

CLARISSA.  
OR, THE  
HISTORY  
OF A  
YOUNG LADY:

Comprehending

*The most Important Concerns of Private LIFE.*

And particularly shewing,

The Distresses that may attend the MISCONDUCT  
Both of PARENTS and CHILDREN,

In Relation to MARRIAGE.

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V O L. VIII.

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The SIXTH EDITION.

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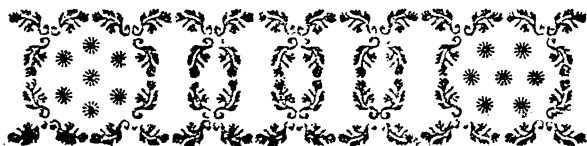
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УЧЕБНО-МЕТОДИЧЕСКАЯ  
БИБЛИОТЕКА  
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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
CLARISSA HARLOWE.

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V O L. VIII.

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L E T T E R I.

*Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq.*

*Thursday Night.*

✻✻✻ MAY as well try to write ; since, were I to  
✻ I ✻ go to bed, I shall not sleep. I never had such  
✻✻✻ a weight of grief upon my mind in my life,  
as upon the demise of this admirable woman ; whose  
soul is now rejoicing in the regions of light.

You may be glad to know the particulars of her happy Exit. I will try to proceed ; for all is hush and still ; the family retired ; but not one of them, and least of all her poor Cousin, I dare say, to rest.

At Four o'clock, as I mentioned in my last, I was sent for down ; and, as thou usedst to like my descriptions, I will give thee the woeful scene that presented itself to me, as I approached the bed.

The Colonel was the first that took my attention, kneeling on the side of the bed, the Lady's right hand,

in both his, which his face covered, bathing it with his tears; altho' she had been comforting him, as the women since told me, in elevated strains, but broken accents.

On the other side of the bed sat the good Widow; her face overwhelmed with tears, leaning her head against the bed's head in a most disconsolate manner; and turning her face to me, as soon as she saw me, O Mr. Belford, cried she, with folded hands—The dear Lady--A heavy sob permitted her not to say more.

Mrs. Smith, with clasped fingers, and uplifted eyes, as if imploring help from the Only Power which could give it, was kneeling down at the bed's feet, tears in large drops trickling down her cheeks.

Her Nurse was kneeling between the Widow and Mrs. Smith, her arms extended. In one hand she held an ineffectual cordial, which she had just been offering to her dying mistress; her face was swoln with weeping (tho' used to such scenes as this); and she turned her eyes towards me, as if she called upon me by them to join in the helpless sorrow; a fresh stream bursting from them as I approached the bed.

The Maid of the house, with her face upon her folded arms, as she stood leaning against the wainscot, more audibly expressed her grief than any of the others.

The Lady had been silent a few minutes, and speechless as they thought, moving her lips without uttering a word; one hand, as I said, in her Cousin's. But when Mrs. Lovick on my approach pronounced my name, Oh! Mr. Belford, said she, with a faint inward voice, but very distinct nevertheless—Now! —Now! [in broken periods she spoke]—I bless God for his mercies to his poor creature—will all soon be over—A few—A very few moments—will end this strife—And I shall be happy!

Comfort here, Sir—turning her head to the Colonel—Comfort my Cousin—See! the blame—able kindness—He would not wish me to be happy—so soon!

Here

Here she stopt, for two or three minutes, earnestly looking upon him : Then resuming, My dearest Cousin, said she, be comforted—What is dying but the common lot?—The mortal frame may *seem* to labour—But that is all!—It is not so hard to die, as I believed it to be!—The Preparation is the difficulty—I bless God, I have had time for That——The rest is worse to beholders, than to me!—I am all blessed hope—Hope itself. She *looked* what she said, a sweet smile beaming over her countenance.

After a short silence, Once more, my dear Cousin, said she, but still in broken accents, commend me most dutifully to my Father and Mother—There she stopt. And then proceeding—To my Sister, To my Brother, To my Uncles—And tell them, I bless them with my parting breath—for all their goodness to me--Even for their displeasure, I bless them—Most happy has been to me my punishment *here!* Happy indeed!

She was silent for a few moments, lifting up her eyes, and the hand her Cousin held not between his. Then, *O death!* said she, *where is thy sting!* [The words I remember to have heard in the Burial-service read over my Uncle and poor Helton]. And after a pause—*It is good for me that I was afflicted!* Words of Scripture, I suppose.

Then turning towards us, who were lost in speechless sorrow—O dear, dear gentlemen, said she, you know not what *foretastes*—what *assurances*—And there she again stopt, and looked up, as if in a thankful rapture, sweetly smiling.

