mrs. Darnley called her daughter, and chid⁷² her severely for her rudeness in leaving the baronet.

Sophia defended herself as well as she could, without owning the true cause of her disgust, which was her mother's so officiously quitting the room; but Mrs. Darnley was so ill satisfied with her behaviour, that she complained of it to her friend Mr. Herbert, who came in soon afterwards, telling him that Sophia's pride and ill temper would be the ruin of her fortune.

The good man having heard the story but one way, thought Sophia a little to blame, till having an opportunity to discourse with her freely, he found the fault she had been charged with, was no more than an excess of delicacy, which was very pardonable in her situation: he warned her, however, not to admit too readily apprehensions injurious to herself, which was in some degree debasing the dignity of her sex and character; but to make the baronet comprehend that esteeming him as a man of honour, she considered his professions of regard to her as a claim upon her gratitude; and that, in consequence, she should without any reluctance receive the commands of her mother, and the advice of her friends in his favour.

⁷⁰ Satire; satirical merriment ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "raillery, n.s.").

⁷¹ Loose musing; irregular thought ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "reverie, n.s.").

⁷² To give loud of impassioned utterance to anger, displeasure, disapprobation, reproof ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), "chide, v.").

Poor Sophia found herself but too well disposed to think favourably of Sir Charles; her tenderness had suffered greatly by the force she had put upon herself to behave to him in so disobliging a manner, and the uneasiness she saw him under, his silence, and confusion, and the sighs that escaped him, apparently without design, had affected her sensibly, and several days passing away without his appearing again, she concluded he was irrecoverably prejudiced against her; the uneasiness this thought gave her, first hinted to herself the impression he had already made on her heart.

Sir Charles indeed had been so much piqued⁷³ by her behaviour as to form the resolution of seeing her no more; but when he supposed himself most capable of persisting in this resolution, he was nearest breaking through it, and suddenly yielding to the impulse of his tenderness, he flew to her again more passionate than ever; this little absence having only served to shew him how necessary she was to his happiness.

When Sophia saw him enter the room, the agitations of her mind might be easily read in her artless countenance; a sentiment of joy for his return gave new fire to her eyes, and vivacity to her whole person; while a consciousness of the effect his presence produced, and a painful doubt of his sincerity, and the rectitude of his intentions, alternately dyed her cheeks with blushes and paleness.

The young baronet approached her trembling, but the unexpected softness with which she received him, increasing at once his passion and his hopes, he poured out his whole soul in the tenderest and most ardent professions of love, esteem, and admiration of her.

Sophia listened to him with a complaisant attention; and having had sufficient time, while he was speaking, to compose and recollect herself; she told him, in a modest but firm accent, that she was obliged to him for the favourable opinion he entertained of her; but that she did not think herself at liberty to hear, much less to answer to such discourse as he had thought proper to address to her, till she had the sanction of her mother's consent, and Mr. Herbert's approbation, whose truly parental regard for her, made her look upon him as another father, who supplied the place of him she had lost.

Sir Charles, more charmed with her than ever, was ready in his present flow of tender sentiments for her, to offer her his hand with an unreservedness that would have satisfied all her delicate scruples; but carried away by the force of habit, an insurmountable aversion to marriage, and the false but strongly impressed notion of refinements in a union of hearts, where love was the only tie, he could not resolve to give her a proof of his affection, which in his opinion was the likeliest way to destroy all the ardor of it; but careful not to alarm her, and apprehending no great severity of morals from the gay interested mother, he politely thanked her for the liberty she gave him to make his passion known to Mrs. Darnley, and to solicit her consent to his happiness.

Sophia observed with some concern, that he affected to take no notice of Mr. Herbert upon this occasion; but she would not allow herself to dwell long upon a thought so capable of raising doubts injurious to his honour; and satisfied with the frankness of his proceeding thus far, she suffered no marks of discontent or apprehension to appear in her countenance and behaviour.

⁷³ A strong passion ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "pique, n.s.").

Sir Charles did not fail to make such a general declaration of his sentiments to Mrs. Darnley as he thought sufficient to satisfy Sophia, without obliging himself to be more explicit; and in the mean time, having acquired a thorough knowledge of Mrs. Darnley's character, he sought to engage her in his interest by a boundless liberality, and by gratifying all those passions which make corruption easy. She loved dissipation; and all the pleasures and amusements that inventive luxury had found out to vary the short scene of life were at her command; she had a high taste for the pleasures of the table, and therefore the most expensive wines, and choicest delicacies that earth, sea, and air could afford, were constantly supplied by him in the greatest profusion. No day ever passed without her receiving some considerable present, the value of which was enhanced by the delicacy with which it was made.

The innocent Sophia construed all this munificence⁷⁴ into proofs of the sincerity of his affection for her; for the young baronet, whether awed by the dignity of her virtue, or that he judged it necessary to secure the success of his designs, mingled with the ardor of his professions, a behaviour so respectful and delicate, as removed all her apprehensions, and left her whole soul free to all the tender impressions a lively gratitude could make on it.

Mr. Herbert, however, easily penetrated into Sir Charles's views; he saw with pain the progress he made every day in the affection of Sophia; but by the speciousness of his conduct, he had established himself so firmly in her good opinion, that he judged any attempt to alarm her fears, while there seemed so little foundation for them, would miss its effect; and not doubting but ere it was long her own observation would furnish her with some cause for apprehension, he contented himself for the present with keeping a vigilant eye upon the conduct of Sir Charles and Mrs. Darnley, and with being ready to assist Sophia in her perplexities, whenever she had recourse to him.

The change there was now in the situation of this amiable girl, afforded him many opportunities of admiring the excellence of her character: she who formerly used to be treated with neglect and even harshness by her mother, was now distinguished with peculiar regard; her opinion always submitted to with deference, her inclinations consulted in all things, and a studious endeavour to please her was to be seen in every word and action of Mrs. Darnley's, who affected to be as partially fond of her as she had once been of her sister.

Even the haughty⁷⁵ insolent Harriot, keeping her rage and envy concealed in her own breast, condescended to wear the appearance of kindness to her, while she shared with her mother in all those gratifications which the lavish generosity of Sir Charles procured them, and which Sophia, still continuing her usual simplicity of life, could never be persuaded to partake of. Yet all this produced no alteration in Sophia; the same modesty and humility, the same sweetness of temper, and attention to oblige, distinguished her now as in her days of oppression.

Mr. Herbert contemplated her with admiration and delight, and often with astonishment reflected upon the infatuation of Sir Charles, who could allow himself to be so far governed by fashionable prejudices, and a libertine turn of mind, as to balance one moment whether he should give himself a lawful claim to the affections of such a woman.

⁷⁴ Liberality; the act of giving ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "munificence, n.s.").

⁷⁵ Proud; lofty; insolent; arrogant; contemptuous. ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "haughty, adj.").

Affairs continued in this state during three months, when the good old man, who watched over his young favourite with all the pious⁷⁶ solicitude of her guardian angel, perceived that she was grown more melancholy and reserved than usual; he often heard her sigh, and fancied she had been weeping, and her fine eyes would appear sometimes suffused⁷⁷ with tears, even when she endeavoured to appear most chearful.

He imagined that she had something upon her mind which she wished to disclose to him; her looks seemed to intimate as much, and she frequently sought opportunities of being alone with him, and engaged him to pass those evenings with her when her mother and sister were at any of the public entertainments. Yet all those times, though her heart seemed labouring with some secret uneasiness which she would fain⁷⁸ impart to him, she had not resolution enough to enter into any explanation.

Mr. Herbert, who could have wished she had been more communicative, resolved at length to spare her any farther struggles with herself; and one day when he was alone with her, taking occasion to observe that she was not so chearful as usual, he asked her tenderly if any thing had happened to give her uneasiness; speak freely my child, said he to her, and think you are speaking to a father.

Sophia made no other answer at first than by bursting into tears, which seeming to relieve her a little; she raised her head, and looking upon the good man, who beheld her with a fixed attention. ‘May I hope sir: said she, that you are still disposed to fulfil the kind promise you once made me—Oh take me from hence, pursued she, relapsing into a new passion of tears, place me in the situation to which my humble lot has called me; save me from the weakness of my own heart—I now see plainly the delusion into which I have fallen; but, alas! my mother does not see it—every thing here conspires against my peace.’

[To be continued.]

INSTALLMENT 3

SOPHIA, as if afraid she had said too much, stopped abruptly, and, fixing her eyes on the ground, continued silent, and lost in thought.

Mr. Herbert, who had well considered the purport⁷⁹ of her words, passed over what he thought would give her too much pain to be explicite⁸⁰ upon, and answered in great concern, ‘Then my fears are true: Sir Charles is not disposed to act like a man of honour.’

⁷⁶ Careful of the duties owed by created beings to God; godly; religious; such as is due to sacred things ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “pious, adj.”).

⁷⁷ To spread over with something expansible, as with a vapour or a tincture ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “suffuse, v.a.”).

⁷⁸ Forced; obliged; compelled ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “fain, adj.”).

⁷⁹ “Design; tendency of a writing or discourse”. ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “purport, n.s.”).

⁸⁰ Unfolded; plain; clear; not obscure; not merely implied. ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “explicit, adj.”).

A sudden blush glowed in the cheeks of Sophia at the mention of Sir Charles's name; but it was not a blush of softness and confusion. Anger and disdain took the place of that sweet complacency, which was the usual expression of her countenance⁸¹, and with a voice somewhat raised, she replied eagerly.

'Sir Charles I believe has deceived me; but him I can despise—Yet do not imagine, Sir, that he has dared to insult me by any unworthy proposals: if he has any unjustifiable views upon me, he has not had presumption enough to make me acquainted with them, otherwise than by neglecting to convince me that they are honourable; but he practises upon the easy credulity of my mother. He lays snares for her gratitude by an interested generosity, as I now too plainly perceive; and he has the art to make her so much his friend, that she will not listen to any thing I say, which implies the least doubt of his honour.'

Mr. Herbert sighed, and cast down his eyes. Sophia continued in great emotion: 'It is impossible for me, Sir, to make you comprehend all the difficulties of my situation. A man who takes every form to ensnare⁸² my affections, but none to convince my judgment, importunes me continually with declarations of tenderness, and complaints of my coldness and indifference; what can I do? what ought I to answer to such discourse? In this perplexity, why will not my mother come to my assistance? Her years, her authority as a parent give her a right to require such an explanation from Sir Charles as may free me from doubts, which although reason suggests, delicacy permits me not to make appear; but such is my misfortune, that I cannot persuade my mother there is the least foundation for my fears. She is obstinate in her good opinion of Sir Charles; and I am reduced to the sad necessity of either acting in open contradiction to her sentiments and commands, or of continuing in a state of humiliating suspense⁸³, to which my character must at last fall a sacrifice.'

'That, my dear child, interrupted Mr. Herbert, is a point that ought to be considered. I would not mention it to you first; but since your own good sense has led the way to it, I will frankly own that I am afraid, innocent and good as you are, the censures of the world will not spare you, if you continue to receive Sir Charles's visits, doubtful as his intentions now appear to every one: I know Mrs. Darnley judges of the sincerity of his professions⁸⁴ to you by the generosity he has shewn in the presents he has heaped⁸⁵ upon her—but, my dear child, that generosity was always suspected by me.'

'I confess, said Sophia, blushing, I once thought favourably of him for the attention he shewed to make my mother's life easy; but if his liberality to her be indeed, as you seem to think, a snare, what opinion ought I to form of his motives for a late offer he has made her, and which at first dazzled me, so noble and so disinterested did it appear!'

⁸¹ "The form of the face; the system of the features." (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "countenance, n.s.").

⁸² To intrap; to catch in a trap, gin, or snare; to inveigle (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "insnare, v.a.").

⁸³ Uncertainty; delay of certainty or determination; indetermination (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "suspense, n.s.").

⁸⁴ The act of declaring one's self of any party or opinion. (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "profession, n.s.").

⁸⁵ Many single things thrown together; a pile; an accumulation (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "heap, n.s.").

'I know no offer but one, interrupted Mr. Herbert hastily, which you ought even to have listened to.'

'Then the secret admonitions of my heart were right,' cried Sophia, with an accent that at once expressed exultation and grief.

'But what was this offer, child, said Mr. Herbert? I am impatient to know it.'

'I will tell you the whole affair as it happened, resumed Sophia; but you must not be surprised, that my mother was pleased with Sir Charles's offer. He has been her benefactor, and has a claim to her regard: it would be strange if she had not a good opinion of him. You know what that celebrated divine says whose writings you have made me acquainted with: *Charity itself commands us where we know no ill, to think well of all; but friendship, that goes always a pitch higher, gives a man a peculiar right and claim to the good opinion of his friend.* My mother may be mistaken in the judgment she has formed of Sir Charles; but it is her friendship, for him, a friendship founded upon gratitude for the good offices he has done her, that has given rise to this mistake.'

Sophia, in her eagerness to justify her mother, forgot that she had raised Mr. Herbert's curiosity, and left it unsatisfied; and the good old man, charmed with the filial tenderness she shewed upon this occasion, listened to her with complacency, tho' not with conviction. At length she suddenly recollected herself, and entered upon her story; but a certain hesitation in her speech, accompanied with a bashful air that made her withdraw her eyes from him, to fix them on the ground, intimated plainly enough her own sentiments of the affair she was going to acquaint him with.

'You know, Sir, said she, Sir Charles has had a fit of illness lately, which alarmed all his friends. My mother was particularly attentive to him upon this occasion, and I believe he was sensibly affected with her kind concern for him. When he recovered, he begged my mother, my sister, and myself, would accompany him in a little excursion to Hampstead to take the air. We dined there, and returning home early in the evening, as we passed through Brookstreet, he ordered the coach to stop at the door of a very genteel house, which appeared to be newly painted and fitted up. Sir Charles desired us to go in with him and look at it, and give him our opinion of the furniture. Nothing could be more elegant and genteel⁸⁶, and we told him so; at which he appeared extremely pleased, for all had been done, he said, according to his directions.'

'He came home with us, and drank tea; after which he had a private conversation with my mother, which lasted about a quarter of an hour; and when they returned to the room in which they had left my sister and I, Sir Charles appeared to me to have an unusual thoughtfulness in his countenance, and my mother looked as if she had been weeping; yet there was, at the same time, an expression of satisfaction in her face.'

'He went away immediately; and my mother, when, eager to give vent to the emotions which filled her heart, exclaimed, Oh, Sophia, how much are you obliged to the generous affection of that man!'

⁸⁶ Polite; elegant in behaviour; civil (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "genteel, adj.").

'You may imagine, Sir, pursued Sophia, in a sweet confusion, that I was greatly affected with these words. I begged my mother to explain herself. Sir Charles, said she, has made you a present of that house which we went to view this afternoon; and here, added she, giving me a paper, is a deed by which he has settled three hundred pounds a year upon you.'

'I was silent, so was my sister, who looked at me as if impatient to know my thoughts of this extraordinary generosity. My thoughts indeed were so perplexed, my notions of this manner of acting so confused and uncertain, that I knew not what to say. My mother told us Sir Charles had declared to her, that his late illness had given him occasion for many uneasy reflections upon my account; that he shuddered with horror when he considered the unhappy state of my fortune, and to what difficulties I should have been exposed if he had died; and that, for the satisfaction of his own mind, he had made that settlement upon me, that whatever happened I might be out of the reach of necessity.'

'I am afraid, Sir, pursued Sophia with a little confusion in her countenance, that you will condemn me when I tell you I was so struck at first with the seeming candor and tenderness of Sir Charles's motives for this act of generosity, that none but the most grateful sentiments rose in my mind.'

'No, my dear, replied Mr. Herbert, I do not condemn you: this snare was artfully laid; but when was it that your heart, or rather your reason, gave you those secret admonitions you spoke of.'

'Immediately, said Sophia: a moment's reflection upon the conduct of Sir Charles served to shew me that some latent design lay concealed under this specious⁸⁷ offer; but I am obliged to my sister for giving me a more distinct notion of it than my own confused ideas could furnish me with.'

"Then you desired to know her opinion," said Mr. Herbert.

'Certainly, resumed Sophia, this conversation passed in her presence, and as my elder sister she had a right to be consulted.'

"Pray what did she say?" asked Mr. Herbert impatiently.

'You know, Sir, said Sophia, with a gentle smile, my sister takes every opportunity to rally me about my pretensions to wit: she told me it was great condescension in me, who thought myself wiser than all the world besides, to ask her advice upon this occasion; and that she would not expose herself to my contempt, by declaring her opinion any farther than that she supposed Sir Charles did not consider this as a marriage-settlement.'

'These last words, pursued Sophia, whose face was now covered with a deeper blush, let in so much light upon my mind, that I was ashamed and angry with myself for having doubted a moment of Sir Charles's insincerity. I thanked my sister, and told her she should see that I would profit by the hint she had given me.'

⁸⁷ Plausible; superficially, not solidly right; striking at first view (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "specious, adj.").

'I wish, interrupted Mr. Herbert, that she may profit as much by you; but people of good understanding learn more from the ignorant than the ignorant do from them, because the wise avoid the follies of fools, but fools will not follow the example of the wise: but what did Mrs. Darnley say to this?'

'I never saw her so angry with my sister before, replied Sophia: she said several severe things to her, which made her leave the room in great emotion; and when we were alone I endeavoured to convince my mother that it was not fit I should make myself a dependant upon Sir Charles, by accepting such considerable presents: she was however of a different opinion, because Sir Charles's behaviour had been always respectful in the highest degree to me, and because the manner in which he made this offer left no room to suspect that he had any other design in it but to secure a provision for me, in case any thing should happen to him.'

'Your mother imposes upon herself, replied Mr. Herbert; but I hope, my dear child, you think more justly.'

'You may judge of my sentiments, Sir, answered Sophia, by the resolution I have taken: I wished to consult you; but as I had no opportunity for it, I satisfied myself with doing what I thought you would approve. My mother, prest⁸⁸ by my arguments, told me in a peevish⁸⁹ way that I might act as I thought proper: upon which I retired, and, satisfied with this permission, I enclosed the settlement in a cover directed for Sir Charles. I had just sealed it, and was going to send it away, when my mother came into my room: I perceived she was desirous to renew the conversation about Sir Charles; but I carefully avoided it, for fear she should retract the permission she had given me to act as I pleased upon this occasion. My reserve piqued her so much, that she forbore⁹⁰ to enter upon the subject again; but as I had no opportunity of sending my letter that night without her knowledge, I was obliged to go to bed much richer than I desired to be; and the next morning, when we were at breakfast, a letter was brought me from Sir Charles, dated four o'clock, in which he informed me that he was just setting out in a post-chaise for Bath. His uncle, who lies there at the point of death, has it seems earnestly desired to see him, and the messenger told him he had not a minute to lose.'

'I am sorry, interrupted Mr. Herbert, that he did not get your letter before he went.'

Sophia then taking it out of her pocket, gave it to him, and begged he would contrive some way to have it safely delivered to Sir Charles; 'and now, added she, my heart is easy on that side, and I have nothing to do but to arm myself with fortitude to bear the tender reproaches of a mother whose anxiety for my interest makes her see this affair in a very different light from that in which you and I behold it.'

⁸⁸ Ready; not dilatory. This is said to have been the original sense of the word *prest men*; men, not forced into the service, as now we understand it, but men, for a certain sum received, *prest* or ready to march at command (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "prest, adj.>").

⁸⁹ Petulant; waspish; easily offended; irritable; irascible; soon angry; perverse; morose; querulous; full of expressions of discontent; hard to please (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "peevish, adj.>").

⁹⁰ To bear, endure, submit to (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, "forbear, v.>").

Mr. Herbert put the letter carefully into his pocket-book, and promised her it should be conveyed to Sir Charles; then taking her hand, which he press'd affectionately, 'You have another sacrifice yet to make, my dear good child, said he, and I hope it will not cost you much to make it. You must resolve to see Sir Charles no more: it is not fit you should receive his visits, since you suspect his designs are not honourable, and you have but too much cause for suspicion. It is not enough to be virtuous: we must appear so likewise; we owe the world a good example, the world, which oftener rewards the appearances of merit than merit itself. It will be impossible for you to avoid seeing Sir Charles sometimes, if you continue with your mother: you have no authority to forbid his visits here; and whether you share them or not, they will be all placed to your account. Are you willing, Miss Sophia, to go into the country, and I will board you in the family of a worthy clergyman, who is my friend? His wife and daughters will be agreeable companions for you; you will find books enough in his study to employ those hours which you devote to reading, and his conversation will be always a source of instruction and delight.'

Sophia, with tears in her eyes, and a look so expressive that it conveyed a stronger idea of the grateful sentiments which filled her heart, than any words could do, thanked the good old man for his generous offer, and told him she was ready to leave London whenever he pleased: but unwilling to be an incumbrance⁹¹ upon his little fortune, she intreated⁹² him to be diligent in his enquiries for a place for her, that she might early inure⁹³ herself to the humble condition which providence thought fit to allot for her.

Mr. Herbert entering into her delicate scruples, promised to procure her a proper establishment; and it was agreed between them that he should acquaint her mother the next day with the resolution she had taken, and endeavour to procure her consent to it.

Mr. Herbert well knew all the difficulties of this task, and prepared himself to sustain the storm which he expected would fall upon him. He visited Mrs. Darnley in the morning, and finding her alone, entered at once into the affair, by telling her that he had performed the commission Miss Sophia had given him; that a friend of his who was going to Bath would take care to deliver her letter to her unworthy lover, who, added he, will be convinced, by her returning his settlement, that she has a just notion of his base designs, and despises him as well for his falshood and presumption, as for the mean opinion he has entertained of her.

Mr. Herbert, who was perfectly well acquainted with Mrs. Darnley's character, and had studied his part, would not give her time to recover from the astonishment his first words had thrown her into, which was strongly impressed upon her countenance, and which seemed to deprive her of the power of speech; but added, with an air natural enough, 'Your conduct, Mrs. Darnley, deserves the highest praises; indeed I know not which to admire most; your disinterestedness, prudence, and judgment; or Miss Sophia's ready obedience, and the noble sacrifice she makes to her honour and

⁹¹ That which encumbers; a burden, impediment, 'dead weight'; a useless addition; in stronger sense, an annoyance, trouble ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), "encumbrance, n").

⁹² To petition; to sollicite; to importune ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "entreat, v.a.").

⁹³ To habituate; to make ready or willing by practice and custom; to accustom. It had anciently with before the thing practised, now to ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "inure, v.a.").

reputation. You knew her virtue might be securely depended upon, and you permitted her to act as she thought proper with regard to the insidious offer Sir Charles made her: thus, by transferring all the merit of a refusal to her, you reflect a double lustre upon your own, and she has fully answered your intentions by rejecting that offer with the contempt it deserved.'

While Mr. Herbert went on in this strain, Mrs. Darnley insensibly forgot her resentment; her features assumed all that complacency which gratified vanity and self-applause could impress upon them: and although she was conscious her sentiments were very different from those which Mr. Herbert attributed to her, yet, as she had really spoke those words to Sophia which had given her a pretence⁹⁴ to act as she had done, she concluded his praises were sincere, and enjoyed them as much as if she had deserved them.

It was her business now, however vexed at her daughter's folly, as she conceived it, to seem highly satisfied with her conduct, since what she had done could not be recalled; yet inwardly fretting at the loss of so noble a present, all her dissimulation could not hinder her from saying, that although she approved of Sophia's refusal, yet she could not help thinking she had been very precipitate, and that she ought to have waited till Sir Charles returned; and not have sent, but have given him back his settlement.

Mr. Herbert, without answering to that point, told her, that what now remained for her prudence to do was, to take away all foundation for slander, by peremptorily⁹⁵ forbidding Sir Charles's future visits. Here Mrs. Darnley began to frown; 'for, since it is plain to us all, madam, pursued he, without seeming to perceive her emotion, that marriage is not his intention, by being allowed to continue his addresses, miss Sophia's character will suffer greatly in the opinion of the world; and the wisdom and discretion by which you have hitherto been governed in this affair, will not secure you from very unfavourable censures. To shew therefore how much you are in earnest to prevent them, I think it is absolutely necessary that you should send your daughter out of this man's way.'

Mrs. Darnley, who thought she had an unanswerable objection to make to this scheme, interrupted him eagerly, 'You know my circumstances, Mr. Herbert, you know I cannot afford to send my daughter from me; how am I to dispose of her, pray?'

'Let not that care trouble you, madam, replied Mr. Herbert, I will take all this expence upon myself: I love Miss Sophia as well as if she was my own child; and slender as my income is, I will be at the charge of her maintainance till fortune and her own merit place her in a better situation.'

Mr. Herbert then acquainted her with the name and character of the clergyman in whose family he intended to board Sophia: he added, that the place to which she was going being at no great distance, she might hear from her frequently, and sometimes visit her, without much expence or inconvenience.

⁹⁴ "A false argument grounded upon fictitious postulates" (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "pretence, n.s.").

⁹⁵ Absolutely; positively; so as to cut off all farther debate (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "peremptorily, adj.>").

Mrs. Darnley having nothing that was reasonable to oppose to these kind and generous offers, had recourse to rage and exclamation. She told Mr. Herbert that he had no right to interpose in the affairs of her family; that he should not dispose of her child as he pleased; that she would exert the authority of a parent, and no officious medler should rob her of her child.

Mr. Herbert now found it necessary to change his method with this interested mother, 'Take care, madam, said he, with a severe look, how far you carry your opposition in this case: the world has its eyes upon your conduct; do not give it reason to say that your daughter is more prudent and cautious than you are; nor force her to do that without your consent which you ought to be the first to advise her to.'

'Without my consent! replied Mrs. Darnley, almost breathless with rage; will she go without my consent, say you; have you alienated her affections from me so far? I will soon know that.'

Then rising with a furious air, she called Sophia, who came into the room, trembling, and in the utmost agitation. The melancholy that appeared in her countenance, her paleness and disorder, the consequences of a sleepless night, which she had passed in various and afflicting thoughts, made Mr. Herbert apprehensive that her mother's obstinacy would prove too hard for her gentle disposition; and that her heart, thus assaulted with the most powerful of all passions, love and filial tenderness, would insensibly betray her into a consent to stay.

Mrs. Darnley giving her a look of indignation, exclaimed with the sarcastic severity with which she used formerly to treat her; 'So my wise, my dutiful daughter, you cannot bear, it seems, to live with your mother; you are resolved to run away from me, are you?'

'Madam, replied Sophia, with a firmness that disconcerted Mrs. Darnley, as much as it pleasingly surprised Mr. Herbert, it is not you I am running away from, as you unkindly say, I am going into the country to force myself from the pursuits of a man who has imposed upon your goodness, and my credulity⁹⁶; one who I am convinced, seeks my dishonour, and whose ensnaring addresses have already, I am afraid, given a wound to my reputation, which nothing but the resolution I have taken to avoid him can heal.'

Poor Sophia, who had with difficulty prevailed over her own softness to speak in this determined manner, could not bear to see the confusion into which her answer had thrown her mother; but sighing deeply, she retired towards the window, and wiped away the tears that fell from her charming eyes.

Mrs. Darnley, who observed her emotion, and well knew how to take advantage of that amiable weakness in her temper, which made any opposition, however just and necessary, painful to her desired Mr. Herbert to leave her alone with her daughter, adding, that his presence was a constraint upon them both.

⁹⁶ Easiness of belief; readiness of credit (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "credulity, n.s.").

Sophia hearing this, and dreading lest he should leave her to sustain the storm alone, went towards her mother, and with the most persuasive look and accent, begged her not to part in anger from Mr. Herbert.

‘I cannot forgive Mr. Herbert, said Mrs. Darnley, for supposing I am less concerned for your honour than he is. I see no necessity for your going into the country; your reputation is safe while you are under my care; it is time enough to send you out of Sir Charles’s way when we are convinced his designs are not honourable. Mr. Herbert, by filling your head with groundless apprehensions, will be the ruin of your fortune.’

‘Sir Charles’s dissembled⁹⁷ affection for me, interrupted Sophia, will be the ruin of my character. There is no way to convince the world that I am not the willing dupe of his artifices, but by flying from him as far as I can: do not, my dear mamma, pursued she, bursting into tears, oppose my going; my peace of mind, my reputation depend upon it.’

‘You shall go when I think proper, replied Mrs. Darnley; and as for you, Sir, turning to Mr. Herbert, I desire you will not interpose any farther in this matter.’

‘Indeed I must, madam, said the good old man, encouraged by a look Sophia gave him. I consider myself as guardian to your daughter, and in that quality I pretend to some right to regulate her conduct on an occasion which requires a guardian’s care and authority.’

‘Ridiculous! exclaimed Mrs. Darnley, with a malignant⁹⁸ sneer, what a jest!⁹⁹ to call yourself guardian to a girl who has not a shilling¹⁰⁰ to depend upon.’

‘I am the guardian of her honour and reputation, said Mr. Herbert: these make up her fortune; and with these she is richer than if she possessed thousands without them.’

‘And do you, miss, said Mrs. Darnley to her daughter, with a scornful air, do you allow this foolish claim? Are you this gentleman’s ward, pray?’

‘Come, madam, said Mr. Herbert, willing to spare Sophia the pain of answering her question, be persuaded that I have the tenderness of a parent, as well as guardian, for your daughter: it is absolutely necessary she should see Sir Charles no more; and the most effectual method she can take to shun him, and to preserve her character, is to leave a place where she will be continually exposed to his importunity. I hope she will be able to procure your consent to her going tomorrow. I

⁹⁷ To hide under false appearance; to conceal; to pretend that not to be which really is (*Johnson’s Dictionary Online*, “dissemble, v.a.”).

⁹⁸ Malign; envious; unpropitious; malicious; mischievous; intending or effecting ill (*Johnson’s Dictionary Online*, “malignant, adj.”).

⁹⁹ Any thing ludicrous, or meant only to raise laughter (*Johnson’s Dictionary Online*, “jest, n.s.”).

¹⁰⁰ A coin of various value in different times. It is now twelve pence (*Johnson’s Dictionary Online*, “shilling, n.s.”).

shall be here in the morning with a post-chaise, and will conduct her myself to the house of my friend, whom I have already prepared by a letter to receive her.’

Mr. Herbert, without waiting for any answer, bowed and left the room. Sophia followed him to the door, and by a speaking glance assured him he might depend upon her perseverance.

[To be continued.]

INSTALLMENT 4

AS soon as Mr Herbert went away, Harriot, who had been listening, and had heard all that past, entered the room. The virtue and strength of mind her sister shewed in the design she had formed of flying from Sir Charles Stanley excited her envy; and she would have joined with her mother in endeavouring to prevail upon her to stay, to prevent the superiority such conduct gave her, had not that envy found a more sensible gratification in the thought that Sophia would no longer receive the adorations of the young baronet; and that all her towering hopes would be changed to disappointment and grief.

The discontinuance of those presents which Sir Charles so liberally bestowed on them, evidently on Sophia’s account, and which had hitherto enabled them to live in affluence, affected her but little; for vanity is a more powerful passion than interest in the heart of a coquet; and the pleasure of seeing her sister mortified and deserted by her lover out-weighed all other confiderations: besides, she was not without hopes that when Sophia was out of the way, her charms would regain all their former influence over the heart of Sir Charles.

She came prepared therefore to support her in her resolution of going into the country; but Mrs. Darnley, who did not enter into her views, and who had no other attention but to secure to herself that ease and affluence¹⁰¹ she at present enjoyed, expected Harriot would use her utmost efforts to prevent her sister from disoblging¹⁰² a man whose liberality¹⁰³ was the source of their happiness.

