
THE
HISTORY
OF
FELICIANA.

A Rich Merchant of *Cadiz*, named *Varnes*, had an only Daughter, in whom were united the most attractive Graces of the Body and Mind. The Time arrived when her springing Charms, and the Father's Wealth, created her a Number of Admirers, from the respective Motives of Love and Interest; none of which had had the good Fortune to captivate her Tendernefs. She was not however without Sensibility; but, without Doubt, no Object capable of pleasing her, had as yet presented itself. At length, the
Moment

Moment came, when an accomplished Cavalier triumphed over her Indifference.

Don *Lewis* (for that was his Name) beheld this fair *Spaniard* at Church, and conceived for her the most violent Passion. He declared his Affection for her in so persuasive and affecting a Manner, that *Felician*a (for that was the Name of this young Beauty) could not disguise a reciprocal Esteem. Don *Lewis* would not suffer her to part from him, till he had obtained a Promise to enjoy a second Time her Conversation; which she, without Difficulty complied with. He was desirous of Permission to accompany this young Lady home, but the Custom of the Country would not permit of such a Proceeding. He contented himself therefore with following her, to observe the House she entered; and the same Day he took a Lodg-
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ing directly opposite *Feliciano's* Window.

Piety, or rather Love, brought her often to Church, where she never failed to find the assiduous Don *Lewis*, with whom she had each Time a tender Conference. But the Violence of his Passion made him sigh for a more perfect Bliss. He longed for a Tete a Tete, where they might not be liable to Interruption; but how could he obtain it? He knew *Feliciano's* Prudence, and therefore had not as yet ventured to ask it. He at length took Courage to request it of her, but in vain; she told him, that she had a severe Mother, whose Vigilance it would be difficult to elude; and seriously told him, that if he was desirous of preserving her Esteem, he must never propose any Thing that would be in the least offensive to Decency.

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If your Sentiments, said she, are regulated by Honour and Probity, consider what those Titles exact from you; but perhaps, continued she, the Mediocrity of my Fortune will put a Stop to the Progress of your Passion; for I do not, like you, derive my Origin from illustrious Blood, and it is necessary there should be some proportion in Birth and Alliances, to make an Union happy.

For Heaven's sake, my dear Madam, replied the enamour'd Don *Lewis*, talk not at this Rate, for it offends my Love; mention not my Birth or my Distinction: In what a Light should I appear, when put in Competition with a Thousand amiable Qualifications, which in you so eminently shine? Love equals all. Believe me, I shall think myself the happiest of Men, if you permit me to demand you of your Friends in Marriage. I have not the least Objection, replied she; and I confess
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to you, that you could not have offered a more convincing Proof of the Sincerity of your Intentions. Therefore strive to obtain my Father's Consent; and be assured, that should he determine in your Favour, I should exceedingly rejoice at it. I will not conceal from you, added she, that Interest is his reigning Principle; but if he should oppose our Wishes, rest yourself satisfied, and I'll engage to tell you an infallible Method to overcome his Objections.

Don *Lewis*, transported with Joy at these flattering Hopes, returned a thousand Thanks to the dear Object of his Soul; and promised her that he would, the very next Day, wait on her Father, and pour out all his Heart before him. But, alas! he did not succeed as he expected. He flattered himself, that an Account of his Birth and Family would engage the old Gentleman to lend a

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favourable Ear to his Propositions ; but he was an utter Stranger to the Disposition of *Felicianas*'s Father. It was to very little Purpose to talk to him of ancient or illustrious Nobility. To obtain the Attention of Don *Varnes*, he must have said that he was nobly rich. But, unhappily for Don *Lewis*, it was quite otherwise. Therefore this unfortunate young Gentleman was politely thanked, for the Honour he intended the *Varnes* Family, who would be much better satisfied with a Ton of Gold, than with all the pompous Titles of Nobility.

It was not long before *Felicianas* was made acquainted with this shocking Answer. But she had a Stratagem in her Head, which she promised herself would render her Father more conformable to their Wishes. A Friar, named Father *Gregory*, she knew, had all his Confidence,

fidence, whose Directions he implicitly followed in every Thing.

