
THE
HISTORY
OF

DONNA MIRANDA SOLIS.

I H A D not been at *Cadiz* above a Couple of Days, when I saw two young Strangers enter my Inn. There was somewhat about them so particularly engaging, that I could not help being immediately prepossessed in their Favour ; and that Prepossession, forced me to take every Means possible to introduce myself to their Acquaintance. But tho' they returned my Overtures with the utmost Politeness, I found what I sought for was impracticable ; for

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they were to leave Town the next Day, and for that Night had ordered to eat alone.

Mortified as I was at this Disappointment, I retired after Supper immediately to my own Apartment, which I observed to be separated from theirs only by a slight Partition. They talked pretty loud, and perhaps I was more attentive than I ought to have been ; but guess my Astonishment, when, after listening to their Discourse for a few Minutes, I began not to wonder at certain Emotions I had felt at the first Sight of them, and which I had been before at a Loss to account for : In short, those two so seemingly graceful Cavaliers, proved in reality to be two very beautiful young Women.

Alas, my dear *Dorothea* ! cried one of them with a Sigh, the Time which I have so long both dreaded, and wished for, is at length arrived ;
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I shall now appear before my Friends, before my Father, if Grief for my inconsiderate Conduct has not yet put a Period to his Days. Oh Heavens ! how shall I support that awful Trial ? Must I not sink under the Weight of their Reproaches ? For can I flatter myself that they will have the Goodness to receive me with Pardon ?

Indeed, *replied the other*, my dear *Miranda*, you look at your own Actions in a Light too rigid, and desperate ; but if they were really as culpable as you would make People think them, the Joy of seeing you return in Safety, would no doubt obliterate every Sentiment of Anger from the Breasts of your Family. Your greatest Fault has been Love, which was ever accounted venial ; and a Love too the most pure and chaste : 'Tis true, by following the Flame, you have been led through many thorny, and in-

tricate Ways, but still you have gone on without stumbling; besides, it will be more properly my Part, to make them a Relation of your most extraordinary Adventures; and let me alone to set the Zeal you have shewn for your Religion, and the Sacrifices you have made to your Chastity, in their true Colours.

A Domestick coming in prevented me from hearing any more; and I prepared to go to Bed with the utmost Dissatisfaction, knowing that their Departure the next Morning, would prevent me from making any farther Progress in the Knowledge of an Affair, which I had the most sanguine Curiosity to be acquainted with. When an Accident brought about what I dispaired of doing myself, and in a very short Time made me the Confidant of their most Bosom Secrets.

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The principal of those Female Adventures, for whom I already began to feel the most tender Compassion, was seized in the Night with a violent Fever, so violent, that for several Days she remained delirious ; in those Circumstances you may easily imagine it was impossible to keep her Sex long a Secret, which indeed soon became publick to the whole House, though every one was ignorant why she had strove to conceal it.

For my own Part I never failed to make constant Inquiries after her Health ; led thereto, as well by the Desire which I had of paving the Way to a future Intimacy, as by my own natural Disposition, which always rendered me solicitous for the Distressed.

Her Friend, who still retained her Man's Habit, and passed for this
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sick Lady's Brother, was the Person, to whom I chose to address myself; and was still received with such an affable Complaisance, that, on the Patient's Amendment, I could not help signifying the Pleasure I should take in being permitted to the Honour of a Visit; at the same Time giving her to understand, that in Spite of that masculine Drapery, I knew well enough that she and I were not formed alike below the Girdle; and then I told her the Means by which I happened to learn it.

At first she seemed a little staggered; but soon recollecting herself, Then Sir, says she, since you have made the Discovery, I hope you will have Honour enough to let it go no further; I assured her it should not, and reiterating my Request to be admitted to her Friend.— She promised to use her Interest in my Behalf, but could not forbear letting me know, that she saw how far Curiosity

riosity had a Share in my Concern ; however, added she, if I can procure your Admittance i dare Swear she will not refuse the recital of Adventures, which I venture to Promise will Surprise you.

She was as good as her Word, and the next Day told me that after Supper we should enjoy the wished for Conference ; accordingly at the Hour appointed, she Conducted me to the sick Chamber, where after the usual Compliments upon those Occasions, the Lady began to speak to me in the following Manner :

I find by my Companion, Sir, that through some Words which you accidentally heard pass between us, the Evening of our Arrival at this Place, you are let into the Secret of our real Characters ; she also informed me, of the Gentleman-like Assurance, which you have given her to keep that Matter still concealed.

I renewed my Promise, and she went on. I also find, Sir, said she, that you have picked up some Hints which I then let fall, relative to my disastrous Fortune ; and that you are anxious to hear a more ample Detail of them : Alas ! it will but shock your compassionate Nature ; my Life having hitherto consisted, (and I see no Probability of a future Reverse) of such a Series of calamitous Incidents, partly thro' my own Fault, and partly thro' the Dispensations of Providence, to which I shall always bend with the lowest Submission, as no poor Creature, besides myself, perhaps ever experienced.

I beseeched her to wipe away the Tears, which now flowed from her Eyes in great Abundance ; she did so ; and after a short Silence, resumed the Discourse, as near as I can remember in these Words.

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My Name is *Miranda Solis*, and I am sprung from a Family, which is a Branch of one of the most ancient Stocks about *Seville*. My Youth was brought up in all that Delicacy, usual among People of the first Rank ; but the best of Mothers made it her chief Care to graft into me such Principles, as might tend rather to make me a good Woman, than a fine Lady. Thus I passed my Time in my Father's House, happy, and undisturbed ; unthought of by the World, I thought not of it ; but the Time shortly came, when I was to make my Appearance in that tumultuary Assembly, and tho' it was but a short one, I may justly say, to that Appearance I owe my Ruin.

