

Prefaces to Fiction eBook

Prefaces to Fiction

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the English novel is one of the triumphs of the eighteenth century. Criticism of prose fiction during that period, however, is less impressive, being neither strikingly original nor profound nor usually more than fragmentary. Because the early statements of theory were mostly very brief and are now obscurely buried in rare books, one may come upon the well conceived “program” of *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* with some surprise. But if one looks in the right places one will realize that mid-eighteenth century notions about prose fiction had a substantial background in earlier writing. And as in the case of other branches of literary theory in the Augustan period, the original expression of the organized doctrine was French. In Georges de Scudery’s preface to *Ibrahim* (1641)[1] and in a conversation on the art of inventing a “Fable” in Book VIII (1656) of his sister Madeleine’s *Clelie* are to be found the grounds of criticism in prose fiction; practically all the principles are here which eighteenth-century theorists adopted, or seemed to adopt, or from which they developed, often by the simple process of contradiction, their new principles.

That many of the ideas in the preface to *Ibrahim* were not new even in 1641 becomes plain if one reads the discussions of romance written by Giraldi Cinthio and Tasso.[2] The particular way in which Mlle. de Scudery attempted to carry out those ideas in her later, more subjective works she obligingly set forth in *Clelie* in the passage already alluded to. There it is explained that a well-contrived romance “is not only handsomer than the truth, but withal, more probable;” that “impossible things, and such as are low and common, must almost equally be avoided;” that each person in the story must always act according to his own “temper;” that “the nature of the passions ought necessarily to be understood, and what they work in the hearts of those who are possess’d with them.” He who attempts an “ingenious Fable” must have great accomplishments—wit, fancy, judgment, memory; “an universal knowledge of the World, of the Interest of Princes, and the humors of Nations,” and of both closet-policy and the art of war; familiarity with “politeness of conversation, the art of ingenious raillery, and that of making innocent Satyrs; nor must he be ignorant of that of composing of Verses, writing Letters, and making Orations.” The “secrets of all hearts” must be his and “how to take away plainness and driness from Morality.”[3]

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The assumption that the new prose fiction could be judged, as the Scuderys professed to judge their work, first of all by reference to the rules of heroic poetry is frequent in the next century—in the unlikely Mrs. Davys (preface, *Works*, 1725); in *Joseph Andrews* of course, where the rules of the serious epic and of the heroic romance are to aid the author in copying the ancient but, as it happens, nonexistent comic epic; and in Fielding's preface to his sister's *David Simple* (1744). Both Richardson and Fielding were attacked on epic grounds.[4] Dr. Johnson's interesting and unfriendly essay on recent prose fiction (*Rambler* No. 4) adopted the terminology familiar in the criticism of epic and romance and showed that Johnson, unlike d'Argens and Fielding, did not intend to give any of the old doctrines new meanings in a way to justify realism. Johnson laughed a little in that essay at the heroic romances; but like *Mlle. de Scudery*, whose *Conversations* he drew on for a footnote in his edition of Shakespeare (1765),[5] he believed that fiction should be "probable" and yet should idealize life and men and observe poetic Justice. Many other writers on prose fiction borrowed the old neo-classic rules, and they applied them often so carelessly and so insincerely that one is glad to come eventually on signs of rebellion, even if from the sentimentalists: "I know not," wrote Elizabeth Griffith in the preface to *The Delicate Distress* (1769), "whether novel, like the *epopee*, has any rules, peculiar to itself.... Sensibility is, in my mind, as necessary, as taste, to intitle us to judge of a work, like this."

The theory of prose fiction offered by the Scuderys was, on the whole, better than their practice. The same remark can be made with even greater assurance of *The Secret History of Queen Zarah, and the Zarazians* (1705) and the other political-scandalous "histories" of Mary De la Riviere Manley. For in spite of the faults of *Queen Zarah*, the preface is one of the most substantial discussions of prose fiction in the century. Boldly and reasonably it repudiates the most characteristic features of the heroic romance—the vastness produced by intercalated stories; the idealized characters, almost "exempted from all the Weakness of Humane Nature;" the marvelous adventures and remote settings; the essay-like conversations; the adulatory attitude; and poetic Justice. *Vraisemblance* and *decorum*, we are told, are still obligatory, but the probable character, action, dialogue will now be less prodigious, will be closer to real life as the modern English reader knows it. Thus Mrs. Manley announced a point of view which was, at least in most respects, to dominate the theory and invigorate the practice of prose fiction throughout the century.

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A significant phase of Mrs. Manley's discussion is the emphasis upon individual characterization and, in characters, upon not only the "predominant Quality" and ruling passion of each but also upon the elusive and surprising "Turnings and Motions of Humane Understanding." Here one should recognize the influence of historical writing rather than of poetry. As Rene Rapin had made clear in Chapter XX of his *Instructions for History* (J. Davies's translation, 1680), the historian writes the best portraits who finds the "essential and distinctive lines" of a man's character and the "secret motions and inclinations of [his] Heart." But Mrs. Manley's remarks go beyond Rapin's in implying faith in a sort of scientific psychology, especially of "the passions." Other writers showed the same interest and worked toward the same end. Thus Henry Gally in his essay on Theophrastus and the Character was so carried away by a notion of the importance of the Character-writer's knowing all about the passions that he allowed himself to say that only by such a knowledge could a Character be made to "hit one Person, and him only"[6]—the goal obviously not of the Character-writer but of the historian and the novelist. The authors of *The Cry*[7] (1754) regarded the unfolding of "the labyrinths of the human mind" as an arduous but necessary task; indeed they went on to declare that the "motives to actions, and the inward turns of mind, seem in our opinion more necessary to be known than the actions themselves." It was Fielding's refusal, in spite of the titles of his books, to write like an historian with highly individualized and psychological characterizations that caused his admirer Arthur Murphy to admit in his "Essay" on Fielding that "Fielding was more attached to the *manners* than to the *heart*." [8] He thought Fielding inferior to Marivaux in revealing the heart just as Johnson, according to Boswell, preferred Richardson to Fielding because the former presented "characters of nature" whereas the latter created only "characters of manners." The author of "A Short Discourse on Novel Writing" prefixed to *Constantia; or, A True Picture of Human Life* (1751) went so far as to say that prose fiction may teach more about the "sources, symptoms, and inevitable consequences" of the passions than could easily be taught in any other way. The increasingly subjective and individualized characterization in English fiction was well supported in contemporary theory.

The Jewish Spy, translated from the *Lettres Juives* (1736-38) of Jean-Baptiste de Boyer, Marquis d'Argens, is an early example of citizen-of-the-world literature and contains in its five volumes a "Philosophical, Historical and Critical Correspondence" dealing with French, English, Italian, and other matters. The work had a European vogue, and there were at least two English translations, the present one, issued in 1739, 1744, and 1766, and another, called *Jewish*



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Letters, published at Newcastle in 1746. (The Dublin edition of 1753 I have not seen.) Though d'Argens's purpose in Letter 35 may have been to advertise his own novel, what he had to say is interesting. Like many others, he could scoff at the heroic romances and yet borrow and quietly modify the doctrines of *Ibrahim* and *Clelie*. He proposed a still more "advanced" *vraisemblance* and *decorum*—psychological analysis tinged with cynicism rather than idealism; gallantry but against the background sometimes of the modern city; a plainer style; and only such matters as seemed to this student of Descartes and Locke to be entirely reasonable. Fielding's chapter in *Tom Jones* (IX, i) "Of Those Who Lawfully May, and of Those Who May Not, Write Such Histories as This" could be taken as an indication that he knew not only what *Mlle. de Scudery* thought were the accomplishments of the romancer but that he had read d'Argens's words on that subject too. Both d'Argens and Fielding believed that in addition to "Genius, Wit, and Learning" the novelist must have a knowledge of the world and of all degrees of men, distinguishing the style of high people from that of low. They agreed that a writer must have felt a passion before he could paint it successfully. Much more goes into the making of a novel, they sarcastically pointed out, than pens, ink, and quires of paper. D'Argens, like Fielding, relished reflective passages and could approve, more readily than Mrs. Manley, of "an Historian that amuses himself by Moralizing or Describing." D'Argens's list of the features to be found in good history and good fiction shows him to be a thoroughgoing rationalist and separates his ideal from that of young readers, who, according to the preface to *The Adventures of Theagenes and Chariclia* (1717), wish to hear of "Flame and Spirit in an Author, of fine Harangues, just Characters, moving Scenes, delicacy of Contrivance, surprising turns of action ... indeed the choicest Beauties of a *Romance*."

