

# **Life's Progress Through The Passions eBook**

## **Life's Progress Through The Passions by Eliza Haywood**

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LIFE's  
*progress*  
*through the*  
*passions.*

## INTRODUCTION.

I have often heard it observed by the readers of biography, that the characters are generally too high painted; and that the *good* or *bad* qualities of the person pretended to be faithfully represented, are displayed in stronger colours than are to be found in nature. To this the lovers of hyperbole reply, that *virtue* cannot be drawn too beautiful, nor *vice* too deformed, in order to excite in us an ambition of imitating the *one*, and a horror at the thoughts of becoming any way like the *other*.—The argument at first, indeed, seems to have some weight, as there is nothing, not even precept itself, which so greatly contributes whether to rectify or improve the mind, as the prevalence of example: but then it ought to be considered, that if the pattern laid down before us, is so altogether angelic, as to render it impossible to be copied, emulation will be in danger of being swallowed up in an unprofitable admiration; and, on the other hand, if it appears so monstrously hideous as to take away all apprehensions of ever resembling

it, we might be too apt to indulge ourselves in errors which would seem small in comparison with those presented to us.—There never yet was any one man, in whom all the *virtues*, or all the *vices*, were summed up; for, though reason and education may go a great way toward curbing the passions, yet I believe experience will inform, even the *best* of men, that they will sometimes launch out beyond their due bounds, in spite of all the care can be taken to restrain them; nor do I think the very *worst*, and most wicked, does not feel in himself, at some moments, a propensity to good, though it may be possible he never brings it into practice; at least, this was the opinion of the ancients, as witness the poet's words:

## Page 3

All men are born with seeds of *good* and *ill*;  
And each shoot forth, in more or less degree:  
*One* you may cultivate with care and skill,  
But from the *other* ne'er be wholly free.

The human mind may, I think, be compared to a chequer-work, where light and shade appear by turns; and in proportion as either of these is most conspicuous, the man is alone worthy of praise or censure; for none there are can boast of being wholly bright.

I believe by this the reader will be convinced he must not expect to see a faultless figure in the hero of the following pages; but to remove all possibility of a disappointment on that score, I shall farther declare, that I am an enemy to all *romances*, *novels*, and whatever carries the air of them, tho' disguised under different appellations; and as it is a *real*, not *fictitious* character I am about to present, I think myself obliged, for the reasons I have already given, as well as to gratify my own inclinations, to draw him such as he was, not such as some sanguine imaginations might wish him to have been.

I flatter myself, however, that *truth* will appear not altogether void of charms, and the adventures I take upon me to relate, not be less pleasing for being within the reach of probability, and such as might have happened to any other as well as the person they did.—Few there are, I am pretty certain, who will not find some resemblance of himself in one part or other of his life, among the many various and surprizing turns of fortune, which the subject of this little history experienced, as also be reminded in what manner the passions operate in every stage of life, and how far the constitution of the *outward frame* is concerned in the emotions of the *internal faculties*.

These are things surely very necessary to be considered, and when they are so, will, in a great measure, abate that unbecoming vehemence, with which people are apt to testify their admiration, or abhorrence of actions, which it very often happens would lose much of their *eclat* either way, were the secret springs that give them motion, seen into with the eyes of philosophy and reflection.

But this will be more clearly understood by a perusal of the facts herein contained, from which I will no longer detain in the attention of my reader.

## BOOK the First.

### CHAP. I.

Shews, in the example of Natura, how from our very birth, the passions, to which the human soul is incident, are discoverable in us; and how far the organs of sense, or what is called the constitution, has an effect over us.

The origin of Natura would perhaps require more time to trace than the benefit of the discovery would atone for: it shall therefore suffice to say, that his ancestors were neither of the highest rank:—that

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if no extraordinary action had signalized the names of any of them, so none of them had been guilty of crimes to entail infamy on their posterity: and that a moderate estate in the family had descended from father to son for many generations, without being either remarkably improved or embezzled.—His immediate parents were in very easy circumstances, and he being their first son, was welcomed into the world with a joy usual on such occasions.—I never heard that any prodigies preceded or accompanied his nativity; or that the planets, or his mother's cravings during her pregnancy, had sealed him with any particular mark or badge of distinction: but have been well assured he was a fine boy, sucked heartily of his mother's milk, and what they call a thriving child. His weaning, I am told, was attended by some little ailments, occasioned by his pining after the food to which he had been accustomed; but proper means being found to make him lose the memory of the breast, he soon recovered his flesh, increased in strength, and could go about the room at a year and some few months old, without the help of a leading-string.

Hitherto the passions, those powerful abettors, I had almost said sole authors of all human actions, operated but faintly, and could shew themselves only in proportion to the vigour of the animal frame. Yet latent as they are, an observing eye may easily discover them in each of their different propensities, even from the most early infancy. The eyes of Natura on any new and pleasing object, would denote by their sparkling a sensation of joy:—*Fear* was visible in him by clinging to his nurse, and endeavouring to bury himself as it were in her bosom, at the sound of menaces he was not capable of understanding:—That *sorrow* has a place among the first emotions of the soul, was demonstrable by the sighs which frequently would heave his little heart, long before it was possible for him either to know or to imagine any motives for them:—That the seeds of *avarice* are born with us, by the eagerness with which he caught at money when presented to him, his clinching it fast in his hand, and the reluctance he expressed on being deprived of it:—That *anger*, and impatience of controul, are inherent to our nature, might be seen in his throwing down with vehemence any favourite toy, rather than yield to resign it; and that spite and revenge are also but too much so, by his putting in practice all such tricks as his young invention could furnish, to vex any of the family who had happened to cross him:—Even those tender inclinations, which afterwards bear the name of *amorous*, begin to peep out long before the difference of sex is thought on; as Natura proved by the preference he gave the girls over the boys who came to play with him, and his readiness to part with any thing to them.

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In a word, there is not one of all the various emotions which agitate the breast in maturity, that may not be discerned almost from the birth, *hope*, *jealousy*, and *despair* excepted, which, tho' they bear the name in common with those other more natural dispositions of the mind, I look upon rather as consequentials of the passions, and arising from them, than properly passions themselves: but however that be, it is certain, that they are altogether dependant on a fixation of ideas, reflection, and comparison, and therefore can have no entrance in the soul, or at least cannot be awakened in it, till some degree of knowledge is attained.

Thus do the dispositions of the *infant* indicate the future *man*; and though we see, in the behaviour of persons when grown up, so vast a difference, yet as all children at first act alike, I think it may be reasonably supposed, that were it not for some change in the constitution, an equal similitude of will, desires, and sentiments, would continue among us through maturity and old age; at least I am perfectly perswaded it would do so, among all those who are born in the same climate, and educated in the same principles: for whatever may be said of a great genius, and natural endowments, there is certainly no real distinction between the *soul* of the man of *wit* and the *idiot*; and that disproportion, which we are apt to behold with so much wonder, is only in fact occasioned by some or other of those innumerable and hidden accidents, which from our first coming into the world, in a more or less degree, have, an effect upon the organs of sense; and they being the sole canals through which the spirit shews itself, according as they happen to be extended, contracted, or obstructed, the man must infallibly appear.

## CHAP. II.

**Contains some proofs by what swift degrees the passions gain an ascendant over the mind, and grow up in proportion with our reason.**

Natura had no sooner quitted the nursery, than he was put under the direction of the school, to which at first he was every day conducted either by a man or maid-servant; but when thought big enough to be trusted alone, would frequently play the truant, for which he generally received the discipline necessary on such occasions.—He took his learning notwithstanding as well as could be expected;—he had read the testament through at five years old, about seven was put into Latin, and began the rudiments of Greek before he had attained the age of nine.



## Page 6

As his understanding increased, the passions became stronger in proportion: and here is to be observed the wonderful wisdom of nature, or rather of the Great Author of nature, in the formation of the human system, that the passions given to us, especially those of the worst sort, are, for the most part, such opposites, that the one is a sufficient check upon the other.—The *pride* of treating those beneath us with contempt, is restrained by the *fear* of meeting the same usage from those above us.—A *sordid covetousness* is controlled by *ostentation*.—*Sloth* is roused by *ambition*, and so of the rest.—I have been told that when Natura, by the enticements of his companions, and his own eagerness to pursue the sports suitable to his years, had been drawn in to neglect his studies, he had often ran home on a sudden, and denied himself both food and sleep, till he had not only finished the task assigned him by his school-master, but also exceeded what was expected from him, instigated by the ambition of praise, and hope of being removed to a higher form.—But at other times again his love of play has rendered him totally forgetful of every thing besides, and all emulation in him absorbed in pleasure.—Thus hurried, as the different propensities prevailed, from one extreme to the other;—never in a medium, but always doing either more or less than was required of him.

In like manner was his *avarice* moderated by his *pity*;—an instance of which was this;—One morning having won at chuck-farthing, or some such game, all the money a poor boy was master of, and which he said had been given him to buy his breakfast, Natura was so much melted at his tears and complaints, that he generously returned to him the whole of what he had lost.—Greatly is it to be wished, the same sentiments of compassion would influence some of riper years, and make them scorn to take the advantage chance sometimes affords of ruining their fellow-creatures; but the misfortune is, that when we arrive at the state of perfect manhood, the *worst* passions are apt to get the better of the more *noble*, as the prospect they present is more alluring to the eye of sense: all men (as I said before) being born with the same propensities, it is *virtue* alone, or in other words, a strict *morality*, which prevents them from actuating alike in all.—But to return to the young Natura.

He was scarce ten years old when his mother died; but was not sensible of the misfortune he sustained by the loss of her, though, as it afterwards proved, was the greatest could have happened to him: the remembrance of the tenderness with which she had used him, joined to the sight of all the family in tears, made him at first indeed utter some bitter lamentations; but the thoughts of a new suit of mourning, a dress he had never yet been in, soon dissipated his grief, and the sight of himself before the great glass, in a habit so altogether strange, and therefore pleasing to him, took off all anguish for the sad occasion.—So early do we begin to be sensible of a satisfaction in any thing that we imagine is an advantage to our persons, or will make us be taken notice of.—How it grows up with us, and how difficult it is to be eradicated, I appeal even to those of the most sour and cynical disposition.

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Mr. Dryden admirably describes this propensity in human nature in these lines:

Men are but children of a larger growth,  
Our appetites as prone to change as theirs,  
And full as craving too, and full as vain.

A fondness for trifles is certainly no less conspicuous in age than youth; and we daily see it among persons of the best understanding, who wholly neglect every essential to real happiness in the pursuit of those very toys which children cry to be indulged in; even such as a bit of ribband, or the sound of a monosyllable tacked to the name; without considering that those badges of distinction, like bells about an idiot's neck, frequently serve only to render their folly more remarkable, and expose them to the contempt of the lookers on, who perhaps too, as nature is the same in all, want but the same opportunity to catch no less eagerly at the tawdry gewgaw.

Natura felt not the loss of his dear mother, till he beheld another in her place. His father entered into a second marriage before much more than half his year of widowhood was expired, with a lady, who, though pretty near his equal in years, had yet remains enough of beauty to render her extremely vain and affected, and fortune enough to make her no less proud.—These two qualities occasioned Natura many rebuffs, to which he had not been accustomed, and he felt them the more severely, as the name of mother had made him expect the same proofs of tenderness from this, who had the title, as he had remembered to have received from her who had been really so.

He endeavoured at first to insinuate himself into her favour by all those little flattering artifices which are so becoming in persons of his tender years, and which never fail to make an impression on a gentle and affable disposition; but finding his services not only rejected, but also rejected with scorn and moroseness, his spirit was too great to continue them for any long time; and all the assiduity he had shewn to gain her goodwill, was on a sudden converted into a behaviour altogether the reverse: he was sure to turn the deaf ear to all the commands she laid upon him, and so far from doing any thing to please her, he seemed to take a delight in vexing her. This occasioning many complaints to his father, drew on him very severe chastisements both at home and abroad; but though while the smart remained, he made many promises of amendment in this point, the hatred he had now conceived against her, would not suffer him to keep them.

His sister, who was five years older than himself, and a girl of great prudence, took a good deal of pains to convince him how much it was both his interest and his duty to pay all manner of respect to a lady whom their father had thought fit to set over them; but all she could say on that head was thrown away, and he still replied, that since he could not make her love him, he should always hate her.

This young lady had perhaps no less reason than her brother to be dissatisfied with the humour of their stepmother; and it was only the tender affection she had for him which made her feign a contentment at the treatment both of them received, in order to keep him within any manner of bounds.

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It may be reckoned among the misfortunes of Natura, that he so soon lost the benefit of these kind remonstrances: his fair adviser having a considerable fortune, independent on her father, left her by a grandmother, who had also answered for her at the *font*, was courted by a gentleman, to whom neither herself nor family having any thing to object, she became a bride in a very few months, and went with her husband to a seat he had at a considerable distance in the country.

This poor youth was now without any one, either to prevent him from doing a fault, or to conceal it when committed; on the contrary, his mother-in-law, having new-modelled all the family, and retained only such servants as thought it their duty to study nothing but to humour her, every little error in him was exaggerated, and he was represented to his father as incorrigible, perverse, and all that is disagreeable in nature.

I will not take upon me to determine whether, or not, the old gentleman had altogether so ill an opinion of his son, as they endeavoured to inspire him with; but it is certain, that whatever his thoughts were on the matter, he found himself obliged for a quiet life to use him with a good deal of severity, which, either because he believed it unjust, or that it was disagreeable to his own disposition, he grew very weary of in a short time, and to put an end to it, resolved to send the child to a boarding-school, tho' he had always declared against that sort of education, and frequently said, that though these great schools might improve the learning, they were apt to corrupt the morals of youth.

Finding himself, however, under a kind of necessity for so doing, nothing remained but the choice of a convenient place. The wife proposed some part of Yorkshire, not only as the cheapest, but also that by reason of the distance, she should not have the trouble of him at home in the holidays; but to this it was not in her power to prevail on his father to consent, and after many disputes between them on it, Eton was at length pitched upon.

Natura heard of his intended removal with a perfect indifference:—if the thoughts of parting from his father gave him any pain, it was balanced by those of being eased of the persecuting of his stepmother; but when all things were prepared for his journey, in which he was to be accompanied by an old relation, who was to give the necessary charge with him to those into whose care he should be committed, he was taken suddenly ill on the very day he had been to take leave of his kindred, and other friends in town.

His distemper proved to be the small-pox, but being of a very favourable sort, he recovered in a short time, and lost nothing of his handsomeness by that so-much-dreaded enemy to the face: there remained, however, a little redness, which, till intirely worn off, it was judged improper he should be sent where it was likely there might be many young gentlemen, who having never experienced the same, would take umbrage at the sight.

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During the time of his indisposition he had been attended by an old nurse, who had served in the same quality to his mother, and several others of her family.—The tenderness this good creature shewed to him, and the care she took to humour him in every thing, not only while he continued in a condition, in which it might have been dangerous to have put his spirits into the least agitation, but after he was grown well enough to walk abroad, had made him become extremely pettish and self-willed; which shews, that an over-indulgence to youth, is no less prejudicial, than too much austerity.—Happy is it for those who are brought up in a due proportion between these two extremes; for as nature will be apt to fall into a dejection, if pressed down with a constant, and uninterrupted severity, so it will infallibly become arrogant and assuming, if suffered always to pursue its own dictates.—Nothing is more evident, than that most of the irregularities we see practised in the world, are owing originally to a want of the medium I have been speaking of, in forming the mind while it is pliable to impression.

This was not, however, the case of Natura; and though he would doubtless have been what we call a spoiled child, had he been for any length of time permitted to do just what he pleased, yet the nurse being discharged, he fell again under the jurisdiction of his mother-in-law, who had now more excuse than ever for treating him with severity.

His father did not want understanding, but was a good deal more indolent than befits a parent.—He had always been accustomed to live at ease, and his natural aversion to all kinds of trouble, made him not inspect into the manners or temperament of his son, with that care he ought to have done. Whenever any complaints were made concerning his behaviour, he would chide, and sometimes beat him, but seldom examined how far he really merited those effects rather of others resentment than his own. Sometimes he would ask him questions on his progress in learning, and praise or dispraise, as he found occasion; but he never discoursed with him on any other topics, nor took any pleasure in instructing him in such things as are not to be taught in schools, but which much more contribute to enlarge the mind; so that had not Natura's own curiosity led him to examine into the sources, first causes, and motives of what he was obliged to read, he would have reaped no other benefit from his Greek and Latin authors, than merely the knowledge of their language.

Here I cannot help taking notice, that whatever inconveniences it may occasion, curiosity is one of the greatest advantages we receive from nature; it is that indeed from which all our knowledge is derived.—Were it not for this propensity in ourselves, the sun, the moon, and all the darling constellations which adorn the hemisphere, would roll above our heads in vain: contented to behold their shine, and feel their warmth, but ignorant of their motion and influence on all

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beneath, half that admiration due to the Divine Architect, would lye dormant in us.—Did not curiosity excite us to examine into the nature of vegetables, their amazing rise, their progress, their deaths and resurrections in the seasons allotted for these alternatives, we should enjoy the fruits of the earth indeed, but enjoy them only in common with the animals that feed upon it, or perhaps with less relish than they do, as it is agreed their organs of sensation have a greater share of poignancy than ours.—What is it but *curiosity* which renders study either pleasing or profitable to us?—The facts we read of would soon slip through the memory, or if they retained any place in it, could be of little advantage, without being acquainted with the motives which occasioned them. By *curiosity* we *examine*, by *examining* we *compare*, and by *comparing* we are alone enabled to form a right *judgment*, whether of things or persons.

We are told indeed of many jealousies, discontents, and quarrels, which have been occasioned by this passion, among those who might otherwise have lived in perfect harmony; and a man or woman, who has the character of being too inquisitive, is shunned as dangerous to society.—But what commendable quality is there that may not be perverted, or what *virtue* whose extreme does not border on a *vice*?—Even *devotion* itself should have its bounds, or it will launch into *bigotry* and *enthusiasm*;—*love*, the most *generous* and *gentle* of all the passions, when ill-placed, or unprescribed, degenerates into the very *worst*;—*justice* may be pursued till it becomes *cruelty*;—*emulation* indulged till it grows up to *envy*;—*frugality* to the most sordid *avarice*; and *courage* to a brutal *rashness*;—and so I am ready to allow that *curiosity*, from whence all the *good* in us originally arises, may also be productive of the *greatest mischiefs*, when not, like every other emotion of the soul, kept within its due limits, and suffered to exert itself only on warrantable objects.

It should therefore be the first care of every one to regulate this propensity in himself, as well as of those under whose tuition he may happen to be, whether parents or governors.—Nature, and the writings of learned men, who from time to time have commented on all that has happened in nature, certainly afford sufficient matter to gratify the most enquiring mind, without descending to such mean trifling inquisitions, as can no way improve itself, and may be of prejudice to others.

I have dwelt the longer on this head, because it seems to me, that on the *well*, or *ill direction* of that curiosity, which is inherent to us all, depends, in a great measure, the peace and happiness of society.

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Natura, like all children, uncircumscribed by precept, had not only a desire of prying into those things which it was his advantage to know, but also into those which he had much better have been totally ignorant of, and which the discovery of his being too well skilled in, frequently occasioned him much ill will, especially when he was found to have too far dived into those little secrets which will ever be among servants in large families. But reason was not ripe enough in him to enable him to distinguish between what were proper subjects for the exercise of this passion, and what were not so.

That impediment, however, which had hitherto retarded his departure being removed, he now set out for Eton, under the conduct of the abovementioned kinsman, who placed him in a boarding-house very near the school, and took his leave, after having given him such admonitions as he thought necessary for a person of his years, when more intrusted to himself than he before had been.

But Natura was not yet arrived at an age wherein it could be expected he should reap much benefit from advice. A settled resolution, and the power of judging what is our real interest to do, are the perfections of maturity, and happy is it for the few who even then attain them.—*Precept* must be constantly and artfully instilled to make any impression on the mind, and is rarely fixed there, till experience confirms it; therefore, as both these were wanting to form his behaviour, what could be hoped from it, but such a one as was conformable to the various passions which agitate human nature, and which every day grow stronger in us, at least till they have attained a certain crisis, after which they decay, in proportion as they increased.

As *wrath* is one of the most violent emotions of the soul, so I think it is one of the first that breaks out into effects: it owes its birth indeed to *pride*; for we are never angry, unless touched by a real, or imaginary insult; but, by the offspring chiefly is the parent seen. *Pride* seldom, I believe it may be said, *never*, wholly dies in us, tho' it may be concealed; whereas *wrath* diminishes as our *reason* increases, and seems intirely evaporated after the heat of youth is over: when a man therefore has divested himself of the *one*, no tokens are left to distinguish the *other*.—Sometimes, indeed, we shall see an extreme impetuosity, even to old age, but then, it is out of the ordinary course of nature, and besides, the person possessed of it must be endued with a small share of sound understanding, to give any marks of such a propensity remaining in him.

It is with the utmost justice, that by the system of the *christian* religion, *pride* is intitled the original sin, not only as it was that of the fallen angels, but also as it is certainly the fountain-head from which all our other vices are derived.—It is by the dictates of this pernicious passion we are inflamed with *wrath*, and wild ambition,—instigated to covetousness,—to envy,—to revenge, and in fine, to stop at nothing which tends to self-gratification, be our desires of what kind soever.



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During the school hours, Natura, as well as the other young gentlemen, was under too much awe of the master to give any loose to his temper; but when these were over, and they went together into the fields, or any other place to divert themselves, frequent quarrels among them ensued; but above all between those who boarded in the same house; little jealousies concerning some imaginary preference given to the one more than the other, occasioned many bitter taunts and fleers, which sometimes rose to blows and bloody noses; so that the good people with whom they were, had enough to do, to keep them in any tolerable decorum.

There is also another branch of *pride* which is visible in all youth, before consideration takes place, and that is, treating with contempt whoever seems our inferior.—A boy who was allowed less money, or wore plainer cloaths, was sure to be the jest of all the rest. Natura was equally guilty of this fault with his companions; but when the sarcasms became too severe, and the object of them appeared any way dejected, his generosity often got the better of his arrogance, and he would take part with the weakest side, even till he drew on himself part of those reflections he averted from the other; but this never happened without his resenting it with the utmost violence; for patience and forbearance were virtues not to be expected in this stage of life.

He was a great lover of gaming, whether of chucking, tossing up for money, or cards, and extremely ill-humoured and quarrelsome whenever luck was not on his side; which shews, that whatever people may pretend, avarice is at the bottom, and occasions all the fondness so many testify for play.

As for the other ordinary diversions of youth, none could pursue them with more eagerness, nor was less deterred by any ill accident which befel either himself, or any of his companions; one of whom having been near drowning before his face, as they were swimming together, the sight did not hinder him from plunging into the same stream every day; nor could he be prevailed upon from ringing, as often as he had an opportunity, though he had been thrown one day by the breaking of the bell-rope, a great height from the ground, and in the fall dislocated his shoulder, and bruised his body all over.—But it is not to be wondered at, that boys should remember the misfortunes their pleasures have brought on them no longer than the smart continues, when men of the ripest, and sometimes most advanced years, are not to be warned from the gratification of their passions, by the worst, and most frequently repeated ills.

He, notwithstanding, made a very good progress in those things in which he was instructed, which as yet were only Latin and Greek; and when the time of breaking up arrived, and he returned to his father's house, none who examined him concerning his learning, could suspect there was either any want of application in himself, or care in his master.



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His three months of absence having rendered him a kind of stranger at home, his mother-in-law used him with somewhat more civility, and his father seemed highly satisfied with him; all his kindred and friends caressed him, and made him many little presents of such things as befitted his years; but that which crowned his felicity, was the company of a young girl, a near relation of his stepmother's, who was come to pass some time with her, and see London, which she had never been in before.

### CHAP. III.

**The early influence which the difference of sex excites, is here exemplified in the fond but innocent affection of Natura and Delia.**

Natura being much of the same age with Delia (for so I shall call her) and both equally playful, spirituous, and good-natured, it is hard to say which of them took the greatest delight in the society of the other. Natura was never well out of the presence of Delia, nor Delia contented but when Natura was with her.

In walking, dancing, playing at cards, these amiable children were always partners; and it was remarkable, that in the latter of these diversions, Natura was never uneasy at losing his money to Delia, nor resented any little raileries she treated him with on account of his ill luck, or want of skill in the game, as he had been accustomed to do whenever he received the like from any of his companions.—So forcibly does the difference of sex operate, even before that difference is considered.

Natura was yet too young by much, to know wherefore he found in himself this complaisance, or how it came to pass, that he so much preferred a beautiful and good-humoured girl, to a boy possessed of the same qualifications; but he was not ignorant that he did so, and has often wondered (as he afterwards confessed) what it was that made him feel so much pleasure, whenever, in innocently romping together, he happened to catch hold of her in his arms; and what strange impulse it was, that rendered him so reluctant to part with her out of that posture, that she was obliged to struggle with all her strength to disengage herself.

Hence it is plain, that the passion of love is part of our composition, implanted in the soul for the propagation of the world; and we ought not, in my opinion, to be too severe on the errors which, meerly and abstracted from any other motive than itself, it sometimes influences us to be guilty of.—The laws, indeed, which prohibit any amorous intercourse between the sexes, unless authored by the solemnities of marriage, are without all question, excellently well calculated for the good of society, because without such a restriction, there would be no such thing as order in the world. I am therefore far from thinking lightly of that truly sacred institution, when I say, that there are some cases, in which the pair so offending, merit rather our pity, than that abhorrence which

those of a more rigid virtue, colder constitution, or less under the power of temptation, are apt to testify on such occasion.

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Rarely, however, it happens, that love is guilty of any thing capable of being condemned, even by the most austere; most of the faults committed under that sanction, being in reality instigated by some other passion, such as avarice and ambition in the one sex, and a flame which is too often confounded and mistaken for a pure affection in the other.—Yet such is the ill-judging, or careless determination of the world, that without making any allowances for circumstances, it censures all indiscriminately alike.

The time prefixed for Natura's remaining with his father being but fourteen days, as they grew near expired, the family began to talk of his going, and orders were given to bespeak a place for him in the stage-coach: he had been extremely pleased with Eton, nor had he met with any cause of disgust, either at the school or house where he was boarded, yet did the thoughts of returning thither give him as much disquiet as his young heart was capable of conceiving.—The parting from Delia was terrible to him, and the nearer the cruel moment approached, the more his anxiety increased.—She seemed also grieved to lose so agreeable a companion, and would often tell him she wished he was to stay as long as she did.

Though nothing could be more innocent than these declarations on both sides, yet what she said had such an effect on Natura, that he resolved to delay his return to Eton as long as possible; and that passion which he already felt the symptoms of, though equally ignorant of their nature or end, being always fertile in invention, put a stratagem into his head, which he flattered himself would succeed for a somewhat farther continuance of his present happiness.

The day before that prefixed for his going, he pretended a violent pain in his head and stomach, and to give the greater credit to his pretended indisposition, would eat nothing; and as it drew toward evening, cried out he was very sick, and must go to bed.—His father, who had the most tender affection for him, could not think of sending him away in that condition.—He went in the morning to his bedside, and finding him, as he imagined, a little feverish, presently ordered a physician, who did not fail to countenance the young gentleman's contrivance, either that he really thought him out of order, or that he had rendered himself so in good earnest, through abstaining from food, a thing very uncommon with him. A prescription was sent to the apothecary for him, and a certain regimen directed.

But poor Natura soon found this did not answer his purpose:—he was in the same house indeed with his beloved Delia, but had not the pleasure of her company, nor even that of barely seeing her, she being forbid going near his chamber, on account of the apprehensions they had that his complaint might terminate in a fever, and endanger her health.

This, however, was more than he knew, and resentment for her supposed indifference, joined with the weariness of living in the manner he did, made him resolve to grow well

again, and chuse to go to Eton, rather than suffer so much for one who seemed so little to regard him.

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Accordingly, when they brought him something had been ordered for him to take, he refused it, saying, he had not occasion for any more physic, and immediately got up, and dressed himself, in spite of all the servant that attended him could do to prevent it.—Word being carried to his father of what he was doing, he imagined him delirious, and immediately got up, and went into his room, nor though he found him intirely cool, could be perswaded from his first opinion.—The doctor was again sent for, who unwilling to lose his perquisite, made a long harangue on the nature of internal fevers, and very learnedly proved, or seemed to prove, that they might operate so far as to affect the brain, without the least outward symptom.

Natura could not forbear laughing within himself, to hear this great man so much mistaken; but when they told him he must take his physic, and go to bed, or at least be confined to his chamber, he absolutely refused both, and said he was as well as ever he was in his life.—All he said, however, availed nothing, and his father was about to make use of his authority to force him to obedience to the doctor's prescription, when finding no other way to avoid it, he fell on his knees, and with tears in his eyes, confessed he had only counterfeited sickness, to delay being sent to Eton again; begged his father to forgive him; said he was sorry for having attempted to deceive him, but was ready to go whenever he pleased.

The father was strangely amazed at the trick had been put upon him; and after some severe reprimands on the occasion, asked what he had to complain of at Eton, that had rendered him so unwilling to return. Natura hesitated at this demand, but could not find in his heart to forge any unjust accusation concerning his usage at that place, and at last said, that indeed it was only because he had a mind to stay a little longer at home with him. On which he told him he was an idle boy, but he must not expect that wheedle would serve his turn; for since he was not sick, he must go to school the next day: Natura renewed his intreaties for pardon, and assured him he now desired nothing more than to do as he commanded.

This story made a great noise in the family, and the mother-in-law did not fail to represent it in its worst colours to every one that came to the house; but Natura having obtained forgiveness from his father, did not give himself much trouble as to the rest.—Delia seemed rejoiced to see him come down stairs again, but he looked shy upon her, and told her he could not have thought she would have been so unkind as not to have come to see him; but on her acquainting him with the reason of her absence, and protesting it was not her fault, he grew as fond of her as ever; and among a great many other tender expressions, 'I wish,' said he, 'I were a man, and you a woman.'—'Why?' returned she; 'because,' cried he, 'we would be married.'—'O fye,' answered the little coquet, 'I should hate you,

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if you thought of any such thing; for I will never be married.' Then turned away with an affected scornfulness, and yet looked kindly enough upon him from the corner of one eye.—'I am sure,' resumed he, 'if you loved me as well as I do you, you would like to be married to me, for then we should be always together.'—He was going on with something farther in this innocent courtship, when some one or other of the family, coming into the room, broke it off; and whether it was resumed afterwards, or not, I cannot pretend to determine, nor whether he had opportunity to take any particular leave of her before his departure, which happened, as his father had threatened, the succeeding day.

### CHAP. IV.

**Shews, that till we arrive at a certain age, the impressions made on us are easily erased; and also that when those which bear the name of love are once rooted in the mind, there are no lengths to which we may not be transported by that passion, if great care is not taken to prevent its getting the ascendant over reason.**

The change of scene did not make any change in the sentiments of our young lover: Delia was always in his head, and none of the diversions he took with his companions could banish her from his thoughts; yet did she not so wholly engross his attention, as to render him remiss in his studies; his ambition, as I said before, would not suffer him to neglect the means of acquiring praise, and nothing was so insupportable to him as to find at any time another boy had merited a greater share of it: by which we may perceive that this very passion, unruly as it is, and in spite of the mischiefs it sometimes occasions, is also bestowed upon us for our emolument; and when properly directed, is the greatest excitement to all that is noble and generous, Natura seldom had the mortification of seeing any of the same standing with himself placed above him; and whenever such an accident happened, he was sure to retrieve it by an extraordinary assiduity.

But to shew that love and business are not wholly incompatible, his attachment to Delia did not take him off his learning, nor did his application to learning make him forgetful of Delia. He frequently thought of her, wished to see her, and longed for the next breaking-up, that he might re-enjoy that satisfaction, as he knew she intended to stay the whole winter at his father's; but now arrived the time to prove the inconstancy of human nature: he became acquainted with some other little misses, and by degrees found charms in them, which made those he had observed in Delia appear less admirable in his eyes; the fondness he had felt for her being in reality instigated chiefly by being the only one of his own age he had conversed with, a more general acquaintance with others not only wore off the impression she had made, but also kept

him from receiving too deep a one from the particular perfections of any of those he now was pleased with:—it

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is likely, however, that the sight of her might have revived in him some part of his former tenderness, had he found her, as he expected he should, on his next coming to London: but an elder sister she had in the country, happening to die, she was sent for home, in order to console their mother for that loss; so that he had not any trial on that account; and tho' he thought he should have been glad of her society, during his stay in town, yet her absence gave him small anxiety; and the variety of company which came to the house on account of the baptism of a little son his mother-in-law had lately brought into the world, very well atoned for the want of Delia.

Nothing material happening to him during his stay in town at this time, nor in any other of the many visits he made his father while he continued at Eton, I shall pass over those years, and only say, that as he grew nearer to manhood, his passions gathered strength in proportion; and tho' he increased in knowledge, yet it was not that sort of knowledge which enables us to judge of the emotions we feel within ourselves, or to set curbs on those, which to indulge renders us liable to inconveniences.

All those propensities, of which he gave such early indications, and which I attempted to describe in the beginning of this book, now displayed themselves with greater vigour, and according as exterior objects presented, or circumstances excited, ruled with alternate sway: sparing sometimes to niggardliness, at others profusely liberal;—now pleased, now angry;—submissive this moment, arrogant and assuming the next;—seldom in a perfect calm, and frequently agitated to excess.—Hence arose contests and quarrels, even with those whose company in some humours he was most delighted with;—insolence to such whose way of thinking did not happen to tally with his own, and as partial an attachment to those who either did, or pretended to enter into his sentiments.

But as it was only in trivial matters, and such as were meerly boyish, he yet had opportunity of exercising the passions, his behaviour only served to shew what man would be, when arrived at maturity, if not restrained by precept.

He had attained to little more than sixteen years of age, when he had gone through all the learning of the school, and was what they call fit for the university, to which his father not intending him for the study of any particular science, did not think it necessary to send him, but rather to bestow on him those other accomplishments, which are immediately expected from a gentleman of an estate; such as fencing, dancing, and music, and accordingly provided masters to instruct him in each, as soon as he came home, which was about the time of life I mentioned.

As he was now past the age of being treated as a meer child, and also knew better how it would become him to behave to the wife of his father, his mother-in-law seemed to live with him in harmony enough, and the family at least was not divided into parties as it



had been, and eighteen or nineteen months past over, without any rub in our young gentleman's tranquility.