My Mother began to take me abroad with her, and among other Visits, we frequently made one to a particular Friend of her's : This La-

dy had a Son, that had for some Years been in the Army, and was now on his Return home ; he was almost the constant Topick of our Conversation ; and his Friends passed such Encomiums upon him, that I began insensibly to sympathize in the general Impatience to see him ; in short, on a strict Retrospection, I have since found, that I was half in Love with the Copy, before I beheld the Original.

But at length Don *Ferdinand* arrived. O Heavens ! Shall I ever forget the Perturbation of my Spirits at our first Interview ; in Spite of all my Efforts I could not conceal it ; like a pent up Fire, when I deny'd it a Passage at my Lips, it broke out at my Eyes ; and I imagined I could perceive an equal Ardor in those of the dear Inflamer.

But if I was charmed with his Figure, his Conversation compleated the
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the Conquest ; so gentle, and at the same Time so manly ; so free, and at the same Time so respectful, methought I could have listened to him for ever ; and that the Moment we parted I ceased to live ; at least, but a breathing Statue, till the Presence of my beloved revived me. My Mother and I continued our Visits, and I was blessed in the Consideration, that by so doing, I should still enjoy my ultimate Desire, when a fatal Cloud intercepted this momentary Sunshine, and plunged me at once in the blackest Despair.

My Mother was taken off by an Apoplexy, at a Time too when she never appeared in a more confirmed State of Health ; as a Daughter, I felt all the Grief at her Death, that a Daughter is capable of feeling for the Loss of a Parent ; but as a Lover, I was distracted for the Loss of my ador'd *Ferdinand*, with whom I

thought all farther Communication must now be at an End.

However, tho' I was debarred from the Sight of the Man I doated on, his Sisters, upon this melancholly Occasion, were the first who came to wait on me with their Condolence; they also brought me Compliments from their Brother, but delivered them in a Manner so tender, and pathetic, as left me no Room to doubt, that he had given them particular Directions to let me see how much he was interested in all my Concerns.

A Letter, which he soon after found Means to convey to me, confirmed me in this Supposition; for then he breathed the most rapturous Passion; and concluded with entreating a private Interview; I believe I need not tell you that I was well enough enclined to comply with his Request; but alas, on my Mother's
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Decease, my Father had taken into the House an old Duenna, who watched me with such a vigilant Severity, that it was morally impracticable : This I let him know. When Love, who gave Birth to his Desires, prompted the Methods to satisfy them ; he soon found out the weak Side of my good Governess, whom he solicited with a Purse of Gold, and that so effectually, that in a short Time after, in the Dead of Night, when I as much expected to see an Apparition, I beheld him at my Feet in the most extatic Raptures.

He seemed the Priest of Love, and to deliver Oracles warm from God ; or rather, he looked like the God himself, at least, such I thought him, and for six Months that we enjoyed this Intercourse uninterrupted, I never knew a Moment's Pain, but when he was absent from me, in languishing to see him again.

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But what rendered himself still dearer to me was, that tho' the Violence of his Passion was apparent, and I seldom attempted to hide mine from him ; yet he never suffered it to get a Step beyond the Bounds of Honour ; he often indeed hinted at making Proposals to my Father, but I still talked of Decency, and the Forms to be preserved during my Mother's Mourning ; however, Love, which disdains to be fettered by slavish Custom, at last broke thro' them all, and Don *Ferdinand* sent a Deputation of his Friends to demand me in Marriage.

Oh ! cursed Avarice, which rejects every Thing, however, good and noble in itself, unmixed with the Object of its Idolatry. Tho' *Ferdinand* was of a Family every Way equal to my own, he was not so well accommodated with the Gifts
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of Fortune.—My Father knew this.—And considering me only in the Light of a Commodity, to which his Estate must be indispensibly annexed, he was determined to give me to the highest Bidder, and consequently refused Don *Ferdinand's* Proposal with Disdain.

This Circumstance too was attended with another no less disagreeable ; the Fame of my little Stock of Beauty, had gained me a new Admirer, Don *Sancho de Menezes*, and poor *Ferdinand* had the more Reason to dread him as a Rival, he having added to an illustrious Birth, an Income of above ten thousand Pistoles a Year ; which made it certain, that, on the least Motion to my Father, he would leap at such a Son-in-Law.

But, it seems, he thought it more *en Cavalier*, to talk to me first ; and a thousand Stratagems he made use of

of to address me in Person, but I still avoided giving him an Opportunity ; at length, he began to solicit my Governess, and truly she was very willing to grant him all in her Power, but I continuing obstinate, he swore that there was some more happy Man, whom he would make a Sacrifice to his rejected Passion.

Now whether the old Duenna gave him any Intimation, I cannot pretend to say ; but certain it is, that he got an Inkling of *Ferdinand's* nocturnal Visits, and way-laid him one Night. When my dear unsuspecting Lover coming according to Custom, was suddenly assaulted in the Street, by *Don Sancho*, at the Head of three Ruffians.

I heard the Noise from my Chamber, and having a Sort of ill-boding Heart, I looked out of the Window ; but good Heavens, how was I shocked, when I beheld the Idol of
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Soul, with his Back to the Wall, defending himself against four Assassins ; he was just then joined by his Valet de Chambre, whom he always left at the Corner of the Street, upon which, the three horrid Murderers ran away ; but Don *Sancho* still keeping his Ground, I saw them make over to our Porch ; upon which I screamed violently, and my Governess coming up to me, unable to support it any longer, I fainted in her Arms.

She seconded my Alarms ; and my Father was unfortunately the first Person, who run to our Assistance ; I say unfortunately, for he too soon was advertized of the Cause of my Swooning.

Don *Sancho*, who was grievously wounded, and now lay groaning at the Steps of the Door, as soon as I was recovered, called my Father's Attention that Way.

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The Servants went out, and immediately returned, bearing him among them ; and while one was dispatched for a Surgeon to survey the Wound, my Father try'd to bring him to himself, by the Help of some Cordials, which he poured down his Throat ; and now came the Thunderbolt, what was doomed to strike me down ; Don *Sancho*, inspirited by the vivifying Drops, as soon as he knew with whom, and where he was, began to lay open the whole Cause of the late Bustle ; he told my Father, that he had long been a Suitor of mine ; and, in short, of the Amour between Don *Ferdinand* and me.

