
T H E

Lady's Drawing Room.

D A Y the F I F T H.

THE Story of *Marilla* had made so great an Impression on the Minds of those that heard it, that, the next Time we had the Honour of attending *Ethelinda*, the Conversation was very much engross'd by it. *Bellimante* could not forgive *Carlos* for not renewing his Addresses to her after she became a Widow, 'till *Acasto* acquainted her, that he liv'd but a small Time after she had rejected him. *Philetas* accus'd her Relations of Imprudence as well as Cruelty, in not protecting her from those Distresses, which render'd any false Step she might have been guilty of more conspicuous, as People are under no Restraint in their Censures of an unfortunate Person. *Ethelinda* said, she thought that to preserve from sinking a Woman of such real Merit was a Duty incumbent on all those, who were even barely acquainted with her. As it is utterly impossible, said *Dorinthus*, a Mind at once so delicate and resolute

resolute could be subdued by any ordinary Methods, I should be sorry to be assur'd there could be a Man vile enough, after having triumph'd in the Manner *Acasto* seems to apprehend, to leave so glorious a Conquest desolate, and exposed to the Insults of any future Spoiler.

Ah, *Dorinthus*, said *Miranda*, the Pride of having it in your Power to subdue, is often the most powerful Excitement your Sex has in addressing ours ; and, tho' Vanity is a Vice charg'd wholly on us, the Disregard many Women have been treated with, when they have no longer any Thing to grant, sufficiently proves, that the Men have at least an equal Share.

True, my Dear, rejoin'd *Bellimante*, and I would have every Woman consider, when closely press'd by a belov'd Adorer, and perhaps too by her own secret Inclinations, that, if she yields, she but *shares* in the Joy, while the *Remorse*, the *Shame*, and whatever ill Consequences may ensue, is all *her own* : The proud Triumpher has no Ruin of Character, no Loss of Fame to glare him in the Face, and, having gain'd what he desir'd, forgets the Difficulties by which it was attain'd. — His soft Professions, — his Vows of everlasting Constancy, — his well-counterfeited Agonies. — All the innumerable Artifices he put in Practice to seduce, are then no more remember'd, and cold Indifference is the best of what succeeds Possession. Since then all the Evil, of giving way to a Tendernefs of this Sort, is on the Woman's Side, how little Thought must she have
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who encourages it? as a late celebrated Poet justly says ;

*Such is the Fate unhappy Women find,
And such the Curse entail'd upon our Kind,
That Man, the lawless Libertine may rove,
Free and unquestion'd, thro' the Wilds of Love :
While Woman, Sense and Nature's easy Fool,
If poor weak Woman swerve from Virtue's Rule ;
If, strongly charm'd, she leave the thorny Way,
And in the softer Paths of Pleasure stray ;
Ruin ensues, Reproach and endless Shame,
And one false Step entirely damns her Fame :
In vain with Tears the Loss she may deplore,
In vain look back to what she was before,
She sets, like Stars that fall, to rise no more.*

I am therefore apt to imagine, continued this charming Lady, that, if *Marilla* did fall this Way, her Misfortunes must first have impair'd her Understanding.

A fine Understanding, Madam, answer'd *Philetas*, and all the Accomplishments, which *Acasto* enumerated as center'd in this unfortunate Lady, are not always a sufficient Guard against the Power of Love. I believe you will allow, that *Berinthia* was possess'd of them in as great a Degree as most of her Sex : Yet how did an ill-fated Passion sway her ! How unhappy have two illustrious Families been made by the little Government she was able to preserve over her Inclinations ! This is too known a Truth ; but as the Particulars of the Affair may not have reached the Ears of this Company, and have been lately related to me,
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by one who could not be deceiv'd in them, nor is capable of deceiving others ; perhaps the Repetition may not be disagreeable. — As he address'd these last Words to *Ethelinda*, she instantly reply'd, Nothing I should desire more than to be fully inform'd of that Adventure ; because many Things, which heard in the gross give us a shocking Idea of the Persons concern'd, are often very much alleviated by a perfect Knowledge of the Circumstances ; and I hope this of *Berinthia* may furnish me at least with some Excuses for her Conduct.

I am sorry, Madam, to say, resumed *Philetas*, that nothing but the uncommon Perfections of the Object of her Passion can be any Sort of Plea for the Errors it has made her guilty of ; but I will not postpone the Curiosity I have excited, or anticipate any of those Remarks, which this Company cannot fail of making on what I shall relate.

The Story of *B E R I N T H I A*.

SHE was marry'd, said *Philetas*, as every one knows, extreamly young to *Leontius*, a Nobleman whose Birth, Fortune, and personal good Qualities render'd him every way deserving her : She had never given the least Testimonies that her Heart felt any Repugnance in disposing her Hand ; and for a Time

Time they were look'd upon as a Pair perfectly happy in each other. This is most certain, that *Leontius* lov'd, I may say doated, on her, with the utmost Profusion of Fondness ; and, if she did not return it with altogether so much Violence, it rather seem'd as if she were restrain'd more by the Modesty of her Sex, than Want of Inclination. The least penetrating Eye might discern, that all she then knew of the tender Passion was in his Favour, as he preferr'd the Pleasures of a Country-life, to any the Town afforded, (possibly that he might with less Interruption enjoy the Society of his ador'd Spouse) she never regretted continuing there, even in that Season of the Year, when Fields and Meadows lose all their Beauties, and indeed in every Thing seem'd to like as he did, and to have no other Desires than what were inspir'd by him.

They were in this Retirement, when *Amarantha* came down to pass some Weeks with her :—Fatal Friendship !—Destructive Visit !—Equally ruinous to the Peace of both !——*Celadon* at that Time made his Addresses to that Lady, and, under Pretence of paying his Respects to *Leontius*, follow'd her thither, in order to prosecute his Love : The engaging Qualities and agreeable Person of this young Nobleman are too conspicuous to all, who have ever seen him, to stand in need of any Description ; so I shall only say, that they receiv'd a considerable Addition from that Fire, which animated his Eyes in Presence of his ador'd *Amarantha*. *Berinthia* had often seen him before, but had never given herself the Trouble
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to examine into his Merits with that unhappy Distinction she now did. — The tender and passionate Things which she was often Witness of, tho' utter'd to another, sunk into her Soul, and had all the Effect on her he aim'd to inspire in her fair Friend: Here did she suck in the delicious Poison, which by swift Degrees diffus'd itself thro' all her Veins, and became the Bane of her Honour and all the Happiness of *Leontius*.

Celadon, little suspecting what had happen'd in her Heart, would frequently entreat her good Offices for him to *Amarantha*, and she as often promise him; which Promises she in Truth perform'd, but it was to gratify the Pleasure she took in speaking of him, that made her so readily comply. — 'Tis likely indeed that the excessive Praises she bestow'd on him went no inconsiderable Way in influencing *Amarantha* in his Favour, tho', being of a very reserved Temper, she carefully concealed the Inclination she had to reward his Passion. The Indifference, with which she always answered *Berinthia*, flattered her with a Hope it would never be a Match; for, tho' married herself, the Thoughts of seeing him so was a Dagger to her Soul; at last, however, that Lady took her Leave, and he obtained her Permission to conduct her to Town. But the terrible Inquietudes *Berinthia* felt at losing his Presence, join'd with the aggravating Circumstance of his being gone with her Rival, left her no room to hope she could live without him: She no longer found any Satisfaction in obliging her Husband, nor any Pleasures

tures in a Country-life : — Her once gay and lively Temper was converted into a fullen Melancholy. — She would sit whole Hours bury'd as it were in Thought ; and, when interrupted, answer with a Peevishness which shew'd, if she were capable of any Pleasure, it was only in her own Meditations.

