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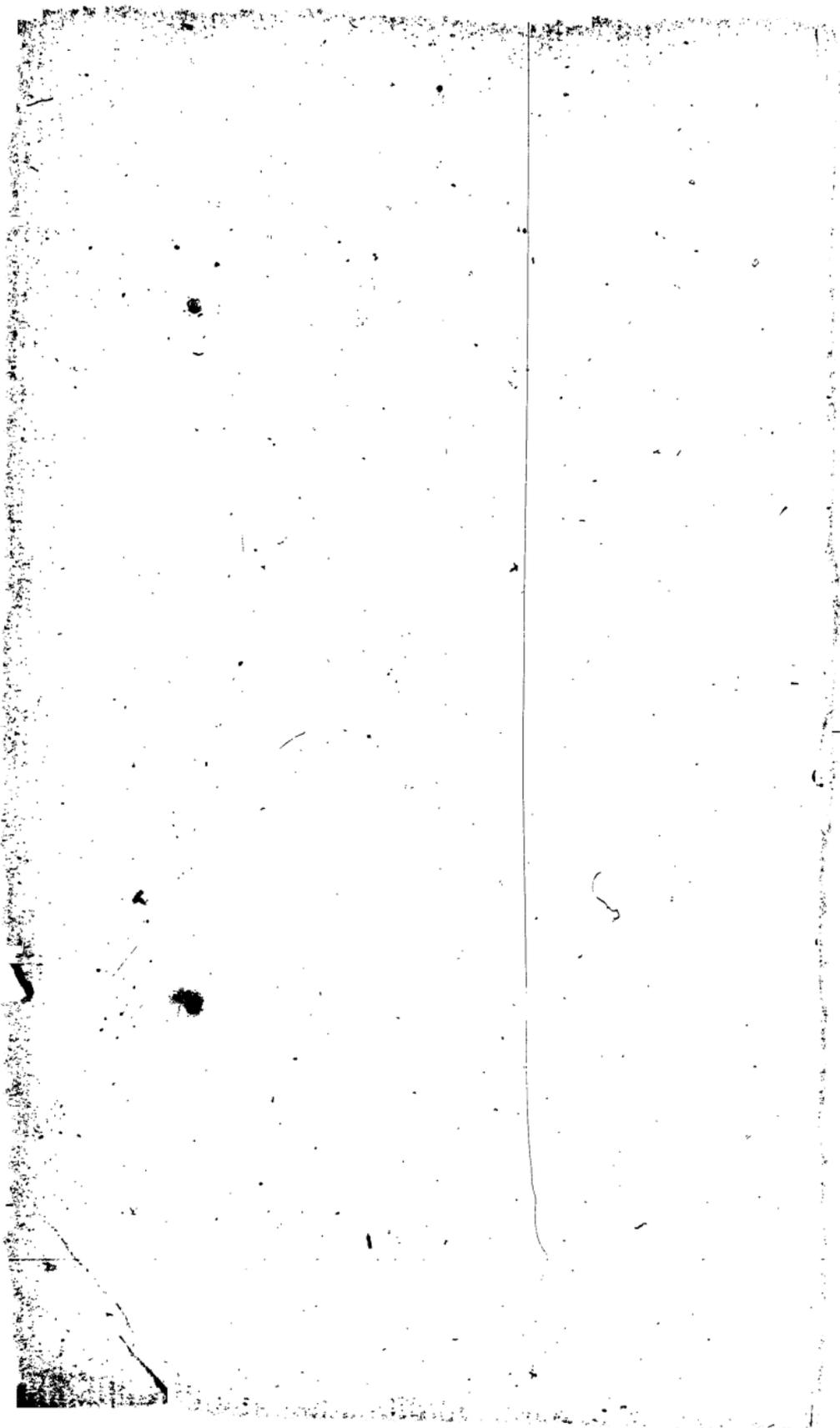
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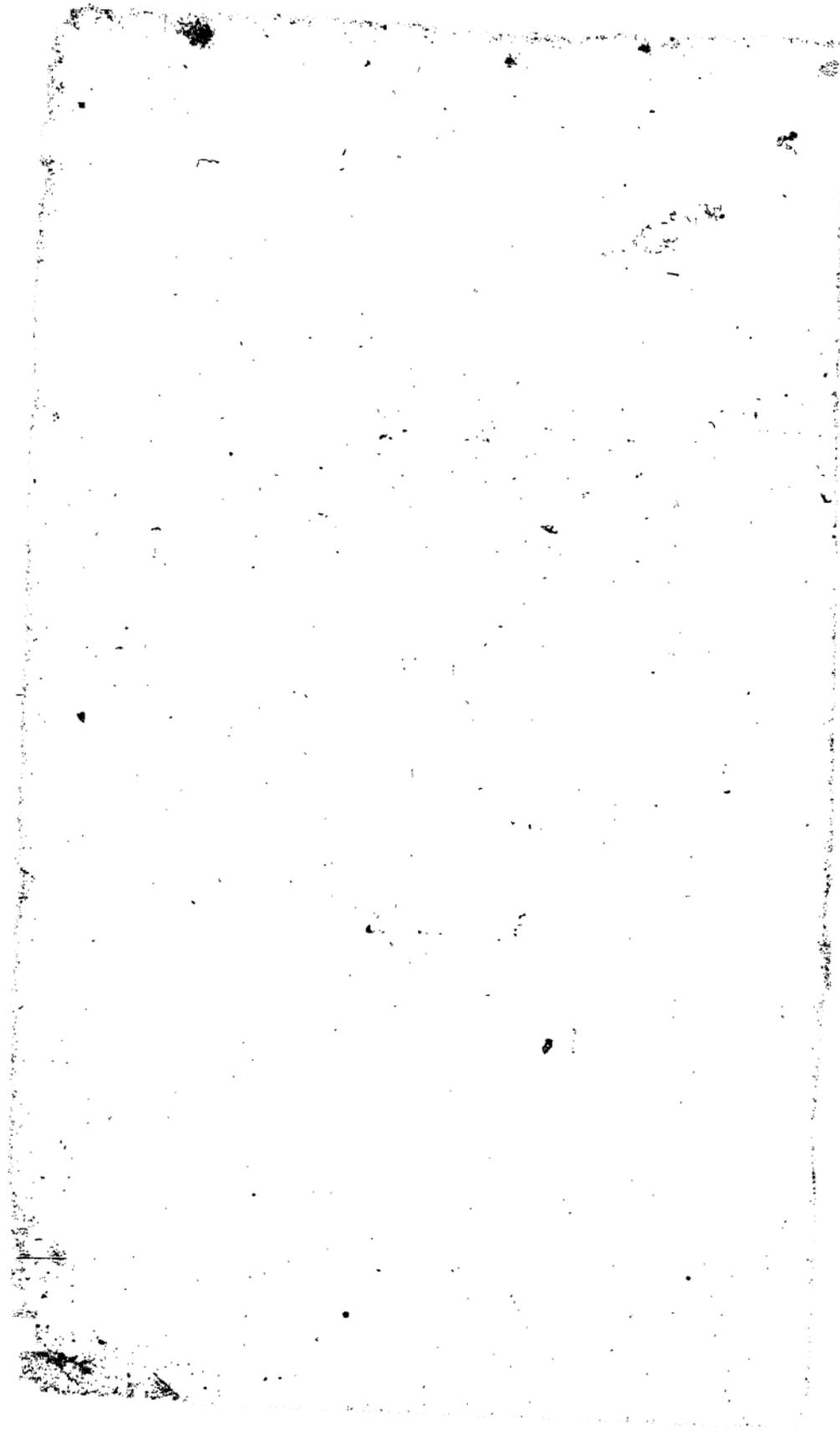
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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE.

VOL. I.



THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
Lady Julia Mandeville.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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By the TRANSLATOR of  
LADY CATESBY'S LETTERS.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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V O L. I.

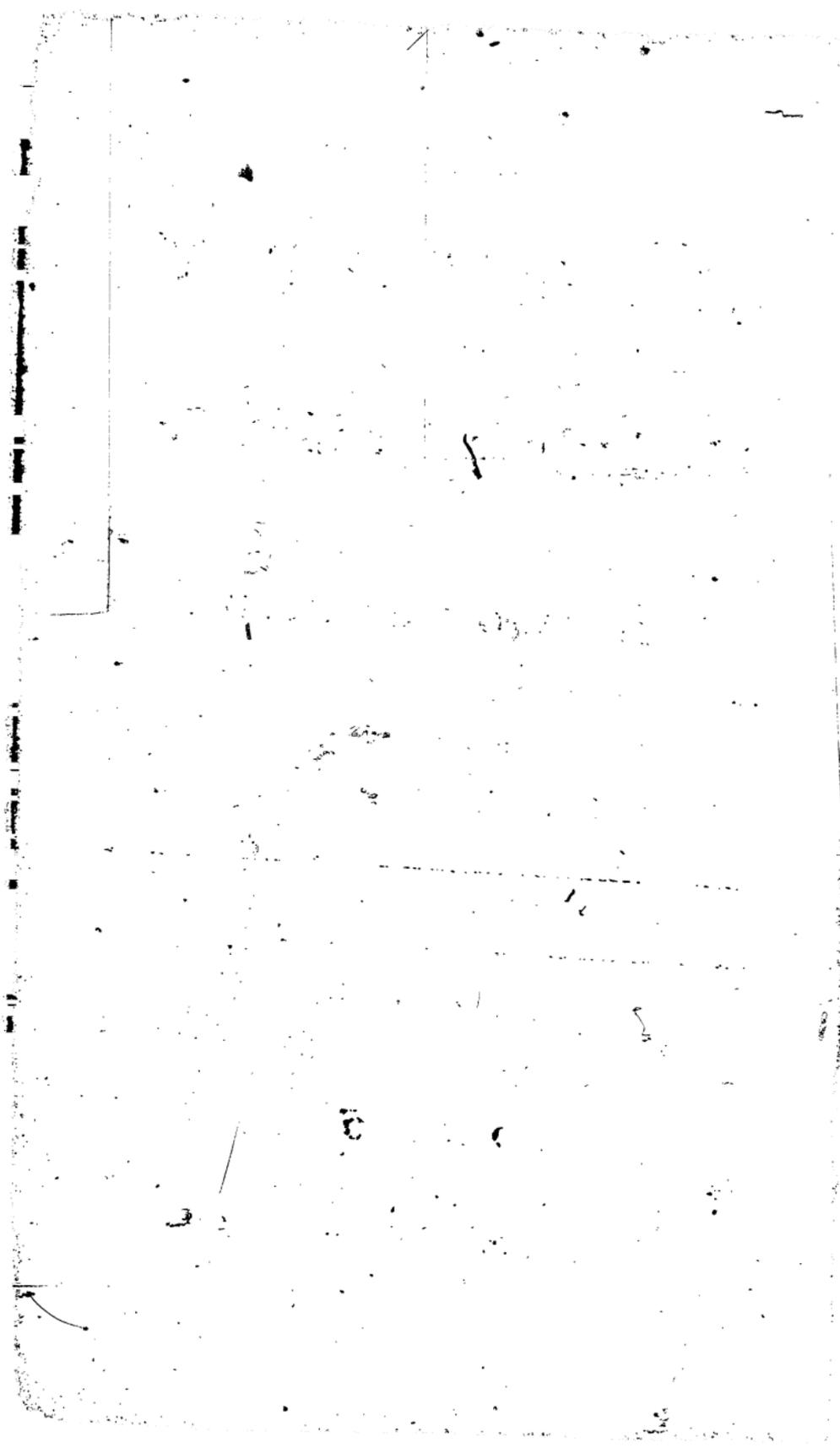
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Printed for R. and J. DODSLEY in Pall-Mall.

MDCCLXIII.



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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE.

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TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

Belmont-House, July 3, 1762.

I AM indeed, my dear George, the most happy of human beings; happy in the paternal regard of the best of parents, the sincere esteem of my worthy relations, lord and lady Belmont; and the friendship, the tender friendship of their

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B

lovely

lovely daughter, the amiable lady Julia. An encrease of fortune, which you are kind enough to wish me, might perhaps add something to my felicity, but is far from being necessary to constitute it, nor did it ever excite in my bosom an anxious wish. My father, though he educated me to become the most splendid situation, yet instructed me to be satisfied with my own moderate one; he taught me that independence was all a generous mind required; and that virtue, adorned by that liberal education his unsparing bounty lavished on me, would command through life that heart-felt esteem from the worthy of every rank, which the most exorbitant wealth alone could never procure its possessors. Other parents hoard up riches for their children; mine with a more noble, more enlightened solicitude, expended his in storing my mind with generous sentiments and useful knowledge, to which  
his

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 3

his unbounded goodness added every outward accomplishment that could give grace to virtue, and set her charms in the fairest light.

Shall I then murmur because I was not born to affluence? No, believe me, I would not be the son of any other than this most excellent of men, to inherit all the stores which avarice and ambition fight for. I am prouder of a father to whose discerning wisdom, and generous expanded heart, I am so obliged, than I should be of one whom I was to succeed in all the titles and possessions in the power of fortune to bestow. From him I receive, and learn properly to value, the most real of all treasures, independence and content.

What a divine morning! how lovely is the face of nature! The blue serene of Italy, with the lively verdure of England.

B 2

But

But behold a more charming object than nature herself! the sweet, the young, the blooming lady Julia, who is this instant stepping into her post chaise with lady Anne Wilmot. How unspeakably lovely! she looks up to the window, she smiles; I understand that smile, she permits me to have the honour of following her: I'll order my horses, and whilst they are getting ready, endeavour to describe this most angelic of woman kind.

Lady Julia then, who wants only three months of nineteen, is exactly what a poet or painter would wish to copy who intended to personify the idea of female softness. Her whole form is delicate and feminine to the utmost degree: her complexion is fair, enlivened by the bloom of youth, and often diversified by blushes more beautiful than those of the morning: her features are regular, her mouth and teeth particu-

larly

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 5

larly lovely; her hair light brown; her eyes blue, full of softness, and strongly expressive of the exquisite sensibility of her soul. Her countenance, the beautiful abode of the loves and the smiles, has a mixture of sweetness and spirit, which gives life and expression to her charms.

As her mind has been adorned, not warped, by education, it is just what her appearance promises; artless, gentle, timid, soft, sincere, compassionate; awake to all the finer impressions of tenderness, and melting with pity for every human woe.

But my horses are in the court, and even this subject cannot detain me a moment longer. Adieu!

H. MANDEVILLE.

B 3

To

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

**Y**OUR raillery, my dear Mordaunt, gives me pain; that I have the tenderest attachment to lady Julia is certain; but it is an attachment which has not the least resemblance to love. I should be the most ungrateful of mankind to make so ill a return to the friendship lord Belmont honours me with, and the most selfish to entertain a wish so much to lady Julia's disadvantage. My birth, it must be confessed, is not unworthy even her; since the same blood fills our veins, my father being descended from the eldest brother of the first earl of Belmont, great grandfather of the present: but it would ill become a man whose whole expectations are limited to the inheritance of 700l. a year (long very long, may it be before the greatest of all misfortunes makes even  
that

Lady JULIA MANDEVILL. 7

that little mine) to aspire to the heiress of twice as many thousands.

What I feel for this most charming of women is the tenderness of a relation, mixed with that soft and lively esteem which it is impossible to refuse to the finest understanding and noblest mind in the world, lodged in a form almost celestial.

Love, for I have tasted its poisoned cup, is all tumult, disorder, madness; but my friendship for lady Julia, warm and animated as it is, is, calm, tranquil, gentle; productive of a thousand innocent pleasures, but a stranger to every kind of inquietude: it does not even disturb my rest, a certain consequence of love, even in its earliest approaches.

Having thus vindicated myself from all suspicion of a passion, which in the present

B 4

situation

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situation of my fortune I should think almost a criminal one, I proceed to obey you in giving you the portraits of my noble friends, though, I assure you, my sketches will be very imperfect ones.

Lord Belmont, who lives eight months of the year at this charming seat, with all the magnificence and hospitality of our ancient English nobility, is about sixty years old; his person is tall, well made, graceful; his air commanding, and full of dignity: he has strong sense, with a competent share of learning, and a just and delicate taste for the fine arts; especially musick, which he studied in Italy, under the best masters that region of harmony afforded. His politeness is equally the result of a natural desire of obliging, and an early and extensive acquaintance with the great world.

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A liberality which scarce his ample possessions can bound, a paternal care of all placed by Providence under his protection, a glowing zeal for the liberty, prosperity, and honour of his country, the noblest spirit of independence, with the most animated attachment and firmest loyalty to his accomplished sovereign, are traits too strongly marked to escape the most careless observer; but those only who are admitted to his nearest intimacy are judges of his domestic virtues, or see in full light the tender, the polite, attentive husband, the fond indulgent parent, the warm unwearied friend.

If there is a shade in this picture, it is a prejudice, perhaps rather too strong, in favour of birth, and a slowness to expect very exalted virtues in any man who cannot trace his ancestors as far back, at least, as the conquest.

Lady Belmont, who is about six years younger than her lord, with all the strength of reason and steadiness of mind generally confined to the best of our sex, has all the winning softness becoming the most amiable of her own; gentle, affable, social, polite, she joins the graces of a court to the simplicity of a cottage; and by an inexpressible ease and sweetness in her address, makes all who approach her happy: impartial in her politeness, at her general board no invidious distinctions take place, no cold regards damp the heart of an inferior: by a peculiar delicacy of good breeding, and engaging attention to every individual, she banishes reserve, and diffuses a spirit of convivial joy around her: encouraged by her notice the timid lose their diffidence in her presence, and often surprized exert talents of pleasing they were before themselves unconscious of possessing.

The

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. II

The best, and most beloved of wives, of mothers, of mistresses, her domestic character is most lovely; indeed all her virtues are rendered doubly charming, by a certain grace, a delicate finishing, which it is much easier to feel than to describe.

The œconomy of her house, which she does not disdain herself to direct, is magnificent without profusion, and regular without constraint: The effects of her cares appear, the cause is unobserved; all wears the smiling easy air of chance, though conducted with the most admirable order.

Her form is perfectly elegant; and her countenance, without having ever been beautiful, has a benignity in it more engaging than beauty itself.

Lady

Lady Anne Wilmot, my father, and myself, make up the present party at Belmont. Lady Anne, who without regularity of features has that animation which is the soul of beauty, is the widow of a very rich country gentleman; if it be just to prostitute the name of gentleman to beings of his order, only because they have estates of which they are unworthy, and are descended from ancestors whom they dishonour; who, when riding post through Europe, happened to see her with her father at Turin; and as she was the handsomest English woman there, and the whim of being married just then seized him, asked her of Lord —, who could not refuse his daughter to a jointure of 3000  $\text{£}$  a year. She returned soon to England with her husband, where during four years she enjoyed the happiness of listening to the interesting histories of the chace, and entertaining the —shire hunt at dinner: her  
slumbers

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 13

slumbers broke by the noise of hounds in a morning, and the riotous mirth of less rational animals at night. Fortune however at length took pity on her sufferings, and the good 'squire overheating himself at a fox chace, of which a fever was the consequence, left her young and rich, at full liberty to return to the chearful haunts of men, with no very high ideas of matrimonial felicity, and an abhorrence of a country life, which nothing but her friendship for Lady Belmont could have one moment suspended.

A great flow of animal spirits, and a French education, have made her a Coquet, though intended by nature for a much superior character. She is elegant in her dress, equipage, and manner of living, and rather profuse in her expences. I had first the honour of knowing her last winter at Paris, from whence she has been returned  
about

about six weeks, three of which she has passed at Belmont.

Nothing can be more easy or agreeable than the manner of living here; it is perfectly domestic, yet so diversified with amusements as to exclude that satiety from which the best and purest of sublunary enjoyments are not secure, if continued in too uniform a course. We read, we walk, we ride, we converse; we play, we dance, we sing; join the company, or indulge in pensive solitude and meditation, just as fancy leads; liberty, restrained alone by virtue and politeness, is the law, and inclination the sovereign guide, at this mansion of true hospitality. Free from all the shackles of idle ceremony, the whole business of Lord Belmont's guests, and the highest satisfaction they can give their noble host, is to be happy, and to consult their own taste entirely in their manner of being so.

Reading,

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 15

Reading, musick, riding, and conversation are Lord Belmont's favourite pleasures, but none that are innocent are excluded; balls, plays, concerts, cards, bowls, billiards, and parties of pleasure round the neighbouring country, relieve each other; and whilst their variety prevents any of them from fatiating, all conspire to give a double poignancy to the sweeter joys of domestic life, the calm and tender hours which this charming family devote to the endearing conversation of each other, and of those friends particularly honoured with their esteem.

