LETTERS

TO A

WIFE,

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

CARDIPHONIA.

Cara Maria, vale! at veniet felicius ævum,
Quando iterum tecum, fim modo dignus, ero.

LOWTH.

A prudent wife is from the Lord.

PROV. xix. 14.

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LETTERS

TO A

WIFE.

VOL. I.

WRITTEN DURING

THREE VOYAGES TO AFRICA,

From 1750 to 1754.

——O laborum
Dulce lenimen——!

HOR.

They that go down to the ſea in ſhips, that do buſineſs in great waters; theſe ſee the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.

Ps. cvii. 23, 24.

PREFACE.

WHEN, after repeated checks of conſcience, I obſtinately broke through all reſtraints of religion, it pleaſed God, for a time, to give me up to my own wilfulneſs and folly; perhaps as much ſo, as ever poor creature was given up to himſelf, who did not finally periſh. The way of tranſgreſſors is always hard. It proved ſo to me. The miſeries, into which I plunged myſelf, could only be exceeded, by the dreadful wickedneſs of my heart, and life. At length, I was driven to the deſperate determination, of living upon the coaſt of Africa. My principal reſidence, was at the Plantanes, an iſland at the mouth of

the river Sherbro, on the windward coaſt; about twenty leagues, S. E. from Sierra Leon. Some account, of this mournful part of my early life, has been long in print.

The coaſt of Guinea, is a country, from whoſe bourn, few travellers, who have once ventured to ſettle there, ever return. But God, againſt whom I had ſinned with a high hand, was pleaſed to appoint me, to be a ſingular inſtance of his mercy. He not only ſpared me, but watched over me, by his merciful Providence, when I ſeemed to be bent upon my own deſtruction; and provided for my deliverance from my wretched thraldom! To him, who has all hearts in his hands, I aſcribe it, that a friend of my father's, the late Mr. Joſeph Maneſty, a merchant of Liverpool, to whom I was then an utter ſtranger, directed the captain

of

of one of his ſhips, to enquire for me; and, if he could, to bring me home. This propoſal for my deliverance, no leſs unexpected, than undeſerved, by me, reached me at a time, when ſome circumſtances of my captivity, being, according to my wretched views, and taſte, a little amended, I at firſt heſitated to accept it. And, I believe, had it not been for one conſideration, which will be often mentioned, in the courſe of theſe letters, I ſhould have lived, and died, in my bondage. When I returned to Liverpool, I found, in Mr. Maneſty, a ſecond father; he treated me with great kindneſs, and took upon himſelf the care of providing for me.

Towards the cloſe of the year 1749, Mr. Maneſty promiſed me the command of a ſhip to Africa, in the enſuing ſeaſon. On this promiſe, (for I had no other de-

pendance) I ventured to marry, on the firſt of February following, where my heart had been long engaged. After I had gained my point, I often trembled for my precipitation. For though I am ſure, I ſhould have preferred the perſon I married, to any other woman in the world, though poſſeſſed of the mines of Potoſi, ſhe had no fortune; and if any thing had happened, to involve her in difficulties, upon my account, I think my ſtrong affection for her, would have made me truly miſerable.

I have often thought ſince, that we were then, like two unexperienced people, on the edge of a wide wilderneſs; without a guide; ignorant of the way they ſhould take, and entirely unappriſed of the difficulties they might have to encounter. But the Lord God, whom, at that time, we knew

knew not, had mercifully purpoſed, to be our guide, and our guard.

The imminent danger, and extreme diſtreſs, to which we were reduced by a ſtorm, in my paſſage from Africa to Liverpool, had, by the mercy of God, made ſuch an impreſſion upon my mind, that I was no longer an infidel, or a libertine. I had ſome ſerious thoughts; was conſiderably reformed, but too well ſatisfied with my reformation. If I had any ſpiritual light, it was but as the firſt, faint ſtreaks of the early dawn; and I believe, it was not yet day-break with my dear wife. She was young, cheerful, and much eſteemed by her connexions, which were genteel, and numerous. She was not wanting in that decent religion, which is compatible, with the ſuppoſed innocent gaities, of a worldly life; and which diſpoſes people, to be

equally ready, and punctual, (in their reſpective ſeaſons) at church, and at cards; at the aſſembly, or theatre, and at the ſacrament. Farther than this, ſhe knew not, nor was I qualified to teach her. It is rather probable, that if I could have remained at home, my great attachment to her, would have drawn me into the ſame path; and that we ſhould have looked no higher for happineſs, than to our mutual ſatisfaction in each other.

But God had deſigned better things for us. The ſeaſon for ſailing approached, and I was conſtrained to leave her, to take the command, and charge, of my ſhip. This neceſſity of being abſent from her, which then ſeemed to me, bitter as death, I have now reaſon to acknowledge, as one of the chief mercies of my life. Niſi periiſſem, periiſſem. If I could have obtained

tained my fond ſhort-ſighted wiſh, and have continued with her, I ſee, that, humanly ſpeaking, it might have proved the ruin of us both.

The ſummons I received, to repair to Liverpool, awakened me, as out of a dream. When I was forced from her, I found both leiſure, and occaſion, for much reflection. My ſerious thoughts, which had been almoſt ſmothered, began to revive. And my anxiety, with reſpect to what might poſſibly happen, while I was abroad, induced me to offer up many prayers for her, before I well knew how to pray for myſelf. He, who takes notice of the cries of the young ravens in their neſts, was pleaſed to hear mine. In a word, I ſoon felt the need of that ſupport, which only religion can give. The ſeparation likewiſe, tended on both ſides, to give a

certain tenderneſs, and delicacy, and thereby, a permanency to our affection, which might not have flouriſhed to equal advantage, through life, if we had always lived together.

This brief introduction, may poſſibly throw ſome light upon ſeveral paſſages, which will occur in the courſe of my correſpondence.

The only expedient, we could then think of, to alleviate the pains of abſence, was writing. Letters were accordingly exchanged, by every poſt, while I ſtaid in England: and when I ſailed, and could not expect to hear from *her*, for a long time, I ſtill continued to write, on the uſual poſt-days. And this practice afforded me ſo much relief, and pleaſure, that it was not long, before I wrote (if buſineſs, and circumſtances, would permit) almoſt every day,

day, of every week. Few, if any, of my letters, miſcarried. The firſt volume of this publication, is formed, by a ſelection of extracts, from thoſe which I ſent home, during the three voyages I made to Africa. Thoſe in the ſecond, are extracted from a number almoſt equal, which I wrote when we were occaſionally ſeparated, after the good providence of God, freed me from that iniquitous employment, in which I was too long ignorantly engaged, and appointed me a ſettlement on ſhore.

When I firſt undertook this painfully pleaſing taſk, I had not the leaſt thought, of the letters appearing in print ſo ſoon. I intended them for a poſthumous legacy, to my friends, and to the public. But, in the progreſs of the work, my objections to publiſhing them myſelf, were gradually weakened; and I became more willing, to erect,

as it were, a monument, to the memory of a valuable, and much valued woman, in my own life time. The only juſtifiable plea I can alledge, for printing theſe letters at all, is a hope, that, by the bleſſing of God, they may be made uſeful to ſome of my readers; and, if this hope be not ill-founded, the ſooner they appear, the better. Some teſtimony, in favour of the happineſs of wedded life; ſome intimation of the ſnares, and abatements, which attend it, ſeems not unſeaſonable, in the preſent day. And perhaps, I am, by experience, qualified to be as unexceptionable a witneſs, in both reſpects, as moſt men.

I am aware, that I ſhall expoſe myſelf to the charge of egotiſm; but this, I may cheerfully ſubmit to, if my heart does not deceive me, with reſpect to my motives, and propoſed end. Neither the cenſures,

nor

nor the praiſes of men, ought to have an undue influence upon thoſe, who profeſs to act, with a view to the glory of God, and the benefit of their fellow-creatures. And, as to myſelf, now far advanced in life, and ſtanding upon the brink of the grave, and of eternity, it does not become me, to be very ſolicitous, what mortals may ſay, or think, of me, either at preſent, or when I ſhall ceaſe to be ſeen among them; provided I am juſtly chargeable with nothing, unſuitable to my profeſſion, and general character. We muſt all ſhortly appear, before the tribunal of the great, unerring judge, the one lawgiver, who is able to ſave, or to deſtroy. *Dies iſte indicabit.* Then the ſecrets of all hearts will be unfolded, and every character will appear in its true light.

Yet, as my letters are of a ſingular caſt,

and I tread upon rather new, and unbeaten ground, the reſpect which I owe to my readers, requires me, to requeſt their candid peruſal; and to ſoften, if I can, ſuch objections, as I foreſee may ariſe in their minds, (as they may be differently diſpoſed) to different parts of the book.

It is proper to make an apology to the public at large, for the detail of many incidents, which, however intereſting to myſelf, eſpecially at the time of writing, are certainly not ſufficiently ſo, to deſerve general attention. If I had not ſuppreſſed the greater part of theſe, my two ſmall volumes, would have ſwelled to folios. To have ſuppreſſed them all, beſides defeating my main deſign, would have made the little remainder, appear harſh and ſtiff; would have given the letters an air of declamation, and have deſtroyed that free-

dom,

dom, which is eſſential to the epiſtolary ſtyle. It is difficult to draw the exact line, and to fix the proper medium; and eſpecially ſo to me, on a ſubject in which I am ſo nearly concerned, and on which, I could not well conſult my friends. I have kept this difficulty in view, through the whole, and have acted to the beſt of my judgment. What ſome perſons will blame, others may approve, and my books will be open to all. Beſides, as the workings, and emotions, common to the human heart, are much fewer, than the various events, and occaſions, that may excite them; ſome account of my own feelings, under certain circumſtances, may apply to the feelings of others, in their more important affairs.

To my more ſerious readers, I may well apologize, for moſt of the letters of an early

early date; which I ſhould certainly be aſhamed of now, if they were printed by themſelves. But as I began to *write*, about the ſame time that I began to *ſee*; and, in proportion as light increaſed upon my mind, my letters aſſumed a graver caſt; I was willing to inſert ſuch a ſeries, as might mark the progreſs of that ſpiritual knowledge, which the Lord taught me to ſeek, and which, I did not ſeek entirely in vain. My letters, which at firſt were trifling, ſoon became more ſerious; and, as I was led into farther views of the principles, and privileges, of the goſpel, I endeavoured to communicate to my dear correſpondent, what I had received. And in due time, he was pleaſed to make them a mean of affecting *her* heart, and impreſſing her with the ſame deſires, and

aims.

aims. For which mercy, I can never ſufficiently adore, and praiſe him.

If they, who think lightly of marriage, or who chiefly engage in it upon intereſted motives, preferring the wealth, and pomp, and glare of the world, to a union of hearts; if ſuch perſons, ſhould treat all that I have written upon the ſubject, as folly, rant, and enthuſiaſm, I cannot help it. To them, I owe no apology. I only hope they will not be angry with me, for expreſſing a friendly wiſh, that they might be, even as I was; excepting the heart-achs, and inquietudes, that I ſometimes felt; which I conſidered, as a price paid (and I thought the purchaſe not dear) for my ſatisfaction. Long experience, and much obſervation, have convinced me, that the marriage ſtate, when properly formed, and prudently conducted, affords

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the neareſt approach to happineſs, (of a merely temporal kind) that can be attained, in this uncertain world; and which will beſt abide the teſt of ſober reflection.

To infidels, ſceptics, and libertines, if ſuch ſhould be among the number of my readers, I cannot expect, that any apology of mine, for what might be juſtly exceptionable, would be either acceptable, or ſufficient. They will be glad, if they can pick out any ſentiments, either falſe or trivial, to exhibit as ſpecimens of the whole. Yet I have ſomething to ſay to *them*; not in a ſpirit of defiance, but of meekneſs. Theſe characters were once, alas! my own. Had my abilities, and opportunities, been equal to the depraved taſte of my heart, I ſhould have rivalled Voltaire himſelf. My own experience convinces me, that nothing ſhort of a divine

power,

power, can ſoften that mind, which, after having ſtifled repeated checks of conſcience, has renounced revelation, and is hardened like ſteel, by infidelity. I know the gall and bitterneſs, the effects, and the awful danger, of that ſtate. Such perſons are entitled to my compaſſion, and my prayers; if peradventure, it may pleaſe God to give them repentance, to the acknowledgment of the truth. It is not the ſmalleſt evil, reſulting from this malignant poiſon, that they, who are infected by it, cannot be content with going on, in their own way, alone; but uſually labour, with a zeal, almoſt equal to that of a martyr, to draw others into the ſame path. There is a ſomething within them, which will, at times, remonſtrate, and recoil, in defiance of their utmoſt efforts. At ſuch ſeaſons, (like children in the dark) unleſs they

have

have company, their ſpirits will flag. This prompts them to employ, every art of ſophiſtry, and diſſimulation, to gain proſelytes.

Hiſtorical deductions, and learned arguments, are not neceſſary, to evince the truth of the goſpel. It proves its own importance, by its obvious tendency, and by its uniform effects. Let a thinking man ſuppoſe, for a moment, that the motives, hopes, and rules, propoſed in the New Teſtament, were to be univerſally underſtood, cordially embraced, and ſtrictly obſerved, to-morrow; the ſure conſequence, that a change, equally univerſal, in the general habits, tempers, and purſuits of mankind, would likewiſe, to-morrow, take place, muſt force itſelf upon his mind. The wilderneſs would become a garden: fraud, violence, diſcord, oppreſ-

ſion,

ſion, and profligacy, would inſtantly ceaſe: order, juſtice, peace, benevolence, and every branch of morality, would inſtantly flouriſh. Men would live as brethren, and treat each other, as they could equitably expect to be treated themſelves, in ſimilar caſes. Such are the *actual* effects, where the goſpel is truly received. How many, who, like the man poſſeſſed with a legion, or like me, were miſerable and miſchievous, a burden to themſelves, and to their friends, and a nuiſance in the community, have been, and ſtill are, brought to their right minds; reſcued from the tyranny of contending, inordinate paſſions, and taught to fill up their places in ſociety, with decorum, and uſefulneſs! The goſpel, thus embraced, is preſently found, to be exactly ſuited to the wants, deſires, and forebodings, of the human heart. It adds

a reliſh

a reliſh to all the comforts of life; diminiſhes the preſſure of afflictions; affords a balm for every wound, a cordial for every care; and enables the believer to meet death, with compoſure, dignity, and hope.

How ungenerous then, how cruel, are they, who endeavour to rob us of this precious depoſitum; when they have nothing to propoſe as a ſubſtitute? But, bleſſed be God, their attempts are no leſs vain, than deſperate. They may blind the eyes of a few, but they cannot deprive the ſun of its light.

Such is the power of guilt, and fear, to alienate the mind from God, that they, who would tremble to be ſeated in a carriage, drawn by unruly horſes, with no one to manage the reins, are reduced, to deny a governing providence of God, over all

his

his creatures, and eſpecially over mankind. They think it leſs uncomfortable to ſuppoſe, that the contingencies to which we are liable, in ſuch a world as this, are the mere, unavoidable reſult of ſecond cauſes, than that they are under the direction of him, whoſe almighty power, is combined with infinite wiſdom, and goodneſs. For they know and feel, that, if there be a God, if he be wiſe and good, and if he takes cognizance of the hearts, and actions, of men, they have every thing to dread. From perſons of this ſtamp, I can expect no favour. I once thought, or wiſhed, as they do; but the divine Providence, which I long denied, and defied, convinced me of my error, by multiplied, merciful interpoſitions in my behalf. May the like mercy and compaſſion, be extended to

many

many others, who, at preſent, know not what they do!

I return from this digreſſion. My views, in ſending theſe letters abroad, are chiefly four:

1. As a public teſtimony, of the thanks which I owe, to the God of my life, for giving me ſuch a treaſure; for uniting our hearts by ſuch tender ties, and for continuing her to me ſo long.

2. As a monument of reſpect, and gratitude, to her memory. She was my pleaſing companion, my moſt affectionate friend, my judicious counſellor. I ſeldom or ever repented, of acting according to her advice. And I ſeldom acted againſt it, without being convinced by the event, that I was wrong.

3. I hope to ſhew, by the moſt familiar kind of proof, *example*, that marriage,

when the parties are united by affection, and the general conduct is governed by religion, and prudence, is not only an honourable, but a comfortable ſtate. But, from what I have felt, and what I have ſeen, I am well aſſured that religion, by which I mean, the fear of God, a regard to his precepts, and a dependance upon his care, is abſolutely neceſſary, to make us comfortable, or happy, even in the poſſeſſion of our own wiſhes. The faireſt proſpects, unleſs founded upon this baſis, may be compared to a houſe, built upon the ſand, which may ſeem to anſwer, for a time, while the weather is fine; but which, when tried by the ſtorms and floods, the changes and calamities, inſeparable from the preſent ſtate of things, will, ſooner or later, fall; and involve the builders, in confuſion and diſtreſs.

4. I likewiſe hope, that my example may prove a warning to others, who ſet out with warm hopes of ſatisfaction; to be cautious of an over-attachment to their creature-comforts. *Hinc illæ Lacrymæ.* My ſharpeſt trials, and my moſt pungent cauſes for repentance, and humiliation, through life, ſprung from this ſource!

LETTERS

LETTERS

TO A

WIFE.

1750.

FIRST VOYAGE TO AFRICA.

St. Alban's, 19 May.

MY DEAREST,

I could have reached Dunſtable to night, but I remembered that you had deſired me not to ride late.

I think, I fully obeyed you, in not ſaying much when I took my leave. My heart was really too full; and had I been more able, the fear of increaſing your uneaſineſs, would have prevented me. Were I capable of deſcribing all the tender ſen-

timents that have occurred, ſince we parted, an indifferent perſon would allow me to be maſter of the *pathetic*. But I cannot expreſs what I feel. Do me the juſtice to believe my affection goes beyond any words I can uſe.

I purpoſe to ſet off early to-morrow, and to attend ſervice at church ſomewhere on the road; which I do not care to miſs without neceſſity. But now I am particularly deſirous of improving the firſt opportunity to implore, in a ſolemn manner, the protection of Divine Providence, that we may be favoured with a happy meeting.

" Gracious God! favour me and my deareſt M—— with health, and a moderate ſhare of the good things of this life. Grant that I may be always happy in her love, and always prove deſerving of it! For the reſt, the empty gewgaws and gilded trifles, which engage the thoughts of multitudes; I hope I ſhall be always able to look upon them with indifference."

I make

I make no apology for this ſerious ſtrain. Believe me I write experimentally; and, to the degree that I love you, I could not bear to be torn from you in this manner, if I was not ſupported by my principles; which teach me, that I ought to be not only content, but thankful, that things are ſo well with me as they are; and to expect no pleaſure in this life, without ſome abatement. I believe there may be perſons who can keep themſelves in tolerable good humour, by the ſtrength of their own minds, in a courſe of proſperity; but when croſſes and diſappointments take place, or when they are conſtrained to part from what they hold moſt dear, if they cannot call in religion to their aid, they uſually ſink and deſpond. At leaſt I have always found it ſo.

I have a good horſe and a good road, and pretty good ſpirits likewiſe, conſidering that the more haſte I make, the more I increaſe my diſtance from you. But when I reflect, that now your intereſt as

well as my own, calls me away, methinks I can ſcarcely go faſt enough.

I am likely to perform the whole journey alone; but I want no company. It will always be a full entertainment to me, to recollect how very happy I have been in yours, and to animate myſelf with the pleaſing hope, that in due time, I ſhall be ſo again.

I am, &c.

Inviolably yours.

Liverpool, 27 May.

I WAS forced to defer writing ſo long on Friday, that I was conſtrained to leave a thouſand things unſaid. I therefore begin now in time. When you write next (which I beg may always be by return of poſt) let me know at what hours you uſually riſe, breakfaſt, dine, ſup, and go to bed, that I may keep time with you, or, at leaſt, attend you with my thoughts, if I ſhould be otherwiſe engaged.

I cannot

I cannot inform you that I have a ſhip yet; no one offers at preſent which Mr. M—— thinks good enough. Oh, that it was poſſible for you to go with me, where I go, to cheer and enliven me amidſt fatigues and difficulties, without ſharing in them! How light would they then ſeem to me! But I ſubmit. At leaſt, happen what may, it will give me pleaſure to think that my better, dearer part, is in ſafety at home.

I have now received yours of the 24th, and kiſſed it a hundred times! I beg you, not to give way to uneaſy apprehenſions for me: for while you are well and eaſy, I am as happy as I wiſh to be, during my abſence from you. I ſhould be ſorry to find this abſence become more eaſy to me by time. Let it ſuffice that I eat, drink, and ſleep well, and am in health and ſpirits to do every thing that may appear neceſſary to procure us a future happy interview.

I acknowledge that at intervals, and

when alone, the recollection of the paſt, almoſt overpowers me with a tender concern; but do not be grieved for me, for I find a pleaſure in the indulgence of ſuch thoughts, which I would not part with upon any leſs conſideration, than that of being actually with you. I have written myſelf into tears now, and yet I feel a ſerenity and ſatisfaction, of which, till I could call you mine, I had no perception. I cannot bemoan your abſence, without remembering, at the ſame time, how happy, and how long happy I have been with you. This is a kind of bank ſtock, a treaſure of which I cannot be deprived. And while I retain the recollection, that I have been ſo happy, I cannot be quite uncomfortable. But why do I ſay, I once was?—I am ſo ſtill; for the conſciouſneſs that you love me, is a preſent, and permanent comfort, and will be ſo, at all times, and in all places. Your love was my principal deſire; and without it, all that you had beſides in your power to beſtow,

beſtow, would have been dull and inſipid.

Since you have kindly promiſed to write by every poſt, I wiſh we had a poſt every day.

Liverpool, 29 June.

THOUGH, at taking up the pen, I have not a ſingle ſentence ready, I expect ſomething will ſoon occur, when I write to you. I am going to ſet you a pattern, how to fill a ſheet with nothing, or what is little better than nothing. But as I know you will make favourable allowances, I am content to appear at a diſadvantage: I can ſubmit that you ſhould find tautologies and incoherence to excuſe, provided I give you no cauſe to think me ungrateful.—

—Do not think of me as ſuffering or grieving—rather conſider how happy you have made me, and that you have put me into a ſituation, from which I can look

upon princes without envy; and that notwithſtanding my regret for parting with you for a ſeaſon, I would not change circumſtances with any man in the kingdom. Of the many temporal bleſſings for which I am indebted to a Gracious Providence, I ſet a higher value upon none than this, that I was formed with a heart capable of tender and diſintereſted affection, and directed to *you*, for the object of it.

I am entirely yours.

Liverpool, 10 *July*.

I MUST be up late to-night to attend the tide; but by writing to you, I can agreeably fill up the time, which might otherwiſe ſeem tedious.

I pity thoſe who muſt fly to company and noiſe, to fill up their vacant hours; and muſt be always changing the ſcene, though often for the worſe. Whereas I, when I am moſt retired and ſolitary, by directing my thoughts to you, have more

pleaſure

pleaſure than they can conceive of in their gayeſt moments! I ſay this, the more aſſuredly, becauſe I have formerly been on the other ſide of the queſtion; and have ſought ſatisfaction, in that manner of life, with ſo much earneſtneſs, that I ſhould, at leaſt ſometimes, have found it, had it really been to be met with. But I can ſcarcely recollect an hour of my paſt life, with any pleaſure, excepting the time I have paſſed in your company, and for that I think the innumerable troubles and ſufferings I previouſly underwent, not a dear purchaſe.

I was on ſhipboard this morning till paſt two o'clock. The weather was perfectly ſerene, the moon ſhone bright, and having nothing from within, or without, to diſcompoſe me, I paſſed the hours pleaſantly, in thinking of you. It was with great ſatisfaction, I indulged the hope that you were then in a gentle ſlumber, under a ſafe and ſure protection, and as free from inquietudes as myſelf. I then

imagined the ſcene changing to what I muſt, in a little time, expect; when dark nights, heavy rains, violent winds, mountainous ſeas, and awful thunder, will ſometimes all combine to alarm me. But this anticipation gives me no uneaſineſs at preſent; for even then, I ſhall hope, that my dearer, better part, will be as calm and undiſturbed, as ſhe is now. And as to the other half of myſelf, now on board the Duke of Argyle, it may be pleaſed with the expectation of an ample amends at the completion of the voyage. I ſhall probably at ſuch times often repeat to myſelf a part of the verſes which I addreſſed to you at a time when I had little hope of obtaining the happineſs I attempted to deſcribe. They were then therefore a mere rant, but they now expreſs my ſettled judgment and choice.

Theſe threat'ning ſeas, where wild confuſion reigns,
And yawning dangers all around appear,
I value more than groves or flow'ry plains,
Since 'tis the only way that leads to her.

Believe

Believe me, I ſhould think it well worth the trouble of another journey to London, to have an interview with you, if only for a quarter of an hour. But it muſt not be, and I ſubmit.

You either miſunderſtood the latter part of my letter, or I expreſſed myſelf awkwardly, which is moſt likely. I did not mean to ſay that you were wanting in religion*; I ſaid, or meant to ſay, that as I thought myſelf not wanting in love, when I firſt offered you my heart, and yet found afterwards, that my notion of it has been greatly enlarged by a more intimate relation to you; ſo it might be a happy circumſtance if we could be reciprocally helpful in improving each other's ideas of religion. If I ſeemed to take the upper hand, and affect the dictating ſtrain, I aſk your pardon. I ought to be ſenſible

* Alas! neither of us had much ſenſe of religion at that time. She was my idol, and perhaps I was hers. We looked little further for happineſs than to each other.

that I am not qualified for it, and to be more ready to learn than to teach.

I am, &c. Yours.

Liverpool, 20 July.

I RECEIVED your welcome letter of the 17th, which, when I had read it about twenty times over, furniſhed me with many pleaſing reflections; and led me to compare my preſent ſtate, with the low inſipid life I muſt have led, even in the moſt affluent circumſtances, if my ſincere love had not obtained the only adequate prize, a reciprocal affection from you.

I am ſtill of opinion, that at firſt, compaſſion and generoſity induced you to think favourably of me. It did not ſuit with your temper to be unaffected by the pain and uneaſineſs of any one, much leſs of one, who though under a thouſand diſadvantages, you had reaſon to believe, really loved you. And, if I am not miſtaken, you uſed ſome conſtraint with yourſelf, in the

the beginning, to bring your inclination to coincide with the power you had to make me happy. Thus I thought when I received your hand in marriage. Yet I was no leſs eaſy and ſecure, than if I had made the moſt ſucceſsful improvement of our long acquaintance, in gaining your heart. For I knew you too well to fear that after you had gone ſo far, you would ſtop ſhort, till your affection was equal to my own.

I was pretty well aſſured in my own mind, that I ſhould make it the chief buſineſs, or rather pleaſure, of my life, to ſtudy and ſeize every opportunity of obliging you; and I was no leſs certain, that the moſt trivial inſtance of ſuch an intention, would not be overlooked by you, or loſt upon you. The event has anſwered my expectation. I have now the ſame confidence that you love me, as that I love you. A confidence, which I would not exchange for any conſideration the world could offer. A confidence, which renders

me ſuperior to all the little entertainments that would allure me while I am here; and which I hope will ſatisfy and cheer me, when, in a few days, I ſhall leave them all behind me. I long to be gone, for, after parting with you, all ſcenes will be equally indifferent to me, till the happy hour of our reunion.

I thank you for your promiſe of writing weekly, and you may depend upon my not being behindhand with you. But remember there is no regular poſt from Africa, and that the length of the paſſage of a ſhip is very precarious. I hope therefore you will not indulge diſcouraging thoughts, if you ſhould not hear from me ſo ſoon as you may expect.

The weather has been dark and rainy. It is ſome time ſince I ſaw the north ſtar*. When

* With this view we agreed upon an evening hour, as a little relief in abſence, when we were to look at the north-ſtar, if the ſky was clear, and be pleaſed with the probability that we might both be looking at it at the

When I am at ſea, I ſhall watch it, at the hour we agreed upon, that I may have the pleaſure of thinking that ſometimes our eyes and thoughts are fixed upon the ſame object.

I am, &c. Yours.

Liverpool, 29 July.

I THINK, if I ſtay here much longer, I muſt adopt your method, and follow a long letter with a very ſhort one. For though I always take pleaſure in writting, I begin to be aſhamed of ſending you little more than repetitions. I have expreſſed my affection (ſo far as my knowledge of words can expreſs) in ſo many different forms and phraſes, that I am quite at a loſs for new ones. I muſt either write but little, as you do, or to little

the ſame minute. We knew but little then of the throne of Grace, the central point, at which all who love the Lord duly meet (at whatever local diſtance) with him, and with each other.

purpoſe,

purpoſe, unleſs I begin again, as from the firſt; and in that caſe I believe my ſecond round of letters would be very ſimilar to the former, becauſe I write from my feelings. My heart dictates every line.

And though my head often interpoſes, and obſerves that this expreſſion is hardly grammar, the next not well turned, the third unneceſſary, and ſo on; yet heart perſiſts in his own way, and whatever occurs to him goes down upon the paper, in defiance of head's wiſe remonſtrances. The contention ariſes ſometimes to ſuch a height, that head tells heart, he raves and is an enthuſiaſt. And heart calls head a conceited pedant, whoſe narrow views are confined to a little nicety and exactneſs in trifles, becauſe he is a ſtranger to the emotions of love. As you know which ſide of the debate I favour, I need not tell you that when my ſtrains are dull, it is none of poor heart's fault, who always does his beſt to pleaſe; but becauſe head refuſes to aſſiſt him, and leaves us both to ſhift

for

for ourſelves; though I often tell him, that I will neither regard heart, head, nor hands, unleſs they all conſider themſelves as belonging to you, and ready at all times for your ſervice, as myſelf. It ſeems wrong to ſay, a man has his heart in his mouth, when he is in great fear. I think he may properly be ſaid to have his heart in his mouth, when he is capable of relating in ſuitable terms what really affects him. So had I my heart at my fingers ends, I ſhould perhaps write a letter worthy of your peruſal. Till then I muſt beg you to accept what I ſend, becauſe it is the beſt I have.

I am yours, &c.

Liverpool, 31 *July*.

I WAS kept ſome little time in ſuſpenſe for yours of the 28th, which made it, if poſſible, more welcome when it came. Yet I am ſorry that I hinted any thing

thing to give you an anxious thought upon my account. The pain I complained of in my head, or a much more ſevere one, would be vaſtly more tolerable to me, than to hear that you are made uneaſy. If it had not been a common thing, and uſually ſoon over, I ſhould not have mentioned it; but was unwilling to be guilty of a ſhort letter, without aſſigning the true reaſon. I am much concerned that you ſhould have ſuch a weight upon your mind, and beg you, by all the regard you have for me, to ſtrive againſt it.

If my deareſt M—— will permit me to offer my beſt advice, and which I propoſe as a rule to myſelf—it is this—To endeavour to caſt all your care upon Him, who has promiſed to care for us, if we will but put our truſt in him. I long attempted to apply the ſpecious maxims of philoſophy, to ſoften the cares and trials of life, but I found them ineffectual and falſe; or however they might have ſoothed ſome of the moſt ordinary and trivial in-

quietudes;

quietudes; yet I am very ſure, that under this aggravated circumſtance of ſeparation from you, I ſhould be miſerable and without ſupport, if religion did not aſſiſt me with nobler and more powerful motives of conſolation. I go from you with the leſs regret, becauſe I leave you in the hands of Him who is able, and I truſt willing, to preſerve you from all evil, and to make every thing eaſy to you. And I look forward to the various ſcenes of my intended voyage with cheerfulneſs, becauſe I am ſenſible that in the moſt remote inhoſpitable climes, a protecting Providence will ſurround me; and is no leſs to be depended on in the moſt apparent dangers, than in the greateſt ſeeming ſecurity.

Let me again and again intreat you not to give way to melancholy; aſſure me that you will ſtrive to be cheerful, or I proteſt I ſhall be unwilling to laugh, or even to ſmile, leſt I ſhould happen to be unſeaſonably merry when you are ſad.

Scarcely

Scarcely any thing will inſpire me with ſo much life and ſpirit, as the hope that you ſtill poſſeſs that cheerfulneſs which uſed to be ſo engaging and ſo natural to you. Let me not have to charge myſelf with having ſpoiled your temper, unleſs you mean to frighten me indeed. I remember that before you quite conſented to marry, you told me that I was preſſing you to a life, in which you ſhould often regret the condition of happy M. C. And I endeavoured to perſuade you, that you would only change pleaſures, not loſe them. I hope, if you will but help me by keeping up your ſpirits, I ſhall be able to make my words good. It will ſurely be my conſtant ſtudy to approve myſelf,

Your obliged, affectionate,
and grateful, &c.

