

The Memoirs of Count Grammont — Volume 05 eBook

The Memoirs of Count Grammont — Volume 05

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CHAPTER NINTH.

Various love intrigues at the English court.

Every man who believes that his honour depends upon that of his wife is a fool who torments himself, and drives her to despair; but he who, being naturally jealous, has the additional misfortune of loving his wife, and who expects that she should only live for him; is a perfect madman, whom the torments of hell have actually taken hold of in this world, and whom nobody pities. All reasoning and observation on these unfortunate circumstances attending wedlock concur in this, that precaution is vain and useless before the evil, and revenge odious afterwards.

The Spaniards, who tyrannise over their wives, more by custom than from jealousy, content themselves with preserving the niceness of their honour by duennas, grates, and locks.

The Italians, who are wary in their suspicions, and vindictive in their resentments, pursue a different line of conduct: some satisfy themselves with keeping their wives under locks which they think secure: others by ingenious precautions exceed whatever the Spaniards can invent for confining the fair sex but the generality are of opinion, that in either unavoidable danger or in manifest transgression, the surest way is to assassinate.

But, ye courteous and indulgent nations, who, far from admitting these savage and barbarous customs, give full liberty to your dear ribs, and commit the care of their virtue to their own discretion, you pass without alarms or strife your peaceful days, in all the enjoyments of domestic indolence!

It was certainly some evil genius that induced Lord Chesterfield to distinguish himself from his patient and good-natured countrymen, and ridiculously to afford the world an opportunity of examining into the particulars of an adventure which would perhaps never have been known without the verge of the court, and which would everywhere have been forgotten in less than a month; but now, as soon as ever he had turned his back, in order to march away with his prisoner, and the ornaments she was supposed to have bestowed upon him, God only knows what a terrible attack there was made upon his rear: Rochester, Middlesex, Sedley, Etheredge, and all the whole band of wits, exposed him in numberless ballads, and diverted the public at his expense.

The Chevalier de Grammont was highly pleased with these lively and humorous compositions; and wherever this subject was mentioned, never failed to produce his supplement upon the occasion: "It is strange," said he, "that the country, which is little better than a gallows or a grave for young people, is allotted in this land only for the unfortunate, and not for the guilty! poor Lady Chesterfield, for some unguarded looks, is

immediately seized upon by an angry husband, who will oblige her to spend her Christmas at a country-house, a hundred and fifty

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miles from London; while here there are a thousand ladies who are left at liberty to do whatever they please, and who indulge in that liberty, and whose conduct, in short, deserves a daily bastinado. I name no person, God forbid I should; but Lady Middleton, Lady Denham, the queen's and the duchess's maids of honour, and a hundred others, bestow their favours to the right and to the left, and not the least notice is taken of their conduct. As for Lady Shrewsbury, she is conspicuous. I would take a wager she might have a man killed for her every day, find she would only hold her head the higher for it: one would suppose she imported from Rome plenary indulgences for her conduct: there are three or four gentlemen who wear an ounce of her hair made into bracelets, and no person finds any fault; and yet shall such a cross-grained fool as Chesterfield be permitted to exercise an act of tyranny, altogether unknown in this country, upon the prettiest woman in England, and all for a mere trifle: but I am his humble servant; his precautions will avail him nothing; on the contrary, very often a woman, who had no bad intentions when she was suffered to remain in tranquillity, is prompted to such conduct by revenge, or reduced to it by necessity: this is as true as the gospel: hear now what Francisco's saraband says on the subject:

"Tell me, jealous-paced swain,
What avail thy idle arts,
To divide united hearts?
Love, like the wind, I trow,
Will, where it listeth, blow;
So, prithee, peace, for all thy cares are vain.

"When you are by,
Nor wishful look, be sure, nor eloquent sigh,
Shall dare those inward fires discover,
Which burn in either lover
Yet Argus' self, if Argus were thy spy,
Should ne'er, with all his mob of eyes,
Surprise.

"Some joys forbidden,
Transports hidden,
Which love, through dark and secret ways,
Mysterious love, to kindred souls conveys."

The Chevalier de Grammont passed for the author of this sonnet: neither the justness of the sentiment, nor turn of it, are surprisingly beautiful; but as it contained some truths that flattered the genius of the nation, and pleased those who interested themselves for the fair sex, the ladies were all desirous of having it to teach their children.



During all this time the Duke of York, not being in the way of seeing Lady Chesterfield, easily forgot her: her absence, however, had some circumstances attending it which could not but sensibly affect the person who had occasioned her confinement; but there are certain fortunate tempers to which every situation is easy; they feel neither disappointment with bitterness, nor pleasure with acuteness. In the mean time, as the duke could not remain idle, he had no sooner forgotten Lady Chesterfield, but he began to think of her whom he had been in love with before, and was upon the point of relapsing into his old passion for Miss Hamilton.

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There was in London a celebrated portrait-painter called Lely, who had greatly improved himself by studying the famous Vandyke's pictures, which were dispersed all over England in abundance. Lely imitated Vandyke's manner, and approached the nearest to him of all the moderns. The Duchess of York, being desirous of having the portraits of the handsomest persons at court, Lely painted them, and employed all his skill in the performance; nor could he ever exert himself upon more beautiful subjects. Every picture appeared a master-piece; and that of Miss Hamilton appeared the highest finished: Lely himself acknowledged that he had drawn it with a particular pleasure. The Duke of York took a delight in looking at it, and began again to ogle the original: he had very little reason to hope for success; and at the same time that his hopeless passion alarmed the Chevalier de Grammont, Lady Denham thought proper to renew the negotiation which had so unluckily been interrupted: it was soon brought to a conclusion; for where both parties are sincere in a negotiation, no time is lost in cavilling. Everything succeeded prosperously on one side; yet, I know not what fatality obstructed the pretensions of the other. The duke was very urgent with the duchess to put Lady Denham in possession of the place which was the object of her ambition; but as she was not guarantee for the performance of the secret articles of the treaty, though till this time she had borne with patience the inconstancy of the duke, and yielded submissively to his desires; yet, in the present instance, it appeared hard and dishonourable to her, to entertain near her person, a rival, who would expose her to the danger of acting but a second part in the midst of her own court. However, she saw herself upon the point of being forced to it by authority, when a far more unfortunate obstacle for ever bereft poor Lady Denham of the hopes of possessing that fatal place, which she had solicited with such eagerness.

Old Denham, naturally jealous, became more and more suspicious, and found that he had sufficient ground for such conduct: his wife was young and handsome, he old and disagreeable: what reason then had he to flatter himself that Heaven would exempt him from the fate of husbands in the like circumstances? This he was continually saying to himself; but when compliments were poured in upon him from all sides, upon the place his lady was going to have near the duchess's person, he formed ideas of what was sufficient to have made him hang himself, if he had possessed the resolution. The traitor chose rather to exercise his courage against another. He wanted precedents for putting in practice his resentments in a privileged country: that of Lord Chesterfield was not sufficiently bitter for the revenge he meditated: besides, he had no country-house to which he could carry his unfortunate wife. This being the case, the old villain made her travel a much longer journey without stirring out of London. Merciless fate robbed her of life, and of her dearest hopes, in the bloom of youth.

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As no person entertained any doubt of his having poisoned her, the populace of his neighbourhood had a design of tearing him in pieces, as soon as he should come abroad; but he shut himself up to bewail her death, until their fury was appeased by a magnificent funeral, at which he distributed four times more burnt wine than had ever been drunk at any burial in England.

[The lampoons of the day, some of which are to be found in Andrew Marvell's Works, more than insinuate that she was deprived of life by a mixture infused into some chocolate. The slander of the times imputed her death to the jealousy of the Duchess of York.]

While the town was in fear of some great disaster, as an expiation for these fatal effects of jealousy, Hamilton was not altogether so easy as he flattered himself he should be after the departure of Lady Chesterfield: he had only consulted the dictates of revenge in what he had done. His vengeance was satisfied; but such was far from being the case with his love; and having, since the absence of her he still admired, notwithstanding his resentments, leisure to make those reflections which a recent injury will not permit a man to attend to: "And wherefore," said he to himself, "was I so eager to make her miserable, who alone, however culpable she may be, has it in her power to make me happy? Cursed jealousy!" continued he, "yet more cruel to those who torment than to those who are tormented! What have I gained by having blasted the hopes of a more happy rival, since I was not able to perform this without depriving myself, at the same time, of her upon whom the whole happiness and comfort of my life was centred."

