

THE FAIR JILT

By Aphra Behn

As love is the most noble and divine passion of the soul, so it is that to which we may justly attribute all the real satisfactions of life; and without it man is unfinish'd a unhappy. There are a thousand things to be said of the advantages this generous passion brings to those, whose hearts are capable of receiving its soft impressions; for 'tis not every one that can be sensible of its tender touches. How many examples, from history and observation, could I give of its wondrous power; nay, even to a degree of transmigration! How many idiots has it made wise! How many fools eloquent! How many home-bred 'squires accomplish'd! How many cowards brave! And there is no sort of species of mankind on whom it cannot work some change and miracle, if it be a noble well-grounded passion, except on the fop in fashion, the harden'd incorrigible fop; so often wounded, but never reclaim'd. For still, by a dire mistake, conducted by vast opiniatrety, and a greater portion of self-love, than the rest of the race of man, he believes that affectation in his mien and dress, that mathematical movement, that formality in every action, that a face manag'd with care, and soften'd into ridicule, the languishing turn, the toss, and the back-shake of the periwig, is the direct way to the heart of the fine person he adores; and instead of curing love in his soul, serves only to advance his folly; and the more he is enamour'd, the more industriously he assumes (every hour) the coxcomb. These are love's playthings, a sort of animals with whom he sports; and whom he never wounds, but when he is in good humour, and always shoots laughing. 'Tis the diversion of the little god, to see what a fluttering and bustle one of these sparks, new-wounded, makes; to what fantastick fooleries he has recourse. The glass is every moment call'd to counsel, the valet consulted and plagu'd for new invention of dress, the footman and scrutore perpetually employed; billet-doux and madrigals take up all his mornings, till playtime in dressing, till night in gazing; still, like a sun-flower, turned towards the beams of the fair eyes of his Caelia, adjusting himself in the most amorous posture he can assume, his hat under his arm, while the other hand is put carelessly into his bosom, as if laid upon his panting heart; his head a little bent to one side, supported with a world of crevat-string, which he takes mighty care not to put into disorder; as one may guess by a never-failing and horrid stiffness in his neck; and if he had any occasion to look aside, his whole body turns at the same time, for fear the motion of the head alone should incommode the crevat or periwig. And sometimes the glove is well manag'd, and the white hand display'd. Thus, with a thousand other little motions and formalities, all in the common place or road of foppery, he takes infinite pains to shew himself to the pit and boxes, a most accomplish'd ass. This is he, of all human kind, on whom love can do no miracles, and who can no where, and upon no occasion, quit one grain of his refin'd foppery, unless in a duel, or a battel, if ever his stars should be so severe and ill-manner'd, to reduce him to the necessity of either. Fear

then would ruffle that fine form he had so long preserv'd in nicest order, with grief considering, that an unlucky chance-wound in his face, if such a dire misfortune should befall him, would spoil the sale of it for ever. Perhaps it will be urg'd, that since no metamorphosis can be made in a fop by love, you must consider him one of those that only talks of love, and thinks himself that happy thing, a lover; and wanting fine sense enough for the real passion, believes what he feels to be it. There are in the quiver of the god a great many different darts; some that wound for a day, and others for a year; they are all fine, painted, glittering darts, and show as well as those made of the noblest metal; but the wounds they make reach the desire only, and are cur'd by possessing, while the short-lived passion betrays the cheat. But 'tis that refined and illustrious passion of the soul whose aim is virtue, and whose end is honour, that has the power of changing nature, and is capable of performing all those heroick things, of which history is full.

How far distant passions may be from one another, I shall be able to make appear in these following rules. I'll prove to you the strong effects of love in some unguarded and ungovern'd hearts; where it rages beyond the inspirations of "a God all soft and gentle," and reigns more like "a Fury from Hell."

I do not pretend here to entertain you with a feign'd story, or anything piec'd together with romantick accidents; but every circumstance, to a tittle, is truth. To a great part of the main I myself was an eye-witness; and what I did not see, I was confirm'd of by actors in the intrigue, holy men, of the order of St. Francis. But for the sake of some of her relations, I shall give my Fair Jilt a feign'd name, that of Miranda; but my hero must retain his own, it being too illustrious to be conceal'd.

You are to understand, that in all the Catholick countries, where Holy Orders are establish'd, there are abundance of differing kinds of religious, both of men and women. Amongst the women, there are those we call Nuns, that make solemn vows of perpetual chastity; there are others who make but a simple vow, as for five or ten years, or more or less; and that time expir'd, they may contract a-new for longer time, or marry, or dispose of themselves as they shall see good; and these are ordinarily called Galloping Nuns. Of these there are several Orders; as Canonesses, Begines, Quests, Swart-Sisters, and Jesuitesses, with several others I have forgot. Of those of the Begines was our fair votress.

These Orders are taken up by the best persons of the town, young maids of fortune, who live together, not inclos'd, but in palaces that will hold about fifteen hundred or two thousand of these filles devotes; where they have a regulated government, under a sort of Abbess, or Prioress, or rather a Governante. They are oblig'd to a method of devotion, and are under a sort of obedience. They wear a habit much like our widows of quality in England, only without a bando; and their veil is of a thicker crape than what we have here, through which one cannot see the face; for when they go abroad, they cover themselves all over with it; but they put 'em up in the churches, and lay 'em by in the houses. Every one of these has a confessor, who is to 'em a sort of steward. For, you must know, they that go into these places, have the management of their own fortunes, and what their

parents design 'em. Without the advice of this confessor, they act nothing, nor admit of a lover that he shall not approve; at least, this method ought to be taken, and is by almost all of'em; though Miranda thought her wit above it, as her spirit was.

But as these women are, as I said, of the best quality, and live with the reputation of being retir'd from the world a little more than ordinary, and because there is a sort of difficulty to approach 'em, they are the people the most courted, and liable to the greatest temptations; for as difficult as it seems to be, they receive visits from all the men of the best quality, especially strangers. All the men of wit and conversation meet at the apartments of these fair filles devotes, where all manner of gallantries are perform'd, while all the study of these maids is to accomplish themselves for these noble conversations. They receive presents, balls, serenades, and billets. All the news, wit, verses, songs, novels, musick, gaming, and all fine diversion, is in their apartments, they themselves being of the best quality and fortune. So that to manage these gallantries, there is no sort of female arts they are not practis'd in, no intrigue they are ignorant of, and no management of which they are not capable.

Of this happy number was the fair Miranda, whose parents being dead, and a vast estate divided between herself and a young sister, (who liv'd with an unmarried old uncle, whose estate afterwards was all divided between 'em) she put herself into this uninclos'd religious house; but her beauty, which had all the charms that ever nature gave, became the envy of the whole sisterhood. She was tall, and admirably shaped; she had a bright hair, and hazle-eyes, all full of love and sweetness. No art could make a face so fair as hers by nature, which every feature adorn'd with a grace that imagination cannot reach. Every look, every motion charm'd, and her black dress shew'd the lustre of her face and neck. She had an air, though gay as so much youth could inspire, yet so modest, so nobly reserv'd, without formality, or stiffness, that one who look'd on her would have imagin'd her soul the twin-angel of her body; and both together made her appear something divine. To this she had a great deal of wit, read much, and retain'd all that serv'd her purpose. She sang delicately, and danc'd well, and play'd on the lute to a miracle. She spoke several languages naturally; for, being co-heiress to so great a fortune, she was bred with the nicest care, in all the finest manners of education; and was now arriv'd to her eighteenth year.

'Twere needless to tell you how great a noise the fame of this young beauty, with so considerable a fortune, made in the world. I may say, the world, rather than confine her fame to the scanty limits of a town; it reach'd to many others. And there was not a man of any quality than came to Antwerp, or pass'd through the city, but made it his business to see the lovely Miranda, who was universally ador'd. Her youth and beauty, her shape, and majesty of mien, and air of greatness, charm'd all her beholders; and thousands of people were dying by her eyes, while she was vain enough to glory in her conquests, and make it her business to wound. She lov'd nothing so much as to behold sighing slaves at her feet, of the greatest quality; and treated 'em all with an affability that gave 'em

hope. Continual musick, as soon as it was dark, and songs of dying lovers, were sung under her windows; and she might well have made herself a great fortune (if she had not been so already) by the rich presents that were hourly made her; and every body daily expected when she would make some one happy, by suffering herself to be conquer'd by love and honour, by the assiduities and vows of some one of her adorers. But Miranda accepted their presents, heard their vows with pleasure, and willingly admitted all their soft addresses; but would not yield her heart, or give away that lovely person to the possession of one, who could please it self with so many. She was naturally amorous, but extremely inconstant. She lov'd one for his wit, another for his face, and a third for his mien; but above all, she admir'd quality. Quality alone had the power to attach her entirely; yet not to one man, but that vertue was still admir'd by her in all. Wherever she found that, she lov'd, or at least acted the lover with such art, that (deceiving well) she fail'd not to compleat her conquest; and yet she never durst trust her fickle humour with marriage. She knew the strength of her own heart, and that it could not suffer itself to be confin'd to one man, and wisely avoided those inquietudes, and that uneasiness of life she was sure to find in that married state, which would, against her nature, oblige her to the embraces of one, whose humour was, to love all the young and the gay. But Love, who had hitherto only play'd with her heart, and given it nought but pleasing wanton wounds, such as afforded only soft joys, and not pains, resolv'd, either out of revenge to those numbers she had abandon'd, and who had sigh'd so long in vain, or to try what power he had upon so fickle a heart, to send an arrow dipp'd in the most tormenting flames that rage in hearts most sensible. He struck it home and deep, with all the malice of any angry god.