THIS,

At Sea, 20 Auguſt.

THIS, I hope, will go on ſhore by the pilot-boat, to inform you that I am now at ſea, and with a proſpect of a fair wind. I ſhould be in high ſpirits, but that the thought of being ſo many months at an uncertainty with reſpect to you, ſoftens me into tears. And your favour of the 16th, which I received laſt night, has renewed my anxiety for you. Let me beg of you to be as cheerful as poſſible, and to believe that the good Providence which, after a long ſeparation, brought us together laſt year, when we were leſs intereſted in each other, will again join us to our mutual ſatisfaction. Once more, my deareſt, farewell! May the good God bleſs you with health and peace, and reſtore me, at a proper time, to your arms; and for what is to take place in the interval, I would make no conditions, but leave all to him.

I cannot

I cannot ſeal my letter without one more farewell. I need not put you in mind of writing by every probable opportunity. I preſs to my lips the paper that will be with you in a few days, while I muſt be kept from you for many months. Adieu.

I am yours, &c.

Ramſay, I. Man, 24 Auguſt.

I COULD not have greater pleaſure than in the opportunity which now offers me of relieving your uneaſineſs on my account. We have already met with unfavourable winds and weather. Particularly a violent gale laſt night, and in a narrow, dangerous navigation. The weather likewiſe was thick and dark. My own caution and diligence would ſoon have been of little uſe; the wind blew ſo that we could not carry our ſails, and there was no friendly port within our power.

power. But my dependance upon God's Providence kept me in tolerable peace. I was relieved by the ſame conſideration which I believe diſtreſſed my ſhipmates, I mean, that we could do nothing further.

I felt a perſuaſion, that if not ſo ſoon as we could wiſh, yet before it was too late, ſome alteration would take place in our favour. Accordingly, this morning the weather cleared up, and the wind abated, and enabled me to put into this place; where we anchored about two in the afternoon. The wind now rages more than before, and had we continued this night at ſea, the conſequence (humanly ſpeaking) might have been fatal.

I readily inform you of the danger we have been in, now it is happily over; and hope you will not be alarmed becauſe I am ſtill liable to the like; but rather be comforted with the thought, that in the greateſt difficulties the ſame Great Deliverer is always preſent. The winds and the

the ſeas obey him. I endeavour, in every ſcene of diſtreſs, to recollect the ſeaſons in my paſt life, in which, when I have given myſelf up for loſt, I have been unexpectedly relieved. Inſtances of this kind have been frequent with me, ſome of them perhaps as remarkable as any that have been recorded. Particularly my preſervation in the Greyhound in the year 48, which can only be accounted for by an immediate and almoſt miraculous interpoſition of Divine Power. Then I apply the argument of David—The God who delivered me from the paw of the lion, and from the paw of the bear, will alſo deliver me from this Philiſtine. The God who preſerved me from ſinking and ſtarving (from both more than once), who raiſed me friends among ſtrangers, when I had diſguſted all my own by my follies; and above all, who has not only afforded me the neceſſaries of life, but indulged my ſofteſt wiſhes, obviated the many hindrances in my way, and made

me

me happy in you—ſurely it would be not only ungrateful but unreaſonable, to diſtruſt him now, who has done ſo much for me hitherto.

I would be almoſt content, that you ſhould be indifferent concerning me, during my abſence, provided your love might revive upon my return; that ſo you might experience all the pleaſing, and be exempted from all the painful ſenſations of a married ſtate. But then I muſt not know it; for I could hardly bear the noiſe and impertinence of the world, were I not enlivened by believing myſelf to be often upon your thoughts.

I confeſs, at ſome times, I can hardly acquit myſelf from the charge of ſelfiſhneſs, that, for my own gratification, I ſhould ſo earneſtly preſs you to make your peace of mind dependant upon me. That you ſhould be unhappy, and that I ſhould be the occaſion of it, would be painful to me indeed! But, I thank God, all is well hitherto; and if you (as I doubt not) will

kindly accept my utmoſt endeavours to oblige you, on our future happy meetings, as a compenſation for the anxiety you muſt now and then ſuffer, I hope I have not done wrong.

At Sea, 3 September.

I WROTE you three letters, while in Ramſay Bay, but could not ſend the laſt on ſhore. We ſailed from thence the 29th Auguſt. The fair wind laſted but one day, which was not ſufficient to run us clear of the land, and I had ſome trouble and fatigue till Saturday, when we got a breeze that has brought us into what the ſailors call ſea-room. The wind is now contrary again, but I have reaſon to be thankful we are ſo well as we are. I am at preſent little more than a gentleman-paſſenger; I ſhall, perhaps, have little care upon my head till we arrive in Africa, then I may expect care and trouble in abundance;

abundance; but all will be welcome upon your account. Therefore, while I have leiſure, I ſhall appropriate an hour every two or three days (ſometimes, perhaps, daily) for writing to you, that I may have a ſizeable packet ready at a ſhort warning.

At Sea, 10 *September*.

THERE is a ſtrange mixture of pleaſure and pain in the life I now lead. When I think of the regard which you expreſs in your letters (one of which in their courſe I re-peruſe every poſt day) I feel a ſatisfaction which no wealth could buy from me. But when I think of the uneaſineſs it cauſes you, I could almoſt bear to be forgotten. I know I have ſaid this often, but I muſt repeat it when you write in a melancholy ſtrain. You charge me, in that which I have now at my lips, with making hours ſeem more tedious to you than days and weeks did formerly.

I am ſorry. I beg you to ſtrive to be cheerful.

Though I feel abſence painful indeed, I do not deſerve much pity, becauſe I am abſent for your ſake. I am likewiſe engaged in active buſineſs, and have ſome new ſcene offering every day, to relieve my mind; beſides, I have been long uſed to ſuffer, and did not begin to know what peace or pleaſure meant till I married you. On the contrary, you, by marriage, expoſed yourſelf to cares and anxieties to which you was before a ſtranger; and you have done enough to make me happy, if I could be happy alone, but that is impoſſible. Unleſs you are happy likewiſe, money, pleaſure, health, nay love itſelf, will not make me amends.

At Sea, 14 September.

Last poſt day I finiſhed a large ſheet, and did not leave room to write my name, for

for I had crowded 181 lines into it. Should this come first to your hand, you may wonder where I could find subject matter. Nothing (necessary business excepted) seems deserving my attention but religion and love; the one my constant support, the other my constant solace: and was I not favoured with some taste for these, I should find a settled gloom in my heart, though placed in the gayest scenes of life. For at the age of 25, I have seen enough to force my assent to the confession which experience extorted from Solomon in his latter days, *All is vanity and vexation of spirit.* I mean all that can be possessed exclusive of these two principles; but under their regulation the scene is changed, and the whole creation blooms with beauty.

Religion, rightly understood, is doubtless sufficient of itself to bear us through all the changes of this world, and guide us to a better. But our Gracious Master has made us capable of tender and social af-

fections, to add to the comfort of the preſent life. I know nothing that is required of us as a duty, but what is both conſiſtent with our happineſs, and has a tendency to promote it. Nor is there a ſingle gratification prohibited, that is not, in its natural conſequences productive of pain or diſguſt. But you will ſay, why all this to you? You are guilty of no exceſs (except your partial regard to me may be deemed one). I anſwer, it was a grateful reflection on the goodneſs of God, and a ſenſe of what I owe him, eſpecially for giving you to me, directed my pen; and to whom could I ſo properly addreſs theſe thoughts as to your dear ſelf, ſince to you I am ſecondarily indebted for my preſent peace?

At Sea, 18 September.

I SUPPOSE that I am now about half way to Sierra Leon, and not leſs than fifteen hundred miles from my deareſt—a great diſtance,

diſtance, and hourly increaſing! But it is not ſufficient to divide you from my thoughts. I have read three more of your letters, and as often as I take them in hand, I have a pleaſure in the repeated marks of your affection, which nothing elſe could afford. Although I am obliged to go to ſea, and what is more, to Guinea, I would not change conditions with the moſt wealthy bachelor on ſhore. No fox-hunter can follow his hounds with more alacrity than I now traverſe the pathleſs ocean in queſt of a country which, but for your ſake, I ſhould be as earneſt to avoid. I am obliged to you, not only for the happineſs I have found and hope to find at home, but for a pleaſure while abroad, in what would otherwiſe be very unpleaſant. When I left Africa, in the Greyhound, I ſeemed reſolved never to return thither again; but my reſolution was formed when I had no hope that you would ever make it worth my while; and I knew that nothing elſe could. But upon

the encouragement (though ſlender) which you gave me when I arrived there in the Brownlow, every thing appeared with a different aſpect. And though, perhaps, few perſons, in the ſame ſpace of time, have met with more dangers and hardſhips than I then did, I believe no one heard me complain; becauſe, what I had in view upon the end of the voyage, ſo fixed my thoughts, that I could conſider nothing as a real hardſhip, that had a probability of being acknowledged and rewarded by you; I ventured all upon your honour, and was not diſappointed. If the bare hope of your love was ſuch a ſupport, judge, if you can, how the proofs I have ſince obtained of it muſt influence me!

At Sea, 16 October.

I AM much obliged to Mr. Addiſon, from whom I took the hint of ſetting apart ſtated times for writing to you, and reviewing

reviewing your dear letters. This expedient is a great relief in your abſence. When I awake in the morning, if it be what I call a poſt-day, I am no leſs pleaſed than children are with the thoughts of a fair-day.

We have not yet ſeen the land, but I deem myſelf within one hundred miles of the Bananas, which is the firſt place I propoſe to call at. There I ſpent a part of my wretched time of thraldom, of which you have often heard me ſpeak.

Little did I think in my ſorrowful days there, when I went almoſt naked, ſo that my ſkin in many parts of my body has been bliſtered by the heat of the ſun—where ſometimes I have not had half a good meal in the courſe of a month, where I was reduced ſo low as

——— to be the ſport of ſlaves,
Or what's more wretched yet, their pity.——

I ſay, little did I think that I ſhould ſoon reviſit that place in a ſtate to excite the envy of thoſe, who would once have

ſcorned to let me ſit in the ſame houſe with them. Still leſs had I reaſon to hope that you, whom, in the midſt of my diſtreſs, I paſſionately loved, would requite me as you have done. With ſuch a hope I could have born all pretty well. But Providence was mercifully intent to make my ſituation completely miſerable for a time, in order to preſerve me from that utter ruin, into which my folly and wickedneſs might otherwiſe have plunged me. I have nothing now to aſk, but a diſpoſition to be thankful to Him, the author, and to you, the appointed inſtrument and mean, of my recovery. I can now look with pity upon all that the vulgar account great and honourable. I pity poor kings, as ſincerely as I do a poor beggar; and conſider wit, learning, and fame, likewiſe as mere trifles, compared with our mutual love, which may it pleaſe God to continue, I was going to ſay to increaſe, but that is unneceſſary.

At Sea, 19 October.

THIS morning we diſcovered the land of Guinea. It is exactly four months from the day I took my mournful leave of you. I hope my next poſt-day's pleaſure will be dated from my intended port. The paſſage from England has not been the ſhorteſt, but remarkably pleaſant, and free from diſaſter.

Laſt night we were diſturbed by a tornado, which I believe I have told you is a violent ſquall of wind, accompanied with heavy rain, thunder and lightning. The darkneſs of the night added to the horror of the ſcene. But with proper care, under the bleſſing of Providence, theſe boiſterous viſitants, though very troubleſome, are ſeldom dangerous; nor do they often laſt above an hour. At theſe times my mind is generally calm, when every body, and every thing, is in confuſion around me; which is in a great meaſure owing to my

ſenſe of your love, and a hope that you are ſleeping in ſafety. If it pleaſe God to permit me a happy return to you, a ſhort interval will fully recompenſe me for the inconveniencies of a whole voyage; and all the reſt will be clear gain.

If I do but win your acknowledgment, that I am not guilty of the ſtupid ingratitude, too common with many of my ſex, who undervalue their moſt deſired bleſſings, merely becauſe they are poſſeſſed of them; but that my regard and behaviour, ſince our marriage, has been anſwerable to the profeſſions I made beforehand—I ſay, if you believe this, I ſhall think nothing hard or troubleſome, that may confirm your good opinion of me, which I certainly prefer in itſelf, to all its pleaſing conſequences; for I am diſintereſtedly

Yours, &c.

Sierra Leon, October, November.

We arrived here the 24th October; a hurry of buſineſs has forced me to paſs ten days without writing to you.

Though this country is not England, it does nearly as well for me in your abſence; and on the other hand, if you could live here with me, without inconvenience to yourſelf, the gloomy mountains and foreſts of Sierra Leon would be to me as a *Blenheim*. They who pity me becauſe I am not fond of what *they* call pleaſure, know not the motives which render me ſuperior to it. I was once no leſs eager after their pleaſures than they are now. But you have ſo refined my taſte ſince, that nothing ſhort of yourſelf can thoroughly pleaſe me.—As it is midnight, I only add my prayers for your peaceful repoſe.

I have

Sierra Leon, 8 November.

I HAVE encloſed you, under another cover, two ſheets of the largeſt paper, full on all ſides, containing near four hundred lines; and I have as much more ready to ſend by the next opportunity. If it pleaſe God to continue my health and welfare, my ſtock will be ſtill increaſing, for I generally devote ſome time, twice a week at leaſt, for writing to you. But, for fear any thing ſhould prevent my packet from reaching you, I commit theſe few lines to the care of Mr. M——.

I think, were I allowed two wiſhes ſhort of the happineſs of being with you, the firſt ſhould be that you might have early information that I am well; and the ſecond, that I might have a letter from you, informing me that you were well, and eaſy when you wrote. I do not impoſe upon you by ſaying, that I prefer your peace to my own. I would

do or ſuffer much, to obtain a letter from you; and then reſign it unopened, rather than miſs one opportunity of writing to you. If I am favoured with any good quality, I think it is a grateful temper, which makes me glad to acknowledge and return the ſmalleſt favour I receive, even from an indifferent perſon. Judge then, what an effect the many endearing obligations I am under to you, heightened by the ardency of my affection, muſt have upon me! It is upon this principle that I not only *ſubmit* to the ſcenes in which I am now engaged, with *patience*, but *embrace* them with *cheerfulneſs*. Had I been able to live always with you, I think I ſhould not have loved you leſs; but it would not have been in my power to ſhew it ſo much. But I hope, now you find that, for your ſake, I can take pleaſure in my very pain, you will do me the juſtice to believe, that the confidence you have repoſed in me has not been miſplaced. I

commend

commend you, upon my knees, to the bleſſing and protection of God.

Bananas, 21 November.

SINCE I came hither, I have been cruizing about in the boat, in queſt of trade, without one leiſure evening for writing to you, which has been my chief inconvenience. For the viciſſitudes of winds and weather, the ſcorching days and damp foggy nights, are to me but mere trifles. I have lately had a viſit from my quondam black miſtreſs, P. I. [thoſe two letters pronounced diſtinctly, and not in one ſyllable, as Pi, exactly found her name] with whom I lived at the Plantanes. I treated her with the greateſt complaiſance and kindneſs; and if ſhe has any ſhame in her, I believe I made her ſorry for her former ill treatment of me. I have had ſeveral ſuch occaſions of taking the nobleſt

kind

kind of revenge upon perſons who once deſpiſed and uſed me ill. Indeed I have no reaſon to be angry with them; they were, what they little intended, inſtrumental to my good. If my ſituation, at that time, had been more favourable, I ſhould probably have miſſed you. I may ſay with an old Grecian, If I had not been ruined, I ſhould have been ruined indeed!

At Sea, 3 December.

THOUGH this is not my poſt-night, I am willing to write, becauſe I am behind-hand, and becauſe it is the moſt pleaſant way of filling up a leiſure hour. It was not inclination, but buſineſs, that made me limit myſelf to twice a week, for it would be an agreeable employment to write to you twice a day, if I had nothing to call me off. But, however my hands and head are engaged, my heart is always with you. It can be but ſeldom, if at all, that you are

out

out of my thoughts for five minutes together. Whether I am viſiting, trading, or watching, your idea is ſtill before my eyes.

I would give ſomething for ſuch a ſympathetic, needle and dial-plate, as is mentioned in the Spectator, that we might be able to correſpond without being interrupted by diſtance. But perhaps I am better without it, for I ſhould hardly attend to any thing elſe. And we already have what is more valuable, a ſympathy of mind and affection. I believe, if we could compare notes, we ſhould find that our thoughts are often engaged in the ſame manner, at the ſame time.

Shebar, 14 October.

I SUPPOSE you have often obſerved, for I have (and to my credit be it ſpoken, we think pretty much alike), that what we very much hope for, or fear, more ſeldom happens than ſuch things as are quite out of our

our thoughts, and beyond our prevention. An inſtance of this lately, I ſhall mention, by way of change of ſubject. I went on ſhore at this place lately, on account of trade; and the next morning walking by the ſea ſide to look for the ſhip, ſhe could not be ſeen. Upon this, I ſent off a boat, which returned in the evening and brought me word, that they had been ſome leagues beyond the place where I left her, but could diſcern nothing of her. I leave you to judge of my anxiety. I could not account for it, the weather being perfectly fine, and we had too few ſlaves on board to cauſe any diſturbance.

For once, and for a few minutes, I almoſt wiſhed myſelf unmarried; for the moſt ſenſible part of my trouble was, that whatever difficulties I may meet with, I cannot now ſuffer alone. I was at length, in ſome degree, relieved by the dependance which I always endeavour to maintain upon the good Providence which has done ſo much for me hitherto.

I put

I put to ſea with two boats which I had with me, and after ſailing ſome hours diſcovered the ſhip, when I was upon the point of giving up all hope of ſeeing her again. I ſoon reached her, and found all well on board. The night I left her had been dark and hazy, ſhe had dragged her anchor, and had ſlipped to ſea, and was carried a good way by the current, unperceived by the watch upon deck, who doubtleſs had been careleſs, and perhaps aſleep: I brought her ſafely back again yeſterday. So that this adventure was only to caution me, and to teach me never to think myſelf quite ſecure.

Shebar, 21 December.

MY DEAREST,

MUST I imitate the news-writers? They, in a ſcarcity of foreign news, rather than fall ſhort of their uſual number of paragraphs, entertain their readers with relations

tions of ſtrange monſters, apparitions, wonderful ſights in the air, or terrible noiſes under ground. For they take *news* in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, to ſignify any thing that has not been heard of before, whether true or falſe.

Moſt of my letters to you remind me of Æſop's feaſt, which, though conſiſting of ſeveral diſhes, were all tongues, only dreſſed in different ways. Thus whether I write in a grave or a jocular ſtrain, the ſubject is ſtill Love, Love, which is as inſeperable from my idea of you, as heat from that of fire.

Cape Mount, 31 *December*.

I SENT you from Sierra Leon two ſheets, like the two I now encloſe, and I have two more in readineſs for the next ſhip, and I ſhall think myſelf happy, if I can employ my leiſure to afford you any entertainment. I am apt to grieve at the probability

probability of my voyage proving longer than I expected; but I am ſoon checked by conſidering how much cauſe I have for thankfulneſs. For I am in perfect health, and have met with no harm or diſappointment hitherto. I am informed there is a ſhip upon the coaſt which has letters for me; I hope to be with her in a few days. My mind revives at the expectation; for then I ſhall be able to boaſt of a real pleaſure in your abſence, beſides that which I find in writing to you. It is now the laſt night, and almoſt the laſt minute of the year, being very near twelve o'clock. How can I conclude the year better than by writing to you, and praying to the Lord to bleſs you, and to ſpare me a little longer to love and deſerve you, and to be happy with you?

1751.

Rio Junque, 8 January.

I WAS prevented writing on Friday by a violent pain in my head, which was perhaps

haps partly occaſioned by not receiving a letter from you. I have one from Mr. M—, dated 24 October. He promiſed to let you know when he intended to write, but I would hope, for my own peace, he neglected it. For I am ſure you would not miſs the opportunity, if you were able to hold a pen. I muſt now wait till I arrive at Antigua. Then I hope to be gratified.

When I meet with any thing croſs, or contrary to my wiſh, I dare not now complain; becauſe in gaining you I ſecured the principal aim of my life; a real good, which if ſet in oppoſition to the little diſappointments I meet with from without, outweighs them all. Nor need I envy others their wealth or proſperity, when it is a thouſand to one if any of them have ſuch a dear M— as I can call my own. I ſhould therefore be ſorry to change with the very beſt of them, in all points, or to part with a ſmall portion of your regard for any worldly conſideration.

This

This has been one of the moſt fatiguing days I have met with, and therefore, though it is not my regular poſt, I write a little by way of amends. No one, who has not experienced it like me, can conceive the contraſt between my preſent ſituation, diſtracted with the noiſe of ſlaves and traders, ſuffocated with heat, and almoſt chop-fallen with perpetual talking; and the ſweet agreeable evenings I have paſſed in your company. But all is welcome for your ſake. I ſhall never forget, and you doubtleſs well remember, the evening when you firſt gave me your hand, as an earneſt of what has ſince followed. How I ſat ſtupid and ſpeechleſs for ſome minutes, and I believe, a little embarraſſed you by my awkwardneſs. My heart was ſo full, it beat and trembled to that degree, that I knew not how to get a word out. I hope I ſhall never entertain a fainter ſenſe of the invaluable preſent you then made me; though a greater intimacy has ſince reſtored to me the uſe of my tongue. But I am writing in

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the midſt of talkers, and am obliged to anſwer queſtions about buſineſs, ſo that my head is too confuſed to touch upon ſubjects of this kind, without ſpoiling them.

Shebar, 15 February.

When you think any of my eſſays more confuſed than uſual, (the beſt need your excuſe) I beg you to conſider, that I was probably myſelf ſenſible that I ſhould acquit myſelf but poorly, before I began. Sometimes I am fatigued, at others embarraſſed, with the buſineſs of the day, or deſtitute of a ſubject, or unable to collect my thoughts. But I had rather appear to a diſadvantage than recede from a good cuſtom. For though I hope my affection is fixed upon a baſis, which no change of circumſtance will be able to ſhake; yet knowing the weakneſs and inconſtancy of human nature, I would be always careful not to omit the ſmalleſt outward mark of

my regard, leſt I ſhould in time be ſo unhappy, as to make it a precedent; and leſt from being remiſs or negligent in one particular, I might at length prove ſo in many. For as it is remarked that no man becomes very wicked all at once, I believe it may be the ſame with a bad huſband; that he begins with inattention to ſmaller faults, and from thence proceeds to commit greater. Therefore when you find little elſe to pleaſe you in my letters, I hope they will be agreeable to you, as a proof that, at leaſt, I was not unmindful of you, but willing to ſhew my attention to you, if not ſo well as I could wiſh, yet in the very beſt manner I was able.

Shebar, 20 February.

LAST night (which made it a remarkable night) I dreamed of you. Methought we were walking together, and mutually hearing and relating many things which had occurred ſince our parting. It

was

was a pleaſing illuſion; but at day-light the noiſe of the people over my head broke the charm, and reminded me, that for a time, I muſt ſubmit to a very different ſcene. But I ſeemed more refreſhed by my dream than I ſhould have been by a longer ſleep.

I ſometimes wonder that my ſleeping fancy does not oftener tranſport me to you. Were it true, as ſome ſuppoſe, that our dreams are uſually influenced by our employment when awake, I ſhould ſurely dream of you always. For my attention is ſeldom ſo engaged by the moſt preſſing buſineſs, as to exclude the thoughts of you, five minutes at a time. Perhaps my mind, being ſo taken up with you when I am awake, is glad to take the opportunity of ſleeping, when my body does. Yet I well remember that when I firſt loved you, I dreamed of you, night after night, for near three months ſucceſſively; though I certainly could not have half the regard for you then, that I have now.

Shebar, 26 February.

If our correſpondence was made public, I ſuppoſe many people, who, though married, are ſtrangers to the delicacy of mutual love, would ſmile at *me* for writing ſo often, and at *you* for accepting my frequent and long letters ſo favourably as I know you will. I pity them no leſs than they can pity me.

I could tell thoſe who undervalue only becauſe they do not underſtand, that there have been men of as much politeneſs and good judgment as they can pretend to, who have placed much of their happineſs in poſſeſſing and deſerving the affections of a worthy woman. If you underſtood Latin, you would be much pleaſed with ſome letters of Pliny to his wife. He was the firſt favorite of the Emperor, and as a ſcholar, a courtier, and a philoſopher, inferior to none of his age. You may find two or three of them tranſlated in the Tatler, but they fall ſhort of the ſpirit of the original. But

were

were the billetdoux of our modern fine gentlemen, upon the commencement of an amour, (which is the only time they are desirous of pleasing) compared with the epistles of Pliny to his Calphurnias, they would appear very trivial and empty. The grateful remembrance of past pleasures, the anxiety and tediousness of absence, the impertinence of all business compared with love, the inquietude of passing a day without a letter, and the promised satisfaction of a happy meeting, are topics which he dwells upon with equal elegance and passion. Having said so much of Pliny, I must add in my own behalf, that I love as well as he did, though I cannot express myself so well; but for plain downright affection and gratitude, I would not yield to the best Pliny that ever wore a head.

Shebar, 5 March.

It was an expression of Cato, that it was more honourable to be a good

huſband, than a great ſenator. The point of honour ſeems to have varied ſince his time. We now find too many who value themſelves upon a contrary character, and yet are not the worſe received in company, not even by thoſe of your ſex; who I think, both in juſtice and compaſſion, ſhould unite in deſpiſing the man who dares to uſe a deſerving woman ill, becauſe he has not a heart to value her.

But had Cato ſaid there was more profit and comfort in being a good huſband than in being an unmarried Emperor, he would have ſaid but the truth. And, however faſhionable it might become to diſpute or contradict this maxim, there would always be a favoured few, who would not be diſputed, or laughed out of their experience. And it is only by experience it can be known. We need not wonder, therefore, if a married life is thought lightly of, by thoſe who judge of it only by hearſay. For a man might as well pretend to paint a ſound, as to deſcribe the various ſenſibilities connected

connected with a happy marriage, in such a manner as to make a stranger understand them.

Shebar, 22 March.

A DESIRE of rendering myself agreeable to you has long been a motive of my conduct. This I may well stile my *ruling passion.* I was changeable as the weather, till my regard for you fixed me, and collected all my aims to the single point of gaining you. Then my faculties, which before were remiss, were roused, and indolence gave way to application. It has been observed, that those who have wearied themselves in vainly searching after the Philosopher's stone, have often found out useful things which they had no thought of seeking. So I, in the pursuit of the methods by which I hoped to influence you, obtained unawares advantages of another kind. The desire of pleasing you

inſenſibly made me more acceptable to others. In one eſſential reſpect the compariſon happily fails. Theſe philoſophers were poorly rewarded for their trouble, by their petty diſcoveries, while their principal object was ſtill unattained. Whereas I not only found the *means* leading to my chief deſire pleaſant and profitable, but in due time completely gained my *end*. I long for the opportunity of thanking you again and again.

Shebar, 29 March.

THE Spectator tells us, that Socrates, in diſcourſing upon marriage, placed it in ſuch an advantageous light, that he induced all his auditors to marry as faſt as poſſible. And yet it ſeems he was, at that time, himſelf wedded to a noted ſhrew. So that he could hardly draw many perſuaſive arguments from his own experience. Surely, had he been matched like me, he would have

have ſpoken with ſtill greater emphaſis. Methinks, if I had his eloquence, I could delight to ſpeak on this ſubject from morning to night. I could tell the fooliſh world how ſtrangely they wander from the path of happineſs, while they ſeek that ſatisfaction in luxury, wealth, or ambition, which nothing but mutual love can afford.

I give and take a good deal of raillery among the ſea-captains I meet with here. They *think* I have not a right notion of life, and I *am ſure* they have not. They ſay I am melancholy; I tell them they are mad. They ſay, I am a ſlave to one woman, which I deny; but can prove that ſome of them are mere ſlaves to a hundred. They wonder at my humour; I pity theirs. They can form no idea of my happineſs; I anſwer I think the better of it on that account; for I ſhould be aſhamed of it, if it was ſuited to the level of thoſe who can be pleaſed with a drunken debauch, or the ſmile of a proſtitute. We ſhall hardly come to an agreement on theſe

points, for they pretend to appeal to experience againſt me. Juſt ſo, ſome of the poor objects in Bethlem, while raving in ſtraw and dirt, miſtake their chains for ornaments of gold, announce themſelves to be kings or lords, and are firmly perſuaded, that every perſon who pities them is out of his wits.

- Rio St. Paul's, 17 April.

MAY you always feel a ſatisfaction equal to that which the receipt of your two dear letters laſt night gave me, and I need wiſh you nothing farther till we happily meet. Could any thing enhance the value of ſuch marks of your affection, it would be my receiving them ſo unexpectedly. For I had long given them over for loſt, or worſe than loſt, expoſed to the ill-bred curioſity of ſome ſea-bear, who, incapable of underſtanding, much more of valuing your delicacy, might have inſulted them by ſome

ſhocking

ſhocking jeſt, to the diverſion of his brother animals, over a can of naſty flip. Do not think I extend the direction of divine Providence too minutely, if I ſuppoſe there was ſomething remarkable in my getting them at laſt (for they have been tranſferred to ſix or ſeven different veſſels ſucceſſively). They are of great importance to me. They could not have arrived at a more ſeaſonable juncture, to revive my ſpirits, which are ſometimes a little flagged by the tedioufneſs and difficulties of the voyage. I thank God that I poſſeſs them ſafe, and had the pleaſure to find the wax whole, as it came from under your ſeal. I could almoſt hug every dirty fellow through whoſe hands they have paſſed, for taking ſuch care of them. It will employ me agreeably for ſome days to anſwer them periodically, if you will allow the word in that ſenſe—I mean, to comment upon every period.

Rio St. Paul's, 19 April.

You wonder that ſuch a ſmart girl as Miſs H— ſhould throw herſelf away upon an unſuitable huſband. But are you ſure that your own judgment has not been often called in queſtion upon this head? It would ill become me to blame her for matching at an apparent diſparity, becauſe to ſuch a partiality in your conduct I owe my happineſs. And though, upon compariſon, I ſhould prove a little more tolerable than he, yet you are ſo much ſuperior to her, as ſtill to leave a proportionate difference between us. I believe the motives which induced you to give me your hand, are not underſtood by at leaſt one half of our acquaintance. How often muſt they have ſaid, What! the accompliſhed, eaſy, polite Miſs C—, married to that awkward piece of formality, whoſe ridiculous behaviour was for years a ſtanding jeſt amongſt us! Strange!—But I could tell them that you yourſelf, with all your

eaſe

eaſe and politeneſs, were alloyed with a quality almoſt as ſingular and unfaſhionable as any of mine. I mean an artleſs generoſity of mind, upon the knowledge of which I raiſed my firſt wiſhes, and to which I am indebted for their completion. My love to you occaſioned my troubles, my troubles inſpired you with compaſſion, that compaſſion encouraged me to perſeverance, which long perſevered in, induced firſt your good opinion, then your goodwill, and thus by pleaſing gradations, I reached the happy ſummit of my wiſhes. That I may be always worthy of my privilege, and that you may be no loſer by my gain, is my conſtant and earneſt prayer.

Rio St. Paul's, 30 April.

Now for a word of condolence on the cataſtrophe of poor Fancy. I am really ſorry, having a complacence for every

every thing that has, in any degree, the merit of pleaſing you. Beſides, he was ſo good natured, and had a fidelity and aſſiduity, which might ſhame many who walk upon two legs. But when I recollect his manner of life, I muſt, notwitſtanding his premature death, pronounce him to have been a happy dog. While many poor puppies have wandered forlorn in the ſtreets, expoſed to the gripe of the butcher's ſurly maſtiff, the kick of the weary and peeviſh traveller, or of the more heavy iron-hoofed horſe, and many ſimilar calamities, highly favoured Fancy was brought up within doors, in peace and plenty, and, to ſay all in a word, indulged with your ſmiles and careſſes. While I—what would I give to be ſo careſſed and ſmiled upon! If after all this he came to a violent end, many of the greateſt heroes have been ſerved ſo before him. So the mighty Cæſar, after all his honours and ſucceſs, was ſeized by mad dogs (that were fawning upon him a little before), who bit him

(as we are told) in three and twenty places till he died. Cæſar and Fancy equally afford a proof, that no ſituation in life is perfectly ſecure.—But enough of trifling.

Mana, 3 *May*.