To describe my Father's Rage is impossible, the first Fruits of which was experienced by the Duenna, whom he directly turned out of Doors ; justly conjecturing, that such a Negotiation could not have been carried on
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under his Roof, without her Connivance ; I was the next Object of his Resentment, he storm'd like a Fury, called me a thousand opprobrious Names ; and, in fine, locked me up, to consider on what had happened at Leisure.

Don *Ferdinand* I percieved had made his Escape, but I neither knew to what Place, nor whither dangerously wounded ; I was like a mad Woman, and so continued for a considerable Space ; when my Miseries were screwed up to the highest Pitch: Don *Sancho* was now got abroad again, and the first Visit he made, was to my Father, to acquaint him, that what had happened, was not capable of altering his Resolution, and that, if he thought proper, he was still desirous of a Union with me.

Nor did my Father leave any Means untry'd, to break me to his Yoke ;

Yoke ; he flattered, threatened, promised me his whole Estate, swore he would turn me out as an Alien from his Blood ; but all to no Purpose, I remained inflexible, and plainly told him, that I would rather follow *Ferdinand* with a Knapsack, than have a Throne with him to whom he wanted to join me.

An Answer so peremptory, enraged him beyond all Bounds ; and he told me to prepare for a Monastery the next Morning ; which I did with great Pleasure, as submitting to the milder Fate ; I wanted nothing but to inform Don *Ferdinand* of the Choice I had made, rather than violate my Faith to him. I had a few Days before heard, that he was seen about Town ; and then, by Dint of a Bribe, prevailed upon a Negro Boy to give him a Line, which only contained a Direction to the Convent I was to enter, and
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an Entreaty to see him there as soon as possible.

According to this Determination, the very next Morning, at six o'Clock, I set out for the Convent of —, about eight Leagues from *Seville*, where strict Orders were given, that I should be suffered to see nobody : However, What Difficulties are unfurmountable to a Mind determined ? I had not been there a Week, before I was happy in the Society of him, who to me was all the World : Oh ! would to Heaven that his Charms had been less attractive, or my Soul more insensible.

The Society of which I was become a Member, was governed by Friars, whose Convent was distant about a Gun-shot from the Abbey ; here *Ferdinand* betook himself, and grew so intimate with one of the reverend Brethren, that he prevailed on him to take his Case into Consideration :

deration: The Case of a Lover, anxious to see his Mistress, and thro' his Means, in Spite of my Father's Mandate, he had Egrefs and Regrefs to and from me, as often as he would.

I must own, that such an Instance of Complaisance in a holy Brother and Sisterhood surprized me ; but I was soon after convinced, that the Habit of a Nun and Friar, are but like Charity, a Cover for a Multitude of Sins. That they are themselves a Pack of Wolves in Sheeps Cloathing ; who, however meekly they carry it to the Eye of the World, are in their own dark Cells so many ravenous Beasts of Prey, a Herd of Cannibals, who feed upon one another, in the most licentious and shameful Manner ; considering nothing but their brutal Appetites, and the readiest Way to satisfy them.

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The Friars were constantly among us, and you might easily observe that their Affiduity about the young Nuns, had more in it than meer Devotion. In fine, they generally were acquainted with their female Penitents Confession before she made it ; and charitably gave her Absolution for those Sins, which they helped her to commit.

Indeed it was plain, that the Flesh had a greater Share than the Spirit, in the Works of this Convent ; which seemed to me a Temple dedicated to *Cupid* ; and I let Don *Ferdinand* into the Discovery I had made, but he seemed much better acquainted with their Manners, even than I myself ; and I was not a little surprized when he spoke to me in the following Strain.

My dear *Miranda*, I love you of all Woman kind, but you see your
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Father's unreasonable Prejudice is such, that he will never consent to our coming together ; and you may be sure, that if on his second Trial of your Inclinations, in regard to your Marriage with Don *Sancho*, he still finds you obstinate, that he will insist upon your taking the Veil. I hope not so, answered I ; And why not so, replied he, my Angel ? Where is there a Retreat in the World, that will afford us such a Liberty of conversing together, as this ? Do you not see that Love revels here in his most unbounded Riots ? Do you then take the Habit of a Devotee, as I will of a Cordelier, Restraint from the very Moment will cease betwixt us ; the Nature of my Function will permit me to be with you ; as often, and as long as I please, and I shall esteem the World well given up, for the constant Enjoyment of your dearer Conversation.

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This Discourse of yours, replied I, seems something serious. Seems so! returned he, you may be assured that it is really so; and I presume your Sentiments would not differ from mine, if you, like me, had reflected on the Advantages of the Plan which I propose. Promise me but to consider of it, and I dare answer that you cannot but approve of it. I consent to it with all my Heart, replied I, and you may shortly expect the Result of my Reflection.

Two Months however elapsed, before I could resolve what Course to take; perhaps I should even have remained longer undetermined, if my cruel Father, in order to revenge himself of my Opposition to his Will, had not made Choice of another Husband for me, who, in order to keep me at a Distance from the Family-seat, had found Means to enrage him so much against me, that

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he threatened me with the most cruel Treatment, if I did not resolve to give my Hand to Don *Sancho*, or immediately to take a Veil. I told him that tho' I had no Inclination for a Cloister, I should have much less Objection to be confined in one, than to be united for Life to a Man whom I could not love. And that he might not have the least Doubt of the Sincerity of my Intention, I went a few Days after to the Lady Abbess, to acquaint her with my Design of becoming a Nun.