The ever assiduous *Leontius* observed this Change in her with an infinite Concern, tho' far from imputing it to the real Cause, or having any Guess at his Misfortune, and endeavour'd, by all the tender Demonstrations of Love in the Power of Man to give, to alleviate her Discontent. But she, insensible to every Thing but the Idea of the too charming *Geladon*, and, impatient to see again the dear Original of that enchanting Image he had left in her Breast, pretended, that the Country-air did not agree with her Constitution, and told him, That, as she had suffered the Decay it brought upon her in Complaisance to him, she expected he would have so much for her as to permit her to quit it, at least for a Time : Not, said she, that I would have you go to a Place you are averse to ; for, as soon as I am a little recover'd, I will come here again.

As it was impossible for her to declare any Inclination he was not glad to gratify, he was far from opposing this ; but could not be prevailed upon to stay behind her, imagining, no doubt, but his Company would still add to the Contentment she expected to find in *London*. — Mistaken Man ! Could any Thing have embitter'd the Pleasure of this Journey, it would have been his partaking it ; but this she was

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oblig'd to dissemble, and every Thing being got ready for their Departure, with as much Expedition as possible, they set out from their Country-seat, to which they never return'd together more.

As they drew nearer *London*, the very Thoughts she was beginning to breath the same Air with that of the ador'd *Celadon*, restored great Part of that Spirit, which so lately seem'd banished from her languid Eyes: *Leontius*, with Pleasure, saw the Alteration, and told her, That he doubted not but she would be soon recover'd ; at which she sigh'd, and said, She wish'd that she were not already too far gone.

Too far, indeed, in that worst Distemper of the Mind, a lawless Flame ; but, as he took these Words only in a literal Sense, and had no Notion of the Meaning contained in them, he assured her, she should want no Means of Relief. Thus did they entertain each other ; He, venting the cordial Affections of his Soul in the most affectionate Terms ; She, forcing herself to return his Endearments with a cold Civility, till they arriv'd in Town, where the first News they heard was of the Marriage of *Celadon* and *Amarantha*, a Thing long before agreed upon by the Friends of both, and now consummated.

This Intelligence, tho' of a Thing she expected, gave her the most poignant Anguish ; but when she was told the new married Pair were come to visit her, she was in such Confusion, as might have given some Suspicion of the Cause, had not the fixt Opinion, that she laboured under some bodily Indisposition, prevented any one from diving any further. — She

was once or twice about excusing herself from seeing them, under Pretence of her ill Health ; but then the extream Impatience she had, to feast her Eyes with the Sight of her ador'd *Celadon*, made her resolve, rather than be depriv'd of that, to endure the Company of her now hated, 'because happy Rival : Tho' the Constraint she suffered, in receiving them in any Manner befitting their's, or her own Character, may more easily be imagined than described.

The first Shock over, she began, however, to be somewhat less perplex'd ; her good Sense representing to her, That, as she was not in a Condition to receive his honourable Vows, they might as well be given to *Amarantha*, as to any other ; and her Virtue sometimes remonstrating, that she ought to use her utmost Efforts to extinguish a Passion not only unwarrantable, but hopeless, she set herself in good Earnest about it, or at least thought she did so. Happy had she been, could she have accomplish'd so glorious a Work : — But, alas ! the Measures she took were too weak for such a Task, and served only more to ensnare her in the fatal Labyrinth. — Instead of shunning his Conversation, as she might easily have done, by returning into the Country, she flatter'd herself, that, as he knew not her Sentiments of him, she might indulge the Pleasure of seeing him without a Crime, and that, by being much with him, she should in Time convert her Passion into a kind of sisterly Affection for him. This, as I was informed by one who had it from herself, was a Method she ima-

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gined would succeed ; it seemed, however, the most easy, and what she was resolv'd to pursue.

To this End, Parties of Pleasure were continually form'd, in which *Celadon* was always sure to make one, and sometimes, for Decency's Sake, *Amarantha*. As for *Leontius*, the little Delight he took in any of the Town-Amusements, was a sufficient Excuse for her not to press him over much ; so that she had frequently the Opportunity of being attended to the Mall, the Opera, Play, and Masquerade, by the Object of her Affections, without the Presence of any one who might have been a Check on her Behaviour. Her Actions, however, were perfectly innocent for a Time, whatever her Thoughts were ; but every one knows the Danger of too great an Intimacy between Persons of a different Sex. — So free a Conversation, with one of the loveliest Women in the World, and the Marks of Friendship she treated him with, by Degrees inspir'd him with Desires more warm than was consistent with his Vows to *Amarantha*, which, join'd to some little Disputes with that Lady, occasion'd by a less Conformity of Tempers than could be wished, made him never think himself so happy as in *Berinthia's* Company. The Tendernefs he now began to feel for her, rend'ring him a more close Observer of her Looks, soon discovered to him that he was not indifferent to her ; and, thus embolden'd, he hesitated not one Day, as they were sitting alone together in her Chamber, to declare, how happy he should have thought himself had Fortune put him in the Place of *Leontius*. As he
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look'd full in her Eyes while he disclos'd himself, he saw there all the Tokens of a great Surprise, but it was a Surprise of Joy, not Indignation. — She blush'd, hung down her Head, and with a Sigh answered, It was Pity that a State, instituted by Heaven, should often be the Means of rendering those who enter'd into it miserable, as, said she, is but too frequently the Case.—You see before your Eyes an Example of it, Madam, replied he, since it deprives me of all Hope of being favour'd, in the Manner I could wish, by the charming *Berinthia* ; yet she herself doubtless has no Reason to regret her Lot !—Ah, *Celadon* ! cry'd she, looking on him with Eyes swimming in the most tender Languishments, How little do you know what passes in my Heart ! — Yes, I am one of those unhappy Persons who know all the Discontents, but nothing of the Joys of Marriage.—I was disposed of to *Leontius* at an Age when I was incapable of judging what was valuable in Mankind, and I have since had Eyes but too distinguishing for my eternal Peace. — Can there be a Man, said he, taking her Hand which trembled at his Touch, so blest to be preferred in your Esteem to *Leontius* ? O ! proceed, continued he, in the kind Confidence you have begun to place in me, and tell me, Is there a Possibility he can be insensible or thankless ?—Press me no more, interrupted she, in an extream Confusion, I have already said too much, unless you know how to pity, by your own, those Agonies of Heart which force my Tongue to speak.—Ah, *Berinthia* ! answer'd he, think you I am so poor a Judge of all that's

charming in your Sex, as not to feel for you all that a despairing Passion can inflict?——
 Yes, Madam, let your Tendernefs for this happy, nameless He be ever so transcendant, mine will more than equal it.——Heavens, cry'd he, that for a Moment I could assume the Shape, the Voice of this so favoured Rival, and, undisdain'd, pour out my Vows of everlasting Love on this soft, yielding Breast. He had the Temerity to catch her in his Arms as he spoke these last Words, and prest her to him with such a Fervor as almost stopt her Breath; all the weak Resolutions she had form'd of preserving her Virtue, while she indulg'd her Love, were now swallow'd up in an Abyfs of Rapture, and she had Power to say no more than, *O Cladon!* I am lost!—Too well, O dear Enchanter of my Soul! you know the guilty Secret:——Too well are acquainted for whose Almighty Charms I have learn'd to hate *Leontius*.——But *Amarantha!* *Amarantha*, pursued she, as soon as she could a little recover herself, has too much Merit to be eclips'd by me. —— Name not *Amarantha*, thou Idol of my Soul, cry'd he; could I have once hop'd Fate had a Blessing, such as I now enjoy, in Store for me, my fond Heart had never thrown away a Wish on her, or aught but the adorable *Berinthia!* *Berinthia*, in whom the Charms of her whole Sex are united. All the Time he was speaking he pursued every Measure impatient Love inspires for the Completion of his Conquest, which at length was as perfect as either of them wished.