She complained to her in a tender manner of Sophia’s unkindness; she exaggerated the ill consequences that might be apprehended from the affront she put on Sir Charles, by thus avowing the most injurious¹⁰⁴ suspicions of him; and declared she expected nothing less than to be reduced by the loss of her pension to that state of misery from which he had formerly relieved her.

Sophia melted into tears at these words; but a moment’s reflection convinced her, that her mother’s apprehensions were altogether groundless: Sir Charles was not capable of so mean a revenge; and

¹⁰¹ Exuberance of riches; stream of wealth; plenty ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “affluence, n.s.”).

¹⁰² Disgusting; unpleasing; offensive ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “disoblging, adj.”).

¹⁰³ Munificence; bounty; generosity; generous profusion ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “liberality, n.s.”).

¹⁰⁴ Mischievous; unjustly hurtful ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “injurious, adj.”).

Sophia, on this occasion, defended him with so much ardor,¹⁰⁵ that Miss Darnley could not help indulging her malice, by throwing out some severe sarcasms upon the violence of her affection for a man whom she affected to despise.

Sophia blushed; but answered calmly, “Well, sister, if I love Sir Charles Stanley, I have the more “merit in leaving him.”

‘Oh, not a bit the more for that, replied Harriot; for, as I read in one of your books just now, *Virtue would not go so far, if pride did not bear her company*’

‘Sister, said Sophia, no woman is envious of another’s virtue who is conscious of her own.’

This retort threw Harriot into so violent a rage, that Sophia who knew what excesses she was capable of, left the room, and retired to pack up her cloaths, that she might be ready when Mr. Herbert called for her.

In this employment Mrs. Darnley gave her no interruption; for Harriot having quitted¹⁰⁶ her mother in a huff, because she did not join with her against Sophia, she was left at liberty to pursue her own reflections. After long doubt and perplexity in what manner to act, she resolved to consent that Sophia should depart; for she saw plainly that it would not be in her power to prevent it, and she was willing to derive some merit from the necessity she was under of complying. She considered that if Sir Charles really loved her daughter, her flight¹⁰⁷ on such motives would rather increase than lessen his passion; and that all his resentment for being deprived of her sight would fall upon Mr. Herbert, who was alone in fault.

Mrs. Darnley, as has been before observed, was not of a temper to anticipate misfortunes, or to give herself much uneasiness about evils in futurity¹⁰⁸: she always hoped the best, not because she had any well-grounded reasons for it, but because it was much more pleasing to hope than to fear.

Sophia, when she saw her next, found her surprisingly altered: she not only no longer opposed her going, but even seemed desirous of it; and this she thought a master-piece of cunning which could not fail of gaining Mr. Herbert’s good opinion; never once reflecting that her former opposition deprived her of all the merit of a voluntary compliance.

This change in Mrs. Darnley left Sophia no more difficulties to encounter but what she found in her own heart. Industrious to deceive herself, she had imputed all the uneasy emotions there to the grief of leaving her mother contrary to her inclination: she had now her free consent to go, yet still those perturbations remained. She thanked her mother for her indulgence: she took her hand, and tenderly pressed it to her lips, tears at the same time flowing fast from her eyes.

¹⁰⁵ Heat of affection, as love, desire, courage ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “ardour, n.s.”).

¹⁰⁶ To discharge an obligation; to make even ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “quit, v.a.”).

¹⁰⁷ Flight- Oversight; mistake ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), flight, n.s.”).

¹⁰⁸ Time to come; events to come ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “futurity, n.s.”).

Mrs. Darnley was cruel enough to shew that she understood the cause of this hidden passion. ‘What, said she, to the poor blushing Sophia, after all the clutter you have made about leaving Sir Charles, does your heart fail you, now you come to the trial?’

Sophia, abashed and silent, hid her glowing face with her handkerchief; and having with some difficulty repress another gush of tears, assumed composure enough to tell her mother that she hoped she should never want fortitude to do her duty.

‘To be sure, replied Mrs. Darnley, with a sneer, one so wise as you can never mistake your duty.’

‘Sophia however understood hers so well that she did not offer to recriminate upon this occasion; for Mrs. Darnley was but a shallow politician, and was thrown so much off her guard by the vexation¹⁰⁹ she felt, that an affair on which she built such great hopes had taken so different a turn, that she gave plain indications of her displeasure, and that her consent to her daughter’s going was indeed extorted from her.’

Sophia had many of these assaults to sustain, as well from Harriot as Mrs. Darnley, during the remainder of that day; but they were of service to her. Her pride was concerned to prevent giving a real cause for such sarcasms as her sister in particular threw out: opposition kept up her spirits, and preserved her mind from yielding to that tender grief which the idea of parting for ever from Sir Charles excited.

When Mr. Herbert came the next morning, Mrs. Darnley, who had no better part to play, had recourse again to dissimulation, and expressed great willingness to send her daughter away; but the good man, who saw the feint¹¹⁰ in her overacted satisfaction, suffered her to imagine that she had effectually¹¹¹ imposed upon him.

Sophia wept when she took leave of her mother, and returned the cold salute her sister gave her with an affectionate embrace. She sighed deeply as Mr. Herbert helped her into the post-chaise; and continued pensive¹¹² and silent for several minutes, not daring to raise her eyes up to her kind conductor, lest he should read in them what passed in her heart.

Mr. Herbert, who guessed what she felt upon this occasion, was sensibly affected with that soft melancholy, so easy to be discovered in her countenance¹¹³, notwithstanding all her endeavours to conceal it. He wished to comfort her, but the subject was too delicate to be mentioned: kind and

¹⁰⁹ The state of being troubled; uneasiness; sorrow ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “vexation, n.s.”).

¹¹⁰ A false appearance; an offer of something not intended to be ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “feint, n.s.”).

¹¹¹ In a manner as to produce the consequence desired ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “effectually, adj.”).

¹¹² Sorrowfully thoughtful; sorrowful; mournfully serious; melancholy ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “pensive, adj.”).

¹¹³ Calmness of look; composure of face ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “countenance, n.s.”).

indulgent as he was, he began to think his admired Sophia carried her concern on this occasion too far; so true it is, that the case of tried virtue is harder than that of untried: we require from it as debts continual exertions of its power, and if we are at any time disappointed in our expectations, we blame with resentment as if we had been deceived.

Sophia's sensibility, however, was very excusable; in flying from Sir Charles she had done all that the most rigid virtue could demand; for as yet she had only suspicions against him; and this man, whose generous gift she had returned with silent scorn¹¹⁴, whom she had avoided as an enemy, had hitherto behaved to her with all the tenderness of a lover, and all the benevolence of a friend. It was under that amiable idea that he now presented himself to her imagination; her pride and her resentment were appeased by the sacrifice she had made in her abrupt departure, and every unkind thought of him was changed to tender regret for his loss.

Mr. Herbert, by not attempting to divert the course of her reflections, soon drew her out of her revery¹¹⁵: his silence and reserve first intimated to her the impropriety of her behaviour. She immediately assumed her usual composure, and during the remainder of their little journey, she appeared as chearful and serene as if nothing extraordinary had happened.

The good curate with whom she was to lodge having rode out to meet his friend and his fair guest, joined them when they had come within three miles of his house. Mr. Herbert, who had descried¹¹⁶ him at a little distance, shewed him to Sophia: 'There, my dear, said he, is a man who with more piety and learning than would serve to make ten bishops is obliged to hire himself out at the rate of sixty pounds a year, to do the duty of the parish-church, the rector of which enjoys three lucrative benefices, without praying or preaching above five times in a twelvemonth.'

Mr. Lawson, for that was the curate's name, had now gallop'd up to the chaise¹¹⁷, which Mr. Herbert had ordered the post-boy to stop, and many kind salutations passed between the two friends.

Sophia was particularly pleased with the candor and benevolence which appeared in the looks and behaviour of the good clergyman; who gazed on her attentively, and found the good opinion he had entertained of her from Mr. Herbert's representations fully confirmed. The bewitching sweetness in her voice and eyes, the spirit that animated her looks, and the peculiar elegance of her address, produced their usual effects, and filled Mr. Lawson's heart with sentiments of tenderness, esteem, and respect for her.

Mrs. Lawson and her two daughters received her with that true politeness which is founded on good sense and good nature. Both the young women were extremely agreeable in their persons, and Sophia contemplated with admiration the neat simplicity of their dress, their artless¹¹⁸ beauty, and

¹¹⁴ Contempt; scoff; slight; act of contumely ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "scorn, n.s.").

¹¹⁵ Loose musing; irregular thought ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "revery, n.s.").

¹¹⁶ Discover; thing discovered ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "descry, n.s.").

¹¹⁷ A carriage of pleasure drawn by one horse ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "chaise, n.s.").

¹¹⁸ Contrived without skill; without fraud ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "artless, adj.").

native sweetness of manners. Health died their cheeks with blushes more beautiful than those the fine lady borrows from paint; innocence and cheerfulness lighted up smiles in their faces, as powerful as those of the most finished coquet¹¹⁹; and good humour and a sincere desire of obliging, gave graces to their behaviour which ceremony but poorly imitates.

These were Sophia's observations to Mr. Herbert, who seized the first opportunity of speaking to her apart, to ask her opinion of her new companions. He was rejoiced to hear her express great satisfaction in her new situation, and not doubting but time and absence, assisted by her own good sense and virtue, would banish Sir Charles Stanley entirely from her remembrance; he scrupled¹²⁰ not to leave her at the end of three days, after having tenderly recommended her to the care of this little worthy family, every individual of which already loved her with extreme affection.

Sophia was indeed so much delighted with the new scene of life she had entered upon, and her fancy was at first so struck with the novelty of all the objects she beheld, that the continual dissipation of her thoughts left no room for the idea of the baronet: but this deceitful calm lasted not long. She soon found by experience, that the silence and solitude of the country were more proper to nourish love than to destroy it; and that groves and meads, the nightingale's song, and the rivulet's¹²¹ murmur¹²², were food for tender melancholy.

Mr. Lawson's house was most romantically situated on the borders of a spacious park; from whose opulent¹²³ owner he rented a small farm, which supplied his family with almost all the necessaries of life. Mrs. Lawson his wife, brought him a very small fortune, but a great stock of virtue, good sense, and prudence. She had seen enough of the world to polish her manners without corrupting her heart; and having lived most part of her time in the country, she understood rural affairs perfectly well, and superintended all the business of their little farm. Their two daughters were at once the best house-wives, and the most accomplished young women in that part of the country. Mr. Lawson took upon himself the delightful task of improving their minds, and giving them a taste for useful knowledge: and their mother, besides instructing them in all the economical duties suitable to their humble fortunes, formed them to those decencies of manners and propriety of behaviour, which she had acquired by a genteel¹²⁴ education, and the conversation of persons of rank. In the affairs of the family, each of the young women had their particular province assigned them. Dolly, the eldest, presided in the dairy; and Fanny, so was the youngest called, assisted in the management of the house. Sophia soon entertained a friendship for them both; but a powerful inclination attached her particularly to Dolly. There was in the countenance of this young woman a certain sweetness and sensibility that pleased Sophia extremely; and though she had all that cheerfulness which youth,

¹¹⁹ Entertain with compliments and amorous tattle ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "coquet, v.a.").

¹²⁰ To doubt; to hesitate ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "scruple, v.n.").

¹²¹ A small river; a brook; a streamlet ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "rivulet, n.s.").

¹²² A low shrill noise ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "murmur, n.s.").

¹²³ Rich; wealthy; affluent ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "opulent, adj.").

¹²⁴ Polite; elegant in behaviour; civil ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "genteel, adj.").

health, and innocence inspire, yet the pensiveness that would sometimes steal over her sweet features, the gentle sighs that would now and then escape her, excited a partial tenderness for her in the heart of Sophia.

She took pleasure in assisting her in her little employments. Dolly insensibly lost that care which the presence of the fair Londoner first inspired, and repaid her tenderness with all that warmth of affection which only young and innocent minds are capable of feeling.

Sophia, instructed by her own experience, soon discovered that her young friend was in love; but neither of them disclosed the secret of their hearts to each other. Dolly was with-held by bashful timidity, Sophia by delicate reserve. Fond as they were of each other's company, yet the want of this mutual confidence made them sometimes chuse to be alone. Sophia having one evening strayed in the wood, wholly absorbed in melancholy thoughts, lost her way, and was in some perplexity¹²⁵ how to recover the path that led to Mr. Lawson's house; when looking anxiously around her, she saw Dolly at a distance, sitting under a tree. Overjoyed to meet her so luckily, she was running up to her, but stopped upon the appearance of a young man, who, seeing Dolly, flew towards her with the utmost eagerness, and with such an expression of joyful surprize in his countenance as persuaded her this meeting was accidental.

Sophia, not willing to interrupt their conversation, passed on softly behind the trees, unobserved by Dolly, who continued in the same pensive¹²⁶ attitude; but being now nearer to her, she perceived she was weeping excessively.

Sophia, who was greatly affected at this sight, could not help accompanying her tears with some of her own; and not daring to stir a step farther for fear of being seen by the youth, she resolved to take advantage of her situation, to know the occasion of Dolly's extraordinary affliction¹²⁷.

The poor girl was so rapt¹²⁸ in thought, that she neither saw nor heard the approach of her lover, who called to her in the tenderest accent imaginable, "My dear Dolly, is it you? Won't you look at me? Won't you speak to me? What have I done to make you angry, my love? Don't go (for upon hearing his voice she started from her seat, and seemed desirous¹²⁹ to avoid him) don't go, my dear Dolly, said he, following her (and she went slowly enough) don't drive me to despair."

"What would you have me do, Mr. William, said she, stopping and turning gently towards him, you know my father has forbid me to speak to you, and I would die rather than disoblige¹³⁰ him: you may

¹²⁵ Anxiety; distraction of mind ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "perplexity, n.s.").

¹²⁶ Sorrowfully thoughtful; sorrowful; mournfully serious; melancholy ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "pensive, adj.").

¹²⁷ The cause of pain or sorrow; calamity ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "affliction, n.s.").

¹²⁸ A trance; an ecstasy (Samuel Johnson's Dictionary, "rapt, n.s.").

¹²⁹ Full of desire; eager; longing after; wishing for ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "desirous, adj.").

¹³⁰ To offend; to disgust; to give offence to. A term by which offence is tenderly expressed ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "disoblige, v.a.").

thank your proud rich aunt for all this. Pray let me go, pursued she, making some faint efforts to withdraw her hand, which he had seized and held fast in his, you must forget me, William, as I have resolved to forget you,” added she sighing, and turning away her head lest¹³¹ he should see the tears that fell from her eyes.

Cruel as these words founded in the ears of the passionate William, yet he found something in her voice and actions that comforted him; “No, my dear Dolly, said he, endeavouring to look in her averted face, I will not believe that you have resolved to forget me; you can no more forget me than I can you, and I shall love you as long as I live—I know you say this only to grieve me; you do not mean it.”

“Yes I do mean it, replied Dolly, in a peevish¹³² accent, vexed that he had seen her tears. I know my duty, and you shall find that I can obey my father.” While she spoke this, she struggled so much in earnest to free her hand from his, that fearing to offend her, he dropped it with a submissive air.

Dolly having now no pretence for staying any longer, bid him farewell in a faltering voice, and went on, tho’ with a slow pace, towards her father’s house. The youth continued for a moment motionless as a statue, with a countenance as pale as death, and his eyes, which were suffused with tears, fixed on the parting virgin.

‘What, cried he at last, in the most plaintive¹³³ tone imaginable, can you really leave me thus? go then, my dear unkind Dolly, I will trouble you no more with my hateful presence; I wish you happy, but if you hear that any strange mischief has befallen me, be assured you are the cause of it.’

He followed her as he spoke, and Dolly no longer able to continue her assumed rigour,¹³⁴ stopped when he approached her, and burst into tears. The lover felt all his hopes revive at this sight, and taking her hand, which he killed a thousand times, he uttered the tenderest vows of love and constancy; to which she listened in silence, only now and then softly sighing; at length she disengaged her hand, and gently begged him to leave her, lest he should be seen by any of the family. The happy youth, once more convinced of her affection for him, obeyed without a murmur.

Dolly, as soon as he had quitted her, ran hastily towards home; but he, as if every step was leading him to his grave, moved slowly on, often looking back, and often stopping: so that Sophia who was afraid she would not be able to overtake her friend, was obliged to hazard being seen by him, and followed Dolly with all the speed she could.

As soon as she was near enough to be heard she called out to her to stay. Dolly stopt, but was in so much confusion at the thought of having been seen by Miss Darnley, with her lover, that she had not

¹³¹ That not ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “lest, conj.”).

¹³² Petulant; waspish; easily offended; irritable; irascible; soon angry; perverse; morose; querulous; full of expressions of discontent; hard to please ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “peevish, adj.”).

¹³³ Complaining; lamenting; expressive of sorrow ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “plaintive, adj.”).

¹³⁴ Severity; sternness; want of condescension to others ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “rigour, n.s.”).

courage to go and meet her. ‘Ah Miss Dolly, said Sophia smiling, I have made a discovery; but I do assure you it was as accidental as your meeting with that handsome youth, who I find is your lover.’

‘Yes, indeed, replied Dolly, whose face was covered with blushes, my meeting with that young man was not designed, at least on my part: but surely you jest, Miss Darnley, when you call him handsome: do you really think him handsome?’

‘Upon my word I do, said Sophia; he is one of the prettiest youths I ever saw; and if the professions of men may be relied on, added she, with a sigh, he certainly loves you; but, my dear Dolly, by what I could learn from your conversation, he has not your father’s consent to make his addresses to you; I was sorry to hear that, Dolly, because I perceive, my dear, that you like him.’

Dolly now held down her head, and blushed more than before, but continued silent. ‘Perhaps you will think me impertinent,¹³⁵ resumed Sophia, for speaking so freely about your affairs; but I love you dearly, Miss Dolly.’— ‘And I, interrupted Dolly, throwing one of her arms about Sophia’s neck, and kissing her cheek, love you, Miss Darnley, better a thousand times than ever I loved any body, except my father and mother and sister.’

‘Well, well, said Sophia, I won’t dispute that point with you now; but if you love me so much as you say, my dear Dolly, why have you made a secret of this affair? friends do not use to be so reserved with each other.’

‘Perhaps, said Dolly, smiling a little archly,¹³⁶ you have taught me to be reserved by your example; but indeed, added she, with a graver look and accent, I am not worthy to be your confidant;¹³⁷ you are my superior in every thing: It would be presumption in me to desire to know your secrets.’

‘You shall know every thing that concerns me, interrupted Sophia, which can be of use to you, and add weight to that advice I shall take the liberty to give you upon this occasion: I am far from being happy, my dear Dolly, and I blush to say it; it has been in the power of a deceitful man greatly to disturb my peace.’

Sophia here wiped her charming eyes, and Dolly who wept sympathetically for her, and for herself, exclaimed, ‘Is there a man in the world who could be false to you? alas! what have I to expect?’

‘Come, my dear, said Sophia, leading her to the root of a large tree, let us sit down here, we shall not be called to supper yet, you have time enough to give me some account of this young man, whom I

¹³⁵ Foolish; trifling ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “impertinent, adj.”).

¹³⁶ In an arch manner; cleverly, waggishly; with good-humoured slyness or sauciness ([Oxford Dictionary Online](#), “archly, adj.”).

¹³⁷ A person trusted with private affairs, commonly with affairs of love ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “confidant, n.s.”).

should be glad to find worthy of you: tell me how your acquaintance began, and what are your father's reasons for forbidding your correspondence.¹³⁸

[To be continued.]

INSTALLMENT 5

DOLLY, though encouraged by the sweet condescension¹³⁹ of Sophia, who, to inspire her with confidence, freely acknowledged the situation of her own heart, blushed so much, and was in such apparent confusion, that Sophia was concerned at having made her a request which gave her so much pain to comply with.

At length the innocent girl, looking up to her with a bashful¹⁴⁰ air, said, 'I should be ashamed, dear Miss, to own my weakness to you, if I did not know that you are too generous to think the worse of me for it: to be sure I have a great value for Mr. William; but I was not so foolish as to be taken with his handsomeness only, tho' indeed he is very handsome, and I am delighted to find that you think him so; but Mr. William, as my father can tell you, madam, is a very fine scholar: he was educated in a great school at London, and there is not a young squire¹⁴¹ in all this country who has half his learning, or knows how to behave himself so genteely as he does, though his father is but a farmer: however, he is rich, and he has but one child besides Mr. William, and that is a sickly boy, and not likely to live; so that Mr. William, it is thought, will have all.'

'I should imagine then, said Sophia, that this young man would not be a bad match for you?'

'A bad match, replied Dolly, sighing: no certainly; but his aunt looks higher for him: yet there was a time when she was well enough pleased with his liking me.'

'What is his aunt, said Sophia, and how does it happen that she has any authority over him?'

'Why you must know, madam, answered Dolly, that his aunt is very rich; when she was a young woman, a great lady took a fancy¹⁴² to her, and kept her as her companion a great many years, and when she died, she left her all her cloaths and jewels, and a prodigious¹⁴³ deal of money: she never

¹³⁸ Relation; reciprocal adaptation of one thing to another ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "correspondence, n.s.").

¹³⁹ Voluntary humiliation; descent from superiority; voluntary submission to equality with inferiours ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "condescension, n.s.").

¹⁴⁰ Modest; shamefaced ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "bashful, adj.").

¹⁴¹ A gentleman next in rank to a knight. ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "squire, n.s.").

¹⁴² To like; to be pleased with ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "fancy, v.a.").

¹⁴³ Amazing; astonishing; such as may seem a prodigy; portentous; enormous; monstrous; amazingly great ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "prodigious, adj.").

would marry; for she was crossed in love, they say, in her youth, and that makes her so ill natured and spiteful, I believe, to young people; but notwithstanding that, I cannot help loving her, because she was always so fond of Mr. William: she is his god-mother, and when he was about ten years old she sent for him to London, and declared she would provide for him as her own; and indeed she acted like a mother towards him: she put him to school, and maintained him like a gentleman; and when he grew up, she would have made a gentleman of him; for she had a great desire that he should be an officer.’

‘Mr. William at that time was very fond of being an officer too; but as he was very dutiful and obedient to his father, indeed Miss Sophia he is one of the best young men in the world, he desired leave¹⁴⁴ to consult him first; so about a year ago he came to visit his father, and has never been at London since; and he had not been long in the country before he changed his mind as to being an officer, and declared he would be a farmer like his father, and live a country life.’

‘Ah Dolly, said Sophia smiling, I suspect you were the cause of this change, my friend.’

‘Why indeed, replied Dolly, he has since told me so: but perhaps he flattered me when he said it; for, ah my dear Miss, I remember what you said just now about the deceitfulness of men, and I tremble lest¹⁴⁵ Mr. William should be like the rest.’

‘Well, my dear, interrupted Sophia, go on with your story; I am impatient to know when you saw each other first, and how your acquaintance¹⁴⁶ began.’

‘You know, madam, said Dolly, my father keeps us very retired¹⁴⁷: I had no opportunity of seeing Mr. William but at church; we had heard that farmer Gibbons had a fine¹⁴⁸ son come from London, and the Sunday afterwards when we were at church, my sister, who is a giddy¹⁴⁹ wild girl, as you know, kept staring about, in hopes of seeing him. At last she pulled me hastily, and whispered, look, look, Dolly, there is farmer Gibbons just come in, and I am sure he has got his London son with him, see what a handsome young man he is, and how genteely he is drest!’

‘Well, madam, I looked up, and to be sure I met Mr. William’s eyes full upon me; I felt my face glow like fire; for as soon as I looked upon him, he made me a low bow. My sister courtesied; but for my part, I don’t know whether I courtesied or not: I was never so confused in my life, and during the

¹⁴⁴ Grant of liberty; permission; allowance (*Samuel Johnson’s Dictionary*, “leave, n.s.”).

¹⁴⁵ That not (*Johnson’s Dictionary Online*, “lest, conj.”).

¹⁴⁶ A slight or initial knowledge, short of friendship, as applied to persons (*Johnson’s Dictionary Online*, “acquaintance, n.s.”).

¹⁴⁷ Secret; private (*Johnson’s Dictionary Online*, “retired, part., adj.”).

¹⁴⁸ Applied to a person, it means beautiful with dignity (*Johnson’s Dictionary Online*, “fine, adj.”).

¹⁴⁹ Inconstant; mutable; unsteady; changeful (*Johnson’s Dictionary Online*, “giddy, adj.”).

whole time we were at church, I scarce¹⁵⁰ ever durst¹⁵¹ raise my eyes; for I was sure to find Mr. William looking into our pew.'

'I suppose you was not displeased with him, said Sophia, for taking so much notice of you?'

'I do not know whether I was or not, replied Dolly; but I know that I was in a strange confusion during all church-time; yet I observed that Mr. William did not go out when the rest of the congregation did, but staid behind, which made my sister laugh; for he looked foolish enough standing alone. But he staid to have an opportunity of making us another bow; for it is my father's custom, as soon as he has dismissed the people, to come into our pew and take us home with him. I never shall forget how respectfully Mr. William saluted my father as he passed him. I now made amends for my former neglect of him, and returned the bow he made me with a very low courtesy¹⁵².'

'Fanny and I talked of him all the way home: I took delight in hearing her praise him; and although I was never used to disguise my thoughts before, yet I knew not how it was, but I was ashamed to speak so freely of him as she did, and yet I am sure I thought as well of him.'

'I dare say you did, said Sophia, smiling; but my dear, pursued she in a graver accent, this was a very sudden impression. Suppose this young man whose person captivated you so much, had been wild and dissolute, as many young men are; how would you have excused yourself for that early prejudice in his favour, which you took in so readily at your eyes, without consulting your judgment in the least?'

Dolly, fixing her bashful looks on the ground, remained silent for a moment; then sighing, answered, 'I am sure if I had not believed Mr. William good and virtuous, I should never have liked him, tho' he had been a hundred times handsomer than he is; but it was impossible to look on him and think him otherwise; and if you had observed him well, Miss Darnley, his countenance¹⁵³ has so much sweetness and candor¹⁵⁴ in it, as my father once said, that you could not have thought ill of him.'

'It is not always safe, said Sophia, sighing likewise, to trust to appearances: men's actions as well as their looks often deceive us; and you must allow, my dear Dolly, that there is danger in these sudden attachments; but when did you see this pretty youth again?'

'Not till the next Sunday, replied Dolly; and tho' you should chide¹⁵⁵ me never so much, yet I must tell you that this seemed the longest week I ever knew in my life. I did not doubt but he would be at

¹⁵⁰ Hardly; scantily ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "scarce, adv.").

¹⁵¹ The preterite of *dare* ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "durst").

¹⁵² "To perform an act of reverence ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "courtesy, v.n.").

¹⁵³ The form of the face; the system of the features ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "countenance, n.s.").

¹⁵⁴ Sweetness of temper; purity of mind; openness; ingenuity; kindness ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "candour, n.s.").

¹⁵⁵ To reprove; to check; to correct with words: applied to persons ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "chide, v.a.").

church again, and I longed impatiently for Sunday. At last Sunday came; we went with my father as usual to church, and would you believe it, Miss Darnley, tho' I wish'd so much to see Mr. William, yet now I dreaded meeting him, and trembled so when I came into church, that I was obliged to take hold of Fanny to keep me from falling. She soon discovered him, and pulled me in order to make me look up: he had placed himself in our way, so that we passed close by him. He made us a very low bow, and my mother, who had not seen him before, smiled, and looked extremely pleased with him; for to be sure, Madam, she could not help admiring him.'

'Well, I was very uneasy all the time we were in church; for Fanny whispered me that my sweet-heart, for so she called Mr. William, minded nothing but me. This made me blush excessively, and I was afraid my mother would take notice of his staring and my confusion; so that (heaven forgive me) I was glad when the sermon was ended. He made us his usual compliment at our going out, but I did not look up: however, I was impatient to be alone with Fanny, that I might talk of him, and in the evening we walked towards the Park. Just as we had placed ourselves under a tree, we saw a fine drest gentleman, a visitor of the Squire's¹⁵⁶ as we supposed, coming up to us: upon which we rose and walked homewards; but the gentleman followed us, and coming close to me, stared impudently under my hat, and swearing a great oath, said I was a pretty girl, and he would have a kiss. Fanny seeing him take me by the arm, screamed aloud; but I, pretending not to be frightened, tho' I trembled sadly, civilly begg'd him to let me go. He did not regard what I said, but was extremely rude; so that I now began to scream as loud as Fanny, struggling all the time to get from him, but in vain, and now who should come to my assistance but Mr. William: I saw him flying across a field, and my heart told me it was he, before he came near enough for me to know him.'

'As soon as Fanny perceived him, she ran to him and beg'd him to help me; but he did not need intreaty: he flew like a bird to the place where I was, and left Fanny far behind. The rude gentleman bad him be gone, and threatened him severely; for he had taken the hand I had at liberty, which I gladly gave him, and insisted upon his letting me go: and now, my dear Miss Darnley, all my fears were for him, for the gentleman declared if he did not go about his business he would run him through the body, and actually drew his sword; I thought I should have died at that terrible sight; my sister run towards home crying like one distracted; as for me, tho' the man had let go my hand, and I might have run away, yet I could not bear to leave Mr. William to the mercy of that cruel wretch¹⁵⁷; and I did what at another time I should have blushed to have done. I took his hand, and pulled him with all my force away; but he, enraged at being called puppy by the gentleman, who continued swearing, that he would do him a mischief, if he did not leave the place, begged me to make the best of my way home; and turning furiously to him who was brandishing his sword about, he knocked him down with one stroke of a cudgel¹⁵⁸ which he fortunately had in his hand, and snatching his sword from him, he threw it among the bushes.'

¹⁵⁶ "A gentleman next in rank to a knight ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "squire, n.s.").

¹⁵⁷ A miserable mortal ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "wretch, n.s.").

¹⁵⁸ A stick to strike with, lighter than a club, shorter than a pole ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "cudgel, n.s.").

‘Upon my word (said Sophia) your William’s character rises upon me every moment; this was a very gallant action, and I do not wonder at your liking him now.’

‘Ah, Miss (cried Dolly) if you had seen how he looked when he came back to me, if you had heard the tender things he said—Well, you may imagine I thanked him for the kindness he had done me, and he protested he would with pleasure lose his life for my sake. I think I could have listened to him for ever; but now my father appeared in sight. My sister had alarmed him greatly with her account of what had happened, and he was coming hastily to my assistance, followed by my mother and all the family. As soon as we perceived them coming we mended our pace; for we had walked very slowly hitherto¹⁵⁹: then it was that Mr. William, who had not spoke so plainly before, told me how much he loved me, and begg’d I would give him leave to see me sometimes. I replied, that depended upon my father, and this was prudent, was it not, my dear Miss Darnley?’

‘Indeed it was, answered Sophia, but what said your lover?’

‘He sighed, Madam, resumed Dolly, and said he was afraid my father would not think him worthy of me: he owned he was no otherwise worthy of me than from the great affection he bore me, and then—But here I fear you will think him too bold and perhaps blame me.’

“I hope not, said Sophia.”

‘Why, Madam, continued Dolly, he took my hand and kissed it a thousand times; and tho’ I did all I could to be sure to pull it away, yet he would not part with it, till my father was so near that he was afraid he would observe him; and then he let it go, and begg’d me in a whisper not to hate him. Bless me, what a strange request that was, Miss Darnely! how could I hate one to whom I had been so greatly obliged! I was ready to burst into tears at the very thought, and told him I was so far from hating him, that —’

‘Pray go on, my dear (said Sophia) observing she hesitated and was silent.’

‘I told him, Madam, resumed she, that I would always regard him as long as I lived.—I did not say too much, did I?’

‘I suppose, said Sophia, you gave him to understand that it was in gratitude for the service he had done you.’