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Since his childish affection for Delia, he had not been possessed of what could be called a strong inclination for any particular female; though, as many incidents in his life afterwards proved, he had a no less amorous propensity than any of his sex, and was equally capable of going the greatest lengths for its gratification.

He was but just turned of nineteen, when happening to pass by the playhouse one evening, he took it into his head to go in, and see the last act of a very celebrated tragedy acted that night.—But it was not the poet's or the player's art which so much engaged his attention, as the numerous and gay assembly which filled every part of the house.—He was in the back bench of one of the front boxes, from which he had a full prospect of all who sat below:—but in throwing his eyes around on every dazzling belle, he found none so agreeable to him as a young lady who was placed in the next division of the box:—her age did not seem to exceed his own, and tho' less splendid in garb and jewels than several who sat near her, had something in her eyes and air, that, in his opinion, at least, infinitely exceeded them all.

When the curtain dropt, and every one was crowding out as fast they could, he lost not sight of her; and finding when they came out to the door, that she, and a companion she had with her, somewhat older than herself, seemed distressed for chairs, which by reason of the great concourse, seemed difficult to be got, he took the opportunity, in a very polite manner, to offer himself for their protector, as he perceived they had neither friend nor servant with them. They accepted it with a great deal of seeming modesty, and he conducted them through a passage belonging to the house which he knew was less thronged, and thence put them into a hackney coach, having first obtained their permission to attend them to their lodgings, or wherever else they pleased to be set down.

When they arrived at the place to which they gave the coachman a direction, he would have taken leave of them at the door; but they joined in entreating him, that since he had been at the pains of bringing them safe home, he would come in and refresh himself with such as their apartment could supply: there required little invitation to a thing his heart so sincerely wished, tho' his fears of being thought too presuming, would not suffer him to ask it.

He went up stairs, and found rooms decently furnished, and a maid-servant immediately spread the table with a genteel cold collation; but what he looked upon as the most elegant part of the entertainment, was the agreeable chit-chat during the time of supper, and a song the lady who had so much attracted him, gave him, at her friend's request, after the cloth was taken away.

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It growing late, his fears of offending where he already had such an inclination to oblige, made him about to take his leave; but could not do it without intreating permission to wait on them the next day, to receive pardon, as he said, for having by his long stay, broke in upon the hours should have been devoted to repose. Tho' this compliment, and indeed all the others he had made, were directed to both, the regard his eyes paid to the youngest, easily shewed the preference he secretly gave to her; and as neither of these women wanted experience in such affairs, knew very well how to make the most of any advantage. 'If this lodging were mine,' replied the eldest briskly, 'I should have anticipated the request you make; but as I am only a guest, and take part of my friend's bed to-night on account of the hour, will take upon me to say, she ought not to refuse greater favours to so accomplished a gentleman, and from whom we have received so much civility.'

Natura did not fail to answer this gallantry in a proper manner, and departed highly satisfied with his adventure; tho' probably could find less reasons for being so, than those with whom he thought it the greatest happiness of his life to have become acquainted.

Wonderful are the workings of love on a young heart: pleasure has the same effect as pain, and permits as little rest: it was not in the power of Natura to close his eyes for a long time after he went to bed.—He recollected every thing the dear creature had said;—in what manner she looked, when speaking such or such a thing;—how enchanting she sang, and what a genteelness accompanied all she did:—when he fell into a slumber, it was only to bring her more perfectly into his mind; whatever had past in the few hours he had been with her, returned, with additional graces on her part, and her idea had in sleep all the effect her real presence could have had in waking.

With what care did he dress himself the next day:—what fears was he not possessed of, lest all about him should not be exact:—never yet had he consulted the great glass with such assiduity;—never till now examined how far he had been indebted to nature for personal endowments.

His impatience would have carried him to pay a morning visit, but he feared that would be too great a freedom, and therefore restrained himself till after dinner, though what he eat could scarce be called so; the food his *mind* languished for, being wanting, the body was too complaisant to indulge itself.—After rising from table, not a minute passed without looking on his watch, and at the same time cursing the tedious seconds, which seemed to him increased from sixty to six hundred.—The hour of five at length put an end to his suspense, and he took his way to the dear, well-remembered mansion of his adorable.

He found her at home, and in a careless, but most becoming dishabillee; the other lady was still with her; and told him she had tarried thus long with Miss Harriot, for so she called her, meerly to participate of the pleasure of his good company. Harriot, in a gay

manner, accused her of envy, and both having a good share of wit, the conversation might have been pleasing enough to a man less prepossessed than Natura.

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The tea equipage was set, and the ceremony of that being over, cards were proposed; as they were three, Ombre was the game, at which they played some hours, and Natura was asked to sup.—After what I have said, I believe the reader has no occasion to be told that he complied with a pleasure which was but too visible in his eyes.—The time passed insensibly on, or at least seemed to do so to the friend of Harriot, till the watchman reminding her it was past eleven, she started up, and pretending a surprize, that the night was so far advanced, told Natura that she must exact a second proof of that gallantry he had shewn the night before, for she had not courage to go either in a chair or a coach alone at that late hour:—this doubtless was what he would have offered, had she been silent on the occasion; and a coach being ordered to the door, he took leave of miss Harriot, though not till he had obtained leave to testify his respects in some future visits.

Had Natura appeared to have more experience of the town, the lady he gallanted home would certainly not have entertained him with the discourse she did; but his extreme youth, and the modest manner of his behaviour on the first sight of him, convinced them he was a person such as they wished to have in their power, and to that end had concerted measures between themselves, to perfect the conquest which, it was easy to perceive, one of them had begun to make over him.

Harriot being the person with whom they found he was enamoured, it was the business of the other to do for her what, it may be supposed, she would have done for her on the like occasion.—Natura was no sooner in the coach with her, than she began to magnify the charms of her fair friend, but above all extolled her virtue, her prudence, and good humour:—then, as if only to give a proof of her patience and fortitude, that her parents dying when she was an infant, had left her with a vast fortune in the hands of a guardian, who attempting to defraud her of the greatest part, she was now at law with him, 'and is obliged to live, till the affair is decided,' said this artful woman, 'in the narrow manner you see,—without a coach,—without any equipage; and yet she bears it all with cheerfulness:—she has a multiplicity of admirers,' added she, 'but she assures all of them, that she will never marry, till she knows what present she shall be able to give with herself to the man she shall make choice of.'

Till now Natura had never asked himself the question how far his passion for Harriot extended, or with what view he should address her; but when he heard she was a woman of condition, and would have a fortune answerable to her birth, he began to think it would be happy for him if he could obtain her love on the most honourable terms.

It would be too tedious to relate all the particulars of his courtship; so I shall only say, that humble and timid as the first emotions of a sincere passion are, he was emboldened, by the extraordinary complaisance of Harriot, to declare it to her in a few days.—The art with which she managed on this occasion, might have deceived the most knowing in the sex; it is not, therefore, surprizing, that he should be caught in a

snare, which, though ruinous as it had like to have been, had in it allurements scarce possible to be withstood at his time of life.

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It was by such degrees as the most modest virgin need not blush to own, that she confessed herself sensible of an equal tenderness for him; and nothing is more strange, than that in the transport he was in, at the condescensions she made him, that he did not immediately press for the consummation of his happiness by marriage; but tho' he wished for nothing so much, yet he was with-held by the fears of his father, who he thought would not approve of such a step, as the fortune he imagined she had a right to, was yet undetermined, and himself, tho' an elder son, and the undoubted heir of a very good estate, at present wholly dependant on him.—He communicated his sentiments to Harriot on this head with the utmost sincerity, protesting at the same time that he should never enjoy a moment's tranquility till he could call her his own.

She seemed to approve of the caution he testified;—said it was such as she had always resolved religiously to observe herself; 'tho' I know not,' cried she, looking on him with the most passionate air, 'how far I might have been tempted to break thro' all for your sake; but it is well one of us is wise enough to foresee and tremble at the consequences of a marriage between two persons whose fortunes are unestablished.'—Then, finding he made her no other answer than some kisses, accompanied with a strenuous embrace, she went on; 'there is a way,' resumed she, 'to secure us to each other, without danger of disobliging any body; and that is by a contract: I never can be easy, while I think there is a possibility of your transferring your affection to some other, and if you love me with half that degree of tenderness you pretend, you cannot but feel the same anxiety.'

Natura was charmed with this proposition, and it was agreed between them, that her lawyer should draw up double contracts in form, which should be signed and delivered interchangeably by both parties. Accordingly, the very next day, the fatal papers were prepared, and he subscribed his name to that which was to remain in her custody, as she did her's to that given to him. Each being witnessed by the woman with whom he first became acquainted with her, and another person called into the room for that purpose.

Natura now considering her as his wife, thought himself intitled to take greater liberties than he had ever presumed to do before, and she had also a kind of a pretence for permitting them, till at last there remained nothing more for him to ask, or her to grant.

Enjoyment made no abatement in his passion; his fondness was rather increased by it, and he never thought himself happy, but when with her; he went to her almost every night, and sometimes passed all night with her, having made an interest with one of the servants, who let him in at whatever hour he came:—so totally did she engross his mind, that he seemed to have not the least attention for any thing beside: nor was the time he wasted with her all the prejudice she did him:—all the allowance made him by his father for cloaths and other expences, he dissipated in treats and presents to her, running in debt for every thing he had occasion for.

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But this was insufficient for her expectations; she wanted a sum of money, and pretending that her law-suit required a hundred guineas immediately, and that some remittances she was to have from the country would come too late, told him he must raise it for her some way or other.

This demand was a kind of thunder-stroke to Natura; not but he doated on her enough to have sacrificed infinitely more to her desires, if in his power; but what she asked seemed so wholly out of reach, that he knew not any way by which there was the least probability of attaining it. The embarrassment that appeared in his countenance made her see it was not so easy for him to grant, as it was for her to ask. 'I should have wanted courage,' said she, 'to have made you this request, had I not considered that what is mine must one day be yours, and it will be your own unhappiness as well as mine, should my cause miscarry for want of means to carry it on.'—'Severe necessity!' added she, letting fall some tears, 'that reduces me to intreat favours where I could wish only to bestow them.'

These words destroyed all the remains of prudence his love had left in him; he embraced her, kissed away her tears, and assured her that though, as he was under age, and had but a small allowance from his father, it was not at this time very easy for him to comply with her demand, yet she might depend upon him for the money the next day, let it cost what it would, or whatever should be the consequence.

He left her that night much sooner than was his custom, in order to consult within himself on the means of fulfilling his promise to her, which, to have failed in, would have been more terrible to him than death.

## CHAP. V.

**That to indulge any one fault, brings with it the temptation of committing others, is demonstrated by the behaviour of Natura, and the misfortunes and disgrace which an ill-judged shame had like to have involved him in.**

Never had Natura experienced so cruel a night; a thousand stratagems came into his head, but for some reason or other all seemed alike impracticable, and the morning found him in no more easy a situation.—He put on his cloaths hastily, and resolved to go to all the acquaintance he had in the world, and try the friendship of each, by borrowing what sums he thought they might be able to spare: but first, going into his father's closet, as was his custom every morning to pay his duty to him, he found a person with him who was paying him a large sum of money: the sight of what he so much wanted filled him with inexpressible agitations:—he would have given almost a limb to have had in his possession so much of that shining ore as Harriot expected from him; and wished that some sudden accident, even to the falling of the house, would



happen, that in the confusion he might seize on some part of the treasure he saw before him.

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The person, after the affair which brought him there was over, took leave of the father of Natura, who having thrown the money into his bureau, to a large heap was there before, waited on him down stairs, without staying to lock the drawer.

Often had Natura been present when his father received larger sums than this, and doubtless had the same opportunity as now to make himself master of some part, or all of it; but never till this unhappy exigence had the least temptation to do so.—It came into his head that the accident was perfectly providential, and that he ought not to neglect the only means by which he could perform his promise;—that his father could very well spare the sum he wanted, and that it was only taking before the time what by inheritance must be his own hereafter.—In this imagination he opened the drawer, and was about to pursue his intention, when he recollected that the money would certainly be missed, and either the fault be laid upon some innocent person, who might suffer for his crime; or he himself would be suspected of a thing, which, in this second thought, he found so mean and wicked, that he was shocked almost to death, for having been capable of even a wish to be guilty of it.—He shut the drawer again,—turned himself away, and was in the utmost confusion of mind, when his father returned into the room; which shews that there is a native honesty in the human nature, which nothing but a long practice of base actions can wholly eradicate: and I dare believe that even those we see most hardened in vice, have felt severe struggles within themselves at first, and have often looked back upon the paths of virtue, wishing, tho' fruitlessly, to return.

Natura, however, did not give over his pursuit of the means of performing his promise: on the contrary, he thought himself obliged by all the ties of love, honour, and even self-interest, to do it; but difficult as he believed the task would be, he found it much more so than he could even have imagined: his intimacy being only with such, as being much of his own age, and like him were at an allowance from their parents or guardians, it was not in the power of any of them to contribute a large sum toward making up that he wanted; the most he got from any one being no more than five guineas, and all he raised among the whole amounted to no more than twenty, and some odd pounds.

Distracted with his ill fortune, he ventured to go to an uncle he had by the mother's side, and after many complaints of his father's parsimony, told him, that having been drawn into some expences, which, though not extravagant, were more than his little purse could supply, he had broke into some money given him to pay his taylor, whom he feared would demand it of his father, and he knew not how far the ill-will of his mother-in-law might exaggerate the matter; concluding with an humble petition for twenty guineas, which he told him he would faithfully return by degrees.

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As Natura had the character of a sober youth, the good old gentleman was moved by the distress he saw him in, and readily granted his request, tho' not without some admonitions to confine for the future his expences to his allowance, be it ever so small.

Thus Natura having with all his diligence not been able to raise quite half of the sum in question, was quite distracted what to do, and as he afterwards owned, more than once repented him of those scruples which had prevented him from serving himself at once out of his father's purse; tho' had the same opportunity again presented itself, it is scarce possible to believe by the rest of his behaviour, that he would have made use of it, or if he had, that he could have survived the shame and remorse it would have caused in him.

In his desperation he ran at last to the house of a noted money-scrivener, a great acquaintance of the family, and in his whose hands his father frequently reposed his ready cash: to this man he communicates his distress, and easily prevails with him to let him have fifty pounds, on giving him a note to pay him an hundred for it when he should come of age, his father having said he would then make a settlement on him.

This, however, was still somewhat short of what Harriot had demanded; but he left his watch at a pawn-broker's for the rest; and having compleated the sum, went transported with joy, and threw it into the lap of that idol of his soul; after which, he was for some days perfectly at ease, indulging himself with all he at present wished for, and losing no time in thought of what might happen to interrupt his happiness.

But while he batted in the sun-shine of his pleasures, storms of vexation were gathering over his head, which, when he least expected such a shock, poured all their force upon him.

The first time his uncle happened to see his father, he fell on the topic of the necessity there was for young gentlemen born to estates, and educated in a liberal manner, to be enabled to keep his equals company; adding, that if the parsimony of a parent, denied them an allowance, agreeable to their rank, it might either drive them to ill courses, or force them to associate themselves only with mean, low-bred people, among whom they might lose all the politeness had been inculcated into them. The father of Natura, well knowing he had nothing to answer for on this account, never suspected this discourse was directed to him in particular, and joined in his brother-in-law's opinion, heartily blaming those parents, who, by being too sparing to their children, destroyed all natural affection in them, and gave them some sort of an excuse for wishing for their death:—he thanked God he was not of that disposition, and then told him what he allowed per quarter to Natura, 'with which,' added he, 'I believe he is intirely satisfied.' The other replying, that indeed he thought it more than sufficient, the conversation

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dropped; but what sentiments he now began to conceive of his nephew it is easy to conceive; the father however thought no farther of this, till soon after the scrivener came to wait on him:—he was a perfect honest man, and had lent Natura the money meerly to prevent his applying to some other person, who possibly might have taken advantage of his thoughtlessness, so far as even to have brought on his utter ruin, too many such examples daily happening in the world: to deter him also from going on in this course, he demanded that exorbitant interest for his money abovementioned, which, notwithstanding, as he assured his father, in relating to him the whole transaction, he was far from any intention to make him pay.

Never was astonishment greater than that in which the father of Natura was now involved;—the discourse of his brother-in-law now came fresh into his mind, and he recollected some words which, tho' he did not observe at the time they were spoken, now convinced him had a meaning which he could not have imagined there was any room for.—He had no sooner parted from the scrivener, than he flew to that gentleman, and having related to him what had passed between him and the scrivener, conjured him, if he could give him any farther lights into the affair, not to keep him in ignorance: on which the other thought it his duty to conceal nothing, either of the complaints, or request had been made him by his nephew:—after some exclamations on the extravagance and thoughtlessness of youth, the afflicted father went in search of more discoveries, which he found it but too easy to make among the tradesmen, all of whom he found had been unpaid for some time.

It would be needless to go about to make any description of the confusion of mind he was in:—he shut himself in his closet, uncertain for some time how he should proceed; at last, as he considered there was not a possibility of reclaiming his son from whatever vice had led him thus all at once into such extravagancies, without first knowing what kind of vice it was; he resolved to talk to him, and penetrate, if possible, into the source of this evil.

Accordingly the next morning he went into the chamber where Natura was yet in bed; and began to entertain him in the manner he had proposed to himself:—first, he let him know, that he was not unacquainted with every step he had taken for raising a sum, which he could not conceive he had any occasion for, as well as his having with-held the money he had given him to discharge his tradesmen's bills:—then proceeded to set before his eyes the folly and danger of having hid, at his years, any secrets from a parent; concluding with telling him, he had yet a heart capable of forgiving what was past, provided he would behave in a different manner for the future.

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What Natura felt at finding so much of what he had done revealed to his father, was greatly alleviated, by perceiving that the main thing, his engagement with Harriot, was a secret to him:—he did not fail to make large promises of being a better oeconomist, nor to express the most dutiful gratitude for the pardon the good old gentleman so readily offered; but this he told him was not sufficient to deserve a re-establishment in his favour, he must also give him a faithful account by what company, and for what purposes he had been induced to such ill husbandry; ‘for,’ added he, ‘without a sincere confession of the motives of our past transactions, there can be little assurances of future amendment.’

Natura to this only answered, that it was impossible to recount the particulars of his expences, and made so many evasions, on his father’s still continuing to press his being more explicit, that he easily perceived there would be no coming at the truth by gentle means; and therefore, throwing off at once a tenderness so ineffectual, he assumed all the authority of an offended parent, and told the trembling Natura, that since he knew not how to behave as a *son*, he should cease to be a *father*, in every thing but in his authority:—‘be assured,’ said he, ‘I shall take sure measures to prevent you from bringing either ruin or disgrace upon a family of which you are the first profligate:—this chamber must be your prison, till I have considered in what fashion I shall dispose of you.’

With these words he flung out of the room, locking the door after him; so that when Natura rose, as he immediately did, he found himself indeed under confinement, which seemed so shameful a thing to him, that he was ready to tear himself in pieces:—it was not the grief of having offended so good a father, but the disgrace of the punishment inflicted on him, which gave him the most poignant anguish, and far from feeling any true contrition, he was all rage and madness, which having no means to vent in words, discovered itself in sullenness:—when the servant to whom he intrusted the key came in to bring him food, he refused to eat, and could scarce restrain himself from throwing in the man’s face what he had brought.

It is certain, that while under this circumstance, he was agitated at once by every different unruly passion:—pride, anger, spleen, thinking himself a man, at finding the treatment of a *boy*, made him almost hate the person from whom he received it.—The apprehensions what farther meaning might be couched in the menace with which his father left him, threw him sometimes into a terror little different from convulsive;—but above all, his impatience for seeing his dear Harriot, and the surprize, the grief, and perhaps the resentment, he imagined she must feel on his absenting himself, drove him into a kind of despair.

In fine, unable to sustain the violence of his agitations, on the third night, regardless of what consequences might ensue from giving this additional cause of displeasure to his father, he found means to push back the lock of his chamber, and flew down stairs, and out at the street-door with so much speed, that it would have been impossible to have

stopped him, had any one heard him, which none happened to do, it being midnight, and all the family in a sound sleep.

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That he went directly to the lodgings of Harriot, I believe my reader will make no doubt; but perhaps her character does not yet enough appear, to give any suspicion of the reception he found there.

In effect, she was no other than one of those common creatures, who procure a miserable subsistence by the prostitution of their charms; and as nature had not been sparing to her on that score, and she was yet young, though less so than she appeared thro' art, she wanted not a number of gallants, who all contributed, more or less, to her living in the manner she did: several of these had happened to come when Natura was with her; but she having had the precaution to acquaint them with her design of drawing in this young spark for a husband, they took the cue she gave them, each passing before him either for a cousin, or one of the lawyers employed in her pretended suit.

It was with one of these equally happy, tho' less deluded rivals of Natura, that finding he did not come, she had agreed to pass this night; and her maid, as the servants of such women, for the most part, imitate their mistresses, happened to be at the door, either about to introduce, or let out a lover of her own;—the sight of a man at that time of night, with one who belonged to his beloved, immediately fired Natura with jealousy:—he seized the fellow by the collar, and in a voice hoarse with rage, asked him what business he had there? To which the other replied only with a blow on the face, the wench shrieked out, but Natura was either stronger or more nimble than his competitor; he presently tripped up his heels, and ran up stairs.—Harriot and her lover hearing somewhat of a scuffle, the latter started out of bed, and opened the chamber-door, in order to listen what had occasioned it, just as Natura had reached the stair-case.—If his soul was inflamed before, what must it now have been, to see a man in his shirt, and just risen from the arms of Harriot, who still lay trembling in bed:—he flew upon him like an incensed lion; but the other being more robust, soon disengaged himself and snatching his sword, which lay on a table near the door, was going to put an end to the life of his disturber; when Harriot cried out, 'Hold! hold!—for heaven's sake!—It is my husband!'—Natura having no weapon wherewith he might defend himself, or hurt his adversary, revenge gave way to self-preservation; and only saying, 'husband, no;—I will die rather than be the husband of so vile a woman,' run down with the same precipitation he had come up.

Impossible it is to describe the condition of his mind when got into the street:—his once violent affection was now converted into the extremest hatred and contempt;—he detested not only Harriot, and the whole sex, but even himself, for having been made the dupe of so unworthy a creature, and could have tore out his own heart, for having joined with her in deceiving him.—Having wandered about some time, giving a loose to his fury, the considerations of what he should do, at last took their turn:—home he could not go, the servant who used to admit him knew nothing of his being out, and he durst not alarm the family by knocking at the door, having passed by several times, and found all fast.

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In this perplexity, as he went through a street he had not been used to frequent, he saw a door open, and a great light in a kind of hall, with servants attending:—he asked one of them to whom it belonged, and was told it was a gaming-house, on which he went in, not with any desire of playing, but to pass away some time; finding a great deal of company there, he notwithstanding engaged himself at one of the tables, and tho' he was not in a humour which would permit him to exert much skill, he won considerably.

The company did not break up till five in the morning, and he then growing drowsy, and yet unable to find any excuse to make to his father, he could not think of seeing his face, so went to a bagnio to take that repose he had sufficient need of, the fatigues of his mind having never suffered him to enjoy any sound sleep, since his father's discovery of the extravagance he had been guilty of.

On his awaking, the transaction of the preceding night returned to his remembrance with all its galling circumstances, and the more he reflected on his disobedience to his father, the less he could endure the thoughts of coming into his presence:—in fine, that shame which so often prevents people from doing amiss, was now the motive which restrained him from doing what he ought to have done.—Had he immediately gone home, thrown himself at his father's feet, and confessed the truth, his youthful errors had doubtless merited forgiveness; but this, though he knew it was both his duty, and his interest, he could not prevail on himself to do; and to avoid the rebukes he was sensible were due to his transgressions, he resolved to hide himself as long as he could from the faces of all those who had a right to make them.

In fine, he led the life of a perfect vagabond, sculking from one place to another, and keeping company with none but gamesters, rakes, and sharpers, falling into all manner of dissolution; and whenever his reason remonstrated any thing to him on these vicious courses, he would then, to banish remorse for one fault, fly to others, yet worse, and more destructive.

It is true, he often looked back upon his *former* behaviour, and was struck with horror at comparing it with the *present*;—the reflection too how much his mother-in-law might take advantage of the just displeasure of his father against him, to prejudice him in his future fortune, even to cause him to be disinherited, sometimes most cruelly alarmed him; yet, not all this, nor the wants he was plunged in on an ill run at play, (which was the sole means by which he subsisted) were sufficient to bring him to do that which he now even wished to do, tired with the conversation of those profligates, and secretly shocked at the scenes of libertinism he was a daily witness of.

His thoughts thus divided and perplexed, he at length fell into a kind of despair; and not caring what became of himself, he resolved to enter on board some ship, and never see England again, unless fortune should do more than he had reason to hope for in his favour.



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### CHAP. VI.

Shews the great force of natural affection and the good effects it has over a grateful mind.

If children could be sensible of parental tenderness, or knew what racking cares attend every misdoing of an offending offspring, the heart of Natura would have been so much touched with what his father endured on his account, as to have enabled him to have got the better of that guilty shame, which alone hindered him from submitting to him; but conscious of deferring only the severest reproofs, he could not flatter himself there was a hope of ever being reinstated in that affection he had once possessed, and was too proud to content himself with less.

That afflicted parent being informed of his son's flight, spared no cost or pains to find out the place of his retreat; but all his enquiries were in vain, and he was wholly in the dark, till it came into his head to search a little escritore which stood in his chamber, and of which he had taken away the key: on breaking it open, he found the counterpart of his contract with Harriot, and by that discovery was no longer at a loss for the motives which had obliged his son to raise money, not doubting but the woman was either extremely indigent; or a jilt: but to think the heir of his estate had been so weak as to enter into so solemn and irretrievable an engagement, with a person of either of these characters, gave him an inexpressible disquiet. All his endeavours were now bent on finding her out, not in the least questioning but his son was with her: the task was pretty difficult, the contract discovering no more of her than her name, and the parish in which she lived; yet did the emissaries he employed at last surmount it: they brought him word not only of the exact place where she lodged, but also of her character, as they learned it from the neighbours; they heard also that a young gentleman, whose description answered that of Natura, had been often seen with her, and that she had given out she was married to him.

The father having received this information, consulted with his brother-in-law what course was to be taken, and both being of opinion, that should any enquiry be made concerning Natura, it would only oblige them to quit their lodgings, and fly to some place where, perhaps, it would be more difficult to trace them; it was agreed to get a lord chief justice's warrant, and search her lodgings, without giving any previous alarm.

This was no sooner resolved than put in execution: the father and uncle, attended by proper officers, burst into the house, and examined carefully every part of it; but not finding him, they sought, and perfectly perswaded Harriot could give intelligence of him, they threatened her severely, and here she displayed herself in her proper colours;—nothing ever behaved with greater impudence:—she told them, that she knew nothing of the fool they

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wanted; but if she could find him, would make him know what the obligations between them exacted from him: in fine, it was easy for them to perceive, there was nothing satisfactory to be obtained from her, and they departed with akeing hearts, but left not the street without securing to their interest a person in the neighbourhood, who promised to keep a continual eye upon her door, and if they ever saw the young gentleman go in, to send them immediate notice.

It is needless to acquaint the reader how fruitless this precaution was: Natura was far from any inclination ever more to enter that detested house, and in that desponding humour, already mentioned, had certainly left the kingdom, and compleated his utter undoing, if Providence had not averted his design, by the most unexpected means.

He was at Wapping, in the company of some persons who used the sea, in order to get into some ship, he cared not in what station, when a young man, clerk to an eminent merchant of his father's acquaintance, happened to come in, to enquire after the master of a vessel, by whom some goods belonging to his master were to be shipped: he had often seen Natura, and though much altered by his late way of living, knew him to be the person whom he had heard so great a search had been made after: he took no notice of him however, as he found the other bent earnestly in discourse did not observe him, but privately informed himself of all he could relating to his business there, and as soon as he came home acquainted his master with the discovery he had made, who did not fail to let his father know it directly.

It is hard to say, whether joy at hearing of his son, or grief at hearing he was in so miserable a condition, was most predominant in him; but the first emotions of both being a little moderated, the consideration of what was to be done, took place:—the clerk having found out that he was lodged in an obscure house at that place, in order to get on board the first ship that sailed, the father would needs go himself, and the merchant offering to accompany him in their little journey, a plan of proceeding was formed between them, which was executed in the following manner.

They went together into a tavern, and sent to the house the clerk had directed, under pretence, that hearing a young man was there who had an inclination for the sea, a master of a ship would be glad to treat with him on that affair.—Natura, happily for him, not having yet an opportunity of engaging himself, obeyed the summons, and followed the messenger:—his father withdrew into another room, but so near as to hear what passed, and there was only the merchant to receive him; but the sight of one he so little expected in that place, and whom he knew was so intimate in their family, threw him into a most terrible consternation. He started back, and had certainly quitted the house, if the merchant, aware of his intention, had not caught hold of him, and getting between him and the door, compelled him to sit down while he talked to him.

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He began with asking what had induced him to think of leaving England in the manner he was going to do;—reminded him of the estate to which he was born, the family from which he was descended, and the education which he had received; and then set before his eyes the tenderness with which his father had used him, the grief to which he had exposed him, and above all the madness of his present intentions:—Natura knew all this as well as he that remonstrated to him; but as he had not been capable of listening to his own reflections on that head, all that was said had not the least effect upon him, and the merchant could get no other answer from him, than that as things had happened, he had no other course to take.

The truth was, that as he could not imagine by what means the merchant was apprized of his design, he thought his father was also not ignorant of it; and as he did not vouchsafe either to come in person, or send any message to him from himself, and perhaps was even ignorant that the merchant had any intention of reclaiming him, he looked upon it as a confirmation of his having intirely thrown off all care of him, and in this supposition he became more resolute than ever in his mind, to go where he never might be heard of more.

‘What though,’ said the merchant, ‘you have been guilty of some youthful extravagancies, I am perfectly assured there requires no more than your submitting to intreat forgiveness, to receive: come,’ continued he, ‘I will undertake to be your mediator, and dare answer I shall prevail.’—‘No, sir,’ replied Natura, ‘I am conscious of having offended beyond all possibility of a pardon;—nor can I ever bear to see my father again.’

The merchant laboured all he could to overcome this mingled pride and shame, which he perceived was the only obstacle to his return to duty; but to no purpose, Natura continued obstinate and inflexible, till his father, having no longer patience to keep himself concealed, rushed into the room, and looking on his son with a countenance which, in spite of all the severity he had endeavoured to assume, betrayed only tenderness and grief.—‘So, young man,’ said he, ‘you think it then my place to seek a reconciliation, and are perhaps too stubborn to accept forgiveness, even though I should condescend to offer it.’

Natura was so thunderstruck at the appearance of his father, and the manner in which he accosted him, that he was far from being able to speak one word, but threw himself at his feet, with a look which testified nothing but confusion: that action, however, denoting that he had not altogether forgot himself, melted the father’s heart; he raised him, and forcing him to sit down in a chair close by him; ‘Well, Natura,’ said he, ‘you have been disobedient to an excess; I wish it were possible for your distresses to have given you a remorse in proportion;—I am still a *father*, if you can be a *son*.’—He would have proceeded, but was not able:—the meagre aspect, dejected air, and wretched appearance of a son so dear to him, threw him into a condition which destroyed all the power of maintaining that reserve which he thought necessary to his character.

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Natura, on the other hand, was so overcome with the unlooked-for gentleness of his behaviour, that he burst into a flood of tears.—Filial gratitude and love, joined with the thoughts of what he had done to deserve a far different treatment, so overwhelmed his heart, that he could express himself no other way than by falling on his knees a second time, and embracing the legs of his father, with a transport, I know not whether to say of grief or joy; continued in that posture for a considerable time, overwhelmed at once with shame, with gratitude, and love:—at length, gaining the power of utterance,—‘O sir,’ cried he, ‘how unworthy am I of your goodness!’—but then recollecting as it were somewhat more; ‘yet sure,’ pursued he, ‘it is not possible you can forgive me all.—I have been guilty of worse than, perhaps, you yet have been informed of:—I am a wretch who have devoted myself to infamy and destruction, and you cannot, nay ought not to forgive me.’

The father was indeed very much alarmed at this expression, as fearing it imported his distresses had drove him to be guilty of some crime of which the law takes cognizance.—‘I hope,’ said he, ‘your having signed a contract with an abandoned prostitute, is the worst action of your life?’

It is impossible to describe the pleasure with which Natura found his father was apprized of this affair, without being obliged to relate it himself, as he was now determined to have done:—all his obduracy being now entirely vanquished, and converted into the most tender, affectionate, and dutiful submission.

‘Can there be a worse?’ replied he, renewing his embraces, ‘and can you know it, and yet vouchsafe to look on me as your son!’—‘If your penitence be sincere,’ said the good old gentleman, ‘I neither can, nor ought refuse to pardon all:—but rise,’ continued he, ‘and freely give this worthy friend and myself, the satisfaction we require;—a full confession of all your misbehaviour, is the only atonement you can make, and that I can expect from you:—remember I have signed your pardon for all that is past, but shall not include in it any future acts of disobedience, among which, dissimulation, evasion or concealment, in what I demand to be laid open, I shall look upon as of the worst and most incorrigible kind.’

He needed not have laid so strong an injunction on the now truly contrite Natura;—he disguised nothing of what he had done, even to the mean arts of gaming, to which he had been obliged to have recourse after his voluntary banishment from all his friends; and then painted the horrors he conceived at the things he daily saw, and the despair which had induced him to leave England, in such lively colours, that not only his father, but the merchant, were affected by it, even to the letting fall some tears.

But not to be too tedious in this part of my narration, never was there a more perfect reconciliation:—the father till now knew not how much he loved his son, nor the son before felt half that dutiful affection and esteem for his father.

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It now remained to conclude how the forgiven youth was to be disposed:—there were two reasons which rendered it imprudent for him to go home; first, on the score of his mother-in-law, who being better informed than her husband could have wished, of the errors of his son, he feared would have behaved to him in a fashion which, he easily foresaw, would be attended with many inconveniences; even perhaps to the driving him back into his late vicious courses; and secondly, on that of the contract, which it would be more difficult to get Harriot to relinquish, if Natura were known to be re-established in his father's favour, than if concealed and supposed still in disgrace with him.—The generous merchant made an offer of an apartment in his house; but Natura, who had not seen his sister of a long time, proposed a visit to her; as thinking the society of that dear and prudent relation, would not only console, but establish him in virtue.