The two novels that d'Argens recommended had different fortunes in England. D'Argens's book, *Memoires du Marquis de Mirmon, ou Le Solitaire Philosophe* (Amsterdam, 1736) was never translated into English and apparently was not much read. But Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crebillon, the younger, was extolled by Thomas Gray and Horace Walpole, quoted by Sarah Fielding,[9] and had the honor, if one can trust Walpole, of an offer of keeping from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. His *Egaremens du Coeur et de l'Esprit* (1736-38) was translated in 1751[10] and is the novel which Yorick helped the *fille de chambre* slide into her pocket. Crebillon was damned, however, in *The World* (No. 19, May 10, 1753) in an essay that, oddly enough, reminds one of d'Argens's Letter 35. The work referred to in the third footnote on page 258 is *Le Chevalier des Essars et la Comtesse de Berci* (1735) by Ignace-Vincent Guillot de La Chassagne. The last footnote on that page refers to G.H. Bougeant's satire, *Voyage Merveilleux du Prince Fan-Feredin dans la Romancie* (1735).



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The preface which William Warburton was invited by Richardson to supply for Volumes III and IV of *Clarissa* when they first appeared in 1748 has never, I think, been reprinted in full. Richardson dropped it from the second edition (1749) of *Clarissa*, probably because he relished neither its implication that he was following French precedents nor its suggestion that his work was one “of mere Amusement.” In the “Advertisement” in the first volume of the second edition he insisted that *Clarissa* was “not to be considered as a *mere Amusement*, as a *light Novel*, or *transitory Romance*; but as a *History* of LIFE and MANNERS ... intended to inculcate the HIGHEST and *most IMPORTANT Doctrines*.”[11] Warburton, offended in turn perhaps, thriftily salvaged more than half of the preface (paragraphs 2 to 6) to use as a footnote in his edition of Alexander Pope, [12] but he there made a striking change: not Richardson but Marivaux and Fielding were praised as the authors who, with the extra enrichment of comic art, had brought the novel of “real LIFE AND MANNERS ... to its perfection.”

The important principle of prose fiction which Richardson and Warburton recognized—that there is power in a detailed picture of the private life of the middle class—had been suggested earlier. Mrs. Manley could not voice it, at least not in *Queen Zarah*, where the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, Godolphin, and Queen Anne were to be leading characters. But her sometime-friend Richard Steele could. Having laughed in *The Tender Husband* (1705) at a girl whose judgment of life was seriously—or, rather, comically—warped by her reading of heroic romances, Steele made a positive plea in *Tatler* No. 172 for histories of “such adventures as befall persons not exalted above the common level.” Books of this sort, still rare in 1710, would be of great value to “the ordinary race of men.” The anonymous preface to *The Adventures of Theagenes and Chariclia* seven years later attributed to Heliodorus’s romance the value of suggesting rules “for conducting our Affairs in common Actions of Life.” In 1751 when the new realism was a *fait accompli*, the author of *An Essay on the New Species of Writing Founded by Mr. Fielding* declared roundly (p. 19) that in the new fiction the characters should be “taken from common Life.” A good argument in favor of books about “private persons” was offered in the preface to the English translation of the Abbe Prevost’s novel, *The Life And Entertaining Adventures of Mr. Cleveland, Natural Son of Oliver Cromwell* (1741): “The history of kingdoms and empires, raises our admiration, by the solemnity ... of the images, and furnishes one of the noblest entertainments. But at the same time that it is so well suited to delight the imagination, it yet is not so apt to touch and affect as the history of private men; the reason of which seems to be, that

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the personages in the former, are so far above the common level, that we consider ourselves, in some measure, as aliens to them; whereas those who act in a lower sphere, are look'd upon by us as a kind of relatives, from the similitude of conditions; whence we are more intimately mov'd with whatever concerns us." A comparison of the first two paragraphs of this preface and the first four paragraphs of Johnson's *Rambler* No. 60, if it does not discover the source of part of Johnson's paper, will at least reveal how the defender of the fictional "secret history" and a famous champion of intimate biography played into each other's hands. Johnson's appearing to follow the defender of French fiction here is all the more interesting when one recalls his alarm in *Rambler* No. 4 over the prevailing taste for novels that exhibited, unexpurgated, "Life in its true State, diversified only by the Accidents that daily happen in the World." Indeed if it were not for Fielding himself, one might imagine from Johnson's unsteady and generally unsatisfactory criticism of prose fiction that the old neo-classical principles were completely out of date and useless.

Samuel Derrick, the editor of Dryden and friend of Boswell for whom Johnson "had a kindness" but not much respect, the "pretty little gentleman" described by Smollett's Lydia Melford, translated the *Memoirs of the Count Du Beauval* from *Le Mentor Cavalier, ou Les Illustres Infortunez de Notre Siecle* ("Londres," 1736) by the Marquis d'Argens. Only the second paragraph of Derrick's preface came from d'Argens, but the drift of the Frenchman's ideas toward "le Naturel" is well sustained in Derrick's praise, no doubt based on Warburton's, of writers who present scenes that "are daily found to move beneath their Inspection." There are ties with the doctrines of 1641 even in this preface, but the transformation of *vraisemblance* and *decorum* was sufficiently advanced for the needs of the day.

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NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

[1] Most scholars attribute the preface to Georges de Scudery, but it seems impossible to say whether he collaborated with his sister in writing the romance itself or whether the work was written entirely by her.

Cogan's translation of *Ibrahim* and the preface appeared first in 1652.

[2] See the texts in Allan H. Gilbert's *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden* (N.Y.: American Book Co., 1940) and the discussion in A.E. Parsons' "The English Heroic Play," *MLR*, XXXIII (1938), 1-14.



[3] *Clelia. An Excellent New Romance. The Fourth Volume ... Rendered into English by G.H.* (1677; Part IV, Book II), pp. 540-543.

[4] See *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Bempfylde-Moore Carew ... The Sixth Edition*, p. xix; *Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison* (1754), p. 20.

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[5] IV, 184. The footnote could have come, contrary to the assertion of Sir Walter Raleigh (*Six Essays* [Oxford, 1910], p. 94), from either the original French (*Conversations sur Divers Sujets* [Paris, 1680], II, 586-587) or the English translation (1683, II, 102). In both editions, the passage appears soon after the dialogue on how to compose a romance. I am indebted to Dr. Arthur M. Eastman for help in tracing Raleigh's vague reference.

[6] *The Moral Characters of Theophrastus* (1725), pp. 31-32.

[7] Jane Collier and Sarah Fielding.

[8] The "Essay" was written in 1762, but I quote it as it appeared in the third edition (1766) of *The Works of Henry Fielding*, I, 75.

[9] James B. Foster, *History of the Pre-Romantic Novel in England* (N.Y.: Modern Lang. Assoc., 1949), p. 76.

[10] *The Wanderings of the Heart and Mind: or, Memoirs of Mr. de Meilcour*, translated by M. Clancy. Clara Reeve maintained in 1785 that Crebillon's book was never popular in England and that "Some pious person, fearing it might poison the minds of youth ... wrote a book of meditations with the same title, and *this* was the book that *Yorick's fille de Chambre* was purchasing" (*The Progress of Romance* [N.Y.: Facsimile Text Society, 1930], pp. 130-131).

[11] Richardson said that he dropped Warburton's preface because *Clarissa* had been well received and no longer needed such an introduction. A fourth explanation of the matter and much other relevant information were presented by Ronald S. Crane, "Richardson, Warburton and French Fiction," *MLR*, XVII (1922), 17-23.

[12] *The Works of Alexander Pope* (1751), IV, 166-169. The footnote is on line 146 of the Epistle to Augustus ("And ev'ry flow'ry Courtier writ Romance").

IBRAHIM,

OR THE

ILLUSTRIOUS

BASSA.

* * * * *

The whole Work,



In Four Parts.

Written in French by *Monsieur de Scudery*,

And Now Englished

by

Henry Cogan, Gent.

* * * * *

London,

Printed by *J.R.* and are to be sold by *Peter Parker*, at his Shop at the *Leg and Star* over against the Royal Exchange, and *Thomas Guy*, at the Corner-shop of *Little-Lumbard street* and *Cornhil*, 1674.