She congratulated me and herself on the prudent Choice I had made; and that my Fervour might not have Time to abate, she promised me to abridge the usual Probation previous to the taking the Habit. I was actually incorporated in a few Months after. About the same time Don *Ferdinand* took the Habit of a Cordelier. We both of us passed the Time of our Probation, without being

ing indulged with the Pleasure of an Interview. By frequent Letters which passed between us, we endeavoured to alleviate the Torments of Absence; but these Torments were to last but a Year; for my Lover had been promised, that when his Term of Probation should expire, he should be at Liberty to make Choice of a Convent.

He was no sooner engaged in this Vocation, by the solemn Vows that it required, than in Compliance thereto he came to the Convent at a very little Distance from ours. His Superiors could not refuse him this Favour. A Letter which he sent me acquainted me with the Day of his Arrival: I expected it with the utmost Ardor of Impatience. Nor was I long in this Situation; for, led on by his Passion, he came with such Speed, that he had almost overtaken his Letter. Word was brought me that he was come. Love lent me

Wings to fly into the Parlour, where he was waiting to receive me in his Arms. Ask me not to express the Transports of Joy which our Hearts experienced. We were both so extremely affected that we could not refrain from Tears. The Emotion of our Souls deprived us for some Moments of the Power of Speech. Our Looks and Sighs were our only Interpreters. To this silent Scene succeeded the most tender and passionate Expressions.

“ Adorable *Miranda*, said the enraptured Don *Ferdinand*, you are at length restored to my Arms : May I flatter myself you do not repent the generous Sacrifices your Love has cost you ? Do you not reproach yourself with having too dearly purchased an Opportunity of loving without Restraint ? ” “ What ! answered I, do you doubt the Sincerity of my Love ? And do you think it would permit me to regret those trivial Advantages
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which the World promised me, and in which you could not share with me? Have I not a thousand Times told you the Happiness of my Life depends on your Love alone: Promise me only that your Affection shall end but with your Life.”

A thousand Oaths he swore to testify his perpetual Fidelity. We promised to see each other every Day; but Don *Ferdinand* was not perfectly satisfied with that Privilege. He was sensible that his new Situation favoured him with an Opportunity of making me frequent nocturnal Visits; and he was very willing to avail himself of that Advantage. But I refused to comply with his Wishes. In vain did he remonstrate the Example of his Brethren, who, during the Night, very often made their Appearance in the Abbey. I did not think myself obliged to follow their Example. My Prudence even made me look with Horror on the

scandalous Proceedings to which I was every Day Witness. I could hardly conceive how these Friars our Directors could steal into the Abbey, without any one's discovering the Respect they paid to their Devotees; but Don *Ferdinand*, who presently became acquainted with the Stratagems practised in the Convent, told me it was by Means of a Passage under Ground, that they made their Way into our Convent. Young and Old did not fail, by this Means, to perform the pious Offices of their Ministry. This could not be done without sometimes leaving behind them very evident Marks of their Zeal; but this was easily concealed from the Eyes of the World. The young Sisters who were thus become Mothers, exempted themselves from the Scandal by absconding from the Grate before their Pregnancy was visible. A separate Apartment was allowed them, where they waited patiently the happy Moment of their Delivery;

Delivery; and the Burdens, of which they were eased, were privately entrusted to Persons of approved Discretion.

You see then, Sir, said the fair *Miranda*, interrupting her Narrative, that my feeble Virtue has been exposed to dangerous Temptations; so prevalent is the Contagion of ill Example. I resisted them, however, notwithstanding the repeated Efforts which Don *Ferdinand* practised to seduce me: But little did I think that my Charms were about to create him a formidable Rival! It was the Guardian Father himself, who did me the Honour to conceive the most violent Affection for me. I knew that he was a secret Admirer of the Lady Abbess. How would she then be enraged against me, if I should rob her of a Conquest so valuable to her Soul; for, it is necessary to observe, that this Guardian Father was a Man of a genteel and graceful Person,

Person, and that the Lady Abbess, still young, appeared to be of a Complexion susceptible of the most tender Passion. Could she then ever have pardoned me for the Theft I should have committed? No; but I will spare her the Grief the Infidelity of her Lover would occasion. Could it be imagined that I should be insensible of the Declarations of his Love; for, without Doubt, he thought he did me great Honour in making me the Object of his glorious Choice.

The insolent and audacious Discourse of this Friar, gave me, at least, Reason to think, that full of the Idea of his own Merit, he did not expect that I should venture to oppose his Will.

You know not perhaps dear Sister, (said he, one Day, when he made me a Visit) that I have some good News to tell you; but, added he, (taking
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hold of my Hand, which he pressed ardently) I would have you read in my Eyes what I have to communicate. Indeed, Father, answered I, (hastily snatching my Hand from his) it is not in my Power to do that; for I must confess myself an utter Stranger to the Language of the Eyes.

Oh! replied he, I see you are a little Dissembler; for, I am well assured that you can read in my Looks the tender Impression which you have made in my Heart; perhaps, added he, in an affected Tone, you are displeased that I have so long delayed to declare my Passion. No, Father, answered I, I am not at all displeased on that Account, I assure you: And I must acknowledge to you that I should have been much better pleased if you had kept your good News to yourself.

How! Child, answered he, I fancy you do not consider that there is not

a Person here but would think herself highly honoured by such an Overture ; and that I must keep it a Secret from the Lady Abbess, to prevent her being jealous of you : But fear nothing ; I will take upon myself to conceal from her all the Measures that we shall agree upon ; only be careful implicitly to follow my Advice.

For Shame! Father, answered I, exasperated at this Friar's Audacity, let us put an End to this troublesome Discourse ; and place to my Account the Patience which I have had in listening to you.

But, my dear Sister, replied he, do you forget that you are talking to your Superior? No, I do not forget it, replied I ; but I do not think his Authority should extend so far as to make me listen to a Discourse which is offensive to my Modesty.

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Very well! very well! said he, in an angry Tone, my Discourse, I find, has not the good Fortune to please you; but I suspect the Reason: You would perhaps be better pleased to converse with our Brother *Leander*. (*That was the Name which Don Ferdinand assumed with the Habit of the Order.*) For I am not a Stranger to the amorous Correspondence carried on between you two. However, added he, dispose yourself this Day to bid him eternally farewell; I will send him to take a final Leave of you.