Thus, clearly proving to himself, by a great many reasonings of the same kind, and all out of season, that in such an engagement it was much better to partake with another than to have nothing at all, he filled his mind with a number of vain regrets and unprofitable remorse, when he received a letter from her who occasioned them, but a letter so exactly adapted to increase them, that, after he had read it, he looked upon himself as the greatest scoundrel in the world. Here it follows:

"You will, no doubt, be as much surprised at this letter as I was at the unconcerned air with which you beheld my departure. I am led to believe that you had imagined reasons which, in your own mind, justified such unseasonable conduct. If you are still under the impression of such barbarous sentiments it will afford you pleasure to be made acquainted with what I suffer in the most horrible of prisons. Whatever the country affords most melancholy in this season presents itself to my view on all sides: surrounded by impassable roads, out of one window I see nothing but rocks, out of another nothing but precipices; but wherever I turn my eyes within doors I meet those of a jealous husband, still more insupportable than the sad objects that encompass me. I should add to the misfortunes of my life that of seeming

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criminal in the eyes of a man who ought to have justified me, even against convincing appearances, if by my avowed innocence I had a right to complain or to expostulate: but how is it possible for me to justify myself at such a distance; and how can I flatter myself that the description of a most dreadful prison will not prevent you from believing me? But do you deserve that I should wish you did? Heavens! how I must hate you, if I did not love you to distraction. Come, therefore, and let me once again see you, that you may hear my justification; and I am convinced that if after this visit you find me guilty it will not be with respect to yourself. Our Argus sets out to-morrow for Chester, where a law-suit will detain him a week. I know not whether he will gain it; but I am sure it will be entirely your fault if he does not lose one, for which he is at least as anxious as that he is now going after."

This letter was sufficient to make a man run blindfold into an adventure still more rash than that which was proposed to him, and that was rash enough in all respects: he could not perceive by what means she could justify herself; but as she assured him he should be satisfied with his journey, this was all he desired at present.

There was one of his relations with Lady Chesterfield, who, having accompanied her in her exile, had gained some share in their mutual confidence; and it was through her means he received this letter, with all the necessary instructions about his journey and his arrival. Secrecy being the soul of such expeditions, especially before an amour is accomplished, he took post, and set out in the night, animated by the most tender and flattering wishes, so that, in less than no time almost, in comparison with the distance and the badness of the roads, he had travelled a hundred and fifty tedious miles at the last stage he prudently dismissed the post-boy. It was not yet daylight, and therefore, for fear of the rocks and precipices mentioned in her letter, he proceeded with tolerable discretion, considering he was in love.

By this means he fortunately escaped all the dangerous places, and, according to his instructions, alighted at a little hut adjoining to the park wall. The place was not magnificent; but, as he only wanted rest, it did well enough for that: he did not wish for daylight, and was even still less desirous of being seen; wherefore, having shut himself up in this obscure retreat, he fell into a profound sleep, and did not wake until noon. As he was particularly hungry when he awoke, he ate and drank heartily: and, as he was the neatest man at court, and was expected by the neatest lady in England, he spent the remainder of the day in dressing himself, and in making all those preparations which the time and place permitted, without deigning once to look around him, or to ask his landlord a single question. At last the orders he expected with great impatience were brought him,

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in the beginning of the evening, by a servant, who, attending him as a guide, after having led him for about half an hour in the dirt, through a park of vast extent, brought him at last into a garden, into which a little door opened: he was posted exactly opposite to this door, by which, in a short time, he was to be introduced to a more agreeable situation; and here his conductor left him. The night advanced, but the door never opened.

Though the winter was almost over, the cold weather seemed only to be beginning: he was dirtied up to his knees in mud, and soon perceived that if he continued much longer in this garden it would all be frozen. This beginning of a very dark and bitter night would have been unbearable to any other; but it was nothing to a man who flattered himself to pass the remainder of it in the height of bliss. However, he began to wonder at so many precautions in the absence of a husband his imagination, by a thousand delicious and tender ideas supported him some time against the torments of impatience and the inclemency of the weather; but he felt his imagination, notwithstanding, cooling by degrees; and two hours, which seemed to him as tedious as two whole ages, having passed, and not the least notice being taken of him, either from the door or from the window, he began to reason with himself upon the posture of his affairs, and what was the fittest conduct for him to pursue in this emergency: "What if I should rap at this cursed door," said he; "for if my fate requires that I should perish, it is at least more honourable to die in the house than to be starved to death in the garden but then," continued he, "I may, thereby, perhaps, expose a person whom some unforeseen accident may, at this very instant, have reduced to greater perplexity than even I myself am in." This thought supplied him with a necessary degree of patience and fortitude against the enemies he had to contend with; he therefore began to walk quickly to and fro, with resolution to wait, as long as he could keep alive, the end of an adventure which had such an uncomfortable beginning. All this was to no purpose; for though he used every effort to keep himself warm, and though muffled up in a thick cloak, yet he began to be benumbed in all his limbs, and the cold gained the ascendancy over all his amorous vivacity and eagerness. Daybreak was not far off, and judging now that, though the accursed door should even be opened, it would be to no purpose, he returned, as well as he could, to the place from whence he had set out upon this wonderful expedition.

All the faggots that were in the cottage were hardly able to unfreeze him: the more he reflected on his adventure, the circumstances attending it appeared still the more strange and unaccountable; but so far from accusing the charming countess, he suffered a thousand different anxieties on her account. Sometimes he imagined that her husband might have returned unexpectedly; sometimes, that she might suddenly

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have been taken ill; in short, that some insuperable obstacle had unluckily interposed, and prevented his happiness, notwithstanding his mistress's kind intentions towards him. "But wherefore," said he, "did she forget me in that cursed garden? Is it possible that she could not find a single moment to make me at least, some sign or other, if she could neither speak to me nor give me admittance?" He knew not which of these conjectures to rely upon, or how to answer his own questions; but as he flattered himself that everything would succeed better the next night, after having vowed not to set a foot again into that unfortunate garden, he gave orders to be awakened as soon as any person should inquire for him: then he laid himself down in one of the worst beds in the world, and slept as sound as if he had been in the best: he supposed that he should not be awakened, but either by a letter or a message from Lady Chesterfield; but he had scarce slept two hours when he was roused by the sound of the horn and the cry of the hounds. The but which afforded him a retreat, joining, as we before said, to the park wall, he called his host, to know what was the occasion of that hunting, which made a noise as if the whole pack of hounds had been in his bed-chamber. He was told that it was my lord hunting a hare in his park. "What lord?" said he, in great surprise. "The Earl of Chesterfield," replied the peasant. He was so astonished at this that at first he hid his head under the bed-clothes, under the idea that he already saw him entering with all his bounds; but as soon as he had a little recovered himself he began to curse capricious fortune, no longer doubting but this jealous fool's return had occasioned all his tribulations in the preceding night.

It was not possible for him to sleep again, after such an alarm; he therefore got up, that he might revolve in his mind all the stratagems that are usually employed either to deceive, or to remove out of the way, a jealous scoundrel of a husband, who thought fit to neglect his law-suit in order to plague his wife. He had just finished dressing himself, and was beginning to question his landlord, when the same servant who had conducted him to the garden delivered him a letter, and disappeared, without waiting for an answer. This letter was from his relation, and was to this effect:

"I am extremely sorry that I have innocently been accessory to bringing you to a place, to which you were only invited to be laughed at: I opposed this journey at first, though I was then persuaded it was wholly suggested by her tenderness; but she has now undeceived me: she triumphs in the trick she has played you: her husband has not stirred from hence, but stays at home, out of complaisance to her: he treats her in the most affectionate manner; and it was upon their reconciliation that she found out that you had advised him to carry her into the country. She has conceived such hatred and aversion against you for it, that I find, from her

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discourse, she has not yet wholly satisfied her resentment. Console yourself for the hatred of a person, whose heart never merited your tenderness. Return: a longer stay in this place will but draw upon you some fresh misfortune: for my part, I shall soon leave her: I know her, and I thank God for it. I do not repent having pitied her at first; but I am disgusted with an employment which but ill agrees with my way of thinking."

Upon reading this letter, astonishment, shame, hatred, and rage, seized at once upon his heart: then menaces, invectives, and the desire of vengeance, broke forth by turns, and excited his passion and resentment; but, after he deliberately considered the matter, he resolved that it was now the best way quietly to mount his horse, and to carry back with him to London a severe cold, instead of the soft wishes and tender desires he had brought from thence. He quitted this perfidious place with much greater expedition than he had arrived at it, though his mind was far from being occupied with such tender and agreeable ideas: however, when he thought himself at a sufficient distance to be out of danger of meeting Lord Chesterfield and his hounds, he chose to look back, that he might at least have the satisfaction of seeing the prison where this wicked enchantress was confined; but what was his surprise, when he saw a very fine house, situated on the banks of a river, in the most delightful and pleasant country imaginable. Neither rock nor precipice was here to be seen; for, in reality, they were only in the letter of his perfidious mistress. This furnished fresh cause for resentment and confusion to a man who thought himself so well acquainted with all the wiles, as well as weaknesses, of the fair sex; and who now found himself the dupe of a coquette, who was reconciled to her husband in order to be revenged on her lover.