You know the grove where we have ſometimes walked together; but where I more frequently paſſed many hours by myſelf. I call that grove my chapel, and my ſtudy. There I have offered many prayers for your welfare. There I have formed plans for my future conduct, and conſidered in what manner I might beſt deſerve and return your love. There is not a tree in the whole walk, but if it could ſpeak, and would ſpeak truth, might bear teſtimony to my regard for you. For I believe you know that it is my frequent cuſtom to vent my thoughts aloud, when I am ſure that no one is within hearing. I have had many a tender ſoliloquy

in

in that grove concerning you, and in the height of my enthuſiaſm, have often repeated your dear name, merely to hear it returned by the echo. Theſe, and many other harmleſs things, which the inſenſible and the mercenary would term fooleries, I have done; and that, not only when a deſponding lover, but when a happy one. I am ſo far from being influenced by that deteſtable maxim, Poſſeſſion quenches love —that I can hardly allow my affection for you before marriage, the ſame name by which I would expreſs (if I could) what I now feel.

Cape Mount, 7 May.

I HAVE been through fire and water for you to-day. That is to ſay, I was expoſed for ſome hours to a more ſcorching ſun than you can eaſily conceive of; and then cooled, when I landed, by the ſurf, or violent ſurges of the ſea, breaking upon the

the ſhore. I charge all my fatigue to your account, becauſe you only are able to pay me for it; and for your ſake it is all welcome. I am now warm with the hope of quitting this troubleſome coaſt in a few days.

Shebar, 14 *May*.

My laſt broke off abruptly. I was ill, and diſconcerted by an incident in buſineſs, which might have had bad conſequences. But I am well again, and all is to rights. A happy reſtoration to you, is the principal end I propoſe, and if I attain it, I am not very ſolicitous, whether my paſſage homewards be long or ſhort, pleaſant or otherwiſe, ſo that our meeting be ſafe and happy at laſt. The ſcenes of life I have paſſed through, have taught me a degree of patience and thankfulneſs, which ſupport me under ordinary troubles; and I hope the God in whom I deſire to truſt,

will

will preſerve me from very heavy ones. I ſeem perſuaded that he who has done ſo much for me, will at a proper time do more; if I do not put hindrances in my own way, by impatience and unthankful complaints. In the mean time my aſſurance of your love is my conſtant ſupport and feaſt. I muſt not expect to ſlide through life without meeting any rubs. If it would pleaſe God, I could wiſh to bear all my pains by myſelf, and to enjoy all my real pleaſures with you.

Shebar, 17 May.

THOUGH in this country there is no winter, properly ſpeaking, the different parts of the year are no leſs different than in England. For about ſeven months the weather is remarkably fair, with light winds, and ſeldom a threatening cloud to be ſeen. In the remaining five, we have either inceſſant heavy rains, or ſudden ſtorms

ſtorms of wind, with violent thunder and rain. This uncomfortable ſeaſon is now commencing, but I hope we ſhall not ſuffer much by it, as I expect to ſail, and change my climate in a few days. I only mention it as an excuſe for any faults in my letters, which I would have you impute to my ſituation, which I leave you to gueſs at as well as you can. Two hundred people confined in a ſmall veſſel, in bad weather, occaſion noiſe, dirt, and trouble enough. Beſides the common buſineſs and care, incident to other ſhips, we have a large number of ſlaves, that muſt be attended, fed, cleaned, and guarded againſt, let what will ſtand ſtill. When I compare a day paſſed in this manner, with one of the happy days I have known with you, I can ſcarcely imagine a greater contraſt. But when I turn my thoughts forward, and indulge the hope of being reſtored to you again, that proſpect reconciles me to all that is before me.

At Sea, 24 May.

AT length, my deareſt M. I have loſt ſight of Africa, and have been three days on my paſſage towards Antigua. Innumerable dangers and difficulties, which, without a ſuperior protection, no man could eſcape or ſurmount, are, by the goodneſs of God, happily over. I now think myſelf every hour drawing nearer to you; or (which is the next comfort to it of which I am capable) to the receipt of more letters from you, to confirm my prayers for your welfare, and for the continuance of your love. Of the latter I cannot doubt for a moment. I think myſelf as unalterably fixed in your affection, as I feel you are in mine. This perſuaſion, ſo needful to my happineſs, is rivetted in my heart, and I would not part with it for mines of gold. Yet there is ſomething inexpreſſibly engaging, to read the tender acknowledgment, under your own dear hand. You will quite ſpoil me for a letter-writer. The great

great beauty of an epiſtolary ſtile is conciſeneſs; I ſeem rather to ſtudy circumlocution, when writing to you, that I may make ſome amends in quantity, for what I fall ſhort in the quality of my letters, if compared with yours. It is now ten in the evening. I am going to walk the deck and think of you; and according to my conſtant cuſtom, to recommend you to the care and protection of God.

At Sea, 27 June.

SOMETIMES my letters reſemble the courſe of a Hare. I digreſs from one thing to another, till I make a fair round, and return to the ſubject with which I began. At other times, like the Fox, I lead you a chaſe right out, leap over all bounds of regularity, and you cannot gueſs by the manner of my ſetting off, whither or how far I may lead you; nor can I tell myſelf; but fear I tire you to keep pace with my rambles.

rambles. But if, upon the whole, you are pleaſed or amuſed, my end is anſwered. In this my deſultory way, I am almoſt at the bottom of my twelfth large ſheet, and am now expecting to ſee Antigua every minute, where I hope to be furniſhed with new materials. I had but two opportunities of writing from the coaſt, and ſhall therefore carry eight ſheets with me, which I ſhall diſperſe homewards as faſt as I can, as occaſions offer, for my juſtification, leſt you ſhould in ſome anxious moment ſuſpect me of negligence. Though I rather believe you are diſpoſed to judge favourable of me, even if appearances ſhould be againſt me. Indeed your idea is conſtantly with me, and I hope in due time I ſhall prove the reverſe of Æſop's dog, and by long gaping after the ſhadow, come at length to repoſſeſs the ſubſtance. Eager as I am for the receipt of your expected letters, my heart goes often pit a pat, leſt I ſhould hear that you have been ill or uneaſy. But I check my fears, by conſider-

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ing that I have committed you to him, who is able to take better care of you than I could, if I was preſent with you. To him I again recommend you, praying that we may at length be reſtored to each other, and that I may always prove worthy of your affection.

Antigua, 4 *July*.

As I have been for three nights almoſt ſleepleſs, I can hardly keep my eyes open, not even to write to you. But I have been long providing againſt buſy times, and now encloſe your three ſheets, as a ſpecimen; and have ſix more ready to ſend as ſhips may offer. The buſineſs of this is chiefly to acquaint you, that I arrived here in ſafety yeſterday, and have received your ſeveral favours of the 20th December, 11th January, and 2d April. That which you mention to have written in October has not come to hand. But

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my joy for thoſe received has been ſo great, that I have not yet been at leiſure, ſufficiently to regret the one which is loſt. Had not the news of my dear father's death been accompanied by theſe confirmations of your health, and your affection to me, I ſhould have felt it more heavily, for I loved and revered him. But enough of this. My tears drop upon the paper.—

Tell me, my deareſt, if you can, How two oppoſite paſſions find room for exerciſe in my breaſt at the ſame time? I rejoice greatly in the conſciouſneſs of your love, and I ſorrow greatly for my father's death. Theſe different emotions ſeem not to interfere. But I have now given vent to my grief, and ſhall not indulge it. Religion, which is the beſt philoſophy, has, I hope, prepared me, in a meaſure, for every event, at leaſt, for all but one: that one indeed I cannot think of without trembling.

Antigua, 5 *July*.

You caution me to be careful of my own life for your ſake, which is indeed the moſt engaging argument you can aſſign; for I know nothing but yourſelf that makes a continuance in this life very deſirable, unleſs as it is a ſtate of improvement for a better. But, if I durſt, I ſhould a little blame the ſtrength of your expreſſions upon the point. God only knows which of us muſt depart firſt, but it is probable, one muſt ſurvive the knowledge of the other's death. If it ſhould be my lot, I cannot tell how I ſhould be able to bear it; but I would wiſh our love to be ſo regulated, that neither of us ſhould be rendered miſerable by a ſeparation; but rather be ſupported by a well grounded hope, that a few more rolling years would re-unite us, never more to part. In a world liable to ſuch unexpected and unavoidable changes, there is no probability of being happy, even in the enjoyment of

our own wiſhes, unleſs we hold them in ſubordination to the will and wiſdom of God, who is the author and giver of every bleſſing.

Your *laſt* letter is the *beſt*, becauſe the longeſt, and becauſe you ſeem to have written it when you were tolerably eaſy, and at peace in your mind. If this was in any meaſure owing to hearing from me, I hope you will be peaceful for the remainder of the voyage; for I expect frequent opportunities of writing, and I am not likely to let one of them ſlip.

Antigua, 9 July.

THIS is my fourth letter in five days. I write by every ſhip, that you may have the moſt early information poſſible of my arrival and welfare, to relieve the anxiety which I fear you muſt have felt; and I now ſend the two laſt of the eight ſheets I brought with me. Should all my packets

cts arrive ſafely, and nearly together, your love muſt ſtrengthen your patience, or you will be wearied by the peruſal. But I believe you will receive them with as much pleaſure as I wrote them. I cannot more ſtrongly expreſs my confidence of your affection. I have perhaps told you before, that, when we married, I had not deſerved much of your *poſitive* love; but I knew from your temper, that I might be ſure your heart was free from any other engagement or preference; and for the reſt, I depended on your generoſity, and on my own ſincere endeavours to deſerve you. But even this confidence in myſelf, and in you, did not induce me to expect you would advance ſo faſt, as in a few months to overtake me in the race, in which I ſet out ſeven long years before you.

Antigua, 23 *July*.

YOUR laſt letter has the only additional excellence which I could wiſh for

in a letter from you; I mean the length. You are greatly improved indeed. At the end of five years, with ſome difficulty, I drew ſix lines from you. In leſs than two years afterwards, I obtained eleven lines and a half more. After marriage you ſtipulated to return one line for my two; and though you fell ſomething ſhort of your agreement, I acquitted you; for beſides that one of your lines is worth ten of mine, I conſidered, that, at the time of articling, you could not foreſee that I ſhould be ſo unreaſonably prolix as I have proved. Could any one who knew us both have imagined, that you ſhould already imitate me as far as one hundred and twenty lines? Yes, any one who knew us *both* perhaps might expect it. But if he only knew me, I think he would not. When I ſay You imitate me; I mean only in the length, for you leave me in full poſſeſſion of my tautologies, perplexities, and repetitions. I have thought that your writing ſo correctly was, in ſome meaſure, owing to your brevity.

vity. But I was miſtaken. You have ſhewn me, that as you have the art of imprinting your character and ſpirit in three or four lines, ſo you can, if you pleaſe, enlarge to as many hundred, without ſinking below yourſelf in a ſingle expreſſion.

I admire the delicate turn of your writing. You need not be careful who ſees your letters; for though you touch upon the moſt intereſting ſubjects in a manner quite intelligible to me, a ſtranger could pick little out of them. I would imitate you in this, if I could, while conveyances are ſo uncertain. However, I hope that if my flights were expoſed to public view, there would be nothing found but what tended to your honour, though perhaps my own prudence might be called in queſtion. I might even be excuſed by competent judges, but in the crowd we call the world, what a mixture of wonder, envy, and contempt, ſhould I excite! How would they exclaim, This is mere cant,

bombaſt, enthuſiaſm! I hope moſt of my poor eſſays to thank you, have merit enough to meet with ſuch a reception from the ignorant and ſelfiſh. Imagine Handel playing one of his beſt pieces to a parcel of gypſies, who till then had only heard ſuch muſic as gypſies are accuſtomed to; would they not gape and ſtare at him, and wiſh that he had done tuning his inſtrument, and would give them ſomething worth their hearing? Or if a clown, who had ſeen a puppetſhew, ſhould go to the theatre in hopes of ſomething to make him laugh, and hear Garrick repeating the ſoliloquy, *To be, or not to be*, he would probably wonder what the audience could find to admire, or applaud in ſuch dry ſtuff. It grows late, or I could run over fifty more inſtances of the readineſs of people to deſpiſe what they do not underſtand. And then I would endeavour to prove (I think it no difficult taſk) that this folly is never more completely abſurd, than when the dull, or the cold, or the croſs, or the unamiable,

miable, or the envious, or the selfish, or the abandoned, affect to undervalue the happiness of the marriage state.

Antigua, 4 August.

You will perceive by the date, that this is one of the days which I pass, as much as I can, in retirement and reflection. My correspondence with you falls in with my design. I hope a mutual affection will be rather a help than a hindrance to us, in our most important concerns. Not one of the many blessings which God has bestowed upon me, excites in me a more ardent desire to be thankful, than that which he has given me in you. And the remembrance of our past endearments, is a powerful preservative, to keep me from low and unworthy pursuits. In like manner, nothing reconciles me so much to the troubles and hazards incident to my situation, as the thought that I en-

dure them for your ſake, and that from you I expect a recompenſe anſwerable to my wiſhes. I hope I may ſay this, without derogating from thoſe motives, which ought to have no leſs weight with me, if you were out of the queſtion. My meaning is, that I ought to be very thankful to the goodneſs of the Lord, who has thus ordered my duty and my inclinations to go hand in hand, and in a manner bribed me to my true intereſt. And this enhances my regard to you; that I am not only indebted to you for my pleaſures here, but that you will be a mean of preparing me for thoſe which I hope for hereafter. This is the proper foundation for abiding love. A love like mine is calculated for all ſeaſons and changes; equally ſuited, to enlarge the advantages of proſperity beyond the comprehenſion of a ſtranger, and to gild the uneaſy hours of pain and trouble. I may loſe money, health, liberty, or limbs, but while it pleaſes God to preſerve my memory, nothing can rob me of the conſciouſ-

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neſs that you are mine, and that I am favoured with the deareſt place in your heart. The veſſel is now under ſail, ſo I muſt conclude. I hope to follow her ſoon. Adieu, my deareſt. Believe me to be almoſt continually praying for you, and ſtudying how to approve myſelf,

Yours, &c.

At Sea, 14 Auguſt.

I AM ſo pleaſed with writing to you, and ſo uſed to it, that though I hope to deliver you my pacquet with my own hand, I cannot deſiſt. I now begin a *book* for your entertainment, and ſhall only mark the date here and there, reſerving my bounden ſubſcription to the end.

I ſuppoſe moſt people when entering the marriage ſtate promiſe themſelves much ſatisfaction; and I am afraid very many are greatly diſappointed. Why has it been otherwiſe with me? How was it,

that at a time when I was miſtaken and wrong, in every other part of my conduct, I ſhould direct my addreſſes to perhaps the only one in the ſphere of my acquaintance who could make me happy? Undoubtedly the hand of God was in it. How wretched muſt I have been had my heart been ſo cloſely engaged to a giddy, inconſiderate, or mercenary character! Beſides my other obligations, I muſt always conſider you as the principal inſtrument employed by divine Providence, to wean me from thoſe errors and evils, which otherwiſe, muſt have ſoon iſſued in my deſtruction. This will be a motive of regard which will always remain, though length of time ſhould abate the force of many other endearing conſiderations; and when life has nothing more in itſelf deſirable, I ſhall have reaſon, with my dying breath, to bleſs God for the influence you have had over me.

You will not wonder that I write in a ſerious ſtrain, when I tell you that I am

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ſitting by a perſon in his laſt agonies, and who, only five days ſince, was healthy and florid. This is my ſurgeon, who, by an obliging behaviour during the whole voyage, has gained a great ſhare of my regard. But I fear he muſt go.—— Cut ſhort in the vigour of life, amidſt a heap of amuſing purpoſes and proſpects, if he reached England!

19th Auguſt.

My poor ſurgeon is gone, and buried in the ſea; a ſepulchre, of which, while living he could not bear the thought. But it makes no difference to him now. Beſides my perſonal regard, I ſhall miſs him upon your account. For from the time I knew him ſo well as to judge him worthy of the ſubject, I have often found ſome relief by venting my mind to him in talking about you. I have none with me now but mere ſailors, to whom I ſhould degrade your name if I mentioned it; and ſhall therefore keep my pleaſures and my pains to myſelf.

Yet now and then, when I am ſure I am not overheard, I breathe out your name, *My deareſt M.* and find muſic in the ſound.

We have had very bad weather lately, and I ſhould have been afraid of a hurricane, (for this is the ſeaſon) but that my dependance upon the providence of God is become almoſt habitual. I have had ſo many, and ſuch great deliverances, within theſe few years, that I hope I ſhall learn by degrees, to think myſelf in no more danger in one time or place than in another, while I am in the path of duty, and do not place confidence in my own abilities, or miſtake the means for the end.

21ſt Auguſt.

I ſubmit, with due deference, to your judgment in my own favour, and will entertain as good an opinion of myſelf as I can, with any regard to truth. Indeed, if I am not better than formerly, by my connection with you, I muſt be quite incorrigible.

rigible. For a proof that I once was a very poor creature, I could, if you would not be angry, cite your own opinion upon ſeveral occaſions, and ſummons more witneſſes than two or three. I divert myſelf ſometimes with the recollection of what paſſed between Mrs. P. and me, when I firſt ſaw her after we were married. It was to this purpoſe. Dear Madam, wiſh me joy. Of what, Sir? Of my marriage. With whom pray? With my dear M. What M; M. C? Yes; ſhe owned that name lately, but has now caſt it off, and deſires you would know her by mine. Ah! ſays ſhe, ſighing and ſhaking her head both at once, I wiſh it was true. Her ſiſter interpoſed, He only jeſts. She anſwered, Then he is much altered; very lately he would not have jeſted upon this ſubject. No really, it is downright earneſt; why are you ſo backward to credit it? Nay—only—becauſe—I do not know—ſtay—no—it is impoſſible. When ſhe had repeated this, or ſomething like it, two or three

three times, I begged her to collect herſelf, and give me her reaſons. She did not care to ſpeak out, but hinted an unſuitableneſs of tempers; that you was cheerful and ſprightly, and I heavy and dull; and though I might be mad enough to match at a diſparity, you were more miſtreſs of yourſelf than to make ſuch a wild experiment. This ſhe minced up as complaiſantly as ſhe could, not to offend me; but I am confident her real ſentiments, and thoſe of moſt of our acquaintance, were as I have expreſſed.

I told her ſhe had judged rightly of me, but it was plain ſhe did not ſo well know you. At length ſhe was convinced—but ſtill inſiſted, 'twas ſtrange, 'twas paſſing ſtrange; but that ſhe ſhould love you better than ever. With all my heart, Madam, I replied, and ſo ſhall I likewiſe.

28th Auguſt.

When I am in eaſy circumſtances, I try to heighten my pleaſure by the recollection of

of paſt times, when I have been much otherwiſe. When I am in a ſafe harbour, or on ſhore, I think of paſt difficulties and dangers. When (as at preſent) I poſſeſs plenty, I recall to mind the ſeaſons when I was deſtitute of bread to eat, or a ſhirt to wear. And, to ſum up all, ſince I have been happy in a return of your affection, I often compare the ſtate of my mind, with what it was when I deſpaired of gaining it.

I have been lately looking back to the hour when I firſt ſaw you, and from thence through all the various turns I met with till you had the goodneſs to give me your hand and heart; and though you have abundantly made me amends for all my ſufferings, I think nothing ſhort of yourſelf could have ſatisfied me; and that, to the degree I loved you, I muſt have been miſerable to the end of my life, without you.

Do not think I conſider you as the real cauſe of my wretchedneſs; you were indeed the *occaſion*, but the cauſe was wholly in myſelf. I gradually deviated from the

principles in which I was educated, till I became profligate and abandoned; and the way of tranſgreſſors will always be hard. From this ſtate God might indeed have appointed ſome other way for my recovery, though I had never known you; but to all human appearance, *you* were the inſtrument of ſnatching me from ruin. And at laſt, if you had not been one of a thouſand, to conduct the abſolute influence you had over me with prudence and caution, we might both have been unhappy.

December 12, 1742, was the memorable day on the event of which my future life was to turn. I was then advancing towards eighteen, you were within a month of fourteen. How wonderful, that when we were both ſo young, an impreſſion ſhould be made upon my mind, almoſt at firſt ſight, which neither diſtance, nor abſence, nor all my ſufferings, nor even all the licentiouſneſs and folly I afterwards run into, could obliterate!

I knew not at firſt what ailed me. I

was

was uneasy when you were absent, yet when you were present I scarcely durst look at you. If I attempted to speak, I trembled and was confused. My love made me stupid at first. I could not bear to leave you; but once and again broke my engagements, and disappointed my father's aim to settle me in life, rather than be banished far from you.

30th August.

In March, 1744, I was impressed, and sent in a tender on board the Harwich. Here I began a new stage of my life. Here I met with a shrewd man, who robbed me of my principles, and poisoned me with infidelity. Then *bad* soon became *worse*. I forsook God, and he left me, for a time, to follow the way of my own heart. I deserted from the ship at Plymouth when sent upon duty, but was apprehended, brought back like a felon, degraded and punished as I well deserved. Surely no misery could be greater than mine while I remained in

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that ſhip; but at Madeira I was exchanged, and ſent to Guinea. In that ſhip I might have done well, but I would not, and at length thought it eligible to quit her, and to reſide on ſhore in Africa. Here falling ſick, and being therefore uſeleſs, I incurred the diſpleaſure and contempt of my black miſtreſs P. I. and ſoon became the ſcorn and the pity of ſlaves. Almoſt naked and famiſhed, a burden to myſelf and to all around me, helpleſs and hopeleſs, I dragged through almoſt a year. My outward ſituation was *then* a little amended; and I thought myſelf fixed for life, when a meſſage reached me in a moſt providential manner, inviting me to return to England. The invitation would have been in vain, had it not revived in my mind the poſſibility (had I conſidered maturely, it would hardly have amounted to a poſſibility) of obtaining you. This gleam of hope determined me. If I had not known you, perhaps I ſhould never have ſeen the coaſt of Guinea. But it ſeems more certain,

tain, that if I had not known you I should never have returned from it. Near a year (for so long I was on ship-board) I spent in dreadful wickedness. And I should have come to England, as unworthy of you as ever, had it not pleased God to meet with me. Oh! I have reason to praise him for that storm; for the apprehension I had, first of sinking under the weight of all my sins into the ocean, and into eternity, and afterwards of being starved to death. Then I began to think; I attempted to pray, and my first half-formed prayers were answered. He whom the winds and seas obey, in a manner little less than miraculous, brought me in safety to Ireland.

2d September.

When I arrived at Liverpool, not meeting with a letter from your aunt, I thought myself forsaken by her. This, added to the rest of the difficulties which I knew were in my way, made me despair of success;

ceſs; and as I was now become more conſiderate, I thought it beſt for us both to break off; accordingly I wrote to her, with a heavy heart, and with watery eyes, that I intended to give you no further trouble. But, upon the receipt of her anſwer, I was glad to change my mind, and I ſoon ſet off for London to ſee you. See you I did, but little more. I was tongue-tied as formerly: when I had juſt feaſted my eyes, I returned to Liverpool at almoſt as great an uncertainty as before; I cannot ſay quite, for I ſaw ſo much generoſity in your behaviour, as encouraged me to hope on. And I ventured afterwards to put it to a final iſſue to yourſelf by letter. I believe had you then given me an abſolute refuſal, I ſhould have endeavoured to conquer, or at leaſt, to ſmother my paſſion.

When I received your anſwer, I kept it ſome time before I durſt open it. When I did, I was tranſported to find you kind—for though you wrote in the moſt cautious terms, I knew it was much in my favour

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that you would write at all, and that you designed I ſhould underſtand it ſo. And I was ſure you had too much honour and goodneſs, to trifle with me after I had ſtated the affair in ſo ſerious a light.

Then, my deareſt M. on that very day, I began to live indeed, and to act, in all my concerns, with a ſpirit and firmneſs to which I before was a ſtranger. My next voyage, though troubleſome enough, yet, enlivened by the hopes you had given me, was to me light and eaſy. And as it pleaſed God to enable me, in ſome meaſure, to act up to my new reſolutions, I was, for the moſt part, at peace every way. I informed you of my arrival at Liverpool, and, upon the receipt of your ſecond dear letter, I ſet off to try once more what I could find to ſay for myſelf; and, as you were then diſpoſed to make your company agreeable to me, I found it ſo indeed. Such are the outlines of my hiſtory, which I will cloſe with thanking you for the invaluable preſent you made me, on the never

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to be forgotten firſt of February, 1750. But I muſt requeſt your patience while I draw an inference or two from it.

5th September.

And firſt, from a frequent review of the paſt, I learn to be eaſy and thankful in my preſent ſituation. The diſpenſations of divine Providence towards me have ſurely been extraordinary. All the evil I ſuffered was the immediate reſult of my own folly and wilfulneſs; but the good I have experienced was wholly unmerited, and for a long time unhoped for. Had it pleaſed God to continue my life upon any terms, I ought to be very thankful for it, as allowing me time for repentance. But, as though this were a ſmall thing, my wild and roving behaviour has been over-ruled to procure me a better proſpect in life, than perhaps I ſhould have obtained by following my proper buſineſs from the firſt, with a ſteady application. And farther, as I have reaſon to think that riches, could I

have

have acquired them, would have been tasteless to me without you, what sufficient acknowledgment can I make that even this last, best, crowning gift, should be added to the rest! Could my wretched course of life, for several years that I pretended to have you so much at heart, entitle me to this blessing? Alas! I was unworthy of you, in every sense of the word!

Since, therefore, so many blessings were in store for me, though I had cast off all fear and thought of the great God, why should I fear now, that I endeavour to acknowledge him in all my ways? I entered upon this voyage with little anxiety, though I well knew it would expose me to many dangers, because I had been protected before, and brought through the like unhurt. I parted from you with grief, it is true, and yet with a degree of cheerfulness, because I trusted that he who brought us together so much beyond my expectations and deserts, would restore us to each other again at a proper time; and

for

for the ſame reaſon, my heart now exults in the hope that the time is nearly approaching. My cares are ſweetened with many comforts, and my pleaſures, when I meet them, I believe, are with as little alloy as can be expected in this ſublunary ſtate.

I infer, ſecondly, (which I have often mentioned before, but cannot too often repeat) how great my obligations are to you! I will not compliment you as the firſt and principal cauſe, (for that I look higher) but ſurely I may conſider you as the chief mean and inſtrument of reſcuing me from guilt and miſery, and forming me to a true taſte for the enjoyment of life. In gaining *you*, I gained all at once. The empty ſhews of pleaſure, which daily ruin thouſands, have no more charms for me; and the difficulties and troubles which are, more or leſs, inſeparable from this mortal ſtate, appear light and tolerable for your ſake. The only ſtudy now left me (a pleaſing ſtudy) is, how I may beſt deſerve and requite

quite your goodneſs. Good night. I am going to look at the north ſtar.

6th September.

I muſt mention one additional circumſtance, which demands my thankfulneſs. I mean the friendſhip, and kindneſs of the whole family to which I am by you allied. Was it not very happy for me, that I ſhould receive you from thoſe very perſons, to whom, of all others, I had the greateſt deſire of being obliged? For I knew it would have been in vain to expect *your* conſent, unleſs it was allowed and confirmed by theirs. By the bye I ſhould tell you, that your unuſual obſervance to your parents, gave me ſome of my ſtrongeſt hopes, that if we were once joined, we ſhould do well together; for I thought it morally impoſſible, that the beſt daughter I had met with, ſhould not prove a good wife. I have ſeen the peace of ſome hopeful marriages diſturbed, and ſometimes deſtroyed, by diſſenſions ariſing from the

new relations; but I have ſeldom ſeen ſuch entire, diſintereſted harmony as ſubſiſts amongſt us.

At Sea, 9th September.

It is now ſuch weather, as often makes thoſe who live on ſhore, pity the poor ſailors. The wind blows very hard, the ſea runs high, and toſſes the ſhip about, without any ceremony. So that writing is difficult, and I muſt be ſhorter than uſual; but I was not willing to deſiſt entirely. For my own part, I do not think my caſe very pitiable. I am in good health, I am ſurrounded by a good Providence, to which a calm and a ſtorm are alike; and, as the wind is fair, every puff puſhes me nearer to you. I have ſhortened the diſtance between us about 180 miles within the laſt 24 hours. Who would not purchaſe this ſpeed (if it could be bought) at the price of a little inconvenience? Not that I am anxiouſly in haſte. I am willing to make the

the beſt uſe both of fair, and of contrary winds, and, if poſſible, with equal thankfulneſs; for I truſt, all my concerns are under a better direction than my own; and that you and I ſhall meet again, in the beſt concerted hour, and manner, imaginable.

At Sea, 16th September.

THE ſcene is much changed ſince yeſterday. The wind is abated, and the raging billows are greatly ſubſided. I thank God we did not ſuſtain the leaſt damage; though ſuch ſeaſons are not without real danger; for the force of the ſea, when enraged by the wind, is inconceivable by thoſe who have not ſeen it, and unmanageable by thoſe who have ſeen the moſt of it. God is often pleaſed to make this element, his inſtrument of confounding the pride of thoſe who preſume to think their own art, vigilance, and precaution, a ſufficient ſecurity againſt it; while at the ſame, or at a worſe time, he makes the uſe

of common means ſucceſsful, to ſuch as acknowledge that their beſt endeavours muſt be in vain, without his bleſſing.

It is a common error, to be much afraid in times of great apparent danger, and only at ſuch ſeaſons. In a tempeſt, a fire, a peſtilence, or an earthquake, we are alarmed, and cry, Lord, help us, and give ourſelves up for gone. But alas! were our frail lives any way inconſiſtent with the views of Providence, there is no need of ſuch a mighty apparatus to remove us. A fever, a fall, a fly, a tile, or even an hair, are, and have been ſufficient to interrupt the ſchemes of the ambitious, to rob the conqueror of his triumphs, or to change beauty into a loathſome maſs.

Theſe thoughts have ariſen from a grateful ſenſe of my late preſervation, and there is a propriety in offering them to you. I owe to you the moſt that endears life to me. I ought to be thankful for its continuance, though it were not thus enlivened, as a ſtate of improvement and prepa-

ration

ration for a better; but for any happineſs merely temporal, further than what ſhall be allotted me, through and with you, I have neither conception nor deſire. Farther than this I dare not ſay. God forbid that either of us ſhould miſtake the mean, his goodneſs in bleſſing us with affections ſo happily attuned to each other, for the end to which it ought to lead us; ſo as to place an undue ſtreſs, upon what muſt be either taken from us, or we from it. Since we are ſure we muſt at length part, let us endeavour that it may be upon ſuch terms, as may afford us, mutually, the joyful hope of a re-union, when we ſhall no more be liable to ſeparation, or diſappointment. This muſt be happineſs indeed!

At-Sea, 19th September.

I AM a great admirer of Æſop's fables. They could hardly have been more adapted to the cuſtoms and humours of our times, had they been written in Lon-

don. His apes, lions, foxes, geeſe, magpies, and monkeys, may be met with in our ſtreets every day. As a proof that I am not partial in my cenſure, I will confeſs that I myſelf have frequently appeared in ſome of theſe characters. When I firſt knew you I was a bear; I then became an owl, and afterwards exhibited the worſt properties of *all* his brutes, in my ſingle ſelf.

The morals, ſo called, uſually ſubjoined to the fables, I think, might be omitted without much loſs. Let the reader moraliſe for himſelf, as I mean to do on a fable which commonly ſtands the firſt in the book. I muſt give it you from memory, and believe I ſhall not much deviate from the original.

A cock, ſcraping in a dunghill, found a diamond. Oh! ſaid he, what a fine bright thing is this! a jeweller would be overjoyed to find it; but for my part, I think it a mere bauble, and would prefer one barley corn to all the diamonds and pearls

in

in the world! Is not this a lively picture of ſome, who would be thought fine gentlemen! In taſte, diſcernment, and employment, how nearly do they reſemble the cock? Solomon aſſures us, the price of a virtuous woman is above rubies; which ſufficiently explains what is meant by the diamond. Thus the libertine judges of a fine woman, every way qualified to make a man of ſenſe happy. He will, like the cock, allow that ſhe is worth much to one who knows how to value her; (for beauty joined with goodneſs in a female character, will extort ſome homage from the moſt brutiſh.) I muſt own, he would ſay, ſhe is very amiable, and if a man ſhould gain her, who can reliſh the good ſenſe, tenderneſs, and generoſity, ſhe ſeems to poſſeſs, he would, to be ſure, think himſelf very happy; but theſe things are to me mere baubles. If I have my barley corn I ſhall not envy him. My bottle and a brothel are more to my taſte. Thus far my moral.