For Heaven's Sake, Father, cried I, alarmed at his cruel Threat, erase from your Remembrance what I have said to offend you. Let me on my Knees intreat your Pardon. No; replied he, bidding me rise from that humble Posture; I do not merit from you such Condescension; and if you have done any Thing to reproach yourself with, employ the Means that are in your Power to make Re-

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paration. But, my Reverend Father, said I, do nothing rashly, allow me, at least, Time for Reflection: Your Merit, which I know how to value, will be answerable for the Progress which it will be easy for you to make in my Heart: These are flattering Hopes you give me, answered he; but consider that it will be your Interest not to deceive me; and if I consent that our Brother *Leander* should continue his Addresses, remember it is on Condition, that you shall not refuse mine also. These are the Terms I offer you; and I leave you to reflect on them.

Thus was I under a Necessity of complying with whatever this insolent Friar exacted from my Obedience. What Menace could indeed have been more terrible than that which he pronounced? And how could I have survived the bitter Pangs of a Separation from Don *Ferdinand*? It was then for his Sake alone that I
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consented to suffer the Importunities of his new Rival. For some Weeks I amused him with flattering Promises ; but his brutal Appetite could not long endure the Resistance I had made to his infamous Desires. The Wretch, resolving to succeed, determined to complete his Pleasure by Violence ; and the Moment was almost arrived, when he was to execute his horrid Purpose.

For two Hours after I was laid in my Bed, I knew not what secret Impulse acquainted me with the Misfortune that threatened me ; but I was so extremely uneasy that Sleep could not close my Eyes. I spent the Time in making the most sorrowful Reflections upon my hard Fate, when suddenly I thought I heard a Noise at my Chamber-door ; nor was I mistaken : My Door was opened, and immediately shut to again. The Horror with which I was seized on this Occasion, made me cry out in a most terrible Manner ; but I

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presently lost the Power of making myself heard ; the Villain who was got into my Chamber, came to my Bedside, and put his Hand before my Mouth. It was the Guardian Father. The Sight of the Danger my Innocence was exposed to, gave me Strength to defend myself against his brutal Violence. Transported with Fury I tore myself from the Arms of this audacious Villain ; but my Strength was soon exhausted. The Wretch, putting a Poniard to my Throat, threatened to sacrifice me to his Rage, if I did not immediately consent to be the Victim of his infamous Lust. If you make the least Noise, said he, it is as much as your Life is worth : --- either comply with my Desires, or expect sudden Death.

Dear reverend Father, said I, throwing myself at his Feet, will you owe that to Violence which you may obtain by Love ? I only ask a Delay of three Days.---No, no, answered

swered he, I have too long suffered myself to be deceived by your delusive Wiles ; you shall this very Instant perform the Promise you have made me.

Heaven, to whom I cried for Succour, inspired me with a Thought by which I preserved my Innocence. I pretended to consent to the Desires of this lustful Beast. I quitted the humble Posture I was in, threw my Arms round his Neck, and almost smothered him with feigned Caresses ; and that he might not have any Doubt but that I was sincerely disposed to gratify his Wishes, I insisted that he should permit me to receive the Addresses of his Brother *Leander*. He made no Manner of Objection to my Request ; and thought of nothing then but an immediate Compliance. But he was to meet with Obstacles which he did not dream of. Happy for me, the Moon shone through my Chamber-

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ber-Window. I took particular Notice where he put the Poniard with which he was armed. He laid it carelessly on a Chair by my Bed-side: To obtain an Opportunity of getting it, I asked him Leave to let me fetch my Smelling-bottle which lay upon the Table, telling him I wanted it to compose my Spirits which were ruffled by a foolish feigned Resistance. He readily granted my Request; and disentangling myself from his Arms, I jumped off from the Bed on which he had thrown me, armed myself with his Poniard; and threatened to sacrifice him to my just Revenge, if he did not preserve himself by Flight.

He now perceived the only Method to preserve his Life was a quick Retreat: However, before he went out of my Chamber, he earnestly entreated me not to mention a Word of what had passed between us; and to engage my Silence, he promised

mised never more to lay any Obstacles between me and *Leander*.

I was not, however obliged to rely upon his Promises; for I expected that Don *Ferdinand* would soon or late become the unfortunate Victim of his jealous Rage. I wrote a Letter to him the next Morning, desiring he would come to me immediately, for I had something of the utmost Consequence to communicate to him. He delayed not to come; and I acquainted him with every thing that had happened, without concealing a single Circumstance. Never was Rage more violent than his. Monster! cried he, his Blood shall pay for his most villainous Attempt.

For Heaven's Sake, my dear Don *Ferdinand*, said I, (taking hold of his Hand and pressing it tenderly with mine,) moderate the Transports of your undiscerning Rage. Consider,
nothing

nothing can preserve us but the Succours of Diffimulation. I desire not, added I, to conceal the Dangers which beset my Innocence, but to extricate myself from them : Say, will you accompany me in my Flight ! I will, by Heaven, answered he, you could not have proposed a Thing more consonant to my Wishes : But my dear *Miranda*, continued he, the Execution of the Design which you propose is inconsistent with the Revenge which fires my Soul. Shall it be said, that I have suffered such a Villain to go unpunished ? Forbid the Thought. It would be equally injurious to both our Honours. Let us fly ; but first, let that cursed Fiend become the Object of my Resentment. But, answered I, will the Interest of our Security permit you to enter into such Projects of Vengeance. Let us only consider what Measures we must take to secure our Flight.