At last he reached London, well furnished with arguments to maintain that a man must be extremely weak to trust to the tenderness of a woman who has once deceived him, but that he must be a complete fool to run after her.

This adventure not being much to his credit, he suppressed, as much as possible, both the journey and the circumstances attending it; but, as we may easily suppose, Lady Chesterfield made no secret of it, the king came to the knowledge of it; and, having complimented Hamilton upon it, desired to be informed of all the particulars of the expedition. The Chevalier de Grammont happened to be present at this recital; and, having gently inveighed against the treacherous manner in which he had been used, said: "If she is to be blamed for carrying the jest so far, you are no less to be blamed for coming back so suddenly, like an ignorant novice. I dare lay an hundred guineas, she has more than once repented of a resentment which you pretty well deserved for the trick you had played her: women love revenge; but their resentments seldom last long; and if you had remained in the neighbourhood

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till the next day, I will be hanged if she would not have given you satisfaction for the first night's sufferings." Hamilton being of a different opinion, the Chevalier de Grammont resolved to maintain his assertion by a case in point; and, addressing himself to the king: "Sir," said he, "your majesty, I suppose, must have known Marion de l'Orme, the most charming creature in all France: though she was as witty as an angel, she was as capricious as a devil. This beauty having made me an appointment, a whim seized her to put me off, and to give it to another; she therefore wrote me one of the tenderest billets in the world, full of the grief and sorrow she was in, by being obliged to disappoint me; on account of a most terrible headache, that obliged her to keep her bed, and deprived her of the pleasure of seeing me till the next day. This headache coming all of a sudden, appeared to me very suspicious; and, never doubting but it was her intention to jilt me: 'Very well, mistress coquette,' said I to myself, 'if you do not enjoy the pleasure of seeing me this day, you shall not enjoy the satisfaction of seeing another.'

"Hereupon, I detached all my servants, some of whom patrolled about her house, whilst others watched her door; one of the latter brought me intelligence that no person had gone into her house all the afternoon; but that a foot-boy had gone out as it grew dark; that he followed him as far as the Rue Saint Antoine, where this boy met another, to whom he only spoke two or three words. This was sufficient to confirm my suspicions, and make me resolve either to make one of the party, or to disconcert it.

[Marion de l'Orme, born at Chalons, in Champagne, was esteemed the most beautiful woman of her times. It is believed that she was secretly married to the unfortunate Monsieur Cinqmars. After his death, she became the mistress of Cardinal Richelieu, and, at last, of Monsieur d'Emery, superintendent of the finances.]

"As the bagnio where I lodged was at a great distance from the Marais, as soon as the night set in I mounted my horse, without any attendant. When I came to the Place-Royale, the servant, who was sentry there, assured me that no person was yet gone into Mademoiselle de l'Orme's house: I rode forward towards the Rue Saint Antoine; and, just as I was going out of the Place-Royale, I saw a man on foot coming into it, who avoided me as much as he possibly could; but his endeavour was all to no purpose; I knew him to be the Duke de Brissac, and I no longer doubted but he was my rival that night: I then approached towards him, seeming as if I feared I mistook my man; and, alighting with a very busy air 'Brissac, my friend,' said I, 'you must do me a service of the very greatest importance: I have an appointment, for the first time, with a girl who lives very near this place; and, as this visit is only to concert measures, I shall make but a very short stay: be so kind, therefore, as

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to lend me your cloak, and walk my horse about a little, until I return; but, above all, do not go far from this place: you see that I use you freely like a friend; but you know it is upon condition that you may take the same liberty with me.' I took his cloak, without waiting for his answer, and he took my horse by the bridle, and followed me with his eye; but he gained no intelligence by this; for, after having pretended to go into a house opposite to him, I slipped under the piazzas to Mademoiselle de l'Orme's, where the door was opened as soon as I knocked. I was so much muffled up in Brissac's cloak that I was taken for him: the door was immediately shut, not the least question asked me; and having none to ask myself I went straight to the lady's chamber. I found her upon a couch in the most agreeable and genteelest deshabelle imaginable: she never in her life looked so handsome, nor was so greatly surprised; and, seeing her speechless and confounded: 'What is the matter, my fair one?' said I, 'methinks this is a headache very elegantly set off; but your headache, to all appearance, is now gone?' 'Not in the least,' said she, 'I can scarce support it, and you will oblige me in going away that I may go to bed.' 'As for your going to bed, to that I have not the least objection,' said I, 'but as for my going away, that cannot be, my little princess: the Chevalier de Grammont is no fool; a woman does not dress herself with so much care for nothing.' 'You will find, however,' said she, 'that it is for nothing; for you may depend upon it that you shall be no gainer by it.' 'What!' said I, 'after having made me an appointment!' 'Well,' replied she hastily, 'though I had made you fifty, it still depends upon me, whether I chose to keep them or not, and you must submit if I do not.' 'This might do very well,' said I, 'if it was not to give it to another.' Mademoiselle de l'Orme, as haughty as a woman of the greatest virtue, and as passionate as one who has the least, was irritated at a suspicion which gave her more concern than confusion; and seeing that she was beginning to put herself in a passion: 'Madam,' said I, 'pray do not talk in so high a strain; I know what perplexes you: you are afraid lest Brissac should meet me here; but you may make yourself easy on that account: I met him not far from this place, and God knows that I have so managed the affair as to prevent his visiting you soon.' Having spoken these words in a tone somewhat tragical, she appeared concerned at first, and, looking upon me with surprise: 'What do you mean about the Duke de Brissac?' said she. 'I mean,' replied I, 'that he is at the end of the street, walking my horse about; but, if you will not believe me, send one of your own servants thither, or look at his cloak which I left in your ante-chamber.' Upon this she burst into a fit of laughter, in the midst of her astonishment, and, throwing her arms around my neck, 'My dear Chevalier,' said she, 'I can hold out no longer; you are too amiable and too eccentric not to be pardoned.' I then told her the whole story: she was ready to die with laughing; and, parting very good friends, she assured me my rival might exercise horses as long as he pleased, but that he should not set his foot within her doors that night.

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"I found the duke exactly in the place where I had left him: I asked him a thousand pardons for having made him wait so long, and thanked him a thousand times for his complaisance. He told me I jested, that such compliments were unusual among friends; and to convince me that he had cordially rendered me this piece of service, he would, by all means, hold my horse while I was mounting. I returned him his cloak, bade him good night, and went back to my lodgings, equally satisfied with my mistress and my rival. This," continued he, "proves that a little patience and address are sufficient to disarm the anger of the fair, to turn even their tricks to a man's advantage."

It was in vain that the Chevalier de Grammont diverted the court with his stories, instructed by his example, and never appeared there but to inspire universal joy; for a long time he was the only foreigner in fashion. Fortune, jealous of the justice which is done to merit, and desirous of seeing all human happiness depend on her caprice, raised up against him two competitors for the pleasure he had long enjoyed of entertaining the English court; and these competitors were so much the more dangerous, as the reputation of their several merits had preceded their arrival, in order to dispose the suffrages of the court in their favour.

They came to display, in their own persons, whatever was the most accomplished either among the men of the sword, or of the gown. The one was the Marquis de Flamarens, the sad object of the sad elegies of the Countess de la Suse, the other was the president Tambonneau, the most humble and most obedient servant and admirer of the beauteous Luynes. As they arrived together, they exerted every endeavour to shine in concert: their talents were as different as their persons; Tambonneau, who was tolerably ugly, founded his hopes upon a great store of wit, which, however, no person in England could find out; and Flamarens, by his air and mien, courted admiration, which was flatly denied him.

They had agreed mutually to assist each other, in order to succeed in their intentions; and therefore, in their first visits, the one appeared in state, and the other was the spokesman. But they found the ladies in England of a far different taste from those who had rendered them famous in France: the rhetoric of the one had no effect on the fair sex, and the fine mien of the other distinguished him only in a minuet, which he first introduced into England, and which he danced with tolerable success. The English court had been too long accustomed to the solid wit of Saint Evremond, and the natural and singular charms of his hero, to be seduced by appearances; however, as the English have, in general, a sort of predilection in favour of anything that has the appearance of bravery, Flamarens was better received on account of a duel, which, obliging him to leave his own country, was a recommendation to him in England.

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Miss Hamilton had, at first, the honour of being distinguished by Tambonneau, who thought she possessed a sufficient share of wit to discover the delicacy of his; and, being delighted to find that nothing was lost in her conversation, either as to the turn, the expression, or beauty of the thought, he frequently did her the favour to converse with her; and, perhaps, he would never have found out that he was tiresome, if, contenting himself with the display of his eloquence, he had not thought proper to attack her heart. This was carrying the matter a little too far for Miss Hamilton's complaisance, who was of opinion that she had already shown him too much for the tropes of his harangues: he was therefore desired to try somewhere else the experiment of his seducing tongue, and not to lose the merit of his former constancy by an infidelity which would be of no advantage to him.