The father listened to both, and after some little deliberation, told his son, that he approved of his going to his sister for a month or two, or three, at his own option; 'but,' said he, 'it is not fit a young man like you should bury yourself for any long time in the country;—you are now of a right age to travel, and I would have you enlarge your understanding by the sight of foreign manners and customs:—I would, therefore, have you make a short visit to my daughter, after which, accept of my friend's invitation, and in the mean time I shall prepare things proper for your making the tour of Europe, under a governor who may keep you in due limits.'

Had Natura never offended his father, the utmost he could have wished from his indulgence, was a proposal of this kind:—he was in a perfect extasy, and knew not how sufficiently to express his gratitude and satisfaction; on talking, however, more particularly on the affair, it was agreed he should go first to the merchant's, in order to be new clothed, and recover some part of those good looks his late dissolute way of life had so much impaired.

Every thing being settled so much to the advantage of Natura, even a few hours made some alteration in his countenance; so greatly does the ease of the mind contribute to the welfare of the body!—he parted not till night from this indulgent parent, when he went home with the merchant, and had the next day tradesmen of all kinds sent for, who had orders to provide, in their several ways, every thing necessary for a young gentleman born to the estate he was.—As youth is little regardless of futurity, he forgot, for a time, what consequences might possibly attend his contract with Harriot, and was as perfectly at ease, as if no such thing had ever happened. When fully equipped, he went down into that country where his sister lived, and if the least thought of his former transactions remained in him, they were now intirely dissipated, by the kind reception he there met with, and the entertainments made for him by the neighbouring gentry.

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But his heart being bent on his travels, and receiving a letter from his father, wherein he acquainted him that all things were ready for his departure, he took leave of the country, after a stay of about nine weeks, and returned to the merchant's, where his father soon came to see him, and told him, he had provided a governor for him, who had served several of the sons of the nobility in that capacity, and was perfectly acquainted with the languages and manners of the countries through which they were to pass.

This tender parent moreover acquainted him, that having consulted the lawyers, on the score of that unhappy obligation he had laid himself under to Harriot, and finding they had given it as their assured opinion, that it was drawn up in the most binding and authentic manner, he had offered that creature a hundred guineas to give up her claim; but she had obstinately rejected his proposal, and seemed determined to compel him to the performance of his contract; or in case he married any other woman, to prosecute him for the moiety of whatever portion he should receive with her.

The mention of this woman, who had given Natura so much disquiet, and who indeed had been the primary cause of all his follies and misfortunes, together with the thoughts of what future inconveniencies she might involve him in, both on the account of his fortune and reputation, made him relapse into his former agitations, and afterwards rendered him extremely pensive, and he could not forbear crying out, that he would chuse rather to abandon England for ever, and, pass the whole remainder of his days in foreign climates, than yield to become the prey any way of so wicked, so infamous a wretch, 'whom,' said he, 'I shall never think on, without hating myself for having ever loved.'

The good-natured merchant, as well as his father, perceiving these reflections began to take too much root in him, joined in endeavouring to alleviate the asperity of them, by telling him, that it was their opinion, as indeed it seemed highly probable, that when he was once gone, she would be more easily prevailed upon; especially as the reconciliation between him and his father was to be kept an inviolable secret. The old gentleman also added, in order to make him easy, that how exorbitant soever she might be in her demands, and whatever it should cost, though it were the half of his estate, he would rid him of the contract; which second proof of paternal affection, renewed in Natura, as well it might, fresh sentiments of love, joy, and duty; and the same promise being again and again reiterated, he soon resumed his former cheerfulness, and thought of nothing but the new scenes he was going to pass through.



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In fine, not many days elapsed before he departed, with his governor and one footman, who had been an antient servant in the family.—As their first route was to France, they went in the Dover stage, and thence embarked for Calais, without any thing material happening, except it were, that on sight of the ocean, Natura was fired with a devout rhapsody at the thoughts of finding himself upon it, in a manner so vastly different from that in which, but a few months since, his despair had led him to project; and the resolution he made within himself never to be guilty of any thing hereafter, which should occasion a blush on his own face, or incur the displeasure of a father, to whom he looked upon himself as much more indebted, for the forgiveness he had received, than for being the author of his existence.

So great an effect has mercy and benevolence over a heart not hardened by a long practice of vice! How far Natura persevered in these good intentions, we shall hereafter see; but the very ability of forming them, shews that there is a native gratitude and generosity in the human mind, which, in spite of the prevalence of unruly passions, will, at sometimes, shine forth, even in the most thoughtless and inconsiderate.

## BOOK the Second.

### CHAP. I.

The inconsideration and instability of youth; when unrestrained by authority, is here exemplified, in an odd adventure Natura embarked in with two nuns, after the death of his governor.

Novelty has charms for persons of all ages, but more especially in youth, when manhood is unripened by maturity, when all the passions are afloat, and reason not sufficiently established in her throne by experience and reflection, the mind is fluctuating, easily carried down the stream of every different inclination that invites, and seldom or never has a constant bent.

From seventeen or eighteen to one or two and twenty, I look upon to be that season of life in which all the errors we commit, will admit of most excuse, because we are then at an age to think ourselves men, without the power of acting as becomes reasonable men. It was in the midst of this dangerous time, that Natura set out in order to make the tour of Europe, and his governor dying soon after their arrival in Paris, our young traveller was left to himself, and at liberty to pursue whatever he had a fancy for.

The death of this gentleman was in effect a very great misfortune to Natura; but as at his time of life we are all too apt to be impatient under any restraint, tho' never so mild and reasonable, he did not consider it in that light; and therefore less lamented his loss, than his good nature would have made him do, had he been the companion of his

travels in any other station than that of governor, the very name of which implied a right of direction over his behaviour, and a power delegated by his father of circumscribing



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every thing he did. I believe, whoever looks back upon himself at that age, will be convinced by the retrospect, that there was nothing wonderful in Natura's imagining he had now discretion enough to regulate his conduct, without being under the controul of any person whatever; and could not, for that reason, be much afflicted at being eased of a subordination not at all agreeable to his humour, and which he thought he had not the least occasion for.

The baron d' Eyrac had often invited him to pass some days with him, at a fine villa he had about some ten leagues from Paris; but his governor not having approved that visit, he had hitherto declined it.—He now, however, took it into his head to go, and as the distance was so short, went on horseback, attended by his footman, with a portmanteau containing some linnen and cloaths, his intention being to remain there while the baron stayed, which, as he was informed, would be three weeks, or a month;—it being then the season for hunting, and that part of the country well suited for the diversion.

He had been on a party of pleasure a considerable way on this road before, so thought he had no occasion for a guide, and that he should easily be directed to the house; but it so happened that being got about twenty miles from Paris he missed his route, and took one the direct contrary, and which at last brought him to the entrance of a very thick wood:—there was not the least appearance of any human creature, nor the habitation of one, and he was beginning to consult with his servant whether to go back, or proceed till they should arrive at some town or village for refreshment, when all at once there fell the most terrible shower of hail and rain, accompanied with thunder, that ever was heard;—this determined them to go into the wood for shelter:—the storm continued till night, and it was then so dark, that they could distinguish nothing:—they wandered, however, leading their horses in their hands, for it was impossible to ride, hoping to find some path, by which they might extricate themselves out of that horrid labyrinth.

Some hours were passed in this perplexed situation, and Natura expected no better than to remain there till morning, when he heard a voice at a little distance, cry, 'Who goes there?' Never had any music been half so pleasing to the ears of Natura. 'Friends,' replied he, 'and travellers, that have lost their way.' On this the person who had spoke, drew nearer, and asked whither they were bent. Natura told him to the villa of the baron d' Eyrac. 'The baron d' Eyrac,' said the other, 'he lives twelve miles on the other side the wood, and that is five miles over.'—He then asked if there were no town near, to which he could direct them.—'No,' replied the other, 'but there is a little village where is one inn, and that is above half a league off:—you will never find your way to it; but if you will pay me, I will guide you.' Natura wished no more, and having agreed with him for his hire, followed where he led.

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Nothing that was ever called an inn, had so much the shew of wretchedness; nor could it be expected otherwise, for being far from any great road, it was frequented only by shepherds, and others the meanest sort of peasants, who worked in the adjacent grounds, or tended the cattle.

In this miserable place was Natura obliged to take up his lodging:—he lay down, indeed, on the ragged dirty mattress, but durst not take off his cloaths, so noisome was every thing about him:—fatigued as he was, he could not close his eyes till towards day, but had not slept above two hours before the peasant who had served him as a guide, and had also stayed at the inn, came into his room, and waked him abruptly, telling him the lady abbess desired to speak with him.—Natura was much vexed at this disturbance, and not sufficiently awaked to recollect himself, only cried peevishly, 'What have I to do with abbesses,' and then turned to sleep again.

On his second waking, his footman acquainted him, that a priest waited to see him:—Natura then remembered what the peasant had said, but could not conceive what business these holy people had with him; he went down however immediately, and was saluted by a reverend gentleman, who told him, that the lady abbess of a neighbouring monastery (whose almoner he was) hearing from one of her shepherds the distress he had been in, had sent to intreat he would come, and refresh himself with what her convent afforded.

Natura was now ashamed of having been so rough with the peasant, but well atoned for it by the handsome apology he now made; after which he told the almoner, that he would receive the abbess's commands as soon as he was in a condition to be seen by her.—This was what good manners exacted from him, tho' in truth he had no inclination for a visit, in which he proposed so little satisfaction.

He then made his servant open the portmanteau, and give him such things as were proper to equip him for this visit; and while he was dressing, was informed by his host, that this abbess was a woman of quality, very rich, and owned the village they were in, and several others, which brought her in more rent.

If the vanity so natural to a young heart, made Natura, on this information, pleased and proud of the consideration such a lady had for him while unknown, how much more cause had he to be so, when being shewn by the same peasant into the monastery, he was brought into a parlour, magnificently furnished, and no sooner had sat down, than a very beautiful woman, whom he soon found was the lady abbess, appeared behind the grate, and welcomed him with the most elegant compliments.

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He had never been in a monastery before, and had a notion that all the nuns, especially the abbesses, were ill-natured old women: he was therefore so much surprized at the sight of this lady, that he had scarce power to return the politeness she treated him with. —Her age exceeded not twenty-four; she was fair to an excess, had fine-turned features, and an air which her ecclesiastic habit could not deprive of its freedom; but the enchanting manner of her conversation, her wit, and the gaiety that accompanied all she said, so much astonished and transported him, that he cried out, without knowing that he did so, 'Good God!—is it possible a monastery can contain such charms!'—She affected to treat the admiration he expressed, as no other than meer bagatelle; but how serious a satisfaction she took in it, a very little time discovered.

'A monastery,' said she, 'is not so frightful a solitude as you, being a stranger to the manners of this country, have perhaps painted to yourself:—I have companions in whom I believe you will find some agreements.'—She then rung a bell, and ordered an attending nun, or what they call a lay-sister, to call some of the sisterhood, whose names she mentioned; and presently came two nuns, with a third lady in a different habit; the least handsome of these might have passed for a beauty, but she that was the most so I shall call Elgidia; she was sister to the abbess, but wanted a good many of her years, and being intended for a monastic life by their parents, had been sent there as a pensioner, till she should be prevailed upon to take the veil.

The abbess, having learned from Natura that he was from England, told them, in a few words, what she knew of him, and the motive of the invitation she had made him; then desired they would entertain him till her return, having some affair, which called her thence for a small time.

As Elgidia appeared by her dress to be more a woman of this world than her companions, he directed his discourse chiefly to her; but whether it were that she had less gaiety in her temper, or that she was that moment taken up with some very serious thought, Natura could not be certain, but he found her much less communicative, than either of those, whose profession seemed to exact greater reserve.

As Natura spoke French perfectly well, and delivered all he said with a great deal of ease, they were very much pleased with his conversation; and yet more so, when, at the return of the abbess, that wit and spirit they before found in him, seemed to have gained an additional vigour.

The truth is, the first sight of this beautiful abbess had very much struck him; and a certain prepossession in her favour, had rendered him not so quick-sighted as he might otherwise have been to the charms of her sister:—not that he was absolutely in love with her, nor entertained the least wish in prejudice to the sanctity of her order; it was rather an *admiration* he was possessed with on her account, which the surprize, at finding her person and manner so widely different from what he had expected, contributed very much to excite in him.

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The breakfast, which consisted of chocolate, tea, coffee, rich cakes, and sweetmeats, was served upon the Turnabout; but the abbess told him, that their monastery had greater privileges than any other in France; for they were not restrained from entertaining their kindred and friends, tho' of a different sex, within the grate; 'as you shall experience,' said she, with the most obliging air, 'if you will favour us with your company at dinner.'

Nothing could be more pleasing to Natura than this invitation, and it cannot, therefore, be supposed he hesitated much to comply with it; however, as the hour of their devotion drew nigh, and forms must be observed, he was desired to take a tour round about the village till twelve, at which time they told him dinner would be on the table.

He was still in so much amazement at what he had seen and heard, that he was not sorry at having an opportunity of being alone, to reflect on all had passed; but the deeper he entered into thought, the more strange it still seemed to him; till happening accidentally to fall into some discourse with a gentleman in the village, he was told by him, that the nunnery they were in sight of, was called, Le Convent de Riche Dames; that none but women of condition entered themselves into it, and that they enjoyed liberties little different from those that live in the world:—'It is true,' said this person, 'the gay manner in which they behave, has drawn many reflections on their order, yet I know not but they may be equally innocent with those of the most rigid.'

This was enough to shew Natura, that the civilities he received, were only such as any stranger, who appeared of some rank, might be treated with, as well as himself; and served to abate that little vanity which, without this information, might have gained ground in his heart; at least it did so for the present: what reasons he found afterwards for the indulging it, the reader will anon be enabled to judge.

He was not, however, without a good deal of impatience for the hour appointed for his return, which being arrived, the portress admitted him into a fine room behind the grate, where he found the abbess, Elgidia, the two nuns he had seen in the morning, and another, which, it seems, were all the abbess thought proper should be present.

The table was elegantly served, and the richness of the wines, helped very much to exhilarate the spirits of the company.—Elgidia alone spoke little, tho' what she said was greatly to the purpose, and discovered that it was not for want either of sentiment or words she retained so great a taciturnity.—Natura saying somewhat, that shewed he took notice how singular she was in this point, the abbess replied, that her sister did not like a convent, that the comedy, the opera, and ball, had more charms for her than devotion. On which Natura made some feint attempts to justify a goute for those public diversions, but was silenced

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by the abbess, who maintained the only true felicities of life were religion and friendship. 'What then do you make of love, madam?' cried he briskly: 'love, the first command of Heaven, and the support of this great universe:—love, which gives a relish to every other joy, and'—he was going on, but the abbess interrupted him, 'Hold!—Hold!' said she, 'this is not a discourse fit for these sacred precincts.'—But these words were uttered in a sound, and accompanied with a look, which wholly took away their austerity, and it was easy for Natura to perceive by the manner in which they were spoke, as well as by a sigh, which escaped Elgidia at the same time, that neither of these ladies were in reality enemies to the passion he was defending.

Some little time after dinner was over, Natura was about to take his leave; but the abbess told him, that she had formed a design to punish him for pretending to espouse the cause of love; 'and that is,' said she, 'by detaining you in a place, where you must never speak, nor hear a word, in favour of it:—'we have,' continued she, 'a little apartment adjoining to the monastery, tho' not in it, which serves to accommodate such friends as visit us, and are too far from home to return the same day:—you must not refuse to pass at least one night in it; and I dare promise you, that you will not find yourself worse lodged, than the preceding one:—your servant may also lie in the same house, and I will send your horses to a neighbouring farmer; who will take care of them.'

The manner in which this request was urged, had somewhat in it too obliging, for Natura to have denied, in good manners, even if his inclinations had been opposite; but indeed he was too much charmed with the conversation of the lovely abbess, and her fair associates, to be desirous of quitting it.—He not only stayed that night, but also, on their continuing to ask it, many succeeding ones.—He lay in the apartment above-mentioned, breakfasted, dined, and supped in the convent, as if a pensioner in the place, always in the same company, and ambitious of no other.

The gallantries with which he treated the abbess, were as tender as innocence would permit; nor did he presume to harbour any views of being happier with her than he was at present.

But see! the strange caprice of love! It was not through a coldness of constitution, nor any confederations of her quality and function, which rendered him so content with enjoying no more of her than her conversation; nor that hindered him from taking advantage of many advances she made him, whenever they were alone, of becoming more particular; but it was the progress Elgidia every day made in his esteem:—the more he saw that beautiful young lady, the more he thought her charming; and every time she spoke discovered to him a new fund of wit, and sweetness of disposition:—it was not in her power to erase the first impression her sister had made on him, but it was to stop the admiration he had for her from growing up into a passion:—whenever he

saw either of them alone, he thought her most amiable he was with; and when they were together, he was divided between both.

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For upwards of a month did he continue in the same place, and in the same situation of mind; but then either the abbess's own good sense, or the advice of some friend, remonstrating to her, that so long a stay of a young gentleman, who was known to be not of her kindred, might occasion discourses to her disreputation, and that of the monastery in general; she took the opportunity one day, when he was making an offer of going, as he frequently did, to speak to him in this manner:

'I know not how,' said she, 'to part with you, and I flatter myself you think of going, rather because you imagine your tarrying here for any length of time, might be inconvenient for us, than because you are tired of the reception you have found here.'

'Ah madam!' cried he, 'be assured I could live for ever here;—and that I only grieve that such a hope is impossible.—If what you now say is sincere,' answered she, 'you may at least prolong the happiness we at present enjoy:—but I shall put you to the proof,' continued she, looking on him with eyes in which the most eager passion was visibly painted,—'to hush the tongue of censure, you shall remove to a town about seven miles distant, where there are many good houses, in one of which you may lodge, under pretence of liking the air of this country, and visit us, as other of our friends do, as frequently as you please, without endangering any remarks, even though you should stay with us three or four nights at a time.'

Natura was so ravished at this proposal, and the kind, almost fond manner, in which it was made, that he caught hold of her hand, and kissed it, with a vehemence not conformable to a Platonic affection:—she seemed, however, far from being offended at his boldness, which had perhaps proceeded to greater lengths, had not Elgidia at that instant come into the room.—The abbess was a little disconcerted, but to conceal it as well as she could, 'sister,' said she, 'I have made our guest the proposal I mentioned to you this morning, and leave you to second it': with these words she withdrew.

Elgidia appeared in little less confusion than her sister had done; but Natura was in infinitely more than either of them.—The sudden sight of her who possessed at least half of his affections, just in the moment he was in a kind of rapture with another, struck him like the ghost of a departed mistress; and tho' he had never made any declaration of love either to the one or the other, yet his heart reproached him with a secret perfidy, and he durst scarce lift his eyes to her face, when with a timid voice he at last said, 'Madam, may I hope you take any interest in what your sister has been speaking of?'—'You may be sure I do,' replied she, 'in all that concerns the abbess; as to my farther sentiments on your staying or going, they can be of no consequence to you.'—'How, madam!' resumed he, by this time a little re-assured, 'of no consequence! You know nothing of my heart, if you know it not incapable of forming the least wish but to please you.'



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He said many other tender and gallant things to her, in order to engage her to add her commands to those of the abbess; but, either the belief that he was wholly devoted to that lady, or the natural reserve of her temper, would suffer her to let him draw no more from her, than that she should share in the happiness her sister proposed to herself, in his continuing so near them.

But tho' Elgidia could command her words, she could not have so much power over her eyes as to keep them from betraying a tenderness not inferior to that of her sister; and Natura had the satisfaction of finding he was beloved by both these amiable women, without thinking himself so far attached to either, as not to be able to break off whenever he pleased.

But to what end tended all this gallantry! to what purpose was all this waste of time, in an amour, which either had no aim in view, or if it had, must be such a one, as must turn to the confusion of the persons concerned in it!—These indeed are questions any one might naturally ask, but could not have been resolved by Natura, who took a pleasure in prosecuting the adventure, and neither examined what he proposed by it himself, or considered what consequences might ensue; and herein he but acted as most others do of his age, who rarely give themselves the pains of consulting what *may*, or *will be*, when pleased with what *is*.

He went to the place the abbess had directed, but imagined he should be very much at a loss for amusement, being wholly a stranger to every body. He would doubtless have been so, had his retreat been in any other country than France; but as it is the peculiar characteristic of that nation to entertain at first sight with the same freedom and communicativeness of a long acquaintance, he soon found himself neither without company nor diversion:—whether he had an inclination to hunt, or dance, or play, he always met with persons ready to join in the party, so that the intervals he passed there, between his visits to the monastery, seemed not at all tedious to him.

The ladies, however, were far from being forgotten by him; ten days had not elapsed, before he returned to renew, or rather to improve, the impression he had both given and received.—The abbess appeared all life and spirit at his return, but Elgidia was more melancholly than when he left her; but it was a melancholly which had in it somewhat of a soft languor, which was very engaging to Natura, especially as he had reason to believe, by several looks and expressions, which in some unguarded moments fell from her, that he had the greatest interest in it.

The oftener he saw her, the more he was confirmed in this conjecture; but as he could not be assured of it, never treated her in a manner which should give her room to guess what his thoughts were, for fear of meeting with a rebuff, which would have been too mortifying to his vanity:—but as the belief of being beloved by her, rendered her insensibly more dear to him; the regards he paid her, and the sighs which frequently issued from his breast when he approached her, did not escape the notice of the quick-



sighted abbess; and disdaining a competitorship in a heart she thought she had wholly engrossed, resolved to be more plain than hitherto she had been, in order to bring him to declare himself.

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With this view she led him one day into the garden, and being seated in a close arbour, where there was no danger of being overheard,—'Natura,' said she, 'I doubt not but you may perceive, by the civilities I have treated you with, that you are not indifferent to me; but as you cannot be sensible to how great a degree my regard for you extends, it remains that I confess to you there is but one thing wanting to compleat the intire conquest of my heart'; 'and that is,' continued she, fixing her eyes intently on his face, 'that you will cease for the future to pay those extraordinary assiduities to Elgidia you have lately done.'

How much soever Natura was transported at the beginning of this discourse, the closure of it gave him an inexpressible shock, insomuch that he was wholly unable to make any reply, to testify the sense he had of the obligation she conferred on him. 'I see,' said she, 'the too great influence my sister has over you leaves me no room to hope any thing from you:—I did not think the sacrifice I exacted from you so great, that the purchase of my heart would not have atoned for it; but since I find it is otherwise, I repent I put you to the trial.'

In speaking these words she rose up, and flew out of the arbour: the confusion Natura was in, prevented him from endeavouring to detain her; and before he could resolve with himself how to behave in so critical a conjuncture, she was out of sight.—Whatever tenderness he had for the other, he could not bear the thoughts of having offended this lady: the confession she had just made him, seemed to deserve all his gratitude; and tho' the price she demanded for her heart was too excessive for him to comply with, yet he resolved to make his peace with her the first time he found her alone, on the best terms he could.

This was an opportunity, however, not so easily attained as he had imagined:—the abbess conceived so much spite at the little inclination he had testified to comply with her demand, that she kept one or other of the nuns with her the whole remainder of that day, and he could only tell her by his eyes how desirous he was of coming to an eclairsissement.

But as if this was a day destined to produce nothing but extraordinary events, perceiving the abbess industriously avoided speaking to him, he had retired into the parlour to ruminate on the affair, when Elgidia came in to him, and with somewhat more gaiety than she was accustomed to, cried, 'What, alone, Natura! but I suppose you attend my sister, and I will not be any interruption'; and then turned to go out of the room. All the discontent he was in for the displeasure he found he had given the abbess, could not keep him from getting between her and the door:—'I have no other way to convince you of the injustice of your suspicion,' said he, 'than to detain you here; tho' perhaps,' added he, looking on her with an unfeigned tenderness, 'while I am clearing myself in one article, it may not be in my power to prevent betraying my guilt in another, which it may be you will find yet less worthy of forgiveness.'

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'I know not,' replied she, with a smile too enchanting to be resisted, 'that I ever gave you any tokens of a rigid disposition; and besides, I am inclined to have so good an opinion of you, that I look on your giving me any cause of offence, as one of the things out of your power.'

Emboldened by these words, 'Suppose, madam,' returned he, 'I should confess to you that I was indulging the most passionate tenderness for the beautiful Elgidia!—that her sweet idea is always present with me, and that I sometimes am presuming enough to cherish the hopes of not being hated by her':—'tell me,' continued he, 'what punishment does this criminal deserve?'

'To be treated in the same manner,' answered she blushing, 'if he is sincere; and to be made know that he cannot have formed any designs upon the heart of Elgidia, which Elgidia has not equally harboured upon that of Natura.'—A declaration so unexpected might very well transport a young man, even beyond himself, and all considerations whatever:—forgetful of the respect due to her quality and virtue, and regardless of the place they were in, he seized her in his arms, and almost smothered her with kisses, before she could disengage herself; at length, breaking from him, 'It is not by such testimonies as these,' said she, 'that I expected you should repay the acknowledgment I have made; but by a full laying open your bosom, as to what passes in it, in regard to my sister:—I know very well she loves you, and am apt to believe she has not been more discreet than myself in concealing it from you; but am altogether at a loss as to the returns you may have made her passion.'

Natura now really loving her, hesitated not to do as she desired; neither making any secret of the admiration which the abbess had raised in him at first sight, nor the discourse she had lately entertained him with, and the injunction she had laid upon him. Elgidia took this as so great a proof of his affection, that she made no scruple to ratify the confession she had made him by all the endearments that innocence would permit:—after which, they consulted together how he should behave to the abbess, whose temper being violent, it was not proper to drive to extremes; and it was therefore agreed between them, that he should continue to treat her with a shew of tenderness: Elgidia even proposed, that he should renounce her, in case the other continue to insist upon it; but Natura could not consent his insincerity should go so far.

They parted, mutually content with each other; and Natura himself believed his inclinations were now fixed, by the assurance Elgidia had given him of the most true and perfect passion that ever was: but how little do we know of our own hearts at his years! the next time he saw the abbess alone, he relapsed into the same fluctuating state as before, and found too much charms in the kindness she expressed for him, to be able to withdraw himself intirely from her.

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That lady, who loved to an excess, could not be any long time without affording him the means of reconciliation; and the next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, descended alone into the garden, giving him a look at the same time, which commanded him to follow:—he did so, and perceiving she took her way to the same arbour they had been in before, he went in soon after her, affecting, rather than feeling, a timidity in approaching her. ‘Well, Natura,’ said she, ‘have you yet examined your heart sufficiently, to know whether the full possession of mine, can atone for your breaking with my sister’;—to which he replied, that as he had no engagements with Elgidia, nor had ever any other thoughts of her, than such as were excited by that respect due to her sex and rank, he was wholly ignorant in what manner it was exacted from him to behave:—‘but,’ added he, ‘if vowing that from the first moment I beheld your charms, I became absolutely devoted to you, may deserve any part of that affection you are pleased to flatter me with, I am ready to give you all the assurances in the power of words.’

This asseveration could not be called altogether false, because he had really a latent inclination in him towards her, which all the tenderness he had for Elgidia could not eradicate; and this it was that gave all he said such an air of sincerity as won upon the abbess, to believe her jealousy had misinterpreted the looks she had sometimes seen him give her sister, and at length made her desist from reproaching him on that score.

The tranquility of her mind being restored, she gave a loose to the violence of her passion, in such caresses as might well make the person who received them forgetful of all other obligations:—in these transporting moments the lovely abbess had his whole soul:—he now, unasked, abjured not only Elgidia, but all the sex beside, and even wondered at himself for having ever entertained a wish beyond the happiness he enjoyed at present.

The abbess was too well versed in the affairs of love, not to be highly satisfied with the proofs he gave of his, than which, it is certain, nothing for the time could be more sincere or ardent; death was it to them both to put an end to this enchanting scene, but as they were seen to go into the garden soon after one another, and too long a stay together might occasion a suspicion of the cause, they were obliged to separate, though not without a promise of meeting in the same place at night, after the nuns were all retired to their respective chambers.

The abbess passed through a back-way into the chapel, it being near the time of prayers, and Natura returned by the great walk into the outward cloister, where Elgidia seeing him at a distance, and alone, waited his coming, to know of him how he had proceeded with her sister.—Natura, yet full of the abbess and the favours he had received from her, would have gladly dispensed with this interview; but she was too near, before he perceived her, for him to draw back with decency.

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Far from suspecting any change in him, and judging of his integrity by her own, 'I was impatient,' said she, 'to hear the event of your conversation with the abbess; tell me therefore in a few words, for the bell rings to chapel, whether you have succeeded so far as to stifle all jealousies of me?' 'Yes, madam,' replied he, recovering himself as well as he could from his confusion, 'we may be easy for the future, as to that particular.'—'I long for the particulars of your discourse' resumed she, 'but cannot now stay to be informed; meet me in the garden after the sisterhood are in bed'; 'this,' continued she, putting a key into his hand, 'will admit you by the gate that leads to the road:—do not fail to be there at nine.'—The haste she was in to be gone, would not have permitted him time to make any answer, if he had been provided with one, and he could only just kiss her hand as she turned from him.

But what was the dilemma he was now involved in! the hour, and place she appointed, were the very same in which he was to meet the abbess! impossible was it for him to gratify both, and not very easy to deceive either:—he went back into the garden, ruminating what course he should take in so intricate an affair; at first he thought of writing a little billet, and slipping it into Elgidia's hand, acquainting her that the abbess had commanded him to attend her in the garden at the time she mentioned, and telling her that he thought it necessary to obey, to prevent all future suspicion:—but he rejected this design, not only as that young lady might possibly have the curiosity to conceal herself behind the arbour, and would then be a witness of things it was no way proper she should be informed of, but also because his heart reproached him for having already done more than he could answer, and forbid him to deceive her any farther; in fine, that he might be guilty of perfidy to neither, he resolved to quit both, at least for that night, but knew not yet on what he should determine for the future.

Divine service being over, he repaired to the parlour, where, after they were sat down to dinner, he said, addressing himself to the abbess, that having sent his servant that morning to his lodgings, he had received letters of the utmost importance, which required immediate answers; and that he must be obliged for that reason to take his leave; 'though with what regret,' added he, 'it is easy to perceive, by the long stay I always make here.'

The abbess insisted upon it, that he should not go;—told him he might write what he pleased there without interruption; and that his man might carry his dispatches to the post: but all she urged could not prevail, and both that lady and her sister had the mortification to hear him give orders that his own horse should be got ready with all expedition; as for his servant he was left behind for a few hours, on the account of packing up some things he had brought him in the design of staying a longer time.

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In fine, he went away, with a promise of returning in a short time. The abbess was inwardly fretted at the disappointment, but imagined it was only occasioned by the motive he pretended, till a young nun who was her confidante in all things, and had happened to cross the cloyster when Natura and Elgidia were talking together before prayers, and had seen him kiss her hand, informed her of this passage, and added, of her own conjecture, that the abrupt departure of Natura was owing to somewhat that lady had said to him:—there needed no more to inflame the passionate and jealous abbess; she doubted not of being betrayed, and flew directly to her sister's chamber, accused her of being guilty of the most criminal intercourse with a stranger, and threatened if she did not confess the whole truth to her, and swear never to see him more, she would send an account of her behaviour to their parents, who would not fail to thrust her into a less commodious convent, and compel her to take the veil directly.

The mild and timid disposition of Elgidia, could not sustain this shock; she immediately fainted away, and help being called to bring her to herself, in opening her bosom a paper fell out of it, which the abbess snatching up, ran to her chamber to examine, and found it contained these words:

'To prevent my dear angel from being surprized at my sudden departure, know that it is to avoid the abbess, who obliged me to give her a promise of meeting her this night in the garden:—at my next visit you shall be informed at full of all that passed between us in the morning. Adieu.

Natura.

As Natura had no opportunity to make an excuse to Elgidia, he had slipt this billet into her hand on taking leave; and though no more was meant by it than to make her easy till his return, there was sufficient in the expression not only to convince the abbess that her sister was indeed her rival, but also to make her think herself had been the dupe to their amour.—Impossible would it be to describe the force of those passions, which, in this dreadful instant, overwhelmed her soul; so I shall only say, it was as great as woman could sustain, and which the impatience of venting on their proper object, put it into her head to go to him in a disguise, and upbraid his perfidy. As she seldom listened to any dictates, but those of her passion, this design was no sooner formed than preparations were made for the execution, nor could all her confidante urged, on the danger and scandal of the attempt, deter her from it.

There was a fellow who was frequently employed about the monastery, in whom she could confide:—him she sent to a farmer, with orders to hire three horses, one for herself, another for her confidante, who, in spite of all her apprehensions on that account, she would needs make accompany her, and the third for the man, who was to attend them as a valet, the little road they had to travel. This fellow was directed to bring the horses about ten o'clock at night, at which time it would be dark, to the corner

of a wall at the farther end of the garden, when she and her companion were to mount, and away on this wild expedition.

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But while the abbess was busy on her project, Elgidia had also another, though of somewhat a less desperate kind; her sister's temper gave her but too much reason to believe she would revenge herself on her by all the ways in her power; and trembling at the thoughts of being exposed to her parents, and the censure of the world, as the other had threatened, which she knew no way to avoid, but by Natura making up this quarrel; and tho' she knew it could only be done by his renouncing all pretensions to herself, yet she rather chose to lose the man she loved, than her reputation. As she knew not whether the abbess would delay the gratification of her malice any longer than the next morning, she resolved to send for Natura that same night, in order to engage him to a second reconciliation with her sister, let the terms be never so cruel to herself.

She had no sooner laid this plot, than she ran to see if the servant he had left behind was yet gone, and finding he was not, bad him wait a little, that she might send a letter by him to his master. The contents of her epistle were as follow:

'Something has happened, which lays me under a necessity of speaking to you this night:—the only consolation I have under the severest of all afflictions, is, that I did not take back the key I gave you in the morning: I beg you will make use of it, and let me find you in the close harbour as soon as the darkness will permit your entrance unobserved:—fail not, if you have any regard for the honour, the peace, and even the life of the unfortunate

Elgidia.

Natura had no sooner received this billet from the hands of his servant, than all his tenderness for the fair authoress of it revived in him, which, joined to his impatient curiosity for the knowledge of the accident she mentioned, easily determined him to do as she desired.

He set out at the close of day; but the moon rising immediately after, shone so extremely bright as proved her, no less than the sun, an enemy to the design he was at present engaged in; he was therefore obliged to wait till that planet had withdrawn her light, before he durst approach the convent.