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Having thus ventur'd to break thro' the Bonds of Honour, Gratitude, and Duty, all Care of Reputation seem'd beneath Regard; wholly taken up, and transported with each other's Charms, they abandon'd themselves to all the Extravagance of their unbounded, wild Desires, giving such publick Testimonies of the Flame with which they mutually were possess'd, that none who saw them but must read it in their every Look and Action. *Leontius* was the last that would believe his Misfortune: As for the injur'd *Amarantha*, she spoke loudly of it, and not only upbraided her Husband in Terms which, I must say, were not the most proper to reclaim him, but also proclaim'd his Injustice in all Companies: Tho' his good Sense could not but remind him he was guilty of a Fault, yet he could not bear to hear it repeated by others, whom he look'd upon to have no Concern in his Affairs; and this occasion'd such continual Dissention between them, that it was impossible for any two People to live more disagreeably together.

Leontius, confirm'd by a thousand Circumstances, and most by the careless Airs with which *Berinthia* reply'd to any Question he put to her on that Head, was prevail'd upon to set Spies on her, in order to surprize her with her Lover, and then to sue out a Divorce. Nothing could be more easy than to make such a Discovery: He was very soon inform'd they were at a little retir'd House, some few Miles out of *London*, which *Celadon* had hir'd on Purpose for their Meeting: On which, tho' they say much against his secret Inclination, he

went, accompany'd by some Friends, who were to serve as Witnesses. *Celadon*, however, had Notice of their Approach, and made his Escape ; but the Warning arriv'd not timely enough for *Berinthia* to do so too, and, disdain- ing to conceal herself, as probably she might have done, receiv'd her injur'd Lord with as much Intrepidity in her Countenance, as there was Grief in his. Ah ! Madam, said he, I find the Country has Charms for you when they are not poison'd by the Presence of *Leontius*.—People's Mind, will alter, answered she : I may approve that at some Times, which at others I may detest ; but a jealous Husband is what I would fly any where to avoid.—How little I deserve that Name, resumed he a little warmly, the World can answer for me, who saw with what Unwillingness I was brought to believe a Misfortune you have taken too little Care to conceal. — But, continued he, 'tis Proofs which must now condemn or absolve those Suspicions the Imprudence of your Conduct has excited. A scornful Smile was all the Reply she made, and that Moment he, and those he brought with him, went out of the Room to search the House, not doubting but they should there find *Celadon*, as they certainly would have done, had not *Berinthia*, indolent in every Thing that regarded herself, but anxious for her Lover, and expecting that some time or other they might be betray'd, obliged him to have always a Horse ready saddled, which, on the first Notice given by a Scout at a little Distance from the House, he might mount, and get off by a back Way.

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This she had two Views in ; first, to prevent a Quarrel, the Event of which was uncertain ; and the next, to deprive *Leontius* of Proofs sufficient to procure a Divorce ; for, tho' she wished nothing more than to live in an eternal Separation, she knew, if it were brought about that Way, the Law would leave great Part of her Fortune in his Hands ; and besides, give him a Power of prosecuting her belov'd *Celadon* : To hinder either of these Evils she afterwards had recourse to an Invention infinitely less to be forgiven, than that which the Impetuosity of her Passion had made her guilty of.

After *Leontius* and his Friends had quitted the House, disappointed of the Proofs, but convinc'd in their Minds of her Dishonour, she went to meet *Celadon* at a Place they had before agreed upon, and from thence to a private Lodging, determined to return no more to her Lord : Neither did he make any Overtures to her for that Purpose, being advis'd to the contrary ; his House was open to receive her, in Case she thought fit to come, and the Law required no further Condescension on his Part.

But this Lady, who, as I said before, had other Views, sent for all her Friends, and told them, That the ill Treatment she had met with from *Leontius* had oblig'd her to leave him, and withal to reveal a Secret which should ever have been bury'd in her Breast, had he behaved to her with Civility ; and this was, that, by Nature being render'd incapable of having any Children, he had marry'd her only with a View her large Estate should devolve on

his Family, which, said she, would be so great an Injustice to my Kindred, that I could not die in Peace if accessory to it.

Thus, making it their Interest to assist her in procuring a Divorce, every Thing was preparing on her Side to bring in a Bill of *Impotency* against her Husband ; and on his, to summon what Evidences they could to form one of *Adultery* against her ; but this unthought of Accusation put a Stop to all their Proceedings ; for, if the Marriage was unlawful, he had no Right to call her Actions to Account.

The Town was very much divided in their Opinions concerning the Truth of this Affair ; but I believe the greater Part, if we take in the Ladies, were on *Berinthia's* Side, few of them being unable to believe one of their own Sex, and especially one of *Berinthia's* Birth and Education, could be guilty of such a Forgery ; and this serv'd as some Sort of an Excuse for the Intimacy between her and *Celadon*, which they grew so publick in, that none could make a Doubt of it. That Nobleman, impos'd upon, as well as the rest of the World, by her Accusation of her Husband, became the more endear'd to her for the Wrong he imagin'd she had sustained, and poor *Amarantha* was in a manner quite abandon'd by him.

Lcontius, whom all the Certainty of her Infidelity could not entirely make her Enemy, became impatient at this second Insult, and, as there was no other Way to vindicate his Character from the Aspersions she had so cruelly cast on it, submitted to an Examination of
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the Truth, by some Persons appointed for that Purpose, and who were on Oath to report according to the best of their Judgment, without being prejudiced in Favour of either Party. These Gentlemen all agreeing, That he was, as he had ever been suppos'd, perfectly capable of having Issue, the Calumny fell immediately to the Ground, and the fair, treacherous Author of it was condemn'd by those who before had most espous'd her Cause. *Celadon*, who had more than any one taken care to inform himself of the Truth of the Business, was as fully convinced as the rest, and no sooner was so, than all the Charms of *Berinthia* could not preserve his Affection. — Instead of the long suffering, injur'd Wife, as he before believ'd her, he now found her the Hypocrite, the Deceiver, the unjust Accuser, and the most ungrateful, and unprovok'd Defiler of the Marriage-Bed. Those Beauties, which had attracted his Admiration, were now so much disfigur'd, by the discover'd Deformity of her Mind, that he became almost to hate what he so lately had ador'd. He broke off all Conversation with her, was reconcil'd to *Amarantha*, and ashamed of having wrong'd her; nor could all the Endeavours, and Artifices of the fair Deluder tempt him to her Arms again.

Leontius, now fully cleared in the Opinion of the whole World, neglected nothing to do himself Justice, and doubtless would soon have obtain'd the Sanction of the Law for a Divorce, from a Person who had already divorc'd herself from his Love and Bed, if her sudden Death had not sav'd the Pleaders the Trouble,
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and put an End to all his Shocks on her Account.