Our

Our first Consideration was where to seek a Refuge. After many Reflections on this Head, we determined to go to *Holland*. But for this Purpose, we required a considerable Sum of Money; and where could we expect to find it? However, Don *Ferdinand* had happily preserved a substantial Friend, and he was the only Person he ever visited since he had been divorced from the World; to him therefore he addressed himself, acquainted him with his Design, and received greater Favours from him than he could possibly expect. This generous Man did every Thing in his Power to promote our Escape; besides the Money which Don *Ferdinand* had received from him, he also promised him a Post-Chaise to conduct us to *Cadiz*. A proper Suit of Cloaths was needful to disguise me, which he also very willingly provided for me. Don *Ferdinand*, after returning him the
 most

most hearty Thanks, came to acquaint me with the joyful News. Our next Concern was how I should make my Escape from the Convent: This was a Difficulty which my Lover easily removed: He asked my Permission to come to my Chamber the next Morning, said he would bring a Friar's Robe with him; and that being thus disguised, I might safely follow him into his Convent. He gave me this Caution only, that if we should be so unfortunate as to meet with any of the Friars in the subterraneous Passage, that I should preserve a profound Silence, and boldly follow him.

Measures, so well concerted, left us no Obstacle to surmount. I was not in the least affrighted at the Sight of three Friars which we found in our Passage under Ground. Deceived by my Disguise, they imagined me one of their Brethren; and

and with a Lover's Haste passed by us to go where *Venus* called them.

Don *Ferdinand*, who was not under any Fear of making himself known, jeered them as they passed along for not making more Haste to pay their Devoirs to their young Sisters: But the Business they had in Hand was of too great Importance to make any Delay to reply to him. A Moment stole them from our Sight; and in a short Time afterwards we arrived at the Habitation of our devout Directors. I had not long to wait there; for my Lover conducted me into the Garden, out of which we made our Escape, and went to his kind Benefactor, whose Residence was not above half a League from our Convent.

Being in such a strange Disguise, I could not avoid blushing when I was first presented to him; but that was presentiy over. In the Cham-
ber

her to which I was conducted, I found a rich Suit of Cloaths made in the genteelest Taste, and just of a proper Size. The same was also prepared for Don *Ferdinand*.

Our Moments were now precious; and by our extreme Diligence we were presently equiped for our Journey. We repeated our Thanks to our gracious Benefactor; and then ascended the Post-Chaise which waited for us.

Our Journey to *Cadiz* was not impeded by any Kind of Accident; when we arrived at that City, I was not in the least fatigued. We were so fortunate as to find a Ship there which was the next Day to set Sail for *Holland*. Don *Ferdinand* advised me to resume my female Dress; I willingly followed his Advice; for in the Habit I then wore, I certainly appeared to have an awkward borrowed Air. --- But in what Character

rafter was I to accompany him ? It was necessary I should pass under some Title ; and he thought nothing could be more eligible than that of his Wife, which he desired I would accept of. I did ; but it was on Condition, that this Title should give him no Right of Possession, till we were solemnly united by the holy Bands of Love. He assured me that his Passion should ever confine itself within the Limits of Respect ; and never venture on the Brink of Freedom. You will presently learn how much I ought to have relied on those Promises. I shall now return to our Departure, which was fixed on for the next Day.

It was to *Holland* we were to go to seek for an Asylum : We flattered ourselves that the Space of a Month would bring us thither ; a favourable Wind gave us Reason to expect an happy Voyage. We anticipated the
Sweets

Sweets of Liberty, of which the bare Idea charmed us.

Six Days were elapsed before we experienced any Perils; and we doubted not but the Remainder of our Voyage would be as happy as the Beginning. But alas! these were delusive Hopes: We were then on the Brink of the most terrible Misfortunes. We were unhappily attacked by a Corsair which we could not possibly avoid. The numerous Broad-sides which were poured in upon us had made such Havock on our Ship, that it was impossible for the Sailors to manage her. The Pirates had it in their Power to sink her if they had been so inclined; but they were not willing to lose the Riches with which she was laden: Making therefore nearer to her, they threw their grappling Irons, drew her to them, and boarded her. A bloody Battle ensued: Don *Ferdinand*, after hav-

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ing given a thousand Marks of Intrepidity, received several dangerous Wounds ! Weltering in Blood I received him in my Arms ; but he was less concerned for his own Misfortunes, than he was with those which I was about to suffer ; for he doubted not but we should both be condemned to Slavery. In fine, the victorious Corsair did not delay to make himself Master of our Vessel ; and caused us to be put in his. But we were treated wlt h more Humanity than we could even hope for. Witness of Don *Ferdinand's* prodigious Valour, the Pirate gave him a thousand Tokens of the most singular Respect. He caused him to be laid on a Bed, and gave strict Orders that the utmost Care should be taken of him ; and I had the Consolation of being suffered to be always near him till his Health and Strength returned.

At length, by the Aid of Sails and Oars, we arrived at the large City of *Fez*, where Don *Ferdinand* and I were sold to the richest *Moor* in all that Country. The Recital which had been made him of my Lover's Valour, together with the Marks of Distinction which appeared in our Behaviour, pleaded in our Behalf, and prevented our being mingled with the other Slaves. We were confined to a lower Room, and a Parterre belonging to it, the Care and Management of which was reposed in us.

During some Months of our Slavery, we had not any Reason to complain of hard Treatment. But this gentle Calm was soon succeeded by a boisterous Tempest: unfortunately for us, our Patron took it into his Head to object against our Religion, and endeavoured to stagger us in our Faith. Threats, Gifts, and Promises, were all employed to seduce us.

At

At first Don *Ferdinand* appeared stedfast and immoveable; but I presently perceived it was no very difficult Matter to triumph over his Resolutions. By what he said to me, I found his Stedfastness was shaken: I reproached him for it; but, so far from being ashamed of his Proceedings, he had the Confidence to tell me, that he was no longer disposed to be the Companion of my Misfortunes; that his foolish Passion had been the Cause of all that he had laboured under; and that he was resolved to extricate himself from them.