The abbess and her companion having dressed themselves in riding habits, went at the above-mentioned hour to the gate where they expected the man and horses were attending their coming; but there was not the least appearance of any.—the abbess, emboldened by her impatience and despair, would needs venture out some paces beyond the gate, to listen if she could hear any sound of what she wanted, but had not long continued in that posture, before she discovered by the twinkling light of the stars, two men on horseback, galloping directly to the place where she stood:—impossible was it for her to discern what sort of persons they were, but easy to know, as there were two men, and no more than two horses, that they were not those she looked for; on which she ran with all the haste she



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could back into the garden, and clapping the gate after her, in her fright stopped not till she was almost at the entrance of the cloyster:—both she and her companion were out of breath; but when they had a little recovered it, the latter took the liberty of railing her on the terror she had been in, at the sight of two persons, who were, doubtless, only pursuing their own affairs, without any thought or notice of them:—the abbess acknowledged the pleasantry was just, and returned again to the gate, which having opened, they found two horses tied to a tree, at a little distance from it, without any person to look after them. She imagined they belonged to the farmer, but could not guess wherefore there was not a third, or how it happened that the man was not with them.—The two lady-adventurers waited in hopes of seeing their attendant with another horse, till the abbess, fearing the night would be too far spent for the execution of her design, and grown quite wild with rage and vexation, resolved to go without a guide; and accordingly she, and the young nun that was with her, mounted the horses they found there, and rode away.

Little did this distracted woman imagine to whom she was indebted for the means of conveying herself where she wished to be; for in effect these horses were Natura's, and it was no other than himself, attended by his man, who had put her into that fright, which occasioned her running so far back into the garden, as gave him time to enter, without being either seen or heard by her:—he was no sooner within the gate, than his servant tied the horses to a tree, as has been related, and retired to a more convenient place, either to lye down to sleep, or on some other occasion.—Thus did an accident which had like to have broken all Elgidia's measures, turn wholly to the advantage of them, and she found as much satisfaction, as a person in her situation could possibly take, in finding Natura so punctual to the summons she had sent:

It was with a flood of tears she related to him all that had passed between the furious abbess and herself after his departure, and concluded her discourse with beseeching him to see her in the morning, and omit nothing that might pacify her, 'even,' said she, 'to forswear ever speaking to me more.'

Natura was touched to the very soul at the grief he saw her in, and equally with the tender consideration she had for him; and now more devoted to her than ever, would have done any thing to prove the sincerity of his passion, but that which she demanded of him:—it was in vain she urged the impossibility of keeping a correspondence together under the same roof with a rival who had all the power in her own hands; or that she represented how much better it would be for both to break off so dangerous an intercourse of themselves, before the rage of the abbess should put her upon doing it, in a manner which might involve them all in destruction:—all the arguments she made

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use of, only served to render him more amorous, and consequently less able to part with her.—The difference he found between these two sisters; the outrageous temper of the one, compared with the prudence, sweetness, and gentleness of the other, rendered the comparison almost odious to him; and as he could not but acknowledge the impracticability of maintaining a conversation with the latter, without the participation of the former; nor though he should even consent to divide himself between them, would either of them be content, he told Elgidia, that the only way to solve these difficulties, was, for her to fly from the monastery, and be the partner of his fortune, as she was the mistress of his heart.

Such a proposition made her start!—to abandon all her friends, and put herself wholly in the power of a stranger, of whose fortune, family, or fidelity, she could not be assured, gave her very just alarms; but whatever was her reluctance at the first mention of such an enterprize, the extreme passion she had for him, rendered all her apprehensions, by degrees, less formidable:—he told her he had no other wishes, than such as were dictated by honour;—that he would marry her as soon as they should arrive at a place where the ceremony could be performed with safety:—that he was heir to a considerable estate after his father's death, that on his return to England he should have a handsome settlement out of it, and that his present allowance was sufficient to keep them above want.—People easily believe what they wish, especially from the mouth of a beloved person.—Natura indeed had uttered no untruths as to his circumstances, but as to the main point, his marrying her, it is impossible to judge whether in that he was sincere, because he knew not himself whether he was so, tho' in the vehemence of his present inclinations he might imagine he did so, and at that time really meant as he said.

Be that as it may, Elgidia suffered herself to be won by his perswasions; and being so, the present opportunity was not to be lost.—He had horses at the gate, could conduct her, he said, where she might be concealed till they got quite out of the reach of her kindred, and failed not to remonstrate, that if she delayed, but even till the next morning, not only the jealousy of the abbess, but a thousand other accidents, might separate them for ever.

As the lovers past their time in this manner, the distracted abbess was prosecuting her journey, in quest of him she had left behind: as the way she had to go was so short, there was no great danger of any mischief attending it, neither did any happen; but how great was her confusion! when arriving at the house where Natura lodged, she was told he went out in the evening, on the receipt of a billet brought him by his servant.—This disappointment destroyed all the remains of temperance had been left in her; she presently guessed the billet came from no other than Elgidia, doubted not but they were together,

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and figured in her mind a scene of tenderness between them so cruel to her imagination, that frenzy itself scarce exceeded what she endured:—she rode back with even more precipitation than she had set out, and being alighted at the gate thro' the great walk, supposing Elgidia had brought him into her chamber, where, if she found them, thought of nothing, but sacrificing one or both of them to her resentment.

In this situation of mind, it cannot be imagined she had any thought about the horses; but her companion having more the power of reflection, and judging them to be the farmer's, thought it best to tie them to a tree within the garden, that so they might be secured, and sent to him in the morning; which having done, and shut the gate, she was going to follow the abbess, when she met her coming back:—'I have considered,' said she, 'that my perfidious sister would rather chuse the close arbour for her rendezvous, than her own chamber, where there would be more danger of being overheard by the nuns who lie near her;—go you therefore,' continued she, 'and wait me in my apartment, while I search the garden.'

The nun obeyed, glad to be eased of this nocturnal attendance, and the abbess drew near, as softly as she could, to the arbour; and standing behind the covert of the greens of which it was composed, heard the consent Elgidia gave to accompany Natura, and saw her quit him, with a promise of returning, as soon as she had put on a habit somewhat more proper for travelling.

Had she followed the first dictates of her passion in this stabbing circumstance, she had either pursued her sister, and inflicted on her all that vindictive malice could suggest, or run into the arbour, and discharged some part of her fury on Natura:—each alike shared her resentment, but divided between both, lost its effects on either:—a revenge more pleasing, and less unbecoming of a female mind, at length got the better of those furious resolves;—she thought, that as every thing favoured such a design, and she was equipped for the purpose, to take the place of her sister, would afford her an exquisite triumph over the disappointment she should occasion them: accordingly, after staying long enough to encourage the deception, she came round the arbour, and entered at the passage by which Elgidia had gone out:—Natura, not doubting but it was his beloved, took her in his arms, saying, 'How transporting is the expedition you have made in your return; and indeed we had need of it, for the night is far exhausted, and it is necessary you should be out of this part of the country before day-break.'

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The abbess answered not to what he said, but gave him her hand; on which he led her towards the gate, entertaining her with the most endearing expressions as they walked, to all which she was still dumb. Natura was not surprized at it, as imagining she was too much engrossed by the thoughts of what she was about to do, to be able to speak:—but how great was his mortification, when having opened the gate, he found his servant, who having missed the horses, was just come back from a fruitless search of them.—He drew his sword, and had not the fellow stept nimbly aside, had certainly killed him:—while he was venting his passion in the severest terms, the abbess shut the gate upon him, and locked it with her own key, which, leaving in the lock, the one he had made use of, could now be of no service.—A caprice he had so little reason to expect in Elgidia, might very well surprize him, especially at a time when both had so much cause to be more grave!—he called to her, he complained, he even reproached the unkindness, and ill-manners of this treatment, while the abbess indulged on the other side the most spiteful pleasure in his vexation.

She left him railing at fate and womankind, without convincing him of his error, when as she was going to the monastery, she met Elgidia just coming out, and directing her steps towards the harbour:—they were in the same path, and facing each other:—Elgidia, full of the fears which usually attend actions of the nature she was about to do, no sooner perceived the form of a woman, and habited in the same manner as herself, than she took it for a spirit; and terrified almost to death, cried out, ‘a ghost! a ghost!’ and ran, shrieking, with all her force to the cloyster, resolved, as much as it then was in her power to resolve on any thing, to desist from her enterprise.—She made no stop, till she got into her chamber, where she threw herself on the bed, in a condition not to be described.

The abbess was so well satisfied with the success of this last stratagem, that it greatly abated the thoughts of taking any further revenge:—she went laughing to her confidante, and told her the whole story, who congratulated her upon it, and said, that in her opinion, she might take it as a peculiar providence of Heaven, that had disappointed her first design, which could only have increased her confusion, and probably brought a lasting scandal on the order. The abbess wanted not reason, when her passion would permit her to exert it, and could not help confessing the truth of what the other remonstrated:—she now easily saw they were Natura’s horses they had made use of, but how it came to pass that those she had bespoke, or the man she had ordered to bring them, happened to fail, remained a point yet to be discussed:—the morning, however, cleared it up;—the fellow acquainted her, that the farmer had no horses at home, and that as he was coming to let her know it, he saw two men at the gate, one of whom entered, so that he imagined she had provided herself elsewhere:—she then bad him turn out Natura’s horses, which the nun having said how she had disposed of them, not thinking herself obliged to take any care of what belonged to a man, who had treated her with so much ingratitude.

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Natura was all this time in the utmost perplexity, not only at the usage he imagined had been given him by Elgidia, but also for the loss of his horses; and at being told when he came home, that two women, in riding habits, well mounted, but without any attendants, had been to enquire for him:—all these things, the meaning of any one of which he was not able to fathom, so filled his head, that he could not take any repose:—pretty early in the morning, a letter was brought him from Elgidia, which he hastily opened, but found nothing in it, but what served to heighten his amazement and discontent.

She told him that she could not dispense with letting him know the occasion of her breach of promise; that intending nothing more than to perform it, she was hastening to the harbour, when, in the middle of the garden, she was met by an apparition, which, as near as she could discern, had the resemblance of herself;—that the terror she was in had obliged her to retire; and that as she could look on what she had seen, as no other than a warning from Heaven, she had determined to use her utmost endeavours for extinguishing a passion obnoxious to its will; to which end she desired he would make no farther attempts to engage her to an act so contrary to her duty, or even ever to see her more.

Natura had so little notion of spirits and ghosts, that at first he took this story only as a pretence, to cover a levity he had not suspected her to be guilty of; but when he reflected on the silence of the person he had taken for her, and the description of those who had been to enquire for him, he began to imagine, as he had not the least thought of the abbess, that something supernatural had indeed walked the garden that night, and had also been at his own lodgings in order to perplex him more:—a thousand little tales he had been told in his infancy, concerning the tricks played on mortals by those shadowy beings, now came fresh into his mind; and as the belief of what Elgidia had wrote gained ground in him, was not far from being of her opinion, that it was a warning from Providence, and to repent of having attempted to snatch from the altar a woman devoted to it.

It is doubtless accidents such as this, that have given rise to so many stories of apparitions, as have been propagated in the world; and had not Natura been afterwards informed of the whole truth, it is likely he would have been as great a defender of these ideas, as any who are accounted superstitious:—but however that might have been, it wrought so strongly on his mind at present, that joined with the considerations of those perpetual perplexities which must infallibly attend an ecclesiastical intrigue; besides, those which the abbess would involve him in, made him resolve to obey Elgidia's commands, and pursue the matter no farther, but go directly to the baron d' Eyrac's, who he heard was still at his country-house.

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The loss of his horses, however, very much vexed him; he bought them, because he preferred that way of travelling to a post-chaise: they had cost him forty louis d'ores in Paris, and knew not whether the country he was in would afford him any so fit for his purpose:—he was just sending his man to enquire where others were to be had, when his own were at the door, without the least damage done either to themselves or saddles:—the farmer who had the care of them while he was at the monastery, found them wandering in the field, and easily knowing to whom they belonged, brought them home.

This was some consolation to him for the loss of his mistresses; and he began to resolve seriously on his departure; but thinking it would be the highest ungenerosity to quit the convent, without acknowledging the favours he had received there, he wrote a letter to the abbess, full of gratitude and civility, telling her, that tho' the necessity of his affairs required he should take an eternal leave of that place, he should always preserve the memory of those honours he had received in it.—To Elgidia he wrote in much the same strain she had done to him, and concluded with desiring her to believe it was to Heaven alone he could resign her. Those letters he sent by his man, and ordered him to leave them with the portress, to avoid any answers which might have drawn him into a longer correspondence than he desired, or perhaps even have occasioned a revival of those inclinations in him, which he was now convinced of the folly and danger of.

This was the first proof he gave of a firmness of resolution, and was indeed as great a one as could have been expected from a man of the age he was:—it must be owned, that at that time love is the strongest passion of the soul, and as neither Elgidia nor the abbess wanted charms to inspire it, and he had been but too sensible of the force of both, to be able, I say, to tear himself away in the manner he now did, was a piece of heroism, which I with every one in the like circumstance may have power to imitate.

He hired another horse and guide, that he might not lose his way a second time, and departed the same day for the baron's, where he was received by that young nobleman with the utmost kindness as well as politeness, and found so much in his conversation, and those who came to visit him, and the continual amusements of that place, as made him soon forget all he had partook in the monastery:—he remained there while the baron stayed, and then came with him to Paris.

On his return he frequented the same company, and pursued the same pleasures he had done before; but as nothing extraordinary befel him, I shall not enter into particulars, my design being only to relate such adventures as gave an opportunity for the passions to exert themselves in influencing the conduct of his life.

## CHAP. II.



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The pleasures of travelling described, and the improvement a sensible mind may receive from it: with some hints to the censorious, not to be too severe on errors, the circumstances of which they are ignorant of, occasioned by a remarkable instance of an involuntary slip of nature.

Of all the countries Natura intended to see, Italy was that of which he had entertained the most favourable idea:—his curiosity led him to convince himself whether it really deserved to be intitled *the garden of the world*; and therefore it was thither he resolved to make his next progress.—Being told that in so long a journey he would find an excessive expence, as well as incommodity, in travelling on horseback, by reason he must be obliged to hire a guide from one place to another, he sold his horses, and after having hired a post-chaise, took leave of his acquaintance, and of a place where he had enjoyed all the pleasures agreeable to a youthful taste.

He went by the way of Burgundy, and passing through Dijon proceeded to Lyons, where the sight of the ruins of some Roman palaces yet remaining there, the fine churches, and beautiful prospect that city affords, being situated at the confluence of the rivers Rhone and Soane, tempted him to stay some days.—He was one evening sitting with his landlord in the inn-yard, when a post-chaise came in, out of which alighted a gentleman and a lady, just by the place where they were.—The man got up with all the obsequiousness of persons of his calling, to bid them welcome, and shew them into a room:—the lady, in passing, looked earnestly at Natura, and his eyes were no less attached on her: he thought he saw in her face features he was perfectly acquainted with, but could not, at that instant, recollect where he had been so. Not so with her, she easily remembered him, and in less than half an hour he received an invitation by his name from these new guests to sup with them, which he accepted of with great politeness, but said at the same time, he could not imagine to whom he was obliged for that honour.—On his coming into the room, 'Difference of habit,' said the lady, smiling, 'joined with the little probability there was of meeting me in this place, may well disguise me from your knowledge; but these impediments to remembrance, are not on your account; monsieur Natura is the same in person at Lyons, as at the convent of Riche Dames, though perhaps,' added she, 'somewhat changed in mind.' There needed no more to make him know she was one of the two nuns who always dined, when he was there, with the abbess, and was her particular confidante.—'By what miracle, madam, are you here?' cried he: 'by such another,' answered she, 'as might have brought Elgidia here, had not an unlucky spirit put other thoughts into her head.'

She then proceeded to inform him, that loving, and being equally beloved by the gentleman who was with her, she had made her escape with him from the monastery, and was going with him into one of the Protestant cantons of Switzerland, of which he was a native, and where they were certain of being safe from any prosecutions, either from her kindred, or the church.

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Natura, after having made his compliments to the gentleman on the occasion, enquired of her concerning the abbess and Elgidia; on which she informed him of all the particulars related in the preceding chapter; adding, that after the receipt of the two letters he had sent, the sisters came to a mutual understanding, each confessed her foible to the other, and the cause of their quarrel being for ever removed, a sincere reconciliation between them ensued.

As gratitude is natural to the soul, and never is erased but by the worst passions that can obtrude upon the human mind, Natura had enough for these ladies to make him extremely glad no worse consequences had attended their acquaintance with him, but was extremely merry, as they were all indeed, at the story of the supposed spirit:—they passed the best part of the night together in very entertaining discourses, and the next day the two lovers proceeded on their journey to Switzerland, as Natura the following one did his to Avignon.

Here again he halted for some time, to feast his eyes, and give subject for future contemplation, on the magnificent buildings, fine gardens, churches, and other curiosities, which he was told of, gave him a sample, tho' infinitely short, of what he would find in Rome;—the grandeur in which the nobility lived, the elegance and politeness in the houses of even the lowest rank of gentry, and the masquerades, balls, and other public diversions, which every night afforded, made him already see that neither the pleasures, nor the delicacies of life were confined to Paris.

The desire of novelty is inherent to a youthful heart, and nothing so much gratifies that passion as travelling:—variety succeeds variety;—whether you climb the craggy mountains, or traverse the flowery vale;—whether thick woods set limits to the light, or the wide common yields unbounded prospect;—whether the ocean rolls in solemn state before you, or gentle streams run purling by your side, nature in all her different shapes delights; each progressive day brings with it fresh matter to admire, and every stage you come to presents at night customs and manners new and unknown before.

The stupendous mountains of the Alps, after the plains and soft embowered recesses of Avignon, gave perhaps a no less grateful sensation to the mind of Natura: he wanted indeed such a companion as death had deprived him of in his good governor, to instruct him how to improve contemplation, and to moralize on the amazing and different objects he beheld; yet as his thoughts were now wholly at liberty, and his reason unclouded by any passions of what kind soever, he did not fail to make reflections suitable to the different occasions.



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Whoever has seen Rome will acknowledge he must find sufficient there to exercise all his faculties; but though the architecture, and the paintings which ornament that august city might have engrossed his whole attention, the many venerable reliques which were shewn him of old Rome, appeared yet more lovely in his eyes; which shews the charms antiquity has for persons even of the most gay dispositions: but this, according to my opinion, is greatly owing to the prejudice of education, which forces us as it were to an admiration of the antients, meerly because they are so, and not that they are in any essential respect always deserving that vast preference given them over the moderns:—this may be easily proved by the exorbitant prices some of our virtuoso's give for pieces of old copper, which are reckoned the most valuable, as the inscriptions or figures on them are least legible.

Natura, however, was not so absorbed in his admiration of the ruined corner of a bath, or the half-demolished portico of an amphitheatre, as to neglect those entertainments which more affect the senses, and consequently give the most natural delight;—the exquisite music performed at the churches, carried him there much oftener than devotion would have done, and rarely did he fail the opera at night.

As the Romans are allowed to be the best bred people upon earth, especially to strangers, be they of what country or perswasion soever, neither the being an Englishman or a Protestant hindered him from making very good acquaintance, and receiving the greatest civilities from them; but the person to whom he was most obliged, and who indeed had taken a particular fancy to him, was the younger son of the family of Caranna: this nobleman, knowing his taste for music, would frequently take him with him to his box at the opera-house, most persons of condition having little closets or boxes to themselves, of which every one keeps his own key, and none can be admitted but by it:—nothing can be more indulging, as there are curtains to draw before them, and the seats are made in such a manner that the person may lie down at his ease.

The signior of Caranna being otherwise engaged one night, when a celebrated piece was to be performed, he lent his key to Natura, unknowing that his wife, who had also one, had made a compliment of her's to a young lady of her acquaintance.

Natura by some accident being delayed from going till after the opera began, on entering was surprized to find a very beautiful young person there, stretched on the sofa:—as he had been told the box would be intirely empty, he knew not whether he ought to retire or go forward and seat himself by her:—this consideration kept him some minutes in the posture he was in, and perceiving she was too much taken up with the music, either to have heard him open the door, or see him after he came in, he had the opportunity of feasting his eyes, with gazing on the thousand charms she was mistress of; all which were displayed to a great advantage by the shadowy light which gleamed from the stage thro' a thin crimson taffety curtain, which she had drawn before her, to the end she might neither be seen by others, nor see any thing herself which might take off her attention from the music.

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In fine, he drew near, and had placed himself close by her before she observed him; but no sooner did so, than she started, and appeared in some confusion: he made a handsome apology for the intrusion, which he assured her, with a great deal of truth, was wholly owing to chance, and said he would withdraw, if his presence would be any interruption to the pleasure she proposed:—she seemed obliged to him for the offer, but told him she would not abuse the proof he gave of his complaisance by accepting it; on which he bowed, and continued in his place.

Both the music, and the words, seemed intended to lull the soul into a forgetfulness of all beside, and fill it only with soft ideas:—it had at least this effect upon the lady, who had closed her eyes, and was in reality lost to every other sense than that of hearing.—Natura, either was, or pretended to be, equally transported, and sunk insensibly upon her bosom, without any opposition on her part:—she had possibly even forgot she was not alone, and when an air full of the most enchanting tenderness was singing, was so much dissolved in extasy, that crying out, 'O God, 'tis insupportable!' she threw her arms over Natura's neck, who was still in the same posture I just mentioned;—he spoke not a word, but was not so absorbed in the gratification of one faculty, as to let slip the gratification of the others:—he seized the lucky moment;—he pressed her close, and in this trance of thought, this total absence of mind, stole himself, as it were, into the possession of a bliss, which the assiduity of whole years would perhaps never have been able to obtain.

Reason and thought at last returned; she opened her eyes, she knew to what the rapture she had been in had exposed her, and was struck with the most poignant shame and horror:—she broke with all her force from that strict embrace in which he had continued to hold her; and being withdrawn to the farther corner of the closet,—'What have I done,' cried she, 'What have I done!'—these words she repeated several times, and accompanied them with tears, wringing her hands, and every testimony of remorse.—It was in vain for him to attempt to pacify her, much less to prevail on her to suffer any second proofs of his tenderness;—she would not even give him leave to touch her hand, and on his offering it, pushed him back, saying, 'No, stranger! you have taken the advantage of my *insensibility* but shall never triumph over my *reason*, which enables me to hate you,—to fly from you for ever, as from a serpent.'

Natura said every thing that love and wit could inspire, to reconcile her to what had past; but she remained inflexible, and only condescended to request him to leave the place before the opera was ended, that they might not be seen coming out together, and that he would tell signior Carrana, that having unexpectedly found a lady in the box, he had withdrawn without entering.—He then begged she would entertain

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a more favourable opinion of an action, which her beauty, the bewitching softness of the entertainment, and the place they were in, had all concurred to make him guilty of; but she would listen to nothing on that head, insisted on his never taking the least notice of her, wherever they might chance to meet; and only told him, that tho' she was unalterably fixed in this resolution, yet he might depend upon it she hated him less than she did herself.

Finding she was not to be moved, he obeyed her commands, and straight went out of the box, more amazed at the oddness of the adventure, than can be well expressed; and yet more so, when he afterwards heard she was the wife of a person of great condition, was in the first month of her marriage with him, and had the reputation of a woman of strict virtue.

As this false step was merely accidental, wholly unpremeditated on either side, and by what can be judged by the character of the lady, and her behaviour afterwards, was no more on her part than a surprize on the senses, in which the mind was not consulted, and had not the least share, I know not whether it may not more justly be called a slip of unguarded nature, than a real crime in her; and as for Natura, though certainly the most guilty of the two, whoever considers his youth, his constitution, and above all the greatness of the temptation, which presented itself before him, will allow, that he must either have been *more*, or *less*, than *man*, to have behaved otherwise than he did.

Let the most severely virtuous, who happily have never fallen into the same error, but figure to themselves the circumstances of this transgressing pair, and well consider in what manner nature must operate, when thus powerfully excited, and if they are not rendered totally incapable of any soft sensations, by an uncommon frigidity of constitution, they will cease either to wonder at, or too cruelly condemn, the effects of so irresistible an impulse.

Were it not for the precepts of religion and morality, the fears of scandal, and shame of offending against law and custom, man would undoubtedly think himself intitled to the same privileges which the brute creation in this point enjoy above him; and it is not therefore strange, that whenever reason nods, as it sometimes will do, even in those who are most careful to preserve themselves under its subjection, that the senses ever craving, ever impatient for gratification, should readily snatch the opportunity of indulging themselves, and which it is observable they ordinarily do to the greater excess, by so much the longer, and the more strictly they have been kept under restraint.

## CHAP. III.

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The uncertainty of human events displayed in many surprizing turns of fortune, which befel Natura, on his endeavouring to settle himself in the world: with some proofs of the necessity of fortitude, as it may happen that actions, excited by the greatest virtue, may prove the source of evil, both to ourselves and others.

Natura stayed but six months in Rome, and then passed on to Florence, where having seen all the curiosities that place afforded, he only waited to receive some remittances from his father, after which he intended to cross the Appenines to Bolognio, then proceed to Venice, and so through the Tirolose to Vienna, and flattered himself with having time enough to visit all the different courts which compose the mighty empire of Germany.

These remittances were delayed much longer than he had expected, and when they arrived, were accompanied by a positive command from his father to put an end to his travels, and return to England with all the expedition he could.—His surprize at so unlooked for an order, would have been equal to the mortification it gave him, if he had not received a letter from his sister at the same time, which informed him, that his being so suddenly recalled was wholly owing to the misfortunes in which their family was at present involved:—that soon after his departure, their father had discovered an intercourse between his wife and a person who pretended to be a relation, no way to the honour of either of them;—that frequent quarrels had at length separated them;—that he was engaged in a law-suit with her, and also in several others, with people to whom she, in revenge, as it was supposed, had given bonds, dated before marriage, for very great sums of money, pretended to have been borrowed of them by her;—that tho' the imposition was too gross not to be easily seen through, yet the forms of the courts of judicature could not be dispensed with, and the continual demands made upon him had laid him under such inconveniencies as obliged him even to lessen the number of his servants, and retrench his table:—she added, that he spoke of his dear Natura with the utmost tenderness, and was under a very great concern that the necessity of his affairs would not permit to send him any more such supplies as were requisite for the prosecution of his travels.

Natura at first felt a very great shock at this account; but it is the peculiar blessing of youth, not to be for any length of time affected with misfortunes; his melancholly soon dissipated, and he thought of nothing more than compliance with the command he had received, and also to perform it in the cheapest manner he could.—On speaking of his intentions of returning home, he was advised to go to Leghorn, which being a very great port, it would be no difficulty to find a ship bound for Holland or England, in which he might take his passage at an easy rate. He had certainly taken this method, but meeting with an English gentleman, who was on his travels, and had

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not yet been at Rome, was perswaded by him to go back, on his offering to bear the whole expences of that route, for the pleasure of his company.—After a stay of two or three months there, they pursued their journey to Paris, where Natura renewed all the former acquaintance he had there:—the baron d' Eyrac, with whom he had contracted an intimate friendship, and from whom he concealed nothing of his affairs, was extremely concerned to hear the occasion of his being recalled so much sooner than he had expected, and made him an offer which suited very well with Natura's inclination to accept: it was this.

That an old officer in the army having obtained leave to dispose of his commission, Natura should become the purchaser; and to enable him to do so, the baron would advance a sum of money, to be returned at several easy payments, as he received the profits arising from his troop.

Love and gallantry had already had their turns with Natura; ambition, and the pride of being in an independent state, began now to work in him:—as France was in alliance with England, there was neither shame nor danger in entering into her service:—besides, he considered, that as his father was no longer in a condition to supply him with money abroad, he could not expect any settlement to be made on him at home that would be answerable to his former expectations;—and that by a captain's pay, joined to some assistance he might hope to receive sometimes from England, he should be enabled to make a very good figure in the world, till the misfortunes of his family should be retrieved, and if they never were so, he should at least have a provision for life, in a country he was not weary of.

He therefore made no hesitation of accepting this proof of the baron's friendship, who immediately went about making good his promise; and what with his money, and the great interest he had, both with the court and army, Natura was dispensed with, for not having been in the service before; and in a very few days saw himself at the head of a troop of horse.

His father, to whom he wrote an account of the step he had taken, with his motives for it, was far from being offended at it; tho' he told him it added to his trouble, to think his eldest son should be compelled, by his having entered into a second marriage, to have recourse to any avocation whatever for bread; but concluded with telling him, that in the severe necessity of their present circumstances, he could not have pitched on any thing more agreeable to his inclinations, or more honourable in itself.

This letter served to compose all the disquiets Natura had of disobliging a parent, for whom he retained the most tender, as well as dutiful regard, ever since the kind forgiveness he received from him at Wapping, which shews the great effect of lenity

over a mind, where gratitude and generosity are not wholly extinguished; which, as I before observed, they never are, but by a long habitude of vice.

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He was now as happy as he had any need to wish to be, enjoying all the pleasures of life in a reasonable way, and rarely transgressing the bounds of moderation; and when at any time, through the prevalence of example, or the force of his own passions, he was hurried to some little excesses, they were never such as could incur the censure of dishonourable or mean. He was punctual to his payments with the baron, and had the satisfaction of seeing himself intirely out of debt at three years end; which manner of behaviour so endeared him to that gentleman, that few friendships are to be found more sincere, than that which subsisted between them.

But as good sometimes arises out of evil, so what is in itself a real happiness, is not always without consequences altogether the reverse; as it proved to Natura, who from the most contented situation, all owing to the baron's friendship, was, on a sudden, by that very friendship, thrown into one of the greatest trouble and danger.

One morning, as he was dressing, the baron entered his chamber, with a countenance which before he spoke, denoted he had somewhat of importance to communicate:—Natura easily perceived it, and to put him out of pain, ordered his valet to leave the room; on which the other immediately told him, he was come to desire a proof of that sincere good-will he had professed for him.—'I should,' replied he, 'be the most unworthy of mankind, if I had not in reality much more than is in the power of words to express, and not look on an opportunity given by you of testifying it, equal to any favour you have bestowed on me.'

The baron was at present in too much agitation of spirit to answer this compliment as he would have done at another time; and made haste to inform him, that the countess d' Ermand, who on some misunderstanding with her husband, had been confined in a monastery for several months, without any hopes of obtaining her release, had found means to convey a letter to him, earnestly requesting he would assist her in her escape:—'she has acquainted me,' continued he, 'with the plot she has laid;—there is nothing impracticable in it; but I cannot do what she desires without the help of some trusty friend, and it is you alone I dare rely upon, in a business, which, if not carefully concealed, as well as resolutely acted, may be of very ill consequence.'

Natura did not greatly relish this piece of knight-errantry; but as he thought he ought to refuse nothing to the baron, hesitated not to assure him of the most ready compliance; on which the other told him, he must get two or three of his soldiers, who, disguised like peasants, but well mounted, and their swords concealed under their cloaths, must attend the expedition, and be at hand in case they should meet with any resistance, which, however, he said he did not apprehend, it being but ten small miles to the monastery, the road but little frequented, and the time agreed upon for the



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execution of the project twelve at night; so there was no great danger of any interruption, unless some unfortunate accident should happen.—'The lady,' continued he, 'informs me she has observed the place where the portress constantly hangs up the key of the outer gate every night, and when the nuns are gone into the chapel to their midnight devotions, can easily slip out:—we have only therefore to be there exactly at the time, and be ready to receive her; and as for the rest, I have already provided a place where she may remain undiscovered, till something can be done for her.'

The baron added many things concerning the ill treatment she had received; but Natura did not give himself any trouble to examine into the merits of the cause, it was sufficient for him to do what he requested of him; and that night being the same had been appointed by the lady for the business to be done, he went immediately about preparing for it.

Accordingly, he selected from out of his troop three who seemed most proper to be employed in such an enterprize, and after having sworn them to secrecy in whatever they saw, or should happen, though without acquainting them with the main of the affair, or mentioning the baron d' Eyrac, told them in what manner they were to disguise themselves, and ordered they should attend him at the Fauxbourg, a little after ten o'clock the same night.

Rejoiced at an opportunity of obliging their officer, especially as they doubted not of being well gratified, each gave a thousand oaths instead of the one required of him, to be both punctual and faithful in the discharge of the trust reposed in him.

In fine, all was conducted with a care and caution becoming of the gratitude and esteem Natura had for the baron, and as if he had himself approved of this undertaking, which, as I before observed, he could not do in his heart.

The two gentlemen, muffled up in their cloaks and vizarded, repaired to the Fauxbourg, at the appointed time, where they found the soldiers on the post allotted for them by their officer; on which they all rode off together, and arrived before the walls of the monastery some few minutes before twelve, at which hour precisely the gate was opened, and a woman appeared at it.—To prevent the loss of time, it had been concluded, that the baron should not dismount, but Natura perform the office of an equerry, in placing her behind him: just as he had alighted, and taken her in his arms, in order to perform that office, a great noise was heard; and in an instant, our adventurers found themselves surrounded by more than a dozen armed men, who rushed upon them from the covert of a wood:—the lady shrieked, and ran back into the convent, on Natura's letting her go, in order to draw his sword against these antagonists, who seemed resolute, either to kill or take him and his associates prisoners:—the fight was obstinate on both sides, tho' the baron finding his design defeated, had not entered



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into it at first, but trusted to the goodness of his horse for his escape, if his consideration for Natura, who being on foot, must have been immediately seized, had not prevented him.—At length, however, having received two or three wounds, and convinced of the impossibility of maintaining their ground against such an inequality of numbers, self-preservation prevailed; he broke thro' those that encompassed him, and setting spurs to his horse, had the good fortune to avoid the mischief which he knew must inevitably befall those he left behind.

The three troopers gallantly defended their captain for some time, nor was he idle in making those who approached him too near, feel the sharpness of his sword; but not being able to get on horseback, all his courage, or that of his men, could not prevent him, and them, from being made prisoners. Several of the conquering party being officers of justice, they conducted them to Paris, where the soldiers were disposed of in the common goal, but Natura who was known, was committed to the care of an exempt, who treated him with the good manners his station demanded; he had received a pretty deep wound in the shoulder, and a surgeon was presently sent for; but no artery nor sinew being touched, no ill consequence was like to attend it.