IBRAHIM, or The Illustrious Bassa

THE PREFACE



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I do not know what kind of praise the Ancients thought they gave to that Painter, who not able to end his Work, finished it accidentally by throwing his pencil against his Picture; but I know very well, that it should not have obliged me, and that I should have taken it rather for a Satyre, than an Elogium. The operations of the Spirit are too important to be left to the conduct of chance, and I had rather be accused for failing out of knowledge, than for doing well without minding it. There is nothing which temerity doth not undertake, and which Fortune doth not bring to pass; but when a man relies on those two Guides, if he doth not erre, he may erre; and of this sort, even when the events are successefull, no glory is merited thereby. Every Art hath its certain rules, which by infallible means lead to the ends proposed; and provided that an Architect takes his measures right, he is assured of the beauty of his Building. Believe not for all this, Reader, that I will conclude from thence my work is compleat, because I have followed the rules which may render it so: I know that it is of this labour, as of the Mathematical Sciences, where the operation may fail, but the Art doth never fail; nor do I make this discourse but to shew you, that if I have left some faults in my Book, they are the effects of my weakness, and not of my negligence. Suffer me then to discover unto you all the resorts of this frame, and let you see, if not all that I have done, at leastwise all that I have endeavoured to doe.

Whereas we cannot be knowing but of that which others do teach us, and that it is for him that comes after, to follow them who precede him, I have believed, that for the laying the ground-plot of this work, we are to consult with the Grecians, who have been our first Masters, pursue the course which they have held, and labour in imitating them to arrive at the same end, which those great men propounded to themselves. I have seen in those famous *Romanzes* of Antiquity, that in imitation of the Epique Poem there is a principal action whereunto all the rest, which reign over all the work, are fastned, and which makes them that they are not employed, but for the conducting of it to its perfection. The action in *Homers Iliades* is the destrustion of *Troy*; in his *Odysseas* the return of *Ulysses* to *Ithaca*; in *Virgil* the death of *Turnus*, or to say better, the conquest of *Italy*; neerer to our times, in *Tasso* the taking of *Jerusalem*; and to pass from the Poem to the *Romanze*, which is my principal object, in *Helidorus* the marriage of *Theagines* and *Cariclia*. It is not because the Episodes in the one, and the several Histories in the other, are not rather beauties than defects; but it is always necessary, that the Adresse of him which employes them should hold them in some sort to this principal action, to the end, that by this ingenious concatenation, all the parts of them



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should make but one body, and that nothing may be seen in them which is loose and unprofitable. Thus the marriage of my *Justiniano* and his *Isabella*, being the object which I have proposed unto my self, I have employed all my care so to doe, that all parts of my work may tend to that conclusion; that there may be a strong connexion between them; and that, except the obstacle which Fortune opposeth to the desires of my *Hero's*, all things may advance, or at leastwise endeavour to advance his marriage, which is the end of my labour. Now those great Geniusses of antiquity, from whom I borrow my light, knowing that well-ordering is one of the principal parts of a piece, have given so excellent a one to their speaking Pictures, that it would be as much stupidity, as pride, not to imitate them. They have not done like those Painters, who present in one and the same cloth a Prince in the Cradle, upon the Throne, and in the Tombe, perplexing, by this so little judicious a confusion, him that considers their work; but with an incomparable address they begin their History in the midle, so to give some suspence to the Reader, even from the first opening of the Book; and to confine themselves within reasonable bounds they have made the History (as I likewise have done after them) not to last above a year, the rest being delivered by Narration. Thus all things being ingeniously placed, and of a just greatness, no doubt, but pleasure will redound from thence to him that beholds them, and glory to him that hath done them. But amongst all the rules which are to be observed in the composition of these works, that of true resemblance is without question the most necessary; it is, as it were, the fundamental stone of this building, and but upon which it cannot subsist; without it nothing can move, without it nothing can please: and if this charming deceiver doth not beguile the mind in *Romanzes*, this kinde of reading disgusts, instead of entertaining it: I have laboured then never to eloigne my self from it, and to that purpose I have observed the Manners, Customs, Religions, and Inclinations of People: and to give a more true resemblance to things, I have made the foundations of my work Historical, my principal Personages such as are marked out in the true History for illustrious persons, and the wars effective. This is the way doubtless, whereby one may arrive at his end; for when as falshood and truth are confounded by a dexterous hand, wit hath much adoe to disintangle them, and is not easily carried to destroy that which pleaseth it; contrarily, whenas invention doth not make use of this artifice, and that falshood is produced openly, this gross untruth makes no impression in the soul, nor gives any delight: As indeed how should I be touched with the misfortunes of the Queen of *Gundaya*, and of the King of *Astrobacia*, whenas I know their very Kingdoms are not in the universal Mapp, or, to say better, in the being of things?



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But this is not the only defect which may carry us from the true resemblance, for we have at other times seen *Romanzes*, which set before us monsters, in thinking to let us see Miracles; their Authors by adhering too much to wonders have made Grotesques, which have not a little of the visions of a burning Feaver; and one might demand of these Messieurs with more reason, than the Duke of *Ferrara* did of *Ariosto*, after he had read his *Orlando*, Messer *Lodovico* done *diavolo havete pigliato tante coyonerie?* As for me, I hold, that the more natural adventures are, the more satisfaction they give; and the ordinary course of the Sun seems more marvellous to me, than the strange and deadly rayes of Comets; for which reason it is also that I have not caused so many Shipwrecks, as there are in some ancient *Romanzes*; and to speak seriously, *Du Bartas* might say of these Authors,

*That with their word they bind,
Or loose, at will, the blowing of the wind.*

So as one might think that *AEolus* hath given them the Winds inclosed in a bagg, as he gave them to *Ulysses*, so patly do they unchain them; they make tempests and shipwracks when they please, they raise them on the Pacifique Sea, they find rocks and shelves where the most expert Pilots have never observed any: But they which dispose thus of the winds, know not how the Prophet doth assure us, that God keeps them in his Treasures; and that Philosophy, as clear sighted as it is, could never discover their retreat. Howbeit I pretend not hereby to banish Shipwrecks from *Romanzes*, I approve of them in the works of others, and make use of them in mine; I know likewise, that the Sea is the Scene most proper to make great changes in, and that some have named it the Theatre of inconstancy; but as all excess is vicious, I have made use of it but moderately, for to conserve true resembling: Now the same design is the cause also, that my *Heros* is not oppressed with such a prodigious quantity of accidents, as arrive unto some others, for that according to my sense, the same is far from true resemblance, the life of no man having ever been so cross'd. It would be better in my opinion to separate the adventures, to form divers Histories of them, and to make persons acting, thereby to appear both fertile and judicious together, and to be still within this so necessary true resemblance. And indeed they who have made one man alone defeat whole Armies, have forgotten the Proverb which saith, *not one against two*; and know not that Antiquity doth assure us, how *Hercules* would in that case be too weak. It is without all doubt, that to represent a true heroical courage, one should make it execute some thing extraordinary, as it were by a transport of the *Heros*; but he must not continue in that sort, for so those incredible actions would degenerate into ridiculous Fables, and never move the mind. This fault is the cause also



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of committing another; for they which doe nothing but heap adventure upon adventure, without ornament, and without stirring up passions by the artifices of Rhetorick, or irksome, in thinking to be the more entertaining. This dry Narration, and without art, hath more of an old Chronicle, than of a *Romanze*, which may very well be imbellished with those ornaments, since History, as severe and scrupulous as it is, doth not forbear employing them. Certain Authors, after they have described an adventure, a daring design, or some surprising event, able to possess one with the bravest apprehensions in the world, are contented to assure us, that such a *Heros* thought of very gallant things, without telling us what they are; and this is that alone which I desire to know: For how can I tell, whether in these events Fortune hath not done as much as he? whether his valour be not a brutish valour? and whether he hath born the misfortunes that arrived unto him, as a worthy man should doe? it is not by things without him, it is not by the caprichioes of destiny, that I will judge of him; it is by the motions of his soul, and by that which he speaketh. I honour all them that write at this day; I know their persons, their works, their merits; but as canonizing is for none but the dead, they will not take it ill if I do not Deifie them, since they are living. And in this occasion I propose no other example, than the great and incomparable *Urfe*; certainly it must be acknowledged that he hath merited his reputation; that the love which all the earth bears him is just; and that so many different Nations, which have translated his Book into their tongues, had reason to do it: as for me, I confess openly, that I am his adorer; these twenty years I have loved him, he is indeed admirable over all; he is fertile in his inventions, and in inventions reasonable; every thing in him is mervellous, every thing in him is excellent; and that which is more important, every thing in him is natural, and truly resembling: But amongst many rare matters, that which I most esteem of is, that he knows how to touch the passions so delicately, that he may be called the Painter of the Soul; he goes searching out in the bottom of hearts the most secret thoughts; and in the diversity of natures, which he represents, every one findes his own pourtrait, so that

*If amongst mortals any be
That merits Altars, Urfe's he
Who can alone pretend thereto.*

Certainly there is nothing more important in this kind of composition, than strongly to imprint the Idea, or (to say better) the image of the *Heroes* in the mind of the Reader, but in such sort, as if they were known to them; for that it is which interesseth him in their adventures, and from thence his delight cometh, now to make them be known perfectly, it is not sufficient to say how many times they have suffered shipwreck, and how many times they have encountered



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Robbers, but their inclinations must be made to appear by their discourse: otherwise one may rightly apply to these dumb *Heroes* that excellent motto of Antiquity, *Speak that I may see thee*. And if from true resemblance and inclinations, expressed by words, we will pass unto manners, goe from the pleasant to the profitable, and from Delight to Example, I am to tell you, Reader, that here Vertue is seen to be alwayes recompenced, and Vice alwayes punished, if he that hath followed his unruliness hath not by a just and sensible repentance obtained Grace from Heaven; to which purpose I have also observed equality of manners in all the persons that do act, unless it be whereas they are disordered by passions, and touched with remorse.