He followed this advice like a wise and tractable man; and some time after, returning to his old mistress in France, he began to lay in a store of politics for those important negotiations in which he has since been employed.

It was not till after his departure that the Chevalier de Grammont heard of the amorous declaration he had made: this was a confidence of no great importance; it, however, saved Tambonneau from some ridicule which might have fallen to his share before he went away. His colleague, Flamarens, deprived of his support, soon perceived that he was not likely to meet in England with the success he had expected, both from love and fortune: but Lord Falmouth, ever attentive to the glory of his master, in the relief of illustrious men in distress, provided for his subsistence, and Lady Southesk for his pleasures: he obtained a pension from the king, and from her everything he desired; and most happy was it for him that she had no other present to bestow but that of her heart.

It was at this time that Talbot, whom we have before mentioned, and who was afterwards created Duke of Tyrconnel, fell in love with Miss Hamilton. There was not a more genteel man at court: he was indeed but a younger brother, though of a very ancient family, which, however, was not very considerable either for its renown or its riches; and though he was naturally of a careless disposition, yet, being intent upon making his fortune, and much in favour with the Duke of York, and fortune likewise favouring him at play, he had improved both so well that he was in possession of about forty thousand pounds a year in land. He offered himself to Miss Hamilton, with this fortune, together with the almost certain hopes of being made a peer of the realm, by his master's credit; and, over-and-above all, as many sacrifices as she could desire of Lady Shrewsbury's letters, pictures, and hair; curiosities which, indeed, are reckoned for nothing in housekeeping, but which testify strongly in favour of the sincerity and merit of a lover.

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Such a rival was not to be despised; and the Chevalier de Grammont thought him the more dangerous, as he perceived that Talbot was desperately in love; that he was not a man to be discouraged by a first repulse; that he had too much sense and good breeding to draw upon himself either contempt or coldness by too great eagerness; and, besides this, his brothers began to frequent the house. One of these brothers was almoner to the queen, an intriguing Jesuit, and a great match-maker: the other was what was called a lay-monk, who had nothing of his order but the immorality and infamy of character which is ascribed to them; and withal, frank and free, and sometimes entertaining, but ever ready to speak bold and offensive truths, and to do good offices.

When the Chevalier de Grammont reflected upon all these things, there certainly was strong ground for uneasiness: nor was the indifference which Miss Hamilton showed for the addresses of his rival sufficient to remove his fears; for being absolutely dependent on her father's will, she could only answer for her own intentions: but Fortune, who seemed to have taken him under her protection in England, now delivered him from all his uneasiness.

Talbot had for many years stood forward as the patron of the distressed Irish: this zeal for his countrymen was certainly very commendable in itself; at the same time, however, it was not altogether free from self-interest: for, out of all the estates he had, through his credit, procured the restoration of to their primitive owners, he had always obtained some small compensation for himself; but, as each owner found his advantage in it, no complaint was made. Nevertheless, as it is very difficult to use fortune and favour with moderation, and not to swell with the gales of prosperity, some of his proceedings had an air of haughtiness and independence, which offended the Duke of Ormond, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, as injurious to his Grace's authority. The Duke resented this behaviour with great spirit. As there certainly was a great difference between them, both as to their birth and rank, and to their credit, it had been prudent in Talbot to have had recourse to apologies and submission; but such conduct appeared to him base, and unworthy for a man of his importance to submit to: he accordingly acted with haughtiness and insolence; but he was soon convinced of his error; for, having inconsiderately launched out into some arrogant expressions, which it neither became him to utter nor the Duke of Ormond to forgive, he was sent prisoner to the Tower, from whence he could not be released until he had made all necessary submissions to his Grace: he therefore employed all his friends for that purpose, and was obliged to yield more to get out of this scrape than would have been necessary to have avoided it. By this imprudent conduct he lost all hopes of marrying into a family, which, after such a proceeding, was not likely to listen to any proposal from him.

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[A very exact account of this transaction is given by Lord Clarendon, by which it appears, that Talbot was committed to the Tower for threatening to assassinate the Duke of Ormond. —Continuation of Clarendon, p. 362.]

It was with great difficulty and mortification that he was obliged to suppress a passion which had made far greater progress in his heart than this quarrel had done good to his affairs. This being the case, he was of opinion that his presence was necessary in Ireland, and that he was better out of the way of Miss Hamilton, to remove those impressions which still troubled his repose: his departure, therefore, soon followed this resolution.

Talbot played deep, and was tolerably forgetful: the Chevalier de Grammont won three or four hundred guineas of him the very evening on which he was sent to the Tower. That accident had made him forget his usual punctuality in paying the next morning whatever he had lost over-night; and this debt had so far escaped his memory, that it never once occurred to him after he was enlarged. The Chevalier de Grammont, who saw him at his departure, without taking the least notice of the money he owed him, wished him a good journey; and, having met him at court, as he came to take his leave of the king: “Talbot,” said he, “if my services can be of any use to you during your absence, you have but to command them: you know old Russell has left his nephew as his resident with Miss Hamilton: if you please, I will act for you in the same capacity. Adieu, God bless you: be sure not to fall sick upon the road; but if you should, pray remember me in your will.” Talbot, who, upon this compliment, immediately recollected the money he owed the Chevalier, burst out a-laughing, and embracing him: “My dear Chevalier,” said he, “I am so much obliged to you for your offer, that I resign you my mistress, and will send you your money instantly.” The Chevalier de Grammont possessed a thousand of these genteel ways of refreshing the memories of those persons who were apt to be forgetful in their payments. The following is the method he used some years after with Lord Cornwallis: this lord had married the daughter of Sir Stephen Fox,—treasurer of the king’s household, one of the richest and most regular men in England. His son-in-law, on the contrary, was a young spendthrift, was very extravagant, loved gaming, lost as much as any one would trust him, but was not quite so ready at paying. His father-in-law disapproved of his conduct, paid his debts, and gave him a lecture at the same time. The Chevalier de Grammont had won of him a thousand or twelve hundred guineas, which he heard no tidings of, although he was upon the eve of his departure, and he had taken leave of Cornwallis in a more particular manner than any other person. This obliged the Chevalier to write him a billet, which was rather laconic. It was this:

“My lord,

“Pray remember the Count de Grammont, and do not forget Sir Stephen Fox.”

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To return to Talbot: he went away more concerned than became a man who had voluntarily resigned his mistress to another: neither his stay in Ireland, nor his solicitude about his domestic affairs, perfectly cured him; and if at his return he found himself disengaged from Miss Hamilton's chains, it was only to exchange them for others. The alteration that had taken place in the two courts occasioned this change in him, as we shall see in the sequel.

We have hitherto only mentioned the queen's maids of honour, upon account of Miss Stewart and Miss Warmestre the others were Miss Bellenden, Mademoiselle de la Garde and Mademoiselle Bardou, all maids of honour, as it pleased God.

Miss Bellenden was no beauty, but was a good-natured girl, whose chief merit consisted in being plump and fresh-coloured; and who, not having a sufficient stock of wit to be a coquette in form, used all her endeavours to please every person by her complaisance. Mademoiselle de la Garde, and Mademoiselle Bardou, both French, had been preferred to their places by the queen dowager: the first was a little brunette, who was continually meddling in the affairs of her companions; and the other by all means claimed the rank of a maid of honour, though she only lodged with the others, and both her title and services were constantly contested.

It was hardly possible for a woman to be more ugly, with so fine a shape; but as a recompense, her ugliness was set off with every art. The use she was put to, was to dance with Flamarens, and sometimes, towards the conclusion of a ball, possessed of castanets and effrontery, she would dance some figured saraband or other, which amused the court. Let us now see in what manner this ended.

As Miss Stewart was very seldom in waiting on the queen, she was scarcely considered as a maid of honour: the others went off almost at the same time, by different adventures; and this is the history of Miss Warmestre, whom we have before mentioned, when speaking of the Chevalier de Grammont.

Lord Taaffe, eldest son of the Earl of Carlingford, was supposed to be in love with her; and Miss Warmestre not only imagined it was so, but likewise persuaded herself that he would not fail to marry her the first opportunity; and in the mean time she thought it her duty to entertain him with all the civility imaginable. Taaffe had made the Duke of Richmond his confidant: these two were particularly attached to each other; but still more so to wine. The Duke of Richmond, notwithstanding his birth, made but an indifferent figure at court; and the king respected him still less than his courtiers did: and perhaps it was in order to court his majesty's favour that he thought proper to fall in love with Miss Stewart. The Duke and Lord Taaffe made each other the confidants of their respective engagements; and these were the measures they took to put their designs in execution. Little Mademoiselle de la Gardet was charged to acquaint Miss Stewart that the Duke of Richmond was dying of love for her, and that when he ogled

her in public it was a certain sign that he was ready to marry her, as soon as ever she would consent.