Then turning her head towards me—Do you, Sir, tell your friend, that I forgive him! And I pray to God to forgive him!—Again pausing, and lifting up her eyes, as if praying that He would. Let him know how happily I die:—And that such as my own, I wish to be his last hour.

She was again silent for a few moments: And then resuming—My sight fails me!—Your voices only—

[for we both applauded her christian, her divine frame, tho' in accents as broken as her own]; and the voice of grief is alike in all. Is not this Mr. Morden's hand? pressing one of his with that he had just let go. Which is Mr. Belford's? holding out the other. I gave her mine. God Almighty bless you both, said she, and make you both----in your last hour----for you *must* come to this---happy as I am.

She paused again, her breath growing shorter; and, after a few minutes, And now, my dearest Cousin, give me your hand—Nearer—still nearer,—drawing it towards her; and she pressed it with her dying lips--God protect you, dear, dear Sir--And once more, receive my best and most grateful thanks—And tell my dear Miss Howe—and vouchsafe to see, and to tell my worthy Norton—She will be one day, I fear not, tho' now lowly in her fortunes, a Saint in Heaven--Tell them both, that I remember them with thankful blessings in my last moments!--And pray God to give them happiness *here* for many, many years, for the sake of their friends and lovers; and an heavenly crown *hereafter*; and such assurances of it, as I have, thro' the all-satisfying merits of my blessed Redeemer.

Her sweet voice and broken periods methinks still fill my ears, and never will be out of my memory.

After a short silence, in a more broken and faint accent—And you, Mr. Belford, pressing my hand, may God preserve you, and make you sensible of all your errors—You see, in me, how All ends—May *you* be--And down sunk her head upon her pillow, she fainting away, and drawing from us her hands.

We thought she was then gone; and each gave way to a violent burst of grief.

But soon shewing signs of returning life, our attention was again engaged; and I besought her, when a little recovered, to complete in my favour her half-pronounced blessing. She waved her hand to us both, and bowed her head six several times, as we have since recollected,

recollected, as if distinguishing every Person present; not forgetting the nurse and the maid-servant; the latter having approached the bed, weeping, as if crouding in for the divine Lady's last blessing; and she spoke faltering and inwardly --Bless--bless--bleis--you All--And now--And now--[holding up her almost lifeless hands for the last time] Come---O come---Blessed Lord---Jesus!

And with these words, the last but half-pronounced, expired: Such a smile, such a charming serenity over-spreading her sweet face at the instant, as seemed to manifest her eternal happiness already begun.

O Lovelace!--But I can write no more!

\* \* \*

I RESUME my pen to add a few lines.

While warm, tho' pulseless, we pressed each her hand with our lips; and then retired into the next room.

We looked at each other, with intent to speak: But, as if one motion governed, as one cause affected, both, we turned away silent.

The Colonel sighed as if his heart would burst: At last, his face and hands uplifted, his back towards me, Good Heaven! said he to himself, support me!--And is it thus, O Flower of Nature!--Then pausing--And must we no more---*Never more!*---My blessed, blessed Cousin! uttering some other words, which his sighs made inarticulate:--And then, as if recollecting himself--Forgive me, Sir!--Excuse me, Mr. Belford! And, sliding by me, Anon I hope to see you, Sir---And down-stairs he went, and out of the house, leaving me a Statue.

When I recovered, I was ready to repine at what I *then* called an unequal dispensation; forgetting her happy preparation, and still happier departure; and that she had but drawn a common lot; triumphing in it, and leaving behind her, every one less assured of happiness, tho' equally certain that the Lot would one day be their own.



She departed exactly at 40 minutes after Six o'clock, as by her watch on the table.

And thus died Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, in the blossom of her youth and beauty : And who, her tender years considered, has not left behind her her superior in extensive knowledge, and watchful prudence ; nor hardly her equal for unblemished virtue, exemplary piety, sweetness of manners, discreet generosity, and true christian charity : And these all set off by the most graceful modesty and humility ; yet on all proper occasions, manifesting a noble presence of mind, and true magnanimity : So that she may be said to have been not only an ornament to her Sex, but to Human nature.

A better pen than mine may do her fuller justice. Thine, I mean, O Lovelace ! For well dost thou know how much she excelled in the graces both of mind and person, natural and acquired, all that is woman. And thou also canst best account for the causes of her immature death, thro' those calamities which in so short a space of time, from the highest pitch of felicity (every one in a manner adoring her), brought her to an Exit so happy for herself, but, that it was so *early*, so much to be deplored by all who had the honour of her acquaintance.

This task, then, I leave to thee : But now I can write no more, only that I am a sympathizer in every part of thy distress, except (and yet it is cruel to say it) in That which arises from thy guilt.