There was a church belonging to the Cordeliers, whither Miranda often repair'd to her devotion; and being there one day, accompany'd with a young sister of the Order, after the Mass was ended, as 'tis the custom, some one of the Fathers goes about the church with a box for contribution, or charity money. It happened that day, that a young Father, newly initiated, carried the box about, which, in his turn, he brought to Miranda. She had no sooner cast her eyes on this young friar but her face was overspread with blushes of surprize. She beheld him steadfastly, and saw in his face all the charms of youth, wit, and beauty; he wanted no one grace that could form him for love, he appear'd all that is adorable to the fair sex, nor could the misshapen habit hide from her the lovely shape it endeavour'd to cover, nor those delicate hands that approach'd her too near with the box. Besides the beauty of his face and shape, he had an air altogether great, in spite of his profess'd poverty, it betray'd the man of quality; and that thought weigh'd greatly with Miranda. But love, who did not design she should now feel any sort of those easy flames, with which she had heretofore burnt, made her soon lay all those considerations aside, which us'd to invite her to love, and now lov'd she knew not why.

She gaz'd upon him, while he bow'd before her, and waited for her charity, till she perceiv'd the lovely friar to blush, and cast his eyes to the ground. This awaken'd her shame, and she put her hand into her pocket, and was a good while in searching for her purse, as if she thought of nothing

less than what she was about; at last she drew it out, and gave him a pistole; but with so much deliberation and leisure, as easily betray'd the satisfaction she took in looking on him; while the good man, having receiv'd her bounty, after a very low obeisance, proceeded to the rest; and Miranda casting after him a look all languishing, as long as he remain'd in the church, departed with a sigh as soon as she saw him go out, and returned to her apartment without speaking one word all the way to the young fille devote who attended her; so absolutely was her soul employ'd with this young holy man. Cornelia (so was this maid call'd who was with her) perceiving she was so silent, who used to be all wit and good-humour, and observing her little disorder at the sight of the young father, tho she was far from imagining it to be love, took an occasion, when she was come home, to speak of him. "Madam," said she, "did you not observe that fine young Cordelier, who brought the box?" At a question that nam'd that object of her thoughts, Miranda blush'd; and she finding she did so, redoubled her confusion, and she had scarce courage enough to say, "Yes, I did observe him." And then, forcing herself to smile a little, continu'd, "And I wonder'd to see so jolly a young friar of an Order so severe and mortify'd." "Madam", reply'd Cornelia, "when you know his story, you will not wonder." Miranda, who was impatient to know all that concern'd her new conqueror, oblig'd her to tell his story; and Cornelia obey'd, and proceeded.

The Story Of Prince Henrick

"You must know, Madam, that this young holy man is a Prince of Germany, of the House of --, whose fate it was to fall most passionately in love with a fair young lady, who lov'd him with an ardour equal to what he vow'd her. Sure of her heart, and wanting only the approbation of her parents, and his own, which her quality did not suffer him to despair of, he boasted of his happiness to a young Prince, his elder brother, a youth amorous and fierce, impatient of joys, and sensible of beauty, taking fire with all fair eyes. He was his father's darling, and delight of his fond mother; and, by an ascendant over both their hearts, rul'd their wills.

"This young Prince no sooner saw, but lov'd the fair mistress of his brother; and with an authority of a sovereign, rather than the advice of a friend, warn'd his brother Henrick (this now young friar) to approach no more this lady, whom he had seen; and, seeing, lov'd.

"In vain the poor surpriz'd Prince pleads his right of love, his exchange of vows, and assurance of a heart that could never be but for himself In vain he urges his nearness of blood, his friendship, his passion, or his life, which so entirely depended on the possession of the charming maid. All his pleading serv'd but to blow his brother's flame; and the more he implores, the more the other burns; and while Henrick follows him, on his knees, with humble submissions, the other flies from him in rages of transported love; nor could his tears, that pursu'd his brother's steps, move him to pity. Hot-headed, vain-conceited of his beauty, and greater quality, as elder brother, he doubts not of success, and resolv'd to sacrifice all to the violence of his new-born passion.

"In short, he speaks of his design to his mother, who promis'd him her

assistance; and accordingly proposing it first to the Prince her husband, urging the languishment of her son, she soon wrought so on him, that a match being concluded between the parents of this young beauty and Henrick's brother, the hour was appointed before she knew of the sacrifice she was to be made. And while this was in agitation, Henrick was sent on some great affairs, up into Germany, far out of the way; not but his boding heart, with perpetual sighs and throbs, eternally foretold him his fate.

"All the letters he writ were intercepted, as well as those she writ to him. She finds herself every day perplex'd with the addresses of the Prince she hated; he was ever sighing at her feet. In vain were all her reproaches, and all her coldness, he was on the surer side; for what he found love would not do, force of parents would.

"She complains, in her heart, of young Henrick, from whom she could never receive one letter; and at last could not forbear bursting into tears, in spite of all her force, and feign'd courage, when, on a day, the Prince told her, that Henrick was withdrawn to give him time to court her; to whom he said, he confess'd he had made some vows, but did repent of em, knowing himself too young to make 'em good: that it was for that reason he brought him first to see her; and for that reason, that after that he never saw her more, nor so much as took leave of her; when, indeed, his death lay upon his next visit, his brother having sworn to murder him; and to that end, put a guard upon him, till he was sent into Germany.

"All this he utter'd with so many passionate asseverations, vows, and seeming pity for her being so inhumanly abandon'd, that she almost gave credit to all he had said, and had much ado to keep herself within the bounds of moderation and silent grief. Her heart was breaking, her eyes languish'd, and her cheeks grew pale, and she had like to have fallen dead into the treacherous arms of him that had reduc'd her to this discovery; but she did what she could to assume her courage, and to shew as little resentment as possible for a heart, like hers, oppress'd with love, and now abandon'd by the dear subject of its joys and pains.

"But, Madam, not to tire you with this adventure, the day arriv'd wherein our still weeping fair unfortunate was to be sacrific'd to the capriciousness of love; and she was carry'd to Court by her parents, without knowing to what end, where she was even compell'd to marry the Prince.

"Henrick, who all this while knew no more of his unhappiness, than what his fears suggested, returns, and passes even to the presence of his father, before he knew anything of his fortune; where he beheld his mistress and his brother, with his father, in such a familiarity, as he no longer doubted his destiny. 'Tis hard to judge, whether the lady, or himself, was most surpriz'd; she was all pale and unmovable in her chair, and Henrick fix'd like a statue; at last grief and rage took place of amazement, and he could not forbear crying out, 'Ah, traitor! Is it thus you have treated a friend and brother? And you, O perjur'd charmer! Is it thus you have rewarded all my vows?' He could say no more; but reeling against the door, had fall'n in a swoon upon the floor, had not his page caught him in his arms, who was entring with him. The good old Prince, the father, who knew not what all this meant, was soon inform'd by the young weeping Princess;

who, in relating the story of her amour with Henrick, told her tale in so moving a manner, as brought tears to the old man's eyes, and rage to those of her husband; he immediately grew jealous to the last degree. He finds himself in possession ('tis true) of the beauty he ador'd, but the beauty adoring another; a Prince young and charming as the light, soft, witty, and raging with an equal passion. He finds this dreaded rival in the same house with him, with an authority equal to his own; and fancies, where two hearts are so entirely agreed, and have so good an understanding, it would not be impossible to find opportunities to satisfy and ease that mutual flame, that burned so equally in both; he therefore resolved to send him out of the world, and to establish his own repose by a deed, wicked, cruel, and unnatural, to have him assassinated the first opportunity he could find. This resolution set him a little at ease, and he strove to dissemble kindness to Henrick, with all the art he was capable of, suffering him to come often to the apartment of the Princess, and to entertain her oftentimes with discourse, when he was not near enough to hear what he spoke; but still watching their eyes, he found those of Henrick full of tears, ready to flow, but restrain'd, looking all dying, and yet reproaching, while those of the Princess were ever bent to the earth, and she as much as possible, shunning his conversation. Yet this did not satisfy the jealous husband; 'twas not her complaisance that could appease him; he found her heart was panting within, whenever Henrick approach'd her, and every visit more and more confirmed his death.

"The father often found the disorders of the sons; the softness and address of the one gave him as much fear, as the angry blushings, the fierce looks, and broken replies of the other, whenever he beheld Henrick approach his wife; so that the father, fearing some ill consequence of this, besought Henrick to withdraw to some other country, or travel into Italy, he being now of an age that required a view of the world. He told his father that he would obey his commands, tho he was certain, that moment he was to be separated from the sight of the fair Princess, his sister, would be the last of his life; and, in fine, made so pitiful a story of his suffering love, as almost mov'd the old Prince to compassionate him so far, as to permit him to stay; but he saw inevitable danger in that, and therefore bid him prepare for his journey.

"That which pass'd between the father and Henrick, being a secret, none talked of his departing from Court; so that the design the brother had went on; and making a hunting-match one day, where most young people of quality were, he order'd some whom he had hired to follow his brother, so as if he chanc'd to go out of the way, to dispatch him; and accordingly, fortune gave 'em an opportunity; for he lagg'd behind the company, and turn'd aside into a pleasant thicket of hazles, where alighting, he walked on foot in the most pleasant part of it, full of thought, how to divide his soul between love and obedience. He was sensible that he ought not to stay; that he was but an affliction to the young Princess, whose honour cou'd never permit her to ease any part of his flame; nor was he so vicious to entertain a thought that should stain her vertue. He beheld her now as his brother's wife, and that secured his flame from all loose desires, if her native modesty had not been sufficient of itself to have done it, as well

as that profound respect he paid her; and he consider'd, in obeying his father, he left her at ease, and his brother freed of a thousand fears; he went to seek a cure, which if he could not find, at last he could but die; and so he must, even at her feet. However, that 'twas more noble to seek a remedy for his disease, than expect a certain death by staying. After a thousand reflections on his hard fate, and bemoaning himself, and blaming his cruel stars, that had doom'd him to die so young, after an infinity of sighs and tears, resolvings and unresolvings, he, on the sudden, was interrupted by the trampling of some horses he heard, and their rushing through the boughs, and saw four men make towards him. He had not time to mount, being walked some paces from his horse. One of the men advanced, and cry'd, 'Prince, you must die.' 'I do believe thee,' reply'd Henrick, 'but not by a hand so base as thine,' and at the same time drawing his sword, ran him into the groin. When the fellow found himself so wounded, he wheel'd off and cry'd, 'Thou art a prophet, and hast rewarded my treachery with death.' The rest came up, and one shot at the Prince, and shot him in the shoulder; the other two hastily laying hold (but too late) on the hand of the murderer, cry'd, 'Hold, traitor; we relent, and he shall not die.' He reply'd, "'Tis too late, he is shot; and see, he lies dead. Let us provide for our selves, and tell the Prince, we have done the work; for you are as guilty as I am.' At that they all fled, and left the Prince lying under a tree, weltering in his blood.