How is it that women, who profeſs a regard for honour, truth, and virtue, will, without ſcruple, converſe, in general terms, with men who live in open defiance to theſe principles, if they are only recommended by a genteel addreſs and appearance; and will permit them, upon the eaſy condition of avoiding groſs vulgar terms, to ſay things which they muſt ſurely deſpiſe? If they would reſolutely treat with contempt, the man who ſhould dare to hint, that he conſiders all women as alike, it would prevent the ruin of many of your ſex, and be the moſt effectual ſtep towards a reformation amongſt ours, that I can think of. But now, let a wretch, by a complicated ſcene of perjury, baſeneſs, and ingratitude, firſt ruin, and then abandon a young creature, who has been ſo unhappy as to believe him, he will probably be received in the next company with a ſmile, and marks of good will; while the poor dupe of his artifice, deprived both of peace and ſubſiſtence, ſhall be deemed unworthy

of

of pity. And this from women, who ought to be the patterns of commiſeration and candour!

You, I know, think more juſtly. You do not ſuppoſe, that your having withſtood or eſcaped all villainous deſigns, can warrant you to add weight to the affliction of thoſe who have been overreached. I may ſay of you, with the poet,

There dwelt the ſcorn of vice, and pity too.

I know not what I ſhould digreſs to next, but I am juſt told, The tea-kettle boils, ſo, as the ſailors ſay, no more at preſent.

20th September.

We have another heavy gale of wind, and it is not eaſy to ſit faſt, or to hold a pen; but as the diſtance between us is leſſening at the rate of ſeven or eight miles per hour, I am willing to fill up my paper as faſt as I can. I wiſh I had words to convey ſome idea of the ſcene around me.

But it cannot be fully deſcribed. A faint, and but a faint conception, may be formed from pictures, or prints, of a ſtorm at ſea. Imagine to yourſelf an immenſe body of water behind you, higher than a houſe, and a chaſm of equal depth juſt before you: both ſo apparently dangerous, that you could hardly determine which to venture; and both ſo near, as not to allow you a moment's time to chooſe: for in the twinkling of an eye the ſhip deſcends into the pit which is gaping to receive her, and with equal ſwiftneſs aſcends to the top on the other ſide, before the mountain that is behind can overtake her. And this is repeated as often as you can deliberately count four. It is indeed wonderful, that a ſhip will run inceſſantly over theſe hills and dales, for days and weeks together, (if the gale laſts ſo long) without receiving the leaſt damage, or taking any conſiderable quantity of water on board; and yet never be more than four or five yards from a ſea, which, (if it was quite to reach her) would

would perhaps diſable her beyond recovery, if not beat her to pieces at a ſingle blow. Need we go farther for the proof of a Providence always near, always kind? kind to the unthankful and the evil. For though theſe marks of his care are repeated every minute, they are ſeldom acknowledged by ſeamen. For my own part, I ſee dangers ſo numerous and imminent, that I ſhould be always in anxiety and fear, could I not ſubmit myſelf and all my concerns, to Him who holds the waves of the ſea in the hollow of his hand, as the prophet ſtrongly expreſſes it; ſo that when moſt enraged by the winds, I am ſure they dare not riſe a ſingle inch beyond his permiſſion.

You have often heard of an oſtrich, and perhaps ſeen one. This bird is common in the northern parts of Africa; and, if travellers may be believed, he has a peculiarity, which, if my friend Æſop had known, he would, I think, have given him a place in his fables. They ſay, when an

oſtrich is purſued, he uſually gets clear by running, if the place is open and plain, (for they are ſwifter than a horſe) but if he be near an encloſure, or wood, he ſticks his head into the firſt buſh he can reach; and when he can no longer ſee his enemy, he thinks himſelf ſafe, and ſtands quiet till he is caught. We may ſmile at this folly in a bird, but how often is it an emblem of our own! When the thing we fear is impending, and before our eyes, we are alarmed; but ſoon drop our apprehenſions, and perhaps are unwilling to own we had any, when the danger is over, as we ſuppoſe; that is, when we cannot ſee it. Our own wiſdom, or diligence, or vanity, ſerve us for a buſh; and we little think of the many calamities to which we are equally expoſed from other quarters. Though we daily ſee more people ſuffering by what they ſlighted, than by what they feared. May you and I learn to fear the Lord, and we need fear none but him. He could preſerve us ſafe and happy, though fire and air,

air, earth and water, men and devils, were to conſpire againſt our peace.

21ſt September.

How different is to-day from yeſterday! The ſea hardly ſeems to be the ſame element. The weather is quite fair, the wind moderate, (but ſtill favourable) and the water ſmooth. When the country is loaded with ſnow, and the trees without a leaf, how pleaſing is the alteration produced by the returning ſpring! The ground, by degrees, is covered with flowers, the woods arrayed in green, and muſic is heard from every thicket. Seamen often experience as great a change in a few hours; which makes it the more ſenſible. A little bad weather, now and then, makes the return of fair more pleaſant. I ſeem to-day to breathe a new air, and with a new life.

You are very kind to wiſh yourſelf at ſea with me; but dearly as I value your company, I could not conſent to pay ſuch a price for it. I can eaſily ſubmit to the inconveniencies

inconveniencies of a ſea-faring life while you are ſafe on ſhore; but they would diſtreſs me greatly, if you were affected by them. I am like a prudent merchant, who, not willing to riſk his whole fortune in one adventure, leaves the better and larger part of his riches at home; and then, if any thing happens, he can comfort himſelf with the thoughts of a reſerve.

Excepting the pain of your abſence, (which I hope I ſhall always feel when from you) I have little to diſquiet me. My condition when abroad, and even in Guinea, might be envied by multitudes who ſtay at home. I am as abſolute in my ſmall dominions (life and death excepted) as any potentate in Europe. If I ſay to one, Come, he comes; if to another, Go, he flies. If I order one perſon to do ſomething, perhaps three or four will be ambitious of a ſhare in the ſervice. Not a man in the ſhip muſt eat his dinner till I pleaſe to give him leave; nay, nobody dares to ſay it is 12 or 8 o'clock, in my hearing, till

till I think proper to ſay ſo firſt. There is a mighty buſtle of attendance when I leave the ſhip, and a ſtrict watch kept while I am abſent, leſt I ſhould return unawares, and not be received in due form. And ſhould I ſtay out till midnight, (which, for that reaſon, I never do without neceſſity) nobody muſt preſume to ſhut their eyes, till they have had the honour of ſeeing me again. I would have you judge from my manner of relating theſe ceremonials, that I do not value them highly for their own ſake; but they are old eſtabliſhed cuſtoms, and neceſſary to be kept up; for, without a ſtrict diſcipline, the common ſailors would be unmanageable. But, in the midſt of all my parade, I do not forget (I hope I never ſhall) what my ſituation was on board the Harwich, and at the Plantanes.

25th September.

While I am writing, the ſhip keeps running towards you. The wind has been moſtly fair for more than a week. Sometimes I almoſt fancy myſelf in a dream, and think, Can it indeed be poſſible, that I am within a few weeks of ſo much happineſs as a return to you includes? Perhaps I may find you ill—perhaps I may not reach you at all, near as I think myſelf. Hundreds have periſhed much nearer home. But all dark thoughts give way to my dependance upon God. I know I do not deſerve ſo great a bleſſing as to be reſtored to you again. But neither did I deſerve to be bleſſed with you at firſt. I hope, arrive when I will, I ſhall bring home a diſpoſition to be thankful. I have advanced about 800 miles this week. How many deaths and dangers have I eſcaped in that ſpace! Why then ſhould I fear theſe that

are

are ſtill before me, if I am always under the ſame protection?

At Sea, 26th September.

THE weather is at preſent very cold, wet, and windy; but, I thank God, my heart is warm and calm. I think of paſt times, when I have been happy with you, and I count nothing a hardſhip, that does not interfere with my hope of being ſo again. I would not wiſh to fix the hour myſelf, becauſe I cannot chooſe for the beſt. I ſuppoſe myſelf about 350 miles from Ireland; and I have at times been too impatient to ſee it, becauſe I ſhould be ſo much nearer to you. But were we now very cloſe to the land, I might, perhaps, wiſh myſelf far out at ſea again; for the wind, in its preſent degree and direction, which is only inconvenient here, would there be dangerous. How often have I found, that the accompliſhment of my own

ſhort-ſighted

ſhort-ſighted deſigns would have been to my hurt! And yet, alas! I feel it difficult to ſubmit my concerns to a ſuperior management, though I am convinced in my judgment, that I could not order them ſo well myſelf. The ſtory of the Fairy, who would never aſſign a reaſon for what ſhe did, but always did right, though ſome of her proceedings appeared to contradict her promiſes, I think well ſuited to illuſtrate the conduct of Divine Providence, which will ſurely do us good, if we can humbly truſt it, without nicely examining the aptneſs of the means by which it works. Dr. Parnell's Hermit is a ſtill more ſolid and ſatisfying illuſtration of this ſubject. How miſerable, for inſtance, muſt both you and I have been, if my deſire had ſucceeded, before I had a little learnt how to treat and value you? And how unlikely was the path that I trod for ſeveral years, to lead me to your poſſeſſion? And though I ſhould have thought myſelf happy, could I have avoided the neceſſity of leaving you

for

for the long term of this voyage, yet I am aſſured, that when we are permitted to meet, we ſhall both derive advantages from the ſeparation.

The ſhip has ſo many motions, that writing (unleſs to you) would be quite troubleſome. So I ſhall leave off, though I cannot ſay the tea-kettle boils, nor am I ſure that it will, for the ſea often puts the fire out. But if you drink your tea in peace, I can make a good ſhift without any.

At Sea, 2nd October.

I HAVE been prevented from writing in the day, ſo muſt try my eyes by candle-light. Indeed, at preſent, I could not write with pleaſure to any one but yourſelf; for, as I expect every hour to ſee the land, my head is full of the charge of a ſhip valuably laden, and the lives of many people entruſted to my care. Not that I

have

have more anxiety than is needful to make me uſe my beſt endeavours. For the ſucceſs of the whole, I can with ſome comfort depend on the good providence of God; but I muſt not preſume to be preſerved by a miracle. It is ſufficient if my beſt diligence is permitted to anſwer the propoſed end; which of itſelf I am ſure it cannot do. The innumerable poſſibilities of miſcarriage to which a ſhip is liable, are far beyond the reach of human foreſight or prevention. It is my mercy to be convinced of this, and, at the ſame time, to be able to look higher for protection.

When Cæſar was once at ſea in a ſtorm, and the mariners themſelves were ſtartled at the danger, he is reported to have ſaid, Fear nothing, you carry Cæſar and his fortune. Perhaps I may, with leſs preſumption than he, take ſome comfort in the thought of my own importance; for though, ſtrictly ſpeaking, I am a mere nothing, I hope I may rank myſelf with thoſe, to whom all things are promiſed to work together for

good,

good, and that my beſt intereſts are fixed upon a foundation that cannot be ſhaken. When I do give way to fears or wiſhes of a temporal kind, I think it is chiefly on your account. I would be thankful for life, but am in ſome meaſure freed from the dread of death, further than for the grief it would occaſion to you. I ought to ſtrive to get the better of this thought likewiſe; but I have not yet attained. In the wretched unthinking part of my life, I was full of fears, which I do not now wonder at. The wonder is, how any one who lives as I then did, can be otherwiſe. Surely the ſudden and various paſſages from this world to the next, muſt ſhock thoſe who have nothing to hope for, but every thing to fear, by the change. The wicked flee when no man purſueth; the ſhadow of danger diſcompoſes them; and whatever boaſts they may make of their courage, it moſt commonly fails them when moſt needed, unleſs they have hardened themſelves beyond the power of reflection. But

the righteous are bold as a lion. No difficulty can overpower their reſolution, when they are in the path of duty.

Were ſome gay ladies of your acquaintance to read what I write, they would call much of it, ſtuff, and preaching; and admire that you have patience to read it. Perhaps a time will come, when ſuch will wiſh they had thought as you do. However, I do not write in this ſerious ſtrain for your peruſal only, but for my own; to quicken my remembrance of the paſt, when I ſhall be reſtored to you, and be in a ſtate of more apparent ſafety. In hopes that theſe paſſages may contribute to the forming of my behaviour *then*, anſwerably to my deliberate and cool judgment of things *now*. That I may not be like the ſailor who once, in great diſtreſs, made a vow to the Virgin Mary, that if ſhe would deliver him, he would preſent her with a wax candle as big as the ſhip's main-maſt; and, on being aſked how he would raiſe money to pay for ſo large a candle, he ſaid, Let us firſt

get

get on ſhore, and then the ſaints will not exact too ſtrictly, upon a ſailor's promiſe.

At Sea, October 3.

WHAT a taſteleſs unpleaſant voyage would this have been, if you had not ſecured my happineſs before I came out, and given me ſomething to remember, and ſomething to hope for, that has ſupported me at all times; and yet you denied me at firſt, with ſo grave a face, and had ſuch abſolute command over me, that I had almoſt taken you at your word. I may be obliged to Mrs. H.'s advice, that I did not fairly give up my ſuit; though, upon ſecond thoughts, I believe it was more owing to my opinion of your generoſity. For I thought, that to ſend me away empty again, would argue a ſelfiſh caution, of which I could not ſuppoſe you capable, without wronging you. So I ventured to touch again upon a ſubject, on which you had

had poſitively enjoined me ſilence. And I remember you forbad me again, but I thought you did not ſpeak in ſo peremptory a manner as before. In a little time you heard me without interrupting me, and from thence proceeded to argue and object, in a cool, converſible ſtrain. When it came to this, I promiſed myſelf ſucceſs. I remembered that line,

The woman that deliberates is *gain'd.*

I then began to preſs my point more cloſely, till you actually yielded, and gave me your hand in conſent; which though I had been ſo long entreating for, I could not receive without trembling and ſurpriſe. I could hardly think myſelf awake. I never till then was ſenſible of the force of my love; and I ſlept that night with a content and ſweetneſs, which I had not known before. I often recollect theſe circumſtances, and the much ado I made about you before marriage, to make me careful that my behaviour now, may be ſuitable to

my

my former profeſſions. But, I thank God, it does not require much care or pains; for to do all in my power to pleaſe and oblige you, ſeems as natural to me, as it is to breathe.

Liverpool, 8 October.

THE news of my arrival will make this letter, however faulty, welcome to you. I could not write, at preſent, to any one but yourſelf. I am overfatigued, having been inceſſantly waking for four days and four nights, which once brought on a temporary delirium, though not ſo violent as to prevent my knowing what I ſaid or did. But almoſt every thing I thought of (yourſelf excepted) ſeemed to be preſent before my eyes. But ſince I came here, I have had a good nap, which has much refreſhed me, and I hope to be quite recovered tomorrow. In other reſpects I am in perfect health.

I hope to ſet out for London as ſoon as the ſhip is diſcharged; but cannot be yet ſure. Should another voyage be propoſed immediately, I muſt beg you to ſubmit to the inconvenience of a long journey in the winter! for now there is no ocean between us, we muſt not be ſeparated, no not for a ſingle hour, without neceſſity. But I rather hope, and expect, that the lot of travelling will fall to me.

I hope you will rather be pleaſed with the knowledge of my being now, ſo near you, than be grieved that we muſt wait a little longer, before we meet. For my own part, I have ſo ſtrong an impreſſion of the dangers I have mercifully eſcaped, in the courſe of the laſt week, that I dare not complain of a little delay; and when the poſt ſhall bring me an aſſurance of your health and peace, I ſhall cheerfully wait the ordinary courſe of things.

Liverpool, 11 *Octōber.*

In about fourteen days from this date, I hope to be preparing for London. Mr. M. ſays, that about March I may expect to be ſummoned again; and then he hopes to ſee you with me; and that he will be glad to make his houſe an agreeable home to you, and charge himſelf with the care of returning you to London, if you do not chooſe to reſide in Liverpool, while I am abroad. Mrs. M. likewiſe wiſhes to ſee you. She thinks ſhe pays my judgment a compliment, in forming a favourable idea of you before-hand. I ſmile, and ſay nothing. She will perceive, when the time comes, that any opinion of *you*, derived only from the knowledge of what I am, muſt greatly wrong you.

Many welcome me home; but alas, Liverpool, without you, is almoſt as poor a home to me, as the wildeſt part of Africa. I only ſay almoſt, becauſe I am much in

Mr. M.'s family, and when there, find ſome alleviation of your abſence. All the reſt is wearifome and tedious. I enjoy myſelf beſt when retired in my room, and eſpecially when I am writing to you.

Liverpool, 13 *October.*

If I could write a quire, I ſhould be unable to expreſs my pleaſure on the receipt of your dear punctual favour of the 9th. It is like your kindneſs, to offer to meet me upon the road, but I beg you to ſpare yourſelf the trouble. I do not even deſire you to come to London, as I have no buſineſs to detain me there, and I ſhould be under ſome reſtraint at the houſe of an acquaintance. The pleaſure of having our firſt interview quite at home, amongſt ourſelves, ſeems worth waiting for a few hours. I am glad you made yourſelf quite eaſy, upon the news of my departure from Antigua. But now I am ſafely arrived, I may venture

venture to tell you, that my paſſage homewards at this time of the year (the hurricane ſeaſon) was the moſt apparently dangerous part of the voyage: I thought it ſo before I ſailed; and yet I ventured to foretell a happy arrival; becauſe I truſted to that Providence which has never failed me. In effect all proved favourable, and excepting two or three hard gales, I might, for the moſt part of the way, have come ſafely in a Graveſend boat.

Liverpool, 18 October.

I HAVE been ſearching (in vain) for epithets and phraſes, but I muſt ſtop.—— They ſay, the Greek is a more expreſſive language than our own; if ſo, I wiſh we both underſtood it, for it is impoſſible for mere Engliſh, to do juſtice to a twentieth part, of what I have in my mind. Yet I ought not to quarrel with words, leſt my actions, however well meant, ſhould fall

equally ſhort of what I owe you. But I know you will kindly value them according to my intention, which I am ſure is ſtrong and ſincere, to make you every return in my power. I hope ſoon to name the day of my leaving Liverpool, and ſhall mind your caution about my health.

1752.

SECOND VOYAGE TO AFRICA.

At Sea, 30 June.

I BEGIN to write, the moment we are under ſail, and ſhall ſnatch every interval, while my friends ſtay with me.

The firſt thing I ſhall ſay is, that I am really eaſy. Though I have no reliſh for mirth, my mind is at peace. The knowledge of your love, the recollection of the happy time I have paſſed with you; and the powerful conſiderations of a more ſerious kind, which I have often repeated to you, have all the effect upon me that you could wiſh. And I aſſure you the reſolution you have ſhewn has no ſmall influence, both as an example, and in giving me hope that you will ſtrive to be compoſed, and to depend, with me, upon the good Providence which has already done ſo much for

us. I do not complain of being ſomething moved at parting; becauſe I ſhould be a wretch indeed, were I inſenſible of the value of what I leave behind. I can from experience pronounce, that the pains of an affection properly directed, are in no degree proportionable to its pleaſures. I already look forward to a time, when —— but I have no words to expreſs myſelf, ſo muſt refer you to our laſt meeting 2nd. November. Such another interview, will be a full amends for the diſagreeables, of a long voyage. May the good, and gracious God bleſs, and preſerve you. Remember my laſt advice. Be patient and thankful, and expect me, at the beſt time, to return and be happy with you again.

At Sea, 11 July.

THOUGH my letter by the pilot boat went twelve days ago, I have not written to you ſince. We were exerciſed for ſome time

time (while near the land) with very thick weather, and weſterly winds; and I would not begin my new ſea-correſpondence till I could tell you (as I thank God I now can) that we are ſafely in good ſea-room. I am almoſt aſhamed to ſay, how eaſily I bear your abſence. Surely it is not that I love you leſs than formerly; yet I ſeem to myſelf, to make a better ſhift without you, than I ought. Though I think of you continually, and pray for you almoſt hourly, much oftener than ever, my love, and care for you, are much freed from inquietude, and anxiety. I have my ſerious hours; for it is only from ſerious thoughts, at ſome times, that I can derive conſiderations, ſufficient to make me cheerful, at any time.

I am now ſettled in a regular courſe; for ſo far as circumſtances will permit, I do every thing by rule, and at a fixed hour. My time is divided into ſeaſons for devotion, ſtudy, exerciſe, and reſt; and, thus diverſified, no part of it is tedious.

I have been following you, in my mind,

to London this week, where I hope you arrived in ſafety laſt night; but leſt I ſhould be miſtaken in the time, I purpoſe to travel it over again, next week. I have almoſt diſmiſſed my fears upon your account, for I have ſo often recommended and reſigned you to the protection of God, that I ſeldom doubt of his ſpecial care over you. But I have bound myſelf in a ſtrict promiſe, and engaged to uſe my whole intereſt with you, to join me in it, that when He ſhall be pleaſed to bring us together again in peace, we will both endeavour to ſhew gratitude by our conduct, as well as to expreſs it in words. In the mean while, it is one of my daily and nightly petitions, that he may teach us to extract a real good, out of theſe our painful ſeparations, by improving the occaſion to the increaſing, and fixing, our beſt affections on himſelf. From his favour and goodneſs all our bleſſings, even our mutual love, proceeds. He is able and willing to proſper all our wiſhes and deſires, ſo far as they are rightly grounded;

grounded; and from his notice, neither time, nor diſtance, can ſeparate us. He is an ever-preſent and an all-ſufficient helper.

At Sea, 24 July.

I KNOW you have thought of me to-day, becauſe it is my birth-day. I have likewiſe obſerved it; but not ſo properly celebrated, as ſolemnized it. I would willingly grow wiſer and better, as I grow older, every year. I have now lived twenty-ſeven years, but how few things have I done really worthy of life; unleſs I am allowed to conſider the inſtances, in which I have endeavoured to ſhew my affection and gratitude to you, of that number. I have ſome hope that my remaining time will be better improved; and my prayer and wiſh for you is, that we may be both of one mind, and prove helps to each other in our moſt important buſineſs; and this will be the moſt effectual means of ſecur-

ing peace and ſatisfaction, in our inferior concernments. I continue to conceive moſt of my prayers in the plural number, as when we were together; for every deſirable good that I can aſk for myſelf, I am equally ſolicitous that you ſhould be a ſharer in.

At Sea, 27 July.

I HAD nearly miſſed my poſt to-night, by attending to our old ſea form in croſſing the tropic. This is the boundary of what the ancients called, the torrid zone. We croſſed, the ſuppoſed line of this boundary, to-day. On theſe occaſions, all the people on board a ſhip who have not paſſed it before, are ſubject to a fine, which, if they refuſe to pay, or cannot procure, they muſt be ducked; that is, hoiſted up by a rope to the yard arm, and from thence dropped ſouce into the water. This is ſuch fine ſport to the ſeamen, that they would

would rather loſe ſome of the forfeiture, (which is uſually paid in brandy) than that every body ſhould eſcape the ducking. And in many veſſels, they ſingle out ſome poor helpleſs boy or landſman, to be half-drowned for the diverſion of his ſhipmates. But as I do not chooſe to permit any arbitrary, or oppreſſive laws to be valid, in my peaceful kingdom, I always pay for thoſe, who cannot pay for themſelves. If this poor relation does not entertain you, the thought that I wrote it, and the perſuaſion that my inclination to ſend you ſomething better is not wanting, will, I doubt not, make you ſome amends.

Indeed I am at a loſs for a ſubject. Suppoſe, for want of ſomething better, I ſhould obſerve, that it is a month ſince we parted. No, that will not do—the word *parted* has ſpoiled all. Oh, that morning! It was a parting indeed! But do not think I am uneaſy at the recollection. I only gave way to one tender ſigh, and now it is gone. Well, ſuppoſe we turn the glaſs,

and

and look forward, to our next hoped-for happy meeting? Aye, that is the very thing: at the mention of it, I almoſt forget that we parted at all. Such a meeting as our laſt! Well, I am content, and acknowledge that one of thoſe hours will make amends for all. Till that time ſhall come, all that we have to do is, cheerfully to fill up the part Providence has appointed us, without too anxious ſolicitude; to pray for each other's welfare, and to endeavour to live under the impreſſion of the bleſſings we have already received, or have yet to hope for, from our all-gracious benefactor; and all the reſt will in due time come round, and you will find my dependance upon his goodneſs, to be well founded.

At Sea, 7 Auguſt.

I HAVE no confident now, as I had in my poor doctor laſt voyage, to whom I can eaſe my mind a little, by talking of you.

For

For my chief mate, though in all other reſpects much to my ſatisfaction, has not that turn of temper, which is requiſite to reliſh the delicacy of the love I bear you; and to thoſe who have not ſomething of a fellow-feeling, my tenderneſs would appear only a kind of innocent folly. In this, you have greatly the advantage of me: you have friends about you, who will often ſpeak of me, becauſe they know it will pleaſe you. I would rather have your name ſo ſounded in *my* ears, than to have Corelli himſelf entertain me with his own muſic. For want of this, I am forced to have recourſe to my old cuſtom of repeating it ſoftly to myſelf, praying at the ſame time, that the happineſs I have in you, may be repaid you a thouſand fold.

So that when I indulge myſelf with a particular thought of you, it uſually carries me on farther, and brings me upon my knees to bleſs the Lord, for giving me ſuch a treaſure, and to pray for your peace and welfare. I cannot expreſs the pleaſure and

ſatisfaction

ſatisfaction I find in theſe exerciſes. When thus engaged, my fears ſubſide, my impatience of your abſence changes into a reſignation full of hope, and every anxious uneaſy thought is lulled to reſt. This is my preſent temper, nor would I waſte a wiſh for any thing the world can afford, beyond the probabilities which lie before me.

At Sea, 11 Auguſt.

I NEED not apologize to you for writing ſo much in a ſerious ſtrain; but were an excuſe needful, I muſt plead *yourſelf.* For when I take up my pen, and begin to conſider what I ſhall ſay, I am led to think of the goodneſs of God, who has made you mine, and given me a heart to value you. Thus my love to you, and my gratitude to him, cannot be ſeparated. And as you are ſo good to prize my affection, by finding it thus accompanied, you may

be aſſured of its being unalterable. All other love, that is not thus connected with a dependance upon God, muſt be precarious. To this want, I attribute many unhappy marriages. I believe many perſons fall from their hopes of ſatisfaction in that ſtate, by degrees inſenſible to themſelves; and a ſecret change, or alienation of mind from each other, takes place before they are well aware of it; till, in time, they proceed to ſuch lengths, as they would once have judged impoſſible.

I am not at a loſs to account for this. God has ſubjected the preſent ſtate of the world to uncertainty and vanity; not becauſe he is a hard maſter, but becauſe he ſees, if we go on ſmoothly long, we are prone to forget that our great concern in this life, ſhould be to prepare for another. Now they who, by his grace, are led to conſider the great truths of religion, and are taught before the days of trial come, to ſubmit themſelves, their deſigns and enjoyments to his wiſdom and guidance,

may,

may, in a great meaſure, eſcape the bitterneſs of evil, or at leaſt the moſt bitter of thoſe evils, to which mortality is ſubject: becauſe the merciful deſign of afflictions is, to them, ſo far anſwered. But they who judge ſo ill as to place a dependance upon each other, which interferes with what they owe to their common preſerver, oblige him, if I may ſo ſpeak, to quaſh their purpoſe, either by ſickneſs, ſufferings, death, or what to me ſeems worſe than all, a change of affection, to make them feel their offence in their puniſhment. I dare not ſay, that you and I have not been guilty of this error. But ſince it has pleaſed God, as yet, to forbear afflicting us for it, I hope, for the future, we ſhall be more upon our guard, and not farther diſpleaſe him.

Sierra Leon, 17 *Auguſt*.

We arrived here the 17th, after a fine, and not very long paſſage. We had no violent weather, nor painful event, but a viſible hand of conducting Providence attended us all the way. I have begun trade, and things appear in a promiſing train.

I often aſk myſelf, if I know any perſon upon earth with whom I could be content, in all points, to change; and I can confidently anſwer, No: for the knowledge and enjoyment of your love, enable me to look with pity upon kings, and I would not part with what I now feel upon your account, for the treaſures of both the Indies.

October 6.

The Hunter, which will ſail in a few days, has a large pacquet for you; and I have further ſent you a few lines by Mr.

D. a young gentleman from Scotland, who is on board her. He has promiſed to deliver my letter in perſon, though he has no buſineſs at C—, but to oblige me, by ſeeing you; that he may anſwer any little queſtions you may aſk, or inform you of ſome incidents which I may have omitted. It is not eaſy to ſay, what pleaſure I could take in converſing with any perſon, who had lately been with you; and I judge of you, by myſelf. In other reſpects, he is an agreeable man, and I have been much pleaſed with him. I am informed he has a tolerable eſtate in Scotland; but having an eager deſire of ſeeing new things, after having made the tour of France, he thought there might be ſomething worthy of his notice, even in Guinea. But I believe his expectations have been much baulked.

It is now the noon of night, as Shakeſpeare ſomewhere expreſſes it. I left Sierra Leon this morning. I am very ſleepy, but muſt not go to bed yet; being often obliged

obliged to watch, when the ſhip is under ſail. This I ſubmit to cheerfully, becauſe you have, before-hand, overpaid me for my trouble. I have been praying for your calm repoſe, and am pleaſed with the hope, that only one of us is kept waking. I pity thoſe, who have only dull intereſt to animate them in their buſineſs; and am ſurpriſed to ſee how powerful an inducement this is, to them who have not a better. But I believe love would ſupport me through more, and with more alacrity, than their plodding motive. When I am wearied, or perplexed, with any affair, I have only to reflect that I am employed upon your account, and that I may look for my reward from you, when I have done my work, or rather, that you rewarded me before I undertook it, and all difficulties preſently diſappear.

SINCE

Shebar, 31 October.

SINCE my laſt, I have been a week on ſhore, and three or four days indiſpoſed; but am now, I thank God, quite recovered. Your letter of the 12th July came very ſeaſonably, to comfort me in my illneſs. When you aſſure me that you are eaſy, I ſeem to have nothing to make me otherwiſe.

I have been ſitting very gravely with my pen in my hand for ſome minutes, waiting for a thought to begin with; but with ſo little ſucceſs, that, were it not to you, I ſhould lay the paper aſide, till I was in a better cue. But to you ſomething muſt be ſaid. I have rung ſo many changes upon love and gratitude, upon the pains of ſeparation, and the overbalancing pleaſures of meeting, that though I cannot be weary of the ſubjects, I begin to be weary of my way of treating them. But then, where ſhall I find other ſubjects worthy either of your attention or my own?

Were I to muſter up my learning, and tell you what Plato or Cicero ſaid, and upon what occaſion they ſaid it, I ſhould think the paper might have been filled more acceptably to *you*, by a ſpeech of my own. Were I to ſend you a ſample of philoſophy, you might juſtly ſay, This is but a cold buſineſs. Shall I then try to be witty? Alas! one tender thought, one ſigh that terminates in your dear name, would ſpoil my conceit. I can think but of one ſubject more, and that perhaps I have, already, overdone likewiſe, unleſs I could do it better. But perform well or ill, you have little to expect from me but either love letters, or ſermons. In all other topics, I feel a vanity and unimportance which diſguſts me, when I am writing to you. But I cannot be ſoon weary of reminding you and myſelf, of our obligations to the author of all good, for our diſtinguiſhed lot. May a grateful ſenſe of his mercies be mutual! May it engage us in ſuch a courſe, that death itſelf may not ſeparate

parate us long, but that we may have a well grounded hope of meeting in a ſtate, when the recollection of our higheſt endearments while here, which are ſurely the higheſt pleaſure this world can afford, ſhall, by our own confeſſion, be but a ſmall thing, compared with the abounding joys to which we ſhall then be admitted. And when we may have reaſon, through eternal ages, to bleſs the divine providential hand, that firſt brought us together.

10 *November.*

I HAVE been walking the deck very pleaſantly. It is my watch, for the ſhip is under ſail. Theſe ſilent night hours, when the weather is fair, are, to me, the moſt agreeable part of the voyage: for in the day time, the heat of the ſun, the ſmoke of the furnace, and the hurry of trade, are a little troubleſome; I mean they would be ſo, did not the thoughts of you interpoſe to enliven

enliven the ſcene. But when the ſun is ſet, the fires out, and all, but the Watch, are aſleep, I can enjoy myſelf without diſturbance. I have a ſet of favourite themes to muſe upon, which are always at hand, and cannot be eaſily exhauſted. Sometimes, I ruminate upon what is paſt, at others, anticipate what I hope is to come. And ſometimes, I look round me, and reflect how God has been pleaſed to diſtinguiſh me, in his providence, not only from the crowds, whoſe miſeries and ſufferings are obvious, but even from the moſt of thoſe who ſuppoſe themſelves, and would perſuade others, that they are happy. But ſo ſcanty are the general notions of earthly happineſs, compared with mine, that I doubt not, there are thouſands in poſſeſſion of great outward advantages, who yet, in their brighteſt intervals, never felt half of the ſatisfaction, which at this moment warms my heart; though now it is a time of trial and exerciſe with me, being removed, a third of the globe, from the only

treaſure I have, or wiſh for, upon the ſurface of it.