*One o'clock, Friday Morning.*

## L E T T E R II.

*Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq.*

*Nine, Friday Morn.*

I HAVE no opportunity to write at length, having necessary orders to give on the melancholy occasion. Joel, who got to me by Six in the morning, and whom I dispatched instantly back with the  
Letter

Letter I had ready from last night, gives me but an indifferent account of the state of your mind. I wonder not at it; but Time (and nothing else can) will make it easier to you: If (that is to say) you have compounded with your conscience; else it may be heavier every day than other.

\* \* \*

TOURVILLE tells me what a way you are in. I hope you will not think of coming hither. The Lady in her Will desires you may not see her. Four copies are making of it. It is a long one; for she gives her reasons for all the wills. I will write to you more particularly as soon as possibly I can.

\* \* \*

THREE Letters are just brought by a servant in livery, directed *To Miss Clarissa Harlowe*. I will send copies of them to you. The contents are enough to make one mad. How would this poor Lady have rejoiced to receive them!—And yet, if she had, she would not have been enabled to say, as she nobly did (a), *That God would not let her depend for comfort upon any but Himself*—And indeed for some days past she had seemed to have got above all worldly considerations—Her  *fervent Love, even for her Miss Howe*, as she acknowledged, having given way to *supreme fervors* (b).

### L E T T E R   I I I .

*Mrs. NORTON, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.*

*Wednesday, Sept. 6.*

AT length, my best beloved Miss Clary, every thing is in the wished train: For all your relations are unanimous in your favour. Even your Brother and Sister are with the foremost to be reconciled to you.

I knew it must end thus! By patience, and persevering sweetness, what a triumph have you gained!

B 5

This

(a) See Vol. VII. Letter cvi.

(b) Ibid. Letter xcvi.

This happy change is owing to Letters received from your Physician, from your Cousin Morden, and from Mr. Brand.

Colonel Morden will be with you no doubt before this can reach you, with his pocket-book filled with money-bills, that nothing may be wanting to make you easy.

And now, all our hopes, all our prayers, are, that this good news may restore you to spirits and health ; and that (so long with-held) it may not come too late.

I know how much your dutiful heart will be raised with the joyful tidings I write you, and still shall more particularly tell you of, when I have the happiness to see you : Which will be by next Saturday, at farthest ; perhaps on Friday afternoon, by the time you can receive this.

For this day, being sent for by the general voice, I was received by every one with great goodness and condescension, and *entreated* (for that was the word they were pleased to use, when I needed *no* entreaty, I am sure) to hasten up to you, and to assure you of all their affectionate regards to you : And your Father bid me say all the kind things that were in my *heart* to say, in order to comfort and raise you up, and they would hold themselves bound to make them good.

How agreeable is this commission to your Norton ! My heart will overflow with kind speeches, never fear ! I am already meditating what I shall say, to cheer and raise you up, in the names of every one dear and near to you. And sorry I am, that I cannot this moment set out, as I might, instead of writing, would they favour my eager impatience with their chariot ; but as it was not offered, it would be presumption to have asked for it : And to-morrow a hired chaise-and-pair will be ready ; but at what hour I know not.

How I long once more to fold my dear precious young Lady to my fond, my *more* than fond, my *maternal* bosom !

Your

Your Sister will write to you, and send her Letter, with This, by a particular hand.

I must not let them see what I write, because of my wish about the chariot.

Your Uncle Harlowe will also write, and (I doubt not) in the kindest terms: For they are all extremely alarmed and troubled at the dangerous way your Doctor represents you to be in; as well as delighted with the character he gives you. Would to Heaven the good gentleman had written *sooner*! And yet he writes, that you know not he has *now* written. But it is all our confidence, and our consolation, that he would not have written at all, had he thought it too late.

They will prescribe no conditions to you, my dear young Lady; but will leave all to your own duty and discretion. Only your Brother and Sister declare, they will never yield to call Mr. Lovelace Brother: Nor will your Father, I believe, be easily brought to think of him for a Son.

I am to bring you down with me as soon as your health and inclination will permit. You will be received with open arms. Every one longs to see you. All the servants please themselves, that they shall be permitted to kiss your hands. The pert Betty's note is already changed; and she now runs over in your just praises. What friends does prosperity make! What enemies adversity! It always was, and always will be so, in every state of life from the throne to the cottage.—But let all be forgotten now on this jubilee change: And may you, my dearest Miss, be capable of rejoicing in this good news; as I know you *will* rejoice, if capable of any thing.

God preserve you to our happy meeting! And I will, if I may say so, weary Heaven with my incessant prayers to preserve and restore you afterwards!