‘To be sure, said Dolly, I put it in that light. Well I am glad you approve of my behaviour, Miss Darnley; so, as I was telling you, my father came up to us, and thanked Mr. William for having rescued his daughter; he then asked him what he had done with the rude fellow? Mr. William told him he had given him a lucky stroke with his cudgel, which had made him measure his length on the ground; but, said he (and sure that showed excessive good nature) I hope I have not hurt him much:’

‘My father said he would go and see; and then shaking Mr. William kindly by the hand, he called him a brave youth, and said he hoped they should be better acquainted—Oh! how glad was I to hear him

¹⁵⁹ “To this time; yet; in any time till now ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “hitherto, adj.”).

say so: My mother too was vastly civil to him; and as for Fanny, I thought she would have hugg'd him, she was so pleased with him for his kindness to me. My mother insisted upon his staying to drink tea with us, and as soon as my father came back, we all went in together.'

'Pray what became of the poor vanquished knight? said Sophia, smiling.'

'Oh, I forgot to tell you, resumed Dolly, that my father said he saw him creeping along as if he was sorely bruised with his fall, supporting himself with his sword, which it seems he had found. We were all glad it was no worse, and Mr. William having accepted my mother's invitation, he staid with us till the evening was pretty far advanced; and then my father accompanied him part of his way home, and at parting, as he told us, desired to see him often.'

'He was not backward, you may be sure, in complying with his request: he came so often, that my father was surprised; and besides, my sister and I scarce¹⁶⁰ ever went out to walk but we met him; so that one would have imagined he lived in the fields about our house. My mother at last suspected the truth, and questioned me about him, and I told her all that he had ever said to me; and not long afterwards he took an opportunity to open his heart to my father, and asked his permission to make his addresses¹⁶¹ to me. With such modesty and good sense he spoke, that my father was extremely pleased with him; but told him that he must consult his friends, and know whether they approved of it, and then he would consider of his proposal. Mr. William, as he afterwards told me, wrote to his aunt first; for he was well assured that his father would agree to any thing that she thought for his advantage.'

'He had a very favourable answer from Mrs. Gibbons, for she had changed her mind also, with regard to his being an officer, as war was then talked of; and she was afraid of his being sent abroad. He shewed me her letter, and she told him in it, that since he was resolved to settle in the country, she approved of his marrying; and was glad he had not fixed his affections upon some homespun¹⁶² farmer's daughter; but had chosen a gentlewoman, and one who was well brought up. She added, that she intended to come into the country, in a few weeks; and if she found the young lady (so she called me) answered his description, she would hasten the marriage, and settle us handsomely.—Oh! how pleased was I with this letter, and how did it rejoice¹⁶³ Mr. William!'

'I should never have done, were I to tell you all the tender things he said to me. Mr. Gibbons, at his son's desire, came to my father, and begged him to give his consent, which he obtained; for my father had well considered the affair before: and nothing was wanting but Mrs. Gibbons's arrival to

¹⁶⁰ Hardly, scantily ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "scarce, adj.").

¹⁶¹ Verbal application to anyone, by way of persuasion, petition. Courtship ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "address, n.s.").

¹⁶² Plain; coarse; rude; homely; inelegant ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "homespun, adj.").

¹⁶³ To exhilarate; to gladden; to make joyful; to glad ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "rejoice, v.a.").

make us all happy. Mr. William thought every hour an age till she came, and prest¹⁶⁴ her continually in his letters to hasten her journey.'

'Alas! if he had known what was to happen, he would not have been so impatient; for soon after she came, all our fine hopes were blasted; and I have now nothing to expect but misery.'

Poor Dolly was so oppressed with grief, when she came to this part of her story, that she was unable to proceed, and burst into tears. The tender Sophia, who was greatly affected with the anguish she saw her in, employed every soothing art to comfort her. And Dolly being a little composed, was going to continue her story, when she saw her sister looking about for them; Sophia and she immediately rose up and joined Fanny, who rallied them both upon their fondness for lonely places; but perceiving that Dolly had been weeping, she immediately became grave, and accommodated her looks and behaviour to the gentle melancholy of her sister.

Sophia, from the state of her own mind, was but too much disposed¹⁶⁵ to sympathize with the love-sick Dolly: these softning conversations were ill calculated to banish from her remembrance, the first object of her innocent affections; and who, with all his faults, she still loved. Dolly's story awakened a thousand tender ideas, and recalled to her memory every part of Sir Charles's conduct, which had any resemblance to that of the faithful and passionate William.

She dwelt¹⁶⁶ with tender regret upon these pleasing images, and for a while forgot how necessary it was for her peace, to suppress every thought of Sir Charles, that tended to lessen her just resentment against him.

But, good and pious¹⁶⁷ as she was, the passion she could not wholly subdue she regulated by reason and by virtue; for, as an eminent Divine says, 'Although it is not in our power to make affliction¹⁶⁸ no affliction; yet we may take off the edge of it, by a steady view of those divine joys prepared for us in another state'

It was quite otherwise with Sir Charles: for the guilty, if unhappy, are doubly so; because they are deprived of those resources of comfort, which the virtuous are sure to find, in the consciousness of having acted well.

¹⁶⁴ Ready; not dilatory. This is said to have been the original sense of the word *prest men*; men, not forced into the service, as now we understand it, but men, for a certain sum received, *prest* or ready to march at command. Neat; tight. In both senses the word is obsolete ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "prest. adj.").

¹⁶⁵ *To give; to place; to bestow* ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "dispose, v.a.").

¹⁶⁶ "Inhabited ([Oxford English Dictionary](#), adj.)."

¹⁶⁷ Careful of the duties of near relation. Careful of the duties owed by created beings to God; godly; religious; such as is due to sacred things ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "pious, adj.").

¹⁶⁸ The cause of pain or sorrow; calamity. The state of sorrowfulness; misery ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "affliction, n.s.").

Sir Charles, upon finding his settlement sent back to him, in such a manner, as shewed not only the most obstinate resolution to reject his offers, but also a settled contempt for the offerer, became a prey to the most violent passions: rage, grief, affronted¹⁶⁹ pride, love ill requited, and disappointed hope, tormented him by turns; nor was jealousy without a place in his heart; the chaste, the innocent, the reserved Sophia, became suspected by the man, who in vain attempted to corrupt her; so true it is, that libertinism¹⁷⁰ gives such a colour to the actions of others, as takes away all distinction between virtue and vice.

Love, he argued, is either rewarded with a reciprocal affection, or with an inward and secret contempt; therefore he imputed¹⁷¹ Sophia's rejection of his offers, not to her disapprobation¹⁷² of the intention of them, but to want of affection for his person; and from her youth, and the tender sensibility of her heart, he concluded, that since he had failed in making an impression on it, it was already bestowed on another; one while he resolved to think no more of her, and repay her indifference and disdain, with silence and neglect; the next moment, dreading lest¹⁷³ he had lost her for ever, he regretted his having alarmed her with too early a discovery of his intentions, and sometimes his passion transported him so far, as to make him think seriously of offering her his hand: then starting at his own weakness, and apprehensive of the consequences, he sought to arm himself against that tenderness which suggested so mad a design, by reflecting on her indifference towards him, and accounting for it in such a manner, as fixed the sharpest stings of jealousy in his mind.

Thus various and perplexed were his thoughts and designs; and he was incapable of resolving upon any thing, except to see her; and so great was his impatience, that he would have set out for London, the moment he received the fatal paper, but decency would not permit him to leave his uncle, who was in a dying condition, and wished only to expire in his arms.

The poor man, however, lingered a week longer, during which Sir Charles passed some of the most melancholly hours he had ever known; at length, his uncle's death left him at liberty to return to London, which he did immediately, and alighted at Mrs. Darnley's house. Upon hearing she was at home, he did not send in his name, but walked up stairs with a beating heart; he found Mrs. Darnley, and Harriot together, but not seeing the person, whom he only wished to see, he cast a melancholy look round the room, and answering, in a confused, and dejected manner, the mother's excessive politeness, and the cold civility of the daughter, he threw himself into a chair, with a deep sigh, and was silent.

¹⁶⁹ Insult offered to the face; contemptuous or rude treatment ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "affront, n.s.").

¹⁷⁰ Irreligion; licentiousness of opinions or practice ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "libertinism, n.s.").

¹⁷¹ To charge upon; to attribute: generally ill; sometimes good. To reckon to one what does not properly belong to him ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "impute, v.a.").

¹⁷² Censure; condemnation; expression of dislike ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "disapprobation, n.s.").

¹⁷³ *That not*, ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "lest. conj.").

So evident a discomposure pleased Mrs. Darnley as much as it mortified Harriot. As for Sir Charles, pride and resentment hindered him at first from enquiring for Sophia; but his anxiety and impatience to hear of her, soon prevailed over all other considerations; and tho' he asked for her with an affected carelessness, yet his eyes, and the tone of his voice betrayed him.

Mrs. Darnley told him, that she was gone into the country: 'Very much against my inclination, said she: but Mr. Herbert, who you know, Sir, has great power over her, more I think, than I have, would have it so.'

Sir Charles turning as pale as death, replied, in great emotion, 'What! gone into the country; where is she gone, to whom, why did she go? Against your inclination, did you say, Madam, what could possibly induce her to this? You surprise me excessively.'

Harriot, who did not chuse to be present at the explanation of this affair, now rose up, and went out of the room, smiling sarcastically, as she passed by Sir Charles, and bridling¹⁷⁴ with all the triumph of conscious beauty. He, who was in a bad humour, beheld her airs not only with indifference but contempt, which he suffered to appear pretty plain in his countenance; for he thought it but just to mortify her for her ill-usage of her sister, without considering that he himself was far more guilty, in that respect, towards the amiable Sophia, and equally deserved to be hated by her.

When Harriot was gone, Mrs. Darnley instantly renewed the conversation concerning Sophia; and finding that the young baronet listened to her, with eager attention, she gave him a full account of all that had happened, during his absence: she represented Sophia, as having followed implicitly the directions of Mr. Herbert, whom she called a busy, meddling, officious¹⁷⁵, old man; and as the behaviour of her daughter, at her going away, gave sufficient room to believe, that her heart suffered greatly by the effort she made, she dwelt upon every circumstance that tended to shew the concern she was under; and did not scruple¹⁷⁶ to exaggerate, where she thought it would be pleasing.

Sir Charles, tho' he inwardly rejoiced at what he heard, yet dissembled so well, that no signs of it appeared in his countenance. He now seemed to listen with much indifference, and coldly said, he was sorry Miss Sophia would not permit him to make her easy.

The tranquillity he affected alarmed Mrs. Darnley: she who was ever ready to judge by appearances, concluded that all was over, and that the baronet was irrecoverably lost; but had her judgment been more acute, she would have perceived, that he was still deeply interested in every thing that related to Sophia. The questions he asked were not such as curiosity suggests, but the tender anxiety of doubting love: Mrs. Darnley informed him of all he wish'd to hear; Sophia had indeed fled from him, but not without reluctance and grief: she was at present removed from his sight, but she was removed to silence and solitude; and she carried with her a fond impression, which solitude would not fail to encrease.

¹⁷⁴ To restrain; to govern ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), bridle, v.a.).

¹⁷⁵ Importunely forward ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "officious, adj.").

¹⁷⁶ To doubt; to hesitate ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "scruple, v.n.").

Thus satisfied, he put an end to his visit, with all imaginable composure, leaving Mrs. Darnley in doubt, whether she should see him again, and more enraged than ever with Mr. Herbert, whose fatal counsels had overthrown all her hopes.

[To be continued.]

INSTALLMENT 6

IT was not long before Sophia had an account of Sir Charles's visit from her mother, who, forgetting the part she had acted before, wrote her a letter full of invectives¹⁷⁷ against her obstinacy¹⁷⁸ and disobedience, and bitter upbraidings¹⁷⁹ of her folly¹⁸⁰, for losing by her ill-timed pride, the heart of such a man as Sir Charles.

She told her, with a kind of exultation¹⁸¹, that he had utterly forgot her, and repeated every circumstance of his behaviour while he was with her, and every word he had spoke, as all tending to shew his indifference; but though this was done to mortify Sophia, and make her repent of her precipitate¹⁸² departure, yet her discernment, and that facility which lovers have, in flattering their own wishes, pointed out to her many things in this minute relation, which served rather to nourish hope than destroy it.

Mrs. Darnley added, as the finishing stroke, that Sir Charles looked pale and thin; she attributed this alteration in his health to the efforts he had made to banish her from his heart, and thence¹⁸³ inferred that a resolution which had cost him so much trouble to confirm, would not be easily broke through; and that she had no reason to expect he would ever desire to see her more.

Sophia could not read this part of the letter without tears, tears that flowed from tender sensibility, accompanied with a sensation which was neither grief nor joy, but composed of both: that Sir Charles should resolve to forget her was indeed afflicting¹⁸⁴, but that this resolution should cost him

¹⁷⁷ Using or characterized by denunciatory or railing language; inclined to inveigh; expressing bitter denunciation; vituperative, abusive. Now *rare* ([Oxford English Dictionary](#), “invective, adj.”).

¹⁷⁸ Stubbornness; contumacy; pertinacy; persistency ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “obstinacy, n.s.”).

¹⁷⁹ A reproach or reproof ([Oxford English Dictionary](#), “upbraidings, v.a.”).

¹⁸⁰ Want of understanding; weakness of intellect ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “folly, n.s.”).

¹⁸¹ Joy; triumph; rapturous delight. ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “exultation, n.s.”).

¹⁸² Headlong; hasty; rashly hasty ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “precipitate, adj.”).

¹⁸³ For that reason ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “thence, n.s.”).

¹⁸⁴ To distress with continued physical or mental suffering; to torment; to trouble. Also *reflexive*: to become or feel distressed; to grieve. Also *intransitive* ([Oxford English Dictionary](#), “afflicting, v.a.”).

struggles so painful as to affect his health, could not but raise her depressed hopes, since it shewed the difficulty of the attempt, and consequently that the success was doubtful.

This letter gave so much employment to her thoughts, that to be at liberty to indulge them she took her evening walk without soliciting the company of her beloved Dolly, and wandered far into the wood, attracted by those romantic shades which afford such soothing pleasure to a love-sick mind. Here, while she meditated on her mother's letter, and read it over and over, still seeking, and still finding something new in it to engage her attention, she heard the voices of some persons talking behind her, and suddenly recollecting Dolly's adventure, she began to be alarmed at the distance to which she had unwarily strayed, and turned her steps hastily towards home.

Mean time a sudden gust of wind blew off her hat, and carried it several paces back: she turned, in order to recover it, and saw it taken up by a genteel young man, who on a nearer approach she knew to be the lover of her young friend. Pleased at this encounter, she advanced to receive her hat from him, which he gave her with a blushing grace, awed by the dignity of her mein,¹⁸⁵ and that sparkling intelligence which beamed in her eyes, and seemed to penetrate into his inmost soul; for Sophia, who was deeply interested for her innocent and unhappy friend, considered him attentively, and was desirous of entering into some conversation with him, that she might be enabled to form a more exact judgment of his understanding and manners than she could from the accounts of the partial Dolly.

While she was talking to him they were joined by an ancient gentlewoman, who accosting¹⁸⁶ Sophia, told her in an affected style and formal accent, that her nephew was very happy in having had an opportunity to do her this little piece of service.

Sophia, who saw an old woman, apparently oppressed with the infirmities of years, drest in all the ridiculous foppery¹⁸⁷ of the last age, was so little pleased with her, that she would have answered this compliment with great coldness, had not the desire and hope of being serviceable to her friend made her conquer her growing disgust; she therefore resolved to improve this opportunity of commencing an acquaintance with the aunt of young William, and met her advances with her usual sweetness and affability¹⁸⁸, so that the old woman was quite charmed with her; and being very desirous to gain her good opinion, and to shew her breeding, of which she was extremely vain, overwhelmed her with troublesome ceremony; and, to display her understanding, of which she was equally proud, murdered so many hard words, that her discourse was scarcely intelligible.

¹⁸⁵ A growth of long hair on the back of the neck and the shoulders, characteristic of various animals, esp. the horse and lion; a similar growth on other animals (Oxford English Dictionary, "mein, n.s.").

¹⁸⁶ To speak to first; to address; to salute ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "accost, v.a.").

¹⁸⁷ Folly; impertinence ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "foppery, n.s.").

¹⁸⁸ The quality of being affable; easiness of manners; courteousness; civility; condescension. It is commonly used of superiors ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "affability, n.s.").

Sophia would fain¹⁸⁹ have drawn in the youth to partake of their conversation, but his aunt's volubility¹⁹⁰ left him very little to say; yet in that little Sophia thought she discovered both good sense and politeness.

The evening being now pretty far advanced, Sophia thought it time to separate, and took leave of her new acquaintance. Their parting was protracted by so many courtesies and compliments from the old lady, that her patience was almost wearied out; at last she got free from her, and quickened her pace towards home, when on a sudden she heard her in a tremulous voice calling out, "Madam, madam, pray stop one moment." Sophia looked back, and seeing Mrs. Gibbons come tottering¹⁹¹ up to her with mere speed than was consistent with her weakness, she met her half way, and smiling, asked her why she had turned back?

'Oh, madam, replied she, I am ready to sink with confusion! what a *sol/sim* in good breeding have I committed! to be sure you will think I have been used to converse with savages only.' Sophia, not able to guess what this speech tended to, looked at Mr. Gibbons as if she wished for an explanation.

'My aunt, madam, said the youth, (blushing a little at the old woman's affectation,) is concerned that you should walk home alone, and that I can't offer my service to attend you, being obliged to lead her, as you see.'

'That is not all, nephew, said the ceremonious gentlewoman: you do not tell the young lady the true cause of the *dilemnia* I am in: I would not leave you, madam, pursued she, till I saw you safe home, but you live with a family who has affronted me, and I cannot endure to come within sight of the house. I never can forgive an affront, that would be to shew I do not understand the laws of good breeding: but I thank heaven no body can charge me with that, I was very early *instituted into* polite life; but some people are not to be *assessed* with.'

'I hope, said Sophia, (scarce able to compose her countenance¹⁹² to any tolerable degree of seriousness) that none of Mr. Lawson's family have given you cause of complaint: they seem to me incapable of affronting any one, much more a person that.' —

'Oh, dear madam, interrupted the old lady, courtesying low, you do me a great deal of honour; but you will find, nay¹⁹³ you must have observed already, that Mrs. Lawson is vulgar, very vulgar, she knows nothing of decorums.'

'I am very sorry for this misunderstanding between you, said Sophia, and I should think it a very great happiness if I could be any way useful in renewing your friendship.'

¹⁸⁹ Glad; merry; cheerful; fond. It is still retained in Scotland in this sense ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "fain, adj.").

¹⁹⁰ Activity of tongue; fluency of speech ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "volubility, n.s.").

¹⁹¹ The action of totter v.; oscillation, wavering, shaking as if about to fall ([Oxford English Dictionary](#), "tottering, v.n").

¹⁹² The form of the face; the system of the features ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "countenance, n.s.").

¹⁹³ Not only so but more. A word of amplification ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "nay, adj.").

‘Oh, cried Mrs. Gibbons, you might as well think of joining the *Antipoles*, madam, as of bringing us together again; and I am grieved beyond measure when I think that it is impossible for me to wait on you.’

‘However, answered Sophia, you will have no objection, I hope, to my coming to see you.’

‘By no means, madam, replied Mrs. Gibbons, you came last into the country, and you are entitled to the first visit; I would not for the world break through the laws of politeness; I am sorry you have so indifferent an opinion of my breeding.’

Sophia perceiving that the old gentlewoman was a little discomposed, for this article of good breeding was a tender point with her, endeavoured to bring her into good humour, by some well-timed compliments, and once more took leave of her; but Mrs. Gibbons now insisted upon her nephew’s seeing her safe home, saying, ‘She would rest herself under a tree till he came back.’

Sophia but faintly declined this civility, for she feared to offend her again; and the joy that sparkled in William’s eyes when his aunt made this offer of his attendance, made her unwilling to disappoint him of the hope of seeing his mistress; so after much ceremony on the part of Mrs. Gibbons, they separated.

As they walked, Sophia took occasion to express her concern for the violent resentment his aunt had entertained against Mr. Lawson’s family, and which seemed to make a reconciliation hopeless.

The youth told her, that nothing could be more trivial¹⁹⁴ than the accident that had occasioned it; and yet, pursued he, sighing deeply, ‘slight as it is, the consequences are likely to be fatal enough.’

During their conversation Sophia discovered so much good sense and delicacy of sentiment in the young William, that she more than ever pitied the fate of these poor lovers, whose happiness was sacrificed to the capricious¹⁹⁵ temper of an affected old woman: she assured him she would neglect no opportunity to improve her acquaintance with his aunt: ‘And perhaps, said she, with an enchanting smile, that expressed the benevolence of her heart, I may be so fortunate as to effect a reconciliation between her and my Dolly’s family.’

Mr. Gibbons thanked her in transports of joy and gratitude; and now Dolly and her sister, who had walked out in search of Sophia, appearing in sight, she mended her pace, in order to come up with them soon; for in the ardent¹⁹⁶ glances that William sent towards his mistress, she read his impatience to speak to her.

¹⁹⁴ Vile; worthless; vulgar; such as may be picked up in the highway ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), "trivial, n.s.").

¹⁹⁵ Whimsical; fanciful; humoursome ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), "capricious, adj.").

¹⁹⁶ Hot; burning; fiery ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), "ardent, adj.").

Dolly, who was in the utmost surprise, to see Sophia thus accompanied, took no notice of William; but avoiding, with a sweet bashfulness¹⁹⁷, his earnest and passionate looks: she fixed her eyes on Miss Darnley, as if she wished to hear from her by what chance they had met.

'I know, said Sophia to her smiling, that you did not expect to see me so agreeably engaged; but Mr. Gibbons can inform you how his aunt, whom we left in the forest yonder, and I became acquainted.' She then addressed some discourse to Fanny, to give the lovers an opportunity of talking to each other.

Dolly asked a thousand questions concerning their meeting, and his aunt's behaviour to Miss Darnley; but the passionate youth leaving it to Sophia to satisfy her curiosity, employed the few moments he had to stay with her in tender assurances of his own unaltered affection, and complaints of her indifference.

'Surely, said Dolly, with tears in her eyes, I ought not to be blamed for obeying my father.'

'Ah, my dear Dolly, replied William, our affections are not in the power of our fathers; and if you hate me now because your father commands you to do so, you never loved me.'

'Hate you, cried Dolly; no, Mr. William, my father never bid me hate you; and if he had I am sure I could not have obeyed him: he only commanded me to forget you.'

'Only to forget me, repeated William, in a melancholy¹⁹⁸ tone: then you think that little, Dolly; and perhaps you will be able to obey him; but be assured I would rather be hated by you than forgotten.'

"That is strange, indeed," said Dolly, smiling through her tears.

'You would not think it strange, replied the youth, in an accent that expressed at once grief and resentment, if you had ever loved. Ah Dolly, are all your tender promises come to this! little did I imagine I should ever see you altered thus! but I will trouble you no more, added he, sighing, as if his heart would break; I will endeavour to follow your example: perhaps it is not so difficult a thing as I imagined to cure one's self of love; you have shewn¹⁹⁹ me it is possible, and if I fail in the attempt I can be but miserable, and that you have made me now.' As he spoke these words, he turned half from her, and let fall some tears.

Dolly, who had no intention to make him uneasy, was excessively affected with this sight, and not a little alarmed at what he had said: 'And will you try to forget me, said she, in the most moving tone imaginable; then indeed you will be false and perjured too, for you have sworn a thousand times that you would love me for ever.'

¹⁹⁷ Modesty, as shewn in outward appearance ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "bashfulness, n.s.").

¹⁹⁸ Gloomy; dismal ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "melancholy, adj.").

¹⁹⁹ Shown. pret. and part. pass. of To show. Exhibited ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "shewen, v.n.").

‘Why should you wish to see me wretched, said he; you have resolved to love me no longer, and it is but reasonable that I should try to forget you.’

He would have proceeded in this strain; but turning to look on her, he saw her sweet face overspread with tears. ‘Oh my Dolly, cried he, we are very cruel to each other; but I am most to blame: can you pardon me, my dearest: say you can; alas, I know I do not deserve it.’

Dolly’s heart was so opprest that she was not able to speak; but she held out her hand to her young lover, who seizing it eagerly, prest it to his lips, ‘Yes, I will love you, said he, though you should hate me; I will love you to my latest breath.’

Dolly perceiving Sophia and her sister coming up to them, drew away her hand hastily; but looked on him at the same time, with inexpressible tenderness: Sophia told him with a smile, that she was afraid his aunt would be impatient: upon which he made his bow, and hastened back to her.

Fanny now left her sister alone with Miss Darnley, who perceiving that she had been weeping, asked her tenderly the cause. ‘Oh my dear miss, said the poor girl, blushing and pressing her hand, if I had but a little of your prudence²⁰⁰ and good sense, I should obey my father better; but when one has once given one’s heart, it is very difficult to recal it.’

‘Very true, my dear, said Sophia; therefore one ought not to be in haste to give it.’

‘I hope, interrupted Dolly with an anxious look, you have observed nothing in Mr. William to make you change your good opinion of him.’

‘Quite the contrary, said Sophia, I believe him to be a good, and I am sure he is a sensible youth: nay more, I believe he has a sincere regard for you; and that, pursued she, sighing, is saying a great deal, considering what reason I have to judge unfavourably²⁰¹ of men: but, my dear, I would have you keep your passion so far subjected to your reason, as to make it not too difficult for you to obey your father, if he is fully determined to refuse his content.’ I know, added she, with a gentle smile, ‘That it is easier to be wise for others than for ourselves; but I know it is not impossible for a heart in love to follow the dictates of reason: I think so highly of Mr. Lawson’s understanding and goodness, that I am persuaded he would not lay an unreasonable command upon you, and by what I could collect from some hints dropt by Mrs. Gibbons, and the little discourse I had with your lover, the old gentlewoman is wholly to blame.’

‘Did Mr. William tell you, said Dolly, what was the occasion of their quarrel?’

‘No, replied Sophia: I should be glad to hear it from yourself.’

²⁰⁰ Wisdom applied to practice ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “prudence, n.s.”).

²⁰¹ Unkindly; unpropitiously; So as not to countenance, or support ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “unfavourably, adv.”).

‘Well, resumed Dolly, taking her under the arm, let us go to our dear oak then, and there we shall be out of sight; but I am impatient to know how you met, and what conversation you had.’ Sophia satisfied her curiosity, diverting herself a little with the old lady’s hard words, and her strict regard to ceremony.

‘Ah, said Dolly, it was those hard words, and the clutter she made about ceremony and decorum²⁰², that occasioned all our unhappiness; for as I told you, miss, she was well enough pleased with her nephew’s choice, saying, that he was in the right to marry like a gentleman, and prefer person and breeding to money: however, soon after she came into the country, she shewed herself a little dissatisfied with my education, and said, that as my father was a gentleman and a scholar, he ought²⁰³ to have taught his daughters a little Greek and Latin, to have distinguished them from meer country girls.’

‘Your mother, I suppose, said Sophia, laughed at this notion.’

‘It does not become me, said Dolly, to blame my mother; but to be sure she took great delight²⁰⁴ in ridiculing Mrs. Gibbons: indeed it was scarce possible to help smiling now and then at her hard words, and her formal politeness; but my mother, as Mr. William often told me with great concern, carried her raillery²⁰⁵ so far that his aunt would certainly be offended with it at last; and so indeed she was, and grew every day cooler, with regard to the marriage. This disgusted my mother more, so every thing wore a melancholy²⁰⁶ appearance: at length Mrs. Gibbons broke out one day violently upon my mother’s sending a dish of tea to another gentlewoman before her. I saw a storm in her countenance, and dreading the consequence, I made haste to carry her, her dish myself, but she refused it scornfully²⁰⁷, and then began to attack my mother in her strange language, upon her want of breeding, and ignorance of the rules of *precedency*, that was her word. My mother at first only laughed, and rallied; but when the rest of our visitors was gone, and Mrs. Gibbons only remained, the quarrel grew serious. My mother, who was out of patience with her folly, said some severe things, which provoked Mrs. Gibbons so much, that she rose up in a fury²⁰⁸, and declared she would never more have any *collection* with such vulgar²⁰⁹ creatures. At that moment my father and Mr. William, who had been walking together, came into the room: they both were excessively surprised

²⁰² Decency; behaviour contrary to licentiousness, contrary to levity; seemliness ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “decorum, n.s.”).

²⁰³ Any thing; not nothing ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “ought, n.s.”).

²⁰⁴ Joy; content; satisfaction ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), delight, n.s.”).

²⁰⁵ Slight satire; satirical merriment ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), raillery, n.s.”).

²⁰⁶ Gloomy; dismal ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “melancholy, adj.”).

²⁰⁷ Contemptuously; insolently ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “scornfully, adv.”).

²⁰⁸ Madness ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “fury, n.s.”).

²⁰⁹ Plebeian; suiting to the common people; practised among the common people ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “vulgar, adj.”).

at the disorder that appeared among us; and poor Mr. William, who was most apprehensive, turned as pale as death: he gave me a melancholy look, as fearing what had happened, and had scarce courage enough to ask his aunt what was the matter? Mean time, my mother, in a laughing way gave my father an account of what had happened, repeating some of Mrs. Gibbons's strange words, and made the whole affair appear so ridiculous, that Mrs. Gibbons in a great fury, flung out of the house, declaring that from that moment she broke off any *treatise* of marriage between her nephew and me; and that, if he continued to make his addresses to me, she would make a will and leave all her money to a distant relation. Mr. William was obliged²¹⁰ to follow his aunt; but he begged my father's leave to return as soon as he had seen her safe home. When he came back, he implor'd my father, with tears in his eyes, not to forbid his seeing me: he said the loss of his aunt's fortune would give him no concern if he durst hope that it would make no alteration in my father's resolutions, since his own little inheritance was sufficient to maintain us comfortably. My father was pleased with his generous affection for me, and said a great many obliging things to him, as did my mother likewise, so that we thought our misfortune not so bad; but the next day old Mr. Gibbons came plodding²¹¹ to our house, and with a great deal of confusion and awkwardness, told my father that he was very sorry for what had happened; but sister had changed her mind, and would not let her nephew marry, and he was afraid if he disobliged her she would leave all her money to strangers; so he begged him to give his son no encouragement, but to tell him plainly he must obey his aunt and his father; and he said he was sure his son would mind what my father said to him more than any body else.'

'I am in pain for poor Mr. Lawson, said Sophia. What a boorish speech was this!'

'My father, resum'd Dolly, said afterwards, that if it had not been for the concern he felt for me and Mr. William, he would have been excessively diverted with the old man's simplicity²¹²; but he answered him gravely and with great civility: he promised him that the affair should go no farther; that I should receive no more visits from his son; and that he would talk with him, and endeavour to make him submit patiently to what his father and his aunt had determined for him. The old man thanked my father a thousand times over for his kindness, and after a great many bows and scrapes he went away. My father was as good as his word: he laid his commands on me to think no more of Mr. William, and forbad me to see or speak to him; and when Mr. William came next, he took him with him into his study and talked to him a long time. He acknowledged that Mr. William had oftener than once moved him even to tears; but for all that he did not relent, and we were not allowed so much as to speak to each other alone, for fear we should take any measures to meet in private. This I thought very severe, pursued Dolly, sighing, we might at least have been indulged in taking leave, since we were to be separated for ever.'

'I cannot blame your father, said Sophia, he was indispensably obliged to act as he did: it is to be wished indeed that Mrs. Lawson had passed over the poor woman's follies with more temper; but this cannot be helped now: perhaps I may be able to serve you. The old gentlewoman seems to

²¹⁰ To bind; to impose obligation; to compel to something ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "obliged, v.a.").

