

that might bring discredit to him, if revealed.—Better any-body expose a man than a wife, if I *am* to be his; and what is said by you will be thought to come from me.

It shall be my constant prayer, that all the felicities which this world can afford, may be yours: And that the Almighty will never suffer you nor yours, to the remotest posterity, to want such a friend as my Anna Howe has been to

Her CLARISSA HARLOWE.

• L E T T E R XLII.

• *Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;*

• **A**ND now, that my Beloved seems secure in
• my net, for my project upon the vixen Miss
• Howe, and upon her Mother: In which the of-
• ficious prancer Hickman is to come in for a dash.

• But why upon her Mother, methinks thou
• askest; who, unknown to herself, has only acted,
• by thy impulse, thro' thy agent Joseph Leman,
• upon the folly of old Tony the Uncle?

• No matter for that: She believes she acts upon
• her own judgment; and deserves to be punished
• for pretending to judgment, when she has none.—
• Every living soul, but myself, I can tell thee, shall
• be punished, that treats either cruelly or disrespect-
• fully so adored a Lady.—What a plague! is it not
• enough that she is teased and tormented in person
• by me?

• I have already broken the matter to our three
• confederates; as a *supposed*, not a *resolved-on* case
• indeed. And yet they know, that with me, in a
• piece of mischief, Execution, with its swiftest feet,
• is seldom three paces behind Projection, which
• hardly ever limps neither.

• MOWBRAY is not against it. It is a scheme, he
• says, worthy of us: And we have not done any-
• thing for a good while, that has made a noise.

• BELTON indeed hesitates a little, because matters go wrong between him and his Thomazine ; and the poor fellow has not the courage to have his fore place probed to the bottom.

• TOURVILLE has started a fresh game, and shrugs his shoulders, and should not *chuse* to go abroad at present, *if I please*. For I apprehend that (from the *nature* of the project) there will be a kind of necessity to travel, till all is blown over.

• To ME, one country is as good as another ; and I shall soon, I suppose, chuse to quit this paltry Island ; except the mistress of my fate will consent to cohabit at *home* ; and so lay me under no necessity of *surprising her into foreign parts*. TRAVELING, thou knowest, gives the Sexes charming opportunities of being familiar with one another. A very few days and nights must now decide all matters betwixt me and my fair Inimitable.

• DOLEMAN, who can act in these causes only as chamber-counsel, will inform us by pen and ink [his right hand and right side having not yet been struck, and the other side beginning to be sensible] of all that shall occur in our absence.

• As for THEE, we had rather have thy company than not ; for, altho' thou art a wretched fellow at contrivance, yet art thou intrepid at execution. But as thy present engagements make thy attendance uncertain, I am not for making thy part necessary to our scheme ; but for leaving thee to come after us when abroad. I know thou canst not long live without us.

• The project, in short, is this :—Mrs. Howe has an elder Sister in the Isle of Wight, who is lately a widow ; and I am well informed, that the Mother and Daughter have engaged, before the latter is married, to pay a visit to this Lady, who is rich ; and intends Miss for her heiress ; and in the in-

• terim will make her some valuable presents on
 • her approaching Nuptials ; which, as Mrs. Howe,
 • who loves money more than any-thing but her-
 • self, told one of my acquaintance, would be *worth*
 • *fetching*.

• Now, Jack, nothing more need be done, than
 • to hire a little trim vessel, which shall sail a plea-
 • suring backward and forward to Portsmouth, Spit-
 • head, and the Isle of Wight, for a week or fort-
 • night before we enter upon our parts of the plot.
 • And as Mrs. Howe will be for making the best
 • bargain she can for her passage, the master of the
 • vessel may have orders (as a perquisite allowed him
 • by his owners) to take what she will give : And
 • the Master's name, be it what it will, shall be
 • *Ganmore* on the occasion ; for I know a rogue of
 • that name, who is not obliged to be of any country,
 • any more than we.

• Well, then, we will imagine them on board. I
 • will be there in disguise. They know not any of
 • ye four—supposing (the scheme so inviting) that
 • thou canst be one.

• 'Tis plaguy hard, if we cannot *find*, or *make*, a
 • storm.

• Perhaps they will be sea-sick : But whether they
 • be or not, no doubt they will keep their Cabin.