It is now a twelvemonth ſince we met, after the long abſence of my laſt voyage. The recollection of that hour, gives me a pleaſure, which neither time, nor diſtance can impair. And when I reflect, that I may hope, by the bleſſing of God, to be favoured with ſuch another, I can ſmile at all the little incidental difficulties, that may ſtand between us. Not that I have reaſon to think ſo highly of that one particular day; it has only the merit of being an introduction to the many which followed. For when I am with you, I know little difference of days, except between the firſt, and the laſt. Theſe are very different indeed!

Cape Mount, 20 November.

It has been out of my power to write of late. A part of the time, I was on ſhore, and the reſt, indiſpenſably engaged.

gaged. But my prayers, and warmeſt affection for you, have found a place in every waking hour. I have made no great progreſs in trade as yet, but as I am in good health, and mercifully preſerved from heavy troubles, I am content and thankful; and doubt not of doing well at laſt, by the bleſſing of him, who has been with me hitherto. Were I maſter of the whole coaſt of Africa, I would part with it, to procure you the ſame ground, and degree of peace, which I poſſeſs myſelf; and I am willing to hope, that you are, by this time, not far, if at all behind me: for if you ſeek it in the path I recommended to you, I am as ſure you will find it, as I am that it is to be found no where elſe. Were I to confine my thoughts to the dark ſide of human life, and reckon up, not only the evils attendant on my preſent ſituation, but the numberleſs calamities to which the ſmootheſt ſtate, on this ſide the grave, is expoſed, I ſhould be always in fear, both for you and for myſelf. But when I conſider

that the Moſt High is on our ſide, that he is all-ſufficient—that we have already had innumerable proofs of his goodneſs to us—and that his promiſe runs, To him that hath ſhall be given—then every diſagreeable proſpect vaniſhes.

Mana, 1 December.

THIS day has been devoted to ſerious thoughts. I have had Mr. T— on board with me a month; which, in one reſpect, was no ſmall inconvenience, by breaking in upon my uſual times of retirement. As I expected this would be a day of leiſure, I reſolved laſt night, to dedicate it to Him, to whom I owe my all. I find, by repeated experience, that it is impoſſible to ſerve him for nought. I who was, yeſterday, fluctuating and unſettled, am now, compoſed and happy. It is a pleaſure to me, that, in conſiſtence with my plan, I can let you have your hour too; and write a letter

a letter which you will accept, in a religious ſtrain.

I ſpent the forenoon chiefly in a review of the various mercies I have received, the long liſt of my deliverances, enjoyments, and comforts.—The afternoon was employed in making known my requeſts, and ſubmitting my views, deſigns, and hopes, to the diſpoſal of my heavenly Father, whoſe wiſdom and goodneſs are, I truſt, engaged for me. In theſe exerciſes, Oh! how I remember you! My firſt acknowledgments are, for your love, and that you are mine, when I attempt to enumerate the bleſſings pertaining to this life; and my firſt deſire is, for a heart to value them. My prayers for you are, for your health, peace, and ſatisfaction, while we are ſeparated, and for our happy meeting; but above all, for your progreſs in religion, and that you may have a proſpect of happineſs, independent of all earthly comforts, and ſuperior to them. So diſintereſted is my love, that I often earneſtly pray you may,

by grace, be prevented from making too much account of any thing on this ſide the grave, not excepting myſelf. For though I value your affection beyond crowns and empires, I tremble at the thought of being over-regarded, or that you ſhould wholly reſt your peace, upon ſuch a wretched, feeble prop, as I am. A love with all our heart, and mind, and ſoul, and ſtrength, (ſuch, I fear, ours has too much been to each other) can be only due to our maker and great benefactor. I mention this, becauſe I have found it hard to diſtinguiſh in this matter. A long time it was, before I durſt appeal to my conſcience, that I did not behold you with a regard, which belongs only to God. And even to this day, I fear my heart deceives me. But I am endeavouring to avoid this error; no leſs for your ſake than for my own; leſt I ſhould provoke him to wound me in the moſt ſenſible part, and to afflict you, for my puniſhment.

I hope you will not miſunderſtand me,

as

as if I thought I loved you, or could love you, too much (that one neceſſary exception only excepted). You may be aſſured that my love (eſpecially when thus limited) is incapable of change, and always upon the increaſe. Whatever may be expected on my ſide, from a temper naturally ſuſceptive of tenderneſs, and from the many inexpreſſible endearments and obligations I have received from you, none of which are loſt or forgotten by me, I feel at this moment, and truſt I ſhall always feel, while I can ſubſcribe myſelf,

Yours, &c.

Cape Mount, 25 December.

I NOW ſit down to wiſh you a happy Chriſtmas; a merry one, is a frequent phraſe, but that falls far ſhort of my deſire. For I have often found mirth and happineſs, to be two very different things; and that either of them, when prevalent in a

great degree, is inconſiſtent with the other. My heart is warm with the recollection of many endeared hours paſſed with you, when my happineſs has been, for the time, complete, and yet I have not then felt the leaſt inclination to be merry; and I have often been forced into a laugh, when I have not been pleaſed.

This has been a ſerious day with me, and, after what I have written already, I need not attempt to ſay, how much you have been concerned in it. It grieves me to think, that this is uſually a ſeaſon of feſtivity and diſſipation. Surely they, who think proper to notice it at all, ſhould ſhew their attention in a different manner. If we are really chriſtians, and do indeed believe the tenor of the ſcriptures, with what ſerious thankfulneſs, and joyful compoſure, ought we to commemorate the coming of a Saviour into the world? If the little good offices, we perform to each other, demand a grateful return, what do we owe to him, who of his own free mo-

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tion and goodneſs humbled himſelf ſo far, and ſuffered ſo much, to redeem us from extreme, and endleſs miſery? Oh! my deareſt M. it is a moſt certain truth, that if he had not pitied us, we muſt have been for ever wretched. And if we continue to neglect him now, our miſery will be aggravated, by the refuſal of the ſure, and only mean of relief. And however a round and ſeries of what the world miſcals pleaſure, may ſtifle uneaſy thoughts for a time, they will at length awake, to the confuſion of all who deſpiſe this mercy, and die impenitent. My ſubject has almoſt made me forget I am writing to you. For, bleſſed be God, I hope we are not like them. I truſt we both deſire to be wiſe in time, and to apply, to the giver of all grace, for that ſufficiency, which of ourſelves we cannot attain. And if we aſk, we undoubtedly ſhall ſucceed. This hope fills my mouth with praiſe, ſince I now ſee a plain and ſecure path, to eternal happineſs, not for myſelf only, but for you likewiſe, whoſe wel-

ſare, if I miſtake not, is little leſs dear to me, than that of my own ſoul. I find, as Solomon ſays, that love is ſtronger than death: for my regard for you, often leads my views beyond the grave, and alleviates the thought, that we muſt ſooner or later be ſeparated here, with the proſpect of being joined hereafter, upon much preferable terms; where our love will be refined and ennobled, and the conſciouſneſs of our being mutually and for ever happy, will fill us with a joy of which we have no preſent conception; and yet, perhaps, this joy, will be among the leaſt, in that happy ſtate.

1753.

Mana, 12 January.

WERE it not for the late alteration of the ſtile, this would be new-year's day. It is with a pleaſing kind of regret I remember how happily I began the laſt year, and

and how happy I continued for juſt ſix months afterwards. The latter half of the year has been of a different colour; for tho' I have, even now, much to be thankful for, I am abſent from you. A ſea-faring life has its peculiar trials, and difficulties, and the Guinea trade perhaps has more than any other. But if I muſt be detained from you for a ſeaſon, I am as well here, as elſewhere; for to live without you, conſtitutes the very eſſence of Guinea to me, ſo far as the word expreſſes a diſagreeable ſituation; and I hope and believe, I ſhould find myſelf as much at a loſs, and ſigh as often for ſomething better, if I lived in the palace of Verſailles, and could call it my own, unleſs you were with me. But when I direct my thoughts forward, to the proſpect of being reſtored to you again, the ſcene changes at once, and I ſeem to be at Verſailles already.

It may be ſaid, that my hopes are precarious, and may be diſappointed. But here, Religion comes to my aid, and tells me,

that my beſt intereſt, though apparently contingent, is in effect firm as a rock; being ſupported by him, whoſe wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, are infinite; who cannot but be preſent with me in all difficulties and dangers; who knows our weakneſſes and our wants, and has promiſed to relieve and ſupply them. My own experience has convinced me a thouſand times, that his promiſe is ſure. Here is my refuge and comfort. Every other expedient would fail me in ſome tender hours, when I think of home; but in the truſt I have juſt mentioned, I find repoſe, when, ſeemingly, moſt deſtitute and forlorn. My prayers are frequent, that you, like me, may always derive comfort, from the ſame conſiderations.

Mana, 26 January.

THOUGH to be abſent from you, is the chief part of my trial, it is not the whole. In this unhappy country, I am in the

the midſt of ſcenes, not only inferior, but oppoſite, to thoſe which are inſeparable from your company. But from being much among a people, who are ſo far from poſſeſſing ſuch mercies, as I am favoured with, that they are unable to form a conception of them, I may learn a leſſon of gratitude; ſince the leaſt pleaſing part of my life is ſuch, as ſtill to leave me room to pity millions of my fellow creatures. The three greateſt bleſſings of which human nature is capable, are, undoubtedly, Religion, Liberty, and Love. In each of theſe, how highly has God diſtinguiſhed me! But here are whole nations around me, whoſe languages are entirely different from each other, yet I believe they all agree in this, that they have no words among them, expreſſive of theſe engaging ideas: from whence I infer, that the ideas themſelves, have no place in their minds. And as there is no medium between light and darkneſs, theſe poor creatures are not only ſtrangers to the advantages which I enjoy, but are

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plunged in all the contrary evils. Inſtead of the preſent bleſſings, and bright future proſpects of Chriſtianity, they are deceived and haraſſed, by necromancy, magic, and all the train of ſuperſtitions, that fear, combined with ignorance, can produce in the human mind. The only liberty of which they have any notion, is an exemption from being ſold; and even from this, very few are perfectly ſecure, that it ſhall not, ſome time or other, be their lot: for it often happens, that the man, who ſells another, on board a ſhip, is himſelf bought and ſold, in the ſame manner, and perhaps in the ſame veſſel, before the week is ended*. As for love, there may be ſome ſofter

* The reader may perhaps wonder, as I now do myſelf, that, knowing the ſtate of this vile traffic to be as I have here deſcribed, and abounding with enormities which I have not mentioned, I did not, at the time, ſtart with horror at my own employment, as an agent in promoting it. Cuſtom, example, and intereſt, had blinded my eyes. I did it ignorantly; for I am ſure, had I thought of the ſlave trade then, as I have thought of it ſince, no conſiderations would have induced

ſofter ſouls among them, than I have met with, but for the moſt part, when I have tried to explain this delightful word, I

induced me to continue in it. Though my religious views were not very clear, my conſcience was very tender, and I durſt not have diſpleaſed God, by acting againſt the light of my mind. Indeed a ſlave-ſhip, while upon the coaſt, is expoſed to ſuch innumerable and continual dangers, that I was often then, and ſtill am, aſtoniſhed that any one, much more ſo many, ſhould leave the coaſt in ſafety. I was then favoured with an uncommon degree of dependance upon the providence of God, which ſupported me; but this confidence muſt have failed in a moment, and I ſhould have been overwhelmed with diſtreſs and terror, if I had known, or even ſuſpected, that I was acting wrong. I felt the diſagreeableneſs of the buſineſs very ſtrongly. The office of a gaoler, and the reſtraints under which I was forced to keep my priſoners, were not ſuitable to my feelings; but I conſidered it as the line of life which God, in his providence, had allotted me; and as a croſs which I ought to bear with patience and thankfulneſs, till he ſhould be pleaſed to deliver me from it. Till then, I only thought myſelf bound to treat the ſlaves under my care with gentleneſs, and to conſult their eaſe and convenience, as far as was conſiſtent with the ſafety of the whole family, of whites and blacks, on board my ſhip.

have ſeldom been in the leaſt underſtood; and when I have ſpoken of its effects, I have never been believed. To tell them of the inexpreſſible, and peculiar attraction, between kindred minds; the pains of abſence, the pleaſures of a re-meeting (if I may make a word,) and all the other endearments, (were it lawful, or poſſible to name them,) which I owe to you, would be labour loſt; like deſcribing the rainbow, to a man born blind. What needs all this ado, they have ſaid, will not one woman cut wood and fetch water, as well as another? Their paſſions are ſtrong, but few, indeed, have any notion of what I mean by tenderneſs. While I am writing, many paſt circumſtances occur to my memory, and my heart ſwells at the odious compariſon I have unawares made.

I have heard England ſtiled the paradiſe of women, but ſurely, in this reſpect, it is no leſs the paradiſe of men likewiſe; for there, perhaps, they beſt underſtand the

means

means of their own happineſs, and of how much importance it is, to form a right judgment of the dignity and value of your ſex; which, whoever attains, thereby indicates, that he poſſeſſes ſome degree of dignity in himſelf. In ſaying this, to be ſure, I ſound my own praiſe, but you will excuſe me.

Shebar, 5 March.

It is often remarked, that advice is more eaſily given, than followed. I have of late, and perhaps, ſometimes too officiouſly, taken occaſion to preſcribe patience, when I have ſeen people uneaſy under a ſenſe of what we call diſappointments, and want of ſucceſs. Providence ſeems at length to put me to the trial, how far the arguments I have uſed with others, will have influence upon myſelf. I have been now near ſeven months upon the coaſt, and am yet unable to judge, when I ſhall probably leave it,

and

and muſt expect to make a loſing voyage, at laſt. (I ſhould not write ſo frankly, but that I hope to be in a better place, and upon a greater certainty, before I ſend my letter home.) But I am willing to give you my preſent thoughts, that you may judge, once for all, how I am ſupported, when things do not anſwer my wiſhes.

The intereſt of my employers, and my long confinement from you, are two points, to which I cannot be indifferent. I hope, I never ſhall, for then I muſt be ungrateful or inſenſible, either of which, appears more terrible to me, than any outward evils. But then my concern ought to be no more than is neceſſary, to excite me to make the moſt of what lies before me. As I cannot charge myſelf with neglect, or any conſiderable falſe ſtep, though I am ſorry to be the occaſion of loſs to my friends, the thought ſhould not break my peace, if I am conſcious of having done my beſt.

As to what concerns myſelf; how far two unſucceſsful voyages may affect my intereſt,

intereſt, or diminiſh my expected profits, I am tolerably eaſy. I have placed my dependance higher; I conſider my friends and employers, as inſtruments in the hand of God, for my good. He can continue them to me, or raiſe me up better, with equal eaſe. As to money, you know my thoughts of it. In itſelf, and as an end, it is of no value; but of uſe, as a mean of procuring the conveniencies of life; and therefore I am willing to embrace any honourable terms, for procuring a competency: but ſtill, without ſolicitude. I have enough for the preſent; and the promiſe of God, warrants me to hope for what he ſees needful for me, in time to come.

In this manner, I reaſon againſt my firſt grievance, which is neither ſo preſſing, nor ſo conſtantly upon my mind, as the other, my long ſeparation from you. Money matters affect me but occaſionally, and I can relieve myſelf by employments or amuſements; but your idea is before me at all times, and in all places. You are

with

with me in retirement, and go with me into company: neither buſineſs nor relaxation, neither hurry nor indolence, can hide you from my thoughts. Every thing I ſee, equally reminds me, that you are abſent; and now the ſeaſon is drawing near when we hoped to meet; and yet, to be ſtill deferred. —— However, againſt this uneaſineſs, I have ſome remedies, which never wholly fail me.—I have often repeated them to you: I think of your love, and that I am here for your ſake.—I recollect the paſt, I anticipate the future, and am ſatisfied. I conſider likewiſe, the benefits I am favoured with, even now; my health, my preſervation and protection, while ſurrounded with impending dangers, whether on ſhip-board, or on ſhore; and when I join to theſe, the thought of my own unworthineſs, and ſmall improvement of my mercies; and my blindneſs, and inability to chooſe (was it even permitted me) what is really beſt, upon the whole, for myſelf, or for you, I have not a word

to

to ſay. Inſtead of complaining, I ought to abound in praiſe. My chief trouble is from a fear, leſt you ſhould not have the ſame reſignation to the will of God. Excuſe this doubt, my deareſt, I know your temper is tender and apprehenſive; and I know (and I am not ungrateful) that you feel much for me. Though I value your love more than a thouſand kingdoms, I could almoſt wiſh to poſſeſs it, in a degree more conſiſtent with your quiet. It is well the paper is full, that I can add no more, or perhaps I might contradict myſelf upon the ſpot, for my laſt aſſertion. How could I bear that you ſhould love me leſs than you do!

Sierra Leon, 23 March.

Sometimes in travelling, when I have met with two or three different roads, and have not been ſure which was the right, I have deliberated a little, and then gravely taken the wrong. So it often happens

happens in my writing to you. When I beat the buſh of my brains for a ſubject, I ſtart ſo many, that I know not which to follow; and at laſt perhaps chooſe that, which I am the leaſt able to manage. I have been ſitting in a wiſe ſuſpenſe, whether I ſhould try to divert, or adviſe, or thank you. I am awkward at the firſt, the ſecond, if needful (for I would not pay you a falſe compliment) is difficult for me to perform rightly, and the third, I have almoſt worn threadbare, though I have never expreſſed the half of my meaning. Then for other things, one day here, is ſo like another, that there hardly ariſes a new incident in a month; which, by the bye, demands my acknowledgment, for life is uſually chequered with many events, which when well managed by an impatient temper, may furniſh whole ſheets, yea quires of complaints. And as nothing extraordinary occurs in my own hiſtory, neither do I hear of any thing very intereſting among the natives—politics or ſcandal

have

have little place in this country:—Under theſe cirumſtances I am hard put to it to write any thing, and this difficulty I have made ſo often, not only an excuſe but a ſubject, that I am tired of that likewiſe. But as when a man is thoroughly hungry, he will eat, what would once have ſeemed hard fare, ſo rather than forego the pleaſure of writing to you, I make ſhift with any thing, that will ſerve to fill up the paper.

Bence Iſland, 30 March.

I AM now at the factory, in the river of Sierra Leon. We are at length preparing for ſea, and I hope to find all in readineſs when I return from Sherbro, where I purpoſe going to-morrow, in the long boat, to finiſh my buſineſs in that river, and hope to be back in about a fortnight. Therefore, as it will be ſome time before I can write to you, I would not omit to-night, though we are very buſy. I hope this will be the laſt cruize I ſhall make

this

this voyage. I have had ſo many, that I ſhould be almoſt weary, did I not conſider that your intereſt leads me, and that your love will, I hope, in due time, pay me for my trouble.

Bence Iſland, 10 *April.*

By the mercy of God I am returned, ſafe and well, from my voyage in the long boat, without meeting any harm, though not without ſome fatigue; but that is always welcome for your ſake. No one here can gueſs by my looks, or behaviour, how much of my heart is in another quarter of the world. In ſhort, you would not yourſelf deſire, that I ſhould bear you abſence better than I do; yea I fear, if you could ſee me, you would ſuſpect me of indifference. But I ſhould beg you to take my word, rather than judge by appearances. I hope to be, in a few days, on my way to the Weſt Indies, whither my thoughts have often gone before me, in expectation

of

of finding letters from you, which, next to your company, is the greateſt pleaſure I can think of. Let thoſe be pleaſed with letters-patent, who can be ſatisfied with honours and riches: if I do not abſolutely deſpiſe theſe things, I can pronounce them trifles, when compared with the ſatisfactions of mutual love, which ſo far reſemble the joys of a good conſcience, that nothing adventitious, can either give them, or take them away. They who poſſeſs an affluence of all other temporal good, if devoid of this generous tenderneſs, are, in my view, objects of pity.—I ſpeak, as St. Paul ſays, after the manner of men, for notwithſtanding all my encomiums upon love, I hold it to be very dangerous, and indeed deſtructive, unleſs regulated, and governed by a due ſenſe of religion.

Bence Iſland, 19 April.

I HAVE been very happy this evening, in a ſolitary ramble round this iſland. I ſtudiouſly avoided all company, and choſe a retired walk, where I could vent my thoughts aloud, without fear of being overheard. The night was perfectly fine, and ſerene, and I was favoured with a frame of mind, that I cannot always command. The ſhip was in ſight at a ſmall diſtance, which gave the firſt turn to my meditations. My thoughts went back to the time, when I firſt ſaw her upon the ſtocks, in the builder's yard; and from thence led me to review the different ſcenes in which I have been engaged, ſince I left Liverpool; which furniſhed me with ſo many inſtances of a kind, preſerving Providence, that I was, in a remarkable manner, emboldened, and encouraged, to recommend the reſt of the voyage, to the ſame gracious protection. May I never forget this night! I could not

not be long in the exerciſe of prayer and praiſe, without intereſting you largely in it; and I think, I never prayed more earneſtly for myſelf, than I have to-night for you. I am now, quite eaſy and compoſed, which is the neareſt approach to happineſs, that I deſire in this world, when I am not with *you*.

Plantanes, 25 April.

ACCEPT this letter as a proof, that in the midſt of company and buſineſs, I am ſtill thinking of you. I write, and talk, and trade, at the ſame time. I am now to inform you, that I am juſt finiſhing; and hope to ſail this night, or to-morrow morning, for St. Chriſtopher's. I completed eight months upon the coaſt, yeſterday; in which time, I have ſeen a variety of ſcenes, and have often been upon the brink of apparent danger, but am preſerved in health, and ſafety, hitherto. If I call my long ſtay, a diſappointment, I

would remember, that former diſappointments, by the over-ruling providence and goodneſs of God, have proved, in the event, to my advantage; and I truſt it will be ſo ſtill. Thus I often preach to you, and you will not wonder, that having your peace of mind more at heart, than any thing that can be named, I ſhould be frequently inculcating, what I believe, yea what I am very ſure, will be moſt conducive to it. If you could form a judgment of the numberleſs eſcapes and deliverances I met with, laſt voyage, I think you would never fear for me again. I have now a better ſhip, and ſhip's company, and am better provided than then. I leave this, with a large pacquet encloſed, to go by a veſſel which is expected to ſail in about three weeks, directly for England; and will probably arrive there, before you can hear of me from the Weſt Indies.

At Sea, 4 May.

If I can contrive any thing to ſay, I hope now, to be more regular in my correſpondence; for I have left the greater part of the cares and troubles, which uſed to divide my thoughts and time, behind me in Africa. I am now about three hundred miles on my way to St. Kitt's, and hope to get the trade wind ſoon, which will be fair for the reſt of the paſſage.

I lately encloſed you four ſheets, which bring the hiſtory of my voyage down to the 12th February. I have ſent you twelve in all, by different conveyances, beſides their covers, which were not blank paper. For all this, I charge your account, as the merchants ſay; or rather I acknowledge myſelf ſtill your debtor, for the favourable reception I know they will find, and which they are no farther entitled to, than as proofs of an inclination to pleaſe. If there is merit in that, I ſhall

not affect ſo much modeſty, as to diſclaim it; for it is the buſineſs, and glory, of my life, to endeavour to act up to thoſe profeſſions, which firſt induced you to confide in me. My mind runs ſo much upon the wiſhed-for pleaſure of letters from you, when I arrive at St. Kitt's, that I often dream I have them in my hand, and when awake, am often dictating for you; and by reading thoſe I have already received, I can make ſhrewd gueſſes, how kind and good you will appear, in thoſe which are yet to come. But when I have done my beſt, I perſuade myſelf that I ſhall find, as I have uſually done in all relating to you, that my expectations will not only be anſwered, but exceeded.

At Sea, 7 May.

I WAS ſenſibly diſappointed, in miſſing the letter you mention obliging me with, by a ſhip from London. I ſhould have found,

found, in that, ſome particulars of your long journey. How gladly would I have prevented you the inconvenience of that long and lonely journey, if performing it for you myſelf on foot, could have done it. As it was, I could only attend you with my thoughts, and prayers. How much am I indebted to the divine goodneſs, for reſtoring you home in ſafety and peace! The mention of footing it, reminds me of my ſolitary walk to Liverpool, in the year 48. Solitary indeed it was then; but could I have known, that the time was coming, when you would accompany me on the ſame road, I ſhould have thought it pleaſant, in defiance of heat, duſt, and fatigue. But my only buſineſs at London, which was with you, I left unfiniſhed: I was ſhort of money, deſtitute of friends, without proſpect of a livelihood for myſelf, and ſtill more, of having it in my power, to make propoſals to you; and therefore, had nothing to cheer me. When I recollect theſe dark ſeaſons, I can-

not but pauſe, to wonder at the goodneſs of God, who was even then leading me, though I neither knew him, nor the way by which I went. How wonderfully was every obſtacle to our union removed; and how happy has that event been (I hope I may ſay) to us both. I might have proved a wretch, inſenſible and ungrateful, when I had gained my point. Such, I ſee, is the folly, and inconſtancy of many. But my ſatisfaction has been ſtill upon the increaſe; and, ſo far as happineſs is attainable here, I think I have known it, and with as few drawbacks, for the time, as any perſon living.

At Sea, 18 May.

We are now about half-way to St. Chriſtopher's from Guinea, in point of diſtance, and I hope nearer in reſpect of time, as we are in the trade wind, which blows moſt of the year from the eaſtern quarter.

Though

Though I count the days, and hours, I am from you, my time does not hang heavy upon my hands: a part of it is employed, twice or thrice a day, in praying for you; a part of it in reading, and ſtudying the bible. The reſt of my leiſure is divided between reading, writing, and the mathematics, as my inclination leads. I paſs my verdict upon the actions of Cæſar, Pompey, and twenty other hot-headed heroes of antiquity; and when I reflect upon their mighty deſigns, their fatigues and riſks, and at laſt their diſappointments, even when they attained the deſired object; I aſk myſelf, ſometimes with a ſmile, What trifles are theſe compared with love? Sometimes with a ſigh, What trifles are theſe compared with eternity? The latter queſtion brings my cenſure home to myſelf; and forces me to confeſs, that the greater part of my own ſchemes and proſpects, are no leſs vanities, than thoſe which I pity in others. I am pleaſed with the mathematics, becauſe there is truth, and certainty in

them, which are ſeldom found in other branches of learning. Yet even in theſe, I am diſcouraged; for the more I advance, the more clearly I perceive, that the greateſt human knowledge, amounts but to a more pompous proof of our ignorance, by ſhewing us how little we know of any thing, and how many inquiries may be ſtarted, concerning which, we can know nothing. Then again, what we *can* attain, requires ſo much time and pains, that it ſcarcely quits coſt; eſpecially, as it ſeems needleſs to toil for knowledge, in this world, under ſo many diſadvantages, when, poſſibly, before I have been an hour within the vail, I ſhall know more, intuitively, than my name-ſake, Sir Iſaac, had ever a glimpſe of. However, I ſtill jog on in this road, partly, to keep me from idleneſs, which is the ſource either of ſin, or diſquiet; and partly, becauſe I conſider every little improvement I can make, to be valuable, ſo far as it may enable me to appear to more advantage, in the character of your huſband.

I EXPECT

At Sea, 28 May.

I EXPECT that we are now, within three or four days ſail of our port. Thus far we have croſſed the ocean again, without trouble or harm.

I hope you will derive encouragement and thankfulneſs by recollecting, from what you may have heard or ſeen, how many perſons in my way of life, have parted from their families and affections, ſince I left you, and with no leſs pleaſing proſpects and probabilities; who, before this time, have been cut off from the hope of a return. One inſtance I ſhall mention, becauſe I think you know the man: Mr. ——, who ſailed, chief-mate of the Adlington. He had a conſtitution likely to wear many years, a good character and intereſt, and a wife and family. He had been maſter of a ſhip in ſome home trade, but choſe to go as mate, to Guinea, one voyage, to introduce himſelf into this line

of buſineſs. His views would probably have been anſwered, if he had lived. But he was killed, in an inſurrection of the ſlaves, before he had been two months upon the coaſt.

If this ſtory, and many more of the ſame kind, which the common newſ-papers will furniſh, ſhould increaſe your fears for me, I ſhall be ſorry; and muſt ſay, The fault will be in yourſelf. I am ſtill ſafe, though I was liable to the ſame danger. My ſlaves likewiſe were, for a time, diſpoſed to be very troubleſome; but I was always providentially favoured, with a timely intimation of their deſigns; ſo that they never proceeded to open diſturbance; and for ſeveral months paſt, they have been as quiet and tractable, as children. Having had ſo many repeated proofs of a gracious, and always preſent, Protector, I think it would be not only folly, but ingratitude and ſin, to diſtruſt him now. So that even with regard to yourſelf, though you are unſpeakably the

deareſt bleſſing, and comfort of my life, for whoſe ſake chiefly it is, that all other advantages appear deſirable; and though I have no information of your welfare, later than of nine months date, yet I cannot ſay that I am uneaſy. While I hear nothing to the contrary, I ſhall truſt, pray, and believe, that the Lord ſtill preſerves you, in mercy to us both, and will, in good time, bring us happily together again.

St. Chriſtopher's, 3 June.

We arrived here in ſafety laſt night. I can ſay little more, as I expect to be called on for my letter, every minute; and I would not miſs the opportunity, if I could only ſend a ſingle line. I feel enough in my own diſappointment, to oblige me to be punctual. I promiſed myſelf many letters from you, upon my arrival here: judge then (if you can) how much I am chagrined, not to find even one. I am ſure

it

it is not owing to any neglect of yours; and though I have not heard from you ſo long, I am not quite uneaſy. I have committed you into the hands of God, whoſe goodneſs abounds to me daily. On him I depend, and endeavour to think, No news is good news.

Sandy Point, St. Kitt's, 8 June.

I INFORMED you the 3d of my arrival, but was then, too buſy to enlarge. I have, now, leiſure enough, but muſt confeſs I write with a heavy heart. I cannot account for having no letters from you, after ſo many months, if you are well.——But I endeavour to compoſe myſelf, by a ſubmiſſive dependance upon the providence of God, to whom I have ſo often, and ſo earneſtly, commended you. For my peace ſake, I try to ſuppoſe that the letters I ſo longed for, have, by ſome means, miſcarried. I will endeavour not to mention this ſubject any more, but I cannot promiſe to forget

forget it. In every other point, I have all poſſible ſatisfaction. Moſt of the cargo is ſold, and at a good price. I hope the loſs upon the voyage will prove inconſiderable, and I believe my own intereſt in it, will be better than in the former. I was going to add, as uſual, that I expect my beſt reward from you, but this thought gave riſe to another, which drew from me a heart-felt ſigh. But I remember my promiſe. I have ſent a boat up to Antigua, upon the peradventure, that your letters may have been lodged for me there. I know a ſeparation muſt at ſome time take place, but I hope, and pray, it may be deferred till we have more ſtrength to bear it. A perfect acquieſcence in the will of God, could we attain it, would be worth more than mountains of gold, and ſilver. I know, as I have often ſaid, that our concerns are under the beſt and kindeſt management. I know who brought us together, and has bleſt us with a mutual affection; for want of which, marriage is a clog and burden to thouſands.

And

And he knows our paſſions, and our weakneſs; and, unleſs we over-rate the comforts he beſtows, will never deprive us of them, but with a deſign of giving us ſomething ſtill better, in their room.

Sandy-Point, 12 June.

I HAVE ſent away all my ſpare ſheets, and ſhall take care to be conſtantly provided with ſomething, for every opportunity. But to what purpoſe do I write, when perhaps my dear M. may be paſt the power of reading? Indeed I find it a heavy taſk now, to what it uſed to be. But ſince I am not quite without hope of your welfare, (which is the very beſt I can ſay) I muſt write on, leſt I ſhould ſubject you to an anxiety, like that which I now feel. I am forced to aſſume an air of cheerfulneſs in company, but maugre all my precautions, I often diſcover myſelf to be an hypocrite,

hypocrite, by my involuntary ſighs: and at night I dream, I know not what.—

Yet when you read this, do not think I was unhappy when I wrote it. My hopes, for the moſt part, prevail; and I conſider, even now, that if we meet happily at laſt, I ſhall ſoon be overpaid for all my care. Under ſuch a diſappointment as this, it is neceſſary, either that I ſhould not be quite eaſy, or that I ſhould love you leſs than I do. You will allow the former evil to be a mere triſle, compared with the other.