²¹¹ To toil; to moil; to drudge; to travel ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "plodding, v.n.").

²¹² Plainness; artlessness; not subtilty; not cunning; not deceit ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "simplicity, n.s.").

have taken a liking to me; I shall endeavour to improve it, that I may have an opportunity to soften her: it is not impossible but this matter may end well yet.'

'Poor Dolly was ready enough to admit a hope so pleasing, and felt her heart more at ease than it had been a long time. As for William, his aunt's extravagant praises of Sophia, and some expressions which she dropped, intimating that she should be pleased if he could make himself acceptable to so fine a lady, hinted to him a scheme which might afford him the means of seeing his mistress sometimes: he seemed therefore to listen with satisfaction to these dark overtures made by his aunt, and upon her speaking still plainer, he said it would be presumption in him to think that a young lady so accomplished as Miss Darnley would look down upon him; and besides, he had no opportunity of improving an acquaintance with her, being forbid Mr. Lawson's house, at her request.'

The old woman, pleased to find he made so little opposition to her desire, told him, 'That he would have opportunities enough of seeing and conversing with the lady; she often walks out, said she, either in the forest or the fields about the house: cannot you throw yourself in her way, and accost her politely, as you very well know how; and, to *felicitate* your success, I will let her know that I am willing to receive the honour of a visit from her, though this is against all the rules of decorum²¹³, for it is my part to visit her first, she being the greatest stranger here: you shall deliver my message to her to-morrow yourself.'

'The youth replied, coldly, that it was possible he might not meet with her to-morrow: nevertheless he would go every day to the forest, and wherever it was likely she would walk, in hopes of seeing her.'

Mrs. Gibbons, exulting in the hope of mortifying Mrs. Lawson, told her nephew, 'That if he could succeed in his addresses to miss Darnley, and give her so fine a lady for a niece, she would settle the best part of her fortune on him immediately.'

William suffered her to please herself with these imaginations, having secured the liberty of going unsuspected, and as often as he pleased, to those places where he could see his beloved Dolly; hitherto he had not dared to indulge himself frequently in these stolen interviews, lest his aunt being informed of them, should take measures to engage Mr. Lawson to keep his daughter under a greater restraint; but now he continually haunted the park, the wood, and the fields about Mr. Lawson's house: here he could not fail of often seeing his mistress, and sometimes of speaking to her unobserved by any one.

Dolly never failed to chide²¹⁴ him as often as this happened, for thus laying her under a necessity of disobeying her father's injunctions; but she took no pains to shun those places where she was almost sure of meeting him; and her chiding was so gentle, that he was convinced she was not greatly offended.

²¹³ Decency; behaviour contrary to licentiousness, country to levity; seemliness ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "decorum, n.s.").

²¹⁴ To reprove; to check; to correct with words: applied to persons ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "chide, v.a.").

Sophia happening to meet him one morning, while he was thus sauntering about, she enquired for his aunt, and hearing from him how desirous the old gentlewoman was of seeing her, she who was full of her benevolent²¹⁵ scheme, and eager to put it in execution, delayed her visit no longer than till the afternoon.

Mrs. Gibbons considered this as a proof of her nephew's sincerity, and was in so good a humour, that she listened without any signs of displeasure, to the praises which Sophia artfully introduced of Dolly; and even sometimes joined in them: Sophia thought this a very favourable beginning, and went away full of hope that she should succeed in her design: but while she was thus endeavouring to make others happy, her sister was preparing a new mortification for her.

Sir Charles continued to visit Mrs. Darnley as usual: he passed some hours every day at her house, and while he applauded himself for the steadiness of his resolution, not to follow his mistress, he perceived not his own weakness in seeking every alleviation²¹⁶ of her absence. He went to the house where she had formerly dwelt, because every object he saw in it brought her dear idea to his mind: he loved to turn over the books he had seen her read, to sit in those places where she used to sit: he was transported when he saw any thing that belonged to her; and when he was not observed by the inquisitive eyes of Harriot, he indulged his own in gazing upon Sophia's picture, faintly as it expressed the attractive graces of the original: he endured the trifling²¹⁷ discourse of Mrs. Darnley and the insipid gaiety of Harriot, and left all other company and amusements to converse with them, that he might hear something concerning Sophia; for he had the art, without seeming to design it, to turn the discourse frequently upon her, and thus drew from the loquacious mother all he desired to know, without appearing to be interested in it.

Mrs. Darnley knew not what judgment to form of his assiduity in visiting her, and vainly endeavoured to penetrate into his views. As for Harriot, who had no idea of those refinements of tenderness which influenced Sir Charles's conduct on this occasion, she concluded that her charms had once more enslaved him, and exulted in her fancied conquest the more, as it was a triumph over her sister, who had been the occasion of so many mortifications to her.

Nothing is so easy or so fallacious²¹⁸ as the belief that we are beloved and admired; our own vanity helps the deceit, where a deceit is intended: and a coquet who has a double portion of it, willingly deceives herself.

Harriot was now fully persuaded that Sir Charles had forgot Sophia, and was wholly devoted to her. Impatient to insult her with the news of his change, she proposed to her mother to make her a visit: Mrs. Darnley immediately consented, not because she was very desirous to see her daughter, but because every thing that wore the face of amusement was always acceptable to her. Sir Charles, upon being made acquainted with their intention, offered to accommodate them with his chariot; and although he only desired them coldly to present his compliments to Sophia, yet when he reflected

²¹⁵ Kind; having good will, or kind inclinations ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "benevolent, adj.").

²¹⁶ That by which any pain is eased, or fault extenuated ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "alleviation, n.s.").

²¹⁷ Wanting worth; unimportant; wanting weight ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "trifling, adj.").

²¹⁸ Deceitful; mocking expectation ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "fallacious, adj.").

that they would soon see and converse with her, he could not help envying their happiness; and it was with great difficulty he conquered himself so far as to forbear going with them.

[To be continued.]

INSTALLMENT 7

WHEN they arrived at Mrs. Lawson's, Sophia, who little expected such a visit, had wandered, as usual, in the wood, accompanied with Dolly: Mrs. Lawson immediately sent Fanny in search of her; and Harriot, expressing an impatience to see her sister, went along with her.

They found Sophia sitting under an oak, with Mrs. Gibbons on one side of her, and Dolly on the other; for the old gentlewoman was prevailed upon by Sophia to endure the company of the innocent girl, who had never offended her; and Dolly, instructed by her lovely friend, made good use of these opportunities to insinuate herself into her favour.

William leaned on a branch close by Sophia, to whom he addressed his discourse²¹⁹, while his eyes often stole tender glances at his beloved Dolly. Harriot, when she approached, cried out affectedly, 'Upon my word, sister, you have a brilliant assembly here; I did not expect to find you in such good company.'

Sophia, surprised to see her sister, ran hastily to meet her, and embracing her kindly, enquired with a sweet anxiety for her mother, and whether she also had been so good to visit her. Harriot scarce²²⁰ answered her question; her attention was all fixed upon William: so handsome a youth seemed worthy to feel the influence of her charms; and all the artillery of her eyes was instantly levelled against him. Having returned his respectful bow with an affected courtesy, and the fashionable toss of the head, she deigned to take some little notice of Mrs. Gibbons, and honoured Dolly with a careless glance, whose amiable figure, however, attracted a second look; and after examining her with an inquisitive eye, she turned away with a little expression of scorn in her countenance²²¹, and again attacked William, practising a thousand airs²²² to strike him; all which he beheld with the utmost indifference.

Sophia, being impatient to see her mother, took leave of Mrs. Gibbons; but Harriot, who had a new conquest in view, was unwilling to go so soon, professing herself enchanted with the place, and declaring she would turn shepherdess.

Sophia told her, smiling, that she was sure that that sort of life would not please her.

²¹⁹ Effusion of language; speech ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "discourse, n.s.").

²²⁰ Not plentiful ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "scarce, adj.").

²²¹ Air; look ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "countenance, n.s.").

²²²The mien, or manner, of the person ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "air, n.s.").

‘Oh! how can you think so, cried Harriot, is not the dress excessively becoming? then love in these woods is so tender and sincere! I will engage there is not a nymph in this hamlet whose frown would not drive her lover to despair: own the truth now, said she, turning with a lively air to William, are you not violently in love?’

The youth bowed, blushed, and sighed; and not daring to look at his mistress, he suffered his eyes, full as they were of tender expression, to direct their glances towards Sophia. ‘I am proud to own, madam, said he to Harriot, that I have a heart capable of the most ardent passion.’

“And mighty constant too! no doubt,” interrupted Harriot, with a malignant sneer; for she had observed the sigh and the look, and was ready to burst with vexation²²³ and disappointment, to find her conquest obstructed already by her sister, as she supposed; and being now as impatient, as she was before unwilling to be gone, ‘Come, Sophy, said she, taking her under the arm, my mamma will take it ill that you make no more haste to see her, for we shall return to town immediately.’

“Sure you will stay one night,” said Sophia.

“Oh not for the world!” exclaimed Harriot affectedly; ‘How can you imagine I would stay so long in an odious²²⁴ village, to be rusticated²²⁵ into awkwardness, pursued she, with a spiteful laugh, and ashamed to shew my face in any assembly in town afterwards.’ Saying this, she courtesied disdainfully to Mrs. Gibbons and her nephew, and tripped away, pulling her sister away with her.

Dolly joined the two ladies, but walked by the side of Sophia, not aiming at any familiarity with the insolent and affected Harriot; and as they pursued their way home, she had the mortification to hear her lover ridiculed and despised by the disappointed coquet, who supposed she mortified her sister by the contempt she expressed for a man who had so little taste as to like her.

Sophia, as well in compassion to poor Dolly, who suffered greatly upon this occasion, as in justice to the amiable youth, defended him warmly, which drew some coarse raillery²²⁶ upon her from Harriot.

When they came near to Mr. Lawson’s house, the sight of Sir Charles’s chariot threw her into a fit of trembling; Harriot perceived it, and willing to undeceive²²⁷ her, if she hoped to find the young baronet there, ‘I am charged with Sir Charles’s compliments, to you, said she, he insisted upon our using his chariot for this little excursion; my mamma and I would fain have persuaded him to accompany us, but he pleaded an engagement, and would not come.’

²²³ “The state of being troubled; uneasiness; sorrow ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “vexation, n.s.”).

²²⁴ Hateful; detestable; abominable ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “odious, adj.”).

²²⁵ To reside in the country ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “rusticate, n.s.”).

²²⁶ Slight satire; satirical merriment ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “raillery, n.s.”).

²²⁷ To set free from the influence of a fallacy ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “undeceive, v.a.”).

Dolly now looked with great concern upon her fair friend, who suppressing a sigh, asked if Sir Charles was quite recovered.

‘I do not know that he has been ill, replied Harriot. Indeed when he came from Bath, the fatigue he had endured with his sick uncle, whom he had sat up with several nights before he died, made him look a little pale and thin; but he is now extremely well, and more gay than ever: and it is well he is so, pursued she, for we have so much of his company, that if he was not entertaining, we should find him very troublesome.’

All this was daggers to the heart of poor Sophia: those pleasing ideas which she had indulged upon reading her mother’s letter, that represented Sir Charles as having suffered in his health, from his endeavours to vanquish his passion for her, all vanished, and left in their room a sad conviction²²⁸ that she was become wholly indifferent to him.

She might indeed, knowing her sister’s malice, have attributed what she said to artifice²²⁹; but her manner of accounting for the alteration in Sir Charles’s looks, which her fond fancy had dwelt upon so much, was so natural and so full of probability, that she could suspect no artifice there.

Every thing Harriot said was confirmed by facts which left no room for doubt: his assiduity²³⁰ to Harriot, his neglect of her, appeared but too plain. Did he not lend his chariot for a visit in which he would not share? did he not send his compliments in a manner that shewed his heart was so much at ease, that he felt not even any resentment for her leaving him? could there be stronger proofs of indifference than these?

Such were her thoughts, and her heart was so oppressed by this sudden and unexpected shock, that it was with difficulty she restrained her tears. Dolly, who looked at her with tender anxiety, and saw her colour come and go, and her charming eyes bent on the ground, as if she feared to look up, lest they should betray her anguish, cast many an angry glance at her envious sister, and wished her a thousand miles off.

Sophia having a little recovered herself, hastened towards her mother, who with a face of ignorant wonder was following Mrs. Lawson about her little farm, asking a thousand questions, without heeding the answers she received. Sophia approaching, paid her duty to her with her usual tenderness and respect, which Mrs. Darnley returned with slightly kissing her cheek, telling her that she thought her complexion was greatly improved, and appealed to Harriot for the truth of her observation.

Harriot answered, ‘That indeed she could not flatter her sister so much, as to say she thought so; for if there was any alteration, it was rather for the worse.’

²²⁸ Detection of guilt, which is, in law, either when a man is outlawed, or appears and confesses, or else is found guilty by the inquest ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “conviction, n.s.”).

²²⁹ Trick; fraud; stratagem ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “artifice, n.s.”).

²³⁰ Diligence; closeness of application ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “assiduity, n.s.”).

Sophia, without attending to this difference of opinion, with regard to her complexion, was only solicitous²³¹ to know if her mother had been well; and while she was making some tender enquiries concerning her health, Mrs. Darnley, who never consulted either time or place, suddenly interrupted her to draw her aside from the company, and asked her abruptly, ‘Whether she was not surprised at Sir Charles’s indifference?’

Sophia, still smarting with the pangs her sister’s discourse had given her, replied, in a tone of resentment, ‘That nothing now could surprise her with regard to Sir Charles.’

‘Why, to say the truth, Sophia, replied Mrs. Darnley, I believe he has quite forgot you; but there was a time when you might have been happy.—oh girl, girl, pursued she, kindling with anger as she spoke, you were always obstinate²³² and conceited; what a foolish part have you played with all your wit! but I am to blame to trouble myself about you.’

Sophia now eased her loaded heart by a shower of tears. ‘It is to little purpose now, said Mrs. Darnley, to repent of your imprudent²³³ behaviour; you were too wise to take a parent’s advice, when it might have been useful: when a man of rank and fortune makes his addresses to a woman who is inferior to him in both, he expects a thousand little complacencies and attentions from her, which, without wounding her honour, may convince him that it is not to his riches she sacrifices herself.’

‘Ah, Madam, cried Sophia, that is a snare which has been fatal to many young women in my circumstances. Who sees not the advantages this gives a man whose aim is to seduce? I am persuaded these pernicious²³⁴ maxims²³⁵ are not yours, but his, for whose ungenerous purpose they are so well calculated.’

Sophia guessed truly; the young baronet had often had discourses of this sort with Mrs. Darnley, who nevertheless took it ill that her daughter should offer her such an affront as to suppose she did not understand maxims as well as Sir Charles.

Nothing is more certain than that we are never made so ridiculous by the qualities we have, as by those we affect to have. Mrs. Darnley, with all her ignorance, aspired to be thought witty: she therefore vindicated her claim to what Sophia had called maxims; no matter whether they were pernicious or not. The word maxim sounded learnedly in her ears: she told her daughter, with great asperity, that she was so conceited and vain of her own wit, that she would allow no one else to have any. Sophia found it difficult enough to appease her, but she succeeded at length, and they joined the rest of the company.

²³¹ Anxious; careful; concerned. It has commonly *about* before that which causes anxiety; sometimes *for* or *of*. *For* is proper before something to be obtained ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), solicitous, adj.”).

²³² Stubborn; contumacious; fixed in resolution. Absolutely used, it has an ill sense; but relatively, it is neutral ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “obstinate, adj.”).

²³³ Wanting prudence; injudicious; indiscreet; negligent ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “imprudent, adj.”).

²³⁴ Mischievous in the highest degree; destructive ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “pernicious, adj.”).

²³⁵ An axiom; a general principle; a leading truth ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “maxim, n.s.”).

Mrs. Lawson easily prevailed upon her guests to stay that night and the following day, which, being Sunday, Harriot could not resist the temptation of displaying her charms and her fine clothes in a country church, which was so new a triumph, that the thoughts of it kept her waking almost the whole night.

The ridiculous airs she assumed to draw the admiration of the simple villagers, who never saw any thing so fine and so gay before, and who stared at her with stupid surprise, made Sophia often blush for her: but her affected glances were chiefly directed to the beautiful youth, whose insensibility had so greatly mortified her pride: she saw his eyes constantly turned towards the pew where she sat; but she saw plainly that it was not her charms that drew them thither. She had no suspicion that Dolly was the object of his affection, and, sensible to her great grief, of her sister's power to charm, she no longer doubted that this envied conquest was hers.

Thus disappointed, she appeared so much out of humour, and so impatient to return to town, that Mrs. Darnley, over whom her power was absolute, complied with her importunity²³⁶, and set out with her for London, as soon as they returned from church; notwithstanding all the endeavours of the good curate and his wife to detain them to dinner.

Sophia was now left alone to her own melancholy reflections; this visit from her mother and sister had produced a sad reverse in her situation: hitherto²³⁷ hope had not quite forsaken her; the idea of being still beloved by Sir Charles lessened all her griefs, and supported her amidst the doubt and anxiety which his mysterious conduct had involved her in: his indifference, so apparent in her sister's account of him, gave her pangs unfelt before: and never till now did she think herself unhappy; for, unperceived by herself, she had encouraged a secret hope that the passion she had inspired him with would not be easily subdued; and that perhaps all which she had thought exceptionable in his conduct proceeded not from a settled design to the prejudice of her honour, but from that irresolution²³⁸ and slowness with which a man, too sensible of his superiority in birth and fortune, proceeds in an affair of marriage, where he has no obstacles to fear, and where every thing depends upon himself.

She now perceived the necessity of banishing Sir Charles from her heart; but at the same time, she perceived all the difficulty of the task. Though ashamed of her tears, she wept, and passionately exclaimed against her own weakness, which had kept her in a delusion so fatal to her peace. She continued the whole day in her chamber, wholly absorb'd in melancholy thoughts.

Dolly, who knew enough of her situation to guess the cause of this new affliction²³⁹, was grieved to find herself excluded as well as the rest of the family; and although she ardently²⁴⁰ wished to console her, yet she durst not intrude uncalled upon her retirement. While she waited impatiently for her

²³⁶Incessant solicitation ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "importunity, n.s.").

²³⁷To this time; yet; in any time till now ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "hitherto. adv.").

²³⁸Want of firmness of mind ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "irresolution. n.s.").

²³⁹The cause of pain or sorrow; calamity ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "affliction. n.s.").

²⁴⁰Eagerly; affectionately ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "ardently. adv.").

appearance, a visitor arrived, who she knew would be welcome to her charming friend. As soon as she perceived him, she flew with eager haste to inform Sophia, and, tapping at her door, told her in a joyful voice, that Mr. Herbert was just alighted.

Sophia, surprised at the news, instantly opened her chamber-door, and smiling tenderly upon the charming girl, to whom she excused herself for her long absence, hastened to receive the good old man, who, after some affectionate enquiries concerning her health, rallied her upon the melancholy that appeared in her countenance.

Sophia blushed and fixed her eyes on the ground, not a little surprised at his talking to her in that manner; and when with a bashful air, she looked up again, and saw a more than usual cheerfulness in his eyes, her confusion increased, and for a few moments she could not help feeling some resentment against her benefactor, for thus diverting himself with her uneasiness.

Mr. Herbert, whose thoughts were wholly employed on the pleasing news he brought, did not perceive how much his behaviour embarrassed her: to prevent his renewing a subject so disagreeable, she talked of the visit her mother and sister had made her.

Mr. Herbert asked her, 'If they had mentioned Sir Charles, and what she thought of him now?'

'I think of him as I ought to do, replied Sophia, with some warmth, I despise him.'

'Be not too rash, my dear child, said Mr. Herbert; if your sister, whose malice²⁴¹ I well know, has suggested any thing to Sir Charles's disadvantage, be assured she deceives you; for I am convinced he not only loves you, but loves you with honour.'

Sophia, who from the first words Mr. Herbert uttered, had been in great agitation, as expecting something extraordinary, was so overwhelmed with surprise at what she heard, that her speech and colour forsaking her, she remained pale, silent, and motionless in her chair.

Mr. Herbert, perceiving how powerfully this news operated on her spirits, began to be apprehensive²⁴² of the consequences, and was rising hastily to give her some assistance, when Sophia, roused to recollection by this motion of her vulnerable friend, and ashamed of the extreme sensibility she had discovered, apologised for it with a charming modesty, that greatly affected the good old man, who, if he had known in what melancholy thoughts she had passed the day, would have told her with more caution, a circumstance that raised her at once from despair to hope, and produced so great a change in her situation.

As we are never so ready to fear a disappointment as when we are nearest the completion of our wishes, Sophia, with a sweet apprehensiveness, which yet she laboured to conceal, hinted her doubts of the baronet's sincerity; Mr. Herbert answering explicitly to these half expressed doubts, told her, that he was fully persuaded Sir Charles would act like a man of honour. "I will give you an

²⁴¹ Ill intention to any one; desire of hurting ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "malice, n.s.").

²⁴²Quick to understand ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "apprehensive, adj.").

exact account, said he to her, of what has passed between us, from which you may judge yourself of his conduct:" he then took a letter out of his pocket, and desired her to read it.

Sophia, trembling a little at the sight of Sir Charles's hand writing, took the billet, and found it contained a message from him to Mr. Herbert, requesting in very earnest terms, the favour of an interview, and an offer to wait upon him at any hour he should appoint.

'You may be sure, said Mr. Herbert, (receiving back the billet²⁴³ which Sophia gave him without speaking a word) that I did not suffer Sir Charles to come to me; hearing from the messenger that his master was at home waiting for my answer, I attended him immediately. I perceived a little embarrassment in his countenance²⁴⁴ upon my first entrance, but that soon wore off: he welcomed me with great politeness, and after thanking me for the honour I did him, in preventing his visit, he entered immediately upon the affair which had occasioned his sending to me.'

'You have, Sir, said he, shewn so truly a paternal affection for the young lady to whom I have paid my addresses, and are so much esteemed and revered by her, that I think I may without any impropriety²⁴⁵, address myself to you upon this occasion—'

Here he paused, and seemed a little perplexed. 'To be sure, added he, I ought to have done this before; my conduct must have appeared capricious²⁴⁶ both to her and you, and indeed it was capricious,—but—'

Here he paused again, and fixed his eyes on the ground. "His frankness, pursued Mr. Herbert, pleased me greatly, and disposed me to give him a favourable attention."

'I cannot blame Miss Sophia, said he, for acting as she has done; my heart did homage to her virtue at the time that I suffered most from the contemptuous²⁴⁷ behaviour it suggested to her. Fain would I hope, added he sighing, that the prejudices she has conceived against me has not entirely banished me from her remembrance; the delicacy of my passion would be but ill satisfied by calling so deserving a woman my own, unless I could likewise boast a preference in her heart that left me no room to doubt my fortune had any share in determining her in my favour.'

"I know not, pursued Mr. Herbert, whether Sir Charles expected any answer to this declaration; it is certain he looked on me with a kind of anxious timidity, and stopped a moment; I continued silent, and he proceeded in this manner:" 'I know, Miss Sophia has an understanding too solid, and a mind too noble to suffer any considerations of rank and fortune to determine her solely in an affair upon

²⁴³A small paper; a note ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "billet, n.s.')

²⁴⁴The form of the face; the system of the features ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "countenance, n.s.').

²⁴⁵Unfitness; unsuitableness; inaccuracy; want of justness ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "impropriety, n.s.').

²⁴⁶ Whimsical; fanciful; humoursome ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "capricious, adj.').

²⁴⁷ Scornful; apt to despise; using words or actions of contempt; insolent ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "contemptuous, adj.').

which the happiness of her life depends: she would not surely give her hand where her heart did not acknowledge a preference. 'Tis thus I answer all those doubts which my situation, and perhaps an overstrained delicacy suggest: I am impatient to convince her of the purity of my passion; and, considering you as her friend, her guardian, and one who is in the place of a father to her, I will take no steps in this affair but such as have the sanction of your approbation²⁴⁸; I will not even presume to visit her without your permission: be you my advocate with her, tell her I lay myself and fortune at her feet, and will receive her from your hand as the greatest blessing that heaven can bestow on me.'

'Now, my child, pursued Mr. Herbert, looking on Sophia with a smile, how would you have me answer to this discourse? was it necessary, think you, to play off a few female artifices here, and keep Sir Charles in doubt and anxious suspense, or did the apparent openness and candor²⁴⁹ of his procedure deserve an equal degree of frankness on my part?'

'It is not to be doubted, sir, said Sophia blushing, but that on this occasion, as on every other, you acted with the utmost prudence²⁵⁰.'

'I find, resumed Mr. Herbert, that you are resolved beforehand, to approve of whatever I said: well then, I told Sir Charles, that his present declaration entirely satisfied me; that being fully convinced of his sincerity, I looked upon his offer as highly honourable and advantageous to you; and that I was very sure you would have all the sense you ought to have of so generous an affection.'

'He then begged me to set out immediately for this place, and prepare you to receive a visit from him. This request I could not possibly comply with, having business in town, which would necessarily detain²⁵¹ me for some hours; but I promised him to go as soon as that was dispatched, which probably might be in the afternoon.'

'He modestly asked my leave to accompany me; but this I declined, as fearing his sudden appearance, without your being previously acquainted with what had past, might occasion²⁵² some perplexity and uneasiness to you; so it was agreed that he should come to-morrow.'

"To-morrow," replied Sophia, with an emotion she was not able to suppress.

'Yes, my child, replied the good old man, have you any objections to this?'

'I know not, replied Sophia, with downcast eyes and a faltering accent, what I ought to do; I have been so used to consider Sir Charles's professions in an unfavourable point of view; my heart has

²⁴⁸The act of approving, or expressing himself pleased ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), , "approbation, n.s.").

²⁴⁹ Sweetness of temper; purity of mind; openness; ingenuity; kindness ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "candour, n.s.").

²⁵⁰ Wisdom applied to practice ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "prudence, n.s.").

²⁵¹ To restrain from departure ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "detain, v.a.").

²⁵² Accidental cause ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "occasion, n.s.").

been so accustomed to suspect him—to guard itself against delusive hopes, perhaps I ought not to admit²⁵³ his visit so easily; perhaps I ought to resent his former behaviour. I own I am greatly perplexed, but I will be determined wholly by your advice.’

Mr. Herbert saw her delicate scruples, and, to favour her modesty, answered, with the authority of a guardian, ‘When Sir Charles visits you next, Miss Sophia, he comes to offer you his hand; he has asked my consent as your guardian and your friend; and, I presuming on my influence over you in both those characters, have given it freely; and how indeed, having your interest and happiness sincerely at heart, could I do otherwise? but if you think his former behaviour, in which however there were only suspicions against him, deserves to be resented, at a time when those suspicions are absolutely destroyed, you must go through with your heroism, and see him no more; for as the poet says, ‘He comes too near who comes to be denied,’ so he has offended too much who needs a pardon.’

Sophia, who felt all the force of this reasoning, answered only by a blushing silence. Mr. Herbert then told her, that Sir Charles had declared to him that he would make the same settlements on her as had been stipulated²⁵⁴ for his mother; for he added, with equal delicacy and tenderness, ‘Miss Sophia, in virtue, wit, good sense, and every female excellence, brings me an immense portion.’

“Sir Charles, pursued Mr. Herbert smiling, by a strange contradiction, which is, I suppose, always found in lovers, though he was impatient to have me with you, yet could not help detaining²⁵⁵ me to have the pleasure of talking of you: he painted²⁵⁶ to me very naturally, the uneasiness he had suffered from your supposed contempt of him: he told me, that he was at one time determined to travel, in order to efface²⁵⁷ you from his remembrance;” ‘But, (said he, rising and unlocking a cabinet, from which he took out a paper and put into my hands,) you shall judge whether amidst all my resentment I did not still love Miss Sophia; that is my will, which I ordered to be drawn up previous to my intended journey.’

“He then, to spare me the trouble of reading it all through, pointed to the place where you was mentioned, and I found he had bequeathed²⁵⁸ you an estate of four hundred pounds a year for life, and five thousand pounds to be disposed of as you pleased.”

This last circumstance touched Sophia so much that tears filled her eyes: she sighed, and turned her head aside to conceal her emotion, while Mr. Herbert, without seeming to observe it, continued

²⁵³ To suffer to enter; to grant entrance ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “admit, v.a.”).

²⁵⁴ To contract; to bargain; to settle terms ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “stipulate, v.n.”).

²⁵⁵ “To withhold; to keep back ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “detain, v.a.”).

²⁵⁶ To describe; to represent ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “paint, v.a.”).

²⁵⁷ To destroy; to wear away ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “efface, v.a.”).

²⁵⁸ To leave by will to another ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “bequeath, v.a.”).

to repeat to her several expressions used by Sir Charles, which shewed the greatness of his affection, and his veneration²⁵⁹ for her virtues.

‘We parted at length, pursued Mr. Herbert, extremely well satisfied with each other, and tomorrow, or next day at farthest, you may expect to see Sir Charles here; for he told me, that if he received no ill news from me, he would conclude I had prepared him a favourable reception; and, presuming on this hope, he would immediately set his lawyer to work to prepare the writings, that nothing might be left undone which could convince you of the sincerity of his affections; therefore, my dear child, set your heart at rest; and since providence has thought fit to reward your piety²⁶⁰ and virtue, receive with humble gratitude that fortune to which you are raised, and which puts it so largely in your power to do good. I will now leave you, said the good old man rising, to your own reflections; I have scarce spoke a word yet to our kind friends here, for I was so impatient to see you, that I left them very abruptly.’

Mr. Herbert had no sooner left the room, than Sophia, in an ardent ejaculation, thanked heaven for thus relieving her from her distress: but it was long ere the tumult in her mind raised by such unhopd for happy news subsided, and gave place to that calm recollection which supplied a thousand pleasing ideas, and filled her with the softest emotions of gratitude, tenderness, and joy.

She was now freed from those tormenting doubts, which made her consider her tenderness for Sir Charles as a crime, and occasioned so many painful struggles in her mind. What joy to reflect that the man she loved was worthy of her affection! how pleasing was the prospect that opened to her view; to be blest with the power of shewing her gratitude to her friends, her piety to her mother; to repay her sister’s unkindness with acts of generosity; and indulge the benevolence of her heart in relieving every distress which fell within her power to relieve!

These were the advantages which she promised herself in the change of her fortune, and for these her grateful heart lifted itself up every moment in thanks and praise to that providence that bestowed them on her.

While Sophia was thus absorb’d in thought, Dolly opened the door, and running up to her, eagerly cried, ‘Tell me true, my dear miss, has not Mr. Herbert brought you some good news? I am sure he has; I never saw him so joyful in my life, and you look glad too,’ pursued she, peering in her face with a sweet earnestness²⁶¹. ‘May I not ask you, Miss Darnley, what this good news is?’

‘You may, my dear, said Sophia smiling, but not now; you shall know all soon. At present I would rather talk of your affairs.’

‘Indeed I am greatly obliged to you, miss, said Dolly, for what you have done for me. Mrs. Gibbons seems almost as kind to me as ever she was, and you have talked so sensibly to my mother, that

²⁵⁹ Reverend regard; awful respect ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “veneration, n.s.”).

²⁶⁰ Duty to parents or those in superiour relation ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “piety, n.s.”).

²⁶¹ Eagerness; warmth; vehemence; impetuosity([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “earnestness, n.s.”).

she repents of her behaviour to Mrs. Gibbons; and she likes Mr. William so well, that I am sure she would be glad to be reconciled to her.'