The house, which is the work of Inigo Jones, is magnificent to the utmost degree; it stands on the summit of a slowly rising hill, facing the South; and, beyond a spacious court, has in front an avenue of the tallest trees, which lets in the prospect of a fruitful valley, bounded at a distance  
by

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by a mountain, down the sides of which rushes a foaming cascade which spreads into a thousand meandering streams in the vale below.

The gardens and park, which are behind the house, are romantic beyond the wantonness of imagination; and the whole adjoining country diversified with hills, valleys, woods, rivers, plains, and every charm of lovely unadorned nature.

Here Lord Belmont enjoys the most unmixed and lively of all human pleasures, that of making others happy. His estate conveys the strongest idea of the patriarchal government; he seems a beneficent father surrounded by his children, over whom reverence, gratitude, and love, give him an absolute authority, which he never exerts but for their good: Every eye shines with transport at his sight; parents point him  
our

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 17

out to their children; the first accents of prattling infancy are taught to lisp his honoured name; and age, supported by his bounteous hand, pours out the fervent prayer to heaven for its benefactor.

To a life like this, and to an ardent love of independence, Lord Belmont sacrifices all the anxious and corroding cares of avarice and ambition; and finds his account in health, freedom, cheerfulness, and "that sweet peace which goodness bosoms ever." Adieu! I am going with Lord Belmont and my father to Acton-Grange, and shall not return till Thursday.

H. MANDEVILLE.

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TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

FRIDAY.

WE returned yesterday about six in the evening, and the moment we alighted, my Lord leading us into the garden,

garden, an unexpected scene opened on my view, which recalled the idea of the fabulous pleasures of the golden age, and could not but be infinitely pleasing to every mind uncorrupted by the false glare of tinsel pomp, and awake to the genuine charms of simplicity and nature.

On a spacious lawn, bounded on every side by a profusion of the most odoriferous flowering shrubs, a joyous band of villagers were assembled: the young men drest in green, youth, health, and pleasure in their air, led up their artless charmers in straw hats adorned with the spoils of Flora, to the rustic sound of the tabor and pipe: Round the lawn, at equal intervals, were raised temporary arbors of branches of trees, in which refreshments were prepared for the dancers: and between the arbors, seats of moss for their parents, shaded from the sun by green awnings on poles, round  
which

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which were twined wreaths of flowers, breathing the sweets of the spring. The surprize, the gaiety of the scene, the flow of general joy, the sight of so many happy people, the countenances of the enraptured parents, who seemed to live over again the sprightly season of youth in their children, with the benevolent pleasure in the looks of the noble bestowers of the feast, filled my eyes with tears, and my swelling heart with a sensation of pure yet lively transport, to which the joys of courtly balls are mean.

The ladies, who were sitting in conversation with some of the oldest of the villagers, rose at our approach, and my Lord giving Lady Anne Wilmot's hand to my father, and honoring me with Lady Julia's, we mixed in the rustic ball. The loveliest of women had an elegant simplicity in her air and habit which became the scene,  
and

and gave her a thousand new charms : she was drest in a straw-coloured lustring night gown, the lightest gauze linen, a hat with purple ribbons, and a sprig of glowing purple amaranthus in her bosom : I know not how to convey an idea of the particular style of beauty in which she then appeared. — Youth, health, sprightliness and innocence, all struck the imagination at once. — Paint to yourself the exquisite proportion, the playful air, and easy movement of a Venus, with the vivid bloom of an Hebe ; — however high you raise your ideas, they will fall infinitely short of the divine original.

The approach of night putting an end to the rural assembly, the villagers retired to the hall, where they continued dancing, and our happy party passed the rest of the evening in that sweet and lively conversation, which is never to be found but amongst those

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those of the first sense and politeness, united by that perfect confidence which makes the most trifling subjects interesting; none of us thought of separating, or imagined it midnight, when my father opening a window, the rising sun broke in upon us, and convinced us on what swift and downy pinions the hours of happiness flit away. Adieu!

H. MANDEVILLE.

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TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

BELMONT.

**N**O, my friend, I have not always been this hero: too sensible to the power of beauty, I have felt the keenest pangs of unsuccessful love: but I deserved to suffer; my passion was in the highest degree criminal, and I blush, though at this distance of time, to lay open my heart  
even

even to the indulgent eyes of partial friendship.

When your father's death called you back to England, you may remember I continued my journey to Rome: where a letter from my father introduced me into the family of count Melespini, a nobleman of great wealth and uncommon accomplishments. As my father, who has always been of opinion that nothing purifies the heart, refines the taste, or polishes the manners, like the conversation of an amiable, well-educated, virtuous woman, had particularly entreated for me the honour of the countess's friendship, whom he had known almost a child, and to whom he had taught the English language; I was admitted to the distinction of partaking in all her amusements, and attending her every where in the quality of Cecisbeo. To the arts of  
the

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 23

the libertine, however fair, my heart had always been steeled; but the countess joined the most piercing wit, the most winning politeness, the most engaging sensibility, the most exquisite delicacy, to a form perfectly lovely. You will not therefore wonder that the warmth and inexperience of youth, hourly exposed in so dangerous a situation, was unable to resist such variety of attractions. Charmed with the flattering preference she seemed to give me, my vanity fed by the notice of so accomplished a creature, forgetting those sentiments of honour which ought never to be one moment suspended, I became passionately in love with this charming woman: for some months I struggled with my love; till, on her observing that my health seemed impaired, and I had lost my usual vivacity, I took courage to confess the cause, though in terms which sufficiently spoke my despair of touching a heart which I feared was too sensible to virtue  
for

for my happiness: I implored her pity, and protested I had no hope of inspiring a tenderer sentiment. Whilst I was speaking, which was in broken interrupted sentences, the countess looked at me with the strongest sorrow and compassion painted in her eyes; she was for some moments silent, and seemed lost in thought; but at last, with an air of dignified sweetness, “ My  
“ dear Enrico,” said she, “ shall I own  
“ to you that I have for some time feared  
“ this confession? I ought perhaps to re-  
“ sent this declaration, which from another  
“ I could never have forgiven: but as I  
“ know and esteem the goodness of your  
“ heart, as I respect your father infinitely,  
“ and love you with the innocent tender-  
“ ness of a sister, I will only entreat you to  
“ reflect how injurious this passion is to the  
“ count, who has the tenderest esteem for  
“ you, and would sacrifice almost his life  
“ for your happiness: be assured of my  
eternal

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 25

“ eternal friendship, unless you forfeit it  
“ by persisting in a pursuit equally destruc-  
“ tive to your own probity and my honor;  
“ receive the tenderest assurances of it,”  
continued she, giving me her hand to kiss,  
“ but believe at the same time, that the  
“ count deserves and possesses all my love,  
“ I had almost said, my adoration. The  
“ fondest affection united us, and time,  
“ instead of lessening, every hour increases  
“ our mutual passion. Reserve your heart,  
“ my good Enrico, for some amiable lady  
“ of your own nation, and believe that  
“ love has no true pleasures but when it  
“ keeps within the bounds of honour.”

It is impossible, my dear Mordaunt,  
to express to you the shame this discourse  
filled me with: her gentle, her affection-  
ate reproofs, the generous concern she  
showed for my error, the mild dignity of  
her aspect, plunged me into inexpressible  
confusion, and shew'd my fault in its  
VOL. I. C blackest

blackest colours, at the same time that her behaviour, by increasing my esteem, added to the excess of my passion. I attempted to answer her; but it was impossible; awed, abashed, humbled before her, I had not courage even to meet her eyes: like the fallen angel in Milton, I felt

— “How awful goodness is, and saw  
 “Virtue in her own shape how lovely.”

The countess saw, and pitied, my confusion, and generously relieved me from it by changing the subject: she talked of my father, of his merit, his tenderness for me, and expectations of my conduct; which she was sure I should never disappoint. Without hinting at what had past, she with the most exquisite delicacy gave me to understand it would be best I should leave Rome, by saying she knew how ardently my father wished for my return,

turn, and that it would be the height of cruelty longer to deprive him of the pleasure of seeing a son so worthy of his affection: "The count and myself," pursued she, "cannot lose you without inexpressible regret, but you will alleviate it by letting us hear often of your welfare. When you are united to a lady worthy of you, my dear Enrico, we may perhaps make you a visit in England: in the mean time be assured you have not two friends who love you with a sincerer affection."

At this moment the count entered, who, seeing my eyes filled with tears of love, despair, and admiration, with the tenderest anxiety enquired the cause. "I shall tell you news which will afflict you, my lord," said the countess: "Signor Enrico comes to bid us farewell; he is commanded by his father to return to England; tomorrow is the last day of his stay in  
C 2 "Rome;

“ Rome : he promises to write to us, and  
“ to preserve an eternal remembrance of  
“ our friendship, for which he is obliged  
“ only to his own merit : his tender heart,  
“ full of the most laudable, the most en-  
“ gaging sensibility, melts at the idea of a  
/ “ separation which will not be less painful  
“ to us.”

The count, after expressing the most obliging concern at the thought of losing me, and the warmest gratitude for these supposed marks of my friendship, insisted on my spending the rest of the day with them. I consented, but begged first to return to my lodgings on pretence of giving some necessary orders, but in reality to give vent to my full heart, torn with a thousand contrary emotions, amongst which, I am shocked to own, hatred to the generous count was not the weakest. I threw myself on the ground in an agony of despair ; I wept, I called heaven to witness the purity of my love ; I accused the count-

efs

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 29

els of cruelty in thus forcing me from Rome: I rose up, I begun a letter to her, in which I vowed an eternal silence and respect, but begged she would allow me still the innocent pleasure of beholding her; swore I could not live without seeing her, and that the day of my leaving Rome would be that of my death. — But why do I thus tear open wounds which are but just healed? let it suffice that a moment's reflexion convinced me of my madness, and showed the charming countess in the light of a guardian angel snatching me from the edge of a precipice. My reason in some degree returning, I dress myself with the most studious care, and returned to the Melespini palace, where I found the abbate Camilli, a near relation of the family, whose presence saved me the confusion of being the third with my injured friends, and whose lively conversation soon dissipated the air of constraint I felt on  
C 3 entering

entering the room, and even dispelled part of my melancholy.

The count, whose own probity and virtue set him far above suspecting mine, pressed me, with all the earnestness of a friendship I so little merited, to defer my journey a week: on which I raised my downcast eyes to madam Melespini; for such influence had this lovely woman over my heart, I did not dare to consent till certain of her permission; and reading approbation in a smile of condescending sweetness, I consented with a transport which only those who have loved like me can conceive: my cheerfulness returning, and some of the most amiable people in Rome coming in, we past the evening in the utmost gaiety. At taking leave I was engaged to the same company in different parties of amusement for the whole time I had to stay, and had the joy of being every day with the countess; though I never  
found

found an opportunity of speaking to her without witnesses, till the evening before I left Rome, when going to her house an hour sooner than I was expected; I found her alone in her closet. When I approached her, my voice faltered; I trembled, I wanted power to address her; and this moment, fought with such care, wished with such ardor, was the most painful of my life. Shame alone prevented my retiring; my eyes were involuntarily turned towards the door at which I entered, in a vain hope of that interruption I had before dreaded as the greatest misfortune; and even the presence of my happy envied rival would at that moment have been most welcome.

The Countess seemed little less disconcerted than myself; however recovering herself sooner, "Signor Enrico," said she, "your discretion charms me; it is absolutely necessary you should leave Rome;

" it has already cost me an artifice unwor-  
 " thy of my character to conceal from the  
 " Count a secret which would have wound-  
 " ed his nice honor, and destroyed his  
 " friendship for you. After this adored  
 " husband, be assured you stand first of all  
 " your sex in my esteem: the sensibility of  
 " your heart, though at present so unhap-  
 " pily misplaced, encreases my good opi-  
 " nion of you: may you, my dear Enrico,  
 " meet with an English Lady worthy of  
 " your tenderness, and be as happy in mar-  
 " riage as the friends you leave behind.  
 " Accept," pursued she, rising and going  
 to a cabinet, " these miniatures of the  
 " Count and myself, which I give you by  
 " his command; and when you look on  
 " them believe they represent two faith-  
 " full friends, whose esteem for you neither  
 " time nor absence can lessen."

I took the pictures eagerly, and kissed  
 that of the Countess with a passion I could  
 not

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 33

not restrain, of which however she took not the least notice. I thanked her, with a confused air, for so valuable a present; and intreated her to pity a friendship too tender for my peace, but as respectful and as pure as she herself could wish it.

The abbate Camilli here joined us, and once more saved me a scene too interesting for the present situation of my heart. The Count entered the room soon after, and our conversation turned on the other cities of Italy, which I intended visiting; to most of which he gave me letters of recommendation to the noblest families, wrote in terms so polite and affectionate as stabbed me to the heart with a sense of my own ingratitude. He did me the honor to accept my picture, which I had not the courage to offer the Countess. After protracting till morning a parting so exquisitely painful, I tore myself from all I loved, and bathing with tears her hand which I pressed

C 5

eagerly

eagerly to my lips, threw myself into my chaise, and, without going to bed, took the road to Naples. But how difficult was this conquest! How often was I tempted to return to Rome, and throw myself at the countess's feet, without considering the consequences of so wild an action! You, my dearest Mordaunt, whose discerning spirit knows all the windings, the strange inconsistencies of the human heart, will pity rather than blame your friend, when he owns there were moments in which he formed the infamous resolution of carrying her off by force.

But when the mist of passion a little dispersed, I began to entertain more worthy sentiments; I determined to drive this lovely woman from my heart, and conquer an inclination, which the Count's generous unsuspecting friendship would have made criminal even in the eyes of the most abandoned libertine; rather owing this resolution  
however

however to an absolute despair of success than either to reason or a sense of honor, my cure was a work of time. I was so weak during some months as to confine my visits to the families where the Count's letters introduced me, that I might indulge my passion by hearing the lovely Countess continually mentioned.

Convinced at length of the folly of thus feeding so hopeless a flame, I resolved to avoid every place where I had a chance of hearing that adored name: I left Italy for France, where I hoped a life of dissipation would drive her for ever from my remembrance. I even profaned my passion for her by meeting the advances of a Coquette, but disgust succeeded my conquest, and I found it was from time alone I must hope a cure. I had been near a year at Paris, when, in April last, I received a letter from my father, who pressed my return, and appointed me to meet him immediately at the Hague,  
from

from whence we returned together; and after a few days stay in London, came down to Belmont, where the charms of Lady Julia's conversation, and the esteem she honors me with, entirely compleated my cure, which time, absence, and the Count's tender and affectionate letters, had very far advanced. There is a sweetness in her friendship, my dear Mordaunt, to which love itself must yield the palm; the delicacy, yet vivacity of her sentiments, the soft sensibility of her heart, which without fear listens to vows of eternal amity and esteem. — O Mordaunt, I must not, I do not hope for, I do not indeed wish for, her love; but can it be possible there is a man on earth to whom heaven destines such a blessing?

H. MANDEVILLE.

To

Lady JULIA MANDÉVILLE. 37

To Col. BELLVILLE.

TUESDAY, Belmont.

**O**H! you have no notion what a reformation: Who but Lady Anne Wilmot at chapel every Sunday? grave, devout, attentive; scarce stealing a look at the prettiest fellow in the world, who sits close by me! Yes, you are undone, Bellville; Harry Mandeville, the young, the gay, the lovely Harry Mandeville, in the full bloom of conquering three and twenty, with all the fire and sprightliness of youth, the exquisite symmetry and easy grace of an Antinous; a countenance open, manly, animated; his hair the brightest chestnut; his complexion brown, flushed with the rose of health; his eyes dark, penetrating, and full of fire, but when he addresses our sex softened into a sweetness which is almost irresistible; his nose inclining to the aquiline; his lips full and red, and his teeth of the most pearly whiteness.

There, read and die with envy :  
“ You with envy, I with love.”

Fond of me too, but afraid to declare his passion ; respectful—awed by the commanding dignity of my manner — poor dear creature, I think I must unbend a little, hide half the rays of my divinity, to encourage so timid a worshiper.

Some flattering tawdry coxcomb; I suppose ; some fool with a tolerable outside:

No, you never was more mistaken, Bellville : his charms I assure you are not all external. His understanding is of the most exalted kind, and has been improved by a very extraordinary education, in projecting which his father has employed much time and thought, and half ruined himself by carrying it into execution. Above all the Col. has cultivated in his son an ardent love of independence, not quite so well suited

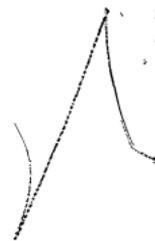
suitèd to his fortune; and a generous, perhaps a romantic, contempt of riches, which most parents if they had found would have eradicated with the utmost care. His heart is warm, noble, liberal, benevolent: sincere, and violent in his friendships, he is not less so, though extremely placable, in his enmities; scorning disguise, and laying his faults as well as his virtues open to every eye: rash, romantic, imprudent; haughty to the assuming sons of wealth, but to those below him,

“Gentle

“As Zephyr blowing underneath the violet.”

But whither am I running? and where was I when this divine creature seduced me from my right path? Oh, I remember, at chapel: it must be acknowledged my digressions are a little Pindaric. True, as I was saying, I go constantly to chapel.

'Tis



'Tis strange, but this lady Belmont has the most unaccountable way in the world of making it one's choice to do whatever she has an inclination one should, without seeming to desire it. One sees so clearly that all she does is right, religion fits so easy upon her, her style of goodness is so becoming, and graceful, that it seems want of taste and elegance not to endeavour to resemble her. Then my Lord too loves to worship in the beauty of holiness; he makes the fine arts subservient to the noblest purpose, and spends as much on serving his Creator as some people of his rank do on a kennel of hounds. We have every external incitement to devotion; exquisite paintings, an admirable organ, fine voices, and the most animated reader of prayers in the universe.

Col. Mandeville, whom I should be extremely in love with if his son was not five and twenty years younger, leaves us to-morrow

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 41

morrow morning, to join his regiment, the — shire militia: he served in the late war with honour, but meeting with some ill usage from a minister on account of a vote in parliament, he resigned his commission, and gave up his whole time to the education of my lovely Harry, whose tenderness and merit are a full reward for all his generous attention. Adieu!

A. WILMOT.

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To Col. BELLVILLE.

Belmont, THURSDAY.

**I**L divino Enrico is a little in the Penseroso. Poor Harry! I am charmed with his sensibility, he has scarce been himself since he parted with his father yesterday. He apologizes for his chagrin, but says no man on earth has such obligations to a parent. Entre nous, I fancy I know some few sons who would be of a different way of thinking: the Col. has

has literally governed his conduct by the old adage that, "Learning is better than house and land;" for as his son's learning advanced, his houses and lands melted away, or at least would have done, had it not been for his mother's fortune, every shilling of which, with half the profits of his estate, he expended on Harry's education, who certainly wants only ten thousand pounds a year to be the most charming young fellow in the universe. Well he must e'en make the most of his perfections, and endeavour to marry a fortune, on which subject I have a kind of a glimpse of a design, and fancy my friend Harry has not quite so great a contempt of money as I imagined.

You must know then, (a pretty phrase that, but to proceed) you must know, that we accompanied Col. Mandeville fifteen miles, and after dining together at an inn, he took the road to his regiment,  
and

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 43

and we were returning pensive and silent to Belmont, when my Lord, to remove the tender melancholy we had all caught from Harry, proposed a visit at Mr. Westbrook's, a plump, rich, civil, citizen, whose house we must of necessity pass. As my lord despises wealth, and Mr. Westbrook's genealogy in the third generation loses itself in a livery stable, he has always avoided an intimacy, which the other has as studiously sought; but as it is not in his nature to treat any body with ill-breeding, he has suffered their visits, though he has been slow in returning them; and has sometimes invited the daughter to a ball.

