

complexion, I was of course eternally exposed to all the taunts of jealousy, and the private malice of a resentment, at which (how little soever my relative feelings might have entitled me to such a sentiment) my cool reflections would scarcely justify resentment or offence. Thus, with a heart alive to all the social affections of nature, was I doomed to consume my embittered days with three unsocial sisters, who could return my fondness only with a settled malignity, that lurked in the secret recesses of the averted heart, or with the taunts of indignant reproach, which female petulance would not always permit them to conceal.

I had just begun to acquire philosophy sufficient to console myself under this affliction, with the consciousness of my superior charms, and the prospects of those pleasures which the society and the admiration of the other sex, I thought, could not fail to afford, when I found a still greater source of unhappiness opened through that channel, from which I had formed such sanguine expectations. My parents having taken care to display me at proper times and intervals, at the various places of public amusement, my tea-table became presently thronged with fops of all descriptions; wits, whose *exalted* talents enabled them to be the punsters of a fashionable circle; titled poets, who could pen tender couplets on the choice of a ribbon; and baronets, who were indebted to their rapiers for the whole gentility of their appearance.

At first, it is true, the buzzing of these fluttering insects pleased my ear; but when, in several of them, whom I could only think of as idle play things, I met with presuming lovers, I could not but look with disdain on the idea of forming any serious engagement with beings, who, having no pursuit but pleasure, had sought it in the paths of folly, indolence, and dissipation; and I began secretly to repine at the ambitious views of my parents, and the futile education that had rendered me unfit to be the partner of a respectable trader, and to attain those solid enjoyments of domestic life, from which the frivolous children of fashion are for ever estranged.

'Why,' would I sigh to myself, 'should I be secluded from a state blending the different advantages of industry, and liberality in virtuous compact; by which my younger brothers are rising to opulence and esteem, and to which my sisters may also hope to be associated?'

These sentiments, I know, will appear to many singular and eccentric. I wish, however, they were more common among

our sex, and more attended to by parents; they would save many an unhappy female from the cruel necessity of bartering her unwilling charms for the sake of an establishment, and exchanging happiness for the idle appendages of luxury and show: and I am thoroughly convinced, that the happiest state of life is that, in which those innocent enjoyments of life may be attained by frugal industry, which are neither in the contemplation nor the reach of heedless indolence.

Unhappily, however, my father did not enter into my ideas; and the indiscriminate dismission of my lovers, produced a remonstrance from him, in such terms as convinced me, that whatever might be the consequence to my happiness, he considered my beauty to be an article he had a right to dispose of, to whatever bidder should offer the largest increase of opulence and family importance.

This remonstrance produced a conduct on my part, for which, I own, I have but too much reason for self reproach. Anxious, if possible, to gratify the wishes of my parents, I heedlessly sported with the happiness of my succeeding lovers, in hopes of subduing my disgust at their addresses; and in two or three cases, I have even proceeded so far as to encourage their hopes, with a determined purpose of sacrificing my future happiness to filial duty. But, alas! when things have proceeded to extremities, my heart has constantly failed me, and unequal to the heroism of such a resolution, I had been tacitly betrayed.

This conduct, as you may naturally suppose, brought upon me the severe displeasure of my parents, and a young gentleman of rank and fortune, the honourable Mr. W——T——, having lately made very liberal offers, my father determined to bring matters to an issue at once, by informing me that I must either resolve to accept the overture, or for the future consider him as exonerated from all care of my maintenance; that he had hitherto put up with one excuse or another, and given me the opportunity of election, from a number of lovers sufficient to gratify the most inordinate vanity; but that, as my education had been peculiarly expensive, he had done for me all I had any right to expect; and, having so large a family, he thought it not just to injure my sisters for the purpose of indulging my capricious humours; that I must resolve therefore immediately to marry the honourable Mr. T——, or seriously turn my thoughts to some species of industry, by which I might henceforth provide for my own subsistence.

Thus, sir, by the vanity and ambition  
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