This, Madam, continued *Philetes*, was the Progress and End of an Amour, which indeed, from its very Beginning, had the Guilt of a double Wrong, and could promise no better Consequences ; and I wish that my Account could furnish more Matter of Excuse for the Behaviour of that unhappy Lady.

I think, said *Ethelinda*, Fate has been very kind in taking her from the World, before her Disgrace receiv'd its full Completion ; and, since it has happen'd so, the greatest Act of Friendship that can be paid her, is not to mention her, and endeavour to forget there ever was such a one, as much as possible.

This Age, cry'd *Lucillius*, has been strangely fruitful in Inventions such as *Berinthia's* : A Lady, who brings a large Fortune to her Husband, and afterwards takes it into her Head to like another Man better, has only to excuse herself by presently accusing him of a natural Impediment ! — Would it not therefore be a very wholesome Law to oblige both Parties to make Trial of each other before the Ceremony is perform'd, which costs so much Time and Money to render afterwards invalid ?

The Gentlemen of the long Robe would scarce thank you for this Proposition, reply'd *Dorinthus* ; but I cannot help agreeing with you, That we have had so many Instances of the Ladies taking this Method of recovering their Portions and Persons, as makes it in a manner necessary some new Forms of securing them to ourselves should be found out.

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Who that saw the Marriage of *Horatius* and *Rosinda* ; He, justly accounted a Man of the strictest Honour, best Sense, and greatest Accomplishments ; She fam'd for an uncommon Sweetness of Disposition, and exemplary Virtue : Who, I say, that had seen such a Pair united, but would have believ'd they had been so for Life ? And yet, how short a Time was he become a Husband, before his elop'd Wife left him to mourn her Loss in a widow'd Bed ! And for whom were her Affections thus perverted from their right Channel ? Why, for an Object as inferiour to her noble Spouse, as she was in Beauty to a certain Lady who had been rejected for her Sake, and who, constant to her first Flame, still preserves the tenderest Wishes for him she could not inspire with Love.

Who that knew with what a real Satisfaction the fair *Amiana* was conducted to the Altar, and pledg'd her Vows to *Lisimore*, but would have been assur'd she never could have thought a second Object worthy to supplant him ? Yet, after a few Months, did she not fly his House, nay, to be secure from his Pursuit, the Kingdom, and contented herself to live in a foreign Clime, mean and obscure, with a Man low born and bred, and who had no one Thing in him to excuse the Folly she committed ? And have not both these Ladies had Recourse to the same Stratagem *Berinthia* made use of, to free themselves from a Tie no longer agreeable to them ?

Many Examples of this Kind, indeed, have happen'd, said *Aristo* ; but they have been yet less

less astonishing to me, than some Accounts I have lately had of *Elismonda* : A Lady educated in the severest Principles of Virtue, and of so timid a Modesty, that the most respectful Salute from any but her Lord would call the Blood into her Cheeks : Yet, in a short Time after her Marriage, she seem'd to take a Kind of Pride in making the World believe her Husband was the last Man in it she thought worthy of her ; and, when reprov'd by a near Relation of her Husband's, and at last menac'd with a Bill of Divorce, had the Front to reply, That there were certain Occasions which allow'd a Wife the same Privilege, and that she, perhaps, might make no Scruple to claim it.

Most People, however, said *Bellimante*, believ'd her innocent in Fact, and had not one Transaction after she went abroad given the Lye to that good Opinion, her Lord would have retain'd the whole Blame of the Discord between them.

I am far from justifying *Elismonda*, said the sweet *Ethelinda* ; but if there are in Nature any Excuses to be made for a Wife, who offends in the Manner she has done, they doubtless all are on her Side. She was in the Bloom of Beauty when made a Bride ; her Soul gentle, generous, and as entirely free from all Art and Affectation as her exterior Form. A thousand good Qualities gave the World a Promise she would be one of its chief Ornaments ; nor would her Actions, I am confident, ever have bely'd that Hope, had she been marry'd to a Person who had known the Value of her, and treated her according to her Merits ; but
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the Delicacy of her Way of thinking ill agreed with the rough unpolish'd Behaviour of her Lord :——She had too much Good-Sense not to perceive his Want of it ; and her extreme Youth render'd her incapable of reflecting, That unworthy as he was, yet, being her Husband, it was her Duty to endeavour at least to be blind to his Follies, and patient with his Infirmities. As to the Amour, they tell us she enter'd into after leaving *England*, when we reflect it was with the most lovely Prince that Nature ever fram'd——a Prince, whose admirable Qualities, both of Mind and Body, extort Esteem from even his worst Enemies, it will scarce deserve Wonder, that she should be but too sensible of them. ——How often have I seen the most severely Virtuous of our Sex languish before the Picture of that young Hero, and cry out, *O God ! was any thing ever so enchanting !*——If *Elismonda*, therefore, who saw the dazzling Original at her Feet——who heard his Wit, was Witness of his every Perfection, did yield to an irresistible Impulse in Favour of his Suit, who will not say, her Foible merited not Excuse.

Circumstances indeed, reply'd *Aristo*, make a wide Difference in the Errors occasion'd by Love : Had the Husband of *Elismonda* treated her in a Manner worthy of her, she had certainly never left him, or if Chance had brought her to the Presence of the lovely Prince you mention, her whole Stock of natural Softness being already fix'd on the Person allotted for her, even the transcendent Qualities of her illustrious Lover had made no other Impres-

Impression than that of Respect and Admiration.

I have always absolv'd *Elismonda* in my own Mind, said *Lucillius*, not only for what might happen between her and that Prince ; but also for other Faults of the same Nature, which I have heard laid to her Charge, merely on the Score of her Husband's Brutality.

It must be own'd, said *Dorinthus*, some Men's Humours are intolerable ; and when we find a Woman, whose Conduct has been unblameable before Marriage, commit any Irregularities after, we ought to be well assured of his Behaviour before we lay the Blame wholly on her.

What *Dorinthus* has observ'd, rejoin'd *Bellimante*, puts me in mind of the most amiable and unfortunate *Semanthe*, that great Example of suffering Virtue, and Martyr of a too rigid Duty.

Ah, *Bellimante*, said *Ethelinda*, you have often began to relate the History of that accomplish'd Lady, but some unlucky Interruption has still depriv'd me of the Pleasure I propose in knowing the Particulars which brought her to so untimely a Fate. If you will now favour me so far, I believe you will also lay an equal Obligation on the whole Company.

Whatever is enjoin'd by *Ethelinda*, reply'd that beautiful Lady, cannot be otherwise than approv'd by every one ; Apologies therefore would be impertinent, because needless, and but delay fulfilling your Request, so I shall do it in as brief a Manner as the Circumstances I have to relate will admit of.

Here

Here she paus'd a little, to recollect the Passages she was about to deliver, and then, addressing her Discourse to *Ethelinda*, began in these Terms.

THE HISTORY

OF

ADRASTUS, SEMANTHE,

and *APAMIA.*

YOU all know, said she, that *Adrastus* is more indebted to the Gifts of *Fortune* than to those of *Nature*, for the Respect paid him by the World ; yet some, who look on him with less distinguishing Eyes, allow him a fine Gentleman : It is certain he has a gay, polite Behaviour, can give his Opinion agreeably enough on the Amusements in vogue at present, goes often to Court, and can tell you what Dish the King eats ofteneft on, and when his Majesty has a good or bad Night, as well as his Cook or Physician : Hunts with Lord *Orford*, and of late has the Honour of being intimate with Lord and Lady *Bath* : Besides this, he dances well, and can play some of *Handel's* Tunes on the Harpsicord and Violin.