The lady wife, who is a woman of great erudition, and is at present intirely lost to the world, all her faculties being on the rack composing a treatise against the immortality of the soul, sent down an apology; and we were entertained by Mademoiselle la Fille, who is little, lean, brown, with small pert black eyes, quickened

ened by a large quantity of abominable bad rouge: she talks incessantly, has a great deal of city vivacity, and a prodigious passion for people of a certain rank, a phrase of which she is peculiarly fond. Her mother being above the little vulgar cares of a family, or so unimportant a task as the education of an only child, she was early entrusted to a French chamber-maid, who, having left her own country on account of a *Faux Pas* which had visible consequences, was appointed to instill the principles of virtue and politeness into the flexible mind of this illustrious heiress of the house of Westbrook, under the title of governess. My information of this morning further says, that, by the cares of this accomplished person, she acquired a competent, though incorrect, knowledge of the French language; with cunning, dissimulation, assurance, and a taste for gallantry; to which if you add a servile passion for quality, and an oppressive insolence to all, however worthy, who want that

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 45

that wealth which she owes to her father's skill in Change alley, you will have an idea of the bride I intend for Harry Mandeville. Methinks, I hear you exclaim: "Heavens! what a conjunction"! 'Tis mighty well, but people must live, and there is 80,000 *l.* attached to this animal, and if the girl likes him, I dont see what he can do better, with birth, and a habit of profuse expence, which he has so little to support. She sung, for the creature sings, a tender Italian air, which she addressed to Harry in a manner and with a look, that convinces me her stile is *l'amorose*, and that Harry is the present object. After the song I surpris'd him talking low to her, and pressing her hand, whilst we were all admiring an India cabinet; and on seeing he was observed, he left her with an air of conscious guilt which convinces me he intends to follow the pursuit, and is at the same time ashamed of his purpose. Poor fellow! I pity him; but marriage is his only

only card. I'll put the matter forward, and make my lord invite her to the next ball. Don't you think I am a generous creature, to sacrifice the man I love to his own good? When shall I see one of your selfish sex so disinterested? no, you men have absolutely no idea of sentiment.

Adio! A. WILMOT.

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TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

**I**T is the custom here for every body to spend their mornings as they please, which does not however hinder our sometimes making parties all together when our inclinations happen all to take the same turn. My lord this morning proposed an airing to the ladies, and that we should, instead of returning to dinner, stop at the first neat farm house where we could hope for decent accommodations. Love of variety made the proposal agreeable to us all; and a servant being ordered  
before

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 47

before to make some little provision, we stopped, after the pleasantest airing imaginable, at the entrance of a wood, where, leaving our equipages to be sent to the neighbouring village, we walked up a winding path to a rustic building, embosomed in the grove, the architecture of which was in the most elegant stile of simplicity: the trees round this lovely retreat were covered with wood bines and jessamines, from which a gale of perfume met our approach: the gentlest breath of Zephyr just moved the leaves, the birds sung in the branches, a spring of the clearest water broke from the rising ground on the left, and murmuring along a transparent pebbly bottom, seemed to lose itself in a thicket of roses: no rude sound disturbed the sweet harmony of nature; all breathed the soul of innocence and tranquillity, but a tranquillity raised above itself. My heart danced with pleasure, and the lovely lady Julia happening to be next  
me,

me, I kissed her hand with an involuntary fervor, which called up into her cheeks a blush "celestial rosy red." When we entered the house, we were struck with the propriety, the beauty, the simplicity of all around us; the apartments were few, but airy and commodious; the furniture plain, but new and in the most beautiful taste; no ornaments but vases of flowers, no attendants but country girls, blooming as the morn, and drest with a neatness inexpressible.

After an elegant cold dinner, and a desert of cream and the best fruits in season, we walked into the wood with which the house was surrounded, the romantic variety of which it is impossible to describe; all was nature, but nature in her most pleasing form. We wandered over the sweetly varied scene, resting at intervals in arbours of intermingled roses and jessamines, till we reached a beautiful mossy grotto,  
wildly

wildly lovely, whose entrance was almost hid by the vines which flaunted over its top. Here we found tea and coffee prepared as if by invisible hands. Lady Anne exclaimed that all was enchantment; and Lord Belmont's eyes sparkled with that lively joy, which a benevolent mind feels in communicating happiness to others.

Lady Julia alone seemed not to taste the pleasures of the day: Her charming eyes had a melancholy languor I never saw in them before: she was reserved, silent, absent; and would not have escaped Lady Anne's raillery, had not the latter been too much taken up with the lovely scene to attend to any thing but joy.

As friendship has a thousand groundless fears, I tremble lest I should have been so unhappy as to offend her: I remember she seemed displeas'd with my kissing her

hand, and scarce spoke to me the whole day: I will beg of Lady Anne to ask the cause, for I cannot support the apprehension of having offended her.

It was with difficulty Lord Belmont forced us at night from this enchanting retirement, which he calls his hermitage, and which is the scene of his most pleasing hours. To Lady Anne and me it had a charm it did not want, the powerful charm of novelty: it is about four miles from Belmont house, not far distant from the extremities of the park. To this place I am told Lord Belmont often retires, with his amiable family, and those particularly happy in his esteem, to avoid the hurry of company, and give himself up entirely to the uninterrupted sweets of domestic enjoyment. Sure no man but Lord Belmont knows how to live!

H. MANDEVILLE.

To

To Col. BELLVILLE.

**L** O R D, these prudes— no, don't let me injure her — these people of high sentiment, are so tremblingly alive all o'er— there is poor Harry in terrible disgrace with Lady Julia for only kissing her hand, and amidst so bewitching a scene too, that I am really surprized at his moderation; all breathed the soul of pleasure;— rosy bowers and mossy pillows, cooing doves and whispering Zephyrs — I think my Lord has a strange confidence in his daughter's insensibility to trust her in these seducing groves, and with so divine a fellow in company — But as I was saying, she takes the affair quite seriously, and makes it an offence of the blackest die — Well, I thank my stars, I am not one of these sensitive plants; he might have kissed my hand twenty times without my being more a-

harm'd than if a fly had settled there; nay a thousand to one whether I had even been conscious of it at all.

I have laugh'd her out of her resentment, for it is really absurd; the poor fellow was absolutely miserable about it, and begged my intercession, as if it had been a matter of the highest importance. When I saw her begin to be ashamed of the thing, Really my dear, says I, I am glad you are convinced how ridiculous your anger was. for illnature'd people might have put strange constructions. — I know but one way of accounting rationally — if I was Harry I should be extremely flatter'd — one would almost suppose — This answer'd; — I carry'd my point, and transfer'd the pretty thing's anger to me; it blush'd with indignation, drew up, and, if mamma had not happened to enter the room at that instant, an agreeable scene of altercation would probably have ensu'd; she took that op-  
por-

7 Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 53

portunity of retiring to her apartment, and we saw no more of her till dinner, when she was gracious to Harry, and exceedingly stately to me.

O mon Dieu! I had almost forgot: we are to have a little concert this evening and see, my dear Lord appears to summon me. Adio! Caro!

A. WILMOT.

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TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, Esq;

**Y**ES, my dear son, you do me justice: I am never so happy as when I know you are so. I perfectly agree with you as to the charms of Lord Belmont's hermitage, and admire that genuine taste for elegant nature which gives such a spirited variety to the life of the wisest and most amiable of men.

But does it not, my dear Harry, give you at the same time a very contemptible

D 3

idea

idea of the power of greatness to make its possessors happy, to see it thus flying as it were from itself, and seeking pleasure not in the fruition, but in the temporary suspension, of those supposed advantages it has above other conditions of life? Believe me, it is not in the costly dome, but in the rural cott, that the impartial Lord of all has fixed the chearful seat of happiness. Health, peace, content, and soft domestic tenderness, the only real sweets of life, driven from the gilded palace, smile on the humble roof of virtuous industry.

The poor complain not of the tediousness of life: their daily toil makes short the flying hours, and every moment of rest from labour is to them a moment of enjoyment. Not so the great: surrounded from earliest youth by pleasures which court their acceptance, their taste palled by habit, and the too great facility of satiating every wish, lassitude and disgust creep  
on

on their languid hours; and, wanting the doubtful gale of hope to keep the mind in gentle agitation, it sinks into a dead calm more destructive to every enjoyment than the rudest storm of adversity. The haughty dutchess, oppressed with tasteless pomp, and sinking under the weight of her own importance, is much less to be envied than "the milk-maid singing blithe," who is in her eyes the object only of pity and contempt.

Your acquaintance with the great world, my dear Harry, has shown you the splendid misery of superior life: you have seen those most wretched to whom heaven has granted the amplest external means of happiness. Miserable slaves to pride, the most corroding of human passions, strangers to social pleasure, incapable of love or friendship, living to others not to themselves, ever in pursuit of the shadow of happiness, whilst the substance glides past

them unobserved, they drag on an insipid joyless being: unloved and unconnected, scorning the tender ties which give life all its sweetness, they sink unwept and unlamented to the grave. They know not the conversation of a friend, that conversation which "brightens the eyes:" their pride, an invasion on the natural rights of mankind, meets with perpetual mortification; and their rage for dissipation, like the burning thirst of a fever, is at once boundless and unquenchable.

Yet, tho' Happiness loves the vale, it would be unjust to confine her to those humble scenes; nor his her presence, as our times afford a shining and amiable example, unattainable to royalty itself; the wife and good, whate'er their rank, led by the hand of simple unerring nature, are seldom known to miss their way to her delightful abode.

You

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 57.

You have seen Lord Belmont (blest with wisdom to chuse, and fortune to pursue his choice, convinced that wealth and titles, the portion of few, are not only foreign to, but often inconsistent with, true happiness) seek the lovely goddess, not in the pride of show, the pomp of courts; or the madness of dissipation; but in the calm of retirement, in the bosom of friendship, in the sweets of dear domestic life, in the tender pleasing duties of husband and of father, in the practice of beneficence, and every gentler virtue. Others may be like him convinced, but few like him have spirit and resolution to burst the magic fetters of example and fashion, and nobly dare to be happy.

What pleasure does it give me to find you in so just a way of thinking in regard to fortune! Yes, my dear Harry, all that in reality deserves the name of good, so far as it centers in ourselves, is within

the reach, not only of our moderate income, but of once much below it. Great wealth is only desirable for the power it gives us of making others happy, and when one sees how very few make this only laudable use of extreme affluence, one acquiesces chearfully in the will of heaven, satisfied with not having the temptation of misapplying those gifts of the supreme being, for which we shall undoubtedly be accountable.

Nothing can, as you observe, be more worthy a reasonable creature than Lord Belmont's plan of life: he has enlarged his own circle of happiness, by taking into it that of all mankind, and particularly of all around him: his bounty glides unobserved, like the deep silent stream, nor is it by relieving so much as by preventing want, that his generous spirit acts: it is his glory and his pleasure that

that he must go beyond the limits of his own estate to find objects of real distress.

He encourages industry, and keeps up the soul of cheerfulness amongst his tenants, by maintaining as much as possible the natural equality of mankind on his estate: His farms are not large, but moderately rented; all are at ease, and can provide happily for their families, none rise to exorbitant wealth. The very cottagers are strangers to all that even approaches want: when the busier seasons of the year are past, he gives them employment in his woods or gardens; and finds double beauties in every improvement there, when he reflects that from thence

“ Health to himself and to his infants

“ bread,

“ The labourer bears.” —

Plenty, the child of industry, smiles on their humble abodes, and if any unforeseen  
mil-

misfortune nips the blossoms of their prosperity, his bounty, descending silent and refreshing as the dews of heaven, renews their blooming state, and restores joy to their happy dwellings.

To say all in one word, the maxims by which he governs all the actions of his life are manly, benevolent, enlarged, liberal; and his generous passion for the good of others is rewarded by his Creator, whose approbation is his first point of view, with as much happiness to himself as this sublunary state is capable of. Adieu!

Your affectionate J. MANDEVILLE.

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TO COL. BELLVILLE.

**Y**ES, I am indeed fond of your Italiano; it is the language of Love and the Muses: has a certain softness and all that; — and by no means difficult to understand — at least it is tolerable easy to understand as much of it as I do, as much

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 61

as enables one to be conceited, and give one's self airs amongst those who are totally ignorant: when this happens, I look astonished at the Gothic creatures.--“Heavens! my dear Madam, not know Italian? how I pity your savage ignorance! not know Italian! La Lingua D'Amore? Oh! Mirtillo! Mirtillo! Anima mia!”--The dear creatures stare, and hate one so cordially, it is really charming. — And if one now and then unluckily blunders upon somebody who is more in the secret than one's self, a downcast look, and Ho vergogna Signora, saves all, and does credit at once to one's learning and one's modesty. Flattered too by so plain a confession of their superiority, they give you credit for whatever degree of knowledge you desire, and go away so satisfied—and exclaim in all companies, “upon my word, Lady Anne Wilmot is absolutely an exquisite mistress of Italian, only a little too diffident.”

I am

I am just come from playing at ball in the garden, Lord Belmont of the party : this sweet old man ! I am half in love with him, though I have no kind of hopes, for he told me yesterday, that, lovely as I was, Lady Belmont was in his eyes a thousand times more so. How amiable is age like his ! so condescending to the pleasures of the young ! so charmed to see them happy ! he gains infinitely in point of love by this easy goodness, and as to respect, his virtues cannot fail to command it.

Oh ! à propos to age, my Lord says he he is sure I shall be a most agreeable old woman, and I am almost of his opinion. Adieu ! creature ! I can no more.

By the way, do you know that Harry's Cittadina has taken a prodigious Penchant for me, and vows no woman on earth has so much wit, or spirit, or politesse, as Lady Anne Wilmot. Something like a glimmering

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 63

mering of taste this: I protest I begin to think the girl not quite so intolerable.

Je suis votre,

A. WILMOT.

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To the Earl of BELMONT.

My Lord,

**A**N unforeseen inevitable misfortune having happened to me, for which a too careless œconomy had left me totally unprovided, I find it necessary to sell my estate and quit the country.

I could find a ready purchaser in Mr. Westbrook, who, with the merciless rapacity of an exchange-broker, watches like a harpy the decline of every gentleman's fortune in this neighbourhood, in order to seize on his possessions: but the tender affection I bear my tenants, makes me solicitous to consult their good as much as possible in the sale, since my hard fate will

will not allow me longer to contribute to it myself: I will not here say more than that I cannot provide more effectually for their happiness than by selling to your lordship.

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most

Obedient and devoted Servant,

JAMES BARKER.

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TO JAMES BARKER, Esq;

S I R,

**I** Am extremely concerned any accident should have happened which makes it possible I should lose from my neighbourhood a gentleman of family, of so very worthy a character, and one I so greatly esteem: but I hope means may be found to prevent what would be so extremely regretted

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 65

regretted by all who have the pleasure of knowing you.

As I have always regarded the independent country gentlemen as the strength and glory of this kingdom, and the best supports of our excellent constitution; no increase of power or property to myself shall ever tempt me to lessen the number of them, where it can possibly be avoided. If you have resolution to enter on so exact a system of oeconomy as will enable you to repay any sum you may want in seven years, whatever that sum is, I shall be most happy in advancing it and will take it back in the manner most easy to you. I think I could trace out a plan by which you might retrench considerably in a manner scarce perceptible. I will to-morrow morning call upon you when I am riding out, when we will talk further on this subject; be assured, none of the greedy Leviathans of our days can feel half the pleasure

pleasure in compleating a purchase that I shall do in declining this, if I can be so happy as to keep you amongst us. Your accepting this without hesitation, will be a proof of your esteem which I can never forget, as it will shew you think too highly of me to fear my making an ill use hereafter of having had the happiness of doing for you what, if we were to change present situations, I know you would rejoice in doing for me. I have a fund which I call the bank of friendship, on which it is my rule to take no interest, which you may command to its utmost extent.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend,  
and obedient servant,

BELMONT.

To

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 67

To Col. BELLVILLE.

THURSDAY.

WE have been dining Al fresco in a rustic temple in a wood near the house: romanesque, simple; the pillars trunks of ancient oaks, the roof the bark of trees, the pavement pebbles, the seats moss; the wild melody of nature our musick; the distant sound of the cascade just breaks on the ear, which, joined by the chant of the birds, the cooing of the doves, the lowing of the herds, and the gently breathing western breeze, forms a concert most divinely harmonious.

Really this place would be charming if it was a little more replete with human beings; but to me the finest landscape is a dreary wild, unless adorned by a few groups of figures. — There are 'squires indeed—  
well

— well absolutely your 'squires are an agreeable race of people, refined, sentimental, formed for the Belle passion; tho' it must be owned the 'squires about Belmont are rational animals compared to those my Caro Sposo used to associate with: my Lord has exceedingly humanized them, and their wives and daughters are decent creatures: which really amazed me at first, for you know, Bellville, there is in general no standing the country misses.

Your letter is just brought me: all you say of levees and drawing rooms, is thrown away.

“ Talk not to me of courts, for I disdain  
 “ All courts when he is by: far be the  
   “ noise  
 “ Of kings and courts from us, whose  
   “ gentle souls  
 “ Our kinder stars have steered another  
   ,, way.

Yes,

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 69

Yes, the rural taste prevails; my plan of life is fixed; to sit under a hill and keep sheep with Harry Mandeville.

O mon Dieu! what do I see coming down the avenue? Is it in woman to resist that equipage? Papier machée — highly gilded — loves and doves — six long tailed grey Arabians—by all the gentle powers of love and gallantry, Fondville himself—the dear enchanting creature — nay then — poor Harry — all is over with him — I discard him this moment, and take Fondville for my Cecisbeo—fresh from Paris —just imported—O all ye gods!

FRIDAY Morning.

I left you somewhat abruptly, and am returned to fill up my epistle with the adventures of yesterday.

The

The great gates being thrown open, and the chariot drawn up to the steps, my charming Fondville, drest in a suit of light-coloured silk embroidered with silver, a hat with a black feather under his arm, and a large bouquet of artificial flowers in his button-hole, all Arabia breathing from his well-scented handkerchief, descended, like Adonis from the carr of Venus, and, full of the idea of his own irresistibility, advanced towards the saloon--he advanced not with the doubtful air of a bashful lover intimidated by a thousand tender fears, but in a minuet step, humming an opera tune, and casting a side glance at every looking glass in his way. The first compliments being over, the amiable creature seated himself by me, and began the following conversation :

Well, but my dear lady Anne, this is so surprizing—your ladyship in Campagna? I thought Wilmot had given you a surfeit of the poet's Elyzium——horrid retirement—

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 71

ment—how do you contrive to kill time?  
— tho' Harry Mandeville indeed — a  
widow of spirit may find some amusement  
there.

Why really, Fondville, a pretty fellow  
does prodigiously soften the horrors of  
solitude.

O, nothing so well.

And Harry has his attractions.

Attractions! ah! L'Amore! the fairest  
eyes of Rome—

But pray, my dear lord, how did the court  
bear my absence?

In despair: the very Zephyrs about  
Versailles have learnt to sigh, la belle An-  
gloise.

And

And Miremont ?

Inconsolable : staid away from two operas.

Is it possible ? the dear constant creature ! how his sufferings touch me ——— but here is company.

Any body one knows ?

I rather think not.

What the good company of the Environs, the Arrière ban, the Posse Comitatus ?

Even so : my lord “ brings down the “ natives upon us,” but, to do the creatures justice, one shall seldom see tamer savages.

Here the door opening, Fondville rose with us all, and leaning against the waincoat,

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 73

coat, in an attitude of easy indifference, half bowing, without deigning to turn his eyes on those who entered the room, continued playing my fan, and talking to me in a half whisper, till all were seated; when my dear lady Belmont, leading the conversation, contrived to make it general, till, tea being over, my lord proposed a walk in the gardens; where having trifled away an hour very pleasantly, we found music ready in the saloon at our return, and danced till midnight.

Lord Viscount Fondville (he would not have you omit Viscount for the world) left us this morning: my lord is extremely polite and attentive to him, on the supposition of his being my lover; otherwise he must expect no supernumerary civilities at Belmont; for, as it is natural to value most those advantages one possesses oneself, my lord, whose nobility is but of the third generation, but whose ancestry loses

itself in the clouds, pays much greater respect to a long line of illustrious ancestors than to the most lofty titles; and I am sorry to say my dear Fondville's pedigree will not stand the test; he owes his fortune and rank to the iniquity of his father, who was deep in the infamous secret of the South Sea bubble.

'Tis however a good-natured, inoffensive, lively, showy animal, and does not flatter disagreeably. He owns Belmont not absolutely shocking, and thinks lady Julia rather tolerable, if she was so happy as to have a little of my spirit and enjoyment. Adjo!

A. WILMOT.

O Ciel! what a memory! this is not past day. You may possibly gain a line or two by this strange forgetfulness of mine.

SATURDAY.

SATURDAY.

Nothing new, but that La Signora Westbrook, who visited here yesterday, either was, or pretended to be, taken ill before her coach came, and Harry, by her own desire, attended her home in lady Julia's post chaise. He came back with so grave an air, that I fancy she had been making absolute, plain, down-right love to him: her ridiculous fondness begins to be rather perceptible to every body: really these city girls are so rapid in their amours, they won't give a man time to breathe.

Once more, Adieu!

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

June 13th.

