Mary Ann Pennington

AN

Unfortunate Mother's

ADVICE

TO HER

ABSENT DAUGHTERS,

IN A

LETTER

TO

Miss PENNINGTON.

BY THE LATE LADY PENNINGTON.

A NEW EDITION.

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AN

UNFORTUNATE MOTHER'S

ADVICE, &c.

MY DEAR JENNY,

WAS there any probability that a letter from me would be permitted to reach your hand alone, I ſhould not have choſen this leaſt eligible method of writing to you.—The public is no way concerned in family-affairs, and ought not to be

made a party in them;—but my circumſtances are ſuch as lay me under a neceſſity of either communicating my ſentiments to the world, or of concealing them *from you*:—The latter would, I think, be the breach of an indiſpenſable duty,—which obliges me to wave the impropriety of the former.

A long train of events, of a moſt extraordinary nature, conſpired to remove you, very early, from the tender care of an affectionate mother:—You were then too young to be able to form any right judgment of her conduct, and ſince that time it is very probable that it has been repreſented to you in the moſt unfavourable light.——The general prejudice a-

gainſt me I never gave myſelf the uſeleſs trouble of any endeavour to remove.—I do not mean to infer from hence, that the opinion of others is of no material conſequence—on the contrary, I would adviſe you always to remember, that, next to the conſciouſneſs of acting right, the public voice ſhould be regarded, and to endeavour, by a prudent behaviour—(even in the moſt trifling inſtances)—to ſecure it in your favour. The being educated in a different opinion was a misfortune to me.—I was early and wiſely taught, that virtue was the one thing neceſſary, and without it no happineſs could be expected either in this, or in any future ſtate of exiſtence:—But, with this good principle, a miſtaken one was at the ſame

time inculcated, namely, That the ſelf-approbation, ariſing from conſcious virtue, was alone ſufficient; and that the cenſures of an ill-natured world, (ever ready to calumniate) when not founded on truth, were beneath the concern of a perſon, whoſe actions were guided by the ſuperior motive of obedience to the will of Heaven: This notion, ſtrongly imbibed before Reaſon had gained ſufficient ſtrength to diſcover its fallacy, was the cauſe of an inconſiderate conduct in my ſubſequent life, which marked my character with a diſadvantageous impreſſion. To you I ſhall ſpeak with the moſt unreſerved ſincerity, not concealing a fault which you may profit by the knowledge of,—and therefore I freely own, that in

my younger years, satisfied with keeping strictly within the bounds of virtue, I took a foolish pleasure in exceeding those of prudence, and was ridiculously vain of indulging a latitude of behaviour, into which others of my age were afraid of launching.—But then, in justice to myself, I must at the same time declare, that this freedom was only taken in public company;—and, so extremely cautious was I of doing any thing that appeared to me a just ground for censure, I call Heaven to witness, your father was the first man whom I ever made any private assignation with, or even met in a room alone:—Nor did I take that liberty with him, until the most solemn mutual engagement (the matrimonial cere-

mony) had bound us to each other.—My behaviour then, he has ſince frequently acknowledged, fully convinced him I was not only innocent of any criminal act, but of every vitious thought; and that the outward freedom of my deportment proceeded merely from a great gaiety of temper, and, from a very high flow of ſpirits, never broke (if the expreſſion may be allowed) into the formal rules of decorum.

To ſum up the whole in a few words, my private conduct was what the ſevereſt prude could not condemn; my public, ſuch as the moſt finiſhed coquette alone would have ventured upon:—The latter only could be known to the world, and,

conſequently, from thence muſt their opinion be taken. You will therefore eaſily be ſenſible, that it would not be favourable to me;—on the contrary, it gave a general prejudice againſt me; and this has been ſince made uſe of as an argument to gain credit to the malicious falſehoods laid to my charge. For this reaſon—(convinced by long experience that the greater part of mankind are ſo apt to receive, and and ſo willing to retain a bad impreſſion of others, that, when it is once eſtabliſhed, there is hardly a poſſibility of removing it through life)—I have, for ſome years paſt, ſilently acquieſced in the diſpenſations of Providence, without attempting any juſtification of myſelf;—and, being conſcious that the infamous aſperſions

caſt on my character were not founded on truth, I have ſat down content with the certainty of an open and perfect acquittal of all vitious diſpoſitions, or criminal conduct, at that great day, when all things ſhall appear as they really are, and when both our actions, and the moſt ſecret motives for them, will be made manifeſt to men and angels.

HAD your father been amongſt the number of thoſe who were deceived by appearances, I ſhould have thought it my duty to leave no method uneſſayed to clear myſelf in his opinion;—but that was not the caſe:—He knows that many of thoſe appearances, which have been urged againſt me, I was forced to ſubmit to, not only

from his direction, but by his abſolute command; which, contrary to reaſon and to my own intereſt, I was for more than twelve years weak enough implicitly to obey:—and that others, even ſince our ſeparation, were occaſioned by ſome particular inſtances of his behaviour, which rendered it impoſſible for me to act with ſafety in any other manner.—To *him* I appeal for the truth of this aſſertion, who is conſcious of the meaning, which may be hereafter explained to you.—Perfectly acquainted with my principles and with my natural diſpoſition, his heart, I am convinced, never here condemned me.—— Being greatly incenſed that my father's will gave to me an independent fortune,—which will, he imagined, I was acceſſary

to, or at leaſt, that I could have prevented; he was thereby laid open to the arts of deſigning men, who, having their own intereſt ſolely in view, worked him up into a deſire of revenge—and from thence, upon probable circumſtances, into a public accuſation:—Though that public accuſation was ſupported only by the ſingle teſtimony of a perſon, whoſe known falſehood had made him a thouſand times declare, that he would not credit her oath in the moſt trifling incident; yet, when he was diſappointed of the additional evidence he might have been flattered with the hope of obtaining, it was too late to recede.—— This I ſincerely believe to be the truth of the caſe, though I too well know his *tenacious* temper, to expect a preſent ju-

ſtification:—but whenever he ſhall arrive on the verge of eternity——if Reaſon holds her place at that awful moment, and if Religion has then any power on his heart—I make no doubt, he will at that time acquit me to his children, and with truth he muſt then confeſs, that no part of my behaviour to him ever deſerved the treatment I have met with.——Sorry am I to be under the neceſſity of pointing out faults in the conduct of another, which are, perhaps, long ſince repented of, and ought in that caſe to be as much forgotten, as they are moſt truly forgiven: Heaven knows, that, ſo far from retaining any degree of reſentment in my heart, the perſon breathes not whom I wiſh to hurt, or to whom I would not this moment

render every ſervice in my power. The injuries which I have ſuſtained, had I no children, ſhould contentedly be buried in ſilence, until the great day of retribution; but, in juſtice to you, to them, and to myſelf, it is incumbent on me, as far as poſſible, to efface the falſe impreſſions which, by ſuch ſilence, might be fixed on your mind, and on thoſe of your brothers and ſiſters, whom I include with you. To this end, it will be neceſſary to enter into a circumſtantial hiſtory of near fifteen years, full of incidents of a nature ſo uncommon, as to be ſcarcely credible.—— This, I am convinced, will effectually clear me, in your opinions, of the imputations I now lie under, and it will prove, almoſt to a demonſtration, the true cauſe

of thoſe proceedings againſt me that were couched under pretended motives,—as injurious to my reputation as they were falſe in themſelves. But this muſt be deferred ſome time longer;—you are all yet too young to enter into things of this kind, or to judge properly of them.——When a few years ſhall, by ripening your underſtandings, remove this objection, you ſhall be informed of the whole truth without diſguiſe or partiality. Till then, ſuſpend your belief of all that may have reached your ears with regard to me, and wait the knowledge of thoſe facts, which my future letter will reveal for your information.

THUS much I thought it neceſſary to premiſe concerning myſelf, though fo-

reign to the design of this epistle; which is only to remind you, that you have still an affectionate mother, who is anxious for your welfare, and desirous of giving you some advice with regard to your conduct in life. I would lay down a few precepts for you, which, if attended to, will supply (as far as it is in my power to supply) the deprivation of a constant, tender, maternal care. The address is to you in particular, your sisters being yet too young to receive it, but my intention is for the equal service of you all.

You are just entering, my dear girl, into a world full of deceit and falsehood, where few persons or things appear as they really are. Vice hides her deformity

with the borrowed garb of Virtue; and, though eaſily diſcernible by the unbecoming awkwardneſs of her deportment under it, ſhe paſſes on thouſands undetected.——Every preſent pleaſure uſurps the name of happineſs, and as ſuch deceives the unwary purſuer. Thus one general maſk diſguiſes the whole face of things, and it requires a long experience, and a penetrating judgment, to diſcover the truth.——Thrice happy thoſe whoſe docile tempers improve from the inſtructions of maturer age, and who thereby attain ſome degree of this neceſſary knowledge, while it may be uſeful in directing their conduct!

THE turn which your mind may now

take, will fix the happineſs or miſery of your future life;—and, I am too nearly concerned for your welfare, not to be moſt anxiouſly ſolicitous that you may be early led into ſo juſt a way of thinking as will be productive to you of a prudent, rational behaviour, and which will ſecure to you a laſting felicity. You were old enough, before our ſeparation, to convince me that Heaven had not denied you a good natural underſtanding.——This, if properly cultivated, will ſet you above that trifling diſpoſition, too common among the female world, which makes youth ridiculous, maturity inſignificant, and old age contemptible!—It is, therefore, needleſs to enlarge on that head, ſince Good-ſenſe is there the beſt adviſer;—and, without it,

all admonitions or directions on the ſubject would be as fruitleſs, as to lay down rules for the conduct or for the actions of an idiot.

THERE is no room to doubt but that ſufficient care will be taken to give you a polite education;—yet, a religious one is of ſtill greater conſequence:—Neceſſary as the former is toward your making a proper figure, in the world, and for your being well accepted in it; the latter is yet more ſo, as that only can ſecure to you the approbation of the greateſt and beſt of Beings, on whoſe favour depends your everlaſting happineſs.——Let therefore your duty to God be ever the firſt and principal object of your care:——As your

Creator and Governor, he claims adoration and obedience;—as your Father and and Friend, he demands ſubmiſſive duty and affection.—Remember that, from this common Parent of the univerſe, you received your life;—that, to his general providence, you own the continuance of it;—and, to his bounty, you are indebted for all the health, eaſe, advantages, or enjoyments which help to make that life agreeable.—A ſenſe of benefits received naturally inſpires a grateful diſpoſition, with a deſire of making ſuitable returns:—All that can here be made for innumerable favours, every moment beſtowed, is a thankful acknowledgment and a willing obedience;—in theſe be never wanting.—Make it an invariable rule to begin

and to end the day with a ſolemn addreſs to the Deity. I mean not by this, what is commonly, with too much propriety, called *ſaying of prayers*, namely a cuſtomary repetition of a few good words, without either devotion or attention—than which nothing is more inexcuſable and affrontive to the Deity: It is the homage of the heart that can alone be accepted by him. Expreſſions of our abſolute dependence on, and of our entire reſignation to him—thankſgivings for the mercies already received—petitions for thoſe bleſſings it is fit for us to pray for—and interceſſions for all our fellow-creatures—compoſe the principal parts of this duty;—which may be compriſed in very few words, or may be more enlarged up-

on, as the circumſtances of time and diſpoſition may render moſt ſuitable: For it it is not the length, but the ſincerity and attention of our prayers, that will make them efficacious. A good heart, joined to a tolerable underſtanding, will ſeldom be at a loſs for proper words, with which to clothe theſe ſentiments; and all perſons being beſt acquainted with their own particular circumſtances, may reaſonably be ſuppoſed beſt qualified for adapting their petitions and acknowledgments to them: But for thoſe, who are of a different opinion, there are many excellent forms of prayer already compoſed;—amongſt theſe, none, that I know of, are equal to Dr. Hoadley's (the late Biſhop of Wincheſter) which I recommend to your peruſal and

uſe:—in the preface to them, you will find better inſtructions on this head than I am capable of giving, and to theſe I refer you.