I have informed my owners, that I cannot undertake to do any thing upon the Windward coaſt next ſeaſon, the trade is ſo overdone. If they will ſend me, I am ready to go, but I will not be blamed in caſe of ill-ſucceſs, for not honeſtly giving my opinion. If they take my advice, perhaps they may ſend me to ſome other part of the coaſt, or to ſome other part of the world. I am indifferent as to the how, or where, provided I may be permitted ſometimes to tell you, it is all for your ſake; and

and to hear you ſay, that you accept it ſo.

Sandy-Point, 21 June.

I HAVE ſent you ſeveral letters and pacquets ſince my arrival. I cannot now complain as formerly, for want of a ſubject. I have one with which I could fill many ſheets, but have promiſed not to touch upon it, if I can help it. So that I am at preſent under a double difficulty: It is equally hard for me, to write what would entertain you, or to refrain from what I know would grieve you. Well, I muſt ſubmit. My happineſs with you is ſuch, that all incidental pains, and uneaſineſſes, ſeem mere trifles, when either paſt or to come, however hard to bear when preſent. My pleaſures, on the contrary, whether at the time, in recollection, or in proſpect, always afford me conſolation. Thus though there is, ſtrictly ſpeaking, more evil than good in life, yet Providence ſo orders it,

or

or at leaſt ſo orders my ſhare, that I find a little of the real good, overbalances a great deal of the evil. My fears and uncertainties upon your account, are much preferable to my being a mercenary wretch, incapable of valuing you, as I ought. When I conſider how many I ſee, who are blind to the merit of their wives, becauſe they are ſecure of them, I learn how much I owe to the Lord, for bleſſing me with the knowledge of my true intereſt, and a mind ſuſceptive of tenderneſs and ſenſibility.

I believe, I was rather ſparing of my promiſes, in the time of courtſhip; at leaſt I engaged for no more than is uſual on ſuch occaſions; but it has been my happineſs ſince, to endeavour to act fully up to what I had ſaid. And I now ſee, by the conduct of many who treat ſuch things as matters of courſe, how nearly my duty and my pleaſure were united, and how miſerable I muſt have been, if capable of wronging the confidence you placed in me. I ſee that thoſe who cannot find their ſatiſ-

factions

factions *at home*, ſeek them in vain *abroad*. And thus I underſtand the literal meaning of the word *Diverſions*; which are only, or chiefly, agreeable to thoſe, who wiſh to turn their thoughts from their own ſituation. What numbers are there, who frequent the theatres, aſſemblies, balls, and all the various ſcenes of diſſipation, without being really pleaſed for one half hour, either with themſelves, or with any body, or thing, around them. They languiſh continually for a change, and rather than continue in the ſame purſuit, are willing to change for the worſe.

A letter from Liverpool, dated 5 April, informs me of the death of our friend Mrs. M—. What a ſtriking leſſon! A beautiful woman, in the bloom of youth, with gay hopes and proſpects, cut off in the firſt year of marriage! As you mentioned her being with child, I think it probable that ſhe died in child-bed. Alas! the vanity of this world and all its enjoyments! How little do we know what to wiſh for! I hope

hope I ſhall always be contented and pleaſed, if it ſhould pleaſe God that you never have to encounter that terrible riſk. How could I bear to conſider myſelf as the immediate, though innocent, cauſe of your death! I own that children, from the conſideration of their being yours, would be highly acceptable to me, if it were ſo appointed; but I hope, I ſhall never be ſo mad as to wiſh for them, for fear the conſequence ſhould ruin me. I know I am already happy without them.

Sandy Point, 23 June.

My letters were ſealed, and juſt going away, but I gladly break open yours, to tell you, that the boat which I ſent to Antigua, has brought me (Oh how kind and careful is my dear) ſix letters from you, beſides ſeveral others from friends, which, though very acceptable, are of leſs importance to my peace. I am ſorry now, that

that I diſcloſed my fears to you, as you will perhaps be uneaſy for me, till you learn by this, that my wound is healed. I aſſure you, I diſſembled what I could, and expreſſed much leſs concern than I felt, becauſe I was writing to you. I have to praiſe God for the mercy of this day, and to confeſs the ſin, and folly, of my diſtruſt of his goodneſs. I have only had time, as yet, to read your letters twice. I ſee already, that I cannot fully anſwer them; but I am ſure my full heart means you thanks.

Sandy Point, 5 July.

I THINK this is the 12th letter I have ſent you from hence, in the ſpace of a month, and they have been all pretty full; and I believe, I ſhall hardly ſend you above ONE, or, at moſt, two more, before I ſail myſelf, which I hope will be within ten days. In ſome of my former, I have commented upon three of yours, which I have received here.

The next, in order of time, is dated 3d January. I began the new year very ſeriouſly, and with I could ſay, the whole hitherto, had been of a piece; but there has not a day paſſed, without my prayers, that every bleſſing may reſt upon you. I thank you for reſolving not to like any one, but whom I firſt approve. I wiſh not to trouble you with many exceptions; but perhaps ſometimes your judgment, and mine, may differ a little; for you have too much good nature and openneſs, to ſuſpect ſome of the poor, fluttering things, that intrude upon you. I aim at no one in particular; but you are ſenſible, that ſome, of whom you once thought better than they deſerved, have before now explained their own characters, and juſtified my cenſure; and, ſooner or later, all ſuch will appear in their proper colours; for, where there are no good principles, profeſſions and pretences muſt fall to the ground. You have given a good turn to Mrs. P—'s backwardneſs to believe we were married; but

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if

if we live to ſee her together, ſhe ſhall ſpeak, if ſhe pleaſes, for herſelf; and tell us whether your compliance, did not ſurpriſe her, more than my perſeverance. But I care not which it was, ſince I know that I am happy. Happy indeed, ſince you acknowledge that you think yourſelf ſo; for I never was ſo poor a wretch as to think of being happy alone. The only riſk I ran was this, leſt I ſhould preſume too much upon myſelf, in expecting to inſpire you with a reciprocal regard. The event has indeed anſwered to my wiſhes; but when I think ſeriouſly of myſelf, I cannot but wonder at it, and at my own hardineſs in the undertaking.

You ſay, my love continued, and yours increaſed. But has not mine increaſed likewiſe? I have no ſimile to illuſtrate the difference, between the regard I bear you now, and that which I had for you before marriage. I was not a hypocrite then. My affection was perhaps as ſtrong, as in thoſe circumſtances, it could be. But I loved

loved you, as I may ſay, for your looks; my love had little more to feed upon. As yet, there were none of thoſe endearments, and obligations, which now continually throng my remembrance. In ſhort, I find by experience, that love, to be ſtable and permanent, muſt be mutual; and then, after years and years of poſſeſſion, it will be ſtill increaſing; and every new endeavour to pleaſe, will produce a new pleaſure. How different is this, from the vice, which the libertine would diſguiſe under the name of love.

Sandy Point, July 11.

If I have a good paſſage, I may be in England, before this notice reaches you, for I hope to ſail this evening, and the veſſel by which I ſend it, is bound to London, and will ſtay here two or three days after me. But as ſhe is a better ſailer than mine, may probably arrive firſt. I allow

you to begin to think of my arrival, when you hear I am upon my way home, but beg you not to be impatient for news. Paſſages from the Weſt Indies are very uncertain. It ſometimes has happened, that a veſſel, which has ſailed a month after another, has reached home as much before her. I have told you, that there is not a ſtronger or ſafer ſhip than mine upon the ſea; and the ſame good Providence which preſerved me laſt voyage, in a very old and crazy veſſel, will be with me now; and I am going in the fineſt ſeaſon of the year. In ſhort, though I ought not confidently to preſume on any thing in this uncertain world, I derive, from the tenour of the diſpenſations I have met with, for ſeveral years paſt, a cheerful perſuaſion, that the God in whom I truſt, will preſerve me for farther mercies, and ſtill make me an inſtance of his goodneſs to the moſt unworthy.

I AM

At Sea, 23 July.

I AM almoſt aſhamed to ſay, that though I have been twelve days at ſea, this is the firſt time of my writing to you. But I hope to be more frequent in future. I have indeed been very buſy, and am ſo ſtill. But I will not offer ſo poor an excuſe; for if I can find time to eat or ſleep, I can as well find an hour for your ſervice, which is the ſecond beſt buſineſs of my life. I have had much peace ſince I received your letters, but I may now venture to own, that my diſappointment till I had them, was the greateſt trial I have known, ſince I could call you mine. You know the ſtrength of my paſſion, and you know well (obſerve my confidence) the painfulneſs of abſence, and ſilence, from what we moſt value. But it is now happily over, and I hope what I then ſuffered, will prove for the good of both, hereafter.

The weather is fine, and the wind fair.

I am drawing nearer to you every moment. Perhaps, as my proſpect brightens, my genius may improve. My good intentions, at leaſt, will not be wanting to entertain you. Thus much by way of preface. It grows late, and another agreeable employment awaits me, I mean, to recommend you to God in my prayers, that every evil may be kept from you while you ſleep. I ſhall then lie down myſelf, with my uſual wiſh, (which ſometimes happens) that I may dream myſelf in your company.

At Sea, 24 July.

You think, by my laſt letters, that I am grown more grave than formerly. I do not intend to be more dull, nor am I troubled with low ſpirits; but I own that gravity, ſo far as conſiſtent with cheerfulneſs of heart, appears to me, deſirable. And I hope I ſhall return to you graver (in my ſenſe of the word) than I have been;

been; but that this change will not be to my diſadvantage as a companion, and leaſt of all to you. Cannot I remind you of many happy hours we have paſſed together, when noiſy mirth, and the miſtaken gaiety in which thouſands are bewildered, would have ſeemed taſteleſs, and impertinent?

Perhaps when you read this, I may be at your elbow to aſk you, if not, I beg you to aſk yourſelf—When ſometimes you have been ſitting alone in a melancholy muſe, perhaps the more lonely for not having heard of me—when your imagination has painted the dangers to which I was expoſed, and your memory has officiouſly furniſhed you, with inſtances of ſome who have ſuffered by ſuch diſaſters;—or when you have recollected the circumſtances of our paſt endearments—and, to finiſh all, when you have recalled me to your thoughts, in the action of parting from you, without a word or ſigh, for fear of increaſing your trouble——I ſay, when

a mixture of theſe, and ſimilar ideas, have wrought you up to that pitch of regret, and concern, which muſt be ſometimes paid for the privilege of loving—tell me, if then, the world, with all its gaieties and amuſements, has not appeared a bubble, a ſhadow, a wilderneſs? Why then ſhould we not always be too grave to be pleaſed with them, ſince we have repeated proofs, that none of the world's gewgaws can afford us relief, in our mournful hours. So far from helping us at ſuch times, we prefer our own thoughts, (though painful enough) to every thing that offers to divert us; and carry it with caution to our deareſt friends, leſt they ſhould ſteal our grief away; I have ſaid *We* and *Us* all along, having no doubt, but a deſcription of my own feelings, will anſwer to yours likewiſe. Yet after all, we ſeem to be perſuaded, that a more happy couple than we are, cannot be found. If ſo, do we not allow and prove, that happineſs is not to be expected in this life; at leaſt, not in

any,

any, or all the things, that are of an earthly growth? Who has it, if we have it not? And what have we? Perhaps a precarious month in a year, which, conſidered in itſelf, is to me valuable indeed. But it muſt be owned, that the more we are pleaſed, the ſhort ſpace we are together, the more we are at a loſs, in the long interval of ſeparation; during the greater part of which, we know no more of each other, than of the ſilent grave.

The inſenſible, ſelfiſh creatures, whom caprice or cuſtom, yoke in a married ſtate, without deſign or confidence, are ſtrangers to our ſatisfactions: this is true; but neither do they feel the drawback. To quit a perſon dearer than eyes, or life—to be at a painful uncertainty, for many weary months, for a welfare more precious to us than our own – and, from a ſenſe of happineſs, at home, to be raiſed to a pitch incapable of taſting the common entertainments of life, abroad—to be always fearing what may never happen, and regret-

ing what can never be recalled——From theſe, and many more pains, which I feel, but cannot deſcribe, their inſenſibility ſecures them. Theſe are appropriate, prerogative troubles, which none but lovers, nay, none but happy lovers, are capable of ſuffering.

At Sea, 25 July.

A STRANGER might ſuppoſe, I was yeſterday complaining of my lot, but you know me better. That I can love; that my regard was directed to you, and has met with a ſuitable return from you, are my chief temporal bleſſings, in which, notwithſtanding all diſadvantages, I ſtill deem myſelf happy; that is, in a qualified ſenſe; ſo far as this imperfect ſtate will admit, and far beyond my deſerts, or the common attainment of mankind. But for this, I am much beholden to my gravity, ſuch as it is. For ſhould I grant,

that

that a ſerious temper is not quite neceſſary, to give us the full reliſh of our enjoyments when preſent, (which is more, however, than I mean to grant) yet ſurely it is needful to ſupport us in the want of them.

Though, in the moment of taking my leave of you, I felt more than I can expreſs; yet, in the midſt of my grief, and when quitting what I moſt valued, I thought myſelf happier than thouſands can be, in the poſſeſſion of their wiſhes. I left you, and with the expectation of a long abſence; but a ſenſe of the divine Providence, and my truſt in God, greatly obviated my cares and fears, and led my thoughts forwards to the hour, (I hope now nearly approaching) which will reſtore me to you again. I was like a perſon, committing his deareſt treaſure, to his deareſt friend; and then went down ſtairs, with a mixture of peace and grief, not eaſily deſcribed; not as violently torn away, but as willingly foregoing you for a while, that I might the better deſerve you.

I conſidered, that the Lord, who had joined us, could eaſily have ſo appointed our affairs, as to free us from the neceſſity of ſuch long ſeparations; and I thought it would have been ſo, but that He, who knows all things, knows the indulgence would hurt us in ſome particulars, perhaps in many, which we are not aware of. I felt for the uneaſineſs, which your regard for me, might ſometimes occaſion; but I ſaw, that even this might lead your mind more cloſely, and frequently, to him for help, and if ſo, be a benefit. I confeſs, the thought of death, on either ſide, made me ſerious. If I had apprehended, that was the laſt time I ſhould hold you in my arms, how could I have left you at all? No;—then, methinks, wind and tide, buſineſs and honour, would have pleaded in vain, and I muſt have been carried from you by force. But this, which was my only dread, hardly occurred to me at the time, and was ſoon removed, by an inward perſuaſion, that we ſhould happily meet again.

again. And Oh! could you form an idea, of the evils I have ſince been preſerved through, and kept for the moſt part in peace, ſeldom knowing where the danger lay, till it was paſt, you would allow, that I am a living proof, of the truth of thoſe promiſes, which I endeavour, by the grace of God, to make my ſtay, and my truſt.

I hope I have made out the advantage of a religious frame of mind, in my preſent ſituation. Let me now conſider, whether it will not be equally neceſſary, and conducive to our happineſs, upon a re-union. Will it not be an additional pleaſure, to think that we do not meet again, as it were by chance, but by the care of a watchful Providence, in anſwer to prayer; as a token of his favour, and an earneſt, to encourage our future dependance upon him? How could I, loving you as I do, be eaſy a moment, without this dependance, in ſuch a changeable ſtate, and not knowing what the next day, or hour, may bring

forth? Nor is religion a reſtraint, upon any real or rational pleaſure. For, as the apoſtle emphatically expreſſes it, God gives us *all* things *richly*, to *enjoy*. Not grudgingly, but freely and richly; not to raiſe deſires which may not be gratified; what he gives, is with the deſign that it may be enjoyed. It is true, there is a modus, a moderation, enjoined; but this, likewiſe is for our benefit, that we may not ſpoil the reliſh of our comforts, nor indiſpoſe ourſelves for the reception of his farther, and better gifts.

At Sea, 26 July.

SINCE, then, a ſerious and dependant ſpirit, ſecures to us the beſt enjoyment of our bleſſings, and obviates, in a great meaſure, the inconveniences to which they are ſubject; what remains, but that we ſhould reſolve, and endeavour, to the beſt of our power, to cultivate this temper, and

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to live, ſo as has appeared to u moſts reaſonable, when we have been uneaſy, and afflicted. The contrary behaviour carries in it ſo much diſingenuouſneſs, that I am aſhamed, when I reflect upon my paſt guilt and folly. For it is certain, that I have often been leaſt obſervant and attentive, when a grateful mind would have been moſt ſo. For theſe reaſons, I hope, upon my return, to appear more grave than ever, to one part of our acquaintance; but then I ſhall be always cheerful, in the approbation of my conſcience. I have chiefly written all this, upon my own account, that the peruſal of it hereafter, may confirm and ſtrengthen me, in my preſent views, and deſires.

At Sea, 31 *July*.

I AM perſuaded, as I have often ſaid, that if it was in all points beſt for us to be always together, we ſhould never be part-

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ed. He who has already done ſo much for us, could eaſily add this to the reſt of his mercies, and, perhaps, at a proper time, he will. If not, let us entreat him, to direct our thoughts and purſuits to a better ſtate, where no ſeparation, anxiety, or grief, ſhall diſturb us for ever. The trials of this life, are highly uſeful and neceſſary, to prevent our minds from fixing here; eſpecially to us, who have ſo much to prize in each other. But let not paſſion miſlead us to ſuppoſe, that we are not capable of a happineſs, as far beyond our preſent experience or conception, as the heavens are higher than the earth. Our mutual affection, which now makes life chiefly valuable to us, will, I truſt, ſubſiſt in a nobler manner, when the tranſient cauſes upon which it was at firſt founded, ſhall, perhaps, have no more place in our remembrance; at leaſt, will not be conſidered in the light we now eſteem them, but will appear truly valuable, only ſo far as they were, by the bleſſing of God, ſubſervient to a farther,

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and better end. And how will it then increaſe our joys, (if our joys will then be capable of increaſe) to think, that we have aſſiſted each other in obtaining them!

At Sea, 5 Auguſt.

SUPPOSING, that if you are in health to-day, you have been a partaker of the communion at church, I attended you with my prayers, about the time; that you might receive a bleſſing, and have cauſe to look back upon the opportunity, with comfort. If it pleaſe God to continue our preſent favourable appearances, I hope to join with you, the next time, with a pleaſure, which only they, who have been long ſeparated from public worſhip, and who have ſo many mercies to acknowledge, as I have, can conceive. It comforts me to think, that you are favoured with all the advantages, of which my way of life deprives me, for a whole year, or longer.

And

And I hope you ſuitably improve them.

My affection carries my wiſhes and deſires for you, far beyond the narrow bounds, of the time we can expect to paſs together here; and I ſhall be glad to find, that a preparation for an hereafter, has a place in your thoughts, much ſuperior to any concern, or regard for me. For I am a poor weak creature, incapable, dearly as I love you, of ſhielding you from the ſmalleſt evil, or of doing you any ſervice ſo great, as by diſſuading you, from placing too much dependance upon a worm, like myſelf. Think not that I undervalue your affection. I am ſure I would not exchange it, for all the kingdoms upon earth. But there is a regard, which is only due to him, who firſt inſpired us with love to each other. While our mutual affection is reſtrained, in a proper ſubordination to him, I hope we ſhall not be blameable for prefering it, as I do, to whatever elſe can be named. But if we exceed this boundary,

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we not only ſin, but expoſe ourſelves to a double riſk, of having our comforts blighted, either by death, or by heavy troubles. All that we poſſeſs, or value, is the immediate gift of God, who propoſes the moſt ingenuous and grateful motives, to win us to his ſervice. But if, by fondly repoſing on creatures, we pervert his goodneſs, and ſet up a reſt, independent of the Creator, what can be expected, but that he will either recal the bleſſings we ſo little deſerve, or throw in bitter ingredients, to ſpoil our pleaſures?

I tremble to think, how much I have expoſed you, by my blindneſs and folly in this reſpect. When I was ſo long at St. Kitt's, without hearing from you, that I almoſt concluded you were dead, my conſcience confirmed my fears; for I knew that I deſerved to be puniſhed, where my feelings were moſt tender and ſenſible. This conviction lay upon my mind, with a weight that no words can expreſs. Ah! thought I, but for me, ſhe might have been

been ſtill living and happy. My weakneſs and ingratitude, have ſhortened her days! But God is merciful: after I had ſuffered thus for about a fortnight, I received your letters. But had the event proved, according to my dread, and my deſert, what would have become of me. —— To ſurvive you upon any terms, would be a great trial; but it then ſeemed comparatively light, could it have been abſtracted from the aggravation, of having ſinned you away. But—I cannot give you a juſt idea of the ſtate of my mind, at that time. I thank God, it is happily over, and I have now a comfortable hope, that we ſhall meet again in peace. If we do, ſurely I ſhall not be ſuch a wretch again.

At Sea, 16 Auguſt.

Now I may write leiſurely, for the wind is contrary. Though I am earneſtly deſirous to ſee you, I would not be

be impatient, nor wiſh, if it was in my power, to fix the time myſelf. I truſt, it ſhall be in a happy hour, and I deſire to leave the *when*, to God. Our times are in his hands. It will ſignify little, a hundred years hence, whether I was five, or ſix, or more weeks, on my paſſage homewards, from St. Kitt's, in the year 1753. And, indeed, it will ſignify but little, when I have been half an hour with you. I ſhall then ſoon forget the inconvenience of delay. If I feel any concern, it is on your account; for my love would not willingly have you kept in an hour's ſuſpenſe for me. But my judgment ſpeaks more reaſonably, and tells me, that, as diſappointments and hindrances, have often proved of real ſervice to myſelf; ſo, perhaps, they may be to you likewiſe. And the dependant frame of ſpirit, in which I am now happy, would be worth your purchaſe, if you have not yet attained it, (but I hope you rather exceed me) at the price of not ſeeing me this twelvemonth.

I AM

At Sea, 18 Auguſt.

I AM brought in ſafety, to the cloſe of another week. The evening of a Saturday, I uſually allot to the exerciſe of prayer, and praiſe. It is not foreign to this deſign, to employ half an hour in writing to you, to invite you to join with me, in praiſing our gracious Preſerver, as we are jointly intereſted in each other's concernments.

The wind has been eaſterly a few days, but it now ſeems to be coming about fair again. For my own part, I conſider the winds, from every quarter, to be fair; though, in compliance with our cuſtomary forms of ſpeaking, I call thoſe ſo, which allow me to ſail to my intended port, in a ſtraight line. When it changes, I am obliged to change my courſe, and to go ſomething about. But they all contribute to anſwer my beſt wiſh, at the proper time. And probably a contrary wind, is no leſs conducive to this end, than a more direct one.

For we know not, when we go too faſt, or too ſlow. A ſhip has often been hurried into danger and diſtreſs, by a quick paſſage.

I ſhall be with you in my thoughts tomorrow, in the church, in your retirements, and at your meals. I riſe early, to pray for your happineſs, before you awake; and ſit up paſt your hour, that I may beg a bleſſing upon your reſt, before I go to reſt myſelf. Some perſons would ſmile at all this. Let them ſmile—ſo that I may give the moſt ſincere, and ſerious proof of my affection, by praying, at all hours, and in all circumſtances, for your peace and welfare.

At Sea, 20 Auguſt.

We have again a fair wind, and very pleaſant weather. I have often heard your ſex compared to the ocean. I hope the reſemblance does not generally hold,

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(I am happy to be certain, that in one inſtance it does not) for there cannot be a more apt emblem of inconſtancy. This ſpot of water, which I am now paſſing over, which, at preſent, is as ſmooth as a meadow, ſpread round far as the eye can reach, like a great mirror, and reflects the beams of the moon unruffled, has, perhaps, been the grave of many; at leaſt, their terror, and will often be ſo. It may be, that the next who follow me, will find a very different ſcene. For, let the wind blow with violence, from any quarter, for the ſpace of four hours, and all will be in confuſion; the mirror broken, the level deſtroyed, and nothing to be ſeen, but, alternately, yawning gulphs, and moving mountains, every one ſeeming to riſe higher than the reſt, and the ſmalleſt, ſufficient to deſtroy the ſtouteſt ſhip, and to confound the ſtrongeſt human confidence, in a moment; if not continually reſtrained, by that ſovereign power, which rules the waves with a nod, and limits them

to their bounds, beyond which, in their higheſt rage and confuſion, they cannot riſe the tenth part of an inch. How they feel, at ſuch times, who have no reliance, but on their own ſkill and precaution, I cannot ſay; but was it ſo with me, I ſhould often prove, a very coward; and, indeed, always; for when danger was not apparent, I ſhould dread it, as being imminent. When I compare the various contingencies, to which a ſhip is liable, with the beſt preventions, or remedies, that art can furniſh againſt them, they ſeem ſo diſproportionate, that, were it not for a ſuperintending Providence, I ſhould think it a wonder indeed, if any one veſſel, made a voyage in ſafety. But, as in this view, I ſhould be always afraid, ſo now, ſince I am certain, that I am under the care of God, in all places, I do not, even in turbulent weather, ſuffer more anxiety, than is needful to engage my attention to the proper uſe of means. This is my part, and if means are ſucceeded, it is by the bleſſing of God,

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without which, my diligence would be unavailing. The watchman waketh but in vain, *except* the Lord keep the city; but it does not follow, that *becauſe* the Lord keeps the city, the watchman may go to ſleep, but rather the contrary.

At Sea, 29 Auguſt.

I TOLD you yeſterday, that I might probably dine to day at Liverpool; but I muſt wait longer. Laſt night brought us, with fair wind and fair weather, within four hours ſail of our port. We ſtopped to wait for day-light, and a pilot. The day came at its appointed time, but, inſtead of a pilot, brought a ſtrong gale of wind, with thick weather; ſo that I was glad to turn about, and away to ſea again; and may be thankful, if I can keep clear of the ſands and dangers, which lie before the entrance of the river, which I truſt I ſhall; for I believe the providence of God, has not brought

brought me ſafely acroſs two oceans, to leave me to my own poor ſhifts at laſt. It really blew very hard, and looked very diſmally at four this morning: but the weather is now more moderate, though ſtill dark and rainy. I was ſomething anxious in the night, but am, at preſent, tolerably eaſy. God is my defence; if he is on my ſide, I muſt be preſerved: the winds and the waves obey him!

I can now give you a new proof, that my dependance upon God, is not in vain. When I wrote the above, I was in a very indifferent ſituation. A hard gale of wind, thick weather, and very little ſea room. Had things continued ſo another day, I might have ſuffered ſhipwreck, within a few miles of my port. But I had ſcarcely laid the paper by, when the weather changed to quite fine, and the wind came about fair. Before noon, I got a pilot on board, and I may now hope to be at Liverpool, this very night! Surely no

one experiences the goodneſs, and care of divine Providence, more continually than I do! Surely the Lord hears and anſwers my poor prayers!

1753.

THIRD VOYAGE TO AFRICA.

At Sea, 26 October.

MY DEAREST,

I NOW begin to prepare materials for new packets. The firſt thing in courſe, is to tell you, that, by the bleſſing of the Lord, all is well with me. We had an extraordinary good outlet to ſea, and loſt ſight of the laſt land, the third day after parting with you. We are all in good health and ſpirits. My time paſſes, perhaps, too pleaſantly, conſidering that poſſibly you may be mourning, at the very inſtant, when I am moſt cheerful. But I excuſe myſelf to myſelf, by pleading, that it was your deſire, I ſhould be as cheerful as I can. At all times, I have room in my thoughts for you; and the moſt pleaſant of all my hours, are thoſe which are devoted

to praying for you. My mind attends you this week, from ſtage to ſtage, on your long journey home. The wiſe, taſteleſs *many*, would ſmile at this attention, and call me a trifler. So let them. If it gains a ſmile of acceptance from you, I will account it a matter of importance; and ſmile at them, in my turn, though I rather ought to pity them.

At Sea, 2 November.

We ſaw, and paſſed, the iſland Madeira, this morning, (which is diſtant from Liverpool about 1500 miles) though this is but the thirteenth day ſince we left the rock. As we are now entering that part of the ocean, where the wind blows from the eaſtern quarter, the year round, I have the proſpect of a quick paſſage. Should it prove ſo, it will be agreeable, eſpecially as I have not been left to wiſh, for any thing particular, being ſenſible, that I know not how to chooſe, the beſt means,

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and times, for accompliſhing my own deſires, if the choice was given to me. Diſpatch will be welcome, as affording me the proſpect, of a more ſpeedy return to you. But ſhould I meet with delay, I hope to acquieſce, and to believe that it will keep me back, from ſomething that would be worſe. Was I to judge otherwiſe, I ſhould ſin againſt the experience of many years, in which I have always had my wiſhes gratified, ſo far as was conſiſtent with my ſafety; and have met with no diſappointment, or trouble, but what I have afterwards perceived, was intended, or at leaſt overruled, for my benefit.

In two points we are, and have been, favoured above thouſands. Firſt, in a tender and reciprocal regard, which renders it impoſſible for either of us, to be pleaſed or pained, alone; and, ſecondly, that this ſympathy has been chiefly, I could almoſt ſay, wholly employed, in a participation of pleaſures, with very little interruption (the pain of abſence excepted) on

either ſide. I know not which of theſe bleſſings is moſt valuable, but certainly, when combined, (as with us) they conſtitute the neareſt approach to happineſs, in a temporal view, that this imperfect ſtate will admit. There are many, who, in point of outward advantages, may ſeem equal, or ſuperior to us, but then their contracted, ſelfiſh ſpirits, cannot reliſh, or improve them: Again, there are others, of generous, and feeling diſpoſitions, who, borne down by the preſſure of accumulated afflictions, derive no advantage from their ſenſibility, unleſs it be a privilege, to have a more exquiſite perception of miſery. There are thoſe who could bear adverſity in their own perſons, with tolerable compoſure, but feel a tenfold diſtreſs, by ſeeing others involved with them, whoſe peace is dearer to them than their own. Help me to be thankful! I have no rent-rolls, or ſtock-ſecurities, to rely upon. But I have an inventory of another kind, a ſingle article of which, is

preferable,

preferable, in my eyes, to all the wealth of the Indies: health, content, liberty, love, the recollection of the paſt, and therein, a lively image of what I may yet hope for; when it ſhall pleaſe God, in his good time, to reſtore me home, to receive from you, in one hour, an ample recompenſe, for the toils of a whole voyage.

At Sea, 23 November.

I AIM, as well as I can, to mingle the agreeable and uſeful, in the courſe of my letters; and to offer what may entertain *you*, and, at the ſame time, improve us *both*. Our mutual happy affection, ſupplies me with my largeſt fund, for the firſt purpoſe; and I am glad, when I can properly introduce ſuch reflections, as may aſſiſt us in making our preſent ſatisfactions, ſubſervient to a ſtill higher end. You will not be diſpleaſed with me for ſaying, that though you are dearer to me, than the aggregate

of all other earthly comforts, I wiſh to limit my paſſion, within thoſe bounds which God has appointed. Our love to each other, ought to lead us to love him ſupremely, who is the author and ſource of all the good we poſſeſs, or hope for. It is to him, we owe that happineſs in the marriage ſtate, which ſo many ſeek in vain; ſome of whom, ſet out with ſuch hopes and proſpects, that their diſappointments can be deduced from no other cauſe, than their having placed that high regard on a creature, which is only due to the Creator. He therefore withholds his bleſſing, (without which no union can ſubſiſt) and their expectations, of courſe, end in ſatiety and indifference.

Perfect happineſs cannot be attained in this life; but to come as near it as poſſible, well deſerves our cloſe application. As perſons differ much in their views and inclinations, this attempt has been purſued, by a great variety of mediums. The heathen philoſophers were divided by a

diverſity

diverſity of opinions, but they all agreed in an endeavour to teach mankind, how to make the moſt, of the good which life affords; and to bear its evils, with the beſt grace poſſible. Some propoſed one ſort of rules; others offered new ones, and perhaps quite oppoſite to the former; but experience confuted them all. Being ignorant of the original nature, the true end, and the future deſtination, of man, they failed in the cure of the evils, under which he laboured, becauſe they knew not the ſource from which they ſprung. Some attempted to eradicate the paſſions, and placed happineſs in a calmneſs, or rather, an inſenſibility, of ſoul; not reflecting, that the Creator does nothing in vain, and that we have not a ſingle, *natural* inclination in our frame, but what he deſigned ſhould, under a proper reſtriction, be gratified. But while they endeavoured to guard againſt care, and to reſtrain irregularity, their ſchemes tended to deſtroy, ſome of our moſt diſtinguiſhing properties,

and to exclude all tenderneſs, and generoſity of ſentiment. Others, to avoid this abſurdity, fell into a greater, if poſſible. By ſuppoſing, the greateſt happineſs to conſiſt, in the moſt conſtant enjoyment of ſenſual pleaſure, they opened a wide door to folly and enormity; and left each perſon to purſue his own propenſity, under the notion of pleaſure, without having recourſe to any ſtandard, by which to regulate their conduct. Theſe were the two very different plans of thoſe, who are generally deemed, the wiſeſt men among the ancients, the Stoics, and the Epicureans. The one *pretended*, that the world afforded nothing worthy of their notice. The other *found*, there was nothing in the world, deſerving of the value they ſet upon it.

