

L E T T E R XLIII.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Tuesday, March 21.

• **W**OULD you not have thought, my dear Miss
 • Howe, as well as I, that my proposal must
 • have been accepted: And that my Brother, by the
 • last article of his unbrotherly Letter (where he
 • threatens to go to Scotland if it should be hearkened
 • to) was of opinion that it *would*.

• For my part, after I had read the unkind Letter
 • over and over, I concluded, upon the whole, that a
 • Reconciliation upon terms so disadvantageous to my-
 • self, as hardly any other person in my case, I dare
 • say, would have proposed, must be the result of this
 • morning's conference. And in that belief I had
 • begun to give myself new trouble in thinking (this
 • difficulty over) how I should be able to pacify Love-
 • lace on that part of my engagement, by which I
 • undertook to break off all correspondence with him,
 • unless my friends should be brought by the interpo-
 • sition of his powerful friends, and any offers they
 • might make (which it was rather *his* part to suggest,
 • than *mine* to intimate) to change their minds.

• Thus was I employed, not very agreeably, you
 • may believe, because of the vehemence of the tem-
 • pers I had to conflict with; when breakfasting-time
 • approached, and my judges began to arrive.

• And oh! how my heart fluttered on hearing the
 • chariot of the one, and then of the other, rattle
 • thro' the court-yard, and the hollow-sounding foot-
 • step giving notice of each person's stepping out, to
 • take his place on the awful bench which my fancy
 • had formed for them and my other judges!

• That, thought I, is my Aunt Hervey's! That
 • my Uncle Harlowe's! Now comes my Uncle An-
 • tony! And my imagination made a fourth chariot
 • for

• for the odious Solmes, altho' it happened that he
• was not there.

• And now, thought I, are they all assembled :
• And now my Brother calls upon my Sister to make
• *her* report ! Now the hard-hearted Bella interlards
• her speech with invective ! Now has she concluded
• her report ! Now they debate upon it !—Now does
• my Brother flame ! Now threaten to go to Scot-
• land ! Now is he chidden, and now soothed !

• And then I ran thro' the whole conference in my
• imagination, forming speeches for this person and
• that, *pro* and *con*. till all concluded, as I flattered
• myself, in an acceptance of my conditions, and in
• giving directions to have an instrument drawn to tie
• me up to my good behaviour : While I supposed all
• agreed to give Solmes a Wife every way more wor-
• thy of him, and with *her* the promise of my Grand-
• father's Estate, in case of my forfeiture, or dying
• unmarried, on the righteous condition he proposes
• to entitle himself to it with me.

• And now, thought I, am I to be ordered down
• to recognize my own proposals. And how shall I
• look upon my awful judges ? How shall I stand
• the questions of some, the set furlinefs of others,
• the returning love of one or two ? How shall I be
• affected !

• Then I wept : Then I dried my eyes : Then I
• practised at my glass for a look more chearful than
• my heart.

• And now [as any-thing stirred] is my Sister
• coming to declare the issue of all ! Tears gushing
• again, my heart fluttering as a bird against its
• wires ; drying my eyes again and again to no pur-
• pose.

• And thus, my Nancy [Excuse the fanciful pro-
• lixity] was I employed, and such were my thoughts
• and imaginations, when I found a very different
• result from the hopeful conference.

• For

• For about Ten o'clock up came my Sister, with
 • an air of cruel triumph, waving her hand with a light
 • flourish—

• Obedience without reserve is required of you,
 • Clary. My Papa is justly incensed, that you should
 • *presume* to dispute his will, and to make conditions
 • with him. He knows what is best for you: And
 • as you own matters are gone a great way between
 • this hated Lovelace and you, they will believe nothing
 • you say; except you will give the one *only* instance,
 • that will put them out of doubt of the sincerity of
 • your promises.

• What, child, are you surprised?—Cannot you
 • speak?—Then, it seems, you had expected a dif-
 • ferent issue, had you?—Strange that you could!—
 • With all your acknowledgements and confessions, so
 • creditable to your *noted prudence*!—

• I was indeed speechless for some time: My eyes
 • were even fixed, and ceased to flow. But, upon the
 • hard-hearted Bella's proceeding with her airs of in-
 • sult, Indeed I *was* mistaken, said I; Indeed I was!
 • —For in you, Bella, I expected, I hoped for, a
 • Sister—

• What! interrupted she, with all your mannerly
 • flings, and your despising airs, did you expect, that
 • I was capable of telling stories for you?—Did you
 • think, that when I was asked my own opinion of
 • the sincerity of your declarations, I could not tell
 • them, *how far matters had gone between you and*
 • *your Fellow*?—When the intention is to bend that
 • stubborn will of yours to your duty, do you think
 • I would deceive them?—Do you think I would en-
 • courage them to call you down, to contradict all
 • that I should have *invented* in your favour?