It may be imagined he passed the remainder of this night in a good deal of disquiet, as having lived long enough in France to know that an attempt of the nature he had been engaged in would find little mercy from the law.—A good part of the next day was passed, before they carried him to the magistrate, whose office it was to examine into such causes, his adversaries not having prepared their accusation; the heads of which were, that he had attempted a rape upon a married woman of quality; that he had contrived, with other persons, to take her out of the monastery, and had come with an armed force for that purpose. These articles having been deposed upon oath, the magistrate told him his crime was of a double nature, that he had violated both the civil and ecclesiastic laws; but as his office extended no farther than the former, he had only to demand of him what defence he had to make for himself in that part.

Natura had no other remedy than to deny all that was laid to his charge:—he protested, as he might truly do, that he was so far from entertaining any criminal designs on any lady in that monastery, that he did not so much as know the face of any one of them; and pretended, that being only riding out for the benefit of the air, he found himself attacked by persons unknown, with whom he confessed he had fought in his own defence.

But this availed not at all to his justification:—his own soldiers, who had been examined before himself, had confessed, that they were commanded by their officer to attend him on a certain enterprize, in which they were to behave with secrecy and resolution; but said, they did not know of what sort it was, till they saw a woman come to the gate of

the monastery, whom their captain presently took in his arms, but with what intent they could not pretend to say.

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A letter also was produced, which madame d' Ermand had dropt, and which had occasioned this discovery of the intrigue, as it contained the whole method by which she was to be taken away; and tho' there was no name subscribed, appearances were strong against Natura as the author, and tho' he offered to bring many witnesses to prove it was a hand very different from what he wrote, yet it served at least to prove that it was sent by some one person in the company, and that if he were not the principal in this conspiracy, yet being the agent and abettor, as it was plain he was, by his bringing his own soldiers, he could not be judged less guilty.

After a long examination he was remanded to the exempt's house, till the sitting of the judges, which they told him would be in eight days; in which interval he was allowed to prepare what defence he had to make, and for that purpose advocates were allowed to come to him, but no other person whatever, not even his own servant, and he received attendance from those belonging to the exempt, who also fetched from his lodgings change of apparel, and all such necessities as he had occasion for; care being taken to search every thing before it came to his hands, in order to prevent any letters being conveyed to him that way.

In this melancholly situation did he pass his time; but that was little in regard to his apprehensions of the future:—as his case stood there was little expectation of any thing less than a shameful death, perhaps ushered in by tortures worse than even that:—his advocates, however, and it is likely his accusers too, were of opinion that he had been in reality no more than an agent in this business, and therefore gave him to understand, that if he laid open the whole truth, and declared the name of the person chiefly concerned, it would greatly mitigate the severity of the laws in such cases; but this he would by no means be prevailed upon to do, resolving rather to suffer every thing they could inflict upon him, than be guilty of so mean and dishonourable an action as breach of trust, even to a person indifferent, but to a friend villainous in the most superlative degree: alike unmoved by arguments, as inflexible to menaces or perswasions, he persisted in answering, that he was ignorant of what they aimed at:—that he knew nothing of madame d' Ermand himself, was an intire stranger to her, and equally so to the ill designs on her they mentioned, either on his own account, of that of any other person.

He was neither so weak nor vain as to flatter himself his positiveness in denying what could be proved by so many witnesses, would be of any service at his trial; but as it was expected he should say something in his defence, and could say nothing else, without giving up his friend, he was determined not to depart from what he had alledged at first.

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The count d' Ermand, who possibly had a suspicion of the truth, as it seems he long had entertained some jealous thoughts of the baron d' Eyrac, who had taken all opportunities of testifying an uncommon gallantry to his wife, would have given almost a limb to satiate his revenge against that gentleman:—the soldiers had been re-examined several times concerning that other person who was with them at the monastery, and had made his escape; but as they had neither seen his face, nor heard his name, it was impossible for them to make any discoveries:—these poor wretches were afterwards put to the torture, but that had, nor indeed could have, any other effect, than to make them curse their officer, who had been the cause of their sufferings.

In fine, monsieur d' Ermand, and the kindred of his wife, joined with the instigations of the clergy, who thought they had an equal right for revenge in this point, prevailed so far upon the civil magistrates, as to procure an order, that Natura should himself undergo the same tortures his soldiers had done, thereby to extort that confession from him they could no otherwise procure:—this, notwithstanding, they had the lenity to inform him of, the day before that which was prefixed for the execution, thinking perhaps, that the menace of what he was condemned to endure, would be sufficient: but tho' human nature could not but shrink under such apprehensions, yet did his fortitude remain unshaken, and he thought of nothing but how to arm himself, so as to bear all should be inflicted on him with courage.

But there were no more than a few hours in which he had to meditate on what he had to do, when his affairs took a very different turn, and by the most unthought-of means imaginable: It was towards the close of day, when the wife of the exempt came into his chamber, and having locked the door, 'I am come, captain,' said she, 'to offer you life, liberty, and what is yet more, to put it in your power to avoid those dreadful tortures, which are preparing for you!—what would you do to gratify your preserver?'—The surprize Natura was in, did not hinder him from replying, that there was nothing with which he would not purchase such a deliverance, provided the terms were not inconsistent with his honour:—'No,' resumed she, 'I know by your behaviour since in custody, and the resolution with which you have withstood all the temptations laid before you, for the unravelling an affair, you have, it is the opinion of every one, been led into only by your friendship to some person, that you regard nothing so much as honour; what I have to propose will be no breach of it';—'but,' continued she, 'time is precious, and opportunities of speaking to you are scarce; therefore know, in a few words, that I am weary of my husband's ill usage, desire nothing so much as to go where I may never see him more; and if you will make me the companion of your flight, and swear to take care of me till I shall otherwise dispose of myself; I have disguises for both of us prepared, and this night you shall be free.'

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Natura had little need to hesitate if he should accept this proposal:—he saw there was at least a chance for escaping the dangers to which he was exposed; and should the woman's plot miscarry, and he detected of being an accomplice in it, his condition could not, even then, be worse than it was at present; he therefore embraced her with a fervor which she seemed very well pleased with, and assured her in the most solemn manner he would return all the obligations she conferred on him, by such ways as should be most agreeable to her. She then told him she had not slept for some time in the same bed with her husband, and therefore might easily come to him again as soon as the family were gone to their respective apartments; and having said this, went out of the room hastily, tho' not without returning his salute, and telling him he was worthy of greater risques than those she was about to run.

He was no sooner left alone, than he began to reflect: on the capriciousness of his destiny, which to preserve him from suffering for a crime he was innocent of, was about to make him in reality guilty of one of the very same nature: it is likely, however, he was not troubled with many scruples on this head; or if any arose in his mind, they were soon dissipated in the consideration of what he owed to his own safety, which he yet could not greatly flatter himself with the hope of, as he was not ignorant how difficult it was for a delinquent to elude the diligence of those sent in search of him. The chance of such a thing notwithstanding was not to be neglected; and he waited with an impatience adequate to the occasion, for the hour in which he expected his deliverance.

It was little more than eleven o'clock, when she came into the chamber in the habit of a country fellow, which so intirely disguised her, that till she spoke, he took her for one of those who attend the prisoners in the circumstances he then was, and imagined some accident had prevented the execution of her plot; but he was soon convinced of his error, by her speaking, and at the same time presenting him with a coat, wig, and every thing proper to make him pass for such as she appeared herself:—the reader may suppose he wasted not much time in equipping himself, or in making any idle compliments; it was scarce midnight, when they both got safely out of the house, the door of which she shut softly after her.

She then proposed to him to go to the Fauxbourg, whence they might, without any suspicion, as passing for poor countrymen, get into the open road before day-break; but he would needs stop at the baron d' Eyrac's, judging with good reason that they might be more securely concealed in his house, till the search should be over, than to pretend to travel in any shape whatever. She, who knew not what obligations the baron had to be faithful to him in this point, at first opposed it; but he at length prevailed, and they went boldly to the door; the family not being all in bed, it was

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immediately opened, but in the dress they were, found some difficulty to be admitted to the baron, who, the servant told them, was asleep; but Natura, with an admirable presence of mind, replied, that he had brought a letter from a friend in the country of the utmost importance, and must be delivered into the baron's own hands directly; on which he was at last won to let them come into the hall, while he sent to let his lord know.

Whether the baron had any suspicion of the truth, or not, is uncertain, but he ordered the men should be brought up; Natura, however, thought it most proper to speak to him alone, therefore left his companion below:—never was surprize greater than that of this nobleman, when the other discovered himself to him, and the means by which he had been set free. After the first demonstrations of joy and gratitude for the integrity he had shewn in resolving to endure every thing, rather than betray the trust reposed in him, it was judged necessary to send for his deliverer, to whom on her coming up, the baron made many compliments.

On discoursing on what method was best for them to take, in order to prevent discovery, the baron would by no means suffer them to pursue that of endeavouring to quit France till the search would be made should be entirely over; he told them, he had a place where he could answer with his life for their concealment, which indeed was that he had provided for the countess d' Ermand, in case they had not been disappointed in their designs.—'There,' said he, 'you may remain, and be furnished with all things necessary;—I can come frequently to you, and inform you what passes, and when you may depart with safety, after we have contrived the means.'

The exempt's wife, as well as Natura, highly approved of this offer; and the baron knowing any stay in his house might be dangerous both to himself and them, presently dressed himself, and went with them to the house he mentioned, where having seen them safe lodged, took his leave for that night, but seldom let a day pass without seeing them.

This was doubtless the only asylum which could have protected them from the strict search was made the next day, the house of every person, with whom either Natura or the woman had the least acquaintance, was carefully examined; but this scrutiny was soon over in that part, they supposed them to have left the city, and officers were sent in pursuit of them every road they could be imagined to take; so that had they fled, they must unavoidably have been taken. But not to be too tedious, it was five weeks before the baron could think it safe for them to leave Paris; and then hearing their enemies had lost all hope of finding them, and that the general opinion was, that they were quite got off, he told Natura that he believed they now might venture to go, taking proper precautions. On taking leave, he compelled Natura to accept of bills to the value of his comission, which, as he said, being lost meerly on his account, it was his duty to reimburse:—nothing could be more tender than the parting of these two faithful friends;—

necessity, however, must be obeyed;—they separated, after having settled every thing between them, and mutually promised to keep a correspondence by letters.

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It was judged best, and safest for them, to keep still in the same disguise till they should be entirely out of the French dominions, which happily at length they were, without the least ill accident befalling them, none suspecting them for other than they appeared, though the search after them was very strict, and a great reward offered for apprehending them.—As soon as they arrived at Dover, both threw off their borrowed shapes; Natura was again the fine gentleman, and his companion a very agreeable woman, who was so well satisfied with what she had done, and the behaviour of Natura towards her, that she had lost nothing of her good looks by the fatigue of her journey.

Here they waited some time for the arrival of his servant, who knew nothing what was become of his master, since he had made his escape from the exempt, till he was entirely out of the kingdom, but had, all this while, been kept in good heart by the baron, who still had told him he was safe and well, and that he should soon hear news of him to his satisfaction; this faithful domestic, whom they had no pretensions to detain, now came with all his baggage, and Natura returned to London, in an equipage, not at all inferior to that in which he had left it.

The first thing he did was to place the exempt's wife in a handsome lodging, and then went to wait upon his father, who had been much alarmed at not having received any letter from him for a much longer time than he had been accustomed to be silent. The old gentleman was rejoiced to see him, after an absence of near six years, but sorry for the occasion, as his affairs were greatly perplexed, on account of the law-suits before mentioned, which being most of them in chancery, were like to be spun out to a tedious length; but Natura soon informed him that he was in a condition, which at present did not stand in need of any assistance from him, and that he was determined to enter into some business for his future support.

But in the midst of these determinations, the remembrance of his unhappy contract with Harriot came into his mind; he thought he had reason to fear some interruption in his designs from the malice and wickedness of that woman: but being loth to renew the memory of his former follies, he forbore making any mention of it to his father, till that tender parent, not doubting but it would be a great satisfaction to him, to know himself entirely freed from all claims of the nature she had pretended to have on him, acquainted him, that after he was sent away, the first step he had taken, was to get the contract out of her hands.

The transported Natura no sooner heard he had done so, than he cried out, 'By what means, dear sir, was she prevailed upon to relinquish a title, by which she certainly hoped to make one day a very great advantage?'



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'Indeed,' said the father, 'I know not whether all the efforts I made for that purpose, would have been effectual, if fortune had not seconded my design:—she withstood all the temptations I laid in her way, rejected the sum I offered, and only laughed at the menaces I made, when I found she was not to be won by gentle means; and I began to despair of success, so much as to give over all attempts that way, when I was told she was in custody of an officer of the *compter*, on account of some debts she had contracted:—on this your uncle put it into my head to charge her with several actions in fictitious names; so that being incapable of procuring bail, and going to be carried to prison, when I sent a person to her with an offer to discharge her from all her present incumbrances, on condition she gave up the contract, which I assured her, at the same time, she would not be the better for, it being my intention you should settle abroad for life.'

'This,' continued he, 'in the exigence she then was, she thought it best to accept of, and I got clear of the matter, with much less expence than I had expected; her real debts not amounting to above half what I had once proposed to give her.'

Natura was charmed to find himself delivered from all the scandal, and other vexations, with which he might otherwise have been persecuted his whole life long, both by herself and the emissaries she had always at hand, might have employed against him: nor was he much less delighted to hear that she had also received some part of the punishment her crimes deserved, in the disappointment of all her impudent and high-raised expectations.

Having nothing now to disturb him in the prosecution of his purpose, he set about it with the utmost diligence; and as he had a considerable quantity of ready money by him to offer either by way of praemium, or purchase, there was not, indeed, any great danger of his continuing long without employment, nor that, so qualified, he might not also be able to chuse out of many, one which should be most agreeable to his inclinations.

Accordingly he in a little time hearing of a genteel post under the government that was to be disposed on, he laid out part of his money in the purchase of it, and with the remainder set up the exempt's wife in a milliner's shop, in which, being a woman of a gay polite behaviour, she soon acquired great business, especially as she pretended to have left France on the score of religion, and went constantly every day to prayers, after having formally renounced the errors of the church of Rome: Natura visited her very often out of gratitude, and perhaps some sparks of a more warm passion; and they had many happy hours together, which the talk of their past adventures contributed to heighten, as afflictions once overcome, serve to enhance present happiness.

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Several matches were now proposed to Natura, but he rejected them all; whether it were that he had not seen the face capable of fixing his heart, or whether he was willing to wait the determination of his father's affairs, in order to marry to greater advantage, it is hard to say; tho' probably the latter was the true reason; for ambition now began to display itself in his bosom, and by much got the better of those fond emotions which a few years past had engrossed him: he now began to think that grandeur had charms beyond beauty, though far from being insensible of that too, he was not without other amours than that he still continued with the French woman: the raising his fortune was, however, his principal view, and for that purpose he neglected nothing tending to promote it; he made his court to those of the great men, who he knew could be serviceable to him with so much success, that he had many promises of their interest for a better post, as soon as opportunity presented.

Fortune for a while seemed inclined to favour him in a lavish manner; his mother-in-law died, and with her many of the vexatious suits dropped, and others were compromised at an easy rate, so that his father was soon in a condition to make a settlement upon him sufficient to qualify him for a seat in parliament, which, on the first vacancy, thro' favour, he got into, though at that time the house was not crowded with placemen, as it since has been: in fine, he was beloved and caressed by persons of the highest rank, and every one looked upon him as a man who, in time, would make a very considerable figure in the world.

His friends remonstrating that as he was twenty-nine, it was time for him to think of marriage, and a proposal being made on that account with a young lady, of an ancient and honourable family, who, besides a large fortune in her own hands, had the reputation of every other requisite to render that state agreeable, he hesitated not to embrace it:—he made his addresses to her, she accepted of them, and in as short a time as could be expected, consented to give him her hand;—the kindred on both sides were very well pleased, and tho' her family had some advantages in point of birth over his, yet as he seemed in a fair way of doing honour to it, there was not the least objection made; but articles were drawn, and a day appointed for the wedding.

But how little dependance is to be placed on fortune! how precarious are the smiles of that uncertain goddess, when most secure of her promised favours, and just upon the point, as we imagine, of receiving all we have to wish from her, she often snatches away the expected good, and showers upon us the worst of mischiefs treasured in her store-house!—Some few days before that which was to crown his hopes, he happened in company to be discoursing of his travels, and mentioning some things he had seen in France, a gentleman who imagined he spoke too favourably of the chevalier St. George, and pretended he had also

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been there, took upon him to contradict almost all he said concerning that place and person: Natura knowing himself in the right, and being a little heated with wine, maintained the truth of what he alledged, with more impetuosity than policy perhaps would have suffered him to have done at another time; and the other no less warmly opposing, passion grew high on both sides;—the lie was given and returned;—each was no less quick with his sword than his repartee, several passes were made, but the company parted them: and though they stayed together, neither of them was reconciled, nor in good humour for what was past.

In going home Natura and one gentleman kept together, as their way happened to be the same, when, see the wild effects of party-rage! all on a sudden, the person who had been his antagonist, and, it seems, had followed, came up to them, with his sword drawn, and told Natura he was a scoundrel, and a fool, for what he had said; his words, and the sight of his weapon, made him put himself immediately in a posture of defence, which indeed he had need of; for had he been less nimble, he had received the sword of the other in his body, before the gentleman who was with him could do any thing to separate them; nor were his efforts for that purpose sufficient to prevent them from engaging with a vehemence, which permitted neither of making use of much skill: it was however the chance of Natura to give his adversary a wound, which made him fall, as he imagined, dead; on which the disinterested person made the best of his way, as being afraid of being taken up by the watch, who were then just coming by:—Natura did the same, and thinking it improper to go home, went to the house of a friend, in whom he could confide, and who, on enquiry the next day, brought him an account, that the person with whom he had fought was dead, but had lived long enough to acquaint those who took him up, by whom he had received his hurt; and that warrants were already out for apprehending the murderer, as he was now called.

What now was to be done! Natura found himself under the necessity of going directly out of the way, and by that means endanger the loss of his employment, and also of his intended bride; or by staying expose himself to a shameful trial at the Old Bailey, which, he had reason to fear, would not end in his favour, the deceased having many friends and relations at the bar; and the very person who had been witness of their combat, somewhat a-kin to him:—it was therefore his own inclination, as well as the advice of his friends, that prevailed on him to make his escape into some foreign part, while they were looking for him at home; which he accordingly did that same hour, taking post for Harwich, where, through the goodness of his horse, he arrived that night, and immediately embarked in a fishing-smack, which carried him into Holland.

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He had leisure now to reflect on his late adventure, which afforded the most melancholly retrospect; the happy situation he had been in, and the almost assured hopes of being continued in for life, made his present one appear yet worse, than in reality it was: he now looked on himself as doomed to be a vagrant all his days, driven from his native country for ever, and the society of all his friends, and torn beyond even a possibility of recovering, from a lady, to whom he was so near being united for ever, whom he loved, and whose fortune and kindred had given him just expectation of advancement in the world.

These gloomy thoughts took him wholly up for some days, but he was not yet arrived at those years, in which misfortunes sink too deeply on the soul; these vexatious accidents by degrees lost much of their ferocity, and he began to consider how much beneath a man of courage it was to give way to despair at any event whatever, and that he ought to look forward, and endeavour to *retrieve*, not *lament*, the mischief that was past. He wrote to his father an exact account of every thing, and intreated his advice: he sent also a letter to the young lady, full of the most tender expressions, and pressures for the continuance of her affection; though this latter was more for the sake of form than any hope he had of being granted what he asked, or as he was circumstanced, any benefit he could have received from it, if obtained.

The answer his father sent, gave him both pain and pleasure; it informed him, that the wounds he had given the person with whom he fought, were not mortal; that it was only the vast effusion of blood which had thrown him into a fainting, which occasioned the report of his death, and that he was now in a fair way of recovery; so that he, Natura, might return as soon as he pleased, there being no danger on account of the rencounter; but that the occasion of that quarrel being a party-affair, and represented in its worst colours by some private enemies, it had reached the ears of the ministry, who, looking on him as a disaffected person, had already disposed of his employment; he also informed him, that he must not flatter himself with being able ever hereafter to be thought qualified to hold any place or office under the government:—he also added, that the friends of his intended bride were so incensed against him, that they protested, they would sooner see her in her coffin, than in the arms of a man who had incurred the odious appellation of a *Jacobite*; and that she herself expressed her detestation of the principles he was now accused of, with no less virulence and contempt;—had torn the letter he had sent to her in a thousand pieces; and to shew how much she was in earnest, had accepted the addresses of a gentleman, who had been long his rival, and to whom it was expected she would soon be married.

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If Natura rejoiced to find himself cleared of having been the death of a fellow-creature, he was equally mortified at having rendered himself obnoxious to those who alone were capable of gratifying his ambition: as for the change in the lady's sentiments concerning him, he was under much less concern; he thought the affection she professed for him must have been very small, when a difference of opinion in state-affairs, and that too but supposed, could all at once erase it, and rather despised, than lamented, the bigotry of party-zeal, which had occasioned it:—his good sense made him know, that to deny all the good qualities of a person, merely because those good qualities were not ornamented with the favours of fortune, was both unjust and mean; and the proof she gave of her weakness and ungenerosity in this point, intirely destroyed all the passion he once had for her, and consequently all regret for the loss of her.

He could not, however, think of returning to England yet a while; his father's letter had given some hints, as if there was a design on foot, and he was confirmed soon after of the truth of it, for expelling him the house; and he thought it was best to spare his enemies that labour, and quit it of his own accord: and in this he found himself intirely right, when on writing to some persons of condition, with whom he had been most intimate, he found by their answers, that it was now known he had been in the French service, which both himself and his father had kept a secret, even from their nearest kindred; not there was any thing in it which could be construed into a crime, as the nations were then in alliance, but because as he could not possibly enjoy a commission there, without conforming to the ceremonies of the Romish church, it must infallibly be a hindrance to his advancement in a Protestant country. It is certain, Natura was of a temper to make good the proverb, *That when one is at Rome, one must do as they do at Rome*:—and though he had gone to hear *mass*, because it was his interest, and the necessity of his affairs obliging him in a manner to seek his bread at that time, yet was he far from approving the superstitions of that church; all that he could write, however, or his friends urge for him on this head, was ineffectual; he passed for a *papist* and *jacobite* with every body: pursuant therefore to his resolution of continuing abroad, till these discourses should be a little worn out, he wrote again to his father, and settled his affairs so as to receive remittances of money, at the several places to which he intended to go.

## CHAP. IV.

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The power of fear over a mind, weak either by nature, or infirmities of body: The danger of its leading to despair, is shewn by the condition Natura was reduced to by the importunities of priests of different persuasions. This chapter also demonstrates, the little power people have of judging what is really best for them, and that what has the appearance of the severest disappointment, is frequently the greatest good.

As to lose the memory of his disgrace, or at least all those gloomy reflections it had occasioned, was the chief motive which had made Natura resolve to travel a second time, it was a matter of indifference to him which way he went. He first took care to make himself master of all that was worth observation in Holland, where he found little to admire, except the Stadthouse, and the magnificence with which king William, after his accession to the crown of these kingdoms, had ornamented his palace at Loo; but the rough, unpolite behaviour of the people, disgusted him so much, that he stayed no longer among them than was necessary to see what the place afforded, and then passed on to Brussels, Antwerp, and, in fine, left no great city, either in Dutch or French Flanders unvisited; thence went into Germany, where his first route was to Hanover, having, it seems, a curiosity of seeing a prince, whose brows were one day to be incircled with the crown of England; but this country was, at that time, in so low and wretched a condition, that whether he looked on the buildings, the lands, or the appearance of the inhabitants, all equally presented a scene of poverty to his eyes; he therefore made what haste he could out of it, having found nothing, except the Elector himself, that gave him the least satisfaction. He was also at several other petty courts, all which served to inspire in him not the most favourable idea of Germany.

At length he arrived at Vienna, a city pompous enough to those who had never seen Rome and Paris; but however it may yield to them in elegance of buildings, gardening, and other delicacies of life, it was yet more inferior in the manners of the people;—he perceived among the persons of quality, an affectation of grandeur, a state without greatness, and in the lower rank of gentry, a certain stiffness, even to the meanest, and an insufferable pride, which came pretty near ferocity:—the costly, but ill-contrived parades frequently made, discovered less their riches than their bad taste, and appeared the more ridiculous to Natura, as they were extolled for their magnificence and elegance; but, even here, as indeed all over Germany, the courts of Berlin and Dresden excepted, you see rather an *aim* of attracting admiration and respect, than the *power* of it. These, however, were the sentiments of Natura, others perhaps may judge differently.

But whatever may be the deficiencies of Germany in matters of genius, wit, judgment, and manners, there is none in good eating, and good wine; and though their fashion of cookery is not altogether so polite, nor so agreeable to the palates of others as their own, yet it must be confessed, that in their way, they are very great epicures; but though they generally eat voraciously, they drink yet more; and so nimbly do they send the glass about, that a stranger finds it no small difficulty to maintain his sobriety among them.



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Natura's too great compliance with their intreaties in this point, had like to have proved fatal to him:—the strength of the wines, and drinking them in a much larger quantity than he had been accustomed to, so inflamed his blood, that he soon fell into a violent fever, which for some days gave those that attended him, little hopes of his recovery; but by the skill of his physician, joined to his youth, and the goodness of his constitution, the force of the distemper at last abated, yet could not be so intirely eradicated, as not to leave a certain pressure and debility upon the nerves, by some called a fever on the spirits, which seemed to threaten either an atrophy or consumption; his complexion grew pale and livid, and his strength and flesh visibly wasted; and what was yet worse, the vigour of his mind decayed, in proportion with that of his external frame, insomuch that, falling into a deep melancholy, he considered himself as on the brink of the grave, and expected nothing but dissolution every hour.

While he continued in this languishing condition, he was frequently visited by the priests, who in some parts of Germany, particularly at Vienna, are infinitely more inveterate against Protestantism than at Paris, or even at Rome, though the *papal* seat; as indeed any one may judge, who has heard of the many and cruel persecutions practised upon the poor Protestants by the emperors, in spite of the repeated obligations they have had to those powers who profess the doctrines of Calvin and Luther; but gratitude is no part of the characteristic of a German.

These venerable distracters of the human mind, were perpetually ringing hell and damnation in his ears, in case he abjured not, before his death, the errors in which he had been educated, and continued in so many years, and by acts of penance and devotion, reconcile himself to the mother church; they pleaded the antiquity of their faith, brought all the fathers they could muster up, to prove that alone was truly orthodox, and that all dissenting from it was a sin not to be forgiven.

On the other hand, the English ambassador's chaplain, who knew well enough what they were about, omitted nothing that might confirm him in the principles of the reformation, and convince him that the church of England, as by law established, had departed only from the errors which had crept into the primitive church, not from the church itself, and that all the superstitious doctrines now preached up by the Romish priests, were only so many impositions of their own, calculated to enrich themselves, and keep weak minds in awe.

Natura, who had till now contented himself with understanding moral duties, and had never examined into matters of controversy between the two religions, now found both had so much to say in defence of their different modes of worship, that he became very much divided in his sentiments; and each remonstrating to him by turns, the danger of dying in a wrong belief, wrought so far upon the present weakness of his intellects, as to bring him into a fluctation of ideas, which might, in time, either have driven him into despair, or made him question the very fundamentals of a religion, the merits of which its professors seemed to place so much in things of meer form and ceremony.

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By this may be seen how greatly *christianity* suffers by the unhappy divisions among the professors of it:—much it is to be wished, though little to be hoped, that both sides would be prevailed upon to recede a little from their present stiffness in opinion, or be at least less virulent in maintaining it; since each, by endeavouring to expose and confute what they look upon as an absurdity in the other, join in contributing to render the truth of the whole suspected, and not only give a handle to the avowed enemies, of depreciating and ridiculing all the sacred mysteries of religion, but also stagger the faith of a great many well-meaning people, and afford but a too plausible pretence for that scepticism which goes by the name of *free-thinking*, and is of late so much the fashion.

In another situation, perhaps, Natura would have been little affected with any thing could have been said on this score; but health and sickness make a wide difference in our way of thinking:—when surrounded by the gay pleasures of life, and in the full vigour and capacity of enjoying them, we either do not reflect at all, or but cursorily on the evil day; but when cold imbecility steals upon us, either through age or accidents, and death and eternity stare us in the face, we have quite other sentiments, other wishes:—whoever firmly believes, that in leaving this life, we but step into another, either of happiness or misery, and that which ever it proves, will be without end, or possibility of change, and that the whole of future welfare depends on the road we take in going out of this world, will be very fearful lest he should chuse the wrong; and it is not therefore strange, that while, with equal force, the *papist* pulled one way, and the *protestant* another, the poor penitent should be involved in the most terrible uncertainty.

Happy, therefore, was it, both for the recovery of his mind and body, that his physicians finding all their recipes had little effect, advised him to seek relief from the waters of the Spa, and as it was their opinion, they would be of more efficacy, when drank upon the spot, he accordingly took his journey thither, but by reason of his weakness, was obliged to be carried the whole way in a litter.

It is very probable, that being eased of the perplexities the incessant admonitions of the priests of different opinions had given him, contributed as much as the waters to his amendment; but to which ever of these causes it may be imputed, it is certain that he every day became better, and as his strength of body returned, so did that of his mind, in proportion; with his apprehensions of death, his disquiets about matters of religion subsided also, and whenever any thing of that kind came cross his thoughts, it was but by starts, and was soon dissipated with other ideas, which many objects at this place presented him with.



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But that to which he was chiefly indebted for the recovery of his former gaiety of temper, was meeting with an English family, with whom he had been extremely intimate; the lady had come thither for the same purpose he had done, her husband being very tender of her, would needs accompany her, and they brought with them their only daughter, a young lady of great beauty, and not above eighteen, in hopes, as they said, of alleviating a certain melancholly, to which she was addicted, without any cause, at least any that was visible, for it.

Natura had often seen the amiable Maria (for so she was called) but had never felt for her any of those pleasing, and equally painful, emotions, which a nearer conversation with her now inspired him with:—he had always thought her very handsome, but she now appeared perfectly adorable in his eyes:—the manner of her behaviour, that modest sweetness which appeared through her whole deportment, and seemed, as it were, a part of her soul, had for him irresistible charms; and as he very well knew the circumstances of her family, such as his friends could make no reasonable objections against, nor his own such as could be thought contemptible by those of her kindred, he attempted not to repel the satisfaction which he felt, in the hopes of being one day able to make an equal impression on her heart.

The very first use he made of his intire recovery from his late indisposition, was an endeavour to convince her how much her presence had contributed to it, and that the supremest wish his soul could form, was to enjoy it with her in the nearest, and most tender union, as long as life continued.—She received the declarations he made her of his passion with great reserve, and yet more coldness; and affected to take them only for the effects of a gallantry, which she told him was far from being agreeable to a person of her humour: but he imputing her behaviour only to an excess of that extreme modesty which accompanied all her words and actions, was so far from being rebuffed at it, that he acquainted her parents with his inclination, and, at the same time, intreated their permission for prosecuting his addresses to her.

Both of them heard his proposals with a joy which it was impossible for either, especially the mother of that lady, to conceal:—each cried out, almost at the same time, that the sentiments he expressed for their daughter, was an honour they hoped she had too much good sense not to accept with the utmost satisfaction, and added, that they would immediately lay their commands upon her, to receive him in the manner she ought to do.

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As their families and fortunes were pretty equivalent, and Maria, besides her being an heiress, had beauty enough to expect to marry, even above her rank, Natura could not keep himself from being a little astonished at the extravagance of pleasure they testified at the offer he had made: parents generally take some time to consider, before they give their assent to a proposal of this sort; and as he knew they were very well acquainted with the occasion of his leaving England this second time, and were of a party the most opposite that could be to that he was suspected to have favoured, their extreme readiness to dispose of their only daughter, and with her their whole estate, to him seemed the more strange, as he had been, ever since he conceived a passion for Maria, in the most terrible apprehension of meeting with a different reception from them, merely on the account of his supposed principles.

The transport, however, that so unexpected a condescension gave him, prevented him from examining too deeply what might be the motives that induced them to it, and he gave himself wholly up to love, gratitude, and the delightful thoughts of being in a short time possessed of all he at present wished, or imagined he ever should ask of Heaven.

But how were all these rapturous expectations dashed, when soon after going to visit Maria, he found her lovely eyes half drowned in tears, and her whole frame in the utmost disorder:—"What, madam," cried he, with a voice which denoted both grief and surprize, 'can have happened, to give you any cause of the disquiet I see in you!'—" 'You,' replied she, snatching away her hand, which he had taken, 'you alone are the cause;—what encouragement did I ever give you,' continued she, 'that should make you imagine the offers you have made my parents would be agreeable to me?—Did I ever authorize you to ask a consent from them, which I was determined never to grant myself, and which, I will suffer a thousand deaths rather than ratify.'

The confusion Natura was in at these words was so great, that it prevented him from making any answer; but he looked on her in such a manner as made her ashamed of what she had said, and perhaps too of the passion that had so far transported her; and perceiving he still continued silent, 'I own myself obliged for the affection you express for me,' resumed she, with more mildness, 'though it is at present the greatest misfortune could have happened to me. Could I have thought you would have declared yourself in the manner you have done to my father and mother, I would have convinced you how impossible it would be for you to reap any advantage from it, and that by so doing you would only make me the most wretched creature in the world; but all is now too late, and I foresee the cruel consequence.'—Here her tears interrupted the passage of her words, and Natura having recollected himself, began to complain of the severity of his destiny, which compelled him

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to *love* with the most violent passion a person who could only return it with an equal degree of hate.—'Love,' replied she, with a deep sigh, 'is not in our power;—let me therefore conjure you, by all that which you pretend to have for me, to proceed no farther in this business, nor endeavour to prevail on my parents to force an inclination, which no obligations to them, services from you, or length of time can ever influence in your favour; for be assured, that if you do, you will only see the hand should be given you at the altar, employed in cutting my own throat, or plunging a dagger in my breast.'

With these words, and an air that had somewhat of wildness in it, she flung out of the room, leaving him in a consternation impossible to describe, almost to conceive; her mother came in immediately after, and judging by his countenance how her daughter had behaved, told him he must not regard the coyness of a young girl; that she doubted not but Maria would soon be convinced what was her true happiness; and that a little perseverance and assiduity on his side, and authority on theirs, would remove all the scruples, bashfulness alone had created in her: 'No, madam,' answered he, with some impatience, 'there is somewhat more than all this you have mentioned, against me;—there is a rooted detestation to me in the very soul of Maria, which as I cannot but despair of being ever able to remove, common reason bids me attempt no farther.'