• Here will be Mrs. Howe, Miss Howe, Mr. Hick-
 • man, a Maid, and a Footman, I suppose ; and thus
 • we will order it :

• I know it will be hard weather : I *know* it will :
 • And before there can be the least suspicion of the
 • matter, we shall be in sight of Guernsey, Jersey,
 • Dieppe, Cherbourg, or any-whither on the French
 • coast that it shall please us to agree with the winds
 • to blow us : And then, securing the footman, and
 • the women being separated, one of us, according
 • to lots that may be cast, shall overcome, either by
 • persuasion or force, the maid-servant : That will
 • be

• be no hard task ; and she is a likely wench [I have
 • seen her often] : One, Mrs. Howe ; nor can there
 • be much difficulty there ; for she is full of health
 • and life, and has been long a Widow : Another
 • [*That*, says the princely Lion, must be *I!*] the
 • faucy Daughter ; who will be too much frightened
 • to make great resistance [*Violent* spirits, in that Sex,
 • are seldom *true* spirits--'Tis but where they *can*—]:
 • And after beating about the coast for three or four
 • days for recreation's sake, and to make sure work,
 • and till we see our fullen birds begin to eat and sip,
 • we will set them all ashore where it will be most
 • convenient ; sell the vessel [To Mrs. Townsend's
 • agents, with all my heart, or to some other Smug-
 • glers] or give it to Ganmore ; and pursue our tra-
 • vels, and tarry abroad till all is hushed up.

• Now I know thou wilt make difficulties, as it is
 • thy way ; while it is mine to conquer them. My
 • other vassals made theirs ; and I condescended to
 • obviate them : As thus I will thine, first stating
 • them for thee according to what I know of thy
 • phlegm.

• What, in the first place, wilt thou ask, shall be
 • done with Hickman ? who will be in full parade of
 • dress and primness, in order to shew the old Aunt
 • what a devilish clever fellow of a Nephew she is to
 • have.

• What!—I'll tell thee—Hickman, in good
 • manners, will leave the women in their Cabin—
 • and, to shew his courage with his breeding, be up-
 • on deck—

• Well, and suppose he is ?

• Suppose he is !—Why then I hope it is easy for
 • Ganmore, or any-body else, myself suppose in my
 • pea-jacket and great watch-coat (if any other make
 • a scruple to do it) while he stands in the way, gape-
 • ing and staring like a novice, to stumble against
 • him, and push him overboard !—A rich thought !—

• Is

• Is it not, Belford?—He is certainly plaguy of-
 • ficious in the Ladies correspondence; and, I am
 • informed, plays double between Mother and Daugh-
 • ter, in fear of both.—Dost not see him, Jack?—
 • I do—popping up and down, his wig and hat float-
 • ing by him; and paddling, pawing, and dashing,
 • like a frightened mongrel—I am afraid he never ven-
 • tured to learn to swim.

• But thou wilt not drown the poor fellow; wilt
 • thou?

• No, no!—That is not necessary to the project—
 • I hate to do mischiefs supererogatory. The skiff
 • shall be ready to save him, while the vessel keeps
 • its course: He shall be set on shore with the
 • loss of wig and hat only, and of half of his little
 • wits, at the place where he embarked, or any-
 • where else.

• Well, but shall we not be in danger of being
 • hanged for three such enormous Rapes, altho'
 • Hickman should escape with only a bellyful of sea-
 • water?

• Yes, to be sure, when caught—But is there any
 • likelihood of that?—Besides, have we not been in
 • danger before now, for worse facts?—And what
 • is there in being only in *danger*?—If we actually
 • were to appear in open day in England before mat-
 • ters are made up, there will be greater likelihood,
 • that these women will *not* prosecute, than that they
 • *will*.—For my own part, I should wish they *may*.
 • Would not a brave fellow chuse to appear in court
 • to such an arraignment, confronting women who
 • would do credit to his attempt? The country is
 • more merciful in *these* cases, than in *any others*:
 • I should therefore like to put myself upon my
 • country.