This Friar, being the sole Director of all this rich Merchant's Family, had so insinuated himself into their good Graces, that nothing was done but in Obedience to his Commands. When he spake, he was listened to with the most respectful Attention, and no one ever dared to contradict what he pronounced: His Word was a Law. He was so extreme religious, in Appearance, that one would think it was Piety itself who had made use of him as an Instrument to express her Sentiments: His Lips never opened without a Lesson of Wisdom.

It must however be confessed, that the principal Part of his Conversation was addressed to *Feliciara*. She was the beautiful Plant which seemed to merit the utmost Care from this Sower of Religion; he therefore did

not neglect her, but delighted himself with long and frequent Interviews with her; and it may reasonably be supposed that Heaven and heavenly Things were not always the Subject of their Discourse.

He softened her rigid Virtue, and proportioned it to the Foibles of his young Pupil: She was amiable, and he did not fail to tell her so; but it was to Heaven, he said, all the Praises were due, for having bestowed on her such Charms, which none could behold without Astonishment. The word Love had not yet escaped his Lips; but he had frequently said what was an Equivalent to it, and, nothing but the Fear of alarming *Felician's* Virtue, and of lessening himself in her Esteem, made him wait the happy Moment, when he might, without Hazard, declare the Vivacity of his secret Flame.

Such

Such was this holy Father, that in the Space of a few Months, he merited, by an ignominious Death, to suffer the Chastisements due to his most horrid Crimes.

But, let us not anticipate his History. I shall return to the Chagrin with which Don *Lewis* was overwhelmed, at hearing the cruel Sentiments of *Feliciano's* Father.

The next Day he had some Conversation with the dear Object, who had before been informed of her Father's Answer to him. She re-kindled his Hopes, advised him to go to Father *Gregory*; and to neglect nothing that might engage him to espouse his Interest.

This Advice was eagerly followed by the passionate Don *Lewis*; he ran with a Lover's Haste, to visit this holy Man, with whom he was to interceed.

My Happiness, said he, my reverend Father, is in your Power, and it will cost you but a few Words to purchase it for me. Indeed you are mistaken, (replied this hypocritical Friend, in a pious Tone) for what Interest can such a poor Friar be supposed to have? Only promise me, replied Don *Lewis*, that you will not refuse me the Honour of your Protection, and I desire no more; I know, added he, the Deference which Don *Varnes* always pays to your Council: If I am not united to his fair Daughter, I shall ever be miserable. May I hope, my reverend Father, that you will be so generous as to speak in my Behalf?

I have not the Honour to be acquainted with you, replied the Friar, and you know the Holiness of my Profession will hardly permit me to meddle with profane Affairs. But,
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added he, is the Design you mention, of heavenly Inspiration? or, have you hearkened to a sensual Passion? How miserable will be your Case, my dear Sir, if any criminal Views should induce you to enter into a State of Life, which though holy in itself, would to you be a State of Damnation.

May it please your Reverence, replied Don *Lewis*, believe me, I can call Heaven to witness, that my Intentions, regulated by Piety and the strictest Honour, have nothing to reproach me with.

It is the Lord only, resumed the holy Father, that can fathom the Secrets of the Heart. He has commanded me to judge favourably of my Neighbour; and therefore, I rely upon your Word; and promise you, that I will endeavour to execute the Commission you have given me; but, that you may not be disap-

pointed, I tell you before-hand, that you must not promise yourself much Success from my impotent Endeavours.

We shall now see how he employed the Influence he had over the Father of this young Devotee. He had such tender Propositions to make her himself, that he would hardly solicit a Marriage which must be so repugnant to his Wishes; for the Jealousy of an Husband is much clearer sighted than the Vigilance of Parents: This cunning Friar, therefore, had rather see the fair *Felician*a in the House of a Father, than in that of a troublesome Husband.

