

Nevertheless, and whatever she was as a wife—and it is true she could ding my father's ears, and, for as handsome as she was, there were times when he would have been happier with a plainer woman—I am far from saying that she was a bad mother. Indeed, she was a kind, if fickle, and passionate one, wiser at large and in intention than in practice and in small matters. Yet if for one thing only, and putting aside natural affection—in which I trust I am not deficient—she deserved to be named by me with undying gratitude. For having learned to read, but never to write, beyond, that is, the trifle of her maiden name, she valued scholarship both by that she had, and that she had not; and in the year after I was breeched, prevailed on my father who, for his part, good man, never advanced beyond the Neck Verse, to bind me to the ancient Grammar School at Bishop's Stortford, then kept by a Mr. G—.

I believe that there were some who thought this as much beyond our pretensions, as our small farm fell below the homestead of a man of substance; and for certain, the first lesson I learned at that school was to behave myself lowly and reverently to all my betters, being trounced on arrival by three squires' sons, and afterwards, in due order and gradation, by all who had or affected gentility. To balance this I found that I had the advantage of my master's favour, and that for no greater a thing than the tinge of my father's opinions. For whereas the commonalty in that country, as in all the eastern counties, had been for the Parliament in the late troubles, and still loved a patriot, my father was a King's man; which placed him high in Mr. G—'s estimation, who had been displaced by the Rump and hated all of that side, and not for the loss of his place only, but, and in a far greater degree, for a thing which befell him later, after he had withdrawn to Oxford. For being of St. John's College, and seeing all that rich and loyal foundation at stake, he entered