"About the evening, the forester going his walks, saw the horse richly caparison'd, without a rider, at the entrance of the wood; and going farther, to see if he could find its owner, found there the Prince almost dead; he immediately mounts him on the horse, and himself behind, bore him up, and carry'd him to the lodge; where he had only one old man, his father, well skilled in surgery, and a boy. They put him to bed; and the old forester, with what art he had, dress'd his wound, and in the morning sent for an abler surgeon, to whom the Prince enjoin'd secrecy, because he knew him. The man was faithful, and the Prince in time was recover'd of his wound; and as soon as he was well, he came for Flanders, in the habit of a pilgrim, and after some time took the Order of St. Francis, none knowing what became of him, till he was profess'd; and then he wrote his own story to the Prince his father, to his mistress, and his ungrateful brother. The young Princess did not long survive his loss, she languished from the moment of his departure; and he had this to confirm his devout life, to know she dy'd for him.

"My brother, Madam, was an officer under the Prince his father, and knew his story perfectly well; from whose mouth I had it."

"What!" reply'd Miranda then, "is Father Henrick a man of quality?" "Yes, Madam, " said Cornelia, "and has changed his name to Francisco." But Miranda, fearing to betray the sentiments of her heart, by asking any more questions about him, turned the discourse; and some persons of quality came in to visit her (for her apartment was about six a-clock, like the presence-chamber of a queen, always filled with the greatest people). There meet all the beaux esprits, and all the beauties. But it was visible Miranda was not so gay as she used to be; but pensive, and answering mal a propos to all that was said to her. She was a thousand times going to speak, against her

will, something of the charming friar, who was never from her thoughts; and she imagined, if he could inspire love in a coarse, grey, ill-made habit, a shorn crown, a hair-cord about his waste, bare-legg'd, in sandals instead of shoes; what must he do, when looking back on time, she beholds him in a prospect of glory, with all that youth, and illustrious beauty, set off by the advantage of dress and equipage? She frames an idea of him all gay and splendid, and looks on his present habit as some disguise proper for the stealths of love; some feigned put-on shape, with the more security to approach a mistress, and make himself happy; and that the robe laid by, she has the lover in his proper beauty, the same he would have been, if any other habit (though ever so rich) were put off. In the bed, the silent gloomy night, and the soft embraces of her arms, he loses all the friar, and assumes all the prince; and that awful reverence, due alone to his holy habit, he exchanges for a thousand dalliances, for which his youth was made: for love, for tender embraces, and all the happiness of life. Some moments she fancies him a lover, and that the fair object that takes up all his heart, has left no room for her there; but that was a thought that did not long perplex her, and which, almost as soon as born, she turned to her advantage. She beholds him a lover, and therefore finds he has a heart sensible and tender; he had youth to be fir'd, as well as to inspire; he was far from the loved object, and totally without hope; and she reasonably consider'd, that flame wou'd of itself soon die, that had only despair to feed on. She beheld her own charms; and experience, as well as her glass, told her, they never fail'd of conquest, especially where they design'd it. And she believed Henrick would be glad, at least, to quench that flame in himself, by an amour with her, which was kindled by the young Princess of - his sister.

These, and a thousand other self-flatteries, all vain and indiscreet, took up her waking nights, and now more retired days; while love, to make her truly wretched, suffer'd her to soothe her self with fond imaginations; not so much as permitting her reason to plead one moment to save her from undoing. She would not suffer it to tell her, he had taken Holy Orders, made sacred and solemn vows of everlasting chastity, that 'twas impossible he could marry her, or lay before her any argument that might prevent her ruin; but love, mad malicious love, was always called to counsel, and like easy monarchs, she had no ears, but for flatterers.

Well then, she is resolved to love, without considering to what end, and what must be the consequence of such an amour. She now miss'd no day of being at that little church, where she had the happiness, or rather the misfortune (so love ordained) to see this ravisher of her heart and soul; and every day she took new fire from his lovely eyes. Unawares, unknown, and unwillingly, he gave her wounds, and the difficulty of her cure made her rage the more. She burnt, she languish'd, and dy'd for the young innocent, who knew not he was the author of so much mischief.

Now she resolves a thousand ways in her tortured mind, to let him know her anguish, and at last pitch'd upon that of writing to him soft billets, which she had learnt the art of doing; or if she had not, she had now fire enough to inspire her with all that could charm and move. These she deliver'd to a young wench, who waited on her, and whom she had entirely

subdu'd to her interest, to give to a certain lay-brother of the Order, who was a very simple harmless wretch, and who served in the kitchen, in the nature of a cook, in the monastery of Cordeliers. She gave him gold to secure his faith and service; and not knowing from whence they came (with so good credentials) he undertook to deliver the letters to Father Francisco; which letters were all afterwards, as you shall hear, produced in open court. These letters failed not to come every day; and the sense of the first was, to tell him, that a very beautiful young lady, of a great fortune, was in love with him, without naming her; but it came as from a third person, to let him know the secret, that she desir'd he would let her know whether she might hope any return from him; assuring him, he needed but only see the fair languisher, to confess himself her slave.

This letter being deliver'd him, he read by himself, and was surprized to receive words of this nature, being so great a stranger in that place; and could not imagine, or would not give himself the trouble of guessing who this should be, because he never designed to make returns.

The next day, Miranda, finding no advantage from her messenger of love, in the evening sends another (impatient of delay) confessing that she who suffer'd the shame of writing and imploring, was the person her self who ador'd him. 'Twas there her raging love made her say all things that discover'd the nature of its flame, and propose to see with him to any part of the world, if he would quit the convent; that she had a fortune considerable enough to make him happy; and that his youth and quality were not given him to so unprofitable an end as to lose themselves in a convent, where poverty and ease was all the business. In fine, she leaves nothing un-urg'd that might debauch and invite him; not forgetting to send him her own character of beauty, and left him to judge of her wit and spirit by her writing, and her love by the extremity of passion she profess'd. To all which the lovely friar made no return, as believing a gentle capitulation or exhortation to her would but inflame her the more, and give new occasions for her continuing to write. All her reasonings, false and vicious, he despis'd, pity'd the error of her love, and was proof against all she could plead. Yet notwithstanding his silence, which left her in doubt, and more tormented her, she ceas'd not to pursue him with her letters, varying her style; sometimes all wanton, loose and raving; sometimes feigning a virgin-modesty all over, accusing herself, blaming her conduct, and sighing her destiny, as one compell'd to the shameful discovery by the austerity of his vow and habit, asking his pity and forgiveness; urging him in charity to use his fatherly care to persuade and reason with her wild desires, and by his counsel drive the god from her heart, whose tyranny was worse than that of a fiend; and he did not know what his pious advice might do. But still she writes in vain, in vain she varies her style, by a cunning, peculiar to a maid possess'd with such a sort of passion.

This cold neglect was still oil to the burning lamp, and she tries yet more arts, which for want of right thinking were as fruitless. She has recourse to presents; her letters came loaded with rings of great price, and jewels, which fops of quality had given her. Many of this sort he receiv'd, before he knew where to return 'em, or how; and on this occasion alone he sent her

a letter, and restor'd her trifles, as he call'd them. But his habit having not made him forget his quality and education, he wrote to her with all the profound respect imaginable; believing by her presents, and the liberality with which she parted with 'em, that she was of quality. But the whole letter, as he told me afterwards, was to persuade her from the honour she did him, by loving him; urging a thousand reasons, solid and pious, and assuring her, he had wholly devoted the rest of his days to heaven, and had no need of those gay trifles she had sent him, which were only fit to adorn ladies so fair as herself, and who had business with this glittering world, which he disdain'd, and had for ever abandon'd. He sent her a thousand blessings, and told her, she should be ever in his prayers, tho not in his heart, as she desir'd. And abundance of goodness more he express'd, and counsel he gave her, which had the same effect with his silence; it made her love but the more, and the more impatient she grew. She now had a new occasion to write, she now is charm'd with his wit; this was the new subject. She rallies his resolution, and endeavours to recall him to the world, by all the arguments that human invention is capable of. But when she had above four months languished thus in vain, not missing one day, wherein she went not to see him, without discovering herself to him; she resolv'd, as her last effort, to shew her person, and see what that, assisted by her tears, and soft words from her mouth, could do, to prevail upon him.

It happen'd to be on the eve of that day when she was to receive the Sacrament, that she, covering herself with her veil, came to vespers, purposing to make choice of the conquering friar for her confessor. She approach'd him; and as she did so, she trembled with love. At last she cry'd, "Father, my confessor is gone for some time from the town, and I am oblig'd tomorrow to receive, and beg you will be pleas'd to take my confession."

He could not refuse her; and led her into the sacristy, where there is a confession-chair, in which he seated himself; and on one side of him she kneel'd down, over-against a little altar, where the priests' robes lie, on which were plac'd some lighted wax-candles, that made the little place very light and splendid, which shone full upon Miranda.

After the little preparation usual in confession, she turn'd up her veil, and discover'd to his view the most wondrous object of beauty he had ever seen, dress'd in all the glory of a young bride; her hair and stomacher full of diamonds, that gave a lustre all dazling to her brighter face and eyes. He was surpriz'd at her amazing beauty, and question'd whether he saw a woman, or an angel at his feet. Her hands, which were elevated, as if in prayer, seem'd to be form'd of polished alabaster; and he confess'd, he had never seen anything in nature so perfect, and so admirable.

He had some pain to compose himself to hear her confession, and was oblig'd to turn away his eyes, that his mind might not be perplex'd with an object so diverting; when Miranda, opening the finest mouth in the world, and discovering new charms, began her confession.