**I** Have just received a letter which makes me the most unhappy of mankind: 'tis from a lady whose fortune is greatly above my most sanguine hopes, and whose merit and tenderness deserve that heart which I feel it is not in my power to give her. The general complacency of my behaviour to the lovely sex, and my having been accidentally her partner at two or three balls, has deceived her into an opinion that she is beloved by me; and she imagines she is only returning a passion, which her superiority of fortune has prevented my declaring. How much is she to be pitied! my heart knows too well the pangs of disappointed love not to feel most tenderly for the sufferings of another, without the additional motive to compassion of being the undesigned cause

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cause of those sufferings, the severest of which human nature is capable. I am embarrassed to the greatest degree, not what resolution to take, that required not a moment's deliberation, but how to soften the stroke, and in what manner, without wounding her delicacy, to decline an offer, which she has not the least doubt of my accepting with all the eager transport of timid love, surpris'd by unexpected success.

I have wrote to her, and think I shall send this answer; I enclose you a copy of it: her letter is already destroyed: her name I conceal. The honor of a lady is too sacred to be trusted, even to the faithful breast of a friend.

To Miss ———

**N**O words, madam, can express the warmth of my gratitude for your generous intentions in my favor, tho' my ideas of probity will not allow me to take advantage of them.

To rob a gentleman, by whom I have been treated with the utmost hospitality, not only of his whole fortune, but of, what is infinitely more valuable, a beloved and amiable daughter, is an action so utterly inconsistent with those sentiments of honor which I have always cultivated, as even your perfections cannot tempt me to be guilty of. I must therefore, however unwillingly, absolutely decline the happiness you have had the goodness to permit

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 79

mit me to hope for, and beg leave to subscribe myself,

Madam,

with the utmost gratitude  
and most lively esteem,  
your most obliged and  
devoted servant,

H. Mandeville.

I ought perhaps to be more explicit in my refusal of her, but I cannot bring myself to shock her sensibility, by an appearance of total indifference. Surely this is sufficiently clear, and as much as can be said by a man sensible of, and grateful for, so infinite an obligation.

You will smile when I own, that, in the midst of my concern for this lady, I feel a secret, and, I fear, an ungenerous, pleasure, in sacrificing her to lady Julia's friendship, tho' the latter will never be sensible of the sacrifice.

E 4

Yes,

Yes, my friend, every idea of an establishment in the world, however remote or however advantageous, dies away before the joy of being esteemed by her, and at liberty to cultivate that esteem; determined against marriage, I have no wish, no hope, but that of being for ever unconnected, for ever blest in her conversation, forever allowed, uninterrupted, unrestrained by nearer ties, to hear that enchanting voice, to swear on that snowy hand eternal amity, to listen to the unreserved sentiments of the most beautiful mind in the creation, uttered with the melody of angels. Had I worlds, I would give them to inspire her with the same wishes!

H. MANDEVILLE.

To

To Col. BELLVILLE.

WEDNESDAY Night.

I Can't conceive, Bellville, what it is that makes me so much the men's taste: I really think I am not handsome — not so very handsome — not so handsome as lady Julia, — yet I don't know how it is — I am persecuted to death amongst you — the misfortune to please every body — 'tis amazing — no regularity of features — fine eyes indeed — a vivid bloom — a seducing smile — an elegant form — an air of the world — and something extremely well in the *Toute ensemble* — a kind of an agreeable manner, — easy, spirited, *Dégagée* — and for the understanding — I flatter myself malice itself cannot deny me the beauties of the mind. You might justly say to me, what the queen of Sweden said to *Mademoiselle le Fèvre*, “with such an under-  
E 5 standing,

“standing, are not you ashamed to be  
“handsome?”

THURSDAY Morning.

Absolutely deserted. Lord and Lady Belmont are gone to town this morning on sudden and unexpected business: poor Harry's situation would have been pitiable, had not my lord, considering how impossible it was for him to be well with us both à Trio, sent to Fondville to spend a week here in their absence, which they hope will not be much longer. Harry, who is viceroy, with absolute power, has only one commission, to amuse lady Julia and me, and not let us pass a languid hour till their return.

O Dio! Fondville's Arabians! the dear creature looks up — he bows —  
“That bow might from the bidding of the  
“gods command me” —

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 83

Don't you love quotations! I am immensely fond of them: a certain proof of erudition: and, in my sentiments, to be a woman of literature is to be —— In short, my dear Bellville, I early in life discovered, by the the meer force of genius; that there were two characters only in which one might take a thousand little innocent freedoms, without being censured by a parcel of impertinent old women, those of a Belle Esprit and a Methodist; and, the latter not being in my style, I chose to set up for the former, in which I have had the happiness to succeed so much beyond my hopes, that the first question now asked amongst polite people, when a new piece comes out, is, "What does lady Anne Wilmot say of it?" A scornful smile from me would damn the best play that ever was wrote; as a look of approbation, for I am naturally merciful, has saved many a dull one. In short, if you should happen to write an insipid poem, which is ex-

tremely probable, send it to me, and my Fiat shall crown you with immortality.

Oh! heavens! à propos, do you know that Bell Martin, in the wane of her charms, and past the meridian of her reputation, is absolutely married to sir Charles Canterell? Astonishing! till I condescend to give the clue. She praised his bad verses. A thousand things appear strange in human life, which, if one had the real key, are only natural effects of a hidden cause. “ My dear sir Charles, says Bell, that divine sap-  
 “ phic of yours — those melting sounds —  
 “ I have endeavoured to set it — But Or-  
 “ pheus or Amphion alone -- I would sing it  
 “ — yet fear to trust my own heart — such  
 “ extatic numbers — who that has a soul” —  
 She sung half a stanza, and, overcome by the magic force of verse, leaning on his breast, as if absorbed in speechless transport, “ she fainted, sunk, and dyed away”. Find me the poet upon earth who could have withstood

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 85  
withstood this. He married her the next  
morning.

Oh! Ciel! I forgot the Caro Fondville.  
I am really inhuman. Adieu!

“ Je suis votre amie tres fidelle”.  
I can absolutely afford no more at present.

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TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, Esq;

London, June 20th.

**Y**OU can have no idea, my dear  
Mr. Mandeville, how weary I am  
of being these few days only in town: that  
any one, who is happy enough to have a  
house, a cottage, in the country, should  
continue here at this season, is to me incon-  
ceivable: but that gentlemen of large  
property, that noblemen should imprison  
themselves in this smoking furnace, when  
the whole land is a blooming garden, a wil-  
derness of sweets; when pleasure courts  
them

them in her fairest form; nay, when the fordid god of modern days, when Interest joins his potent voice; when power, the best power, that of doing good, solicits their presence, can only be accounted for, by supposing them under the dominion of fascination, spell-caught by some malicious demon, an enemy to human happiness.

I cannot resist addressing them in a stanza or two of a poem, which deserves to be written in letters of gold :

“ Mean time, by pleasure’s sophistry fl-  
 “ lur’d,  
 “ From the bright sun and living  
 “ breeze ye stray :  
 And, deep in London’s gloomy haunts  
 “ immur’d,  
 “ Brood o’er your fortune’s, freedom’s,  
 “ health’s decay,  
 “ O, blind of choice, and to yourselves  
 “ untrue!

“ The

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 87

“ The young grove shoots, their  
“ bloom the fields renew,  
The mansion asks its lord, the swains  
“ their friend ;  
“ While he doth riot’s orgies haply  
“ share,  
“ Or tempt the gamester’s dark destroy-  
“ ing snare,  
“ Or at some courtly shrine with fla-  
“ vish incense bend.

“ And yet full oft your anxious tongues  
“ complain  
“ That careless tumult prompts the  
“ rustic throng ;  
“ That the rude village inmates now  
“ disdain  
“ Those homely ties which rul’d their  
“ fathers long :  
“ Alas ! your fathers did by other arts  
“ Draw those kind ties around their  
“ simple hearts,  
“ And led in other paths their ductile  
“ will :

“ By

“ By succours, faithful counfel, cour-  
 “ teous chear,  
 “ Won them the ancient manners to re-  
 “ vere,  
 “ To prize their country’s peace, and  
 “ heaven’s due rites fulfil.

Can a nobleman of spirit prefer the rude  
 insults of a licentious London rabble, the  
 refuse of every land, to the warm and faith-  
 ful attachment of a brave, a generous, a  
 free, and loyal yeomanry in the country.  
 Does not interest, as well as virtue and hu-  
 manity, prompt them, by living on their  
 estates, to imitate the heavens, which re-  
 turn the moisture they draw from the earth,  
 in grateful dews and showers?

When I first came to Belmont, having  
 been some years abroad, I found my te-  
 nants poor and dejected, scarce able to  
 gain a hard penurious living. The neigh-  
 bouring gentlemen spending two thirds of  
 the

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 89

the year in London, and the town, which was the market for my estate, filled only with people in trade, who could scarce live by each other: I struck at the root of this evil, and, by living almost altogether in the country myself, brought the whole neighbourhood to do the same: I promoted every kind of diversion, which soon filled my town with gentlemen's families, which raised the markets, and of consequence the value of my estate: my tenants grew rich at the same rents which before they were unable to pay; population encreased, my villages were full of inhabitants, and all around me was gay and flourishing. So simple, my dear Mr. Mandeville, are the maxims of true policy: but it must be so; that machine which has the fewest wheels is certainly most easy to keep in order.

Have you had my old men to dine? at sixty I admit them to my table, where they are always once a fortnight my guests.

I love

I love to converse with those, "whom age and long experience render wise"; and, in my idea of things, it is time to slacken the reins of pride, and to wave all sublunary distinctions, when they are so near being at an end between us. Besides I know, by my own feelings, that age wants the comforts of life: a plentiful table, generous wines, cheerful converse, and the notice of those they have been accustomed to revere, renews in some degree the fire of youth, gives a spring to declining nature, and perhaps prolongs as well as enlivens the evening of their days. Nor is it a small addition to my satisfaction, to see the respect paid them by the young of their own rank, from the observation of their being thus distinguished by me: as an old man, I have a kind of interest in making age an object of reverence; but, were I ever so young, I would continue a custom, which appears to me not less just than humane.

Adieu!

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 91

Adieu! my esteemed, my amiable friend!  
how I envy you your larks and nightin-  
gales!                      Your faithful BELMONT.

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To Col. BELLVILLE.

THURSDAY.

**P**OSITIVELY, Bellville, I can answer for nothing: these sylvan scenes are so very bewitching, the vernal grove, and balmy Zephyr, are so favourable to a lover's prayer, that, if Fondville was any thing but a pretty man about town, my situation would be extremely critical.

This wicked Harry too has certainly some evil design; he forms nothing but enchanting rural parties, either à quarrée, or with others of the young and gay: not a maiden aunt has appeared at Belmont since his reign commenced. He suffers no ideas to enter our imaginations but those  
of

of youth, beauty, love, and the seducing pleasures of the golden age. We dance on the green, dine at the Hermitage, and wander in the woods by moonlight, listening to the song of the nightingale, or the sweeter notes of that little syren lady Julia, whose impassioned sounds would soften the marble heart of a virgin of eighty-five.

I really tremble for my fair friend; young, artless, full of sensibility, exposed hourly to the charms of the prettiest fellow upon earth, with a manner so soft, so tender, so much in her own romantic way—

A rap at my door — Fondville is sent for away — company at his house — sets out immediately — I must bid the dear creature adieu —

I am returned: pity me, Bellville.

“The

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 93

“The streams, the groves, the rocks  
“ remain,

“But Damon still I seek in vain.”

Yes, the dear man is gone; Harry is retired to write letters, and Lady Julia and I are going to take a walk, Tete à Tete, in the wood. Jesu Maria! a female Tete à Tete! — I shall never go through the operation — if we were en confidence indeed, it might be bearable: but the little innocent fool has not even a secret.

Adio!

Your's A. WILMOT.

To

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

**O** Mordaunt! I am indeed undone: I was too confident of my own strength: I depended on the power of gratitude and honor over my heart, but find them too weak to defend me against such inexpressible loveliness: I could have resisted her beauty only, but the mind which irradiates those speaking eyes — the melting music of those gentle accents, “soft as the fleeces of descending snows,” the delicacy, yet lively tenderness of her sentiments—that angel innocence—that winning sweetness — the absence of her parents, and lady Anne’s coquetry with lord Fondville, have given me opportunities of conversing with her, which have forever destroyed my peace — I must tear myself from her — I will leave Belmont the moment my lord returns — I am forever lost — doomed to wretchedness — but

I will

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 95

I will be wretched alone — I tremble lest my eyes should have discovered — lest pity should involve her in my misery.

Great heavens! was I not sufficiently unhappy? to stab me to the heart, I have just received the following letter from lord Belmont.

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TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, Esq;

June 22d.

**T**HE present member of parliament for — being in a state of health which renders his life extremely uncertain, it would be very agreeable to me if my dear Mr. Mandeville would think of offering himself a candidate to succeed him. I will however be so plain as to tell him, he will have no assistance from me except my wishes, and has nothing to trust to but his merits and the name of Mandeville;  
it

it being a point both of conscience and honor with me, never to intermeddle in elections. The preservation of our happy constitution depends on the perfect independence of each part of which it is composed on the other two: and the moment, heaven grant that moment to be far distant! when the house of lords can make a house of commons, liberty and prerogative will cease to be more than names, and both prince and people become slaves.

I therefore always, tho' the whole town is mine, leave the people to their free and uninfluenced choice: never interfering farther than to insist on their keeping themselves as unbiassed as I leave them. I would not only withdraw my favor from, but prosecute, the man who was base enough to take a bribe, tho' he who offered it was my nearest friend.

By

By this means I have the pleasure also of keeping myself free, and at liberty to confer favors where I please; so that I secure my own independence by not invading that of others.

This conduct, I cannot help thinking, if general, would preserve the ballance of our glorious constitution; a ballance of much greater consequence to Britons than the ballance of power in Europe, tho' so much less the object of their attention. In this we resemble those persons, who, whilst they are busied in regulating the domestic concerns of their neighbours, suffer their own to be ruined.

But to return from this unintended digression: You will perhaps object to what I have proposed, that during your father's life you are not qualified for a seat in parliament. I have obviated this objection. Lady Mary, the only sister of my father,

has an ample fortune in her own power to dispose of: some part of it was originally her own, but much the larger part was left her by her lover, Sir Charles Barton, who was killed in queen Anne's wars, the very morning before he was to have set out for England to complete his marriage. Being the last of his family, he had made a will, in which he left his estate to lady Mary, with a request, that, if she did not marry, she would leave it to one of the name of Mandeville. As she loves merit, and has the happiness and honor of our house warmly at heart, I have easily prevailed on her to settle 500*l.* a year on you at the present, and to leave you a good part of the rest at her death. Her design hitherto, I will not conceal from you, has been to leave her fortune to my daughter, of whom she is infinitely fond; but Julia has enough, and by leaving it to you, she more exactly fulfils the will of Sir Charles, who, tho' he has not expressly made the distinction,

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distinction, certainly meant it to a male of the Mandeville name. The estate is about 2000*l.* a year; her own fortune of 14000*l.* I shall not oppose her leaving to my daughter.

I know too well the generous sentiments of your heart to doubt that, in procuring this settlement, I give to my country a firm and unshaken patriot, at once above dependence on the most virtuous court, and the mean vanity of opposing the just measures of his prince, from a too eager desire of popularity: not that I would have you insensible to praise, or the esteem of your country; but seek it only by deserving it, and tho' it be in part the reward, let it not be the motive of your actions: let your own approbation be your first view, and that of others only your second.

You may observe, my dear Mr. Mandeville, I only caution you against being led

away by youthful vanity to oppose the just measures of your prince: I should wrong the integrity of your heart, if I supposed you capable of distressing the hands of government for mercenary or ambitious purposes: a virtuous senator will regard, not men, but measures, and will concur with his bitterest enemies in every salutary and honest purpose; or rather, in a public light, he will have no enemies, but the enemies of his country.

It is with caution I give even these general hints; far be it from me to attempt to influence your judgment: let your opinion be ever free and your own; or, where your inexperience may want information, seek it from the best, and most enlighten'd of mankind, your excellent father, who has long sat with honor in the same house.

Let me now, my amiable friend, thank you for your obliging attention, not only

to the ladies, of whom I could not doubt your care, but of my tenants, one of whom writes me word, that, coming to enquire when I should return, with a look of anxiety which shew'd my return was of consequence to him, you took him aside, and, enquiring his business, found he wanted, from an accident which had involved him in a temporary distress, to borrow 100 £. for which you gave him a draught on your banker, with a goodness and sweetness of manner, which doubled the obligation; making only one condition, which the overflowing of his gratitude has made him unable to keep, that it should be a secret to all the world.

Can Lady Mary do too much for a man who thus shews himself worthy the name of Mandeville, the characteristick of which has ever been the warmest benevolence?

Another would, perhaps, insist on returning the money to you, but I will not rob you of the pleasure of making an honest man happy: you will however observe, that it is this once only I indulge you; and that you are the only person from whom I have ever suffered my family, for such I esteem all placed by Providence under my protection, to receive an obligation: 'tis a favor I have refused even to your father.

Do not answer this: I shall possibly be with you before a letter could reach me.

Adieu. Your affectionate BELMONT.

Can I, after this letter, my dear Mordaunt, entertain a wish for lady Julia, without the blackest ingratitude? no, tho' I will not accept his generous offer, I can never forget he has made it. I will leave Belmont—I will forget her—what have I said? forget her? I must first lose all sense of my own being. Am

Am I born to know every species of misery? I have this moment received a second letter from the lady I once mention'd to you, filled with the softest and most affecting expressions of disinterested tenderness; indiscreet from excess of affection, she adjures me to meet her one moment in the rustic temple, where she is waiting for me; her messenger is gone, and, as I will not hazard exposing her by sending my servant, I have no choice left but to go: Heaven knows how unwillingly! should we be seen, what an appearance would such a meeting have! I left Lady Julia to write letters, and on that account excus'd myself from attending her: yet can I leave her whom love alone has made imprudent, to the consequence of her indiscretion, and the wild sallies of a mind torn by disappointment and despair! I will go: but how shall I behold her! how tell her pity is all I can return to so generous a passion? These trials are too great for a heart like mine,

tender, sympathetic, compassionate; and softened by the sense of it's own sufferings: I shall expire with regret and confusion at her sight. Farewell.

H. MANDEVILLE.

To Col. BELLVILLE.

OUR party last night did not turn out so much in the still-life way as I expected—unfortunate that I am—two rivals at once—la Bellissima Julia has most certainly a penchant for Harry—'tis absurd, for the thing is impossible. In the first place I am rather afraid he has a kind of attachment to this creature, and in the second, I know Lord Belmont's sentiments on this head, and, that with all his generosity, no man breathing has a greater aversion to unequal marriages: the difference is so immense in every thing but birth and merit, that there remains not a shadow of hope for her. But these people of high  
heroics

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 105

heroics are above attending to such trifling things as possibilities—I hope I am mistaken, but the symptoms are strong upon her, as you shall judge.

I left you last night, to accompany Lady Julia to the wood we are both so fond of: the evening was lovely beyond description, and we were engaged in a very lively conversation; when, as we approached the temple, we saw Harry, who had just left us on pretence of writing letters, come out of it with the detestable Westbrook leaning familiarly on his arm, her pert eyes softened into languishment, and fixed eagerly on his: the forward creature started at seeing us, and attempted to fly, which Harry prevented, and, withdrawing his arm from hers, as if mechanically, advanc'd slowly towards us; with a look so confus'd; a mien so disorder'd, so different from that easy air which gives ten thousand graces to the finest form in the world, as convinced me

that this meeting was not accidental. Lady Julia stop'd the moment she saw them; a deep blush overspread her face, she fixed her eyes on the ground, and waited their approach silent and unmov'd as a statue. Not so the cit: the creature's assurance, and the ease with which she recovered herself and addressed Lady Julia, excited equally my astonishment and indignation. She told her she came to wait on her Ladyship, and the fineness of the evening had tempted her to leave her coach at the entrance of the wood: that as she walked thro' she happen'd to meet Mr. Mandeville, quite by chance she assured her Ladyship; as he would testify. Harry disdain'd to confirm her falsehood even by an assenting look: his silence, the coldness of his manner, with the air of dignity and spirit Lady Julia assumed, almost disconcerted her; we walk'd silently to the house, where the girl only stay'd till her coach was order'd round, and then left us; her eyes  
ask'd

ask'd Harry's attendance, but he chose not to understand their language.