I need not say how much I am, my dear young Lady,

*Your ever-affectionate, and devoted*

JUDITH NORTON.

An unhappy delay as to the chaise, will make it Saturday morning, before I can fold you to my fond heart.

## L E T T E R IV.

*Miss* ARAB. HARLOWE, *To Miss* CL. HARLOWE.

*Dear Sister,*

*Wedn. Morning, Sept. 6.*

WE have just heard that you are exceedingly ill. We all loved you as never young creature was loved: You are sensible of That, Sister Clary. And you have been very naughty—But we could not be angry always.

We are indeed more afflicted with the news of your being so very ill than I can express: For I see not but, after this separation (as we understand that your misfortune has been greater than your fault, and that, however unhappy, you have demeaned yourself like the good young creature you used to be) we shall love you better, if possible, than ever.

Take comfort therefore, Sister Clary, and don't be too much cast down—Whatever your mortifications may be from such noble prospects over-clouded, and from the reflections you will have from *within*, on your faulty step, and from the sully of such a charming character by it, you will receive none from *any of us*: And, as an earnest of your Papa's and Mamma's favour and reconciliation, they assure you by me of their Blessing and hourly prayers.

If it will be any comfort to you, and my Mother finds this Letter is received as we expect (which we shall know by the good effect it will have upon your health) she will herself go to town to you. Meantime, the good woman you so dearly love will be hastened up to you; and she writes by this opportunity, to acquaint you of it, and of all our returning Love.

I hope you will rejoice at this good news. Pray let us hear that you do. Your next grateful Letter on this occasion, especially if it gives us the pleasure of hearing  
you

you are better upon this news, will be received with the same (if not greater) delight, than we used to have in all your prettily penn'd epistles. Adieu, my dear Clary! I am, *Your loving Sister, and true Friend,*

ARABELLA HARLOWE.

# LETTER V.

*To his dear Niece Miss* CLARISSA HARLOWE.

*Wedn. Sept. 6.*

WE were greatly grieved, my beloved Miss Clary, at your fault; but we are still more, if possible, to hear you are so very ill; and we are sorry things have been carried so far.

We know your talents, my dear, and how movingly you could write, whenever you pleased; so that nobody could ever deny you any thing; and, believing you depended on your pen, and little thinking you were so ill, and that you had lived so regular a life, and were so truly penitent, are much troubled every one of us, your Brother and all, for being so severe. Forgive my part in it, my dearest Clary. I am your *Second-Papa*, you know. And you *used* to love me.

I hope you'll soon be able to come down, and, after a while, when your indulgent parents can spare you, that you will come to me for a whole month, and rejoice my heart, as you used to do. But if, thro' illness, you cannot so soon come down as we wish, I will go up to you: For I long to see you. I never more longed to see you in my life; and you was always the darling of my heart, you know.

My Brother Antony desires his hearty commendations to you, and joins with me in the tenderest assurance, that all shall be well, and, if possible, better than ever; for we now have been so long without you, that we know the miss of you, and even hunger and thirst, as I may say, to see you, and to take you once more to our hearts: Whence indeed you was never banished

banished so far, as our concern for the unhappy step made *us* think and *you* believe you were. Your Sister and Brother both talk of seeing you in town: So does my dear Sister your indulgent Mother.

God restore your health, if it be his will: Else, I know not what will become of

*Your truly loving Uncle, and Second-Papa,*

JOHN HARLOWE.

## L E T T E R VI.

*Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq.*

*Friday Night, Sept. 8. past Ten.*

**I** WILL now take up the account of our proceedings from my Letter of last night, which contained the dying words of this incomparable Lady.

As soon as we had seen the last scene closed (so blessedly for herself!) we left the body to the care of the good women, who, according to the orders she had given them that very night, removed her into that last house which she had display'd so much fortitude in providing.

In the morning, between 7 and 8 o'clock, according to appointment, the Colonel came to me here. He was very much indisposed. We went together, accompanied by Mrs. Lovick and Mrs. Smith, into the deceased's chamber. We could not help taking a view of the lovely corpse, and admiring the charming serenity of her noble aspect. The women declared, they never saw death so lovely before; and that she looked as if in an easy slumber, the colour having not quite left her cheeks and lips.

I unlocked the drawer, in which (as I mentioned in a (a) former) she had deposited her papers. I told you in mine of Monday last, that she had the night before sealed up with three black seals a parcel inscribed, *As soon as I am certainly dead, this to be broke open by Mr. Belford*. I accused myself for having not done it overnight. But really I was then incapable of any thing.

(a) See Vol. VII. Letter xci.