He went therefore, the next Day, to make Don *Varnes* a Visit, and stepping with him into a private Room, he represented Don *Lewis* in the most disadvantageous Colours; and endeavoured to persuade him, that

that should he consent to an Union so disproportionable, the Ruin of his Family would be the certain Consequence.

By the Advice I now give you, added he, you may judge how much I have your Happiness at Heart ; but, that I may not be exposed to Don *Lewis's* Resentment, it will be necessary that I should, in the Presence of *Feliciano*, express myself in a very different Manner. I will pretend to plead in Behalf of her Lover, and you shall refuse to comply with my Request. At this I will appear extremely sorry, and such feigned Sorrow will protect me from Don *Lewis's* Anger.

From these Proceedings you may judge of this Friar's Sincerity ; and that our two Lovers could not avoid being the Dupes of this artful Impostor. Convinced that it was not through him that their Designs were

opposed, they thanked him for his Endeavours, and intreated a Continuance of them. He promised it, and told them, they might depend upon his Fidelity.

The fair *Feliciano*, in the mean Time, assiduously applied herself to cultivate the good Graces of her dear Director; who, on his Part, employed all Methods to make some Progress in the Heart of his young Devotee. Two Months rolled away, during which Time, he every Day promised himself the Gratification of his Wishes. A few small Favours were however the only Recompence of such delusive Promises. He expected all that she could grant, and what seemed to give him further Assurances, was, that the young *Feliciano* had some Time after a more pressing Occasion for his Assistance.

Don

Don *Sebastian*, Son of a wealthy Citizen of *Toledo*, came to *Cadiz*. Chance furnished him with an Opportunity of beholding the fair *Felician*a, the Sight of whose Charms, like Lightning, pierced him through the Heart, and he immediately became a passionate Lover. But how could he declare his Sentiments? he could see her but at Church, where the enraptured Don *Lewis* never failed to attend her.

Though ardent was his Love, yet still his Life was dear to him; and he was not much inclined to have recourse to Violence to oblige her Rival to give her up: He therefore contented himself with writing a Letter to his Mistress. Never was Passion more rapturously expressed than was his in his Letter; but they were to no manner of Purpose. *Felician*a did not even deign to write him an Answer.

Exasperated at this Treatment, he resolved to make Don *Varnes* a Visit; and how could he fail of being favourably received? He introduced himself by telling the old Gentleman that he was Heir to five Thousand Pounds per Annum. What persuasive Rhetoric was this to a Person of his Disposition! It was, as the Reader may imagine, no very difficult Matter to obtain his Consent; but that of *Feliciano* still remained to be won.

Her Father could hardly oblige her to receive a Visit from this odious Lover; and the Answer she made to his Proposal could not but deprive him of all manner of Hopes of obtaining her.

Indeed Sir, said she, this is a very odd Method of treating a Lover! The Inclination of the Person whom you desire to unite, is not to be regarded.

garded. The Fashion is, I perceive, to interceed with the Parents of a young Lady; and if the Suit obtains their Consent, the Daughter is to be forced into Compliance by their Authority! A fine Thing indeed!

Hold your Tongue, Sauce-box, cried the old Man, what, should a young giddy Girl be consulted in an Affair of this Consequence? I tell you, that this Gentleman is a Man of Merit. That may be, replied *Feliciano*, but it is a Species of Merit that I am quite insensible of. Oh! he'll make you sensible of it, replied the old Man, in a very short Time; therefore see that my Commands are comply'd with. But, my dear Father, resumed she, do not employ your Authority, in obliging me to mourn my Fate all the Remainder of my Life.

Believe me, Madam, resumed Don *Sebastian*, my Study shall be
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to render you happy : I will anticipate your Desires : Your Will shall be always mine.

Vouchsafe then, resumed she, to give me a small Proof of your Love, by desisting to execute the Authority given you by him who has given me Birth, and wait with Patience, 'till my Heart shall plead in your Behalf. But, suppose this Heart should be occupied by another Object, replied he. Suppose it is, answered she, in a disdainful Tone ; where it is fixed, it shall ever remain : and without waiting for an Answer, she retired.