These Perfections were so enchanting to *Apamia*, that he no sooner made his Addresses to her, in common with all the Ladies he saw, whom

whom he found young and dress'd well, than she thought herself the happiest Creature upon Earth ; and endeavour'd, by pretending the warmest Passion for him, to secure him from all her Rivals : As he has the most tender Affection for his own Person, it was indeed natural for him to like her best who seem'd most to admire him, and her Artifices succeeded so well, as to engage his Promise to make her his Wife ; but, as there was not the least Probability his Father would ever be brought to give his Consent, there was an absolute Necessity the Ceremony of Marriage should be deferr'd 'till his Death : But Love could not attend the tedious Form.—*Adrastus* was impatient for the Completion of his Desires, and *Apania*, fearing a Denial would give him Cause to call in question the Sincerity of her Passion, yielded her Honour into his Possession, on his solemn Vow of restoring it to her before the Altar, as soon as Circumstances would give him Leave to do it, without involving them both in Ruin.

But, while they were indulging their mutual Wishes, the Father of *Adrastus* was carrying on a Treaty of Marriage for him with *Semanthe*. The Parents of that excellent Lady having no Objections to make against his Proposals, and she, all Obedience to their Will, and unpossess'd with any Idea of Love, not in the least opposing it, every Thing was agreed upon before *Adrastus* was told there was such a Design in Agitation. When inform'd of it, and commanded to visit *Semanthe* on that Score, he was neither pleas'd at the Happiness intended for him; nor shock'd at the Injustice
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he must be guilty of to *Apamia* ; but, quite insensible of either, set himself about obeying his Father, and address'd that young Beauty in Phrases he had too much accusom'd himself to, to be at any Loss for. She, who had never before been permitted to hear the Sound of Love, took all his Common-place Professions as so many Testimonies of a real Passion, and, looking on him as the Man whom it would be soon her Duty to love, cherish'd the most favourable Inclinations for him.

As every Thing was previously determin'd, the Days of Courtship lasted no longer than was necessary for the getting ready Clothes and Equipages, and the Marriage was solemnized with a Pomp suitable to their Quality.

Apamia, to whom *Adrastus* had never communicated the Affair, and, to prevent her from hearing of it by any other Hand, had prevail'd on her to go into the Country, with a Promise of coming shortly to her, knew nothing of any such intended Marriage, 'till the publick Papers inform'd her of the Consummation : The Surprize and Indignation she was in may more easily be conceiv'd than related : She instantly order'd her Coach to be got ready, and was just going to step into it in order to come to *London*, when *Adrastus*, who thought it best to meet the first Fury of her Resentment in that Retirement, came down according to his Promise. The first Words she accosted him with were, Monster ! Traitor ! To which he made no Reply, but gently taking her in his Arms, oblig'd her to turn back and go with him into the House, where, as soon as they were enter'd, she

she discharg'd a whole Volley of Reproaches on him.—Conscious how much he merited them, he suffer'd her to go on without offering any Interruption, 'till he found she had exhausted her whole Stock of harsh Epithets, as well as Breath ; and then, throwing himself on his Knees before her, All this, O divine *Apamia* ! cry'd he, is too mean a Punishment for the Crime I am guilty of.—Here, said he, presenting her with his naked Sword, let this Revenge your Cause ; all the Reluctance with which I shall receive the Blow is, That, in piercing my still faithful Heart, you must also pierce your own dear Image there.—Death, continued he, after what a cruel Father has enforc'd me to do, would be a Blessing, and doubly so from my *Apamia's* Hand ; for, if divorc'd from all I ever did, or ever can love, I never will yield to live with one I hate.

These Words, so soothing to that Vanity of which few Women have a greater Share than *Apamia*, disarm'd a good Part of her Resentment ; but then, reflecting that, whatever he said, he had put another in Possession of that Title she had thought herself secur'd of, it renew'd again, and he was oblig'd to bear a second Storm of Upbraidings, which at last ended in a Torrent of Tears, on the Consideration that the Evil was irremediable. With much Entreaty he prevail'd on her to sit down by him, and then told her a long Story of the Necessity he was under of complying with his Father's Will, or being cut off from all his Patrimony ; assur'd her, that he had the most implacable Aversion to his Bride, and that he had

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contriv'd a Scheme to get rid of her, and be once more in a Condition of doing Justice to her, who only had a Right to him, and whom he look'd upon as his real Wife, tho' another at present enjoy'd the Name.

The latter Part of his Discourse had the most Effect upon her, and she presently cry'd out, But how is it possible for you render invalid a Marriage solemniz'd and consummated as yours has been?—By provoking her, reply'd he, by the worst of Usage, to quit my House, or, if she continues obstinately patient, to do, as you know an Acquaintance of mine has done, get a Friend to be found with her in a Manner which may give a Pretence for suing out a Divorce.

On this a Gleam of Joy diffus'd itself all over her Face, and looking kindly on him, And have you then enough of Love and Honour, said she, to undertake this Stratagem for my Sake? I would undertake not only what I have said, reply'd he, but every Thing that either Heaven or Hell could suggest to rid me of this detested Tie, and restore me to my ever dear, my ever ador'd *Apamia*. With these, and such like flattering Assurances, did he win her, not only to an entire Forgiveness, but also to permit him a Continuance of those Endearments which at first had been the Consequences of the Contract between them.

The Truth is, he preferr'd the coquet Airs of *Apamia*, and her affected Passion, infinitely to the modest Tenderness with which *Semanthe* return'd the Endearments he sometimes vouchsafed to treat her with ; but, with how
much

much Indifference soever he regarded her, he was far from daring to treat her in the Fashion he had promis'd to the other : The greatest Proof of his Neglect she receiv'd, was his being little at Home, and when he was so, talking more to his Dogs and Monkey than to her.

She would often sigh, and tell him, She had always thought the chief Happiness of a married Life consisted in having an agreeable Companion, and a certain sincere Friend to bear a Part in every Pleasure, and soften the Weight of every Care. To which he would answer, in an indolent Way, That she was quite mistaken in her Notions, for when People were marry'd a Month, they had said over all they could to one another, - and had nothing further to furnish Conversation, and then either hum a Tune, or look out of the Window, to prove the Truth of his Argument.

How disagreeable such a Behaviour must be to a Woman who had a great deal of Sense, had read much, and was capable of entertaining, and being entertain'd in the most elegant Manner, any one may judge ; yet she forbore any Reproaches on that Head, and, seemingly contenting herself with such cold Civilities as he was pleas'd to shew her, bore all his real Sights without the least Murmur to him, or Complaint to others.

She became pregnant in a short Time, and that Condition flatter'd her with the Hope of inspiring him with more Tenderneſs ; but, on the contrary, he rather grew worse, and by Degrees, converted the indolent Air with
which

which he had behav'd to her before, into one altogether fullen and merose, the Cause of which she was very much at a Loss to guess, tho' she was almost the only Person who was ignorant of it. Whether it was that she had not a Strength of Passion sufficient to give her any jealous Emotions, or whether she was not by Nature capable of it, I will not pretend to say ; for, in spite of the Intimacy between us, she always spoke of every Thing relating to her Husband with the greatest Reserve.