IT is acknowledged that our petitions cannot in any degree alter the intention of a Being, who is in himſelf invariable, and without a poſſibility of change; all that can be expected from them is, that, by bettering ourſelves, they will render us more proper objects of his favourable regard:—And this muſt neceſſarily be the reſult of a ſerious, regular, and conſtant diſcharge of this branch of our duty;—for it is ſcarcely poſſible to offer up our ſincere and fervent devotions to Heaven, every morning and evening, without lea-

ving on our minds such useful impressions as will naturally dispose us to a ready and cheerful obedience, and will inspire a filial fear of offending;—the best security virtue can have. As you value your own happiness, let not the force of bad examples ever lead you into an habitual disuse of secret prayer; nor let an unpardonable negligence so far prevail on you as to make you rest satisfied with a formal, customary, inattentive repetition of some well chosen words: Let your heart and attention always go with your lips, and experience will soon convince you, that this permission of addressing the Supreme Being is the most valuable prerogative of human nature;—the chief, nay, the only support under all the distresses and calamities to which this state

of sin and misery is liable;—the highest rational satisfaction the mind is capable of, on this side the grave,—and the best preparative for everlasting happiness beyond it. This is a duty ever in your own power, and therefore you only will be culpable by the omission of it. Public worship may not always be so; but, whenever it is, do not wilfully neglect the service of the church, at least on Sundays; and let your behaviour there be adapted to the solemnity of the place, and to the intention of the meeting:——Regard neither the actions, nor the dress of others;—let not your eyes rove in search of acquaintance, but in the time of divine service avoid, as much as possible, all complimental civilities, of which there is

too great an intercourſe in moſt of our churches;—remember that your only buſineſs there is to pay a ſolemn act of devotion to Almighty GOD; and let every part of your conduct be ſuitable to this great end.——If you hear a good ſermon, treaſure it in your memory, that you may reap all the benefit it was capable of imparting:—If but an indifferent one, there muſt be ſome good things in it;—retain theſe, and let the remainder be buried in oblivion.—Ridicule not the preacher, who no doubt has done his beſt, and who is rather the object of pity, than of contempt, for having been placed in a ſituation of life, to which his talents were not equal:—he may perhaps be a good man, though he is not a great orator.

I WOULD alſo recommend to you the early and frequent participation of the communion, or, what is commonly called, *receiving the ſacrament*, as the indiſpenſable duty of every Chriſtian. There is no inſtitution of our religion more ſimple, plain, and intelligible than this is, as delivered to us by our Saviour: and moſt of the elaborate treatiſes written on the ſubject have ſerved only to puzzle and diſturb weak minds, by throwing the dark veil of Superſtition and of human Invention over a plain poſitive command, given by him in ſo explicit a manner as to be eaſily comprehended by the meaneſt capacity, and which is doubtleſs in the power of all his ſincere followers to pay an acceptable obedience to.——Nothing

has more contributed to the neglect of this duty than the numerous well-meaning books that have been written to enjoin *a month's, or a week's preparation* as previouſly neceſſary to the due performance of it, by which means filling the minds of many with needleſs terror,—putting it even out of the power of ſome to receive it at all,—and inducing great numbers to reſt ſatisfied with doing it only once or twice in a year, on ſome high feſtival:—whereas it was certainly the conſtant cuſtom of the apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians, on every Sunday,—and it ought to be received by us, as often as it is adminiſtered in the church we frequent—which in moſt places is but once in a month.—Nor do I think it excuſable, at

any time, to turn our backs upon the table we ſee prepared for that purpoſe, on pretence of not being fit to partake worthily of it: The beſt, the only true preparation for this, and for every other part of religious duty, is a good and virtuous life, by which the mind is conſtantly kept in ſuch a devotional frame, as to require but a little recollection to be ſuited to any particular act of worſhip or of obedience, that may occaſionally offer; and, without a good and virtuous life, there cannot be a greater, or more fatal miſtake then to ſuppoſe, that a few days or weeks ſpent in humiliation and prayer, will render us at all the more acceptable to the Deity, or that we ſhould be thereby better fitted for any one inſtance of that duty, which we

muſt univerſally pay, to be either approved by him, or to be advantageous to ourſelves:—I would not, therefore, adviſe you to read any of thoſe *weekly preparatives*, which are too apt to lead the mind into error, by teaching it to reſt in a mere ſhadow of piety, wherein there is nothing rationally ſatisfactory. The beſt books which I have ever met with on this ſubject, are Biſhop HOADLEY's *Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, and NELSON's *Great Duty of frequenting the Chriſtian Sacrifice*. —To the former are annexed the prayers which I before mentioned; they are well worth your attentive peruſal;—the deſign of the inſtitution is therein fully explained, agreeable both to ſcripture and to rea-

ſon, ſtripped of that veil of myſtery, which has been induſtriouſly thrown over it, by deſigning or by miſtaken men; and it is there laid as plainly open to every capacity as it was at firſt left us by our great Maſter.——Read *theſe books* with due attention, you will there find every neceſſary inſtruction concerning the rite, and every reaſonable inducement to the conſtant and conſcientious performance of it.

THE ſincere practice of religious duties, naturally leads to the proper diſcharge of the ſocial; which may be all comprehended in that one great general rule of *doing unto others as you would they ſhould do unto you:*——but of theſe, more particularly hereafter. I ſhall firſt give you my advice

concerning *employment*, lit being of great moment to ſet out in life in ſuch a method as may be uſeful to yourſelf, and beneficial to others.

TIME is invaluable, its loſs is irretrievable! the remembrance of having made an ill uſe of it muſt be one of the ſharpeſt tortures to thoſe who are on the brink of eternity? and, what can yield a more unpleaſing retroſpect, than whole years idled away in an irrational inſignificant manner? Examples of which are continually before our eyes! Look on every day as a blank ſheet of paper put into your hands to be filled up; remember the characters will remain to endleſs ages, and that they never can be expunged. Be careful, there-

fore, not to write any thing but what you may read with pleaſure a thouſand years after. I would not be underſtood in a ſenſe ſo ſtrict as might debar you from any innocent amuſement, ſuitable to your age, and agreeable to your inclination:—Diverſions, properly regulated, are not only allowable, they are abſolutely neceſſary to youth, and are never criminal but when taken to exceſs; that is, when they engroſs the whole thought, when they are made the chief buſineſs of life; they then give a diſtaſte to every valuable employment, and, by a ſort of infatuation, leave the mind in a ſtate of reſtleſs impatience from the concluſion of one until the commencement of another. This is the unfortunate diſpoſition of many; guard moſt

carefully againſt it, for nothing can be attended with more pernicious conſequences. A little obſervation will convince you, that there is not, among the human ſpecies, a ſet of more miſerable beings than thoſe who cannot live out of a conſtant ſucceſſion of diverſions; theſe people have no comprehenſion of the more ſatisfactory pleaſure to be found in retirement; thought is inſupportable, and conſequently ſolitude muſt be intolerable to them: they are a burden to themſelves, and are a peſt to their acquaintance, by vainly ſeeking for happineſs in company, where they are ſeldom acceptable. I ſay vainly, for true happineſs exiſts only in the mind, nothing foreign can give it: The utmoſt to be attained, by what is called *a gay life*, is a

ſhort forgetfulneſs of miſery, to be felt with accumulated anguiſh in every interval of reflection. This reſtleſs temper is frequently the product of a too eager purſuit of pleaſure in the early part of life, to the neglect of thoſe valuable improvements which would lay the foundation of a more ſolid and permanent felicity.—— Youth is the ſeaſon for diverſions, but it is alſo the ſeaſon for acquiring knowledge, for fixing uſeful habits, and for laying in a ſtock of ſuch well-choſen materials, as may grow into a ſerene happineſs, which will increaſe with every added year of life, and will bloom in the fulleſt perfection at the decline of it. The great art of education conſiſts in aſſigning to each its proper place, in ſuch a manner that the

one ſhall never become irkſome by intrenching on the other. Our ſeparation having taken from me the pleaſing taſk of endeavouring, to the beſt of my ability, to to ſuit them occaſionally, as might be moſt conducive both to your profit and pleaſure, it only remains for me to give you general rules, which, indeed, accidents may make it neceſſary ſometimes to vary: Thoſe, however, muſt be left to your own diſcretion, and, I am convinced, that you have a ſufficient ſhare of underſtanding to be very capable of making advantageouſly ſuch caſual regulations to yourſelf, if the inclination is not wanting.

IT is an excellent method to appropriate the morning wholly to improvement;

the afternoon may then be allowed to diverſions. Under the laſt head, I place company, books of the amuſing kind, and entertaining productions of the needle, as well as plays, balls, cards, &c. which more commonly go by the name of *diverſions:* the afternoon, and evening till ſupper, may by theſe be employed with innocence and propriety; but let not one of them ever be ſuffered to intrude on the former part of the day, which ſhould be always devoted to more uſeful employments. One half hour, or more, either before or immediately after breakfaſt, I would have you conſtantly give to the attentive peruſal of ſome rationally pious author, or to ſome part of the New Teſtament, with which, and indeed with the

whole ſcripture, you ought to make your-ſelf perfectly acquainted, as the baſis on which your religion is founded. From this practice, you will reap more real be-nefit than can be ſuppoſed by thoſe who have never made the experiment. The other hours may be divided amongſt thoſe neceſſary and polite acquiſitions which are ſuitable to your ſex, age, and rank in life. Study *your own language* thoroughly, that you may ſpeak correctly, and write gram-matically: Do not content yourſelf with the common uſe of words, which cuſtom has taught you from the cradle, but learn from whence they are derived, and what are their proper ſignifications.—*French* you ought to be as well acquainted with as with Engliſh;—and *Italian* might, with-

out much difficulty, be added.——Acquire a good knowledge of hiſtory—that of your own country firſt, then of the other European nations: Read them not with a view to amuſe, but to improve your mind; and to that end make reflections on what you have read, which may be uſeful to yourſelf, and will render your converſation agreeable to others.——Learn ſo much of *Geography*, as to form a juſt idea of the ſituation of places, mentioned in any author, and this will make hiſtory more entertaining to you.