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Taaffe had no commission to give the little ambassadress for Miss Warmestre; for there everything was already arranged; but she was charged to settle and provide some conveniences which were still wanting for the freedom of their commerce, such as to have free egress and regress to her at all hours of the day or night: this appeared difficult to be obtained, but it was, however, at length accomplished.

The governess of the maids of honour, who for the world would not have connived at anything that was not fair and honourable, consented that they should sup as often as they pleased in Miss Warmestre's apartments, provided their intentions were honourable, and she one of the company. The good old lady was particularly fond of green oysters, and had no aversion to Spanish wine: she was certain of finding at every one of these suppers two barrels of oysters; one to be eaten with the party, and the other for her to carry away: as soon, therefore, as she had taken her dose of wine, she took her leave of the company.

It was much about the time that the Chevalier de Grammont had cast his eyes upon Miss Warmestre, that this kind of life was led in her chamber. God knows how many ham pies, bottles of wine, and other products of his lordship's liberality were there consumed!

In the midst of these nocturnal festivals, and of this innocent commerce, a relation of Killegrew's came up to London about a lawsuit: he gained his cause, but nearly lost his senses.

He was a country gentleman, who had been a widower about six months, and was possessed of fifteen or sixteen thousand pounds a-year: the good man, who had no business at court, went thither merely to see his cousin Killegrew, who could have dispensed with his visits. He there saw Miss Warmestre; and at first sight fell in love with her. His passion increased to such a degree that, having no rest either by day or night, he was obliged to have recourse to extraordinary remedies; he therefore early one morning called upon his cousin Killegrew, told him his case, and desired him to demand Miss Warmestre in marriage for him.

Killegrew was struck with wonder and astonishment when he heard his design: nor could he cease wondering at what sort of creature, of all the women in London, his cousin had resolved upon marrying. It was some time before Killegrew could believe that he was in earnest; but when he was convinced that he was, he began to enumerate the dangers and inconveniences attending so rash an enterprise. He told him that a girl educated at court, was a terrible piece of furniture for the country; that to carry her thither against her inclination, would as effectually rob him of his happiness and repose, as if he was transported to hell; that if he consented to let her stay, he needed only to compute what it would cost him in equipage, table, clothes, and gaming-money, to maintain her in London according to her caprices; and then to cast up how long his fifteen thousand a-year would last.

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His cousin had already formed this computation; but, finding his reason less potent than his love, he remained fixed in his resolution; and Killegrew, yielding at length to his importunities, went and offered his cousin, bound hand and foot, to the victorious fair. As he dreaded nothing more than a compliance on her part, so nothing could astonish him more than the contempt with which she received his proposal. The scorn with which she refused him, made him believe that she was sure of Lord Taaffe, and wonder how a girl like her could find out two men who would venture to marry her. He hastened to relate this refusal, with all the most aggravating circumstances, as the best news he could carry to his cousin; but his cousin would not believe him: he supposed that Killegrew disguised the truth, for the same reasons he had already alleged; and not daring to mention the matter any more to him, he resolved to wait upon her himself. He summoned all his courage for the enterprise, and got his compliment by heart; but as soon as he had opened his mouth for the purpose, she told him he might have saved himself the trouble of calling on her about such a ridiculous affair; that she had already given her answer to Killegrew; and that she neither had, nor ever should have, any other to give; which words she accompanied with all the severity with which importunate demands are usually refused.

He was more affected than confounded at this repulse: everything became odious to him in London, and he himself more so than all the rest: he therefore left town, without taking leave of his cousin, went back to his country seat, and thinking it would be impossible for him to live without the inhuman fair, he resolved to neglect no opportunity in his power to hasten his death.

But whilst, in order to indulge his sorrow, he had forsaken all intercourse with dogs and horses; that is to say, renounced all the delights and endearments of a country squire, the scornful nymph, who was certainly mistaken in her reckoning, took the liberty of being brought to-bed in the face of the whole court.

An adventure so public made no small noise, as we may very well imagine: all the prudes at court at once broke loose upon it; and those principally, whose age or persons secured them from any such scandal, were the most inveterate, and cried most loudly for justice. But the governess of the maids of honour, who might have been called to an account for it, affirmed that it was nothing at all, and that she was possessed of circumstances which would at once silence all censorious tongues. She had an audience of the queen, in order to unfold the mystery; and related to her majesty how everything had passed with her consent, that is to say, upon honourable terms.

The queen sent to inquire of Lord Taaffe, whether he acknowledged Miss Warmestre for his wife: to which he most respectfully returned for answer, that he neither acknowledged Miss Warmestre nor her child, and that he wondered why she should rather father it upon him than any other. The unfortunate Warmestre, more enraged at this answer than at the loss of such a lover, quitted the court as soon as ever she was able, with a resolution of quitting the world the first opportunity.

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Killegrew, being upon the point of setting out upon a journey, when this adventure happened, thought he might as well call upon his afflicted cousin in his way, to acquaint him with the circumstance; and as soon as he saw him, without paying any attention to the delicacy of his love, or to his feelings, he bluntly told him the whole story: nor did he omit any colouring that could heighten his indignation, in order to make him burst with shame and resentment.

We read that the gentle Tiridates quietly expired upon the recital of the death of Mariamne; but Killegrew's fond cousin falling devoutly upon his knees, and lifting up his eyes to Heaven, poured forth this exclamation:

"Praised be the Lord for a small misfortune, which perhaps may prove the comfort of my life! Who knows but the beauteous Warmestre will now accept of me for a husband; and that I may have the happiness of passing the remainder of my days with a woman I adore, and by whom I may expect to have heirs?" "Certainly," said Killegrew, more confounded than his cousin ought to have been on such an occasion, "you may depend upon having both: I make no manner of doubt but she will marry you as soon as ever she is recovered from her lying-in; and it would be a great ill-nature in her, who already knows the way, to let you want children: however, in the meantime I advise you to take that she has already, till you get more."

Notwithstanding this raillery, all that was said did take place. This faithful lover courted her, as if she had been the chaste Lucretia, or the beauteous Helen: his passion even increased after marriage, and the generous fair, first out of gratitude, and afterwards through inclination, never brought him a child of which he was not the father; and though there have been many a happy couple in England, this certainly was the happiest.

Some time after, Miss Bellenden, not being terrified by this example, had the prudence to quit the court before she was obliged so to do: the disagreeable Bardou followed her soon after; but for different reasons. Every person was at last completely tired of her saraband, as well as of her face; and the king, that he might see neither of them any more, gave each a small pension for her subsistence. There now only remained little Mademoiselle de la Garde to be provided for neither her virtues nor her vices were sufficiently conspicuous to occasion her being either dismissed from court, or pressed to remain there: God knows what would have become of her, if a Mr. Silvius, a man who had nothing of a Roman in him except the name, had not taken the poor girl to be his wife. We have now shown how all these damsels deserved to be expelled, either for their irregularities, or for their ugliness; and yet, those who replaced them found means to make them regretted, Miss Wells only excepted.

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She was a tall girl, exquisitely shaped: she dressed very genteel, walked like a goddess; and yet, her face, though made like those that generally please the most, was unfortunately one of those that pleased the least: nature had spread over it a certain careless indolence that made her look sheepish. This gave but a bad opinion of her wit: and her wit had the ill-luck to make good that opinion: however, as she was fresh coloured, and appeared inexperienced, the king, whom the fair Stewart did not render over nice as to the perfections of the mind, resolved to try whether the senses would not fare better with Miss Wells's person than fine sentiments with her understanding: nor was this experiment attended with much difficulty: she was of a loyal family; and her father having faithfully served Charles the First, she thought it her duty not to revolt against Charles the Second. But this connection was not attended with very advantageous circumstances for herself; some pretended that she did not hold out long enough, and that she surrendered at discretion before she was vigorously attacked; and others said, that his majesty complained of certain other facilities still less pleasing. The Duke of Buckingham made a couplet upon this occasion, wherein the king, speaking to Progers, the confidant of his intrigues, puns upon the name of the fair one, to the following purport:

When the king felt the horrible depth of this Well,
"Tell me, Progers," cried Charlie, "where am I? oh tell!
Had I sought the world's centre to find, I had found it,
But this Well! ne'er a plummet was made that could sound it."

[Edward Progers, Esq., was a younger son of Philip Progers, Esq., of the family of Garreddin, in Monmouthshire. His father was a colonel in the army, and equerry to James I. Edward was early introduced to court, and, after having been page to Charles I., was made groom of the bed-chamber to his son, while Prince of Wales. He attached himself to the king's interest during the war with the parliament, with laudable fidelity. The following letter, from which antiquaries may derive the minute information that Charles II. did wear mourning for a whole year for his father, serves to shew the familiar style which Charles used to Progers, as well as his straitened circumstances while in the island of Jersey. "Progers, I wold have you (besides the embroidred sute) bring me a plaine riding suite, with an innocent coate, the suites I haue for horsebacke being so spotted and spoiled that they are not to be seene out of this island. The lining of the coate, and the petit toies are referred to your greate discretion, provided there want nothing when it comes to be put on. I doe not remember there was a belt, or a hat-band, in your directions for the embroidred suite, and those are so necessarie as you must not forget them.