'That is what I have been labouring at all this time, resumed Sophia. If Mrs. Lawson can be persuaded to make some concessions to the fantastick old gentlewoman, all may go well yet: it shall be my care to bring them together; and if my endeavours to produce a reconciliation fail, perhaps I may be able to engage a more powerful mediator in your interest.'

Sophia had Sir Charles in her thoughts, who she doubted not would readily undertake the cause of the distressed lovers, and possibly add something to her Dolly's portion, to lessen the inequality there was between them in that point. She spoke with such a chearful confidence, that Dolly, full of hope and joy, thanked her with artless transports of gratitude that moved her even to tears.

The next day, though in expectation of seeing Sir Charles, her heart laboured with a thousand emotions; yet kindly attentive to the affairs of her friend, she resolved to make Mrs. Gibbons a visit, to prepare the way for the hoped for interview between her and Mrs. Lawson. As soon as she had disengaged herself from Mr. Herbert, she set out alone for Mrs. Gibbons's house; but scarcely had she crossed the first field when she saw William, who was as usual, sauntering about Mr. Lawson's grounds, in hopes of seeing his mistress.

Sophia beckoned to him, and he flew to meet her; for, next to Dolly, he thought her the most charming woman in the world; and he adored her for the goodness with which she interested herself in his and his Dolly's happiness.

When he drew near, Sophia told him she was going to visit his aunt; the youth respectfully expressed his concern that his aunt could not have that honour; she was gone, he said, to visit a relation who lived a few miles up the country.

Sophia then told him the design upon which she was going, and the favourable disposition Mrs. Lawson was in. 'I am persuaded, said she, all might be made up, if we could but bring them together. Mrs. Lawson only wants an opportunity to repair her fault; but how shall we contrive to give her this opportunity? what expedient²⁶² can we find out to overcome your aunt's obstinacy, and prevail upon her to enter Mrs. Lawson's door again?'

'I know one, madam, said the youth smiling, which I think would do.'

Sophia concluding from the timidity of his look, that she was concerned in this expedient, prest him to speak freely, assuring him she would assist to the utmost of her power.

'My aunt, madam, said he, is as you know a great observer of forms: she would not for the world fall under the censure of having failed in any part of ceremony or good breeding; now, madam, if you would be pleased to make a point of her returning your visit, and permit me to tell her that you are offended with her neglect, and that you insist upon this proof of her politeness, I am persuaded she will come.'

²⁶² Proper; fit; convenient; suitable ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/expedient), expedient, adj.').

‘Well, said Sophia, smiling, if you are of opinion this will do, you have my consent to say whatever you think will affect her most; make me as angry and as ceremonious as you please.’

‘Nothing shall be wanting on my part to promote the success of this affair, added she, with a graver look and accent; for I believe you have a sincere affection for my young friend, and I shall not be at rest till I see you both happy.’

The youth, in whose breast the sweet benevolence²⁶³ of her looks and words excited the strongest transports of gratitude, not able to find words to express his sense of her goodness, suddenly threw himself at her feet, and kissed her hand with a mixture of tenderness and awe.

Sophia, smiling at this sally, stepped back a little; upon which he rose up, and with a graceful confusion paid her his thanks: she again repeated her promise of serving him, and took leave: he bowed low, following her for some time with his eyes, and sent a thousand kind wishes after her.

Sophia, at her return, acquainted Dolly with what had passed between her lover and her, and filled her with pleasing hopes of the success of his scheme: but now the day wore away, she was in continual expectation of seeing Sir Charles; her heart throbbed with anxiety; every noise she heard, sounded like the trampling of horses, and then a universal trembling would seize her. She dreaded, yet wished for his arrival; and at every disappointment she sighed, and felt her heart sink with tender despondency.

Such were her agitations²⁶⁴, till the evening being far advanced, she gave up all hope of his coming that night. Mr. Herbert had assigned a very pleasing reason for his visit being deferred till the next day; and, her mind growing more composed, she went in search of the good old man, who, Dolly told her, was gone to walk in the meadows behind the house; for she had kept herself out of his sight as much as possible, unwilling that he should observe her emotions. She saw him at a distance, walking with a slow pace, and she perceived he saw her; but to her great surprise, she saw him cross into another field, and take a quite contrary way, on purpose to avoid her.

Struck with this little accident, she stood still and paused a few moments: she felt herself strangely alarmed, yet wondered why she should be so, and took her way back again to the house with sad forebodings on her mind.

[To be continued.]

²⁶³ Disposition to do good; kindness; charity; good will ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “despondency, n.s.”).

²⁶⁴ Violent motion of the mind; perturbation; disturbance of the thoughts ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), “agitation, n.s.”).

INSTALLMENT 8

WHEN Mr. Herbert returned from his walk, and met the curate²⁶⁵, and his little family at supper, Sophia, who heedfully observed him, saw an alteration in his countenance, which realized all her melancholy apprehensions, and convinced her that some new misfortune awaited her: his eyes, which studiously avoided her's, expressed nothing but grief and confusion; but he retired so early to his chamber, that Sophia, finding there was no hopes of his explaining himself that night, passed it in an anxiety of mind which suffered her not to taste the least repose. Early in the morning he knocked at her door, and desired her to join him in the garden; she was already drest, and instantly complied.

As soon as she came up to him, he took her hand, and pressed it affectionately, but spoke not a word.

Sophia, who feared, as much as she wished to know what had happened, had not power to ask for an explanation; so they both continued silent for some minutes.

At length Mr. Herbert told her he was going to London: Sophia, in a faltering accent, asked him what had happened to occasion this sudden resolution?

'Alas! my dear child, said the good old man, in great emotion, I am ashamed and grieved to tell you that —Sir Charles has, I fear, deceived me.

Although Sophia had reason to expect some sad reverse of fortune, and had endeavoured to prepare herself for it, yet this fatal confirmation of her fears shocked her so much, that Mr. Herbert, who saw a death-like paleness overspread her face, and felt her hand cold and trembling, fearing she would faint, made haste to lead her to a little bench of turf²⁶⁶ which was near them.

Sophia recovering, saw so much concern in his looks, that struggling to repress her own anguish, she endeavoured to comfort him, and smiling through the tears that filled her charming eyes, 'Let not this instance of my weakness alarm you, sir, said she; and doubt not but, with the assistance of heaven, I shall bear this strange insult with proper fortitude.'

'How worthy are you, my good child, of better fortune!' said Mr. Herbert; then taking a letter out of his pocket, 'My first design, pursued he, was to seek some explanation of this mysterious letter before I made you acquainted with it, but I perceived that my too apparent uneasiness had alarmed you, and I thought it would be less cruel to inform you of the whole matter, than to leave you in doubt and uncertainty: this letter was delivered to me yesterday in the evening, by one of Sir Charles's servants, just as was walking out towards the road, in hopes of meeting his master. My surprise at receiving a letter when I expected to see himself, made me open it instantly, without asking the servant any questions, and while I was reading it he went away, doubtless being directed to do so.'

²⁶⁵ A clergyman hired to perform the duties of another. ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "curate, n.s.").

²⁶⁶ A clod covered with grass. ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "turf, n.s.").

Mr. Herbert then gave the letter to Sophia, who unfolding it with trembling emotion, found it was as follows:

SIR,

Since it is impossible my marriage with Miss Sophia can ever take place, I wish you would look upon all that passed between us upon that subject, as a dream: I dreamt indeed when I imagined there was a woman in the world capable of a sincere attachment; and I ought to be ashamed to own that upon so delusive a hope I was ready to act in opposition to the general maxims²⁶⁷ of the world, and be pointed at as a silly romantic fellow. However, I beg you will assure the lady, that as I have no right to blame her conduct, so I have not the least resentment for it, and am so perfectly at ease on this occasion, that I can with great sincerity congratulate her on her approaching happiness. I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

CHARLES STANLEY.

Although this letter gave Sophia a sad certainty of her misfortune, yet it relieved her from those worst pangs²⁶⁸ which a heart in love can feel, the belief of being abandoned through indifference, or inconstancy: unperceived by ourselves, pride mixes with our most tender affections, and either aggravates or lessens the sense of every disappointment, in proportion as we feel ourselves humbled by the circumstances that attend it.

This ill-disguised jealousy, the personated calmness, the struggling resentment that appeared in this letter, convinced Sophia that Sir Charles was far from being at ease, and that to whatever cause his present unaccountable behaviour was owing, yet she was sure at least of not being indifferent to him.

It was not difficult to perceive that he had been deceived by some malicious reports, and her suspicions fell immediately upon Harriot; but rejecting this thought, as too injurious²⁶⁹ to her sister, she returned the letter to Mr. Herbert without speaking a word, but with a look much more serene and composed than before.

Mr. Herbert, who saw nothing in this letter like what her penetration²⁷⁰ had discovered, and who conceived it to be only a poor artifice to disengage himself from promises which he now repented of, was surprised to find her so much less affected with it than he expected, and asked her what she thought of it?

²⁶⁷ A general principle; a leading truth ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "maxim, n.s.").

²⁶⁸ Extreme pain; sudden paroxysm of torment ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "pang, n.s.").

²⁶⁹ Unjust; invasive of another's rights ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "injurious, adv. ").

²⁷⁰ Mental entrance into anything abstruse ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "penetration, n.s.").

Sophia told him, that she was fully persuaded Sir Charles had been prejudiced against her.

‘Do you think so, my dear, said he, after a little pause; then it is your sister to whom you are obliged for this kind office.’

‘I hope not, sir, replied Sophia, sighing; that circumstance would aggravate my concern—indeed I think it would be a crime in me to suspect her of being capable of such unkindness.’

‘Well, resumed Mr. Herbert, I will, if possible, discover this mystery before night; you shall hear from me to-morrow; in the mean time calm your mind, and resign yourself entirely to that providence, which while you continue thus good and virtuous, will never forsake you.’

Mr. Herbert now left her, to go and take leave of the curate and his family; and Sophia, whose fortune had undergone so many revolutions in so short a time, retired to her chamber, where she passed great part of the day alone, at once to indulge her melancholy and to conceal it from observation.

In the afternoon Dolly came up, in a great hurry of spirits, to acquaint her that Mrs. Gibbons was come to wait upon her, that she had been met at the door by her mother, and that several courtesies had passed between them.

The poor girl, though transported with joy at this favourable beginning, no sooner perceived by the pensive²⁷¹ air in Sophia’s countenance, and the sighs that escaped her, that her suspicions of some new disappointment having happened to her were true, than instantly forgetting the prosperous situation of her own affairs, her sweet face was overspread with tender grief, and a tear stole from her eyes; but Sophia, whom nothing could have awakened from that stupifying sorrow in which any great and sudden misfortune plunges the mind, but the desire of being useful to her friends, soon assumed a more chearful look, and hastened to receive her visitor.

Mrs. Gibbons was in full dress, and had omitted no superfluous²⁷² ornament that could serve to shew Sophia how well she understood every sort of punctilio²⁷³. As soon as the first compliments were over, ‘You see, madam, said she, what *affluence* your commands have over me; I once little thought that I should ever have entered this impolished house again; my nephew attended me to the door, but I would not suffer him to come in, because I am not sure that you are willing to let these people know the honour you do him by receiving his adorations.’

Sophia, though a little startled at these words, yet supposed she had no particular meaning in them, and ascribed all to her fantastick²⁷⁴ manner of expressing herself; but Mrs. Gibbons being resolved

²⁷¹ Sorrowful; mournfully serious ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “pensive, adj.”).

²⁷² Unnecessary; offensive by being more than sufficient ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “superfluous, adj.”).

²⁷³ A small nicety of behaviour; a nice point of exactness ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “punctilio, n.s.”).

²⁷⁴ Irrational; bred only in the imagination ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “fantastick, “adj.”).

to hasten the conclusion of an affair which she had very much at heart, spoke so intelligibly at last, that Sophia could no longer be ignorant of her design, all the ill consequences of which suddenly striking her imagination, she exclaimed in a tone of surprise and terror, 'Sure I am the most unfortunate creature in the world! is it possible, Mrs. Gibbons, that you can be serious? have you really given any cause for a report, that I receive your nephew's addresses? if you have, you have done me an irreparable injury.'

Sophia's spirits were so greatly agitated that she did not perceive how much of her situation these words discovered; so that Mrs. Gibbons, who saw the tears flow fast from her eyes, immediately comprehended the whole truth.

'I see plainly, said she, in great concern, that I have been deceived, and others perhaps have been so too; I shall never *disculpate* myself for being the cause of any misfortune to you: some more advantageous *treatise* has been on the *tapestry*, and this unlucky affair has done mischief.'

'Give me leave to ask you, madam, interrupted Sophia, with some peevishness, what foundation you had for believing that I considered your nephew as my lover? you know his heart has been long since engaged.'

'I acknowledge I have been to blame, my dear miss, resumed Mrs. Gibbons, I was too *sanguinary* in my hopes; but I beg you will *disclaim* no more, this will do no good, only tell me if it is possible to repair the harm I have done by my foolish schemes.'

To this Sophia made no answer; but Mrs. Gibbons, who wanted neither tenderness nor candor, and who was greatly concerned at the uneasiness she saw her under, urged her so frequently, and with so much earnestness, to tell her if she could be of any use in clearing up a mistake that had possibly been disadvantageous to her, that Sophia, still attentive amidst all her own distresses to the interest of her friend, thought this a favourable opportunity to serve her; and therefore told Mrs. Gibbons, that if she was really sincere in her offers, there was one way.

'I understand you, madam, interrupted Mrs. Gibbons, and I believe I may venture to say that I thought of this *expedition* before you did. I cannot, indeed, Miss Darnley, I cannot consent to my nephew's marriage with the young woman here; you know I have been affronted.'

Sophia now urged some arguments in favour of Mrs. Lawson, but chiefly rested her defence upon her ignorance of those forms of politeness and good breeding which Mrs. Gibbons was so perfectly mistress of.

This compliment put the old lady into so good a humor, that she cried out, 'Well, my dear Miss Darnley, in regard to you, I will take off the *prohibition* I laid on my nephew to visit here no more; and this I hope, added she smiling, will set matters right in another place; as for the rest, I shall take no resolution till I see how they behave.'

Sophia, in her transport at having succeeded so well with the old lady, felt all her own griefs suspended; and indeed when she reflected upon what had happened with regard to herself, she found she had less cause for reflection than Mr. Herbert, or her own fears, had suggested.

Mrs. Gibbons acknowledged that she had flattered herself with the hope of her nephew's being well received by her; and that, in consequence of it, she had talked of their marriage as an event which was very likely to happen, and which would give her great joy. Sophia, being fully persuaded that these reports had reached Sir Charles, though by what means she was not so well able to determine, easily accounted for that jealousy and resentment which had produced so strange an inconsistency in his behaviour, and which Mr. Herbert considered as a piece of artifice to palliate his lightness and inconstancy.

The good old man, animated by his affection for the poor afflicted Sophia, rode with the utmost speed to town, and alighted at the house of the young baronet. The servants informed him, that their master was in the country, which was all the intelligence they could give him; for they neither knew where he was, nor when he would return. Mr. Herbert, perplexed and concerned at this new disappointment, repaired immediately to Mrs. Darnley's, hoping to hear some news of him there.

Harriot, in answer to his enquiries, told him with an air of triumph, that the same day they returned from visiting Sophia, Sir Charles had waited on her mamma and her, and had as usual past great part of the afternoon with them.

Mr. Herbert, who was struck with this incident, endeavoured to make some discoveries concerning their conversation, and Harriot's malice made this no difficult matter: for she could not forbear throwing out some sarcasms against her sister, whose extreme sensibility, she insinuated, had already found out a new object.

Mr. Herbert, by his artful questions, drew her into a confession of all that had passed between her and the baronet upon this subject; and was convinced that her malignant hints had poisoned his mind with suspicions unfavourable to Sophia.

He went away full of indignation at her treachery, and still doubtful of Sir Charles's sincerity, who he could not suppose would have been so easily influenced by Harriot's suggestions, (whose envious disposition he well knew,) if his intentions had been absolutely right.

The next morning he received a letter from Sophia, in which she acquainted him with the discoveries she had made; and modestly hinted her belief that Sir Charles had been imposed upon by this report of her intended marriage, which she found was spread through the village, and which, as it was very probable, he had intelligence from thence, had confirmed any idle raillery to that purpose, which her sister might have indulged herself in.

Mr. Herbert reflecting upon all these unlucky circumstances, began to suppose it possible that Sir Charles had been really deceived. He went again to his house, but had the mortification to hear from a servant whom he had not seen the day before, that the baronet was at his seat in—

Thither the good old man resolved to go; the inconveniencies and expence of such a journey, which in his years, and narrow circumstances were not inconsiderable, had not weight enough with him to make him balance a moment whether he should transact this affair by letter, or in person. The happiness of his dear and amiable charge depended upon his success: he therefore delayed no longer than to make the necessary preparations for his journey, and, after writing to Sophia to

acquaint her with his design, he set out for Sir Charles's seat, where he met with a new and more severe disappointment. The first news he heard was, that the baronet was not in that part of the country; and, upon a fuller enquiry of his servants, he was informed that their master had the morning before set out for Dover with an intention to go to Paris.

Mr. Herbert, dispirited with this news, and fatigued with his fruitless journey, retired to his inn, where he passed the lonely hours in melancholy reflections upon the capricious behaviour of Sir Charles, and the undeserved distresses of the innocent Sophia.

Sir Charles, however, notwithstanding appearances, was at present more unhappy than guilty. His resolution to marry Sophia, though suddenly formed, was not the less sincere: he had always loved her with the most ardent passion, and had not the light character of her mother and sister concurred with those prejudices which his youth, his fortune, and his converse with the gay world led him into, his heart, which never ceased to do homage to her virtue, would have sooner suggested to him the only means of being truly happy.

An overstrained delicacy likewise proved another source of disquietude to him. The inequality of their circumstances gave rise to a thousand tormenting doubts: he was afraid, that dazzled with the splendor of his fortune, she would sacrifice her inclinations to her interest, and give him her hand without her heart; and when doing justice to the greatness of her mind, and the real delicacy of her sentiments, he rejected this supposition as too injurious to her, his busy imagination conjured up new forms of distrust: he trembled left, mistaking gratitude for love, she should be deceived by her own generosity and nice sense of obligation, and imagine it was the lover she preferred, when the benefactor²⁷⁵ only touched her heart.

Such was the perplexed state of his mind, when Mrs. Darnley and Harriot proposed making her a visit. With some difficulty he conquered his desire of accompanying them; but his impatience to hear of her, carried him again to Mrs. Darnley's much earlier in the evening than it was likely they would return; presuming on his intimacy in the family, he scrupled not to go up stairs, telling the servant he would wait till the ladies came home.

He sat down in the dining room, where he gazed on Sophia's picture a long time. At last a sudden fancy seized him to visit her apartment, which he knew was on the second floor: he ascended the stairs without being perceived, and with a tender emotion entered the room where his beloved Sophia used to pass so many of her retired hours.

It was still elegantly neat, as when its lovely inmate was there; for Harriot, who hated this room, because it contained so many monuments of her sister's taste and industry, never went into it; and it remained in the same order that she had left it.

²⁷⁵ He that confers a benefit; frequently he that contributes to some publick charity ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "benefactor, n.s.").

The first thing that drew the young baronet's²⁷⁶ attention, was a fire screen of excellent workmanship; it was a flower-piece, and executed with peculiar taste and propriety: the wainscot²⁷⁷ was adorned with several drawings, neatly framed and glassed. In this art Sophia took great delight, having while her father lived, appropriated all her pocket-money to the payment of a master to instruct her in it. Sir Charles considered the subjects of these drawings with peculiar pleasure. The delicate pencil of Sophia had here represented the virtues and the graces, from those lively ideas which existed in her own charming mind.

Her little library next engaged his notice: many of the books that composed it he had presented her; but he was curious to see those which her own choice had directed her to, and in this examination he met with many proofs of her piety as well as of the excellence of her taste.

Several compositions of her own now fell into his hands; he read them with eagerness, and, charmed with this discovery of those treasures of wit, which she with modest diffidence so carefully concealed, he felt his admiration and tenderness for her encrease every moment.

While he was anxiously searching for more of her papers, a little shagreen case fell from one of the shelves upon the ground. He took it up, and as every thing that belonged to her excited his curiosity, he opened it immediately, and with equal surprise and pleasure, saw his own miniature in water colours, which was evidently the performance of Sophia herself.

Had it been possible for her to imagine the sudden and powerful effect the sight of this picture would have upon the heart of Sir Charles, she would not have suffered so much uneasiness for the loss of it as she really had; for forgetting where she had laid it, she supposed it had dropt out of her pocket, and was apprehensive of its having fallen into her sister's hands, who she knew would not fail to turn this incident to her disadvantage.

While Sir Charles gazed upon this artless²⁷⁸ testimony of Sophia's affection for him, the softest gratitude, the tenderest compassion filled his soul. 'Oh my Sophia, said he, do you then truly love me! and have I cruelly trifled with your tenderness!'

This thought melted him even to tears; he felt in himself a detestation of those depraved principles which had suggested to him a design of debasing such purity! he wondered at the hardness of his own heart, that could so long resist the influence of her gentle virtues, and suffer such sweet sensibility to waste itself in anxious doubts, and disappointed hope.

Being now determined to do justice to her merit, and make himself happy, his first design was to go immediately to Mr. Lawson's; but, reflecting that Sophia had great reason to be dissatisfied with his conduct, and that to remove her prejudices, the utmost caution and delicacy was to be observed, he

²⁷⁶ The lowest degree of honor that is hereditary; it is below baron and above a knight; and has the precedence of all other knights, except the knights of the garter. It was first founded by king James I. A.D. 1611. Cowei. i" ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "baronet, n.s.").

²⁷⁷ The inner wood covering of a wall ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "wainscot, n.s.").

²⁷⁸ Contrived without skill ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "artless, adj.").

conceived it would be more proper to make a direct application to Mr. Herbert, whom she loved and revered as a father, than to present himself before her, while her mind yet laboured with those unfavourable suspicions for which he had given but too much cause; and hence new fears and doubts arose to torment him. He dreaded lest her just resentment for his injurious designs should have weakened those tender impressions she had once received, and that in the pride of offended virtue every softer sentiment would be lost.

Impatient of this cruel state of suspense and inquietude,²⁷⁹ he left Sophia's apartment, and repairing to the dining-room, rang the bell for the servant, of whom he enquired where Mr. Herbert lodged. Having obtained a direction, he went immediately to the house; Mr. Herbert was not at home, and Sir Charles grieved at this disappointment, and at Mrs. Darnley's not returning that night, from whom he hoped to have heard some news of Sophia; the agitation of his mind made him think it an age till the next day, in which he determined to put an end to all his perplexities, and to fix his fate.

After his interview with Mr. Herbert, and the good old man's departure to prepare Sophia for his intended visit, the young baronet resigned his whole soul to tenderness and joy. His impatience to see Sophia increased with his hope of finding her sentiments for him unchanged, and he regretted a thousand times his having suffered Mr. Herbert to go away without him.

Mean time a card came from Mrs. Darnley and Harriot, acquainting him that they were returned, and thanking him for the use of his servants and chariot. Sir Charles, eager to hear news of his Sophia, went immediately to wait on them, and scarce were the first compliments over, when he enquired for her with such apparent emotion, that, Harriot mortified to the last degree, resolved to be even with him, and said every thing that she thought would torment him, and prejudice her sister.

She told him that Sophia was the most contented creature in the world, and that she was so charmed with her present way of life, and her new companions, that she seemed to have forgot all her old friends, and even her relations. 'She is grown a meer country girl, said she, is always wandering about in the fields and meadows, followed by a young rustic who has fallen in love with her. I rallied her a little upon her taste; but I found she could not bear it, and indeed he is extremely handsome, and she says, has had a genteel education.'

Harriot was at once pleased and grieved at observing the effect these insinuations had on Sir Charles; his colour changed, he trembled, and fixing his eyes on the ground, he remained pensive and silent, while Harriot, notwithstanding her mother's significant frowns, proceeded in a malicious detail of little circumstances partly invented, and partly mistaken, which fixed the sharpest stings of jealousy in his heart.

If in dealing with cunning persons we were always to consider their ends, in order to interpret their speeches, much of their artifice²⁸⁰ would lose its effect; but Sir Charles had so contemptible an opinion of Harriot's understanding, that although he knew she was malicious, he never suspected

²⁷⁹ Disturbed state; want of quiet; attack on the quiet ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "inquietude, n.s.").

²⁸⁰ Trick; fraud; stratagem" ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "artifice, n.s.").

her of being capable of laying schemes to gratify her malice, and did not suppose she was mistress of invention enough to form so plausible a tale as that she had told.

Impatient under those cruel doubts which now possessed him, he resolved to go, late as it was in the evening, to Mr. Lawson's house, and taking an abrupt leave of Mrs. Darnley and her daughter, he went home, and ordered his horses to be got ready. He scarce knew his own design by taking this journey at so improper a time; but in the extreme agitation of his mind, the first idea of relief that naturally presented itself was to see Sophia, who alone could destroy or confirm his fears; and this he eagerly pursued without any farther reflection.

The servant to whom he had sent his orders, made no haste to execute them, as conceiving it to be a most extravagant whim in his master to set out upon a journey so late, and in that manner. While he with studied delays protracted the time, hoping for some change in his resolutions, Sir Charles racked with impatience, counted moments for hours; message after message was dispatched to the groom. The horses at length were brought, and Sir Charles with only one servant gallop'd away, never stopping till he came to the place where Sophia resided.

It was now night, and the indecorum of making a visit at such a time in a family where he was a stranger first striking his thoughts, he resolved to alight²⁸¹ at an inn which he saw at a small distance, and there consider what it was best for him to do.

A guest of his appearance soon engaged the attention of the host and his wife. They quitted two men with whom they had then been talking, and, with a great deal of officious²⁸² civility, attended upon Sir Charles, who desired to be shewn into a room. As he was following the good woman, who declared he should have the best in her house, the two men with whom she had been talking, bowed to him when he passed by them; the salute of the younger having a certain grace in it that drew his attention, he looked back on him, and at the sight of a very handsome face, and a person uncommonly genteel,²⁸³ his heart, by its throbbing emotion, immediately suggested to him, that this beautiful youth was the lover of his Sophia.

The jealousy which Harriot's insinuations had kindled in his heart, now raged with redoubled force; this rival, whom she had called a rustic, and whom he fondly hoped to find such, possessed the most attractive graces of form, and probably wanted neither wit nor politeness. Sophia's youth, her tenderness, her sensibility wounded by his dissembled indifference, and the cruel capriciousness of his conduct, all disposed her to receive a new impression, and who so proper to touch her heart as this lovely youth, whose passion, as innocent as it was ardent and sincere, banished all doubt and suspicion, and left her whole soul open to the soft pleadings of gratitude and love?

²⁸¹ This implies coming to stop from being in motion. This is usually in the context of something coming down and stopping such as a bird coming down and stopping after a flight in the sky ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "alight, v.n.").

²⁸² Kind, doing good offices ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "officious, adj.").

²⁸³ Polite and showing good manner in the way one conducts oneself ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "genteel, adj.").

While he was wholly absorbed in these tormenting reflections, and incapable of taking any resolution, the officious landlady entered his chamber to take his orders for supper.

Sir Charles, surprised to find it was so late, resolved to stay there all night, and after giving the good woman some directions, his restless curiosity impelled him to ask her several questions concerning the old man and the youth whom he had seen talking to her.

The hostess, who was as communicative as he could desire, told him, that the old man was one farmer Gibbons, of whom she had been buying a load of hay; that the young one was his son, and a great scholar. ‘His aunt, pursued she, breeds him up to be a gentleman, and she has a power of money, and designs to leave it all to him, much good may it do him, for he is as handsome a young man as one would desire to see. Some time ago it was all over our town that he was going to be married to the parson’s youngest daughter, and she is a pretty creature, and *deserves* him if he was more richer, and handsomer than he is; but whatever is the matter, the old folks have changed their mind, and his aunt, they say, wants to make up a match between him and a fine London lady that boards at the parson’s; but I’ll never believe it till I see it, for she and the parson’s²⁸⁴ daughter are great friends, they say, and it would not be a friendly part to rob the poor girl of her sweetheart. To say the truth, I believe there is some juggling among them; but this I keep to myself, for I would not make mischief; therefore I never tell my thoughts to any body, but I wish the young folks well.’

Sir Charles, who had listened to her with great emotion, dismissed her now, that he might be at liberty to reflect on what he had heard, which although it did not lead him to a full discovery of the truth, yet it suggested thoughts which relieved him in some degree from those dreadful pangs of jealousy with which he had hitherto been tortured, and balanced at least his fears and his hopes.

His impatience to free himself from this state of perplexity and suspence, allowed him but little repose that night; he rose as soon as the day appeared, and it was with some difficulty that he prevailed upon himself to defer his visit till a seasonable hour; and then being informed that Mr. Lawson’s house was scarce a mile distant, he left his servant and horses at the inn, and walked thither, amidst a thousand anxious thoughts, which made him dread as much as he wished for an interview, which was to decide his fate.

As he drew near the house, he perceived a young man sauntering about in an adjacent field, whose air and mien had a great resemblance of the youth whom he had seen in the inn. Sir Charles, eager to satisfy his doubts, followed him at a distance, and the youth turning again his wishing eyes towards the house, the baronet had a full view of his face.

At the sight of his young rival his heart throbbed as if it would leave his breast: he hastily retreated behind the hedge, determined to watch his motions; for he imagined, and with reason, that he came there to meet his mistress; and who that mistress was, whether Sophia, or the curate’s daughter, was the distracting doubt, which he now expected to have satisfied.

²⁸⁴ The priest of a parish; one that has a parochial charge or cure of souls ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “parson, n.s.”).

He walked along by the side of the hedge, still keeping William in sight, who suddenly turning back, rather flew than ran to meet a woman who beckoned to him. Sir Charles saw at once his Sophia, and the fatal sign, which planted a thousand daggers in his heart. Trembling and pale he leaned against a tree, which concealed him from view, and saw her advance towards his rival, saw her in earnest discourse with him; and, to compleat his distraction and despair, saw the happy youth throw himself at her feet, doubtless to thank her for the sacrifice she made to him of a richer lover.

Such was the inference he drew from this action; and now rage and indignation²⁸⁵ succeeding to grief, in these first transports, he was upon the point of discovering himself, and sacrificing the hated youth to his vengeance; but a moment's reflection shewed him the dishonour of a contest with so despicable a rival, and turned all his resentment against Sophia, who having quitted her supposed lover, took her way back again to the house. Sir Charles followed her with disordered haste, resolved to load her with reproaches for her inconstancy; then, unwilling to gratify her pride by such an acknowledgment of his weakness, he turned back, cursing love, women, and his own ill fate. In this temper he wandered about a long time; at last he again returned to the inn, where after giving orders to have his horses got ready, he wrote that letter to Mr. Herbert, in which he so well disguised the anguish of his heart, that the good old man believed his breaking off the affair was the effect of his lightness and inconstancy only, though Sophia's quicker penetration easily discovered the latent jealousy that had dictated it.

Sir Charles ordered his servant to deliver the letter into Mr. Herbert's hands; then mounting his horse, he bid him follow him as soon as he had executed his commission.²⁸⁶ The young baronet, who retired to his country seat to conceal his melancholy, and fondly flattered himself that he should soon overcome that fatal passion which had been the source of so much disgust to him, found his mind so cruelly tortured with the remembrance of Sophia, that he reassumed his first design of going abroad, and unfortunately set out for Dover, the day before Mr. Herbert's arrival.

The good old man being obliged to send Sophia this bad news, filled his letter with tender consolations, and wise and prudent counsels: he exhorted her to bear this stroke of fortune with that dignity of patience which distinguishes the good and wise.