We are relieved from this uncertainty, by the goſpel, which has brought life and immortality, true happineſs, and the means of attaining it, to light. And when we count over, the various bleſſings we enjoy,

we ſhould always acknowledge, in the firſt place, this pledge, and ground-work, of every other mercy, that we were born in an age, and a country, affording us plain, and ſure inſtruction, concerning our real intereſt, and bounden duty, and how inſeparably they are joined together. The ſcripture teaches us how to enjoy proſperity, in its full reliſh, by conſidering every inſtance of it, as a gift and token of the divine goodneſs, always attentive to bleſs us; and, likewiſe, abates the preſſure of adverſity, by ſhewing us, how much our worſt ſufferings, fall ſhort of our demerits; how much more our Lord and Saviour endured, for our ſakes; and by the aſſurance it gives, that if we love God, all things, even thoſe which at preſent are moſt diſagreeable, ſhall work together for our final good. Now, whatever troubles we meet with, we can look beyond them all, to an everlaſting reſt. The hour of death, ſo much dreaded by others, will put the true Chriſtian, in poſſeſſion of eter-

nal life. Theſe things, reaſon, unaſſiſted by revelation, could never have diſcovered.

The Chriſtian Religion is a conſiſtent ſyſtem, including the truth, and morality of every ſect of philoſophy, and avoiding the errors of each. We now ſee the uſe and excellence of the paſſions, when duly regulated; though they render us unhappy, when miſapplied, becauſe then they fall ſhort of their proper end; for God, who (as the ſcripture ſays) made us for himſelf, has formed us, with a vaſtneſs of capacity, which, he only, can ſatisfy. And from hence proceeds that reſtleſſneſs, and diſappointment, that love of change, which is the portion of thoſe, who place their higheſt deſires, and ſtrongeſt hopes, on any thing beneath the ſupreme good. We can now ſay, that pleaſure is our chief happineſs, by uſing the word, with a propriety unknown to the Epicureans. We ſeek for pleaſure, but it muſt be of the nobleſt kind, and moſt laſting duration. Upon this maxim, we cheerfully renounce every preſent

preſent pleaſure, which, in its conſequence, would occaſion a pain, greater, or more laſting, than the pleaſure propoſed; and we can welcome troubles, when we clearly perceive, they are but light and momentary, if compared with the far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory, to which they lead. This is an abſtract of my principles, and, I believe, of yours likewiſe. Theſe ſhall ſupport us, when we ſhall be conſtrained to leave each other; and theſe, I truſt, ſhall join us again, in a better world, to part no more for ever.

Plantanes, 10 *December*.

THE three ſheets encloſed, will bring my hiſtory down to the end of November. I arrived, in ſafety, at Shebar, the ſecond inſtant; found my friend Harry *

* Henry Tucher, a Mulatto, at Shebar, was the man, with whom I had the largeſt connection in buſineſs, and by whom I was never deceived.

well

well, and very glad to ſee me. Your picture, if it could ſpeak, might tell you, how well pleaſed his *firſt* lady was with your preſent; for ſhe dreſſed herſelf in it before *you*, and ſeemed to think, that in her new attire, ſhe might ſtand in competition with you. I believe you will ſmile at her vanity, and think I pay you no great compliment, in preferring your *picture*, to her *reality*. But had the fineſt woman in England ſtood by, ſhe would, in my eye, have fallen almoſt equally ſhort, upon the compariſon.

I often look back, with a mixture of thankfulneſs and regret, upon the time we lately paſſed together, at Liverpool, which I conſider as the happieſt part of my life. I never before had ſo much of your company, in an equal ſpace, and with ſo little interruption. Seven ſuch weeks, are preferable to ſeven years of common time. After ſo many ſheets and quires, as I have written to you, I cannot always produce what is new. But the thoughts with which your

your love inſpires me, are too intereſting to be irkſome, though often repeated.

Accept my thanks for your valuable, or invaluable letter, of the 28th October, which I have juſt received. I thank you, likewiſe, for your punctual obſervance of our ſtated hour of retirement, which has been ſeldom omitted on my part; though, ſometimes, hurry of buſineſs, or want of opportunity, *have* prevented *me*. But if I ſlip the appointed minute, no buſineſs, or company, can prevent me from putting up, at leaſt, frequent heart-felt ejaculations on your behalf. I congratulate Mr. B. upon the agreeable company he had to London. I think the journey was, at leaſt, as favourable to him, as to you. I am ſure, I would rather have had his ſeat in the poſt-chaiſe, than his office, however lucrative or honourable, unleſs you were annexed to it. But I remember, as Friar Bacon's head ſaid, Time was. I have been happy, and hope to be ſo again.

1754.

1754.

Shebar, 10 January.

I OFTEN loſe myſelf inſenſibly, in the recollection of our paſt times; and purchaſe the recal of the moſt valued pleaſures, at the expence of only a tranſient ſigh. I think of our evening walks and retirements, when the ſetting ſun, the trees, the birds, and proſpects, have contributed to enrich the ſcene; though your company was, to me, that which completed, and crowned the whole. I reflect with pleaſure, on ſome ſeaſons, when our thoughts have riſen faſter, than words could give them utterance, and we have ſurpriſed the tears ſilently ſtealing down our cheeks. What would the gay, and faſhionable world ſay, to ſuch a repreſentation? They live in too much hurry, and have too little reflection, to underſtand this elegance of ſoul, which, under the guiſe of grief, affords

fords the ſincereſt pleaſure. My own experience, would almoſt lead me to maintain, what you, perhaps, will think a paradox—That they who beſt love, are beſt qualified to ſupport the pains, and anxieties of abſence. Such trains of thought as I have mentioned, yield me more ſatisfaction, than all the gewgaws of the great or wealthy could do. But it will not therefore follow, that people, who are indifferent when together, are better pleaſed when aſunder. In the former caſe, they are ſoon weary of each other; in the latter, they are as ſoon weary of themſelves. However, to me, the paſt and the future, afford abundant ſubject for agreeable muſing; and even the preſent, though not very agreeable in itſelf, becomes in ſome meaſure ſo, when I conſider, that I am here for your ſake. And I am glad of the opportunity of manifeſting, that neither difficulties, nor dangers, nor diſtance, nor time, can abate the ſenſe of what I owe you. However the caſe may be now, I can remember the time,

when

when you could have done very well without me. The firſt obligation, which was the ground of every other, was entirely on your ſide; and I ſtill think myſelf far ſhort of repaying it. Though, if I could cancel that, you have taken care to ſuperadd new ones, every ſucceeding day ſince.

Rio Junk, 17 January.

In the midſt of a thouſand hurries, and avocations, I muſt ſteal a few minutes, to converſe with you. I have been almoſt wearied to-day with noiſe, heat, ſmoke, and buſineſs; but when I think of you, the inconvenience is gone. Which of your learned philoſophers can define, this wonderful, transforming thing, called Love, that can infuſe a degree of pleaſure, into trouble and diſquiet?

The ſhip that is to take my packet, is upon the point of ſailing. I muſt wind up all, with fervent prayers, that it may

pleaſe

pleaſe the Lord, the giver of all good, to preſerve us in peace and dependance, during the appointed term of our ſeparation; and, in his good hour, to give us a happy meeting; and that we may learn to wait for that time with patience, with more than patience, with thankfulneſs, that our proſpects are only delayed, or prorogued, and not wholly cut off, as has been the caſe with many, ſince we firſt joined hands. Above all, I pray, that in every ſcene of life, we may prepare for what we know muſt, ſooner or later, take place. That we may believe, and act, upon the principles of the goſpel, to the glory of our Maker and Redeemer here, and then we ſhall be happy for ever, hereafter, beyond the reach of ſorrow or pain, and ſhall never more know, what it is to part.

LORD

Rio Seſtos, 21 January.

LORD Orrery remarks, upon a letter of Pliny, (whom, I think, I formerly mentioned) to his wife's aunt, That the examples of delicate conjugal love, have been few. He ſays, "Men cannot, or will not, "ſee the excellencies of their wives. From "the day of marriage, the woman lays "aſide her reſerve, and the man his civi- "lity. She grows forward, and overbear- "ing; he becomes ſour and ſnappiſh. Or, "if they appear fond, (as, from the novel- "ty of the ſtate, it ſometimes happens) "the groſſneſs of the paſſion is too nau- "ſeous to be named." Whenever I meet with an obſervation of this kind, it is an unſpeakable pleaſure to me, to reflect, that I can put in an exception to it, in both your name, and my own. Were I even aſſured, that the whole time, ſince Pliny and Calphurnia lived, (which is more than ſixteen hundred years) afforded only forty ſuch happy couples, I ſhould not ſcruple

to

to include you, and myſelf, in the number. And in this conſciouſneſs, I find more pleaſure, than the greateſt affluence of wealth could give me. I have enough. I have all, in that mutual affection, with which it has pleaſed God to bleſs us, and, without which, the treaſures of both the Indies, would, to me, be uſeleſs and taſteleſs. I think, I have now ſome right to ſpeak thus; for the experience of nearly four years, has convinced me, that either the novelty ſo much talked of, is not neceſſary to my ſatisfaction; or elſe, which amounts to the ſame thing, that I find ſome new cauſe of endearment in you, every day.

Rio Seſtos, 25 January.

I EXPECTED, before I left England, that the preſent voyage would not prove ſucceſsful, in point of profit; and I was not miſtaken. I ſhall hardly reach the half

half of my laſt year's purchaſe. I hope, the veſſel I have bought, to trade after I am gone, may ſecure the owners intereſt; but my own part of the affair, will probably be moderate enough.

If a ſigh ſhould eſcape you on this account, I beg you to recollect yourſelf, and not indulge a ſecond. Remember, that this failure in dirty money matters, is the only abatement we have hitherto met with; and that, in other reſpects, we have as much the advantage, of thoſe who are envied by the world, as we fall ſhort of them in riches. We have bleſſings, which riches can not purchaſe, nor compenſate for the want of. And I ſee much cauſe for thankfulneſs, that things are no worſe. We want for nothing at preſent; and for the future, we may ſafely rely on the good Providence, that has done ſo much for us already. Beſides, what *I* may get by an indifferent voyage, would, by many, be thought a great ſum. We are both ſenſible, that we are too ſhort-ſighted, to chooſe well

well for ourſelves, if the choice were allowed us; and, therefore, I hope we ſhall agree, to reſign our concerns to the diſpoſal of a better wiſdom than our own.

When I look back, and reflect upon the difficulties, from which I have been relieved; and the advantages I have obtained, beyond my former hopes, and probabilities, it would be very diſingenuous in me, to diſtreſs myſelf about ſmall matters. Nor need I be over-anxious upon your account, for God can as eaſily provide for us, now we are joined in one intereſt, as if we had continued ſeparate. If we make our chief application, for what chiefly deſerves it, we are aſſured, that all inferior good things, in ſuch a meaſure, and manner, as is moſt expedient for us, will ſurely be added to us. Perhaps we may not be rich—no matter. We are rich in Love. We are rich indeed, if the promiſes, and providence of God, are our inheritance. And, at preſent, we have every convenience; and I can think of no one thing,

really

really deſirable, the greateſt ſum of money could procure us, which we have not already, unleſs it were to free us from the neceſſity, of theſe frequent and long ſeparations.

This thought, indeed, were I to yield to my firſt emotions, would make me more fond of gold, than a miſer; though, in every other view, I can deſpiſe it. But when I am cool, as my conſcience tells me, that I am unworthy of ſo great a bleſſing; ſo my experience perſuades me, that probably I cannot, as yet, be ſafely truſted with it. Perhaps the event might prove worſe, than any thing which has hitherto befallen us. I am willing, indeed, to hope it would be otherwiſe, but my heart is deceitful, and has, more than once, deceived me, in this very point. I might grow ſecure, and gradually neglect, the due improvement of ſuch an addition to my talents. Nay, ſuch is the unhappy depravity of human nature, that I cannot be ſure, I might not, in time, be permitted, for my puniſhment, to for-

get what I owe to you. It is true, that at this moment of writing, it ſeems quite as eaſy for me, to forget to ſpeak, or to breathe; but there is an unhappy gradation, often obſervable in the courſe of life, by which, people, from inſenſible beginnings, are carried on to things, which, once, they could not have thought of without horror. The firſt deviations from the paths of duty, and peace, are ſcarcely diſcernible, but they become wider and wider.

I muſt recal, or ſoften, this laſt ſuppoſition; for I cannot bear even to ſuppoſe it. Can I poſſibly forget you? I hope not. Surely it would be better for me, to be condemned to the mines for life, than to be deprived of that grateful confidence, with which my heart at this inſtant overflows, that I am yours, and that you are mine. This, I truſt, will be among the laſt reflections, I ſhall be capable of making in this world. But that it may be ſo, I wiſh to acquieſce, in whatever methods it ſhall pleaſe God to appoint, for the continuance of my affection. Perhaps he ſees, that theſe

intervals of abſence, are the beſt means for preſerving me, from an evil, which I dread more than a dungeon, or a galley. If it were otherwiſe, or whenever I attain ſtrength ſufficient to bear the indulgence, without abuſing it, he can eaſily put it in our power to live together here, till we are meet to be removed to a happy hereafter. That great word *Eternity*, rightly underſtood, is a cure for every evil, and caſts a ſhade upon the brighteſt proſpects, that all on this ſide the grave can furniſh. To us, I hope, it will be an eternity of happineſs.

2 *February.*

AMONG the many congratulations, you will probably receive to-day, I believe you will think none more ſincere, or acceptable, than mine; though, perhaps, I am in nothing more ſingular, or unfaſhionable, than in my manner of expreſſing them. The return of your birth-day, requires from me, an acknowledgment of

the ſame kind, as the return of my own. I commemorate both in the ſame manner. I was up long before the ſun, this morning, to invoke a bleſſing upon you, and to pray, that this may prove a happy birth-day to you, in my ſenſe of the word. I am writing in a tornado. The elements ſeem all at war over my head, but I thank God I have peace within; and the ſtorm does not interrupt my thoughts of you.

The day reminds me of that (propheti-cal, ſhall I call it) agreement between your mother and mine, when we were in lead-ing ſtrings; that, if we lived to grow up, we ſhould be man and wife. There ſeems, indeed, nothing extraordinary in ſuch a diſcourſe taking place, between intimate friends. But as, afterwards, the intercourſe between our families, was totally broken off, for many years, and renewed by me, in the moſt contingent, and, as the phraſe is, accidental manner, when I did not even rightly know your name; add to this, the unuſual impreſſion, the firſt ſight of you, made upon my mind, when we were both

ſo young, that I knew not what, or why, I loved; and further, the many difficulties which attended my purſuit, which was begun, and carried on for years, againſt the advice, and conſent, of all your friends, and of all mine, and, what ſeemed the greateſt bar of all, againſt your own inclination likewiſe;—I ſay, taking all theſe circumſtances together, I cannot but think it remarkable, that we were ſo particularly laid out for each other, when we were infants. However this may be, I have abundant reaſon to praiſe the Lord, that before I had been four years in the world, he ſhould provide for me, in you, the greateſt bleſſing of my life; with which, he purpoſed to enhance, and crown all his other mercies to me; and that you might be, in time, as a guardian angel, to preſerve me from ruin. I deſire to praiſe him, for all the goodneſs that has followed you, from the hour I am commemorating, to this day; for the gracious protection which preſerved you for me, through your early

years;

years; for your health, and ſatisfaction, ſince you have been mine; and for enabling me, thus far, to anſwer the truſt you have repoſed in me. And, I humbly pray, that our affections, and engagements, may be preſerved inviolable between ourſelves, and in a proper ſubordination to what we owe to him, the great Lord of all.

Settera Crue, 6 February.

I HAVE calculated, that, if all the letters I have ſent you, ſince our firſt parting, in May, 50, were tranſcribed in order, they would fill one hundred and twenty ſuch ſheets as this, on all ſides. An eye, leſs favourable than yours, might find very many faults, in ſo large a collection; but if they have the merit of pleaſing you, it pleaſes me more to have written them, than if I had publiſhed ſo many volumes, to be applauded by the world. I hope I need not be aſhamed of them, if

they were to fall into other hands. I hope I have, in general, expreſſed my regard, in terms, which reaſon and religion will warrant. I conſider our union, as a peculiar effect, and gift, of an indulgent Providence; and, therefore, as a talent to be improved to higher ends, to the promoting his will and ſervice, upon earth, and to the aſſiſting each other, to prepare for an eternal ſtate, to which, a few years, at the fartheſt, will introduce us. Were theſe points wholly neglected, however great our ſatisfaction might be, for the preſent, it would be better, never to have ſeen each other; ſince the time muſt ſoon come, when, of all the endearments of our connexion, nothing will remain, but the conſciouſneſs, how greatly we were favoured, and how we improved the favours we poſſeſſed. We ſhall hereafter have reaſon to be thankful, even for theſe frequent ſeparations, if they ſhould conduce to fix theſe views, more effectually in our minds. With ſuch thoughts, I endeavour to oppoſe my impatience

impatience to ſee you. My occaſional anxieties, and my indifference to every thing around me, when you are not with me, I compare to the ſenſe of feeling, which often coſts a perſon pain; but if he were deſtitute of it, he would be incapable of pleaſure, and little better than dead. If my heart were not ſuſceptive of love and tenderneſs, I might eſcape many a twinge; but I have not ſuffered enough, to make me envy thoſe, whoſe whole thought and ſolicitude, terminate on their own dear ſelves.

Sellera Crue, 12 February.

WHAT I daily acknowledge, as the greateſt bleſſing of my life, the return of this day, reminds me to notice, more particularly. It is the anniverſary of our marriage: a point I had ſo much at heart; in which I had long ſo little probability of ſucceeding; was ſo very unworthy of ſuc-

ceſs; and which has ſo happily anſwered, I may indeed ſay, exceeded, my expectations;—When I conſider all theſe items together, I am at a loſs for words, to expreſs my thankfulneſs to God. For four whole years, I have poſſeſſed the height of my wiſhes. I do not except, even theſe neceſſary intervals of abſence, becauſe I have been enabled to ſupport them, as well as I myſelf can deſire; and becauſe the conſciouſneſs of your affection, of which, neither abſence, nor diſtance, can deprive me, affords me a continual feaſt.

I aroſe before the ſun, to pray, and give thanks for you, and to beg that you may always find, as much ſatisfaction, as you have raiſed me to; and that we may both have grace to act, anſwerably to the advantages we have above thouſands. If you look round, upon thoſe of your acquaintance, who have entered the marriage ſtate, about the time we did, I believe you will find but few, who do not, in ſome degree, betray a ſenſe of diſappointment; or, who

are

are ſo entirely ſatisfied with each other, as, I truſt, we are. I do not mean to form a compariſon with any one, in my own favour. Sincerity, and tenderneſs, are the chief of my inventory; but if I ever grow richer in accompliſhments, both the praiſe, and the profit, ought to be yours; and who can tell, how far a deſire to appear deſerving of you, may, at length, carry me?

The occaſion, might now lead me to a more ſerious ſtrain, and to conſider, how we may make theſe bloſſoms of temporal good, bear fruit for eternity; but for this, I ſhall at preſent refer you, to what I wrote on your birth-day. Let us remember, that in all ſituations, whether pleaſed, or pained, we are equally advancing towards an unchangeable eternity. It is a part of human happineſs, if rightly underſtood, to know, that the very beſt of it, muſt ere long be parted with, for ſomething unſpeakably better.

Rio Junque, 1 March.

I STILL continue in health, and all is well, excepting one late circumſtance, which has given me, as you will believe, much concern; but I have now got over it. Not to keep you in ſuſpenſe, longer than juſt to prevent ſurpriſe, I muſt inform you, that all my ſchemes, in favour of Capt. L—, are at an end. I told you, in a former letter, that I had bought a veſſel upon the coaſt, and had given him the command of her. He went from me in good ſpirits, and with high hopes, but was ſeized with a fever, before he had left me three weeks, which proved fatal to him in about eight days. I have been much affected by this ſudden ſtroke. I have known him long, and believe he had a true regard for me: and it was by my inducement, that he came hither. There are other reaſons for my concern, which I need not mention to you.

you. But the will of God has taken place, and it is my part to ſubmit.

May we both profit from this recent, and awful inſtance, of the vanity and uncertainty of human life, and of all relating to it. A healthy conſtitution, and ſprightly temper, afford no ſecurity from death. How many ſuch, have I ſeen cut off upon this coaſt! And yet I, though ſuppoſed by many people, to be in a conſumption, and not likely to hold out for one voyage, am preſerved from year to year! Let us feel the expediency of preparing for a change, which, ſooner or later, we muſt experience. The death of every friend, is a warning to the ſurvivors. And yours and mine will, perhaps, by ſome of our acquaintance, who knew how much we loved, and how happy we were in each other, be alledged, as a new proof, that even thoſe temporal ſatisfactions, which will beſt abide the teſt of reflection, are no leſs frail, and tranſient, than any other.

I am in ſuch a ſcene of confuſion, and

noiſe, that I hardly know what I write. I only read, or think, as it were, by ſtarts.

At Sea, 8 April.

It is a whole fortnight ſince I wrote to you, and ſeems to me much longer. I know you will charge my ſilence, to the hurry of buſineſs, and not to neglect. But I can now make you amends, by informing you, that I am, once more, clear of the coaſt of Guinea. I ſailed from Shebar, yeſterday morning. I have left my chief mate, Mr. W—, in poſſeſſion of the Race-Horſe, (the veſſel which I purchaſed for Capt. L.) with about a thouſand pounds worth of my cargo, which I could not diſpoſe of, in the limited term of my ſtay on the coaſt; which I hope will ſave the voyage to the owners. As to my own profit, though it may not be ſo great, as might have been expected, I hope it will be ſufficient. A ſafe return to you, will make up all deficiencies.

This has been a fatal ſeaſon, to many perſons upon the coaſt. I think I never before heard, of ſo many dead, loſt, or deſtroyed, in one year. But I have been kept in perfect health, and have buried neither White, nor Black. Let us praiſe God, for his ſingular goodneſs to us, and take encouragement to hope and pray, that he will crown this voyage alſo, with a comfortable meeting. Amen.

At Sea, 18 April.

A FEW days ago, I informed you, that I had left Africa, in good health and ſpirits. It has now pleaſed God, to give me in my own perſon, an experience of that uncertainty of all human affairs, which I have ſo often remarked, in the concerns of others.

I have been ill three days, of a fever, which, though it is, at preſent, attended with no ſymptoms, particularly dangerous,

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it behoves me to conſider, may terminate in death. I have endeavoured to compoſe myſelf to the ſummons, if it ſhould ſo prove. And I hope I may ſay, I am, in ſome meaſure, ready to live or to die, as may be appointed; and that I deſire not to chooſe for myſelf, in this caſe, more than in any other. One ſpecious excuſe, with which I have often covered my deſire of life, was, that I might have opportunity of doing ſomething for the glory of God, and the good of my fellow-creatures; that I might not go quite uſeleſs out of the world. But, alas! I have ſo little improved the talents, and occaſions, which have been already afforded me, that I am aſhamed to offer this plea any more. My only remaining concern, is upon your account; and, even in that, I am in a meaſure relieved, from the following conſiderations.

My firſt, and principal conſolation, is in the hope, that we are both under the influence of religious principles, and that you, as well as myſelf, are perſuaded, that

no

no trouble, or change, can befall us by chance. Whenever a ſeparation ſhall take place, as, if not now, it ſooner or later muſt; it will be, by the expreſs act and will, of the ſame wiſe and good Providence, which brought us together at firſt; has given us ſo much, in each other, already, and has continually ſhielded us, as yet, from the various harms, which have been fatal to many of our acquaintance. Farther, I conſider, that *The time is ſhort.* If I go now, in a few years, perhaps much ſooner, you will follow me, I hope, in the ſame path, depending wholly on the divine mercy, through faith in the blood, and mediation, of Jeſus Chriſt our Redeemer, according to the plain, literal terms, of the goſpel. It is in this faith I am now happy. This bears me, in a meaſure, above my fears and ſins, above my ſickneſs, and above the many agreeable views, I had formed in my mind, upon a happy return to you. May this be your ſupport, your guide, and ſhield, and I can aſk no more

for

for you. Then you will, at laſt, attain complete and unfading happineſs; and we ſhall meet again, and, perhaps, to join in recollecting the ſcenes, we have been engaged in together, while upon earth. Then, probably, we ſhall clearly ſee, what I now believe; and from which I derive, another reaſon for acquieſcence; that, as the goodneſs of God firſt joined us, ſo, it was his mercy that parted us again. Mercy to each, to both of us.

We have, perhaps, been ſometimes, too happy in each other; to have been always, or longer ſo, might have betrayed us into a dangerous ſecurity. We might have forgotten our preſent duty, and our future deſtination. It has been too much the caſe already: I have greatly failed myſelf, and I have been but a poor example for you. Should it, therefore, pleaſe God to make my death, the happy occaſion of fixing your dependance, hope, and deſire, upon him alone, ſurely I can ſay, Thy will be done. My heart bleeds, when I repreſent to myſelf, the

the grief, with which ſuch an event would overwhelm you. But I know, that he can moderate and ſanctify it, and give you cauſe, hereafter, to ſay, It was good for you to have been ſo afflicted; and, ere long, the time will come, when all tears ſhall be wiped, both from your eyes and mine.

At Sea, 30 April.

It has pleaſed God to give me another reprieve. The fever has left me, and I feel my ſtrength returning. You will congratulate me on my recovery. I thank you. But let us not be too ſecure. A relapſe may ſoon happen; or twenty unforeſeen events, may, without ſickneſs, prove equally deciſive. I hope I am, in ſome meaſure, thankful for the preſent, and not anxious about the future; for the Lord will appoint, what is beſt for us. My head was much confuſed, when I wrote

wrote laſt; but I ſhall let it ſtand, as a ſpecimen of my thoughts, in the hour of trial. I endeavoured, from the firſt, to compoſe my mind for departure hence, if ſuch ſhould be the will of God. And my belief of the Goſpel, (which I once deſpiſed) made me tolerably eaſy, and reſigned. When this grand point, was, according to my poor attainment, ſettled, you were the chief, the ſole object of my remaining ſolicitude; and I was deſirous of leaving a few lines, while the fever did not render me quite incapable of writing, to certify you, in what manner I was enabled to meet my ſummons; and to leave you my farewel advice, my bleſſing, and my thanks. But before I could finiſh what I intended, the occaſion was mercifully removed.

I hope the remembrance of this viſitation, will be a long, and conſtant benefit to me; and will give me, a better ſenſe of the value of health, which I had been favoured with ſo long, that it ſeemed almoſt a thing of courſe. I bleſs God, for reſtoring

ing it to me again. If it be his will, I ſhall be glad to live a little longer, upon many accounts; and, among the chief, for your ſake. And Oh! may it pleaſe him, to ſpare you for me, likewiſe, and to grant that we may again meet in peace! My eyes will not yet allow me to write much.

At Sea, 16 May.

I SEND this, by a veſſel, which will probably arrive in England, before you can have any news of me, from St. Chriſtopher's, to inform you, that the Lord has brought us ſafely, within about a week's ſail of that iſland. I have before mentioned the death of Capt. L—, which was, indeed, a trial; but I ſoon acquieſced, as I ought always, in the will of God. When I conſider, It is the Lord, ſhould not I add, Let him do as ſeemeth him good?

There is, indeed, one trial, to which I always ſtand expoſed; ſhould this come,

my

my heart and conſcience give me cauſe to fear, that, not only moral arguments, but the poor attainments I have made in religion, would fail, unleſs I was immediately ſtrengthened from above. And I humbly truſt I ſhall be, if I am ever called to a ſcene, which, at preſent, overpowers my ſpirits, when I but tranſiently think of it. Yes! God could enable me, to reſign you alſo! He has promiſed ſtrength according to our day; and he is compaſſionate, and faithful.

Since I left Africa, I have been ill of a fever. It was rather violent, but unattended with pains, delirium, or any threatening ſymptom, and laſted but eight or ten days. Though it was not of the moſt dangerous ſpecies, I thought it right, to conſider it, as a warning to prepare for eternity: and I praiſe God, the principles, upon which I aim to reſt my hope, when in health, did not fail me in ſickneſs. In ſurrendering myſelf entirely, to the mercy, and care, of my Lord and Saviour, my

hopes

hopes ſo much exceeded my fears, that, had it been his will, I ſeemed contented to give up, even all thoſe proſpects, which your love, and a happy return to you, afforded me; (for, at that time, no other temporal proſpects, had the leaſt weight with me) and to have died, in the midſt of the pathleſs ocean, at a diſtance from every friend. If my ſenſes had not failed, I ſhould have died praying, that you might be ſupported, and the ſtroke ſanctified to you. I wrote a letter to you in my illneſs (confuſed as my head was,) when I was not without apprehenſion, that it would be the laſt ſervice, my hand would perform for me. But the Lord has been merciful to me: I am not only ſtill living, but perfectly recovered!

St. Kitt's, Sandy Point, 30 May.

WE arrived here the 21ſt inſt. and I received your dear, obliging letter, of the 16th February.

Before now, I hope you have received an account, of my celebration of your birth-day, and, the happy conſequence of it, the day of our marriage. You ſay, you endeavoured to imitate me, on the return of theſe days, not only in obſerving them, but in the ſame manner. My own attempts, are ſo unſuitable to what I could wiſh, that I cannot ſuppoſe yours inferior to them. I hope you will always copy, after a more perfect pattern. Our prayers have been thus far anſwered; and I hope, the hour of meeting, is not very diſtant. You will be the more ſenſible of this mercy, when you receive information of my illneſs, on the paſſage, and that my life was, for a day or two, thought very dubious, by thoſe about me. My health

was

was reſtored at ſea; but for want of freſh proviſions, and proper nouriſhment, (for I had diſtributed my ſtock among the ſick ſeamen, before I was taken ill myſelf) I continued rather faint and weak; but now, at Mr. G—'s, I have not only neceſſaries, but delicacies, and allow myſelf more indulgence than uſual, with a view of recruiting.

I am glad you think my picture like me. I cannot perſuade myſelf to think ſo of yours; yet I frequently look at it, and talk to it, becauſe you ſat for it; and I can ſupply the defects of it, from my mind, where the dear original is painted, or rather engraved, to the greateſt exactneſs. There, I have traces impreſſed, which no pencil could copy; a lively repreſentation, not only of your perſon, but of your heart.

Now and then, I have been conſtrained to omit our noon-tide appointment; but, in general, I have obſerved it with much pleaſure, and have found it, one of my beſt alleviations of your abſence. At preſent, the

the time falls out with me, about eight in the morning, which is rather inconvenient; but I try to make it up, more or leſs, through the day; and I believe, that one waking hour of my life, ſince I parted with you, has ſeldom paſſed, without ſome breathing of prayer in your behalf.

Sandy-Point, 7 June.

I HAVE found fewer opportunities of writing, than I expected; but, before the cloſe of this month, I hope to be at ſea myſelf, on my way home. Remember what I have formerly written, upon ſuch occaſions, to prevent your uneaſineſs; or rather, remember what the Lord has written, for our encouragement. When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee. In all the dangers, and difficulties, that may affect either of us, our God is ever preſent. May we learn to ſanctify him, in our hearts, and to make him our dread,

dread, and we need fear nothing. It is my daily, earneſt prayer, that you may find peace and comfort, in his promiſes, which are all yea and amen, in Jeſus our Redeemer, to them who truſt in his atonement, and mediation. If we have him on our ſide, nothing can be againſt us, ſo as to ſeparate us from his love. Through him, we ſhall prove more than conquerors. But if we rely on ourſelves, or on any thing elſe, ſhort of that only rock of ſalvation, we ſhall be confuſed and ſhaken.

The encloſed was written, chiefly, during my ſickneſs, after leaving the coaſt. I had ſome expectation, it would have been my laſt; but God was merciful to me. I deſired to live, upon your account, and my deſire was granted. At preſent, I am in perfect health, and happy, in the hope of being ſoon reſtored to you again.

Sandy Point, 13 June.

I HAVE picked up a valuable acquaintance here, of whom I hope to tell you more, ſoon. I was going to ſay, he is one of my ſtamp; but he is far beyond me, in all that I moſt deſire. I hope his example, and converſe, will prove to my advantage. We are always together, when buſineſs will permit: and the laſt fortnight has been the moſt pleaſant time I have ſpent, during my abſence from you. To be from you, is, indeed, an abatement to every pleaſure. But I hope, I make ſome advance, in ſubmiſſion to the will of God. I have reſigned all into his hands, and, while ſeparate from you, that is, from all that I hold dear in this world, I perceive, in ſome degree, his preſence, whoſe loving-kindneſs is better than life itſelf.

