

to this very indolence, which in so short a time will disguise all the delicacy of her face, that she is indebted for those handsome shoulders, which she displays to view with so much pride.

There is another reason why the beauty of the Roman women decays so rapidly: it is always shut up; it is always in the shade. The bud of beauty, like other flowers, requires the rays of the sun.

I must say a word or two of the voice of the Roman women, for the voice is an essential part of the sex. That of the Roman women, like their faces, is fine, but it has no soul: it expresses, at times, the bursts of passion, but hardly ever its true accents. Let a Roman woman, in short, sing before you, her voice will not originate from her heart, nor will it expire in yours.

There are exceptions, however, among the Roman ladies, to all I have been saying. I am myself acquainted with at least three: *Theresa, Rosalinda, and Palmira*.

It is true, that by passing their lives with foreigners, in their father's house, the coquetry natural to their sex and to themselves is continually kept in action.

Theresa is Armida in miniature, Palmira would have resembled Erminia, in the days of Erminia. Rosalinda has something of whatever is pleasing in woman in every country in the world. Each motion of her eye-lid, and of her lip is grace. These three sisters possess accomplishments. They dance—with delicacy—with expression!

But I have said sufficient on the subject of Roman beauty; the delicate bloom of a flower must be carefully touched, and its perfumes sparingly inhaled.

The Roman Women—Love and Gallantry.

What is love among the Roman women? Such as it inevitably must be in a climate and amid manners where it seldom or ever meets with obstacles to fortify it; prejudices to enhance its value; moral ideas to embellish it; restraints to keep it alive; or any of the various circumstances, in short, which consistently with our manners, often render it a happiness, a triumph and a virtue.

Love, with the Roman women, is an amusement, a matter of business, or caprice, and but of short duration as a want; for they soon wear it out; their heart loves, the instant it arrives at maturity.

To talk of love should constitute one of its mysteries; but love here forms a com-

mon-place topic of conversation, together with those of rain and fine weather, the arrival of a stranger, the promotions of the morning, and the processions of the evening.

You talk of it to daughters before their mothers; and mothers even talk of it before their daughters.

A mother says, without any ceremony, my daughter does not eat, she does not sleep, *she has a fit of love*; as if she was telling you she had got a fever.

I have seen priests dancing with young ladies; and it was not thought either scandalous or ridiculous; for here sexes, dignities, and ages, are not discriminated and separated by any distinctive marks of dress, pre-eminence, or decorum.

An old man, an officer, and a cardinal, will talk of love with a girl in a dark corner.

The language is as dissolute as the climate: the moment you are allowed to say some things to a woman, you may say every thing.

The girls in general, however, are tolerably prudent: all of them carry their virginity with them to the altar, nor indeed the virginity of the heart, but of the body, which the Italians hold in high estimation.

The girls employ their early youth in practising, under the eyes of their mothers, what they have received from them, on the art of catching a husband; but, as the men are on their guard, they spread their nets twenty times before they prove successful once. They neglect nothing; however, to succeed, except it be to neglect nothing.

The most notorious gallantry does not affect their reputation: a woman here is as prudent as she is ugly; and as gallant as she is beautiful. What then? She is in love.

The women never renounce love here, that is to say, the men, but when they can no longer pay them.

Look not here, among the women, for that tenderness of heart which penetrates, satisfies, and enchants; that intimate and secret life, the mutual bliss of two lovers; that tenderness which forms a pleasure of pain, which delights in sacrifices, and increases by enjoyment; that moral love, in short, which, if it does not enchain or govern the physical passion, at least decorates and veils it.

Nor will you find here those two delightful kinds of friendship between the sexes, the one of which succeeds to love, the other imitates, and which both of them so nearly resemble love, as to be often mistaken for it.