The mother of Maria appeared very much perplexed, and said a great deal to persuade him that his apprehensions were without foundation; but the young lady had expressed herself in terms too strong for him not to be perfectly assured she was in earnest; and being willing to ruminate a little on the affair, he took leave, though not without the other extorting a promise from him, of coming again the next day.

Natura had not given himself much time to reflect, before he conceived great part of the truth:—he could not think either his person or qualifications so contemptible, as to inspire a heart unprepossessed by some other object, with an aversion such as Maria had expressed: he therefore concluded, she had disposed of her affections before she knew of his: it also seemed plain to him that her parents were not ignorant of her attachment, and being such as they could not approve of, it was that which had rendered them both so ready to snatch at his proposal, without any mention of those considerations they would otherwise naturally have had of jointure, settlements, and all those things, previous to marriage, between persons of condition.

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He was the more confirmed in this belief, when the father came to his lodgings the next morning; and without seeming to know any thing of what had passed between him, either with his wife, or Maria, asked, in a gay manner, how the latter had received his addresses? To which Natura answered in the same manner as he had done to her mother; adding only, that he could not avoid believing her heart was already engaged to some more worthy man, and was sorry his own unhappy passion had occasioned any interruption. The father left nothing unsaid that might dissipate such a conjecture, and affected to railly him on a jealousy which, he said, was common to lovers; and then told him a long story how himself had formerly suffered much by the same vain imagination. But all this was so far from making Natura doubt the truth of his conjectures, that, seeing through the artifice, he was the more convinced they were intirely right.

He went, notwithstanding, in the afternoon, either because he had promised to do so, or because he could not all at once resolve to banish himself from a person he took so much pleasure in beholding, though now without hopes of ever being able to obtain:—being left alone with Maria, both of them remained in a kind of sullen silence for some minutes, till at last the force of his passion in spite of himself made him utter some complaints on the cruelty of fortune, and his own insensibility, which had denied him the opportunity of discovering the thousand charms he now found in her, till too late to have his adoration of them acceptable to her. 'I have not less reason,' said she, 'to accuse the chance which at this time brought us together, than you can possibly have; since the love you profess for me, and which I once more assure you I can never return, has laid me under the severest displeasure of my parents';—'but I had hopes,' continued she, 'after the declaration I made you yesterday, that you would have renounced all pretensions to me, and had generosity enough in your nature, not to have taken the advantage of my father and mother's power over me, to force me into a compliance, which must be fatal to one or both of us.'

'No, madam,' answered he, much surprized, 'I am far from even a wish of becoming guilty of what you accuse me with;—dear as I prize your person, I would not attempt to purchase it at the expence of your peace of mind; nor could I be truly blessed in the enjoyment of the *one*, without the *other*;—it is only to Maria herself I would have been obliged, not to the authority of her parents.'

'Will you then quit me,' cried she hastily, 'and let the act appear wholly your own?'—'I will,' replied he, after a pause, 'difficult as it is to do so, and irresolute and inconstant as it will make me seem.' 'That,' said she, 'will be an action truly deserving my esteem; and in return, know I am much more your friend in refusing your addresses, than either my parents in encouraging, or your own mistaken wishes in offering them':—'but,' pursued she, 'I beg you will enquire no farther, but leave me, and break off with my parents in the best manner you can.'

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Fain would he have obtained a farther explanation of words, which seemed to him to contain some mystery, as indeed they did; but she was no less inflexible to his intreaties on that score, than she had been to those of his love; and perceiving his presence gave her only pain, he went out of the house with an aking and agitated heart, but resolved to do as she desired and he had promised, whatever pangs it cost him.

He had not gone above an hundred paces on his way home, before he was accosted by a man who seemed like an upper-servant in a gentleman's family, and who, with a low bow, delivered him a letter, which, on seeing directed to himself, he hastily opened, and found contained these lines:

Sir,

"If you have any thing in you of the gallantry, generosity, or gratitude, for which your country is famed, come where the bearer will conduct you, to a woman, who has suffered much on your account, and can be extricated from an unhappy affair only by your advice."

Natura was little in a humour to pursue an adventure of the kind this seemed to be; but curiosity got the better of his spleen, and he bad the fellow lead the way, and he would follow; which he accordingly did, till they were out of the town, and from the sight of all the houses.

Being come into a field which was a kind of an inclosure, and a theatre proper enough for the tragedy intended to be acted on it, the fellow turned back, and drew a pistol, which he instantly discharged at the head of Natura, crying at the same time, 'Maria sends you this.'—Heaven so directed the bullets, that the one passed by his ear, and the other only grazed upon his shoulder, without doing any farther damage, than taking away a small piece of his sleeve. It is easy to judge of his surprize, yet was it not so great as to disable him from drawing his sword in order to revenge himself on the assassin; but the wretch, in case his fire-arms should miscarry, had provided a falchion concealed under his coat, with which, the same instant, he ran furiously on Natura, and had certainly cleft him down, tho' perhaps in doing so, he might have received his own death's wound at the same time from the sword of his antagonist; but both these events were happily prevented by the peculiar interposition of Divine Providence: some reapers, who had lain asleep under an adjacent hedge, being roused with the noise of the pistol, ran to the combatants, and with their hooks beat down both their weapons; while at the same fortunate crisis, two gentlemen attended by three servants, who happening to cross a road which had a full prospect over the field, had seen, at a distance, all that had passed, and came galloping up to the assistance of Natura, who was then beginning to interrogate the villain on the occasion of this attempt; but he refused to give any satisfactory answer to what he said, so was dragged by the countrymen, and others, who by this time were gathered together, back into the town,

and carried immediately before a magistrate, who, on his obstinately refusing to make any confession, committed him to prison.

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Natura, who imagined nothing more certain, than that Maria had set this fellow on to murder him, as the surest way to get rid of his addresses, went directly to the house where she lodged, full of a resentment equal to the detestable crime of which he thought her guilty;—he found her in the room with her father and mother, of whom he took little notice, but stepped forwards to the place where she was sitting; and seeing her a little surprized, which indeed was occasioned only by his sudden return, and the abrupt manner in which he entered:—‘You find, madam,’ said he, with a voice broke with rage, ‘your plot has miscarried;—Natura still lives, though it must be owned your emissary did all could be expected to obey your commands, for my destruction.’

It is hard to say, whether Maria, or her parents, were in the greatest consternation at these words; but he soon unravelled the mystery, by relating the whole story, not omitting what the assassin said in presenting the pistol, and then as a confirmation threw the letter he had received into Maria’s lap, and at the same time shewed the passage one of the bullets had made through the sleeve of his coat:—the young lady no sooner cast her eyes upon the letter, than she gave a great shriek, and crying out, ‘O Humphry, Humphry! every way my ruin!’ immediately fell fainting on the floor; her father, without regarding the condition she was in, snatched up the paper, the hand-writing of which he presently recollected, as having, it seems, intercepted several wrote by the same person;—‘Abandoned, infamous creature,’ cried he;—‘shame of thy sex and family,’ added the mother, striking her breast in the utmost agony:—in fine, never was such a scene of distraction and despair!—Natura, injured as he had been, could not behold it without compassion;—he ran by turns to Maria, endeavouring to raise her,—then to her parents, beseeching them to moderate their passion,—then to her again:—‘You are too generous,’ said the father, ‘let her die, happy had it been if she had perished in the cradle’:—Just as he spoke these words she revived, and lifting up her eyes, ‘O, I am no murd’ress,’ cried she, ‘guilty as I am, in this Heaven knows my innocence.’—‘It is false, it is false,’ said the father; ‘but were it true, canst thou deny, thou most abandoned wretch, that thou wert also ignorant that the villain who wrote this letter had followed us to Spaw, and bring a second shame upon us?’—She answered to this only with her tears, which assuring him she had no defence to make on this article, his rage grew more inflamed; he loaded her with curses, and could not keep himself from spurning her with his feet, as she still lay groveling on the ground, and might perhaps have proceeded to greater violences, had not Natura, by main force, withheld him, while her mother, tho’ little less incensed against her, dragged her in a manner out of the room, more dead than alive.

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The unhappy object removed from his sight, the provoked father grew somewhat more calm, and turning to Natura, 'You see now, sir,' said he, 'how unworthy this wretched girl is of that affection with which you once honoured her; but how shall I obtain your pardon for what the too great tenderness for an only child has made me guilty of to you;—all I can say is, that I hoped she had been reclaimed, and so far from even a wish to repeat her crimes, that she had only an utter detestation for the villain that had seduced her.'

Natura knew very well how he ought to judge of this affair; but as he had an aversion to dissimulation, and was unwilling to add any thing to the affliction he was witness to, he said little in answer to the other's apology, but that he was extremely sorry for Maria, and the misfortunes she had brought on the family; and then took his leave as soon as decency would permit; but with a firm resolution to hold no farther conversation, wherever they should hereafter happen to meet, with persons who had all of them, in their several capacities, used him so ill.

The assassin was soon after brought to a public trial, where tortures making him confess the truth, he acknowledged, that having been a servant in the family, the beauty of Maria had inspired him with desires, unbefitting the disparity between them;—that emboldened by an extraordinary goodness she shewed to him, he had declared his passion, and met with all the returns he wished;—that she became pregnant by him, and had made a vow to keep herself single, till the death of her father should leave her at liberty to marry him; but that an unlucky accident having discovered their amour, he was turned out of the house, and the grief Maria conceived at it occasioned an abortion; but that after her recovery she contrived means to meet him privately, and to support him with money, that he might not be obliged to go to service any more; that she had acquainted him with their coming to the Spa, and not only knew of his following them in disguise to that place, but contrived a rendezvous where they saw each other often, and he learned from her the addresses of Natura, and the positive commands laid on her by her parents of marrying him, in order to retrieve her honour and reputation; that as besides the extreme love he had for her, his own interest obliged him to hinder the match, if by any means he could; and finding no other than the death of his rival, he had attempted it by the way already mentioned: but cleared Maria, however, of all guilt on this score, who, he assured the court, knew nothing of his intentions of murder.



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The sentence passed on him was, to be hanged in chains, which was accordingly executed in a few days; though Natura, pitying his case, in consideration of the greatness of the temptation, laboured for a mitigation of his doom.—He never saw the unfortunate Maria afterwards, but heard she was in a condition little different from madness, which making her parents think it improper she should return to England, they conveyed her to Liege, where they placed her as a pensioner in the convent of English nuns, there to remain till time and reflection should make a change in her, fit to appear again in the world; which proceeding in them shewed, that whatever aversion some people have to *this*, or *that* form of religion, they can countenance, nay, pretend to approve it, when it happens to prove for their convenience to do so.

Natura was now intirely cured of his passion, but could not avoid feeling a very tender commiseration for her, who had been the unhappy object of it; he found also, on meditating on every passage of this adventure, that she was infinitely less to blame, in regard to him, than her parents had been; and that what he had accused, as cruel in her, was much more kind than the favour they had pretended for him.—When he reflected on the gulph of misery he had so narrowly escaped, he was filled with the most grateful sentiments to that Providence which had protected him; and also made sensible, that what we often pray for, as the greatest of blessings, would, if obtained, prove the severest curse:—a reflection highly necessary for all who desire any thing with too much ardency.

### CHAP. V.

Shews that there is no one human advantage to which all others should be sacrificed:—the force of ambition, and the folly of suffering it to gain too great an ascendant over us;—public grandeur little capable of atoning for private discontent; among which jealousy, whether of love or honour, is the most tormenting.

The desire of being well settled in the world is both natural and laudable; but then great care ought to be taken to moderate this passion, in order to prevent it from engrossing the mind too much; for it is the nature of ambition, not only to stop at nothing that tends to its gratification, but also to be ever craving new acquisitions, ever unsatisfied with the former.—One favourite point is no sooner gained, than another appears in view, and is pursued with the same eagerness:—what we once thought the *summum bonum* of our happiness, seems nothing when we have attained to the possession of it, while that which is unaccomplished, fires us with impatience, and robs us of every enjoyment we might take in life.

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Natura having now been absent two years, thought the idle rumours concerning him, as to his principles in party-matters, would be pretty much silenced, so began to think of returning to England; he was the more encouraged to do so, as he found by his letters, that those in the ministry, who had appeared with most virulence against him, had been removed themselves, and that a considerable change in public affairs had happened. Accordingly, he set forward with all the expedition he could, feeling not the least regret for leaving a country he had never liked, nor where he had ever enjoyed any real satisfaction, and had been so near being plunged into the worst of misfortunes, that of an unhappy marriage:—no ill accident intervening, he arrived in England, and proceeded directly to London, where he was received with an infinity of joy by his father and sister, who happened at that time to come to town with her spouse, in order to place a young son they had at Westminster school.

The better genius of Natura now took its turn, and prevailed over his ill one: the person whose turbulent zeal had occasioned his late misfortune, had since, being detected in some mal practice in other affairs, been cashiered from an office he held under the government, and was in the utmost disgrace himself: every body was now assured, that Natura had done no more than what became any man of spirit and honour; and those who before had condemned, now applauded his behaviour: in fine, every thing happened according to his wishes, and, to crown his happiness, he married about ten months after his arrival, a young beautiful lady, of his father's recommendation, and who had indeed all the qualifications that can render the conjugal state desirable.

The promotion of a member of parliament to the house of peers for that county in which their estate lay, happening soon after, he stood for the vacant seat, and easily obtained it:—nothing now seemed wanting to compleat his perfect happiness, yet so restless is the heart of man, that gaining much, it yet craves for more; Natura had always a great passion for the court, meerly because it was a court, and gave an air of dignity to all belonging to it; he longed to make one among the shining throng; he was continually solliciting it, with an anxiety which deprived him of any true enjoyment of the blessings of his life; nor could all the arguments his father used to convince him of the vanity of his desires, nor the soft society of a most endearing and accomplished wife, render him easy under the many disappointments he received in the prosecution of this favourite aim.

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The death of his father soon after, however, filled his bosom with emotions which he had never felt before in any painful degree; he was for some time scarce able to support the thoughts of having lost so tender and affectionate a parent: but as nothing is so soon forgot as death, especially when alleviated by the enjoyment of a greater affluence of fortune, his grief wore off by pretty swift degrees, and he was beginning to renew his pursuits after preferment, with the same assiduity and ardency as ever, when his wife died in bringing into the world a son. This second subject of sorrow struck indeed much more to his heart than the former had done, as he now wanted that comforter he had found in her.—All the consolation he had was in that little pledge of their mutual affection she had left behind; and it was for the sake of that dear boy, at least he imagined it so, that his ambition of making a great figure in the world again, revived in him, if possible, with greater energy than ever.

As he was now in possession of a very fine estate, had an agreeable person, rendered yet more so by all the advantages of education and travel, and not quite six-and-thirty, when he became a widower, his year of mourning was scarce expired, before all his friends and acquaintance began to talk to him of another wife, and few days past without proposals of that nature being made; but either the memory of the former amiable partner of his bed, or the experience he had in his own family of the ill effects that second marriages sometimes produce, made him deaf, for a long time, to any discourses on that head, though urged by those who, in other matters, had the greatest ascendant over him.

Though he was far from being arrived at those years which render a man insensible of beauty, yet he was past those which had made him look on the enjoyment of it as the supremest bliss:—the fond desires that once engrossed him, had for some time given way to the more potent ardors of ambition;—he now made not love his *business* but *amusement*; the amours he had were only transient, and merely to fill the vacancy of an idle hour: his thoughts were so wholly taken up with advancing himself, and becoming a man of consequence in the world, that it may be reasonably supposed, by his behaviour, and the manner in which he rejected all the offers made to him, that had he met with a woman, in whom all the perfections of the sex were centered, she would not have been able either to engage him to a serious attachment, or to have quitted those more darling pursuits, which the desire of greatness fired him with.

Thus fortified by his present inclinations against all the charms of youth, of wit, of beauty, there was but one temptation he had not the power of withstanding, and that one his ill fate at length presented to him. A certain great person, who at that time was at the head of public affairs, had a neice, who for many private reasons, he found it necessary to dispose of in marriage: Natura was the man he happened to pitch upon, as one who seemed to him a very proper person, and accordingly made him the offer, accompanied with a promise of getting him into a great post, which he knew he had been for a long time, and was still, soliciting, though without any prospect of success, without his assistance.

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The young lady was not ugly, yet far from being mistress of charms capable of captivating a heart which had been filled with so many images of different beauties; but, as I have already said, love was not now the reigning passion of Natura's soul, and had she been much less amiable, the dowry she was to bring, sufficiently compensated for all other deficiencies, according to his present way of judging.

He hesitated not a moment to accept the minister's proposal; and a long courtship, as things were ordered between them, being needless, he became again a husband, in a very few days, after the first mention had been made of it, and at the same time was put in possession of what was much more welcome to him than his bride, even tho' she had been endowed with every virtue, every grace.

All for a time went smoothly on:—he saw himself in a rank and precedence, his birth could never have expected:—his wife's uncle loaded him with favours; he procured a commission of lieutenant in the guards for his younger brother by his mother-in-law, whom, in spite of the ill usage, with which both himself and his father had been treated by her, he had a very great affection for;—he also got employments for several others of his kindred;—his house was the rendezvous of the gay and titled world;—his friendship was courted by all his acquaintance, and his interest at court created him so many dependants, that his levee was little inferior to that of the minister himself.

This full attainment of all he wished, and even more than he had ever dared to indulge the hope of, might well render him extremely contented;—he was indeed pleased to excess, but the gladness of his heart was so far a virtue in him, as it prevented him at first from shewing any tokens of that pride, which a sudden variation of fortune frequently excites.

It is certain, his behaviour was such as gained him an equal share of love and respect; and he had this addition to his other blessings, of not having his advancement envied; a thing pretty rare about a court, where there are so many gaping after every office that falls.

They say ambition is a lust that is never quenched; and that the enjoyment of much brings with it only an impatience for more; that fresh objects, and new acquisitions, still presenting themselves, the mind is ever restless, ever anxious in the endless pursuit.—It is very likely this maxim might indeed have been verified in the mind of Natura, after the hurry of transport for what he had already obtained had been a little worn off, and made way for other aims; but he had scarce given over congratulating himself on his success, before a strange alteration, and such as he had least dreaded of, happened in his humour, and rendered him wholly incapable of retaining the least relish for all the blessings he possessed, and in which he so lately placed the ultimate of his wishes.

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The compliments paid to him on his promotion and marriage, the giving and receiving visits from all his kindred and friends, together with the duties of his post, so much engrossed him for the first two or three months, that he had not time to give any attention to his domestic affairs, and happy would it have been for his peace if he had always continued in a total negligence in this point, as the fatal inspection plunged him into such distractions, as required many long years to compose.

In fine, he now discovered such dispositions to gallantry in his wife, as inflamed him with jealousy, to such a degree as it would be impossible to describe;—not that he had ever been possessed of any extraordinary love or fondness on her account; but the injury which he imagined was offered to his honour, by the freedoms with which she entertained several of those young courtiers which frequented his house, made him in a short time become the most discontented man alive.

Utterly impossible was it for him to conceal his disquiets; though the fears he had of displeasing the minister made him attempt it, as much as possible, and conscious of his ill dissimulation that way, the little notice she took of a chagrin he knew she could not but observe, very much added to it, as it seemed a certain proof of her indifference for him; a behaviour so widely different from the amiable tenderness of his former wife, dissipated all the little affection he had for her, and it was not long before she became even hateful to him; his jealousy however abated not with his love, her dishonour was his own, her person was his property by marriage, and the thoughts of any encroachment on his right were insupportable to him.

Whether she was in fact as yet guilty of those violations of her duty, which his imagination incessantly suggested to him she was, neither himself, nor the world, were ever able to prove; but it is certain her conduct was such, in every shape towards him, as gave but too much room for suspicion in the least censorious, and which growing every day more disagreeable to him, he at length had not the power of feigning an inattention to it.—He remonstrated to her the value every woman, especially those in high life, ought to set on her reputation;—told her plainly, that the severest censures had been past upon her, and without seeming to believe them just himself, intreated her to act with more reserve for the future.

All this, though delivered in the most gentle terms he could invent, had no other effect than to set her into an immoderate laughter: nothing could be more provoking, than the contempt with which she treated his advice; and on his insisting at last, in terms which she might think were somewhat too strong, on her being less frequently seen with some persons he mentioned to her, she answered in the most disdainful tone, that when she came to his years, she might, perhaps, look on the pleasures of life with the same eyes he did; but while youth and good humour lasted, she should deny herself no innocent indulgencies, and was resolved, let him and the world say what they would, not to anticipate old age and wrinkles.

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As Natura was not yet forty, in perfect health, and consequently not past the prime of manhood, this reflection cast upon his years, could not but add to his disgust of her that made it, and he replied with a spite which was very visible in his countenance, that whatever disparity there was between their ages, it would soon diminish by the course of life she followed, and which, if she persisted in, would, in a very little time, make her become an object below the voice of censure.

They must know little of the sex, that do not know no affront can be so stinging as one offered to their beauty, even tho' conscious of having no great share of it; but the wife of Natura had heard too many flatteries, not to inspire her with the highest idea of her charms, which the little respect he now testified to have for them, did not at all abate, and only served to make her despise his stupidity, as she termed it.

No measures after this were kept between them; she seemed to take a pleasure in every thing that gave him pain; she coquetted before his face with every handsome man that came in her way, and in fine gave herself such airs as the most patient husband could not have permitted her long to persist in. Making use of the authority the laws had given him, he, in a manner, forced her into the country, upwards of an hundred miles from London, though it was then in the depth of winter, and placed persons about her, with orders to prevent her from all means of returning, till he should judge it proper for her so to do.

On this she wrote to her uncle, complaining of the hard treatment she received, and beseeching him to take some measures to oblige her husband to restore her liberty. The minister, who had at that time much greater concerns upon his hands on his own account, did not care to give himself any trouble about private family affairs; he only just mentioned to Natura the letter she had sent to him, and the purport of it; and on his relating to him the reasons that had compelled him to put this restraint on her behaviour, told him, he should not interfere between them; so that Natura found he had nothing to apprehend for what he had done.

Finding this step had produced nothing for her purpose, she at last condescended to submit to her justly offended husband; and on her solemn and repeated promises of regulating her conduct for the future in such a manner as he should approve, he was prevailed upon by her seeming contrition, to consent to make trial how far her heart corresponded with her professions:—it was agreed, to prevent the town from inspecting too deeply on what had passed, that she should pretend her absence from town had been the effect of her own choice, and for giving the better colour, he went down himself, and brought her up.—They lived together, after this, much better than they had done for some months before their quarrel, and were now, in appearance, perfectly reconciled; I say, in appearance, for all was outward shew, neither of them had in their hearts the least true affection, nor could forgive the other for what had passed between them.



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The excessive constraint which both put upon themselves, in order to conceal the real sentiments of their hearts from each other, as well as from the world, could not but be extremely painful:—Natura suffered her as little as possible out of his sight, though he could have wished a possibility of avoiding her for ever, and was obliged to do all he could, to make that pass for a fondness of her presence, which was indeed only the effect of his jealousy of her behaviour in absence:—she affected to think herself happy in his company, for no other reason, than to win him to an assurance of her reformation, as might render him less observant than he had been of what she did, even at the time (as was afterwards discovered) when she seemed most sorry and angry with herself for having given him any cause of suspicion since their marriage.

Both, in fine, endured all that could make marriage dreadful, especially Natura, who having with his former wife experienced all the felicity of that state, was the more wretched by the sad alternative; and as he could not sometimes forbear comparing the present with the past, fell frequently into perfect convulsions of grief and remorse, for having plunged himself into it.

A perpetual dissimulation is what human nature finds among the things which are impossible to perform;—and I am pretty certain, that the most artful person that ever breathed, could not, at all times, and in all circumstances, restrain so far his real inclinations, as to give no indications of them to an observing eye; and it is scarce probable, but that the very attempt in Natura and his wife, gave rise to as many reflections on their conduct in this point, as there was too much room to make on others.

It was indeed a kind of farce acted by this unhappy pair, in which both played their parts so awkwardly, that the real character would frequently peep out, and though each dissembled, yet neither was deceived; but as I said before, this could not last for ever; and the ice being once broke in some unguarded humour either on the one or the other side, I cannot pretend to affirm on which, the torrent of their mutual disgust burst out with the greater force, for having been so long pent up: it is hard to tell which testified the most virulence, or expressed themselves in the most bitter terms:—all that can be determined is, that those of Natura shewed most of *rage*, and those his wife made use of, most of *hatred*.

After having fully vented all that was in their souls against each other, both became more calm; and agreed in this, as the only resource for ease in their present unhappy situation, to banish for the future all deceit between them, and never more pretend the least kindness or good-will to each other when in private, to lie in separate beds, and to be as seldom as possible alone together; but for the sake of both their reputations to continue in the same house, and before company to behave with reciprocal politeness.

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These terms rid Natura of a great part of that insupportable constraint he had been under, but gave not the least satisfaction, as to his jealousy of honour; he doubted not but she would be guilty of many things, injurious in the highest degree to their public character, and which yet it would not so well become him to exert his authority in opposing, and these reflections gave him the most terrible inquietude; which shews, that though *jealousy* is called the child of *love*, it is very possible to feel all the tortures of the *one*, without being sensible of any of the douceurs of the *other* passion.

How dearly now did Natura pay for the gratification of his ambition!—What availed his grandeur, the respect paid him by his equals, and the homage of the inferior world!—What the pride of having it in his power to confer favours, when he had himself a heart torn with the most fierce convulsions, and less capable of enjoying the goods of fortune, than the most abject of those indigent creatures, who petitioned for relief from him!—By day, by night, alone, or in company, he was haunted with ideas the most distracting to his peace.—A smile on the face of his wife, seemed to him to proceed from the joy of having made some new conquest; a grave or melancholly look, from a disappointment on the account of a favourite gallant: yet as her person was the least thing he was tenacious of, the behaviour of others gave him greater pain than any thing she could do herself;—whoever spoke handsomely of her, he imagined insulted him; and those who mentioned her not at all, he thought were sensible of her levity, and his misfortune:—every thing he saw or heard, seemed to him a sad memento of his dishonour; and though he could not assure himself she had in fact been guilty of a breach of her virtue, he was very certain she had been so of that reserve and modesty which is the most distinguishable characteristic of it, and took from him the power of vindicating her innocence, or his own honour even though he had believed them safe, as becomes a husband, whose wife is more cautious of her conduct in this point.

Too delicate of the censure of the world, it gave him the utmost anxiety how to carry himself, so as not to afford any room to have it said he was either a jealous, or a too credulous husband; yet in spite of all his care, he incurred both these characters:—those who had heard of his sending her into the country, without being acquainted with the motives for his so doing, looked on him as the former; and those who saw her manner of behaviour, and the seeming politeness of his treatment of her, imagined him the latter:—so difficult is it for any one, who only sees the outside of things, to judge what they are in reality; yet the vanity of having it believed they are let into secrets, makes a great many people invent circumstances, and then relate for matters of fact, what are indeed no more than the suggestions of imagination, or, what is yet worse, the coinage of their own brain, without believing themselves what they take upon them to report to others.



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This undoubtedly happened on the score of Natura and his wife, and occasioned not only many idle stories at tea-table conversation, but also many oblique hints to be sometimes given to himself, which, perhaps, there was not the least grounds for, but which greatly added to his disquiets; as when we think we have reason to believe part, we are ready to give credit to all we hear, especially in cases of this nature; it being the peculiar property of jealousy, to force the mind to grasp with eagerness, at every thing that tends to render it more afflicted and perplexed.

### BOOK the Third.

#### CHAP. I.

Shews in what manner anger and revenge operate on the mind, and how ambition is capable of stifling both, in a remarkable instance, that *private injuries*, how great soever, may seem of no weight, when *public grandeur* requires they should be looked over.

Nothing is so violent as anger in its first emotions, it takes the faculties by surprize, and rushes upon the soul like an impetuous torrent, bearing down all before it: its strength, however, is owing to its suddenness; for being raised by some new and unexpected accident or provocation, reason has no warning of its approach, and consequently is off her guard, and without any immediate power of acting: the sweetest, and most gentle disposition, is not always a sufficient defence for the mind, against the attacks of this furious passion, and may be hurried by it to deeds the most opposite to its own nature; but then as it is fierce, it is transient also; should its force continue, it would lose its name, and be no longer anger, but revenge; which, though the worst and most fiend-like propensity of a vicious inclination, is sometimes excited by circumstances, that seem in a great measure to alleviate the blackness of it:—repeated and unprovoked insults, friendship and love abused, injuries in our person, our fortune, or reputation, will sour the softest temper, and are apt to make us imagine it is an injustice to our selves, not to retaliate in kind, the ill treatment we receive. Religion, indeed, forbids us to take our own parts thus far, and philosophy teaches, that it is nobler to forgive, than punish wrongs; but every one is not so happy as to have either of these helps; and I do not find but those who boast both of them in the most superlative degree, stand in need of something more, to enable them to restrain this prevailing impulse; and that it is not so much to the precepts they receive from others, as to some dictates from within, that many people are indebted for the reputation of patience and forbearance.

It is the peculiar providence of Heaven, as I took notice in the beginning of this work, that the more ignoble passions of human nature, are, generally speaking, opposites, and by that means serve as a curb to bridle the inordinancy of each other; so that, though *one alone* would be pernicious to society, and render the person possessed of it obnoxious to the world, *many* will prevent the hurt, and make the man himself tolerable.

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The adventure I am now going to relate, will prove that Natura had the greatest excitements, and the greatest justification both for wrath and revenge that could possibly be offered to any one man: yet did another passion, not more excusable than either of these, suppress all the turbulent emotions of both, and quench the boiling flames within his soul, insomuch as to make him appear all calmness and contentedness.

But though I made use of the word passion to express the now prevailing propensity of Natura's soul, I do not think that ambition, strictly speaking, can come under that denomination:—to me it rather seems the effect of an assemblage of other passions, than a passion simple of itself, and natural to the mind of man; and I believe, whoever examines it to the fountain head, will find it takes its origin from pride and envy, and is nourished by self-love, nor ever appears in any great degree, where these do not abound.—Were it born with us, there would doubtless be some indications of it in childhood, but it is observable, that not till man arrives at maturity, and even not then, unless the sight of objects above himself excites it, he discovers the least sensation of any such emotion.—In fine, it is an inclination rarely known in youth, ordinarily declines in age, and never exerts itself with vigour, as in the middle stage of life, which I reckon to be from about five-and-twenty to fifty, or somewhat more, according to the strength of the natural stamina, or constitution.—But to go on with my history.

Since Natura had been in what they call a settled state in the world, it had always been his custom to distinguish the anniversary of that day which gave him birth, by providing a polite entertainment for his friends and kindred: he had now attained to his fortieth year, and though it had been that in which he had known more poignant disquiets, than in any one of his whole life before; yet thinking that to neglect the observation of it now, would give occasion for remarks on his reasons for so doing, he resolved to treat it with the usual ceremony.

It was in that delightful season of the year, when nature, adorned with all her charms, invites the senses to taste that regale in the open air, which the most elegant and best concerted entertainments within doors cannot atone for the want of. After dinner was over, the whole company which was pretty numerous, adjourned from the table to the garden, a small, but well ordered spot of ground, at the lower end of which was a greenhouse, furnished with many curious exotic plants. While Natura was shewing this collection to those of his guests, who had a taste that way, others were diverting themselves with walking in the alleys, or set down in arbors, according as their different fancies inclined, as it is common for people to divide themselves into little parties, when there are too many for all to share in a general conversation.

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As they were thus employed, the minister, who though he had not thought it beneath the dignity of his character to do honour to the birth-day of the husband of his neice, yet had his mind taken up with other things than the amusements of the place, took Natura aside on a sudden, and asked him if he had not a paper in his custody, which he had some time before put into his hands; to which the other answering in the affirmative, 'There are some things in it I do not well remember,' said the great man; 'and a thought just now occurs to me, in which they may be of use':—Natura then offered to fetch it; 'No,' replied the other, 'I will go with you, and we will examine it together.'

There was no need of making any apology to the company, they being, as I have already said, dispersed in several parts of the garden; but had they not been so, the statesman was absolute master wherever he came, and no one would have taken umbrage at Natura's following him.

They went hastily up stairs together, and the door of a room, thro' which they were to pass to Natura's study, being shut, he gave a push against it with his foot, and it being but slightly fastened, immediately flew open, and discovered a sight no less unexpected than shocking to both;—the wife, and own brother of Natura, on a couch, and in a posture which could leave no room to doubt of the motive which had induced them to take the opportunity of the company separating themselves, to retire, without being missed, which, but for this accident, they probably would not have been.

It is easy to conceive what a husband must feel in so alarming a circumstance, nor will any one wonder that Natura behaved in the manner he did, in the first emotions of a rage, which might very well be justified by the cause that excited it.—Not having a sword on, he flew to the chimney, on each side of which hung a pistol; he snatched one off the hook, and was going to revenge the injury he had received on one or both the guilty persons, when the minister, stepping between, beat down that arm which held the instrument of death, crying at the same time, 'What, are you a madman!—would you to punish them expose yourself!'—The passion with which Natura was overwhelmed was too mighty for his breast; it stopped the passage of his words, and all he could bring out was 'villain!'—'whore'—while those he called so, made their escape from his fury, by running out of the room. In attempting to follow them he was still with-held; and the minister having with much ado got the pistol from him, began to expostulate with him, in order to disarm his mind from pursuing any future revenge, as he had done his hand from executing the present.

'Consider,' said the statesman, 'that these are but slips of nature, that there are in this town a thousand husbands in the same situation:—indeed the affair happening with your own brother, very much enhances the crime and the provocation; but as the thing is done, and there is no remedy, it will but add to your disgrace to make it public.'

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Little would it have been in the power of all the arguments in the world, if made use of by any other person, to have given a check to that just indignation Natura was inflamed with: but as patience and moderation were prescribed him by one to whom he was indebted for all the grandeur he enjoyed, and by whose favour alone he could hope for the continuance, of it, he submitted to the task, difficult as it was, and consented to make no noise of the affair. The minister assured him he would oblige his brother to exchange the commission he was at present possessed of, for one in a regiment that was going to Gibraltar, 'which,' said he, 'will be a sufficient punishment for his crime, and at the same time rid you of the sight of a person who cannot but be now detestable to you;—as to your wife, I expect you will permit her to continue in your house, in consideration of her relation to me, but shall not interfere with the manner of your living together;—that shall be at your own discretion.'

