

CLARISSA HARLOWE
or the
HISTORY OF A YOUNG LADY

By Samuel Richardson

Volume VIII. (of Nine Volumes)

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LETTER LI. Belford to Lovelace.— The lady alive, serene, and calm. The more serene for having finished, signed, and sealed her last will; deferred till now for reasons of filial duty.

LETTER LII. Miss Howe to Clarissa.— Pathetically laments the illness of her own mother, and of her dear friend. Now all her pertness to the former, she says, fly in her

face. She lays down her pen; and resumes it, to tell her, with great joy, that her mother is better. She has had a visit from her cousin Morden. What passed in it.

LETTER LIII. From the same.— Displeas'd with the Colonel for thinking too freely of the sex. Never knew a man that had a slight notion of the virtue of women in general, who deserved to be valued for his morals. Why women must either be more or less virtuous than men. Useful hints to young ladies. Is out of humour with Mr. Hickman. Resolves to see her soon in town.

LETTER LIV. Belford to Lovelace.— The lady writes and reads upon her coffin, as upon a desk. The doctor resolves to write to her father. Her intense, yet cheerful devotion.

LETTER LV. Clarissa to Miss Howe.— A letter full of pious reflections, and good advice, both general and particular; and breathing the true spirit of charity, forgiveness, patience, and resignation. A just reflection, to her dear friend, upon the mortifying nature of pride.

LETTER LVI. Mrs. Norton to Clarissa.— Her account of an interesting conversation at Harlowe-place between the family and Colonel Morden; and of another between her mother and self. The Colonel incens'd against them all. Her advice concerning Belford, and other matters. Miss Howe has obtained leave, she hears, to visit her. Praises Mr. Hickman. Gently censures Miss Howe on his account. Her truly maternal and pious comfortings.

LETTER LVII. Belford to Lovelace.— The lady's sight begins to fail her. She blesses God for the serenity she enjoys. It is what, she says, she had pray'd for. What a blessing, so near to her dissolution, to have her prayers answer'd! Gives particular directions to him about her papers, about her last will and apparel. Comforts the women and him on their concern for her. Another letter brought her from Colonel Morden. The substance of it. Belford writes to hasten up the Colonel. Dr. H. has also written to her father; and Brand to Mr. John Harlowe a letter recanting his officious one.

LETTER LVIII. Dr. H. to James Harlowe, Senior, Esq.

LETTER LIX. Copy of Mr. Belford's letter to Colonel Morden, to hasten him up.

LETTER LX. Lovelace to Belford.— He feels the torments of the damned, in the remorse that wrings his heart, on looking back on his past actions by this lady. Gives him what he calls a faint picture of his horrible uneasiness, riding up and down, expecting the return of his servant as soon as he had dispatch'd him. Woe be to the man who brings him the fatal news!

LETTER LXI. Belford to Lovelace.— Farther particulars of the lady's pious and exemplary behaviour. She rejoices in the gradual death afforded her. Her thankful acknowledgments to Mr. Belford, Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. Lovick, for their kindness to her. Her edifying address to Mr. Belford.

LETTER LXII. Clarissa to Mrs. Norton. In answer to her's, No. LVI.— Afflicted only for her friends. Desires not now to see her cousin Morden, nor even herself, or Miss Howe. God will have no rivals, she says, in the hearts of those whom HE sanctifies. Advice to Miss Howe. To Mr. Hickman. Blesses all her relations and friends.

LETTER LXIII. Lovelace to Belford.— A letter of deep distress, remorse, and impatience. Yet would he fain lighten his own guilt by reflections on the cruelty of her relations.

LETTER LXIV. Belford to Lovelace The lady is disappointed at the Doctor's telling her that she may yet live two or three days. Death from grief the slowest of deaths. Her solemn forgiveness of Lovelace, and prayer for him. Owns that once she could have loved him. Her generous concern for his future happiness. Belford's good resolutions.

LETTER LXV. Mr. Brand to Mr. John Walton.

LETTER LXVI. Mr. Brand to John Harlowe, Esq.; in excuse of his credulity, and of the misreports founded upon it.

LETTER LXVII. Lovelace to Belford.— Blesses him for sending him word the lady is better. Her charity towards him cuts him to the heart. He cannot bear it. His vehement self reproaches. Curses his contriving genius, and his disbelief that there could be such virtue in woman. The world never saw such an husband as he will make, if she recover, and will be his.

LETTER LXVIII. Belford to Lovelace.— The lady's pious frame. The approaches of death how supportable to her; and why. She has no reason, she says, to grieve for any thing but the sorrow she has given to her friends.

LETTER LXIX. Lovelace to Belford.— Never prayed in his life, put all the years of it together, as he has done for this fortnight. Has repented of all his baseness: And will nothing do? Conjures him to send him good news in his next, as he would not be answerable for consequences.