"Jearsey, 14th Jan. old stile, 1649. *Charles R.*"]

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Miss Wells, notwithstanding this species of anagram upon her name, and these remarks upon her person, shone the brightest among her new companions. These were Miss Levingston, Miss Fielding, and Miss Boynton, who little deserve to be mentioned in these memoirs; therefore we shall leave them in obscurity until it please fortune to draw them out of it.

This was the new establishment of maids of honour to the queen. The Duchess of York, nearly about the same time, likewise recruited hers; but showed, by a happier and more brilliant choice, that England possessed an inexhaustible stock of beauties. But before we begin to speak of them, let us see who were the first maids of honour to her royal highness, and on what account they were removed.

Besides Miss Blague and Miss Price, whom we have before mentioned, the establishment was composed of Miss Bagot and Miss Hobart, the president of the community. Miss Blague, who never knew the true reason of her quarrel with the Marquis de Brisacier, took it up upon that fatal letter she had received from him, wherein, without acquainting her that Miss Price was to wear the same sort of gloves and yellow riband as herself, he had only complimented her upon her hair, her fair complexion, and her eyes marcassins. This word she imagined must signify something particularly wonderful, since her eyes were compared to it; and being desirous, some time afterwards, to know all the energy of the expression, she asked the meaning of the French word marcassin. As there are no wild boars in England, those to whom she addressed herself, told her that it signified a young pig. This scandalous simile confirmed her in the belief she entertained of his perfidy. Brisacier, more amazed at her change, than she was offended at his supposed calumny, looked upon her as a woman still more capricious than insignificant, and never troubled himself more about her; but Sir Yarborough, of as fair a complexion as herself, made her an offer of marriage in the height of her resentment, and was accepted: chance made up this match, I suppose, as an experiment to try what such a white-haired union would produce.

Miss Price was witty; and as her person was not very likely to attract many admirers, which, however, she was resolved to have, she was far from being coy when an occasion offered: she did not so much as make any terms: she was violent in her resentments, as well as in her attachments, which had exposed her to some inconveniences; and she had very indiscreetly quarrelled with a young girl whom Lord Rochester admired. This connection, which till then had been a secret, she had the imprudence to publish to the whole world, and thereby drew upon herself the most dangerous enemy in the universe: never did any man write with more ease, humour, spirit, and delicacy; but he was at the same time the most severe satirist.

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Poor Miss Price, who had thus voluntarily provoked his resentment, was daily exposed in some new shape: there was every day some new song or other, the subject of which was her conduct, and the burden her name. How was it possible for her to bear up against these attacks, in a court, where every person was eager to obtain the most insignificant trifle that came from the pen of Lord Rochester? The loss of her lover, and the discovery that attended it, was only wanting to complete the persecution that was raised against her.

About this time died Dongan, a gentleman of merit, who was succeeded by Durfort, afterwards Earl of Feversham, in the post of lieutenant of the duke's life guards. Miss Price having tenderly loved him, his death plunged her into a gulf of despair; but the inventory of his effects had almost deprived her of her senses: there was in it a certain little box sealed up on all sides: it was addressed in the deceased's own handwriting to Miss Price; but instead of receiving it, she had not even the courage to look upon it. The governess thought it became her in prudence to receive it, on Miss Price's refusal, and her duty to deliver it to the duchess herself, supposing it was filled with many curious and precious commodities, of which perhaps she might make some advantage. Though the duchess was not altogether of the same opinion, she had the curiosity to see what was contained in a box sealed up in a manner so particularly careful, and therefore caused it to be opened in the presence of some ladies, who happened then to be in her closet.

All kinds of love trinkets were found in it; and all these favours, it appeared, came from the tender-hearted Miss Price. It was difficult to comprehend how a single person could have furnished so great a collection; for, besides counting the pictures, there was hair of all descriptions, wrought into bracelets, lockets, and into a thousand other different devices, wonderful to see. After these were three or four packets of letters, of so tender a nature, and so full of raptures and languors so naturally expressed, that the duchess could not endure the reading of any more than the two first.

Her royal highness was sorry that she had caused the box to be opened in such good company; for being before such witnesses, she rightly judged it was impossible to stifle this adventure; and, at the same time, there being no possibility of retaining any longer such a maid of honour, Miss Price had her valuables restored to her, with orders to go and finish her lamentations, or to console herself for the loss of her lover, in some other place.

Miss Hobart's character was at that time as uncommon in England, as her person was singular, in a country where, to be young, and not to be in some degree handsome, is a reproach; she had a good shape, rather a bold air, and a great deal of wit, which was well cultivated, without having much discretion. She was likewise possessed of a great deal of vivacity, with an irregular fancy: there was a great deal of fire in her eyes, which, however, produced no effect upon the beholders and she had a tender heart, whose sensibility some pretended was alone in favour of the fair sex.

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Miss Bagot was the first that gained her tenderness and affection, which she returned at first with equal warmth and sincerity; but perceiving that all her friendship was insufficient to repay that of Miss Hobart, she yielded the conquest to the governess's niece, who thought herself as much honoured by it as her aunt thought herself obliged by the care she took of the young girl.

It was not long before the report, whether true or false, of this singularity, spread through the whole court, where people, being yet so uncivilized as never to have heard of that kind of refinement in love of ancient Greece, imagined that the illustrious Hobart, who seemed so particularly attached to the fair sex, was in reality something more than she appeared to be.

Satirical ballads soon began to compliment her upon these new attributes; and upon the insinuations that were therein made, her companions began to fear her. The governess, alarmed at these reports, consulted Lord Rochester upon the danger to which her niece was exposed. She could not have applied to a fitter person: he immediately advised her to take her niece out of the hands of Miss Hobart; and contrived matters so well that she fell into his own. The duchess, who had too much generosity not to treat as visionary what was imputed to Miss Hobart, and too much justice to condemn her upon the faith of lampoons, removed her from the society of the maids of honour, to be an attendant upon her own person.

Miss Bagot was the only one who was really possessed of virtue and beauty among these maids of honour: she had beautiful and regular features, and that sort of brown complexion, which, when in perfection, is so particularly fascinating, and more especially in England, where it is uncommon. There was an involuntary blush almost continually upon her cheek, without having anything to blush for. Lord Falmouth cast his eyes upon her: his addresses were better received than those of Miss Hobart, and some time after Cupid raised her from the post of maid of honour to the duchess to a rank which might have been envied by all the young ladies in England.

The Duchess of York, in order to form her new court, resolved to see all the young persons that offered themselves, and, without any regard to recommendations, to choose none but the handsomest.

At the head of this new assembly appeared Miss Jennings and Miss Temple; and indeed they so entirely eclipsed the other two, that we shall speak of them only.

Miss Jennings, adorned with all the blooming treasures of youth, had the fairest and brightest complexion that ever was seen: her hair was of a most beautiful flaxen: there was something particularly lively and animated in her countenance, which preserved her from that insipidity which is frequently an attendant on a complexion so extremely fair. Her mouth was not the smallest, but it was the handsomest mouth in the world. Nature had endowed her with all

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those charms which cannot be expressed, and the graces had given the finishing stroke to them. The turn of her face was exquisitely fine, and her swelling neck was as fair and as bright as her face. In a word, her person gave the idea of Aurora, or the goddess of the spring, "such as youthful poets fancy when they love." But as it would have been unjust that a single person should have engrossed all the treasures of beauty without any defect, there was something wanting in her hands and arms to render them worthy of the rest: her nose was not the most elegant, and her eyes gave some relief, whilst her mouth and her other charms pierced the heart with a thousand darts.

With this amiable person she was full of wit and sprightliness, and all her actions and motions were unaffected and easy: her conversation was bewitching, when she had a mind to please; piercing and delicate when disposed to raillery; but as her imagination was subject to flights, and as she began to speak frequently before she had done thinking, her expressions did not always convey what she wished; sometimes exceeding, and at others falling short of her ideas.

Miss Temple, nearly of the same age, was brown compared with the other: she had a good shape, fine teeth, languishing eyes, a fresh complexion, an agreeable smile, and a lively air. Such was the outward form; but it would be difficult to describe the rest; for she was simple and vain, credulous and suspicious, coquettish and prudent, very self-sufficient and very silly.

As soon as these new stars appeared at the duchess's court, all eyes were fixed upon them, and every one formed some design upon one or other of them, some with honourable, and others with dishonest intentions. Miss Jennings soon distinguished herself, and left her companions no other admirers but such as remained constant from hopes of success: her brilliant charms attracted at first sight, and the charms of her wit secured her conquests.