IT is neceſſary for you to be perfect in *the four firſt rules of Arithmetic*; more, you can never have occaſion for,—and the mind ſhould not be burdened with

needleſs application. *Muſic* and *Drawing* are accompliſhments well worth the trouble of attaining, if your inclination and genius lead to either,—if not, do not attempt them; for it will be only much time and great labour unprofitably thrown away; it being next to impoſſible to arrive at any degree of perfection in thoſe arts, by the dint of perſeverance only, if a good ear and a native genius be wanting. The ſtudy of *Natural Philoſophy*, you will find both pleaſing and inſtructive;—pleaſing, from the continual new diſcoveries to be made of the innumerably various beauties of nature—a moſt agreeable gratification of that deſire of knowledge wiſely implanted in the human mind—and highly inſtructive, as thoſe diſcoveries lead

to the contemplation of the great Author of Nature, whose wisdom and goodness so conspicuously shine through all his works, that it is impossible to reflect seriously on them, without admiration and gratitude.

THESE, my dear, are but a few of those mental improvements I would recommend to you; indeed there is no branch of knowledge that your capacity is equal to, and which you have an opportunity of acquiring, that, I think, ought to be neglected. It has been objected against all female learning, beyond that of household-economy, that it tends only to fill the minds of the sex with a conceited vanity, which sets them above their proper

buſineſs—occaſions an indifference to, if not a total neglect of, their family-affairs, —and ſerves only to render them uſeleſs wives and impertinent companions.—It muſt be confeſſed, that ſome *reading ladies* have given but too much cauſe for this objection; and, could it be proved to hold good throughout the ſex, it would certainly be right to confine their improvements within the narrow limits of the nurſery, of the kitchen, and the confectionary;—but, I believe it will, upon examination, be found, that ſuch ill conſequences proceed chiefly from too great an imbecillity of mind to be capable of much enlargement, or from a mere affectation of knowledge, void of all reality.—Vanity is never the reſult of underſtanding; a

ſenſible woman will ſoon be convinced, that all the learning her utmoſt application can make her miſtreſs of, will be, from the difference of education, in many points inferior to that of a ſchool-boy: This reflection will keep her always humble, and will be an effectual check to that loquacity, which renders ſome women ſuch inſupportable companions.

THE management of all domeſtic affairs is certainly the proper buſineſs of woman; and unfaſhionably ruſtic as ſuch an aſſertion may be thought, it is not beneath the dignity of any lady, however high her rank, to know how to educate her children, and to govern her ſervants, how to order an elegant table with economy,

and to manage her whole family with prudence, regularity, and method:—If in these she is defective, whatever may be her attainments in any other kinds of knowledge, she will act out of character; and, by not moving in her proper sphere, she will become rather the object of ridicule than of approbation. But, I believe, it may with truth be affirmed, that the neglect of these domestic concerns has much more frequently proceeded from an exorbitant love of diversions, from a ridiculous fondness for dress and gallantry, or from a mistaken pride that has placed such duties in a servile light; from whence they have been considered as fit only for the employment of dependents, and below the attention of a fine lady,

than from too great an attachment to mental improvements: Yet, from whatſoever cauſe ſuch a neglect proceeds, it is equally unjuſtifiable. If any thing can be urged in vindication of a cuſtom, unknown to our anceſtors, which the prevalence of Faſhion has made ſo general amongſt the modern ladies,—I mean, that of committing to the care and diſcretionary power of different ſervants the ſole management of their family-affairs—nothing certainly can be alleged in defence of ſuch an ignorance, in things of this nature, as renders a lady incapable of giving proper directions on all occaſions; an ignorance, which, in ever ſo exalted a ſtation, will render her contemptible, even to thoſe ſervants on whoſe un-

derſtanding and fidelity ſhe in fact becomes dependent for the regularity of her houſe, for the propriety, elegance, and frugality of her table; which laſt article is ſeldom regarded by ſuch ſort of people, who too frequently impoſe on thoſe by whom they are too implicitly truſted. Make yourſelf, therefore, ſo thoroughly acquainted with the moſt proper method of conducting a family, and with the neceſſary expence which every article, in proportion to their number, will occaſion, that you may come to a reaſonable certainty of not being materially deceived, without the ridiculous drudgery of following your ſervants continually, and meanly peeping into every obſcure corner of your houſe: Nor is this at all dif-

ficult to attain, as it requires nothing more than an attentive obſervation.

IT is of late, in moſt great families, become too much the cuſtom to be long upon the books of every tradeſman they employ: To aſſign a reaſon for this is foreign to my purpoſe; but I am certain it would, in general, be better, both for themſelves and for the people they deal with, never to be on them at all; And what difficulty or inconvenience can ariſe in a well regulated family from commiſſioning the ſteward or houſekeeper to pay for every thing at the time when it is brought in? — This obſolete practice, though in itſelf very laudable, is not at preſent, and perhaps never may be again,

authoriſed by Faſhion: However, let it be a rule with you to contract as few debts as poſſible; moſt things are to be purchaſed, both better in their kind, and at a lower price, by paying for them at the time of purchaſing. But if, to avoid the ſuppoſed trouble of frequent trifling diſburſements, you chooſe to have the leſſer articles thrown together in a bill, let a note of the quantity and price be brought with every ſuch parcel;—file theſe notes, compare them with the bill when delivered in, and let ſuch bills be regularly paid every quarter: For it is not reaſonable to expect that a tradeſman ſhould give longer credit, without making up the intereſt of his money by an advanced price on what he ſells. And, be aſſured,

you find it inconvenient to pay at the end of three months, that inconvenience muſt ariſe from living at too great an expence, and will conſequently encreaſe in ſix months, and grow ſtill greater at the end of the year. By making ſhort payments you will become the ſooner ſenſible of ſuch a miſtake, and you will find it at firſt more eaſy to retrench any ſupernumeraries than after having been long habituated to them.

IF your houſe is ſuperintended by an houſekeeper, and your ſervants are accountable to her, let your houſekeeper be accountable to yourſelf, and let her be entirely governed by your directions. Carefully examine her bills, and ſuffer no ex-

travagances or unneceſſary articles to paſs unnoticed:—Let theſe bills be brought to you every morning, what they contain will then be eaſily recollected without burthening your memory;—your accounts being ſhort will be adjuſted with leſs trouble, and with more exactneſs. Should you at any time have an upper ſervant, whoſe family and education were ſuperior to that ſtate of ſubjection, to which ſucceeding misfortunes may have reduced her, ſhe ought to be treated with peculiar indulgence. If ſhe has underſtanding enough to be converſable, and humility enough always to keep her proper diſtance, leſſen, as much as poſſible, every painful remembrance of former proſpects, by looking on her as an hum-

ble friend, and by making her an occaſional companion:—But never deſcend to converſe with thoſe whoſe birth, education, and early views in life, were not ſuperior to a ſtate of ſervitude; their minds being in general ſuited to their ſtation, they are apt to be intoxicated by any degree of familiarity, and to become uſeleſs and impertinent. The habit, which very many ladies have contracted, of talking to and conſulting with their women, has ſo ſpoiled that ſet of ſervants, that few of them are to be met with, who do not commence their ſervice, by giving their unaſked opinion of your perſon, dreſs, or management, artfully conveyed in the too generally accepted vehicle of flattery; and, if allowed in this,

they will next proceed to offer their advice on any occaſion that may happen to diſcompoſe or ruffle your temper: Check therefore the firſt appearance of ſuch impertinence, by a reprimand ſufficiently ſevere to prevent a repetition of it.

GIVE your orders in a plain diſtinct manner, with good-nature, joined to a ſteadineſs that will ſhew they muſt be punctually obeyed: Treat all your domeſtics with ſuch mildneſs and affability, that you may be ſerved rather out of affection than from fear:—Let them live happily under you; give them leiſure for their own buſineſs; time for innocent recreation, and more eſpecially for attending the public ſervice of the church, to be in-

ſtructed in their duty to God,—without which, you have no right to expect the diſcharge of that owing to yourſelf.—When wrong, tell them calmly of their faults; if they amend not, after two or three ſuch rebukes, diſmiſs them—but never deſcend to paſſion and ſcolding, which are inconſiſtent with a good underſtanding, and beneath the dignity of a gentlewoman. Be very exact in your hours, without which there can be no order in your family, I mean thoſe of riſing, eating, &c. Require from your ſervants punctuality in theſe, and never be yourſelf the cauſe of breaking through the rules you have laid down, by deferring breakfaſt, putting back the dinner, or by letting it grow cold on the table, to wait your dreſſing; a cuſtom by which many

ladies introduce confuſion, and bring their orders into neglect. Be always dreſſed, at leaſt, half an hour before dinner.—— Having metioned this important article, I muſt be allowed a little digreſſion on the ſubject.

WHATEVER time is taken up in dreſs, beyond what is neceſſary to decency and cleanlineſs, may be looked upon (to ſay no worſe) as a vacuum in life.—By decency, I mean ſuch an habit as is ſuitable to your rank and fortune;—an ill-placed finery, inconſiſtent with either, is not ornamental, but ridiculous:—A compliance with Faſhion, ſo far as to avoid the affectation of ſingularity, is neceſſary; but to run into the extreme of faſhions,

more eſpecially thoſe which are inconvenient, is the certain proof of a weak mind.—Have a better opinion of yourſelf than to ſuppoſe you can receive any additional merit from the adventitious ornaments of dreſs: Leave the ſtudy of the toilet to thoſe who are adapted to it; —I mean that inſignificant ſet of females, whoſe whole life, from the cradle to the coffin, is but a varied ſcene of trifling, and whoſe intellectuals fit them not for any thing beyond it. Such as theſe may be allowed to paſs whole mornings at their looking-glaſs, in the important buſineſs of ſuiting a ſet of ribands, adjuſting a few curls, or determining the poſition of a patch—one, perhaps, of their moſt innocent ways of idling. But let as ſmall

a portion of your time as poſſible be taken up in dreſſing: Be always perfectly clean and neat, both in your perſon and clothes—equally ſo when alone, as in company;—look upon all beyond this as immaterial in itſelf, any farther than as the different ranks of mankind have made ſome diſtinction in habit, generally eſteemed neceſſary;—and remember, that it is never the dreſs, however ſumptuous, which reflects dignity and honour on the perſon—it is the rank and merit of the perſon that gives conſequence to the dreſs. But to return:

IT is your own ſteadineſs and example of regularity that alone can preſerve uninterrupted order in your family:—If,

by forgetfulnefs or inattention, you at any time ſuffer your commands to be diſobeyed with impunity, your ſervants will grow upon ſuch neglect into an habit of careleſsneſs, until repeated faults (of which this is properly the ſource) rouſe you into anger, which an even conduct would never have made neceſſary. Be not whimſical or capricious in your likings; approve with judgment, and condemn with reaſon, that acting right may be as certainly the means of obtaining your favour, as the contrary of incurring your diſpleaſure.

FROM what has been ſaid you will ſee, that, in order to the proper diſcharge of your domeſtic duties, it is abſolutely neceſſary for you to have a perfect know-

ledge of every branch of houſehold economy, without which, you can neither correct what is wrong, approve what is right, nor give directions with propriety. It is the want of this knowledge that reduces many a fine lady's family to a ſtate of the utmoſt confuſion and diſorder, on the ſudden removal of a managing ſervant, until the place is ſupplied by a ſucceſſor of equal ability. How much out of character! how ridiculous muſt a miſtreſs of a family appear, who is entirely incapable of giving practical orders on ſuch an occaſion! Let that never be *your* caſe.—Remember, my dear, this is the only proper temporal buſineſs aſſigned you by Providence; and in a thing ſo indiſpenſably needful, ſo eaſily attained, where ſo little ſtudy or application is neceſſary to

arrive at the moſt commendable degree of it, the want even of perfection is almoſt inexcuſable. Make yourſelf miſtreſs of the theory, that you may be able, the more readily, to reduce it into practice. When you have a family to command, let the care of it always employ your principal attention, and let every part of it be ſubjected to your own inſpection. If you riſe early (a cuſtom, I hope, you have not left off ſince you was with me), waſte no unneceſſary time in dreſſing; and if you conduct your houſe in a regular method, you will find many vacant hours unfilled by this material buſineſs, and no objection can be made to your employing theſe in ſuch improvements of the mind as are moſt ſuitable to your genius and inclination. I believe no man of un-

derſtanding will think, that, under ſuch regulations, a woman will either make a leſs agreeable companion, a leſs uſeful wife, a leſs careful mother, or a worſe miſtreſs of a family, for all the additional knowledge her induſtry and application can acquire.