"Holy father," said she, "amongst the number of my vile offences, that which afflicts me to the greatest degree, is, that I am in love. Not," continued she, "that I believe simple and vertuous love a sin, when 'tis

placed on an object proper and suitable; but, my dear father," said she, and wept, "I love with a violence which cannot be contain'd within the bounds of reason, moderation, or vertue. I love a man whom I cannot possess without a crime, and a man who cannot make me happy without being perjur'd." "Is he marry'd?" replied the father. "No," answer'd Miranda. "Are you so?" continued he. "Neither," said she. "Is he too near ally'd to you?" said Francisco, "a brother, or relation?" "Neither of these," said she. "He is unenjoy'd, unpromis'd; and so am I. Nothing opposes our happiness, or makes my love a vice, but you - 'Tis you deny me life: 'tis you that forbid my flame: 'tis you will have me die, and seek my remedy in my grave, when I complain of tortures, wounds, and flames. O cruel charmer! 'tis for you I languish; and here, at your feet, implore that pity, which all my addresses have failed of procuring me."

With that, perceiving he was about to rise from his seat, she held him by his habit, and vow'd she would in that posture follow him, wherever he flew from her. She elevated her voice so loud, he was afraid she might be heard, and therefore suffer'd her to force him into his chair again; where being seated, he began, in the most passionate terms imaginable, to dissuade her, but finding she the more persisted in eagerness of passion, he us'd all the tender assurances that he could force from himself, that he would have for her all the respect, esteem, and friendship that he was capable of paying; that he had a real compassion for her: and at last she prevail'd so far with him, by her sighs and tears, as to own he had a tenderness for her, and that he could not behold so many charms, without being sensibly touch'd by 'em, and finding all those effects, that a maid so fair and young causes in the souls of men of youth and sense. But that, as he was assured, he could never be so happy to marry her, and as certain he could not grant anything but honourable passion, he humbly besought her not to expect more from him than such. And then began to tell her how short life was, and transitory its joys; how soon she would grow weary of vice, and how often change to find real repose in it, but never arrive to it. He made an end, by new assurance of his eternal friendship, but utterly forbid her to hope. Behold her now deny'd, refus'd and defeated, with all her pleading youth, beauty, tears, and knees, imploring, as she lay, holding fast his scapular, and embracing his feet. What shall she do? She swells with pride, love, indignation and desire; her burning heart is bursting with despair, her eyes grow fierce, and from grief she rises to a storm; and in her agony of passion, with looks all disdainful, haughty, and full of rage, she began to revile him, as the poorest of animals; tells him his soul was dwindled to the meanness of his habit, and his vows of poverty, were suited to his degenerate mind. "And," said she, "since all my nobler ways have fail'd me; and that, for a little hypocritical devotion, you resolve to lose the greatest blessings of life, and to sacrifice me to your religious pride and vanity, I will either force you to abandon that dull dissimulation, or you shall die, to prove your sanctity real. Therefore answer me immediately, answer my flame, my raging fire, which your eyes have kindled; or here, in this very moment, I will ruin thee; and make no scruple of revenging the pains I suffer, by that which shall take away your life and honour."

The trembling young man, who, all this while, with extreme anguish of mind,

and fear of the dire result, had listen'd to her ravings, full of dread, demanded what she would have him do? When she reply'd, "Do what thy youth and beauty were ordain'd to do: this place is private, a sacred silence reigns here, and no one dares to pry into the secrets of this holy place. We are as secure from fears of interruption, as in desarts uninhabited, or caves forsaken by wild beasts. The tapers too shall veil their lights, and only that glimmering lamp shall be witness of our dear stealths of love. Come to my arms, my trembling, longing arms: and curse the folly of thy bigotry, that has made thee so long lose a blessing, for which so many princes sigh in vain."

At these words she rose from his feet, and snatching him in her arms, he could not defend himself from receiving a thousand kisses from the lovely mouth of the charming wanton; after which, she ran her self, and in an instant put out the candles. But he cry'd to her, " In vain, O too indiscreet fair one, in vain you put out the light! for Heaven still has eyes, and will look down upon my broken vows. I own your power, I own I have all the sense in the world of your charming touches; I am frail flesh and blood, but - yet - yet I can resist; and I prefer my vows to all your powerful temptations. I will be deaf and blind, and guard my heart with walls of ice, and make you know, that when the flames of true devotion are kindled in a heart, it puts out all other fires; which are as ineffectual, as candles lighted in the face of the sun. Go, vain wanton, and repent, and mortify that blood which has so shamefully betray'd thee, and which will one day ruin both thy soul and body."

At these words, Miranda, more enrag'd, the nearer she imagin'd herself to happiness, made no reply; but throwing herself, in that instant, into the confessing-chair, and violently pulling the young friar into her lap, she elevated her voice to such a degree, in crying out, "Help, help! A rape! Help, help!" that she was heard all over the church, which was full of people at the evening's devotion; who flock'd about the door of the sacristy, which was shut with a spring-lock on the inside, but they durst not open the door.

'Tis easily to be imagined in what condition our young friar was, at this last devilish stratagem of his wicked mistress. He strove to break from those arms that held him so fast; and his bustling to get away, and hers to retain him, disorder'd her hair and habit to such a degree, as gave the more credit to her false accusation.

The fathers had a door on the other side, by which they usually enter'd, to dress in this little room; and at the report that was in an instant made 'em, they hasted thither, and found Miranda and the good Father very indecently struggling; which they misinterpreted, as Miranda desir'd; who, all in tears, immediately threw herself at the feet of the Provincial, who was one of those that enter'd; and cry'd, "O holy father! revenge an innocent maid, undone and lost to fame and honour, by that vile monster, born of goats, nursed by tygers, and bred up on savage mountains, where humanity and religion are strangers. For, O holy father, could it have enter'd into the heart of man, to have done so barbarous and horrid a deed, as to attempt the virgin-honour of an unspotted maid, and one of my degree, even in the moment of my confession, in that holy time, when I was

prostrate before him and heaven, confessing those sins that press'd my tender conscience, even then to load my soul with the blackest of infamies, to add to my number a weight that must sink me to hell? Alas! under the security of his innocent looks, his holy habit, and his awful function, I was led into this room to make my confession; where, he locking the door, I had no sooner began, but he gazing on me, took fire at my fatal beauty; and starting up, put out the candles and caught me in his arms; and raising me from the pavement, set me in the confession-chair; and then - Oh, spare me the rest."

With that a shower of tears burst from her fair dissembling eyes, and sobs so naturally acted, and so well manag'd, as left no doubt upon the good men, but all she had spoken was truth.

"At first," proceeded she, "I was unwilling to bring so great a scandal on his Order, as to cry out; but struggled as long as I had breath; pleaded the heinousness of the crime, urging my quality, and the danger of the attempt. But he, deaf as the winds, and running as a storm, pursu'd his wild design with so much force and insolence, as I at last, unable to resist, was wholly vanquish'd, robb'd of my native purity. With what life and breath I had, I call'd for assistance, both from men and heaven; but oh, alas! your succours came too late. You find me here a wretched, undone, and ravish'd maid. Revenge me, fathers; revenge me on the perfidious hypocrite, or else give me a death that may secure your cruelty and injustice from ever being proclaim'd over the world; or my tongue will be eternally reproaching you, and cursing the wicked author of my infamy." She ended as she began, with a thousand sighs and tears; and receiv'd from the Provincial all assurances of revenge.

The innocent betray'd victim, all the while she was speaking, heard her with an astonishment that may easily be imagin'd; yet shew'd no extravagant signs of it, as those would do, who feign it, to be thought innocent; but being really so, he bore with a humble, modest, and blushing countenance, all her accusations; which silent shame they mistook for evident signs of his guilt.

When the Provincial demanded, with an unwonted severity in his eyes and voice, what he could answer for himself? calling him prophaner of his sacred vows, and infamy to the Holy Order; the injur'd, but innocently accus'd, only reply'd: "May Heaven forgive that bad woman, and bring her to repentance!" For his part, he was not so much in love with life, as to use many arguments to justify his innocence; unless it were to free that Order from a scandal, of which he had the honour to be profess'd. But as for himself, life or death were things indifferent to him, who heartily despis'd the world.

He said no more, and suffer'd himself to be led before the magistrate; who committed him to prison, upon the accusation of this implacable beauty; who, with so much feign'd sorrow, prosecuted the matter, even to his tryal and condemnation; where he refus'd to make any great defence for himself. But being daily visited by all the religious, both of his own and other Orders, they oblig'd him (some of'em knowing the austerity of his life, others his cause of griefs that first brought him into Orders, and others pretending a nearer knowledge, even of his soul it self) to stand upon his

justification, and discover what he knew of that wicked woman; whose life had not been so exemplary for vertue, not to have given the world a thousand suspicions of her lewdness and prostitutions.

The daily importunities of these fathers made him produce her letters. But as he had all the gown-men on his side, she had all the hats and feathers on hers; all the men of quality taking her part, and all the church-men his. They heard his daily protestations and vows, but not a word of what passed at confession was yet discover'd. He held that as a secret sacred on his part; and what was said in nature of a confession, was not to be reveal'd, though his life depended on the discovery. But as to the letters, they were forc'd from him, and expos'd; however, matters were carry'd with so high a hand against him, that they serv'd for no proof at all of his innocence, and he was at last condemn'd to be burn'd at the Market-place. After his sentence was pass'd, the whole body of priests made their addresses to the Marquis Castel Roderigo, the then Governour of Flanders, for a reprieve; which, after much-ado, was granted him for some weeks, but with an absolute denial of pardon. So prevailing were the young cavaliers of his Court, who were all adorers of this fair jilt.

About this time, while the poor innocent young Henrick was thus languishing in prison, in a dark and dismal dungeon, and Miranda, cured of her love, was triumphing in her revenge, expecting and daily giving new conquests: and who, by this time, had re-assum'd all her wonted gaiety; there was a great noise about the town, that a Prince of mighty name, and fam'd for all the excellences of his sex, was arriv'd; a Prince young, and gloriously attended, call'd Prince Tarquin.

