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SHREWSBURY

CHAPTER I

THAT the untimely death at the age of fifty-eight of that great prince, Charles, Duke of Shrewsbury, my most noble and generous patron, has afflicted me with a sorrow which I may truly call *acerbus et ingens*, is nothing to the world; which from one in my situation could expect no other, and, on the briefest relation of the benefits I had at his hands, might look for more. Were this all, therefore, or my task confined to such a relation, I should supererogate indeed in making this appearance. But I am informed that my lord Duke's death has revived in certain quarters those rumours to his prejudice which were so industriously put about at the time of his first retirement; and which, refuted as they were at the moment by the express declaration of his Sovereign, and at leisure by his own behaviour, as well as by the support which at two great crises he gave to the Protestant succession, formed always a proof of the malice, as now of the persistence, of his enemies.

Still, such as they are, and though, not these circumstances only, but a thousand others have time after time exposed them, I am instructed that they are again afloat; and find favour in circles where to think ill of public men is held the first test of experience. And this being the