THE morning being always thus advantageouſly engaged, the latter part of the day, as I before ſaid, may be given to relaxation and amuſement. Some of theſe hours may be very agreeably and uſefully employed by entertaining books; a few of which, in the Engliſh language, I will mention to you, as a ſpecimen of the kind I would recommend to your peruſal, and I ſhall include ſome others religious and inſtructive.——

Maſon on Self-Knowledge
Economy of Human Life
Seneca's Morals
Epictetus
Cicero's Offices
Collier's Antoninus
Wheatley on the Common Prayer
Seed's
Sherlock's
Sterne's
Fordyce's
Blair's
} Sermons
Rollin's Belles Letters
Nature Diſplay'd
The Spectator
The Guardian
The Female Spectator
The Rambler
The Adventurer
The World
The Speaker
Cicero's Familiar Letters
Pliny's Letters
Fitzoſborne's Letters
Epiſtles for the Ladies
Freeman's Letters
Lady Ruſſell's Letters
Ganganelli's Letters
Mrs. Chapone's Letters
Telemachus
The Prince of Abiſſinia
The Vicar of Wakefield
Guthrie's Geographical Grammar
Potter's Antiquities of Greece
Rollin's Antient Hiſtory
Kennett's Antiquities of Rome
Hooke's Roman Hiſtory
Hume's Hiſtory of England
Robinſon's Hiſtory of Scotland
Militon's Poetical Works
Pope's Ethic Epiſtles
—— Homer
Thomſon's Works
Young's Works
Mrs. Rowe's Works
Mrs. Talbot's Works
Langhorne's Works
Moore's Fables for the Female Sex
Tales of the Genii
Viſions
Dodſley's Collection of Poems and Suppliment

FROM theſe you may form a judgment of that ſort of reading, which will be both uſeful and entertaining to you. I have named only thoſe *Practical Sermons*, which I thought would more directly influence your conduct in life.—*Our rule of faith* ſhould be taken from the ſcripture alone, which we muſt underſtand for ourſelves; therefore, the controverted opinions of others ſerve in general rather to puzzle than to improve the mind.

Novels and *Romances*, never give yourſelf the trouble of reading:—ſome of them perhaps do contain a few good morals, but they are not worth the finding, where ſo much rubbiſh is intermixed.—Their moral parts, indeed, are like ſmall dia-

monds amongſt mountains of dirt and traſh, which, when found, are too inconſiderable to anſwer the pains of coming at: Yet, ridiculous as theſe fictitious tales generally are, they are ſo artfully managed as to excite an idle curioſity to ſee the concluſion; by which means the reader is drawn on, through a tireſome length of foolish adventures, (from which either knowledge, pleaſure, or profit, ſeldom can accrue) to the common cataſtrophe of a wedding. The beſt I have met with of theſe writings, to ſay no worſe, it is little better than the loſs of time to peruſe:—but ſome of them have more pernicious conſequences;—by drawing characters that never exiſt in life, by repreſenting perſons and things in a falſe and extravagant light,

and, by a ſeries of improbable cauſes, bringing on impoſſible events, they are apt to give a romantic turn to the mind, which is often productive of great errors in judgment, and of fatal miſtakes in conduct:—Of this I have ſeen frequent inſtances, and therefore adviſe you never to meddle with any of them.

IN juſtice, however, to a late ingenious author, this letter muſt not be reprinted, without my acknowledging, that, ſince the laſt edition was publiſhed I have accidentally met with one exception to my general rule, namely the *Vicar of Wakefield*. That novel is equally entertaining and inſtructive, without being liable to any of the objections that occaſioned the above

reſtriction. This poſſibly may not be the only unexceptionable piece of the kind, but, as I have not met with any other, amongſt a number that I have peruſed, a ſingle inſtance does not alter my opinion of that ſort of writing;—and, I ſtill think, the chance is perhaps a thouſand to one againſt the probability of obtaining the ſmalleſt degree of advantage from the reading any of them, as well as that, very few are to be found, from which much injury may not be received.

WORKS OF THE NEEDLE that employ the fancy may, if they ſuit your inclination, be ſometimes a pretty amuſement; but, let this employment never extend to large pieces, beyond what can be accom-

pliſhed by yourſelf without aſſiſtance.—There is not a greater extravagance, under the ſpecious name of good houſewifery, than the furniſhing of houſes in this manner;—whole apartments have been ſeen thus ornamented by the ſuppoſed work of a lady, who, perhaps, never ſhaded two leaves in the artificial foreſt, but has paid four times its value to the ſeveral people employed in bringing it to perfection. The expence of theſe tedious pieces of work, I ſpeak of experimentally,—having, many years paſt, undertaken one of them, which, when finiſhed, was not worth fifteen pounds; and, by a computation ſince made, it did not coſt leſs than fifty, in the hire and maintenance of the people employed in it.—This, indeed,

was at the age of ſeventeen,—when the thoughtleſs inexperience of youth could alone excuſe ſuch a piece of folly.—— *Embroideries in gold, ſilver*, or *ſhades of ſilk*, come within a narrower compaſs:—Works of that kind, which may, without calling in expenſive aſſiſtance, or tiring the fancy, be finiſhed in a ſummer, will be a well-choſen change of amuſement, and may, as there are three of you, be made much more agreeable, by one alternately reading aloud, while the other two are thus employed.—All kinds of what is called *plain-work*, though no very polite accompliſhment, you muſt be ſo well verſed in, as to be able to cut out, make, or mend, your own linen:—Some fathers, and ſome huſbands, chooſe to have their

daughters and their wives thus attired in the labour of their own hands; and, from a miſtaken notion, believe this to be the great criterion of frugal economy. Where that happens to be the inclination, or opinion of either, it ought always to be readily complied with: But, excluſive of ſuch a motive, I ſee no other that makes the practical part neceſſary to any lady, excepting, indeed, where there is ſuch a narrowneſs of fortune as admits not conveniently the keeping a ſervant, to whom ſuch exerciſes of the needle much more properly appertain.

THE THEATRE, which, by the indefatigable labour of the inimitable Mr. Garrick, has been brought to very great

perfection, will afford you an equally rational and improving entertainment:—Your judgment will not now be called in queſtion, your underſtanding affronted, nor will your modeſty be offended by the indecent ribaldry of thoſe authors, who, to their defect in wit, have added the want of good ſenſe and of good manners. Faults of this kind, that, from a blameable compliance with a corrupted taſte, have ſometimes crept into the works of good writers, are, by his prudent direction, generally rectified or omitted on the ſtage.—You may now ſee many of the beſt plays performed in the beſt manner:—do not, however, go to any that you have not before heard the character of,—be preſent only at thoſe, which are approved

by perſons of underſtanding and virtue, as calculated to anſwer the proper ends of the theatre, namely that of conveying inſtruction in the moſt pleaſing method: Attend to the ſentiment, apply the moral, and then you cannot, I think, paſs an evening in a more uſeful, or in a more entertaining diverſion.

DANCING may alſo take its turn as a healthful exerciſe, and as it is generally ſuitable to the taſte and gaiety of young minds.

PART of the hours appropriated to relaxation muſt of neceſſity be leſs agreeably taken up in the paying and receiving viſits of mere ceremony and civility;—a

tribute, by cuſtom authoriſed,—by good manners enjoined.—In *theſe*, when the converſation is only inſignificant, join in it with an apparent ſatisfaction;—talk of the elegance of a birthday-ſuit, the pattern of a lace, the judicious aſſortment of jewels, the cut of a ruffle, or the ſet of a ſleeve, with an unaffected eaſe,—not according to the rank they hold in your eſtimation, but proportioned to the conſequence they may be of in the opinion of thoſe you are converſing with. The great art of pleaſing is to appear pleaſed with others;—ſuffer not then an ill-bred abſence of thought, or a contemptuous ſneer, ever to betray a conſcious ſuperiority of underſtanding—always productive of ill-nature and diſlike:—Suit yourſelf to the capacity

and to the taſte of your company, when that taſte is confined to harmleſs trifles; but, where it is ſo far depraved as to delight in cruel ſarcaſms on the abſent, to be pleaſed with diſcovering the blemiſhes in a good character, or in repeating the greater faults of a bad one, Religion and Humanity, in that caſe, forbid the leaſt degree of aſſent. If you have not any knowledge of the perſons thus unhappily ſacrificed to Envy or to Malice, and conſequently are ignorant as to the truth or falſehood of ſuch aſperſions, always ſuſpect them to be ill-grounded, or, at leaſt, greatly exaggerated;—ſhew your diſapprobation by a ſilent gravity, and by taking the firſt opportunity to change the ſubject:—But, where any acquaintance with the character in

queſtion gives room for defending it, let not an ill-timed complaiſance prevail over juſtice;—vindicate injured innocence with all the freedom and warmth of an unreſtrained benevolence;—and, where the faults of the guilty will admit of palliation, urge all that truth can allow, in mitigation of error. From this method, beſides the pleaſure ariſing from the conſciouſneſs of a ſtrict conformity to the great rule of *doing as you would be done by*, you will alſo reap to yourſelf the benefit of being leſs frequently peſtered with themes ever painful to a humane diſpoſition. If, unfortunately, you have ſome acquaintance, whoſe malevolence of heart, no ſentimnnt of virtue, no check of good manners, can reſtrain from theſe malici-

ous ſallies of ill-nature;—to them let your viſits be made as ſeldom, and as ſhort, as decency will permit, there being neither benefit nor ſatisfaction to be found in ſuch company, amongſt whom only cards may be introduced with any advantage. On this account, it will be proper for you to know how to play at the games moſt in uſe, becauſe it is an argument of great folly to engage in any thing without doing it well;—but this is a diverſion, which I hope you will have no fondneſs for, as it is in itſelf, to ſay no worſe, a very inſignificant amuſement.