What an obstinate Baggage ! says the old Man, but I shall find Means to reduce her to Compliance. Call again, Sir, in a few Days ; but first of all, make a Visit to my Daughter's Director ; she will be ruled by him ; beg him therefore to interceed in your Behalf ; and as he is a Man
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of Honour, if he gives you his Promise, you may confidently rely upon it. But, Sir, replied Don *Sebastian*, will you be kind enough to give me a Letter of Recommendation to this holy Father. It shall be done, said the old Man ; your Request shall be complied with.

Behold now, the pious Father *Gregory*, about to be employed in interceding for his new Rival ; and it may be easily conjectured with what Fidelity he will discharge his Commission. He first privately exhorted Don *Varnes* not to give his Daughter any Reason to complain of his tyranical Authority ; and then advised *Feliciano* to persist in her Refusal. He also made her promise to tell Don *Sebastian* that he had done him all the Services in his Power. For this pretended Fidelity he doubtless expected the Thanks of Don *Sebastian*, which he in a few Days received accordingly.

Thus

Thus the deceitful and cunning Monk, the secret Rival of Don *Lewis*, and Don *Sebastian*, strove to make them both the Dupes of their Credulity. But the Violence of his brutal Passion hurried him on to reap the Fruits of his Artifice.

The hapless *Feliciano* is shortly destined to become the innocent Victim of this Villain's Treachery. He thought it necessary to ensure Success, that he should rid himself of his two Rivals; and employed the following Stratagem, to be freed from their Importunities.

He dispatched a Letter to Don *Lewis*, urging him to come to him with the utmost Speed, on pretence of having Affairs of the greatest Importance to communicate to him; and did not long wait for his Arrival.

I have, Sir, said the Friar, the most agreeable News in the World to impart to you. I think I have at length prevailed on Don *Varnes*; for I have so often expatiated on your Deserts, that he is inclined to think as favourable of you as myself. He is not, however, entirely disposed to conform to your Desires. He complains that your Love detains you here too long, and causes you to neglect your Affairs; for you know, that the Views of this good Man are entirely lucrative; therefore if you would completely obtain his Favour, absent yourself only for a few Weeks, and I will not fail to improve your Absence to your Advantage; by giving him to understand that you no longer think and act like a giddy young Man, but extend your Vices to Futurity, and that you are less anxious for the Success of your Love, than for the Preservation and Improvement of your Fortune.

And

And I doubt not, but this Remonstrance, which I shall often repeat, will effectually remove his Objections.

Oh ! my reverend Father, cried Don *Lewis*, how greatly am I indebted to you, since it is to you alone I shall owe this Happiness of my Life. You see, replied the Friar, that this Absence which I advise is for your Felicity ; but, before your Departure, make a Visit to Don *Varnes*, acquaint him that your Affairs at home require your Attendance ; and I doubt not but I shall in a little Time have good News to tell you.

Don *Lewis* wanted Words to express his Acknowledgment. He took Leave of his zealous Advocate, recommending to him his Cause. And how could he intrust it in better Hands !

But

But now let us dismiss the credulous Don *Lewis*, and return to Don *Sebastian*, who will not long trouble Father *Gregory* with his Importunity.

The artful Friar gave him to understand, that it was proper to go to his Parents at *Toledo*, and engage them to write to Don *Varnes*, in his Behalf; and that some Persons of Distinction should also write to him; and that they should not omit to mention in their Letters a full Account of his present Fortune, and future Expectations.

But a Motive, which alone might induce him to depart, was, that the Friar gave him his Word of Honour (which must certainly be of great Moment) that in a Month's Time he should have succeeded, either in subduing the Heart of *Feliciano*, or
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engaging Don *Varnes* to force her to Obedience.

Thus Don *Sebastian* thought himself secure of Happiness either from Authority or Inclination. But before a Fortnight was elapsed, he was convinced of his Error.