A veſſel arrived to-day from London, which brought many letters, but none for me. It is no matter. I truſt in the Lord,

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and this keeps me from uneaſineſs. I was more afraid than hurt, for want of letters here, laſt voyage; and I hope, I ſhall not be weak enough, to grieve again, without juſt grounds.

At Sea, 24 June.

I LEFT St. Kitt's, the 20th inſt. and am now, about 600 miles, on my way homewards, in perfect health, and peace.

I had a ſacramental opportunity while there, on Whitſunday, and was glad to embrace it. The ſervice was, indeed, poorly adminiſtered, by a man, whoſe only diſtinguiſhing mark of a miniſter, I believe, was his gown and ſurplice. But I aimed, to look beyond the man, to the Lord; and I hope I received a bleſſing. You may be ſure, I thought of you upon the occaſion. I hoped, that you were engaged, that day, in the ſame manner; and I earneſtly prayed, (as I do daily) that every

appointed mean of grace, may be made effectual to your preſent comfort, and final ſalvation. This is the one thing needful, which I aſk with ſolicitude. I am more cool, as to our temporal concerns; becauſe I know, we are not competent to chooſe for ourſelves; and, therefore, I am content with begging a bleſſing upon them, in general terms; ſo far as they may moſt conduce, to the promoting his glory, and our eternal welfare; reſigning the particulars, to the wiſe, and merciful diſpoſal of God. And I can ſay, to his praiſe, that things never ſucceeded more to my mind, than ſince I have been taught, to aim at this method. May we be intereſted in the covenant, which is well ordered, in all points, and ſure; and then, both great mercies, and ſmall mercies, (if any mercies could, with propriety, be deemed ſmall) will be ours of courſe. Then we need be anxious about nothing; but, as occaſions ariſe, make known our requeſts to God; and, if what we aſk be really good for us, we ſhall

certainly

certainly have it. The apoſtle's argument, upon this head, is unanſwerable. He that ſpared not his own ſon, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not, with him alſo, freely give us all things? That powerful love, which brought down the Moſt High, to aſſume our nature, to ſuffer, and to die for us, will not permit thoſe who depend on him, to want what is really good for them.

At Sea, 6 July.

TO-MORROW will be a feaſt-day with you, if, as I hope, you are well. My thoughts and prayers will attend you, at the Lord's table. May you have his preſence and bleſſing, in all his ordinances! It is my allotment, to be ſeldom favoured, with the benefit of Chriſtian communion, and public ordinances. But, I thank the Lord, I know that He, who is rich in mercy, is in every place, equally nigh to all

who call upon him. Neither in the wilds of Guinea, nor in the pathleſs ocean, am I wholly without his gracious preſence. Yet, were it lawful for me to chooſe, I would rather be a door-keeper in the houſe of God, than to dwell in ſplendour, at a diſtance from it. However, it is a great ſatisfaction to me, that you, who are dear to me as my own heart, have always in your power, the privileges, which are but now and then permitted to me.

Two very different errors are frequent, concerning the Lord's ſupper. The firſt is, of thoſe who keep away, becauſe, as they ſay, they are unworthy. If they mean, that they are determined to perſiſt in thoſe courſes, which are directly contrary to the deſign, of our Redeemer's life and death, they certainly have no buſineſs at his table. But alas! what will they do, if death ſhould ſummon them, in this hardened diſpoſition, to his tribunal? But with reſpect to thoſe, who mourn for their ſins, and ſtrive, and pray againſt them, it is an artifice

artifice of the tempter, to deter them from the Lord's table, becauſe they are ſinners; when it is a ſure, and glorious truth, that ſinners are the very perſons invited. The whole need not the Phyſician, but the ſick. All the ordinances, and particularly this, are deſigned, to ſtrengthen the weak, to confirm the doubtful, and to raiſe them that are fallen. Unbelief, and a legal temper, diſhonour the goſpel, and diſquiet the ſoul; and, indeed, the objection is founded in pride, for they own, that if they were better, as it is called, they would readily attend. But it is beſt for us, to renounce all ſeeming good in ourſelves, and, as helpleſs, worthleſs ſinners, to rely wholly on the mercy of God, in Jeſus Chriſt.

There is an oppoſite error. Many ruſh upon this ſacrament, as though it were a mere ceremony; or a civil inſtitution, to qualify for an office; or a ſponge, to wipe off their paſt offences, that they may begin a new ſcore. They have no ſenſe of

the evil of ſin, and, therefore, cannot know their need of a Saviour. But they preſume, that God is merciful, and are quieted. He is, indeed, merciful beyond our conception, and he has ſhewn himſelf ſo, in the method of reconciliation; but he has declared the way, in which he will ſhew mercy, and there is no other. For a perſon to partake of that bread, and of that cup, which exhibit to us the ſorrows, and ſufferings, of the Son of God, for our ſins, and yet wilfully to continue, in the practice of thoſe ſins, which coſt him all his agonies, in the garden, and upon the croſs, to expiate; is, as much as in him lies, to crucify the Son of God afreſh, and to put him to open ſhame.

At Sea, 13 July.

Of all the authors I have read, who have occaſionally treated of a married life, and of the inadvertencies on both ſides, by

by which it is too often rendered unhappy; I do not remember one, who has touched upon the great evil of all; I mean, our wretched propenſity, to lay the foundation of our propoſed happineſs, independent of God. If we are happy, in a mutual affection, when we ſet out, we are too apt to think, that nothing more is wanting; and to ſuppoſe our own prudence, and good judgment, ſufficient to carry us on to the end. But that it is not ſo, in fact, we have daily proof, from the example of numbers, who, notwithſtanding a ſincere regard to each other, at firſt, and the advantages of good ſenſe, and good temper, in general, yet, by ſome hidden cauſes, gradually become cool, and indifferent; and, at length, burdenſome, perhaps, hateful to each other. This event is often noticed, and excites ſurpriſe, becauſe few can properly account for it. But I ſee few marriages commenced, which give me hope of a more favourable iſſue.

It is an undoubted truth, that the Moſt

High God, who is ever preſent with, and over his creatures, is the author, and giver, of all that is agreeable, or comfortable to us, in this world. We cannot be either eaſy in our ourſelves, or acceptable to others, but by his favour; and, therefore, when we preſume to uſe his creature comforts, without conſulting, and acknowledging him in them, his honour is concerned to diſappoint us. Dreaming of ſure ſatisfaction, in the proſecution, or enjoyment, of our own deſires, we do but imitate the builders of Babel, who ſaid, Go to, let us build a tower, to get ourſelves a name. So we, too often, when circumſtances ſmile upon us, vainly think of ſecuring happineſs upon earth; a ſenſual happineſs, and on an earth that ſtands accurſed, and ſubject to vanity, for our ſins. In every ſtate and ſcene of life, there are inſtances of this folly; but perhaps it is, in no one, more inſinuating and plauſible, than in the commencement of marriage, between thoſe, whoſe hearts are

united.

united. But alas! God looks down upon ſuch ſhort-ſighted projectors, as he did upon thoſe of old. He pours contempt upon their deſigns; he divides their language; he permits ſeparate views and intereſts to riſe in their minds; their fair ſcheme of happineſs degenerates into confuſion, and they are left under the reproach, of having begun to build, what they will never be able to finiſh. This is the true cauſe, of half the unhappineſs complained of, and obſerved among thoſe, who come together by their own conſent. Not for want of good-will at firſt, nor for want of any neceſſary qualification in themſelves; but becauſe, neglecting to own, and to ſeek God in their concerns, he has refuſed them that bleſſing, without which no union can ſubſiſt.

You will not aſk me, how we ſet out, and in what manner, our happy connexion has been conducted. But perhaps you will ſee much reaſon to aſk, (I am ſure I do) why we have ſucceeded ſo much better

than others; and why we, unlike the moſt of our acquaintance, have preſerved our regard unabated, and all our obligations freſh upon our minds, into the middle of our fifth year? I cannot pretend, that it is owing to my being duly dependant, and humble, in aſcribing all my bleſſings to the Lord; or to my having enjoyed them, with an eye to his glory. (Alas, I have given way to evils, which I knew, I ought to avoid; and have neglected the good, to which my conſcience called me.) But it is, becauſe the Lord, in all his dealings with me, has been wonderfully, ſingularly, merciful and favourable. By his grace, he brought me from a ſtate of apoſtaſy, to the knowledge of his goſpel; and by his good Providence, he has no leſs diſtinguiſhed me in temporals. He brought me, as I may ſay, out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage; from ſlavery and famine, on the coaſt of Africa, into my preſent eaſy ſituation. And he brought me, from the moſt abandoned ſcenes of profligacy,

profligacy, when I was ſunk, into a complacency with the vileſt wretches; to make me happy, in the poſſeſſion of your heart, and perſon. And thus, he has continued to me, in your love, and its endearing conſequences, all that I hold valuable in life, for ſo many years; though I have not endeavoured, in the manner I ought, to deſerve you, for one whole day. Often, the conſciouſneſs of my diſingenuous behaviour, has made my heart tremble, upon your account. I have feared, leſt you ſhould be ſnatched away, for my puniſhment. But the Lord is God, and not man. As in a thouſand inſtances, ſo particularly in this, I may well ſay, He has not dealt with me, according to my ſins, nor rewarded me after my iniquities. He has neither ſeparated us by death, nor involved us in heavy afflictions, nor ſuffered our affections to fail. Let us praiſe him for theſe three articles, for there is ſcarcely one couple in a thouſand, that is favoured with them all, for an equal ſpace of time.

Mr.

Mr. Addiſon has treated with propriety, on the want of complaiſance, the improper freedoms, and ſeveral other failings, which, though, ſeemingly, of no great immediate importance themſelves, may, in time, give riſe to ſerious, and abiding diſguſts. The faults which he mentions, are to be guarded againſt; but to attend to theſe only, will not be ſufficient. Philoſophy, and reaſoning, have their uſe; but religion alone can teach us, how to uſe the good things of this world, without abuſing them; and to make our earthly comforts, bleſſings indeed; by improving them to a farther view; by tracing them, as ſtreams, to their fountain; by extending our views, from time to eternity; and making our mutual affection, a mean, of raiſing our deſires to the great Lord of all. But herein, alas! I have greatly failed hitherto. And perhaps this is the reaſon, why I am ſo long, and ſo often, ſeparated from you. I now ſee, that I may number it, among my greateſt mercies, that I was not permitted

mitted to remain always at home with you. Perhaps, by this time, I might have been hardened, into an entire neglect of my duty to God, and my moſt eſſential duty to you. But, by being forced to leave you, again and again, I have had opportunity, and leiſure, for reflection, and, I would hope, at length, for repentance. You have been much miſtaken, in your opinion of me. Your kind partiality has thought me very good, when, indeed, I have been very bad; very inſenſible, and ungrateful, not only to God, but even to you. I have not properly anſwered, the truſt you have repoſed in me; but, I hope, I ſhall be enabled to amend.

You ſay, you ſometimes ſhew my letters. Though moſt of them are in an unfaſhionable ſtrain, I am not very ſolicitous who may ſee them. I write from my heart; from a heart, that is not aſhamed (excepting as I have acknowledged above) in any thing relating to you. A heart,

that

that hardly beats, but in concert to ſome earneſt wiſh for your welfare. A heart, that always feels the ſmalleſt inſtance of your kindneſs. A heart, that would give up every pleaſure, this world can afford, rather than loſe the joy it feels in being yours, and that you own an intereſt in it. A heart, that would welcome any temporal troubles, that might be a mean of final good to you.—Thus far I can go.—There was a time, when I could have gone farther. Do not think my love impaired, becauſe I now deſire to ſtop here. There was a time, (what a mercy, that the Lord did not tear my idol from me) when you had that place in my heart, which is only due to him, and I regarded you as my chief good. But I hope that time is paſt; and never did I wiſh ſo earneſtly, for the firſt proofs of your affection, as I do now, that you may be enabled to reſtrain it within due bounds; and that your regard may not prevent you, from conſidering me as a frail, poor, mutable creature, unable of myſelf,

myſelf, to procure you any real good, or to ſhield you from the ſmalleſt evil. Oh, may we adore him, who provided us for each other; who brought us together, and has ſpared us ſo long! May we love each other till death, yea, I hope, in a future ſtate, beyond death! And, in order to this, may we, in the firſt place, love him with all our heart, and ſoul, and ſtrength, who firſt loved us, and gave himſelf for us, to renew our forfeited title, to the good things of both worlds, and to waſh us from our ſins, in his own blood. This was love indeed! Where were the ſenſibility, and ingenuouſneſs of ſpirit, which we ſometimes think we poſſeſs, that this unſpeakable lover of ſouls, has been no more noticed, no more admired, and beloved, by us hitherto. Lord! make us partakers of thy divine nature, for thou art Love!

You

At Sea, 27 July.

You will obſerve, I have of late made an alteration in my poſt-days. Inſtead of a few lines, two or three times a week, I now write a whole ſheet every Saturday; and in the choice of a ſubject, I have an eye to the ſervice of the following day. Thus I indulge my inclination in writing to you, without breaking the rule I have, for ſome time paſt, preſcribed to myſelf: the forenoon of Saturday, I allow for relaxation; but when I have dined, if no neceſſary buſineſs prevents me, I endeavour to abſtract my mind from worldly concerns, and to prepare for the approaching ſabbath.

I now mean to give you ſome account, how I paſs a Sea-Sunday, when I am favoured with a tolerable frame of mind, and am enabled, by the grace of God, to obtain ſome tolerable maſtery over the incumbrances of the fleſh, and the world, which,

in

in my beſt hours, are too prevalent with me.

My evening devotions, when opportunity permits, commence about ſix o'clock, the week, and the month round; and I am, ſometimes, engaged a full hour, or more, in prayer and praiſe, without any remarkable wearineſs, or repetition. *You* furniſh me with much ſubject for both. On a Saturday evening, in particular, I beg a bleſſing upon your Sunday, upon your public worſhip, and retirement. And as I know, that where you are, you are unavoidably expoſed to trifling company, to whom all days are alike, I pray, that you may be ſhielded from their evil influence. I have likewiſe to pray for others; for our friends; for many of them by name, and according to the knowledge I have of their circumſtances; and extend my petitions to the general ſtate of the world, that they who are ſtrangers to the goſpel, in which I have found ſo much peace, may be brought to the knowledge of it; and

that

that they who neglect, and deſpiſe it, as I once did, may, like me, obtain mercy. When theſe, and other points, are gone over, and my praiſes offered, for our temporal and ſpiritual bleſſings, and likewiſe, my repeated confeſſions of the ſins of my childhood, youth, and advanced years, as they occur to my remembrance, you will not wonder, that an hour is elapſed. The remainder of the evening, I paſs in ruminating on the mercies of the preceding week; the ſubjects of my reading, or whatever I can pick uſeful ſelf-conference from.

I uſually riſe at four, on a Sunday morning. My firſt employ, is to beg a bleſſing upon the day, for us both; for all, who, like you, are preparing to wait upon God in public, and for all, who, like myſelf, are, for a time, excluded from that privilege. To this, ſucceeds a ſerious walk upon deck. Then I read two or three ſelect chapters. At breakfaſt, I eat and drink, more than I talk; for I have no one here, to join in ſuch converſation, as I ſhould

then

then chooſe. At the hour of your going to church, I attend you in my mind, with another prayer; and at eleven o'clock, the ſhip's bell rings my own little congregation about me. To them I read the morning ſervice, according to the Liturgy. Then I walk the deck, and attend my obſervation, as we call it; that is, to know, by the ſun, (if it ſhines) at noon, the latitude the ſhip is in. Then comes dinner. In the afternoon, I frequently take a nap, for half an hour; if not, I read, or write in a book, I keep for that purpoſe. I wait upon you again to church, in the afternoon, and convene my ſhip's company, as in the morning. At four o'clock, I drink tea, which recruits my ſpirits for the evening. Then another ſcripture leſſon, and a walk, brings ſix o'clock, which, I have told you, is my hour for ſtated prayer. I remember you then again, in the moſt particular manner, and, in truſt that you are ſtill preſerved in ſafety, for me, I endea-

your

vour to praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, ſo long vouchſafed to us.

But alas, when I look back, upon a day ſpent in this manner, I cannot expreſs how much I have to mourn over, and be aſhamed of, at night. Oh! the wanderings, and faintneſs, of my prayers; the diſtraction of my thoughts; the coldneſs of my heart, and the ſecret workings of pride, which debaſe, and corrupt, my beſt ſervices. In ſhort, every thing is wrong. But I remember, that I am not under the law, but under grace. I rely on the promiſed mediation of my Saviour; renounce my own poor performances, and implore mercy, in his name, and for his ſake only, and that ſets all to rights. I need no one to pronounce an abſolution to me; I can tell myſelf, that my ſins are forgiven me, becauſe I know in whom I have believed. This leads me to praiſe and adore him, that I was born in an age, and country, favoured with the light of the goſpel; when there are millions of my ſpecies, who

have neither the means of grace, nor the hope of glory; and farther, that I have been called out, from the unhappy apoſtaſy, and licentiouſneſs, and miſery, into which I had plunged myſelf; when many thouſands, who never offended to the degree I have, are either ſuffered to go on, from bad to worſe, till there is no hope, or are cut off by a ſtroke, and ſink into endleſs miſery, in a thoughtleſs moment! Lord, not unto me, but unto Thee be the praiſe. It was wholly the effect of thy grace; for thou would'ſt be found of me, when I had not the leaſt inclination to ſeek thee!

Though I have given you this account, chiefly of my paſſing a Sunday, it will in the main, ſerve for the hiſtory of any day, in any week, ſince I left St. Chriſtopher's. It is thus I am enabled, ardently as I love you, to ſupport your abſence, without impatience; though a re-union to you, ſuch as our two former, includes all I can wiſh, as to temporals. And I truſt, he who has brought me ſafely, over two thirds of the ocean,

ocean, that was lately between us, will do the reſt, in his own good hour. And, in the mean while, bleſſed be his name, my time does not hang heavy upon my hands. I truſt *you* chooſe him for your portion alſo. Thus we ſhall bear ſeparation better, and be more happy when together, than formerly. And when we are called finally to part, (as, ſooner or later, we muſt) He will ſtrengthen us, according to the day of our trouble, and will aſſuredly unite us again, to unſpeakable advantage; and place us beyond the reach, of every trial, and every evil.

At Sea, 3 *Auguſt.*

If our reckonings are right, I am now within a day's ſail of Ireland; and I may hope, (if the fair wind continues) to ſee Liverpool within a week. My paſſage thus far, like all the paſſages I have made, ſince you have owned an intereſt in me, has

has been remarkably exempted from diſagreeable events, and apparent dangers. As I hope I ſhall not have occaſion to ſend you another weekly ſheet, before I ſee you, I would employ this, on a cloſing invitation, to join with me, in praiſing the great Author of all Good, for his numerous, and repeated mercies, and bleſſings, vouchſafed to us both. And the rather, at preſent, as this day will conclude another year of my life. How much reaſon have I to ſay, with David, O Lord, thou crowneſt the year with thy goodneſs.

We are never in a better diſpoſition, to aſk, and obtain, further favours from the Lord, than when our hearts are impreſſed, with a grateful ſenſe of thoſe, we have already received. *We* have, indeed, reaſon to praiſe him, above many; for his diſpenſations to us, have been ſingularly favourable. His goodneſs has been manifeſted, from the firſt moments of our life; yea, ſtill more early, from the circumſtances of

our birth. It was by the ordination of his kind providence, that we were born in an age, and land, of light and liberty, and not among the millions, who have no knowledge of the means of grace, or of the hope of glory; nor among the multitudes, who are trained up, from their cradles, to ſubſtitute ſuperſtition for religion. But I ſhall defer ſpeaking of ſpiritual mercies, till I have ſaid ſomething of our temporal bleſſings.

Perhaps we have ſometimes been tempted to think, that, becauſe we do not poſſeſs titles and eſtates, and are not of high diſtinction, and eſtimation, in the world, we have received nothing extraordinary; but two reflections will, I hope, ſuffice to correct this miſtake.

Let us, in the firſt place, think of the miſeries we know, or obſerve, in the world. How many are crippled, or maimed, in their bodies, or diſordered in their minds? How many, at this minute, are nearly periſhing, through extreme want of the common

common neceſſaries of life? How many are chained to their beds, by ſickneſs, and excruciating pains, and can find no eaſe by day, or by night? not to inſiſt on the more deplorable caſe of thoſe, who are ſuffering the agonies of a wounded ſpirit, or a terrified conſcience. Let us reflect on the miſeries and outrages, which the ſcourge of war, brings upon cities, provinces, and whole nations. Or, if thoſe ſcenes are too ſhocking to dwell upon, it will ſuffice, to take the eſtimate much lower. Let us look round us at home, amongſt our own acquaintance, or, at fartheſt, within the bounds of the newſpapers. How many fatherleſs—how many widows, do we hear of? How many, from happy proſpects, rendered ſuddenly miſerable, by what we call caſualties? Take theſe things together, and let us aſk our conſciences, if a continued exemption, from ſuch a variety of evils, and a conſtant ſupply of the many wants, we have in common with others,

are not favours which we enjoy, and which are afforded, comparatively to few?

But farther, let us, in the ſecond place, turn our eyes to thoſe who are placed in the ſmoother walks of life, whom cuſtomary ſpeech calls the *happy*. Run over what you know of thoſe, who are moſt noticed for perſonal qualifications, for their riches, honours, or the variety of their means, and modes, of pleaſure: and then, let us aſk ourſelves, if there is any one amongſt all theſe, with whom we would be content to change, in all points? If we ſhould not accept ſuch a propoſal, as ſurely we ſhould not, (I anſwer for you, no leſs confidently, than for myſelf) it follows evidently, that we have more to be thankful for, (our own partial ſelves being judges) than many of thoſe, whom, perhaps, we have been diſpoſed to envy; and if ſo, it is equally plain, that there are no two perſons, upon the face of the earth, more indebted to an indulgent Providence, than ourſelves.

If I mention particulars, I muſt begin, with what I have moſt at heart, our mutual, happy affection. In this, at leaſt, we are rich; and this is a kind of wealth, with which, gold and ſilver will bear no compariſon; nor would many cart loads of them, purchaſe a ſingle grain of ſo great a bleſſing. But let us not aſcribe this to ourſelves. How manifeſt, how powerful, and marvellous, was the hand of God, in bringing us together! For myſelf, I have reaſon to ſay, (as you well know) that never was attempt of the kind ſucceſsful, under greater improbabilities; and yet, ſo peculiar was our turn, that, had we miſſed each other, perhaps there was not one of each ſex, in the kingdom, that could have made us ſo entirely happy. Then, after marriage, it was not impoſſible for us, more than others, to decline into that ſatiety, and indifference, ſo much complained of, and ſo often obſerved. If we had ſunk no lower, than into a cold eſteem, a ſort of mechanical good-will, the world

might have judged charitably, that we were well matched; but we could not have been able to write, to ſpeak, to look, and to feel, as we do now. But farther, when all that we do poſſeſs was granted, we might ſtill have been unhappy, without the eſpecial protection of God. We were liable to ſickneſs, death, and a variety of diſtreſſes, which, if they had not impaired our love, would have made it productive of more pain than pleaſure. But, in this reſpect, we have been no leſs diſtinguiſhed, than in the reſt. I can give you no idea of the many evils, and dangers, which ſurrounded me, in my two laſt voyages; nor can I recount, how many fell beſide me, and at my right hand, who had equal proſpects, better conſtitutions, and, perhaps, ſuperior ſkill. But this was not all, nor even half; for I found, upon my return, that my deareſt M— was ſtill preſerved to me, and had always the ſatisfaction to meet you, in the moſt agreeable manner I could

could wiſh. And I have been conducted towards you thus far, in ſafety, the third time, and my hopes ſtill flouriſh.

To the prime article, What we are to each other, many may be added, which, though ſubordinate, are very valuable. The union, and harmony, of every branch of our family; an eaſy, ſufficient way of life, creditable and decent, if not ſplendid. But want of room prevents me from enlarging on theſe items, and from the mention of ſeveral more; for I am not willing to fill the ſheet, with what relates merely to this tranſitory ſtate. The bleſſings I have recounted, are in themſelves great; but when compared with the views, and hopes, revealed to us by the goſpel, they ſink at once in their importance, and become, any farther than ſubſervient to our ſpiritual intereſt, leſs than nothing, and vanity. All advantages of this kind, might have been permitted us, for the term of a frail life, and yet we might have lived and died,

ſtrangers to God, and to true peace; nay, we certainly ſhould, had we been left to ourſelves.

Let us, therefore, praiſe the mercy, and goodneſs, of God, for conveying to us all his gifts, in the channel of redeeming love; and for leading us to build our hopes, upon the mediation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, by being made a curſe for us, and dying upon the croſs, has taken out that curſe, and evil, which the tranſgreſſion of our firſt parents, had entailed upon the whole lower creation. Let us praiſe the Lord, that though he has bleſſed us, with ſo much of our hearts deſire, he has enabled us to hope, that he has not appointed us all our portion of good in this life. Let us rejoice, not merely in our comforts upon earth, but rather, in the truſt we have, that our names are written in heaven. Let us receive our Lord's gifts with thankfulneſs, and improve them to his ſervice; and may they be doubly welcome to us, as tokens of his love, and earneſts of his farther

ther gracious deſigns, in our favour. And Oh! may the conſciouſneſs of our paſt neglect, and our unſuitable returns, for all his benefits, inſpire us with redoubled diligence and care, for the future; and engage us in a humble, and daily application, to our great Surety, who has undertaken to pay *all* our debts. And may you, my deareſt M. appear to-morrow at his table, with theſe views, acknowledging that our talents have been all of his bounty, and the abuſe of them, yours and mine, and all that we can properly call our own. May your confeſſions end in peace, and your ſorrow terminate in joy, in receiving the pledges of his dying love. You will remember me, and I ſhall endeavour to be with you in ſpirit; and I truſt, on the next ſacrament day, I ſhall accompany you in perſon; and before that time, I hope we ſhall be permitted, with one heart, and one voice, to praiſe the Lord, our light and ſtrength, and ſalvation, who holds our ſouls in peace, and ſuffers not our feet to

be moved. O Lord, thou haſt dealt wonderfully with us, therefore will we exalt thy glorious name!

I am unalterably yours.

Liverpool, 11 Auguſt.

My laſt, juſt informed you, of my arrival here, in health and peace. I can tell you little more at preſent. I lived almoſt without ſleep, nearly a week before we came in, and my head, and thoughts, are not yet quite ſettled.

It is not at preſent determined, whether you or I, muſt remove from where we are; if you receive this without a poſtſcript, you may expect me. I ſhall be clear of my ſhip African, in two days. I have quitted her, becauſe ſhe is ſuch a heavy ſailer. But there is another, that was born (launched) the ſame day with her, which I may have if I pleaſe, and probably I ſhall not refuſe her, though I know not what to do with her at preſent. My judg-

ment

ment tells me, that it would be better to ſail ſix months hence, and I have almoſt induced Mr. M—, to think as I do. And yet I fear, he ſuſpects that I ſtart objections, that I may have the more time to paſs with you. I wiſh he could know, the peculiar turn of my love, and he would fully acquit me of ſuch a charge. It is true indeed, were I maſter of a ſmall independency, though but a ſmall one, I ſhould glory in avowing, that nothing, which the mercenary world calls advantage—not a large heap of yellow counters—ſhould bribe me to the neceſſity, of being ſo long, and ſo far, from my deareſt M. For, when I conſider myſelf only, I know, and feel, that the price of a kingdom, would poorly pay me for your abſence. But when I think of you, as unprovided for, and liable to I know not what, if any thing ſhould befal me; and ſtill more, that your deſire of making me happy, was the occaſion of your being in this precarious ſtate; I almoſt grudge

every hour, in which I am not ſome way engaged for your intereſt. I ſhould be aſhamed to be long at home, when your concerns require me abroad. However, I aim to ſubmit every thing, to the diſpoſal of that all-wiſe Providence, on which I am permitted to depend, and by which I never was, nor can be, diſappointed. I have many reaſons, for deſiring a little time with you, if it will ſuit my buſineſs; if otherwiſe, I have one reaſon againſt it, that outweighs them all, The ſenſe of what I owe to you. I conſidered, before we married, what muſt be the conſequence, on my ſide; I joyfully accepted the terms, with all diſadvantages: and, I thank God, I never yet repented, or thought for a moment, that I could either bear, or forbear, too much, while you were my motive, and reward.

If you aſk, how I paſs my time here? I anſwer, that if an aſſemblage of all I can wiſh for, could ſatisfy me, without your company, I need not ſet my foot

out

out of Liverpool; yet if I did not keep a ſtrict watch over my heart, I ſhould be uneaſy, and impatient amidſt all; and more ſo here than elſewhere, for every thing I ſee, reminds me, that you were with me laſt year.

Warrington, 18 Auguſt.

I AM thus far, on my return from Mancheſter, and thus far, on my way from Liverpool to London; and hope to be with you on Friday. You muſt prepare for another journey, for I promiſed to return within a month. Mr. M—, in his uſual manner, talks of having the ſhip at ſea in ſix weeks; but I believe it will be near twelve before all is ready. I have procured, for my new ſhip, the name of the Bee; both for ſhortneſs, and ſignificancy. I could comment a good while upon the word Bee, and talk about the ſting, and the honey; but I forbear, as we hope ſo ſoon to meet.

I make

I make this a day of reſt, for I think it not right to travel on a Sunday, without a more urgent neceſſity, than I can plead at preſent. But it has been a cold, unfruitful day. It muſt be ſo at times, while I am encumbered with the world, and the fleſh. But I am ſomething enlivened, by the receipt of yours, of the 14th. Like Hezekiah, I ſpread the letter before the Lord. But my circumſtances are very different from his: Inſtead of complaining of enemies, my joyful errand to his mercy-ſeat, is, to praiſe him for his goodneſs; for the confirmation of your health, and peace, and for the happy proſpect, of being ſoon with you.

The laſt week I was at ſea, was no leſs ſtormy with us, than with you; and beſides the many inviſible, and unheeded evils, from which we were preſerved, we were twice in imminent, apparent danger, and never more ſo, than for two or three hours before we arrived at Liverpool. Let theſe inſtances confirm you in the

perſuaſion,

perſuaſion, that ſtorms and calms are equally ſafe, to thoſe who truſt in the God of the ſea, and the dry land. He ſometimes gives me a view of impending harm, to teach me, that I am inſufficient to my own ſafety. But when deliverance is ſeaſonable, and neceſſary, I find it always at hand. Had the winds, and weather, during the whole paſſage, been at my own choice, I could not have gained my port, in a more ſatisfactory manner, or in a better hour, than I did. I had the pleaſure of returning thanks, in all the churches, for an African voyage performed, without any diſaſter, or the loſs of a ſingle man, (for captain L. was fixed in another veſſel, ſome time before his death.) This was much noticed, and ſpoken of, in the town, and I believe, it is the firſt inſtance of the kind.

No part of your letter pleaſes me ſo much, as that, where you tell me, you can ſincerely ſay, *The will of the Lord be done.* To find us both proficients in this temper, would

would rejoice me more, than the expectation of paſſing many winters at home; and yet, I think I ſhould not undervalue, a ſingle hour of your company. But I conſider, that in a few winters and ſummers more, all our endeared hours, will be as though they had never been; but the effects, and conſequences, of our temporary connection, will abide for ever.

N. B. When I returned to Liverpool, and was upon the point of ſailing in the Bee, it pleaſed God to ſtop me by illneſs. By the advice of the phyſicians, I reſigned the command of the ſhip; and was thus, unexpectedly freed, from the diſagreeable, and (as I now ſee it) the abominable employment, and traffic, in which I had been engaged. So that my marine correſpondence ends here.

My firſt attack, was a violent fit, which threatened immediate death, and left me

no

no ſigns of life, but breathing, for about an hour. I ſoon grew better; but the ſudden ſtroke, made ſuch an impreſſion upon my dear wife, that it coſt her, more than a twelvemonth's ſevere illneſs. My friend, Mr. M—, procured me a place in the Cuſtom-houſe; and when I was conſtrained to return, to take poſſeſſion of my office, ſhe had been but a few days a little revived, from a ſtate, in which the phyſicians had given up all hope of her recovery. The ſecond ſeries of my letters were written, while I was Tide-ſurveyor of the port of Liverpool.

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