I have had a care likewise to deal in such sort, as the faults, which great ones have committed in my History, should be caused either by Love or by Ambition, which are the Noblest of passions, and that they be imputed to the evil counsell of Flatterers; that so the respect, which is alwayes due unto Kings, may be preserved. You shall see there, Reader, if I be not deceived, the comeliness of things and conditions exactly enough observed; neither have I put any thing into my Book, which the Ladies may not read without blushing. And if you see not my *Hero* persecuted with Love by Women, it is not because he was not amiable, and that he could not be loved, but because it would clash with Civility in the persons of Ladies, and with true resemblance in that of men, who rarely shew themselves cruel unto them, nor in doing it could have any good grace: Finally, whether things ought to be so, or whether I have judged of my *Hero* by mine own weakness, I would not expose his fidelity to that dangerous triall, but have been contented to make no *Hilas*, nor yet an *Hipolitus* of him.

But whilst I speak of Civility, it is fit I should tell you (for fear I be accused of falling therein) that if you see throughout all my Work, whenas *Soliman* is spoken unto, Thy Highness, Thy Majestie, and that in conclusion he is treated with Thee, and not with You, it is not for want of Respect, but contrarily it is to have the more, and to observe the custom of those people, who speak after that sort to their Sovereigns. And if the Authority of the living may be of as much force, as that of the dead, you shall find examples of it in the most famous *Othomans*, and you shall see that their Authors have not been afraid to employ in their own Tongue a manner of speaking, which they have drawn from the Greek and Latin; and then too I have made it appear clearlie, that I have not done it without design; for unless it be whenas the Turks speak to the Sultan, or he to his Inferiours, I have never made use of it, and either of them doth use it to each other.



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Now for fear it may be objected unto me, that I have approached some incidents nearer than the Historie hath shewed them to be, great *Virgil* shall be my Warrant, who in his Divine *AENEIDS* hath made *Dido* appear four Ages after her own; wherefore I have believed I might do of some moneths, what he hath done of so many Years, and that I was not to be afraid of erring, as long as I followed so good a guide. I know not likewise whether some may not take it ill, that my *Hero* and *Heronia* are not Kings; but besides that the Generous do put no difference between wearing of Crowns, and meriting them, and that my *Justiniano* is of a Race which hath held the Empire of the Orient, the example of *Athenagoras*, me-thinks, ought to stop their mouths, seeing *Theogines* and *Charida* are but simple Citizens.

Finally, Reader, such Censors may set their hearts at rest for this particular, and leave me there, for I assure them, that *Justiniano* is of a condition to command over the whole Earth; and that *Isabella* is of a House, and Gentlewoman good enough, to make Knights of the *Rhodes*, if she have children enough for it, and that she have a minde thereunto. But setting this jesting aside, and coming to that which regards the *Italian* names, know that I have put them in their natural pronounciation. And if you see some Turkish words, as *Alla*, *Stamboll*, the *Egira*, and some others, I have done it of purpose, Reader, and have left them as Historical marks, which are to pass rather for embellishments than defests. It is certain, that imposition of names is a thing which every one ought to think of, and whereof nevertheless all the World hath not thought: We have oftentimes seen Greek Names given to barbarous Nations, with as little reason as if I should name an English man *Mahomet*, and that I should call a Turk *Anthony*; for my part I have believed that more care is to be had of ones with; and if any one remarks the name of *Satrape* in this *Romanze*, let him not magine that my ignorance hath confounded the ancient and new Persia, and that I have done it without Authority, I have an example thereof in *Vigenere*, who makes use of it in his Illustrations upon *Calchondila*; and I have learned it of a *Persian*, which is at *Paris*, who saith, that by corruption of speech they call yet to this day the Governours of Provinces, *Soltan Sitripin*.

Now lest some other should further accuse me for having improperly named *Ibrahim's* House a Palace, since all those of quality are called *Seraglio*es at *Constantinople*, I desire you to remember that I have done it by the counsel of two or three excellent persons, who have found as well as my self, that this name of *Seraglio* would leave an *Idea* which was not seemly, and that it was fit not to make use of it, but in speaking of the Grand Signior, and



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that as seldom as might be. But whilst we are speaking of a Palace, I am to advertise you, that such as are not curious to see a goodly building, may pass by the gate of that of my *Heroe* without entering into it, that is to say, not to read the description of it; it is not because I have handled this matter like to *Athenagoras*, who plays the Mason In the Temple of *Jupiter Hammon*; nor like *Poliphile* in his dreams, who hath set down most strange terms, and all the dimensions of Architecture, whereas I have employed but the Ornaments thereof; it is not because they are not Beauties suitable to the *Romanze*, as well as to the *Epique Poem*, since the most famous both of the one and the other have them; nor is it too because mine is not grounded on the History, which assures us that it was the most superb the Turks ever made, as still appears by the remains thereof, which they of that Nation call *Serrau Ibrahim*.

But to conclude, as inclinations ought to be free, such as love not those beautiful things, for which I have so much passion (as I have said) pass on without looking on them, and leave them to others more curious of those rarities, which I have assembled together with art and care enough. Now Reader, ingenuity being a matter necessary for a man of Honour, and the theft of glory being the basest that may be committed, I must confess here for fear of being accused of it, that the History of the Count of *Lavagna*, which you shall see in my Book, is partly a Paraphrase of *Mascardies*; this Adventure falling out in the time whilst I was writing, I judged it too excellent not to set it down, and too well indited for to undertake to do it better; so that regard not this place but as a Translation of that famous Italian, and except the matters, which concern my History, attribute all to that great man, whose Interpreter only I am. And if you finde something not very serious in the Histories of a certain French Marquis, which I have interlaced in my Book, remember if you please, that a *Romanze* ought to have the Images of all natures; and this diversity makes up the beauties of it, and the delight of the Reader; and at the worst regard it as the sport of a Melancholick, and suffer it without blaming it. But before I make an end, I must pass from matters to the manner of delivering them, and desire you also not to forget, that a Narrative stile ought not to be too much inflated, no more than that of ordinarie conversations; that the more facile it is, the more excellent it is; that it ought to glide along like the Rivers, and not rebound up like Torrents; and that the less constraint it hath, the more perfection it hath; I have endeavoured then to observe a just mediocrity between vicious Elevation, and creeping Lowness; I have contained my self in Narration, and left my self free in Orations and in Passions, and without speaking as extravagants and the vulgar, I have laboured to speak as worthy persons do.



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Behold, Reader, that which I had to say to you, but what defence soever, I have employed, I know that it is of works of this nature, as of a place of War, where notwithstanding all the care the Engineer hath brought to fortifie it, there is always some weak part found, which he hath not dream'd of, and whereby it is assaulted; but this shall not surprize me; for as I have not forgot that I am a man, no more have I forgot that I am subject to erre.

THE

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OF

Queen *ZARAH*,

AND THE

Zarazians;

BEING A

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TO THE



READER.

The Romances in France have for a long Time been the Diversion and Amusement of the whole World; the People both in the City and at Court have given themselves over to this Vice, and all Sorts of People have read these Works with a most surprizing Greediness; but that Fury is very much abated, and they are all fallen off from this Distraction: The Little Histories of this Kind have taken Place of Romances, whose Prodigious Number of Volumes were sufficient to tire and satiate such whose Heads were most fill'd with those Notions.