This evening was the only unpleasant one I ever past at Belmont: a reserve unknown before in that seat of sincere friendship, took place of the sweet confidence which used to reign there, and to which it owes its most striking charms. We retired earlier than usual, and Lady Julia, instead of spending half an hour in my apartment, as usual, took leave of me at the door and passed on to her own.

I am extremely alarmed for her--it would have been natural to have talked over so extraordinary an adventure with me, if not too nearly interested—There was a constraint in her behaviour to Harry all the evening—an assumed coldness—his assiduity seem'd to displease her—she sigh'd often—nay once, when my eyes met hers, I observed a tear ready to start—she may

call this friendship if she pleases, but these very tender, these apprehensive, these jealous friendships, between amiable young people of different sexes, are exceedingly suspicious.

It is an hour later than her usual time of appearing, and I hear nothing of her: I am determined not to indulge this tender melancholy, and have sent up to let her know I attend her in the saloon, for I often breakfast in my own apartment, it being the way here for every body to do whatever they like.—

Indeed! a letter from Lady Julia!—a vindication?—nay then—“guilty upon my honor.”—Why imagine I suspect her?—O! Conscience! Conscience!

Her extreme fear of my supposing her in love with Harry, is a convincing proof that she is, tho' such is her amiable sincerity,

rity, that I am sure she has deceived herself before she would attempt to deceive me; but the latter is not so easy; sitters by see all the game.

She tells me, she cannot see me till she has vindicated herself from a suspicion which the weakness of her behaviour yesterday may have caused: That she is not sure she has resolution to mention the subject when present; therefore takes this way to assure me, that, tender and lively as her friendship for Mr. Mandeville is, it is only friendship; a friendship which his merit has hitherto justified, and which has been the innocent pleasure of her life; That born with too keen sensibilities (poor thing! I pity her sensibilities) the ill treatment of her friends wounds her to the soul. That zeal for his honor and the integrity of his character, which she thinks injured by the mysterious air of last night's  
adventure,

adventure, her shock at a clandestine and dissembled appointment so inconsistent with that openness which she had always admired in him, as well as with the respect due to her, now so particularly in her father's absence under his protection, had occasioned that concern which she fears may make her appear to me more weak than she is.

In short, she takes a great deal of pains to lead herself into an error; and struggles in those toils which she will find great difficulty in breaking.

Harry's valet has just told my woman his master was in bed but two hours last night: that he walked about his room till three, and rose again at five, and went out on horseback, without a servant. The poor fellow is frightened to death about him, for he is idolized by his servants,

and



Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. III

and this man has been with him from his child-hood. But adieu! I hear Lady Julia upon the stairs: I must meet her in the saloon.

Eleven o'clock.

Poor soul! I never saw any thing like her confusion when we met: she blushed, she trembled, and sunk half motionless into her chair: I made the tea, without taking the least notice of her inability to do it; and by my easy chit chat manner soon brought her to be a little composed: though her eye was often turned towards the door, though she started at every sound, yet she never asked the cause of Harry's absence, which must however surprize her, as he always breakfasts below.

Foreseeing we should be a very awkward party to day a Trio, I sent early in the morning to ask three or four very agreeable

able girls about two miles off, to come and ramble all day with us in the woods : happily for poor Lady Julia, they came in before we had done breakfast, and I left them to go and look at some shellwork, whilst I came up to finish my letter.

Harry is come back, and has sent to speak with me : I am really a person of great consequence at present. I am in a very ill humor with him ; he may well be ashamed to appear, however the worst of criminals deserves to be heard. I will admit him : he is at the door. Adieu.

A. WILMORE

To

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

WEDNESDAY, Five in the Morning;

**G**REAT heaven! what a night have I pass! all other fears give way before that of displeasing her. Yes, let me be wretched, but let her not suppose me unworthy: let her not see me in the light of a man who barter the sentiments of his soul for sordid views of avarice or ambition, and, using means proportioned to the baseness of his end, forges a falsehood to excuse his attendance on her, seduces an heiress to give him clandestine assignations, and in a place guarded, doubly guarded at this time, by the sacred and inviolable laws of hospitality, from such unworthy purposes.

I will clear my conduct, though at the hazard of exposing her whose love for me  
deserves

deserves a different treatment: let her be the victim of that indiscretion by which she has ruined me — and can I be thus base? — Can I betray the believing unsuspecting heart? — My mind is distracted — but why do I say betray? I know Lady Anne's greatness of mind, and for Lady Julia — yes, the secret will be as safe with them as in my own bosom.

Shall I own all my folly? I cannot, though she shall never know my passion for herself, support one moment the idea of Lady Julia's imagining I love another.

I will go to Lady Anne, as soon as she is up, and beg her to convince her lovely friend my meeting this Lady was accidental: I will not, if I can avoid it, say more.

I can.

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 115

I cannot see her before this explanation. I will ride out, and breakfast with some friend: I would not return till they are gone back to their apartments, that I may see Lady Anne alone.

Twelve o'clock.

Lady Anne has probed me to the quick: I have trusted her without reserve as to this affair, I have begged her to vindicate me to Lady Julia, who is walking in the garden with some ladies of the neighborhood: we are going to follow them, I am to take the ladies aside, whilst Lady Anne pleads my cause: she calls me. Farewell.

Twelve at Night.

She forgives me, and I am most happy. Lady Anne has told her all, and has had the goodness to introduce me to her as we walked, unobserved by the ladies who were

were with us. I have kissed her hand as a seal of my pardon. That moment! O Mordaunt! with what difficulty did I restrain the transport of my soul!

Yes, my friend, she forgives me, a sweet benign serenity reigns in her lovely eyes; she approves my conduct; she is pleased with the concern I show at giving pain to the heart which loves me; her cheerfulness is returned, and has restored mine; she rules every movement of my heart as she pleases: never did I pass so happy a day. I am all joy; no sad idea can enter; I have scarce room even for the tender compassion I owe to her I have made wretched. I am going to bed, but without the least expectation of sleep: joy will now have the same effect as I last night found from a contrary cause. Adieu!

H. MANDEVILLE.

To

To Col. BELLVILLE.

THURSDAY Morning.

I Have reconciled the friends: the scene was amazingly pathetic and pretty: I am only sorry I am too lazy to describe it. He kissed her hand, without her showing the least symptom of anger; she blushed indeed, but, if I understand blushes — in short, times are prodigiously changed.

The strange misses were of infinite use, as they broke the continuity of the tender scene (if I may be allowed the expression) which, however entertaining to Les Amies, would have been something sickly to my Ladyship, if it had lasted.

And now having united, it must be my next work to divide them; for seriously I am apt to believe, the dear creatures are  
in

in immense danger of a kind of partiality for each other, which would not be quite so convenient.

I have some thoughts, being naturally sentimental and generous, of taking Harry myself, meerly from compassion to Lady Julia. Widows, you know, are in some degree the property of handsome young fellows, who have more merit than fortune; and there would be something very heroic in devoting myself to save my friend. I always told you, Bellville, I was more an antique Roman than a Briton. But I must leave you: I hear Lady Julia coming to fetch me: we breakfast à Trio in a bower of roses.

O heavens! the plot begins to thicken—  
Lucretia's dagger—Rosamonda's bowl —  
Harry has had a letter from his charmer —  
vows she can't live without him — deter-  
mined to die unless the barbarous man re-  
lents.—

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 119

ents.—This cruel Harry will be the death of us all.

Did I tell you we were going to a ball to-night, six or seven miles off? She has heard it, and intends to be there: tells him she shall there expect the sentence of life or death from his lovely eyes: the signal is appointed: if his savage heart is melted, and he pities her sufferings, he is to dance with her, and be master of her divine person and eighty thousand pounds, to-morrow; if not—but she expires at the idea — she entreats him to soften the cruel stroke, and not give a mortal wound to the tenderest of hearts by dancing with another.

You would die to see Harry's distress,—so anxious for the tender creature's life, so incensed at his own wicked attractions, so perplexed how to pronounce the fatal sentence—for my part I have had the utmost  
difficulty

difficulty to keep my countenance.—Lady Julia, who was to have been his partner, fighting with him over the letter, intreating him not to dance, pitying the unhappy love-sick maid, her fine eyes glistening with a tear of tender sympathy.

The whole scene is too ridiculous to be conceived, and too foolish even to laugh at: I could stand it no longer, so retired, and left them to their soft sorrows.

You may talk of women, but you men are as much the dupes of your own vanity as the weakest amongst us can be. Heaven and earth! that, with Harry's understanding and knowledge of the world, he can be seriously alarmed at such a letter. I thought him more learned in the arts "of wilful woman laboring for her purpose." Nor is she the kind of woman; I think I know more of the nature of love, than to imagine her capable of it. If there

was

was no other lover to be had indeed,—but he is led astray by the dear self-complacency of contemplating the surprizing effects of his own charms.

I see he is shocked at my insensibility, and fancies I have a most unfeeling heart; but I may live to have my revenge. Adio! I am going to my toilet. “Now awful beauty puts on all its arms.”

Five o’Clock.

The coach is at the door: Harry is drest for execution; always elegant, he is to-day studiously so; a certain proof, to be sure, that his vanity is weaker than his compassion: he is however right; if she must die, he is to be commended for looking as well as he can, to justify a passion which is to have such fatal effects: he sees I observe his dress, and has the grace to blush a little. Adio! Caro! Votre

A. WILMOT.

To Col. BELLVILLE.

FRIDAY Morning.

**W**E are again at Belmont. But Oh, how changed! all our heroicks destroyed — poor Harry! I can't look at him without laughing.

Our journey thither was pensive, our conversation sentimental; we entered the ball-room trembling with apprehension; where the first object which struck our eyes was the tender, lovesick, dying maid, listening with the most eager attention to Fondville, who was at the very moment kissing her hand; her whole soul in her eyes, her heart fluttering with a pleasure which she could not conceal, and every feature on the full stretch of coquetry.

An involuntary frown clouded the lovely countenance of my Harry, which was not lessened

lessened by his observing a malicious smile on mine: he advanced however towards her, when she, not doubting his design was to ask her to dance, told him, in a faltering voice, with a mixed air of triumph and irresolution, her eyes fixed on her fan, that she was engaged to Lord Fondville.

Harry was thunderstruck: a glow of indignation flushed his cheek, and he left her without deigning to make her any reply; which I observing, and fearing she might misinterpret his silence, and that the idea of his supposed disappointment might flatter the creature's vanity, took care to explain to her that he was engaged to Lady Julia before we came; a piece of information which made her feel to the quick, even through the pleasure of dancing with a Lord; a pleasure which has inconceivable charms for a citizen's daughter, and which love itself, or what she pleases

to call love, could not enable her to resist.

The attention of all the company was now turned on Harry and Lady Julia, who were dancing a minuet: the beauty of their persons, the easy dignity of their air, the vivid bloom of their cheeks, the spirit which shone in their eyes; the inimitable graces of their movement, which received a thousand additional charms from (what I hope no one observed but myself) their desire of pleasing each other, gave me an idea of perfection in dancing, which never before entered my imagination: all was still as night; not a voice, not a motion, through the whole assembly. The spectators seemed afraid even to breathe, lest their attention should be one moment suspended: Envy herself seemed dead, or to confine her influence to the bosom of Miss Westbrook. The minuet ended, a murmur of applause ran through the room, which,

which, by calling up her blushes, gave a thousand new charms to Lady Julia, which I observed to the cit, adding also aloud that it was impossible any body should think of dancing minuets after them; in which sentiment every body concurring, we began country dances. Harry never looked so lovely; his beauty, and the praises lavished on him, having awakened a spark of that flame, which her ambition had stifled for a moment, the girl endeavor'd, at the beginning of the evening, to attract his notice, but in vain: I had the pleasure to see him neglect all her little arts, and treat her with an air of unaffected indifference, which I knew must cut her to the soul. She then endeavoured to pique him by the most flaming advances to Fondville, which, knowing your capricious sex as I do, rather alarmed me; I therefore determined to destroy the effect of her arts by playing off, in opposition, a more refined species of coquetry, which

turned all Fondville's attention on myself, and saved Harry from the snare she was laying for him, a snare of all others the hardest to escape.

When I saw I had by the most delicate flattery chained Fondville to my carr for the night, and by playing off a few quality airs inspired him with the strongest contempt for his city partner, I threw myself into a chair; where, affecting an excess of languor and fatigue, and wondering at the amazing constitutions of the country ladies, I declared my intention of dancing no more.

Sir Charles Mellifont, who danced with me, sat down on one side, and Fondville on the other, pouring forth a rhapsody of tender nonsense, vowing all other women were only foils to me, envying Sir Charles's happiness, and kissing my hand with an affection of transport, which pleased me,

as I saw it mortified the- cit, who sat swelling with spite in a window near us, in a situation of mind which I could almost have pitied.

I sat a full hour, receiving the homage of both my adorers, my head reclined, and my whole person in an attitude of the most graceful negligence and inattention; when, observing the Cittadina ready to faint with envy and indignation, turning my eye carelessly on her, O, Heavens! Fondville, said I, you are an inhuman creature; you have absolutely forgot your partner: then, starting with Sir Charles, rejoined the dance with an air of easy impertinence, which she could not stand, but burst into tears, and withdrew.

You must know this affair was all of my contriving; I was determined to try the reality of the girl's passion, to quiet Harry's conscience as to cruelty of reject-

ing her suit, and remove those apprehensions for her life, which seemed so infinitely to distress him.

Full of these ideas, I wrote by one of my servants to Fondville, immediately after Harry communicated to us the Cittadina's tragedy-letter, commanding him to be at this ball, dressed for conquest, to enquire out Miss Westbrook, whom he had never seen, to pretend a sudden and violent passion for her, and to entreat the honor of being her partner: that it was a whim I had taken into my head; that I would explain my reasons another time, but insisted on his implicit obedience.

“He came, he saw, he conquered,” as I imagined he would: I knew her rage for title, tinsel, and “people of a certain rank,” and that Fondville was exactly calculated for the meridian of her taste, understanding and education. The over-  
charged

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charged splendor of his dress and equipage must have infinite advantages, with one who had so long breathed city air, over the genuine elegance of Harry Mandeville's; nor was it possible in the nature of things for the daughter of an exchange-broker to prefer even personal perfection to the dazzling blaze of a coronet; Harry's charms gave way before the flattering idea of a title, and the gentle God resigned his place to the greater power, Ambition.

Things to be sure have taken rather a disagreeable turn; but she must thank her own inconstancy, and be content for the future with making love to one man at a time.

I have only one more scene of mortification in view for her, and my malice will be satisfied; I would invite her to a ball at Belmont, let Harry dance with

Lady Julia, take Fondville myself, and pair her with the most disagreeable fellow in the room.

You have no notion how Harry's vanity is hurt, though he strives all he can to hide it; piqued to death; just like one of us, who are pleased with the love, though we dislike the lover: he begins to think it possible she may survive his cruelty.

Lady Julia is all astonishment, had no idea of such levity — the amiable ignorant — how little she knows us — the character of half the sex. Adio! I am going with Lady Julia, to pay some morning visits in the environs.

Three o'Clock.

Till this morning I had no notion how much Lord and Lady Belmont were beloved, or, to speak with more propriety,  
adored

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adored in their neighborhood: the eager enquiries of the good ladies after their return, their warm expressions of esteem and veneration, are what you can scarce conceive: the swell of affection, which their presence restrained, now breaks forth with redoubled impetuosity.

There are really a great many agreeable people hereabouts: Belmont is the court of this part of the world, and employs its influence, as every court ought to do, in bringing virtue, politeness, and elegant knowledge into fashion. How forcible, how irresistible are such examples in superior life! who can know Lord and Lady Belmont, without endeavoring to imitate them? and who can imitate them without becoming all that is amiable and praise-worthy?

Do you know, Bellville, I begin extremely to dislike myself? I have good  
G 6 qualities,

qualities, and a benevolent heart, but have exerted the former so irregularly, and taken so little pains to rule and direct the virtuous impulses of the latter, that they have hitherto answered very little purpose either to myself or others. I feel I am a comet, shining, but useless, or perhaps destructive, whilst Lady Belmont is a benignant star.

But, for heaven's sake, how came the spirit of reflexion to seize me? There is something in this air. — O Cielo! una Carrozza! — my dear Lord Belmont. I fly — Adio!

To

June 23<sup>d</sup>

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

**T**HEY are come; the impatient villagers crowd the hall, eager to behold them, transport in every eye, whilst the noble pair scarce retain the tender tear of glowing benevolence. How lovely a picture was the audience they come from giving! how sweet the intercourse of warm beneficence and ardent gratitude! my heart melted at the sight. This evening is devoted to joy — I alone — O Mordaunt! have I known this paradise only to be driven for ever from it?

I cannot to-night mention leaving Belmont; to-morrow I will propose it; I am in doubt where to go; my father is absent from camp on a visit of a fortnight to the Duke of ———, his Colonel. I  
have

have some thoughts of going to Lord T——'s, till his return: perhaps I may come to town; all places but this are equal to me yet: I must leave it; I am every moment more sensible of my danger: yes, Mordaunt, I love her, I can no longer deceive myself; I love her with the fondest passion; friendship is too cold a name for what I feel, too cold for charms like hers to inspire: yet, heaven is my witness, I am incapable of a wish to her disadvantage; her happiness is my first, my only object— I know not what I would say, — why does fortune for ever oppose the tender union of hearts? Farewel!

H. MANDEVILLE.

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 135

To Col. BELLVILLE.

SATURDAY.

**M**Y Lord has brought us a thousand presents, a thousand books, a thousand trinkets, all in so exquisite a taste— He is the sweetest man in the world certainly— Such delight in obliging— 'Tis happy for you he is not thirty years younger and disengaged; I should infallibly have a passion — He has brought Harry the divinest horse; we have been seeing him ride, “ spring from the ground like feather'd Mercury ”— you can have no conception how handsome he looks on horseback — poor Lady Julia's little innocent heart— I can't say I was absolutely insensible myself— you know I am infinitely fond of beauty, and vastly above dissembling it: indeed it seems immensely absurd that one is allowed to be charm'd with living perfection in every species but our own, and  
that

that there one must admire only dead colours: one may talk in raptures of a lifeless Adonis, and not of a breathing Harry Mandeville. Is not this a despicable kind of prudery? For my part, I think nature's coloring vastly preferable to the noblest attempts of art, and am not the less sensible to the graces of a fine form because it is animated. Adieu! we are going to dine at the hermitage; Lord Belmont is to be my Cecisbeo.

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TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

**H**OW inconsistent is the human mind! I cannot leave Belmont, I cannot give up the delight of beholding her: I fancy a softness in her manner which raises the most flattering ideas; she blushes when her eyes meet mine—Tho' I see the madness of hope, I indulge it in spite of myself. No one can deserve her; yet, as Lord Belmont

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Belmont honors me with his esteem, I would persuade myself fortune alone forbids—I will struggle with impossibilities; I have many and powerful friends; we have a Prince in the early prime of life, the season of generous virtue; a Prince to whom the patriot glow, and that disinterested loyalty, which is almost my whole inheritance, cannot but be the strongest recommendations; to him it may be merit to have suffered, when the basest of the people rose on the ruins of their country. Those ample possessions, which would have descended to me, and might have raised my hopes to the most angelic of woman-kind, were gloriously spent in endeavouring to support the throne, when shook by the rage of faction and narrow-minded bigoted enthusiasm; the younger branch of our family escaped the storm by having a minor at it's head: to this accident, the partiality of an ancestor, and the military talents of his father, lord Belmont owes  
the

the affluence he so nobly enjoys, and which I only, of all mankind, have cause to regret.

These circumstances raise a flattering hope — my views are confus'd, but I will pursue the track. If I succeed, I may openly avow my passion; if not, the secret of my love shall die with me: never, my friend, will I attempt her heart by unworthy means: let me endeavour to deserve, and leave to heaven to determine whether I shall possess the noblest gift it has to bestow. Farewel.

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

August 1st.

**I** Have heard from my father on the subject of Lady Mary's intended settlement, who extremely disapproves my intention of entirely declining it, which he thinks cannot be founded on any motives worthy.

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worthy of me, but on a false pride of disdain-  
ing to be obliged, which is in this case  
unjust, and greatly below my character:  
that I might as well object to receiving a  
part of his estate, which he intends to set-  
tle on me at the same time: he says Lord  
Belmont acts properly, and consistently  
with himself, and does not at all mean to  
break in on that independence which can  
never be too highly valued: that Lady  
Julia would scarce perceive such an addi-  
tion to her already splendid fortune, whilst  
this settlement fixes in some degree of af-  
fluence the elder branch of the family,  
which lost its superiority, by the injustice  
of an ancestor, and that heroic loyalty which  
has ever characterized our house. That  
he will talk further with me on this subject  
when we meet, but in the mean time ad-  
vises me, as a friend zealous for my inte-  
rest, yet not the less attentive to my ho-  
nor, and the propriety of my conduct, to  
accept the immediate settlement of 500 l.  
a year,

a year, which will enable me to be serviceable to my country; but to postpone to some distant time settling the whole, and to insist that Lady Mary be convinced I deserve her friendship before she lavishes it so profusely on me.