WITH perſons, for whom you can have no eſteem, good-breeding may oblige you to keep up an intercourſe of ceremonious

visits, but politeness enjoins not the length or frequency of them. Here inclination may be followed without a breach of civility:—there is no tax upon intimacy, but from choice—that choice should ever be founded on merit, the certainty whereof you cannot be too careful in previously examining—and great caution is necessary not to be deceived by specious appearances;—a plausible behaviour often, upon a superficial knowledge, creates a prepossession in favour of persons, who, upon a nearer view, may be found to have no claim to esteem. The forming a precipitate judgment, sometimes leads into an unwary intimacy, which it may prove absolutely necessary to break off, and yet that breach may be attended

with innumerable inconveniences;—nay, perhaps, with very material and laſting ill conſequences: Prudence, therefore, here enjoins the greateſt circumſpection. Few people are capable of friendſhip, and ſtill fewer have all the qualifications one would chooſe in a friend;—the fundamental point is a virtuous diſpoſition—but, to that ſhould be added, a good underſtanding, ſolid judgment, ſweetneſs of temper, ſteadineſs of mind, freedom of behaviour, and ſincerity of heart: Seldom as theſe are found to be united, never make a boſom friend of any one greatly deficient in either. Be ſlow in contracting friendſhip, and invariably conſtant in maintaining it: Expect not many friends, but think yourſelf happy, if, through life, you

meet with one or two who deſerve that name, and have all the requiſites for the valuable relation: This may juſtly be deemed the higheſt bleſſing of mortality; —uninterrupted health has the general voice—but, in my opinion, ſuch an intercourſe of friendſhip as much deſerves the preference, as the mental pleaſures, both in nature and degree, exceed the corporeal: The weakneſſes, the pains of the body, may be inexpreſſibly alleviated by the converſation of a perſon, by affection endeared, by reaſon approved; whoſe tender ſympathy partakes your afflictions, and ſhares your enjoyments; who is ſteady in the correction, but mild in the reproof of your faults; like a guardian angel, ever watchful to warn you of un-

foreſeen danger, and, by timely admonitions, to prevent the miſtakes incident to human frailty, and to ſelf-partiality: This is the true office of friendſhip: With ſuch a friend, no ſtate of life can be abſolutely unhappy; but, deſtitute of ſome ſuch connection, Heaven has ſo formed our natures for this intimate ſociety, that, amidſt the affluence of fortune, and in the flow of uninterrupted health, there will be an aching void in the ſolitary breaſt, which can never otherwiſe know a plenitude of happineſs. Should the Supreme Diſpoſer of all events beſtow on you this ſuperlative gift, to ſuch a friend let your heart be ever unreſervedly open; conceal no ſecret thought; diſguiſe no latent weakneſs; but bare your boſom to

the faithful probe of honeſt friendſhip, and ſhrink not, if it ſmarts, beneath the touch; nor, with tenacious pride, diſlike the perſon that freely dares to condemn ſome favourite foible; but, ever open to conviction, hear with attention, and receive with gratitude, the kind reproof that flows from tenderneſs: When ſenſible of a fault, be ingenuous in the confeſſion—be ſincere and ſteady in the correction of it.

HAPPY is her lot, who, in a huſhand, finds this invaluable friend! Yet ſo great is the hazard, ſo diſproportioned the chances, that I could almoſt wiſh the dangerous die was never to be thrown for any of you!—But as probably it may,

let me conjure ye all, my dear girls, if ever any of you take this moſt important ſtep in life, to proceed with the utmoſt care, and with deliberate circumſpection. Fortune and Family it is the ſole province of your father to direct in; he certainly has always an undoubted right to a negative voice, though not to a compulſive one: As a child is very juſtifiable in the refuſal of her hand, even to the abſolute command of a father, where her heart cannot go with it; ſo is ſhe extremely culpable in giving it contrary to his approbation. Here I muſt take ſhame to myſelf! And, for this unpardonable fault, I do juſtly acknowledge, that the ſubſequent ill conſequences of a moſt unhappy marriage were the proper puniſhment: This, and

every other error in my own conduct, I do, and shall, with the utmost candour, lay open to you, sincerely praying that you may reap the benefit of my experience, and that you may avoid those rocks on which, either by carelessness, or sometimes, alas, by too much caution, I have been wrecked! But to return:

THE chief point to be regarded, in the choice of *a companion for life*, is a really virtuous principle—an unaffected goodness of heart: Without this, you will be continually shocked by indecency, and pained by impiety. So numerous have been the unhappy victims to the ridiculous opinion—*a reformed libertine makes the best husband*—that, did not experience

daily evince the contrary, one would believe it impoſſible for a girl, who has a tolerable degree of common underſtanding, to be made the dupe of ſo erroneous a poſition, which has not the leaſt ſhadow of reaſon for its foundation, and which a ſmall ſhare of obſervation will prove to be falſe in fact. A man who has been long converſant with the worſt ſort of women, is very apt to contract a bad opinion of, and a contempt for the ſex in general: Incapable of eſteeming any, he is ſuſpicious of all; jealous without cauſe, angry without provocation, and his own diſturbed imagination is a continual ſource of ill humour: To this is frequently joined a bad habit of body, the natural conſequence of an irregular life, which gives

an additional ſourneſs to the temper. What rational proſpect of happineſs can there be with ſuch a companion? And, that this is the general character of thoſe who are called *reformed rakes*, obſervation will certify. But, admit there may be ſome exceptions, it is a hazard upon which no conſiderate woman would venture the peace of her whole future life. The vanity of thoſe girls, who believe themſelves capable of working miracles of this kind, and who give up their perſons to men of libertine principles, upon the wild expectation of reclaiming them, juſtly deſerve the diſappointment which it will generally meet with; for, believe me, a wife is, of all perſons, the leaſt likely to ſucceed in ſuch an attempt.——Be it your

care to find that virtue in a lover which you muſt never hope to form in a huſband. Good-ſenſe and good-nature are almoſt equally requiſite; if the former is wanting, it will be next to an impoſſibility for you to eſteem the perſon of whoſe behaviour you may have cauſe to be aſhamed; —and mutual eſteem is as neceſſary to happineſs in the married ſtate, as mutual affection: Without the latter every day will bring with it ſome freſh cauſe of vexation, until repeated quarrels produce a coldneſs, which will ſettle into an irreconcileable averſion, and you will become, not only each other's torment, but the object of contempt to your family, and to your acquaintance.

THIS quality of good-nature is, of all others, the moſt difficult to be aſcertained, on account of the general miſtake of blending it with good-humour, as if they were in themſelves the ſame; whereas, in fact, no two principles of action are more eſſentially different—but this may require ſome explanation.——By good-nature I mean that true benevolence which partakes the felicity of all mankind, which promotes the ſatisfaction of every individual within the reach of its ability, which relieves the diſtreſſed, comforts the afflicted, diffuſes bleſſings, and communicates happineſs, far as its ſphere of action can extend; and which, in the private ſcenes of life, will ſhine conſpicuous in the dutiful ſon, in the affectionate huſband, the

indulgent father, the faithful friend, and in the compaſſionate maſter both to man and beaſt: whilſt good-humour is nothing more than a cheerful, pleaſing deportment, ariſing either from a natural gaiety of mind, or from an affectation of popularity, joined to an affability of behaviour, the reſult of good-breeding, and from a ready compliance with the taſte of every company. This kind of mere good-humour is, by far, the moſt ſtriking quality; it is frequently miſtaken for, and complimented with the ſuperior name of *real good-nature*; a man, by this ſpecious appearance, has often acquired that appellation, who, in all the actions of his private life, has been a moroſe, cruel, revengeful, ſullen, haughty tyrant.——Let

them put on the cap whoſe temples fit the galling wreath!——On the contrary, a man of a truly benevolent diſpoſition, and formed to promote the happineſs of all around him, may ſometimes, perhaps, from an ill habit of body, an accidental vexation, or from a commendable openneſs of heart, above the meanneſs of diſguiſe, be guilty of little fallies of peeviſhneſs, or of ill-humour, which, carrying the appearance of ill-nature, may be unjuſtly thought to proceed from it, by perſons who are unacquainted with his true character, and who take ill-humour and ill-nature to by ſynonimous terms, tho' in reality they bear not the leaſt analogy to each other. In order to the forming a right judgment, it is abſolutely neceſſary

to obſerve this diſtinction, which will effectually ſecure you from the dangerous error of taking the ſhadow for the ſubſtance—an irretrievable miſtake, pregnant with innumerable conſequent evils!

FROM what has been ſaid, it plainly appears, that the criterion of this amiable virtue is not to be taken from the general opinion; mere good-humour being, to all intents and purpoſes, ſufficient, in this particular to eſtabliſh the public voice in favour of a man utterly devoid of every humane and benevolent affection of heart. It is only from the leſs conſpicuous ſcenes of life, the more retired ſphere of action, from the artleſs tenor of domeſtic conduct, that the real character can, with any

certainty, be drawn: Theſe, undiſguiſed, proclaim the man; but, as they ſhun the glare of light, nor court the noiſe of popular applauſe, they paſs unnoted, and are ſeldom known till after an intimate acquaintance. The beſt method, therefore, to avoid the deception in this caſe, is to lay no ſtreſs on outward appearances, which are too often falacious, but to take the rule of judging from the ſimple unpoliſhed ſentiments of thoſe, whoſe dependent connections give them an undeniable certainty; who not only ſee, but who hourly feel, the good or bad effect of that diſpoſition, to which they are ſubjected. By this, I mean, that if a man is equally reſpected, eſteemed, and beloved by his tenants, by his dependents and domeſtics—from the

ſubſtantial farmer to the laborious peaſant, from the proud ſteward to the ſubmiſſive wretch, who, thankful for employment, humbly obeys the meanial tribe;—you may juſtly conclude, he has that true good nature, that real benevolence, which delights in communicating felicity, and enjoys the ſatisfaction it diffuſes:—But if, by theſe, he is deſpiſed and hated, ſerved merely from a principle of fear, devoid of affection, which is ever eaſily diſcoverable, whatever may be his public character, however favourable the general opinion, be aſſured, that his diſpoſition is ſuch as can never be productive of domeſtic happineſs.—I have been the more particular on this head, as it is one of the moſt eſſential qualifications to be regarded, and

of all others the moſt liable to be miſtaken.

NEVER be prevailed with, my dear, to give your hand to a perſon defective in theſe material points: Secure of virtue, of good nature, and underſtanding, in a huſband, you may be ſecure of happineſs;—without the two former it is unattainable; without the latter, in a tolerable degree, it muſt be very imperfect.

REMEMBER, however, that infallability is not the property of man, or you may entail diſappointment on yourſelf, by expecting what is never to be found:—The beſt men are ſometimes inconſiſtent with themſelves; they are liable to be hurried,

by ſudden ſtarts of paſſion, into expreſſions and actions, which their cooler reaſon will condemn;—they may have ſome oddities of behaviour, ſome peculiarities of temper;—they may be ſubject to accidental ill-humour, or to whimſical complaints. Blemiſhes of this kind often ſhade the brighteſt character, but they are never deſtructive of mutual felicity, unleſs when they are made ſo by an improper reſentment, or by an ill-judged oppoſition. Reaſon can never be heared by Paſſion;—the offer of it tends only to inflame the more.—When cooled, and in his uſual temper, the man of underſtanding, if he has been wrong, will ſuggeſt to himſelf all that could be urged againſt him;—the man of good-nature will, unupbraided, own his

error;—immediate contradiction is, therefore, wholly unſerviceable, and highly imprudent, an after repetition equally unneceſſary and injudicious. Any peculiarities in the temper or behaviour ought to be properly repreſented in the tendereſt and in the moſt friendly manner; and, if the repreſentation of them is made diſcreetly, it will generally be well taken; but if they are ſo habitual as not eaſily to be altered, ſtrike not too often upon the unharmonious ſtring, rather let them paſs as unobſerved: Such a cheerful compliance will better cement your union; and they may be made eaſy to yourſelf, by reflecting on the ſuperior good qualities, by which theſe trifling faults are ſo greatly overbalanced.