As neither of them imagined the lady, after what had happened, would have courage enough to go down to the company, it was agreed between them to make her excuse, by saying, a sudden disorder in her head had obliged her to absent herself.

Natura cleared up his brow as much as it was possible for him to do in such a circumstance, and returned with the minister to his guests, among whom, as he supposed, he found neither his wife nor brother; as for the latter, much notice was not taken of his absence, but the ladies, by this time, were full of enquiries after her; on which he immediately made the pretence above-mentioned; but unluckily, one of the company having been bred to physic, urged permission to see her, in order to prescribe some recipe for her ailment.—Natura was now extremely at a loss what to do, till the minister, who never wanted an expedient, relieved him, by telling the doctor, that his neice had been accustomed to these kind of fits from her infancy, that it was only silence and repose which recovered her, which being now gone to take, any interruption would be of more prejudice than benefit.

This passed very well, and no farther mention was made of her; but the accident occasioned the company to take leave much sooner than otherwise they would have done, very much to the ease of Natura, who had been in the most intolerable constraint, to behave so as to conceal the truth, and longed to be alone, to give a loose to the distracting passions of his soul.

The more he ruminated on the wrongs he had sustained, the more difficult he found it to preserve that moderation the minister had enjoined, and he had promised: he had long but too much reason to believe his wife was false; but the thought that she had entered into a criminal conversation with his own brother, rendered the guilt doubly odious in them both.—Had not his own eyes convinced him of the horrid truth, he could have given credit to no other testimony, that

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a brother, whom he had always treated with the utmost affection, and whose fortune it had been his care to promote, should have dared to harbour even the most distant wish of dishonouring his wife. He seemed, in his eyes, the most culpable of the two, and thought the banishment intended for him much too small a punishment for so atrocious a crime. It is certain that this young gentleman had not only broke through the bands of duty, honour, gratitude, and every social obligation, but had also sinned against nature itself, by adding incest to adultery.—Natura could not indeed consider him as any thing but a monster, and that as such he ought to be cut off from the face of the earth; and neither reason nor humanity, could alledge any thing against the dictates of a revenge, which by the most unconcerned and disinterested person could not be called unjust.—Strongly did its emotions work within his soul, and he was more than once on the point of going in search of him, in order to satiate its most impatient thirst, but was as often restrained, by reflecting on the consequences.—'Suppose,' said he to himself, 'I should escape that death the law inflicts for murder, in consideration of the provocation, I cannot hope to preserve my employments.—I must retire from the world, live an obscure life the whole remainder of my days, and the whole shameful adventure being divulged, will render me the common topic of table conversation, and entail dishonour and contempt upon my son.'

Thus did ambition get the better of resentment;—thus did the love of grandeur extirpate all regard of true honour, and the shame of private contempt from the world lie stifled in the pride of public homage.

The minister in the mean time kept his word; he let the offending brother know it was his pleasure he should dispose of his commission in the guards, and purchase one in a regiment he named to him, which was very speedily to embark for Gibraltar: the young gentleman obeyed the injunction, and doubtless was not sorry to quit a place, where some accident or other, in spite of all the care he had resolved to take, might possibly bring him to the sight of a brother he had so greatly injured, the thoughts of whose just reproaches were more terrible to him, than any thing else that could befall him.

The wife of Natura being also privately admonished by her uncle how to behave, kept her chamber for some days, not only to give the better colour to the pretence had been made of her indisposition, but also to avoid the presence of her husband, till the first emotions of his fury should be a little abated;—he, on the other hand, profited by this absence, to bring himself to a resolution how to behave, when the shock of seeing her should arrive:—as her crime was past recal, reproaches and remonstrances would be in vain to retrieve her honour, or his peace; and if they even should work her into penitence, what would it avail? unless to soften him into a pity, which would only serve to render him more uneasy, as there was now no possibility of living with her as a wife.—Having, therefore, well weighed and considered all these things, it seemed best to

him to say nothing to her of what had happened, and indeed to avoid speaking to her at all, except in public.

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What she thought of a behaviour she had so little reason to expect, and what effect it produced on her future conduct, shall hereafter be related: I shall only say at present, that Natura gave himself no pain to consider what might be her sentiments on the occasion, as long as he found her uncle was perfectly satisfied with his manner of acting in this point, which he had no reason to doubt of, not only by the assurances he gave him in words of his being so, but by a more convincing and substantial proof, which was this; an envoy extraordinary being about to be sent to a foreign court, on a very important negotiation, he had the honour of being recommended, as a gentleman every way qualified for the duties of that post.—The minister's choice of him was approved by the king and council, and he set out on his embassy, with an equipage and state, which, joined to the attention he gave to what he was employed in, greatly dissipated the chagrin of his private affairs, and he seemed to have forgot, for a time, not only the injuries he had received, but also even the persons from whom he had received them.

### CHAP. II.

Shews at what age men are most liable to the passion of grief: the impatience of human nature under affliction, and the necessity there is of exerting reason, to restrain the excesses it would otherwise occasion.

There are certain periods of time, in which the passions take the deepest root within us; what at one age makes but a slight impression, and is easily dissipated by different ideas, at another engrosses all the faculties, and becomes so much a part of the soul, as to require the utmost exertion of reason, and all the aids of philosophy and religion to eradicate.—Grief, for example, is one of those passions which, in extreme youth, we know little of, and even when we grow nearer to maturity, has rarely any great dominion, let the cause which excites it be never so interesting, or justifiable: it may indeed be poignant for a time, and drive us to all the excesses imputed to that passion; but then it is of short continuance, it dwells not on the mind, and the least appearance of a new object of satisfaction, banishes it entirely; we dry our tears, and remember no more what so lately we lamented, perhaps with the most noisy exclamations:—but it is not so when riper years give a solidity and firmness to the judgment;—then as we are less apt to grieve without a cause, so we are less able to refrain from grieving, when we have a real cause.—Grief may therefore be called a reasonable passion, tho' it becomes not a reasonable man to give way to it;—this, at first sight, may seem a paradox to many people, but may easily be solved, in my opinion, on a very little consideration;—as thus, —because to be sensible of our loss in the value of the thing for which we mourn, is a proof of our judgment, as to refrain that mourning for what is past retrieving, within the bounds of



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moderation, is the greatest proof we can give of our reason:—a dull insensibility is not a testimony, either of wisdom or virtue; we are not to bear afflictions like *statues*, but like men; that is, we are allowed to *feel*, but not to *repine*, or be *impatient* under them:—few there are, however, who have the power of preserving this happy medium, as I before observed, tho' they are such as have the assistance both of precept and experience.

In a word, all that can be expected from the best of men, when pressed with any heavy calamity, is to struggle with all his might to bear up beneath the weight with decency and resignation; and as grief never seizes strongly on the mind, till a sufficient number of years gives reason strength to combat with it, that consideration furnishes matter for praise and adoration of the all-wise and all-beneficent Author of our being, who has bestowed on us a certain comfort for all ills, if we neglect not to make use of it; so that no man can be unhappy, unless he will be so.

Motives for grief which happen on a sudden merit excuse for the extravagancies they sometimes occasion, because they surprize us unawares, reason is off her guard, and it cannot be expected we should be armed against what we had no apprehensions of;—presence of mind is an excellent, but rare quality, and we shall see very few, even among the wisest men, who are such examples of it, as to behave in the first shock of some unforeseen misfortune, with the same moderation and calmness of temper, as they would have done, had they had previous warning of what was to befall them.

Much, however, are the effects of this, as of all other passions, owing to constitution:—the robust and sanguine nature soon kindles, and is soon extinguished; whereas the phlegmatic is slow to be moved, and when so not easily settled into a calm: and tho' the difference of age makes a wide difference in our way of thinking, yet as there are old men at twenty, and boys at three-score, that rule is not without some exceptions. But to take nature in the general, and allowing for the different habits of body and complexion, we may be truly said to be most prone to particular passions at particular ages:—as in youth, love, hope, and joy;—in maturity, ambition, pride, and its attendant ostentation;—when more advanced in years, grief, fear, and despair;—and in old age, avarice, and a kind of very churlish dislike of every thing presented to us.

But to return to Natura, from whose adventures I have digressed; but I hope forgiveness for it, as it was not only the history of the man I took upon me to relate, but also to point out, in his example, the various progress of the passions in a human mind.

He acquitted himself of the important trust had been reposed in him, with all the diligence and discretion could be expected from him; and returned honoured with many rich presents from the prince to whom he had been sent, as a testimony of the sense he had of his abilities.



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But scarce had he time to receive the felicitations of his friends on this score, before an accident happened to him, which demanded a much more than equal share of condolance from them.—His son, his only son, the darling of his heart, was seized with a distemper in his head, which in a very few days baffled the art of medicine, and snatched him from the world.—What now availed his honours, his wealth, his every requisite for grandeur, or for pleasure?—He, for whose sake chiefly he had laboured to acquire them, was no more!—no second self remained to enjoy what he must one day leave behind him.—All of him was now collected in his own being, and with *that* being must end.—Melancholly reflection!—yet not the worst that this unhappy incident inflicted:—his estate, all at least that had descended to him by inheritance, with the vast improvements he had made on it, must now devolve on a brother he had so much cause to hate, and whose very name but mentioned struck horror to his heart.

The motives for his grief were great, it must be allowed, and such as demanded the utmost fortitude to sustain;—he certainly exerted all he was master of on this occasion; but, in spite of his efforts, nature got the upper hand, and rendered him inconsolable:—he burst not into any violent exclamations, but the silent sorrow preyed on his vitals, and reduced him, in a short time, almost to the shadow of what he had been.

One of the most dangerous effects of melancholy is, the gloomy pleasure it gives to every thing that serves to indulge it:—darkness and solitude are its delight and nourishment, and the person possessed of it, naturally shuns and hates whatever might alleviate it;—the sight of his best friends now became irksome to him;—he not only loathed, but grew incapable of all business;—he shut himself in his closet, shunned conversation, was scarce prevailed on to take the necessary supports of nature, and seemed as if his soul was buried in the tomb of his son, and only a kind of vegetative life remained within him.

His sister, who loved him very affectionately, and for whom he had always preserved the tenderest amity, being informed of his disconsolate condition, came to town, flattering herself with being able to dissipate, at least some part of his chagrin. To this end she brought with her all her children, some of whom he had never seen, and had frequently expressed by letter, the desire he had of embracing them, and the regret he had that the great affairs he was always constantly engaged in, would not permit him time to take a journey into the country where she lived.

But how greatly did she deceive herself;—he was too far sunk in the lethargy of grief, to be roused out of it by all her kind endeavours;—on the contrary, the sight of those near and dear relatives she presented to him only added to his affliction, by reminding him in a more lively manner of his own loss; and the sad effect she found their presence had on him, obliged her to remove them immediately from his eyes.

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She could not, however, think of quitting him in a state so truly deplorable, and so unbecoming of his circumstances and character:—she remained in his house, would pursue him wherever he retired, and as she was a woman of excellent sense, as well as good-nature, invented a thousand little stratagems to divert his thoughts from the melancholly theme which had too much engrossed them, but had not the satisfaction to perceive that any thing she could say or do, occasioned the least movement of that fixed sullenness, which, by a long habit, appeared like a second nature in him.

This poor lady found also other matters of surprize and discontent, on her staying in town, besides the sad situation of her brother's health:—as she had never been informed of the disunion between him and his wife, much less of the occasion of it, the behaviour of that lady filled her with the utmost astonishment:—to perceive she took no pains to alleviate his sorrows, never came into the room where he was, or even sent her woman with those common compliments, which he received from all who had the least acquaintance with him, would have afforded sufficient occasion for the speculation of a sister; yet was this manifest disregard, this failure in all the duties of a wife, a friend, a neighbour, little worthy of consideration, when put in comparison with her conduct in other points.

After the adventure of her detection, finding the minister was resolved to support her, and that her husband durst not come to any open breach with her, she immediately began to throw aside all regard for decorum;—she seemed utterly to despise all sense of shame, and even to glory in a life of continual dissolution;—the company she kept of both sexes, were, for the most part, persons of abandoned characters: whether she indulged herself in a plurality of amours, is uncertain, though it was said she did so; but there was one man to whom she was most particularly attached;—this was a person who had formerly enjoyed a post under the government, but was turned out on the score of misbehaviour, and had now no other support than what he received from her:—with him she frequently passed whole nights, and took so little care in concealing the place of their meeting, that the sister of Natura easily found it out.

On relating the discovery she had made to some of their relations, they advised her to tell her brother, imagining this glaring insult on his honour would effectually rouse him out of the stupidity he languished under:—she was of the same opinion, and took the first opportunity of letting Natura into the whole infamous affair, not without some apprehensions, that an excess of rage on hearing it, might hurry him into a contrary extreme; but her terrors on this head were presently dissipated, when having repeated many circumstances to corroborate the truth of what she said, there appeared not the least emotion in his countenance; and on her urging him to take some measures to do himself justice, or at least to put a stop to this licentiousness of a person whose dishonour was his own; all she could get from him was, that he had neither regard enough for her to take any pains for the reclaiming her, nor for the censure of the world on himself, and desired she would not trouble him any farther on this point.

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This strange insensibility afforded cause to fear his faculties were all too deeply absorbed in melancholy, for him ever to become a man of the world again, and as she truly loved him, gave both her, and all his other friends, an infinite concern.

### CHAP. III.

The struggles which different passions occasion in the human breast, are here exemplified; and that there is no one among them so strong, but may be extirpated by another, excepting *revenge*, which knows no period, but by gratification.

Though it must be acknowledged, that the passions, generally speaking, operate according to the constitution, and seem, in a manner, wholly directed by it, yet there is one, above all, which actuates alike in all, and when once entertained, is scarce ever extinguished:—it may indeed lie dormant, for a time, but then it easily revives on the least occasion, and blazes out with greater violence than ever. I believe every one will understand I mean *revenge*, since there is no other emotion of the soul, but has its antedote: *grief* and *joy* alternately succeed each other;—*hope* has its period in possession;—*fear* ceases, either by the cause being removed, or by a fatal certainty of some dreaded evil;—*ambition* dies within us, on a just sense of the folly of pursuing it;—*hate* is often vanquished by good offices;—even greedy *avarice* may be glutted; and *love* is, for the most part, fluctuating, and may be terminated by a thousand accidents. —*Revenge* alone is implacable and eternal, not to be banished by any other passion whatsoever;—the effects of it are the same, invariable in every constitution; and whether the man be phlegmatic or sanguine, there will be no difference in his way of thinking in this point. The principles of religion and morality indeed may, and frequently do, hinder a man from putting into action what this cruel passion suggests, but neither of them can restrain him who has revenge in his heart, from wishing it were lawful for him to indulge it.

This being so fixed a passion, it hardly ever gains entrance on the mind, till a sufficient number of years have given a solidity to the thoughts, and made us know for what we wish, and why we wish.—Every one, however, does not experience its force, and happy may those be accounted who are free from it, since it is not only the most unjustifiable and dangerous, but also the most restless and self-tormenting emotion of the soul.

There are, notwithstanding, some kind of provocations, which it is scarce possible, nor indeed consistent with the justice we owe to ourselves, to bury wholly in oblivion; and likewise there are some kinds of revenge, which may deserve to be excused; of these, that which Natura put in practice, as shall presently be shewn, may be reckoned of the number.

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I doubt not, but my readers, as well as all those who were acquainted with him at that time, will believe, that in the situation I have described, he was for ever lost to the sense of any other passion, than that which so powerfully engrossed him, and from which all the endeavours hitherto made use of, had been ineffectual to rouse him. But it often happens, that what we least expect, comes most suddenly upon us, and proves that all human efforts are in vain, without the interposition of some supernatural power.

I have already said, that the bad conduct of his wife had been repeated over and over to him without his discovering the least emotion at it; yet would not his sister cease urging him to resent it as became a man sensible of his dishonour, that is, to rid himself, by such ways as the law puts it in the power of a husband so injured, to get rid of her; and imagining that an ocular demonstration of her crime, would make a greater impression on him, than any report could do, she set about contriving some way to bring him where his own eyes might convince him of the truth of what he had been so often told:—but how to prevail on him to go out of his house, which he had not now seen the outside of for some months, was a difficulty not easily surmounted:—the obstinacy of grief disappointed all the little plots they laid for their purpose, and they were beginning to give over all thoughts of any future attempts, when chance accomplished the so-much desired work.

He had ordered a monument to be erected over the grave of his beloved son; which, being finished, and he told that it was so, ‘I will see,’ said he, ‘if it be done according to my directions.’ Two or three of his kindred were present when he took this resolution, and one of them immediately recollecting, how they might make it of advantage to their design, said many things in praise of the structure; but added, that the scaffolding and rubbish the workmen had left, not being yet removed, he would have him defer seeing it, till it was cleaned. To this he having readily agreed, spies were placed, to observe the time and place, where the lady and her favourite lover had the next rendezvous. As neither of them had any great caution in their amour, a full account was soon brought to the sister of Natura, who, with several of their relations, came into his chamber, and told him that the tomb was now fit to be seen in all its beauty.

On this he presently suffered himself to be dressed, and went with them; but they managed so well that, under pretence of calling on another friend, who, they said, had desired to be of their company in this melancholly entertainment, they led him to the house where his wife and enamorado were yet in bed. The sister of Natura having, by a large bribe, secured the woman of the house to her interest, they were all conducted to the very scene of guilt, and this much injured husband had a second testimony of the perfidy of his wife; but alas! the first had made too deep an impression on him to leave room for any great surprize; he only coolly turned away, and said to those who had brought him there, that they needed not have taken all this pains to make him a witness of what he was convinced of long before.

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His wife, however, was frightened, if not ashamed, and hid herself under the bedcloaths, while her gallant jumped, naked as he was, out of the window; but though Natura discovered very little emotion at all this, yet whether it was owing to the arguments of his friends, or that the air, after having been so long shut up from it, had an effect on him, they could not determine, but had the satisfaction to find that he consented an action in his name should be awarded against the lover, and proper means used for obtaining a bill of divorce from his wife.

The real motive of this change in him none of them, however, could penetrate:—grief had for a while obliterated the thoughts of the injustice and ingratitude of his brother, but what he had now beheld reminding him of that shocking scene related in the first chapter of this book, all his long stifled wishes for revenge returned with greater force than ever; and thinking he could no way so fully gratify them, as by disappointing him of the estate he must enjoy at his decease, in case he died without issue, a divorce therefore would give him liberty to marry again; and as he was no more than three-and-forty years of age, had no reason to despair of having an heir, to cut entirely off the claim of so wicked a brother. Having once began to stir in the affair, it was soon brought to a conclusion.—The fact was incontestable, and proved by witnesses, whose credit left no room for cavil; a bill of divorce was granted on very easy terms, and the gallant fined in so large a penalty, that he was obliged to quit the kingdom, to avoid imprisonment for life.

Thus did revenge produce an effect, which neither the precepts of religion, philosophy, or morality, joined with the most tender and pressing remonstrances of his nearest and dearest friends, could ever have brought about;—and this instance, in my judgment, proves to a demonstration, that it is so ordered by the all-wise Creator, that all the pernicious passions are at continual enmity, and, like counter-poisons, destroy the force of each other: and tho' it is certain, a man may be possessed of many passions at once, and those also may be of different natures, and tend to different aims, yet will there be a struggle, as it were, between them in the breast, and which ever happens to get predominance, will drive out the others in time, and reign alone sole master of the mind.

### CHAP. IV.

Contains a further definition of *revenge*, its force, effects, and the chasm it leaves on the mind when once it ceases. The tranquility of being entirely devoid of all passions; and the impossibility for the soul to remain in that state of inactivity is also shewn; with some remarks on human nature in general, when left to itself.

I have already shewn, in the example of Natura, how not only resentment for injuries, but even the extremest and most justifiable *rage*, may be subjected

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to *ambition*, and afterwards how that *ambition* may be quelled and totally extinguished by *grief*; and also that *grief* itself, how violent soever it appears, may subside at the emotions of *revenge*.—This last and worst passion alone finds nothing capable of overcoming it, while the object remains in being. It is true, that we frequently in the hurry of resentment, threaten, and sometimes act every thing in our power, against the person who has offended us, yet on his submission and appearing sorry for what he has done, we not only forgive, but also forget all has past, and no longer bear him the least ill will; but then, this passion, by which we have been actuated, is not properly *revenge*, but *anger*, of which I have already sufficiently spoke, and, I flatter myself, proved how wide the difference is between these two emotions.

Natura had no sooner taken it into his head to revenge himself in the manner above related, on his transgressing brother, than he resumed great part of his former cheerfulness, conversed again in the world as he had been accustomed; nor, though he perceived his interest with the minister fall off ever since he had been divorced from his niece, and easily foresaw, that he would, from his friend, become in time his greatest enemy, yet it gave him little or no concern, so wholly were his thoughts and desires taken up with accomplishing what he had resolved.

He was, however, for some time deliberating within himself to whom he should direct his addresses on this score; the general acquaintance he had in the world, brought many ladies into his mind, who seemed suitable matches for him; but then, as they were of equal birth and fortunes with himself, he reflected, that a long formal courtship would be expected, and he was now grown too indolent to take that trouble, as he was not excited by inclination to any of them, and had determined to enter a third time into the bonds of matrimony, merely through the hope of depriving his brother of the estate.

Besides, the accidents which had lately happened to him, had very much altered his way of thinking, and though he had shaken off great part of the chagrin they had occasioned, yet there still remained a certain languor and inactivity of mind, which destroyed all the relish he formerly had of the noisy pleasures of life:—he began now to despise that farce of grandeur he once testified so high a value for, and to look on things as they really deserved;—he found his interest with those at the helm of public affairs, was very much sunk, and he was so far from taking any steps to retrieve it, that he seldom went even to pay that court to them, which his station demanded from him;—he grew so weary of the post which he had, with the utmost eagerness, sought after, and thought himself happy in enjoying, that he never rested till he had disposed of it, which he did for a much less consideration than it was really worth, merely because he would be in a state of perfect independency, and at full liberty to speak and act, according to the dictates of his conscience, or his inclination.



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He was no sooner eased of his attendance at court by this means, than he retired to his country seat, in which he now thought he found more satisfaction, than the town, with all its hurrying pleasures could afford; there he intended to pass the greatest part of the remainder of his days, with some woman of prudence and good nature, which were the two chief requisites he now wished to find in a wife.—There were several well-jointed widows in the county where he resided, and also young ladies of family and fortune, but he never made the least overtures to any of them, and behaved with that indifference to the sex, that it was the opinion of all who conversed with him, that he never designed to marry again, when at the same time, he thought of nothing more than to find a partner in that state, such as promised to prove what he desired.

To this end he watched attentively the behaviour of all those he came in company with, and as he was master of a good deal of penetration, and also no small experience in the sex, and besides was not suspected to have any views that way, it is certain he had a good chance not to be deceived.

It was not among the fine ladies, the celebrated beauties, nor the great fortunes, he sought himself a wife; but among those of a middling rank; he only wished to have one who might bring him children, and be addicted to no vice, or caprice, that should either scandalize him abroad, or render him uneasy at home, and in all his inspection, he found none who seemed so likely to answer his desires in every respect as a young maid called Laetitia; she was the daughter of a neighbouring yeoman, not disagreeable in her person, or behaviour, yet possessed of no accomplishments, but those which nature had bestowed: her father was an honest plain man, he had four sons and two daughters, who had been married some time, and had several children; Laetitia was his youngest, and promised to be no less fruitful than her sisters; and this last was the chief inducement which made Natura fix his choice upon her.

Having resolved to seek no farther, he frequently went to the old man's house, pretending he took delight in country affairs, would walk with him about his grounds, and into his barns, and see the men who were at work in them. One day he took an opportunity of going when he knew he was abroad, designing to break his mind to the young Laetitia, who, being her father's housekeeper, he did not doubt finding at home: accordingly she was so; and, after some previous discourse, a little boy of one of her sisters, being playing about the room, 'This it a fine child,' said he; 'when do you design to marry, pretty Mrs. Laetitia?'—'Should you not like to be a mother of such diverting little prattlers?'—'It is time enough, sir,' replied she modestly, 'for me to think of any such thing.'—'If you get a good husband,' resumed he, 'it cannot be too soon':—'Nor, if a bad one, too late,' cried she, 'as there are great odds on that side.'—'That

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is true,' said he, 'but I believe there are many ill husbands, who owe their being such, to the ill conduct of their wives':—'now I fancy,' continued he, 'whoever is so happy as to have you, will have no such excuse; for I firmly believe you have in you all the requisites to make the marriage state agreeable.' To this she only made a curtesy, and thanked him for his good opinion: 'I do assure you,' resumed he, 'it is so sincere, that I should be glad to prove it, by making you my wife. What say you,' pursued he, 'could you be willing to accept of my addresses on that score?' With these words he took hold of her hand, and pressing it with a great deal of warmth, occasioned her to blush excessively. —The inability she was in of speaking, through the shame this question had excited in her, gave him an opportunity of prosecuting what he had begun, and saying many tender things, to convince her he was in earnest; but when at last she gave him an answer, it was only such as made him see she gave little credit to his professions.—Some people coming in on business to her father, and saying they would wait till he came home, obliged Natura to take his leave for that time, well satisfied in his mind, that he had declared himself, and not much doubting, but that in spite of this first shyness, she would easily be prevailed upon to correspond with his desires, when his perseverance in them, should have assured her of their sincerity.

He was, notwithstanding, a good deal surprized, when, going several times after to the house, he could scarce see her, and never be able to exchange a word with her in private, so industriously did she avoid coming into his presence.—Such a behaviour, he thought, could proceed only from one of these two motives, either thro' an extraordinary dislike to his person, or through the fears of giving any indulgence to an inclination, which the disparity between them might make her mistake for a dishonourable one. Sometimes he was tempted to think the one, sometimes the other; but not being of a humour to endure suspense, he resolved to take effectual measures for coming at the certainty.

He went one day about noon, and told the yeoman he was come to take a dinner with him, on which the other replied, that he did him a great deal of honour; but should have been glad to have been previously acquainted with it, in order to have been prepared to receive a gentleman of his condition.—'No,' said Natura, 'I chose to come upon you unawares, not only to prevent you from giving yourself any superfluous trouble on my account, but also because I would use a freedom, which should authorize you to treat me with the same;—we are neighbours,' continued he, 'and neighbours should be friends, and love one another.'



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Some other little chat on trivial affairs passed away the short time between the coming of Natura, and dinner being brought in; on which, the yeoman intreated him to sit down, and partake of such homely food as he found there.—‘That I shall gladly do,’ answered Natura, ‘but I waited for your fair daughter; I hope we shall have her company. I do not know,’ said the yeoman, ‘I think they told me she was not very well, had got the head-ach, or some such ailment;—go, however,’ pursued he, to a servant, ‘and see if Laetitia can come down.’—‘But, sir,’ cried he, perceiving his guest discovered no inclination to place himself at the table, ‘do not let us wait for her.’

Natura on this sat down, and they both began to eat, when the person who had been sent to call Laetitia returned, and said, she begged to be excused, being very much indisposed, and unfit to be seen.—The old man seemed to take no notice, but pressed Natura to eat, and somewhat embarrassed him with the many apologies he made for the coarseness of his entertainment; to all which he gave but short answers, till the cloth was taken away, and they were alone.—Then, ‘I could not wish to dine more to my satisfaction,’ said he, ‘if the sweetness of your meat had not been imbittered by your daughter’s absence’;—‘to be plain,’ continued he, ‘I fear I am the disease which occasions her retirement.’—‘You, sir!’ cried the father, affecting a surprize, which he was not so well skilled in the art of dissimulation, to make appear so natural, but that Natura easily saw into the feint, and told him with a smile, that he found the *country* had its arts as well as the *court*:—‘but let us deal sincerely with each other,’ pursued he, ‘I am very certain, it is from no other motive, than my being here, that your daughter refused to come to table; and I also faithfully believe you are no stranger to that motive:—be therefore free with me; and to encourage you to be so, I shall acquaint you, that I have made some overtures to Mrs. Laetitia,—that I like her, and that my frequent visits to you have been entirely on her account:—now, be as sincere with me, and let me know, whether the offers I made her will be approved.’

The yeoman was a little dashed on Natura’s speaking in this manner, and was some moments before he could recollect himself sufficiently to make any reply; and, when at last he had, all he could bring out was, ‘Sir, my girl is honest, and I hope will always continue so.’

‘I am far from doubting her virtue in the least,’ answered Natura hastily, ‘but I think I cannot give a greater testimony of the good opinion I have of her, than by offering to make her my wife.’—‘Ah, sir,’ cried the yeoman, interrupting him, ‘you must excuse me, if I cannot flatter myself you have any thoughts of doing us that honour.—I am a mean man, of no parentage, and it is well known have brought up a large family by the sweat of my brow.’—‘Laetitia is a poor country maid;—it is true, the girl is well enough, but has nothing,—nothing at all, alas! in her to balance for that vast disparity of birth and fortune between you.’

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'Talk no more of that,' said Natura, taking him by the hand, 'such as she is, I like her; and I once more assure you, that I never had any dishonourable intentions on her, but am ready to prove the contrary, by marrying her, as soon as she approves of me, and you agree to it.'

The old man looked very earnestly on him all the while he was speaking, and knew not well whether he ought to give credit to what he said, or not,—Natura, perceiving his diffidence, continued, by sparing neither arguments, nor the most solemn imprecations, to remove it, till he was at last assured of a good fortune, which, as he said, he had thought too extraordinary to happen in his family. He then told Natura he would acquaint his daughter with the happiness he intended for her, and dispose her to receive it with that respect and gratitude that became her. On which Natura took his leave till the next day, when he found Laetitia did not make any excuse to avoid his presence, as she had lately done.—He addressed himself to her not in the same manner he would have done to a woman of condition, but yet in very tender and affectionate terms:—her behaviour to him was humble, modest, and obliging; and though she was not mistress of the politest expressions, yet what she said discovered she wanted not a fund of good sense and understanding, which, if cultivated by education, would have appeared very bright. He easily perceived, she took a great deal of pains to disguise the joy she conceived at this prospect of raising her fortune, but was too little accustomed to dissimulation, to do it effectually, and both the one and the other gave him much satisfaction.

Circumstances being in the manner I related, it is not natural to suppose any long sollicitation was required.—Laetitia affected not an indifference she was free from, and Natura pressing for the speedy consummation of his wishes, a day was appointed for the celebration of the nuptials, and both the intended bride and bridegroom set themselves about making the necessary preparations usual in such cases.

But see, how capable are our finest resolutions of being shaken by accidents!—the most assured of men may be compared to the leaf of a tree, which veers with every blast of wind, and is never long in one position.—Had any one told Natura he had taken all this pains for nothing, and that he would be more anxious to get off his promise of marrying Laetitia, than ever he had been to engage one from her for that purpose; he would have thought himself highly injured, and that the person who said this of him was utterly a stranger to his sentiments or character; yet so it happened, and the poor Letitia found all her hopes of grandeur vanish into air, when they seemed just on the point of being accomplished.—The occasion of this strange and sudden transition was as follows:

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Two days before that prefixed for his marriage, Natura received a packet from Gibraltar, which brought him an account of the death of his brother.—That unfortunate young gentleman, being convinced by his sufferings, and perhaps too by his own remorse, and stings of conscience of the foulness of the crime he had been guilty of, fell into a languishing disorder, soon after his arrival in that country, which left those about him no expectations of his ever getting the better of.—Finding his dissolution near, he wrote a letter to Natura, full of contrition, and intreaties for forgiveness. This epistle accompanied that which related his death, and both together plunged Natura into very melancholly thoughts.—The offence his brother had been guilty of, was indeed great; but, when he remembered that he had repented, and was now no more, all resentment, all revenge, against him ceased with his existence, and a tender pity supplied their place:—what, while *living*, he never would have forgave, when *dead* lost great part of its atrocity, and he bewailed the fate of the transgressor, with unfeigned tears and lamentations.

This event putting an end to the motive which had induced Natura to think of marriage, put an end also to his desires that way;—he was sorry he had gone so far with Laetitia, was loth to appear a deceiver in her eyes, or in those of her father; but thought it would be the extremest madness in him to prosecute his intent, as his beloved sister had a son, who would now be his heir, and only had desired to be the father of one himself to hinder *him* from being so, whose crimes had rendered him unworthy of it.

The emotions of this revenge having entirely subsided, he now had leisure to consider how oddly the world would think and talk of him, if he perpetrated a marriage with a girl such as Laetitia;—he almost wondered at himself, that the just displeasure he had conceived against his brother, should have transported him so far as to make him forgetful of what was owing to his own character; and when he reflected on the miseries, vexations, and infamy, his last marriage had involved him in, he trembled to think how near he had been to entering into a state, which tho' he had a very good opinion of Laetitia's virtue, might yet possibly, some way or other, have given him many uneasinesses.

He was, however, very much embarrassed how to break with her handsomely; and it must be confessed, that after what had passed, this was no very easy matter to accomplish.—Make what pretence he would, he could not expect to escape the censure of an unstable fluctuating man.—This is indeed a character, which all men are willing, nay industrious, to avoid, yet what there are few men, but some time or other in their lives, give just reason to incur.—Natura very well knew, that to court a woman for marriage, and afterwards break his engagements with her, was a thing pretty common in the world; but then, it was

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thing he had always condemned in his own mind, and looked upon as most ungenerous and base:—besides, though he had made his addresses to Laetitia, meerly because he imagined she would prove a virtuous, obedient, and fruitful wife, and was not inflamed with any of those sentiments for her which are called love; yet, designing to marry her, he had set himself as much as possible to love her, and had really excited in his heart a kind of a tenderness, which made him unable to resolve on giving her the mortification of being forsaken, without feeling great part of the pain he was about to inflict on her.

All he now wished was, that she might be possessed of as little warmth of inclination for him as he had known for her, and that the disparity of years between them, might have made her consent to the proposed marriage, intirely on the motive of interest, without any mixture of love, in order that the disappointment she was going to receive, might seem the less severe: as the regard he had for her made him earnestly wish this might be the case, he carefully recollected all the passages of her behaviour, her looks, her words, nay, the very accents of her voice, were re-examined, in hope to find some tokens of that happy indifference, which alone could make him easy in this affair; but all this retrospect afforded him no more than uncertain conjectures, and imaginations which frequently contradicted each other, and indeed served only to increase his doubts, and add to his disquiets.