No sooner had he arrived at *Toledo*, than his Parents, by whom he was tenderly beloved, wrote to Don *Varnes*, in the very Terms he dictated. They were imparted to Father *Gregory*, who, to forward his own Designs, advised *Felician's* Father to force her to comply, in spite of all Resistance.

His Advice was punctually followed. *Felician* received Orders to engage herself to Don *Ferdinand*; and only eight Days were allowed her to consider of it.

Alarmed

Alarmed with this cruel News she shed abundance of Tears, but to no purpose. Overwhelmed with Grief at her Father's Insensibility, she made Application to the holy Father to protect her.

It is all over with me! my good Father, said she, my Ruin is determined! A cruel unrelenting Parent has sentenced me to pass my unhappy Days in Despair, by forcing me to wed a Man who will ever be the Object of my Aversion.

Well, my dear Child, answered this hypocritical Friar, Heaven now presents you with an Opportunity to display your Virtue. I must confess, added he, this is a very great Mortification; but consider, the Kingdom of Heaven is to be won only by Violence.

Indeed,

Indeed, my reverend Father, I can never make this Sacrifice to my Duty: Protect me therefore from the Misfortune that threatens me; pity my Tears; give me this last Testimony of your Bounty; employ the Interest you have in my Father's Heart, by hindering him from making me a Sacrifice to his Avarice.

Say no more, answered he; I am affected to such a Degree, that there is nothing I would not do, to shew you how much I have your Happiness at Heart. But, alas! I am so well acquainted with your Father's Intentions, that it would be to no purpose to attempt to alter them. However, continued he, a Thought's come into my Head.—But stopping short, he said, I must not follow the Dictates of my Inclination, lest my Zeal to serve you should prove my Destruction. Dear reverend Father, cried she, let me conjure
 6 you

you not to abandon me to my sad Fate! my only Hope is in you.

I will not conceal from you, reply'd he, that you perplex me more than you imagine; but, my dear Child, I am interested in the Salvation of your Soul; and would you not greatly endanger it by being obliged to pass your Life with a Husband, who, far from meriting your chaste Love, might be the Object of your Indifference, or, even of your Hatred; so that I hope that God will prosper the Design he has inspired me with in your Favour. You shall hear it, added he, and then you will be able to judge, whether any Danger can deter me, when your Interest is in view. I will engage myself to bring you into the Arms of Don *Lewis*, whose Wisdom I have experienced. I will accompany you in your Flight. This will without Doubt excite your Father's

ther's Anger, but I shall find it no very difficult Matter to appease it.

O! my good Father! cried the credulous *Feliciano*, my whole Life shall be employed in testifying my Gratitude. You will thank me, replied this Monster of Iniquity, when I have secured your Happiness. Let us only deliberate on the necessary Measures for the Execution of our Design. First, get Possession of as much Money as you are able to carry; then come to me, and I will give you a Letter to a Woman, at whose House you must conceal yourself for one Day. Your Father, alarmed at your Absence, will doubtless imagine that Don *Lewis* has carried you off.

As soon as I think he is acquainted with his Misfortune, I will make him a Visit. He is old, infirm, and so taken up in his Affairs, that he will be unable to pursue you. I

will therefore offer to go in quest of your pretended Ravisher, and will engage to restore you to the Arms of your Father, who will not refuse me any Sum I shall ask, for the Prosecution of my Project. I will then come to you, and we will take the Advantage of the Darkness to conceal our Flight; and that we may not be in fear of Discovery, I think it is necessary you should take an Habit of our Order, which I have already left for that Purpose at the Woman's to which I shall direct you. See whether you can submit for a few Days to pass for a young Brother Novice.

The tender *Felicianà* immediately complied with this Proposition; and knew not how sufficiently to thank her dear Director for all the Pains he had been at, to snatch her from the Misfortunes which threatened her. But, alas! little did she expect those that were to befall her. She

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had just received her Lesson, and was unfortunately but too exact in putting it in Practice.