LETTER LXX. Belford to Lovelace.— Solemn leave taken of her by the doctor and apothecary; who tell her she will hardly see the next night. The pleasure with which she receives the intimation. How unlike poor Belton's behaviour her's! A letter from Miss Howe. Copy of it. She cannot see to read it. Her exalted expressions on hearing it read. Tries to write an answer to it; but cannot. Dictates to Mrs. Lovick. Writes the superscriptive part herself on her knees. Colonel Morden arrives in town.

LETTER LXXI. From the same.— What passes on Colonel Morden's visit to his cousin. She enjoins the Colonel not to avenge her.

THE HISTORY OF CLARISSA HARLOWE

LETTER I

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE YARMOUTH, ISLE OF WIGHT,
MONDAY, AUG. 7.

MY DEAREST CREATURE,

I can write but just now a few lines. I cannot tell how to bear the sound of that Mr. Belford for your executor, cogent as your reasons for that measure are: and yet I am firmly of opinion, that none of your relations should be named for the trust. But I dwell the less on this subject, as I hope (and cannot bear to apprehend the contrary) that you will still live many, many years.

Mr. Hickman, indeed, speaks very handsomely of Mr. Belford. But he, poor man! has not much penetration.—If he had, he would hardly think so well of me as he does.

I have a particular opportunity of sending this by a friend of my aunt Harman's; who is ready to set out for London, (and this occasions my hurry,) and is to return out of hand. I expect therefore, by him a large packet from you; and hope and long for news of your amended health: which Heaven grant to the prayers of

Your ever-affectionate ANNA HOWE.

LETTER II

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE FRIDAY, AUG. 11.

I will send you a large packet, as you desire and expect; since I can do it by so safe a conveyance: but not all that is come to my hand—for I must own that my friends are very severe; too severe for any body, who loves them not, to see their letters. You, my dear, would not call them my friends, you said, long ago; but my relations: indeed I cannot call them my relations, I think!—But I am ill; and therefore perhaps more peevish than I should be. It is difficult to go out of ourselves to give a judgment against ourselves; and yet, oftentimes, to pass a just judgment, we ought.

I thought I should alarm you in the choice of my executor. But the sad necessity I am reduced to must excuse me.

I shall not repeat any thing I have said before on that subject: but if your objections will not be answered to your satisfaction by the papers and letters I shall enclose, marked 1, 2, 3, 4, to 9, I must think myself in another instance unhappy; since I am engaged too far (and with my own judgment too) to recede.

As Mr. Belford has transcribed for me, in confidence, from his friend's letters, the passages which accompany this, I must insist that you suffer no soul but yourself to peruse them; and that you return them by the very first opportunity; that so no use may be made of them that may do hurt either to the original writer or to the communicator. You'll observe I am bound by promise to this care. If through my means any mischief should arise, between this humane and that inhuman libertine, I should think myself utterly inexcusable.

I subjoin a list of the papers or letters I shall enclose. You must return them all when perused.*

- * 1. A letter from Miss Montague, dated Aug. 1.
- 2. A copy of my answer Aug. 3.
- 3. Mr. Belford's Letter to me, which will show you what my request was to him, and his compliance with it; and the desired extracts from his friend's letters Aug. 3, 4.
- 4. A copy of my answer, with thanks; and requesting him to undertake the executorship Aug. 4.
- 5. Mr. Belford's acceptance of the trust Aug. 4.
- 6. Miss Montague's letter, with a generous offer from Lord M. and the Ladies of that family Aug. 7.
- 7. Mr. Lovelace's to me Aug. 7.
- 8. Copy of mine to Miss Montague, in answer to her's of the day before Aug. 8.
- 9. Copy of my answer to Mr. Lovelace Aug. 11.

You will see by these several Letters, written and received in so little a space of time (to say nothing of what I have received and written which I cannot show you,) how little opportunity or leisure I can have for writing my own story.

I am very much tired and fatigued—with—I don't know what—with writing, I think—but most with myself, and with a situation I cannot help aspiring to get out of, and above!

O my dear, the world we live in is a sad, a very sad world!—While under our parents' protecting wings, we know nothing at all of it. Book-learned and a scribbler, and looking at people as I saw them as visitors or visiting, I thought I knew a great deal of it. Pitiably ignorant!—Alas! I knew nothing at all!

With zealous wishes for your happiness, and the happiness of every one dear to you, I am, and will ever be,

Your gratefully-affectionate CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER III

MR. ANTONY HARLOWE, TO MISS CL. HARLOWE [IN REPLY TO HER'S TO HER UNCLE HARLOWE, OF THURSDAY, AUG. 10.] AUG. 12.

UNHAPPY GIRL!

As your uncle Harlowe chooses not to answer your pert letter to him; and as mine, written to you before,* was written as if it were in the spirit of prophecy, as you have found to your sorrow; and as you are now making yourself worse than you are in your health, and better than you are in your penitence, as we are very well assured, in order to move compassion; which you do not deserve, having had so much warning: for all these reasons, I take up my pen once more; though I had told your brother, at his going to Edinburgh, that I would not write to you, even were you to write to me, without letting him know. So indeed had we all; for he prognosticated what would happen, as to your applying to us, when you knew not how to help it.