You muſt remember, my dear, theſe rules are laid down, on the ſuppoſition of your being united to a perſon who poſſeſſes the three eſſential qualifications for happineſs before mentioned: In this caſe, no farther direction is neceſſary, but that you ſtrictly perform the duty of a wife, namely, to love, to honour, and obey: The two firſt articles are a tribute ſo indiſpenſably due to merit that they muſt be paid by inclination;—and they naturally lead to the performance of the laſt, which will not only be an eaſy, but a pleaſing taſk, ſince nothing can ever be enjoined by ſuch a perſon that is in itſelf improper, and few things will, that can, with any reaſon, be diſagreeable to you.——Here ſhould this ſubject end, were it not more

than poſſible for you, after all that has been urged, to be led, by ſome inferior motive, to the neglect of the primary caution; and that, either from an opinion too haſtily entertained, from an unaccountable partiality, or from the powerful prevalence of perſuaſion, you may be unfortunately induced to give your hand to a man, whoſe bad heart and moroſe temper, concealed by a well-practiſed diſſimulation, may render every flattering hope of happineſs abortive.—May Heaven, in mercy, guard you from this fatal error! Such a companion is the worſt of all temporal ills, a deadly potion, that imbitters every ſocial ſcene of life, damps every riſing joy, and baniſhes that cheerful temper, which alone can give a true reliſh to the

bleſſings of mortality.——Moſt ſincerely do I pray that this may never be your lot. And I hope your prudent circumſpection will be ſufficient to guard you from the danger: But the bare poſſibility of the event makes it not unneceſſary to lay down a few rules for the maintaining ſome degree of eaſe, under ſuch a deprivation of happineſs. This is by far the moſt difficult part of my preſent undertaking;—it is hard to adviſe here, and ſtill harder to practiſe the advice: The ſubject alſo is too extenſive to be minutely treated within the compaſs of *a letter*, which muſt confine me to the moſt material points only: In theſe, I ſhall give you the beſt directions in my power, very ardent-

ly wiſhing that you may never have occaſion to make uſe of them.

THE being united to a man of irreligious principles, makes it impoſſible to diſcharge a great part of the proper duty of a wife;—to name but one inſtance, obedience will be rendered impracticable, by frequent injunctions inconſiſtent with, and contrary to the higher obligations of morality. This is not a ſuppoſition, but is a certainty founded upon facts, which I have too often ſeen and can atteſt. Where this happens, the reaſons for non-compliance ought to be offered in a plain, ſtrong, good-natured manner,—there is at leaſt the chance of ſucceſs from being heard: But ſhould thoſe reaſons be rejected, or

the hearing them be refuſed, and ſilence on the ſubject enjoined, which is moſt probable, few people caring to hear, what they know to be right, when determined not to appear convinced by it,—obey the injunction, and urge not the argument farther;—keep, however, ſteady to your principles, and ſuffer neither perſuaſion or threats to prevail on you to act contrary to them. All commands repugnant to the laws of Chriſtianity, it is your indiſpenſable duty to diſobey—all requeſts that are inconſiſtent with prudence, or incompatible with the rank and character, which you ought to maintain in life, it is your intereſt to refuſe:—a compliance with the former would be criminal, a conſent to the latter highly indiſcreet;—and it might thereby

ſubject you to general cenſure. For a man, capable of requiring from his wife what he knows to be in itſelf wrong, is equally capable of throwing the whole blame of ſuch miſconduct on her, and of afterwards upbraiding her for a behaviour, to which he will, upon the ſame principle, diſown that he has been acceſſary. Many ſimilar inſtances have come within the compaſs of my own obſervation. In things of a leſs material nature, that are neither criminal in themſelves, nor pernicious in their conſequences, always acquieſce, if inſiſted on, however diſagreeable they may be to your own temper and inclination: Such a compliance will evidently prove that your refuſal, in the other caſes, proceeds not from a ſpirit of contradiction,

but merely from a juſt regard to that ſuperior duty, which can never be infringed with impunity:—Paſſion may reſent, but Reaſon muſt approve this conduct; and, therefore, it is the moſt likely method, in time, to make a favourable impreſſion. But, if you ſhould fail of ſuch ſucceſs, you will at leaſt enjoy that ſatisfactory ſelf-approbation, which is the inſeparable attendant of a truly religious and rational deportment.

SHOULD the painful taſk of dealing with a moroſe tyrannical temper be aſſigned you, there is little more to be recomended than a patient ſubmiſſion to an evil which admits not of a remedy. Ill-nature is increaſed, obſtinacy confirmed by

oppoſition;—the leſs ſuch a temper is contradicted, the more ſupportable will it be to thoſe who are under its baneful influence. When all endeavours to pleaſe are ineffectual, and when a man ſeems determined to find fault with every thing, as if his chief pleaſure conſiſted in tormenting thoſe about him, it requires a more than common degree of patience and reſolution to forbear uttering reproaches, which ſuch a behaviour may be juſtly allowed to deſerve: yet, it is abſolutely neceſſary to the maintaining any tolerable degree of eaſe, not only to reſtrain all expreſſions of reſentment, but to withhold even thoſe diſdainful looks, which are apt to accompany a contemptuous ſilence,—both equally tending to increaſe the ma-

lady. This diabolical delight in giving pain is moſt unwearied in the ſearch of matter for its gratification, and can either find, or unaccountably can form it, in almoſt all the occurrences of life; but, when ſuffered unobſtructed, and unregarded to run its malicious courſe, it will quickly vent its blunted arrows, and will die of diſappointment;—whilſt all endeavours to pleaſe, all complaints of unkindneſs, will but ſharpen againſt yourſelf the weapon's edge,—and, by proving your ſenſibility of the wound, will give the wiſhed-for ſatisfaction to him who inflicts it. Prudence, in this caſe, directs more than ordinary circumſpection,—that every part of your behaviour may be as blameleſs as poſſible, even to the abſtaining from

the leaſt appearance of evil;—and after you have, to the utmoſt of your power, ſtrove to merit approbation, expect not to meet with it.—By theſe means you will eſcape the mortification of being diſappointed, which, often repeated, is apt to give a gloomy ſourneſs to the temper, incompatible with any degree of contentment: You muſt, ſo ſituated, learn to be ſatisfied with the conſciouſneſs of acting right, according to your beſt abilities;—and, if poſſible, you ſhould look with an unconcerned indifference on the reception of every ſucceſsleſs attempt to pleaſe.

THIS, it muſt be owned, is a hard leſſon of philoſophy,—it requires no leſs than an abſolute command over the paſ-

ſions;—but let it be remembered, that ſuch a command will itſelf moſt amply recompenſe every difficulty, it will compenſate every pain, which it may have coſt you to obtain:—beſides it is, I believe, the only way to preſerve any tranquillity of mind, under ſo diſagreeable a connection.

As the want of underſtanding is by no art to be concealed, by no addreſs to be diſguiſed, it might be ſuppoſed impoſſible for a woman of ſenſe to unite herſelf to a perſon whoſe defect, in this inſtance, muſt render that ſort of rational ſociety, which conſtitutes the chief happineſs of ſuch an union, impoſſible; yet, here, how often has the weakneſs of female judgment been

conſpicuous! The advantages of great ſuperiority in rank or fortune have frequently proved ſo irreſiſtible a temptation, as, in opinion, to outweigh, not only the folly, but even the vices of its poſſeſſor: A grand miſtake, ever tacitly acknowledged by a ſubſequent repentance, when the expected pleaſures of affluence, equipage, and all the glittering pomp of uſeleſs pageantry, have been experimentally found inſufficient to make amends for the want of that conſtant ſatisfaction, which reſults from the ſocial joy of converſing with a reaſonable friend!—But, however weak this motive muſt be acknowledged, it is more excuſable than another, which, I fear, has ſometimes had an equal influence on the mind;—I

mean ſo great a love of ſway, as to induce her to give the preference to a perſon of weak intellectuals, in hopes thereby of holding, uncontrolled, the reigns of government: The expectation is, in fact, ill-grounded—Obſtinacy and Pride being generally the companions of Folly;—the ſilliest people are generally the moſt tenacious of their opinions, and, conſequently, the hardeſt of all others to be managed. But, admit the contrary, the principle is in itſelf bad,—it tends to invert the order of Nature, and to counteract the deſign of Providence.

A WOMAN can never be ſeen in a more ridiculous light, than when ſhe appears to govern her huſband; if, unfortunately, the

ſuperiority of underſtanding is on her ſide, the apparent conſciouſneſs of that ſuperiority betrays a weakneſs that renders her contemptible in the ſight of every conſiderate perſon,—and it may, very probably, fix in his mind a diſlike never to be eradicated.—In ſuch a caſe, if it ſhould ever be your own, remember that ſome degree of diſſimulation is commendable, ſo far as to let your huſband's defects appear unobſerved. When he judges wrong, never flatly contradict, but lead him inſenſibly into another opinion, in ſo diſcreet a manner, that it may ſeem entirely his own,—and let the whole credit of every prudent determination reſt on him, without indulging the fooliſh vanity of claiming any merit to yourſelf. Thus a per-

ſon, of but an indifferent capacity, may be ſo aſſiſted, as, in many inſtances, to ſhine with a borrowed luſtre, ſcarce diſtinguiſhable from the native, and by degrees he may be brought into a kind of mechanical method of acting properly, in all the common occurrences of life. Odd as this poſition may ſeem, it is founded in fact; and I have ſeen the method ſucceſsfully practiſed by more than one perſon, where a weak mind, on the governed ſide, has been ſo prudently ſet off as to appear the ſole director;—like the ſtatue of the Delphic god, which was thought to give forth its own oracles, whilſt the humble prieſt, who lent his voice, was by the ſhrine concealed, nor ſought a higher glory

than a ſuppoſed obedience to the power he would be thought to ſerve.

FROM hence, it may be inferred, that, by a perfect propriety of behaviour, eaſe, and contentment, at leaſt, are attainable with a companion, who has not the moſt exalted underſtanding; but then virtue and good-nature are preſuppoſed, or there will be nothing to work upon—a vicious ill-natured fool being ſo untractable and tormenting an aſſociate, that there needs only the addition of jealouſy to the compoſition to make the curſe complete.

THIS paſſion, once ſuffered to get footing in the heart, is hardly ever to be extirpated; it is a conſtant ſource of torment

to the breaſt that gives it reception, and is an inexhauſtible fund of vexation to the object of it: With a perſon of this unfortunate diſpoſition, it is prudent to avoid the leaſt appearance of concealment—a whiſper in a mixed company, a meſſage given in a low voice to a ſervant, have, by the power of a diſturbed imagination, been magnified into a material injury—whatever has the air of ſecrecy raiſes terror in a mind naturally diſtruſtful; a perfect unreſerved openneſs, both in converſation and behaviour, ſtarves the anxious expectation of diſcovery, and may very probably lead into an habitual confidence, the only antidote againſt the poiſon of ſuſpicion. It is eaſier to prevent than to remove a received ill impreſſion; and, con-

ſequently, it is much wiſer to be ſometimes deficient in little points of civility, which, however indifferent in themſelves, may happen unaccountably to claſh with the eaſe of a perſon, whoſe repoſe it is both your duty and intereſt to promote; it is much more commendable contentedly to incur the cenſure of a trifling diſpoſition, by a circumſtantial unaſked relation of inſignificant incidents, than to give any room for apprehending the leaſt degree of reſerve. Such a conſtant method of proceeding, together with a reaſonable compliance, is the moſt likely to cure this painful turn of mind; for, by withholding every ſupport that could give ſtrength to it, the want of matter to feed on may probably in time cauſe its extinction: If,

unhappily, it is ſo conſtitutional, ſo interwoven with the ſoul, as to become, in a manner, inſeparably united with it, nothing remains but to ſubmit patiently to the will of Heaven, under the preſſure of an unalterable evil; to guard carefully againſt the natural conſequence of repeated undeſerved ſuſpicions, namely, a growing indifference which too frequently terminates in averſion; and, by conſidering ſuch a ſituation as a trial of obedience and reſignation, to receive the comfort that muſt ariſe from properly exerciſing one of the moſt exalted of the Chriſtian virtues:

——I cannot diſmiſs this ſubject without adding a particular caution *to yourſelf* concerning it.