• Well, well, Bella; I am the less obliged to you;
 • that's all. I was willing to think, that I had still a
 • Brother and Sister. But I find I am mistaken.

• *Pretty Mopsa-eyed soul!* was her expression!—

• And

• And was it willing to think it had still a *Brother* and
 • *Sister*? And why don't you go on, Clary? [mock-
 • ing my half-weeping accent] I thought too I had a
 • *Father*, and *Mother*, *two Uncles*, and an *Aunt*: *But*
 • *I am mis—taken, that's all*—Come, Clary, say this,
 • and it will in part be true, because you have thrown
 • off their authority, and because you respect one vile
 • wretch more than them all.

• How have I deserved this at your hands, Sister?—
 • But I will only say, I pity you.

• And with that disdainful air too, Clary!—None
 • of that bridled neck! None of your scornful pity;
 • Girl!—I beseech you!

• This sort of behaviour is natural to you, surely,
 • Bella!—What *new* talents does it discover in you!—
 • But proceed—If it be a pleasure to you, proceed,
 • Bella. And since I must not pity *you*, I will pity
 • *myself*: For nobody else will.

• Because you don't, said she—

• Hush, Bella, interrupting her, *Because I don't*
 • *deserve it*—I know you were going to say so. I
 • will say as you say in every-thing; and that's the
 • way to please you.

• Then say, Lovelace is a villain.

• So I will, when I think him so.

• Then you don't think him so?

• Indeed I don't. *You* did not always, Bella.

• And what, Clary, mean you by that? [bristling
 • up to me]—Tell me what you mean by that refle-
 • ction?

• Tell me why you call it a reflection?—What did
 • I say!

• Thou art a provoking creature—But what say
 • you to two or three duels of that wretch's?

• I can't tell what to say, unless I knew the occa-
 • sions.

• Do you justify duelling at all?

• I do not: Neither can I help his duelling.

- Will you go down, and humble that stubborn
- spirit of yours to your Mamma?
- I said nothing.
- Shall I conduct your Ladyship down? [offering
- to take my declined hand].
- What! not vouchsafe to answer me?
- I turned from her in silence.
- What! turn your back upon me too!—Shall I
- bring up your Mamma to you, Love? [following
- me, and taking my struggling hand] What! not
- speak yet! Come, my sullen, silent dear, speak one
- word to me—You must say *two* very soon to Mr.
- So!mes, I can tell you that.
- Then [gushing out into tears, which I could not
- hold in longer] they shall be the last words I will
- ever speak.
- Well, well [insultingly wiping my averted face
- with her handkerchief, while her other hand held
- mine, in a ridiculing tone] I am glad any-thing will
- make thee speak: Then you think you may be
- brought to speak the *two* words—Only they are to
- be the last!—How like a gentle *Lovyer* from its
- tender bleeding heart was that!
- Ridiculous Bella!
- Saucy Clary! [changing her sneering tone to an
- imperious one] But do you think you can humble
- yourself to go down to your Mamma?
- I am tired with such stuff as this. Tell me,
- Bella, if my Mamma will condescend to see me?
- Yes, if you can be dutiful at last.
- I can. I will.
- But what call you dutiful?
- To give up my own *inclinations*—That's some-
- thing more for you to tell of—in obedience to my
- Parents commands; and to beg I may not be made
- miserable with a man that is fitter for *any-body* than
- for me.
- For *me*, do you mean, Clary?

• Why

• Why not? since you have put the question. You
 • have a better opinion of him than I have. My
 • friends, I hope, would not think him too good for
 • me, and not good *enough* for you. But cannot you
 • tell me, Bella, what is to become of me, without
 • insulting over me thus?—If I must be thus treated,
 • remember, that if I am guilty of any rashness, the
 • usage I meet with will justify it.

• So, Clary, you are contriving an *excuse*, I find,
 • for somewhat that we have not doubted has been in
 • your head a great while.