The Grief with which I was seized at these Words, deprived me of the Power to answer him, but with my Sighs and Tears. The ungrateful Wretch was utterly insensible: I threw myself at his Feet, and bathed them with my Tears; but nothing could recal him to his Duty. He

was not contented with shamefully abandoning his Religion himself, but he exerted his utmost Efforts to engage me to follow his vile Example : The Villain had triumphed over my Innocence ; for how could I defend myself from his seducing Arts ? But he was presently cloyed with the Favours he received from my tender and faithful Passion.

By the changing his Religion he obtained the good Graces of our Patron, who gave him an absolute Authority over all his Slaves. A young *Spanish* Girl had captivated the Heart of this perfidious Man ; he married her, and had the Cruelty to make me her Servant. Alas ! how grievous was my Fate ; I was obliged to do the most servile Drudgery for my detested Rival ! In vain were all my Efforts to oblige her ; my best Services were rewarded with the most cruel Treatment ; and, to heap up the Measure of my Misfortunes,

tunes, the barbarous Don *Ferdinand* had promised *Achmet*, our Patron, that, in a very short Time, he would engage to make me abjure my Faith. Flattering Hopes, dangerous Threats, and seducing Promises, were all employed to corrupt me ; but I had the Courage to resist them all. The Traitor, exasperated at my Resistance, consulted nothing but Revenge. I was loaded with Chains, and shut up in a Dungeon ; where I continued for six Months, without any other Nourishment than a few bitter Roots.

The Moment however approached in which I was to become a Mother. I flattered myself that the unfortunate Infant I was about to bring into the World would regain me the Affection of a Monster whom I could not hate, notwithstanding his Barbarity. But he received the News of his becoming a Father, without being in the least affected with that

endearing Title. I entreated, as a great Favour, to be permitted to give my little Infant suck ; but even that was denied me ; for it was tore from my Arms, and I presently after received the News of its Death. Perhaps, alas ! he was the unfortunate Victim of the Barbarity of an inhuman Father.

But, Heaven ! the Protector of oppressed Innocence prepared to revenge my Injuries. Already the Thunder began to rattle over the Head of the guilty Don *Ferdinand*. An Infidel to his God, he made no Scruple of being so to his Master and Benefactor.

Ackmet had a Wife whom he tenderly loved : Don *Ferdinand* saw her ; and, seeing, conceived a violent Passion for her. Blinded by his Passion, he did not perceive the imminent Danger which must necessarily attend his Declaration. I know not
by

by what Means he obtained a private Interview with the fair *Zoraida* (that was the Name of the unfortunate *Achmet's* Wife); but, however, they had frequent Intercourse together; in which he succeeded so well, that she consented to elope with him: A Vessel was secretly purchased, and other Preparations were made for their intended Flight. It was about Midnight that *Zoraida*, accompanied by a Confidant, was to fly to the Arms of her new Lover. Already she had escaped from her Husband's House, and had even but a few Paces farther to go before she would have arrived at the appointed Rendezvous where he waited for her, when she was stopt in the very Instant she was going to embark, by the following Means: One of the Sailors, whom Don *Ferdinand* had gained over to his Interest, happened to quarrel with one of his Ship-mates; and resolving to execute a Project of Revenge he had

D 4 formed

formed against him, took Advantage of the Night to steal away from the Ship. He hastily sought for *Achmet*, and betrayed to him Don *Ferdinand's* Design. Transported with unbounded Rage at this Intelligence, the *Moor* armed some of the most courageous of his Slaves, and ordered them to follow him.

Led on by the Sailor who came to warn him of his impending Misfortune, he soon reached the Vessel which the faithless *Zoraida* was about to go on board. Ready to die with Fear, she flung herself into the Arms of the perfidious Don *Ferdinand*, who, with Scymetar in Hand, seemed resolved his Life should be no easy Purchase; but in vain were his feeble Efforts to sustain the Attacks of his injured Pursuer and his Adherents.

Achmet, who reserved him for an exemplary Punishment, had forbid
any

any one to give him a mortal Blow; which gave him an Opportunity to prolong the Combat; but, a Wound which he received in his Sword-Arm obliging him to let fall his Weapon of Defence, he was loaded with Chains, and led into the City with the Accomplice of his Crime. The ruling Prince of *Fez* being informed of the Affair, determined himself to judge the Criminals. I know not on what Occasion they told him of the Sufferings I was to have undergone from the cruel Don *Ferdinand*; the Recital of my Woes excited his Compassion, and he ordered that I should be released from the Dungeon wherein I had been Imprisoned. He had sentenced the two Offenders to be thrown into the Flames; and was desirous I should be a Witness of this horrid Sight. A Pile was built in the Middle of a large Place, where a prodigious Crowd of People were assembled. This severe Decree was about to be

D 5 executed,

executed, when, with Tears in my Eyes, I threw myself at the Feet of the *Moorish* Prince.

Generous Prince, said I, with a Voice interrupted with Sighs, vouchsafe some Pity to my Tears, and either spare my Husband's Life, or let me perish with him. Have you then forgot, replied he, that this same Husband, in whose Behalf you endeavour to deprecate my Wrath, has been your cruel Executioner. Yes, Prince, said I, I would willingly forget it, by reflecting that, as his ever faithful Wife, he is entitled to all my Tenderneſs; and 'tis that Tenderneſs which will make me deſcend with him into the Grave, unleſs you condeſcend to reſtore him to my Prayers. No, no, returned he, think not that Compaſſion will ever make me forget what is due to Juſtice: I will however, in Pity to your Tears, abate ſomething of my Severity; a Death leſs painful ſhall be

be the Reward of the Traitor's Crimes.