It was not, however, *Apamia*, but a new Object of his inconstant Wishes, that had occasion'd this Change in him from bad to worse. The gay Relict of his own Brother was now the only one of her whole Sex who had any Charms for him : He was never easy out of her Company ; and she, too much a Coquet by Nature, both heighten'd and encourag'd the Passion she perceiv'd he had for her, by all the little Arts she was Mistress of. *Apamia*, who had always her Spies over his Actions, was not long before she discover'd this new Amour, and, finding he could neither clear himself from the Accusation, nor took any Pains even to deceive her on this Point, bent her whole Mind on Revenge. To this detested End she sent an anonymous Letter to *Semantoe*, containing a full Account of the whole Affair between *Adrastus* and herself, their Contract, his Aversion to marry any other, and the Design he had form'd to get rid of his Engagements :——Then proceeded to relate all she had discover'd (perhaps with some Additions

264 *The Lady's Drawing Room.*

ditions to the Truth) of his new Amour with his Brother's Widow ; in fine, a whole Sheet of Paper was crowded with Circumstances so stabbing, that *Semanthe* had no sooner read it, than she fell into a Swoon : I happen'd to come in while her Women were endeavouring to bring her to herself, and, seeing this Letter lie open on the Table, took it up, and put it in my Pocket, designing to give it her on her Recovery.

The first Thing she did indeed, after she open'd her Eyes, was to send them in Search of it, and, remembering where she had left it, ask'd, Who had been near her Toilet ? On which, to save the Women the Trouble of looking, I told her I had the Paper I believ'd she meant ; but, as I fear'd that had been the Occasion of her Indisposition, it would be better she should permit me to burn it, than give it a second Reading. I will do neither the one nor the other, answer'd she ; but, since you have it, insist on your examining the Contents, and then give me your sincere Opinion what Credit I ought to afford them.

Tho' I had but just cast my Eye upon this Letter in folding it up, I had seen enough to guess the Purport, and was sorry I had so unfortunately brought myself into the Dilemma of either falsifying my Sentiments, or, by speaking the Truth of them, add to the Affliction I saw my Friend was in. I was oblig'd however to comply with her Request, and retir'd to a Window, under Pretence of having a better Light, but indeed to consider on what

I should say after having finish'd the Perusal of this malicious Scroll.

Well, my dear *Bellimante*, said she to me, as soon as she thought I had read it, am I to accuse my Fortune and my Husband of Injustice, or the Author of that cruel Intelligence? The latter, doubtless, answer'd I; for were *Adrastus* capable of wronging you in this Manner, the Discovery would be made by none but an Enemy to your Peace; and from such a one every Thing ought to be suspected.

This I might very truly say; for none, but a Person delighting in ill Offices, would have been the Reporter of such News, how real a Foundation soever they had for it. But I was in much more Perplexity at the second Question she put to me. Do you believe, said she, that *Adrastus's* Marriage with me was an Act of Compulsion? That he lov'd and was contracted at that Time to *Apamia*? Or that he now entertains any dishonourable Designs on her who was the Wife of his own Brother? I must confess I was at a very great Loss how to reply, and I believe hesitated so much, that she could not but see what my Opinion was, and that I only study'd for an Evasion. At last, dear *Semanthe*, said I, think no more of so palpable a Baseness. — 'Tis plain all this is wrote merely with an Intention of giving you Disquiet, and, perhaps too, to irritate you to a Behaviour to *Adrastus* which might render you both eternally unhappy. — For my Part, I should, with the utmost Difficulty, be brought to believe there could be such a Man in the World as this Letter has describ'd, and no-

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thing but the most glaring Proofs ought to make you condemn your Husband, even in Thought.

Very right, answer'd this amiable Lady ; and I am resolv'd not only to assure myself he is entirely innocent, but also to redouble all my former Tenderness, and give him such Proofs of it, as even if he were guilty should reclaim him, and make him blush within himself for having ever wrong'd so sincere and perfect an Affection.

Heavens ! continued *Bellimante*, wiping away some Tears, which in spite of her stole down her Cheeks at the Remembrance of her fair Friend, How did my Heart bleed for the Wrongs I too well knew were done to this suffering Innocence ! this most perfect Pattern of conjugal Virtue ! But I dissembled my Concern as well as I could, and, taking her in my Arms, applauded, as it deserv'd, so generous a Proceeding.

What she had promis'd she made good : She never once mention'd her having receiv'd any such Letter, to *Adrastus*, or any other Person ; and from that Time forward testify'd so ardent a Love for him in all her Words and Actions, that he could not, without proclaiming himself the most brutally Savage of all that ever had the Shape of Man, avoid using her with Civility in Publick : How he behav'd in private, Heaven and themselves alone can tell ; but I have been inform'd, that she has often been surpriz'd pouring forth the Anguish of her Mind in Tears. One Thing I cannot omit mentioning, which is, that, being never
very

very fond of walking, and now by her Condition render'd more averſe, becauſe leſs capable, he was for ever propoſing it, and, to engage her to it, would accompany her himſelf, telling her it was good for her Health, and beſides, a Recreation that was extreamly in Faſhion: — Her late Majeſty, would he ſay, walk'd much when ſhe was pregnant: — The Princeſſes walk, and I ſhould be ſorry to have a Wife ſo unpolite as to ſit ſtill like a Mope. To oblige him ſhe indeed walk'd beyond what was conſiſtent either with the Strength or Inclination of moſt *Engliſh* Women bred in any Delicacy, and it ſeems highly probable that ſo much of that robuſt Exerciſe help'd to render her Spirits too weak to bear up againſt the many Cauſes ſhe had of Diſcontent, and contributed to throw her into thoſe Fits which occaſion'd an Abortion, and at the ſame Time depriv'd her of Life. Whether her cruel Huſband had any Intention of getting rid of her by this ſeeming Kindneſs I dare not affirm; but his Behaviour ſince her Death has convinced all the World, how well ſatisfy'd he is in the Effects of his Preſcription.

As for *Apania*, the Letter ſhe wrote to *Sc-manthe* being found after her Decease, and the Hand being known by *Adrastus*, gave him a ſufficient Pretence to break entirely off with her: As ſhe has no further Means of Revenge in her Power, ſhe is oblig'd to content herſelf with what Conſolation ſhe can find in new Addreſſes, which ſhe receives promiſcuouſly; few who offer themſelves being refus'd Admittance into the Liſt of her Admirers.

Adrastus as yet continues his Devoirs to his Sister-in-Law ; how long his inconstant Heart will find the same Charms in her Society is uncertain ; but she is of that happy Disposition, as to be easy under any Circumstances, and will scarce lament the Loss of his Affection above a Day, whenever he shall withdraw it for a new Object.

These, said *Bellimante*, are all the Particulars I am able to inform you of concerning this unhappy Adventure, nor had I known so much, had it not been for the Letter *Apamia* wrote to *Semanthe* ; so strictly did that amiable Lady conform to all the Duties of a Wife, that while her tender Heart was bursting at the Ingratitude of a Husband so unworthy of her, she forbore even to utter a Groan that might give Suspicion of the Cause ; but died as she liv'd, a Model to our Sex, which I am afraid very few, if any in her Circumstances, would be able to copy.

Not to be guilty of *Adrastus's* Vice, Ingratitude, said *Ethelinda*, I thank you, my Dear, for the Satisfaction my Curiosity has receiv'd ; but I assure you, at the same Time, you have been compell'd to give me a kind of Pain mix'd with Pleasure, and excited in me a Passion, which to me is the most uneasy of any. — I have a thousand Times, since the Beginning of your Recital, been ready to interrupt you, by enquiring, If Providence sent no uncommon Calamity to punish such uncommon Cruelty ? But I must endeavour to moderate my Resentments, and only wish to hear that
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some time or other he may be truly sensible of the Value of the Jewel he always hung so carelessly about him, and at last threw away beyond all Possibility of Recovery.

