

And now, my dear, how is it with you? How do you now, as my Mother says to Mr. Hickman, when her pert Daughter has made him look sorrowful?

L E T T E R XXI.

Mr. HICKMAN, To Mrs. HOWE.

Madam, Wednesday, March 29.

IT is with infinite regret that I think myself obliged, by pen and ink, to repeat my apprehensions, that it is impossible for me ever to obtain a share in the affections of your beloved Daughter. O that it were not too evident to every one, as well as to myself, even to our very servants, that my Love for her, and my Assiduities, expose me rather to her Scorn [Forgive me, Madam, the hard word!] than to the treatment due to a man whose proposals have met with your approbation, and who loves her above all the women in the world!

Well might the merit of my passion be doubted, if, like Mr. Solmes to the truly admirable Miss Clarissa Harlowe, I could continue my addresses to Miss Howe's distaste. Yet what will not the continuance cost me!

Give me leave, nevertheless, dearest, worthiest Lady, to repeat, what I told you, on Monday night, at Mrs. Larkin's, with a heart even bursting with grief, That I wanted not the treatment of that day to convince me, that I am not, nor ever can be, the object of Miss Howe's voluntary favour. What hopes can there be, that a Lady will ever esteem, as a Husband, the man, whom, as a Lover, she despises? Will not every act of obligingness from such a one, be construed an unmanly tameness of spirit, and entitle him the more to her disdain?— My heart is full: Forgive me if I say, that Miss Howe's treatment of me does no credit either to her education, or fine sense. Since

• Since then it is too evident, that she cannot esteem
 • me; and since, as I have heard it justly observed by
 • the excellent Miss Clarissa Harlowe, that Love is
 • not a voluntary passion; would it not be ungenerous
 • to subject the dear Daughter to the displeasure of a
 • Mother so justly fond of her; and you, Madam,
 • while you are so good as to interest yourself in my
 • favour, to uneasiness? And why, were I to be even
 • sure, at last, of succeeding by means of your kind
 • partiality to me, should I wish to make the Best-
 • beloved of my soul unhappy; since mutual must be
 • our happiness, or misery for life the consequence to
 • both?

• My best wishes will for ever attend the dear, the
 • ever-dear Lady! May her Nuptials be happy! They
 • must be so, if she marry the man she can honour
 • with her Love. Yet I will say, that whoever be the
 • happy, the thrice happy man, he never can love her
 • with a passion more ardent and more sincere than
 • mine.

• Accept, dear Madam, of my most grateful thanks
 • for a distinction that has been the only support of my
 • presumption in the address I am obliged, as utterly
 • hopeless, to discontinue. A distinction, on which
 • (and not on my own merits) I had entirely relied;
 • but which, I find, can avail me nothing. To the
 • last hour of my life, it will give me pleasure to think,
 • that had your favour, your recommendation, been
 • of sufficient weight to conquer what seems to be an
 • invincible Aversion, I had been the happiest of men.

• I am, dear Madam, with inviolable respect,

• *Your ever-obliged and faithful*

• *humble Servant,*

• CHARLES HICKMAN.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXII.

• Mrs. HOWE, To CHARLES HICKMAN, Esq;

• Thursday, March 30.

• I Cannot but say, Mr. Hickman, but you have
 • cause to be dissatisfied—to be out of humour—
 • to be displeas'd—with Nancy—But, upon my word;
 • But indeed—What shall I say?—Yet this I will
 • say, that you *good* young gentlemen know nothing
 • at all of our Sex. Shall I tell you—But why should
 • I? And yet I will say, That if Nancy did not think
 • well of you in the main, she is too generous to treat
 • you so freely as she does.—Don't you think she has
 • courage enough to tell me, She would not see you,
 • and to refuse at any time seeing you, as she knows
 • on what account you come, if she had not some-
 • thing in her head favourable to you?—Fie! that I
 • am forced to say thus much in writing, when I
 • have hinted it to you twenty and twenty times by
 • word of mouth!