* See Vol. I. Letter XXXII.

Brother John has hurt your niceness, it seems, by asking you a plain question, which your mother's heart is too full of grief to let her ask; and modesty will not let your sister ask; though but the consequence of your actions—and yet it must be answered, before you'll obtain from your father and mother, and us, the notice you hope for, I can tell you that.

You lived several guilty weeks with one of the vilest fellows that ever drew breath, at bed, as well as at board, no doubt, (for is not his character known?) and pray don't be ashamed to be asked after what may naturally come of such free living. This modesty indeed would have become you for eighteen years of your life—you'll be pleased to mark that—but makes no good figure compared with your behaviour since the beginning of April last. So pray don't take it up, and wipe your mouth upon it, as if nothing had happened.

But, may be, I likewise am too shocking to your niceness!—O girl, girl! your modesty had better been shown at the right time and place—Every body but you believed what the rake was: but you would believe nothing bad of him—What think you now?

Your folly has ruined all our peace. And who knows where it may yet end? —Your poor father but yesterday showed me this text: With bitter grief he showed it me, poor man! and do you lay it to your heart:

'A father waketh for his daughter, when no man knoweth; and the care for her taketh away his sleep—When she is young, lest she pass away the flower of her age—[and you know what proposals were made to you at different times.] And, being married, lest she should be hated. In her virginity, lest she should be defiled, and gotten with child in her father's house—[and I don't make the words, mind that.] And, having an husband, lest she should misbehave herself.' And what follows? 'Keep a sure watch over a shameless daughter—[yet no watch could hold you!] lest she make thee a laughing

stock to thine enemies—[as you have made us all to this cursed Lovelace,] and a bye-word in the city, and a reproach among the people, and make thee ashamed before the multitude.' Eccclus. xlii. 9, 10, &c.

Now will you wish you had not written pertly. Your sister's severities! —Never, girl, say that is severe that is deserved. You know the meaning of words. No body better. Would to the Lord you had acted up but to one half of what you know! then had we not been disappointed and grieved, as we all have been: and nobody more than him who was

Your loving uncle, ANTONY HARLOWE.

This will be with you to-morrow. Perhaps you may be suffered to have some part of your estate, after you have smarted a little more. Your pertly-answered uncle John, who is your trustee, will not have you be destitute. But we hope all is not true that we hear of you. —Only take care, I advise you, that, bad as you have acted, you act not still worse, if it be possible to act worse. Improve upon the hint.

LETTER IV

MISS CL. HARLOWE, TO ANTONY HARLOWE, ESQ. SUNDAY, AUG. 13.

HONOURED SIR,

I am very sorry for my pert letter to my uncle Harlowe. Yet I did not intend it to be pert. People new to misfortune may be too easily moved to impatience.

The fall of a regular person, no doubt, is dreadful and inexcusable. is like the sin of apostacy. Would to Heaven, however, that I had had the circumstances of mine inquired into!

If, Sir, I make myself worse than I am in my health, and better than I am in my penitence, it is fit I should be punished for my double dissimulation: and you have the pleasure of being one of my punishers. My sincerity in both respects will, however, be best justified by the event. To that I refer.—May Heaven give you always as much comfort in reflecting upon the reprobation I have met with, as you seem to have pleasure in mortifying a young creature, extremely mortified; and that from a right sense, as she presumes to hope, of her own fault!

What you heard of me I cannot tell. When the nearest and dearest relations give up an unhappy wretch, it is not to be wondered at that those who are not related to her are ready to take up and propagate slanders against her. Yet I think I may defy calumny itself, and (excepting the fatal, though involuntary step of April 10) wrap myself in my own innocence, and be easy. I thank you, Sir, nevertheless, for your caution, mean it what it will.

As to the question required of me to answer, and which is allowed to be too shocking either for a mother to put to a daughter, or a sister to a sister; and which, however, you say I must answer;—O Sir!—And must I answer?—This then be my answer:—'A little time, a much less time than is imagined, will afford a more satisfactory answer to my whole family, and even to my brother and sister, than I can give in words.'

Nevertheless, be pleased to let it be remembered, that I did not petition for a restoration to favour. I could not hope for that. Nor yet to be put in possession of any part of my own estate. Nor even for means of necessary subsistence from the produce of that estate—but only for a blessing; for a last blessing!

And this I will farther add, because it is true, that I have no wilful crime to charge against myself: no free living at bed and at board, as you phrase it!

Why, why, Sir, were not other inquiries made of me, as well as this shocking one?—inquiries that modesty would have permitted a mother or sister to make; and which, if I may be excused to say so, would have been still less improper, and more charitable, to have been made by uncles, (were the mother forbidden, or the sister not inclined, to make them,) than those they have made.

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