JEALOUSY is, on ſeveral accounts, ſtill more inexcuſable in a woman—there is not any thing that ſo much expoſes her to ridicule, or ſo much ſubjects her to the inſult of affrontive addreſſes—it is an inlet to almoſt every poſſible evil, the fatal ſource of innumerable indiſcretions, the ſure deſtruction of her own peace, and frequently is the bane of her huſband's affection! Give not a momentary harbour to its ſhadow in your heart—fly from it as from the face of a fiend that would lead your unwary ſteps into a gulph of unalterable miſery. When once embarked in the matrimonial voyage, the fewer faults you diſcover in your partner, the better; never ſearch after what it will give you no pleaſure to find—never deſire to hear, what

you will not like to be told;—therefore avoid that tribe of impertinents, who, either from a malicious love of discord, or from the meaner, tho' less criminal motive of ingratiating themselves, by gratifying the blameable curiosity of others, sow dissention wherever they gain admittance; and, by telling unwelcome truths, or, more frequently, by insinuating invented falsehoods, injure innocent people, disturb domestic union, and destroy the peace of families: Treat these emissaries of Satan with the contempt they deserve; hear not what they offer to communicate, but give them at once to understand, that you can never look on those as your friends, who speak in a disadvantageous manner of that person whom you would always choose to

ſee in the moſt favourable light. If they are not effectually ſilenced by ſuch rebukes, be inacceſſible to their viſits, and break off all acquaintance with ſuch incorrigible peſts of ſociety, who will be ever upon the watch to ſeize an unguarded opportunity of diſturbing your repoſe.

SHOULD the companion of your life be guilty of ſome ſecret indiſcretions, run not the hazard of being told by theſe malicious meddlers, what, in fact, it is better for you never to know; but, if ſome unavoidable accident betrays an imprudent correſpondence, take it for a mark of eſteem, that he endeavours to conceal from you what he knows you muſt, upon a principle of reaſon and religion, diſap-

prove—and do not, by discovering your acquaintance with it, take off the restraint which your supposed ignorance lays him under, and thereby, perhaps, give a latitude to undisguised irregularities. Be assured, whatever accidental sallies the gaiety of inconsiderate youth may lead him into, you can never be indifferent to him whilst he is careful to preserve your peace, by concealing what he imagines might be an infringement of it: Rest then satisfied that time and reason will most certainly get the better of all faults which proceed not from a bad heart; and that, by maintaining the first place in his esteem, your happiness will be built on too firm a foundation to be easily shaken.

I HAVE been thus particular on the choice of a husband, and on the material parts of conduct in a married life, because thereon depends not only the temporal, but often the eternal felicity of those who enter into that state;—a constant scene of disagreement, of ill nature, and quarrels, necessarily unfitting the mind for every religious and social duty, by keeping it in a disposition directly opposite to that Christian piety, to that practical benevolence and rational composure, which alone can prepare it for everlasting happiness.

INSTRUCTIONS on this head, considering your tender age, may seem premature, and should have been deferred until occasion called for them, had our situation allowed

me frequent opportunities of communicating my ſentiments to you—but that not being the caſe, I chooſe in this epiſtle, at once, to offer you my beſt advice in every circumſtance of great moment to your well-being, both here and hereafter, leſt at a more proper ſeaſon it may not happen to be in my power. You may defer the particular conſideration of this part, till the deſign of entering into a new ſcene of life may make it uſeful to you;—which, I hope, will not be for ſome years—an unhappy marriage being generally the conſequence of a too early engagement, before reaſon has gained ſufficient ſtrength to form a ſolid judgment, on which only a proper choice can be determined.——Great is the hazard of a miſtake, and irretrievable

the effects of it!—Many are the degrees between happineſs and miſery!—Abſolute miſery, I will venture to affirm, is to be avoided, by a proper behaviour, even under all the complicated ills of human life:—But to arrive at that proper behaviour, requires the higheſt degree of Chriſtian philoſophy;—and who would voluntarily put themſelves upon a ſtate of trial ſo ſevere, in which not one of a thouſand has been found able to come off victorious?—Between this and poſitive happineſs there are innumerable ſteps of comparative evil—each has its ſeparate conflict, variouſly difficult, differently painful, under all which a patient ſubmiſſion and a conſcious propriety of behaviour is the only attainable good. Far ſhort indeed of poſſible tem-

poral felicity is the eaſe ariſing from hence! Reſt not content with the proſpect of ſuch eaſe, but fix on a more eligible point of view, by aiming at true happineſs;—and, take my word, *that* can never be found in a married ſtate, without the three eſſential qualifications already mentioned, Virtue, Good-Nature, and Good-Senſe in a huſband.—Remember, therefore, my dear girl, this repeated caution, if ever you reſolve on marriage—Never to give your hand to a man who wants any of them, whatever other advantages he may be poſſeſſed of; ſo ſhall you not only eſcape all thoſe vexations, which thouſands of unthinking mortals hourly repent of having brought upon themſelves, but, moſt aſſuredly, if it is not your own fault, you will

enjoy that uninterrupted domeſtic harmony, in the affectionate ſociety of a virtuous companion, which conſtitutes the higheſt ſatisfaction of human life. Such an union, founded on reaſon and religion, cemented by mutual eſteem and tenderneſs, is a kind of faint emblem—if the compariſon may be allowed—of the promiſed reward of virtue in a future ſtate; and, moſt certainly, it is an excellent preparative for it, by preſerving a perfect equanimity, by keeping a conſtant compoſure of mind, which naturally lead to the proper diſcharge of all the religious and ſocial duties of life, and theſe form the unerring road to everlaſting peace. The firſt have been already ſpoken to—it remains only to mention ſome few of the latter.

AMONGST theſe, ECONOMY may, perhaps, be thought improperly placed; yet many of the duties we owe to ſociety being often rendered impracticable by the want of it, there is not ſo much impropriety in ranking it under this head as may at firſt be imagined: For inſtance, a man who lives at an expence beyond what his income will ſupport, lays himſelf under a neceſſity of being unjuſt, by withholding from his creditors what they have a right to demand from him as their due, according to all laws both human and divine—and thereby he often entails ruin on an innocent family, who, but for the loſs ſuſtained by his extravagance, might have comfortably ſubſiſted on the profits of their induſtry;—he likewiſe puts it out of his own

power to give that relief to the indigent, which, by the laws of humanity, they have a right to expect—"the goods of fortune being given"—as a great divine excellently obſerves—"for the uſe and ſupport of others, as well as for the perſon on whom they are beſtowed."—Theſe are ſurely great breaches of that duty we owe to our fellow-creatures, and are effects very frequently and naturally produced by the want of economy.

You will find it a very good method to to regulate your ſtated expences as to bring them always one-fourth part within your certain annual income;—by theſe means you will avoid at any time being diſtreſſed by unforeſeen accidents, and you will have

it more eaſily in your power materially to relieve thoſe who deſerve aſſiſtance.—But the giving trifling ſums, *indiſcriminately*, to ſuch as appear neceſſitous, is far from being commendable—it is an injury to ſociety—it is an encouragement to idleneſs, and helps to fill the ſtreets with lazy beggars, who live upon miſapplied bounty, to the prejudice of the induſtrious poor. Theſe are uſeful members of the commonwealth, and on them ſuch benefactions might be ſerviceably beſtowed. Be ſparing, therefore, in this kind of indiſcriminate donations—they are too conſtantly an inſignificant relief to the receivers—ſuppoſing them really in want—and, frequently repeated, they amount to a conſiderable ſum in the year's account. The proper ob-

jects of charity are thoſe, who, by unavoidable misfortunes, have fallen from affluent circumſtances into a ſtate of poverty and diſtreſs—thoſe alſo, who, by unexpected diſappointments in trade, are on the point of being reduced to an impoſſibility of carrying on that buſineſs on which their preſent ſubſiſtence and their future proſpects in life depend, from the incapacity of raiſing an immediate ſum to ſurmount the difficulty—and thoſe, who, by their utmoſt induſtry, can hardly ſupport their families above the miſeries of want—or who, by age or by illneſs, are rendered incapable of labour:—Appropriate a certain part of your income to the relief of theſe real diſtreſſes. To the firſt give as largely as your circumſtances will allow;—to the ſe-

cond—after the example of an excellent prelate of our own church—lend, if it is in your power, a ſufficient ſum to prevent the threatened ruin, on condition of being repaid the loan, without intereſt, if Providence enables them, by future ſucceſs, to do it with convenience.—The ſame method may be uſed where indigence renders induſtry unavailable, by depriving it of the means to lay in a ſmall original ſtock to be improved.—Never take a note of hand, or any acknowledgement of ſuch loan, leſt what you intended for a benefit ſhould be afterwards made the inſtrument of ruin to the receiver, by a different diſpoſition in your ſucceſſor. But ſuch aſſiſtance ought not to be given to any, without a thorough knowledge of their character, and from

having good reaſon to believe them not only induſtrious but ſtrictly honeſt—which will be a ſufficient obligation on them for the repayment;—and the ſums ſo repaid ought to be laid by, till an opportunity again offers of making them, in like manner, ſerviceable to others.—The latter ſort, who are able to work, may, by a ſmall addition to the profits of their own labour, be reſcued from miſery, and may be put into a comfortable way of ſubſiſtence. Thoſe who by age or by infirmity are rendered utterly incapable of ſupporting themſelves, have an undoubted right, not only to the neceſſaries, but even to ſome of the conveniencies of life, from all whom Providence has placed in the more happy ſtate of affluence and independence.

As your fortune and ſituation are yet undetermined, I have purpoſely laid down ſuch rules as may be adapted to every ſtation. A large fortune gives greater opportunity of doing good, and of communicating happineſs in a more extenſive degree—but a ſmall one is no excuſe for withholding a proportionate relief from real and deſerving objects of compaſſion:—to aſſiſt them is an indiſpenſable duty of Chriſtianity. The firſt and great commandment is, To love GOD with all your heart;—the ſecond, To love your neighbour as yourſelf.—*Whoſo ſeeth his brother in need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*—Or how the love of his neighbour?—If deficient in theſe primary duties, vain

are the hopes of acceptance built on a partial obedience to the leſſer branches of the law!—Inability is often pleaded as an excuſe for the want of charity, by perſons who make no ſcruple of daily laviſhing on their pleaſures, what, if better applied, might have made an indigent family happy thro' life;—theſe perſons loſe ſight of real felicity, by the miſtaken purſuit of its ſhadow: The pleaſures which engroſs their attention, die in the enjoyment, are often ſucceeded by remorſe, and always by ſatiety; whereas the true joy, the ſweet complacency reſulting from benevolent actions, encreaſes by reflection, and muſt be immortal as the ſoul. So exactly, ſo kindly is our duty made to coincide with our preſent as well as future intereſt, that

incomparably more ſatisfaction will accrue to a conſiderate mind, from denying itſelf even ſome of the agreeables in life, in order the more effectually to relieve the unfortunate, than could ariſe from a full indulgence of every temporal gratification.