• Let me indulge a few reflections upon what thou
 • mayst think the *worst* that *can* happen. I will sup-
 • pose that thou art one of us; and that all five are

• actually

• actually brought to tryal on this occasion: How
 • bravely shall we enter a court, / at the head of you,
 • dressed out each man, as if to his wedding-appear-
 • ance!—You are sure of all the women, old and
 • young, of your side.—What brave fellows!—What
 • fine gentlemen!—There goes a charming hand-
 • some man!—meaning me, to be sure!—Who
 • could find in their hearts to hang such a gentleman
 • as that! whispers one Lady, sitting perhaps, on the
 • right-hand of the Recorder [I suppose the scene to
 • be in London]: While another disbelieves that any
 • woman could *fairly* swear against me. All will
 • croud after *me*: It will be each man's happiness (if
 • ye shall chance to be bashful) to be neglected: I
 • shall be found to be the greatest criminal; and my
 • safety, for which the general voice will be engaged,
 • will be yours.

• But then comes the triumph of triumphs, that
 • will make the accused look up, while the accusers
 • are covered with confusion.

• Make room there!—Stand by!—Give back!—
 • One receiving a rap, another an elbow, half a score
 • a push apiece!—

• Enter the slow-moving, hooded-faced, down-
 • looking Plaintiffs.—

• And first the Widow, with a sorrowful counte-
 • nance, tho' half-veil'd, pitying her Daughter more
 • than herself. The people, the women especially,
 • who on this occasion will be five-sixths of the
 • spectators, reproaching her—You'd have the con-
 • science, would you, to have five such brave gen-
 • tlemen as these hanged for you know not what?

• Next comes the poor maid—who perhaps had
 • been ravished twenty times before; and had not
 • appeared now, but for company-fake; mincing,
 • simpering, weeping, by turns; not knowing whe-
 • ther she should be sorry or glad.

• But

- But every eye dwells upon Miss!—See, see, the
- handsome gentleman bows to her!
- To the very ground, to be sure, I shall bow;
- and kiss my hand.
- See her confusion! See! She turns from him!—
- Ay! that's because it is in open court, cries an
- arch one!—While others admire her—Ay! that's
- a girl worth venturing one's neck for!
- Then we shall be praised—Even the Judges, and
- the whole crowded Bench, will acquit us in their
- hearts; and every single man wish he had been me!
- —The women, all the time, disclaiming prose-
- cution, were the case to be their own. To be sure,
- Belford, the sufferers cannot put half so good a face
- upon the matter as we.
- Then what a noise will this matter make!—Is it
- not enough, suppose us moving from the Prison to
- the Sessions-house (*a*), to make a noble heart thump
- it away most gloriously, when such an one finds
- himself attended to his trial by a parade of guards
- and officers, of mien and aspects warlike and un-
- warlike; himself their whole care, and their bu-
- siness!—weapons in their hands, some bright, some
- rusty, equally venerable for their antiquity and in-
- offensiveness! others, of more authoritative de-
- meanour, strutting before with fine painted staves!
- shoals of people following, with a Which is he
- whom the *young* Lady appears against?—Then, let
- us look down, look up, look round, which way
- we will, we shall see all the doors, the shops, the
- windows, the sign-irons and balconies (garrets,
- gutters, and chimney-tops included) all white-capt,
- black-hooded, and periwigg'd, or crop-ear'd up by
- the *Immobile Vulgus*: While the floating *street-*

• (*a*) Within these few years past, a passage has been made from the
 • Prison to the Sessions-house, whereby malefactors are carried into court
 • without going thro' the street. Lovelace's triumph on their supposed
 • march shews the wisdom of this alteration.

• *swarmers*, who have seen us pass by at one place,
 • run with stretched-out necks, and strained eye-balls,
 • a round-about way, and elbow and shoulder them-
 • selves into places by which we have not passed, in
 • order to obtain another sight of us; every street
 • continuing to pour out its swarms of late-comers,
 • to add to the gathering snowball; who are content
 • to take descriptions of our persons, behaviour, and
 • countenances, from those who had the good for-
 • tune to have been in time to see us.