'The virtue of prosperity, said he, is temperance, the virtue of adversity fortitude; it is this last which you are now called upon to exert, and which the innocence of your life may well inspire you with; for be assured, my dear child, that it is the greatest consolation under misfortunes to be conscious of having always meant well, and to be convinced that nothing but guilt deserves to be considered as a severe evil.'

Sophia in her answer displayed a mind struggling against its own tenderness, offering up its disappointed hopes, its griefs, and desires, in pious sacrifice to the will of Providence, and seeking in religion all its consolation and support.

²⁸⁵ Anger mingled with contempt or construct ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "indignation, n.s.").

²⁸⁶ A trust; a warrant by which any trust is held, or authority exercised ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "commission, n.s.").

‘Can a virtuous person, said she, however oppressed by poverty, and in consequence neglected by the world, be said to want friends and comforters who can look into his own mind with modest approbation,²⁸⁷ and to whom recollection furnishes a source of joy? Every good action he has performed is a friend, every instance of pious resignation is a comforter, who cheer him with present peace, and support him with hopes of future happiness. Can he be said to be alone, and deprived of the pleasures of society, who converses with saints and angels? is he without distinction and reward whose life his almighty Creator approves?’

[To be continued.]

INSTALLMENT 9

THE loss of Sir Charles having clouded all Sophia’s views of happiness, she earnestly intreated Mr. Herbert’s permission to settle herself in that humble station to which providence²⁸⁸ seemed to call her; and as she believed Mrs. Gibbons might be very useful to her upon this occasion, she resolved to apply to her as soon as she had his answer.

Notwithstanding all her endeavours to bear this shock of fate with patience, a fixed melancholy took possession of her mind, convinced that Sir Charles had loved her, and that by an unfortunate concurrence of circumstances he had been prevented from giving her the utmost proof of his affection; her tenderness no longer combatted by suspicions to his prejudice, gained new force every day, and all his actions now appeared to her in a favourable point of view: so true it is, that when a person is found less guilty than he is suspected, he is concluded more innocent than he really is.

Mr. Herbert, after a long silence, at length acquainted her, that he was ill, and desired her not to leave Mr Lawson’s till she heard further from him.

The shortness of this billet the trembling hand with which it appeared to be written, filled Sophia with the most dreadful apprehensions. Sir Charles was now forgot, and all her thoughts were taken up with the danger of her worthy friend: she determined to go to him; and although Mr. Lawson and his wife endeavoured to, dissuade her from taking such a journey, and William, urged by Dolly, and his own eagerness to serve her, offered to go and bring her an exact account of the state of his health, yet her purpose remained unalterable.

‘My dear benefactor is ill, said she, and has none but strangers about him: it is fit that I should go and attend him; and if I must lose him, pursued she, bursting into tears, it will be some comfort to me to reflect that I have done my duty.’

She set out early the next morning in the stage-coach: Dolly wept at parting, and engaged her lover to attend Sophia to her journey’s end; that if Mr. Herbert should be worse than they apprehended, he might be near to assist and comfort her.

²⁸⁷ The act of approving, or expressing himself pleased ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “approbation, n.s.”).

²⁸⁸ Foresight; timely care; forecast; the act of providing ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “providence, n.s.”).

Sophia, when she saw him riding by the side of the coach, attempted to persuade him to return; but William charmed to have an opportunity of expressing his zeal²⁸⁹ for her service, would not quit her; and her spirits being too weak to contest this point with him, she was obliged to suffer his attendance.

They reached the place where Mr. Herbert was, in the evening of the third day: he had taken lodgings at the house, of a farmer, where he was attended with great tenderness and care.

Sophia, appeared with so deep a concern upon her countenance, and enquired for him with such extreme emotion, that the good woman of the house concluding she was his daughter, thought it necessary before she answered her questions, to preach patience and submission to her, wisely observing, that we are all mortal, and that death spares nobody, from the squire²⁹⁰ to the plowman.

She ran on in this manner till she perceived Sophia grow as pale as death, and close her eyes: she had just time to prevent her from falling, and with William's assistance, placed her in a chair, where while she applied remedies to recover her from her swoon, the youth with tears in his eyes, asked her softly how long Mr. Herbert had been dead.

'Dead! repeated the farmer's wife, who told you he was dead? no, no, it is not so bad as that neither.'

William rejoiced to hear this, and as soon as Sophia shewed some signs of returning life, he greeted her with the welcome, news. She cast a look full of doubt and anguish upon the countrywoman, who confirmed his report, and offered to go with her to the gentleman's room. Sophia instantly found her strength return; she followed her with trembling haste; and, left her presence should surprise Mr. Herbert, she directed the good woman to tell him, that a friend of his was come to see him.

She heard him answer in a weak voice, but with some emotion, "It is my dear child, bring her to me."

Sophia immediately appeared, and throwing herself upon her knees at his bed-side, burst into tears, and was unable to speak.

The good old man holding one of her hands prest in his, tenderly blamed her for the trouble she had given herself in coming so far to visit him; but acknowledged at the same time, that this instance of her affection was extremely dear to him, and that her presence gave him inexpressible comfort.

Sophia entered immediately upon the office of a nurse to her benefactor, and performed all the duties of the most affectionate child to the best of parents.

Mr. Herbert employed the little remaining strength he had in endeavours to comfort her, and in pious exhortations. 'Weep not for me, my dear child, would he say, but rather rejoice that the innocence of my life has diverted death of his terrors, and enabled me to meet him with calm resignation, and with

²⁸⁹ Passionate ardour for any person or cause ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "zeal, n.s.").

²⁹⁰ A gentleman next in rank to a knight. ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "squire, n.s.").

humble hope. At this awful hour how little would it avail me, that I had been rich, that I had been great and powerful? but what comforts do I not feel from an unreproving conscience? these comforts every one has it in his power to procure; live virtuous²⁹¹ then, my dear Sophia, that you may die in peace: how small is the difference between the longest and the shortest life! if its pleasures be few, its miseries are so likewise; how little do they enjoy whom the world calls happy! how little do they suffer whom it pronounces wretched! one point of fleeting time past, and death reduces all to an equality. But the distinction between virtue and vice²⁹², and its future happiness and misery are eternal.'

Sophia had need of all the consolation she derived from her reflections on the virtue and piety²⁹³ of her friend, to enable her to bear the apprehensions of his approaching death with any degree of fortitude²⁹⁴; but when she least expected it, his distemper²⁹⁵ took a favourable turn, and in a few days the most dangerous symptoms were removed.

The Bath waters being judged absolutely necessary for the entire reestablishment of his health, he resolved to go thither as soon as he had recovered strength enough to bear the journey.

Sophia at his earnest desire consented to return to Mr. Lawson's, and remain there till he came from Bath, but she would not quit him till he was able to take this journey; and by the sweetness of her conversation, her tender assiduity²⁹⁶, and watchful care, contributed so much towards his recovery, that he was soon in a condition to travel with safety.

He accompanied her the first day's journey to Mr. Lawson's; and being met at the inn by this worthy friend and young William, he consigned his beloved charge to their care, and pursued his way to Bath.

Sophia was received with great joy by Mrs. Lawson and her daughters: Dolly hung a long time upon her neck in transports, and as soon as they were alone, informed her that Mrs. Gibbons and her mother were perfectly reconciled; that she had consented to her nephew's marriage, and even shewed an impatience to conclude it: but I prevailed,²⁹⁷ said she, to have the ceremony delayed till

²⁹¹ In a virtuous manner; according to the rules of virtue ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "virtuous, adj.").

²⁹² The course of action opposite to virtue; depravity of manners; inordinate life ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "vice, n.s.").

²⁹³ Discharge of duty to God ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "piety, n.s.").

²⁹⁴ Courage; bravery; magnanimity; greatness of mind; power of acting or suffering well ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "fortitude, n.s.")

²⁹⁵ Disorder; uneasiness; the peccant predominance of some humour; properly a slight illness; indisposition. ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "distemper, n.s.").

²⁹⁶ Diligence; closeness of application ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "assiduity, n.s.").

²⁹⁷ To overcome; to gain the superiority. With *on* or *upon*, sometimes *over* or *against* ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "prevail, v.n.").

you, my dear friend, could be present; for I could not think of being happy, while, you to whom I owe all, was afflicted.

Sophia embraced her tenderly, congratulated her upon her change of fortune, and gave many praises to her lover, to whom she acknowledged great obligations for his care and attention to her.

Dolly's cheeks glowed with pleasure while she heard her William commended by one whom she so much loved and revered.

The young lovers were married a few days afterwards; and Sophia, who had so earnestly endeavoured to bring about this union, and had suffered so much in her own interest by her solicitude concerning it, was one of those to whom it gave the most satisfaction.

Mean time Mr. Herbert continued indisposed at Bath, and Sophia uneasy, left in this increase of his expences, her residence at Mr. Lawson's should lay him under some difficulties, resolved to ease him as soon as possible of the charge of her maintenance: she explained her situation to Mrs. Gibbons, and requested her assistance in procuring²⁹⁸ her a place.

Mrs. Gibbons expressed great tenderness and concern for her upon this occasion, and assured her she would employ all her interest in her service. She accordingly mentioned her with great praise to a widow lady of a very affluent fortune, who had established such a character for generosity and goodness, that she hoped if she could be induced to take Sophia under her protection her fortune would be made.

Mrs. Howard, so was the lady called, no sooner heard that a young woman of merit, well born, and genteely educated was reduced to go to service for subsistence, than she exclaimed with great vehemence against the avarice and luxury of the rich and great, who either hoarded for their unthankful heirs, or lavished in expensive pleasures those superfluous sums which ought to be applied to the relief of the indigent. 'Oh that I had a fortune, cried she, as large as my heart, there should not be one distressed person in the world! I must see this young lady Mrs. Gibbons, and I must do something for her. You have obliged me infinitely by putting it in my power to gratify the unbounded benevolence of my heart upon a deserving object.'

Mrs. Gibbons, when she related this conversation to Sophia, filled her with an extreme impatience to see the lady, not from any mean considerations of advantage to herself, but admiration of so excellent a character. She accompanied Mrs. Gibbons in a visit to her at her country-seat, which was but a few miles distant from the village where they lived; and Mrs. Howard was so pleased with her at this first interview, that she gave her an invitation to spend the remainder of the summer with her, and this in so obliging a manner, that Sophia immediately complied, not thinking it necessary to wait till she had consulted Mr. Herbert upon this offer, as she was fully persuaded he could have no objections to her accepting it, Mrs. Howard being so considerable by her family and fortune, and so estimable²⁹⁹ by her character.

²⁹⁸ To obtain; to acquire ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "procure, v.a.").

²⁹⁹ Worthy of esteem; worthy of some degree of honour and respect ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "estimable, adj.").

This lady, who had made an early discovery of Sophia's economical talents, set her to work immediately after her arrival; her task was to embroider a white sattin negligee, which she undertook with great readiness, pleased at having an opportunity of obliging a woman of so generous a disposition, and in some degree to requite³⁰⁰ her for her hospitality.

Mrs. Howard indeed always prevented those on whom she conferred favours from incurring the guilt of ingratitude; for she took care to be fully repaid for any act of benevolence; and having a wonderful art in extracting advantage to herself from the necessities of others, she sometimes sought out the unfortunate with a solicitude³⁰¹ that did great honour to her charity, which was sure to be its own reward. A few ostentatious³⁰² benefactions had sufficiently established her character; and while her name appeared among the subscribers to some fashionable charity, who could suspect that her table was served with a parsimony which would have disgraced a much smaller fortune; that her rents from her indigent tenants were exacted with the most unrelenting rigor, and the naked and hungry sent sighing from her gate?

Nothing is more certain than what is called liberality³⁰³ is often no more than the vanity of giving, of which some persons are fonder than of what they give. But the vanity of giving publicly is most prevailing; and hence it happens, that those who are most celebrated for their charity, are in reality least sensible to the feelings of humanity: and the same persons from whom the most affecting representation of private distress could not force the least relief, have been among the first to send their contributions to any new foundation.

Sophia knew not how to reconcile many circumstances in Mrs. Howard's conduct, with her general professions of benevolence and generosity; but that lady had been so used to disguise herself to others, that at last she did not know herself; and the warmth and vehemence with which she delivered her sentiments imposed almost as much upon herself as her hearers.

Sophia's amiable qualities however soon produced their usual effects, and inspired Mrs. Howard with as much friendship for her as so interested a temper was capable of. She wished to see her fortune established, and was very desirous of serving her as far as she could, consistent with her prudent maxims, which were to make other persons the source of those benefits, the merit of which she arrogated to herself.

Chance soon furnished her with an opportunity of exerting her talents in favour of Sophia, and of engaging, as she conceived, her eternal gratitude. A country lady of her acquaintance coming one day to visit her, with her son, a clownish ignorant youth, Mrs. Howard was encouraged by the frequent glances he gave Sophia, to form a scheme for marrying her to him; and in this she foresaw

³⁰⁰ To repay; to retaliate good or ill; to recompense ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "requite, v.a.").

³⁰¹ Anxiety; carefulness ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "solicitude, n.s.").

³⁰² Boastful; vain; fond of show; fond to expose to view ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "ostentatious, adj.").

³⁰³ Munificence; bounty; generosity; generous profusion ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "liberality, n.s.").

so many possible advantages to herself from Sophia's grateful disposition, that she pursued it with the most anxious solicitude.

Mr. Barton, so was the young squire called, having conceived a liking for Sophia, repeated his visits frequently, emboldened by Mrs. Howard's civilities, who took every occasion of praising Sophia, and insinuating that he would be extremely happy in such a wife.

She sometimes left him alone with Sophia, in hopes that he would declare his passion to her: but the rustic, awed by the dignity of her person and manners, durst not even raise his eyes to look on her; so that Mrs. Howard finding the affair did not advance so fast as she wished, rallied Sophia upon her: ill-timed reserve, and hinted her views in her favour, which she considering as an effect of her friendship, listened to with respect and even gratitude, though her heart refused to concur in them.

This conversation passed in the presence of Mrs. Howard's only son, a youth about nineteen, who had come from the university to pass a few days with his mother. As soon as she had quitted Sophia he approached her, and with a look of tenderness and concern, told her, 'He was sorry to find his mother so zealous an advocate for Mr. Barton, who could not possibly deserve her.'

'Nor can I possibly deserve him, replied Sophia with a smile; he is too rich.'

'Love only and merit can deserve you, resumed the young student, sighing, and if love was merit, I know one who might—hope—'

He paused and hesitated, and Sophia, to whom the language of love in any mouth but Sir Charles's was odious³⁰⁴, suddenly quitted him, to avoid the continuance of a discourse which she considered as mere unmeaning gallantry³⁰⁵.

Mean time, her rustic lover not having courage enough to declare his passion to her, had recourse to the indulgence of his mother, who till that time had never refused any of his desires.

He told her that he never liked any young woman so well in his life as Mrs. Sophia Darnley; and that he was sure she would make a good wife, because Mrs. Howard had told him so, and encouraged him to break his mind to her, but he was ashamed: he declared he would marry no body else, and begged his mother to get her for him.

Mrs. Barton, full of rage against her neighbour, for thus endeavouring to ensnare her son into a marriage, as she conceived unworthy of him, resolved to go to her and load her with reproaches. While her chariot was getting ready, she continued to question her son, and heard a great many particulars from him which convinced her that his affections were more deeply engaged than she had imagined.

³⁰⁴ Hateful; detestable; abominable ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "odious, adj.").

³⁰⁵ Courtship; refined address to women ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "gallantry, n.s.").

After ordering the young squire to be locked up till her return, she flew to Mrs. Howard, and with the most violent transports of rage, upbraided her with the treacherous part she had acted, by seducing her son into a liking for a poor creature who was a dependent upon her charity, and whom she took this method to get rid of.

Mrs. Howard, who held Mrs. Barton in great contempt, on account of her ignorance, and valued herself extremely upon her philosophic command over her passions, listened with an affected calmness to all Mrs. Barton's invectives; and when she found she had railed herself out of breath, she began to declaim in a solemn accent against avarice³⁰⁶, and that vile and fordid disposition of parents, who in the marriage of their children preferred the dross of riches to the real treasures of wisdom and virtue. She very charitably lamented Mrs. Barton's want of discernment, and littleness of mind; and concluded that Miss Sophia's, merit rendered her deserving of a husband even more considerable than Mr. Barton.

'Then marry her to your own son, replied Mrs. Barton, with a sneer; no doubt but he will be more worthy of her.'

'If my son should declare a passion for Miss Sophia, resumed Mrs. Howard, it would soon be seen how far my sentiments are exalted above yours.'

'I am glad to hear this, returned Mrs. Barton, for I am very sure Mr. Howard is in love with this wonderful creature whom you praise so much; and since you are so willing to make her your daughter-in-law, I shall be under no fear of my son's marrying her.'

Mrs. Howard, at this unexpected stroke, turned as pale as death, and with a faltering voice, asked her, 'What reason she had for supposing her son was in love with Miss Sophia?'

Mrs. Barton, who enjoyed her perplexity and confusion, suffered her to repeat her questions several times, and then maliciously referred her to the young gentleman himself, 'Who, said she, upon finding you so favourably disposed, will, I doubt not, be ready enough to own his inclinations.'

Mrs. Howard was now so far humbled, that she condescended to intreat Mrs. Barton to tell her what she knew of this affair.

'All my information, said Mrs. Barton, comes from my son, to whom Mr. Howard, considering him as his rival, declared his better right to the lady, as having acquainted her with his passion.'

At this intelligence Mrs. Howard's rage got so much the better of her prudence, that she uttered a thousand invectives against the innocent Sophia, which drew some severe sarcasms from Mrs. Barton, who being now fully revenged, rose up to be gone; but Mrs. Howard, sensible that a quarrel upon this occasion might have consequences very unfavourable to her reputation, seized her hand, and led her half reluctant, again to her chair, where, after she had soothed her into good humour, by some flattering expressions, which coming from one of her acknowledged understanding, had great weight. She told her with the most unblushing confidence, that she was now convinced she had

³⁰⁶ Covetousness; insatiable desire ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "avarice, n.s.").

been deceived in the character of the young woman on whom she had with her usual generosity conferred so many benefits. ‘I find to my inexpressible concern, pursued she, that this modest, sensible, and virtuous young creature, as I once believed her, is in reality an artful hypocrite, whose only aim is to make her fortune, by ensnaring some unexperienced youth into a marriage. Let us join our endeavours then, my dear Mrs. Barton, to preserve our sons from this danger: this is a common cause, all mothers are concerned in it; we will shew the young dissembler in her true colours, and prevent her imposing upon others as she has done on us.’

Mrs. Barton, who never carried her reflections very far, was so well pleased with Mrs. Howard’s present behaviour, that she forgot all the past: these two ladies became on a sudden the best friends in the world, and this union was to be cemented³⁰⁷ with the ruin of Sophia’s fame; such beginnings have certain female friendships, and such are the leagues in which the wicked join.

Mrs. Barton proposed to have her sent for into their presence, and after reproaching her severely, dismiss her with contempt³⁰⁸; but the more politic Mrs. Howard, whose views were at once to destroy Sophia’s reputation, and to secure her own, disapproved of this harsh treatment, as she called it, and charitably resolved to ruin her with all possible gentleness.

She wrote to Mrs. Gibbons, and acquainted³⁰⁹ her, that having discovered an intrigue³¹⁰ carrying on between Sophia and her son, she thought it necessary to dismiss her immediately out of her family; but that the poor young creature might be exposed as little as possible to censure, she begged she would come herself to fetch³¹¹ her away, and deliver her to her friends, with a caution to watch her conduct carefully.

She recommended secrecy to her for Sophia’s sake; and assured her that if it had not been for this discovery of her bad conduct, she had resolved to have provided for her handsomely.

Mrs. Gibbons, whom this letter threw into the utmost³¹² astonishment³¹³, immediately communicated the contents of it to Dolly and William, with whom she now lived.

³⁰⁷To unite by means of something interposed ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “cement, v.a.”).

³⁰⁸ The act of despising others; slight regard; scorn ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “contempt, n.s.”).

³⁰⁹ To make familiar with; applied either to persons or things ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “acquaint, v.a.”).

³¹⁰ A plot; a private transaction in which many parties are engaged: usually an affair of love ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “intrigue, n.s.”).

³¹¹ To go and bring ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “fetch, v.a.”).

³¹² Extreme; placed at the extremity ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “utmost, adj.”).

³¹³ Amazement; confusion of mind from fear or wonder ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “astonishment, n.s.”).

Dolly burst into tears of grief and indignation³¹⁴, and earnestly intreated her to go immediately and take Miss Sophia out of a house where her merit was so little understood; but William, who looked farther into the consequences of this affair than either his wife or his aunt, believed it necessary for the justification of Sophia's honour, that Mr. Lawson should wait upon Mrs. Howard, and demand an explanation of those censures which she had cast upon a young lady confided³¹⁵ to his care; rightly judging, that if malice³¹⁶ was the source of her accusation, she would not dare to pursue it with a man of his character; and if it arose from the information of others, he would be able to detect the falshood of it.

These reasons prevailed³¹⁷ with Mrs. Gibbons, who had been very desirous³¹⁸ to shew her eloquence³¹⁹ upon this occasion, and was resolved, she said, not to have spared Mrs. Howard for her *immature* conclusions.

William went immediately to his father-in-law, and acquainted him with what had happened. Mr. Lawson was grieved³²⁰ from the consideration of what Sophia's delicate sensibility would feel from such an attack upon her reputation; and this was the worst that he apprehended could happen from calumnies³²¹ which the purity of her manners and the innocency of her life would be always a sufficient refutation of. A wise and virtuous person, he knew, was out of the reach of fortune, though not free from the malice of it. All attempts against such a one are, as the poet says, like the arrows of Xerxes; they may darken the day, but cannot stifle³²² the sun.

His impatience to take Sophia out of the hands of a woman whom he conceived to be either very malicious, or very imprudent³²³, made him defer his visit no longer than till the afternoon.

³¹⁴ Anger mingled with contempt or disgust ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "indignation, n.s.").

³¹⁵ To trust in; to put trust in ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "confide, v.n.").

³¹⁶ "*Badness of design; deliberate mischief* ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "malice, n.s.").

³¹⁷ To be in force; to have effect; to have power; to have influence ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "prevail, v.n.").

³¹⁸ Full of desire; eager; longing after; wishing for ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "*desirous, adj.*").

³¹⁹ The power of speaking with fluency and elegance; oratory ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "eloquence, n.s.").

³²⁰ To be in pain for something past; to mourn; to sorrow, as for the death of friends ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "grieve, v.n.").

³²¹ Slander; false charge; groundless accusation ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "calumny, n.s.").

³²² To oppress or kill by closeness of air; to suffocate ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "stifle, v.a.").

³²³ Wanting prudence; injudicious; indiscreet; negligent ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "imprudent, adj.").

When he sent in his name, Mrs. Howard, who had no suspicion³²⁴ of the occasion of his coming, ordered him to be shewn into a parlour³²⁵, where she suffered him to wait near an hour before she admitted him to her presence; a country curate³²⁶ being in her opinion a person too insignificant to lay claim to any degree of consideration, and besides, this sort of neglect being affected by many persons of quality, to whom it certainly gives great importance and dignity, their imitators never lose any opportunity of exercising it.

Mr. Lawson was at last summoned to the lady's dressing-room, where he expected to have found Sophia, but was glad to see Mrs. Howard alone. She asked him with a little superciliousness³²⁷, if he had any business with her; to which he replied, with a solemnity in his look and accent that surprised her, 'That being a friend to miss Sophia Darnley, and the person to whose care she was confided by her relations, he thought it his duty to enquire what part of her conduct had given occasion for those unfavourable suspicions which were entertained of her.'

'Mrs. Gibbons, madam, pursued he, has communicated to me a letter which she has received from you, wherein there is a heavy charge against miss Sophia; a charge which none who know her can think it possible for her to deserve. There must certainly be some mistake here, madam; you have been misinformed, or appearances have deceived you, and in justice to you, as well as to one of the most virtuous and amiable³²⁸ young women in the world, I am resolved to trace the source of these calumnies, that her innocence may be fully cleared. I beg of you then, madam, let me know what foundation you have for believing that Miss Sophia—'

Mrs. Howard, whom this speech had thrown into great confusion, interrupted him here, to prevent his repeating those expressions in her letter, the meaning of which, though obvious, she durst³²⁹ not avow.

'I find, said she, that you and Mrs. Gibbons have seen this affair in a worse light than I intended you should; my son has been foolish enough to entertain a liking for this girl, whom I took under my protection, with a view to provide for her handsomely, and she has been wise enough pursued she, with an ironical smile, to give him encouragement, I suppose; but with all her excellencies, I am not disposed to make her my daughter-in-law.'

³²⁴ The act of suspecting; imagination of something ill without proof ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "suspicion, n.s.").

³²⁵ A room in houses on the first floor, elegantly furnished for reception or entertainment ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "parlour, n.s.").

³²⁶ A clergyman hired to perform the duties of another ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "curate, n.s.").

³²⁷ Haughtiness; contemptuousness ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "superciliousness, n.s.").

³²⁸ Lovely; pleasing, ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "amiable, adj.").

³²⁹ The preterite of *dare*, ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "durst").

Mrs. Howard threw in this last softening expression, in hopes it would satisfy Mr. Lawson, and added, that to prevent any thing happening, which might be disagreeable to her, she begged he would take Sophia home with him.

‘Most willingly, madam, said he; but since it seems to be your opinion, that this young gentlewoman has encouraged the clandestine³³⁰ addresses of your son, I think it will be proper to examine first into the truth of these suspicions, that you may not part with worse thoughts of her than she deserves.’

Mrs. Howard being thus prest³³¹, and unwilling to enter into an explanation that would expose all her artifice³³²s, was forced to acknowledge that she had no other foundation for her fears than the passion her son had owned for her; and having made this unwilling concession³³³, she left him with a countenance inflamed with stifled rage, saying she would send Sophia to him.

Accordingly she went into the room where she was at work, and told her, her friend the curate was waiting to carry her home. Observing her to look extremely surprised, ‘If you consider, said she, what returns you have made me for the benefits I have conferred upon you, you will not think it strange that we should part in this manner.’

‘Bless me, cried Sophia, what have I done to deserve such reproaches?’

‘I cannot stay to talk to you now, said Mrs. Howard; I have explained myself to Mr. Lawson, I am sorry to say, that I now can only wish you well.’

She hurried out of the room when she had said this; and Sophia, in the utmost perplexity³³⁴ and concern, flew down stairs to Mr. Lawson, who was already at the gate waiting to help her into the chaise: she gave him her hand, asking him at the same time, with great emotion, ‘What Mrs. Howard accused her of?’

As soon as they drove away, Mr. Lawson related all that had past between that lady and him, which filled Sophia with new astonishment: she could not comprehend Mrs. Howard’s motives for acting in the manner she had done with regard to her; all her conduct appeared to her highly extravagant³³⁵ and inconsistent; she asked Mr. Lawson a thousand questions, full of that simplicity which ever accompanies real goodness of heart.

³³⁰ Secret; hidden; private; in an ill sense ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “clandestine, adj.”).

³³¹ Neat; tight. In both senses the word is obsolete ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “prest, adj.”).

³³² Trick; fraud; stratagem ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “artifice, n.s.”).

³³³ The act of granting or yielding ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “concession, n.s.”).

³³⁴ Anxiety; distraction of mind ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “perplexity, n.s.”).

³³⁵ Wandering out of his bounds. This is the primogeneal sense, but not now in use ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “extravagant, adj.”).

He gave her some notion of the dangerous character of Mrs Howard, and greatly blamed her for having so suddenly accepted her invitation, without first consulting Mr. Herbert. ‘It is a maxim, pursued he, of one of the wisest of the antients, that in forming new connections of every sort, it is of great importance in what manner the first approaches are made, and by whose hands the avenues of friendship are laid open.’

Mr. Lawson, by this hint, gave Sophia to understand, that he did not think Mrs. Gibbons, a proper person to introduce her into the world. She was now sensible that she had been too precipitate³³⁶; but her motives were so generous, that Mr. Herbert, whom in a letter she acquainted with the whole affair, easily justified her in his own opinion, though he earnestly, recommended it to her not to let her apprehensions of being burthensome to him draw her into new inconveniencies.

Mr. Lawson having, as he imagined, prevented Mrs. Howard from making any future attack upon Sophia’s reputation, by obliging her to acknowledge her innocence, was surprised to hear wherever he went, of the calumnies she invented against her.

Nothing is more common than for persons to hate with extreme inveteracy³³⁷ those whom they have injured; and although Mrs. Howard was convinced, that Sophia would not admit a visit from her son, (who now openly avowed his passion for her;) that she refused to receive his letters, and shunned every place where she thought it possible to meet him; yet pretending to be apprehensive that the youth would be drawn into a clandestine³³⁸ marriage, she sent him away precipitately upon his travels, and this gave a colour to new invectives against Sophia, who trusting only to her innocence for her justification, had the satisfaction to find that innocence fully acknowledged in the esteem and respect with which she was treated by all the persons of fashion in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Herbert, who in every new trial to which she was exposed, found greater cause for admiration of her character, praised the gentleness and forgiving spirit which she discovered upon this occasion; but Mrs. Gibbons was not wholly satisfied with her conduct, ‘You ought to *discriminate* upon Mrs. Howard, said she, and tell the world how desirous she was to have you married to her friend’s son, though she makes such a clutter about her own: indeed you want spirit, miss Sophia,’ added the old lady, with a little contempt.

‘I am not of your opinion, madam, replied Sophia; for in taking revenge upon our enemies, we are only even with them; in passing over their malice we are superior.’

‘Well, well, interrupted Mrs. Gibbons, I have no notion of such *superiousness*: I always resent injuries, and Mrs. Howard shall feel my resentment for her malice³³⁹ to you. I have not returned her last visit yet, and perhaps I may not this month; this is pretty severe I think.’

³³⁶Headlong; hasty; rashly hasty ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “*precipitate*, adj.”).

³³⁷ Long continuance of any thing bad; obstinacy confirmed by time ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “*inveteracy*, n.s.”).

³³⁸ Secret; hidden; private; in an ill sense ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “*clandestine*, adj.”).

³³⁹ To regard with ill will ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “*malice*, v.a.”).

Sophia, composing her countenance³⁴⁰ as well as she could, thanked Mrs. Gibbons for this instance of her friendship to her; but she had no opportunity to observe whether she kept her word, for she was summoned to town by a letter from her mother, which gave her a melancholy account of her affairs.

Mrs. Darnley acquainted her that the gentleman was dead who paid her the annuity which Sir Charles had stipulated for her when he procured him her late husband's place. She desired her to come immediately to town to assist her under her misfortunes; and added in a postscript, as if reluctantly, that Harriot had left her, and was not so dutiful as she could wish.

Sophia read this letter with tears; and, impatient to comfort her afflicted mother, she instantly prepared for her little journey.

All Mr. Lawson's family parted from her with great regret; but Dolly's affliction was extreme, and Sophia amidst so many greater causes of sorrow, felt a new pang³⁴¹ when she took leave of her tender and innocent friend.

To spare Mr. Lawson the trouble of conducting her to town, she accepted a place in the coach of a lady with whom she had lately become acquainted, and who professed a particular esteem for her.

On her arrival at her mother's house, she found only a servant there, who informed her that her mistress had taken lodgings at Kensington for the air, having been indisposed for some weeks past.

Sophia ordered her to get a hackney³⁴² coach to the door, and was hurrying away without daring to enquire for her sister, when the maid told her Miss Darnley desired to see her before she went to Kensington.