The Duke of York having persuaded himself that she was part of his property, resolved to pursue his claim by the same title whereby his brother had appropriated to himself the favours of Miss Wells; but he did not find her inclined to enter into his service, though she had engaged in that of the duchess. She would not pay any attention to the perpetual ogling with which he at first attacked her. Her eyes were always wandering on other objects, when those of his royal highness were looking for them; and if by chance he caught any casual glance, she did not even blush. This made him resolve to change his manner of attack: ogling having proved ineffectual, he took an opportunity to speak to her; and this was still worse. I know not in what strain he told his case; but it is certain the oratory of the tongue was not more prevailing than the eloquence of his eyes.

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Miss Jennings had both virtue and pride, and the proposals of the duke were consistent with neither the one nor the other. Although from her great vivacity one might suppose that she was not capable of much reflection, yet she had furnished herself with some very salutary maxims for the conduct of a young person of her age. The first was, that a lady ought to be young to enter the court with advantage, and not old to leave it with a good grace: that she could not maintain herself there but by a glorious resistance, or by illustrious foibles and that, in so dangerous a situation, she ought to use her utmost endeavours not to dispose of her heart until she gave her hand.

Entertaining such sentiments, she had far less trouble to resist the duke's temptations, than to disengage herself from his perseverance: she was deaf to all treaties for a settlement, with which her ambition was sounded: and all offers of presents succeeded still worse. What was then to be done to conquer an extravagant virtue that would not hearken to reason? He was ashamed to suffer a giddy young girl to escape, whose inclinations ought in some manner to correspond with the vivacity that shone forth in all her actions, and who nevertheless thought proper to be serious when no such thing as seriousness was required of her.

After he had attentively considered her obstinate behaviour, he thought that writing might perhaps succeed, though ogling, speeches, and embassies had failed. Paper receives everything, but it unfortunately happened that she would not receive the paper. Every day billets, containing the tenderest expressions, and most magnificent promises, were slipped into her pockets, or into her muff: this, however, could not be done unperceived; and the malicious little gipsy took care that those who saw them slip in, should likewise see them fall out, unperused and unopened; she only shook her muff, or pulled out her handkerchief; as soon as ever his back was turned, his billets fell about her like hail-stones, and whoever pleased might take them up. The duchess was frequently a witness of this conduct, but could not find in her heart to chide her for her want of respect to the duke. After this, the charms and prudence of Miss Jennings were the only subjects of conversation in the two courts: the courtiers could not comprehend how a young creature, brought directly from the country to court, should so soon become its ornament by her attractions, and its example by her conduct.

The king was of opinion that those who had attacked her had ill-concerted their measures; for he thought it unnatural that she should neither be tempted by promises, nor gained by importunity: she, especially, who in all probability had not imbibed such severe precepts from the prudence of her mother, who had never tasted any thing more delicious than the plums and apricots of Saint Albans. Being resolved to try her himself, he was particularly pleased with

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the great novelty that appeared in the turn of her wit, and in the charms of her person; and curiosity, which at first induced him to make the trial, was soon changed into a desire of succeeding in the experiment. God knows what might have been the consequence, for he greatly excelled in wit, and besides he was king: two qualities of no small consideration. The resolutions of the fair Jennings were commendable, and very judicious; but yet she was wonderfully pleased with wit; and royal majesty prostrate at the feet of a young person, is very persuasive. Miss Stewart, however, would not consent to the king's project.

She immediately took the alarm, and desired his majesty to leave to the duke, his brother, the care of tutoring the duchess's maids of honour, and only to attend to the management of his own flock, unless his majesty would in return allow her to listen to certain proposals of a settlement which she did not think disadvantageous. This menace being of a serious nature, the king obeyed; and Miss Jennings had all the additional honour which arose from this adventure: it both added to her reputation, and increased the number of her admirers. Thus she continued to triumph over the liberties of others without ever losing her own: her hour was not yet come, but it was not far distant; the particulars of which we shall relate as soon as we have given some account of the conduct of her companion.

Though Miss Temple's person was particularly engaging, it was nevertheless eclipsed by that of Miss Jennings; but she was still more excelled by the other's superior mental accomplishments. Two persons, very capable to impart understanding, had the gift been communicable, undertook at the same time to rob her of the little she really possessed: these were Lord Rochester and Miss Hobart: the first began to mislead her by reading to her all his compositions, as if she alone had been a proper judge of them. He never thought proper to flatter her upon her personal accomplishments; but told her that if heaven had made him susceptible of the impressions of beauty, it would not have been possible for him to have escaped her chains; but not being, thank God, affected with anything but wit, he had the happiness of enjoying the most agreeable conversation in the world without running any risk. After so sincere a confession he either presented to her a copy of verses, or a new song, in which whoever dared to come in competition in any respect with Miss Temple was laid prostrate before her charms, most humbly to solicit pardon: such flattering insinuations so completely turned her head that it was a pity to see her.

The duchess took notice of it, and well knowing the extent of both their geniuses, she saw the precipice into which the poor girl was running headlong without perceiving it; but as it is no less dangerous to forbid a connection that is not yet thought of, than it is difficult to put an end to one that is already well established, Miss Hobart was charged to take care, with all possible discretion, that these frequent and long conversations

might not be attended with any dangerous consequences: with pleasure she accepted the commission, and greatly flattered herself with success.

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She had already made all necessary advances to gain possession of her confidence and friendship; and Miss Temple, less suspicious of her than of Lord Rochester, made all imaginable returns. She was greedy of praise, and loved all manner of sweetmeats, as much as a child of nine or ten years old: her taste was gratified in both these respects. Miss Hobart having the superintendence of the duchess's baths, her apartment joined them, in which there was a closet stored with all sorts of sweetmeats and liqueurs: the closet suited Miss Temple's taste, as exactly as it gratified Miss Hobart's inclination, to have something that could allure her.

Summer, being now returned, brought back with it the pleasures and diversions that are its inseparable attendants. One day, when the ladies had been taking the air on horseback, Miss Temple, on her return from riding, alighted at Miss Hobart's, in order to recover her fatigue at the expense of the sweetmeats, which she knew were there at her service; but before she began she desired Miss Hobart's permission to undress herself, and change her linen in her apartment; which request was immediately complied with: "I was just going to propose it to you," said Miss Hobart, "not but that you are as charming as an angel in your riding habit; but there is nothing so comfortable as a loose dress, and being at one's ease: you cannot imagine, my dear Temple," continued she, embracing her, "how much you oblige me by thus free unceremonious conduct; but, above all, I am enchanted with your particular attention to cleanliness: how greatly you differ in this, as in many other things, from that silly creature Jennings! Have you remarked how all our court fops admire her for her brilliant complexion, which perhaps, after all, is not wholly her own; and for blunders, which are truly original, and which they are such fools as to mistake for wit: I have not conversed with her long enough to perceive in what her wit consists; but of this I am certain, that if it is not better than her feet, it is no great matter. What stories have I heard of her sluttishness! No cat ever dreaded water so much as she does: fie upon her! Never to wash for her own comfort, and only to attend to those parts which must necessarily be seen, such as the neck and hands."

Miss Temple swallowed all this with even greater pleasure than the sweetmeats; and the officious Hobart, not to lose time, was helping her off with her clothes, while the chambermaid was coming. She made some objections to this at first, being unwilling to occasion that trouble to a person, who, like Miss Hobart, had been advanced to a place of dignity; but she was overruled by her, and assured that it was with the greatest pleasure she showed her that small mark of civility. The collation being finished, and Miss Temple undressed: "Let us retire," said Miss Hobart, "to the bathing closet, where we may enjoy a little conversation secure from any impertinent visit." Miss Temple consented, and both of them sitting down on a couch: "You are too young, my dear Temple," said she, "to know the baseness of men in general, and too short a time acquainted with the court to know the character of its inhabitants. I will give you a short sketch of the principal persons, to the best of my knowledge, without injury to any one; for I abominate the trade of scandal.

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“In the first place, then, you ought to set it down as an undoubted fact that all courtiers are deficient either in honesty, good sense, judgment, wit, or sincerity; that is to say, if any of them by chance possess some one of these qualities, you may depend upon it he is defective in the rest: sumptuous in their equipages, deep play, a great opinion of their own merit, and contempt of that of others, are their chief characteristics.