The mourning for his brother was, however, a very plausible pretence for delaying the marriage; and as he was willing the disappointment should come on by degrees, thinking by that means to soften the asperity of it, he contrived to let both father and daughter have room to guess the event before hand.—He seldom went to their house, and when he did, made very short visits, talked as if the necessity of his affairs would oblige him to leave the country, and settle again entirely in town:—rather avoided, than sought any opportunity of speaking to Laetitia in private, and in all his words and actions, discovered a coldness which could not but be very surprizing to them both, though they took not the least notice that they were so before him, but behaved towards him in the same manner, as when he appeared the most full of affection.

This was a piece of prudence Natura had not expected from persons of their low education and way of life:—he had imagined, that either the one or the other of them would have upbraided this change in him, and by avowing a suspicion, that he had repented him of his promises, given him an opportunity either of seeming to resent it, or by some other method, of breaking off: but this way of proceeding frustrated his measures in that point, and he found himself under a necessity of speaking first, on a subject no less disagreeable to himself, than he knew it would be to those to whom his discourse should be directed.

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However, as there was no remedy, and he considered, that the longer to keep them in suspense, would only be adding to the cruelty of the disappointment; he sent one morning for the yeoman to come to his house, and after ushering in what he was about to say, with some reflections on the instability of human affairs, told him that some accidents had happened, which rendered it highly inconvenient for him to think of marrying;—that he had the utmost respect and good will for Laetitia, and that if there were not indissoluble impediments to hinder him from taking a wife, she should be still his choice, above any woman he knew in the world;—that he wished her happy with any other man, and to contribute to making her so, as also by way of atonement for his enforced leaving her, he would give her five hundred pounds, as an addition to her fortune.

This was the substance of what he said; but though he delivered it in the softest terms he could possibly make use of, he could find it was not well received by the old man; his countenance, however, a little cleared up at the closure of it:—the five hundred pounds was somewhat of a sweetener to the bitter pill; and after expatiating, according to his way, on the ungenerosity of engaging a young maid's affection, and afterwards forsaking her, he threw in some shrewd hints, that as accidents had happened to change his mind as to marriage, others might also happen, which would have the same effect, in relation to the present he now seemed to intend for her.

'To prevent that,' cried Natura hastily, 'you shall take it home with you'; and with these words turned to a cabinet, and took out the sum he had mentioned; after counting it over, he put it into a bag, and delivered it to the yeoman, saying at the same time, that though it might not be so proper to come to his house, yet if he would send to him in any exigence, he should find him ready to assist him; 'for you may depend,' added he, 'that though I cannot be your son, I shall always be your friend.'

These words, and the money together, rendered the yeoman more content than Natura had expected he would be; and by that he hoped he knew his daughter had not imbibed any passion for him, which she would find much difficulty in getting rid of, and that this augmentation to her portion, would very well compensate for the loss of a husband, of more than twice her years.

A small time evinced, that Natura had not been altogether mistaken in his conjectures. —Laetitia became the bride of a young wealthy grazier in a neighbouring town, with whom she removed soon after her marriage; and this event, so much desired by Natura, destroyed all the remains of disquiet, his nicety of honour, and love of justice, had occasioned in him.

Being now wholly extricated from an adventure, which had given him much pain, and no less free from the emotions of any turbulent passion, he passed his days and nights in a most perfect and undisturbed tranquility; a situation of mind to which, for a long series of years, he had been an utter stranger.

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To desire, or pursue any thing with too much eagerness, is undoubtedly the greatest cruelty we can practise on ourselves; yet how impossible is it to avoid doing so, while the passions have any kind of dominion over us:—to *acquire*, and to *preserve*, make the sole business of our lives, and leave no leisure to *enjoy* the goods of fortune:—still tost on the billows of passion, hurried from care to care the whole time of our existence here, is one continued scene of restlessness and variated disquiet.—Strange propensity in man!—even nature in us seems contradictory to herself!—we wish *long life*, yet shorten it by our own anxieties;—nothing is so dreadful as *death*, yet we hasten his approach by our intemperance and irregularity, and, what is more, we know all this, yet still run on in the same heady course.

Natura had now, however, an interval, a happy chasm, between the extremes of pleasure and of pain;—contented with his lot, and neither aiming at more than he possessed, nor fearful of being deprived of what he had. He, for a time, seemed in a condition such as all wise men would wish to attain, tho' so few take proper methods for that purpose, that those who we see in it, may be said to owe their felicity rather to chance, than to any right endeavours of their own.

### CHAP. V.

Contains a remarkable proof, that tho' the passions may operate with greater velocity and vehemence in youth, yet they are infinitely more strong and permanent, when the person is arrived at maturity, and are then scarce ever eradicated. Love and friendship are then, and not till then, truly worthy of the names they bear; and that the *one* between those of different sexes, is always the consequence of the *other*.

The inclination we have, and the pleasure it gives us to think well of our abilities, leads us frequently into the most gross mistakes, concerning the springs of action in our breasts. We are apt to ascribe to the strength of our reason, what is in reality the effect of one or other of the passions, sometimes even those of the worst kind, and which a sound judgment would most condemn, and endeavour to extirpate.—Man is a stranger to nothing, more than to himself;—the recesses of his own heart, are no less impenetrable to him, than the worlds beyond the moon;—he is blinded by vanity, and agitated by desires he knows not he is possessed of.

It was not *reason* but *revenge*, which dissipated the immoderate grief of Natura on the death of his son;—it was not *reason* but *pride*, which made him see the inconveniences of marrying with Laetitia;—and yet doubtless he gave the praise of these events to the strength of his prudence: to that too he also ascribed the resolution he now took of living single during the remainder of his life; whereas it was in truth only owing to his being at present acquainted with no object capable of inspiring him with the tender passion.



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As he was now entirely free from all business, or avocation of any kind whatsoever, it came into his head to go and pass some part of the summer season with his sister:—he accordingly crossed the country to her seat, and was received with all imaginable demonstrations of joy, both by herself and husband.

He found their family increased by the addition of a lady, who preferring a country to a town life, had desired to board with them, which was readily granted by the sister of Natura, not only as she was a relation of her husband, but also for the sake of having a companion so perfectly agreeable as this lady was in every respect.

Charlotte, for so she was called, had been left a widow within three months after her marriage, and had never entertained any thoughts of entering into a second engagement, though her person, jointure, and accomplishments, had attracted many solicitations on that score. She was about thirty years of age when Natura found her at his sister's; and through the cheerfulness of her temper, and the goodness of her constitution, had preserved in her countenance all the bloom of fifteen.—The charms of her person, however, made no impression on Natura at his first acquaintance with her; he thought her a fine woman, as every one did who saw her, but her charms reached not his heart, nor gave him any emotions, either of pain or pleasure.

But it was not for any longtime he remained in this state of insensibility.—Charlotte had graces which could not fail of conquest, sooner or later:—where those of her eyes wanted the power to move, her tongue came in to their assistance, and was sure of gaining the day:—there was something so resistless in her wit, and manner of conversation, that none but those by nature, or want of proper education, were too dull and stupid to understand, but must have felt an infinity of satisfaction in it.

Besides all this, there was a sympathy of humour between this lady and Natura, which greatly contributed to make them pleased with each other:—both were virtuous by nature, by disposition gay and cheerful:—both were equally lovers of reading; had a smattering of philosophy, were perfectly acquainted with the world, and knew what in it was truly worthy of being praised or contemned; and what rendered them still more conformable, was the aversion which each testified to marriage.—Natura's treatment from his wife, had made him speak with some bitterness against a state, which had involved him in so many perplexities; and Charlotte, though so short a time a wife, having been married against her inclination, and to a man who, it seems, knew not her real value, had found in it the beginning of disquiets, which prognosticated worse mischiefs, had not his death relieved her from them, and made her too thankful for the deliverance, to endure the thoughts of venturing a second time to give up her freedom.

This parity of sentiments, inclinations, and dispositions, it was which, by degrees, endeared them to each other, without knowing they were so.

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Natura became at last impatient out of the company of Charlotte, and Charlotte found a restlessness in herself whenever Natura was absent; but this indeed happened but seldom:—the mutual desire they had of being together, made each of them industriously avoid all those parties of pleasure, in which both could not have a share:—Natura excused himself from accompanying his brother-in-law in any of those diversions where women were not admitted; and Charlotte always had some pretence for staying at home when the sister of Natura made her visits to the ladies of the country;—yet was this managed on both sides with such great decency and precaution, that neither the one nor the other perceived the motive which occasioned their being so rarely separated; much less had the family any notion of it.

It is certain, that never any two persons were possessed of a more true and delicate passion for each other:—the flame which warmed their breasts, was meerly spiritual, and platonic;—the difference of sex was never considered:—Natura adored Charlotte, not because she was a lovely woman, but because he imagined somewhat angelic in her mind; and Charlotte loved Natura not because he had an agreeable person, but because she thought she discovered more charms in his soul, than in that of any other man or woman.

The acquaintance between them soon grew into an intimacy, and that intimacy, by degrees, ripened into a friendship, which is the height and very essence of love, though neither of them would allow themselves to think it so: they made no scruple, however, of assuring each other, of their mutual esteem, and promised all the good offices in the power of either, with a freedom which they would not have done (especially Charlotte, who was naturally very reserved) had they been sensible to what lengths their present attachment might in time proceed.

Winter now drew on, but Natura was too much rivetted to think of departing, and would doubtless have made some pretext for living altogether with his sister, had not an accident happened, which made his going a greater proof of the regard he had for Charlotte, than his staying could have done, and perhaps made him know the real sentiments he was possessed of on her account, much sooner than he should without it.

That lady had some law-affairs, which required either herself, or some very faithful and diligent friend to attend. Term was approaching, and the brother-in-law of Natura had promised to take a journey to London for that purpose; but he unfortunately had been thrown from his horse in a hunting match, and broke his leg, and Charlotte seemed in a good deal of anxiety, who she should write to, in order to entrust with the care of her business, which she justly feared would suffer much, if left wholly to the lawyer's own management.



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Natura on this offered his service, and told her, if she would favour him with her confidence in this point, he would go directly to London, where she might depend on his diligence and fidelity in the forwarding her business:—as she had not the least doubt of either, she accepted this testimony of his friendship, with no other reluctance, than what the being long deprived of his conversation occasioned.—Her good sense, notwithstanding, got the better of that consideration, which she looked upon only at an indulgence to herself, and committed to his care all the papers necessary to be produced, in case he succeeded so well for her, as to bring the suit to a trial.

The manner of their taking leave was only such as might be expected between two persons, who professed a friendly regard for each other; but Natura had no sooner set out on his journey, than he felt a heaviness at his heart, for having left the adorable Charlotte, which nothing but the consideration that he was employed on her business, and going to serve her could have asswaged.

This was, indeed, a sweet consolation to him, and on his arrival in town, set himself to enquire into the causes of that delay she had complained of, with so much assiduity, that he easily found out she had not been well treated by her lawyers, and that one of them had even gone so far as to take fees from her adversary;—he therefore put the affair into other hands, and ordered matters so, that the trial could not, by any means, be put off till another time.

Yet, in spite of all this diligence, it was the opinion of the council, that there was an absolute necessity for the lady to appear herself:—it is hard to say, whether Natura was more vexed or pleased at this intelligence; he was sorry that he could not, of himself, accomplish what he came about, and spare her the trouble of a journey he had found was very disagreeable to her, not only on account of her aversion to the town, and the ill season of the year for travelling, but also because the person she contended with was a near relation, and she was very sensible would engage many of their kindred to dissuade her from doing herself that justice she was resolute to persist in her attempts for procuring.—The thoughts of the perplexity this would give her, it was that filled him with a good deal of trouble; but then the reflection, that he should have the happiness of seeing her again, on this account, much sooner than he could otherwise have done, gave him at least an equal share of satisfaction.

The gentlemen of the long robe employed in her cause, and whose veracity and judgment he was well assured of, insisting she must come, put an end to his suspense, and he wrote to her for that purpose: the next post brought him an answer which, to his great surprise, expressed not the least uneasiness on the score of this journey, only acquainted him, that she had taken a place in the stage, should set out next morning, and in three days be in London; against which time, she begged he would be so good to provide her a commodious lodging, she being determined to go to none of her kindred, for the reason abovementioned.

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Being animated with exactly the same sentiments Natura was, that inclination which led him to wish her coming, influenced her also to be pleased with it, and rendered the fatigue of the journey, and those others she expected to find on her arrival, of no consequence, when balanced against the happiness she proposed, in re-enjoying the conversation of her aimable and worthy friend.

But all this Natura was ignorant of; nor did his vanity suggest to him the least part of what passed in his favour in the bosom of his lovely Charlotte; but he needed no more than the knowledge she was coming to a place where he should have her company, with less interruption than he had hitherto the opportunity of, to make him the most transported man alive. As he had no house of his own in town to accommodate her with, he provided lodgings, and every thing necessary for her reception, with an alacrity worthy of his love, and the confidence she reposed in him; and went in his own coach to take her from the stage some miles on the road. She testified her gratitude for the care he took of her affairs, in the most obliging and polite acknowledgments; and he returned the thanks she gave him, with the sincerest assurances, that the thoughts of having it in his power to do her any little service, afforded him the most elevated pleasure he had ever known in his whole life.

What they said to each other, however, on this score, was taken by each, more as the effects of gallantry and good breeding, than the real motives from which the expressions they both made use of, had their source:—equal was their tenderness, equal also was their diffidence, it being the peculiar property of a true and perfect love, always to fear, and never to hope too much.

Natura had taken care to chuse her an apartment very near the place where he lodged himself, which luckily happened to be in an extreme airy and genteel part of the town; so that he had the pleasure of seeing her, not only every day, but almost every hour in the day, on one pretext or other, which his industrious passion dictated; and this almost continual being together, and, for the most part, without any other company, very much increased the freedom between them, though that freedom never went farther, even in a wish, on either side, for a long time at least, than that of a brother and sister.

Though all imaginable diligence was used to bring the law-suit to an issue, those with whom Charlotte contested, found means to put it off for yet one more term, she was obliged to stay that time; but neither felt in herself, nor pretended to do so, any repugnance at it:—Natura had enough to do to conceal his joy on this occasion; and when he affected a concern for her being detained in a place she had so often declared an aversion for, he did it so awkwardly, that had she not been too much taken up with endeavouring to disguise her own sentiments on this account, she could not but have seen into his.

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As neither of them seemed now to take any delight in balls, plays, operas, masquerades, cards, or any of the town diversions, they passed all their evenings together, and, for the most part, alone, as I before observed;—their conversation was chiefly on serious topics, and such as might have been improving to the hearers, had any been permitted; and when they fell on matters which required a more gay and sprightly turn, their good humour never went beyond an innocent chearfulness, nor in the least transgressed the bounds of the strictest morality and modesty.

How long this platonic intercourse would have continued, is uncertain; but the second term was near elapsed, the suit determined in favour of Charlotte, and her stay in town necessary but a very days before either of them entertained any other ideas, than such as I have mentioned. Natura then began to regret the diminution of the happiness he now enjoyed, and indeed of the total loss of it; for though he knew it would not be wondered at, that his complaisance should induce him to attend Charlotte in her journey to his sister's, yet he was at a loss for a pretence to remain there for any long time.—Charlotte, on the other hand, considered on the separation which, in all appearance, must shortly be between them, with a great deal of anxiety, and was even sorry the completion of her business had left her no excuse for staying in town, since she could not expect it either suited with his inclinations, or situation of affairs, to live always in the country.

These cogitations rendered both very uneasy in their minds, yet neither of them took any steps to remedy a misfortune equally terrible to each; and the event had doubtless proved as they imagined, had not the latent fires which glowed in both their breasts, been kindled into a flame by foreign means, and not the least owing to themselves.

One of those gentlemen who had been council for Charlotte, and had behaved with extraordinary zeal in her behalf, had been instigated thereto, more by the charms of her person, than the fees he received from her;—in fine, he was in love with her; but his passion was not of that delicate nature, which fills the mind with a thousand timid apprehensions, and chuses rather to endure the pains of a long smothered flame, than run the hazard of offending the adored object, by disclosing it.

He had enquired into her family and fortune, and finding there was nothing of disparity between them, he declared his passion to her, and declared it in terms which seemed not to savour of any great fears of being rejected.—He was in his prime of life, had an agreeable person, and a good estate, the consciousness of which, together with his being accustomed to plead with success at the bar, made him not much doubt, but his eloquence and assurance would have the same effect on his mistress, as it frequently had on the judges: but the good opinion he had of himself, greatly deceived him in

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this point; he met with a rebuff from Charlotte, which might have deterred some men from prosecuting a courtship she seemed determined never to encourage: but though he was a little alarmed at it, he could not bring himself to think she was enough in earnest to make him desist: in every visit he paid her, he interlarded his discourse on business with professions of love, which at length so much teized her, that she told him plainly, she would sooner suffer her cause to be lost, than suffer herself to be continually persecuted with sollicitations, which she had ever avoided since her widowhood, and ever should do so.

Natura came in one day just as the counsellor was going out of her apartment; he observed a great confusion in his face, and some emotions in her's, which shewed her mind a little ruffled from that happy composure he was accustomed to find it in. On his testifying the notice he took of this change in her countenance, 'It is strange thing,' said she, 'that people will believe nothing in their own disfavour!—I have told this man twenty times, that if I were disposed to think of a second marriage, which I do not believe I ever shall, the present sentiments I am possessed of, would never be reversed by any offer he could make me; yet will he still persist in his impertinent declarations.'

There needed no more to convince Natura he had a rival; nor, as he knew Charlotte had nothing of coquetry in her humour, to make him also know she was not pleased with having attracted the affections of this new admirer: this gave him an inexpressible satisfaction; for tho', as yet, he had never once thought of making any addresses to her on the score of love, death was not half so terrible to him, as the idea of her encouraging them from any other man.

'Then, madam,' cried he, looking on her in a manner she had never seen him do before, 'the counsellor has declared a passion for you, and you have rejected him?'—'is it possible?'—'Possible!' interrupted she, 'can you believe it possible I should not do so, knowing, as you do, the fixed aversion I have to entering into any second engagement!'—'but were it less so,' continued she, after a pause, 'his sollicitations would be never the more agreeable to me.'

Natura asked pardon for testifying any surprize, which he assured her was totally owing, either to this proof of the effect of her charms, 'which,' said he, 'are capable of far greater conquests; or to your refusal of the counsellor's offer, after the declarations you have made against a second marriage, but was excited in me meerly by the novelty of the thing, having heard nothing of it before.'

'This had not been among the number of the few things I conceal from you,' answered she, 'if I had thought the repetition worthy of taking up any part of that time which I always pass with you on subjects more agreeable';—'besides,' continued she, 'it was always my opinion, that those women, who talk of the addresses made to them, are

secretly pleased with them in their hearts, and like the love, tho' they may even despise the lover. For my part, I can feel no manner of satisfaction in relating to others, what I had rather be totally ignorant of myself.'

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Natura had here a very good opportunity of complimenting her on the excellency of her understanding, which set her above the vanities of the generality of her sex; and indeed he expressed himself with so much warmth on this occasion, that it even shocked her modesty, and she was obliged to desire him to change the conversation, and speak no more of a behaviour, which was not to be imputed to her good sense, but to her disposition.

Never had Natura found it more difficult to obey her than now;—he could have expatiated for ever on the many and peculiar perfections both of her mind and person; but he perceived, that to indulge the darling theme, would be displeasing to her, and therefore forced himself to put a stop to the utterance of those dictates, with which his heart was now charged, even to an overflowing.

Such was the effect of this incident on both: Natura, who till now had thought he loved only the *soul* of his mistress, found how dear her lovely *person* was also to him, by the knowledge that another was endeavouring to get possession of it; and Charlotte, by the secret satisfaction she felt on those indications Natura, in spite of his efforts to the contrary, had given of a more than ordinary admiration of her, discovered, for the first time, that he was indeed the only man whose love would not be displeasing to her.

After Natura came home, and had leisure to meditate on this affair, he began with thinking how terrible it would be to him, to see Charlotte in the arms of a husband; and when he reflected, that such a thing might be possible, even though he doubted not the sincerity of her present aversion, the idea was scarce to be borne:—from this he naturally fell on figuring to himself how great a blessing that man would enjoy, who should always have the sweet society of so amiable a companion;—and this made him cry out, 'Why then, what hinders me from endeavouring to become that happy man?—If I resolved against any future marriage, it was when I knew not the adorable Charlotte, nor believed there was so excellent a woman in the world.'—In this rapturous imagination did he continue for a moment, but then the improbability of succeeding in any such attempt, struck him with an adequate despair.—'Though the uncommon merit of the woman I adore,' said he, 'compels me to change the resolution I had taken, there is not the same reason to prevail on her to recede from her's.—Past the bloom of life, and already twice a husband, can I flatter myself with the fond hope she will not reject the proposals I should make with the same scorn she did those of the councillor?'

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Charlotte, on the other hand, was engrossed by reflections vastly different from those she was accustomed to entertain:—never woman was more free from vanity, or thought less of the power of her charms, yet she could not hinder herself from thinking there was somewhat in the behaviour of Natura, in his last visit, that denoted a regard beyond an ordinary friendship for her.—This apprehension, at first, a little startled her, or at least she imagined it did so, and she said to herself, 'If he should really harbour any inclinations for me of that sort, how unhappy should I be in being obliged to break off my acquaintance with a person so every way agreeable to me; and to continue it, would be to countenance a passion I have determined never to give the least attention to.'—'Yet wherefore did I determine?' pursued she, with a sigh, 'but because I found the generality of men mere wandering, vague, inconstant creatures;—were guided only by fancy;—never consulted their judgment, whether the object they pretended to admire, had any real merit or not, and often too treated those worst who had the best claim to their esteem;—besides, one seldom finds a man whose person and qualifications are every way suited to one's liking:—Natura is certainly such as I should wish a husband to be, if I were inclined to marry again;—I have not taken a vow of celibacy, and have nobody to controul my actions':—'then,' said she again, 'what foolish imaginations comes into my head; perhaps he has not the least thought of me in the way I am dreaming of;—no, no, he has suffered too much by the imprudence of one woman, to put it in the power of another to treat him in the same manner;—be trembles at marriage;—I have heard him declare it, and I am deviating into a vanity I never before was guilty of.'

She was debating in this fashion within herself, when Natura came to pay his morning visit: she blushed at his approach, conscious of the meditations she had been in on his account.—He, full of the sentiments I have described, saluted her with an air more grave and timid than he had been accustomed, and which all who are judges of the tender passion, know to be the surest symptom of it.—They sat down, and on his beginning to renew some discourse concerning the counsellor's pretensions, she desired him to forbear so disagreeable a topic, telling him at the same time, he could say nothing else she would not listen to with satisfaction.—'How, madam,' cried he, 'are you sure of that?—Alas, you little know what passes in my heart, or you would not permit me this toleration.' This might have been sufficient to make some women convinced of the truth; but Charlotte either fearful of being deceived by her own vanity, or willing he should be more explicit, answered, 'I have too high an opinion of your good sense, and too flattering an idea of your friendship to me, to imagine your heart will ever suggest any thing which would be offensive to me from your tongue.'



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'Suppose, madam,' said he, 'it should not be in my power to restrain my wishes in those bounds prescribed by you, to all who have the happiness of conversing with you; and that I were encroaching enough not to be content with the marks of friendship you are pleased to honour me':—'in fine,' continued he, 'suppose I were guilty of the very same presumption, you have so severely censured in the councillor!'

'That is impossible,' replied she, 'since you are a foe professed to marriage, as well as myself';—she was about to add something more, but was prevented by emotions, which she attempted, but in vain, to conceal; and Natura saw enough to keep him from despairing he had forfeited her *esteem* by aiming at her *love*.

Having thus made a beginning, it was easy for him to prosecute a suit, which he soon discovered he had a friend in her bosom to plead in favour of:—in a word, he left her not, till he had obtained her permission to entertain her on the same theme, and to use his endeavours to prevail on her to exchange the friendship she confessed for him into a warmer passion.

It would be altogether needless to make any repetition of the particulars of this courtship; the reader will easily believe, that both parties being animated with the same sentiments I have described, it could not be very tedious;—love had already done his work in their hearts, and required little the labour of the tongue. Charlotte had entirely compleated every thing appertaining to her law-suit, yet she seemed not in a hurry to quit the town; a business of a more tender nature now detained her;—she had resolved, or rather she could not help resolving, to give herself to Natura, and the shame of doing what she had so often, and so strenuously declared against, rendered the thoughts of returning into the country in a different state, from that with which she had left it, insupportable to her.

After having agreed to the sollicitations of her importunate lover, she expressed her sentiments to him on this head; on which it was concluded, that their nuptials should be solemnized as privately as possible in London, and that they should set out immediately after for his country seat, where Charlotte, being utterly a stranger, would not be subjected to any of those little railleries, she must have expected, in a place where every one knew of the aversion she had testified for a second marriage.

No cross accident intervening, what they designed was, in a short time, carried into execution;—never were any pair united by more indelible bonds; those of friendship sublimed into the most pure and virtuous tenderness, and a parity of principles, humours, and inclinations.

Thus does passion triumph over the most seemingly fixed and determined resolution; and though it must be confessed, that in this instance, both had reason, from the real merits of the beloved object, to justify their choice, yet nature would certainly have had



the same force, and worked the same effect, if excited only by meer fancy, and imaginary perfections.



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A Platonic and spiritual love, therefore, between persons of different sexes, can never continue for any length of time. Whatever ideas the *mind* may conceive, they will at last conform to the craving of the *senses*; and the *soul*, though never so elevated, find itself incapable of enjoying a perfect satisfaction, without the participation of the *body*.—As inclination then is not always guided by a right judgment, nor circumstances always concur to render the indulging an amorous propensity either convenient, or lawful, how careful ought every one be, not to be deceived by a romantic imagination, so far as to engage in an affection which, sooner or later, will bring them to the same point that Natura and Charlotte experienced.

### CHAP. VI.

How the most powerful emotions of the *mind* subside and grow weaker in proportion, as the strength of the *body* decays, is here exemplified; and that such passions as remain after a certain age, are not properly the incentives of nature, but of example, long habitude or ill humour.

The bride and bridegroom were received by all the friends, tenants, and dependants of Natura, with the greatest demonstrations of joy; and the behaviour of the amiable Charlotte was such as made every one cease to wonder that he had ventured again on marriage, after the disquiets he had experienced in that state.

The kindred on neither side had nothing to condemn in the choice which each had made of the other; and though perhaps a motive of self-interest might make those nearest in blood, and consequently to the estates they should leave at their decease, wish such an union had not happened, yet none took the liberty to complain, or betray, by any part of their behaviour, the least dissatisfaction at it.—The sister and brother-in-law of Natura, it must be allowed, had the most cause, as they had a large family of children, who had a claim equally to the effects of both, in case they had died without issue; yet did not even they express any discontent, though Charlotte, within the first year of her marriage, brought two sons into the world, and a third in the next ensuing one, all which seemed likely to live, and enjoy their parents patrimony.

What now was wanting to compleat the happiness of this worthy pair, equally loving and beloved by each other, respected by all who knew them, in need of no favours from any one, and blessed with the power of conferring them on as many as they found wanted, or merited their assistance.—Charlotte lost no part of her beauty, nor vivacity, by becoming a mother, nor did Natura find any decrease in the strength, or vigour, either of his mind or body, till he was past fifty-six years of age.—The same happy constitution had doubtless continued a much longer time in him, as nature had not been worn out by any excesses, or intemperance, if by unthinkingly drinking

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some cold water, when he was extremely hot, he had not thrown himself into a surfeit, which surfeit afterward terminated in an ague and fever, which remained on him a long time, and so greatly impaired all his faculties, as well as person, that he was scarce to be known, either by behaviour, or looks, for the man who, before that accident, had been infinitely regarded and esteemed for the politeness of the *one*, and the agreeableness of the *other*.

His limbs grew feeble, his body thin, and his face pale and wan, his temper sour and sullen, seldom caring to speak, and when he did it was with peevishness and ill-nature;—every thing was to him an object of disquiet; nothing of delight; and he seemed, in all respects, like one who was weary of the world, and knew he was to leave it in a short time.

It is so natural to feel repugnance at the thoughts of being what they call *no more*; that is, no more as to the knowledge and affections of this world; that even those persons who labour under the severest afflictions, wish rather to continue in them, than be eased by death:—they are pleased at any flattering hopes given of a prolongation of their present misery, and are struck with horror at the least mention of their life and pains being drawing to a period.—More irksome, doubtless, it must still be to those, who having every thing they could wish for here, find they must soon be torn from all the blessings they enjoy.—This is indeed a weakness; but it is a weakness of nature, and which neither religion nor philosophy are sufficient to arm us against; and the very endeavours we make to banish, or at least to conceal our disquiets on this score, occasion a certain peevishness in the sweetest temper, and make us behave with a kind of churlishness, even to those most dear to us.

Few, indeed, care to confess this truth, tho' there are scarce any, who do not shew it in their behaviour, even at the very time they are forcing themselves to an affectation of indifference for life, and a resignation to the will of Heaven.

The great skill of his physicians, however, and the yet greater care his tender consort took to see their prescriptions obeyed with the utmost exactitude, at length recovered Natura from the brink of the grave.—He was out of danger from the disease which had so long afflicted him; but though it had entirely left him, the attack had been too severe for a person at the age to which he was now arrived, to regain altogether the former man.—He had, in his sickness, contracted habits, which he was unable to throw off in health, and he could no more behave, than look, as he had done before.

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The mind would certainly be unalterable, and retain the same vigour it ever had in youth, even to extreme old age, could the constitution preserve itself entire.—It is that perishable part of us, which every little accident impairs, and wears away, preparing, as it were, by degrees, for a total dissolution, which hinders the nobler moiety of the human species from actuating in a proper manner:—those organs, which are the vehicles, through which its meanings shoot forth into action, being either shrivelled, abraded by long use, or clogged up with humours, shew the soul but in an imperfect manner, often disguise it wholly, and it is for want of a due consideration only, that we are so apt to condemn the *mind*, for what, in reality, is nothing but the incumbrances laid on it by the infirmities of the *body*.

It is true, that as we grow older, the passions naturally subside; yet that they do so, is not owing to themselves, as I think may be easily proved by this argument.

Every one will acknowledge, because he knows it by experience, that while he is possessed of *passions*, his *reason* alone has the power of keeping them within the bounds of moderation; if then we have less of the *passions* in old age, or rather, if they seem wholly extinguished in us, we ought to have a greater share of *reason* than before; whereas, on the contrary, *reason* itself becomes languid in the length of years, as well as the *passions*, it is supposed to have subdued: it is therefore merely the imbecility of the organical faculties, and from no other cause, that we see the aged and infirm dead, in appearance, to those sensations, by which their youth was so strongly influenced.

*Avarice* is, indeed, frequently distinguishable in old men; but this I do not look upon as a *passion* but a *propensity*, arising from ill-nature and self-love.—Gain, and the sordid pleasure of counting over money, and reckoning up rents and revenues, is the only lust of age; and since we cannot be so handsome, so vigorous, cannot indulge our appetites, like those who are younger, we take all manner of ways to be richer, and pride ourselves in the length of our bags, and the number of our tenants.

I know it may be objected, that this vice is not confined to age, that youth is frequently very avaritious, and grasps at money with a very unbecoming eagerness:—this, I grant, is true; but, if we look into the conduct of such men in other respects, I believe we shall generally find their avarice proceeds from their prodigality;—they are lavish in the purchase of pleasures, and must therefore be parsimonious in acts of generosity and justice:—they are guilty of meanness in some things, only for the sake of making a great figure in others; and are not ashamed to be accounted niggards, where they ought to be liberal, in order to acquire the reputation of open-handedness, where it would better become them to be sparing.

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Natura, however, had never discovered any tendency to this vice, either in youth or age; yet did that peevishness, which the infirmities of his body had occasioned, make him behave sometimes, as if he were tainted with it.

Charlotte observed this alteration in her husband's temper with an infinite concern; yet bore it with an equal patience;—making it her whole study to divert and sooth his ill humour:—he was not so lost to love and gratitude, and even reason too, as not to acknowledge the tender proofs he continually received of her unshaken affections, and would sometimes confess the errors he was guilty of, in point of behaviour towards her, and intreat her pardon; but then the least trifle would render him again forgetful of all he had said, and make him relapse into his former frowardness.

It is certain, notwithstanding, that his love for her was the same as ever, though he could not shew it in the same manner; and to what can this be imputed, but to the effect which the ailments of his external frame had on his internal faculties.

Though, as well as those about him, he found a decay within himself, which made him think he had not long to live; yet could he not be prevailed upon, for a great while, to settle his affairs after his decease, by making any will; and whenever it was mentioned to him, discovered a dissatisfaction, which at last made every one desist from urging any thing on that score.

It was in vain that they had remonstrated to him, that the estate being to descend entire to his eldest son, the two youngest would be left without any provision, and consequently must be dependants on their brother, by his dying intestate:—in vain they pleaded, that taking so necessary a precaution for preserving the future peace of his family, would no way hasten his death, but, on the contrary, render the fatal hour, whenever it should arrive, less dreadful, he had only either answered not at all, or replied in such a fashion, as could give them no room to hope for his compliance.

In this unhappy disposition did he continue between two and three years; but as his latter days came on, he grew much more calm and resigned, *reason* began to recover its former dominion over him; and, when every one had left off all importunities on the account of his making a *will*, he, of himself, mentioned the necessity of it, and ordered a lawyer to be sent for to that end.

Having settled all his affairs, relating to this world, in the most prudent manner, he began to prepare for another, with a zeal which shewed, that whatever notions people may have in health, concerning futurity, they become more convinced, in proportion as they grow nearer their dissolution.

He finished his course in the sixty-third, or what is called the grand climacteric year of life;—had the blessing to retain the use of all his senses to the last; and as death had long before assailed, though not totally vanquished him, he was too much decayed by

continual wastings, to feel any of those pangs, which persons who die in their full vigour must unavoidably go through, when the vital springs burst at once.

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He took leave of his dear wife and children with great serenity and composure of mind; and afterwards turned himself from them, and passed into eternity, as if falling into a gentle slumber.

Thus have I attempted to trace nature in all her mazy windings, and shew life's progress thro' the passions, from the cradle to the grave.—The various adventures which happened to Natura, I thought, afforded a more ample field, than those of any one man I ever heard, or read of; and flatter myself, that the reader will find many instances, that may contribute to rectify his own conduct, by pointing out those things which ought to be avoided, or at least most carefully guarded against, and those which are worthy to be improved and imitated.

**FINIS.**