This advice gives me pleasure, as it coincides with my own present sentiments: eager to pursue my scheme of rising to such consequence as may justify my hopes of the only event desirable to me in this world, I am happy in the thought of appearing in every light in which I can attract the notice of my Prince; and, by steadily serving him and my country, whose true interest must ever be the same, deserve that favor on which all my designs are founded.

The time not being yet arrived when I can serve the noblest cause in the senate, I will go to Germany, and endeavour first to signalize myself in the manner most suited

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to my period of life, the season of action, not of counsel: it is shameful, at my age, to recline in the flowery bower of indolence, when the whole world is in arms; I have not yet begun to live; my time has hitherto been less pass'd in acting, than in preparing to act, my part on the great theatre of human life.

Oh, Mordaunt! should I succeed in my views! should the hour come when I may openly avow my passion for the most lovely of womankind! this is the sweet hope which fires my soul, and animates me to the glorious pursuit. Why do closeted moralists, strangers to the human heart, rail indiscriminately at love? when inspired by a worthy object, it leads to every thing that is great and noble; warmed by the desire of being approved by her, there is nothing I would not attempt. I will to-day write to my father for his consent,

sent, and embark immediately for the army.

I have just received your letter : you call my design madness, the light in which every animated purpose will appear to minds inactive, unimpassioned, and sunk in the lethargic calm of lifeless tranquillity.—Mordaunt, you speak the cold language of a heart at rest : talk not of impossibilities ; nothing is impossible to a soul impelled by the most lively of all passions, and ardent in a pursuit on which its whole happiness depends ; nothing is impossible to him who aspires to please the most lovely, the most amiable, the most exalted of her sex.

I feel, I know I shall be successful. I ask not advice, but declare my settled purpose : I am already determined, and, if your friendship be warm as mine, you will not torture me by further opposition. My father alone has power to change my resolution,

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tion, but it is a power he will not exert : I shall ask his permission, but inform him at the same time, that, by refusing, he cuts off all the hope of my future days, and chains me down to a life of tasteless insensibility.

I know him well ; he will advise, he will remonstrate, if he disapproves ; but he will leave me that freedom of choice which is the inherent right of every rational being, and which he never, in one instance, invaded, when I was much less capable of judging for myself.

Fearful however lest he should disapprove my passion for Lady Julia, I shall not declare it to him at present ; but, as I never will even tacitly deceive him, I shall tell him I have a motive to this design, which I beg his leave to conceal from him till I have a prospect of success.

I this

I this morning mentioned leaving Belmont, but my Lord insists on my staying a few days longer, which are devoted to domestic happiness. I cannot refuse without making him suspect some latent cause; nor will it make any difference in my plan, since I must wait somewhere an answer from my father, which will reach Belmont about the time I shall now leave it. Tomorrow se'n-night expect me in town: I shall stay but two nights: I need little preparation: my equipage and attendance are already greatly beyond my fortune, and rather suited to what you call the madness of my expectations: my father, the most generous of mankind, has always proportioned my expences more to my birth than his moderate income: as my companions have ever been of the first rank, he has supported me greatly above myself, and on a full equality with them, lest I should be dazzled to mean compliances with their faults, by the false splendor they

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they might receive from a superiority in these outward distinctions.

Did I tell you Lord Belmont had presented me with a beautiful Arabian horse, which he bought when in town? What delight has he in giving pleasure to others! What addition, if that can admit addition, to the happiness of the man who is blest with Lady Julia, will it be to be so nearly allied to worth like Lord Belmont's!

O Mordaunt! were it possible!—it is, it must—I will not give room to the faintest idea of disappointment.

Adieu! I have this moment a letter from my father, which I must answer to-night.

H. MANDEVILLE.

Vol. I.

H

To

TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, Esq;

Roseberry-House.

TUESDAY.

**I**T gives me the warmest pleasure, my dear son, to find you are pleased with the expensive education I have given you, though it reduces your fortune considerably below what it might otherwise have been : I considered that wealth, if necessary to happiness, which I do not believe, might be acquired ; but that the flying hours of youth, the season of instruction, are never to be recalled.

I have the happiness to see you reward and justify my cares by a generous freedom of thinking, and nobleness of sentiment, which the common methods of education might have cramped, or perhaps totally destroyed. It has always appeared to me, that  
our

our understandings are fettered by systems, and our hearts corrupted by example: and that there needs no more to minds well disposed than to recover their native freedom, and think and act from themselves. Full of this idea, I have instructed you how, but never what to think; I have pointed out the road which leads to truth, but have left you to discover her abode by your own strength of mind: even on the most important of all subjects, I have said no more, than that conviction must be on the side of that religion, which teaches the purest and most benevolent morality, is most conducive to the general happiness of mankind, and gives the most sublime idea of the Deity.

Convinced that the seeds of virtue are innate, I have only watched to cherish the rising shoots, and prune, but with a trembling hand, the too luxuriant branches.

By virtue I would here be understood to mean; not a partial attention to any one duty of life, but that rectitude of heart, which leads us to fulfil all, as far as the frailty of human nature will permit, and which is a constant monitor of our faults. Confucius has well observed, that virtue does not consist in never erring, which is impossible, but in recovering as fast as we can from our errors.

With what joy, my dearest Harry, did I early see in you that warmth of temper, which is alone productive of every extraordinary exertion of the human mind, the proper soil of genius and the virtues; that heat from which light is inseparable!

I have only one fear for you; inured to a habit of profuse expence, I dread your being unable to practice that frugality, which will now be indispensable. To lady Mary's intended settlement, I will add a

third

third of my estate, but even that is below your birth, and the manner of life to which you are habituated. But why do I doubt you! I know your generosity of spirit, and scorn of every species of slavery; that you will not descend to be indebted, to withhold a moment the price of laborious industry, or lessen the honest profit of the trader, by a delay yet more destructive to yourself than to him.

Intended to become a part of the legislative power, you are doubly bound to keep yourself from all temptations of corruption or dependence, by living within your income; the amplest estate is wretched penury, if exceeded by the expences of its possessor.

Need I say more to recommend œconomy to a spirit like yours, than that it is the fountain of liberality, and the parent of independence?

You enquire after the place where I am: it is, except Belmont, the sweetest spot I

ever beheld, but in a different style: the situation is rather beautiful than magnificent. There is a mild elegance, a refined simplicity in the air all around, strongly expressive of the mind of its amiable possessor; a poetic wildness, a luxuriant glow, like that of primeval nature, adorned by the hand of the Graces.

The same spirit of liberty breathes here as with you: we are all perfectly at home; our time is subject to no restraint but that which our desire of obliging each other makes a voluntary imposition.

I am now alone, sitting in an arbour, attentive to the lively chant of the birds, who swell their little throats with a morning hymn of gratitude to their Creator: whilst I listen, I think of those sweet lines of Cowley:

“ All round the little winged choir,

“ Pathetic tender thoughts inspire:

“ With

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“ With ease the inspiration I obey,  
“ And sing as unconcern’d and as well  
“ pleas’d as they.”

’Tis yet early day: the flocks and herds  
are spreading over the distant meadows,  
and joining the universal song of praise to  
the beneficent Lord of nature.

Rejoicing in the general joy, I adore the  
God who has expanded so wide the circle  
of happiness, and endeavour to regulate  
my own desires by attending to the simpli-  
city of theirs.

When I see the dumb creation, my dear  
Harry, pursuing steadily the purposes of  
their being, their own private happiness,  
and the good of their peculiar species, I am  
astonished at the folly and degeneracy of  
man, who acts in general so directly con-  
trary to both; for both are invariably united.

The wise and benevolent Creator has  
placed the supreme felicity of every indi-  
vidual

vidual in those kind domestic social affections, which tend to the well-being of the whole. Whoever presumes to deviate from this plan, the plan of God and nature, shall find satiety, regret or disappointment his reward.

I this moment receive your letter : you judge perfectly well in saying, there is an activity and restlessness in the mind of man, which makes it impossible for him to be happy in a state of absolute inaction : some point of view, some favourite pursuit is necessary to keep the mind awake. 'Tis on this principle alone one can account for what seems so extraordinary to the eyes of impartial reason, that avarice and ambition should be the vices of age, that men should most ardently pursue riches and honours at the time when they have the least prospect of enjoying them ; the lively passions of youth subsiding, some active principle must be found to replace them ; and where that warm benevolence of heart is wanting,  
which

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which is a perpetual source of ever-new delight, I do not wonder they engage in the chace of wealth and power, though sure so soon to melt from their grasp.

The first purpose of my heart, next to that superior and general one of making myself acceptable to my Creator, was to render the most angelic of women, your lovely mother, happy; in that, heaven was pleased to disappoint my hopes, by taking her to itself. My second has been to make you the most amiable of men; in which, I am not afraid to say to yourself, I have been successful, beyond my most sanguine wishes.

Adieu, my dear son! may you succeed in every purpose of your soul as fully as I have done in this, and be as happy as your virtues have made your father!

I am, &c.

J. MANDEVILLE.

H 5

To

To Col. BELLVILLE.

**O** Heavens! Bellville! Nay, there is absolutely no resisting a man that carries one off. Since you have mentioned the thing, I shall not abate you a scruple. There is no saying how charming it will be: let common beauties inspire whining, submissive, respectful passions; but let me — heaven! earth! to be run away with at four-and-twenty — a paragraph in the papers. — “Yesterday the celebrated lady Anne Wilmot was forcibly carried off by a gentleman who had long in vain deprecated her pity: if any thing can excuse so atrocious an action, the unrivalled beauty of the lady” — Dear Bellville! when do you begin your adventure?

But, in sober sadness, how come you so flippant on the sudden? Thus it is with  
you

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you all ; use you ill, and not a spaniel can be more under command : but the least encouragement quite ruins you. There is no saying a civil thing, but you presume upon one's favour so intolerably.—

Why, yes, as you say, the hours past pleasantly enough at Sudley farm. Pretty rural scenes, tender Platonic chat, perfect confidence, the harmony of souls in unison; infinite flattery on your side, and implicit belief on mine : the sprightly god of love gave wings to the rapid hours. The gentle Muses too.—I think, Bellville, you are a pretty enough poet for a man of fashion ; flowery, mild, not overburdened with ideas.

“ O, can you forget the fond hours,  
“ When all by yon fountain we stray'd.”

I wish I could remember the rest ; but you are a cruel creature, never will leave me a

copy of any thing, dreading the severity of my criticism: nay, you are right; yours are excellent verses, as Moliere says, to lock up in your bureau.

Nine at Night.

Peace to the gentle spirit of him who invented cards! the very bond of peace, and cement of society.

After a philosophical enquiry into the *summum bonum*, I find it to consist in play: the more sublime pleasures require relaxation, are only for holyday wear, come but now and then, and keep the mind too much expanded: all other delights, all other amusements, pall; but play, dear, divine, seraphic play, is always new, the same to-day, to-morrow, and for ever.

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 157

It reconciles parties, removes distinctions, and restores what my lord calls the natural equality of mankind.

I have only one fault to find with it; that for the time it extremely weakens, or rather totally suspends, the impressions of beauty: the finest woman in the world, whilst at the card-table, is regarded by the most susceptible man only as a being which is to lose its money.

You will imagine success produced these wise reflexions: yes, we have been playing a most engaging pool at quadrille in the wood, where I have with the utmost composure won an immensity. If I go on thus, all objections to our union will be removed: I shall be literally a fortune in myself.

Without vanity, I have some little skill in the game; but, at present, there is no  
great

great degree of merit in winning of the friends, who happened to be of my party, with an absurd conceited squire, who loves quality, and thinks it the greatest honor in the world that I will condescend to win his money. We had four tables under the shade of a spreading oak.

I can no more. —

Adieu!

A. WILMOT.

We have had a penitential letter from the Cittadina, with another from Papa, offering 30,000*l.* at present, and 50,000*l.* at his death, on condition lord Belmont will get Harry an Irish title: knows its a bad match, but won't baulk his girl's fancy; and besides, considers Harry has good blood in his veins: we rejected it politely, but with a little of the Mandeville stateliness.

O Heavens! Fondville's valet—A billet-doux.—I shall be cruel, — This murderous form—

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 159

form — I must absolutely hide myself, or wear a mask, in pity to mankind. — My Lord has taken the letter — He brings it me — He is on the stairs—How! gone on to lady Belmont's apartment! — A biller, and not to me!—What can it mean?—Can the dear man be false?

The infidel! Yes, he has left me—forgot his vows. — This bewitching lady Julia; it is really an heroic exertion of virtue not to hate her. Could you have thought it possible—but read his cruel letter.

To

To the Earl of BELMONT.

My LORD,

**Y**OUR Lordship will be perhaps surprized—Yet why surprized? Lady Julia is absolutely an immense fine creature: and though marriage, to those who know life, cannot but seem an impertinent affair, and what will subject me to infinite ridicule; yet custom, and what one owes to one's rank, and keeping up a family!—

In short, my Lord, people of a certain consequence being above those romantic views which pair the vulgar, I chose rather to apply to your Lordship than the Lady, and flatter myself my estate will bear the strictest inspection: not but that, I assure your Lordship, I set a due value on Lady Julia's charms; and, though I have visited every court in Europe, and  
seen

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 161

seen all that is lovely in the Beau sexe,  
never yet beheld the fair whom I would  
so soon wish to see fill the rank of Lady  
Viscountess Fondville as her Ladyship.

If my pretensions are so happy as to be  
favorably received by your Lordship, I  
will beg leave to wait on Lady Julia to-  
morrow, and my lawyer shall attend your  
Lordship's wherever and whenever you  
please to appoint. Believe me, my Lord,  
with the most perfect devotion,

Your Lordship's  
most Obedient and  
very Humble Servant,  
Fondville.

To

To Lord Viscount FONDVILLE.

My Lord,

I Am the last man in the world to whom it was necessary to apologize for an intention of entering into a state which, I have experienced, is productive of such exquisite felicity.

My daughter's choice is perfectly free; nor shall I ever do more than advise her, in an affair of such consequence to herself; but, from what I know of her character, think it highly improbable she should approve the pretensions of a man, who professes being above those tender affections which alone can make happy sensibility like hers.

Allow me to take the liberty of observing, in answer to the latter part of your  
Lordship's

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 163

Lordship's letter, that there are few ranks which Lady Julia Mandeville has not a right to fill. I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's

most Obedient and

devoted Servant,

BELMONT.

Don't come to Belmont, I charge you ; I shall have this invincible Lady Julia seduce you too. Besides, I have some reasons why I chuse our attachment should not yet come to a crisis ; till when, I will take Lady Belmont's advice and be prudent : obey in silence ; let me have no more sighs till the milder influence of the heavens dispose me to be gracious. I am always in good humor in Autumn ; your fate my possibly be determined in little more than a month : ask no questions : suspend

suspend your passion, or at least the outward expression of it, and write to me in Amico. Adieu!

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TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

**I** Have been riding alone with Lord Belmont this morning, a pleasure I very often enjoy, and on which I set infinite value: in those hours of perfect confidence, I am certain of being instructed and amused, by a train of ideas uncommon, enlarged, noble, benevolent; and adapted to inspire me with a love of virtue, by showing her in her native charms: I shall be all my life the wiser and worthier man, for the hours I have passed at Belmont.

But,

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 165

But, O Mordaunt! shall I be the happiest? That is in the bosom of futurity: a thousand times have I been tempted, in these hours of indulgent friendship, to open all my heart to Lord Belmont.

I know his contempt of wealth, and how little he thinks it conducive to happiness. "Heaven," said he to me this very morning, "has blest me with affluence: I am thankful, and endeavor to deserve, by applying an ample portion of it to the purposes of beneficence. But for myself, my pleasures are of so unexpensive and simple a kind, that a diminution of fortune would take very little from my private felicity: Health, content, the sweets of social and domestic life, the only enjoyments suited to the nature of man, are and ought to be within the reach of all the species: yes, my dear Mr. Mandeville; it gives a double relish to all my pleasures,

to

to reflect that they are such as every man may enjoy if he will."

Can this man, my dear Mordaunt, sacrifice the real happiness of his child, the calm delight of domestic friendship on which he sets such value himself, to the gaudy trappings of tasteless grandeur? Did she approve my passion, I should hope every thing from the most indulgent of fathers.

He has refused Lord Fondville for Lady Julia, whose fortune is as large as avarice itself could desire: Good heaven, that such a man, without one other recommendation, without a soul to taste even the charms of her person, can aspire to all that can be imagined of perfection!

Adieu!

H. MANDEVILLE.

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 167

To Col. BELLVILLE.

THURSDAY Afternoon.

O Ciel! I faint! what a world do we live in! How many unavoidable enemies to enjoyment! It is sometimes too cold, sometimes too hot to be happy! One is never pleased a week together. I shall absolutely grow a snarling philosopher, and find fault with every thing.

These unconscionable lovers have dragged me cross an open meadow, exposed to the sun's burning rays — no mercy on my complexion — Lady Julia sure, for her own sake, — yet she is laughing at my distress. I am too languid to say more. — Oh! for a cooling breeze!

“ The whispering zephyr, and the purl-  
“ ing rill.”

We

We are going to have an addition to our group of friends: Emily Howard, daughter to the late dean of —, a distant relation, and rector of the parish, being expected to-morrow at Belmont: she is Lady Julia's friend in the most emphatical sense of the word. Do you know, I feel extremely inclined to be jealous of her; and am angry with myself for such meanness?

A. WILMOT.

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TUESDAY 3d.

To Col. BELLVILLE.

**S**HE is come, this redoubtable Emily Howard; and, I find I have only a second place in Lady Julia's friendship: I would hate her if I could, but it is really impossible: she is so gentle, she steals ones affection imperceptibly, and one has the vexation

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 169

vexation to be forced to love her in spite of ones self.

She has been here three days, and in that short time she has gained amazingly upon my heart: her person is little, finely proportioned, and delicate almost to fragility; her voice and manner soft and timid: her countenance a mixture of innocence and sweetness which would disarm the rage of a tyger: her heart is tender, kind, compassionate; and tremblingly awake to friendship, of which she is universally the object: Lady Julia doats on her, nor am I surprized at it: she appears so weak, so helpless, so exquisitely feminine, it seems cruelty not to be her friend: no one ever saw her without wishing her happiness: the love one has for her seems of a peculiar species, or most nearly resembles that instinctive fondness one feels for a beautiful child: it is independent of esteem, for one loves her before one knows her. It is the

pleasantest kind of affection that can be conceived.

Yet, though she is extremely handsome, or rather, to suit the expression to her form, extremely pretty, she is very little the taste of men; her excessive modesty renders both her beauty and understanding in some degree useless to her; "not obvious, not obtrusive," she escapes the observation of common eyes; and though infinitely lovely, I never heard she was beloved.

For this very reason, the women do her ample justice; she is no woman's rival, stands in nobody's way, which cannot fail of exciting a general good will towards her, in her own sex; they even allow her more beauty than she really has, and take a delight in setting her charms in opposition to every impertinent thing the men are fond of. "Yes, the girl is very well,  
" but

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 171

“but nothing to Emily Howard,” is the common cry on the appearance of a new beauty.

There is another strong reason for loving her; tho' exact in her own conduct, she has an indulgence to that of others, which is a consequence of her excessive gentleness of temper, and her seeing every action on the favourable side: one could own one's greatest weakness to her almost without blushing, and at this very moment I dare say Lady Julia is confessing to her her passion for Harry Mandeville, who is riding out with my Lord. I dare say she would find an excuse for my indiscretion in regard to you, and see only the delicacy of our friendship.

She sings and dances angelically, but she blushes to death if you tell her so.

Such gentle unassuming characters as these, make the most agreeable friends in the world; they are the mild green of the soul, on which it rests itself from more glaring objects: one may be absurd, one may be vain, one may be imprudent, secure of being heard with indulgence: I know nothing which would make her more what I mean but her being a fool: however the indulgent sweetness of her temper answers almost the same purpose.

I am disconsolate that the Caro Enrico is going to desert us; but the cruel man is inflexible to all my soft persuasions, and determined to leave us on Wednesday.

Adieu!

The sweet Emily is going on Thursday for ten days to Sir George Martin's, and then returns to finish the summer here.