I am of Opinion, Madam, reply'd *Philetas*, that will one Day be the Case; *Adrastus* is yet young, and when Time and Experience shall correct the Errors of his Judgment, he will then look back on the Usage of his Lady, with a Horror, which, tho' no Attonement to the World, or to her mournful Parents, will at least revenge them for the Loss he has occasion'd them.

I think, said *Emilia*, one may behold in the Characters of *Apamia*, *Adrastus* and his Sister-in-Law, a lively Picture of modern Love and Honour: *Semanthe* seems like some blest Spirit wander'd from its Sphere out of Curiosity to prove Mankind, which having done, return'd to its first Orb of Light, amaz'd and frightened at the Degeneracy of this lower World.

Indeed, added *Miranda*, one would scarce believe her altogether human; Who could sustain Injuries so unparallel'd, without harbouring the least Thought of doing any Thing to retaliate them, or even complaining of her ill Fate? I think, for my Part, she bore much more than either Virtue or Duty requir'd of her; and I should be so far from one of those who would be able to imitate her in this Part of her Character, that I would not so much as attempt it.

I must own, said *Dorinthus*, that tho' I am very much of Mr. *Dryden's* Mind, who says,

*Secrets of Marriage should be sacred held,
Their Sweets and Bitters by the Wife conceal'd.*

Yet do I think, under such Provocations, *Semantbe* had been perfectly justify'd, if she had complain'd to her noble Parents, and entreated to be receiv'd into their Protection. So that by suffering herself to be destroy'd by a secret Grief, she answer'd the Character another Poet gives of a Lady, who we may suppose exercis'd her wisely Virtue in this superlative Degree.

*She was in all Things more than Woman shou'd,
And err'd by being exquisitely good.*

I never yet, resum'd *Miranda*, could hear any substantial Reason assign'd, why that should be a Glory in one Sex, which is a Shame in the other. — I do not mean as to Chastity, that being undoubtedly the peculiar Characteristick of Womanhood, and the Loss of Modesty is, generally speaking, the Loss of all other Virtues : But as to that patient Sufferance of Injuries, for which *Semantbe* is so much celebrated, a Man would justly be laugh'd at for his want of Spirit, who should tamely endure ill Treatment from his Wife ; and wherefore it should be Praiseworthy in a Woman to submit to it from her Husband, has, I must confess, always been to me a Mystery.

O Madam, reply'd *Acasto*, there are many undeniable Arguments in our Favour in this Case ; but the Chief is from the immutable
Decree

Decree of that Power, from which you have no Appeal, in the third Chapter and sixteenth Verse of *Genesis* ; tho' I am far from thinking the Almighty Lawgiver meant it as a Sanction for Unkindness : The Man who makes an ill Use of the Power put into his Hands, is not only to be condemn'd for his tyrannick Disposition, but also answerable for all the Errors the Woman may be provok'd by it to commit.

'Tis well, *Acasto*, said *Philetas* with a Smile, that the Close of this Observation has made the Ladies some Amends ; for I protest I trembled for you in the Beginning. — Superiority is a bitter Pill, and the Fair Sex, especially all over *Europe*, are so accusom'd to command before Marriage, that they can ill descend to submit after it.

To put an End to this Dispute, said *Ethelinda*, and not terrify these Ladies from entering into a State which appears so full of Bugbears. — There is a Mystery in Marriage, which gives to both, and yet to neither the Superiority over the other : Their Affections and Desires are undistinguishable, and whichever of them speaks, the Mouth is but the Oracle of the others Heart. — Their Minds converse by Intuition, and are so blended as not to have the Power of acting separately : He rules in her and she in him ; each executes no more than the other wills, and each, in effect, but obeys their own Injunctions.

This certainly, Madam, reply'd *Miranda*, was the Union instituted by Heaven ; but it is so much of a Piece with Heaven, that I should

doubt if it were to be found on Earth, did not your own illustrious Example give the Proof.

All would be so, resum'd this admirable Lady, were proper Care taken by those who have the Disposal of us; for of ourselves we are too liable to be sway'd by a partial Inclination. Our Senses have too much Power over our Reason, and the Beauty, or what to us seems Beauty in the exterior Part, either renders us negligent of the more valuable Part of the Mind, or represents it to our deluded Fancy, often very different from what it is in Reality. It is not a violent Passion; for that of itself, in free Possession, will decay, as will the Charms that excited it, but a Sympathy of Humours and a Conformity of Principles that must give lasting Happiness, and silence all those idle Terms of Superiority and Dependence, Command and Obedience, which, in effect, only serve to perplex weak Minds, and occasion Discord, where else perhaps there might be perfect Harmony.

Indeed, Madam, said *Acasto*, I have often observ'd that in Marriage, as in Religion and Government, People differ more about *Words* than *Things*, and losing their Time about Matters of *meer Form*, wholly neglect those which are the *Essentials* of Happiness. The Ceremony of Marriage appointed by the Church is plain enough, the Parties take each other for better and for worse; and if they would but as plainly consider, that they are to live always together, common Policy would tell them, it was their Interest, as well as Duty,
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to bear with each others Failings, and to endeavour mutually to oblige the other to a kind Behaviour, by shewing an Example in themselves, we should see no such Things as conjugal Dissention ; but where there is an assuming Arrogance on the one Side, or an over Delicacy on the other, a secret Discontent, if not an open Breach, must be infallibly the Consequence.

All the Company agreed to *Acasto's* Way of Reasoning, and *Ethelinda* and *Philetas*, who had been long acquainted with him, made him many Compliments on the Harmony, which subsisted between him and his Lady, who I found, by what they said, had been dead some Years. After which *Emilia* told him, in a gay Manner, that, since she found he knew so well how to live with a Wife, she wonder'd he did not marry again ; to which he answer'd, That, though as he had no Children living, he might have a better Excuse for entering again into that State than many others, yet he could never approve of second Marriages. — He said, That, in spite of all could be alledg'd in favour of Matrimony, he look'd on it at best but as an uncertain Ocean, where every Gust of Passion threaten'd Wreck, and therefore thought he ought to content himself with having made one prosperous Voyage.—Bless me ! then said that amiable Lady, since there is so much Danger, I think it best not to venture at all.

You have said enough, *Acasto*, cry'd *Lucillius*, to furnish *Emilia* with Arguments against Marriage for this Month at least : I dare swear your Simile will be quoted by that beautiful

Mouth every Opportunity that arises ; and a Lover must employ all his Wits to answer it with another equally just in her Opinion.

Tho' nothing could more gratify my Vanity, reply'd he, than to have any Thing of mine repeated by one who can speak so much better herself, yet I would not wish to purchase that Honour at the Expence of *Lucillius*.

Philetes and *Dorinthus* were both about to take up the Word, when *Ethelinda* perceiving some little Confusion in the modest Cheeks of *Emilia*, prevented what they were going to say. — I bar all Particulars of any one in Presence, cry'd she ; and, as I think we have had enough of Love and Marriage, should be oblig'd to whoever shall change the Topick for one less serious and interesting.

Permit me, Madam, then, said *Philetes*, to be the first to obey you, in relating a Piece of News I have just receiv'd from a Friend of mine at *Vienna* ; which is, that her *Hungarian* Majesty intends to write a Letter of Thanks, with her own Hand, to the King of *Great Britain*, for the late Assistance given her on the *Rhine*.