We had often heard of this great man, and that he was making his travels in France and Germany. And we had also heard, that some years before, he being about eighteen years of age, in the time when our King Charles, of blessed memory, was in Brussels, in the last year of his banishment, that all on a sudden, this young man rose up upon 'em like the sun all glorious and dazling, demanding place of all the princes in that Court. And when his pretence was demanded, he own'd himself Prince Tarquin, of the race of the last Kings of Rome, made good his title, and took his place accordingly.

After that he travell'd for about six years up and down the world, and then arriv'd at Antwerp, about the time of my being sent thither by King Charles.

Perhaps there could be nothing seen so magnificent as this Prince. He was, as I said, extremely handsome, from head to foot exactly form'd, and he wanted nothing that might adorn that native beauty to the best advantage. His parts were suitable to the rest. He had an accomplishment fit for a Prince, an air haughty, but a carriage affable, easy in conversation, and very entertaining, liberal and good-natur'd, brave and inoffensive. I have seen him pass the streets with twelve foot-men, and four pages; the pages all in green velvet coats lac'd with gold, and white velvet tunics; the men in cloth, richly lac'd with gold; his coaches, and all other officers suitable to a great man.

He was all the discourse of the town; some laughing at his title, others reverencing it. Some cry'd that he was an impostor; others, that he had made his title as plain, as if Tarquin had reign'd but a year ago. Some

made friendships with him, others would have nothing to say to him. But all wonder'd where his revenue was, that supported this grandeur; and believ'd, tho he could make his descent from the Roman kings very well out, that he could not lay so good a claim to the Roman land. Thus everybody meddled with what they had nothing to do; and, as in other places, thought themselves on the surer side, if, in these doubtful cases, they imagin'd the worst.

But the men might be of what opinion they pleas'd concerning him; the ladies were all agreed that he was a prince, and a young handsome prince, and a prince not to be resisted. He had all their wishes, all their eyes, and all their hearts. They now dress'd only for him; and what church he grac'd, was sure, that day, to have the beauties, and all that thought themselves so.

You may believe, our amorous Miranda was not the least conquest he made. She no sooner heard of him, which was as soon as he arriv'd, but she fell in love with his very name. "Jesu! A young King of Rome! Oh, 'twas so novel, that she doated on the title; and had not car'd whether the rest had been man or monkey almost." She was resolv'd to be the Lucretia that this young Tarquin should ravish.

To this end, she was no sooner up the next day, but she sent him a billet doux, assuring him how much she admired his fame; and that being a stranger in the town, she begged the honour of introducing him to all the belle-conversations, etc., which he took for the invitation of some coquette, who had interest in fair ladies; and civilly return'd her an answer, that he would wait on her. She had him that day watched to church; and impatient to see what she heard so many people flock to see, she went also to the same church; those sanctified abodes being too often profaned by such devotees, whose business is to ogle and ensnare.

But what a noise and humming was heard all over the church, when Tarquin enter'd! His grace, his mien, his fashion, his beauty, his dress, and his equipage, surprized all that were present. And by the good management and care of Miranda, she got to kneel at the side of the altar, just over against the Prince, so that, if he wou'd, he cou'd not avoid looking full upon her. She had turned up her veil, and all her face and shape appear'd such, and so enchanting, as I have described; and her beauty heighten'd with blushes, and her eyes full of spirit and fire, with joy, to find the young Roman monarch so charming, she appear'd like something more than mortal, and compelled his eyes to a fixed gazing on her face; she never glanc'd his way, but she met them; and then would feign so modest a shame, and cast her eyes downwards with such inviting art, that he was wholly ravished and charmed, and she overjoy'd to find he was so.

The ceremony being ended, he sent a page to follow that lady home, himself pursuing her to the door of the church, where he took some holy water, and threw upon her, and made her a profound reverence. She forc'd an innocent look, and a modest gratitude in her face, and bow'd, and pass'd forward, half assured of her conquest; leaving her, to go home to his lodging, and impatiently wait the return of his page. And all the ladies who saw this first beginning between the Prince and Miranda, began to curse and envy her charms, who had deprived them of half their hopes.

After this, I need not tell you, he made Miranda a visit; and from that day never left her apartment, but when he went home at nights, or unless he had business; so entirely was he conquer'd by this fair one. But the Bishop, and several men of quality, in Orders, that profess'd friendship to him, advised him from her company; and spoke several things to him, that might (if love had not made him blind) have reclaim'd him from the pursuit of his ruin. But whatever they trusted him with, she had the art to wind herself about his heart, and make him unravel all his secrets; and then knew as well, by feign'd sighs and tears, to make him disbelieve all; so that he had no faith but for her; and was wholly enchanted and bewitch'd by her. At last, in spite of all that wou'd have opposed it, he marry'd this famous woman, possess'd by so many great men and strangers before, while all the world was pitying his shame and misfortunes.

Being marry'd, they took a great house; and as she was indeed a great fortune, and now a great princess, there was nothing wanting that was agreeable to their quality; all was splendid and magnificent. But all this would not acquire them the world's esteem; they had an abhorrence for her former life, and despis'd her; and for his espousing a woman so infamous, they despis'd him. So that though they admir'd, and gazed upon their equipage, and glorious dress, they foresaw the ruin that attended it, and paid her quality little respect.

She was no sooner married, but her uncle dy'd; and dividing his fortune between Miranda and her sister, leaves the young heiress, and all her fortune, entirely in the hands of the Princess.

We will call this sister Alcidiana; she was about fourteen years of age, and now had chosen her brother, the Prince for her guardian. If Alcidiana were not altogether so great a beauty as her sister, she had charms sufficient to procure her a great many lovers, tho her fortune had not been so considerable as it was; but with that addition, you may believe, she wanted no courtships from those of the best quality; though every body deplor'd her being under the tutorage of a lady so expert in all the vices of her sex, and so cunning a manager of sin, as was the Princess; who, on her part, failed not, by all the caresses, and obliging endearments, to engage the mind of this young maid, and to subdue her wholly to her government. All her senses were eternally regaled with the most bewitching pleasures they were capable of. She saw nothing but glory and magnificence, heard nothing but musick of the sweetest sounds; the richest perfumes employ'd her smelling; and all she eat and touch'd was delicate and inviting; and being too young to consider how this state and grandeur was to be continu'd, little imagin'd her vast fortune was every day diminishing, towards its needless support.

When the Princess went to church, she had her gentleman bare before her, carrying a great velvet cushion, with great golden tassels, for her to kneel on, and her train borne up a most prodigious length, led by a gentleman usher, bare; follow'd by innumerable footmen, pages, and women. And in this state she would walk in the streets, as in those countries 'tis the fashion for the great ladies to do, who are well; and in her train two or three coaches, and perhaps a rich velvet chair embroider'd, would follow in state.

'Twas thus for some time they liv'd, and the Princess was daily press'd by young sighing lovers, for her consent to marry Alcidiana; but she had still one art or other to put them off, and so continually broke all the great matches that were propos'd to her, notwithstanding their kindred and other friends had industriously endeavour'd to make several great matches for her; but the Princess was still positive in her denial, and one way or other broke all. At last it happen'd, there was one proposed, yet more advantageous, a young count, with whom the young maid grew passionately in love, and besought her sister to consent that she might have him, and got the Prince to speak in her behalf; but he had no sooner heard the secret reasons Miranda gave him, but (entirely her slave) he changed his mind, and suited it to hers, and she, as before, broke off that amour: which so extremely incensed Alcidiana, that she, taking an opportunity, got from her guard, and ran away, putting herself into the hands of a wealthy merchant, her kinsman, and one who bore the greatest authority in the city; him she chuses for her guardian, resolving to be no longer a slave to the tyranny of her sister. And so well she order'd matters, that she writ to this young cavalier, her last lover, and retrieved him; who came back to Antwerp again, to renew his courtship.

Both parties being agreed, it was no hard matter to persuade all but the Princess. But though she opposed it, it was resolved on, and the day appointed for marriage, and the portion demanded; demanded only, but never to be pay'd, the best part of it being spent. However, she put them off from day to day, by a thousand frivolous delays; and when she saw they would have recourse to force, and that all her magnificence would be at an end, if the law should prevail against her; and that without this sister's fortune, she could not long support her grandeur; she bethought herself of a means to make it all her own, by getting her sister made away; but she being out of her tuition, she was not able to accomplish so great a deed of darkness. But since 'twas resolved it must be done, she contrives a thousand stratagems; and at last pitches upon an effectual one.

She had a page called Van Brune, a youth of great address and wit, and one she had long managed for her purpose. This youth was about seventeen years of age, and extremely beautiful; and in the time when Alcidiana lived with the Princess, she was a little in love with this handsome boy; but 'twas checked in its infancy, and never grew up to a flame. Nevertheless, Alcidiana retained still a sort of tenderness for him, while he burned in good earnest with love for the Princess.

The Princess one day ordering this page to wait on her in her closet, she shut the door; and after a thousand questions of what he would undertake to serve her, the amorous boy finding himself alone, and caress'd by the fair person he ador'd, with joyful blushes that beautify'd his face, told her "There was nothing upon earth he would not do, to obey her least commands." She grew more familiar with him, to oblige him; and seeing love dance in his eyes, of which she was so good a judge, she treated him more like a lover, than a servant; till at last the ravished youth, wholly transported out of himself, fell at her feet, and impatiently implor'd to receive her commands quickly, that he might fly to execute them; for he was not able to bear her charming words, looks, and touches, and retain his duty. At this

she smil'd, and told him, the work was of such a nature, as wou'd mortify all flames about him; and he wou'd have more need of rage, envy, and malice, than the aids of a passion so soft as what she now found him capable of. He assur'd her, he would stick at nothing, tho even against his nature, to recompense for the boldness he now, through his indiscretion, had discover'd. She smiling, told him, he had committed no fault; and that possibly, the pay he should receive for the service she required at his hands, should be - what he most wish'd for in the world. At this he bow'd to the earth; and kissing her feet, bad her command. And then she boldly told him, 'twas to kill her sister Alcidiana. The youth, without so much as starting or pausing upon the matter, told her, it should be done; and bowing low, immediately went out of the closet. She called him back, and would have given him some instruction; but he refused it, and said, "The action and the contrivance shall be all his own." And offering to go again, she again recalled him; putting into his hand a purse of a hundred pistoles, which he took, and with a low bow departed.