These little Pieces which have banish'd Romances are much more agreeable to the Brisk and Impetuous Humour of the English, who have naturally no Taste for long-winded Performances, for they have no sooner begun a Book, but they desire to see the End of it: The Prodigious Length of the Ancient Romances, the Mixture of so many Extraordinary Adventures, and the great Number of Actors that appear on the Stage, and the Likeness which is so little managed, all which has given a Distaste to Persons of good Sense, and has made Romances so much cry'd down, as we find 'em at present. The Authors of Historical Novels, who have found out this Fault, have run into the same Error, because they take for the Foundation of their History no more than one Principal Event, and don't overcharge it with Episodes, which wou'd extend it to an Excessive Length; but they are run into another Fault, which I cannot Pardon, that is, to please by Variety the Taste of the Reader, they mix particular Stories with the Principal History, which seems to me as if they reason'd Ill; in Effect the Curiosity of the Reader is deceiv'd



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by this Deviation from the Subject, which retards the Pleasure he wou'd have in seeing the End of an Event; it relishes of a Secret Displeasure in the Author, which makes him soon lose Sight of those Persons with whom he began to be in Love; besides the vast Number of Actors who have such different Interests, embarresses his Memory, and causes some Confusion in his Brain, because 'tis necessary for the Imagination to labour to recal the several Interests and Characters of the Persons spoken of, and by which they have interrupted the History.

For the Reader's better Understanding, we ought not to chuse too Ancient Accidents, nor unknown Heroes, which are fought for in a Barbarous Countrey, and too far distant in Time, for we care little for what was done a Thousand Years ago among the Tartars or Ayssines.

The Names of Persons ought to have a Sweetness in them, for a Barbarous Name disturbs the Imagination; as the Historian describes the Heroes to his Fancy, so he ought to give them Qualities which affect the Reader, and which fixes him to his Fortune; but he ought with great Care to observe the Probability of Truth, which consists in saying nothing but what may Morally be believed.

For there are Truths that are not always probable; as for Example 'tis an allowed Truth in the Roman History that Nero put his Mother to Death, but 'tis a Thing against all Reason and Probability that a Son shou'd embrue his Hand in the Blood of his own Mother; it is also no less probable that a Single Captain shou'd at the Head of a Bridge stop a whole Army, although 'tis probable that a small Number of Soldiers might stop, in Defiles, Prodigious Armies, because the Situation of the Place favours the Design, and renders them almost Equal. He that writes a True History ought to place the Accidents as they Naturally happen, without endeavouring to sweeten them for to procure a greater Credit, because he is not obliged to answer for their Probability; but he that composes a History to his Fancy, gives his Heroes what Characters he pleases; and places the Accidents as he thinks fit, without believing he shall be contradicted by other Historians, therefore he is obliged to Write nothing that is improbable; 'tis nevertheless allowable that an Historian shows the Elevation of his Genius, when advancing Improbable Actions, he gives them Colours and Appearances capable of Perswading.

One of the Things an Author ought first of all to take Care of, is to keep up to the Characters of the Persons he introduces. The Authors of Romances give Extraordinary Virtues to their Heroins, exempted from all the Weakness of Humane Nature, and much above the Infirmities of their Sex; 'tis Necessary they shou'd be Virtuous or Vicious to Merit the Esteem or Disesteem of the Reader; but their Virtue out to be spared, and their Vices exposed to every Trial: It wou'd in no wise be probable that a Young Woman fondly beloved by a Man



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of great Merit, and for whom she had a Reciprocal Tenderness, finding her self at all Times alone with him in Places which favour'd their Loves, cou'd always resist his Addresses; there are too Nice Occasions; and an Author wou'd not enough observe good Sense, if he therein exposed his Heroins; 'tis a Fault which Authors of Romances commit in every Page; they would blind the Reader with this Miracle, but 'tis necessary the Miracle shou'd be feisable, to make an Impression in the Brain of Reasonable Persons; the Characters are better managed in the Historical Novels, which are writ now-a-days; they are not fill'd with great Adventures, and extraordinary Accidents, for the most simple Action may engage the Reader by the Circumstances that attend it; it enters into all the Motions and Disquiets of the Actor, when they have well express'd to him the Character. If he be Jealous, the Look of a Person he Loves, a Mouse, a turn of the Head, or the least complaisance to a Rival, throws him into the greatest Agitations, which the Readers perceive by a Counter-blow; if he be very Vertuous, and falls into a Mischance by Accident, they Pity him and Commiserate his Misfortunes; for Fear and Pity in Romance as well as Tragedies are the Two Instruments which move the Passion; for we in some Manner put our selves in the Room of those we see in Danger; the Part we take therein, and the fear of falling into the like Misfortunes, causes us to interest our selves more in their Adventures, because that those sort of Accidents may happen, to all the World; and it touches so much the more, because they are the common Effect of Nature.

The Heroes in the Ancient Romances have nothing in them that is Natural; all is unlimited in their Character; all their Advantages have Something Prodigious, and all their Actions Something that's Marvellous; in short, they are not Men: A single Prince attack by a great Number of Enemies, it so far from giving way to the Croud, that he does Incredible Feats of Valour, beats them, puts them to flight, delivers all the Prisoners, and kills an infinite Number of People, to deserve the Title of a Hero. A Reader who has any Sense does not take part with these Fabulous Adventures, or at least is but slightly touch'd with them, because they are not natural, and therefore cannot be believ'd. The Heroes of the Modern Romances are better Characteriz'd, they give them Passions, Vertues or Vices, which resemble Humanity; thus all the World will find themselves represented in these Descriptions, which ought to be exact, and mark'd by Tracts which express clearly the Character of the Hero, to the end we may not be deceived, and may presently know our predominant Quality, which ought to give the Spirit all the Motion and Action of our Lives; 'tis that which inspires the Reader with Curiosity, and a certain impatient Desire to see the End of the Accidents, the reading of which causes an Exquisite Pleasure when they are Nicely



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handled; the Motion of the Heart gives yet more, but the Author ought to have an Extraordinary Penetration to distinguish them well, and not to lose himself in this Labyrinth. Most Authors are contented to describe Men in general, they represent them Covetous, Courageous and Ambitious, without entering into the Particulars, and without specifying the Character of their Covetousness, Valour or Ambition; they don't perceive Nice Distinctions, which those who know it Remark in the Passions; in Effect, the Nature, Humour and Juncture, give New Postures to Vices; the Turn of the Mind, Motion of the Heart, Affection and Interests, alter the very Nature of the Passions, which are different in All Men; the Genius of the Author marvellously appears when he Nicely discovers those Differences, and exposes to the Reader's Sight those almost unperceivable Jealousies which escape the Sight of most Authors, because they have not an exact Notion of the Turnings and Motions of Humane Understanding; and they know nothing but the gross Passions, from whence they make but general Descriptions.

He that Writes either a True or False History, ought immediately to take Notice of the Time and Sense where those Accidents happen'd, that the Reader may not remain long in Suspence; he ought also in few Words describe the Person who bears the most Considerable Part in his Story to engage the Reader; 'tis a Thing that little conduces to the raising the Merit of a Heroe, to Praise him by the Beauty of his Face; this is mean and trivial, Detail discourages Persons of good Taste; 'tis the Qualities of the Soul which ought to render him acceptable; and there are those Qualities likewise that ought to be discourag'd in the Principal Character of a Heroe, for there are Actors of a Second Rank, who serve only to bind the Intrigue, and they ought not to be compar'd with those of the First Order, nor be given Qualities that may cause them to be equally Esteemd; 'tis not by Extravagant Expressions, nor Repeated Praises, that the Reader's Esteem is acquired to the Character of the Heroe's, their Actions ought to plead for them; 'tis by that they are made known; and describe themselves; altho' they ought to have some Extraordinary Qualities, they ought not all to have 'em in an equal degree; 'tis impossible they shou'd not have some Imperfections, seeing they are Men, but their Imperfections ought not to destroy the Character that is attributed to them; if we describe them Brave, Liberal and Generous, we ought not to attribute to them Baseness or Cowardice, because that their Actions wou'd otherwise bely their Character, and the Predominant Virtures of the Heroes: 'Tis no Argument that Salust, though so Happy in the Description of Men, in the Description of Cataline does not in some manner describe him Covetous also; for he says this Ambitious Man spent his own Means profusely, and raged after the Goods of another with an Extream Greediness, but these Two Motions which seem contrary were inspired by the same Wit; these were the Effects of the Unbounded Ambition of Cataline, and the desire he had to Rise by the help of his Creatures on the Ruins of the Roman Republic; so vast a Project cou'd not be Executed by very great Sums of Money, which obliged Cataline to make all Sorts of Efforts to get it from all Parts.