"Where is my sister," said Sophia, with a faltering accent.

The answer she received was a stroke of fortune more cruel than any she had yet experienced: her sister, she found, lived in the house which Sir Charles had once offered to her.

Trembling and pale she ordered the coachman to drive thither³⁴³, and drawing up the windows, relieved her labouring heart with a shower of tears.

[To be continued.]

³⁴⁰ Calmness of look; composure of face ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), , "countenance, n.s.").

³⁴¹ Extreme pain; sudden paroxysm of torment ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "pang, n.s.").

³⁴² A hired horse; hired horses being usually taught to pace, or recommended as good pacers ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "hackney, n.s.").

³⁴³ To that place: it is opposed to hither ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "thither, adv.").

INSTALLMENT 10

THE first thought that struck the amazed Sophia was that Sir Charles, either following the motions of his natural inconstancy, or in revenge of her supposed contempt of him, had married Harriot. Certain that she had now lost for ever this lover, who with all his real or imputed faults, she had never been able to banish from her heart, she resigned herself up to the sharpest agonies of despair, and had already arrived at her sister's house before she was able to stop the course of her tears.

A servant in the livery³⁴⁴ of her own family opened the door. This circumstance surprised Sophia, who pulling her hat over her eyes to conceal her disorder, asked him, with some hesitation, if his mistress was at home.

The fellow replied, he believed she was, and opening the coach-door, shewed her into a parlour, telling her, with a smart air, that he would enquire of his lady's woman whether she was visible yet or not.

Sophia having summoned all her fortitude to enable her to go through this severe trial with dignity, had time enough to recollect and compose herself before any one appeared; and now several circumstances rushed upon her memory which in the first transports of her astonishment and grief had escaped her attention.

Mrs. Darnley, in her letter, had not mentioned Harriot's marriage, but barely said she had left her. The servant who delivered her message called her miss Darnley; and though she lived in a house that belonged to Sir Charles, yet it was scarcely suitable to the quality of his wife.

A few moments reflection upon these appearances made the generous Sophia change the object of her concern. The misfortune for which she had grieved so much, seemed light, compared with that she apprehended: she wept no longer for the inconstancy of her lover; she trembled for the honor of her sister; and her greatest fear now was, that Sir Charles was not married.

While she was absorbed³⁴⁵ in these melancholy thoughts, Harriot's maid entered the room, who after glancing over Sophia, with a supercilious eye, (for she was very simply drest,) asked her, 'If she had any business with her lady.'

'Tell her, replied Sophia, that her sister is here.'

The girl blushed, courtesied, and flew to acquaint her mistress; and Sophia was instantly desired to walk up stairs. She found Harriot in her dressing-room, in an elegant dishabille³⁴⁶, having just finished her morning's work, which appeared in a suit of ribbons made up with great taste.

³⁴⁴ The clothes given to servants ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "livery, n.s.").

³⁴⁵ Gloomy, dismal ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "melancholy, adj.").

³⁴⁶ Undressed; loosely or negligently dressed ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "dishabille, n.s.").

As soon as she saw Sophia, she rose from her chair, and saluted her with affected dignity; but at the same time with an air of embarrassment that increased every moment: so that being unable to bear the sweet but penetrating looks of her sister, she resumed her work, altering and unripping³⁴⁷, without any apparent design, yet affecting to be extremely busy, and to shew how perfectly she was at ease, talked of the most trifling matters imaginable, while Sophia gazed on her in silent anguish, anxious to know the truth of her situation, yet dreading to have it explained. At length she told her that she was going to Kensington to her mother, and desired to know if she had any message to send to her.

Harriot suddenly interrupting her, as if she feared some further questions, began to exclaim against her mother's unreasonable temper, saying, that she had offended her violently only because she had it not in her power to comply with some very extravagant expectations which she had formed.

'Sister, said Sophia, I am wholly³⁴⁸ ignorant of your affairs; I know not what cause of discontent you have given my mother, but I see there is a great alteration in your condition of life, and I hope—'

'What do you hope, pray miss? interrupted Harriot, reddening: I suppose I am to have some of your satirical flings; your temper is not altered I find.'

'Dear Harriot, resumed Sophia, with tears in her eyes, this causeless anger confirming her suspicions, why do you reproach³⁴⁹ me with being satirical? Is it a crime to be anxious for your happiness?'

'I wish you would not trouble yourself about me, replied Harriot, I know best what will make me happy; you should not pretend to instruct your elders, miss Sophy; I am older than you; you know, you have often upbraided³⁵⁰ me with that.'

'Sister, said Sophia calmly, you desired to see me, have you any thing to say to me?'

'I know, answered Harriot, that I shall meet with ungrateful returns for my kindness, nevertheless I shall act like a sister towards you, and it was to tell you so that I wished to see you: I very much doubt whether, if you were in prosperity, you would do the same by me.'

'Have I behaved so ill in adversity then, said Sophia, that you form this harsh judgment of me, sister?'

³⁴⁷ To Unri'p. v.a. [This word is improper; there being no difference between *rip* and *unrip*; and the negative particle is therefore of no force; yet it is well authorised.] To cut open ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "unrip, v.a.").

³⁴⁸ Completely; perfectly ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "wholly, adj.").

³⁴⁹ To charge with a fault in severe language ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "reproach, v.s.").

³⁵⁰ To charge contemptuously with any thing disgraceful ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "upbraid, v.a.").

‘Pray don’t upbraid me with your behaviour, miss, said Harriot; other people may have behaved as well as you, though they are not prudes.’

‘You say you are in prosperity, sister, said Sophia, but perhaps you and I have different notions of prosperity: let me know the truth of your situation, and if I find you happy according to my notions of happiness, you will soon be convinced that I can take a sister’s share in it.’

‘I am not obliged to give an account of my conduct to you, replied Harriot, who had listened to this speech with great emotion; and I must tell you, sister Sophy, that if you go on taking this liberty of questioning and censuring me, I shall not care how seldom I see you. As to my mother, I know that it is my duty to do every thing for her that is in my power; and this I have offered to do already.’

Saying this, she rang the bell, and her maid appearing, she gave her some orders which necessarily required her attendance in the room; so that Sophia, finding she could have no further discourse with her sister, rose up and took leave of her with an aching heart. Her griefs all aggravated by the apprehension of her sister’s dishonour, and the hatred which she felt for Sir Charles, as her seducer, struggling with a tender remembrance, her gentle bosom³⁵¹ was torn with conflicting passions, and she proved but too well the truth of that maxim,³⁵² That philosophy easily triumphs over past and future evils, but the *present* triumph over her.

Mrs. Darnley received her daughter with unusual tenderness: she felt how much she stood in need of her filial³⁵³ care; and her behaviour was dictated by that interested kindness which only gives in expectation of receiving back doublefold.

Sophia saw her pale and emaciated, and was greatly affected with the sight: she would not mention her sister, for fear of discomposing her; but Mrs. Darnley soon introduced the subject that was most in her thoughts, and exclaimed against Harriot’s undutifulness³⁵⁴ and want of affection with the most violent transports of passion.

‘I have been the best of mothers to her, said she, melting into tears; I have always indulged her in all her wishes, and impaired my circumstances to support her extravagancies, and how has she returned this kindness! would you think it, my dear Sophy, though she is in affluent circumstances, and I, by the loss of my annuity,³⁵⁵ am plunged into all my former distresses, she has refused to pay those debts which I contracted during the time she lived with me; and thinks it sufficient to invite me to reside in her house, where, no doubt, I should feel my dependence severely.’

³⁵¹ The breast; the heart ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “bosom, n.s.”).

³⁵² An axiom; a general principle; a leading truth ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “maxim, n.s.”).

³⁵³ Bearing the character or relation of a son ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “filial, adj.”).

³⁵⁴ Want of respect; irreverence; disobedience ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “undutifulness, n.s.”).

³⁵⁵ A yearly allowance ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “annuity, n.s.”).

‘Sir Charles, said Sophia sighing, does not act with his usual generosity; if he has married my sister, why does he suffer you to be in distress?’

“Married your sister!” repeated Mrs. Darnley, in astonishment.

‘Ah, madam, resumed Sophia, is she not married then to Sir Charles?’

‘Why, is it possible that you can wish him to be married to Harriot?’ said Mrs. Darnley.

‘Alas! cried Sophia, ought I not to wish it, when I see her in his house?’

‘Oh, resumed Mrs. Darnley, I perceive your mistake; but that house is not Sir Charles’s now; Lord L— bought it of him, with the furniture, some time ago; it might have been yours, and without any offence to your virtue too, yet you thought fit to refuse it: but I will not pretend to reprove one so much wiser than myself—

‘Well, madam, interrupted Sophia eagerly, then it is not to Sir Charles that my sister is married, to whom is she married?’

“You have seen her, have you not?” said Mrs. Darnley, looking a little confused.

‘I have indeed seen her, said Sophia, but she did not explain her situation to me.’

‘And do you imagine, resumed Mrs. Darnley peevishly,³⁵⁶ that she would be less reserved with her mother? and if she was afraid of telling you the truth, is it likely she would own it to me?’

‘Then I fear it is bad indeed with Harriot, cried Sophia, in a melancholy accent, since she has so much to conceal from a mother and a sister.’

‘You were always censorious, Sophy, said Mrs. Darnley, with some passion; for my part, I am resolved to think the best. If Lord L—is married privately to your sister, her character will one day be cleared to the world, and she thinks no prudent person can blame her, for chusing to bear for a time a few undeserved censures, rather than to struggle with poverty and contempt.’

Sophia, now convinced of Harriot’s unhappy conduct, burst into tears. Mrs. Darnley after looking at her in silence a moment, said, with some confusion; ‘Then you do not believe your sister is married, Sophy?’

‘Ah, madam, replied Sophia, you do not say that you know she is, and whatever reasons there might be for concealing her marriage from the world, certainly there are none for hiding it from you.—In vain, added she, with still greater emotion, would your parental tenderness seek to deceive yourself.’

³⁵⁶Angrily; querulously; morosely ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “peevishly, adv.”).

Reproach me no more with my tenderness for your sister, interrupted Mrs. Darnley, angrily; I am too much affected with her ingratitude³⁵⁷ already.'

'I am sorry she is ungrateful, said Sophia; but oh! my dear mama, it is not fit you should accept of her assistance.

'I hope, said Mrs. Darnley, calling down her eyes, that I know what is fit for me to do as well as my daughter.—But Sophy, added she, after a little pause, I am sorry to tell you, if you do not know it already, that if you have still any thoughts of Sir Charles, you deceive yourself; I am very well informed, that a match has been proposed to him, and he has given so favourable an answer, that it is expected the marriage will be concluded, as soon as he comes from Paris: I heard it all from one of the young lady's relations.'

This was a severe stroke to poor Sophia, who had just begun to breathe again, after the anguish she had suffered, in the belief that Sir Charles had forsaken her for her sister, and added perfidy³⁵⁸ and baseness³⁵⁹ to his inconstancy.

Mrs. Darnley, who saw her turn pale, and her eyes swimming in tears, while she struggled to conceal her emotions, could not help being affected with her distress, and endeavoured³⁶⁰ to console her.

Sophia, more softened by this tenderness, suffered her tears to flow a few moments unrestrained; then suddenly wiping her charming eyes, 'Pardon this weakness, madam, said she; this indeed is not a time to weep for myself, your sorrows claim all my tears.'

'Aye, I have sorrows enough, Heaven knows, said Mrs. Darnley, my debts unpaid, my annuity gone, what have I to trust to?'

'Providence, interrupted Sophia, your piety³⁶¹ and my industry. Alas! my dear mama, your greatest affliction is not the loss of your annuity, or the debts with which you are encumbered, it is my sister's unhappy fall from virtue. That parent, pursued she, who sees a beloved child become a prey to licentious³⁶² passions, who sees her publicly incur shame and reproach, expelled the society of the good and virtuous, and lead a life of dishonour, embittered with the contempt of the world, and the secret upbraidings of her own conscience; that parent can best judge of your anguish now: I have only a sister's feelings for this misfortune! but these feelings are strong enough to make me very unhappy.'

³⁵⁷Retribution of evil for good; unthankfulness ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "ingratitude, n.s.").

³⁵⁸Treachery; want of faith; breach of faith ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "perfidy, n.s.").

³⁵⁹Meanness; vileness; badness ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "baseness, n.s.").

³⁶⁰To attempt; to try ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "endeavour, v.a.").

³⁶¹Duty to parents or those in superious relation ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "piety, n.s.").

³⁶²Unrestrained by law or morality ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "licentious, n.s.").

Mrs. Darnley appeared so much moved with this discourse, that Sophia pursued it, till she brought her mother to declare, that she would rather suffer all the inconveniencies of poverty, than give a sanction to Harriot's guilt, by partaking of its reward.

Sophia, to relieve her anxiety, laid down a plan for their future subsistence, and proved to her, that by her skill in several little useful arts, it would be easy for her to supply her with all the necessaries of life. "We will first, said she, pay your debts."

"How is that to be done?" said Mrs. Darnley, hastily.

'The furniture of your house, said Sophia, the plate, and other pieces of finery, which Sir Charles Stanley presented to you, will, if converted into money, not only pay your debts, but provide a little fund for present expences, and a reserve for future exigencies; mean while, my industry and care will, I hope, keep want far from you. I have friends, who will find employment for my little talents; and if I can but make your life easy and comfortable, I shall think myself happy.'

Mrs. Darnley, with tears in her eyes, embraced her daughter, bid her dispose of every thing as she pleased, and assured her she would endeavour to bear her new condition of life with patience and resignation.

Sophia immediately wrote to a gentleman of the law, who had been an intimate friend of her father's and he undertook to manage their little affairs in town. A few days afterwards he brought them fifty pounds, which was all that remained from the sale, after every demand upon Mrs. Darnley was paid.

She read over the accounts with great emotion, bitterly regretting every trinket³⁶³ she had parted with, and told Sophia, that it was absolutely necessary they should settle in some village near town, for she could not bear the thoughts of exposing her poverty to her acquaintance, and of being seen in a worse condition than formerly.

Sophia, who thought her declining health a better reason for not residing in London, hired in an adjacent village, at a very small rent, a little house, or rather cottage, so neat, and situated so happily, that an imagination lively as hers was, and a little romantick, could not fail of being charmed with it. To this place she removed her books, and being provided by her friend Dolly, with an innocent country girl for a servant, she conducted her mother to her rural abode, and had the satisfaction to find her pleased with it, novelty having always charms for her, and here for a few days, it supplied the place of those other gratifications to which she had been accustomed.

In the midst of these cares, Sophia did not forget her unhappy sister: she wrote several letters to her, in which she employed all the power of virtuous eloquence³⁶⁴ to bring her to a sense of her errors, but in vain.

³⁶³ Toys; ornaments of dress; superfluities of decoration ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "trinket, n.s.").

³⁶⁴ Elegant language uttered with fluency ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "eloquence, n.s.").

Harriot did not deign to answer her, but in a letter to her mother, she complained of the injurious treatment she received from Sophia, and earnestly intreated her to leave her sister, and reside with her.

Although Mrs. Darnley refused this offer with seeming steadiness, yet her discontent was but too apparent. A life of retirement, which often obliged her to seek in herself, those resources against languor and melancholy, which she used to find in the dissipations of the town, could not be grateful to one who had never accustomed herself to reflection, whose mind was filled with trifles, and its whole stock of ideas derived from dress, cards, and every other fashionable folly.

To be capable of enjoying a rural life, there is something more necessary than a good understanding: innocence and purity of manners must contribute to give a relish to pleasures, which are founded in reason, virtue, and piety.

Hence it was, that Sophia, in the bloom of youth, found happiness in the solitude of a village, while her mother, in a declining age, panted after the vanities of the town.

In vain, did Mr. Herbert fill the letters he wrote to Mrs. Darnley, with maxims of morality and pious³⁶⁵ admonitions; he experienced here the truth of that observation, that it is a work of great difficulty, to dispossess vice from a heart, where long possession seems to plead prescription.

Sophia, who knew her mother's taste for living at ease, that she might be able to gratify it, applied herself diligently to her work, which was a piece of embroidery, that had been bespoke by a benevolent lady, in order to give her present employmen; and, by exhibiting it as a proof of her ingenuity, to procure her more. She likewise exercised her invention in drawing little designs for fanmounts; and always chose such subjects as conveyed some moral lesson to the mind, while they pleased the imagination.

Some of these drawings were disposed of, by the lady her friend, so advantageously, that Sophia was encouraged to pursue her labour; and Mrs. Darnley, flattered by the prospect of more easy circumstances, began to enlarge her scheme of expence, made little excursions about the country in a post-chaise, talked of hiring a better house, and of passing two months at least in London during the winter.

Mean time Harriot became more earnest in her solicitations to her mother, to come and live with her; her situation began to be so generally suspected, that she was in danger of being wholly neglected.

She wrote to her in a strain of tenderness and duty, that revived all the ill-judging parent's affection, who invited her to make her a visit in her little retreat, and promised her a favourable reception even from Sophia herself.

Sophia was indeed far from opposing this visit; she was rather desirous of drawing her sister thither frequently, with a hope that her example and her arguments, might one day influence her to change her conduct.

³⁶⁵ Careful of the duties of near relation ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "pious, adj.").

Harriot received this invitation with joy; for such was the depravity³⁶⁶ of her mind, that she exulted in having an opportunity of displaying the grandeur of her dress, and equipage to her sister; to her who had made virtuous poverty her choice, and shewn that she despised riches, when they were to be purchased by guilt. *The pride of human nature (says an eminent writer) takes its rise from its corruption, as worms are produced by putrefaction*³⁶⁷.

The wretched fallen Harriot was proud! the diamonds that glittered in her hair, the gilt chariot, and the luxurious table; these monuments of her disgrace contributed to keep up the insolence of a woman, who by the loss of her honor was lower than the meanest of her servants, who could boast of an uncorrupted virtue.

Sophia was busily employed upon her embroidery, when Harriot, from her gay chariot, alighted at her door; she entered that humble abode of innocence and industry, in a kind of triumph, and accosted her sister with a haughty expression of superiority in her looks and air, as if she expected the splendor of her appearance should strike her with awe.

Sophia received her with the modest dignity of conscious virtue; and Harriot, tho' incapable of much reflection, yet soon perceived the miserable figure she made, in the presence of such a character, and stood silent and abashed, while Sophia contemplated her finery with an eye of pity and of anguish.

Harriot, at length recovering herself, asked for her mother, who at that moment entered the room. The sight of her daughter's equipage³⁶⁸, had thrown her into an agreeable flutter of spirits, and she readily pardoned the fine lady, all the faults of the ungrateful child.

Harriot, emboldened by such a kind reception, proposed to her to accompany her to town, promising to make her abode with her agreeable, by every instance of duty and affection.

Mrs. Darnley blushed, and was silent. Sophia fixed her eyes upon her mother, anxious and impatient for her answer; she cast a timid glance at Sophia: she read in her speaking eyes her sentiments of this proposal; and turning to Harriot, she told her faintly, that not being satisfied with her conduct, it would be very improper for her to countenance it, by residing with her.

Harriot burst into tears, and exclaimed against her sister's malice³⁶⁹, who, she said, acted like her most cruel enemy, and sought to ruin her character, by estranging herself from her company, and preventing her mother from taking notice of her.

³⁶⁶ Corruption; a vitiated state ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "depravity, n.s.").

³⁶⁷ The state of growing rotten; the act of making rotten ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "putrefaction, n.s.")

³⁶⁸ Accoutrements; furniture ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "equipage, n.s.").

³⁶⁹ Ill intention to any one; desire of hurting ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "malice, n.s.").

Sophia, with great gentleness, proved to her that the loss of her reputation was the necessary consequence of her living in a manner unsuitable to her circumstances; that her mother and her, by complying with her request, could not preserve her from censure, but would incur it themselves.

'You call me cruel, Harriot, said she, for estranging myself from your company; but consider a little, whether it is not you that are both cruel and unjust. Why would you deprive me of the only reward the world bestows on me, for a life of voluntary poverty; you have exchanged a good name for dress and equipage; and I, to preserve one, subject myself to labor and indigence: you enjoy your purchase; but I should lose mine, were I to have that complaisance for you which you require. Leave me my reputation then, since it is the sole recompence of those hardships to which I willingly submit; and if you wish to recover yours, be content to be poor like me.'

Sophia, finding her sister listened to her, tho' it was sullenly, and with downcast eyes, expatiate in a tender manner upon the errors of her conduct, and the fatal consequences that were likely to follow.

Harriot at length interrupted her, with a pert air, and said, 'She would not be taught her duty by her younger sister;' then turning to her mother, 'I hope madam, said she, my sister will not have so much power with you, as to make you forbid my coming here.'

She put her handkerchief to her eyes, as she said this; to which Mrs. Darnley replied, with great vehemence, 'That no person on earth should ever prevail upon her to cast off her child.'

Sophia was silent, and observing that her presence seemed to lay them under some restraint, she rose up, to retire to her work, telling her sister, as she passed by her, 'That far from hindering her visits, she would rather encourage her to repeat them often, that she might be convinced it was possible, to be happy in a cottage.'

Harriot laughed, and muttered the words romantick and affectation³⁷⁰, which Sophia took no notice of, but left her at liberty to converse freely with her mother.

Mrs. Darnley talked to her at first in a chiding strain, and affected to assume the authority of a parent; but, a slave to her appetites, she could not resist any opportunity of gratifying them; and Harriot found it no difficult matter to force a present upon her, to supply those expences which her extravagance, and not her wants, made necessary.

Harriot now came often to the village, and gave it out, that she was upon the best terms imaginable with her mother and sister, not doubting but the world would cease to suspect her, since Sophia approved her conduct.

The frequency and the length of her visits made Sophia entertain hopes of her reformation, since the time she spent with her mother, was taken from that dangerous and immoral dissipation, which

³⁷⁰ The act of making an artificial appearance ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "affectation, n.s.").

forms the circle of what is called a gay life. For it is with our manners as with our health; the abatement³⁷¹ of vice is a degree of virtue, the abatement of disease is a degree of health.

Mr. Herbert being perfectly recovered, filled Sophia with extreme joy, by the account he sent her of it, and of his resolution to come and live near her.

While she impatiently expected his arrival, and sent many a longing look towards the road, near which her little cottage was situated, she one day saw a gentleman ride by full speed, who in his person and air had a great resemblance to Sir Charles Stanley. Her heart, by its throbbing emotion, seemed to acknowledge its conqueror;³⁷² for poor Sophia was still in love: she loved, though she despaired of ever being happy; and by thus persisting in a hopeless passion, contradicted that maxim, that love like fire, cannot subsist³⁷³ without continual motion, and ceases to be as soon as it ceases to hope or fear.

Sophia, not able to remove her eyes from the place where she fancied she had seen Sir Charles, continued to look fixedly towards the road, and was beginning to believe she had been mistaken, when a servant in Sir Charles's livery rode by also, and put it out of doubt that she had really seen the master.

This unexpected incident awakened a thousand tender melancholy ideas in her mind; and finding herself too much softened³⁷⁴, she had recourse again to her work, to divert her imagination from an object, she had vainly endeavored to forget.

[To be concluded in our next.]

INSTALLMENT 11

SOPHIA was not deceived when she imagined she had seen Sir Charles, it was really he who had rode by her window, and it was her little abode³⁷⁵ he was in search of, though in his extreme eagerness he had overlooked it.

He had left England with a hope that change of scene, and a variety of new objects, would efface the idea of Sophia from his heart, and restore him to his former tranquility; but amidst all the delights of

³⁷¹ To lessen, to diminish ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "abate, v.a.").

³⁷² A man that has obtained a victory; a victor ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "conqueror, n.s.").

³⁷³ To continue; to retain the present state or condition ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "subsist, v.n.").

³⁷⁴ To make soft; to make less hard ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "soften, v.a.").

³⁷⁵ Habitation, dwelling, place of residence ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "abode, n.s.").

Paris he found himself oppressed with languor³⁷⁶: no amusements could entertain him, no conversation engage his attention; disgusted with every thing he saw and heard, peevish³⁷⁷, discontented, and weary of the world, he avoided all company, and had recourse to books for relief; but Sophia was too much in his thoughts to render study either instructive or amusing. He past whole days in solitude, feeding his melancholy with the reflection of a thousand past circumstances, which served to soften his mind, and make him feel his loss more sensibly.

When he reflected on her exalted³⁷⁸ virtues, her wit, her elegance, the attractive graces of her person, and the irresistible sweetness of her manners, he lamented³⁷⁹ his hard fate that had put such a treasure out of his reach; but when his conscience told him that it had once been in his power to have become possessor of this treasure, that he had trifled with that innocent affection till he had alienated it from himself to another object; his anguish³⁸⁰ became insupportable, and he sought to relieve it by rousing his indignation against her, for her preference of so unworthy a rival.

He called to mind her interview with this happy rival in the field, and concluded he was far more favoured by her than himself had ever been, since her discourse to him had produced so tender and passionate an expression of acknowledgment as that he had beheld.

These circumstances, which his imagination dwelt³⁸¹ upon in order to lessen his regret, added to it all the stings of jealousy; so that, almost frantic³⁸² with rage and grief, he was a hundred times upon the point of committing some desperate action.

³⁷⁶ Languor and lassitude signifies a faintness, which may arise from want or decay of spirits, through indigestion, or too much exercise; or from an additional weight of fluids, from a diminution of secretion by the common discharges. ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "languor, n.s.").

³⁷⁷ with more reason than he commonly discovers, supposes to be formed by corruption from perverse; Skinneri rather derives it from beeish, as we say waspish.] Petulant; waspish; easily offended; irritable; irascible; soon angry; perverse; morose; querulous; full of expressions of discontent; hard to please. ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "peevish, adj.").

³⁷⁸ To raise on high ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "exalt, v.a.").

³⁷⁹ To mourn; to wail; to grieve; to express sorrow ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "lament, v.n.").

³⁸⁰ Excessive pain either of mind or body; applied to the mind, it means the pain of sorrow, and is seldom used to signify other passions ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "anguish, n.s.").

³⁸¹ To hinder, delay ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), "Dwell, v.").

³⁸² Mad; deprived of understanding by violent madness; outrageously and turbulently mad. ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "frantick, adj.").

A violent fever was the consequence of these transports, which, after confining him a long time to his bed, left his body in a weak and languishing³⁸³ condition, and his mind sunk in an habitual melancholy.

His physicians recommended to him the air of Montpelier, and he was preparing to set out for that place when he happened to meet with a gentleman who made him alter his resolution.

This person had been his governor, and now attended Mr. Howard in the same quality.

Sir Charles, who had a slight acquaintance with Mrs. Howard, was prevailed upon, notwithstanding³⁸⁴ his aversion to company, to receive a visit from her son: he invited the young gentleman to dine with him, and he having not yet forgot the lovely Sophia, drank her health after dinner by the name of miss Darnley.

Sir Charles, who could not hear that name without a visible emotion, told him he knew two young ladies so called, and asked whether it was the eldest or the youngest sister that he meant?

Mr. Howard replied, 'That he was ignorant till then that miss Darnley had a sister.'

'Yes, she has a sister, said his governor, who is much handsomer than herself, and for whom a youthful passion would be far more excusable.'

The young gentleman, who knew his governor talked in that contemptuous³⁸⁵ manner of Sophia in compliance with his mother's humour, in revenge avowed his admiration of her in the most passionate terms, and, forgetting that Sir Charles had said he was acquainted with her, described her excellencies with all the enthusiasm of a lover.

Sir Charles listened in silence; and when the other had done speaking told him, with an air of forced gravity, that it was easy to see he was very much in love.

This, indeed, was his real opinion; nevertheless he felt no emotions of jealousy or resentment against a rival whom he believed was as unhappy as himself: he asked him with a seeming carelessness if miss Sophia was not to be married to the son of a rich farmer in the village where she lived? and waited his answer with an agitation of mind which appeared so plainly in the frequent changes of his colour, that Mr. Howard must have observed it, had not the question given him almost as much concern.

³⁸³ Of a person, animal, or plant: to decline in health; to weaken, wither, or become faint; to exist in a state of weakness or illness. In early use also: †to be sick of (obsolete) (*Oxford English Dictionary*, "languish, v.).

³⁸⁴ Without hindrance or obstruction from. (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "notwithstanding, conj.").

³⁸⁵ Scornful; apt to despise; using words or actions of contempt; insolent (*Johnson's Dictionary Online*, "contemptuous, adj.").

After a short pause he replied, 'That he never heard she was going to be married;' but, added he, sighing, 'I remember I have seen a very handsome young man at Mr. Lawson's, who perhaps —'

'Aye, aye, interrupted his governor, smiling, he was the favoured lover no doubt, you have nothing to do but to forget her as soon as you can.'

The youth sat pensive and silent for some time, then suddenly rising, took leave of Sir Charles and went away; his governor prepared to follow him, but the baronet, anxious to hear more of Sophia, detained³⁸⁶ him to ask several questions concerning her acquaintance with Mr. Howard.

Sir Charles found his old friend had lost no part of his former candor and sincerity: though by the trust reposed in him he was obliged to discountenance³⁸⁷ as much as possible the passion of his pupil for a young woman so much his inferior in rank and fortune; yet having seen and conversed with Sophia, he did justice to her extraordinary merit, and acknowledged that Mrs. Howard had treated her harshly. He related to Sir Charles in what manner Mrs. Howard had invited her to her house, and the suspicions she entertained of Sophia's encouraging her son's passion, and design to ensnare³⁸⁸ him into a clandestine marriage. 'Suspicious, added he, which her subsequent behaviour entirely destroyed, for the youth was rash³⁸⁹ enough to avow³⁹⁰ his passion openly, and solicited her by frequent letters and messages to grant him an interview, which she absolutely refused, and this conduct did her honour and procured her great esteem; yet it is very likely that her affections are otherwise engaged, and that she has some difficulties to encounter, for she looks thoughtful and melancholy, and affects retirement more than persons of her age generally do.'

Sir Charles was thrown into so profound a reverie by this account of Sophia, that he heard not a word of what his friend afterwards said which had no relation to this interesting subject, and scarce perceived when he went away.

After reflecting a long time with mingled grief, resentment, and compassion, upon her melancholy, which he supposed was occasioned by some disappointment in the affair of her marriage with the young farmer, and which probably her want of fortune was the cause of, he suddenly formed the generous design of removing this obstacle to her union with the person whom she preferred to him, and, by making her happy, entitle himself to her esteem, since he had unfortunately lost her heart.

The novelty of this resolution, and its extraordinary generosity, filled him with so many self-flattering ideas, as suspended for a while his jealousy and his grief.

³⁸⁶ To keep that which belongs to another ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "detain, v.a.").

³⁸⁷To discourage by cold treatment ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "discountenance, v.a.").

³⁸⁸ To intrap; to catch in a trap, gin, or snare; to inveigle ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "insnare, v.a.").

³⁸⁹ Hasty; violent; precipitate; acting without caution or reflection ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "rash, adj.").

³⁹⁰ To declare with confidence; to justify; not to dissemble ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "avow, v.a.").

Instead of going to Montpelier he set out immediately for England, and during his journey was continually applauding himself for the uncommon disinterestedness³⁹¹ of his conduct.

Nothing is more certain, than that the motives even of our best actions will not always bear examination: we deceive ourselves first, and our vanity is too much interested in the deception, to make us wish to detect it. Sir Charles either did not or would not perceive the latent³⁹² hope that lurked within his bosom³⁹³, and which, perhaps, suggested the designs he had formed.

How must such an instance of generous passion, thought he, affect a mind so delicately sensible as Sophia's! she who had once loved him, and what was more than probable, had not yet entirely forgot him.