• If it were so, you seem resolved, for *your* part, and
 • so does my Brother for *his*, that I shall not want
 • one.—But indeed, Bella, I can bear no longer this
 • repetition of the worst part of yesterday's conversa-
 • tion: I desire I may throw myself at my Father's
 • and Mother's feet, and hear from them what their
 • sentence is. I shall at least avoid, by that means,
 • the unfisterly insults I meet with from you.

• Hey-day! What, is this you? Is it you, my meek
 • Sister Clary?

• Yes, it is I, Bella; and I will claim the pro-
 • tection due to a child of the family, or to know
 • why I am to be thus treated, when I offer only to
 • preserve to myself the liberty of *refusal*, which be-
 • longs to my Sex; and, to please my Parents, would
 • give up my *choice*. I have contented myself till now
 • to take *second-hand* messengers, and *first-hand* in-
 • sults: You are but my Sister: My Brother is not
 • my Sovereign. And while I have a Father and
 • Mother living, I will not be thus treated by a Bro-
 • ther and Sister, and their servants, all setting upon
 • me, as it should seem, to make me desperate, and
 • to do a rash thing.—I will know, in short, Sister
 • Bella, *why* I am to be constrained thus?—What is
 • intended by it?—And whether I am to be con-
 • sidered as a *child* or a *slave*?

• She stood aghast all this time, partly with real,
 • partly with affected surprize. • And

• And is it *you*? Is it *indeed* you?—Well, Clary, you amaze me! But since you are so desirous to refer yourself to your Father and Mother, I will go down, and tell them what you say. Your friends are not yet gone, I believe: They shall assemble again; and then you may come down, and plead your own cause in person.

• Let me then. But let my *Brother* and *you* be absent. You have made yourselves too much *parties* against me, to sit as my judges. And I desire to have none of yours or his interpositions. I am sure you could not have represented what I proposed fairly: I am *sure* you could not. Nor is it possible you should be *commissioned* to treat me thus.

• Well, well, I'll call up my Brother to you.—I will indeed.—He shall justify himself, as well as me.

• I desire not to see my Brother, except he will come *as* a Brother, laying aside the authority he has unjustly assumed over me.

• And so, Clary, it is nothing to him, or to me, is it? that our Sister shall disgrace her whole family?

• As how, Bella, disgrace it?—The man whom you thus freely treat, is a man of birth and fortune: He is a man of parts, and nobly allied.—He was once thought worthy of you; and I wish to Heaven you had had him. I am sure it was not my fault you had not, altho' you treat me thus!

• This set her into a flame: I wish I had forborn it. O how the poor Bella raved! I thought she would have beat me once or twice: And she vowed, her fingers itched to do so—But I was not worth her *anger*: Yet she flamed on.

• We were heard to be high.—And Betty came up from my Mother to command my Sister to attend her.—She went down accordingly, threatening me with letting every one know what a violent creature I had shewn myself to be.

• *Tuesday*

• *Tuesday Noon, March 21.*

• I HAVE as yet heard no more of my Sister : And
 • have not courage enough to insist upon throwing
 • myself at the feet of my Father and Mother, as I
 • thought in my heat of temper I should be able to do.
 • And I am now grown as calm as ever ; and were
 • Bella to come up again, as fit to be played upon as
 • before.

• I am indeed sorry that I sent her from me in such
 • disorder. But my Papa's Letter threatening me
 • with my Uncle Antony's house and chapel, terrifies
 • me strangely ; and by their silence I am afraid some
 • new storm is gathering.

• But what shall I do with this Lovelace? I have
 • just now, by the unsuspected hole in the wall (*that I
 • told you of in my Letter by Hannah*) got a Letter
 • from him—So uneasy is he for fear I should be pre-
 • vailed upon in Solmes's favour ; so full of menaces,
 • if I am ; so resenting the usage I receive [for, how I
 • cannot tell ; but he has undoubtedly intelligence of
 • all that is done in the family] ; such protestations of
 • inviolable faith and honour ; such vows of reforma-
 • tion ; such pressing arguments to escape from this
 • disgraceful confinement—O my Nancy, what shall
 • I do with this Lovelace?—

L E T T E R XLIV.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, *To Miss* HOWE.

Wednesday Morning, 9 o' clock.

MY Aunt Hervey lay here last night, and is but
 just gone from me. She came up to me with
 my Sister. They would not trust my Aunt without
 this ill-natured witness. When she entered my cham-
 ber, I told her, That this visit was a high favour to
 a poor prisoner, in her hard confinement. I kissed her
 hand. She, kindly saluting me, said, Why this distance
 to your Aunt, my dear, who loves you so well?

She