“Interest or pleasure are the motives of all their actions: those who are led by the first would sell God Almighty, as Judas sold his Master, and that for less money. I could relate you a thousand noble instances of this, if I had time. As for the sectaries of pleasure, or those who pretend to be such, for they are not all so bad as they endeavour to make themselves appear, these gentlemen pay no manner of regard either to promises, oaths, law, or religion; that is to say, they are literally no respecters of persons; they care neither for God nor man, if they can but gain their ends. They look upon maids of honour only as amusements, placed expressly at court for their entertainment; and the more merit any one has, the more she is exposed to their impertinence, if she gives any ear to them; and to their malicious calumnies, when she ceases to attend to them. As for husbands, this is not the place to find them; for unless money or caprice make up the match, there is but little hopes of being married: virtue and beauty in this respect here are equally useless. Lady Falmouth is the only instance of a maid of honour well married without a portion; and if you were to ask her poor weak husband for what reason he married her, I am persuaded that he can assign none, unless it be her great red ears and broad feet. As for the pale Lady Yarborough, who appeared so proud of her match, she is wife, to be sure, of a great country bumpkin, who, the very week after their marriage, bid her take her farewell of the town for ever, in consequence of five or six thousand pounds a year he enjoys on the borders of Cornwall. Alas! poor Miss Blague! I saw her go away about this time twelvemonth, in a coach with four such lean horses, that I cannot believe she is yet half way to her miserable little castle. What can be the matter! all the girls seem afflicted with the rage of wedlock, and however small their portion of charms may be, they think it only necessary to show themselves at court in order to pick and choose their men: but was this in reality the case, the being a wife is the most wretched condition imaginable for a person of nice sentiments. Believe me, my dear Temple, the pleasures of matrimony are so inconsiderable in comparison with its inconveniences, that I cannot imagine how any reasonable creature can resolve upon it: rather fly, therefore, from this irksome engagement than court it. Jealousy, formerly a stranger to these happy isles, is now coming into fashion, with many recent examples of which you

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are acquainted. However brilliant the phantom may appear, suffer not yourself to be caught by its splendour, and never be so weak as to transform your slave into your tyrant: as long as you preserve your own liberty, you will be mistress of that of others. I will relate to you a very recent proof of the perfidy of man to our sex, and of the impunity they experience in all attempts upon our innocence. The Earl of Oxford fell in love with a handsome, graceful actress belonging to the duke's theatre, who performed to perfection, particularly the part of Roxana, in a very fashionable new play, insomuch that she ever after retained that name: this creature being both very virtuous and very modest, or, if you please, wonderfully obstinate, proudly rejected the addresses and presents of the Earl of Oxford. This resistance inflamed his passion: he had recourse to invectives, and even to spells; but all in vain. This disappointment had such effect upon him that he could neither eat nor drink; this did not signify to him; but his passion at length became so violent, that he could neither play nor smoke. In this extremity love had recourse to Hymen; the Earl of Oxford, one of the first peers of the realm, is, you know, a very handsome man: he is of the order of the garter, which greatly adds to an air naturally noble. In short, from his outward appearance, you would suppose he was really possessed of some sense; but as soon as ever you hear him speak, you are perfectly convinced of the contrary. This passionate lover presented her with a promise of marriage, in due form, signed with his own hand: she would not, however, rely upon this, but the next day she thought there could be no danger, when the earl himself came to her lodgings attended by a clergyman, and another man for a witness: the marriage was accordingly solemnized with all due ceremonies, in the presence of one of her fellow players, who attended as a witness on her part. You will suppose, perhaps, that the new countess had nothing to do but to appear at court according to her rank, and to display the earl's arms upon her carriage. This was far from being the case. When examination was made concerning the marriage, it was found to be a mere deception: it appeared that the pretended priest was one of my lord's trumpeters, and the witness his kettle drummer. The parson and his companion never appeared after the ceremony was over; and as for the other witness, they endeavoured to persuade her that the Sultana Roxana might have supposed, in some part or other of a play, that she was really married. It was all to no purpose, that the poor creature claimed the protection of the laws of God and man, both which were violated and abused, as well as herself, by this infamous imposition: in vain did she throw herself at the King's feet to demand justice: she had only to rise up again without redress; and happy might she think herself to receive an annuity of one thousand crowns, and to resume the name of Roxana,

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instead of Countess of Oxford. You will say, perhaps, that she was only a player; that all men have not the same sentiments as the earl; and, that one may at least believe them, when they do but render justice to such merit as yours. But still do not believe them, though I know you are liable to it, as you have admirers; for all are not infatuated with Miss Jennings: the handsome Sydney ogles you; Lord Rochester is delighted with your conversation; and the most serious Sir Lyttleton forsakes his natural gravity in favour of your charms. As for the first, I confess his figure is very likely to engage the inclinations of a young person like yourself; but were his outward form attended with other accomplishments, which I know it is not, and that his sentiments in your favour were as real as he endeavours to persuade you they are, and as you deserve, yet I would not advise you to form any connections with him, for reasons which I cannot tell you at present.

“Sir Lyttleton is undoubtedly in earnest, since he appears ashamed of the condition to which you have reduced him; and I really believe if he could get the better of those vulgar chimerical apprehensions, of being what is vulgarly called a cuckold, the good man would marry you, and you would be his representative in his little government, where you might merrily pass your days in casting up the weekly bills of housekeeping, and in darning old napkins. What a glory would it be to have a Cato for a husband, whose speeches are as many lectures, and whose lectures are composed of nothing but ill-nature and censure!

“Lord Rochester is, without contradiction, the most witty man in all England; but then he is likewise the most unprincipled, and devoid even of the least tincture of honour; he is dangerous to our sex alone; and that to such a degree that there is not a woman who gives ear to him three times, but she irretrievably loses her reputation. No woman can escape him, for he has her in his writings, though his other attacks be ineffectual; and in the age we live in, the one is as bad as the other in the eye of the public. In the mean time nothing is more dangerous than the artful insinuating manner with which he gains possession of the mind: he applauds your taste, submits to your sentiments, and at the very instant that he himself does not believe a single word of what he is saying, he makes you believe it all. I dare lay a wager, that from the conversation you have had with him, you thought him one of the most honourable and sincerest men living; for my part I cannot imagine what he means by the assiduity he pays you not but your accomplishments are sufficient to excite the adoration and praise of the whole world; but had he even been so fortunate as to have gained your affections, he would not know what to do with the loveliest creature at court: for it is a long time since his debauches have brought him to order, with the assistance of the favours of all the common street-walkers.

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See then, my dear Temple, what horrid malice possesses him, to the ruin and confusion of innocence! A wretch! to have no other design in his addresses and assiduities to Miss Temple, but to give a greater air of probability to the calumnies with which he has loaded her. You look upon me with astonishment, and seem to doubt the truth of what I advance; but I do not desire you to believe me without evidence: 'Here,' said she, drawing a paper out of her pocket, 'see what a copy of verses he has made in your praise, while he lulls your credulity to rest, by flattering speeches and feigned respect.'"

After saying this, the perfidious Hobart showed her half-a-dozen couplets full of strained invective and scandal, which Rochester had made against the former maids of honour. This severe and cutting lampoon was principally levelled against Miss Price, whose person he took to pieces in the most frightful and hideous manner imaginable. Miss Hobart had substituted the name of Temple instead of Price, which she made to agree both with the measure and tune of the song. This effectually answered Hobart's intentions: the credulous Temple no sooner heard her sing the lampoon, but she firmly believed it to be made upon herself; and in the first transports of her rage, having nothing so much at heart as to give the lie to the fictions of the poet: "Ah! as for this, my dear Hobart," said she, "I can bear it no longer: I do not pretend to be so handsome as some others; but as for the defects that villain charges me with, I dare say, my dear Hobart, there is no woman more free from them: we are alone, and I am almost inclined to convince you by ocular demonstration." Miss Hobart was too complaisant to oppose this motion; but, although she soothed her mind by extolling all her beauties, in opposition to Lord Rochester's song, Miss Temple was almost driven to distraction by rage and astonishment, that the first man she ever attended to should, in his conversation with her, not even make use of a single word of truth, but that he should likewise have the unparalleled cruelty falsely to accuse her of defects; and not being able to find words capable of expressing her anger and resentment, she began to weep like a child.

Miss Hobart used all her endeavours to comfort her, and chid her for being so much hurt with the invectives of a person whose scandalous impostures were too well known to make any impression: she however advised her never to speak to him any more, for that was the only method to disappoint his designs; that contempt and silence were, on such occasions, much preferable to any explanation, and that if he could once obtain a hearing, he would be justified, but she would be ruined.

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Miss Hobart was not wrong in giving her this counsel: she knew that an explanation would betray her, and that there would be no quarter for her if Lord Rochester had so fair an opportunity of renewing his former panegyrics upon her; but her precaution was in vain: this conversation had been heard from one end to the other, by the governess's niece, who was blessed with a most faithful memory; and having that very day an appointment with Lord Rochester, she conned it over three or four times, that she might not forget one single word, when she should have the honour of relating it to her lover. We shall show in the next chapter, what were the consequences resulting from it.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Better to partake with another than to have nothing at all
How I must hate you, if I did not love you to distraction
So weak as to transform your slave into your tyrant
Terrible piece of furniture for the country (educated girl)
What a glory would it be to have a Cato for a husband