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Every Historian ought to be extremely uninterested; he ought neither to Praise nor Blame those he speaks of; he ought to be contented with Exposing the Actions, leaving an entire Liberty to the Reader to judge at he pleases, without taking any care not to blame his Heroes, or make their Apology; he is no judge of the merit of his Heroes, his Business is to represent them in the same Form as they are, and describe their Sentiments, Manners and Conduct; it deviates in some manner from his Character, and that perfect uninterestedness, when he adds to the Names of those he introduces Epithets either to Blame or Praise them; there are but few Historians who exactly follow this Rule, and who maintain this Difference, from which they cannot deviate without rendering themselves guilty of Partiality.

Although there ought to be a great Genius required to Write a History perfectly, it is nevertheless not requisite that a Historian shou'd always make use of all his Wit, nor that he shou'd strain himself, in Nice and Lively Reflexions; 'tis a Fault which is reproach'd with some Justice to Cornelius Tacitus, who is not contented to recount the Feats, but employs the most refin'd Reflexions of Policy to find out the secret Reasons and hidden Causes of Accidents, there is nevertheless a distinction to be made between the Character of the Historian and the Heroe, for if it be the Heroe that speaks, then he ought to express himself Ingeniously, without affecting any Nicety of Points or Syllogisms, because he speaks without any Preparation; but when the Author speaks of his Chief, he may use a more Nice Language, and chuse his Terms for the better expressing his Designs; Moral Reflexions, Maxims and Sentences are more proper in Discourses for Instructions than in Historical Novels, whose chief End if to please; and if we find in them some Instructions, it proceeds rather from their Descriptions than their Precepts.

An Acute Historian ought to observe the same Method, at the Ending as at the Beginning of his Story, for he may at first expose Maxims relating but a few Feats, but when the End draws nigher, the Curiosity of the Reader is augmented, and he finds in him a Secret Impatience of desiring to see the Discovery of the Action; an Historian that amuses himself by Moralizing or Describing, discourages an Impatient Reader, who is in haste to see the End of Intrigues; he ought also to use a quite different Sort of Stile in the main Part of the Work, than in Conversations, which ought to be writ after an easie and free Manner: Fine Expressions and Elegant Turns agree little to the Stile of Conversation, whose Principal Ornament consists in the Plainness, Simplicity, Free and Sincere Air, which is much to be prefer'd before a great Exactness: We see frequent Examples in Ancient Authors of a Sort of Conversation which seems to clash with Reason; for 'tis not Natural for a Man to entertain himself, for we only speak that we may communicate



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our Thoughts to others; besides, 'tis hard to comprehend how an Author that relates Word for Word, the like Conversation cou'd be instructed to repeat them with so much Exactness; these Sort of Conversations are much more Impertinent when they run upon strange Subjects, which are not indispensibly allied to the Story handled: If the Conversations are long they indispensibly tire, because they drive from our Sight those People to whom we are engaged, and interrupt the Seque of the Story.

'Tis an indispensable Necessity to end a Story to satisfie the Disquiets of the Reader, who is engag'd to the Fortunes of those People whose Adventures are described to him; 'tis depriving him of a most delicate Pleasure, when he is hindred from seeing the Event of an Intrigue, which has caused some Emotion in him, whose Discovery he expects, be it either Happy or Unhappy; the chief End of History is to instruct and inspire into Men the Love of Vertue, and Abhorrence of Vice, by the Examples propos'd to them; therefore the Conclusion of a Story ought to have some Tract of Morality which may engage Virtue; those People who have a more refin'd Vertue are not always the most Happy; but yet their Misfortunes excite their Readers Pity, and affects them; although Vice be not always punish'd, yet 'tis describ'd with Reasons which shew its Deformity, and make it enough known to be worthy of nothing but Chastisements.

THE JEWISH SPY:

BEING A

PHILOSOPHICAL, HISTORICAL and
CRITICAL Correspondence,

By LETTERS

Which lately pass'd between certain JEWS
in *Turky, Italy, France, &c.*

Translated from the ORIGINALS into *French,*

By the MARQUIS D'ARGENS; And now done into English.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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[Illustration]

LETTER XXXV.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS, a *Rabbi*, at Constantinople.

Paris—

I still expect the Books from *Amsterdam*; and have writ several times to *Moses Rodrigo* to press him to send them to me; but to no purpose: He puts me off to the End of the Month, and I shall not be able to send them to *Constantinople* in less than five Weeks.



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I have search'd all the Booksellers Shops at *Paris* for some choice new Tracts, to add to those which I shall receive from *Holland*, but found nothing good besides what I have already sent thee, except two little. Romances that are lately come out. The first is intitled, *Les Egaremens du Coeur & de l'Esprit*; the Author of which I have already made mention of in my former Letters.[13] He writes in a pure Stile, understands Human Nature, and he lays the Heart of Man open with a great deal of Clearness and Justice: But in this Work he has fallen into an Error, which he has often condemn'd in the Writings of others. He makes it plain to the Reader, that he affects to be witty; and there are some Passages where Nature is sacrificed to the false Glare. But this Error, which is not common, is repair'd by a thousand Beauties. The Author of this Romance paints rather than writes Things; and the Pictures he draws strike the Imagination with Pleasure. Do but consider if it be possible to define the first Surprize of a Heart with more Justness and Clearness. *Without searching into the Motive of my Action, I managed, I interpreted her Looks; I endeavour'd to make her least Motions my Lessons. So much Obstinacy in not losing Sight of her made me at last taken notice of by her. She looked upon me in her turn, I fix'd her without knowing it, and during the Charm with which I was captivated whether I wou'd or not, I know not what my Eyes told her, but she turn'd hers away with a sort of Blush.*

None but a Man who was at that Juncture, or had been formerly, in Love cou'd, with so much Truth and Delicacy, have painted all the Motions of the Soul. Genius, Wit, and Learning cannot draw Pictures so much to the Life, it being a Point to which the Heart alone can attain. When I say the Heart, I mean a tender Heart, and one that is in such Situations. The following is the Character of a Prude in Love. *Being not to be depended upon in her Proceedings, she was a perpetual Mixture of Tenderness and Severity: She seem'd to yield only to be the more obstinate in her Opposition. If she thought she had, by what she said, disposed me to entertain any sort of Hopes, being on the Watch how to disappoint me, she presently resum'd that Air which had made me so often tremble, and left me nothing to trust to but a melancholy Uncertainty.* One cannot help being struck with the Truth and Nature which, prevail in this Character. Without an Acquaintance with the World, and a perfect Knowledge of Mankind, 'tis impossible to attain to this Point. 'Tis difficult to distinguish the different Forms, and, as one may say, the internal Motives of different Characters. A mean Writer does only take a Sketch of 'em; but a good Author paints them, sets them plainly in Sight, and exposes them as they really are.

A Romance is consider'd in no other Light than as a Work composed only for Amusement; but something else ought to be the Scope of it: For every Book that has not the Useful as well as the Agreeable, does not deserve the Esteem of good Judges. The Heart ought to be instructed at the same time as the Mind is amused; and this is the Quality with which the greatest Men have render'd their Writings famous.

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A Writer who, abounding with bold Fictions and Imaginations, amuses the Readers for a matter of a dozen Volumes with Incidents, work'd up artfully and importantly, and who nevertheless in the Close of his Book entertains his Reader's Imagination with nothing but Rapes, Duels, Sighs, Despair, and Tears[14]; has not the Talent of instructing, nor can he attain to Perfection; for he possesses but the least part of his Art. An Author who pleases without instructing, does not please long; for he sees his Book grow mouldy in the Bookseller's Shop, and his Works have the Fate of sorry Sermons and cold Panegyric.

Heretofore Romances were nothing more than a Rhapsody of tragical Adventures, which captivated the the Imagination and distracted the Heart[15]. 'Twas pleasant enough to read them, but nothing more was got by it than feeding the Mind with Chimaeras, which were often hurtful. The Youth greedily swallow'd all the wild and gigantic Ideas of those fabulous Heroes, and when their Genius's were accustomed to enormous Imaginations, they had no longer a Relish for the Probable. For some time past this manner of Thinking has been chang'd: Good Taste is again return'd; the Reasonable has succeeded in the place of the Supernatural; and instead of a Number of Incidents with which the least Facts were overcharg'd, a plain lively Narration is required, such as is supported by Characters that give us the *Utile Dulci*.

Some Authors have wrote in this Taste, and have advanced more or less towards Perfection, in proportion as they have copy'd Nature[16].

There are others who carry Things to Extremity; for, by affecting to appear natural, they become low and creeping, and have neither the Talent of pleasing nor of instructing[17].