O, do

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 173,

O, do you know that I am credibly informed, her favorite Suivante having told it to one, who told it to another, who told it to a good old gossiping lady, who told it to me, that the Cittadina, who has in vain wrote Harry a penitential letter, is playing off the same arts, the same dying airs, to Pondville, which had such extreme ill success with him; the siege is at present suspended, not by his addressing Lady Julia, which is a profound secret to her and every body without these walls, but by his mother's death, which has called him hastily to town; and which, by the way, adds 2000*l.* a year to his income. Do you know, that I think the thing may do, if Lady Julia continues cruel; they are absolutely formed for each other, and it would be a thousand pities to part them.

Ever yours,

A. WILMOT.

To Col. BELLVILLE.

August 6.

**C**ERTAINLY next to a new lover the pleafantest thing upon earth is a new friend: let antediluvians take seven years to fix, but for us insects of an hour, nothing can be more absurd: by the time one has try'd them on these maxims, ones taste for them is worn out. I have made a thousand friendships at first sight, and sometimes broke them at the second: there is a certain exertion of soul, a lively desire of pleasing, which gives a kind of volatile spirit to a beginning acquaintance, which is extremely apt to evaporate. Some people make a great merit of constancy, and it is to be sure a very laudable virtue; but for my part, I am above dissembling: My friendships wear out like my clothes, but often much faster.

Not

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Not that this is the case in regard to Emily Howard; no, really, I think this Pen. hint is very likely to be lasting; may probably hold out the summer.

To-morrow, when Harry leaves us, my Lord, to divert our chagrin, takes us, with three strange belles, and five most engaging beaux, a ramble I cannot tell whither.

Saturday Morning,

O heavens! one of our male animals has disappointed us. Absolutely I shall insist on Harry's attendance; he shall defer his journey, I am resolved: there is no supporting a scarcity of beaux.

He goes with us; Lady Julia's eyes have prevailed; she had seduced him before I went down: his chaise is ordered back to wait for ours.

Adio, Carissimo,

To

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

Saturday Night.

I AM still here; when shall I have strength of mind to go? not having heard from my father in the time I expected, I was determined to go to Lord T—'s, whose zeal for my interest, and great knowledge of mankind, makes him the properest person I can consult. My chaise was this morning at the door, when my Lord told me, Lady Julia intreated my stay a few days longer: she blush'd, and with the loveliest confusion confirm'd my Lord's assertion: all my resolution vanished in a moment; there is enchantment in her look, her voice — enchantment which it is not in man to resist.

Sunday

Sunday Morning.

I am every hour more unhappy : Lord Fondville's proposal gives me infinite uneasiness ; not that I fear such a rival ; but it has raised the idea of other pretensions, which may be accepted before it is time for me to avow my designs : I have pass'd this night in forming schemes to prevent so fatal a blow to all my hopes ; and am determined to own my passion to the lovely object of it, and entreat her, if no other man is so happy as to possess her heart, to wait one year the result of those views which that love which has inspired may perhaps prosper.

Not certain I shall have courage to own my tenderness in her presence, I will write, and seize some favourable opportunity to give her the letter on which all my happiness depends : I will ask no answer

I 5

but

but from her eyes. How shall I meet them after so daring an attempt?

We are going to the parish church; the coach is at the door: Adieu! she comes! What graces play around that form! What divinity in those eyes! O Mordaunt, what task will be difficult to him who has such a reward in view!

TO COL. BELLVILLE.

Sunday Evening.

**O**UR ramble yesterday was infinitely agreeable; there is something very charming in changing the scene; my Lord understands the art of making life pleasurable by making it various.

We have been to the parish church, to hear Dr. H. preach; he has that spirit in  
his

his manner without which the most sensible sermon has very little effect on the hearers. The organ, which my Lord gave, is excellent. You know I think musick an essential part of public worship, used as such by the wisest nations, and commanded by God himself to the Jews; it has indeed so admirable an effect in disposing the mind to devotion, that I think it should never be omitted.

Our Sundays here are extremely pleasant: we have, after evening service, a moving rural picture from the windows of the saloon, in the villagers, for whose amusement the gardens are that day thrown open.

Our rustic Mall is full from five till eight, and there is an inexpressible pleasure in contemplating so many groups of neat, healthy, happy-looking people, enjoying the diversion of walking in these lovely  
I 6 shades,

shades, by the kindness of their beneficent Lord, who not only provides for their wants, but their pleasures.

My Lord is of opinion that Sunday was intended as a day of rejoicing not of mortification; and meant not only to render our praises to our benevolent Creator, but to give rest and chearful relaxation to the industrious part of mankind, from the labors of the week.

On this principle, tho' he will never suffer the least breach of the laws in being, he wishes the severity of them softened, by allowing some innocent amusements after the duties of the day are past: he thinks this would prevent those fumes of enthusiasm which have had here such fatal effects, and could not be offensive to that gracious Power who delights in the happiness of his creatures, and who, by the royal poet, has commanded them to praise him in the cymbals and dances.

For

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 181

For my own part, having seen the good effect of this liberty in catholic countries, I cannot help wishing, though a zealous protestant, that we were to imitate them in this particular.

It is worth observing, that the book of sports was put forth by the pious, the religious, the sober Charles the 1st, and the law for the more strict observation of Sunday passed in the reign of the libertine Charles the 2d.

Love of pleasure is natural to the human heart, and the best preservative against criminal ones, is a proper indulgence in such as are innocent.

These are my sentiments, and I am happy in finding Lord Belmont of the same opinion. Adio!

A. WILMOT.

To

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

Monday.

**M**ORDAUNT, the die is cast, and the whole happiness of my life hangs on the present moment. After having kept the letter confessing my passion two days without having resolution to deliver it, this morning in the garden, being a moment alone with Lady Julia in a summer-house, the company at some distance, I assumed courage to lay it on a table whilst she was looking out at a window which had a prospect that engag'd all her attention: when I laid it down, I trembled, a chillness seized my whole frame, my heart dy'd within me; I withdrew instantly, without even staying to see if she took it up: I waited at a little distance hid in a close arbour of woodbines, my heart throbbing with apprehension, and,  
by

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by the time she staid in the summer-house, had no doubt of her having seen the letter. When she appeared I was still more convinced; she came out with a timid air, and looked round as if fearful of surprize: the lively crimson flushed her cheek, and was succeeded by a dying paleness; I attempted to follow, but had not courage to approach her. I suffered her to pass the arbor where I was, and advance slowly towards the house: when she was out of sight I went back to the summer-house, and found the letter was gone. I have not seen her. I am called to dinner: my limbs will scarce support me: how shall I bear the first sight of Lady Julia! how be able to meet her eyes!

I have seen her, but my fate is yet undetermined; she has avoided my eyes, which I have scarce dar'd to raise from the ground: I once look'd at her when she did  
not

not observe me, and saw a melancholy on her countenance which stab'd me to the soul. I have given sorrow to the heart of her, whom I would wish to be ever most happy; and to whose good I would sacrifice the dearest hope of my soul. Yes, Mordaunt, let me be wretched, but let every blessing heaven can bestow, be the portion of the loveliest of her sex.

How little did I know of love, when I gave that name to the shameful passion I felt for the wife of my friend! The extreme beauty of the countess Melespini, that unreserved manner which seldom fails to give hope, the flattering preference she seemed to give me above all others, lighted up in my soul a more violent degree of youthful inclination, which the esteem I had for her virtues refined to an appearance of the noblest of affections, to which it had not the remotest real resemblance.

Without

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Without any view in my pursuit of her but my own selfish gratification, I would have sacrificed her honor and happiness to a transient fondness, which dishonored my character, and, if successful, might have corrupted a heart naturally full of probity; her amiable reproofs, free from that severity which robs virtue of half her charms, with the generous behaviour of the most injured of mankind, recalled my soul to honor, and stoped me early in the career of folly; time wore out the impression of her charms, and left only a cold esteem remaining, a certain proof that she was never the object of more than a light desire, since the wounds which real love inflicts are never to be intirely healed.

Such was the infamous passion which I yet remember with horror: but my tenderness for Lady Julia, more warm, more animated, more violent, has a delicacy of which those only who love like me can form

form any idea : independent of the charms of her person, it can never cease but with life ; nor even then if in another state we have any sense of what has passed in this ; it is eternal, and incorporated with the soul. Above every selfish desire, the first object of my thoughts and wishes is her happiness, which I would die, or live wretched, to secure : every action of my life is directed to the sole purpose of pleasing her : my noblest ambition is to be worthy her esteem. My dreams are full of her ; and when I wake, the first idea which rises in my mind is the hope of seeing her, and of seeing her well and happy : my most ardent prayer to the supreme Giver of all good is for her welfare.

In true love, my dear Mordaunt, there is a pleasure abstracted from all hope of return ; and were I certain she would never be mine, nay, certain I should never behold her more, I would not, for all the  
king-

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 187

kingdoms of the world, give up the dear delight of loving her.

Those who never felt this enlivening power, this divinity of the soul, may find a poor insipid pleasure in tranquillity, or plunge into vicious excesses to animate their tedious hours; but those who have, can never give up so sweet, so divine a transport, but with their existence, or taste any other joy but in subordination.

O Mordaunt! when I behold her, read the soft language of those speaking eyes, hear those harmonious sounds — who that has a soul can be insensible! — yet there are men dead to all sense of perfection, who can regard that angel form without rapture, can hear the music of that voice without emotion! I have myself with astonishment seen them, inanimate as the trees around them, listen coldly to those melting accents —

accents—There is a sweetness in her voice, Mordaunt, a melodious softness, which fancy cannot paint: the enchantment of her conversation is inexpressible.

Four o'clock.

I am the most wretched of mankind, and wretched without the right of complaining: the baseness of my attempt deserves even the pangs I suffer. Could I, who made a parade of refusing to meet the advances of the daughter of almost a stranger, descend to seduce the heiress of him on earth to whom I am most obliged? O Mordaunt! have we indeed two souls? Can I see so strongly what is right, yet want power to act up to my own sentiments? The torrent of passion bears down all before it. I abhor myself for this weakness. I would give worlds to recall that fatal letter: her coldness, her reserve, are more than I can support. My madness has undone me.—My assiduity is importunate.

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nate. I might have preserved her friendship. I have thrown away the first happiness of my life. Her eyes averted shun me as an object of hatred. I shall not long offend her by my presence. I will leave her for ever. I am eager to be gone, that I may carry far from her — O Mordaunt! who could have thought that cruelty dwelt in such a form? She hates me, and all my hopes are destroyed for ever.

Monday Evening.

BELMONT.

This day, the first of my life; what a change has this day produced! These few flying hours have raised me above mortality. Yes: I am most happy; she loves me, Mordaunt: her conscious blushes, her downcast eyes, her heaving bosom, her sweet confusion, have told me what her tongue could not utter: she loves me, and all else is below my care: she loves me, and I will pursue her. What are the mean  
con-

considerations of fortune to the tender union of hearts? Can wealth or titles deserve her? No, Mordaunt, love alone. — She is mine by the strongest ties, by the sacred bond of affection. The delicacy of her soul is my certain pledge of happiness: I can leave her without fear; she cannot now be another's.

I told you my despair this morning; my Lord proposed an airing; chance placed me in lady Julia's chaise. I entered it with a beating heart: a tender fear of having offended, inseparable from real love, kept me some time silent; at length, with some hesitation, I beg'd her to pardon the effect of passion and despair, vowed I would rather die than displease her; that I did not now hope for her love, but could not support her hate.

I then ventured to look up to the loveliest of women; her cheeks were suffused

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flushed with the deepest blush; her eyes, in which was the most dying languor, were cast timidly on the ground, her whole frame trembled, and with a voice broken and interrupted, she exclaimed, "Hate you, Mr. Mandeville, O heaven!" she could say no more; nor did she need, the dear truth broke like a sudden flash of light on my soul.

Yet think not I will take advantage of this dear prepossession in my favor, to seduce her from her duty to the best of parents; from Lord Belmont only will I receive her: I will propose no engagements contrary to the rights of an indulgent father, to whom she is bound by every tie of gratitude and filial tenderness: I will pursue my purpose, and leave the event to heaven, to that heaven which knows the integrity, the disinterested purity of my intentions: I will evince the reality of my passion

passion by endeavoring to be worthy of her. The love of such a woman, is the love of virtue itself: it raises, it refines, it ennobles every sentiment of the heart; how different from that fever of selfish desire I felt for the amiable countess!

O Mordaunt! had you beheld those blushes of reluctant sensibility, seen those charming eyes softened with a tenderness as refined as that of angels.—She loves me — let me repeat the dear sounds.—She loves me, and I am happier than a god!

I have this moment a letter from my father: he approves my design, but begs me for a short time to delay it: my heart ill bears this delay: I will carry the letter to lady Julia.

She approves my father's reasons, yet begs I will leave Belmont: her will is the law

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 193

law of my heart; yet a few days I must give to love. I will go on Tuesday to lord T—'s. His friendship will assist me in the only view which makes life supportable to me; he will point out, he will lead me to the path of wealth and greatness.

Expect to hear from me when I arrive at Lord T—'s. I shall not write sooner: my moments here are too precious.

Adieu.

Your faithful

H. MANDEVILLE.

TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, Esq;

Aug. 6th.

**H**APPY in seeing in my son that heroic spirit, which has ever distinguished our house, I should with pleasure consent to his design, were this a proper time to execute it, provided he went a volunteer, and determined to accept no command but as a reward of real services, and with a resolution it should never interfere with that independence to which I would have him sacrifice every other consideration; but, when there is so strong a probability of peace, his going would appear like making a parade of that courage which he did not expect would be tried.

Yes, my son, I am well assured we shall have peace; that the most amiable of  
princes,

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princes, the friend of humankind, pitying the miseries of his species, and melting with compassion at the wide extended scene of desolation, meditates such a peace as equally provides for the interest and honor of Britain, and the future quiet of mankind. The terms talked of are such as give us an immense addition of empire, and strengthen that superiority of naval force on which our very being depends, whilst they protect our former possessions, and remove the source of future wars, by securing all, and much more than all, for which this was undertaken; yet, by their just moderation, convince the world a British monarch is governed only by the laws of honor and equity, not by that impious thirst of false glory, which actuates the laurel'd scourges of mankind.

After so long, so extensive and bloody a war, a war which has depopulated our  
K 2 country,

country, and loaded us with a burden of debt, from which nothing can extricate us but the noble spirit of public frugality, which, if steadily and uniformly pursued, will rank the name of our Prince with those of Elizabeth, and Henry the great. All ardently wish for peace, but those who gain by the continuance of war; the clamors of these are inconceivable; clamors which can be founded only in private interest, because begun before they could even guess at the terms intended, and continued when such are mentioned as reason herself would dictate: but such ever will be the conduct of those in whom love of wealth is the primary passion.

Heaven and earth! can men wearing the form, and professing the sentiments of humanity, deaf to the cries of the widow and the orphan, labor to perpetuate the dreadful carnage, which has deluged the world

with the blood of their fellow creatures, only to add to the mass of their already unwieldy wealth, and prey longer on the distresses of their country!

These clamors are as illegal as they are indecent: peace and war are the prerogative of the crown, sacred as the liberties of the people, nor will ever be invaded by those who understand and love our happy constitution: let us strengthen the hands of our sovereign by our warm approbation during the course of this arduous work; and if his ministers abuse their trust, let them answer it, not to the noise of unthinking faction, or the unfeeling bosom of private interest, but to the impartial laws of their country.

Heaven forbid I should ever see a British King independent on his people collectively; but I would have him raised above

private cabals, or the influence of any partial body of men, however wealthy or respectable.

If the generous views of our Prince do not meet with the success they merit, if France refuses such a peace as secures the safety of our colonies, and that superiority, as a naval power, so necessary to the liberties of Europe, as well as our own independence, you shall join the army in a manner becoming your birth, and the style of life in which you have been educated: till then, restrain within just bounds that noble ardor so becoming a Briton, and study to serve that country with your counsels in peace, which will not, I hope, have occasion for your sword in war. Adieu.

WEDNESDAY, August 11th.

To Miss HOWARD.

**M**Y Emily, your friend, your unhappy Julia, is undone. He knows the tenderness which I have so long endeavored to conceal. The trial was too great for the softness of a heart like mine; I had almost conquered my own passion, when I became a victim to his: I could not see his love, his despair, without emotions which discovered all my soul. I am not formed for deceit: artless as the village maid, every sentiment of my soul is in my eyes; I have not learnt, I will never learn, to disguise their expressive language. With what pain did I affect a coldness to

K 4

which

which I was indeed a stranger! But why do I wrong my own heart? I did not affect it. The native modesty of my sex gave a reserve to my behavior, on the first discovery of his passion, which his fears magnified into hate. O, Emily! Do I indeed hate him! you to whose dear bosom your Julia confides her every thought, tell me if I hate this most amiable of mankind? You know by what imperceptible steps my inexperienced heart has been seduced to love: you know how deceived by the sacred name of friendship — But why do I seek to excuse my sensibility? Is he not worthy all my tenderness? are we not equal in all but wealth, a consideration below my care? is not his merit above titles and riches? How shall I paint his delicacy, his respectful fondness? Too plainly convinced of his power over my heart, he disdains to use that power to my disadvantage; he declares he will never receive me but from my father, he con-

fents

sents to leave me till a happier fortune enables him to avow his love to all the world; he goes without asking the least promise in his favor. Heaven sure will prosper his designs, will reward a heart like his. O, my Emily, did my father see with my eyes! what is fortune in the ballance with such virtue! Had I worlds in my own power, I should value them only as they enabled me to show more strongly the disinterestedness of my affection.

Born with a too tender heart, which never before found an object worthy its attachment, the excess of my affection is unspeakable. Delicate in my choice even of friends, it was not easy to find a lover equal to that idea of perfection my imagination had formed; he alone of all mankind rises up to it; the speaking grace, the easy dignity of his air, are the natural consequences of the superiority of his soul. He-

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looks as if born to command the world.  
I am interrupted. Adieu.

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AUGUST 15th.

TO COL. BELLVILLE.

**Y**OU never were more mistaken:  
you will not have the honor of see-  
ing me yet in town. My Lord thinks it  
infinitely more respectful to his royal Mas-  
ter to celebrate this happy event in the  
country.

“ My congratulations, says he, would  
be lost in the crowd of a drawing room,  
but here I can diffuse a spirit of loyalty and  
joy through half a county, and impress  
all around me with the same veneration  
and love for the most amiable of Princes  
which burns in my own bosom”.

Our

Our entertainment yesterday was magnificent, and in the *Gusto Belmonto* : there is a beautiful lake in the park, on the borders of which, on one side, interspersed amongst the trees, which form a woody theatre round it, at a distance of about three hundred yards, tents were fixed for the company to dine in, which consisted of all the gentlemen's families twenty miles round. Westbrook and his daughter were there, as my Lord would not shock them by leaving them only out when the whole neighbourhood were invited ; though he observed smiling, this was a favor, for these kind of people were only gentlemen by the courtesy of England. Streamers of the gayest colors waved on the tops of the tents, and glittered in the dancing funbeams : the tables were spread with every delicacy in season, at which we placed ourselves in parties, without ceremony or distinction, just as choice or accident directed. On a little island in the midst of

the lake, an excellent band of music was placed, which played some of the finest compositions of Handel during our repast; which ended, we spread ourselves on the borders of the lake, where we danced on the verdant green, till tea and coffee again summoned us to the tents; and when evening "had in her sober livery all things clad," a superb supper, and grand ball in the saloon finished our festival.

Nor were the villagers forgot: Tables were spread for them on the opposite side of the lake, under the shade of the tallest trees, and so disposed as to form the most agreeable points of view to us, as our encampment must do to them.

I am ill at describing, but the feast had a thousand unspeakable charms.

Poor Harry! How I pity him! His whole soul was absorbed in the contemplation

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 205

plation of Lady Julia, with whom he danced. His eyes perpetually followed her; and, if I mistake not, his will not be the only heart which aches at parting on Tuesday, for so long is Harry's going postponed. He may go, but, like the wounded deer, he carries the arrow in his breast.

Adio!

To

Tuesday, August 17th:

To Miss HOWARD.

**H**OW, my sweet Emily, shall I bear his absence; an absence embittered by the remembrance of those lively impassioned hours which love alone can give? What joy have I found in owning the sentiments of my soul to one so worthy of all my tenderness! Yes, Emily, I love him — words can but ill paint what I feel — he, he alone, — yet he leaves Belmont — leaves it by my command, leaves it this very hour, leaves it perhaps for ever — Great Heaven! can I support that thought?