He no sooner left her presence, but he goes directly, and buys a dose of poison, and went immediately to the house where Alcidiana lived; where desiring to be brought to her presence, he fell a weeping; and told her, his lady had fallen out with him, and dismissed him her service; and since from a child he had been brought up in the family, he humbly besought Alcidiana to receive him into hers, she being in a few days to be marry'd. There needed not much intreaty to a thing that pleased her so well, and she immediately received him to pension. And he waited some days on her, before he could get an opportunity to administer his devilish potion. But one night, when she drank wine with roasted apples, which was usual with her; instead of sugar, or with the sugar, the baneful drug was mixed, and she drank it down.

About this time, there was a great talk of this page's coming from one sister, to go to the other. And Prince Tarquin, who was ignorant of the design from the beginning to the end, hearing some men of quality at his table speaking of Van Brune's change of place (the Princess then keeping her chamber upon some trifling indisposition), he answered, "That surely they were mistaken, that he was not dismissed from the Princess's service": and calling some of his servants, he asked for Van Brune; and whether anything had happen'd between her Highness and him, that had occasion'd his being turned off. They all seem'd ignorant of this matter; and those who had spoken of it, began to fancy there was some juggle in the case, which time would bring to light.

The ensuing day 'twas all about the town, that Alcidiana was poison'd; and though not dead, yet very near it; and that the doctors said, she had taken mercury. So that there was never so formidable a sight as this fair young creature; her head and body swoln, her eyes starting out, her face black, and all deformed. So that diligent search was made, who it should be that did this; who gave her drink and meat. The cook and butler were examined, and footmen called to account; but all concluded, she received nothing but from the hand of her new page, since he came into her service. He was examined, and shewed a thousand guilty looks. And the apothecary, then attending among the doctors, proved he had bought mercury of him three or

four days before; which he could not deny; and making many excuses for his buying it, betray'd him the more; so ill he chanced to dissemble. He was immediately sent to be examined by the Margrave or Justice, who made his Mittimus, and sent him to prison.

'Tis easy to imagine, in what fears and confusion the Princess was at this news. She took her chamber upon it, more to hide her guilty face, than for any indisposition. And the doctors apply'd such remedies to Alcidiana, such antidotes against the poison, that in a short time she recover'd; but lost the finest hair in the world, and the complexion of her face ever after.

It was not long before the trials for criminals came on; and the day being arrived, Van Brune was try'd the first of all; every body having already read his destiny, according as they wished it; and none would believe, but just indeed as it was. So that for the revenge they hoped to see fall upon the Princess, every one wished he might find no mercy, that she might share of his shame and misery.

The sessions-house was filled that day with all the ladies, and chief of the town, to hear the result of his trial; and the sad youth was brought, loaden with chains, and pale as death; where every circumstance being sufficiently proved against him, and he making but a weak defence for himself, he was convicted, and sent back to prison, to receive his sentence of death on the morrow; where he owned all, and who set him on to do it. He owned 'twas not reward of gain he did it for, but hope he should command at his pleasure the possession of his mistress, the Princess, who shou'd deny him nothing, after having entrusted him with so great a secret; and that besides, she had elevated him with the promise of that glorious reward, and had dazled his young heart with so charming a prospect, that blind and mad with joy, he rushed forward to gain the desired prize, and thought on nothing but his coming happiness. That he saw too late the follies of his presumptuous flame, and cursed the deluding flatteries of the fair hypocrite, who had soothed him to his undoing. That he was a miserable victim to her wickedness; and hoped he should warn all young men, by his fall, to avoid the dissimulation on the deceiving fair. That he hoped they would have pity of his youth, and attribute his crime to the subtle persuasions alone of his mistress the Princess: and that since Alcidiana was not dead, they would grant him mercy, and permit him to live to repent of his grievous crime, in some part of the world, whither they might banish him.

He ended with tears, that fell in abundance from his eyes; and immediately the Princess was apprehended, and brought to prison, to the same prison where yet the poor young Father Francisco was languishing, he having been from week to week reprieved, by the intercession of the fathers; and possibly she there had time to make some reflections.

You may imagine Tarquin left no means unessay'd, to prevent the imprisonment of the Princess, and the publick shame and infamy she was likely to undergo in this affair. But the whole city being over-joyed that she should be punished, as an author of all this mischief, were generally bent against her, both priests, magistrates and people; the whole force of the stream running that way, she found no more favour than the meanest criminal. The Prince therefore, when he saw 'twas impossible to rescue her

from the hands of justice, suffer'd with grief unspeakable, what he could not prevent, and led her himself to the prison, follow'd by all his people, in as much state as if he had been going to his marriage; where, when she came, she was as well-attended and served as before, he never stirring one moment from her.

The next day she was tried in open and common court; where she appeared in glory, led by Tarquin, and attended according to her quality. And she could not deny all the page had alledged against her, who was brought thither also in chains; and after a great many circumstances, she was found guilty, and both received sentence; the page to be hanged till he was dead, on a gibbet in the market-place; and the Princess to stand under the gibbet, with a rope about her neck, the other end of which was to be fasten'd to the gibbet where the page was hanging; and to have an inscription, in large characters, upon her back and breast, of the cause why; where she was to stand from ten in the morning to twelve.

This sentence, the people with one accord, believed too favourable for so ill a woman, whose crimes deserved death, equal to that of Van Brune. Nevertheless, there were some who said, it was infinitely more severe than death it self

The following Friday was the day of execution, and one need not tell of the abundance of people, who were flocked together in the market-place. And all the windows were taken down, and filled with spectators, and the tops of houses; when at the hour appointed, the fatal beauty appear'd. She was dress'd in a black velvet gown, with a rich row of diamonds all down the fore-part of her breast, and a great knot of diamonds at the peak behind; and a petticoat of flower'd gold, very rich, and laced; with all things else suitable. A gentleman carry'd her great velvet cushion before her, on which her prayer-book, embroider'd, was laid; her train was borne up by a page, and the Prince led her, bare; followed by his footmen, pages, and other officers of his house.

When they arrived at the place of execution, the cushion was laid on the ground, upon a Portugal-mat, spread there for that purpose; and the Princess stood on the cushion, with her prayer-book in her hand, and a priest by her side; and was accordingly tied up to the gibbet.

She had not stood there ten minutes, but she had the mortification (at least one would think it so to her) to see her sad page, Van Brune, approach, fair as an angel, but languishing and pale. That sight moved all the beholders with as much pity, as that of the Princess did with disdain and pleasure.

He was dressed all in mourning, and very fine linen, bareheaded, with his own hair, the fairest that could be seen, hanging all in curls on his back and shoulders, very long. He had a prayer-book of black velvet in his hand, and behaved himself with much penitence and devotion.

When he came under the gibbet, he seeing his mistress in that condition, shew'd an infinite concern, and his fair face was cover'd over with blushes; and falling at her feet, he humbly asked her pardon for having been the occasion of so great an infamy to her, by a weak confession, which the fears of youth and hopes of life, had obliged him to make, so greatly to her dishonour; for indeed he wanted that manly strength, to bear the

efforts of dying, as he ought, in silence, rather than of committing so great a crime against his duty, and honour itself; and that he could not die in peace, unless she would forgive him. The Princess only nodded her head, and cried, "I do."

And after having spoken a little to his father-confessor, who was with him, he cheerfully mounted the ladder, and in sight of the Princess he was turned off, while a loud cry was heard thro all the market-place, especially from the fair sex; he hanged there till the time the Princess was to depart; and then she was put into a rich embroider'd chair, and carried away, Tarquin going into his, for he had all that time stood supporting the Princess under the gallows, and was very weary. She was sent back, till her releasement came, which was that night about seven o'clock; and then she was conducted to her own house in great state, with a dozen white wax flambeaux about her chair.

If the guardian of Alcidiana, and her friends, before were impatient of having the portion out of the hands of these extravagants, 'tis not to be imagined but they were now much more so; and the next day they sent an officer, according to law, to demand it, or to summon the Prince to give reasons why he would not pay it. The officer received for answer, that the mony should be called in, and paid in such a time, setting a certain time, which I have not been so curious as to retain, or put in my journal-observations; but I am sure it was not long, as may be easily imagin'd, for they every moment suspected the Prince would pack up, and be gone, some time or other, on the sudden; and for that reason they would not trust him without bail, or two officers to remain in his house, to watch that nothing should be removed or touched. As for bail, or security, he could give none; every one slunk their heads out of the collar, when it came to that. So that he was obliged, at his own expense, to maintain officers in his house. The Princess finding herself reduced to the last extremity, and that she must either produce the value of a hundred thousand crowns, or see the Prince her husband lodged for ever in a prison, and all their glory vanish; and that it was impossible to fly, since guarded; she had recourse to an extremity, worse than the affair of Van Brune. And in order to this, she first puts on a world of sorrow and concern, for what she feared might arrive to the Prince. And indeed, if ever she shed tears which she did not dissemble, it was upon this occasion. But here she almost over-acted. She stirred not from her bed, and refused to eat, or sleep, or see the light; so that the day being shut out of her chamber, she lived by wax-lights, and refused all comfort and consolation.

The Prince, all raving with love, tender compassion and grief, never stirred from her bedside, nor ceased to implore, that she would suffer herself to live. But she, who was not now so passionately in love with Tarquin, as she was with the Prince; nor so fond of the man as his titles, and of glory, foresaw the total ruin of the last, if not prevented by avoiding the payment of this great sum; which could not otherwise be, than by the death of Alcidiana. And therefore, without ceasing, she wept, and cry'd out, "She could not live, unless Alcidiana dy'd. This Alcidiana," "continu'd she, "who has been the author of my shame; who has expos'd me under a gibbet, in the publick market-place! Oh! I am deaf to all reason,

blind to natural affection. I renounce her, I hate her as my mortal foe, my stop to glory, and the finisher of my days, e'er half my race of life be run."