HOWEVER ſmall your income may be, remember that a part of it is due to merit in diſtreſs;—ſet by an annual ſum for this purpoſe, even tho' it ſhould oblige you to abate ſome unneceſſary expence to raiſe the fund: By this method perſons of ſlender fortune have been enabled to do much good, and to give happineſs to many. If your ſtock will not admit of frequent draughts upon it, be the more circumſpect with regard to the merit of thoſe you

relieve, that bounties, not in your power to repeat often, may not be misapplied:—But if Providence, by a more ample fortune, should bless you with a larger ability of being serviceable to your fellow-creatures, prove yourself worthy of the trust reposed in you, by making a proper use of it.—Wide as your influence can extend, turn the cry of distress and danger into the song of joy and safety—feed the hungry, clothe the naked, comfort the afflicted, give medicine to the sick, and, with either, bestow all the alleviation their unfortunate circumstances can admit of:—Thus may you truly make a friend of the unrighteous mammon—thus you may turn the perishable goods of fortune into everlasting blessings:—Upon earth you will partake

that happineſs you impart to others, and you will lay up for yourſelf *Treaſures in Heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt can corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor ſteal.*

A PERSON who has once experienced the advantages of a right action, will be led by the motive of preſent ſelf-intereſt, as well as by future expectation, to the continuance of it. There is no injunction of Chriſtianity that a ſincere Chriſtian, by obedience, will not find is ſo calculated as to be directly, in ſome meaſure, its own reward.

THE forgiveneſs of injuries—to which is annexed the promiſe of pardon for our own offences, and which is required by the

goſpel, not only ſo far as to forbear all kinds of retaliation, but alſo to render us equally diſpoſed to ſerve, with our utmoſt power, thoſe perſons who have wilfully injured us, as if no ſuch injury had been received from them—has by ſome been accounted a hard precept;—yet the difficulty of it ariſes merely from, and is proportionable to, the badneſs of the heart, by which it is ſo eſteemed: A good diſpoſition finds a ſuperlative pleaſure in returning good for evil;—and, by an inexpreſſible ſatisfaction of mind, in ſo doing, feels the preſent reward of obedience:—whereas a ſpirit of revenge is incompatible with happineſs, an inplacable temper being a conſtant torment to its poſſeſſor; and the man who returns an injury feels more real miſery from

the rancour of his own heart, than it is in his power to inflict upon another.

SHOULD a friend wound you in the moſt tender part, by betraying a confidence repoſed, prudence forbids the expoſing yourſelf to a ſecond deception, by placing any future truſt in ſuch a perſon; but though here all obligations of intimacy ceaſe, thoſe of benevolence and humanity remain ſtill in full force, and are equally binding, as to every act of ſervice and aſſiſtance, even to the ſuffering a leſſer evil yourſelf, in order to procure a much greater good to the perſon, by whom you have been thus ill-uſed.——This is in general allowed to be the duty of every individual to all, as a member of ſociety—but it is particularly

instanced in the present case, to shew, that not even a breach of friendship—the highest of all provocations—will cancel the duty, at all times equally and unalterably binding, the duty of promoting both the temporal and eternal happiness of all your fellow-creatures, by every method in your power.

IT has been by many thought impertinent at any time to offer unasked advice;—the reason of which may be chiefly owing to its being too frequently tendered with a supercilious air that implies a conceited consciousness of superior wisdom:—it is the manner, therefore, more than the thing itself, that gives disgust.

If thoſe with whom you have any degree of intimacy are guilty of what to you appears either wrong, or indiſcreet, ſpeak your opinion to them with freedom, though you ſhould even loſe a nominal friend by ſo doing: Silence makes you, in ſome meaſure, an acceſſary to the fault. But having thus once diſcharged your duty, reſt there—they are to judge for themſelves;—to repeat ſuch admonitions is both uſeleſs and impertinent—and they will then be thought to proceed rather from pride than from good-nature. To the perſons concerned only are you to ſpeak your diſapprobation of their conduct;—when they are cenſured by others, ſay all that truth or probability will permit in their juſtification.

IT often happens, that, upon an accidental quarrel between friends, they ſeparately appeal to a third perſon;—in ſuch caſe, alternately take the oppoſite ſide, alledging every argument in favour of the abſent party, and placing the miſtakes of the complainer in the ſtrongeſt light. This method may probably at firſt diſpleaſe, but is always right, as it is the moſt likely to procure a reconciliation: If that takes place, each equally obliged, will thankfully approve your conduct;—if not, you will have the ſatisfaction of, at leaſt, endeavouring to have been the reſtorer of peace. A contrary behaviour, which generally proceeds from the mean deſire of pleaſing, by flattery, at the expence of truth, often widens a trifling breach into

open and irreconcileable enmity:—People of this diſpoſition are the worſt ſort of incendiaries,—the greateſt plague of human ſociety, becauſe the moſt difficult to be guarded againſt, from their always wearing the ſpecious diſguiſe of pretended approbation and friendſhip to the preſent, and equally deceitful reſentment againſt the abſent perſon or company.

To enumerate all the ſocial duties would lead me too far;—ſuffice it, therefore, my dear, in few words to ſum up what remains.——Let truth ever dwell upon your tongue—Scorn to flatter any, and deſpiſe the perſon who would practiſe ſo baſe an art upon yourſelf.——Be honeſtly open in every part of your beha-

viour and converſation. All with whom you have intercourſe, even down to the meaneſt ſtation, have a right to civility and good-humour from you:—a ſuperiority of rank or fortune is no licence for a proud ſupercilious behaviour—the diſadvantages of a dependent ſtate are alone ſufficient to labour under, it is both unjuſt and cruel to increaſe them, either by a haughty deportment, or by the unwarrantable exerciſe of a capricious temper.

EXAMINE every part of your conduct towards others, by the unerring rule of ſuppoſing a change of places;—this will certainly lead to an impartial judgment. Do then what appears to you right, or, in other words, *what you would they ſhould do*

unto you—which comprehends every duty relative to ſociety.

AIM at perfection, or you will never attain an amiable degree of virtue. Be religious without hypocriſy, pious without enthuſiaſm. Endeavour to merit the favour of GOD, by a ſincere and uniform obedience, to whatever you know or believe to be his will: And, ſhould afflictive evils be permitted to cloud the ſun-ſhine of your brighteſt days, receive them with ſubmiſſion,—ſatisfied that a Being equally wiſe, omniſcient, and beneficent, at once ſees and intends the good of his whole creation; and that every general or particular diſpenſation of his providence, towards the rational part of it, is ſo calcula-

ted as to be productive of ultimate happineſs, which nothing but the miſbehaviour of individuals can prevent to themſelves. This truth is ſurely an unanſwerable argument for abſolute reſignation to the will of GOD;—and ſuch a reſignation, founded upon reaſon and choice, not enforced by neceſſity, is unalterable peace of mind, fixed on too firm a baſis to be ſhaken by adverſity:—Pain, poverty, ingratitude, calumny, and even the loſe of thoſe we hold moſt dear, may each tranſiently affect, but united cannot mortally wound it. Upon this principle you will find it poſſible, not only to be content, but cheerful under all the diſagreeable circumſtances, which this ſtate of probation is liable to; and, by making a proper uſe of

them, you may effectually remove the garb of terror from the laſt of all temporal evils. Learn then, with grateful pleaſure, to meet approaching death as the kind remover of every painful ſenſation, as the friendly guide to perfect, to everlaſting happineſs.

BELIEVE me, this is not mere theory, —my own experience every moment proves the fact undeniably true—my conduct, in all thoſe relations which ſtill ſubſiſt with me, nearly as human imperfection will allow, is governed by the rules here laid down for you, and it produces the conſtant rational compoſure, which conſtitutes the moſt perfect felicity of human life;—For with truth I can aver, that I

daily feel incomparably more real satisfaction, more true contentment in my present retirement, than the gayest scenes of festive mirth ever afforded me: I am pleased with this life, without an anxious thought for the continuance of it, and am happy in the hope of exchanging it hereafter for a life infinitely better. My soul, unstained by the crimes unjustly imputed to me, most sincerely forgives the malicious authors of these imputations;—it anticipates the future pleasure of an open acquittal, and in that expectation, loses the pain of present undeserved censure.—By this is meant the instance that was made the supposed foundation for the last of innumerable injuries, which I have received

through him from whom I am conſcious of having deſerved the kindeſt treatment: Other faults, no doubt, I might have many;—to him I had very few: nay, for ſeveral years, I cannot, upon reflection, accuſe myſelf of any thing, but of a too abſolute, too unreſerved obedience to every injunction, even where plainly contrary to the dictates of my own reaſon.—How wrong ſuch a compliance was, has been clearly proved by many inſtances, in which it has been ſince moſt ungenerouſly and moſt ungratefully urged as a circumſtantial argument againſt me.

IT muſt indeed be owned, that for the two or three laſt years, tired with a long

ſeries of repeated inſults, of a nature almoſt beyond the power of imagination to conceive, my temper became ſoured;—a conſtant fruitleſs endeavour to oblige was changed into an abſolute indifference about it; and ill-humour, occaſioned by frequent diſappointment, a conſequence I have experimentally warned you againſt, was, perhaps, ſometimes too much indulged. How far the unequalled provocations may be allowed as an excuſe for this, Heaven only muſt determine, whoſe goodneſs has thought fit to releaſe me from the painful ſituation, though by a method, at preſent, not the moſt eligible, as it is the cauſe of a ſeparation *from my children alſo*, and thereby has put it out

of my power to attend, in the manner I could have wiſhed, to their education;—a duty that inclination would have led me with equal care and pleaſure more amply to fulfil, had they continued under my direction.—But as Providence has thought fit otherwiſe to determine, contented I ſubmit to every diſpenſation, convinced that all things are ordered for the beſt, and that they will in the end work together for good to them that fear GOD, and who ſincerely endeavour to keep his commandments.—If in theſe I err, I am certain it is owing to a miſtake in the judgment, not to a defect of the will.

THUS have I endeavoured, my dear girl, in ſome meaſure, to compenſate both to you and to your ſiſters the depravation of a conſtant maternal care, by adviſing you, according to my beſt ability, in the moſt material parts of your conduct thro' life, as particularly as the compaſs of a letter would allow me.—May theſe few inſtructions be as ſerviceable to you as my wiſhes would make them! And may that Almighty Being, to whom my daily prayers aſcend for your preſervation, grant you his heavenly benediction; may he keep you from all moral evil, lead you into the paths of righteouſneſs and peace,—and may he give us all a happy meeting in that future ſtate of unalterable

felicity, which is *prepared for thoſe, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek after glory and immortality.*

I am,

Your truly affectionate mother,

S. PENNINGTON.