He then made a Sign that they should strike off his Head, as well as that of *Zoraida*; which was performed before I could perceive it. But, what did I endure, at the Sight of such a horrid Spectacle! By the most violent Efforts, I endeavoured to get away from those who held me: I would have flung myself upon the Body of this unfortunate Lover, who notwithstanding all his Barbarity towards me, did not cease to be dear in my Esteem. But, some Slaves whom the Prince had ordered to carry me into his Palace, opposed my Passage, and executed their Master's Orders. For a whole Fortnight, nothing could calm the Grief that overwhelmed me; what Tears did I now shed for the Death of a Man, who, when he was alive, had drawn as many Floods from my Eyes! The Women however, who were ordered

to attend me, did what they could to alleviate my Sorrow. They congratulated me on the happy Change in my Fortune; incessantly reminding me, that I might expect every Thing from the Favour of the Prince, who they said had entertained for me the most inviolable Regard; it was not difficult for me to perceive it; the Diligence every one shewed in preventing my Desires, gave me Cause to apprehend that the Sight of my feeble Attractions had made some Impression on the Heart of the young Prince.

My Fears were but too well grounded. He was not long indeed before he made me a Declaration of the most passionate and tender Love; but, what afforded me some Consolation, was, that by his manner of speaking he gave me Reason to think I had nothing to apprehend from his Violence; he even assured me, that I should remain entirely free,
with

with respect to my Religion, the Duties of which he gave me full Liberty to practise secretly. However I might be interested to cultivate his good Graces, I could not however resolve to amuse him with Promises I never intended to fulfil. I recounted to him my Adventures, which I concluded with telling him, that the Vows I had made to God, engaged me to re-enter into that State of Life I had quitted; and ventured to ask him, if he would compleat that Goodness of which he had already given me such generous Marks, by permitting me to return into *Spain*. I could not expect he would comply with my Request. He accordingly told me frankly, that I must not hope he would so soon consent to be deprived of the Pleasure of seeing me; he would rather have Time to try, whether the repeated Proofs he should give me of his Love and Constancy, would not

here-

hereafter get the better of my Indifference.

I was under a Necessity of permitting his Addresses; but, what contributed to render them supportable, was, that he always confined his Love within the Bounds of Respect. I soon became the Dispenser of all his Favours, not one of which were denied to my Request. The Women, who were attach'd to my Service, made it their Study to prevent my Wishes. But these, alas! remained unsatisfied, for notwithstanding my apparent Felicity, I sigh'd Day and Night for the happy Moment that should restore me to my Country.

I had nevertheless a whole Year to wait, before I could see my Prayers fulfilled; for the Prince had never concealed from me, that I was not to hope he would consent to my Departure before the Time. The
only

only Motive of Consolation I had left, was, that I was certain he would punctually perform the Promise he had made me. Would he have kept his Word, if he had known what passed in my Heart?

Shall I make a sincere Confession? This Heart could not long continue insensible; the Prince was lovely; a Thousand agreeable Qualifications rendered him worthy of my Esteem; his Kindness deserved the utmost Acknowledgment; and how, with these lively Sentiments of Gratitude and Esteem, should I be wholly free from those of Love? What Violence consequently did I not undergo, in order to disguise the Effects of my Sensibility? How many Sighs, which would have betrayed me, was I not obliged to stifle? and how often had I not Reason to fear, that this amiable Prince would read in my Eyes the Perturbation of my Soul.

Thus

Thus was I exposed with him to a continual Conflict; but how could I think that my Zeal for Religion would allow me to join my Fortunes with an Unbeliever? I plainly foresaw it was to no Purpose to endeavour to convince him of his Error. Could I have expected that he would have sacrificed to his Love, his Title to a Crown? Or, that I would have sacrificed my eternal Salvation to any worldly Enjoyment.

Notwithstanding the secret Murmours of my growing Love, which every Day encreased, I waited with Impatience, till the Prince, whom I left despairing of Success, should permit me to return to my native Country. The Ardour, with which I redoubled my Sollicitations, to obtain my Liberty, sufficiently convinced him that nothing could shake my Constancy. He therefore yielded to my Entreaties; and that he might not be exposed to the Temptation

tion of detaining me, he did his Passion the Violence to deprive himself of the Pleasure of seeing me.

A few Weeks afterwards he gave Orders that Preparations should be made for my Departure. This generous Prince extended his Bounty so far as to let me know he thought it adviseable, that I should choose, from among the Women Slaves, a Fellow-Traveller; and that my Virtue might not be exposed to Danger, I should assume the Habit of a Cavalier.

I presently made choice of a Companion. I reposed all my Confidence in the amiable *Dorothea*, who, on her Part, was wholly devoted to my Interest. I was delighted with having it in my Power to bring her back again to her own Country, and we embarked together in a Merchant Ship bound for *Spain*, where we are now happily arrived, after
being

being made the Sport of the Winds and Waves.

Thus ended the Narrative of the Adventures of the fair *Miranda*. I returned her Thanks for her Complaisance; and as she had told me that she was determined to reassume the Veil, I asked her if she intended to make choice of the Convent from which she had escaped. No, indeed, Sir, answered she, for I have so terrible an Idea of the Monks, that I should prefer the Company of the most abandoned Libertines to those Wolves in Sheep's Cloathing.

I commended the Resolutions of this young Nun, and some Adventures of Monastic Gallantry, which I related to her, contributed not a little to confirm her therein. As she only waited to recover her Fatigue before she proceeded on her Journey, she was presently in a Capacity of returning to *Seville*. I
took

took my Leave of her; and I received a thousand Acknowledgments for the little Services for which she thought herself indebted to my Complaisance.

A Letter which I received from her, a little While after her Departure, informed me, that the Spiritual Directors of the Abbey from whence she escaped, had been shamefully expelled their Monastery; and that some pious Ecclesiastics had succeeded them. She seemed to rejoice at such an Exchange, and assured me that she had now no Objection to re-enter the same Convent, because she should fear no other Attacks upon her Virtue.

In the Answer that I returned her, I gave her Joy of this fortunate Alteration. I acquainted her, however, that in the Ecclesiastical as well as the Monastic State, there were several compleat Masters of Gallantry,

try, with this Difference only, that the one had more Delicacy than the other.

Whether she profited by my Information I could never learn; for I never received any Answer to my Letter.



T H E