Then throwing her false, but snowy charming arms about the neck of her heart-breaking lord and lover, who lay sighing, and listening by her side, he was charmed and bewitched into saying all things that appeased her; and lastly, told her, "Alcidiana should be no longer any obstacle to her repose; but that, if she would look up, and cast her eyes of sweetness and love upon him, as heretofore; forget her sorrow, and redeem her lost health; he would take what measures she should propose to despatch this fatal stop to her happiness, out of the way."

These words fail'd not to make her caress him in the most endearing manner that love and flattery could invent; and she kiss'd him to an oath, a solemn oath, to perform what he had promised; and he vowed liberally. And she assumed in an instant her good-humour, and suffer'd a supper to be prepar'd, and did eat; which in many days before she had not done. So obstinate and powerful was she in dissembling well.

The next thing to be considered was, which way this deed was to be done; for they doubted not, but when 'twas done all the world would lay it upon the Princess, as done by her command. But she urged, suspicion was no proof; and that they never put to death any one, but when they had great and certain evidence who were the offenders. She was sure of her own constancy, that racks and tortures should never get the secret from her breast; and if he were as confident on his part, there was no danger. Yet this preparation she made towards laying the fact on others, that she caused several letters to be writ from Germany, as from the relations of Van Brune, who threaten'd Alcidiana with death, for depriving their kinsman (who was a gentleman) of his e, tho he had not taken away hers. And it was the report of the town, how this young maid was threatend. And indeed, the death of the page had so afflicted a great many, that Alcidiana had procured herself abundance of enemies upon that account, because she might have saved him if she had pleased; but, on the contrary, she was a spectator, and in full health and vigour, at his execution. And people were not so much concerned for her at this report, as they would have been. The Prince, who now had, by reasoning the matter soberly with Miranda, found it absolutely necessary to despatch Alcidiana, resolved himself, and with his own hand, to execute it; not daring to trust any of his most favourite servants, tho he had many, who possibly would have obeyed him; for they loved him as he deserved, and so would all the world, had he not been so purely deluded by this fair enchantress. He therefore, as I said, resolved to keep this great secret to himself; and taking a pistol, charged well with two bullets, he watched an opportunity to shoot her as she should go out or into her house, or coach, some evening.

To this end he waited several nights near her lodgings, but still, either she went not out, or when she returned, she was so guarded with friends, her lover, and flambeaux, that he could not aim at her without endangering the life of some other. But one night above the rest, upon a Sunday, when he knew she would be at the theatre, for she never missed that day seeing the play, he waited at the corner of the Stadt-House, near the theatre,

with his cloke cast over his face, and a black periwig, all alone, with his pistol ready cock'd; and remain'd not very long but he saw her kinsman's coach come along; 'twas almost dark, day was just shutting up her beauties, and left such a light to govern the world, as served only just to distinguish one object from another, and a convenient help to mischief. He saw alight out of the coach only one young lady, the lover, and then the destin'd victim; which he (drawing near) knew rather by her tongue than shape. The lady ran into the play-house, and left Alcidiana to be conducted by her lover into it, who led her to the door, and went to give some order to the coachman; so that the lover was about twenty yards from Alcidiana; when she stood the fairest mark in the world, on the threshold of the entrance of the theatre, there being many coaches about the door, so that hers could not come so near. Tarquin was resolved not to lose so fair an opportunity, and advanc'd, but went behind the coaches; and when he came over against the door, through a great booted velvet coach, that stood between him and her, he shot; and she having the train of her gown and petticoat on her arm, in great quantity, he missed her body, and shot through her cloaths, between her arm and her body. She, frighten'd to find something hit her, and to see the smoke, and hear the report of the pistol; running in, cried, "I am shot, I am dead."

This noise quickly alarm'd her lover; and all the coachmen and footmen immediately ran, some one way, and some another. One of'em seeing a man haste away in a cloak; he being a lusty bold German, stopped him; and drawing upon him, bad him stand, and deliver his pistol, or he would run him through.

Tarquin being surprized at the boldness of this fellow to demand his pistol, as if he positively knew him to be the murderer (for so he thought himself, since he believed Alcidiana dead), had so much presence of mind as to consider, if he suffered himself to be taken, he should poorly die a publick death; and therefore resolved upon one mischief more, to secure himself from the first. And in the moment that the German bade him deliver his pistol, he cried, "Though I have no pistol to deliver, I have a sword to chastise thy insolence." And throwing off his cloak, and flinging his pistol from him, he drew, and wounded, and disarmed the fellow.

This noise of swords brought everybody to the place; and immediately the bruit ran, "The murderer was taken, the murderer was taken." Tho none knew which was he, nor the cause of the quarrel between the two fighting men which none yet knew; for it was now darker than before. But at the noise of the murderer being taken, the lover of Alcidiana, who by this time found his lady unhurt, all but the trains of her gown and petticoat, came running to the place, just as Tarquin had disarmed the German, and was ready to have killed him; when laying hold of his arm, they arrested the stroke, and redeemed the footman

They then demanded who this stranger was, at whose mercy the fellow lay; but the Prince, who now found himself venturing for his last stake, made no reply; but with two swords in his hands went to fight his way through the rabble. And tho there were above a hundred persons, some with swords, others with long whips (as coach-men), so invincible was the courage of this poor unfortunate gentleman at that time, that all these were not able

to seize him; but he made his way through the ring that encompassed him, and ran away; but was, however, so closely pursued, the company still gathering as they ran, that toiled with fighting, oppressed with guilt, and fear of being taken, he grew fainter and fainter, and suffered himself, at last, to yield to his pursuers, who soon found him to be Prince Tarquin in disguise. And they carried him directly to prison, being Sunday, to wait the coming day, to go before a magistrate.

In an hour's time the whole fatal adventure was carried all over the city, and every one knew that Tarquin was the intended murderer of Alcidiana; and not one but had a real sorrow and compassion for him. They heard how bravely he had defended himself, how many he had wounded before he could be taken, and what numbers he had fought through. And even those that saw his valour and bravery, and who had assisted at his being seiz'd, now repented from the bottom of their hearts their having any hand in the ruin of so gallant a man; especially since they knew the lady was not hurt. A thousand addresses were made to her not to prosecute him; but her lover, a hot-headed fellow, more fierce than brave, would by no means be pacified, but vowed to pursue him to the scaffold.

The Monday came, and the Prince being examined, confessed the matter of fact, since there was no harm done; believing a generous confession the best of his game. But he was sent back to closer imprisonment, loaded with irons, to expect the next sessions. All his household goods were seized, and all they could find, for the use of Alcidiana. And the Princess, all in rage, tearing her hair, was carried to the same prison, to behold the cruel effects of her hellish designs.

One need not tell here how sad and horrid this meeting appear'd between her lord and her. Let it suffice, it was the most melancholy and mortifying object that ever eyes beheld. On Miranda's part, 'twas sometimes all rage and fire, and sometimes all tears and groans; but still 'twas sad love, and mournful tenderness on his. Nor could all his sufferings, and the prospect of death itself, drive from his soul one spark of that fire the obstinate god had fatally kindled there. And in the midst of all his sighs, he would recal himself, and cry, "I have Miranda still."

He was eternally visited by his friends and acquaintance; and this last action of bravery had got him more than all his former conduct had lost. The fathers were perpetually with him; and all joined with one common voice in this, that he ought to abandon a woman so wicked as the Princess; and that however fate dealt with him, he could not shew himself a true penitent, while he laid the author of so much evil in his bosom: that heaven would never bless him, till he had renounced her: and on such conditions he would find those that would employ their utmost interest to save his life, who else would not stir in this affair. But he was so deaf to all, that he could not so much as dissemble a repentance of having married her.

He lay a long time in prison, and all that time the poor Father Francisco remained there also. And the good fathers who daily visited these two amorous prisoners, the Prince and Princess; and who found, by the management of matters, it would go very hard with Tarquin, entertained 'em often with holy matters relating to the life to come; from which, before

his tryal, he gathered what his stars had appointed, and that he was destin'd to die.

This gave an unspeakable torment to the now repenting beauty, who had reduced him to it; and she began to appear with a more solid grief: which being perceived by the good fathers, they resolved to attack her on the yielding side; and after some discourse upon the judgment for sin, they came to reflect on the business of Father Francisco; and told her, she had never thriven since her accusing of that father, and laid it very home to her conscience; assuring her that they would do their utmost in her service, if she would confess that secret sin to all the world, so that she might atone for the crime, by the saving that good man. At first she seemed inclined to yield; but shame of being her own detector, in so vile a matter, recalled her goodness, and she faintly persisted in it.

At the end of six months, Prince Tarquin was called to his tryal; where I will pass over the circumstances, which are only what is usual in such criminal cases, and tell you, that he being found guilty of the intent of killing Alcidiana, was condemned to lose his head in the market-place, and the Princess to be banished her country.

After sentence pronounced, to the real grief of all the spectators, he was carry'd back to prison. And now the fathers attack her a-new; and she, whose griefs daily increased, with a languishment that brought her very near her grave, at last confess'd all her life, all the lewdness of her practices with several princes and great men, besides her lusts with people that served her, and others in mean capacity: and lastly, the whole truth of the young friar; and how she had drawn the page, and the Prince her husband, to this design'd murder of her sister. This she signed with her hand, in the presence of the Prince, her husband, and several holy men who were present. Which being signify'd to the magistrates, the friar was immediately deliver'd from his irons (where he had languished more than two whole years) in great triumph, with much honour, and lives a most exemplary pious life, as he did before; for he is now living in Antwerp.

After the condemnation of these two unfortunate persons, who begot such different sentiments in the minds of the people (the Prince, all the compassion and pity imaginable; and the Princess, all the contempt and despatch); they languished almost six months longer in prison: so great an interest there was made, in order to the saving his life, by all the men of the robe. On the other side, the Princes, and great men of all nations, who were at the Court of Brussels, who bore a secret revenge in their hearts against a man who had, as they pretended, set up a false title, only to take place of them; who indeed was but a merchant's son of Holland, as they said; so incens'd them against him, that they were too hard at Court for the church-men. However, this dispute gave the Prince his life some months longer than was expected; which gave him also some hope, that a reprieve for ninety years would have been granted, as was desired. Nay, Father Francisco so interested himself in this concern, that he writ to his father, and several princes of Germany, with whom the Marquis Castel Roderigo was well acquainted to intercede with him for the saving of Tarquin; since 'twas more by his persuasions, than those of all who attacked her, that made Miranda confess the truth of her affair with him.