Some have had recourse to insipid Allegory[18], thinking to please by a new Taste; but their Works dy'd in their Birth, and were so little read that they escaped Criticism.

If the bad Authors were but to reflect on the Talents and Qualifications necessary for a good Romance, Works of this kind would no longer be their Refuge. A Man who is press'd both by Hunger and Thirst, sets about writing a Book, and tho' he has not Knowledge enough to write History, nor Genius for Works of Morality, he stains a couple of Quires of Paper with a Heap of ill-digested Adventures, which he relates without Taste, and without Genius, and carries his Work to a Bookseller, who, were he oblig'd to buy it by Weight, and to give him but twice the Cost of the Paper, wou'd pay more for it than the Worth of it. Perhaps there is as much need for Wit, an Acquaintance with Mankind, and the Knowledge of the Passions, to compose a Romance as to write a History. The only Qualification to paint Manners and Customs, is a long Experience; and a Man must have examin'd the various Characters very closely, to be able to describe them to a Nicety.



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How can an Author, whose common Vocation is staining of Paper, and spending his whole Time in a Coffee-house or in a Garret, give a just Definition of a Prince, a Courtier, or a fine Lady? He never sees those Persons but as he walks the Streets; and I can scarce think that the Mud with which he is often dash'd by their Equipages, communicates to him any Share of their Sentiments. Yet there is not a wretched Author but makes a Duke and Dutchess speak as he fancies. But when a Man of Fashion comes to cast his Eye on these ridiculous Performances, he is perfectly surpriz'd to see the Conversation of *Margaret* the Hawker, retail'd by the Name of the Dutchess of —, or the Marchioness of —. Yet be these Books ever so bad, abundance of 'em are sold; for many People, extravagantly fond of Novelty, who only judge of Things superficially, buy those Works, tho' by the Perusal of 'em they acquire a Taste as remote from a happy Talent of Writing, as the Authors themselves are.

Don't fear, dear *Isaac*, that I shall ever send thee a Collection of such paultry Books. Be a Man ever so fond at *Constantinople* of Romances and Histories of Gallantry, 'tis expected they should serve not only for Pleasure but for Edification.

The second Book that I have bought, seems to me to be written with this View. 'Tis intitled, *Memoirs of the Marquis de Mirmon; or the Solitary Philosopher*. The Author writes with an easy lively Stile[19]; and 'tis plain, that he himself was acquainted with the Characters which he paints. Without affecting to appear to have as much Wit as the former Author that I mention'd to thee, he delivers the Truth every where in an amiable Dress. If any Fault can be found with him, 'tis explaining himself a little too boldly; and he is also reproach'd with a sort of Negligence pardonable in a Man whose Stile is in general so pure as his is. The following is his Character of Solitude, *'Tis not to torment himself that a wise Man seems to separate himself from Mankind: He is far from imposing new Laws on himself, and only follows those that are already prescrib'd to his Hands. If he lays himself under any new Laws, he reserves to himself the Power of changing them, being their absolute Master, and not their Slave. Being content to cool his Passions, and to govern them by his Reason, he does not imagine it impossible to tame them to his own Fancy, and does not convert what was formerly an innocent Amusement to him, into a Monster to terrify him. He retains in Solitude all the Pleasures which Men of Honour have a Relish for in the World, and only puts it out of their Power of being hurtful, by preventing them from being too violent.*

There are several other Passages in this Book, which are as remarkable for their Perspicuity as their Justness. Such is the Description of the Disgust which sometimes attends Marriages. *When Persons are in Love, they put the best Side outwards. A Man who is desirous of pleasing, takes a world of Care to conceal his Defects. A Woman knows still better how to dissemble. Two Persons often study for six Months together to bubble one another, and at last they marry, and punish one another the Remainder of their Lives for their Dissimulation.*

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You will own, dear *Isaac*, that there is a glaring Truth and Perspicuity in this Character, which strikes the Mind. These naked Thoughts present themselves with Lustre to the Imagination, which cannot help being pleased, because they are so just. If the Authors who write Romances in this new Taste, would always adhere to the Truth, and never suffer themselves to be perverted to any new Mode (for this is what Works of Wit are liable to) their Writings wou'd probably be as useful in forming the Manners as Comedy, because they wou'd render Romances the Picture of Human Life. A covetous Man will therein find himself painted in such natural Colours; a Coquette will therein see her Picture so resembling her, that their Reflection upon reading the Character will be more useful to them than the long-winded Exhortations of a Fryar, who makes himself hoarse with Exclamation, and often tires out the Patience of his Hearers.

Authors who set about writing Romances, ought to study to paint Manners according to Nature, and to expose the most secret Sentiments of the Heart. As their Works are but ingenious Fictions, they can never please otherwise than as they approach to the Probable. Nor is every thing that favours of the Marvellous, esteem'd more among Men of Taste than pure Nonsense. Both generally go together, and the Authors who fall into gigantic or unnatural Ideas, have commonly a declamatory Stile, bordering upon a pompous and unintelligible Diction.

The Stile of Romances ought to be simple; indeed it should be more florid than that of History, but not have all that Energy and Majesty. Gallantry is the Soul of Romance, and Grandeur and Justness that of History. A Person must be very well acquainted with the World to excel in the one, and he must have Learning and Politics to distinguish himself in the other. Good Sense, Perspicuity, Justness of Characters, Truth of Descriptions, Purity of Stile are necessary in both. The Ladies are born Judges of the Goodness of a Romance. Posterity decides the Merit of a History.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*. As soon as I have receiv'd the new Books from *Holland*, I will send them to thee.

NOTES:

[13] *Crebillon* the Son.

[14] *La Calprenede*.

[15] The *Polexandre of Gomberville*, the *Ariana of Des Maretz*, &c.

[16] *Le Prevot d'Exiles*. See the *Bibliotheque des Romans*.

[17] *Histoire du Chevalier des Essars*, & de la *Comtesse de Merci*, &c.

[18] *Fanseredin*, &c.



BOOKRAGS

[19] M. *d'Argens*.

[Illustration]

CLARISSA.

OR, THE

HISTORY

OF A

YOUNG LADY:

Comprehending



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*The most Important Concerns of Private LIFE,
And particularly shewing,
The DISTRESSES that may attend the Misconduct
Both of PARENTS and CHILDREN,
In Relation to MARRIAGE.*

Published by the EDITOR of PAMELA.

VOL. IV.

[Illustration]

LONDON:

Printed for S. Richardson: And Sold by JOHN OSBORN, in *Pater-noster Row*;
ANDREW MILLAR, over-against *Catharine-street* in the *Strand*; J. and JA.
RIVINGTON, in *St. Paul's Church-yard*; And by J. LEAKE, at *Bath*

M.DCC.XLVIII.

[Illustration]

THE EDITOR *to the* READER.

If it may be thought reasonable to criticise the Public Taste, in what are generally supposed to be Works of mere Amusement; or modest to direct its Judgment, in what is offered for its Entertainment; I would beg leave to introduce the following Sheets with a few cursory Remarks, that may lead the common Reader into some tolerable conception of the nature of this Work, and the design of its Author.

The close connexion which every Individual has with all that relates to MAN in general, strongly inclines us to turn our observation upon human affairs, preferably to other attentions, and impatiently to wait the progress and issue of them. But, as the course of human actions is too slow to gratify our inquisitive curiosity, observant men very easily contrived to satisfy its rapidity, by the invention of *History*. Which, by recording the principal circumstances of past facts, and laying them close together, in a continued narration, kept the mind from languishing, and gave constant exercise to its reflections.

But as it commonly happens, that in all indulgent refinements on our satisfactions, the Procurers to our pleasures run into excess; so it happened here. Strict matters of fact, how delicately soever dressed up, soon grew too simple and insipid to a taste stimulated by the Luxury of Art: They wanted something of more poignancy to quicken and enforce a jaded appetite. Hence the Original of the first barbarous *Romances*, abounding with this false provocative of uncommon, extraordinary, and miraculous Adventures.



But satiety, in things unnatural, soon, brings on disgust. And the Reader, at length, began to see, that too eager a pursuit after *Adventures* had drawn him from what first engaged his attention, *MAN and his Ways*, into the Fairy Walks of Monsters and Chimeras. And now those who had run farthest after these delusions, were the first that recovered themselves. For the next Species of Fiction, which took its name from its *novelty*, was of *Spanish* invention. These presented us with something of Humanity; but of Humanity in a stiff unnatural state. For, as every thing before was conducted by *Inchantment*; so now all was managed by *Intrigue*. And tho' it had indeed a kind of *Life*, it had yet, as in its infancy, nothing of *Manners*. On which account, those, who could not penetrate into the ill constitution of its plan, yet grew disgusted at the dryness of the Conduct, and want of ease in the Catastrophe.