• But if you are so indifferent, Mr. Hickman—If
 • you think you can part with her for her skittish
 • tricks—If *my* interest in your favour—Why, Mr.
 • Hickman, I must tell you, that my Nancy is worth
 • bearing with. If she be *foolish*—what is that owing
 • to?—Is it not to her *Wit*? Let me tell you, Sir;
 • you cannot have the convenience without the incon-
 • venience. What workman loves not a sharp tool
 • to work with? But is there not more danger from a
 • sharp tool, than from a blunt one? And what work-
 • man will throw away a sharp tool, because it may
 • cut his fingers? Wit may be likened to a sharp
 • tool. And there is something very pretty in wit,
 • let me tell you. Often and often have I been forc'd
 • to smile at her arch turns upon me, when I could
 • have beat her for them. And, pray, don't I bear
 • a great deal from her?—And why? Because I love
 • her

• her. And would you not wish me to judge of your
 • Love for her by my own? And would not you bear
 • with her?—Don't you love her (what tho' with an-
 • other sort of Love?) as well as I do? I do assure
 • you, Sir, that if I thought you did not—Well, but
 • it is plain that you don't!—And is it plain that you
 • don't?—Well, then, you must do as you think
 • best.

• Well might the merit of your passion be doubted,
 • you say, if, like Mr. Solmes—Fiddle-faddle!—
 • Why, you are a captious man, I think!—Has
 • Nancy been so plain in her repulses of you as Miss
 • Clary Harlowe has been to Mr. Solmes?—Does
 • Nancy love any man better than you, altho' she
 • may not shew so much Love to you as you wish for?
 • —If she did, let me tell you, she would have let us
 • all hear of it.—What idle comparisons then!

• But it may be you are tired out. It may be you
 • have seen somebody else—It may be you would wish
 • to change Mistresses with that gay wretch Mr.
 • Lovelace. It may be too, that, in that case, Nancy
 • would not be sorry to change Lovers—The *truly*
 • *admirable* Miss Clarissa Harlowe! And the *excellent*
 • Miss Clarissa Harlowe!—Good-lack!—But take
 • care, Mr. Hickman, that you do not praise any
 • woman living, let her be as admirable and as excel-
 • lent as she will, above your own Mistress. No po-
 • lite man will do that, surely. And take care too,
 • that you do not make her or me think you are in
 • earnest in your anger—Just tho' it may be, as an-
 • ger only—I would not for a thousand pounds, that
 • Nancy should know that you can so easily part with
 • her, if you have the Love for her which you declare
 • you have. Be sure, if you are not absolutely deter-
 • mined, that you do not so much as whisper the con-
 • tents of this your Letter to your own heart, as I
 • may say.

• Her treatment of you, you say, does no credit
 • either

• either to her education or fine sense. Very home
 • put, truly! Nevertheless, so say I. But is not hers
 • the disgrace, more than yours? I can assure you,
 • that every-body blames her for it. And *why* do
 • they blame her?—Why? Because they think you
 • merit better treatment at her hands: And is not
 • this to your credit? Who but pities *you*, and blames
 • *her*? Do the servants, who, as you observe, see
 • her skittish airs, disrespect you for them? Do they
 • not, at such times, look concerned for you? Are
 • they not then doubly officious in their respects and
 • services to you?—I have observed with pleasure,
 • that they are.

• But you are afraid you shall be thought tame,
 • perhaps, when married. That you shall not be
 • thought *manly* enough, I warrant!—And this was
 • poor Mr. Howe's fear. And many a tug did this
 • lordly fear cost us both, God knows!—Many more
 • than needed, I am sure:—And more than ought to
 • have been, had he known how to *bear and forbear*;
 • as is the duty of those who pretend to have most
 • sense—And, pray, which would you have to have
 • most sense, the woman or the man?

• Well, Sir, and now what remains, if you really
 • love Nancy so well as you say you do?—Why, I
 • leave that to you. You may, if you please, come
 • to breakfast with me in the morning. But with no
 • *full heart*, nor resenting looks, I advise you; ex-
 • cept you can brave it out. 'Tis that have I, when pro-
 • voked, done many a time with my *Husband*; but
 • never did I get any-thing by it with my *Daughter*:
 • Much less will you. Of which, for your observa-
 • tion, I thought fit to advertise you. As from

Your Friend,

ANNABELLA HOWE.