Not the most grave in the whole Company could refrain smiling at this sudden Turn he gave to the Conversation ; *Lucillius* and *Dorinthus* laugh'd excessively, and the former cry'd out, A most important Article indeed ! And, whether your Intelligence be true or false, will add some Thousands to the Sale of the *Daily Advertiser*, *Gazetteer*, and other publick Papers.

Not if People were of my Way of Thinking, said *Bellimante*, for the Papers you mention have been so long cram'd with nothing but Letters from that Queen, and Paragraphs concerning her Case and Situation, that the News-Men have lost a Customer of me, being resolv'd to read no more, 'till I am well assur'd they shall vouchsafe to insert something of more Consequence to my own Country.

Take Care what you say, lovely *Bellimante*, reply'd *Lucillius*, if you talk in this Manner before some Companies, you'll be in danger of being suspected of a *French* Heart, and an Enemy to the *Ballance of Europe*.

I am no Visionary, resum'd that Lady, but, as I pretend to no more than a superficial Skill in Politicks, I will not dispute whether this same *Ballance of Power* be any Thing more than that *chimerical* Ballance the *Astronomers* have set up in the Heavens; but this I assure you, that I am very far from having a *French* Heart; for how much soever I may have declared myself in favour of that Nation in some Particulars, I cannot approve their Manner of acting in those foreign Affairs, they have lately intermeddled with.——They can at best be term'd but *luke-warm Friends*, which is a Character I *detest*; and I think, by their bad Management, they have prov'd themselves *enervate Enemies*, which is what I equally *despise*.——Their Negotiations and Schemes of Battle are alike ill laid and worse conducted, so have been easily seen through and disconcerted.——Their Behaviour in regard to *Stanislaus*, a Prince so nearly allied to his Most
Christian

Christian Majesty, and so worthy of the Throne, to which he had twice been call'd by the Voice of the People, first gave me an ill Opinion of both their Politicks and Sincerity ; and their concerning themselves in giving a Head to the *Germanick* Body, and thereby furnishing an ambitious Princess with a Pretence for following her Fathers Steps, and setting all *Europe* in a Flame a second Time, may convince any one, that they are not in reality the *Peace-makers* of the World, as the weak Assistance they have afforded an Emperor of their own setting up, may of the Instability of their Councils, the Inactivity of their Arms, and the little Dependance to be placed on their Promises.

Not, continued this beautiful Declaimer, that I should consider these Things, but with the same Indifference I do the Histories of Times long since past over, had not *Great Britain* too deeply interested itself in the fatal Struggle, and that too at a Crisis, in my poor Opinion, equally unseasonable for its Interest and its Glory. We are already engaged in a most justifiable, because necessary War with a mighty Power, our Wealth was drain'd to the very Vitals by foreign Depredations and home Supplies ; our Commerce visibly decay'd, when, by some Motives too deep for my Penetration, we run to the Assistance of a Family, not over grateful for good Offices, and neglect the Calls of Self-defence.—I could say more, but my Zeal for the Welfare of my Country, might, perhaps, transport me too far.

YOU

You have said enough, Madam, answer'd *Philetas*, to convince us you have made the Study of Politicks more your Care, than you would seem to have done; and also that you were not of the Number of those who encouraged a Proposal made some Time since in the publick Papers for a voluntary Contribution among the Nobility and Gentry, in order to make a Present to the Queen of *Hungary*.

No indeed, cry'd she hastily, and was with some Difficulty persuaded, that any one could ever think of such a Thing in earnest.—It was a Piece of Generosity which, I dare say, *Marilla* never found equall'd in all the Romances she had read: For tho' I think there have been Heroes who neglected the Defence of their own Dominions to establish other Princes in theirs, yet I never heard their Subjects contributed their Money, as well as Blood, for carrying on the War.

How niggardly you are, *Bellimante*, said *Ethelinda*: I know a Lady who intended to sell all her Plate and Jewels for that Purpose: Now, I warrant you would rather dispose of yours to purchase Ammunition for our Fleet in the *West Indies*.

Well, Ladies, said *Dorinthus*, since you have these Notions, I know not whether I dare venture to shew you a Scheme drawn up by a Friend of mine, who is a great Projector, in order to be presented to Parliament next Sessions, for the Relief of the Queen of *Hungary*.

It must be a good Invention, reply'd *Ethelinda*, that can find any new Ways of raising Money,

Money, when there is scarce sufficient in the Nation to supply the old ; therefore I beg to hear it.

Dorinthus, at these Words, took a Piece of Paper out of his Pocket, and read as follows :

A P R O P O S A L,

Humbly offer'd to the Consideration of both

H O U S E S of P A R L I A M E N T.

Containing an easy Method of raising Money for assisting the QUEEN of *HUNGARY*; humbling the POWER of *FRANCE*, preserving the BALANCE of POWER in *EUROPE*, and securing his MAJESTY's foreign DOMINIONS.

THAT all Gentlemen, of what Degree soever (the Right Reverend the Bishops not excepted) possess'd of Sine-cures, should be oblig'd to relinquish, for the aforesaid Purposes, all Profits arising from thence, over and above what is receiv'd by the Persons who actually officiate.

II. That all Noblemen, Gentlemen, or others, who receive Salaries from the Crown, exceeding three thousand Pounds per Annum, should, out of every Thousand over and above the said Sum, allow three hundred Pounds; and this to be paid at the Time of their receiving the Whole.

III.

III. *That all Lovers of Italian Painting should, for every Piece of such Ornament in their Houses, valued at above five hundred Pounds, pay fifty Pounds into the Hands of the Government, for every hundred Pounds it can be prov'd to have cost upwards of the said Sum of five hundred Pounds.*

IV. *That all Actors of Plays, and Interludes, or that are Singers, Dancers, or otherwise perform in those Entertainments, who have Salaries amounting to more than four Pounds per Week, should pay two Shillings out of every Pound they receive above the said Sum of four Pounds.*

V. *And that all these Sums should be receiv'd by Collectors who shall perform this Office gratis, and without any Deduction for Trouble or Expences of what Kind soever, which may attend the Gathering in of the said Sums.*

This Proposal gave a good deal of Diversion to us all, and *Ethelinda* said, That, if it had been serious, there could not be a less oppressive Taxation, since no Body would have any Thing taken from them but what they might very well spare. But as for Buildings, added she, Gardening, Jewels, Plate, Equipage, and Tables, they keep our Poor from Idleness, employ our Artificers, and are an Encouragement to Trade in general; therefore are Luxuries which merit Indulgence, and ought never to be tax'd but in the last Necessity, which I hope will never be our Case.

These whimsical Proposals would doubtless have furnish'd a long Conversation had not the Hour arriv'd in which we generally took Leave. The gracious *Ethelinda* told us at parting, she desir'd

desir'd we would postpone our next Visit a Day longer than that on which we were accusom'd to wait upon her ; because, said she, I intend to set out for the Country the next Morning, and shall be glad your engaging Conversation may be the last I hear in Town, to the End my Memory may be the better able to carry it with me on the Road.

So obliging a Compliment demanded the most grateful Acknowledgments from us all ; but we could not hear our Happiness was so near a Close, without testifying the utmost Concern, which also receiv'd a considerable Addition by being told the charming *Bellimante* was to accompany her in that Journey, and that they did not purpose to return 'till Winter.