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The avoiding these defects gave rise to the *Heroical Romances* of the *French*; in which some celebrated Story of antiquity was so stained and polluted by modern fable and invention, as was just enough to shew, that the contrivers of them neither knew how to lye, nor speak truth. In these voluminous extravagances, *Love* and *Honour* supplied the place of *Life* and *Manners*. But the over-refinement of Platonic sentiments always sinks into the dross and feces of that Passion. For in attempting a more natural representation of it, in the little amatory Novels, which succeeded these heavier Volumes, tho' the Writers avoided the dryness of the Spanish Intrigue, and the extravagance of the French Heroism, yet, by too natural a representation of their Subject, they opened the door to a worse evil than a corruption of *Taste*; and that was, A corruption of *Heart*.

At length, this great People (to whom, it must be owned, all Science has been infinitely indebted) hit upon the true Secret, by which alone a deviation from strict fact, in the commerce of Man, could be really entertaining to an improved mind, or useful to promote that Improvement. And this was by a faithful and chaste copy of real *Life and Manners*: In which some of their late Writers have greatly excelled.

It was on this sensible Plan, that the Author of the following Sheets attempted to please, in an Essay, which had the good fortune to meet with success: That encouragement engaged him in the present Design: In which his sole object being *Human Nature*; he thought himself at liberty to draw a Picture of it in that light which would shew it with most strength of Expression; tho' at the expense of what such as read merely for Amusement, may fancy can be ill-spared, the more artificial composition of a story in one continued Narrative.

He has therefore told his Tale in a Series of Letters, supposed to be written by the Parties concerned, as the circumstances related, passed. For this juncture afforded him the only natural opportunity that could be had, of representing with any grace those lively and delicate impressions which *Things present* are known to make upon the minds of those affected by them. And he apprehends, that, in the study of Human Nature, the knowlege of those apprehensions leads us farther into the recesses of the Human Mind, than the colder and more general reflections suited to a continued and more contracted Narrative.

This is the nature and purport of his Attempt. Which, perhaps, may not be so well or generally understood. For if the Reader seeks here for Strange Tales, Love Stories, Heroical Adventures, or, in short, for anything but a *Faithful Picture of Nature in Private Life*, he had better be told beforehand the likelihood of his being disappointed. But if he can find Use or Entertainment; either *Directions for his Conduct*, or *Employment for his Pity*, in a HISTORY of LIFE and MANNERS, where, as in the World itself, we find Vice, for a time, triumphant, and Virtue in distress, an idle hour or two, we hope, may not be unprofitably lost.



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[Illustration]

MEMOIRS

OF THE

Count Du BEAUVAL,

INCLUDING

Some curious PARTICULARS

Relating to the DUKES of

Wharton *and* Ormond,

During their Exiles.

WITH

ANECDOTES of several other Illustrious
and Unfortunate Noblemen of the present Age.

Translated from the French of the Marquis D'ARGENS, Author of The Jewish Letters.

By Mr. DERRICK.

LONDON:

Printed for M. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *PaterNoster-Row*.

M.DCC.LIV.

PREFACE.

The Ground-work of Romances, till of late Years, has been a Series of Actions, few of which, ever existed but in the Mind of the Author; to support which, with proper Spirit, a strong picturesque Fancy, and a nervous poetical Diction, were necessary. When these great Essentials were wanting, the Narration became cold, insipid, and disagreeable.

The principal Hero was generally one who fac'd every Danger, without any Reflection, for it was always beneath him to think; it was a sufficient Motive of persisting, if there



seem'd Peril; conquering Giants, and dissolving Enchantments, were as easy to him as riding. He commonly sets out deeply in Love; his Mistress is a Virgin, he loses her in the Beginning of the Book, thro' the Spite or Craft of some malicious Necromancer, pursues her thro' a large Folio Volume of Incredibility, and finds her, indisputably, at the End of it, like try'd Gold, still more charming, from having pass'd the Fire Ordeal of Temptation.

Amusement and Instruction were the Intent of these Sort of Writings; the former they always fulfill'd, and if they sometimes fail'd in the latter, it was because the Objects they conjur'd up to Fancy, were merely intellectual Ideas, consequently not capable of impressing so deeply as those which are to be met with in the Bustle of Life.

Hence those, whose Genius led them to cultivate this Sort of writing, have been induc'd to examine amongst such Scenes as are daily found to move beneath their Inspection. On this Plan are founded the Writings of the celebrated Mons. MARIVAUX, and the Performances of the ingenious Mr. FIELDING; each of whom are allow'd to be excellent in their different Nations.

The Marquis D'ARGENS, sensible of the Advantages accruing from Works of this Kind, was not satisfied with barely copying the Accidents, but has also united with them the real Names of Persons, who have been remarkable in Life; conscious that we pay a more strict Attention to the Occurrences that have befallen those who enter within the Compass of our Acquaintance, or Knowledge, and if a Moral ensues from the Relation, it is more firmly rooted in the Mind, than when it is to be deduced from either Manners or Men, with whom we are entirely unacquainted.



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The Marquis is easy in his Stile, delicate in his Sentiments, and not at all tedious in his Narration. In the following Piece we find Nothing heavy or insipid, he dwells not too long upon any Adventure, nor does he burthen the Memory, or clog the Attention with Reflections intended, too often more for the Bookseller's Emolument, in swelling the Bulk of the Performance, than the Service of the Reader, on whom he knew it to be otherwise an Imposition; since, by long-winded wearisome Comments upon every Passage (a Fault too frequent in many Writers) he takes from him an Opportunity of exercising his reflective Abilities, seeming thereby to doubt them.

[Illustration]

PUBLICATIONS OF THE AUGUSTAN REPRINT SOCIETY

FIRST YEAR (1946-47)

Numbers 1-4 out of print.

5. Samuel Wesley's *Epistle to a Friend Concerning Poetry* (1700) and *Essay on Heroic Poetry* (1693).

6. *Representation of the Impiety and Immorality of the Stage* (1704) and *Some Thoughts Concerning the Stage* (1704).

SECOND YEAR (1947-1948)

7. John Gay's *The Present State of Wit* (1711); and a section on Wit from *The English Theophrastus* (1702).

8. Rapin's *De Carmine Pastoralis*, translated by Creech (1684).

9. T. Hanmer's (?) *Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet* (1736).

10. Corbyn Morris' *Essay towards Fixing the True Standards of Wit, etc.* (1744).

11. Thomas Purney's *Discourse on the Pastoral* (1717).

12. *Essays on the Stage*, selected, with an Introduction by Joseph Wood Krutch.

THIRD YEAR (1948-1949)

13. Sir John Falstaff (pseud.), *The Theatre* (1720).



14. Edward Moore's *The Gamester* (1753).
15. John Oldmixon's *Reflections on Dr. Swift's Letter to Harley* (1712); and Arthur Mainwaring's *The British Academy* (1712).
16. Nevil Payne's *Fatal Jealousy* (1673).
17. Nicholas Rowe's *Some Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespeare* (1709).
18. "Of Genius," in *The Occasional Paper*, Vol. III, No. 10 (1719); and Aaron Hill's Preface to *The Creation* (1720).

FOURTH YEAR (1949-1950)

19. Susanna Centlivre's *The Busie Body* (1709).
20. Lewis Theobald's *Preface to The Works of Shakespeare* (1734).
21. *Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa, and Pamela* (1754).
22. Samuel Johnson's *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749) and Two *Rambler* papers (1750).
23. John Dryden's *His Majesties Declaration Defended* (1681).
24. Pierre Nicole's *An Essay on True and Apparent Beauty in Which from Settled Principles is Rendered the Grounds for Choosing and Rejecting Epigrams*, translated by J.V. Cunningham.



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FIFTH YEAR (1950-51)

25. Thomas Baker's *The Fine Lady's Airs* (1709).
26. Charles Macklin's *The Man of the World* (1792).
27. Frances Reynolds' *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Taste, and of the Origin of Our Ideas of Beauty, etc.* (1785).
28. John Evelyn's *An Apologie for the Royal Party* (1659); and *A Panegyric to Charles the Second* (1661).
29. Daniel Defoe's *A Vindication of the Press* (1718).
30. Essays on Taste from John Gilbert Cooper's *Letters Concerning Taste*, 3rd edition (1757), & John Armstrong's *Miscellanies* (1770).
31. Thomas Gray's *An Elegy Wrote in a Country Church Yard* (1751); and *The Eton College Manuscript*.