It may be imagined that Father *Gregory* did not, on his Part, neglect any Measures to perpetrate his Designs. He set out at Midnight, with his lovely Devotee, in the Form of a Franciscan Friar, and took the Road for *England*. But his Journey was not so long as he expected. After having made a Day's Journey, he stopped in a little Village, when he would fain have passed a Night with his pretended Brother. They told them at the Inn where they alighted, that they had but one Room for them; at which *Felician*a appeared extremely sorry, but the perfidious Monk rejoiced in secret.

By his Behaviour to his young Devotee, he sought to dispel her Chagrin; and during the whole Repast, did not fail frequently to congratulate her,

her, on the Happiness of seeing herself shortly in the Arms of her Lover.

The Repast ended, he proposed going to Bed. Though there were two Beds, she was extremely unwilling to undress herself. Her pious Director was not at all pleased with her scrupulous Behaviour, and reproached her for it in the severest Terms. What could *Felician*a do then but oblige him; but how dear was she about to pay for her Compliance?

Sleep had no sooner closed her Eyes, than she became the unfortunate Victim of her Companion's Brutality; nor could all her Efforts defend her from his Violence, since she strove in vain to escape from the Arms of this perfidious Monk, before he had compleated his infamous Desires.

Abandoned to the most poignant Grief, a Flood of Tears flowed from her Eyes ; and what contributed to her Despair was, that she foresaw that she must expect further Violence. But Heaven, the just Avenger of such Crimes, was about to take her Cause in Hand.

After she had been a second Time abused by her vile Associate, who, in order to appease her, promised within the Space of twenty four Hours, to bring her into the Arms of her Lover ; they mounted the Chaise together about break of Day ; but their Journey was very short. They had hardly travelled two Leagues, when they perceived at a Distance three Cavaliers, who were coming towards them, and whom they could not avoid meeting, otherwise than by returning the same Way they came. A secret Presage acquainted *Feliciano* that those were
Defenders

Defenders whom Heaven had brought to her Deliverance.

She was extremely overjoy'd to see them approach; but how was she surprized when they came near enough to be distinguished? Could any Rencounter be more fortunate! It was Don *Lewis* himself, attended by two Servants. Transported beyond Measure, she held out her Arms to him, and would have leap'd out of the Chaise to his Embraces. Generous Don *Lewis*, cried she, do I behold you again.—She could say no more.—The Wretch who accompanied her, held one Hand before her Mouth, and taking his Poniard in the other, he threatened to sacrifice her to his Fury, if she uttered a single Word more.

Monster, cried the unfortunate Don *Lewis*, jumping from his Horse, alarmed with *Feliciána's* Danger, what Rage transports you? either
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quit that murderous Weapon, or the Effusion of your Blood shall be the Chastisement of your Crimes. Well then, replied the ferocious Monk, come and take your Lover, but it shall be weltering in her Blood that I will restore her to you : In pronouncing which Words, the Villain plunged the Poniard in her Bosom, and then turned his guilty Hands upon himself; but Don *Lewis*, who was willing to preserve him for a more ignominious Death, hastily disarmed him, and hindered him from putting an End to his Life; he then ordered his Servants to bind him.

During this Time *Feliciána* was weltering in her Gore; her disconsolate Lover then made haste to stop the Bleeding, by binding up the Wound, which was happily not judged mortal. The Surgeon of the Village she came from, who visited her, pronounced her able to sustain

sustain the Fatigue of the Journey as far as *Cadiz*; thither she was re-conducted by her Lover, from whom she thought she ought not to disguise the Violence that had been committed on her Honour. Torments were therefore necessary to extort a Confession from Father *Gregory*. The Monks, his Brethren, in vain reproached him. He was delivered into the Hands of Justice, and in a few Days condemned to lose his Life upon a Scaffold, where he was rack'd alive upon the Wheel.

The Misfortune which had happened to the unfortunate *Feliciano* was not able to diminish the Affection of Don *Lewis*; he would have married her, but she thought it more prudent to bury in a Nunnery her apparent Disgrace; and she was no sooner recovered of her Wound than she put her pious Design into Execution.