

## LETTER XIV.

Mrs. NORTON, To Miss HOWE.

Dear Madam, Saturday, May 13.

*in confidence*

MY heart is almost broken to be obliged to let you know, that such is the situation of things in the family of my ever-dear Miss Harlowe, that there can be at present no success expected from any application in her favour. Her poor Mother is to be pitied. I have a most affecting Letter from her; but must not communicate it to you; and she forbids me to let it be known that she writes upon the subject; although she is compelled, as it were, to do it, for the ease of her own heart. I mention it therefore in confidence.

I hope in God that my beloved young Lady has preserved her honour inviolate. I hope there is not a man breathing, who could attempt a sacrilege so detestable. I have no apprehension of a failure in a virtue so established. God for ever keep so pure a heart out of the reach of surprizes and violence! Ease, dear Madam, I beseech you, my over-anxious heart, by one line, by the bearer, altho' but by *one* line, to acquaint me (as surely you can) that her honour is unfullied.—If it be not, adieu to all the comforts this life can give: Since none will it be able to afford

To the poor JUDITH NORTON.

## LETTER XV.

Miss HOWE, To Mrs. JUDITH NORTON.

Dear good Woman, Saturday Evening, May 13.

YOUR Beloved's honour is inviolate!—*Must* be inviolate! And *will* be so, in spite of men and devils. Could I have had hope of a Reconciliation, all my view was, that she should not have had this man.

Let. 16. Clarissa Harlowe. 71

man.—All that can be said now, is, She must run the risk of a bad husband: She, of whom no man living is worthy!

*You* pity her Mother—So do not *I!* I pity no Mother, that puts it out of her power to shew maternal Love, and Humanity, in order to patch up for herself a precarious and sorry quiet, which every blast of wind shall disturb.

I hate tyrants in every form and shape: But paternal and maternal tyrants are the worst of all: For they can have no bowels.

I repeat, that I pity *none* of them. Our beloved friend *only* deserves pity. She had never been in the hands of this man, but for them. She is quite blameless. You don't know all her Story. Were I to tell you that she had no intention to go off with this man, it would avail her nothing. It would only serve to condemn, with those who drove her to extremities, *him*, who now must be her refuge. I am

Your sincere Friend and Servant,

ANNA HOWE.

## LETTER XVI.

Mrs. HARLOWE, To Mrs. NORTON.

[Not communicated till the Letters came to be collected.]

Saturday, May 13.

I Return an answer in writing, as I promised, to your communication. But take no notice either to my Bella's Betty (who I understand sometimes visits you) or to the poor wretch herself, nor to anybody, that I do write. I charge you don't. My heart is full: Writing may give some vent to my griefs, and perhaps I may write what lies most upon my heart, without confining myself strictly to the present subject.

You know how dear this ingrateful creature ever was