He never asked himself, why his imagination dwelt upon these pleasing images? why he prosecuted his journey with such eager haste³⁹⁴, as if the purport³⁹⁵ of it was to receive, not to resign for ever the woman he so passionately loved?

When he arrived at his own house scarce would he allow himself a few minutes rest after his fatiguing journey: he hastened³⁹⁶ to Mr. Herbert's lodgings, to prevail upon him to justify by his concurrence³⁹⁷ the designs he had formed in favour of Sophia.

Mean time the secret and powerful impulse by which he was actuated, kept his mind in a continual tumult³⁹⁸. He hoped, he feared, he wished: he was all anxious expectation, all trembling doubt; he heard with grief that Mr. Herbert was at Bath; for now he knew not how to get access to Sophia, who being ignorant of his intentions, and offended by his behaviour, might possibly refuse to see him.

He went to the house where Mrs. Darnley lived when he left England; he was surprised to see it shut up. This incident perplexed him more, and rendered him more impatient.

³⁹¹ Contempt of private interest; neglect of personal profit ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "disinterestedness, n.s.").

³⁹² Hidden; concealed; secret ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "latent, adj.").

³⁹³ The breast; the heart ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "bosom, n.s.").

³⁹⁴ Hurry; speed; nimbleness; precipitation ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "haste, n.s.").

³⁹⁵ To intend; to tend to show ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "purport, v.a.").

³⁹⁶ To push forward; to urge on; to precipitate; to drive to a swifter place ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "hasten, v.a.").

³⁹⁷ Agreement; act of joining in any design, or measures ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "concurrence, n.s.").

³⁹⁸ A multitude put into wild commotion ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "tumult, n.s.").

He returned to his house, ordered his horses to be saddled, and set out immediately for Mr. Lawson's; where he arrived before he had resolved how to introduce himself, or who he should enquire for.

However, upon the appearance of a servant at the door, he asked for Mr. Herbert; which Mr. Lawson hearing, came out himself, and, though he did not know Sir Charles, politely requested him to alight³⁹⁹, telling him, he had just received a letter from Mr. Herbert, which acquainted him that he was perfectly recovered, and that he was on the way to London.

Sir Charles accepted Mr. Lawson's invitation, and alighting, followed him into a parlour⁴⁰⁰, but in such perturbation⁴⁰¹ of mind that he scarce knew what he did. The good curate⁴⁰², surprised at the pensiveness⁴⁰³ and silence of his guest, was at a loss what to say to him, or how to entertain him: he gave him an account of Mr. Herbert's illness, which seemed to engage his attention very little; but happening to mention Sophia in the course of his relation, the young baronet⁴⁰⁴ started as from a dream, and turned his eyes upon him with a look of eagerness and anxiety, but said not a word.

Mr. Lawson paused, as expecting he was going to ask him a question, which Sir Charles perceiving, said with some confusion, 'I beg your pardon, Sir, you mentioned miss Sophia, I have the honour to know her, pray how does me do?'

'I hope she is well, Sir, replied Mr. Lawson, I have not seen her a long time.'

"Then she does not board with you now," said Sir Charles, with a countenance⁴⁰⁵ as pale as death, dreading to hear something still more fatal.

As Mr. Lawson was going to answer him, William, not knowing his father-in-law had company, entered the room abruptly; but seeing the baronet, he bowed, apologized for his intrusion, and instantly retired.

³⁹⁹ To come down, and stop. The word implies the idea of descending; as, of a bird from the wing; a traveller from his horse or carriage, and generally of resting or stopping ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "alight, v.n.").

⁴⁰⁰ A room in houses on the first floor, elegantly furnished for reception or entertainment ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "parlour, n.s.").

⁴⁰¹ Disquiet of mind; deprivation of tranquility, restlessness of passions ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "perturbation, n.s.").

⁴⁰² A parish priest ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "curate, n.s.").

⁴⁰³ Melancholy; sorrowfulness; gloomy seriousness ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "pensiveness, n.s.").

⁴⁰⁴ The lowest degree of honour that is hereditary; it is below a baron and above a knight; and has the precedence of all other knights, except the knights of the garter. It was first founded by king James I. A.D. 1611. Cowel. But it appears by the following passage, that the term was in use before, though in another sense ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "baronet, n.s.").

⁴⁰⁵ Calmness of look; composure of face ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "countenance, n.s.").

The various emotions with which this sudden and unexpected sight of his rival filled the breast of Sir Charles, caused such a wildness in his looks, that Mr. Lawson, in great astonishment and perplexity, asked him if he was taken ill?

Sir Charles, endeavouring to compose himself, replied, "That he was very well, but in a faltering accent asked, who the young gentleman was that had just left the room.

Mr. Lawson told him he was his son-in-law.

'Your son-in-law! cried Sir Charles, eagerly, what! married to your daughter! is it possible?'

Mr. Lawson knew enough of Sophia's story to make him comprehend now who this young gentleman was, who discovered so extraordinary a concern upon this occasion; and, charmed to have an opportunity of doing her service by removing those suspicions which he had been told had produced

so fatal a reverse in her fortune, he gave the baronet a circumstantial account of his daughter's marriage: sensible that he was too much interested in this detail to make him think it impertinent⁴⁰⁶, he introduced it no otherways than by declaring himself under the greatest obligation to miss Sophia, who, having honoured his daughter with her friendship, had been the chief instrument of her present happiness.

While the good curate related all the circumstances of an affair which had had such melancholy consequences, the baronet listened to him with an attention still as the grave; his eyes were fixed upon his with a look of the most eager anxiety, and he scarce suffered himself to breathe for fear of losing any of his words.

In proportion as his doubts were removed, his countenance expressed more and more joy; and when, upon his reflecting on all that he had heard, it appeared plainly that the fatal meeting which had caused him so much anguish⁴⁰⁷, was the effect of Sophia's solicitude⁴⁰⁸ to serve her friend, and that the passionate action of the youth was an acknowledgment of gratitude, not an expression of love, he was not able to conceal the excess of his joy, but, rising up in a sudden transport, he took the curate's hand, and pressing it eagerly, 'You know not, said he, Mr. Lawson, how happy you have made me; but where is miss Sophia, is she gone to Bath with her good friend Mr. Herbert?'

'No, Sir, replied Mr. Lawson; she lives with her mother. You know, I suppose, that Mrs. Darnley has lost her annuity⁴⁰⁹ by the death of the gentleman upon whom it was charged.'

⁴⁰⁶ Of no relation to the matter in hand; of no weight ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "impertinent, adj.").

⁴⁰⁷ Excessive pain either of mind or body; applied to the mind, it means the pain of *sorrow*, and is seldom used to signify other passions ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "anguish, n.s.").

⁴⁰⁸ Anxiety; carefulness ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "solicitude, n.s.").

⁴⁰⁹ A yearly allowance ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "annuity, n.s.").

‘I never heard it till now, said the baronet, whose tenderness was alarmed for his Sophia; tell me I beg you what is her present situation.’

‘Her eldest daughter has left her, said Mr. Lawson, and she has retired with miss Sophia to a village about five miles from hence, in the road to London, where that excellent young lady supports her mother and herself by the labour of her hands.’

“Angelick creature!” exclaimed Sir Charles, with his eyes swimming in tears. Then, after a little pause, he desired a direction to the place where Mrs. Darnley lived, and took a kind leave of Mr. Lawson, telling him he hoped soon to visit him again.

Sir Charles, although he galloped as fast as it was possible, found his horse went too slow for his impatience; so eager was he to see Sophia, and gain her pardon for the unreasonable conduct which his jealousy and rage had made him guilty of.

The account Mr. Lawson had given him of the part she had taken in his daughter’s marriage with the youth whom he had considered as his rival, not only removed the torturing pangs of jealousy, which he had so long felt, but made him view several circumstances in Sophia’s behaviour in a light favourable to his own ardent⁴¹⁰ wishes.

He fondly fancied that the melancholy in which he had heard she was plunged, was occasioned by a tender remembrance of him; and that the hope of still being his, might have been the chief cause of her rejecting the addresses of Mr. Howard.

How different were these ideas from the gloomy ones which had hitherto⁴¹¹ perplexed his mind! he seemed like a man waked from a frightful dream of despair and death, to a certainty of life and joy.

Amidst these transporting reveries he had passed by Sophia’s house, without perceiving it to be the same he had been directed to; and when he had reached the end of the village, he looked about for it in vain, and saw no one of whom he could enquire for it but an old woman, who was sitting under a tree near the road, making up a nosegay⁴¹² of some flowers, such as the late season produced.

He stopped his horse, and asked her if she knew where Mrs. Darnley lived? At the mention of that name she rose as hastily as her feebleness would permit her, and told him, she knew the house very well; and, if he pleased, would go and shew it him. ‘I am making this nosegay for the sweet young gentlewoman her daughter, said the old woman; I carry her flowers every day; heaven bless her, she is my only support. There is a great many fine folks hereabouts, from whom I could never get any

⁴¹⁰ Passionate; affectionate: used generally of desire ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “ardent, adj.”).

⁴¹¹ At every time till now ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “hitherto, adj.”).

⁴¹² A posie; a bunch of flowers ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “nosegay, n.s.”).

relief; but since she came hither⁴¹³ I have wanted for nothing. Pray let me shew you her house; old and weak as I am, I would walk ten miles to do her service.’

Sir Charles, alighting from his horse, ordered his servant to lead it to the nearest public house, and wait for him there; he told the old woman, he would accept of her offer, and walk along with her. Then taking two guineas⁴¹⁴ out of his pocket, he gave them to her, in reward, he said, for the gratitude she expressed for her young benefactress.

The good woman received his bounty with a transport⁴¹⁵ of surprise and joy, and pleasingly repaid him by talking of his beloved Sophia; of whom she related many instances of tenderness and charity towards the poor of the village, and filled him with admiration of that true benevolence, which, even in the midst of indigence, could administer to the greater wants of her fellow-creatures.

When they came within sight of Sophia’s little cottage, the old woman, pointing to it, told him, Mrs. Darnley and her daughter lived there: upon which the⁴¹⁶ baronet, dismissing her, walked up to it with disordered haste. A row of wooden pales led to a small grass-plot before the door.

As he approached, he saw Sophia sitting at a window at work. He stopped to gaze upon her; she appeared to him more lovely, more engaging than ever. He wished, yet dreaded her looking up, lest her first thoughts upon seeing him being unfavourable, she should resolve to refuse his visit. He went forwards with a beating heart, and cautiously opening the little gate, reached the door of this humble habitation unheard and unseen by Sophia; the door flew open at his touch, poverty has no need of bolts and bars, and every good angel is the guard of innocence and virtue.

The noise he made in entering, and the sound of her name, pronounced in a tender accent, made Sophia hastily turn her head. At sight of Sir Charles, she started from her chair, her work fell from her trembling hands, she looked at him in silent astonishment, unable, and perhaps unwilling to avoid him.

The baronet, whose heart laboured with the strongest emotions of tenderness, anxiety, hope, and fear, had not power to utter a word; and while her surprise kept her motionless, threw himself at her feet, and taking one of her hands, pressed it respectfully to his lips, tears at the same time falling from his eyes.

⁴¹³ To this end; to this design; to this topick of argument. ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “hither, adj.”).

⁴¹⁴ “An English gold coin, not coined since 1813, first struck in 1663 with the nominal value of 20s., but from 1717 until its disappearance circulating as legal tender at the rate of 21s ([Oxford English Dictionary](#), “guinea, n.”).

⁴¹⁵ To put into ecstasy; to ravish with pleasure ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “transport, v.a.”).

⁴¹⁶ “The lowest degree of honour that is hereditary; it is below a baron and above a knight; and has the precedency of all other knights, except the knights of the garter. It was first founded by king James I. A.D. 1611. *Cowel*. But it appears by the following passage, that the term was in use before, though in another sense ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “Baronet, n.s.”).

Sophia, whose gentle mind was sensibly affected with this action, and the paleness and ⁴¹⁷langour which appeared in his countenance, found it impossible to treat him with that severity which his capricious conduct seemed to demand of her; nevertheless she drew away her hand, which he yielded with reluctant submission.

“I hoped,” said she, in an accent that expressed more softness and grief than anger or disdain, “that I should be spared any farther insults of this sort from you; those I have already suffered has sufficiently punished me for my weak credulity.”

Sir Charles, when she began to speak, rose up; but continued gazing on her with the most passionate tenderness, while every word she uttered seemed to pierce his heart.

‘I will not, pursued Sophia, gathering firmness as she spoke, ask you, why you have intruded upon me thus unexpectedly? or why you assume a behaviour so little of a-piece with your past actions? I only beg you to believe, that I am not again to be deceived; and although I am persuaded my good opinion is of no consequence to you, yet I will tell you, that if it is possible to regain it, it will be by never more ⁴¹⁸importuning me with visits, which my situation in life makes it very improper for me to admit of.’

Sophia, when she had said this, went out of the room, without casting a look back upon Sir Charles, who followed her in great disorder, conjuring her only to hear what he had to say.

As she was passing to her own chamber, she was met by her mother, who, seeing Sir Charles, was filled with surprize and joy; and perceiving that Sophia was avoiding him, said to her with an angry accent, ‘Where are you going? what is the meaning of this rudeness?’

Sophia, without answering her, retired to her own room, not without great ⁴¹⁹perturbation of mind; for there was something in the baronet’s looks and words that seemed to merit a hearing at least; but she dreaded the weakness of her own heart, and was fully persuaded that any condescension on her side would give him too great an advantage over her.

Mrs. Darnley, finding her endeavours to retain her were fruitless, advanced towards Sir Charles with great ⁴²⁰obsequiousness, congratulated him upon his return, and thanked him for the honour he did her in visiting her in her poor little habitation.

Sir Charles saluted her respectfully, and took a seat. ‘There is a sad alteration, Sir, said she, in my poor affairs since I saw you last. I never thought to have received you in such a hovel. You have heard, I suppose, of my misfortune.’

⁴¹⁷ Distressed condition, woeful plight (*Oxford English Dictionary*, “languor, n.”).

⁴¹⁸ To make persistent or pressing requests or demands; to ask or beg for something urgently or repeatedly (*Oxford English Dictionary*, “importune, v.”).

⁴¹⁹ Disquiet of mind; deprivation of tranquility (*Johnson’s Dictionary Online*, “perturbation, n.s.”).

⁴²⁰ Obedience; compliance (*Johnson’s Dictionary Online*, “obsequiousness, n.s.”).

Sir Charles, who was in great confusion of thought, and had scarce heard a word she said, replied carelessly, ‘Yes, madam, I am sorry for it.’

The coldness of this answer cast a damp upon those hopes which she had eagerly admitted upon seeing him again; and, impatient to be relieved from her tormenting anxiety on account of this unexpected visit, she asked him abruptly, whether she might wish him joy, for she heard, she said, that he was going to be married.

Sir Charles, roused by this question, replied hastily, ‘Who could have told you any thing so unlikely? Married! no, madam, there never was any foundation for such a report.’

“Indeed I believe so,” said Mrs. Darnley, almost breathless with joy to find him deny it so earnestly. ‘To be sure people are very envious and ill-natured, and those who told me, no doubt, designed to do you an ill office.’

‘And they have succeeded, said Sir Charles, sighing, if they have been able to persuade miss Sophia, that after having aspired to the possession of her, I could descend to love any other woman. I came to implore her pardon, madam, pursued he, for all the extravagancies⁴²¹ of my past conduct, and for that unreasonable jealousy which was the source of them, could I have been so happy to have prevailed upon her to have heard me.’

“What!” interrupted Mrs. Darnley eagerly, ‘and was my daughter so rude as to leave you without hearing what you had to say, I protest I am ashamed of her behaviour; but I hope you will be so good to excuse it, Sir; I will insist upon her coming in again.’

‘No, madam, said Sir Charles, holding her, for she was hurrying away, miss Sophia must not be constrained: I cannot bear that.’

Mrs. Darnley unwillingly resumed her seat, and inly fretting at her daughter’s obstinacy, trembled for the event of this visit.

Sir Charles, after a silence of some minutes, suddenly rose up, and took his leave. Mrs. Darnley, in great anxiety, followed him to the door, and said, she hoped to see him again. He answered only by a low bow, and walked away full of doubt and perplexity.

Sophia’s steadiness in refusing to hear him, banished all those flattering ideas of her tenderness for him, which he had so eagerly admitted; for he concluded that if her heart had not been steeled by indifference, she would, notwithstanding her just reasons for resentment, have been rejoiced to give him an opportunity of justifying himself.

He had reached the house where his servant was attending with the horses, without having determined what to do. To return to town without seeing Sophia again, and being assured of a

⁴²¹ Irregularity; wildness ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “extravagance, n.s.”).

reconciliation,⁴²² was misery which he could not support; and he dreaded making a new attempt to see her, lest he should receive more proofs of her insensibility and disdain.

In this perplexity the sight of Mr. Herbert alighting from a stage-coach,⁴²³ was a relief as great as it was unexpected; and in the sudden joy he felt at meeting with a man whose interposition⁴²⁴ could be so useful to him, he forgot that his former behaviour must necessarily have given rise to strong prejudices against him, and ran up to embrace the good old man with extreme cordiality.

Mr. Herbert was surprised, and repaid his civilities with great coldness: upon which the young baronet, in some confusion, desired to have a few moments conversation with him.

They walked together down a meadow; and Sir Charles, having with a candor⁴²⁵ and sincerity becoming the rectitude⁴²⁶ of his intentions, related all those circumstances which had concurred to excite his jealousy, and with that powerful eloquence which passion inspires, expatiated⁴²⁷ upon the motives of his conduct, a conduct which he acknowledged laid him open to the most unfavourable suspicions; Mr. Herbert, convinced of his sincerity, and full of compassion for the torments which his mistaken jealousy had caused him, undertook to make his peace with Sophia, and assured him he would very shortly wait upon him in town.

This would not satisfy the anxious lover; he declared he would not leave the place till he was assured of his pardon; and Mr. Herbert, who certainly was not displeased with his obstinacy,⁴²⁸ could with difficulty persuade him to wait only till the next day for an account of his success.

Sir Charles unwillingly took the road to London, and Mr. Herbert hastened to congratulate his beloved charge upon the agreeable prospect that was once more opening for her.

Mrs. Darnley had, during this interval, been employed in reproaching poor Sophia for her behaviour to Sir Charles. In the vexation⁴²⁹ of her heart she exclaimed in the severest terms against her pride

⁴²² Renewal of Friendship ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "reconciliation, n.s.").

⁴²³ A coach that keeps its stages; a coach that passes and repasses on certain days for the accommodation of passengers ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "stage-coach, n.s.").

⁴²⁴ Mediation; agency between parties ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "interposition, n.s.").

⁴²⁵ Sweetness of temper; purity of mind; openness; ingenuity; kindness ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "candour, n.s.").

⁴²⁶ Rightness; uprightness; freedom from moral curvity or obliquity ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "rectitude, n.s.").

⁴²⁷ "To let loose; to allow to range. The sense is very improper ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "expatiate, v.n.").

⁴²⁸ Stubbornness; contumacy; pertinacy; persistency ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), obstinacy, n.s.).

⁴²⁹ The state of being troubled; uneasiness; sorrow ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "vexation, n.s.").

and obstinacy; she told her, she might be assured Sir Charles would never attempt to see her again; that it was plain he was disgusted with her bad temper.

She burst into a passion of tears while she enumerated the glorious advantages of that rank and fortune, which, she said, Sophia had thrown from her; and among many motives which she urged ought to have determined her to act otherwise, that of being able to out-shine her sister was one.

Sophia answered only by sighs: she herself was not absolutely satisfied with the unrelenting severity with which she had treated Sir Charles. The more she reflected upon his behaviour, the more she condemned herself for not hearing what he had to offer in his own defence. She had once thought it probable that he had been deceived by the report that was spread through Mrs. Gibbons's folly of her encouraging the addresses of her nephew, and his extravagant conduct might be occasioned by jealousy: a fault which a woman is always disposed to pardon in a lover. While she revolved these thoughts in her mind, Mrs. Darnley perceived her uneasiness, and added to it by new reproaches.

Mr. Herbert's arrival put an end to this tormenting scene. Sophia first heard his voice, and flew to receive him; Mrs. Darnley followed, and seeing her bathed in tears, while the good old man saluted her with the tenderness of a parent, she told him, with an air half serious, half gay, that her daughter loved him so well, she had no tenderness for any one else. She then entered abruptly upon the affair of Sir Charles, though she hardly expected Mr. Herbert would join with her in condemning Sophia.

He pleasingly surprised her by saying, that Sophia was to blame; and that he came prepared to chide her for her petulance⁴³⁰ and obstinacy.

Mr. Herbert, who saw a sweet impatience in Sophia's looks, explained himself immediately, and told her he had met Sir Charles; who had fully removed all the suspicions his strange conduct had occasioned, and convinced him, that he deserved more pity than censure.⁴³¹

'No doubt, pursued he, looking on Sophia with a smile, you will be surprised to hear, young lady, that Sir Charles was witness to the interview you had in the meadow behind Mr. Lawson's house, with a certain handsome youth, whom he had heard was his rival, and a favoured rival too. What were his thoughts, do you imagine, when he saw this handsome youth throw himself at your feet, and kiss your hand?'

Mrs. Darnley now looked at her daughter in great astonishment; and Sophia, who yet did not recollect the circumstance of her meeting William, was so perplexed, she knew not what to say.

Mr. Herbert enjoyed her innocent confusion for a few moments, and then repeated all that Sir Charles had told him, of his jealousy and rage; his vain attempts to banish her from his remembrance; the resolution he had formed after his conversation with Mr. Howard concerning her; and how happily he had been undeceived at Mr. Lawson's, where he found his supposed rival was the husband of her friend.

⁴³⁰ Sauciness; peevishness; wantonness ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "petulance, n.s.").

⁴³¹ Blame; reprimand; reproach ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "censure, n.s.").

“Well,” interrupted Mrs. Darnley, with great vehemence,⁴³² ‘I hope you are satisfied now, Sophia: I hope you will treat Sir Charles with more civility if he comes again.—Mr. Herbert, I beg you will exert your power over her upon this occasion —I think there is no doubt of Sir Charles’s honourable intentions.’

Thus she ran on, while Sophia, who had listened to Mr. Herbert’s relation with the softest emotions of pity, tenderness, and joy, continued silent with her eyes fixed upon the ground.

Mr. Herbert, willing to spare her delicacy, told Mrs. Darnley, that relying upon—Sophia’s good sense and prudence, he had ventured to assure Sir Charles of a more favourable reception, when her prejudices were removed.

‘He will come to-morrow, my child, pursued he, to implore your pardon for all the errors of his past conduct, and to offer you his hand. I am persuaded you will act properly upon this occasion; and in a marriage so far beyond your hopes and expectations, acknowledge the hand of Providence,⁴³³ which thinks fit to reward you, even in this world, for your steady adherence to virtue.’

Sophia bowed and blushed; her mother, in a rapture,⁴³⁴ embraced and wished her joy.

Mr. Herbert now endeavoured to change the conversation to subjects more indifferent; but Mrs. Darnley, ever thoughtless and unseasonable, could talk of nothing but Sir Charles, and the grandeur which awaited her daughter. All night her fancy ran upon gilt⁴³⁵ equipages,⁴³⁶ rich jewels, magnificent houses, and a train of servants; and she was by much too happy to taste any repose: but Sophia enjoyed the change of her fortune with much more rational delight, and among all the sentiments that arose in her mind upon this occasion, that of gratitude to heaven was the most frequent and most lively.

Mr. Herbert, who had accepted a lodging in Sophia’s cottage, went to Sir Charles the next day, according to his promise. He found him waiting for him full of anxious impatience; and hearing from the good old man, that Sophia was disposed to receive him favourably, he embraced him in a transport of joy; and his chariot⁴³⁷ being already ordered, they drove immediately to the village.

Mrs. Darnley welcomed the baronet with a profusion of civilities. Sophia’s behaviour was full of dignity and soft reserve.

⁴³² Ardour; mental violence; terrour ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “vehemence, n.s.”).

⁴³³ Foresight; timely care; forecast; the act of providing ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “providence, n.s.”).

⁴³⁴ Ecstasy; transport; violence of any pleasing passion; enthusiasm; uncommon heat of imagination ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “rapture, n.s.”).

⁴³⁵ Golden show; gold laid on the surface of any matter. Now obsolete ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “gilt, n.s.”).

⁴³⁶ Carriage of state; vehicle ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “equipage, n.s.”).

⁴³⁷ A lighter kind of coach with only back seats ([Johnson’s Dictionary Online](#), “chariot, n.s.”).

Sir Charles, after a long conversation with her, obtained her leave to demand her of her mother, to whom he shewed the writings, which were already all drawn; and by which Sophia had a jointure⁴³⁸ and pin-money⁴³⁹, equal to the settlements that had been made upon lady Stanley.

He now ventured to intreat that a short day might be fixed for their marriage. It was with great difficulty, that Sophia was prevailed upon to consent; but her mother's impetuosity⁴⁴⁰ carried all before it, and Mr. Herbert himself supported the young baronet's request.

The ceremony was performed by Mr. Lawson in his own parish-church: after which he and his amiable family accompanied the new wedded pair to their country-seat, where they passed several days with them.

Mr. Herbert having previously acquainted Sir Charles with Harriot's situation, the baronet, tho' he detested her character, and declared he never could pardon her for the miseries she had caused him; yet was desirous to have her decently settled, and promised to give a thousand pounds with her in marriage, if a reputable match could be found for her: he even put notes for that sum into Mr. Herbert's hands, and earnestly recommended it to him, to take the affair under his management.

Harriot, during the time she lived with her mother, had been courted⁴⁴¹ by a young tradesman in tolerable circumstances; and although she thought it great insolence⁴⁴² for a person in business to pretend to her, yet, actuated by a true spirit of coquetry⁴⁴³, while she despised the lover, she took pleasure in his addresses.

This young man still retained some tenderness for her, and, allured by the prospect of a fortune, was willing, notwithstanding any faults in her conduct, to make her his wife.

Mrs. Darnley proposed him to her, and Mr. Herbert enforced her advice with all the good sense he was matter of. But Harriot received the proposal with the utmost disdain⁴⁴⁴; insisted that she was married as well as her sister; that her rank in life was superior to hers; and added, by way of threat, that her appearance should be so likewise.

⁴³⁸ Estate settled on a wife to be enjoyed after her husband's decease ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "jointure, n.s.).

⁴³⁹ Money allowed to a wife for her private expences without account ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "pin-money, n.s.").

⁴⁴⁰ Violence; fury; vehemence; force ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "impetuosity, n.s.").

⁴⁴¹ To woo; to solicit a woman to marriage ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "court, v.a.").

⁴⁴² Pride exerted in contemptuous and overbearing treatment of others; petulant contempt ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "insolence, n.s.").

⁴⁴³ Affectation of amorous advances; desire of attracting notice ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "coquetry, n.s.").

⁴⁴⁴ Contempt; scorn; contemptuous anger; indignation ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "disdain, n.s.").

The extraordinary efforts she made to support this boast, engaged lord L. in expences that entirely alienated his affections from her, disgusted as he long had been, with her insolence and folly⁴⁴⁵.

His relations concluded a match for him with a young lady of suitable rank and fortune; and, after making a small settlement on Harriot, he took leave of her for ever.

The vexation⁴⁴⁶ she felt from this incident, threw her into a distemper very fatal to beauty. The yellow jaundice made such ravage in her face, that scarce any of those charms on which she had valued herself so much, remained. All her anxious hours were now employed in repairing her complexion, and in vain endeavours to restore lustre to those eyes, sunk in hollowness, and tintured⁴⁴⁷ with the hue of her distemper.

Although thus altered, the report of the fortune she was likely to have made her be thought a prize worthy the ambition of a young officer, who had quitted the business of a peruke⁴⁴⁸ maker, in which he was bred, for an ensign's⁴⁴⁹ commission, which made him a gentleman at once.

He offered himself to Harriot with that assurance of success, which the gaiety of his appearance, and his title of captain, gave him reason to expect, with a lady of her turn of mind.

Harriot, charmed with so important a conquest, soon consented to give him her hand; and Sir Charles Stanley, finding his character not exceptionable, gave her the fortune he had promised, to which Sophia generously added a thousand pounds more. The baronet procured her husband a better commission; but designedly in one of the colonies, whither he insisted upon his wife's accompanying him.

Harriot, in despair at being obliged to quit the delights of London, soon began to hate her husband heartily; and he, entering into her disposition⁴⁵⁰ and character, lost all esteem and tenderness for her. Her behaviour justified the rigid confinement he kept her in; and while she suffered all the restraint of jealousy, she was at the same time mortified with the knowledge that pride and not love was the source of it.

Mrs. Darnley lived not long after the departure of her favourite daughter; for so Harriot always continued to be.

⁴⁴⁵ Want of understanding; weakness of intellect, ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "folly, n.s.").

⁴⁴⁶ The state of being troubled; uneasiness; sorrow ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "vexation, n.s.").

⁴⁴⁷ To imbue or impregnate with some colour or taste ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "tincture, v.a.").

⁴⁴⁸ To dress in adscititious hair ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "peruke, v.a.").

⁴⁴⁹ A badge or symbol of dignity or office; chiefly *plural* = Latin *insignia*; also, heraldic arms or bearings ([Oxford English Dictionary Online](#), "ensign, n").

⁴⁵⁰ Tendency to any act or state ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "disposition, n.s.").

Sophia attended her mother during her long illness with the most duteous⁴⁵¹ care, and had the satisfaction to be assured by Mr. Lawson, who assisted her in her preparations for death, that her attachment to the world, which the affluent circumstances to which she was raised but too much increased, had at length given way to more pious⁴⁵² sentiments; and she died with the resignation of a christian.

The ill conduct of her sister, and the death of her mother, proved at first some interruption to Sophia's happiness; but these domestic storms blown over, she began to taste the good fortune which heaven had bestowed⁴⁵³ on her: her chief enjoyment of it was to share it with others; and Sir Charles, who adored her, put it amply in her power to indulge the benevolence of her disposition.

He took upon himself the care of rewarding her friends; he presented Mr. Lawson to a very considerable living: he procured Dolly's husband a genteel⁴⁵⁴ and lucrative employment; and married her younger sister to a relation of his own.

Mr. Herbert, who was above receiving any other gratification from Sir Charles than the entire friendship which he ever preserved for him, had the satisfaction to spend most of his time with his beloved daughter, as he used tenderly to call Sophia, and to behold her as happy as the condition of mortality admits of.

Sir Charles's tenderness for her seemed to increase every day; and when Mr. Herbert once took occasion to compliment him upon the delicacy, the ardor⁴⁵⁵, and the constancy⁴⁵⁶ of his affection, he replied with a smile, 'You attribute to me a virtue, which, in this case, I cannot be said to possess; had my passion for my Sophia been founded only on the charms of her person, I might probably e'er now have become a mere fashionable husband; but her virtue and wit supply her with graces ever varied, and ever new. Thus the steadiness of my affection for her is but a constant inconstancy, which attaches me successively to one or other of those shining qualities, of which her charming mind is an inexhaustible source.'

⁴⁵¹ Obedient; obsequious; respectful to those who have natural or legal authority ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "duteous, adj.").

⁴⁵² Careful of the duties owed by created beings to God; godly; religious; such as is due to sacred things. [Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "pious, adj.).

⁴⁵³ To give; to confer upon ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "bestow, v.a.").

⁴⁵⁴ Polite; elegant in behaviour; civil ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "genteel, adj.").

⁴⁵⁵ Heat of affection, as love, desire, courage ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "ardour, n.s.").

⁴⁵⁶ Consistency; unvaried state ([Johnson's Dictionary Online](#), "constancy, n.s.").