If you love, if you pity your unhappy friend, return immediately to Belmont, let me repose my sorrows in that faithful breast: Lady Anne is tenderly my friend, but the sprightliness of her character intimidates me: I do not hope find in her  
that

that sweet indulgence to all my faults, as in the gentle soul of my Emily.

I have entreated him to take no leave of me; I shall only see him with the family: The moment draws near — my fluttering heart — How shall I hide my concern? — Lady Anne is coming to my apartment: I must go with her to the saloon, where he only waits to bid us adieu: his chaise is in the court. O Emily! my emotion will betray me.—

He is gone, the whole house is in tears: never was man so adored, never man so infinitely deserved it. He pressed my hand to his lips, his eyes spoke unutterable love. I leaned almost fainting on Lady Anne, and hid my tears in her bosom: she hurried me to my apartment, and left me to give vent to my full heart! She sees my weakness, and kindly strives  
to

to hide it from others, whilst her delicacy prevents her mentioning it to myself: she has a tender and compassionate heart, and my reserve is an injury to her friendship.

Lady Anne has sent to ask me to air; I shall be glad to avoid all eyes but hers; perhaps I may have courage to tell her — she merits all my confidence, nor is it distrust but timidity which prevents — she is here—I am ashamed to see her. Adieu! my dearest, my beloved friend!

To Col. BELLVILLE.

FRIDAY Night.

WE have lost our lovely Harry; he left us this morning for Lord T——'s. Poor Lady Julia! how I adore her amiable sincerity! she has owned her passion to me as we aired, and mentioned hopes which are founded in madness: I ventured gently to remonstrate, but there is no reasoning with a heart in love. Time and absence may effect a cure: I am the confidente of both: I am perplexed how to proceed: I must either betray the trust reposed in me, or abuse Lord Belmont's friendship and hospitality.

In what a false light do we see every thing through the medium of passion! Lady Julia is heiress to 14,000*l*. a year, yet  
thinks

thinks Harry's merit may raise him to a situation which will justify his pretending to her, and that this stupendous rise may be brought about in a twelvemonth: he too thinks it possible, nay the scheme is his. Heaven and earth! yet they are not fools, and Harry has some knowledge of mankind.

At present there is no talking reasonably to either of them. I must soothe them, to bring them off this ruinous inclination by degrees.

As idleness is the nurse of love, I will endeavour to keep Lady Julia continually amused: a new lover might do much, but there is nobody near us that is tolerable: indeed the woman who has loved Harry Mandeville, will be somewhat hard to please.

Chance

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 211

Chance favors my designs ; my Lord has proposed a visit of a fortnight to a neighbouring nobleman, Lord Rochdale, whose house is generally full of gay people ; his son too, Lord Melvin, with whom I was acquainted abroad, and who is only inferior to Harry Mandeville, is hourly expected from his travels.

Since I wrote the last paragraph an idea has struck me ; from a very particular expression in a letter I once received from Lady Belmont, in France, I have a strong suspicion Lord Melvin is intended for Lady Julia ; I wish he might be agreeable to her, for her present passion is absolute distraction.

We go to-morrow : when we come back you shall hear from me : or, perhaps, for I am something variable in my determinations, as soon as I get thither. Expect nothing however : if I do you the honor,  
you

you must set an immense value on my condescension, for I know we shall not have a moment to spare from amusements.  
Adieu!

A. WILMOT.

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

**I** Have at length left Belmont, and left it certain of Lady Julia's tenderness: I am the happiest of mankind; she loves me, she confesses it, I have every thing to hope from time, fortune, perseverance, and the constancy of the most amiable of her sex.

All cold reserve is banished from that charming bosom; above the meanness of suspicion, she believes my passion noble and disinterested as her own; she hears my vows with a pleasure which she cannot,  
nay

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 213

may which she does not wish to conceal; she suffers me to swear eternal tenderness— We dined on Wednesday at the hermitage. The company dispersed, the most delicate of women, not from coquetry, but that sweet impulsive modesty, not obvious, not obtrusive, which gives to beauty its loveliest charm, avoided an opportunity, which eager watchful love at last obtained: alone with her in those sweets shades, — O Mordaunt! let not the gross unloving libertine talk of pleasure: how tasteless are the false endearments, the treacherous arts of the venal wanton, to the sweet unaffected downcast eye of virgin innocence, the vivid glow of artless tenderness, the native vermilion of blushing sensibility, the genuine smile of undissembled love!

I write this on the road to Lord T——'s, where I shall be to night, I shall expect to hear from you immediately. Adieu!

H. MANDEVILLE.

To

TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, Esq;

Mount Melvin,

THURSDAY.

**I** Never so strongly relish the happiness of my own manner of living, as when I compare it with that of others. I hear perpetual complaints abroad of the tediousness of life, and see in every face a certain weariness of themselves, from which I am so happy as to be perfectly free. I carry about me an innate disposition to be pleased, which is the source of continual pleasure.

That I have escaped what is in general the fate of people of my rank, is chiefly owing to my fortunate choice in marriage: our mutual passion, the only foundation on which sensible souls can build happiness, has been kept alive by a delicacy of behaviour, an angel purity, in Lady Belmont,

to

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 215

to which words cannot do justice. The transports of youthful passion yield its sweetness to the delight of that refined, yet animated sensation which my heart feels for her at this moment. I never leave her without regret, nor meet her without rapture, the lively rapture of love,

“ By long experience mellowed into friendship,”

We have been married thirty years. There are people who think she was never handsome; yet to me she is all loveliness. I think no woman beautiful but as she resembles her; and even Julia's greatest charm, in my eye, is the likeness she has to her amiable mother.

This tender, this exquisite affection, has diffused a spirit through our whole lives, and given a charm to the most common occurrences; a charm, to which the dulness  
of

of apathy, and the fever of guilty passion, are equally strangers.

The family where we are furnish a striking example of the impossibility of being happy without the soft union of hearts. Though both worthy people, having been joined by their parents, without that affection which can alone make so near a connexion supportable, their lives pass on in a tedious and insipid round: without taste for each other's conversation, they engage in a perpetual series of diversions, not to give relish to, but to exclude, those retired domestic hours, which are the most sprightly, and animated of my life; they seek, by crowds and amusements, to fly from each other and from themselves.

The great secret of human happiness, my dear Mr. Mandeville, consists in finding such constant employment for the mind, as,  
without

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 217

without over-fatiguing, may prevent its languishing in a painful inactivity. To this end I would recommend to every man to have not only some important point in view, but many subordinate ones, to fill up those vacant hours, when our great purpose, whatever it is, must be suspended: our very pleasures, even the best, will fatigue, if not relieved by variety: the mind cannot always be on the stretch, nor attentive to the same object, however pleasing: Relaxation is as necessary as activity, to keep the soul in its due equipoise. No innocent amusement, however trifling it may seem to the rigid or the proud, is below the regard of a rational creature, which keeps the mind in play, and unbends it from more serious pursuits.

I often regard at once with pity and astonishment, persons of my own rank and age, dragged about in unwieldy state, forging for themselves the galling fetters of

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eternal

eternal ceremony, or the still heavier chains of ambition; their bodies bending under the weight of dress, their minds for ever filled with the idea of their own dignity and importance; to the fear of lessening which, they sacrifice all the genuine pleasures of life.

Heaven grant, my dear friend, I may never be too wise, or too proud, to be happy!

To you, my amiable friend, who are just entering on the stage of life, I would recommend such active pursuits as may make you an useful member of society, and contribute to raise your own fortune and consequence in the world, as well as secure the esteem of your fellow citizens, and the approbation of your Prince.

For my own part, like the Roman veterans, I may now be excused, if I ask  
my

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 219

my discharge from those anxious pursuits, which are only becoming in the vigor of our days, and from those ceremonial attentions, which are scarce bearable even then. My duty as a senator, and my respect to my king, nothing but real inability shall ever suspend; but for the rest, I think it time at sixty to be free, to live to one's self, and in one's own way; and endeavour to be, rather than to *seem* happy.

The rest of my days, except those I owe to my country and my prince, shall be devoted to the sweets of conjugal and paternal affection, to the lively joys of friendship. I have only one wish as to this world, to see Julia married to a man who deserves her, who has sensibility to make her happy, and whose rank and fortune are such as may justify us to the world, above which the most philosophic mind cannot entirely rise; let me but see this, and have a hope that they will pursue my

plan of life, let me see them blest in each other, and blessing all around them, and my measure of earthly felicity will be complete.

I You know not, my dear Mr. Mandeville, how much my happiness in this world has been owing also to the lively hope of another: this idea has given me a constant serenity, which may not properly be called the health of the mind, and which has diffused a brightness over all my hours.

Your account of Lord T — made me smile; his fear of being dismissed at seventy from the toilsome drudgery of business, is truly ridiculous: rich, childless infirm, ought not ease and retirement to be the first objects of his wishes? But such is the wretched slavery of all who are under the absolute dominion of any passion, unguided by the hand of reason.

The

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 221

The passions of every kind, under proper restraints, are the gentle breezes which keep life from stagnation; but, let loose, they are the storms and whirlwinds which tear up all before them, and scatter ruin and destruction around.

Adieu. I ought to apologize for the length of this; but age is the season of garrulity.

Your affectionate

BELMONT.

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To

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To the Earl of BELMONT.

**H**OW happy would it be for mankind, if every person of your Lordship's rank and fortune govern'd themselves by the same generous maxims!

It is with infinite pain I see Lord T— pursuing a plan, which has drawn on him the curse of thousands, and made his estate a scene of desolation: his farms are in the hands of a few men, to whom the sons of the old tenants are either forced to be servants, or to leave the country to get their bread elsewhere. The village, large, and once populous, is reduced to about eight families; a dreary silence reigns over their deserted fields; the farm houses, once the seats of chearful smiling industry, now use-  
less,

less, are falling in ruins around him; his tenants are merchants and ingrossers, proud, lazy, luxurious, insolent, and spurning the hand which feeds them.

Yesterday one of them went off largely in his debt: I took that occasion of pressing him on his most vulnerable side, and remonstrating the danger of trusting so much of his property in one hand: but I am afraid all I can say will have no effect, as he has, by this narrow selfish plan, a little encreased his rents at present, which is all he has in view, without extending his thoughts to that future time, when this wretched policy, by depopulating the country, will lower the price of all the fruits of the earth, and lessen, in consequence, the value of his estate.

With all my friendship for Lord T—, I cannot help observing in him another fault greatly below his rank and understanding,

ing, I mean a despicable kind of pride, which measures worth by the gifts of fortune, of which the largest portion is too often in the hands of the least deserving.

His treatment of some gentlemen, whose fortunes were unequal to their birth and merit, yesterday, at his table, almost determined me to leave his house: I expostulated warmly, tho' not impolitely, with him on the subject, and almost got him to confess his error. My friendship for him makes me feel sensibly what must lessen his character in the eyes of all whose esteem is desirable. I wish him to pass a month at Belmont, that he may see dignity without pride, and condescension without meanness; that he may see virtue in her loveliest form, and acknowledge her genuine beauty.

I am, my Lord, &c.

H. MANDEVILLE.

To

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 225

TO GEORGE MORDAUNT, Esq;

FRIDAY.

I Have past a tedious fortnight at Lord T——'s, without tasting any pleasure but that of talking of Lady Julia, with some ladies in the neighbourhood who know her. I estimate the merit of those I converse with, by the distinction of being known to her: those who are so happy as to be of her acquaintance have, in my eye, every charm, that polished wit or elegant knowledgè can give; those who want that advantage scarce deserve the name of human beings: all conversation, of which she is not the subject, is lifeless and insipid; all, of which she is, brilliant and divine.

My Lord rallies me on my frequent visits to these Ladies, and, as one of them is extremely handsome, supposes it a beginning passion: the Lady herself, I am

L 5

afraid,

afraid, is deceived, for, as she is particularly warm in her praises of Lady Julia, my eyes sparkle with pleasure at her approach, I single her out in every company, and dance with her at all our little parties; I have even an attention to her superior to that of common lovers, and feel for her a tenderness for which I want a name.

Lady Anne has had the goodness to write twice to me, from Lord Rochdale's, whither my Lord went, with his amiable family, two days after I left Belmont: Lady Julia is well, she loves me, she hears of me with pleasure. Ought I at present to wish more?

I have hinted to Lord T— my purpose, though not the dear motive which inspired it; he is warmly my friend, if there is truth in man. I will be more explicit the first time I see him alone: shall I own to you one weakness of my heart? I would be served

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 227

served by any interest but Lord Belmont's. How can I pretend to his daughter, if all I have is, in a manner, his gift? I would be rich independently of his friendship.

Lord T—— is walking in the garden alone, I will go to him, and explain all my designs: his knowledge of mankind will guide me to the best road to wealth and honor, his friendship will assist me to the ample extent of his power. Adieu!

TO HENRY MANDEVILLE, Esq;

**O**H, do you know I have a little request to make, you? but first, by way of preface, I must inform you, Lady Belmont has been reading me a serious lecture about the Caro Bellville, who has wrote to her to beg her intercession in his favor.

I find fools have been impertinent in regard to our friendship: there are so few pleasures in this world, I think it extremely hard to give up one so lively, yet innocent, as that of indulging a tender esteem for an amiable man. But to our conversation:

“ My dear Lady Anne, I am convinced you love Colonel Bellville.

Love him, Madam? no, I rather think not; I am not sure: The man is not shocking, and dies for me: I pity him, poor creature;  
and

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 229

and pity, your Ladyship knows, is a-kin to love.

Will you be grave one moment?

A thousand, if your Ladyship desires it: nothing so easy to me; the gravest creature in the world naturally.

You allow Colonel Bellville merit?

Certainement.

That he loves you?

To distraction.

And you return it?

Why as to that — he flatters agreeably, and I am fond of his conversation on that account: and let me tell you, my dear Lady Belmont, it is not every man that can flatter; it requires more genius than one would suppose.

You

You intend some time or other to marry him?

Marry? O heavens! How did such a thought enter your Ladyship's imagination? Have not I been married already? And is not once enough in conscience, for any reasonable woman?

Will you pardon me if I then ask, with what view you allow his address?

I allow? Heavens, Lady Belmont! I allow the addresses of an odious male animal? If fellows will follow one, how is it to be avoided? it is one's misfortune to be handsome, and one must bear the consequences.

But, my dear Lady Anne, an unconnected life — is the pleasantest life in the world. Have not I 3000*l.* a year? am not I a widow? mistress of my own actions? with youth, health, a tolerable understanding,

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 231

derstanding, an air of the world, and a person not very disagreeable?

All this I own.

All this? yes, and twenty times more, or you do nothing. Have not these unhappy eyes carried destruction from one climate to another? Have not the sprightly French, the haughty Romans, confessed themselves my slaves? Have not — But it would take up a life to tell you all my conquests.

But what is all this to the purpose, my dear?

Now I protest I think it is vastly to the purpose. And all this you advise me to give up, to become a tame, domestic, inanimate — really, my dear Madam, I did not think it was in your nature to be so unreasonnable.

It is with infinite pain, my dearest Lady Anne, I bring myself to say any thing  
which

which can give you a moment's uneasiness. But it is the task of true friendship—

To tell disagreeable truths: I know that is what your Ladyship would say; and, to spare you what your delicacy starts at mentioning, you have heard aspersions on my character, which are the consequences of my friendship for Col. Bellville.

I know and admire the innocent cheerfulness of your heart, but I grieve to say, the opinion of the world—

As to the opinion of the world, by which is meant the malice of a few spiteful old cats, I am perfectly unconcerned about it; but your Ladyship's esteem is necessary to my happiness: I will therefore to you vindicate my conduct: which, though indiscreet, has been really irreproachable. Though a widow, and accountable to nobody, I have ever lived  
with

with Colonel Bellville, with the reserve of blushing apprehensive fifteen, whilst the warmth of my friendship for him, and the pleasure I found in his conversation, have let loose the baleful tongue of envy, and subjected my resolution to the malice of an ill-judging world, a world I despise for his sake, a world, whose applause is too often bestowed on the cold, the selfish, and the artful, and denied to that generous unsuspecting openness and warmth of heart, which are the strongest characteristics of true virtue. My friendship, or, if you please, my love, for Colonel Bellville, is the first pleasure of my life; the happiest hours of which have been past in his conversation; nor is there any thing I would not sacrifice to my passion for him, but his happiness; which, for reasons known to your Ladyship, is incompatible with his marrying me.

But

But is it not possible to remove those reasons?

I am afraid not.

Would it not then, my dear Madam, be most prudent to break off a connexion, which can answer no purpose but making both unhappy?

I own it would, but prudence was never a part of my character. Will you forgive and pity me, Lady Belmont, when I say, that, though I see in the strongest light my own indiscretion, I am not enough mistress of my heart to break with the man to whom I have only a very precarious and distant hope of being united? There is an enchantment in his friendship, which I have not force of mind to break through; he is my guide, my guardian, protector, friend; the only man I ever loved, the man to whom the last recesses of my heart are open: must I give up the tender exquisite, refined delight of his conversation,

to

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 235

to the false opinion of a world, governed by prejudice, judging by the exterior, which is generally fallacious, and condemning, without distinction, these soft affections without which life is scarcely above vegetation?

Do not imagine, my dear Lady Belmont, I have really the levity I affect: or, had my prejudices against marriage been ever so strong, the time I have passed here would have removed them: I see my Lord and you, after an union of thirty years, with as keen a relish for each other's conversation as you could have felt at the moment which first joined you: I see in you all the attention, the tender solicitude of beginning love, with the calm delight and perfect confidence of habitual friendship. I am therefore convinced marriage is capable of happiness, to which an unconnected state is lifeless and insipid; and, from observing the lovely delicacy of your  
Ladyship's

Ladyship's conduct, I am instructed how that happiness is to be secured; I am instructed how to avoid that tasteless, languid, unimpassioned hour, so fatal to love and friendship.

With the man to whom I was a victim, my life was one continued scene of misery; to a sensible mind; there is no cold medium in marriage; its sorrows, like its pleasures, are exquisite. Relieved from those galling chains, I have met with a heart suited to my own; born with the same sensibility, the same peculiar turn of thinking: pleased with the same pleasures, and exactly formed to make me happy: I will believe this similarity was not given to condemn us both to wretchedness: as it is impossible either of us can be happy but with the other, I will hope the bar, which at present seems invincible, may be removed: till then indulge me, my dear Lady Belmont, in the innocent

Lady JULIA MANDEVILLE. 237  
cent pleasure of loving him, and trust to  
his honor for the safety of mine."

The most candid and amiable of women, after a gentle remonstrance on the importance of reputation to happiness, left me, so perfectly satisfied, that she intends to invite Bellville down. I send you this conversation as an introduction to a request I have to make you, which I must postpone to my next. Heavens! how perverse! interrupted by one of the veriest cats in nature, who will not leave us till ages after the post is gone. Adieu! for the present! it is prettily enough contrived, and one of the great advantages of society, that one's time, the most precious of all possessions, is to be sacrificed, from a false politeness, to every idle creature who knows not what else to do. Every body complains of this, but nobody attempts to remedy it.

Am

Am not I the most inhuman of women, to write two sheets without naming Lady Julia? She is well, and beautiful as an angel: we have a ball to-night on Lord Melvin's return, against which she is putting on all her charms. We shall be at Belmont to-morrow, which is two or three days sooner than my Lord intended.

Lady Julia dances with Lord Melvin, who is, except two, the most amiable man I know: she came up just as I sat down to write, and looked as if she had something to say: she is gone, however, without a word; her childish bashfulness about you is intolerable.

The ball waits for us. I am interrupted by an extreme pretty fellow, Sir Charles Mellifont, who has to-night the honor of my hand. Adio!

A. WILMOT.

To

5.

To Lady ANNE WILMOT.

“ WE have a ball to-night on Lord  
“ Melvin’s return, against which  
“ she is putting on all her charms.”

Oh, Lady Anne! can you indeed know what it is to love, yet play with the anxiety of a tender heart? I can scarce bear the thought of her looking lovely in my absence, or in any eyes but mine; how then can I support the idea of her endeavouring to please another, of her putting on all her charms to grace the return of a man, young, amiable, rich, noble, and the son of her father’s friend? a thousand fears, a thousand conjectures torment me: should she love another—the possibility distracts  
me.—

me.—Go to her, and ask her if the tenderest, most exalted passion, if the man who adores her—I know not what I would say.—you have set me on the rack — If you have pity, my dearest Lady Anne, lose not a moment to make me easy.

Yours, &c.

H. MANDEVILLE.

*The END of the FIRST VOLUME.*