• Let me tell thee, Jack, I see not why (to judge
 • according to our principles and practices) we should
 • not be as much elated in our march, were this to
 • happen to us, as others may be upon any other the
 • most *mob-attracting* occasion—Suppose a Lord-
 • Mayor on his *Gawdy*; suppose a victorious Ge-
 • neral, or Embassador, on his public Entry—Sup-
 • pose (as I began with the *lowest*) the *grandest* parade
 • that can be supposed, a Coronation—For, in all
 • these, do not the royal guard, the heroic trained-
 • bands, the pendent, clinging throngs of spectators,
 • with their waving heads rolling to-and-fro from
 • house-tops to house-bottoms and street-ways, as I
 • have above described, make the principal part of
 • the Raree-show?

• And let me ask thee, If thou dost not think, that
 • either the Mayor, the Embassador, or the General,
 • would not make very pitiful figures on their Gala's,
 • did not the trumpets and tabrets call together the
 • Canaille to gaze at them?—Nor perhaps should we
 • be the most guilty Heroes neither: For who knows
 • how the Magistrate may have obtained his gold
 • chain? While the General probably returns from
 • cutting of throats, and from murders, sanctified by
 • custom only.—Cæsar, we are told (*a*), had won,
 • at the age of Fifty-six, when he was assassinated,

(*a*) Pliny gives this account, putting the number of men slain at 1,100,092. See also Lipsius *de Constantia*.

• fifty pitched battles, had taken by assault above a
 • thousand towns, and slain near 1,200,000 men;
 • I suppose exclusive of those who fell on his own
 • side in slaying them. Are not you and I, Jack,
 • innocent men, and babes in swadling-cloths, com-
 • pared to Cæsar, and to his predecessor in heroism
 • Alexander, dubbed for murders and depredation
 • *Magnus*?

• The principal difference that strikes me in the
 • comparison between us and the Mayor, the Em-
 • bassador, the General, on *their* Gawdies, is, that
 • the mob make a greater noise, a louder huzzaing,
 • in the one case than in the other, which is called
 • *acclamation*, and ends frequently in *higher* taste, by
 • throwing dead animals at one another, before they
 • disperse; in which they have as much joy, as in
 • the former part of the triumph: While they will
 • attend us with all the marks of an awful or silent
 • (at most only a whispering) respect; their mouths
 • distended, as if set open with gags, and their voices
 • generally lost in goggle-eyed admiration.

• Well, but suppose, after all, we are convicted;
 • what have we to do, but in time make over our
 • estates, that the sheriffs may not revel in our spoils?
 • —There is no fear of being hanged for such a crime
 • as this, while we have *money* or *friends*.—And sup-
 • pose even the worst, that two or three were to die,
 • have we not a chance, each man of us, to escape?
 • The devil's in them, if they'll hang Five for ravish-
 • ing Three!

• I know I shall get off for one—were it but for
 • family sake: And being a handsome fellow, I shall
 • have a dozen or two of young maidens, all dressed
 • in white, go to Court to beg my life—And what
 • a pretty shew they will make, with their white
 • hoods, white gowns, white petticoats, white scarves,
 • white gloves, kneeling for me, with their white
 • handkerchiefs at their eyes, in two pretty rows,

as Majesty walks thro' them, and nods my pardon for their sakes!—And, if once pardoned, all is over: For, Jack, in a crime of this nature there lies no appeal, as in a murder.

So thou seest the worst that can happen, should we *not* make the Grand Tour upon this occasion, but stay and take our tryals. But it is most likely, that they will not prosecute at all. If not, no risque on our side will be run; only taking our pleasure abroad, at the worst; leaving friends tired of us, in order, after a time, to return to the same friends endeared to us, as we to them, by absence.

This, Jack, is my scheme, at the first running. I know it is capable of improvement—For example: I can land these Ladies in France; whip over before they can get a passage back, or before Hickman can have recovered his fright; and so find means to entrap my Beloved on board—And then all will be right; and I need not care if I were never to return to England.

Memorandum, To be considered of—Whether, in order to complete my vengeance, I cannot contrive to kidnap away either James Harlowe or Solmes? or both? A man, Jack, would not go into exile for nothing.

L E T T E R XLIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

IF, Belford, thou likest not my plot upon Miss Howe, I have three or four more as good in my own opinion; better, perhaps, they will be in thine: And so 'tis but getting loose from thy present engagement, and thou shalt pick and chuse. But as for thy three brethren, they must do as I would have them: And so, indeed, must thou—Else why am I your general? But I will refer this subject to its proper season.