But at the end of six months, when all applications were found fruitless and vain, the Prince receiv'd news, that in two days he was to die, as his sentence had been before pronounc'd, and for which he prepared himself with all chearfulness.

On the following Friday, as soon as it was light, all people of any condition came to take their leaves of him; and none departed with dry eyes, or hearts unconcern'd to the last degree. For Tarquin, when he found his fate inevitable bore it with a fortitude that shewed no signs of regret; but address'd himself to all about him with the same chearful, modest, and great air, he was wont to do in his most flourishing fortune. His valet was dressing him all the morning, so many interruptions they had by visitors; and he was all in mourning, and so were all his followers; for even to the last he kept up his grandeur, to the amazement of all people. And indeed, he was so passionately belov'd by them, that those he had dismiss'd, serv'd him voluntarily and would not be persuaded to abandon him while he liv'd

The Princess was also dress'd in mourning, and her two women; and notwithstanding the unheard-of lewdness and villainies she had confessed of herself, the Prince still ador'd her; for she had still those charms that made him first do so nor, to his last moment, could he be brought to wish, that he had never seen her; but on the contrary, as a man yet vainly proud of his fetters, he said, "All the satisfaction this short moment of life could afford him, was, that he died in endeavouring to serve Miranda, his adorable Princess."

After he had taken leave of all, who thought it necessary to leave him to himself for some time, he retir'd with his confessor; where they were about an hour in prayer, all the ceremonies of devotion that were fit to be done, being already passed. At last the bell toll'd, and he was to take leave of the Princess, as his last work of life, and the most hard he had to accomplish. He threw himself at her feet, and gazing on her as she sat more dead than alive, overwhelm'd with silent grief, they both remain'd some moments speechless; and then, as if one rising tide of tears had supply'd both their eyes, it burst out in streams at the same instant: and when his sighs gave way, he utter'd a thousand farewels, so soft, so passionate, and moving, that all who were by were extremely touch'd with it, and said, that nothing could be seen more deplorable and melancholy. A thousand times they bad farewell, and still some tender look, or word, would prevent his going; then embrace, and bid farewell again. A thousand times she ask'd his pardon for being the occasion of that fatal separation; a thousand times assuring him, she would follow him, for she could not live without him. And Heaven knows when their soft and sad caresses would have ended, had not the officers assur'd him 'twas time to mount the scaffold. At which words the Princess fell fainting in the arms of her women, and they led Tarquin out of prison.

When he came to the market-place, whither he walked on foot, follow'd by his own domesticks, and some bearing a black velvet coffin with silver hinges; the heads-man before him with his fatal scimitar drawn, his confessor by his side, and many gentlemen and church-men, with Father Francisco attending him, the people shewing millions of blessings on him,

and beholding him with weeping eyes, he mounted the scaffold; which was strewed with some saw-dust, about the place where he was to kneel, to receive the blood. For they behead people kneeling, and with the back-stroke of a scimitar; and not lying on a block, and with an ax, as we in England. The scaffold had a low rail about it, that everybody might more conveniently see. This was hung with black, and all that state that such a death could have, was here in most decent order.

He did not say much upon the scaffold. The sum of what he said to his friends was, to be kind, and take care of the poor penitent his wife. To others, recommending his honest and generous servants, whose fidelity was so well known and commended, that they were soon promis'd preferment. He was some time in prayer, and a very short time in speaking to his confessor; then he turn'd to the headsman, and desired him to do his office well, and gave him twenty louis d'ors; and undressing himself with the help of his valet and page, he pull'd off his coat, and had underneath a white satten waste-coat. He took off his perriwig, and put on a white satten cap, with a holland one done with a point under it, which he pulled over his eyes; then took a chearful leave of all, and kneel'd down, and said, "When he lifted up his hands the third time, the heads-man should do his office." Which accordingly was done, and the heads-man gave him his last stroke, and the Prince fell on the scaffold. The people with one common voice, as if it had been but one entire one, pray'd for his soul; and murmurs of sighs were heard from the whole multitude, who scrambled for some of the bloody saw-dust, to keep for his memory.

The heads-man going to take up the head, as the manner is, to shew it to the people, he found he had not struck it off, and that the body stir'd; with that he step'd to an engine, which they always carry with 'em, to force those who may be refractory; thinking, as he said, to have twisted the head from the shoulders, conceiving it to hang but by a small matter of flesh. Tho 'twas an odd shift of the fellow's, yet 'twas done, and the best shift he could suddenly propose. The Margrave, and another officer, old men, were on the scaffold, with some of the Prince's friends and servants; who seeing the heads-man put the engine about the neck of the Prince, began to call out, and the people made a great noise. The Prince, who found himself yet alive; or rather, who was past thinking but had some sense of feeling left, when the heads-man took him up, and set his back against the rail, and clap'd the engine about his neck, got his two thumbs between the rope and his neck, feeling himself pres'd there; and struggling between life and death, and bending himself over the rail backward, while the headsman pulled forward, he threw himself quite over the rail, by chance, and not design, and fell upon the heads and shoulders of the people, who were crying out with amazing shouts of joy. The heads-man leap'd after him, but the rabble had liked to have pulled him to pieces. All the city was in an uproar, but none knew what the matter was, but those who bore the body of the Prince, whom they found yet living; but how, or by what strange miracle preserv'd, they knew not, nor did examine; but with one accord, as if the whole crowd had been one body, and had but one motion, they bore the Prince on their heads about a hundred yards from the scaffold, where there is a monastery of Jesuits; and there they secur'd him. All this was done,

his beheading, his falling, and his being secur'd, almost in a moment's time; the people rejoicing, as at some extraordinary victory won. One of the officers being, as I said, an old timorous man, was so frighten'd at the accident, the bustle, the noise, and the confusion, of which he was wholly ignorant, that he dy'd with amazement and fear; and the other was fain to be let blood.

The officers of justice went to demand the prisoner, but they demanded in vain; the Jesuits had now a right to protect him, and would do so. All his overjoy'd friends went to see in what condition he was, and all of quality found admittance. They saw him in bed, going to be dress'd by the most skilful surgeons, who yet could not assure him of life. They desired nobody should speak to him, or ask him any questions. They found that the headsman had struck him too low, and had cut him into the shoulder-bone. A very great wound, you may be sure; for the sword, in such executions, carries an extreme force. However, so great care was taken on all sides, and so greatly the fathers were concern'd for him, that they found an amendment, and hopes of a good effect of their incomparable charity and goodness.

At last, when he was permitted to speak, the first news he ask'd was after the Princess. And his friends were very much afflicted to find, that all his loss of blood had not quenched that flame, nor let out that which made him still love that bad woman. He was solicited daily to think no more of her. And all her crimes are laid so open to him, and so shamefully represented; and on the other side, his vertues so admir'd; and which, they said, would have been eternally celebrated, but for his folly with this infamous creature; that at last, by assuring him of all their assistance if he abandon'd her; and to renounce him, and deliver him up, if he did not; they wrought so far upon him, as to promise he would suffer her to go alone into banishment, and would not follow her, or live with her any more. But alas! this was but his gratitude that compell'd this complaisance, for in his heart he resolv'd never to abandon her; nor was he able to live, and think of doing it. However, his reason assur'd him, he could not do a deed more justifiable, and one that would regain his fame sooner.

His friends ask'd him some questions concerning his escape; and since he was not beheaded, but only wounded, why he did not immediately rise up. But he reply'd, he was so absolutely prepossessed, that at the third lifting up his hands he should receive the stroke of death, that at the same instant the sword touch'd him, he had no sense; nay, not even of pain, so absolutely dead he was with imagination; and knew not that he stirr'd, as the headsman found he did; nor did he remember anything, from the lifting up of his hands, to his fall; and then awaken'd, as out of a dream, or rather a moment's sleep without dream, he found he liv'd, and wonder'd what was arriv'd to him, or how he came to live; having not, as yet, any sense of his wound, tho so terrible an one.

After this, Alcidiana, who was extremely afflicted for having been the prosecutor of this great man; who, bating this last design against her, which she knew was at the instigation of her sister, had oblig'd her with all the civility imaginable; now sought all means possible of getting his pardon, and that of her sister; tho of a hundred thousand crowns, which she should have paid her, she could get but ten thousand; which was from the

sale of her rich beds, and some other furniture. So that the young Count, who before should have marry'd her, now went off for want of fortune; and a young merchant (perhaps the best of the two) was the man to whom she was destin'd.

At last, by great intercession, both their pardons were obtain'd; and the Prince, who would be no more seen in a place that had prov'd every way so fatal to him, left Flanders, promising never to live with the fair hypocrite more; but e'er he departed, he writ her a letter, wherein he order'd her, in a little time, to follow him into Holland; and left a bill of exchange with one of his trusty servants, whom he had left to wait upon her, for mony for her accommodation; so that she was now reduced to one woman, one page, and this gentleman. The Prince, in this time of his imprisonment, had several bills of great sums from his father, who was exceeding rich, and this all the children he had in the world and whom he tenderly loved.

As soon as Miranda was come into Holland, she was welcomed with all imaginable respect and endearment by the old father; who was impos'd upon so, as that he knew not she was the fatal occasion of all these disasters to his son; but rather look'd on her as a woman, who had brought him a hundred and fifty thousand crowns, which his misfortunes had consum'd. But,

above all, she was receiv'd by Tarquin with a joy unspeakable; who, after some time, to redeem his credit, and gain himself a new fame, put himself into the French army, where he did wonders; and after three campaigns, his father dying, he return'd home, and retir'd to a country-house: where, with his Princess, he liv'd as a private gentleman, in all the tranquillity of a man of good fortune. They say Miranda has been very penitent for her life past, and gives Heaven the glory for having given her these afflictions that have reclaim'd her, and brought her to as perfect a state of happiness, as this troublesome world can afford.

Since I began this relation, I heard that Prince Tarquin dy'd about three quarters of a year ago.

